The System of Dividing Lists into Verses

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Abstract
The system of division within the verse by the accents has been investigated and described, but the system of division into verses has never been described. This article focuses on the system of dividing lists into verses. A list may be divided into verses containing one, two or three items. The decision on the number of items to be included in a given verse depends on the length of the items. Thus, the first step is to determine the exact length of the items suitable for each arrangement. The next step is to describe the exact method of division when the list cannot be evenly divided.

Keywords
versification, verses, list division

1. Introduction

1.1 Division into verses and division within the verse

The Masoretic Text (MT) of the Hebrew Bible is divided into verses, and each verse is divided into smaller sections by the accents. The system of division within the verse has been thoroughly investigated and widely described. The system of division into verses, however, has never been described.

In this article, I intend to focus on the system according to which the biblical text was divided into verses, but only in a specific kind of text: lists of items enumerated in sequence and coordinated with each other in equal syntactic status. In such lists, the division does not reflect the unique syntactic structure of a specific text, but rather is based solely on technical principles.

The division of the biblical text into verses cannot be later than the second century C.E., as verses are mentioned in the Mishnah. However, there is no

1) M. Meg. 4:4.
way to know whether and to what extent the division referred to bears any similarity to the division known to us. There are also hints pointing to different systems of division, but these are rare and are insufficient for reconstructing a full system.² Therefore, this article is based on the MT as it is manifested in the Tiberian manuscripts.

Similarly, accents are also mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud,³ but here again, it is impossible to determine the exact relationship between the systems being referred to and the systems known to us.

Although it is natural to assume that the division into verses preceded division within the verse, such a diachronic development cannot be traced, since all the systems known to us include both types of division.⁴ Consequently, not only is description of the system of versification important for its own sake, but it also has implications for understanding the general process by which the MT was created: establishing the principles for the division into verses and comparing them with the principles for division within the verse may enhance our understanding of the relationship between these systems of division.

It is important to stress a distinction between these systems which is crucial for this investigation. The basic principle of division within the verse is that of dichotomy: a verse is divided into two parts, with each resulting part

²] See b. Qidd. 30a, which states that “in the verses too we are not certain”, and mentions a case in which Palestinian and Babylonian versification differ. Contradictions between versification and section division (whether in the MT or in the Dead Sea Scrolls) also prove that various methods of versification existed in ancient times. See e.g., E. Tov, “Sense Division in the Qumran Texts, the Masoretic Text, and the Ancient Translations of the Bible”, in J. Krasovec (ed.), The Interpretation of the Bible (Journal for the study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 289; Sheffield, 1988), pp. 136-137. For differences in versification in Babylonian manuscripts see Y. Ofer, The Babylonian Masora of the Pentateuch: Its Principles and Methods (Jerusalem, 2001), pp. 154-167. Among the verses mentioned there, only one is included in our discussions: Ruth 4:18-22; according to one Babylonian manuscript, it is divided into three verses (instead of five): 18-19, 20, 21-22.
³] B. Hagiga 6b; b. Nedarim 37b.
⁴] Generally speaking, the Tiberian system stands before us as a finished product, offering no way for tracing stages of development. Within the Babylonian system of accentuation, on the other hand, clear stages of development are discernible; see R. Shoshany, The Babylonian Accentuation System (Ph.D. diss.; Tel-Aviv University, 2003), p. 23. However, this concerns only the system of accentuation itself, not its relationship to the system of division into verses. For the dating of the process by which the Tiberian system developed see, e.g., W. Wickes, A Treatise on the Accentuation of the Twenty-One So-called Prose Books of the Old Testament² (New York, 1970), pp. 4-8.
subsequently divided into two, and so on. This creates a clear arrangement of the parts of the verse, reflecting various kinds of syntactic relationships between them. On the other hand, division into verses produces a sequence of sections with no hierarchy, the only syntactic relationship between them being that of coordination.

It is in the domain of lists that division into verses seems preferable. While division of a normal sentence into small parts according to the dichotomy principle gives a reasonable result, dividing lists according to the same principle leads to an artificial arrangement of the items. Conversely, dividing a list into a sequence of verses, each with equal status, seems more natural. For example, the following list of nine names is divided by the accents in the following way:

\[
\text{Num 32:3}
\]

which may be represented by the formula \([(2 + 2) + 2] + [2 + 1]\). On the other hand, the following list, which also contains nine names, is divided into three equal verses:

\[
\text{1 Chron 1:24-26}
\]

which may be represented by the simple formula \(3 + 3 + 3\).

The unique nature of lists justifies concentrating on this kind of text. Investigation of other kinds of texts will involve examination of the way the syntactic relationship between sentences is treated within the two systems.

1.2 Method of Research

A list may be divided into verses containing one, two or three items. Consider the following examples, each of which contains six items:

Three items per verse (Josh 15:58-59)

\[
\text{מלוחת בית צור מנזר. משהת בית蝽 אחלסמ / עירם שיש ופריוות.}
\]

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5) See, e.g., Wickes, A Treatise, pp. 29-60.
6) For the meaning of the / sign see the following section.
Two items per verse (1 Chron 6:52-54)

תנו למב אתי ער המקלט / אתי שבם ואתי מנרשת בור אפורים אתי נרגו אתי מנרשית.

אתו קומתי ואתי מנרשתי ואתי בית חורו ואתי מנרשית. ואתו אילו ואתי מנרשית ואתו

רגון ואתי מנרשית.

One item per verse (1 Chron 15:5-10)

לבני כלת אורייאלشر ואתי מה משליש. לבני מרר الشريف ואתי מתים ועשר.

ירס. לבני נרוה ואול SHR אוהמי משליש. לבני אליעзол الشريف והбро

מאתים. לבני תבור alcan SHRאנים. לבני חилас שמידור SHRאנים ומאתים:

ונענן עשר.

It is evident that the decision on the number of items to be included in a given verse depends on the length of the items: the longer the items, the fewer are included in each verse. Therefore, the first step is to determine the exact length of the items suitable for each of the aforementioned arrangements. This will be described in section 2.

Having decided between the possible arrangements, the exact method of division must be described. For example, when a list is expected to be divided into groups of three, and can be evenly divided, no difficulty arises. However, when the number of items cannot be evenly divided into three, one of the verses must contain a different number of items. A similar difficulty arises in conjunction with lists of odd-numbered items which must be divided into groups of two. The principles of dividing such lists are treated in sections 3-4. Sections 5-6 deal with other kinds of division.

1.3 Additions to the list

In addition to the listed items, most lists also contain an addition—an introduction or an appendage. In the case of a short addition, it is attached to the first or last verse, not presented as a separate verse. Nor does it cause a decrease in the number of items in the verse to which it is added. Indeed, the addition does not affect the division in any way: the body of the list is divided according to the relevant principles, while the addition is simply added to the opening or concluding verse.

In order to highlight the body of the list, the / sign will be used to mark the border between the addition and the body. The following example contains an introduction:

1 Chron 8:3-5

ותח ברכ ללכל / אדך והא עבידזור. ואבישעם ענעם ואוהזה. וגוא שפומ וחרז.
In this example there is an appendage:

1 Chron 8:19-21

וַיֵּרְקָא הָאָדָם נַעֲלֶה אֲוֹר לָהֶם וְשׁומַרְתֵּם עַדֶּיהָ וּבִרְאִיהָ וּבְנֵיהֶם עַדָּם שָׁם.

And this example has both an introduction and an appendage:

Num 32:37-38

וַיֶּבֶרֶךְ וְאֵת עֲלוּתָו וְאֵת אֵלְעַלָּו וְאֵת כֵּרְחָיו וַיִּשְׁפֹּֽתֵם וְיִקְרָאָֽו שְׁמוֹ הַשֵּׁם עָלָיו וּבְנֵיהֶם.

In all cases, the list is divided exactly as it would have been without any addition.

The same principle holds for the division of a verse into smaller parts by the accents:

Gen 10:4

וְדֹדָ֔נִים כִּתִּים וְתַרְשִׁ֑יס אֱלִישָׁ֣ה יָוָ֖ ּן וּבְנֵ֥י

Deut 30:15

הָרָֽע - וְאֶת הַמָּ֖וֶת - וְאֶת הַטּ֑וֹב - וְאֶת הַחַיִּ֖ים - אֶת הַיּ֔וֹם לְפָנֶ֙יךָ נָתַ֤י רְאֵ֨ה

In these cases, too, the list is divided into two equal parts by the main division, while the introduction is only added to the first part.7

1.4 Calculating the length of the items and the system of presentation

Since length of the listed items is the criterion for the selection of the system of division, the method of calculating the length is central to this investigation.

The length is calculated according to the number of words.8 A short word, composed of one syllable (usually a preposition, such as 'et, 'al), is considered part of the following word.9

7) On this principle within the verse see Wickes, A Treatise, pp. 34-42; in his words, “the division is made . . . just as if the introductory words were absent”. On p. 42 he notes that adherence to the same principle is also discernible in the division of lists into verses.

8) I have also attempted to measure according to the number of syllables. This produced very similar results, with a few more exceptions, so I conclude that measuring according to the number of words is the best way to describe the method of division.

9) However, a short word is not considered part of the previous word. I do not use the maqqef to decide this issue. Maqqef is part of the accent system, and, since we do not know whether
When items are of unequal length, length is determined according to the average. For example:

Josh 15:52-54

ארב ורומת אפשע. וינש [תן] בניח תפת ומקפה. והמשה קורת ארבע ואין הבור.

Most of the items consist of one word, but the item کירת ארבן היא תבנית consists of three. The average length is thus 1.22.10

Accordingly, each case will be accompanied by the following information: number of items, method of division, average length, origin:

9 (3-3-3) (1.22) Josh 15:52-54

In this case there are nine items, divided into three groups of three, and the average length of each item is 1.22.11

1.5 Lists grouped into one verse

In many cases a list is grouped into one verse with no division at all. The longest list I have found consists of fourteen items:

1 Chron 25:4

It might be expected that the tendency to divide would increase in the presence of an addition (introduction or appendage), in order to avoid overly long verses. Indeed, in the following pair this motivation is evident:

that system as it is known to us already existed when the division into verses took place, I refrain from basing my investigation of the latter on the former.

10 I assume that the nature of the list was fixed according to the dominant length of the listed items. I could not find a better way of determining the dominant length than that of calculating the average.

11 In presenting the cases, I will specify the exact average. However, when discussing the system of division, I will give only the approximate number. Therefore, throughout the article, a whole number indicates that the average is less than the following whole number, e.g., “one” means an average of 1-1.99, and so on.
In these two occurrences of the same list only the first is divided, no doubt due to the longer additions. However, in other cases this motivation cannot be discerned. For example, each of the following two cases consists of nine items, but only the first is divided, although it has a shorter addition:12

1 Chron 8:19-21
וּשָׁמֵי בֵּנֵי / הָאָרִים / וְשָׁמְרָת / וַעֲרַיָּה / עֲדֵיה / וַאֲלֵיָל / וַאֲלֵיָג / וַזְּבַד / וַזְּכָר / וַעֲקָק / וַעֲקָק / וַעֲקָק / בֵּנֵי / שָׁמֵי / אֲלֵיָל.

1 Chron 7:8
בֵּנֵי בָּכִּר / וְזֶה הָאוֹשֶׁר הַאֲלִילִי הַבָּכִּר וַעֲרַיָּה / וַזֶּבַד / וַזָּכָר / וַעֲקָק / וַעֲקָק / וַעֲקָק / בֵּנֵי / בָּכִּר / בָּכִּר / אֲלֵיָל.

We can conclude that although the system of division can be described, the principle on which the very decision to divide a list (of up to fourteen items) is based is not known.

Since the discussion here is limited to division into verses, the way a list is divided by the accents within the verse is not treated here.

1.6 Division according to structure

This article deals with sequence of similar items. Consequently, the division discussed in this article is purely technical, based on general principles. However, in many cases a list is divided according to internal landmarks in the text. Such lists are not treated in this article. I will here present four examples of this type of division.

8 (3-5) Gen 22:21-22
וַאֲתִתְהֵם בֵּרֵי הָאָרִים / וַאֲתִתְהֵם בֵּרֵי הָאָרִים / וַאֲתִיתְהֵם בֵּרֵי הָאָרִים / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה / לֹּא תַעֲמֵם אֶתְנָה.

The three names accompanied by attributes are grouped together in the first verse.

8 (1-4-3) Ex 21:23-25

והוה יד את נפש / יד נפש הוה יד יד רגל נפש.

The items are organized according to subjects: soul, body parts, types of injury.

10 (3-2-1-4) Lev 11:13-16

 cloudy cloudלע + min + pronominal suffix marks the end of three verses.

6 (1-3-2) Deut 34:1-3

3. Deciding between the Systems of Division

2.1 Three Items per Verse

In this section, I adduce one example for each category represented in the Bible by at least three cases, or represented in more than one class of division (e.g., a category which is sometimes divided into verses containing three items and other times divided into verses containing two items).13

Lists which cannot be evenly divided into three (e.g., lists of thirteen items, divided into three groups of three and one group of four), are included here without further comment. The exact method for dividing such lists is discussed in section 3.

13) The full list appears in the appendix, and the numbers of occurrences are calculated in tables 1-2 (2.4).
2.1.1  A single word
When the length of the items is less than two words, the list is always divided into verses containing three items.

Without any marker

6 (3-3) (1) 1 Chron 8:26-27

ושמריו ושחריו ו בקלות יערשו אדם וזכרו.  

’et + noun

15 2 (1.13) (3-3-3-3-3) Chron 11:6-10

ירון / אתח תלח ואתח עטש ואתחตกו.  

תא בחר Atatürk ואתח שכת אתח וידל.  

אותו עת ואתח שירה ואתח עתוק.  

אותו עתה ואתח אלים ואתח עתוק.  

תברך / אשר יוחדים וביניהם עיר מצורת.

ben + proper name

13 (3-3-3-4) (1) 1 Chron 6:29-32

נבני מריר אחוהו על השמואל אחוהו / בן שי נגבע נג ממליך.  

בכشبיה נג זג שמליך.  

כbbingله.  

bn/ney + proper name

10 (3-3-4) (1.1) Neh 7:57-59

נבני עבדיה שלמה / בנפי נג פפרת נג פרדרו.  

נג עלא בני דרקון בני גל.  

נפשיה בני חסיל בני פפרת האביסים בני אמאון.

2.1.2  Two words

2.1.2.1 One of the words is short
In three categories, items two words in length are also divided into verses containing three items each; in all of them, each item contains at least one short word (up to two syllables): bn/ney, ’alluf and la’asher.

Proper name + bn/ney

11 (3-3-3-2) (2) 1 Chron 6:35-38

ואלה בני אחרן / Alvarez בני פינסס בני אבישון בני.  

בק בני diy בני וריחו בני.  

מריהו

בני אמרייא בני אדווטו בני.  

זרק בני אוחימיא בני.

14) As mentioned in note 11, a number means that the average is less than the following number; i.e., one = average 1-1.99; two = average 2-2.99, and so on.
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ʾalluf + local name

11 (3-3-3-2) (2) Gen 36:40-43

Their name. A local name אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל פָּטִים. A local name אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל מִבְּשָׁמָם אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל עֵשֶׂה אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַלְפָּאֵל אַlšer b— + local name

This category is represented in the Bible by the following case alone:

13 (3-3-3-3-1) (2.23) 1 Sam 30:27-31

This category is represented in the Bible by the following case alone:

Proper name + ordinal number

7 (4-3) (2) 1 Chron 26:2-3

2.1.2.2 Both words are long

When both words in each item are long (three syllables or more), in only one case is the list divided into verses containing three items. In other cases of this category, the list is divided into verses containing two items (2.2.1), so the following case is an exception.

Proper name + ordinal number

7 (4-3) (2) 1 Chron 26:2-3

2.2 Two Items per Verse

2.2.1 Two or three words

When each item is two or three words long, the list is divided into verses containing two items.15

ʾet + noun

9 (2-2-2-3) (2) Josh 21:13-16

15) When each item consists of two words, and one of the words is short, the list is divided into verses containing three items (2.1.2.1).
ודבר או אמרה. ואתן לך נרות והראשי של ימי ההמשה.

Proper name + ordinal number

11 (3-2-2-2-2) (2.09) 1 Chron 12:10-14

עזה והמשה ובית והמשה ומגרשה והמשה ואלישע והמשה

Proper name + duty

9 (1-2-2-2) (3.22) 1 Kgs 4:2-6

יהוה ספרים ושישא בני ואחיה אליחרף.

Proper name + holid + proper name

12 (2-2-2-2-2) (3) 1 Chron 2:36-41

עובד את הוליד ואפלל אפלל את הוליד

Noun + number


ملك יהו שלמה מלך יחו שלמה מלך ירמיהו מלך

16) Each of the pairs זון ואחיה and אליחרף ואחיה is considered a single item, as the names are short (without the name of the father after each name) and they share the same duty.
2.2.2 Four words
When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.3.2). Here I adduce examples of division into verses containing two items.

\[
\text{\textit{b'ney} + proper name}
\]

8 (2-2-2-2) (4.03) 1 Chron 1:39-42

When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.3.2). Here I adduce examples of division into verses containing two items.

\[
\text{\textit{min-b'ney} + proper name}
\]

7 (3-2-2) (4.72) 2 Chron 29:12-14

When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.3.2). Here I adduce examples of division into verses containing two items.

\[
\text{Ordinal number + proper name}
\]

6 (2-2-2) (4.01) 1 Chron 3:1-3

When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.3.2). Here I adduce examples of division into verses containing two items.

\[
\text{Noun + number}
\]

4 (2-2) (4.5) Ezra 2:66-67

When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.3.2). Here I adduce examples of division into verses containing two items.

2.2.3 Five words or more
When the length of the items is five words or greater, the list is usually divided so that each verse contains one item (2.3.3). The only case of verses containing two items is the following:

\[
\text{4 (2-2) (5) Zech 12:12-13}
\]

When the length of the items is five words or greater, the list is usually divided so that each verse contains one item (2.3.3). The only case of verses containing two items is the following:

It seems that since each item includes two instances of the short word \textit{levad}, the items are considered shorter than five words.
2.3 One Item per Verse

2.3.1 Three words
When each item consists of three words, the list is usually divided so that each verse contains two items (2.2.1). The following is the only case in which there is one item per verse:

L- + proper name + proper name

11 (3.45) Num 1:5-15

ארוחת שמך מבניבי יתדות חננס / ואBadge עלحجر בעמדת ללשון שפלתי

ונכטעה תוקן וב ערפה. ליתשתו תגורל בר זכר. לבלוק אליאב בר חל.

בלג יוחי לארבעים בל שפיריו להוציאו למלשנה מכלאיć ולמד鹑יו.17 לינבני באורייכ בר

כם דג. לוד חתרון במרשד. לעשר פנטילאי בפעור. תל לביליקה בזואר. למלתלי.

אחים רב עונ.

In other cases of lists in this category, they are divided into verses containing two items each, according to the principle described above, so this case should be considered an exception.

2.3.2 Four words
When each item consists of four words, the list may be divided so that each verse contains one or two items (see 2.2.2). In the following cases each verse contains one item:

L- + proper name + proper name

12 (4.16) Num 13:4-15

אראל שימחה / חולשת ראובן שמהי בר יחי. לשמוחה שפוף בורי. להכות יהודה

וכל בר פיה. למלח שישבד ילאי בוי של. למלחה יפרים והשת בר נון. למלחה שניים

ופלפי בר רחל. למלחה יוקי ב buồn בר בט. למלוח יופי להשת נפשי צי בר בט. למלחה

ון טומיאל בר גמל. למלחה ישר חותר בר מיכאל. למלחהffenו בבר בט. למלחה דג

טומיאל במד.

Proper name + number

31 (4.75) Neh 7:8-38

בגל פרעה אלפסים מואה ועבים שלנה. גמל שפשעה שלוש מואית שבירים שלנה. בהל אריא

שם מואית טפשים שלנה. בין פחה מואב לבלי שישו וארבע אלפסים טפשים מואית שלנה

ועשם. ביןעלי אלפא מואית טפשים ארבעה. בין פחה שפחת מואית ארבעים ושלנה.

17) The sons of Joseph are considered one item.
The first three items are short and so are grouped into one verse.

2.3.3  Five words or more
When the length of the items is five words or greater, the list is divided into verses containing one item per verse.

b’ney + proper name

2 (5) 1 Chron 7:38-39

בנין יתי פינן ופוספו ואו. בנין עלא ארוח והניהו עירו.

mibb’ney + proper name

12 (7.83) Ezra 8:2-14

מיבני פינטא גרסו מיבני אחומר דניאל מבעל דויד חוסן. / 197-mobile

וכריי עום התוויות לכרכי ממאת התומש. מבני פולס מאיוא אחלוהית נר רוחי עון

מאתיים חישר. מבני שבניה ויהיויה עום שלמת חטוש חכדר. מובני עון יבש חכדר.

ויוני עום התומש חכדר. מבני עליה עון שבניה חכדר. מבני

שפייתו ביתו מבכייה עום שבניה חכדר. מבני יאוב עביד ביתו יחיויה עון ממאת

שכנת עופר חישר. מבני שבניה ויוחויה עום שלמת חטוש חכדר. מבני

וכריי עום שבניה חכדר. מבני עון יבש חכדר. מבני

.Ordinal number + noun

4 (5) Ex 28:17-20

⽤לאה בּ ממאח אֶבְרְעָה צַעְוָם אָבִי וַאֲדָם פָּרְדוּ אֶבְרְעָה פָּרְדוּ אֶבְרְעָה.

ותוי עֲם פָּרְדוּ אֶבְרְעָה. התוים חולם ישבע שבוי הוֹחֵלָה. התוים הָרְפִּי יָרָש.

ועשה וישפה / שבועים וָיִוֶּ הָמָּלָאָם.
$l^-$ + proper name + proper name

6 (6.84) 1 Chron 15:5-10
לבני קהת אורייאל חסר ואחי מאה ושנים. לבני מריר שעשה חסר ואחי מאמות עו
רמ. לבני רגרים היו חסר ואחי מאה ושלשים. לבני אליעזר שעשה חסר ואחי
מאמות. לבני חזרו אלכלא חסר ואחי שמות. לבני חזרו שנהרב חסיד חסר
ומאה.

Noun + number

4 (5.75) Num 31:43-46
והרי מחצית העדה / מנワーク שלש מאה ושלאוק אלפים שלשים אלף ושלש
מאות. עשר אלפים ושלשים אלף ושלשים אלף ושלשים אלף ושלשים אלף
ועשר.

2.4 Summarizing Tables

Table 1. Totals of the cases according to category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of items per verse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without any marker</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'et + noun</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben + noun</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b'ney + proper name</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mibb'ney + proper name</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper name + b'no</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'alluf + proper name</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la'sher b' + local name</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper name + ordinal number</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordinal number + proper name</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper name + duty</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proper name + holid + proper name</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le- + proper name + proper name</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + number</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Cases in each division according to length

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of items per verse</th>
<th>No. of words per item</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (one word short)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (both words long)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (two words short)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Conclusions

As can be seen in table 1, many categories appear in several classes of division, the only difference between them being the length of the items. Consequently, the only criterion for selecting the method of division is the length of the items; the character of the list is irrelevant.

According to table 2, the rules are quite clear and account for nearly all the cases:

- Words in each item | Items in each verse
  - one              | three
  - two (one short) | three
  - two or three    | two
  - four            | one or two
  - five and above  | one

The total number of the cases is 141. Two of them, or 1.4% of the cases, are exceptions.

\(^{19}\) Exceptions are cases divided according to a class other than the one expected. Cases which do not belong to any of these classes (e.g., division of 6-6 instead of 3-3-3-3), are not mentioned here, and are discussed in detail in section 5.
3. The System of Division into Verses Containing Three Items

In this section I will describe the exact way a list is divided into verses containing three items.

In every type, I will adduce one example for each number found in the MT. In addition, I will adduce all the exceptions to the regular rules.

3.1 Lists Evenly Divided into Three

When the number of items can be evenly divided into three, the items are divided three items per verse, without exception.

6 (3-3) (2) 1 Chron 6:14-15
בְּנוֹי מֶרְכָּבָה / לָֽבְנֵי בֹּנֶה שֶׁמֶּנֶּי בֹּנֶה צָעִים בֹּנֶה שָׁעְיָה בֹּנֶה.

9 (3-3-3) (1) 1 Chron 1:24-26
שְׁמוֹ יַרְבָּךְ שָׁלָל / עֶבֶר פָּלָג רוֹעָה נוֹחֵר.

12 (3-3-3-3) (1.17) Josh 18:21-24
וַיַּעַרְבֶּהוּ לְמַעְסֵי בְּנֵי בּוֹנֶה לֶשֶפָּהוֹתיוֹ / וַיַּעַרְבֶּהוּ לְמַעְסֵי בּוֹנֶה צְעִים. בֹּנֶה הַעֲרֹבָה
שְׁמוֹ יַרְבָּךְ שָׁלָל הָעוֹרֶה.

15 (3-3-3-3-3) (1.07) Neh 11:31-35
בוֹנֶה בְּנֵי מָגָנִים / בּוֹמָשׂוֹת וּבְיִית אֶל בּוֹנֶה. גְּנוֹת בּוֹנֶה וּבְיִית הַעֲרֹבָה.
חַרְיוֹ גְּנוֹת גָּלְס. לִדְנֵי גָּלְס הָעֲרֹבָה.

27 (3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3) (1) Ezra 10:34-42
מַכְנֵי בּוֹנֶה / מַכְנֵי גָּלְס וּגָּלְס בּוֹנֶה בּוֹדֶי חַכָּר [בּוֹדֶי חַכָּר]. בּוֹנֶה בּוֹדֶי חַכָּר.
מַכְנֵי הַעֲרֹבָה [הַעֲרֹבָה]. בּוֹנֶה בּוֹדֶי שֶׁמֶּנֶּי. שֶׁמֶּנֶּי הַעֲרֹבָה. מַכְנֵי הַעֲרֹבָה.
שָׁמַלְמוּ הָעֲרֹבָה / שָׁמַלְמוּ הָעֲרֹבָה.

3.2 Lists with a Remainder of Two

When the division into three produces a remainder of two, the list is divided into verses containing three items and one verse containing two. The short verse is the last one.

In the MT, there is no verse containing only two words. Consequently, this division is possible only when it does not result in such a verse: there must either be an appendage, in which case the final verse will be longer than two words, or each item must be greater than one word in length. In such cases, although the final verse contains only two items, it is still longer than two words.
3.2.1 Normal cases

8 (3-3-2) (1.38) Num 32:34-35

And, now, in all these cases, it should be noted that the short group comes at the beginning, with the underlined name, which is the only one with waw, at the end of a verse:20

11 (3-3-3-3-2) (2) 1 Chron 1:51-54

In the following case, division is such that the short group comes at the beginning, with the underlined name, which is the only one with waw, at the end of a verse:20

32 (3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3) (1) Neh 7:46-56

In the following case, division is such that the short group comes at the beginning, with the underlined name, which is the only one with waw, at the end of a verse:20

3.2.2 Exceptions

In the following case, division is such that the short group comes at the beginning, with the underlined name, which is the only one with waw, at the end of a verse:20

20 The reason may also be the length of the first name. On the influence of the conjunction waw see 5.1.
In the following four cases, the normal division would have resulted in a verse consisting of two words at the end, which is to be avoided. In order to solve this problem, in one case the division is done in such a way that the short verse comes at the beginning:

In the other three cases, the division creates a verse consisting of five items at the beginning:

The difference seems to be that in the first case the introduction is long, while in the other three cases it is short, and the inclusion of five items in a verse does not make it overly lengthy.

In one case, a verse consisting of five items appears at the end:

According to the total explicitly given, fourteen, the final verse should mention five cities. However, according to many interpretations, there are only
three or four cities in the final verse. If this was the original reading, the division here is normal.

3.3 Lists with a Remainder of One

When division into three results in a remainder of one, the list is divided into verses consisting of three items plus one verse consisting of four. The long verse is the last one. Exception to this are lists of seven items, in which the long verse is the first one (3.3.2).

If we combine this principle with the principles described above, we can define the system as follows: (1) a list is divided into verses containing three items per verse, and the exceptional verse may contain either two or four items; (2) the exceptional verse is always at the end: if the remainder is one, the remainder is added to the final verse; if the remainder is two, the remainder is the final verse.

It should be stressed that this system does not reflect a motivation to locate a verse according to its length, i.e., to divide a list so that a short verse or a long verse should come at the beginning or at the end. Rather, the motivation here is always to introduce the exceptional verse at the end, whether shorter or longer.

3.3.1 All numbers (except seven)

3.3.1.1 Normal cases

10 (3-3-4) (1) Gen 15:19-21

13 (3-3-3-4) (1) Josh 19:18-21


22) When dividing into two parts, there is a tendency to divide in such a way that the longer part comes first; see 3.3.2.1 and note 26; 6.3.
3.3.1.2 Exceptions

In five cases the division is different.

In four cases, the division creates a long verse at the beginning instead the end:

10 (4-3-3) (1) Josh 15:55-57

The motivation here is to divide in such a way that the underlined name, without waw, comes at the beginning of a verse.24

13 (4-3-3-3) (1) 1 Chron 14:4-7

This division aims at avoiding having the underlined item, without waw, appear at the end of a verse.25

23) It is not clear whether this verse contains two, three, or four names; see the commentaries.

Those responsible for the division seem to have taken it as containing three names.

24) On the influence of the conjunction waw see 5.1.

25) There may also be influence of the parallel list in 1 Chron 3:5-8, where the four names at the beginning are separated according to the structure.
The reason for this division remains unclear to me.

In one case, the exceptional verse appears at the end, as expected, but it contains only one item:

13 (3-3-3-3-1) (2.23) 1 Sam 30:27-31

It seems that grouping the last four names together (according to the expected 3-3-3-4 arrangement), plus the long appendage, would have produced a very long final verse.

3.3.2 Lists of seven items

3.3.2.1 Normal cases—the long verse at the beginning

In lists of seven, the long verse is the first one:

7 (4-3) (1) 1 Chron 8:17-18

This contradicts the method in other lists, where the long verse is the final one. The explanation seems to be that in all other cases, the list opens with normal verses (containing three items) and ends with the exceptional verse (containing two or four items). However, in a list of seven items divided into only two verses, it is impossible to say which verse is normal and which is exceptional. Accordingly, there is no reason to divide in such a way that the verse containing four items should come at the end.

Since in such a list we have two parts, the division is done so that the longer part comes first. This tendency, i.e., to arrange in such a way that the longer of two parts comes first, is very common in division within the verse,26 e.g.:

26 See M. Breuer, Taamei Hamiqra be-chaf-aleph sefarim uvsifre emet (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 345-347; A. Spanier, Die massoretischen Akzente (Berlin, 1927), pp. 49-53. In the Babylonian...
3.3.2.2 Exceptions
In three cases, a list of seven is divided differently. In two of the cases the division is 3-4:

7 (3-4) (1) Neh 12:33-34

The motivation here is to divide in such a way that the underlined name, without waw, comes at the beginning of the verse.

7 (3-4) (2) 1 Chron 6:5-6

The reason for this division remains unclear to me.27

In one case, the exceptional verse is indeed at the end, but it contains only one item:

7 (3-3-1) (2) 1 Chron 5:4-6

The last name is accompanied by a long relative clause. Consequently, it is presented in a separated verse, and the other six items are divided 3-3.28

manuscripts, there is a tendency to divide in such a way that the short part comes first; see Shoshany, *Babylonian Accentsuation System*, pp. 173-267; 415-418. However, this unique tendency of the Babylonian manuscripts is only manifested in dividing small sections of the verse, while in dividing the whole verse into two parts (by **atah**), the tendency is similar to that of the Tiberian system, namely to have the longer part come first; see Shoshany, p. 278. Accordingly, when we deal with division into verses, it is not surprising to find that the longer part comes first according to all systems. I thank Dr. Shosany for assisting me in this topic.

27) In the *Peshitta*, **Zerah** is missing. If this was the reading of those responsible for the division, it can be classified among lists of 6, divided as expected, 3-3.

28) Unlike an addition that relates to the whole list, which is not regarded as part of the list, the relative clause in this case relates only to the final name.
3.4 Conclusion

Table 3. Summarizing Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>items in first verse</th>
<th>items in last verse</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>evenly divided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remainder of 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceptions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remainder of 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceptions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lists of 7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exceptions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of cases divided into verses containing three items is 70. 56 cases conform to the regular principles described, while 14 cases (20%) deviate from them.

If the explanations proposed above are accepted, there are only three cases (4.3%) of unexplained exceptions.29

4. The System of Division into Verses Containing Two Items per Verse

In this section I will describe the system of division into verses containing two items.

4.1 Even Numbers

When the number of items is even, the list is divided into verses containing two items, without exception.

4 (2-2) (2.25) Josh 21:21-22

יִהוּ֖וּ וְהִלְתָּנָ֣ה אֶת בְּנֵ֑י יְהוּדָּ֔ה אֶת שְׂכָנֵ֖ה אֶת מְרָשְׁתָּ֣ה בְּרֵי אֶפְרָיִ֑ים אֶת נְוֵ֖את נְוֵאֶֽת מְרָשְׁתָּ֣ה וְתָֽנוּ עִ֖יר אֶת/ בְּנֵי בֵֽית נְוֵאֶֽת/

4.2 **Odd Numbers**

In lists of odd-numbered items, the system of division is not uniform. The remainder may be presented as a separate verse or be added to a verse to create a verse consisting of three items; in either case, the exceptional verse—consisting of one or three items—may appear at the beginning or at the end of the list.

A verse consisting of three items at the beginning

7 (3-2-2) (3) Num 26:15-17

A verse consisting of three items at the end

9 (2-2-2-3) (2) Josh 21:13-16

A verse consisting of one item at the beginning

9 (1-2-2-2-2) (3) Ruth 4:18-22

A verse consisting of one item at the end

13 (2-2-2-2-2-2-1) (3.45) 1 Chron 27:16-22
Conclusion

The first question is why the exceptional verse sometimes consists of one item and other times consists of three. For this I have no answer.

The second question is why the exceptional verse (consisting of either one or three items) is sometimes at the beginning and other times at the end. It seems that its placement depends in turn on the placement of the longer of the two verses (three versus two or two versus one)—at the beginning or at the end. This is decided on the basis of the length of the introduction. I shall present all the cases sorted according to this criterion:

Table 4. Dividing Lists of Odd-numbered items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of items in first verse</th>
<th>No. of items in last verse</th>
<th>No. of words in introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>longer part starts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num 26:15-17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chron 12:10-14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Chron 29:12-14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh 12:9-24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Sam 23:25-39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chron 5:30-36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chron 27:16-22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>longer part ends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh 21:13-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Kings 4:2-6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth 4:18-22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is shown in the table, the location of the longer part is decided according to the length of the introduction:30 when there is no introduction, or when it is short (two words), the longer part is at the beginning; when the introduction is long (three or more words), the longer part is at the end. The motivation is to maintain balance: in a long introduction, starting with the long part would create a very long verse.

---

30 The length of the appendage does not seem to play any role.
5. Other systems of division

The lists described so far are divided into verses containing one, two, or three items, according to the length of the items. However, in fourteen cases various reasons led to the use of a different method of division. All of them will be discussed in this section.31

5.1 Influence of the conjunction waw

The conjunction waw has a significant influence on the division.32 There is a tendency to divide in such a way that a noun without waw comes at the beginning of a verse and a noun with waw at the end. Of course, when such a division is not possible (e.g., when either all or none of the items are accompanied by waw), this tendency cannot be realized. But whenever possible, an effort is made to divide according to this principle.33 Consequently, in a list of nouns where the majority come with the conjunction waw, the division is made so that waw-less nouns come at the beginning of the verses:

31 According to the length of the items, all cases discussed in this section save one were expected to be divided into verses containing three items; see note 35.

32 On the influence of the waw on the division within the verse see, e.g., Spanier, Akzente, p. 51.

33 In five cases I found that the division is not affected by the waw and the normal division is maintained, so that a noun with waw appears at the beginning of a verse (Josh 15:41; Neh 10:27; 12:19), or a noun without waw appears at the end (Neh 12:6; Ezra 10:38, 41), in spite of the possibility of alternate division. There is a tension between the influence of the waw and the tendency toward normal division, and this tension may result in inconsistency.

34 The last seven names all have waw. However, dividing the eight names in a different method (e.g., 3-3-2, according to the rule of lists of eight) would result in a final verse consisting of only two words.
Similarly, in a list of nouns wherein the majority lack a conjunction waw, the division is such that the minority with waw come at the end of a verse:

8 (5-3) (2) 1 Chron 26:4-5

In a sequence of four names, which are organized by the waw as two pairs (1 + 2 3 + 4), these four names are grouped together in the same verse, so as to avoid breaking the sequence in the middle of a pair, and to allow a noun with waw to appear at the end of a verse. In the following two cases I have underlined the verses containing such pairs:

15 (4-3-3-5) (1.07) Josh 19:35-38

In two cases the division according to the waw, together with the necessity to avoid a verse consisting of only two words, results in different ways of dividing similar lists:

11 (4-3-4) (1) Ex 1:2-4

12 (6-6) (1) 1 Chron 2:1-2

In the following, I present the expected division according to the waw in rows (the current division is marked with periods):

35) In this section, this is the only case in which division into verses containing two items is expected. In all the other cases the expectation is for division into verses containing three items each.

36) In the second group, the pair אל ומגדל ויראון is too short to create a verse, so it is combined with the following group.
In both cases, the division is according to the appearance of the *waw*, but a verse consisting of only two words, which is created according to this division, is combined with the previous one.37

Similarly, in the following two cases we have the same list divided in different ways:

11 (3-3-5) (1) Gen 25:13-15

 CWE: שמות כנני ישמעאל במשה ל(console בכר ישמעאל (כבוד ואברא

مبושמ.＆משתמש＆רומח＆ESH свет נפש＆קוף＆מהו.

11 (3-5-3) (1) 1 Chron 1:29-31

 CWE: וישמעאל בכר ישמעאל (כבוד ואברא＆مبושמ.＆משתמש＆רומח＆ES כי נפש＆קוף＆מהו.

Here again I present the expected division according to the *waw* in rows (the current division is marked with periods):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Chron 1:29-31</th>
<th>Gen 25:13-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>קוף ואברא＆مبושמ.</td>
<td>קוף ואברא＆מבושמ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מעמש＆רומח＆ESH свет נפש＆קוף＆מהו.</td>
<td>מעמש＆רומח＆ES כי נפש＆קוח＆מהו.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>תור＆ݥים＆מש＆חלど＆אמת</td>
<td>תור＆,Yes＆חמש＆חלדו＆אמת</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both cases, after dividing according to the *waw*, a verse consisting of two words is combined with the following one.

37) In the second case, the last six names could have been divided in two. It seems that the first group of six caused the creation of another group of six.
Finally, the following list is divided into two parts: in the first, all the names have *waw*, in the second, none has *waw*:38

9 (4-3-2) (1.89) 1 Chron 7:25-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1 Chronicles 7:25-27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>בנו ינון. עלו ובנו אלישמע. בנו י proton. בנו לועדן.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimelech</td>
<td>בנו עמיהוד. בנו אלישמע.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Other cases

11 (4-4-3) (1) 2 Sam 5:14-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>2 Samuel 5:14-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>ונפג ואלישוע ויבחר.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>ושם ושבב ונתן זפלה.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimei</td>
<td>ובשלמה ושתלח ויבחר.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabez</td>
<td>עלו ובנו גרשDallas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case we may consider the possibility that the division arises from a different textual reading. This list also appears twice in 1 Chron (3:5-8; 14:4-7). Comparing the list here with the list in Chron reveals that two names are missing from our list (S=Sam; C=Chron):39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1 Chronicles 7:25-27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>ונפג ואלישוע ויבחר.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>ובשלמה ושתלח ויבחר.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zerah</td>
<td>ושם ושבב ונתן זפלה.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabez</td>
<td>עלו ובנו גרשDallas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The division in Chron, into verses containing three items each, is expected. If this was the original reading also in Sam, and the division into verses preceded the dropping of the two names, we may assume that an original division is preserved here.40

8 (4-4) (1.75) 1 Chron 7:20-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1 Chronicles 7:20-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zerubbabel</td>
<td>בנו ואולם ושתלח אפרים ובני thần עזר.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jabez</td>
<td>עלו ובנו גרשDallas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

38) The second list is divided 3-2, according to the principle according to which lists of five items are divided (5.3).
39) For Chron I give 14:4-7. 3:5-8 is identical, save for slight changes.
40) It could result from influence of the parallel list. A reason for a verse consisting of four items at the beginning in Chron is offered in 3.3.1.2, and it can explain this case as well, if the original reading was as in Chron.
The expected division is 3-3-2. All the names in this list are composed of two words except for the underlined names. It seems that in order to maintain balance, they were treated as one. Consequently, the list is considered a list of seven items, divided 4-3 (according to the principle described above; see 3.3.2).

This list appears according to a different textual reading in 1 Chron 8:30-31, where it has only seven names, divided, as expected, 4-3. Accordingly, the division here may preserve a different reading, as in the parallel list, or it may have resulted from the influence of the parallel. I will present here a comparison between these lists (the numbers refer to the chapter in Chron):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>ומריה וזכרה ואחיו והנצב ונדב ונר וけばל קיש ותוריה</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ומריה וזכרה ואחיו והנצב ונדב ונר וけばל קיש ותוריה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason for introducing the short verse at the beginning is to avoid a final verse consisting of only two words. But the reason for the peculiar division into verses containing four items is unclear to me.

5.3 Conclusion

Table 5. Summarizing Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal division</th>
<th>141</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptions and reason</td>
<td>The conjunction <em>waw</em> 10 other cases 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of cases is 155. 141 cases are divided according to the expected principles of division, as described in the previous sections, while 14 cases (9%) are divided according to different principles, as discussed in
If the explanations proposed in this section are accepted, there is only one case left unexplained (0.6%).

6. Lists of Three, Four and Five Items

Lists of three, four and five items do not fall into the categories mentioned above: the number of items is too small to determine whether the list is divided into verses containing two or three items. These lists must be described separately.

6.1 Lists of Three Items

When there is an introduction, but no appendage, the first item is added to the introduction to create a division of 1-2:

3 (1-2) (3) 1 Chron 2:50-51

אלה הוא בן מב נו תור ברו אפרתות / שלח אבי קרית עירם. שלמה אבי בת תљמ.

חך אפרﲢ נו.

When there is an appendage, or when the last item is long, the division is 2-1:

3 (2-1) (4) Gen 36:4-5

תכל تعد לעשו את אלימ ופשעתיו לעשו תראו. וחלילה הלדה אתعيית [יווש]  
ואת עליה ואת קרית /olah בשן ושאר הלדו ולבראית בננה.

3 (2-1) (5) Song 5:11-12

ראשה חתמו יכרצימו חלותם שחיתת קנורב. עני גוני עלא אפקי מים רבעות בחלב  
شبוח על מלאת.

In one case (which appears twice) there is both an introduction and an appendage, but since the first item is long, the division is 1-2:

3 (1-2) (4.67) 2 Kgs 11:5-6; similarly 2 Chron 23:4-5

ורBuilderInterface מה окруג והדר בא אפרתות וחלילה מב נו תור ברו אפרתות בך.  
しっかり הלדה בשערור והוללות בשערראחר הרצים / ושמרתם את משמרת  
ברית מחט.

41) I include in the regular cases all those divided into verses containing one, two, or three items. Differences within these systems (e.g., cases in which the exceptional verse is introduced at the beginning instead of at the end) are discussed in section 3.

42) 1 Chron 6:18-23.
In one case the division is 2-1 although there is an introduction and no appendage:

3 (2-1) (3.33) Gen 36:2-3
 buiten de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van de zoon van де zон

The reason is the similarity between the attributes of the first two names: *hahiti-hahivvi*.

### 6.2 Lists of Four Items

When the last item is longer than the rest of the items, the division is 3-1:

4 (3-1) (2.25) Gen 10:11-12

In the following case the division is similar, but since the items are longer, the first group of three is also divided (1-2, according to 6.1, when there is an introduction and no appendage):

4 (1-2-1) (3.5) Num 21:18-20

In one case the length of the items is equal, but the introduction is long and the appendage short, therefore the division is 1-3:

4 (1-3) (4.5) Deut 6:10-11

According to the previous sections, in a list of five the division must always be 3-2: in verses containing three items, the short verse is at the end (3.2); in

---

43 When the length of the items is equal, the division is 2-2. These cases are described in their regular place (see 2.2; 4.1).
verses containing two items, when the number is odd and the introduction is short (which is the case in all the lists of five), the long verse is at the beginning (4.2). To this we should add the tendency, when dividing a list into two parts, to place the longer part first (3.3.2.1). Indeed, the normal division is 3-2:

5 (3-2) (3) Num 26:12-13
בענ שם נמשחת / להרוא מאשה נמואל נמו ammoו נמו米饭 חורי ילך משפת
ויוכין. לחר משפת חורי ילך משפת השואל.

There are three exceptions. In two cases the division is 2-3:

5 (2-3) (4) Gen 32:15-16
ווע באהים ואתים ששים רחל מאמות אཡילם עשים. מלאם מニックם הבנים
שלישים פרת ארבעים ופין עשר אוחנה עשרים וחמש עשר.

The two items with the numbers 200-20 are grouped together.

5 (2-3) (2) 1 Chron 6:11-12
אלכונה בן [קִרְיָה] אלכונה / שפתי בן וחת בן. אלאך בן וזבח בן אלכונה בן.

The division puts the underlined item, which is the only one with waw, at the end of a verse.

In one case a unique division is employed:

5 (2-2-1) (4.6) 2 Sam 3:3-5
משנהו כלב לאבלי [לאבלי] אשת בבל הכרמל הששלי ארבעים בן מעכו בת
וחלמי מלך גזר. הורבני בתורנו בן תאני והשימי מייסם בן אביס. והשימי ירעו
לעגולה אשת דוד / אלהChelsea בתם.

In this case, the difference in length between the items is considerable: the first two items are especially long (six words), so they are grouped in a separate verse.

7. Conclusion

In this article, the principles according to which lists are divided into verses have been investigated and described. These principles can be summarized as follows:
1. A list can be divided into verses containing one, two, or three items per verse.

2. The system of division is selected according to the length of the items: when each item consists of one word,\textsuperscript{44} the list is divided into verses containing three items; when each item consists of two or three words, the list is divided into verses containing two items; when each item consists of five words or more, the list is divided into verses containing one item.\textsuperscript{45}

3. The list is divided into equal parts. When the number of items does not allow for an even division, an exceptional verse is created at the end of the list.

In order to explain the logic of this system, let us first deal with items consisting of one word, divided into verses containing three items each. This method doubtless reflects two principles: on the one hand, a tendency to divide into the smallest parts possible; on the other hand, a tendency to maintain the minimal length of a verse in the Bible, which is three words. When each item consists of one word, the result is necessarily verses containing three items.

When the length of the items is two words, the same principles result in verses containing two items, since dividing into verses containing only one would produce verses two words in length.

However, these principles cannot account for the method employed in the case of items consisting of three words or more. In such cases, division into the smallest parts would produce verses containing one item each. Each verse would be three words in length, which is absolutely legitimate. But this was in fact not the practice employed by those responsible for versification. Therefore, the principles mentioned so far are inadequate to explain why such lists are divided into verses containing two items.

I suggest that a third principle is at work here. When items are longer than one word, there is always some kind of resemblance between the items; usually there is even repetition of a word with each item. Consequently, division into verses containing two items creates two parts which resemble each other in each verse. This gives the impression of parallelism between two hemistiches. Thus, dividing a list into verses consisting of two items lends the list

\textsuperscript{44} In certain conditions also of two.

\textsuperscript{45} Inconsistency is discerned when the items consist of four words. Such lists can be divided into verses containing either one or two items.
the appearance of biblical poetry.\footnote{According to Wickes, the dichotomy system of accentual division within the verse was derived from biblical poetry, where the division into two parts is rooted in the structure and is the most natural division, and subsequently imposed on the prose; see Wickes, A Treatise, pp. 30-31. It is thus reasonable to expect the same principle to be at work in the method of versification.} It is true that in poetic parallelism only two parts of a line resemble each other, while in a list the resemblance applies to all of the items; still, dividing a list into verses containing two items produces parallelism within each verse. For example:

**Ruth 4:19-21**

"תופרש הSharedPreferences AT עי / תֶּפֶר הSharedPreferences AT עי
תֶּפֶר הSharedPreferences AT עי / תֶּפֶר הSharedPreferences AT עי
תֶּפֶר הSharedPreferences AT עי / תֶּפֶר הSharedPreferences AT עי"

**Josh 12:10-12**

"מלך ירושלים אחוד / מלך חורן אחוד
מלך ירושלים אחוד / מלך חורן אחוד
מלך ירושלים אחוד / מלך חורן אחוד"

Even when there is no common word, a resemblance in structure always exists:

**1 Chron 3:1-3**

"הכהן אשתה לאחיה וַיִּשָּׁתָה / שָׁנִי זֵאל אֲבֹנָי הָכֹלֵלִית
השלש אֲבֹנָי בָּנָה חֵלֵק מֶלֶךְ גִּנֵּר / ההשָּׁתָה אֲדוֹנִי בַּנָּה
השָּׁתָה שֶׁחַתָּת לְאֶבֶנֶל / השָׁתָה יַרְעָה לְאֶבֶנֶל"

**Ezra 2:66-67**

"уют הָמְשִׁים שניים הַכֶּלֶל שֶׁלֶשׁ / הָמְשִׁים מַעֲשֵׂים שֶׁלֶשׁ שֶׁלֶשׁ
וֹת הָמְשִׁים שניים הַכֶּלֶל שֶׁלֶשׁ / הָמְשִׁים מַעֲשֵׂים שֶׁלֶשׁ שֶׁלֶשׁ
וֹת הָמְשִׁים שניים הַכֶּלֶל שֶׁלֶשׁ / הָמְשִׁים מַעֲשֵׂים שֶׁלֶשׁ שֶׁלֶשׁ"

This method cannot be applied when the items consist of only one word, since the individual items share no verbal link, and dividing so that each verse contains two pairs would not create parallelism. However, this method could be applied in the case of long items (instead of dividing into verses of one item). The problem is that with long items, dividing into verses containing two items each would result in overly long verses, the prevention of which evidently overrides the motivation for creating parallelism within such verses. We should keep in mind that long verses are not typical of biblical poetry, and
thus arranging long items in pairs would not imbue the list with poetic character.

Accordingly, the logic of the system is based on three principles: creating a verse with a reasonable length (not fewer than three words, but not too long); dividing into the smallest parts possible; and arrangement so as to resemble the parallelism of biblical poetry.\footnote{It is worth noting that in Masoretic manuscripts many of these lists are presented in a structure resembling that of biblical poetry. I will adduce two examples from the Aleppo Codex: 1 Chron 24:7-8}

The desire for division into the smallest parts possible is unique to lists and is not evident in the division of other biblical material.\footnote{For example, the following verse contains five sentences and could have been divided into shorter verses: Gen 22:3} While regular sentences can be arranged hierarchically, according to the syntactic relationship between the sentences, in a row of items there is no hierarchy, the syntactic relationship between them being merely one of coordination. Therefore, the most natural method of division is into the smallest parts.

I hope that this research may serve as a starting point for the investigation into the rationale of versification in other kinds of texts as well. Such research will further our understanding of the relationship between the various components of the Masoretic Text and of the history of the biblical text in general.

\footnote{In seems that the motivation was to highlight the nature of the list by arranging the similar words in columns. This shows that the Masoretes, too, endeavored to emphasize the unique nature of a list and to highlight the parallelism between its components.}
Appendix

Introductory remarks

This appendix contains all the lists upon which the research is based. The lists are organized according to the structure of the article, with the same titles and the same numbering of sections. In this way, all biblical cases for every section can be located.

Cases of textual difficulty (e.g., a list which claims to contain fourteen items, but which in reality includes only thirteen; see Josh 19:2-6) do not affect the topic of this research and, as such, I refrain from comment. Individual cases can be checked in the commentaries.

Lists with varying length of items

In most of the lists, the length of the items is relatively consistent throughout the whole list. In six cases, there is one verse which is significantly longer than the rest of the verses in the same list. In order to fit such cases into the general framework, I had to split the list into two:

- Josh 15:48-49; 50-51 (addition at the end of 49)
- Lev 11:13-16; 11:17-19 (first list according to structure)
- Deut 14:12-15; 16-18 (first list according to structure)
- Song 5:11-12; 13-16 (addition at the end of first list)
- 1 Chron 5:30-36; 37-40 (addition at the end of first list)
- 1 Chron 11:27-41; 42-47 (in second list length of items varies considerably from verse to verse; this list is not included in the discussions).

Neh 3:2-32 is special in that item length and, accordingly the number of items in each verse varies significantly from verse to verse. This case is not included in our discussions.

1. Division according to structure

2. Deciding between the systems of division

2.1 Three Items per Verse

2.1.1 A single word

2.1.2 Two words

2.1.2.1 One of the words is short
lʾasher b- + local name: 1 Sam 30:27-31.

2.1.2.2 Both words are long
Proper name + ordinal number: 1 Chron 26:2-3.

2.2 Two Items per Verse

2.2.1 Two or three words

49) Hebron is a district and is not included in the list of the cities.
50) The names in verse 15 are in a different form and are not included in the list.
51) According to the introduction at the beginning this is a new list, not a continuation of the previous one.
52) According to the introduction at the beginning this is a new list, not a continuation of the previous one.
Proper name + duty: 2 Sam 8:16-18; 20:23-25; 1 Kings 4:2-6; 1 Chron 18:15-17.
Proper name + holid + proper name: Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chron 2:10-12; 2:36-41; 5:30-36; 5:37-40.
Noun + number: Josh 12:9-24

2.2.2 Four words
b’ney + proper name: 1 Chron 1:39-42.
min-b’ney + proper name: 2 Chron 29:12-14.
Ordinal number + proper name: 1 Chron 3:1-3.
Noun + number: Ezra 2:66-67
Others: Deut 4:17-18; Zeph 3:3-4; Zech 6:2-3; Song 5:13-16

2.2.3 Five words or more

2.3 One Item per Verse

2.3.1 Three words
L’- + proper name + proper name: Num 1:5-15.

2.3.2 Four words
l’- + proper name + proper name: Num 13:4-15: Num 34:19-28
Proper name + number: Ezra 2:3-35; 2:36-39; Neh 7:8-38; 7:39-42.

2.3.3 Five words or more
b’ney + proper name: 1 Chron 7:38-39.
mb’b’ney + proper name: Ezra 8:3-14; 10:20-30.53
l’- + proper name + proper name: 1 Chron 15:5-10.

53) In verse 24 two short items are grouped together.
3. The System of Division into Verses Containing Three Items

3.1 Lists Evenly Divided into Three


3.2 Lists with a Remainder of 2


3.3 Lists with a Remainder of One

3.3.1 All the numbers (except seven)


3.3.2 Lists of seven items

3.3.2.1 Normal cases—the long verse at the beginning: Gen 10:13-14; 36:15-16; 36:20-21; 36:29-30; Josh 19:25-26; 1 Chron 1:11-12; 8:9-10; 8:17-18; 8:30-31; 26:2-3.
3.3.2.2 Exceptions: Neh 12:33-34; 1 Chron 5:4-6; 6:5-6.

4. The System of Division into Verses Containing Two Items per Verse

4.1 Even numbers


4.2 *Odd numbers*

A verse consisting of three at the beginning: 7 Num 26:15-17; 2 Chron 29:12-14; 11 1 Chron 12:10-14.
A verse consisting of three at the end: 9 Josh 21:13-16.
A verse consisting of one at the beginning: 9 1 Kings 4:2-6; Ruth 4:18-22.

5. *Other systems of division*

See the body of the article for discussion of these cases.

6. *Lists of Three, Four and Five Items*

6.1 *Lists of Three Items*

Division of 1-2: 1 Sam 13:17-18; 2 Kings 11:5-6; Neh 7:67-68; 1 Chron 2:50-51; 2 Chron 23:4-5.
Division of 2-1: Gen 36:2-3; 36:4-5; Song 5:11-12.

6.2 *Lists of Four items*

Division of 3-1: Gen 10:11-12; 14:5-6.
Division of 1-3: Deut 6:10-11.

6.3 *Lists of Five items*

Division of 2-3: Gen 32:15-16; 1 Chron 6:11-12.
Division of 2-2-1: 2 Sam 3:3-5.