

Should Parallelistic Structure Be Used as Evidence for an Early Dating of Biblical Hebrew Poetry?

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1. Introduction¹

The current scholarly debate on the origins of ancient Israel and the dating of different biblical sources centers largely on the distinction between the periods before and after the end of the Babylonian Exile (539 B.C.E.). For the so-called “minimalists,” the literature comprising the Hebrew Bible “was at least largely compiled into its present form, and at most almost entirely written . . . during the rule of the Persians and then the Hellenistic monarchies”² and has virtually no value for understanding the history of the entity or entities known as Israel before the Persian period.³ Their opponents, the so-called “maximalists,” contend that at least the books of the Primary History (Genesis–Kings) were composed shortly before or during the Babylonian Exile at the latest and that these books “reflect authentic, archaic Israelite traditions from the late monarchy, c. 922–586 B.C.E.”⁴ The question whether any biblical source

1. This article is based on the author’s MA thesis presented to the Faculty of Humanities of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in December 2005. The thesis was written under the supervision of Prof. Mordechai Cogan, to whom the author is grateful for his patient attention and guidance. The author is also indebted to the coeditor of *JANES*, Prof. Edward L. Greenstein, and to the anonymous readers of the *Journal*, from whose comments he has benefited. Needless to say, the responsibility for the arguments presented below rests solely with the present author. Translations of biblical and extra-biblical texts, unless noted otherwise, are mine.

2. P. R. Davies, *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’*, *JSOT Supp.* 148 (Sheffield, 1992), 24.

3. The existence of such entities as early as the late 13th century B.C.E. (as attested in the Merneptah Stele) and in the 9th century B.C.E. (when the term “Israel” in extra-biblical sources refers to the kingdom that included Palestine to the north of Judah and a part of Transjordan) is, of course, not doubted by the “minimalists.” What is doubted is the historical connection between these two entities and the entity described as “Israel” in the Hebrew Bible (see, e.g., *ibid.*, 60–74).

4. Z. Zevit, “Three Debates About the Bible and Archaeology,” *Biblica* 83 (2002), 17. To be sure, Zevit speaks of “most of the historical books from Joshua through Kings,” but other scholars who hold the “maximalist” position add the Pentateuch (or the different sources included therein) to the list of the biblical literature dating before the Babylonian Exile. Compare, e.g., Z. Kallai, “Biblical Historiography and Literary History: A Programmatic Survey,” *VT* 49 (1999), 346, who speaks of “an incisive literary boundary of composition and redaction that distinguishes the Earlier Prophets with the Pentateuch and the Later Prophets up to Jeremiah from the later writings as of Ezekiel. The exilic period is, therefore, a profound divide.” Those scholars who approach the question of dating the different books of the Hebrew Bible on linguistic grounds also distinguish between the pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods; cf., e.g., A. Hurvitz, “The Relevance of Biblical Hebrew Linguistics for the Historical Study of Ancient Israel,” in R. Margolin,

was composed before the period of the parallel existence of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah—i.e., before c. 922 B.C.E.—is hardly even asked. And yet, for most of the past century, the study of the Hebrew Bible and of ancient Israel was largely influenced by a theory which made an explicit claim of such an early date for the poetic fragments within the Primary History.

The theory in question is Early Hebrew Poetry (EHP), the foundations of which had been laid by William F. Albright in 1922, and which was further developed by Albright and his followers, most notably Frank M. Cross, Jr., and David N. Freedman, in the decades following the discovery of Ugaritic poetry.⁵ This theory holds that the poetic fragments found within the books of the Primary History—the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:1–27), the Song at the Sea (Exod. 15:1–18), the Oracles of Balaam (Num. 23:7–10, 18–24; 24:3–9, 15–24), the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1–43), the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 33), the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5), the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1–10), David’s Lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:19–27), the Royal Thanksgiving Psalm (2 Sam. 22 = Ps. 18), and the Last Words of David (2 Sam. 23:1–7)⁶—were composed in the period between the appearance of an Israelite population in Canaan in the late 13th century B.C.E. and the breakup of the United Monarchy of David and Solomon in the late 10th century B.C.E. Hence, if the EHP theory is correct, these poems can be utilized as primary textual evidence for the formative period of ancient Israelite history.

The EHP theory, as developed by Albright and his followers, rests on considerations from different fields, but most importantly on stylistic and linguistic criteria—that is, on the supposedly ancient features of Canaanite poetic style and Hebrew language evidenced by the poems that were included in the category of EHP. And recently, the EHP theory was brought to bear on the current debate about the origins of ancient Israel and of biblical literature by Terry Fenton in an article presented

ed., *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Division A: The Bible and Its World* (Jerusalem, 1999), 32*: “Though linguistically we are unable to tell apart the B[iblical] H[ebrew] of the ninth century from that of the seventh, we are certainly in a position to distinguish between the two—both pre-exilic—and the language of the fifth century, which is unmistakably post-exilic” (and see *ibid.*, n. 39, where Hurvitz lists the Yahwistic and the Priestly sources of the Pentateuch as examples of pre-exilic Biblical Hebrew texts).

5. The study which laid foundations for the EHP theory is W. F. Albright, “The Earliest Forms of Hebrew Verse,” *JPOS* 2 (1922), 69–86. The latest and most detailed description of this theory was given by Albright in *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), 1–28. For a detailed discussion of most biblical poems included by Albright and his followers in the category of EHP, see F. M. Cross, Jr., and D. N. Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, *SBLDS* 21 (Missoula, Mont., 1975). The last work is a published version of a Ph.D. thesis written jointly under Albright at the Johns Hopkins University in 1950.

6. The list is given according to the final treatment of the EHP by Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 11–25. However, Cross and Freedman considered the psalm 2 Sam. 22 = Ps. 18 to have been composed not later than the 9th–8th centuries B.C.E., without opting explicitly for an earlier date (*Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, 125). In Albright’s view, several poems from the book of Psalms (e.g., Pss. 68, 78) also belonged to the corpus of EHP (Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 25–27). However, the main repository of EHP was, in the eyes of Albright and his followers, the Primary History—or, more precisely, the books from Genesis to Samuel.

before the Oxford Old Testament Seminar.⁷ Fenton's article is devoted exclusively to the criteria of poetic style, which have served as groundwork for the EHP theory, and therefore provides a convenient starting point for a discussion of the validity of these criteria. Yet, obviously, the following discussion will affect not only Fenton's presentation, but the stylistic aspect of the EHP theory as a whole.

Following Fenton, we shall limit our discussion to the issue of poetic parallelism, leaving aside the question of meter. Indeed, despite the various attempts to define the metrical system of biblical poetry, including those by Albright and his followers, the nature of this system (insofar as it existed at all) remains fundamentally unclear.⁸ And in the final analysis, no poem in the Hebrew Bible can be shown to comply fully with any given metrical pattern, even though the poetic material in the biblical canon does exhibit, on the whole, a greater degree of rhythmical regularity than the prose material.⁹ Hence, it would be difficult to use the criterion of meter in an attempt to determine the date of composition of any given poem.

Moreover, even though "parallelism is universally recognized as *the* characteristic feature of biblical Hebrew poetry,"¹⁰ the very concept of parallelism may be defined in different ways.¹¹ Fenton's discussion is based on the essentially semantic definition of parallelism by Robert Lowth (of Lowth's three categories of parallelism: synonymous, antithetic and synthetic, the first two are defined in plainly semantic terms, and the third is basically a catch-all definition for all those poetic lines which cannot be included in the first two categories).¹² This is well justified as a working definition, given the fact that the specific types of parallelism, claimed to be diagnostic of EHP, are basically defined in semantic terms, and wherever a formal criterion is employed (namely, word-for-word repetition), it is self-evident enough to be used without the mediation of a more general category.

Another note should be made concerning the view of biblical poetry as an outgrowth of an earlier Canaanite poetic tradition, exemplified by poetic works of the second millennium B.C.E. from Ugarit. The common scholarly categorization of the Ugaritic poetry as Canaanite has been upheld and justified by Fenton:

7. T. Fenton, "Hebrew Poetic Structure as a Basis for Dating," in J. Day, ed., *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar, JSOT Supp.* 406 (London, 2004), 386–409.

8. See the survey of different approaches to Biblical Hebrew metrics in D. R. Vance, *The Question of Meter in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Lewiston, N.Y., 2001), 41–222; and note especially the discussion and criticism by Vance of the metrical approaches adopted by Albright and his followers (*ibid.*, 163–65, 184–206).

9. See a detailed analysis of various poems from the Hebrew Bible, with biblical prose texts employed as controls (*ibid.*, 223–497).

10. W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques, JSOT Supp.* 26 (Sheffield, 1984), 114; italics preserved.

11. See A. Berlin, "Parallelism," *ABD* 5:155–62.

12. "There is a third species of parallelism, in which the sentences answer to each other, not by the iteration of the same image or sentiment, or of the opposition of their contraries, but merely by the form of construction. To this, which may be called the Synthetic or Constructive Parallelism, may be referred all such as do not come within the two former classes" (R. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* [1787; repr., Hildesheim, 1969], 2:48–49). For a general discussion of parallelism by Lowth, see *ibid.*, 2:34–53.

We take it for granted that Ugaritic poetry is Canaanite, whatever the ancient political use of this term and even though that poetry contains other elements. . . . It is also assumed that at its height Canaanite culture extended from the Taurus to the Sinai Peninsula and from the Mediterranean littoral to the Syrian desert. At present the ancient Canaanite poetic tradition is known, with trifling exceptions, only from Ugarit and the Hebrew Scriptures, but Ugarit fell in ruins, never to rise again, just before the dawn of the Hebrew poetic composition, if that was in the second half of the twelfth century. No Hebrew poet could ever have had contact with Ugarit itself—hence the need to refer to Canaanite poetry. . . . In fact the two literary corpora arose from common sources, themselves, no doubt, diversified to a degree, and went their separate ways.¹³

Phrased this way, there is little reason to disagree with Fenton’s statement, except to caution against mixing up the scholarly shorthand designation of Ugaritic poetry as “Canaanite” with the geopolitical meaning of the term “Canaan” in ancient times.¹⁴

It has to be noted, however, that since the lines of development of the older Canaanite stylistic norms after the destruction of Ugarit and outside the biblical canon are essentially unknown,¹⁵ compliance of a given poetic passage in the Hebrew Bible with these norms cannot be used, in and of itself, as evidence for an early date for that poetic passage. One must establish the distribution of the older Canaanite stylistic features inside the corpus of biblical poetry (especially in those poems which can be dated on other than stylistic grounds) *before* the implications of these features for dating a poem or a passage of an otherwise unknown date may be assessed. A failure to abide by this methodological principle will easily lead one to circular reasoning of the kind: “Feature X is ancient because it appears only in ancient poetry; poem Y is ancient because feature X appears in it.”

2. Climactic Parallelism

Of the specific kinds of parallelism, which Fenton described as characteristic of Canaanite (Ugaritic) and early biblical poetry, the first one is climactic or staircase parallelism. Fenton’s survey of earlier discussions of this category of parallelism reveals that both the definition of this category and the terminology used to describe it are somewhat fluid, changing from one scholar to another.¹⁶

13. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 387.

14. For a recent discussion of the latter problem, see O. Tammuz, “Canaan—a Land without Limits,” *UF* 33 (2001), 501–43.

15. Yet, an important exception is to be found in Pap. Amherst 63, recording a collection of Aramaic poems in the Egyptian demotic script (the Aramaic text of the papyrus has not yet been published in full; a full English translation has been published by R. C. Steiner, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *COS* 1.99:309–27). The poems recorded in this papyrus include some stylistic features, which were traced by Fenton, as well as by Albright and his followers, to the Ugaritic poetry, and which will be discussed below. Pap. Amherst 63 was found in Upper Egypt, in the vicinity of Thebes, and dates from the 4th or the 2nd century B.C.E. (G. T. M. Prinsloo, “Psalm 20 and Its Aramaic Parallel: A Reappraisal,” *JSem* 9 [1997], 51). The Aramaic poems recorded in the papyrus are evidently older than the papyrus itself, but it would be difficult to suppose that any of these poems was composed before the first millennium B.C.E. The text of Pap. Amherst 63 will be cited below according to the column numbers given by Steiner in his full English translation; other scholars number cols. IVA and IVB in Steiner’s system as cols. IV and V, respectively, and cols. V–XXII in Steiner’s system as cols. VI–XXIII.

16. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 387–89. For the history of scholarship on what is now understood as climactic parallelism, from the Middle Ages down to the 1960s, see S. E. Loewenstamm, “The

Yet the definition of climactic parallelism as parallelism exhibited by a poetic line of three cola, where the first two cola may be described by the formula a b c / a b d¹⁷—that is, with verbatim repetition of *at least* two words at the beginning of each colon—fits almost all the relevant examples from Ugaritic poetry.¹⁸ And if the norms of Ugaritic poetry are to be used as a standard against which the later developments of biblical poetry should be measured, such definition has every reason to be accepted.

Moreover, according to Fenton, the element “c” in formula a b c / a b d—that is, that part of the first colon which is not included in the repetitive formulation—is “either a deity or a person addressed or the subject of the sentence.”¹⁹ Yet, this criterion is somewhat problematic, as will be seen below.²⁰

Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse,” *JSS* 14 (1969), 176–79. The term “staircase parallelism” was coined by H. L. Ginsberg, “Ugaritic Studies and the Bible,” *BA* 8 (1945), 54. A thorough discussion of this category of parallelism has been provided by E. L. Greenstein, “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism in Canaanite Poetry and Their Psycholinguistic Background,” *JANES* 6 (1974), 96–105; idem, “One More Step on the Staircase,” *UF* 9 (1977), 77–86.

17. Here and below, the sigla “/” and “//” (not used by Fenton) signify the boundary between different cola within a poetic line and between different poetic lines, respectively.

18. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 389–90. For an almost complete list of Ugaritic examples, see Greenstein, “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism,” 105. To Greenstein’s examples one must add *KTU*² 1.17.I.9–11 (IID 1:10–12, in Greenstein’s notation) and *KTU*² 1.161.20–22 (from a text that was first published after the publication of Greenstein’s article). Note that it would be wrong to describe each letter in the formula a b c / a b d as corresponding to a single word. Consider, e.g., the following Ugaritic poetic line: *irš hym laqht ġzr / irš hym watnk / blmt wašlhk* (*KTU*² 1.17.VI.26–28) = “Ask life, O Aqhat the hero, / ask life, and I will give (it) to you, / immortality, and I will grant (it) to you” (cited in Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 390). Here, the element “c” of Fenton’s formula consists of the collocation *laqht ġzr* (in the vocative). Likewise, in Ps. 92:10 (ET 9): *kī hinnē(h) ’ōyēbēkā YHWH / kī-hinnē(h) ’ōyēbēkā yō’bēdū / yūpārēdū kol-pō’ālē ’āwen* = “For behold, your enemies, YHWH, / for behold, your enemies will perish, / will be dispersed all evildoers” (cited in Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 391), the element “a” in the first and the second cola consists of two words: *kī hinnē(h)*, which are only in the second colon connected by the *maqṣep*. Fenton argues that for the definition of climactic parallelism, “the significant units are those which constitute parallels or repetitions, irrespective of the number of words within them” (ibid., 388–89). However, in the above example from *KTU*² 1.17.VI.26–28 there is no word in the second or the third colon parallel (in the sense of synonymy) to the collocation *laqht ġzr* (except for the 2 m. sg. pronominal suffix -k, but this is not marked by Fenton as a separate “significant unit”). And in Ps. 92:10 (ET 9), the words *kī hinnē(h)* are repeated in the first and the second colon but have no parallel in the third colon, so that from Fenton’s definition it is unclear whether this collocation has to be counted as one “significant unit” or two. The point is that it does not matter: in the formula a b c / a b d, the element “a b” must consist of *at least* two words, but possibly of more.

19. Ibid., 389.

20. This criterion originates with Greenstein, “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism,” 97. Yet, Greenstein defined only “the last word(s) of the first line [= colon]” as “either the grammatical subject N[oun] P[hrase] of the first two lines [= cola] or a vocative.” The difference between the formulations of Fenton and Greenstein becomes clear, once we consider a verse like Exod. 15:11: *mī-kāmōkā bā’ēlim YHWH / mī-kāmōkā ne’dār bāqōdeš / nōrā’ tēhillōt ’ōsē(h) pele’* = “Who is like you among the gods, O YHWH? / Who is like you, majestic in holiness / fearful in praises, doing wonders?” In Greenstein’s view, since the first colon ends in a vocative, *YHWH*, this poetic line should be classified as an example of climactic/staircase parallelism (and is listed so in ibid., 105). In Fenton’s view, since the first colon includes, beside the repetitive formulation and the vocative, also the adverbial phrase *bā’ēlim*, “among the gods,” it cannot be classified as an example of climactic parallelism from the grammatical viewpoint (and see below, n. 37).

Significantly, Fenton's use of the term "climactic parallelism" is more restricted than Albright's. Although Albright spoke of "an elaborate rhetorical structure of the climactic or repetitive type" corresponding basically to the formula "abc | abd (or bcd) | aef (or efg, etc.),"²¹ he stretched the definition to include as well poetic lines answering to the formulae a b c / a d e / a f g, a b c / d e f / f g h, a b / a c, a b / c d // c d / e f, a b c / a d e, etc.²² Thus, in effect, any repetition of one word or more in subsequent cola (not necessarily belonging to one parallelistic poetic line) was sufficient for Albright to list the relevant case among the "exceedingly elaborate examples of repetitive or climactic parallelism."²³ This, of course, turned climactic parallelism into such a broad phenomenon that it would be possible to recognize its existence and relatively wide distribution in biblical poetic compositions dating from the 6th century B.C.E. and later, such as the prophecy of Jeremiah against Babylon (Jer. 50–51; see vv. 50:36, 51:7, 21–23, 26, 29, 43, 46, 49) or the opening poem of the book of Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 1:2–8).²⁴

In any event, one must agree with Fenton that introducing a considerable measure of variation into the definition of climactic parallelism—to the degree that the only thing in common between the various poetic lines grouped under this category would be "some form of repetition, often of one word"—would "push the scope of 'variation' beyond the bounds of the meaningful."²⁵

On the other hand, returning to the definition espoused by Fenton: a poetic line of three cola, where the first two cola may be described by the formula a b c / a b d, it is easy to see that under this definition, the phenomenon of climactic parallelism becomes remarkably rare in biblical poetry. Of the examples mentioned by Fenton, only three: Pss. 77:17 (ET 16), 92:10 (ET 9), 93:3,²⁶ answer to this definition. And in Fenton's own view, Pss. 77 and 92 are not compositions of an early date, the relevant poetic lines having been borrowed by the composers of these psalms from earlier sources (although Fenton brings no evidence whatsoever concerning the dates of these psalms).²⁷

21. W. F. Albright, "The Psalm of Habakkuk," in H. H. Rowley, ed., *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson* (Edinburgh, 1950), 3.

22. *Ibid.*, 4–8.

23. *Ibid.*, 4.

24. This delimitation of the opening poem of Ecclesiastes follows G. A. Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes*, ICC (Edinburgh, 1912), 69. Some scholars define the whole section Eccl. 1:2–11 as poetic (thus, e.g., J. L. Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes, Book of," *ABD* 2:273). Fenton delimited the opening poetic section to Eccl. 1:4–9 (Fenton, "Hebrew Poetic Structure," 397, n. 11). Yet, however the opening poem of Ecclesiastes is delimited, its use of word repetition in successive poetic cola is easily recognizable.

25. *Ibid.*, 397. One has to note that among Albright's followers, Cross has adopted the definition of the climactic parallelism essentially the same as the one espoused by Fenton (F. M. Cross, Jr., *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* [Baltimore, 1998], 142).

26. Fenton, "Hebrew Poetic Structure," 391–93.

27. "In Psalm 93 we have a concentration of original ancient material in its pristine context. The 'staircases' in Psalms 92 and 77 were insertions" (*ibid.*, 393). The claim of an early date for Ps. 93 forced Fenton to dissociate Ps. 93:5: 'ēdōtēkā ne'emmū mē'ōd / lēbētēkā na'āwā-qōdeš / YHWH lē'ōrek yāmīm = "Your laws are firmly established, / holiness befits your house, / O YHWH, forever," from the rest of the psalm and to hypothesize that this verse is a later addition to the original text, because the plural 'ēdōt = "laws,"

In a number of other cases, Fenton ventures to suggest that several poetic lines in the book of Psalms were originally cast in climactic parallelism, even though the Masoretic text of those poetic lines does not answer to the criteria of climactic parallelism. Illustrative of this category is Fenton's treatment of Ps. 29:1–2:

*hābū IYHWH bēnē 'ēlīm / hābū IYHWH kābôd wā'ōz / hābū IYHWH kēbôd šēmô / hištaḥwū
IYHWH bēhadērat-qōdeš*

Ascribe to YHWH, O divine beings, / ascribe to YHWH glory and strength, / ascribe to
YHWH the glory of his name, / bow down to YHWH in holy splendor.

Fenton suggests that originally, this poetic line consisted of three cola, and that the second and the third cola in the MT are variants of the second colon of the original poetic line.²⁸ Yet, there is no evidence whatsoever that would support this hypothesis of textual development. On the other hand, already the author of Ps. 96:7–9 evidently knew the poetic line of Ps. 29:1–2 in its present form and expanded it, replacing *bēnē 'ēlīm* = “divine beings” with *mišpēḥôt 'ammîm* = “families of nations.”²⁹

Moreover, examples of poetic lines bearing the essential characteristic of climactic parallelism (the formula a b c / a b d in the first two cola), but consisting of four cola rather than three, are known already in Ugaritic poetry.³⁰ Thus, there is

“commandments” is characteristic of the book of Deuteronomy, commonly thought to have been composed in the 7th century B.C.E., and of the later literature inspired by it (cf. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* [Oxford, 1972; repr., Winona Lake, Ind., 1992], 65). However, even if Fenton's claim—purely conjectural, as it stands—is to be rejected, it is not certain that the term *'ēdōtēkā* in v. 5 can automatically classify Ps. 93 as a late composition. On the one hand, this term may appear already in pre-Deuteronomistic sources, if Ps. 78 is indeed pre-Deuteronomistic (Weinfeld, 365, listed the use of *'ēdōt* in Ps. 78 among “deuteronomistic prototypes?” with the question mark in the original). On the other hand, although the plural *'ēdōt* (variant: *'ēdwōt*) is generally recognized as cognate with Old Aramaic (Sefire) *'dn*, *'dy*, *'dy'* and Akkadian (Neo-Assyrian) *adē*, “political treaty (originally of a suzerain vis-à-vis a vassal),” “loyalty oath” (see, e.g., H. Simian-Yofre, “עֲדָר,” *TDOT* 10:496–97), it is possible that the Hebrew term followed an independent line of development and was not borrowed from Akkadian or Aramaic diplomatic terminology of the 8th–7th centuries B.C.E.; see D. Talshir, “עֲדָרָה וְעֲדָרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ,” *ZAH* 15–16 (2002–3), 115–16, and the earlier literature cited there.

28. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 395.

29. As shown by H. L. Ginsberg, “A Strand in the Cord of Hebraic Hymnody,” *Eretz-Israel* 9 (1969), 47–48, Ps. 96 was likely one of the sources of Ps. 98, and both these psalms were the sources Isa. 42:10–17—a passage belonging to Deutero-Isaiah, composed in the late 6th century B.C.E. Hence, Ps. 96 dates probably to the period before the Babylonian Exile, and correspondingly, the poetic line of Ps. 29:1–2 must have had its present form already in the pre-exilic period.

30. *KTU*² 1.10.II.13–16: *wyšū 'nh aliyn b'l / wyšū 'nh wy'n / wy'n blt 'nt / n'mt bn aht b'l* = “Raises his eyes Baal the Mighty, / raises his eyes and sees, / sees Anat the Girl, / loveliest among Baal's sisters”; *KTU*² 1.10.II.26–29: *wišū 'nh blt 'nt / wišū 'nh wt'n / wt'n arḥ wtru blt / tru blt wtru bhl* = “Raises her eyes Anat the Girl, / raises her eyes and sees, / sees a cow and sets off going, / sets off going and sets off trembling (?)” (The verbal forms are rendered according to S. B. Parker, “Baal Fathers a Bull,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. idem [Atlanta, 1997], 184. G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, trans. W. G. E. Watson [Leiden, 2003], 389, s.v. *lh-ll*, 2, translate the last colon as: “she escaped running and she escaped skipping.”) In both cases, the fourth colon is an integral part of the statement made by the poetic line as a whole, and stands in synonymous parallelism with the concluding part of the third colon (in *KTU*² 1.10.II.26–29, part of the third colon is repeated in the fourth). It is not clear, therefore, why Fenton treated these two poetic lines as comprising three cola each: “*KTU*² 1.10.II.13–15 and 26–28” (“Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 390).

no justification for Fenton's assertion that the MT of Ps. 29:1–2 is not original. The same applies to Ps. 94:1–2 and 3–4, where Fenton suggests deleting one colon in each poetic line (*hāšēb gēmūl 'al-gē'im* = “bring retribution to the haughty” in v. 2, and *yabbī'ū yēdabbērū 'ātāq* = “they utter, they speak arrogantly” in v. 4) in order to bring these poetic lines to their supposedly original state of climactically parallelistic tricola.³¹

In any event, in the books of the Primary History—the main repository of EHP, according to the classical view of the Albright school—there are only three poetic lines consisting of three cola, the first two of which may be described by the formula a b c / a b d:

bēn pōrāt yōsēp / bēn pōrāt 'ālē-'āyin / bānōt šā'ādā 'ālē-šūr

A very fruitful tree is Joseph, / a very fruitful tree next to a waterspring, / (whose) branches are running over a wall (Gen. 49:22);³²

mī-kāmōkā bā'elim YHWH / mī kāmōkā ne'dār bāqqōdeš / nōrā' tēhillōt 'ōšē(h) pele'

Who is like you among the gods, O YHWH? / Who is like you, majestic in holiness, / awesome in glory, working wonders? (Exod. 15:11);³³

31. *Ibid.*, 394.

32. Translation based on the discussion of Sh. Morag, “*ūmit'ārē kē'ezrāh ra'anān* (Psalms 37:35),” *Studies in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem, 1995), 199–200 (Heb.). Some scholars suggest emending *bēn pōrāt* to *bēn pārat* = “son of a cow” or translating *bēn pōrāt* as “son of a wild ass,” emending *bānōt šā'ādā* to *bēnōt šā'ādā* = “wild asses,” and treating *šūr* as a toponym, which must refer to the wilderness lying between Canaan and Egypt, as in Gen. 20:1, Exod. 15:22, 1 Sam. 15:7, etc. (A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* [Leipzig, 1908], 1.250–51; S. Gevirtz, “Of Patriarchs and Puns: Joseph at the Fountain, Jacob at the Ford,” *HUCA* 46 [1975], 36–42). Yet, in the light of Morag's discussion, the difficulties presented by the MT do not appear substantial enough to warrant emendation (for explanation of the formal disagreement in number between the f. pl. noun *bānōt* and the 3 f. sg. verbal form *šā'ādā*, see *GKC* §145k; Joüon-Muraoka, §150g). The context of Gen. 49:1–27 (the Testament of Jacob) might favor a metaphor referring to animals, for metaphors of this kind are also used in vv. 9, 14, 17, 21, 27; but since animal metaphors are employed for fewer than half of Jacob's sons in the poem, this consideration is far from conclusive. In any event, there is no justification for such a far-reaching emendation of the vocalization and of the Masoretic partition of the text into verses as suggested by R. de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context* (Leiden, 1999), 184–94.

33. Chaim Cohen suggests the presence of a three-colon poetic line, cast in climactic parallelism, in Exod. 15:6–7a: *yēmīnēkā YHWH ne'dārī bakkōah / yēmīnēkā YHWH tir'as 'ōyēb / ūbērōb gē'ōnēkā tahārōs qāmēkā* = “Your right hand, O Lord, mighty in strength, / Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy, / And with your great majesty, you destroyed your attackers” (Ch. Cohen, “Studies in Early Israelite Poetry I: An Unrecognized Case of Three-Line Staircase Parallelism in the Song of the Sea,” *JANES* 7 [1975], 14). Yet, this suggestion not only violates the Masoretic partition of the text into verses, but also ignores the clear synonymous parallelism between the cola of v. 7: *ūbērōb gē'ōnēkā tahārōs qāmēkā / tēšallah hārōnēkā yō'klēmō kaqqaš* = “And with your great majesty you destroyed your attackers, / you sent forth your anger (and) it devoured them like stubble,” and the assonance between these two cola (*gē'ōnēkā / hārōnēkā*, plus the twofold repetition of the syllable *ka/kā* in each colon). These factors suggest that the cola Exod. 15:7a and 7b constitute a separate poetic line. On the other hand, the parallelism suggested by Cohen (*ibid.*, 16–17) between Exod. 15:7b and 8a: *tēšallah hārōnēkā yō'klēmō kaqqaš / ūbērūah 'appēkā ne'ermū mayīm* = “You sent forth your anger (and) it devoured them like stubble, / and by the wind of your nostrils the waters piled up,” is not at all evident: thematically, the first colon of v. 8 belongs clearly with the rest of the verse, which speaks of waters standing still “like a mound.” The fact that the common

šēlal šēbā‘im lēsisērā’ / šēlal šēbā‘im riqmā / šeba‘ riqmātayim lēšawwē’rē šālāl

A spoil of dyed stuff for Sisera, / a spoil of dyed stuff, embroidered, / two pieces of embroidered dyed stuff to the neck of a captive (?) (Judg. 5:30b).³⁴

If, in addition to the formal criterion (three cola, the first two of which may be described by the formula a b c / a b d), we use the grammatical criterion espoused by Fenton (that in the above formula, the element “c” has to be either a vocative or the grammatical subject of a sentence), of all the above examples only Gen. 49:22 will be left as a case of climactic parallelism.³⁵ Yet, since poetic lines answering to the formal but not to the grammatical criterion of climactic parallelism occur even in Ugaritic poetry,³⁶ it is perhaps possible to omit the grammatical criterion in the consideration of biblical poetry.

On the other hand, poetic lines answering to the definition of climactic parallelism—according to both the formal and the grammatical criteria mentioned above—occur also in poetic works dating to the 8th century B.C.E. and later. In fact, almost all these cases have been mentioned by Fenton, but under the category of “Various examples . . . diverging to a greater or lesser degree from the Ugaritic examples and

collocation *hārōn ‘ap*, “the anger of (one’s) nostrils” is broken up between two cola in vv. 7b–8a does not mean that these two cola belong to a single poetic line—cf. the collocation *‘ēl ‘elyōn*, “the God most high,” broken up (in reverse order) between two cola belonging clearly to different poetic lines in Ps. 78:17–18.

34. This appears to be the only possible translation of the MT as it stands, implying that the victorious Canaanites, in the opinion of Sisera’s mother, would capture pieces of fine cloth not as separate items of booty but worn on the necks of their young female Israelite captives (mentioned earlier in the verse). Admittedly, such interpretation is too conjectural to accept it with certitude, but the problem of interpretation (or emendation) of the phrase *lēšawwē’rē šālāl* has no bearing on the classification of Judg. 5:30b as an example of climactic parallelism. On the other hand, in Judg. 5:12: *‘ūrī ‘ūrī dēbōrā / ‘ūrī ‘ūrī dabbēri-šīr // qūm bārāq / ūšābē(h) šebyēkā ben-’ābīnō‘am* = “Awake, awake, O Deborah, / awake, awake, chant a song! // Arise, Barak / and take your captives, son of Abinoam!,” each half of the verse expresses a separate idea (urge to action addressed to Deborah and Barak, respectively) and consists of two clauses standing in synonymous parallelism with each other. Thus, it seems best to divide this verse in two poetic lines, each consisting of two parallel cola, rather than treat the second half of the verse as a single colon in a poetic line consisting of three cola.

35. As noted above (n. 20), under a slightly different definition of the grammatical criterion, Exod. 15:11 would also qualify as a case of climactic parallelism.

36. *KTU*² 1.100.70–72: *b‘dh bhtm mnt / b‘dh bhtm sgrt / b‘dh ‘dbt ilt // pth bt mnt / pth bt wuba / hkl wišql* = “Behind her, the house of incantation, / behind her, the house of incantation she has shut, / behind her, she has set the bronze (bolt). // Open the house of incantation, / open the house that I may enter, / the palace that I may come in” (translation according to D. Pardee, “Ugaritic Liturgy against Venomous Reptiles,” *COS* 1.94: 298). There is no justification for the suggestion of Yitzhak Avishur to understand *mnt* in this text as the name of a snake-goddess (Y. Avishur, “Addenda to the Expanded Colon in Ugaritic and Biblical Verse,” *UF* 4 [1972], 3; idem, *Phoenician Inscriptions and the Bible* [Tel Aviv, 2000], 239). The goddess Manāt is well known from the ancient Arab world, and she had cognates (some masculine!) in other civilizations of the ancient Near East (T. Fahd, “Manāt,” *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed. [ed. C. E. Bosworth et al.; Leiden, 1991], 6:373–74); but in no case does she have anything to do with snakes, and the phrase *mnt(y) ntk nḥš*, repeatedly appearing in the text *KTU*² 1.100 in invocations to various deities (lines 4, 9, 15, 20–21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46, 52, 58, 79), is best understood as “incantation (against) serpent bite” (see Pardee, “Ugaritic Liturgy against Venomous Reptiles,” *COS* 1.94: 295, n. 5). Thus, *bhtm mnt* and *bt mnt* are to be understood as construct chains, meaning “houses (dual) of incantation” and “house (sg.) of incantation,” respectively.

from those Hebrew examples which I have discussed, in their original forms. They cannot, it seems, increase our understanding of the developmental process.”³⁷ It will be argued below that these relatively late examples do not differ significantly from the examples occurring either in Ugaritic or in supposedly early Hebrew poetry.

The first example is Isa. 26:15:

yāsaptā laggôy YHWH / yāsaptā laggôy nikkādtā / riḥaqtā kol-qašwê-’āreš

Increase the nation, YHWH, / Increase the nation by which you are honored. / Fix far off all the bounds of the netherworld.³⁸

This verse belongs to the literary unit Isaiah 24–27, “The Isaiah Apocalypse,” which is generally thought to be a separate composition from the first part of the book of Isaiah (chs. 1–39). The proposed dates for the composition of the Isaiah Apocalypse range from the period of activity of the prophet Isaiah himself down to the Hasmonean era,³⁹ but nobody has ever suggested that the Apocalypse is earlier than the end of the 8th century B.C.E. Although one cannot deny, in principle, the possibility that Isa. 26:15 was taken by the author of the Isaiah Apocalypse from an earlier source, there is no evidence whatsoever to support such a suggestion,⁴⁰ and to put it forth only because of the occurrence of climactic parallelism in this verse would be nothing but circular reasoning.

It must be noted that in Isa. 26:15 no word in the third colon is synonymous, in and of itself, with any word in the second colon. This might have been a reason for Fenton to treat this verse differently from the Ugaritic and the supposedly early

37. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 396–97. Fenton includes in the same category the poetic line Exod. 15:11, evidently because it does not answer to the grammatical criterion of climactic parallelism as Fenton defined it (see above, n. 20).

38. Translation according to W. H. Irwin, “Syntax and Style in Isaiah 26,” *CBQ* 41 (1979), 249–50. Irwin’s understanding of the suffix-conjugation verbal forms in Isa. 26:14–15 as forms with precative meaning (cf. Joüon-Muraoka, §112k) solves the apparent contradiction between the positive atmosphere of these verses and their immediate context, which portrays Israel, though faithful to YHWH, in dire straits (vv. 13, 16–18). The understanding of the noun *’ereš* (*’āreš* in pause) as referring to the netherworld (cf. *HALOT*, 91a, s.v. עָרֶשׁ) provides a conceptual link between v. 15 and v. 14: “Dead, they will not revive, Shades, they will not rise; O that you would visit them with destruction and make all sign of them perish” (translation according to Irwin, “Syntax and Style in Isaiah 26,” 249). The “dead” mentioned in this verse are probably those “lords” beside YHWH who are told to have ruled over Israel in v. 13 (see H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 13–27: A Continental Commentary*, trans. T. H. Trapp [Minneapolis, 1997], 564). Thus, the plea for YHWH’s everlasting extermination of these dead in v. 14 is contrasted with the plea to bring increase to Israel in v. 15, and this increase is to be accompanied by distancing the bounds of the netherworld—so that the abode of the dead, who once ruled over Israel, will provide no threat to the faithful nation. The common translation of the third colon of Isa. 26:15 as “you have expanded all the borders of the land” (cf., e.g., *ibid.*, 551) is plagued, besides the problem of verbal mood (indicative vs. precative), by the difficulty of interpreting the verb *RHQ* in the *pi’el* stem as referring to territorial expansion—a usage not attested elsewhere (cf. *ibid.*, 554).

39. See W. R. Millar, “Isaiah 24–27 (Little Apocalypse),” *ABD* 3:488–89. Millar himself opts for the 6th century B.C.E., and this date—or perhaps a century later—seems to fit best both the content and the language of the Isaiah Apocalypse (see D. C. Polaski, *Authorizing an End: The Isaiah Apocalypse and Intertextuality* [Leiden, 2001], 58–61, and the earlier literature cited there).

40. Thematically, Isa. 26:15 may well be related to its immediate context (see above, n. 38).

Hebrew examples mentioned by him (although Fenton himself does not specify why he treated Isa. 26:15 differently). Consider, however, the following Ugaritic example:

tšū knp btlr ʿn[ʾ] / tšū knp wtr bʿp / tk aḥ šmk mlat rumm (KTU² 1.10.II.10–12)

Raises wings Anat the Girl, / raises wings and sets off flying, / to the grassland of SMK,
abounding in bulls.

Here no specific word in the third colon is synonymous with any word in the second colon, and the third colon itself is not even a self-standing clause but an adverbial phrase complementing the clause *wtr bʿp*, “and she sets off flying,” in the second colon. Still, there is no reason to discount this poetic line as a case of climactic parallelism;⁴¹ and the same applies to Isa. 26:15.

Another example of climactic parallelism in a relatively late poetic line from the Hebrew Bible is Prov. 31:4:

ʾal lamēlakīm lēmōʿēl / ʾal lamēlakīm šātō-yāyin / ūlērōzēnīm ʾē (Ketib: ʾw) šēkār

“Let there not be for kings, O Lemuel, / let there not be for kings drinking of wine / and for rulers of any (or: desire of) beer!”⁴²

This verse belongs to the literary unit Prov. 31:1–9, defined by its caption (v. 1) as “the words concerning Lemuel, king of Massa’, with which his mother instructed him.”⁴³ The use of the Aramaic noun *bar* “son” and of the Aramaizing masculine plural *mēlakîn* “kings” in this unit (vv. 2, 3) suggests that the unit as a whole is relatively

41. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 389, counted *KTU² 1.10.II.10–12* as a case of climactic parallelism in Ugaritic poetry, but claimed it to be an exception to the rule that poetic lines cast in climactic parallelism have a third colon, and noted that in this case “the text may be suspected.” Neither of Fenton’s reservations, however, is justified. The adverbial phrase *tk aḥ šmk mlat rumm* complements the preceding verbal clause and is not followed by any phrase that might stand in semantic parallelism to it. Hence, it is only natural to see this phrase as belonging to the same poetic line with the verbal clauses preceding it, and the length of this phrase necessitates seeing it as a separate colon. On the other hand, this poetic line presents no textual difficulty whatsoever.

42. A precise understanding of this verse is hampered by the textual variation between the Qere and the Ketib in the penultimate word. The word ʾē is normally used in Biblical Hebrew as the interrogative pronoun “where?” Applying such a meaning to this word here (in the Qere version) would result in understanding the last colon as a rhetorical question: “And for rulers, where is beer?”—meaning that drinking beer, as opposed to wine, does not befit persons of such a high status. However, such a reading would produce a certain tension between the prohibitive statement in the first two cola and a mere rhetorical question in the third. It appears more likely that the word ʾē (if it is indeed the original version) is used here as the adjective “any”; cognate words of this meaning are known in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Arabic and Ethiopic (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 133, s.v. *ay*). If, on the other hand, the original version is the Ketib ʾw, it can stand either for an ultra-defective spelling (without the final *mater lectionis*) of the infinitive absolute *ʾāwō or *ʾawwō, “to desire,” or for the noun ʾēw, “desire,” built in an Aramaizing pattern (see G. R. Driver, “Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” *Biblica* 32 [1951], 195).

43. Reading *melek maššāʾ* as a construct chain, against the Masoretic punctuation but in accordance with the absence of the definite article in the word *melek*, which should be present here if the word were *nomen regens* in a construct chain (cf. Joüon-Muraoka, §131k). Since the “words” of this literary unit are ascribed to Lemuel’s mother, the genitival relation in the construct chain *dibrē lēmōʿēl* is to be understood as an objective genitive: “the words concerning Lemuel” (cf. Joüon-Muraoka, §129e).

late.⁴⁴ After all, the most plausible historical background for Aramaic linguistic influence on Hebrew is the use of the Aramaic language as a vehicle of diplomatic and administrative communication under the auspices of the empires which controlled the ancient Near East from the second half of the 8th century B.C.E. onwards.⁴⁵ On the other hand, “the words concerning Lemuel” need not be postexilic, as suggested by some scholars.⁴⁶

Despite the textual uncertainty regarding the penultimate word in Prov. 31:4, it seems clear that the third colon of this verse stands in synonymous parallelism with

44. Albright considered Prov. 31:1–9 to be an archaic passage, dating probably from the 10th century B.C.E. or earlier (W. F. Albright, “The Biblical Tribe of Massa’ and Some Congeners,” in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* [Rome, 1956], 7–9). Yet, none of his arguments for such an early date holds. Duplication of the modal negative particle *’al* at the beginning of two successive cola (as in Prov. 31:4) is attested as late as the Deutero- (or Trito-)Isaiah (Isa. 64:8 [ET 9]), and so is the use of this particle to negate a nominal element (Isa. 62:6). Whether the Ketib *’w* in Prov. 31:4 reflects an ultra-defective spelling of the infinitive absolute **’āwō* or **’awwō*, and whether the original version is that of the Ketib or of the Qere, is unknown (see above, n. 42). Emphasis on the royal duty to execute justice (Prov. 31:8–9) is by no means characteristic only of second millennium sources, and appears in classical Hebrew prophets (e.g., Isa. 9:6, 11:1–10, 16:5, Jer. 22:15–16, 23:5–6, 33:15) as well as in the royal inscriptions of Mesopotamian rulers down to the Achaemenid and the Seleucid periods (see *CAD* K: 470a–471a, s.v. *kittu* A, 1b; *CAD* M/2: 117a–18b, s.v. *mīšaru* A, 2a–c). Using the climactic parallelism of Prov. 31:4 to argue for an early date of this poetic line is, once again, circular reasoning.

45. See H. Tadmor, “The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact,” in H. J. Nissen and J. Renger, eds., *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im Alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Berlin, 1982), 451–53, 459, for the use of Aramaic in diplomatic and administrative communication in the Neo-Assyrian empire starting in the 8th century B.C.E. The transition from the local Aramaic-like dialect to a more standard dialect of Aramaic (with a special affinity to the later Imperial Aramaic) in the inscriptions of Barrākib King of Sam’al (Zinjirli) at about 730 B.C.E. (*KAI* 215–21) was probably due to the influence of the Assyrian empire, of which Barrākib was a vassal (see J. Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli: neue edition und vergleichende Grammatik des phönizischen, Sam’alischen und aramäischen Textkorpus*, *ALASP* 6 [Münster, 1993], 299–300).

It should be noted that cuneiform and epigraphic sources locate the range of activity of the population of Massa’ between the region of Tema’ (northwestern Arabia) and southern Babylonia (I. Eph’al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, 9th–5th Centuries B.C.* [Jerusalem, 1984], 218–19). Thus, the homeland of this population must have lain in the very heart of the Arabian Peninsula, probably along the caravan route Tema’-Duma-Babylon or Yathrib-Ha’il-an-Najaf (cf. Eph’al, *The Ancient Arabs*, 14, 241). Hence, it would be difficult to suppose that some population in this region spoke an Aramaic-like dialect before the colonization project of Nabonidus in Tema’ in the 550s–540s B.C.E. (*pace* S. A. Kaufman, “The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof,” in M. Bar-Asher, ed., *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic* [Jerusalem, 1988], 54–56).

46. E.g., Y. Hoffman, “The Language of the Priestly Source and the Question of Its Date of Composition,” in M. A. Friedman and M. Gil, eds., *Te’udah—Studies in Judaica* (Tel Aviv, 1986), 17 and n. 16 (Heb.). Avi Hurvitz has rightly objected to Hoffman’s argument, noting that “it is legitimate to assume that certain compositions within biblical Wisdom Literature (Job, Proverbs) may have absorbed words and forms from Wisdom Literature whose language was *ancient* Aramaic. In other words, here again the existence of ‘Aramaisms’ is not in itself proof of lateness” (A. Hurvitz, “Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Problem of ‘Aramaisms’ in Linguistic Research on the Hebrew Bible,” in I. Young, ed., *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, *JSOT Supp.* 369 (London, 2003), 33, and n. 21; italics preserved). It is, however, most reasonable to assume that Hebrew authors became acquainted with Aramaic wisdom literature only after the Aramaic language gained the status of a vehicle of international communication under the auspices of the Neo-Assyrian empire in the 8th century B.C.E.

the second colon. And in any event, the words *rôzēnîm* “rulers” and *šēkār* “beer” in the third colon are synonymous with the words *mēlākîm* “kings” and *yāyin* “wine” in the second colon.

More examples of climactic parallelism in biblical poetry appear in the Song of Songs—a book which most scholars consider to have been composed in the post-exilic period (within the broad range of the 5th–2nd centuries B.C.E.), by virtue of its language.⁴⁷ Fenton accepts this dating, only to use the six-colon poetic line of Song 4:8 as an example of how a late author altered the ancient climactic-parallelistic structure without feeling restrained by the ancient norms.⁴⁸

Of course, such a claim is gratuitous, since poetic lines exhibiting the essential feature of climactic parallelism (the formula a b c / a b d in the first two cola), but consisting of more than three cola, appear already in Ugaritic poetry.⁴⁹ Likewise, Fenton’s suggestion that the author of Song 4:8 found the first three cola of this verse as an independent poetic line in some ancient source available to him lacks any evidence to support it. But more importantly, poetic lines answering to the strictest demands of climactic parallelism (three cola, with the first two answering to the formula a b c / a b d, the element “c” being either a vocative or the grammatical subject of a sentence) also occur in the Song of Songs:

ʾaḥat hîʾ yônāfî tammāfî / ʾaḥat hîʾ lēʾimmāh / bārā hîʾ lēyôladtāh

One is my dove, my perfect one, / one is she of her mother, / favored is she of the one who bore her (Song 6:9a);⁵⁰

šûbî šûbî haššûlammî / šûbî šûbî wēneḥzē-bāk / mah-teḥzû baššûlammî kimēḥôlat hammaḥănāyim

Return, return, O Shulammit, / return, return, and let us look at you! / Why would you look at the Shulammit as (in?) the dance of two companies (of dancers)? (Song 7:1 [ET 6:13])⁵¹

47. See most recently and in great detail F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Late Linguistic Features in the Song of Songs,” in A. C. Hagedorn, ed., *Perspectives on the Song of Songs*, BZAW 346 (Berlin, 2005), 27–77. The late linguistic features assembled by Dobbs-Allsopp are so numerous and so pervasive as to view the possibility that the Song of Songs was composed in the early postexilic period (the late 6th century B.C.E.) as unlikely.

48. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 396.

49. See above, n. 30.

50. Song 6:9b: *rāʾûhā bānôt wāyēʾaššērûhā / mēlākôt ûpîlagšîm wāyēḥalzēlûhā* “The daughters saw her and called her happy / queens and concubines—and they praised her,” turns to a topic somewhat different from that of the first part of the verse: from the uniqueness of the speaker’s beloved to her high repute in the eyes of other women. Of course, the two topics are interconnected, and the uniqueness of the speaker’s beloved stands in pronounced contrast to the large number of queens and concubines mentioned in Song 6:8. Still, since the synonymous parallelism is evident between the three cola of v. 9a and between the two cola of v. 9b, but not between these two groups of cola, the two parts of the verse are best defined as two different poetic lines.

51. The last word of the phrase *kimēḥôlat hammaḥănāyim* is often understood to refer to war camps (thus, e.g., W. F. Albright, “Archaic Survivals in the Text of Canticles,” in D. W. Thomas and W. D. McHardy, eds., *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver* [Oxford, 1963], 5; T. Longman III, *Song of Songs*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, Mich., 2001], 189). But the connection between dancing (**mēḥôlâ*) and military camps, and between these two and the beauty of a woman at whom some people want to gaze, appears somewhat difficult (notwithstanding the ingenious suggestion of Longman, *Song of Songs*, 193).

Theoretically it would be possible to argue that these poetic lines had been borrowed by the late composer of the Song of Songs from some earlier sources; but in the absence of any clear supportive evidence this would be nothing but circular reasoning.⁵² Given the fact that at least Song 6:9a appears in a context which displays a good number of late linguistic features (Song 6:4–10)⁵³ and is thematically well related to this context, such an argument would hardly merit credence.

It seems better to understand the term *maḥneh* (dual *maḥnāyim*) in this context as referring to a group of (female) dancers in some traditional dance with the fairest woman (the Shulammitte) dancing in between (with Y. Zakovitch, *Song of Songs, Miqra' Leyisra'el* [Jerusalem, 1992], 120 [Heb.]). Also, the correct version is perhaps *bimēḥolat*, “in the dance,” as in some medieval Masoretic manuscripts (see *BHS* ad loc.).

Despite the change of the speaker in the last colon compared to the first two (from some people speaking to the Shulammitte to someone—perhaps even the Shulammitte herself—answering them), all these cola are united by a common theme: the desire to gaze at the Shulammitte. This theme does not continue explicitly into the following verses (even though the description of a woman’s beauty in Song 7:2–6 [ET 1–5] is probably to be understood as an answer to the question, why would someone want to gaze at the Shulammitte?). Moreover, each colon of Song 7:1 (ET 6:13) employs a verb in the second person (*sābī*, imperative, fem. sg.; *teḥzū*, prefix-conjugation, m. pl. [or actually, c. pl.]), thus creating a dialogue which does not continue into the following verses. Hence, there appears to be enough justification for seeing the whole verse Song 7:1 (ET 6:13) as a single poetic line consisting of three cola.

52. Albright went perhaps farther than anyone else in suggesting that the Song of Songs contains “archaic material dating at the latest from the last centuries of the second millennium, and perhaps even older,” though he did not doubt that the final composition of the book took place relatively late, in the 5th–4th centuries B.C.E. (Albright, “Archaic Survivals in the Text of Canticles,” 7). Albright’s suggestion was based chiefly on stylistic and thematic elements common to the Song of Songs and Ugaritic poetry, even though he recognized that at least one of the thematic elements mentioned by him survived in Phoenician mythology long enough to be recognized by Hellenistic writers (see *ibid.*, 3–4; however, it should be mentioned that Albright’s idea of mythic-cultic elements in the Song of Songs is far from compelling to begin with—cf. M. Cogan, “Shulmanitu,” *DDD*, 776; Longman, *Song of Songs*, 44–46). In fact, it is not clear, whether the themes and the stylistic devices known from Ugaritic poetry reached the ancient Israelite and Judean society through Phoenician mediation; and given the meager amount of what is known about Phoenician poetry, a definite answer to this question cannot be expected. But given the fact that “[n]o Hebrew poet could ever have had contact with Ugarit itself” (Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 387), some mediation was obviously needed, and the Phoenician hypothesis is perhaps the most likely suggestion (cf. Y. Avishur, *The Repetition and the Parallelism in Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* [Tel Aviv, 2002], 60–61 [Heb.]). Then, however, nothing definite can be said about the length of the period, during which the relevant thematic and stylistic elements persisted in the Phoenician poetry itself. Moreover, as late as the postexilic period there were direct contacts between Phoenicians and the inhabitants of Judah—cf. the presence of Phoenician traders from Tyre in Jerusalem in the 430s B.C.E. (Neh. 13:16) and the inclusion of the city of Jaffa, on the northwestern fringe of Judah, in the territory of the kingdom of Sidon in roughly the same period (*KAI* 14:18–20). Thus, the hypothesis of Phoenician mediation can support neither an early date of Ugaritic-like elements in the Song of Songs, nor the idea of the origin of the book (or at least, large parts thereof) in the northern part of Palestine (*pace* Y. Avishur, “Stylistic Common Elements between Ugaritic Literature and Song of Songs,” *Beth Miqra' 19* [1974], 525 [Heb.], 600 [Eng. summary]).

53. The late features in this passage are: the exclusive use of the relative pronoun *še-* to introduce different kinds of subordinate clauses in vv. 5–6; the absence of concord in gender between f. pl. nouns and 3 m. pl. pronouns and verbal forms in vv. 5–6, 8–9; and such probably late lexical elements as the nouns *ra'yā* “beloved” in v. 4 and *šammā* “veil” in v. 7 (see Dobbs-Allsopp, “Late Linguistic Features,” 32–33, 46, 48). The mention of the city of Tirzah in Song 6:4 is not a clear index of early composition; see Zakovitch, *Song of Songs*, 112–13 [Heb.]; Dobbs-Allsopp, “Late Linguistic Features,” 72–73; M. V. Fox, *Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* [Madison, Wis., 1985], 151).

Moreover, the use of climactic parallelism in poetic works composed in Northwest Semitic languages in the first millennium B.C.E. was evidently not limited to the Hebrew Bible. Two examples of poetic lines coined in climactic parallelism, or at least resembling this type of parallelism very closely, appear in Papyrus Amherst 63, a collection of Aramaic poems (in demotic script), the composition of which should be dated broadly to the first millennium B.C.E.⁵⁴

The first example is Pap. Amherst 63, col. XII, lines 11–12:

m(y) b'lhñ b'dm Hr / m(y) b'lhñ bmlk' bl(?) mlk' / m(y) kk Hr b'lhñ⁵⁵

Who among gods, among men, Horus, / who among gods, among royalty, among non-royalty, / who is like you, Horus, among the gods?⁵⁶

The first colon of this poetic line includes, beside the repetitive formula *m(y) b'lhñ* and the vocative *Hr*, the adverbial phrase *b'dm* “among men as well.” Hence, this poetic line does not answer to the grammatical criterion of climactic parallelism as defined by Fenton—but then, neither do the poetic lines of Exod. 15:11 and Judg. 5:30, belonging to two poems which were considered by Albright and his followers as prime specimens of the EHP.⁵⁷

54. See above, n. 15.

55. The Northwest Semitic alphabetized transliteration is based on the demotic and Northwest Semitic transliteration of S. P. Vleeming and J. W. Wesseliuss, *Studies in Papyrus Amherst 63: Essays on the Aramaic Texts in Aramaic/Demotic Papyrus Amherst 63* (Amsterdam, 1985), 1.72, 111 with the following differences from their Northwest Semitic transliteration. First, the interrogative pronoun *mi* is transcribed *m(y)*, with the final *mater lectionis* in parentheses, because the demotic spelling *m₂' I* does not include *y* as *mater lectionis* (for a catalogue of the demotic signs employed by the papyrus and their transliteration, see *ibid.*, 113; for a discussion of spelling practices in the papyrus, see *ibid.*, 13–27). Second, the name of the deity invoked in this poetic line (demotic spelling *'hr G*) is transliterated as *Hr* (Horus) rather than *Yhw*, following C. F. Nims and R. C. Steiner, “A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2–6 from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *JAOS* 103 (1983), 265; Z. Zevit, “The Common Origin of the Aramaicized Prayer to Horus and of Psalm 20,” *JAOS* 110 (1990), 217–18, 220–22, and against Vleeming and Wesseliuss, *Studies in Papyrus Amherst 63*, 39–42 (for other proposals concerning the identification of this deity, see Prinsloo, “Psalm 20 and Its Aramaic Parallel,” 77–79). And third, the penultimate word in the second colon is transliterated *bl(?)*—assuming that the demotic spelling *b l I* does not record the original word-final Semitic *'* in the negation particle *lā'*. The final *'* in *lā'* may well have fallen out in the Aramaic dialect, in which the papyrus was recorded—cf. the demotic spelling *d₃ l* for the collocation *dī-lā'*, “who do not,” in col. X, lines 18–19 (Vleeming and Wesseliuss, *Studies in Papyrus Amherst 63*, 88). On the other hand, the suggestion of Vleeming and Wesseliuss, *ibid.*, 74 to read the demotic spelling *b l I* as the negation particle *bal*, known from Ugaritic and from the Canaanite branch of Northwest Semitic languages, is less convincing—not so much because of the absence of the particle *bal* from genuinely Aramaic vocabulary, but because other adverbial phrases in this poetic line open with the preposition *b-* “among,” which is also demanded by the context. In general, the hypothesis of Vleeming and Wesseliuss about the origin of the poems in Pap. Amherst 63, cols. XI–XII, in some Canaanite language, perhaps even Hebrew, has enough support from the vocabulary of these poems (see *ibid.*, 81–84); but there is nothing to suggest a link specifically with Ugaritic poetry or with any literary tradition of the second millennium B.C.E. (*pace ibid.*, 47).

56. Translation based on Steiner, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *COS* 1.99:318. However, Steiner’s translation leaves open the question whether the preposition “among” (*b-*) before “non-royalty” is to be read explicitly in the text or merely supplied in translation in parentheses, assuming an elliptic formulation in the Aramaic text—while in the view of the present author, the first of these options is preferable (see the preceding note).

57. On the other hand, both Pap. Amherst 63, col. XII, lines 11–12, and Exod. 15:11 answer to the grammatical criterion of climactic parallelism as defined by Greenstein (see above, n. 20).

The second example from Pap. Amherst 63 (belonging to the poem in col. VII, lines 7–19) has been published meanwhile only in translation:

Favor your loved ones, Mar, / favor your loved ones and Rash. / Favor your loved ones (and) Rash.⁵⁸

The translation is sufficient to note the existence of the formula *a b c / a b d* in the first two cola. However, the third colon appears to be an almost verbatim repetition of the second. While from the formal viewpoint there is nothing to disqualify a poetic line of this kind from being included in the category of climactic parallelism, as far as the content is concerned this may be judged too much repetition to count as *any* parallelism.⁵⁹

In any event, the biblical examples listed above (Isa. 26:15, Prov. 31:4, Song 6:9a, 7:1) demonstrate that even by the most rigorous definition of climactic parallelism, this stylistic pattern continued in use even in relatively late stages of the ancient Hebrew poetic tradition.

3. *Forked Parallelism*

Whereas the category of climactic parallelism had been employed by scholars (even if in varying definitions) long before Fenton, the credit for identifying another category of parallelism allegedly characteristic of Ugaritic and the earliest Hebrew poetry belongs to Fenton himself. This category is termed by Fenton “forked parallelism” and is defined as encompassing poetic lines of three cola, which consist “of a single-colon statement or command followed by two cola which explain, elaborate on or in some way continue the thought of the first and are parallel to each other. The first is, so to say, the ‘handle’ from which ‘fork out’ two parallel ‘prongs’.”⁶⁰ In Fenton’s words, this type of parallelism is “a structure which hardly survived the end of the Bronze Age.”⁶¹

From Fenton’s definition it is not clear, what kind of parallelism he refers to in describing the second and the third cola of a poetic line as “parallel” to each other. And since some scholars see the essence of *all* parallelism in that each colon of a parallelistic line continues the thought of the previous colon and elaborates on it,⁶² it would be possible, in principle, to define every poetic line of three cola as cast in forked parallelism.

However, perusal of the examples adduced by Fenton shows that in his understanding, the category of forked parallelism is reasonably restricted. Since Ugaritic poetry functions, for Fenton, as a kind of standard against which later developments

58. Steiner, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *COS* 1.99:314.

59. Compare Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 388: “Repetition and parallelism, however, are essentially opposed features . . . The essential feature of this structure [climactic parallelism], in my view, is that it combines repetition with parallelism.”

60. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 398.

61. *Ibid.*, 407.

62. Thus, in the by now classic formulation of James L. Kugel, parallelism is essentially expressed as “A, and what’s more, B” (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* [New Haven, 1981], 58, and see the discussion 51–58). Cf., however, the criticism of S. A. Geller, “Theory and Method in the Study of Biblical Poetry,” *JQR* 73 (1982–83), 73–77.

of biblical poetry should be measured, it is most reasonable to begin with Ugaritic examples of forked parallelism quoted by Fenton.⁶³

First of all, these examples reveal that the parallelism between the second and the third cola, of which Fenton speaks, is synonymous parallelism in Lowthian terms. Further, a closer consideration of some of Fenton's examples allows one to identify different kinds of semantic and syntactic relationships between the first colon and the second and the third cola of a poetic line included in the category of forked parallelism.⁶⁴

The first example to be noted is:

tbrk ilm tity / tity ilm lahlhm / dr il lmšknthm (KTU² 1.15.III.17–19)

Blessed the gods and proceeded, / proceeded the gods to their tents, / the generation of El to their dwellings.⁶⁵

This poetic line was mentioned by Greenstein among the “tricola of a type in which the first line expresses a summary statement, which the second and third lines

63. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 398–403.

64. One should note, however, that Fenton's analysis of some of his examples is problematic. Thus, the poetic line *aḥdy dymlk ʿI ilm / lymru ilm wnšm / dyšb[ʿ] hmlt arš (KTU² 1.4.VII.49–52)* is translated by Fenton as “I alone will rule over the gods, / that may grow fat gods and men / that may be full the multitudes of the Earth”—i.e., as a main clause followed by two purpose clauses (Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 398). However, there are no clear examples of purpose clauses in Ugaritic introduced by *d*. The only kind of clauses which *d* can introduce are relative clauses, with or without an explicit antecedent (see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 254–58, s.v. *d*, 2–3; casual clauses can be introduced by the compound conjunction *k d* [ibid., 258, s.v. *d*, 4]). Hence, the clauses introduced by *d* in the first and the third cola of *KTU² 1.4.VII.49–52* are best understood as relative clauses, substantivized and functioning as grammatical subjects in a nominal cleft sentence: “I alone am (the one) who rules over the gods . . . who satiates the multitudes of the earth” (for the syntactic analysis of this sentence, see J. Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik*, AOAT 273 [Münster, 2000], 856, §92.239; the verbal form *yšbʿ* should be parsed in the D-stem, “to satiate,” rather than in the G-stem, “to be satiated”). As for the second colon of *KTU² 1.4.VII.49–52*, it can be analyzed either as a final clause (in accord with Fenton's translation; this analysis has been suggested by E. Verreet, *Modi Ugaritici: Eine morpho-syntaktische Abhandlung über das Modalsystem im Ugaritischen*, OLA 27 [Leuven, 1988], 168–69) or as a relative clause, “who fattens gods and men.” The analysis of this colon as a relative clause, either with or without the emendation of *l* to *d*, has been specifically advocated by J. Tropper, “Finale Sätze und *yqṭla*—Modus im Ugaritischen,” *UF* 23 (1991), 345–46; idem, “Subjunktiv in Ugaritischen Relativsätzen?” *UF* 23 (1991), 354. Yet, although Tropper was right in criticizing Verreet's claim that the only non-energetic prefix-conjugation verbal form employed in subordinate clauses in Ugaritic poetry is *yaqṭla* (cf. also D. Pardee, Review of Verreet, *Modi Ugaritici*, *JNES* 52 [1993], 316–17), it is nevertheless possible that this form is used in purpose clauses, and therefore the analysis of the second colon of *KTU² 1.4.VII.49–52* as a purpose clause (with *ymru* being a 3 m. pl. form of what would be **ymra* in 3 m. sg.) cannot be precluded (cf. the translation of the verbal form *wymza* “that he might meet” [*KTU² 1.12.I.37*] by S. B. Parker, “The Wilderness,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* [ed. idem], 189, and the translation of the verbal form *thja* “that it may harm” [*KTU² 1.169.5*] by J. N. Ford, “The Ugaritic Incantation Against Sorcery RIH 78/20 (*KTU² 1.169*),” *UF* 34 [2002], 155, 172–74). If the second colon of *KTU² 1.4.VII.49–52* is analyzed as a purpose clause, then the whole poetic line must be translated: “I alone am (the one) who rules over the gods, / so that gods and men may grow fat, / (the one) who satiates the multitudes of the earth.” In this case, the syntactic similarity between the first and the third cola (relative clauses referring to Baal) may outweigh the semantic similarity between the second and the third cola (which speak of fattening and satiating, rather than of rulership).

65. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 398.

elaborate.”⁶⁶ Yet, as Fenton observes, Greenstein did not classify the poetic lines of this kind as a separate category of parallelism, nor did he mention any connections with Biblical Hebrew poetry.⁶⁷ Characteristic of the poetic line quoted above is that the first colon is a grammatically complete clause; so is also the second colon, which rehearses the message of the first with a further detail: in the first colon, the gods merely proceeded, in the second, they proceeded to their tents. The third colon is not a grammatically complete clause: it lacks a verb, which must be supplied by the reader from the preceding colon (*tity*); deletion of a verb in the second of two parallel cola is a common technique in both Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew poetry.⁶⁸ Semantically, the third colon stands in synonymous parallelism with the second colon, expressing essentially the same message in different words.

Another example of a similar nature is:

brkm ybrk [ʿbdh] / ybrk il krt [tʿ] / [ymr]m nʿm[n] ḡlm il (KTU² 1.15.II.18–20)

He lavishes blessings on his servant, / blesses El Kirta the Noble, / He grants benison to the pleasant servitor of El.⁶⁹

In this example, unlike the preceding one, the third colon is a grammatically complete clause.⁷⁰ Still, the structure remains: the first colon makes a statement, and the second and the third cola rehearse it with further specification.⁷¹

A different structure appears in the following example:

ap ʿnt ttlk wtšd / kl ḡr lkbd arš / kl ḡbʿ [lk]bd šdm (KTU² 1.5.VI.25–28)

Indeed, Anat went to and fro and scoured, / every mountain to the bowels of the Earth, / every hill to the depth of the fields.

66. Greenstein, “One More Step on the Staircase,” 79.

67. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 398.

68. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Greenstein, “Two Variations of Grammatical Parallelism,” 89–96.

69. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 399.

70. Of course, the verbal form *ymrm* (with enclitic *-m*) is restored, but the restoration seems certain based on the poetic line coming earlier in the same episode: *lbrk [krt] tʿ / ltmr nʿmn [ḡlm] il (KTU² 1.15.II.14–16)*.

71. A similar structure can be observed in: *ḡšk ʿyk ʿbšk / ʿmy pʿnk tšmn / ʿmy twḥ išk (KTU² 1.3.III.18–20)*. Fenton translated this poetic line as: “Stay your stave and your staff, / to me your feet let run, / to me let hasten your legs,” noting further that “The ‘stave’ and the ‘staff’ . . . are weapons, ‘club’ and ‘mace’ or the like, the addressee being enjoined to leave off fighting—and hasten to join the sender of the message in a peaceful venture” (Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 400). Such an explanation would fit the occurrence in *KTU² 1.3.III.18–20*, which quotes a message addressed by Baal to Anat—a goddess who is often presented in Ugaritic literature as belligerent. However, in *KTU² 1.1.III.10–11*, evidently the same message (although the text is much damaged) is addressed to Kothar-wa-Hasis, who is not known from Ugaritic literature to use weapons, although he produces a bow for the hero Aqhat (*KTU² 1.17.V*). Hence, the first colon of *KTU² 1.3.III.18–20* is likely to be translated as a series of infinitives with second person pronominal suffixes and imperative meaning: “Hasten! Hurry! Rush!” (P. Grelot, “On the Root עבך/עבך in Ancient Aramaic and in Ugaritic,” *JSS* 1 [1956], 203–5; Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik*, 492, §73.532). The second and the third cola, which are grammatically independent clauses, should then be understood as rehearsing the message of the first colon with further specification.

The above translation, given by Fenton,⁷² renders the nominal phrases in the second and the third cola as direct objects of the verbal form *tšd*, derived from the verb */š-d/*, which Fenton interprets as transitive, meaning “to scour, to traverse in search.” Such an interpretation is, of course, possible,⁷³ but it is not the only possible one. Compare the translation of the same poetic line by Smith:

Then Anat goes about hunting, / In every mountain in the heart of the earth, / In every hill [in the heart] of the fields.⁷⁴

In Smith’s understanding, the verb */š-d/* here means “to hunt” (used intransitively),⁷⁵ and the nominal phrases in the second and the third cola function as adverbial complements, specifying where the hunt took place.⁷⁶ In any event, a clause beginning in the first colon (*wtšd*) is continued in the following two cola, with either object or adverbial complements.

Turning to the Hebrew Bible, Fenton has classified under the category of forked parallelism the following poetic lines: Gen. 49:3, 4, 8, 27; Exod. 15:8; Judg. 5:3; Deut. 33:5, 13, 26; 2 Sam. 1:22, 24—all in the corpus of poetic compositions defined by Albright and his followers as EHP. To be sure, the classification of some of these poetic lines as cast in forked parallelism is open to objection.⁷⁷ But the main question is: should we accept Fenton’s assertion that poetic lines of this kind are characteristic only of the earliest layers of biblical poetry?

To this question, the answer can be only negative, as can be shown by the following sampling of poetic lines cast in forked parallelism from the relatively late poetic compositions discussed in the previous section: the Isaiah Apocalypse, “the words concerning Lemuel,” and the Song of Songs:

72. Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 400.

73. It is also the one given by del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 778, s.v. */š-d/*, 2.

74. M. S. Smith, “The Baal Cycle,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (ed. Parker), 150.

75. For examples of intransitive use of the verb */š-d/* “to hunt,” see del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 778, s.v. */š-d/*, 1.

76. This means that the quantifier *kl* “every,” opening the noun phrases in second and the third cola of *KTU*² 1.5.VI.25–28, must appear here in the accusative (for adverbial use of the accusative, see J. Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik*, 310–13, §54.133.2).

77. Consider, e.g., Judg. 5:3: “Hearken kings, give ear princes, / I to Yahweh, I shall sing, / I shall chant to Yahweh, the God of Israel” (translation and partition into cola as given by Fenton, “Hebrew Poetic Structure,” 405). First, it is not clear why the two imperative clauses in the beginning of the verse, clearly standing in synonymous parallelism to each other, are not to be defined as a separate poetic line consisting of two cola: “Hearken, kings, / Give ear, princes! // I to YHWH, I shall sing, / I shall chant to YHWH, the God of Israel.” Second, even in Fenton’s definition of the whole verse as a single poetic line, it should be noted that unlike the Ugaritic examples quoted above, the second and the third cola neither belong syntactically to the same sentence as the first colon (or a part thereof), nor develop the message of the first colon (rather, they convey a new message, the focus switching from the injunction to the rulers to hear to the prospective action of the singer herself). Fenton, on his part, expressed doubt about the definition of Gen. 49:8 as forked parallelism (*ibid.*, 404).

ûbilla^c bâhâr hazzê(h) / pênê-hallôṭ hallôṭ ^cal-kol-hâ^cammîm / wêhammassêkâ hannêšûkâ ^cal-kol-haggôyîm

And he (YHWH) will destroy on this mountain / the shroud that is cast over all peoples, / the sheet that is spread over all nations (Isa. 25:7).⁷⁸

tirmēsennâ rāgel / raglê ^cānî / pa^cāmê dallîm

The foot tramples it, / the feet of the poor, / the steps of the needy (Isa. 26:6).⁷⁹

ma(h)-bêrî / ûma(h)-bar-biṭnî / ûmê(h) bar-nêdārāy

Ho, my son! / Ho, son of my womb! / Ho, son of my vows! (Prov. 31:2)⁸⁰

qôl dôdî hinnê(h)-zê(h) bā[?] / mēdallēg ^cal-hehārîm / mēqappēš ^cal-haggēbā^côṭ

Hark! My beloved—here, he comes, / leaping upon the mountains, / bounding over the hills (Song 2:8).⁸¹

hinnê(h)-zê(h) ^cômēd [?]aḥar kotlênû / mašgîaḥ min-haḥallônôṭ / mēšîš min-haḥārakkîm

Here, he is standing behind our wall, / gazing in at the windows, / looking through the lattice (Song 2:9b).⁸²

libbabitînî [?]āḥôṭî kallâ / libbabitînî bē[?]aḥat (Ketib: b[?]ḥd) mē^cênayik / bē[?]aḥad ^cānāq miššawwêrônāyik

You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride, / you have captured my heart with one of your eyes, / with a single strand of your necklace (Song 4:9).⁸³

ma(h)-yāpû dôdayik [?]āḥôṭî kallâ / ma(h)-ṭôbû dôdayik miyyayin / wêrêaḥ šēmānayik mikkol-bêšāmîm

78. The structure of this poetic line can be compared with that of *KTU*² 1.5.VI.25–28: a verbal clause begins in the first colon, but some complements of the verb appear as noun phrases in the second and the third cola, standing in synonymous parallelism with each other.

79. Here, the first colon states that “the lofty city” (mentioned in Isa. 26:5) will be trampled by feet (*regel*, pausal *rāgel*, used as a collective singular). The next two cola relate more specifically that those will be the feet of the poor. The noun phrases appearing in these cola are grammatical subjects of the verbal form *tirmēsennâ* in the first colon.

80. For the understanding of *ma(h)* as a particle of exclamation rather than an interrogative pronoun, see Paul Haupt *apud GKC* §137b, n. 1; E. Ben-Yehudah, “The Edomite Language,” *JPOS* 1 (1921), 114. In Prov. 31:2, an invocation addressed by Lemuel’s mother to her son in the first colon is elaborated in the following two cola by dwelling on the special bond between the mother and her son.

81. For the understanding of *qôl* in this verse as an interjection, see E. L. Greenstein, “YHWH’s Lightning in Psalm 29:7,” *Maarav* 8 (1992), 56–57, and the earlier literature cited there. The first colon in Song 2:8 makes a general statement about the advance of the woman’s beloved; the following two cola describe this advance in more detail, metaphorical and vivid.

82. Song 2:9a: “My beloved is like a gazelle / or a young stag,” consists of two cola standing in synonymous parallelism with each other and describing the nature of the woman’s beloved, rather than a specific action of his. Hence, v. 9a should be defined as a separate poetic line. As for v. 9b, its first colon makes a statement about the woman’s beloved standing behind the wall, and the following two cola describe his actions while standing—thus, these two cola can be said to elaborate on the statement made in the first colon.

83. For analysis of this verse, see Fox, *Song of Songs*, 136.

How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride! / How much better is your love than wine, / and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! (Song 4:10).⁸⁴

Another repository of poetic lines cast in forked parallelism is the text of Deutero-Isaiah, composed in the late 6th century B.C.E.⁸⁵ (the list of examples below is representative rather than exclusive):

ʾānōkī YHWH ʿōśē(h) kōl / nōʾē(h) šāmayim lēbaddī / rōqāʿ hāʾāreš mēʾittī (Ketib: *my ʾty*)

I am YHWH, who made all things, / who alone stretched out the heavens, / who spread out the earth—who was with me? (Isa. 44:24b)⁸⁶

šimʿû-ʾzōʾt bēt yaʿāqōb / hanniqrāʾim bēšēm yiśrāʾēl / ʾūmimmē yēhūdā yāšāʾû

Hear this, O house of Jacob, / who are called by the name of Israel, / and who came forth from the seed of Judah (Isa. 48:1a).⁸⁷

84. In the last two examples, the first colon makes a statement, and the second and the third cola rehearse it with further specification. From the formal viewpoint, these two poetic lines nearly match the definition of climactic parallelism (they fail to match this definition because in Song 4:9, the repetitive formula in the beginning of the first and the second cola consists of one word only, and in Song 4:10, the formula *ma(h)-yāpû dōdayik* in the beginning of the first colon is switched to *ma(h)-ʾōbû dōdayik* in the beginning of the second colon). Thus, it would be possible to claim that in the poetic lines Song 4:9–10, the author was trying to produce a variation of climactic parallelism rather than forked parallelism. But on the other hand, there is nothing to rule out an overlapping between these two categories. The definition of climactic parallelism is based essentially on the form of a poetic line; the definition of forked parallelism is based essentially on its content (the semantic relationship between the three cola). In fact, every poetic line cast in climactic parallelism, where the third colon stands in synonymous parallelism with the second colon, can be also classified under the category of forked parallelism (cf., e.g., Exod. 15:11, Prov. 31:4, Song 6:9a).

85. The poetic character of prophetic speeches is commonly recognized in modern biblical scholarship, even though Albright's statement: "It should be obvious that one of the prerequisites for being considered as a true prophet was native poetic genius" (Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 252), is probably exaggerated. To be sure, Ezekiel's speeches have been reportedly appreciated by the prophet's fellow exiles from Judah for their lyric qualities rather than for their prophetic message (Ezek. 33:30–33). But we have no indication whether other prophets active in ancient Israel and Judah (who were doubtless more numerous than those mentioned in the Hebrew Bible) were similarly appreciated for the poetic qualities of their speeches, or whether such appreciation was indeed prerequisite for achieving one's social standing as a prophet.

86. Isa. 44:24a: "Thus says YHWH, your Redeemer, / who formed you in the womb," consists of two cola standing in synonymous parallelism with each other and functioning as an introduction to YHWH's direct speech. Hence, Isa. 44:24a should be defined as a separate poetic line. As for Isa. 44:24b, which quotes YHWH's direct speech, here the first colon presents YHWH as the creator of everything, and the following two cola elaborate this statement by specifying that YHWH created the heaven and the earth. The version of the Ketib, *my ʾty*, at the end of the verse is preferable to the version of the Qere (see J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, Mich., 1998], 189, n. 78). As a rhetorical question (implying that nobody assisted YHWH in the act of creation), *my ʾty* is semantically parallel to *lēbaddī* in the preceding colon.

87. Many scholars emend *mē*, "waters," to *mēʿē*, "bowels" (see, e.g., *BHS*). However, the MT can be taken as a euphemism for "sperm," as understood by Targum Jonathan and by medieval Jewish commentators, such as Radak and Ibn Ezra (for "water" as euphemism for "sperm" in the Qur'an and in a Hodayot scroll from Qumran [1QH^a], see P. Wernberg-Møller, "Notes on the Manual of Discipline," *VT* 3 [1953], 201). Isa. 48:1a, opening the prophet's speech to the community of exiled Judeans, describes comprehensively the community's identity: "the house of Jacob," they are also called Israel, and they trace their genealogy back to Judah. The second and the third cola add information about the community's identity

midda'it ki qāšē(h) 'āttā / wəǧid barzel 'orpekā / ūmišhākā nēhūšā

Because I know that you are obstinate, / and your neck is an iron sinew / and your forehead brass (Isa. 48:4).⁸⁸

'ānī YHWH 'ēlohēkā / mēlammēdēkā lēhō'it / madrikēkā bēderek tēlēk

I am YHWH your God, / who teaches you to gain profit, / who leads you in the way you should go (Isa. 48:17b).⁸⁹

lū(?) hiqšabtā lēmišwōtāy / wayēhī kannāhār šēlōmekā / wəšidqātēkā kēgallē yām

Had you paid attention to my commandments, / your prosperity would have been like a river, / and your success like the waves of the sea (Isa. 48:18).⁹⁰

Poetic lines cast in forked parallelism can be also found in Northwest Semitic poetic works of the first millennium B.C.E. outside the Hebrew Bible. A few examples appear in Pap. Amherst 63, in an epic poem dealing with the rebellion of Shamash-shum-ukin, governor of Babylon, against his brother Assurbanipal king of Assyria—a poem dating obviously after Shamash-shum-ukin's defeat in 648 B.C.E.:⁹¹

yqr(?)w ll[s]rytr(h) 'htr(y) / yw[bl] srytr(h) / y[q]mm bb [h]ykl mlk(?) (col. XVIII, lines 15–17)

Let them call [S]aritrah, my sister. / Let Saritrah be br[ought]. / Let her (!) be caused to [st]and in the gate of the [p]alace of the king.⁹²

to the identification given in the first colon. Isa. 48:1b: “Who swear by the name of Yahweh, / and invoke the God of Israel, / (but) not in truth or right,” switches from the identification of the community to the description of its misdeeds, and should be seen as a separate poetic line.

88. Here, the second and the third cola are nominal clauses which rehearse metaphorically the message of the content clause in the first colon: *ki qāšē(h) 'āttā*, governed by the infinitive construct *midda'it* (lit., “out of my knowledge”). The whole poetic line Isa. 48:4 functions as an adverbial complement to the main clause in Isa. 48:5a: *wā'aggid lēkā mē'āz / bēterem tābō' hišma'tikā* “I declared them (the earlier prophecies) to you from long ago, / before they came to pass I announced them to you.” Still, the manifest synonymous parallelism between the three cola of v. 4 and between the two cola of v. 5a, but not between these two groups of cola, suggests that these two groups of cola should be defined as two different poetic lines.

89. Isa. 48:17a: “Thus says YHWH, your Redeemer, / the Holy One of Israel,” should be defined as a separate poetic line, for the same reasons as those given for Isa. 44:24a (above, n. 86). In Isa. 48:17b, a general statement “I am YHWH your God” is followed by two noun phrases detailing the functions of YHWH as the God of Israel.

90. The particle *lū(?)* can be also understood as introducing a wish (cf., e.g., Num. 14:2). However, the essential meaning of this particle is probably that of a hypothetical condition, and its usage to express a wish is to be understood as a virtual conditional clause with omission of the apodosis (*GKC* §151e, n. 1). Hence, those cases, where the apodosis (expressing the result of the action introduced by *lū*) is present, are best understood as full-fledged conditional sentences. In Isa. 48:18, the second and the third cola complete the message of the first colon, and though they are grammatically complete main clauses (and not object or adverbial complements, as in *KTU*² 1.5.VI.25–28 and Isa. 25:7), this poetic line can still be defined as cast in forked parallelism.

91. See above, n. 15. In the examples below, the Northwest Semitic transliteration follows R. C. Steiner and C. F. Nims, “Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin: A Tale of Two Brothers from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *RB* 92 (1985), 69–81. The translation follows Steiner, “The Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *COS* 1.99:322–27.

92. Saritrah is *Šerū'a-ēterat*, the sister of Assurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin, whom Assurbanipal summons in order to dispatch her on a diplomatic mission to his rebellious brother (Steiner and Nims, “Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin,” 63).

šm ʔytk sgn / lgryk mn-k(h) bln / ʔt(h)-ʕl mlk(ʔ) ʔhk (col. XIX, lines 16–17)⁹³

Act like (lit., make yourself) a governor. / Lift up your feet from here. / Come to the king, your brother.⁹⁴

(ʔ)zl-(l)k / dšr-bbl btl ym(n) nqh / dšr(ʔ) (ʔ)bšh ʔh<r>y-ym (col. XXI, lines 6–7)

Begone, / for the walls of Babylon in three days we shall capture; / for the wall I shall breach af<t>er a day.⁹⁵

4. Conclusion

In light of the above discussion, the question asked in the title of this article should be answered firmly in the negative. The kinds of poetic parallelism, held by Fenton, as well as by his predecessors from the Albright school, to be characteristic of Ugaritic and of the earliest specimens of Hebrew poetry, are also to be found in biblical poetic compositions dating from the 8th–5th centuries B.C.E. (and possibly later). In addition, these kinds of parallelism are to be found in Aramaic poetic texts of Pap. Amherst 63, dating generally to the first millennium B.C.E. (examples of forked parallelism appear in a composition dating no earlier than the mid-7th century B.C.E.). Hence, the occurrence of the relevant kinds of poetic parallelism in any poetic text in the Hebrew Bible cannot be used as evidence for dating the composition of that text to the 13th–10th centuries B.C.E.

93. The same text is repeated, with minor changes of demotic spelling, in col. XX, line 5, and col. XXI, line 4.

94. In this translation, the poetic line in question can be classified under the category of forked parallelism: the first colon make a general statement, the implications of which in the terms of the action that Shamash-shum-ukin has to take are detailed in the following two cola. However, Steiner gives an alternative translation for the first colon as well: “Put your hands (in) fetters” (*COS* 1.99:324–26). This translation is evidently based on the understanding of the ultimate word in the first colon as *zqn* “fetters,” and of the penultimate word as *yd(y)k* “hands.” The reading *zqn* is well possible, since the demotic spelling of Pap. Amherst 63 does not differentiate between voiced, unvoiced, and emphatic Semitic consonants (but it does differentiate the affricate *š* = [ts] from the fricative *z* and *s*; see Nims and Steiner, “A Paganized Version of Psalm 20:2–6,” 263). The reading *yd(y)k*, however, is somewhat more problematic, since it requires one to assume that in the demotic spellings ʔ₂ y t ʔ k (col. XIX, line 16), ʔ₂ y t y k y (col. XX, line 5) and ʔ₂ y t ʔ k y (col. XXI, line 4), the sign ʔ₂ (in the transliteration system of Vleeming and Wesselius, adopted here; see above, n. 55) or *e* (in the transliteration system of Steiner and Nims) does not signify the Semitic consonant ʔ but rather is phonetically meaningless. Still, such an assumption is not inherently impossible (see R. C. Steiner and C. F. Nims, “You Can’t Offer Your Sacrifice and Eat It Too: A Polemical Poem from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script,” *JNES* 43 [1984], 99). In Steiner’s alternative translation, there would be no general-particular relationship between the first colon and the following two.

95. An alternative reading for the second colon is: *dšr-bbl btr{t} ym nqh* = “for the wall of Babylon after a day we shall capture” (Steiner and Nims, “Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin,” 78). In any event, the second and the third cola are casual clauses laying down the reason for the Assyrian general’s order to Shamash-shum-ukin to leave Babylon. Thus, these two cola complement the statement made in the first colon, somewhat similarly to *KTU*² 1.5.VI.25–28 and Isa. 25:7 (although the latter examples feature object and adverbial complements, and not complete clauses).

