

Biblical *rḥm* I and *rḥm* II

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In memory of Professor Moshe Held: *ina šilli ilāni rabūti linūḥ eṭemmaka*

A distinction between a verb *rḥm* I, “be compassionate, show mercy,” and *rḥm* II, “love,” in biblical Hebrew (BH) was virtually forced on lexicographers by ¹*erḥāmēkā* *yḥwh ḥizqī* (Ps. 18:2). Although Psalm 18 is a parallel recension of 2 Sam. 22,² ²*erḥāmēkā yḥwh ḥizqī*³ has no parallel in the Samuel version.⁴ In addition, ²*erḥāmēkā* is the sole biblical attestation of *rḥm* in the *qal*.⁵ More important, Ps. 18:2 is unique in making Yahweh the object of the verb *rḥm*. The theological enormity of Yahweh as object of human compassion impelled translators and commentators to other solutions.⁶ The Septuagint’s *agapeso se* and the Vulgate’s *diligam te* employ the respective Greek and Latin verbs normally used to translate Hebrew ³*hb*, “love.”⁷ Among the Jewish scholars who wrote in Arabic, both the Rabbinite Saadia⁸ and the Qaraite David Alfasi⁹ translated ²*erḥāmēkā* by forms of *ḥabba*, “loved,” used elsewhere to render BH ³*hb*.¹⁰ For his part, ibn Janah¹¹ specifically differentiated Ps. 18:2 from the other attestations

1 Medieval Jewish scholars differed over the quality of the *qāmeṣ* following the *ḥet*. See A. Hakam, *Sefer Tehillim* (Jerusalem, 1979), 79, n. 5.

2 For a recent comprehensive treatment of these two chapters, with extensive bibliography, see G. Schmuttermayr, *Psalm 18 und 2 Samuel 22 Studien zu einem Doppeltext* (Munich, 1971).

3 The form *ḥizqī*, presumably derived from a noun *ḥēzeq*, is likewise unattested except for the PNs *ḥizqī* (1 Chr. 8:17) and *ḥizqīyāhū*, “Hezekiah” (passim). Note, however, that King Hezekiah’s name appears in Akkadian transcription as *ḥa-za-qi-a-ū*, *ḥa-za-qi-ya-ū* and *ḥa-za-qi-ya-a-ū*. See OIP 2 31, n. 4; M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart, 1928), 110, n. 1.

4 This holds for MT, Vg., Saadia Tg. and most LXX texts but not for Lucianic LXX and Peshitta. See Schmuttermayr, *Psalm 18*, 34–35; idem, “RḤM- Eine Lexikalische Studie,” *Bib.* 51 (1970), 523, n. 2. It has generally not been noted that Peshitta’s ²*erḥāmāk māryā ḥayl wētūklan* at both 2 Sam. 22:2 and Ps. 18:2, reflects a Hebrew: ²*erḥāmēkā YHWH ḥizqī ūmahsī* (cf. Peshitta to Ps. 73:28; 91:2, 9). Schmuttermayr (ibid.) is of the opinion that the text of Peshitta to 2 Sam. 22:2 has been harmonized with that of Ps. 18:2, but this does not seem to be the case. Note that Peshitta to Psalm 18 lacks the prose rubric found in MT and LXX at both 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18, while Peshitta to 2 Samuel 22 has it. Note further that ²*eḥseh* in vs. 3 is translated by a form of Syriac *tkl* in Psalm 18 but by a form of *sbr* in 2 Samuel 22.

5 The singularity of *rḥm* in the *qal* was first remarked by ibn Ezra.

6 Ibn Ezra attempted to interpret ²*erḥāmēkā* as “I seek your mercy.” See also A. Darom, ed., *R. David Kimhi (RADAK) ha-Pērūš ha-Šālēm ‘al Tehillim* (Jerusalem, 1974), 41.

7 See, e.g., LXX and Vg. to Gen. 22:2; 25:28; Deut. 6:5; Hos. 3:1; Amos 5:15; Mal. 1:1–2.

8 Y. Kafah (Kafih), ed., *Tēhillim ‘im Targūm u- Fērūš ha-Gā’ōn Rabbēnū Sa’adyāh ben Yōsef Fayyumī* (Jerusalem, 1965), 77.

9 S. Skoss, ed., *Kitāb Jāmī‘ Al-Alfāz of David ben Abraham Al-Fasī* (New Haven, 1945), 2:604.

10 E.g., Saadia to Gen. 22:2; 25:28; 27:14; 37:3, 4; 44:20; Deut. 6:15; cited from J. Derenbourg, ed., *Version arabe du Pentateuque* (Paris, 1893).

11 A. Neubauer, ed., *The Book of Hebrew Roots by . . . ibn Janah* (Oxford, 1875), 676 = W. Bacher, ed., *Sepher Haschoraschim . . . von ibn Ganah* (Berlin, 1896), 477.

of *rhm* in the Bible: "(This is) targumic¹² language (i.e., Aramaic) such as translates *wayye'ehab Ya'aqob* (Gen. 29:18) by *urēhēm Ya'āqōb*." H. Chajes, one of the earliest modern critical Jewish Bible scholars, followed this line of exegesis and made an additional observation: "In Assyrian as well, *r²m* is equivalent to Hebrew *ʿhb*." In illustration, Chajes cited the Akkadian form *tarammanni*, "you (shall) love me."¹³

The presence of *rhm*, "love," in Ps. 18:2 may be taken as assured.¹⁴ Several questions, however, arise from this recognition. First, it is well known that Aramaic *rhm* means both "be compassionate" and "love." Is *ʿerhāmēkā*, "I love you," of Ps. 18:2 to be regarded as a biblical "Aramatism"¹⁵ or is *rhm* "love" more developed in BH than is commonly acknowledged? Second, are the senses "love" and "be compassionate" sufficiently discrete in Hebrew and the classical Semitic languages to warrant insistence on a distinction between them? Huffmon,¹⁶ for one, denies any fundamental difference, speaking instead of a "common Semitic *rhm* 'love', 'have mercy'." Schmuttermayr, somewhat similarly, views "lieben" as the basic sense of *rhm*. For him, the decision to understand *rhm* as "love" or "compassion" in a particular verse depends on its direction;¹⁷ "von unten nach oben," attested biblically only in Ps. 18:2 indicates a meaning "love" whereas in all other instances *rhm* is directed "von oben nach unten," and denotes "be compassionate."¹⁸ In contrast, Wallenstein¹⁹ asserts that there are many biblical passages in which the sense "love" rather than "compassion" is called for (although he does not document the assertion).

It is best to begin with the situation in English. The *OED*²⁰ defines "compassion" as "the feeling or emotion when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of

12 Cf. Rashi, who cites Tg. Onq. to Lev. 19:18; the Tg. to Ps. 18:2, unlike the Peshitta, translates *rhm* by *hbb*, employed by Tg. Onq. for the cognate Hebrew *hōbēb* in Deut. 33:3 and *sēgullā* elsewhere (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6, 14:2; 26:18). Doubtless, the Aramaic translator chose *hbb*, "love," to translate Hebrew *rhm* in Ps. 18:2 because of his theological sensitivity to the possible confusion of Aramaic *rhm*, "love," and Aramaic *rhm*, "have compassion."

13 H. P. Chajes, *Sefer Tehillim* (Zhitomer, 1902), 33. His suggestion, however, that *rhm* has the primary sense of "delicate, pleasant" is unlikely. The claim is based solely on Arabic *rahuma* (with *ha*), "was soft or pleasant of voice."

14 F. Hitzig first proposed emending *ʿerhāmēkā* to *ʿarōmimēkā* and has been followed by numerous scholars. See bibliography in Schmuttermayr, *Bib.* 51 (1970), 500, n. 4; cf. idem, *Psalm 18*, 32-34. The emendation finds no support in the versions. It is also unlikely that the more common *ʿarōmimēkā* would have been "corrected" to *ʿerhāmēkā*; cf. "RHM," 503.

15 Note the equivocal statement of C. and E. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, ICC (Edinburgh, 1906), 51: "Possibly an early and rare use in Hebrew, but probably a later one, an Aramatism." See further the bibliography in Schmuttermayr, "RHM," 501, n. 3. On the problem of Aramaisms in biblical Hebrew in general see bibliography in *ibid.*; add A. Hurvitz, "The Chronological Significance of Aramaisms in Biblical Hebrew," *IEJ* 18 (1968), 234-40.

16 Apud Schmuttermayr, "RHM," 523, n. 1.

17 Cf. H. J. Stoebe, "*rhm* pi. 'sich erbarmen'," *THAT*, 2:761, who attributes to *rhm* the primary sense "love," in the main directed from the high to the lowly (thus "love" > "sympathize"). In Aramaic, claims, Stoebe, *rhm* expanded its more general sense of "love" without regard to direction; contrast R. Dentan, "The Literary Affinities of Exodus xxxiv 6f," *VT* 13 (1963), 40: "The finite verb [*rhm*] is used in Hebrew . . . in the intensive stem with the meaning 'to show mercy' but it carries strong overtones of the meaning 'to love' which the simple stem normally has in Aramaic and Syriac."

18 Schmuttermayr, "RHM," 499, 523.

19 M. Wallenstein, "Some Aspects of the Vocabulary and Morphology of the Hymns of the Judean Scrolls," *VT* 7 (1957), 213, n. 2. In several instances, the NEB and NJV translations reflect a similar understanding; see below.

20 *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1971), 489.

another, and by the desire to relieve it.” The same dictionary²¹ defines “love” as “that disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which (arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship, or from sympathy) manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the object, and usually also in delight in his presence and desire for his approval; warm affection, attachment.” In other words, although love may arise out of compassion (= sympathy), the two English terms are by no means synonymous. It will be argued here that BH *rḥm* is to be divided in two etymologically and semantically distinct vocables²² fairly corresponding to English “love” and “be compassionate.” In some verses the change from “love” to “be compassionate” does not greatly alter the meaning. Here, however, I treat passages in which the distinction is crucial. Some of these verses were selected for the further reason that our lamented teacher Professor Moshe Held had contributed to their interpretation in other respects.

Among the classical Semitic languages the distinction between “love” and “compassion” is most obvious in Akkadian. “Love” is expressed most often by *rāmu*²³ with thematic vowels (a, a). The vocable and its derivatives are employed both verbally and nominally to connote “love” and “desire” (emotional and sexual), “prefer(ence),” “recognition,” and “favor.” The semantic range of *rāmu* and its derivatives coincides at various points with *ḥašāḥu*,²⁴ “like, desire”; *dādū*,²⁵ “love-making”; *kuzbu*,²⁶ “charm,

21 Ibid., 1669.

22 There is a similar problem in the Hebrew root *šlm*. Some of its attestations have the sense “peace, alliance, reconciliation”; others mean “well-being” and “wholeness.” For Hebrew *šlm* in general, see M. Eisenbeis, *Die Wurzel šlm im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1969). Although it is possible to draw semantic connections among these concepts in English, the situation in Akkadian strongly militates against classifying all forms of Hebrew *šlm* under a single heading. Akkadian expresses “peace, alliance, reconciliation” by forms of *salāmu* (with *s* and thematic vowels i/i) and “well-being” and “wholeness” by *šalāmu* (with *šin* and two sets of thematic vowels; i/i and a/a). Akkadian documents of West-Semitic provenience began to confuse the two in the mid-second millennium. See P. Haupt apud Mullo Weir, *Lexicon*, 293; B. Landsberger, “Zu neueröfentlichten Geschichtsquellen der Zeit von Asarhaddon bis Nabonid,” *ZA* 37 (1927), 86, n. 2; M. Held, “Philological Notes on the Mari Covenant Rituals,” *BASOR* 200 (1970), 33, n. 9; H. Tadmor, “Bērit ū-Šēbū‘at Ne‘emānim ba-Mizrāḥ ha-Qadmōn: Gišātō šel Historyōn,” *Shnaton* 5–6 (1981–1982), 155, n. 16; W. von Soden regards *salāmu*, “freundlich, friedlich sein, werden” as a “Sekundärwurzel” (*AHw.*, 1013) to *šalāmu* “(sem.) unversehrt, heil, gesund sein, werden” (ibid., 1143).

23 For references see *AHw.*, 951–52.

24 Cf. such phrases as: *ša epšēt qātīšu u nadān zībīšu ilāni rabūti ša šamē eršetī irāmūma* . . . “Whose deeds and offerings the great gods of heaven and earth loved” (*AKA* 262, I:24–25); and *ša niš qātīšu nadān zībīšu iḥšuhū [ilū] rabūti*, “Whose prayers and offerings the great [gods] desired” (*CAD* Z, 105b). Like *rāmu*, *ḥašāḥu* is opposed to *zēru*, “hate, loathe.” See M. Held, “A Faithful Lover in an Old Babylonian Dialogue,” *JCS* 15 (1961), 17. Note further that *ḥašāḥu* and *rāmu* are attested in synonymous parallelism: *bēlūti iḥšuhū irāmū epēš šarrūtiya*, “They desired my lordship, loved my rule” (Streck *Asb.* 260, ii:12).

25 Note the alternation of *kuzbi u rāmi* and *kuzbi u dādī*, “(goddess of) sexual joy and love-making” (*CAD* D, 20a). Both *dādū* and *rāmu* share the logogram K1.AG; see *AHw.*, 149a, 951a. The synonymy of *dādū* and *rāmu* corresponds to the parallelism of Hebrew *dōdīm*//²*ohābīm* (Prov. 7:18) and Aramaic *raḥamātā*//²*rigʿatātā* (Tg.; cf. Peshitta). For the similar Ugaritic *ahbt*//*dd* see M. Held, “Additional Pairs of Words in Synonymous Parallelism in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic,” *Leš.* 18 (1953), 146; Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures*, AOAT 210 (Kevelaer, 1984), 354–55.

26 See, e.g., the conclusion to a potency incantation: *ī[na qibūt DN₁] bēlet ruʿame DN₂ bēlet kuzbi* (H1.L1), “Acc[ording to the command of Istar], goddess of feminine charms (and) Nana, goddess of sexual attractiveness.” (Biggs *Šaziga*, 31:22 and see Biggs, ad. loc.); cf. further: *Ištar mēlišim ruʿamam labšat zaʿnat inbī miqīʿam u kuzbam*, “Ištar of pleasure is clothed in sensuousness, adorned and made up with voluptuousness and sex appeal” (*RA* 22 [1925], 170:7–8; cf. Held, “A Faithful Lover,” 14).

sexual vigor”; *šāhu*,²⁷ “dally amorously, caress”; and *hadû*,²⁸ “like, be well-disposed, rejoice over.” Akkadian *rāmu* is most often opposed to *zêru*,²⁹ “dislike, hate, reject, repudiate.” In an interdialectal distribution³⁰ within ancient Semitic, *rāmu* corresponds to Hebrew *rḥm* II, Hebrew and Ugaritic ²*hb*, and Aramaic *rḥm* II, “love.”

A common Akkadian verb for “be compassionate, show compassion” is *rēmu*³¹ (e, i). It is a synonym of *napšuru*³² (verb), “relent, show mercy”; *aḫulap qabû*,³³ “speak ‘compassion,’” and *epēqu*,³⁴ “be merciful.” As a noun, *rēmu* and its derivatives mean “mercy” and “compassion.” Semantically, *rēmu* is associated with *unnīnu*,³⁵ “grace”; *napšuru*³⁶ (noun), “mercy”; *nashuru*,³⁷ “pardon”; and *tay(y)āru*, “mercy.”³⁸ The epi-

27 Akkadian *šāhu*, primarily “smile, laugh,” shares various sexual nuances with its Semitic cognates. See Held, *ibid.*, 20. Note the parallelism: *rāmka lū šurru šihātuka lū ḫurāšu*, “Your love is true obsidian, your caress the very gold”; *KAR* 158, VII:43–44; cf. *CAD* S, 258a; *AHw.*, 1114; Held, *loc. cit.*

28 Thus the legal phrase *ašar hadē inaddin*, “He may give as he pleases” = *ša irammu inaddin*, “He may give as he likes”; i.e., there is no restriction on his giving. See Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Leiden, 1969), 139; cf. *idem*, “Joy and Love . . .” in J. Neusner, ed., *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults for Morton Smith at Sixty* (Leiden, 1975), 3:1–36; *idem*, “Love and Joy . . . The Joy of Giving,” *JANES* 11 (1979), 91–111; see further J. Rabinowitz, “A Legal Formula . . .,” *Bib.* 36 (1955), 76–77. Like *rāmu*, *hadû* is an antonym of *zêru*. Note the following: *ka[ru ay iḫ]dika nēbiru lizirka*, “May the harbor not welcome you, may the ford reject you” (Gilg. XI:235). Note also the sequence *rāmu* . . . *hadû* in an OB letter: *mannum ša kima yāti irammūka u ana zi[krika] iḫaddu*, “Who is there who loves you the way I do and delights at your mention?” (*AbB.* 11, 9:3–5). The sequence recalls the pairing of Hebrew *ḥpš* “delight, desire” and ²*hb* (e.g., 1 Sam. 18:22; 1 Kgs. 10:9; Ps. 34:13).

29 E.g., *ina bītum PN₁ bītum ša irammu lissuqma liḫi bītum ša izirru PN₂ liḫi*, “Let PN₁ choose from the house the room he prefers; the room he rejects let PN₂ take” (Wiseman *Alalakh* 7:19–23). Similarly, we read in a well-known poetic text: *aššatka ša tarammu lā tanaššiq aššatka ša tazerru lā tamahḫaš māraka ša tarammu lā tanaššiq māraka ša tazerru lā tamahḫaš*, “Do not kiss the wife you love. Do not beat the wife you dislike. Do not kiss the son you love. Do not beat the son you dislike” (Gilg. XII:24–27).

30 Cf. *aššatka ša tarammu* (above n. 30) with ²*šša* ²*ašer* ²*āhabitā* (Qoh. 9:9 = Tg. ²*ūtētā dī rēhīmtā*) and *māraka ša tarammu with bineka* . . . ²*ašer* ²*āhabitā* (Gen. 22:2 = Tg. Onq. *bērāk dī rēhīmtā*); cf. *DN* ²*ōhēb* ²*šēdāqā ūmišpāt*, “Lover of justice and equity” (Ps. 33:5 = Tg. *raḥēm šidqātā wēdinā*) and *DN* *rā'im kittum u mišaru* (Tallqvist *Götterepitheta*, 167; Late Hebrew ²*ōhēb* ²*ammō*, “Lover of his people” (prayerbook) and Akkadian *rā'im nišēšu* (Tallqvist, *loc. cit.*), Aramaic *rḥm* ²*mh* (*AH* I/1, p. 48: 3:7, 7:3). Ugaritic and Hebrew ²*hb* are clearly equivalent. They share a synonym (above, n. 26) and an antonym *š/šn*² (*CTA* 4, III:17–18). In classical Phoenician, ²*hb* is not yet attested, although *ḫmd*, “desire,” is found in *KAI* 26, A III:14–17. For Neo-Punic *ḫbb*, “love,” see *KAI* III, 8.

31 References in *AHw.*, 970; Mullo-Weir, *Lexicon*, 283.

32 E.g., *ana āliku GN napšer ana TN bītiku rišē rēma*, “Show forbearance to Babylon your city, have mercy on Esaggila your temple” (*RAcc.* 134:246–47); see further Ebeling *Handerhebung* 72:1–2.

33 E.g., [²*š*] *absu kišādī ul utiraššum[m]a [u]l ipšaḫšu ezzetu kabatti [a]ggu libbi ul inūḫma rēmu ul aršišūma ul aqbīšu aḫulap*, “I did not turn my angry face (lit., neck) back to him; neither did my raging mood quiet down for him, nor my angry heart become pacified for him. I had no mercy on him. I spoke him no word of compassion” (Borger *Esarh.* 104, i:34–35); cf. *rēma ar(š)šunūtīma utninnišunu alqi atmūšunu ša tēninti ašmīma aqbīšunu aḫulap*, “Because I had mercy on them I accepted their supplications and harkened to their cries for grace. I said ‘Compassion’ to them” (*TCL* 3, 59).

34 The verb *epēqu* is restricted to the lists and the onomasticon; see *CAD* E, 184b.

35 E.g., *rēma unnīna balta lamassa qabā šemā šukna yāši*, “Mercy, grace, dignity, a good spirit, and the power to speak with authority grant me” (Ebeling *Handerhebung* 108:21–22 = Mayer *Gebetsbeschworungen*, 477:23–24); *AHw.*, 1421b, translates *unnīnu* in such usages as “Gebetserhöhung.”

36 For the equation of *napšuru* and *rēmu* see *CAD* N/1, 319a, s.v. *napšuru*, *lex. section*.

37 References in *CAD* N/2, 25. *CAD* ad. *loc.* translates *nashuru* as “benevolent attention.”

38 References in *AHw.*, 1304a; cf. the sequence *gammalāta . . . tayyārāta . . . muppalsāta rēmēnāta*, “(Because) you are forbearing . . . relenting . . . gracious . . . merciful” (Mayer *Gebetsbeschworungen*, 480:15–18); Akkadian *rēmēnū* and *tayyāru* are reflected in the Palmyrene divine epithet *rḥmn² wtyr²* (*AH* I/1, 43, 14:1; see S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Chicago, 1974), 106.

that *rēmēnū*,³⁹ “merciful one” is a synonym of *gāmīlu*,⁴⁰ “forebearing one.” Antonyms of *rēmu* and its congeners are *lā padū*,⁴¹ “without pity”; and *lā gāmīlu*,⁴² “merciless.” The vocable *rēmu* is also cognate with the noun *rēmu*,⁴³ “womb,” corresponding to Hebrew *reḥem* and Arabic *raḥim*. In an interdialectal distribution within ancient Semitic, *rēmu* would correspond to Hebrew *rḥm* I, Ugaritic *rḥm*, and Aramaic *rḥm* I.

39 The epithet *rēmēnū* is mainly applied to gods. See *AHw.*, 970a; Tallqvist *Götterepitheta*, 169. Aramaic *rḥmn*² is its loan-translation. See Kaufman, *Influences*, 106; cf. idem, “Reflections on the Assyrian-Aramaic Bilingual from Tell Fakhariyeh,” *Maarav* 3 (1982), 165. The Aramaic epithet ʾlh rḥmn, “compassionate god,” is attested at an early date in the Hadd-Yith^ci bilingual, corresponding to *ilu rēmēnū* (written LID-*u*) in the corresponding Akkadian line. See D. Gropp & T. Lewis, “Notes on Some Problems in the Aramaic Text of the Hadd-Yith^ci Bilingual,” *BASOR* 259 (1985), 45:5; cf. Kaufman, loc. cit.; see further, Grayson *ARI*, II, 119, n. 485; P. Dion, “Ššbšr and Ssnwry,” *ZAW* 95 (1983), 111–12.

40 E.g., *rēmēnāta gāmīlāta*, “You are merciful. You are forbearing” (*CAD* G, 33a).

41 See *AHw.*, 808b.

42 See *CAD* G, 33a.

43 See *AHw.*, 970a. The vocable is now attested at Ebla; see M. Krebernik, “Zu Syllabar und Orthographie der lexikalischen Texte aus Ebla,” *ZA* 73 (1983), 14. In all likelihood, the phrase ʾl rḥm attested at Deir ʿAllā means “new born child”; see J. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* (Chico, 1984), 26:13; *ibid.*, p. 70. The connection between *rēmu*, “mercy,” and *rēmu*, “womb,” is more transparent in Akkadian than is the connection between *reḥem* and *raḥāmīm* in Hebrew. First, the pointing of *raḥāmīm* (assuming the accuracy of Masoretic tradition) distances the singular form from the plural. Second, in Akkadian *rēmu* (noun) is employed in the singular for both the physical organ and the associated emotion of compassion. Thus, the concept “show mercy, have compassion” may be expressed in Akkadian by *rēmu* accompanied by the verb *rašū* or *šakānu*; less frequently by *sabātu* (*AHw.*, 970b). In Hebrew, the singular noun *reḥem* is never employed in an emotional sense. Accordingly, a translation of Akkadian *rēma šakānu* into Hebrew yields the well-attested *nātan raḥāmīm* (e.g., Gen. 43:14; Deut. 13:18) or the unique *sām raḥāmīm*. The equivalence holds regardless of whether *sām raḥāmīm* is originally Hebrew or a calque from Akkadian; on the problem see Y. Avishur, “*lō*² *sāmīti lāhēm raḥāmīm* (Isaiah 47:6)—Biblical Style or Translated Idiom,” *Shnaton* 5–6 (1978–1979), 91–99. Both the difference in vocalization and the avoidance of *reḥem* in the singular in figurative use, argue against the claims of P. Tribble, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, 1978), 31–59, who maintains that ancient Hebrew speakers were fully conscious of the etymological relation between *reḥem*, “womb,” the verb *rīḥam*, and the noun *raḥāmīm* and viewed them as an extension of primary uteral imagery; see further the strictures of M. Gruber, “The Motherhood of God in Second Isaiah,” *RB* 90 (1983), 352, n. 4. Tribble’s related claim (loc. cit.) that the semantic development from *reḥem* to *rīḥam* and *raḥāmīm* grew out of the notion of the womb as a place of protection and care, has no basis in the Hebrew Bible, which never speaks of the womb in imagery of protection and care. Metaphorically, to exist in the womb is to be in a state inferior to life, parallel to the shadowy existence of the dead in the grave. The difference is temporal: existence in the womb is pre-life (Isa. 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5); for Akkadian parallels, see S. Paul, “Deutero-Isaiah and Cuneiform Royal Inscriptions,” *JAOIS* 88 (1968), 184–85; while existence in the grave is post-life. The two common Hebrew words for “womb,” *reḥem* and *beṭen*, are poetic synonyms of *qeber* (see Jer. 20:17–18; Job 10:18–19; cf. Job 1:21; Qoh. 5:14). Contra Tribble, the sense “compassion” for *raḥāmīm* does not derive from uteral imagery but from the primary sense of *raḥāmīm* (cf. its synonym *mēʿayīm*), which is “bowels, innards, or guts,” without necessary reference to a specific organ. (Note the pun in Prov. 12:10: *wəraḥamē rēšāʿīm ʾakzārī*, “The very innards/mercies of the wicked are cruel.”)

It is well known that the Semitic languages usually describe emotions in terms of bodily states, actions, and physical sensations; see in general M. Gruber, *Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East* (Rome, 1980); idem, “The Many Faces of Hebrew *nš*² *pnym* Lift up the Face,” *ZAW* 95 (1983), 252–60; and see further, M. Petrucci, “Body Part Terminology in Hebrew: A Study in Lexical Semantics” (Ph.D. dissertation; Berkeley, 1986), ch. 6. Hebrew *raḥāmīm* derives its emotional connotations from ellipsis, as may be seen in fuller expressions such as *nikmērū raḥamāw/raḥamēhā* (Gen. 43:30; 1 Kgs. 3:26) or *hamon mēʿekā wəraḥamēka*, “the rumbling of your very guts” (Isa. 63:15); see I. Eitan, “An Unknown Meaning of Raḥamim,” *JBL* 53 (1934), 269–71; N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Language and the Book* (Jerusalem, 1954), 1:355 [Hebrew].

Long ago, Barth demonstrated that the inner-Akkadian semantic differences between *râmu* and *rêmu* as well as their different thematic vowels were reflected in Arabic *raʿîma*, "treated with love" (= Akk. *râmu*), and *rahîma*, "was compassionate" (= Akk. *rêmu*).⁴⁴

Early Aramaic⁴⁵ orthography does not enable us to determine whether there was a difference in vocalization between *rhm* I and *rhm* II, but the semantic difference is clear. Thus, after describing the successful audience of Nadin before Esarhaddon the author of Ahiqar 11 says ʿhr *rhmh RN mlk GN*, "Then King Esarhaddon of Assyria loved (accepted) him." Similarly, Ah. 51 reads: *RN mlkʷ rhmny ʿlzy hhytk wlʷ qtlk*,⁴⁶ "King Sennacherib showed me favor because I had kept you alive and not killed you." The proverb in Ah. 92 reads: *trtyn mln špyrhʷ wzy tltʷ rhyhm lšmš*,⁴⁸ "two things are proper⁴⁹ and a third pleasing to Shamash."⁵⁰ Ah. 53, however, describes the tender mercies of the Assyrian king by saying: *RN mlkʷ rhmh hw*, "King Sennacherib is merciful." Later Aramaic speakers continued to be conscious of the difference as witness the pun preserved in the Talmud:⁵¹ *kl dsny ly lhdy ly wktyb . . . wdrhym ly lybʷy ʿly rhyy*, "Let whoever hates me rejoice for it is written . . . (Prov. 24:17–18 is cited to prove that the gloating of your enemies causes God to improve your lot) and let whoever loves me pray for mercy on my behalf."

Let us turn now to some biblical passages. Hos. 1:6 reads: *qērāʷ šēmâh lōʷ rūhâmâ kî lōʷ ʷôšip ʷôd ʷarahēm ʷet bêt yišrâʷel*. RSV translates: "Call her name Not-

44 See J. Barth, "Babl.-assy. *ra-a-mu* 'lieben'," *ZA* 22 (1909), 1–5; Mullo Weir, *Lexicon*, 278, 283–84; T. Jacobsen, "Sumerian Mythology: A Review Article," *JNES* 5 (1946), 132; Y. Muffs, *Studies*, 132, n. 2; idem, "Joy and Love," 5, n. 13; *AHW.*, 951, s.v. *râmu*, *raʿâmu*, "lieben"; *ibid.*, 970, s.v. *rêmu*, "sich erbarmen." *AHW.*, 952, also lists a third verb *râmu* III/*riʿâmu*, "(be)schenken." On its derivation, its relation to the other two verbs and possible reflexes in Aramaic, see Muffs, loc. cit. W. von Soden, "Mirjâm-Maria '(Gottes)-Geschenk,'" *UF* 2 (1970), 269–72, has argued that *râmu* III provides the etymology of the names Miriam and Jeremiah and of the Hebrew cultic term *têrûmâ*; contrast B. A. Levine, "Assyriology and Hebrew Philology: A Methodological Re-Examination," in H. Nissen and J. Renger, eds., *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn* (Berlin, 1987), 521–30.

45 For references to *rhm* in early Aramaic, see *DISO*, 276–78; K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen, 1984), 693–94. Note that *rhm*, "love," shares with Akkadian *râmu* the nuance of "desire sexually, lust after"; see IQapGen 20:8.

46 With the parallelism *hhyh//P qtl*, cf. *hhyh//P hrg* in Judg. 8:19. For the phenomenon *x//* negation of *y*, see M. Held, "The Action-Result (Factitive-Passive) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," *JBL* 84 (1965), 282, n. 71; and now C. Cohen, "The Phenomenon of Negative Parallelism . . .," *Beer-sheva* 3 (1988), 69–107 [Hebrew]; contrast A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, 1985), 40. A similar form of parallelism is found in Egyptian; see N. Shupak, "Stylistic and Terminological Traits Common to Biblical and Egyptian Literature," *WO* 14 (1985), 230.

47 The association of *špr* with *mltʷ* continued in later Aramaic; see the Gamaliel letters in D. Pardee, S. D. Sperling et al., *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters* (Chico, 1982), 192.

48 The Akkadian parallel to the expression *rhyhm lšmš* is *iāb eli šamš*, "pleasing to Shamash"; see *BWL*, 314:60. The inner Aramaic equivalence of *špr* and *tb* seems attested as early as the eighth century in Sefire III:29.

49 For the translation "just, proper," note that Syriac *špyr* translates Hebrew *yšr*; e.g., Peshitta to Judg. 14:3; 19:25.

50 The saying is composed in synonymous parallelism and employs the well-known *x/x+1* number scheme. See J. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* (Baltimore, 1983), 65. On poetic elements in Ahiqar, see the summary of J. Greenfield, "Early Aramaic Poetry," *JANES* 11 (1979), 46; see further J. Kselman's review of Lindenberger in *JBL* 105 (1986), 115.

51 *TB Ned.* 40a; cf. the Akkadian pun: *bêlu rēmēnû ša bulluū irammu*, "merciful lord who loves to heal" (Mayer *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 461:10; cf. *ibid.*, 12).

pitied, for I will no more have pity on the house of Israel." As Ginsberg⁵² has shown, however, this is one of several passages in Hosea where *rḥm* in some nuance of "love" must be recognized.⁵³ First, Hos. 2:6 reads: *wē²et bānēhā lō² ʾarahēm kī bēnē zēnūnīm hēmā*, "I will disown/repudiate her children because they are the issue of whoredom."⁵⁴ Second, the older brother of Lo-Ruhama is Lo-Ammi, "Not-my-people/kin," a name transparently indicating repudiation. Third, Hos. 2:25, which constitutes the happy ending to 1:6, promises: *wēriḥamtī ʾet lō² rūhāmā we²āmartī lēlō² ʿammī ʿammī ʾattā*, "I will acknowledge (Ms.) Unacknowledged and declare to (Mr.) Not-my-people 'You are My-people'." In none of these passages is "compassion" at issue. It is rather "love," with a formal connotation of recognition or acceptance, necessary because the identity of the father is unknown. The sense of *rḥm* is exactly that of *rḥmh* in Ah. 11, which describes the king's official acceptance of Nadin as Ahiqar's successor. There is a similar use of *rāmu* in the annals of Assurbanipal (VAB 7:258: 30): *ittanaplas abu bānū²a qarrādūtu ša išimmūinni ilāni rabūti ina qibū ilāni rabūti puḥur aḥḥēya* [. . .] *MĒŠ mādiš irāmāni aššu epēš šarrūtiya imḥur Aššur šar ilāni bēl gimri*, "My natural father beheld with joy the heroism with which the great gods had endowed me. At the command of the great gods he favored me in the midst of my brothers. . . . He prayed to Assur, king of the gods, lord of all, for my rule as king." Note that *mādiš irāmāni* in the Assurbanipal passage corresponds to *rēša ullū*⁵⁵ in Esarhaddon: *abu bānū²a ina puḥur aḥḥēya rēšiya kīniš ullūma*, "My natural father formally raised my rank in the presence of all my brothers" (Borger *Esarh.* 40, 1:10).

A generally unrecognized use of *rḥm* II is found in Hos. 14:4: *ʾašer bēkā yēruḥam yātōm*. Here, NJV, which earlier followed Ginsberg, errs in its rendition: "In You alone orphans find pity." The NEB is closest to the mark with its "In Thee the fatherless⁵⁶ find a father's love." The more precise sense is: "In You only, the fatherless find paternal recognition." With this notion we may compare the divine epithet *ʾabī yētōmīm*, "father to the fatherless" (Ps. 68:5).

Surely Jer. 31:20 is one of the most poignant passages in the Hebrew Bible. MT reads: *habēn yaqqîr lî PN ʾim yeled ša ʿašū ʿim kî middê dabbērî bô zākōr ʾezkērennū ʿōd ʿal kēn hāmū mēʿay lô raḥēm ʾarahamennu nēʾūm YHWH*. Various commentators have correctly understood parts of the verse. Nonetheless, its full meaning can only be grasped by recognizing the following: a) As Held demonstrated, the passage contains a triple rhetorical question;⁵⁷ b) *dabbēr bē* means "defame,⁵⁸ repudiate, disown"; c) *ʿal*

52 H. L. Ginsberg, "Hosea, Book of," *Enc. Jud.* 8:1010–11; cf. the translations of JB and NEB ad loc.

53 G. Rendsburg, "Hebrew *RḤM* = Rain," *VT* 33 (1983), 359–69, who wrongly translates *rḥm* in these passages by "pity," nonetheless offers an interesting suggestion that merits further study. On the basis of *rḥm*, "rain," attested in some South Arabian dialects, Rendsburg argues that the author of Hos. 1:6, 7; 2:6, 25 was punning intentionally.

54 Cf. the paraphrase by R. Johanan b. Nappaha (3rd c.) cited in TB *Pes.* 87b: "If you, whose wife is a whore and whose children are the issue of whoredom so that you don't know if they are yours or someone else's. . . ."

55 For *rēša ullū* and its associated idioms see A. L. Oppenheim, "Idiomatic Accadian," *JAOS* 61 (1941), 252–56.

56 For "fatherless" rather than "orphan," see Exod. 22:23; Ps. 109:8; Lam. 5:3. "Fatherless" is the sense of *ym* in Phoenician and Ugaritic as well; see Avishur, *Word-Pairs*, 373–74.

57 M. Held, "Rhetorical Questions in Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew," *Eretz-Israel* 9 (1969), 79.

58 Cf. Num. 12:1, 8b; Ps. 78:19. Cf. Held, loc. cit.; S. Paul, "Literary and Ideological Echoes of Jeremiah in Deutero-Isaiah," in *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem, 1969), 118.

kēn here and elsewhere⁵⁹ has an asseverative rather than a causal sense; and d) *rahēm* means “acknowledge as an offspring.”⁶⁰ The entire verse should be translated: “Is Ephraim my darling son, or is he my cherished child? Why, whenever I disowned him, have my thoughts dwelt on him still? Surely my innermost being yearns for him. I will take him back for certain—Yahweh’s word.”

The author of Psalm 103 shares with Hosea⁶¹ and Deutero-Isaiah the belief that human constancy (*hesed*)⁶² is insufficient to permit faithfulness to God.⁶³ Vss. 11–13 are a literary unit expressing the superiority of Yahweh’s *hesed*;⁶⁴ the removal of Israel’s iniquity; Yahweh’s reclamation of Israel. Vs. 13 expresses this notion by a simile comparing Yahweh to a human father. Here, too, *rḥm* II, “love,” is employed technically, just as in Jer. 31:19. MT reads: *kērahēm ʾab ʿal bānīm riḥam YHWH ʿal yērēʾaw*, “Just as a father reclaims his children, so Yahweh has reclaimed his worshippers.” Yahweh, in other words, legally (re)affirms his own.⁶⁵

The same senses of reclamation and formal acknowledgment are demonstrable from poetic verses in which *rḥm* II is associated with *šāb šēbūt*,⁶⁶ “restore the fortunes.” Deut. 30:3, for example, reads: *wēšāb YHWH ʾelōhēkā ʾet šēbūtēkā wēriḥamekā wēšāb wēqibbešēkā mikkōl hāʿammîm ʾašer hepīšēkā YHWH ʾelōhēkā šāmā*. Inasmuch as *šāb šēbūt* means “restore the fortunes” and *qibbeš* means “gather in,” the associated verb *wēriḥamekā* must mean “take you back, restore your standing,” or the like. The passage should be rendered: “Yahweh will restore your fortunes and take you back. He will once more gather you from among all the peoples where Yahweh your god has scattered you.” Similarly, Ezek. 39:25 reads: *ʿattā ʾāšib ʾet šēbūt (Qere: šēbūt) Yaʿaqōb wēriḥamtī kōl bēt Yiśrāʾel wēqinnēʾī lēšēm qodšī*, “Now I shall restore Jacob’s fortunes and take back the entire household of Israel, zealously acting in behalf of my holy name.” The same association occurs in Jer. 30:18, a verse composed

59 Jer. 29:8 and 38:4, in which “therefore” is supplied by *kī*. For Isa. 9:16, see below. For other examples of asseverative *ʿal-kēn*, see R. Frankena “Einige Bemerkungen zum Gebrauch des Adverbs ʿal-kēn,” in W. van Unnik and A. van der Woude, eds., *Studia . . . Vriezen* (Wageningen, 1966), 98.

60 The NEB translator ad loc. doubtless sensing the inappropriateness of “compassion” in context, offers “filled with tenderness,” probably on the basis of Arabic *rahuma*; cf. above, n. 13.

61 See Ginsberg, “Hosea,” 1011; cf. NJV to Hos. 2:21–22 and note ad loc.

62 On *hesed* see the detailed study by K. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (Missoula, 1978).

63 In Hos. 6:4, the impermanence of Ephraim’s *hesed* is compared to a morning cloud. Isa. 40:6, in similar fashion, compares human *hesed* to the impermanence of flowers (cf. vs. 7). For a recent discussion of the passage, with bibliography, see Sakenfeld, *Hesed*, 189–91. Sakenfeld follows several earlier scholars in emending this verse unnecessarily.

64 Vs. 11 reads: *kī kigēbōah šāmayim ʿal hāʾāreš gābar ḥasdō ʿal yērēʾaw*, “For His constancy surpasses that of His worshippers as heaven towers over earth”; *gābar ḥasdō ʿal yērēʾaw* is elliptical for **gābar ḥasdō ʿal hesed yērēʾaw*; for *gābar ʿal*, “overpowered, surpassed, was greater than,” see Gen. 7:18, 19, 24; 49:26; 2 Sam. 11:23; Ps. 117:2. Cf. Chajes, *Tehillim*, 219. Human constancy is limited by sinfulness (vs. 10) and short life (vss. 14–16); see Rashi ad loc.

65 Chajes, *Tehillim*, 219, compares Ps. 103:13 to Mal. 3:17; *wēhāmaltī ʾālēhem kaʾāšer yaḥmōl ʾš ʿal bēnō hā-ʿōbēd ʾōtō*, “I will spare them the way a man spares the son who serves him.” The similes, however, are different. As Qimhi explains, the son who serves his father merits sparing because he is both a son and a servant. In the Malachi passage *hāmāl* refers to the sparing of the God-fearers (vs. 16) who are righteous (vs. 18) from the coming conflagration (vs. 19). On the dreadful day, Yahweh Šebaʾot will secrete those who fear him (vs. 17a; for *sēgullā* see HAL, 701; for the anastrophic construction see ibn Ezra and Qimhi ad loc.), treating them the way a man treats a son who is at the same time his servant.

66 The oldest attested example of this idiom occurs as *hšbw ʾlhn šybt* (Sefire III:24), “the gods restored the fortunes.” The spelling of *šybt* agrees with the unique *šybt* of Ps. 126:1. For a recent discussion of the idiom, with bibliography, see M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel, 1–20* (Garden City, 1983), 290.

entirely in synonymous parallelism: *hinnēnī šāb šēbūt ʾohālē Yaʿāqōb ūmiškēnōtāw ʾārahēm*⁶⁷ *wēnibnētā ʿir ʿal tillāh weʾarmōn ʿal mišpātō yēšēb*, “Behold I will restore Jacob’s tents and treat his dwellings lovingly so that the city shall be rebuilt on its own mound with each fortress in its proper place.”

There is a similar association in Isa. 14:1, where *rḥm II* occurs in synonymous parallelism with two verbal phrases denoting restoration: *kī yērahēm YHWH ʾet Yaʿāqōb ūbāhar*⁶⁸ *ʿōd bē-Yisrāʾēl wēhinnīhām ʿal ʾadmātām*, “When Yahweh takes Jacob back and reclaims Israel and resettles them on their land.”

It should be obvious that Hebrew *rḥm II* is employed in these passages exactly the way *ʾhb* is employed elsewhere. We may compare Mal. 1:2b–3a: *halōʾ ʾāh PN₁ PN₂ nēʾūm YHWH wāʾōhab ʾet PN₂ weʾet PN sānēʾti*. It is instructive to examine the Targum to this unit: *halāʾ āh PN₁ PN₂ ūrēḥimat yat PN₂ wēyat PN₁ rēḥiqēt*. The Aramaic translator was aware that the verbs *ʾhb* and *śnʾ* had a legal⁶⁹ sense in this passage because he translated *śnʾ* by *rḥq*. In Aramaic and Late Hebrew, *rḥq*⁷⁰ serves as a technical term for “dispossession, renunciation, repudiation.” If *śnʾ*, the antonym of *ʾhb*, is equivalent to *rḥq*, “dispossess,” then *ʾhb/rḥm* means “give title.”⁷¹ The passage translates as: “Was not Esau brother to Jacob? Yet I accepted Jacob and repudiated Esau.”

Isa. 9:16, although not difficult to translate, has long been considered problematic because of the parallelism of *śmh/rḥm*.⁷² MT reads: *ʿal kēn ʿal baḥūrāw lōʾ yīśmah ʾādōnāy wēʾet yētōmāw wēʾet ʾalmēnōtāw lōʾ yērahēm kī kullō ḥānēp ūmērāʿ wēkol pē dōbēr nēbālā*. NJV, for example, clearly sensitive to this difficulty, follows a suggestion first made by Perles⁷³ and translates *lōʾ yīśmah* as “will not spare” on the basis of Arabic *samuḥa*. The Arabic vocable however means “was liberal, bountiful, generous.”⁷⁴ “Spare” in Arabic is *safaqa*, the verb employed regularly by Saadia to translate Hebrew *ḥml*.⁷⁵ JB adopts the Dead Sea Scroll reading *yḥml*,⁷⁶ itself in all likelihood an

67 Cf. *drḥym lhylkʾ*, “whoever cares for the palace” (*KAI* 242:4–5).

68 At the same time, note that *bḥr* is a poetic synonym of *ʾhb*. See Ps. 47:5; 78:68. Thus, we find the parallelism of *bḥr*//*ʾwh*, “choose”//“desire” (Ps. 132:13; *bḥr*//*ḥps*, “choose”//“desire, delight in” (Isa. 63:4; cf. 63:5). Note further the parallelism of *ḥmd*//*bḥr*, “Lust after//choose” (Isa. 1:29; cf. Ezek. 23:6, 12, 23). The verb *bḥr* is an antonym of *śnʾ* (Prov. 1:29), as is *ʾhb*.

69 Otherwise Aramaic *rḥm* and *śnʾ/śnʾ* would have been employed to express the opposition of Hebrew *ʾhb-śnʾ*. See, e.g., Tg. to Judg. 14:16; 2 Sam. 13:15, 19:6; Amos 5:15; Ps. 119:113. Note further two typical talmudic usages: *mʾn drḥym lyh . . . mʾn dsny lyh*, “One who loves him, one who hates him (TB *Ketub.* 105b); similar is: *bḥʾy ʾtrʾ rḥmw ly . . . bḥʾy ʾtrʾ snw ly*, “In this place they love me . . . In this place they hate me” (TB *Qidd.* 50a).

70 Cf. Rabinowitz, “A Legal Formula” (see n. 28), 75; for Aramaic *rḥq* see references in Muffs, *Studies*, 231; for Late Hebrew see, e.g., M *Eduy.* 8:2, 3, 7.

71 This has been rightly termed “the forensic sense” of *ʾhb*; see H. M. Orlinsky, “The Biblical Concept of the Land of Israel,” *Eretz-Israel* 18 (1985), 53*, n. 5.

72 The parallelism *bāḥūr*//*yāṭōm ʾalmānā* is also unusual. Most often, *bāḥūr* is paralleled by, or found in hendiadys with, *bētūlā*. See Deut. 32:25; Isa. 23:4, 62:5; Jer. 31:12; 51:22; Ezek. 9:6; Amos 8:13; Zech. 9:17; Ps. 148:12; Lam. 1:18 (cf. 1:15); 2:21. In Jer. 15:8 *ʾalmēnōtāw* and *bāḥūr* appear to be associated poetically, but the text is problematic; see the commentaries.

73 F. Perles, “Critical Notices. Gesenius’ Hebrew Dictionary,” *JQR* 11 (1899), 689.

74 Perles (loc. cit.) correctly translates *samuḥa* by “gütig, grossmütig sein.” See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, I/4, 1422–23, who offers: “was liberal, bountiful generous, going an easy pace (of a camel).”

75 See, e.g., Saadia to Gen. 19:16; Exod. 2:6; Deut. 13:9; Job 20:13. Saadia also employs *safaqa* for *ḥūs*; see, e.g., to Gen. 45:20; Deut. 7:16; Ps. 72:13.

76 For a good photograph of the variant, see J. C. Trevor, *Scrolls from Qumran Cave I* (Jerusalem, 1972), pl. 9.

emendation.⁷⁷ I suggest another solution. We have seen that *rḥm* II, “to love,” has the sense of legal acceptance and recognition. In all likelihood therefore the word *yīšmah* is to be connected with Akkadian *samāhu*,⁷⁸ a synonym of *zāzu*,⁷⁹ “to share as an heir.” Thus, a Nuzi text reads in part: *ana eqlētiya bītātiya u mimma šunšuya lā isemmehū*,⁸⁰ “they shall not share in my fields, houses or anything else of mine.” The intensive form *summuḥu*, means “to include as an heir.” In one case an individual swears: *šumma . . . ana eqlētišunu u bītātišunu lā ussemmiḥūnimma*,⁸¹ “(I swear that) they included me as an heir to their fields and houses.” The negation of *summuḥu* means “to disinherit.” Thus, in another case from Nuzi we read concerning the sons by a second wife: *ina eqlētišu bītātišu ina mimma šunšu ša PN lā summuḥū*,⁸² “they shall be disinherited with regard to his fields, his houses or anything else.” Closer to Israel, a text from Ugarit reads: *ina gabbi mimmu [ša PN] lā summuḥū lā iqarrubū*,⁸³ “They have no share or right in any of PN’s property.” In this light, Isa. 9:16 should be translated: “Surely my Lord will disinherit His youths⁸⁴ and not be responsible for His widows and orphans; for all are evil and wicked and every mouth speaks impiety.”

Finally, we turn to Amos 1:11, well known as a difficult verse. Held demonstrated that the problematic *wayyitrōp . . . šēmārâ* sequence in the final stich concealed a Hebrew pair corresponding to Akkadian *šamāru/nadāru*, “rage/be furious.”⁸⁵ Our concern here is with the previous stich *ʿal rodēpō baḥereb ʾāhīw wēšihēt raḥamāw*. Scholars have long realized the difficulty of *raḥamāw*, “his mercy” or “compassion” in context. A century ago Krochmal⁸⁶ proposed the translation “Verwandten” on the basis of Aramaic *rahmā*, “friend.” More recently Fishbane offered a similar suggestion. In addition to citing Aramaic parallels, Fishbane noted that Akkadian *rāmu* was widely employed in treaty contexts. He concluded therefore that *šihēt raḥamāw* was to be translated as “destroyed his allies.” The heinous crime of Edom was to be understood as betrayal of treaty-relations.⁸⁷ Paul⁸⁸ and Coote⁸⁹ objected on the grounds that

77 See H. Wildberger, *Jesaya*, BK 10/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1972), 206; an earlier *yḥml* was “corrected” to *yḥmw* in this text. See H. M. Orlinsky, “The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament,” in G. E. Wright, ed., *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Garden City, 1965), 156. On the general unreliability of the textual variants from this source, see Orlinsky apud P. Miller, “A Selective Bibliography of the Writings of Harry M. Orlinsky,” *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982), items, 63, 76, 79, 91, 92.

78 See references in *CAD S*, 107–9; *AHW.*, 1016–17.

79 Cf. the hendiadys *lā summuḥū u lā izuzzū* (*CAD S*, 109a).

80 See E. A. Speiser, “A Significant New Will from Nuzi,” *JCS* 17 (1963), 65:29–31; cf. *CAD S*, 108a.

81 See *RA* 23 (1926), 148, no. 29:10: 5–10; cf. *CAD S*, 108b.

82 See *RA* 23, 145, no. 12: 20–24; cf. *CAD S*, 109a.

83 *Ugaritica V*, 3:3–5.

84 Perhaps read: *ʿet baḥūrāw lōʾ yēšammāḥ ʾādōnāy*.

85 Held, “Rhetorical Questions” (see n. 57); 73, n. 19; idem, “Studies in Biblical Homonyms in the Light of Akkadian,” *JANES* 3 (1970–1971), 46–55.

86 Apud *Gesenius* 17, 755.

87 M. Fishbane, “The Treaty Background of Amos 1:11 and Related Matters,” *JBL* 89 (1970), 313–18; see now M. Barré, “The Meaning of *lʾ ʾybnw* in Amos 1:3–2:6,” *JBL* 105 (1986), 617–20.

88 S. Paul, “Amos 1:3–2:3: A Concatenous Literary Pattern,” *JBL* 90 (1971), 397–403. Paul’s own suggestion is to explain *raḥamāw* on the basis of Ugaritic *rḥm*, “girl,” a synonym of *bilt*; see A. Caquot et al., *Textes ougaritiques* (Paris, 1974), 1:258; see further M. Gruber, “Ha-tiškaḥ ʾiššā ʿullāh?” *Tarbiz* 51 (1982), 491, n. 2. It is attested in Moabite as *rḥmt* (*KAI* 181:18). At the present state of our knowledge, however, the pairing of “brother”/“girl” in poetic parallelism seems unlikely. For more likely complements of *ʾāh*, see Avishur, *Word Pairs*, 753. The most convincing occurrence of Hebrew *rḥm*, “girl,” is Isa. 49:15; see Gruber, “Ha-tiškaḥ,” 491–92. For *rḥm rḥmtym* in Judg. 5:30 see N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Language and the Book* (Jerusalem, 1959), 2:227–29 [Hebrew].

89 R. Coote, “Amos 1:11 RḤMYW,” *JBL* 90 (1971), 206–8.

etymological *ḥet*, ^c*ayin*, and ^c*gayn* are reflected in Akkadian in a vowel of *e*-quality so that a Hebrew *rḥm* could correspond only to *rēmu*, but not to *ra²āmu/rāmu*. Fishbane then retreated somewhat, contending that he had intended to suggest only a functional but not an etymological parallel.⁹⁰ Actually, Fishbane should not have given ground on the etymological objections because although Paul and Coote were correct with regard to the normal phonetic correspondence,⁹¹ there are exceptions.

Thus, Akkadian *da²āpu*, “push, push away,” can hardly be separated from Hebrew *dhp*.⁹² In addition, the Akkadian word for “kill, slay,” *na²āru/nāru/nēru*, is attested with middle *aleph* or *a*-vowel as well as with middle *e*.⁹³ Yet, as shown by Late Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic, the vocable’s etymology is *nḥr*, with medial *ḥet*.⁹⁴ Accordingly, Hebrew *raḥamāw* in Amos 1:11 corresponds etymologically⁹⁵ and semantically to *rā²imūšu*, “his friends,⁹⁶ those who love him.” From Aramaic sources Fishbane correctly noted the Elephantine phrase *b^cly ṭbtk wrḥmyk*, “your allies and friends.”⁹⁷ Additional parallels should also be mentioned. From Sefire we have *wkl mlk^y zy šrty² wkl zy rḥm h² ly*, “and any kings in my vicinity⁹⁸ or whoever is an ally of mine.” Similarly, the *ba^calê bērit* of Gen. 14:13 are referred to as *rḥmy* in IQapGen A, 21:21. As to the pairing of ²*ḥ* and *rḥm*, it is well-attested in Aramaic. We read for example in a Syriac incantation: ²*h² P^h² nhw² wrḥm² ldyr² byt²*,⁹⁹ “He is brother to brethren and friend to the house-dwellers.” Similarly, the pair ²*ḥ/r^c* (Jer. 9:3) is rendered ²*ḥ²/rḥm²* by Tg. and Peshitta.¹⁰⁰ The reverse sequence is attested in the phrase *kl rḥmwhy wkl² ḥwhy*, “all his brethren and all his friends” (4Q157.11QtgJob 42:11). Accordingly, we translate in Amos 1:11: “For with the sword he ran down his brother¹⁰¹ and annihilated his friends.¹⁰² His anger seethed forever, his wrath raged for eternity.”¹⁰³

90 M. Fishbane, “Additional Remarks on RḤMYW (Amos 1:11),” *JBL* 91 (1972), 391–93.

91 See *GAG*, §9a.

92 See *AHW.*, 146; *HAI.*, 210.

93 See *CAD*, N/2, 182a.

94 See *AHW.*, 780b.

95 The irregular etymological correspondence of Aramaic *rḥm*, “love,” and Arabic *ra²ima* is not unique. Syriac *rahēp*, “to have compassion,” can hardly be separated from Arabic *ra²afa* with the same meaning. It is instructive to compare the respective translations of the Peshitta and Saadia to Ps. 86:16; 145:8.

96 This interpretation causes Amos 1:11 to fit neatly into traditional patterns. Cf. the parallelism ²*ḥ/r^c*, “brother//friend,” attested in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Akkadian; see Avishur, *Word-Pairs*, 557–58. Note that Tg. Onq. and Peshitta to Gen. 38:12, 20, translate Hebrew *r^c* by *rḥm²*.

97 Fishbane, “Treaty Background,” 316.

98 See D. Sperling, “Late Hebrew *ḥzr* and Akkadian *saḥāru*,” *JANES* 5 (1973), 398, n. 6; contrast *TSSI*, 2:47.

99 J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls* (Leiden, 1985), 125:8.

100 Cf. Peshitta to Ps. 122:8.

101 Accompanying *ḥrb*, *rdp* must have a perfective connotation; cf. Jer. 29:18. There are several instances where *rdp* alone should be translated by “run down”; see, e.g., 1 Sam. 25:29; Ps. 143:3. For the construction *rdp b* plus verb of destruction, cf. Lam. 3:66.

102 The idiom *šḥt rḥmym* should be restored in Ps. 78:38; see T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York, 1969), 718; NEB ad loc. With Gaster read: *wēhū² yēkapper ‘āwōn wēlō² yašḥit raḥāmāw*, but translate: “But He—He shrives wrongdoing and destroys not those who love him.”

103 For the translation of Amos 1:11b, see Held, “Studies in Biblical Homonyms,” 51.