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,¹
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.² In recent years Robert
Whiting has shown that Akkadian also uses dual personal prono-
nouns.³ 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 demon-
strate this is to use an example, in this case the third person
common dual independent pronoun, which, based on the com-
parative evidence (cf. Arabic humā and a reconstructed Ugaritic
*hm₄), would be (נְמָ). Since these consonants are the same as

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1 S. Moscati, ed., An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic
Languages (Wiesbaden, 1969), pp. 102, 106, 110–11.
2 E. Edel, Altägyptische Grammatik (Rome, 1955/64), pp. 70–80; A. Gardiner,
3 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.
4 Cf. C. H. Gordon, UT, p. 149. J. Aistleitner, Wörterbuch der urgaritischen
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 "it"; 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 (המַהו, it is impossible to tell when which of the two is being used. That is to say, if (המַהו 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), 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 (המַה are different from those of the third person feminine plural pronoun (הא, it is possible to tell which of the two is being used. That is to say, if (הא is used to refer to a feminine pair, it can only be the third person feminine plural pronoun. But if (המ 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. Coupric and Viktor Christian both cited the following two passages with the third person common dual pronoun (המ referring to a feminine pair:

Zech. 5:10

אֵּנָא המֶה מֶלֶלְלָת אָזֶה הָעָיָה

where are they (c. dual) taking the tub?
The antecedent is שַחְיָה נְשִׁים, “two women,” in Zech. 5:9.

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5 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.

Ruth 1:22 and they (c. dual) came to Bethlehem
The antecedent is Ruth and Naomi earlier in the verse.

Third person common dual (םֲהִמָּם) also occurs in the following two verses:
Zech. 4:10 they (c. dual) are the eyes of YHWH ranging
Song 6:5 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 הנְָּמָה 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?" Campbell thus concluded that הנְָּמָה cannot mean "they" here, and so identified it with the Ugaritic emphasizing particle hm and translated it "now as it happened." But J. C. de Moor has effectively shown that hm never has this function in Ugaritic, and therefore it should not be sought in Hebrew. Given the number of times the book of

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7 For the duality of the participle מְשָׁמוֹטָּים, "ranging," below, p. 56.
9 E. F. Campbell, Ruth (Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 78.
10 Ibid.
11 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.
12 Similarly, E. L. Greenstein, "Another Attestation of Initial h > ָּ 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. hm(h) 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 הָם as a pronoun.
Ruth uses dual pronouns, it is better to parse הַמָּה here as another instance of this usage.

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

The independent pronoun is here the masculine form הֶם, 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.

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. סִי is the third person common dual pronoun referring to the feminine dual antecedent עיני, “your eyes.” Further evidence for the duality of the independent pronoun here is the two-fold use of the common dual pronominal suffix ס(נ) in the following verse, Song 6:6. On these forms, Pope is silent.

There are no instances of the second person common dual pronoun *סָה in Hebrew. That it existed, however, may be determined by both the comparative evidence, e.g., Arabic ٣انتمā and Egyptian ṯn, 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 –cumā and the Ugaritic –km, the corresponding Hebrew second person common dual suffix would be סָה. 

13 See below, pp. 42, 44.
14 M. H. Pope, Song of Songs (Garden City, N.Y., 1977), p. 564.
15 See below, p. 47.
16 Cf. Edel, op. cit., pp. 70, 75; and Gardiner, op. cit., p. 39.
17 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.
18 That Arabic –cumā ends in a long vowel and Hebrew ס– 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 הַמָּה in Ruth 1:22, Campbell (with the aid of Francis Andersen) did note the duality of the pronominal suffix סָם—. He cited the following instances of סָם— referring to a feminine pair: \(^{19}\)
Gen. 31:9
��צל אלדים את המקנה אבייס
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 עָמָכְךָ חסד
may YHWH deal kindly with you (c. dual)
The antecedent of the above passage as well as the following three passages is שִׁתֶּךָ יְהוָה, “her two daughters-in-law,” in Ruth 1:8.
Ruth 1:9
יתֵן יהוה לָכָּם
YHWH will grant you (c. dual)
Ruth 1:11
הָעִרְוֹר לְבֵית בְּנֵי זָרָי לְכֵם לְאַחֲשָׁה
do I still have sons in my womb to become husbands for you (c. dual)
Ruth 1:13
אַל בּוֹנֵי כִּי מִרְּלָל מַעֲרַי מָכָּה
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 aniceps 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 –קמעָ/ֶס— also holds for –המָ/ֶס– and קָתָבשָ/ֶס, both discussed below, and חָמָ/ֶס discussed above.

\(^{19}\) 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.\(^{20}\)

Recently, Jack Sasson accepted Campbell’s position on “the (alleged) (mis)use of the pronominal suffixes in Ruth.”\(^{21}\)

Based on the Arabic –humā and the Ugaritic –hm,\(^{22}\) the Hebrew third person common dual suffix would be גה(ו) –.\(^{23}\) Campbell citing the following examples of this usage:\(^{24}\)

Gen. 18:20

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.”\(^{25}\)

Gen. 19:9

we will harm you more than them (c. dual)

The antecedent is שתי בנה, “two daughters,” in Gen. 19:8.

Exod. 1:21

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.

\(^{20}\) Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65.


\(^{22}\) Whiting, *JNES*, 31 (1972), 332–36, discussed the Akkadian third person common dual –isum which, while cognate to the Arabic, Ugaritic, and Hebrew forms, is phonetically more distant.

\(^{23}\) Christian, *op. cit.*, p. 40, suggested that גה(ו) – 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 גה(ו) – suffix sometimes has a singular antecedent, e.g., Isa. 44:21, Job 20:23, 22:2, 27:23 (twice); in this last cited verse, מעלי is parallel to מעלי. Thus, this suffix is better treated as a variant of both the third person masculine singular י – and the third person masculine plural גה(ו) –.

\(^{24}\) Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65. The two passages from Ruth 1:19, 4:11 were also cited by Couprie, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

\(^{25}\) Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
Judg. 16:3

ירהוח בכרת בית העירה בכרת מוהות רימם לשם הבירה
ורֵעֶל 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

הנה באה בהר הים הפינון ארצה נא והוסה ועטו אוזה
рош הדם חותם עינים

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

וְשִּׁחַר פְּרֹתֵה עַלָּהָ אֲרָרָה לִשְׂכַּל עַלָּהָ עֲלֵימֵה
כָּנֵי יָמָּהוּ מַעְחַרְדָּהוּ הָרִים

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

רַק הָאָשֶׁר פְּרֹתֵה וְיָבֹאָה בָּעַנְגֵּל אַיָּא בִּגְוָמֵה כָּל בְּרֵית

and they took two milch cows and harnessed them
(c. dual) to the cart, and they shut up their (c. dual)
calves inside

Ruth 1:19

וְחַלָּהוּ שָׁחוֹם

and the two of them (c. dual) traveled

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

Ruth 4:11

בוֹרֶה לְכָלָה אָשֶׁר בּוֹנַת בִּי בִּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

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 ב(ו)—
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 posses-
Compare also Arabic –humā.”

26 Campbell’s “Judg. 16:13” is a misprint.
27 This example was also cited by D. N. Freedman in R. G. Boling, Judges
(Garden City, N.Y., 1975), p. 276.
noted the same usage in I Sam. 6:12; see below, p. 46.
An alternative but incorrect explanation for the use of לְהָם, “for them (c. dual),” in Exod. 1:21 was offered by U. Cassuto. He attributed the use of the ס(ד)– suffix to phonological considerations, that is, the bilabial ס – appears instead of the nasal dental י – because the next word, דָּוִים, “houses,” begins with the bilabial ב. The phonological argument may work for Exod. 1:21, but it cannot explain the dozens of other examples where ס(ד)– 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 ס(ד)– form, it is methodologically sounder to propose a morphological solution to the problem. Accordingly, לְהָם, “for them,” in Exod. 1:21 exhibits the common dual pronominal suffix.

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

Exod. 28:9

לָקַחְתָּ וַתֵּעָבֵר אֶלָּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

take two lazuli stones and engrave on them (c. dual)

Exod. 28:11

מָסַחְתָּ וַתֵּעָבֵר אֶלָּי יִשְׂרָאֵל . . . מַסַּכְתָּ וַתֵּעָבֵר אֶלָּי יִשְׂרָאֵל

engrave two stones . . . make them (c. dual) to be enclosed in settings of gold

Exod. 28:14

וַיַּקְרָבָה וַתֵּעָבֵר אֶלָּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מַגְּלָה עֲעָשֶׂה אָתָּה

and two chains of pure gold, make them (c. dual) into cords

Exod. 28:26

עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל מַגְּלָה וַתֵּעָבֵר אָתָּה

make two rings of gold and place them (c. dual)

30 Thus the theory of M. Dahood, “Canaanite-Phoenician Influence in Qoheleth.” Biblica, 33 (1952), 43, that ס(ד)– 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 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.

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 לְהָם has been established, this view should be discarded. Were more than two midwives delivering Israelite babies, the author most probably would have used הָלָה, “for them (f.pl.),” and not לְהָם.
Exod. 28:27 make two rings of gold and put them (c. dual)
Exod. 30:4 make two rings of gold... by which (c. dual) to carry it

This same verse also exhibits the third person feminine dual perfect verb.32
Exod. 39:7 he placed them (c. dual) on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod

The antecedent is אבן שמה, “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 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 they made two rings of gold and put them (c. dual) on the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod

I Sam. 6:12 and the lords of the Philistines went after them (c. dual)

The antecedent is two cows,” in I Sam. 6:10.
Jer. 33:24 the two families which YHWH chose, He has rejected them (c. dual)
Ezek. 23:45 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 summon an assembly against them (c. dual)
Ezek. 23:47 let them kill their (c. dual) sons and their (c. dual) daughters

Zech. 5:9 and behold two women came out with the wind in their (c. dual) wings

32 See below, p. 50.
Proverbs 6:20-21

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 of Solomon 6:6

all of them (c. dual) perfectly paired and none of them (c. dual) missing

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

Ecclesiastes 2:10

call Asher Shalal Beni Lo Aszfati HaZaHa

and whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them (c. dual)

Two other passages which may exhibit the third person common dual מ(ן)—occur in Deuteronomy 27:2, II Chronicles 23:22:

Deuteronomy 27:2

you shall put up large stones and coat them with plaster

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

I Chronicles 23:22

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 Chronicles 23:21–23). If this was the case, the suffixes in ויאזומא, “married them,” and א(*)ים, “their brethren,” are to be construed as duals. Otherwise they too are to be treated as masculine pronouns referring to feminine substantives.35

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33 There are numerous references in the Pentateuch to the two stones of the Decalogue, e.g., Exodus 34:1, 34:4; Deuteronomy 4:13, 5:19, 9:10, 9:11, 10:1, 10:3.


Mention should also be made of the first person common dual suffix -ny known from Ugaritic and Egyptian, to which should also be compared Homeric νοῖ. However, it is highly unlikely that Biblical Hebrew used this form; at least no sure example of a first person common dual ינ 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.

Since the third person masculine dual perfect is katabā in Arabic, qtl in Ugaritic, and parsā in Akkadian, the corresponding Hebrew form presumably was *kūl or with final mater lectionis *kūl. 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 *kūl:

Job 6:19–20

the caravans of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them, they were ashamed because they had trusted (c. dual [?])

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36 UT, p. 37.
37 Edel, op. cit., pp. 70, 72–73; and Gardiner, op. cit., p. 39.
39 The existence of dual verbs in Hebrew generally has not been recognized. Note the statement by Fontino, op. cit., p. 59, “Les hébraïsants 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 Hebreuws de dualis ook in het pronomen personale, het verbum (?) en de pronominale suffixen gekend heeft.”
40 UT, pp. 70, 153.
42 The Egyptian third person masculine dual old perfective sd'm-wy may also be cited as a cognate form; cf. Edel, op. cit., pp. 271, 274–75; and Gardiner, op. cit., p. 234.
43 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 התמה, “had trusted,” so most scholars read רשתו. But if we consider 좌ת as masculine dual subject, MT may be retained by parsing בעית as the third person masculine dual perfect written without mater lectionis ל.

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 הקטלה 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 הקטלה:

I Sam. 4:15 עניין לו המקה
his eyes were fixed (c. dual)

Ps. 68:14 כפות ידה נתמלה בכפות
the wings of the dove are covered (c. dual) with silver

Ps. 73:2K שפה אשו
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:

I Kgs. 14:6 רגלה באמה במחנה
her feet as they came to the door

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

The Masoretes pointed the verb as a participle, הָבֶלֶם, and though Dahood is silent on the issue, one must assume that he proposes to point the verb as a perfect, בָּלֶם. 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 א֞דָוַחֲנַת הָֽעַשֲׁנָה יִצְלְבוּת לִבְרֵים 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 מ(ה) – יִצְלְבוּת לִבְרֵים

Deut. 21:7 כיּרֵנוּ לָא שפֶךְ אִית הָדֹם 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 יִצְלְלוּת. Listed below are the cognate forms:

Egyptian sdm-ty
Arabic katabata
Ugaritic qltt
Akkadian parsā

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 < *yalad-tā. 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 qataltā would be הֶלְלַת (as in the second person masculine singular perfect) and not הָלֵל, we must look elsewhere to explain the third person feminine dual perfect in Hebrew. The answer apparently lies with the Akkadian

48 See above, p. 46.
49 Edel, op. cit., pp. 271, 274–75; and Gardiner, op. cit., p. 234.
50 UT, pp. 70, 153.
51 Ungnad-Matouš, op. cit., p. 144. The Akkadian form is of common gender; see above, p. 48, n. 41, and below, p. 51.
52 UT, p. 70. Note I Sam. 4:19 בָּלֶם where *lalidt > *laladt (via the shift of i > a in an originally closed [here doubly closed] accented syllable) > *lalat (via assimilation, as in Ugaritic ylt < *ylidt) > lālat (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. The same pattern exists in Hebrew. We have already postulated third person masculine dual *ḵenā, and now we have seen examples of third person feminine dual ḫesā. Thus ḫesā, 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.

If Hebrew ḫesā and Akkadian parsā are to be identified as the same form, one might ask why the Canaanite ā > ō 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 א, Arabic qām(a) = Hebrew ס (with pure long ā as evidenced in [<i>yômim</i>]) versus סבשו]. Similarly, the Arabic participle kātib = Hebrew כותב, but the Arabic nomen agentis ṣabbāḥ = Hebrew ṣבב Thus the Hebrew third person common dual perfect ḫesā is another example where the ā > ō shift does not occur.

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 qitl, 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 ḫesā replaces feminine ḫesā, the latter appearing only vestigially.

With the second person dual perfect, there is greater agreement among the Semitic languages. Since this form is katabatumā in Arabic and qitlm in Ugaritic, one may posit a Hebrew form ḫesā. Since this form is the same as the second person

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53 Ungnad-Matouš, op. cit., p. 144.
55 Moscati, op. cit., p. 51, considers the ā > ō shift in Hebrew "nonconditioned," 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.
56 UT, p. 153.
57 The second person dual perfect (=permansive) is not attested in Akkadian, but see the comments of Ungnad-Matouš, op. cit., p. 64, and Fontino, op. cit., pp. 43–46. The Egyptian cognate form is the common sdm-ywy, 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 קְלָלָהּ and the second person feminine plural קְלָלָתָהּ. 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: 58

Ruth 1:8 נַעֲשֶׂר עֲשָׂרָה וּמֵהָהּ וַעֲמִידָה
as you have dealt (c. dual) with the dead and with me
Naomi is addressing שֵׁיָר קָלָהָהּ, “her two daughters-in-law,” mentioned in Ruth 1:7.

The second instance of this usage is the following:
Ezek. 23:49 יְרָעָם כִּי אֲנִי אֲדֻנִי יְהוָה
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, yaktubānī being used for the former and taktubānī for the latter. In Ugaritic, there apparently is a consistent interchange of yqtln and tqtln, with both forms being used for both genders. 59 In Akkadian, a truly common form is used, iparrasā. 60 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. 61 In either case, a Hebrew third person common dual קְלַלְלָי may be posited. 62, 63

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

58 Campbell, op. cit., p. 65.
59 UT, pp. 75, 154.
60 Ungnad-Matouš, op. cit., p. 144.
61 Moscati, op. cit., p. 145.
62 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 sḏm-f construction (cf. O. Rössler, “Verbalbau und Verbalflexion in den semitohamitisichen Sprachen,” ZDMG, 100 [1950], 461–514), where a third person common dual sḏm-sny is used; cf. Edel, op. cit., pp. 70, 74, 207–08; and Gardiner,
The final vowel of this יִכְלָל form would not have been -ע as in the third person masculine plural, but rather -ו, the result of the Canaanite ָָא > ֤ו shift. Both ֤ו and -ו are represented by the same mater lectionis in Hebrew, י, so that both the third person masculine plural and the third person common dual would have been written יִכְלָל. The Masoretes did not recognize the dual verbs and thus pointed all יִכְלָל forms as יִכְלָל. 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 יִכְלָל.

This ֤ו vowel is to be identified with the suffixed י representing the nominative construct dual in the Gezer Calendar four times:

- line 1 יִרְהַר אָסִיק two months of gathering
- lines 1–2 יִרְהַר רָע two months of sowing
- line 2 יִרְהַר לָשְׁב two months of later sowing
- line 6 יִרְהַר וֹּרָר two months of pruning

The same ֤ו may also occur in the place name שְׁמַיְרְא בּ, “Samaria,” for in Aramaic it is treated as a dual: שְׁמַיְרְא בּ, 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 כֶּפֶרֶם מַחְוֵנִים, and at least in later times, יִרְוְשָׁלַם.

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.

More than a century ago, F. Böttcher, Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache (Leipzig, 1863), II, §931, claimed that the יִכְלָל in Gen. 30:38, I Sam. 6:12, are duals. In the first example, however, the subject is collective of יִכְלָל, “sheep.” Only in the second example is the subject dual, but this may be coincidental. It is better to treat these יִכְלָל forms as Hebrew reflexes of the third person feminine plural יָכְלַב in Arabic, يُكَلُب 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 Fontino, op. cit., p. 59.

64 The duality of cities may also be exhibited by the two Udm’s, ְרָת and ְרָת, in the Ugaritic Krt epic (lines 108–09, 210–11, 276–77), and the two Sidon’s, ְרָת and ְרָת, listed in the Akkadian report of Sennacherib’s third campaign. Also note Hebrew ְרָת (Amos 6:2) and ְרָת (Josh. 11:8, 19:28), implying something like יִכְלָל and יִכְלָל; 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 קְפֶרֶל 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 קְפֶרֶל form is used, the verb must be the third person feminine plural. But if a קְפֶרֶל form is used, the verb is probably the third person common dual.

The following passages all include קְפֶרֶל forms as the predicates of a feminine dual subject:
II Sam. 4:1 וַיִּזְדָּרֵד וְהָנָּחָה his hands weakened (c. dual)
Isa. 51:5 וְהַנִּעָר יִשְׁמַעְתֶּנָּה and my arms will judge (c. dual) the nations
Isa. 59:7 לְשׁוּם לְשׁוּם יָרְשָׁה their feet run (c. dual) after evil and hasten (c. dual)
Jer. 13:16 יִנְגֵּן לֹֽאְלִילָם your feet stumble (c. dual)
Zeph. 3:16 אָל֚וֹ יָרְדֵּכְנָּה do not let your hands weaken (c. dual)
Mal. 2:7 שָׁפֵיתְךָ חָיֹה יִשְׁמַר וְדַעְתָּה the lips of a priest guard (c. dual) knowledge
Ps. 11:4 עַיִּינַי יִצְבָּה his eyes behold (c. dual)
Ps. 63:4 שָׁפֵיתְךָ יִשְׁבָּחַתְךָ my lips will praise (c. dual) you
Prov. 1:16 וְנֶעְלֵיהֶם לְמָאִשְׁתָּהוֹרֵּכְנָּה for their feet run (c. dual) after evil and hasten (c. dual)
Prov. 4:25 עַיִּינַיִּים יִבְצֵּשִּׁׁת 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 שפיחך נצר
your lips shall preserve (c. dual)

Prov. 7:11 אל ישכון גלית
her feet do not abide (c. dual)

Prov. 10:21 שפיח צדיק יעיש ברים
the lips of the righteous feed (c. dual) many

Prov. 10:32 שפיח צדיק יуется רזון
the lips of the righteous know (c. dual) delight

Prov. 15:7 שפיח חכמה יורה דעת
the lips of the wise disperse (c. dual) knowledge

Prov. 18:6 שפיח כיסל בני ברך
the lips of the fool enter (c. dual) into strife

Prov. 23:33 עיניך ירא
your eyes will behold (c. dual)

Job 15:6 שפיחך ענה
your lips testify (c. dual)

Job 21:20Q ירא עני
his eyes will behold (c. dual)

II Chr. 7:15 עיני ירח综合征ת
my eyes will be (c. dual) open

II Chr. 15:7iola ירוח ידך
do not let your hands weaken (c. dual)

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

Sir. 15:20 עיני אלה ירא מעשיה
the eyes of God will behold (c. dual) his works

Sir. 21:27 שפיח ידך כל אחד ישתוו
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 ספאת is discordantly construed with the masculine verb; the discordance is even greater when the subject precedes the verb, as here.”65 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 בשבחוכך, “will praise (c. dual) you,” as a dual form, there would be no need for emendation.

65 Dahood, op. cit., p. 98.
given the number of times קִסְצֵל forms are used with feminine plural subjects. On Ps. 11:4 Dahood made no comment.

For the second person dual imperfect, Semitic languages are unanimous in using common forms, Arabic taktušānī, Ugaritic ṭqṭln, and Egyptian sdm-tny. On the basis of these forms we may posit a Hebrew second person common dual imperfect קִסְצֵל, 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 קִסְצֵל forms in the Bible, it presumably existed in ancient Hebrew.

There is also the question of the participle duals. Although the Arabic use of kātibānī for the masculine and kātibatānī 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 קִסְצֵל:

Zech. 4:10

ועֵזְיוּ יְהוָה הַמֵּדָה מְשָׁטְתָּם

they are the eyes of YHWH ranging (c. dual)
The subject of this passage is unquestionably feminine dual and the pronoun הַמֵּדָה has already been shown to be common dual. 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:

66 E.g., Gen. 20:17, 29:20, 30:39, 41:27; Lev. 26:33, Judg. 21:21, 1 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, קִסְצֵל forms are wanting and קִסְצִל 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.

67 UT, pp. 75, 154.


69 See above, p. 40.
# Personal Pronouns

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person common dual</td>
<td>אָתָם</td>
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## Verbs

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<th>IMPERFECT</th>
<th>PARTICIPLE</th>
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<td>רָקִּסֵל</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd person common dual</td>
<td>קִסֶּלָה</td>
<td>רָקִּסֶּלָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.”

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.

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 are from early works such as the Pentateuch, Judges, and Samuel, and many are from

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71 I hasten to add, however, that nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is this usage 100% consistent. Thus Zech. 5:10 reads יהלמה but 5:9 uses יהלמה; Gen. 19:9 reads מחם but 19:8 uses מחו; Deut. 27:2 reads קסלו but 27:3 uses קסל; Ezek. 23:45–47 reads בַּנָּהוֹת, אַחַת, אָתָם, עֶבֶרָה, עָלִיתָה, אַחַת, אָתָם; but 23:46–47 uses בַּנָּהוֹת, אַחַת, אָתָם, עֶבֶרָה, עָלִיתָה, אַחַת, אָתָם; and Ruth 1:8–19 reads לֶבֶם, עִלָּה, לֶבֶם, לֶבֶם, לֶבֶם, לֶבֶם, but the same section uses לֶבֶם, שְׁדִירָה, לֶבֶם, but לֶבֶם, שְׁדִירָה (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.

72 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 Hellentistic times, should not be surprising. Hebrew, especially the Judean variety, was a conservative dialect used in the relatively isolated mountainous regions of Canaan. 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.”

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.


74 Moran, op. cit., p. 53.