

Genesis 41:40: A New Interpretation

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The basic sense of Gen. 41:40 has always been clear to readers. It is certain from the context that the writer of the passage wished to describe Pharaoh as conferring wide-ranging authority on Joseph. Unclear, however, is the precise intention of the text, particularly of the second clause. The ancient, medieval, and modern translations and commentaries have attempted—unsuccessfully in our opinion—to resolve the difficulty.¹ Our study examines earlier suggestions and proposes a fresh solution.

The Hebrew of the Massoretic text reads: *'th thyb 'l byty w'l pyk yšq kl 'my rq bks' 'gdl mmk* "You shall be in charge of my palace². . . Only the throne shall be greater than you."³ For the moment we leave untranslated the highly problematic second phrase. Joseph was thus to be major domo. Indeed, Egyptian sources know such an official who is designated as *mr pr*. His

1 The Septuagint (hereafter LXX) translated: *kai epi tō stomati sou hypakousetai pas ho laos mou* "And all my people shall be subject to your mouth." Perhaps this reflects a reading *yqšb*. Note that Prov. 17:4, *mr' mqšyb 'l špt 'wn* is translated by LXX as *kakos hypakoúei glossēs paranómon* "A bad man hearkens to the tongue of transgressors." In addition, see LXX to Prov. 29:12. Peshitta translated: *w'l mlt pwmk nsb dyn' klb 'my* "And by the word of your mouth shall all my people be judged." The Syriac is more likely a guess than a witness to a reading *yšpt* (contrast *BH*³). Saadia (ed. Derenbourg, 65) offered: *w'ly 'mrk ynq'd ḡmy' qwmy* "All of my people will be directed by your command." Elsewhere Saadia employed *qāda* to translate the Hebrew term for 'lead' and 'drive' *nbg*. See his translations of Ps. 78:26, 52 (ed. Qafih, 185, 188), 80:2 (ibid., 191). In his essentially correct translation of Gen. 41:40 he has been followed by a number of moderns. Thus *NJPS*: "By your command shall all my people be directed." Cf. *Gesenius*¹⁷, 527b (with reservations).

2 Cf. Gen. 39:4,5 "According to 44:1 Joseph has his own *'šr 'l bytw*, translated literally by LXX as *ho ēpì tēs oikías autou*.

3 The verb *'gdl* appears to be a first person imperfect. Yet the grammatical subject of the clause is the throne. Scholars have therefore generally taken *rq bks'* as an accusative of extent. Ibn Ezra, for example, wrote, "Its sense is, 'I shall not have more greatness than you, except in regard to the throne'" (A. Weiser, ed., *Ibn Ezra* [Jerusalem, 1976], 1:116); cf. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 118h. A slight modification of this is D. Redford's "Only on the throne shall I be greater than you" (*A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph* [Leiden, 1970], 166). However, both the presence of the definite article (*bks'*) as well as the relative position of the accusative and that which it allegedly determines make this explanation unlikely (see Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 1:210; contrast *Mikrâ Ki-Phešbutô* 1:113). There is manuscript support, though, for *ygdI* (third person; see *Randglossen* 1:210). But there is no need for textual emendation, for *'gdl* and *ygdI* may simply be alternative orthographies. In classical Hebrew the imperfect prefixes *alep* and *yod* were frequently interchanged and both pronounced *iqtol*. See Qimhi apud *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 47b; cf. Ginsberg in *Kaplan Volume*, 257; M. Held, *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969), 77, n. 55. 'Throne' is used here metonymically, representing the royal authority; cf. E. L. Greenstein and D. Marcus, *JANES* 8 (1976), 90, comment to l. 81.

activity however was restricted to the royal household while Joseph's authority was not.⁴ It is more likely that the Hebrew writer had in mind the Israelite ('šr) 'l hbyt, an official of very high standing who was, by the ninth pre-Christian century, first minister of state.⁵ A biblical account of the meeting of a Judite royal delegation and its Assyrian counterpart during the reign of Hezekiah names the 'šr 'l hbyt first in the Judite group.⁶ Significantly, the first Assyrian official mentioned is the trtn (Akkadian *tartānu/turtānu*) who followed the king in *limmu*, or eponym succession.⁷ Furthermore, a seal impression of the sixth century B.C.E. names one gdlybw 'šr 'l hbyt⁸ who is generally considered to be identical with Gedaliah b. Ahīqam, who governed Judah as a Babylonian official in 586 B.C.E.⁹ Joseph would thus be pictured as a sort of grand vizier.¹⁰ We would not err in expecting the next phrase to expand on this depiction.

If we derive yšq in the second phrase from the well-attested verb nšq I 'kissed' with semantic etymons in Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Akkadian, then the Massoretic text admits of only two translations: a) "All my people shall kiss you on the mouth"; b) "At your command¹¹ all my people shall kiss." The first translation makes grammatical sense but is unlikely in a context describing Joseph's authority.¹² The alternative translation takes 'l pyk idiomatically but leaves the apparently transitive verb yšq without a direct object.

4 R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York, 1965), 1:130.

5 H. J. Katzenstein, *IEJ* 10 (1960), 150, n. 9; H. L. Ginsberg, in *Mordecai Kaplan Jubilee Volume* (New York, 1953), 252–53.

6 2 Kgs. 18:17–18; cf. Isa. 36:2.

7 See *AHW*, 1332.

8 *Inscriptions Reveal*, No. 15. The title occurs earlier on a seal from Silwan dating from the seventh or sixth century BCE. (*KAI* # 191, B:1).

9 2 Kgs. 25:22–25; Jer. 40:5f.

10 Further light is shed on the narrator's conception of Joseph's office by the association of 'šr 'l hbyt and skn in the description of Shebna in Isa. 22:15. The high standing of the skn is assured by the description of Shebna's duties, by the occurrence of the title in Phoenician and Aramaic sources, and especially by the mention of the skn immediately following the mlk 'king' in the Ahiiram sarcophagus inscription (see *KAI* # 1:2; vol. 2: 211–12; Jean & Hoftijzer, *DISO*, 193). The Hebrew and Phoenician titles are reflected in Amarna *sūkinu* (*EA* 256:9; 362:69), which is functionally equivalent to Akkadian *rābišu* and Egyptian *wprwtj* 'commissioner', agent', and in Ugaritic skn (see Bohl, *Sprache*, 83; Albright, in *CAH*³, II/2, 102; Gordon, *UT*, Glossary No. 1754; Aistleitner, *WUS*⁴, No. 1909).

11 For this idiomatic sense of 'l py, see, e.g., Gen. 45:21; Exod. 17:1; Num. 3:16, 9:20; 27:21. For post-biblical Hebrew, cf. *TB Sukkah* 2b.

12 Cf. H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen, 1910), 438; Ehrlich, *Randglossen* 1: 210; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (New York, 1904), 343. Though a kiss may be an act of homage, biblical and near eastern sources do not indicate that oral or facial kissing was an appropriate gesture of submission, at least, in non-romantic contexts. Joab's deceitful kiss of Amasa (2 Sam. 20:9) illustrates a practice of equals. Note Herodotus' remark that Persians kissed equals on the mouth and those somewhat superior on the cheeks (*The Histories*, 1:134; cf. further C. Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer* [Leipzig, 1890], 78, n. 6). Akkadian sources speak of kissing the feet of a superior, especially a sovereign, as a gesture of submission or reverence (references in *AHW*, 759a). An inferior might also kiss a superior on the knees (*CAD B*, 256a), a practice which has parallels in the Babylonian Talmud and Greco-Roman custom (see *TB Sanhedrin* 27b; *Ketubot* 49b, 63a; Sittl, *Gebärden*, 169). According to *TB* a superior might show affection or appreciation for an inferior by kissing him/her on the head (*Hagigah* 14b; *Megillah* 14a; *Nazir* 29b). One modern commentator cites two midrashic statements to explain Gen. 41:40. The first comments on it directly: "No one shall kiss me without your permission" (J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, *Der Midrasch Bereschit Rabba* [Reprint: Jerusalem, 1965]

Because of these difficulties commentators and translators have sought other solutions. Targum Onkelos translated *yšq* by *ytzn*¹³ 'shall be fed, shall be provided for'. Rashi followed Onkelos and in addition related *yšq* to *bn mšq byty* of Gen. 15:2.¹⁴ It must be objected, though, that the context of Gen. 41:40 leads the reader to expect mention of Joseph's authority and privileges rather than of his duties.¹⁵ More significantly, there is no philological basis for the Targum's translation. Rashi notwithstanding, the term *bn mšq byty* is itself highly problematic¹⁶ and cannot elucidate *yšq*. It is likely that Onkelos was influenced by the inner-Aramaic closeness of *zwn* 'provide', 'feed' and *zyyn* (*pa 'el*) 'to arm, equip with weaponry'.¹⁷ By analogy to Aramaic, Onkelos may have reasoned that Hebrew *nšq* II, which is associated with weaponry, could likewise be associated with food-provision.

Indeed, some medieval Jewish scholars explicitly related *yšq* to *nšq* II, a verbal root connected with the noun *nšq* (*nešeq*) 'weapon', etymologically distinct from *nšq* I, as shown by Ugaritic.¹⁸

3:1100). The second (ibid. 577–709) explains the proper name Pikol (Gen. 21:22; 26:26) as the "The-Mouth-of-Everyone—All his minions kiss him on the mouth" (A. Kahana, *The Bible with Critical Commentary* [Zhitomer, 1904], 117–18 [in Hebrew]). Though certainly of interest, these sources are irrelevant to Gen. 41:40. First, they reflect Greco-Roman practice. Secondly the earlier comment says simply that the Pharaoh might not be kissed without Joseph's permission, not that either he or Joseph might be kissed on the mouth. The second citation claims that Pikol or, more precisely, whomever the midrashist actually had in mind, did not receive the tribute due his office. For related midrashic comments, see A. Hyman et al., *Yalqut Shim'oni 'al Hattora* (Jerusalem, 1973) 1:426, 2:533; S. Buber, *Lekach-Tob* (Vilna, 1880), 96. For the gesture of kissing in general in Greco-Roman sources, see Sittl, *Gebärden*, 166–73; H. J. Rose, in *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1970), 466.

13 For the Onkelos text, see A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (Leiden, 1970), 1:70; cf. A. Diez Macho, *Neophyti I* (Barcelona, 1968), 275.

14 Ed. Berliner, 82. Saadia apparently made the same connection. He translated *mšq* by *qy'd*; see ad loc. (ed. Derenbourg, 22).

15 Cf. K. A. Kitchen, *ET* 69 (1957), 30.

16 The phrase occurs nowhere else. Furthermore, the Massoretic cantillation breaks the construct-genitive chain in an unexpected and ungrammatical manner. Onkelos translated, *br prns' bdyu dbbyty* "this overseer who is in my house" (ed. Sperber, 1:20). The Peshitta either ignored *mšq* or did not have the vocable in its Hebrew source. Indeed *mšq* looks suspiciously like a partial dittography of *dmšq* (cf. vs. 2). See further *Gesenius*¹⁷, 473; H. L. Ginsberg, *BASOR* 200 (1970), 31–32. For a provocative, if overly ingenious, solution see Ehrlich, *Mikrā Ki-Pšesbutô*, 1:39. For a derivation of the meaning 'overseers', see A. Neubauer, ed., *The Book of Hebrew Roots by Abu'l Walid Marwan ibn Janab, called Rabbi Jonah* (Oxford, 1875), 396 = W. Bacher, ed., *Sepher Haschoraschim* (Berlin, 1896), 277; J. Biesenthal and F. Lebrecht, eds., *Rabbi Davidis Kimchi Radicum Liber* (Berlin, 1847), 203.

17 Targum Onkelos employs *zwn* to translate Hebrew *klkl* 'sustain, support' (Gen. 45:11; 47:12; 50:21). Similarly it translates *y'b* 'lead, pasture' by *zwn* (Gen. 48:15) and also employs it for *nbl* 'lead' (Gen. 47:17). The noun *nšq* 'weapon' appears in Targum as *mny zyn* (1 Kgs. 10:25; 2 Kgs. 10:2). In addition see the Targums to Isa. 22:8 and Job 39:21; cf. Levy, *TW* 1:215, 219.

18 In *PRU* II, 123:1–3 *ntq* appears as a specific weapon along with *hṣ* 'arrow', *qšt* 'bow' and *ql'* 'shield'. Note the similar association in the parallelism *nšq/qšt* in Job 20:24. See M. Dahood, in *An. Or.* 49 (1972), 333, who translates *ntq* as 'dart'. Analogously, in Akkadian the general term for 'weapon', *kakku*, refers as well to a specific weapon whose exact translation thus far eludes us. See *CAD K*, 52. More problematic is the Ugaritic phrase *ntq dmm* (CTA 4, vii:39. Even the reading is uncertain, for though Herdner's transcription has *dmm*, the autograph has *dmm*, which seems closer to the photograph (pl. 10). Caquot translated the phrase as "l'arme du Vaillant" (*Textes ougaritiques* [Paris, 1974] 1:217); De Moor preferred "armor-bearers of the place of perdition" (*AOAT* 16 [Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1971], 164, 166. Perhaps the wisest course was taken by H. L. Ginsberg (*ANET*, 135) who hesitated to offer any translation.

Ibn Janah, for example, raised the possibility of translating Gen. 41:40 "At your command my people shall bear weapons, i.e., they will battle their foes."¹⁹ But this translation is likewise objectionable. Though the noun *nešeq* is well-attested, the verb *nšq* II appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible, twice in the phrase *nšqy qšt*²⁰ and a third in the apparently conflate form *nwšqy rwmy qšt*.²¹ Each of these seems to be an active participle much like *tpš qšt*²² 'bow holder' and *drky qšt*²³ 'bow treaders'. In fact, biblical Hebrew generally favors similar active participles in its descriptions of military personnel. Note for example *šlp ḥrb*²⁴ 'sword drawer'; *nš'y mgn whrb*²⁵ 'bearers of shield and sword'; *tpšy ḥrbwt*²⁶ 'sword holders'; and *nš'y šnb wrmb*²⁷ 'holders of buckler and lance'. We should expect *nšqy qšt* to conform to this pattern and to have some active sense rather than a passive 'armed with'. If *rwmy* in the expression *nwšqy rwmy qšt* is an explanatory gloss or a conflate of two synonymous expressions, then we should translate *nwšqy qšt* as 'bow shooters' and the verb *nšq* II as 'shoot' or perhaps as 'cast, fling'. Note the phrase *rmb qšt* 'archer'.²⁸ Accordingly, were we to derive *yšq* in Gen. 41:40 from *nšq* II we would be compelled to translate 'l pyk yšq kl' *my* as "At your command shall all my people shoot/cast/flip," which is unlikely.

The Egyptian setting of the Joseph story has led some scholars to suggest that an Egyptianism underlies *yšq*. Yahuda suggested that *yšq* reflects Egyptian *šn* 'kiss', which is sometimes attested with food as a direct object and thus means both 'kiss' and 'eat'.²⁹ In effect the Targum's translation would be justified by this procedure. However Gen. 41:40 has no direct object following the verb *yšq*. Furthermore, other scholars have shown that *šn* does not mean 'eat' even in Yahuda's alleged prooftexts.³⁰ Kitchen, who criticized Yahuda, himself saw in *yšq* a reflex of Egyptian *šn t3* 'kiss the earth'.³¹ Contextually Kitchen's suggestion is superior to that of Yahuda. Nonetheless the text still lacks the required direct object, in this case a correspondent of Egyptian *t3*, such as 'rš' 'earth, ground' or 'pr' 'dust'. Furthermore, one need not turn to Egyptian for 'kiss the

19 He translated *yšq* by *ytslḥwn* (*Roots*, 465 = *Haschoraschim*, 326) but suggested *yltzmn* 'will cleave to' as an alternative (loc. cit.). Ibn Ezra likewise opted for *nšq* II; see ad loc. (ed. Weiser, 1:116).

20 1 Chr. 12:2; 2 Chr. 17:17.

21 Ps. 78:9; see *BH*³.

22 Amos 2:15.

23 1 Chr. 5:18; 2 Chr. 14:7; note the apparently conflate form *tpšy drky qšt* 'bow-holders/treaders' (Jer. 46:9).

24 Judg. 8:10; 20:2, 15, 17, 35, 46; 2 Sam. 24:9; 2 Kgs. 3:26; 1 Chr. 21:5. For the plural, see Judg. 20:25.

25 1 Chr. 5:18; cf. 2 Chr. 14:7. Cf. also *tpšy mgn* 'shield-holders' (Jer. 46:9).

26 Ezek. 38:4.

27 1 Chr. 12:25 (cf. vs. 9).

28 Jer. 4:29. Cf. the alternation of *rmb* and *yrb* in Exod. 15:1,4. Akkadian shares with Hebrew the preference for constructing active participial phrases to describe military personnel. Note *nāš kabābi* 'shield bearer' (*AHW.*, 414a); *tāmeḥ abūbi* 'holder of the deluge weapon' (Bollenrücher, *Nergal* 50:8); *mutabbilat kakkī* 'wielder of weapons' (Ebeling, *Handerhebung*, 130:6).

29 A. S. Yahuda, *Die sprachliche Gestalt des Pentateuch in ihren Beziehung ägyptischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1929), 6–7 = idem, *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egyptian* (Oxford, 1933), 7–8.

30 See E. König, *JBL* 48 (1929), 342; cf. T. E. Peet, *JEA* 16 (1930), 158; K. A. Kitchen, *ET* 69 (1957), 30; D. Redford, *Joseph*, 166, n. 4.

31 *ET* 69 (1957), 30.

earth' as a figure connoting submission³² but may adduce Akkadian examples as well.³³

One of the more popular approaches to the problem has been to translate *yšq* as 'arrange, order themselves' on the basis of Arabic *nasāqa*.³⁴ While it is true that Arabic *nasāqa* attests these meanings, even a perusal of the standard Arabic lexica demonstrates that the verb is employed primarily for the stringing of pearls and the composition of discourses.³⁵ The meaning alleged here for *yšq* would most likely be expressed in Arabic by *igtama* 'a, the eighth form of *gama'a* 'gather, collect'. A dialectal distribution³⁶ for the notion of 'people, troops, subjects, etc. ordering themselves' follows:

Hebrew	Aramaic	Akkadian	Arabic
<i>nqbš</i> ³⁷	<i>'tknš</i> ⁴⁰	<i>paḫāru</i> ⁴¹	<i>ḡtm</i> ⁴³
<i>n'sp</i> ³⁸		<i>kutaššuru</i> ⁴²	
<i>nqbl</i> ³⁹			

A. B. Ehrlich likewise turned to Arabic. He suggested revocalizing *yiššaq* to *yašaq* and trans-

32 Thus P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Genesis* (Bonn, 1930), 374–75, explained *yšq* by reference to Ps. 72:9 in which *'pr ylhkw* 'shall lick the dust' stands parallel to *ykr 'w* 'will bend the knee' (cf. Isa. 49:23). In addition see EA 100:34–36 with Weber's note ad loc., 1195.

33 Akkadian *qaqqara našāqu/nuššuqu* 'kiss the earth (repeatedly)' provides a more exact parallel to Egyptian *sn t3*. See, e.g., Streck, *Asb.*, 34:19–20; *ibid.*, LXXXVII, n. 2; *ibid.*, 539; *RLA* 3, 668.

34 E.g., J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (=ICC, New York, 1917), 469; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (New York, 1904), 343; Kōnig, *JBL* 48 (1929), 342; *RSV*.

35 See G. W. Freytag, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* 3:275; J. Hava, *Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut, 1921), 766; H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. M. Cowan, (Ithaca, 1961), 962.

36 The importance of the principle of dialectal distribution can scarcely be overstated. Of particular significance is Held's "stress on disclosing the meanings of words by the inductive method rather than the etymological one" (*JAOS* 79 [1959], 169; cf. W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* [Garden City, N. Y., 1957], 46–47; B. Landsberger, *JNES* 24 [1965], 295–96). Over-reliance on the etymological method often leads scholars into allegedly clarifying an obscure term in language X by reference to a term in language Y when the contextual sense of the term in language Y is inappropriate to the obscure term of language X. By establishing the attested semantic range of a term with the aid of dialectal distribution we are able, within limits, to be precise about the probable synchronic associations which a speaker would have made, irrespective of ultimate etymological relationships. It is worthy of note that neither Saadia, nor Ibn Ezra, nor Ibn Janah, who were native speakers of Arabic as well as outstanding Hebraists, associated *yšq* of Gen. 41:40 with Arabic *nasāqa*.

37 E.g., Gen. 49:2; Isa. 49:18, 60:4; Ps. 102:23.

38 Judg. 9:6; 10:17; 16:23.

39 Lev. 8:4; 1 Kgs. 8:2; Jer. 26:9.

40 Onkelos to Gen. 49:2 (ed. Sperber, 84); Targum to Isa. 49:18; 60:4.

41 See ARM II, 48:6–20; further, *Allw.*, 210.

42 References in CAD K, 262, sec. 7.

43 See Saadia to Gen. 49:2 (ed. Derenbourg, 77); Isa. 49:18; 60:4; (ed. Derenbourg, 76, 90); Ps. 102:23 (ed. Qafih, 224). We have not included Ugaritic in this distribution. Though several nouns have the sense 'assembled multitude', e.g., *qbš* and *phr* (CTA 14, iii:15), it is unclear which verbs have the required meaning. See CTA 14, ii:85–88 with Caquot, *Textes ougaritiques* 1:516, and reference to previous literature.

lating 'l pyk yšq as 'soll sich deinem Befehle unterwerfen'. In so doing he parsed yšq as a *qal* imperfect of šūq,⁴⁴ related it to tšwqt⁴⁵ (Gen. 3:16) which he understood as 'your submission'. He then connected tšwqb and *yāšaq to Arabic sāqa 'seine Sache dem Belieben eines anderen überlassen, sie ihm Anheim geben'. His final tour de force was to assert that the sense 'Anheim geben' underlies the noun sūqatun 'Untertanenschaft'.⁴⁶ Though it cannot be denied that the meanings 'Anheim geben' and 'überlassen' are attested by Arabic sāqa, these are clearly secondary to its basic meaning 'drive'.⁴⁷ Arabic sāqa is a semantic equivalent of Hebrew nbh⁴⁸ and nbl.⁴⁹ Like those verbs, sāqa may be employed for the driving of cattle or beasts. The noun sūqatun refers to 'mob, rabble, subjects' and the like, in the sense of those driven by another. If Ehrlich were correct in deriving yšq from sāqa, we would have to translate Gen. 41:40 as "All my people shall drive," which is most unconvincing.

Our contention is that the Massoretic text be emended slightly to read 'l pyk yšb (yešeb) kl 'my. The ancient signs for bet and qof were not graphically distant.⁵⁰ Indeed, the Massorah and versions vacillate between tšwqt⁴⁵ and tšwbtk in Gen. 3:16, and a similar situation obtains in Cant. 7:11.⁵¹ The proposed emendation would enable us to translate 'l pyk yšb kl 'my literally as "All my people shall sit at your command," an exact reflex of Akkadian ana pī X ašābu 'to sit at the command of X,' which attests the idiomatic sense 'obey'. As an example we may cite an omen text based on observations of anomalous births: šumma izbū 2-ma pišunu 1-ma mātum ana pī šarrim uššab⁵² "If anomalies are double but have only one mouth, the land will

44 Randglossen, 1:210. Presumably his vocalization was based on forms such as yāqām (= yāqom; see Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, § 72f). Previously Ehrlich had followed LXX, though not without reservations; see Mikrā Ki-Phešcutū, 1:113. The Randglossen proposal was accepted by E. A. Speiser, Genesis (Garden City, 1964), 313.

45 Saadia apparently related yšq of Gen. 41:40 to tšwqt of Gen. 3:16 a millennium before Ehrlich, though he did not invoke sāqa. He simply translated tšwqt by qy'dk and yšq by ynq'dw.

46 Ehrlich discussed tšwqt in Randglossen, 1:14–15. It must be noted, however, that the Massoretic text differs from LXX *he apostrophe sou*; Old Latin *conversio tua* (BH³); and Onkelos *tywbtyk* (ed. Sperber, 5), all of which indicate a reading tšwbtk 'your turning'. If Massoretic tšwqt is preferable after all, there is still no reason that tšwqb should mean anything other than 'desire', which most translators have found in Cant. 7:11 (but see BH³). Ehrlich differs from most and translates that passage, "und es ist meine Pflicht mich ihm hinzugeben" (Randglossen; 7:16). It seems simpler to derive tšwqb from šūq which occurs in the *poel* as a synonym of r'b 'hungry' (Ps. 107:9) and 'yp 'thirsty' (Isa. 29:8). Nor is it strange that the Bible speaks of love and longing in terms of hunger and thirst (Ps. 42:3, 63:2).

47 For references, see Lane, *Lexicon*, 1/4:147–71; Wehr, *Dictionary*, 442–43.

48 See S. Skoss, ed., *Kitab jamī' al-alfaz* (New Haven, 1945), 2:257; Saadia to Gen. 31:18 (ed. Derenbourg, 48); Exod. 10:3 (ibid., 95).

49 See Saadia to Ps. 23:2, 31:4 (ed. Qafih, 91, 101).

50 See conveniently the chart in IDB, 4:914 and the Aramaic script charts appended to F. Rosenthal, *Die aramaische Forschung* (reprint: Leiden, 1964).

51 See n. 46.

52 Leichty, *Izbu* (= TCS 4), 87:26. Cf. 132:20. The omen interpretation is transparent. The presence of one mouth eliminates the possibility of disagreement. We may compare idioms along the line of pā ištēn mītharīš iššaknū "(Rebellious countries) had united themselves under one command" (Weidner, *Tn.* 3:36–37; Grayson, *RANE*, 1:103; cf. Josh. 9:2 and see E. Dhorme, *L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps en Hébreu et en Akkadien* [Paris, 1923], 84). Similarly, pā ištēn kullat nākīrī [aškun] "I made all the foes submit to (my) unified command" (Weidner, *Tn.* 5:36–37; Grayson, *RANE*, 1:104; further *AHW.*,

be obedient to the king.” Similarly an OB omen text reads: *šarrum massu ana pīšu uššab*⁵³ “As regards the king, his land shall obey him.” In an Old Assyrian royal inscription King Irišum declares: *ālī ana pīya ūšib*⁵⁴ . . . “My city obeyed me.”

Inasmuch as *pī* means ‘word’ and ‘command’ as well as ‘mouth’,⁵⁵ the vocable is often a virtual synonym of *qibītu*. Now the idiom *ana pī X ašābu* has a causative parallel in *ana qibīt X šūšubu*, literally ‘to cause to sit at the command of X’. Note the following examples: *išdī ayyābī u lemmim in mātīm lu assuḥ napḥar mātīm ana qibītiya lu ušēšib*⁵⁶ “I extirpated enemy and foe from the country. I caused the entire country to be obedient to my command”; *napḥar māt Šumerīm u Akkadīm uštešmi kibrāt erbettim ana qibītišu ušēšib*⁵⁷ “He compelled obedience from the entire land of the Sumerians and Akkadians. He imposed his command on the Four Quarters.”

The above references demonstrate the use of the Akkadian idioms ‘to sit at the command of/cause to sit at the command of X’ in rulership contexts that are extremely similar to Gen. 41:40. That text, as emended by us, is in keeping with the tendency of the Semitic languages to construct idioms making verbal use of the parts of the body.⁵⁸ Note this in the very continuation of the Joseph narrative in Gen. 41:44: *’ny pr’h wbl’dyk l’ yrym ’yš ’t ydw w’t rglw bkl ’rš mšrym* “I am Pharaoh; but without your consent no man shall lift hand or leg throughout the land of Egypt.” Each of these idioms simply means that the movements of the subjects will be so much in their ruler’s control that their very abilities to sit, move or walk will depend on him. An American speaker might say, “They won’t make a move without his permission.”

As to the prepositional equivalency of Hebrew *’l* and Akkadian *ana* in the respective idioms we may compare *’l py btwrh* (Deut. 17:11) ‘according to the instruction’ with *ana pī kankim ša PN našū*⁵⁹ “according to the document which PN bears.”

We translate Gen. 41:40: “You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people shall obey you. Only the throne shall be greater than you.”

872–73, meaning D). Extremely close to *pā ištēn šakānu* ‘to place one mouth’ is *pā ēda šakānu* ‘to place a single mouth’. We read in the “Fable of the Fox and the Wolf”: *pā ēda iššaknūma . . . ana kalbi re’išina ištene’u maršāti* “(The fox and wolf) having reached an agreement . . . constantly seek the discomfiture of the dog their shepherd” (BWL, 207:14–15).

53 YOS X, 11:4:17–9. W. von Soden translates, “Der Land des Königs wird für seinem Mund sitzen” d.h. seinem Geheiss folgen” (Or. 21 [1952], 76).

54 AOB I, 12:7:18; cf. Grayson, *RANE*, 1:10.

55 See *Allw.*, sub D ‘Aussage, Befehl’.

56 RA 39 (1942–44), 8:49–53 (Samsu-Iluna B).

57 RA 63 (1969), 36:123–28.

58 In general see Dhorme, *L’emploi métaphorique*; Holma, *Körperteile*; H. Vorwahl, *Die Gebärdensprache im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1932); A. L. Oppenheim, *JAOS* 61 (1941), 251–67; S. D. Sperling, *Studies in Late Hebrew Lexicography in the Light of Akkadian* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: Columbia, 1973), chap. 5; A. D. Kilmer, *JAOS* 94 (1974), 177–83 and especially 182, n. 24; M. Gruber, *Nonverbal Communication*.

59 *Abb.* 2:1:23–24. More frequently the Hebrew prepositions *’l* and *l* correspond to *ana*. Note, however, the alternation of *’l py* and *lpy* in Num. 35:30 and Deut. 17:6.