

The Saga of a Unique Verb in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic: השתחוה 'to Bow Down' - Usage and Etymology*

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Much has been written over the last twenty-five years, concerning the determination of the root and etymology of the unique BH verb, **השתחוה** 'to bow down', without arriving at any clear scholarly consensus. The purpose of the present article is to demonstrate that there is some crucial, but for the most part heretofore neglected philological evidence available, which if analyzed according to proper philological method,¹ is sufficient to clearly establish that the root in question is most likely **ח״ו**. Likewise, it may be established that the Ug. cognate root is almost surely **ḥwy**. The key methodological issue is the determination of approximate meaning first and foremost according to context and usage (especially parallelistic structure). Only then should an appropriate etymology be sought in order to conclude the philological treatment and perhaps determine a more precise basic meaning.²

1. BH **השתחוה** = Ug. **ḥtḥwy** 'to bow down'

Until the discovery of the Ug. texts more than 70 years ago, the verb **השתחוה** was generally thought to be derived from the root **שׁח״ו** (= final quiescent **שׁח״ו**). Gesenius,³ for example (followed by BDB),⁴ took it as a reflexive *hitpaʿel* form for which, however, he could provide no other clear examples of extant final-*yod* verbs. The existence of the **waw** (rather than a second *yod*) in *every* form of this verb was apparently *not* considered of decisive importance. In 1932, shortly after the first Ug. texts were published, W. F. Albright claimed the following: "This [Ug.] orthography [**ḥtḥwy**] shows that **השתחוה** is derived from a stem **ח״ו**," and he further compared Arabic **ḥwy** for which the fifth theme means 'coil, of a serpent, etc.'⁵ The full explanation was that the Ug. forms **ḥtḥwy**,⁶ **ḥtḥwy**,⁷ and **ḥtḥwyn**,⁸ having the exact same usage as BH **השתחוה** and occurring in a dialect where the **ḥ**-prefix (**שפעל**) is the regular causative conjugation, prove that the **ḥ** in these forms is not a root letter, but rather the prefix of the **שפעל** (specifically the **Ḥt**) conjugation. Therefore, the root is **ח״ו** (rather than **שׁח״ו**) in both Ug. and BH. This explanation remained the consensus position⁹ until 1977, when J. A. Emerton's article appeared, arguing for a possible return to the pre-Ug. derivation from **שׁח״ו**.¹⁰ Emerton's two major arguments were as follows:

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1) Although the **שפעל** conjugation in Ug. is the regular causative conjugation, there are no other clear examples of a $\check{S}t$ conjugation. Thus, “it cannot be proved that a $\check{S}t$ theme is more probable in Ugaritic than a theme with a reflexive *t* and reduplication of the final radical consonant. On the other hand a *hithpaʿel* is perhaps more probable than a *hištaphʿal* in Biblical Hebrew.” Furthermore, “the fact that Ugaritic *yš tḥwy* has both *w* and *y* does not prove that the root was *ḥwy* rather than *šḥw*.”¹¹

2) With respect to the suggested etymology from Arabic *ḥwy* ‘to coil (of a serpent)’, “it may be questioned whether the physical posture of a person doing obeisance is very likely to have been compared to that of a snake coiling itself: the theory is, to say the least, far from obviously true.”¹²

Emerton concluded his article as follows:¹³

The opinion of some recent scholars that the Ugaritic evidence proves that the root was *ḥwy* has been shown to be mistaken, and it is hoped that future publications on the subject will be more cautious. On the other hand, there seems to be some force in the argument that *ḥwy* is not a suitable root, but that *שחה* is suitable, and that it is difficult to separate *השתחוה* from *שחה*. While the question cannot be regarded as closed, there is perhaps sufficient evidence to tip the balance of probability in favour of the view that *השתחוה* is derived from *שחה*.

From 1977 to the present, Emerton's position has been taken most seriously (and in several cases has been at least partially supported) by such scholars as G. Davies, T. L. Fenton, M. I. Gruber, S. Kreuzer, J. Tropper, G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, and D. Sivan,¹⁴ and is currently either fully accepted or at least prominently noted by the three most recent BH dictionaries - HALOT, Ges¹⁸ and DCH.¹⁵ It is the purpose of the present contribution to highlight some crucial, (and for the most part) neglected evidence in order to conclusively demonstrate that a *חויי* derivation is most likely. As already noted above, we will first deal with the primary evidence from usage in both BH and Ug. in order to determine the approximate meaning. Only afterwards will the crucial morphological and etymological evidence be added and final conclusions will then be drawn.

2. The Usage of BH *השתחוה* and Ug. *tḥwy* / *yš tḥwy* / *yš tḥwyn*

The verb *השתחוה* occurs 170 times in BH. As noted by Gruber in his exhaustive study on the usage of this verb,¹⁶ the *basic* meaning of *השתחוה* may best be seen in II Kings 5:18. In the previous verse, after having been cured of his skin disease *צרעת* by the God of Israel, the Aramaean official Naʿaman vows “that your servant will never again offer up burnt offering or sacrifice to any god, except the Lord.” Then in II Kings 5:18, Naʿaman utters the following prayer to the Lord asking to be forgiven in advance *for what might appear to be a contradiction to his vow when he enters the Temple of Rimmon in Damascus with his master, the king of Aram:*¹⁷

But may the Lord pardon your servant for this: When my master enters the Temple of Rimmon to bow down in worship [לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת] there, and he is leaning on my arm so that I must bow down [וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי] in the Temple of Rimmon - when I so bow down [בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתִי] in the Temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.

When the king of Aram **משתחוה**, he is ‘bowing down in worship’, while the **השתחוויה** of Na‘aman is not a voluntary gesture of worship, but rather merely an involuntary physical ‘bending down’ brought about by the king’s leaning on his arm. Yet, as Gruber correctly concludes, Na‘aman “recognizes that voluntarily or otherwise, the act of bowing down in the Temple of Rimmon is *prima facie* evidence of worshipping Hadad.”¹⁸ Clearly, the resultant posture of the physical act **להשתחות** is equivalent to the normal posture of prayer whether or not one intends to pray. Thus, the basic meaning of **השתחוה** is ‘to physically bow down in a prayer-like posture (for whatever reason)’ [= Gruber’s “primary postural sense”], while its secondary meanings are ‘to bow down in worship, in homage or as a greeting’ (or by extension, simply ‘to worship, to pay homage, or to greet’) [= Gruber’s “secondary transferred abstract sense”].¹⁹ A good example brought by Gruber where **השתחוה** must be understood in this secondary abstract sense is in Gen. 22:5 (“The Binding of Isaac”):²⁰

Then Abraham said to his servants: “You stay here with the donkey
The boy and I will go on ahead; we will worship [**וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה**] and then return to you”.

Clearly, according to the earlier preparations in verse 3 and the later actions in verses 6-8, **וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה** in verse 5 must be referring to the performing of the **עֹלָה**-sacrifice. In such a case, **השתחוה** must be understood abstractly as ‘to worship’.

A further generally accepted lexicographical refinement based on usage, is the division of 169 occurrences of **השתחוה** into approximately 25% where the activity occurs between *man and man*, and some 75% between *man and deity* (either the God of Israel or with respect to idolatry). It is the 170th occurrence, I Chron. 29:20, as again pointed out by Gruber, which demonstrates that **השתחוה** can in fact refer to both situations at the same time:²¹

David said to the whole assemblage, “Now bless the Lord, your God”.
All the assemblage blessed the Lord, God of their fathers
and prostrated and bowed down [**וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ**]
to the Lord (in worship) and to the king (in obeisance).

The following additional points regarding the usage of BH **השתחוה** and its equivalents in Akk. and Ug. should be noted:

a) Of the 15 verbal occurrences in the MT of the verb **קדד** ‘to bow down’ (= Akk. *qadādu*), 14 occurrences are in hendiadys with **השתחוה** (as in I Chron. 29:20 quoted above).²² Thus **קדד** must be considered a “poetic semantically equivalent B-word” to **השתחוה**.²³ While such B-words are often in the second position (e.g. **יִנַּק // מִצָּץ**; **יִרָא // שְׁתַּע**; **תָּהוּ וְבָהוּ**; **אֵב // יִדְעֵנִי**),²⁴ in the present case of B-words to **השתחוה** (cf. also **סָגַד** discussed below), the order was apparently reversed because of the relative length of the two words - the shorter word generally appears in the first position, the longer word in the second position.²⁵ This strong literary connection between the verbs **קדד** and **השתחוה** will be referred to again in section **1B** of this study below with respect to the etymology of **השתחוה**.

b) Of the four occurrences of the root **סג"ד** ‘to bow down’ in BH (the origin of the Arabic “mosque” - Isa. 44:15,17,19; 46:6), three occurrences (Isa. 44:15,17; 46:6) are in

parallelism or in hendiadys with השתחוה [e.g. Isa. 44:15 - עָשָׂהוּ פֶסֶל // וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ אֵל וַיִּסְגְּדוּ לָמוֹ “He also fashions a god and worships (it) // He makes of it an idol and bows down to it”]. Thus סגד is a second poetic semantically equivalent B-word to השתחוה. In two of the three cases (Isa. 44:17; 46:6), the B-word סגד occurs in the initial position.²⁶

c) The following verbs are also used in parallelism and / or hendiadys with השתחוה: נפל ‘to fall down’ (11 times);²⁷ כרע ‘to kneel, stoop’ (7 times);²⁸ התפלל ‘to pray’ (twice);²⁹ שחח ‘to be low, prostrate’ (once).³⁰

d) The Ugaritic usage of *šṭḥwy* / *ṣṭḥwy* / *ṣṭḥwyn*, cognate to BH השתחוה, is much more limited in scope in the extant Ugaritic corpus. As opposed to the 170 occurrences of BH השתחוה, there are only 12 extant attestations of this Ugaritic verb.³¹ All 12 occurrences are basically the same contextually, being part of a messenger formula which expresses the deference of the envoy(s) (in the name of the sender of the message) towards the recipient(s) of the message. In 10 of the 12 cases, the messenger bows (*hbr*) and falls down (*ql*) at the feet of (*lp'n*) the recipient, prostrates himself (*ṣṭḥwy*) and honors (*ykbd*) the recipient of the message.³² In the other two cases, which are in the negative, the two messengers do *not* fall down (*npl*) at the feet of (*lp'n*) the recipient and do *not* prostrate themselves (*šṭḥwy*) before him.³³ Thus, the Ug. verbs used together with *ṣṭḥwy* are *hbr* ‘to bow’, *ql* ‘to fall down’, *npl* ‘to fall down’, and *kbd* ‘to honor, pay homage’.

e) The two main Akk. semantic equivalents of BH השתחוה are *šukênu* ‘to prostrate oneself’ and *maqātu* ‘to fall down’. This is demonstrated especially by the Akk. and BH formulae for “prostration from afar” which have been studied in detail by S. E. Loewenstamm, F. B. Knutson and M. Gruber.³⁴ The BH formula occurs in Ex. 24:1:

וַאֲל מֹשֶׁה אָמַר עֲלֵה אֵל ה' אֶתְּךָ וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וְאַבִּיהוּא
וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם מֵרָחֵק

Then He said to Moses: “Come up to the Lord, with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu,
and seventy elders of Israel, and bow down from afar”.

maqātu ‘to fall down’ is the Akk. semantic equivalent to BH השתחוה in one Akk. version of this formula, occurring in several of the Akk. letters from Ugarit:

ana šēpē bēliya štu rūqš 2-šu 7-šu amqut

At the feet of my lord, I fall down twice, seven times from afar.³⁵

šukênu ‘to prostrate oneself’ is the other Akk. semantic parallel to BH השתחוה in the other Akk. version of this formula in Gilgamesh VI: 150-151.³⁶ There, after having slain the Bull of Heaven and torn out its heart, Gilgamesh and Enkidu *ana pān Šamaš ... ištaknū iriqqūnimma ana pān Šamaš uškinnū* “placed it ... before Šamaš. From afar, they prostrated themselves before Šamaš” (where the verb in hendiadys, *iriqqūnimma*, replaces the adverbial construction *štu rūqš* ‘from afar’). It is interesting to note that the Ug. version of this formula does not utilize *ṣṭḥwy*, but rather a form of the verb *ql* ‘to fall’,³⁷ which has already been discussed above as belonging to this same semantic range.

3. The Morphological and Etymological Evidence in Favor of a חו"י Derivation

a) *The Morphological Evidence* - The forms יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ / יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ and תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ / תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ (regular and pausal forms respectively) occur with a penultimate accented syllable no less than 48 times.³⁸ They thus represent more than one quarter of all the occurrences of BH השתחווה. Yet, in none of the articles over the last twenty years, which have discussed the possibility of once again deriving השתחווה from שח"י, has this form been considered. In pre-Ugaritic days, even Gesenius paid little attention to this form, stating merely that the form יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ stands “for *mayyštaḥw* (analogous to the noun-forms like שָׁחַ for *saḥm*)”.³⁹ In fact, the form יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ exhibits all the classic identifying characteristics of an apocopated ל"י form. Besides the penultimate accented syllable, it occurs only in the prefixed tense. Of the 48 attestations, 47 are with conversive *wa-*, whereas only one (Isa. 44:17) occurs with conjunctive ׀, יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ׀. Furthermore, there are no cases here of 1st person apocopated forms as is the norm for apocopated ל"י forms. Thus, in Gen. 24:26, the text reads וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לָהּ, while in Gen. 24:48, we find וַאֲקַדּוּ וַאֲשַׁתְּחִוּ לָהּ. Finally, apocopated and regular forms interchange within the same context (cp. e.g. I Kings 16:31- וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לוֹ with I Kings 22:54 - וַיַּעֲבֹד אֶת הַבַּעַל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לוֹ). Such an apocopated ל"י form must be derived from an original **yīštaḥwiyu > *yīštaḥw* (i.e. minus the triphthong *-iyu*) just like an original **yabniyu > *yabn* (i.e. minus the triphthong *-iyu*). The resultant forms are then treated like *segolate* nouns, according to which the cluster at the end of the form is separated by an anaptyctic vowel which is *e* in the case of **yabn > *yaben* (= MT *yiben*) and *u* (because of the *w*) in the case of **yīštaḥw > *yīštaḥw > yīštaḥū* (= MT יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ).⁴⁰ The penultimate accent is in accordance with the *segolate* structure. In order to understand the significance of the *w* at the end of this apocopated ל"י form, we must compare such forms as וַיִּקּוּ, short for וַיִּקְוּ “he hoped” and וַיִּצּוּ, short for וַיִּצְוּ “he commanded”. Just as the last two root letters of the latter two forms are *-wy*, so the last two letters of the root of יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ should also be *-wy*. Thus, on the basis of this morphological evidence, the most likely derivation of השתחווה is from חו"י.⁴¹

b) *The Etymological Evidence* - In his important 1973 article,⁴² M. Held, after first demonstrating that all seven attestations of the alleged root שו"ח should be revocalized or slightly emended either to forms of ש"ח ‘to muse, to complain’ (five occurrences)⁴³ or to forms of שח"ח ‘to be low, prostrate’ (two occurrences),⁴⁴ then turned his attention to the alleged root שח"י. After similarly disposing of the two alleged occurrences, one in the *qal* (Isa. 51:23) and the other in the *hiph ʿil* (Prov. 12:25) conjugations,⁴⁵ he then attempted to strengthen the derivation of השתחווה from חו"י in order to completely eliminate the existence of the root שח"י. Held's new evidence was etymological in nature, implying (although he did not state this explicitly) that he was not completely satisfied with the etymology referred to above, the fifth theme of Arabic *ḥwy* meaning ‘to coil (of a serpent)’. Thus Held, in effect, anticipated Emerton's justified rejection of this etymology in the latter's aforementioned 1977 article.⁴⁶ Here it may be added that according to the third part of the Held Method for Comparative Semitic Philology,⁴⁷ this etymology must be rejected for the following two reasons:

- 1) In all of its 170 occurrences in BH and 12 occurrences in Ug., *never* does **השתחוה** ever refer to the movement of snakes or any other animal.⁴⁸
- 2) There is no precedent for any other Semitic root referring to ‘coiling’ (or any other similar movement) of snakes developing into a *regular* term for human prostration (or the like).⁴⁹
- Held's new suggestion, which is adopted here (albeit with the same degree of caution with which it was originally suggested), was as follows:⁵⁰

It may be further suggested here, though not without hesitation, that the very same root [ח״י] may be hidden in the Talmudic idiom **אחוי קידה** (TB *Megillah* 22b; *Ta'anith* 25a). While it is true that parallel episodes in the TP (e.g. *Sukkah* 5:3; *Berakboth* 1:3) have the idiom **הראה כריעה** (see Kohut, *Aruch* [N. Y., 1955], 4:340a), one cannot help feeling that the rendering of **אחוי קידה** as 'showed the way of **קידה**' (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1355a) leaves much to be desired. Indeed, one wonders whether it is not within the realm of possibility to render the Talmudic statement **לוי אחוי קידה קמיה דרבי ואיטלע** as follows: “PN prostrated himself (= Heb. **כָּרַע כְּרִיעָה** or **קָדַד קָדָה**, not **קָדָה / הִרְאָה כְּרִיעָה**!) before Rabbi and thus became lame.”

It will eventually be up to Talmudic philologists to pass final judgement on this etymology. It may be noted in passing both that the other context of **אחוי קידה** in BT *Yoma* 19b is entirely different and that C. J. Kosowski in his Talmudic concordance does list “**לכרוע**” i.e. ‘to kneel, stoop’ as one of the meanings of **מִחְוָה**.⁵¹ The main point, however, is that this etymology involves the contextual association of an Aramaic verb (in the causative *ʿaphʿel* conjugation) which must be derived from **ח״י**, together with the noun **קידה**, clearly derived from **קד״ד**, the usage of which in BH is more closely connected to **השתחוה** than any other verbal root.⁵²

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is maintained here that this additional morphological and etymological evidence, which is in complete accord with the overall usage of BH **השתחוה**, is the effective answer to Emerton's article. The analysis of both BH **השתחוה** and Ug. *ḫṣṭḫwy* as *ḫt* forms of the root *ḫwy* should now surely be considered the most likely solution.

APPENDIX

The Usage and Etymology of מִטְחוּי קֶשֶׁת (Gen. 21:16)

This phrase occurs only in the context **ותלך ותשב לה מנגד הרחק כמטחוי קשת** (Gen. 21:16), which is best translated “and she went and sat down at a distance, approximately a bowshot (or two bowshots) away”. The translation of “bowshot” (or “two bowshots”)⁵³ in this context is based solely on the contextual requirement here for a two word technical term referring to a relatively short distance (immediately following **הרחק כ...** “at a distance, approximately ...”)⁵⁴ with the second word being the regular BH term **קשת** “bow”. The technical measure of distance “bowshot” translates **מטחוי קשת** in the LXX (τοζον βοληγ) and in the Judaeo-Arabic Tafsir of Sa’adya Ga’on (גלוה קוס [= *glwh qws*]). The latter is defined by Jonah ibn Janah as follows: **והיא מרוצת החץ כשיוצא מהקשת** “it is the (distance of the) flight of the arrow when released from the bow”.⁵⁵ The only precedent for the use of the bow in the Biblical period as a semantic element in a technical measure of distance is indeed the ancient Greek “bowshot” (cf. the LXX translation above) as found in the Iliad, the Odyssey and Herodotus, e.g. Odyssey, Book XII, referring to the distance between the two rocks which marked the respective haunts of the two monsters Scylla and Charybdis. Here it is also important to note that the extant Akkadian term for “bowshot” is **šilûtu*,⁵⁶ attested only once in the plural construct phrase *šilât qaltšu*, literally “shots of his bow”,⁵⁷ which in BH would be precisely **מטחוי קשתו**. This Akkadian term is certainly derived from *šalû*, the regular term for “to shoot a bow/arrows”.⁵⁸ While this Akkadian phrase is surely the exact semantic equivalent of BH **מטחוי קשת**, it is not presently attested as a technical measure of distance. On the basis of these clear semantic parallels, the only acceptable etymology for the first element of this BH measure of distance, **מטחוי**, would be a verbal root specifically used in connection with the “shooting of the bow / arrows”. None of the usually suggested etymologies e.g. from Rabbinic Hebrew (טו'ח), Arabic (*ṭḥw*), and Akkadian (*teḥû*) have anything to do with the “shooting of the bow”.⁵⁹ For the first etymology, see also Rashi on Gen. 21:16.⁶⁰ Rashi's highly imaginative semantic development suggested here, namely “to have intercourse” (הטיח in BT Sanhedrin 46a) < “to shoot the bow” since “the semen shoots forth like an arrow” is also unacceptable for lack of a precedent in any ancient Semitic language. Finally, N. H. Tur-Sinai has suggested what seems at first glance to be a potentially acceptable etymology:⁶¹ Arabic *ṭwh* “to shoot an arrow”. A perusal of the usage of this verb, however, seems to indicate that its meaning when used with the substantive “arrow” is not “to shoot”, but rather “to miss the mark”.⁶² Furthermore, as clearly indicated by the Judaeo-Arabic Tafsir of Sa’adya Ga’on to Gen. 21:16 cited above, the regular Arabic technical term for “bowshot” (also used as a measure of distance) is *glwh*.⁶³ Even if this dubious etymology (*ṭwh*) were to be accepted, this ע'י Arabic root could hardly serve as decisive evidence to justify the assumption of a BH root ט'ח'י (or ט'ח'י). It should finally be noted that some scholars have alternatively suggested here a quadrilateral root ט'ח'ו'י.⁶⁴ The only valid etymological conclusion that may be drawn in light of the above evidence regarding the meaning and usage of this phrase is that the term **מטחוי** must be derived from a presently unknown phonologically appropriate verbal root meaning “to shoot a bow / arrows” (just as the aforementioned Akk. semantic equivalent **šilûtu* is derived from *šalû*).

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AHw W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Wiesbaden. Otto Harrassowitz: 1959-1981.
- AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament.
- BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.
- BDB *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford. Oxford University Press: 1907.
- BH Biblical Hebrew.
- BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: 1967-1977.
- BT Babylonian Talmud.

- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago. The Oriental Institute: 1956-.
- CDA *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. ed. J. Black, A. George and N. Postgate. Second edition. Wiesbaden. Harrassowitz: 2000
- DCH *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield. Sheffield Academic Press: 1993-.
- Ges¹⁸ H. Donner ed., *Gesenius hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. 18th edition. Berlin. Springer Verlag: 1987-.
- HAL *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*. 3rd edition. Leiden. E. J. Brill: 1967-1995.
- HALOT *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden. E. J. Brill: 1994-.
- JANES *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
- JPOS *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*
- KTU² M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*. Münster. Ugarit - Verlag: 1995.
- MBY E. Ben Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew*. Jerusalem and New York: 1959 [in Hebrew].
- NIDOTTE *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*
- OLM *Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible*. Jerusalem. The Bible Concordance Press: 1957- [in Hebrew].
- OLT *Thesaurus Talmudis*. Jerusalem. The Ministry of Education and Culture and The Jewish Theological Seminary: 1954-1989 [in Hebrew].
- OTS *Oudtestamentische Studiën*.
- SBL Society of Biblical Literature.
- TDOT *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*.
- TLOT *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*.
- UF *Ugarit - Forschungen*.
- VT *Vetus Testamentum*.
- ZAH *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*.

Notes

¹ The method used here is the Held Method for Comparative Semitic Philology for which see Cohen 1989 and most recently, Cohen 2005 (forthcoming).

² For the importance of first determining the approximate meaning according to context and usage and only then seeking out an appropriate etymology, see especially Cohen 2005: chapter 1 (forthcoming). For the most recent attempt to defend the etymological method as opposed to the Held method, with respect to the meaning and usage of the three assumed masoretic roots שׁוׁיׁח, שׁחׁׁיׁ, and שׁחׁׁיׁח, see Tropper 1991: pp. 46-54, and especially his methodological exceptions on p. 47 to M. Held's conclusions concerning these three roots in Held 1973: pp. 176-181. See also nn. 41-45 below.

³ Cowley 1910: p. 215 (§75kk). For a full discussion concerning the sole (dubious) example provided by Gesenius, namely the construct form מִטְחוּי (Gen. 21:16), see n. 41 below and the APPENDIX at the end of this study.

⁴ BDB, p. 1005. Cf. also MBY, pp. 7011-7013.

⁵ Albright 1932: p. 197, n. 41. Cf. also Albright 1951: p. 33, n. 1. J. A. Emerton has noted that this suggestion was already advanced by M. Hartmann in 1875, but was not considered seriously until Albright independently suggested it in light of the then newly discovered Ug. texts. See Emerton 1977: pp. 1-2 and n. 2.

⁶ KTU² 1.1:III:3; 1.2:I:15,31; 1.3:III:10; VI:19-20; 1.4:IV:26; VIII:28; 1.6:I:38; 1.17:VI:50-51.

⁷ KTU² 1.1:III:25; 1.2:III:6.

⁸ KTU² 1.1:II:16.

⁹ See e.g. HALOT, pp. 295-296 (reflecting the scholarly consensus of 1967 when the first volume of the German original HAL was published, but contrast n. 15 below); Preuss 1980: pp. 249-256 (reflecting the scholarly consensus of 1975-1977 when the original German article was published); Stähli 1997: pp. 398-400 (reflecting the scholarly consensus in 1971 when the original German article was published).

¹⁰ See Emerton 1977: pp. 41-55.

¹¹ Emerton 1977: pp. 41-46, 55 (both quotes are from p. 55). See n. 41, #1 below. Here it should be added that the derivation of השתחווה as a השתפעל form in BH as accepted in the present study is not at all based on the acceptance of “traces” of the שפעל in BH as suggested in Soggin 1975: pp. 188-202. Here, Emerton is correct in his claim that “The *shin* at the beginning of most words that he lists may always have been the first radical; it is not certain, for example, that *škn* is derived from a combination of a causative *š* with the root *kwn*.” See Emerton 1977: p. 43, n. 4. The fact that the verb *škn* is regular in both Akk. and Ug. (where the שפעל is the regular causative conjugation) and the *š* of *škn* is considered a root letter in all modern dictionaries of these two languages is clear decisive evidence against Soggin's suggestion. But Emerton himself does not deny that the *š* of the BH term שלהבת ‘flame’ (Ezek. 21:3; Job 15:30; Cant. 8:6) is indicative of the שפעל since “שלהבת may be a loan from Aramaic” (Emerton 1977: p. 43, n. 4). By the same token, it is the clear analysis of the Ug. cognate form *yšthwy* as *Št* conjugation of the root *hwy* which leads to the same conclusion for BH השתחווה.

¹² Emerton 1977: p. 46.

¹³ Emerton 1977: p. 55.

¹⁴ Davies 1979: pp. 493-495; Fenton 1980: pp. 273-274; Gruber 1980: p. 91, n. 1; Kreuzer 1985: pp. 39-60; Tropper 1991: p. 46; Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: p. 380; Sivan 1997: p. 171.

¹⁵ Prominently noted in HALOT, p. 1457 (reflecting the scholarly consensus of 1990 when the fourth volume of the German original HAL was published and thus contradicting the 1967 derivation from חו"י in the first volume of HAL - see n. 9 above); fully accepted in Ges¹⁸, p. 328; DCH III, p. 170. It is to the credit of T. Muraoka that the new 1991 edition of the P. Joüon-T. Muraoka BH grammar has accepted a חו derivation (correcting the original pre-Ugaritic 1923 edition which accepted the traditional שחה derivation) despite Emerton's 1977 article. See Joüon and Muraoka 1991: pp. 169, 170, 211-212 (§§ 59b,g; 79t) as opposed to Joüon 1923: pp. 128, 164 (§§ 59b; 79t). Contrast the non-committal position in Waltke and O'Connor 1990: pp. 360-361 and nn. 34-35 (§21.2.3d).

¹⁶ Gruber 1980: pp. 90-123, 187-200, 303-312. Much of the semantic analysis presented here concerning the usage of השתחוה in BH has been heavily influenced by Gruber's excellent study. Note that Gruber 1980: p. 96 refers to 169 occurrences, whereas Even-Shoshan 1982: pp. 1129-1130 (##3-172) clearly lists 170 attestations. On the general usage of this verb in various BH prose formulae which are for the most part absent in BH poetry, see Polak 1992: pp. 81*-91*.

¹⁷ This is perhaps the earliest recorded case of the Talmudic principle of מראית עין, lit. 'external appearance, semblance', according to which certain acts are forbidden not because they are inherently improper according to the law, but because they appear to be so in the eye of the beholder. According to most authorities, such acts were forbidden even in private. See e.g. Mishna Kil'ayim 9:2; BT Beša 9a.

¹⁸ Gruber 1980: pp. 92-94 (quote is from p. 93). Gruber adds (p. 93): "One is reminded of various Christian holy places in Nazareth and Bethlehem the entrances to which are so constructed that nonbeliever and believer alike must bend over voluntarily or involuntarily to enter or exit."

¹⁹ Gruber 1980: pp. 96-97.

²⁰ Gruber 1980: pp. 122-123.

²¹ Gruber 1980: p. 97. Gruber's comment is noteworthy: "Here the compound adverbial phrase לה' ולמלך 'to the Lord and to the king' indicates that within a single time frame the identical or a similar posture was employed in both significances."

²² Gen. 24:26,48; 43:28; Ex. 4:31; 12:27; 34:8; Num. 22:31; I Sam. 24:9; 28:14; I Kings 1:16,31; Neh. 8:6; I Chron. 29:20; II Chron. 29:30. Only in II Chron. 20:18 does קדד occur merely in juxtaposition (rather than in parallelism or hendiadys) with השתחוה. For detailed discussion of these verses, see Gruber 1980: pp. 123-131. In fact, there are at least another eight verses where the root קד"ד must be read instead of MT קד"ר, as already suggested by N. H. Tur-Sinai more than eighty years ago: Jer. 8:21 (read קדדתי!); 14:2 (read קדדו!); Mal. 3:14 (read ויקדדני!); Ps. 35:14 (read קדד!); 38:7 (read קדד!); 42:10 (read קדד!); 43:2 (read קדד!); Job 5:11 (read ויקדדים!). In other words, as brilliantly discovered by Tur-Sinai, the Masoretic Text recognized this root only when forms with a single consonant ד were written (e.g. ויקדדו and ויקדדו). Wherever the form originally was written with two ד consonants (as in the eight cases above), the Masoretic text read the second ד (for whatever reason) as the consonant ר. For all the internal semantic evidence in BH as well as the decisive comparative evidence from Akk. justifying these readings and all relevant bibliography, see Cohen 1996a: pp. 291-292, n. 16; Cohen 1996b: p. 51. Add also Gruber 1980: pp. 123-131.

None of the eight aforementioned verses include the verb **השתחוה**. Note finally that F. Polak's claim (1992: p. 86*) that the basic meaning of Akkadian *qadādu* is “a matter of scholarly controversy” seems to me quite exaggerated. Suffice it to say that none of the six listed derivatives of *qadādu* point to any basic meaning other than ‘to bow, to bend down’ and that such is the case in the vast majority of verbal attestations as well (cf. CAD,Q, pp. 44-45; CDA, 282). See also the detailed discussion in Cohen 1996a: pp. 291-292, n. 16; Held 1973: p. 177, n. 45. Part of the problem may in fact lie in such idiomatic usage as Gilg. X:115 (=Parpola 1997: p. 104:115): *ammēni ... quddu[dū panūka]* “Why ... is your face fallen?” which is the exact semantic equivalent of the BH idiomatic usage **ולמה נפלו פניך** (Gen. 4:6).

²³ For the non-positional definition of “poetic semantically equivalent B-words” as words which are “semantically equivalent to their respective A-words” and “occur much less frequently than their respective A-words and more often in poetic contexts”, and for the distinction between “poetic semantically equivalent B-words” and “common positional B-words”, see Cohen 2005: section III.3, n. 15. See also Gruber 1980: pp. 123-125. The reference in Cohen 1996a: p. 292, n. 16 to **קוד** “as an A-word to the verb **השתחוה**” should be corrected to “poetic semantically equivalent B-word” as defined above.

²⁴ See Cohen 1989: p. 13; Cohen 2005: section II.1.

²⁵ See Gruber 1980: p. 124 and the bibliography in n. 3.

²⁶ See Gruber 1980: pp. 140-143.

²⁷ Jos. 5:14; I Sam. 20:41; 25:23; II Sam 1:2; 9:6; 14:4,22; II Kings 4:37; Job 1:20; Ruth 2:10; II Chron. 20:18. See also Gruber 1980: pp. 131-136.

²⁸ Ps. 22:30; 95:6; Est. 3:2 (twice),5; II Chron. 7:3; 29:29. See also Gruber 1980: pp. 118-120, 136-138, 199-200.

²⁹ Isa. 44:17; 45:14.

³⁰ Isa. 60:14.

³¹ See notes 6-8 above. Here it should be noted that both the latest Ugaritic dictionary and the two latest Ugaritic grammars analyze the forms *tšṯḥwy / yšṯḥwy / yšṯḥwyn* as *št* conjugation of the root *ḥwy*. See Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: p. 380; Sivan 1997: p. 171; Tropper 2000: pp. 606-607.

³² KTU² 1.1:II:15-17; III:2-3, 24-25; 1.2:III:5-6; 1.3:III:9-10; VI:18-20; 1.4:IV:25-26; VIII:26-29; 1.6:I:36-38; 1.17:VI:50-51.

³³ KTU² 1.2:I:14-15, 30-31.

³⁴ Loewenstamm 1967: pp. 41-43 [= Loewenstamm 1980: pp. 246-248]; Knutson 1975: pp. 421-422; Gruber 1980: pp. 111-112.

³⁵ See CAD, M/1, p. 243 and the references to Loewenstamm and Knutson in the previous note. See also Salonen 1967: p. 74 (#6) and the discussion on pp. 72-73.

³⁶ The text is quoted here according to the new edition of Parpola 1997: p. 93.

³⁷ It is noteworthy that of the 14 occurrences of the Ug. adverbs *mrḥqm / mrḥqtm* ‘from afar, at a distance’ (see Sivan 1997: pp. 179, 197), 13 occur as part of this prostration formula

in the epistolary texts, in each case followed by a form of the verb *ql'* 'to fall' as follows: *l p'n 'ady/ 'adny/ b'ly/ b'ly [šb'd/tn'id (w) šb'(i)d] mḥqtm qlt/ny* "at the feet of my/our lady/lord, [seven times/twice (and) seven times,] I/we fall prostrate from afar" (where the bracketed words are optional). See KTU² 2.11:5-7; 2.12:6-11; 2.24:5-7; 2.33:3-4; 2.40:5-8; 2.42:4-5; 2.45:11-12; 2.50:2-4; 2.51:2-3; 2.52:3-4; 2.64:13-16; 2.68:4-7; 2.70:8-10. Only in the restored text of 2.42:4-5 is the order reversed (*l p'n b'ly [mḥqtm] šb'd w šb'd [qlt]*). This Ug. formula has been studied especially in Kristensen 1977: pp. 147-150 and see also the added note in Loewenstamm 1980: p. 246, n. 2.

³⁸ See Even-Shoshan 1982: p. 1129c-1130a, ##65-112.

³⁹ Cowley 1910: p. 215 (§75kk).

⁴⁰ I would here like to thank my good friend and colleague Prof. Daniel Sivan, who kindly discussed with me all the phonological aspects of the present analysis of the BH form *שְׁתַּחֲוֶה* and suggested to me the various reconstructions presented in this section. Any errors are of course my own responsibility. It should be noted that the reconstructed forms **yabniyu > *yabn > *yaben* with original *a* vowel (as opposed to the *i* vowel in MT *yiben*) is based on analogy with such attested Ug. *'qtl* forms as *'abky* 'I will weep' (KTU² 1.19:III:5,20,34), the Barth-Ginsberg law, and the assumption that the original vocalization of *לִי* verbs in BH would be equivalent to that of Ug. Note that in Sivan 1997: p. 163 (cf. p. 44), the form *'ibky* [KTU² 1.161.13] must be contextually analyzed as some unusual kind of imperative form with final *-y* (cf. Sivan 1997: p. 166) as well as prosthetic *'*; and should therefore be eliminated from this section and replaced by the three occurrences of *'abky* cited above (referred to by Sivan on p. 44, but not on p. 163). See most recently Del Olmo Lete 1999: pp. 194-195, n. 83 and the bibliography cited there. Add Levine and De Tarragon 1984: p. 652.

⁴¹ Here it should be emphasized that morphologically, a derivation from *שח* (perhaps < *שח*) is not completely excluded as a reduplicated *hitpa'el* (see n. 3 above). Yet, such a derivation must be considered much less likely for the following three reasons:

1) The only other *לִי* form which could conceivably be compared is *כַּמִּטְחִי* in Gen. 21:16, for which see the APPENDIX at the end of this study. The reliance on this case of unknown etymology, as the sole potential precedent of a reduplicated *לִי hitpa'el* verbal form must surely cast serious doubts on such a morphological analysis of *השתחוה*.

2) Held 1973: pp. 178-179, n. 48, has made a strong case against the original existence of the BH root *שח* in any of its three other alleged attestations (see the next note). If his claim is correct, there would be no internal BH independent evidence to support the very existence of this root.

3) One of the often cited alleged cognates of this root from the ancient Semitic languages has been El Amarna Akkadian *šḥn* clearly meaning 'to bow down, prostrate oneself, do obeisance' as a variant to the regular Akk. verb *maqātu* in the typical prostration "Grussformeln" in the Amarna letters (all the textual material may be found in Salonen 1967: pp. 64 [D,E,F,G] and 66-70 [§§5-18]; together with Rainey 1978: pp. 80 [sub *maqātu*] and 94 [sub **šḥn*]). For previous discussion of this evidence and its bearing on the etymology of *השתחוה*, see e.g. S. E. Loewenstamm apud Blau 1974: p. 306; Izre'el 1975a: p. 156; Izre'el 1975b: p. 320; Emerton 1977: pp. 47-48, n. 9. All major authorities on this peripheral dialect of Akkadian are now in agreement that "The verb forms appearing to have this root were evidently generated in Hurrian speaking areas from *šukēnu* 'to prostrate oneself.'" (quote is from Rainey, 1996, Vol. 2: p. 109; see also Von Soden 1995: p. 198 [§109m]; CAD,Š/3, p. 218; AHw, p. 1263). Contrast Tropper 1991: p. 48, n. 23. Here it may be added that such variation between *maqātu* and *šukēnu* in the prostration "Grussformeln" in the Amarna letters is precisely parallel to the variation of the same two verbs in the Akkadian formula for "prostration from afar" discussed above in section 2e.

⁴² Held 1973: pp. 173-190. Note that while Tropper (1991: p. 47) claims that Held's conclusions with regard to the three Masoretic roots שׁוׁיח, שׁחׁיׁי, and שׁחׁיׁח are unacceptable because of “mehrere Textemendationen” (which he also terms “gewagten Textemendationen”), all of the emendations suggested by Held with regard to these three roots are merely revocalizations of the Masoretic consonantal text except for the single case of Prov. 2:18, which Held indicates “involves the assumption of a *h* - *ḥ* interchange, a phenomenon easily accounted for on orthographic grounds, and recognized by the Masora itself in at least four cases.” See Held 1973: pp. 180-181 and his detailed note 59 including further documentation and citing three additional precedents for this interchange within Prov. 1-9. Finally, note that Tropper himself (in complete agreement with Held even though this is never acknowledged in his article) revocalizes six of the seven Masoretic attestations of the root שׁוׁיח (see nn. 43-44 below) retaining the original Masoretic vocalization only in Prov. 2:18 (for which see n. 44 below). See Tropper 1991: pp. 49-50 (Prov. 2:18); 51 (Ps. 44:26); 52 (Ps. 42:6,7,12; Lam. 3:20). See also n. 2 above and n. 45 below.

⁴³ Read in Ps. 42:6,7,12; 43:5 תַּשְׁתַּחֲוּחִי! or תַּשְׁתַּחֲוּחַ! (referring in each case to the complaints or bewilderment of the נַפְשׁ ‘soul’) // תִּהְיֶינִי (in Ps. 42:6,12; 43:5; referring in each case to the moaning or groaning of the soul) just as this parallelism occurs in Ps. 55:18 (also in verse 3 if אֶהְמִיָּהּ is read - cf. BHS, p. 1136, n. 3b) and especially in Ps. 77:4, where וְאֶהְמִיָּהּ // וְאֶשְׁיַח. Likewise in Lam. 3:20, one should read with a slight emendation to the *ketib* וְתִשְׁיַח! since here too the context is referring to the complaints and bewilderment of the soul (עַל נַפְשִׁי) precisely as in Ps. 42:7; in the other three verses these two words are parallel to each other). Furthermore, the corresponding verb in the next verse, Lam. 3:21, is אוֹחִיל ‘I will have hope’ which also occurs immediately after the aforementioned parallelism שִׁיחַ // הִמָּה in Ps. 42:6,12; 43:5. See Held 1973: pp. 177-178; Tropper 1991: p. 52. Here it may be added that the phrase אֶזְכְּרָה אֱלֹהִים ‘I call God to mind’ occurs together with the aforementioned parallelism in Ps. 77:4 while the same root זָכַר ‘to call to mind’ is used precisely in the same way with reference to God in Ps. 42:5,7; Lam. 3:19-20 (in Ps. 42:7 clearly relating directly to the verb תַּשְׁתַּחֲוּחִי!).

⁴⁴ The two remaining occurrences of the alleged verb שׁוׁיח in the MT are Ps. 44:26 and Prov. 2:18. In Ps. 44:26, Held suggested revocalizing from שָׁחָה to שָׁחָה! (from the root שׁחׁיׁח ‘to be low, prostrate’), comparing the parallelism there (// דַּבְּקָה ‘to cling’) with the parallelism in Isa. 25:12; 26:5 (הִשָּׁח ‘to bring low’ // הִגִּיעַ ‘to raze, to level’) on the one hand, and with II Chron. 3:12 (נִגְיַע // דַּבְּקָה) on the other. Furthermore, the usage in Ps. 44:26 שָׁחָה לַעֲפָר ‘lies prostrate in the dust’ // דַּבְּקָה לָאָרֶץ ‘clings to the ground’ “is in no way different from דַּבְּקָה לַעֲפָר in Ps. 119:25” (see Held 1973: p. 177). See also Tropper 1991: p. 51. Prov. 2:18 has been dealt with extensively by Held (1973: pp. 178-181) and there is no need to present the detailed evidence once again. Suffice it to say that the usually accepted solution for the discrepancy between the 3fs. verb שָׁחָה and its masc. sing. subject בֵּיתָהּ ‘her house’, namely the emendation of the latter to נְתִיבָתָהּ ‘its path’ (e.g. BHS, p. 1277, n. 18b) is both devoid of any orthographic justification whatsoever and is completely contradicted by the exact semantically equivalent parallel pairs in BH and Akkadian to BH בֵּית // מַעְגַּל, namely, respectively בֵּית // דֶּרֶךְ (Prov. 5:8; 7:19 and cf. 7:27) and *bītu* // *ḥarrānu* (Descent of Ishtar in Borger 1979: pp. 95-96: 3-6; see also Reiner 1985: pp. 31-32), which may all be translated ‘house’ // ‘road’ (on מַעְגַּל ‘road’ as a poetic synonym of דֶּרֶךְ, see especially Held 1974: pp. 107-116). The much more likely solution suggested by Held is to read שָׁחָה! ‘sinks down’ especially in light of the usage of the verb יָרַד ‘to descend’ in the same context (Prov. 5:5; 7:27). For the *h* - *ḥ* interchange involved, see n. 42 above. The possibility of reading here שָׁחָה (with ultimate accented syllable as 3ms. form of שׁחׁיׁי) was rejected by Held because according to his research this would then be the only case of שׁחׁיׁי in BH (Held 1973: p. 178, n. 48). Contrast the treatment of this textual problem in Tropper 1991: p. 50, based first and foremost on etymology and the “logic” of the researcher. For the different methods involved, see n. 2 above.

⁴⁵ For Isa. 51:23 (MT: שְׁחִי), Held (1973: p. 177, n. 45) revocalizes שְׁחִי (from שְׁחִי) with 1QIsa^a (שׁוּחִי), comparing other similar contexts of שְׁחִי referring to submission or humiliation: e.g. Isa. 2:9,11,17; 5:15; 25:12; and especially 26:5-6. For Prov. 12:25 (MT: יִשְׁחַנָּה), Held (1973: p. 178, n.48) revocalizes יִשְׁחַנָּה (from שְׁחִי; = semantically יִשְׁפִּילְנָה) ‘brings low’, which “would stand in antithetical parallelism to יִשְׂמַחְנָה ‘gladdens, exalts’.” Much additional semantic evidence is cited here as well. Finally, note that while Tropper (1991: p. 47) labels these two revocalizations (together with the easily justifiable emendation in Prov. 2:18 - see the previous note) as “gewagten Textemendationen”, three pages later (Tropper 1991: p. 50) he states concerning each of the two forms as follows: “Die Form könnte freilich auch als שְׁחִי / יִשְׁחַנָּה bzw. תִּשְׁחַנּוּ gelesen und von שְׁחִי abgeleitet werden.”

⁴⁶ See above and note 12.

⁴⁷ Cohen 2005: section II.3 (forthcoming).

⁴⁸ Contra Gruber 1980: pp. 91-92 and n. 1. While Gruber is surely correct that the BH - Ug. serpent epithet לוֹיִתָּן (derived from לוֹיִי ‘to encircle, circumambulate’; cf. Akk. *lawū*) provides a precedent for etymologically deriving Aramaic חוּיָא ‘snake’ according to the meaning of the fifth theme of Arabic *ḥwy* ‘to coil, curl up’ (note further that the Akk. interdialectal equivalent *kapālu* ‘to roll up, form coils’ is one of the regular Akk. terms for snake movement - CAD,K, pp. 174-175), this is never connected with human prostration. Thus, no relevant textual evidence is provided for Gruber's conclusion: “Hence it appears that the literal meaning of השתחוה is ‘bend oneself over at the waist’.” Gruber's attempt to find support for this conclusion in BT Berakhot 12b, where Rab Shesheth's ‘stooping/kneeling’ (כרע) is described as כחיזרא ‘like a cane’, while his ‘getting up’ (קא זקיף) is described as כחיויא ‘like a snake’, is also unacceptable both because it is the “getting up” which is compared to the movement of a snake, not the prostration, and because such an isolated case could certainly be referring to something extraordinary in Rab Shesheth's prayer posture or some peculiar habit (making the snake simile particularly appropriate), rather than this being singular evidence for a term referring to snake movement developing into a regular term for human prostration. Contrast also Polak 1992: p. 84*, n. 21.

⁴⁹ The only serious attempt to suggest such a precedent was in Davies 1979: pp. 493-495, with respect to the usage of Akk. *kanānu*, which he claimed meant both ‘to coil up (of a snake)’ and (twice in one Middle Assyrian text in the relatively rare III/3 conjugation) ‘bow down repeatedly (or completely)’ before a king. Whereas it is abundantly clear that Akk. *kanānu* (like *kapālu* - see the previous note) is used for snake movement (CAD,K, pp. 142-143; CDA, p. 145), Davies' second suggested meaning is far less certain. The Middle Assyrian text (MVAG 41/3, p. 14:iii:2-3 and p. 12:iii:37-38) as presented in CAD,N/2, p. 59 (cf. CAD,K, p. 143) reads as follows: “the high officials and the palace personnel [*ina pan*] *šarri ultanaknanū šēpī ša šarri unaššaqu* bend down before the king and kiss the feet of the king”. Davies' semantic analogy with regard to the etymology of השתחוה as based on this singular usage is questionable for the following reasons: 1) This context allegedly includes not only the two only recorded cases of the III/3 conjugation of *kanānu*, but also the only two cases of *kanānu* in the causative III conjugation at all. 2) In all other contexts where the subject of the verb *kanānu* is a human being and the verb refers to human limbs (see the many cases in CAD,K, pp. 142-143), the meaning is ‘(unnatural) contortion or twisting’, usually as a symptom of an ailment requiring medical treatment. Thus, if this form is not a scribal error in these two occurrences (see reason 3 below), perhaps the correct translation would be ‘to (unnaturally) grovel or cringe’. Such a usage referring to unnatural movement is found in Gilg. XI:116 (quoted also by Davies 1979: p. 494, but without proper assessment of its philological significance): *ilānu kīma kalbī kunnunū ina kamāti rabšū* “the gods were cringing like dogs, crouching at the outskirts” (as a result of their fear of the flood - cf. lines 114-115). In such a case, this textual evidence could hardly be considered a

valid precedent for the semantic development ‘to coil like a snake’ > a *regular* term for human prostration. 3) Finally, it is certainly feasible that *ultanaknanū* may be a scribal error for some rare form of *uškinnū* ‘they prostrated themselves’ (from the regular verb *šukênu* - see above section 1A, paragraph e and cf. the many MA occurrences of the form *ultakîn* listed in CAD,Š/3, p. 218, usage 2b, 1’). Such a possibility is particularly enhanced by such precedents as En. el. V:85-86 which demonstrate through parallelism that it is precisely a verb like *šukênu* which is expected in such a context as the MA text quoted above: *paḥrūma Igigi kalīšunu uškinnūš // Anunnaki mala bašū unaššaḡū šēpīšu* “All the Igigi-gods assembled and prostrated themselves before him (Marduk); // The Anunnaki-gods, all that there were, were kissing his feet”.

⁵⁰ Held 1973: pp. 178-179, n. 48. Note that the same Talmudic passage is also found in BT *Sukkah* 53a. Contrast most recently the translation of this passage in Sokoloff 2002, p. 437, under his suggested meaning for חו"י, “3. to demonstrate”.

⁵¹ OLT XIII, p. 121.

⁵² This etymology may be contrasted with one additional etymology which was suggested in detail by S. Kreuzer in Kreuzer 1985: pp. 39-60 and was apparently arrived at independently for Ug. *yšḥwy* in Segert 1984: p. 185, namely understanding the basic meaning of השתחוה as ‘to pay homage, acclaim, prostrate oneself’ and deriving it as a Št conjugation of חו"י / חיי ‘to live’ especially according to such idioms of acclamation as יחי המלך “(long) live the king!” (e.g. II Sam. 16:16) to which should be compared such usages of השתחוה as Gen. 27:29. This etymology must be rejected for three reasons (see the three etymological principles discussed in Cohen 2005: section II.3 [forthcoming]): 1) The basic meaning must be established first and foremost according to usage as was done in section 1A above. 2) The verb חו"י / חיי ‘to live’ *never* has any special contextual connection to the various usages of השתחוה. The fact that in approximately 25% of the cases, השתחוה is used between man and man in contexts of obeisance, and that the verb חו"י / חיי ‘to live’ is occasionally used as part of an idiom יחי המלך “(long) live the king!” in contexts of royal acclamation is surely not sufficient to justify the required special contextual relationship between the term and its suggested etymology. 3) There is no precedent for any verb meaning ‘to live’ in the ancient Semitic languages undergoing a semantic development to the meaning ‘to prostrate oneself’. Contrast the way in which this etymology is rejected in Tropper 1991: pp. 46-47. Cf. also Blau 1985: p. 294.

⁵³ See e.g. Speiser 1964: pp. 154-155 and R. Yiṣḥaq in Gen. Raba 53, 16 cited below.

⁵⁴ As quite aptly formulated by Skinner 1930: p. 323: “out of sight of her child, but within hearing of his cry”. For this usage of ...פ for the measuring of approximate distance, cf. Gen. 35:16; 48:7; II Kings 5:19 (all three occurrences of כברת (ה)ארץ) and Num. 11:31 (כדרך יום twice) together with Cohen 1987: pp. 33-34.

⁵⁵ See Bacher 1896: p. 179. On the other renderings of this phrase in the various ancient translations of Gen. 21:16, see in general Rappel 1985: pp. 180-181.

⁵⁶ See CAD,Š/2, p. 453; AHW, p. 1237; CDA, p. 373.

⁵⁷ For this single occurrence in Akkadian, LKA 62:14, see most recently Hurowitz and Westenholz 1990: p. 47; Foster 1996: pp. 249-250 (in addition to the dictionary entries in the previous note).

⁵⁸ See CAD,Š/1, p. 272 - *šalû* A; AHW, p. 1152 - *šalû* II. Contrast CDA, p. 373, where an alternative derivation is also proposed (albeit with a question mark) from Akk. *šeltu* ‘cutting edge, blade’ (cf. e.g. CAD, Š/2, pp. 273-274). This etymology is clearly unacceptable both

because *šeltu* is never used with *qaštu* and because *šalû* ‘to shoot a bow/arrows’ is so obviously correct (see the discussion above).

⁵⁹ For all these etymologies, see e.g. HALOT, p. 373; Ges¹⁸, p. 422; Greenspahn 1984: p. 119 and nn. 142-143 and the bibliography referred to in these studies.

⁶⁰ Rashi's understanding here is based on the interpretation of R. Yiṣḥaq (from Gen. Raba 53, 16), whose unique usage of the now common noun in modern Hebrew טוּחַ ‘distance’ in his explanation of כַּמֵּטָחַי קֶשֶׁת as שְׁנֵי טוּחִים בְּקֶשֶׁת מִיֵּל “the distance of two bowshots is a mile” can hardly be considered as independent etymological evidence. See also MBY, p. 1859.

⁶¹ See most recently Tur-Sinai 1972: p. 324 (cited also in OLM 3, p. 306).

⁶² See Lane 1968: pp. 1888-1889. The substantive “arrow” is not mentioned as regards the possibly relevant meaning 6: ‘The *casting, or throwing, a thing [to or fro,] one with another, or one to, or at, another.*’, but rather only with respect to meaning 1: ‘*He, or it, perished, or came to nought,* where among the examples is listed “And, said of an arrow, *It missed its aim.*”.

⁶³ See Lane 1968: p. 2288.

⁶⁴ See e.g. already Radaq on Gen. 21:16 (as opposed to his סֵפֶר הַשְּׂרָשִׁים); MBY, p. 2947, n. 3; Weinfeld 1975: p. 113.