

New Perspectives in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew

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DIFFERENTIATING LEFT DISLOCATION CONSTRUCTIONS IN BIBLICAL HEBREW¹

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1.0. Introduction

Left dislocation (as opposed to topicalisation) involves a constituent that occurs outside of the left edge of the sentence boundary and has resumption within the sentence. Characteristic features of left dislocation include the following (Alexiadou 2006, 668–71): (1) a referential constituent is dislocated and precedes a matrix sentence and is accompanied by a separate intonation contour; (2) an alternative position for the dislocated constituent exists within the matrix sentence, which is filled by an anaphoric, coreferential resumptive element; and (3) the matrix sentence is considered to be ‘about’ the left dislocated element (the ‘aboutness requirement’).

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Crosslinguistically, left dislocation constructions exhibit considerable syntactic variation.² In our previous publications (especially, Naudé 1990 and Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2019) syntactic variation within left dislocation was noted, but not analysed. In this chapter, the types of left dislocation in Biblical Hebrew will be differentiated on the basis of the following three considerations.³ The first relates to the grammatical features of the coreferential resumptive element (Oosthuizen 2016). The second concerns the relationship of the left dislocated constituent to the resumptive element, especially with respect to case agreement. The third relates to the relationship of the sentence involving left dislocation to the broader syntactic context.⁴ By considering these questions within the context of contemporary linguistic

² See, for example, Ben-Horin (1976); Gross (1987); Khan (1988); (2016); Anagnostopoulou (1997); Anagnostopoulou, Van Riemsdijk, and Zwarts (1997); Rizzi (1997); Alexopoulou, Doron, and Heycock (2004); Alexiadou (2006); Korchin (2015); López (2016).

³ In a future article we consider the kind of intonational breaks between the dislocated constituent and the matrix sentence for each type of left dislocation, insofar as they can be determined in the Masoretic system of accents. For a prosodic account for differentiating left-dislocated and tripartite verbless clauses in Biblical Hebrew, see Naudé and Miller-Naudé (2017). For a prosodic account of the Masoretic accents and a preliminary examination of the intonational break in left dislocation and other constructions exhibiting the syntax-phonology interface, see Pitcher (2020, 241–358).

⁴ An additional type of left dislocation which is distinct from clitic left dislocation—broad subject—has been identified for Modern Hebrew (Alexopoulou, Doron and Heycock 2004; Doron and Heycock 2010), although the category has been disputed (Landau 2009).

theory we can determine in a more precise and principled way the kinds of left dislocation constructions that are differentiated in Biblical Hebrew and their essential characteristics.⁵

2.0. Topicalisation and Left Dislocation

Preparatory to the following discussion, we briefly summarise some of the ways in which the syntactic constructions topicalisation (or fronting) and left dislocation differ from one another. Although topicalisation and left dislocation have been differentiated in linguistic analyses of Biblical Hebrew,⁶ an alternative position considers the two to be varieties of ‘fronting’, which optionally exhibits resumption.⁷

The following verse provides contrastive examples of left dislocation and topicalisation in adjacent sentences.

- (1) כָּל־הַבֵּן הַיֵּלֹד הַיְאֹרָה תִשְׁלִיכֶהוּ וְכָל־הַבַּת תְּחַיֶּינָהּ
 ‘Every son that is born, into the Nile you will throw him,
 but every daughter you will allow to live every daughter.’ (Exod.
 1.22)

Topicalisation involves a constituent that is moved to the very beginning of the sentence. In the second sentence in (1) the object (‘every daughter’) is topicalised before the verb; it has been

⁵ Throughout we use representative examples of the syntactic phenomena discussed rather than comprehensive lists.

⁶ Naudé (1990; 1994a; 1994b; 1999); Holmstedt (2014); see also Shlonsky (2014).

⁷ Westbury (2014; 2016); see Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (2017, 510–18) for a description of both positions.

moved from its unmarked position after the verb in the sentence.⁸ A zero trace marks the location where the constituent originally occurred in the sentence; this is indicated by the small subscripted type.⁹ What is important is that the object constituent remains inside the sentence, although it has been moved to initial position within the sentence. It is for this reason that there is no resumption of the constituent in its original position in the sentence—the topicalised constituent is required to complete the sentence. By contrast, in the first sentence in (1), the object constituent (‘every son that is born’) is left dislocated—it occurs outside of the sentence and has a coreferential resumptive element (also called a ‘correlate’, see López 2016) that occurs within the sentence, viz. the object suffix on the verb (‘him’). The matrix sentence ‘you will throw him’ (consisting of a verb and its object suffix) is a fully-formed predication apart from the dislocated constituent.

In the first sentence in (1), the resumptive element of the dislocated constituent occurs in situ, that is, in the normal position after the verb that the constituent would have had within

⁸ We understand Biblical Hebrew to exhibit unmarked word order of VSO (verb-subject-object) followed by other adjuncts (Naudé 1994b), although theoretically underlying word order in generative grammar is SVO. As a result, topicalisation may involve any non-verbal constituent occurring before the verb without a resumptive element. Multiple instances of topicalisation may occur within a sentence (e.g., Gen. 17.6, in which both the subject and a prepositional phrase are topicalised).

⁹ The object regularly follows this verb, either with (Exod. 1.17) or without (Num. 31.15) the definite object marker. For another example of the topicalised object preceding this verb, see Gen. 12.12.

the sentence without dislocation.¹⁰ However, it is also possible for the resumptive element itself to be topicalised within the matrix sentence so that it occurs at the beginning of the matrix sentence:

- (2) אֶת־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אַתּוֹן תִּקְדֹּשׁוּ
 ‘The LORD of hosts, him you will regard _{him} as holy.’ (Isa. 8.13)

The object noun phrase (NP) (‘the LORD of hosts’) is dislocated. Its resumptive element (‘him’) is topicalised (moved to the beginning of the matrix sentence); semantically, it conveys contrastive focus.

The sentence boundary between the left dislocated constituent and the matrix sentence can be detected on the basis of the appearance of the following items at the sentence boundary: a parenthetical element,¹¹ a quotative frame,¹² a consecutive verb

¹⁰ For representative examples of the unmarked order of the object occurring after this verb, see Gen. 21.15 (for an NP object) and Gen. 37.22 (for an independent pronominal object). For topicalisation of the object constituent with this verb, see 1 Kgs 14.9.

¹¹ For example, in Num. 14.24, the dislocated NP וְעַבְדִּי כָלֵב ‘and my servant Caleb’ is separated from the matrix sentence by a parenthetical sentence עֵקֶב הַיְיִתָּה רֹיחַ אַחֲרָת עִמּוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא אַחֲרָי ‘because another spirit is within him and he has followed after me’. The separation of the dislocated element and the parenthetical sentences is also indicated by the fact that the matrix sentence begins with a consecutive verb with an objective suffix, which serves as the resumptive element (וְהִבִּיאֲתִי ‘I will bring him’): וְעַבְדִּי כָלֵב עֵקֶב הַיְיִתָּה רֹיחַ אַחֲרָת עִמּוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא אַחֲרָי וְהִבִּיאֲתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר: But my servant Caleb—because a different spirit is with him and he has fully followed after me—I will bring him into the land that he has entered and his offspring will inherit it.’

¹² For example, in Gen. 3.3, the quotative frame אָמַר אֱלֹהִים ‘God said’ intervenes between the dislocated prepositional phrase (וּמִפְרֵי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר)

form,¹³ and an interrogative.¹⁴ The fact that a topicalised constituent remains within the left boundary of the sentence, whereas a left dislocated constituent occurs outside of the left boundary, results in two additional syntactic features useful for categorising the two types of constructions.

First, the topicalised constituent has the same form that it would have in its unmarked position within the sentence, especially with respect to case marking (Naudé 1990, 126). This is especially evident with respect to the various ways in which the object may be marked—with the definite object marker (3a), as a definite NP without the definite object marker (3b), an indefinite object (3c), or a prepositional complement (3d):

(3a) אֶת־קוֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַגֶּן

‘Your voice I heard your voice in the garden.’ (Gen. 3.10)

(3b) וְעֵרוֹת אֲבִיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ

‘And the nakedness of their father they did not see the nakedness of their father.’ (Gen. 9.23)

and its resumption as a pronominal suffix on a preposition (בְּתוֹךְ־הַגֶּן) and its resumption as a pronominal suffix on a preposition (מִמֶּנּוּ): (מִמֶּנּוּ) וּמִפְרֵי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגֶּן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְעוּ בוֹ פֶן־תָּמוּתוּ: (מִמֶּנּוּ) ‘and from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God said, “you must not eat **from it** and you must not touch it lest you die.”’

¹³ For example, in Exod. 12.15, the matrix sentence begins with a perfect consecutive verb (וְנִכְרְתָהּ) הוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: (וְנִכְרְתָהּ) ‘For every one who eats leavened bread, **that person** will be cut off from Israel.’

¹⁴ For example, in Job 38.29, the interrogative marker (מִי) intervenes between the dislocated NP (כִּפְרֵי שָׁמַיִם) and the matrix sentence (יִלְדוּ): (יִלְדוּ) ‘and the frost of heaven, who bore **it**?’

(3c) וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדָּר תִּצְמִיחַ לָךְ

‘And thorns and thistles will sprout thorns and thistles for you.’

(Gen. 3.18)

(3d) מִפְּרֵי עֵץ-הַגָּן נֹאכֵל

‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden.’ (Gen. 3.2)

As is described below, the question of the case of the dislocated constituent in left dislocation constructions serves as a diagnostic tool for differentiating various types.

Second, topicalisation and left dislocation are differentiated with respect to negation (see Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2019). To name just one example, topicalised constituents may exhibit negation of the topicalised constituent apart from the matrix sentence as a whole when the negative marker precedes the topicalised constituent. In (4a) negation extends only to the prepositional phrase and not to the predication as a whole:

(4a) לֹא בְגִבּוֹרַת הַסּוּס יִחַפֵּץ

‘Not in the strength of a horse he delights not in the strength of a horse.’ (Ps. 147:10)

By contrast, left dislocated constituents cannot be negated apart from their matrix sentence.¹⁵ As illustrated in (4b), both a topicalised constituent (first poetic line) and a left dislocated constituent (second poetic line) may precede the negative marker that negates the entire sentence:

¹⁵ Negation with the interrogative marker and לֹא, viz., לֹא־הֲ, is a special case; see Snyman and Naudé (2003) and Miller-Naudé and Naudé (2019).

(4b) לֹסֶה לֹא יִחְשְׁבוּ / וְזָהָב לֹא יִתְפָּצְוּבוּ

‘Silver they do not regard_{silver} / and gold they do not delight in it.’ (Isa. 13.17)

This difference in the possibility of constituent negation of topicalised constituents as opposed to left dislocated constructions is a direct result of their respective syntactic structures—the topicalised constituent remains within the matrix sentence, whereas the dislocated constituent is outside the left boundary of the matrix sentence.

3.0. Types of Left Dislocation in Biblical Hebrew

3.1. Clitic Left Dislocation

The first type of left dislocation in Biblical Hebrew involves a dislocated constituent that exhibits case agreement with its resumptive,¹⁶ and the resumptive is a pronominal clitic:

(5) אֶת־זִמְתְּךָ וְאֶת־תּוֹעֵבוֹתֶיךָ אַתָּה נֹשֵׂאתָם

‘Your wickedness and your abominations, you bear them.’
(Ezek. 16.58)

The dislocated NP is explicitly marked as the definite object with the definite object marker and its resumptive within the matrix sentence is an pronominal object suffix on the verb. Because the resumptive is a pronominal clitic, this kind of left dislocation has been called ‘clitic left dislocation’.

¹⁶ Case agreement is used in the sense of abstract case marking within generative linguistics. Abstract case is assigned structurally, regardless of whether or not a language has morphologically realised case.

Clitic left dislocation may involve an object NP (as in [5]) or a subject NP (as in [6]):

(6) וְאֲנִי הַנְּגִי יֵשֵׁב בְּמִצְפָּה

‘And I, behold I will dwell at Mizpah.’ (Jer. 40.10)

The dislocated subject pronoun is separated from the matrix sentence by the presentative הִנֵּה ‘behold’. The subject is resumed with the pronominal subject suffix on the presentative.

Clitic left dislocation may involve a prepositional phrase (PP) (as in [7]), where the dislocated PP contains a relative clause and the resumptive is topicalised:

(7) וּבְעוֹלוֹ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה בּוֹ יָמוּת

‘And in his injustice which he has done, in it he will die _{in it}.’ (Ezek. 33.13)¹⁷

In Biblical Hebrew, clitic left dislocation, unlike topicalisation, can involve a resumptive element that crosses subordinate sentence boundaries. In (8), the pronominal resumptive is embedded within an infinitival complement clause:

(8) וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא־יָבִילוּ [Q] בְּנִי־הַיְהוּדָה לְהוֹרִישָׁם

‘But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the sons of Judah were not able to drive them out.’ (Josh. 15.63)

¹⁷ See also 2 Sam. 6.23.

Crosslinguistically, clitic left dislocation constructions are usually sensitive to ‘island’ constraints, although these are language specific; by contrast, hanging topic left dislocation constructions (see §3.2) are not usually subject to these constraints.¹⁸

Biblical Hebrew is a *pro*-drop language, which means that when a finite verb is present in the sentence, the pronominal subject is null or covert, rather than expressed (Naudé 1991; 1993; 1996; 2001). However, the phonologically null subject *pro* on finite verbs cannot serve as an unexpressed resumptive pronoun within left dislocation constructions (Naudé 1996; 1999; Holmstedt 2014; cf. Cowper and DeCaen 2017). Such an analysis would mean that in sentences such as (9), there is no explanation for the independent subject pronoun, since the phonologically null subject *pro* on the finite verb serves as the resumptive:

(9) וְקָנְיִי הַיְהוָה הַיְהוָה יִרְשׁוּ-אֶרֶץ

‘But those who wait for the LORD, **they** (*pro* they) will inherit the land.’ (Ps. 37.9)

3.2. Hanging Topic Left Dislocation

In the second sub-type of left dislocation in Biblical Hebrew, the dislocated constituent is always a noun phrase (not a prepositional phrase or an adverbial phrase), but the resumptive within the matrix sentence may bear any grammatical relation to the predication. In (10), the noun phrase ‘north and south’ is not

¹⁸ Alexiadou (2006, 673–74, 682–85); see also Alexopoulou, Doron, and Heycock (2004). For an overview of the long linguistic history of ‘islands’, see Szabolcsi (2006).

marked as an object, but its resumptive element within the matrix sentence is an object verbal suffix:

(10) צָפוֹן וְיָמִין אֵתָהּ בְּרָאתָם

‘North and south, you created **them**.’ (Ps. 89.13)

Because the dislocated NP does not exhibit the case agreement with its resumptive, this construction has traditionally been referred to as *casus pendens*. It is referred to in the linguistics literature as ‘hanging topic left dislocation’.

In (11), the dislocated NP has a resumptive that is a pronominal clitic on the preposition -ל:

(11) וְהָאִישׁ מִיכָה לֹוּ בֵּית אֱלֹהִים

‘(As for) the man Micah, **he** had a shrine.’ (Literally: ‘and the man Micah, to **him** a house of gods_{to him}’) (Judg. 17.5)

The NP may be realised by an independent subject pronoun whose resumptive element is a possessive pronominal clitic:

(12) אֲנִי הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתְּךָ

‘I, behold, **my** covenant is with you.’ (Gen. 17.4)

The difference between example (12), as a hanging topic left dislocation, and example (6) (repeated here), with a clitic resumptive exhibiting case agreement, is very striking:

(6) וְאֲנִי הִנֵּנִי יֹשֵׁב בַּמִּצְפָּה

‘And I, behold I will dwell at Mizpah.’ (Jer. 40.10)

Hanging topic left dislocation, like clitic left dislocation, allows the resumptive element to be deeply embedded within a subordinate clause; compare (8) above with (13):

(13) זֶה | מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלֵנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא יָדַעְנוּ מִה־הָיָה לוֹ:

‘This Moses, the man who brought us from the land of Egypt, we do not know what happened to **him**.’ (Exod. 32.1)

This syntactic feature, therefore, does not serve to differentiate these two kinds of left dislocation in Biblical Hebrew. By contrast, topicalisation is a movement construction, which is constrained by its sentence boundaries—a topicalised constituent cannot move to the beginning of the matrix sentence from an embedded sentence. We see this in (14a), in which the topicalised NP moves only to the beginning of its embedded sentence:

(14a) וּזְכַרְתָּ כִּי־עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם

‘You must remember that a slave you were _{a slave} in Egypt.’ (Deut. 16.12)

If a topicalised constituent could move past a sentence boundary, then the unattested sentence in (14b), in which the topicalised NP has moved from a deeply embedded sentence to the beginning of the matrix sentence, would be possible:

(14b) *A slave you must remember that you were _{a slave} in Egypt

3.3. Left Dislocation with a Deictic Resumptive

The third type of left dislocation involves a deictic resumptive which is coreferential with the dislocated constituent. In (15), the deictic resumptive is the pronominal deictic אֵלֶּה ‘these’ and the dislocated constituent exhibits case agreement:

(15) וְלִבְנֹתַי מִה־אֲעֹשֶׂה לְאֵלֶּה הַיּוֹם אֲזוֹ לְבָנִיהֶן אֲשֶׁר יִלְדוּ:

‘...and for my daughters, what should I do for these today or for their sons which they have borne?’ (Gen. 31.43)

In (16), the dislocated constituent is a prepositional phrase and the resumptive element is the deictic שם ‘there’ (Naudé 1990, 115; Holmstedt 2014, 121).¹⁹

(16) עַל נְהַרֹּתַי | בְּבַל שָׁם יֹשְׁבוּ
 ‘By the rivers of Babylon, **there** we sat _{there}.’ (Ps. 137.1)

In (17), the deictic resumptive is אז ‘then’:

(17) בַּעֲשֵׂתוֹ לִמְטֵר חֶק וְדֶרֶךְ לַחַיִּיז קִלּוֹת: אַז רָאָה וַיִּסְפְּרָה הַכִּינָה וְגַם-חִקְקָה:
 ‘When he made a rule for the wind and a path for the thun-
derstorms, **then** he saw it [= the wisdom, Job 28.12] and
 gauged it, he measured it and probed it.’ (Job 28.26–27)

In (16) and (17) there is no case agreement between the resumptive deictic and the dislocated constituent, but in a different sense than we have seen thus far. The dislocated constituent is headed by a prepositional phrase, whereas the resumptive element is not headed by a preposition, but is an adverb.

This category of left dislocation with a deictic resumptive cannot be considered a sub-category of the two categories of left dislocation previously identified. It is not a sub-category of clitic left dislocation (§3.1), because the resumptive element is not a clitic and there is not necessarily case agreement between the dislocated constituent and the resumptive element. Neither is it a sub-category of hanging-topic left dislocation (§3.2), because the dislocated element is not a NP.

¹⁹ See also Gen. 25.10; Deut. 12.11; Qoh. 3.16.

3.4. Left Dislocation with an Independent Pronominal Resumptive

The fourth type of left dislocation involves a dislocated noun phrase whose resumptive element is a strong, tonic pronoun, rather than a pronominal clitic. In Biblical Hebrew, only independent subject pronouns are strong, tonic pronouns:

(18) יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם הוּא יִלָּחֶם לְכֶם

‘The LORD your God who goes before you, **he** will fight for you.’ (Deut. 1.30)²⁰

Semantically, the resumptive independent pronoun conveys contrastive focus when it occurs as the first element in the matrix sentence; in (18), the meaning is ‘he (and no one else) will fight for you’.

In cases where the matrix sentence is a verbless clause, it is important to distinguish constructions involving left dislocation and those which are tripartite verbless clauses (see Naudé 1994a; 2002; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2017 for the argumentation and additional bibliographic sources). Left dislocation constructions have an intonational break (indicated by a disjunctive Masoretic accent) after the dislocated constituent (19):

(19) וְדָוִד הוּא הַקָּטָן

‘As for David, **he** was the youngest.’ (1 Sam. 17.14)

The pronoun (הוא) as resumptive agrees in person, gender, and number with the dislocated element and semantically conveys

²⁰ See also Gen. 37.30; 47.6; Deut. 30.1; 1 Sam. 17.14; 2 Sam. 21.2; Zech. 1.5.

contrastive focus. When the predicate rather than the subject of a verbless predication is in contrastive focus, it will be topicalised so that it precedes the pronominal subject; in (20) the prepositional predicate לְפָנֶיךָ is topicalised:

- (20) $\text{אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפָנֶיךָ הוּא}$
 ‘As for the land of Egypt, before you it is before you.’ (Gen. 47.6)

By contrast, in tripartite verbless clauses, the pronominal element after the first constituent is joined to it by *maqṣef* or a conjunctive accent; the pronominal element is neither a resumptive element nor a copula:

- (21) $\text{אַתָּה־הוּא מַלְכִי אֱלֹהִים}$
 ‘You are my king, O God.’ (Ps. 44.5)

The pronominal element הוּא is a ‘last resort strategy’ to avoid ambiguity in the identification of the nominal subject. In (21), an additional argument against viewing the third person pronoun as a resumptive element in a dislocation construction involves the lack of agreement between the subject (אַתָּה) and the pronoun הוּא that follows—a third person pronominal element cannot function as an anaphoric pronoun resuming a second person pronoun. Instead, the pronoun הוּא functions in a ‘last resort’ strategy to insure that אַתָּה is understood as the subject of a verbless predication in which מַלְכִי is the predicate.

3.5. Left Dislocation with a Noun Phrase Resumptive

The fifth type of left dislocation involves a noun phrase resumptive which is coreferential with a dislocated noun phrase:

- (22) הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תֹאכַל בְּשֶׂר מִזִּבְחַ הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר לַיהוָה וְטִמְאַתָּהּ עָלָיו וְנִכְרְתָהּ
הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מֵעַמִּיהָ:

‘But the person who eats flesh from the sacrifices of well-being which belong to the LORD and his uncleanness is upon him, **that person** shall be cut off from his relatives.’ (Lev. 7.20)

When the resumptive element is the subject, the dislocated NP exhibits case agreement with it, as illustrated in (22). However, when the resumptive is not the subject, there is no case agreement between the dislocated NP and its resumption as the object of the verb:

- (23) עֲרוֹת בֵּית־בְּנֵךְ אֹו בֵּית־בַּתְּךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָן

‘The nakedness of the daughter of your son or the daughter of your daughter—you must not uncover **their nakedness**’.
(Lev. 18.10)

3.6. Marginal Constructions

We now briefly consider two marginal constructions. The first construction is illustrated in (24). The first constituent (‘the word which he shows me’) has no resumptive element within the matrix sentence and thus is not a variety of left dislocation. However, some scholars have understood the so-called consecutive

verb form in the matrix sentence to indicate a sentence boundary which should block the topicalisation of a constituent.

- (24) וְדָבַר מִה־יִרְאֵנִי וְהִגִּדְתִּי לָךְ
 ‘...and the word which he shows me and I will declare ^{the}
 word which he shows me to you.’ (Num. 23.3)

This construction was first identified in Naudé (1990). It was called ‘heavy topic focus’ by Holmstedt (2014), who argued that the so-called consecutive verbal forms, which obligatorily begin with *waw*, should not be considered uncrossable boundaries for the movement of constituents. Miller-Naudé (2019) and Miller-Naudé and Naudé (2019) call the construction ‘heavy topicalisation’ and provide additional arguments against viewing it as a type of left dislocation.

The second marginal construction is exemplified in (25):²¹

- (25) וְהַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְנוּ אִנִּי וְאַתָּה הִנֵּה יְהוָה בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:
 ‘And the word which we spoke, I and you—behold the LORD
 is between me and between you for ever.’ (1 Sam. 20.23)

The noun phrase ‘the word which we spoke, I and you’ cannot be understood as a topicalised constituent, because it cannot be understood as playing a grammatical role in the matrix sentence. The construction is also not a type of left dislocation, properly speaking, because there is no resumption of the dislocated noun phrase within the matrix sentence.

Van Riemsdijk (1997) has identified a similar construction in French, which he refers to as ‘Loose Aboutness Left Dislocation’; however, the only feature of left dislocation that is present

²¹ See also Lev. 25.32; 2 Kgs 22.18b–19.

is the semantic ‘aboutness requirement.’ O’Connor (1993) refers to the Biblical Hebrew construction as ‘thematization’, and insists that it must not be grouped together with left dislocation, because the absence of the resumptive is ‘definitive’. We agree with O’Connor’s analysis and describe the noun phrase as providing the ‘frame of reference’ for the following discourse in a construction that is neither topicalisation nor left dislocation (see also Blau 1977).

In (26), a complicated construction is found:

(26) וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהִי-לְךָ מֵאֶת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֶיךָ מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ עֶבֶד
וְאִמָּה:

’And your male slave and your female slave which will belong to you—from the nations which are around you, from them
you will buy a male slave and a female slave from them’ (Lev. 25.44)

The left dislocated prepositional phrase ‘from the nations which are around you’ has its resumption in the matrix sentence (‘from them’). The coordinate noun phrase ‘your male slave and your female slave which will belong to you’ seems to function as a frame of reference rather than a dislocated constituent, because the relative clause dependent upon it (‘which will belong to you’) does not appear with the NP in the matrix sentence. The verse, then, has a frame of reference that introduces a left dislocated construction. The matrix sentence echoes the coordinate noun phrase of the frame of reference without resuming it syntactically.

4.0. Conclusions

In conclusion, we have attempted to further the analysis of left dislocations in Biblical Hebrew in four ways. First, we differentiated left dislocation constructions on the basis of the grammatical features of the coreferential resumptive element. Second, we examined the relationship between the left dislocated constituent and the resumptive element, especially with respect to case agreement. Third, we examined the role of matrix sentences and ‘islands’ in the framework of left dislocation constructions. Fourth, we provided additional clarity on two marginal constructions, neither of which can be categorised as left dislocation. The first, ‘heavy topicalisation’, we identify as a marginal type of topicalisation. The second, ‘frame of reference’, is neither left dislocation nor topicalisation, but rather a detached noun phrase which provides the frame of reference for the following discourse.

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