The recovery of the Ugaritic literature has been a great boon to Bible scholars, not only helping to solve textual problems, but providing a cultural backdrop for much of the Biblical material as well 1). The study of Ugaritic poetry has also advanced the understanding of Hebrew poetry, beginning in 1934 when Ginsberg noted that Ugaritic poetry shared with Hebrew poetry not only the feature of parallelism, but also certain fixed expressions. In these fixed expressions the same terms were juxtaposed parallelistically in both Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry. For example, a Ugaritic line:

*qp ksp / tvyrq hrs*

which Ginsberg translated, "take silver/and yellow glittering gold" 2) is similar to a sequence which occurs in Psalm lxviii 14:

"The wings of a dove covered with silver (ksp) its pinions with yellow gold (hrs)."

By the next year, Ginsberg was referring to these sequences as "standing pairs," 3) and in 1936, discussing Ugaritic prosody, he commented that "certain fixed pairs of synonyms that recur repeatedly, as a rule in the same order . . . belonged to the regular stock-in-trade of the Canaanite poets." 4) Ginsberg noted further that often "B" terms (the second terms of the pairs) occurred only rarely in prose. Since, as a rule, they were confined to poetry, appearing as parallels to their mates, the "A" terms, it seems likely that these terms existed to help the poet form parallelistic lines.

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Sometimes the parallel mate is not another word, but the same word or root repeated. Two different types of verbal sequences have been identified. One is the sequence perfect/imperfect of the same verbal root 1) as in Isaiah xiv 25:

"And departed (perfect) from upon him his yoke
and his burden from his shoulder will depart
(imperfect)".

The second sequence type is active/passive of the verbal root 2) as in Hosea v 5:

"And Israel and Ephraim will stumble (passive)
also stumbles (active) Judah with them".

However, this type of parallelistic sequence, repetition, is not restricted to verbal forms, for cases of nominal repetition are not uncommon 3).

Explanations for this pervasive feature of Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry were suggested by the early researchers. CASSUTO, in conjunction with his presentation of a list of fixed pairs, offered the following explanation:

An almost fixed bond is gradually formed between particular synonyms, virtually a fixed convention according to which if one occurs in the first colon of the line, it entails the presence in the second colon of its mate 4).

By the use of these fixed pairs the poet was aided in the composition of parallel cola, for the words in the second colon are called forth by the words in the first. HELD, in fact, writes of "a dictionary of parallel words" into which the poet could dip in composing his lines" 5).

In sum, then, the comparative studies of Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry

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3) Cf. Ps. xxiv 8, xxix 1, 2, 4, 5, etc.
