On Prose and Poetry in the Book of Job

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The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the poetic sections of the book of Job and the prose tale by means of stylistic criteria. This relationship is highly problematic. The prose tale recounts the fate of a moral hero whose life is ruined by the *śaṭan*, whereas the speeches show how the righteous victim bewails his fate and asserts his justness in the face of his friends, who try to find a moral justification for his afflictions. It is not, however, easy to say whether the prose tale is merely the framework which provides the background for the debate in the poetic sections,[1] or an independent work of art.[2] Does it have a subject of its own, viz., the question whether human righteousness is a matter of expedience or a good in its own right, or is this issue raised as an ironic comment on the attitude of his peers? The attitude of Job seems problematic since the hero of the prose tale accepts his fate (1:21; 2:9–10), while the poetic sections center on Job's emotional expression of his doubts concerning divine justice. Is this contrast a matter of difference

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1. The most impressive presentation of this view is still to be found in F. Delitzsch, *Das Buch Iob* (Leipzig, 1876), 16–18; see also S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (Edinburgh, 1921), xxxiv–vii; E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (London, 1967), xxxv, lxiv–lxxxv; N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1985), 25–39; D. J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20* (Dallas, 1989), lvii–lxix. For the objection that the notion of a prose tale providing the background for the poetic sections is too bookish, see C. Kuhl, "Neuere Literarkritik des Buches Hiob," *Th.R.* 21 (1953), 163–205, 257–317, esp. p. 194. Against this point we argue that the need for a clear exposition is common to all oral, ancient, and popular narrative. One notes, e.g., the outstanding role of the exposition in the famous collection of oral Palestinian folktales: H. Schmidt and P. Kahle, *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina* (Göttingen, 1918). For Akkadian epic poetry, see C. Wilcke, "Die Anfänge der akkadischen Epen," *ZA* 67 (1977), 153–216; for Sumerian epic see idem, "Formale Gesichtspunkte in der sumerischen Literatur," in *Sumerological Studies in Honor of Thorkild Jacobsen*, *AS* 20 (Chicago, 1974), 205–316. For the argument that oral narrative tends to clear-cut structure see, e.g., Deborah Tannen, "The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse," in idem, ed., *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* (Norwood, 1982), 1–16. On the other hand, Kuhl's suggestion that the poetic speeches themselves already provide all data which are needed for understanding the debate (ibid.), presupposes a highly literate public, not unlike that of the Akkadian poem *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqim*, which is constructed in this way; for its opening see D. J. Wiseman, "A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," *An.St.* 30 (1980), 101–7.

2. The separation of the prose tale from the poetic speeches has been advocated by, e.g., B. Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob* (Freiburg-Leibzig-Tübingen, 1897), VII; F. Horst, *Hijob 1–19* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), ix, 3; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (London, 1972), 207–9; J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1976), 389–90. For the opinion that the poet of Job used an originally independent narrative as framework, and redesigned it in his own way, see K. Budde, *Das Buch Hiob* (Göttingen, 1896), VIII–IX; G. Hölscher, *Das Buch Hiob* (Tübingen, 1952), 4: R. Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago, 1965), 13, 71–72; G. Fohrer, *Studien zum Buche Hiob* (Gütersloh, 1963), 26–67. See also nn. 3–5 below. The scholarly discussion has been reviewed by Kuhl, "Literarkritik," 163–205; H.-P. Müller, *Das Hijobproblem* (Darmstadt, 1978), 36–48.

in origin or a problem of plot development?[3] Should the book of Job be read as the statement of an already formed point of view or as the emergence of a growing insight?[4]

Much has been said in favor of both views. What has often been taken for granted, however, is the certitude that the tale is essentially different from the poetic sections for the reason that it is prose. But this inference lacks justification, for poems may be contained in prose frameworks,[5] and poets may compose in prose, in the way Isaiah recounted his experience (Isa. 6:1–12; 7:1–17; 8:1–8). Thus the only way to investigate the relationship of poetry and prose in Job is by stylistic comparison.

In view of the intrinsic differences between prose and poetry in terms of syntax and lexical register, a comparison between them is not easily envisioned. Such an analysis should be based on categories that are not limited to a specific kind of discourse. In our investigation the following categories proved extremely fruitful: (1) prosodic regularity, (2) the relative frequency of nouns *vis-à-vis* verbs, and (3) the use of formulaic phrases. The latter two categories are not confined to prose or poetry, and as such they offer a common ground for comparison. The mention of prosodic regularity, on the other hand, might be surprising, for this is the main divider between poetry and prosaic language. But prose has its own rhythm and regularity, which must be taken into account. In order to explore this issue more thoroughly, we will first of all address the specific distinctions between prose and poetry in Biblical Hebrew. Then we will return to the Job tale, and in particular to the prologue.

1. *Prose Prosody: Balanced Coupling*

In the Hebrew Bible the difference between prose and poetry pertains to the general character of the text. Poetry is characterized by metaphoric language,[6] as well as a sophisticated lexical register (based in particular on fixed pairs)[7] and complicated syntactic (and at times also morphological) structures, which are archaic and extremely rare or nonexistent in prose, such as the use of attributive phrases without

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3. So Delitzsch, *Job*, 16; Habel, *Job*, 25–26, 29.

4. So Clines, *Job*, lviii. For a fresh look at some of these questions see Y. Hoffman, "The Relation between the Prologue and the Speech-Cycles in Job: A Reconsideration," *VT* 31 (1982), 160–70. See also n. 92 below.

5. As recognized by Kuhl, "Literarkritik," 188; G. Fohrer, *Studien*, 28; Y. Hoffman, "Ancient Near Eastern Literary Conventions and the Restoration of the Book of Job," *ZAW* 103 (1991), 399–411.

6. Informal as they are, the following parameters do not provide definite and unequivocal criteria. Apparently this is why they are being neglected in the discussions of de Moor and his pupils, in their endeavor to show the large extent of poetry in ancient Northwest Semitic royal inscriptions and Biblical Hebrew, on which see nn. 31–32 below. The difference between the two dictions is especially obvious in the Book of Job. For the role of semantic characteristics in defining poetry, see also J. Cohen, *Structure du langage poétique* (Paris, 1966), 105–35, 199–225.

7. On fixed pairs see in particular: Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1984). This concept has come under fire, since the appearance of T. Donald's review of S. Gevirtz, *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel* in *JSS* 10 (1965), 99–101; W. R. Watters, *Formula Criticism and the Poetry of the Old Testament* (Berlin, 1976), 72–73; P. C. Craigie, "Parallel Words in Ugaritic Poetry: A Critical Evaluation of Their Relevance for Psalm 29," *UF* 11 (1979), 135–40; A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Indiana, 1985), 66–68. These attacks seem ill-founded. Lexical association is at least partly dominated by convention. For instance, the

the relative particle. The formal hallmark of Hebrew verse structure is parallelism,[8] defined by Hrushovsky as the typical division into lines (stichs) and balanced cola (half-stichs),[9] linked by overlapping correspondences on three constitutive planes,[10] viz., (1) semantics,[11] (2) syntactic structure,[12] and (3) the number of words and/or accents and/or syllables (isometry).[13] A parallelistic line typically consists of two (or

well-known poetic term for "gold," חרוץ, occurs in six passages, always matched by the word for silver, כסף (in Prov. 8:19 together with פז), but *never* by the common word for gold, זהב. This despite the fact that זהב is used together with פז (Isa. 9:19; Ps. 119:29; Prov. 5:15; Job 28:17; Lam. 4:2; in the latter two places together with כתם), as well as כתם (Prov. 25:12; Job 31:24), which is also used together with פז (Isa. 13:12; Cant. 5:11). If free association were the rule, one would expect at least some collocations of זהב and חרוץ. The fact that this association does not exist is to be explained by the system of traditional pairs, as it is made abundantly clear by the phrase ירקרק חרוץ (Ps. 68:14), a fixed pair in Ugaritic but an odd collocation in Hebrew. On the other hand, one can only applaud Donald's remark (p. 99 of his review) that the definition of a "traditional pair" should be linked to the number of instances of one of the lexemes involved, though the demand that this number should be at least half of the instances is grossly exaggerated.

8. The use of parallelism as distinctive of poetry has been rejected by J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven, 1981), 49–63. Kugel argues that prose also may contain parallelistic clauses (59–62). This argument, however, fails to convince, as any prose text in any language may contain phrases in poetic prosody, e.g., meter. The problem is, whether these features represent a norm, which is violated by lack of observance, or an extraordinary expressive function.

9. The above characterization is based on B. Hrushovsky, "Notes on the Systems of Hebrew Versification," in T. Carmi, ed., *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Poetry* (Harmondsworth, 1981), 57–72, esp. 58–60; idem, "Prosody, Hebrew," *EJ* 13: 1195–1245, esp. 1200–3. See also n. 10 below. The recognition of "planes" is similar, in a way, to the differentiation between "aspects" of parallelism in the analysis of Berlin, *Dynamics*, and the perception of "kinds" of parallelism by D. Pardee, *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: A Trial Cut (ᶜnt I and Proverbs 2)* (Leiden, 1988), 178–79.

10. The limitation of the colon (the "line") to two explicit constituents (apart from the predicate) has been proposed by M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, 1980), 78–80. But this limitation, which might be related to the capability of recognizing parallelism in oral delivery, also exists in prose, as it is clear from our discussion of the noun-verb ratio for which see below. This limitation is not observed in verses like Mic. 2:3, 4; O'Connor's suggestion fits the thesis of Jean Cohen (*Language*, 57–76, 96–100), according to which the most general formal characteristic of poetry is the constraint on breathing units as against the sentence unit (e.g., by parallelism, end-rhyme, staff-rhyme, or, in modernistic poetry, indication of line endings). According to this thesis the essential point in our definition of parallelism is the division into accentual units, i.e., corresponding half-stichs (= colon) and lines governed by the three constitutive planes.

11. The semantic correspondence may relate to (a) the lexemes used (including repetition) and (b) the information conveyed by the corresponding clauses as a whole. Thus parallelism is a semiotic, and not a linguistic, phenomenon. Moreover, it affects discourse beyond the sentence rather than sentence structure. This is shown for any colon by gapping, e.g., Isa. 1:3: וחמור אבוס בעליו, which, if taken on its own, would mean: *"the ass is the feeding-trough of its master," but is related to the previous colon by the recognition of parallelism (in the light of the use of semantically related terms and isometry). In respect of this point one must also refer to antithetic parallelism. Parallelism, then, is a code.

12. Including those cases in which the second colon is elliptical, expressing only some of the constituents present in the first colon (gapping if one constituent is lacking; double gapping if two constituents are not represented). The (morpho)syntactic component includes morphological similarities (see Berlin, *Dynamics*, 31).

13. The isometric component has been rejected by O'Connor, *Verse Structure*, 33–37; Pardee, *Parallelism*, 195; whereas it is emphasized by Hrushovsky, "Prosody," 1203. For the argument that its role is indicated by the "ballast variant" see E. L. Greenstein, "Aspects of Biblical Poetry," *Jewish Book Annual* 44 (1986–1987), 33–42, esp. 36–38. A statistical estimate of the amount of non-isometric lines (23% of the material) is given by S. A. Geller, *Parallelism in Early Biblical Poetry* (Missoula, 1979), 371.

more) coupled cola,[14] which both contain a number of semantically related lexemes (repetitive, synonymous, antonymous, hyponymic-hypernymic, in short, belonging to the same semantic class).[15] The semantic and/or syntactic correspondence between the cola will be called "congruity."

It will be easier to analyze this matter in the light of some distinctions proposed by the great Danish linguist, Otto Jespersen, who recognizes two kinds of word combinations:[16] (a) the *junction*, that is, the join of a headword and an adjunct, or of several headwords within one and the same syntactic slot (in short: a paradigmatic join); and (b) the *nexus*, that is the join of words in different parts of speech (in short: a syntagmatic join).

Parallelism, then, could be defined as the *balancing of nexuses in congruity*, which is the common way of coupling in poetry. It is, however, not always easy to recognize poetic parallelism. In terms of our definition, balancing of nexuses is most obvious if their congruity relates to all planes (semantic-syntactic-isometric), e.g., (Isa. 10:6):

<div dir="rtl">בגוי חנף אשלחנו / ועל עם עברתי אצונו</div>

> I will send it against an ungodly nation, / and against the people at which I am furious, I shall direct it.

But congruity does not always pertain to all planes. In fact, parallelism may involve only two out of the three constitutive planes;[17] e.g., (a) *semantic-syntactic* congruity (e.g., Isa. 1:4b):[18]

<div dir="rtl">עזבו את ה׳ / נאצו את קדוש ישראל</div>

> They have abandoned the Lord, / Forsaken the Holy God of Israel.

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14. In addition to parallelism between cola, one notes (a) parallelism between lines, e.g., Isa. 1:10, 18–19, as shown by: M. Z. Segal, "Leḥeqer ṣuratah šel haššira hammiqra'it," *Sefer Klausner* (Jerusalem, 1939), 90–108, esp. 106–8; Avishur, *Stylistic Word Pairs*, 77–78; (b) parallelism within the colon ("half-line"); (c) the addition of a single colon to the stich, mostly before or after the two parallel hemistichs, e.g., Isa. 41:8, with Segal, "Leḥeqer ṣuratah," 104–6; M. Weiss, *The Bible From Within* (Jerusalem, 1984), 251–55 (on Isa. 1:4c: נזרו אחור); T. Collins, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry* (Rome, 1978), 223–25 ("tripartite lines").

15. A systematic treatment of the semantic relationships between parallel cola and stichs is given by Geller, *Parallelism*, 31–37. The semantic aspect of the definition is rejected by O'Connor (*Verse Structure*, 50–53), since in his opinion "meaning" is not a linguistic entity (even though the difference between phonemes is defined by means of differences in meaning). For the definition of "meaning" see, e.g., B. Russell, *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (repr.: Middlesex, 1965), 28–123, 158–93, esp. 179–80.

16. O. Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (London-New York, 1924; repr.: 1935), 96–116. Of course, this definition parallels the opposition of "syntagmatic" vs. "paradigmatic," which is a specific difference, according to Landy (see n. 29 below).

17. Hrushovsky ("Prosody," 1200–1201) informally recognizes that "in most cases there is an overlapping of several such heterogeneous parallelisms . . . so that no single element, meaning, syntax, stress, may be considered as completely dominant or as purely concomitant." In this quote the term "heterogeneous parallelisms" is equivalent to our "planes."

18. In these examples the lack of isometry is the result of the presence of an expansive phrase (קדוש ישראל, בחוצת אשקלון), commonly used as a compensatory "ballast variant," in verses where such compensation is not necessary (so also Isa. 41:9). Other constellations are possible too, e.g., Isa. 41:2.

or (b) *semantic-isometric* congruity (e.g., Isa. 29:4):[19]

<div dir="rtl">

ושפלת מארץ תדברי / ומעפר תשח אמרתך

</div>

    You shall be brought down, / and speak from out the ground.

In these two categories the balancing of nexuses is obvious, even though their correspondence is less pronounced than in complete congruity. Problems arise when the semantic component is absent. A third category, (c) *syntactic-isometric* regularity, admits of two possibilities:

(1) Each colon consists of a different clause (e.g., Isa. 42:1):

<div dir="rtl">

נתתי רוחי עליו / משפט לגוים יוציא

</div>

    I have put My spirit upon him—he will make justice go out to the peoples.

In this case the division of the cola is given by the boundary between the clauses,[20] while the isometric arrangement warrants the balancing.

(2) The second part of the line actually continues the first one (e.g., Isa. 3:14):

<div dir="rtl">

ה׳ במשפט יבוא / עם זקני עמו ושריו

</div>

    The Lord will enter into judgment / with the elders of His people and its rulers.

In this class the second clause does not match the first one, but complements it as its syntagmatic continuation; both belong to one nexus.

    Lowth categorizes cases of this kind as "synthetic parallelism" but fails to give a convincing definition.[21] The question is, whether it is possible to distinguish between this type of verse and plain prose. How can one decide when to read such an utterance as a continuous sentence and when to introduce a division between two balanced cola? The quandary can be solved by the following proposal. As long as parallelism involves the semantic component (cases a, b, and c.1), the caesura separating the cola is defined by the boundary of the corresponding nexuses. In the present case, on the other hand, the recognition of the cola follows from the identification of the caesura.[22] Such identification may be justified if the text meets the following three conditions:

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19. For the theory that in this case syntactic congruence is preserved by deep structure see E. L. Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" in S. A. Geller, ed., *A Sense of a Text*, JQRSupp. (Winona Lake, 1982), 41–70. On the other hand, in some cases the relationship between the cola does not permit taking recourse to underlying deep structure (Deut. 32:6b); the relationship between "he is your father" and "he made you" is a matter of semantics, not of syntactic structure. One should also note the problem of antithetic parallelism. See also D. Grossberg, "Noun/Verb Parallelism: Syntactic or Asyntactic," *JBL* 99 (1980), 481–88. On Isa. 41:19 see below.

20. So also, e.g., Ps. 3:7; 15:4; 19:4, 5, 6; 22:2; 23:1b, 4a; 26:6, 11, 12; 27:6; 137:1b; Mic. 1:3. Some of these cases meet Geller's criteria for a looser semantic relationship, e.g., cause-consequence (*Parallelism*, 31–37); the problem is that some of these apply equally to prose and are thus not distinctive.

21. "The sentences answer to each other . . . merely by the form of construction": R. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (London, 1787), 48–49. This concept has been criticized fiercely by Collins, *Line-Forms*, 126; Geller, *Parallelism*, 370, 383; O'Connor, *Verse Structure*, 29–30.

22. This construction is confirmed by those examples of line parallelism in which the one line consists of two corresponding modifiers and the other of two congruous clauses, e.g. (2 Sam 1:22): מדם חללים מחלב

    (a)   the caesura is indicated by syntactic features;
    (b)   both parts of the sentence are set apart by some semantic factor;
    (c)   the surrounding text contains indications of semantic parallelism.

That is to say, in the case of syntactic-isometric regularity, the caesura is conditioned by syntactic-semantic indications.[23] In many examples the first colon seems to include the basic nexus (the verbal phrase with its immediate constituents), whereas the second colon consists of an additional modifier (e.g., Ps. 2:6):[24]

ואני נסכתי מלכי / על ציון הר קדשי

    (1) And I have created my king / (2) on Zion, my holy mountain.

This verse forms one nexus. The caesura separates the verbal phrase (1) from the modifier as a noun phrase (2), consisting of headword and apposition. The semantic entities of both parts of the sentence are set apart from each other since the one refers to the elected king, and the other to the holy mountain (hence on a higher plane they actually belong to one semantic category).[25] In terms of nexus and balance, one could define this kind of verse as a *balanced nexus*, as against the "balancing of nexuses" that is characteristic of standard parallelism (classes a–b, c1). "Balancing," then, is the main feature of poetic discourse.[26]

    Prose, on the other hand, is to be defined as a type of discourse in which the dominating feature is not balancing but continuity (even though it may contain clauses in parallelism in the same way European prose may contain metrical phrases or rhyme). Prose has its own rhythmic, syntactic, and semantic regularities,[27] which

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גבורים—קשת יהונתן לא נשוג אחור, וחרב שאול לא תשוב ריקם. In cases like this the caesura in line 1 is determined by the syntactic-semantic correspondence between the two modifiers (so also Ps. 2:2; Mic. 1:4; and in Ugaritic: *CTA* 17 II:27–30).

    23. That is the analogy between syntacto-isometric regularity and semantic correspondence. I wonder whether this condition is still covered by Jakobson's "compulsory syntactic pause" at the end of each line of Southwest Slavic and Russian oral poetry; see R. Jakobson, "Slavic Epic Verse—Studies in Comparative Metrics," *Selected Writings: Slavic Epic Studies* (The Hague-Paris, 1966), 6:414–63, esp. 418–20.

    24. To a certain extent his analysis is analogous to the distinction drawn in functionalist linguistics between the "nuclear predication" and the "satellites," for which see S. C. Dik, *Functional Grammar* (Dordrecht, 1981), 16–17, 25–29. Rejection of the present analysis entails the acceptance of more than two explicit constituents in one "line," against O'Connor's thesis, for which see n. 10 above. In Psalm 2 our proposal is not affected by the emendation ואני נסכתי מלכו על ציון הר קדשו, for in that case we would be dealing with the third person suffix.

    25. The same analysis could be applied to such passages as Ps. 23:3b, 4b; 137:1a, 2, 4, 6b, 7, 8, and even to Isa. 1:2b, 6, 8, 14a, 21, 23a (cohesion by paronomasia; so also Ps. 137:3b). A syntacto-semantic caesura of this kind does not exist in such passages as 1 Sam 2:14aα.

    26. For a view of Hebrew poetry as dominated by "an ideally conceived, all-embracing sense of balance," see M. H. Lichtenstein, "Biblical Poetry," in B. W. Holtz, ed., *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classical Jewish Texts* (New York, 1984), 105–27, esp. 115, 117. This view is already implied in Lowth's remark that "almost every poem possesses a sort of responsive form" (p. 33; cf. 34, 48); in Herder's appreciation of symmetry in parallelism, for which see J. G. Herder, *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (repr.: Göttingen, 1893), 1:56; and in G. B. Gray's remark concerning "rhythmical balance" as an independent principle: *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (repr.: New York, 1972), 122–24.

    27. See Kugel, *Idea*, 59–62. In fact, the Dutch student of versification, A. W. de Groot, points to similar phenomena in classical Latin *Kunstprosa* for illustrating the difference between rhythmic prose and metrical poetry; *Algemene Versleer* (The Hague, 1946), 71–99; see also E. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa*

are, in a way, similar to, but not identical with, poetic parallelism. Many prose sentences contain a number of clauses that are similar in syntactic structure, number of accents and/or words, and sometimes even in semantic content; frequently we encounter word repetition. Balancing of nexuses is obvious in such verses as, e.g.:

ויחלמו חלום שניהם / איש חלמו בלילה אחד / איש כפתרון חלמו

They had a dream, both of them, / each his own dream, in one night, / each dream with an interpretation of its own (Gen. 40:5).

ושמואל טרם ידע את ה׳ / וטרם יגלה אליו דבר ה׳

Samuel did not yet know the Lord, / and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him (1 Sam. 3:7).

One may even meet clear cases of a syntactically conditioned caesura, e.g., the relative clause (together with its antecedent; Gen. 18:8):[28]

ויקח חמאה וחלב / ובן הבקר אשר עשה

So he took curd and milk, / and the calf which he had prepared.

In prose, however, features of this type tend to stand apart and only rarely are they consecutive. Parallelism is not allowed to impair narrative continuity.[29] When prose narrative uses fixed pairs, the trend is to keep them within one given junction, without affecting the nexus (e.g., טל ומטר, "dew and rain," 1 Kgs. 17:1; מזבח ומקטיר, "sacrifice and burn incense," 1 Kgs. 3:3);[30] the argument must keep going. Line division is less clear than in poetry, for it is not given by the nexus. Prose balancing, then, is less pronounced than poetic parallelism, and does not hamper narrative progress. Despite some basic similarities, the distinction between prose and poetry should not be abandoned. Hence it seems expedient to speak, not of "prose parallelism" but of "balanced coupling" as less demanding and less rich than parallelism proper.[31] In

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vom VI. Jahrhundert v. Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance (Leipzig, 1898), 1:41–50; 2:909–60; H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Stuttgart, 1990), 479–81, 483–507. The norms of verse prosody tend to influence all stylistic design. This has been recognized by R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York, 1985), 6–7. For the description of the poet's prose style as "glänzende Ausfälle aus den Bergen der Dichtung in die Prosa der Ebene," see R. Jakobson, "Randbemerkungen zur Prosa des Dichters Pasternak," *Selected Writings: On Verse, Its Masters and Explorers* (The Hague-Paris, 1969), 5:416–32, esp. 416, 424.

28. אשר עשה is a "ballast variant" for ויקח; the junction חמאה וחלב is balanced by the phrase ובן הבקר.

29. This principle was already recognized by Gray, *Forms*, 54–55. In formal terms one could envision an opposition between static parallelism in poetry and syntagmatic progress in narrative; e.g., Kugel, *Idea*, 59, and in particular F. Landy, "Poetics and Parallelism: Some Comments on James Kugel's *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*," *JSOT* (1982), 61–87, esp. 71–72. The same differentiation is implied by Jakobson's description of poetry as tending to the metaphorical, and prose to the metonymic ("Randbemerkungen," 420).

30. Avishur, *Word Pairs*, 91–211.

31. In view of the many different facets of this phenomenon, as well as its similarity to parallelism, this term seems preferable to "rhythmic prose," as used by M. Z. Segal, *Mevô Hammiqrā* (Jerusalem, 1977), 35 (mentioning Job 1–2; Isa. 6:2; 1 Sam. 1:11), and in particular F. Landy, "Poetics," 78–79. Kugel (*Idea*, 81) speaks of "quasi-poetic" prose. This is the phenomenon behind the proposal to regard many of

particular, balanced coupling will include "balanced junctions" as well, e.g., חמאה
וחלב "curds and milk" (Gen. 18:8).[32]

Many cases of balanced coupling could be identified in spoken discourse, especially in divine promises, prophetic utterances, blessings, and prayer. In common speech one notes such instances as

עד מתי תשתכרין / הסירי יינך מעליך

How long will you be drunk? / Put your wine away from you! (1 Sam. 1:14).[33]

אמרי נא אחתי את / למען ייטב לי בעבורך / וחיתה נפשי בגללך

Say, you are my sister / that it may be well to me for your sake / and that I may live because of you (Gen. 12:13).

בנערינו ובזקנינו נלך / בבנינו ובבנתינו, בצאננו ובבקרנו נלך

We will go with our young and with our old, / we will go with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our cattle (Exod. 10:9).

Balanced coupling, then, is common in direct and indirect discourse. Biblical prose has a prosody of its own; though influenced by the norms of Hebrew poetry, it is distinct entity. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the Book of Job.

2. *Balanced Coupling in the Job Tale*

The point is that balanced coupling permeates the tale of Job in a way which has no precedent in any other prose narrative.[34] Spoken discourse is dominated by

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the ancient Hebrew and Northwest Semitic prose texts as poetry, for which see especially J. C. de Moor, "Narrative Poetry in Canaan," *UF* 20 (1988), 149–71; idem, "The Poetry of the Book of Ruth," *Or.* 53 (1984), 262–83; 55 (1986), 16–46. Recently the principles involved have been discussed by J. C. de Moor and W. G. E. Watson, eds., *Verse in Ancient Near Eastern Prose*, AOAT 42 (Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1993), ix–xviii; and esp. W. G. E. Watson, "Half Line Parallelism as an Indication of Verse in Hebrew Prose," in ibid., 331–44. In Watson's opinion, the main factor behind this kind of prose rhythm is the usage of the living language. Though it is to be admitted that this is no doubt one of the main factors, one should not overlook the influence of poetic prosody, as indicated by the incidence of YQTL-QTL parallelism and active-passive sequences. On prose parallelism in general see also R. Jakobson, "Metrics," *Writings* 5:147–59, esp. 151.

32. Such cases of coupling (within the junction) should never be considered parallelism proper, as they are by de Moor in his study of Ruth (e.g., 2:1 [loosely isometric]; 2:2 [not even isometric]; 2:8; 3:2–3); see also, e.g., D. T. Tsumura, "The Poetic Nature of Hebrew Narrative Prose in 1 Sam. 2:12–17," in de Moor and Watson, *Verse*, 293–304. For example, 1 Sam. 2:14 is counted as parallelism because each hemistich has four accented words: והכה בכיור או בדוד או בקלחת או בפרור. The inclusive sentence is considered as "overcarrying" (gapping). But this phrase does not contain a ballast variant; in this respect the present clause does not exhibit the same structure as Isa. 41:19 (double gapping), for which see our discussion below.

33. Antithetic parallelism, with the fixed pair שכר-יין; note that the direct object is not marked by את. For עד מתי in poetry see: Jer. 4:14; 4:21; 12:4; 23:26; 31:22; 47:5; Hos. 8:5; Hab. 2:6; Zech. 1:12; Ps. 6:4; 74:10; 80:5; 82:2; 90:13; 94:3; Prov. 1:22; 6:9. In poetic prose see Isa. 6:11; Zech. 1:12; Dan. 8:13; 12:6; in narrative prose; Exod. 10:3, 7; Num. 14:27; 1 Sam. 16:1; 2 Sam 2:26; 1 Kgs. 18:21; Neh. 2:6.

34. As recognized by Horst, *Hijob*, 4, on 2:7. A. van Selms acknowledges the presence of "art prose" (*kunstproza*), but does not admit its affinity with poetry; see *Job* (Nijkerk, 1982), 1:32. On the other hand,

this phenomenon. One easily notes the balanced nexuses in Job's blessing (Job 1:21b):

ה׳ נתן / ה׳ לקח / יהי שם ה׳ מברך

The Lord has given, / the Lord has taken, / the name of the Lord be blessed.

The first two semi-cola of this verse are interrelated by inner-colon parallelism, in semantic correspondence (antonymy and repetition). The second colon completes the idea, while repeating the divine name. Syntactic congruity is perfect, and so is isometry (2,2–4 accents; 4,4–8 syllables). The preceding clause is hardly less balanced (1:21a):

ערום יצתי מבטן אמי / וערום אשוב שמה

Naked I came out of my mother's womb / and naked I shall return there.

Repetition is obvious, as is the contrast of the two verbs; but in the second clause the indirect object of the first clause is replaced by the deictic שמה, "there." From a syntactic point of view the match is perfect. The number of accented words is similar (4/3), but the number of syllables is not (10/7).

An interesting case of gapping is offered by the great detractor's answer to the divine question where he was coming from (1:7):[35]

משוט בארץ / ומהתהלך בה

From roaming about the country / and from wandering about it.

Balancing is perfect from all points of view, including the syllable count, as the short form משוט is completed by the longer variant בארץ, so as to form a counterweight for the long form ומהתהלך.[36]

A kind of general semantic equivalence may be noted in Job's inner monologue (1:5):

אולי חטאו בני / וברכו אלהים בלבם

Maybe my sons have sinned / And cursed God in their hearts.

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the basic similarity to poetry has been recognized by P. Volz, who speaks of a transition to epic, in which the spoken word seems to be close to poetic: *Hijob und Weisheit* (Göttingen, 1921), 14. For the view that some passages in the Job tale actually exhibit poetic parallelism, and that their source is to be sought in an ancient epic concerning Job, see N. M. Sarna, "Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job," *JBL* 76 (1957), 13–25, esp. 16; followed by M. H. Pope, *Job* (Garden City, 1965), xxiv. For some, the artful design of the prose tale is sufficient reason to reject the prose-poetry dichotomy: A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Copenhagen, 1952), 2:175; G. Fohrer, *Studien*, 28; M. Greenberg, "Job," in R. Alter and F. Kermode, eds., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, 1987), 283–304, esp. 285: "artful construction, dialogue and elements of poetic diction permeate the prose tale." The present study seeks to demonstrate that the poetic elements are even more pervasive than these scholars maintained.

35. For an elliptical answer of the same structure (skipping the given from the previous question) see Judg. 15:6; the same phenomenon underlies elliptical affirmation; see E. L. Greenstein, "The Syntax of Saying 'Yes' in Biblical Hebrew," *JANES* 19 (1990), 51–59.

36. √שוט occurs both in prose and poetry, in the following distribution of the stems: Q in prose: Num. 11:8; 2 Sam. 24:2–8; in poetry: Ezek. 27:8, 26; L in poetry; Amos 8:12; Jer. 5:1; 49:3; in elevated prose: Zech. 4:10; Dan. 12:4; 2 Chr. 16:9.

One also notes gapping: the verbal phrase וברכו אלהים expands the predicate חטאו, and forms the compensation for the ellipsis of the subject בני in clause (a). The modifier בלבבם of the second clause is the syntactic (and chiastic) counterpart of אולי in the opening. Furthermore, the sound play connects the adverb to the divine name.

   In other cases the balance is limited to the syntactic-isometric components, e.g., the satanic suggestion to put Job's piety to the text (1:11):

אולם שלח נא ידך / וגע בכל אשר לו / אם לא על פניך יברכך

   But stretch out your hands / and touch all he has got; / surely he will curse you in your face.

The first two clauses are balanced by syntactic congruity and isometry (4–4); the third clause, which states the expected result, is connected from the semantic point of view, but the other aspects are less obvious.[37]

   Isometry also prevails in śaṭan's second answer (2:4):

עור בעד עור / וכל אשר לאיש / יתן בעד נפשו

   A skin for a skin / and all what a man has got / he will give for his life.

Here the first clause is a balanced nexus, in which עור is matched by בעד עור (note the graphic correspondence!).[38] Thus the pattern is set for the second clause, in which the caesura introduced by the relative clause preserves a certain isometric regularity, even though the semantic correspondence relates to the clause as a whole.

   Some prosodic regularity (3–3) is preserved in the divine comment on Job's steadfastness (2:3b):

ועדנו מחזיק בתמתו / והסיתני בו לבלעו חנם

   And he still holds on to his integrity / even though you have incited me against him, to destroy him for nothing.

Isometry is weak, but not entirely lacking, in the introduction to the divine comments on Job (1:8; 2:3):

השמת לבך אל עבדי איוב / כי אין כמהו בארץ

   Have you paid attention to my servant Job, / that there is none like him in the earth?

Some kind of accentual balance may also be detected in the final decision (2:6b):

הנו בידך / אך את נפשו שמר

   See, he is in your hand; / But spare his life.

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   37. In the pendant of this verse, the diabolic proposal of 2:5, the rhythmic effect is strengthened by the balanced junction אל עצמו ואל בשרו.

   38. Nexuses of this kind are rejected by O'Connor (*Verse Structure*, 109–10) as a mere *figura etymologica.* The beautifully balanced nexus of Ps. 126:1 (בשוב ה׳—את שיבת ציון—היינו כחלמים) is an eloquent witness against this restriction.

Balanced junctions are less frequent than nexuses. One example is offered by the first part of the first satanic argument (1:10a):

<div dir="rtl">

הלא את (qere אתה) שׂכת בעדו ובעד ביתו / ובעד כל אשר לו מסביב

</div>

Haven't you shielded him and his house / and all he has got, on every side?

The rhythmic flow of this verse, in which the caesura is indicated by the relative clause,[39] is not irregular (5–5). The sequel brings a perfect nexus (10b):

<div dir="rtl">

מעשה ידיו ברכת / ומקנהו פרץ בארץ

</div>

You have blessed the work of his hands, / and his life-stock is increased in the land.

The isometric balance is obtained by the expansion of the noun phrase in the first clause as against the augmentation of the verbal phrase in the second part. The semantic correspondence is general rather than lexical, even though מעשה could match מקנהו. Other cases of balanced junction are presented by the divine rebuke of Eliphaz and his peers (42:8a), and by God's comments on Job (1:8; 2:3a).

This predilection for rhythmic regularity and balancing stands out in almost all direct speech (1:14–15, 16, 17, 18, 19; 2:2, 10, 11). Only a few utterances offer no prosodic regularity, as, e.g., the short questions God addresses to the great detractor (מאין תבוא, "from where do you come?" 1:6; 2:1: אי מזה תבוא, "where are you coming from?"; how easy it would have been to balance this clause by an additional colon!), and the latter's criticism of Job's integrity (החנם ירא איוב אלהים, "does Job fear God for nothing?" 1:9); so also the divine instructions to the friends in the epilogue (42:7b, 8b).[40]

Prosodic regularity is the rule in the narrator's discourse as well. An outstanding case of balanced coupling, on the borderline of parallelism proper, is offered by the conclusion of the first chapter (1:22):

<div dir="rtl">

בכל זאת לא חטא איוב / ולא נתן תפלה לאלהים

</div>

Nevertheless, Job did not sin / And did not put blasphemy to God.

The general semantic correspondence of these clauses is augmented by the isometric regularity (3–3; syllable count: 8–9) and a subtle syntactic structuring, in which the object of the second nexus תפלה serves to compensate for בכל זאת of the first one (a "ballast variant"). The human person of the first clause, איוב, is matched by the deity in the second one, לאלהים.

Another strong example may be found in the staccato clauses describing Job's mourning (1:20):

<div dir="rtl">

ויקם איוב / ויקרע את מעילו ויגז את ראשו / ויפל ארצה וישתחו

</div>

So Job stood up, / rent his mantle and shaved his head, / and, throwing himself on the ground, prostrated himself.

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39. As indicated by the cantillation signs, מסביב belongs to the main sentence and continues the verbal phrase שׂכת בעדו. From a prosodic point of view it balances the verbal phrase.

40. In 42:7b one could note the isometric balance (5–5); in v. 8b a certain balance is discernible in the first instructions: ואיוב עבדי . . . והעליתם . . . ולכו (3–3–4), but the conclusion is unpatterned.

In these nexuses one notes the *inclusio* formed by the antonyms ויקם and ויפל,[41] as well as the semantic correspondence of the two vehement mourning gestures (ויקרע and ויגז) and the compelling rhythm (2–2–2–3).

The opening exposition is quite subtle (1:1):

איש היה בארץ עוץ—איוב שמו / והיה האיש ההוא תם וישר / וירא אלהים / וסר מרע

> There was a man in the Land Utz—Job was his name, / This man, now, was virtuous and honest, / God fearing / and shunning evil.

In this verse both predicate and subject are repeated in chiastic order (איש היה versus והיה האיש). Syntactic structure is basically similar, since both clauses contain no object. The main part of the first clause, Job's name, corresponds with the noun predicate of the second clause: והיה האיש ההוא תם וישר.

The second part of the line contains two noun phrases each consisting of a head-word and a nominal adjunct:[42] וירא אלהים וסר מרע. On the face of it, this is just a straightforward sentence with a compound nominal predicate. Nevertheless, the construction is parallelistic, as may be seen by comparison with two lines from Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 41:19):

אתן במדבר ארז / שטה, והדס ועץ שמן / אשים בערבה ברוש, תדהר ותאשור יחדו

> I will plant in the waste cedar, / acacia tree, and myrtle and oil-tree / I will place in the desert juniper, / plane-tree and larch together.

These lines, which parallel each other almost completely, consist each of two cola, of which the first contains a verbal predicate, subject, and object, whereas the second one consists of a term matching the object, and a ballast variant:

אשים בערבה ברוש / תדהר ותאשור יחדיו

> I will place in the desert juniper, / plane-tree and larch together.

The phrase ותאשור יחדו (considered the inner-colon match of תדהר) can be regarded as the ballast variant of אשים בערבה. By the same token, in the first stich the junction והדס ועץ שמן balances אתן במדבר. This is a case of double gapping (involving verb and predicate) and not just of syntactic-isometric congruence.[43]

The line on Job's integrity embodies the same structure:

והיה האיש ההוא תם וישר / וירא אלהים - וסר מרע

> This man, now, was virtuous and honest, / God fearing—and shunning evil.

---

41. For the pair קום-נפל cf. in a similar configuration Ezek. 3:23; and also Isa. 24:20; Jer. 8:4; 25:27; 46:16; Amos 5:2; 8:14; 9:11; Mic. 7:8; Ps. 18:39; 20:9; 36:13; 140:11; as well as Isa. 22:25; Jer. 19:7; Job 14:18 (מקים-נפל).

42. In direct discourse the divine comments on Job are quite similar (1:8; 2:3), the only difference being the introductory noun איש, on which the series תם וישר etc. is dependent as an attribute.

43. Actually, this pattern (a-b-c/c′-c″-c‴; double gapping; see Collins, *Line Structure*, 126) fits Greenstein's view of "synthetic" parallelism as semantic correspondence in the underlying deep structure (see n. 19 above). But unlike syntactic-isometric congruence, it is based on a certain measure of semantic correspondence, for the second colon matches an element of the first colon.

The phrase ירא אלהים matches the predicate of the first colon (תם וישר): the junction וסר מרע balances the opening of the first colon, והיה האיש ההוא (note the pair איש / אלהים). Accordingly, this line is quite balanced from the point of view of semantics, syntax, and isometry.

Another good case of balancing is offered by the introductions to the discussions between God and the *śaṭan* (1:7, 8–9; 2:2, 3–4):

<div dir="rtl">ויאמר ה׳ אל השטן . . . / ויען השטן את ה׳ ויאמר . . .</div>

So the LORD said to the *śaṭan* . . . / So the *śaṭan* answered and said to the LORD.

Nor could one pass by the intriguing balance in the introduction to the scene in heaven (2:1–2):[44]

<div dir="rtl">ויהי היום   ויבאו בני האלהים   להתיצב על ה׳</div>
<div dir="rtl">ויבוא גם השטן בתוכם   להתיצב על ה׳</div>

It was on a day, that the sons of God came   to present themselves before the LORD.
And the *śaṭan* came also among them   to present himself before the LORD.

In both these lines the clause with the finite verb, which indicates the arrival, is balanced by the condensed clause with the infinitive, indicating the act of presenting oneself at the divine court. In the surface structure the infinitival clause is integrated into the main sentence, but from a syntactic point of view this phrase is the condensation of an ordinary verbal clause in its own right. Reconstruction of the underlying substrate indicates the balance:

<div dir="rtl">* ויבאו בני האלהים—ויתיצבו על ה׳</div>

* So the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord.

Both clauses consist of a verb of movement and a divine name, and both have two main accents. The prosodic structure of the underlying reconstruction is preserved by the actual compound sentence of vv. 1–2. In fact, the adverbial modifier בתוכם (v. 2) could be regarded as a ballast variant for ויהי היום. In the corresponding verse of the opening scene (1:6) the condensed clause occurs only once. Hence the prosodic structure is less full than it is according to its pendant. Still, the subtle balancing of closing and opening clause merits attention:

<div dir="rtl">ויהי היום ויבאו בני האלהים / להתיצב על ה׳ / ויבא גם השטן בתוכם</div>

It was on a day that the sons of God came / to present themselves before the LORD. / And the *śaṭan* came also among them.

Another case of repetition is offered by the verse concerning Job's peers (2:12):

<div dir="rtl">וישאו עיניהם למרחוק ולא הכרהו—וישאו קולם ויבכו / ויקרעו איש מעילו—ויזרקו עפר על ראשיהם השמימה</div>

But they lifted their eyes from afar and could not recognize him, so they lifted their voices and wept; / and they each rent his mantle and threw dust upon their heads toward heaven.

---

44. In the LXX the second clause להתיצב על ה׳ (2:2b) is not represented. According to that version the structure of our verse is equal to that of 1:6.

The first two clauses of this verse open with the same verb וישאו (repetitive parallelism), to be continued by a stereotypic object: עיניהם and קולם (syntactic congruity). Moreover, both clauses are followed by an additional clause: ולא הכרהו and ויבכו. This isomorphy is matched by a certain rhythmic regularity (3–2–3). The lack of semantic correspondence (though partly compensated by lexical repetition) does not detract from the other components of this prosodic structure. In the second line both clauses are concerned with the mourning gestures. The semantic correspondence, then, is obvious. So is the syntactic congruity. Within the line isometry is less pronounced. But the accentual configuration (3–4) mirrors that of the previous two clauses.

One of the most amazing instances of prosodic arrangement is the regularity in the pericope of the disasters which hit Job. First, one should note the stereotypic introduction of the messengers (1:16, 17):

<div dir="rtl">

עוד זה מדבר—וזה בא—ויאמר

</div>

As he was still speaking—another came—and said.

The obvious features of this passage are lexical correspondence (ויאמר, מדבר, זה), and syntactic congruity (subject with participle as verbal predicate). The interesting point, however, is the isometric regularity, as the first clause is balanced by the following two short clauses (ויאמר balances עוד):

<div dir="rtl">

עוד זה מדבר / וזה בא—ויאמר

</div>

As he was still speaking, / another came—and said.

In fact, this arrangement is matched by the configuration of the messenger's accounts of the calamities. The first report opens with two long clauses describing the pastoral rest of the herd, and continues with two short clauses, of which the former one, consisting of subject and verbal predicate, describes the source of the calamity, and the latter one, which contains only a verbal predicate with suffix, stating the fate of the herd (1:14–15). The other accounts all open with a long clause explaining the source of the calamity, balanced by two short clauses to describe what actually happened:

1. 1:14–15			הבקר היו חרשות
			והאתנות רעות על ידיהן
		ותקחם	ותפל שבא
2. 1:16			אש אלהים נפלה מהשמים
		ותאכלם	ותבער בצאן ובנערים
3. 1:17			כשדים שמו שלשה ראשים
		ויקחום	ויפשטו על הגמלים
4. 1:19[45]			רוח גדולה באה מעבר המדבר
			ויגע בארבע פנות הבית
		וימתו	ויפל על הנערים

<hr>

45. In this verse element (2) is doubled, a variegation that is characteristic of the fourth and final stage (also note the opening in v. 18b). An additional expansive element is the note ואת הנערים הכו לפי חרב in stage 1 (v. 15) and 3 (v. 17). This variegation also fits the "three-four" pattern.

1. 1:14–15   As the oxen were plowing
  And the asses were grazing near them,
      the Sabeans forayed   and took them
2. 1:16   A huge fire came falling from heaven
      and burnt the sheep and the boys   and consumed them
3. 1:17   The Chaldeans split up into three gangs
      and raided the camels   and took them
4. 1:19   A great wind came from across the open land
  And struck the four corners of the house
      so that it fell down on the boys   so that they died.

One also notes some regularity in the syntactic arrangement. All four accounts open with a clause which identifies two participants (VP+NP$_1$–NP$_2$#; two clauses in 1:14), continue with a clause with identification of one participant (VP+NP#), followed by a nounless clause (VP#), which does not offer any identification. Hence these accounts are governed by one single pattern, which affects both syntactic structure and isometric ordering.[46] Nevertheless—and this is a sign of extreme stylistic sensitivity—in all cases the actual construction is different. In its richness and originality this configuration betrays the poet.

Of course, the tale also offers many balanced junctions, e.g. (1:13):

<div dir="rtl">

ויהי היום
ובני איוב ובנתיו   אכלים ושתים יין
בבית אחיהם הבכור

</div>

It was on a day,
that Job's sons and daughters   were eating and drinking wine
in the house of their eldest brother.

The opening clauselet is followed by two junctions, the first of which constitutes the subject (NP) and the second the verbal phrase (VP), both of them subtly balanced by the use of complements. The notion of balancing is justified by the number of junctions as well as by their extent. The NP consists of two headwords, בני, ובנתיו, and one complement after the first headword (בני איוב); the VP contains two headwords as well: אכלים ושתים, the second of which is complemented by the object יין (contrast the lack of a corresponding object for שתים). Thus, both junctions contain three main accents. Moreover, the same number of accents is present in the closing NP: בבית אחיהם הבכור. One also notes the counterpoint between אחיהם הבכור and בני איוב ובנתיו in the first NP.

Mention should also be made of the meristic junction in the description of Job's affliction with disease (2:7):

<div dir="rtl">

ויצא השטן מאת פני ה׳ / ויך את איוב בשחין רע / מכף רגל ועד קדקדו

</div>

So the *śaṭan* went forth from the LORD / and afflicted Job with sore boils / from the sole of his feet to the top of his head.

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46. A similar isometric-syntactic constellation is found in Job's wife's scolding (2:9), and, in a slightly more complicated form, in the opening of Job's complaint (3:1–2).

The caesura, suggested by the extent of the opening clause (syntactic-isometric regularity), is confirmed by the merism. In spite of a lack of semantic equivalence and syntactic congruity, we obtain a prosodic pattern.

Other cases of balanced junction include:

(a) verbal junctions: ויועדו יחדו לבוא לנוד לו לנחמו (2:11);

(b) structured listings, e.g. (1:3): ויולדו לו שבעה בנים ושלוש בנות (similarly: 42:13; also 1:2; 42:9, 12);

(c) combinations of nexus balancing and balanced junctions, e.g. (2:13):
וישבו אתו לארץ שבעת ימים ושבעת לילות (junction)
ואין דבר אליו דבר
כי ראו כי גדל הכאב מאד (isometrically balanced nexus);
1:4:
והלכו בניו ועשו משתה בית איש יומו (nexus: 2–2–3)
ושלחו וקראו לשלשת אחיתיהם (verbal junction)
לאכל ולשתות עמהם (infinitive junction);
42:11:
ויבאו אליו כל אחיו וכל אחיתיו וכל ידעיו לפנים (junction)
ויאכלו עמו לחם בביתו וינדו לו וינחמו אתו (nexus: 4–2–2)
על כל הרעה אשר הביא ה׳ עליו
ויתנו לו איש קשיטה אחת ואשי נזם זהב אחד (nexus: 5–5).[47]

We may conclude, then, that the large majority of sentences in the prose tale are characterized by the balancing of nexus or junction. The verses in which one may not discern any type of balanced coupling are few and far between (1:5; 3:1; 42:15; and in direct discourse: 1:6, 9; 2:1, 8; 42:7b–8). In short, in this tale balanced coupling is almost as regular as parallelism is in the poetic speeches. Its frequency exceeds the incidence of balancing in other tales by far. This result suggests a high affinity between the prosody of the Job tale and that of the poetic sections.

3. *The Noun-Verb Ratio in Pre-exilic and Postexilic Prose*

Prose and poetry are fully comparable in one respect: both contain verbs and nouns, and therefore the noun-verb ratio (hence: NV), one of the universal characteristics of language,[48] relates to both of them. In standard language, as well as in poetry, a typical clause contains one predicate, mostly verbal (VP), together with some noun phrases (NP), including a subject, mostly nominal (i.e., noun, proper noun, adjective), and an object, whether direct or indirect (or another indication of the goal of the action), also mostly nominal, e.g., ותגנב רחל את התרפים, "and Rachel stole the *manes*" (Gen. 31:19); וישג לבן את יעקב, "and Laban overtook Jacob" (Gen. 31:25). In these clauses both subject and object are explicitly indicated by nouns. In such a case we will speak of "double identification," since two roles in the clause have been

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47. In 42:11 זהב is a ballast variant of ויתנו.

48. R. Wells, "Nominal and Verbal Style," in T. A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language* (Cambridge, MA, 1960), 213–20; G. Herdan finds the distribution of word classes relatively stable: *The Advanced Theory of Language as Choice and Chance* (Berlin-Heidelberg, 1966), 15–17, 26–27, 123–27; see also J. M. Zemb, "La Stylometrie," in P. Guiraud and P. Kuentz, *La Stylistique: Lectures* (Paris, 1970), 214–27. Zemb speaks of relative stability of authorial style, and of language (in this case, French as compared with German).

identified (of course, double identification also includes subject/object + modifiers, or even two modifiers). The narrator may also choose to define only one role explicitly, whether as a subject, an object, or a modifier (single identification), e.g., ויאמר אחז, "Ahaz said" (Isa. 7:12). The ancient Israelite narrator has a typical predilection for reference by means of particles and/or pronouns, or omission of explicit reference (nounless), e.g., ולא שנה לו, וימת, "and did not hit him a second time, and he died" (2 Sam. 20:10).

On the other hand, the narrator may go so far as to define three roles (triple identification), e.g., ויצא מנחם את הכסף על ישראל, "So Menahem exacted the silver of Israel" (2 Kgs. 15:20). This clause defines the subject (Menaham), the object (the silver), and the indirect object (Israel). Clauses that include more than three explicit participants (quadruple identification) are rare in narrative, but do occur in certain contexts, e.g., בעת ההיא השיב רצין מלך ארם את אילת לארם, "At that time Retzin, the king of Aram, returned Eiloth to Aram (sic!)" (2 Kgs. 15:6).[49]

A text which uses many clauses of this type, will contain more nouns for each verbal predicate, and will therefore tend to the nominal pole. So will a text that contains many verbless (nominal) clauses. The same may be said of a text which uses, apart from role identifiers (function-nouns), many complements, such as appositions, attributes, and amplified junctions, e.g.:

ויהי בימי אחז . . . עלה רצין מלך ארם ופקח בן רמליהו מלך ישראל ירושלים למלחמה עליה

It was, then, in the days of Ahaz . . . that Retzin, the king of Aram and Pekah ben Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it (Isa. 7:1).

A text containing two nouns per verb, resulting in a NV-ratio of 0.667, will be considered balanced, as will any text with a NV-ratio in the range between 0.66–0.67. A text in which the ratio is higher than 0.67 exhibits a nominal style, and a text with a NV ratio under 0.66 a verbal style.

Investigation indicates that in Biblical Hebrew the nominal style is characterized by a number of factors:

the frequent use of nouns in order to render subject, object or modifier explicit;
their frequent use for attributive description and other adjuncts;
the high frequency of nominal clauses;
the strong development of expositional discourse; and
the tendency to link as many data as possible to a single predicate.

The verbal style, on the other hand, is characterized by:

the small number of attributive descriptions;
the limited use of expositional discourse;
the frequency of reference by pronouns and particles; and
implicit reference (implied subject or object).

In such texts the verbal components are more pronounced, because there are fewer nominal components accompanying them. Expository pericopes obviously tend to the

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49. So also 2 Kgs. 25:27b, as well as many instances of the regnal formula of the Kings of Northern Israel, e.g., 1 Kgs. 16:8; 22:52; 2 Kgs. 3:1; 13:1.

nominal pole, whereas a passage presenting a turning point tends to be more verbal.[50] For example, in the tale of Samuel's birth (1 Samuel 1), the special position of the exposition is quite obvious. The final resolution of the narrative also tends to the nominal pole. Complication and denouement are highly verbal, and the crisis even more so:[51]

Subunit	Noun	Verb	NV rate
exposition (vv. 1–3):	43	5	0.896
complication (vv. 4–8):	31	18	0.633
(vv. 9–11aa):	12	9	0.571
crisis (vv. 12–18):	40	27	0.597
denouement (vv. 19–20):	22	16	0.579
(vv. 21–23):	22	16	0.579
solution (vv. 24–28):	29	14	0.674
Total	199	105	0.654

The nature of these distinctions is clarified by the comparative analysis of a tale in the verbal style and a story in the nominal diction. The story of Esau's birthright (Gen. 25:27–34) tends to the verbal pole, even though the exposition contains many clauses consisting of nominal forms (vv. 27–28; six clauses):

single identification (subject or goal/modifier): 1; 1 V–1 N
ויגדלו הנערים (no adjuncts)
double ident. (subject+goal/modifier, or goal+modifier): 2; 2 V–4 N
ויאהב יצחק את עשו (no adjuncts)
ורבקה אהבת את יעקב (no adjuncts)
triple ident. (subject+goal+modifier): 0
nominal clause/היה (subject+predicate): 1; 1 V–6 N
ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה (four adjuncts)
nominal clause/verbless: 2; 7 N
ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים (four adjuncts)
כי ציד בפיו

In the action sequence (vv. 29–34) the style is more verbal, even though there is some fluctuation:

nounless clauses (verbs only): 4; 4 verbs
ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך
single identification: 6; 7 V–5 N (one adjunct)–2 P
הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה (one adjunct; dialogue)
ויאמר יעקב (no adjuncts)
ויאמר עשו

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50. For the development of the frequency of verbs in given textual units see also W. Bader, "Ausdruckssyntax und Textgrammatik: Statistik im Methodendreischritt Syntax-Semantik-Pragmatik," in *Actes du premièr colloque international bible et informatique: le texte—Louvaine-la-Neuve (Belgique) 2–3–4 septembre 1985* (Genève-Paris, 1986), 51–79.

51. In this analysis an infinitive clause is counted as verbal. Suffixed pronouns are not counted at all: a form like ויחבקהו is considered a verb. The category of particles includes all deictic reference, whether as particle with suffix (אליו) or as adverb (שם, כן). Infinitives are counted as verb, and so are participles functioning as finite verbs. But if a participle serves as an attribute, it is counted as a noun. לאמר is not counted at all, even though in the statistical survey it counts as a verb.

ויאמר יעקב
וישבע לו (no adjuncts; one particle)
הנה אנכי הולך למות (no adjuncts; verb-infin.; one particle; dialogue)
double identification: 6; 6 V–11 N–1 P
ויזד יעקב נזיד (no adjuncts)
ויבא עשו מן השדה
ויאמר עשו אל יעקב
השבעה לי כיום (one particle; dialogue)
וימכר את בכרת ליעקב (no adjuncts)
ויבז עשו את הבכרה
triple identification: 3; 3 V–9 N (two adjuncts)
על כן קרא שמו אדום (no adjuncts; one particle)
מכרה כיום את בכרתך לי (no adjuncts; 1 particle; dialogue)
ויעקב נתן לעשו לחם ונזיד עדשים (two adjuncts)
nominal clause/היה (subject+predicate/goal): 0
nominal clause/verbless: 3; 3 N
והוא עיף (one particle)
כי עיף אנכי (one particle; dialogue)
ולמה זה לי בכרה (one particle; dialogue)

Thus the verbal tendency of the action tale is quite obvious. Actually the entire unit tends to the verbal pole. The following tables offer (a) the NV rate per section and (b) the number of clause types per section:

unit	clauses	function-nouns[52]	adjuncts	N	V	P	NV
25:27–28	6	11	7	18	4	—	0.818
	per clause	1.833	1.167	3	0.667	—	
25:29–36	22	25	3	28	20	8	0.583
	per clause	1.136	0.136	1.273	0.91	0.364	
total	28	36	10	46	24	8	0.657

unit	clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	היה	nom	NV
25:27–28	6	—	1	2	—	1	2	0.818
	p in section	—	0.167	0.333	—	0.167	0.333	
25:29–36	22	4	6	6	3	—	3	0.583
	p in section	0.182	0.273	0.273	0.136	—	0.136	

In other tales the expository sections are less developed, so that the final balance tends more to the verbal pole. For instance, in Gen. 32:23–33:16 the data are as follows:

1. 32:23–32 (41 clauses):
    nounless clauses (verbs only): 12; 12 V (0.293)
    single identification: 16; 16 V–22 N (11 adj)–5 P (1 adj) (0.390)
    double identification: 8; 8 V–16 N (5 adj)–5 P (0.195)
    triple identification: 2; 2 V–9 N (5 adj)–2 P (1 adj) (0.049)
    nominal clause/היה: 0
    nominal clause/verbless: 3; 4 N (1 adj)–1 P (0.073)

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52. The appellation "function-nouns" indicates nouns that fulfill a syntactic function in a clause type, even when standing alone (the kernel of the constituent, e.g., איש in איש תם). "Adjuncts" = all adjuncts to the kernel, i.e., attributes, appositions, and appended nouns in the junction (ויוסף in רחל ויוסף is a function-noun).

   2. 33:1–7 (29 clauses)
      nounless clauses (verbs only): 9; 9 V
      single identification: 7; 7 V–10 N (3 adj)
      double identification: 8; 8 V–20 N (7 adj)–2 P
      triple identification: 0
      nominal clause/היה: 0
      nominal clause/verbless: 5; 10 N (4 adj)– 4 P
   3. 33:8–16 (42 clauses)
      nounless clauses (verbs only): 9; 9 V
      single identification: 13; 13 V–12 N (3 adj)–4 P
      double identification: 7; 7 V–12 N (2 adj)–2 P
      triple identification: 3; 3 V–12 N (6 adj)–2 P
      nominal clause/היה: 1; 1 V–1 P
      nominal clause/verbless: 9; 12 N (3 adj); 9 P

unit	clauses	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
32:23–32	41	29	22	51	38	12	0.573
33:1–7	29	26	14	40	24	6	0.625
33:8–16	42	34	14	48	33	18	0.593
total	112	89	50	139	95	36	0.594
per clause:		0.795	0.446	1.24	0.85	0.32	0.594

unit	clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	היה	nom	NV
32:23–32	41	12	16	8	2	—	3	0.573
33:1–7	29	9	7	8	—	—	5	0.625
33:8–16	42	9	13	7	3	1	9	0.593
total	112	30	36	23	5	1	17	0.594
p in section		0.268	0.321	0.205	0.045	0.009	0.152	

This, then, is the stylistic reality behind the low NV rate.[53] The profile of a text which tends to the nominal pole is quite different, as shown by the tale of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs. 10:1–10, 13):

   nounless: 6 cls; 6 V
   single id.: 12 cls; 12 V–12 N–2 P (2 adj)
   double id.: 13 cls; 13 V–62 N–5 P (41 adj)
   triple id.: 1 cls.; 1 V–3 N–1 P (1 adj)
   quadruple id.: 1 cls; 1 V–7 N (3 adj)
   nominal/היה: 5 cls; 5 V–12 N–1 P (4 adj)
   nominal/verbless: 2 cls– 4 N

	unit	clauses	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
1 Kings	10	40	45	51	100	38	9	0.725
per clause			1.125	1.275	2.5	0.95	0.225	

By comparison, the data for the Jacob tale were as follows:

	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
per clause	0.795	0.446	1.24	0.85	0.32	0.594

This comparison shows that the number of verbs per clause is rather stable. In the sections with a nominal style the mean clause contains 2.5 nouns, as against 1.24

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53. A detailed investigation of Judg. 14:1–19; 15:1–19 yielded results which were very similar to those for Gen. 32:23–33:16.

nouns in the sections with a strongly verbal style, which also tend to contain more particles (0.32 versus 0.225). Two tendencies are notable: (a) the number of function-nouns is higher than in the sections with verbal style (1.125 per clause versus 0.795 per clause); (b) adjuncts are far more frequent than in sections with a predominantly verbal style (1.275 as against 0.446 per clause).

Clause structure is characteristic as well:

unit	clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	היה	nom
1 Kings 10	40	6	12	13	2	5	1
p in section		0.15	0.3	0.325	0.05	0.125	0.025

For the sections with marked verbal style we found the following data:

	nounless	single	double	triple	היה	nom
p in section	0.268	0.321	0.205	0.045	0.009	0.152

The differences between these sections pertain to: (a) the number of nounless clauses: 0.268 in the verbal style as against 0.15 in the nominal style (178 : 100); and (b) the number of clauses with double identification: 0.325 as against 0.205 (158 : 100). The other differences do not seem to be important.

Generally speaking, the nominal style is more prevalent in undoubtedly post-exilic prose (represented by Chronicles,[54] Esther, and Ezra; the diction of the Nehemiah memoirs tends to the verbal pole), as well as in those texts which are best attributed to the exilic/late pre-exilic period. Some of the data have been assembled in the following tables:[55]

NV Ratio in Post-Exilic Prose

unit	N	V	pN	
Ezra	619	253	0.71	(nominal)
Neh.	1285	738	0.635	(verbal)
Esth.	1721	647	0.727	(nominal)
2 Chr.	2183	778	0.737	(nominal)
Total	5808	2416	0.706	

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54. On the nominal tendency in the style of Chronicles as against the more verbal style of Samuel, see A. J. C. Verheij, *Verbs and Numbers: A Study of the Frequencies of the Hebrew Verbal Tense Forms in the Books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles* (Assen, 1990), 32, 118–20. Verheij bases his conclusions mainly on the synoptic texts (1 Chronicles // 1–2 Samuel; 2 Chronicles // 1–2 Kings), but also makes mention of non-parallel texts. It turns out that the latter category is more decisive, for here the author was less exposed to the influence of his synoptic sources.

55. The samples from which the data were culled are:
Post-exilic: Ezra 1; 3:1–4:5; 8:17–10:17; Neh. 1:1–7:5; 8:1–9:37; 13:1–31; Job 1:1–3:1; 42:1–17; Haggai 1–2; Zechariah 1–7; Ruth 1:1–4:17; Esth. 1:1–9:6; 9:10–10:3; 2 Chronicles 29–36;
Exilic/Late Pre-exilic: Jeremiah 26–28; 36:1–43:7; 2 Kings 11–16; 22–25; 1 Kings 9; 11; 15 (mainly Dtr.); 1 Kings 12–14 (mainly pre-Dtr.); Joshua 2–11; Joshua 22–24;
Pre-exilic: Abraham: Genesis 12–13; 15–16; 18–22; 24; Jacob: Genesis 27; 28:10–33:20; Joseph: Genesis 40–45 (but 40–41: NV = 0.692; apparently because of the dreams of Pharaoh and his servants; David: 1 Samuel 16–30; 2 Samuel 7; 10–13; 15–16; 18–21; Elijah: 1 Kings 17–22; Elisha: 2 Kings 2–10.
The verbal style prevails in Joshua 2–11; 1 Kings 12–14. Hence these tales appear to belong to the classical period rather than to the intermediate stage. In Joshua 22–24 the nominal style is predominant.

NV Ratio in Exilic/Late Pre-Exilic Prose

unit	N	V	pN	
2 Kgs. 22–25	1148	366	0.758	(nominal)
2 Kgs. 11–16	1494	526	0.74	(nominal)
1 Kgs. 9–15	822	299	0.73	(nominal)
Josh. 22–24	784	322	0.709	(nominal)
Jer.	2351	1054	0.69	(nominal)
Josh. 2–11	2243	1104	0.67	(balanced)
Total	9615	4138	0.699	

On the other hand, the verbal style prevails in those narratives which are mostly considered to represent pre-exilic, "classical" prose, e.g., the tales of Abraham and Jacob (in both NV = 0.614),[56] the Samson cycle (NV = 0.581), the David tales (NV = 0.63), the Joseph narrative (NV = 0.64), the Elijah tales (NV = 0.60) and the Elisha cycles (NV = 0.589).[57]

The differences between the classical style and the late diction are also borne out by detailed stylistic analysis.

unit	clauses	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
Esth. 3:1–15	72	87	91	178	58	19	0.754
per clause		1.208	1.264	2.472	0.806	0.264	

clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	quad	היה	nom
72	10	21	18	7	1	1	14
p in section	0.138	0.292	0.25	0.097	0.014	0.014	0.194

The difference between the nominal style of this pericope and the verbal style lies both in the number of adjuncts (1.264 per clause as against 0.446 in the Jacob tales) and in the number of function-nouns (1.28 as against 0.795 in the Jacob tales). Nominal clauses are more frequent than in the Jacob narrative. However, since these clauses mostly serve as attribute or apposition (e.g., אשר בשער המלך, "which is in the king's gate" הוא חדש אדר, "that is the month Adar") this phenomenon belongs to the same category as the high number of adjuncts. Moreover, quadruple (and even quintuple) identification, which was not found in classical prose, does occur, though rarely, in exilic/post-exilic prose, e.g.:

אף לא הביאה אסתר המלכה עם המלך אל המשתה אשר עשתה כי אם אותי

Esther the queen did not invite anyone with the king to the banquet which she had arranged, but me (Esth. 5:12).

This is not to deny that the Esther narrative does contain clauses with a strongly developed verbal character, e.g., כי כן צוה לו המלך, "for so the king ordered him" (3:2); ולא קם ולא זע ממנו, "and stood not up nor moved on his account" (5:9); but

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56. In the Abraham cycle, however, the data are not stable; chaps. 14 and 23 tend to the nominal pole. The verbal style is strongly developed in Exodus 19; 20:14–17; 18–21; 32–33 (NV between 0.57 and 0.61); the style of 15:20–27; chaps. 17–18 are more balanced.

57. For additional features which confirm the distinction between "classical" prose and exilic/post-exilic narrative, see my "New Means . . . New Ends: Biblical Scholarship and Computer Data," in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Colloquium on Bible and Computer: Desk and Discipline . . . (Amsterdam, August 15–18, 1994)* (Paris, 1995), 282–312, esp. 284–94, 295–307.

these are rare. In chapter 5 we note one additional example (ויבא אל ביתו וישלח ויבא את אהביו, "and upon coming home sent to bring his friends"; 5:10) and in chapter 3 four (all in direct speech: 3:3b, 8b; cf. 2 Chr. 30:10–11, 14–15; 32:1–2; 20:20). Everywhere one meets extended descriptive adjuncts; e.g., איש צר ואויב המן הרע הזה, "an adversary and an enemy, that bad Haman" (7:6; crisis; in dialogue); ויאמר חרבונה אחד מן הסריסים, "And Harbona, one of the eunuchs, said" (7:9; unraveling).

These features are also characteristic of other post-exilic narratives (e.g., Dan. 1:1–2:3). Some involved sentences could be regarded as expositional discourse (Ezra 1:1, 5), but this categorization fits only part of the material. The strong preference for the noun adjuncts is also striking in the Egyptian Aramaic Aḥiqar narrative. For instance, Sennacherib is styled שנחארב מלך אתור, "Sennacherib, King of Assyria" (ll. 4, 7; l. 15: אבוהי = ll. 51, 55; l. 47 סנחארב מלכא = l. 27; l. 50: [שנח]ארב מלכא אבוך] = l. 27; l. 50: זי אסרחאדן זנה מלכא); Esarhaddon is similarly named אסרחאדן מלך אתור (ll. 10, 11, 20, 32). Aḥiqar's title is יעט אתור וצבית עזקתה, "counsellor of Assyria and its seal holder" (ll. 2–3); [ס]פרא חכימא יעט אתור כלה, "wise scribe, counsellor of all Assyria" ספרא חכימא ובעל עטמא טבתא זי גבר [צדיק הוה ו]על עטתה (l. 12, cf. ll. 18–19, 35–36); ומלוהי הות אתור כלא, "wise scribe and good counsellor, who [was a just man and] whose advice and decisions were relied upon by all Assyria" (ll. 42–43); אבוה זי אתור, כלה זי על עטתה סנחאריב מלכא וחיל אתור [כולה הון], the *praeceps* of all Assyria, on whose advice Sennacherib the king and all the Assyrian army were relying" (55–56; so also ll. 60–61). This predilection could be attributed to the stylistic habits of the official scribal chancellery, as witnessed by the Egyptian Aramaic contracts from Elephantine.

The following table offers the data for the account of the beginning of the building of the Second Temple (Ezra 3:1–4:5), a section from the Ezra Memoirs and some sections from the Book of Chronicles:[58]

unit	clauses	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
Ezra							
3:1–4:5	52	92	143	235	48	10	0.83
per clause		1.769	2.75	4.519	0.923	0.192	
10:1–17	69	86	89	175	58	15	0.751
per clause		1.246	1.29	2.536	0.841	0.217	
2 Chr.							
20:1–30[59]	69	94	62	156	63	11	0.726
per clause		1.362	0.899	2.261	0.913	0.159	
30:10–17	56	82	95	177	50	6	0.779
per clause		1.464	1.696	3.161	0.892	0.107	
32:1–8	35	40	27	67	31	6	0.684
per clause		1.143	0.771	1.914	0.886	0.171	
32:22–30	20	38	48	86	21	11	0.804
per clause		1.9	1.263	4.3	1.05	0.55	

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58. No formal selections were made from 1 Chronicles, for this book contains few narrative sections which are independent of the parallel books, apart from speeches and lists. We have checked 1 Chr. 12:39–13:5; 15:25–28. For these sections the data were: N = 122; V = 25; NV = 0.83; function nouns: 49; adjuncts: 73; clauses: 31; nounless: 3 (0.097); single: 6 (0.194); double: 10 (0.323); triple: 3 (0.097); היה: 2 (0.065); nom: 7 (0.226).

59. Including 20:1–5, 18–30.

	clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	quad	היה	nom
Ezra								
3:1–4:5	52	1	17	18	8	1	—	7
p in section		0.0192	0.327	0.346	0.154	0.0192		0.135
10:1–17	69	6	30	16	6	—	—	11
p in section		0.087	0.435	0.232	0.087			0.159
2 Chr.								
20:1–30	69	12	26	15	5	2	1	8
p in section		0.174	0.377	0.217	0.072	0.029	0.014	0.116
30:10–17	56	3	23	16	3	1	2	8
p in section		0.054	0.411	0.286	0.054	0.018	0.036	0.143
32:1–8	35	7	17	5	—	—	—	6
p in section		0.2	0.486	0.143				0.171
32:22–30	20	—	4	8	5	1	2	—
p in section			0.2	0.4	0.25	0.05	0.01	

4. *The Style of the Job Narrative and the Poetic Dialogues*

In view of these findings, it is important to note that the prose tale of Job tends to the verbal pole (NV = 0.633), although the style of the epilogue of the book is more nominal of character (42:7–17; NV = 0.691). Detailed analysis of the tale confirms the general picture:

1. Exposition 1 (1:1–3):
   Double id.: 1 cls; 1 V–4 N–1 P (3 adj)
   ויולדו לו שבעה בנים ושלש בנות
   nominal/היה: 4 cls; 4 V–20 N–(12 adj)
   איש היה בארץ עוץ
   והיה האיש ההוא תם וישר וירא אלהים וסר מרע
   ויהי מקנהו שבעת אלפי צאן ושלשת אלפי גמלים . . .
   ויהי האיש ההוא גדול מכל בני קדם
   verbless: 1 cls; 2 N
   איוב שמו

   Exposition 2 (1:4–5):
   Nounless: 4 cls–4 V
   וישלחו
   לאכל
   ויהי
   ויקדשם
   Single id.: 7 cls–7 V–10 N–1 P (2 adjuncts)
   והלכו בניו
   וקראו לשלשת אחיתיהם
   ולשתות עמהם
   הקיפו ימי המשתה
   וישלח איוב
   והשכים בבקר
   והעלה עלות מספר כלם
   Double id.: 2 cls–2 V–3 N
   אולי חטאו בני
   וברכו אלהים בלבבם
   Triple id.: 2 cls–2 V–7 N (2 adjuncts)
   ועשו משתה בית איש יומו
   ככה יעשה איוב כל הימים

Complication 1 (1:6–12)
Nounless: 2 cls–2 V

 ויאמר (twice)

Single id.: 9 cls–9 V–9 N–3 P (2 adj)

 ויבאו בני האלהים
 להתיצב על ה׳
 מאין תבא
 משוט בארץ
 ומהתהלך בה
 מעשה ידיו ברכת
 שלח־נא ידך
 וגע בכל אשר לו
 על פניך יברכך

Double id.: 11 cls–11 V–23 N–3 P (2 adj)

 ויבא גם השטן בתוכם
 ויאמר ה׳ אל השטן (thrice)
 ויען השטן את ה׳ (twice)
 השמת לבך על עבדי איוב
 אתה שכת בעדו ובעד ביתו ובעד כל אשר לו מסביב
 ומקנהו פרץ בארץ
 רק אליו אל תשלח ידך
 ויצא השטן מעם ה׳

Triple id.: 1 cls–1 V–3 N

 החנם ירא איוב אלהים

Nominal/היה: 1 cls–1 V–1 N

 ויהי היום

Verbless: 3 cls–11 N–1 P

 כי אין כמהו בארץ
 איש תם וישר ירא אלהים וסר מרע
 כל אשר לו בידך

Complication 2 (1:13–19)
Nounless

 ויאמר (four times)—7 cls–7 V
 ותקחם
 ותאכלם
 ויקחום

Single id.: 18 cls–18 V–13 N–10 P (5 adj)

 בניו ובנתיו אכלים
 הבקר היו חרשות
 ותפל שבא
 להגיד לך (four times)
 עוד זה מדבר וזה בא (thrice)
 ותבער בצאן ובנערים
 ויפשטו על הגמלים
 בניך ובנתיך אכלים
 ויגע בארבע פנות הבית
 ויפל על הנערים

Double id.: 13 cls–13 V–32 N–4 P (10 adj)

 ושתים יין בבית אחיהם הבכור (twice)
 ומלאך בא אל איוב
 והאתנות רעות על ידיהם
 ואת הנערים הכו לפי חרב (twice)
 ואמלטה רק אני לבדי (four times)
 אש אלהים נפלה מן השמים
 כשדים שמו שלשה ראשים ואשים
 רוח גדולה באה מעבר המדבר

Triple id.: 0

Nominal/היה; 1 cls–1 V–1 N

ויהי היום

Crisis 1 (1:20–22)

Nounless: 2 cls–2 V

וישתחו

ויאמר

Single id.: 6 cls–6 V–6 N

ויקם איוב ויקרע את מעילו ויגז את ראשו ויפל ארצה

ה׳ נתן וה׳ לקח

Double id.: 4 cls–4 V–8 N–2 P (2 adj)

ערום יצתי מבטן אמי וערם אשוב שמה

בכל זאת לא חטא איוב

ולא נתן תפלה לאלהים

Triple id.: 0

Nominal/היה; 1 cls–1 V–3 N

יהי שם ה׳ מברך

Complication 3 (2:1–7)

Nounless: 2 cls–2 V

ויאמר (twice)

Single id.: 9 cls–9 V–9 N–3 P (2 adj)

ויבאו בני האלהים

להתיצב על ה׳ (twice)

אי מזה תבא

משוט בארץ

ומהתהלך בה

ותסיתני בו לבלעו חנם

שלח־נא ידך

וגע אל עצמו ואל בשרו

על פניך יברכך

אך את נפשו שמר

Double id.: 11 cls; 11 V–22 N–2 P (2 adj)

ויבא גם השטן בתוכם

ויאמר ה׳ אל השטן (thrice)

ויען השטן את ה׳ (twice)

השמת לבך על עבדי איוב

ועודנו מחזיק בתמתו

וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו

רק אליו אל תשלח ידך

ויצא השטן מאת פני ה׳

Triple id.: 1 cls; 1 V–6 N (3 adj)

ויך את איוב בשחין רע מכף רגלו ועד קדקדו

Nominal/היה: 1 cls–1 V–1 N

ויהי היום

Verbless: 5 cls; 13 N

כי אין כמהו בארץ

איש תם וישר ירא אלהים וסר מרע

עור בעד עור[60]

אשר לאיש

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60. The phrase עור בעד עור (2:4) echoes the phrase ועדנו מחזיק בתמתו (2:3) in two ways: (a) בעד matches the consonants of ועודנו; (b) עור matches the vocal (assonance). This truly *is* the answer to the divine thesis.

הנו בידך
ומת

Crisis 2 (2:8–10):
Single id.: 5 cls; 5 V–4 N– 2 P (1 adj)
להתגרד בו
ברך אלהים
ויאמר אליה
כאחת הנבלות תדברי
ואת הרע לא נקבל
Double id.: 5 cls; 5 V–7 N–4 P (1 adj)
ויקח לו חרש
והוא ישב בתוך האפר
ותאמר לו האשה
עודך מחזיק בתמתך
גם את המוב נקבל מאת האלהים
Triple id.: 1 cls; 1 V–3 N–1 P (1 adj)
בכל זאת לא חטא איוב בשפתיו

Crisis 3 (2:11–3:1)
Nounless: 5 cls; 5 V
לבוא
ולנחמו
ולא הכירהו
ויבכו
כיראו
Single id.: 5 cls; 5 V–4 N–1 P
וייעדו יחדו
לנוד לו
וישאו קולם
כי גדל הכאב מאד
ויקלל את יומו
Double id.: 5 cls; 5 V–19 N–1 P (10 adj)
וישמעו שלשת רעי איוב את כל הרעה הבאה עליו
ויבאו איש ממקמו, אליפו התימני ובלדד השוחי וצופר הנעמתי
וישאו את עיניהם מרחוק
ויקרעו איש את מעילו
ואין דבר אליו דבר
Triple id.: 3 cls; 3 V–10 N–2 P (3 adj)
ויזרקו עפר על ראשיהם השמימה
וישבו אתו לארץ שבעה ימים ושבעה לילות
אחרי כן פתח איוב את פיהו

unit	clauses	function-nouns	adjuncts	N	V	Part	NV
1:1–3	6	11	16	26	4	1	0.867
1:4–5	17	16	4	20	15	1	0.571
1:6–12	27	43	4	47	24	7	0.662
1:13–19	39	31	15	46	39	14	0.541
1:20–22	13	15	2	17	13	2	0.567
2:1–7	29	44	7	51	23	5	0.689
2:8–10	11	11	3	14	11	7	0.56
2:11–3:1	18	20	13	33	18	4	0.647
total	160	191	64	254	147	41	0.633
per clause		1.194	0.4	1.588	0.919	0.256	
42:7–17	35	49	65	114	34	18	0.77
per clause		1.4	1.857	3.257	0.971	0.514	

unit	clauses	nounless	single	double	triple	quad	היה	nom
1:1–3	6	—	—	1	—	—	4	1
1:4–5	17	4	7	2	2	—	—	—
1:6–12	27	2	9	11	1	—	1	3
1:13–19	39	7	18	13	—	—	1	—
1:20–22	13	2	6	4	—	—	1	—
2:1–7	29	2	9	11	1	—	1	5
2:8–10	11	—	5	5	1	—	—	—
2:11–3:1	18	5	5	5	3	—	—	—
total	160	22	59	52	8	—	7	9
p in section		0.138	0.369	0.325	0.05	—	0.044	0.056
42:7–17	35	1	6	17	9	—	1	1
p in section		0.029	0.171	0.486	0.257		0.029	0.029

Thus, the style of this tale is strongly verbal in most sections, even though some pericopes tend to the nominal pole (so even the section concerning Job's companions: 2:11–3:1;[61] balanced: 1:6–12; strongly nominal: 2:1–7; 42:7–17).[62] In this respect the prose tale of Job is far closer to the classical style than to that of the post-exilic period. This result is surprising, for the language of the tale shows unequivocally that it was composed in the Second Temple period.[63] The verbal tendency, then, is not in keeping with the stylistic preferences of the period.

On the other hand, the prose tale's verbal tendency is of a piece with the diction of most of the poetic sections in the Book of Job. In biblical poetry differences between the nominal and the verbal diction are not related to any period. In psalms and prophetic poetry both the nominal and the verbal style are frequent, though the latter is slightly predominant; both styles may occur in post-exilic (verbal: Psalm 119) as well as in pre-exilic poetry (nominal: Genesis 49). The Book of Proverbs tends to

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61. Hence the diction of this pericope differs significantly from that of the epilogue; against Hölscher, *Hiob*, 5; Fohrer, *Studien*, 36.

62. The strong difference between the style of the epilogue and that of the prologue should not be taken as an indication in favor of differences in origin (against Fohrer, *Studien*, 36–38). The crucial point is that the narrator is highlighting the blessings of Job. Therefore he fills the tale with junctions enumerating the three companions, his brothers and sisters, his sons and daughters, etc. The reconstruction according to which the note concerning Job's family (42:11) belonged originally to the prologue (Hölscher, *Hiob*, 5; Fohrer, *Studien*, 37), is not in keeping with the typical prosody of the prologue, for in this verse the nominal diction is quite outstanding (N 19; V 6; NV = 0.76). In fact, the components of the nominal style of the epilogue are quite different from those of other prose sections from this period, for single identification is almost non-extant, whereas double and triple identification is highly prominent. Verbless clauses (including attributive clauses) are rare (p = 0.029).

63. For the date of the prose tale of Job, see A. Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *HTR* 67 (1974), 17–34. His findings, opposed to but not refuted by Habel (*Job*, 40–41), are confirmed by some other characteristics of the post-exilic Hebrew prose style: the frequency of nominal forms of the verb (infinitive and participle) as against the finite forms is close to that of Chronicles (see Verheij, *Verbs and Numbers*, 38, 76–85), as well as to other post-exilic books, e.g., Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah 1–7; see the author's "New Means . . . New Ends," 290–94. The difference between the normal style of the period and the style of the prose tale of Job is highly significant from a statistical point of view; X^2 is 33.542 (p < 0.001, at 24.32; v = 7). Chances that this distribution is fortuitous are less than one in a thousand. For the tale of Ruth the NV ratio is 0.558 (nouns: 491, verbs: 389).

the nominal pole, but in chapters 1–9 the verbal diction is well represented.[64] The nominal tendency, then, is characteristic of traditional Ḥokmā.

The NV Ratio in Poetic Texts

unit	N	V	NV
2 Samuel 22	175	124	0.585
Psalms 9–17	450	275	0.62
Psalms 76–79	489	280	0.635
Psalm 89	212	101	0.677
Psalm 119	530	345	0.606
Psalm 137	38	20	0.655
Psalm 145	106	34	0.757
Proverbs 10–21	1788	677	0.725
Proverbs 1–9	993	536	0.649

The poetic speeches in the Book of Job for the most part tend strongly to the verbal pole, as shown by the following table.

The NV Ratio in the Peers' Speeches

unit	extent	p	N	V	NV
Eliphaz:					
chaps. 4–5	469	0.44	165	114	0.591
chap. 15	331	0.31	117	79	0.597
chap. 22	266	0.25	94	63	0.599
Sum total	1066		376	256	0.596
Bildad:					
chap. 8	204	0.458	75	42	0.641
chap. 18	185	0.416	74	39	0.655
chap. 25	56	0.126	20	10	0.667
Sum total	445		169	91	0.654
Zophar:					
chap. 11	194	0.425	65	50	0.565
chap. 20	263	0.575	101	68	0.598
Sum total	457		166	118	0.582

The homogeneity of the speeches of each of the peers is striking: the three Eliphaz speeches center on the ratio of 0.594 (the difference between maximum and minimum, d, being 0.005); in Bildad's speeches the arithmetic mean of the ratio is 0.654 (d = 0.017), and in Zophar's 0.585 (d = 0.33). Thus Bildad's discourse, though still to be characterized as verbal, is closest to the tranquillity of traditional Ḥokmā. Zophar is at once the most enticing (chap. 11) and the most violent (chap. 20), whereas Eliphaz seems the most consistent, composed, and assertive among Job's peers.[65]

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64. The verbal style prevails in Proverbs 1 (0.64/0.36), 4 (0.56/0.44) and 9 (0.56/0.44), as it is the case in chap. 28 (0.43/0.57). The nominal style is quite pronounced in chap. 5 (0.7/0.3) and 8 (0.697/0.303).

65. Although these differences are not significant from a statistical point of view, they do merit attention. My friend and colleague Yair Hoffman informs me that he has noted additional means of personal typification of Job's friends. Another factor to be taken into account for stylistic characterization and differentiation in Job is the distribution of pronouns ("power and solidarity") and conjunctions.

Job's discourse is characterized by its great variety;[66] a difference of no less than 0.171 sets the most verbal speech (chap. 23; NV = 0.494) apart from the most nominal one (chap. 26; NV = 0.685).

The NV Ratio in Job's Speeches

unit	extent	p	N	V	NV
Class a:					
chap. 3	248	0.095	83	64	0.565
chaps. 6–7	488	0.187	153	126	0.548
chaps. 9–10	527	0.202	146	143	0.505
chaps. 13–14	478	0.184	136	131	0.509
chap. 19	272	0.104	78	75	0.51
chap. 23	154	0.059	42	43	0.494
chaps. 27, 29	437	0.168	156	117	0.571
Total	2604		794	699	0.532
Class b:					
chap. 12	240	0.122	86	55	0.61
chaps. 16, 21	527	0.268	180	127	0.586
chaps. 17, 26	261	0.133	105	53	0.665
chap. 24	257	0.131	97	66	0.595
chaps. 30–31	681	0.346	253	156	0.619
Total	1966		721	457	0.612

On the whole one may distinguish between two classes. In one series of speeches (chaps. 3; 9–10; 13–14; 19; 23 and 27; 29) the verbal components are quite pronounced (NV 0.532; d = 0.077), whereas the nominal components seem weak. These are the more energetic speeches, the outstanding ones of which are found in chaps. 9–10 and chap. 23. In fact, the first speeches are characterized by a certain *crescendo*. The opening complaint, in which Job bewails his fate (chap. 3, e.g., vv. 3–13, 16–26), is followed by the *riposti* to his peers, in which he not only lashes out at their dogmatic attitude and lack of sensitivity (e.g., 6:21–30; 9:1), but also challenges divine justice (6:8–10; 7:7–21, and in particular 9:14–34). In the speeches of the second type more prominence is given to the nouns (mean 0.612; d = 0.079; slightly higher than the mean of the speeches by Eliphaz and Zophar). The mood in these pericopes seems more composed (chap. 21); some of them satirize the wisdom style (chaps. 12; 16–17; 26), and some offer more elaborate descriptions (chap. 24) and arguments (chaps. 30–31). Of course, in both classes the diction is on the whole strongly verbal; the highest value for the NV rate is 0.665.

In the remaining pericopes the findings vary. In the Elihu speeches one notes a slight divergence between the verbal style in chaps. 32–35 (in the very short chap. 35 the NV rate = 0.53, and in chap. 32 = 0.566), and the slightly more nominal tendency in chaps. 36–37. In the section of the divine answer from the storm the style is mostly verbal. In chaps. 38–39 the NV ratio is not unlike that of class (b) of the speeches of Job (cf. chaps. 12; 30–31), but the verbal tendency is more pronounced in chap. 40

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66. Here too the difference is not statistically significant.

(especially in the first part of the chapter, vv. 1–14: NV = 0.516). The nominal style stands out in chap. 41 (as well as in 40:15–32; NV = 0.674).[67]

Remaining Units in the Book of Job

unit	extent	p	noun	verb	NV
chap. 28	268		112	52	0.683
Elihu					
chaps. 33–34	676	0.556	232	163	0.587
chaps. 36–37	539	0.444	205	124	0.623
Sum total	1215		437	287	0.604
Divine Answer:					
chaps. 38–39	659	0.577	249	155	0.616
chap. 40	269	0.236	99	68	0.593
chap. 41	214	0.187	98	46	0.68
Sum total	1142		446	269	0.624

In short, almost all sections of the poetic speeches are dominated by the verbal style. The verbal style of the prologue, then, is in keeping with the diction of the poetic sections. It therefore appears that the poetic language of the speeches has influenced the style of the prose narrative. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the verbal style also stands out in the prose account of Zechariah's visions (Zechariah 1–7; NV ratio 0.615), the style of which is, of course, influenced by the poetic tradition of prophecy (cf. Zechariah 8). Thus, the remarkable preference for the verbal style sets the Job tale apart from the style of the period, and links it with the poetic sections of the book.

5. *Formulaic Language*

The narrative section and the speeches hold one phrase in common. The formula ויען ויאמר, "he began to speak and said," which is used for the stereotypic introductions of the speeches,[68] occurs four times in the prose tale, always in the clause ויען השטן את ה׳ ויאמר, "The *śaṭan* answered God and said" (Job 1:7, 9; 2:2, 4) and always indicating the answer to a divine question.[69] This structure may also be found in the

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67. Some of these data could inform the discussion regarding the composition of these speeches, if used with due care. For example, the difference between the descriptions of Leviathan and Behemoth (40:15–41:26) and the first discourse (chaps. 38–39) is striking, and might strengthen the argument that only the latter is part of the original main corpus. Hoffman suggests that the opening sections of the second divine answer (40:7–14) with its strongly developed moral sense, as distinct from the cosmological argument of the other speeches, could be related to the Elihu speeches: *Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Context* (Sheffield, 1996), 297–98. This proposal could be considered to fit the data concerning the NV ratio even though the diction of these speeches is less verbal than that of 40:7–14.

68. Cycle 1: 3:2; 4:1; 6:1; 8:1; 9:1; 11:1; 12:1; cycle 2: 15:1; 16:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1; cycle 3: 22:1; 23:1; 25:1; 26:1; Elihu speeches: 32:6; 34:1; 35:1. Deviating openings are limited to the sections following cycle 3: ויסף איוב שאת משלו ויאמר, 27:1; 29:1): ויסף אליהוא ויאמר (36:1).

69. On the remarkable frequency of this phrase in the Job tale, see S. A. Meier, *Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible*, VTS 46 (Leiden, 1992), 179, 178, n. 5. In his opinion, this is a matter of Aramaic influence. The Aramaic Sarmuge tale, in which this phrase is quite frequent, is characterized by repetitive "compositional themes" and a highly formulaic diction, which has influenced

dialogue between God and Job. The divine answers from the storm open with the
clause ויען ה׳ את איוב מן הסערה ויאמר, "So the Lord answered Job out of the storm
and said" (38:1; 40:6), or with ויען ה׳ את איוב ויאמר "So the Lord answered Job and
said" (40:1), whereas Job's responses are introduced by the clause ויען איוב את ה׳ ויאמר,
"So Job answered the Lord and said" (40:3; 42:1). Usage of the extended formula is
restricted to the dialogue with the deity; in general the introductions of the speeches
do not mention the addressee. This correspondence, then, is a matter of system, a sys-
tem common to the narrative and the speeches.

The particular use of the phrase ויען ויאמר is the more significant, as it is but one
of a large class of traditional expressions, paralleled by fixed phrases in Ugaritic,[70]
Akkadian, and also Hittite poetry, as well as in Aramaic narrative,[71] e.g., וישא עיניו
וירא, "he lifted his eyes and saw"; וישא קולו ויקרא (with its variants וישא קולו וירם
קולו ויקרא ויבך), "he lifted his voice and cried"; ותהר ותלד, "she conceived and bore";
ויקח וילך/ויצא ללכת, "he took and went"/"he went out to go"; ויקח וישם, "he took and
placed"; ויקח ויתן, "he took and gave"; ויפל/ויקד וישתחו, "he fell/bowed and pros-
trated himself"; ויאכל וישת, "he ate and drank."

Generally speaking, phrases of this type are extremely frequent in the Abra-
ham and Jacob narratives, and fairly common in the Book of Samuel and the Elijah-
Elisha cycles (i.e., classical narrative). In contrast, post-exilic narrative (Chronicles,

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the Daniel tales of Daniel 2–6; see the author's "The Daniel Tales in their Aramaic Literary Milieu," in
A. S. van der Woude, ed., *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (Leuven, 1993), 249–65.
Hence this type of Aramaic narrative could also have influenced the diction of the Job tale. But this is no
reason to assume that the Book of Job has been translated from Aramaic, as suggested once again by
A. Lemaire, "Aramaic Literature and Hebrew Literature: Contact and Influences in the First Millennium
BCE," in M. Bar-Asher, ed., *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem, August
1985)*, Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic Languages (Jerusalem, 1988), 9–24, esp. 21–23.

70. Actually, in Ugaritic texts we find the form *wyᶜn* without any verbal complement, which could be
considered to match ויאמר. Nevertheless Cassuto's assumption that this is the equivalent of BH ויען ויאמר
has been shown to be correct, for this phrase is not only extremely frequent in the Egyptian Aramaic
Aḥiqar tale, but also in the Sarmuge narrative (see n. 69). Even more important is the fact that this formula
occurs in the Aḥiqar proverbs in an animal fable (l. 118, cf. ll. 119, 121): the view that these proverbs are
of ancient Aramaic provenance (Damascus) has been defended by U. Kottsieper, *Die Sprache der Aḥiq-
arsprüche* (Berlin-New York, 1990), 244–46. In Akkadian epic poetry we meet the phrase *apālu—āwata
zakārum* (Zu epic: *CT* 15, 40:8f.; cf. 39:43f.; A. F. Rainey, *El Amarna Tablets 359–379*, *AOAT* 8 (Neukirchen-
Vluyn, 1978), 12, rev.: 8 (*šar tamḥārim*). The evidence of the Sarmuge tale is highly significant, for it
contains many compositional themes, typical scenes in fixed formulaic language, as shown in the present
author's "Daniel Tales," 251–53.

71. U. M. D. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, trans. I. Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1975), 1:7–16; 2:16–
109; F. M. Cross, "The Epic Traditions of Ancient Israel: Epic Narrative and the Reconstruction of Early
Israelite Institutions," in R. E. Friedman, ed., *The Poet and the Historian* (Chico, CA, 1983), 13–39. See
also G. del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan segun la Tradicion de Ugarit* (Madrid, 1981), 36–37,
54–58. Cassuto's thesis has been further extended in computer aided stylo-statistical studies in the present
author's "Epic Formulas in Biblical Narrative: Frequency and Distribution," in *Les actes du second col-
loque international Bible et Informatique: méthodes, outils, résultats (Jerusalem 9–13 Juin 1988)* (Genève,
1989), 435–88; "Epic Formulas in Biblical Narrative and the Fountainheads of Ancient Hebrew Narra-
tive," *Teᶜuda* 7 (1992), 9–53 [Heb. with Eng. summary]. In these studies a formula is defined as a com-
posite phrase that is frequent in certain sections of the corpus (and not in one section only) and is not
confined to one contextual situation: indicating a simple action or idea, it is equivalent to a corresponding
simple expression (e.g., "to lift the eyes and to see" instead of "to see").

Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther) and exilic narrative (most parts of Kings) offer only few instances. Thus it is remarkable how rich the prose tale of Job is in formulaic language. Apart from the four instances of ענה־אמר "he answered"—"he said," one notes: אכל־שתה "he ate"—"he drank" (1:4, 13, 18); לקח־הלך "he took"—"he went" (42:18); נשא עינים "he lifted his eyes" (2:12); נשא קול־בכה "he lifted his voice"— "he cried" (2:12); ויפל ארצה וישתחו "he fell to the ground and prostrated himself" (1:20); לקח־נתן "he took"—"he gave" (1:21; actually the inverse variant: ה׳ נתן, ה׳ לקח).[72] The high incidence of formulaic language connects the diction of the Book of Job with that of classical narrative and sets it apart from post-exilic prose. This conclusion matches our findings concerning the NV ratio. How might one account for this result?

A possible answer is provided by Sarna's thesis that various features of the Job tale suggest an epic substratum, a suggestion also supported by Ezekiel's allusions, in which Job is mentioned together with Daniel and Noah (Ezek. 14:14, 20).[73] Hence one could venture the hypothesis that this substrate was the source of the epic formulae in our tale, as well as its strong predilection for verbal diction and remarkable inclination to balanced coupling. This hypothesis is borne out by the parallels with the Egyptian Aramaic Sarmuge tale, with its strongly epic character.[74]

But this is hardly the only factor. First, some features of the Job tale suggest some influence of patriarchal narrative. Job's prayer on his friends' behalf is matched by Abraham's prayer for Abimelech (Gen. 20:7, 17).[75] The phrase used for introducing Job's three daughters is quite similar to the introduction of Leah and Rachel as well as to the introduction of Elkanah's two wives.[76]

Job 42:13–14	Gen. 29:16–17	1 Sam. 1:2
ויהי לו שבענה בנים ושלש בנות	וללבן שתי בנות	ולו שתי נשים
ויקרא שם האחת ימימה	שם הגדולה לאה	שם אחת חנה
ושם השנית קציעה	ושם הקטנה רחל	ושם השנית פננה
ושם השלישית קרן הפון	—	
ולא נמצא <u>נשים יפות</u> כבנות איוב	ועיני לאה רכות	
	ורחל היתה <u>יפת תאר ויפת מראה</u>	

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72. On the inverse variant of ויקה . . . ויתן, see J. C. Greenfield, "*Našû-nadānu* and its Congeners," in M. de Jong-Ellis, ed., *Essays on the Ancient Near East in Memory of J. J. Finkelstein* (Hamden, 1977), 87–91; and note Gen. 14:21; 23:13; 34:9, 16; 38:28; 48:22; Deut. 7:3; 1 Sam. 2:16; 10:4; 1 Kgs. 17:19.

73. Sarna, "Epic Substratum." The presence of real parallels with Ugaritic, e.g., the phrase ישב לארץ, is not surprising if the narrator is identical with the poet of the main corpus of the poetic speeches. The "patriarchal background" seems to be a matter of literary borrowing.

74. See n. 69, above. It is, however, to be admitted that some of Sarna's examples are matched by instances in post-exilic poetry, e.g., Qoh. 5:14 (יצא מבטן, Job 1:21); the opposition ראשית-אחרית (Isa. 46:10); the phrase שב שבות does not have a parallel in epic poetry.

75. The divine instructions to Job's friends (42:10) seem problematic, for the friends are represented as staying with Job. Actually the problem is less severe than it appears at first sight; before offering the sacrifice they have to procure the sacrificial animals, and then they must return to their friend. For the junction of שבעה פרים and שבעה אילים cf. Num. 23:2–3; 2 Sam. 6:13 (4QSamᵃ). The sequence of הלך, לקח and העלה עולה is particular to the Aqedah narrative (Gen. 22:2).

76. See also 1 Sam. 14:47 (Merab and Michal); Num. 11:26 (Medad and Eldad). The use of the ordinal numbers "first" and "second" instead of the characterization (so also 1 Sam. 14:47; similarly 8:2) resembles the opening of the Samuel book (so also Num. 11:26).

He had seven sons and three daughters, he called the one Yemima	Laban had two daughters The name of the eldest was Leah	He had two wives The name of the one was Hannah
and the second Qetzi'a	and of the youngest Rahel	and of the second Penina
and the third Keren Happukh and there were no women to be found as <u>beautiful</u> as Job's daughters	Leah's eyes, now, were dull, but Rahel was of <u>beautiful</u> figure and <u>beautiful</u> shape	

One notes two differences. Instead of the classical opposition of two daughters (or wives), coming to a head in the conflict between them, the Job tale speaks of three daughters,[77] all unequalled in their beauty. The latter motif is the counterpart of Rachel's beauty, which, however, is contrasted with Leah's lacklusterness. The way in which bitter conflict makes place for full harmony, demonstrates the narrator's dependence on the classical themes of the patriarchal narratives.

The second point is that some of Sarna's examples actually suit exilic and post-exilic biblical poetry.[78] The role of the śaṭan in the heavenly council matches the post-exilic prophetic vision on the trial of Jehoshua ben Jehosadak and his rehabilitation (Zech. 3:1–5). This reference is quite helpful to our study. The prophetic literature of the exilic/post-exilic period seems to adopt the formulaic diction of classical prose, as shown by the frequent adaptation of narrative formulae in Deutero-Isaiah[79] and Ezekiel.[80] In the visions of Zechariah (Zechariah 1–7) formulaic language highlights the function of the visionary[81] and of the angelic speaker.[82] Hence, in the tale of Job the use of these formulae is related not only to the classical pre-exilic prose tradition, but also, and especially so, to the poetic register of the exilic/post-exilic period.[83] Actually, it is the connection with poetic conventional language

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77. The use of the numbers three and seven is related to the combination of these two typological numbers in the seven-day pattern, as noted by S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Seven-Day-Unit in Ugaritic Epic Literature," *Comparative Studies in the Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literatures*, AOAT 204 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1980), 192–209.

78. E.g., Qoh 5:14 (יצא מבטן, Job 1:21); the opposition ראשית־אחרית (Isa. 46:10); the phrase שב שבות does not have a parallel in epic poetry.

79. נשא עינים וראה: Isa. 40:26; 49:18; 51:6; 60:4; cf. Ps. 121:1; לקח ושים: Isa. 46:7; ישאהו . . . יסבלהו: וישא קולו ויקרא (וינחהו free variations): Isa. 42:2, 11; 52:8 (cf. 24:14); 58:1 (השתחוה); free variations: Isa. 49:7, 49:23; 60:14. In pre-exilic prophecy note: Isa. 6:3; 7:14; 8:3 (cf. Ps. 77:15; Cant. 8:2); 14:10; 21:5, 9; 22:13; 26:18; Jer. 3:2; 13:20; 11:5; 22:15; Hos. 2:10–11; 13:10–11; Joel 2:19; Mic. 2:10; Hab. 2:2. In view of these data, one could ask why a late historian could not use these formulae in the same way these prophets did. The answer is that he could. But in that case we would still have to consider the qualitative differences between these narratives and recognizably late narratives. Moreover, one should account for the differences between the (more or less) uniform usage in presumed classical narrative and the large variegation in exilic-postexilic prophetic poetry. See also n. 83.

80. נשא עינים: Ezek. 8:5; ויקח ויתן: 4:1, 2, 9; 16:18, 19; 17:5, 22; 33:2; 37:19; וישא ויתן: 10:7; ויקח: וישם: 19:5 (cf. Hag. 2:23); ויקח וילך: Ezek. 3:14; 17:12 (cf. Zech. 6:10); וישא כנפים וירם: Ezek. 10:16 (cf. 11:22; *CTA* 10 II:10f.: *wtšu knph btlt ᶜnt* . . . *wtr bᶜp*); ויקח ויצא: 10:7; for ויען ויאמר see also Jer. 44:15.

81. ואשא עיני וארא: 2:1, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:1; cf. Dan. 8:3; 10:5; ויען ויאמר: 4:4, 11–12; 6:4 (cf. the priestly spokesmen, Hag. 2:12, 13).

82. ויען ויאמר: Zech. 1:10, 11, 12, 3:4; 4:5, 6; 6:5.

83. The way these formulae are used betrays a conscious literary effort. The formula ויען ויאמר is only used for śaṭan's answer to God's questions (1:7, 9; 2:2, 4). In the divine instructions to Job's friends the phrase והעליתם עולה בעדכם (42:10) is strange, for the friends are staying with Job; actually it is related to the Abraham narrative (Gen. 22:2). Job's prayer on his friends' behalf is matched by Abraham's prayer for Abimelech (Gen. 20:7, 17).

that explains the narrator's particular sensitivity to epic diction in general and in the patriarchal narratives in particular.

It must be admitted, however, that the formulaic register is not used in the poetic sections of Job. In this respect the distinction between prose and poetry is maintained. But this gap is bridged by the introduction to Job's first complaint (3:1):

אחרי כן פתח איוב את פיהו ויקלל את יומו / ויען איוב ויאמר.

> After that Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. / And Job began to speak and said.

This phrase is related to epic diction. It resembles the well-known Akkadian epic formula for the introduction of direct speech, e.g.:[84]

> *anu pīašu īpušamma, issaqar ana qurādi enlil*
>
> Anu "did" his mouth and spoke to hero Enlil.

The quotation of the Akkadian formula does not lack justification, for the Old Babylonian epic also preserves traces of the same formulaic tradition that is embodied in Ugaritic poetry and ancient biblical narrative. The Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh epic contains a hitherto unnoticed instance of the well-known formula "lift the eyes and see":[85]

> *iššîma īnīšu ītamar awīlam*
>
> He (i.e., Enkidu) lifted his eyes and saw the man.

By the same token the Akkadian formula for the opening of the mouth is the epic counterpart of the phrase in Job. In Tannaitic midrash this phrase serves as the introduction to speech (*Mekilta*, Bešallaḥ: Širta 1):[86]

> אלה ואלה פתחו פיהן ואמרו שירה לפני המקום
>
> Both parties alike opened their mouth and sang praise before God.

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84. Atram-ḫasīs I II 111–12 and passim; see K. Hecker, *Untersuchungen zur Akkadischen Epik*, *AOATS* 8 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1974), 174.

85. Gilg. Penn., *PBS* X, pl. LXV, rev. i:3–4. From a structural point of view it is closer to the BH formula than the Ugaritic formulae. That this formula was more widespread than it seems is shown by the corresponding expression in Hittite literature: *nu Ellalluš šakuwa karpta nuza TUR-an šakwiškizzi*, "And Enlil lifts the eyes and sees the 'small one',"; see H. G. Güterbock, "The Song of Ullikummi—Revised Text of the Hittite Version of a Hurrian Myth," *JCS* 5 (1951), 135–61; 6 (1952), 8–42; there: I iv:10–11 (p. 157).

86. Ed. Horovitz-Rabin, p. 121. The Aramaic counterpart of these formulae occurs in Tg. Ps.-Jon. Deut. 32:9: פתח מיכאל פומיה ואמר ארום חולק טב דשום מימרא דיי עמיה, פתח גבריאל פומיה בתושבחא ואמר דבית יעקב עדב אחסנתיה, "Michael opened his mouth, and said, 'lo, a good lot, for the name of the Lord is with it (i.e., with Israel); Gabriel opened his mouth in praise and said, 'for the house of Jacob is the share of His inheritance.'" This phrase also occurs in the *Targum šel Tosefta* on Exod. 14:30, according to A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (Leiden, 1959), 1:357; see also the piyyut republished by Joseph Heinemann as *Targum šel Tosefta* on Genesis 22 (פתח פומך וברוך אבא): "Śerīdīm mīṣīrātām šel hammeturgemānīm haqqedūmīm," *Hasifrut* 4 (1973), 362–75, at 367 (also 363 for the *Tosefta* on Exod. 14:30).

In biblical poetry the phrase "open the mouth" is not uncommon. Ezekiel uses it in conjunction with a free variation of the formula "lift the voice" (Ezek. 21:27):

לפתח פה ברצח להרים קול בתרועה

    To open the mouth ⟨in a shout⟩, to lift the voice in clamor.

Instead of ברצח, "murder," the Septuagint (ἐν βοῇ) reflects "shouting," i.e., בצרח, בצוחה, or something similar.[87] The phrase "open the mouth" may be used in the introduction to poetic speech (Ps. 49:2; Job 33:2). In negative clauses it parallels the root אלם, "dumb."[88] In prose this phrase occurs one other time, to indicate the break of silence (Dan. 10:16, after נאלמתי in v. 15), not unlike the way it is used in the introduction to Job's complaint. Hence this phrase belongs to the domain of poetry as well as to traditional formulaic language. As such it is eminently suited to its function in the Book of Job, welding together the poetic speeches and the prose tale.

    Moreover, the way in which the prose tale uses formulae has a clear poetic ring. We have already referred to lexical and syntactic congruity in the descriptions of the friends' reaction when they came to comfort Job (2:12):

וישאו עיניהם מרחוק ולא הכירהו / וישאו קולם ויבכו

    But they lifted their eyes from afar and could not recognize him / so they lifted their voices and wept.

The two cola of this verse contain two formulae, which occur only here in parallelism. Moreover, the formula "they lifted their eyes" is used without the main predicate "and they saw," not unlike the Aramaic phrase נטל עינא.[89] Actually, the position of the verb "see" is occupied by a related phrase ולא הכירהו, "they did not recognize him," representing a highly literary effort. Furthermore, the intervening adverb, "from afar," which separates the first part of the formula from the verb of perception so as to create two cola, parallels the poetic usage of the phrase, e.g. (Isa. 40:26):[90]

שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה

    Lift your eyes unto heaven and see who created these.

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87. Even though we cannot decide which of these roots was used and which form, the text reflected by the LXX is the original reading, as shown by Isa. 42:13, יריע אף יצריח (cf. v. 11).

88. Isa. 53:7; Ps. 38:14; 39:10; Prov. 31:8; cf. also Ps. 109:2 (following אל תחרש); and in general: Prov. 24:7; 31:9, 26 (Josh. 10:22; פי המערה). For transitive use of the phrase see Num. 22:28; Ezek. 3:27; 33:22. This phrase may also be used as an introduction to the act of swallowing: Ezek. 3:2; Num. 16:32; 26:10; Ps. 106:17. An alternative for this formula is פצה פה; for speaking: Judg. 11:35, 36; Isa. 10:14; Ps. 22:14; Job 35:16; Lam. 2:16; 3:46; for swallowing: Gen. 4:11; Num. 16:30; Deut. 11:6; Ezek. 2:8; for פתח שפתים see Job 11:5; 32:20; Ps. 51:17 (cf. with פצה: 66:14). Cf. Prov. 8:6.

89. נשא עינא: Aḥiqar 169; Dan. 4:31 and cf. Akkadian *niṭil īne*; in BH cf. Ezek. 8:5; Ps. 121:1. For the formula ענה ואמר in an animal fable see Aḥiqar 118.

90. So also Isa. 49:18; 60:4; Jer. 3:2; Deut. 3:27; 4:19, but contrast Jer. 13:20; see also Isa. 51:6; and S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse," *Comparative Studies*, 281–309, esp. 289, n. 16.

This construction constitutes a deviation from the narrative norm, in which the verb "see" always comes immediately after the phrase "lift the eyes," e.g., וישא יעקב עיניו וירא והנה עשו בא, "And Jacob lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, Esau was coming" (Gen. 33:1). Hence the Job tale follows the poetic variant of the common formula.

A special effect is achieved by the description of Job's mourning gestures (1:20):

ויקרע את מעילו ויגז את ראשו / ויפל ארצה וישתחו

He rent his robe, shore his head, / and throwing himself down on the earth prostrated himself.

This prostration could be viewed as a sign of despondency, as it is the case in Joshua's reaction at the defeat near Ai (Josh. 7:6).[91] The mourning description in Ezekiel's prophecy offers a similar sequence (Ezek. 27:30–31):

ויזעקו מרה ויעלו עפר על ראשיהם באפר יתפלשו והקריחו אליך קרחה וחגרו שקים

So they will cry bitterly, cast dust upon their heads, roll themselves in ashes,
and they will make themselves bold over you and gird them with sackcloths.

Of course יתפלשו is the normal expression, for which וישתחו of the Job tale is an artful, and highly significant variant, indicating as it does Job's unswerving loyalty to the divine sovereign and his authority (cf. v. 21). Such a use of this word is eminently suited to the sophisticated vocabulary of the poetic sections of the book. Thus, the use of formulaic language links up with other indications of the singular status of the prose tale of Job and its close relation to the poetic diction.

The conclusion seems justified that with respect to those parameters that are relevant for prose and poetry alike, the diction of the tale turns out to be rather close to the poetic style. The narrator of the Job tale is a highly sophisticated poet, whose prose truly resembles a dance. Some details suggest that the narrative was composed by the poet of the main corpus, e.g., the NV ratio of the speeches and the particularly formulaic language at the point of the transition from prose to poetry (3:1–2). This aspect of the problem cannot be pursued without a detailed examination of the fine texture of the speeches.[92] But that should be the subject of another study.

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91. So M. I. Gruber, *Aspects of Non-Verbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Rome, 1980), 94–124. See also the present author's "*Wyšthw*: Group Formulas in Biblical Prose and Poetry," in M. Fishbane et al., eds., *Shaᶜarei Talmon. Studies in the Bible, Qumran and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (Winona Lake, 1992), 81*–91* [Heb. with Eng. summary].

92. An innovative and thorough discussion of the stylistic overlap between the prose narrative and the first chapters of the poetic corpus has been offered by W. A. M. Beuken, "Job's Imprecation as the Cradle of a New Religious Discourse: The Perplexing Impact of the Semantic Correspondences between Job 3, Job 4–5 and Job 6–7," in idem, ed., *The Book of Job* (Leuven, 1994), 41–78. One of the central issues to be discussed is the relationship between the various occurrences of phrases such as ועדנו מחזיק בתמתו (2:3, as divine praise), עדך מחזיק בתמתך (2:9, the reproach of Job's wife), לא אסיר תמתי ממני (27:5, Job's remonstration of innocence). Is this a matter of contradictions or of word-play, point of view, and irony? New light may be shed on this problem by focusing on the forensic aspect of the poetic speeches in Job, for which see now E. L. Greenstein, "A Forensic Understanding of the Speech from the Whirlwind," in M. V. Fox et al., eds., *Texts, Temples and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (Winona Lake, 1996), 241–58.