Construct State: Modern Hebrew

Modern Hebrew (MH) nominal morphology preserves the nominal inflectional categories of earlier periods, and accordingly all nouns are inflected for the category of *state* (as well as other nominal categories such as *gender* and *number*). The unmarked state is called the *absolute state*, and it is distinguished from the *construct state* (CS) form:

(1a) absolute state: גלימה *glima* 'gown'

(1b) construct state (CS): גלימת *glimat* 'gown-CS'

The construct state noun heads a construction called סמיכות חבורה *smixut xavura* 'construct', where it is immediately followed by a noun-phrase called סומך *somex* 'annex'. The construct encodes a relation, such as the possessive relation in (2), where the construct head is the possessee and the construct annex the possessor:

(2) גלימת המלך

glimat	*ha-melex*
gown-CS	the-king

'the king's gown'

Nouns in the absolute state must lack an annex, as they do in (3a). In contrast, nouns in the construct state must be followed by an annex, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (3b) which lacks an annex.

(3) המלך התעטף בגלימה*בגלימת

ha-melex hit'aṭef	*(a) bi-glima*
	*(b) *bi-glimat*
the-king wrapped himself	(a) in-gown
	(b) *in gown-CS

'The king wrapped himself in a gown'.

The construct in MH preserves some of the properties of the construct in earlier periods of Hebrew, but also exhibits some new tendencies, concerning both form and function. The study of the construct in MH has been carried out within different theoretical frameworks, and has raised a variety of issues related to the properties and characteristics of the construct. These issues include definiteness of the construct, the distinction between phrasal

and compound structures, and the interpretation of constructs headed by non-nominal heads. In addition, it has been pointed out that the construct is but one of three constructions which express genitive relations in MH, and the relationship between these constructions has been the subject of many studies.

1. THE FORM OF THE CONSTRUCT

Prosody and Phonology. As in earlier periods of Hebrew, the construct state head in MH together with the first word of its annex constitute a prosodic word. This word has one primary stress, which falls on the annex. As a result, the head may undergo a variety of phonological operations sensitive to lack of stress, such as vowel deletion (גָּדוֹל *gadol* 'big' > גְּדוֹל *gdol* 'big-CS'), monosyllabization (בַּיִת *bayit* 'house' > בֵּית *bet* 'house-CS', מָוֶת *mavet* 'death' > מוֹת *mot* 'death-CS'), and internal stem modification (שְׂמָלוֹת *śmalot* 'dresses' > שִׂמְלוֹת *śimlot* 'dresses-CS'). The latter operation, however, is less widely spread in MH, and speakers often use either forms in both construct and absolute nouns (Rosén 1957:140). Thus both חֲבָרוֹת *xevrot* 'companies-CS' and חֲבָרוֹת *xavarot* 'companies' (absolute form) can be found as the head of a construct, as in חֲבָרוֹת\חֶברות תעופה *xevrot/xavarot te'ufa* 'airline companies', and both forms are also attested in non-construct phrases, such as חֲבָרות\חֶברות עסקיות *xevrot/xavarot 'isqiyot* 'financial companies'. The phonological form of the head also differs according to the nature of the annex; pronominal annexes and full NP annexes may in some cases trigger different phonological operations on the head, e.g., מְלָאכָה *melaxa* 'craft': מְלֶאכֶת *melexet*-(CS) vs. מְלַאכְתּוֹ *melaxt-o* 'his craft'. In some cases only the suffixed construct changes form: סרט *seret* 'film': סרט *seret*-CS vs. סרטו *sirṭ-o* 'his film' (Glinert 1989).

In addition, the feminine singular suffix *-á* and the masculine plural suffix *-im* exhibit a particular form in the construct state: *-at* and *-e* respectively (Rosén 1957; Berman 1978; Coffin and Bolozky 2005; Faust 2011; among many others).

The Head. The head of the construct can be a noun, as in שמלת כלה *śimlat kala* 'bridal dress', חלון הבית *xalon ha-bayit* 'the window of the house', including abstract nominalization of a

verb (יציאת המוזמנים *yeṣi'at ha-muzmanim* 'the exit of the invitees', הפסקת הדיון *hafsaqat ha-diyun* 'the termination of the discussion'); an adjective (טוב לב *ṭov lev* 'good hearted', שחור תלתלים *šxor taltalim* 'black-curled'); a numeral or quantifier (כל הילדים *kol ha-yeladim* 'all the children', שבעת הכוכבים *šiv'at ha-koxavim* 'the seven stars'); a participle, either active (עורך עיתון *'orex 'iton* 'newspaper editor', מנהל החברה *menahel ha-xevra* 'CEO') or passive (מוצף מים *muṣaf mayim* 'flooded with water', נטול קפאין *neṭul kafeyn* 'caffeine free'); and a preposition (לפני הצהריים *lifne ha-ṣohorayim* 'before noon', אחרי הצומת *'axare ha-ṣomet* 'after the intersection').

From a normative point of view, the head cannot be coordinated. Yet constructs with coordinate heads are attested, not only in colloquial use, but also in more formal registers: מורי ותלמידי המכללה *more ve-talmide ha-mixlala* 'the teachers and students of the college', מדינת ועם ישראל *medinat ve-'am yiśra'el* 'the state and the people of Israel', תחילת וסוף השיעור *txilat ve-sof ha-ši'ur* 'the beginning and the end of the class' (Glinert 1989).

In very rare cases, the head of the construct can itself be a construct: בית משפט השלום *bet mišpaṭ ha-šalom* 'magistrates court', בית ספר שדה *bet sefer śade* 'field school'.

The Annex. The annex of the construct in MH must be a noun phrase, including noun phrases which consist of a pronominal affix (זכותו *zxut-o* 'his right'). However, proper names are generally avoided as annexes when referring to a possessor. Speakers judge constructs such as משקפי מוטי *mišqefe moṭi* 'Moti's glasses' as ungrammatical, and find it difficult to assign possession interpretation to them (Ravid and Bar-On 2012). The annex cannot be an adjective; a compound such as הנדסה אזרחית *handasa 'ezraxit* 'civil engineering' is not a construct, as is evident from the form of the head (הנדסה *handasa*), which is in the absolute state rather than the construct state (הנדסת *handasat*). The annex can also itself be a construct, thus creating construct chains which are in principle unbounded: עקרון חופש הביטוי *'eqron xofeš ha-biṭuy* 'the principle of freedom of speech', תצהיר מזכירת דובר ראש הממשלה *taṣhir mazkirat dover roš ha-memšala* 'the declaration of the secretary of the spokesperson of the prime minister'.

Inflection. Plural and gender inflection is marked on the head: ראשי ממשלה *raše memšala* 'prime ministers', עורכת העיתון *'orexet ha-'iton* 'the newspaper editor(f)'. Pluralization of the annex differs for compound and phrasal constructs, and is discussed below. Definiteness marking in the construct has been the topic of investigation of many studies, and is discussed below.

2. RELATED CONSTRUCTIONS

The construct involves the surface adjacency of two nominal elements: the construct-state head and the noun-phrase annex. The construction denotes a genitive relation, such as possession, where the construct-state head is the possessee and the annex noun-phrase is the possessor, though many other semantic relations are also expressed (see, e.g., Azar 1977; Glinert 1989; Schlesinger and Ravid 1998 and references therein; and Coffin and Bolozky 2005). In the construct, the annex is bare, i.e., not case-marked. Genitive relations can also be expressed with a different construction, the *periphrastic possessive* construction, where the possessee is a full noun phrase. In this case the possessor cannot be bare, but must be case-marked as genitive by the genitive preposition של *šel*: ספר של המורה *sefer šel ha-more* 'a book of the teacher's', המטריה החדשה של רותי *ha-miṭriya ha-xadaša šel ruti* 'Ruti's new umbrella'. There is also an intermediate construction for the expression of genitive relations, where the head is in the construct state, and its annex is a possessive suffix which agrees with the possessor. This construction is called the *clitic doubled construct*, or simply the *double construct*. It has in common with the periphrastic possessive the case-marking of the possessor by means of the genitive preposition של *šel* 'of': אשתו של הצייר *'išt-o šel ha-ṣayar* 'the painter's wife', ספרו החדש של המורה *sifr-o he-xadaš šel ha-more* 'the teacher's new book' (Rosén 1957; Azar 1977; Berman 1978; Borer 1984; Engelhardt 1998; 2000).

The construct and double-construct show structural and functional similarities and differences relative to the periphrastic construction, where the head neither agrees nor is in the construct relation with the possessor. Though some researchers maintain that the three con-

structions are essentially synonymous (Berman 1978; Landau 1980; Rosenhouse 1989; Glinert 1989; Coffin and Bolotzky 2005 among others), others have pointed out interesting differences in the meaning of the construct (including the double-construct) vs. the periphrastic construction. For example, the construct is only interpreted as relational, unlike the looser contextual association allowed in the periphrastic possessive construction (Rosén 1957):

(4a)

בנות המורה	בנותיה של המורה	הבנות של המורה
bnot ha-mora	*bnot-eha šel ha-mora*	*ha-banot šel ha-mora*
girls-CS the-teacher	girls-CS-her of the-teacher	the-girls of the-teacher

both: 'the daughters of the teacher'

'the teacher's girls' (not necessarily her daughters, maybe her students, or associated in any contextually salient way)

(4b)

אשת הצייר	אשתו של הצייר	האשה של הצייר
ešet ha-ṣayar	*išt-o šel ha-ṣayar*	*ha-iša šel ha-ṣayar*
woman-CS the-artist	woman-CS-his of the-artist	the-woman of the-artist

both: 'the wife of the artist'

'the artist's woman' (not necessarily his wife, could be the woman he painted)

(4c)

צבע הסתיו	צבעו של הסתיו	הצבע של הסתיו
ṣeva ha-stav	*ṣiv'-o šel ha-stav*	*ha-ṣeva šel ha-stav*
color-CS the-autumn	color-CS-its of the-autumn	the color of the-autumn

both: 'the color of autumn' (the prevalent color of nature in that time of year)

'autumn's color' (the color associated with autumn, e.g., the one in vogue in autumn fashion this year)

Nouns which are interpreted only as relational tend to appear in the construct. This conforms with the cross-linguistic tendency for more structural 'cohesion' in relational constructions than in possessive constructions. The construct state is the idiomatic form of relational nouns which allows them to appear in close association with their argument. The periphrastic construction, on the other hand, where the possessor is not an argument but is contextually associated with the head, is less suitable for the expression of such relations, as examples (5a)–(5d) show:

(5a)

דרום הארץ	דרומה של הארץ	?הדרום של הארץ
drom ha-ʾareṣ	*drom-a šel ha-ʾareṣ*	*? ha-darom šel ha-ʾareṣ*
south-CS the-country	south-CS-its of the-country	the-south of the-country

both: 'the south of the country'

(5b)

ראש המגדל	ראשו של המגדל	?הראש של המגדל
roš ha-migdal	*roš-o šel ha-migdal*	*?ha-roš šel ha-migdal*
head-CS the-tower	head-CS-its of the-tower	the-head of the-tower

both: 'the top of the tower'

(5c)

תחילת השיעור	תחילתו של השיעור	התחילה של השיעור*
tχilat ha-šiʿur	*tχilat-o šel ha-šiʿur*	**ha-tχila šel ha-šiʿur*
start-CS the-class	start-CS-its of the-class	the-start of the-class

both: 'the beginning of the class'

(5d)

טובת המדע	טובתו של המדע	הטובה של המדע*
ṭovat ha-madaʿ	*ṭovat-o šel ha-madaʿ*	**ha-ṭova šel ha-madaʿ*
sake-CS the-science	sake-CS-its of the-science	the-sake of the-science

both: 'the sake of science'

The double construct differs from the construct in that it reduces thematic ambiguity in the role of the annex as argument of the relational head. While אהבת אם *ʾahavat ʾem* can be interpreted as 'mother's love' (mother as the subject) as well as 'love for mother' (mother as the object), the corresponding double construct אהבתה של אם *ʾahavata šel ʾem* can have only the first interpretation. That is, the annex can be interpreted only as the subject argument of the head, not the object. Where a subject interpretation is not possible, the construction is ungrammatical: תחזיתו של מזג האויר* *taχazito šel mezeg ha-ʾavir* 'the forecast of the weather' (vs. תחזיתו של החזאי *taχazito šel ha-χazay* 'the forecast of the meteorologist', which is grammatical) (Englehardt 1998; 2000). Some nominalizations allow for passivization, as in הריגתו של הנמר *harigato šel ha-namer* 'the killing of the leopard', where *ha-namer* is the subject of the passivized nominalization (Hazout 1991; 1995; Borer 1999).

The relationship between the three genitive constructions has been studied within a functional-pragmatic framework as well. Schlesinger and Ravid (1998) point out that the view that the three varieties are semantically equivalent does not take into consideration the fact that not all expressions are equally possible in the three constructions. Furthermore, when several varieties are available, one is regarded as more basic and less marked than the others. Their studies (1995; 1998) examined the occurrences and functions of the three constructions in a wide corpus (35,000 word tokens) of written and spoken texts. They found that each construction has distinct basic functions.

The main function of the bound construct is that of categorization, that is, creating a hyponym of the head. In 96 percent of the bound constructs in spoken corpora the rela-

tionship between the head and the annex is that of categorization, as in בובת עץ *bubat ʿeṣ* 'wooden doll', שולחן קפה *šulχan qafe* 'coffee table', מחלת רוח *maχalat ruaχ* 'mental illness'. Two other semantic relations, possession and part-whole relation, are also attested, but the bound construct is the marked construction for expressing them. Rather, the periphrastic construction is the basic structure for expressing these relations in MH. The double construct is the most limited construction, and occurs almost exclusively in written texts. It expresses specific propositional relations: the annex is the subject argument of the head, or its possessor. Proper names and nouns denoting human entities are very common; they appeared in eighty percent of the occurrences in the corpora studied as the annex of double constructs: אשתו של דני *ʾišto šel dani* 'Danny's wife', ביתו של המזכיר *beto šel ha-mazkir* 'the secretary's house', חריצותם של תושבי האי *χariṣutam šel tošve ha-ʾi* 'the diligence of the island's inhabitants'.

3. Phrasal vs. Compound Constructs

Constructs with non-phrasal annexes are one of the productive word formation devices in MH, similarly to compounds in other languages (Berman 1987; 1988; Borer 1988; Ravid and Schlesinger 1995; Ornan 2001). As such, they form part of the lexicon. They are distinguished from constructs with phrasal annexes, which are productive and are generated in the syntax of the language.

Compounds and phrasal constructs exhibit surface similarities yet distinct syntactic and semantic properties, making it challenging to draw the line between them and to account for both the similarities and differences.

Borer (1988; 2009) points out that both types of constructs show the same kind of phonological reduction of the head described above. Syntactically, the definite article is attached only once, to the annex, both in compounds (בית החולים *bet ha-xolim* 'the hospital') and in phrasal constructs (בית המורה *bet ha-more* 'the teacher's house'). The head cannot be directly modified; rather, all modifiers of the head must follow the annex in constructs, be they compounds (בית חולים חדש *bet xolim xadaš* 'a new hospital') or phrasal (בית מורה חדש *bet more xadaš* 'a new house of a teacher').

One difference between compounds and phrasal constructs is the availability of the double construct for phrasal constructs, but never for compounds: סופו של פסוק *sof-o šel pasuq* can only be the doubling of the phrasal construct 'the end of a sentence', but not of the compound סוף פסוק *sof pasuq* 'full stop'. Another difference between compounds and phrasal constructs is overtly expressed in colloquial Modern Hebrew (Berman 1978; Agmon-Fruchtman 1982; Coffin and Bolozky 2005; Meir and Doron 2013). Colloquial Modern Hebrew allows the definite article to attach to the construct-state head, yet it does so strictly in the case of compounds, and not in the case of phrasal constructs: התמונת מצב *ha-tmunat maṣav* 'the situation report', התמונת מורה* *ha-tmunat more* 'the teacher's picture'.

Borer (1988; 2009) lists a variety of syntactic and semantic operations and properties within Modern Hebrew (not necessarily colloquial) which distinguish between the two structures. Semantically, Borer regards compounds as opaque, in that their meaning is neither compositional nor predictable from their components, as in עורך דין *'orex din* 'editor-law' = 'lawyer', בית ספר *bet sefer* 'house-book' = 'school'). Phrasal constructs are regarded by Borer as semantically transparent, as their meaning is entirely predictable from their components: עורך המאמר *'orex ha-ma'amar* 'editor-the-article' = 'the editor of the article', בית השר *bet ha-śar* 'house-the-minister' = 'the house of the minister').

The syntactic differences mentioned by Borer between the two types of constructs have to do mainly with the phrasal nature and with the referentiality of the annex: in compounds the annex is non-referential, as it is not even a phrase, while in phrasal constructs it is phrasal and referential. Hence in compounds, but not

in phrasal constructs, the annex cannot be modified (6), cannot be a coordinate phrase (7), may not be referred to pronominally (8), and is not interpreted as definite even when marked by the definite article *ha-* (9):

(6a) בית התלמידים החדשים
bet ha-talmidim ha-xadašim (phrasal construct)
house the-students the-new
'the house of the new students'

(6b) *בית החולים החדשים
bet ha-xolim ha-xadašim (compound)
house the-sick(pl) the-new(pl)
'the new patients' house; *the new hospital'

(7a) בית תלמידים ותלמידות
bet talmidim ve-talmidot (phrasal construct)
house students(m) and-students(f)
'a house of male students and female students'

(7b) *בית חולים וחולות
bet xolim ve-xolot (compound)
house patients(m) and-patients(f)
'the male and female patients house'; *'hospital'

(7c) *גן ילדים וחיות
gan yeladim ve-xayot
garden children and-animals
*'a kindergarten and a zoo'

(8) *בית חולים ומיטותיהם
bet xolim u-miṭoteyhem
house patients; and-beds-theirs;
*'the hospital and their beds'

(9) בן המלך
ben ha-melex
son the-king
'the prince'

In (9), under the compound reading 'prince', the annex 'the king' is not interpreted as a particular king, though the entire construction is definite.

Other differences between the two constructions are as follows:

In phrasal constructs, the annex may be pluralized, with the related change in meaning:

בית השר *bet ha-śar* 'the house of the minis-
ter', בית השרים *bet ha-śarim* 'the house of the
ministers'. In compounds, the annex is either
in the singular or in the plural, but it cannot
vary in number inflection: מיץ גזר *miṣ gezer*
'carrot juice' (*carrot* in singular, the plural
is ungrammatical), מיץ תפוחים *miṣ tapuxim*
'apple juice' (*apple* in plural, the singular is
ungrammatical).

The stress pattern of the two constructions
may also differ. Compounds may exhibit redis-
tribution of stress so as to create a sequence of
alternating stressed and non-stressed syllables
(Bolozky 1982), as in כדורגל *kàdurégel* 'foot-
ball', מצב-רוח *màṣav-rúax* 'mood', כאב ראש
kèʾev- róš 'headache', מורה דרך *mòre- dérex*
'guide'. Phrasal constructs do not exhibit such
redistribution of stress.

Borer points to a class of constructs which
are difficult to classify, since they have a mix of
semantic characteristics of the two classes. Like
compounds, they have a non-referential annex,
but like phrasal constructs, their interpretation
is compositional: the annex is interpreted as a
modifier of the head, as in בית אבן *bet ʾeven*
'stone house', מגבת מטבח *magevet miṭbax*
'kitchen towel', גלגל הצלה *galgal haṣala* 'life
saver, flotation ring'. This class of modifica-
tional constructs leads Borer to a tri-partite
classification of constructs, whereas Meir and
Doron (2013) maintain a bi-partite classifica-
tion, treating modificational constructs as com-
pounds. Like compounds, the double construct
is never available for modificational constructs,
though it is found with phrasal constructs:
ביתם של החולים* *bet-am šel ha-xolim* 'the
hospital' (which can only be interpreted as
phrasal, i.e., 'the house of the patients'), ביתה
של האבן* *bet-a šel ha-ʾeven* 'the stone house',
vs. ביתם של השרים *bet-am šel ha-śarim* 'the
ministers' house'. Like compounds, modifica-
tional constructs in colloquial MH allow the
definite article to be attached to the construct-
state head: המגבת מטבח *ha-magevet miṭbax*
'the kitchen towel', השמלת משי *ha-śimlat meši*
'the silk dress', הבית אבן *ha-bet ʾeven* 'the stone
house'.

4. ADJECTIVAL CONSTRUCTS

An adjective in the construct state exhibits
the phonological changes typical of construct

nouns and behaves as a construct with respect
to the position of the definite article.

There are two types of constructs headed
by an adjective. One is the so-called *superla-
tive genitive*, where the construct expresses
the superlative relation, as in טובי האמנים *ṭove
ha-ʾomanim* 'the best artists' (Glinert 1989).
This use of the construct is restricted to for-
mal usage, and the adjective must be simplex
(derived adjectives as well as participial forms,
such as מוצלח *muṣlax* 'successful', do not occur
in this construction).

The second type of adjectival construct, which
has received a great deal of attention in the lit-
erature, consists of a construct state adjective
which forms a complex semantic relation with
its annex, on the one hand, and with the noun
it modifies, on the other hand, as in ילדה ארוכת
צוואר *yalda ʾarukat ṣavar* 'girl with a long neck,
long-necked girl', מרפסת עגולת פינות *mirpeset
ʿagulat pinot* 'balcony with rounded corners',
חדרים גבוהי תקרה *xadarim gvohe tiqra* 'rooms
with a high ceiling, high-ceilinged rooms'. The
adjectival head is restricted to non-suffixed
adjectives, i.e., derived adjectives, such as גאוותן
gaʾavtan 'arrogant', אביבי *ʾavivi* 'of-spring,
spring (adj), springtime (adj)', cannot occur in
this position (Glinert 1989).

The annexes in adjectival constructs are typi-
cally relational nouns (Glinert 1989; Hazout
2000; Siloni 2002), such as body parts, abstract
attributes, spatial parts (as is 'ceiling' to 'room'
in the above examples), but not kinship terms
(Siloni 2002). The adjectival head in this
construction is not directly interpreted as an
attribute of the noun it modifies, but only indi-
rectly, through being an attribute of its annex,
which itself is a relation taking the modified
noun as argument. For example, *long* is not an
attribute of the modified noun *girl* in the con-
struct 'long-necked girl', but of the noun *neck*
in annex position. The relation between *long*
and *girl* is mediated by the relational annex
neck, which takes *long* as its attribute on the
one hand, and *girl* as its argument on the other
hand (Kim 2002). Though the construct state
adjective functions as the head of the construct,
its annex, too, has head-like properties, since it
takes the modified noun as argument. Accord-
ingly, the annex is non-recursive in this con-
struction, and disallows further modification
and complementation (Borer 1996):

(10) ילדה אדומת שמלה קצרה*
*yalda adumat śimla qṣara
girl red-cs dress short
'a girl whose short dress is red'

(11) הילדה אדומת שרוולי חולצתה*
*ha-yalda adumat šarvule xulṣat-a
the-girl red-cs sleeves-cs shirt-cs-her
'the girl whose shirt's sleeves are red'

Some accounts (e.g., Kremers 2005) nevertheless analyze construct state adjectives as attributed to the noun they modify. In the above examples, this can be paraphrased as: 'a girl who is long (of neck)', 'a balcony which is round (of corners)', or 'rooms which are high (of ceiling)'. Such a paraphrase would be problematic ('a boy who is torn of shirt') for an example like (12):

(12) ילד קרוע חולצה
yeled qruaʿ xulṣa
boy torn-cs shirt
'A boy whose shirt is torn'

Among adjectival constructs, as in the case of other nominal constructs, it is possible to discern between phrasal constructs, which are fully productive and have transparent meaning, such as the examples above (Siloni 2002; Hazout 2000), and adjectival compounds, such as קל רגליים *qal raglayim* 'light-legged' meaning 'fast', כבד משקל *kvad mišqal* 'heavy-weighted' meaning 'serious, important', and גבה לב *gvah lev* 'high hearted' meaning 'arrogant'.

5. DEFINITENESS OF THE CONSTRUCT

The assignment of definiteness to the construct shows some peculiarities that raise many theoretical challenges. As already mentioned, the canonical way of turning a construct definite is by attaching the definite article to the annex. This raises several theoretical questions:

(a) Why is it impossible to mark a construct state head directly with the definite article and to what extent has this changed in colloquial Modern Hebrew?
(b) Does the annex itself get a definiteness value from the definite article which marks it?

(c) How does the construct get its definiteness value from the definite article marking the annex?

The prevalent view in the literature is that the definiteness marking of the annex determines the definiteness of the construct. In (13) the picture is interpreted as definite because of the definiteness marking of the annex *monk*:

(13) תמונת הנזיר
tmunat ha-nazir
picture-cs the-monk
'the picture of the monk'

There is disagreement about whether the annex itself is definite in addition to the construct, or whether an additional translation of (13) could be 'the picture of a monk', as suggested by Danon (2008). An indefinite interpretation of the definite annex is found in compounds, e.g., גלימת הנזיר שלו *glimat ha-nazir šelo* 'his monk's (i.e., monkish) robe', but Danon suggests this for phrasal constructs as well.

In the view of Heller (2002), the construct is definite independently of the definiteness of its annex, and this is determined by the relational (or, rather, functional) interpretation of its head. Heller argues that (14) is definite as well as (13), though the annex in (14) is indefinite:

(14) תמונת נזיר אחד
tmunat nazir exad
picture-cs monk one
'the picture of some monk'

Conversely, Danon (2001) argues that constructs may be indefinite even in cases where the annex is definite. In the following examples, the construct is not necessarily interpreted as unique, despite the definiteness marking of the annex:

(15a) רגל השולחן
regel ha-šulxan
leg-cs the-table
'the leg of the table'

(15b) חלון המכונית
xalon ha-mexonit
window-cs the-car
'the window of the car'

(15c)   עובדת השגרירות
    ʿovedet   *ha-šagrirut*
    employee-CS the-embassy
    'the/an employee of the embassy'

(15d)   תושב האיזור
    tošav   *ha-ʾezor*
    inhabitant-CS the-area
    'the/an inhabitant of the area'

(15e)   תלמיד החוג
    talmid   *ha-xug*
    student-CS ES-department
    'the/a student of the department'

(15f)   דוד הכלה
    dod   *ha-kala*
    uncle-CS the-bride
    'the uncle of the bride'

These various issues concerning definiteness have been tackled in a sequence of studies: Borer (1984; 1996; 1999), Ritter (1988), Englehardt (1998; 2000), Danon (2001; 2008; 2010), Siloni (2001; 2003), Heller (2002), Shlonsky (2004), Rothstein (2009), Doron and Meir (2013), Meir and Doron (2013), and others.

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Construct State: Hasidic Hebrew

The construct chain is the primary method of expressing nominal possession in the Hebrew hagiographic tales composed in late 19th- and early 20th-century Eastern Europe by adherents of the Hasidic spiritual movement. The → Hasidic Hebrew construct chain exhibits a variety of noteworthy features reflecting influence from various earlier strata of Hebrew as well as from the authors' native Yiddish. The most prominent of these features are non-standard definition of construct chains; construct nouns linked by the conjunction *waw*; construct chains containing abstract plural absolute nouns and loan-words; and the avoidance of the construct chain with attributive adjectives. In addition, the Hasidic Hebrew authors sometimes express nominal possession with the post-biblical Hebrew particle של *šel* 'of' or its Aramaic counterpart -ד *d-*, but the use of these forms is comparatively limited.

1. DEFINITION OF CONSTRUCT CHAINS

Hasidic Hebrew authors sometimes define construct chains according to standard historical convention by prefixing the definite article to the absolute noun while leaving the construct noun unprefixed, e.g., בני הבית *bene hab-bayit* 'the members of the household' (Kaidaner 1875:12b). However, they often deviate from this norm by instead employing one of two non-standard constructions. The first involves prefixation of the definite article to the construct noun instead of the absolute one, e.g., היראת שמים *hay-yirʾat šamayim* 'the fear of heaven' (Bromberg 1899:35), הארון קודש *ha-ʾaron qodeš* 'the holy ark' (Kaidaner 1875:19b), החביות יין *ha-ḥaḇiyyot yayin* 'the barrels of wine' (Shenkel 1903:16). This Hasidic Hebrew phenomenon seems to lack precedent in biblical and rabbinic literature; instead, it may be partly traceable to medieval and early modern Ashkenazi Responsa literature, in which an identical construction is attested (see Betzer 2001:91). The practice in both the Hasidic tales and the Responsa is most likely ultimately attributable to the Eastern European Jewish authors' Yiddish vernacular, in which many Hebrew construct chains exist independently as compound nouns that are defined by placing the definite article before the initial noun (e.g., דאָס יראת-שמים *dos yires-shomayim* 'the fear of heaven', דער ארון-קודש *der orn-koydesh* 'the holy ark'). It is likely that the authors understood these construct chains as compound nouns, as in their native Yiddish, and applied this method of definition to a wide range of construct chains not all of which are employed in that language.

The second construction consists of doubly defined construct chains with the definite article prefixed to both the absolute and construct nouns, e.g., הצדיקי הדור *haṣ-ṣaddiqe had-dor* 'the righteous men of the generation' (Bromberg 1899:4), העובד האלקים הזה *ha-ʿoḇed ha-ʾeloqim haz-ze* 'this worshipper of God' (Kaidaner 1875:14a), להאדון העיר *le-ha-ʾadon ha-ʿir* 'to the lord of the town' (Rodkinsohn 1865:40),

השבת הקודש *haš-šabbat haq-qodeš* 'the holy Sabbath' (Munk 1898:72). Like defined construct nouns, this phenomenon does not seem to derive from the canonical texts (except for a very marginal attestation in the Hebrew Bible; see Williams 2007:8), but appears in Ashkenazi Responsa literature (Betzer 2001:91–2). Again, it is most likely partially rooted in Yiddish influence: many of the construct chains in question function independently in Yiddish as indefinite compound nouns in which the *he* prefixed to the absolute noun serves as a meaningless lexicalized component (e.g., צדיקי הדור *tsadike hador* 'righteous men of a generation') with definition effected by placing the Yiddish definite article before the entire compound (e.g., די צדיקי הדור *di tsadike hador* 'the righteous men of a generation'). However, the phenomenon is also frequently attested with construct chains that did not serve as Yiddish compound nouns containing lexicalized *he*, but would instead have been familiar to the authors from appearances in both Yiddish and earlier forms of Hebrew in their indefinite form (e.g., עובד אלהים *ʿoḇed ʾelohim* 'worshipper of God', אדון עיר *ʾadon ʿir* 'lord of a town', שבת קודש *šabbat qodeš* 'holy Sabbath'). In such cases the construction seems to be rooted in an analogy with Hebrew noun-adjective phrases, in which determination is effected in all strata of the language by prefixing the article to both the noun and its associated adjective (e.g., האיש הטוב *ha-ʾiš haṭ-ṭoḇ* 'the good man').

2. SPLIT CONSTRUCT CHAINS

Hasidic Hebrew authors sometimes follow the standard biblical and post-biblical convention whereby two construct nouns may not be linked by the conjunction *waw* but rather one of them is placed after the following absolute noun with a *waw* prefix and possessive pronominal suffix, e.g., כח ה' וגבורתו *koaḥ h' u-gḇurato* 'the power and might of the Lord' (Rodkinsohn 1865:11). However, they often diverge from this historical model by splitting the construct through insertion of the conjunction *waw* between two or more construct nouns, e.g., קדושת והפלאת רבינו *qeduššat we-haḇlaʾat rabbenu* 'the holiness and wonder of our Rebbe' (Rodkinsohn 1865:6). This non-standard usage has occasional precedent in certain medieval Hebrew texts (e.g., Karaite

piyyuṭim and Moses Alshich's 16th-century biblical commentary), which may have exerted a degree of influence on the authors of the tales; however, any such influence was probably compounded by the existence of a similar construction in Yiddish, which commonly expresses the possessive relationship between nouns by placing the preposition פֿון *fun* 'of' before the possessing noun, with the possessed nouns routinely linked by the conjunction און *un* 'and'.

3. CONSTRUCT CHAINS WITH ABSTRACT PLURAL ABSOLUTE NOUNS

When Hasidic Hebrew construct chains contain a plural construct noun, the following absolute noun is typically plural as well, even if the noun refers to an abstract concept that outside of construct settings appears only in the singular, e.g., ספרי תורות *siḇre torot* 'Torah scrolls' (Kaidaner 1875:19b), בתי כנסיות *batte kenesiyyot* 'synagogues' (Shenkel 1903:17). This convention is most likely ultimately traceable to Late Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew, in which the absolute noun following a plural construct noun is likewise frequently plural even if it refers to an abstract concept; this can be contrasted with Classical Biblical Hebrew, in which the absolute noun in such chains typically remains in the singular. The authors' relatively consistent selection of this particular late biblical and rabbinic feature instead of its standard biblical equivalent may be due to the suffix concord exhibited in the Late Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew construction, as attraction played a dominant role in the formation of Hasidic Hebrew syntax.

4. CONSTRUCT CHAINS COMPOSED OF ADJECTIVES

While most Hasidic Hebrew construct chains are composed solely of nouns, some are comprised of a noun and an adjective. The adjective may be in the construct position, e.g., גדול התלמידים *gedol hat-talmidim* 'the greatest of the students' (Shenkel 1903:19), or in the absolute position, e.g., בחכמת האלקית *be-ḥoḵmat ha-ʾeloqit* 'with Godly holiness' (Rodkinsohn 1864:22), חתולי שחורות *ḥatule šeḥorot* 'black cats' (Rodkinsohn 1864:43). When adjectives

appear in the absolute position, they serve to modify the associated construct nouns just as attributive adjectives modify their nouns; as such, the adjectives typically match the nouns in gender and number, though there are occasional instances of gender discord. The use of adjectives in the construct position is attested in biblical and post-biblical literature. By contrast, the placement of adjectives in the absolute position lacks historical precedent. It appears to be an internal Hasidic Hebrew development that evolved as an alternative to noun-adjective phrases, possibly on analogy with the converse phenomenon of adjectives in the construct position and perhaps reinforced by the authors' abovementioned tendency to confuse construct chains with noun-adjective phrases.

5. Loan-words in Construct Chains

Hasidic Hebrew authors often employ borrowed Yiddish nouns in the formation of construct chains. The Yiddish nouns are most commonly in the absolute position and may be indefinite, e.g., מלכי גרעקין *malke greqin* 'Greek kings' (Bodek 1866:2), or prefixed with the definite article, e.g., שתיית הקאווע *šetiyyat haq-qawwe* 'the drinking of coffee' (Kaidaner 1875:21b); however, they may appear in the construct position with a following Hebrew absolute noun, e.g., פוטעלקיס היין *putelqis hay-yayin* 'containers of the wine' (Munk 1898:18). The Hasidic Hebrew authors' readiness to employ Yiddish lexical borrowings in these contexts differs noticeably from the Rabbinic Hebrew convention of avoiding the construct with loanwords in favor of the possessive particle של *šel* 'of' (see Pérez Fernández 1999:32); this unprecedented and productive use of the construct chain highlights its position within Hasidic Hebrew as a fully integrated and productive grammatical feature.

6. Construct Chains Modified by Attributive Adjectives

Although Hasidic Hebrew authors employ the construct chain frequently and productively, they use it only rarely in conjunction with attributive adjectives. Constructs with an associated attributive adjective are typically restricted to cases in which either the construct chain constitutes a set phrase, e.g., בבית הכנסת הגדולה *be-ḇet hak-keneset hag-gedola* 'in the big synagogue' (Shenkel 1903:3), or the absolute noun and associated adjective comprise one, e.g., בהתגלות הצדיק הקדוש *be-hitgallut haṣ-ṣaddiq haq-qadoš* (Rodkinsohn 1865:1). This tendency suggests that the authors found such constructions awkward except when they regarded the components as fixed expressions rather than actual construct chains.

7. Particles של *šel* and -ד *d*-

In addition to the construct chain, Hasidic Hebrew authors sometimes employ the particle של *šel* 'of' in order to convey nominal possessive relationships. However, they use של *šel* much less frequently than they do the construct chain. In some cases the two constructions are employed interchangeably, e.g., המצוה של תשובה *ham-miṣwa šel tešuḇa* vs. מצות תשובה *miṣwat tešuḇa* 'the commandment of repentance' (Munk 1898:5). However, של *šel* is often selected in syntactic and semantic contexts differing from those in which construct chains appear: it is frequently attested in set phrases deriving from rabbinic literature, e.g., ב"ד של מעלה *b"d (bet din) šel maʿala* 'the heavenly court' (Shenkel 1903:8), and in conjunction with attributive adjectives (when the construct chain is typically avoided), e.g., מעשה גדולה ונוראה של הרב *maʿaśe gedola we-noraʾa šel ha-raḇ* 'a great and awesome story of the Rebbe' (Shenkel 1903:7), תלמיד מובהק של הרב הקדוש *talmid muḇhaq šel ha-raḇ haq-qadoš* 'an outstanding student of the holy Rebbe' (Rodkinsohn 1864:17). Moreover, when של *šel* is employed it commonly appears in conjunction with a 3rd person proleptic suffix, e.g., טיבו של השחוק *ṭiḇo šel haś-śeḥoq* 'the nature of the laughter' (Rodkinsohn 1865:1), לבה של היתומה *libba šel hay-yetoma* 'the heart of the orphan girl' (Bodek 1866:1).

Finally, Hasidic Hebrew authors sometimes employ the particle -ד *d*- 'of', the Aramaic equivalent of של *šel*; however, they typically select it only in two specific settings. Firstly, they use it in order to convey a geographic relationship between two nouns, generally a common noun followed by a place name, e.g., הרב הקדוש דמעזעריטש *ha-raḇ haq-qadoš de-mezeritš* 'the holy Rebbe of Mezeritch' (Kaidaner 1875:15b), יום השוק דבאלטע *yom*

haš-šuq de-balṭe 'the market day of Balta' (Rodkinsohn 1865:37). This construction may constitute a generalization of the Hebrew and Yiddish designation for Vilnius ירושלים דליטא *yerušalayim de-liṭe* 'Jerusalem of Lithuania'. Secondly, they employ it in order to indicate a temporal relationship between two nouns, e.g., קידוש דליל שבת *qidduš de-lel šabbat* 'Friday night *kiddush*' (Bromberg 1899:34).

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Construct State and Possessive Constructions: Rabbinic Hebrew

Rabbinic Hebrew possesses a number of ways to express the possessive relation. Most of the structures used for this purpose can be found already in Biblical Hebrew, but in Rabbinic Hebrew some become more common.

In Rabbinic as in Biblical Hebrew a common possessive structure is a direct juxtaposition of the phrase's components ('construct', סמיכות *semixut*). Diachronically the first element of this construction (the dependent form or *nomen regens*) loses its stress and therefore may undergo certain phonetic changes, for example שָׂדֶה יָרָק *śede yaraq* 'vegetable field' (Mishna Kilʾayim 3.3; note: unless otherwise specified, all examples are from MS Kaufmann, although the transliteration does not necessarily reflect the manuscript's vocalization); זֶרַע קִישּׁוּאִים *zeraʿ qiššuʾim* 'cucumber seed' (Mishna Shabbat 2.3); חֶזְקַת בָּתִּים *ḥezqat battim* 'title to homes' (Mishna Bava Batra 3.1) (Har-Zahav 1952:220–226; Fernández 1997:32).

The entire phrase is made definite by means of making the last component definite, as in פתילת הבגד *petilat hab-beged* 'wick made from used garments' (Mishna Shabbat 2.3); בית המדרש *bet ham-midraš* 'college' (Mishna Menaḥot 10.9). This form is identical to that in which the definite article is meant to apply only to the last part of the phrase (the *nomen rectum*), for example, תמורת הפסח *temurat hap-pesaḥ* 'exchange for the Passover sacrifice' (Mishna Pesaḥim 9.6), that is, '(something) in exchange for the Passover sacrifice' (cf. תמורת עולה *temurat ʿola* 'exchange for a burnt offering' [Mishna Temura 3.2]) (Birnbaum 1996:8).

Some phrases occur only with the definite article, for example, וולד הטומאה *welad haṭ-ṭumʿa* 'secondary cause of ritual uncleanliness' (Mishna Maʿaser Sheni 3.9), while others never do, for example, טבול יום *ṭebul yom* 'one who has bathed in the daytime' (Mishna Ṭevul Yom 1.1). Other phrases may occur with or without the definite article, irrespective of their syntactic status, for example, בשר הקודש *beśar haq-qodeš* 'sacrificial meat' (Mishna Pesaḥim 3.8) versus בשר קודש *beśar qodeš* (Mishna ʾAvot 5.5). All these phrases may be considered inherently definite, irrespective of whether or not they contain a definite article (Birnbaum 1996:10).

The plural of this kind of possessive construction is usually formed by making the first component plural, for example כדי שמן *kadde šemen* 'oil jars' (Mishna Sheviʿit 5.7), בגדי זהב *bigde zahaḇ* 'gold garments' (Mishna Yoma 3.4). Occasionally, the second component is in the plural as well, for example, שיברי השופרות *šiḇre haš-šofarot* 'broken pieces of the