Among the varied interests of Albert Ehrman was the field of Hebrew lexicology. He contributed a number of studies to this area, increasing our knowledge of the meanings of Hebrew words and explicating difficult passages. Two of his articles dealt with the hapax legomenon מַשָּׂר in Mic. 6:14, in which Ehrman demonstrated that the word is to be interpreted on the basis of its Arabic cognates, either מַשָּׂר, "dirt, filth, soil", or מַשָּׂר, "urinate, defecate", and מַשָּׂר, "urine, excrement".

Either one of these meanings, "filth" or "excrement", fits the context in Mic. 6:14, though naturally the former cognate מַשָּׂר, adheres to the usual correspondence of Hebrew מַשָּׂר (י) to Arabic م (ش). Admittedly, however, we may easily repoint MT to מַשָּׂר and utilize the latter cognates מַשָּׂר, מַשָּׂר; or without altering MT we may posit a rare example of the atypical correspondence between Hebrew מ and Arabic ش. Regardless of which of these options is pursued, it is evident that Ehrman's interpretation of Mic. 6:14 is sound. Accordingly, it is a fitting memorial tribute to our lamented colleague to offer the present essay which builds on his foundation.

The foundation on which I build is not so much Ehrman's first article, "A Note on מַשָּׂר in Mic. 6:14", JNES 18 (1959):156, though he seems to have surrendered this idea fourteen years later (see the following note).

1These cognates are proposed in the second of Ehrman's articles, "A Note on Micah VI 14", VT 23 (1973):103-105, presumably superseding his earlier proposal (see preceding note).

2One clear example of מ is מַשָּׂר, "desire", for which see J. Blau, "'Weak' Phonetic Change and the Hebrew שטן", BAR 1 (1977):92.
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cle, but rather his second article which concluded that the Biblical Hebrew lexicon included a cognate to Arabic, "urinate, defecate", שָׁחַח, "urine, excrement". Additional etyma for this root, it should be noted, may also be found in two modern South-East Semitic languages. The first of these is Soqotri ṣḥḥ, "urinate",4 where the sibilant correspondence is the expected Modern South Arabian ʿ = Hebrew ʿ (ʿ) = Arabic ʿ (ṣ).5 As far as I am able to determine, the remaining South Arabian languages use different words for this action. In Harari, the nominal form is ṣḥḥ, "urine", and the verbal usage is ṣḥḥ ṣḥḥ, literally "make urine".6 The other Ethiopian languages all use different words for "urine (n.)/-ate (v.). Accordingly, Harari ṣḥḥ could be a borrowing from Arabic, especially since the Harari are Muslims and have many Arabic loanwords in their lexicon. Beyond Semitic we may note the following cognates in Cushitic: Bilin ṡgay, ṣgay, Qemant ṡgaŋ, Khamir ṣaq.7

We may now proceed to a discussion of those Biblical passages which, in addition to Mic. 6:14, exhibit the Hebrew root ḫv/ḵw meaning "urinate, defecate".8

Gen. 24:63 Isaac went out לָאָסָע in the field toward evening.

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5Ibid.:15.
7Ibid.
8One might object that our proposed Hebrew root is ḫv/ḵw and its Arabic (and Soqotri) etymon is ʿ ʿ ʿ geminatae... Furthermore, I admit to being unaware of any sure examples, where a hollow verb in Hebrew corresponds to a geminate verb in Arabic. One possible instance is the Hebrew hapax legomenon ṣḥḥ in Ps. 99:1. L. Kopf, "Arabisches Etymologien und Parallelen zum Bibelwörterbuch", VT 8 (1958):183, advanced Arabic ʿ, "jump", as a cognate. S. E. Loewenstamm, "Ugarit and the Bible. I", Biblica 56 (1975):107, building on the work of A. Schoors, "Literary Phrases", in L. R. Fisher, ed., Ras Shamra Parallels I, Rome 1972:26-27, connected Ugaritic ṭṭ, "shake". See further F. E. Greenspahn, Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew, Chico, CA 1984:135. Regardless of this example, it is well known that within Hebrew itself the two verb classes of ḫv/ḵw and ʿ ʿ ʿ geminatae often interchange; cf. P. Jouon, Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique, Rome 1923:171, 183. Accordingly, there should be no objection to correlating Arabic ṣḥḥ and Hebrew ḫv/ḵw.
This verse is an old crux. The most popular translation of throughout the ages is "to meditate", first evinced in LXX's ἀδολεσχίζω, Onqelos' נָהָב, and Vulgate's ad meditandum, and lately attested in JPSV and RSV. The basis for this rendering is comparison with ṣנָב with recognition of the not uncommon interchange between IIω and IIυ verbs. The second commonest translation of is "to walk about", seen first in Peshītta's imḥlkω and more recently in NJPSV (with a footnote "others 'to meditate'; meaning of Heb uncertain"), JB, and TEV. The basis for this rendering, at least among the moderns, is the Arabic connate ḥḥ, which, however, entails moving the diacritic in MT to form ṣ instead of ṣ, to gain the usual correspondence of ṣ = ḫ. Other exegetes, not willing to accept either of these definitions, have sought other etymologies or have emended the text.

G. R. Driver rightly questioned all previous interpretations and brought us a step closer to proper elucidation of the verse. He noted that also occurs in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the Manual of Discipline (1QS) 7:15, amidst a discussion of proper etiquette: "and he who draws out his left hand with it shall be punished for ten days". Driver accepted Ralph Marcus' conclusion that should be read with and be translated "to dig a hole" for the purpose of excreting.
In light of the aforementioned Arabic cognates خُثْحُ، خَخْ، however, it is better to read נֶשֶׁב in 1QS 7:15 as לָדָע and translate it either "defecate" or "urinate". If yād meant "penis" here, which additional meaning it bears in Hebrew and Ugaritic,\(^\text{14}\) then "urinate" would be the clear choice. However, the passage states specifically "the left yād" which rules out this possibility, there being only one penis per male. The explanation for the left hand is that this is the hand traditionally used for bodily functions in the Near East. Driver himself noted several passages in rabbinic literature which specifically connect the left hand with excretion (B. Ber. 62a, AdRN 40, etc.),\(^\text{15}\) and the same holds true in traditional Arab culture to this day.\(^\text{16}\)

Marcus and Driver were on the right track, but instead of לָדָע, "to dig a hole", we should read נֶשֶׁב as לָדָע in 1QS 7:15 and accept MT in Gen. 24:63 without alteration of even the diacritical mark on theuspended. Interestingly, a marginal note in NEB, a version in the pages of which Driver's influence is strongly visible, suggests "to relieve himself" as a possible translation of מַעְפִּיל in Gen. 24:63. Did NEB adopt this because its translators realized לָדָע bore this meaning based on its Arabic cognates, or was it simply easier and shorter than "to dig a hole for excrement"?\(^\text{17}\)

Edward Ullendorff has objected to the NEB marginal note on the grounds that Isaac's "relieving himself would not be improper; it would be wholly inappropriate".\(^\text{18}\) Ullendorff adduces no empirical evidence, rather he is apparently guided merely by his Textgefühl. But as his own article so brilliantly illustrates, there are other instances in the Bible where apparent bawdiness is not easily explained or where the exact intention of the author is not readily apparent. Perhaps irony


\(^{15}\)Driver, "Problems of Interpretation in the Heptateuch", p.67, fn.1.

\(^{16}\)See, for example, E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, London 1842:134, 187.

\(^{17}\)Driver's suggestion is also accepted by E. H. Maly, "Genesis", *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1968:25.

or "shock value" (to use a contemporary term) was his desire, or perhaps, assuming that the chapter faithfully records the events of the lives of the characters involved, this actually happened, coincidence of coincidences!

Recognition of lāšu‘āh = "urinate, defecate" based on Arabic šchina, ṣhīna, also permits us to retain MT. There is certainly no need to emend the consonantal text, nor is it necessary even to move the diacritical mark (as both Nöldeke's and Driver's solutions require). MT may stand as it is. To my knowledge, E. Ben Yehuda's Thesaurus is the only work which previously has connected the Hebrew and Arabic roots and properly interpreted both Gen. 24:63 and IQS 7:15.¹⁹ Numerous commentaries and translations of Genesis have neglected this proposal, but in view of the foregoing discussion it should be accorded full consideration.²⁰

I Kings 18:27

When it was noon, Elijah taunted them and said, "Shout in a loud voice, for he is a god! ki štay או כ-ס-ל, or he may be on a journey, ויהי: or perhaps he is sleeping or waking up.

This verse appears in the story of the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The words left untranslated are apparently a hendiadys, perhaps reflected in the LXX's use of but one word, namely ἄδολεσχες, where MT shows two. This situation led Driver to conclude that ישבע was a secondary gloss used to explain the euphemism ישבע.²¹ Conversely, Müller proposed that ישבע was original and that ישבע was included secondarily as an alternative spelling of the same word (presuming early spirantization of /g/ to [v]).²²


²⁰Two further points: in light of the conclusion to translate ישבע as "defecate, urinate", (a) it is ironic that R. Yose bar Hanina (B. Ber. 26b) deduced Isaac's institution of the Minhāh service from this passage (based on the notion that ישבע means "to meditate" as reflected in the ancient versions), and (b) it is comical to read E. A. Speiser, Genesis, Garden City, NY, 1964:185: "If we knew the meaning of the key verb in vs.63 (Heb. לַעֲבָר), we might have a further clue to Isaac's personality".

²¹Driver, "Problems of Interpretation in the Heptateuch":67.

²²Müller, "Die hebräische Wurzel ישבע":369.
But both of these text-critical solutions may be shelved if we posit גַּּלֶּשׁ as a hendiadys. The use of this literary device enables us to translate these words. The latter verb, גַּלֶּשׁ (usually גַּלֶּשׁ) bears the meaning "go aside, move away", and may also be related to the noun גַּלֶּשׁ, "dross", i.e., that which is removed or set aside. For what purpose would Baal have gone aside? Targum Yonatan renders גַּלֶּשׁ with which has been viewed as a euphemism for "eased himself". The traditional Jewish exegetes, Rashi and others, concur that Baal's sidetrip is for the purposes of excreting. Since גַּלֶּשׁ and גַּלֶּשׁ are paired in the hendiadys, they should share the same meaning or at least refer to the same happening. Accordingly, גַּלֶּשׁ means "defecate" or "urinate" in this passage, especially in light of its Arabic cognates and the entire expression גַּלֶּשׁ is to be translated "he went aside to excrete".

Nor is this the only reference to Baal and excrement in ancient li-

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23 The Hebrew text of Sir. 13:26 reverses the two words with גַּלָּשׁוֹ and J. Gray, I & II Kings, Philadelphia 1970:397, claims that the Greek text has one word, χευτάται, "to be busy", but frankly I am unable to confirm this reading in any works available to me. The standard editions of the Greek Bible lack said reading and it is wanting in E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, Oxford 1897. Regardless, Gray is correct in treating the two words in I Kings 18:27 as synonyms. In the discussion which follows I make no attempt to interpret in Sir. 13:26; the context suggests something other than "defecate, urinate" for this expression.

24 M. Jastrow, A Dict. of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, New York 1903, Vol. II:1525.


26 Again this is noted already by Ben Yehuda, הַעֲשָׂרַת הַנְּחָלָה, Vol. 16:7552.
terature. Marvin Pope\textsuperscript{27} has called attention to the rabbinic description of ceremonial defecation in the cult of Baal Peor (see B. Av. Zar. 44b, B. Sanh. 60b, M. Sanh. 7:6 [cited by Pope], as well as Sifre Numbers 131, Y. Sanh. 10:2, 28d). Pope's caution on whether this detail stems "from direct knowledge of the pagan cult" or "from play on one of the meanings of the word $\rho\omega\gamma$" is admirable. Now, however, recognition of the allusion to excrement in I Kings 18:27 may tilt the scales in favor of Pope's former suggestion (notwithstanding the assumption that Baal worship took on different manifestations in different locales, that is to say, that the worship of Baal on Mt. Carmel need not \textit{a priori} have been the same at Baal Peor in Transjordan). We may even reverse the thinking of Pope's latter suggestion and propose that the name Baal Peor is to be derived from $\gamma\nu\sigma$ ($\rho\omega\rho$) "excrete".\textsuperscript{28}

Pope raises the issue of ceremonial defecation in the cult of Baal Peor in connection with explicit reference in a Ugaritic tablet (RS.24.258) to El's floundering in excrement and urine. It is interesting to note that El in the Ugaritic texts occasionally corresponds to Baal in the Bible and elsewhere. For example, El is paired with Asherah at Ugarit, but in the Bible Baal and Asherah are collocated in Judg. 6:25-30, I Kings 16:32, II Kings 17:16, 21:3, 23:4, etc. (albeit usually as $\text{n}^\text{h}^\text{b}^\text{b}^\text{a}^\text{c}^\text{a}^\text{l}$ and $\text{n}^\text{h}^\text{a}^\text{a}^\text{q}^\text{s}^\text{h}^\text{a}^\text{r}^\text{h}$). In \textit{UT} Cnt:III:43 we read of $\text{i}^\text{l} \text{z}^\text{b}^\text{b}^\text{b} = \text{El-zebub}$, which reverberates as Baal-zebub in the Bible (II Kings 1:2-3, 1:6, 1:16; see also Matt. 12:24 and Mark 3:22 in the New Testament)\textsuperscript{29} (notwithstanding the use of $\text{z}^\text{b}^\text{l}$, "prince", as an epithet of Baal in the Ugaritic texts, which may have been corrupted to $\text{z}^\text{b}^\text{b}$ in the Bible). Moreover, studies have shown that Baal-hammon and Baal-shamen of Phoeni-
cian and Punic religion are not to be identified with Baal of Ugarit, rather with El of Ugarit. All of this goes to show that what we know of El in the Ugaritic texts may be associated with Baal further south, e.g., among the Canaanites with whom Elijah tackling atop Mt. Carmel.

We know that El defecates at Ugarit, and now we can confirm the same for Baal in I Kings 18:27.

Again Driver was on the right track but again he concluded that ניו in I Kings 18:27 should be repointed to נו, with the meaning "to dig a hole", used euphemistically for defecating. The correspondence of שקח, and נו/נוי, however allows us to retain MT. We need simply posit a IIw/Iiy interchange as occurs commonly in Biblical Hebrew.

Thus in Gen. 24:67 the root נוי is used and in I Kings 18:27 the root ני is used.

Isa. 5:25 Thus YHWH's anger was roused against his people, and he stretched out his arm against them and struck them; so that the mountains quaked, and their corpses became like סָחַה in the middle of the streets; and with all this, his anger is not turned back and his arm is still outstretched.

The word סָחַה, which occurs only here in Biblical Hebrew, is usually

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31 Cf. Oden, "Ba'al Samen and 'El":473.

32 Driver, "Problems of Interpretation in the Pentateuch":67. Driver's position is accepted by Gray, I & II Kings:398. See also L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, Leiden 1953:919, who define ני in I Kings 18:27 as "has to relieve himself/ hat ein 'Geschäft' (Notdurft)". Oddly, NEB reads "it may be he is in deep thought, or engaged", with apparently no recognition of Driver's proposal.

33 This entire line of argumentation is wanting in the brief note by L. Heyman, "A Note on I Kings 18:27", JNES 10 (1951):57-58. Heyman translated נו as "vegetation" (cf. Gen. 2:5) and considered it a reference to Baal as the god of fertility. But this approach does not fit the context, which has Elijah mocking the deity and not recounting his attributes.
translated "refuse, filth". The etymon cited in the standard dictionaries is Arabic "scrape off, clear away". The connection between the two notions is spurious, however, and in light of our discussion so far it is more appropriate to connect נְפֶּה with נְפֶּה and its Arabic cognates. Accordingly, in נְפֶּה the א stands for original, i.e., etymological or historical, א, as occurs frequently enough in Biblical Hebrew. Furthermore, notwithstanding the common metaplas- sm between IIω/y and IIIy (=IIλ) roots, נְפֶּה is the feminine nominal formation expected from a IIω/y Qal root such as נְפֶּה/ה. Additional support for נְפֶּה = "excrement" is forthcoming from the LXX which renders the term with κοξεία "dunghill" and the Vulgate which renders it with stercus "dung". Moreover, Targum Yonatan renders נְפֶּה with the cognate נְפֶּה, which is elsewhere utilized to translate Hebrew כְּלָל, "dung", in Zeph. 1:17 (Vulg. stercora [pl.], LXX βόδι, "cow-dung" [pl.]). As an aside, mention should be made of the attempt by some exegetes to repoint or emend נְפֶּה in Job 9:31 to נְפֶּה or נְפֶּה, the presumed plural of נְפֶּה in Isa. 5:25 (with א, not א). This alteration

34 Although נְפֶּה occurs only in Isa. 5:25, it is not generally classified as a hapax legomenon (note its absence from the study of H. R. Cohen, Biblical Hapax Legomena in the Light of Akkadian and Ugaritic, Missoula, Mont. 1978, including his "Composite List of Biblical Hapax Legomena Isolated in the Middle Ages",:101-105) because most scholars connect it with forms from the root נְפֶּה; cf., e.g., Brown, Driver, and Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament:691; and Rashi, ad loc.


37 Note the following feminine nouns derived from IIω roots: נְפֶּה (Neh. 3:36) from רָדָה, נְפֶּה (Prov. 23:21) from מָלַל, נְפֶּה (I Sam. 25:31) from מַלָּל, נְפֶּה (Ezek. 43:11 [tris]) from מַלָּל, נְפֶּה (Isa. 30:15) from מַלָּל, נְפֶּה (Jer. 2:6, 18:20, 18:22, Prov. 22:14, 23:27) from נְפֶּה.


of MT is forwarded on the basis of LXX's ἐν ἁρπαγῇ and Vulgate's sordibus. This is conceivable, but one must concur with those commentators who reject the proposal as gratuitous.\(^{40}\)

A second aside is the use of ἔναρξ in Lam. 3:45, which is often connected with ἐπικράσιον.\(^{41}\) The word is paired with ὀμφαλός "refuse", so it could feasibly be related to ἔμθωσι and ἱππος. However, I am inclined to derive the noun from ἔμθωσι, "scrape away" (cf. Arabic حصر) as is customary. Etan Levine has called attention to the LXX's καμπύσαω με καὶ ἀπακαταστάλω at Lam. 3:45, which he suspects "is a euphemism, rather than a scribal error".\(^{42}\) But this odd Greek expression can be seen as a clumsy rendering of "refuse/rejection", the literal meanings respectively of ἔναρξ and ἔμθωσι.

From a formal perspective, whereas ἔμθωσι is to be derived from a IIω/υ Qal root such as ἔμθωσι, ἔναρξ is the nominal formation expected from a IIIυ (= IIIυ) root such as ἔποος.\(^{43}\)

Prov. 23:29:

Who cries "woe!" who cries "alas!",
who has strife, who has ꬳאבַע,
who has wounds for naught,
who has darkness of eyes?

The questions asked in this verse are answered in the following verse:

They who linger over wine,
they who experiment with mixed wine.

Clearly Prov. 23:29 is a poetic description of the effects of too much alcohol. The word left untranslated, מים, is usually rendered "com-
plaint, raving, anxiety" or the like. While any of these may possibly result from drunken stupor, I would propose that "excrement" is more fitting. One should note that the first three cola deal with psychological effects of inebriation. Since the final two cola deal with physical effects, הֲפִיךְ should be similarly interpreted to give balance to the verse, with "defecation, urine" the most logical choice. The association between intoxication and excrement was known to the ancients, as evidenced by RS.24.258 from Ugarit (discussed above) and Isa 28:7-8 where הֲפִיךְ "excrement", results from drunkenness.44

Versional support for הֲפִיךְ in Prov. 23:29 meaning "excrement" is forthcoming from the Targum in the Complutensian Polyglot which reads תַּעְם (טֶמֶל), interpreted by M. Jastrow as "dirt, disgusting matter".45 Although this polyglot dates from 1514-1517, it is surmised that its editors utilized ancient manuscripts as they so claim.46 Other manuscripts and editors read אַשְׁרָי (אָשָּׁר), which Jastrow translates "nasty secretion, vomit", based on Syriac מֶשֶׁכִּי.47 J. Levy is more noncommittal in translating אַשְׁרָי simply as "Schlechtes",48 apparently based on the Peshitta's הבש at Prov. 23:29.49 But regardless of how אַשְׁרָי is to be understood, it is clear that the Targumists recognized that הֲפִיךְ in MT has no connection with its usual meaning of "converse" (as the extended meanings "complaint, raving, anxiety" noted above purport) and that it should not be seen as parallel to אַשְׁרָי (אָשָּׁר), "contentions" either. On the contrary, אַשְׁרָי may intend a physical function, which is certainly the case with Aramaic אַשְׁרָי (with א for etymological א, as with Hebrew אַשְׁרָי in Isa 5:25), cognate to Arabic شَخَخ/شَخَخ.
SUMMARY

With the exception of a brief note in Ben Yehuda's *Thesaurus*, it was Albert Ehrman who first proposed that the ancient Hebrew lexicon included a cognate to Arabic *

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With the exception of a brief note in Ben Yehuda's *Thesaurus*, it was Albert Ehrman who first proposed that the ancient Hebrew lexicon included a cognate to Arabic "urinate, defecate", and "urine, excrement". Apart from in Mic. 6:14, which Ehrman analyzed, there are four instances in the Bible which affirm this conclusion. נַצִּי in Gen. 24:63, נֵפֶשׁ in I Kings 18:27, נַפְסָךְ in Isa. 5:25, and נֶפֶשׁ in Prov. 23:29, are to be clarified on the basis of the above Arabic cognates. Additionally, נַפֶּשׁ in 1QS 7:15 is to be understood as "to urinate, to defecate". The interpretation of these passages is defended in each case by the context, and in three instances there is additional support from the ancient versions.

EXCURSUS: An Egyptian Cognate to Hebrew נַפְסָךְ, Arabic שֵׁלֶס

Egyptian *

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Yet another possible cognate to our Hebrew and Arabic words, but there is one phonetic difficulty. Egyptian $ corresponds to Arabic $ and hence to Hebrew $ in several instances, so this is unproblematic. The difficulty lies in equating Egyptian $ with Arabic $, there being no parallel in all of Egypto-Semitic. Egyptian $ (sign S29, the folded cloth) can correspond to Arabic $ and Hebrew $, e.g., $ = נַפָּס = שֵׁלֶס, "lip"), but Egyptian $ (sign 034, the bolt) usually corresponds to Semitic $ (e.g., $ = זֶבָּה = פּוֹלֵחъ, "wolf"). Without a suitable parallel, one must conclude that נַפָּס = נַפְסָךְ שֵׁלֶס represent a sui generis correspondence or that the similarity is coincidental.

If the three are related, the different forms of the verbs present no problem. We may simply propose an original biliteral which appears with initial $ in Egyptian, as a so-called hollow root in Hebrew, and as a geminate in Arabic. Egyptian initial $ roots can correspond to so-called hollow roots in Semitic, e.g., Egyptian $ = נַפָּס (Hiphil), "answer", or to geminate verbs, e.g., Egyptian $ = אָבֵל = Akkadian אֵבָא, "pure, clean".

If the three are not related, then we may wish to defer to Otto Rössler's suggestion which compares נַפָּס and Arabic $, "wetness, moisture".52


51Sign numbers are according to the system of A. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford 1957.

52Rössler, "Das Ägyptische als semitische Sprache":303.