

BENEFITS OF A PRINCIPLED ANALYSIS OF BIBLICAL HEBREW PREPOSITIONS

Kristopher Lyle

University of Stellenbosch

Private Bag XI

7602 Matieland

E-mail: kris.a.lyle@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

As Biblical Hebrew studies have become more attuned to the explanatory power accompanying modern linguistic theory, some theoretical pitfalls of standard lexicons have become more apparent. Specifically within the realm of lexicology, it has been demonstrated that current frameworks, such as cognitive semantics, can bring a great deal of theoretical muscle into semantic endeavours. This article applies a methodology based on such advances and shows the benefits of a principled analysis of BH prepositions, with ׀ and ׀ as examples. In the end, a replicable investigation is rendered that carefully explores the semantic potential and network of each lexeme.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional evaluations of the semantic potential of Biblical Hebrew (BH) lexemes have, by and large, been characterised by a vacuum of explicit criteria to guide and motivate the investigation.¹ As such, a self-constrained use of intuition has taken the reins, in both lexicon compilation and consequently lexicon use.² This methodological

¹ Barr (1992:145–46); de Regt (1994:159–60); van Steenberg (2003:268–313); van der Merwe (2004:119–137); van der Merwe (2006a:85–9); van der Merwe (2006b:87–112); Imbayaro (2008:108–58); Lyle (2013:49–52); as self-attesting examples see BDB (1907:vi); HALOT (1995–2001:lxv). This conclusion should not assume that there was no (implicit) methodology – indeed, note Lübke (1990:1) who discusses the etymological juggernaut that has guided traditional lexicons for more than a thousand years – but that no explicit methodology has been “spelled out”, empirically grounded, and/or consistently applied. Such a consensus is perhaps behind Barr’s (1992:145–146) comment that “there seems to be no methodological principle that one can simply lay down and then leave alone with the assurance that it will generate correct and satisfactory entries for every word”.

² I am comfortable calling this driving force “intuition”, for as Atkins and Rundell (2008:275) note, “When people communicate, their lexical choices are intuitive, but rule-governed. Similarly, when lexicographers distinguish one sense from another, the process is

lacuna ensures that the lexicographer's underlying rationale be kept in the dark, and simply to be trusted. To be sure, such impediments have been due to a shortage of helpful lexicological theory to guide the lexicon construction process.³ But thankfully, recent advances in linguistics – specifically cognitive semantics – have presented us with better methods and theories to evaluate the semantic potential of a given lexeme.⁴ This robust framework provides the semantician with the opportunity to leave a trail of breadcrumbs for those who would come after and interact with their analysis. But the real trouble is that even with modern lexicons, the shortcomings of traditional lexicons persist to this day. Recent endeavours in BH lexicography have not taken advantage of the theoretical advances made in lexical semantics, and thus still lack the underpinnings of a compelling and transparent semantic model.⁵ With that said, we

in the first instance an intuitive one, but if we understand the ‘rules’ that govern these lexical choices, we will be better placed to do the job of identifying senses” (cf. Atkins and Rundell 2008:275, 314–315). But if no “rules” (or very little) are mentioned, then a user cannot test the analysis on the same grounds upon which it is founded. This is a predicament when it is believed that “[u]sers of a dictionary have a right to know *how* its authors know what a word means. Users want to know where that knowledge comes from and how reliable it is” (Andersen 1995:63, emphasis in original).

³ It was only in the 1960s that semantics became a somewhat reputable avenue of linguistic study (Geeraerts 2010:1, 270); cf. van der Merwe (2006a:87–112) on the neglect of lexicological advances in discussions of current BH lexicography.

⁴ I use the term “semantic potential” to refer to the full spectrum of senses (or “stable semantic representations”) that are associated with a lexeme (Evans 2009:23). Although these form-meaning associations are sometimes thought to exist in the abstract regardless of context, it is important to recognise that “word ‘meaning’ is protean, its semantic contribution sensitive to and dependent on the context which it, in part, gives rise to” (Evans 2006:492).

⁵ “If one understands the notion ‘semantic model’ as an explicit theoretically well-justified model for analyzing and understanding the meaning of linguistic expressions, in particular lexical items, it may be argued that no such model undergirds either BDB, HALOT or even current BH lexica” (van der Merwe 2004:121). This critique holds true for Swanson (1997) (cf. Imbayarwo 2008:143–146) and even the famed *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Clines 1993). The reader may be surprised to hear such critique aimed at the latter – which claims to be modelled on modern linguistic principles – but should consult the following reviews for a balanced critique: Lübke (1991:135–143), Muraoka (1995:87–101), Andersen (1995:50–71), the latter of which claims, “[...] underneath it all *DCH* is still very much bound by tradition, very little released by an independent application of modern linguistic principles from the mere recycling of tralatitious opinions” (Andersen 1995:64) (cf. van der Merwe 2004:121–126; Imbayarwo 2008:14–16, 109–114). An exception to this critique, which the biblical studies community should be thankful for, is de Blois’ (2000–) online dictionary that is under development, which is based on a number of cognitive linguistic

are at a stage in BH lexicography where pioneering work not only can be done – for we have the technological tools and theoretical muscle to do so—but must be done.

This article is a contribution toward that end: specifically, by showcasing the benefits of a principled analysis of BH prepositions, taking ׀ and ׀ as test cases. After all, “although cognitive semantics provides promising new perspectives on the notion of ‘lexical meaning’, it does not present – as any other linguistic theory does – a ready-made model that can merely be applied to an ancient language like Biblical Hebrew” (van der Merwe 2006a:85). The model implemented below is explicitly diachronic, and has three primary objectives: 1) identify the distinct senses of the semantic network, 2) chart the derivation of these senses, and 3) evaluate the semantic potential from varying modes of observation. To accomplish the first objective a criterion posited by Tyler and Evans (2003) will be applied, and for the second, a handful of parameters developed by Heine et al. (1991). The third objective relies on theoretical understandings of semantics rather than any set of criteria to guide the analysis – and in doing so, yields an analysis that more closely reflects real-world usage instead of an artificial demarcation of different senses (which is of course a heuristic model that semanticists have relied on for centuries in order to represent a lexeme’s semantic potential on paper). Over all, the result is a methodologically constrained evaluation that yields rigorous and replicable findings.⁶

DETERMINING THE DISTINCT SENSES

The first step in identifying the semantic potential of a BH preposition is to determine the distinct senses that comprise the network of usages. This step is especially important to conduct in a replicable manner due to the way prepositions have been analysed in the past, not only with BH but with modern languages too. Tyler and Evans (2003:39–40) point to Sandra (1998) who argues that many cognitive linguists

principles.

⁶ The methodology presented in this article represents a significant revision of an earlier model (Lyle 2012, 2013). Many thanks are due to Alexander Andrason for critical conversations in how to improve this model, as well as Jimmy Parks and Josh Westbury for their valuable input on various topics and earlier drafts.

“exaggerate the number of distinct senses associated with a particular form vis-à-vis the mental representation of a native speaker,” and in doing so commit the “polysemy fallacy”. However, by implementing an explicit criterion to counter this tendency, the semantician is equipped with a falsifiable means of delimiting what counts as a distinct sense and, consequently, a way of attributing the balance of that usage to contextual effects.

Tyler and Evans (2003) have proposed a set of two criteria to gauge sense distinction in a constrained and replicable manner; however, I will only adopt one criterion as the other has theoretical and practical complications I cannot find a way to work around.⁷ In order to understand the adopted criterion it is first necessary to define two concepts that are staples in discussing the relations and processes described by prepositions. These two concepts are trajector (TR) and landmark (LM): the former is often smaller and more apt for movement, while the latter is often larger and stationary; it is also the item that the TR is understood in relation to (Tyler and Evans 2003:50; Evans and Green 2006:334). Together, these components and the relation coded between them comprise a TR-LM configuration. So, for instance, in the sentence “The boy was hanging in his hammock”, the boy and the hammock comprise a TR-LM configuration in which a TR (the boy) is located in relation to a LM (the hammock) that is coded by the preposition “in”. With these concepts in place we are ready to examine the criterion for sense distinction.

For a sense to count as distinct, it must contain additional meaning [i.e., non-spatial or an altered TR-LM configuration] not apparent in any other senses associated with a particular form (Tyler and Evans 2003:42–43)

With this criterion and the Pentateuch as a data-set, I was able to identify no less than

⁷ The second criterion states: “... there must be instances of the sense that are context independent, that is, in which the distinct sense could not be inferred from another sense and the context in which it occurs” (Tyler and Evans 2003:43). From a theoretical point of view, this criterion seems to contradict the notion that meaning is contextually dependent in all situations. At a practical level, the criterion is difficult to apply to an ancient language since the corpus is naturally delimited and hypothetical utterances cannot be created to find examples that could pass for being context independent. Native competency is seemingly required for this criterion to work, assuming no theoretical issues exist.

eleven distinct senses for ׀ as an independent lexeme.⁸ Although almost every sense identified with ת overlaps with ׀'s semantic potential, several points of imbalance can be noted. The following chart displays these variations and also describes the TR-LM configuration coded by each sense.

<u>DISTINCT SENSE</u>	<u>TR-LM CONFIGURATION</u>
Shared Presence (ת / ׀)	<i>describes a TR located in general proximity to a LM</i>
Domain (ת / ׀)	<i>describes a TR located within the domain of a profiled LM</i>
In Front Of ([פני] ת / ׀)	<i>describes a TR located in front of an oriented LM</i>
Shared Activity (ת / ׀)	<i>describes the joint activity between a TR and a LM</i>
Recipient (ת / ׀)	<i>describes a profiled LM that receives an activity from an oriented TR</i>
Possession (ת / ׀)	<i>describes a TR in spatial proximity to a LM which is understood as indicating the LM's possession of the TR</i>
Addition (ת / ׀)	<i>describes one entity (TR) coupled with another (LM)</i>
Inclusion (׀)	<i>describes a profiled TR that is included with a LM</i>
Support (idiom) (ת / ׀)	<i>describes a superior TR in close proximity or joint activity with an inferior LM</i>
Devotion (idiom) (ת)	<i>describes an inferior TR in joint activity with a superior LM</i>
Sex (idiom) (׀)	<i>describes the joint activity of sex between a TR and a LM</i>
Death (idiom) (׀)	<i>describes the shared participation of death between a TR and a LM</i>

⁸ Contrary to Aristotelian categories (viz., a model of categorisation based on necessary-and-sufficient conditions), the identified senses are not assumed to reflect absolute autonomy from one another; rather, they are related in graded degrees (Taylor 2003:144–169; Riemer 2010:167) and exhibit “family resemblances”, yielding “fuzzy” rather than fixed boundaries (Brugman and Lakoff 2006:109; Evans and Green 2006:29, 43; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2007:144–146).

Interestingly, it was determined that these surface level differences are not actually reflective or determinant of any real, legitimate points of distinction between the two respective networks. For example, though the Devotion idiom is found only with אָת in the Pentateuch, expanding the data-set for gauging עִם and אָת's semantic potential reveals that עִם can communicate this idiom, as well (e.g., Mic 6:8). The same is also true of the Death idiom (e.g., in 2 Sm 7:12 we find אָת שָׁכַב rather than עִם שָׁכַב).

Having briefly addressed some of the (apparent) semantic variations and dissonance between the two lexemes, an overview of each sense will now be provided as well as a briefing on how the criterion was applied. As a starting point, I will begin by showcasing the distinct sense of Shared Presence – what is most likely the original usage from which the existing network was derived (see section “Determining each network’s derivation” below). Because this usage is the seed of all the others, its TR-LM configuration can function as a baseline against which other usages might be measured, that is, whether or not the token under consideration contains additional meaning. The following examples illustrate the TR-LM setup of Shared Presence – with both עִם (1–2) and אָת (2–3) – in which a TR (usually animate) is located in general proximity to another (usually animate) LM (notice that both prepositions are used within the same proposition in the second example and, likewise, carry the same sense).⁹

- (1) וּתְקַח מִפְּרִי וּתְאָכַל וּתְתֵן גַּם לְאִשְׁתּוֹ עִמָּה וְיֹאכַל (Gen 3:6)
...and she took its fruit and ate—and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate
- (2) וַיֹּאמֶר עָשׂו אֶצִּיגָה נָא עִמָּךְ מִן הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתִּי (Gen 33:15)
Esau said, “Then let me leave with you some of the men who are with me”
- (3) וְהִקְטַן הַיּוֹם אֶת אַבְיָנוּ בְּאַרְץ כְּנָעַן (Gen 42:32)

⁹ Shared Presence: עִם – Gen 3:6; 19:30; 21:22; 22:5; 24:54; 25:11; 26:3, 28a; 27:44; 28:15; 29:14, 25, 27, 30; 31:3, 38, 50; 32:5, 7; 33:1, 15; 35:2–4, 6; 48:21; Exod 3:12; 4:12, 15; 10:10; 18:6, 18–19; 22:13, 29; 34:28; Lev 25:6, 35b, 40 (2x), 47b, 50b, 53; Num 22:8–9; Deut 15:16; 20:1; 29:14 (2x); 31:8, 23. אָת – Gen 6:19; 7:13, 23; 8:1, 17a; 9:8, 10b, 10c, 12; 14:5; 20:16; 21:20; 22:5; 24:32, 55; 26:24; 28:4; 32:8; 33:15b; 34:5; 39:2, 3, 21, 23; 40:4; 41:12; 42:32, 33; 43:3, 5, 16 (2x); 44:26 (2x), 30, 34; 45:1; Exod 2:21; 28:1, 41; 29:21 (2x); Lev 8:30 (2x); 10:9, 14, 15; Num 1:4; 14:9; 18:1 (2x), 11, 19 (2x); 22:40; Deut 22:2; 31:8.

...and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan

The remaining distinct senses all exhibit additional meaning to this original usage, whether that be due to the expression of non-spatial meaning and/or an altered TR-LM configuration. The distinct senses that represent a departure from the TR-LM setup of Shared Presence are the easiest to detect, and so will be the first to review.

The distinct senses of Domain and In Front Of represent, largely, spatial TR-LM configurations. The former describes a TR located within the domain of a profiled LM, which encompasses the TR in either physical/numerical size or authority (4–5).¹⁰ This usage represents a departure from Shared Presence in that the LM is profiled and is now seen as encompassing the TR, instead of being located on par with it.

(4) גַּר וְתוֹשֵׁב אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם (Gen 23:4)

I am a stranger and a sojourner among you ...

(5) תּוֹרָה אַחַת וּמִשְׁפָּט אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְלִגֵּר אֲתֶכֶם (Num 15:16)

One teaching and one rule will be for you and for the stranger who sojourns among you

As for the distinct sense of In Front Of, this usage complies with the first criterion by describing a TR whose spatial approximation is understood in terms of an oriented LM. With Shared Presence the LM is unmarked with regard to where the entity is “facing”. However, with the In Front Of sense the LM is perceived as being oriented towards the TR as a result of the LM possessing either an inherent (6) or imagined (7) front/back asymmetry, which basically means the LM can be either animate or inanimate (Tyler and Evans 2003:158).¹¹ In either case, the oriented LM holds the privileged vantage point, as it is this entity that the TR is located in front of (Tyler and Evans 2003:167).¹²

¹⁰ It is often difficult to establish which aspect of measurement is profiled (i.e., quantitative or qualitative). Domain: עַם – Gen 23:4 (2x); Exod 22:24; Lev 25:6, 45 (2x), 47a, 47c; Deut 10:9; 14:27, 29; 18:1; 23:17. אֶת – Gen 34:10, 16, 22, 23; Exod 12:48; Lev 19:33, 34; Num 9:14; 15:14, 16.

¹¹ In Front Of: עַם – Deut 18:13; אֶת-פָּנָי – Gen 19:13, 27; 33:18; Exod 32:11; 34:23–24; Lev 4:6, 17; Deut 16:16; 31:11.

¹² In English we are able to detect a distinction between those cases when an oriented LM is animate or inanimate. This largely boils down to a distinction between the locative sense of before (animate) and in front of (inanimate/animate): “She ran in front of the stray cart to

(6) תמים תהיה עם יהוה אלהיך (Deut 18:13)

You shall be blameless before Yhwh your God

(7) ויבא יעקב שלם עיר שכם ... ויהן את פני העיר (Gen 33:18)

And Jacob arrived at the city of Shechem... and he camped in front of the city.

Beyond the distinct senses of Domain and In Front Of, the detection and demarcation of the remaining senses is made apparent through various expressions of non-spatial meaning (which entails an altered TR-LM configuration). For instance, Shared Activity (8–9) describes the joint activity between a TR and a LM,¹³ while Shared Presence (1–3) only situates the two in terms of general proximity.¹⁴ Similarly, the Recipient sense (10–11) describes a situation in which an oriented TR performs an action towards a profiled LM, and is thus only “half” of Shared Activity, viz., it codes a unidirectional activity.¹⁵

stop it” sounds more natural than “She ran before the stray cart to stop it”. However, due to the limitations of working with an ancient language I am hesitant to impose a distinction that exists in modern English onto BH. Even if such a distinction does exist in BH, the difficulty would be in detecting when in front of (involving an animate LM) is different from before (which necessarily involves an animate LM).

¹³ Shared Activity: עָם – Gen 13:1; 18:16; 19:32, 34; 21:10 (2x); 24:58; 26:20 (2x); 29:6, 9 (2x); 30:8, 15; 31:23, 24, 29 (2x); 32:25, 26, 29 (2x); 39:7, 10, 12, 14; 42:38; 43:34; 44:33; 46:4; 47:30; 48:1; 50:9; Exod 10:24, 26; 13:19; 14:6; 17:2a, 8; 18:12; 19:9, 24; 20:19 (2x), 22; 21:3; 22:15, 18; 23:1, 5; 24:2, 8; 33:9, 12, 16; 34:3; Lev 15:33; 25:41, 50a; 26:21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 40, 41; Num 10:32a; 11:16, 17; 13:31; 14:43; 22:12, 14, 19, 21, 22, 35 (2x), 39; 23:21; Deut 2:7; 4:23; 5:2, 4; 9:9, 10; 20:4 (2x), 20; 22:22 (2x), 23, 25 (2x), 28–29; 27:20, 23; 29:11, 24; 31:6, 16.

אָח – Gen 4:1; 6:18b; 7:7; 8:16, 17b, 18; 11:31; 12:4; 13:5; 14:2, 8, 9 (2x), 24; 17:3, 23; 22:3; 23:8a; 24:40; 26:8; 34:6, 8; 35:13, 14, 15; 37:2 (3x); 41:9; 42:4, 7, 30; 43:4, 8; 44:23; 45:15; 46:6; 50:7, 14; Exod 1:1; 12:38; 13:19; 17:5; 18:22; 25:22; 31:18; 34:27 (2x), 29, 32, 33, 34, 35; Lev 8:2; Num 1:5; 3:1; 7:89; 10:29; 11:17; 22:20; 23:13; 26:3; 32:29, 30; Deut 5:3 (2x), 24; 19:5; 28:69 (2x); 31:7, 16.

¹⁴ Although not employed in this model (see fn 7), with example (6) it is possible to see how the second criterion for sense distinction (i.e., contextual independence) might be applied: For all practical purposes, example (6) cannot mean a person should lift an enemy’s fallen donkey on one’s own in the enemy’s presence (Shared Presence); rather, an understanding of joint activity must be seen as operable for a felicitous reading, i.e., two people engage in the lifting together.

¹⁵ Recipient Sense: עָם – Gen 21.23a, 23c; 24.12, 14; 26.29 (2x); 31.2, 29a; 32.10, 13; Deut 29.11; אָח – Gen 6.18; 9.9 (2x), 10, 11; 15.18; 17.4, 19, 21; 32.11; 34.21; Exod 2.24 (3x); 6.4; Lev 26.9, 44; Deut 29.13, 14 (2x).

- (8) כי תראה חמור שנאך רבץ תחת משאו והדלת מעזב לו עזב תעזב עמו (Exod 23:5)
When you see your enemy's donkey lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him
- (9) אם ישך משלה את אחינו אתנו נרדה ונשברה לך אכל (Gen 43:4)
If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food for you
- (10) ויאמר יהוה אלהי אדני אברהם הקרה נא לפני היום ועשה חסד עם אדני אברהם (Gen 24:12)
And he said, "O Yhwh, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham"
- (11) קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך... (Gen 32:11)
I am unworthy of all the loyal love and devotion you have shown to me...

The distinct sense of Possession is a unique use of both prepositions because it utilises the exact same TR-LM configuration found in Shared Presence, yet, at the same time, construes an original meaning. In short, the configurational setup of X is with Y in Shared Presence is taken to mean X belongs to Y (or Y is in possession of X). This usage is evident with עם in example (12) and with אַת in (13).¹⁶

- (12) ועבדי כלב עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו וימלא אחרי (Num 14:24)
But my servant Caleb, because a different attitude has been with him, and he has followed me fully
- (13) נחנו נעבר חלוצים לפני יהוה ארץ כנען ואתנו אחזת נחלתנו מעבר לירדן (Num 32:32)
We will cross over armed before Yhwh into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance will remain beyond the Jordan with us

Similar to Possession, the distinct sense of Addition is closely related to the TR-LM configuration of Shared Presence – of a TR located in close proximity to a LM – only with Addition the spatial component is removed and the entities are left coupled with one another. In this setup, neither TR nor LM is profiled against the other; one component is simply paired with another (14–15).¹⁷ This feature is significant to take note of because it sets the Addition sense apart from the Inclusion sense. In the latter,

¹⁶ Possession: עם – Gen 24:25; 31:32; Num 14:24; Deut 29:16; אַת – Gen 27:15; 30:33; 44:9, 10; Exod 35:23, 24; Lev 5:23; Num 32:32; Deut 15:3.

¹⁷ Addition: עם – Deut 32:14 (2x); Deut 32:24, 25; אַת – Gen 6:13; Deut 29:19.

the LM is taken as a base to which a profiled TR is incorporated (16).¹⁸ This entails that the ordering of the TR and LM is significant and cannot be reversed. For instance, while the TR and LM may be reversed without changing the overall meaning in (14), if the TR and LM were swapped in (16) the meaning would change and not convey the intended message (viz., the wicked represent a baseline of those that will be destroyed and Abraham is questioning whether or not it would be right for God to include the righteous in this judgment).

- (14) מחוץ תשכל חרב ומחדרים אימה גם בחור גם בתולה יונק עם איש שיבה (Deut 32:25)
Outside the sword will bereave, and inside terror – for the young man and the virgin, the infant and the man of grey hair
- (15) וְהִנְנִי מְשַׁחֵתִם אֶת הָאָרֶץ... (Gen 6:13)
... Behold, I am going to destroy them [all living creatures] and the earth
- (16) וַיִּגַּשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵפִי תִסְפֶּה צְדִיק עִם רָשָׁע (Gen 18:23)
Then Abraham came near and said, ‘Will you indeed sweep away the righteous along with the wicked?’

In addition to these senses, several idiomatic usages were also identified. But before discussing these expressions, several comments about idioms (or fixed expressions or formulas) will help to dispel any objections that the identified usages are not distinct senses. Contrary to a folk-understanding of idioms, cognitive linguists recognise that idiomaticity is a cline that can be detected to varying degrees in nearly all forms of communication, so much so that “rather than being peripheral to the ‘core’ of a language, it becomes possible to argue that idioms *are* the core” (Taylor 2003:541, emphasis in original). And so, if “prepositions, in particular, are liable to have a large number of uses which are idiomatic with respect to the items with which they co-occur” (Taylor 2003:544), it should not surprise us that עִם and אֵת share multiple idiomatic uses, even if some are considered more idiomatic than others, for this is to be expected. With these comments in mind, we can turn to discuss the distinction of the idioms of Support (17–18) and Devotion (19), followed by Sex (20) and Death (21).

¹⁸ Inclusion: עִם – Gen 18:23, 25; Deut 12:23; אֵת – Gen 17:27.

- (17) ...אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה ואנכי אעלך גם עלה... (Gen 46:4)
I myself [God] will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will surely bring you back again...
- (18) ...סר צלם מעליהם ויהוה אתנו אל תיראם (Num 14:9)
Their protection has been removed from them, and Yhwh is with us, do not fear them
- (19) ...נה איש צדיק תמים היה בדורתו את האלהים התהלך נח (Gen 6:9)
... Noah was righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God

The idioms of Support and Devotion are represented by both עִם and אֵת (though as referenced above, to find the Devotion idiom with עִם the corpus must be extended beyond the Pentateuch, e.g., Mic 6:8).¹⁹ These idioms can be treated together because their TR-LM configurations represent the complete inverse of the other. While Support describes a superior TR in close proximity or joint activity with an inferior LM, Devotion describes the opposite, an inferior TR in joint activity with a superior LM (notice that only Support occurs in contexts of both shared space and activity). The types of TRs and LMs involved in these expressions represent a departure from the ones found in the baseline configuration of Shared Presence, for with the Devotion and Support idiom we find TRs and LMs with a specific orientation. Instead of a spatial orientation (evident in the In Front Of sense), there is an orientation of rank (Taylor 2003:113). This altered aspect of the TR-LM configuration in addition to the non-spatial meaning of support/devotion complies with our criterion for sense distinction.²⁰

- (20) ויהי אחר הדברים האלה ותשא אשת אדניו את עיניה אל יוסף ותאמר שכבה עמי (Gen 39:7)
And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, 'Lie with me'
- (21) ...ושכבתי עם אבתי ונשאתני ממצרים וקברתני בקברתם... (Gen 47:30)

¹⁹ Support: עִם – Gen 21:22; 26:3, 28; 28:15; 31:3, 5; 35:3; 46:4; 48:21; Exod 3:12; 4:12, 15; 10:10; 18:19; 33:12; Num 14:43; 23:21; Deut 2:7; 20:1, 4a; 31:6, 8, 23; 32:12. אֵת – Gen 21:20; 24:40; 26:24; 39:2, 3, 21, 23; Num 14:9.

Devotion: אֵת – Gen 5:22, 24; 6:9.

²⁰ For a more developed discussion of these two idioms see Lyle (2012:84–87).

When I lie down with my ancestors, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place ...

The final idioms to consider are those of Sex (20) and Death (21), the latter of which is represented by both עִם and אֵת (with an extended dataset, 2 Sm 7:12), while the former is found only with עִם (however, this is most likely a testament to the entrenchment of the עִם שָׁכַב construction rather than any semasiological distinction between the two prepositions).²¹ As previously hinted at, the key ingredient to both expressions is the verb שָׁכַב (to lie down), which is used in conjunction with עִם or אֵת as a euphemism for sex (viz., lying in a position that allows intercourse) and death (viz., lying down in the grave with one's ancestors).²² Both of these idioms are taken as distinct senses because they comply with our criterion for a preposition to facilitate a TR-LM configuration that conveys non-spatial meaning. Although the activity of lying down with someone assumes close proximity, it is the joint activity that is profiled over the spatial scene.

So far, the current methodology has identified a number of distinct senses that, together, comprise the semantic network of עִם and אֵת (as primarily represented in the Pentateuch). Importantly, the identification of each of these is characterised by a principled evaluation. This is an important step not yet taken by established BH lexicons. Additionally, it should be recognised that the current methodology does not rely on glosses to communicate the usage-based construal of a preposition. Instead, a description of the encoded relationship between the entities involved is provided (i.e., the TR-LM configuration), which serves as a *via media* between the unsatisfactory gloss and traditional definition.²³

²¹ Sex: עִם – Gen 19:32, 34; 30:15; 39:7, 10, 12, 14; Exod 22:15, 18; Lev 15:33; Deut 22:22 (2x), 23, 25 (2x), 28, 29; 27:20, 21, 22, 23.

Death: עִם – Gen 47:30; Deut 31:16.

²² However, on at least one occasion עִם is paired with הִיא instead of שָׁכַב (Gen 39:10), though the latter is present and precedes להיות עִמָּה (to be with her) in the clause לשכב אצלה (to lie beside her).

²³ Imbayarwo (2008:27) reminds us that “in Europe, ‘glosses’ seem to have been the earliest versions of dictionaries compiled to help monks read important texts written in languages that they could no longer understand, e.g., Latin, Greek or Hebrew”. However, Barr (1973:120) explains that though lexicon readers may often assume they are being told the meaning of a lexeme by a gloss, this is not the case: “these simple equivalents can hardly be

DETERMINING EACH NETWORK'S DERIVATION

Similarly important to the task of sense-distinction is that of discovering the path of a preposition's semantic development. In the previous section, out of necessity I identified the original sense of **אֶל** and **אֶת** (i.e., Shared Presence) in order to have a distinct sense (i.e., TR-LM configuration) against which the other usages might be measured. Now I will explain in a criteria-constrained fashion why Shared Presence is the strongest candidate for being the earliest fixed usage, and from here, trace out the effects and impact of this usage as it was employed in new contexts.²⁴

One of the key notions in this section is grammaticalisation. This term refers to the cyclical and unidirectional evolution of a linguistic expression, which, broadly speaking, can be summarised as follows: noun > preposition > head of genitive > conjunction > affix > noun > etc. Put differently, what begins as an open class, concrete expression is bleached over time of its entire semantic load as it evolves into a closed class, abstract marker (Evans and Green 2006:708; Hopper and Traugott

dignified with the term 'meanings'; [...] they are not themselves meanings nor do they tell us the meanings; the meanings reside in the actual Hebrew usage" (cf. Hoftjizer 1995:88–99; Steenberg 2003:270–271). Atkins and Rundell (2008:311) go further, explaining that "meanings and dictionary senses aren't the same thing at all. Meanings exist in infinite numbers of discrete communicative events, while the senses in a dictionary represent lexicographers' attempts to impose some order on this babel."

²⁴ In the introduction I alluded to the fact that established investigations of BH prepositions have not fully engaged the notion of semantic primacy in a manner characterised by an explicit methodology. This is not to say that every assessment in the past was ignorant of or impartial to investigating the semantic seed of a network (quite the contrary), but that a straightforward methodology to facilitate such an endeavour has been found wanting. For example, the lexicographers of HALOT (2000:lxx) affirm their intention to identify "the original meaning of a word ([which may be] in many cases more concrete and restricted than the secondaries)", but do not explain how they will go about this process of semantic differentiation. In the case of **אֶל**, the lexicon-user is provided with a numerical taxonomy of bolded translational values (which actually overlap, at times) from which the user is obliged to intuitively choose which sense is active in the target text. On the whole, Lübke's (1990:1) words from twenty-five years ago ring with relevance today: "from the first known Hebrew dictionary of Saadia Gaon to the most recent revisions of Koehler-Baumgartner, it appears that little has changed regarding [the] methods of arranging the entries and determining and reflecting meaning." This is also true of the current revision of BDB, which will primarily consist of updated etymological information and an improvement of the overall cosmetics of the lexicon (e.g., using English abbreviations instead of Latin), all the while "organization by root, semantic arrangement, and the manner of citation will all remain essentially the same" (Hackett and Huehnergard 2008:230).

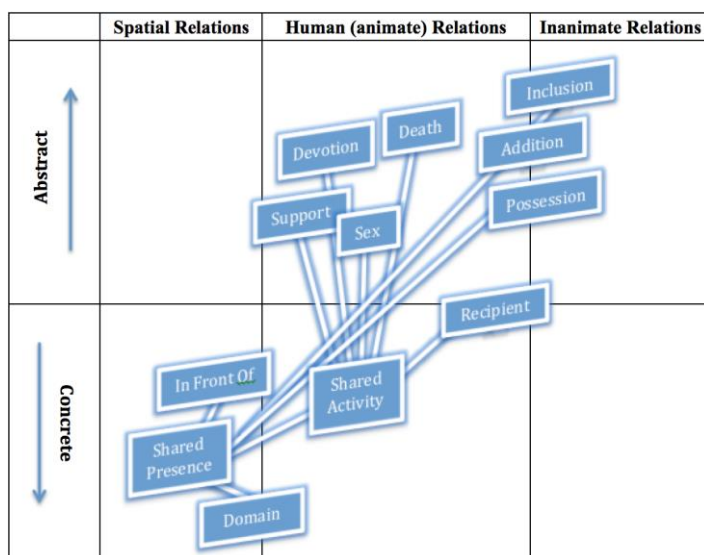
2003:1–18, 94–114). This notion is formally applied in the theory of grammaticalisation, which looks to cross-linguistic and typological patterns for evidence in reconstructing an expression's grammatical life. Due to the cross-linguistic and typological nature of these grammaticalisation principles, it does not matter whether the language under scrutiny is ancient or modern. The principles represent generalisations that stand above time and beyond any particularities of a language that could make the application futile.

For our purposes, this renders any concern for dating portions of the Hebrew Bible a moot point, as the parameters provided by grammaticalisation allow us to treat the closed corpus as a synchronic snapshot of BH. In other words, it is irrelevant how old or young one piece of the text is because no matter the age, all languages are still governed by typological principles. In light of this understanding, we can be certain that the more grammaticalised an expression is – whether in morphology, function, or sense – the more developed and more recent a development it is. Therefore, the theory of grammaticalisation offers a rigorous framework for plotting the evolution of a preposition's semantic potential.²⁵ In order to apply this theory, we can rely on five parameters provided by Heine et al. (1991:156–161) for detecting the degree of grammaticalisation in a given usage, and in doing so capture a more complete picture of the network's expanding reach. These parameters are summarised as follows: A given sense is more grammaticalized than another (1) if it is historically dependent upon another; (2) if it lacks a spatial aspect while the other possesses one; (3) if it implies participation with an inanimate entity while the other implies a human participant; (4) the fewer the physical dimensions it is able to represent; (5) if it indicates some sort of logical relationship while the other references some temporal relation, and (6) if it is more inclusive of other senses.

Because one sense does not always lead to another and one distinct use may lead to multiple, a flat linear depiction is less suited to represent the dynamism in play. For

²⁵ Although this investigation is restricted to the semantic potential of prepositions, the theory of grammaticalisation is applicable to any grammatical category; it is even able to trace the entire "lifespan" of a gram (e.g., Andrason and Lyle (2015) studies the journey of *לֹא* from noun to negator).

this reason, a chart has been drafted in which multiple dimensions might be accounted for: the concrete-abstract continuum is represented by the y-axis, while three primary cognitive domains of interaction (posited by Heine et al. 1991:160) are accounted for along the x-axis. The least grammaticalised sense is then theorised to be located further left and farther down, while the degree of grammaticalisation should increase the further right and farther up one goes.²⁶



For the sake of space, two examples of semantic extension will suffice in illustrating how this plotting was derived from the grammaticalisation parameters mentioned above. First, that Shared Activity is considered more grammaticalised than Shared Presence is validated by parameters (2) (viz., joint activity does not speak to spatial proximity while the Shared Presence does) and (4) (viz., Shared Activity is naturally less-suited to describe space than Shared Presence). In addition to the fact that Shared

²⁶ It should be remembered that the boundary lines are understood as being fuzzy, in both scope and nature, despite their appearance on paper. For instance, though Shared Presence is situated within the spatial relations column, it should not be supposed that it never relates animate entities (for it often does), but that the primary aspect profiled are spatial features. Furthermore, it is significant to note that a new extension is not reached by a spontaneous and uncharted jump. Rather, the regular use of Sense A in new contexts eventually crystallises into a new usage in which Sense B may not even show apparent traces of its semantic heritage to its predecessor.

Activity is considered more grammaticalised than Shared Presence, it is also plotted as a direct derivation from Shared Presence (rather than having a go-between sense to which the two are interrelated). This line of extension is deduced from the fact that for several millennia technology has demanded that for an activity to be performed with another individual, space must also be shared. It is Shared Presence, then, that begets Shared Activity (this entailment also appeals to the first parameter), and is actually the usage from which all of them might be derived. After all, every other usage represents a vestige of this most basic and spatial of relations. The second illustration fleshes this out further.

The fact that Possession is directly related to Shared Presence – bypassing all other chains of extension – is attested to by its TR-LM configuration. Although this sense’s setup closely resembles the concrete (spatial) formula of Shared Presence – X is with Y – it codes a completely different (non-spatial, abstract) sense. Thus, on the chart it must be placed within the “abstract row” on the y-axis. Similarly, because it regularly entertains inanimate entities in its configurational setup, it must be located between the animate/inanimate cognitive domains, i.e., parameter (6). And so, in this fashion, the development of 𐤁𐤅 and 𐤏𐤍 ’s range of meaning can be reconstructed and plotted according to the degree of grammaticalisation that is measured using the aforementioned parameters (cf. Lyle 2012:90–100 for a fuller analysis).

VIEWPOINTS OF THE SEMANTIC NETWORK

With the previously plotted derivation in play, our portrait of 𐤁𐤅 and 𐤏𐤍 ’s semantic potential is exacted with more depth and draws attention to the flattened limitations of a simple taxonomy. At the same time, however, there remain other methods through which the collective gamut of senses may be observed more fully, in which other dimensions may be accounted for (cf. Barr 1973:119). Two such methods will now be explained: first, by alternating between two different models of lexical inquiry, and second, through adjusting the level of resolution (or abstraction) at which the network is observed.

Vantage points from semasiology and onomasiology

Concerning the first method, our understanding of the network may change from two varying modes of observation, i.e., methods of lexical inquiry. The first alternating vantage point is quite simple. On the one hand, because an analysis of two prepositions entails the representation of two separate networks, both מֵ and מִן may initially be studied individually through a semasiological inquiry. This is the common model of lexical assessment appropriated by standard dictionaries where a single form is studied and its multiple meanings extrapolated. On the other hand, by reversing this method – that is, by first observing a handful of meanings, and secondarily seeing what forms are used to represent them – a homogenous portrait of the same or similar senses is drafted which consists of different lexemes. This onomasiological endeavour (often employed in a thesaurus) reveals the similarities of מֵ and מִן , while the former method tends to sharpen their differences.²⁷

Recalling the identified senses from the initial table at the beginning of the article, the benefits of both a semasiological and onomasiological exercise are attested to: each distinct sense is named but also complementarily exhibited by those forms through which such senses may be indicated.²⁸ Due to this comparison, one is able to more readily spot those senses that do not seem to be expressed through both forms. For the current investigation, the ability to alternate between two modes of viewing enables us to affirm the surprising judgment that the full spectrum of מֵ and מִן 's semantic potential is highly synonymous. The significance of this judgment as well as the extent to which these two lexemes demonstrate an element of sameness is further attested to by the second mode of network inspection.

Vantage points from abstraction to resolution

The second model of network analysis is based upon a dynamic interpretation of the

²⁷ For an introduction on the two approaches, see Geeraerts and Grondelaers (2004:25–45); and on onomasiology in particular, see Blank (2003:37–65).

²⁸ A fuller onomasiological survey would entail the inclusion of other prepositions (e.g., the Recipient sense can be signalled by מֵ , מִן , מִן , and מִן), yet such a study lies outside the scope of this article.

monosemy-polysemy dichotomy – a distinction which cognitive linguists believe melts away in language praxis. Taylor (2003:167) and Riemer (2010:167–168) explain that the degree of a form’s polysemy is directly contingent upon “the level of abstraction” at which its usages are viewed. The more “zoomed in” the lexical semantic analysis may be, the more attuned one will be to the various nuances of a form’s semantic potential. Similarly, the more removed and “zoomed out” one’s inspection may be, the more the schematic will swallow distinction, thus increasing the degree of monosemy. This process of fluctuation may be illustrated by the viewing distance at which one beholds an image-mosaic: a picture composed of different images that, together, comprise a single homogenous image when viewed from far away.



Image-mosaic of a face

So while there is no hard and fast line at which monosemy meets polysemy, to detect such levels demands a linguistic competency that will always evade those who study ancient languages. Nevertheless, it remains helpful to be aware of this flexible dynamism, for distinction and precision will increase with a more “zoomed in” account (similar to a semasiological investigation), while oneness and homogeneity will rise as the level of abstraction does (similar to an onomasiological point of departure).

With this said, it was found for $\text{נָּ$ and $\text{נָּ$ that even the nuances of an analysis characterised by more resolution were largely synonymous. These “nuances” are

better understood as the functional consequences or functional relations of a TR-LM configuration, each varying according to context.²⁹ Thus, for instance, when ׀ or ׀ relate the co-participation of an activity between a TR and a LM (Shared Activity), this joint activity – depending on the entities involved and the context of the activity – necessarily entails different types of functional relations between the configurational components, for example: “cooperation” (8), “accompany” (9), and “opposition” (Gen 20:4). Several functional relations evident among the other senses include the following: “company” (1–3) for Shared Presence, “subset” (4–5) for Domain, “perceptual accessibility” (6–7) for In Front Of, “benefactive” (10–11) for Recipient, “characterisation” (12) and “ownership” (13) for Possession, “extension” (14–15) for Addition, and “common lot” (14–15) for Inclusion.

These examples may suffice in demonstrating the complexity and polysemous nature of ׀ and ׀’s semantic potential. Having already commented on the TR-LM configurations of the distinct senses mentioned above, this functional sensitivity pays attention to the idiosyncratic behaviour of these configurations as varying contexts manipulate the total semantic appeal of a given usage. Both methods of description – the configurational and functional – are used in lieu of glosses, and highlights an added benefit of employing such explanatory tactics since there will never be any descriptive overlap (which is often the case when glosses are relied on). With a “zoomed-in” viewpoint accounted for, let us alter the level of abstraction and turn to the abstract, as our viewing distance increases and the monosemous rises.

Reflecting back upon the image-mosaic of the face, the visibility of the bigger picture may be seen – for in all actuality, the picture so easily referred to as “the face” is at the same time a picture of twenty other scenes. When this principle of perceptual variation is applied to lexical semantics, a comparison might be made between what we conveniently referred to as “the face” and “image schemas”. This term describes the recurring rudimentary conceptual structures we intuitively employ to

²⁹ Attention to this particular area of lexical semantics has only recently been given increased attention, the primary proponent being Vyvyan Evans (cf. Evans 2006:491–543; Evans 2009:155–174; Evans 2010:215–248); other linguists have in passing made note of such an awareness (cf. Cienki 1989:47–48; Tyler and Evans 2003; Taylor 2003:113; and Herskovits 1986 who first paid heed to this feature).

subconsciously make sense of and articulate the world we inhabit (Clausner and Croft 1999:1–31; Oakley 2007:215, 218).³⁰ As such, image schemas represent the skeletal frame of a semantic network. Moreover, image schemas are the building blocks of each unique sense, in which case an individual sense may consist of several image schemas, or multiple senses derived from the same image schema. Image schemas, then, provide and ensure the structural integrity of a lexeme’s vast network of senses. However, though image schemas play such a central role in a lexeme’s meaning potential, because they are such grand-picture structures, and, because in our day-to-day use of language we characteristically interact on a more refined level, image schemas are often unobserved. Thus, in the following example we are probably unaware of the image schema involved, or, for that matter, the string of schematic extensions involved with *עַם* that facilitate this reading: TOGETHER-APART begets CO-ACTIVITY, which in turn yields AGENT-PATIENT and a TRANSFER schema.

(22) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם הַקָּרָה נָא לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם (Gen 24:12)

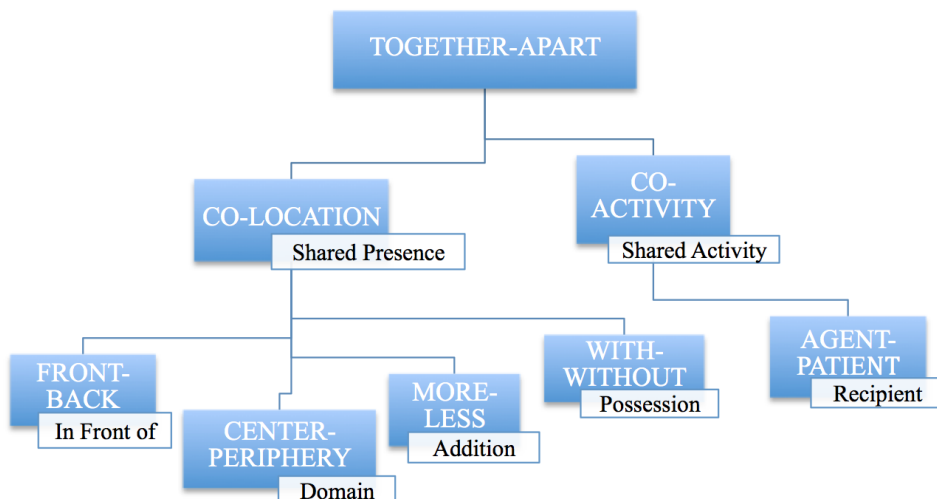
And he said, ‘O Yhwh, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show [your] devoted kindness to my master Abraham’

In other words, image schemas are often taken for granted: they lay unobserved at the bedrock of all our craftsmanship and manipulations of experiential knowledge turned to shared meaning.³¹ This, of course, is understandable due to the degree of contextual foliage we regularly encounter in any given act of communication. It is nonetheless helpful to remove ourselves from such a focused gaze on a particular semantic stock in order that we might see the underlying structures that organise and commission the lexeme’s network of senses. In this abstracted vantage point we are able to see “the big picture”, the common traits behind multiple senses and even the common layovers

³⁰ For example, one of the locative uses of “in” relies on the CONTAINER schema, as in the sentence “She poured the water in the vase”, just as one of the metaphorical uses of “over” relies on the CONTROL schema in “Something must have come over him”.

³¹ Although image schemas play a fundamental role in providing particular “cut-outs” for how we communicate our experiences of reality, they do not determine the more influential factor that dictates how reality is experienced. It is in fact our physical bodies and cultural milieu that regulate the composition of image schemas. This bodily/socially grounded influence on meaning is what Cognitive linguists refer to as “the embodiment of meaning” (Rohrer 2007:25–47).

between separate networks. Some of the major image schemas – and their extensions – involved in עִם and בְּ 's network are depicted in the following graph.



Thus we see that as the viewing distance decreases, the distinctions once observed from a zoomed-in viewpoint are greyed as image schemas begin to swallow what were once separate senses. The significance of all this will now be explained.

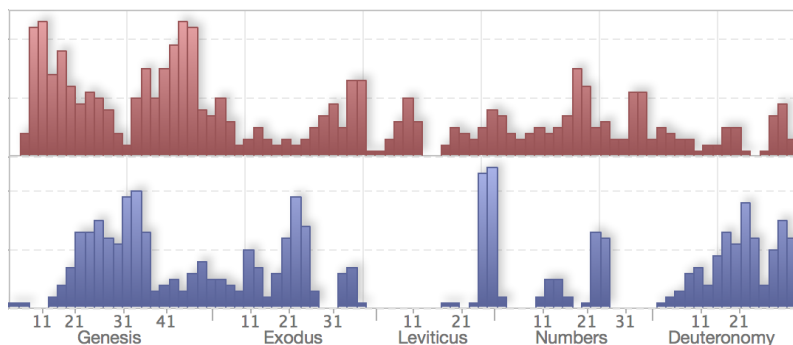
CONCLUSION

Although already suggested above, we can now affirm with confidence that the semantic potential of עִם and בְּ (as attested to primarily in the Pentateuch) is highly synonymous – not only with the identified array of distinct senses, but, as recently elaborated upon, in the image schemas which beget these senses as well as the functional relations existing among them. But this conclusion is somewhat unexpected. In theory, while a closed class lexeme (such as a preposition) will invariably demonstrate degrees of semantic overlap, synonymy is hard to come by; for the very nature of a lexeme's ability to construe a vast variety of meanings is facilitated to maximise the range of a lone prompt, that way other lexemes do not have to carry this load. Yet, synonymy does just the opposite: it minimises, due to redundancy, the utility of an already delimited stock of particles. Hence, to assert that

both מִן and מֵן are near synonyms is no small matter.³²

Summa summarum the current evaluation has demonstrated the benefits of a principled approach to ascertaining the semantic potential of BH prepositions. It has also laid a necessary foundation on which future analyses might be built. No longer should advances in lexicology be left as relics of the past. Modern BH lexicology must be informed and begin to be shaped by these giant strides. While intuition certainly has its place in lexical semantic inquiry, it need not play the leading role.

A promising area of future research lies in marrying this principled model of diachronic analysis to one of synchrony. The best way forward for the latter – one that builds a semantic network around the most prototypical usage – is to appropriate the quantitative methods from corpus linguistics. And because within the past decade cognitive linguists have been intentional about incorporating the methodological insights from corpus linguistics, this is a most natural step forward (cf. Glynn and Fischer 2010). Although not pertaining to prototypicality, some of the benefits of a quantitative approach are already evinced by the graph below, which displays all of the hits of מִן (bottom) and מֵן (top) in the Pentateuch.³³ In short, the graph is highly suggestive that the two prepositions are used interchangeably: as מִן 's distribution rises, מֵן 's dwindles (and vice-versa), implying a complementary implementation of the two throughout this closed corpus. This observation, of course, corroborates the previous conclusion that מִן and מֵן are near synonyms.



³² A common consensus concerning these two prepositions, however, is that as time went on, מִן eclipsed מֵן in both semantic development and use (consider the fact that in Chronicles מִן occurs 178x while מֵן only tallies in 28x; cf. TDOT s.v. מֵן and TLOT s.v. מִן).

³³ This graph was created using Accordance 10 (version 10.4.6).

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