

## Psalm 6 in Comparative Perspective

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The study of the Bible against its background in the ancient Near East has fallen on hard times in recent decades for several reasons.<sup>1</sup> As my late lamented teacher Yochanan Muffs noted, bad comparatism has contributed to a “radical purism often encountered in Assyriological<sup>2</sup> circles where anything having to do with the Bible...is considered suspect.”<sup>3</sup> Another factor has been the popularity of the study of the Bible as literature, which, although not without merit, has made it legitimate for commentators and translators unschooled in the languages and cultures of the ancient Near East to write about the Bible as though it arose in a historical vacuum.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the proliferation of primary ancient Near Eastern on the Internet can prove daunting to the would-be comparatist.

In regard to Psalms, two recent commentaries pay virtually no attention to the extensive prayer literature of the larger ancient Near East,<sup>5</sup> while the compliment is returned by important studies of ancient Near

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<sup>1</sup> In the ranks of younger scholars there are hopeful indications that the tide seems to be turning. See, e.g., A. Lenzi, “Invoking the God: Interpreting. Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual,” *JBL* 129 (2010), 303-15; A. Lenzi (ed.) *Reading Akkadian Prayers* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011); A. E. Zernecke, *Gott und Mensch in Klagebeten aus Israel und Mesopotamien: Die Handerhebungsgebeten Ištar 2 und Ištar 10 und die Klagepsalmen Ps 38 und Ps 22 im Vergleich* (AOAT 387; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Assyriological abbreviations follow the system of *CAD*.

<sup>3</sup> Y. Muffs, *Love & Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992), 110 n. 52. Muffs observes that such suspicion sometimes extends to certain groups of Akkadian texts that have been brought into comparison with the Hebrew Bible. See also the remarks by W. W. Hallo, “New Moons and Sabbaths: A Case Study in the Contrastive Approach,” *HUCA* 48 (1977), 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> See S. D. Sperling, “Major Developments in Jewish Biblical Scholarship,” in M. Saebo (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. The History of its Interpretation. III/2* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 371-90.

<sup>5</sup> F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms 2* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); A. Ḥakham, *The Bible: Psalms with Jerusalem Commentary* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 2003).

Eastern prayer literature.<sup>6</sup> The present study is a modest attempt to demonstrate that the comparative approach adds an essential dimension to the study of Psalms.

למנצח בנגינות על-השמינית ; מזמור לדוד.	1) To the leader, with stringed instruments, to the melody of <i>al-ha-sheminith</i> , a song of David.
יהוה, אל-באפך תוכיחני ; ואל-בחמתך תיסרני.	2) O YHWH, do not correct me in your anger, and do not chastise me in your outrage.
חנני יהוה, כי אמלל-אני ; רפאני יהוה-- כי נבהלו עצמי.	3) Grant me grace, O YHWH, for broken am I. Make me whole, O YHWH, for my bones tremble.
ונפשי נבהלה מאד ; ואת (ונאתה) יהוה, עד-מתי.	4) Yea, my very being trembles mightily. And you YHWH—how long...?
שובה יהוה, חלצה נפשי ; הושיעני למען חסדך.	5) Return, O YHWH. Save my life. Rescue me in keeping with your steadfast love.
כי אין במות זכרך ; בשאול, מי יודה- לך.	6) For there is no mention of you in Death's realm. In Sheol, who thanks you?
נגעתי באנחותי--אשחה בכל-לילה, מפתי ; בדמעתי ערשי אמסה.	7) I am worn out in my exhaustion. I bathe my couch every night. With my tears I dissolve my bed.

<sup>6</sup> T. Oshima, *Babylonian Prayers to Marduk* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); C. G. Frechette, *Mesopotamian Ritual Prayers of "Hand-lifting" (Akkadian šuilllas). An Investigation of Function in Light of the Idiomatic Meaning of the Rubric* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2012). Note that this fine book is published in the series *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* (!). Mayer, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, devotes only two pages (189-90) to Hebrew terms for *Koinzidenzfall*.

<p>עֲשֹׂשָׁה מִפְּעַס עֵינַי ; עֲתָקָה בְּכָל-צוֹרְרֵי.</p>	<p>8) My eye is darkened from vexation, my *pupil (darkened) *from<sup>7</sup> all my foes.</p>
<p>סוּרוּ מִמִּנִּי, כָּל-פְּעֻלֵי אָוֹן : כִּי-שָׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל בְּכִי.</p>	<p>9) Turn aside from me, O all workers of iniquity, for YHWH has heard the sound of my weeping.</p>
<p>שָׁמַע יְהוָה תְּחִנָּתִי ; יְהוָה תִּפְּלֵתִי יִקַּח.</p>	<p>10) YHWH has heard my plea or grace. YHWH will accept my prayer.</p>
<p>יִבְשׂוּ וַיִּבְהָלוּ מְאֹד כָּל-אֹיְבֵי ; יִשָּׁבוּ יִבְשׂוּ רְגַע.</p>	<p>11) All my enemies will greatly tremble in shame. In an instant they will turn back ashamed.</p>

Psalm 6<sup>8</sup> is generally classified as a psalm of lamentation<sup>9</sup> by an individual. The psalm remains important in Christian and Jewish liturgy. The worshipper's request חנני (v. 3), “grant me grace,” and its cognate noun תחנה (v. 10) “plea for grace,” led Ashkenazi Jewish liturgists to place Psalm 6 at the center of the twice daily weekday penitential ritual known as Taḥanun.<sup>10</sup> The

<sup>7</sup> Reading with Peshitta’s *mn klhwn b’ldbby dbby*.

<sup>8</sup> Long ago Franz Delitzsch observed that Gleichartigkeit (verbal similarity) was a significant operative principle in the arrangement of the Book of Psalms. See F. Delitzsch, *Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1883), 16-17. Following Delitzsch's lead, we note the verbal links between Psalms 5 and 6: שמע יהוה קול בכי (6:9) corresponds to כל פעלי און in Ps. 6:9 repeats כל פעלי און in Ps. 5:6. In like manner there are verbal links with Psalm 7: שמע השיעני occurs in Ps 7:2 and 6:5; of Ps. 7:5,7 corresponds to צוררי of Ps. 6:8; באפר of Ps. 7:7 corresponds to באפר in Ps. 6:2. In Psalm 6 itself internal devices pull the psalm together: rhyme in vv. 2 (תִּסְרִי / תוֹכִיחֵנִי); 3 (בְּכִי / 9-10); ערשי / בדמעתי / במטתי / באנחתי (7a-b) (זכרך / חסדך) (5b-6a) (חנני / רפאני); the threefold repetition of the *niph'al* of בהל' (vv. 2, 3, 11); the alliteration of the *lamed* which occurs in every verse (not counting the rubric) in v. 2 (bis), 4, 5, 9 (bis), 6, 7 (bis), 8, 9 (bis), 10, 11 (bis); in v. 11 ישבו echoes שובה of v. 5 and at the same time plays on יבשו.

<sup>9</sup> For a recent survey of the history of interpretation of the psalms of Lamentation, see A. Basson, *Divine Metaphors in Selected Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 6-23.

<sup>10</sup> In the Sephardi *Taḥanun* the central psalm is Psalm 25. On the ritual see M. Ydit, *EncJud*<sup>2</sup>, 19: 434-35.

early medieval church grouped Psalms 6 together with 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143 as “penitential psalms” to be sung on Ash Wednesday.<sup>11</sup> The main focus of the present study is philological, and it attempts to understand Psalm 6 against its ancient Near Eastern background. Attention is paid as well to the literary devices employed by the author of the psalm.

### *Notes to Psalm 6*

#### **V. 1**

לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹתוֹ: Outside of Psalms, where it is found 55 times<sup>12</sup>, לְמַנְצֵחַ occurs only in Hab. 3:19, the concluding two words of the “Psalm of Habakkuk,” in the similar phrase לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִגְיֹתָי, but that text is suspect. Andersen takes the phrase as a dedication: “For the conductor in my string ensemble,”<sup>13</sup> which seems overly interpretative. LXX incorporates the phrase into the body of the psalm and translates, τοῦ νικῆσαι ἐν τῇ ὕδῃ αὐτοῦ, (“he mounts me upon high places) that I may conquer by his song” = \*אנצח בנגינתו. Peshitta likewise incorporates the phrase *dʿzmr btšbħth*, “that I might sing his praise,” into the body of the Habakkuk psalm.<sup>14</sup> In our passage LXX translates לְמַנְצֵחַ by εἰς τὸ τέλος, “until the end.”<sup>15</sup> τέλος, “end,” is the same word LXX uses to render לנצח, “to the end,” “forever.” See, e.g., LXX to Ps. 9:7, 19, 32 (= Heb. 10:11); 15:11 (= Heb. 16:11); 48:10. The Targum translates לְמַנְצֵחַ by לְשֹׁבַח, “for the singer.”

<sup>16</sup>בְּנִגְיֹתוֹ appears following לְמַנְצֵחַ in 6:1; it is written defectively following לְמַנְצֵחַ in Ps. 54:1; 55:1; 67:1; 76:1. The form is vocalized נְגִינָת in Ps 61:1. LXX translates בְּנִגְיֹתוֹ here by ἐν ψαλμοῖς, “among the Psalms,” and the Vulgate *in carminibus*, “in tunes.” From such verses as Ps. 68:26, קְדָמוּ שָׁרִים אַחַר נְגִינִים; ; בְּתוֹךְ עַלְמוֹת תוֹכְפוֹת, “First come singers, then musicians, amidst young women

<sup>11</sup> P. C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1983), 91.

<sup>12</sup> The לְמַנְצֵחַ of Ps. 18:1 is lacking in the parallel recension 2 Samuel 22.

<sup>13</sup> F. I. Andersen, *Habakkuk* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 350.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the Vulgate ad loc.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Vulgate *in finem* for לְמַנְצֵחַ throughout Psalms.

<sup>16</sup> For the range of interpretations of this term, see Y. Kolyada, *A Compendium of Instruments and Instrumental Terminology in the Bible* (London: Equinox, 2009), 136-37.

drumming,” it is clear that  $\sqrt{\text{נג}}$  refers to the playing of instruments, in this case accompanying vocalists. See further 2 Kgs. 3:15-19; Isa. 38:20; Ezek. 33:32; Ps. 33:16. In the majority of cases  $\sqrt{\text{נג}}$  refers to playing a stringed instrument (1 Sam 15:16,20; 18:10; 19:9; Isa 23:16). The noun  $\text{נגינה}$  (מ), however, most likely refers to unaccompanied singing in Job 30:9; Lam. 3:14, 63; 5:14.

$\text{השמינית}$ : Kolyada surveys the interpretations of this unclear term.<sup>17</sup> My translation follows R. Isaiah of Trani (ad loc.) in understanding this rubric and others like it as an instruction to the musician to sing psalms to the melody of existing songs.<sup>18</sup>

## V. 2

$\text{אף}$  and  $\text{באפף}$  ...  $\text{במפתף}$  ... :  $\text{אף}$  and  $\text{חמה}$  are a regular word pair.<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ps. 38:2:  $\text{הנה אל-}$  ;  $\text{במפתף תיסרני}$  ;  $\text{במפתף תוכיחני}$  ;  $\text{במפתף תיסרני}$ . For Ugaritic  $\sqrt{\text{ysr}}$  in a similar sense, see *KTU* 1.4:v:4; 1.16:vi:26. The roots  $\sqrt{\text{יסר}}$  and  $\sqrt{\text{יכח}}$  are regularly paired in their verbal and nominal forms.<sup>20</sup>

## V. 3

$\text{רפאני}$ : “make me whole.” The root sense of  $\text{רפא}$  (like that of English “heal”) is to make whole that which is broken. As such it can be used of broken inanimate objects. See 1 Kgs. 18:30; Ps. 60:2.

$\text{חנני}$  is attested as a Canaanite loanword (for standard Akk. *enēnu*) in EA 137:81-82: *šumma yihnanūni šarru u yutirūni ana āli...* “if the king is gracious to me and returns me to the city...”; and perhaps in EA 253:24: *yenninūnu šarru*, “the king treats us kindly.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 141-43.

<sup>18</sup> In Trani's words, “David composed this song and gave it to the overseer of the melodies (to perform) to the tune of a poetic composition beginning with the word  $\text{השמינית}$ .” Cf. Ibn Ezra ad loc.

<sup>19</sup> See Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1984), 754.

<sup>20</sup> See *ibid.*, 760.

<sup>21</sup> For this translation see W. Moran in J. Huehnergard and S. Izre'el (eds.), *Amarna Studies* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 276-80. But see A. F. Rainey, “A New Translation of the Amarna Letters—after 100 Years,” *AfO* 36-37 (1989/90), 60.

אִמְלַל: Ibn Ezra's text read אִמְלַל with *pataḥ* as did Qimhi's. Saadia translates אִמְלַל by כאִלְמִנְקָצָף, "like a broken thing."<sup>22</sup> Cf. Jer. 14:2: אֲבָלָה יְהוּדָה וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ; כאִלְמִנְקָצָף, "Judah mourned, for her gates were broken,<sup>23</sup> sunken,<sup>24</sup> into the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem rose."

נִבְהַלּוּ: Biblical Hebrew, more so than English, prefers to express emotion in physical terms. The basic sense of נִבְהַלּוּ is "shake."<sup>25</sup> See Exod. 15:15 // נִבְהַלּוּ; Ps. 48:6: וַיִּדִּי עִם הָאָרֶץ תִּבְהַלֵּנָה; Ezek. 7:26; Ezek. 26:18: נִבְהַלּוּ; יֵאָחֲזוּ רַעַד; Ezek. 26:18: נִבְהַלּוּ // יֵחַרְדּוּ; Ezek. 7:26: תִּבְהַלֵּנָה; Ezek. 26:18: נִבְהַלּוּ; יֵאָחֲזוּ רַעַד. The basic sense "shake"<sup>26</sup> explains the use of נִבְהַלּוּ, "be in haste."<sup>27</sup>

### Vv. 3-4

The parallelism נֶפֶשׁ // עֶצֶם crosses the sentence boundaries of vv. 3-4. Idiomatically, עֶצֶם here refers to the entire body.<sup>28</sup> For the same parallel pairs and meaning, cf. Prov. 16:24: צוּף-דְּבַשׁ אִמְרֵי-נֶעֱם; מֵתוֹק לִנְפֶשׁ וּמֵרֶפָא לְעֶצֶם; "Pleasant words are a honeycomb to the palate (לִנְפֶשׁ) and a healing for the body." For עֶצֶם meaning "skeleton," "frame of the body," see Gen. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13; Ps. 139:15; Job 2:5. Cf. Akk. *ešemtu* in the same meaning.<sup>29</sup>

עַד-מָתַי: Most of the occurrences of this phrase are elliptical questions for "How long will X go on?"<sup>30</sup> With the Heb. usage compare Akk. *adi mati*,

<sup>22</sup> At Isa. 24:7 the Targum translates גִּפְּן אִמְלַלָּה by גּוֹפְנִיא אֲתַפְרִיכוּ. For פָּרַךְ "break," see Sokoloff, *DJPA*, 447.

<sup>23</sup> This is probably the sense of אִמְלַלָּה in 1 Sam. 2:9; Jer. 15:9. If a woman is built by having children (Gen. 16:2), it stands to reason that their loss would break her.

<sup>24</sup> Reading קָדְדוּ with N.H. Tur-Sinai, *Ha-lašon Ve-hasefer* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1954), 1.385. The NJPS "bowed" seems to be an unacknowledged acceptance of Tur-Sinai's emendation. The verse is a good example of chiasmic parallelism.

<sup>25</sup> Contrast the Arabic etymology suggested by J. Blau, "Etymologische Untersuchungen auf Grund des palaestinischen Arabisch," *VT* 5 (1955), 339. Peshitta translates נִבְהַלּוּ עֶצֶם by *z'w grmy*.

<sup>26</sup> For the opposite view, that the semantic development was from "be in haste" to "shake," see J. L. Palache, *Semantic Notes on the Hebrew Lexicon* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Translation of *DCH* 2:97.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Ibn Ezra: וְהִנֵּה עֶצֶם כִּנְגַד הַגּוּף.

<sup>29</sup> See *CAD E*, 343b; עֶצֶם refers to the "fetus" in Qoh. 11:5.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the Targum ad loc. and see Exod. 10:3, 7; Num. 14:27; 1 Sam. 1:14; 1 Kgs. 18:21 et al. Cf. עַד אֵיכָּא "how far?" See, e.g., Ps. 13:2 (*bis*), 3; 62:4.

which is also found in the prayer literature.<sup>31</sup> For *עד מתי* as an elliptical interjection of despair, see Jer. 23:26; Hab. 2:6; Ps. 90:13. Though not properly a mourning text, Ps. 6:7 recalls an Ugaritic ritual mourning for dead royal ancestors in which W. Hallo<sup>32</sup> finds the Ugaritic equivalent of Akk *adi mati*, which, like *עד מתי* in Ps 6:7, is elliptical. *KTU* 1.161:12-17 reads:

*ksi*<sup>33</sup> *nqmd ibky*<sup>34</sup> *wydm<sup>ς</sup> hdm p<sup>ς</sup>nh*

*lpnh ybky tllhn mlk wybl<sup>ς</sup> udm<sup>ς</sup>th*

*‘dmt w<sup>ς</sup>dmt ‘dmt*

O throne of Niqmaddu weep! And let his footstool shed tears!

In front of it let the table of the king weep! Let it swallow its tears

(crying out) “How long and how long, how long?”

## V. 5

שׁוֹבָה יְהוָה: With the plea for the angry (v. 2) god to return compare the Šuilla Gula 1A:87<sup>35</sup> *ili šabsu litūra ištarti zenūti lissaḥra*, “May my angry god return to me, may my enraged goddess turn back to me.”

חִלְצָה נַפְשִׁי: Literally, “pull/take away my neck from.” The only other biblical attestation of  $\sqrt{\text{חלצ}}$  with *נפש* is Ps. 116:8.<sup>36</sup> The phrase has an exact Akkadian semantic parallel in *eṭirī napultī*, as found in the following: *ummu ālidāte attī eṭirī napultī*<sup>37</sup>, “You are the mother of those who give birth. Save my life!”

לְמַעַן “in keeping with”; so the NJPS. The common “for the sake of” as a translation of *למען* here is completely out of place. Cf., e.g., 2 Kgs. 13:23:

וַיַּחַן יְהוָה אֹתָם וַיְרַחֲמֵם, וַיִּפְּן אֶלֵיהֶם לְמַעַן בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וְיַעֲקֹב. “YHWH showed them grace, he showed them love, and turned towards them in keeping with his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

<sup>31</sup> See *CAD* A/I, 19. For *adi mati* in the prayer literature, see Mayer, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 92.

<sup>32</sup> Oral communication, 1984.

<sup>33</sup> For the parallel *ksi//hdm* and its Hebrew reflex, see Avishur, *Word-Pairs*, 375-76. For the Hebrew reflex of *bky//dm<sup>ς</sup>*, see *ibid*, 583.

<sup>34</sup> On the form as N-imperative, see J. Tropper, *Ugaritische Grammatik* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2000), 540, 668

<sup>35</sup> For the text, see Mayer, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 453. See also Lenzi, *Akkadian Prayers*, 250.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ps. 56:14.

<sup>37</sup> *SAA* 3 15:10 [p. 38]]. On the reading *ālidāte* see Livingstone *ad loc.*; *CAD* A/II, 342. On the semantics involved in the meanings of *eṭēru* A, see the discussion in *CAD* E, 404.

**V. 6**

“no mention of you”: Literally, “in (the realm of) death, your name is absent.” Cf. the parallelism זכר // שם in Exod. 3:15; Ps. 35:13; Prov. 10:7; Job 18:17; cf. Isa. 26:8. See also the discussion in W. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1998), 205. Propp translates זכר by “designation.” Tawil aptly compares the Hebrew parallelism זכר // שם with the Akkadian pair *šumu//zikru*; see H. Tawil, *An Akkadian Lexical Companion for Biblical Hebrew* (Jersey City: Ktav, 2009), 92.

For the sentiment that the dead do not praise God and that it is in God's self-interest to keep his worshipper alive, see Isa. 38:18-19; Ps. 30:9-13; 88:11-14; 115:16-18. A similar sentiment is found in an Akkadian prayer to Marduk:

*ē tābut arda binût qātēka ina ša ṭiddiš imû minû nēmelšu balṭumma ardu bēlašu ipallaḥ epru mītum ana ili mīnâ uṣṣap*

Do not destroy the creation of your hands. From one who has turned into clay, what is his benefit? Living, a slave serves his master. What does dead dust add to his god?<sup>38</sup>

For the pairing מות // שאיל, see Avishur, *Word-Pairs*, 767. In classical biblical thought everyone who died went to Sheol (etymology uncertain), where there was no distinction between the righteous and the wicked. It was a dark and miserable place distant from the divine presence. No one returned from Sheol (Job 7:9), which, like the Mesopotamian netherworld, “earth of no return” (*kurnugû/eršet lā tāri*), had gates (Isa. 38:10) to prevent escape.<sup>39</sup>

**V. 7**

יְגַעְתִּי בְּאִנְחָתִי: Because of the presence of ערש, equivalent to Akk. *eršu* later in the verse, and the Akkadian prayer complaint *ina ereš<sup>40</sup> anḥūti nadāku*, “in

<sup>38</sup> For a recent edition of this text, see Oshima, *Prayers to Marduk*, 137-90. The quotation is from *ibid.*, 148:67-69; cf. 49. See further S. E. Loewenstamm, *From Babylon to Canaan* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 264-66; B. Foster, *Before the Muses* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Bethesda: CDL, 2005), 611-16.

<sup>39</sup> See further, T. Lewis, “Dead, Abode of the,” *ABD* 2.101-5; J. Healey, “Mot,” *DDD*, 598-603; W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 348-62.

<sup>40</sup> Written GIŠ.NÁ. CAD A/II, 120a, and CAD Š/II, 156b, normalize *erši*.

my bed of exhaustion I lie,”<sup>41</sup> Held<sup>42</sup> emended to יגעתי בערש אנחתי\*. But as shown by יגעתי באנחתי, ומנוחה לא מצאתי (Jer. 45:3), that emendation is unnecessary. יגע is regularly associated with עיף/יעף “to tire.” See, e.g., Deut. 25:18; Isa. 40:28, 30, 31.

The general tendency has been to understand our verse as well as Jer. 45:3 in light of Ps. 69:4:<sup>43</sup>

יגעתי בקראי, נחרר<sup>44</sup> גרוני / כלו עיני, מיחל לאלהי  
I am worn out from my crying, my throat is parched.  
My eyesight is gone from<sup>45</sup> waiting for my god.

The connection between the two verses has been aided by the common translation of אנחתי by words for sighing, moaning, groaning, and the like.<sup>46</sup> But if that translation is inaccurate, then יגעתי באנחתי is not equivalent to יגעתי בקראי. In fact, it appears that just as Akk. *anāhu* must be separated into two vocables, so should Heb. אנח. Certainly in several biblical passages אנח seems to refer to a vocal act corresponding to *anāhu* B,<sup>47</sup> a synonym of *damāmu*, “mourn, moan.”<sup>48</sup> Thus in Ezek. 9:4 //21:11-12; נאק; Ps. 102:6: מקול

<sup>41</sup> CAD E, 317.

<sup>42</sup> M. Held, "The Root ZBL/SBL in Akkadian, Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew," *JAOS* 88 (1968), 93, n.70.

<sup>43</sup> See Y. Hoffman, *Jeremiah* (2 vols.; Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 2001), 2.750.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Lev. 26:16; Lam. 2:11; Ps. 119:123; Job 11:20.

<sup>45</sup> Reading מיחל with LXX and Targum. See the commentaries.

<sup>46</sup> LXX, Vulgate, Targum, Peshitta, Luther, KJV, NJPS, NEB, JB (Vulgate and Peshitta construe אנחתי as a plural.) This tendency extends to the single example of  $\sqrt{nh}$  in Ugaritic, *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.17:i:17:-18: *nh ḡzr [m]t. hrnmy*. Among the more recent are Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, “quejumbroso” (G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica* [2 vols.; Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 1996], 1.38); Wright, “moaning” (D. Wright, *Ritual in Narrative* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001], 38); Wyatt, “groaning” (N. Wyatt, *Ritual Texts from Ugarit* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002 ], 254); Bordueil and Pardee, “groaning” (P. Bordueil and D. Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 173). In contrast, Tropper, who compares Akk. *anhu*, translates “traurig,” “unglücklich” (J. Tropper, *Kleines Wörterbuch des Ugaritischen* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008]), 5. The exact reading of the word parallel to *anh* in l. 16 is disputed; see Wyatt, *Ritual Texts*, 253, n.17.

<sup>47</sup> See CAD A/II, 105-6.

<sup>48</sup> See CAD D, 59-61; *AHW.*, 155. Note the parallelism *uttanah//idammum* in the text cited in CAD A/II, 105b-6a from STT 52:52). For Hebrew and Ugaritic  $\sqrt{dmm}$  corresponding etymologically and semantically to *damāmu*, see B. A. Levine, “Silence, Sound, and the Phenomenology of Mourning in Biblical Israel,” *JANES* 22 (Comparative Studies in Honor of Yochanan Muffs; 1993), 86-106.

אֲנַחְתִּי; Job 3:24: שאגת//אנחת. <sup>49</sup>

But the sense in our passage and in Jer. 45:3<sup>50</sup> is that of Akk. *anāḫu* A,<sup>51</sup> “toil,” “exert oneself,” “to tire,” “be worn out.”<sup>52</sup> Forms of *anāḫu* are common in Akkadian prayer literature.<sup>53</sup> The combination of אֲנַח with אֲנַח in Ps. 6:7 recalls the combination *anḫu/dalpu/šudlupu*, “worn out,” “weary,” “enervated.”<sup>54</sup> Note that אֲנַח is paired with אֲנַח in Ps. 31:11, as well as in Isa. 35:10; 51:11, where it is opposed to שמחה, “joy,”<sup>55</sup> none of which denotes vocalization. Similar is Job 23:2:

גַּם-הַיּוֹם מְרִי שְׁחִי, יְדִי כְבֻדָּה עַל-אֲנַחְתִּי  
Yet today bitter<sup>56</sup> is my speech;  
His(!)<sup>57</sup> hand has worsened<sup>58</sup> my debility.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The vocal אֲנַח is certainly related to the Akk. noun *tānīḫu* A “sighing, wailing, moaning” (CAD T, 171; AHW., 1310, lists only one noun s.v. *tānēḫu*).

<sup>50</sup> REB translates אֲנַחְתִּי בְאֲנַחְתִּי in Ps. 6:6 as “I am wearied with my moaning.” Nonetheless it renders the same phrase in Jer. 45:3 as “I have worn myself out with my labours.”

<sup>51</sup> See CAD A/II, 101-4; AHW., 48-49, s.v. *anāḫu* I. Although I reject Held’s emendation to בִּעֲרַשׁ אֲנַחְתִּי\* it appears that he saw the reflex of *anāḫu* A in our verse.

<sup>52</sup> Note the parallelism *ul āniḫā šēpāki lāsīmā birkāki*, “Your legs do not tire, swift are your knees.” See A. Zernecke apud Lenzi, *Reading Akkadian Prayers*, 265:29 (the great Ishtar prayer), and the pairing *anḫu šumrušu*, “worn out, very ill” (ibid., l. 42). Note also the exorcist’s declaration of loyalty to the king, *u anāku kārīb šarri bēliya ina pān šarri bēliya lazizma ina gummurti libbiya aḫīya laplah kīma aḫīya ētanḫā ina kišir ammātiya emūqīya lugammir*, “And I am one who blesses the king my lord. May I stand before the king my lord and with my arms offer reverence wholeheartedly. When my arms are worn out may I exhaust my strength with my elbows” (SAA X:198: [= ABL 435] r.1-8. Akk. *anāḫu* A refers also to the dilapidation of buildings. For references see CAD A/II, 103.

<sup>53</sup> See Mullo-Weir *Lexicon*, 21, 22-23; Mayer, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 71-72.

<sup>54</sup> E.g., *anḫākūma šaddalupu lāniya*, “I am worn out and my body is exhausted” (SAA IX:9:15). For the combination in prayer literature, see Mayer, *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 71-72. The adjective *anḫu* is also paired with its intensive Š-form *šūnuḫu*, e.g., *[tappa]llas anḫu šūnuḫu ša inunūšu ilūšu*, “You look favorably on one tired and worn out whose god punished him.” See the composite text IP 4; BMS 12, 17-95, in Oshima, *Prayers to Marduk*, 356:25; see further CAD Š/III, 310; AHW., 1277.

<sup>55</sup> For אֲנַח as an antonym of שמחה see Jer. 31:12; Est. 9:22. Derived from אֲנַח, the word is attested in Mari Akkadian in the form *yagātum*. Note *ina ḥarrānātīm kalīš[i]na uznām šaknākūma yagātum mādā inanna ina ḥarrānim annītim uznām aškunma yagātum u mimma ul ibašš[i] šūḫumma mēlulum[ma] kīma ina bītātīšunu wašbū libbašunu ṭāb*, “In all the expeditions I attend to there is much grief. Now I attended to this expedition and there is no grief or anything; only laughing and playing. They are as content as if they were sitting at home” (ARMT 2:118:10-19). Cf. A .L. Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967), 106; J.-M. Durand, *Les documents épistolaires du palais de Mari* (Paris: Cerf, 2009), 200; see also AHW., 411.

<sup>56</sup> The Targum reads מִרִּיר מִימִרִי. In clear cases of מְרִי, “rebellion,” the Targums render it by forms of סָרַב. See, e.g., to Num. 17:25; 1 Sam. 15:23; Ezek. 2:3, 5, 7, 8; 12:2, 3, 9; Peshitta to Job 23:2 reads *mrt šh’yty*; the Vulgate renders *in amaritudine* (in bitterness). See also Job 7:11.

<sup>57</sup> LXX has καὶ ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ; Peshitta has *t’ydh*.

In Exod. 2:23-24 is likewise best translated, “(the Israelites) were <sup>60</sup>ויאָנחו worn out,”<sup>61</sup> given that the vocal aspect is expressed in those verses by the roots  $\sqrt{\text{שוע}}$ ,  $\sqrt{\text{זעק}}$  and  $\sqrt{\text{נאק}}$ .

אָשָׁחָה: Despite the presence of the cognate  $\sqrt{\text{סחי}}$  “wash,” “bathe” in Aramaic<sup>62</sup> and Syriac,<sup>63</sup> neither the Targum nor Peshitta translated אָשָׁחָה by its Aramaic cognate. The Targum's אמלל בצערי בכל ליליא “I speak in my sorrow every night,” shows that the translators derived אָשָׁחָה from  $\sqrt{\text{שיח}}$ , “speak.” Peshitta offers *šblt*, “I moistened,” from  $\sqrt{\text{šbl}}$ ,<sup>64</sup> the same verb it uses to translate טבל in Deut. 33:24. Hebrew  $\sqrt{\text{שחי}}$  is attested only three other times in the Bible (Isa. 25:11 (*bis*) and Ezek. 47:5).

אָמָסָה: The verb מסה is used for the melting of snow and hail in Ps. 147:18, and figuratively for the melting of the heart in Josh. 14:8. The phrase has aptly been connected to the description<sup>65</sup> of the sorrowful King Kirta in *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14:i: 28-30: *tntkn. udm<sup>h</sup>th km. tqlm. arsh k mh mšt.*<sup>66</sup> *mṯth*,<sup>67</sup> “his tears,

<sup>58</sup> Cf. ותכבד יד בית יוסף (Judg. 1:35); תכבד עלי יד (Ps. 32:4)

<sup>59</sup> REB's “Even today my thoughts are embittered, for God's hand is heavy on me in my trouble,” appears to reflect an understanding of אָנַחְתִּי similar to that expressed here.

<sup>60</sup> Note that *Tg. Neof.* Translates ואתנחו from  $\sqrt{\text{נוח}}$ , “rest.” The reading of the Fragment Targum ואתנחו, from this same root, is emended to אתאנחו by the editor; see A. Diez Macho (ed.), *Biblia Polyglottas Matritensia Series IV L. 2 Exodus* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1980), 10. Note further that the Samaritan Pentateuch reads here וינחו; see A. Tal, *The Samaritan Pentateuch. Edited according to Ms. 6 (C) of the Shekhem Synagogue* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1994), 56. Text J of the Samaritan Targum reads ואתנחו, while a variant reads אתניחו; see A. Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch. A Critical Edition. Part 1* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1980), 226.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. the complaint by an official of Esarhaddon to the king after all the work he has done in the fields: *[akimā]dê (= akī mādê) ana šarri bēliya uštāniḥ*, “I have greatly worn myself out in behalf of the king.” (SAA VIII: 8 [=ABL 1123]: r.3-4).

<sup>62</sup> See *DJBA*, 797-98; *DJPA*, 372.

<sup>63</sup> See Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 992-93.

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*, 1272.

<sup>65</sup> See H. L. Ginsberg, *The Legend of King Keret* (BASORSup. 2/3; New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1946), 14, 34; *idem*, in *ANET*, 143; M. Held, “*mḥṣ/mḥš* in Ugaritic and Other Semitic Languages (A Study in Comparative Lexicography),” *JAOS* 79 (1959), 173 n.79.

<sup>66</sup> Most scholars find some form of *ḥmš*, “five,” in this cluster. Among the more recent are E. L. Greenstein (“Kirta,” in S. Parker [ed.], *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], 13) who divides *km ḥmšt* and translates “like five-weights”; cf. N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 183, n. 27, with references; P. Bordreuil and D. Pardee, *A Manual of Ugaritic* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009, 170); J.

which are like shekels,<sup>68</sup> are poured out towards the ground. Like marrow<sup>69</sup> at night<sup>70</sup> is his bed.”<sup>71</sup>

## V. 8

עֵינַי מִכַּעַס עִינִי: Cf. עששה בכעס עיני in Ps. 31:10. The precise sense of  $\sqrt{\text{עש}}$  is controversial.<sup>72</sup> Among the versions, LXX offers  $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\chi\theta\eta \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron \theta\upsilon\mu\omicron\upsilon \omicron \acute{\omicron}\phi\alpha\lambda\mu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \mu\omicron\upsilon$ , “My eye became troubled because of wrath.” The Vulgate is similar: *turbatus est a furore oculus meus*. The Targum: חשכת מן רגיו עיני, “From anger my eye darkened.” Peshitta:  $k^{\prime}bt\ mn\ rwgz^{\prime}ygy$ , “from anger my eye was pained.” Rashi understands  $\sqrt{\text{עש}}$  as a denominative from LH and Aramaic עששית, which he renders לנטירנא = Old French *lanterne*.<sup>73</sup> That is, the psalmist is describing his eyesight as foggy as though he were looking through the glass of a lantern, what we might describe as cataract vision.<sup>74</sup>

Although not impossible as a designation of an ocular ailment, “foggy”

Tropper (*Kleines Wörterbuch*, 51) has the same division but translates “Fünftenscheckel”; *KTU*<sup>2</sup> divides  $k-m\dot{h}m\dot{s}t$ . This connection to “five” turns for support to *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.19:ii:33-34:  $w\ l.\ ytk.\ dm^{\prime}t\ [.]km\ rb^{\prime}t.\ \underline{t}qlm$ , “and surely they poured out tears which were like quarter-shekel weights.” But in the Kirta passage the cluster  $km\dot{h}m\dot{s}t$  is not followed by  $\underline{t}qlm$ . Wyatt’s criticism (see above) that Ginsberg’s interpretation misses the parallelism with  $\underline{t}qlm$  (which would apply as well to Held) is not critical. Not every line in *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14 is in parallelism; see, e.g., 1.14:ii:12, 25b-26a, 47b-48a.

<sup>67</sup> Most scholars take this word to mean “bed.” For a dissent, see O. Loretz, “Adaption ugaritisch-kanaanäischer Literatur in Psalm 6,” *UF* 22 (1990), 228.

<sup>68</sup> The phrase is to be understood anastrophically as equivalent to  $*udm^{\prime}th\ km\ \underline{t}qlm\ tntkn\ ar\dot{s}h$ .

<sup>69</sup> Cf. the parallelism  $nqr\ ^{\prime}nk\ //m\dot{h}\ ri\dot{s}k$ , “well of your eyes// marrow of your head” (*KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.16:i:25-28). For Akk.  $mu\dot{h}hu$ , “marrow,” see J. G. Westenholz and M. Sigrist apud B. Alster and T. Oshima, “Sargonic Dinner at Kaneš: The Old Assyrian Sargon Legend,” *Iraq* 69 (2007), 13; M. J. Geller, *Ancient Babylonian Medicine* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 180-81.

<sup>70</sup> Connect with Akk.  $mu\dot{s}ita$ , “at night”; see *CAD* M/II, 271; cf. Held, “ $m\dot{h}s/m\dot{h}\dot{s}$ ,” 173, n. 79.

<sup>71</sup> The translation is in essential agreement with Ginsberg and Held but differs in the particulars of interpretation. Both scholars read  $tm\dot{h}m\dot{s}t$ , which is ruled out by the hand copy and the photograph of the tablet in the recent treatment in Bordreuil and Pardee, *Manual*, 100 (for the photograph see the accompanying CD-ROM). Ginsberg (*Keret*, 34) offered a dubious Arabic etymology for his reading  $tm\dot{h}m\dot{s}t$ , which he read as a single word, and italicized his translation “soaked.” Held (see preceding note) analyzed the form as  $tm\dot{h}\ m\dot{s}t$ , connecting  $tm\dot{h}$  with late Hebrew מחה, “melt.” He claimed that *Midrash Psalms* (ed. Buber, 61) to our verse, which he cited as  $\text{בוכה ומחה מסתו בדמעות}$ , substantiated its connection with the Ugaritic both in terms of imagery and etymology. But Buber’s critical text, based on manuscripts, reads  $\text{ממסה}$ , and his note there characterizes  $\text{ממחה}$  of the printed editions as a corruption.

<sup>72</sup> See *HALAT*, 850.

<sup>73</sup> Jast, 1128, translates עששית by “crystal, glass ball.”

<sup>74</sup> Akk.  $bar\dot{a}ru$ . See Fincke apud M. Geller, *BSOAS* 68 (2005), 302,

would not work for עשש referring to נפשי, “my throat,” בטני, “my stomach” and עצמי “my bones,” “my frame,” in Ps. 31:10-11. Ibn Ezra, Qimhi, Isaiah of Trani, and Menahem ha-Meiri all connect עשה with Isa. 50:9 עש יאכלם, which they understand as “rot shall consume them.”<sup>75</sup> In his 1908 Hebrew commentary to Psalms<sup>76</sup> Chajes wrote, “And just now I have found that in Syriac (called Palestinian-Christian) עשש means 'dark' so (the phrase) is to be explained as 'my eye darkened'.”<sup>77</sup> Chajes cited no sources, but a CPA translation of ענן כבוד (Exod. 19:16) reads עננא דעששא “cloud of darkness.”<sup>78</sup> Similarly, one version of the Samaritan Aramaic to חשך אפלה (Exod. 10:22) reads עששה קפלה.<sup>79</sup> More important, a passage in the Samaritan Aramaic Tibāt Mārqa (238a) that describes the fate of the wicked reads:<sup>80</sup> ומלאכי רגזה מסתבבין בון ועקבה ועפרה נחתין עחיון ועששה בעינין “And angels of anger surround them, and dirt-particles and dust descend upon them, and darkness<sup>81</sup> is in their eyes.”

<sup>75</sup> LXX σῆς, “moth”; Vulgate *tinea*, “moth,” “worm”; Peshitta *ss*?, “grub,” “worm”; Targum עשא, “louse.”

<sup>76</sup> H. P. Chajes, *Tehillim ‘im Perush Mada’i* (Kiev: A. Kahana, 1908), 11. Most likely he saw B. Jacob, “Das hebräische Sprachgut im Christlich-Palästinischen,” *ZAW* 22 (1902), 83-113. The reference to עשש is on p. 107. Jacob (pp. 84-85) approvingly cites Nöldeke to the effect that CPA and Samaritan would have preserved Hebrew usages going back to the biblical period.

<sup>77</sup> This fits nicely with חשך used of eyes in Ps. 69:24; Lam. 5:17; Qoh. 12:3. Note also Akk. *eṭû*, “be dark,” which includes darkness of the eyes. See *CAD* E, 412; note further Akk. *ekēlu*, “be dark,” attested of eyes, which is to be equated with Heb. חכלילי עינים (Gen. 49:12) and חכלילות עינים (Prov. 23:29). See Gesenius<sup>17</sup>, 229; C. Cohen, “The ‘Held Method’ for Comparative Semitic Philology,” *JANES* 19 (Held Memorial Volume; 1989), 15-16.

<sup>78</sup> See C. Müller-Kessler and M. Sokoloff, *A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic Volume 1* (Groningen: Styx, 1997), 38, 283.

<sup>79</sup> See Tal, *Samaritan Targum Part I*, 263; idem, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 668.

<sup>80</sup> See Z. Ben-Ḥayyim, תיבת מרקה [*Tibāt Mārqa*]. *A Collection of Samaritan Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 1988), 293; Tal, *Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 668.

<sup>81</sup> I thank my ophthalmologist friend Dr. Raphael Bloch for the following observations: “1. If the psalmist’s עששה עיני is equivalent to the Samaritan Aramaic you describe and means ‘darkening’, it may mean that the eyes appear dark, which is on occasion observed by laymen today who note ‘dark circles around the eyes’, usually referring to fatigued individuals. There is no physiological basis for this, but with pallor the underlying veins are more readily seen through the thin skin of the eyelids, giving an appearance of ‘darkness’. 2. ‘Darkening’ may refer to the eyes’ function, i.e., they fail to provide good vision as would be the case ordinarily in a dark environment. 3. Perhaps most appealing to an ophthalmologist is that the passage describes decay or withering of the eye. [See NJPS, NRSV, NEB, et al., along these lines—SDS.] After severe inflammation or trauma, an eye can go into a state of atrophy, known in medical terms as *phthisis bulbi*. Such an eye is usually

עַתְקָה: A long interpretative tradition,<sup>82</sup> continued in modern translations, connects עתקה with Hebrew and Aramaic  $\sqrt{\text{עתק}}$ , “to age,” understood to include “wear out,”<sup>83</sup> “weaken,” or the like. Ehrlich, with characteristic disdain, but in this case aptly, characterized this tradition as “*albern* (silly),”<sup>84</sup> for neither Biblical Hebrew nor Biblical Aramaic<sup>85</sup> displays a semantic connection between aging and wearing out in the verb עתק.<sup>86</sup>

בְּכַל-צוֹרְרֵי: The motif of attributing the cause of suffering to a foe, *bēl šerri*,<sup>87</sup> *bēl ikki*,<sup>88</sup> *bēl rīdi*,<sup>89</sup> is well-attested in Akkadian prayer and incantation literature.<sup>90</sup>

The fact that the LXX and other ancient Greek versions indicate a Hebrew עתקתי\* led Ginsberg (*Keret*, 39) to emend עתקה to עקתי\* on the basis

shrunk in size, often has disorganized internal structure, and is always blind. All contemporary ophthalmologists have seen such eyes, and in the biblical era they were likely more common because proper eye care was unknown. This is perhaps more consistent with עשש describing other organs, e.g., neck, belly, etc., in which atrophy characterizes severe illness, such as advanced malnutrition, malignancy, paraplegia. 4. Darkening of other organs could possibly be an allusion to the post-mortem state known as *livor mortis*. Because of the way blood redistributes itself in the body after death, or leaks through decomposed blood vessel walls, various limbs and organs can appear very dark. You've probably heard the term 'blackened and bloated corpses'. It's a stretch, but perhaps the psalmist used poetic license to describe or anticipate this terrible state in the living individual. 5. If עשש refers to growing old [see on עתקה—SDS], there's a host of ocular problems associated with the aging process, most of which have implications for vision. One biblical reference to this, off the top of my head, is the case of Isaac (Genesis 27), whose age-related visual deficit led to a serious family conflict.”

<sup>82</sup> The LXX: ἐπαλαιώθη, “I grew old”; see below. The verb παλαιόω elsewhere renders בלה and יש; see T. Muraoka, *A Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 210), 89.

<sup>83</sup> E.g., NJPS; NRSV; NEB.

<sup>84</sup> A. B. Ehrlich, *Die Psalmen* (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1905), 12.

<sup>85</sup> Despite the fact that Syriac ʿtq can have the sense “become obsolete,” “grow old” (Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 1148), Peshitta translates עתקה by wʿtdllht, “and was agitated.” (Note that Akk. *dalāhu*, cognate with *dlh*, can refer to blurring of the eyes; *CAD* D, 43.)

<sup>86</sup> On the contrary, as noted by Ehrlich (*Psalmen*, 12), the biblical verb עתק connects aging with strength. The עתיק יומין of Dan. 7:9, 13 is hardly decrepit. In Job 21:7 עתקו is associated with יחיו, “live” and גברו חיל, “grow in power/wealth.” It is significant that the Targum to that verse translates עתקו by עתקו אַתְקִיפו rather than by סיבו. In his commentary *Mešudat Šiyyon* to Isa. 23:18, the eighteenth century Bible scholar Yeḥiel Altschuler writes of עתיק: “its sense is strength and importance. In support he cites הון עתק (Prov. 8:18), which in this case is translated by the Targum as ממונא ומילא, “money and power.”

<sup>87</sup> Etymologically related to Heb. (צר)ר; see *HALAT*, 985, 990.

<sup>88</sup> *CAD* I/J, 60.

<sup>89</sup> *CAD* R, 325.

<sup>90</sup> See Mayer *Gebetsbeschwörungen*, 84-85.

of *KTU*<sup>2</sup> 1.14:vi:29-30: *d ṣqh. ib. iqni // ṣpṣh. sp. trml*, “whose pupils (*ṣqh*) are pure lapis lazuli, whose eyes are alabaster bowls.” The parallelism then would be between עיני in the first clause of the verse and עקתי\* in the second, a parallelism similar to עפעפם//עינים (Jer. 9:17; Ps. 11:4; 132:4; Prov. 6:4; Job 16:16). In my interpretation, following Ginsberg, the verb עשש√ governs both clauses. Likewise, “vexation” serves both clauses.

## V. 9

<sup>91</sup>פְּעָלִי אָנוּ: A Greek rendition of the phrase סורו ממני כל פעלי און, “Turn aside from me, O all workers of iniquity,” is attributed to Jesus in Luke 13:27.

## V. 10

תְּחַנְתִּי...תְּפַלְתִּי: This pairing occurs as well in 1 Kgs. 8:38; Dan. 9:17. Although the words are synonymous, at root the two prayer terms reflect different strategies used by worshippers to obtain divine aid. תחנה from חנן√, “be gracious,” describes worshippers as seekers of unmerited favor from God.<sup>92</sup> תפלה from פלל√, “reckon,” describes worshippers giving God a detailed account of the many reasons they merit divine aid.

שְׁמַע יְהוָה תְּחַנְתִּי: Cf. שמע קול תחנוני (Ps. 28:6).

With the parallelism שמע//לקח compare Jer. 7:28; 9:19; Prov. 4:10. In an Akkadian prayer text Marduk is termed, *ilu rēmenû<sup>93</sup> šēmû teslīti lēqû unninni*, “merciful god, hearer of prayer, receiver of supplication.”<sup>94</sup> In the large Yaḥdun-Lim inscription the king refers to Šamaš as, *šēmî ikribī lēqî unnennim*, “hearer of entreaties, receiver of supplication.”<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> For discussion of this term, see Loewenstamm, *Babylon to Canaan*, 390-91; A. Jeffers, *Magic and Divination in Ancient Palestine and Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 102-4; R. Schmidt, *Magie im Alten Testament* (Münster: Ugarit, 2004), 116-18.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Akk *tēnintu*, “supplication” (*CAD T*, 342) from *enēnu*, (related to חנן “pray,” “ask for mercy” (*CAD E*, 162).

<sup>93</sup> For other gods given this epithet, see Tallqvist *Götterepitheta*, 168. Cf. the rabbinic divine epithet הרחמן (*t.B.Qam.* 9:4; *b.Qidd.* 81b). For the Jewish Aramaic divine epithet רחמנא and its closely related forms, see *DJBA*, 1069; for Palmyrene see D. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996), 411.

<sup>94</sup> Oshima, *Prayers to Marduk*, 404:2 (= KAR 26 obv. 12).

<sup>95</sup> *RIME* 4, 605:11-12. For other gods similarly described, see Tallqvist *Götterepitheta*, 118, 226.

**v. 11**

יְבֹשֶׁתִּי וְיִבְהַלֵּי: For this combination compare Ps. 83:18.

*Concluding thoughts:* The present study shows how comparative Semitic philology coupled with attention to common themes in ancient Near Eastern literature provides a heightened understanding of a biblical psalm. We are fortunate to live in a time when many more relevant ancient Near Eastern texts bearing on biblical prayer literature are available than when comparatism was in its heyday,<sup>96</sup> a fact of which scholars should take full advantage.

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<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., the extensive bibliographies in Oshima, *Prayers to Marduk*, 418-35; Frechette, *Hand Lifting*, 283-98