

Meaningful Manipulations of Grammatical Gender

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Genesis 33:6 and 33:7

וּתְגַשְׁןָּ הַשְּׁפָחוֹת הַנָּה וּלְדִיהֶן וּתְשַׁתְּחוּןָּ:
וּתְגַשְׁ גַּם-לְאֵה וּלְדִיהָ וּיְשַׁתְּחוּ:
ואחר נגש יוסף ורחל וישתחוּ:

Exodus 21:4

אם-אֲדָנֶיךָ יִתֶּן-לוֹ אִשָּׁה וּלְדָהּ-לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת
הָאִשָּׁה וּלְדִיהָ תִּהְיֶה לְאֲדֹנֶיהָ והוא יצא בגפו:

Numbers 12:1

וּתְדַבֵּר מְרִים וְאֶהְרֹן בְּמִשְׁה עַל-אֲדוֹת הָאִשָּׁה
הכשית אשר לקח כִּי-אִשָּׁה כְּשִׁית לָקַח:

Judges 5:1

וּתְאֶשֶׁר דְּבוּרָה וּבָרַק בֶּן-אֲבִינֵעַם ביום ההוא
לאמר:

1 Kings 10:13

והמלך שלמה נתן למלכת-שְׁבָא אֶת-כָּל-חֲפָצָה
אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֵלָה מִלְּבַד אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָהּ כִּי־ד המלך שלמה
וּתְפֹן וּתְלַךְ לְאַרְצָהּ הִיא וְעַבְדֶּיהָ:

1 Kings 17:15 (קר')
וּתְלַךְ וּתַעֲשֶׂה כַּדָּבָר אֲלֵיהֶן:

וּתֹאכַל הִיא-וְהוּא וּבֵיתָהּ יָמִים:

2 Kings 4:7 (קר')

וּתְבֹא וּתִגַּד לְאִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי מִכְרִי אֶת-
הַשֶּׁמֶן וְשִׁלְמִי אֶת-נְשִׁיךָ וְאֶת וּבְנֶיךָ **תְּחִי** בַּנּוֹתָר:

2 Kings 8:1-2 (קר')

וְאֵלִישֶׁעַ דָּבַר אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-הִחְיָה אֶת-בְּנֵיהָ
לֵאמֹר **קוּמִי וּלְכִי אֶת וּבֵיתְךָ וּגְוֹרֵי** בְּאֶשֶׁר
תְּגוּרֵי. . .

וּתְקַם הָאִשָּׁה וּתַעֲשׂ כַּדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים וּתְלַךְ:

הִיא וּבֵיתָהּ וּתְגַר בְּאַרְץ-פְּלִשְׁתִּים שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים:

Hosea 10:14

וְקָאֵם שְׂאוֹן בְּעַמֻּד וְכָל-מִבְצָרֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁד כְּשֵׁד שְׁלֹמֹן
בֵּית אַרְבָּאֵל בְּיּוֹם מִלְחָמָה **אִם עַל-בָּנִים רְטָשָׁה:**

Amos 8:13

ביום ההוא

תִּתְעַלְפֶּנָּה הַבְּתוּלוֹת הַיְּפוֹת וְהַבְּחוּרִים
בְּצֶמָא:

Job 19:15

גְּרִי בֵיתִי וְאִמְהַתִּי לְזֹר תַּחֲשַׁבְנִי
נְכָרִי הֵייתִי בְּעֵינֵיהֶם:

Ruth 1:3

וַיָּמַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נְעָמִי
וּתְשָׂאֵר הִיא וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ:

Esther 4:4 (קר')

וּתְבֹאנָה נְעֻרוֹת אֶסְתֵּר וְסָרִיסָיָהּ
וַיִּגִּידוּ לָהּ וּתִתְחַלְחַל הַמֶּלֶכָה מֵאֵד וּתְשַׁלַּח בְּגָדִים
לְהַלְבִּישׁ אֶת-מַרְדֳּכָי וּלְהַסִּיר שָׁקוֹ מֵעַלְיוֹ וְלֹא קָבַל:

Esther 5:14

וּתֹאמֶר לוֹ זָרַשׁ אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וְכָל-אֶהְבִּי
יַעֲשׂוּ-עֵץ גְּבֵה חֲמִשִּׁים אַמָּה וּבַבֶּקֶר אֹמַר לְמֶלֶךְ
וַיִּתְּלוּ אֶת-מַרְדֳּכָי עַלְיוֹ וּבֹא-עַם-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל הַמִּשְׁתֶּה
שְׂמַח וַיִּיטֵב הַדָּבָר לְפָנֵי הַמֶּן וַיַּעַשׂ הָעֵץ:

Esther 9:29

וּתְכַתֵּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמֶּלֶכָה בְּתֹאבֵיחֵיהִל
וּמַרְדֳּכָי הַיְּהוּדִי אֶת-כָּל-תְּקוּף
לְקַיֵּם אֶת אַגְרַת הַפּוּרִים הַזֹּאת הַשְּׁנִית:

Daniel 11:6

וְלִקַּח שָׁנִים יִתְחַבְּרוּ וּבֵת מֶלֶךְ-הַנְּגֹב תְּבֹא אֶל-מֶלֶךְ
הַצָּפוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא-תַעֲצֹר כּוֹחַ הַזְּרוּעַ וְלֹא
יַעֲמֵד וְזָרְעוֹ **וּתִנָּתֵן הִיא וּמִבִּיאָיָהּ וְהִילָדָהּ**
וּמִחֻזְקָהּ בְּעַתִּים:

2 Chronicles 9:12 (parallel to 1 Kings 10:13)

. . . **וּתְהַפֵּךְ וּתְלַךְ לְאַרְצָהּ הִיא וְעַבְדֶּיהָ:**

KEY: **Red** = predicate (verb)

Blue = subject or adjunct (compound noun phrase)

Meaningful Manipulations of Grammatical Gender

Location	Textual Stability Note	Initial Nominal*	Additional Nominal(s)**	Syntactic Role of Compound	Relationship of Components	Feminine Verb Number†	Womanly Referent Was Already the Discourse Topic	Order of Nominals = Reversal or Subversion of Norm	Expressive Content of the Feminine Verb Form
Gen 33:6	—	[Maids]	Their children	Adjunct	Possession	Plural	X		Matriarchal authority; (2nd verb) distance
Gen 33:7	—	Leah	Her children	Subject	Possession	Singular			Matriarchal authority
Exod 21:4	—	Wife	Her children	Subject	Possession	Singular	X		Principle parent: case turns on her status
Num 12:1	—	Miriam	Aaron	Subject	Conjunction	Singular		X	More extreme challenge to authority
Jud 5:1	—	Deborah	Barak	Subject	Conjunction	Singular			Lead credit (as God's agent; glorifies God)
1 Kgs 10:13	—	[Queen of Sheba]	Attendants	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Queenly authority (glorifies Solomon)
1 Kgs 17:15	1	[Widow of Zarephath]	He [Elijah] and her household	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Fulfills the promise of patronage in v. 9
2 Kgs 4:7	2, 3	Widow (Elisha's circle)	Her child	Subject	Possession	Singular			Retained custody (addressing her wish)
2 Kgs 8:1	4	[Ishah Gedolah]	Your household	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Householder authority
2 Kgs 8:2	—	[Ishah Gedolah]	Her household	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Householder authority
Hos 10:14	—	Mother	Children	Subject	Addition	Singular			Mother as protector
Amos 8:13	—	Beautiful Maidens	Young men	Subject	Conjunction	Plural		X	Sympathy
Job 19:15	—	Dependents	Maidservants	Subject	Conjunction	Plural			Distance (alienation)
Ruth 1:3	—	[Naomi]	Her sons	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Householder authority (aloneness)
Est 4:4	5	Ladies-in-waiting	Eunuchs	Subject	Conjunction	Plural			Closer to queen (glorifies Esther)
Est 5:14	—	Zeresh his wife	His hangers-on	Subject	Conjunction	Singular		?	Authority or status
Est 9:29	—	Queen Esther	Mordecai	Subject	Conjunction	Singular			Lead credit (as queen)
Dan 11:6	6	[Princess]	Her retinue; her father; her supporter	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Principal actor and envoy
2 Chr 9:12	—	[Queen of Sheba]	Attendants	Adjunct	Possession	Singular	X		Queenly authority (glorifies Solomon)

Textual Stability Notes:

1 = Qere/Ketiv of the order of the first two components of the noun phrase; the Qere is supported by Greek (Vaticanus, Lucianus), Targum, and Syriac versions.

2 = Qere/Ketiv of the conjunction between the components of the noun phrase; the Qere is supported by the ancient versions.

3 = Greek and Vulgate versions suggest a masculine plural verb, rather than feminine singular.

4 = Qere/Ketiv of 2nd-person pronoun, where the Ketiv apparently reflects Elisha's northern speech dialect.

5 = Qere/Ketiv of the initial verb; both variants are marked with feminine plural inflections.

6 = In place of "father," Theodotian (2nd-century Greek translation) reads "daughter"; and Syriac and Vulgate read "children," while the likely historical allusion suggests "son."

* Syntactically feminine in all cases except Job 19:15. [Square brackets] = Co-referent of an independent pronoun in the compound noun phrase.

** Syntactically masculine in all cases except Job 19:15.

† The number of the verb matches the number of the womanly nominal, regardless of the verb's position (before or after the nominal).