

## DUAL PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND DUAL VERBS IN HEBREW\*

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### *Dual Personal Pronouns*

ALTHOUGH SABATINO MOSCATI'S work on comparative Semitics reckons with the existence of dual personal pronouns in Semitic,<sup>1</sup> by adducing evidence only from Arabic and Ugaritic, it leaves the reader with the impression that the other languages did not admit such forms. Egyptian is excluded from Moscati's work (as it generally is from comparative Semitics discussions), although Egyptian uses dual forms extensively.<sup>2</sup> In recent years Robert Whiting has shown that Akkadian also uses dual personal pronouns.<sup>3</sup> As the following will demonstrate, the same situation obtains in Hebrew.

The evidence for the Hebrew dual personal pronouns can only be adduced from the feminine forms. The simplest way to demonstrate this is to use an example, in this case the third person common dual independent pronoun, which, based on the comparative evidence (cf. Arabic *humā* and a reconstructed Ugaritic \**hm*<sup>4</sup>), would be (ה)מְה. Since these consonants are the same as

\* I would like to thank my teacher, Cyrus H. Gordon, for kindly reading a draft of this paper and for making many invaluable suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> S. Moscati, ed., *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden, 1969), pp. 102, 106, 110-11.

<sup>2</sup> E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* (Rome, 1955/64), pp. 70-80; A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 39, 58-60, 66.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. Whiting, "The Dual Personal Pronouns in Akkadian," *JNES*, 31 (1972), 331-37; *idem.*, "More About Dual Personal Pronouns in Akkadian," *JNES*, 36 (1977), 209-11. See also W. L. Moran, "The Dual Personal Pronouns in Western Peripheral Akkadian," *BASOR*, 211 (1973), 50-53.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C. H. Gordon, *UT*, p. 149. J. Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1974), p. 90, parsed *hm* in *UT* 52:39 as the third person common dual pronoun with El's two women as the antecedent. It may be better, however, to read *hm* here as "if"; thus C. H. Gordon in his most recent translation of the text in *Berytus*, 25 (1977), 62. Regardless of this example, the existence of third person common dual \**hm* in Ugaritic may be safely assumed on the basis of the third person common dual independent oblique pronoun *hmt*; cf. *UT*, pp. 35-36, 149.

the consonants of the third person masculine plural pronoun (הַמָּה), it is impossible to tell when which of the two is being used. That is to say, if הַמָּה is used to refer to a masculine pair, it could either be a) the third person masculine plural, as with all plural nouns, or b) the third person common dual pronoun. It is assumed, again on the basis of comparative evidence (note the Arabic third person common dual *humā* and third person masculine plural *hum*<sup>5</sup>), that the vocalizations of these two pronouns would have been different. But since the Masoretes failed to distinguish the vowels of the two pronouns, it is impossible to determine which is being used.

With the feminine, however, the situation is different. Since the consonants of the third person common dual pronoun (הַנָּה) are different from those of the third person feminine plural pronoun (הֵנָּה), it is possible to tell which of the two is being used. That is to say, if הַנָּה is used to refer to a feminine pair, it can only be the third person feminine plural pronoun. But if הַמָּה is used to refer to a feminine pair, it is probably the third person common dual pronoun. The vowels of these two pronouns were also probably different, but at least they are not necessary to distinguish the two.

Although most grammars have not recognized them, dual forms are not as rare in Hebrew as one might expect. P. C. Couprie and Viktor Christian both cited the following two passages with the third person common dual pronoun (הַמָּה) referring to a feminine pair:<sup>6</sup>

Zech. 5:10 אָנָּה הֵמָּה מוֹלְכוֹת אֶת הָאִיפָה

where are they (c. dual) taking the tub?

The antecedent is נָשִׁים שְׁחִים, "two women," in Zech. 5:9.

<sup>5</sup> Here may also be cited the Akkadian third person common dual *šunī* found in EA 366 and the third person masculine plural *šunu*, third person feminine plural *šina*. The consonants of the three forms are identical; the vowels distinguish them. For the dual *šunī*, cf. Moran, *op. cit.*; and Whiting, *JNES*, 36 (1977), 209. Note the similarity between the Akkadian dual form and Egyptian *sny*, for which see Edel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 75; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> P. C. Couprie, "De dualis van het pronomen personale in het Hebreeuws," *Gereformeerd theologisch Tijdschrift* (1952), 153; and V. Christian, *Untersuchungen zur Laut- und Formenlehre des Hebräischen* (=Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte* 228:2) (Vienna, 1953), p. 39. See also C. Fontinoy, *Le duel dans les langues sémitiques* (*Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège*, 179) (Paris, 1969), pp. 59–60.

Ruth 1:22 והמה באו בית לחם  
and they (c. dual) came to Bethlehem

The antecedent is Ruth and Naomi earlier in the verse.

Third person common dual (המה) also occurs in the following two verses:

Zech. 4:10 עיני יהוה המה משוטטים<sup>7</sup>  
they (c. dual) are the eyes of YHWH ranging

Song 6:5 הסכי עיניך מנגדי שהם הרהיבני<sup>8</sup>  
turn away your eyes from me, for they (c. dual)  
excite me

It is of interest to note how recent commentators in the Anchor Bible series have treated these forms. Commenting on *המה* in Ruth 1:22, Edward Campbell wrote that it "is usually taken to be the third person masculine plural independent pronoun 'they,' but . . . why the wrong gender, masculine, when the antecedent is the *pair* [italics added] of women?"<sup>9</sup> Campbell thus concluded that *המה* cannot mean "they" here, and so identified it with the Ugaritic emphasizing particle *hm* and translated it "now as it happened."<sup>10</sup> But J. C. de Moor has effectively shown that *hm* never has this function in Ugaritic,<sup>11</sup> and therefore it should not be sought in Hebrew.<sup>12</sup> Given the number of times the book of

<sup>7</sup> For the duality of the participle משוטטים, "ranging," below, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the Arabic vocalization, *humā*, we might expect *המה* and not *הם* in Cant. 6:5, especially in view of Zech. 4:10, 5:10; Ruth 1:22. To gain the desired form we may invoke the principle of shared consonants and read *שהמה הרהיבני*; on this phenomenon see I. O. Lehman, "A Forgotten Principle of Biblical Textual Tradition Rediscovered," *JNES*, 24 (1967), 93–101; W. Watson, "Shared Consonants in Northwest Semitic," *Biblica*, 52 (1971), 39–44; R. Margalio, *Ha-Miqra<sup>2</sup> weha-Masorah* (Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 66–70.

<sup>9</sup> E. F. Campbell, *Ruth* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> J. C. de Moor, "Ugaritic *hm*—Never 'Behold,'" *UF*, 1 (1969), 201–02. C. H. Gordon has also denied the meaning "behold" for Ugaritic *hm*; note its absence from the glossary in *UT*, and see Gordon's translations of *UT* 52 in *Ugarit and Minoan Crete* (New York, 1966), pp. 93–98; and *Berytus*, 25 (1977), 59–64.

<sup>12</sup> Similarly, E. L. Greenstein, "Another Attestation of Initial *h* > <sup>2</sup> in West Semitic," *JANESCU* 5 (1973), 161, n. 39, wrote: "It has been claimed by some that Ugar. *hm* is the etymological precursor of Heb. *hm(h)* with the sense 'Behold!' . . . However, in nearly every case Heb. *hmh* is incontestably the (emphatic) 3rd masc. pl. independent pronoun; . . . The only plausible *hm* 'Behold!' in the Hebrew Bible is that in Deut. 33:17," but even here as Greenstein noted *NEB* and *NJPSV* treat *הם* as a pronoun.

Ruth uses dual pronouns,<sup>13</sup> it is better to parse הַמָּה here as another instance of this usage.

Marvin Pope attempted to explain the use of הַם in Song 6:5 as follows:

The independent pronoun is here the masculine form *hēm*, although eyes, as other paired organs of the body are regularly feminine. If the eyes in question are the multiple eyes of the Eye Goddess, the abnormal gender of the pronoun would be explicable.<sup>14</sup>

The logic of Pope's second sentence is difficult to follow. How the multiple eyes of the Eye Goddess could be construed as masculine escapes me. Moreover, the entire strophe is addressed to the young heroine of the work and not to any deity. Regardless, there is no discordance of gender here. הַם is the third person common dual pronoun referring to the feminine dual antecedent עֵינַיךְ, "your eyes." Further evidence for the duality of the independent pronoun here is the two-fold use of the common dual pronominal suffix ם(ה)– in the following verse, Song 6:6.<sup>15</sup> On these forms, Pope is silent.

There are no instances of the second person common dual pronoun \*אֲתֶם in Hebrew. That it existed, however, may be determined by both the comparative evidence, e.g., Arabic <sup>ʿ</sup>*antumā* and Egyptian *tny*,<sup>16</sup> and the analogy of the third person form.

Whereas only the above cited four examples of the independent personal pronoun duals exist in Biblical Hebrew, the pronominal suffixes commonly exhibit dual usage. Based on the Arabic –*kumā* and the Ugaritic –*km*,<sup>17</sup> the corresponding Hebrew second person common dual suffix would be כֶּם–.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See below, pp. 42, 44.

<sup>14</sup> M. H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (Garden City, N.Y., 1977), p. 564.

<sup>15</sup> See below, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Edel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 75; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also the Akkadian –*kunī*, where, however, the *n* instead of *m* (as regularly in Akkadian pronouns) places a distance between this form and the Arabic-Ugaritic-Hebrew evidence. The Akkadian form is cited by Whiting, *JNES*, 31 (1972), 334, 336.

<sup>18</sup> That Arabic –*kumā* ends in a long vowel and Hebrew כֶּם– does not should not restrain us from making the identification. We may attribute this phenomenon

Although he did not recognize the duality of the independent pronoun *המה* in Ruth 1:22, Campbell (with the aid of Francis Andersen) did note the duality of the pronominal suffix *כִּם*-. He cited the following instances of *כִּם*- referring to a feminine pair:<sup>19</sup>

Gen. 31:9 ויצל אלהים אה מקנה אביכם

God has taken the flock of your (c. dual) father  
The antecedent is Rachel and Leah in Gen. 31:4ff.

Ruth 1:8 יעשה יהוה עמכם חסד

may YHWH deal kindly with you (c. dual)

The antecedent of the above passage as well as the following three passages is *שתי כלחיה*, "her two daughters-in-law," in Ruth 1:8.

Ruth 1:9 יתן יהוה לכם

YHWH will grant you (c. dual)

Ruth 1:11 העוד לי בנים במעי והיו לכם לאנשים

do I still have sons in my womb to become husbands  
for you (c. dual)

Ruth 1:13 אל בנתי כי מר לי מאד מכם

no, my daughters, for I am very grieved for  
you (c. dual)

Campbell concluded:

There must have been an early Hebrew feminine dual suffix which ended in *-m*, just as the masculine plural ending does but contrasted with the feminine plural *-n*. Presumably the vowel pattern was the distinguishing feature. As texts containing this old form were transmitted across the centuries, it was generally forgotten and was replaced by the standard masculine and feminine plural forms. But in a few places it survived. Since the Ruth text as we have it is quite scrupulous in its correct use of gender, these relics must be regarded as a

to anceps which occasionally appears in Semitic; cf., e.g., C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, (Berlin, 1908), I, 460. The "two-headed" final vowel of the second person dual form is treated long in Arabic, but short in Hebrew, where it drops in final position. This explanation of *-kumā/כִּם*- also holds for *-humā/הֵם*- and *katabtumā/קְטַלְתֶּם*, both discussed below, and *humā/הֵמָּה* discussed above.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65. The four passages from Ruth, 1:8, 1:9, 1:11, 1:13, were also cited by Couprie, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

distinct mark of archaic composition or at least of composition in a dialect retaining an otherwise lost grammatical feature.<sup>20</sup>

Recently, Jack Sasson accepted Campbell's position on "the (alleged) (mis)use of the pronominal suffixes in Ruth."<sup>21</sup>

Based on the Arabic *-humā* and the Ugaritic *-hm*,<sup>22</sup> the Hebrew third person common dual suffix would be ם(ה)-.<sup>23</sup> Campbell citing the following examples of this usage:<sup>24</sup>

Gen. 18:20 זעקת סדם ועמרה כי רבה וחטאתם כי כבדה  
the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and  
their (c. dual) sin is so grave

Campbell correctly noted that the antecedent of the pronominal suffix is "two *cities*, which like most geographical designations in Hebrew are feminine."<sup>25</sup>

Gen. 19:9 נרע לך מהם  
we will harm you more than them (c. dual)

The antecedent is בנות שתי, "two daughters," in Gen. 19:8.

Exod. 1:21 ויהי כי יראו המילדת את האלהים ויעש להם בחים  
and because the midwives feared God, he made  
houses for them (c. dual)

The antecedent is Shiphrah and Puah, the two midwives, in Exod. 1:15ff.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> J. M. Sasson, *Ruth* (Baltimore, 1979), p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> Whiting, *JNES*, 31 (1972), 332-36, discussed the Akkadian third person common dual *-šunī* which, while cognate to the Arabic, Ugaritic, and Hebrew forms, is phonetically more distant.

<sup>23</sup> Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 40, suggested that ם(י)- is the third person common dual suffix (cf. also Fontinoy, *op. cit.*, p. 60), but there are various problems with his argument. First, in the examples he cited most of the antecedents are not dual but rather masculine plural. Second, in these examples the antecedents are masculine, and I have shown above that only when a feminine pair is referred to is it possible to detect the dual forms. Third, the ם(י)- suffix sometimes has a singular antecedent, e.g., Isa. 44:21, Job 20:23, 22:2, 27:23 (twice); in this last cited verse, *עליו* is parallel to *עליו*. Thus, this suffix is better treated as a variant of both the third person masculine singular ך- and the third person masculine plural ם(ה)-.

<sup>24</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65. The two passages from Ruth 1:19, 4:11 were also cited by Couprie, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>25</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

Judg. 16:3<sup>26</sup> ויאחזו בלחנות שער העיר ובשתי מזוזות ויסעם עם הכריח  
 ויעלם אל ראש ההר . . .

and he grasped the doors of the city gate with the  
 two gateposts and he tore them (c. dual) away with  
 the bar . . . and he carried them (c. dual) to the  
 hilltop

Judg. 19:24<sup>27</sup> הנה כתי הבתולה ופילגשהו אוציאה נא אותם וענו אותם  
 ועשו להם הטוב בעיניכם

here is my virgin daughter and his concubine, let me  
 bring them (c. dual) out, and you can rape them  
 (c. dual) and do with them (c. dual) whatsoever  
 you wish

I Sam. 6:7 ושתי פרות עלות אשר לא עלה עליהם על . . . והשיבתם  
 בניהם מאחריהם הביתה

and two milch cows that have had no yoke upon  
 them (c. dual) . . . but remove their (c. dual) calves  
 from behind them (c. dual) into the house

I Sam. 6:10 ויקחו שתי פרות עלות ויאסרום בעגלה ואח בניהם כלו כבית  
 ויקחו שתי פרות עלות ויאסרום בעגלה ואח בניהם כלו כבית  
 (c. dual) to the cart, and they shut up their (c. dual)  
 calves inside

Ruth 1:19 ותלכנה שתיהם

and the two of them (c. dual) traveled

The antecedent is Ruth and Naomi in Ruth 1:14ff.

Ruth 4:11 כרחל וכלאה אשר בנו שתיהם את בית ישראל

like Rachel and like Leah, the two of whom (c. dual)  
 built the house of Israel

In the most recent volume of the Anchor Bible series, P. Kyle McCarter agreed with Campbell's assessment of the ם(ה)–suffixes in I Sam 6:7, 6:10. He wrote that "it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these suffixed pronouns preserve archaic dual forms, used here in reference to the yoke of cows, especially in light of Ugaritic grammar, which has a third person dual possessive suffix of common gender, viz. *-hm* (cf. Gordon, *UT* §6:10). Compare also Arabic *-humā*."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Campbell's "Judg. 16:13" is a misprint.

<sup>27</sup> This example was also cited by D. N. Freedman in R. G. Boling, *Judges* (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 276.

<sup>28</sup> P. K. McCarter, *I Samuel* (Garden City, N.Y., 1980), p. 135. McCarter also noted the same usage in I Sam. 6:12; see below, p. 46.

An alternative but incorrect explanation for the use of להם, “for them (c. dual),” in Exod. 1:21 was offered by U. Cassuto. He attributed the use of the ם(ה)– suffix to phonological considerations, that is, the bilabial ם– appears instead of the nasal dental ן– because the next word, בחים, “houses,” begins with the bilabial ב.<sup>29</sup> The phonological argument may work for Exod. 1:21, but it cannot explain the dozens of other examples where ם(ה)– appears without a following bilabial. In view of the present evidence, Cassuto’s suggestion, while it represents an attempt to come to grips with the problem, should be rejected. Instead of seeking a phonological solution which would explain only an occasional ם(ה)– form, it is methodologically sounder to propose a morphological solution to the problem.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, להם, “for them,” in Exod. 1:21 exhibits the common dual pronominal suffix.<sup>31</sup>

Other examples of third person common dual ם(ה)– adduced through its referring to a feminine pair are the following:

- Exod. 28:9 ולקחת את שתי אבני שהם ופתחת עליהם  
take two lazuli stones and engrave on them (c. dual)
- Exod. 28:11 חפחת את שתי האבנים . . . מסכת משבצות זהב תעשה אתם  
engrave two stones . . . make them (c. dual) to be enclosed in settings of gold
- Exod. 28:14 ושתי שרשרת זהב טהור מגבלת תעשה אתם  
and two chains of pure gold, make them (c. dual) into cords
- Exod. 28:26 ועשית שתי טבעות זהב ושמת אתם  
make two rings of gold and place them (c. dual)

<sup>29</sup> U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. by I. Abrahams (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Thus the theory of M. Dahood, “Canaanite-Phoenician Influence in Qoheleth.” *Biblica*, 33 (1952), 43, that ם(ה)–in Prov. 6:21 (cited below, p. 47) and Ruth 1:19 (cited above, p. 44) is the result of dissimilation, may be similarly dismissed. Dahood also misconstrued מהם in Eccles. 2:10 (cited below, p. 47); he parsed it as the third person masculine plural form used with a feminine antecedent; as I demonstrate, it is rather the third person common dual form.

<sup>31</sup> Many scholars, Cassuto among them, believe that Shiphrah and Puah are merely representatives of an entire team of midwives, mainly because two midwives “would not appear to be consonant with the needs of an entire people” (*op. cit.*, p. 13). Now that the duality of להם has been established, this view should be discarded. Were more than two midwives delivering Israelite babies, the author most probably would have used להן, “for them (f.pl.),” and not להם.

- Exod. 28:27 ועשית שתי טבעות זהב ונתתה אתם  
make two rings of gold and put them (c. dual)
- Exod. 30:4 ושתי טבעת זהב תעשה . . . לשאת אתו בהמה  
make two rings of gold . . . by which (c. dual) to  
carry it
- This same verse also exhibits the third person feminine dual perfect verb.<sup>32</sup>
- Exod. 39:7 וישם אתם על כתפת האפר  
he placed them (c. dual) on the shoulder-pieces of  
the ephod
- The antecedent is שהם, "lazuli stones," in Exod. 39:6, but as we know from the corresponding passage in Exod. 28:9, there were *two* stones.
- Exod. 39:18 ואת שתי קצוות שתי העבתה נתנו על שתי המשבצת ויתנם  
על כתפת האפר  
and two ends of two cords they put on the two  
settings, and they put them (c. dual) on the shoulder-  
pieces of the ephod
- Exod. 39:20 ויעשו שתי טבעת זהב ויתנם על שתי כתפת האפר  
they made two rings of gold and put them (c. dual) on  
the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod
- I Sam. 6:12 וסרני פלשתים הלכים אחריהם  
and the lords of the Philistines went after them  
(c. dual)
- The antecedent is פרות, "two cows," in I Sam. 6:10.
- Jer. 33:24 שתי המשפחות אשר בחר יהוה בהם וימאסם  
the two families which YHWH chose, He has rejected  
them (c. dual)
- Ezek. 23:45 המה ישפטו אותהם  
they will judge them (c. dual)
- In this example and in the following two passages the antecedent is Oholah and Oholibah in Ezek. 23:44.
- Ezek. 23:46 העלה עליהם קהל  
summon an assembly against them (c. dual)
- Ezek. 23:47 בנייהם ובנותיהם יהרגו  
let them kill their (c. dual) sons and their (c. dual)  
daughters
- Zech. 5:9 והנה שתי נשים יוצאות ורוח בכנפיהם  
and behold two women came out with the wind in  
their (c. dual) wings

<sup>32</sup> See below, p. 50.

Prov. 6:20–21 נצר בני מצות אביך ואל תטש תורה אמך קשרם על לבך  
 חמיר ענדם על גרגרתך

my son, keep the precept of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them (c. dual) upon your heart forever, tie them (c. dual) around your neck

Song 4:2, 6:6 שכלם מתאימות ושכלה אין בהם  
 all of them (c. dual) perfectly paired and none of them (c. dual) missing

The antecedent is שניך, “your teeth,” earlier in the verse.

Eccles. 2:10 וכל אשר שאלו עיני לא אצלתי מהם  
 and whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them (c. dual)

Two other passages which may exhibit the third person common dual (הם)– occur in Deut. 27:2, II Chr. 23:22:

Deut. 27:2 והקמת לך אבנים גדולות ושדת אתם בשיד  
 you shall put up large stones and coat them with plaster

It is possible that only two large stones were intended, in which case אתם, “them,” would be dual. It is not inconceivable that the entire Mosaic law could have been inscribed on two stones.<sup>33</sup> All of Hammurapi’s code, for example, fits on one large stele. If more than two stones are meant, then אתם is simply the masculine form referring to a feminine antecedent as occurs repeatedly in the Bible.<sup>34</sup>

I Chr. 23:22 וימת אלעזר ולא היו לו בנים כי אם בנות וישאום בני קיש  
 אחיהם

and Eleazar died, having no sons, but only daughters, and their brethren, the sons of Kish, married them

It is possible that Eleazar had only two daughters, for the family of Merari was generally quite small (I Chr. 23:21–23). If this was the case, the suffixes in וישאום, “married them,” and אחיהם, “their brethren,” are to be construed as duals. Otherwise they too are to be treated as masculine pronouns referring to feminine substantives.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> There are numerous references in the Pentateuch to the two stones of the Decalogue, e.g., Exod. 34:1, 34:4; Deut. 4:13, 5:19, 9:10, 9:11, 10:1, 10:3.

<sup>34</sup> See E. Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, trans. by A. E. Cowley (Oxford, 1974), p. 440; and A. Sperber, *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden, 1966), pp. 82–84.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Mention should also be made of the first person common dual suffix  $-ny$  known from Ugaritic<sup>36</sup> and Egyptian,<sup>37</sup> to which should also be compared Homeric  $v\omega\ddot{i}$ .<sup>38</sup> However, it is highly unlikely that Biblical Hebrew used this form; at least no sure example of a first person common dual  $\text{ני-}$  is attested.

### Dual Verbs

Dual forms are not limited to pronouns, either in general Semitic or in Hebrew. Arabic, Ugaritic, Egyptian, and the older stages of Akkadian also use dual forms of the verb, both perfect and imperfect. Based on the above cited pronoun evidence, it is most likely that dual verbs were also used in Hebrew.<sup>39</sup>

Since the third person masculine dual perfect is *katabā* in Arabic, *qtl* in Ugaritic,<sup>40</sup> and *parsā* in Akkadian,<sup>41</sup> the corresponding Hebrew form presumably was \*קטל or with final *mater lectionis* \*קטלה.<sup>42</sup> In my estimation, it is doubtful if MT has preserved any such forms. Nevertheless, it is worth suggesting one possible instance of the postulated third person masculine dual perfect \*קטלה(ה):

Job 6:19–20 הביטו ארחות תמא הליכת שבא קרו למו בשו כי בטח  
the caravans of Tema looked, the companies of  
Sheba waited for them, they were ashamed because  
they had trusted (c. dual [?])<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *UT*, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Edelman, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 72–73; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>38</sup> H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1940), p. 477, s.v.  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ .

<sup>39</sup> The existence of dual verbs in Hebrew generally has not been recognized. Note the statement by Fontinoy, *op. cit.*, p. 59, "Les hébraïsans s'accordent à déclarer qu'en hébreu il n'y a pas ou plus de duel verbal." On the other hand, almost thirty years ago Couprie, *op. cit.*, p. 153, concluded his little note on the dual personal pronouns as follows: "Het bovenstaande moge aantonen, dat het Hebreeuws de dualis ook in het pronomen personale, het verbum (?) en de nominale suffixen gekend heeft."

<sup>40</sup> *UT*, pp. 70, 153.

<sup>41</sup> A. Ungnad and L. Matouš, *Grammatik des Akkadischen* (Munich, 1969), p. 144. The Akkadian form is of common gender; see below, p. 51.

<sup>42</sup> The Egyptian third person masculine dual old perfective *sdm-wy* may also be cited as a cognate form; cf. Edelman, *op. cit.*, pp. 271, 274–75; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>43</sup> It will soon be apparent why "c. dual" is used for all the third person dual perfect verbs presented here; see below, p. 51.

All the verbs are plural except for בטט, "had trusted," so most scholars read בטחו.<sup>44</sup> But if we consider תמא and שבא as masculine dual subject, MT may be retained by parsing בטט as the third person masculine dual perfect written without *mater lectionis* ה.<sup>45</sup>

The situation concerning the third person feminine dual perfect is more complex. For all the forms cited in this article, I have first presented the cognate evidence, then deduced the proposed Hebrew form, and then cited examples of this usage from the Bible. However, because of the peculiarities of the third person feminine dual perfect in Egypto-Semitic (with virtually no two forms exactly alike), I would like to posit here a Hebrew third person feminine dual perfect קטלה based on the following passages from MT, and then discuss the cognate data.

Mitchell Dahood has cited the following verses which exhibit the postulated third person feminine dual perfect קטלה:<sup>46</sup>

I Sam. 4:15 עיניו קמה

his eyes were fixed (c. dual)

Ps. 68:14 כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף

the wings of the dove are covered (c. dual) with silver

Ps. 73:2K שפכה אשרי

my legs were poured out (c. dual)

Dahood also suggested another instance of the third person feminine dual perfect, but this passage requires a repointing of the Masoretic accentuation:<sup>47</sup>

I Kgs. 14:6 רגליה באה בפתח

her feet as they came to the door

<sup>44</sup> See N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem, 1957), p. 125; and R. Gordis, *The Book of Job* (New York, 1978), p. 76.

<sup>45</sup> Even without parsing בטט as third person masculine dual, there is no need to emend MT. Singular verbs often follow plural subjects, e.g., Gen. 21:30, Exod. 31:14; Lev. 17:14, 19:8; I Sam. 16:4; Isa. 64:10; Ezek. 18:29, 20:38, 45:10; Prov. 18:21, 21:27, 27:16, 28:1, 28:16; Eccles. 2:7. Thus בטט in Job 6:20 may also be considered as the third person masculine singular regardless of the preceding plural subject. G. R. Driver, "Colloquialisms in the Old Testament," in D. Cohen, ed., *Mélanges Marcel Cohen* (The Hague, 1970), pp. 234–35, explained these lapses in the congruence of number as colloquialisms, and I have adopted the same approach in my doctoral dissertation *Evidence for a Spoken Hebrew in Biblical Times* (New York, 1980), pp. 178–83. See below, p. 50, for the similar use of singular participles following plural subjects.

<sup>46</sup> M. Dahood, *Psalms II* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), pp. 142, 188.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

The Masoretes pointed the verb as a participle, **בָּאֵה**, and though Dahood is silent on the issue, one must assume that he proposes to point the verb as a perfect, **בָּאָה**. Since, however, singular participles are sometimes used with plural or dual subjects, e.g., Gen. 27:29, Num. 24:9, Isa. 3:12, Mic. 1:9, Prov. 3:18, perhaps it is better to retain the Masoretic accentuation.

To the examples cited by Dahood may be added the following:

Exod. 30:4 **וַשְׁתֵּי טַבַּעַת זָהָב תַּעֲשֶׂה . . . וְהָיָה לְכַתְּמִים לְבָרִים**  
 make two rings of gold . . . and they shall be (c. dual) receptacles for the handles

This same verse also exhibits the third person common dual suffix **ם(ה)**.<sup>48</sup>

Deut. 21:7K **יָדִינוּ לֹא שִׁפְכָה אֶת הַדָּם**  
 our hands did not shed (c. dual) blood

From the above cited passages, it seems apparent that there existed in Hebrew a third person feminine dual perfect **קַטְלָה**. Listed below are the cognate forms:

Egyptian	<i>sdm-ty</i> <sup>49</sup>
Arabic	<i>katabatā</i>
Ugaritic	<i>qtl</i> <sup>50</sup>
Akkadian	<i>parsā</i> <sup>51</sup>

The biggest question is how to vocalize the Ugaritic form. The answer is supplied by the form *ylt*, "they bore (f. dual)," predicated of El's two wives in *UT* 52:53. Since the third root letter *d* would only have assimilated to the following *t* if no vowel intervened, C. H. Gordon has already postulated the vocalization *yalattā* < \**yaladtā*.<sup>52</sup> The final *-a* vowel accords with the Arabic evidence, and the Egyptian form also has a vowel following the *t*.

Since the Hebrew reflex of Ugaritic *qatalatā* would be **קַטְלָתָה** (as in the second person masculine singular perfect) and not **קַטְלָה**, we must look elsewhere to explain the third person feminine dual perfect in Hebrew. The answer apparently lies with the Akkadian

<sup>48</sup> See above, p. 46.

<sup>49</sup> Edell, *op. cit.*, pp. 271, 274-75; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>50</sup> *UT*, pp. 70, 153.

<sup>51</sup> Ungnad-Matouš, *op. cit.*, p. 144. The Akkadian form is of common gender; see above, p. 48, n. 41, and below, p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> *UT*, p. 70. Note I Sam. 4:19 **לָלַח** where \**lalid* > \**laladi* (via the shift of *i* > *a* in an originally closed [here doubly closed] accented syllable) > \**lalatt* (via assimilation, as in Ugaritic *ylt* < \**ylti*) > *lalat* (by giving up doubling at the end of a word).

evidence, where *parsā* is used for both the third person feminine plural and the third person common dual.<sup>53</sup> The same pattern exists in Hebrew. We have already postulated third person masculine dual \*קטלה, and now we have seen examples of third person feminine dual קטלה. Thus קטלה, like *parsā*, is the third person common dual, and as is now well known, the same form is used vestigially for the third person feminine plural too.<sup>54</sup>

If Hebrew קטלה and Akkadian *parsā* are to be identified as the same form, one might ask why the Canaanite  $\hat{a} > \hat{o}$  shift does not take place in the Hebrew form. Simply stated, there are various levels in the Hebrew language, and this shift does not always occur. For example, although Arabic *lā* = Hebrew לא, Arabic *qām(a)* = Hebrew קָם (with pure long  $\hat{a}$  as evidenced in קָמִיָּהם [versus יָרִיָּהם]). Similarly, the Arabic participle *kātib* = Hebrew כּוֹתֵב, but the Arabic *nomen agentis ṭabbāḥ* = Hebrew טָבַח. Thus the Hebrew third person common dual perfect קטלה is another example where the  $\hat{a} > \hat{o}$  shift does not occur.<sup>55</sup>

As to the evolution of the third person common dual Hebrew perfect and Akkadian permansive forms, I would suggest that at an early time the masculine forms replaced the feminine forms, so that a cognate to Arabic *katabatā*, Ugaritic *qilt*, Egyptian *sdm-ty*, is lacking in Hebrew and Akkadian. The tendency for the masculine to replace the feminine is common in Semitic. An excellent example is the Hebrew third person plural perfect, where masculine קטלו replaces feminine קטלה, the latter appearing only vestigially.

With the second person dual perfect, there is greater agreement among the Semitic languages. Since this form is *katabtumā* in Arabic and *qiltm* in Ugaritic,<sup>56</sup> one may posit a Hebrew form קטלתם.<sup>57</sup> Since this form is the same as the second person

<sup>53</sup> Ungnad-Matouš, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>54</sup> E.g., Josh. 15:4K, 18:12K, 18:14K, 18:19K; I Kings 22:49K, Jer. 2:15K, 22:6K, 48:41, 50:6, 51:56; Ezek. 26:2, Hab. 3:17, Ps. 45:10, Neh. 13:10.

<sup>55</sup> Moscati, *op. cit.*, p. 51, considers the  $\hat{a} > \hat{o}$  shift in Hebrew "non-conditioned," but there are obviously many forms in which it does not occur. See also H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments* (Halle, 1922; reprint: Hildesheim, 1965), p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> *UT*, p. 153.

<sup>57</sup> The second person dual perfect (=permansive) is not attested in Akkadian, but see the comments of Ungnad-Matouš, *op. cit.*, p. 64, and Fontinoy, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-46. The Egyptian cognate form is the common *sdm-t(y)wny*, but the *n*

masculine plural form, it is impossible to distinguish the two. It is assumed that the vocalizations of the two differed in ancient times, but MT does not reckon with the distinction.

When a feminine subject is used, however, it is possible to distinguish between the second person common dual קטלתם and the second person feminine plural קטלתן. If the latter is used in reference to a feminine pair, it can only be the plural form. But if the former is used to refer to a feminine pair, it may be the dual form. This latter usage occurs twice in the Bible. Campbell noted one instance:<sup>58</sup>

Ruth 1:8 כאשר עשיתם עם המתים ועמדי  
as you have dealt (c. dual) with the dead and with me  
Naomi is addressing שתי כלתיה, "her two daughters-in-law,"  
mentioned in Ruth 1:7.

The second instance of this usage is the following:

Ezek. 23:49 וידעתם כי אני ארני יהוה  
and you shall know (c. dual) that I am the Lord  
YHWH

The antecedent is Oholah and Oholibah in Ezek. 23:4ff.

Moving to the imperfect, we note that there is little agreement among the Semitic languages regarding the third person dual forms. In Arabic, masculine and feminine are distinguished, *yaktubāni* being used for the former and *taktubāni* for the latter. In Ugaritic, there apparently is a consistent interchange of *yqtlh* and *tqtlh*, with both forms being used for both genders.<sup>59</sup> In Akkadian, a truly common form is used, *iparrasā*.<sup>60</sup> From this evidence, Moscati deduced that proto-Semitic had a common third person dual with a *y-* prefix and that all forms with a *t-* prefix are formed by analogy, or vice versa.<sup>61</sup> In either case, a Hebrew third person common dual יקטלו may be posited.<sup>62, 63</sup>

places a distance between this form and the Hebrew-Ugaritic-Arabic evidence; see Edel, *op. cit.*, pp. 272, 274–75.

<sup>58</sup> Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>59</sup> *UT*, pp. 75, 154.

<sup>60</sup> Ungnad-Matouš, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>61</sup> Moscati, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>62</sup> In Egyptian, there is no imperfect in the Semitic sense, i.e., with the personal pronoun indicator prefixed to the verbal root. The corresponding form is the *sdm-f* construction (cf. O. Rössler, "Verbalbau und Verbalflexion in den semito-hamitischen Sprachen," *ZDMG*, 100 [1950], 461–514), where a third person common dual *sdm-sny* is used; cf. Edel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 74, 207–08; and Gardiner,

The final vowel of this יקטלו form would not have been  $-û$  as in the third person masculine plural, but rather  $-ô$ , the result of the Canaanite  $\hat{a} > ô$  shift. Both  $ô$  and  $û$  are represented by the same *mater lectionis* in Hebrew, ם, so that both the third person masculine plural and the third person common dual would have been written יקטלו. The Masoretes did not recognize the dual verbs and thus pointed all יקטלו forms as יקטלוּ. Had the Hebrew language retained the dual forms into Masoretic times, one can assume that the third person common dual imperfect verbs would have been pointed \*יקטלוּ.

This  $ô$  vowel is to be identified with the suffixed ם- representing the nominative construct dual in the Gezer Calendar four times:

line 1	ירחו אסף	two months of gathering
lines 1-2	ירחו זרע	two months of sowing
line 2	ירחו לקש	two months of later sowing
line 6	ירחו זמר	two months of pruning

The same  $ô$  may also occur in the place name שמרון, "Samaria," for in Aramaic it is treated as a dual: שְׁמֶרִין, Ezra 4:10, 4:17. That cities were often thought of as grammatically dual, perhaps due to their being composed of an upper city and a lower city, is to be learned from such place names as מְחַנִּים, קְרִיתִים, and at least in later times, ירושלים.<sup>64</sup>

*op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. Syntactically, the Hebrew, Akkadian, and Egyptian usages are alike; in each language a third person common dual imperfect is used without gender distinction.

<sup>63</sup> More than a century ago, F. Böttcher, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1863), II, §931, claimed that the יקטלנה "Mischformen" in Gen. 30:38, I Sam. 6:12, are duals. In the first example, however, the subject is collective צֹאן, "sheep." Only in the second example is the subject dual, but this may be coincidental. It is better to treat these יקטלנה forms as Hebrew reflexes of the third person feminine plural *yaktubna* in Arabic, יכתבן in many Aramaic dialects (cf. F. Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* [Wiesbaden, 1974], pp. 44, 60); see also Kautzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 128. For further comments on Böttcher's suggestion, see Fontinoy, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>64</sup> The duality of cities may also be exhibited by the two Udm's, *rbi* and *rrri*, in the Ugaritic Krt epic (lines 108-09, 210-11, 276-77), and the two Sidon's, *rabû* and *ṣḥru*, listed in the Akkadian report of Sennacherib's third campaign. Also note Hebrew חמת רבה (Amos 6:2) and צירון רבה (Josh. 11:8, 19:28), implying something like חמת קטנה\* and צירון קטנה\*; the latter is especially likely in view of the aforementioned Akkadian evidence. Some scholars prefer to analyze Hebrew *-ayim*, Aramaic *-ayin* as a locative (J. Barth, *Die Nominalbildung in den*

Again, when a masculine pair is the subject of the sentence and a *יקטלו* form is used, it is impossible to determine whether a third person masculine plural or a third person common dual is intended. Only if the Masoretes had retained the difference in vocalizations would this task be possible. With a feminine pair as subject it is possible. If a *תקטלנה* form is used, the verb must be the third person feminine plural. But if a *יקטלו* form is used, the verb is probably the third person common dual.

The following passages all include *יקטלו* forms as the predicates of a feminine dual subject:

- II Sam. 4:1 *וירפו ידיו*  
his hands weakened (c. dual)
- Isa. 51:5 *וזרעי עמים ישפטו*  
and my arms will judge (c. dual) the nations
- Isa. 59:7 *רגליהם לרע ירצו וימהרו*  
their feet run (c. dual) after evil and hasten (c. dual)
- Jer. 13:16 *יחננפו רגליכם*  
your feet stumble (c. dual)
- Zeph. 3:16 *אל ירפו ידיך*  
do not let your hands weaken (c. dual)
- Mal. 2:7 *שפתי כהן ישמרו דעה*  
the lips of a priest guard (c. dual) knowledge
- Ps. 11:4 *עיניו יחזו*  
his eyes behold (c. dual)
- Ps. 63:4 *שפתי ישבחונך*  
my lips will praise (c. dual) you
- Prov. 1:16 *כי רגליהם לרע ירוצו וימהרו*  
for their feet run (c. dual) after evil and hasten (c. dual)
- Prov. 4:25 *עיניך יביטו*  
your eyes will look (c. dual)

*semitischen Sprachen* [Leipzig, 1884], pp. 319–20, n. 5; Kautzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 245; H. Torczyner, *Die Entstehung des semitischen Sprachtypus* [Vienna, 1916], pp. 67ff.; and J. J. Finkelstein, “Mesopotamia,” *JNES*, 21 [1962], pp. 84–85), but I am not convinced by their argument and still prefer to interpret these endings as duals (as do R. T. O’Callaghan, *Aram Naharaim* [Rome, 1948], p. 141; W. F. Albright, *The Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthography* [New Haven, 1934], p. 45, where Naharaim is rendered “the Two Rivers”; and E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* [Garden City, N.Y., 1964], p. 254, where Mahanaim is described as “formally a dual of the noun for ‘camp’”).

- Prov. 5:2 שפתיך ינצרו  
your lips shall preserve (c. dual)
- Prov. 7:11 לא ישכנו רגליה  
her feet do not abide (c. dual)
- Prov. 10:21 שפתי צדיק ירעו רבים  
the lips of the righteous feed (c. dual) many
- Prov. 10:32 שפתי צדיק ידעון רצון  
the lips of the righteous know (c. dual) delight
- Prov. 15:7 שפתי חכמים יזרו דעת  
the lips of the wise disperse (c. dual) knowledge
- Prov. 18:6 שפתי כסיל יבאו בריב  
the lips of the fool enter (c. dual) into strife
- Prov. 23:33 עיניך יראו  
your eyes will behold (c. dual)
- Job 15:6 שפתיך יענו  
your lips testify (c. dual)
- Job 21:20Q יראו עיניו  
his eyes will behold (c. dual)
- II Chr. 7:15 עיני יהיו פתוחות  
my eyes will be (c. dual) open
- II Chr. 15:7 ואל ירפו ידיכם  
do not let your hands weaken (c. dual)

Here may also be cited two examples of *יקטלו* forms with feminine dual subjects in Ben Sira:

- Sir. 15:20 עיני אל יראו מעשיו  
the eyes of God will behold (c. dual) his works
- Sir. 21:27 שפתי זדים כאלה ישיחו  
the lips of the wicked speak (c. dual) [the words of] others

Although Dahood astutely assayed the dual forms of the perfect verb, he missed the dual forms of the imperfect verb. Instead, he unnecessarily emended Ps. 63:4 because “in the traditional interpretation feminine *s<sup>c</sup>pātāy* is discordantly construed with the masculine verb; the discordance is even greater when the subject precedes the verb, as here.”<sup>65</sup> Had Dahood recognized the use of dual imperfect verbs in Hebrew, he probably would not have resorted to this alteration of MT. In actuality, even without parsing *ישבחונך*, “will praise (c. dual) you,” as a dual form, there would be no need for emendation

<sup>65</sup> Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

given the number of times יקטלו forms are used with feminine plural subjects.<sup>66</sup> On Ps. 11:4 Dahood made no comment.

For the second person dual imperfect, Semitic languages are unanimous in using common forms, Arabic *taktubāni*, Ugaritic *tqtln*,<sup>67</sup> and Egyptian *sdm-tny*.<sup>68</sup> On the basis of these forms we may posit a Hebrew second person common dual imperfect \*תקטלו, a form which unfortunately is not attested in MT. But based on the cognate evidence and on the wide use of the corresponding third person יקטלו forms in the Bible, it presumably existed in ancient Hebrew.

There is also the question of the participle duals. Although the Arabic use of *kātibāni* for the masculine and *kātibatāni* for the feminine does not accord with the forthcoming material—the Ugaritic evidence is too scanty to allow any conclusions—I believe that the following verse points to a Hebrew common dual participle מקטלים/קוטלים:

Zech. 4:10 עיני יהוה המה משוטטים

they are the eyes of YHWH ranging (c. dual)

The subject of this passage is unquestionably feminine dual and the pronoun המה has already been shown to be common dual.<sup>69</sup> Thus it would appear that the participle here is also common dual.

### Summary

The charts below present the material discussed in this article in paradigm form:

<sup>66</sup> E.g., Gen. 20:17, 29:20, 30:39, 41:27; Lev. 26:33, Judg. 21:21, I Kings 11:3; Isa. 17:9, 19:18, 49:11; Hos. 14:1, 14:7; Ps. 16:4, 102:28; Prov. 3:2, 16:3, Job 3:24, 16:22; Song 6:9, Esth. 1:20; Dan. 11:41, 11:44; Sir. 9:5. I would explain these forms as characteristic of ancient spoken Hebrew, analogous to the use of third person masculine *yaktubū* (or variations thereof) in place of the third person feminine plural *yaktubna* in spoken Arabic. See my doctoral dissertation, pp. 123–30; and W. Chomsky, *Hebrew, the Eternal Language* (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 161, 164. Note that in Mishnaic Hebrew, widely recognized as the colloquial Hebrew of Greco-Roman times, if not earlier, תקטלנה forms are wanting and יקטלו forms are used for the third person feminine plural as well as for the third person masculine plural; cf. M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1970), p. 71.

<sup>67</sup> *UT*, pp. 75, 154.

<sup>68</sup> Edel, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 74, 207–08; and Gardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40. See above, p. 52, n. 62, for equating Egyptian *sdm-f* with the Semitic imperfect.

<sup>69</sup> See above, p. 40.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

	INDEPENDENT	SUFFIXED
3rd person common dual	המה (ה)	ם(ה)-
2nd person common dual	* אתם	כם-

VERBS

	PERFECT	IMPERFECT	PARTICIPLE
3rd person common dual	קטלה	יקטלו	מקטלים/קוטלים
2nd person common dual	קטלחם	* חקטלו	

Not long ago Dahood wrote: "The extensive use of the dual in Ugaritic . . . leads one to suppose that Hebrew employed the dual more widely than is customarily admitted."<sup>70</sup> This paper has demonstrated that Dahood was correct. Hebrew, like Arabic, Ugaritic, and Egyptian (and Akkadian) made wide use of dual pronouns and dual verbs.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that Hebrew continued to use dual pronouns and verbs, at least vestigially, well into late antiquity. Although many of the passages cited are from early works such as the Pentateuch,<sup>72</sup> Judges, and Samuel, and many are from

<sup>70</sup> M. Dahood, *Psalms I* (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), p. 98.

<sup>71</sup> I hasten to add, however, that nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is this usage 100% consistent. Thus Zech. 5:10 reads המה but 5:9 uses ולהנה; Gen. 19:9 reads מהם but 19:8 uses אתהן; Deut. 27:2 reads אתם but 27:3 uses עליהן; Ezek. 23:45-47 reads אותהם, עליהם, בנייהם, but 23:46-47 uses אתהן, עליהן, אותהן, ובחיתהן; and Ruth 1:8-19 reads עמכם, לכם (2x), מכם, שחיהם, but the same section uses עליהן להן (2x). Similar examples could be cited for the verbs. The conclusion to be reached is that Biblical Hebrew, no matter how many duals are attested, already represents a stage of the language when the dual was receding.

<sup>72</sup> Thirteen of the 43 examples of dual pronominal suffixes appear in the Pentateuch. Although duals were used as late as the time of Ben Sira, such a high concentration of dual forms points to an early composition of the entire Pentateuch. This is especially true for the so-called "P" stratum, in which nine of these thirteen dual personal pronouns appear (Exod. 28:9, 28:11, 28:14, 28:26, 28:27, 30:4, 39:7, 39:18, 39:20). Nevertheless, one still finds R. Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew* (Missoula, Mont., 1976), pp. 85-115, 159-60, arguing for a late date for the so-called "Priestly Document." He partially bases his argument on the above pronouns being third person feminine plurals ending in *mem* instead of

works which are difficult to date, e.g., Proverbs, Psalms, and Job, a number of the dual forms cited in this article appear in works of an unquestionably late date. Here may be cited from the 6th century, Ezek. 23:45, 23:46, 23:47, 23:49; Zech. 4:10, 5:9, 5:10; Mal. 2:7; from the 5th–4th century, II Chr. 7:15, 15:7 (both passages without parallels in Kings); and latest of all from ca. 180 B.C.E., Sir. 15:20, 21:27.

That Hebrew should have preserved a feature such as dual pronouns and verbs—which, if the Ugaritic evidence is revealing, must have been exceedingly common in 2nd millennium Canaanite—until Hellenistic times, should not be surprising. Hebrew, especially the Judean variety, was a conservative dialect used in the relatively isolated mountainous regions of Canaan.<sup>73</sup> William Moran noted a similar situation in Akkadian: although dual personal pronouns were no longer used in native Akkadian after the 20th century B.C.E., they appear in the El-Amarna letters originating from Canaan in the 14th century; “Though not without parallel . . . this is surely the most extraordinary example of the tenacity and conservatism of the western scribal tradition.”<sup>74</sup> The persistence of the dual pronouns and verbs in Hebrew into the Greco-Roman period is a result of that same tradition.

the usual *nun* (*ibid.*, pp. 99, 103–04). Closer examination, however, reveals them to be third person common duals, and Polzin’s theory is thus greatly weakened. See further Gary Rendsburg, “Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of ‘P,’” *JANESCU*, 12 (1980), 65–80, especially 74, 75, 77.

<sup>73</sup> Chomsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>74</sup> Moran, *op. cit.*, p. 53.