

Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures

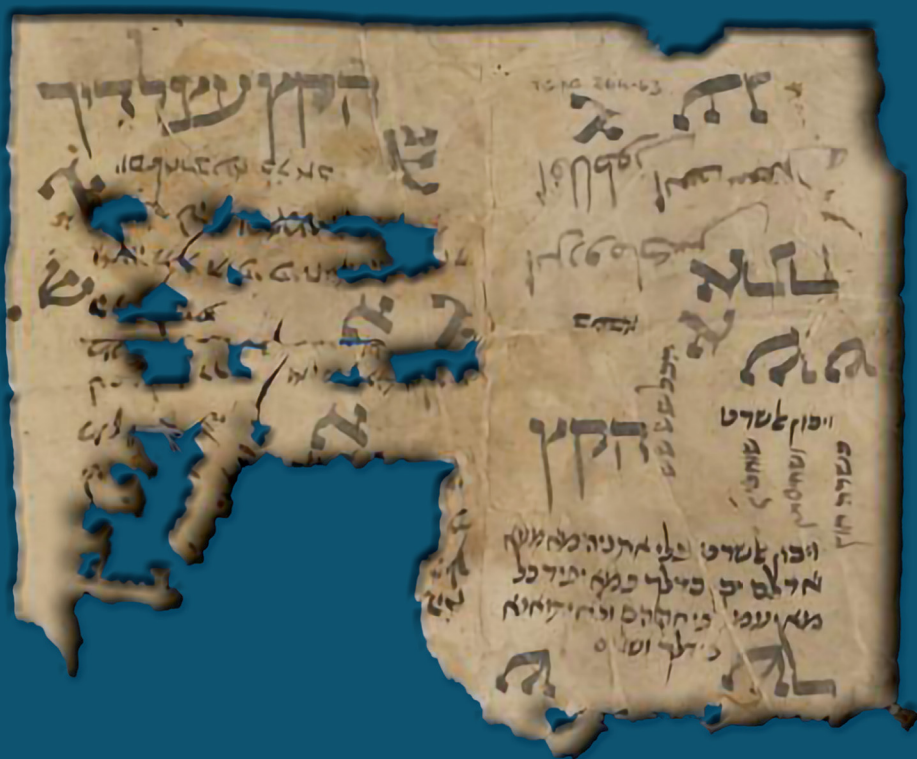
Interconnected Traditions

Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan

Volume 1: Hebrew and the Wider Semitic World

EDITED BY AARON D. HORNKOHL, NADIA VIDRO,
JANET C. E. WATSON, ELEANOR COGHILL,
MAGDALEN M. CONNOLLY, AND BENJAMIN M. OUTHWAITE





<https://www.openbookpublishers.com>

©2025 Aaron D. Hornkohl, Nadia Vidro, Janet C. E. Watson, Eleanor Coghill,
Magdalen M. Connolly, and Benjamin M. Outhwaite



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). This license allows you to share, copy, distribute, and transmit the text; to adapt the text for non-commercial purposes of the text providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Aaron D. Hornkohl, Nadia Vidro, Janet C. E. Watson, Eleanor Coghill, Magdalen M. Connolly, and Benjamin M. Outhwaite, *Interconnected Traditions: Semitic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures—A Festschrift for Geoffrey Khan. Volume 1: Hebrew and the Wider Semitic World*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2025,
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0463>

Further details about CC BY-NC licenses are available at
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

All external links were active at the time of publication unless otherwise stated and have been archived via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine at
<https://archive.org/web>

Any digital material and resources associated with this volume will be available at
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0463#resources>

Semitic Languages and Cultures 35

ISSN (print): 2632-6906

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80511-576-2

ISSN (digital): 2632-6914

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80511-577-9

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80511-578-6

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0463

Cover image: Cambridge University Library T-S NS 264.63, assorted writing exercises in Hebrew, Judaeo-Arabic, and Arabic, part of a letter, and some legal text (courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

Cover design: Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal

The fonts used in this volume are Cambria Math, Charis SIL, David, Estrangelo Edessa, Kahle, Mandaic Hebrew, Narkisim, Paleo Hebrew, SBL Greek, SBL Hebrew, Scheherazade New, Segoe UI Historic, Times New Roman.

KOL AS A UNIVERSAL QUANTIFIER IN BIBLICAL HEBREW*

Adina Moshavi

The determiner **כָּל**, which occurs approximately 5400 times in the Hebrew Bible, is one of the most versatile grammatical items in Biblical Hebrew (BH), with at least five apparently distinct uses. With a singular noun whose meaning involves physical or temporal extension, it can mean ‘the whole’, as in (1a).

(1a) וּשְׁמֵהֶנָּהּ הַשְּׁנִי גִיחוֹן הוּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ:

‘The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flows around **the whole land of Cush**’. (Gen. 2.13 NRSV); ‘**entire**’ (NIV)

* It is a privilege to contribute to this paper to the Festschrift in honour of Geoffrey Khan, whose towering intellectual achievements and dedication to collaborative scholarship have fundamentally transformed the many intersecting worlds of research in which he participates. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado, on 12 November 2022. My thanks go to Elitzur Bar-Asher Siegal and Nora Boneh for helpful conversations on the subject of this paper. My thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers, whose comments on an earlier draft spurred me to deepen the theoretical basis of the paper and thereby substantially improve the analysis.

The other uses, illustrated in (1b)–(1e), fall under the rubric of *quantification*, a term denoting the semantic function of determiners such as English *some*, *all*, *any*, *most*, etc. (Naudé 2011):¹

- (1b) וַיְהִי כָּל־יְמֵי אָדָם אֲשֶׁר־חָיָה תִּשְׁעַת מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה
 ‘Thus **all the days that Adam lived** were 930 years. (Gen. 5.5 *ESV*)
- (1c) וַיֵּצֵא מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֹחַמֵּד לְמַרְאֶה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֱכֹל
 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up
 ‘**every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.**’
 (Gen. 2.9 *ESV*)
- (1d) לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה
 ‘You shall not do **any work.**’ (Exod. 20.10 *ESV*)
- (1e) וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵלּוּ הָאָדָם בְּנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הִוא שְׁמוֹ
 ‘And **whatever the man called every living creature**, that
 was its name.’ (Gen. 2.19 *ESV*)

In its ‘all’ (1b) and ‘every’ (1c) uses כָּל expresses *universal* quantification, indicating that a property or relation holds for all items in a particular set or group. The difference between the meaning of כָּל in the two sentences above is generally characterised as the difference between *distributive* and *collective* quantification: (1b) expresses that the total number of days that Adam lived was 930 years, and (1c) expresses that God created every (kind of) tree.

¹ Additional papers by Naudé and Miller-Naudé on כָּל are cited in §2.5, below. For a general discussion of determiners that express quantification, see Payne and Huddleston (2002, 358–97). On quantifiers in Modern Hebrew, see Goldring and Francez (2012); Netzer (2013).

In its ‘any’ reading (1d) כָּל expresses *existential* quantification, indicating the existence of at least one entity belonging to a particular set or group. In this use, כָּל is a *negative polarity item*, a type of word which is grammatical only in non-affirmative sentences (Pullum and Huddleston 2002, 834–38).² In its ‘whatever’ use (1d) כָּל expresses *free choice*, which involves ignorance and/or indifference (Pullum and Huddleston 2002, 832). This use often occurs in modal (1d) or generic clauses, and is frequently characteristic of phrases that are modified by relative clauses, as in (1e).

The present paper is concerned with כָּל as a universal quantifier, a use which occurs in a broader range of syntactic and semantic clause types than the existential and free choice uses. A central question regarding universal כָּל is its distributivity/collectivity in different syntactic environments. Hebraists widely agree that the universal quantifier כָּל is distributive when it quantifies an indefinite singular noun (כָּל-יֶלֶד) and collective when it quantifies a definite plural noun (כָּל-הַיְלָדִים); they disagree on its meaning with a definite singular noun (כָּל-הַיֶּלֶד) or with an indefinite plural (כָּל-יְלָדִים). Since the Modern Hebrew descendant of כָּל, *kol*, is grammatical only in the first two constructions, the question of how to understand its uses in the latter two constructions takes

² On this use of כָּל in BH, see Naudé and Rendsburg (2013); Naudé (f.c.); on a somewhat similar use of *kol* in Modern Hebrew, see Glinert (1982; 2013). On the Modern Hebrew quantifier *kolšehu* ‘any’ and its semantic development from Rabbinic Hebrew to Modern Hebrew, see Bar-Asher Siegal (2022).

on added significance. Another question is whether there are differences between the meanings of BH לָ and Modern Hebrew *kol* in their common syntactic environments.

This article takes a fresh look at the meaning of universal לָ in Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) prose, drawing on modern linguistic research on universal quantifiers in English, Modern Hebrew, and other languages. I will argue that לָ is always distributive with singular indefinite nouns, but can be distributive or collective with plural definite nouns. Furthermore, I will argue that the two constructions which are ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, the definite singular לָ phrase and the indefinite plural לָ phrase, are not broadly productive constructions in BH either, but are restricted to certain non-prototypical noun classes and/or mismatches between morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness.

The structure of the paper is as follows: §1.0 presents essential theoretical background on the concepts of collective and distributive universal quantification. §2.0 surveys and evaluates views on universal לָ in the literature on BH. Research methods and definitions are described in §3.0, and a corpus-based analysis of CBH prose is presented in §4.0. Conclusions are summarised in §5.0.

1.0. Theoretical Background

1.1. Distributivity and Collectivity

Distributivity and collectivity are generally defined as pertaining to the relation between the predicate of a sentence and an argument denoting a set or group of two or more entities (generally a

plural or coordinated noun phrase).³ A predicate is distributive if it applies to each member of the set denoted by the subject/object, and is collective if it applies only to the set as a whole. For example, the predicate *smile* is always distributive, since smiling is an activity that can be performed only by an individual (e.g., 2a). Additional predicates that are always distributive include, e.g., *sleep*, *walk*, and *sing*. In contrast, the predicate *met* is collective, because the act of meeting can only be performed by a group of two or more individuals, e.g., (2b). Additional predicates that are always collective include, e.g., *gather*, *meet*, and *be numerous*.

(2a) *The girls smiled.*

(2b) *The girls met in the park.*

Distributive and collective predicates can be distinguished by the distinct logical entailments of the sentences in which they occur. For example, (3a) entails both *Kim smiled* and *Sandy smiled*, while (3b) entails neither **Kim met in the park* nor **Sandy met in the park*.

(3a) *Kim and Sandy smiled.*

(3b) *Kim and Sandy met in the park.*

A predicate can be collective with respect to one argument and distributive with respect to another. For example, *kill* is always distributive with respect to the object, but may be distribu-

³ Relevant linguistic studies on distributivity and collectivity include, among others, Taub (1989); Winter (2002); Brisson (2003); Tonciulescu (2011); De Vries (2017); Champollion (2020); Glass (2021).

tive or collective in relation to the subject. Thus (4) has two readings: in one the boys each killed different snakes, and in the second reading they killed the snakes together.

(4) *The boys killed two snakes.*

Adding a distributive marker (e.g., *each*) or collective marker (e.g., *together*) can eliminate one of the readings. *The boys each killed two snakes* has only the distributive reading and *The boys killed two snakes together* has only the collective reading.

1.2. Distributive and Collective Universal Quantification

Universal quantifiers are classified as distributive or collective depending on the relation between the predicate and the quantified noun which serves as an argument: when the predicate is collective/distributive, the quantifier is likewise said to be collective/distributive. As already mentioned, the presence of distributive or collective markers can force a particular interpretation of ambiguous predicates.

English has two universal quantifiers, *every* and *all*. *Every* is considered to be a distributive quantifier, because it occurs with distributive predicates, e.g., (5a), and is incompatible with collective predicates, e.g., (5b).⁴ *Every* is only compatible with indefinite singular nouns. While this would appear to contradict the statement above that distributivity (and collectivity) apply to

⁴ The discussion here is limited to the use of universal quantifiers with prototypical count nouns, i.e., nouns which inflect for number and denote individuated entities.

nouns denoting a set of entities, *every* pragmatically implicates that the quantified noun belongs to a set with more than two members (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 379).

(5a) *Every girl smiled.*

(5b) **Every girl met in the park.*

While *every* is exclusively distributive, *all* cannot be simply characterised as collective. *All* quantifies plural nouns, both indefinite and definite. While *all* is compatible with some collective predicates, e.g., (6a),⁵ it resembles *every* in its compatibility with distributive predicates, e.g., (6b). In fact, there is no semantic difference between (5a), with *every*, and the corresponding sentence with *all* in (6b).

(6a) *All the girls gathered in the park.*

(6b) *All the girls smiled.*

According to Huddleston and Pullum's (2002, 377), *all* usually has a distributive interpretation, but does not exclude a collective interpretation. Gil (1995, 324) maintains that *all* is unmarked with respect to distributivity and collectivity, but this is hard to reconcile with the fact that, for many speakers, *all* forces a distributive reading of sentences with ambiguous predicates, like (7) (Champollion 2020).⁶

(7) *All the students wrote an essay.*

⁵ Other collective predicates, such as *be numerous*, are incompatible with both quantifiers: **Every girl/*all the girls were numerous*.

⁶ For other speakers both readings are possible (Taub 1989, 2; Gil 1995, 322).

1.3. The Modern Hebrew Universal Quantifier *kol*

Modern Hebrew has only one universal quantifier, *kol* (the descendent of the BH quantifier).⁷ When it quantifies an indefinite singular count noun, *kol* is compatible only with distributive predicates, as seen by contrasting (8a) with the ungrammatical (8b) (Shlonsky 1991; Haspelmath 1995, 379; Tonciulescu 2011, 79; Francez and Goldring 2012, 380). In this use it is equivalent to English *every*.

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (8a) | <i>kol yeled hiyex.</i> | ‘Every child smiled.’ |
| (8b) | * <i>kol yeled nifgaš ba-parq.</i> | ‘*Every child met in the park.’ |

When it quantifies definite plural nouns, *kol* can occur with distributive (9a) or collective predicates (9b). Here, too, *kol* appears to be equivalent to *all*. *Kol*, however, cannot quantify indefinite plurals as in (9c), unlike *all*, which is grammatical in such sentences.

- | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| (9a) | <i>kol ha-yeladim hiyxu.</i> | ‘All the children smiled.’ |
| (9b) | <i>kol ha-yeladim nifgešu
ba-parq.</i> | ‘All the children met in the park.’ |
| (9c) | * <i>kol yeladim nifgešu
ba-parq.</i> | ‘All children met in the park.’ |

⁷ The discussion here does not address other uses of *kol*, which shares the same range of meanings exemplified in (1a), (1d), and (1e), above.

2.0. Previous Studies of the Biblical Universal Quantifier כָּל

This section briefly surveys the treatment of universal כָּל in the existing literature on BH.

2.1. GKC

According to GKC (§127b–c) the interpretation of כָּל depends exclusively on the definiteness of the quantified noun: with a definite noun (e.g., כָּל־הָאָדָם) the meaning of כָּל is ‘*the entirety*, i.e., *all, the whole*’. What we would call the collective use of the quantifier is viewed by GKC as closely linked to the original use of כָּל as a noun meaning ‘whole’. With an indefinite noun, according to GKC, כָּל means ‘any’ (the negative polarity use, not relevant for our purposes) or “distributively ‘each, every’”, e.g., כָּל־יְמֵים ‘every day’ (Ps. 7.12).⁸

GKC introduces, if only implicitly, a distinction between syntactic and semantic definiteness: it is noted that the collective use may lack the article in poetry, as in (10). The implication is that כָּל־בְּמֹת is semantically definite and therefore כָּל־בְּמֹת (בְּ) is collective.

⁸ A similar view is expressed in JM (§139e–h). BDB (כָּל) does not distinguish clearly between collectivity and distributivity, stating, for example, that the singular is collective with or without the article, but glossing some of the adduced examples as ‘every’.

- (10) וַיִּקְטְרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמוֹת

‘and there they made offerings on **all the high places**’ (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); ‘**every high place**’ (*NIV*)

GKC grapples with reconciling the assertion that indefinite כל phrases are distributive with the fact that כל is also used of indefinite non-count nouns, as in (11). The explanation offered is that when כל is combined with “singular nouns used collectively” (i.e., in this case, aggregate nouns), the distributive meaning of כל is extended to indicate “totality”.⁹

- (11) כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דַּרְכּוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: ס

‘for **all flesh** had corrupted its ways upon the earth.’ (Gen. 6.12 *NRSV*)

2.2. Brockelmann

Brockelmann (1956, 71) presents a different view in a brief discussion which does not explicitly invoke the concepts of collectivity and distributivity. In contrast to GKC, he asserts that number, rather than definiteness, is the conditioning factor of the interpretation of כל: with plural nouns כל means ‘alle’ and with singular nouns it means ‘jeder’.

⁹ Such a semantic change would be highly unexpected: Haspelmath’s (1995) crosslinguistic study identifies multiple languages in which a word meaning ‘whole’ changes to a universal quantifier meaning ‘all’, and a few languages, including Hebrew, in which a quantifier meaning ‘all’ changes to mean ‘every’, but does not cite any in which a quantifier meaning ‘every’ changes to ‘all’.

2.3. Bekins

Bekins (2014, 97) asserts briefly that both definiteness and number must be taken into account to determine whether כָּל is collective or distributive: when it is combined with indefinite singular nouns it is distributive, and in all other cases (i.e., definite plurals, definite singulars, and indefinite plurals) it is collective, and should be glossed ‘all’.¹⁰

2.4. Naudé and Miller-Naudé

Naudé and Miller-Naudé (Miller 2010; Naudé 2011a; 2011b; f.c.; Naudé and Miller-Naudé 2015; Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2020) observe that the biblical universal quantifier כָּל appears to have a broader syntactic distribution than Modern Hebrew *kol*: like the modern quantifier, כָּל can quantify indefinite singular nouns and definite plural nouns, but it can also occur in two constructions that are not compatible with modern *kol*: definite singular count nouns (12a) and indefinite plurals (12b).

(12a) כָּל־הָאִזְרָח יַעֲשֶׂה־בָּכָה אֶת־אֵלֶּה לְהַקְרִיב אִשָּׁה רֵיח־נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:
 ‘**Every native Israelite** shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.’
 (Num. 15.13 *ESV*)

(12b) וַיִּקְטְרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמֹת
 ‘and there they made offerings on **all the high places**’ (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); ‘**every high place**’ (*NIV*)

¹⁰ Bekin’s distributive example (Josh. 11.14), which he glosses ‘any’, is actually an instance of the existential (negative polarity item) use of כָּל.

In Naudé and Miller-Naudé's view the meaning of כל is only partially encapsulated by the distributive/collective opposition; an additional property, *individualisation* (a term that they do not define) is also relevant.¹¹ The distributivity versus collectivity of כל depends on the definiteness of the quantified noun, while individualisation depends on its number.¹² Their claims are as follows (glosses are theirs):

1. With a definite plural noun (כָּל-הַיְלָדִים 'all the children'), כל is collective and non-individualising, meaning 'the totality of'.
2. With a definite singular noun (כָּל-הַיֶּלֶד 'all the children'), כל is collective and individualised, meaning 'the totality of the individual members of the group'.¹³

¹¹ In Naudé (2011) a different (undefined) term, *specificity*, is used as a synonym for individualisation.

¹² It can be objected that individualisation is not intuitively different from distributivity; indeed GKC §127b appears to use the two terms synonymously. See also *BHRG* (309), where the parameter of individualisation is omitted, and both singular and plural indefinites are given the same gloss, 'each and every'.

¹³ As an example of this category Naudé and Miller-Naudé cite כָּל-הַבֶּן (Exod. 1.22). The כל phrases in this verse, however, are in modal clauses, and are modified by relative clauses (in the second phrase elliptically), resulting in ambiguity between a universal and a free-choice rendering: 'Every Hebrew boy that is born (or: any Hebrew boy that is born) you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl (or: any girl) [that is born] live.' (*NIV*, round and square brackets mine).

3. With an indefinite singular noun (כָּל-יֶלֶד 'every child'), כָּל is distributive and individualised.¹⁴
4. With an indefinite plural noun (כָּל-יְלָדִים 'each and every child'), כָּל is distributive and non-individualised.

2.4. Interim Discussion

Comparing the four above views, we see that there is agreement that כָּל is collective when it quantifies a definite plural noun (כָּל-הַיְלָדִים), and is distributive when it quantifies an indefinite singular noun (כָּל-יֶלֶד).

The meaning of כָּל with a definite singular noun (כָּל-הַיֶּלֶד) is debated: according to GKC, Bekins, and Naudé and Miller-Naudé, it is collective, whereas in Brockelmann's view, it is distributive. The meaning of כָּל with an indefinite plural (כָּל-יְלָדִים) is also debated: according to GKC and Naudé and Miller-Naudé, it is distributive, whereas according to Bekins, it is collective. Naudé and Miller-Naudé's introduction of the concept of individualisation does not resolve this debate, since what it means for a phrase to be both collective and individualised is not explained. Nor are how individualised and non-individualised distributivity differ; their paraphrases ('the totality of the individual members';

¹⁴ In keeping with the assertion that כָּל with an indefinite singular noun is always distributive, Naudé (2011, 418) denies that an indefinite mass noun can be quantified by כָּל. Doron (2020, 9) points out that this assertion is incorrect, citing כָּסֶף וְזָהָב | וְכָל 'but all silver and gold' (Josh. 6.19 *ESV*).

‘every’ versus ‘each and every’) are not of much help in this regard.¹⁵

GKC and Naudé and Miller-Naudé appear to view distributivity and collectivity as inherent properties of the noun phrase, rather than as depending on the predicate. Although Bekins understands collectivity and distributivity as properties which “affect the semantics of the event structure,” he does not demonstrate that each type of כָּל phrase is restricted to a particular kind of event structure.

2.5. Doron

Doron’s (2020) analysis of כָּל is radically different from the views discussed above. In her view, biblical כָּל is not a quantifier, but rather a degree determiner, denoting the entirety of a group or mass entity (i.e., ‘the whole set’).¹⁶ Definiteness and number are irrelevant to its interpretation, which is invariable.¹⁷ Doron does not deny that many sentences with כָּל, such as וַיִּשְׁקֶה לְכָל-אֶחָיו ‘and

¹⁵ See also Muraoka (2020, 172–73) for a critique of Naudé and Miller-Naudé with respect to Qumran Hebrew.

¹⁶ In the post-biblical period, according to Doron, the word developed into a distributive determiner, which was nonetheless not a quantifier. Doron’s definition of quantifiers is unusual, excluding determiners that serve as the syntactic heads of construct phrases, such as Modern Hebrew *kol* ‘all’, *rov* ‘most’, *še’ar* ‘the rest of’, etc. (for details, see Doron 1992). For the standard view that all of these Modern Hebrew determiners are quantifiers, see Francez and Goldring (2012); Netzer (2013).

¹⁷ It should be noted that, in Doron’s view, the article הַ does not mark definiteness in BH, but is an emphatic marker.

he kissed all his brothers' (Gen. 45.15), have a distributive meaning which can be conveyed by the English gloss 'every'. Rather, she claims that the property of distributivity is not conveyed by כל, but by some other element in the sentence, either overt or covert. The element can be a predicate that is inherently distributive with regard to a particular argument, e.g., הרג 'kill', which is distributive with relation to the object. Other elements which can convey distributivity include, e.g., the distributive adverb איש 'each', as in (13a), and lexical reduplication, as in (13b).

(13a) וַיִּכְרְתוּ גַם-כָּל-הָעָם אִישׁ שׁוֹכֵה

'So **every one of the people** also cut down his bundle (lit. also **all the people** cut down **each** his bundle)' (Judg. 9.49 *ESV*)

(13b) אֵלֶיךָ לַמִּטָּה אֵלֶיךָ לַמִּטָּה לְכָל מִטּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּשְׁלָחוּ לַעֲבָדָא

'You shall send a thousand from **each of the tribes of Israel** to the war (lit. a thousand **for a tribe**, a thousand **for a tribe**, **from all the tribes of Israel**).' (Num. 31.4 *ESV*)

The sense in which כל is 'collective' for Doron differs fundamentally from the way universal quantifiers such as *all* are collective: while a universal quantifier is collective only when the predicate is collective, for Doron כל is 'collective', i.e., denoting the entire set, even when the predicate is distributive. This surprising claim rests on the unorthodox assertion that the biblical word is a degree determiner meaning 'entirety (of a group)', rather than a universal quantifier. Against this is the fact that כל does not fit the standard definition of a degree determiner, i.e., a determiner that inflects for grade (comparison), like *many/more/most*. Moreover, in the standard view, degree determiners are

considered to be a type of quantifier, expressing so-called *multal* quantification (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 365, 393). Yet another difficult aspect of Doron's position is the attribution of the meaning 'entirety of a group' to כָּל phrases with singular nouns.

3.0 Research Methods and Definitions

3.1. Delineation of the Corpus and Excluded Clause Types

The data for this analysis is restricted to classical BH prose (Genesis–Kings), henceforth CBH. Poetry, which has a tendency to omit the definite article and often pluralises abstract nouns which are always singular elsewhere, deserves a separate study. כָּל in Transitional and Late Biblical Hebrew awaits a separate study as well.

Sentences in which כָּל is open to an interpretation other than the universal one have been excluded. Negative sentences and other negative polarity contexts (primarily interrogatives and conditionals) have been systematically excluded, since כָּל generally has an existential ('any') interpretation in these contexts. Singular כָּל phrases in modal sentences expressing permission or obligation, e.g., (14a)–(14b), or in habitual past sentences, e.g., (14c), have been systematically excluded as well. In these types of sentences, the universal ('every/all') and free choice ('any', whatever') interpretations frequently have the same truth conditions, making it difficult to rule out the free

choice reading (see Doron 2020).¹⁸ When a phrase is modified by a relative clause, the free-choice reading is often likely even in non-habitual past tense sentences (14d).

(14a) מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגָּן אָכַל תֹּאכֵל:

‘You may surely eat of **every tree of the garden**.’ (Gen. 2.16 *ESV*); ‘**any**’ (*NIV*)

(14b) וַעֲתָה הָרְגוּ כָל-זָכָר בָּטָף וְכָל-אִשָּׁה יָדַעַת אִישׁ לְמִשְׁכַּב זָכָר הָרִגּוּ:

‘Now therefore, kill **every (= any) male among the little ones**, and kill **every (= any) woman who has known man by lying with him**.’ (Num. 31.17 *ESV*)

(14c) וַרְאָה שָׂאוּל כָּל-אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר וְכָל-בֶּן-חַיִּל וַיֹּאסֶפֶהוּ אֵלָיו: ס

‘And when Saul saw **any strong man**, or **any valiant man**, he attached him to himself.’ (1 Sam. 14.52 *ESV*)

(14d) וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁאָז לְבּוֹ

‘And they came, **everyone whose (= whoever’s) heart stirred him**’ (Exod. 35.21 *ESV*)

Occurrences in which כָּל may have the meaning ‘whole’, rather than universal quantification, include definite nouns that denote entities with physical or temporal extension, e.g., כָּל-הָאָרֶץ

¹⁸ This is also true for comparative כָּל phrases with a singular group noun, e.g., וַיִּגְבַּהּ מִכָּל-הָעָם מִשְׁכְּמוֹ וְמִמְעָלָה ‘he was taller than **any of the people** from his shoulders upward’ (1 Sam. 10.23 *ESV*); ‘**all the people**’ (*NJPS*), as well as comparative phrases with a noun that has a pseudo-group use (see §3.2, below), such as וַיִּחָכֵם מִכָּל-הָאָדָם ‘For he was wiser than **all other men**’ (1 Kgs. 5.11 *ESV*); ‘**anyone else**’ (*NIV*). Comparative phrases with plural nouns do not seem to be ambiguous in this way, even though they can be translated with *any of*, e.g., וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת-יוֹסֵף מִכָּל-בָּנָיו ‘Now Israel loved Joseph more than **all his children**’ (Gen. 37.3 *KJV*); ‘more than **any other of his sons**’ (*ESV*).

‘all the land/the whole land’ (Gen. 13.9), and definite group nouns, e.g., בְּלִיקְהֶל הָזֶה ‘all this congregation/this whole congregation’ (Exod. 16.3). When nouns such as עִיר ‘city’ and אֶרֶץ ‘land, world’ are used metonymously to refer to the inhabitants of a region, they behave like group nouns and exhibit the same ambiguity, e.g., וְכָל־הָאָרֶץ ‘and all the world/the whole world’ (Gen. 41.57).¹⁹

Also excluded are occurrences in which כָּל appears without an overt quantified noun, e.g., (15a), or is “floated” after the noun with a suffixed resumptive pronoun, e.g., (15b) (Naudé 2011).²⁰

(15a) בִּירֶק יַעֲשֶׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל:

‘And as I gave you the green plants, I give you **everything**.’

(Gen. 9.3 *ESV*)

(15b) וְהָר סִינַי עָשָׂן כָּלֹ

‘Now Mount Sinai was **all** in smoke’ (Exod. 19.18 *JPS*)

3.2. Linguistic Categories

The first two subsections below present definitions of morpho-syntactic definiteness and number, as well as semantic aspects of

¹⁹ When the phrase has a definite singular group noun and is governed by partitive בֵּין, כָּל is not ambiguous, e.g., מִכָּל הָעָם הָזֶה שִׁבְעַת מֵאוֹת אִישׁ, ‘Among **all these** were 700 chosen men who were left-handed’ (Judg. 20.16 *ESV*).

²⁰ The latter construction is rare in classical prose; in all of its occurrences the determiner has the meaning ‘whole’ rather than universal quantification.

these concepts. The last subsection presents definitions of distributivity and collectivity.

3.2.1. Definiteness

A noun is morphosyntactically definite if it has the article, is a personal or demonstrative pronoun or a proper name, or is in construct with a definite noun or noun phrase. Definite direct objects are often governed by the direct object marker ל . A direct object that is governed by ל is characterised here as morphosyntactically definite even if it lacks other indications of definiteness.

A noun is semantically definite if it refers to an identifiable and/or unique entity in the context of the discourse.²¹ While the most common way for an expression to be semantically definite is through anaphoric reference (i.e., referring to an entity evoked in the preceding textual context), expressions can also be considered definite when they are identifiable based on world knowledge, or are conventionally associated with an entity or a situation evoked in the text, as in ‘the waiter’ in a text describing a meal at a restaurant. Although morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness generally coincide, nouns are occasionally morphosyntactically indefinite, but semantically definite.

3.2.2. Number and Noun Class

Number is defined here as a morphosyntactic category. In the case of a prototypical count noun, the singular form is the one

²¹ For further discussion of semantic definiteness in BH, see Bekins (2013).

that is morphologically unmarked (i.e., does not have a plural morpheme) and triggers singular verbal and pronominal agreement when functioning as the subject or antecedent of an anaphor, respectively. Plural forms have plural morphemes and trigger plural agreement; they can be quantified by numerals. The singular and plural forms of prototypical nouns also differ semantically, in that the singular refers to a single entity and the plural refers to multiple entities.

Number in the case of non-prototypical count nouns does not fit these neat patterns. *Uninflectable plural nouns*, e.g., BH בָּקָר ‘cattle’, are morphologically unmarked, but trigger plural verbal agreement and can be quantified by high numerals (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 345); semantically, they refer to multiple entities.

The *group noun*, e.g., BH קָהָל ‘congregation’, denotes an individuated entity that is composed of multiple entities; it inflects for number like prototypical nouns, but verb and pronominal agreement rules vary from language to language (Corbett 2000, 187–90).²² BH is among the languages that allow morphologically singular group nouns to trigger either singular or plural agreement (JM §150e), unlike Modern Hebrew, which treats them as singular. We classify such BH forms as having *compound*, rather than singular number. From the semantic perspective, sin-

²² I avoid the term *collective noun* sometimes applied to group nouns in order to avoid confusion with the concept of collectivity as discussed in this paper. Group nouns can be distributive or collective depending on the predicate of the sentence.

gular group nouns have both singular and plural aspects, designating a single entity that is comprised of multiple entities. Plural group nouns refer to multiple groups of entities.

The concept of compound number is also relevant to BH nouns whose morphologically singular forms have a *quasi-group* use that refers to multiple individuals, in addition to a prototypical use. These are mostly nouns referring to well-established categories of people, e.g., אִישׁ ‘a man/people’ in phrases such as אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל ‘a man/the men of Israel’; נֶפֶשׁ ‘a person/people’; זָכָר ‘male/males’ (JM §135). A singular quasi-group noun can trigger either singular or plural agreement, just like a group noun. In the plural, quasi-group nouns differ from group nouns in that they refer to a single group of individuals, e.g., אֲנָשֵׁי יְהוּדָה ‘the men of Judah’.

Number is inapplicable to non-count nouns, which constitute a separate class with several sub-types (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 335–39). They are generally morphologically unmarked for number, are uninflectable, trigger singular agreement, and are not able to be quantified by numerals.²³ Three types occurring in the biblical corpus are *mass nouns*, which denote a substance rather than an entity, e.g., זָהָב ‘gold’; *uninflectable abstract nouns*, e.g., מְלָאכָה ‘work’, which occur only in

²³ An exception is the non-count מַיִם ‘water’, which is uninflectable like other non-count nouns, but is morphologically plural and triggers plural agreement.

the singular;²⁴ and *aggregate nouns*, which denote a collection of objects belonging to a functional category, e.g., רְכוּשׁ ‘goods’.

Non-count nouns differ from count nouns in their compatibility with universal quantification. For example, Modern Hebrew universal *kol* can quantify definite non-count nouns, e.g., **kol ha-sukar matoq* ‘all the sugar is sweet’,²⁵ even though it cannot quantify definite singular count nouns, e.g., **kol ha-yeled ĥiyex* ‘*all the child smiled’. Furthermore, *kol* cannot quantify indefinite non-count nouns, e.g., **kol sukar matoq* ‘*all sugar is sweet’, despite the fact that it can quantify indefinite count nouns, e.g., *kol yeled ĥiyex* ‘every child smiled’ (Francez and Goldring 2012, 392). In the analysis below we will examine whether there are differences between the biblical כָּל and modern *kol* in their compatibility with non-count nouns.

3.2.3. Distributivity and Collectivity

A universal כָּל phrase in a particular sentence in its context is classified as distributive if the predicate applies separately to each individual referred to by the noun phrase; otherwise, it is

²⁴ Some of these nouns occur in the plural in poetry or late texts; if their only occurrences in CBH is in the singular, they are assumed here to be uninflectable.

²⁵ The Hebrew sentence with the mass noun is ambiguous: it can be interpreted as a generic sentence describing a property of sugar, or a predication with respect to a particular quantity of sugar; in English, in contrast, the generic reading is available only when the quantified noun is indefinite, e.g., *all sugar is sweet*.

collective. Distributivity is confirmed by a translation test: when the predicate is distributive, כל can be appropriately rendered ‘every’, assuming the necessary adjustments of definiteness and number are made.

4.0. Analysis of the Data

4.1. Indefinite Singular כל phrases

There are relatively few indefinite singular כל phrases with prototypical count nouns in our corpus; illustrative examples follow.²⁶

- (16a) וַיֵּצֵאֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־עֵץ נֹחַמֵד לְמִרְאָה וטוֹב לְמֶאֱכֹל
 ‘And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food’ (Gen. 2.9 *ESV*); cited above as (1c)²⁷
- (16b) כִּי־עָצָר עָצָר יְהוָה בָּעֵד כָּל־רָחִם לְבֵית אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
 ‘For the LORD had closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech’ (Gen. 20.18 *ESV*); ‘every womb’ (*NJPS*)
- (16c) וְכָל־אִשָּׁה חֲכַמַת־לֵב בִּידֶיהָ טָווּ
 ‘And every skillful woman spun with her hands’ (Exod. 35.25 *ESV*)

The indefinite singular כל phrases in the corpus, in the morphosyntactic sense of number defined above, are all distributive. While there are collective phrases with nouns that are unmarked

²⁶ The other occurrences are Gen. 7.14; 20.18; Exod. 35.22; Num. 8.16; 18.21; 31.51; Deut. 3.6; 1 Sam. 4.8; 2 Kgs 17.13.

²⁷ Additional indefinite singular occurrences referring to kinds are Gen. 7.14 and Exod. 35.22.

for plural inflection, these are all used in a pseudo-group sense, i.e., *נָפֶשׁ* ‘people’, e.g., (17a), *זָכָר* ‘males’, e.g., (17b), or *בְּכוֹר* ‘firstborn’, e.g., (17c).²⁸ Significantly, all the phrases are semantically definite, referring to already-mentioned entities, e.g., (17a) or entities that are inferable from known entities, e.g., (17b) and (17c). The semantic definiteness of the phrases is typically reflected in the use of syntactically definite renderings in the translations.

(17a) אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי רָחֵל אֲשֶׁר יָלַד לְיַעֲקֹב כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר:

‘These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: **all the souls** were fourteen.’ (Gen. 46.22 KJV) (≠ every soul)

(17b) פְּקֻדֵיהֶם בְּמִסְפָּר כָּל-זָכָר מִבֶּן-חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שִׁבְעָת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשׁ
מֵאוֹת:

‘Their listing according to the number of **all the males** from a month old and upward was 7,500.’ (Num. 3.22 ESV) (≠ every male)

(17c) וַיְהִי כָל-בְּכוֹר זָכָר בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת מִבֶּן-חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה לְפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים
אֲלֹף שָׁלֹשָׁה וּשְׁבַעִים וּמֵאוֹת: פ

‘And **all the firstborn males**, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273.’ (Num. 3.43 ESV) (≠ every firstborn male)

The above data indicate that Modern Hebrew and BH do not differ with respect to the distributivity/collectivity of singular indefinite כל phrases: both restrict such phrases to distributive

²⁸ The other occurrences with pseudo-group nouns are Gen. 46.22, 25, and 26; Exod. 1.5; Num. 3.12, 22, 28, 34, 39, 41, 43; 8.18; 26.62; 31.35.

meaning. The fact that כל phrases with semantically definite pseudo-group nouns are able to be collective is explainable on the basis of their syntactic and semantic resemblance to definite plural כל phrases, which, as discussed below, can be distributive or collective.

Notably, the CBH corpus also contains כל phrases with indefinite non-count nouns, as in the non-inflectable abstract noun מְלָאכָה ‘work’ in (18a)²⁹ and the aggregate noun בָּשָׂר ‘flesh’ (= living things) in (18b). This usage of כל differs from Modern Hebrew, where, as noted above, such phrases are ungrammatical.

(18a) וַיִּמְלֵא אֱתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה בְּתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה:
 ‘and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with **all craftsmanship**’
 (Exod. 35.31 *ESV*)

(18b) כִּי-הָשֹׁחִית כָּל-בָּשָׂר אֶת-דִּרְכּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:
 ‘for **all flesh** had corrupted its ways upon the earth.’ (Gen. 6.12 *NRSV*); cited above as (11)

4.2. Definite Plural כל Phrases

Definite plural כל phrases are very common in the corpus; they frequently involve prototypical nouns, and can be distributive or collective. In all these respects CBH exhibits no differences from

²⁹ Additional indefinite uninflectable abstract nouns quantified by כל are טוב ‘goodness’ (Deut. 6.11); מְלָאכָה ‘handiwork’ (Exod. 35.31); עֲבָדָה ‘labour’ (Exod. 1.14); עֵת ‘time’ (e.g., Exod. 18.22).

Modern Hebrew. The following are representative examples with distributive meaning.³⁰

- (19a) וַתֵּצֵאֲנָן כָּל־הַנָּשִׁים אַחֲרֶיהָ
 ‘and **all the women** went out after her’ (Exod. 15.20 *ESV*)
 (= every woman)
- (19b) וַיִּקְמוּ כָל־בָּנָיו וְכָל־בָּנוֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ
 ‘**All his sons** and **all his daughters** rose up to comfort him’
 (Gen. 37.35 *ESV*) (= every son... every daughter)
- (19c) וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל־נְשֵׂאֵי הָעֵדָה
 ‘And when **all the leaders of the congregation** came’ (Exod. 16.22 *ESV*) (= every leader)
- (19d) וַיִּנָּשֶׁק לְכָל־אָחָיו
 ‘And he kissed **all his brothers**’ (Gen. 45.15 *ESV*) (= every brother)

³⁰ Additional distributive examples include, e.g., Gen. 7.11; 17.23, 27; 35.4; 45.15; 50.7 (2x); Exod. 9.14; 34.30; 35.13, 16; 38.3, 30, 31; 39.37, 39; Num. 15.40; 16.10; 17.21; Deut. 2.34; Josh. 3.1; 11.4; Judg. 9.3 (2x), 46, 51, and many additional occurrences. Definite plural כל phrases governed by comparative מן are generally distributive, e.g., וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בָּנָיו ‘Now Israel loved Joseph more than **all his children**’ (Gen. 37.3 *KJV*) presumably means that Israel loved Joseph more than each of his other sons, not that he loved him more than all of his other sons put together.

Illustrative collective examples are shown below.³¹

- (20a) כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחַת הַשּׁוּחַמִּי לְפָקְדֵיהֶם אַרְבַּעַה וְשָׁשִׁים אָלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת: ס
 ‘All the clans of the Shuhamites, as they were listed, were 64,400.’ (Num. 26.42 *ESV*) (≠ every clan)
- (20b) כָּל־עָרֵי בְנֵי־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים שְׁלֹש־עֶשְׂרֵה עָרִים וּמִגְרָשֵׁיהֶן: ס
 ‘The cities of the descendants of Aaron, the priests, were in all thirteen cities with their pasturelands.’ (Josh. 21.19 *ESV*) (≠ every city)
- (20c) וּבָדַךְ בָּחַר יְהוָה לְהִיזֹת לוֹ לְעָם סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים
 ‘For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes’ (Deut. 18.5 *ESV*)

4.3 Definite Singular כָּל Phrases

This construction, which is ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, is scarcely attested in CBH, contrary to initial impressions.³² While there are many definite כָּל phrases in the corpus that are singular

³¹ Additional collective occurrences serving as subjects include, e.g., Gen. 5.5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 27, 31; 9.29, Num. 1.45, 46; 2.9, 16, 24, 31 (and many similar occurrences in passages following); 26.43; 35.7; Josh. 10.6. Also collective is a כָּל phrase in Gen. 40.20 designating multiple beneficiaries. Partitive phrases like (21c) are collective as well, e.g., Exod. 19.5; Deut. 7.6; 12.5; 29.20; 1 Sam. 2.28; 2 Sam. 10.9; 1 Kgs 5.4, 14; 11.32; 14.21.

³² Many occurrences of כָּל phrases with definite singular nouns are ambiguous between the universal and free-choice interpretations (see discussion in §3.1, above), and are therefore excluded from the data. Of the eligible clauses that might have been included in this category, many are not actually morphosyntactically singular, as detailed below.

in the sense that they are unmarked for plural inflection, unambiguous cases of the morphosyntactic singular according to the definition presented above are vanishingly rare in this construction.³³ The only occurrence I have found is *אֶת-כָּל-עִיר* ‘every city’, in (21), which is definite because it is governed by the object marker.³⁴

- (21) וְנִלְכְּדָה אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַנַּחֲרֵם אֶת-כָּל-עִיר מֵתָם וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף
 ‘And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction **every city**, men, women, and children.’ (Deut. 2.34 *ESV*)³⁵

The other occurrences which might have been thought to provide evidence of this construction are not unambiguously singular in the morphosyntactic sense defined above. Many involve non-count nouns, to which the category of number is inapplicable. For example, there are several phrases with mass nouns such as *עָפָר* ‘dust’, e.g., (22a).³⁶ Many have uninflectable abstract

³³ While *כל* with a suffixed pronoun satisfies the conditions for this category, in all these occurrences the meaning is ‘whole’ rather than universal quantification (e.g., Exod. 25.36).

³⁴ The Targum translates *ית כל קרויא* ‘all the cities’. The Samaritan Pentateuch has *עָרָיו* ‘his cities’ instead of *עִיר*. Deut. 2.34 can be compared to the similar Deut. 3.6, which has an indefinite phrase *כָּל-עִיר* ‘every city’, without the object marker.

³⁵ A reviewer suggests that *אֶת* here might be the comitative preposition ‘with’ rather than the object marker; in that case the *כל* phrase would be indefinite.

³⁶ Other mass nouns occurring in definite *כל* phrases include, e.g., *דָּם* ‘blood’ (Exod. 29.12); *זָהָב* ‘gold’ (e.g., Num. 7.86); *כֶּסֶף* ‘silver’ (e.g., Num. 7.85); *עָפָר* ‘dust’ (Exod. 8.13); *עֵשֶׂב* ‘grass’ (e.g., Exod. 10.15). As

nouns, such as מְלָאכָה ‘work’, e.g., (22b),³⁷ or aggregate nouns, such as רְכָשׁ ‘goods’, e.g., (22c).³⁸ A few occurrences involve uninflectable plural nouns, such as צֹאן ‘sheep’, e.g., (22d).³⁹ The last example is distributive.

noted above, definite singular mass nouns can be quantified in Modern Hebrew with *kol* as well, despite the fact that this construction is ungrammatical with count nouns.

³⁷ Other apparently uninflectable abstract nouns occurring in definite בָּל phrases include (not a comprehensive list; includes concrete applications of the abstract meaning): אֱמֶת ‘truth’ (Gen. 32.11); חֵכְמָה ‘wisdom’ (e.g., 1 Kgs. 10.4); חֲמֻדָּה ‘desire’ (1 Sam. 9.20); חֶפְצִי ‘delight’ (e.g., 1 Kgs 5.24); חֶשֶׁק ‘desire’ (1 Kgs 9.1); טוֹב ‘goodness’ (e.g., 2 Kgs 8.9); מְלָאכָה ‘work’ (e.g., 1 Kgs 7.14); מַעֲשֶׂה ‘deed, work’ (e.g., Deut. 2.7); נְבִלָה ‘disgraceful folly’ (Judg. 20.10); עֲבֹדָה ‘labour’ (e.g., Num. 3.26); עֲצָה ‘advice’ (e.g., 2 Sam. 16.23); תְּלָאָה ‘hardship’ (e.g., Exod. 18.8).

³⁸ Other aggregate nouns occurring in definite בָּל phrases include (not a comprehensive list): אֹכֶל ‘food’ (e.g., Gen. 14.11); זֶרַע ‘seed, offspring’ (e.g., Gen. 46.6); חֵיל ‘wealth’ (e.g., Num. 31.9); לֶחֶם ‘bread’ (Josh. 9.5); מִלְקוֹחַ ‘booty’ (Num. 31.11); פֵּרִי ‘fruit’ (e.g., Exod. 10.15); רֶכֶב ‘chariotry’ (e.g., Judg. 4.15); שָׁלַל ‘spoil, plunder’ (e.g., Num. 31.11). On nouns which may or may not belong in this category see fn. 39, below.

³⁹ Another uninflectable plural noun is בָּקָר ‘cattle’ (e.g., Num. 7.87). There is insufficient evidence to determine whether the following animal terms are aggregate nouns or uninflectable plural nouns: בְּהֵמָה ‘beasts’ (e.g., Gen. 8.1); חַיָּה ‘animals’ (e.g., Gen. 2.20); מִקְנֵה ‘cattle’ (e.g., Gen. 31.18); עוֹף ‘birds’ (e.g., Gen. 2.19); גְּרִמָּשׁ ‘creeping things’ (e.g., Gen. 1.25). הָ ‘children’ (e.g., Gen. 34.29) does not fit neatly into either category, as it variously triggers singular or plural agreement (both occurring together in Num. 14.31).

- (22a) כָּל־עֹפֶר הָאָרֶץ הָיָה כְּנִים בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
 ‘All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. (Exod. 8.13 *ESV*)
- (22b) וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה
 ‘And Moses saw all the work’ (Exod. 39.43 *ESV*)
- (22c) וַיָּשֶׁב אֶת כָּל־הָרֶכֶשׁ
 ‘Then he brought back all the possessions’ (Gen. 14.16 *ESV*)
- (22d) וַיֵּלְדוּ כָל־הָעֶזְאָן נִקְדָּיִם
 ‘all the flock bore spotted’ (Gen. 31.8 *ESV*)

Another group of purportedly singular phrases involves nouns which have a pseudo-group use; the pseudo-group reading is variously certain or at least possible, depending on the context. For example, the plural verb in (23a) establishes that the singular subject, כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, is used in its pseudo-group meaning and, therefore, has compound number. This example is distributive.⁴⁰ In (23b), the pseudo-group reading is forced by a collective predicate. In (23c) the singular verb creates ambiguity between the pseudo-group reading (‘all the men of Israel’) and the prototypical use (‘every man of Israel’); both readings are distributive.

- (23a) וַהֲגֵה כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאִים אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
 ‘Then all the men of Israel came to the king’ (2 Sam. 19.42 *ESV*) (= every man of Israel)

⁴⁰ Other distributive occurrences with אִישׁ are Judg. 20.33; 1 Sam. 31.12; 2 Sam. 19.42. A distributive occurrence with בְּכֹר ‘firstborn’ is Num. 3.42.

(23b) כָּל-נַפְשׁ בָּנָיו וּבָנוֹתָיו שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשָׁלֹשׁ:

‘all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three.’ (Gen. 46.15 KJV)⁴¹ (≠ every soul)

(23c) וַיַּעַל כָּל-אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאַחֲרֵי דָוִד

‘So every man of Israel went up’ (2 Sam. 20.2 KJV); ‘all the men of Israel’ (ESV)⁴²

The last group of purportedly singular phrases involves proper names of nations (24a)–(24b). Such names have compound number and are inherently definite. The first illustrative example is distributive and the second collective.

(24a) וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל רָאוּ כִּי-לָכַד הָאֲרָב אֶת-הָעִיר

‘And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had captured the city’ (Josh. 8.21 ESV) (= every person in Israel)

(24b) וַיִּקַּח שָׁאוּל שְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ בְּחֹרֶם מִכָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל

‘Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel’ (1 Sam. 24.3 ESV) (≠ every person in Israel)

The almost complete absence of definite כל phrases with morphosyntactically singular nouns in the corpus indicates that this construction is not productive in CBH, presenting no contrast

⁴¹ Other collective occurrences with definite singular נַפְשׁ are Gen. 46.27 and Exod. 1.5.

⁴² When the כל phrase is the subject of a singular verb (e.g., Judg. 7.24) or functions as object (e.g., Josh. 10.24), it is usually impossible to distinguish the quasi-group and prototypical readings. An additional ambiguous structure is the כל phrase which is a constituent in a coordinated subject in a sentence with a plural verb, e.g., סוס ‘horse/s’ (Exod. 14.23; Deut. 29.9) (סוס has a quasi-group use in military contexts, often appearing in coordination with the aggregate noun רֶכֶב ‘chariots’).

with Modern Hebrew in this respect. The fact that definite pseudo-group nouns and names of nations can occur with לַל is most likely due to their compound, rather than truly singular number. As we have already seen, the definite plural לַל phrase is a highly productive construction. Like the latter, the definite compound-number לַל phrase can be either distributive or collective. It is worth remembering that while definite mass nouns can be quantified by לַל in CBH, this is true of modern *kol* as well.

4.4. Indefinite Plural לַל Phrases

This construction, ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, is extremely rare in the CBH corpus. Only one occurrence involves a semantically indefinite noun phrase:⁴³

⁴³ While Rashi explains this to mean ‘instruments made out of wood’, modern scholars widely emend it to בכל עז ובשירים ‘with all (his) might’ or בכלי עז ‘with mighty instruments. The former emendation is based on v. 14 in the same chapter, the parallel to our verse in 1 Chron. 13.8, which has בְּכָל־עֵז וּבְשִׁירִים, and 4QSam^a, with essentially the same text as Chronicles. The latter emendation is based on the LXX. According to the first emendation, the לַל phrase involves a non-count abstract noun, and according to the second emendation, there is no לַל phrase.

- (25) וְדָוִד | וְכָל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשַׁחֲקִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּכָל עֵצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים וּבִכְנֹרוֹת
וּבִנְבָלִים וּבַתְּפִילִּים וּבִמְנַנְעִים וּבַצִּלְצָלִים:

‘And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on **all manner of instruments made of fir wood**, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.’ (2 Sam. 6.5 KJV) (= on every kind of instrument)

The other seven definite plural כל phrases I am aware of appear to be semantically definite, and are typically translated with a definite noun phrase. Four occurrences refer to lists of entities appearing immediately earlier in the texts, as in כל־עָרִים ‘all (the) cities’ in (26a), which provides a sum of all the cities previously listed;⁴⁴ all four are collective. The occurrence in (26b) refers to multiple entities, בְּכָל־בָּמֹת ‘all (the) high places’ that have been repeatedly mentioned throughout the passage, most recently two verses earlier. This example is distributive.

- (26a) כָּל־עָרִים עֶשְׂרִים וְתִשְׁעַ וְחִצְרֵיהֶן: ט
‘**all the cities** are twenty and nine, with their villages’ (Josh. 15.32 KJV) (≠ every city)

- (26b) וַיִּקְטְרוּ־שָׁם בְּכָל־בָּמֹת
‘And there they made offerings on **all the high places**’ (2 Kgs 17.11 *ESV*); ‘at **every high place**’ (*NIV*)

The rarity of prototypically indefinite plural כל phrase indicates that it is not a productive construction in CBH. Since almost all of the few phrases with this structure are semantically definite, they are presumably a variation of the highly productive

⁴⁴ The others are Josh. 21.26, 39, both with עָרִים ‘the cities’, and Josh. 12.24, with מְלָכִים ‘the kings’.

definite plural construction, which, as seen above, can be distributive or collective.

5.0 Conclusions

This article has drawn new conclusions regarding the classification of לָּ in different syntactic constructions in CBH prose. These results are the product of the following research methods and procedures, which, taken together, distinguish the present study from existing literature on the subject:

1. Corpus-based analysis
2. Isolating universal לָּ from other uses of the determiner
3. Distinguishing between number in prototypical and non-prototypical count nouns
4. Distinguishing between morphosyntactic and semantic definiteness
5. Defining distributivity and collectivity based on the relation between the לָּ phrase and the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs

It has been demonstrated that biblical לָּ has the same meaning as modern *kol* in their common syntactic environments: לָּ is distributive with singular indefinite nouns, and can be distributive or collective with plural definite nouns. Obscuring the former rule is the common phenomenon of pseudo-group nouns that are semantically definite appearing in לָּ phrases. The fact that such phrases can be collective can be explained by their syntactic and semantic resemblance to definite plural לָּ phrases.

It has further been demonstrated that the two constructions that are ungrammatical in Modern Hebrew, i.e., the definite singular phrase and the indefinite plural phrase, are not productive constructions in CBH prose either. Almost all the definite singular לָ phrases in the corpus require or admit a pseudo-group use interpretation, or are names of nations; both types, therefore, resemble the plural לָ phrase from the syntactic and the semantic perspective. The few indefinite plural לָ phrases in the corpus are best understood as variations of definite plural לָ phrases, since they are nearly always semantically definite. Like the definite plural phrase, they, too, can be distributive or collective.

Finally, a difference between the biblical and modern universal quantifiers was identified, namely that only biblical לָ can be used with indefinite non-count nouns.

References

- Bar-Asher Siegal, Elitzur. 2022. 'Kolšehu: From Rabbinic Hebrew to Modern Hebrew'. *Leshonenu* 84: 110–43.
- BDB = 1979. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Bekins, Peter. 2013. 'Non-prototypical Uses of the Definite Article in Biblical Hebrew'. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 58/2: 225–40.
- . 2014. *Transitivity and Object Marking in Biblical Hebrew: An Investigation of the Object Preposition 'et*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

- BHRG* = van der Merwe, C. H. J., Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze. 2017. *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*. 2nd edition. London: Bloomsbury T and T Clark.
- Brisson, Christine. 2003. 'Plurals, *all*, and the Nonuniformity of Collective Predication'. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26/2: 129–84.
- Brockelmann, Carl. 1956. *Hebraische Syntax*. Neukirchen: Moers.
- Champollion, Lucas. 2020. 'Distributivity, Collectivity and Cumulativity'. In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Semantics*, edited by Daniel Gutzmann et al. Wiley Online Library.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2000. *Number*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- De Vries, Hanna. 2017. 'Two Kinds of Distributivity'. *Natural Language Semantics* 25/2: 173–97.
- Doron, Edit. 1992. 'The Structure of the Noun Phrase'. In *Hebrew Computational Linguistics: Papers Presented at Seminars Held in 1988, 1989, 1990*, edited by Uzi Ornan, Edit Doron, and Gideon Arieli, 116–21. Israel: Ministry of Science and Technology. [Hebrew]
- . 2020. 'From a Collective to a Free Choice Determiner in Biblical Hebrew'. In *Quantification and Scales in Change*, edited by Remus Gergel and Jonathan Watkins, 1–31. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Francez, Itamar, and Katja Goldring. 2012. 'Quantifiers in Modern Hebrew'. In *Handbook of Quantifiers in Natural Language*, edited by Edward Keenan and Denis Paperno, 347–97. Dordrecht: Springer.

- Gil, David. 1995. 'Universal Quantifiers and Distributivity'. In *Quantification in Natural Languages*, edited by Emmon W. Bach, 321–62. Dordrecht: Springer and Kluwer.
- Glass, Lelia. 2021. 'The Lexical and Formal Semantics of Distributivity'. *Glossa: A Journal of General linguistics* 6/1: 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1137>
- GKC = *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. 1910. Edited by Emil Kautzsch. 2nd edition. Translated by Arthur E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Glinert, Lewis. 1982. 'Negative and Non-Assertive in Contemporary Hebrew'. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 45: 434–70.
- . 2013. Negation: Modern Hebrew'. In *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, edited by Geoffrey Khan, et al. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_euhl_EHLL.COM.00000318
- Haspelmath, Martin. 1995. 'Diachronic Sources of "all" and "every"'. In *Quantification in Natural Languages*, edited by Emmon W. Bach, 363–82. Dordrecht: Springer and Kluwer.
- JM = Joüon, Paul, and Takamitsu Muraoka. 2009. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd edition. Subsidia Biblica 27. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press.
- Miller, Cynthia L. 2010. 'Definiteness and the Vocative in Biblical Hebrew'. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 36/1: 43–64.
- Miller-Naudé, Cynthia L., and Jacobus Naudé. 2020. 'Negative Polarity in כֹּל Constructions in Qumran Hebrew'. *Dead Sea Discoveries* 27: 351–71.

- Muraoka, Takamitsu. 2020. *A Syntax of Qumran Hebrew*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Naudé, Jacobus A. 2011a. 'The Interpretation and Translation of the Biblical Hebrew Quantifier *KOL*'. *Journal for Semitics* 20/2: 408–21.
- . 2011b. 'Syntactic Patterns of Quantifier Float in Biblical Hebrew'. *Hebrew Studies* 52: 121–36.
- . Forthcoming. 'Syntactic Features of *kol* as a Polarity Item in Negative Statements'. In *May You Favor the Work of His Hands: Essays in Memory of Michael Patrick O'Connor*, edited by Peter T. Daniels et al. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association.
- Naudé, Jacobus, and Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé. 2015. 'Syntactic Features of כֹּל in Qumran Hebrew'. In *Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of a Sixth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira—International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, edited by Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar and Pierre van Hecke, 88–111. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 114. Leiden: Brill.
- Naudé, Jacobus A., and Gary A. Rendsburg. 2013. 'Negation: Pre-Modern Hebrew'. In *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, edited by Geoffrey Khan et al. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/22124241_ehll_EHLL_COM_000008

- Netzer, Yael. 2013. 'Quantifier'. In *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, edited by Geoffrey Khan et al. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-4241_ehll_EHLL.COM_00000208
- Payne, John, and Rodney Huddleston. 2002. 'Nouns and Nouns Phrases'. In *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, edited by Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum, 326–523. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pullum, Geoffrey K., and Rodney Huddleston. 2002. 'Negation', In *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, edited by Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum, 785–849. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shlonsky, Ur. 1991. 'Quantifiers as Functional Heads: A Study of Quantifier Float in Hebrew'. *Lingua* 84/2–3: 159–80.
- Taub, Alison. 1989. 'Collective Predicates, Aktionsarten and All'. *University of Massachusetts Occasional Papers in Linguistics* 15: *Papers on Quantification*, Article 16: 1–33.
- Tonciulescu, Keren C., 2011. 'Licensing Conditions for Indefinite Pronouns in Modern Hebrew'. PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa.
- Winter, Yoad. 2002. 'Atoms and Sets: A Characterization of Semantic Number'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33/3: 493–505.

