

Job 19:20, 25-29

A New Translation and Notes
in the Light of Northwest Semitic Studies
(in the Context of a new Translation of Job 19:1-29)
(another futile attempt?)

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I. PREFACE

The text. The ancient, esoteric, exotic Hebrew text. What does it mean? How can it and how does it mean anything to a person in the twentieth century of the Christian Era? And why should anyone care?

These questions have plagued me ever since I have been a boy of nine years of age. Now, almost fifty years later (well, not quite) the importance and seriousness of these questions have increased a thousandfold for me and have become a consuming passion.

My father (an Austrian from Vienna) was a missionary, preacher, teacher (“Evangelischer Diakon”) for German congregations in Yugoslavia. In 1941, when the German Wehrmacht occupied Yugoslavia, a Nazi officer (a woman) requisitioned the guest room in the parsonage and began to spread the Nazi “good news” throughout the German community. One evening, when I was already in bed, my father and this Nazi officer had a verbal fight in the living room over the respective merits of Adolf Hitler, his book Mein Kampf and of Jesus of Nazareth and the Bible. I heard every word. I became terribly afraid and many conflicting emotions raced through my brain and body. My father could not endure the propaganda of the Nazi officer for too long and greatly agitated raised the Bible and told her (in approximately the following words): “Listen, this book, yes, the book about the Jew Jesus of Nazareth, whom we Christians claim as our Führer, our Lord and Savior, yes, this Jewish and Christian book, will continue to give salvation to millions of people unto the end of the earth, while Mein Kampf, together with its author, will become known as incarnate evil.”

Even as a nine year old I knew that one does not talk to Nazis in this manner and that my father was in grave danger and therefore also I. I was terrified?

But the most important question was: what or who gave my father the courage to do what needed to be done? Why was he willing to risk his life?

What made things worse was the fact that I had a terrible time believing anything that I had learned about the Bible. By the time I was twelve years old I had read the Bible twice. But, whenever I asked my father about the meaning of a biblical, dogmatic or theological point he always ended the argument with: “you must believe!” I felt violated. I knew that I would never accept anything which did not make sense to me, to my intellect, my brain, nor anything which did not make sense in my heart and was not able to address my whole being.

And so I set out on a journey which is culminating today in this celebration of my appointment to full professor of Old Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

I set out to gain the necessary skills (at various academic institutions) to understand the Bible and, especially, the Old Testament, because I came to understand the Hebrew Scriptures (which we Christians understand as our Old Testament) as the basis for all work with the New Testament and for all theological and any other work in the Jewish and Christian communities.

I became convinced that it is imperative that one understands the Hebrew text on its own terms as clearly as possible. I searched for freedom from the prison of dependence and ignorance about the Bible, the church, dogmatics and theology.

I learned that anyone who does not know Hebrew is totally dependent upon those who do and can never be trusted with any interpretation of the Old Testament and simply has no authority in this area. Such a person will base everything (meditation, teaching, preaching, theology) only on a translation by someone else.

I learned, that it was the Old Testament, i.e., the Hebrew Bible, which filled Jesus of Nazareth with the spirit and the power to live obediently according to the vision of God for humans and to do what needed to be done in his day.

I also learned (beginning with 1953, when I began to study at the University of Vienna) that the many stumbling blocks to even being able to hear the invitation to faith can be removed through study. Knowledge does not lead to faith, but stupidity and ignorance about the Bible is a sure hindrance to the understanding of its message. Knowledge is power and freedom and independence.

But has the ancient Hebrew text not been understood and translated into many ancient and modern languages for more than two thousand years? Yes, it has been understood, but only partly. Yes, it has been translated in ancient and in modern times.

In ancient times the text (probably beginning in the third century B.C.E.) was translated into Samaritan, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, Latin. Translations were even made from a Greek translation (the so-called Septuagint) into Coptic, Ethiopic, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian and Latin. But would you trust a translation of a translation? During the second part of the first millennium of the Christian era Jewish scholars, called the Masoretes, added their understanding of the ancient Hebrew consonantal text by providing it with a vocalization, i.e., an interpretation, a translation.

In recent years numerous English translations have appeared, e.g.,

(1) formal equivalence or literal translations: The Jewish Publication Society Version (JPS, 1917); The Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1952);

(2) dynamic equivalence or idiomatic translations: The Jerusalem Bible (JB, 1966), The New English Version (NEB, 1970), The New American Bible (NAB, 1970), The Good News Bible - Today's English Version (TEV, 1976), The Holy Bible - New International Version (NIB, 1978), Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (NJV, or NewJPS, 1988) and any more.

With this plethora of translations (and hundreds of commentaries on the Bible) available, based on painstaking scholarly study, is it not foolish to think that one might be able to gain any further and deeper insight into the meaning of the ancient Hebrew text? It may appear so. But archaeological discoveries of the last hundred years and especially the discoveries of the text from Ugarit (discovered in 1929), which are dated to the middle of the second millennium B.C.E. and the discovery of the texts from Ebla (discovered in 1974/75), which are dated to the middle of the third millennium B.C.E., have changed the task of translators of the Hebrew text drastically. Windows of understanding have opened up which make it possible to see beyond the difficulties which even the ancient translators experienced. It is actually possible now to be in dialogue with the ancient scholars who translated the Septuagint and to show them where they might have improved their translation had they only known the kind of information which is now available to modern Hebrew scholars. For me this is an absolutely stunning and extremely exciting new development.

During my formal studies, as a graduate student (1966-1970) and since that time, I have immersed myself deeply especially in the study of the Ugaritic texts and their impact on the understanding of the ancient Hebrew text. This new field of academic study is known by the term "Northwest Semitic Studies" (and takes into account not only Ugaritic, but also all other Semitic languages which were used in that area of the ancient Near East).

After completing my formal studies I have now begun myself to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ancient Hebrew text and its meaning through scholarly publications and especially through my work on the Book of Job as only one example of the impact which Northwest Semitic studies have made on the understanding of the whole Old Testament. Similar studies should be undertaken for all other books of the Old Testament and especially for the one third of it which is composed in poetry.

II. THE WORK ON THE BOOK OF JOB

The first volume of my work on Job was published in 1987: Job In the Light of Northwest Semitic. Volume I. Prologue and First Cycle of~ Speeches Job 1:1 - 14:22. *Biblica et Orientalia (Sacra Scriptura Antiquitatibus Orientalibus Illustrata)* - 42. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987. XVII, 436 pages).

A second volume (covering Job 15-28) and a third volume (covering Job 29-42) will follow, God willing, in due time. The third volume will also contain a "Grammar of Job," similar to the "Grammar of the Psalter," prepared by M. Dahood and T. Penar in M. Dahood, Psalms III:101-150 (The Anchor Bible. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970) pages 361-456. The reading of these pages will give any interested and educated adult an excellent insight into the field of Northwest Semitic scholarship even if one does not know Hebrew or Ugaritic.

My book ventures to close a gap in recent studies on Job. This gap exists, in spite of a number of brilliant commentaries, for example, by

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- 1) Georg Fohrer (Das Buch Hiob. Kommentar zum Alten Testament, Bd. XVI. Güterloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963. BS 1154.2.K85), who relied heavily on the ancient versions and on many emendations (Fohrer was my teacher when I studied at the University of Vienna);
 - 2) Marvin Pope (Job - Introduction, Translation, and Notes. The Anchor Bible, 15. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973 [1965]), who also relied on emendations, but was the first scholar to use some insights from Ugaritic for his work, though (wisely perhaps) refrained from accepting the many suggestions made by M. Dahood. (By the way, in 1972 I had the great fortune of being a Research Fellow at Yale University where M. Pope invited me to participate with him and one of his students, Bruce Zuckerman, in a study for the writing of the third edition of his commentary on Job. We worked very hard from February to July 1972, paying close attention to my dissertation and to the Qumran Targum on Job);
 - 3) Tur-Sinai (= H. Torczyner. The Book of Job - A New Commentary. Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, LTD., 1967. BS 1415.T9.1967), who argued that one must assume an Aramaic original for Job;
 - 4) Robert Gordis (The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 5738-1978. BS 1415.2.G62), who approached Job through post-biblical Hebrew and post-biblical traditions and, most recently,
 - 5) Norman Habel (The Book of Job: A Commentary (The Old Testament Library). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), who has written an instant master piece by emphasizing the literary structures and the plot outline of Job, basing his work on a very traditional translation, following mainly Robert Gordis and the New Jewish Version (produced by Moshe Greenberg, Jonas Greenfield and Nahum Sarna). It will be interesting to see how my translation may or may not necessitate a different perception of the literary structures or of the plot outline of Job. I know that, in some instances, my translation does, indeed, change the understanding of the the literary structure and the plot outline. What comes first, the understanding of the structure or the understanding of the text? Is it appropriate to impose a structure on the text?

Only two scholars, students of Dahood, have used Northwest Semitic studies, as practiced by Dahood, in their books on Job:

- 1) Anton C. M. Blommerde (Northwest Semitic Grammar and Job. Biblica et Orientalia - N. 22. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969. PJ 4102.B5), who discussed selected verses of Job, and included in Part I of his book a section on "Northwest Semitic Grammar and Hebrew," together with a basic bibliography on each grammatical topic;
- 2) Anthony R. Ceresko (Job in the Light of Northwest Semitic. Biblica et Orientalia - N. 36. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980. BS1415.2.C46), who discussed chapters 29-31 of Job and, in Appendix I, provided "A Grammar of Job 29-31." His book is also the first commentary on a biblical book which makes use of the insights which have been gained from the study of the tablets discovered at Ebla in 1974/75.

My work is a comprehensive study of the insights, which have been gained through Northwest Semitic studies, with particular emphasis on the collection, summary and discussion (in one convenient place) of the many contributions which Mitchell J. Dahood has made. M. Dahood has written (in the period between 1952-1982) over 360, highly technical, philological reviews, articles and monographs and the three monumental volumes on the Psalms (Psalms I:1-50. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, New York, 1966; Psalms II:51-100. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, New York, 1979 (1968); Psalms III:101-150. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, New York, 1970). In addition, many hundreds of other publications had to be persued in order to make my work as comprehensive as possible.

III. METHODOLOGY

Among the methodological principles, which have guided and continue to guide my work, the most important are the following:

- 1) to understand the consonantal text without recourse to emendations or transposition of consonants, words, lines or verses. Already in my dissertation, completed in 1970 (written under the guidance of Professor Menahem Mansoor at the Hebrew and Semitic Studies Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison), I had argued that it is possible to understand the consonantal text of the whole Book of Job without any emendations. (Dissertation: The Ugaritic Texts and the Mythological Expressions in the Book of Job (including a new Translation of and Philological Notes on the Book of Job). Dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1970. See Dissertation Abstracts 31.10 (1971) 5369-A. Published on demand by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Order Number: 70-24, 709. Call number in JKM Library: BS 1415.5.M5.);

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- 2) to recover previously unrecognized mythological references or allusions, especially names and epithets of God and the forces of death and the underworld. I realize that this is a highly controversial exercise, but other scholars, including now also Norman Habel, have made use of the possibility of a much larger amount of mythopoeic expressions in Job. In my dissertation I interpreted more than 150 expressions as referring to God and God's realm and about 180 expressions as referring to the underworld and the realm of the forces of death. In addition I found that more than 135 different verbs are referring to dying and to death;
 - 3) to produce a literal and still sensible translation into English. There was never a desire, though, to disregard the insights of the ancient versions or the centuries of hard work by more recent scholars, nor was there a desire to be as original as possible, but, simply to give an account of the results of a particular methodology when applied to an ancient Hebrew text. Therefore, I continue to insist that my work does not make me a "Dahoodian," but simply a student of Dahood's work and of a particular methodology.

Furthermore, I did not ignore the scholarly debate surrounding M. Dahood's work. I am painfully aware of the serious disagreements among scholars about all aspects of the so-called Northwest Semitic method, especially as M. Dahood has used it.

It is with a deep sense of frustration that I must report, after years of painstaking study, that it is my conviction that no methodology, including the Northwest Semitic methodology, has been able to unlock the doors to the mysteries of Job completely.

But, I do think, that the Northwest Semitic methodology, with all of its weaknesses and uncertainties, is still preferable to any other method, especially when used prudently in tandem with other methods.

A more detailed discussion of my methodology is available in the "Introduction" in my book.

And now I would like to present an example of my work. I have chosen a text which is very well known to all cultured (and even uncultured or uneducated) people and is especially dear to Christians: Job 19:25-27.

I will also discuss Job 19:20, from where the English language received the expression: "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (KJV) and also verses 28-29.

But before I turn to a somewhat detailed discussion of Job 19:20, 25-29 I will read all of chapter 19 in a translation which will probably appear in this form in the second volume of my work.

Biblical scholars, who spend countless hours, even years, on some philological detail in a passage here and there, are often accused of not paying attention to the larger context. With the reading of the whole chapter of Job 19 I want to show that such a criticism is often quite misplaced.

IV. TEXT AND TRANSLATION OF JOB 19:1-29

1. An Explanatory Note on the Transliteration:

Only the revocalized words (i.e., vocalized differently than the Masoretic text) are vocalized and underlined in the transliteration.

Please note that only the following words are read differently from the Masoretic vocalization: kěšārî, "as His adversary (v 11'b), lě'ēd, "as my witness" (v 24b), niqqap wēz't, "He will strike off even Filth" (v 26a), bēhēqay, "in my loins" (v 27c), šedîn, "The One of Judgment" (v 29c).

All other new translation proposals could very well have been the very meanings which were intended by the ancient consonantal text (sixth century B.C.E.?) and even by the vocalized Masoretic text which was produced only during the second part of the first millennium of the Christian Era, i.e, more than one thousand years removed from the original.

2. An Explanatory Note on the Translation:

The translation has been achieved without even one emendation of the consonantal Masoretic Text. Anyone familiar with the scholarly study of the Hebrew text will recognize the significance of this fact. New translations are underlined in the translation.

The word order of the Hebrew text is retained wherever possible.

Gender specific Hebrew terms which refer to God must also be translated in a gender specific way in a literal translation. In a paraphrase of the text such gender specific terms must be rephrased according to the rules of inclusive language.

Notes are not provided for the whole chapter, but only for for verses 20, 25-29 (see below). Notes will, of course, appear in the second volume of my work on Job (chapter 15-28).

1. Transliteration

- 1 wy'n 'ywb wy'mr
- 2 'd 'nh twgywn npšy
wtdk'wnny bmlym
- 3 zh 'sr p'mym tklymwyny
l' tbšw thkrw ly
- 4 w'p 'mnm šgyty
'ty tlyn mšwgyty
- 5 'm 'mnm 'ly tgdylw
wtwkyhw 'ly hrpty
- 6 d'w 'pw ky 'lwh 'wtny
wmswdw 'ly hqyp
- 7 hn 'š'q hms wl' 'nh
'šw' w'yn mšpł
- 8 'rhy gdr wl' 'bwr
w'l ntybwty hšk yšym
- 9 kbwdy m'ly hpšyt
wys' 'trt r'šy
- 10 ytšny sbyb w'lk
wys' k'š tpwty
- 11 wyhr 'ly 'pw
wyhšbny lw kēsārī
- 12 wyhd yb'w gdwdyw
wyslw 'ly drkm
wyhnw sbyb l'hly
- 13 'hy m'ly hrhyq
wyd'y 'k zrw
- 14 mmny hdlw qrwby
wmyd'y škhwyny
- 15 gry byty w'mhty
l'zr thšbny
nkry hyyty b'ynyhm
- 16 l'by qr'ty wl' y'nh
bmw py 'thnn lw
- 17 rwhy zrh l'šty
whty lbny b'tn-y
- 18 gm 'wylm m'sw by
'qwmh wydbw by
- 19 t'bwyny kl mty swdy
wzh 'hbty nhpkw by
- 20 b'wry wbbšry dbqh 'šmy
w'tmlth b'wr šny
- 21 hnyy hnyy 'tm r'y
ky yd 'lwh ng'h by

-
- 22 lmh trdpny kmw 'l
 wmbśry l' tśb'w
- 23 my ytn 'pw wyktbwn mly
 my ytn bspr wyḥqw
- 24 b'ṭ brzl w'prt
 lē'ēd bšwr yḥšbwn
- 25 w'ny yd'ty g'ly ḥy
 w'ḥrwn 'l 'pr yqwm
- 26 w'ḥr 'wry niqqap wēz't
 wmbśry
 (wmbśry) 'ḥzh 'lwh
- 27 'sr 'ny 'ḥzh ly
 w'yiny r'w wl' zr
 klw klyty bēḥēqay
- 28 ky t'mrw mh nrdp lw
 wšrš dbr nms' by
- 29 gwrw lkm mpny ḥrb
 ky ḥmh 'wnwt ḥrb
 lm'n td'wn šedfn

2. Translation

- 1 Then Job answered and said:
- 2 “How long will you torment my spirit,
and completely crush me with statements?
3 These ten times you have insulted me,
you have not been ashamed, you have oppressed me.
4 And if, truly, I have inadvertently erred,
with me lodges my inadvertent error.
- 5 If truly, about me you spin tales,
and you argue against me with my shame,
6 know, with His Anger, indeed, Eloah has wronged me,
and His Net around me He has tossed.
7 Look, I cry: ‘Violence!’ - but I am not answered.
I shout, - but there is no justice.
- 8 My trail He has walled up and I cannot cross over,
and on my paths Darkness He has placed.
9 My glorious robe from me He has stripped,
and He has removed my crown from my head.
10 He tears me down, on all sides, and I must go (>underworld),
and He uprooted, like a tree/peg, my hope/cord.
- 11 He has kindled against me His Anger,
and He considers me His adversary.
12 and united His Troops come against me,
and cast up their road/ramp against me,
and camp on all sides of my tent.
- 13 My brothers He has made distant from me,
and my acquaintances are totally estranged,
14 from me have withdrawn my relatives,
and my acquaintances have forgotten me.
- 15 Sojourners in my house, and my slave girls,
a stranger they consider me;
a foreigner have I become in their eyes.
16 To my slave I called out, but he did not answer,
with my mouth I must repeatedly plead with him.
- 17 My attitude is alien to my wife,
and my commiseration to the sons of her belly.
18 Even infants recoil from me,
I want to get up and they turn their back on me.
- 19 They detest me, all the men of my council,
and those I loved have turned away from me.
20 To my skin and to my flesh cleaves my bone,
but I can remove from my skin/gums my teeth.
- 21 Have pity on me, have pity on me, you my friends,
because the hand of Eloah has touched me.

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- 22 Why do you pursue me like El,
and with slandering me you are not satisfied?
- 23 O that now, yes, they were written - my statements,
O that in an inscription, yes, they were inscribed,
24 on a plaque of iron and lead,
as my witness into rock they were hewn!
- 25 Though I know, my vindicator is the Living One,
and the Ultimate One against the Dust will rise up ,
26 and the Ultimate from my skin will strike off even Filth,
and from my flesh/body,
(and from my flesh/body) I shall gaze upon/worship Eloah,
27 when I, yes I, shall gaze upon/worship Him,
and my eyes shall see/worship certainly not an Alien (God),
my kidneys are spent in my loins.
- 28 When you continue to say: 'We cannot overtake him,
though the root of the matter is found in him,' -
29 be afraid for yourselves of the Blade of the Sword,
for hot is the Sheathe of the Sword;
therefore, you will come to know The One of Judgment.

V. TEXT, TRANSLATION AND NOTES: JOB 19:20, 25-29

A Note on the NOTES:

The NOTES include only the most necessary comments in order to justify the translation and to point out some relationships to the Ugaritic literature. They are presented in a crisp and clear fashion for the sake of clarity. For the same reason references are added in brackets instead of in footnotes.

A meditation or theological discussion of the translation may now follow but is not provided at this time. The primary task is to understand the text first (on its own terms) and only then is one allowed to meditate on what it might be able to communicate to later generations.

A Note on the Addition of Other Important Recent Translations:

A comparison with other translations is in order and they are provided to make such comparison easily available and also to highlight the utter simplicity and power of the suggested new translation. A thorough explanation of these translations is not possible in this context (although I am very much tempted to do so).

Job 19:20

b'wry wbb'sry dbqh 'šmy
w'tmlth b'wr šny

To my skin and to my flesh cleaves my bone,
but I can remove from my skin/gums my teeth.

Other Important Recent Translations:

Driver-Gray (1921) 168:

“My bone cleaveth to my skin,
And I am escaped with my flesh in my teeth.”

Fohrer (1963) 307:

“An meiner Haut [...] kleben meine Knochen,
und ich wurde an der Haut meiner Zähne kahl.”
(To my skin [...] stick my bones,
and I became bare of my teeth at my skin.”
Translation by W. L. Michel)

JB, The Jerusalem Bible (1966) 749:

“Beneath my skin, my flesh begins to rot,
and my bones stick out like teeth.”

Tur-Sinai (1967) 300:

“My palate-bone cleaveth to my (skin and) tongue,
and I am stuck to the skin of my teeth.”

LB, The Living Bible (1971) 432:

“I am skin and bones
and have escaped death by the skin of my teeth.”

Pope (1973) 139:

“My flesh rots on my bones,
My teeth drop from my gums.”

NEB, The New English Bible (1976, 1970) 546:

“My bones stick out through my skin,
and I gnaw my under-lip with my teeth.”

TEV, Good News Bible: The Bible in Today’s English Version (1976) 570:

“My skin hangs loose on my bones;
I have barely escaped with my life.”

RSV, Revised Standard Version (1977, 1952) 631:

“My bones cleave to my skin and to my flesh,
and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.”

Gordis (1978) 196:

“My bones cling to my skin and my flesh,
and I have escaped only with the skin of my teeth.”

NIV, The Holy Bible: New International Version (1978) 480:

“I am nothing but skin and bones;
I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth.”

Habel (1985) 290:

“My bones stick to my skin and flesh;
I escape with the skin of my teeth.”

Mitchell (1987) 49

Translation of v. 20 is missing.

NewJPS, Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (1988) 1366:

“My bones stick to my skin and flesh;
I escape with the skin of my teeth.”

NOTES on Job 19:20:

· Repetition of same preposition, but with different meaning.

b + b // b, “to” + “to” // “from” (cf. Michel, Job I, 370)

· Ugaritic/Hebrew pair.

b // b, “in, into” // “from” (Dahood, RSP III, I 54; Job 5:19; 20:20; add 19:20).

· Repetition of the same noun in both lines, but in the second line with a different nuance.

‘ôrî // ‘ôr, “my skin” // “(my) skin/gums” (cf. Michel, Job I, 370).

· Double duty suffix.

The suffix -y of ‘ôr-î does double duty also for ‘ôr, “(my) skin” in the second line (cf. Michel, Job I, 364).

· Nuance the Hitpael of ml̄t and of šin.

The translation of ‘etmallētah bē‘ôr šinnāy, “I can remove from my skin/gums my teeth,” was inspired by M. Pope’s translation (Pope, 139), “My teeth drop from my gums.”

Although the translation of the KJV, “I am escaped with the skin of my teeth,” has become proverbial for a narrow escape, it can hardly claim to be sensible or a rendering of the Hebrew text.

Habel (290) prefers the translation: “I escape with the skin of my teeth.” He explains: “The possible allusion to ‘escape’ (ml̄t) in the prologue (1:15-18), ... suggests retaining the traditional sense. Job ‘escapes/survives’ God’s attack with nothing but his person.” (292).

Job 19:25-27

- 26 w^hrwⁿ 'l 'pr yqwm
w^hrw 'wry niqqap wēz't (MT niqqēpû)
wmbśry
- 27 (wmbśry) 'hzh 'lwh
'šr 'ny 'hzh ly
w'yⁿy r'w w^l' zr
klw klyty bēhēqay (MT bēhēqî)

- 25 Though I know, my vindicator is the Living One,
and the Ultimate One against the Dust will rise up ,
26 and the Ultimate from my skin will strike off even Filth,
and from my flesh/body,
(and from my flesh/body) I shall gaze upon/worship Eloah,
27 when I, yes I, shall gaze upon/worship Him,
and my eyes shall see/worship certainly not an Alien (God),
my kidneys are spent in my loins.

Other Important Recent Translations:

Driver-Gray (1921) 171f.:

- 25 But I know that my vindicator liveth,
And that hereafter he will stand upon the dust.
26 And
And away from my flesh I shall behold God.
27 Whom I shall behold (to be) on my side,
And mine eyes shall see (to be) unestranged.
My reins fail with longing within me.

Fohrer (1963) 307:

- 25 Aber ich weiß: Mein Löser lebt,
selbst wenn er sich als letzter auf dem Erdreich erhebt.
26 Und nachdem meine Haut so geschunden worden ist,
will ich doch ohne mein Fleisch Gott schauen.
27 Ich selber, ich möchte schauen,
meine Augen möchten sehen und nicht einer,

der mich nichts angeht.
Meine Nieren verschmachten in meinem Leib
.....

JB, The Jerusalem Bible (1966) 750:

- 25 This I know: that my Avenger lives,
and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth.
26 After my awakening, he will set me close to him,
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
27 He whom I shall see will take my part:
these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof.
My heart within me sin• s...

Tur-Sinai (1967) 304:

- 25 Yet I, I want to know my redeemer while alive --
but he who someth later will stand at my dust.
26 After my body let them break it up!
Out of my flesh I want to see (my) God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself,
mine eyes shall behold and not another.
For this my reins go out within me.

LB, The Living Bible (1971) 432:

25 But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that he will stand upon the earth at last.
26 And I know that after this body has decayed,
this body shall see God!
27 When he will be on my side!
Yes, I shall see him, not as a stranger,
but as a friend! What a glorious hope!

Pope (1973) 139:

25 I know my vindicator lives,
A guarantor upon the dust will stand;
26 Even after my skin is flayed,
Without my flesh I shall see God.
27 I will see him on my side,
My own eyes will see him no stranger.
My heart faints within me.

NEB, The New English Bible (1976, 1970) 546:

25 But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives
and that he will rise last to speak in court;
26 and I shall discern my witness standing at my side
and see my defending counsel, even God himself,
27 whom I shall see with my own eyes,
I myself and no other.
My heart failed me when you said,

TEV, Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version (1976) 571:

25 But I know there is someone in heaven
who will come at last to my defense.
26 Even after my skin is eaten by disease,
while still in this body I will see God.
27 I will see him with my own eyes,
and he will not be a stranger.
My courage failed because you said,

RSV, Revised Standard Version (1977, 1952) 631:

25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth;
26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
27 whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold and not another.
My heart faints within me!

Gordis (1978) 198:

- 25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
 though He be the last to arise upon earth!
 26 Deep in my skin this has been marked,
 and in my very flesh do I see God.
 27 I myself behold Him,
 with my own eyes I see Him, not with another's --
 my heart is consumed with longing within me!

NIV, The Holy Bible: New International Version (1978) 480:

- 25 I know that my Redeemer lives,
 and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
 26 And after my skin has been destroyed,
 yet in my flesh I will see God;
 27 myself will see him
 with my own eyes--I, and not another.
 How my heart yearns within me!

Habel (1985) 290:

- 25 I, I know my redeemer lives
 And afterward he will rise on the dust--
 26 After, that is, my skin is peeled off!
 But from my flesh I would behold Eloah;
 27 I, I would behold him.
 My eyes would see him, not another's--
 My heart heaves in my breast.

Mitchell (1987) 49:

- 25 Someday my witness would come;
 ? my avenger would read those words.
 He would plead for me in God's court;
 he would stand up and vindicate my name

26-29: these verses are not translated by Mitchell

NewJPS, Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (1988, 1980) 1366:

- 25 But I know that my Vindicator lives;
 In the end He will testify on earth--
 26 This, after my skin will have been peeled off.
 But I would behold God while still in my flesh,
 27 I myself, not another, would behold Him;
 Would see with my own eyes:
 My heart pines within me.

NOTES on Job 19:25-26:

A:B::B:A pattern in vv. 25-26.

The recognition of this pattern (and the multitude of other rediscovered poetic devices) is important for the understanding of this text and for many other texts in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Michel, Job I, 361).

A	<u>yāda'tî</u> - <u>hāy</u> :
B	<u>ʾahārôn</u> - <u>ʾāpār</u> - <u>yāqûm</u> ::
B	<u>ʾahar</u> - <u>niqqap</u> - <u>zō't</u> :
A	<u>ʾehēzeh</u> - <u>ʾēlôah</u>

A		“I know” - “the Living One” :
	B	“Ultimate One” - “Dust” - “He will rise up” ::
	B	“Ultimate” - “He will strike” - “Filth” :
A		“I shall gaze” - “Eloah”

Word pairs in the A:B::B:A pattern in vv. 25-26.

Note the following word pairs:

(1) yādaʿtī // ʿehēzeh, “I know” // “I shall gaze.”

(2) hāy // ʿēlôah, “the Living One” // “Eloah.”

Because of the apparent pairing of ʿēlôah with hāy it seems that hāy is another divine epithet.

So already **Guillaume**, Studies (1968), 101, “The Eternal” // “The Ever-living One.”

Cf. **Koehler-Baumgartner**, Lexicon (1958), 292: ʿēl hāy, Josh 3:10; Hosea 2:1; Ps 42:3; 84:3 and ʿēlôhîm hāy, 2 Kings 19:4, 16; Is 37:4, 17).

Cf. Lam 3:39, which M. **Dahood** translated, mah-yitʿônēn ʿādām hāy, “Why does man complain about the Living God.” He added: “With ʿelyôn in the preceding verse it (hāy) forms a composite divine title whose roots are also found in the Samaria Ostraca personal name yhwʿly, as well as in the parallel cola of Pss 30,4 and 71,20.” (“New Readings in Lamentations,” Bib 59 [1978] 187).

See also H.-J. Kraus, “Der lebendige Gott,” Evangelische Theologie. 27 (1967) 169-200.

(3) ʾahārôn // ʾahar, “Ultimate One” // “Ultimate.”

For ʾahārôn, “Last,” as a divine name, see also

E. **Dhorme** (283), on the basis of Is 48:12 and 44:6;

A. **Guillaume** (Studies, [1968] 101, “The Eternal” // “The Ever-living One”)

M. **Dahood** (Psalms III, 184; HUL 9 = Bib 52 [71] 346), “The Last, Ultimate;” Is 41:4; 44:6 (rîšôn + ʾahārôn, “First” + “Last”); 48:12; Job 19:25.

A. **Schoors** (RSP I, I 7g): “the Last One, Guarantor.”

(4) ʾahar. Paired with ʾahārôn, “Last,” ʾahar may also be a divine epithet, “Ultimate.” This may even be a conscious pun on ʿēl ʾahēr, “another god, idol, in Ex 34:14.

(5) ʾāpār // zōʿt, “Dust” // “Filth” are interpreted as epithets of the underworld.

(6) ʾāpār, “Dust” (for ʾāpār, “Dust,” as an epithet of the underworld, see **Michel**, Job I, Index, 372).

(7) zōʿt, “Filth.” The word zōʿt may not be the feminine demonstrative, but a word related to soʿah, “indignity, insult,” and because of the pairing with ʾāpār, “Dust,” may therefore function as another term for the underworld, “Indignity, Insult, Excrement, Filth.” For a discussion of zōʿt, “filth,” see **Michel**, Job I, 25, 34, 35.

(8) yāqûm // niqqap (revocalized; MT has niqqēpû, “they strike off” [pi]), “He will rise up” // “He will strike off.”

M. **Dahood** suggested to read yiqqôm, from nqm, “to avenge, be victorious over.” He translated v. 25b,

“And that the Ultimate will take vengeance upon the Slime.” (HUL 9 = Bib 52 [71] 346.

A. **Schoors** (RSP I, I 7g), apparently independently, translated v. 25b, “and that the Last One will be victorious over the Netherworld.”

Verse 25b might be the counterpart to Job 16:8,

“My Witness He is and He rises up against me (wayyāqām bî).”

Revocalization.

Read niqqap wě, “He will strike off even,” for MT niqqēpû, “they strike off” (pi).

Word pair in v. 26 not listed above.

ʾôrî // běšārî, “my skin” // “my flesh/body.”

Merismus.

The pair ʾôrî // běšārî, “my skin” // “my flesh” may indicate a merismus = my total body (cf.

Michel, Job I, 366)

M. **Dahood** proposed to revocalize MT mibběšārî to měbuššārî, i.e., as a pual participle, with the suffix representing the -y third person suffix, functioning as the dative of agency, and he translated “refleshed by him, I will gaze upon God.” (Psalms II, 196; mentioned in Pope, 147; Boadt, UF 7 [75] 63.

Ugaritic/Hebrew word pair.

ydʿ + hy, “to know” + “alive” (Dahood, RSP III, I 128).

Inclusio, inclusion or envelop figure.

Vv. 25a and 29c seem to form an inclusio:

- 1) yāda‘tî // tēdē‘ûn, “I know” // “you (pl) will know.”
- 2) hāy // šēdîn, “Living One, Living God” // “The One of Judgment” (cf. Michel, Job I, 366)

Nuance of preposition ‘al.

‘al, “against” (cf. Michel, Job I, 416). ‘al ‘āpār, “against the Dust.” Cf. M. Dahood (HUL 9 = Bib 52 [71] 346), “against the Slime;” **Schoors** (RSP I, I 7g), “against the Netherworld.”

Double duty preposition.

The preposition of mibbēšārî, “from my flesh,” may do double duty also for ‘ôrî, “(from) my skin” (cf. Michel, Job I, 364)

Breakup of composite phrase.

The parts of the phrase ‘ôrî ... ûmibbēšārî, “my skin ... and from my flesh,” are distributed over two lines (cf. Michel, Job I, 362)

Emphatic waw.

The w of wēzô’t, may be emphatic, “even Filth/Indignity” (cf. Michel, Job I, 365.)

Ellipsis or double duty of a phrase.

The phrase “and from my flesh/body” seems to have to be repeated (cf. Michel, Job I, 365). The phrase may function as a double-duty modifier (cf. Michel, Job I, 364).

M. Dahood’s translation of v. 25.

In his article, “Can One Plow Without Oxen? (Amos 6:12) A Study of ba- and ‘al,” (in The Bible World [Gordon Festschrift]. G. Rendsburg, et al. eds. New York: KTAV, 1980, 18) M. Dahood proposed the following translation:

“For I know that my Redeemer lives again,
and that the Ultimate has risen from the Dust.

M. Dahood’s assumptions are:

- (1) hāy, “lives again,” because of pairing of hāy // yāqûm, “He has risen,” encountered in the famous resurrection texts (according to Dahood) Is 26:19 and Hos 6:2. In Ugartic too, hy signifies “to live again,” in UT 49:III:8-9, “then I will know that Baal the Conqueror lives again (hy) / that the Prince, the Lord of the Earth, is present.” He also called for a new examination of the Hebrew personal name ’dnyqm, “my Lord has risen.”
- (2) ‘al, “from;” so also in Job 29:7 (Pope, 210); 30:2, 4. (cf. Michel, Job I, 416).

M. L. Barré’s translation of v. 25 in Vetus Testamentum 29 (79) 107-110:

“I know that my redeemer can restore life/health,
And that (my) guarantor can raise up from the dust

(= netherworld).”

M. L. Barré’s Assumptions are:

- (1) read g’ly (y)hy, and vocalize piel yēhayye from *yhy. -y of gō’ālî is understood either as “shared consonant,” or as haplography;
- (2) read yāqûm as hiphil (from a form without the internal matres lectionis) yāqîm;
- (3) ‘āpār, “dust” = netherworld;
- (4) ‘al, “from;” separative sense in Hebrew and other Northwest Semitic languages (according to Blommerde, in Job 29:7; 30:2,4);
- (5) “to raise up from the netherworld” could mean to restore to health;
- (6) refers to Ludlul bēl nēmeqî (Tablet IV), “The Babylon<ians> saw how [Marduk] restores to life.” Also to ina qabri bullutu, “to restore to life/health from the grave.” (Ludlul);
- (7) furthermore, if a loss of -ny from one (double duty suffix) or both verbs is postulated the following translation results:

“I know that my redeemer will restore my health/life,
And that (my) guarantor will raise me up from the

netherworld.”

Comment bei H.-P. Müller.

In his article, “Keilschriftliche Parallelen zum Hiobbuch: Möglichkeit und Grenze des Vergleiches,” *Orientalia* 47 (1978) 360-375, H.-P Müller made the following comment (on p. 367f.):

“Erst die letzten drei Zeilen des Gedichts (295-297) artikulieren nach Art der Klagepsalmen ein Bekenntnis der Zuversicht gegenüber den Göttern (?), der persönlichen Schutzgöttin (^diš-tar) und dem König (?) die Götter mögen dem Leidenden ‘einen Helfer’ stellen; vielleicht ist damit die Hoffnung auf einen ʿēd // śāhēd ‘Zeugen’ Hi 16,19 bzw. einen gōʿēl ‘Loskäufer’ 19,25 und die Gestalt eines mēlîš ‘Fürsprechers’ Hi 33,23 zu vergleichen.”

NOTES on Job 19:27:

The sequence yqtl - qtl referring to the future.

ʿehēzeh - rāʾû, “I shall gaze” - “I shall see.” (cf. Michel, *Job I*, 373).

-y third person suffix.

The suffix of lî is understood to be a -y third person suffix, “upon Him.” (cf. Michel, *Job I*, 373).

Emphatic w.

The waw of wēlōʾ zār may be emphatic. (cf. Michel, *Job I*, 365).

Meaning of zār.

Zār is understood to mean “Foreign God, Alien, Idol.”

The term zār, “stranger,” is, of course, quite common and may be the intended meaning. But zār, zārîm, can also refer to foreign gods or to apostasy as, for example, in **Hos** 5:7, where bānîm zārîm, “alien children,” are not foreign, but domestic enemies of God who commit idolatry.

L. A. **Snijders**, “Zûr/zār,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 4 (G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, eds. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980) 52-58, states (p. 54f.):

“Foreign Gods. Closely associated with foreign or alien nations are their gods. These embody their character and ideas. It is therefore not surprising that the term zārîm can be used not only for other, hostile nations but also for other, dangerous gods, who threaten and corrupt the faith of Israel and the welfare of the people. In **Jer**. 5:19 and 30:8, both are meant: the foreign rulers or nations and their gods. In **Jer**. 2:25 and 3:13--as in **Dt**. 32:16 and **Isa**. 17:10--the word refers to baals. **Ps** 44:21(20) and 81:10(9) speak of ʿēl zār as an ‘outside’ god, belonging to an alien nation. He is deceitful, and his worship brings disaster (**Jer** 3:23). Not so is Yahweh. He is not a power dangerous to men, but a deliverer.”

See also his article, “The Meaning of zār in the OT,” *Oudtestamentische Studien*, 10 (1954) 1-154.

The comment by F. I. **Andersen** and D. N. **Freedman** on **Hos** 5:7 (in *Hosea* [Garden City, N. Y., 1980]), p. 395) may also support the interpretation of zr as an alien god:

“We are dealing with hypocritical Yahweh worship ... The children, who seem to be the husband’s, are really bānîm zārîm, ‘foreign children,’ illegitimate in the sense of being conceived during the adultery of a married woman. ... If ‘children of foreign fathers (viz, gods)’ is meant, bēnêma zārîm, construct with enclitic mem, can be read (cf. **Ps** 44:21). **Jeremiah** 2, which uses many of Hosea’s terms, points to this possibility: the woman goes off after ‘the Baals’; she loves ‘foreigners.’”

Job 15:19b might therefore be translated,

wēlōʾ ʿābar zār bētôkām

“and a Foreign God did not traverse among them.”

The meaning of **Job** 19:27 then is that Job will continue to see = worship God and not a foreign god, an idol.

There are, at least, two other passages in which Job denies that he has committed **idolatry**:

1) **Job 31:1**

“I made a covenant in His (her?) presence --
never would I gaze upon the Virgin (Virgo = Anat).”

So W. L. **Michel**, “BTWLH, ‘virgin,’ or ‘Virgin (Anat)’ in Job 31:1?,” Hebrew Studies 23 (1982) 59-66, following a suggestion made by G. **Jeshurun**, “A Note on Job XXXI:1,” Journal of the Society of Oriental Research 12 (1928) 153-154. (cf. Michel, Job I, 8, 105, 106, 158).

Bētūlāh is an epithet of the virgo coelestis, Ishtar-Astarte-Venus, the goddess Anat, the Queen of Heaven. The argument has been accepted by **Ceresko**, 100f. Cf. also **Pope** (1973), 229, where, after citing Michel’s argument and quoting Jer 44:16-19, he stated:

“If the virgin in question is the Queen of Heaven whose licentious worship Job has forsworn, vowing not to look at her even as he avoided looking to the sun and the moon as objects of worship, then the difficulties considered at the beginning of this note vanish.”

2) **Job 31:26**

’im ’er’eh ’ôr kî yāhēl
wēyārēah yāqār hōlak

“I gazed not on the light as it brightened --
the moon, that is, waning in splendor.” (Ceresko, 101f.)

Revocalization.

Read bēhēqay, “in my loins” for MT bēhēqî, “in my bosom” (Guillaume, Studies, [1968] 102).

Motif: reaction to bad news.

Verse 27c may be better understood in the light of the widespread literary convention (in Biblical and Canaanite literature) depicting the reaction to bad news. (cf. Michel, Job I, 370). See esp. the study by D. R. **Hillers**, “A Convention in Hebrew Literature: The Reaction to Bad News,” Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 77 (1965) 86-90. Among the passages quoted are the following:

’nt III 29-32

When Anat sees the approaching messengers Vineyard and Field she cries out:

“... Anath’s feet do stumble. / Behind, her loins (ksl) do break (tbr); / Above, her face doth sweat; / Bent are the joints of her loins (kslh), / Weakened those of her back.” (**Ginsberg**, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 136F.);

51 II 12-20; 1 Aqht 93-96; 125:53-54;

Ezek 21:11-12

“As for you, son of man, sigh with breaking loins (bēšibrôn mātnayim); ... Every spirit will faint and every man will wet himself”

(p. 88, n. 7: “Literally, ‘all knees run with water’ (wēkōl birkayim tēlaknāh mayim). On the meaning of this expression, see G. R. **Driver**, ‘Some Hebrew Medical Expressions,’ Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 65 [1953], 259-260. ‘Knees,’ is a common euphemism for genitals in Akkadian ...”

Hab 3:16

“When I heard, my bowels were queasy (wētirgaz bitnî).”

Meaning of “my kidneys are spent in my loins.”

Job’s statement, “my kidneys are spent in my loins,” apparently means then that he has been wetting himself so many times that he is now completely dry and not capable any longer to wet himself. The reason for this bitter anguish is Job’s conviction that his God will finally vindicate him and heal him, but, at present, there is no concrete evidence for his hope.

In the next two verses, vv. 28-29, he lashes out against his “Friends.”

Job 19:28-29

28 ky t’mrw mh nrdp lw
wšrš dbr nms’ by
29 gwrw lkm mpny ḥrb
ky ḥmh ‘wnwt ḥrb
lm’n td’wn šedîn

- 28 When you continue to say: 'We cannot overtake him,
though the root of the matter is found in him,' -
- 29 be afraid for yourselves of the Blade of the Sword,
for hot is the Sheathe of the Sword;
therefore, you will come to know The One of Judgment.

Other Important Recent Translations:

Driver-Gray (1921) 175f.:

- 28 If ye say, "How eill we persecute him!
Seeing that the root of the matter is found in him",
- 29 Be afraid of the sword:
For such things are iniquities meet for the sword,
That ye may know ther is a judge.

Fohrer (1963) 307:

- 28 Wenn ihr denkt: Wie wollen wir ihn verfolgen
und den Grund der Sache in ihm finden!,
29 schreckt selber vor dem Schwert zurück,
denn dieses ist des Schwertes würdige Schuld,
daß ihr erfahrt: Es gibt einen Richter!

JB, The Jerusalem Bible (1966) 750:

- 28 You then, that mutter, 'How shall we track him down,
what pretext shall we find against him?'
- 29 may well fear the sword on your account.
There is an anger stirred to flame by evil deeds;
you will learn that there is indeed a judgement.

Tur-Sinai (1967) 306:

- 28 Perhaps ye say: 'How are we persecuting him?'
and (that) the root of the thing is found with me?--
- 29 Beware of crime;
for to cover sins is a crime,
so that ye should make known my sins.

LB, The Living Bible (1971) 432:

- 28 How dare you go on persecuting me,
as though I were proven guilty?
- 29 I warn you, you yourselves
are in danger of punishment for your attitude.

Pope (1973) 139:

- 28 [If you say, 'How we will persecute him!
And 'The root of the matter is found in me,'
- 29 Then beware of the sword,
For wrath will destroy iniquity,
That you may know Shaddayan.

NEB, The New English Bible (1976, 1970) 547:

- 28 'What a train of disaster he has brought on himself!
The root of the trouble lies in him.'
- 29 Beware of the sword that points at you,
the sword that sweeps away all iniquity;
then you will know that there is a judge.

TEV, Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version (1976) 571:

- 28 'How can we torment him?'
- You looked for some excuse to attack me.
- 29 But now, be afraid of the sword--
the sword that brings God's wrath on sin,
so that you will know there is one who judges.

RSV, Revised Standard Version (1977, 1952) 631:

- 28 If you say, 'How we will pursue him!'
and, 'The root of the matter is found in him';
29 be afraid of the sword,
for wrath brings the punishment of the sword,
that you may know there is a judgment.

Gordis (1978) 198:

- 28 When you say, 'How shall we persecute him,
since the root of the matter must be found in him?'
29 I answer, 'Be afraid of the sword,
for you will learn that there is a judgment.

NIV, The Holy Bible: New International Version (1978) 481:

- 28 'If you say, 'How we will hound him,
since the root of the trouble lies in him,'
29 you should fear the sword yourselves;
for wrath will bring punishment by the sword,
and then you will know that there is judgment.

Habel (1985) 291:

- 28 You say, 'How do we pursue him,
Since the root of the matter is with him?'
29 Fear the sword for yourselves,
For these are sins worthy of the sword.
You will know there is a judgment!

Mitchell (1987) 49:

A translation or paraphrase of verses 28-29 is not provided.

NewJPS, Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (1988) 1366:

- 28 You say, 'How do we persecute him?
The root of the matter is in him.'
29 Be in fear of the sword,
For [your] fury is iniquity worthy of the sword;
Know there is a judgment!

NOTES on Job 19:28:. Negative mah.

So M. Dahood, private communication, 1979. mah can be a negative particle or negative substantive (see, e.g., Dahood, "The Emphatic Double Negative m'yn in Jeremiah 10:6-7," CBQ 37 [1975] 458-459). (cf. Michel, Job I, 412).

. -y third person suffix.

The pairing of lô (I used here as ʿēt, the sign of the direct object) with bî may indicate that the -y of bî is to be taken as the third person suffix. Cf. lî, "upon Him" in v. 27a. An emendation to bô is not necessary. Cf. Dahood, Or 48 (1979) 98. (cf. Michel, Job I, 371).

NOTES on Job 19:29:. Motif of "sword of judgment."

On the "Sword of Yahweh, see, e.g., Fohrer, 323.

. Mythopoeic expressions.

The paired expressions, pēnê hereb // ʿāwōnôt hereb, "the mouths/blade of the sword" // "the sheathe of the sword" are understood as references to Mot ("Sword") and the underworld ("Sheathe"). Mot functions as the sword of God. The dwelling place of Mot is the underworld ("Sheathe"). (cf. Michel, Job I, 368).

. Derivation of ʿāwōnôt.

According to M. Dahood ("Further Instances of the Breakup of stereotyped phrases in Hebrew," Studia Hierosolymitana 2 [1976] 15) unexplained ʿāwōnôt may derive from the root ʿwn, "to dwell," and as a noun

denote the housing or sheathe of a sword. He found the same elements of the composite phrase, containing ʿāwōnōt and hereb, distributed over the parallel lines in

Ezek 32:27,
wayyittēnū ʿet harbōtām taḥat rāʾšêhem
wattēhî ʿwnwtm ʿal ʿasmōtām
 “Their swords were put under their heads,
 while their sheathes are upon their bones.

The vocalization of ʿwnwtm remains uncertain. The breakup of the composite phrase, “sheathes of/and their swords,” seems clear (cf. Michel, Job I, 362). On p. 15, n. 26, Dahood added māʿōn, “dwelling,” as an example of a noun from the root ʿwn; cf. Is 13:22 and Deut 33:28.

Feminine absolute singular ending in -ōt.

ʿāwōnōt may be another instance of a feminine singular noun ending in -ōt. (cf. Michel, Job I, 365).

Revocalization and divine name.

The troublesome šdyn (MT šadyyn, Qere, šaddûn) is read by **Dahood** (private communication, 1979) as šedîn, “the One of Judgment” (so also the Vulgate). Cf. Ugaritic il dpid, “the One of heart.” Similarly **Habel**, 291, “there is a judgment.”

But the problem of understanding šdyn remains: š occurs only here in Job. This by itself does not mean much, because there are many other hapax expressions in Job. It is used in the same context with ʾăšer in v. 27a.

For other explanations see, e.g.,

L. R. **Fisher**, Vetus Testamentum 11 (1961) 342-343 (šdyn is probably the regular form of šdy plus the ending -n, similar to ly and lywn);

H.-P. **Müller**, “Einige alttestamentliche Probleme zur aramäischen Inschrift von Dēr ‘Allā,” Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina Vereins 94 (1978) 56-67 (esp. 65f. on šdyn; p. 67, “damit ihr die šdyn kennenlernt.” ... “ihnen (den Freunden) gegenüber wird der persönliche Gott Hiobs zu einer Mehrzahl von Rächern seines Schützlings. Mit dieser Mehrzahl aber sind die šdyn unserer Inschrift in ihrer Unheil abwehrenden Funktion vergleichbar.”).

Similar threat in Ugaritic text.

The exhortation in v. 29ab is reminiscent of the instructions which Baal gives to his two messengers, who are to announce to Mot that Baal is now king, namely, to keep their distance from him, otherwise they would be crushed between his jaws, UT 51 VIII 14f.

“But watch, lackeys of the gods, / (that) you come not near to divine Mot, / lest he make you like a lamb in his mouth, / (and) you both be carried away like a kid in the breach of his windpipe.” (Gibson, 67).

VI. CONCLUSION

The foregoing is only a minute glimpse of my work, but, I think, it was sufficient to illustrate the joys and pains of serious study of the ancient Hebrew text in the light of the ongoing new insights and revelations about the meaning and significance of its words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs.

As a little boy I was frightened by the fight which my father had with the Nazi officer. I am still frightened, but, this time, as a mature person, pastor, professor, translator and interpreter of Scripture and I hope that this work will not endanger my physical, intellectual and spiritual life.

I am convinced that many of my translations will end up in some official Bible translation, in time, and that my work will influence people long after I am dead. I take my work very seriously and I am very much aware of my responsibility to scholarship, the church and to everyone who reads my translation. I am unable to think of a more foundational and important work as a servant of the Lord as one of the professors at a seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

My work is extremely difficult and very time consuming. I consider it to be holy and a form of worship. It is for this reason, though, that I am unable to understand the many hindrances which are put into my way. Are these hindrances provided by God or by the Devil?

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