

Diachronic Diversity in Classical Biblical Hebrew

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4. CONSTRUCT מֵאָה VERSUS ABSOLUTE מֵאָה

1.0. The Numeral ‘Hundred’ in Ancient Hebrew

Ancient Hebrew exhibits two forms of the numeral hundred when followed by a noun: construct מֵאָה and absolute מֵאָה. Their distribution in biblical and extrabiblical material is not random.¹

1.1. Iron Age Epigraphic Hebrew

Iron Age Hebrew epigraphy has just one relevant instance. Here the grammatical state of the numeral is construct: וּמֵאָה תִּשְׁמֹנֶה ‘and a hu[nd]red cubits’ (Siloam ll. 5–6).

1.2. The Masoretic Tradition

In the MT, the ratio of construct to absolute forms is 30:53, but the respective totals show uneven distribution. In the Pentateuch, construct forms outnumber absolute by a margin of 27:5. The rest of the MT exhibits the reversed trend of 3:48—0:34 in the Prophets, 3:14 in LBH. Recalculated according to recognised chronolects, in CBH the ratio is 27:39, in LBH 3:14.

Some HUNDRED + NOUN collocations utilise only construct מֵאָה or absolute מֵאָה. Since a given expression may only ever have occurred with one of the two forms, it is instructive to consider expressions co-occurring with both forms. See Table 1 (overleaf).

¹ See Moshavi and Rothstein (2018), on indefinite numerals in construct generally, and (117–18) on constructions with מֵאָה specifically. Their discussion is largely synchronic.

Table 1: Nouns that occur in collocations after construct and absolute forms of ‘hundred’

Noun	Construct		Absolute	
	Count	References	Count	References
אֲדָנִים ‘bases’	1	Exod. 38.27 (P)	0	
אִישׁ ‘people’	0		4	Judg. 7.19; 20.35; 1 Kgs 18.13; 2 Kgs 4.43
אֶלֶף ‘thousand’	4	Num. 2.9 (P), 16 (P), 24 (P), 31 (P)	8	1 Kgs 20.29; 2 Kgs 3.4, 4; 1 Chron. 5.21; 21.5; 22.14; 29.7; 2 Chron. 25.6
אַמָּה/אַמוֹת ‘cu-bits’	0		11	1 Kgs 7.2; Ezek. 40.19, 23, 27, 47, 47; 41.13, 13, 14, 15; 42.8
יוֹם ‘days’	3	Gen 7.24 (P); 8.3 (P); Est. 1.4	0	
כֶּכֶר ‘talents’	4	Exod. 38.25 (P), 27 (P), 27 (P); 2 Chron. 25.9	5	2 Kgs 23.33; Ezra 8.26; 2 Chron. 25.6; 27.5; 36.3
כֶּסֶף ‘silver’	1	Neh. 5.11	4	Deut. 22.19 (Other) (SP); Judg. 16.5; 17.2, 3
מְדִינָה ‘countries’	0		3	Est. 1.1; 8.9; 9.30
נְבִיאִים ‘prophets’	0		1	1 Kgs 18.4
עֲרֻלוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים ‘Philistine fore-skins’	0		2	1 Sam. 18.25; 2 Sam. 3.14
פְּעָמִים ‘times’	0		2	2 Sam. 24.3 1 Chron. 21.3
צֹאן ‘sheep and goats’	0		1	1 Kgs 5.3
צִמְ(ו)קִים ‘raisin clusters/cakes’	0		2	1 Sam. 25.18; 2 Sam. 16.1
קִיץ ‘summer fruit (figs)’	0		1	2 Sam. 16.1
קִשְׁיָה ‘monetary units’	0		2	Gen. 33.19 (E) (SP); Josh. 24.32
רֶכֶב ‘chariots’	0		2	2 Sam. 8.4 1 Chron. 18.4
שָׁנָה ‘years’	17	Gen. 5.3 (R), 6 (R), 18 (R), 25 (R), 28 (R); 11.10 (R), 25 (R); 21.5 (P); 25.7 (P), 17 (P); 35.28 (P); 47.9 (E), 28 (P); Exod. 6.16 (P), 18 (P), 20 (P); Num. 33.39 (R)	4	Gen. 17.17 (P); 23.1 (P); Isa. 65.20, 20
שְׁעָרִים ‘measures’	0		1	Gen. 26.12 (SP)
TOTALS	30		53	

In BH, just four collocations occur with both forms of ‘hundred’: אֶלֶף ‘thousand’, כֶּכֶר ‘talent’, כֶּסֶף ‘silver’, and שָׁנָה ‘year’. Broadening the perspective, this is also true of אמות/אמה ‘cubit(s)’, preceded by construct מאת in Iron Age epigraphy (above, §1.1), but by absolute מאה in BH (including the SP, below, §1.5) and elsewhere. Taking into account only these expressions, the ratio of construct to absolute is 26:21 overall, 24:3 in the Torah, and 2:18 elsewhere. Consider examples (1)–(8).

- (1) בְּלִי-הַפְקָדִים לְמַחֲנֵה אֶפְרַיִם מֵאֵת אֶלֶף וּשְׁמֹנֶת-אֲלָפִים וּמֵאָה לְצִבְאוֹתָם...
‘All those numbered of the camp of Ephraim, according to their divisions, are 108,100 [= **one hundred** thousand...].’
(MT Num. 2.24)
- (2) ...וַיַּכּוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-אֲרָם מֵאָה-אֲלָף רִגְלֵי בְיּוֹם אֶחָד:
‘And the people of Israel struck down of the Syrians 100,000 [= **one hundred** thousand] foot soldiers in one day.’ (MT 1 Kgs 20.29)
- (3) וַיְהִי מֵאֵת כֶּכֶר הַכֶּסֶף לְצִקֹּת אֶת אֲדָנֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ
‘The **hundred** talents of silver were for casting the bases of the sanctuary...’ (MT Exod. 38.27)
- (4) ...וַיִּתֵּן עֹנֶשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ מֵאָה כֶּכֶר-כֶּסֶף וְכֶכֶר זָהָב:
‘...and he laid on the land a tribute of **a hundred** talents of silver and a talent of gold.’ (2 Kgs 23.33)
- (5) הָשִׁיבוּ נָא לָהֶם כְּהַיּוֹם שְׂדֵתֵיהֶם כְּרָמֵיהֶם זֵיתֵיהֶם וּבְתֵיהֶם וּמֵאֵת הַכֶּסֶף
‘Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the **hundred** pieces of silver’ (Neh. 5.11)²

² The phrase וּמֵאֵת הַכֶּסֶף here is enigmatic. ESV takes it as ‘percentage’. Others view it as a corruption of מִשְׁאָה ‘loan of’, here in the sense of ‘interest of, collateral of’ (see the critical apparatus in *BHS*).

- (6) וַיִּשָּׁב אֶת־אֲלֹף־וּמָאָה הַכֶּסֶף לְאִמּוֹ
‘And he restored the 1,100 [= one thousand, **one hun-**
ded...] pieces of silver to his mother.’ (Judg. 17.3)
- (7) וַאֲבִרָהָם בֶּן־מֵאָה שָׁנָה
‘And Abraham was **a hundred** years old’ (MT Gen. 21.5).
- (8) ...כִּי הַנָּעַר בֶּן־מֵאָה שָׁנָה יָמוּת וְהַחֹטֵא בֶּן־מֵאָה שָׁנָה יִקְלָל:
‘...for the young man shall die **a hundred** years old, and
the sinner **a hundred** years old shall be accursed.’ (MT Isa.
65.20)

Most collocations are indefinite, but instances including the definite article are found with both structures, e.g., examples (3) and (6).

Turning to the matter of Source Criticism, consider Table 2.
Table 2: Incidence of construct מֵאָה and absolute מֵאָה according to purported Pentateuchal sources (per Friedman 1989, 246–59)

	Construct	Absolute
E	1	1
P	17	2
R	8	0
Other	0	1

As the construct form dominates in the Pentateuch, it is unsurprising that no source should exhibit marked preference for the absolute form. Still, it is worth noting that routinely late-dated P, though showing minority use of the absolute form (with the word שָׁנָה ‘year’), exhibits decisive affinity for the construct form (including with the word שָׁנָה ‘year’), accounting for a large share of the construct forms. R also uses the construct form exclusively, whereas E shows mixed usage between two occurrences, while Freidman’s Other source in Deuteronomy shows a single instance

of absolute morphology. The most conspicuous tendencies are those of P and R, which differ markedly from the dominance of the absolute form in non-Pentateuchal CBH and LBH.

1.3. The Non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

In the NBDSS, there are four cases of construct מִאָת, but only one—4Q159 f1ii.8—is independent of BH influence, the remaining cases being based on BH—4Q252 1.7 || Gen. 7.24; 4Q252 1.9 || Gen. 8.3; 4Q364 f8i.2 || Gen. 35.28. Absolute cases number five; of these, four are independent—מֵאָה מִגֶּן ‘a hundred shields’ (1QM 9.13); מֵאָה יוֹם ‘a hundred days’ (4Q266 f10ii.1); מֵאָה צוֹאִים ‘a hundred sheep and goats’ and מֵאָה נִשְׁכָּה ‘and a hundred chambers’ (11Q19 44.6)—and one is a biblical quotation—מֵאָה כֶּסֶף ‘a hundred (pieces of) silver’ (11Q19 65.14 || מֵאָה כֶּסֶף Deut. 22.19). These figures relevant to independent usages—four absolute, one construct—indicate that the absolute form is more characteristic than the construct form of the linguistic milieu in which the NBDSS were composed.

1.4. The Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

The BDSS exhibit one instance of construct מִאָת: מִאָת שָׁנָה ‘a hundred years’ (4Q1 f5.9 || Gen. 35.28) and five instances of absolute מֵאָה: מֵאָה קָשִׁיטָה ‘a hundred monetary units’ (MurX f1.3 || Gen. 33.19; מֵאָה שָׁנָה ‘a hundred years’ (1QIsa^a 55.3 [2x] || 1Q8 28.4 || Isa. 65.20 [2x]). In all cases, the BDSS form corresponds to that of the MT. Little of diachronic import can be said on the basis of these facts, as the material is fragmentary and there is full agreement between the BDSS and the MT.

1.5. The Samaritan Pentateuch

Due to textual differences of a non-linguistic nature, the SP has more cases of HUNDRED + NOUN constructions than the MT. Overall, its ratio of construct to absolute is 36:3 (compare 27:5, in the case of the MT Torah, above, §1.2). In most cases, the SP matches the MT in terms of the grammatical state of the numeral ‘hundred’. Thus, all cases of MT construct מֵאָה with a corresponding form of ‘hundred’ in the SP are paralleled by construct מֵאָה *māʾ*. The SP lacks a corresponding form three times in Gen. 5 (vv. 18, 25, 28), while there are ten cases of SP construct מֵאָה *māʾ* in Gen. 11 not paralleled by MT ‘hundred’ (vv. 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 have no parallel numeral; vv. 23 and 32 have מֵאָתַיִם ‘two hundred’). Additionally, in two cases SP construct מֵאָה *māʾ* parallels MT absolute מֵאָה (Gen. 17.17; 23.1). Significantly, these two involve the specific expression ‘a hundred years’, which in the Masoretic Pentateuch shows a construct form 17 times, and an absolute form just twice. It seems that, in line with its penchant for linguistic harmonisation, the Samaritan tradition levelled the two exceptional cases in line with the majority. This means that the SP preserves absolute מֵאָה *māʾ* ‘hundred’ only in the case of expressions with no documented construct alternative in the Pentateuch (Gen. 26.12; 33.19; Deut. 22.19).

1.6. Rabbinic Hebrew

RH shows strong predilection for the absolute form. Focusing on the Mishna, construct מֵאָה is unattested, while examples of abso-

lute מֵאָה are plentiful ($40 \times$).³ These latter include cases of collocations that in earlier sources utilise the construct alternative, specifically, מֵאָה אַמָּה ‘a hundred cubits’ (m. ‘Eruvin 3.3, 3; 8.10; m. Middot 4.7; 5.1, 2; m. ‘Oholot 14.3; 17.1; cf. Iron Age epigraphic Hebrew, §1.1, above) and מֵאָה יוֹם ‘a hundred days’ (m. Nazir 2.10; 3.4; cf. Tiberian and Samaritan BH, §§1.2 and 1.5, respectively). In RH beyond the Mishna, construct מֵאָה is extremely rare, and seems to obtain only in direct allusion to BH. Compare the following examples from the Babylonian Talmud:

- (9) בתי הניפי לי(ה) במניפיד ואני אתן ליכי מֵאָה ככרין דנרד
 ‘My daughter, fan me with a fan, and as a gift I will give you a **hundred** packages of spikenard’ (b. Bava Meṣia‘ 86a)
- (10) בנתינת הכסף אתה מוצא מֵאָה ככר. דכת' "ויהי מֵאָה ככר הכסף לצקת" וג'.

‘But with regard to the giving of the silver to the Tabernacle you find only **one hundred** talents, as it is written: “And the **hundred** talents of silver were for casting” (Exod. 38.27).’ (b. Bekhorot 5a)

When the RH usage is independent of BH, the absolute form obtains (9). Only under the influence of a BH allusion is the construct alternative preserved (10). But even under BH influence, construct מֵאָה does not necessarily persist in RH. Consider example (11).

³ M. Demai 7.7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7; m. Terumot 4.7, 10; 5.1, 2, 3, 4; 9.5; m. Shabbat 16.3; m. ‘Eruvin 3.3, 3; 8.10; m. Ketubbot 4.3; 5.1, 5; 13.7; m. Nazir 2.10; 3.4; m. Bava Qamma 4.5; m. Bava Meṣia‘ 3.8; m. Bava Batra 9.5; m. Sanhedrin 4.5; m. Hullin 6.4, 4; m. ‘Arakhin 3.5; 6.2; m. Keritot 5.3, 3; m. Middot 4.7; 5.1, 2; m. ‘Oholot 14.3; 17.1; m. Nega‘im 8.4.

- (11) אבינו אברהם בשעה שנימול היה בן תשעים ותשע שנה "בהמולו בשר ערלתו". ומת בן חמש ושבעים ומאת שנה. "ויהיו חיי שרה מאה שנה ועשרים שנה ושבע שנים שני חיי שרה". יצחק אבינו מת בן מאה ושמונים שנה. "ויהיו ימי יעקב שני חייו שבע שנים וארבעים ומאת שנה".
 'Our father Abraham at the time that he was circumcised was ninety-nine years old "In his circumcising of his fore-skin" (Gen. 17.24)'. And he died at the age of a **hundred** and seventy-five years [\approx Gen. 25.7]. "And Sarah's life was **a hundred** and twenty-seven years—the years of Sarah's life" (Gen. 23.1). Isaac our father died at the age of **a hundred** and eighty years [\approx Gen. 35.28]. "And the days of Jacob's life were **a hundred** and forty-seven years" (Gen. 47.28).' (Seder 'Olam Rabba 2)

Instructive in example (11) is the varied treatment of forms of 'hundred' in the RH retelling of BH source material. Twice the composer of Seder 'Olam Rabba preserves BH construct מֵאָה (in the non-literal allusion to Gen. 25.7 and the quotation of Gen. 47.28). In another instance, BH absolute מֵאָה is retained (in the quotation of Gen. 23.1). In the remaining case, the BH construct is brought into line with the standard RH absolute (in the allusion to Gen. 35.28). This is typical of RH citation of BH: a combination of verbatim quotation, reformulation retaining linguistic archaisms, and rephrasing with contemporary forms.

1.7. Cognate Sources

Both Old and Second Temple Aramaic have regular recourse to the absolute form of 'hundred'. OA usage is seen in the four relevant cases in the Tell Fekheriye bilingual inscription (KAI 309): 'and a hundred ewes' (l. 20), 'and a hundred

cows' (l. 20), ומאה נשון 'and a hundred women' (ll. 21, 22). The Second Temple Aramaic convention is demonstrated by the Targums and the Peshiṭta, which consistently resort to the absolute form of 'hundred', even when rendering a construct form in the MT.

2.0. Interpreting the Data

2.1. Diachrony

Based on the biblical and extrabiblical distribution of the construct and absolute forms of 'hundred', מאָה and מֵאָה, respectively, certain diachronic conclusions can be drawn. The most obvious would seem to be that CBH allowed for the use of both the construct and the absolute forms, generally and in the case of specific collocations. Thus, Tiberian CBH shows a construct to absolute ratio of 27:39, whereas the same ratio in LBH is 3:14. Crucially, the late abandonment of the construct form in writing independent of BH influence is confirmed by Second Temple extrabiblical corpora, especially the NBDSS and RH. A single case of the construct form in Iron Age Hebrew epigraphy, OA's use of the absolute form, and mixed usage in the BDSS and the SP support the reliability of the general impression of distribution reflected in Tiberian CBH.

2.2. The Linguistic Exceptionality of the Torah

A second phenomenon of apparent diachronic import is the conspicuous distinction between the Hebrew of the Torah and the Hebrew of the rest of the Bible. In other words, without denying the validity of the difference observed in the previous section

(§2.1) between CBH, on the one hand, and LBH and other Second Temple forms of Hebrew, on the other, there is also a clear-cut division between the Hebrew of the Torah (Tiberian and Samaritan, alike), joined by Iron Age epigraphy, and the Hebrew of all other ancient sources, including, critically, all non-Pentateuchal CBH. The relevant ratios of construct to absolute are MT Torah 27:5, SP 36:3, rest of MT 3:48 (Prophets 0:34, Writings 3:14).

This state of affairs demands an explanation that takes into account not just the distribution of the specific linguistic feature under examination, but additional traits discussed in this volume, by dint of which the linguistic profile of the Torah is exceptional.

2.2.3. Explanation 1: Differing Approaches to Preservation

According to what is perhaps the least contentious hypothesis, ancient scribes accorded the Torah special reverence not accorded to other biblical material, on account of which they took special care to preserve its linguistic profile, including archaic features, which in non-Pentateuchal material they were somewhat less careful to preserve, allowing the infiltration of later alternatives. If so, then one might reasonably suppose that the CBH of the Prophets may once have presented more cases of construct מֵאָה than the extant Masoretic tradition does, but that these were replaced with absolute מֵאָה as Second Temple scribes allowed non-Pentateuchal CBH to shift in the direction of the Hebrew of their own milieu. There seems to be nothing in the distribution of the two forms of ‘hundred’ to contradict the reality of such a scenario.

2.2.2. Explanation 2: Diachronic Diversity within Classical Biblical Hebrew

The suitability of such an explanation in this specific case does not, however, prove its correctness here or in general. Indeed, parsimony dictates preference for the theory that accounts for the broadest swathe of data. While an approach that assumes secondary contemporisation of non-Pentateuchal CBH in the direction of Second Temple Hebrew plausibly accounts for many differences between Pentateuchal CBH and non-Pentateuchal CBH, it cannot account for all of them. Chs 1–2 in the present volume deal with features the specific distributions of which are difficult to explain as the result of such a process. It has been argued that these must rather be considered characteristic of typologically distinct CBH sub-chronolects, tentatively labelled CBH₁ and CBH₂. Crucially, a theory hypothesising phases within CBH can account for all differences between Pentateuchal and non-Pentateuchal CBH. The reality of artificial linguistic development in the course of transmission must be taken seriously, but it was evidently not so pervasive as to reshape the general profile of a given biblical chronolect. In general, the ostensible CBH₂ remains distinct from TBH and LBH. Thus, even if this subphase of CBH is deemed (partially) a result of secondary processes, a distinction between it, i.e., retouched early material and TBH and LBH, i.e., authentically later material, is perceptible.

3.0. Excursus: The Grammatical State of the Numerals 1–10 in Ancient Hebrew in Historical Perspective⁴

It might be wondered whether the developments seen in the case of forms of the numeral ‘hundred’ were part of a broader process of development involving the grammatical state of cardinal numerals modifying nouns in indefinite constructions. In this connection, not all forms are relevant or show a distinction. No construct form of אֶחָד or אַחַת ‘one’ is available in indefinite expressions, because the numeral ‘one’ typically follows the noun it modifies. In the case of אַרְבַּע ‘four (F)’, שֵׁשׁ ‘six (F)’, שְׁמֹנֶה ‘eight (F)’, and עָשָׂר ‘ten (F)’, there is no possibility of marking a distinction in state, as the respective construct and absolute forms are identical. Though such a distinction theoretically exists in the case of absolute חָמֵשׁ ‘five (F)’, versus construct חֲמִשָּׁה ‘five (F)’, absolute שִׁבְעַת ‘seven (F)’, versus construct שִׁבְעָה*, and absolute תִּשְׁעָה ‘nine (F)’, versus construct תִּשְׁעָה*, the construct forms obtain only in fixed expressions involving more complex numerals, e.g., חֲמִשָּׁה מֵאוֹת ‘five hundred’ and שִׁבְעָה עָשָׂר ‘seventeen’, but generally not with following nouns (the sole possible exception being *ketiv* חֲמִשָּׁה קִנִּים ‘five cubit reeds’, *qere* חֲמִש־מֵאוֹת קִנִּים ‘five hundred reeds’ [Ezek. 42.16], but the realisation of the *ketiv* cannot be known). Table 3 (facing page) gives the MT distribution of forms where a distinction in grammatical state obtains.

⁴ See Moshavi and Rothstein (2018) for a synchronic discussion of the grammar of indefinite numerical construct phrases in BH.

Table 3: Incidence of construct and absolute forms of numerals in the MT (for citations, see below, §4.0)

Two				
	שני	%	שנים	%
Pent	56	97	2	3
Proph	27	59	19	41
Writ	3	43	4	57
LBH	1	20	4	80
שתי				
	שתי	%	שנים	%
Pent	33	97	1	3
Proph	16	59	11	41
Writ	3	75	1	25
LBH	2	67	1	33
Three				
	שלוש	%	שלושה	%
Pent	18	42	25	58
Proph	13	33	26	67
Writ	4	36	7	64
LBH	4	40	6	60
שלוש				
	שלוש	%	שלושה	%
Pent	2	9.5	19	90.5
Proph	1	4	27	96
Writ	0	0	7	100
LBH	0	0	5	100
Four				
	ארבעה	%	ארבעת	%
Pent	0	0	10	100
Proph	1	6	16	94
Writ	0	0	1	100
LBH	0	—	0	—
Five				
	חמשה	%	חמשת	%
Pent	2	15	11	85
Proph	0	0	12	100
Writ	0	—	0	—
LBH	0	—	0	—
Six				
	ששה	%	ששת	%
Pent	13	72	5	28
Proph	4	40	6	60
Writ	0	0	5	100
LBH	0	0	5	100
Seven				
	שבעה	%	שבעת	%
Pent	56	80	14	20
Proph	15	44	19	56
Writ	13	68	6	32
LBH	11	85	2	15
Eight				
	שמונה	%	שמונת	%
Pent	2	50	2	50
Proph	0	0	3	100
Writ	0	0	2	100
LBH	0	0	2	100
Nine				
	תשעה	%	תשעת	%
Pent	0	—	0	—
Proph	0	0	1	100
Writ	0	—	0	—
LBH	0	—	0	—
Ten				
	עשרה	%	עשרת	%
Pent	3	14	18	86
Proph	3	14	18	86
Writ	2	0	2	50
LBH	2	67	1	33

It is difficult to discern an overall trend. In the case of the numerals ‘two’,⁵ ‘six’, and ‘seven’, a trend of diminishing use of the construct seems clear. In the case of ‘four’, ‘five’, and ‘ten’, the construct form is consistently rare. In the case of ‘three’, both construct and absolute forms occur and are stable. Cases of ‘eight’ and ‘nine’ are too rare to sustain much in the way of argumentation.

These trends find a degree of confirmation in non-Tiberian biblical material and extrabiblical sources, but there are also inconsistencies. See Table 4 (facing page). Instability in the grammatical state of ‘two’ in the MT Prophets, MT LBH, the NBDSS, and the BDSS—with preference for the construct, but also some documentation of the absolute—contrasts sharply with overwhelming use of the relevant construct forms in the MT Pentateuch and the Mishna (with absolute forms in the latter only in citations of the Torah). The growing use of absolute forms of ‘six (M)’ and ‘seven (M)’ is confirmed by similar distributions in non-Tiberian and extrabiblical material, but LBH is an outlier when it comes to ‘seven (M)’. The same is true of absolute ‘eight’, the infrequency of which in BH makes it difficult to discern any trend there. ‘Nine’ is virtually undocumented in BH, but is strongly construct in RH. The numeral ‘ten’ shows preference for the absolute state throughout all sources. The SP is in general agreement with the MT, sometimes harmonising minority forms.

⁵ Excluded from counts of the numeral ‘two’ are cases involving the decades, e.g., ‘twenty-two’, as these almost uniformly (15 of 16 times) involve absolute forms of the numeral ‘two’, e.g., וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁנַיִם מֵלֶכֶךְ ‘and thirty-two kings’ (1 Kgs 20.1). The sole exception is אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁנַיִם יְלָדִים ‘forty-two children’ (2 Kgs 2.24).

Table 4: Incidence of construct and absolute forms of numerals in the MT, non-Tiberian BH, and late extrabiblical sources (for citations, see below, §4.0)

	מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת		מֶאֱת/מֶאֱת	
	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת	מֶאֱת
Pent.	89	3	18	25	0	11	2	11	13	5	56	14	2	2	0	0
Proph.	41	30	13	26	1	16	0	12	4	6	15	19	0	3	0	1
LBH	3	5	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	5	11	2	0	2	0	0
NBDSS	15	4	8	15	0	5	0	0	0	5	21	37	0	2	0	0
BDSS	9	2	4 ⁶	7	0	1 ⁷	0	1	15 ⁸	0	15 ⁹	8	0	0	0	0
SP	91	0 ¹⁰	18	25	0	10	2	10	14	5	53	14	2	2	0	0
Ben Sira	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
RH	669	9 ¹¹	45	211	13	76	5	45	0	32	8	20	1	10	13	2

Since no general trend is discernible, it is difficult to contextualise the treatment of ‘hundred’. The only thing that can be

⁶ Excluding 4Q51 9e–i.2, where the text is unclear.

⁷ וְאַרְבַּע כְּנָפִים (MT Ezek. 40.21) || ‘and four wings’ (4Q73 f2.6) וְאַרְבַּע כְּנָפִים (MT Ezek. 10.21).

⁸ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים ‘six days’ (4Q132 f3–4.1; 4Q136 f1.13; 4Q140 f1.14; 4Q145 f1R.7) || שִׁבְעַת יָמִים ‘seven days’ (MT Exod. 13.6).

⁹ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים ‘six days’ (MT Deut. 16.8) || שִׁבְעַת יָמִים ‘seven days’ (4Q30 f32i + 33.4) || שִׁבְעַת יָמִים (MT Deut. 16.8); לְשִׁבְעַת נְחָלִים ‘into seven channels’ (1QIsa^a 11.5) || לְשִׁבְעַת נְחָלִים (MT Isa. 11.15).

¹⁰ שְׁנֵי כְּרֻבִּים || שְׁנֵי כְּרֻבִּים (SP Exod. 25.18) || שְׁנֵי עֵדִים || שְׁנֵי עֵדִים (MT Exod. 25.18); שְׁנֵי עֵדִים || שְׁנֵי עֵדִים (MT Deut. 17.6); שְׁנֵי מַעְרְכוֹת || שְׁנֵי מַעְרְכוֹת (SP Lev. 24.6) || שְׁנֵי מַעְרְכוֹת (MT Lev. 24.6).

¹¹ All cases of שְׁנֵי עֵדִים come in citations of עֵדִים (Deut. 17.6; Sota 6.3 [3×]; Mak. 1.7, 9 [2×]). All cases of שְׁנֵי מַעְרְכוֹת come in a citation of Ezek. 41.23–24 (Mid. 4.1 [2×]).

said is that, similar to the case of ‘hundred’, the Torah shows high proportions of construct ‘two’, ‘six’, and ‘seven’, which elsewhere in BH (but not necessarily in other late sources) show majority absolute usage. In a limited sense, then, preference for the construct forms of these numerals may be considered distinctive of the CBH of the Pentateuch.

4.0. Citations

שני—Gen. 10.25; 24.22; 25.23, 23; 27.9; 32.8, 11; 41.50; Exod. 2.13; 26.19, 19, 21, 21, 23, 25, 25; 34.1, 4, 4; 36.24, 24, 26, 26, 28, 30, 30; 37.7; Lev. 5.7, 11; 12.8; 14.10, 22; 15.14, 29; 16.5; 23.13, 17, 19, 20; 24.5; Num. 6.10; 11.26; 15.6; 28.9, 9, 12, 20, 28; 29.3, 9, 14; Deut. 4.13; 5.22; 10.1, 3; 19.15; Judg. 3.16; 11.38; 1 Sam. 10.2; 28.8; 30.12; 2 Sam. 4.2; 8.2; 12.1; 14.6; 1 Kgs 2.32, 39; 6.23, 34, 34; 7.18, 24, 42; 12.28; 20.27; 2 Kgs 5.22, 23; 7.14; 10.8; 17.16 (*qere*); Jer. 24.1; Ezek. 37.22; Zech. 11.7; Song 4.5; 7.4; 1 Chron. 1.19; שנים—Exod. 25.18; Deut. 17.6; Josh. 2.1; Judg. 11.37, 39; 15.13; 1 Sam. 25.18; 1 Kgs 5.28; 10.19; 17.12; 18.23; 21.10; 2 Kgs 2.12; 17.16 (*ktiv*); Ezek. 21.24; 40.39, 39, 40, 40; 41.18; Zech. 4.3; Neh. 6.15; 2 Chron. 4.3, 13; 9.18; שתי—Gen. 4.19; 19.8; 29.16; Exod. 25.12, 12; 26.17; 28.7, 9, 14, 23, 26, 27; 30.4; 36.22; 37.3, 3, 27; 39.16, 16, 19, 20; Lev. 5.7, 11; 12.8; 14.4, 22, 49; 15.14, 29; Num. 6.10; 10.2; Deut. 14.6; 21.15; 1 Sam. 1.2; 2.21; 6.7, 10; 10.4; 13.1; 2 Sam. 13.6; 1 Kgs 6.32, 34; 7.16; 2 Kgs 5.22, 23; Isa. 7.21; Ezek. 37.22; 41.24; Amos 3.12; Prov. 30.15; Neh. 12.31; 1 Chron. 4.5; שתיים—Lev. 24.6; 2 Sam. 2.10; 1 Kgs 3.16; 2 Kgs 2.24; (8.17, 26; 15.2, 27; 21.19;) Jer. 2.13; Ezek. 23.2; 40.9; 41.3, 22, 23, 24; 43.14; Zech. 5.9; 2 Chron. 33.21
שלוש—Gen. 30.36; 40.12, 13, 18, 19; 42.17; Exod. 3.18; 5.3; 8.23; 10.22, 23; 15.22; 19.15; Lev. 12.4; 27.6; Num. 10.33, 33; 33.8; Josh. 1.11; 2.16, 22; 3.2; 9.16; Judg. 14.14; 19.4; 1 Sam. 10.3; 2 Sam. 20.4; 24.13; 1 Kgs 10.17; Amos 4.4; Jon. 3.3; Est. 4.16; Dan. 10.3; 1 Chron. 21.12; 2 Chron. 10.5; שלשה—Gen. 6.10; 18.2; 29.2, 34; 40.10, 16; Exod. 2.2; 25.32, 32, 33, 33; 37.18, 18, 19, 19; Lev. 14.10; Num. 15.9; 28.12, 20, 28; 29.3, 9, 14; Deut. 17.6; 19.15; Josh. 18.4; Judg. 7.16; 9.43; 1 Sam. 2.21; 10.3, 3; 11.11; 13.17; 30.12, 12; 2 Sam. 6.11; 14.27; 18.14; 24.13; 1 Kgs 6.36; 7.4, 12; 12.5; 2 Kgs 2.17; 9.32; 23.31; 24.8; Isa. 17.6; Amos 4.7; Jon. 2.1, 1; Job 1.17; Dan. 10.2; 11.2; 1 Chron. 13.14; 21.12; 2 Chron. 36.2, 9; שלש—Gen. 18.6; 38.24; 1 Sam. 13.21 (?); שלש—Gen. 11.13, 15; Exod. 23.14, 17; 27.1; 34.23, 24; 38.1; Lev. 19.23; Num. 22.28, 32, 33; 24.10; Deut. 4.41; 14.28; 16.16; 19.2, 7, 9; Judg. 9.22; 16.15; 1 Sam. 20.41; 2 Sam. 13.38; 21.1; 1 Kgs 2.39; 7.4, 5; 9.25; 10.22; 15.2; 17.21; 22.1; 2 Kgs 13.18, 19, 25; 17.5; 18.10; 24.1; 25.17; Isa. 16.14; 20.3; Jer. 36.23; Ezek. 40.48,

48; 41.22; Amos 4.8; Job 1.2; 42.13; 1 Chron. 21.12; 2 Chron. 8.13; 9.21; 13.2; 31.16

ארבעה—Judg. 11.40; ארבעה—Gen. 2.10; 14.9; Exod. 25.34; 26.32, 32; 28.17; 36.36, 36; 37.20; 39.10; Judg. 9.34; 19.2; 20.47; 1 Sam. 27.7; 1 Kgs 7.2, 30; 18.34; 2 Kgs 7.3; Ezek. 1.6; 10.9, 14, 21; 40.41, 41, 42; Zech. 2.3; Job 42.16

חמשה—Num. 3.47; 18.16; חמשה—Gen. 47.2; Exod. 21.37; 26.27, 27, 37, 37; 36.32, 32, 38; Lev. 27.6; Num. 11.19; Josh. 10.26; Judg. 18.2; 1 Sam. 6.4, 4; 17.40; 21.4; 22.18; 2 Kgs 6.25; 25.19; Ezek. 8.16; 11.1; 45.12; חמש—Ezek. 42.16; חמש—Gen. 5.6, 11, 15; 11.32; 12.4; 25.7; 43.34; 45.6, 11, 22; Exod. 26.3; 27.1, 1, 18; 36.10; 38.1, 1, 18; Lev. 27.5, 6; Josh. 14.10; 1 Sam. 25.18, 18; 2 Sam. 4.4; 1 Kgs 6.10, 24, 24; 7.16, 16; Isa. 19.18; Jer. 52.22; Ezek. 40.7, 30, 48, 48; 41.2, 2, 9, 11, 12; 2 Chron. 6.13, 13

ששה—Exod. 16.26; 20.9, 11; 23.12; 24.16; 31.15, 17; 34.21; 35.2; Lev. 12.5; 23.3; Deut. 5.13; 16.8; Josh. 6.3, 14; 1 Kgs 11.16; Ezek. 46.6; ששה—Gen. 30.20; Exod. 25.32; 26.22; 36.27; 37.18; 2 Sam. 2.11; 5.5; 6.13; 2 Kgs 15.8; Ezek. 9.2; 46.4; Est. 2.12, 12; 1 Chron. 3.4; 8.38; 9.44

שבעה—Gen. 8.10, 12; 31.23; 50.10; Exod. 7.25; 12.15, 19; 13.6; 22.29; 23.15; 29.30, 35, 37; 34.18; Lev. 8.33, 33, 35; 12.2; 13.4, 5, 21, 26, 31, 33, 50, 54; 14.8, 38; 15.13, 19, 24, 28; 22.27; 23.6, 8, 18, 34, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42; Num. 12.14, 14, 15; 19.11, 14, 16; 28.17, 24; 29.12; 31.19; Deut. 16.3, 4, 13, 15; 1 Sam. 10.8; 11.3; 31.13; 1 Kgs 8.65, 65; 16.15; 20.29; 2 Kgs 3.9; Ezek. 3.15, 16; 43.25, 26; 44.26; 45.23, 23; Job 2.13, 13; Est. 1.5; Ezra 6.22; Neh. 8.18; 1 Chron. 10.12; 2 Chron. 7.8, 9, 9; 30.21, 23, 23; 35.17

שבעה—Num. 23.1, 1, 1, 14, 29, 29, 29; 28.19, 27; Deut. 7.1; 16.9, 9; 28.7, 25; Josh. 6.4, 6, 6; 18.2, 5, 6, 9; Judg. 8.14; 16.7, 8; 1 Sam. 6.1; 2 Sam. 21.6; Isa. 11.15; Jer. 32.9; 52.25; Ezek. 39.12, 14; Zech. 3.9; 4.2; Job 1.2; 42.8, 8; Ruth 4.15; 1 Chron. 15.26, 26

שמנה—Gen. 17.12; 21.4; שמנה—Exod. 26.25; 36.30; 1 Sam. 17.12; Jer. 41.15; Ezek. 40.41

תשעה—2 Sam. 24.8

עשרה—Gen. 31.7, 41; Lev. 27.5; Judg. 17.10; Isa. 5.10; Jer. 42.7; Neh. 5.18; 2 Chron. 36.9; עשרה—Gen. 24.10, 22; 45.23; Lev. 27.7; Num. 7.14, 20, 26, 32, 38, 44, 50, 56, 62, 68, 74, 80; 11.19, 32; Josh. 22.14; Judg. 6.27; 20.10; 1 Sam. 1.8; 17.17; 25.5; 2 Sam. 18.11, 15; 1 Kgs 5.3; 7.38; 11.31; 14.3; 2 Kgs 13.7; 25.25; Jer. 41.1, 8; Amos 6.9; Zech. 8.23; Ruth 4.2; Ezra 1.10

