

כְּתִבּוֹנִים (Hosea 13:2)–*stet*

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This article responds to a recent article by Stuart Irvine, regarding MT כְּתִבּוֹנִים ‘according to their understanding’ in Hosea 13:2. While Irvine argued that the form should be emended to כְּתִבְנִיתָם ‘according to their design’, the present essay notes parallels both from the domain of Hebrew morphology and from the world of Mesopotamian texts, which serve to support MT in this instance.

A recent article by Stuart Irvine adduced new arguments for the emendation of the Masoretic Text (MT) כְּתִבּוֹנִים ‘according to their understanding’ in Hos. 13:2 to כְּתִבְנִיתָם ‘according to their design’,¹ as proposed by numerous scholars in the past and with considerable versional support (LXX, Vulgate, Targum, Peshitta).² The present essay will argue that such an alteration of MT is unnecessary and that the received text makes perfect sense as it stands.

1. MORPHOLOGY

First, in the realm of morphology, while the base form תְּבוּןָ ‘understanding’ in Hos. 13:2 constitutes the only such *taqûl* form in Biblical Hebrew (BH)³—in contrast to its common feminine counterpart תְּבוּנָה (41x)⁴—if we expand our horizons just a bit we are able to cite the following parallel forms:

Ben Sira 3:14 (MS A 1r:6)	תְּמוֹר ‘exchange’
Ben Sira 4:10 (MS A 1r:28)	תְּמוֹר ‘exchange’
4Q405 (ShirShab ^f) 32.3	תְּרוֹם ‘offering’

I here express my gratitude to Shalom Holtz (Yeshiva University) for his kind assistance in this project, especially in part two regarding the Mesopotamian sources.

1. One might wish to render the preposition כ- *k-* in the first instance as ‘with’, hence ‘with their understanding’, but for the sake of consistency I have used ‘according to’ in both renderings.

2. Stuart Irvine, “Idols כתבונם: A Note on Hosea 13:2a,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 509–17. Said past scholars include Heinrich Ewald, George Smith, H. S. Nyberg, and H. W. Wolff; see Irvine (p. 510 nn. 6–7) for the bibliographic particulars. For earlier Jewish exegesis with a similar understanding, see Menahem Ben-Yashar, Isaac B. Gottlieb, and Jordan S. Penkower, *Ha-Miqra’ be-Faršanut Hazal: ‘Asufat Derašot Hazal ‘al Nevi’im u-Ktuvim mi-tok Sifrut ha-Talmud ve-ha-Midraš*, vol. 1: *Hošea* (English title: *The Bible in Rabbinic Interpretation: Rabbinic Derashot on Prophets and Writings in Talmudic and Midrashic Literature*) (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, 2003), 563–64. For a summary of the versions, see Irvine, “Idols כתבונם,” 512.

3. I have labeled the noun pattern *taqûl*, which to my mind seems most likely, though in theory it could be *tāqûl*, which apparently is how William Henry Green analyzed the form (see below, n. 22). A possible second instance in BH is Ezek. 24:12 תְּאָנִים ‘toils, sorrows’, but without the singular form attested and without a true verbal root תָּנָה-אָנָה, one cannot be certain of this noun’s underlying morphology.

4. Not surprisingly, twenty-two of these occurrences appear in the Wisdom books (Job 3x, Proverbs 19x).

Note that the standard forms in BH are תְּמוּנָה ‘exchange’ (6x)⁵ and תְּרוּמָה ‘offering’ (63x),⁶ respectively. And yet here in post-biblical Hebrew we encounter the afore-cited forms, in exact relationship as Hos. 13:2 תְּבוּנָה stands to standard תְּבוּנָה.⁷

Now, to be sure, there may be problems with these post-biblical citations. Since the word תְּמוּר ‘exchange’ appears only in a medieval manuscript of Ben Sira (MS A),⁸ quite possibly this form represents a later accretion to Hebrew morphology, especially since this very word is common in the *piyyuṭim* of Yosi, Yannai, Qillir, et al.⁹ And yet in general scholars of Ben Sira agree that the medieval manuscripts serve as reliable witnesses to the ancient composition, without major accretions of later lexical and/or grammatical features.¹⁰ This is especially demonstrable when we have overlap between the Masada scroll and MS B (spanning Ben Sira 39:27–44:17).¹¹ Not that every form or lexeme in the medieval manuscripts should be naïvely accepted as ancient, but the point remains. In the words of E. Y. Kutscher, “The Masada fragments prove beyond a doubt that the Geniza fragments represent the Hebrew original.”¹²

A parallel to the case of תְּמוּר in Ben Sira ~ תְּרוּם in 4Q405 may be helpful. Once upon a time, scholars may have questioned the antiquity of נִסּוּי ‘trial, ordeal’ in Ben Sira 33:1 (MS B Vv:16; MS E Ir:9; MS F Iv:13),¹³ 44:20 (MS B XIVr:6),¹⁴ especially since the word was known only from the *piyyuṭim* of Yannai.¹⁵ The Dead Sea Scrolls, however, attest to the word five(!) times, e.g., 1QS 1.18, demonstrating its active employment in literary Hebrew of the second century BCE.¹⁶

5. Lev. 27:10, 33, Job 15:31, 20:18, 28:17, Ruth 4:7.

6. Too many to enumerate here, but the word is especially common in priestly oriented texts, such as Exodus 25–40, Leviticus, Numbers 15, 18, 31, Ezekiel 40–48, etc.

7. For a recent treatment, see Noam Mizrahi, “Aspects of Poetic Stylization in Second Temple Hebrew: A Linguistic Comparison of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* with Ancient *Piyyuṭ*,” in *Hebrew in the Second Temple Period: The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of Other Contemporary Sources*, ed. Steven E. Fassberg, Moshe Bar-Asher, and Ruth A. Clements (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 158–59—along with my review of this volume in *JSS* 61 (2016): 278–81, with specific mention of Hos. 13:2 on p. 280. I here add the following observation: It may not be a coincidence that the three attested words in the *taqûl* pattern all include a sonorant consonant (/m/, /n/, /r/) in final position (and in two of the cases, the noun includes two sonorant consonants).

8. The manuscript may be accessed conveniently at <http://www.bensira.org/navigator.php?Manuscript=A&PageNum=1>. Note that both citations occur on this same folio, the first in the Ben Sira collection when representing the text in canonical order.

9. *Ma’agarim* lists 127 occurrences of the form during the years 500–900, the floruit of late antique Hebrew liturgical poetry. For a brief notice on the morphology, albeit with a different example from the poetry of Qillir, to wit, תְּנוּבָה ‘produce’ (cf. BH תְּנוּבָה), see Michael Rand, *Introduction to the Grammar of Hebrew Poetry in Byzantine Palestine* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2006), 75.

10. For discussion, see E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes / Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 87–92; and Menahem Kister, “Ben Sira,” in *Encyclopedia of the Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1.260–62.

11. The best way to visualize the point is through synoptic editions such as Ze’ev Ben-Hayyim, ed., *Sefer Ben Sira* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1973), 41–54; and Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 158–76.

12. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, 90. See similarly Kister, “Ben Sira,” 1.260: “[The Masada scroll] proves that the Hebrew version in the medieval manuscripts is basically reliable.”

13. The word is written *plene* as נִסּוּי in MS B and MS F, and *defectiva* as נִסּוּי in MS E.

14. The word is written *plene* as נִסּוּי in this single testimony. Note that in this passage, the reference is to Abraham, with specific allusion to the presence of the verbal root נִסָּה ‘test’ in Gen. 22:1.

15. See *Ma’agarim*, s.v., נִסָּה, entries nos. 35, 38, from CUL T-S H13.2 and CUL T-S H3.6, respectively.

16. For further discussion of this lexeme, see Moshe Bar-Asher, *Lešonot Riʿšonim: Meḥqare Lašon ba-Miqraʿ, bi-Mgillot Yam ha-Melaḥ u-ve-ʿAramit* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2012), 215–16; and idem, *Studies in Classical Hebrew*, ed. Aaron Koller (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 219–20. The original publication appeared as “Ha-ʿIvrit bi-Mgillot Midbar Yehuda u-Meḥqar Lešon Ḥakamim,” *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* 8–9 (2010): 287–317, esp. 306–7.

In short, and to repeat, in general the medieval manuscripts of Ben Sira may serve as reliable testimony to the literary Hebrew of the late Second Temple period. To return to the specific case before us, note that M. H. Segal, in his commentary, accepted Ben Sira 3:14, 4:10 תמור as authentic and indeed correlated the form to Hos. 13:2 תָּבוֹן.¹⁷

The above reference to תרום ‘offering’ in 4Q405 (ShirShab^f) 32.3 involves a problem of a different kind, because the fragment (which already is tiny) breaks just after the *mem* (see Fig. 1).

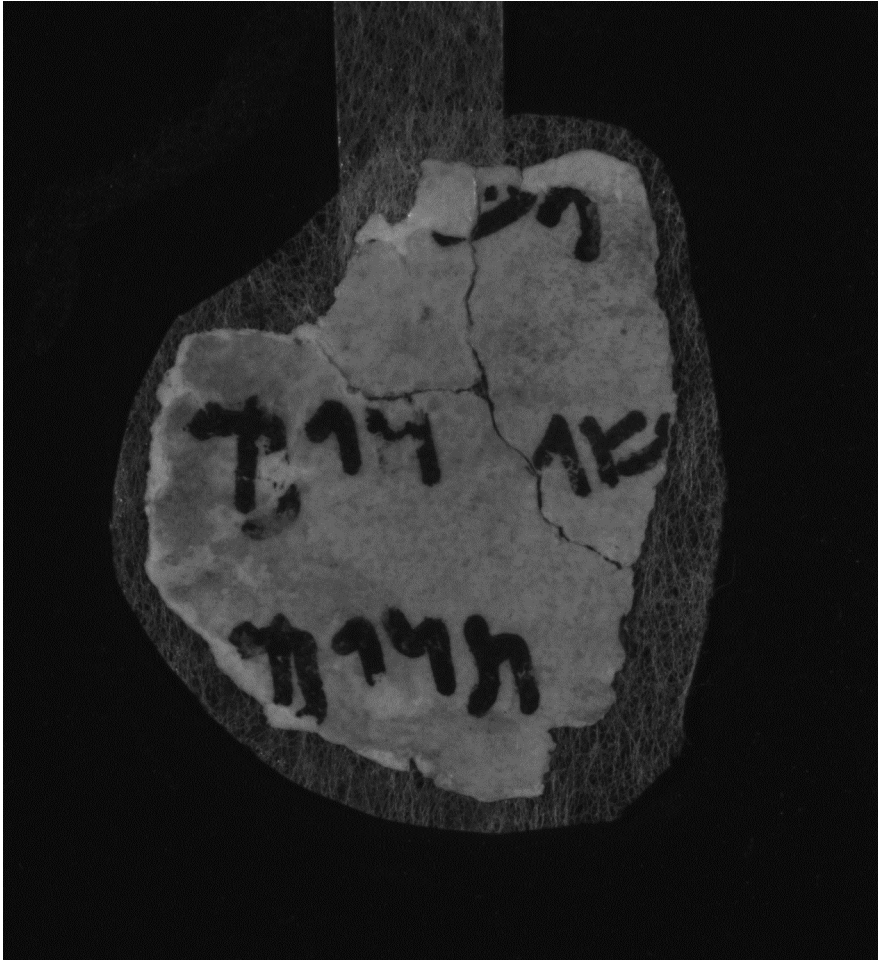


Fig. 1. 4Q405 (ShirShab^f) frg. 32 (courtesy of the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, Israel Antiquities Authority; photo: Shai Halevi¹⁸)

17. M. Z. Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira ha-Šalem* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1958), 16 (of the Hebrew pagination). Noam Mizrahi (Tel-Aviv University) informs me that in fact Segal “attempted to revitalize תמור and employed it occasionally in his Hebrew publications instead of תמורה or תחת (in the sense of ‘instead of’). This initiative, however, was not very successful [as I do not recall] anyone else using this form in Modern Hebrew” (email, 10 July 2016). For an example of such usage, see M. Z. Segal, “Ha-Pizmon ba-Šira ha-Miqra’it,” *Tarbiz* 6 (5695 / 1934–1935), 127 (last line).

18. Also available online at the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library at <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-364884>.

But since the form there is clearly a final *mem*, one will assume that this completes the word, hence, תרום. Caution is advised, since Qumran scribes occasionally used final *mem* in medial position (and even in initial position, albeit more rarely),¹⁹ but such instances are rare, so that the default reading at 4Q405 32.3 is clearly תרום (and not [תרום]ה).²⁰

In short, Irvine's comment that "כתבונם lacks the support of even one other attestation of the form"²¹ (by which, I assume, he means the morphology in general, not this specific noun) is correct for BH proper,²² but not for ancient Hebrew generally when late Second Temple period sources are incorporated into the picture.²³

2. MESOPOTAMIAN (AND OTHER) PARALLELS

The full context of Hos. 13:2 is: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסֶּכֶה מִכֶּסֶפֶם כְּתִבּוֹנָם עֲצָבִים מֵעֵשֶׂה חֲרָשִׁים בְּלֶה: "and they made for themselves, molten-images from their silver according to their understanding, idols, the work of craftsmen all of it."²⁴ That is to say, the images are the products of craftsmen who typically use their skill and understanding for the benefit of humanity, but in this case have done so for the manufacture of idols. All of this, of course, is a typical prophetic critique of the worship of idols, both in Israel (especially notable in Hosea) and in surrounding lands, in particular Babylonia (as manifested in Second Isaiah).²⁵

The main point to be presented here is that the skill and understanding of craftsmen engaged in the production of cultic venues and objects (ranging from temples to idols) is noted throughout Mesopotamian literature—so that תבון 'understanding' makes perfect sense within the context of Hos. 13:2.

19. Eric D. Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 34–35.

20. And such is the reading in all the major editions of 4Q405: Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 343–44; eadem, "Shirot 'Olat HaShabbat," in *Qumran Cave 4/VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (DJD XI; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 370; James H. Charlesworth and Carol A. Newsom, *Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (PTSDSSP 4B; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 98; and Emanuel Tov, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), op. cit.

21. Irvine, "Idols כתבונם," 512.

22. It is worth noting that the two most comprehensive grammars of Biblical Hebrew do not treat our word: Emil Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910); and Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991). For two works which do mention the form, see Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1922; reprint: Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1991), 599, where it is dismissed as a "Schreibfehler"; and William Henry Green, *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language* (New York: John Wiley, 1861), 217, where it is listed as תבון 'understanding' along with several other *t*-preformative "abstract terms," as if it were a perfectly acceptable form.

23. This is one of the stellar advantages of *DCH*. Hence, as one would expect, both of the aforementioned lexemes receive a lemma in vol. 8: [תמוּר] on p. 640, and [תְּרוּם] on p. 675, both with vocalization and both within brackets. Note, however, that תבון is subsumed under standard תבונה (*DCH*, 8.587). Perhaps this would be the appropriate time and place for me to soften some of the tone and criticism employed in my review of *DCH* upon the appearance of the first volume in 1993; see Gary A. Rendsburg, "The Sheffield Dictionary of Classical Hebrew," review essay in *AJS Review* 21 (1996): 111–18. With the completion of the dictionary with vol. 8, published in 2011, I assume that I speak for many when I express deep appreciation to David J. A. Clines and his staff for this impressive accomplishment.

24. My translation is admittedly a bit awkward, but I have followed the Masoretic punctuation, as is my wont.

25. See Michael B. Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Michael B. Dick (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 1–53. For a recent treatment of one key passage, see Noam Mizrahi, "A Matter of Choice: A Sociolinguistic Perspective on the Contact between Hebrew and Aramaic, with Special Attention to Jeremiah 10.1–16," in *Discourse, Dialogue, and Debate in the Bible: Essays in Honour of Frank H. Polak*, ed. Athalya Brenner-Idan (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 107–24, esp. 115–22.

In fact, all three of the classic texts put forward by Irvine as support for his proposed emendation include this trope. First, from the well-known Shamash Tablet from the reign of Nabu-apla-iddina (c. 888–855 BCE), col. IV, ll. 12–20:²⁶

To fashion that image, he (the king) directed his attention. Then through the craft (*nēmequ*) of Ea, by the skill (*šipru*) of Ninildu . . . the image of Shamash, the great lord, he (the king) carefully prepared.²⁷

Second, from the Erra Epic (eighth century BCE), Tablet II, col. 1, ll. 34–35, one reads as follows:

He himself [sc. Marduk] gave those same (human) craftsmen great discretion (*libbu rapšu*) and authority, He gave them wisdom (*uznu*) and perfect dexterity.²⁸

Next, consider the following passage (indeed one directly quoted by Irvine) from the Renewal of the Gods from the reign of Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE) (Borger §53 AsBbA Rev. ll. 18–19):

Endow the skilled (*enqūti*)²⁹ craftsmen whom you ordered to complete the task with as high an understanding (*uznu*) as Ea, their creator. Teach them skills (*lē'ūtu*) by your exalted work; make all their handwork succeed through the craft of Ninshiku.³⁰

One may cite additional illustrations of this trope in Mesopotamian texts, for example, Incantation Tablet 3 of the *mīs pī* ritual, ll. 65ab–68ab (with major ellipsis):

This statue of [. . . (a list of about ten different stones) . . .] by the skill (*šip[ir]*) of the *gurgurru*-craftsman.³¹

Or the following from Incantation Tablet 4 of the same series, l. 13ab, with reference to the dais within the temple:

He completed it with accomplished craftsmanship (*kintillū*).³²

26. In general, I cite the relevant Akkadian words in their absolute or unbound forms, thus to allow the interested reader to consult these terms in the standard dictionaries. For the two exceptions, see below, nn. 29 and 31.

27. Translation of Christopher Walker and Michael B. Dick, “The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian *mīs pī* Ritual,” in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth*, 62–63; and Christopher Walker and Michael B. Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian mīs pī Ritual* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001), 23. See also Victor Hurowitz, “The ‘Sun Disk’ Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina (2.135),” *COS* 2: 364–68. For the most recent thorough treatment, see Christopher E. Woods, “The Sun-God Tablet of Nabû-apla-iddina Revisited,” *JCS* 56 (2004): 23–103, with the cited lines on 85–86.

28. Translation of Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 2nd ed. (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1996), 2.769. See also Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 294; and eadem, “Erra and Ishum (1.113),” *COS* 1: 409. For a study of this portion of the epic, see F. N. H. al-Rawi and Jeremy Black, “The Second Tablet of ‘Išum and Erra,’” *Iraq* 51 (1989): 111–22, with our lines cited on 114–15.

29. The citation form of this word is *emqu*.

30. Translation of Walker and Dick, “The Mesopotamian *mīs pī* Ritual,” 64–65, cited by Irvine on p. 515. For standard editions of the text, see Riekle Borger, *Die Inschriften Asarhaddons, Königs von Assyrien* (Graz: Archiv für Orientforschung, 1956), 79–85, with these lines appearing on p. 82; and Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680–669 BC)* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 104–9, with these lines (now numbered as 70–72) appearing on p. 107. For another phrase from the same text, see further below.

31. Translation of Walker and Dick, *Induction of the Cult Image*, 150–51. The citation of the Akkadian word here constitutes an exception to what I stated above in n. 26. The text is broken at this point, and hence I have registered the restored bound form *šip[ir]*, and not the absolute or unbound form *šipru*.

32. A loanword from Sumerian into Akkadian; cf. *CAD* K, 388–89. Translation of Walker and Dick, *Induction of the Cult Image*, 188.

See further the reference to LÚ.UM.ME.A.MEŠ *mudūti* ‘skilled craftsmen’ (thus Walker and Dick), though more literally ‘knowledgeable craftsmen’ (in Assur Tablet A.418 [*Tot und Leben* 27], l. 18), who are responsible for the repair of a damaged image; and *ummāni lē’ūti* ‘skilled artisans’ in the aforementioned Renewal of the Gods inscription from the reign of Esarhaddon (Borger, §53, AsBbA Rev. line 29).³³

One could continue in this fashion, multiplying illustrative texts, and/or one could peruse the relevant entries (see the italicized words in the citations above) in *CAD* for sample passages. But this inventory of texts should suffice for the main point being made here.

The biblical authors employ the same approach, for both Bezalel (fashioner of the Tabernacle) and Hiram (architect of the Temple) are endowed with חֵכְמָה ‘wisdom’, תְּבוּנָה ‘understanding’, and דַּעַת ‘knowledge’ relevant to artisanry and craftsmanship (see Exod. 31:3, 35:13, for the former; 1 Kings 7:14 for the latter). In light of such passages, the sense of Hos. 13:2, especially the key word כְּתִבּוּנָם seems abundantly clear. The makers of idols do so ‘according to their understanding’, even though the results of their efforts are for naught.³⁴ Note further the classical text in Isa. 44:9–20, especially its description of the craftsmen לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יִבְיִנוּ “they do not know, and they do not understand” (v. 18) and לֹא דַעַת וְלֹא תְבוּנָה “and no knowledge and no understanding” (v. 19), which turn the notion of ‘understanding’ on its head.

Let us also recall here that the name of the Ugaritic god of arts-and-crafts, Kothar-wa-Ḥasis (responsible for Ba’al’s palace, etc.), means literally ‘skill’ (*kt̪r*) and ‘knowledge’ (*ḥss*). For the former, see especially Hebrew כֶּשֶׁרׁוֹן ‘skill’ (Qoh. 2:21, 4:4) (BDB, 507; *HALOT*, 503; *DCH*, 4.471); for the latter see especially Akkadian *ḥasāsu* ‘to be intelligent, understanding’ (amongst other meanings, though always within the same semantic field of mental capacity) (*CAD* Ḥ, 124).

Note further the epithet which Homer ascribes to Hephaistos, the god of arts-and-crafts in the Greek realm, to wit, Πολύμητις ‘of many counsels’ (*Iliad* 21.355) (LSJ, 1440).

We have less evidence forthcoming from Egypt, though we should make mention of the Stele of Irtisen, c. 2000 BCE (Louvre C14), in which this ‘overseer of craftsmen’ (*imī-r’ ḥmwtyw*) boasts of his skills as an artisan, including the statement, “I am a craftsman who excels at his art and has a superior level of knowledge” (l. 8).³⁵

Naturally, Irvine is correct that biblical texts also refer to the use of תְּבִנִית ‘design, blueprint’ for construction projects, both for the Tabernacle and the Temple writ large (Exod. 25:9, 1 Chr. 28:11–12, respectively) and for individual appurtenances thereto (Exod. 25:9,

33. The former text is treated most recently by Walker and Dick, *Induction of the Cult Image*, 228–45, with our passage on p. 233, and n. 26. For the standard editions of the latter text, see Borger, *Inscriptionen Asarhaddons*, 79–85 (per above, n. 30), with this passage on p. 83; and Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 104–9 (again, per above, n. 30), with this passage on p. 108 (now numbered as line 81).

34. Shalom Holtz (email communication, 30 October 2014) raises the excellent suggestion, “In your reading, does Hos 13:2 acknowledge the craftsmen as skilled, while, at the same time, mocking the result? Or should we emphasize the 3mpl suffix—hence ‘their understanding’—which is not divine understanding planted in their hearts, but rather their own human ability and knowledge. Note that the Akkadian passages specifically connect the craftsmen’s understanding to deities.” In this case we also may wish to raise the possibility that the form תְּבוּנָה is an intentionally coined word by the author, to indicate that something is awry, as a mockery of the idol-makers. Something close to this is suggested by Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB 24; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), 632. In adjoining sentences, these scholars state “the reference is to the stupidity of the people” and “it is also possible that *tēbûn* is a coined word,” though they do not connect the two thoughts directly.

35. Translation from the Louvre website: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/stele-master-craftsman-scribe-and-sculptor-irtysen>. For discussion, with an alternative translation, see Pierre Montet, *Everyday Life in Egypt*, tr. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop and Margaret S. Drower (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 158–59. See also Rosemarie Drenkhahn, “Artisans and Artists in Pharaonic Egypt,” in *CANE* 1: 339–40.

40, 2 Kings 16:10, 2 Chr. 28:18).³⁶ Moreover, as indicated, one may find Mesopotamian parallels to the use of a model for the manufacture of an image, for example, in the Shamash Tablet mentioned above—though not in the other two primary texts cited, as Irvine himself admitted. In fact, as the array of texts cited above demonstrates, when the production of images is mentioned in Mesopotamian texts, by and large it is the skill and wisdom of the craftsmen which is highlighted—and not the model or design. Parallels from Israel, Ugarit, Greece, and Egypt—while fewer in number—affirm this conclusion.³⁷

CONCLUSION

Given parallels both to the morphology of תִּבּוּן in Hos. 13:2 and to the sense of this verse from Mesopotamian and other ancient texts, to my mind there is no convincing reason to emend MT.³⁸ The evidence of the versions (LXX, Vulgate, Targum, Peshitta) is important testimony, but the presence of ‘design, model, etc.’ in these compositions should not serve as license to alter MT. In the words of Anthony Gelston, “It is often thought that the versions reflect a *Vorlage* כְּתִבְנִיּוֹת, but they may simply be guessing at the meaning of what is more probably a variant form of כְּתִבּוּנִים.”³⁹ I do not mean to suggest that the Septuagint reading should be dismissed outright, but rather that it (along with the other versions) should not be summoned as “evidence” in support of textual emendation of MT. Specialists in Septuagint (and the other ancient witnesses) should continue to study this important document for its own sake—but, to my mind, the research should remain there and should not be applied to MT.⁴⁰

As so often occurs within the field of biblical studies, a proposed emendation to a difficult reading in MT is shown to be unnecessary upon closer examination.⁴¹ In short, the text should stand.

36. Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 168–70.

37. While devoted more to temple-building than to the manufacture of idols, images, and statues, there is much to be gained relevant to the present study from reading Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House: Building and Wisdom in Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *From the Foundations to the Crenellations: Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Jamie Novotny (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 399–421.

38. For the sake of complete coverage, I here mention 4Q82 = 4QXII^g as the only potential Qumran manuscript to be of assistance, but this very fragmentary document skips from Hos. 13:1 ישׁרָאֵל to Hos. 13:7–8 אֲשׁוּרִי אֶפְנֶשֶׂם (last letter of v. 7 plus first word of v. 8). In short, nothing of v. 2 remains from this manuscript. With an eye to further completeness, I here note the three Cairo Geniza documents which contain our word: CUL T-S A16.3a 1v; CUL T-S AS 12.114 1v; and CUL T-S Misc.2.97 1r. All three read, not surprisingly, כְּתִבּוּנִים. To be more accurate, note that the second of these manuscripts reads כְּתִבּוּנִים[---], though even with the lacuna one may affirm the reading כְּתִבּוּנִים.

39. Anthony Gelston, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (BHQ 13; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010), 70* (see also 24). See further A. A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 522.

40. On the Septuagint as an independent ancient text, to be studied on its own merits, without necessarily applying it to the Hebrew Bible for text-critical purposes, see Hervé Tremblay, “Autonomie de la Septante,” in *Traduire la Bible Hébraïque / Translating the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Robert David and Manuel Jinbanchian (Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2005), 57–84. See also the programmatic essay by Anneli Aejmelaes, “What Can We Know about the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint?” *ZAW* 99 (1987): 58–59. The best monograph on the subject remains Emanuel Tov, *The Text-critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1997); see 261–63 for his statement on how to evaluate LXX evidence vis-à-vis MT.

41. For further illustrations of this approach, see Gary A. Rendsburg, “Psalm cx 3b,” *VT* 49 (1999): 548–53; Aaron D. Hornkohl, “Her Word versus His: Establishing the Underlying Text in 1 Samuel 1:23,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 465–77; and Gary A. Rendsburg, “Notes on 2 Kings 9:36–37,” *VT* 66 (2016): 317–23.