

Some Notes on the Information Structure and Discourse Features of Exodus 1.1-12.15

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INTRODUCTION

I used the notes in this file during the second half of a ‘Discourse for Translation’ workshop run by the Northern Philippines Mother Tongue Translators’ Association (NPMTTA) in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, in late 2009. During the first half of the workshop, the participants learnt about the information structure (NARR §0.1—see below) and discourse features of natural languages that are of particular relevance to Bible translation.

The materials used to teach these features (NARR and NonNarr) are available online¹ and are an essential prerequisite to understanding the terminology used in these notes. Whenever you see a reference to ‘NARR’ or to ‘NonNarr’ in the notes, I recommend that you look up the relevant section, so that you can understand how I am using the term concerned. For instance, if you turn to NARR §0.1, which refers to sec. 0.1 of the self-instruction materials on narrative discourse analysis, you will find a definition of the term ‘information structure’ (“the interaction of sentences and their contexts”—Lambrecht 1994:9). Similarly, you will encounter a reference on p. 6 to NonNarr §7.7.3, which refers to sec. 7.7.3 of the self-instruction materials on non-narrative discourse analysis, where interjections used as attention-getters are discussed.

The present file begins with some brief notes on verb forms and constituent order in Biblical Hebrew. These are followed by a one-page overview of Exodus 1-12, which compares how the *UBS Handbook (UBS)*, Cassuto (1967) and Sarna (1991) divide the chapters and then evaluates their divisions. The rest of the document contains flow-charts of the argument structure of each sub-section, together with comments on the information structure and discourse features of each verse. Footnotes include suggestions for translating certain features into N.W. Austronesian languages of the Philippines.

It is my prayer that these notes on the information structure and discourse features of the first twelve chapters of Exodus will be a helpful tool for all who exegete and translate this book into the heart language of a people group for whom Christ died and rose again.

Verb forms. These notes assume that Hebrew is an aspect-prominent language (Bhat 1999), and that verb forms may be classified as having perfective or imperfective aspect.²

When **perfective** aspect is used to describe an event, the event is portrayed **as a whole** (‘a complete and undifferentiated process’—Porter 1992:21). The *qtl* and *wyyqtl* verb forms in Hebrew have perfective aspect.³ In Ex 1.7a-b, for instance, the *qtl* form פָּרְוּ ‘they became fruitful’ and the *wyyqtl* form וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ ‘& they multiplied’ portray the people of Israel becoming fruitful and multiplying as a whole, without focussing on when this process began or ended.

When **imperfective** aspect is used to describe an event, the event is portrayed as **not completed**. The *yqtl* form and the verbal participle in Hebrew have imperfective aspect, as does the *wqtl* (chain) form, because they portray events as in process or as not completed at the point of reference. In Ex

¹ NARR: Levinsohn, Stephen H. 2009a. *Self-Instruction Materials on Narrative Discourse Analysis*. Online at <http://levinsohn.noadsfree.com>.

NonNarr: Levinsohn, Stephen H. 2009b. *Self-Instruction Materials on Non-Narrative Discourse Analysis*. Online at <http://levinsohn.noadsfree.com>.

² Verbal aspect is a way of **portraying** an event (it ‘reflects the subjective conception or portrayal by the speaker’—Fanning 1990:31).

³ I follow Bowling (1997:50-51) in referring to the basic verb forms of Hebrew as *qtl*, *yqtl*, *wqtl*, *wyyqtl* and verbal participle. Waltke & O’Connor (1990) call *qtl* (*qatal*) forms the ‘suffix conjugation’, *yqtl* (*yiqtol*) forms the ‘prefix conjugation’, and *wqtl* (*waqatal*) forms the ‘relative *waw* + suffix conjugation’. SIL International’s ‘Bible Analysis and Research Tool (BART) tags both *qtl* and *wqtl* forms as ‘p: perfect’. It tags *yqtl* forms as ‘i: imperfect’ and *wyyqtl* (*wayyiqtol*) forms as ‘w: *waw* consecutive’.

1.12, for instance, the *yqtl* verbs **עָנְנוּ** ‘they afflicted’, **יִרְבֶּה** ‘it increased’ and **יִפְרֹץ** ‘it spread’ are imperfective, as the events concerned are portrayed as continuing to happen during the period concerned.

Verbal participles portray the events they describe as happening or as about to happen at the point of reference. In Ex 2.5, for instance, **הֹלְכֹת** ‘(were) walking’ portrays Pharaoh’s daughter’s attendants as walking along the river bank at the time of the next main line event (her seeing the basket among the reeds).

As for *wqtl* (chain) forms, it is true that, most often, they describe events that have not yet been realised, so some grammarians prefer to say that they have irrealis mood. However, their use in passages such as Gen 2.6b, 1 Sam 17.34-35 and Ex 1.19e to describe habitual realis events leads me to define them as having imperfective aspect, where imperfective is understood to include irrealis events because they too are not completed at the point of reference. Thus, following a *yqtl* form in Ex 1.19d **בְּטָרָם תָּבוֹא אֵלֵהֶן הַמִּילָדָת** ‘before the midwife can come to them’), the *wqtl* (chain) form **וַיִּלְדוּ** ‘(&) they give birth’ describes an event that is portrayed as habitual realis and, therefore, ongoing at the point of reference. In Ex 1.16c, in contrast, following the temporal clause **הָעֵבֶרִיּוֹת** **וְרָאִיתָן עַל-הָאֲבָנִים** ‘When you deliver the Hebrew women’, the *wqtl* (chain) form **בְּיִלְדֶכֶן אֶת-** ‘look at the birthstool’ presents an irrealis instruction that is not completed at the point of reference because it has not yet been obeyed.

For further discussion of the aspect of Hebrew verbs, see Levinsohn, Stephen H. 2000/2010. *Aspect, Backgrounding and Highlighting in Biblical Hebrew*. Online at <http://levinsohn.noadsfree.com>.

Constituent Order. I argue in NARR §0.3 that, like N.W. Austronesian languages of the Philippines, Biblical Hebrew belongs to the VS (verb – subject) type of languages because, in narratives, subject-topics that are expressed with noun phrases commonly follow the verb. For example, Ex 1.15a begins with the *wyyqtl* verb **וַיֹּאמֶר** ‘& said’ and is followed by the subject noun phrase **מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם** ‘the king of Egypt’.

NARR §4.2.3 discusses a template proposed by Simon Dik (1989:363) for explaining variations in constituent order that is particularly applicable to VS languages. The template is: **P1 P2 V X**, where:

- position P1 can be occupied by one or more ‘points of departure’ (NARR §3.1) (Dik calls them “TOPIC constituents”);
- position P2 can be occupied by a ‘FOCUS’ constituent (as defined in NARR §4.1), to give it prominence.

For example, in Ex 1.7a (**וַיִּבְנֶי יִשְׂרָאֵל פְּרוּ**) ‘& the people of Israel were fruitful’), the subject is in pre-verbal position P1 to signal a switch of topic from ‘Joseph & all that generation’ (v. 6).

In Ex 1.1d, in contrast (**אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ**) ‘each one & his household went’), because ‘(they) went’ is established information from v. 1c, the subject is focal and is in pre-verbal position P2 to give prominence to the inclusiveness of the group that went.

Note that, in verbless clauses, including those in which the main verb is a participle, the norm is for the subject to precede the verb, so the subject in Ex 2.5 (**וַיֵּלֶךְ הַלְלָה עַל-יַד הַיָּאֵר**) ‘& her female attendants were walking along the river bank’) is NOT considered to be preposed to position P1.

UBS	Cassuto	Sarna
Prologue: the people's slavery (1.1-22)	1. The bondage (1.1-22)	Reversal of Fortune (1.1-22)
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I. The LORD's deliverance (2.1-15.21)		
A. The LORD and Moses: preparation of a leader (2.1-7.7)		
1. The man Moses (2.1-25)	2. The birth of the saviour & his upbringing (2.1-22)	The Birth & Youth of Moses (2.1-25) ¹
2. The call of Moses (3.1-4.17)	3. Moses' mission (2.23-4.31) ²	The Commissioning of Moses (3.1-4.17)
3. The return to Egypt (4.18-31)	4. The first attempt & its failure (5.1-6.1)	The Challenge of Leadership: Initial Failure (4.18-6.1) ³
4. Preview of the contest with Pharaoh (5.1-6.1)	5. Prelude to successful action (6.2-7.7)	Divine Reaffirmation (6.2-7.13) ⁴
5. The call renewed (6.2-7.7)		
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B. Moses and Pharaoh: contest for freedom (7.8-15.21)		
1. Negotiations w/ Pharaoh (7.8-11.10)	6. The plagues (7.8-11.10)	The Plagues (7.14-11.10)
2. The exodus (12.1-13.16)	7. The exodus from Egypt (12.1-42) ⁵	The Last Act (12.1-51) ⁶
a. Preparations for the Passover (12.1-28)		
b. Departure from Egypt (12.29-42)		
c. Additional instructions for celebrating the exodus (12.43-13.16)	Appendices to Section (12.43-13.16)	

¹Sarna treats 2.23-25 as 'A Transitional Postscript'.

²Cassuto divides 2.23-4.31 into six 'paragraphs', the fourth of which begins at 4.18.

³Sarna divides 4.18-6.1 into various subsections, one of which begins at 5.1.

⁴Sarna ends 6.2-7.13 with a subsection entitled 'Signs before Pharaoh' (7.8-13).

⁵Cassuto divides 12.1-42 into six 'paragraphs', the fourth of which begins at 12.29.

⁶Sarna divides 12.1-51 into various subsections, one of which begins at 12.29 and another at 12.43.

Some Notes on the Information Structure and Discourse Features of of the Hebrew of Exodus 1.1-12.15

The Relation of Exodus to Genesis

‘The text rests upon a knowledge of Genesis; it takes for granted that the reader knows the identity and experiences of Joseph, is aware of God’s promises to the patriarchs, and is familiar with the account of the migration of Jacob and his family to Egypt’ (Sarna p. 3). ‘[T]he first six words of Exod 1:1 are in the Hebrew text an exact quotation of the first six words of Gen 46:8’ (Durham 1987:3).

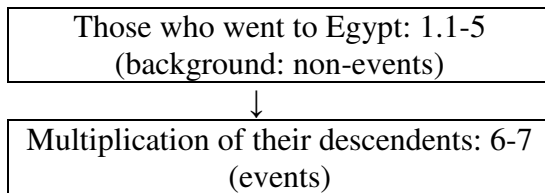
‘**1. These are** (Hebrew *ve-’elleh*) The initial *vav* acts as a connective with Genesis, thereby suggesting continuity with the preceding narrative’ (Sarna p. 3).

1.1-22: ‘The Prologue: The People Are Oppressed’ (UBS)

Cassuto divides chapter 1 into four parts: vv. 1-7, 8-14, 15-21 and 22. Parts 2-4 describe successive tactics used by the new king of Egypt against the Israelites.

(1.1-7: ‘The Israelites in Egypt’—UBS)

Renaming Joseph in v. 6 (the subject is the same as in 5) has the effect of dividing the episode into two units (see NARR §8.3 and Levinsohn 2006):



1.1a אֵלֶּה ‘these’. Cataphoric use of the proximal demonstrative, pointing forward to the list of names in vv. 2-4.

1.1a-b. The Hebrew pointing suggests that 1b begins with אֶת יַעֲקֹב ‘with Jacob’. However, translations normally attach it to the end of 1a.

הַבָּאִים מִצְרַיִם אֶת יַעֲקֹב ‘who went (*lit.* the coming ones) to Egypt with Jacob’. This nominalised clause is NOT a relative clause in Hebrew, as the referents will not be thematic (NARR §10.3.7; contrast v. 8). See also 1.5a.

1.1c אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ ‘each one and his household went’. The subject אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ ‘each one and his household’ is preposed for focal prominence.⁴

1.5b וַיּוֹסֶף ‘and Joseph’. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of topic from those who went with Jacob to Egypt (5a).

1.6 יוֹסֵף ‘Joseph’. See above on the effect of renaming Joseph.

וְכָל הַדּוֹר הַהוּא ‘& all that generation’. The distal demonstrative may have been used to communicate ‘that same’ (see especially 5.6a).

1.7a וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘& the people of Israel’. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of topic from ‘Joseph & all that generation’.

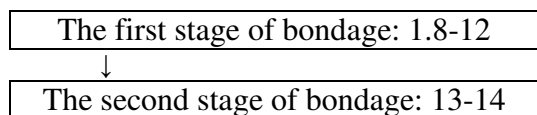
⁴ In a Philippine language, such ‘identificational’ propositions (see NARR §2.1.2) are usually translated with a nominalised verb (e.g. ‘Each one and his household = those who went’).

1.7c. The repetition of מֵאֵד ‘muchness’ is for emphasis.

1.7e. The order of constituents is marked, as the object pronoun (אֹתָם ‘them’) is normally placed immediately after the verb. The marked order gives contrastive prominence to ‘them’ (the land was filled with Jacob’s descendents, not Egyptians).

(1.8-14: ‘The first two stages of bondage’—Cassuto p. 9)

Renaming the Egyptians and the people of Israel in v. 13 (the subjects and objects are the same as in v. 12) has the effect of dividing the episode into two (development) units:



1.8. The use of a relative clause (אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת־יֹסֵף ‘who did not know Joseph’) marks the ‘new king over Egypt’ (מֶלֶךְ־חָדָשׁ עַל־מִצְרַיִם) as thematic (NARR §10.3.7). In other words, he will have a significant role to play in the ongoing narrative.

1.9b. הִנֵּה ‘here!’ is used to ‘highlight a following pronouncement’ (NonNarr §7.7.3).

1.10. The imperative interjection הִבֵּה ‘give’ ‘reflects a word in the Hebrew that expresses urgency, such as the English expression “Come on!”’ (UBS).

When the verb וְהָיָה ‘and it will happen’ is followed by a temporal or conditional expression (in this case, תִּקְרָאנָה מְלַחְמָה ‘if war breaks out’—see next comment), it often points forward to ‘significant background or important events to follow’ (Longacre 1994:84).

The interpretive use marker כִּי (often glossed ‘that’) (NARR §7.10) is used to introduce a hypothetical situation: ‘(Say) that war break out’; hence ‘if’ (Cassuto p. 10).

1.10e. גַּם הוּא ‘also it’. Durham (p. 6) treats this subject as emphatic. However, a pronoun is obligatory when גַּם is used to add an otherwise implicit referent to another.

1.12 ‘But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread’ (NIV). The verbs יַעֲנִי ‘they afflicted’, יִרְבֶּה ‘it increased’ and יִפְרֹץ ‘it spread’ are imperfective: ‘they continued to multiply in increasing measure’ (Cassuto p. 11).

1.12b-c. The adverb כֵּן ‘thus’ is nearly always used anaphorically, to refer to one or more events that have just been described.

1.12d. Some MSS name the subject as ‘the Egyptians’ (see Durham p. 6).

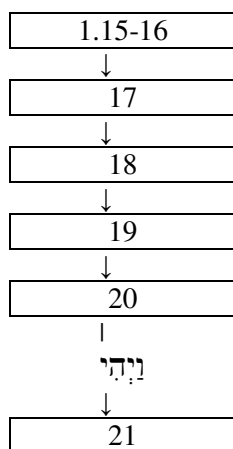
1.13. See above on the effect of renaming of the Egyptians and the people of Israel.

1.14b. The order of constituents violates the Principle of Natural Information Flow. The initial constituent (אֵת כָּל־עֲבֹדָתָם אֲשֶׁר־עָבְדוּ בָהֶם ‘all the labour at which they laboured’) is focal, and בְּבִפְרוֹ ‘with harshness’ is established information.

The use of an apparently ‘redundant’ relative clause (אֲשֶׁר־עָבְדוּ בָהֶם ‘at which they laboured’) makes the reference to ‘all their labour’ (אֵת כָּל־עֲבֹדָתָם) all the more inclusive (NARR §10.3.7); ‘all the labour at which they laboured (they compelled them to work) [was] with harshness’ means ‘absolutely all their labour’. (13 and 14b form an *inclusio*.)

(1.15-21 ‘Pharaoh’s Command to the Midwives’—Cassuto p. 12)

Renaming the midwives in vv. 17, 18, 19 and 20 has the effect of dividing 15-20 into five (development) units (see also the apparently redundant reference to Pharaoh in 19). The final unit of the episode is introduced with וַיְהִי ‘and it was’ (see further below):



1.15. The use of a relative clause (אֲשֶׁר שָׁם הָאֵחָת שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פּוּעָה) ‘one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah’—Sarna p. 6) implies that the midwives are thematic in this episode (see also the renaming of them throughout the passage). The insertion of this relative clause, which conveys ‘non-event information’, has the effect of ‘slowing the story down’ (NARR §5.4), thus giving prominence to the speech that follows.

1.16b-c. ‘When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the birthstool’ (Sarna p. 7).

בְּיִלְדָן אֶת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת ‘When you deliver the Hebrew women’ (16b) is a temporal point of departure, signalling a switch from the time of speaking.

וּרְאִיתָן עַל-הָאֲבָנִים ‘look at the birthstool’ (16c) is NOT taken as a point of departure (contrast ‘When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool’—NIV).

1.16d אִם בֵּן הוּא ‘If it is a son’. A conditional point of departure for the command of 16e.

The complement בֵּן ‘son’ is preposed for focal prominence.

1.16f וְאִם בַּת הִיא ‘(&) if it is a daughter’. Another conditional point of departure, marking a switch of situation from that of v. 16d.

The complement בַּת ‘daughter’ is also preposed for focal prominence.

1.17-20. See above on the effect of renaming the midwives.⁵

1.17b-c. A negative – positive pair of propositions. Some VO languages prefer to begin with the positive proposition (see NonNarr §3.2.5, Application #4).

1.18c הַזֶּה הַדָּבָר ‘this thing’. According to *UBS*, ‘The **this** in **Why have you done this** refers to what follows, namely, “**Why have you...let the male children live?**”’. I think it more likely that the referent of הַזֶּה is what the midwives had failed to do (see Cassuto p. 16). This means that it has been used anaphorically and its referent is thematic.

⁵ 1.17a וַתִּירָאן הַמִּוֹלְדֹת אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים ‘the midwives feared God’ (17a). For Philippine languages, I suggest a verbless clause: ‘The midwives = those who feared God’, as this will serve as a ‘slowing-down’ device for their response to Pharaoh’s instruction (and avoids the need to use a ‘but’!).

1.19b-c. The first כִּי ('because') corresponds to the 'why' of v. 18. The second כִּי (in 19c) introduces material (19c-e) that strengthens the assertion of 19b.

The complement of 19b (לֹא כַנְשִׁים מִמִּצְרַיִת) 'are not like Egyptian women') is preposed for focal prominence.

The complement of 19c (חַיִּוּת) 'vigorous') is also preposed for focal prominence.

1.19d-e. 'Before the midwife can come to them, they have given birth' (Sarna p. 8). It is tempting to treat בְּטֹרֵם תָּבוּא אֶלֶּהֶן הַמִּיֻּלְדֹת ('before the midwife can come to them') as a focal constituent preposed to P2 for prominence (see 'give birth before the midwives arrive'—NIV). However, the presence of *waw* at the beginning of 19e prevents this interpretation (Runge p.c.). Instead, it functions as a temporal point of departure (in P1), marking a switch from the time that the midwife was with them (v. 16b) and, therefore, could theoretically have carried out the king's command.

Both תָּבוּא 'come' and וַיִּלְדוּ (&) they give birth' (19e) are imperfective; the events are portrayed as habitual and, therefore, ongoing.

1.21. וַיְהִי 'and it was' introduces the climactic event of the episode (NARR §5.4.2). Prominence is also given to proposition 21c (וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בָּתִּים) 'He established households for them'—Sarna p. 8) by the repetition in 21b of וַתִּירָאן הַמִּיֻּלְדֹת אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים 'the midwives feared God' (17a).⁶

(1.22: 'Conclusion of the Section'—Cassuto p. 16)

'The oppressive acts of the pharaoh have built to a climax. Strangely, his third and most barbarous decree—infanticide—is never again referred to in the Bible. ... The primary function served by its narration is to set the stage for the story of the birth and survival of Moses.' (Sarna p. 8)

1.22b לֵאמֹר 'saying' introduces the content of 'he commanded'.

1.22c. The object כָּל־הַבֶּן הַיֵּלֹד 'Every son born' is pre-verbal to establish the referent as the topic of this clause.

The constituent הַיְאֹרָה 'to the river' is preposed for focal prominence.

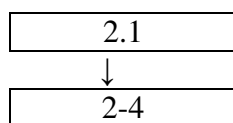
1.22d The object וְכָל־הַבָּת ' & every daughter' is pre-verbal to mark a switch of topic from that of 22c.

2.1-25 'The Birth and Youth of Moses' (Sarna p. 8)

Sarna divides this chapter into four parts: vv. 1-10, 11-15, 16-22 and 23-25. See below on whether the second division should be before 16 or 15c.

(2.1-10: 'His Birth and Adoption'—UBS)

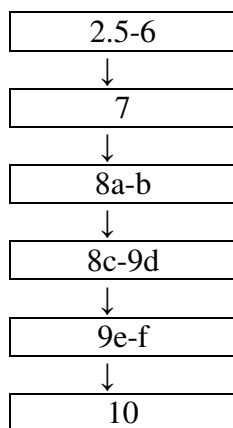
Referring again to the woman in v. 2 (or 3—LXX) has the effect of dividing 1-4 into two units:



⁶ The repetition of an independent clause in subordinate form is referred to as 'tail-head linkage' (NARR §3.2.3).

If the translation of 'He established households for them' into a Philippine language keeps 'the midwives' as the topic of a so-called 'object-focus' proposition, then it should not be necessary to specify the agent ('OBL God'), as He was referred to in the previous proposition.

Renaming the daughter of Pharaoh in vv. 7 and 8a, the young woman in 8c, the woman and child in 9e, and the child in 10 has the effect of dividing 5-10 into six units:



2.2d. The complement טוב 'good' is preposed for focal prominence.

2.5a. The introductory reference to Pharaoh's daughter is NOT given special prominence.

2.5b 'and her attendants were walking along the river bank' (NIV). The participle הלכות 'walking' indicates that this event is of a background nature, probably with the rhetorical effect of slowing down the narrative in anticipation of her discovery of the child.

2.6a-b ותראנהו את-הילד ' & she saw it, the child'. 'This construction, in which the noun ['child'] is specifically mentioned after the pronominal suffix [-hū, 'it'] referring to it' is 'for the purpose of giving emphasis to' the noun (Cassuto p. 19).

והנה ' & lo, she could see'. 'After narrating objectively that Pharaoh's daughter saw the child—with the definite article, that is, the child already known to us—Scripture proceeds to tell us her subjective impression: *and lo*, she sees inside the ark *a weeping boy*—without the definite article, because to her it was not the known child but just a boy' (ibid.).⁷

2.6f. The complement מילדי העברים 'of the children of the Hebrews' is preposed for focal prominence.

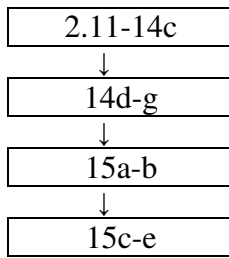
2.9d. The pre-verbal subject ואני '(&) I' signals a switch of topic from the addressee.

2.10f. The order of constituents is marked. The context makes clear that the verb משיטהו 'I drew him' is postposed for focal prominence.

(2.11-15b: 'His flight from Egypt'—UBS)

Moses is not named at the beginning of v. 13 ('he went out the next day'), but is named at 14d and again at 15c (the beginning of the next section—UBS). 'This matter' (15a) is also an instance of over-encoding. The effect is to divide this section into 4 parts:

⁷ 'As Berlin ([1983] pp. 43-82) has clearly shown, the term והנה 'behold' often marks a statement expressing the perception of a character as distinct from the biblical narrator' (Hepner 1988:50).



2.11 **וַיְהִי בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם** ‘& it happened in those days’. The verb **וַיְהִי** ‘& it happened’ is followed by the temporal point of departure **בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם** ‘in those days’ and ‘marks the transition from less important to more important events’ (NARR §5.4.2). In this instance, the events of v. 10 become the background for the inciting incident described in 11-12 (see van der Merwe 1999:114).

The use of the distal demonstrative **הָהֵם** ‘those’ in temporal expressions suggests ‘a loose chronological relation between episodes when there is a discontinuity in the theme-line’ (see NARR chap. 9, Appendix 1 on Koiné Greek). ‘Between what is narrated at the end of the previous paragraph and what is here recorded there was undoubtedly an interval of many years’ (Cassuto p. 21). Nevertheless, Moses is still in the palace as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (v. 10).

2.13a **וַיֵּצֵא בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי** ‘& he went out the next day’. By placing the temporal expression after the verb, the author has avoided introducing a discontinuity into the event line (see NARR §3.3). However, since 13b is introduced with **וְהִגִּיד** ‘& lo, he could see’ (see 2.6), it is reasonable to translate the whole of 13a as a temporal point of departure; e.g. ‘When he went out the next day’ (RSV).

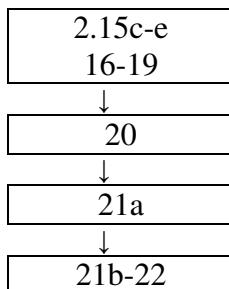
2.14c-d ‘Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ By preposing **וְלִהְרֹגֵנִי** ‘to kill me’, focal prominence is given to the action of killing (me), rather than the object ‘me’.

2.14g **אֲכֵן** ‘truly’ ‘translates a Hebrew word indicating surprise that events have turned out differently from what was expected’ (UBS).

2.15a **אֵת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה** ‘this matter/word’. The anaphoric use of the proximal demonstrative marks the referent as thematic.

(2.15c-22: ‘Moses in Midian’—Cassuto p. 24)

As noted above, the apparently redundant naming of Moses at v. 15c has the effect of marking the beginning of a new unit. This is confirmed by the absence of reference to the well in 16b. Other instances of overencoding occur in 20, 21a and, possibly, 21b. The section can therefore be divided into three or four parts as follows:



2.15d-e. Note the repetition of **וַיִּשָּׁב** ‘& he settled’, which may be thought of as a slowing-down device, creating the expectation that something important is about to happen at the well.

2.15e. The reference to the well is articular (הַבְּאֵר), even though this is the first reference to it. This seems to have the effect of marking the well as ‘thematically salient’ (NARR §8.1.3) and the equivalent of ‘one’ or ‘a certain’ in many languages.⁸

2.16. The reference to the priest of Midian is also articular (וּלְכֹהֵן מִדְיָן), even though this is the first reference to him. Again, the effect appears to be to mark him as thematically salient (see v. 15e).

Beginning the sentence with this reference to the priest of Midian signals a switch of attention from Moses.

2.19b. The proposition is presentational, but the preposing of the subject (אִישׁ מִצְרָיִם ‘an Egyptian man’) allows the girls to make him the topic of their speech.

2.19c. The combination of the additive וְ with the infinitive absolute (וְנָגַם-דָּלָה דָּלָה) is glossed ‘& also [actually] draw he drew’) is emphatic (NARR §§4.7, 6.3.2): ‘he even drew water for us’ (Sarna p. 12).⁹

2.20b-c. *Wāw* ‘links his question to the story of his daughters, the sense being: If this be so, then, after all that he has done for you, why is he not here with you?’ (Cassuto p. 25)

2.20c. The combination לְמַה זֶה ‘for what reason’ and ‘this’ (typically translated ‘why’) is used for ‘emphasis’ (BDB). Also in 5.22d.

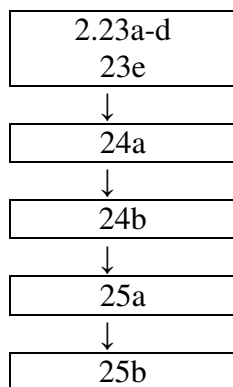
אֶת-הָאִישׁ ‘the man’. This apparently redundant reference (overencoding) highlights the second part of Reuel’s speech.

2.22d. גֵּר ‘sojourner’ has been preposed for focal prominence.

(2.23-25: ‘A Transitional Postscript’—Sarna p. 13)

(2.23-4.31: ‘Moses’ Mission’—Cassuto p. 28)

The apparently redundant naming of God in vv. 24a, 24b, 25a and 25b has the effect of dividing the 24-25 into four units. Overencoding of reference to ‘the labour’ may also have the effect of separating 23e from 23a-d:



⁸ Cassuto suggests that this denotes ‘the particular well at which he happened to sit’ (p. 23).

⁹ Repetition of the verb with the infinite absolute also occurs in 3.7b, 3.16f, 4.14e, 5.23c, 8.24d and 11.1e. This combination ‘is used to give emphasis with various nuances, the basic idea being that by giving the verbal idea in abstracto, the writer or the speaker wants to indicate that he is especially interested in it or to demand that the reader or hearer give especial attention to it’ (Muraoka 1985:92).

2.23 ‘And it happened in the course of those many days’. The combination of the verb **וַיְהִי** ‘& it happened’ and the temporal point of departure **בַּיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הַהֵם** ‘in those many days’ ‘marks the transition from less important to more important events’ (NARR §5.4.2). In this instance, the events of vv. 21-22 become the background for the events of 23ff.

As in v. 11, the use of the distal demonstrative (**הַהֵם**) in temporal expressions suggests a loose chronological relation between episodes when there is a discontinuity in the theme-line.

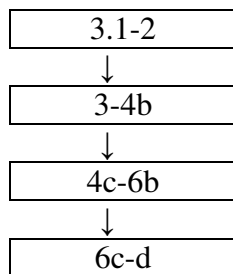
2.24-25. See above on the effect of renaming God four times in these verses. The four clauses ‘describe, stage by stage, the Divine response to the groaning of the children of Israel: first He hears the groaning, then He remembers the covenant, thereafter He considers the position of the Israelites, and finally He decides to intervene in the matter’ (Cassuto p. 29).

3.1-4.17 ‘The Commissioning of Moses’ (Sarna p. 13)

Sarna divides this section ‘into three main parts: (1) the theophany at the burning bush (vv. 1-6); (2) the divine call (vv. 7-10); and (3) Moses’ dialogue with God (3:11-4:17)’ (ibid.). Since the apparently redundant naming of YHWH (3.7) and of Moses (3.11, 4.1 and 4.18) has the effect of dividing the section at these points, I will divide chapter 3 at the same places (see below on chapter 4).

(3.1-6: ‘The Theophany at the Burning Bush’—ibid. p. 14)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in vv. 3 and 6c, and of God in 4c, has the effect of dividing these verses into four units:



3.1 **וַיִּנְשֵׂא** ‘& Moses’. ‘In the opening verses [2.23-25] Scripture directed our glance upward, towards the throne of God, and momentarily distracted our mind from Moses. Now the Torah returns to Moses... Hence the Bible puts the subject before the predicate... as though to say: Now as for Moses, he was keeping the flock, etc.’ (Cassuto p. 30).

3.2a. The order of constituents is marked, with the pronominal indirect object (**אֵלָיו**) after the subject. As the subject and adjuncts are all focal, it may be that **אֵלָיו** acts as a spacer, allowing first **יְהוָה** **מִלְאָךְ** (‘the angel of YHWH’) and then **בְּלַבַּת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּינָה** (‘in a flame of fire from the midst of a certain bush’) to come into focus.¹⁰

The reference to the bush (**הַסִּינָה**) carries the article, to mark its salience.

3.2c-d. **וַיֵּרָא** ‘& lo, he could see’. As in 2.6, the next events are related from Moses’ point of view.

3.2d **וַיֵּרָא הַסִּינָה** ‘& the bush’. The repeated reference to the bush (overencoding) is ‘for emphasis’ (Cassuto p. 32). In particular, it highlights the comment about it (‘not consumed’).

¹⁰ Halliday (1967:202) allows some propositions to have two information foci’.

3.3b נָא (glossed ‘please’). This particle usually makes an exhortation less potent (see 3.18, 4.6, 4.13, 4.18, 5.3, 10.11, 10.17, 11.2). Here (and in Gen 18.21), it probably conveys the idea of ‘Let me...’.¹¹

3.3c אֵת־הַמִּרְאָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת ‘this great sight’. The proximal demonstrative (הַזֹּאת) is used, even though Moses is not yet close to the bush, since it is the centre of attention, as far as he is concerned.

3.5b-c אַל־תִּקְרַב הָלֶם ‘Do not come any closer’; שֶׁל־נִעְלִיךָ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ ‘take off your sandals from your feet’. There is no connective between these negative and positive imperatives, as both are to be obeyed at the same time; Moses is to remove his sandals while remaining where he is.

3.5d הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו ‘the place on which you are standing’ is ‘right-dislocated’ (‘left-dislocated’ in English), probably because the constituent is complex. It functions as a point of departure, signalling a switch of attention from ‘you’.

The complement אֲדָמַת־קֹדֶשׁ ‘holy ground’ is preposed for focal prominence.

(3.7-10: ‘The Divine Call’—Sarna p. 15)

Hortatory discourses that seek to persuade (NonNarr §2.4) commonly consist of two parts:

- a description of the situation and motivations for the exhortation;
- the exhortation itself, often introduced with an expression such as ‘And now’ (וְעַתָּה), in the case of Hebrew).¹²

A variant of this pattern is found in this passage. Verses 7-8 describe the situation and the motivations for YHWH’s exhortation to Moses. Then comes וְעַתָּה, ‘but it is immediately followed by a recapitulation of the essential points of the preceding statement so as to recall and emphasize it ... Hence it is necessary to repeat the expression *And now* at the beginning of v. 10.’ (Cassuto p. 35)

3.7b רָאִיתִי וְאֵתִי רָאִיתִי (literally ‘to see I have seen’). The repetition of the verb with the infinite absolute emphasises ‘see’: ‘I have marked well’ (Sarna p. 15), ‘I have surely seen’ (Cassuto p. 32).

The relative clause אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם ‘who are in Egypt’ is not restrictive.¹³ Rather, it marks עַמִּי ‘my people’ as thematic (the current centre of attention).

3.7b-c. These propositions form a typically Hebrew poetic pair of parallel statements, with the focal constituent of the first after the verb and the focal constituent of the second (אֵת־צַעֲקָתָם ‘their cry of distress’) before it.

3.9a הִנֵּה ‘lo, there!’ highlights what follows. The presence of this particle, following וְעַתָּה ‘& now’, may challenge Moses to enter into YHWH’s perception of the situation of His people.

Runge treats ‘the cry of distress of the people of Israel’ as topical, since it was mentioned in v. 7. Following הִנֵּה, however, I think it more likely to be focal, in which case the proposition is ‘thetic’ (NARR §2.1.4).

¹¹ GKC (§108 b.1.a) considers that נָא is used to ‘express self-encouragement’.

¹² וְעַתָּה most often introduces exhortations that lead from a situation described in the previous verse(s) (see also 3.8; 4.12; 5.18; 9.19; 10.17). Although it is often translated ‘therefore’, the **formal** relation between the two parts is a switch of time from the situation to ‘now’. Consequently, the logical relation with the context is less close than with developmental לְכֵן ‘therefore’ (6.6) or non-developmental עַל־כֵּן ‘therefore, that is why’ (5.8d, 17c—see Falag-ey 2010), both of which are built on the root כֵּן ‘thus, the like’.

¹³ ‘The relative clause (**who...**) seems to mean that all the chosen people were then in Egypt—except Moses, of course’ (UBS).

3.8c מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא ‘from that land’. The distal demonstrative is appropriate both because Egypt is physical distant and because the centre of attention is about to become ‘a good and spacious land’.

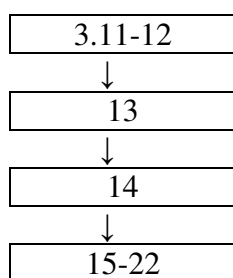
3.9a. The subject צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘the cry of distress of the children of Israel’ could be in P1 (topical) or, more likely, P2 (preposed for focal prominence in a thetic construction).

3.9b וְגַם ‘& also’, ‘moreover’ (Sarna p. 16) adds a whole proposition.

3.9c. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם לְחַצְיָם אֹתָם ‘with which the Egyptians oppress them’ (Cassuto p. 34) marks אֶת־הַלְלָחֵץ ‘the oppression’ as thematic in this speech.

(3.11-4.17 ‘Moses’ dialogue with God’—Sarna p. 17)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in 3.11, 13, 14a and 15 (plus 4.1—see below), and of God in 3.13, 14a and 15, has the effect of dividing 3.11-22 into four units:



3.11c-d. Moses refers to two statements that God has just made (v. 10) and introduces them both with the interpretive use marker כִּי.

3.12b. Following וַיֹּאמֶר ‘& he said’, the presence of כִּי probably makes explicit that God is responding to Moses’ concern as expressed in v. 11.

3.12c Most translations consider the proximal demonstrative הִנֵּה ‘this’ to be cataphoric, pointing forward to 12d-e (see, for instance, the colon at the end of 12c in the NIV), in which case it is in P2 (preposed for focal prominence). Sarna (p. 17) disagrees; he treats it as either exophoric (and therefore topical, in P1), referring to ‘the spectacle at the bush’, or anaphoric: ‘I will be with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you’.

3.12d וְאֲנֹכִי ‘& I’. The thematic pronoun is used for emphasis: ‘in order that you may be sure ... that it is I who have charged you with this task’ (Cassuto p. 36). As Cassuto’s translation suggests, it is focal (in P2), not topical (in P1).

3.12e בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת־הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם ‘When you have brought the people out of Egypt’. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch of time from the present.

3.12f. The overencoding of the reference to the speaker (אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים ‘God’, instead of ‘me’) may be a slowing down device to highlight the rest of the comment: עַל־הַהָר הַזֶּה ‘on this mountain’.

3.13b הִנֵּה ‘lo, here!’ highlights what follows (and may invite God to look at the situation from Moses’ point of view—see the comment on 3.9a). (Also in 4.1c.)

3.13c. As in 3.9a, the subject (אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם ‘The God of your fathers’) could be in P1 (topical) or, more likely, P2 (preposed for focal prominence in a thetic construction). Also in 3.14e, 3.15c, 3.16c and 3.18d.

3.14d. In contrast with כֵּן (also glossed ‘thus’—see comment on 1.12), כֹּה ‘thus’ is typically used cataphorically, to highlight the following proposition(s).

3.14e. See the comment of 3.13c as to whether the subject is in P1 or P2.

3.15-22. This reported speech consists first (v. 15) of an expansion of the answer given in 14. It is followed by a command to speak to the elders (16-17), together with a series of consequences of obeying that command (18-22), each of which is introduced with *waw*.

3.15b. כֹּה ‘thus’ in P2 is again used cataphorically, to highlight the next proposition (15c). The overencoding of the reference to the intended addressees (אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘to the children of Israel’—see 14d) probably has the effect of adding to this highlighting.

3.15c. See the comment of 3.13c as to whether the subject is in P1 or P2.

3.15d-e זֶה ‘this’. The proximal demonstrative is used anaphorically; it ‘refers to the name YHWH, not to the “I am” on which the name is based’ (*UBS*).

3.16a-b. When two or more exhortations are to be obeyed in chronological order, the norm is for the first to be imperative, and the others to be *wqtl* (chain) imperfective forms. (See 3.5b-c, 4.4b-c and 4.19b for other patterns.)

3.16c. See the comment of v. 13c as to whether the subject is in P1 or P2.

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob’ is left-dislocated (‘right-dislocated’ in English).

3.16d לֵאמֹר ‘saying’ introduces the content of the message that accompanied God’s appearance.

3.16e פָּקַד פָּקַדְתִּי. Repetition of the verb with the infinite absolute emphasises ‘observed’: ‘I have surely remembered you’ (Cassuto p. 41).

3.18b. The overencoding of the reference to ‘the elders of Israel’ (זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) marks the beginning of the next stage (development unit) in the consequences: ‘They will listen to your voice. **Then** you will go with them to the king of Egypt’.

3.18d-f. Within the speech that Moses and elders are to make to the king of Egypt, וְעַתָּה ‘& now’ introduces the concluding exhortation (ibid. p. 42—see the comment on vv. 7-10).

3.18d. See the comment of v. 13c as to whether the subject is in P1 or P2.

3.18e נָא ‘please’: ‘we pray you’ (ibid. p. 43). The use of first person plural in the exhortation (נְלַכְדָּה) ‘let us go’) also mitigates the request.

3.19a וְאֲנִי ‘& I’. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of attention to YHWH from ‘us’.

3.20c. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר אַעֲשֶׂה בְּקִרְבִּי ‘which I will do in its midst’ may give prominence to בְּכֹל נִפְלְאוֹתַי ‘with all my wonders’ (NARR §10.3.7) by intensifying ‘all’.

3.20d. כֵּן וְאַחֲרָיִי כֵּן (&) after that’ is preposed for focal prominence. To capture such prominence, some languages will use a limiter such as ‘only’: ‘Only then will he let you go’.

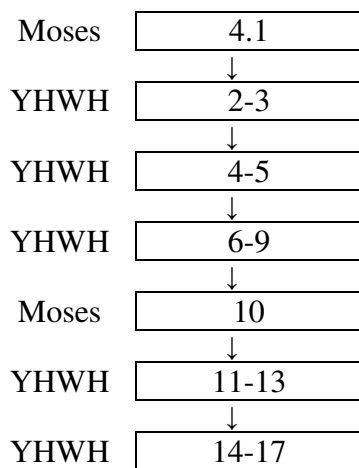
3.21a. הָעָם הַזֶּה ‘this people’. The proximal demonstrative is used to mark the referents as thematic (the centre of attention).

3.21b. Once again, וְהָיָה ‘& it will be’ marks the transition from less important to more important events (see 1.10). In this instance, the transition is from the general assertion of v. 21a (‘I will dispose the Egyptians favourably toward this people’ to the results described in 21c-22.

3.21c כִּי תֵלְכּוּן ‘when you go’. The interpretive use marker כִּי introduces this subordinate clause since the occasion described is to be related to and identified with that asserted in v. 20d. This instance of tail-head linkage is probably a slowing-down device to highlight the next assertion: וְרִיקָם לֹא תֵלְכוּ ‘you will not go empty-handed’ (21d).

(4.1-17: ‘Signs of the LORD’s Power’—NLT)

The apparently redundant naming of YHWH in vv. 2, 4, 6, 10, 11 and 14, and of Moses in 4, 10 and 14, has the effect of dividing these verses into seven units, most of which have YHWH as the initiator (see the first column of the flow-chart):



4.1a-b וַיֹּאמֶר ... וַיֵּעַן ‘& answered & said’. ‘This formula, ‘so-and-so answered and said’ ... serves to indicate the enunciation of a new thought or plan on the part of the speaker. ... The new point here is the doubts expressed by Moses.’ (Cassuto p. 45) Compare the use of the same combination in John’s Gospel when a speech ‘represents a significant counter’ (Levinsohn 2000:256; see NARR §7.6).

4.1c וְהִן ‘lo, & there!’ highlights what follows (and see the comment on 3.13b).

The initial *waw* links what Moses has to say next to the earlier part of YHWH’s speech (e.g. ‘they will listen to your voice’—18a). Since Moses rejects this assertion, *waw* is usually translated ‘But’.

4.2b זֶה ‘this’. The proximal demonstrative is used because the staff is thematic (the centre of attention), even though it is in the hand of the addressee.

4.4b-c שְׁלַח יָדְךָ וְאָחַז בְּזַנְבוֹ ‘Put out your hand & grasp it by the tail’. Both verbs are imperative.¹⁴ This suggests that the first event is only of a preliminary nature.

4.4d-e. The repetition of the command ‘Put out your hand & grasp it by the tail’ (4b-c) as events that Moses then did is probably a slowing-down device to highlight the result described in 4f. In some languages, tail-head linkage (‘When he stretched out his hand and took hold of it’) would produce the same highlighting effect. See also 4.6c and 7c (further discussed below).

¹⁴ When two exhortations are to be obeyed in sequence, the norm is for the second one to be a *wqtl* (chain) imperfective form (see the comment on 3.16a-b).

4.5. The reported speech lacks an introductory orienter. ‘The words ... are a continuation of the Lord’s utterance in v. 4 (the intervening text, *and he put forth his hand*, etc., is a parenthetic statement, describing what Moses did whilst the Lord was still speaking)’ (Cassuto p. 47).

4.6a. The order of constituents is marked, with the pronominal indirect object (לוֹ) after the subject. In this instance, though, I don’t know why such an order was used.

4.6e & 7e. וְהִיָּה ‘& lo, he could see’. Once again, the events concerned are related from Moses’ point of view.

4.7d. In addition to the repetition of the command of 7b as an event that Moses performed, the repetition of reference to ‘his bosom’ is probably an additional slowing-down device to highlight the result in 7e.

4.8. As in v. 5, the reported speech lacks an introductory orienter. ‘In this case, too, the statement of v. 8 ... is only the continuation of the Lord’s utterance in the preceding verse, and the words in between, from *And he put* to *as his other flesh*, are in brackets’ (ibid.).

4.8a & 4.9a. As before, וְהִיָּה ‘& it will be’ marks the transition from less important to more important events. In this instance, there is a build-up from the first sign to the second (v. 8), and again to the third (9).

4.8b-c אם־ לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ לָךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקֶלֶךָ הֲאֵת הֶרְאִשְׁוֹן ‘if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you’. A conditional point of departure, signalling a switch of situation from the reception predicted in YHWH’s speech of v. 5.

4.9b-c אם־ לֹא יֵאֱמִינוּ גַם לְשְׁנֵי הָאֵלֹתִים הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן לְקֶלְכֶךָ ‘if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you’. This conditional point of departure signals a switch of situation from that of v. 8.

4.9b גַּם ‘also’, ‘either’ (in the context of a negative). The additive directs the reader to find a parallel in the context with the situation described in the conditional clause. Such a parallel is found in 8a-b. However, Cassuto translates the additive ‘even’ (‘they will not believe even these two signs’—p. 48).

לְשְׁנֵי הָאֵלֹתִים הָאֵלֶּה ‘these two signs’. The proximal demonstrative is used because the signs are thematic.

4.9e-f הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר תִּקַּח מִן־ הַיָּאֵר ‘the waters that you take from the River’. This constituent, which apparently clarifies the subject before the verb וְהִיָּה ‘& they will become’ is repeated, functions as a slowing-down device (NARR §5.4.1), to give prominence to what they will become (blood).

The relative clause marks the waters as thematic. ‘This sign, moreover, also contains an allusion to the first plague’ (Cassuto p. 48).

4.10b בִּי ‘pardon me’. Cassuto (ibid.) calls this interjection ‘an expression of entreaty’.

When a vocative (in this instance, אֲדֹנָי ‘O Lord’) is not initial in the proposition, it usually gives prominence to what follows (NonNarr §5.4).

The complement לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים ‘not a man of words’ precedes the subject אֲנֹכִי ‘I’ for focal prominence.

4.10e As in 10b, the complement (כְּבֹד־ פִּהּ וְכְבֹד־ לְשׁוֹן) ‘slow of speech & slow of tongue’ precedes the subject for focal prominence.

4.11a. As in v. 6a, the order of constituents is marked, with the pronominal indirect object (אֵלָיו) after the subject. This time, the presence of the pronoun may make YHWH's 'reprimand' (Grispen 1982:60) all the more pointed (see also 1.18b.)

4.11d הֲלֹא אֲנִי יְהוָה 'Not I YHWH?' The use of a rhetorical question gives prominence to this answer to the questions of 11b-c. (4.14c is similar.)

4.12. Within the speech of vv. 11-12, וְעַתָּה 'and now, and therefore' introduces the exhortation (see 3.7-10).

4.12b וְאֲנִי '& I'. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of attention from the addressee (Moses).

4.13. In his 'last desperate appeal' (Sarna p. 21), Moses uses בִּי 'pardon me' plus the vocative (see v. 10) and the mitigating device נָא ('please').

4.14c-16. The way that Moses and Aaron are to interact may be divided into three parts:

- 14c-15b, with first Aaron and then 'you' (Moses) as initiators and ending with, '& you will put the words in his mouth'.
- 15c-16a, with 'I' (YHWH) as initiator and ending with, 'He will speak for you to the people'.
- 16b-d, which begins with וְהָיָה '& it will be' (see below) and the assertion, 'He will become a mouth for you' (16c).

4.14e. Repetition of the verb with the infinite absolute (וַיִּבְרַר וַיִּבְרַר) emphasises 'speaks': 'he can speak well' (Cassuto p. 52) or 'readily, fluently, and with eloquence' (*UBS*).

The third person pronoun הוּא gives contrastive prominence to 'he', 'as though to emphasize the thought: he is not like you' (Cassuto p. 50). See also 16a and 16c.

4.14f. Additive וְ adds a further point which is then highlighted by the use of הִנֵּה 'lo, there!'. Sarna (p. 22) tries to capture its force with the translation 'Even now', though 'Furthermore' would be a reasonable alternative.

4.15c וְאֲנִי '& I'. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of attention to YHWH from 'you'.

4.16b. Once again, וְהָיָה '& it will be' marks the transition from less important to more important events. In this instance, it introduces a summary that forms the climax of the speech of vv. 14-17.¹⁵

4.16b-c. The pre-verbal subjects הוּא 'he' and וְאַתָּה '& you' make first Aaron, then Moses, the centre of attention.

4.17a. The initial constituent וְאֵת־הַמַּטֶּה הַזֶּה '& this staff' could be in P1 (topical) or P2 (preposed for focal prominence). I think it most likely that it is in P2, as the relative clause that modifies it (17b) is not contiguous to it.

4.17b. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֶת־הָאֹתוֹת 'with which you will perform the signs' is probably NOT restrictive. In other words, it is probably not used to identify which rod Moses is to take. Rather, it is present to remind Moses of its function. As usual, it marks the rod as thematic.

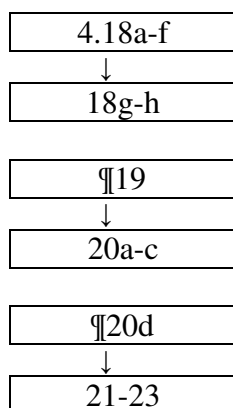
¹⁵ Its function is well captured in Kalanguya (N.W. Austronesian, Philippines) by a translation such as: 'So what will happen is...' (Margie Lumawan p.c.).

4.18-6.1 ‘The Challenge of Leadership: Initial Failure’ (Sarna p. 22)

Sarna divides this section into four parts: ‘(1) leave-taking and departure’ (4:18-23); (2) the night encounter and circumcision (4:24-26); (3) the acceptance of Moses’ leadership (4:27-31); and (4) the first audience with Pharaoh (5:1-6:1)’ (ibid.). There are clear discontinuities between these parts, so I follow the same divisions. In contrast, there is no discontinuity between 6.1 and 6.2 (see below).

(4.18-23: ‘Leave-Taking and Departure’—ibid.)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses vv. 18g, 20a, 20d (see below) and 21, and of Jethro in 18g, has the effect of dividing these verses into five units. The reference to Midian (and Moses) in 19 suggests the beginning of an additional sub-unit (a distinct episode—marked by ¶). The event of 20d is not in sequence with that of 20c, so 20d-23 may also be viewed as a distinct episode:



4.19. ‘Apparently, the Bible wishes only to inform us that after Moses had returned from Mount Horeb to the land of Midian... and, after having received his father-in-law’s permission, ... he was told by the Almighty, that he could go without any anxiety concerning the sentence of death that Pharaoh had passed upon him’ (Cassuto p. 53).

Cassuto also states that ‘the name of this country is expressly emphasized in the text’ (ibid.). This is true only in the sense that the country is named in 19a (בְּמִדְיָן ‘in Midian’).

4.19b לֵךְ שׁוּב ‘go return’. לֵךְ is here used as an auxiliary verb, which is followed immediately by the main imperative (see also 5.11 and 5.18).¹⁶

4.19c כָּל־הַחֹנְטִים הֶמְבַקְשִׁים אֶת־נַפְשִׁי ‘all the men who sought to kill you’. This subject does NOT contain a relative clause in Hebrew, so the referents are not thematic or otherwise prominent.

4.20c וַיָּשָׁב אֶרְצָה מִצְרָיִם ‘& he returned to the land of Egypt’. This event corresponds to the command of v. 19b to go and return to Egypt. The aspect of the *waw*-consecutive is perfective, which means that the event is viewed as a whole. Subsequent events take place before Moses arrives in Egypt. (‘Rashi observes that the biblical texts do not always follow strict chronological sequence’—Sarna p. 23.)

4.20d וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מִטֵּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדוֹ ‘& Moses took the staff of God in his hand’. Since the event described in this proposition is not in chronological sequence with that of 20c, the reference to Moses marks the beginning of a new episode.

¹⁶ Contrast 4.27b (לֵךְ לִקְרֹאת) ‘go to meet’), where the second verb expresses the purpose of going.

4.21b בְּלִכְתּוֹדָ לָשׁוּב מִצְרָיִמָה ‘When you return to Egypt’. A temporal point of departure, which signals a switch from the time of the reported speech.

4.21c רָאָה. Cassuto (p. 55) treats this verb as an imperative: ‘see ... all the portents which I have put in your hand, ... so that ... you may do them before Pharaoh’. However, following a temporal point of departure, a *wqtl* (chain) form is usually used to express an exhortation. This suggests that רָאָה is being used as an interjection (compare 7.1), in which case כָּל־הַמּוֹפְתִים אֲשֶׁר־שָׂמַתִּי בְיָדְךָ ‘all the portents which I have put in your hand’ is right-dislocated (‘left-dislocated’ in English).

The relative clause אֲשֶׁר־שָׂמַתִּי בְיָדְךָ ‘which I have put in your hand’ gives prominence to כָּל־הַמּוֹפְתִים ‘all the portents’.

4.21e וְאֲנִי ‘& I’. The pre-verbal subject signals a switch of attention to YHWH from ‘you’.

4.22b. כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה ‘Thus says the Lord (the customary opening formula used by envoys in the ancient East when delivering their master’s message)’ (ibid. p. 57) is in the perfective (it is viewed as a whole, not as ongoing).

כֹּה ‘thus’ is preposed for focal prominence and is used cataphorically, to highlight the message to which it refers.

4.22c The complement בְּנִי בְכֹרִי ‘my firstborn son’ precedes the subject יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘Israel’ for focal prominence.

4.23e הֲנִיָּה ‘lo, there!’ highlights the final proposition of YHWH’s message to Pharaoh.

(4.24-26: ‘The Night Encounter and Circumcision’—Sarna p. 24)

There is no over-encoding of references to the participants within this short episode (unless ‘him’ in 24c refers to Moses’ son—see below).

4.24a. Once again, וַיְהִי ‘& it happened’ marks the transition from less important to more important events. In this instance, the events of the previous episode become the background for those of vv. 24-26. (Cassuto notes the continuation of the theme of the first-born son—p. 59.)

4.24b בַּדֶּרֶךְ בַּמִּלּוֹן ‘At a lodging place on the way’. A spatio-temporal point of departure, signalling a switch of time and place from those of the previous sub-unit.

4.24c הַמִּיתוֹ ‘to kill him’. Sarna (p. 25) considers the referent to be Moses’ son, not Moses himself. In spite of the reference to a first-born son in v. 23, the more obvious referent is Moses himself (‘Zipporah then formed a plan for saving her husband’s life’—Cassuto p. 60), as he is the ‘global VIP’ in this passage (see NARR §9.1.3) and the natural referent of ‘YHWH met **him**’ (24b).

4.25e. As in 3.12b, כִּי following ‘and she said’ is an ‘interpretive use’ marker. Again, it may make explicit that her words relate to the actions she has just performed.¹⁷

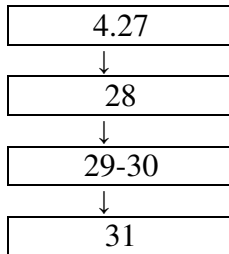
The complement הַתַּנּוֹן דְּמַיִם ‘a bridegroom of blood’ precedes the subject אַתָּה ‘you’ for focal prominence.

¹⁷ Alternatively, כִּי introduces only the gist of what Zipporah said, rather than her actual words. Either way, it is ‘used in the same way as the Greek *hoti* recitativum’ (Muraoka 1985:163), which is an interpretive use marker (NARR §7.10).

4.26b וְאָז ‘then’: ‘It was **then** that...’. ‘**Then it was** translates a Hebrew word that also means “At that time” (NAB, NIV). If this is how it is intended here, it means she spoke the words only once, as they are given in verse 25, not twice, as RSV may suggest.’ (*UBS*)

(4.27-31: ‘Moses’ Leadership is Accepted’—Sarna p. 26)

The apparently redundant naming of Aaron or Moses in vv. 28 and 29, and of the people in 31, has the effect of dividing these verses into four units:



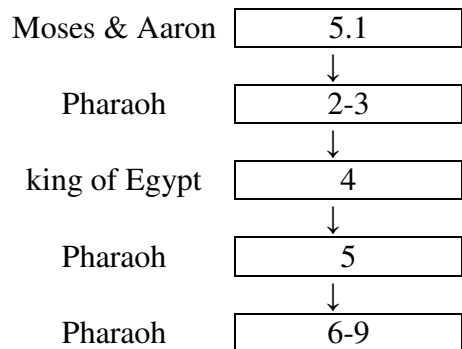
4.28. The relative clauses אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחֹו ‘that he had committed to him’ and אֲשֶׁר צִוְּהוּי ‘about which He had instructed him’ give prominence to אֵת כָּל־דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה ‘all the words of YHWH’ and הָאֵתֹת כָּל־אֵת ‘all the signs’.

4.30b. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה ‘that YHWH had spoken to Moses’ gives prominence to אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים ‘all the words’.

(5.1-6.1: ‘The First Audience with Pharaoh’—Sarna p. 27)¹⁸

For convenience, I will divide this section into three units: 5.1-9, 5.10-21 (the taskmasters & foremen of the people are named at v. 10), and 5.22-6.1 (‘a new episode’—*UBS*).

The apparently redundant naming of Pharaoh/the King of Egypt in vv. 2, 4, 5 and 6, divides the first nine verses into five units, with him as the initiator of all but the first (see the first column of the flow-chart):



5.1a וְאַחֵר ‘& afterwards’. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch from the time of the events of 4.29-31.

5.1c. As in 4.22b, כֹּה ‘thus’ is preposed for focal prominence and is used cataphorically, to highlight the following propositions. See also v. 10d.

¹⁸ As noted earlier, there is no discontinuity between 6.1 and 6.2. An alternative division, therefore, is to follow NIV in treating 5.1-21 as a unit (‘Bricks Without Straw’), with 5.22 beginning another unit (‘God Promises Deliverance’).

5.2c. The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ** ‘that I should listen to his voice’ is ‘sentential’, as ‘it refers back to a whole clause or sentence’ (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartik 1978:764). See *UBS* for suggested ways to translate this clause.

5.2f. **וְגַם** ‘& also’ (‘nor’, in a negative context) adds a whole proposition: ‘and moreover’ (Cassuto p. 66).

The object-verb order gives focal prominence to the negated verb **לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחָה** ‘I will not let go’.

5.3. This scene develops through Pharaoh’s speeches, so no reference is made to Moses and Aaron when they reply to his first speech.

Their speech consists of two sentences: 3b (motivation for the exhortation), and 3c-e (the exhortation itself [3c-d] plus a consequence of not obeying it [3e]). The exhortation is mitigated by the use of first person plural (contrast 1d) and of **נָא** ‘please’.

5.3b. The subject **אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים** ‘The God of the Hebrews’ could be in P1 (topical) or P2 (preposed for focal prominence in athetic construction). Since v. 1 refers to ‘the God of Israel’, I consider it to be topical (in P1).

5.3d. The reference to ‘YHWH our God’ (**לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ**) may be an instance of over-encoding, perhaps as a slowing-down device to highlight the following proposition (3e).

5.4a **אֱלֹהֵם מֶלֶךְ** ‘the king of Egypt’. Runge (2007:172) claims that ‘the switch of referring expression from “Pharaoh” to “king of Egypt” [is] a move to ensure that the reader is processing this struggle between YHWH/Moses and Pharaoh as more than just interpersonal; the future welfare of Egypt is at stake based on its king’s decisions’.

5.4b. The non-initial position of the vocative (**מוֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן** ‘Moses and Aaron’) gives prominence to the rest of the proposition: **תִּפְרָעוּ אֶת־הָעָם מִמַּעֲשֵׂי** ‘are you distracting the people from their tasks’.

5.5b **הִן** ‘lo, here!’ highlights what follows.

The complement **רַבִּים עַתָּה** ‘many now’ precedes the subject **עַם הָאָרֶץ** ‘the people of the land’ to give focal prominence to **רַבִּים** ‘many’.

5.6a. The distal demonstrative **בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** ‘on that day’ is used anaphorically, to underline the fact that what follows took place ‘on the same day’ (Cassuto p. 68).

5.6b **לֵאמֹר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of **וַיִּצְוֶה** ‘he commanded’.

5.7-9. Pharaoh’s speech has three parts:

- a) instructions (vv. 7-8b);
- b) material that strengthens the instructions (8c-f);
- c) a further instruction (9a), together with the desired consequences (9b-c).

5.7c. The pronominal subject **הֵם** ‘they’ is pre-verbal to signal a switch of topic from the addressees; ‘from now on the Hebrews were to take upon themselves the task that other labourers had done so far’ (Muraoka p. 58).

5.8a. The initial constituent **אֶת־מִתְכַנְּת הַלְבָנִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים תְּמוּל שְׁלֶשֶׁם** ‘the number of bricks which they were making heretofore’ may be in P1 (topical) or P2 (for focal prominence). If the latter, then the focus in reality would only be on **אֶת־מִתְכַנְּת** (‘the measurement’).

The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר הֵם עֹשִׂים תְּמוּל שְׁלֶשֶׁם** ‘which they were making heretofore’ marks ‘the number of bricks’ as thematic.

5.8c. The complement **נְרַפְּיִם** ‘lazy’ precedes the subject **הֵם** ‘they’ for focal prominence.

5.8d **עַל־כֵּן** ‘therefore, that is why’ (Sarna p. 29) is a non-developmental logical connective (Falag-ey 2010). In this instance, it introduces a statement that has already been made (see v. 3): ‘that is why they cry, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God’’ (Sarna *ibid.*).

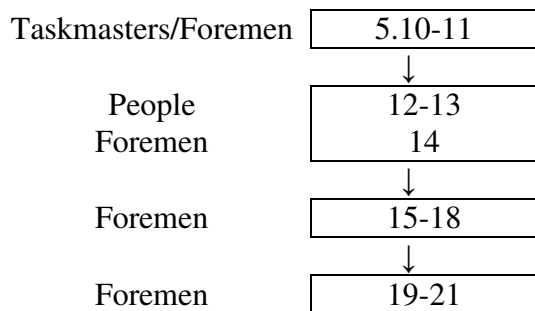
5.8e **לְאָמַר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of what they were crying out.

5.9. Like 8c-e, this verse is oriented around the people (3rd person), rather than the taskmasters (the ‘you’ of 8a-b). For this reason, the reference in 9a to ‘the men’ (**עַל־הָאֲנָשִׁים**), rather than ‘to them’, may be taken as over-encoding.

5.9c **עַל** ‘not’. As Durham (p. 62) notes, the use of this negative particle, rather than **לֹא**, marks this proposition as a wish (‘perhaps they will not pay attention to false reports’—*ibid.* p. 61), rather than a prohibition (‘let them not regard lying words’—Cassuto p. 68).

(5.10-21: Reactions of the Israelites to the Edicts)

Attention now switches to the reaction of the people and, particularly, the Israelite foremen (see the comment on v. 14b). The apparently redundant naming of these groups in 12, 15, 19 and, possibly, 14 divides this sub-section into 4 or 5 units (the first column of the flow-chart indicates the initiators):



5.10c **לְאָמַר** ‘saying’. This redundant verbal form may mark the following speech as an ‘inciting incident’ (NARR §5.4), as far as the Israelites are concerned.

5.10d. See v. 1c on preposed **כֵּן** ‘thus’.

5.10e-11. Pharaoh’s reported speech has three parts:

- a) a statement of the new situation (v. 10e);
- b) the exhortation (11a-b);
- c) material that strengthens the exhortation, introduced with **כִּי** (11c).

5.11a. The subject **אַתָּה** ‘you’ is pre-verbal to signal a switch of topic from ‘I’ (10e).

As in 4.19b, **לְכוּ** ‘go’ is an auxiliary verb to the main imperative (**קְחֵהוּ** ‘acquire’).

5.11c. The order of constituents is marked, with the subject **דְּבָרָא** ‘anything’ placed final for focal prominence.

5.13b **לְאמֹר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of what the taskmasters were saying as they urged the Israelites on.

5.14a. If the Israelite foremen were the addressees of the speech of v. 13, then the reference to them (**שְׂטָרֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**) is apparently redundant and marks the beginning of a new sub-unit.¹⁹

5.14b. The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמוּ עֲלֵהֶם נְגִישֵׁי פַרְעֹה** ‘whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them’ marks ‘the foremen of the Israelites’ as thematic (the rest of the sub-section will develop through their words and actions).

5.14c. **לְאמֹר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of what the taskmasters said as they beat the Israelite foremen.

5.14e **גַּם ... גַּם**: ‘neither ... nor’.

5.15c **לְאמֹר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of ‘they cried out’.

5.16b **וּלְבָנִים** ‘bricks’. Runge (p.c.) takes this word to be preposed for focal prominence (‘and yet they are telling us: ‘Make BRICKS’!’). However, Cassuto treats it as a dislocated point of departure: ‘Regarding the straw, it is not given to your servants; and regarding the bricks, the slave drivers say to us, make them according to the prescribed amount’ (p. 71).

5.16c **וְהִנֵּה** ‘& lo, [you] can see’ highlights what follows. As in 3.9c, this may be an attempt to get Pharaoh to see things from the foremen’s point of view.

5.16d **וְחַטָּאת עִמָּךְ** ‘[&] the fault is with your own people’ (Sarna p. 29). This is probably NOT a comment to the effect that ‘your people’ (topic) have sinned. Rather, the focus is on ‘your people’.

5.17c **עַל-כֵּן** ‘therefore’, ‘that is why’. See the comment on 5.8d.

5.17-18. Pharaoh’s speech has two parts:

- a) a statement of the situation (17b-d);
- b) instructions, introduced with **וְעַתָּה** ‘& now’.

5.18a. **לָכוּ** ‘go’ is an auxiliary verb to the main imperative (**עֲבֹדוּ** ‘work’).

5.18b. The subject **וְהַתָּבֵן** ‘straw’ could be in P1 (topical) or P2 (preposed for focal prominence). Since Pharaoh is responding to a speech about straw (see v. 16), it is topical (in P1).

5.18c. The object **תָּכֵן לְבָנִים** ‘the full quota of bricks’ (NIV) is preposed for focal prominence.

תִּתְּנֵנִי ‘you will give’. ‘The repetition of the verb ‘give’ [from 18b] underlies the antithesis: what devolves upon me, I shall not give; but you shall give what devolves on you’ (Cassuto p. 71).

5.19b **לְאמֹר** ‘saying’ introduces the content of what was being said to cause the calamity.

5.19c. The order of constituents is marked, with the object **יּוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ** ‘the daily number’ placed final for focal prominence.

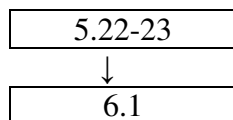
¹⁹ The events of 5.13 would occur at the beginning of the workday, whereas those of 14 would happen at its end.

5.20b **בְּצֵאתָם מֵאֶת פְּרֵעָה** ‘when they left Pharaoh’. NIV treats this constituent as a temporal point of departure by placing it at the beginning of the verse, thus signalling a switch of from the time of 19. However, it ends the verse in Hebrew, which enables the thematic continuity with 19 to be preserved.

5.21b **עֲלֵיכֶם** ‘towards you’. The order of constituents is marked, with the pronominal after the subject, to give it focal prominence.

(5.22-6.1: Moses’ Response)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses and YHWH in 6.1 divides this final sub-section into two parts (but see below):



5.22c **לְעַם הַזֶּה** ‘to this people’. The proximal demonstrative is used because the referents are thematic (the centre of attention in this speech). (Also in 5.23b.)

5.22d **לָמָּה זֶה** ‘Why’. As in 2.20c, the combination of **לָמָּה** ‘for what reason’ and **זֶה** ‘this’ is for ‘emphasis’ (BDB).

5.23a **וּמֵאָז בָּאתִי אֶל- פְּרֵעָה לְדַבֵּר בְּשִׁמּוֹךְ** ‘(&) ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name’. This is probably a temporal point of departure (in P1), signalling a switch from the time that ‘you sent me’ (22d).²⁰

5.23c **וְהַצַּל לֹא- הַצַּלְתָּ** (& to deliver you have not delivered). As usual, the combination of the infinitive absolute and a main verb gives focal prominence to the verb (**And thou hast not delivered thy people at all** is emphatic in the Hebrew—*UBS*). NLT captures the prominence by using ‘even’: ‘You have not even begun to rescue them’.

The overencoding of the reference to ‘your people’ (**אֶת- עַמְּךָ**) may add to the prominence of this climactic proposition.

6.1b **עַתָּה** ‘Now’. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch from the time of the previous incident.

6.1d-e are parallel assertions, so I take **בְּיַד הַזֹּקֶה** ‘by a mighty hand’ to be preposed for focal prominence in both propositions.²¹

6.2-7.7 ‘The Call Renewed’ (*UBS*)

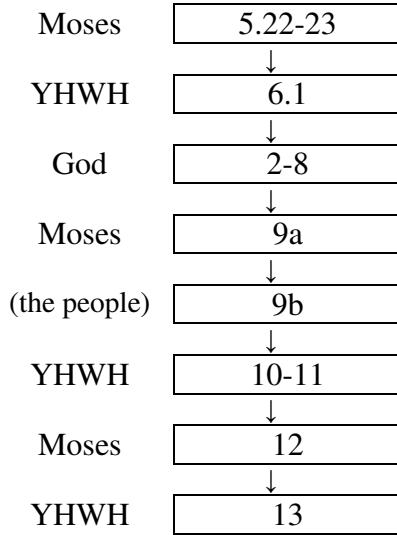
I consider this section in four parts: 6.2-13, the family record of 6.14-27, then the resumption of the narrative in 6.28-30 and the ‘Reaffirmation and Renewal of Moses’ Mission’ (Sarna p. 36) in 7.1-7. However, the speeches of 6.10-13 and 6.29-30 form an *inclusio* (see discussion of v. 10), so it might

²⁰ It is possible, however, to take 5.23a as preposed for focal prominence (in P2), if **הִרַע לְעַם הַזֶּה** ‘he has brought trouble upon this people’ (23b) is taken as the equivalent of **הִרַעְתָּהּ לְעַם הַזֶּה** ‘you have brought trouble upon this people’ (22c). The following might capture this interpretation in English: ‘Pharaoh has brought trouble on this people right from the moment I went to him to speak in your name’.

²¹ Cassuto (p. 74) considers it ‘difficult to suppose that the same phrase would occur twice in a parallelism with the identical significance’, so has ‘by a strong hand’ refer to YHWH in 1d, but to Pharaoh in 1e. Other commentators disagree.

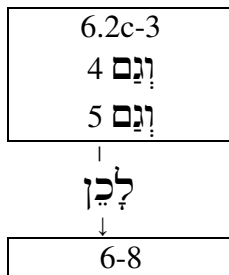
well be more appropriate to divide the section into three parts: 6.2-9, 6.10-30 and 7.1-7, with 6.14-27 at the centre of 6.10-30.

As noted earlier, there is no discontinuity between 6.1 and 6.2, so the following diagram shows the division of 5.22-6.13 into eight parts, based on the apparently redundant naming of Moses in 6.1, 2, 9a, 9b, 10, 12 and 13, and of YHWH in 6.1, 2 (God), 12 and 13 (the first column indicates the initiator of each part).²²



6.2a-b. The double speech orienter (וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־ מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו) ‘& God spoke to Moses and said to him’) may mark ‘the beginning of the Section’ (Cassuto p. 76; see also *UBS*). Alternatively, it may be a slowing-down device that highlights the contents of the speech.

6.2c-8. The logical developmental connective לְכֵן ‘therefore’ (Falag-ey 2010) marks progression in this speech from the situational and motivational material (vv. 2c-5) to the ‘solemn declaration’ (Sarna p. 32) of 6-8. Within the first part, additive וְגַם ‘& also’ adds ‘two parallel statements’ (Cassuto p. 79) to 2c-3:²³



6.3b. וַשְׁמִי יְהוָה ‘My name YHWH’ may be in P1, in which case the negated verb (‘I did not make myself known’) is focal. Alternatively, it may have been preposed for focal prominence (in P2): ‘I did not make myself known to them **by my name YHWH**’.

²² NIV includes 6.13 in the ‘Family Record of Moses and Aaron’ (6.13-27—see further below), but *UBS* begins ‘Moses’ Family Record’ at 6.14.

²³ Cassuto (ibid.) appears not to relate the assertions of vv. 4 and 5 with that of 3 when he continues, ‘on the one hand, *I have established*, etc., and on the other, *I have heard*, etc.’. Sarna (p. 31) describes *ve-gam* as emphatic. In linguistic terms, its presence carries a guarantee that ‘what is added is ... **at least as important** as the item to which it is being added’ (NARR §6.3.1; see also Sim 2009).

6.3c-8. The organisation of the speech is chiasitic: the land of promise (4) – the people’s suffering (5) – their delivery from suffering (6-7) – bringing them into the land of promise (8).

6.4a אִתָּם ‘with them’. This clause-final pronominal ‘belong[s] not to the verb “established” but to the substantive “covenant”’ (Cassuto p. 79).

6.4c. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר-גָּרוּ בָּהּ ‘in which they lived as sojourners’ marks ‘the land’ (אֶרֶץ-אֵת) as thematic within the speech. (See also v. 8b.)

6.5a אֲנִי ‘I’. The pre-verbal pronoun is a point of departure by renewal, and introduces a distinct point about YHWH that is to be added to those made in vv. 3 and 4.

6.5b. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם מַעֲבֵדִים אֹתָם ‘whom the Egyptians are holding in bondage’ also marks ‘the groaning of the people of Israel’ (אֵת-נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) as thematic within the speech.

6.7e הַמּוֹצִיא אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלּוֹת מִצְרַיִם ‘who freed you from the forced labour of Egypt’. This is a nominalised clause, NOT a relative clause. (The clause is NOT there to identify *which* God freed you!)

6.8b אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת-יָדַי לְתַת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב ‘which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac & to Jacob’. This relative clause again marks ‘the land’ (אֶל-הָאָרֶץ) as thematic within the speech (see v. 4c).

6.10. לֵאמֹר ‘saying’ introduces the content of וַיִּדְבֹר ‘& he spoke’. It is used again in v. 12b and also in 29b, which is the first of a pair of speeches that form an *inclusio* with those of 10-12.

The use of וַיִּדְבֹר followed by לֵאמֹר confers theme-line status on the speeches concerned. The combination appears to have been used here to signal that 6.10-30 are not to be treated as the next narrative episode, but as an interlude between them.

6.11a. בֹּא ‘come, go’ is an auxiliary verb to the main imperative (דַּבֵּר ‘speak’).

‘The place is not specified, but the palace is understood’ (Sarna p. 33).

אֶל-פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם ‘to Pharaoh king of Egypt’. Concerning this double reference, Runge writes (p.c.), ‘I would view the use of king of Egypt as thematic in nature, redirecting the reader to keep the national-level plot on their radar’.

6.12c הֵן ‘Lo, There!’ highlights what follows. Also in v. 30b.

The subject בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘the people of Israel’ is pre-verbal to switch attention back to them from Pharaoh. They then serve as a foil for Pharaoh in 12d (NARR §4.8): If the **people of Israel** have not listened to me, how then shall **Pharaoh** listen to me?

6.13. YHWH’s answer to Moses’ objection is not given as direct speech, so may be backgrounded (NIV treats it as the introduction to the ‘Family Record of Moses and Aaron’). It is here ‘given only in a summary form’ (Cassuto p. 89), as a detailed answer will follow in 7.1-5.

6.13c. The overencoding of the references to ‘the people of Israel’ (אֵת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל) and ‘from the land of Egypt’ (מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם) presumably highlights the concluding proposition of this sub-section.

(6.14-27: ‘Moses’ Family Record’—UBS)

6.14. As *UBS* notes, the proximal demonstrative אֵלֶּה ‘these’ is used cataphorically at the beginning of the verse, but anaphorically at its end.

6.16-25. אֵלֶּה ‘these’ is used cataphorically in v. 16, which is the beginning of the passage concerning ‘the male descendents of Levi’, but anaphorically in 25, at the end (*UBS*).

6.25 The subject וְאַלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן ‘(&) Eleazar son of Aaron’ is pre-verbal to mark a switch of topic from that of v. 24. In 20 (עֲמֶרָם ‘Amram’) and 23 (אַהֲרֹן ‘Aaron’), in contrast, the subjects are after the verb, suggesting thematic continuity as the lineage of Aaron and Moses is spelt out, prior to further comments about them in 26-27.

6.26-27 ‘are an editorial conclusion to the genealogy and also a bridge that brings the reader back into the narrative’ (*UBS*).

6.26 The independent personal pronoun הוּא ‘he’ is used to refer to ‘the same’ Aaron and Moses ‘as those mentioned in the genealogy’ (Sarna p. 35). The sentence is equative: ‘The same (הוּא) = the Aaron and Moses to whom YHWH said...’.

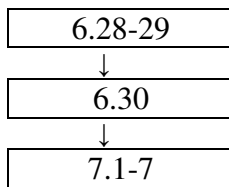
The relative clause אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה לָהֶם ‘to whom YHWH said...’ marks Aaron and Moses as thematic.

6.27a-b. The sentence is equative: ‘They (הֵם) = the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt...’ (הַמְדַבְּרִים אֶל־פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם—a nominalised clause).

6.27c. Another equative clause: ‘The same (הוּא) = Moses and Aaron’ (מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן); ‘These are the same Moses and Aaron’ (Sarna p. 36).

(6.28-30: ‘The Narrative is Resumed’—Cassuto p. 88)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses and YHWH in 6.30 and 7.1 divides this sub-section into two parts and separates it from the next one (7.1-7):



6.28-29. As usual, וַיְהִי ‘and it happened’ marks the transition from less important to more important events. In this instance, it marks the resumption of the event line, with a reference ‘back to verse 10 and possibly to verse 2. The setting has not changed. **Moses** is still **in the land of Egypt** and **the Lord** is still speaking to him. The words “**I am the Lord**” are the very same words spoken in verse 2. So verses 28-29 should be understood as a summary of what **the Lord** had already **said to Moses** in verses 2-12.’ (*UBS*)

6.28b בַּיּוֹם דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ‘when the LORD spoke to Moses in Egypt’. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch back to the time of the events of the first part of chapter 6 (see above).

6.29a-b. As noted in connection with v. 10, the combination of וַיִּדְבֹר ' & he spoke' and לֵאמֹר 'saying' confers theme-line status on this speech. The speeches of 29-30 form an *inclusio* with those of 10-12. 'In the next paragraph, we shall be told in detail the Lord's answer to Moses' doubt, which above, in v. 13, was given only in a summary form' (Cassuto p. 89).

6.30b. As in the corresponding speech of the *inclusio* (12c), הֵן 'Lo, There!' highlights what follows.

(7.1-7: 'Reaffirmation and Renewal of Moses' Mission'—Sarna p. 36)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in 7.6 divides this sub-section into two parts:



7.1b רִאֵה. 'See, my son, consider the matter well' (Cassuto p. 89; compare 4.21c).

7.1b-5. The first main verb ('I have appointed you'—v. 1b) is perfective, whereas all the others are imperfective, so are translated as futures (e.g. 'will be'—1c).

Pre-verbal subjects signal switches of topic and attention from 'I' (1b) to 'Aaron your brother' (רִאֵה אֶת־אָהֳרֹן—1c), to 'you' (אֲתָה—2a), back to 'Aaron your brother' (2b) and, finally, back to 'I' (וְאֲנִי—3-5). Pharaoh does NOT become the centre of attention in 2c or 4a.²⁴

7.5c-d. According to Cassuto (p. 90), the subordinate clause of time (5c) continues into 5d: 'when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and when I bring out the children of Israel from among them'.

7.6. Sarna translates this verse as having two main verbs: 'This Moses and Aaron did; as the LORD commanded them, so they did' (p. 37). 'The two clauses say almost the same thing, but the repetition adds emphasis. When they are combined as in TEV, the emphasis is lacking. NEB brings out the emphasis better: "So Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD had commanded."' (*UBS*)

The subordinate clause כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם 'as YHWH commanded them' is right-dislocated (left-dislocated in English), with כֵּן 'so, thus' preposed for focal prominence.

7.8-11.10 'The Plagues' (Cassuto p. 92)

Cassuto divides this section, which *UBS* entitles 'The negotiations with Pharaoh', into twelve sub-sections: 'The Presentation of Credentials' (7.8-13); 'Blood' (7.14-25);²⁵ 'Frogs' (8.1-15);²⁶ 'Gnats' (8.16-19); 'Swarms of Flies' (8.20-32); 'Pest' (9.1-7); 'Boils' (9.8-12); 'Hail' (9.13-35); 'Locusts' (10.1-20); 'Darkness' (10.21-29); 'The Warning regarding the Plague of the First-Born' (11.1-8); and 'Epilogue' (11.9-10). Other commentators and translations combine the last two sub-sections.

Each sub-section begins with וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־ מֹשֶׁה '& YHWH said to Moses' (7.8 includes Aaron as an addressee). Several of the sub-sections also end with כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה 'just as YHWH had said' (7.13, 8.15, 8.19, 9.12, 9.35).

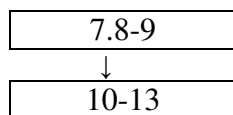
²⁴ To keep the attention on 'I' in 4a in a Philippine language, begin the clause with a linker.

²⁵ See below on whether the section ends at 7.25 or 7.24.

²⁶ In the Hebrew Bible, the references are as follows: 'Frogs' (7.26-8.11); 'Gnats' (8.12-15); 'Swarms of Flies' (8.16-28).

7.8-13: ‘The Presentation of Credentials’—Cassuto p. 94)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses & Aaron in v. 10 divides this sub-section into two parts:



7.8b **לֵאמֹר** ‘saying’ As in 5.10c, this redundant verbal form may mark the following speech as an inciting incident.

(The same comment may apply also to v. 9b, even though the verb in 9a is **יִדְבֹר** ‘he will speak’.)

7.9a-c **כִּי יְדַבֵּר אֲלֵכֶם פְּרֹעֹה לֵאמֹר הֲנִי לָכֶם מוֹפֵת** ‘When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, “Perform a miracle”’. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch from the time of YHWH’s speech.

The interpretive use marker **כִּי** (here translated ‘when’) directs Moses and Aaron to relate this occasion back to something in the context; in this instance, the instruction to speak to Pharaoh (v. 2b; see also 7c).

7.9e-f **קַח אֶת־מִטְּךָ וְהִשְׁלֵךְ לִפְנֵי־פְרֹעֹה** ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh’. As in 4.4b-c, both verbs are imperative. This suggests that the first event is only of a preliminary nature. (Also in 7.19b-c and 8.5c-d [Heb: 8.1c-d].)

7.11a. “Pharaoh also” [**גַּם**], as Moses had done with respect to Aaron’ (Cassuto p. 94).

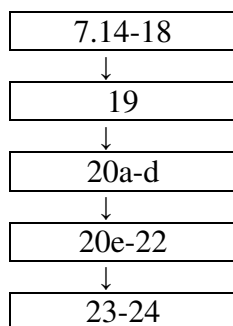
7.11b. “they also” [**גַּם**], imitating the marvel of Aaron’s rod’ (ibid. p. 95). This is followed by an appositive phrase, **חַרְטֻמַּי מִצְרַיִם** ‘the magicians of Egypt’, which is probably a slowing-down device to highlight what follows.²⁷

7.14-25(24): ‘Blood’—Cassuto p. 96)

Some translations end this sub-section at v. 24 (e.g. NIV), while others include 25 (e.g. NLT). ‘The NJPS translation connects this verse [25] with the next, implying that the second plague followed the first by a week. The Hebrew could also signify that the first plague lasted seven days, a rendering favored by the Masoretic division of the Hebrew.’ (Sarna p. 40)

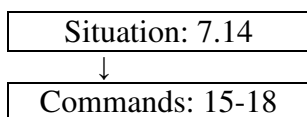
I will follow the NIV in ending the sub-section at v. 24. However, the use of the *waw*-consecutive in both 25 and 26 implies that 25 is to be taken as transitional, with no discontinuity to be discerned between the two plagues.

The apparently redundant naming of YHWH and Moses in v. 19, of Moses & Aaron in 20a, of the waters in 20e and of Pharaoh in 23, divides this sub-section into five parts:



²⁷ ‘no special emphasis is expressed by the construction’ (Muraoka p. 65).

7.14b-18. The apparently redundant naming of Pharaoh in v. 15 divides YHWH's speech into two parts:



7.14b. The complement כָּבֵד 'heavy, unyielding' precedes the subject for focal prominence.

7.15b. הִנֵּה 'lo, there!' temporarily changes the perspective from what Moses is to do to a background comment about Pharaoh. The instructions to Moses then continue.²⁸

7.15d. The object וְהַמִּטָּה אֲשֶׁר-נָהַפֵּךְ לְנָחָשׁ '(&) the staff that was taken into a snake' is preposed for focal prominence. The use of a relative clause marks the staff as thematic (see v. 17).

7.16b. The subject יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים 'YHWH, the God of the Hebrews' is pre-verbal to mark a switch of attention from the speaker (Moses).

7.16f. As in 15b, הִנֵּה '& lo, & here' temporarily changes the perspective from what YHWH says to Pharaoh's failure to obey.

7.17a. See 5.1c on preposed כֹּה 'thus'.

7.17b. The preposed proximal demonstrative בְּזֹאת 'by this' is used cataphorically to point forward to and highlight how Pharaoh will know that God is YHWH (17f-18). Before this is described, however, הִנֵּה 'lo, here!' in v. 17d temporarily changes the perspective to Moses (the 'I' who is about to strike the waters which are in the River with the staff in his hand).

7.17d-18a. Relative clauses mark Moses' staff, the waters and the fish as thematic within the speech that Moses is to make to Pharaoh. Repeated naming of the River divides what will happen into four parts. (See also 20d-21d.)

7.18a. The pre-verbal subject וְהַדְּגָה אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר '(&) the fish that (are) in the River' signals a switch of topic and attention from the waters that are in the River (17e).

7.19f. The repetition of דָּם 'blood' is probably a slowing-down device to highlight the following constituent ('in all the land of Egypt ... even on wood and on stone'—Cassuto p. 99).

7.20e. This time, the relative clause אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר 'which in the River' intensifies כָּל-הַמַּיִם 'all the waters', which is already thematic (17e).

7.21a. As in v. 18a, the pre-verbal subject וְהַדְּגָה אֲשֶׁר-בַּיָּאֵר '(&) the fish that (were) in the River' signals a switch of topic and attention from the waters that are in the River (20e).

As the fish are already thematic (18a), the relative clause probably implies, by parallelism with 20d, that they all died.

7.23c. This time, the proximal demonstrative לְזֹאת 'to this' is used anaphorically (contrast v. 17b) to refer to the second sign Pharaoh has just witnessed. The additive נִם ('either', following the negative) instructs the reader to draw a parallel with Pharaoh's response to the previous sign (13), which both

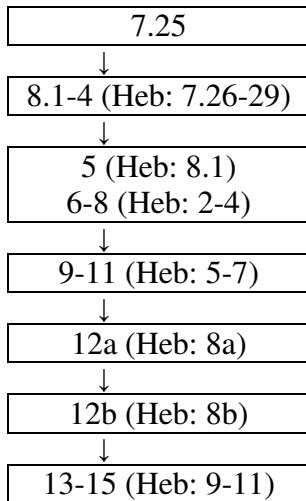
²⁸ If 7.15b is subordinated to 15a in a Philippine language (e.g. 'as he is going out to the water'), then attention will remain on Moses.

Aaron and the Egyptian magicians had also produced. Translators and commentators consistently translate אֲפֹרֹת ‘even’, which implies that they find his response surprising.

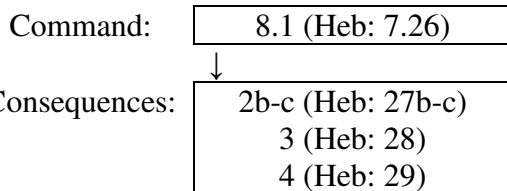
7.24b לְשִׁתּוֹת מַיִם ‘to drink water’. The object מַיִם ‘water’ has been preposed for focal prominence, probably to contrast it with מַיִם הַיַּרְדֵּן ‘of the water of the River’ (24c).

(7.25(8.1)-8.15 [Hebrew 7.25(26)-8.11]: ‘Frogs’—Cassuto p. 100)

If 7.25 is considered to begin this sub-section, then the apparently redundant naming of YHWH in 8.1, 5 and 13, of Pharaoh in 8.9 and 12a, and of Moses in 8.12a and 12b, divides this episode into seven parts:²⁹



8.1-4 (Heb: 7.26-29). The words of YHWH that Moses is to say to Pharaoh may be divided into two main parts: the command to let the people go (8.1/7.26) and the consequences of not obeying (8.2-4/7.27-29). Repeated naming of the frogs divides the consequences into three steps (see below):



8.1d (Heb: 7.26d). See 5.1c on preposed כֹּה ‘thus’.

8.2a (Heb: 7.27a) וְאִם־מִאֵן אָתָּה לְשַׁלְּחַם ‘(&) if you refuse to let them go’. A conditional point of departure, signalling a switch of situation from that of the command of 8.1e (Heb: 7.26e). (Also in 8.21a [Heb: 8.17a] and 9.2.)

8.2b-4 (Heb: 7.27b-29). The conditional clause introduces the three consequences of not obeying the command to let the people go.

The division of the consequences into three steps is as follows:

a) the general statement that the plague will affect the whole territory (highlighted by the presence of הִנֵּה הַיָּהוָה ‘lo, there!’, which also changes the perspective from that of ‘you’ [Pharaoh] to ‘I’ [YHWH]);

²⁹ In the Hebrew text, YHWH is named at 7.26, 8.1 and 8.9, Pharaoh at 8.5 and 8.8a, and Moses at 8.8a and 8b.

The naming of Aaron in 8.6 (Heb: 8.2) may be judged to introduce a further division. However, YHWH’s words in 8.5 (Heb: 8.1) were directed to Moses, not Aaron.

- b) the swarm of the frogs even into ‘places where they are not normally found’ (Cassuto p. 101);
- c) ‘The frogs will be so numerous and daring that they will even climb up people’s legs, even up the legs of his majesty himself’ (ibid.).

8.4 (Heb: 7.29). The locative **וּבְכֹל עַבְדֵיךָ וּבְכֹל אֲנָשֵׁיךָ** ‘(&) on you & your people & all your officials’ is preposed for focal prominence.

8.9b (Heb: 8.5b) **וְהִתְפַּאֵר עָלַי** ‘You may have this triumph over me’ (Sarna p. 41). ‘The Hebrew phrase *hitpa’er al* usually means “to vaunt” but here seems to connote “I defer to you” to select the time for removing the frogs’ (ibid.).

8.9e (Heb: 8.5e). The locative **רַק בַּיַּאֲר** ‘only in the River’ is preposed for focal prominence. (Also in 8.11b [Heb: 8.7b].)

The contrastive limiter **רַק** ‘only’ introduces an important exception (see Levinsohn forthcoming). (Also in 8.11, 28, 29 [Heb: 8.7, 24, 25] and 9.26.)

8.10 (Heb: 8.6). The speakers (Pharaoh and Moses) are not identified, as the narrative does not move forward to the next significant development until v. 12 (Heb: v. 8).

8.11a (Heb: 8.7a). The pronominal **מִמֶּנִּי** ‘from you’ follows the subject because it is part of the focal constituent **מִמֶּנִּי וּמִבְּתוֹתַי וּמִעַבְדֵיךָ וּמִעַמֶּנִּי** ‘from you & from your houses & from your servants & from your people’.

8.12c (Heb: 8.8c). The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם לְפָרְעֹה** ‘which He had ordained for Pharaoh’ marks ‘the matter of the frogs’ (**עַל-דִּבְרֵי הַצְּפַרְדִּיִּים**) as thematic.

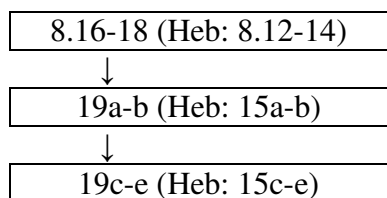
8.14a (Heb: 8.10a). **הַמְרֹם הַמְרֹם** ‘heaps heaps’ ‘may be understood either as “great heaps” or “countless heaps” (NEB). Childs has “one heap after another”; Durham has “pile after pile.”’ (UBS)

8.15c (Heb 8.11c) **וַיַּכְבֵּד אֶת-לְבוּ** ‘& he made his heart stubborn’. An infinitive absolute ‘as the continuation of a preceding finite verb’ (GKC §113 z); namely, ‘he saw that the respite had come’. In this context, this means that Pharaoh made his heart stubborn **as soon as** he saw that respite had come (‘immediately’ —Cassuto p. 104).

(8.16-19 [Heb: 8.12-15]: ‘Gnats’—Cassuto p. 104)

The naming of Pharaoh in 8.19c (Heb: 8.15c) is the only clear instance of overencoding on which to base the division of this episode, though the naming of the magicians in 19a (Heb: 15a) is suggestive of a further division. (See below on the repeated references to gnats.)

I suggest the following division of the episode into development units:



8.16c-d (Heb: 8.12c-d). Although *UBS* suggests that ‘stretch out your staff’ (**נִטְוֵה אֶת-מִטְּךָ**) ‘& strike the dust of the ground’ (**וַיִּדְהֵף אֶת-עַפְרֵי הָאָרֶץ**) ‘are two commands indicating only one action’, previous instructions for Aaron have also been described in two stages (see 7.19c-d, 7.20c-d). It seems

more likely that two actions are being described: first the stretching out (‘staffing’) of the staff, then the striking of the ground with it (compare 8.17b-c [Heb: 13b-c]).

As in 4.4b-c and 7.9e-f, both verbs are imperative. This suggests that the first event (‘stretch out your staff’) is only of a preliminary nature. (Also in 8.20b-c [Heb: 16b-c].)

8.17d & 18d (Heb: 8.13d & 14d). These propositions (וַתְּהִי הַכְּנָם בְּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה) ‘& the gnats came upon man and beast’) form an *inclusio* that brackets the failed attempt of the Egyptian magicians to replicate the plague.

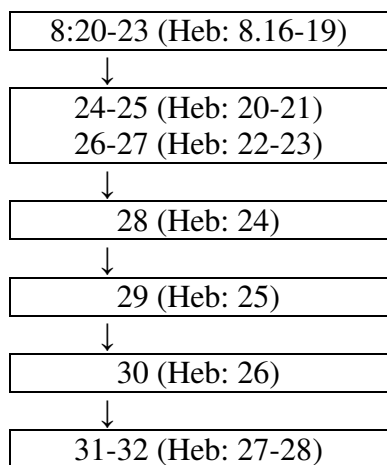
8.17e (Heb: 8.13e). The subject כָּל-עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ ‘All the dust of the ground’ is pre-verbal for focal prominence, to emphasise how much became gnats.

8.18a (Heb: 8.14a) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ-כֵן הַחֹרְטָמִים בְּלִטְיָהֶם ‘The magicians did the like with their spells’ (Sarna p.42). See *UBS* on possible interpretations of כֵּן ‘thus, the like’.

8.19b (Heb: 8.15b). The complement אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים ‘the finger of God’ precedes the subject for focal prominence.

(8.20-32 [Heb: 8.16-28]: ‘Swarms of Flies’—Cassuto p. 107)

The apparently redundant naming of YHWH in 8.24 and 31 (Heb: 8.20 & 27), of Pharaoh in vv. 28 and 30 (Heb: 24 & 26), and of Moses in 29 (Heb: 25) (see also 26 [Heb: 22]), divides this episode into at least six units:



8.20d (Heb: 8.16d). As in 7.15b, הִנֵּה ‘lo, there!’ temporarily changes the perspective from what Moses is to do to a background comment about Pharaoh. The instructions to Moses then continue.

8.20f-23 (Heb: 8.16f-19). YHWH’s words to Pharaoh again consist of a command (v. 20g-h [Heb: 16g-h]), together with the consequences of not obeying (21-23 [Heb: 17-19]).

8.20f (Heb: 8.16f). See 5.1c on preposed כֵּן ‘thus’.

8.21a (Heb: 8.17a). This time, the conditional clause that introduces the consequences is preceded by the interpretive use marker כִּי (here translated ‘for’). Its presence may signal that YHWH is echoing His words of 8.2a (Heb: 7.27a): ‘If you refuse to let them go’, which would lead Pharaoh to remember the consequences of his previous refusal (and would explain why the shorter form of the first person pronoun is used in 21b—contrast 7.27b).

8.21b (Heb: 8.17b). הִנְנִי ‘here I’ highlights the consequence of Pharaoh not obeying (‘This is further emphasized by the word **behold**’—*UBS*), while also changing the perspective from ‘you’ [Pharaoh] to ‘I’ [YHWH] (compare 8.9a).

The order of constituents in this clause (verb – locatives – object) gives focal prominence to the object אֶת־הָעֶרֶב ‘the swarm’. (Although commentators do not know what הָעֶרֶב (usually translated ‘mixture’) refers to, the presence of the object marker אֶת implies that Pharaoh would be able to identify it uniquely; hence, the use of the definite article: ‘**the** swarm’.)

8.21c (Heb: 8.17c). The placement at the end of the clause of an added (נִם) subject (אֲשֶׁר־הֵם עֹלְיָהָ) הָאֲדָמָה ‘the ground on which they stand’) gives prominence to the subject; hence, Sarna’s translation ‘the very ground they stand on’ (p. 42). The subjects are focal, and the relative clause adds to the prominence given to the ground.

8.22a (Heb: 8.18a). The distal demonstrative בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא ‘on that day’ is used anaphorically, possibly to underline the fact that what follows would take place ‘that same day’ (see 5.6a).

8.22b (Heb: 8.18b). The relative clause אֲשֶׁר עִמִּי עַמִּי עֹלְיָהָ ‘where My people dwell’ makes ‘the land of Goshen’ (אֶת־אֶרֶץ גּוֹשֶׁן) thematic within this speech. Commentators treat the relative clause as non-restrictive; it is NOT intended to specify that part of the land of Goshen in which ‘My people dwell’. (Also in 9. 26.)

8.23b (Heb: 8.19b). לְמָחָר ‘tomorrow’ is pre-verbal for focal prominence (‘this miraculous sign will occur tomorrow’—NIV).

הַזֶּה הַחֵטָא ‘this sign’. The proximal demonstrative is used because the referent is thematic.

8.24c (Heb: 8.20c). The locative וּבְכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם ‘(&) in all the land of Egypt’ is preposed for focal prominence, to emphasise the extent of the plague.

תִּשְׁחָת ‘was ruined’. The use of an imperfective portrays the event as ongoing: ‘the severe plague was destroying his land’ (Cassuto p. 108).

8.25d (Heb: 8.21d). The order of constituents conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow, with the DFE (‘dominant focal element’—NARR §4.2.4) בְּאֶרֶץ ‘within the land’ last.

8.26c (Heb: 8.22c). The object תּוֹעֵבַת מִצְרָיִם ‘the abomination of Egypt’ is preposed for focal prominence, to emphasise ‘abomination’.

8.26d (Heb: 8.22d) נִזְבַּח אֶת־תּוֹעֵבַת מִצְרָיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם ‘(if) we offer sacrifices that are an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians’. The repetition of the information in 26c (Heb: 22c) (another instance of ‘tail-head linkage’—see 1.21) highlights the likely consequence of offering their sacrifice ‘within the land’.

הִן ‘Lo, here!’ introduces a temporary change of perspective, which Cassuto (p. 109) renders, ‘Picture to yourself’. Strictly speaking, though, the perspective adopted in 26d-e is that of the Egyptians in general, rather than Pharaoh himself. (Verse 27 reverts to what ‘we’ are to do.)

8.26e (Heb: 8.22e) וְלֹא יִסְקְלוּנוּ. This negative clause is understood as a rhetorical question (*UBS*): ‘will they not stone us?’³⁰

³⁰ See also Muraoka p. 118.

8.27a (Heb: 8.23a). The constituent **דַּרְךְ יְרֵדָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים** ‘a journey of three days’ is preposed for focal prominence.

8.28b (Heb: 8.24b). The pre-verbal subject of **אָנֹכִי** ‘I’ signals a switch of attention from previous subjects to Pharaoh himself. ‘The Hebrew adds the personal pronoun before the verb to emphasize the subject. In this way Pharaoh asserts his superior authority while at the same time making a concession.’ (Sarna p. 43)

8.28c (Heb: 8.24c). The final constituent (**בַּמִּדְבָּר** ‘in the wilderness’) is the DFE.

8.28d (Heb: 8.24d). The contrastive limiter **רַק** ‘only’ introduces a clause that constitutes an important exception to the concession of 28b-c. (Also in 8.29e [Heb: 8.25e].)

לֹא תִרְחֹקוּ (go.far.away not you will.go.far.away). As usual, the combination of the infinitive absolute and a main verb gives focal prominence to the verb: ‘don’t go too far away’ (NLT).

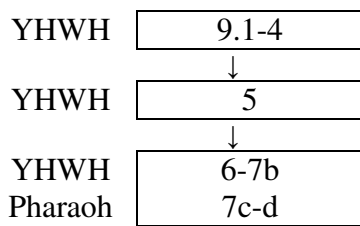
8.29b (Heb: 8.25b). **הִנֵּה** ‘lo, here!’ highlights Moses’ response to Pharaoh’s request. *UBS* interprets its effect as ‘The moment I leave you’ (NJB) or ‘As soon as I leave you’ (NRSV).³¹

8.29d (Heb: 8.25d). The order of constituents conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow, with the DFE **מָחָר** ‘tomorrow’ last.

8.32a (Heb: 8.28a). Additive **גַּם** ‘also’ makes explicit the parallelism between Pharaoh’s response ‘this time’ (**בַּפְּעַם הַזֹּאת**—the proximal demonstrative marks the occasion as thematic) and previous occasions.

(9.1-7: ‘Pest’—Cassuto p. 110)

The apparently redundant naming of YHWH in vv. 5 and 6, and possibly of Pharaoh in 7c, divides this sub-section into three or four units, with initiators as indicated in the first column of the flow-chart:



9.1d. See 5.1c on preposed **כֵּן** ‘thus’.

9.1e-4. YHWH’s words to Pharaoh again consist of a command (1e-f), together with the consequences of not obeying (2-3).

9.2. As in 8.21 (Heb: 8.17), the conditional clauses that introduce the consequences are preceded by the interpretive use marker **כִּי** (‘for’). Again, its presence probably signals that YHWH is echoing His earlier words: ‘If you refuse to let them go’, which would lead Pharaoh to remember the consequences of his previous refusals.

The positive restatement (**וְעוֹדָה מְחַזְּקִים בָּם** ‘& continue to hold them back’) of the first condition-

³¹ However, since the perspective in 8.29b is the same as in Pharaoh’s speech of v. 28, it is possible that **הִנֵּה** ‘lo, here!’ implies that the current perspective is temporary, and will revert to that of Pharaoh in 29f.

nal clause (אִם־מָאֵן אֶתָּה לְשַׁלַּח) ‘If you refuse to let them go’) is probably a slowing-down device, to highlight what follows (the consequences of v. 3).

Within the first conditional clause, the participle (מָאֵן ‘refusing’) precedes the subject (אֶתָּה ‘you’) for focal prominence. (Also in 10.4a.)

9.3. Once again, הִנֵּה ‘lo, there!’ highlights the consequence of Pharaoh not obeying (‘Behold is a word to draw attention to what follows’—*UBS.*), while also changing the perspective from ‘you’ to ‘the hand of YHWH’ (יַד־יְהוָה).

Although translations render the participle הִנֵּה as a transitive verb (e.g. ‘will strike’—Sarna p. 44) with דָּבַר כָּבֵד מְאֹד ‘a very severe plague’ as its object, the gloss ‘[is] about to be’ is correct.

‘With a very severe plague is three words in the Hebrew that are placed at the end of the verse for emphasis, “plague heavy very!”’ (*UBS.*). In other words, they are the DFE.

The relative clause אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׂדֶה ‘which [is] in the field’ marks בְּמִקְנֵךְ ‘your livestock’ as thematic within this speech.

9.4a. The apparently redundant naming of YHWH marks this verse as a distinct point of the speech.

9.4b. דָּבָר ‘anything’ is placed at the end of the clause for focal prominence.

9.5. Sarna (p. 44) treats this verse as part of the speech that began in v. 1: ‘The LORD has fixed the time...’. Other commentators and translations treat it as part of the narrative; e.g. ‘The LORD set a time...’ (NIV). Either way, the apparently redundant naming of YHWH marks it out as a distinct point (NIV begins a new paragraph at 5).

9.5b. לֵאמֹר ‘saying’ introduces the content of ‘set a time’.

9.5c. מָחָר ‘tomorrow’ is pre-verbal for focal prominence.

9.5c & 6a. The proximal demonstrative in הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה ‘this thing/word’ is used because the referent is thematic, both in the reported speech and in the narrative.

9.6c. The constituent וּמִמִּקְנֵה בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘of the livestock of the children of Israel’ is right-dislocated (left-dislocated in English) to signal a switch of attention and topic from the livestock of the Egyptians (6b).

9.7b וְהִנֵּה ‘& lo, & there’. A temporary change of perspective; the situation is presented from the point of view of those whom Pharaoh sent.

עַד־אֶחָד ‘up to one’ is placed at the end of the clause for focal prominence.

(9.8-12: ‘Boils’—Cassuto p. 112)

Overencoding of references to the participants is not used to divide this short episode into units.

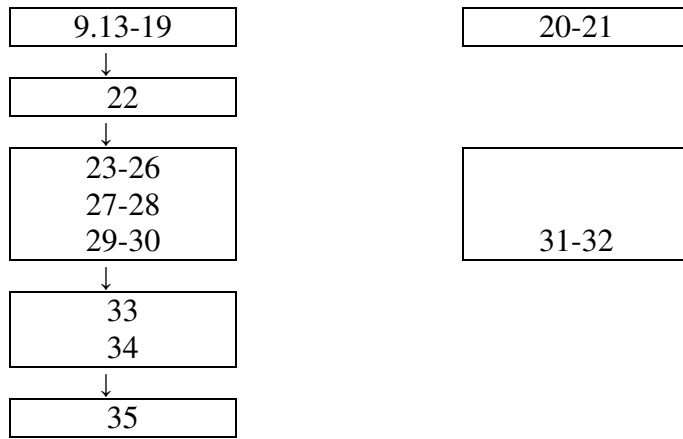
(9.13-35: ‘Hail’—Cassuto p. 115)

As usual, the major participants in this episode are YHWH, Moses and Pharaoh. However, events concerning these participants are interspersed with descriptions a) in vv. 20-21 of how Pharaoh’s courtiers responded to the warning of 18-19; b) in 31-32 of which crops were damaged by the hail (see the flowchart below).

Consequently, there is relatively little overencoding of references to participants in the episode. The only clear instances are the naming of Moses in 23 and of Pharaoh in 35. Additional units

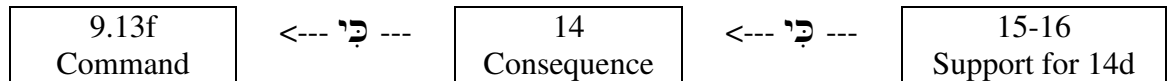
probably begin when the main event line is resumed at 22 (YHWH and Moses are named) and at 33 (Moses and Pharaoh are named).

If the above divisions are valid, then this episode may be divided into at least five units (see below on possible sub-divisions of 23-26 and of 33-34 into further units):



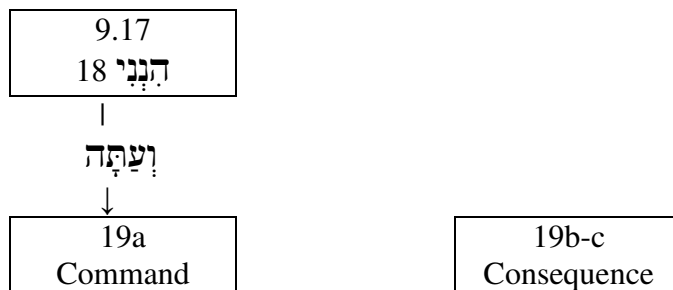
9.13-19. YHWH’s words to Pharaoh again begin with a command (v. 13f), together with a consequence of not obeying (14), which is introduced by כִּי (‘for’). The same marker is used to introduce 15-16, which support the final statement of 14: אֵין כְּמֹנִי בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ ‘there is none like Me in all the world’.

The following is a flowchart for vv. 13f-16:



The absence of *waw* at the beginning of v. 17 is consistent with Durham’s decision to begin a new paragraph (p. 124). The verse describes the current situation, which leads to the consequence of 18. This in turn leads to an exhortation to take precautions (introduced with וְעַתָּה ‘& now’—19a), together with the consequences of failing to obey it (19b-c).

The following is a flowchart of vv. 17-19.



9.13b-c. הִשָּׁמֶם בְּבֹקֶר וְהִתְנַצַּב לְפָנַי פְּרֹעָה. ‘Rise early in the morning & present yourself before Pharaoh’. As in 4.4b-c, the sequence of imperatives implies that the first exhortation is of a preliminary nature.

9.13e. See 5.1c on preposed כֹּה ‘thus’.

9.14a. Instead of a conditional clause such as ‘If you refuse to let them go’ (v. 2a), the consequence of failing to obey the command of 13f is introduced with the temporal point of departure בְּפַעַם הַזֹּאת ‘at this time’ (‘in the cycle of plagues beginning now’—Cassuto p. 115). (‘**For this time** introduces what seems to be a result clause that assumes the Pharaoh’s continued refusal’—*UBS*.)

9.15a עֲתָה 'now': 'by now' (Cassuto p. 116). This point of departure signals a switch to the time prior to the 'this time' of 14a.

9.16a וְאִי־לָם 'But, On the other hand, Nevertheless' (*UBS*). The only instance of this adversative conjunction in Exodus; it introduces a countering point within the supportive material of vv. 15-16.

The proposed constituent בְּעֵבוֹר זֹאת 'for this purpose' is cataphoric, pointing forward and giving prominence to the purpose clauses of 16b-c.

9.18a. As in 8.21b, הִנְנִי 'here I' highlights the consequence of Pharaoh not obeying, while signalling a (temporary) switch of perspective from 'you' to 'I' (YHWH).

The final constituent בָּרָד כָּבֵד מְאֹד ('very heavy hail') is the DFE.

9.18b. The relative clause אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָיָה כְּמֹהוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם לְמִן־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד־עַתָּה 'such as [which] has not been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now' gives prominence within the speech to the hail.

9.19a. Two imperatives, so the first (the motion verb שְׁלַח 'send') is of a preliminary nature in relation to the second (הֵעֵז 'bring to refuge').

9.19b. The initial constituent כָּל־הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר־יִמְצָא בַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא יֵאָסֵף תְּבִיטָה 'every man and beast that is found outside & has not been brought indoors' is right-dislocated (left-dislocated in English), to signal a switch of attention and topic from what will be brought under shelter (19a).

The relative clause אֲשֶׁר־יִמְצָא בַשָּׂדֶה וְלֹא יֵאָסֵף תְּבִיטָה 'that is found outside & has not been brought indoors' also gives prominence within the speech to כָּל־הָאָדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה 'every man and beast'.

9.20-21. 'In both verses, contrary to the usual order followed in Biblical narrative, the subject precedes the predicate, in order to emphasize that what some did others did not do' (Cassuto p. 117). In particular, v. 20 is related to the previous speech by a switch of attention to דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה מִפְּרֹעָה 'those among Pharaoh's courtiers who feared the word of YHWH', instead of being the next event in sequence.

The absence of *waw* adds to the discontinuity with v.19 and may suggest that 20-21 are to be treated as background information.

The pre-verbal subject of v. 21 וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׂם לְבֹוֹ אֶל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה (&) 'those who did not set their heart on the word of YHWH' is separated from the verb by *waw* (contrast 20). The presence of *waw* conveys a degree of continuity between the two sentences, notwithstanding the switch of subject; e.g., because they take place at the same time.

9.23-24. Cassuto (p. 119) divides the storm into three stages, which may also be suggested by the apparently redundant naming of YHWH in 23b and 23d, and in the further reference to the hail in 24:

1. 'To begin with the text speaks of what the Lord prepared in heaven, causing thunder to be heard and bringing forth hail from His storehouses';
2. 'thereafter we are informed that this hail was rained down specifically upon the land of Egypt'.
3. 'In v. 24 the third stage is reached: the hail and the fire of the lightning reach the earth'.

9.23b. The subject יְהוָה (&) 'YHWH' is pre-verbal. This indicates that the clause is to be related to 23a by a switch of attention and topic from Moses, rather than as simply the next event in sequence.

9.24b. The relative clause **לְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה כְּמֵהוּ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מֵאֲזֵי הַיְּתָה לְגֹי** ‘such as [which] has not been in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation’ gives prominence within the narrative to the hail (compare v. 18b).

9.25a. The final constituent (**בְּהֶמְתָּ וְעַד־בְּהֵמָה**) ‘all that were in the open, both man and beast’) is the DFE.

9.25b. The object **וְאֵת כָּל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה** ‘(&) all the vegetation of the field’ is preposed for focal prominence.

The repeated reference to the hail marks this proposition as a separate point (Sarna translates it, ‘the hail also struck down...’—p. 46).

9.25c. The object **וְאֵת כָּל־עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה** ‘(&) every tree of the field’ is preposed for focal prominence.

9.26. As in 8.9 (Heb: 8.5), the contrastive limiter **רַק** ‘only’ introduces an important exception. The locative constituent **רַק בְּאֶרֶץ גּוֹשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** ‘only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were’ is preposed for focal prominence, to bring out the contrast.

As in 8.22b, commentators treat the relative clause as non-restrictive; it is not intended to specify that part of the land of Goshen where the children of Israel live. It may have been used to give prominence to the land of Goshen. More likely, it is a slowing-down device to highlight **לֹא הָיָה בְּרָד** ‘there was no hail’.

9.27-28. Pharaoh’s speech begins with the current situation (27d-f), followed by an exhortation (28a), which is supported in 28b (Cassuto [p. 120] translates **וְרַב מְהֵיָת קִלְתִּי אֱלֹהִים וּבָרָד**, ‘for there has been enough of this thunder [literally, ‘voices of God’] and hail’). The speech ends with promised consequences (28c-d).

The complement of 28b, **וְרַב** ‘(&) too much’, is placed first in the clause for focal prominence.

9.28d. The (auxiliary) verb **תִּסְכַּבֵּן** ‘you will increase’ ends with ‘paragogic *nun*’, which often indicates ‘marked emphasis’ (GKC §47*m*). The proposition can therefore be translated, ‘you shall certainly stay no longer’ (Durham pp. 125, 124). (See also ‘they will cease’.)

9.29b **כַּצֵּאתִי אֶת־הָעִיר** ‘As soon as I leave the city’ (NLT). A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch from the time of speaking.

9.29d. The subject **הַקִּלְוֹת** ‘the thunder claps’ is pre-verbal. As in 23b, this indicates that the clause is to be related to 29c by a switch of attention and topic from ‘I’ (Moses), rather than as simply the next event in sequence.

Waw is not used at the beginning of 29d, either. The absence of *waw* and the subject-initial construction mean that it is better NOT to introduce this proposition with ‘then’ (NLT) or ‘and then’ (Cassuto p. 121).

9.29e. As in 29d, the subject (**וְהַבָּרָד**) ‘(&) the hail’ is pre-verbal, to signal a switch of attention and topic from the thunder claps.

9.29g. The complement **לַיהוָה** ‘to YHWH’ precedes the subject for focal prominence.

9.30a. The separation of **וְאַתָּה וְעַבְדֶּיךָ יְיָ עִתִּי** ‘(&) you and your servants’ from the clause in which they are subject (30b) is a marked way of indicating the change of topic within the speech.³² The

³² Alternatively, ‘you’ may be a point of departure by renewal, introducing a different point about Pharaoh.

GNT translation, ‘But as for you and your officials’ is to be commended (see also Cassuto p. 121).

9.31a. The subject **וְהַשְׂעָרָה וְהַבָּשָׂמֶת** ‘(&) the flax & the barley’ is pre-verbal to signal a switch of attention. As noted earlier, the switch in this instance is from the reported conversation between Moses and Pharaoh to which crops were damaged by the hail.³³

9.32a. As in v. 31a, the subject **וְהַחֲטָיִת וְהַכִּסְמִית** ‘(&) the wheat & the spelt’ is pre-verbal to signal the switch of attention from the flax and barley (31).

9.32b. The complement **אַפְיִלָּת** ‘late’ precedes the subject for focal prominence.

9.33d. The subject **וּמָטָר** ‘(&) rain’ is pre-verbal to signal the switch of attention from the thunder and hail (33c).

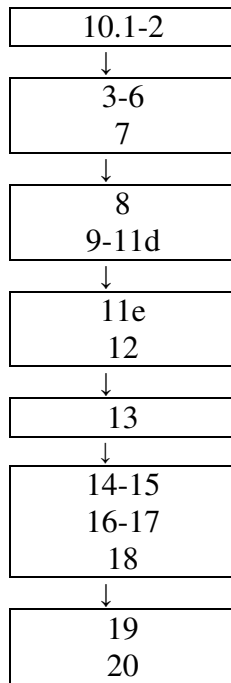
9.34-35. The series of three references to Pharaoh (34a, **הוּא** ‘he’—34d, 35) may suggest three distinct points about his attitude: he ‘reverted to his guilty ways’ (34c), he & his courtiers became ‘stubborn’ (34d), and his heart ‘stiffened’ (35a) (Sarna p. 48).

The further reference in 34b to the rain, hail and thunder claps (see 33b-d) may be a slowing-down device to highlight 34c.

The final constituent of 34d, **הוּא וְעַבְדָּיו** ‘he & his courtiers’ is left-dislocated (right-dislocated in English) to inform the reader that the courtiers also became stubborn, while keeping Pharaoh as the centre of attention.

(10.1-20: ‘Locusts’—Cassuto p. 122)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in vv. 3 and 13 (see also 9 & 12), of Pharaoh in 8 and 11e (see also 7 & 18), of the locusts in 14, and of YHWH in 19 (see also 20) divides this sub-section into at least seven units:



10.1-2. **כִּי** (‘for’) introduces material (1c-2d—see 9.34d) that supports the command of 1b.

³³ For the passive verb forms of 9.31-32 (**נִכְתְּהוּ** ‘was struck’, **לֹא נִכְּוּ** ‘was not struck’), Tagalog uses stative (*ma-*) forms.

10.1c. The pre-verbal subject אֲנִי ‘I’ signals a switch of attention from ‘you’ (Moses) and Pharaoh.

10.1d אֶתֵּי אֵלֶּיהָ ‘these signs of mine’: ‘the fearful plagues of the third cycle’ (Cassuto p. 123). The referent of the proximal demonstrative, whether cataphoric or not, is thematic.

10.2a-b. The direct object (אֶתֵּי אֵשֶׁר־שָׂמֵתִי בָּם) ‘how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians & my signs that I put among them’) is the DFE.

The relative clause (אֶשֶׁר־שָׂמֵתִי בָּם) ‘that I put among them’ also marks the signs as thematic.

10.3-6. As usual, the command (3d-f) is followed by supportive material introduced with כִּי (‘for’) which describes the consequences of not obeying.

10.3c. See 5.1c on preposed כֹּה ‘thus’.

10.4a. Within the conditional point of departure, the participle (מֵאֵן ‘refusing’) precedes the subject (אַתָּה ‘you’) for focal prominence.

10.4b. As usual, הִנְנִי ‘here I’ highlights the consequences of Pharaoh not obeying, while signalling a (temporary) switch of perspective from ‘you’ to ‘I’ (YHWH).

The order of constituents is marked, with the object אֲרֵבָה ‘locusts’ following the time word מָחָר ‘tomorrow’. ‘Locusts’ appears to be the DFE, even though it is followed by another constituent (בְּנִבְלָדְךָ ‘in your territory’), as they are the theme of the remainder of the speech.

10.5c-d. אֶת־יֵתֵר הַפְּלִטָּה הַנִּשְׁאַרְתָּ לָּכֶם מִן־הַבָּרָד ‘the surviving remnant that was left to you after the hail’ and אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ הַצֹּמַח לָּכֶם מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה ‘all the trees that grow for you in the field’ do not contain relative clauses in Hebrew (contrast 15), and are not thematic (see comment on 4b).

10.6b. By analogy with 9.24, the relative clause relates back to the locusts and gives them prominence within the speech.

10.7b. The proximal demonstrative pronoun זֶה ‘this one’ is used because Moses (‘this man’—*UBS*) or ‘this impasse’ (Durham p. 131) is thematic. A pragmatic effect of using the demonstrative may or may not be a ‘disrespectful allusion to’ him (Sarna p. 49).³⁴

10.8c. Two imperatives, so the first (the motion verb לָכוּ ‘go’) is of a preliminary nature in relation to the second (עֲבֹדוּ ‘serve’).

10.9b-c. The subjects are pre-verbal and focal, as the clauses have identificational articulation (NARR §2.1.2), because they answer Pharaoh’s question of 8d, ‘But just who will be going?’ (NIV).

10.9d. חַג־יְהוָה ‘festival of YHWH’ begins the clause for focal prominence.

10.10b-c. The focus of this sentence, which is ‘charged with bitter irony’ (Cassuto p. 125), is the final subordinate clause of time (כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲשַׁלַּח אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־טַפְּכֶם) ‘when I let you and your children go’); see Durham’s translation (p. 131): “‘Yahweh’ will indeed be with you when I send out you and your toddlers”, which seeks to bring out the ‘play on the verb הָיָה “be” and the tetragrammaton derived from it’ (p. 133).

³⁴ The order of constituents is default, with the subject pronominal (זֶה) before the non-subject pronominal (לָנוּ ‘for us’).

10.10d רָאָה 'see': 'take heed' (Cassuto p. 126). However, it may be taken as an introductory orienter to 10e: 'It is clear that...' (TEV; see *UBS*).

10.10e. The subject רָעָה 'evil' is focal.

10.11 נָא. 'Go is here qualified by a particle that softens the command' (*UBS*). This is captured in Durham's translation: 'The able-bodied men may go...' (p. 131).

10.11b-c. A sequence of two imperatives ('the able-bodied men may go & serve YHWH'). This may suggest, as in 4.4b-c, that the first event ('go') is only of a preliminary nature. However, the focus is on **who** may go and serve YHWH, rather than on what the able-bodied men are to do.

10.11d. The initial constituent אֵתהּ 'it' ('that'—NIV) is focal.

10.12b. The final constituent (בְּאַרְבֶּבֶת 'for the locust[s]') is the DFE (contrast v. 4b).

10.12c. The repetition of עַל-אַרְצֵי מִצְרַיִם 'on the land of Egypt' (an instance of overencoding) is probably a slowing-down device to highlight the next proposition (12d).

10.12d. The relative expression אֵת כֹּל-אֲשֶׁר הִשָּׁאִיר הַבָּקָר 'whatever the hail has left' probably **'intensifies the inclusiveness** of the referent' (NARR §10.3.6). (Also in 15c.)

10.13b. The pre-verbal reference to YHWH (יְיָהוָה) indicates that His bringing of the wind is to be related to 13a on the basis of a switch of attention from Moses. Translators should therefore NOT use a connective such as 'then' which would suggest a sequential relationship between 13a and 13b.

The distal demonstrative כָּל-הַיּוֹם הַהוּא 'all that day' is used anaphorically, possibly to communicate that it took place on that **same** day (see 5.6a and 8.22a (Heb: 8.18a)).

10.13c 'it became morning'. This independent clause is the equivalent of a temporal point of departure: 'when morning came' (Sarna p. 50).

The complement הַבֶּקֶר 'morning' is preposed for focal prominence.

10.13d. The subject וְרוּחַ הַקָּדִים (&) 'the east wind' is pre-verbal to mark the switch of topic from YHWH (13b).

10.14b. The repetition of בְּכֹל גְּבוּל מִצְרַיִם 'in all the territory of Egypt' (another instance of over-encoding) has the effect of giving prominence to the final constituent (כִּבְדֵּךְ מְאֹד 'very heavy'— the DFE).

10.14c-d לְפָנָיו 'Before it' and וְאַחֲרָיו (&) 'after it'. Temporal points of departure, signalling switches of time.

10.16d-17. Within Pharaoh's speech, וְעַתָּה '& now' introduces the exhortations of v. 17 that follow from the confession of 16d.

10.17a נָא. 'I pray you ... used to strengthen a request or soften a command, in this case probably doing both' (*UBS*).

אֵדָּה הַפֶּעַם 'just this once' (Durham p. 132). Pharaoh uses the limiting particle אֵדָּה to 'play down' his request and minimise any countering overtones from the fact that he has sinned (16d).³⁵

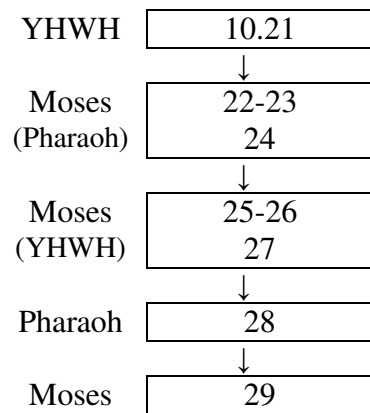
³⁵ Unlike אֵדָּה (v. 17c—see below), אֵדָּה is a simple limiter, without countering overtones (Levinsohn forthcoming).

10.17c רַק אֶת־הַמּוֹת הַזֶּה 'only this death'. This 'should not be understood here as "only this plague and nothing more," for the metaphor of **death** describes it as about the worst thing possible. NRSV translates "pray...that at the least he remove this deadly thing from me." (UBS)

10.19d. The absence of *waw* appears to turn this statement into a conclusion that describes the state resulting from the event of 19c, rather than the next event after it. See also vv. 23a & 26b.

(10.21-29: 'Darkness'—Cassuto p. 129)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in vv. 22, 25 and 29 (see also 24), and of Pharaoh in 28 (see also 24 & 27), divides this sub-section into at least five units, with initiators as indicated in the first column of the flow-chart:



10.21d. The repetition of הַחֹשֶׁךְ 'darkness' suggests that this final proposition is a distinct point in the speech.

10.22b. The order of constituents conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow, with יָמִים שְׁלֹשָׁתַיִם 'three days' as the DFE.

10.23c. The pre-verbal constituent וְלְכָל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (&) 'to all the children of Israel' signals a switch of attention from the Egyptians.

10.24d. The subject רַק צֹאנֵיכֶם וּבְקָרְכֶם 'only your flocks & herds' is pre-verbal for focal prominence. As usual, the presence of רַק 'only' introduces an important exception.

10.24f. The subject גַּם־טַפְּכֶם 'also your children' is pre-verbal for focal prominence. 'Your children' is added to 'you' (24c).

10.25b. This time, גַּם 'also' does not relate to אַתָּה 'you', but to the proposition. '[N]ot only do I not acquiesce in your reservation regarding our flocks and herds, but I go further and declare that in the end you will give more than you now refuse to concede. *You must also let us have* of your sheep and oxen...' (Cassuto p. 130). However, the first propositions of 26 imply that **Moses** is simply ... insisting that their own animals must be used for the sacrifice. In this sense the **also** means "in addition to our women and children" in verse 24.' (UBS)

The subject אַתָּה 'you' (Pharaoh) is pre-verbal to signal the switch of attention from Moses and the children of Israel (the 'you' of 24f).

10.26a. As in v. 24f, the subject וְגַם־מִקְבָּנֵי ('(&) also our livestock') is pre-verbal for focal prominence.

10.26c. כִּי ('for') introduces material (26c-f) that supports the assertions of 25b-26b.

Although מִמֶּנִּי 'from it', 'thereof' (Cassuto p. 130) refers to an established referent, the rest of the proposition is also established, so the preposing of מִמֶּנִּי gives it focal prominence.³⁶

10.26d. The subject וְאֵנָּה ('& we') is pre-verbal to signal a switch of attention from the livestock (26a-c).

10.28b-d 'Be gone from me! Take care not to see my face again'. The juxtaposition of these two imperatives may imply that the second is to be taken as an amplificatory restatement of the first, rather than as being in a sequential relationship. The first imperative may also be taken to be of a preliminary nature, in relation to the second.

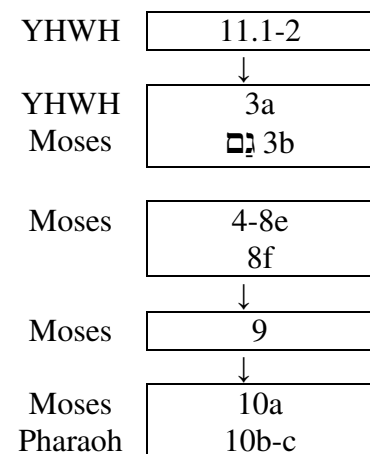
10.28e בַּיּוֹם רְאִיתָהּ פָּנָי 'on the day you see my face'. A temporal point of departure, signalling a switch of situation from that envisaged in 28c-d ('Take care not to see my face again').

10.29b. The initial constituent כֵּן 'right' is pre-verbal for focal prominence.

10.29c The combination of the negated verb לֹא־אֶסְקֶה 'not repeat' and עוֹד 'again' emphasises the negation, hence the NIV translation 'never'.

(11.1-8(10): 'The Warning regarding the Plague of the First-Born'—Cassuto p. 131)

The reference to 'the man Moses' in 3b, which is introduced with the additive וְ (‘Moreover’—Sarna p. 52), signals a switch of attention from YHWH to Moses. The apparently redundant naming of Moses in vv. 4, 9 and 10, and of YHWH in 3a (see also the naming of Pharaoh in 8f & 10b), divides this sub-section into at least five units, with initiators as indicated in the first column of the flow-chart:³⁷



11.1-3. Cassuto suggests, 'When Moses heard Pharaoh's dire threat, he recalled the directives that were given him long ago concerning the tenth and decisive plague... It seemed to him as if that Divine pronouncement was reiterated at that moment...' (p. 132).

11.1b. The object עוֹד נִנְעֶה אֶחָד 'yet one plague' is preposed for focal prominence.

³⁶ This is probably what is meant by the *UBS* comment that 'For we must take of them places the emphasis on of them'.

³⁷ 11.4 appears to resume the narrative of 10.29, rather than developing from 11.1-3a, though it may also relate to 3b.

11.1c. The insertion of a comma following ‘After that’ indicates that NIV and NLT consider כֵּן אַחֲרַיִם to be a temporal point of departure (in position P1). Contrast v. 8e (see below).

11.1d כַּשְׁלַחוֹ ‘when he lets [you] go’. Tail-head linkage with 1c, as a slowing down device to highlight the assertion of 1e.

11.1e כָּלָה נִגְרַשׁ יִגְרַשׁ (completely to drive out he will drive you out). Repetition of the verb with the infinite absolute emphasises ‘drive out’. In turn, this ‘emphatic form suggests that the word *kalah* should be understood as **completely**, or “without restrictions” (*UBS*).

11.2a. נָא ‘please’ again softens the command.

11.2c. The order of constituents conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow, with the final constituent כְּלֵי־כֶסֶף וְכְלֵי־זָהָב ‘articles of silver & articles of gold’ being the DFE.

11.3b. As noted above, הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה ‘Moses himself’ (Sarna p. 52) marks a switch of attention from YHWH (vv. 1-3a) to Moses.

11.4-8. ‘This is a continuation of 10:29’ (ibid.).

11.4b. See 5.1c on preposed כֹּה ‘thus’.

11.4c כְּחֻצַּת הַלַּיְלָה ‘About midnight’. A temporal point of departure, marking a switch from the time of speaking.

11.5b-c. הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּאוֹ ‘who sits on the throne’ (v. 5b) is not a relative clause in Hebrew.

However, the next constituent contains the relative clause אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרָיִם הָרְחִים ‘who is behind the millstones’ (5c). It is probably used to intensify the inclusiveness of כָּל־בְּכוֹרֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ‘every first-born in the land of Egypt’ (5a).

11.6a. The apparently redundant constituent בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ‘in all the land of Egypt’ probably marks this verse as a distinct point in the speech.

11.6b-c. The complex relative clause אֲשֶׁר כָּמֹהוּ לֹא נִהְיְתָה וְכָמֹהוּ לֹא תִסָּף ‘such as [which] has never been or will ever be again’ intensifies צַעֲקָה גְדֹלָה ‘a great cry’.

The placement of כָּמֹהוּ ‘like it’ and וְכָמֹהוּ (&) ‘like it’ before their respective verbs probably gives focal prominence to the negative verbs לֹא נִהְיְתָה ‘has not occurred’ and לֹא תִסָּף ‘will not be again’.

11.7a. The initial constituent וְלִכְלֵ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (&) ‘among the children of Israel’ is a point of departure, to mark the switch of attention from what was happening throughout Egypt.

11.7c. The complement of תִּדְעוּן ‘you may know’ begins with the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר ‘that which’, not with the interpretive use marker כִּי ‘that’. Cassuto captures the effect with the translation ‘that you may know what distinction the Lord makes...’ (p. 133).³⁸

11.8. ‘at this point Moses speaks in his own name’ (ibid.).

³⁸ If a translation into a Philippine language requires ‘know that...’, then the addition of ‘for sure’ will convey the same sort of idea.

11.8a. ‘**And all these your servants** suggests that Moses is standing before the king and his “officials”’ (*UBS*).

The final constituent of the clause (אֵלַי ‘to me’) is the DFE.

11.8c. לֵאמֹר ‘saying’ introduces the content of what they will say as they ‘bow low to me’.

11.8d. A relative clause (אֲשֶׁר-בָּרַגְלֶיךָ ‘who follow you’—Sarna p. 53) may have been used to intensify the inclusiveness of וְכָל-הָעָם ‘all the people’.

11.8e. NLT treats וְאַחֲרַיִךְ-כֵּן ‘(& after that’ as a prominent focal constituent (in P2) by translating this proposition: ‘Only then will I go!’. (Contrast v. 1c.)

11.8f. The order of constituents conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow, with the final constituent (בְּחַרְרֵי-אֵף ‘in the heat of anger’) as the DFE.

11.9-10 Cassuto (p. 134) calls these two verses an ‘Epilogue’. ‘This summary is needed because Moses’ negotiations with Pharaoh are over’ (Sarna p. 53). However, the speech of YHWH to Moses in v. 9 is presented as being in sequence with Moses’ departure from Pharaoh in 8f.

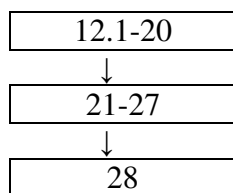
In contrast, the pre-verbal reference to Moses & Aaron in 10a (וּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן) relates what follows to the context on the basis of a switch of attention. In turn, the inclusive reference to ‘all these wonders’ (אֵת-כָּל-הַמִּוִּפְתִּים הָאֵלֶּה) is indicative of a summary statement. (The proximal demonstrative is used because the referents are thematic.)

12.1-13.16 ‘The Exodus’ (*UBS*)

UBS divides this section into three major parts: ‘Preparations for the Passover (12.1-28)’; ‘The departure from Egypt (12.29-42)’; and ‘Additional instructions for celebrating the exodus (12.43–13.16)’. In other words, two blocks of instruction bracket the narrative recounting of the exodus.

(12.1-28: ‘Preparations for the Passover’—*UBS*)

The apparently redundant naming of Moses in v. 21, and of the people of Israel in 28, divides the narrative of this sub-section into three units:



12.1b לֵאמֹר ‘saying’. A redundant verbal form that presumably highlights the following speech.

12.2-20. Commentators are divided as to whether this speech should be divided into two major parts after v. 13 or 14. Cassuto’s division is after 13:

2-13: ‘Instructions on the observance of passover in Egypt’ (p. 136);

14-20: ‘Directives for the observance of passover in the future’ (p. 140).

The switch from בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה ‘in this night’ (vv. 8, 12) to הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ‘this day’ (14, 17) contributes to this division. *UBS*, however, prefers a division between vv. 14 and 15.

Verses 2-13 may be subdivided as follows, on the basis of references to time and the apparently redundant reference in 6b to ‘all the assembly of the congregation of Israel’ (קָהָל עֵדֻת־יִשְׂרָאֵל):³⁹

2: Introductory statement about ‘this month’.

3-11: What ‘you’ (Moses) are to tell ‘all the congregation of Israel’ to do:

3c-6a: ‘on the 10th day of this month’, until ‘the 14th day of this month’

6b-7: on the 14th day

8-11: ‘in this night’ (the evening of the 15th).

12-13: What ‘I’ (YHWH) will do ‘in this night’.

12.2a. The verbless clause is consistent with this being ‘a statement of an existing fact’, rather than a ‘precept to commence the year with the month of Nisan’ (Cassuto p. 137).

12.2b ראשון ‘first’. Preposing gives focal prominence to the adjective, rather than to the complement as a whole.

12.3b לאמר ‘saying’ introduces the content of the imperative דבר ‘speak’.

12.3c-5. What ‘all the congregation of Israel’ are to do ‘on the tenth day of this month’ changes in 4c from 3rd person (plural and singular) to 2nd person plural. A change from indirect to direct reporting is usually associated with a shift from background to foreground information (see NARR §7.1.1).

12.3c בעשר לתחדש ‘on the tenth day of this month’. A temporal point of departure, marking a switch from the more generic ‘this month’ of v. 2.

12.4a ואם ימעט הבית מהגית משה (&) ‘if any household is too small for a whole lamb’. A conditional point of departure, marking a switch from the situation envisaged in v. 3.

12.4c. Muraoka (p. 35) considers איש ‘each one’ to constitute ‘part of an adverbial idiomatic expression’. In contrast, Runge (p.c.) divides the pre-verbal constituents into a topical point of departure (איש) and a preposed focal constituent (לפי אכלו) ‘according to the number of souls’—Cassuto p. 137).

12.5a. The complement שנה בן־זכר בן־שנה ‘an unblemished year-old male lamb’ is preposed for focal prominence.

12.5b. The object מן־הכבשים ומן־העזים ‘from the sheep & from the goats’ is preposed for focal prominence.

12.6b. I take the shift from 2nd person plural back to ‘all the assembly of the congregation of Israel’ (כל קהל עדת־ישראל) to be an instance of overencoding, which marks the next stage (development unit) of the ritual.⁴⁰

12.7b. The relative clause אשר־יאכלו אתו בהם ‘in which they eat it’ marks the houses of v. 7a as thematic. (Also in 13a.)

12.8b. The initial constituent צלי־אש ומצות על־מררים ‘roasted of fire & unleavened bread with bitter herbs’ is preposed for focal prominence.

³⁹ Contrast Durham’s (pp. 153-54) divisions of vv. 3-13, which are as follows: 3-6, 7-10, 11-12, 13.

⁴⁰ However, Cassuto considers the shift to imply ‘that, even though they dwell in different places, they become integrated into a single assembly by their united and simultaneous act of worship’ (p. 138).

12.9. A second change from indirect to direct reporting. The effect is to make the prohibitions of vv. 9-10 and the accompanying instructions ‘more potent’ (NonNarr §7.1.1).

12.9b **כִּי אִם-צָלִי-אֵשׁ** ‘but roasted [of fire]’ (RSV). The interpretive use marker **כִּי** and the conditional marker **אִם** ‘if’ are used to reinforce the instruction of 8b.

12.10b **וְהִנָּתַר מִמָּנוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר** ‘(&) that which is left over from it till morning’. A referential point of departure (in P1), marking a switch of topic and attention from what has been eaten (see 10a).

The following constituent, **בְּאֵשׁ** ‘in the fire’ is preposed (in P2) for focal prominence.

12.11a **וְכָכָה** ‘thus’: points forward to and highlights the rest of the verse.

12.11f. The complement **פֶּסַח** ‘passover’ precedes the subject for focal prominence.

12.12c. The initial constituent, **וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם** ‘(&) on all the gods of Egypt’, is preposed for focal prominence.

12.13a. The order of constituents is marked, with the benefactive pronoun **לָכֶם** ‘for you’ after the subject. This may be for contrastive prominence (v. 12 concerned judgement on the Egyptians). Alternatively, it may associate ‘for you’ with **לְאֵת** ‘for a sign’: ‘the blood shall be a sign for you’ (Cassuto p. 140).

12.14-20. The references in vv. 14 and 17 to observing this day as an ordinance for ever form an *inclusio*. This suggests that the paragraph may be divided into two parts: vv. 14-17 and 18-20. Note, however, that the strengthening proposition of 15c is repeated in 19b.

12.14a. The benefactive pronoun **לָכֶם** ‘for you’ again follows the subject. This time, the effect is to associate it with **לְזָכוֹן** ‘to a memorial’: ‘this day shall become a memorial day for you’.

12.14c **לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם** ‘to/for your generations’. NIV treats this initial constituent as a temporal point of departure (in P1). However, I think it more likely that **לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם** ‘a statute of perpetuity to your generations’ is a single constituent, preposed (in P2) for focal prominence.

12.15a. The temporal expression **שִׁבְעַת יָמִים** ‘seven days’ is preposed (in P2) for focal prominence.

12.15b. The limiting particle **אֲדָּ** ‘just’ (see 10.17a) introduces a proposition that strengthens the instruction of 15a: ‘On the first day just remove the yeast from your houses’ (NIV, with ‘just’ added).

בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן ‘on the first day’. A temporal point of departure (in P1—contrast 15a), to mark a switch from the ‘seven days’ of 15a.

12.15c **כָּל-אֹכֵל חֶמֶץ** ‘anyone eating leaven’. A right-dislocated constituent (left-dislocated in English), to mark a (temporary) switch of topic from the ‘you’ of 15a who obey the command to eat bread without leaven.

הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא ‘that person’. The distal demonstrative is appropriate because the referent is NOT the centre of attention in the remaining propositions of vv. 14-16.

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