

Pits and Pitfalls in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew

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The substantive *šaḫat* denoting 'pit, netherworld', is attested twenty-one times in biblical Hebrew.¹ The verbal idioms with which *šaḫat* is employed may be conveniently summarized as follows: *yārad* (*hōrād*) *laššaḫat* 'to descend (cause to descend) to the pit/netherworld';² *qārāb laššaḫat* 'to draw near to the pit/netherworld';³ *ābar baššaḫat* 'to pass through the pit/netherworld';⁴ *mūt laššaḫat* '(to go down) dying into the netherworld';⁵ *rā'āb šaḫat* 'to experience the netherworld';⁶ *kārāb šaḫat* 'to dig a pit'.⁷ The twin meanings 'pit/netherworld' are also apparent from terms employed in synonymous parallelism with *šaḫat*: *šē'ōl* 'netherworld';⁸ *āpār* 'dust';⁹ *rimmāb* 'worms';¹⁰ *bôr* 'pit';¹¹

1 Isa. 38:17; 51:14; Ezek. 28:8; Jonah. 2:7; Ps. 7:16; 9:16; 16:10; 30:10; 35:7; 49:10; 55:24; 94:13; 103:4; Prov. 26:27; 28:10; Job 17:14; 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30. For *šaḫat* in Ezek. 19:4, 8; Ps. 107:20 and Lam. 4:20, see the discussion below. For *šaḫat* in Job 9:31, see the appendix.

2 Ezek. 28:8; Ps. 30:10; 55:24; Job 33:24 = Akk. *ana eršeti/qabri/ arallî warādu/ šūrudu*; Ugar. *yrd larš*; Aram. *nḥt* ('ḥt) *lšwḥt* ('by qbwrt'); Syr. *nḥt* ('ḥt) *lḥbl*'; Arab. *warada/ awrada ila al-hūtati*. Cf. Heb. *yārad* (l^e) *šē'ōl* (e.g., Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:15); *yārad* (l^e) *bôr* (e.g., Ps. 30:4; Prov. 1:12); *yārad* (l^e) *māwēt* (Prov. 5:5; 7:27); *yārad* (l^e) *'ereš* (e.g., Ezek. 32:18, 24); *yārad* l^e *āpār* (Ps. 22:30); *yārad dūmāb* (Ps. 115:17).

3 Job 33:22 = Aram. *qrb lšwḥt*; Syr. *qrb lḥbl*'; Arab. *qaruba min al-būtati*. Cf. Heb. *nāga' liš'ōl* (Ps. 88:4); *nāga' 'ad šā'ārē māwēt* (Ps. 107:18; note *nāga'//qārāb* in Isa. 5:8).

4 Job 33:28 = Akk. *eršeta/šuttata etēqu/šūtuqu*; Aram. *'br bšwḥt*'; Syr. *'br bḥbl*'; Arab. *marra ('abara) fī-l-hūtati*. Cf. Heb. *'ābar b'ešēlāb*, for which see below, n. 12.

5 Isa. 51:14 = Akk. *ina šuttati/eršeti mātu*; Aram. *mwt bšwḥt*'; Syr. *mwt lḥbl*'; Arab. *māta fī-l-hūtati*. Cf. Heb. *mūt 'im qeḇer* (2 Sam. 19:38); *mūt b'e'āpār* (Job 14:8).

6 Ps. 16:10; 49:10 = Akk. *arallā amāru*; Aram. *ḥzb šwḥt*'; Syr. *ḥzb ḥbl*'; Arab. *ra'ā al-būtata/qabra*. Cf. Heb. *rā'āb māwēt* (Ps. 89:49); *rā'āb šā'ārē šalmāwēt* (Job 38:17).

7 Ps. 94:13; Prov. 26:27 = Akk. *šuttata ḥerū*; Aram. *ḥpr (kr') gwmš'*; Syr. *ḥpr gwmš'*; Arab *ḥafara hūtatan/ḥufratan*. Cf. Heb. *ḥāpar/kārāb bôr* (Exod. 21:33 = Akk. *būra ḥerū*); *pātaḥ bôr* (Exod. 21:33 = Akk. *būrta petū*); *ḥāpar gūmāš* (Eccl. 10:8 [an Aramaism]; *kārāb šūḥāb* (e.g., Jer. 18:20, 22).

8 Ps. 16:10; cf. *šē'ōl//bôr* (Isa. 14:15; 38:18; Ezek. 31:16; Ps. 30:4; Prov. 1:12). Note the sequence of *māwēt//šaḫat//šē'ōl* in *Ben Sira* 51:2-3 (ed. Segal [Jerusalem, 1953], 352) and that of *šaḫat//šē'ōl* - *'ābaddōn* in Qumran (Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll* [Jerusalem, 1957], 84:19-20).

9 Ps. 30:10; cf. *šē'ōl//āpār* (Job 17:16); *'ereš//āpār* (Isa. 29:4; Ps. 22:30) and *'āpār//tāmūn* 'dust'/'unknown grave' (Job 40:13).

10 Job 17:14; cf. *'āpār//rimmāb* (Job 7:5; 21:26) and *šē'ōl//rimmāb* (Job 24:19-20; see Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* [Jerusalem, 1957], 368-69).

šēlaḥ 'death';¹² *mēmītūm* 'death'.¹³

In light of these observations one is immediately reminded of the Akkadian terms *ḥaštu(m)* and *šuttatu(m)* both denoting 'pit, netherworld'. The two substantives are equated in lexical lists,¹⁴ as well as in the commentaries on *Ludlul*¹⁵ and *Šurpu*.¹⁶ Most illuminating is the equation of *ḥaštu(m)* with *eršetu(m)* 'netherworld' in the commentary on *Theodicy*,¹⁷ which calls to mind the parallelism of Hebrew šē'ōl/šāḥat. Indeed, the extent to which the Akkadian pair *ḥaštu(m)*-*šuttatu(m)* corresponds to the Hebrew terms *šāḥat* and *šūḥāb* (*šūḥāb*)¹⁸ is most remarkable, as may be seen from the following idiomatic equivalents:

11 Ps. 7:16; note also Prov. 28:17-18, where MT *bē'ēhāt* should in all probability be emended to *bēšāḥat* (Peshitta *bēgūmšā*; cf. verse 10 *nāpal bišḥūt*); cf. *erēš/bōr* (Ezek. 26:20; 31:14, 16; 32:18, 24) and *bōr/qēḇer* (Isa. 14:19; Ps. 88:5-6).

12 Job 33:18. The rendering of *šēlaḥ* here as 'death, destruction' seems quite certain. Note Peshitta 'bdn' and cf. verse 28 *šbōr baššāḥat*. Also to be compared is the parallelism in Job 36:12 *bēšēlaḥ ya'šbōrū//yigwē'ū biblī dā'at*. Thus, Tur-Sinai's interpretation (Job, 468-70) is basically correct, but his Akkadian etymology for *šēlaḥ*, as well as for šē'ōl (*The Language and the Book* [Jerusalem, 1955], 3:171 [in Hebrew]), must be rejected for more than one reason. It suffices to call attention to the fact that Akk. *šeltu* never denotes a 'sword' as such, but rather means 'sharp cutting edge, blade'. Indeed, the Akk. idiom *patru/namšaru šelu* 'sword provided with a sharp edge' (e.g., *BWL*, 146:52; *Sbalm. Monolith* I:19) is to be equated with Heb. *ḥereḇ neṭūšāb* (= *leṭūšāb*; Isa. 21:15; cf. Ps. 7:13), but the semantic equivalent of *šelu* is obviously *leṭūšāb*, not *ḥereḇ*!

Equally difficult is the etymology proposed by Dhorme (*JPOS* 3 [1923], 46-47; *Job* [Paris, 1926], 452-53), recently adopted by Pope (*Job*, Anchor Bible 15 [Garden City, N.Y., 1965], 215, 218) and Gordis (*The Book of Job and Man* [Chicago, 1965], 289), whereby our *šēlaḥ* is to be etymologically equated with the late and rare Akkadian vocable *šiliḫtu*, allegedly denoting 'canal'. (See the references in Cardascia, *Murašū*, 131, and cf., e.g., *BE* 9, 45:8-9, where *šiliḫtu* clearly denotes 'outlet of a canal'.) Here it will suffice to note that the latter vocable has nothing whatever to do with (the crossing of) the river of the netherworld, which is indicated exclusively by *Ḥubur* in Akkadian, never by *šiliḫtu*! Note particularly the idiom (*nāri*) *Ḥubur ebēru* 'to cross the river of the netherworld'//*urruḫ mūti alaku* 'to go the way of death' (*BWL*, 70:17 [Theodicy]), the antonym of which is *ina Ḥubur šadādu* 'to pull out from the river of the netherworld' (*BWL*, 58:7 [Ludlul IV]). The emendation of Duhm *bš'lb* = *bš'ōlāb* (*Hiob* [Marti's *KHC*, 1897], 159), adopted by many scholars (e.g., Hölscher, *Hiob* [*HAT*, 1952], 80) is gratuitous, particularly in light of Job 36:12.

13 Job 33:22. The rendering of *mēmītūm* as 'death', adopted by many scholars (see the commentaries), is fully corroborated by the versions (cf. Targum *šwpt//myrtwt*; Peshitta *hbl//mw*; Saadia *balāk/imāta*). No emendation seems to recommend itself with the sole exception of revocalizing our vocable as *mēmōlūm* (Jer. 16:4; Ezek. 28:8) = Arab. *mamātu* 'death, place of death'.

14 See *CAD H*, 143a, lexical section. Other lexical equivalents of *ḥaštu(m)*-*šuttatu(m)* are: *naḥallu(m)* (*AHW*, 712), *naḥbalu(m)* (ibid., 714a), *laḫtu(m)* (ibid., 528b) and *maḥdu* (ibid., 582b, where read: *ma-aḫ-du* = *šu-ut-[ta-tu]*!).

15 *Ludlul* I:93 *ana qāb damiqtiya peāssu ḥaštum* 'The pit is open for him who intercedes for me'; commentary *ḥaštum* = *šut[tatum]* (*BWL*, 34).

16 *Šurpu* IV:43-44 *ina ḥašti šulū ina pī karašē eṭēru* 'To bring up from the pit, to save from the brink of annihilation'; commentary *ḥašti* = *šuttatu* (E. Reiner, *Šurpu*, 26; 50:20).

17 Theodicy: 62 *gellat nešū ipušu peāssu ḥaštum* '(For) the crime which the lion committed, the pit is open for him'; commentary *ḥaštu* = *eršetim* (B. Landsberger, *ZA* 43 [1936], 52-53; *BWL*, 74).

18 The substantive *šūḥāb/šūḥāb* 'pit' is attested six times: Jer. 18:20, 22; Ps. 57:7; 119:85; Prov. 22:14; 23:27. This vocable is, in all probability, also hidden in Ps. 35:8c, where *šūḥāb* should be read for MT *šō'āb*. The latter would seem to be the result of contamination by *šō'āb* in the first part of the verse (8a). Note that the reading *šūḥāb* underlies both the rendering of the Syr. (*gwm's*) and that of

- (1) Akk. *šuttata ḥerû* 'to dig a pit'¹⁹ = Heb. *kārāb šaḥat/šūḥāb*;²⁰
 (2) Akk. *ina ḥašti šūlû* (/ / *ina pī karašē eṭēru*) 'to bring up from the pit' (/ / 'to save from the brink of annihilation')²¹ = Heb. *ḥē'ēlāb miššāḥat* 'to bring up from the pit';²² *bēšib minnî šaḥat* 'to bring back from the pit';²³ *gā'al/pādāh miššāḥat* 'to redeem/save from the pit';²⁴ *ḥāsak miššāḥat* 'to hold back from the pit';²⁵
 (3) Akk. *ana šuttati nadû* 'to cast into the pit'²⁶ = Heb. *bišlîk/nātan 'el bôr* 'to cast into the pit';²⁷
 (4) Akk. *ana eršeti*²⁸ / *arallî*²⁹ / *irkalli(a)*³⁰ / *qabri*³¹ *warādu/šūru* 'to descend/cause to

Saadia, who renders the second *šō'āb* by Arab. *būta*. The latter is employed by Saadia to translate Heb. *šūḥāb* in Ps. 57:7; 119:85; Prov. 22:14; 23:27 and *šaḥat* in Ps. 7:16; 9:16; 94:13; Prov. 26:27.

To be excluded here is *šūḥāb* in Jer. 2:6, where the sequence of *ārābāb wēšūḥāb* is difficult and otherwise unattested. Despite the fact that our verse is by no means ideal terrain for emendations, one cannot help feeling that context and parallelism hardly call for a substantive 'pit' (a feeling shared by some of the versions; cf. Targum *myšr wḥrwḥ*; Peshitta *ḥrbt' wšhyt'*). Rather, what comes to mind is the poetic substantive *šō'āb* (*mēšō'āb*) denoting 'devastation, waste, ruin', which is more suited to the context of *ārābāb* 'wilderness'. Thus in Job 30:3 *šō'āb* is employed with *šiyyāb* 'parched land', and in 38:26-27 with *ereš lō' iś* 'uninhabited land' and *midbār* 'wilderness'. To be compared here is Jer. 51:43, where *šammāb* 'desolation, waste' appears parallel to *ereš šiyyāb wa'ārābāb*, the colon itself parallel to one employing terms for 'uninhabited land'. For similar sequences of terms in Heb., cf. Jer. 17:6; 50:12; and in Akk., cf., e.g., *TCL* 3:193; Borger, *Esarḥ.*, 56:53-56; Streck, *Ašb.*, 72:106-110; *ibid.*, 204:3-12. Further, the proposed confusion of *šō'āb-šūḥāb* in Jer. 2:6 may be directly compared to the reverse situation obtaining in Ps. 35:8, discussed above.

19 Gilg. VI:51-52.

20 For the idiom with *šaḥat*, see above, n. 7. For *kārāb šūḥāb*, cf. Jer. 18:20, 22; Ps. 57:7; 119:85.

21 Šurpu IV:43-44 (see above, n. 16). Cf. Ludlul IV:4-6 [*bēl*] *ī uballiṭanni [ina ḥašti] i ēkimanni [ina karaš] ē eṭ[ter] anni* (for *ēteranni*) "My lord (Marduk) restored me to life, he took me away from the pit, he saved me from annihilation"; for restoration and similar context, note Ludlul IV:35-36 (BWL, 58).

22 Jonah 2:7 = Aram. *'sq mḥbl'*; Syr. *'sq mn ḥbl'*; Arab. *aṣ'ada min al-būtati*.

23 Job 33:30 = Akk. *īštu eršeti/qabri/arallî/irkalla tāru/turru* (e.g., Ludlul IV:78; Ebeling, *Handerhebung*, 24:22); Aram. *'tb mn šwḥt' (ḥbl')*; Syr. *bḥk mn ḥbl'*; Arab. *radda min al-būtati*.

24 Ps. 103:4; Job 33:28 = Akk. *pā'iš karašī padû* 'to save from the brink of annihilation' (Afo 19 [1960], 53:163); Aram. *prwq mn šwḥt'*; Syr. *prwq mn ḥbl'*; Arab. *fakka/fadā min al-būtati*.

25 Job 33:18 = Akka. *ina qabri bulluṭu; ina karašē eṭēru* (Ludlul IV:35-36; Gilg. XI:173); Aram. *mn'pṣy mn šwḥt' (ḥbl')*; Syr. *ḥsk mn ḥbl'*; Arab. *anjā min al-būtati*.

26 Langdon, *Etana*, 26:5-7 *šabassu ina kappišu nukkis kappišu abrišu u nuballišu buqunšūma idišu ana šuttati* "Seize him (the eagle) by his wings; cut off his wings, his pinions and his feathers; pluck him and cast him into the pit"; cf. *ibid.*, 30:22-23; 31:8; KAR, 46:24 = ZA 30 (1915-16), 189:22. Note also *ina pī karašī nadû*, e.g., OECT 6, 44-45:17-21; Afo 19 (1960), 59:153.

27 For *nātan 'el bôr*, see Jer. 38:7 = Aram. *ybb lgwb'*; Syr. *'rmy lgwb'*; Arab. *ja'ala fī-l-jubbi*. Cf. Akk. *ana ḥalti (= ḥašti)/būrti kunnu* 'to place into the pit' (Afo 18 [1957-58], 349:10 = AKA, 110:10 [restored]; RAcc. 146:457). For *bišlîk 'el bôr/paḥat*, see, e.g., Gen. 37:20; Jer. 38:6; 2 Sam. 18:17 = Aram. *rm' lgwb'*; Syr. *'rmy lgwb'*; Arab. *ṭaraḥa fī-l-jubbi*; cf. Akk. *ina būrti nadû* 'to cast into the pit' (ZA 30 [1915-16], 189:26).

28 CT 15, 46 r. 5 (Descent of Ištar): *Ištar ana eršeti ūrid ul ūlā* "Ištar descended to the netherworld and has not come up"; cf. LKA, 154 r. 12-13; CT 15, 46:63 and r. 6; EA 264:15-17; CT 16, 22:281; *ibid.*, 43:53; KAR, 227 iii:20.

29 Ebeling, *Handerhebung*, 24:22; cf. ZA 43 (1936), 15:28.

30 Ludlul II:46-47 (BWL, 40).

31 Ludlul IV:78 (BWL, 60); cf. Craig, AAT, 90b:20; UVB 15, 36:13.

descend to the netherworld' = Heb. *yārad* (*hōrîd*) *laššāḥat* 'to descend (make descend) to the pit/netherworld';³²

(5) Akk. *pašūqtu ḥaltu* (= *ḥaštu*) 'narrow pit'³³ = Heb. *bē'ēr šārāb* (*/šûḥāb 'āmuqqāb*) 'narrow pit (*/deep pitfall*)'.³⁴

The equation of *ṣaḥat-šûḥāb* and Akk. *ḥaštu-šuttatu* is especially evident from their respective figurative usage. Thus the metaphor in Prov. 23:27 "For an alien woman (!)³⁵ is a deep pitfall (*šûḥāb*), a foreign one a narrow pit (*bē'ēr*)" may be directly compared to the Akkadian *sinništu bûrtu bûrtu šuttatu ḥirîtu* "a woman is a pitfall,³⁶ a pitfall, a pit, a ditch."³⁷

While the semantic equation of *ṣaḥat-šûḥāb* and Akk. *ḥaštu-šuttatu* appears to be complete in every detail, one is on less firm ground in positing any etymological equation between them.³⁸ Indeed, the etymology of *ṣaḥat* remains as problematic as ever, and recent research in this area has at best been inconclusive.³⁹ What can be said, however, is that there is no basis for the commonly advanced derivation of *ṣaḥat-šûḥāb* from a root *šwh*, allegedly meaning 'to sink down'.⁴⁰ As opposed to regarding these two substantives

32 For references and distribution, see above, n. 2.

33 *Tn.-Epic* III:35-36.

34 Prov. 23:27 = Aram. *byr' 'qt'* (*/gwmš' 'myqt'*); Syr. *br' 'lyšt'* (*/gwmš' 'myq'*); Arab. *bi'r ḏayyīqa* (*/būta 'amīqa*).

35 Recent commentaries (e.g., Scott, *Proverbs* [Anchor Bible 18], 141, "harlot/strange woman") and translations (e.g., NEB, 776, "prostitute/loose woman") notwithstanding, the correct reading is surely *zārāb* (*/nokriyyāb*), and not *zônāb* (*/nokriyyāb*), which is an obvious scribal error. This assumption is fully corroborated by both the parallel text in Prov. 22:14 and the unequivocal rendering *alotrios* of the LXX. Note that while the pair *zônāb/nokriyyāb* is, with the exception of our verse, unattested, the pair *zārāb/nokriyyāb* is attested three times in the Book of Proverbs (2:16; 5:20; 7:5) and the parallelism of *zār/nokrî* is encountered no less than ten times in the Hebrew Bible (Isa. 28:21; 61:5; Obad. 11; Ps. 69:9; 81:10; Prov. 5:10; 20:16 = 27:13; 27:2; Job 19:15; Lam. 5:2). Also to be compared here is the similar description of the 'woman from abroad' (= *'iššāb zārāb*!) in the Instruction of Ani iii:13f. (*ANET*³, 420a).

36 Observe that Akk. *bûrtu*, like its Hebrew counterpart *bē'ēr* (e.g., Ps. 55:24; 69:16), denotes not only 'well, cistern', but also 'pit, hole'; cf., eg., *AfO* 14 (1944), 307, r. 6-7 (*bûrta mullû* 'to fill a pit'); Ebeling, *TuL*, 83:5 (read *bûrta tepette* "you dig a hole").

37 Dialogue of Pessimism: 51 (*BWL*, 146; cf. E. A. Speiser, *JCS* 8 [1954], 99b = *Oriental and Biblical Studies* [Phila., 1967], 348).

38 For the plausible etymological equation of Akk. *ḥaštu* = Heb. *ṣaḥat*, see von Soden, *AHW.*, 334b. It should be noted that the Ugar. vocable *šḥt* (*Ug. V* [1968], 571:65) is obscure, and would seem to have no bearing on our problem.

39 See the various etymologies for Heb. *ṣaḥat* proposed and discussed in M. Pope, *JBL* 83 (1964), 269-78.

40 See the lexica; cf., e.g., Koehler, *Lexicon*, 954b. Koehler's attempt to maintain the etymology from *šwh* is especially problematic since he, at the same time, seems to relate Heb. *ṣaḥat* to Akk. *šuttu* (*ibid.*, 963b). The latter vocable, however, is itself poorly attested in Akkadian, being found only in a lexical text (*Malku-Šarru* V1:206 *ḥaštu* = *šuttum*). Following Tallqvist (*StOr* V/4 [1934], 3), evidence for *šuttu* 'pit' in a connected text is sought in *RA* 13 (1916), 170, ii:3; *ibid.*, 171, iii:5-6 (= Ebeling, *TuL*, 21 ii:3; *ibid.*, iii:5-6). The latter passages, however, actually employ the vocable *šuttu* 'dream', and have nothing to do with Heb. *ṣaḥat*-Akk. *šuttatu* 'pit'.

as primary nouns, such an etymology derives them from this hypothetical verbal root *šwh* on the analogy of the derivation of the substantive *raḥat* from *rwh*.⁴¹

The most serious objection to the derivation from *šwh* 'to sink down' is the fact that the very existence of this root in biblical Hebrew is open to considerable doubt. In each of the seven alleged attestations of the verb in question, the verbal form may be parsed from roots other than *šwh*. The first case of an alleged attestation of *šwh* is said to be found in the form *tištôḥăḥî* (i) in Ps. 42:6, 7, 12; 43:5. However, already the medieval philologists derived this form from the root *šḥḥ* 'to be low, prostrate'.⁴² One might further reject the etymology from *šwh* by deriving the form from *śyh* 'to muse, to complain', a suggestion which is especially favored by biblical poetic usage. The appearance of *tištôḥăḥî* in synonymous parallelism with the verb *bāmāb* 'to groan, to moan' in Ps. 42:6, 12; 43:5 is in no way different from the parallelism of the roots *śyh*//*bmb* in Ps. 55:18; 77:4, and possibly 55:3 (reading 'ēbēmāyāb').⁴³ It stands to reason, then, that *tištôḥăḥî* is to be derived neither from *šwh* nor *šḥḥ*, but rather from *śyh* 'to muse, to complain'.

The supposed attestation of the root *šwh* in Ps. 44:26 is similarly open to alternative derivation. Thus the form *šāḥāb* should in all probability be revocalized *šāḥḥāb* and derived from the root *šḥḥ*.⁴⁴ Once again, the suggestion is prompted by poetic usage. While the pair *šḥḥ*//*dbq* is, outside of our verse, unattested, its existence would seem to be implied by the sequences of *šḥḥ-ng'* in Isa. 25:12; 26:5 and *dbq-ng'* in 2 Chr. 3:12. Such an understanding would call for rendering MT *šāḥāb* (= *šāḥḥāb*) in Ps. 44:26 as 'is bowed down',⁴⁵ parallel to *dbq* employed in the sense of 'prostrate to the ground'. Thus our idiom *šāḥāḥ le'āpār* (*//dābaq lā'ārēš*) is in no way different from *dābaq le'āpār* in Ps. 119:25.

Equally doubtful is the alleged attestation of *šwh* in Lam. 3:20. It has been often suggested that the consonantal text be vocalized after the *qērē*: *tāšôḥ* and derived from

41 See, e.g., Koehler, *Lexicon*, 963b. As a matter of fact, this derivation goes back to the medieval Hebrew philologists. See Ibn Janāḥ, *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, 708-9 (= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 502); cf. Ibn Ezra on Ps. 7:16; 35:7. Note, however, that, unlike the moderns, they express very serious misgivings concerning this derivation; cf. Ibn Ezra on Ps. 94:13 and see particularly Qimḥi, *Lexicon* (Berlin, 1847), 375a, 382b.

42 Cf., e.g., Alfāṣī, *Kitāb Jāmi' Al-alfāz* (1945), 2:660; Qimḥi, *Lexicon*, 379b.

43 Note further the parallelism of *śyh*//*bgh* (Ps. 77:13; 143:5; cf. the sequence of Akk. *damāmu-šasû/nagagu* 'to moan'-'to cry out, to complain', *OECT* 6, 36:10-12) alongside that of *bmb*//*bgh* (Isa. 59:11; cf. Akk. *damāmu-qu(b)bē šušrupu* 'to moan'-'to groan', Ludlul I:107-108 = *BWL*, 36). Also relevant here is the parallelism of the nouns *śāḥ*//*ānāḥāb* 'complaint'/'groan' in Job 23:2; cf. Akk. *dimmatu-tānēḥu*, e.g., CH 27:54-55. Observe that the semantic development of *śyh* 'to speak, to muse' > 'to complain, to lament' calls to mind the similar development in the Akk. verbs *qabû*, *nabû* 'to call, to name', coming to denote (in the D stem) 'to complain, to lament'.

44 See Alfāṣī, *Kitāb*, 2:660.

45 The image of being bent over or stooped in submission or humiliation is frequently encountered in the Hebrew Bible (note, e.g., Isa. 2:9, 11, 17; 5:15, where *šḥḥ* is in parallelism with *špl* 'to be low'; cf. 25:12; 26:5). Also relevant here are Isa. 51:23 (read *šōḥḥî* for MT *šēḥî*, as confirmed by 1Q Isaa) and Ps. 38:7, where *šāḥḥōtî/qôḏēd (!) billakî* is to be read (cf. Ps. 35:14 *qôḏēd (!) šāḥḥōtî*). For *qôḏēd/qēdōdannû bālak* (e.g., Mal. 3:14; Ps. 42:10; 43:2), cf. Akk. *qaddiš/qaddānīs/qaddadānīs alāku* 'to walk bowed down' (*AHW.*, 891b) and see Tur Sinai, *Job*, 100-1.

šḥḥ.⁴⁶ Even more plausible, however, is the vocalization after the *kētiḥ*: *tāšḥāḥ*, and a derivation from the root *šyḥ* 'to muse, to complain'. The latter gains in probability when it is observed that the use of *hōḥlîl* following the proposed pair *šyḥ* (!)/*bmb* in Ps. 42:6, 12; 43:5 would in turn suggest the sequence *tāšḥāḥ* (!)-*ōḥl* in Lam. 3:20, 21.

Finally, alleged *šwḥ* is sought in the traditionally problematic Prov. 2:18,⁴⁷ *kî šāḥāb 'el māwēṭ bēyṭāḥ/w'el rēpā'im mā'gēlōṭēyḥā*. This derivation is beset with difficulties. The most obvious rests in the verbal form *šāḥāb* itself, for which one would have expected *šāḥ*, in agreement with masculine *bayit*.⁴⁸ Adherence to an etymology from *šwḥ* prompted

46 See the commentaries and cf. Qimḥi, *Lexicon*, 379b.

47 The first stich of this verse has been a thorny problem to ancient and modern scholars alike. The perplexity is especially evident in the versions. Thus LXX offers *etheto gar para to thanato tou oikou autes* "She set (*etheto* = *šātāḥ* for MT *šāḥāb*) her house near death." This rendering is problematic on several counts, as rightly observed by many scholars (cf., e.g., Toy, *Proverbs*, ICC [1899], 48; Ehrlich, *Randglossen* [1913], 6:18; contrast Frankenberg, *Die Sprüche*, in Nowack's *HKAT* [1898], 28; Müller-Kautzsch, *Proverbs*, SBOT [1901], 2, 35).

Even more remote from the MT is the Peshitta *ṭ't 'skpt' dbyth*, a rendering which presupposes a Hebrew text *šākēḥāb 'ēlammōt bēyṭāḥ* "She forgets (probably a contamination by *šākēḥāb* in verse 17) the thresholds (cf. Ezek. 40:16) of her house." It may be briefly observed that context and parallelism alone (note the pair *mētîm/rēpā'im* in Ps. 88:11) make this word division highly improbable (contrast Wildeboer, *Die Sprüche*, in Marti's *KHC* [1897], 7). The Targum *db'mq' dmw't byth* "whose house is in the depth of death" is merely a free paraphrase of the MT, while Saadia's *ḥfḏt 'ly 'lmwt byth* "she lowered her house to death" is an earnest but futile attempt at harmonizing the feminine verb *šāḥāb* with the masculine substantive *bayit* (cf. also F. Delitzsch, *Proverbs of Solomon* [English trans.: Edinburgh, 1874], 1:82-3).

48 See the commentaries, e.g., Delitzsch, *Proverbs*, 82; Toy, *Proverbs*, 51; Frankenberg, *Die Sprüche*, 28.

It was precisely this problem that prompted many scholars to derive our form not from *šwḥ*, but, by change of accent, from the root *šḥḥ*, allegedly denoting 'to bow down' (cf., e.g., Umbreit, *Sprüche Salomo's* [Heidelberg, 1826], 19; Wildeboer, *Die Sprüche*, 7; Kuhn, *Beiträge* [BWANT 57, Stuttgart, 1931], 10; Fritsch, *Proverbs* [IB IV, 1955], 796.) These scholars were preceded in this attempt by Qimḥi (*Lexicon*, 380a), quoting the commentary of his father Joseph.

This derivation of MT *šāḥāb* in Prov. 2:18, however, carries very little conviction, since the very existence of the root *šḥḥ* in biblical Hebrew is problematic. As to the alleged attestation of this root in Isa. 51:23, the form *šēḥ* has already been more properly related to the root *šḥḥ* (see above, n. 45, and cf. Alfāsi, *Kitāb*, 2:660).

The same derivation would also seem called for in Prov. 12:25, where the form *yašḥennāb* has also been previously considered evidence for the alleged root *šḥḥ*. In the latter verse, the revocalized form *yēšḥennāb* 'brings low' (= *yašḥennāb*; for *špl/šḥḥ*, see above, n. 45) would stand in antithetical parallelism to *yēšammēḥennāb* 'gladdens, exalts'. Such a pair would seem to recommend itself in light of the antithetical parallelism of *špl/rwm* (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:7; Ps. 75:8; 138:6; cf. Eccl. 10:6) on the one hand, and the synonymous parallelism of *šmh/rwm* (e.g., Ps. 89:43; cf. Lam. 2:17) on the other (see also Tur Sinai, *Proverbs* [Tel Aviv, 1947], 34-35 [in Hebrew]). Observe that the semantic nexus between 'to rejoice' and 'to be exalted' is also evident from verses such as 1 Sam. 2:1 (*'lš-rwm-šmh*); Ps. 89:17 (*gyl/rwm*), which may be viewed alongside Akk. *ḥadû//šaḡû* 'to rejoice'/'to be exalted' (e.g., EA 144: 15-16).

The remaining forms alleged to be derived from a root *šḥḥ* are *bišṭaḥwēḥ*, *mišṭaḥwēḥ* and the like (cf., e.g., Koehler, *Lexicon*, 959, but see *Supplement*, 189a). However, as we have learned from the

widespread acceptance of the emendation of masculine *bēytāb* to feminine *nētibātāb*.⁴⁹ The etymology, however, can hardly be maintained on the basis of such an emendation. The MT of our verse preserves the parallelism of *bayit* 'house' // *ma'gāl* 'road', which not only corresponds to the biblical pair *bayit*//*dereḳ*,⁵⁰ but finds its exact counterpart in Akkadian poetry. Thus in the celebrated composition "The Descent of Ištar to the Netherworld"⁵¹ the journey of the goddess is described as follows:⁵² *iškunma mārāt Sîn uzu[nša] ana bīti eṭē šubat Ir[kalla] ana bīti ša ʿribūšu lā ūš[ū] ana ḥarrāni ša alaktaša lā tār[at]* "The daughter of Sin did indeed direct [her] attention to the dark house,⁵³ the abode

Ugaritic forms *ištḥwy*, *yštḥwy* (e.g., IIIAB, B:14-15, 30-31; IIAB, 4-5:25-26; *ibid.*, 8:26-29; VIAB, 3:24-25), the biblical forms are *št* formations from the root *ḥwb* (= Ugaritic *ḥwy*) 'to be prostrate' (see Albright, *JPOS* 12 [1932], 197, n. 41; *idem*, in Rowley, *The Old Testament and Modern Study* [Oxford, 1952], 33).

It may be further suggested here, though not without hesitation, that the very same root may be hidden in the Talmudic idiom *'ḥwy qydh* (TB *Megillah* 22b; *Taanith* 25a). While it is true that parallel episodes in the TP (e.g., *Sukkah* 5:3; *Berakhoth* 1:3) have the idiom *br'b kry'b* (see Kohut, *Aruch* [N. Y., 1955], 4:340a), one cannot help feeling that the rendering of *'ḥwy qydh* as 'showed the way of *qidab*' (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1355a) leaves much to be desired. Indeed, one wonders whether it is not within the realm of possibility to render the Talmudic statement *lwy 'ḥwy qydh qmyb drby w'y'l* as follows: "PN prostrated himself (= Heb. *kāra' kē'āh* or *qad qiddāb*, not *ḥer'āh kē'āh/qiddāb*!) before Rabbi and thus became lame."

49 See the commentaries. Cf., e.g., Steuernagel, *Die Sprüche, Die Hl. Schrift d. AT*, (Tübingen, 1923), 281; Oesterley, *Proverbs* (London, 1929), 17 (*nētibātāb*); Kuhn, *Beiträge*, 10 (*nētibāb*). Further, see the note in *BH*³ and cf. Koehler, *Lexicon*, 122a, 641b. Other emendations such as *bī'ātāb* for *bēytāb* (Tur Sinai, *Proverbs*, 71) have attracted hardly any adherents.

50 Prov. 5:8; 7:19; cf. 7:27; note also Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Hos. 9:8.

51 In view of the fact that this myth has been known for many years (cf. already the masterly edition of the Nineveh recension by Jensen in his *Ass.-Bab. Mythen und Epen*, KB 6/I [1900], 80-91—text and translation; *ibid.*, 394-405—commentary), one would expect its relationship to Prov. 2:18 to be universally recognized. Surprisingly enough, this is not the case at all. Thus, Gemser (*Sprüche*, 2nd. ed., 24) considers the emendation of *bēytāb* to *nētibāb* "plausible," but finds Prov. 7:27 and 9:18 (!) as militating against it. However, he appears to be totally unaware of the Akkadian evidence. Moreover, though Oesterley (*Proverbs*, 17) refers to the Descent of Ištar, and even quotes an English translation of our particular passage, he fails to apply the latter to our verse and goes on to advocate the emendation of *bēytāb* to *nētibātāb*.

52 CT 15, 45:3-6. Both the Nineveh and Assur recensions are now conveniently given side by side in Borger, *Lesestücke*, 2:86.

53 As far as can be ascertained, the Hebrew idiom closest to our *bītu eṭū* (= *bīt ekleti* in Gilg. VII, iv:33), would seem to be *'ereṣ ḥōṣṣek w'ešalmāwēt* in Job 10:21-22 (where render, following Ginsberg, *Eretz Israel* 5 [1958], 64*, "Before I depart whence I shall not return, to the land of darkness and gloom; a land whose glimmering is like gloom, darkness without any order, and even when it glimmers [there] it is like darkness"). For darkness as a characteristic of the netherworld, cf. particularly CT 15, 45:7-9 (Descent of Ištar) = Gilg. VII, iv:36-39 and LKA, 62 r. 15-17 (MA version of the Descent of Ištar; transliteration and translation in *Orientalia* 18 [1949], 36). In light of this tradition, it is hardly surprising to note that, according to the Babylonian lexicographers (see Landsberger, *MSL* III [1955], 138:101-2; cf. CAD G, 43b, sub *ganzir*), *ekletu/eṭūtu* 'darkness, gloom' may come to denote the netherworld itself. So, too, in Hebrew, *ḥōṣṣek* and *šalmāwēt* are not only B words of *šē'el* and *māwēt*, respectively (Job 17:13; 38:17; cf. Ps. 88:7, 13), but *ḥōṣṣek* and *maḥšāk* alone come to denote 'netherworld' (cf. 1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 143:3; Job 18:18; Lam. 3:6).

of Ir[kalla],⁵⁴ to *the house*⁵⁵ from which those who enter it do not exit, to *the road* whose course does not turn back.”

The parallelism of Akk. *bītu* ‘house’//*ḥarrānu* ‘road’ is clearly the exact equivalent of our *bayit*//*ma’gāl*,⁵⁶ and any interpretation of the form *šāḥāh* that calls for the elimination of that poetic pair is to be rejected. More in line with the context and style of our passage⁵⁷ is a derivation from *šḥ* and the reading *šōḥē^aḥ* ‘*el māwēt beytāh*’ ‘her house sinks down to Môt.’⁵⁸ This reading involves the assumption of a *h* - *ḥ* interchange, a phenomenon

54 The euphemism *irkallu/a* (Sum. ERI.GAL ‘the great city’) ‘netherworld’ calls to mind the somewhat similar *kigallu* (Sum. KI.GAL ‘the great place’), which is likewise a poetic term for the netherworld (cf., e.g., *irat eršeti* in Ludlul II:52 = *irat kigalli* in VAB 4, 72:31, and note the parallelism of *kigallu*//*eršetu*, *ibid.*, 94:32-33). For similar WS euphemisms, cf. Phoen. *Milk-qart* ‘king of the city’ (i.e., of the netherworld) and Ugar. *qrt* ‘the city’ (the realm of Môt; see Albright, *AJSL* 53 [1936], 11; *idem*, *ARI* [Baltimore, 1956], 81; 196, n. 29).

In light of this usage of *irkalla*, the employment of this term as the name of a goddess (cf., e.g., the phrase *šubat irkalla* ‘the abode of Irkalla’ in the Descent of Ištar) is somewhat puzzling. One solution is to view the divine name as an ellipsis of *šarrat irkalli* ‘queen of the netherworld’ (for which, see Ebeling, *Parfümrez.*, pl. 49:6, 15 = *Orientalia* 17 [1948], 418). This usage is in full agreement with the DN Ereškigal, which likewise denotes ‘queen/lady of the netherworld’ (Sum. NIN/GAŠAN.KI.GAL, in all probability to be read Ereš.ki.gal, as is indicated by the writing *e-re-eš-ki-i-ga-a-al* in EA 357:2). Significant here is the fact that Ereškigal is specifically referred to as *šarrat arallū* (Ebeling, *TuL*, 7:18 = ZA 43 [1936], 17:58) and *šarrat eršetum* (Gilg. VII, iv:50), both denoting ‘queen of the netherworld’.

55 For similar “houses” or “palaces” in cultures other than those of the ancient near east, see Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (N.Y. and Evanston, 1969), 801-2.

56 The conception of the netherworld as a place associated with the road leading to it in the Descent of Ištar and in Prov. 2:18 would seem to reflect something of a tradition. Note that the expression *ḥarrān lā tāri* ‘road of no return’ appears alongside the more common term *eršet lā tāri* ‘land of no return’ in, e.g., STT 73:35-38 (see E. Reiner, *JNES* 19 [1960], 32). Also to be compared here is the euphemistic idiom *urḥa/ḥarrāna alāku* ‘to go on the road’ (= *uruḥ mūti alāku* ‘to go the way of death’ in Theodicy: 16; cf. Winckler, *Sar.*, 118:118). Particularly relevant here is the Akk. *šabtū urḥa illakū ḥarrāna* ‘they have taken ‘the path’, they are travelling ‘the road’ ’ (Ebeling, *TuL*, 21, ii:1 = Scheil, *RA* 13 [1916], 169).

Here may also belong the difficult passage in Cagni, *Erra* II, C:20, *ša uruḥ mē illiku ḥarrān turba’i* [*utarrūšu*] ‘He who went forth on a path of water (ellipsis for *mē balāṭi* [KB 6/I, 98:26 = EA 356:62] or *mē nuḥši/ḥegalli* [e.g., *LIH* 95, 19, CH 2:39-40]?) [will be returned] on a road of dust.’ The poetic image of life-giving water represents a life of prosperity, which culminates in entry to the netherworld (= ‘a road of dust’). Cf. *Erra* II, C:19 and note the idioms *eperi mūti* ‘dust of death’ (*AMT* 52, 1:11 = Ebeling, *TuL*, 27) = Heb. *‘āpar māwēt* (Ps. 22:16) and *kišit eperu* ‘seizure by the netherworld’ (lit. ‘dust’; Labat, *TDP*, 216:2, 3, 4) = Heb. *‘āpār* ‘netherworld’ (lit., ‘dust’; Ps. 30:10; Job 17:16). Observe that the netherworld may be designated, alongside *bīt ekleti*, as *bīt eprī* ‘the house of ‘dust’ (Gilg. VII, iv:45).

57 Cf. especially Prov. 5:5 and 7:27, where the verb *yārad* is employed.

58 Contrast the contextually and stylistically incompatible rendering of Prov. 2:18-19 proposed by M. Dahood in his study *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology* (Rome, 1965), 19: “For immortality (reading *‘al-māwēt*) is brought low in her house, since her paths lead to the Shades. None who come to her will return or reach the ways of life eternal.” Dahood’s interpretation in general and his quest for ‘immortality’ in particular are completely refuted by the parallel passages in our collection, such as Prov. 5:5 and 7:27. Context and parallelism make it abundantly clear that *bayit* (//*ma’gāl*) is the subject in our passage, not

easily accounted for on orthographic grounds, and recognized by the Masora itself in at least four cases.⁵⁹ Accordingly, not a single attestation remains in support of the time-honored derivation of *šaḥat*-*šūḥāb* from a supposed root *šwh*.

While a purely etymological approach to Heb. *šaḥat* is thus beset with difficulties, the study of idiomatic correspondences and the establishment of an interdialectal distribution based on actual usage unequivocally confirm the rendering 'pit, netherworld'. A thorough scrutiny of all cases of *šaḥat* in the Hebrew Bible, however, leads to the conclusion that biblical Hebrew knows a *šaḥat* II 'net', completely distinct from and independent of the substantive 'pit, netherworld'.

That this conclusion was apparently reached already by the medieval Hebrew philologists is most remarkable, all the more so in light of the complete silence on these homonyms/homographs in standard modern lexica. Thus Ibn Ezra, in his commentary on Ps. 7:16 (cf. on 9:16), seems to distinguish clearly between the substantive *šaḥat* 'pit' and the one employed in Ezek. 19:4, 8. Further, both Ibn Janāḥ⁶⁰ and Qimḥi⁶¹ recognize a *šaḥat* I, which the latter even equates with *qēḇer* 'grave', and a *šaḥat* II 'net, trap', which they equate with *reṣṣet* 'net', *malkōdet* 'trap' and *mašḥūt* 'snare'.

A particularly compelling pair of passages clearly preserving *šaḥat* II may be found in Ezek. 19:4, 8. The verses in question both employ the phrase *bēšaḥtām nitpās*, which all

'immortality', which is not even part of the MT. Further, by combining *ʿel* and *māwēt* into *ʾalmāwēt*, Dahood ignores the parallelism of *māwēt*/*reṣṣet* (cf. Isa. 26:14; Ps. 88:11), a pair recognized in our verse by a majority of versions. It is true that the Peshitta combines *ʿl* and *mwt*, but this combination was construed as *ʿēlammōt* 'thresholds', as is clearly indicated by the Syr. *ʿskpt* (= Akk. *askuppātu*), and can hardly be adduced in support of 'immortality'. Equally difficult is the lack of congruity between the fem. verbal form *šāḥāb* and the proposed masc. noun *ʾalmāwēt*. Finally, Dahood's assertion that his interpretation yields the parallelism of *ʾal-māwēt* (verse 18)/*ḥayyīm* (verse 19) is unfounded. Even following his own word division, the expected parallel to *ʾal-māwēt* would be *reṣṣet*, and this is, indeed, the best commentary on his reading and interpretation!

59 2 Sam. 13:37; Prov. 20:21; Cant. 1:17; Dan. 9:24. The phenomenon is well known and hardly calls for detailed documentation. For a good case in point, see Ginsberg, *JBL* 69 (1950), 54-55 (reading *šōḥēr šedeq/dōrēš mišpāt* in Isa. 16:5), and cf. the writer's remarks in *JCS* 15 (1961), 24b, and *JBL* 84 (1965), 275, n. 3. Here it will suffice to call attention to the following three cases from the first collection of Proverbs, which biblical scholarship is still not fully cognizant of: (1) Prov. 1:21, where the correct reading is obviously *ḥōmiyyōt* 'walls'; cf. the versions and note the identical sequence of *šaʿar-ḥōmāb-ʾir* in Jer. 1:15; note Ugar. *ḥmt* (sing. = *ḥamītu*, IK:74-75) and *ḥmyt* (probably pl. = *ḥamiyyātu*, RS 2:28), Ugarit Canaanite *ḥamītu* (*PRU* III, 138a:4), Amarna Canaanite *ḥumītu* (*EA* 141:44) and Phoen. *ḥmyt* (pl. = *ḥōmiyyōt*, Azit. I:13-14; (2) Prov. 5:11, where the original reading is in all probability *wēniḥḥamīta* 'you shall regret'; cf. not only the rendering of LXX and the Peshitta but also Saadia's *watandamu* 'you shall regret'; cf. Saadia on Exod. 13:17 and Ps. 110:4 (Heb. *ʾinnāḥēm* = Arabic *nadima*); (3) Prov. 9:1, where following the versions the reading *biššibāb* 'she set up' (*ʾl-bānētāh*) is adopted by many scholars (see the commentaries and note *yissēd*/*biššib* [Josh. 6:26; 1 Kgs. 16:34] alongside *bānāb*/*yāsad* [Isa. 44:28; Amos 9:6; Zech. 8:9]). For an interesting case in post-biblical Hebrew, see J. J. Finkelstein, *JBL* 75 (1956), 331. Note also Ibn Ezra's commentary on Job 8:14, where read *ḥēḇel* *ḥāššēmēš* (not *ḥēḇel* *ḥāššēmēš*) = Arab. *ḥabl aš-šamsi* 'gossamer' (lit. 'sun's thread').

60 *Kūāb al-uṣūl*, 709, 716 (= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 502, 508).

61 *Lexicon*, 375, 382b.

modern critics render "he was captured in their pit," or the like. It cannot be overly stressed, however, that the presence in verse 8 of the parallel pair *šaḫat*//*rešet* leaves no doubt that our *šaḫat* is a poetic synonym of *rešet*⁶² and, accordingly, must be rendered 'net'. Indeed, the synonymous parallelism of *šaḫat*//*rešet* in our verse is in no way different in meaning from that of *rešet*//*m^ešûdāb*,⁶³ *rešet*//*ḥērem*,⁶⁴ and *rešet*//*šēbākāb*.⁶⁵

It has often been maintained⁶⁶ that given the parallelism of *šaḫat* 'pit'//*rešet* 'net' in Ps. 9:16⁶⁷ and 35:7,⁶⁸ the pair 'pit'/'net' alleged for Ezek. 19:8 constitutes no problem. What has been overlooked here, however, is that unlike the Psalm passages, both verses 4 and 8 of Ezek. 19 employ the verb *tāpaš* 'to catch, capture'.⁶⁹ It must be stressed that while the latter is nowhere employed in connection with *šaḫat* 'pit', it is indeed attested with *m^ešûdāb* 'net' in contexts identical to our own.⁷⁰

The supposed parallelism of 'pit'/'net' in Ezek. 19:8 has also been defended by reference to a passage in the Gilgāmeš Epic.⁷¹ It may be observed, however, that there the paired terms *būru-nuballu*, allegedly denoting 'pit-net', at best constitute an isolated case. For, as far as can be ascertained, metaphors involving a pit and a net are not employed jointly in Akkadian literature. Thus, *ḥaštu-šuttatu*, the regular words for 'pit', are never attested in parallelism or in sequence with *šētu-saparu* (*saparru*), the most common terms for 'net'. Moreover, the rendering of our *nuballu* as 'net' by no less an authority than von Soden⁷² may certainly be considered an intelligent guess, but would nevertheless seem to find neither lexical⁷³ nor contextual⁷⁴ corroboration.

62 For the substantive *rešet* 'net', cf. Ugar. *rtt*. The latter appears in IIAB, 2:32-33, which may be confidently restored *qh rtt bdk*//[*rtt*] *rbt* 'lydm "Take a net in your hand//a large [net] upon (your) hands." For this restoration, cf. especially IK:66-67 (= 159-60, abbreviated), where *imr*//*imr dbḥ* stylistically corresponds to our proposed *rtt*//[*rtt*] *rbt*.

63 Ezek. 12:13; 17:20.

64 Ezek. 32:3.

65 Job 18:8.

66 See Cooke, *Ezekiel*, ICC (1936), 207; cf. Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, HAT 13 (1955), 105.

67 Note, however, that Ibn Ezra equates *šaḫat* in Ps. 9:16 with the *šaḫat* of our Ezekiel verses. The equation is expressed there in a characteristically brief comment comprising only three words, but is elaborated in his commentary to 7:16.

68 Reading *kî ḥinnām tāmēnû lî rišām*//*ḥinnām ḥāpēnû šaḫat lēnapšî*; see the commentaries, but note also that Saadia's rendering reflects Heb. *kî ḥinnām tāmēnû lî rešet* < *b^ereša* > *ḥāpēnû šaḫat lēnapšî*.

69 Note that the verb in Ps. 9:16 describing one caught in a *šaḫat* 'pit' is *tāba* 'to sink down', not *tāpaš* 'to catch, capture'. It should be borne in mind that *tāba* 'here is due to the acrostic. Ps. 7:16 employs the more natural *nāpal*.

70 Ezek. 12:13; 17:20.

71 Gilg. I, iii:9-10, 36-37. Cf., e.g., Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 207; Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 105, n. 1.

72 *Das Gilg. Epos* (Stuttgart, 1958), 22, 23.

73 It should be noted that *nuballu* is wanting from the detailed list of terms for 'net' enumerated in *Hb.*, Tab. VI.

74 It is true that the well-known passage from the annals of Tigl. I, *ša nuballūšu. . . eli mātišu šuparrurū* (AKA, 94, vii:57-58), used to be translated "whose net. . . over his land was spread" (King, AKA, 94; cf. Jensen, *KB* 6/I, 416, who wavers between 'net' and 'snare'). The passage, however, must now be rendered "whose wings. . . are spread over his land (protectively)"; see Heide, *AS* 13 (1940), 30f., note the equivalent Heb. idiom *pāraś kēnāpayim* as a metaphor of protection in Deut. 32:11; Ezek.

While the synonymous parallelism of *šāḫat*/*rešet* in Ezek. 19:8 serves as a sure indication of the meaning 'net', one is on less secure ground in utilizing the parallelism *šāḫat*/*ḥaḫḫîm* in 19:4. The vocable *ḥaḫḫîm* here and in verse 9 is problematic, and its exact meaning remains uncertain. However, the widely accepted rendering of our *ḥaḫḫîm* as 'hooks'⁷⁵ can hardly be correct. Our misgivings concerning this interpretation are shared by some of the versions. Thus the Targum renders *baḫḫaḫḫîm* by *bēšilšēlān* 'in chains', a rendering followed by Qimḥi.⁷⁶ Similarly, the LXX and Peshitta eschew the interpretation 'hooks' by rendering our *ḥaḫḫîm* by 'en *kēmō* and *bablāmā*', respectively, both denoting 'in a halter', or the like.

Indeed, context and idiomatic usage would seem to point in the direction of construing *ḥaḫḫîm* as some binding or restraining device. Thus the idiom *bēbî* *baḫḫaḫḫîm* in Ezek. 19:4 may be viewed alongside *bēbî* *bammēšōdôt* (= *bammēšūdôt!*)⁷⁷ 'to transport in toils', in verse 9, while an idiom 'to transport with hooks' is unattested. So too, the idiom *lākad baḫōḫîm* (= *baḫḫaḫḫîm*) in 2 Chr. 33:11 is incomprehensible when construed as 'to capture with hooks',⁷⁸ but yields a satisfactory meaning when viewed as denoting physical restraint.⁷⁹ Thus the Targum⁸⁰ renders *lākad baḫōḫîm* by 'āḫad *bēkîrômāniqyā* 'to capture in manacles', correctly treating it as being parallel to 'āsar *bannēḫūštayim* (Targum 'āsar *bēšōšlāwān*) 'to restrain in fetters'.⁸¹

It will be observed that the two actions of seizure (*lākad*) and transport (*bēbî*) in *ḥaḫḫîm* would seem in no way different from the same actions performed in *nēḫūštayim*, as is suggested by Jer. 39:7 *wayya'asrēhū bannēḫūštayim lābî* 'ōtô *bābēlāb* (cf. 2 Chr. 36:6

16:8; and Ruth 3:9. For the primary meaning of *nuballu* '(eagle's) wing', see now von Soden, *AHW.*, 799b. For *nuballu* denoting 'plumage', cf. the sequence of *kappu-abru-nuballu* in the Etana Epic (see above, n. 26) = Heb. *kānāp-'ēbēr-nōšāb* in Ezek. 17:3. Note that the latter sequence lends ample support to our rendering of the former as 'wings-pinions-feathers' (contrast Langdon, *Etana*, 26, 30, and Speiser *ANET*³, 116b, 117a).

75 See the commentaries; cf., e.g., Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 206, 207; Fohrer, *Ezechiel*, 103; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (BK 13), 417; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (English trans.:1970), 249.

76 See his commentary to 19:4; cf. *Lexicon*, 93a. Also to be noted are the observations of Ibn Janāḥ, *Kiṭāb al-uṣūl*, 205 (= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 139).

77 See the commentaries, but contrast Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 5:72. Note the interesting suggestion by Rost (*OLZ* 7 [1904], 393-94) to restore *mēšūdôt* in Ezek. 19:4 from verse 9, thereby obtaining the reading *waybî'ūbū bimšūdôt baḫḫaḫḫîm*.

78 The Peshitta attempted to overcome this difficulty by construing *baḫōḫîm* as *bḫywy* (= *bēḫayyāyw!*). Similarly, a recent translation (*NEB*, 514) resorts to inventing the highly questionable meaning 'spiked weapons' for *ḫōḫîm*.

79 Note the verb *lākad* employed with such terms as *paḥ* 'trap' (Isa. 24:18 = Jer. 48:44; Amos 3:5); *ḫēḇel* 'cord' (Job 36:8); *rešet* 'net' (Ps. 9:16; 35:8) and cf. *lāpaš bimšūdāb* (Ezek. 12:13; 17:20) and the parallelism of *lākad*/*lāpaš* in Jer. 48:41; 51:41. Significant also for the use of *lākad* with entrapment devices (cf. *malkōdēt* 'trap' in Job 18:10!) is its occurrence in parallelism with the verb *yāqāš* (Prov. 6:2; cf. the sequences in Isa. 8:15; 28:13; Jer. 50:24).

80 Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (Leiden, 1968), 4 A:64; cf. Le Déaut-Robert, *Targum des Chroniques* (Rome, 1971), 1:169.

81 Cf. the Targum to *ḥaḫḫîm* in Ezek. 19:4 *baḫḫaḫḫîm* = *bēšilšēlān*, and note also the Targum to 2 Chr. 36:6.

l^ehōlîkô) "He bound him in fetters in order to transport him to Babylon."⁸² This suggestion gains in probability when it is noted that the interchange of the verbs *'āsar* and *lākad* in this particular context is fully supported by the parallelism of *'āsar bazziqqîm//lākad baḥḥālîm* in Job 36:8.

Another approach to determining the exact meaning of *ḥaḥḥîm* is afforded by its appearance in Ezek. 19:9, seemingly as a gloss to the term *sûgar*.⁸³ The latter, a hapax in Hebrew, is generally recognized to be a loan from Akkadian *šîgaru(m)*. This vocable is now known to denote 'collar' or 'neck-stock', that is, a ladder-like wooden contrivance employed for the transportation of prisoners of war and animals.⁸⁴ Significant here is the usage of Akk. *šîgaru(m)* with the verbs *wabālu/warû* 'to bring, to lead',⁸⁵ which immediately calls to mind the Heb. idiom *hēbî' baḥḥḥîm* in verse 4. So too, the Akk. substantive *erinnu*,⁸⁶ a synonym of *šîgaru(m)*,⁸⁷ is at times paired with *birîtu* 'fetters',⁸⁸ just as *ḥaḥḥîm* and *n^eḥūštayim* appear jointly in 2 Chr. 33:11.

The correspondence between Heb. *ḥaḥḥîm-sûgar* and Akk. terms such as *erinnu* and *šîgaru(m)*⁸⁹ finds confirmation elsewhere. Thus the Targum to Ezek. 19:9, against the other versions, renders *sûgar* by *qôlārîn* 'collar'. Similarly, medieval biblical scholarship, whose observations are generally overlooked by modern scholars, has much to contribute here. Thus, Ibn Janāḥ,⁹⁰ following a Gaonic tradition, equates our *sûgar* with Arabic *sājūr*

82 For context, cf., e.g., 2 Kgs. 25:7; Jer. 52:11; 2 Chr. 36:6.

83 Cf. the Syriac translation of *sûgar* by *namartā*, a clear loan from Akk. *nabāru, nabārtu* (Zimmern, *Fremdw.*, 15, with incorrect etymology), which should, in all probability, be rendered 'trap' rather than 'cage' (for the Akk. terms, see Landsberger, *Fauna*, 81, n. 3).

84 Note that Akk. *šîgaru(m)* has erroneously been taken by Assyriologists to denote 'cage' (cf., e.g., Streck, *Ašb.*, 2:67, n. 8), which has in turn misled biblical scholarship with regard to *sûgar* (cf., e.g., Koehler, *Lexicon*, 651a). It is the merit of Landsberger (*Fauna*, 81f.) to have called attention to lexical equations such as GIŠ.AZ.GÚ; GIŠ.AZ.LÁ = *šîgaru ša kišādi; šîgaru ša kalbi* 'a *šîgaru* for the neck; a *šîgaru* for a dog' (MSL VI:70) and the idiom *šîgara šakānu* 'to put a *šîgaru* (on someone)' (Streck, *Ašb.*, 66, viii:11). On the basis of this usage he convincingly demonstrated that the meaning 'cage' for *šîgaru(m)* had to be abandoned in favor of 'a collar (put on the neck of prisoners and animals)'. E. I. Gordon (*Sumer* 12 [1956], 80-84; *Sumerian Proverbs*, 223f.) has further refined Landsberger's observation by adding that a *šîgaru* was made of wood (GIŠ.SI.GAR) and that it was closely related to the door lock (SI.GAR = *šîgarum* 'lock') and should therefore be rendered 'neck-stock'.

85 Cf., e.g., YOS 9, 35:119-22 (Samsuiluna) in *šîgarim* [GIŠ.SI.GAR] *urāššūma napištašu ušāriḥ* "He brought him (Iluni, king of Ešnunna) in a neck-stock and had him executed by cutting his throat."

86 Note that the substantive *erinnu* was also erroneously taken to denote 'cage' (cf. Luckenbill, *OIP* 2, 88).

87 For *erinnu* 'neck-stock', see CAD E, 295b; AHw., 241b.

88 Cf., e.g., *OIP* 2, 87-88:34-36 *Šūzubu. . . balṭūssu iksūdā qātāšun erinnu birītu iddūšūma adi maḥriya ublūniššu ina abulli qabal āli ša Ninūa arkussu itti asi* (var. *dabūēš*) "They captured RN. . . alive, put on him a neck-stock and fetters, and brought him to me; I tied him up at the city gate of the inner city of Nineveh with a bear (var.: like a bear)."

89 The two terms might also denote some kind of a trap (see CAD E, 295b), as suggested by their logograms (e.g., GIŠ.AZ.BAL = *nabāru, šîgaru, erinnu*) and their inclusion in lists of words denoting traps (MSL VI:70f.; note particularly the terms *naḥḥalu, nabalkattu*, and *kamaru*).

90 *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, 474 (= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 333).

'dog collar'.⁹¹

It would seem abundantly clear, then, that in Ezek. 19:4, 8-9, the parallelism of *šaḥat* and the terms *rešet* 'net' and *ḥaḥḥim* 'restraints', as well as the association with *sūgar* 'collar, neck-stock', rule out the rendering 'pit'. To this one might add that the case for a *šaḥat* II 'net' in these verses is fully corroborated by the versions. While the evidence from LXX is problematic,⁹² it is an undisputed fact that the Targum renders *šaḥat* in Ezek. 19:4, 8 by *s^erigtā*,⁹³ which is the very term by which the Targum translates Heb. *m^ešūdāb*,⁹⁴ *ḥērem*,⁹⁵ and *š^ebākāb*.⁹⁶ It will be recalled that these three terms are all poetic synonyms of *rešet* 'net'. Similarly, the Syriac renders our *šaḥat* by *m^ešidā*,⁹⁷ the regular term by which the Peshitta renders Heb. *rešet*.⁹⁸

The preservation of *šaḥat* II 'net' in Ezekiel 19 should by no means be viewed as a totally isolated case. Following the lead of the medievals, one should also include here the term *š^eḥnōt*, usually rendered 'pit', in Ps. 107:20 and Lam. 4:20.⁹⁹ In the latter verse the idiom

91 From Syriac *sūgārā*; cf. Fraenkel, *Fremdw.*, 114f.

92 The rendering of the LXX for *b^ešaḥtām* in Ezek. 19:4, *en tē diaphthora autōn* 'in their destruction' would seem to have little bearing on the problem of *šaḥat* I 'pit'/'*šaḥat* II 'net'. While it is not excluded that this rendering is due to "confusion of different meanings in similar Hebr. words" (Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 211; cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 418), it is far from certain that the rendering can be labeled "wrong" (contrast Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 211).

Rather, the "confusion" of *šaḥat* 'pit' with *š^aḥat* 'to corrupt, destroy' seems to reflect a pervasive exegetical tradition. Thus, it will be noted that both the Targum and Peshitta frequently render *šaḥat* 'pit, netherworld' by *ḥābālā* 'destruction' (cf. Targum to Isa. 51:14; Ezek. 28:8; Jonah 2:7; Peshitta to Isa. 38:17; 51:14; Ezek. 28:8; Jonah 2:7; Ps. 16:10; 30:10; 49:10; 103:4; Job 17:14; 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30). Similarly, Saadia renders *šaḥat* by *balāk* 'destruction' (cf. Saadia on Isa. 38:17; 51:14; Ps. 16:10; 30:10; 49:10; 55:24; Job 17:14; 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30) and by *fasād* 'corruption' (Saadia on Ps. 103:4). A similar "confusion" can be discerned in Ibn Janāḥ (see *Kitāb al-uṣūl*, 716; contrast *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 508), where, in view of the reference to *mašḥit* in Jer. 5:26, one would have expected neither *mablaka* 'perilous spot' nor *mafsada* 'cause of corruption', but rather *mišyada* 'snare, trap' (note *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 508, where the Arab. vocables *mablaka* and *mafsada* are indeed "rendered" by *malkōdēt*!).

93 Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (Leiden, 1962), 3:304.

94 Note particularly the Targum to Ezek. 12:13 and 17:20, where the pair *rešet*/*m^ešūdāb* is rendered by *m^ešidā*/*s^erigtā*; cf. also the Targum to Job 19:6 and Eccl. 7:26.

95 Note the Targum to Ezek. 32:3, where *rešet*/*ḥērem* is rendered by *m^ešidā*/*s^erigtā*.

96 Note particularly Job 18:8, where the Targum renders the pair *rešet*/*š^ebākāb* by *m^ešidā*/*s^erigtā*.

97 The Peshitta renders *šaḥat* in Ezek. 19:4 by *m^ešidā*, but in 19:8, after rendering *rešet* by *m^ešidā*, it translates *b^ešaḥtām* only by the pronoun *bb* 'in it'. Unless the translator was at a loss for synonyms, this would seem to indicate that he considered *rešet* and *šaḥat* as absolutely synonymous. Similarly, in Ezek. 12:13 and 17:20 the Peshitta employs *m^ešidā* alone for both Heb. *rešet* and *m^ešūdāb*.

98 Note that the substantive *rešet* is attested twenty-one times in the Hebrew Bible. In all but one case *rešet* is uniformly rendered by the Peshitta as *m^ešidā* (cf. Exod. 27:5, where *rešet* = Syr. *qrql*). Also rendered *m^ešidā* by the Peshitta are Heb. *malkōdēt* (Job 18:10), *ḥērem* (Ezek. 26:5, 14; 32:3; 47:10; Hab. 1:15, 16, 17), *š^ebākāb* (Jer. 52:22, 23) and *makmōr* (Ps. 141:10).

99 For the rendering 'pits' in these verses, see the commentaries; cf., e.g., Briggs, *Psalms* II, ICC (1907), 361, 363; Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, in Nowack's *HKAT* (1926), 469, 472; Buitenwieser, *The Psalms* (Chicago, 1938), 306, 316; Kissane, *Psalms* (Dublin, 1953), 496, 499; Löhr, *Die Klagelieder, Die Hl. Schrift d. AT* (Tübingen, 1923), 420; Kraus, *Klagelieder, BK* 20 (1968), 72. Contrast the misgivings

lākad bišḥîṭôt 'to capture in toils (!)' may be directly equated with *tāpaš b'ešahat* in Ezek. 19:4, 8, as observed already by Ibn Ezra.¹⁰⁰ Both of these expressions may in turn be equated with *tāpaš bimšûdāb* in Ezek. 12:13 and 17:20. It should be borne in mind that these equations are fully corroborated by the parallelism of *lākad*//*tāpaš* elsewhere.¹⁰¹

Similarly, our idiom *lākad bišḥîṭôt* is in no way different from the expression *lākad b'eṣṣet* in Ps. 9:16, 35:8, and should also be viewed alongside *lākad b'eṣṣet*¹⁰² and *lākad b'eḥḥel*.¹⁰³ Indeed, while *lākad* is most suited to express seizure in the toils of a net or in a spring-trap,¹⁰⁴ it is less appropriate when speaking of a pit.¹⁰⁵ Thus, in Isa. 24:18 = Jer. 48:44, for example, *falling* into a pit (*nāpal 'el paḥat*) is clearly distinguished from *being seized* in a trap (*lākad b'eṣṣet*). So too, in Ps. 35:8 the verb employed with *reṣṣet* is *lākad*, while the verb associated with *šūḥāb* (MT *šô'āb*)¹⁰⁶ is *nāpal*. Accordingly, one can only applaud Gaster's recent translation of Lam. 4:20 "The breath of our nostrils, the Lord's anointed is taken in their net."¹⁰⁷

The form *š'eḥîṭôt* in Ps. 107:20 is in no way different from its counterpart in Lam. 4:20. Proposed emendations of the form notwithstanding,¹⁰⁸ the idiomatic usage in the Psalm passage leaves little doubt that *š'eḥîṭôt* denotes 'net', rather than 'pit'. More specifically, the verb *millēṭ* 'to rescue, deliver' is never employed with the substantive 'pit'. It must be admitted, however, that while *millēṭ* is never used with *šahat* 'pit', it is attested once (Ps. 89:49) alongside *š'e'ôl*.

Against this isolated case, the root *mlṭ* is indeed attested with such terms as *māšôd*

over such a rendering evinced by Ibn Janāḥ (*Kitāb al-uṣūl*, 716 [= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 508]) and Qimḥi (*Lexicon*, 382b)."

100 See his commentary to our verse: "*bišḥîṭôtām* is to be equated with *b'ešahatām nitpās*."

101 Jer. 48:41; 50:24; 51:41.

102 Isa. 24:18 = Jer. 48:44; Amos 3:5.

103 Job 36:8.

104 See also above, n. 79. For the close relationship between nets and traps, note the parallelism of *paḥ*//*reṣṣet* (Hos. 5:1; Ps. 140:6) and *m'ešôdāb*//*paḥ* (Eccl. 9:12) alongside the frequent pairing of Akk. *šētu* 'net' with terms denoting 'trap', such as *ḥuḥāru*, *gišparru* and the like; cf., e.g., Maqlû II:162-64, 173-75, *kīma ḥuḥāri ana saḥāpiya kīma kāpi ana abātiya kīma šeti ana katāmiya* "To clamp down on me like a bird trap, to ruin me like a trap (not 'like a cliff'!; contrast AHW., 445a and CAD K, 192a), to cover me like a net"; Langdon, *Etana*, 19-20:38-39 *šetu ša Šamaš ibā[rka] gišparrū māmit Šamaš ibbalakkitūkāma ibarrūka* "The net of Šamaš will catch you, the traps (by which was sworn) the oath of Šamaš will clamp down on you and catch you"; ibid., 22-23:10-11; Maqlû III:161-64.

105 Observe that Jer. 18:22 hardly constitutes an exception, since there the verb *lākad* refers to the action of Jeremiah's enemies, rather than to any activity with respect to the pit (*šūḥāb*).

106 For the reading, see above, n. 18. The verb *nāpal* is also attested with terms for 'pit' in, e.g., Ps. 57:7; Prov. 26:27; cf. 28:18, for which see above, n. 11. Note also that in Ps. 9:16 the verb *ṭāba* 'to sink down' is employed with *šahat* I 'pit', while *lākad* is reserved for use with *reṣṣet*.

107 *Myth, Legend, and Custom*, 826-27.

108 Cf., e.g., the widely accepted Kahan emendation of *mišš'eḥîṭôtām* to *miššahat ḥayyātām*; see Kittel, *Die Psalmen*, in Sellin's *KAT* 13 (1929), 350; cf. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 472. Note also such emendations as *mišš'iḥîṭôtām* (Graetz, *Psalmen* II [Breslau, 1883], 578) and *miššahat tammîm*! (Schmidt, *Die Psalmen*, *HAT* 15 [1934], 197). Observe that the reading *wiymall'eṭem mišš'eḥîṭôtām* (cf. LXX, Peshitta and Saadia) has no bearing on the reading of *š'eḥîṭôt*.

bēreṃ 'net' in Eccl. 7:26 and with *paḥ* 'trap' in Ps. 124:7. This usage is in no way different from the idiom *biṣṣûl mippaḥ* 'to rescue from a trap' in Ps. 91:3, as is evident from the parallelism of *biṣṣûl/millêṭ* in 2 Sam. 19:10 and of *biṣṣûl/bimlîṭ* in Isa. 31:5. Of equal significance is the fact that *mlṭ* occurs in synonymous parallelism with *nûs*¹⁰⁹ and synonymously in sequence with *bāraḥ*,¹¹⁰ both of which denote 'to flee' and neither of which is ever attested alongside words for 'pit'.¹¹¹ Indeed, such verbs would seem totally incongruous with the image of a pit, from which one may be rescued,¹¹² but from which one can hardly flee.

While the etymology of *šaḫat* I 'pit, netherworld' was seen to be highly problematic, one is on safer ground in dealing with the homonym denoting 'net'. Thus *šaḫat* II is to be equated both semantically and etymologically with Akk. *šetū* 'net'.¹¹³ Noting that in Ezek. 19:8 *šaḫat* II is a poetic synonym of *rešet*, it is of interest to note that the Hebrew idiom *pāraś rešet*¹¹⁴ 'to spread a net' corresponds exactly to Akk. *šeta nadû*¹¹⁵ /*šuparruru*.¹¹⁶ Even more to the point, *tāpaś bēšaḫat* (Ezek. 19:4, 8) and *lākad bišḫûṭ* (Lam. 4:20), as well as the synonymous *lākad bērešet* (Ps. 9:16; 35:8) and *tāpaś bimšûdāb* (Ezek. 12:13; 17:20) are to be equated with Akk. *ina šeti ašūšu*¹¹⁷ /*ba'āru*¹¹⁸ 'to catch/capture in a net'.¹¹⁹

Finally, it will be noted that the etymological relationship between Akk. *šetū* and Heb. *šaḫat* II — *šēḫîṭ* (pl. *šēḫîṭôt*) presents no phonological problem. Indeed, the etymological equation of the Hebrew vocable *šēḫîṭôt* with Aramaic *šûṭā'/šûṭā'* 'net',¹²⁰ an apparent loan from Akk. *šetū*, was self-evident to Qimḥi. The following penetrating remarks by this outstanding medieval philologist leave little to which modern scholars might add:¹²¹

wiymallêṭ miššēḫîṭôtām (Ps. 107:20), *nīkad bišḫûṭām* (Lam. 4:20): the singular is *šēḫîṭāb* and the feminine plural *šēḫîṭôt*, (the forms) denoting 'their net' (*rištām*) and 'their trap' (*malkudtām*). The same (vocabulary) is attested in the Talmud (TB *Baba Kamma* 117a): 'two men had a dispute over a net (*šûṭā'*).' This word (*šûṭā'*) denotes 'net' (*rešet*) and is to be equated with *šaḫātā'*, by elision of the *ḫ*, a frequent phenomenon with gutturals, which are elided in many instances.¹²²

109 Jer. 46:6; 48:6, 19; 51:6; Amos 2:14; 9:1; cf. Gen. 19:20; 1 Sam. 19:10; 30:17; 1 Kgs. 20:20; Isa. 20:6.

110 1 Sam. 19:12, 18; 22:20; 2 Sam. 19:10.

111 Note that Prov. 28:17 constitutes no exception in that the verse speaks of moving toward a pit rather than fleeing from one.

112 For expressions denoting rescue from a pit, see above, n. 21-24.

113 For *šetū(m)* 'net' and its synonyms and parallels, see Landsberger, *MSL* VI (1958), 66f.

114 Ezek. 12:13; 17:20; 19:8; 32:3; Hos. 5:1; 7:12; Ps. 140:6; Prov. 29:5; Lam. 1:13.

115 Cf., e.g., Maqlû VII:84-87; *BWL*, 221:1-5; *SBH*, 130: 20-23; *KAR*, 375, ii:14-16.

116 Cf., e.g., IVR 26, no. 2:23; Erra IIIc:33. Note also *šeta tarāšu* (*BWL*, 130:87) and *sapar(r)a šuparruru* (En. el. IV:95).

117 *SBH*, 130:20-23 *mê tadluḫma nūmī tabār*. . . *šetū taddāma eššūrātī tāšūš* "You (Enlil) roiled the water and netted fish. . . you spread the net and caught birds"; cf. *KAR*, 375, ii:14-16.

118 Langdon, *Etana*, 19-20:38-39 (see above, n. 104); cf. 14:15-16.

119 Note also *ina šeti ebēlu* (see *CAD* E, 8a).

120 TB *Baba Kamma* 117a; cf. Rashi: "a net for fish or animals."

121 *Lexicon*, 382b. See also his commentary on Isa. 19:10 (Finkelstein, *Kimḥi on Isa.* [N.Y., 1926], 112).

122 Cf. Kohut, *Aruch*, 8:181, and contrast Levy, *Wörterbuch*, 4:529a.

Appendix: *šaḫat* in Job 9:31.

In light of a recent attempt to identify the substantive *šaḫat* 'filth' (cf. LXX) in Job 9:31 with *šaḫat* I 'pit, netherworld', the following remarks seek to re-examine the Hebrew and, more particularly, the Ugaritic evidence adduced to substantiate that identification. M. Pope, both in his commentary on Job (Anchor Bible 15 [1965], 72-74) and in a separate article ("The word *šaḫat* in Job 9:31," *JBL* 83 [1964], 269-78) reasons that since the netherworld is characterized as a place of liquid filth, the substantive *šaḫat* 'netherworld' can itself denote 'liquid filth' in Job 9:31. It must be candidly stated, however, that the philological basis for describing the netherworld as a place of liquid filth is itself open to serious doubts:

- (1) Pope's biblical evidence for the "watery character of the netherworld" (*Job*, 73) derives from Job 33:22. The latter verse, however, yields the evidence only after Pope emends MT *lam^emītīm* to *l^emē māwgt-mô*, which he renders "to the waters of Death" (*Job*, 219). For an interpretation of the term *m^emīlīm* that follows the MT word division, see above n. 13.
- (2) The Ugaritic epithet for the netherworld *bt ḥptt* (IIAB, 8:7-8; I*AB, 5:14-15) can hardly be etymologically related to the Arabic root *ḥbt*, allegedly denoting 'to be filthy'. The notion of 'filth' is expressed in Arabic by *wasāḥ*, *najas*, and *qadar*, while the primary meaning of *ḥabuṭa* seems to be 'to be wicked, evil, malicious' or the like.
- (3) Pope's rendering of the name of Môt's city *bmry* (IIAB, 8:11-12; I*AB, 2:15) as 'Slushy' (*Job*, 73) is likewise problematic. It is based solely on the time-honored but highly improbable assumption that the hapax *mabāmōrôt* (Ps. 140:11) is etymologically related to Arabic *hamara* 'to pour (rain, water)' and must, therefore, be rendered 'pits filled with rain' (Widengren, *VT* 4 [1954], 98-99); 'miry depths' (Driver, *CML*, 159, n. 16); '(watery) pits' (Pope, *Job*, 73); or the like. This etymology, already considered by Ibn Janāḥ (*Kitāb al-uṣūl*, 178 [= *Sepher Haschoraschim*, 121]), but evidently not accepted by his medieval colleagues (cf., e.g., Ibn Ezra and Qimhi), has very little to recommend it. A perusal of *mabāmōrôt*, particularly in its post-biblical usage (see Qimhi's commentary on the Psalms [Jerusalem, 1967], 305), makes it quite clear that it denotes 'pit' or 'grave', with no relationship whatever to rain and water.

It is likewise untenable to render the Ugaritic hapax *mhmrt* (I*AB, 1:6-8) as '(moist) throat'. The latter is a B word in synonymous parallelism with *npš* (possibly meaning 'tomb'; see Ginsberg, *The Ugarit Texts* [Jerusalem, 1936], 41 [in Hebrew]) and in all probability denotes 'pit' or 'grave', as noted by many scholars (cf., e.g., Cassuto, *Tarbiz* 12 [1941], 173; idem, *IEJ* 12 [1962], 81; Ginsberg, *ANET*³, 138b).

- (4) Also highly questionable is Pope's assertion that "The item which clinches the loathsome character of Môt's abode is the term (*ḥḥ arš*) rendered 'infernal filth' " (*Job*, 73). At the outset, it should be observed that such a term is in fact nonexistent. A glance at the two Ugaritic passages involved (IIAB, 8:12-14 = I*AB, 2:15-16) makes it abundantly clear that the alleged attestation of the term *ḥḥ arš* is the result of an erroneous clause division. Thus, from the standpoint of poetic style and usage the only clause division possible is as follows: *mk-ksu ṭbth//ḥḥ-arš nḥlth* (not *ḥḥ arš-nḥlth*!) "*mk*—the throne that he sits on // *ḥḥ*—the land of his inheritance." Note that the following passage from the Anath Texts (VAB, F:14-16), involving the identical construct chain *arš nḥlth*, is self-explanatory: *kptr-ksu ṭbth//*

ḥkpt-arṣ nḥltb (not *ḥkpt arṣ-nḥltb*!) "Kaphtor—the throne that he sits on//Hikpat—the land of his inheritance."

Pope's rendering of the Ugaritic vocable *ḥḥ* as 'filth' (*Job*, 73), following a suggestion by Albright (*BASOR* 50 [1933], 18, n. 55; *JPOS*, 14 [1934], 132, n. 166), is open to serious doubts. While it is true that the word is obscure and its meaning a matter of dispute, the fact remains that Albright's etymology, equating Ugaritic *ḥḥ* with Akk. *ḥaḥḫu* 'spittle', failed to gain universal acceptance (cf., e.g., Cassuto, *Tarbiz* 12, 175; Gordon, *UT*, 3: no. 949; Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch*, no. 1015). This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that Akk. *ḥaḥḫu* is primarily a medical term denoting 'spittle (as result of a coughing fit)', frequently encountered in sequences with *guḥḫu* 'cough', *suālu* 'phlegm' and *ru'tu saliva*. Moreover, Akk. *ḥaḥḫu* is never attested in any simile or metaphor relating to the netherworld, nor does it ever denote 'filth' as such. The notion of 'filth' is expressed in Akk. by *lūtu*, *lu'ū*, and *rūšu* (*AHW.*, 565, 997a), never by *ḥaḥḫu*.

Pope's rendering of the problematic pair *mk//ḥḥ* as 'ruin' and 'filth' (*Job*, 73) is tenuous. However, once we are able to throw off the shackles of etymology and realize that we are confronted with a clear case of synonymous parallelism, there is no escape from the conclusion that since *ksu tbtb* is parallel to *arṣ nḥltb*, then *ḥḥ* must be parallel to *mk*. In other words, it stands to reason that the difficult *ḥḥ* has nothing to do with 'filth' but must somehow be close in meaning to *mk* (*mkk*). As to the latter root, attested only in Baal (= *špl* in SS:32), it can be rendered, with a fair degree of certainty, 'to be low, to be depressed, to sink down' (see already Ginsberg, *The Ugarit Texts*, 42). This rendering is fully corroborated by the sequence 'z-lymk-ltnḡšn (= 'nš)-lydlp (cf. 'zz//rwm in Ps. 89:14 and *mkk//dlp* in Eccl. 10:18; note Targum on Isa. 2:9, 17; 5:15; Ezek. 17:14, 24; 29:14, 15, where Heb. *špl* = Aramaic *ḥlš*) "Firm-not bowed-not weakened-not collapsed" (IIIAB, A:17-18), the antonym of which is *ypršḥ-yql* (= *ypl*; cf., e.g., IIIAB, A:23 with I*AB, 6:8-9 and IIK, 6:57-58 with IIIAB, B:9)-tnḡšn-ydlp 'Falls down-sinks down-weakened-collapsed' (IIIAB, A:25-26). This sequence is very reminiscent of the Hebrew one, *špl-ql!-šḥḥ*, attested in Eccl. 12:4 (see Ginsberg, *Syria* 33 [1956], 99-101; idem, *Kobeleth* [Tel Aviv-Jerusalem, 1961], 130). Indeed, a perusal of *mkk* in Hebrew and Aramaic reveals that the latter is a synonym of *špl* (cf. Peshitta to Isa. 2:9, 17; 5:15; 10:33; 25:12 [*mkk//špl*] and Targum to Lev. 13:20, 21, 26; 14:37; 2 Sam. 6:22; Isa. 57:15; Ezek. 17:6; Ps. 136:23; 138:6; 147:6; Prov. 29:23; Job 40:11; Eccl. 10:6, 18 [*špl* = *mkk*]), and that both verbs share the mutual antonym *rwm* (cf. Job 24:24; 1 Sam. 2:7; Ps. 75:8; 138:6; Eccl. 10:6; note also SS:32). Our rendering of the pair *mk//ḥḥ* as 'low//depressed' presupposes that the latter is a synonym of, and in no way different in meaning from, such pairs as *špl//šḥḥ* (Isa. 2:9, 11, 17; 5:15; 25:12; 26:5; 29:4; Job 22:29; Eccl. 12:4), *špl//qdd* (Job 5:11 [read *qōdē dīm*!; see Tur Sinai, *Job*, 100-101; note, however, that he overlooks the fact that the Peshitta indeed has here *špl'//mkyk*!]) and *špl//yrd* (Isa. 2:12 [read *wēyārad*! courtesy of H. L. Ginsberg]; 32:19; Jer. 13:18). Thus, a rendering of the Ugaritic passage into biblical Hebrew yields the following translation: *mak kissē' šibtô//šāpēlāb (šahḥāb) 'erēṣ naḥālātô*. Note that in our Ugaritic passage the grammatical subjects *ksu* and *arṣ* are feminine, while both *mk* and *ḥḥ* are masculine in form. This is hardly a problem, since both *mk* and *ḥḥ* are stative verbs and therefore need not agree in gender (and number) when they precede their subjects (cf. Driver, *JBL* 73 [1954], 130; D. Marcus, *JANES* 1, no. 2 [1969], 56).

The interdialectal distribution for the pair *mk//ḥḥ* is as follows: Akkadian *šapālu//qadādu*

(CT 18, 48, iv:26-27); Hebrew *špl*//*šḥḥ*; Aramaic-Syriac *špl*//*mkk* (*m'k*); Arabic *ḥaṭṭa* (*inḥaṭṭa*)//*ḥafaḍa* (*inḥafaḍa*).

The notion of Môt's abode being low and depressed is hardly surprising. Suffice it to call attention to the fact that one of the most common epithets of the netherworld (*eršetu*) in Akkadian is *šaplātu*, lit., 'the lower regions' (antonym: *elātu*). Thus, in the celebrated Hymn to Šamaš the god is said to be *rē'u šaplâti nāqidu elâti* "Shepherd of the netherworld, herdsman of the upper world" (Lambert, *BWL*, 128:33; cf. CH 27:38 *ina eršetim* "in the netherworld" = *ina šaplâti* in *VAS I*, 54:17).

The interpretation of *ḥḥ* as 'base' rather than 'spittle' also conforms to its usage in IID 6: 34-35 *al tšrgn ybtltn dm lğzr šrgk ḥḥm*. Pope's assertion that *ḥḥm* in this passage "shows that it is to be connected with Akkadian *ḥaḥḥu*" (*Job*, 73-74) is far from convincing. For it is incomprehensible that Aqhat would term Anath's advances as 'spittle'. Small wonder therefore that no less an authority than Ginsberg had serious misgivings about such an interpretation (see *BASOR* 98 [1945], 20-21, with n. 51). However, our assertion that *ḥḥ* is in all probability a synonym of *mk* 'to be low' (see above) sheds new light on this passage as well. Thus, Aqhat's statement should be rendered as follows: "Lie not to me, O maiden! For to a hero your lies are base" (cf., with Cassuto, Arabic *saraja*, but note also [with metathesis] Akkadian *tašgirtu* = Hebrew *šeqeṣ* 'lie'; cf., e.g., Winckler, *Sar.*, 16:75-76 *amat tašgirti ṭapilti/sarrāti* "words of deceit [and] slander/lies"). Needless to say, words denoting 'to be low, depressed' come also to connote 'to be base, debased (in the moral sphere)'. This is true not only of *špl* (note particularly *qll*//*špl* 'to be disgraced//to be debased' in 2 Sam. 6:22; antonym *kbd* [cf. *EA* 245:38-39]; and the sequence of *nibzîm-šepālîm* 'despicable-lowly' in Mal. 2:9) but also of such vocables as Hebrew-Aramaic *nḥt*, Arabic *ḥaṭṭa*, and others.