Take Them, and Come? – The Interpretation of the Syntax of 1 Samuel 20:21

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Abstract: This paper addresses the varying interpretations of 1 Samuel 20:21 – a verse central to the narrative concerning the farewell between David and Jonathan in the Hebrew Bible. Two syntactical problems will be discussed in the light of different translations of the verse, taking the varying scholarly opinions into account and placing the verse into its literary and linguistic context: namely the function of the prepositive infinitive absolute introducing a conditional clause: *ʾim ʾāmōr ʾōmar*; and the use of the combination of an energic with a lengthened imperative: *qāḥennū wā-ḇōʾāh*. After a careful evaluation of the evidence, the paper provides a translation which offers a satisfactory explanation for all the issues raised.

Introduction

This paper will revisit the conventional interpretations of 1 Samuel 20:21, aiming to re-evaluate the scholarly interpretations of two syntactical problems posed by the text. The verse is taken from the narrative of David's escape from King Saul, who has repeatedly tried to kill him. At the beginning of the chapter, Jonathan still believes in the possibility of reconciliation between his friend and father, whilst David is convinced that Saul wants him dead. A plan is devised to find out what Saul wants: David will miss the important feast on the new moon, and if Saul is enraged at his absence, David is in danger. The verse central to this article concerns the establishment of a coded message from Jonathan to David – a way to inform David (and no-one else) of Saul's intentions: after the king's feast, Jonathan will shoot some arrows into the field, and if he tells his servant to gather the arrows, David is safe. If he does not, David is in danger and should run for his life (verse 22).

To illustrate the syntactic problems at hand, the verse in question is given below, in Hebrew (MT, BHS), and for the non-specialists in three common English translations. The passages of interest are highlighted in each version. The first section will focus on the syntactic issues related to the prepositive infinitive absolute introducing a conditional clause: *ʾim ʾāmōr ʾōmar*; the second on the combination of an energic with a lengthened imperative: *qāḥennū wā-ḇōʾāh*.

1 Samuel 20:21

וְהִנֵּה אֶשְׁלַח אֶת־הַנַּעַר לֵךְ מְצָא אֶת־הַחִצִּים אִם־אָמֹר אֹמַר לַנַּעַר הִנֵּה הַחִצִּים מִמְּךָ וָהֵנָּה קָחֶנּוּ וָבֹאָה

כִּי־שָׁלוֹם לְךָ וְאֵין דָּבָר חַי־יְהוָה:

> NKJV (1982): And there I will send a lad, *saying*, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm.

> JPS (1917): And, behold, I will send the lad: Go, find the arrows. If I say unto the lad: Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee; take them, and come; for there is peace to thee and no hurt, as the LORD liveth.

> ESV (2016): And behold, I will send the boy, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger.

The three English translations given here show a glimpse of the various interpretations of this verse. For example, the NKJV feels the need to use the word 'expressly' to emphasise the hypothetical situation. What kind of emphasis could be meant here will be a point of discussion in the first paragraph. The JPS ends the hypothetical speech to the servant earlier, as it takes both imperatives to belong to the following clause; whilst the NKJV does the opposite, as both verbs are addressed to the servant; and the ESV places the end of the direct speech between the two imperatives. The underlaying linguistic issues behind these choices will be assessed in detail in this paper, thus elucidating what kind of uncertainties are hidden in the Hebrew text, and the debates surrounding them. This article offers an analysis of these two syntactic issues, taking into consideration and relying on formative recent developments in the field of Biblical Hebrew syntax and treating the issues in their linguistic context, where they have previously often been studied in isolation.

1. 'אִם־אָמֹר אֹמַר': a paronomastic infinitive in a conditional clause

In this verse, a prepositive paronomastic infinitive absolute[1] appears in front of a first-person imperfect of the same root, initiating the protasis of a conditional clause. In verse 22, a second option is given, forming a combination of two related conditional sentences. For the syntactic analysis of this clause, the relation between topic (the part of the sentence containing old information) and focus (the part containing new information) is particularly important in this regard. The context of the verse is of particular importance in this case, as similar constructions in the surrounding narrative will be considered. This paragraph will go into detail about this construction and its meaning, influenced by the factors just mentioned.

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[1] For the concept of paronomasia, see Czapla, "Paronomasie," 649–652. The construction has also been called a "tautological infinitive", cf. Goldenberg, "Tautological Infinitive," 36–85, but this is generally considered to be an "ill-suited label", as a tautology denotes a repetition of meaning in general, which does not offer a satisfactory definition of the concept, cf. Gzella, ""Emphasis or Assertion?," 488; Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 392.

1.1. Fronted extraposition: Ewald and Goldenberg

Heinrich Ewald (1870) was the first scholar to explain the paronomastic infinitive with the concept of fronted extraposition.[2] He considered the repetition of the verbal root to be the Biblical Hebrew way of extraposing the verb, where some other languages would use a form of the verb 'to do', cf. his example taken from his native German vernacular "*reden that er nicht*" 'Reading he didn't do', vis-à-vis אֶקְנֶה קָנוֹ 'It is buying that I will do (buy)', 2 Sam. 24:24.[3] This position was later expounded upon by Gideon Goldenberg in a comprehensive article on the occurrence of this construction in a wide variety of languages.[4]

　　Goldenberg discerns two main types of extraposition by infinitival paronomasia. In Type A, the infinitive is extraposed and denotes the topic, and the finite verb and what follows the focus. The infinitive introduces the predicate, with a new talking point, cf. Goldenberg's example "(As for) speaking French, he does it/he speaks it."[5] The second part of this sentence gives more details about the activity, namely that the 'he' is doing it, and not something else.[6] In Type B, the roles are reversed: the infinitive refers to the new information, while the predicate makes up the topic. In English, this would appear in cleft sentences: "What he does, is speaking/It is speaking that he does (as opposed to staying silent)."[7] When it comes to conditional sentences, the topic at hand, Goldenberg assumes that these two types can lose something of their specificity and "turn into plainly-'strengthened' statements, which are actually in (stressed) contrast to their own negation."[8] If we follow his theory, this can also be the case in 1 Samuel 20. Goldenberg cites verse 7 as an example of a "Type B-like conditional": אִם־כֹּה יֹאמַר טוֹב שָׁלוֹם לְעַבְדֶּךָ וְאִם־חָרֹה יֶחֱרֶה לוֹ דַּע כִּי־כָלְתָה הָרָעָה מֵעִמּוֹ "if thus he says, namely 'Well', your servant will have peace; but if *angry* he will be (angry), be sure that evil is determined by him."[9] On its own, this sentence would be translated as 'It is angry that he will be', where the focus, חָרֹה, is extraposed from the rest of the sentence. In this complex sentence, it is highlighted that Saul's possible anger is the new information.

　　The content and structure of 'our' verse 21 is very similar to verse 7, but the infinitive occurs at the other end of the conditional sentence, and refers to the topic instead of the focus.[10] That means, according to Goldenberg's theory, that this must be a 'Type A-like' construction in a conditional sentence, which should be translated as follows: אִם־אָמֹר אֹמַר לַנַּעַר הִנֵּה הַחִצִּים מִמְּךָ וָהֵנָּה קָחֶנּוּ וָבֹאָה כִּי־שָׁלוֹם לְךָ וְאֵין דָּבָר חַי־יְהוָה: "If, with regard to saying: I should say to the boy: 'look, the arrows are on this side of you take them', then you should come, as there is peace for you and no danger as the Lord lives.' (²²But if I say to…)". Here, the topic (Jonathan's speaking) is extraposed from the sentence, where it introduces the focus, initiated by the imperfect אֹמַר, and continuing up to the following verse, which also expands on 'what Jonathan would say', as it gives the second option in another conditional clause. Crucially, this structure prevents the use of the same structure as in verse 7, where two different verbs are used.

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[2] Ewald, *Ausführliches lehrbuch*, 782, §312. Cf. also §280b, p. 699–700.

[3] Ewald, *Ausführliches lehrbuch*, 782.

[4] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive'," 64ff.

[5] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive'," 51, 69.

[6] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive'," 69.

[7] Joosten, "Three Remarks, " 102–103.

[8] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive'," 69.

[9] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive',", 70. Italics original.

[10] Compare also verse 6, (…) אִם־פָּקֹד יִפְקְדֵנִי.

Goldenberg's analysis of the paronomastic infinitive as a form of extraposition has received broad appreciation,[11] but it does not explain all instances of the phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew. That leads him to posit another type of paronomasia for that language, namely Type C. In this type, there is no case of extraposition as the infinitive and the finite verb are not recognized as separate conditions.[12] Instead, the repetition of the verbal root with the infinitive absolute has an intensifying function, cf. Ex. 3:7a: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רָאֹה רָאִיתִי אֶת־עֳנִי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרָיִם, translated by the NRSV as "Then the LORD said, 'I have *observed* the misery of my people who are in Egypt'", as opposed to 'I have seen (…)'.[13]

This Type C-construction is very common in Biblical Hebrew, and, according to critics, many, if not all, of the cases explained as Type A- or Type B-constructions can also be read as Type C-constructions.[14] Compare the translations of 1 Sam. 20:21 in the AKJV and NKJV, among many more: 'If I *expressly* say', where the verb is intensified.[15]

The label "intensification", and its counterparts "emphasis" and "strengthening" appear in many studies on the topic, cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, who describe the purpose of infinitival paronomasia as "in various ways to define more accurately or to strengthen the idea of the verb" in various degrees of emphasis;[16] and Waltke and O'Connor, who discern that "the precise nuance of intensification must be discovered from the broader context."[17] Two other studies concerning such an explanation will be highlighted in the following paragraph.

1.2. Emphatic or contrastive: Muraoka and Joosten

Joosten, not convinced by Goldenberg's theory of fronted extraposition, suggests that the relationship between the infinitive absolute and the finite verb can be considered as one of apposition, i.e., "as an attributive relationship between two elements of the same rank (e.g., substantive – substantive, or adjective – adjective), as in 'John the Baptist' or 'Mount Sinai'."[18] Such an appositional relationship is also expressed "tautologically" in Biblical Hebrew with adjectives (Ecc. 7:24: וְעָמֹק עָמֹק מִי יִמְצָאֶנּוּ "and deep, deep, who will find out?"), substantives (Deut. 16:20: צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף "justice, justice, you shall pursue"), and adverbs (Gen. 7:19: וְהַמַּיִם גָּבְרוּ מְאֹד מְאֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ "And the waters prevailed very much upon the earth") – and Joosten argues that the paronomastic infinitive is construed along the same principle.[19] The correlation between repetition and intensification is a language universal, he argues, and must simply be accepted – a "diffuse linguistic phenomenon" like this allows for a vague term like "emphasis."[20] Something is said twice – so the speaker must want to stress his words.[21] The nature of this emphasis can only be determined in individual cases, on the basis of their context and speech situation. However, Joosten admits that more often than not, there is a contrastive

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[11] It is called 'certainly brilliant', even by Joosten, "Three Remarks," 103, who disagrees with the application of the theory to Biblical Hebrew.

[12] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive," 71.

[13] Goldenberg, "'Tautological Infinitive', 72; Joosten, "Three Remarks," 103.

[14] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 104; Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures,* 91.

[15] The same is true for verse 7: 'if he loses his temper' (AKJV), 'but if he is very angry' (NKJV), and the majority of paronomastic infinitive absolutes in common English translations.

[16] Cowley and Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §113l.

[17] Waltke and O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 594–85. For further details and refences, compare the literature survey in Kim, *The Function of the Tautological Infinitive,* 17ff.

[18] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 104.

[19] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 105.

[20] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 104–105. In his argumentation, the author refers to Kouwenberg's treatment of the Semitic D-stem; Kouwenberg, *Gemination in the Akkadian Verb.*

[21] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 105.

element.[22] Applying this to I Sm. 20:21, a translation involving some sort of emphasis could be used, possibly like the already cited intensified translation "If I expressly say (…)".

It must be said that such a conclusion does not offer much to the reader. The presence of "a degree of emphasis or intensification"[23] in Biblical Hebrew can hardly be denied, as for any other language, but these concepts must be explained upon on linguistic grounds, instead of being taken for granted by themselves – what *is* emphasis exactly, and with what kinds are we dealing with?[24] Next to that, the comparison between the repeated adjectives, substantives and adverbs on the one hand and the paronomastic infinitive on the other leaves something to be desired. The constructions are not identical, and the question remains whether a comparison should be made on the basis of the repetition of the verbal root in a different form.

Muraoka goes slightly further in his analysis of the nuances of the paronomastic infinitive. He notes that the so-called "emphasis" is placed on a certain modality of the clause instead of on the verbal action.[25] He lists eight different modalities/nuances of the construction: affirmation, pressing request, absolute obligation, opposition, strengthened condition, intensification, rhetorical question, and forcing special attention.[26] He also notes that the construction appears most often in lively discourse and legal texts, and only rarely in narrative prose, demonstrating such a strong personal involvement, either by the speaker in the discourse, or a condition deemed crucial in a legal formula.[27]

In the case of conditional clauses, like the one discussed in this paragraph, Joüon and Muraoka note that the paronomastic infinitive can have the nuance of "but" or "on the other hand" in an opposition, thus stressing the large difference between the impact of the two options.[28] They mention I Sam. 20:7 and 21 in this context, where this explanation fits *par excellence*: the choice between the two options is truly a matter between life and death.[29] The difference between the construction being situated in the first part of the dilemma (vs. 7) or the second (vs. 21) is mentioned, but not explained.[30] This could be seen as compatible with Goldenberg's theory – the construction could in theory have both nuances of opposition and fronted extraposition.

Joüon and Muraoka offer some more insight into what can be meant by "emphasis" or "strengthening" in the context of infinitival paronomasia, but the modalities listed still offer a rather broad description of the paronomastic infinitive. Whether a more unifying approach can be found in the studies which approach the construction as a marker for assertion, will be assessed in the following paragraph.

1.3. Assertive: Callaham and Kim

Yoo-Ki Kim states that the function of the paronomastic infinitive can be determined further than merely as an emphatic marker, arguing that the construction is connected to the concept of "assertion", i.e., the speaker's belief that the proposition is correct.[31] According to Kim, the

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[22] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 108.

[23] Joosten, "Three Remarks," 105.

[24] Cf. the criticism in Kim, *Tautological infinitive*, 16 and Van der Merwe, "The Vague Term 'Emphasis'," 130 n. 44.

[25] Muraoka, *Emphatic Words*, 86.

[26] Muraoka, *Emphatic Words*, 86–88.

[27] Muraoka, *Emphatic Words*, 89. For a detailed discussion of the contribution, see Eskhult, "Hebrew Infinitival Paronomasia," 27–32.

[28] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 393, §123g.

[29] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 393, §123g.

[30] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 393, §123g.

[31] Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 74.

infinitive absolute placed next to the predicate underscores the predicate, and thus draws attention to the finite verb itself.[32]

On the basis of Dik's *Theory of Functional Grammar*[33] Kim analyses that the BH paronomastic infinitive does not specify the verb or the clause internally, but functions as a "proposition operator", i.e., denoting the speaker's judgement towards what he has just said.[34] This can go two ways: Dik and Kim propose an *assertive focus* and a *contrastive focus*. If the speaker is of the opinion that the listener does not know anything about the proposition, the focus is assertive; and if he feels like he needs to correct the listener's contrary belief, he uses the contrastive focus. In English, and presumably also in Biblical Hebrew, this can also be done by a change in intonation. Compare Kim's italicised examples, 1 for assertion and 2 for contrast:[35]

> A1: What did you do?
> B1: I *studied syntax*.
>
> A2: Did he go to London?
> B2: No, he went *to Paris*.

In Biblical Hebrew, the contrastive function is clearly secondary. Contrast can also be expressed in the clause itself, and it does not exist in many paronomastic infinitival constructions. However, according to Kim, infinitival paronomasia always seems to have an assertive function, meaning that the speaker commits "to the factuality of his proposition."[36] This does explain why the construction is so prevalent in "lively" conversations with substantial emotional involvement, and likewise in the legal texts.[37]

Callaham's 2010 volume also approaches the paronomastic infinitive from the viewpoint of assertion. His analysis is of particular importance to the study of 1 Sam. 20, as it involves a case-by-case study of the paronomastic infinitives in the chapter.[38] This paper will focus on the conditional clauses, only peripherally discussed by Callaham (vs. 6–7 and 21–22). If the function of the paronomastic infinitive indeed is one of assertion, the constructions in the following verses also further reveal the expectations both David and Jonathan have of the plan they are making. In verse 1–3, the reader already finds out that David thinks his life is in danger, whilst Jonathan still believes everything will be alright, as his father would not hide anything from him. In the following verses, the two make their plan. Both have suggestions for its execution and express them in pairs of conditional clauses with remarkably placed paronomastic infinitives.

In verse 6 and 7, David reveals his plan for the feast. He will not attend, and Jonathan should observe Saul's reaction. The first conditional clause, in verse 6, is introduced with a paronomastic infinitive: אִם־פָּקֹד יִפְקְדֵנִי. As David believes Saul is trying to kill him, he expects that the king would notice his absence. Verse 7 consists of two conditional clauses, detailing the possible options for Saul's answer. The first does not contain a paronomastic infinitive, but the second one does: וְאִם־חָרֹה יֶחֱרֶה. If the construction does indeed mark assertion, David's assumptions are also highlighted in the syntax of the passage. For David, the most probable

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[32] Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 75.

[33] Dik, *Functional Grammar 1,* 51ff.

[34] π_3 in Dik's system, cf. Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 73 and Dik, *Functional Grammar 1*, 63–64, 66.

[35] Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 74.

[36] Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 74.

[37] Kim, *Tautological Infinitive*, 85.

[38] Callaham, *Modality*, 103–104.

result of the situation is Saul noticing, and getting angry. Both options take the infinitive after the verb.[39]

David to Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20:6–7:

⁶אִם־**פָּקֹד יִפְקְדֵנִי** אָבִיךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ נִשְׁאֹל נִשְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי דָוִד לָרוּץ בֵּית־לֶחֶם עִירוֹ כִּי זֶבַח

הַיָּמִים שָׁם לְכָל־הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה׃ ⁷אִם־כֹּה יֹאמַר טוֹב שָׁלוֹם לְעַבְדֶּךָ **וְאִם־חָרֹה יֶחֱרֶה** לוֹ דַּע כִּי־

כָלְתָה הָרָעָה מֵעִמּוֹ׃

⁶ If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' ⁷ If he says thus: '*It is* well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. (NKJV)

Jonathan makes his suggestions in verses 21 and 22, and like David, he uses the infinitive absolute to signal the outcome he believes is most probable, in the phrase central to this chapter. The difference is that Jonathan believes in a happy end: he thinks Saul does not want to kill David, and that he can consequently tell David he can come to meet him, in code. In verse 22, where he reveals the second, unpleasant option, he does not use the infinitive.[40] Note that Jonathan only explains the code until *after* this construction is used. If one follows the analysis suggested here, the syntax of the first part of the verse is used to foreshadow the upcoming plot point in the second part – a signal aimed not only at the literary character of David (to whom it appears meaningless at first – as the 'key' is only put into words afterwards), but, taking a step back, also at the readers of the narrative. The literary narrative of this entire chapter concerns the conflicting expectations of the two protagonists, and that is also reflected in this case.

Jonathan to David, 1 Sam. 20:21–22:

²¹וְהִנֵּה אֶשְׁלַח אֶת־הַנַּעַר לֵךְ מְצָא אֶת־הַחִצִּים אִם־**אָמֹר אֹמַר** לַנַּעַר הִנֵּה

הַחִצִּים מִמְּךָ וָהֵנָּה קָחֶנּוּ וָבֹאָה כִּי־שָׁלוֹם לְךָ וְאֵין דָּבָר חַי־יְהוָה׃ ²²וְאִם־כֹּה

אֹמַר לָעֶלֶם הִנֵּה הַחִצִּים מִמְּךָ וָהָלְאָה לֵךְ כִּי שִׁלַּחֲךָ יְהוָה׃

²¹ And there I will send a lad, *saying,* 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the Lord lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. ²² But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you'—go your way, for the Lord has sent you away. (NKJV)

Callaham's study goes far beyond the elements discussed here, but this part on the infinitive absolute and conditional modality adds a new dimension to the study of this verse, even more so when combined with Kim's work. The two studies show that, as far as 1 Samuel 20 goes, the theory of assertion fits the situation in the narrative rather well. It adds a new aspect to the

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[39] A third paronomastic infinitive in these two verses is found in the second half of verse 6: נִשְׁאַל נִשְׁאֹל, where David gives Jonathan the fake excuse for his absence. The excuse is repeated in verse 28. Here too, the speaker commits to the factuality of his claim, even though it is a lie – David seeks dispensation of the king and wants to assure him that he could not make it, Callaham, *Modality*, 105. As this instance does not occur in a conditional clause, it is not essential for the current argument.

[40] Callaham, *Modality*, 104–105.

interpretation of the chapter, and shines new light on the interpretation of such clauses.
        However, a deeper dive into the occurrences of the paronomastic infinitive in conditional clauses is also needed. A large portion of the 63 cases where the conditional particle אִם is followed by the infinitive absolute consist of responses to divine commands, often with the formula אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמַע, "if you obey …" (e.g., Ex. 15:26, 19:5, Deut. 8:19 and more).[41] These can easily be read as assertive, viewed in the light of divine (omni)potency. In other cases, the picture is more nuanced. Compare Judges 16:11:

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11וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אִם־אָסוֹר יַאַסְרוּנִי בַּעֲבֹתִים חֲדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נַעֲשָׂה בָהֶם

מְלָאכָה וְחָלִיתִי וְהָיִיתִי כְּאַחַד הָאָדָם:

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> [11] So he [Simson] said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man." (NKJV)

Here, Simson is trying to convince Delilah that he would not be able to escape from new ropes, a conditional sentence which at least theoretically could take an assertive marker – Simson wants to assert to Delilah that this would indeed make him weak, even though it is a lie. The verse is part of a broader narrative where Delilah tries to discover how to subdue Simson. Three times (verse 7, 11 and 13) Simson lies, but the fourth time he tells the truth, i.e., by cutting his hair (verse 17). This verse is the only one out of the four conditional sentences with an infinitive absolute – which is rather surprising, especially when compared to 1 Sam. 20, where it is consistently found. There seems to be no reason why this verse would take the assertive focus and the other parallel situations not. In the context of the verse, it would be more fitting for another (emphatic or strengthening) nuance to be applied here (e.g., in line with the translation above). A detailed discussion of these and all other instances will surely be the focus of an article of its own, and is not possible here. However, a broader look into the syntax of conditionals urges for a carefool look into the application of the theory of assertion to the paronomastic infinitive.

1.4. Conclusion

This paragraph has shown some of the theories surrounding the interpretation of the paronomastic infinitive in 1 Sam. 20:21, ranging from Goldenberg's theory of fronted extraposition, to the multiple studies in emphatics, and finally the theory of assertive function. Goldenberg's theory certainly holds for other Semitic languages, especially for Aramaic,[42] and could very well explain a significant part of the available material in Biblical Hebrew, but the comparatively larger Type C allows for uncertainty to exist. The studies by Muraoka and Joosten, among others, encourage a good look at the context of the individual cases, but do not offer a satisfactory theory for the entire phenomenon. The studies by Kim and Callaham might offer a starting point for such a conclusion, but unfortunately neither are (as of yet) comprehensive.[43] However, the theory of assertion was able to explain the situation in 1 Sam. 20 in remarkable detail, fitting the context of the narrative – something that surely is to be commended, even though the theory does not fit completely with all parallels, cf. Judges 16:11.

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[41] Callaham, *Modality*, 94.
[42] Eskhult, 'Hebrew Infinitival Paronomasia', 29.
[43] Gzella, 'Emphasis or Assertion?', 498; Gzella, 'Review of Callaham', 356-362.

2. 'קָחֶנּוּ וָבֹאָה': two imperatives with suffixes

The second problem to be discussed in this paper concerns the two imperatives about halfway through the verse, קָחֶנּוּ and וָבֹאָה. The first is an imperative of the verb לָקַח "to take" with a 3ʳᵈ person masculine singular object suffix, which takes an "energic nun". The second is a "lengthened imperative" of the verb בּוֹא "to come in, to go". In most translations, the protasis of the conditional clause ends after קָחֶנּוּ, the apodosis starting with וָבֹאָה, e.g., the ESV "'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come …". The origin and supposed meanings of the two verbs will first receive some attention, before the infrequent succession of the two verbal forms will be assessed, in the light of the three main interpretations of the issue.

2.1. Energic imperative

Before the 3ʳᵈ singular object suffixes of the *a*- and *i*-imperatives, the so-called energic ending -*an* can be inserted after the imperative (and the imperfective) stem[44] (*qoṭlennū <*quṭl-an-hū* "kill him!" *et cetera*, deriving from the energic verbal form **yaqṭulan(na)*, "he will surely kill"[45]). It is presumed that the energic was mainly used to distinguish the indicative forms from the modal ones (*yaqtulū*), based on the nunation in Arabic, Ugaritic and Amarna Canaanite verbs.[46] Already before the stage of Biblical Hebrew, the functionality of the energic was lost, leaving only the mentioned vestiges.[47] The semantic value of the energic suffix in BH can hardly be isolated, as it is used (inconsistently) through many semantic categories, likely indicating a loss of meaning.[48] Joosten has argued that the form after the imperative might denote movement towards the speaker, after Fassberg's treatment of the lengthened imperative[49] (see the following paragraph), but this hypothesis is only supported by 6 of the 8 attestations, leaving the conclusion still up for debate.[50] The discursive contribution of the energic *nun* to the imperative is difficult to substantiate, leaving scholars with the conclusion that the suffix might have expressed modal (ventive?) nuances at some point, but that those had been lost at the time of writing.

2.2. Lengthened imperative

The masculine singular imperative forms can receive the suffix ◌ָה-, resulting in the so-called lengthened imperative.[51] It is most common in the Qal, but also occurs in the derived conjugations.[52] Also, most examples of the form come from weak verbs, but none from the *verba* ל"ה.[53] The semantics of the verbal form are subject to debate. In many grammars, its

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[44] Bauer and Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache,* 340, §48c'.

[45] Hasselbach, "The Ventive/Energic," 309ff. Cf. also Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 160; and Gottlieb, "The Hebrew Particle nâ," 47–54; for other products of this form.

[46] Williams, "Energic Verbal Forms," 75–85.

[47] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 160.

[48] For an effort to classify the energic forms in semantic-logical categories, see Zewi, *A Syntactical Study*, 76–79. However, in each category, forms without the *nun energicum* are also well-established, cf. Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 160. After the imperative, the energic suffix occurs only eight times in Biblical Hebrew.

[49] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 7–13.

[50] Joosten, "The Lengthened Imperative with Accusative Suffix," 423–426.

[51] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 7.

[52] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 7.

[53] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 7.

function is once again labelled simply "emphatic"[54], others recognise "no possible differentiation" from the regular imperative.[55] According to Joüon/Muraoka, the ending הָ- has an emphatic origin, but "[its] preference seems usually to be purely in the interests of euphony", making it not much more than a stylistic variant of the short imperative.[56]

Others have dared to go further: according to Lambert, the long form expresses a nuance of respect, as it is often used to address "higher-standing" figures, like God, a father, a prophet, or a priest.[57] The strong focus on social status however does not quite work her – there are many examples of "greater" figures addressing their inferiors with a long imperative, instead of the other way around, cf. 1 Kings 21:2-3, where king Ahab proposes his deal to Naboth. Jenni notes that the distinction instead could be one of "politeness", as a king can be polite to his subjects, like the use of "please" in English, or "bitte" in German.[58] Accordingly, Jenni labels the long form as the "adhortative".[59]

Finally, Fassberg believes that the lengthened imperative denotes that the verbal action is directed towards the speaker (usually motion towards the speaker).[60] From his analysis of 288 long imperatives and roughly 1700 regular imperatives, he concludes that almost all long forms are directed to the speaker, and "only" 160 out of 1700 regular forms. Shulman came to the same conclusion in an analysis of the 116 long imperatives in Biblical Hebrew prose, concluding that in its 23 attestations, לְכָה consistently means "come" whereas לֵךְ is translated as "go".[61] This function of directionality closely mirrors the Akkadian ventive ending -a(m)[62], both in form and function. For a closer study on the correspondence and derivation of these forms, and others, see Fassberg 1994 and Hasselbach 2006.[63]

These verbs are commonly analysed in two different ways, compare the NKJV "'(…) get them and come' (…)" to the ESV "'(…) take them,' then you are to come" and the JPS "'Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee'; take them and come". In the former, both imperatives are directed to Jonathan's servant; in the second, the first to the servant, the second to David; and in the latter both are aimed at David. None of these interpretations fit with Lambert's "honorific" function, as the hearer is either inferior or equal to the speaker in this case.[64] Politeness and directionality can both still apply, and the evidence for the latter is particularly convincing.[65] The direction of the verbal action is not marked by a personal pronoun, but it is very clear from the context, in both cases. However, if the long imperative is addressed to David, the stylistic contrast between verse 21 and 22 is even more clear, as the second conditional clause in verse 22 has the regular imperative לֵךְ "go, for the Lord has sent you away."[66] There, David is sent away from Jonathan, but here he is encouraged to come back to him. The following paragraph will expand on this issue.

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[54] Cowley and Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §41k; Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar*, §48b.

[55] Waltke and O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, §34.4a; see also Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, 102.

[56] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 132.

[57] Lambert, *Traité de grammaire hébraïque*, §719 n1, 724.

[58] Jenni, "Höfliche Bitte Im Alten Testament," 10.

[59] Jenni, "Höfliche Bitte Im Alten Testament," 6.

[60] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 10.

[61] Shulman, "The Use of Modal Verb Forms," 75.

[62] Fassberg, "The Lengthened Imperative," 13.

[63] Fassberg, *Studies in Biblical Syntax*, 34-35; Hasselbach, "The Ventive/Energic," 309.

[64] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 132.

[65] Joosten, "The Lengthened Imperative," 423–426.

[66] These two imperatives also serve as an argument against the explanation of the long imperative based on politeness – as the two speakers are in the same position in both cases.

2.3. The relation between the verbal forms

The syntax of the conditional clause and the verb forms appearing in either the protasis or the apodosis have been extensively studied, with varied results, compare the overview and evaluation of the literature in Bivin 2017.[67] There are a "great number of possible combinations,"[68] but here only the relevant analysis of the imperative in the apodosis of a conditional clause will be considered. In total, there are 63 cases of the imperative being used in this position. Remarkably, this verse is the only one of those where the sentence is syndetic, i.e., starts with a *waw*-conjunction before the verb.[69] This mirrors the situation of the jussive and cohortative forms, which also rarely take the conjunction when introducing the apodosis of a conditional clause.[70] Multiple explanations for this "most unusual"[71] phenomenon have been suggested, some resulting in different interpretations of the verse. In the following paragraphs, three of those suggestions will be elucidated.

2.3.1. A unique clause construction

In Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, the construction of the conditional clause in this verse is simply listed as one of the possible ways to initiate the apodosis of a conditional clause in Biblical Hebrew.[72] Its idiosyncrasy as a unique clause construction is noted, but it is seen as a regular form, without the need for further explanation. The *we-qatla*-form is accepted as one of the ways to initiate an apodosis. Joüon-Muraoka has a similar view, "there is nothing of particular importance to be noted."[73] Bivin also notes the form as an exception, and likewise does not recognize any functional differences between the asyndetic and the syndetic forms. However, he does not treat it as a regular way to form the clause, like GKC does.[74]

If we accept the *we-qatla*-form as regular or as an exception to the rule without any semantic or syntactic implications, that means that the clause boundary in 1 Sam. 20:21 can be placed between the two imperatives without any problem. For Bivin, this leads to the following translation: "(…) If I explicitly say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,' then you are to come (…)."[75]

2.3.2. Textual corruption

A different way to treat the peculiarity found here, is to propose a textual corruption to have occurred. Smith, noting the correspondence between וָבֹאָה and לֵךְ, concludes that the apodosis must start with וָבֹאָה.[76] However, as the ו-apodosis is "abnormal" in this case, he is convinced that it cannot be original. He, followed by Driver[77], notes two possible alternatives: 1) the 2nd m.sg. perfect consecutive וּבָאתָ, meaning a change from ה to ת; or 2) the asyndetic form בֹאָה, meaning the omission of the problematic ו-apodosis.[78]

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[67] Bivin, "The Particle אם," 36ff.

[68] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 592.

[69] Bivin, "The Particle אם," 157. Compare verse 8 in the same chapter: וְאִם־יֶשׁ־בִּי עָוֺן הֲמִיתֵנִי אַתָּה.

[70] Dallaire, *The Syntax of Volitives*, 91.

[71] Driver, *Samuel,* 168–169.

[72] Cowley and Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §159.3.A.2g.

[73] Joüon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 592.

[74] Bivin, "The Particle אם," 156–157.

[75] Bivin, "The Particle אם," 156.

[76] Smith, *Samuel,* 190–191.

[77] Driver, *Samuel*, 169.

[78] Smith, *Samuel*, 191.

The similarity between ה and ת, especially in handwritten manuscripts, makes the first option attractive – it is at very least believable that such a mistake could have been made by a copyist's hand. The perfect consecutive is also incredibly common in comparable constructions[79], making it a good candidate.[80] It is however the second option which is preferred by both Smith and Driver, on the basis of three reasons. Firstly, the LXX also lacks the conjunction: "(…) Ὧδε ἡ σχίζα ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ ὧδε, **λάβε αὐτήν, παραγίνου** (…)", suggesting that the *Vorlage* of the LXX might have also lacked the ו.[81] Secondly, the parallel question in the following verse also uses an imperative. On the basis of continuity, it can be argued that the imperative would tend be used twice in such a construction.[82] Lastly, the insertion of the extra ו can be explained by a case of dittography, as the preceding letter is also a ו.[83] Accordingly, Smith reads the passage as follows: "(…) 'The arrow is this side of thee, pick it up!' – then, come! For it is well for thee, (…)."[84] The final translation does not differ much from Bivin's, but the reasoning leading up to that conclusion is quite different.

2.3.3. Different clause boundary

A different clause boundary has also been proposed as a possible solution for the anomaly that is the ו-apodosis in front of the imperative וָבֹאָה. Ehrlich suggests that the apodosis already starts with the previous imperative, קָחֶנּוּ, which does not start with the problematic ו.[85] This means that Jonathan only addresses הִנֵּה הַחִצִּים מִמְּךָ וָהֵנָּה to the servant, and that David should also be seen as the subject of the imperative קָחֶנּוּ.[86]

He then follows David and Joseph Kimchi[87] in proposing that the suffix after the imperative does not refer to the arrows nor to the boy (as others have suggested[88]), but to the sign itself,[89] resulting in a construction very much like the English "to get", in the sense of "receiving/understanding sth", comparable to 'receive mentally' in BDB *sub* לָקַח Qal 4f.[90] This leads to the following translation "(…) If I say to the boy: 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you'; take/get it and come; for there is peace (…)."[91]

Driver agrees with Ehrlich in that this is the correct analysis of the verse's syntax, but he does not agree with the following proposition on the basis of Kimchi's exegesis. Instead, Driver

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[79] Compare 1 Sam. 20:6: אִם-פָּקֹד יִפְקְדֵנִי אָבִיךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ.

[80] Bivin, "The Particle אִם," 119; Revell, "The System of the Verb," 16. If the two imperatives are to be read as parts of the same clause, this would also influence the nuance of the construction, according to Oakes. He argues that an imperative-imperative chain focuses more on the desires of the speaker than on the action itself, whilst an imperative-*we-qatal*-chain focuses on the task at hand, cf. P.J. Oakes, "Functional differences," 257. This is however far from certain.

[81] Smith, *Samuel*, 191.

[82] Driver, *Samuel*, 169; Smith, *Samuel*, 191.

[83] Smith, *Samuel*, 191.

[84] Smith, *Samuel*, 190.

[85] Ehrlich, *Randglossen III,* 239–240.

[86] Ehrlich, *Randglossen III,* 239–240.

[87] Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi), *Commentary on 1 Samuel*, c.1185 –c.1235; 1. Sam. 20:21: קח הנער ובא עמו ואדוני אבי ז"ל פירש קח זה הסימן ובא ''Take the boy and go with him.' And my father, of blessed memory, interpreted: 'take this sign and come.''

[88] Cf. the translation in the Dutch NBV '21.

[89] Ehrlich, *Randglossen III*, 240.

[90] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 543.

[91] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 543.

concludes that another correction must be made, i.e., changing הַחִצִּים into its singular הַחֵצִי, cf. 1 Sam. 20:36, 37.[92] That allows the object suffix of קָחֶנּוּ to agree with its antecedent, and makes קָחֶנּוּ "the end of the words addressed to the boy", preceding the clause boundary.[93] This change too is in accordance with the LXX, Peshitta and Targum Jonathan, which have the singular (σχίζα; *gʾrʾ*, and *grrʾ* respectively), which thus seems to be more believable compared to the emendation of the suffix.[94] This, along with his suggested omission of the ו, brings Driver to his final reconstruction and translation: "If I say to the boy: 'Look, the arrow is on this side of you, take it!', (then) come, for there is peace (…)."[95]

2.4. Conclusion

This paragraph has approached the three main interpretations of the two imperatives קָחֶנּוּ and וָבֹאָה. First, the forms and reconstructions of both imperatives were highlighted, before the attention turned towards the idiosyncratic succession of the two verbs, caused by the irregular ו initiating the second imperative. Some are convinced that this *we-qatla*-form is an acceptable alternative for the introduction of an apodosis, whilst others suggest that a scribal mistake gave birth to this issue, proposing a correction to either a perfect consecutive or to the asyndetic form.

　　Others propose a different clause boundary, leading to a different interpretation of the verse, with the verb קָחֶנּוּ being addressed to David, and possibly referring either to the boy or the sign. It is difficult to definitively write off any of the interpretations, as all options belong to the realm of possibilities. However, the connection with the context of the verse does make it plausible that the clause boundary should indeed be situated between the two imperatives; and that וָבֹאָה should indeed be read as a long imperative.

　　As concluded above, the contrastive pattern between verses 6-7 and 21-22 is also highlighted by the paronomastic infinitive; and it would not be surprising that a similar situation would appear with the assumed directional/ventive function of the long imperative, which does appear in 21, but not in 22. For this contrast to work, the long imperative would also have to be situated in the apodosis, preferably on its own. Thus, the preferred translation would be the following: "If I will say to the boy: 'Look, the arrow is on this side of you, get it,' then come (to me) (…)".

　　The analysis of this verse adds to the understanding and interpretation of the long imperative as a directional marker. The marked contrast between וָבֹאָה and לֵךְ in verses 21 and 22 once again highlights the contrast between David's two options, and might be seen as a syntactical 'minimal pair' for the understanding of the long imperative – the only difference between the regular and long forms can be found in the directionality of the verbal action.

3. General conclusion

In this paper, two syntactical issues in the Biblical Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 20:21 have been discussed, relying on formative recent developments in the field of Biblical Hebrew syntax and treating the issues in their linguistic context. Firstly, the theories concerning the paronomastic infinitive in a conditional clause אִם־אָמֹר אֹמַר were treated, from Goldenberg's suggestion arguing that the various types of infinitival paronomasia serve to put the topic or the focus of

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[92] Driver, *Samuel*, 168.
[93] Driver, *Samuel*, 168.
[94] Driver, *Samuel*, 168; cf. BHS 483.
[95] Driver, *Samuel*, 168.

the clause in fronted extraposition, to Muroaka and Joosten's conclusions related to the emphatic nature of the form, which is unfortunately challenging to specify, and to Callaham and Kim's studies concerning the assertive function of the construction. I concluded that the latter works very well for the specific situation of 1 Sam. 20:21 and its context, but that the parallel in Judg. 16:11 casts a different light and invites further research.

Secondly, the two lengthened imperatives קָחֶנּוּ and וָבֹאָה were discussed, focusing on the semantic functions of both the energic suffix and the long form of the imperative; and on the clause boundary of the conditional sentence, which has been disputed. It was shown that the directional function of the longer imperative would show the same kind of contrast shown by the assertion of the infinitive absolute discussed earlier, as it stresses the contrast between the possible eventualities of both conditional clauses. If קָחֶנּוּ is indeed to be analysed as part of the protasis and וָבֹאָה as part of the apodosis, the incongruence between the suffix of the first verb and its antecedent and the unexpected ו-apodosis must be explained. This can be accomplished by proposing corrections for supposed scribal mistakes (a singular הַחֵצִי instead of its plural, which is corroborated by the evidence from the LXX, Peshitta and Targum Jonathan; and a dittography of the ו, leading to the asyndetic form בֹאָה), to simply accept the form as an anomaly without any semantic implications, or to propose a different clause boundary. Both theories can be considered plausible, but there are stylistic arguments for the long imperative in ־ָה to belong to the apodosis.

This study shows that a straight-forward interpretation of the syntax of 1 Sam. 20:21 does not exist. There will always remain some sort of ambiguity, and it is important to keep that in mind. However, our understanding and translations can be improved through careful study. This article shows how new research on the paronomastic infinitive and the lengthened imperative provide interesting and relevant new avenues for the study of the conditional clause in Biblical Hebrew syntax. In the light of the material discussed, this paper proposes one possible satisfactory translation:

"And look, I will send the boy: 'Go, find the arrows.' If I indeed say to the boy: 'Look, the arrow is on this side of you, take it,' then come to me, for there is peace to you and there is no issue, by the life of YHWH."

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