

The Construct Genitive Phrase and Its Component Parts in Parallelistic Structures

Shamir Yona

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Introduction

The phenomenon of parsing stereotypical phrases and showing how their separate components can stand one opposite the other in parallelism, both in Biblical and Ugaritic poetry, has been discussed in various studies.¹ However, as far as I can tell, most of the research has not dealt with cases in which, side-by-side with the parsed phrase, the complete phrase stands alone as a whole. At times the whole phrase appears first, and then is followed by the detached components; other times this arrangement is reversed. In addition, I have found a third type in which the construct genitive chain appears between the two single words, which constitute the construct and genitive components of the chain.

Avishur has noted eight examples within Biblical poetry following the pattern $x + y // xy$, which teach us of "a more complex development of a model in which the two components of the phrase appear separately and then later are conjoined."² But upon closer examination, this model only holds true in the following five of his eight examples.

¹ See especially Ezra Z. Melamed, "Hendiadys in the Bible," *Tarbiz* 16 (1945), 173-89 [Hebrew]; and idem, "Phrases Which are Broken up in Biblical Poetry," in *Studies in the Bible Presented to Professor M. Z. Segal* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1965), 188-219 [Hebrew]. In these articles Melamed discusses this phenomenon in the Bible. Mitchell Dahood ("The Breakup of Stereotyped Phrases: Some New Examples," *JANES* 5 [The Gaster Festschrift; 1973], 83-89) calls attention to additional examples from the Hebrew Bible and also discusses examples from Ugaritic poetry.

² Yitzhak Avishur, *Repetition and the Parallelism in Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* (Tel Aviv: Archeological Center, 2002), 175-76 [Hebrew].

Ps. 90:9-10

כִּי כָל יָמֵינוּ פָּנוּ בְּעִבְרֹתֶיךָ / כְּלִינוּ שָׁנֵינוּ כְּמוֹ הַגָּה
יָמֵי שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה / וְאִם בְּגִבוֹרֹת שְׂמוֹנִים שָׁנָה ...

For all our **days** are passed away in Thy wrath;
We bring our **years** to an end as a tale that is told.
The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
Or even by reason of strength fourscore years... (JPS)

In this example, the construct phrase preserves the order of the separate components which precede it. Together *yāmîm* and *šānîm* form a regular word pair in all the ancient Semitic languages, as noted by Avishur, and in this case they are combined into the expression *yēmê šēnôtênû*, "the days of our years."³

Ps. 32:5

חַטָּאתִי אִוְדִיעָךְ וְעוֹנִי לֹא כִסִּיתִי
אָמַרְתִּי אוֹדָה עָלַי כְּשָׁעִי לֹה'
וְאַתָּה נִשְׁאַתָּ עוֹן חַטָּאתִי סֵלָה

I acknowledged **my sin** unto Thee, and **mine iniquity** have I not hid;
I said: 'I will make confession concerning my transgressions unto the
LORD'
and Thou, Thou forgavest **the iniquity of my sin**. Selah (JPS)

In this instance, Avishur notes the chiasitic structure of the two separate words which form a synonymous pair, and their occurrence in the subsequent construct genitive chain: "As opposed to the previous example, in which the author worked according to the standard order, placing the **genitive first and the construct second**, here the author made use of a

³The example here cited would seem to prove wrong the suggestion of *BHS* that one should perhaps eliminate the construct element for reasons of meter.

chiastic style and placed **the first word as the construct and the second as the genitive**.⁴ There is no doubt some confusion here, and in the first phrase he meant to say: "placing the construct first and the genitive second," whereas in this last phrase he should have said, "placed the first word as the genitive and the second as the construct."

Ezek. 34:26

A chiastic structure is also found in this verse:

וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם וְסָבִיבוֹת גְּבֻעָתִי בְרָכָה

וְהוֹרַדְתִּי הַגֶּשֶׁם בְּעָתוֹ גִּשְׁמִי בְרָכָה יְהִיוּ

And I will make them and the places round about My hill **a blessing**;

And I will cause **the shower** to come down in its season; there shall be **showers of blessing**. (JPS)

However, I do not accept Avishur's suggested division of this verse into two lines. I would rather divide the second line into two, forming a three-lined structure:

וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם וְסָבִיבוֹת גְּבֻעָתִי בְרָכָה

וְהוֹרַדְתִּי הַגֶּשֶׁם בְּעָתוֹ

גִּשְׁמִי בְרָכָה יְהִיוּ

And I will make them and the places round about My hill **a blessing**;

And I will cause **the shower** to come down in its season;

There shall be **showers of blessing**. (JPS)

Prov. 6:1-3

בְּנֵי אִם עֲרַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ / תִּקְעֶתָ לְזֶרַח כַּפֶּיךָ

נוֹקְשֶׁת בְּאֶמְרֵי פִיךָ / גִּלְכֶּתָ בְּאֶמְרֵי פִיךָ

עֲשֵׂה זֹאת אִפּוֹא בְּנֵי וְהִנָּצַל / כִּי בָאתָ בְּכַף רֵעֶךָ

⁴ Emphasis added.

לִּי הַתְּרַפָּס וְהָבָה רֵעִיךָ

My son, if thou art become surety **for thy neighbor**,
if thou hast struck **thy hands** for a stranger,
Thou art snared by the words of thy mouth,
thou art caught by the words of thy mouth.
Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
seeing thou art come **into the hand of thy neighbor**;
go, humble thyself, and urge **thy neighbor**. (JPS)

In these verses, Avishur sees a further development of this model: "The author used a similar method as [that seen] in the previous example, but he repeated the lone word *rē'êkâ* at the end of the segment, and the construct chain has been placed between these separated components." In this short unit, we do undoubtedly see a change in method, since after joining together the two solitary words into the phrase *kap rē'êkâ*, the word *rē'êkâ* returns at the end of the unit by itself. In my opinion, Avishur uses the terminology "separated" incorrectly because the term "separated" implies a basic form without any added descriptive terms (the "separated" form of *rē'êkâ* is *rē'a* and of *kappêkâ* is *kap*).

Ezek. 23:29

In this example, similar to the preceding one, the construct genitive chain is found between the solitary words:

וַעֲשׂוּ אוֹתָךְ בְּשִׂנְאָה / וְלָקְחוּ כָּל יְגִיעֶךָ
וַעֲזֹבוּךָ עִירָם וְעָרֶיהָ / וְנָגְלָה עֲרוֹת זְנוּנֶיךָ
וְזָמְתָה וְתִזְנוּתֶיךָ

And they shall deal with thee in hatred,
And shall take away all thy labor,
And shall leave thee naked and **bare**;
And the **nakedness of thy harlotries** shall be uncovered,

Both thy lewdness and **thy harlotries**. (JPS)

As I mentioned above, Avishur gives three more examples, but these do not fit the $x + y // xy$ structure.⁵

Other research related to stereotypical phrases found juxtaposed to their component parts in Biblical prose can be found in a short article by Braulik, in which he analyzes five examples from Deut. 4:1-40.⁶ In these examples, however, the components of the phrase appear somewhat at a distance from the whole phrase. Here we are not really interested in the types of phrases analyzed by Braulik, because they are very long—they are phrased in dry, prosaic language—but more pertinently, they are not construct genitive chains.⁷

At this point I would like to present a few examples of each of the different variations of this phenomenon, arranged according to the order in which the words and the construct genitive chains formed from them appear:

- a. The construct chain comes before the appearance of the words as detached elements: (ab//a, b).
- b. The words as detached elements appear first, and then further along are joined to form the construct genitive chain: (a, b//ab).
- c. The construct genitive chain appears in between the single words: (a//ab//b).

In each of these variations, the order of the detached words can be reversed in order to make a chiasmic structure between them and the

⁵In Ezek. 23:45; 39:17-18; and Ps. 80:16, 18, we find the basic double model. This phenomenon appears in the Bible both in poetry and prose, and can be found in extra-Biblical literature, in Ugaritic literature, and in Ben Sira; see Shamir Yona, *The Many Faces of Repetition* (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University Press, 2013), 166-74 [Hebrew].

⁶Georg Braulik, "Aufbrechen von geprägten Wörterbindungen und Zusammenfassen von stereotypen Ausdrücken in der alttestamentlichen Kunstprosa," *Semitics* 1 (1970), 7-11.

⁷For example, in v. 9 we have the complete unit (a + b), *raq hiššāmēr lēkā ûšēmōr napšēkā mē'ōd*, and its component elements follow in v. 1: (1) *wēnišmartem mē'ōd lēnapšōtēkem*, which is the second element of the unit; (2), *hiššāmērū lākem* (v. 23), which is the first element of the unit. Thus the separated elements form a structure which is chiasmic in relationship to the complete unit.

construct genitive chain. Thus, in the first type the order would become *ab//b, a*; in the second type, *b, a//ab*; and in the third, *b//ab//a*.

While most of my examples will be taken from Biblical poetry, I also have included several from Biblical prose and from extra-Biblical literature.

The Construct Phrase Parallel to its Component Parts in Biblical Poetry

Pattern: ab//a, b

Isa. 59:8

דֶּרֶךְ שָׁלוֹם לֹא יָדְעוּ / וְאֵין מִשְׁפָּט בְּמַעְגְּלֵהֶם
נְתִיבוֹתֵיהֶם עֲקָשׁוּ לָהֶם / כֹּל דֶּרֶךְ בָּהּ לֹא יָדַע שָׁלוֹם

The way of peace they know not,
And there is no right in their goings;
They have made them crooked paths,
Whosoever **goeth** therein doth not know **peace**. (JPS)

In this example, the construct chain *derek šālôm* is divided into two single words, one verbal (*dōrēk*), the other a noun (*šālôm*). In addition, the expression *lō'yādā'u* repeats itself twice, once in the first line and once in the fourth. Note also the use of *ma'gēlôtām* and *nētîbôtêhem*, which belong to the same semantic field as *derek*, and strengthens the connection between the lines.

From a structural point of view, it should be noted that in this case an *inclusio* is formed by the presence of the construct chain at the beginning of the verse (*derek šālôm*) in correlation with the detached elements in the last line of the verse (*dōrēk, šālôm*). Finally, notice the chiasmic structure that is created by the synonymy of the two middle lines (second and third) in relation to the first and fourth lines.

There are those who see a syntactical difficulty in reading *bâh* in the last line, because it doesn't sit well with the different terms for "way" in the preceding verses, which appear in the plural (*ma'gēlôtām, nētîbôtêhem*).

Accordingly, they propose using the plural *bām*, based on the Aramaic Targum (*kol dēdārīk bēhôn*), the Syro-Hexapla, the Syriac, and the Vulgate.⁸

However, we can say with a high degree of certainty that the *inclusio* gives greater credence to the word *bāh*, referring back to *derek šālôm* (sing. fem.) in the first line. This verse, like vv. 5-7 of the same chapter, is stylistically similar to wisdom literature.⁹ Moreover, compare this verse to the repeated phrase in Isa. 48:22 *'ên šālôm 'āmar YHWH lārēšā'im* and in Isa. 57:21 *'ên šālôm 'āmar 'ēlōah lārēšā'im*.

Pattern: *b,a//ab*

Isa. 58:2

וְאֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרְשׁוּן / וְנִדְעַת דְּרָכֵי יְהוָה
כְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר צִדְקָה עָשָׂה / וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיוּ לֹא עָזַב
יִשְׁאַלּוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי צֶדֶק / קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים יִחְפְּצוּן

Yet they seek Me daily, / and delight to know My ways;
As a nation that did **righteousness**,
And forsook not the **ordinance** of their God,
They ask of Me **righteous ordinances**,
They delight to draw near unto God. (JPS)

In this verse two single words are combined into a construct genitive chain. The third line has *šedāqâ* and the fourth *mišpaṭ*. Because the poet wishes to accentuate these words he repeats them both in the fifth line, but places them together in a construct chain to give us a sense of variety: *mišpēṭê šedeq*. This stylistic variation gains support by use of the male-female parallel (*šedāqâ//šedeq*) and the singular-plural parallel (*mišpaṭ//mišpēṭê*).¹⁰

⁸ See BHS.

⁹ See Yair Hoffman, *Isaiah* (Olam Ha-Tanakh; Ramat-Gan: Revivim, 1986) [Hebrew]. He argues in his commentary on v. 8 that it is possible that an editor has inserted wisdom sayings at some stage in the development of the Book of Isaiah.

¹⁰ Concerning gender-matched parallelism, see Umberto Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1965), 36-37 [Hebrew]; Wilfred G. E. Watson, "Gender-Matched Synonymous Parallelism in the Old Testament," *JBL* 99 (1980), 321-41; idem, *Classical*

The words *mišpāṭ* and *ṣedeq* are a well-known word pair, appearing here both in parallelism and also in attached synonymous composite construct form: *mišpāṭê ṣedeq*.¹¹ The Syriac translation here is *dîṇā' wəṣādîqūtā'*, which breaks apart the construct form, as is common in that translation.

From a semantic point of view, *mišpāṭ* has two possible meanings in this verse. One is "law" as in the form *mišpaṭ ʿēlōhāw*; the second is in its more literal sense of "justice."¹²

In addition, the word *mišpāṭ* in its morphologically singular sense serves here, in my understanding, as a collective noun. In this way the poet shows he is actively looking for ways to vary his text.

The connection between the lines is further reinforced by means of the repetition of *ʿēlōhîm* in the fourth and sixth lines, and *yehpāṣûn* (at the end of the second and sixth lines).

Ps. 68:2-3¹³

יָקוֹם אֱלֹהִים יַפְּצוּ אוֹיְבָיו / וַיָּנוֹסוּ מִשְׁנָאָיו מִפָּנָיו
כִּהְגִּדְּף עָשָׁן תִּגְדֹּף / כִּהְיָס דֹּגַג מִפָּנָי אֵשׁ
יִאָבְדוּ רָשָׁעִים מִפָּנָי אֱלֹהִים

Let **God** arise, let His enemies be scattered;

And let them that hate Him flee **before Him**.

As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;¹⁴

Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 123-27; Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 41-44. Concerning singular-plural parallelism, see James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 20-21; Berlin, *Dynamics*, 44-55.

¹¹ See Yitzhak Avishur, *Constructs Made up of Synonyms in Biblical Rhetoric* (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1977), 87 [Hebrew]; and the extensive discussion of this pair in Yizhak Silber, "Ellipsis in the Bible," *Leshonenu LaAm* 221 (1972), 3-10 [Hebrew].

¹² See John L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1968) in his commentary on this verse.

¹³ On the theophany and the relation of v. 2 to the short poem about the ark in Num. 10:35, ("When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say: Advance, O Lord! May Your enemies be scattered, And may Your foes flee before You!") see, e.g., Charles and Emily G. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms*. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1907); Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1962); Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms* (3 vols.; AB; New York: Doubleday, 1966-1970) ad loc.

As wax melteth before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the **presence of God**. (JPS)

The two detached words in v. 2, *’ēlōhîm* and *pānā(y)w*, are consolidated in the last line of v. 3 into the construct genitive chain: *pěñê ’ēlōhîm*. In actuality, the contextual-stylistic connection between v. 2 and the final line of v. 3 is also attained through several synonymous verbs: *yāpûṣû* (scattered), *yānûsû* (flee), and *yō’bdû* (perish); and also through these synonymous nouns: *’ôybā(y)w* (enemies), *meśan’ā(y)w* (foes), and *rešā’îm* (wicked).

The first and second lines of v. 3 are similes. The two figures "smoke"¹⁵ and "wax" are parallel not only to the "wicked" in the third line of this verse, but also to the "enemies" and "foes" in v. 2.¹⁶ Additionally, the phrase *mippěñê ’ēš* (before the fire) in the second line of v. 3 refers back to the phrase *pěñê ’ēlōhîm* (before God) in the third line of v. 3, and also back to the single words *’ēlōhîm* and *mippānā(y)w* in v. 2.

Thereby the two contextual phrases, together with the metaphorical phrases, provide a contextual-stylistic frame for the unit as a whole.

Pattern: a//ab//b

Hos. 2:6-7

וְאֵת בְּנֵיהֶּ לֹא אֶרְחֵם

כִּי בְנֵי זְנוּנִים הֵמָּה

כִּי זִנְתָה אִמָּם

¹⁴ In the first line of v. 3 I suggest that we read *tindēpēm* rather than *tindop* (cf. Rashi: "As smoke is dispersed so may you disperse them") or *yinnādēpû* meaning "may they be dispersed" (and see Psalms Targum (היכמא דשקיר תננא ישקפון) and similarly in LXX, Peshitta, and the Vulgate. Dahood (*Psalms*) in his commentary on the verse suggested emending the verbal forms to niphal: *kēhinnādēp*, *tinnādēp*. Zvi P. Chayes (*The Book of Psalms* [Miqra Mephorash; Zhitomir: Avraham Kahana Press, 1903]), in his commentary to the verse, sees the form *tindop* as a corruption of an original *tānûr* "stove." He holds that the original text read as follows: *kēhindop ’āšān tānûr* "as the smoke of a fire disperses." As for the phrase "smoke of a fire," he refers us to Gen. 15:17: "And behold a furnace smoking and a flaming torch." Chayes holds that under the influence of *hindop* earlier in our passage in Psalm 68 *tānûr* was corrupted to *tindop*.

¹⁵ Cf. Ps. 37:20.

¹⁶ See Briggs and Briggs (*The Book of Psalms*) in their commentary to the verse.

הַבִּישָׁה הוֹרְתָם ...

And I will not have compassion upon her **children**;
 For they are **children of harlotry**.
 For their mother hath **played the harlot**,
 She that conceived them hath done shamefully... (JPS)

The three last lines here are meant to explain the words of God in the first line: "I will not have compassion upon her **children**." With respect to content, the second and third phrases overlap: the children are called **children of harlotry** for their mother **played the harlot**. It would no doubt have been possible to make use of just one of these phrases without detracting from the author's intentions, but the repetition here is meant to highlight and emphasize the message.

Pattern: b//ab//a

Jer. 18:6

הַכִּיּוֹצֵר הִנֵּה לֹא אוֹכֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת לָכֶם בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹאמַר ה'
 הִנֵּה כַחֲמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר / כֵּן אַתֶּם בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל

O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this **potter**? saith the LORD.
 Behold, as the clay in **the potter's hand**,
 so are ye in **My hand**, O house of Israel.(JPS)

This verse constitutes the focal point of a wider literary unit (vv. 1-12), whose subject is a prophecy containing a parable about a potter and his routine craft of molding clay, likened to God who is able to mold the nations as the potter molds his clay. The clear message of this prophecy is that there is no divine decision which God may not rescind or change his mind about, one way or the other.

From this particular instance we learn that if Israel will repent of her evil ways, there is still a chance she can be saved from punishment, in spite of the fact that her destruction has already been prophesied.¹⁷

This verse presents the two words (*yôṣēr, yādî*) as separate entities, and in between them, the construct genitive chain ("the hands of the potter") in a quasi-chiastic order. The parts of the verse coalesce into a rhetorical unit including two parts: first, a rhetorical question the answer to which is found in the context: of course God can perform what a mere human potter who is subject to God's authority can do. Second, a comparative model built from the expression "as... so...," whose entire purpose is to emphasize the idea that if the potter can do with his clay as he wishes, then certainly Yahweh can form his nation (likened to the clay) as he wishes.

We should note that the absence of the phrase *ně'ūm YHWH* ("saith the LORD") in the Septuagint¹⁸ increases the stylistic connection between the first and third sentences because of their identical ending (*epiphora*): *bêt yîsrā'ēl*. Thus, perhaps this variant is to be preferred.

The Construct Phrase Parallel to its Component Parts in Biblical Prose

Pattern: b, a//ab

Gen. 1:27

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ

בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ / זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם

And **God** created man in His own **image**,

¹⁷ Concerning the unit's structure, content, style and language, see Robert B. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1986), 371-74. See also the enlightening discussion in Yair Hoffman, *Jeremiah* (2 vols.; Mikra Le-Yisrael; Tel Aviv & Jerusalem: Am Oved Press, 1991), 407-9 [Hebrew]. This pericope has been difficult for a number of scholars, and there are those who have questioned the authenticity of parts of it—although their proposals have often also proven quite difficult; see Umberto Cassuto, *Biblical and Canaanite Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979). 2.75-78 [Hebrew].

¹⁸ See *BHS* and Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 370, in his comment to v. 6: "It is redundant in view of v. 5 but represents the glossing of the tradition in MT with such phrases stressing the oracular nature of its contents (a frequent procedure)."

in the **image** of **God** created He him;
male and female created He them. (JPS)

Many scholars and commentators have regarded this verse as poetic¹⁹ because of its chiastic structure,²⁰ its uniform rhythm (4:4:4), and the variations on the repeated verb *br'* according to the qatal-yiqtol model. However, due to ignorance of the expanded repetition model of the construct chain, some of those scholars have assumed that the repetition of the word *šelem* was based in an error, and should only have been written once.²¹ To validate their assumption, they were aided by the Septuagint which lacks the word *běšalmô*.²²

It seems to me that because of the structure of the verse, whose parts are woven together like a carefully woven fabric, one should not be so quick to apply the scalpel to it. Recognition of the stylistic phenomenon of expanded repetition, by means of the construct phrase in parallel with its components, can only strengthen the structure found here. This is accomplished both by concatenation between the first line and the second line, and also by means

¹⁹ E.g., Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, 8th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969) ad loc.; John Skinner, *Genesis*, 2nd ed. (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930) ad loc.; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 7th ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978) ad loc. [Hebrew]; Nechama Leibowitz, *Studies in Genesis* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1966), 4 [Hebrew]; John S. Kselman, "The Recovery of Poetic Fragments from the Pentateuchal Priestly Source," *JBL* 97 (1978), 161-73, esp. 165-66; Meir Paran, *Forms of the Priestly Style in the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 101 [Hebrew], does not regard this verse as poetic since it features the repetition of the same lines in the same exact words with only minor variations. Paran points out the fact that the chiastic structure and the repetition by means of the *qatal-yiqtol* pattern are characteristic signs of the *ma'golet* (a highly sophisticated form of inclusio for which we as yet have no term in English), which is also found in this verse.

²⁰ See Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis*; Kselman "Poetic Fragments"; Moshe Zipor, *The Septuagint to the Book of Genesis in Hebrew* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1996), 73 [Hebrew].

²¹ Kselman ("Poetic Fragments") deletes the word *běšalmô* and keeps *běšelem* as the construct of the phrase *běšelem 'ēlōhîm*, to balance the rhythm of the three phrases with the same number of syllables.

²² See Kselman ("Poetic Fragments") and Paran (*Forms of the Priestly Style in the Pentateuch*), who admits the solution is not simple; and so in n. 21 there he raises the possibility of leaving the verse as is, using the repetitive model we are discussing, which is found a few more times in the P source. Zipor (*Septuagint*) cites Frankel's opinion, according to which the word *běšalmô* is missing in the Septuagint as a result of haplography.

of the meaning which is supplied by the construct genitive phrase "image of God" to the previously appearing detached word "in his image."²³ Above all, one senses here the author's intent to emphasize the idea that humankind was created in "the image of God." For this reason the author breaks apart the construct genitive phrase and presents its components parallel to the construct phrase by means of chiasmus, as follows:

God, own image	אלהים, צלמו
image of God	צלם אלהים

Pattern: a//ab//b

Exod. 23:14-15

שְׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים תִּהְיֶה לִּי בַשָּׁנָה
אֶת חַג הַמִּצּוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצּוֹת...

Three times thou shalt **keep a feast** unto Me in the year.

The **feast of unleavened bread** shalt thou keep;

seven days thou shalt eat **unleavened bread**... (JPS)

The central line is of primary importance in this segment because it contains the title of the feast which is to be observed: "the feast of unleavened bread." The other two lines present the detached components of the phrase. The verbal form "thou shalt keep a feast" appears in the first line, and the nominal form "unleavened bread" in the third—bread which should be diligently eaten for seven full days.

²³ Samuel D. Luzzatto (*Commentary on the Pentateuch* [Padova, 1871; reprinted Tel Aviv: Dvir 1966; Hebrew]) in his comment on the verse interpreted the repetition as an example of a general term followed by particular term. Abba Bendavid (*Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew* [2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1970], 790-91 [Hebrew]) explains that repetition is one of the means of symmetrical parallelism, which is based upon the order ab//ba—beginning with slight emphasis and move on to certainty.

The Construct Phrase Parallel to its Component Parts in Extra-Biblical Literature

Sirach

Pattern: b, a//ab

Sirach 3:7-8

בְּנִי בְמֵאמָר וּבְמַעֲשֶׂה כְּבֹד אָבִיךָ / עֲבוֹר יְשִׁיגֶיךָ כָּל בְּרָכוֹת
בְּרַכַּת אָב תִּסָּד שְׂרָשׁ / וְקִלְלַת אִם תִּנְתֵּשׁ נִטֵּעַ

My son, by word and by deed honor your **father**

So that he may acquire for you all **blessings**

The blessing of the father establishes the root

And the curse of a mother will uproot the plant.

The two individual words *’ābîkā* (your father) and *bērākôt* (blessings) found in the first two lines, combine to form a construct genitive chain in the third line: *birkat ’āb* (a father's blessing). We find here an instruction made up of two lines, which opens with an appeal to a son. This is followed by a statement, also composed of two lines, the point of which is to emphasize and strengthen the preceding instruction. With that, we find male-female parallelism (father//mother),²⁴ and singular-plural parallelism (*birkat* // *bērākôt*),²⁵ as well as synonymous parallelism (*šōreš*//*neṭā’*), and antithetical parallelism (*birkat*//*qilḥat*, *tēyassed*//*tintōš*). All these characteristics together create a tight unit out of the different parts.

In addition, note that the construct genitive chain together with its component parts creates a chiasmic format:

your father, blessings	אבִיךָ, ברכות
the blessing of the father	ברכת אב

²⁴ See Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath*, 36-37; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 123-27; Berlin, *Dynamics*, 41-44.

²⁵ See Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 20-21; Berlin, *Dynamics*, 44-50.

Sirach 3:17-18

מַעַט נִפְשָׁךְ מִכָּל גְּדוּלַת עוֹלָם / וְלִפְנֵי אֵל תִּמְצָא רַחֲמִים

כִּי רַבִּים רַחֲמֵי אֱלֹהִים / וְלַעֲנָוִים יִגְלֶה סוֹדוֹ

Keep yourself away from all the riches of the world

And you will find **mercy** before **God**.For many are the **mercies of God**,

And he will reveal to the humble his secret.

The words *'el* and *rahāmîm* in the second line, combine in the third to form a construct genitive chain *rahāmê 'ēlōhîm*, with a slight variation between the names *'el* and *'ēlōhîm*. Here, too, the construct genitive chain stands opposite the individual words in a chiastic form:

mercy, God	אל, רחמים
mercies of God	רחמי אלהים

As far as the syntax of the sentence is concerned, notice that the two verses together are constructed in a dependent relationship, where the primary information is included in the first verse, and the lesser, dependent clause makes up the latter verse. This type of structure, entailing syntactical dependence of the two parts of the sentence, does not allow either verse to be understood on its own, but rather, the two verses must be perceived as one unit. The combined unit gains greater force by means of the contrasting pair of words *ma'ēt//rabbîm*,²⁶ whose components provide a contrasting sequence.²⁷

²⁶ See Yitzhak Avishur (*Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* [Butzon & Bercker: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1984], 122) concerning the contrasting pair *rab* // *mē'at* "many" // "little" in that order; concerning the elements in the reverse order "little" // "big," see *ibid.*, 215.

²⁷ Raphael Nir (*The Semantics of Modern Hebrew* [Tel Aviv: Amihay, 1978], 74-76 [Hebrew]) classifies three types of antithetical relationships between meanings as follows: 1) the precise opposite as, for example, life and death; 2) opposite along a continuum or relative opposition such as good and evil, few and many; 3) opposites which are pairs of words whose relationship to each other is that of object and mirror as, for example, buy and sell. Gad B. Zarfatti (*Hebrew Semantics* [Jerusalem: Rubinstein Press, 1985], 205) calls the

In Akkadian Literature

*Atrahasis I, lines 1-3:*²⁸

i-nu-ma i-lu a-wi-lum
ub-lu du-ul-la iz-bi-lu šu-up-ši-[i]k-ka
šu-up-ši-ik i-li ra-bi-[m]a

When the **gods** like men
 Bore the work and suffered the **toil**,
The toil of the gods was great

The two detached words in the first two lines form one parallelism, and are combined to create the construct chain in the following line, belonging to the next literary unit.

Yet, again in this case, as in the others cited above, the construct genitive chain stands opposite its individual components in a chiastic pattern:

the gods - toil
 the toil of the gods

It should be noted that the device known as concatenation connects the first segment, which consists of two lines and ends in the word "toil," to the second literary segment that opens with this word.

In Ugaritic Literature

Finally, we note that the phenomenon of parallelism between a construct genitive phrase and its components is reflected also in Ugaritic poetry. For example, the pattern *ab//b, a* is employed in *KTU* 1.19 IV, 1-2 as follows:

phenomenon of relative opposites by the term antonyms, and he insists on the distinction between that and the phenomenon of *ha-hashlamah* (Hebrew), which signifies absolute opposition.

²⁸ Wilfred G. Lambert and Alan R. Millard, *ATRA-ḪASĪS—The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 42-43.

ymǵ. lqrt. Ablm / ablm. qrt. zbl. yrḥ

He comes to the **town of Abiluma**,
Abiluma the **town of** Prince Yarikhū.

Here again the lines are connected by concatenation, with the proper noun *Abiluma* appearing at the end of the first of the two parallel lines, and then also at the beginning of the second line. It is not an instance of dittography, as such cases were often perceived in nineteenth and twentieth century Biblical scholarship, but rather the deliberate use of rhetorical devices to beautify and strengthen the text. The construct phrase, in this case, "the town of *Abiluma*," is intentionally broken down into its components *Abiluma* and *town*, which are then not only juxtaposed with the construct phrase, but again arranged opposite the complete phrase so as to create a chiasmus:

qrt Ablm
 Ablm, qrt

Thus, we find that the juxtaposition of the construct phrase in parallelism with its detached components is a highly sophisticated device for conveying both aesthetic pleasure and meaningful messages. The ancient authors conveyed these messages to an audience that appreciated the significance of repetition, fragmentation, and chiasm. Centuries passed, and this advanced literary device was unfortunately sometimes mistaken for dittography. However, a careful investigation allows us to avoid unnecessary emendations and to appreciate once again these ancient Semitic rhetorical devices.