The Semantics of Silence in Biblical Hebrew

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Abstract: **The Semantics of Silence in Biblical Hebrew**

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This thesis examines how silence was understood by speakers of biblical Hebrew. Using the biblical books, Ben Sira, Dead Sea Scrolls, and inscriptions, it evaluates how seven lexemes referring to silence were used. Each reference was examined for clues to meaning, using syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, parallels, glosses, antonyms, and causal relations. The early versions (Greek, Latin, Aramaic, Syriac) were consulted to see if they might shed further light on ancient understandings of these words. Semitic languages were also surveyed for potential cognates that might reveal diachronic semantic development.

The chosen lexemes divided into two related domains: restraint (of sound, of action) and cessation (of sound, of motion, of life). Part 1 covers words indicating restraint: 1) חרשׁ refers to not speaking and not hearing (deafness), as well as not acting when expected to. Its counterpart is 2) אלם, referring to muteness or being restrained from speech, while 3) חשׂה can also refer to restraint of both speech and action.

Part 2 covers words indicating cessation: 4a) דמם refers to cessation of motion; 4b) דמה to cessation of life. From these roots arise many derived forms of uncertain meaning (4c): i) דּוּמָה and ii) דֶּמָה, likely referring to the place of the dead; iii) דֶּמִיה/דּוּמִיָּה, possibly referring to rest; iv) דּוּמָם, ‘silent’ or ‘immobile’; v) דָּמִי, perhaps rest or cessation; and vi) דְּמָמָה, probably ‘cessation’, but often translated ‘whisper’. Other roots related to cessation are: 5) הס, an interjection meaning ‘hush!’; 6) שׁתק, referring to cessation of commotion; and 7) סכת, a *hapax legomenon* meaning either ‘be silent’ or ‘listen’.

Part 3 briefly introduces peripheral words, primarily the closely related root שׁקט (8), referring to rest and peace. The periphery of the semantic field is briefly considered (9), along with צמת, which means ‘be silent’ in cognate languages.

The conclusion offers some observations about the field as a whole, describing how the lexemes overlap and differ. Tables and diagrams are offered to represent the richness and versatility of this field graphically.

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AHw	Soden, Wolfram von. Akkadisches Handwörterbuch. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-81.
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement
ANET3	Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament. Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AramB	The Aramaic Bible
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BASORSup	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research. Supplemental studies
BC	Biblischer Commentar
BDB	Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon, 1906.
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
Bib	Biblica
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BO	Bibliotheca Orientalis
Brenton	Brenton, Lancelot C. L. The English Translation of The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1844, 1851.
BS	Ben Sira
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

CAD	Gelb, Ignace J., et al., eds. The Assyrian Dictionary. 21 vols. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956-2010.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
DCH	Clines, David J. A., ed. The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic; Sheffield Phoenix, 1993-2016.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DRA	Douay-Rheims
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EIN	Einheitsübersetzung
ELB	Elberfelder
ESV	English Standard Version
fs / fpl	feminine singular / feminine plural
Ges18	Gesenius, Wilhelm. Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch. 18th edition. 7 vols. Berlin: Springer, 2013.
GK	Gesenius, Wilhelm. Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A.E. Cowley. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2006; orig. 1910.
HALOT	Köhler, L., and W. Baumgartner. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament. Translated by M.E.J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994-2000; 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IOSCS	International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
IOSOT	International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament
JBA	See Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic.

JBQ	Jewish Bible Quarterly
J-M	Joüon, P. A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993.
JPA	See Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KAI	Donner, H., and W. Röllig. Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften. 5th ed. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2002.
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KJV/AV	King James Version/Authorised Version
KTU3	Dietrich, Manfried, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten. 3rd ed. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013.
LBA	La Biblia de las Américas
LSG	Louis Segond
ms / mpl	masculine singular / masculine plural
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NBK	Norsk Bokmål
NETS	Pietersma, Albert, and Benjamin G. Wright, eds. A New English Translation of the Septuagint. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
NIDOTTE	VanGemeren, Willem A. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis. 5 vols. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997.

NIV	New International Version
NJPS	Jewish Publication Society 1985 update
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale
RB	Revue Biblique
Rev. LUT	Revidierte Lutherbibel
RQ	Revue de Qumrân
RST	Russian Synodal Translation
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RVA	Reina Valera
SCH	Schlachter
SOTS	Society for Old Testament Study
SSS	Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Translation of TWAT by John T. Willis, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and David Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-2006.
THAT	Jenni, Ernst, and Claus Westermann. Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament. 2 vols. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971-76
TOB	Traduction œcuménique de la Bible
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments
TWAT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, George W. Anderson, and Helmer Ringgren. Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament. 10 vols. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970-2000.
TWOT	Archer, Gleason L., R. Laird Harris, and Bruce K. Waltke. Theological

	Wordbook of the Old Testament. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
TWQ	Fabry, Heinz-Josef, and Ulrich Dahmen. Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2011.
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Altertumskunde Syrien-Palästinas
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Introduction

But the silence in the mind
is when we live best, within
listening distance of the silence
we call God.
R.S. Thomas[1]

Where shall the word be found, where will the word
Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.
T.S. Eliot[2]

¡Y si después de tantas palabras,
no sobrevive la palabra!
César Vallejo[3]

The rest is silence.
Shakespeare[4]

A. Silence

Many predictable jokes are heard when one is working on the topic of silence: 'Surely that means you have nothing to say?' 'Will your pages all be blank?' The jokes show an uneasiness with a topic perceived to be defined only by absence. But can silence be defined simply as absence of noise? Can we speak—and write—of silence without violating its existence? As suggested by the above quotes, and as will become clear in this study, silence is much more than lack of sound, and there is much to say about it. A survey of recent publications from a variety of disciplines will show that I am not the only one who thinks so.

An on-line catalogue shows that the number of books containing the word 'silence' in the title have increased markedly over the past three decades. While in the 1980s such books averaged 200-300 per year, over the course of the 1990s the yearly total increased from

[1] From *Counterpoint* (1990), reprinted in Cotter, ed. *Etched by Silence*, 20.
[2] From 'Ash-Wednesday' (V), in *Selected Poems*, 90.
[3] 'And if after so many words, the word does not survive!' From *Poesía Completa*, 387; my translation.
[4] These are the last words of Hamlet before he dies (*Hamlet*, Act 5, Scene 2).

400 to 700 per year. In the 2000s it increased from 700 to 1000, and from 2010 onward, there have been close to 1000 such titles each year.[5] Silence is a theme also of drama,[6] music,[7] films,[8] art,[9] and poetry,[10] and the annual totals would have been much higher if titles of these works had also been included. The majority of these works with a title including the word 'silence' do not deal with the topic directly, but rather use the image of silence in some way to represent the contents of the book. An increasing number of books, however, do have silence as their main focus.[11]

Why this increasing interest in silence? Many would claim it is in response to the flood of noise in which we currently live. Complaints are made that entertainment, music, and sound bites clamour for our attention at every turn, not to mention the noises made by modern industry and technology. Whereas silence used to be commonplace, now it must be sought out or created.[12]

[5] Data from http://www.worldcat.org.
[6] Harold Pinter wrote a play called *Silence* (1969); Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) famously makes extensive use of silence in stage directions.
[7] Simon and Garfunkel are known for their popular song 'The Sound of Silence' (1964); 'Silentium' is the second movement of Arvo Pärt's 'Tabula Rasa' (1977); John Tavener wrote a piece called 'Towards Silence' (2007).
[8] The 2016 movie *Silence* (Martin Scorsese) portrays the persecution of Christians in 17th-century Japan. The very different 2015 documentary *In Pursuit of Silence* (Patrick Shen) examines the impact of noise on our lives, while the (again) different *Into Great Silence* (2005; Philip Gröning) portrays the mostly silent daily life of Carthusian monks. Dozens, if not hundreds, of other films also use 'silence' in the title.
[9] A recent piece of art entitled 'Silence' portrays the artist's grandmother suffering the effects of an illness causing her to lose her ability to speak (Bo Wang, 2016). It won second prize in the 2016 BP Portrait Award contest at the National Portrait Gallery, London.
[10] Silence is a perennial topic in poetry. To list just a few English-language examples, there are poems entitled 'Silence' by Thomas Hood, Marianne Moore, Edgar Allan Poe, e.e. cummings, and more, an 'Ode to Silence' by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and poems on silence in many other languages.
[11] A small selection is: Picard, *Die Welt des Schweigens* (1948); Dauenhauer, *Silence: The Phenomenon and Its Ontological Significance* (1980); Schmitz, 'Beredtes Schweigen' (1990); Maitland, *A Book of Silence* (2009); Turner, *The Power of Silence* (2014); Biguenet, *Silence* (2015).
[12] Prochnik, *In Pursuit of Silence*, 12, 18-19.

The image of silence can represent natural beauty and tranquillity, but it can also represent a negative silencing by death, abuse, or oppression.[13] Some use the image of silence to convey frustration with the creative process, particularly the poet's inability to create the desired poem. For the philosopher, it can represent the futility of words, the 'crisis of poetic means'.[14] In the climate of post-modernism, silence can represent the perceived meaninglessness of tradition, the emptiness of existence. It can also be a form of protest against authority, or against established and expected practice.[15]

Silence does, however, retain an ability to communicate reverence and depth of emotion.[16] It is frequently turned to for commemoration of the dead after tragedy.[17] It shows respect and also gravity, a recognition that no words can fully represent the depth of loss and feeling.

Silence is clearly not one thing, nor is it perceived in the same ways across cultures.[18] It contains unavoidable ambiguity, representing both absence and presence. As absence, it represents the lack of sound and speech; as presence, it can represent deep communion or listening. Without it, there can be no music or communicative speech, both of which rely

[13] See Sartre, 'La République du Silence' on oppression of military occupation; Jaworski on the silencing of women (*The Power of Silence,* 118-22); also Olsen's *Silences,* where she discusses the 'silences' of authors generally, but specifically of female authors. Silence also represents legal injustice, and ecological destruction (e.g., Carson, *Silent Spring*).
[14] Steiner, Language and Silence, 27.
[15] John Cage is well-known for his 4'33" (1952), a performance in which musicians do not play any instruments; he also published lectures and writings under the title *Silence* (1961). A similar silence is represented by Vasilisk Gnedov's 'Poem of the End' (1913) which, apart from the title, consists of a blank page.
[16] See Dinkler: 'Silence itself can communicate powerfully—it can express shame or fear, admiration or domination. Silence can signify protective or oppressive censorship, but it can also indicate resistance, or generate anticipation' (*Silent Statements,* 9).
[17] For an investigation into the origins of the moment of silence, see Prochnik, *In Pursuit of Silence*, 39-41.
[18] See Tannen and Saville-Troike, eds. *Perspectives on Silence*; cf. Samarin, 'Language of Silence', on cultural differences in the length of expected pauses between speech turns, also on eating in silence.

on the silences between sounds for their meaningfulness, and the silence of a listening ear.[19]

The image of silence thus has a seemingly inexhaustible fecundity. It is a mirror to whatever is in its presence. For the sorrowing, it shows deepest sorrow; for the joyful, it can be inexpressible joy. It can reflect ultimate peace and rest, or the most terrible destruction and anarchy. It can represent defiance or complicity, the injustice of the oppressed or the smug detachment of the privileged. It can represent unity, or harsh exclusion.[20] Silence is also a multi-faceted image in describing human relationship with the divine. It is often used as shorthand for contemplative prayer and the mystical pursuit of divine presence; yet it can imply God's perceived disinterest, even non-existence.

My own interest in the topic of silence developed while studying 20th-century poetry within the discipline of comparative literature. I was struck by how often the image of silence was used across cultures by poets, those whose very craft relied on the power of words. Silence expressed their inability to create as they wanted to: the poem they could not write, or the words that had lost their power. This use of the image of silence for creative frustrations in 20th-century poetry contrasted sharply with poetry of just a century before, in which the power of the word and poetry were lauded as being able to express the 'unsayable',[21] and silence represented creative potential. A few centuries prior, the

[19] Prochnik, *In Pursuit of Silence*, 11-12; Bruneau, 'Communicative Silences', 18. The interaction of speech with silence, and the role of silence in communication have been researched in a number of studies with a variety of disciplinary approaches. See, for example, Jaworski, *Silence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* and *The Power of Silence: Social and Pragmatic Perspectives*; see also Ephratt 'The Functions of Silence' and 'Linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic speech and silence'; Kurzon, 'Towards a Typology of Silence'; Jensen, 'Communicative Functions of Silence'.
[20] On silence communicating strong emotions, see Bruneau, 'Communicative Silences', 34.
[21] See especially Welhaven's 'Digtets Aand' (1844): 'what cannot be named by words...that shall poetry reveal' (my translation). It should be noted that by the mid-19th century, French poets had already begun to challenge the power of the written word.

poet-mystics John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila used silence to portray peace and union with the divine.[22]

When I turned to biblical studies, I was curious how the image of silence was used in the Hebrew Bible. An expression of futility similar to that of the 20th-century poets is found in Qohelet, but the image of silence is not used to convey it. Wanting to understand how silence was understood and used in the Hebrew Bible, I decided to do a lexical study on the different ways silence was represented, a list that includes a surprising number of lexemes, with a fair share of grammatical and interpretive difficulties. The list includes a *hapax legomenon* (סכת), potential but disputed byforms (דמם, דום, דמה), a case of polysemy or homonymy (חרשׁ), questionable grammatical classification and shifting of categories by analogy (הס), diachronic semantic development (חשׁה, אלם), questions on the influence of cognates on lexicographical tradition (esp. דמם, סכת), and a possible Aramaism or loanword (שׁתק).

I was also interested in semantics and lexicographical method: how do we define words, and what approaches are taken when evidence is limited, as it often is for biblical Hebrew? I became aware of the Semantics of Ancient Hebrew Database project (SAHD), and to some degree implemented their method in examining textual context (syntagmatic evidence), relations within the field (paradigmatic evidence), ancient versions, cognates, and secondary literature.[23]

This study, then, although germinating out of interest in the topic of silence more generally, does not treat those broader topics such as contemplative silence or silence as

[22] John of the Cross, for example, says God speaks in silence and also needs to be heard in silence (‘Puntos de amor’ 21, *Obra Completa*, 2:362).
[23] See the introduction to Muraoka, *Semantics of Ancient Hebrew*, ix-xii.

negative space. Instead, it is a lexical, text-based study on the ways in which biblical Hebrew represents silence, how its words overlap and differ from one another, and how the field as a whole differs from our own (modern English) understanding of silence.

Many other biblical silences could have been discussed but were left out if silence was not referred to by one of my chosen lexemes. Such a study would have included places in the text where a response is expected and none given (such as David's silence after Tamar's rape), the silences of women whose voices are not heard,[24] the narrator's withholding of information, God's lack of answer or deliverance, and many other types of textual 'silence', including gaps on the page.[25] It would have also had to include all collocations suggesting silence, such as 'did not hear', 'did not answer', and references to closed mouths and ears.

I am of course not the first to propose studying biblical silences.[26] Many have done so already from varying theological perspectives, some referring to the silence of God,[27] others to human experiences of silence. The cultic religion of Israel is portrayed as having

[24] Dinah's silence after her rape is treated by Blyth in *The Narrative of Rape in Genesis 34.*
[25] Ebach describes multiple silences: Cain is 'silent' in what seems to be a missing quotation of direct speech in Gen. 4:8 ('And Cain said to his brother Abel'), which results in Abel's 'silence' in death (*Beredtes Schweigen: Exegetisch-literarische Beobachtungen zu einer Kommunikationsform in biblischen Texten,* 23-24). Ebach elsewhere identifies other 'diverse and thoroughly oppositional forms and intentions' of silence: 'There is a beneficial silence and a deathly silence, a comfortable and a crippling silence. In the Bible demonic powers are reduced to silence, but human beings too, especially women, have to be reduced to silence. Silence can be ground for an accusation, but there is also silence in the face of an accusation' ('Silence in the Bible', 104).
[26] See the aforementioned Ebach, Beredtes Schweigen; also Neher, L'exil de la parole: Du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz; MacCulloch, Silence: A Christian History, 11-50; Dinkler, Silent Statements: Narrative Representations of Speech and Silence in the Gospel of Luke; Ross, Silence: A User's Guide, on the relationship between language and silence in biblical texts, and the suppression of silence.
[27] Korpel and de Moor's *The Silent God* surveys the topic in modern literature as well as in the Bible and ancient Near Eastern texts. They focus on the reasons for silence between humans and between God and humans. See also the response volume edited by Bob Becking, *Reflections on the Silence of God.* Rachael Muers's *Keeping God's Silence* portrays God's silence as reflecting his patience and his listening (92-95). In the 1898 *Silence of God* by Anderson, the 'silent Heaven' is associated with God's mercy before judgement. In 'Vom Schweigen Gottes im Alten Testament', Walter Dietrich discusses various reasons for and implications of God's silence. Literature on the 'silence of God' is extensive and cannot be treated exhaustively here.

silence in the sanctuary,[28] and both human and divine silence are themes in the psalms.[29] Christian (and other) mystics and contemplatives seek out silence as a way of connecting to the divine,[30] and some religious services incorporate intentional silence.[31] Silence (especially 'silencing') can represent neglect or oppression,[32] yet it also plays a role in communication.[33] These aspects of silence, and many more, have been treated in relation to religious texts and the divine.[34]

Few studies, however, focus on the lexical representation of silence, as I have sought to do. At least three articles and one dissertation present a survey of textual representation of silence in the Hebrew Bible, but many rely on the traditional (but questionable) translation of given Hebrew words as 'be silent' for their analyses. Paolo Torresan gives a helpful overview of different uses of the image of silence, but his observations are based entirely on Italian translations, without consideration of the Hebrew.[35] Pedro Barrado takes a closer look at five of the Hebrew lexemes used to refer to silence, as well as collocations with 'mouth', 'lips', and 'tongue'.[36] He organises their uses into fourteen

[28] Knohl's *The Sanctuary of Silence* (42-44, 148-49) refers to the absence of prayer and song from cultic service (as an ideal, if not a reality). He uses Kaufmann's term (*Religion of Israel*, 303-4), but differs slightly in its application.
[29] See Spieckermann, 'Schweigen und Beten'.
[30] Laird's *Into the Silent Land* introduces the reader to the practice and benefits of silent contemplation. See also Main, *Word into Silence;* Williams, *Silence and Honey Cakes.*
[31] Bauman's *Let Your Words Be Few* portrays the role of silence in 17th-century meetings of Quakers; Prochnik describes a modern experience of Quaker silence (*In Pursuit of Silence*, 5-8); Dauenhauer discusses 'liturgical silence' in both Roman Catholic and Quaker worship (*Silence*, 18-19). In *Das heilige Schweigen* Mensching discusses silence in relation to the word in various religious experiences, including prayer and worship.
[32] MacCulloch's *Silence* portrays the church's reprehensible *lack* of action against injustice as 'silence'. See also Bruneau, 'Communicative Silences', 38.
[33] Miller discusses the role of silence in speeches of the Hebrew Bible, specifically silence in response to a command, to a yes-no question and to a rebuke. She makes an interesting distinction between the silence of the narrator, which implies conformity with expectation, and the explicit silence of a character, which implies defiance ('Silence as Response in Biblical Hebrew Narrative', 36, 41).
[34] Some theology journals have recently dedicated entire issues to the topic of silence: a 2011 volume of the *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalschrift* was entitled 'Stille', and a 2015 volume of *Concilium* entitled 'Silence', with articles on contemplative silence, listening silences, divine silence, and biblical silences.
[35] See his 'Silence in the Bible' (2003), and 'Dumah, Demamah e Dumiyyah: Il silenzio e l'esperienza del sacro nella bibbia ebraica' (2004).
[36] 'El silencio en el Antiguo Testamento: Aproximación a un símbolo ambiguo' (1997).

categories,[37] but does not focus on differences or similarities between the words chosen, nor does he challenge the sometimes doubtful interpretation of these words as 'be silent'. Furthermore, he does not include in his study references with these words that do not easily fit our conception of silence (e.g., related to inactivity or death).

Another, more recent, article by Göran Eidevall also explores the lexemes representing silence.[38] Recognising that dictionary definitions of a word as 'be silent' are not always agreed upon, he pays more attention to the actual uses of different Hebrew words (rather than their usual translations), and calls for further research on these words.[39] In my own study, I have come to many of the same conclusions as Eidevall, for example, that דמם and its derivatives refer to 'stillness' rather than 'silence', that אלם and חרשׁ often refer to chosen constraints rather than disability, and that חרשׁ and חשׁה can also refer to passivity or not acting. I do not entirely agree, however, with his assessment of דמם as 'mourn, moan', in which he is following dictionary entries. In Eidevall's brief study the difficulties of many of the passages must be glossed over, and there is no room for discussion of versions or cognates, but it provides a useful description of the Hebrew lexical field.

A longer lexical semantic study of silence in the Hebrew Bible was done as a doctoral thesis for the Pontifical University in Rome by Silvio José Báez.[40] This work engages with Hebrew lexemes rather than translations and covers the same roots as my study (minus שׁתק and שׁקט), but since the author's primary interest is theological and exegetical,

[37] These categories of silence are: 1) narrative; 2) administrative; 3) of diverse situations; 4) impossible; 5) of idols; 6) of disability/muteness; 7) of fear and embarrassment; 8) of resignation and impotence; 9) of Sheol and death; 10) of God; 11) negative (i.e., shutting the mouth); 12) as sign of wisdom; 13) numinous and reverent; 14) of respect and surprise (my translation).
[38] 'Sounds of Silence in Biblical Hebrew: A Lexical Study' (2012).
[39] 'Sounds of Silence', 159.
[40] Tiempo de callar y tiempo de hablar: El silencio en la Biblia Hebrea (2000).

the treatment of lexemes is relatively brief and uncritical. Báez does not wrestle with the significant problems of interpretation due to difficult syntax or semantic ambiguity, nor does he consider possible diachronic development or evidence from comparative Semitics. He does occasionally mention the versions, but they are not used comprehensively, nor does the Targum receive much attention. A significant benefit of this study is his inclusion of collocations indicating absence of sound, such as: negated verbs of speech and hearing, statements on the absence of sound or voice, and expressions with organs of speech ('not open the mouth'; 'hand on the mouth', 'tongue stuck to the palate', etc.). These collocations are missing from my own study but should ideally have been included in order to broaden the understanding of the field as a whole. Báez regrettably does not link these collocations to the roots studied previously, nor does he make a clear presentation of how the words relate to one another within the semantic field. The second half of his thesis is an exegetical analysis of certain passages chosen for their theological (rather than lexical) interest. He makes observations on the implications of silence, first human silence, then divine. Although our stated topics clearly overlap, the focus of our studies is very different: Báez's on the theological implications of silence as represented in the Hebrew Bible, mine on the syntactical, semantic, and grammatical difficulties presented by these words, and the effect of these on lexicography and translations.

Another study on silence in the Hebrew Bible is presently being worked on by John Kessler.[41] From earlier communication it became clear that we had reached many similar conclusions as to how silence is used as a biblical image, though our focus is different: his on the implications of the use of the image of silence, and mine on its lexical

[41] We each presented papers at SBL 2016 in San Antonio, Texas, as part of a session on silence within the section 'Speech and Talk in the Ancient Mediterranean World'. We have also discussed our work subsequently.

representation. The studies mentioned above by Jürgen Ebach also treat biblical silence(s) thematically.[42]

B. Methodology

Despite the similarities, my study differs from those above in being a detailed textual analysis that attempts to reconstruct the semantic field from within, that is, by relying on Hebrew usage more than on translations and lexicographical traditions (although I did, of course, begin with these tools). A difficulty with this approach is the limited corpus and its distance from us both culturally and linguistically. To extend the corpus, Ben Sira, Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), and inscriptions were also surveyed for uses of the words in my study.

For each word, I tried to determine: 1) how it was used in its context, and 2) how it was interpreted by later readers and translators. I considered first the syntagmatic relations, that is, how a word relates to its immediate context: What syntactic role does it have? Are there any parallels, synonyms, glosses, or antonyms that might help define it? Are there any causal relations, that is, a result caused by the action of this word, or something else causing this word as a result? I also considered paradigmatic relations, that is, the role of the word in relation to the lexical stock of the language: Are other words used in similar collocations? Why would this word be used over another and what nuance does it contribute in comparison to similar words? Answers to these questions are attempted in the conclusion, after all textual data has been surveyed. Further study of collocations and synonymous words, particularly those I have designated 'peripheral', would enrich our understanding of the nuances of the words chosen.

[42] See footnotes 25-26.

I then evaluated the textual contexts for all uses of a given word to try to discern any patterns related to genre (i.e, if it was predominantly in poetic or prose texts, if there was any change in usage between prose and poetry). I also tried to determine chronological trajectory, but given the difficult task of dating biblical material, the determination of diachronic development can contain a bit of guesswork. While some texts are clearly later compositions (Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles, for example), earlier texts presumably underwent redaction and updating as they were copied and transmitted, and therefore do not necessarily represent an entirely accurate picture of chronological strata. It is therefore useful to include the DSS, yet these too can contain influences that do not necessarily reflect contemporary language. I have therefore made an attempt to discern chronological patterns throughout the study, but without rigidly dividing all biblical books into early and late.

A secondary matter for consideration was how these words have been interpreted: at first by the early versions (Greek Septuagint, Aramaic Targum, Syriac Peshitta, and Latin Vulgate), then by later Jewish and Christian commentary, dictionaries, and finally modern translations and commentaries. Study of the versions sometimes reveals an early difficulty in understanding a text, and it can be instructive to consider the potential reasons for a given translation, which sometimes suggests a different earlier understanding of a word's meaning. In the course of my study I discovered that dictionary entries do not always accurately reflect the usage of a word. They sometimes reflect a tradition of translation, a guess based on context, or a meaning imported from a cognate. Although I used dictionary entries as a starting point, I did not always agree with their treatment after my own textual analysis.

Finally, and perhaps least importantly, I surveyed cognate language evidence for each root to see if it might reveal any information on potential semantic development from a Proto-Semitic root. While extremely interesting from the perspective of etymology and comparative diachronic semantics, cognates cannot conclusively determine meaning and should be used only out of necessity when context is an insufficient guide to meaning. The root סכת presented an interesting case study, revealing conflicting evidence from cognates and traditions of interpretation and lexicography.

As a result of this study, I have a different view of the semantic field of silence in Hebrew than when I first began. It includes some meanings I could not have predicted (e.g., 'restrain action'), and surprisingly excludes or minimises others (e.g., 'not make noise'). At least some of the difference is attributable to the very different cultural and linguistic context of biblical Hebrew, an inescapable result of which is that its semantic fields do not easily 'map' onto our own. It is therefore important both for lexicography and for textual interpretation that we first attempt to recreate the 'native' semantic field (along with linguistic and cultural understandings) as much as possible before beginning to colour it with our own imported understandings.

The approach I have taken does not rigorously follow one particular semantic method, though it clearly arises out of the textual context-driven paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis championed by James Barr, who challenged the earlier tendency to derive Hebrew meanings from cognates or etymologies.[43] His approach was not only a reaction against the disproportionate weight formerly placed on cognates and etymologies but was

[43] *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961). Though I have been influenced by Barr's work and that of those who followed him, I make no claim that he would have approved of my method or results!

also in keeping with the structural linguistics of his day. Structuralism favours a synchronic approach to describing word meanings, which are to be determined by analysing how words are used in relation to each other within a language system. The synchronic emphasis minimises the value of etymology, while the internal focus on a given language system minimises the impact of cognates.[44]

This approach was later advocated for biblical studies by Moisés Silva, who claimed that context 'makes' meaning, thereby justifying close attention not only to the immediately surrounding text, but also to the larger work in which a passage is found, the literary context (genre and conventions governing this genre), extra-linguistic context (life situation), and even subsequent context (tradition of interpretation).[45] A related claim, often attributed to Ludwig Wittgenstein, is that word meaning is determined by usage.[46]

Meaning is also determined by the placement of a word in a lexical field,[47] which requires identifying its associations and contrasts with other words. One method of determining these relationships between words is componential analysis, in which various qualities of word meaning are marked as either present or absent (+/–) in an attempt to identify the ways in which they differ from each other.[48]

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[44] A useful summary of structuralism and Ferdinand de Saussure's influence is found in Eng, *The Days of Our Years,* 12-14. See also Ullmann, *Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning.* He distinguishes between analytical meaning (referring to Ogden-Richards' triangle of reference-word-referent) and operational meaning (how a word is used, in context), but claims both are needed (55, 64).
[45] Biblical Words and their Meaning, 138-48.
[46] *Philosophical Investigations*, §43, cited in Riemer, *Routledge Handbook of Semantics* (108). The same is stated to be the working principle of Clines' *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew,* 1:14. The practice of defining words by how they are used, however, goes back at least to the medieval dictionary-cum-concordance.
[47] A term and concept attributed to Trier, Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes (1931).
[48] Silva, Biblical Words and their Meaning, 163. He gives an example from Vivian, I campi lessicali. See also Nida, Componential Analysis of Meaning; and Zanella, The Lexical Field of the Substantives of "Gift".

Such language-internal semantic approaches are still favoured by some,[49] but began to be challenged by cognitive linguistic theories claiming that the external and conceptual worlds of a language speaker must also be considered when trying to determine word meanings.[50] Clearly, objects of daily life, technological advances, tools, methods of transportation, types of animals, conceptions of kinship and community relationships, as well as of the divine, would all be reflected in the lexicon of a language, which could not be truly understood without an understanding of the concepts (and physical objects) to which they referred. This background, or 'encyclopaedic', knowledge of a language speaker must therefore be understood as the backdrop against which the word itself refers to a certain concept.[51] This can readily be conceded and must be added to the aforementioned emphasis on linguistic context. No language exists in a vacuum, and no language speaker exists outside a certain (even if variable) cultural setting. The objective, then, is to understand both the 'real' world (external/physical and internal/conceptual) *and* how it relates to the linguistic system used by those inhabiting that world. One result of this approach is that the distinction between what is traditionally called semantics and pragmatics becomes blurred: meaning cannot be separated from its context.

It is one thing to recognise the connection between a language and its conceptual, cultural, and cognitive setting, but another thing entirely to reconstruct the setting for a language and culture as distant as biblical Hebrew. It can to some degree be done, as shown by recent studies.[52] For concepts such as 'silence', however, which not only are multi-

[49] See Lyons, *Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction,* where he introduces what he calls 'cognitivism', but chooses to focus on 'word-to-word' relations, or language-internal lexical meaning (97-101).
[50] I am grateful to Kurtis Peters for his lucid introduction to the theory and method of cognitive linguistics in *Hebrew Lexical Semantics and Daily Life in Ancient Israel,* 35-60.
[51] This relevant information is also referred to as a 'frame' or 'domain' to which a given word is related.
[52] See Peters, *Hebrew Lexical Semantics*; also Shead, *Radical Frame Semantics and Biblical Hebrew*, and van Wolde, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, who summarises the work *Cognitive Grammar* by Langacker and applies it to biblical Hebrew.

faceted and hard to pin down even in one's own culture, but also, as this study has made clear, differ greatly between ancient and modern cultures, the attempt to connect ancient biblical vocabulary with cognition is a very 'slippery' venture indeed. Nevertheless, I have tried to leave behind a modern, English-language understanding of 'silence' in order to understand what the chosen Hebrew lexemes would have represented to a speaker. As it turns out, they seem to have less to do with what we would call 'silence', and more to do with expectation of action or speech, cessation of motion or turbulence, and other manifestations of presence or absence.

I became aware of the methods of cognitive linguistics only at the later stages of my project, and therefore have not employed its technical vocabulary and diagrams. My goal throughout, however, was to analyse the texts with a view to understanding how the speaker of biblical Hebrew would have conceived of and represented linguistically what we call 'silence'. The results are represented graphically in the conclusion, where I try to show that what I found was not one semantic 'field', but various 'domains' (e.g., 'cessation' and 'restraint') into which my chosen lexemes fit, and within which they can refer to being silent among other things. Silence, in fact, might be a misnomer of this field or these domains, as it is a small part rather than the focus.

The study of concepts related to silence unavoidably involves a bit of guesswork but could be helpfully supplemented by further study of other ancient Near Eastern sources to improve our understanding of ancient cognitive domains and concepts related to silence.

The biblical Hebrew lexemes in this study are organised according to the larger domains into which they fit: restraint and cessation, and within that by frequency. Each reference

is first surveyed on its own, and difficulties discussed, before moving on to general conclusions for that word. An attempt to present the field as a whole is found in the conclusion.

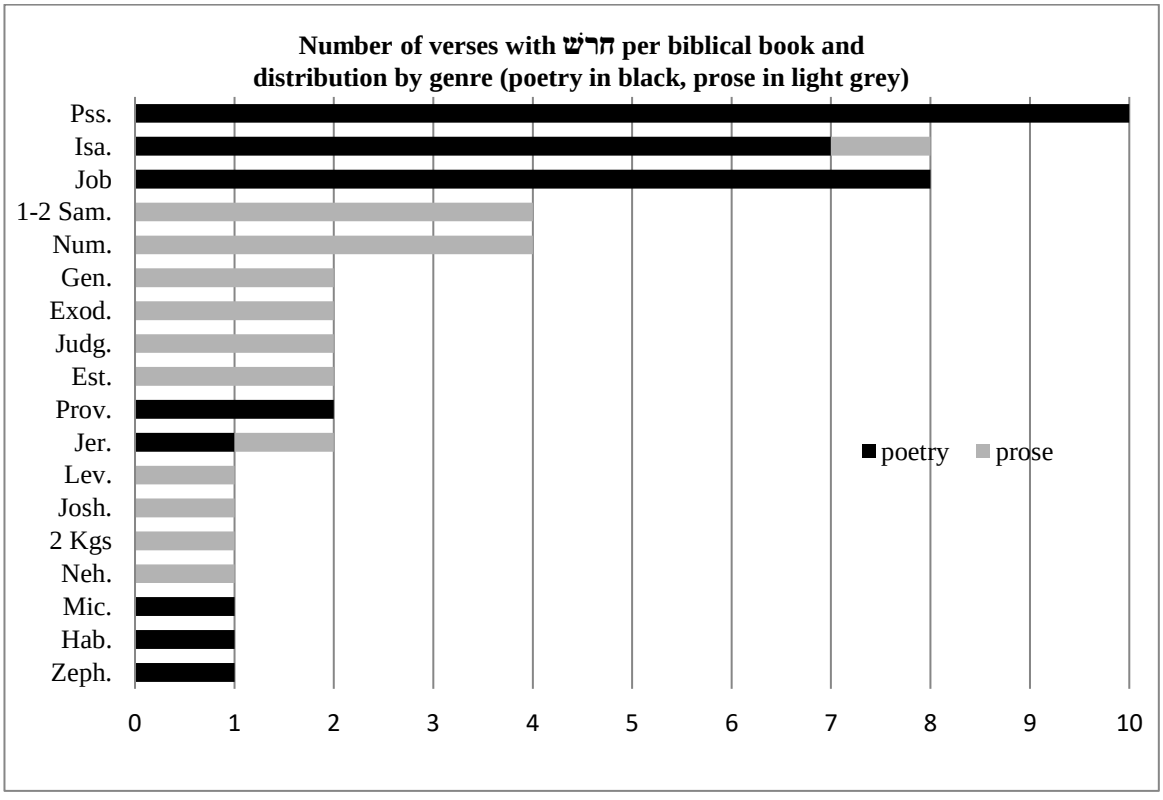
Part I: Restraint

Chapter 1: חרשׁ

Distribution

חרשׁ is used 57 times in 53 verses in the Hebrew Bible in reference to silence or deafness. It also appears three times in Ben Sira and about ten times in the non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls.

חרשׁ is most frequent in Psalms (usually in prayer), Job (for human communication), and Isaiah (metaphorically describing God's people). It is slightly more frequent in poetic contexts (31 verses compared to 22 in prose).



No clear chronological picture emerges from the above data, nor does meaning differ significantly in the later texts of Ben Sira and Qumran.

Lexicographical Survey

חרשׁ covers an exceptionally wide range of meanings, which clearly derive from different proto-Semitic roots, but not all lexica agree in the identification and numbering of these roots. As a verb it can mean 'plough', 'engrave', 'devise, plot', 'be silent', 'be deaf', or 'be still, inactive'. The adjective חֵרֵשׁ means 'deaf' and is used both literally and metaphorically. The noun חֶרֶשׁ is once used adverbially to mean 'silently' or 'secretly'. The noun חָרָשׁ refers to an artisan or craftsman, as does the participle חֹרֵשׁ, while the noun חֶרֶשׁ refers to sorcery or magic, and the noun חֹרֶשׁ to a forest. The root is also used in personal and geographic names. In this chapter I consider only uses of חרשׁ related to silence or deafness, and all subsequent references to the root will refer only to those meanings.

The lexica agree in defining the adjective as 'deaf' but are less consistent for verbal forms.

	Qal	**Hiphil**	**Hithpael**
BDB[53]	1. be silent, always of God's keeping silence when men pray; 2. be deaf	1. be silent; 2. make silent; 3. be deaf	keep quiet
HALOT[54]	be deaf	1. keep, be silent; 2. silently let a person do; 3. be idle; 4. fall silent; 5. reduce to silence	keep silent
DCH[55]	be deaf	be silent, cease speaking; make silent	keep still
Ges18[56]	1. stumm sein, schweigen; 2. taub sein	1. still sein, schweigen; 2. sich ruhig verhalten, nichts tun; 3. zum Schweigen bringen	sich ruhig verhalten

Although the Qal can mean either 'be deaf' or 'be silent', the latter definition is missing from *HALOT* and *DCH*. BDB and Ges18 disagree on in which references it means 'deaf', BDB in Mic. 7:16 and Ps. 28:1, and Ges18 in Mic. 7:16 alone, defining all Pss. references

[53] BDB, 361; Hithpael in *Addenda and Corrigenda*, 1124.
[54] *HALOT*, 357-58.
[55] *DCH* 3:323-24.
[56] Ges18, 402-3.

as ‘be silent’.[57] In my analysis, however, the meanings are split among the Psalms references.

The Hiphil is more straightforward in its meaning ‘be silent’, but BDB defines it ‘be deaf’ for 1 Sam. 7:8, without suggesting repointing as a Qal. All dictionaries suggest a causative meaning for the Hiphil in Job 11:3 (*HALOT* also Job 41:4), though incorrectly, in my view. The additional nuance of the Hiphil as ‘be idle, inactive’ is missed by BDB and *DCH*, but present in *HALOT*, Ges18 and some theological dictionaries.

NIDOTTE identifies חרשׁ as referring to God’s ‘seeming inactivity on behalf of his people’, referring to both judgement and help.[58] It presents an interesting semantic distinction between the verb, which describes silence ‘for various reasons of a nonpathological nature’ and the adjective, which describes ‘a clinical condition of hearing impairment or loss’ (though, as noted below, only two references could be considered ‘clinical’).[59] *THAT* also identifies ‘idleness’ or ‘apathy’ as theological meanings in psalms of lament when God does not hear prayers, and contrasts חרשׁ with judgement (Ps. 50), but it incorrectly claims that the adjective חֵרֵשׁ can refer to both deafness and muteness.[60]

In *TWAT*, A. Baumann describes חרשׁ as ranging from deliberate silence to physical limitation affecting hearing. He identifies the implied ‘holding back’ of speech, but not

[57] Reflected in German translations using ‘be silent/mute’ even in Ps. 28:1, where other traditions have ‘be deaf’.
[58] J. Oswalt, *NIDOTTE* 2:297.
[59] R.K. Harrison and E.H. Merrill, *NIDOTTE* 2:300.
[60] M. Delcor, *THAT* 1:639-40.

the ‘holding back’ of action (i.e., inactivity).[61] In *TWOT*, Wood summarises חרשׁ as ‘non-communication’, ‘either not speaking or not hearing’. He presents both Qal and Hiphil as related to ‘silence in speaking’ but overlooks the more abstract meanings of the Hiphil as well as the ambiguity of the Qal.[62]

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

חרשׁ is used 9 times as an adjective, once adverbially, and 47 times as a verb related to silence or deafness, but only in three *binyanim*: Hiphil (39), Qal (7), and Hithpael (1).

Adjective and Noun

Twice חרשׁ is an attributive adjective meaning ‘deaf’, and seven times the nominalised adjective ‘deaf person’. It follows the expected vocalisation pattern for physical hindrances (cf. עִוֵּר).[63] Although it is more often used metaphorically than literally, it often appears in lists of disabilities along with blindness and muteness and is found in juxtaposition to the verb ‘hear’ (שׁמע) and to the noun ‘ears’ (אזנים).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מִי שָׂם פֶּה לָאָדָם אוֹ מִי־יָשׂוּם אִלֵּם אוֹ **חֵרֵשׁ** אוֹ פִקֵּחַ אוֹ עִוֵּר הֲלֹא אָנֹכִי יְהוָה:	**Exod. 4:11**
לֹא־תְקַלֵּל **חֵרֵשׁ** וְלִפְנֵי עִוֵּר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשֹׁל וְיָרֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:	**Lev. 19:14**

חרשׁ describes a physically deaf person only twice. In Exod. 4 Moses protests his calling because of his ‘heavy’ mouth and tongue, to which God replies: ‘Who made a mouth for mankind? Or who appointed[64] the mute or deaf or ‘opened’[65] or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?’

[61] He understands חרשׁ in Exod. 14:14 to mean the people held back their war cry, for example (*TWAT* 2:279-80).
[62] *TWOT* 1:328-29.
[63] See Olyan, Disability in the Hebrew Bible, 147-48; Bauer-Leander, Historische Grammatik, 477.
[64] I understand שׂים in its wider semantic range of ‘appoint, make’, rather than ‘place, put’.
[65] פקח, ‘open’, usually refers to seeing (i.e., having eyes opened), but since the reversal of both deafness and blindness can be described as ‘opening’ (cf. Isa. 35:5), it could refer here to ‘opening’ of either blind eyes or deaf ears. On ‘open’ ears see also Isa. 42:20; 48:8; 50:4.

Lev. 19, concerned with proper treatment of neighbours, aims to protect the deaf and blind from harm that they cannot perceive: 'do not curse the deaf and before the blind do not place a stumbling block', which could also allude to the futility of an unheard curse. Both verses refer to the deaf as a category of people rather than to specific individuals, a tendency seen also in post-biblical literature.

וַאֲנִי כֶּ֭חֵרֵשׁ לֹ֣א אֶשְׁמָ֑ע וְכְאִלֵּ֥ם לֹ֝א יִפְתַּח־פִּֽיו׃	**Ps. 38:14[13][66]**
חֲמַת־לָ֭מוֹ כִּדְמ֣וּת חֲמַת־נָ֑חָשׁ כְּמ֥וֹ־פֶ֝֗תֶן **חֵרֵ֥שׁ** יַאֲטֵ֥ם אָזְנֽוֹ׃	**Ps. 58:5[4]**

The adjective חרשׁ is used metaphorically twice in the Psalms. These are also the only references in which the adjective/noun חרשׁ is not paired with עור ('blind').

In Ps. 38:14, the troubled psalmist describes himself as deaf and mute, neither hearing the speech of his enemies nor rebuking them. Instead, he waits for God to answer and help him. This is the only first-person reference to being deaf; it is also the only clear simile, using the preposition כ to indicate 'I am *like* a deaf person...and *like* a mute person'.

Ps. 58:5 is the only reference in which the adjective חרשׁ modifies a supplied noun, and it also has the only non-human referent, describing a poisonous and deaf snake[67] that stops its ear from hearing the 'whisperer', or 'charmer'. The snake represents the wicked who speak lies and refuse to listen.

The most useful semantic contributions of these verses are the elaborations helping to define חרשׁ as 'deaf' and exclude the meaning 'mute': 'I do not hear' (38:14); 'stops/shuts his ear' (58:5), suggesting a perception of deafness as closing off or shutting up.

[66] Here and throughout I have used square brackets to indicate the English verse (and/or chapter) numbers wherever these differ from the Hebrew.
[67] *HALOT*: 'horned viper' (990).

וְשָׁמְעוּ בַיּוֹם־הַהוּא **הַחֵרְשִׁים** דִּבְרֵי־סֵפֶר וּמֵאֹפֶל וּמֵחֹשֶׁךְ עֵינֵי עִוְרִים תִּרְאֶינָה׃	**Isa. 29:18**
אָז תִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי עִוְרִים וְאָזְנֵי **חֵרְשִׁים** תִּפָּתַחְנָה׃	**Isa. 35:5**
הַחֵרְשִׁים שִׁמְעוּ וְהַעִוְרִים הַבִּיטוּ לִרְאוֹת׃	**Isa. 42:18**
מִי עִוֵּר כִּי אִם־עַבְדִּי **וְחֵרֵשׁ** כְּמַלְאָכַי אֶשְׁלָח מִי עִוֵּר כִּמְשֻׁלָּם וְעִוֵּר כְּעֶבֶד יְהוָה׃	**Isa. 42:19**
הוֹצִיא עַם־עִוֵּר וְעֵינַיִם יֵשׁ **וְחֵרְשִׁים** וְאָזְנַיִם לָמּוֹ׃	**Isa. 43:8**

Isaiah uses adjectival חרשׁ five times, all metaphorically. Four have references to hearing or ears in relation to חרשׁ, and all are paired with 'the blind'. Isa. 29 and 35 speak of a future reversal of fortunes, which includes restoration of hearing to the deaf (described as opening of their ears in 35:5). Not only will the deaf hear and the blind see, but the poor will exult, the desert will blossom, the lame will leap, and the mute will sing. The three references in Isa. 42-43 contain implicit criticism of God's people who are 'deaf' and 'blind', here clearly referring to a spiritual lack of perception.[68]

Noun as adverb

Josh. 2:1
וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ־בִּן־נוּן מָן־הַשִּׁטִּים שְׁנַיִם־אֲנָשִׁים מְרַגְּלִים **חֶרֶשׁ** לֵאמֹר לְכוּ רְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־יְרִיחוֹ וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית־אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וּשְׁמָהּ רָחָב וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ־שָׁמָּה׃

חרשׁ is used adverbially only once, in Josh. 2:1 when Joshua sends out the spies. The Masoretic accents connect חֶרֶשׁ to לאמר, suggesting it describes the manner in which Joshua spoke: quietly/silently, by implication secretly. חֶרֶשׁ could instead modify the sentence-initial verb וישלח, describing how the spies were sent. It could not imply deafness or literal silence between Joshua and the spies, as an assignment is being given, but it does seem to imply a type of 'deafness' or 'silence' for others, that is, the enemies and the other Israelites who were *not* supposed to hear the assignment, thus it was done 'secretly'.[69]

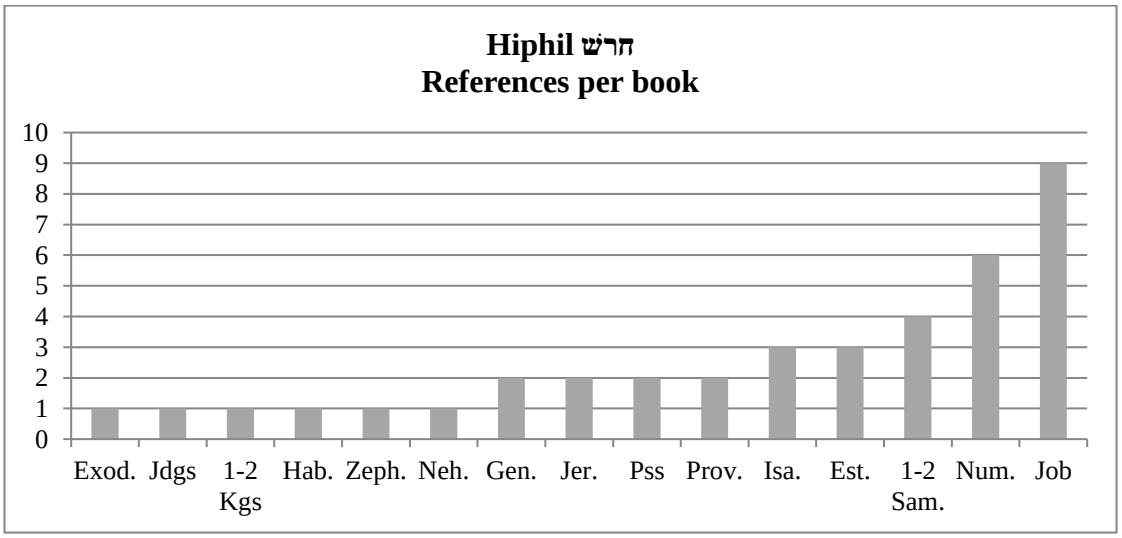
[68] It must be noted that the text of 42:19 is uncertain and 19b often deleted by commentators. The repetition of 'blind' and 'deaf' in the MT, however, make clear a focus on their lack of spiritual discernment. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 218-19.
[69] See Keil, *Josua,* 19.

The Septuagint does not translate חֶרֶשׁ, but instead seems to include it implicitly in the word for 'spies'.[70] The Targum translates 'in secret' (ברז), and the Vulgate with 'hidden': *exploratores abscondito*. The Peshitta translates מְרַגְּלִים חֶרֶשׁ as 'men who knew the land' (ܓܒܪܐ ܕܝܕܥܝ ܐܪܥܐ), perhaps a phonetic association between חרשׁ and ארץ.

Verbs

Hiphil

The Hiphil is by far the most common *binyan* for חרשׁ, used 39 times in 35 verses.[71]



The Hiphil verb most frequently has the intransitive meaning 'be silent', which is established by parallel and explanatory phrases such as 'put your hand on your mouth' (Judg. 18:19), 'not answer' (2 Kgs 18:36), 'close the lips' (Prov. 17:28), and 'did not find a word' (Neh. 5:8). The silence of Hiphil חרשׁ is often related to communication: it can allow someone else to speak or can indicate cessation of speech; it can express agreement with what has been spoken (Num. 30) or instead wilful defiance (2 Kgs 18:36). Being silent is also a mark of wisdom (Prov. 11:12; 17:28; Job 13:5). Another use of Hiphil חרשׁ is to indicate a lack of action, usually something expected or required that was not done.

[70] The verse begins: αὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ναυη ἐκ Σαττιν δύο νεανίσκους κατασκοπεῦσαι λέγων ἀνάβητε.
[71] There are infinitive absolutes with finite forms in Num. 30:15 (3), Job 13:5, and Est. 4:14.

With God as subject, this ‘silence’ refers to his restraint from judgement (Ps. 50:21; Isa. 42:14; Hab. 1:13; Zeph. 3:17). The causative meaning ‘to silence’ is suggested for the Hiphil in Job 11:3 (sometimes also 41:4), but there is little evidence to support this.

Hiphil references are discussed in the following categories:

1) Silence in relation to speech;
2) Silence as wisdom;
3) Silence as peace;
4) Silence as not acting;
5) Causative: ‘to silence’?

1. Silence in relation to speech:

Many Hiphil חרשׁ references portray silence in human communication: sometimes to enable listening, but more often to indicate lack or cessation of speech.

1a) Silence to listen

הֹורוּנִי וַאֲנִי **אַחֲרִישׁ** וּמַה־שָּׁגִיתִי הָבִינוּ לִי׃	**Job 6:24**
מִי־יִתֵּן **הַחֲרֵשׁ** תַּחֲרִישֻׁון וּתְהִי לָכֶם לְחָכְמָה׃	**Job 13:5**
הַחֲרִישׁוּ מֶמֶּנִּי וַאֲדַבְּרָה־אָנִי וְיַעֲבֹר עָלַי מָה׃	**Job 13:13**
הַקְשֵׁב אִיֹּוב שְׁמַע־לִי **הַחֲרֵשׁ** וְאָנֹכִי אֲדַבֵּר׃	**Job 33:31**
אִם־אַיִן אַתָּה שְׁמַע־לִי **הַחֲרֵשׁ** וַאֲאַלֶּפְךָ חָכְמָה׃ ס	**Job 33:33**

Five Job references refer to silence as preparation for listening. In 6:24, Job says to his friends ‘teach me, and I will be silent; make me understand how I have gone astray’. His promised silence, even if hypothetical, corresponds to listening in order to learn. Job again speaks to his friends in chapter 13 asking them to be silent: in 13:5-6 the friends’ silence is requested so they might hear Job’s argument and listen to the pleadings of his lips; in 13:13 Job commands them to be silent ‘from him’ so he might speak; and in 33:31, 33 it is Elihu who tells Job to be silent, paralleled by commands to listen (הקשׁב, שׁמע), in order that Elihu might speak and teach him wisdom.

1b) Silence of not speaking

When Hiphil חרשׁ refers to the silence of not speaking, often the silence itself is significant or communicative. It can refer to exceptional or inappropriate silences, situations in which speech is expected, or to silence chosen with a clear intention.

וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתָּאֵה לָהּ **מַחֲרִישׁ** לָדַעַת הַהִצְלִיחַ יְהוָה דַּרְכּוֹ אִם־לֹא׃	**Gen. 24:21**

In Genesis 24:21 Abraham's servant, sent to find a wife for Isaac, is silent (מחרישׁ) while he watches Rebekah draw water for his camels. The reader is reminded of his earlier prayer (24:14) that the divinely appointed woman would water his camels, exactly as Rebekah is doing. The servant's silence highlights the fact that he is waiting to see if his prayer is being answered. The implication of his silence is twofold: he does not speak, hiding his true intentions from Rebekah, and he does not act, withholding the bridal presents until later.

Num. 30	
וְשָׁמַע אָבִיהָ אֶת־נִדְרָהּ וֶאֱסָרָהּ אֲשֶׁר אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ **וְהֶחֱרִישׁ לָהּ** אָבִיהָ וְקָמוּ כָּל־נְדָרֶיהָ וְכָל־אִסָּר אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ יָקוּם׃	**5[4]**
וְשָׁמַע אִישָׁהּ בְּיוֹם שָׁמְעוֹ **וְהֶחֱרִישׁ לָהּ** וְקָמוּ נְדָרֶיהָ וֶאֱסָרָהּ אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ יָקֻמוּ׃	**8[7]**
וְשָׁמַע אִישָׁהּ **וְהֶחֱרִשׁ לָהּ** לֹא הֵנִיא אֹתָהּ וְקָמוּ כָּל־נְדָרֶיהָ וְכָל־אִסָּר אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ יָקוּם׃	**12[11]**
וְאִם־**הַחֲרֵשׁ יַחֲרִישׁ לָהּ** אִישָׁהּ מִיּוֹם אֶל־יוֹם וְהֵקִים אֶת־כָּל־נְדָרֶיהָ אוֹ אֶת־כָּל־אֱסָרֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ הֵקִים אֹתָם כִּי־**הֶחֱרִשׁ לָהּ** בְּיוֹם שָׁמְעוֹ׃	**15[14]**

Four verses in Numbers 30 use חרשׁ in a very particular legal context regarding a woman's vows, which are valid only if her father (for a young woman) or husband (for a married woman) hears her vow and is 'silent to her' (החריש לה), thereby implicitly agreeing with her vow by not speaking to invalidate it. The rules do not apply to widows and divorced women, whose vows stand without silent male approval (30:10[9]). חרשׁ is

followed by the preposition ל only here, which therefore seems to be legal terminology for silent but official assent.[72]

וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ **הַחֲרֵשׁ** שִׂים־יָדְךָ עַל־פִּיךָ וְלֵךְ עִמָּנוּ וֶהְיֵה־לָנוּ לְאָב וּלְכֹהֵן הֲטוֹב֨ הֱיוֹתְךָ֜ כֹּהֵן לְבֵית אִישׁ אֶחָד אוֹ הֱיוֹתְךָ כֹהֵן לְשֵׁבֶט וּלְמִשְׁפָּחָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל׃	**Jdgs 18:19**

In Judges 18, when Danites come to steal household religious objects from Micah, his personal priest asks what they are doing. They reply: 'be quiet (הַחֲרֵשׁ), put your hand on your mouth' (i.e., stop talking), clearly wanting him to stop protesting and collude with them.

וְ**הֶחֱרִישׁוּ** הָעָם וְלֹא־עָנוּ אֹתוֹ דָּבָר כִּי־מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ הֵיא לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲנֻהוּ׃	**2 Kgs 18:36**
וַ**יַּחֲרִישׁוּ** וְלֹא־עָנוּ אֹתוֹ דָּבָר כִּי־מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ הֵיא לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲנֻהוּ׃	**Isa. 36:21**

2 Kings 18 and Isaiah 36 report Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem under Hezekiah, including the demoralising speech of the Assyrian 'Rabshakeh' to the people of Judah. Their response is to be silent and not answer him a word, a silence that is in defiance of the Assyrians and in obedience to the king.

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל־הַשָּׂרִים אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אֹתוֹ וַיַּגֶּד לָהֶם כְּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ וַ**יַּחֲרְשׁוּ** מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי לֹא־נִשְׁמַע הַדָּבָר׃ פ	**Jer. 38:27**

חרשׁ followed by מן refers to cessation of speech in Jer. 38:27, when officials come to ask Jeremiah what he has told the king. He deceptively replies (as instructed) that he had requested not to be sent back to die in the house of Jonathan (38:26). Since his conversation with the king had not been overheard, they are satisfied with his reply and 'silent from him' (i.e., stop their questioning). חרשׁ מן is also used in Job 13:13 (1a above) to command cessation of undesirable speech.

כִּי־**הֶחֱרַשְׁתִּי** בָלוּ עֲצָמַי בְּשַׁאֲגָתִי כָּל־הַיּוֹם׃	**Ps. 32:3**

[72] Milgrom suggests 'made himself deaf to her' (*Numbers*, 254), but this is not a normal meaning for Hiphil, nor would it make sense since the man has to first hear the vow before expressing tacit approval. Delcor proposes 'quietly let one have one's way' (*THAT* 1:639-40), but this is imprecise, as the phrase is used only in this legal and gender-specific context in which men's silence outweighs women's speech.

In Ps. 32:3, the psalmist laments that when he was silent, his bones wasted away in his groaning all day long. Since his 'silence' is concurrent with his groaning (שׁאגה), it cannot refer to complete silence, but instead to a lack of speech, here specifically a failure to confess sin. This becomes clear in v. 5, when his acknowledgement of sin becomes the turning point between the punishingly heavy hand of God (v. 4) and his deliverance (v. 7). His silence is thus identified with failure to acknowledge and confess sin, speech acts necessary for blessedness and well-being.

וָאֹמְרָה לָהֶם אֲנַחְנוּ קָנִינוּ אֶת־אַחֵינוּ הַיְהוּדִים הַנִּמְכָּרִים לַגּוֹיִם כְּדֵי בָּנוּ וְגַם־אַתֶּם תִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת־אַחֵיכֶם וְנִמְכְּרוּ־לָנוּ וַיַּחֲרִישׁוּ וְלֹא מָצְאוּ דָּבָר׃ ס	**Neh. 5:8**

When Nehemiah accuses the people of treating their 'brothers' unjustly (Neh. 5:8), they might have been expected to reply in self-defence. Their only response is silence, however, glossed with 'they found not a word' (i.e., they could make no reply). Silence here is akin to an admission of guilt.

Job 13:19
מִי־הוּא יָרִיב עִמָּדִי כִּי־עַתָּה **אַחֲרִישׁ** וְאֶגְוָע׃

Job speaks defensively to his friends in chapter 13, claiming that he is in the right and wants to argue his case. In verse 19, he asks: 'who is the one who will contend with me? for then [or 'now'] I would be silent and expire/die'. If כי־עתה introduces an apodosis, as it often does, the first question, 'who will contend with me' would be the protasis.[73] It could be a rhetorical question: 'if there *were* anyone to contend with me' (though he is convinced no one could);[74] it could instead express a potential reality: 'if God finds fault

[73] Tur-Sinai makes the first clause a condition, as if Job is saying: if God refuses to contend with me, 'nothing remains for me but, reduced to silence, to await death' (*The Book of Job*, 227). Job also might have in mind a human subject (such as his friends). Dhorme translates as a condition: 's'il se trouve quelqu'un pour contester avec Job'; כי־עתה he translates 'dès maintenant, aussitôt' (*Le Livre de Job*, 171).
[74] 'Si quelqu'un était capable de relever le gant, je n'aurais qu'à me taire et à mourir' (Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 171-72).

with me (still possible), I will then be silent and die'.[75] His own protestations of innocence make the latter unlikely, but when God does rebuke him at the end of the book, he responds in self-imposed silence.[76]

The connection between חרשׁ and גוע, joined by *waw*, is uncertain. They are unlikely to be synonymous parallels (as if to say 'I will be silent, that is, I will expire/die'), though they could be sequentially related: 'I will be silent, then I will die'.[77] Some interpret more dramatically, as inferring that Job is so convinced of his innocence that being proven wrong and silenced would seem a type of death.[78] Since he later refers to his own speech (v. 22), this is unlikely. His silence here is opposed to his self-defence and would suggest acceptance of guilt.

1c) Uncertain: Both listening and not speaking?

Isaiah 41:1
הַחֲרִישׁוּ אֵלַי אִיִּים וּלְאֻמִּים יַחֲלִיפוּ כֹחַ יִגְּשׁוּ אָז יְדַבֵּרוּ יַחְדָּו לַמִּשְׁפָּט נִקְרָבָה׃

Isaiah 41:1 is a legal summons in which the LORD calls the nations to come near and speak. It begins with an imperative of Hiphil חרשׁ followed by the preposition אֶל, which occurs only here. It could be a command to listen to God, move towards him in silence, be silent in reverential fear, or possibly a demand for legal assent.

[75] Clines argues that since Job knows God already is 'in dispute' with him, it cannot be rhetorical (*Job 1-20,* 315).
[76] Clines points to Job's later silence (40:4-5) as a fulfilment, although he does not also then die (*Job 1-20,* 315).
[77] The wᵊyiqtol וגוע could suggest purpose: 'I will be silent *that* I might die' (see Baden, 'The Wəyiqtol and the Volitive Sequence'), but this does not seem to differ markedly from the sequential interpretation.
[78] Fohrer: ''Wer könnte mit mir—unter Aussicht auf Erfolg—den Rechtsstreit führen?'…Niemand, nicht einmal Gott! Hiob ist von der Rechtmäßigkeit seiner Sache so überzeugt, daß er den Rechtsstreit fordern zu können glaubt. Auf dieser Gewißheit, die ihm niemand wird bestreiten können, beruht seine Existenz' (*Das Buch Hiob*, 251).

Emendations have been suggested as a result of textual difficulties, but these do not necessarily help with חרשׁ.[79] The changes of person in the verbs also make interpretation difficult: first the nations are addressed directly, then spoken about, and finally are speaking themselves. The versions offer variety, but not much help. Vulgate and Peshitta both have 'be silent' (though Peshitta's ܫܬܘ ܠܝ ܐܣܬܝܢ, 'be silent, islands', lacks MT's 'to me'). The Septuagint has ἐγκαινίζεσθε πρός με ('be restored towards me'),[80] a better parallel but certainly a result of *resh*/*daleth* confusion. The Targum has אציתו למימרי ('listen to my Memra'), perhaps linking silence with listening, perhaps reflecting a different tradition.[81] Additional support for interpreting as 'listen' is found in Isa. 49:1 and 51:4, where the Lord calls for islands and peoples to listen to him (using שמע, הקשיב, האזין), all followed by אֵלַי.[82]

Another proposed interpretation of חרשׁ is 'be deaf': Elliger suggests the nations should shut their ears to the voices of peoples around them in the legal scene and listen only to God to wait to hear what he will say.[83] This neither makes good sense of אלי nor fits the meaning of Hiphil חרשׁ, which does not mean 'be deaf' (though it can mean 'fail to react').

[79] Emendations include deletion of יחליפו כח since it is not a good parallel for חרשׁ and seems to be repeated from the immediately preceding 40:31. The insertion of קרבו ויאתיון ('they have drawn near and come') is favoured in its place because it makes a better parallel and does not fit where it is in 41:5 (Elliger, *Deuterojesaja*, 104; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 195).
[80] Silva: 'Be dedicated to me' (*NETS*, 854).
[81] See on סכת in Deut. 27:9, which the Targums translate 'listen'.
[82] Many modern translations also have 'listen' (NRSV, NASB, EIN, ELB, SCH, LSG). Goldingay finds 'listen' 'more likely' than an implied verb of motion (Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40-55*, 140); Elliger translates 'Hört still mir zu' (*Deuterojesaja*, 104), Volz 'Höret mir still zu' (*Jesaia ii*, 14), and Blenkinsopp 'hear me in silence' (*Isaiah 40-55*, 195).
[83] He defines חרשׁ 'sich taub verhalten', 'nicht reagieren', 'still sein' (*Deuterojesaja*, 117).

Other interpretive suggestions focus on the preposition אֶל, which could by itself imply movement: 'in silence (come) towards me'.[84] This fits the context of a legal summons and corresponds to the verbs of motion יגשו ('let them approach') and נקרבה ('let us draw near').[85] To interpret as 'be silent (when coming) towards me' seems paradoxical, however, if the recipients are also the subjects of the following jussives: may they draw near and speak. A more likely solution to the change in person is that the nations are summoned as witnesses to a trial between God and pagan gods, who are the implied subjects of the jussives.[86]

Another interpretive approach contrasts חרשׁ אל with חרשׁ מן, since the prepositions are logically opposite. חרשׁ מן means 'cease speaking with' (Job 13:13; Jer. 38:27), however, and does not imply motion away from,[87] as sometimes claimed.[88]

The use of Qal חרשׁ with אל should also be considered. In Ps. 39:13[12] the plea אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ is preceded by the prepositional phrase אֶל־דִּמְעָתִי: 'do not be deaf to my tear(s)'. אֶל does not indicate motion here, but attitude towards. It is a request that God pay attention to his tears.[89] If החרישו אלי in Isa. 41:1 also refers to attitude rather than motion, it could indicate the people's submission to God and readiness to agree with the upcoming legal pronouncements.[90]

[84] Gesenius includes Isaiah 41:1 in a list of 'pregnant constructions' with prepositions. He translates 'to turn in silence to someone' (GK §119gg).
[85] If identified as a summons to court (see Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour*, 208), motion is implied.
[86] Schoors, I Am God Your Saviour, 209.
[87] See especially Job 13:13, where חרשׁ מן is followed by ואדברה־אני, 'that I might speak'. Job clearly wants them to stay and listen rather than move away.
[88] See Delitzsch (*Jesaia*, 421) and Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 301).
[89] אל is used 'with the person or thing toward whom or which a certain position or attitude is assumed', and in Isaiah 41 refers to 'an object toward which effort is directed' (Mitchell, 'The preposition אֶל', 43, 45).
[90] Duhm compares it to הס, suggesting the silence is both reverential and in order that God might speak (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 301-3).

A connection between חרשׁ אל and חרשׁ ל might also be suggested, since the prepositions אל and ל both indicate motion towards and are sometimes interchangeable or parallel.[91] חרשׁ ל is used only in Numbers 30, where it has the specific legal application that when a man hears a woman's oath and is 'silent towards' her, he validates her oath by his silence. If חרשׁ אל has a similar meaning in Isa. 41:1, it would mean that the nations by their silence towards God legally assent to what he says.[92] This could strengthen the implied sense of 'listen', but a difficulty with this interpretation is that the silence of legal assent requires initially having heard something, while in Isa. 41:1 silence begins the section without any mention of the nations having heard something previously. This might be overcome by assuming that the nations had already heard something (not reported) to which they could assent.

It is simpler, however, to interpret החרישו אלי as 'be silent towards me', allowing for the ambiguity to interpret as silence that creates space for listening, silence that shows reverence and fear of judgement, and possibly silence that gives legal assent to the speech of another.

2. Silence as wisdom

Prov. 11:12	בָּז־לְרֵעֵהוּ חֲסַר־לֵב וְאִישׁ תְּבוּנוֹת **יַחֲרִישׁ**׃
Prov. 17:28	גַּם אֱוִיל **מַחֲרִישׁ** חָכָם יֵחָשֵׁב אֹטֵם שְׂפָתָיו נָבוֹן׃
Job 13:5	מִי־יִתֵּן **הַחֲרֵשׁ תַּחֲרִישׁוּן** וּתְהִי לָכֶם לְחָכְמָה׃

[91] See 2 Sam. 12:4; Ps. 33:18; Jer. 48:36; also J-M §133b ('אל is quite often used in cases where ל is possible') and Bendavid, who provides some 17 such examples (*Leshon Miḳra*, 23, 29-30).
[92] Koole discusses a possible connection between Num. 30 and Isa. 41 based on their shared legal context, but he gives insufficient weight to their syntactic similarities and in the end concludes that the passages are not closely connected and thus it is better 'not to give [41]:1a too legal a slant' (*Isaiah*, 3:134).

Hiphil חרשׁ is the most common word for silence as a mark of wisdom. Proverbs 11:12 describes the man of understanding (איש תבונות) as silent; he is contrasted to one who lacks sense and despises his neighbour. 11:13 condemns the slanderer, who uncovers secrets, and commends the trustworthy (נאמן־רוח), who 'covers' a matter (מכסה דבר). The act of covering is therefore a loose parallel to being silent: both contrast with slanderous or derisive speech, and both are traits of an understanding and trustworthy man.

Wisdom is also associated with silence in Proverbs 17:28: even a fool who is silent is thought of as wise, and one who closes his lips as discerning (נבון). 17:27 also associates the withholding of words (חושך אמריו) with knowledge (יודע דעת), and identifies the man of understanding (איש תבונה) as having a 'cold' or a 'precious' spirit (*kethiv* וקר־רוח; *qere* יקר־רוח). The descriptions of the man of understanding (איש תבונה/ות) in 11:12 and 17:27 differ only in number and suggest a link between the cool (or precious) spirit and being silent.

In Job 13:5 (also in 1a above), Job emphatically asks for the silence of his friends: 'if only (lit., 'who would give that') you would be truly silent (החרש תחרישון)—it would become for you wisdom'. This echoes Prov. 17:28 in attributing wisdom to fools if only they would be silent.

3. Silence as peace

The silence of חרשׁ once refers to stillness, calm, or lack of fear.

Jeremiah 4:19
מֵעַי מֵעַי (אָחוּלָה כ) [אוֹחִילָה ק][93] קִירוֹת לִבִּי הֹמֶה־לִּי לִבִּי לֹא **אַחֲרִישׁ** כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר (שָׁמַעְתִּי כ) [שָׁמַעַתְּ ק] נַפְשִׁי תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה:

Jeremiah 4 speaks of the evil and destruction God would bring from the north as judgement (v. 12). The prophet calls for repentance (v. 14) and reiterates judgement: 'Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you' (v. 18). He speaks of his own anguish at the coming war in 4:19, a verse with disjointed syntax and abrupt transitions that might be a reflection of his distressed emotional state:[94] 'my gut, my gut (lit. 'insides, entrails', possibly 'stomach', here as an expression of distress), I writhe; the walls of my heart, my heart roars (המה); I am not silent, for my soul hears the sound of the shofar, the alarm of war'. His expression of deep distress is directly opposed to חרשׁ: because of his pounding heart and writhing stomach he is (or will)[95] not be 'silent'. This negated 'silence' indicates his inability to rest or be still, and is thus opposed not to speech or sound,[96] but to distress and terror. Some suggest חרשׁ is transitive here: 'I cannot still it' (i.e., my heart),[97] but a causative meaning is doubtful.

[93] In my citation of the Hebrew text, a superscript כ indicates the *kethiv* reading while a superscript ק the *qere*.
[94] Rendsburg calls it 'confused syntax': a 'literary device invoked to portray confusion, excitement, or bewilderment' ('Confused Language as a Deliberate Literary Device', 2). McKane describes the language as 'volcanic' (*Jeremiah*, 1:103). Others think the difficulties indicate textual corruption: 'There is no way to arrange v 19a satisfactorily into cola; something must be wrong with the text' (Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 148).
[95] The *yiqtol* אחרישׁ could refer to an already present state ('I am not silent/at rest') or to a prediction of his future state when the disaster comes ('I will not be silent/at rest'). Many modern translations, perhaps unnecessarily, add 'cannot': 'I cannot keep silent' (ESV, NRSV); 'I cannot hold my peace' (KJV, JPS).
[96] *Contra* McKane: Jeremiah must 'find release from the intolerable tensions which rend him by issuing great cries of anguish'; the statement לֹא אַחֲרִישׁ refers to his 'loss of inner quietness and stability' (*Jeremiah*, 1:102).
[97] Bright, *Jeremiah*, 32. See also Holladay, who cites Job 11:2 (certainly meaning 11:3) as evidence for a transitive meaning. He argues that since לֹא אַחֲרִישׁ cannot stand alone, it must be transitive with 'my heart' as object (*Jeremiah 1*, 161).

4. Silence as not acting

In about one fourth of Hiphil references, the 'silence' referred to is not one of speech, but of action. It describes someone refraining from an expected action, temporarily holding back an eventually inevitable action, or failing to perform the appropriate action in a given situation. The inactivity or lack of response referred to by Hiphil חרשׁ seems marked as either unexpected or inappropriate, which fits the portrayal of silence in biblical Hebrew as a relative and contrastive concept based on a deviation from normal expectations, rather than an absolute absence of noise.[98] Broadly speaking, only those objects or individuals capable of making noise (or acting in a certain situation) are described as being silent when the subject does not act as expected or appropriate.

I have divided Hiphil חרשׁ referring to lack of action into the following categories:

a) Not fighting in war (Exod. 14:14)
b) Not protesting a rape (Gen. 34:5; 2 Sam. 13:20)
c) Not intervening to help someone (speech and action) (2 Sam 19:11; Est. 4:14; 7:4)
d) Not praying for someone (1 Sam. 7:8)
e) Not carrying out judgement (Ps. 50:21; Isa. 42:14; Hab. 1:13; Zeph. 3:17)

4a) Not fighting in war

Exodus 14:14
יְהוָה יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם וְאַתֶּם **תַּחֲרִישׁוּן**׃ פ

When the people express fear and reluctance while fleeing from the pursuing Egyptians in Exodus 14, Moses tells them not to fear, but to stand firm (התיצבו) and see the deliverance God would accomplish for them. In 14:14 he explains why: the LORD will fight for you and you will be 'silent' (ואתם תחרישון). The people's 'silence' contrasts directly with the fighting done for them by the LORD (rather than with any noise), suggesting that it refers to inactivity, specifically not fighting. Their 'silence' parallels standing firm (i.e., neither

[98] חשה also indicates lack of action, suggesting that inactivity pertains to the semantic field of silence.

fighting nor fleeing),[99] as commanded in 14:13.[100] Some, however, interpret תחרישון as expressing a silence opposed to speaking, either in contrast with their crying out to the LORD previously (14:10), or because (it is suggested) they no longer need to give a war cry since God will fight for them.[101] There is no reference otherwise to a war cry, however, and it is not necessary to posit a lack of speech. חרשׁ refers either to their refraining from fighting, or to their trust in the LORD's deliverance enabling them to stand firm (14:13).[102]

4b) Not protesting a rape

Genesis 34:5
וְיַעֲקֹב שָׁמַע כִּי טִמֵּא אֶת־דִּינָה בִתּוֹ וּבָנָיו הָיוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ בַּשָּׂדֶה **וְהֶחֱרַשׁ** יַעֲקֹב עַד־בֹּאָם׃

When Jacob hears of the rape of his daughter Dinah in Gen. 34:5, he is 'silent' until his sons come back from being with the cattle in the field. The sense of waiting implied by 'until', however, is misleading: even after the sons return, they are the only ones who act, and Jacob's silence continues. He neither speaks nor acts against the rape, though a more appropriate response would be to demonstrate outrage and desire vengeance, as shown by Dinah's brothers. 34:7 describes them as very angry, and the rest of the chapter details their deceptive plan to strike down their sister's violator along with all the male Shechemites. Jacob speaks only after the plunder of Shechem, and then not on behalf of his daughter, but to censure his sons for their violent acts making him 'stink' to the inhabitants of the land (v. 30). His 'silence' is one of passivity, neither speaking nor acting against injustice.

[99] Interestingly, other words for silence and standing are also used in parallel (דמם//עמד in 1 Sam. 14:9).
[100] See also the similar 2 Chronicles 20:17.
[101] Baumann refers to a war cry: 'ihr braucht nicht einmal das Kriegsgeschrei zu erheben!' (*TWAT* 2:280). Propp translates 'you be quiet', referring back to 14:10 (*Exodus 1–18*, 496). Houtman translates 'ihr aber schweigt nun still', elaborating further with 'mit eurem törichten Jammern und Klagen', but he prefers the translation 'ihr selbst braucht euch nur ruhig zu verhalten' (*Exodus*, 119).
[102] If the latter, חרשׁ in this verse and Jer. 4:19 are similar in referring to calm or lack of fear.

2 Samuel 13:20
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֵלֶ֙יהָ֙ אַבְשָׁלֹ֣ום אָחִ֔יהָ הֲאַמְנ֥וֹן אָחִ֖יךְ הָיָ֣ה עִמָּ֑ךְ וְעַתָּ֤ה אֲחֹותִי֙ **הַחֲרִישִׁ֔י** אָחִ֖יךְ הֽוּא אַל־ תָּשִׂ֥ימִי אֶת־לִבֵּ֖ךְ לַדָּבָ֣ר הַזֶּ֑ה וַתֵּ֣שֶׁב תָּמָ֔ר וְשֹׁמֵמָ֖ה בֵּ֥ית אַבְשָׁלֹ֖ום אָחִֽיהָ׃

Another post-rape silence is found in 2 Samuel 13, though here the silence is imposed upon the victim rather than attributed to her father. When Tamar is raped by her half-brother Amnon, her father, David, is in effect 'silent', neither acting nor speaking against the act. Tamar herself, however, is told by her brother Absalom to be silent and cease her public mourning: 'Now, my sister, be silent; he is your brother, do not place your heart on this matter' (or 'do not take this matter to heart') (13:20). The two parallel imperatives connect being silent to not paying attention to something.[103] In commanding silence, Absalom not only tells Tamar not to speak of the event, but also not to think about it, certainly not to act on it. Her unlikely 'silence' is a restraint from speaking, mourning or even thinking about the matter. As in Genesis 34, the violent repercussions of the act occupy much of the following text, with the chosen 'silence' of the fathers and the imposed 'silence' of the sisters contrasting sharply with the avenging violence of the brothers.

4c) Not intervening to help someone (speech and action)

חרש can also indicate a lack of speech and action on someone's behalf to protest present or future injustices.

2 Samuel 19:11[10]
וְאַבְשָׁלֹ֗ום אֲשֶׁ֤ר מָשַׁ֙חְנוּ֙ עָלֵ֣ינוּ מֵ֔ת בַּמִּלְחָמָ֖ה וְעַתָּ֣ה לָמָ֗ה אַתֶּם֙ **מַחֲרִשִׁ֔ים** לְהָשִׁ֖יב אֶת־הַמֶּ֣לֶךְ׃ ס

2 Samuel 19 describes the aftermath of Absalom's death, with Joab chiding King David for his mourning, and the people discussing amongst themselves what they should do: 'Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in war; and now, why are you "silent" to

[103] The phrase שׂית לב, 'to place the heart', means to closely observe or listen to someone or something, or to place special value on something (Exod. 7:22, 1 Sam. 4:20, Job 7:17, Ps. 48:12; 62:10, Jer. 31:21). It is used in parallel to verbs such as 'hear', 'see' and 'know' (Prov. 22:17, 24:23, 27:23).

bring back the king?' The shift in person makes the exact addressee uncertain: they seem to be speaking amongst themselves but then address a 2mpl subject with the participle מחרשׁים. Their location is also uncertain, as v. 8 refers to people out in the countryside as well as in the gate speaking with King David. In any case, the result is that David sends priests to ask the elders of Judah why they are the last ones to bring back the king (לָמָּה תִהְיוּ אַחֲרֹנִים לְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ; repeated in vv. 12 and 13). להשׁיב ('to bring back') is thus once the object of חרשׁ and twice of היה אחרן ('be the last to do something'), suggesting a synonymous or parallel relationship, as a result of which some translate חרשׁ as 'delay'.[104] The sense of delay comes from the context, however, and should not be imported into the semantics of the verb. Hiphil חרשׁ here refers to a lack of expected action, specifically the failure to bring back the king.[105]

וַיֹּאמֶר מָרְדֳּכַי לְהָשִׁיב אֶל־אֶסְתֵּר אַל־תְּדַמִּי בְנַפְשֵׁךְ לְהִמָּלֵט בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל־ הַיְּהוּדִים: [14] כִּי אִם־**הַחֲרֵשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי** בָּעֵת הַזֹּאת רֶוַח וְהַצָּלָה יַעֲמוֹד לַיְּהוּדִים מִמָּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאַתְּ וּבֵית־אָבִיךְ תֹּאבֵדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם־לְעֵת כָּזֹאת הִגַּעַתְּ לַמַּלְכוּת:	**Esther 4:13-14**
כִּי נִמְכַּרְנוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי לְהַשְׁמִיד לַהֲרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד וְאִלּוּ לַעֲבָדִים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת נִמְכַּרְנוּ **הֶחֱרַשְׁתִּי** כִּי אֵין הַצָּר שׁוֶה בְּנֶזֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס	**Esther 7:4**

חרשׁ is used twice in Esther to represent the (hypothetical) action of Esther had she *not* spoken out in defence of her people. In chapter 4 Mordechai exhorts her not to 'be silent' but instead to speak out on behalf of her endangered people, lest she herself also be destroyed. What is required of her is not just speech, however, but also decisive and risky action to enter the king's presence unbidden. Mordechai's warning against silence can be equated with a warning against inaction and fearful passivity.[106] In chapter 7 Esther uses the verb herself in describing to the king the action she chose not to take: 'if we had been

[104] 'Warum zögert ihr jetzt' (EIN); 'Pourquoi donc à présent tardez-vous' (Dhorme, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 404); 'Why do you delay' (Smith, *The Books of Samuel*, 362).
[105] Some translations reflect inactivity: 'Why then do you sit idle instead of escorting the king back?' (NJPS); 'Alors pourquoi ne faites-vous rien pour ramener le roi ?' (FBJ: French Bible de Jérusalem, 1973); Keil: 'Warum verhaltet ihr euch still, den König zurückzuführen?' (*Die Bücher Samuels*, 345).
[106] 'Ihre ängstliche Passivität sei nutzlos...Passivität wird sie so wie so ins Verderben bringen' (Gerleman, *Esther*, 106).

sold as slaves (only, and not to destruction), I would have been "silent" (i.e., and not bothered the king)'. As in 4:14, her choosing not to be 'silent' includes both speaking out and courageously approaching the king to intervene on behalf of her people.

Most versions translate with a verb meaning 'be silent', but the Esther Targumim have interesting variants. In 4:14 Targum Sheni uses שׁלי, 'cease' (תישׁלין מישׁלא), while Targum Rishon identifies her silence with a failure to intercede for the Jews (ולא תפגיע על יהודאי).[107] In 7:4, however, all Targums use a form of שׁתק for חרשׁ, while the Peshitta uses the cognate *štq* for both. The Greek traditions differ, the LXX in 4:14 with παρακούσῃς, 'refuse to listen' (possibly associating חרשׁ with deafness), the Alpha Text with ὑπερίδῃς, 'overlook' or 'neglect' (possibly interpreting חרשׁ as not acting).[108] In 7:4 the Septuagint has the same verb παρήκουσα (i.e., she would not have 'listened' or paid attention to a threat of enslavement), while the Alpha text differs with οὐκ ἤθελον ἀπαγγεῖλαι ('I would not have been willing to bring a report').[109] The Vulgate of 7:4 adds a verb for mourning: *et gemens tacerem* ('and mourning, I would have been silent').

4d) Not praying for someone

1 Samuel 7:8
וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ אֶל־שְׁמוּאֵ֔ל **אַל־תַּחֲרַ֥שׁ מִמֶּ֖נּוּ** מִזְּעֹ֣ק אֶל־יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֑ינוּ וְיוֹשִׁיעֵ֕נוּ מִיַּ֖ד פְּלִשְׁתִּֽים׃

In 1 Samuel 7:8 the people plead with Samuel that he not be silent 'from them'. This is the only negated Hiphil imperative of חרשׁ, and one of only three Hiphil חרשׁ followed by the preposition מן.[110] It is the only one followed by a double use of מן with different objects. החריש מן elsewhere refers to cessation of speech: the subject of חרשׁ stops speaking with the object of מן. Here that would not make sense, however, as the people

[107] Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther*, 60. Silence is opposed to intercession also in Esther Rabbah (cf. Isa. 62:1, 6).
[108] Clines, *The Esther Scroll*, 77, 207, 227.
[109] The Alpha text is in the appendix of Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther* (without page numbers).
[110] Also Job 13:13; Jer. 38:27.

(as object of מן) would be saying to Samuel (as subject of חרשׁ): 'do not stop speaking with us'. Context makes clear, however, that the people are concerned not with his speaking *with* them, but with his crying out to God *for* them. The second מן is attached to the infinitive construct זעק ('cry out'), which is easiest to interpret as a complement of אל־ תחרשׁ: 'do not be silent from crying out'. It is not located in the expected position after the verb, however, and interpretation becomes more difficult with ממנו in between. Translators tend to solve the difficulty by interpreting with a different word order, and by supplying somewhat different meanings for חרשׁ and מן. מזעק, for example, is taken as the object of אל־תחרשׁ ('do not be silent from crying out'), as if it followed immediately after, and ממנו, 'from us', is moved to the end of the clause and treated as an object of זעק rather than of חרשׁ (which it follows in a more normal object position). ממנו is also usually interpreted as indicating the beneficiaries of his crying out (i.e., 'for us'),[111] rather than 'from us', the normal meaning of מן, even though the preposition בעד would be more likely for the beneficiaries of prayer.[112]

One proposed solution is to repoint אל־תחרשׁ as a Qal, which could mean 'do not be deaf to (lit. 'from') us'.[113] Just as God is asked not to be 'deaf' but to hear and answer (Ps. 28:1), the people would be asking Samuel to hear them (i.e., not be deaf) and act on their request (by praying for them). A difficulty is that the second object, מזעק, could not possibly be the object of a verb meaning 'be deaf' ('do not be deaf from crying out' does not make sense). A different verbal idea (such as 'do not cease') would have to be

[111] Most translations supply the sense 'for us', but Dhorme does not directly translate ממנו: 'Ne cesse pas de crier vers Iahvé notre Dieu, pour qu'Il nous sauve de la main des Philistins!' (*Les Livres de Samuel*, 67).
[112] In 1 Sam. 7:5 Samuel says he will pray for (בעד) the people to the Lord, and 7:9 reports that he cried out to the Lord for (בעד) Israel. On מן, see GK §119v, x; J-M §133e.
[113] Caspari suggests reading as a Qal, though he does not explain how he arrives at his translation 'call unceasingly with us' ('Rufe rastlos mit uns (?)' [question mark his]), which does not reflect meanings of חרשׁ or of מן (*Die Samuelbücher*, 90). Driver interprets the first clause as 'do not be deaf (turning) from us' and points to Ps. 28:1 for comparison, even though he does not explicitly repoint as a Qal (*Notes on the Hebrew Text*, 64).

supplied for the second object, but this creates the unlikely situation of a single verb having two meanings in one sentence.[114]

Another possible solution is to reanalyse the preposition ממנו as having a 3ms object rather than 1cpl, the forms of which are identical. The request would then be 'do not be silent from/cease speaking with *him*', that is, the LORD. The implication would be 'do not cease praying to him', which is in fact their desire and elaborated in the following phrase: 'from crying out to the LORD our God that he might save us from the hand of the Philistines'. In this interpretation, both ממנו and מזעק function in the same way in relation to the verb חרשׁ, with the second in apposition, identifying more precisely what is meant by the first.[115]

4e) Not carrying out judgement

With divine subject (and once royal), חרשׁ refers specifically to restraint of judgement in situations where judgement is expected.

Psalm 50:21
אֵלֶּה עָשִׂיתָ֗ וְ֭הֶחֱרַ֣שְׁתִּי דָּמִ֣יתָ הֱיוֹת־אֶ֑הְיֶה כָּ֝מ֗וֹךָ אוֹכִיחֲךָ֥ וְאֶֽעֶרְכָ֥ה לְעֵינֶֽיךָ׃

Psalm 50 presents God as a judge who will condemn the wicked for the evil they have done. After their deeds are listed (vv. 17-20), God speaks (v. 21): 'These things you have done, but I have been silent (והחרשׁתי); you thought I was like you; I will now rebuke you and lay (וְאֶעֶרְכָה) [the charge] before you'. God's self-description as 'silent' represents restraint in judgement thus far.[116] Some commentators, however, interpret it in opposition

[114] Alternatively, the idea of cessation could come simply from the מן, and not from חרשׁ. Driver interprets the second clause as 'so as not to cry (lit. *away from* crying)', referencing GK §119y on uses of מן when 'the idea of precluding from anything is only indirectly contained in the preceding verb'. He does not, however, explain how this would relate to his interpretation of the first clause 'be not deaf from us' (*Notes on the Hebrew Text*, 64).

[115] This argument is developed further in Noll, 'Rereading Samuel's Silence'.

[116] It is 'not visiting them with punishment, apparently not noticing them or caring for them' (Briggs, *Psalms*, 1:420).

to speech (e.g., legal accusation).[117] Some interpret והחרשׁתי as a rhetorical question: 'should I have kept silence?',[118] highlighting the unexpected nature of God's restraint. The Targum, as elsewhere, interprets חרשׁ as God's waiting, that is, being 'long' or patient, for the people to turn back and repent: אילין עובדין בישין עבדתא ואוריכית דתיתיב ('these evil deeds you did, and I waited that you would turn back'). Interestingly the more literal ישׁתוק is used in 50:3 (see under Qal).

Isaiah 42:14[119]
הֶחֱשֵׁ֤יתִי מֵעוֹלָם֙ **אַחֲרִ֔ישׁ** אֶתְאַפֵּ֖ק כַּיּוֹלֵדָ֣ה אֶפְעֶ֑ה אֵ֚שֹׁם וְאֶשְׁאַ֔ף יָחַ֖ד׃

Hiphil חרשׁ and חשׁה are parallels in Isaiah 42:14, referring to restraint from both action and speech. As in Ps. 50, חרשׁ portrays the transition point from the 'silence' of temporarily withheld judgement to more active engagement and coming judgement. It contrasts with the cries of a woman giving birth, also with the destructive activities of v. 15. The almost complete lack of syntactic markers makes the relations between verbs difficult to identify, though the context suggests a strong contrast between first and second hemistichs. The relationship of tenses is also unclear: do the חשׁה *qatal* and חרשׁ *yiqtol* contrast ('I have been quiet; I will [now] be silent'), or do all three of the first verbs refer to past events?[120] The latter is contextually preferable, creating a clear contrast between former restraint and future action.

[117] Craigie associates the breaking of silence with God's speaking to reprove and accuse (*Psalms 1-50*, 366). Gunkel says God must speak to counteract the blasphemous idea that good and evil are the same to him (*Die Psalmen*, 218).
[118] JPS, see also NEB.
[119] See also under חשׁה.
[120] *Qatal* and *yiqtol* verbs are commonly paired in poetic passages without indicating a change in tense (e.g., Isa. 40:13, 19; 42:1, 6, 25). There is a lack of agreement over whether this is simply a stylistic device in poetry (Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 210), 'grammatical parallelism' (Berlin, *Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 36), use of an archaic *yiqtol* (Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 49) or if it implies a difference in aspect (Notarius, *The Verb in Archaic Biblical Poetry*, 268-69). GK §106l observes that an imperfect verb can correspond to a perfect in poetic parallelism.

The Targum again interprets God's silence as patience, so they might repent and return to the law: יהבית להון ארכא מעלמא דאם יתובון לאוריתא. The noun ארכא ('length', 'extension'), which is used throughout Isaiah for Hebrew חשׂה, represents both חשׂה and חרשׁ. The Septuagint also uses one verb (σιωπάω) for both Hebrew verbs, though in different tenses (aorist and future): ἐσιώπησα μὴ καὶ ἀεὶ σιωπήσομαι ('I have been silent. Shall I even always be silent?').[121]

Habakkuk 1:13
טְהֹר֤וֹ עֵינַ֙יִם֙ מֵרְא֣וֹת רָ֔ע וְהַבִּ֖יט אֵ֣ל־עָמָ֑ל לָ֣א תוּכֵ֗ל לָ֚מָּה תַבִּ֣יט בּוֹגְדִ֔ים **תַּחֲרִ֖ישׁ** בְּבַלַּ֣ע רָשָׁ֔ע צַדִּ֖יק מִמֶּֽנּוּ׃

חרשׁ is again used to refer to divine restraint of judgement by the prophet Habakkuk, who complains against perceived injustice by accusing God of 'silence' (1:13). Having been warned of upcoming judgement at the hands of the Chaldeans (v. 6), Habakkuk protests, asking why God looks at the treacherous and is 'silent' at the wicked's 'swallowing up' of the righteous. In the sparse poetic syntax תחרישׁ, 'you are silent' could be interpreted either as adverbially modifying תביט: 'you look on silently' (suggesting that he does not act on what he sees) or as a new clause with an implied (but elided) interrogative: '*why* are you silent when the wicked swallow the (more) righteous?' Either way, the accusation of being silent in the face of injustice clearly begs action, not speech. The Targum again represents חרשׁ with giving 'extension': ואת יהיב ארכא, while other versions translate as 'be silent'.

Zephaniah 3:17
[a] יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ בְּקִרְבֶּ֔ךָ גִּבּ֖וֹר יוֹשִׁ֣יעַ [b] יָשִׂ֣ישׂ עָלֶ֔יךָ בְּשִׂמְחָ֑ה [c] **יַחֲרִ֤ישׁ** בְּאַהֲבָתֹו֙ [d] יָגִ֣יל עָלֶ֔יךָ בְּרִנָּֽה׃

[121] Silva, *NETS*, 856.

Hiphil חרשׁ also seems to refer to divine restraint of judgement in Zeph. 3:17, although it is not widely recognised, and interpretations vary widely.

Zephaniah 1-2 talk of the coming day of the LORD, a day of wrath and judgement. Chapter 3 also describes coming judgement and burning anger (3:8), but the end of the chapter is dominated by positive images of future restoration (vv. 9-20). The people are told to rejoice because the LORD has taken away both their judgement and their enemies, and they will have nothing to fear (vv. 15-16). In 3:17 God is portrayed as a mighty man in their midst, one who saves and who also rejoices over them. His rejoicing appears in two parallel verse lines (b and d above): 'he will rejoice over you with joy'; 'he will exult over you with a shout'. Between them comes the enigmatic יחריש באהבתו: 'he will be silent in his love' (or 'with/because of his love').[122] Silence is opposed to audible rejoicing, however, and does not seem parallel or even related to the surrounding lines, which has troubled many commentators.[123]

There is a wide range of proposed interpretations, including emendations, but for reasons of space I will present here only those relevant to חרשׁ, which has been interpreted as:

1. be silent, be quiet;
2. be still, be at rest;
3. make quiet, soothe;
4. renew (you/his love).

Those who translate 'be silent' or 'be still' tend to draw analogies to human love, but still find the parallels difficult. The translations 'quiet you' and 'soothe' assume a causative

[122] באהבתו could be translated 'with his love', corresponding to the instrumental function of ב in the surrounding lines. The causal translation 'because of his love' is suggested by two other uses of אהבה with ב and possessive suffix: 'because of his love' for Rachel, Jacob's seven years of service seemed but a few days (Gen. 29:20); it is also given as the reason for Jonathan's covenant with David (1 Sam. 18:3). באהבתו refers to God's love only here and Isa. 63:9: 'he delivered them in [or 'because of'] his love, and in [or 'because of'] his pity (בחמלתו) he redeemed them'. Here in 3:17 a causal ב would imply that God is silent *because of* his love, an explanation for which is offered in my conclusion on this verse.

[123] See Driver, The Minor Prophets, 139; Sellin, Das Zwölfprophetenbuch, 442; Nowack, Die Kleinen Propheten, 306; Perlitt, Die Propheten Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja, 144; Aḥituv and Cogan, Nahum, 52.

meaning for Hiphil חרשׁ, despite questionable evidence. The translation 'renew' is based on the Septuagint (καινιεῖ), again a *resh/daleth* confusion as if from חדשׁ ('renew').

A better solution, in my view, is to interpret חרשׁ as in the three verses discussed above, that is, as indicating restraint from judgement. Unlike those, a motivation is given ('his love'), and the restraint of judgement is an enduring future promise rather than a temporary restraint. This interpretation also creates a better parallel with the surrounding lines, which can be supported by the following arguments.

1) Although there is a slight difference in the second member of the triplet, it could be intentional. The same pattern is seen in v. 14: three consecutive clauses instruct rejoicing, the first and third addressed to the fs 'daughter of Zion/Jerusalem', but the second to the ms Israel. This middle clause also differs by commanding a war cry rather than rejoicing.[124] It is therefore less surprising for the triplet in v. 17 to also differ somewhat in its middle member.

2) In the closely related 3:14-15,[125] Israel/Zion is told to rejoice (רני, הריעו, שׂמחי) because the LORD has taken away her judgements and her enemies (הסיר יהוה משפטיך פנה איבך מלך ישׂראל). Interestingly, רנה ('shout, cry') both begins v. 14 and ends v. 17, and as the only repeated synonym for rejoicing in these verses seems to create a poetic inclusio.[126] In

[124] רני בת־ציון / הריעו ישׂראל / שׂמחי ועלזי בכל־לב בת ירושׁלם׃

[125] Floyd notes the form critical connection between verses 14 and 17, but because he translates יחריש as renew, he finds anomalous the lack of 'counterpart in vv. 16-17 to the claim that Yahweh has removed his judgment', though, as I argue, it is there in חרשׁ (*Minor Prophets*, 243).

[126] Ivan Ball notes the inclusio in *A Rhetorical Study of Zephaniah* (270).

both verses the motivation for rejoicing is the removal or withholding ('silencing') of judgement.[127]

Alternatively, the verse might have a different structure: not, as commonly thought, ending with three parallel lines: A, B_1–B_2–B_3 (with B_2=יחריש באהבתו), but made up instead of two parallel clauses (A–B, A_1–B_1, with A_1=יחריש באהבתו).

A	The LORD (who) is mighty and saves	rejoices over you	B
A_1	The LORD (who) restrains judgement	rejoices over you	B_1

The Targum supports interpretation of יחריש as 'restrains judgement' with its: יכבוש על חובך ברחמתיה ('he will tread on/overcome your guilt/sin in his love').[128] Rashi has the similar: יכסה על פשעיך באהבתו ('he will cover your sins in his love').[129] Although not identical to the Hebrew, the end result of a lack of punishing judgement is the same in both cases. Gordon interprets God's silence in the Targum of Zephaniah as 'a withholding of judgement to the extent of actual forgiveness for the wrongdoing.'[130] Some modern translations also interpret silence as related to forgiveness: 'he will because of his love keep silent regarding his people's sins'.[131]

Despite these arguments for חרשׁ as restraint from judgment, I have found it in only two modern commentaries: Ivan Ball (1988) defined the silence of Hiphil חרשׁ as 'a refraining from executing judgment' and also identified the close parallels between rejoicing and

[127] Future restoration, joy, and obedience are also associated with divine rejoicing and contrasted to divine judgement in Isa. 65:13-20; Jer. 32:37-42; Deut. 30:8-10.
[128] The same Aramaic phrase translates Hebrew יכבש עונתינו in Mic. 7:19, which also speaks of divine compassion and forgiveness, indicated metaphorically by the image of sins cast into the depths of the sea.
[129] My translation; cf. Cohen: 'God will, in His love, cover up thy sins in silence' (*The Twelve Prophets*, 251).
[130] Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 173n.40.
[131] Smith, in Smith, Ward and Bewer, *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*, 257; cf. Rev. LUT: 'er wird dir vergeben'; NIV: 'he will no longer rebuke you'; RST: 'he will be merciful'.

removal of judgement in vv. 15 and 17;[132] Ehud Ben Zvi (1991) more broadly defined Hiphil חרשׁ as 'refraining from reacting to the deeds of someone else', then narrowed his definition to 'refraining from executing judgment', though without limiting it to divine judgement.[133] Surprisingly, however, this interpretation has not found wider acceptance and is not reflected in recent translations.[134] Although some commentators respond to it favourably, if cautiously,[135] others reject it outright as unconvincing,[136]

The evidence that Hiphil חרשׁ indicates restraint from judgement elsewhere, along with the parallels earlier in the chapter, should be given more weight by interpreters of Zephaniah 3:17, as they provide valuable clues for an otherwise obscure passage.

1 Samuel 10:27
וּבְנֵי בְלִיַּעַל אָמְרוּ מַה־יֹּשִׁיעֵנוּ זֶה וַיִּבְזֻהוּ וְלֹא־הֵבִיאוּ לוֹ מִנְחָה וַיְהִי **כְּמַחֲרִישׁ**׃ פ

1 Samuel 10 describes Saul's installation as king and subsequent return home to Gibeah. With him went an army of men whose hearts God had touched (v. 26), but some 'sons of Belial' spoke out against him, questioning his ability to deliver them, despising him and bringing him no present (v. 27). Saul's reaction to these men—or, rather, his *lack* of reaction—is described with the Hiphil participle מחריש: he was 'like one who is silent'. The verse ends without elaborating on Saul's actions to give context for interpretation.

[132] Zephaniah: A Rhetorical Study, 185-86, 264-72.
[133] A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah, 251-52.
[134] At least two contributors to a 1996 volume on Zephaniah assume the translation 'renew' in 3:17, one despite referencing Ben Zvi (Dietrich and Schwantes, *Der Tag wird kommen*, 27, 131).
[135] Berlin thinks it 'requires the least amount of juggling' but 'still does not wholly explain this crux'. She finds the contrast between silence and singing too great (*Zephaniah*, 145). O'Brien also expresses cautious approval, 'though the verse remains enigmatic' (*Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 126).
[136] Irsigler rejects it outright, calling the interpretation: 'störend und kaum verständlich, trotz zahlreicher Bemühungen, dieses Schweigen—etwa als Verzicht auf Strafe (E. Ben Zvi 1991, 251 f.) oder als "Niederdrücken" der Schuld (so Tg z.St.)—kontextuell verstehbar zu machen'; he translates 'er erneuert dir seine Liebe', requiring an emendation from ב to final ך (*Zefanja*, 418-19). Sweeney also discards Ben Zvi's analysis, but without engaging with it; he suggests the improbable interpretation of חרשׁ as 'plough' (*Zephaniah*, 202). Udoekpo seems to engage with Ben Zvi's analysis, but then bundles all meanings together: 'silence, renew with love or plough', and translates 'renew you' (*Re-Thinking the Day of Yhwh*, 157, 180-81).

The next verse begins a new chapter and abruptly changes topic to describe the oppression by Nahash, a character not previously introduced in the text.

Interpretation of כמחריש is difficult both syntactically and semantically, and a complicated picture of textual transmission emerges from the very different accounts given in the Septuagint, DSS and Josephus, though the MT will be the focus of this study. The syntactic difficulties relate to identifying the function of the preposition כ. When היה is followed by כ and a participle it can: 1) situate an action temporally in relation to another, 2) indicate pretence or misperception (by the actor or the observer), or 3) create a simile or describe the manner in which something was done.[137] The first is not possible here, as no action follows. The second is followed by the Vulgate: *ille vero dissimulabat se audire* ('but he pretended not to hear'), which suggests that Saul was covering up his true response. In other biblical references with היה כ׳, however, the implication of pretence or misperception is indicated not only by כ but also by the phrase 'in the eyes of' (that is, the action is misperceived in someone's eyes).[138] 1 Samuel 10:27 lacks this phrase, making pretence or dissimulation on Saul's part less likely. It could imply a perception contrary to fact,[139] however, that he acted *in the manner of* one who is 'silent' (even if this was not a true reflection of his internal state). The third option, simile or description of manner,[140]

[137] Ges18 (520) defines כ with infinitive or verbal noun as 1) comparative ('vergleichend'), either direct ('wie') or ironic ('als ob'); or 2) temporal ('als, da, wenn, sobald'). I have separated the first category into two.

[138] E.g., Gen. 19:14 (Lot seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting: ויהי כמצחק בעיני חתניו); Gen. 27:12 (Jacob worried that he would seem to be mocking his father: והייתי כמתעתע בעיניו); 2 Sam. 4:10 (a messenger reporting Saul's death to David thought he was bringing good news: והוא־היה כמבשׂר בעיניו). Driver lists these and other references in defence of MT היה כ׳, also pointing out the usual presence of בעיני־ (Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text*, 85).

[139] There *are* cases of כ with participle that convey something contrary to fact without using בעינ-, but these do not involve deception or pretence. In Ps. 31:13[12] the psalmist describes himself as 'one who is dead' (כמת), though he is clearly alive; in Gen 42:30, Joseph's brothers describe how he treated them as spies (כמרגלים), though they were not. See Dyk, *Participles in Context*, 272.

[140] E.g., Prov. 23:34; SS 1:7.

is favoured by many interpreters.[141] The description of Saul as being 'like one who is silent', however, does not have a sufficiently clear referent to function effectively as a simile, and even describing his manner as 'silent' is enigmatic.

The phrase is semantically difficult because חרשׁ could imply: 1) being silent; 2) not paying attention; 3) not responding; or 4) another homonymic meaning.

1. כמחריש could mean he was literally silent, not saying a word, whether out of forbearance, wisdom or sullenness. The Targum's והוה כשתיק and Peshitta's ܐܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܐ seem to reflect this. Some modern translations have 'be silent', but tend to interpret the participle as completed rather than on-going action,[142] and some ignore the sense of the כ, translating simply as 'he was silent'.[143]
2. It is proposed that כמחריש means he did not hear (or pretended not to hear),[144] but חרשׁ refers to deafness only as a Qal or adjective, not Hiphil.[145] A similar idea is that he did not pay attention (as *if* he had not heard, with the idea of pretence also inferred).[146]
3. Another potentially relevant nuance of Hiphil חרשׁ is 'silence' as lack of an expected response, whether speech or action. This would mean that Saul did not respond in judgement or anger as expected, but instead restrained himself.[147] כמחריש could represent his acting 'as one who restrains judgement', neither

[141] Barthélemy: it indicates manner of behaviour rather than a comparison, e.g., Ex. 22:24; Hos. 5:10; Job 24:14 (*Critique Textuelle*, 1:171). Sanders: the role of כ is to indicate the 'formal mode of the action', not comparison, citing the same verses ('Hermeneutics of Text Criticism', 25).
[142] 'He was as one that held his peace' (JPS).
[143] 'He held his peace' (KJV/AV, NRSV); 'he kept silent' (NASB, LBA).
[144] The Vulgate, already mentioned, has 'he pretended not to hear'. Also: 'But he was as one deaf' (Darby); 'Aber er tat, als hörte er es nicht' (ELB, similar also in Rev. LUT, SCH); Keil: 'wie taub seiend: er benahm sich, als habe er es nicht gehört' (*Die Bücher Samuels*, 90).
[145] Wellhausen notes the error of translation as 'be deaf' (*Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 76).
[146] 'He pretended not to mind' (NJPS); 'Mais Saül n'y prit point garde' (LSG); 'Mais lui resta indifférent' (TOB); 'Er aber tat, als merkte er es nicht' (EIN).
[147] See Barthélemy, who defines Hiphil חרשׁ as 'se maîtriser, s'imposer le silence', and interprets here: 'lui se comporta en homme qui s'impose le silence' (*Critique Textuelle*, 1:171).

speaking nor acting against those who scorn him, with the preposition כ suggesting that his outward behaviour was not a true reflection of his internal state.[148]

4. חרשׁ could instead be interpreted as one of its many homonyms, such as 'plot, devise'. כמחריש would describe Saul as being 'like one who plots' in response to being scorned, which would suit not only this situation, but also his character as described in other biblical passages.[149] An argument against this interpretation is that חרשׁ meaning 'plot' always takes an object, most often רע, 'evil', but once the positive טוב, 'good'. The lack of an object here makes interpretation as 'plot' less likely. Others have interpreted חרשׁ as 'plough', another homonym, giving ויהי כמחריש a temporal function identifying the action as occurring at harvest time,[150] but this interpretation is neither widespread nor convincing.

Other difficulties with MT's ויהי כמחריש stem from the abrupt transition between chapters. The immediately following 11:1 opens *in medias res* with an account of the hostile actions of Nahash, who is strangely not introduced by his full formulaic title, 'king of the Ammonites', until much later (12:12). Furthermore, although his previous oppression of the Israelites is important background, it is not described here.[151] There would have been no obvious solutions had different versions not been preserved in the Septuagint, 4QSam[a], and Josephus, which together suggest a different textual tradition.

[148] See footnote above on כ conveying something contrary to fact.
[149] Saul is, notably, the only named subject of the verb חרשׁ with this meaning in biblical Hebrew (1 Sam. 23:9), which otherwise only has impersonal or generic second-person subjects in warning against the consequences of plotting evil (e.g., Prov. 3:29; 6:14, 18; 12:20; 14:22).
[150] Caspari mentions 'Pflügezeit' as a translation previously suggested by Klostermann (1887) and Schlögl (1905): 'חריש Gen 45,6 ist mit Regen verbunden und auch sonst für einen Feldzug ungünstig. Sauls Rinder sprechen eher für Dreschzeit' (*Die Samuelbücher*, 123).
[151] These points are stressed by Terry Eves, who suggests that knowledge of Nahash's past actions is presupposed later in 1 Samuel ('One Ammonite Invasion or Two?', 319).

The LXX ends 10:27 with ‘καὶ ἠτίμασαν αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἤνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα’ (‘and they despised him and brought him no presents’), without any mention of Saul’s silence, or indeed of any response at all. Chapter 11 then begins ‘καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς μετὰ μῆνα καὶ ἀνέβη Ναας ὁ Αμμανίτης καὶ παρεμβάλλει ἐπὶ Ιαβις Γαλααδ’ (‘And it happened about a month later, that Naas the Ammanite went up and encamped against Iabis-Galaad’).[152] The clause ‘it was about a month’ almost certainly reflects a Hebrew text such as כמחדש ויהי,[153] another example of the common *resh/daleth* confusion.

The discovery of 4QSam[a] at Qumran added further evidence for the reading as חדש (‘month’). The manuscript has a clear gap after the word מנחה (‘gift’), and on the next line introduces Nahash, king of the Ammonites, who was oppressing the Gadites and Reubenites. This inclusion of his full title at first mention and a description of his past actions against the Israelites forms a more coherent narrative than MT. After four lines of text describing the actions of Nahash, a scribe has written in supralinearly: ויהי כמו חדש (‘it was about a month’), which is followed by text nearly identical to MT 11:1: ויעל נחש העמוני ויחן על־יביש.[154] After the place name יביש ending the supralinear addition, the reader’s eyes return to the midway point of line four to resume reading at the place name יבש גלעד.[155] This naturally seems to result from the common error of parablepsis, specifically a haplography caused by skipping from one יביש/יבש to the next, inadvertently writing it only once and missing out the text in between. Having realised the error, the scribe added in the missing text above the line.

[152] Taylor, *NETS*, 255.
[153] The reconstructed Hebrew could either be כ-מן-חדש or כמו-חדש. It is unusual to use כ-מן for a temporal phrase, but support for it is claimed from Gen. 38:24: וַיְהִי כִּמְשֻׁלֹּשׁ חֳדָשִׁים (‘about three months later’). This phrase is anomalous, however, with wrong gender and missing *dagesh* in שׁלשׁ. The construction כמו-חדש is therefore more likely, and is also supported by 4QSam[a]. The vocalisation כְּמַחְדָּשׁ is suggested. See Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel*, 73; Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text*, 85; Caspari, *Die Samuelbücher*, 123; Dhorme, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 91.
[154] 4QSam[a] יביש for MT יבש.
[155] Cross et al., *Qumran Cave 4 XII*, DJD 17:66.

Further support for 4QSam[a] is found in Josephus *Antiquities* (6.68): 'However, a month later (Μηνὶ δ᾽ ὕστερον), he [Saul] began to win the esteem of all by the war with Naas, king of the Ammanites. For this monarch had done much harm to the Jews who had settled beyond the river Jordan'.[156] Josephus recounts many of the same details, but differs in placing the time phrase before rather than after describing the deeds Nahash.

There has been much scholarly debate over which of these textual traditions is earlier[157] and about the likely process of transmission,[158] but due to constraints of space the arguments will not be entered into here, as the only relevant text for this semantic study is the MT's כמחריש, regardless of whether it was original or not. At some point, the text came to be consistently transmitted and interpreted as the Hiphil participle מחריש, and it is this tradition alone that offers insight into the semantics of חרשׁ, even if at later stages of transmission.

If חרשׁ in 1 Samuel 10:27 is interpreted with the nuance of not acting as expected, not responding to a provocation, or restraining judgement, it fits the context very well. When

[156] Translation by Thackeray and Marcus in *Jewish Antiquities*, book vi.68, 201-3.
[157] For arguments that the MT is original, see: Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel*, 98; Sanders, 'Hermeneutics', 26; Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle,* 1:172; Rofé, 'The Acts of Nahash according to 4QSam[a]', 131-32; Herbert, '4QSam[a] and its Relationship to the LXX', 50-51; also Müller et al., who discuss both sides of the argument but conclude the longer text has been added (*Evidence of Editing*, 79-99). Arguments that the longer narratives in 4QSam[a] and Josephus reflect an original, fuller version that fell out of the proto-Masoretic text tend to mention the more 'reliable' text of 4QSam[a] than that of MT Samuel (see Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 344), also the non-ideological nature of the plus, its greater linguistic conformity to expected biblical syntax and the necessary context it provides for the surrounding text. See Cross, 'The Ammonite Oppression', 114; Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, 166-67; Eves, 'One Ammonite Invasion or Two?', 318-19.
[158] Tov, *Textual Criticism,* 342; Eves, 'One Ammonite Invasion or Two?', 324. For discussion of differences in Josephus, see Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel,* 70. There is also uncertainty whether the Vorlage of the LXX was closer to the MT or 4QSam[a]; some Greek manuscripts have an interesting 'redactional doublet' reflecting both traditions: 'και εγενηθη ως μετα μηνα' *and* 'και εγενηθη ως κωφευων' (Eves, 'One Ammonite Invasion or Two?', 317, 322-23; Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel,* 69-70). Latin versions also vary, with Old Latin closer to the Septuagint (*et factum est quasi post mensem*), and the Vulgate closer to the MT, albeit not an exact translation (Dhorme, *Les Livres de Samuel*, 91; Eves, 'One Ammonite Invasion or Two?', 313).

Saul is mocked as a newly chosen king, a response of vengeance or anger is expected; when instead he is 'as one who does not act', or 'restrains judgement', it is certainly surprising. The כ seems to add an element of distance, suggesting he acted 'as' with restraint, but perhaps internally desired vengeance.[159] ויהי כמחרישׁ therefore seems to indicate Saul's surprising lack of response and withholding of judgement in response to a provocation.

5. Causative: 'to silence'?

Although dictionaries and commentators commonly suggest a causative meaning for Hiphil חרשׁ in Job 11:3 and 41:4, this is neither certain nor required, and both verses remain obscure.

Job 11:2-3
2 הֲרֹ֤ב דְּ֭בָרִים לֹ֣א יֵעָנֶ֑ה וְאִם־אִ֥ישׁ שְׂפָתַ֝֗יִם יִצְדָּֽק׃ 3 בַּדֶּ֭יךָ מְתִ֣ים **יַחֲרִישׁ֑וּ** וַתִּלְעַ֥ג וְ֝אֵ֗ין מַכְלִֽם׃

In Job 11 Zophar the Naamathite challenges Job: 'should a multitude of words not be answered? And will a talkative man [lit. 'man of lips'] be declared righteous?' (v. 2). The sequence of rhetorical questions seems to continue in v. 3: 'shall your idle talk silence men? [or: 'shall men be silent at your idle talk?'] Shall you mock, and no one shame (you)?'[160] Without any explicit question markers, however, v. 3 could contain statements instead.[161] A majority of interpreters understand יחרישׁו as causative, with בדיך ('your idle talk/empty boasting') as the subject and מתים ('men') as the object. Since both בדיך and מתים are plural nouns without an object marker, however, either one could be the subject

[159] Many suggest this description portrays Saul's character as being restrained or humble, but this is contradicted by his later behaviour in relentless pursuit of David. See Sanders, 'Hermeneutics', 25-26; Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle*, 1:171-72; also Rofé, who emends to כמו חֵרֵשׁ ('The Acts of Nahash', 133).
[160] 'Should your babble put others to silence, and when you mock, shall no one shame you?' (NRSV); 'Should thy boastings make men hold their peace? And shouldest thou mock, with none to make thee?' (Driver and Gray, *The Book of Job*, 105); 'Soll dein Geschwätz Männer zum Schweigen bringen, so daß du unwiderlegt spotten dürftest?' (Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 220); 'Tes bavardages feront-ils taire les hommes / Et te moqueras-tu sans que personne ne blame?' (Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 142).
[161] 'Your prattle may silence men; You may mock without being rebuked' (NJPS); 'Thy boastings have made men hold their peace, and thou hast mocked, with none to make thee ashamed' (JPS).

of the verb, and an equally sensible option is to have מתים as the subject of חרשׁ with its more usual intransitive meaning: ‘Shall men be silent at your empty boasting?’ The word order increases ambiguity, with the verb last in the clause, rather than first and followed by the subject.

Polysemous words also make interpretation difficult. בדיך can be ‘idle talk’, ‘babbling’, or ‘boasting’, but also ‘parts or members of a body’, thus ‘limbs’.[162] מתים means ‘men’, but vocalised מֵתִים means ‘dead people’ (as Peshitta). The second hemistich also presents difficulties, with מכלם a defectively written Hiphil participle[163] (‘humiliate, put to shame’), uncharacteristically without an object.[164]

The broader context supplies some clues. The ‘abundance of words’ and lack of answer in v. 2 provide fitting parallels to the ‘idle talk’ and silence of v. 3. Since the passive ‘not be answered’ (יֵעָנֶה) in v. 2 has men as its implied agents, it would make sense to consider the men (מתים) of v. 3 as the subject of the verb יחרישׁו: in v. 2 men do not answer Job’s many words, and in v. 3 men are silent at his idle talk. They communicate essentially the same situation, that no one answers Job, which Zophar is about to remedy. This is not altogether different in result from the more common interpretation ‘your idle talk will silence men’, but this latter interpretation gives agency to Job’s words that they do not have in v. 2.

Both interpretations create difficulty, however. The first (‘will men be silent at your idle talk?’) lacks a preposition before בדיך. The Peshitta adds one (ܒ) to mean ‘at your

[162] The Vulgate, with *tibi soli tacebunt homines* (‘to you alone men are silent’) seems to interpret from לבדיך, ‘(to) you alone’ (See Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 142; Peters, *Das Buch Job*, 117).
[163] Budde points out that this is usual for Hiphil in pause in Job (*Das Buch Hiob*, 52).
[164] Out of ten biblical uses of Hiphil כלם, it lacks an object only here and in Jer. 6:15, where it is an infinitive construct as object of the verb ידע (and does not need an object).

words', but a lack of preposition could also be attributed to the usual scarcity of syntactic markers in poetry, so does not exclude interpreting בדיך as the reason for men being silent. The second, and more common, interpretation ('will your idle talk silence men'?) seems to be supported by the Targum's causative: כדבובייך גבריא משתקין; however, it is difficult because the Hiphil nowhere else has the causative sense 'to silence', and nowhere else does it take an inanimate subject. Despite this, it is preferred by modern versions and commentators, though a few acknowledge that Hiphil חרשׁ is not usually transitive.[165]

In conclusion, the assumption that חרשׁ should be causative here is severely weakened not only by its distribution (only 1 out of 39 Hiphil uses), but also by the ambiguity of the verse and the equally valid interpretation with the usual intransitive sense.

Job 41:4[12]
(לֹא־)[לוֹ־]ק **אַחֲרִישׁ** בַּדָּיו וּדְבַר־גְּבוּרֹות וְחֵין עֶרְכּוֹ׃

Hiphil חרשׁ is also sometimes translated as a causative in Job 41:4[12]. In chapters 40-41 the LORD speaks to Job, first reminding him of his weakness, then speaking of the surpassing greatness of Behemoth and Leviathan. Changes in person also make this verse more difficult to interpret, as it is the point of transition between the first-person speech immediately before,[166] and the third-person praise of Leviathan following.

Textual problems begin with the verse-initial *kethiv* לא ('not') and the *qere* לו ('to him'). Translations tend to prefer the former ('I will not be silent'), as the latter is difficult to interpret ('to him I am silent'?). There are lexical ambiguities as well: בדיו, as in 11:3,

[165] Driver and Gray, *The Book of Job*, 105; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 220; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 120; Dhorme, *Job*, 142; Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob*, 61; Budde comments: 'החריש kausativ, vielleicht nur hier' (*Hiob*, 52).
[166] In addition to God, many other first-person subjects have been proposed. See Clines, *Job 38-42*, 1162.

could refer to babblings or empty talk (supported by the following clause's ודבר־גבורות, 'word of strength'?), or to body parts ('his limbs', supported by the larger context about Leviathan).[167] Different interpretations are suggested for חרשׁ too: as the causative 'I will not silence his boastings';[168] as implying hiding or concealing: 'I will not conceal his parts'[169] (perhaps derived from the adverbial use in Josh. 2:1); or as an intransitive: 'I will not keep silence concerning its limbs' (supplying a preposition before בדיו).[170] The final two words of the verse, וחין ערכו are too obscure to contribute anything to the interpretation of חרשׁ.

The versions mostly interpret חרשׁ as referring to silence, but the Vulgate has *non parcam ei* ('I will not spare him'), perhaps based on other uses of Hiphil חרשׁ to refer to restraint of judgement. If so, it is noteworthy that it is not found in the Targum.

Because the context does not allude to any speech of Leviathan but instead is focused on his strength, the interpretation as 'I will not silence his idle talk' seems very unlikely, especially with the unlikelihood of חרשׁ being causative in the first place. As part of a speech on the physical greatness of Leviathan, however, interpretation as 'I will not be silent (about) his limbs and the matter of his strength' does seem likely. With so many difficulties, this verse cannot contribute much to semantic knowledge of חרשׁ, and it certainly should not be used as evidence for a causative meaning for Hiphil חרשׁ.

[167] Dhorme suggests 'Je ne tairai pas ses membres' (*Le Livre de Job*, 577).
[168] Although he describes the text as corrupt and suggests an alternative translation, Fohrer offers the following translation of the Hebrew text as it is: 'Ich bringe sein Geschwätz nicht zum Schweigen' (*Das Buch Hiob*, 527).
[169] KJV/AV; see also Peters, 'Verschweigen will ich seine Glieder nicht' (*Das Buch Job*, 474).
[170] NRSV and many others; Strauss, '(So) werde ich nicht schweigen von seinen Gliedmaßen' (*Hiob*, 335).

Qal

חרשׁ is used only seven times in the Qal, all in poetic texts, and all but one in the Psalms. It has two clearly distinguished meanings: 'be deaf' and 'be silent'. When it means 'be deaf', it refers to a choice not to hear rather than to a physical inability; when it means 'be silent', it is always negated and refers to God's restraining action in judgement. References are treated below within these categories in order of clarity, with the more ambiguous last.

1. Be Deaf

Micah 7:16
יִרְאוּ גוֹיִם וְיֵבֹשׁוּ מִכֹּל גְּבוּרָתָם יָשִׂימוּ יָד עַל־פֶּה אָזְנֵיהֶם **תֶּחֱרָשְׁנָה**׃

In Micah 7:16 חרשׁ is a 3fpl form with 'their ears' as its subject: 'the nations will see and be ashamed of all their might; they will place a hand on their mouth, their ears will be deaf'. חרשׁ clearly refers to deafness of ears rather than silence, confirmed also by the preceding allusion to non-literal muteness ('hand on mouth').

Psalm 39:13[12]
שְׁמְעָה־תְפִלָּתִי יְהוָה וְשַׁוְעָתִי הַאֲזִינָה אֶל־דִּמְעָתִי **אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ** כִּי גֵר אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ תּוֹשָׁב כְּכָל־אֲבוֹתָי׃

In Psalm 39:13[12] the psalmist asks three times to be heard: 'hear (שמעה) my prayer, give ear (האזינה) to my cry, and to my tear(s) do not חרשׁ'. The clauses could be divided differently,[171] but the three verbs certainly express parallel ideas. Since the negated Qal חרשׁ is parallel to the positive imperatives 'hear' and 'give ear', it must mean 'do not be deaf' (i.e., but instead hear).

Ps. 28:1
לְדָוִד אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא צוּרִי **אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ** מִמֶּנִּי פֶּן־תֶּחְשֶׁה מִמֶּנִּי וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם־יוֹרְדֵי בוֹר׃

[171] Both תפלתי and שׁועתי, for example, could be objects of שׁמע, and דמעתי the object of האזין, leaving אל־ תחרשׁ as a clause on its own. Even so, חרשׁ would have a meaning similar to the first two verbs.

In Psalm 28:1 אל־תחרֵשׁ is part of a sequence of chronologically related (rather than parallel) requests: 'To you, LORD, I cry; my rock, do not חרשׁ from me, lest you be silent[172] from me and I become like those who go down to the pit'.[173] The request that God not חרשׁ is equivalent in the following verse to a request that he hear, and thus should be translated 'do not be deaf'. The sequence of call-hear-answer is found in other psalms and prayers that ask God to hear and answer—not necessarily audibly, but in actions of deliverance or vengeance. In this psalm God's actions against the enemies (vv. 4-5) are portrayed as the result of God's having heard the psalmist (vv. 2, 6).

The verse is often interpreted by adding the subordinating conjunction 'if': 'do not חרשׁ, lest *if* you חשׁה…'. This addition implies that the two verbs are synonymous parallels ('do not *x*, lest <u>if</u> you *x*'), which alters the normal interpretation of Hebrew syntax. When the conjunction פן־ is followed by a *yiqtol*, it warns against the unwanted result of the action preceding פן ('do not *x*, lest *y* happen'), and would therefore not normally come between synonymous verbs.[174] Since in Psalm 28:1 חשׁה (being silent or restraining from action) is the undesired result of the verb חרשׁ,[175] it is more logical to interpret as 'do not be deaf to me, lest (as a natural and unwanted consequence) you become silent to me...' (that is, if you do not hear me, you might not act for me). Expressed in positive terms, the request is equivalent to 'hear me and answer me', a request that God act on his behalf by helping him and by repaying his enemies. God's protective and retributive actions are opposed to

[172] חשׁה like חרשׁ, means 'be silent' but can be used to indicate lack of action or restraining oneself.
[173] The idiomatic expression 'go down to the pit' refers to death, Sheol, and sometimes destruction.
[174] See GK §152w: פן expresses a 'fear or precaution'; Ges18: 'wenn eine Handlung vorausgeht, die eine andere, zu befürchtende, hindern soll' (1058); *HALOT*: פן with imperfect is used with the purpose of 'rejection of a consequence which might be possible' (936-37). Joüon, however, retains the conditional 'if' in his translation of Ps. 28:1, arguing that when פן 'extends its force to a second juxtaposed verb, the first clause can be logically subordinate (temporal or conditional)' (J-M §168h). I am not sure if ונמשׁלתי is in mind as the second verb, but I still think פן should retain its usual force of contrast.
[175] Although they are elsewhere in parallel, their separation by פן here suggests a different interpretation.

the ‘silence’ which the psalmist wishes to avoid (פן־תחשׁה), and God’s having heard the psalmist is opposed to the deafness against which he pleads (אל־תחרשׁ).

Many translations and commentators, however, interpret differently. Most ancient versions, and some modern,[176] use one word for both חרשׁ and חשׁה (Greek παρασιωπήσῃς, Targum תשׁתוק, Peshitta ܬܫܬܟ). The Vulgate uses two different verbs, but both mean ‘be silent’: ‘*ne sileas a me nequando taceas a me*’. Jerome’s *Iuxta Hebraeos* is the only ancient version to interpret חרשׁ as ‘be deaf’: ‘*ne obsurdescas mihi ne forte tacente te mihi*’.

One further observation must be made on the syntax of this verse: it is the only Qal חרשׁ followed by the preposition מן, which seems to identify the psalmist as the one most affected by God’s being deaf or being silent ‘from’ him.[177]

2. Be Silent

Psalm 50:3
יָבֹא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְ**אַל־יֶּחֱרַשׁ** אֵשׁ־לְפָנָיו תֹּאכֵל וּסְבִיבָיו נִשְׁעֲרָה מְאֹד׃

Psalm 50:3 has the only 3ms Qal חרשׁ: ‘our God will come, and may he not be silent [or: ‘he is not silent’]; fire devours before him, and all around him is a great storm’. God’s purpose in coming is judgement (vv. 4, 6), which is twice contrasted with God’s ‘silence’: here, as the volitive ‘may he not be silent’, and in v. 21 (see under Hiphil, 4e). God’s ‘silence’ is thus equated with restraint from judgement.

Ps. 83:2[1]
אֱלֹהִים אַל־דֳּמִי־לָךְ **אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ** וְאַל־תִּשְׁקֹט אֵל׃

[176] KJV/AV, EIN, ELB, Rev. LUT, SCH.
[177] It might best fit into the category that Williams identifies as ‘מן for standpoint’, when the object of the preposition is ‘the person from whose standpoint something is stated’ (*Williams’ Hebrew Syntax* §323c).

In Psalm 83:2[1] אל־תחרֹשׁ is the second of three parallel negative imperatives addressed to God: 'do not (give) rest to yourself;[178] do not חרשׁ ('be silent/inactive'); and do not be quiet'.[179] Since the surrounding parallels prohibit rest and quiet, אל־תחרשׁ should be interpreted 'do not be silent' rather than 'do not be deaf'. The psalmist is requesting that God not rest or be 'silent' but instead act on his behalf, which is reflected in the rest of the psalm, with the psalmist asking God to act on his behalf against his enemies (esp. vv. 10, 12, 14, 16).

The remaining two references with אל־תחרשׁ are somewhat ambiguous, expressing either a desire to be heard ('do not be deaf') or a desire for God to act ('do not be silent'), with a stronger case for the latter.

Psalm 35:22
רָאִיתָה יְהוָה **אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ** אֲדֹנָי אַל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי׃

אל־תחרשׁ in Psalm 35:22 comes towards the end of a psalm filled with complaints against enemies and wishes for vengeance against them (esp. vv. 1, 8, 23-26). After reviewing the wrongs done to him, including the enemies' deceitful speech, the psalmist states 'you have seen, LORD, do not חרשׁ, my LORD, do not be far from me'. The request אל־תחרשׁ could be interpreted as 'do not be deaf' if the psalmist wants God to hear the mockery and deceit of his enemies and act accordingly. It seems more likely, however, to mean 'do not be silent', communicating his desire that God act on his behalf to accomplish justice.[180] This is confirmed by the following verse, in which he asks God to arise and awake for

[178] דמי means rest, silence, cessation; followed by 'to you', it makes sense to supply a verb like 'give'.
[179] שקט refers to quiet and rest rather than silence and is frequently used to describe land at peace.
[180] An interesting similarity with Hab. 1:13 is suggested by the verb of seeing in v. 17 (כמה תראה, 'how much will you look on?'), and its repetition in v. 22. Both Habakkuk and the psalmist associate God's 'silence' with apparent negligence in seeing without acting, and both plead that God not look on passively but instead act.

judgement. It need not be suggested that 'do not be silent' is a request for speech or legal intervention.[181]

Psalm 109:1
לַמְנַצֵּחַ לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר אֱלֹהֵי תְהִלָּתִי **אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ**׃

Psalm 109 begins with the vocative 'God of my praise', followed by the request 'do not חרשׁ'. The wicked have spoken deceitful and hateful words against the psalmist, returning evil for good, so he asks for their condemnation in judgement (vv. 6-20). Here too אל־ תחרשׁ could be interpreted 'do not be deaf' in reference to the speech of the wicked, which the psalmist wants God to hear and respond to. A request not to be deaf could also be in reference to the title 'God of my praise', as if to say 'hear my praise'. It seems more likely, however, that the request means 'do not be silent', equivalent to the positive 'act on my behalf', since the psalm describes the wrongdoing of the wicked and requests vengeance against them.[182] It need not be interpreted as demanding verbal intervention such as an oracle of salvation.[183]

The connection between not being silent and acting in response is also found in psalms and biblical prayers that present God's 'answer' as manifested in his actions of judgement and deliverance rather than (only) a speech act. The implication is that God acts on behalf of his people, answering when he hears their cry.[184] Sometimes this nuance of silence is missed in interpretation of the request 'do not be silent', which is too literally interpreted as a request for a verbal answer or an oracle of salvation. As shown, it frequently is a

[181] E.g., Kraus: 'Yahweh is called on to intervene in the legal procedure (v. 1) and not to keep silence' (*Psalms 1-59*, trans. Oswald, 394); Briggs: 'keep not silence' refers to God's testimony on the psalmist's behalf as a legal witness (*Psalms*, 1:308); Craigie, however, interprets the prayer as one for 'defence and aid' (*Psalms 1-50*, 288).
[182] Anderson interprets silence as inactivity (*Psalms,* 2:759), as does Kissane, who understands the request as a desire for God to 'punish the wicked and reward the just' (*Psalms*, 2:184-85).
[183] Suggested by Kraus (*Psalms 60-150*, trans. Oswald, 339), with reference to Begrich ('Das priesterliche Heilsorakel,' 81-92). Begrich does refer to Psalm 35, but not to this verse specifically.
[184] E.g., Exod. 3:7-8: the Lord sees their affliction, hears their cry, and comes to deliver them.

request for action, particularly in psalms concerned with justice, deliverance of the petitioner, and punishment of enemies. By asking God not to be 'silent', the psalmist is asking him not to withhold action.

On the semantic duality of the Qal

Qal חרשׁ can clearly refer both to not hearing (being deaf) and not speaking/acting (being silent), but it is less clear how to account for this semantic duality. Perhaps חרשׁ initially had a wider semantic range including both silence and deafness,[185] with a meaning related more broadly to hindrance of communication. Or, it could have instead first referred to not hearing or deafness (as with the adjective), and then by semantic extension come to refer to silence and not speaking as well (see on semantic development in conclusion).

Hithpael

חרשׁ is used in the Hithpael only in Judges 16:2 and possibly once in a marginal note in Ben Sira. Its meaning seems close to that of the Hiphil but is not certain.

Judges 16:2
לָעַזָּתִים לֵאמֹר בָּא שִׁמְשׁוֹן הֵנָּה וַיָּסֹבּוּ וַיֶּאֶרְבוּ־לוֹ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה בְּשַׁעַר הָעִיר **וַיִּתְחָרְשׁוּ** כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה לֵאמֹר עַד־אוֹר הַבֹּקֶר וַהֲרַגְנֻהוּ׃

Judges 16 tells the story of Samson going to Gaza, where he visited a prostitute. Although the Gazites set an ambush for him, he managed to escape, pulling up the doors and posts of the city gate on his way out. חרשׁ is used in 16:2, a verse with various difficulties, including text that seems to be missing and text that is repetitive and seems superfluous: 'to the Gazites,[186] saying: "Samson has come here", and they surrounded[187] and they lay

[185] Other ancient languages have one word for mute-deaf, but the meanings of חרשׁ ('deaf') and אלם ('mute') were clearly distinguished in biblical Hebrew.

[186] The abrupt beginning seems to miss a verb such as 'it was told', as found in the versions. Many have suggested supplying וַיַּגֵּד (Budde, *Das Buch der Richter*, 104; Nowack, *Richter, Ruth u. Bücher Samuelis*, 131; Lagrange, *Le Livre des Juges*, 245; Zapletal, *Das Buch der Richter*, 232; Burney, *The Book of Judges*, 376).

[187] The verb ויסבו is missing its object, so many supply one: 'the house' (Budde, *Richter*, 104.), 'him' (KJV/AV, JPS), 'the place' (ESV, RSV, NASB); Zapletal argues it does not need a complement (*Das Buch der Richter*, 232).

in wait for him all night at the gate of the city, ויתחרשׁו (and they were silent/inactive?) all night[188] saying "until the light of morning,[189] and we will kill him."'

The textual difficulties make it even harder to interpret the Hithpael of חרשׁ. It describes the action of the Gazites following, or perhaps parallel to, setting an ambush for Samson. It is usually understood to mean that they kept quiet or still all night while they were lying in wait to kill him.[190] LXX and Targum translate as 'keep silent', though Vulgate adds the idea of waiting in silence (*cum silentio praestolantes*), and Peshitta has 'they were whispering' (ܚܫܫܘ).[191] Interpretation as 'they were silent' creates a slight paradox with the following verb (לאמר) introducing direct speech: 'they were silent all night, saying…'; however, since אמר can also refer to thought or internal dialogue, it need not be taken literally as speech. Likewise 'silence' need not be literal, and could refer to not acting rather than not speaking.

The Hithpael can contribute a reflexive or reciprocal meaning, but 'they silenced themselves', and 'they silenced each other' are not entirely clear. Hithpael can also contribute a durative nuance, which would fit the modifier 'all night'. Also, since

[188] כל־הלילה is one of a few repeated phrases in verses 2-3 (also: לאמר, חצי הלילה, שׁער העיר) that suggest possible dittography. Some argue that 'all night' is an error here (though perhaps too unimaginatively): they could not have waited all night, since Samson was able to escape. See Nowack, *Richter*, 131; Moore, *Judges*, 348; Lagrange, *Le Livre des Juges*, 246; Zapletal, *Das Buch der Richter*, 232.

[189] A verb seems to be missing: what were they doing until morning? LXX Judges A supplies μείνωμεν ('remain'), but other versions offer no verb. Some modern translations supply 'let us wait' (NRSV, NASB), while others interpret the prepositional phrase ('until the morning') as identifying a specific point in time, or as a subordinate temporal clause: 'When daylight comes' (NJPS); 'Bis der Morgen hell wird' (Elberfelder); 'Bis der Morgen tagt!' (Budde, *Richter*, 105); 'Am Morgen, wenn es hell wird' (Schlachter); 'In the morning, when it is day' (KJV/AV).

[190] JPS, KJV/AV: 'were quiet'; NRSV: 'kept quiet'; NASB: 'kept silent'; many German translations have 'verhielten sich still' (EIN, Rev. LUT).

[191] See also NJPS: 'all night long they kept whispering to each other', but חרשׁ has no relation to whispering.

Hithpael and Qal can have similar meanings, it could mean 'be deaf' or 'be silent' (or 'not act').[192] The latter would make sense as: 'they did nothing the whole night'.

Another alternative is to consider one of the homonym meanings of חרשׁ, a good candidate being 'plot, devise'. חרשׁ is used in this sense to describe evil, often deceitful, plans devised against someone. As a Hithpael it could mean 'they were plotting amongst themselves', since plotting by its very nature involves reciprocal communication and complicity, or it could be durative (with 'all night'). The meaning 'plot' makes better sense of לאמר, removing the perceived contradiction between being silent and speaking. It is also more logical that the activity of plotting (rather than silence) could go on all night, as it describes their active planning to kill him. A weakness of this interpretation is that it has no support from versions. Also, it seems unlikely that the Gazites would have needed to plot actively all night, since they were already lying in wait (וַיֶּאֶרְבוּ־לוֹ); plotting would more logically precede the action of ארב.

ויתחרשׁו therefore most likely refers to inactivity, describing the Gazites as not doing anything, but relying instead on the (assumed) closed city gates to prevent Samson's escape: 'they did nothing all night, thinking "we will kill him in the morning"'.

Extrabiblical references

Ben Sira

חרשׁ is found in three passages of Ben Sira: two relating silence to wisdom and one referring to silence as an inappropriate response to a greeting.

[192] For the meanings of the Hithpael, see J-M §53i and GK §54e-g.

20.6-7

חרשׁ is repeated three times in Ben Sira 20.6-7, which is preserved only in manuscript C, an anthology of collected verses in a different order from other manuscripts. The Greek version of the chapter frequently associates silence with wisdom: in 20.1 silence is linked to prudence and contrasted with untimely questioning; in 20.5 and 20.8, excessive speech leads to being hated. In the Hebrew text of 20.6-7, the silence of ignorance and of wisdom are contrasted, and silent wisdom is linked to observation of 'time'.

20.5-7[193]	
5 There is (one) ... [1] and (who) is thought ... [and th]ere is (one who) is rejected/hated in a quarrel/strife[2]	5 יש ..ש ונחשב ... [וי]ש נמאס בריב ...
translation notes: [1] Likely 'one who is silent' (reconstructing מחריש); [2] ריב could be רב and translated 'much' (as in other versions).	
6 There is **one who is silent** from lack of an answer, and there is **one who is silent** for he sees the time.	6 יש **מחריש** מאין מענה ויש **מחריש** כי ראה עת
7 Wise is he who **is silent** until (the) time, but a fool does not observe (or 'watch') the time.	7 חכם **יחריש** עד עת וכסיל לא ישמור עת

In 20.5 מחריש seems a likely reconstruction for the word-final ש; it would make sense in the Hebrew text ('one silent is thought wise') and also corresponds to the Greek text, which uses σιωπῶν in verses 1 and 5 as well as for both מחריש participles in 20.6. This suggests, but does not guarantee, that a form of חרשׁ was in the Hebrew original as well.[194]

The two Hiphil participles in 20.6 represent people who are silent for different reasons: the first for lack of an answer, perhaps out of ignorance; the second because he sees the

[193] The Book of Ben Sira, 24.
[194] Wright observes that the translator does not 'confine one Greek lexeme to the same Hebrew lexeme', therefore any Hebrew reconstruction on the basis of Greek is speculative (*NETS*, 717).

time and is wise enough to choose not to speak. Biblical texts also associate silence with wisdom[195] and with being aware of the time.[196]

In 20.7 a wise man is said to be silent 'until (the) time'. It is often assumed that the unspecified עת refers to the right or appropriate time.[197] This silent wise man is contrasted with the fool who does not regard (or 'keep': שמר) the time. Here the double nature of silence is shown: as a negative attribute it results from a lack of understanding and nothing to say, while as a positive attribute it is a mark of understanding the time.

32(35).8

חרשׁ is also found in 32.8 (Greek 35.8),[198] a text preserved only in manuscript B. This chapter includes instructions for proper behaviour and speech at a banquet. The older guests are to talk, but not interrupt the music, while the younger guests are to say as little as possible: only when necessary, only when asked more than once, and only briefly, endeavouring to say much in few words.[199]

32(35).7-8[200]	
7 Speak, youth, if you have need, if forced twice, and three (times) if one asks you;	7 דבר נער אם צריך אתה[1] בחזק פעמים ושלש אם ישאלך[2]
	marginal notes: [1] אתך; [2] ישא לך

[195] Prov. 11:12 (understanding is attributed to one silent) and 17:28 (even a fool is thought wise if silent).
[196] Amos 5:13: the prudent one (משכיל) is silent (ידם) because the time is evil.
[197] See Skehan and di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 301. They include references to Prov. 15:23; 25:11; 26:7.
[198] Coggins explains that two sections (20.25-33.13a and 33.13b-36.13) were 'transposed in the Greek text', and the 'correct order has been preserved in the surviving Hebrew, as well as in the Latin and other versions' (*Sirach*, 18).
[199] Summary by Skehan and di Lella (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 386, 391). The Greek of 35.8 is κεφαλαίωσον λόγον ἐν ὀλίγοις πολλά γίνου ὡς γινώσκων καὶ ἅμα σιωπῶν ('Summarize your speech; in a few things there are many; be as one who knows and at the same time one who is silent'; translation by Wright, *NETS*, 745).
[200] The Book of Ben Sira, 32.

8 Finish speaking,[1] and a little will be multiplied;[2] be like one who both knows and **is silent**.	8 כל לאמר ומעט הרבה ודמה ליודע **ומחריש** יחדו
translation notes: [1] Or: 'Restrain speech'; 'Perfect (your) speech'; 'Be finished, saying…'; or 'Saying all' (with כל as a noun). [2] Or: 'a little will be much'; 'make much become little' (מעט as verb); 'make much from little' (הרבה as verb).	

The line on which 32.8 appears is faded and difficult to read, although surrounding text is well preserved. The syntax and meaning of the first verse half is also obscure. כל could be the noun 'everything, totality' with infinitive לאמר 'to speak' as a command or introducing direct speech: 'Say everything', or 'Everyone says'. Alternatively, כל could be a verb: 1) a Qal imperative from כלל ('complete, perfect'); 2) a Piel imperative from כלה ('complete, finish'),[201] or a Pual ('be finished'), though unlikely; or 3) an imperative of כלא ('restrain, withhold'), which makes good sense but does not fit the form (unless כלא/כלה/כלל had already begun to merge as byforms).[202] The second half of the line, ומעט הרבה, is also difficult. מעט could be a Piel verb ('make few'), a predicate adjective ('are few'), or a sentence adverb ('little/few'). The *waw* on מעט could be the simple conjunction 'and', the adversative 'but', or could express purpose ('so that'); it could also be an error for ב ('in'). הרבה could be a Hiphil imperative or *qatal* of רבה ('multiply, make great') or an infinitive absolute functioning adverbially ('greatly'). ומעט הרבה could therefore be a command to make what is little 'much' (i.e., make few words suffice), to decrease the 'much' (i.e., decrease your many words), or it could express a result 'little will be made great' (i.e., restraining your speech will make it 'great').

The second line, with מחריש, is less problematic. The youth is instructed to be like one who both knows and is silent. As with 20.6-7, the silence of חרש refers to not speaking and is associated with knowledge and proper behaviour, both of which imply wisdom.

[201] On the model of צוּ, although the two attested biblical ms imperatives with כלה keep the ה (כַּלֵּה).
[202] See *HALOT* (475): כלא is 'in transition to כלה' (not uncommon for roots with weak third consonant).

41.20/21

In 41.20/21, different Hiphil forms of חרשׁ are found in ms. B (participle) and ms. M (*qatal*), with a possible Hithpael form as well in a marginal note of B.

41.20/21[203]	
B	**M**
[...]ל[1] שלום **מ"חריש**[2]	וּמשאל שלום **החריש**
marginal notes: [1] משואל [2] lines written vertically on inside margin at bottom right-hand side of page: ממ[--] מחת שׁאלה מי חשע פי ראיך מחשבות מחלקות מנה משאול שלום הִתַּחרישו	

Textual observations:[204]

B	**M**
• ח of מ"חריש is not like other examples of ח on page, written too small to be formed correctly (looks similar to an א, but מהאריש would not make sense) • מ of מ"חריש could be preposition 'from' (of what to be ashamed), or, if supralinear ה excluded, the Hiphil participle ('one who is silent'). • marginal note written less neatly, last line a possible Hithpael but ink very faded and reading uncertain.	• small hole at beginning of line half, but tops of letters visible above it with shape similar to top of ומ on line above • parchment broken off at left edge (last line of column) • ink of final ש slightly faded, but form relatively clear.

Chapter 41 presents an 'instruction on shame' (מוסר בשׁת) consisting of a list of things of which one should be ashamed and the people before whom one should be ashamed of

[203] Text from Beentjes (41.21 in *The Book of Ben Sira*, 72, 116, 165) and *The Book of Ben Sira* (41.20), 46.
[204] My observations are from consulting the B manuscript (MS. Heb. e. 62 at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford) and the M manuscript photos on-line (http://www.bensira.org/).

them. Verse 20/21 implies that one who is silent should be ashamed before one who greets him.[205]

In manuscript M from Masada the Hiphil החריש is preceded by ומשאל שלום, 'from one who greeted' (lit. 'from him who asked for peace'). Parker and Abegg surprisingly translate 'of requesting the salutation of the deaf',[206] presumably considering the word-initial ה a definite article for the noun חריש. Although this spelling is found in Aramaic with the meaning 'deaf/mute person', it is not found in Hebrew,[207] and therefore is more likely a Hiphil *qatal*.

In the much later (and possibly less reliable)[208] manuscript B from the Cairo Genizah, the form of חרשׁ is less certain. It could be the participle מחריש, but the added supralinear ה makes it a Hiphil infinitive (or an improbable *qatal*) preceded by the preposition מן. The beginning of the half line is missing, but משואל is provided in a marginal note. A longer marginal note reproduces text similar to preceding lines known from M. The final line of this note might have a 3pl Hithpael: התחרישו, but both its reading and its meaning are uncertain.

The message of the line is similar in both manuscripts: silence is an unacceptable and shameful response to one who greets ('asks peace'). The cultural obligation 'to return a greeting' is also reflected earlier in Ben Sira (4.8): הט לעני אזנך והשיבהו שלום בענוה ('Extend

[205] The Greek version (verse 21) is: καὶ ἀπὸ ἀσπαζομένων περὶ σιωπῆς ([be ashamed] 'before people who greet, of silence'; Wright, *NETS*, 753). περὶ precedes that of which one is to be ashamed (σιωπῆς, silence), and ἀπὸ, as elsewhere, indicates the one before whom one should be ashamed.
[206] Their translation is found on http://www.bensira.org/.
[207] The *yod* could potentially represent a long e vowel (as it sometimes does in DSS) for Hebrew חֵרֵשׁ, 'deaf', but I do not find this likely.
[208] 'The Cairo Geniza MSS, especially MS B, have more than the usual share of scribal errors', while the Masada Scroll is deemed 'the oldest and generally most reliable witness to the original Hebrew text of Ben Sira' (Skehan and di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 59-60).

to the poor your ear [i.e., 'listen'], and return to him a greeting [lit. 'peace'] in his affliction/poverty').[209]

חרשׁ in Ben Sira is thus used for the silence of the wise who restrain words, and the silence recommended to youth for proper behaviour. It is also, unusually, a shameful response to a greeting.[210]

Non-biblical DSS

חרשׁ is used fourteen times in the non-biblical DSS with meanings similar to those in biblical texts: as an adjective and noun it relates to deafness (more often literally in DSS); as a verb it refers to either a literal silence of not speaking or a metaphoric silence of not acting. Attestations of חרשׁ are organised in the chart below by syntactic and semantic roles:[211]

	Reference	Title	Text	Analysis
adj.: deaf	4Q474 10	4QText Concerning Rachel and Joseph[212]	] וֹכֹ[ו]ל אוזניהם חֵרְשׁות	fpl adjective modifying 'ears'
noun: deaf person	1QSa II,6	Rule of the Congregation[213]	פסח או עור או חרש או אלם	ms noun: disability causing exclusion from temple or assembly
	4Q249g 3-7,4		[פסח או עור או]חר[ש או אלם	
	4Q266 8i8	Damascus Document[214]	פסח או חרש או נער זעטוט	
	4Q394 8iv2	Miqṣat Maʿaśe Ha-Torah[215]	[וֹא]ף אל החרשים שלוא שמעו חוק [ומ]שפט	mpl noun: associated with not hearing
	4Q3961-2ii3		וֹ אפ על החר[שים	

[209] My translation; Hebrew text from *The Book of Ben Sira*, 4; commentary in Skehan and di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 481.
[210] It is unusual for silence to be contrasted with greeting, though it does contrast with speech generally. It is even more unusual for silence, a trait of the wise, to be shameful.
[211] Abegg, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, 1.1:278.
[212] Pfann et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 36:458-59.
[213] For 1QSa II,6 see Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 1:111. For 4Q249g 3-7,4 see Pfann et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 36:567.
[214] Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 18:63-64.
[215] Qimron and Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 10:12, 18, 53.

			שלוא]שׁמעו חוק / ומשפט	
	4Q372 8,2	4Q Narrative and Poetic Composition[b] [216]	]ת וחרשים מש[מוע	
verb: to be silent (?)	4Q381 85,2	4Q non-Canonical Psalms B[217]	ה]חרש ושועתי הקשב[	Qal or Hiphil? (related to Hiphil קשׁב as parallel? or opposite?)
	11Q19 LIII, 18	Temple Scroll[218]	האסר אשר אסרה על נפשה והחריש לה אביה	Hiphil, similar to Numbers 30
	CD IX, 6	Damascus Document[219]	אם החריש לו מיום ליום	Hiphil, opposed to 'rebuke' (יכח)
	4Q270 6iii19		אם ה̇חרי̇ש לו מיום ליום	
	1QpHab V,8	Habakkuk Pesher[220]	למה תביטו בוגדים ותחריש	quotation of Hab. 1:13 with variation
	4Q410 1,8	4Q Vision and Interpretation[221]	ולוא יכזב חמ[שא ו]לוא [הח]ריש / [החזון	Hiphil? 'vision' (חזון) as subject
	4Q291 1,2	4QWork Containing Prayers A[222]	החריש משא הריב...	Hiphil; uncertain syntax

Key: ˙ = probable reading; ˚ = possible reading

As an adjective in the DSS, חרשׁ describes only ears. This pair is not found in biblical Hebrew, but the ears of the deaf are referred to in Isaiah 35:5 and 43:8.

חרשׁ is a noun meaning 'deaf person' six times. In three references from the Rule of the Congregation and the Damascus Document, the deaf are among those not allowed to enter the assembly (along with the lame, blind and mute). This is the most literal use of the word in all texts, differing from biblical usage.[223] In other DSS references, deafness

[216] Bernstein et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 28:187-88.
[217] Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 11:163.
[218] Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 2:240-41; Schiffman, 'Temple Scroll', 134-35.
[219] For CD IX, 6, see Baumgarten and Schwartz, 'Damascus Document', 42. For 4Q270 6iii19, see Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 18:158.
[220] Horgan, 'Habakkuk Pesher', 168-69.
[221] Pfann et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 36:317-18.
[222] Nitzan, 'Works Containing Prayers', in Chazon et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 29:10-11.
[223] One of few biblical references to literal deafness (Lev. 19:14) offers special protection (prohibiting others from cursing them), rather than exclusion.

represents spiritual dullness: in 4QMMT the deaf are said not to hear the law, which could metaphorically indicate those who do not obey (שמע referring to both hearing and obeying), though a more literal interpretation is possible (those who cannot hear the law also cannot keep it). The fragmentary 4Q372 also refers to deaf who do not hear, which seems to characterise the spiritual state of people without understanding.

Many of the seven verbal uses of חרשׁ in the non-biblical scrolls reflect similarities to biblical usage. חרשׁ precedes שׁועתי הקשׁב in the psalm-like text 4Q381, and might be reconstructed אל־תחרשׁ based on similarity with Ps. 39:13[12], which would make it the only Qal reference in DSS. It has also been reconstructed as a Hiphil (ה]חְרִשׁ),[224] but translation as 'be silent' makes less sense than 'do not be deaf' before the following 'and hear my cry'.

In both the Temple Scroll and the Damascus Document (CD) Hiphil חרשׁ is followed by the preposition ל, and, although the contexts differ, in both texts silence towards others can be interpreted as tacit approval of their speech or deeds. In the Temple Scroll it is used in a legal context similar to Numbers 30, referring to the male silence that validates a woman's vow. In the Damascus Document silence is contrasted with rebuke, such that being silent towards someone demonstrates apparent (though insincere) approval of the other's actions; this kind of silence is condemned as wrong (cf. Lev. 19:17: הוכח תוכיח את־עמיתך). The opposition of silence to rebuke (יכח) bears some resemblance to Ezek. 3:26, in which Ezekiel's muteness makes him unable to rebuke the people (ולא־תהיה להם לאיש מוכיח).

[224] Schuller in Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 11:163.

The Habakkuk Pesher differs from MT in its citation of Hab. 1:13, with plural תביטו (making בוגדים its subject) and conjunctive *waw* added to ותחריש. The intention of תחריש is less certain with these differences: was the prophet perceived to be addressing both the 'treacherous' ('why do you [mpl] look on, treacherous ones') and God ('and you [ms] are silent') at the same time? Or are the 'treacherous' silent? The pesher explains that this passage concerns the 'house of Absalom and the men of their counsel, who נדמו at the rebuke of the Righteous Teacher and did not support him against the Man of the Lie (VACAT) who rejected the Torah in the midst of all their counsel' (V,8-9). If נדמו of the pesher refers to being 'silent' or 'silenced'[225] and is linked to MT's תחריש, it could represent a lack of action (in not supporting the Righteous Teacher) or a lack of response (in being quiet at his rebuke), but interpretation is made more difficult by the semantic uncertainty of דמה and the uncertain subject of תחריש.

The final two uses of חרשׁ as a verb mention an oracle (משא) that is not silent, but the texts are fragmentary, and syntactic relations and reconstructions of חרשׁ are not certain.

Inscriptions

Cognates of חרשׁ are found in some West Semitic inscriptions and texts, but none in Hebrew.

	century (BCE)	**language**	**quotation**	**translation**
Balaam prophecy of Deir ʿAlla	8th/7th	disputed: Aramaic dialect, southern Canaanite, Gileadite or 'Transjordanian'	ושׁמעו.**חרשׁן**.מן.רחק	'the **deaf** ones heard from afar'[226]
Proverbs of Aḥiqar	5th	Aramaic	עויל **וחרש** אדנין ל...	'a child and a **deaf** man, ears...'[227]

[225] נדמו could instead mean 'being destroyed' in a state of threatened judgement. See under דמם DSS for more.
[226] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij (*Aramaic Texts*, 180). McCarter translates 'the deaf have heard from far away' ('The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā', 58).
[227] Cowley (Line 216 in *Aramaic Papyri*, 220, 226); cf. the similar translation in Lindenberger (*The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 215) and Kottsieper (Column 16, line 126 in *Die Sprache der Aḥiqarsprüche*,

Aramaic cuneiform incantation	3rd?	Eastern Aramaic (with Akkadian influence), written in cuneiform	*a-ma-ár ša-ṭe-e qu-um* ***ḫa-ri-iš***	'Speak, dumb one! Rise, deaf one!'[228]
Poenulus of Plautus	2nd	Punic in a Latin text	*Gune bal samen* ***ierasan***	uncertain: 'O majesty of the lord of the heavens, I'm **silencing** him!'[229]

Balaam prophecy of Deir ʿAlla

A plaster inscription discovered at Deir ʿAlla in the Jordan Valley partially preserves a prophecy of Balaam son of Beor in a language that exhibits characteristics of Aramaic and southern Canaanite.[230] It is commonly dated to approximately 700 BCE.[231] In this text the word חרשן, with the Aramaic plural ending ן- and following the plural verb שׁמעו seems to be the plural noun 'deaf people'. The following text, מן.רחק, 'from afar', could add to the dramatic nature of the deaf hearing or could emphasise that the noise itself was 'considerable'.[232] A very different interpretation of חרשן as 'incantations' was suggested,[233] but the association of חרשׁ with שׁמע favours interpretation as 'deaf'. Deafness here could be physical,[234] or could metaphorically refer to spiritual shortcoming (Isa. 43:8), the healing of which represents a supernatural reversal of fortunes (cf. Isa. 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:7; Ezek. 34:16). Regardless of its implications, it is clear that the cognate חרשׁ was also used in non-biblical prophetic contexts to refer to the deaf hearing.

14, 23). Porten and Yardeni transcribe and interpret differently: ... עולל/עיור וחרש אזנים ('a blind [man]/a child and deaf of ears') (Plate L, line 215 in *Textbook of Aramaic Documents,* 3:53).

[228] Geller (line 43), 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 133.

[229] De Melo, *Plautus IV,* 218.

[230] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij (*Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla,* 300) and Lemaire ('Les inscriptions de Deir ʿAlla', 282) argue it is ancient Aramaic; Hackett argues it is a southern Canaanite dialect (*The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā*, 123-24); McCarter prefers 'Transjordanian' or 'Gileadite' ('The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā', 50).

[231] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts*, 271; Lemaire, 'Les inscriptions', 271; McCarter, 'The Balaam Texts from Deir ʿAllā', 50.

[232] Argued by Hoftijzer and van der Kooij, citing Ezr. 3:13 and Neh. 12:43: 'That a certain noise is considerable can in the OT also be described by telling that it could be heard from afar' (*Aramaic Texts,* 218).

[233] A homonym of חרשׁ does refer to sorcery and magic, but this meaning cannot be justified in this broken context. See Levine, 'Review Article: The Deir ʿAlla Plaster Inscriptions', 197.

[234] Hoftijzer and van der Kooij interpret as physical disability and refer to the return of blind, lame and pregnant with the rest of the nation (Jer. 31:8) and to the lame taking plunder (Isa. 33:23) (*Aramaic Texts,* 217).

Aḥiqar

The story of Aḥiqar and associated proverbs are preserved in Aramaic on a 5th-century BCE papyrus found at Elephantine.[235] חרש is in the severely damaged final column. References to 'ears' immediately following and blind eyes (עויר עינין) in previous lines support the interpretation as 'deaf person',[236] but the fragmentary nature of the text makes it impossible to gather further information about חרש.

Aramaic incantation in cuneiform

A tablet with an incantation written in cuneiform was found in Uruk and most likely dates to the beginning of the Seleucid period at the end of the 3rd century BCE.[237] The language is thought to be an eastern dialect of Aramaic, with possible similarities to Mandaic.[238] The text contains three incantations: one on each side of the tablet, and one partially preserved at the bottom of the obverse. It contains multiple references to silence, and its purpose, although not certain, seems to be silencing the speech of an enemy.

The word *ḫarīš*, a nominal form that almost certainly means 'deaf person', appears twice in identical contexts at the end of each full incantation (lines 18 and 43): *a-ma-ár ša-ṭe-e qu-um ḫa-ri-iš*. Gordon translates 'Speak, oh mad man! Rise, oh deaf-and-dumb!' based on his understanding of the text as an incantation for healing.[239] A more recent translation by Geller is similar, but the identical lines surprisingly differ: 'Speak, fool! Rise, dumb

[235] Cowley, Aramaic Papyri, 204; Lindenberger, The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar, 5-8.
[236] Lindenberger thinks the passage could be 'a series of sayings dealing with various bodily defects' (*The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 214).
[237] Geller, 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 128; Delsman, 'Eine Aramäische Beschwörung', 432.
[238] Macuch, 'Der Keilschriftliche Beschwörungstext aus Uruk', 186-98.
[239] 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform', 108. Dupont-Sommer translates similarly: 'Parle, (ô) stupide ! Lève-toi, (ô) sourd-muet !' ('La tablette cunéiforme araméenne de Warka', 40-41), as does Landsberger, despite understanding the purpose of the text differently: 'Der du toll redest, stehe stumm da!' He references another incantation meant to silence an angry enemy that ends: 'Grosser, schweige! Kleiner, rede nicht!' ('Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 256).

one!' (18); 'Speak, dumb one! Rise, deaf one!' (43),[240] with *ḫarīš* as 'dumb' and 'deaf', respectively. Geller disagrees with Gordon's assumption that the commands to rise and speak are addressed to the now-healed patient, since in similar Akkadian texts, a command to be silent is directed at the adversary. In choosing both 'dumb' and 'deaf' he might mean a deaf-mute or might want to alternate between possible interpretations of *ḫarīš*, which in Aramaic can have both meanings. If the line-initial command 'Speak!' is applied to the entire line, it could mean 'Speak, mute person!' The verb *qūm* could mean 'arise, stand',[241] or perhaps 'be established' (i.e., be turned into), making the injunction mean '*become* deaf/mute', thereby transforming the enemy *into* a deaf-mute person. It seems more likely to be addressed to someone already deaf-mute, but the context is not sufficiently well understood to know.

Poenulus

In the Latin play *Poenulus*, by Plautus, the character Hanno delivers two speeches in Punic that are written in Latin letters. One of his lines, 'gune bal samem ierasan', might contain a cognate of חרשׁ, but word divisions are not clear and even the text is uncertain.[242] The meaning is also uncertain, with *ierasan* understood variously as from *r-ṣ-h* ('favourable'),[243] or *ḥ-r-š* ('be deaf',[244] 'be silent',[245] 'silence'[246]). Interpretation as 'to silence' is based on the faulty assumption that the causative meaning is 'securely attested' in Hebrew.[247] This attestation cannot in any case contribute to an understanding of Hebrew חרשׁ.

[240] 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 133.
[241] Landsberger, 'Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 256n.42.
[242] Textual variants are: 'gunebbalsamem', 'gunebel balsamen', 'i erasan and lyryla' (de Melo, *Plautus IV,* 218).
[243] Du Mesnil du Buisson, Review of *Le sanctuaire punique*, 111.
[244] Gray, 'The Punic Passages', 82.
[245] *Tacere*: Garbini, 'Gune Bel Balsamen', 90.
[246] Schröder, *Die Phönizische Sprache*, 297, 381; de Melo, *Plautus IV*, 218.
[247] De Melo, *Plautus IV,* 218; see also on Job 11:3 above.

Cognate Evidence

Clear cognates of Hebrew חרשׁ that share the meaning 'deaf' are well-attested only in the closely related languages Aramaic and Syriac. Many more cognates are found for homonyms of Hebrew חרשׁ with meanings relating to artisanry, ploughing, and magic, but these will not be considered here.

Aramaic and Syriac

In Aramaic, Syriac, and Mandaic a cognate nominal form means 'silence', and a cognate adjective can refer to someone who is both deaf and mute. The verbal forms can mean 'be silent' and 'be deaf' (Nithpael), and there is also a causative 'to deafen, make deaf'.[248] It is interesting that Aramaic refers to both deafness and muteness in this one word, while in Hebrew (even post-biblical) they remained distinct.[249]

The Syriac verb ܫܛܥ can mean both 'be mute, silent' and 'become deaf', as well as 'be hoarse', and as a causative, 'make deaf, silence'. The adjective also means both 'mute' and 'deaf', and, interestingly, 'barren, sterile'.[250] A derived adverb means 'stupidly'.

Arabic

The cognate Arabic root خرس (*ḫrs*) means 'be mute' or 'speechless', and 'to silence' as a causative, but interestingly not 'to be deaf'.[251]

Ugaritic

A potential Ugaritic cognate meaning 'deaf' was suggested by John Huehnergard,[252] but it is found only once in a lexical list, and its meaning is disputed, with others interpreting it as 'labourer' or 'artisan', more commonly attested meanings for the root in Ugaritic.[253]

[248] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 507; Sokoloff, Dictionary of JPA, 216.
[249] Ben-Yehuda, *Complete Dictionary*, 4:1787.
[250] Sokoloff, Syriac Lexicon, 495-96; Payne-Smith, Compendious Syriac Dictionary, 159-60.
[251] Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 721; Wehr, Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 234.
[252] Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription, 100, 130.
[253] Nougayrol, *Ugaritica V*, 247; Van Soldt, 'Review of J. Huehnergard', 732.

Akkadian

It was suggested that the Akkadian verb *ḫarâšu* means 'be mute' in a text from Mari,[254] but since interpretation is uncertain and based on Hebrew, it cannot prove a cognate relationship.

Cognate conclusion

It is not easy to determine, based on this evidence, if a Proto-Semitic root would more likely have been linked to deafness, muteness, silence more generally, or something else entirely. It might (like אלם) have had another meaning that by metaphorical extension came to refer to deafness or muteness, but such development can only be guessed at, and begs another study examining metaphorical representations of deafness and muteness in the ancient world.

Conclusion

Semantic Range

חרשׁ refers to both deafness and silence, primarily in relation to communicative speech acts (rather than in opposition to noise).

Deafness (non-reception)

As an adjective and noun, and sometimes as a Qal verb, חרשׁ refers to not hearing. It can be involuntary (deafness as physical inability to hear), or by choice (refusing to listen). Deafness can also symbolise spiritual obduracy. By my count, חרשׁ refers to deafness in just over 20% of biblical references.[255]

Silence (non-production)

חרשׁ more frequently refers to silence or non-production of speech. Surprisingly, it is not used for muteness, which is consistently represented in biblical Hebrew by אלם, but it does, as a Hiphil, often refer to not talking. Four Qal references refer to being silent, but

[254] Dossin, 'Ḫarâšu(m) « être muet »', 75-76.
[255] 13 out of 57.

arguably in the non-literal sense ‘be inactive’. The single Hithpael verb seems to refer to inactivity as well, though it might mean ‘be quiet’. In my estimation, silence refers to lack of action in approximately one fourth of Hiphil references, specifically an action from which the subject refrains (often temporarily) or has not yet initiated. Usually this action is presented as expected or appropriate, especially in cases of divine judgement. The nuances of this non-auditory ‘silence’ are not always recognised by lexica entries or Bible translations and commentaries.

Secrecy

חרשׁ once describes an action performed secretly (Josh. 2:1), that is, without anyone able to perceive/hear it. This seems to reflect nuances of non-reception (no one heard or knew of it), but could also hint at non-production (no one spoke of it either).

Semantic Development

With so many meanings, it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the direction of semantic development. Speculatively, if verbal forms of the root initially referred to non-reception (deriving from the adjective ‘deaf’), the Hiphil causative could have meant ‘cause (someone) to be deaf’, that is, ‘cause not to hear’, and by implication ‘be silent’ (i.e., causing others not to hear anything by being silent).[256] Semantic spread between the Qal and Hiphil could have led to the current ambiguity in the Qal. This is a theory without evidence, however, and it could have equally gone the other direction from silence (non-production) to deafness (non-reception). Another possibility is that חרשׁ originally had a

[256] Although I reached this idea independently, Eidevall offers a similar suggestion: ‘In Qal, [*ḥrš* II] denotes “not hearing”. In Hiphil, it can describe the act of “not letting someone hear anything”. To refrain from speaking, to keep silent, can indeed be seen as one way of causing or creating the state denoted in Qal, the state of not being able to hear anything’. He suggests a potential parallel with the Qal and Hiphil of *šmʿ*, meaning ‘hear’ and ‘proclaim, announce’, respectively. Proclaiming something is the same as causing someone to hear, thus ‘the causative function of the Hiphil becomes a bridge between the domains of hearing and speaking’. He suggests a similar development for *ḥrš* II: if the Hiphil meant ‘not let someone hear’, it can imply refraining from speaking, keeping silent, and thus ‘causing or creating the state denoted in Qal’ (i.e., deafness) (‘Sounds of Silence in Biblical Hebrew’, 168-69).

wider semantic spread including both not speaking and not hearing, supporting evidence for which might be found in other languages using one word to cover both meanings.[257]

Semantic Field

חרשׁ intersects with a larger portion of the semantic field of silence than any other root in my study. It relates primarily to communicative speech between humans, but is also found in divine-human exchanges, usually referring to requested action on behalf of the supplicant. חרשׁ overlaps most closely with חשׁה, with which it is sometimes used in parallel. Both refer not only to lack of speech, but also to restraint or inaction.

Like אלם, 'mute', which is closely associated with physical organs of speech, חרשׁ is often associated with 'ears' and the verb 'hear'. Also like אלם, חרשׁ often refers to a voluntary and temporary restriction (on speaking/hearing, respectively), rather than to a physical disability. חרשׁ differs from אלם, however, in having a much broader semantic range, applying not only to communication but also to action.

חרשׁ associates silence with wisdom more frequently than any other root, probably because it refers to restraint of speech, portrayed both as a natural result and as an external proof of wisdom. Other words for silence are associated with wisdom only in isolated cases (דמם, הס and שקט).

חרשׁ differs from other words in also meaning 'not hear' (Qal). Other words related to 'silence' refer to the non-production of noise, but not to non-reception. חרשׁ also differs from other silence words (except חשׁה) in not describing lack of noise generally or the silence of the natural world (as do דמם, שׁתק). It also does not describe rest and peace

[257] Greek κωφος, Latin *surdus*, Aramaic חרישׁ/חרשׁ.

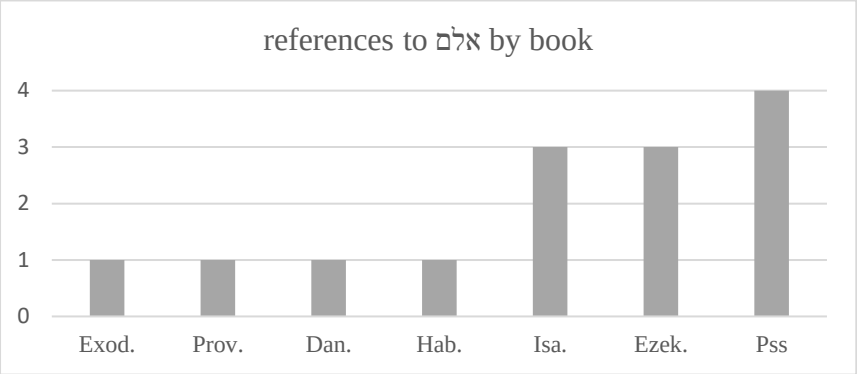
generally (apart from perhaps Jer. 4:19), thus differing from שקט and derivatives of דמם. חרשׁ further differs from דמם/דמה and הס in not referring to perishing, destruction, or a fearful/reverential silence. It also does not refer to stopping or cessation in general (as דמם does), though it can refer to cessation of speech when followed by the preposition מן.

In summary, חרשׁ means ‘not speak’ (Hiph.), ‘not hear’ (Qal, adj.), and ‘not act’ (Qal, Hiph.), with the focus on lack of initiation rather than on cessation.

Chapter 2: אלם

Distribution

Forms of אלם are used seventeen times in the Hebrew Bible, fourteen of which refer to muteness or not speaking. Once it refers to binding sheaves, and in two Psalms its meaning is unclear. It is also found in the DSS and the Mishnah.



אלם is used primarily in poetic or prophetic texts. The references in Ezekiel, although prophetic, are prose, as are those in Daniel and Exodus.

The chronological development of אלם seems to reflect a shift in meaning from the active 'bind' to the passive 'be bound', which in biblical texts refers exclusively to an inability to speak. In post-biblical texts, אלם more clearly refers to muteness as a disability, and is used in other *binyanim* as well.[258]

Lexicographical Survey

The Piel of אלם is defined as 'to bind', and the Niphal is often defined as 'to be bound' or 'tied' (BDB, *HALOT*), although it is never used with this meaning and all references cited have the translation value 'be mute' or 'be struck dumb'. Surprisingly, *HALOT*, *DCH*, and Ges18 all divide אלם into two roots, with one meaning 'bind' and the other 'be mute'. All dictionaries define the two uses of אֻלַּם in the Psalms as 'silence'.[259]

[258] Ben-Yehuda, *Complete Dictionary*, 1:246.
[259] BDB, 47-48; *HALOT*, 57; *DCH* 1:294; Ges18, 66.

In *NIDOTTE* אלם is defined as 'be bound, speechless, grow silent', but interestingly not as 'mute'.[260] The suggested meaning 'be bound' is not discussed or defended. The gloss 'speechless' aptly covers both the forced and chosen silence represented by אלם. The verb is said to mean having 'lips tightly closed', presumably because of its frequent opposition to opening of the mouth. אלם is not treated in other theological dictionaries.

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

אלם is a substantival adjective referring to a mute, or speechless, person in four verses. It is an attributive adjective in only two. Although some interpret it as an adjective in Ps. 56:1, this is problematic and treated separately.

The most common use of אלם is as a Niphal verb meaning 'be mute' (eight times). It is interesting that while 'be deaf' is expressed with the Qal of חרשׁ, 'be mute' is expressed only with the Niphal. The Niphal stem primarily indicates reflexivity or reciprocity, and only secondarily passivity.[261] If Niphal אלם is reflexive, it could refer to self-limitation (a figurative self-binding), which would fit well with the self-imposed 'muteness' in some references. Another possible meaning of the Niphal is the 'tolerative', allowing something to happen to oneself. With אלם this could refer to allowing oneself to be constrained or bound by another, which would fit the Ezekiel references. Niphal אלם could also simply be the passive 'be bound'.

אלם only rarely refers to muteness as a physical disability. It more often indicates an externally imposed restriction on one's mouth or a self-imposed decision not to speak. References are grouped into three syntactic/semantic categories: noun, adjective, and verb.

[260] Oswalt, *NIDOTTE* 1:412.
[261] GK §51c-f; J-M §51c.

1) Noun/substantival adjective: mute person

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מִי שָׂם פֶּה לָאָדָם אוֹ מִי־יָשׂוּם **אִלֵּם** אוֹ חֵרֵשׁ אוֹ פִּקֵּחַ אוֹ עִוֵּר הֲלֹא אָנֹכִי יְהוָה:	**Exod. 4:11**
וַאֲנִי כְחֵרֵשׁ לֹא אֶשְׁמָע **וּכְאִלֵּם** לֹא יִפְתַּח־פִּיו:	**Ps. 38:14[13]**
פְּתַח־פִּיךָ **לְאִלֵּם** אֶל־דִּין כָּל־בְּנֵי חֲלוֹף:	**Prov. 31:8**
אָז יְדַלֵּג כָּאַיָּל פִּסֵּחַ וְתָרֹן לְשׁוֹן **אִלֵּם** כִּי־נִבְקְעוּ בַמִּדְבָּר מַיִם וּנְחָלִים בָּעֲרָבָה:	**Isa. 35:6**

Non-physical referents

אלם is used in a simile in Ps. 38, where the psalmist claims to be like both a deaf and a mute person, though his is a choice, not an actual physical hindrance. In Prov. 31:8 the mute are synonymous with those without a voice in society, who need the king to speak for them in judgement.[262] Here being mute refers not to an inability to speak but to social 'muteness' (i.e., not being heard in matters of judgement). Even in these two passages, however, אלם is closely linked to the physical world: in Ps. 38 the psalmist associates being mute with not opening his mouth, and in Prov. 31 the king is said to open his mouth on their behalf.

Physical referents

Out of all the biblical uses of אלם, Exod. 4:11 and Isa. 35:6 come the closest to referring to true muteness, אלם being paired in both passages with other words indicating physical handicaps, such as 'blind' and 'deaf'. Even here, however, muteness is more a rhetorical device than a disability, functioning as a foil to God's ability to make speak (Exod. 4) and restore to health (Isa. 35).

2) Attributive adjective: mute/silent

אלם is used twice as an attributive adjective, in both cases for non-humans. Both references can be understood as referring to a rhetorical image rather than an actual handicap.

[262] They are associated with the בני־חלוף in the second half of the verse, whose identity is unclear but certainly a disadvantaged group of people needing help. It might refer to 'those quickly perishing' (חלף = 'pass by'). Translations vary: 'appointed to destruction' (JPS, KJV), 'left desolate' (RSV), 'unfortunate' (NASB, NJPS), 'destitute' (NRSV), 'weak' (EIN, ELB), 'neglected' (LSG), 'defeated' (TOB).

Isa. 56:10	צֻפָּו֙ (צפיו֙) עִוְרִ֣ים כֻּלָּ֔ם לֹ֥א יָדָ֖עוּ כֻּלָּ֣ם כְּלָבִ֑ים **אִלְּמִ֥ים** לֹ֖א יוּכְל֣וּ לִנְבֹּ֔חַ הֹזִ֥ים שֹׁכְבִּ֖ים אֹהֲבֵ֥י לָנֽוּם׃
Hab. 2:18	מָֽה־הוֹעִ֤יל פֶּ֙סֶל֙ כִּ֣י פְסָל֔וֹ יְצָר֖וֹ מַסֵּכָ֑ה וּמוֹרֶ֕ה שֶׁ֖קֶר כִּ֣י בָטַ֣ח יֹצֵ֣ר יִצְר֔וֹ עָלָ֔יו לַעֲשׂ֥וֹת אֱלִילִ֖ים **אִלְּמִֽים**׃

In Isa. 56:10 אלם describes mute dogs unable to bark. Its focus is not on lack of noise, however, but on the inability (or refusal) to do what they are meant to do. The image is paralleled by that of blind watchmen, giving a double portrayal of those who fail to perform their primary duty. These images represent shepherds, whom the passage goes on to criticise.

In Hab. 2:18 אלם is used in the alliterative phrase אלילים אלמים to describe the uselessness of idols in a woe oracle against idol makers. The next verse describes the idols as ‘wood’ and ‘immobile (or silent) stone’ (אבן דומם). The focus is not on any physical disability but on the lifelessness of the idols and the foolishness of those who craft them. The adjective אלם again portrays a deficiency challenging their very identity: idols who cannot speak are not gods.

3) Verb: to be mute/dumb

Ps. 31:19[18]	תֵּאָלַ֣מְנָה **שִׂפְתֵי** שָׁ֭קֶר הַדֹּבְר֣וֹת עַל־צַדִּ֑יק עָתָ֥ק בְּגַאֲוָ֖ה וָבֽוּז׃
Ps. 39:3[2]	נֶ֭אֱלַמְתִּי **דוּמִיָּ**ה הֶחֱשֵׁ֣יתִי מִטּ֑וֹב וּכְאֵבִ֥י נֶעְכָּֽר׃
Ps. 39:10[9]	**נֶ֭אֱלַמְתִּי** לֹ֣א אֶפְתַּח־פִּ֑י כִּ֥י אַתָּ֖ה עָשִֽׂיתָ׃
Isa. 53:7	נִגַּ֥שׂ וְה֖וּא נַעֲנָ֑ה וְלֹ֥א יִפְתַּח־פִּ֖יו כַּשֶּׂ֣ה לַטֶּ֣בַח יוּבָ֔ל וּכְרָחֵ֗ל לִפְנֵ֤י גֹזְזֶ֙יהָ֙ **נֶאֱלָ֔מָה** וְלֹ֥א יִפְתַּ֖ח פִּֽיו׃
Ezek. 3:26	וּלְשֽׁוֹנְךָ֙ אַדְבִּ֣יק אֶל־חִכֶּ֔ךָ **וְנֶאֱלַ֖מְתָּ** וְלֹא־תִהְיֶ֣ה לָהֶ֑ם לְאִ֣ישׁ מוֹכִ֔יחַ כִּ֥י בֵ֖ית מְרִ֥י הֵֽמָּה׃
Ezek. 24:27	בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֗וּא יִפָּתַ֤ח פִּיךָ֙ אֶת־הַפָּלִ֔יט וּתְדַבֵּ֖ר וְלֹ֣א **תֵאָלֵ֑ם** עוֹד֙ וְהָיִ֣יתָ לָהֶ֔ם לְמוֹפֵ֖ת וְיָדְע֥וּ כִּֽי־אֲנִ֖י יְהוָֽה׃ ס
Ezek. 33:22	וְיַד־יְהוָ֞ה הָיְתָ֤ה אֵלַי֙ בָּעֶ֣רֶב לִפְנֵ֣י בוֹא֔ הַפָּלִ֖יט וַיִּפְתַּ֣ח אֶת־פִּ֑י עַד־בּוֹא֙ אֵלַ֔י בַּבֹּ֖קֶר וַיִּפָּתַ֥ח פִּ֛י וְלֹא **נֶאֱלַ֖מְתִּי** עֽוֹד׃ פ
Dan. 10:15	וּבְדַבְּרוֹ֙ עִמִּ֣י כַּדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה נָתַ֥תִּי פָנַ֖י אַרְצָ֑ה **וְנֶאֱלָֽמְתִּי**׃

The subjects of Niphal אלם are varied, but are usually human, and never divine. Twice it has a non-human subject, but both are closely linked to a person either through metonymy (‘lying lips’ in Ps. 31) or metaphor (the ewe of Isa. 53:7 representing the servant of 52:13). The Niphal of אלם never indicates someone who is mute as a result of a physical disability, but refers instead to a temporary limitation on speech, whether self-imposed (Ps. 39; Isa. 53) or from an external, divine limitation (as in the three Ezekiel references and Ps. 31). The reference in Dan. 10 indicates a true inability to speak, but as a result of being temporarily without strength and overwhelmed by the vision and message (vv. 8, 16, 17).

In six of the eight references אלם is directly contrasted with opening the mouth (נאלמתי לא ויפתח פי ולא נאלמתי עוד / אפתח־פי). In the other two, it is related to guarding the mouth (Ps. 39:2) or lips being silenced (Ps. 31:19) and in both is parallel to other silence words (דמם, חשׁה, דומיה).

The verb אלם therefore refers not to muteness as a permanent disability, but to a temporary inability or refusal to speak. It is always closely linked to references to mouth, lips, or tongue.

Psalms references (unclear meaning)

אלם is used twice with different vowels and stress (**אֵלֶּם** instead of **אִלֵּם**) and with unclear meaning. I do not think the traditional gloss of ‘silence’ in the lexica is justified.

Ps. 56:1	לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַל־יוֹנַת **אֵלֶּם** רְחֹקִים לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם בֶּאֱחֹז אֹתוֹ פְּלִשְׁתִּים בְּגַת׃
Ps. 58:1-2[1]	לַמְנַצֵּחַ אַל־תַּשְׁחֵת לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם׃ 2 הַאֻמְנָם **אֵלֶּם** צֶדֶק תְּדַבֵּרוּן מֵישָׁרִים תִּשְׁפְּטוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם׃

The two psalms are in a closely related group of five (56-60) with similarly structured beginnings and shared themes. After close analysis of these parallels, however, I determined that they do not offer conclusive help for the meaning of אלם in these verses.

In the phrase על־יונת אלם רחקים in Ps. 56:1, the only contextually possible referent for the mpl adjective רחקים seems to be אלם, which therefore must be a defectively written plural of אֵל (gods) or אַיִל, (rams, leaders, pillars).[263] Another suggested meaning is 'terebinths' or 'oaks', a possible plural of either אַיִל or אֵלָה.[264] The LXX has the significantly different 'ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μεμακρυμμένου',[265] perhaps deriving 'people' from לאם (through metathesis or translator decision). Some translations interpret אֵלֶם as the adjective אִלֵּם and apply it to יוֹנָה, 'dove': 'the mute dove of the distance' or 'the silent dove at a distance',[266] similar to the Targum's ליונה שתוקא and Jerome's *pro columba muta* (*Iuxta Hebraeos*).[267] The interpretation as 'mute dove' is problematic, however, because 1) the adjective is not feminine, 2) יונה is in construct (and should therefore be followed by a noun), and 3) אלם is not pointed as the adjective. With אלם as a noun, it would mean 'dove of a mute man' or 'dove of silence' (the meaning suggested by dictionaries), both of which are obscure and leave the adjective רחקים without referent.

In Ps. 58:2[1] אֵלֶם has been understood to mean 'gods' (as a defective plural of אֵל) or 'leaders', 'mighty men' (as a defective plural of אַיִל), both disregarding the pointing. In the parallel structure of the verse, אלם is likely to be a subject, but its identity remains unclear. If אלם and בני אדם are parallel subjects (of דבר and שפט, respectively), אלם more

[263] E.g., Dahood, *Psalms II*, 56.
[264] E.g., Kittel, *Psalmen*, 200; Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:525. See Isa. 1:29 and 57:5 for trees used in idol worship.
[265] Pietersma translates 'Over the people that are removed far away from their holy things' (*NETS*, 574).
[266] EIN; RVA. Zenger interprets as 'dove of silence' or 'dove falling silent' and builds extensively on this image, but does not justify the translation of אלם (in Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 59).
[267] Lagarde, *Psalterium Iuxta Hebraeos*, 59.

likely means ‘leaders’. The clauses would be syntactically parallel but not synonymous: ‘Do you leaders indeed speak rightly? Do you men judge uprightly?’[268] If instead אלם is the subject of both verbs, בני אדם would be the object of תשפטו, and אלם, as those who judge men, would more likely mean ‘gods’. The verse would then read as a protest against injustice, fitting well with the context of the other five psalms protesting the oppression of the godly by the wicked. Jerome translates as *utique* (‘certainly’) in the *Iuxta Hebraeos*,[269] perhaps from אֱמֶנָם.

Some translations interpret אלם here as ‘be silent’ or ‘mute’,[270] applying the description ‘silent’ either to justice itself (a ‘mute’ justice being faulty) or to those who are meant to judge (the sons of men meant to be speaking in judgement). If justice or the judges were mute, however, I would expect the Niphal of אלם or the adjective אִלֵּם, which should, however, follow the noun. Even אִלֵּם, however, is used only to describe an individual with the condition, not the condition itself (i.e., ‘muteness’), and since its pointing is different from אֵלֶם, they should not be assumed to have the same meaning. Despite this difficulty, some commentators defend the meaning ‘in silence’ or ‘in muteness’ by repointing, while others do not offer justification.[271]

Translations and Versions

Apart from these two Psalms references, translations consistently render אלם as ‘mute’, ‘dumb’, or sometimes ‘silent’ (the natural result of muteness).

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[268] Followed by the NASB, but the majority of translations treat בני אדם as the objects of judgement.
[269] Lagarde, Psalterium Iuxta Hebraeos, 61.
[270] ‘Est-ce donc en vous taisant que vous rendez la justice?’ (LSG); ‘Seid ihr denn wirklich stumm, wo ihr Recht sprechen, wo ihr ein richtiges Urteil fällen solltet, ihr Menschenkinder?‘ (SCH); ‘C'est vrai! Quand vous parlez, la justice est muette.’ (TOB).
[271] Briggs, *Psalms,* 2:43 (‘in silence’); Kittel, *Psalmen*, 203 (‘in Verstummen’); Dahood, *Psalms II,* 56 (‘muteness’); Kraus *Psalms 1-59,* 534 (‘struck dumb’? [question mark his]). Hossfeld develops the image of silence as the silencing of what is right, resulting in the ‘reprehensible condition’ of ‘silence/dumbness before “judgement”’. Although conceptually possible, he does not justify his different translations of אלם, which vary widely from the transitive verb ‘to silence’ to the passive verb ‘be silenced’ and the noun ‘silence’ (*Psalms 2*, 77-78, 80).

Septuagint

The LXX often uses forms related to κωφός, an adjective meaning ‘deaf’, ‘mute’, or both. The verb κωφόω means ‘to become dumb’, and ἀποκωφόομαι (Ezek. 3:26 and 24:27), ‘to become deaf’. The LXX also uses adjectives such as ἄλαλος (‘unable to speak’), μογιλάλων (‘mute’ or ‘stutterers’, those with difficulty speaking), ἄφωνος (‘dumb, silent’; lit. ‘without voice/sound’) and δύσκωφος (‘hard of hearing’, ‘stone-deaf’, which does not correspond exactly to Hebrew אלם). Another adjective used is ἐνεοί, ‘speechless’, describing the dogs in Isa. 56:10. In some places the LXX translates אלם as ‘stopped’: οὐ συνεσχέθη ἔτι (‘it [my mouth] was no longer stopped/constrained’; Ezek. 33:22). This interpretation contrasts with the previous phrase: ‘my mouth was opened’, but does not exactly translate the Hebrew unless the translator understood נאלמתי to mean ‘be bound’. The LXX of Isa. 35:6 is also interesting: καὶ τρανὴ ἔσται γλῶσσα μογιλάλων (‘the tongue of stammerers [לשׁון אלם] will be clear/articulate’). The LXX of Prov. 31:8 does not translate אלם as ‘mute’ at all: ἄνοιγε σὸν στόμα λόγῳ θεοῦ καὶ κρῖνε πάντας ὑγιῶς (‘Open your mouth with the word of God and judge all well/fairly’), perhaps associating it phonetically with מלה.

Vulgate

The Vulgate uses *mutus* for אלם, and sometimes *taceo* or *sileo* (‘be silent’). It also uses *obmutesco* (‘become dumb, lose one's speech’) in Isa. 53 and for both uses of אלם in Ps. 39.

Targum

The Targum sometimes uses a cognate (אילמא, אילמנא, or a Hithpaal of אלם) and other times שׁתק, commonly used for other Hebrew silence words. The ‘mute’ dogs of Isa. 56:10 it renders as ‘deaf’ (חרשין), though it is possible that Aramaic חרש had already come to mean both ‘deaf’ and ‘mute’. Other passages differ more significantly. In Hab. 2:18 the

‘mute’ idols are described as not having any use or profit: טעון דלית בהי(ו)ן צרוך. In Ps. 31:19, where the psalmist requests that lying lips become mute, the Targum uses a form of פקק, ‘to be stopped up’. The effect is the same: the lips will not speak. In Isa. 35:6, while the Hebrew portrays the tongue of the mute singing for joy at water in the desert, the Targum describes the context as people seeing the return of exiles, at which silenced (or ‘muzzled’) tongues will praise: ויֹשבח לישנהון דהוה כלים.

Peshitta

The Peshitta most frequently uses a verbal form of ܚܪܫ (*ḥrš*) for Niphal אלם, and the adjective ܚܪܫ is used in Hab. 2:18 for the idols.[272] The Peshitta also frequently uses ܦܩ (*pˀq*, mute) for the substantival adjective אלם, as well as for the attributive adjective in Isa. 56:10. Other translations are the adjectives ܫܬܝܩ (*štyq*; Isa. 53:7) and ܕܘܓ (*dwg*, ‘dumb’, as a variant for ܟܦܩ in Ps. 38:14[13]). In Ps. 31:19[18], for lying lips being ‘muted’, Peshitta uses a Gt form of ܣܟܪ (*skr*), meaning ‘to be shut up, blocked’, similar to the Targum’s תתפקקן, ‘to be stopped up’. Another verb used once for אלם is the Gt of ܐܬܪ (*ˀḥd*; Ezek. 33:22), ‘to be shut up’, although for the similarly worded Ezek. 24:27 the translator chose the more common ܚܪܫ. The Peshitta of Prov. 31:8 varies significantly from the MT, sharing with the LXX the command to open one’s mouth to speak a word (rather than to speak for the mute), and sharing with the Targum the judgement of evildoers (for the enigmatic בני־חלוף).

Extrabiblical references

אלם appears once in the Mishnah and eleven times in Qumran material, but is not found in Ben Sira or inscriptions. As in biblical texts, it is often used alongside explicit reference to an organ of speech and paired with other physical disabilities.

[272] Although its Hebrew cognate חרשׁ refers to deafness rather than muteness, in Syriac (as Greek and Aramaic) the same word can indicate both muteness and deafness.

Mishnah

The noun אִלֵּם is used in the Mishnah tractate Terumot 1,6 to identify one of the five kinds of people not allowed to bring *terumot*, a list including the drunkard and blind, among others. אלם is thus associated with both physical handicap and ritual impurity.

Dead Sea Scrolls

אלם appears in another list of physical defects in the Community Rule (1QSa, col. 2, lines 4, 6).[273] This list is concerned with those prohibited from entering the assembly, and אלם is again paired with the lame, blind, deaf, and those with any infirmity: אל יבוא בקהל...פסח או עור או חרש או אלם או מום מנוגע בבשרו. A parallel passage might be found in 4Q249g frags. 3-7, line 4, but the text is so heavily reconstructed that no new conclusions can be drawn.

Hodayot has five references with אלם, most associated with a mouth or lips not speaking out of horror, dismay, or as a result of judgement and punishment. Significant textual gaps, however, limit the analysis.[274]

1	XV 4	וֹאני **נאלֹמתי** מֹהֹוֹ[ות]ם...
2	XV 14-15	...כי **תאלמנה** שפתי / שפתי שקר...
3	XVI 37-38	...**נאלם** מֹזל שפתי / מפֹלֹצֹוֹתֹ...
4	XVI 40	... **נאלמו** כאין / ...
5	XX 35-36	ואני **נאלמתי** ומה אֹדבר על זות . . . ומה אדבר כיא אם פתחתה פי ...

The first and fourth references are too fragmentary to analyse, but the second and third clearly portray lips that are silenced. In XV 14-15 lying lips are silenced as a judgement against the guilty. Their inability to speak is contrasted with the righteous speaker, whose tongue is taught by God. In column XVI the speaker uses a series of corporeal images to describe his distress, in lines 37-38 describing his lips as silenced by horror.[275] In the fifth

[273] Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 1:108-11.
[274] Stegemann et al., *1QHodayot[a]*, DJD 40:198, 217, 251.
[275] The text is only partly legible, but the surrounding context clearly refers to distress caused by affliction, making the speaker lose the ability to move and speak. Newsom translates 'horror' (Stegemann et al., *1QHodayot[a]*, DJD 40:223, 225).

reference, the speaker is silenced by awe (or fear) of the anger and glory of God. His muteness is relieved only by God opening his mouth for him, reminiscent of passages in Psalms and Ezekiel. As with most biblical references, אלם in Hodayot is used more for temporary speechlessness than muteness as disability.

אלם also appears once in the War Scroll (1QM 14,6) in the phrase לפתוח פה לנאלמים. This act of opening the mouth of the mute is one of a number of actions that involve strengthening the weak, those with 'melted heart' and 'staggering knees'. The broader context refers to the song of praise that will be sung by those who return (תהלת המשוב). The participle נאלמים is found in the same context in the fragmentary 4QM[a] 8-10,4, but the immediately preceding text is missing.[276] As with biblical passages, muteness represents inability and deficiency, therefore its removal represents strength and sufficiency.

The Habakkuk Pesher (1QpHab 12,12) quotes the biblical text (2:18) on mute idols, but its interpretation is only indirectly connected to the idea of muteness: 'The interpretation of the passage concerns all the idols of the nations, which they have made so that they may serve them and bow down before them, but they will not save them on the day of judgement.'[277] Muteness here represents the idols' inability to do what gods are supposed to do, i.e., save.

[276] Charlesworth, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2:124-25, 148-49.
[277] Horgan, 'Habakkuk Pesher', 182-83.

אלם is also found in the fragmentary 4Q434 (BarkiNafshi[a]) 6,2, where it follows immediately after [ון]בלש בפיהם. The rest of the context is unclear, but there is a definite association with organs of speech, as in the biblical texts.[278]

Inscriptions

The root *ʾlm* is found in Punic meaning 'be mute', but it does not add anything to our understanding of Hebrew אלם.[279]

Cognates

אלם has many potential cognates, but most do not seem to correspond in meaning. BDB lists Akkadian *alāmu*/*almattu*, 'fortress', Arabic *ʾalima* 'be in pain', and Aramaic *ʾelam*, 'retain anger'. *HALOT* suggests a link to Arabic *wal(a)m*, glossed as 'girth', which it claims has the basic meaning 'to bind', thus semantically linking it to אלם.[280] Ges18 suggests the same link to *walam*, but gives its derivation as from *lamma* (لم), which it says means 'sammeln, verbinden'. It seems from Arabic dictionary entries, however, that the focus is more on gathering than binding,[281] and the formal connection between ولم and אלם would in any case be tenuous at best.

In Aramaic the verb אלם can mean both 'be strong, grow', and 'tie', 'be mute', though the latter do not seem to be used in Babylonian Aramaic. The adjective אלם can mean 'violent' or 'powerful' as well as 'mute, unable to speak' (though 'mute' is often spelled אילם).[282] It comes to mean 'ignorant' (as with many languages). In Syriac the root ܐܠܡ means 'be angry' and 'anger',[283] likely related to the meaning 'violent, powerful'.

[278] Chazon et al., *Qumran cave 4*, DJD 29:282.
[279] Krahmalkov, Phoenician-Punic Dictionary, 53; Tomback, Comparative Semitic Lexicon, 20.
[280] Wehr defines ولم (*walam*) as 'to give a banquet' (IV), then as the noun 'saddle girth, cinch'.
[281] Wehr, Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 877; Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, Supplement, 3013.
[282] Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 49, 71; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JBA*, 116, 135.
[283] Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 50.

Apart from Aramaic, however, there do not seem to be strong cognates for Hebrew אלם, and words for 'mute' in other Semitic languages derive from different roots. The case of אלם provides good evidence that one cannot assume semantic overlap even with a correspondence of consonants. It also demonstrates the value of a semantic approach to comparative Semitics, in which semantically similar words are compared even without corresponding root consonants. For example, the Ethiopic verb *sagama* means 'bind, tie, close', but also has a passive form meaning 'be mute' and an adjectival form meaning both 'mute' and 'bound'.[284] If this pattern is found in other languages, it would strengthen the likelihood that Hebrew אלם underwent semantic development from the passive 'be bound' to 'be mute'.[285]

Semantic Field

Semantic Development

With the Piel of אלם meaning 'bind',[286] it seems likely that the Niphal originally meant 'be bound' or 'bind oneself', eventually developing semantically to be used exclusively in the context of being unable to speak. A mouth bound up and kept from speaking could logically come to mean 'be mute', but this cannot be proven without textual evidence. In the evidence we do have, Niphal אלם is never used to mean 'be bound', despite the glosses in lexicons.[287] Further evidence might be found in Ezek. 3, where the prophet is told that he would be bound with cords (וְאָסָרוּךְ בָּהֶם) and then made mute (וְנֶאֱלַמְתָּ), with his tongue stuck to his palate. Since the active verb אסר is used for the physical binding, and

[284] Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary*, 491. Ges18 lists *ʾanama* and *ʾalama* as Ethiopic cognates meaning 'bind' (66), but I did not find them in Leslau's dictionary and do not have the expertise to pursue the matter further.
[285] See a reference in Levy to Aramaic חשק, 'bind', which is used for lips in the phrase חשוק שפתותיך (*ʿAvodah Zara* 35a). Levy translates 'halte deine Lippen fest zusammen' (*Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, 32). This is similar to some uses of אלם, but not when it refers to muteness. I do not pursue this study here as it relates specifically to semantics of 'muteness' rather than 'silence'.
[286] It is used only once (Gen. 37:7), as a participle to refer to the binding of sheaves. The related noun 'sheaves' (אֲלֻמָּה) derives from the same root.
[287] A connection between 'bind' and 'be mute' was suggested by Levy in the entry for אלים in the *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, where he states that 'verstummen und binden sind nahe verwandt' (32).

אלם for the inability to speak, it suggests that at least by this stage of the language, אלם was not used for physical binding.

Syntagmatic Analysis and Semantic Range

אלם is very closely associated with physical organs of speech that have in some way been hindered. In 7 of its 14 biblical uses אלם is directly opposed to opening one's mouth (sometimes even twice: Isa. 53, Ezek. 33). Being mute is also associated with tongue and lips, and Ezekiel's muteness results from his tongue having been stuck to his palate. Only as an attributive adjective is אלם not directly linked to a body part, likely because 1) both describe non-human entities, and 2) the focus is not on lack of speech but on the inability to perform expected tasks, with figurative muteness symbolising the deficiency of gods who cannot speak and dogs who cannot bark.

אלם only rarely refers to muteness as a permanent physical handicap: in *Terumot* and the Community Rule, where it is cause for exclusion, and arguably in Exod. 4 and Isa. 35, where muteness is shown to be a condition that God can reverse. In other references אלם indicates a temporary restriction on the ability to speak, whether self-imposed (voluntarily not opening one's mouth: Ps. 39), externally imposed (God causing the tongue to stick: Ezek. 3), or from utter lack of strength (Dan. 10).

Semantic Field

אלם refers to silence as lack of production (of speech or noise), usually with reference to an organ of speech. The effect of אלם is that one is prevented from making noise with one's mouth, whether by choice, external constraint, or physical handicap. While other silence words (דמם, שתק) refer to cessation of activity or noise in the natural world, אלם is constrained to lack of sound (including barking) produced by an organ of speech, even if

only figurative. אלם is also not used in wisdom contexts (as חרשׁ), nor is it a synonym for destruction (as דמם).

אלם overlaps semantically with other words in referring to not speaking (particularly חרשׁ and חשׁה), and there is arguably some overlap with דמם in the sense of cessation implied by lying lips becoming mute (Ps. 31), a phrase closely paralleled in the previous verse with the wish that the wicked be ashamed and ידמו to Sheol.[288]

אלם also overlaps with other silence words in the sense of self-restraint or limitation (חרשׁ, חשׁה). In Ps. 39 the psalmist declares that he will guard his ways and his mouth with a muzzle, becoming mute (אלם) and restraining himself (חשׁה) even from good. Self-restraint might be implied in Isa. 53, with the mute ewe metaphorically representing the servant not opening his mouth. Restraint is also evident in the Ezekiel references, though it is externally imposed.

אלם can refer to deficiency, both as a lack of status (Prov. 31:8) and as a physical handicap. It is often paired with חרשׁ, 'deaf' (Exod. 4, Ps. 38), with blindness (Exod. 4, Isa. 56), with being lame (Isa. 35), and in 1QSa 2,6 with all of the above. In this respect it distinguishes itself from other silence words (excepting the adjective חרשׁ, 'deaf'). אלם also (as חרשׁ and חשׁה) can refer to failure to fulfil obligations or do what is expected (Hab. 2:18; Isa. 56:10).

Conclusion

Although the meaning of אלם was not previously unclear, syntagmatic analysis reveals some constraints on usage that are not immediately apparent from dictionary entries. For

[288] The verb דמם in this verse could arguably be interpreted as 'be silent', 'be destroyed', or 'stop existing'.

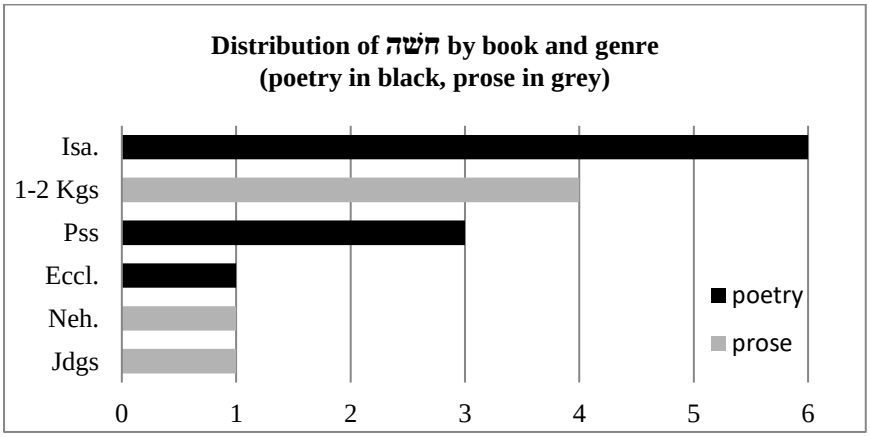
example, it is noteworthy that אלם never has a divine subject, though חרש does. Also, it is always closely associated with organs of speech, though חרש is not always connected to ears. In biblical texts אלם refers predominantly to temporary or figurative muteness, a tendency that admittedly may reflect more on the nature of the texts we have than on the semantic value and connotations of the word itself. In other texts, as seen, אלם does refer to permanent physical disability that limits one's permitted associations. Syntagmatic analysis has also called into question the traditional glossing of אֵלֶם as 'silence' in Psalms 56 and 58.

The root אלם as it relates to my study refers primarily not to 'silence' but to a mouth not speaking (through disability or other constriction), or to a more general failure to perform.

Chapter 3: חשׁה

Distribution

חשׁה appears sixteen times in the Hebrew Bible, twice in Ben Sira and three times in the War Scroll. Of its biblical references, 60% are in poetic texts, many of these prophetic, and it is most common in Isaiah.



Many references are in texts considered to be amongst the later biblical books (Neh., Eccl., Isa. 40-66).[289] There are not enough references to judge its frequency in later Hebrew, but its meaning does seem to change slightly in later texts, where it is used as a transitive verb and with its focus on cessation more than on restraint.

Lexicographical Survey

	Qal	**Hiphil**
BDB[290]	be silent (also: neglect to speak, be unresponsive, overlooking iniquity); be still	1. exhibit silence, be silent (also overlooking iniquity); 2. shew inactivity; 3. *causat*. make still, quiet (Neh. 8:11 only)
HALOT[291]	be silent	1. to order to be silent (Neh. 8:11); 2. to be silent; 3. to hesitate
DCH[292]	be silent	be silent; silence; delay
Ges18[293]	schweigen; ruhen, untätig sein	1. Schweigen gebieten; 2. stillschweigen; 3. *übertr*. (fig.): sich ruhig verhalten, zaudern

[289] BDB says it is 'chiefly poetic and late' (364), Baumann that it is: 'überwiegend in Texten aus später Zeit' (*TWAT* 2:279).
[290] BDB, 364.
[291] *HALOT*, 361.
[292] *DCH* 3:330.
[293] Ges18, 407.

The lexica are consistent in defining חשׁה as 'be silent', though they differ in their treatment of the nuance: failure to perform a certain action. While BDB refers to 'inactivity', *HALOT* glosses with 'hesitate', which implies an element of motivation (fear, laziness, or other) that is not implicit in חשׁה. With divine subject, for example, חשׁה refers to restraint of judgement, but not hesitation. *DCH* and Ges18 have 'delay', which is preferable, but implies a later fulfilment that is not always suggested by חשׁה itself. It is surprising, however, that *DCH* has 'be silent' rather than 'delay' for references to divine restraint of judgement and 2 Kgs 7:9.

In *TWAT*, Baumann correctly analyses חשׁה as indicating the moment of refraining or stopping from speech or from actions. It also indicates idleness or inactivity ('Untätigsein'). Although he suggests there is an element of passivity to חשׁה, I do not think this is justified. Eidevall also disagrees, claiming that חשׁה refers to 'intentional' but never 'involuntary silence or stillness'.[294] Baumann identifies the sense of refraining from action, but he does not elaborate on the specific usage with divine subject meaning 'withhold judgement'.[295] This meaning is also missing from the entry in *THAT* (which suggests 'delay')[296] and from *TWOT* (which includes 'be inactive', but misidentifies God's silence as lack of speaking rather than lack of action in judgement).[297]

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

חשׁה is used only as a verb in the Qal (7 times, mostly *yiqtols*) and Hiphil (9 times, mostly participles). The *binyanim* share the same meaning apart from the single causative Hiphil in Neh. 8:11. חשׁה indicates restraint, either from speech (thus 'be silent') or from action (thus 'be still'), often the lack of an expected action.

[294] Eidevall, 'Sounds of Silence in Biblical Hebrew', 165, 167n.30.
[295] *TWAT* 2:279.
[296] Delcor, 1:640.
[297] L.J. Coppes, 1:330-31.

The meanings divide into three main categories:

1. restraint from action
2. restraint from speech or other noise
3. cause to be still/silent

With human subject (8-9 verses), it most often indicates restraint from war-like activities for acquisition of territory. With divine subject (5-6 verses),[298] חשׁה indicates restraint of judgement when God speaks of his own silence, but can also indicate his lack of action on behalf of someone, particularly in direct address asking him *not* to be silent. Only once does חשׁה have an inanimate subject (waves in Ps. 107:29).

1. Restraint from Action

a) Human Subjects

Judges 18:9
וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוּמָה וְנַעֲלֶה עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי רָאִינוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה טוֹבָה מְאֹד וְאַתֶּם **מַחְשִׁים** אַל־תֵּעָצְלוּ לָלֶכֶת לָבֹא לָרֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ׃

Judges 18 tells of five Danites searching for a place to dwell. After having scouted out Laish, they report back that the land is good and desirable to live in, and that they should go up against the inhabitants to enter and possess the land. Their statement ואתם מחשׁים (‘and you are silent’) is clearly meant to be an accusation and a challenge. It can be interpreted either as a question (‘and will you do nothing?’; and are ye still?)[299] or as an exclamation (‘and you are sitting idle!’).[300] The accusation of ‘silence’ is followed by an exhortation not to be slow or lazy (על־תעצלו)[301] to go in to possess the land. חשׁה, therefore, which is linked to the slowness or laziness of עצל, refers to inaction (rather than lack of noise), in particular to refraining from an action that is rightfully expected in the situation.

[298] The difference is in interpretation of Isa. 62:1.
[299] ESV; JPS.
[300] NJPS.
[301] The verb עצל appears only here in biblical Hebrew, though an adjectival form meaning ‘slow’, ‘lazy’ is well-attested. *HALOT* defines this Niphal as ‘vacillate, hesitate’ and the adjective as ‘slow, idle’ (868).

1 Kings 22:3
וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־עֲבָדָיו הֲיִדַעְתֶּם כִּי־לָנוּ רָמֹת גִּלְעָד וַאֲנַחְנוּ **מַחְשִׁים** מִקַּחַת אֹתָהּ מִיַּד מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם׃

In 1 Kings 22:3 חשׁה also refers to an undesirable failure to act in the way expected, here too going out in war to take land. This chapter relates the visit of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to Ahab, king of Israel, who is at war with Aram. Addressing his servants, Ahab expresses indignation that 'we are silent' (i.e., not acting) to take back Ramoth-Gilead from the king of Aram, even though it belongs to them.

This is one of three references in which חשׁה is followed by the preposition מן to indicate refraining *from* something. The object in this verse is the infinitive construct קחת: from taking (the city) out of the hands of the king. The 'silence' for which they are blamed clearly refers to a lack of action (not speech) that would achieve territorial gains.

The Vulgate, generally quite literal in translation of חשׁה as 'be silent', has 'neglect' (*neglegere*) in both of these verses, though other versions have verbs meaning 'be silent'.

b) God as Subject

God's restraint from expected action can either be positive (restraint of judgement) or negative (lack of action on behalf of the people).

Psalm 28:1
לְדָוִד אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֶקְרָא צוּרִי אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ מִמֶּנִּי **פֶּן־תֶּחֱשֶׁה** מִמֶּנִּי וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם־יוֹרְדֵי בוֹר׃

חשׁה and חרשׁ are again related in Ps. 28:1, but not as parallels. Instead חשׁה portrays the undesired result of the Qal חרשׁ: 'do not be deaf (אל־תחרשׁ) to/from me, lest you are silent (פן־תחשׁה) to/from me, and I become like those going down to the pit' (i.e., and die). God's silence would be not only an undesired lack of communication (not hearing, not answering), but also an undesired lack of action, in effect deserting the psalmist to the

‘pit’. The focus seems to be on communication when the psalmist asks to be heard in v. 2, a theme picked up again in v. 6, when he blesses the LORD for having heard his requests. The focus is more on action, however, when in v. 4 the psalmist asks God to give the wicked according to their deeds.[302]

This is the only reference in which the preposition מן following חשׂה has a personal suffix: ממני (‘from me’). In the other two references with חשׂה מן, it refers to restraint (from the action of taking land or from ‘good’), but here it implies restraint from a person, that is, from not interacting with or answering the psalmist.

Isaiah 42:14[303]
הֶֽחֱשֵׁ֣יתִי מֵעוֹלָ֗ם אַחֲרִישׁ֙ אֶתְאַפֵּ֔ק כַּיּוֹלֵדָ֖ה אֶפְעֶ֑ה אָשֹׁ֥ם וְאֶשְׁאַ֖ף יָחַֽד׃

Isa. 42 describes God as a creator who acts on behalf of his people (vv. 5-9), who are enjoined to praise him (vv. 10-12). God is portrayed anthropomorphically in v. 13 as a ‘mighty man’ of war (כגבור יצא כאיש מלחמות) who ‘arouses jealousy/zealousness’, then ‘cries out’, ‘shouts aloud’, and ‘shows himself mighty against his foes’ (יעיר קנאה יריע אף־ יצריח על־איביו יתגבר). In 42:14 he is portrayed speaking in first-person as a woman in labour gasping and crying out,[304] which is contrasted to his long ‘silence’ and restraint up to this point. The following verse moves into a portrayal of action: ‘I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools’.

Throughout the chapter God is portrayed as acting on behalf of his people as well as against his foes. His acting is associated with loud cries, and the counter-image is that of

[302] Others also interpret silence here as opposed to action. See Briggs, who understands חשׂה as ‘be still’, meaning ‘ignoring, neglecting the prayer, and the serious situation of the people’, though in my view he incorrectly interprets חרשׁ here as ‘be not silent’ (*Psalms*, 1:246).
[303] See also under חרשׁ.
[304] The verbs פעה and נשׁם are *hapax legomena* and difficult to define, but שׁאף can mean ‘gasp’, ‘pant’ or ‘crush’, ‘trample’.

silence representing his long restraint from action. חשׁה is parallel to both חרשׁ and the Hithpael of אפק (as in 64:11, where it also refers to self-restraint in not acting in judgement), and the two silence words are opposed both to action and to the metaphorical gasping and crying out.

The text of 1QIsa[a] has אחשיתי instead of החשׁיתי,[305] due possibly to influence of the Aramaic Aphel verb form, or simply to the weakening of laryngeals and pharyngeals.[306]

Isaiah 57:11
וְאֶת־מִי דָּאַגְתְּ וַתִּירְאִי כִּי תְכַזְּבִי וְאוֹתִי לֹא זָכַרְתְּ לֹא־שַׂמְתְּ עַל־לִבֶּךְ הֲלֹא אֲנִי **מַחְשֶׁה** וּמֵעֹלָם וְאוֹתִי לֹא תִירָאִי׃

Isaiah 57 describes the people's betrayal of God, who challenges them in 57:11 for having forgotten him, and ascribes their lack of fear of him to his long 'silence'. God's silence in this verse could be interpreted in two ways. A negative interpretation would refer to his long lack of action on behalf of his people and refusal to help them in exile. It would be parallel to the angry hiding of his face (v. 17) and would serve as an explanation for the injustice portrayed in v. 1 ('the righteous perish, and no man lays it to heart').[307] Given the positive tone in the latter part of the chapter, however, and other references to God's silence that refer to restraint from judgement, the positive interpretation seems more likely.[308] A positive interpretation of God's silence would be that he has withheld deserved judgement.[309] That it is deserved is made clear in the

[305] Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1,* DJD 32.2:70.
[306] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll,* p. 506.
[307] Delitzsch describes the exile as a time of 'silence of God's help' for his servants and 'silence of his anger' towards the masses (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 555).
[308] Koenen describes the silence as patience going back even to the time of the monarchy: 'Mit dem Schweigen ist deswegen wohl die Zeit der Langmut Jahwes während der Königszeit gemeint: Obwohl Jahwe schwieg und beide Augen zudrückte, hat man ihn nicht gefürchtet. Deswegen kommt jetzt das Gericht' (*Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch*, 45n.220).
[309] Goldingay identifies God's silence as referring to 'inaction'; although usually negative, here 'it suggests slowness in acting against wrongdoing', thus has 'positive connotations when the wrongdoing is Israel's' (*Isaiah 56-66*, 132).

accusations against the people for serving foreign gods and now forgetting God.[310] Even so, he promises future restoration and declares that he will not always be angry but will heal, lead, and comfort his people.

The versions differ significantly in translation of חשׁה. The LXX has no reference to silence, with the latter part of the verse: κἀγώ σε ἰδὼν παρορῶ καὶ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐφοβήθης ('And when I see you, I disregard you, and you have not feared me').[311] חשׁה seems to have been translated with ἰδὼν ('seeing') or possibly with παρορῶ (παρεῖδον: 'overlook, take no notice of'), but the Hebrew question (הלא) and the adverbial ומעלם are not translated. Barthélemy and others suggest that LXX παρορῶ derives from vocalisation as the Hiphil participle וּמַעְלִם, referring to hiding (implied: one's face).[312] A connection between חשׁה and 'see' is also possible: perhaps translators thought of Aramaic חזה/י (see), or Hebrew שׁעה (gaze at). Goshen-Gottstein, however, suggests it is simply an exegetical translation ('God sees, but looks away').[313] The Vulgate does refer to silence, but also includes verbs meaning 'see' and 'forget': *ego tacens et quasi non videns et mei oblita es* ('I am silent, and as one not seeing, and you have forgotten me'). The reference to not seeing again might reflect a perceived reference to 'hiding' in מעלם (or could simply reflect the LXX). It seems less likely that the final Hebrew verb was misinterpreted as 'see' rather than 'fear'. The Targum follows the pattern seen elsewhere in Isaiah of interpreting חשׁה as 'giving extension' (see the treatment of the versions below). The Peshitta follows the Hebrew relatively closely but deviates for מחשׁה, for which it has ܩܕܝܫܐ (pious, holy): 'Behold, I am the holy one and from forever' (ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܥܡ ܟܝ ܡܢ ܥܠܡ).

[310] Westermann summarises as: 'while you were running after the other gods, I held my peace and refused to see a thing—for your sake' (*Isaiah 40-66*, 324-25; orig. *Das Buch Jesaja: Kapitel 40-66,* 258-59).
[311] Silva, *NETS*, 868.
[312] *Critique Textuelle*, 2:414; see also Goldingay, *Isaiah 56-66*, 97.
[313] *Sefer Yesha'yahu,* HUB, 3:256 (רנו).

Isaiah 64:11[12]
הַעַל־אֵלֶּה תִתְאַפַּק יְהוָה **תֶּחֱשֶׁה** וּתְעַנֵּנוּ עַד־מְאֹד׃ ס

In Isaiah 64 the people address God as their father and bemoan the destruction of his cities and the temple. At the end of the chapter (64:11[12]), they issue a final plea for God to act on their behalf with a triad of rhetorical questions: at these things will you restrain yourself (תתאפק)? will you be silent (תחשה)? will you afflict us (תעננו) exceedingly? In this sequence of questions, God's being silent is parallel to restraint,[314] and to the affliction that results from it. His 'silence' poetically describes a lack of action in not protecting the cities and temple from desolation. Their question is an indirect request that he now act on their behalf (i.e., not be 'silent').[315]

Isaiah 65:6
הִנֵּה כְתוּבָה לְפָנָי לֹא **אֶחֱשֶׁה** כִּי אִם־שִׁלַּמְתִּי וְשִׁלַּמְתִּי עַל־חֵיקָם׃

Isaiah 65 details ways in which the people had been rebellious and provoked God to anger. In vv. 6-7 God declares that he will repay (שלם) their and their fathers' iniquities, measuring out payment for their deeds. חשׁה is directly opposed to the Piel of שלם, with a strong contrast implied by כי אם: 'I will not be silent but will instead repay'. Since *not* being silent is equated with delivering punishment, *being* silent indicates restraint (even if temporary) from the expected judgement.

Since Isa. 65-66 is perceived as a response to the lament of Isa. 63-64,[316] the statement 'I will not keep silent' (65:6) could be in response to the people's earlier question 'Will you keep silent?' (64:11).[317] The exchange illustrates the two-fold interpretation of God's 'silence': in their plea it refers to his lack of help ('will you be silent in the face of such

[314] חשׁה is parallel to the Hithpael of אפק also in Isa. 42:14, above.
[315] This interpretation is made explicit in some modern translations (NJPS: 'Will You stand idly by?'; TOB: 'Tu resterais inactif?'), though many others render חשׁה 'be silent'.
[316] See Schultz, 'Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah', 129.
[317] Stromberg, Introduction to the Study of Isaiah (83) and Isaiah after Exile (31-32).

destruction?'), but in his answer it refers to his restraint of judgement ('I will not be silent but will repay').[318]

c) Inanimate Subject

Psalm 107:29
יָקֵם סְעָרָה לִדְמָמָה **וַיֶּחֱשׁוּ** גַּלֵּיהֶם׃

Waves are the subject of חשׁה in Psalm 107:29. The 3pl suffix on גליהם ('their waves') does not have a clear referent, and many translate with the singular 'its' in reference to the storm or the sea. There are two possible plural referents in Hebrew, however, one the 'waters' (מים רבים) from v. 23, and the other an implied plural 'seas'. Another reference to 'seas' and 'their waves' is found in Ps. 65:8[7]: משביח שאון ימים שאון גליהם ('stilling the roar of seas, the roar of their waves'), which might be the implication here as well.

The verb itself (Qal) is usually intransitive, and would mean 'their waves were still', but here it is sometimes interpreted with a transitive meaning: 'its waves were hushed' (ESV) or 'stilled' (NJPS). The agent is unspecified, but the 3pl could be interpreted as an impersonal.

חשׁה here is semantically parallel to דממה ('cessation', perhaps 'silence'), which the storm was turned into. The 'silence' of the waves therefore clearly indicates the cessation of turbulence rather than of any particular noise.

The passage differs slightly in 4QPs^{f}, where it begins with the phrase יויפך שערה and ends with גלי ים ('waves of the sea') instead of the more difficult גליהם.[319]

[318] Koenen remarks: 'Auffällig ist, daß "schweigen" im ersten Fall die gegenwärtige Unheilszeit meint, im zweiten jedoch die künftige Heilszeit' (*Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch*, 164).
[319] Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 16:92.

2. Restraint from (or Cessation of) Speech or Other Noise

חשׁה can also refer to restraint from (and possibly cessation of) speech, usually with human subjects. It can also indicate refraining from other noises such as crying out or gasping.

a) Human subject

חשׁה is directly opposed to speech (אמר, דבר, נגד) in the following five verses.

2 Kings 2:3, 5
3 וַיֵּצְאוּ בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר־בֵּית־אֵל אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַעְתָּ כִּי הַיּוֹם יְהוָה לֹקֵחַ אֶת־אֲדֹנֶיךָ מֵעַל רֹאשֶׁךָ וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי **הַחֱשׁוּ**:
5 וַיִּגְּשׁוּ בְנֵי־הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר־בִּירִיחוֹ אֶל־אֱלִישָׁע וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הֲיָדַעְתָּ כִּי הַיּוֹם יְהוָה לֹקֵחַ אֶת־אֲדֹנֶיךָ מֵעַל רֹאשֶׁךָ וַיֹּאמֶר גַּם־אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי **הַחֱשׁוּ**:

In 2 Kings 2, Elisha, anticipating that his master Elijah would be taken from him, refuses to leave him. When the sons of the prophets from Bethel and then Jericho ask if he knows that his master will be taken, Elisha responds with irritation ‘I do know; be quiet’. The two verses are nearly identical and contain the only biblical imperatival forms of חשׁה. The Hiphil command is directly contrasted to אמר and therefore clearly refers to a lack of speech, but could be interpreted as referring either to its cessation (‘stop talking!’) or its restraint (‘do not speak again!’).[320]

Ecclesiastes 3:7
עֵת לִקְרוֹעַ וְעֵת לִתְפּוֹר עֵת **לַחֲשׁוֹת** וְעֵת לְדַבֵּר:

In Eccl. 3:7 חשׁה is directly contrasted to דבר. This verse is part of a well-known list of contrasting pairs of infinitives making the point that there is a time and season for everything, including being silent and speaking. Although as an infinitive it has no subject, the implied actor is obviously human.

2 Kings 7:9
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ לֹא־כֵן אֲנַחְנוּ עֹשִׂים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יוֹם־בְּשֹׂרָה הוּא וַאֲנַחְנוּ **מַחְשִׁים** וְחִכֵּינוּ עַד־אוֹר הַבֹּקֶר וּמְצָאָנוּ עָוֹן וְעַתָּה לְכוּ וְנָבֹאָה וְנַגִּידָה בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:

[320] The difference is minor, but impacts the position of חשׁה in the semantic field, which, apart from these two verses, seems to imply lack of initiation rather than cessation.

In 2 Kings 7:9 חשׂה is contrasted with the act of telling (Hiphil נגד) good news about the discovery of enemy spoil. The previous chapter describes the famine resulting from Ben-Hadad's siege of Samaria, the end of which Elisha prophecies in 7:1. Chapter 7 then relates the deliberations of four lepers outside the city: faced with certain death by starvation, they choose to risk going over to the Aramean camp, only to find it deserted. After eating, drinking, and looting what they find, they suddenly stop themselves, realising they are in the wrong and risk punishment by being silent and not telling others about what they have found. Their self-aware 'silence' (ואנחנו מחשים) is opposed not only to speech (ונגידה, ויקראו, and ויגידו in 7:10) but also to action, the duty of first going back to the city (לכו ונבאה).

Psalm 39:3[2]
נֶאֱלַמְתִּי דוּמִיָּה **הֶחֱשֵׁיתִי** מִטּוֹב וּכְאֵבִי נֶעְכָּר׃

The contrast of חשׂה with speech in Ps. 39 is less clear, but is implied. חשׂה follows two other silence words: נאלמתי ('I was mute, silent') and דומיה ('rest,' possibly 'silence'). The Niphal אלם is not usually modified adverbially, nor does it take an object, so the relation between these words is not entirely clear: 'I was mute, resting'; 'I was mute in silence'; 'I was utterly silent'; or 'I was bound up into silence'?[321] Another first-person verb, החשיתי, follows, then the prepositional phrase מטוב, but again the relation between them is unclear. Does being 'silent' from good imply not *speaking* of good things or not *doing* good?

Translations of החשיתי מטוב vary widely, from 'I refrained even from good'[322] to 'I held my peace to no avail'.[323] Others associate טוב with happiness: 'I was silent, far from

[321] Niphal אלם most often refers to a voluntary or imposed silence rather than to muteness as a disability. Since Piel אלם means 'bind', it could also mean 'I was bound up'. דומיה usually refers to rest, but if it means 'silence' here perhaps is added for emphasis?
[322] NASB.
[323] ESV, NRSV.

happiness'.[324] The versions also differ. LXX represents טוב with the plural adjective ἀγαθῶν, while the Targum reinterprets as בטלית מן פתגמי אוריתא ('I was idle/ceased from the words of the law/Torah').

The relatively strong speech context surrounding it suggests that טוב implies good words or speech. In the previous verse the psalmist says he will guard his mouth in order not to sin with his tongue (אשמרה דרכי מחטוא בלשוני), which leads to his decision to be silent. His restraint and silence lead only to greater distress, however, which is alleviated only by speaking with his tongue (דברתי בלשוני) in the following verse. This contrast between speech and silence suggests that החשיתי מטוב refers to being silent from speaking what is good. Further evidence that טוב by itself can indicate speech is found in two verses where it is the object of דבר: Jeremiah 12:6 (כי־ידברו אליך טובות) and Genesis 24:50 (לא נוכל דבר אליך רע או־טוב). In Ps. 39, therefore, it seems likely that טוב refers to speech as the object of חשׁה: 'I was silent/restrained from (speaking) good (words)'.

Isaiah 62:1
לְמַעַן צִיּוֹן **לֹא אֶחֱשֶׁה** וּלְמַעַן יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם לֹא אֶשְׁקוֹט עַד־יֵצֵא כַּנֹּגַהּ צִדְקָהּ וִישׁוּעָתָהּ כְּלַפִּיד יִבְעָר׃

Isaiah 62 portrays the promised future vindication and glorification of Jerusalem/Zion. The parallel phrases לא אחשה and לא אשקוט of 62:1 seem to contrast silence/quiet with Jerusalem's righteousness, or perhaps with intercession for her (based on v. 6): 'I will not be silent until her righteousness goes out (or 'shines') as brightness and her salvation as a burning torch'. The unidentified speaker could be either God or the prophet. The preceding and following verses refer to God in third person, making it less likely that he is the subject of the first-person verbs here, but this argument loses potency with the

[324] Particularly among German translations: 'ich schwieg, vom Glück verlassen' (EIN), 'ich schwieg—fern der Freude' (Rev. Lut.); see also LSG: 'Je me suis tu, quoique malheureux'.

multiple person shifts in these verses (e.g., Zion/Jerusalem is third-person in v. 1 but second-person in v. 2).

It was commonly accepted by older commentators (Delitzsch and Cheyne, for example, also Ibn Ezra)[325] that God is the speaker in 62:1. The LXX and Targum also suggest this: LXX with reference to 'my' righteousness and salvation (δικαιοσύνη μου τὸ δὲ σωτήριόν μου) and the Targum with a first-person verb expressing responsibility for bringing salvation to Zion.[326] Arguments for God as speaker are that it would be presumptuous for the prophet to be the speaker, also that the same verb חשׁה has God as subject multiple times in other passages. The verb is used with both divine and human subjects, so this argument should not stand.[327]

The most natural subject seems to be the prophet or prophetic community responsible for calling out to God in prayer,[328] an argument strengthened by the close similarity to v. 6. It also would seem that if God were the subject of לא אחשה, יצא should be a first-person Hiphil, with God himself causing righteousness and salvation to go forth. Since Qal יצא implies non-involvement of the speaker, however, the prophet is more likely subject than God.

[325] Delitzsch, *Das Buch Jesaia,* 590-91; Cheyne refers to Ibn Ezra as well as Qimḥi (*Prophecies of Isaiah,* 97).
[326] עד דאעביד פורקן לציון לא אניח לעממיא. Targum reinterprets to mean that God will not give rest to the nations until he brings salvation to Zion.
[327] For a brief summary of the arguments, see Koole, *Isaiah III,* 3:302.
[328] Koole gives a brief history of scholarship on the two views and refutes the arguments for God as speaker (*Isaiah III,* 3:302). See also Westermann: 'Daß in diesen Worten der Prophet spricht, wird jetzt von den meisten Auslegern gesagt' (*Das Buch Jesaja*, 297). ['Most present-day editors believe that the speaker here is the prophet' (*Isaiah 40-66*, 374).]

An interesting variant is found in 1QIsa[a]: ולוא אחריש,[329] which supports my conclusion that חרשׁ and חשׁה have significant semantic overlap. Kutscher concludes that חרשׁ was chosen instead of חשׁה because it was more familiar.[330]

Isaiah 62:6
עַל־חוֹמֹתַיִךְ יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם הִפְקַדְתִּי שֹׁמְרִים כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה תָּמִיד לֹא **יֶחֱשׁוּ** הַמַּזְכִּרִים אֶת־יְהוָה אַל־דֳּמִי לָכֶם:

In the similar Isaiah 62:6 לא יחשו is parallel to אל־דמי לכם (lit. 'not rest/silence/cessation[331] to you', but usually translated 'give yourselves no rest'). Silence and rest are contrasted to active intercession for Jerusalem.

The subject of יחשו is either the watchmen (שמרים), following the Masoretic accents, or the 'remembrancers'[332] (מזכרים), the more natural subject, following the verb. Given their task of intercession, they should be understood as part of the prophetic community.[333]

b) God as Subject

In both Ps. 28:1 and Isa. 42:14, God's silence could be interpreted in opposition to speech (answering the psalmist in Ps. 28) or to noise (the woman in labour crying out in Isa. 42). However, since the focus of both seems to be more on the action expected and needed from God than on the speech or noise itself, they were treated above under 'restraint from action'.

3. Cause to Be Still/Silent

Nehemiah 8:11
וְהַלְוִיִּם **מַחְשִׁים** לְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר הַסּוּ כִּי הַיּוֹם קָדֹשׁ וְאַל־תֵּעָצֵבוּ:

[329] Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1,* DJD 32.2:100.
[330] Kutscher, Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll, 239.
[331] דמי might mean 'cessation' if it derives from the meaning 'stop' of דמם. Interestingly, the Targum translates both חשׁה and דמי as related to cessation (לא פסקין).
[332] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66,* 239.
[333] Koole describes the prophet as intercessor, with roles as both 'a proclaimer of judgement' and as 'a prophet of salvation' who prays for fulfilment of God's promises (*Isaiah III,* 3:313).

The Hiphil of חשׁה is causative only in Neh. 8:11, where the Levites seek to quiet, or stop, the mourning of the people. Elsewhere the Hiphil is intransitive and indicates the subject's own silence or restraint of action, but it cannot have that meaning here, both because the verb has an object ('all the people'),[334] and because its subjects (the Levites) immediately begin speaking. מחשים describes what the Levites hope to achieve by their subsequent command, הסו ('be silent'), namely, calming the people.[335] Since their next command is to go and celebrate the day, the desired result clearly was not silence, strictly speaking, but an end to the weeping. This is another example of 'silence' referring to a lack of action more than lack of sound.

It seems likely that חשׁה later acquired more a sense of cessation (rather than restraint from), which would also fit this use in Neh. 8:11 (where the Levites cause people to cease from their weeping, not refrain from starting). It is also possible that the Hiphil took on a causative meaning in later stages of Hebrew, although with limited attestation it is hard to know.

Translations and Versions

Versions mostly translate חשׁה predictably with verbs meaning 'be silent', but there is one interesting pattern in the Targum of Isaiah, in which God's 'silence' (חשׁה) is repeatedly interpreted as his giving an extension (ארכא), that is, as waiting and delaying punishment. The Targum uses ארכא for חשׁה in Isa. 42:14; 57:11; 64:11; and 65:6.

[334] The preposition ל on the direct object כל־העם could either be a late feature indicating Aramaic influence, or a marker of an indirect object implying a slightly different verbal nuance, such as 'brought quiet to'.
[335] Gesenius 17th edition defines the causative Hiphil as 'beruhigen' ('to quiet' or 'to calm'), which suits the context well (*Handwörterbuch*, 266).

Extrabiblical references

Ben Sira

The two possible attestations of חשׁה in Ben Sira are of uncertain meaning and therefore will be discussed only briefly, although both passages have been examined thoroughly.

35[32].20 (ms. B) has the text וצעקה ענן חשתה,[336] which has been translated 'the cry of the afflicted fell silent',[337] though not without difficulties.[338] The translation of the versions suggests that a cry 'reached' or 'hastened to' the clouds,[339] possibly interpreting as if from חוש, though this is also problematic.[340]

A second, but textually uncertain, attestation of חשׁה is suggested in 41.21:[341] ... ק ...מהשׁ מנה (ms. B), or מ[ח]ש(א)ות מחל[ק]ת מנה (ms. M).[342] Verse 21 might tell the listener to be ashamed of being silent (מחשות) at the dividing up of a portion,[343] but the text of ms. B preserves only מהש (perhaps the beginning of מהשיב, suggesting returning of portions, or מהשבית, suggesting cessation[344]), and a marginal note has מחשבות. Ms. M more clearly suggests a form of חשׁה, but the ח is supralinear, and the (uncertain) א smudged and unlike other alephs on the page. The reading משאת, 'taking away' has been suggested,[345] among other possibilities.[346] The Greek and Latin seem to follow a different order than the Hebrew text and might have had a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. The text that corresponds

[336] Book of Ben Sira, 27.
[337] See the Einheitsübersetzung: 'das Schreien des Elenden verstummt'.
[338] It is hard to account for the second *nun* of ענן, and צעקה is not in construct.
[339] Greek συνάψει, 'will join with' (i.e., 'will reach'); Vulgate *propinquabit*, 'will draw near'.
[340] A 3fs hollow verb should not end in תה-.
[341] See under חרשׁ for description of this passage.
[342] *Book of Ben Sira*, 47; adjustments made (reconstructed letters in B left out) based on manuscript photos (my own and those found on www.bensira.org).
[343] This is the translation of Eric Reymond from www.bensira.org.
[344] This is suggested by Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 479.
[345] Van Peursen, *The Verbal System*, 256.
[346] See Yadin, The Ben Sira Scroll, 21, 42; Smend, Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, 387.

most closely to this line, however, is ἀπὸ σκορακισμοῦ λήμψεως καὶ δόσεως,[347] and *ab offuscatione dati et accepti*.[348] Although these interpretations *could* relate to being silent, their source text and its connotations are by no means certain, rendering these references of little value for this study.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Hebrew DSS

חשׁה is used four times in the Hebrew DSS, all in copies of the War Scroll.

War Scroll (1QM)[349]	8,11	קול השופרות **יחישו**	The sound of the horns shall cease
	9,1	וכול העם **יחשו** מקול התרועה	The whole band shall cease the sound of the alarm
	16,9	וכול / העם **יחשו** קול הֿתֿרֿוֿעֿהֿ	the whole / band shall cease the sound of the alarm
fragmentary War Scroll (4Q491)[350]	18,4	ידמה להפי]ל בחללים **וח֯ן֯שו** כול העם	[. . . ils brandiront leur main pour (la) faire tomb]er sur les blesses à mort, et [tout le people] se t[aira . . .]

The War Scroll (1QM), which is thought to date to the late 1st century BCE,[351] describes the anticipated war between the 'sons of light' and the 'sons of darkness'. It bears similarities with the genre of the military 'tactical treatise',[352] though it is also a theological text emphasising divine involvement and duties of the priests. חשׁה is used three times: once for silencing the horns of war, twice to stop the cry of alarm.

[347] Before 'contemptuous behaviour' or 'damning' (Wright, *NETS*, 753) of receiving and giving.
[348] DRA translates 'of deceit in giving and taking', but *offuscatione* can also mean 'darkening', 'surliness'.
[349] Text and translations by Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 113, 115, 131.
[350] Text and translation by Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte 4*, DJD 7:41.
[351] Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 83, Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 165. See also Duhaime, *War Texts*, 64-65.
[352] So Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 84.

Column 8 describes how the priests would blow trumpets to announce different stages of the battle. Once the troops were in formation, a second alarm would signal marching, and then a 'shrill staccato sound to conduct the battle'. The Levites and people would blow a war alarm meant to 'melt the enemy's heart', and 'war javelins' would bring down the slain (להפיל חללים). Then the sound of the horns would cease (8,11: קול השופרות יחישו), but the priests would keep blowing the trumpets to conduct the troops until the trumpets of withdrawal were blown.[353] The second *yod* of יחישו makes it appear to be a Hiphil of חוש, 'hurry',[354] which would suggest the horns should be blown hurriedly (possibly to frighten the enemy), while the priests continued to blow the trumpets to conduct the troops.[355] In light of the subsequent passages with forms of חשׁה for the silencing of the sound of alarm, however, and their very similar surrounding text, it seems likely that חשׁה is meant here, despite the difficulty with the *yod*. A possible explanation is that it represents an e-class vowel (as elsewhere in DSS); it is also possible that by the time of composition חוש had become a byform of חשׁה, with overlapping form and meaning (though not demonstrable).

9,1 also describes the slain being brought down, after which all the people would be silent from (or 'cease') the sound of the alarm: וכול העם יחשו מקול התרועה.[356] The priests, however, would continue blowing the trumpets to conduct the battle until the enemies were smitten.

[353] Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 113.
[354] Yadin transcribes יחושו (*The Scroll of the War* [1955], 306), but van der Ploeg argues for the reading יחישו, as the י and the ו of the word are of different lengths (*Le Rouleau de la Guerre*, 125-26).
[355] Van der Ploeg takes this view, arguing that this text portrays a situation different from the texts with חשׁה, which describe a final attack at the routing of the enemy rather than a preparatory attack, as here. He translates as from חושׁ, referring to the quickening of the call: 'on accélérera (=précipitera, produira de façon encore plus agitée) la sonnerie', the purpose being to frighten the enemy: 'pour semer encore plus d'effroi parmi les rangs de l'ennemi, on fera l'alarme de guerre plus terrifiante' (van der Ploeg, *Le Rouleau de la Guerre*, 125-26).
[356] Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 115.

A very similar phrase appears in 16,9, in a similar context detailing the different meanings of the priests' trumpet blowing and describing the alarm sounded by the Levites and the 'people of the shofars'. When the slain were brought down, the people were to be silent from, or cease, the sound of the alarm: וכול / העם יחשו קול הְתְרוּעָה.

An interesting parallel is found in 17,14, with nearly identical surrounding phrases. Instead of חשׁה, however, a Hiphil of נוח is used: וכול העם יניח[ו] קול התרועה. Whether the Hiphil B ('set down') or A ('cause to rest')[357] is intended, the נוח/חשׁה parallel confirms the close semantic overlap in Hebrew between silence and rest or cessation.

4Q491 is deemed to be a recension of 1QM but consists only of fragments.[358] Baillet reconstructed fragment 18, line four, as: ידמה להפי]ל בחללים וח[שו כול העם,[359] though Duhaime marked the first three letters (ל בח) as uncertain.[360] Based on the frequency of the phrase להפיל חללים in the related texts, it is inferred that a form of חשׁה must be used here, although with different word order (here with the reconstructed subject כול העם following the largely reconstructed verb וחשו, of which only the initial *waw* appears to be certain).

In conclusion, the use of חשׁה in the War Scroll suggests that by the first century BCE it could refer not just to restraint from sound/speech (as in biblical texts), but also to the cessation of sound,[361] and that it was sometimes parallel to נוח.

[357] BDB, 628-29; *HALOT*, 679-80.
[358] Duhaime, 'War Scroll', 81-82. For a more detailed discussion of the difficulty in identifying the fragments originally considered to be part of 4Q491, see Duhaime, *War Texts*, 24-30.
[359] Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte 4*, DJD 7:41.
[360] Duhaime, *War Texts*, xi, 162.
[361] U. Dahmen defines it as 'unterlassen (des Redens); aufhören' (*TWQ* 1:1081).

חשׁה is also found in two Aramaic scrolls. Although not directly reflecting biblical Hebrew usage, they are significant in light of the influence exerted by Aramaic on post-biblical and later forms of Hebrew.

1QGenAp 20,16[362]	... ובכית **וחשית** בליליא דן שלח לה אל עליון רוח מכדש למכתשה ולכול אנש ביתה ...	…And I wept and talked to no one. (But) that night God Most High sent him a pestilential spirit *to afflict him* and all the men of *his household*…

The Genesis Apocryphon from cave 1 is close in script to the War Scroll and tentatively dated to the late 1st century BCE.[363] Column 20 tells of the king of Egypt taking Sarai, Abraham's wife, having been told that she is his sister. Abraham weeps bitterly (lines 10-11), prays for justice (lines 12-16), and then describes his actions as: ובכית וחשית ('I wept and I was silent'). The precise intention of חשׁה, however, is unclear. It could indicate the end of his preceding prayer and weeping, perhaps having reached a state of calm ('I prayed and wept, then I was still'). It could instead be interpreted as a continuation of his mourning,[364] which to me seems most likely, whether implying 'I wept and was dumbfounded' or simply 'I wept and kept to myself (not speaking with others)'. The immediately following text does not help solve the uncertainty, and other interpretations have been proposed. It could be, for example, a form of חשׁשׁ ('feel heavy, feel pain' or 'suffer', 'be affected, troubled'):[365] 'And I wept and grieved'[366] or 'Thus I wept and suffered'.[367] Others disagree because the *yod* is unexpected in a geminate verb.[368]

[362] Text and translation from Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, 64-65.
[363] Fitzmyer, The Genesis Apocryphon, 15.
[364] Dahmen suggests it refers to Abraham's silence after his prayer of mourning (*TWQ* 1:1081).
[365] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 511-12.
[366] Avigad and Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon*, 43.
[367] Jongeling et al., *Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, 97.
[368] Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, 130. Kutscher points out that spelling with *yod* in this text occurs only with verbs ל״ה ('The Language of the Genesis Apocryphon', 31). See also Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic*, where none of the suffix conjugation forms of ע״ע verbs have a *yod* (128); cf. Schattner-Rieser, L'araméen des manuscrits de la mer Morte, 81-82.

Another suggestion takes ובכית וחשית together to mean 'I wept and moaned',[369] but there is no evidence for this meaning, and it seems to derive (indefensibly) from cognate-based interpretations of Hebrew דמם as 'mourn'.

11QTargJob 14:3	[ו]רבר[בין **חשו** מללא וכף ישון[	[And] great men refrained from speaking and placed (their) hand [
11QTargJob 21:7[370]	**והחשיו** ונטרת מנהון [...	And they were silent and I withheld from them [

חשׁה is also found on two fragments of the first-century Job Targum from cave 11.[371] In 14:3 (=MT 29:9), great men restrain their speech out of honour for Job. The phrase חשו מללא corresponds to MT's עצרו במלים ('they held back/restrained words'), and to the previously known Job Targum's כלו במליא ('they restrained/ceased words'). The lack of preposition on מללא here, unless an error,[372] suggests that חשו was a transitive verb, perhaps referring to restraint or cessation of its object ('they restrained speech'). It is clear, in any case, that silence is a mark of respect.

In 21:7 Elihu says of Job's friends: והחשיו ונטרת מנהון, which corresponds to MT 32:15: לא־ענו עוד העתיקו מהם מלים ('they answer no more, words are removed from them'). The previously known Job Targum is close: ולא אתיבו תוב אסתלקו מנהון מליא ('they do not answer again; words have gone up from them').[373] Even though the Hebrew of MT and Aramaic of 11QTargJob do not correspond exactly, the association of חשׁה with lack of speech is clear.

[369] Greenfield and Sokoloff argue that this is an expression using 'two words for one' ('The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic to the Aramaic Vocabulary', 96).
[370] Text and translation from García Martínez et al., *Qumran Cave 11*, DJD 23:113-14, 127.
[371] García Martínez et al., *Qumran Cave 11*, DJD 23:87.
[372] Sokoloff and Muraoka suggested a מן is missing through haplography. Sokoloff reconstructs the text as *<ml>mll'* (*The Targum to Job*, 122). Muraoka refers to the Targum of 1 Kings 22:3, where the *n* of the preposition *mn* has been absorbed preceding an infinitive construct: וַאֲנַחְנָא שָׁתְקִין מִלְמִסַב יָתַהּ ('Notes on the Old Targum', 119).
[373] Mangan translates the Gt form of סלק 'fail them' (*The Targum of Job*, 73).

Inscriptions

The Aramaic incantation tablet written in cuneiform (see introduction under חרשׁ) has one potential attestation of the root *ḥšʾ* in the participial form *mé-ḫa-áš-še-e* on line 28 of the reverse. Although in Geller's analysis the meaning is unclear, he suggests the word is related to *ḥšš*, 'to feel' or 'suffer'.[374] Others have thought it related to *ḥšy*, 'be silent', as a causative participle meaning 'a silencer'[375] (cf. 'Schweigenmacher',[376] 'un "qui-fait-taire"',[377] 'der still macht'[378]), describing the function of the knot of the previous line. The writing on the edge of the tablet is damaged at these lines, however, so the context is not clear.

Cognate Evidence

The search for cognates of חשׁה is made difficult by its being a III-ה weak root with both the guttural ח and the sibilant שׁ. The ח could correspond to the Proto-Semitic *ḥ* or *ḫ*, and שׁ could be related to more than one Semitic sibilant (as well as *ṯ*). As a III-ה root there is also a possibility that byforms have developed, even though in Hebrew חוּשׁ and חשׁשׁ have remained separate.[379] Most Semitic cognates sharing the root letters *ḥ* and *š* relate either to hurrying or feeling, and the few examples of possible cognates meaning 'be silent' are speculative, apart from Aramaic.

Aramaic

The Aramaic חשׁא/חשׁי means 'be silent, quiet', and possibly 'whisper'.[380] When nominal forms are preceded by the preposition ב and used to modify verbs of speech (בחשׁאי), it refers to quiet speech or noise.[381]

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[374] Geller, 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 142.
[375] Gordon, 'The Cuneiform Aramaic Incantation', 37.
[376] Landsberger, 'Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 250.
[377] Dupont-Sommer, 'La tablette cunéiforme araméenne de Warka', 40.
[378] Delsman, 'Eine Aramäische Beschwörung', 433.
[379] חוּשׁ means 'hurry' or 'feel, be painful'; חשׁשׁ means 'chaff' (*HALOT*, 300, 363; BDB, 301-2, 366).
[380] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 509; Sokoloff, Dictionary of JPA, 217.
[381] Reymond, 'The Hebrew Word *dmmh* and the Root d-m-m I ('To Be Silent')', 379-80.

Akkadian

Akkadian *ḫašû(m)* is a potential cognate of חשׁה with the meaning 'be silent', but evidence is limited and translations tentative. It is defined as 'schweigend übergehen' in its seventh entry in *AHw*, which identifies it as a Canaanite foreign word from a Mari text.[382] CAD defines it as 'to disregard' in its fifth entry, quoting the same Mari text. It is followed by a question mark, however, and an explanation that translation is based 'on context and the assumption of a West Semitic loan'.[383] Another verb, *ḫešû*, with uncertain meaning, might mean 'be silent' in a Nuzi text,[384] which was argued by Zimmern since *lidbub* ('may she speak') and *liḫsu* ('may she be silent') are related as opposites.[385] CAD interestingly identifies a noun *ḫasû* referring to 'a person with a speech defect', which is possibly related to *ḫazû*, 'to hiss', but not of any certain connection to *ḥšʾ*.[386] The evidence is too uncertain to contribute to a cognate analysis.

Ethiopic

Geʿez *ḫaśʿa/ḫaśʾa* means 'be calm be still, be appeased, cool off (anger), subside, be faint',[387] and might be a cognate of Hebrew חשׁה. Since Leslau observes that ś is unlikely to correspond to Hebrew שׁ, however, a cognate relationship is unlikely.[388]

South Arabian

South Arabian Qatabanian *wḥs[1]y*, which is found on an inscription, appears to be a cognate of חשׁה, and is translated 'silence and oblivion to whoever removes this memorial monument from its place'.[389] Since this translation is based on Hebrew, however, little is gained from it.

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[382] *AHw*, 335.
[383] CAD 6:146.
[384] CAD 6:177-78.
[385] Zimmern, 'Ištar und Ṣaltu: Ein altakkadisches Lied', 18-19.
[386] CAD 6:129, 166.
[387] Leslau, Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez, 266.
[388] Leslau, Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez, xx.
[389] Beeston, 'Notes on Old South Arabian Lexicography V', *Le Muséon* 66 (1953): 111-12; Ricks, *Lexicon of Inscriptional Qatabian*, 69.

Conclusion

Syntagmatic Observations

חשׁה is used in parallel to other verbs meaning 'be silent' (חרשׁ, שׁקט, אלם), as well as to many derivatives of דמם (דמי, דומיה, דממה). It is also parallel to self-restraint (התאפק), to being lazy or sluggish (עצל), and to waiting (חכה).

חשׁה is directly contrasted with speech (אמר, דבר, נגד), and can refer to negligence in not telling what should be told. It can also be opposed to other noises, such as mourning and weeping, crying out, gasping, and panting. In addition, חשׁה is contrasted to military actions related to land acquisition and to punishment (שׁלם, 'repay').

When the preposition מן follows חשׁה it indicates restraint *from* something: from taking land (1 Kgs 22:3), from the psalmist himself (Ps. 28:1), or from 'good' (Ps. 39:3). In the War Scroll (9,1), the people are said to be silent (or cease) 'from' the sound of the alarm. מן can also precede a reference to duration of time (מעולם in Isa. 42:14; 57:11), indicating the on-going nature of the silence or restraint.

Semantic Range and Chronological Development

In biblical texts, חשׁה refers primarily to restraint from an activity, especially an activity expected of the participants (such as speaking, going to war, mourning, repaying sin, storming of the sea, etc.). Its meaning seems to have changed slightly by the time of the DSS, where חשׁה refers to the cessation of the sound of the alarm. It is different in its transitivity and its focus on cessation rather than restraint.[390] If Ben Sira 41.21 does have a form of חשׁה, it could also be a transitive verb indicating cessation (of division of

[390] Yadin argues that חשׁה means 'to cease' based on its use in Neh. 8:11 and in the War Scroll. He also attributes this meaning, however, to the biblical references 1Kgs 22:3, Ps 28:1, Isa. 62:1 and 64:11, a conclusion I do not agree with (*The Scroll of the War* [1962], 107-8, 297-98).

portions). Some later biblical texts share this tendency, particularly the lone causative use in Neh. 8:11, but also possibly Ps. 107:29, with the cessation of the storm in focus.

Semantic Field

חשׁה overlaps semantically most clearly with חרשׁ: both refer to the silence of not speaking and to restraint from an expected action. Both more often refer to silence that results from refraining *from* speech rather than from the cessation *of* speech. When they do indicate cessation in biblical texts, they are usually followed by the preposition מן.

חשׁה contrasts sharply from חרשׁ, however, in that it is not used in wisdom contexts, nor can it refer to deafness or the choice not to hear (lack of reception), but only to not speaking or not acting (lack of production). It differs from דמם/דמה in not being used for death and destruction, and it normally does not overlap with שׁתק and דמם in referring to cessation of motion, apart from Ps. 107:29.

Part II: Cessation

Chapter 4: דמה/דום/דמם

Forms of דמם/דום and דמה are used over 60 times in the Hebrew Bible,[391] and 20 times in the Dead Sea Scrolls, mostly the nominal form דממה. Cognate material is abundant and suggests the possibility of different meanings, including ‘mourn’ and ‘be bewildered’.

The existence of a root דום is uncertain, as all possible attestations could likewise be from דמם; they are therefore analysed together. The root דמה is more easily distinguished in form and meaning, so is treated separately.

Distribution

דמם is used 30 times in 29 verses, in four *binyanim*: Qal (23), Niphal (5), Poel/Polel (1), and Hiphil (1). דמה is used 16 times in 14 verses: Qal (4) and Niphal (12). There are 6 derived forms appearing a total of 20 times: דומה (5 times, 3 of which are proper names), דומיה / דֳמִיָּה (4), דמי (4), דומם (3), דממה (3), דֳמָה (1).

By biblical book

The table below shows the distribution by biblical book of all 63 forms of the roots in increasing order of frequency, excluding the 3 uses of דומה as a proper noun.

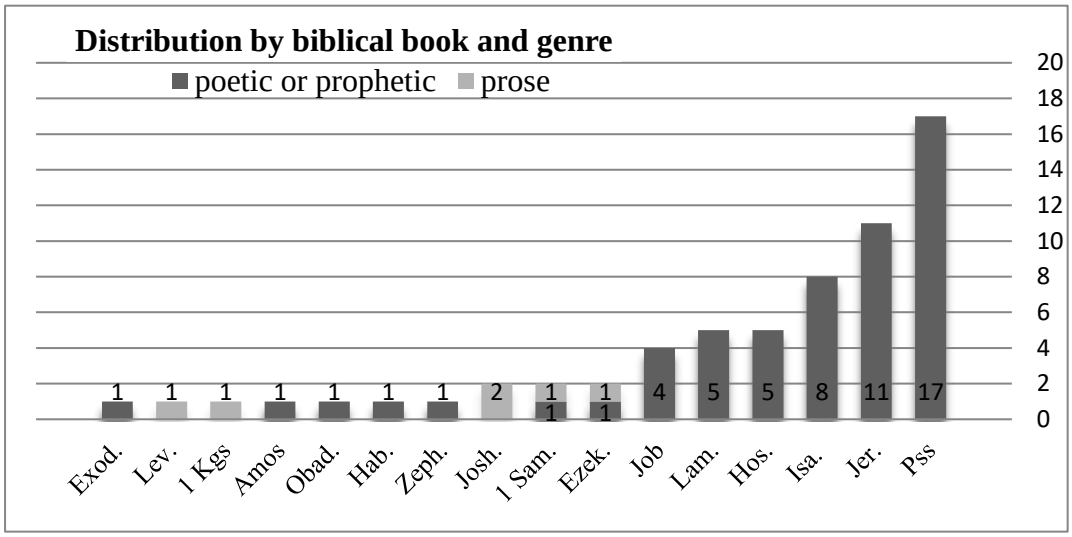
[391] I count 63, but there is variation depending on the analysis of certain forms and proper names.

Distribution by book, root/form, and *binyan*												
	verbal root					derived forms						*per bk*
	דמם/דום			דמה		דומה	דומיה	דומם	דְּמָה	דמי	דממה	
	Qal	Niph.	*other*	Qal	Niph.							
Exod.	1											**1**
Lev.	1											**1**
1 Kgs											1	**1**
Amos	1											**1**
Obad.					1							**1**
Hab.								1				**1**
Zeph.					1							**1**
Josh.	2											**2**
1 Sam.	1	1										**2**
Ezek.	1								1			**2**
Job	3										1	**4**
Lam.	3			1				1				**5**
Hos.				1	4							**5**
Isa.	1				3			1		3		**8**
Jer.	3	4	1 Hi.	2	1							**11**
Pss	6		1 Po.		2	2	4			1	1	**17**
totals:	**23**	**5**	**2**	**4**	**12**	**2**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**3**	
	30 דמם			**16 דמה**		**17 derived forms**						

By genre

The majority of references (89%) are in poetic or prophetic books,[392] and frequently even references in prose books are in poetic passages (e.g., the Song of the Sea in Exod. 15; Hannah's prayer in 1 Sam. 2; carefully structured parallelism in Josh. 10 that could be considered towards the poetic end of the spectrum).

[392] 41% of the total in poetic books, 48% in prophetic books.



By chronology

Forms of דום/דמם and דמה become more common in later texts, with clear cases such as Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and, at least for דממה, the DSS.

Lexicographical Survey

Although דום/דמם and derivative forms are ususally defined as 'be silent', other meanings such as 'hold still' or 'cease' account for the majority of uses. דמה II/III clearly means 'be destroyed', 'perish', but there is some evidence that it later began to overlap with דמם. A survey of the lexica reveals the overlap of meanings as well as the tendency to separate into multiple roots (I, II, III, etc.). The derived forms present difficulty not only because their root derivation and semantic value are not always clear, but also because the root and derived form's meaning frequently do not seem to correspond to one another.

Verbal forms

	BDB[393]	***HALOT***[394]	***DCH***[395]	**Ges18**[396]
דמם	**Qal**: 1. be silent; 2. be still (both speech and motion); 3. be struck dumb, astounded (in amazement and fear); **Niph.**: be made	**Qal**: be motionless, stand still, be rigid, or keep quiet; **Pol**.: quiet; see also דום I and דמה II and III	**Qal**: be silent, cease, be still **Pol**.: quieten, still	**Qal**: 1) freeze with fright, be startled, stunned, 2) be still, be silent; **Pol**.: to be

[393] BDB, 189, 198-99.
[394] *HALOT*, 216, 225-26.
[395] *DCH* 2:425-26, 448-52.
[396] Ges18, 245, 254-55.

	silent, i.e. destroyed; **Pol**.: quieted; **Hiph**.: silenced (= caused to perish)			quieted, to soothe, still[397]
דמם II	wail (with some hesitation)	wail, lament	**Qal, Hiph**.: weep	**Qal**: to come to an end, cease; **Niph.**: be brought to an end, to perish; **Hiph**.: be killed[398]
דמם III		**Qal**: be destroyed, perish; **Niph.**: be devastated, perish; **Hiph**.: cause to perish; see also דמה III	moan, whisper	
דמם IV and V			**IV**: **Qal:** maltreat, destroy, break, crush; **Niph.**: be destroyed, cut off; **Hiph.**: cause to perish, destroy; **V**: level[399]	
דום I	spread slander, perhaps from 'whisper'; later Hebrew	be silent (derivation controversial), or lie still, motionless; see also דמה and דמם I and II	stand still, cease, wait (marked as a reconstructed form; all cited texts emended)	no separate entry, reader referred to דמם
דום II		Arabic *dwm* to last; source of דומה II		
דמה I	'be like, compare' in all	---	---	---
דמה II	**Qal**: cease, cause to cease, cut off, destroy; **Niph**.: be cut off, destroyed, ruined	**Qal**: be silent, still or come to rest, come to an end; **Niph.**: be dumb/silent or be brought to silence, be obliged to be silent	cease	**Qal**: destroy, be killed, come to an end, cease; **Niph**.: be destroyed, lost[400]
דמה III		**Qal**: destroy or be destroyed; **Niph.**: be destroyed	be silent, and wait silently, inactive	
דמה IV			**Qal**: destroy; **Niph.**: be destroyed, cut off, possibly be silenced	

Derived forms

	BDB	***HALOT***	***DCH***	**Ges18**
דממה	(silence) whisper; from דמם I	calm, cessation of strong movement of air; from דמם I	whisper, sighing, (low) rumbling, perhaps silence, calm of sea; as from דמם III, moan, whisper	quiet after the storm, murmuring[401]
דֳּמָה	one silenced,	not translated	I: one silenced;	like (gleich); as

[397] Qal: 1) erstarren vor Schreck, bestürzt sein; 2) sich still halten, schweigen; Pol.: still werden lassen, beschwichtigen.
[398] Qal: zu Ende gehen, aufhören; Niph.: zu Ende gebracht werden, umkommen; Hiph.: umkommen lassen.
[399] From the parallel שׁויתי of Ps. 131:2.
[400] Qal: vertilgen, umkommen lassen, zum Ende kommen, aufhören; Niph.: vertilgt werden, verloren sein.
[401] Ruhe nach dem Sturm, Säuseln.

	brought to silence, destroyed (?); dagesh added to מ	(analysed as Niphal נדמה)	II*: fortress (speculative); both as from דמה II.	from דמה I
דומה	silence, also concealment, hidden meaning; from דום	I: silence, and angel of death (MH), from דום I; II: place name meaning permanent settlement, from דום II; III: proper name (people and place)	I: silence, place or state of the dead; as from דמם; II: personal name; III: place name	I: being silent; reign of the dead; slander; angel of death; II-IV: place names, potentially as permanent settlement[402]
דומיה	silence, still waiting, repose, possibly resignation; from דום	silence, rest, or in silence; from either דום or דמה II	I: silence, perhaps respite; from דמה III; II*: response, satisfaction (speculative)	being silent; silence (Schweigen)
דומם	in silence, silently; from דום	1) quiet, silence, 2) silently, 3) underworld; from דום	silence, in silence; from דמם	quiet, mute (still, stumm)
דמי	cessation, pause, quiet, rest; from דמה II	rest; from דמה II	I: silence, rest; II*: tear, mourning (speculative)	end, cessation, quiet[403]

Analysis

All dictionaries mention the opposition of דמם to both sound ('silence') and motion ('stillness'), but BDB also keeps nuances that have been removed from the later dictionaries, such as being astounded, which seems to be a valid interpretation of דמם. The treatment of derived forms in BDB is curious, however, with דומה, דומיה, and דומם all defined as related to silence, though said to derive from דום, defined as 'slander'. For the difficult דָּמָה, BDB adds a dagesh to the מ to justify its claim of derivation from דמם. It glosses דממה as 'whisper' even in Ps. 107, where cessation from storm is clearly in view.

The treatment of דום in *HALOT* is questionable, as is the definition of דמה II as 'be silent', which does not seem plausible.

The policy of *DCH* to present scholarly proposals without drawing conclusions results in some questionable definitions and an unnecessary multiplication of entries for דמם (with

[402] I: Stillschweigen, eine Bezeichnung für das Totenreich; also üble Nachrede; Todesengel.
[403] Ende, Aufhören, Ruhe.

דמם II and III as ‘weep’ and ‘moan’, for example). The definition of דמם IV as ‘maltreat’ is surprising, as no texts or translations reflect this meaning.[404] The subsequent gloss ‘destroy’ overlaps with דמה, but ‘break’ and ‘crush’ do not.

The newest Gesenius has unfortunately removed the meaning ‘be astonished’ from earlier editions. The interpretation of דממה as ‘murmuring’ (*Säuseln*) does not correspond with the meanings of דמם I, from which it is said to derive, but simply reflects common translations.

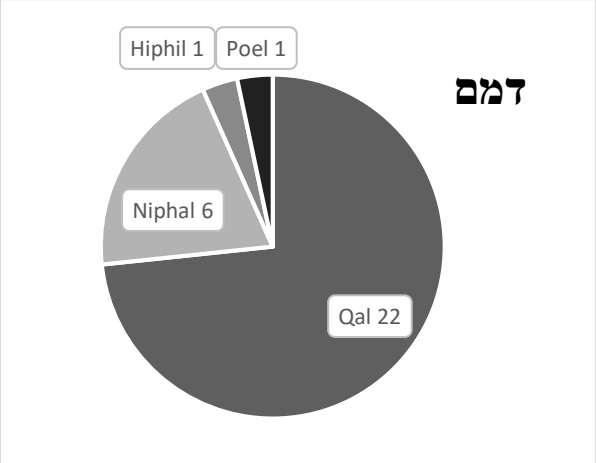
Baumann treats the roots דמה II/דמם/דום together in *TWAT* because of the difficulty in differentiating between them. He describes their meaning as silence in the face of a catastrophe or as preparation for a revelation,[405] but also comments on ‘how seldom words for “to be silent” appear in this semantic field’, which does include: ‘fear’, ‘destruction’, ‘standing still’, ‘mourning’, and ‘waiting’. I agree with his findings, and conclude that biblical ‘silence’ has a different semantic field than we might assume based on modern European langauges. Baumann divides usage into two main areas: 1) legal proclamation (including revelation of God) and announcement of future catastrophes (producing fear, destruction, death, mourning and lament); and 2) quiet expectation that change is coming (prayers in times of crisis and situations of mourning). His conclusion is that ‘if silence is the basic meaning of the words, it is a silence caused by the powerful impress of an impending or actual calamity or by the expectation of coming salvation’.[406] Other theological dictionaries do not offer substantial discussion.

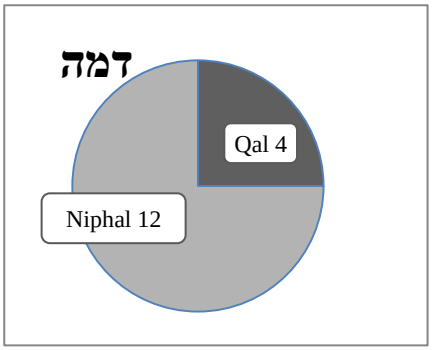
[404] I can only guess it derives from the same source as for the entry דמם III in *HALOT*, where ‘maltreat’ is a gloss for two suggested Arabic cognates. It is never given as a meaning for the Hebrew, however, nor does it fit attested texts.
[405] *TWAT* 2:278-79 (*TDOT*, 260-61).
[406] *TWAT* 2:280-82 (*TDOT*, 263-64).

Grammatical Analysis

Distribution by Binyan

דמם is more commonly Qal, while דמה is more commonly Niphal:





Byforms

The overlap in meanings and the multiple roots in dictionaries suggest that these roots became byforms, even if they began as separate roots.[407] In an unpointed Hebrew text, some forms of all three roots look identical, which could have resulted in re-analysis of a given form as belonging to another root. When confusion of forms coexists with semantic proximity, contamination can result, and the meaning of forms of one root influence those of another. It can then become impossible to identify original roots and meanings. דמם/דום/דמה have been deemed inseparable, but textual usage suggests that at least דמם and דמה began as separate roots, though דום, if it exists, could have arisen as a byform of דמם. Blau argues that these roots might illustrate contamination, as the meanings 'be quiet', 'stiffen', 'be destroyed', and even 'mourn' could develop from the meanings 'cease' and 'stop'. He concludes that it is impossible to completely separate these roots since their meanings are contiguous, and he rejects the attempts to separate them by Schick and

[407] Byforms stem either from the process of two different roots with similar forms becoming more similar in meaning, or from one root developing different forms that retain the same meaning. For more see Korchin, 'Biforms', 1:352-54.

Haupt (who relied heavily on emendation of the text to fit the scheme they had developed).[408]

Another approach is presented by Andersen, who argues that some weak roots are actually allomorphs of the same biconsonantal strong root (i.e., two strong consonants found in different weak root configurations), yielding 'words of different form but identical meaning', which can cause roots to 'switch' to another weak category, and 'throw up a byform'.[409] He does not mention דמם/דום/דמה, but his theory could account for the hypothetical existence of דום, even if not for the clear difference of meaning of דמה.

Semantic Analysis

Since דמם/דום/דמה almost certainly derive from different original roots, their meanings vary widely, but in general, the root דמם (and possibly דום) conveys cessation: often of motion or commotion, in a few cases of noise, and occasionally of life itself. This last sense overlaps with דמה II, which refers to destruction and death.

As stated, the derived forms often do not semantically match the root they appear to derive from, nor is it always clear what they mean. Some refer to rest or waiting, others to silence or quietness, and others to destruction or death. Any of these meanings could conceivably derive from the idea of cessation.

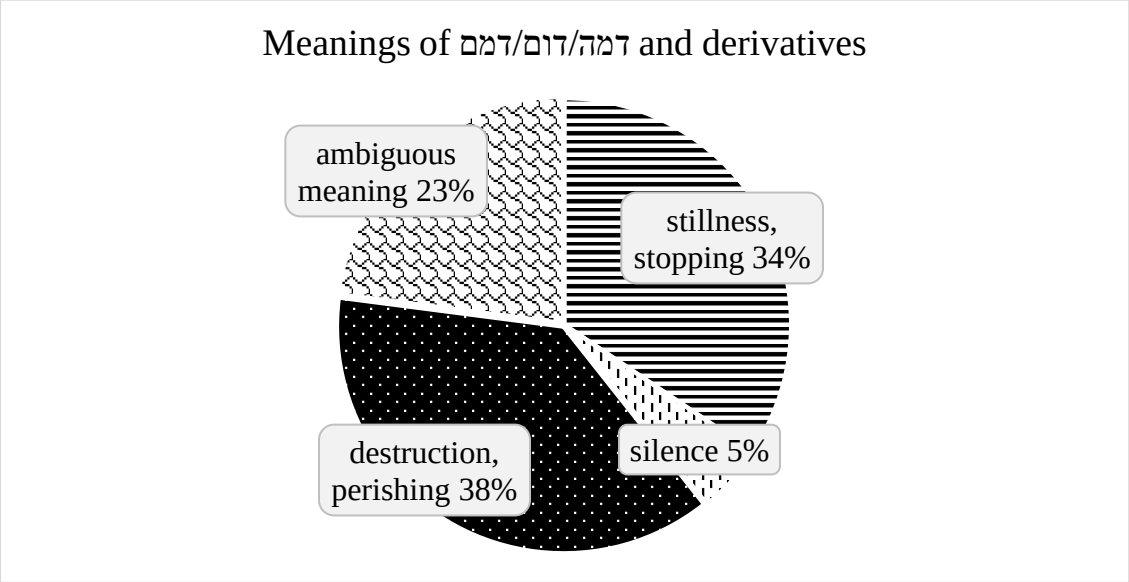
Other meanings have also been suggested for these roots. Based on cognates, for example, some claim that דמם means 'mourn, wail'. Others claim that the nominal דממה refers to

[408] 'Über homonyme und angeblich homonyme Wurzeln', 242-43; Schick, 'The Stems dûm and damám in Hebrew', 219-43; Haupt, 'Some Assyrian Etymologies', 4-6; Haupt, 'Die Posaunen von Jericho', 364-65.
[409] Andersen, 'Biconsonantal Byforms of Weak Hebrew Roots', 271.

quiet noises such as murmuring or whispering, most likely derived from later exegetical tradition (see under DSS).

Distribution by Meaning

When all forms are considered together, the meaning ‘be destroyed, perish’ is the most common (38%), but with a few exceptions this is really only a meaning for דמה. The primary meaning of דמם is ‘cease, hold still’ (34%), while a secondary meaning (most likely derived from the first as ‘cease noise’), is ‘be silent’ (5%). A number of references are ambiguous in my analysis (23%), allowing for interpretation as two or more meanings.



In the following analysis, references with verbal stems are grouped into the following semantic categories:

1) Stillness/Cessation
    a. Negative stillness (fear-induced immobility or muteness)
    b. Positive stillness (trust-based rest and waiting)
    c. Cessation of movement
    d. Cessation of other activity
    e. Cessation of Speech/Song (=Silence)
2) Destruction/Perishing
3) Uncertain/Ambiguous

The derived forms are treated individually, as some fit in multiple semantic categories.

4a) דמם

Stillness/Cessation

דמם most frequently indicates cessation of an activity, such as movement, weeping, or speaking. With human subjects, motivation for the cessation can range from fear or grief to rest and trust. With inanimate subjects, the cause is frequently divine. God is never subject of דמם, though he is of Qal דמה (‘destroy’).

Negative stillness (fear-induced immobility or muteness)

Exodus 15:16
תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וָפַחַד בִּגְדֹל זְרוֹעֲךָ **יִדְּמוּ** כָּאָבֶן עַד־יַעֲבָר עַמְּךָ יְהוָה עַד־יַעֲבָר עַם־זוּ קָנִיתָ:

In the ‘Song of the Sea’, the nations’ fear of Israel is described as causing trembling, pangs, dismay and melting. In v. 16, terror and dread are said to fall on them because of the greatness of God’s ‘arm’ (i.e., power), which results in their being ‘still (יִדְּמוּ) as a stone’. The image of a stone could communicate that they were immobilised or silent, ‘struck dumb’.[410] The versions are split, with Targums favouring silence,[411] and the Vulgate *inmobiles*, ‘immobile’. LXX ἀπολιθωθήτωσαν (‘let them be turned into stone’) interprets ידמו as a form of דמה I (‘become like’). Modern translations express ideas of immobility or muteness—either of which can result from extreme fear, though some use ‘petrified’ to capture both fear-induced immobility and the idea of becoming like stone.[412]

Job 31:34
כִּי אֶעֱרֹץ הָמוֹן רַבָּה וּבוּז־מִשְׁפָּחוֹת יְחִתֵּנִי **וָאֶדֹּם** לֹא־אֵצֵא פָּתַח:

In 31:34 Job reports on his great fear before the multitude and his terror (or dismay) at others’ contempt, which are sufficient to keep him inside (lit. ‘I do not exit the door’). The nuance of the 1cs ואדם therefore seems to be immobility rather than silence, and

[410] Childs, *Exodus*, 241.
[411] יִשְׁתְּקוּן (with the exception of Neofiti’s דמימין).
[412] Houtman: ‘they were petrified with fear’ (*Exodus*, 2:224).

might even suggest a 'petrification' as in Exod. 15—he is so frightened that normal movement becomes impossible. Modern translations have 'I keep silence' for אֶדֹּם, but LXX and at least one Targum interpret as אָדָם, 'man', also found in the previous verse. The sparse poetic syntax makes it difficult to interpret, but וְאֶדֹּם is clearly a response to fear and threat of shame resulting in housebound constriction.[413]

Positive stillness (trust, rest, waiting)

Psalm 37:7
דֹּ֤ום לַיהוָ֨ה ׀ וְהִתְחֹולֵ֬ל לֹ֗ו אַל־תִּתְחַ֥ר בְּמַצְלִ֑יחַ דַּרְכֹּ֝֗ו בְּאִ֣ישׁ עֹשֶׂ֣ה מְזִמֹּ֑ות׃

דֹּום is either an imperative of דמם or an infinitive absolute of דום. The second half of the line, which could have provided clues to meaning, is unfortunately not straightforward. הִתְחוֹלֵל, an uncommon Hithpolel, derives from חול or חיל, meaning 'whirl, writhe', 'be firm, strong', or possibly, as a byform of יחל, meaning 'wait, hope', which is how it is commonly understood here.[414]

The psalm contrasts fretting and being envious (vv. 1, 8) with trusting the LORD to act (vv. 3, 5). The negative command אל־תתחר ('do not fret' or 'do not be heated') is repeated twice and paralleled by commands to refrain from anger. These are contrasted with positive commands to trust (בטח; vv. 3, 5), to 'roll' (גול) one's way onto the LORD (i.e., also 'trust'; v. 5) and to wait (וקוי; v. 9) for him. These positive commands suggest that דום in v. 7 is also related to trusting in the LORD. As דמם elsewhere refers to cessation from motion or turbulence, it is reasonable to assume that here it refers to cessation from emotional turbulence, an internal emotional stillness resulting in a contented, quiet calm.

[413] Zimmerli calls it 'staying at home in fear, rather than going out' (*Ezechiel*, 1:569; trans. Clements, 502).
[414] BDB, 296-98; *HALOT*, 297, 310-11; *DCH* 3:171-72, 212-13.

The LXX interprets as 'submit (ὑποτάγηθι) to the LORD', as does the Vulgate (*subditus esto Domino*),[415] while the Peshitta has 'seek/ask' (ܒܥܐ). The Targum has שתוק, 'be silent', but one interesting variant is אמתין ('wait', Aphel of מתן). Rashi also implies the idea of waiting, but interestingly links this verb to the command דֹּמּוּ in 1 Sam. 14:9.[416] Modern translations vary: from 'rest' to 'be still' to 'be silent', as well as 'be patient'.[417]

Psalm 62:6[5]
אַךְ֤ לֵאלֹהִ֨ים **דֹּ֘ומִ֤י** נַפְשִׁ֗י כִּֽי־מִ֝מֶּ֥נּוּ תִקְוָתִֽי׃

Both Pss. 37 and 62 connect stillness/silence with waiting for, hoping in, and trusting in God. Whereas in Ps. 37 the stillness and trust were contrasted with envy and anger, in Ps. 62 they are contrasted with the unimportance of the ungodly. Ps. 62 also puts more focus on descriptions of God as a rock, salvation, refuge, and hope.The positive image of stillness resulting from trust is found in the nearly identical verses 2[1] and 6[5].[418]

In 62:6, as with 37:7, דמם is followed by the preposition ל with God as object. This could indicate stillness *towards* God, thus trust or reliance on. There are no parallel verbs to help with interpretation, but a reason is given: 'for from him is my hope'. The following verse describes God as the psalmist's rock, salvation, and fortress, because of which he would not be shaken. The action of דמם therefore is a result of the hope and protection given by God, suggesting that דֹּומִי נַפְשִׁי commands internal stillness resulting from trust, rather than silence.[419] Although most modern translations take this approach, the LXX and Vulgate again (as in Ps. 37:7) translate 'be subject to' (ὑποτάγηθι, *subiecta esto*).

[415] The *Iuxta Hebraeos* has 'be silent' (*tace*).
[416] Gruber, Rashi's Commentary on Psalms, 313.
[417] Respectively: 1) KJV/AV; 2) NRSV, NIV; 3) LSG, RVA; 4) NJPS, also Delitzch, who translates 'Duld in Jahve ergeben' and explains it is the resignation of those who trust in God to deny all self-help (*Die Psalmen*, 273, 275).
[418] They differ in preposition (ל/אל), דּוֹמִי/דּוּמִיָּה (nominal form/fs imperative), absence of כִּי, and the explanation of what comes from God: salvation (יְשׁוּעָתִי) or hope (תִקְוָתִי).
[419] See also the command to trust in him at all times in v. 9[8]: בִּטְחוּ בוֹ בְכָל־עֵת.

Psalm 131:2
אִם־לֹ֤א שִׁוִּ֨יתִי **וְדוֹמַ֗מְתִּי** נַפְשִׁ֫י כְּגָמֻ֥ל עֲלֵי־אִמּ֑וֹ כַּגָּמֻ֖ל עָלַ֣י נַפְשִֽׁי׃

An image of positive stillness and trust is also found in Ps. 131:2, with the only Poel of דמם (or Polel of דום). It is preceded by and linked to the Piel of שׁוה, meaning to level or smooth.[420] Since both verbs have the psalmist as subject and his 'soul' as object, they seem to describe the same process of 'smoothing' and 'stilling' the soul so that it became like a weaned child. With its initial אם־לא, the verse could also be understood as an oath formula: 'If I do not make my soul like a weaned child' (with unstated consequence, as typical in biblical Hebrew), equating to a first-person injunction: 'May I make my soul…' The following verse commands Israel to hope (יחל) in the LORD forever, as a result of having 'stilled' one's soul.[421] Poel דמם therefore has the transitive meaning 'cause to be still', by implication, 'cause to trust/rest'.

The LXX translates ὕψωσα ('lifted up'), an apparent *resh/daleth* confusion, and reinterprets the verse: 'If I was not humble-minded but exalted my soul'.[422]

Cessation of movement

Holding Still

Joshua 10:12-13
12 אָ֣ז יְדַבֵּ֣ר יְהוֹשֻׁ֗עַ לַיהוָה֙ בְּי֣וֹם תֵּ֣ת יְהוָ֔ה אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִ֖י לִפְנֵ֣י בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל וַיֹּ֣אמֶר לְעֵינֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֗ל שֶׁ֚מֶשׁ בְּגִבְעוֹן֙ **דֹּ֔ם** וְיָרֵ֖חַ בְּעֵ֣מֶק אַיָּלֽוֹן׃ **13** **וַיִּדֹּ֥ם** הַשֶּׁ֖מֶשׁ וְיָרֵ֣חַ עָמָ֑ד עַד־יִקֹּ֥ם גּ֖וֹי אֹיְבָ֛יו הֲלֹא־הִ֥יא כְתוּבָ֖ה עַל־סֵ֣פֶר הַיָּשָׁ֑ר וַיַּעֲמֹ֤ד הַשֶּׁ֙מֶשׁ֙ בַּחֲצִ֣י הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם וְלֹא־אָ֥ץ לָבֹ֖וא כְּי֥וֹם תָּמִֽים׃

Joshua 10 describes the battle at Gibeon in which the LORD made the Israelites victorious over the Amorites. Vv. 12-13 contain a curious account of how Joshua told the sun and

[420] BDB, 1000.
[421] This is similar to Ps. 37, where stillness is linked with hope, if התחולל is from יחל.
[422] εἰ μὴ ἐταπεινοφρόνουν ἀλλὰ ὕψωσα τὴν ψυχήν μου.

moon to hold still, using forms of דמם.[423] The event is said to be written up in the Book of Jashar, possibly accounting for the impression that it is a side story preserved in an older poetic form. The poetic couplet of v. 12 has unusual word order and an elided verb in the second line, but interpretation is aided by the prose explanation given in v. 13. Both verses use דמם to report what the sun did, but in v. 13 it is further described by עמד ('stand, hold still'), and the information that it did not hurry to set for a whole day. עמד is also a parallel verb describing what the moon did. דמם is thus twice parallel to and once explained by עמד, and clearly means 'hold still, cease moving', rather than 'be silent'. Ben Sira mentions the episode in praise of Joshua: 'Was it not through him that the sun stood still (עמד) and one day became as long as two?' (46:4).[424]

The versions also interpret דמם as 'stand' or 'wait': LXX ἵστημι for both; Vulgate with *ne movearis* ('did not move') for the first and *steteruntque* ('stood still') for the second; Targum with אוֹרִיך ('extend', 'prolong', 'wait')[425] for both; Peshitta with ܩܛܪ (*ktr*), 'wait, stay, remain'.[426]

1 Samuel 14:9-10
9 אִם־כֹּה יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ **דֹּמּוּ** עַד־הַגִּיעֵנוּ אֲלֵיכֶם וְעָמַדְנוּ תַּחְתֵּינוּ וְלֹא נַעֲלֶה אֲלֵיהֶם׃ **10** וְאִם־כֹּה יֹאמְרוּ עֲלוּ עָלֵינוּ וְעָלִינוּ כִּי־נְתָנָם יְהוָה בְּיָדֵנוּ וְזֶה־לָּנוּ הָאוֹת׃

דמם is also parallel to עמד in 1 Samuel 14, which describes Jonathan's surprise attack against the Philistines. He plans the approach with his armour bearer in v. 8, saying they would cross over and show themselves. If, upon being seen, they were given the command דֹּמּוּ, then they would stand still (וְעָמַדְנוּ) and not go up against them (וְלֹא נַעֲלֶה אֲלֵיהֶם). If they were instead told to go up against them (עֲלוּ עָלֵינוּ), it was a sign that the

[423] דּוֹם is a long imperatival form of דמם (normally דֹּם), though the consonantal text could be from דום (vocalised דּוּם as an imperative, or דּוֹם as an infinitive absolute).
[424] NRSV translation; only the beginning of this text is preserved in Hebrew (ms B, 15 verso).
[425] Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JPA*, 75.
[426] Payne Smith, Compendious Syriac Dictionary, 231.

LORD had given them victory. Since the (hypothetical) action commanded by דמו is equated to that of עמד, 'stand still', and opposed to that of עלה, 'go up' (with a connotation of fighting against), דמם here clearly means 'hold still' or even 'wait'.

The LXX has ἀπόστητε ('keep away, stand off'), the Targum אוריכו ('wait', as for previous references), and the Vulgate *manete* ('stay'), all conveying the idea that they should remain where they were. Only the Peshitta conveys the idea of silence (ܫܬܩ from *štq*). Many modern translations interpret as 'wait', which can reasonably be implied in light of the following temporal phrase 'until we reach you'.

Cessation from commotion or turbulent movement

Jeremiah 47:6
הוֹי֙ חֶ֣רֶב לַיהוָ֔ה עַד־אָ֥נָה לֹ֖א תִּשְׁקֹ֑טִי הֵאָסְפִ֤י אַל־תַּעְרֵךְ֙ הֶרְגְּעִ֣י **וְדֹ֔מִּי**׃

דמם also means 'hold still' in Jeremiah 47, which tells of the LORD's judgement coming on the Philistines. In verse 6 the sword of the LORD is addressed directly with the question 'until when will you not be quiet/rest (לא תשקטי),' followed by commands to be gathered to its scabbard, to rest/be quiet (הרגעי)[427] and to be still (דמי). The fs command דמי can be interpreted with the help of the two parallels as either 'be quiet' or 'rest, hold still'.

The LXX (29:6) translates the double imperative as ἀνάπαυσαι καὶ ἐπάρθητι: 'rest and be lifted up', again as if from רמי. The Vulgate translates *refrigerare et sile,* literally 'cool off and be silent', though certainly both were intended figuratively. In the Targum both תשקטי and דמי are translated by תנוחין, with connotations of rest, quiet, and cessation of

[427] רגע is used only here in the Niphal, but since nominal forms refer to quiet and calm and Hiphil forms mean 'make peace' or 'give rest', the Niphal can be understood as 'stay, keep quiet' or 'repose' (*HALOT*, 1188; BDB, 921). Holladay, following Delekat, translates: 'retreat' (*Jeremiah 2*, 339).

movement.[428] The Peshitta commands to cease movement or be silent (ܫܬܩ), an interesting semantic overlap with דמם in a non-cognate verb (suggesting it might be in the semantic field also in cognate languages). Many modern translations have 'rest and be still', but some translate the first verb as 'cease' or 'stop' instead.[429]

Cessation of other activity (adverbial: 'without ceasing')

Job 30:27
מֵעַי֣ רֻתְּח֣וּ **וְלֹא־דָמּ֑וּ** קִדְּמָ֖נִי יְמֵי־עֹֽנִי׃

In Job 30:27 דמם is opposed to רתח ('boil', 'be in turmoil'), and could mean either 'be still' (in contrast to boiling in turmoil) or 'cease' (adverbially modifying רתח: 'boil without ceasing'). The second line gives a reason for his internal 'boiling': because he faces days of affliction. Since agitation is in view rather than noise, דמם must refer to cessation/stillness, not silence. Nonetheless, the LXX has 'were not silent' (οὐ σιωπήσεται), while the Vulgate describes lack of rest (*absque ulla requie*). The Peshitta uses a form of ܫܬܩ (both 'cease' and 'be silent, calm'), while the Targum translates as if from דם, 'blood': 'they do not have the appearance of blood' (ולית בהון חיזו דמא). Modern translations vary between an active verb ('rest not' JPS; 'never stops' NIV) and an adverbial phrase ('without respite' NJPS; 'unceasingly'[430]).

Psalm 35:15
וּבְצַלְעִ֥י שָׂמְח֗וּ וְנֶאֱסָ֫פ֥וּ נֶאֱסְפ֣וּ עָלַ֣י נֵכִ֣ים וְלֹ֣א יָדָ֑עְתִּי קָרְע֥וּ **וְלֹא־דָמּ֗וּ**׃

Another possible adverbial 'without ceasing' is in Ps. 35:15. Enemies gathered against the speaker, 'tore at' him (קָרְעוּ), and did not cease, or, 'tore without ceasing'. As with Job 30:27, דמם could instead reference stillness in opposition to the agitation of קרע: 'they tore

[428] Hayward, The Targum of Jeremiah, 170.
[429] See also Bright: 'desist and be still' (*Jeremiah*, 310).
[430] Gordis translates 'knows no rest', but suggests the verb can also mean 'are not quiet' and 'do not cease, i.e. unceasingly' (*The Book of Job*, 328, 337).

at me; they were not still'. Since both fit the context, the semantic nuance remains ambiguous.

The versions provide an interesting array of interpretations. The LXX translates the end of the verse as διεσχίσθησαν καὶ οὐ κατενύγησαν: 'they were split/severed and stunned/stabbed/pricked'. The verb κατανύσσομαι can refer to the pricking of conscience, but also to the silence of being stunned or bewildered.[431] The Greek is reflected in the Vulgate with '*nec compuncti*' ('they did not repent/were not pricked'), while the *Iuxta Hebraeos* has *non tacentes* ('were not silent'). The Targum again interprets as blood: 'they tore my skin but did not bring out blood' (מבזעין משכי ולא מפקין דמא).[432]

Excursus on Greek κατανύσσομαι

The passive of κατανύσσομαι translates דמם in six verses,[433] suggesting that the Hebrew word was understood to have the sense 'be stunned (perhaps into silence)' or 'be repentant (with conscience pricked)'. Although 'keep silence' is given as a definition for the verb in LSJ (903), the only references given are translations of דמם in the LXX, and therefore based on circular reasoning from the Hebrew exegetical tradition. Since translations of דמם vary so widely in the LXX, it is also possible that it was not well understood, and the translation with κατανύσσομαι was simply copied from other passages (where it might have been supplied based on context). It seems more likely, however, that there was a real understanding of the verb as 'be pricked/repentant' or 'be stunned', though it is unfortunately not easy to know which one. Both meanings are picked up by other versions, with Vulgate translating as 'repent' and sometimes Peshitta as 'be amazed'. External evidence that translators understood it to mean 'be stunned into silence' comes from Aramaic and post-biblical Hebrew, in which the quadriliteral דמדם means 'be stunned' (see on cognates below). If, on the other hand, the meaning was understood to be 'repent, be pricked', a potential source of this translation could be the combined fact that: 1) there is an Arabic root *n-d-m* meaning 'repent', and 2) many conjugated forms of דמם look like they

[431] Pietersma translates: 'they were split apart and were not stunned', with a note that this might mean 'stunned into inactivity' (*NETS*, 563).
[432] Reflected also in Rashi (Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 307, 309).
[433] Lev. 10:3; Isa. 6:5; 47:5; Pss 4:5[4]; 30:13[12]; 35:15.

are from a I-*nun* root (e.g., וידם). I am not aware of any Hebrew or Aramaic root נדם meaning 'repent', so it is only speculation, but if a cognate of the Arabic *ndm* was used in dialects known to the Greek translators, it could explain their translation with κατανύσσομαι.

Tears without end

Three more examples of this potential adverbial use refer to unceasing tears, twice with a jussive sense. Surprisingly, in what seems to be a case of semantic contamination particular to Jeremiah and Lamentations, דמה is used with a meaning normally communicated with דמם.[434] The conflation of these two roots is attributable not only to the similarity of verbal forms, but also to the overlap of semantic domains: to destroy something is to cause it to cease.

Lam. 2:18	צָעַק לִבָּם אֶל־אֲדֹנָי חוֹמַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן הוֹרִידִי כַנַּחַל דִּמְעָה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה אַל־תִּתְּנִי פוּגַת לָךְ **אַל־תִּדֹּם** בַּת־עֵינֵךְ׃ ס
Jer. 14:17	וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה תֵּרַדְנָה עֵינַי דִּמְעָה לַיְלָה וְיוֹמָם **וְאַל־תִּדְמֶינָה** כִּי שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל נִשְׁבְּרָה בְּתוּלַת בַּת־עַמִּי מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד׃
Lam. 3:49	עֵינִי נִגְּרָה **וְלֹא תִדְמֶּה** מֵאֵין הֲפֻגוֹת׃

Lam. 2:18

Lamentations 2 describes mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem: elders sit on the ground with dust on their heads, young women bow their heads, and the speaker weeps (vv. 10-11). The theme of weeping returns in verses 18-19, which call for unceasing mourning and crying out to God. The 3fs אל־תדם is addressed to the 'daughter of your eye', meaning either simply 'eye', or possibly tear drops.[435] This negative command 'do

[434] דמה tends to refer to destruction and perishing, and דמם to cessation or silence, but the two overlap in these verses (see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 437).
[435] Used elsewhere only in Ps. 17:8. See Salters, *Lamentations*, 171.

not cease' parallels two preceding commands: the positive 'cause tears to come down' and the negative 'do not give (yourself) rest'[436] (or 'do not allow benumbing',[437] or 'allow yourself no let up'[438]). The reason given for it is that they might continue to pray for mercy.[439]

The versions translate as '(let) not be silent',[440] but modern translations favour 'give no rest/respite'[441] or 'let not cease'.[442]

Jer. 14:17

In Jer. 14 the LORD tells Jeremiah to speak words of mourning for the (yet future)[443] destruction of his people. The context is similar to Lam. 2:18, and also has a form of ירד exhorting the eyes to let tears come down both night and day. תִּדְמֶינָה is a jussive form of דמה with 'my eyes' as its subject: 'may my eyes not cease' or 'not be still/silent', though the consonantal form could derive instead from the geminate דמם (as תִּדַּמֶּינָה or תִּדַּמֶּינָה). The meaning in context is clear: 'may my eyes weep unceasingly for the destruction awaiting my people'. The intensity and unending duration of Jeremiah's prescribed mourning contrast sharply with the groundless positivism of the lying prophets (vv. 14-15).

The LXX translates with μὴ διαλιπέτωσαν ('let them not cease'), the Vulgate with *et non taceant* ('and may they not be silent'). The Targum uses שתק, with a similar semantic

[436] *DCH* has 'rest, respite' (6:665); *HALOT* suggests in addition 'diminished effort' (916).
[437] BDB, though it also suggests 'cessation' (806).
[438] Salters, *Lamentations,* 171; see also Ges18: 'gib dir kein Nachlassen' (1041).
[439] 'The appeal to Yahweh must have all the marks of sincerity as well as intensity…She should not consider any let up, any break from this activity' (Salters, *Lamentations,* 171).
[440] The Peshitta could be interpreted as 'let not be silent', 'cease' or 'rest' (ܫܬܩ ܠܐ).
[441] ESV, NJPS, NRSV, LSG, EIN.
[442] KJV/AV, JPS, Rev. LUT.
[443] The destruction is portrayed as having already occurred, but the context suggests there is more to come. Some argue it is 'prophetic premonition', others that the disaster has already occurred. See McKane, *Jeremiah,* 1:329.

range to Hebrew דמם, and the Peshitta the cognate form. Most modern translations have 'let them not cease', but some choose the idea of rest[444] or an adverbial phrase such as 'without ceasing'.[445]

Lam. 3:49

A similar context of mourning is found in Lam. 3:49, where 'my eye' is the subject both of a negated דמה (referring to crying that does not stop)[446] and of the Niphal נגר ('my eye pours itself out').[447] These verbs are modified by the metrically suspect and difficult to decipher מאין הפגות, which seems to echo פוגת in the similar Lam 2:18, and likely refers to numbness, weariness, or ineffectiveness.[448]

Although the versions translate as 'be silent',[449] most modern translations interpret as 'without ceasing', and some as 'rest'.[450]

Conclusion

The shared lexical stock of these verses suggests either borrowing or use of a shared formula to respond to devastating destruction. All three call on tears to flow as water (using ירד ,עין), refer to the daughter of 'my people' or Zion (בת־ציון, בת־עמי, בנות עירי) and her destruction (שבר), and all have a negated form of דמה/דמם demanding that the eyes not cease/be still. The context favours interpretation of דמה/דמם as cessation rather than silencing, but since these meanings overlap in the biblical semantic field, they were not necessarily perceived as distinct. These verses provide a clear example of the

[444] EIN: 'finden keine Ruhe'.
[445] NIV; 'unaufhörlich' (Rev. LUT).
[446] Westermann suggests the root דמם is meant (*Lamentations*, trans. Muenchow, 167).
[447] BDB, 620.
[448] BDB does not define הפגות, but says only: 'of weeping; form very strange' (BDB, 806). *HALOT* defines הפגות as a Hiphil meaning 'stop', a conclusion certainly based on this context, as the verb it defines as 'turn cold', 'grow weary' (Qal), and 'be faint, powerless' (Niphal) (*HALOT*, 253, 916).
[449] Peshitta again has a form of ܫܠ.
[450] LSG: 'sans repos'; ELB: 'kommt nicht zur Ruhe'.

contamination of forms and meanings between דמם and דמה that seems typical of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Cessation of Speech/Song (=Silence)

Although dictionaries regularly define דמם as 'be silent', the examples above show that the meaning 'cease, stop' is more common. Some verses do permit the interpretation 'be silent', though this could derive simply from the idea of cessation applied to speech.

Job 29:21
לִי־שָׁמְעוּ וְיִחֲלוּ וְ**יִדְּמוּ** לְמוֹ עֲצָתִי׃

In ch. 29 Job defends his upright life, nostalgically remembering the respect and attention formerly his. In v. 21 he recalls that people listened to him, waited and were silent (or ceased speaking) in order to hear his counsel, verbs that could portray either successive or parallel actions. דמם could be parallel to 'wait', as it is elsewhere interpreted (Ps. 37:7; also 1 Sam. 14:9), but interpretation as 'be silent' (or 'cease talking') is suggested by the following two verses: 'After I spoke they did not speak again, and my word dropped upon them. They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouths as for the spring rain.' Since the context highlights silence as receptive and respectful listening, דמם here suggests silence while listening and waiting for his counsel.[451]

Versions and modern translations interpret as 'be silent', though NJPS has 'wait'.[452]

Psalm 30:13[12]
לְמַעַן יְזַמֶּרְךָ כָבוֹד **וְלֹא יִדֹּם** יְהוָה אֱלֹהַי לְעוֹלָם אוֹדֶךָּ׃

Another verse in which דמם might mean 'be silent' is Ps. 30:13, where it is opposed to זמר ('sing'): 'in order that "glory"[453] might sing to you and not דמם'. The negated דמם could

[451] 'Men waited silently for, and silently accepted, Job's advice, having no alteration or improvement to suggest, no desire to hear anyone else; for his words and advice fell upon men like fertilizing rain' (Driver and Gray, *The Book of Job*, 250).
[452] 'Men would listen to me expectantly, and wait for my counsel'.

mean ‘not be silent’ (with silence opposite to the noise of singing), but it could also have the adverbial sense ‘unceasingly’ (as in the section above on cessation): ‘that “glory” might sing to you unceasingly’. The following line presents a second opposition to דמם with the Hiphil ידה (‘praise’). The ongoing nature of this eternal praise (לעולם) could be synonymous with ולא ידם (unceasing//eternal) or more loosely parallel (non-silence//eternal praise). Given the emphasis on vocal praise, ‘be silent’ seems most fitting as its opposite.

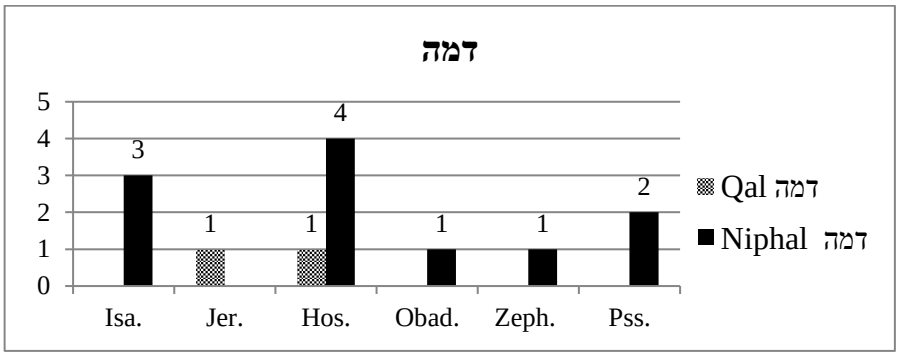
The Targum, Peshitta and *Iuxta Hebraeus* translate as ‘not be silent’, but the LXX and Vulgate have μὴ κατανυγῶ and *non conpungar* (both either ‘not be pricked’ or ‘not repent’). These are difficult to understand with ‘glory’ as subject, and a slightly easier (though still awkward) option is ‘not be stunned’,[454] which could function as an opposite to singing. Repentance and a pricked conscience could presumably keep one from singing. Many modern translations choose ‘not be silent’, but at least two prefer ‘unceasingly’.[455]

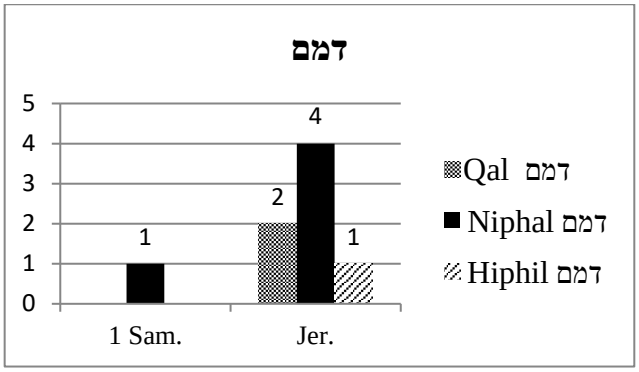
Destruction/Perishing

Verbal forms of דמם or דמה refer to destruction or perishing 21 times in 18 verses. The majority (13) are with דמה II (‘destroy, perish, cease’), though a few of these could be from דמה I (‘be like, compare’).[456] דמם is also used (8 times) to mean ‘destroy, perish’, suggesting a semantic contamination resulting from the confusion of forms (as seen above with דמה). Since all but one of these is in Jeremiah, it seems to be either a widespread later development or one particular to this book.

[453] An unusual subject, often translated with the 1cs possesive ‘my’.
[454] LSJ (http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lsj/).
[455] NJPS: ‘endlessly’; TOB: ‘sans répit’.
[456] דמה II is less common than דמה I, used in only about 15 of 42 verses with a form of דמה.

Distribution by book and *binyan* of the meaning 'destroy/be destroyed'





Most references meaning 'be destroyed' are in the Niphal, making the division very clear between Qal דמם as 'hold still' or 'cease' and Niphal דמה (sometimes דמם) as 'be destroyed' or 'perish'.[457] It seems unlikely that the Niphal of a verb meaning 'cease' (דמם) could be passive, though perhaps the meaning 'be destroyed' developed out of 'be stopped' or 'made to cease'. The Niphal might be construed as tolerative (allowing oneself to be silenced), which seems most likely in the biblical references.[458]

Qal and Hiphil דמם

Jer. 8:14
עַל־מָה֙ אֲנַ֣חְנוּ יֹשְׁבִ֔ים הֵֽאָסְפ֕וּ וְנָבֹ֖וא אֶל־עָרֵ֣י הַמִּבְצָ֑ר **וְנִדְמָ֥ה**־שָּׁ֖ם כִּ֣י יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֵ֔ינוּ **הֲדִמָּ֑נוּ** וַיַּשְׁקֵ֣נוּ מֵי־רֹ֔אשׁ כִּ֥י חָטָ֖אנוּ לַיהוָֽה׃

[457] Only 2-3 Qal דמם references (out of 23) might mean 'perish' (Jer. 8:14; 48:2; possibly Ps. 31:18[17]).
[458] J-M §51c.

Following a passage warning of coming judgement, the people convey resignation to their fate in a brief interlude of direct speech: 'why are we sitting (still)? Gather together and let us go to the fortified cities and perish there; for the LORD our God has caused us to perish and has given us "waters of poison" [or "of the head"],[459] for we sinned against the LORD'. Two forms of דמם are used: a Qal 1pl cohortative and a Hiphil 3ms *qatal* with God as subject and a 1pl object. It seems odd that the people would urge one another to go to a protected place in order to perish (rather than to fight or be delivered), but perhaps it is the only remaining response to an inescapable judgement. The verb וְנִדְמָה could in form be a Niphal *qatal* of דמה (with unexpected *dagesh*), but since it has no clear subject, and is preceded by נבוא ('we will/let us come') and the line-initial imperative האספו ('gather together'), it is more likely a cohortative. Interpretation of the Hiphil הדמנו as 'cause us to perish' is confirmed by contextual clues making God's judgement clear, and although the consonantal form could be interpreted as beginning with an interrogative ה, it would not make sense in the causal clause. This verse provides a clear case of overlapping form and meaning, with consonantal forms from either דמם or דמה, and their meanings, both related to death and destruction, from either Niphal דמה ('perish') or Qal דמם ('cease').

Only the Vulgate and Peshitta among versions translate both verbs as related to silence. The Targum has ונשתוק ('let us be silent') for the first and איתי עלנא תבר ('he has brought upon us breaking/destruction') for the second.[460] The Septuagint has two verbs from

[459] 'Waters of the head' imply tears, an interpretation favoured by those who understand דמם as 'weep'. Since the phrase refers to poisoned water elsewhere in Jeremiah (9:14[15]; 23:15), and since this chapter clearly portrays destruction, it seems better to interpret דמם as referring to destruction and מי־ראש as poisonous waters. For discussion see Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 1:291-92.

[460] Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 3:156. Perhaps one was interpreted as from דמם and the other from דמה, with meanings more clearly associated with destruction (suggested by Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 75n.15).

ἀπορρίπτω, ‘throw away’ or ‘be cast forth’, presumably translating as if from רמה: καὶ ἀπορριφῶμεν ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀπέρριψεν ἡμᾶς (‘let us . . . be cast out, because God has cast us out’).[461] Modern translations tend to choose verbs related to death and perishing, often with ‘doom’,[462] but the KJV/AV translates with ‘let us be silent’, and for ‘God hath put us to silence’.

Jer. 48:2
אֵין עוֹד֙ תְּהִלַּ֣ת מוֹאָ֔ב
בְּחֶשְׁבּ֖וֹן חָשְׁב֣וּ עָלֶ֑יהָ רָעָ֔ה
לְכ֥וּ וְנַכְרִיתֶ֖נָּה מִגּ֥וֹי
גַּם־מַדְמֵ֛ן **תִּדֹּ֖מִי**
אַחֲרַ֥יִךְ תֵּלֵ֖ךְ חָֽרֶב׃

The second use of Qal דמם for destruction is in an oracle against Moab and addressed to Madmen, a place name in Moab mentioned only here in the Bible.[463] Its context is one of coming judgement, using words such as שדד (‘lay waste’), חתת (‘break down’), רעה (‘disaster’), and כרת (‘cut off’). תדמי is a 2fs *yiqtol* addressed to Madmen, mostly likely meaning ‘be destroyed’ or ‘cease’, either as a result of, or parallel to, the sword’s pursuit in the following line. The following verse also speaks of desolation, great destruction (שד ושבר גדול) and the resulting cry (קול צעקה), themes found throughout the whole chapter and in other דמם passages. דמם could be understood as a figurative silencing by the sword (after which sounds of life will no more be heard in her), but is more likely simply destruction. The shared ד and מ of the verb and place name suggest paranomasia, particularly with the obvious phonetic repetition two lines previous with בחשבון חשבו.[464]

[461] Pietersma and Saunders, *NETS*, 889.
[462] NJPS: ‘let us…meet our doom there’ for ‘God has doomed us’; McKane: ‘let us suffer our doom’ for ‘God has decreed doom for us’ (*Jeremiah*, 1:189). Similar translations by Bright (*Jeremiah*, 61-62) and Holladay (*Jeremiah*, 1:287).
[463] On the identity of מדמן, and possible textual corruption in transmission, see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1157-58.
[464] On wordplay see Bright, *Jeremiah*, 319; for the suggestion that Isa. 25:10 alludes to this verse in stating that Moab would be trampled down as straw is trampled in dung (מדמנה), see Williamson, ‘Sound, Sense and Language in Isaiah 24–27’, 6-7.

Versions show some variety. The LXX (31:2) has καὶ παῦσιν παύσεται (‘she shall stop with a stop’),[465] perhaps taking Madmen to be a participial or nominal form of דמם. The Vulgate has *ergo silens conticesces* (‘therefore being silent [adj. or participle], you will be silent’), and the Peshitta is similar: ܐܦ ܕܣܟ̈ܬ ܣܟ̈ܬ ܐܢ (‘even if being silent you are silent’). Only the Targum keeps the subject Madmen, translating the verb as תתברין (‘you will be dismayed, broken’).[466] Modern translations also tend to keep Madmen, but vary between interpretation as ‘destruction’ or ‘silence’ for תדמי.[467] Holladay, based on the potential cognate meaning ‘mourn’, translates ‘Madmen too: you shall weep’.[468] In the given context of coming judgement, however, the verb seems more likely to portray the result of utter destruction.

Niphal דמם

The single use of דמם meaning ‘perish’ outside of Jeremiah is in Hannah’s song in 1 Samuel 2. Interestingly, the LXX of this chapter has text very similar to Jeremiah 9, making it at least possible that a *Vorlage* or later redaction showed some Jeremianic influence, but such comments are purely speculative and I am not aware of any other reason to suspect influence of Jeremiah in this passage.

1 Sam. 2:9
רַגְלֵי (חֲסִידוֹ[2]) [חֲסִידָיו[ק]] יִשְׁמֹּר וּרְשָׁעִים בַּחֹשֶׁךְ **יִדָּמוּ** כִּי־לֹא בְכֹחַ יִגְבַּר־אִישׁ׃

In this prayer, Hannah praises God as one who weighs the actions of humans (vv. 2-3). A series of poetic contrasts follows: between weak and strong, full and hungry, barren and fertile, dead and alive, poor and rich (vv. 4-8), and, in v. 9, between the faithful, who are divinely guarded, and the wicked, who will be destroyed, or perhaps silenced (יִדָּמוּ). The

[465] Pietersma and Saunders, *NETS*, 909.
[466] Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JPA*, 575; Hayward translates ‘shall be *destroyed*’ (*Jeremiah*, 171).
[467] ‘cut down’ (KJV/AV), ‘détruite’ (LSG), ‘vernichtet werden’ (ELB, Rev. LUT); ‘be silenced’ (NJPS, NASB), ‘brought to silence’ (JPS, RSV), ‘wirst verstummen müssen’ (SCH).
[468] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 2:340.

negative connotations of this Niphal דמם are strengthened by the description of it happening 'in darkness', and by the following verse describing the LORD's enemies being shattered or dismayed (יֻחַתּוּ).

The LXX is significantly different, with only the third stich of this verse recognisably translated from the MT.[469] Verse 10 is significantly expanded, echoing Jer. 9:23-24. A translator might have inserted familiar text based on the association of shared ideas, or might have had a different *Vorlage*.[470] Evidence from 4QSam[a] suggests that the text could have contained both traditions, but it is too fragmented to be certain.[471] The Targum adds 'Gehenna', stating that the righteous will be guarded from Gehenna while the wicked will be judged in darkness in Gehenna (ורשיעיא בגיהנם בחשוכא ידדנון). ידדנון, 'will be judged', takes the place of Hebrew ידמו, perhaps a result of phonetic similarities between the nasals מ and נ, or perhaps because of its use in MT v. 10. The Peshitta is closer to the Hebrew, with an ethpeel of *štq,* ܫܬܩ (ʼbe passed over in silence'). The Vulgate has *conticescent* ('they will fall silent'), but many Latin manuscripts reflect instead the tradition of the Septuagint.[472] Modern translations range from 'be silent'[473] to 'be cut off'[474] or 'perish'.[475]

Jer. 25: 36-37
36 קול צעקת הרעים ויללת אדירי הצאן כי־שדד יהוה את־מרעיתם: 37 **וְנָדַמּוּ** נְאוֹת הַשָּׁלוֹם מִפְּנֵי חֲרוֹן אַף־יְהוָה:

[469] 'Granting the prayer to the one who prays, he has even blessed the years of the righteous, because not by strength is a man mighty' (Taylor, *NETS*, 250).
[470] Kutsch determines it is inserted from wisdom tradition and that any Jeremianic influence on 1 Samuel is unlikely ('Weisheitsspruch und Prophetenwort', 172-74).
[471] Cross et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 17:32.
[472] Evidence on Latin manuscripts from the *Vetus Latina* database (http://apps.brepolis.net/vld/Default.aspx).
[473] KJV/AV, JPS, NASB, EIN, SCH.
[474] NRSV, ESV.
[475] NJPS, ELB, Rev. LUT.

Jer. 25 ends with a call to mourning directed at the shepherds of the flock (vv. 34-38), who are told to cry out because of the coming destruction (vv. 34-35). Their wailing and its cause are then reported in vv. 36-37. The Niphal וְנָדְמוּ has as its subject נאות השלום ('peaceful folds' or 'pastures of peace'),[476] one of few inanimate subjects for דמם with the meaning 'perish'.[477] Its meaning is clarified by a parallel in the previous verse (שדד: 'devastate, ruin') and by the reported result in the following verse (היתה ארצם לשמה: 'their land has become a waste'). This is caused by the LORD's anger and results in crying and wailing (צעק, ילל), leaving little doubt that דמם here means destruction.

Of the versions, only the Vulgate translates as 'be silent' or 'idle' (*conticuerunt*), allowing for the possibility that the fields were simply abandoned rather than thoroughly destroyed (both cause 'silence'). The LXX (32:37) again translates with παύσεται ('stop, cease from'), which seems weaker than 'be destroyed', but could have similar implications. The Targum has ויצדון ('they will be laid waste'), and the Peshitta ܡܬܒܗܬ (*tbr* ethpeel: 'they will be be broken/dismayed'). Modern translations vary between silence[478] and destruction.[479]

לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחוּרֶיהָ בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה **יִדַּמּוּ** בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:	**Jer. 49:26**
לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַחוּרֶיהָ בִּרְחֹבֹתֶיהָ וְכָל־אַנְשֵׁי מִלְחַמְתָּהּ **יִדַּמּוּ** בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ס	**Jer. 50:30**

Niphal דמם is used in two nearly identical verses to describe the destruction of men of war. The contexts are slightly different, the first a judgement against Damascus (Jer. 49), the second against Babylon (Jer. 50). The oracle against Damascus occupies only 5 verses

[476] BDB defines נאות (from נוה) as 'pastures' or 'meadows' (627), *HALOT* as 'grazing place' or 'settlement', 678-79.
[477] All others are personified place names: Madmen (Jer. 48:2), Moab (Isa. 15:1), Ashkelon (Jer. 47:5).
[478] JPS: 'brought to silence'; Bright (*Jeremiah*, 160) and Holladay (*Jeremiah*, 1:678) have: 'lie silent'.
[479] KJV/AV: 'are cut down'; NJPS: 'shall be wiped out'; NRSV: 'are devastated'; McKane (*Jeremiah* 1:647): 'are ruined'.

(vv. 23-27) and portrays its destruction as a devouring fire (v. 27). The oracle against Babylon, in contrast, occupies the entirety of a lengthy chapter in which God declares future punishment, also portrayed as a devouring fire (vv. 31-32). In both דמם is parallel to נפל (‘fall’) and refers to death: ‘they will fall (i.e., be killed) and be destroyed’.[480]

Versions predictably treat these two verses in similar fashion. The Targum, as elsewhere for דמם, uses the ethpeel of תבר: יתברון (‘be dismayed/broken’). The Peshitta uses an ethpaal of *štq*: ܢܬܫܬܩܘ (‘be silent’) and the Vulgate *conticescent,* ‘they will be silent’. The LXX, however, translates them differently: in 49:26 (LXX 30:15) both יפלו and ידמו are translated πεσοῦνται, ‘they will fall’, but in 50:30 (LXX 27:30), only יפלו with πεσοῦνται and ידמו with ῥιφήσονται (‘they will be cast down’), almost certainly based on רמה, ‘throw/cast down’ (used also in Jer. 8:14 and 47:5). Many modern translations treat דמם as related to destruction,[481] while others to being silenced,[482] and some as both.[483] Somewhat surprisingly, some modern translations also translate these two verses differently.[484]

Jer. 51:6
נֻ֚סוּ מִתּ֣וֹךְ בָּבֶ֔ל וּמַלְּטוּ֙ אִ֣ישׁ נַפְשׁ֔וֹ **אַל־תִּדַּ֖מּוּ** בַּעֲוֹנָ֑הּ כִּ֚י עֵ֣ת נְקָמָ֔ה הִ֖יא לַיהוָ֑ה גְּמֻ֥ול הוּא֙ מְשַׁלֵּ֣ם לָֽהּ׃

Jer. 51 foretells the coming destruction of Babylon, which will face a day of trouble (v. 2: יום רעה), and her men will fall down slain (v. 4: נפלו חללים). In vv. 5-6 a contrast is made between the people of Israel and Judah (who have not been forsaken by God) and the

[480] Reimer observes that in v. 30, syntactic pairs tend to shift in intensity, with נפל followed by the more ‘literary and evocative’ דמם (*The Oracles against Babylon*, 53). Most uses of דמם are indeed poetic and seem to express a certain *gravitas*.
[481] KJV/AV: ‘shall be cut off’; NRSV: ‘shall be destroyed’; LSG: ‘périront’; Bright (*Jeremiah*, 333, 343): ‘lie lifeless’.
[482] JPS: ‘shall be brought to silence’; NASB and NIV: ‘will be silenced’.
[483] McKane: ‘will be silent in death’, explaining it as ‘the silence of dereliction and death, the muteness of corpses and the extinction of life’ (*Jeremiah*, 2:1231, 1235, 1272).
[484] NJPS: ‘shall be stilled’ (49:26), ‘shall perish’ (50:30); Holladay: ‘shall lie silent’ (49:26), ‘shall perish’ (50:30), without explanation (*Jeremiah*, 2:379).

Babylonians (who are guilty and will be judged). After a statement of Babylon's former greatness (v. 7), there is another announcement of coming judgement (v. 8): she has fallen (נפלה) and been broken (ותשבר), as a result of which the listeners are told to wail (הילילו) for her, all words commonly found in other passages with דמם. The negative command אַל־תִּדַּמּוּ directly follows commands to flee and escape, and could function either in parallel (i.e., 'flee and escape=do not דמם') or as a natural consequence (i.e., 'flee and escape—in order that you not דמם'). The difference is negligible, and the command clearly has in view their escaping to save their lives, so means 'do not be destroyed'. The prepositional phrase בַּעֲוֹנָהּ ('in her punishment' or 'wrongdoing') modifies the verb, and could describe the manner of destruction (i.e., 'with the same punishment Babylon receives') or the reason (i.e., 'because of her iniquity').[485]

The LXX (28:6), as elsewhere, translates as if from רמה, with the passive μὴ ἀπορριφῆτε ('do not be cast aside'). Although it could be simply a matter of graphic confusion, since the meanings 'cast aside' and 'destroy' are not entirely unrelated, an association also could have developed directly between ἀπορρίπτω and דמם. The Vulgate, interestingly, has *nolite tacere super iniquitatem eius* ('do not be silent about her injustice'), suggesting they were to avoid complicity. The Targum has לא תלקון ('do not be smitten/punished' or 'do not suffer'),[486] with a variant reading לא תתקטלון ('do not be killed').[487] The Peshitta reflects a similar, if more poetic, understanding: ܠܐ ܬܐܟܠܝܢ ('do not be swallowed/consumed'). Modern translations tend to interpret as 'do not perish/be destroyed' or 'do not be cut off'.[488]

[485] Modern translations interpret בַּעֲוֹנָהּ differently as circumstantial 'do not be destroyed in her punishment' (NASB), or causal 'do not perish because of her guilt' (NRSV). McKane translates 'do not perish for its sin' (*Jeremiah*, 2:1294), and Bright 'perish not for her guilt' (*Jeremiah,* 346).
[486] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 718.
[487] Antwerp Polyglot (Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah,* 184).
[488] KJV/AV, JPS, RSV, ESV.

4b) דמה

Qal דמה

Jer. 6:2
הַנָּוֶה וְהַמְעֻנָּגָה **דָּמִיתִי** בַּת־צִיּוֹן׃

The Qal דמה in Jer. 6:2 seems to mean ‘destroy’, but its meaning is uncertain and could possibly be דמה I, ‘be like’. The context is one of judgement and uses language similar to other passages with דמה II: the people are told to flee (v. 1) and warned that disaster (רעה) and great destruction (ושבר גדול) are coming. The following verses contain further warnings, and destruction (שד) and desolation (שממה) are foretold in vv. 7-8.

Two unusual words begin v. 2, both definite (but unmarked) objects of דמיתי connected by a *waw*. The first, נָוֶה, can refer to a grazing place or a settlement,[489] though the adjective נאוה means ‘comely, seemly’ or ‘beautiful, suitable’, which might be implied here.[490] The second word, מְעֻנָּגָה, is a Pual fs participle from ענג, a root otherwise used only in the Hithpael to mean ‘be of dainty habit’, ‘take exquisite delight’ or ‘make merry over’.[491] The adjective עָנֹג means ‘dainty’, and the noun עֹנֶג ‘daintiness’ or ‘exquisite delight’, though often translated ‘pleasant’. מְעֻנָּגָה is often interpreted here as ‘daintily bred’, but if the Pual were related to the Hithpael meaning ‘delight in’, it could mean ‘delighted in’ or ‘delightful’. The two words together suggest something attractive and lovely; they could, however, refer to two entities: a pasture and then something delightful or dainty. Since both are feminine, they could be associated with cities or places, particularly in light of the four place names mentioned in the previous verse (Benjamin, Jerusalem, Tekoa, Beth Hakkerem) and בת־ציון at the end of v. 2. If בת־ציון is another unmarked object of דמיתי, it

[489] *HALOT* has both definitions for feminine נָוֶה and masculine נָוֶה (678-79), while BDB defines the feminine as ‘pasture’ or ‘meadow’, and the masculine as ‘dwelling place’, particularly the abode of a shepherd or his flocks (627).
[490] BDB, 610; *HALOT*, 657, 678.
[491] BDB, 772; *HALOT* has ‘pamper oneself’, ‘take one’s pleasure in’, ‘refresh oneself’, ‘make fun’ (851).

would function in apposition to the first two nouns, though it could instead be the addressee: 'O daughter of Zion'.

דמיתי is also ambiguous. Since the Niphal of דמה II means 'be destroyed', it would be logical for the Qal of דמה II to have the transitive sense 'cause to cease' or 'destroy', which would imply God as speaker, destroying Jerusalem despite her loveliness. The Qal seems to have this meaning only here and in Hos. 4:5 (following), however. Twice it has the intransitive sense 'cease', but here 'I cease' would be illogical. If from דמה I, interpretation is even more difficult. The speaker (God?) would be saying 'I am like the daughter of Zion', or 'I am like the pasture' or 'like something beautiful and dainty', addressing the 'daughter of Zion'. If revocalised as a Piel it could mean 'I likened the daughter of Zion to something lovely and delicate', or, as an archaic 2fs form addressing the daughter of Zion ('you were like a pleasant pasture'), but then this two-verse idyllic interlude about shepherds and flocks in lovely pastures would be strikingly out of place, with the preceding verse warning everyone to flee the coming disaster and the following verse calling everyone to prepare (or sanctify themselves: קדשו) for battle.

The versions reveal equal confusion, with two interpreting as if from דמה II (LXX with ἀφαιρεθήσεται, 'will be taken away', referring to the pride of the daughter of Zion,[492] and the Targum with קלקילת 'you have ruined, corrupted your ways'[493]), and two from דמה I (Vulgate with *adsimilavi,* 'I made like', with the object a beautiful and delicate woman, and Peshitta with the cognate *dmy:* ,ܕܡܝܬ 'I was like'). Modern translations are also split,

[492] McKane suggests LXX 'is perhaps a summarizing paraphrase of Hebrew which was ill understood' (*Jeremiah,* 140).
[493] Hayward translates: 'O beautiful and noble lady, *how you have corrupted your ways*!' (*The Targum of Jeremiah,* 66).

though most choose the sense of destruction.[494] Some commentators suggest that v. 2 should be read as a question, with the initial ה as an interrogative. Bright, for example, translates: 'Daughter Zion, are you like (2fs archaic דמה I) a meadow most delightful, to which the shepherds come with their flocks?'[495] McKane, in contrast, translates 'the daughter of Zion, beautiful and pampered, is near her end', emending to a 3fs form of דמה II (דמתה).[496]

In light of Jeremiah's unusual use of Niphal דמם to mean 'be destroyed' it seems possible that his use of Qal דמה might also be inconsistent with the rest of the corpus. Based on the context, with warnings of upcoming punishment, it was probably intended to mean 'I destroyed the pasture(s) and that which was delighted in, O daughter of Jerusalem' (or with 'daughter' in apposition to the delightful pasture).

Summary of דמה/דמם in Jeremiah

With one exception, the Niphal of דמם is used only in Jeremiah, where the use of דמה to mean 'cease' is also unusual (found only in Jer. 14:17 and Lam. 3:49, books traditionally assigned to a similar time period and linguistic milieu). It seems probable that although there was a distinction between דמה and דמם, their meanings were sometimes conflated and beginning to become byforms by the time of the Babylonian exile. This suggestion is challenged by the same usage appearing in 1 Sam. 2:6 and Hos. 4:5. However, since this verb in Hosea 4:5 is thought to be part of a later gloss, Jeremianic (or contemporary) influence could indeed be possible.[497]

Hos. 4:5
וְכָשַׁלְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְכָשַׁל גַּם־נָבִיא עִמָּךְ לָיְלָה **וְדָמִיתִי** אִמֶּךָ׃

[494] KJV/AV, NRSV: 'likened'; JPS, NJPS, NASB: 'destroy'/'cut off'; TOB: 'tu es réduite au silence'.
[495] Bright, *Jeremiah*, 43, 47-48.
[496] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 138.
[497] See Macintosh, *Hosea*, 138.

The other Qal דמה meaning ‘destroy’ is in the also difficult Hos. 4:5: ‘you will stumble today (or ‘by day’?); the prophet too will stumble with you (by?) night; and I will destroy your mother’. Here too God is the subject and speaker of דמיתי, with ‘your mother’[498] the unmarked definite object.[499] The context portrays future judgement and God contending with the people, particularly their prophets and priests. Not only their ‘mother’ would be destroyed, but their children forgotten (vv. 4-6).

The LXX translates as דמה I,‘liken’ (ὡμοίωσα), while the Vulgate and Peshitta translate as related to silence: *tacere feci matrem tuam* (‘I made your mother silent’) and ܐܡܟ ܐܬܕܡܝ ‘your mother was silent’, though the verb could also be first person). The Targum interprets with בהת (‘be/make ashamed’): ואבהית כנישתהון (‘I will put your congregations to shame’).[500] Most modern translations interpret דמה as ‘destroy’, though at least one as ‘reduce to silence’, figuratively implying destruction.[501] Although Qal דמה only seems to have this meaning in two verses, it seems the best interpretation in this difficult context.

Niphal דמה

וְאָדָם בְּיקָר בַּל־יָלִין נִמְשַׁל כַּבְּהֵמוֹת **נִדְמוּ**:	**Ps. 49:13[12]**
אָדָם בְּיקָר וְלֹא יָבִין נִמְשַׁל כַּבְּהֵמוֹת **נִדְמוּ**:	**Ps. 49:21[20]**

Psalm 49 describes the fate of death awaiting both wise and foolish (vv. 11-15) and offers reminders that no man can take anything with him when he dies (vv. 17-21). Two very similar verses have a Niphal of דמה with beasts as its subject, and given the focus of the psalm on the inescapability of death, it seems appropriate to interpret them as דמה II. The verses differ only slightly: v. 13 says man will not stay or remain (בל־ילין), v. 21 says man

[498] The ‘mother’ represents the people, but could also be a later gloss (Macintosh, *Hosea,* 138).
[499] Wolff, however, suggests changing to a Niphal 3fs with ‘mother’ as subject (*Dodekapropheton* 1:88).
[500] Translation by Cathcart, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 36.
[501] TOB: ‘je réduirai ta mère au silence’.

does not understand (ולא יבין). This minor variation could be scribal error,[502] but it is equally possible that the difference is intentional, with an emphasis first on physical transience and then on mental fallibility. The alteration could also be for poetic and phonetic effect, with ב and ל in alternating order in the negative and the following verb: ב־ל in v. 13 (**בל־ילין**) and ל־ב in v. 21 (**ולא יבין**).

The versions interpret נדמו as a synonym of the preceding נמשל, 'be like', with אדם, man, of line 1 as its subject. The LXX translates only יבין, 'understand', not ילין, 'remain': ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ὢν οὐ συνῆκεν παρασυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτήνεσιν τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὡμοιώθη αὐτοῖς ('a person held in honour did not understand. He resembled senseless beasts and became like them').[503] A portion of this Psalm found in the DSS (4Q85 13-15i27) also had only the verb יבין, 'understand', and not ילין, suggesting the MT might have followed an alternate textual tradition (if it was not in error). The Vulgate follows the Greek, but the *Iuxta Hebraeos*, interestingly, has *exaequatus est* ('made equal to') for נדמו in v. 13, but *silebitur* ('will be made silent') in v. 21. The Targum translates היך בעירא אשתווא ללמא ('as an animal, he will be like nothing'), though in most manuscripts the final word ללמא is found only in v. 21, not 13.[504] The Peshitta also interprets 'be like' with the cognate *dmy:* ܐܬܕܡܝ ܟܒܗܡܬܐ. Modern translations, however, tend to interpret from דמה II, 'perish', with 'beasts' as plural subject, which is grammatically preferable to the singular 'man' as subject. It is also syntactically preferable, as דמה I, 'be like', simply repeats the idea of מׇשׇל ('man becomes the same as the beasts, they are like'), and lacks a final complement. The Masoretic pointing also favours the interpretation 'beasts that perish', with a disjunctive accent on נמשל and conjunctive on כבהמות joining it to נדמו.

[502] Briggs finds it 'improbable' that the refrain would be repeated with a different verb, and attributes it to 'an easy copyist's mistake' (*Psalms*, 1:409).
[503] Pietersma, *NETS*, 571.
[504] Stec, *The Targum of Psalms*, 102; also White, 'A Critical Edition of the Targum of Psalms', 2:207.

Isa. 6:5
וָאֹמַ֗ר אֽוֹי־לִ֙י כִּֽי־**נִדְמֵ֔יתִי** כִּ֣י אִ֤ישׁ טְמֵא־שְׂפָתַ֙יִם֙ אָנֹ֔כִי וּבְתוֹךְ֙ עַם־טְמֵ֣א שְׂפָתַ֔יִם אָנֹכִ֖י יוֹשֵׁ֑ב כִּ֤י אֶת־הַמֶּ֙לֶךְ֙ יְהוָ֣ה צְבָא֔וֹת רָא֖וּ עֵינָֽי׃

Isaiah is the subject and speaker of a Niphal form of דמה in the report of his throne room vision. After he sees the foundations shake and the house fill with smoke, he declares woe on himself, followed by a three-part explanation for it: 1) he is destroyed/perishing (נדמיתי), 2) his and the peoples' lips are unclean, and 3) he had seen the LORD. Although the first כי could be a complementiser ('woe is me *that* I am destroyed'), the strong causal sense of the other two כי clauses suggests the same interpretation for the first. Niphal דמה II usually indicates destruction or perishing in a context of judgement, but here there is no proclamation of judgement apart from Isaiah's self-proclaimed woe on himself and his people for having unclean lips. When the seraph touches his lips with coal, Isaiah is absolved and sent out to speak on behalf of the LORD, which makes the usual interpretation as 'I have been destroyed' (or 'will be/am being destroyed') difficult.[505] Isaiah clearly is not actually 'destroyed', but is anticipating divine judgement in saying 'I must surely perish'.

It has been suggested that נדמיתי means 'I have been silenced' or 'I must be silent',[506] based on potential confusion with דמם,[507] on Jewish exegetical tradition,[508] and on the

[505] The question of verb tense is a difficult one, but this *qatal* form could be prophetic (as in other texts portraying future judgement as already accomplished destruction), present (in light of the present-tense value of the subsequent nominal clause and participle), or perfect (conveying the result of the verb rather than any specific time frame). See J-M §112e-g. suggests it is 'viewed as complete for the individual's consciousness' (*The Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. Hastie, 184; orig. *Das Buch Jesaia*, 127).

[506] *HALOT* defines דמה II as 'be silent' for six biblical references, but most, including Isa. 6:5, are uncertain or require revocalisation (225). Blenkinsopp lists those who have translated 'be silent' (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Vulgate, Wildberger), though he himself understands it to mean 'destroyed', 'ruined' (*Isaiah 1-39*, 223); Wildberger also mentions Eichrodt, Fohrer, and Kaiser as translating 'be silent' (*Jesaja*, 1:233; trans. Trapp, 250).

[507] Gray says it is an old tradition due to confusion of the roots דמה and דמם, though he keeps the translation 'undone', also for Isa. 15:1 (*The Book of Isaiah 1-27*, 108).

context of the verse, with its mention of unclean lips (which is syntactically parallel to נדמיתי).[509] In this interpretation, Isaiah is silenced by the vision and by knowledge of his own unclean lips. Although initially attractive, there is no evidence for דמה meaning 'be silent/silenced', nor does it seem to overlap with דמם before the later texts of Jeremiah and Lamentations. In addition, even when דמם does mean 'be silent', its focus is less on silence and more on cessation. For silence in opposition to speech, חרש would be a more likely root. Another argument against נדמיתי referring to silence is that most biblical declarations of woe to someone (אוי־ל) are associated with references to perishing (אבד: Num. 21:29, Jer 48:46), sorrow (אבוי: Prov. 23:29), evil (רעה: Isa. 3:9, Ezek. 16:23), betrayal (בגד: Isa. 24:16), being destroyed (שדד: Jer 6:4), a wound (both שבר and מכה: Jer 10:19), uncleanness (לא תטהרי: Jer. 13:27) and judgement (Hos. 7:13). Woe is not found in connnection with silence,[510] however, so נדמיתי is unlikely to have that meaning here.

The LXX again uses κατανένυγμαι: 'I have been stabbed/sorely pricked' (i.e., 'I am repentant'), or 'I am bewildered/stunned',[511] either of which could make sense. The Peshitta tradition reflects both, with 'I am stupefied' (ܬܡܗ) and a variant 'I repent' (ܬܒ). The Targum differs, with חבית ('I have sinned' or 'am guilty'). The Vulgate alone among

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[508] According to rabbinic tradition, Isaiah was silenced because of his failure to rebuke the sinful actions of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26), which could justify confusion between דמם/דמה (Gray, *Isaiah*, 108; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1:232-33; trans. Trapp, 249).

[509] Kaiser translates 'I must be silent', since with unclean lips, Isaiah 'cannot join in the heavenly song of praise' (*Isaiah 1-12*, trans. Bowden, 117, 128; 'Wehe mir, daß ich schweigen muß', *Das Buch des Propheten Jesaja*, 120). Köhler translates 'silenced' because of the emphasis on lips, mouth, and speech; he also asserts that other verses with Niphal דמה should be translated 'zum Schweigen gebracht' (Isa. 15:1, Jer. 47:5, Hos. 4:6, 10:7, 10:15, Obad. 1:5, Zeph. 1:11, Ezek. 27:32). He does not discuss the relationship between דמם/דמה but implicitly claims a connection to דמם by citing that *domi* means 'be silent' and not 'destruction' (*Kleine Lichter*, 32-34). Jenni translates 'ich muß schweigen', but makes a stronger argument for silence by pointing to the contextual emphasis on unclean lips, the byform relationship between דמם/דמה, and the clear association between חרש and Niphal דמה in 1QpHab ('Jesajas Berufung in der neueren Forschung', 322). Since this is a later text, however, it is more likely that there was already confusion between דמם and דמה, the Niphal of which could have meant 'be silenced' (See Williamson, 'The Translation of 1 Q p Hab. V,10', 263-65).

[510] Wildberger translates 'I must be silent' but also affirms the appropriateness of 'I am lost'. Isaiah's expression of woe and fear of perishing are both expected responses to a theophany (*Jesaja* 1:251; trans. Trapp, 248-49).

[511] Silva, *NETS*: 'O wretched that I am! I am stunned' (830).

the versions interprets as ‘I have been silent’ (*tacui*). Modern translations have a variety of past participles: ‘I am lost’,[512] ‘undone’,[513] ‘ruined’,[514] even ‘dead’.[515] Given the context and other uses of דמה, נדמיתי should certainly be translated in some way related to destruction, even if it is only a threat of judgement that is averted by the action of the seraph.

Isa. 15:1
מַשָּׂא מוֹאָב כִּי בְלֵיל שֻׁדַּד עָר מוֹאָב **נִדְמָה** כִּי בְלֵיל שֻׁדַּד קִיר־מוֹאָב **נִדְמָה**:

Isa. 15:1, the beginning of an oracle against Moab, uses two Niphal forms of דמה to convey the destruction of different places in Moab. The forms could be either 3ms *qatals* or fs participles. A feminine would usually be expected for place names, but the preceding שדד is masculine, as are other verbs and suffixes in the chapter referring to Moab. The geographical references to ‘Ar’ and ‘Kir’ of Moab are uncertain and could either be generic nouns (‘city’ and ‘wall’) or specific (but unknown) places.[516] Ar is mentioned in Deut. 2:18 in apposition with ‘the border of Moab’, suggesting it is either a place on the border or identified with Moab itself.[517] The syntax is also unclear, as the place names could either be separated, with a verb each (as on the left below),[518] or compound names (as on the right):

כי בליל שדד ער מואב	נדמה	כי בליל שדד ער	מואב נדמה
כי בליל שדד קיר־מואב	נדמה:	כי בליל שדד קיר	מואב נדמה:

The Masoretic pointing suggests compound names, as it joins ער and קיר to מואב with conjunctive accents and a maqqef, while מואב has a disjunctive accent. This creates

[512] ESV, NJPS, NRSV, LSG: ‘je suis perdu’; EIN, ELB: ‘ich bin verloren’.
[513] KJV/AV, JPS.
[514] NASB, NIV.
[515] RVA: ‘Soy muerto’; Rev. LUT, SCH: ‘ich vergehe’.
[516] For a discussion of the place names and attempts to identify them, see Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 296; Gray, *Isaiah*, 278-79; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, trans. Wilson, 65-66.
[517] See Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, trans. Wilson, 65-66.
[518] Gray separates the names: ‘Because in a (single) night ʿAr has been spoiled, Moab is undone’ (*Isaiah*, 273).

uneven line breaks, with נדמה on its own: 'it was destroyed'. Some translations therefore add another subject (such as 'Moab'), supplied from context. Alternatively, נדמה could be the main verb of each line if בליל is interpreted in construct: 'in the night of Ar/Kir-Moab's being devastated (שדד), it was destroyed (נדמה)'.[519] Some interpret נדמה as 'silenced',[520] but since this meaning is not proven and שדד and Niphal דמה often appear together in judgement contexts, 'destroyed' seems more likely.

The versions, unsurprisingly, vary. The LXX conflates both שדד and דמה into ἀπολεῖται ('destroyed'), which it uses twice. Aquila and Theodotion translate the second נדמה of the verse as 'was silent', Symmachus as 'has become silent',[521] and the Vulgate has *conticuit* for both. The Targum reinterprets significantly, using different words for the two uses of נדמה (רדימין and דמיכין), both related to sleeping. The Peshitta also uses different verbs: ܐܡܬܒܗܐ and ܐܬܒܗܐ, both suggesting that people wondered in amazement at the destruction. 1QIsa[a] (XIII, 6 and 7) has the variant עיר for both ער and קיר, also adding a *waw* before the first נדמה, which links it more strongly to the preceding שודד. Modern translations have 'ruined',[522] or 'undone',[523] probably in keeping with the traditional interpretation of the same verb in Isa. 6:5, while a minority choose 'brought to silence'.[524]

Jer. 47:5
בָּאָה קָרְחָה אֶל־עַזָּה **נִדְמְתָה** אַשְׁקְלוֹן שְׁאֵרִית עִמְקָם עַד־מָתַי תִּתְגּוֹדָדִי׃

Jeremiah 47 declares judgement against the Philistines: they would be overcome by water and horses, their helpers would be cut off (vv. 2-4), baldness would come upon Gaza and the people would gash themselves in mourning for the destruction (v. 5). נדמתה in v. 5 is a

[519] This interprets בְּלֵיל as in construct (unusually) with the following verbal phrase.
[520] Blenkinsopp: 'Destroyed in the nighttime, Ar Moab is silenced; destroyed in the nighttime, Kir Moab is silenced'. He explains that he reads *nadammāh* from *dmm* instead of *nidmāh* from *dmh* (*Isaiah*, 293, 296).
[521] Quoted in Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, trans. T. Trapp, 106.
[522] NJPS, NASB.
[523] NRSV, ESV.
[524] KJV/AV, RVA: 'reducida a silencio'.

3fs Niphal with Ashkelon as its subject. Its meaning ‘be destroyed’ is clarified by parallel references to a day coming to destroy (לשדוד) the Philistines for the LORD was destroying (שדד) them (v. 4).[525]

The versions follow a pattern similar to Jer. 8:14: the LXX has ἀπερρίφη (‘was cast away’), the Targum איתברו (‘were broken/dismayed’, with the people of Ashkelon rather than the city itself as subject), and the Peshitta a form of the same root (ܐܬܒܗܬ, ‘broken, defeated’). The Vulgate alone translates ‘be silent’ (*conticuit*). Modern translations vary in meaning and verb tense, with some referring to destruction[526] and others to silence.[527] McKane suggests that silence contributes to the idea of mourning: ‘the silence of death has overtaken Ashkelon and she is mourned’.[528] The parallels with שדד and the judgement that causes the mourning, however, suggest that the focal point of נדמתה is destruction.

Hos. 4:6
נִדְמ֖וּ עַמִּ֣י מִבְּלִ֣י הָדָ֑עַת כִּי־אַתָּ֤ה הָדַ֙עַת֙ מָאַ֣סְתָּ וְאֶמְאָ֣סְךָ֔ מִכַּהֵ֖ן לִ֑י וַתִּשְׁכַּ֤ח תּוֹרַת֙ אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ אֶשְׁכַּ֥ח בָּנֶ֖יךָ גַּם־אָֽנִי׃

Hosea 4 begins with the LORD’s contention against the people, followed by accusations against the priests. Two forms of דמה are used in close proximity: 4:5 ‘I will destroy (Qal) your mother’ is followed in 4:6 by ‘my people are destroyed (Niphal) because of lack of knowledge’. Their ‘destruction’, as in Isa. 6, might refer to spiritual judgement that will also result in physical destruction. The priest is blamed for this situation, then rejected, and threatened that his children will also be forgotten, just as he has forgotten the law of

[525] The result here is baldness and infliction of gashes, symbolising mourning. Bright, *Jeremiah*, 310; also McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1150.
[526] ‘Cut off’ (KJV/AV), ‘destroyed’ (NJPS), ‘ruined’ (NASB), ‘vernichtet’ (Rev. LUT), ‘geht unter’ (SCH).
[527] ‘Is silenced’ (NRSV), ‘wird verstummen’ (EIN), ‘dans le silence’ (LSG), ‘struck dumb’ (Bright, *Jeremiah*, 309).
[528] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 2:1150.

his God. Lack of knowledge and failure to instruct is a criticism found elsewhere also with severe consequences (Isa. 5:13-14; Mal. 2:7-9).

The LXX interprets as from דמה I, 'be like': ὡμοιώθη ὁ λαός μου ὡς οὐκ ἔχων γνῶσιν.[529] Others interpret as 'be silent': Aquila, Theodotion, the Vulgate (*conticuit populus meus*: 'my people were silent') and the Peshitta (ܫܬܩ, 'be quiet').[530] The Targum translates with אטפשׁו, 'they were foolish' or 'stupid', with uncertain connection to Hebrew נדמו. Modern translations almost uniformly translate as 'destroyed'.[531]

Hos. 10:7
נִדְמָה שֹׁמְרוֹן מַלְכָּהּ כְּקֶצֶף עַל־פְּנֵי־מָיִם׃

The Niphal participle נִדְמָה seems to describe the king of Samaria in Hos. 10:7, but anomalies in gender agreement and word order make it difficult to interpret. נִדְמָה is masculine singular, but שמרון, in subject position, is feminine, while the most likely masculine subject, מַלְכָּהּ ('her king'), is not. Revocalisation as a feminine participle (נִדְמָה)[532] would solve the difficulty with gender, but not word order. The following שֹׁמְרוֹן מַלְכָּהּ ('Samaria her king') is awkward, and a genitival relationship ('Samaria's king') would more normally be expressed with the construct מלך שמרון (as in 10:15). The clauses could be divided differently as: נדמָה שמרון ('Samaria is perishing') and מלכה כקצף ('her king is like קצף', a word usually meaning 'anger' but here generally understood to mean 'twig'). This phrase division, however, ignores the Masoretic ethnach on מלכה marking a major break. Another possible, if awkward, solution is to interpret שמרון as a topicaliser ('Samaria, her king is destroyed'),[533] or to interpret נדמה as from דמה I (though this does not help with syntax or vocalisation): 'Samaria, her king was made to be like קצף on the

[529] Howard, *NETS*: 'My people have become like one who lacks knowledge' (783).
[530] Macintosh, *Hosea*, 140.
[531] An exception is TOB: 'mon peuple sera réduit au silence'.
[532] Some manuscripts have evidence of the pointing נִדְמָה. See Macintosh, *Hosea*, 408.
[533] Macintosh describes the role of Samaria in the sentence as 'nominative absolute', alternatively that the two nouns are simply joined asyndetically (*Hosea*, 406).

face of the water'. Although קצף might have its more usual meaning 'anger', there are not enough clues to interpret either קצף or נדמה with certainty.

The LXX translates with ἀπέρριψεν ('Samaria threw out her king'),[534] normalising the Hebrew syntax and translating with an active verb, again as if from רמה.[535] The Peshitta follows LXX with ܫܕܐ (from *šdy,* 'throw away'). The Vulgate also interprets with an active verb: *transire fecit Samaria regem suum* ('Samaria makes her king to cross over/vanish').[536] The Targum has בהיתת: 'Samaria was ashamed of her king'. All versions simplify the syntax, with Samaria as subject and 'her king' as object, which is unproblematic in an unpointed text. Surprisingly all but the Targum have an active verb in the place of the MT's Niphal. Modern translations more consistently translate with verbs such as 'cut off' or 'perish', but also make adjustments to compensate for the difficult syntax: by making both Samaria and her king subjects of a passive verb ('Samaria will be cut off *with* her king', NASB), by joining them into a single subject ('Samaria's king shall perish', NRSV), or by mentioning Samaria only in an aside ('As for Samaria, her king is cut off', KJV/AV, JPS). Others are more creative: NJPS with 'vanishing', Schlachter and NIV (perplexingly) with 'fährt dahin' and 'will float away', respectively.

Hos. 10:14-15
14 וְקָם שָׁאוֹן בְּעַמֶּךָ וְכָל־מִבְצָרֶיךָ יוּשַׁד כְּשֹׁד שַׁלְמַן בֵּית אַרְבֵאל בְּיוֹם מִלְחָמָה אֵם עַל־בָּנִים רֻטָּשָׁה: 15 כָּכָה עָשָׂה לָכֶם בֵּית־אֵל מִפְּנֵי רָעַת רָעַתְכֶם בַּשַּׁחַר **נִדְמֹה נִדְמָּה** מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

In Hos. 10:15 the Niphal infinitive absolute נִדְמֹה immediately precedes the *qatal* נִדְמָּה either for emphasis ('will certainly be destroyed') or intensification ('be utterly

[534] Howard, *NETS,* 787.
[535] Since ἀπορρίπτω translates דמה elsewhere, it seems to be systematic rather than inadvertent.
[536] Macintosh translates: 'Samaria has made her king to vanish' (*Hosea,* 408).

destroyed'). The passive subject is the king of Israel, and the context, as elsewhere, is one of judgement (in which שדד is again parallel to דמה).

The LXX (11:1) translates with two passive forms of ἀπορρίπτω ('cast out'), one for the people and one for the king: ἀπερρίφησαν ἀπερρίφη βασιλεὺς Ισραηλ ('they were cast out; Israel's king was cast out').[537] The Vulgate translates *sicuti mane transit pertransiit rex Israhel* ('as the morning passeth, so hath the king of Israel passed away'),[538] also giving the two forms of דמה different subjects and changing the verbs: *transeo* (go over, cross) for the first and *pertranseo* (pass through/by or pass away) for the second. The Targum also translates with different verbs, but only one subject (the king of Israel): בהית אתכנע ('he will be ashamed and humbled'). Modern translations interpret the verbs together as 'perish', 'be destroyed', 'utterly cut off',[539] but Wolff suggests 'be silenced', which he interprets as 'die'.[540]

Obad. 1:5
אִם־גַּנָּבִים בָּאוּ־לָךְ אִם־שׁוֹדְדֵי לַ֫יְלָה
אֵ֣יךְ **נִדְמֵ֔יתָה** הֲלֹ֥וא יִגְנְבוּ דַיָּ֖ם
אִם־בֹּצְרִ֣ים בָּ֣אוּ לָ֑ךְ הֲלֹ֥וא יַשְׁאִ֖ירוּ עֹלְלֽוֹת׃

נדמיתה in Obad. 5 has Edom as its 2ms subject and addressee. It clearly means 'destroyed', as confirmed by the context of upcoming destruction. As part of an exclamation that does not easily fit the syntax of the sentence, some suggest it is misplaced or a later addition.[541] It interrupts the first of two conditional rhetorical questions: 'would not thieves and plunderers take only for themselves?' and 'would not grape harvesters at least leave gleanings?'; both emphasise the surprisingly complete nature of their destruction

[537] Howard, *NETS*, 787.
[538] DRA.
[539] NJPS; EIN, ELB: 'vernichtet'; RVA 'desaparecerá para siempre' ('will disappear forever').
[540] Wolff, *Dodekapropheton* 1:232, 244.
[541] Bewer concludes that it expresses Obadiah's own emotion and previously began v. 5; he notes that its absence from Jer. 49:7 suggests it was not part of the 'older oracle' (*Obadiah and Joel*, in Smith, Ward and Bewer, *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*, 23).

LXX translates as elsewhere with ἀπερρίφης (‘cast out’), interpreting איך as a question: ‘where would you be cast aside’.[542] The Vulgate translates *quomodo conticuisses* (‘how would you have been silent’), and the Peshitta with *štq*: ܐܝܟ ܫܬܩܬ (‘how you have been quiet/silent’).The Targum has איכדין הויתא דמוך (‘how you have become asleep/motionless’, or even ‘dead’).[543] Most modern translations interpret the verb as being destroyed, though they vary in how it relates to the rest of the sentence: either as exclamation or factual statement,[544] either as future certainty (‘O how you will be ruined’, NASB) or accomplished fact (‘how you have been destroyed’, NRSV).[545] One interprets as related to stillness/silence, and that with a tone of condemnation: ‘et tu resterais tranquille’ (TOB).

Zeph. 1:11
הֵילִ֣ילוּ יֹשְׁבֵ֣י הַמַּכְתֵּ֑שׁ כִּ֥י **נִדְמָ֖ה** כָּל־עַ֥ם כְּנַ֛עַן נִכְרְת֥וּ כָל־נְטֻ֖עֵי כָּֽסֶף׃

Zeph. 1:11 also uses Niphal דמה in a context of coming judgement and destruction. The previous verse commands wailing (הילילו) and speaks of crying and wailing (קול צעקה...ויללה) and great destruction (שבר גדול). The lexical and contextual overlap of this passage with others confirms the meaning of נדמה as ‘be destroyed’, as does the parallel verb נכרתו (‘they are cut off’).[546] Its subject, כל־עם כנען, is either ‘all the traders’ or ‘all the people of Canaan’, though the former is preferable in parallel to ‘those who weigh out silver’.

[542] Howard, *NETS*, 803.
[543] דמה is associated with sleep also in the Targum of Isa. 15:1.
[544] EIN: ‘dann bist du verloren’.
[545] Macintosh suggests it is a ‘prophetic perfect’ (*Hosea*, 433).
[546] See also Jer. 47:5 above.

The LXX translates as if from דמה I: ὅτι ὡμοιώθη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς Χανααν ('because all the people were made like Canaan'),[547] as does the Targum, although in its expansion it might even doubly translate נדמה as 'be broken' (איתבר) and 'become like' (דמן).[548] The Vulgate translates 'have become silent' (*conticuit*), and the Peshitta ܬܡܗ (*twr,* 'wondered'), also used elsewhere for דמה. Modern translations usually translate with verbs communicating destruction: 'cut down' (KJV/AV), 'undone' (JPS), 'have perished' (NJPS, NRSV), though a few choose 'be silenced'.[549]

Uncertain/Ambiguous

In some verses the meaning of דמם is uncertain and could be interpreted as 'be silent', 'cease', 'destroy/be destroyed', or even 'mourn', a meaning suggested on the basis of Akkadian and Ugaritic cognates and because it fits the context in some passages. This meaning is never, in my view, contextually required, however, and I do not find the cognate evidence strong enough to 'import' this meaning into Hebrew, even if it remains an outside possibility (see more under cognates below). Another possible meaning for דמם found in Aramaic and post-biblical Hebrew is 'be astonished, bewildered, stunned', which makes better sense of some passages than either 'be silent' or 'mourn'.

Lev. 10:3
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־אַהֲרֹ֔ן הוּא֙ אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּ֣ר יְהוָ֔ה לֵאמֹ֔ר בִּקְרֹבַ֖י אֶקָּדֵ֑שׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵ֥י כָל־הָעָ֖ם אֶכָּבֵ֣ד **וַיִּדֹּ֔ם** אַהֲרֹֽן׃

Lev. 10:1-2 tells the sobering story of the sudden death of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu for offering 'strange' fire before the LORD. In v. 3 Moses neither announces the news nor offers an explanation, but simply speaks for the LORD: 'among those near me I will be sanctified; and before all the people I will be honoured/glorified'. Aaron's response (וַיִּדֹּם)

[547] Howard, *NETS*, 811.
[548] 'For all the people *whose works are like the works of the people of the land of* Canaan have perished' (Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 166-67; see also Ribera Florit, *La versión aramaica del profeta Sofonías*, 127-58, quoted by Cathcart and Gordon, 166n.26).
[549] 'Will be silenced' (NASB), 'verstummt' (EIN), 'será silenciado' (LBA).

has traditionally been understood as silence, but the narrative does not give any contextual clues to help interpret it. The next reported action is Moses giving instructions to remove the bodies, then the LORD commands Aaron and sons not to drink wine or strong drink and to distinguish between the holy and unholy. Moses then instructs Aaron and sons regarding eating of the different offerings. Aaron himself does nothing except passively receive instruction, until in v. 19 he replies to Moses' criticism 'Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?' He may thus have been silent for a time, but then broke his silence with protest.

If דמם *does* indicate Aaron's silence, was it in submission to Moses' statement?[550] Or did it reflect shame,[551] wilful defiance, or simply the speechlessness of extreme grief? Since דמם can refer to cessation of movement, it could also be a type of dumbstruck amazement at the news. Another option, requiring revocalisation as an apocopated Niphal דמה, would mean: 'he was destroyed' (or 'undone/lost'), whether in threatened judgement and subsequent repentance (as in Isa. 6:5), or simply in shock. Since the Niphal of דמה is usually used in prophetic discourse foretelling judgement on a national level, however, it does not easily fit in this very different genre and subject matter, and with a judgement that has already been carried out.

[550] Levine: 'Aaron accepted God's harsh judgement and did not cry out or complain at his painful loss' (*Leviticus*, 60).
[551] Noth: Aaron 'could only take in shamed silence Moses' reproachful indication that Yahweh deals specially severely with those "who are near to him"' (*Leviticus*, 85).

Alternatively, if Hebrew דמם can mean 'mourn', the context here initially seems to permit the interpretation 'Aaron mourned',[552] but it becomes problematic as presented, as a direct response to the LORD's declaration that he would be honoured. Mourning the LORD's honour is of course theologically suspect, and if he had already been mourning prior to Moses' declaration, the placement of וידם is strange.

The LXX again has κατενύχθη: 'Aaron was pricked/stabbed' (i.e., remorseful) or was 'stupefied',[553] either of which suits the context. He could have been repentant on behalf of his sons, or stunned at the shocking loss. All other versions translate as 'be silent'. The Vulgate's *tacuit* is prefaced by *quod audiens* ('upon hearing'), making it explicitly in response to the words of Moses. Targums Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Neofiti use a form of שתק, and the Peshitta its cognate ܫܬܩ. Some (Pseudo-Jonathan and a Neofiti variant) use another form of שׁתק to report the good reward Aaron received for his silence: וקבל אגר טב על משתוקיה, which was that God subsequently spoke to him (vv. 8-11) rather than to Moses.[554] Jewish exegetes clearly understood וידם as referring to silence, as do most modern translations. 'He was silent' seems to be the best translation, as it leaves his motives open for interpretation. There is a strong case, however, for this silence being one of bewilderment or shock.

Isa. 23:2
דֹּמּוּ יֹשְׁבֵי אִי סֹחֵר צִידוֹן עֹבֵר יָם מִלְאוּךָ׃

Isaiah 23:1 begins an oracle against Tyre: 'Wail (הילילו), O ships of Tarshish, for Tyre is laid waste (שדד), without house or harbor!'. V. 2 begins with the command דמו ('be still'? 'be silent'? 'mourn'?), followed by a series of other commands, seemingly related either

[552] TOB: 'Aaron entonna une lamentation'.
[553] Büchner, *NETS*: 'Aaron was shocked' (91); Brenton: 'Aaron was pricked *in his heart*'.
[554] This tradition is reflected in Midrash Rabbah 12.2 (*Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus I-XIX*, trans. Israelstam, 155-56) and Rashi (*Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos*, trans. Rosenbaum and Silbermann, 3:38).

sequentially or as parallels: 'be ashamed' (fs בושי, v. 4), 'wail' (mpl הילילו, v. 6). The first and last commands דמו and הילילו have the same subject, the inhabitants of the coast, suggesting that דמם might be parallel to ילל and mourning. It would make sense for the coastal inhabitants to mourn because Tyre is laid waste (v. 1), but the connection between דמו and the rest of v. 2 is not so clear. The implied reason for the mpl command דמו is that 'merchants of Sidon who cross the sea have filled you (fs)', but the significance of the event is not clear (should it cause mourning, silence, cessation or something else?), nor is it textually certain.[555] Some commentators suggest emendation to נדמו ('they were destroyed'), but this is without textual support.[556] Others suggest דָּמוּ, a 3pl *qatal* of דמם, but interpret as a Niphal דמה meaning 'be destroyed'.[557] If דמו means 'they were silent', it could be related to mourning,[558] though silence and wailing (v. 6) seem to be contradictory.[559] It could alternatively refer to astonishment and being stunned, which would be appropriate in the context of the oracle.

The Vulgate and Peshitta translate as 'be silent' (*tacete*; ܐܬܬܟ), as do Aquila and Symmachus,[560] but the LXX reinterprets as an adjective from דמה I: τίνι ὅμοιοι γεγόνασιν οἱ ἐνοικοῦντες ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ('to whom have become similar those who dwell in the island').[561] The Targum translates with איתברו ('they were broken, dismayed'), probably associating it with Niphal דמה (elsewhere translated by תבר), unsurprising in an

[555] 1QIsa[a] (XVIII, 6) adds *waws* both to ישבי (plene spelling) and to עבר (making it plural); the final word is changed from 'fill you' to 'your messengers': דמו יושבי אי סחר צידון עברו ים מלאכיך. No change is made to דמו.
[556] Duhm (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 166); Wildberger says Marti, Guthe, Kaiser, and others preferred it (*Jesaja* 2:855; trans. Trapp, 406).
[557] E.g., Procksch, *Jesaia I*, 297.
[558] Kissane suggests 'be struck dumb with sorrow', although he then chooses 'mourn' (*The Book of Isaiah*, 260). Van der Kooij also associates them, translating דמו as 'be still or dumb with grief', with the alternative meaning 'lament, wail' (*The Oracle of Tyre*, 21).
[559] Duhm calls this impossible (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 166), and Bentzen contradictory (*Jesaja*, 178).
[560] σιωπήσατε and σιγήσατε respectively (van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre*, 164).
[561] Silva, *NETS*, 841. Van der Kooij observes that the Greek translator likely understood למו at the end of v. 1 as the question 'to whom' (*The Oracle of Tyre*, 125).

unvocalised text. Modern translations mostly have ‘be silent’, though some ‘be still’,[562] and others ‘mourn, moan’.[563]

Lam. 2:10
יֵשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ **יִדְּמוּ** זִקְנֵי בַת־צִיּוֹן
הֶעֱלוּ עָפָר עַל־רֹאשָׁם חָגְרוּ שַׂקִּים
הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֹאשָׁן בְּתוּלֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם׃ ס

Lamentations 2 details the utter destruction suffered by the daughter of Zion as a result of the LORD’s wrath. He became an enemy, swallowing them up and causing mourning to increase (vv. 2-5). The law was no more and even prophets had no vision (v. 9); the elders, the young women (v. 10) and the speaker (v. 11) were all in mourning. The verb ידמו in v. 10 could function as an independent verb (‘they sat, and [then] they were silent/still’) or as an adverbial modifier to ישבו (‘they sat in silence’, or perhaps ‘they sat immobile’ or ‘dumbfounded’). It is possible that being silent or still had some association with mourning,[564] and was a precursor to the phase of dust and sackcloth, but this cannot be proven and is disputed.[565] The following lines describe young women bowing their heads to the ground, either in shame or mourning.[566] Alternatively, if דמם means ‘mourn’, the line could be translated ‘They sat…they mourned’ (or ‘They sat mourning’). With the

[562] One offers fear as a reason for silence: ‘Soyez muets d'effroi, habitants de la côte’ (LSG).
[563] ‘Moan, you coastland dwellers’ (NJPS); ‘Wehklagt, ihr Bewohner der Küste‘ (ELB). Wildberger translates ‘wehklagt, ihr Küstenbewohner’ (‘Bewail, you coastal dwellers’), arguing that it makes a good parallel with הילילו (*Jesaja* 2:853, 855; trans. Trapp, 404). Kissane suggests ‘mourn’ (*The Book of Isaiah*, 260).
[564] Isa. 47:1 mentions sitting on the ground in a similar context of mourning for coming destruction, where it is parallel to another command to sit on the dust
[565] Lohfink argues *for* silence as part of the mourning ritual, on the basis of Job 2:11-3:1; Ezra 9:3-5; Ezek. 26:15-18; and Lam. 1:4,16 (as well as on the questionable basis of 19th-century mourning rituals in Italy) (‘Enthielten die im Alten Testament bezeugten Klageriten eine Phase des Schweigens?’). Others assume silence was part of mourning without making an argument for it: Pham, *Mourning*, 29-31; Feldman, *Biblical and Post-Biblical Defilement and Mourning*, 97-99; Lipinski, *La liturgie pénitentielle dans la Bible*, 32-35. A case *against* silence as part of mourning is made by Levine, who argues that since all suggestions of silence in mourning are based on the roots DMM/DMH, the meanings of which are disputed and which might even mean ‘mourn’, there is no evidence for silence in biblical mourning rites (‘Silence, Sound, and the Phenomenology of Mourning in Biblical Israel’). G.R. Driver also argues against silence, but for the questionable reason: ‘Orientals do not show silent grief’ (‘A Confused Hebrew Root [דום, דמה, דמם]’, 4). See also Olyan’s book *Biblical Mourning*, in which he mentions silence only to identify its role as a ‘behavioural component of mourning’ as ‘doubtful’ (30n.10). I do not believe we can be certain based on the biblical texts, but further comparative work in ancient Near Eastern cultures might be enlightening.
[566] Kraus (*Klagelieder*, 45) and Rudolph (*Klagelieder*, 224) associate it with mourning, also linking grief and silence.

clearly expressed mourning in the following line, this seems heavy-handed, but since it is a feature of biblical poetry to repeat similar ideas using different words, it is not impossible.

The versions translate as 'they were silent', as do most modern translations, whether as a separate verb ('they keep silence'),[567] or adverbially ('sit silently').[568]

Lam. 3:28
יֵשֵׁב בָּדָד וְיִדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו׃

דמם is again used in connection with ישׁב in Lam. 3:28, with similar interpretative difficulties. The two verbs could be separate and sequential ('sit and be silent/still') or דמם could be adverbial ('sit silently/still'). ישב is also modified by בדד, a collocation used elsewhere as a mark of suffering and isolation,[569] ideas strengthened by the image of bearing a yoke in the previous verse. There is further interpretive ambiguity in that וידם could be indicative ('he is sitting alone and silent'),[570] volitive ('let him sit alone and keep silence'),[571] or, with the preceding *waw*, could suggest purpose ('let him sit alone in order that he might be silent/still'). It has also been suggested that דמם means 'mourn' (see previous verse), though we cannot be certain. The second hemistich, כי נטל עליו, gives the reason for these actions ('because it is laid on him'), though it could instead be a temporal clause ('when it is laid on him').[572] נטל ('lift, bear') is followed by the preposition על only here and in 2 Sam. 24:12, where the LORD offers three choices of punishment to David (which were 'lifted up upon' him). If the same nuance applies here, it suits the context of

[567] KJV/AV, JPS, LSG: 'ils sont muets'.
[568] 'Silent sit on the ground' (NJPS), 'sit on the ground in silence' (NRSV), 'sie sitzen schweigend auf der Erde' (SCH).
[569] In Lam 1:1 the formerly full city sits alone; in Jer. 15:17 the prophet states 'because of your hand (upon me) I sat alone'; Lev. 13:46 states that an unclean man must live alone.
[570] KJV/AV, Russian Synodal, Norwegian Bokmål.
[571] JPS, NAS, TOB, also all German versions I consulted (EIN, ELB, Rev. LUT, SCH).
[572] Rudolph, citing Budde, argues it is not causative, because this would require the insertion of a pronoun to emphasise God as subject (*Das Buch Ruth, Das Hohe Lied, Die Klagelieder*, 231).

bearing a yoke and being sorrowful: 'may he sit/dwell alone and be still/silent, for [judgement] has been lifted up upon him'. The following verses call for him to put his mouth in the dust (in mourning? in shame?) and to 'give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults'. This could reflect sorrowing repentance to avert judgement, supported by the following verses extolling the LORD's compassion (vv. 31-33). In light of this, even if דמם simply means 'be silent/still', it has other possible nuances, from mourning to astonishment (in horror or in grief) or even repentance. It could even be linked to shame, or to patient waiting in trust (as possibly in 3:26).[573]

The versions uniformly translate as 'be silent', as do most modern translations. The contexts of both verses, and the semantic range of דמם, allow for too many possibilities to be certain. It seems safest to translate as 'be silent' or 'dumbstruck', with the nuance of mourning and/or repentance implied by the context.

Ezek. 24:17
הֵאָנֵק **דֹּם**
מֵתִים אַבֶל לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה
פְּאֵרְךָ חָבוֹשׁ עָלֶיךָ
וּנְעָלֶיךָ תָּשִׂים בְּרַגְלֶיךָ
וְלֹא תַעְטֶה עַל־שָׂפָם
וְלֶחֶם אֲנָשִׁים לֹא תֹאכֵל׃

Ezekiel 24 begins with an account of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem allegorically described as the cooking of meat. Jerusalem is condemned for having shed blood without covering it and warned of upcoming judgement. In the second half of the chapter the death of Ezekiel's wife is foretold, and he is given the surprising command not to mourn (v. 16): 'I am about to take the delight of your eyes away from you at a stroke; yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down'. V. 17 commands him not to

[573] Kraus concludes that silence suggests submission to the judgement of God and a simultaneous reaching out for his help. It contrasts with loud complaint and lament, but it is not passivity or resignation (*Klagelieder*, 63).

follow expected mourning practices, but somewhat perplexingly begins with a command to groan (האנק), followed by a command (seemingly) to be silent (דֹּם). Both the unclear syntax and the multivalency of דמם make this difficult to interpret, as do the seeming contradictions in being told first *not* to mourn, then to groan, and then be silent. It is later made clear that the purpose of these instructions was to be a sign to the people that they also should not follow expected mourning practices when the sanctuary is profaned (24:21-24).

The verse-initial הֵאָנֵק is a Niphal meaning 'cry, groan',[574] or 'sigh',[575] and is followed immediately by דֹּם, without any conjunction or other syntactical clue of how they relate to each other. Since both verbs could be either an infinitive construct or an imperative, they could relate to each other as sequentially consecutive imperatives ('groan, then stop/be silent'), as a combination of infinitive plus command ('groan, being silent' or *vice versa*), or in hendiadys ('mourn silently'). Since groaning involves noise (unless אנק represented only internal processes), it seems to contradict not only the following דֹּם, but also the preceding prohibition on mourning.

The third word, מֵתִים, is the Qal participle 'dead men' as pointed, but if changed to מְתִים would simply mean 'men'. It is syntactically awkward, without a clear relation to the first two verbs (all three of which have disjunctive accents). If a preposition is inferred ('groan *for* dead men', as in the Targum and many modern translations), it seems to contradict the immediately following prohibition against mourning. מתים is equally hard to attach to the following clause, אבל לא־תעשה ('mourning do not do'). It cannot be a vocative ('O men'), as the verb has a single addressee. It is not in construct to אבל (nor would 'dead men of

[574] BDB, 60.
[575] *HALOT*, 72

mourning' make sense), and for the more logical meaning 'mourning *for/of* the dead' the opposite word order (אבל מתים) would be expected.

Clarity increases from this point on. Ezekiel is prohibited from usual mourning practices, and is told to put on his head covering,[576] an item associated with joy and not worn in mourning.[577] He is also told to put shoes on his feet and not to cover his beard or moustache, an expression used again in 24:22 in a similar context.[578] The final command of 24:17 is not to eat the bread of men, the meaning of which is disputed. Many have suggested it forbids taking part in meals associated with mourning rituals.[579]

It is hardly surprising that the versions vary widely. LXX interprets דם as 'blood' and מתים as 'loins' (probably reading as מתנים): στεναγμὸς αἵματος ὀσφύος πένθους ἐστίν ('It is a groan of blood, of a loin, of mourning').[580] The Peshitta also interprets דם as 'blood': ܐܠܐ ܒܕܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܬܬܥܢܝ ('but be tormented in the blood of the dead'),[581] a tradition found in some Latin manuscripts (*gemitus sanguinis*).[582] It is tempting to interpret the unpointed דם as 'blood', especially following its four-fold repetition in the accusations against Jerusalem (vv. 6-9). The unpointed דם מתים could potentially mean 'blood of (dead) men', but it seems contradictory to be told 'groan for the blood of men' while also being prohibited from mourning (unless mourning for his wife was prohibited while mourning

[576] על is used only here with חבש, which takes the preposition ל 12 times, and ב twice. The object of the ל usually is the recipient or beneficiary of the verb (binding on, saddling for, etc.). The interpretive significance of על is not certain, but perhaps it alludes to the harshness of the demand, as if he is performing an action against himself rather than for his benefit.
[577] See Isa. 61:3, where mourners are given a head covering, פאר, to take the place of their ashes, אפר.
[578] See also Mic. 3:7 (where covering the face is related to the diviners' shame and God's not answering them), and Lev. 13:45 (where it is a sign of uncleanness for the leper).
[579] See Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 271; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, 1:569 (trans. Clements, 506); Keil, *Ezechiel*, 238.
[580] Hubler, *NETS*, 965.
[581] Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 1581. Mulder translates: 'nur quäle dich über das Blut der Toten' ('Die Neue Pešiṭṭa-Ausgabe', in Lust, ed., *Ezekiel and His Book*, 109).
[582] Latin manuscripts from the *Vetus Latina Database* (http://apps.brepolis.net/vld/Default.aspx).

for all men was commanded). If דם referred to bloodshed and death, however, the plural would be expected. The Vulgate and Targum both translate as 'be silent'. The Vulgate begins with the command *ingemesce* (groan, moan) followed by the active participle *tacens* (being silent), thus 'groan silently'. The Targum begins with אידנק שתוק ('sigh/groan, be silent'),[583] which is close to the Hebrew, then translates Hebrew מתים with על מיתך ('for your dead'), simplifying interpretation by adding both a preposition and a 2ms possessive suffix.[584]

Modern translations also show a striking diversity, all trying to make sense of דם האנק in the context of forbidden mourning. They tend to translate as follows:

1) Do not cry;[585]
2) Sigh/groan silently;[586]
3) Make a quiet noise;[587]
4) Sigh/groan without moving;[588]
5) Sigh secretly.[589]

An interpretation similar to the first is suggested by Driver, though he arrives at it by inverting the order of the words to דם האנק, which he translates 'cease, be silent in repect to groaning' and explains as 'make no loud and public demonstration of grief'.[590] The second is the most common interpretation, and could either be contradictory ('sigh, but be silent'), or refer only to internal sighing/groaning ('sigh silently to yourself'). Another

[583] Jastrow defines Ithpe. דנק as 'sigh, sob' (*Dictionary of the Targumim*, 315). Levey translates 'Sob quietly' (*The Targum of Ezekiel*, 75).
[584] Levey translates עַל מִיתָךְ אַבלָא לָא תַעֲבִיד as 'do not perform the rites of mouring for the dead' (*The Targum of Ezekiel*, 75).
[585] 'Forbear to cry' (KJV/AV); 'Reprime el suspirar' (RVA).
[586] 'Sigh in silence' (JPS); 'Groan silently' (NASB); 'Sigh, but not aloud' (NRSV); 'Soupire en silence' (LSG); 'Seufze still' (SCH); 'Gime en silencio' (LBA).
[587] 'Moan softly' (NJPS); 'Groan quietly' (NIV); 'Nur leise stöhnen' (EIN).
[588] 'Stöhne bewegungslos' (ELB); see also discussion on Zimmerli below.
[589] 'Heimlich darfst du seufzen' (Rev. LUT).
[590] Driver compares the construction to חָדְלוּ רֹגֶז in Job 3:17, which he translates 'they cease in respect to agitation' ('Ezekiel: Linguistic and Textual Problems', 155). The phrase in Job, however, is a *qatal* verb followed by a noun, so does not syntactically compare to the phrase in Ezekiel.

approach, similar to the fourth, is taken by Zimmerli, who recognises that דמם means 'cease moving' and interprets דם מתים as the inertia or motionlessness of the dead, or rigid immobility in the face of death (linked to Aaron's response in Lev. 10:3). He translates 'Groan in deathly stiffness'[591] and is followed by Fuhs, who translates 'groan, be stiff like [the] dead'.[592] Although I agree with Zimmerli's analysis of דמם, his interpretation of this phrase seems forced and contextually and syntactically difficult (assigning a nominal value to the imperative דֹּם). His interpretation is that Ezekiel can grieve, but only 'in deep, silent desolation', combining both 'deathly stiffness' and silence.[593] Redpath gives a similar analysis: 'His grief is to be a silent inward sorrow unaccompanied by external signs of woe'.[594]

Different syntactic arrangements and meanings of דמם are considered by Friebel, who reasons that because אנק has an auditory referent, דמם should as well. He interprets the verbs together as: 'groan (but) be silent (when doing so)', suggesting that Ezekiel is 'allowed to experience internally the grief, but not to outwardly manifest such'.[595] Friebel's argument is based on an analysis of the verbs as two imperatives, the first (האנק) qualified by the second (דם).[596] There seems to be little biblical precedence, however, for this type of relationship between verbs, even though it has been the traditional solution.

Excursus on the sequence of verbal forms

Asyndetic imperatives

Having surveyed the more than 260 references that have back-to-back imperatives without any intervening conjunction, I found that they usually indicate consecutive actions, very

[591] 'Stöhne in tödliche Starre': *Ezechiel*, 1:568-69 (trans. Clements, 502).
[592] 'Stöhne, erstarre gleich Toten': 'Tradition und Redaktion' in Lust, ed., *Ezekiel and His Book*, 274.
[593] *Ezechiel*, 1:574 (trans. Clements, 506).
[594] The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, 126.
[595] Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts, 336.
[596] He refers to GK §120h, on the asyndetic coordination of complementary verbal ideas, but only one of the examples given (Jer. 4:5) consists of two imperatives.

frequently begun by a verb of motion (בוא, הלך, שוב, ירד, עלה, קום). Others were syntactically divided by an ethnach on the first of the two imperatives, so did not contribute to this survey. A small portion of asyndetically joint imperatives were verbal collocations with a hendiadic meaning, e.g., with מהר ('do something quickly'), שוב ('do something again'), and חלל ('begin to do something'). In even fewer cases the same verb was repeated or the verbs were synonymous (e.g., 'listen, hear': שמע האזינה). Only in two or three cases did the second imperative modify the first.

1) Jer. 4:5: קראו מלאו ('cry, fill') has been interpreted to mean 'cry aloud' (ESV), though also separately as 'cry, gather together' (KJV/AV);
2) Jer. 13:18: השפילו שבו ('be low, sit') has been interpreted as 'take a lowly seat' (ESV), though also separately as 'humble yourselves, sit down' (KJV/AV); and
3) Ezek. 21:16: התאחדי הימני השימי השמילי, four consecutive commands interpreted variously as 'cut sharply to the right; set yourself to the left' (ESV), or 'go thee one way or other, *either* on the right hand, *or* on the left' (KJV/AV).

With so few examples, it does not seem likely that דם האנק, if two imperatives, should be interpreted with the second adverbially modifying the first ('groan silently'). Instead, since consecutive (asyndetic) imperatives most often refer to separate but sequential actions, האנק דם should be translated: 'groan, (then) be silent' or 'groan, (then) cease/be still (from your groaning)'. This interpretation fits the context, and would allow Ezekiel a brief window in which to mourn, after which he should stop and not proceed with any of the externally visible mourning rituals. Alternatively, if דמם means 'mourn', the two verbs could function as synonymous parallels: 'groan, mourn'. This is a less common a function of double imperatives, and would be contextually difficult (not to mention semantically uncertain), suggesting contradictory commands to mourn (v. 17) and not mourn (vv. 16, 18ff).

Imperative+Infinitive

דם האנק could alternatively be an imperative followed by an infinitive, but this combination is found only six times without an intervening preposition or conjunction. In three of these, the infinitive is the direct object of the imperative,[597] which is not possible here. Twice the combination occurs with היטיב ('do well'), and the final instance does not count as the first verb has an ethnach. This combination is therefore unlikely.

Infinitive+Imperative

The opposite order, an infinitive followed immediately by an imperative, is more common, but the bulk of these references (101 out of 117) were with לאמר followed by an imperative

[597] Isa. 1:16; Jer. 15:15; 18:20.

in quoted speech. Most other cases were syntactically split by an ethnach or other major pause under the first verb. In only one case (Ps. 4:1) were the verbs syntactically related, and both had suffixes: בקראי ענני (in my crying out, answer me), which is not close enough to האנק דם to help.

If the combination infinitive+imperative were more common, and if an infinitive as direct object could *precede* an imperative, it would be attractive to interpret הֵאָנֵק as an object of דֹּם: 'cease groaning'. The results of my survey, however, show that this is unattested and unlikely.

Chiastic parallels

One further observation must be made on the close contextual parallels between 24:16-17 and 24:22-23, which repeats the prohibition on specific mourning practices but is addressed to the people. The prohibitions are listed in reverse order in what seems to be the resumption of an interrupted chiasm.[598]

instructions to Ezekiel			**instructions to the people**		
24:16b-17a			24:22b		
A **don't mourn**	וְלֹא **תִסְפֹּד** וְלֹא **תִבְכֶּה** וְלוֹא **תָבֹוא** **דִּמְעָתֶךָ**׃ הֵאָנֵק ו דֹּם מֵתִים אֵבֶל לֹא־ תַעֲשֶׂה	yet you shall not **mourn** or **weep**, nor shall your **tears run down**. Sigh, but not aloud; make no mourning for the dead.[599]	**C′** **don't cover moustache/lips or eat bread**	עַל־שָׂפָם לֹא תַעְטֹו וְלֶחֶם אֲנָשִׁים לֹא תֹאכֵלוּ׃	you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men.
24:17b			24:23a		
B **wear turban and shoes**	פְּאֵרְךָ חֲבֹושׁ עָלֶיךָ וּנְעָלֶיךָ תָּשִׂים בְּרַגְלֶיךָ	Bind on your turban, and put your shoes on your feet;	**B′** **wear turban and shoes**	וּפְאֵרֵכֶם עַל־ רָאשֵׁיכֶם וְנַעֲלֵיכֶם בִּרַגְלֵיכֶם	Your turbans shall be on your heads and your shoes on your feet
24:17c			24:23b		
C **don't cover moustache/lips or eat bread**	וְלֹא תַעְטֶה עַל־ שָׂפָם וְלֶחֶם אֲנָשִׁים לֹא תֹאכֵל׃	do not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of men	**A′** **don't mourn**	לֹא **תִסְפְּדוּ** וְלֹא **תִבְכּוּ** וּנְמַקּוֹתֵכֶם בַּעֲוֹנֹתֵיכֶם וְנָהַמְתֶּם אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו׃	you shall not **mourn** or **weep**, but you shall rot away in your iniquities and groan to one another.

[598] Bold font marks repeated verbs and grey highlight identifies the text expected to correspond in A and A′.
[599] English translations from the ESV.

In this clear reverse ordering of nearly identical commands, the difficult beginning of v. 17 (here highlighted in A) corresponds in position to the end of v. 23 (highlighted in A′): ‘you will rot [or melt, dissolve] in your iniquities and groan [or growl, roar] each man to his brother’. It is not easy to determine if they are meant to be semantically as well as situationally parallel, but there is certainly a correspondence between האנק and ונהמתם, both indicating an audible but wordless noise communicating distress. It is possible that the perceived contradiction between ‘groan’ and ‘do not mourn’ in 24:16-17 is unfounded, since also in 24:23 ונהמתם immediately follows a probition against mourning. The two *w^{e}qatal* verbs could imply future action, but following as they do on negative commands, could also be imperatives: rot away and groan. If the commands in A and A′ to groan and not mourn are not contradictory, it suggests that the prohibition against mourning refers specifically to human mourning practices (including weeping), while the command to groan refers to the instinctual and expected reaction of distress. If so, האנק of v. 17 can be interpreted as ‘groan’ (internally), and the paseq indicating a minor break allows for a pause before דם.

It is still difficult to interpret what follows האנק, although the phrase אבל לא־תעשה could be taken as an introductory heading for the following prohibitions against mourning. The difficulty with מתים might be solved by revocalising מֻתִּים, which could correspond to איש אל־אחיו of v. 23. The parallels between A and A′ are not perfect, however, and v. 23 might not help with v. 17 apart from the suggestion that there is *not* a contradiction between the commands ‘groan’ and ‘do not mourn/weep’.

One further suggestion for interpretation of דֹּם is that it might be an unattested nominal form similar to שֹׁד (‘devastation’) from the geminate שׁדד (Qal: ‘to devastate’). A nominal

דֹּם from דמם could thus potentially mean ‘cessation’ or even ‘silence’, and, with the later contamination of דמם-דמה, even ‘destruction’. If so, דם מתים could be two nouns in construct as the object of the imperative האנק: ‘Groan (for the) silence/cessation/destruction of dead men’, which would contrast with the forbidden mourning for his wife, and would fit with the parallel context of v. 23 telling men they would/should groan to one another for their sins.

Conclusion

In light of the preceding observations, I suggest the following three possible interpretations:

1) Sequential imperatives: ‘Groan, (then) be silent/stop’.

   Alternatively: ‘Groan, be astonished’.

This allows Ezekiel a brief period of grieving, after which he has to cease and refrain from all external manifestations of mourning. It fits the meaning of דמם elsewhere as ‘cease’, even of emotion (Job 30:27). It would be stronger with a *waw* before דם, but is not impossible given the use of other asyndetic imperatives. A difficulty, of course, is that v. 16 strictly prohibits mourning and weeping, and Ezekiel has not previously been said to be mourning (so how could he be told to stop?). The prohibition in v. 16 would have to be either anticipatory or briefly contradicted (‘don’t mourn, but when you do groan, cease’). The alternative is based on cognate meanings and could help remove the seeming paradox: ‘be dismayed and in shock, but do not participate in any usual mourning rituals’.

2) Synonymous imperatives: ‘Groan/sigh, mourn the dead’.

If דמם can be interpreted as ‘mourn’ (though I am not convinced it can), then מתים (‘dead people’) could be the object of both nearly synonymous verbs. The juxtaposition of commands to mourn with the following prohibitions against mourning practices would require that he be allowed to mourn inwardly, just not outwardly, a nuance also possible

if דמם is interpreted as 'be silent': he can groan (inwardly and silently), but not show outward grief.[600]

3) דם as a nominal form: 'Groan for the silencing/destruction of the dead'.

   Alternatively: 'Groan for the blood of the dead'.

This interpretation is speculative, and based on a hypothetical nominal form meaning 'silencing' or 'destruction', or on revocalisation to the construct form דַּם (though the plural would be expected). Its strength is a closer correspondence to the parallel in v. 23; its weakness is the speculative nature of the nominal דֹּם and the uncertain relationship to the prohibitions against Ezekiel mourning his wife.

The difficulties of האנק דם mean that syntactical clues must be supplied for any of the suggested interpretations: '*even if you* groan *inside*, remain silent'; or 'groan, *and then* stop'; or even 'groan, mourn (the) dead, *but don't (do mourning practices)*'.

Amos 5:13
לָכֵן הַמַּשְׂכִּיל בָּעֵת הַהִיא **יִדֹּם** כִּי עֵת רָעָה הִיא׃

In Amos 5:13 המשׂכיל, the prudent one, is the subjectof ידם, which he does because the time is evil. This 'evil' is described in the preceding verses 10-12: the people have been judged guilty of taking bribes, not caring for the poor, and rejecting those who speak truth. The following verses issue a series of commands to counteract the condemned behaviour: seek good, hate evil, love good, establish justice (vv. 14-15).

The connection of silence with the 'evil time' is perhaps unexpected, though silence with חרשׁ is frequently associated with wisdom. Commentators argue over the nature of the

[600] Herrmann included both mourning and quiet in his translation: 'sigh, mourn quietly' ('seufze, wehklage leise'); he mentions Akkadian *damâmu* in defence of his translation (*Ezechiel*, 149).

silence[601] and the identity of the prudent man.[602] Support for interpreting 'be silent' is found in Prov. 10:19, where the prudent one restrains his lips (וחשך שפתיו משכיל),[603] and in Ben Sira 20:7, where the wise are silent 'until a time' (חכם יחריש עד עת). The prudent man's silence here could demonstrate self-restraint or even condemnation. Other interpretations of דמם are possible, however. It could simply mean 'cease' in reference to restraint from engagement in the evil around him (though דמם is not used elsewhere for restraint). Some have suggested that דמם here is mourning for the sins of the people: 'the prudent one moans, for it is a time of misfortune'.[604] Contextual support for mourning is found in the repeated mention of wailing, lamentation and mourning in vv. 16-17.[605] I do not think, however, that 'mourn' is a more likely interpretation of דמם than 'be silent', and it is equally possible to interpret as 'be astonished/dumbfounded', in line with other cognate evidence. 'Be silent' seems to be the least problematic interpretation, and is found in all versions as most modern translations.

Ps. 4:5[4]
רִגְזוּ וְאַל־תֶּחֱטָאוּ אִמְרוּ בְלִבַבְכֶם עַל־מִשְׁכַּבְכֶם **וְדֹמּוּ** סֶלָה׃

In Psalm 4 the psalmist expresses his distress and asks to be heard and answered, then ends with a statement of trust and peace. A series of four commands ending with דמו is given in v. 5[4], but it is not clear if they relate as semantic parallels or opposites, nor if they are in chiasm or chronologically sequenced. Interpretation is made more uncertain by the polysemy of three of the four verbs.

[601] Keil thinks of the silence as appropriate in the face of corruption and the futility of admonishment (*Zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, 203). Wolff, rearranging these verses to follow the announcement of judgement in vv. 16-17, suggests the silence is in response to God's declared judgement (*Dodekapropheton:8 Amos*, 293).
[602] Harper argues that silence is inconsistent with the teaching of Amos, and that a prophet must always speak (*Amos and Hosea*, 121).
[603] Also Prov. 11:12; 17:28; Job 13:5.
[604] Paul, *Amos*, 156; cf. *DCH*, which lists this verse under דמם II, 'weep' (2:451). Others who translate 'mourn' understand המשכיל as referring to the prosperous. See Jackson, 'Amos 5,13 Contextually Understood', 435; Smith, 'Amos 5:13: The Deadly Silence of the Prosperous', 291.
[605] See Paul, *Amos*, 175.

רגז, the first verb, means ‘tremble’, often in response to fear or excitement.[606] It can be translated ‘be agitated, quiver, quake, be excited, perturbed’[607] and can also refer to quarreling (Gen. 45:24) or mourning (2 Sam. 19:1[18:33]). As it is here followed by the negative imperative ‘and do not sin’, it could imply an acceptance of the inevitability of volatile emotions, followed by an adversative *waw*: ‘be agitated, but do not sin when you are’; or ‘even when your emotions run very high, do not sin’. It is often translated ‘be angry’, perhaps in an attempt to connect the verb more closely with sinning.[608]

Interpretation of the third command, אמרו בלבבכם, ranges from the literal ‘speak in your hearts’ to simply ‘think/ponder in your hearts/minds’. In biblical usage speaking in one’s heart usually refers to secret thoughts, often devious, self-deceptive, or simply incorrect,[609] and it refers to perceptions and plans rather than to spoken words. Here it is followed by על־משכבכם (‘on your beds’), implying either privacy or the quiet of nighttime.

The fourth command, וְדֹמּוּ, is also ambiguous. If דמם means ‘be silent’, the last two verbs together could mean ‘think silently to yourself’, or, if sequential: ‘think/plan and (then) be silent’. If in opposition, they could mean: ‘speak/plan in secret, *but* be silent (about it)’, but no clue is given as to the contents of the thoughts, and the verse-final *selah* makes connection to the following verse unlikely. If דמם instead means ‘cease, be still’, it could

606 *HALOT*, 1183.
607 BDB, 919.
608 It could derive from the LXX or its reception into the New Testament in Ephesians 4:26, where the first line of this verse is quoted in a context clearly dealing with anger.
609 E.g., Deut. 8:17; Isa. 14:13; Obad. 1:3; Zeph. 1:12; Ps. 10:11. Bentzen points out that אמר בלבב is usually followed by the content of the thought (often God warning people ‘don’t think/say to yourself’ followed by a quotation of what they were thinking), so he concludes this text is corrupt (*Fortolkning til de Gammeltestamentlige Salmer*, 17).

be in opposition to trembling or to speaking/thinking in one's heart. Some suggest that דמם here means 'mourn' as a response to sin.[610]

The following seem to be possibilities of interpretation for the two lines of the verse:

Parallel lines	1) when you tremble in great emotion (fear, anger, excitement), do not sin 2) when you think/plan in secret (in hearts, on beds), do it silently (i.e., keeping them to yourself)
Second line as illustrative	1) be agitated, but do not sin 2) (just as when) you 'speak' in your hearts (i.e., think to yourselves), and yet are silent
Chiastic lines (middle verbs parallel, 1st and 4th contrasting)	1) if (*or* when) you are trembling/agitated 2) do not sin, (but) 2′) keep your thoughts to yourself (to help you not to sin) 1′) and hold still/cease (from agitation)[611]

The versions vary widely, LXX with κατανύγητε ('be pricked/troubled', or 'stunned'), and Vulgate with *conpungimini* (also 'be pricked' or 'feel remorse').[612] Unlike the MT, they link 'on your beds' to ודמו: καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς κοίταις ὑμῶν κατανύγητε ('and on your beds be pricked').[613] Both interpret רגז as 'be angry' and אמר בלבב quite literally as 'speak in your hearts'. The interpretation of ודמו as repentance relates directly to the first line: 'be angry and do not sin, instead (speak and) repent'. The much expanded Targum interprets speaking in one's heart as prayer (וצלו), and ודמו as remembering days of death (ואדכרו יומי מיתותא), possibly associating דמו with Niphal דמה ('be destroyed'),[614] although it could simply be an exegetical tradition. The Peshitta is close to the Hebrew except for the final

[610] Dahood, *Psalms*, 1:24; NJPS has 'sigh'.
[611] Tentative support for the opposition of רגז and דמם is found in Prov. 29:9, where the fool's action רגז results in a lack of quiet (נחת). דמם could be opposed to רגז here as well if understood as 'be quiet/still.'
[612] *Iuxta Hebraeos* has *tacete*, 'be silent'.
[613] Pietersma gives the alternative translations: 'stunned into silence' or 'feel compunction' (*NETS*, 549).
[614] Suggested by Stec, *The Targum of Psalms*, 32 n.9.

verb, 𐤓𐤂𐤆 (from *rny* ‘think, ponder’), either from graphic confusion or perhaps interpreting as from a Piel of דמה I. Modern translations tend to have ‘be still’ (in opposition to רגז as ‘tremble’),[615] or ‘be silent’ (in opposition to רגז as ‘be angry’),[616] though some translations oppose trembling to silence.[617]

דמו should most likely be translated ‘be still’, which could command: 1) stillness in opposition to emotional outburst (רגז), or 2) silence/stillness as a parallel to ‘speak in your hearts’ (as a way of fulfilling the command ‘do not sin’). Stillness as a parallel to ‘trust’ is also supported by the context (v. 6[5]). Another option is to translate as ‘cease’ in parallel to ‘do not sin’ (i.e., ‘but stop’). The idea of repentance also fits the context, but is evidenced only in the LXX and Vulgate.

Ps. 31:18[17]
יְהוָ֗ה אַל־אֵ֫בוֹשָׁה כִּ֥י קְרָאתִ֑יךָ יֵ֖בֹשׁוּ רְשָׁעִ֣ים **יִדְמ֣וּ** לִשְׁאֽוֹל׃

In Psalm 31 the psalmist alternates between cries for deliverance and expressions of trust in and thanksgiving for God’s deliverance. In verse 18[17], his plea that he not be put to shame is contrasted with the opposite desire for the wicked, that they be put to shame and ידמו to Sheol, which could be either parallel to their shame, or a result of it.[618] Alternatively, if the syntax of the first line is assumed for the second (by ellipsis), a causal factor could be implied: ‘may the wicked be ashamed *because* they ידמו to Sheol’.

Interpretation of דמם in relation to Sheol is difficult: are they ‘being silent/still’ to Sheol, or ‘ceasing’? The following verse calls for lying lips to be mute (תאלמנה שפתי שקר), which

[615] JPS: ‘Tremble...and be still’; ELB: ‘Erbebt...aber seid still!’
[616] NRSV: ‘When you are disturbed…be silent’; NIV: ‘In your anger…be silent’.
[617] A pattern in French and Spanish: LSG: ‘Tremblez…taisez -vous'; RVA: ‘Temblad…callad’; also TOB, LBA.
[618] Briggs explains the request as ‘let the wicked…be shamed in defeat and slaughter, and so *be made silent, dumb’.* Their silence is not only speechlessness, but also helplessness, and they would go down to Sheol ‘in national death’. He separates ידמו and לשאול as two separate events (*Psalms,* 1:270).

could reinforce the idea of silence: the death of the wicked (i.e., their going to Sheol) will silence them and mute their lying lips. Silence might also be implied by the contrast made between the psalmist, who cries to God (קראתיך), and the wicked, who do not ('are silent').

A more natural interpretation, however, would be 'they are destroyed/perishing', with the ל indicating Sheol as their destination. This could be achieved by revocalising as a Niphal of דמה (יִדָּמוּ).[619] Alternatively, ידמו could be from דמה I ('be like'), which is the expected meaning of דמה when followed by the preposition ל. The psalmist would then be wishing for the wicked to be made like Sheol. Without other examples of such a wish, however, it does not seem viable except as synecdoche, with Sheol taken to represent all who are in it, or even death itself: 'may they become like the dead/like death'.

Surprisingly, none of the versions interpret דמה as 'be like'. The LXX (30:18) has καταχθείησαν: 'may they be brought down', which seems to be based on context, unless it derives from the passive of a perceived רמה. The Vulgate follows LXX with *deducantur* ('may they be brought down'), though the *Iuxta Hebraeos* has *taceant*. The Targum translates with two verbs: ישתקון ויחתון ('may they be silent and go down'). The Peshitta also uses *nḥt*, 'go down' (ܢܚܬ), but has no verb meaning 'be silent'. Modern translations reveal two main tendencies: 1) motion towards Sheol, 'descend in silence'[620] and 2) location in Sheol, where in death all are silent.[621] The simplest interpretation, I believe, is to take ידמו as from דמה, meaning 'be destroyed, perish'.

[619] Duhm compares it to 1 Sam. 2:9 (ורשעים בחשך ידמו), where ידמו is pointed as a Niphal (*Die Psalmen*, 127).
[620] NRSV: 'go dumbfounded to Sheol'; EIN: 'verstummen und hinabfahren ins Reich der Toten'; LSG: 'descendent en silence au séjour des morts'; Kraus: 'verstummen zur Scheol' (*Psalmen*, 1:246).
[621] JPS: 'let them be put to silence in the nether-world'; SCH: 'verstummen im Totenreich'; TOB: 'que les impies soient déçus et réduits au silence des enfers!'

4c) Derived forms

The six derived forms are treated separately as their semantic value and root derivation are not always clear.

i) דומה

וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בִּשְׁמֹתָם לְתוֹלְדֹתָם בְּכֹר יִשְׁמָעֵאל נְבָיֹת וְקֵדָר וְאַדְבְּאֵל וּמִבְשָׂם: וּמִשְׁמָע **וְדוּמָה** וּמַשָּׂא:	**Gen. 25:13-14**
אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹתָם בְּכוֹר יִשְׁמָעֵאל נְבָיוֹת וְקֵדָר וְאַדְבְּאֵל וּמִבְשָׂם: מִשְׁמָע **וְדוּמָה** מַשָּׂא חֲדַד וְתֵימָא:	**1Chron. 1:29-30**
מַשָּׂא **דוּמָה** אֵלַי קֹרֵא מִשֵּׂעִיר שֹׁמֵר מַה־מִּלַּיְלָה שֹׁמֵר מַה־מִּלָּיְלָה:	**Isa. 21:11**

דוּמָה is the name of a son of Ishmael (Gen. 25; 1 Chron. 1) and also a place name (the object of an oracle in Isa. 21).[622] The place Dumah is sometimes interpreted as 'Edom',[623] with the connection to Seir in Isa. 21:11. LXX translates Τὸ ὅραμα τῆς Ιδουμαίας. It could also be an unknown place name, or could imply a connection to Ishmael's sons, with the repetition of both דוּמָה and מַשָּׂא (in opposite order). No clear semantic value is attributed to the names, however,[624] so they are not pursued further.

לוּלֵי יְהוָה עֶזְרָתָה לִּי כִּמְעַט שָׁכְנָה **דוּמָה** נַפְשִׁי:	**Psa. 94:17**
לֹא הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ־יָהּ וְלֹא כָּל־יֹרְדֵי **דוּמָה**:	**Psa. 115:17**

In the Psalms דוּמָה twice refers to a place representing death. Its derivation is uncertain, but fits best the hypothetical דום.

Psalm 94 contrasts the righteous, who count on the LORD's help, with the wicked, who will be destroyed. The psalmist asks who will help him against the wicked, then says: 'if the LORD had not been my help, my soul almost (or soon) would have inhabited דומה'. The context suggests דומה is a place where God does *not* help against the wicked;

[622] In Joshua 15:52 the place name רוּמָה (a city of Judah) becomes דוּמָה in Targum Jonathan.
[623] NASB, EIN, LBA.
[624] Delitzsch suggests relation to דום, referring to silence and the land of the dead (as in the Pss) (*The Prophecies of Isaiah*, transl. Hastie and Bickerton, 384).

therefore the soul's inhabitation of it implies its 'cessation/silence' (i.e., death). Haupt, having concluded (albeit questionably) that דום means 'stay, sojourn', defines Dumah as 'eternity', equating it with Arabic *dā'imîi̯ah* ('eternity') and the בית עולם of Eccl. 12:5.[625] If דומה derives from דמה instead, it could be associated with destruction.

The LXX and Vulgate interpret as Hades and hell (*infernum*), while the Targum translates 'in silence' (בשתיקותא). The Peshitta, interestingly, translates 'in misery' (ܒܥܝܢܬܐ), perhaps influenced by phonetic similarities to Hebrew דומה, as well as by the context. Modern translations tend to translate 'dwell in a place of silence'[626]: 'abode of silence', or 'land of silence',[627] and some specify the idea of death ('Totenstille').[628]

דומה is linked more clearly to death and the underworld in Ps. 115:17: 'the dead do not praise the LORD, nor any going down to Dumah'. Those 'going down' are parallel in position and meaning to 'the dead' at the beginning of the verse, and they are contrasted to the psalm's living speakers, who will bless the LORD forever (v. 18). The phrase 'going down to Dumah' is reminiscent of the more common collocation ירד שׁאול(ה) ('going down to Sheol'), which is equated with death and often describes the fate of the wicked.[629] Other collocations with ירד also refer to death, with destinations such as dust[630] or the pit.[631] This similarity with more common collocations confirms that going down to דומה refers to death or destruction.

[625] Haupt, 'Some Assyrian Etymologies', 20n.13. His conclusions are based on significant emendations and manipulation of cognate information.
[626] KJV/AV, JPS, TNK.
[627] NASB, NRSV, LSG, EIN, Rev. LUT and more.
[628] SCH, NIV: 'the silence of death'; Delitzsch: 'Todtenstille': 'die Stille des Grabes und des Hades' (*Die Psalmen*, 571, 574).
[629] E.g., Num. 16:33; 1 Sam. 2:6; Ps. 55:15; Job 7:9; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:17.
[630] Ps. 22:30 [29]: כל־יורדי עפר.
[631] בור (Ps. 28:1; 30:4 [3]; 88:5 [4]; 143:7, etc.); שחת (Ps. 30:10 [9]) / באר שחת (55:24 [23]).

The LXX and Vulgate interpret as in Ps. 94:17, but the Targum translates more explicitly as 'the grave of the earth' (בית קבורת אדמתא). The Peshitta interprets as 'darkness' (ܚܫܘܟܐ), possibly based on context. Modern translations almost universally interpret as 'go down to silence', without adding place specifiers as for 94:17.

Although the interpretation of דומה as the place of the dead is clear, its semantic derivation is not. It might relate to 'silence', 'cessation', or even 'destruction' (דמה), though perhaps its ambiguity increases its poetic usefulness. The likelihood that Hebrew דומה refers to silence in connection with death is strengthened by similar associations in Egyptian texts,[632] though further research is to be desired.

ii) דָּמָה

The form דָּמָה is used only once in a difficult context, and its interpretation is uncertain.

Ezek. 27:32
וְנָשְׂאוּ אֵלַיִךְ בְּנִיהֶם קִינָה וְקוֹנְנוּ עָלַיִךְ מִי כְצוֹר **כְּדָמָה** בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם׃

Ezekiel 27 is a lament over Tyre, contrasting her former glory (vv. 3-9) and prolific commerce (vv. 12-25) with her coming ruin (vv. 26-31). In verse 32 sailors and seafarers compare Tyre to a דָּמָה in the midst of the sea, and then lament her former glory that is being turned to ruin and disgrace (vv. 33-36).

The precise meaning of כְּדָמָה is unclear, but clearly has negative connotations. It derives either from דמה II, 'destroy', or דמה I, 'be like', although with the two כ prepositions the latter meaning seems redundant and also lacks its expected complement ('who is like Tyre, as one like ____?'). As דמה II, it might be a Qal passive, 'destroyed', although the

[632] The realm of the dead is known as the 'domain of silence', 'the town of silence', or 'the domain of rest' (Tromp, *Primitive conceptions of death in the nether world in the Old Testament*, 77; also Zandee, *Death as an Enemy according to Ancient Egyptian Conceptions*, 93).

Qal only twice means ‘destroy’, and the Niphal is far more common.[633] It is unlikely to be a finite verb with the preceding כ, so would have to be a (hypothetical) participial form: ‘one who has been destroyed’. Some interpret as ‘silenced’, but this is not a demonstrable meaning of דמה, so דמם must then be assumed.[634] Two apparently independent suggestions have been made that כְּדָמָה comes from a root כדם, which would simplify the syntax, allowing the form to be interpreted as a defectively spelt feminine participle. Based on an Arabic verb اكدم, meaning ‘be captive’, the translation is suggested: ‘What city is like Tyre, captive in the midst of the sea?’[635] Since the root is otherwise unattested in Hebrew, however, and the context is one of utter destruction rather than captivity, a strong case cannot be made for this interpretation. Others suggest a connection to mourning: ‘Who is like Tyre, when she was moaning in the midst of the seas? [636] This does not easily fit the context, however, as Tyre is the object of lament rather than its speaker; furthermore, mourning could not be a meaning for דמה.

דָּמָה might instead be a nominal form, perhaps a defective spelling for דוּמָה, the place to which the dead descend. There is no verb here indicating descent (as there is in Ps. 115:17), but if דוּמָה were a well-understood metaphorical place, Tyre could be described as ‘the place of the dead’, even while it is also described as ‘in the sea’. Dahood suggests the nominal meaning ‘fortress’ based on Akkadian *dimtu* (‘tower’) and Ugaritic *dmt*, but I do not believe the evidence is strong enough. [637]

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[633] Zimmerli suggests emendation to the Niphal נדמה (as does the *BHS* apparatus and Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 312), but then interprets as ‘made equal, comparable’ based on the Targum (*Ezekiel 2*, transl. Martin, 52).
[634] BDB does claim derivation from דמם (by adding a dagesh: דַּמָּה) and translates ‘one silenced’ (199).
[635] Reider, ‘Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew’, 279; Guillaume, ‘The Meaning of כדמה in Ezek. XXVII. 32’, 324-25.
[636] Block, *Ezekiel*, 83, 85-86.
[637] Dahood, ‘Accadian-Ugaritic *dmt* in Ezekiel 27,32’, 83-84. He is followed by TOB: ‘Qui était comme Tyr, forteresse au milieu de la mer?’ and JPS: ‘who was there like Tyre, fortified in the midst of the sea?’; Tromp also interprets דומה as ‘fortress’ in the Psalms (*Primitive conceptions of death in the nether world in the Old Testament*, 76).

Versions and modern translations differ significantly. The LXX seems not to translate כדמה.[638] The Vulgate has *obmutuit:* 'who is like Tyre, who has become silent/mute in the midst of the sea?' The Targum translates 'be like' (דְּדָמֵי), changing the verse to answer the question 'Who is like Tyre?': 'There is no one like her in the seas' (מַן כְּצוֹר לֵית דְּדָמֵי לַהּ בְּגוֹ יַמָּמַיָּא). The Peshitta translates 'dwell' (ܝܬܒ): 'Who is like Tyre who dwells in the midst of the sea?' Modern translations vary, with 'destroyed',[639] 'silenced',[640] 'silent',[641] and even 'be like'.[642]

The easiest interpretation of this verse, keeping the syntax and pointing, is to understand דֻּמָּה as a defectively written דומה, which refers to the place of the dead and is often associated with punishment of the wicked, suiting the context here.

iii) דֻּמִיָּה/דומיה

דומיה also likely derives from דום, either with a feminine suffix יה- or as a gentilic feminine adjective of the metaphorical place name דומה. The nominal pattern ◌ִוּיָה is not common,[643] and is found primarily in personal names such as Uriah, Tobiah, and the nouns תּוּשִׁיָּה (Prov. 2:7) and תְּרוּמָיָה (Ezek. 48:12), which is insufficient evidence to deduce a meaning for the pattern. Based on the meanings of דמם (and assuming דום is a byform), דומיה should refer to cessation, stillness, or silence. However, if it derives from דמה, it could mean 'destruction', or 'she who destroys' (as a fs participle), or if related to דומה could refer to someone from the land of the dead, all of which seem unlikely. Since the

[638] The following verse begins with the question πόσον τινὰ εὗρες μισθὸν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης: 'How great a wage have you found from the sea?' (Hubler, *NETS,* 967).
[639] KJV/AV, NRSV, and more.
[640] TNK, NIV.
[641] NASB, SCH.
[642] EIN: 'Wer war Tyrus vergleichbar, mitten im Meer?' Ges18 has 'wer war Tyros gleich' (254).
[643] G.R. Driver calls it 'impossible', explaining it as a 'conflation' ('A Confused Hebrew Root', 10).

four uses of דומיה do not seem to have a single meaning, its meaning must be deduced separately in each context.

אֱלֹהַי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלֹא תַעֲנֶה וְלַיְלָה **וְלֹא־דוּמִיָּה** לִי׃	**Ps. 22:3[2]**
אַךְ אֶל־אֱלֹהִים **דּוֹמִיָּה** נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנּוּ יְשׁוּעָתִי׃	**Ps. 62:2[1]**

Ps. 22:3[2]

Ps. 22 begins with the plaintive cry 'my God, my God, why have you forsaken me', followed in v. 3[2] by the related complaint: 'I cry by day, but you do not answer, by night, but there is no דומיה for me'.[644] Although 'not answer' and no דומיה are not precise syntactic parallels, the psalmist's lack of דומיה is clearly a state of distress resulting from God not answering him.[645] It can be inferred that if God *had* answered the psalmist, he *would* have had דומיה, which has therefore been translated 'rest' or 'respite'.[646] It has also been interpreted as a lack of silence in parallel to the psalmists' repeated crying out: 'I cry…and am not silent'[647] or 'there is no silence for me'.[648] The same idea can be communicated with 'no respite' or no cessation:[649] 'his agony continues without interruption, his cry for help has no pause'.[650] The idea of unceasing complaint is emphasised by the adverbs 'by day' and 'by night', and the lack of answer leads to 'bitterness of abandonment'.[651] דומיה could thus be understood as either relief and rest (in contrast to distress), or as silence and cessation (in contrast to repeated cries).

[644] אין might be expected to negate דומיה as a noun, though לא could be used for emphasis (GK §152d).
[645] In other biblical references God's refusal to answer is associated with punishment for disobedience, possibly indicating the type of distress the psalmist feels here. See Job 35:12; Prov. 1:28; Mic. 3:4; in relation to Saul: 1 Sam. 14:37, 28:6, 28:15.
[646] TNK: 'respite'; NASB, NRSV, and others: 'rest'; LSG: 'repos'; most German translations have 'Ruhe' (ranging from 'silence' and 'quiet' to 'rest'). Delitzsch: 'ohne das mir Ruhe wird' (*Psalmen,* 221, 228).
[647] KJV/AV, NIV, also Norwegian NBK.
[648] 'Die Nacht kennt kein Stillschweigen bei mir' (Kittel, *Psalmen,* 80).
[649] JPS: 'there is no surcease for me'.
[650] Briggs, *Psalms,* 1:193.
[651] Kraus: 'Vom unablässigen Rufen und Klagen spricht [v.] 3. Das Leiden erstreckt sich über einen langen Zeitraum. Jahwe antwortet nicht. Darin liegt die eigentliche Bitterkeit des Verlassenseins' (*Psalmen,* 1:178).

The Septuagint translates: καὶ οὐκ εἰς ἄνοιαν ἐμοί ('and it becomes no folly for me'),[652] and the Vulgate follows suit with *insipientia* (unwisdom, folly). Only the Targum translates with 'silence': לא שתיקותא לי. The Peshitta has ܠܐ ܐܬܚܫ ܠܝ ('you do not remain/wait for me').

Ps. 62:2[1]

In Ps. 62:1[1] דומיה is associated with God's deliverance and answering. It parallels דּוֹמִי in v. 6[5] very closely, and some suggest emending to the imperative here as well.[653] It is the interpretation of דומיה itself, however that must be considered here. In the context of the psalm, describing God as a rock, fortress, and refuge to be trusted, the phrase אך אל־אלהים דומיה נפשי must refer to the psalmist's sense of safety, protection, and trust in God: 'only to/for God my soul is (in?) stillness/rest', surely with the implication of *being* still, resting, or trusting. The verbal idea must be inferred, either as a verbless clause ('my soul [is] stillness', i.e., 'at rest') or with attitude or destination implied by the preposition אל ('be stillness towards', i.e., 'trust in'). The second line, 'from him my salvation', seems to gives a reason for the first, although it is not explicitly marked as a causal clause as it is in v. 6 with כי.

The LXX translates as 'be subject': οὐχὶ τῷ θεῷ ὑποταγήσεται ἡ ψυχή μου ('shall not my soul be subject to God?'),[654] as does the Vulgate, with *nonne Deo subiecta erit anima mea*. The Targum again translates as silence: ברם לאלהא שתקא נפשי ('only to God silence [perhaps implied 'is silent'] my soul'),[655] while the Peshitta supplies ܣܒܪ, referring to expecting or waiting for something. Many modern translations supply the idea of waiting,

[652] Translation by Pietersma, *NETS*, 557. Translation with ἄνοιαν may result from an internal Greek corruption from ἄνεσιν, which represents the Aramaic שְׁלוֹ in Ezra 4:22 (suggestion thanks to Alison Salvesen).
[653] Briggs suggests an original דמי הנפש, with the 1cs suffix later taking the place of the article (*Psalms*, 2:71).
[654] Pietersma, *NETS*, 576.
[655] Stec translates: 'Truly my soul is silent for God' (*The Targum of Psalms*, 121).

sometimes combined with silence and stillness,[656] though others translate as rest or trust.[657]

נָאֱלַמְתִּי **דוּמִיָּה** הֶחֱשֵׁיתִי מִטּוֹב וּכְאֵבִי נֶעְכָּר׃	**Ps. 39:3[2]**

In Ps. 39 דומיה is syntactically difficult, but more closely related to silence. It follows the intransitive verb 'I was mute' and precedes the enigmatic phrase 'I was silent from good' (probably good words), the result of which was an increase in pains. דומיה could modify נאלמתי ('I was mute [in] silence/stillness'?) or be a separate noun phrase ('I was mute; there was silence'; or 'cessation': of words). If נאלמתי could be the passive 'I was bound' (though without other evidence), דומיה could function adverbially as 'bound into silence'. The context reinforces the contrast between speaking and keeping silent, since in the previous verse the psalmist declares that he will guard his ways so as not to sin with his tongue, and will guard his mouth with a muzzle while the wicked are before him. The two verses have four corresponding members, which could be arranged chiastically as AB/B′A′:

A: guarding ways to not sin with tongue
  B: guarding mouth with a muzzle (i.e., *binding* the mouth)
  B′: being mute (Niphal אלם: *being bound*)
A′: being still and/or silent (דומיה)

The correspondence of A/A′ is tenuous,[658] but if דומיה can mean 'silence', it would parallel not speaking in order not to sin. It would make less sense here as 'respite' or 'cessation'.

[656] KJV/AV: 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God'; TNK: 'Truly my soul waits quietly for God'; SCH: 'Nur auf Gott wartet still meine Seele'.
[657] EIN: 'Bei Gott allein kommt meine Seele zur Ruhe'; NIV: 'My soul finds rest in God alone'; LSG: 'c'est en Dieu que mon âme se confie'. Kittel: 'zu Gott ist still meine Seel' (*Psalmen*, 211); Delitzsch interprets it as submission and devotion (*Die Psalmen*, 448-49); Kraus associates the soul's stillness towards God with coming to rest (*Psalmen*, 1:437).
[658] Though there are echoes of Ps. 4:5 with potential contrast between sin and stillness.

All versions translate דומיה with a verb: LXX and Vulgate with ‘I was humbled’ (ἐταπεινώθην, *humiliatus sum*), the Targum with ‘I was silent’ (שתקית), and the Peshitta with ‘I was sad’ (ܐܬܚܫܟ). Most modern translations interpret as related to silence, either adverbially (KJV/AV: ‘I was dumb with silence’)[659] or as a predicate adjective (TNK: ‘I was dumb, silent’).[660] Some interpret as stillness (NRSV: ‘I was silent and still’). Whether the semantic value of silence or stillness is emphasised, in this context דומיה seems to reinforce the chosen silence and restraint of the psalmist.

Ps. 65:2[1]	לְךָ **דֻמִּיָּה** תְהִלָּה אֱלֹהִים בְּצִיּוֹן וּלְךָ יְשֻׁלַּם־נֶדֶר׃

דֻמִּיָּה, of uncertain meaning and derivation, is found in Ps. 65:2[1]. Guided by uses of דומיה, we might translate: ‘to you rest/silence/stillness is praise, God in Zion’, or perhaps: ‘praise is your rest’. Neither one is easy to make sense of, nor does the context offer much interpretive help. The subject of the nominal clause could be either תהלה or דֻמִּיָּה, thus either ‘praise is silence to you’ (implying that human praise is so insignificant that he does not even hear it), or ‘silence is praise to you’ (implying that human ‘silence’, interpreted as restful trust, is equivalent to praise). If דֻמִּיָּה derives from דמה I, it could instead have the meaning: ‘similarity’ or ‘comparison’, based on which it is traditionally interpreted here as ‘due to’ or ‘fitting’: ‘praise is due to you’.[661]

The LXX and Vulgate intepret as from דמה I: σοὶ πρέπει ὕμνος (‘to you praise is fitting’ or ‘a hymn is due’[662]), and *te decet hymnus*. The Peshitta seems to follow suit with ܫܦܝ (‘suited, fitting, beautiful’). Only the Targum translates with ‘silence’, also adding syntactic clues: קדמך מתחשבא היך שתיקותא תושבחתא (‘before you, praise is considered as

[659] Kittel: ‘ich verstummte in Schweigen, liess unnütze Reden’ (*Psalmen*, 141).
[660] Kraus: ‘Stumm und still war ich, schweig—ohne Glück’ (*Psalmen*, 1:299).
[661] I did not find evidence for this meaning, but Kittel argues that it should be read as a fs participle from דמה (‘be the same, similar’), and that since דמה is parallel to שוה in Est. 3:8, it must have the meaning ‘befit, be appropriate for’ here (*Psalmen*, 220-21).
[662] Pietersma, *NETS*, 578.

silence'). Some modern translations are similar to LXX,[663] while others interpret as related to silence, either with silence and praise as separate items,[664] or with silence adverbially modifying praise.[665] Others interpret 'silence' as 'waiting' or 'trust', presumably based on other derivatives of דמם/דום/דמה in the Psalms.[666] In light of the references to דומיה, it seems best to interpret דֻמִיָּה as implying a trust that is equivalent to praise.

Conclusion on דומיה

As stated above, it is very difficult to propose a single meaning for דומיה with such different uses. It is parallel with being answered (Ps. 22:3), but also seemingly with paying vows (Ps. 65:2). It might be parallel to חשה in Ps. 39:3, but its function in the sentence is very difficult to tell. Three of the four references use the preposition לְ or אֶל, suggesting it might be a noun that can be possessed: no דומיה to me (Ps. 22:3), to you (God) praise is דומיה (Ps. 65:2), and to God דומיה my soul (Ps. 62:2), although in the latter example a verb might fit the syntax better. The most likely shared meaning is 'rest' with implications of trust, but it is possible that another meaning is intended, or that these examples are from different roots, perhaps also different forms, some nominal or adjectival, others verbal.

iv) דומם

The derived form דומם is used three times in different syntactic environments, where it could be an adverb, adjective, or noun. The form itself could derive from דמם or דום (with reduplicated *mem*). The closest parallels in formation are the adverb יוֹמָם ('by day') and Polal verbs, such as רוֹמַם, רוֹמְמוֹת ('extolling, praise', Ps. 66:17; 149:6), although all of these have וֹ rather than וּ, so are not exact parallels. דומם has traditionally been interpreted

[663] TNK: 'Praise befits you'; NRSV: 'Praise is due to you'.
[664] NASB: 'there will be silence before you, and praise'; ELB: 'Dir gilt Stille, Lobgesang'.
[665] Rev. LUT: 'Gott, man lobt dich in der Stille'.
[666] KJV/AV: 'Praise waiteth for thee'; SCH: 'Auf dich harrt der Lobgesang'; LSG: 'Avec confiance, ô Dieu! on te louera'.

as an adverb,[667] but the adverbial ם֫ ending added to an adjectival דמם should cause the geminate *mem* to double. It could instead be an adjective from דמם that with its final geminate *mem* only incidentally resembles an adverb. Driver identifies the *mem* as an 'accusative termination'.[668] Barth argued that since דומם functions as both an adjective and a noun, it should be understood as a participle (i.e., a verbal adjective).[669]

Isa. 47:5
שְׁבִי **דוּמָּם** וּבְאִי בַחֹשֶׁךְ בַּת־כַּשְׂדִּים כִּי לֹא תוֹסִיפִי יִקְרְאוּ־לָךְ גְּבֶרֶת מַמְלָכוֹת׃

Isaiah 47 calls Babylon to mourning for her coming destruction. The tone is set in the first verse: 'Come down and sit in the dust (רדי ושבי על־עפר), O virgin daughter of Babylon'. She is removed from her throne and subject to vengeance and disgrace (v. 3). Another command to sit in 47:5 is followed by דומם, which could function adverbially to mean 'sit in silence', or 'sit in stillness' (or 'astonished'). If דומם is nominal, it could be the object of שבי and similar to the idea of 'inhabiting silence/Dumah' (Ps. 94:17), in reference to the land of the dead, which could also be alluded to by the subsequent command to 'enter darkness'. Although possible, there is no other evidence for דומם referring to the place of the dead, and the parallels emphasise sitting on the ground in mourning.[670] Interpretation as 'sit silently' or 'sit astonished' (perhaps 'in mourning'?) seems best.

The LXX, as elsewhere, translates κατανενυγμένη ('be pierced', possibly 'be stunned, bewildered').[671] The Targum translates with 'silence' (תִּיבִי שָׁתְקָא), and the Vulgate with

[667] See GK §100h.
[668] G.R. Driver, 'A Confused Hebrew Root', 3.
[669] He interprets דומם as an adjective in Hab. 2 and Lam. 3, parsing it as a participle from a hollow verb (as שׁוֹבָב, עוֹלֵל) and attributing the change in vowel (to *shureq*) to the following mem (*Nominalbildung*, 352).
[670] ישב is used in other mourning contexts, especially related to widowhood (Lam. 1:1, Gen. 38:11 and Isa. 47:8), suggesting that it was a recognised part of mourning (even if the verb simply indicates physical position).
[671] Silva translates 'Sit distressed', also suggesting the possibility 'stunned into silence' (*NETS*, 860).

sede tace (‘sit, be silent’). 1QIsa[a] (xxxix, 23) has דממה instead of דומם,[672] which could have been a more familiar word, or perhaps was perceived as a synonym.[673]

Lam. 3:26
טָ֥וב וְיָחִ֖יל **וְדוֹמָ֑ם** לִתְשׁוּעַ֖ת יְהוָֽה׃

In the acrostic poem Lam. 3, v. 26 is the second of three verses beginning with the letter ט, all three stating what is good, טוב. The first is: ‘the LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him’. The second has awkward syntax, with טוב followed immediately by *waw* and a *yiqtol* of uncertain derivation (חול, ‘writhe’; חיל, ‘be strong’; or יחל, ‘wait, hope’), then another *waw* followed by דומם. The two *waws* might suggest it is good to *both* wait and be silent (i.e. trust?) for the salvation of the LORD, but then another *yiqtol* might be expected instead of דומם. It could be revocalised as a participle (דּוֹמֵם), or interpreted as an adverb (though then it should not have the *waw* before it) or as an adjective (perhaps substantival: ‘a quiet/resting one’). Although its syntactic function remains ambiguous, its semantic value surely has to do with stillness caused by rest and trust.[674]

The LXX translates with ἡσυχάσει, ‘he will be silent/quiet’ or ‘rest’, but it also interprets the syntax differently, with ἀγαθὸν ending v. 25. The Vulgate translates adverbially: *bonum est praestolari cum silentio.* The Targums of Lamentations translate with the infinitive: למשתק, ‘to be silent’, while the Peshitta refers to one ‘who waits in truth’ (ܘܡܫܟܚ ܒܫܪܪܐ). Most modern translations interpret דומם adverbially: ‘wait silently’

[672] Kutscher suggests the scribe intended דוממה, though I am not sure how that would relate to the context (*The language and linguistic background of the Isaiah Scroll*, 371).
[673] The special significance given to דממה in some DSS as a sound made by angels makes it difficult to intepret reliably here.
[674] דמם and יחל/חיל/חול are also connected in Ps. 37:7, where trust in the Lord is contrasted with fretting and wrath. There too the preposition ל precedes the object of דמם, suggesting that being ‘still towards’ is an idiom for resting or trusting in something.

(NASB), ‘quietly’ (NRSV) or ‘patiently’ (TNK, LUT), smoothing over the difficulty with the *waws*.

Hab. 2:19
הַוֹי אֹמֵר לָעֵץ הָקִיצָה עוּרִי לְאֶבֶן **דּוֹמֵם** הֲוּא יוֹרֶה הִנֵּה־הוּא תָּפוּשׂ זָהָב וָכֶסֶף וְכָל־רוּחַ אֵין בְּקִרְבּוֹ׃

In Hab. 2:19 דומם has traditionally been interpreted as an adverb, but could more easily be interpreted as an attributive adjective (though of mismatched gender) describing אבן, ‘stone’ (here representing idols),[675] or as the absolute noun of a construct phrase (‘a stone of silence’, though unattested elsewhere). It is not common to find an adverbial form in construct, but there are some examples, such as דמי חנם, ‘bloodshed without cause’ (1 Kgs 2:31) and קללת חנם, ‘a curse that is causeless’ (Prov. 26:2). In both חנם is adverbial but also describes the state of the construct noun. If the same is possible here, דומם would describe the stone’s state of silence.

The juxtaposition of אבן with דמם is reminiscent of Exod. 15:16, when the Israelites’ enemies become still (or silent) as a stone (ידמו כאבן) out of fright. There as here ‘stillness’ or immobility seem more appropriate than silence. The stone idol in Habakkuk is given the obviously impossible command ‘arise’, highlighting its immobility more than its silence. דומם could mean ‘silent’, however, if the following phrase, הוא יורה, is understood as the rhetorical question ‘will/can he teach?’, highlighting its inability to speak.[676] These clauses do not link very neatly, however, as the masculine pronoun הוא should refer back to the masculine עץ (‘tree’) rather than the feminine אבן. Another suggested solution is to

[675] Talmon calls the form ‘grammatically irregular’, suggesting it should have been the fs adjective דּוֹמָמָה, yet he still translates ‘dumb stone’ without engaging the semantic question (‘Notes on the Habakkuk Scroll’, 37).
[676] Ward calls the two ‘a fine antithesis’: the silence of the false god is contrasted with one who can teach (in Smith, Ward and Bewer, *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*, 19).

interpret דומם as a nominal complement to יורה, identifying the contents of the teaching as 'silence' and therefore worthless,[677] or to interpret דומם as an adverb describing *how* the tree and stone teach (i.e., silently, with nothing to say).

The LXX translates with ὑψώθητι, 'be exalted' (as from רומם), but the Vulgate with the participle *tacenti,* 'being silent'. The Peshitta translates as 'mute stone' (ܟܐܦܐ ܣܬܝܡܐ), using a cognate of Hebrew *ḥrš*. The Targum is significantly expanded and seems to translate דומם twice, with שְׁתִקָא and דָמְיָא.[678] These two words are not immediately attached to 'stone', but instead follow the pronoun, which is changed to feminine presumably to match 'stone' ('she/it is silent'). The Habakkuk Pesher does not elaborate specifically on דומם (or if it did, it has been lost in the lacuna at this point), but the preceding text referring to idols as 'mute' (Hab. 2:18: אלילים אלמים), could support the interpretation as 'mute stone'.[679] Modern translations tend to translate as 'mute/silent stone', although a few focus on immobility.[680]

Despite the tradition of translating as 'silent', nuances of stillness and lack of motion seem to be stronger here, and דומם should be interpreted as an adjective meaning 'motionless', based both on the context of the verse (with the idol's inability to respond to the command to arise) and on the frequent use of דמם to refer to stillness and cessation of movement.

v) דמי

In form דמי appears to derive from דמה, but its meanings, related to to rest/cessation or quiet/silence, more closely reflect דמם. The *haṭef qameṣ* under the first consonant suggests

[677] Suggested by van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophètes*, 485.
[678] 'Woe to him who says to *an image of* wood, '*Arise!'* and to *an idol of* stone, 'Rouse yourself!'—*but it is silent and dumb!*' (Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 154).
[679] Horgan in 'Habakkuk Pesher', 182-83.
[680] TNK: 'inert stone'; NIV: 'lifeless stone'.

it is a segholate noun with primitive o-vowel, which sometimes keep the *haṭef* vowel even with non-guttural consonants (e.g., צֶדֶק).[681] Although usually understood as a nominal form, it is used in some contexts where a *yiqtol* verb is expected.

Ps. 83:2[1]
אֱלֹהִים **אַל־דֳּמִי־לָךְ** אַל־תֶּחֱרַשׁ וְאַל־תִּשָּׁקֹט אֵל׃

In Ps. 83:2[1] אל־דמי־לך begins a threefold request and is used in parallel to אל־תחרש ('do not be silent/inactive') and אל־תשקט ('do not be still/quiet'). They are not syntactically parallel, however, with דמי the only noun and somewhat unusually preceded by the negative אַל.[682] It is also followed by the preposition לך: 'may there not (be) דמי to/for you'.

דמי is not only parallel to being 'quiet/inactive', but also opposed to the following request that God exact vengeance on the psalmist's enemies, suggesting that if God were to allow himself דמי, he would *not* exact vengeance. The most likely translation therefore is 'no rest to you' (i.e., 'don't allow yourself rest/idleness').[683]

LXX, Vulgate, and Peshitta, however, translate as from דמה I: 'who is like you?,'[684] turning the phrase into an introductory rhetorical question no longer parallel to the silence verbs. Only the Targum translates 'don't be silent', perhaps 'don't give yourself silence', also changing the form to a negated *yiqtol* in parallel to the others (לא תשתוק לך). Almost all modern translations interpret אל־דמי־לך as 'do not be silent'.[685]

Isa. 62:6-7
6 עַל־חוֹמֹתַיִךְ יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם הִפְקַדְתִּי שֹׁמְרִים כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה תָּמִיד לֹא יֶחֱשׁוּ הַמַּזְכִּרִים אֶת־יְהוָ֔ה

[681] Bauer-Leander calls it a *qutl* (*Historische Grammatik* §72i′).
[682] Delitzsch proposes the addition of יְהִי to ease the reading (*Die Psalmen,* 589). אַל is most likely supplied to match the parallel verbal phrases.
[683] Delitzsch defines דמי in opposition to 'Rührigkeit', activity (*Die Psalmen,* 589). Briggs summarises it as a 'plea that God would no longer refrain from interposition on behalf of his people, but imediately act, without a moment's rest, in their behalf' (*Psalms,* 219).
[684] LXX: τίς ὁμοιωθήσεταί σοι; Vulgate: *quis similis erit tibi*; Peshitta: ܡܢ ܕܡܐ ܠܟ.
[685] 'Keep not Thou silence' (KJV/AV, JPS); 'do not keep silence' (NRSV); 'do not remain quiet' (NASB); 'ne reste pas dans le silence' (LSG); 'Schweig doch nicht' (EIN); 'bleibe nicht ruhig' (SCH).

אַל־דֳּמִי לָכֶם:
7 **וְאַל־תִּתְּנוּ דֳמִי לוֹ** עַד־יְכוֹנֵן וְעַד־יָשִׂים אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם תְּהִלָּה בָּאָרֶץ׃

דמי is again preceded by the negative אַל and followed by the preposition ל in Isa. 62:6-7, where it is parallel to חשׁה. Here the watchmen and מַזְכִּרִים (those who call out or remind) are the subjects and are asked not to דמי to themselves (be 'silent'?) but instead to 'remind/call out' and pray to God for deliverance. אל־דמי לכם seems to mean 'don't allow yourselves rest/quiet/inactivity', deriving from the idea of cessation. It is preceded by the nearly parallel תמיד לא יחשו: 'may they never be silent'.

The second דמי is in another negated request, this time as the object of נתן, 'give'. The addressees are the same, but the preposition ל has a 3ms suffix in reference to God: 'do not give rest/quiet to him',[686] that he might establish Jerusalem and make it a praise. The negation of דמי therefore equates to action, as in Ps. 83, and should be translated 'rest' or 'idleness'.

The LXX seems not to translate דמי in v. 6 at all, perhaps finding the repetition unnecessary, and in v. 7 translates as from דמה I: οὐκ ἔστιν γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅμοιος ('there is none like you'). The Vulgate translates both as 'be silent', first with *ne taceatis*, then *et ne detis silentium*. The Targum interestingly translates דמי (twice) and חשׁה with forms of פסק ('come to an end, cease'). In v. 6 לא פסיק ('it does not cease') refers to the remembrance of their goodness/benefits (טבותיך), while v. 7 elaborates more: ולא יפסוק דכרנהון מן קדמוהי ('their remembrance will not cease before him').[687] The Peshitta has ܠܐ ܫܠܝ in v. 6 (negating *šly,* 'cease, be silent') and a nominal form of the same root in v. 7 (ܫܠܝܐ, 'quiet, ease').

[686] 1QIsa[b] (1Q8 XXVII,5) has the variant reading לכם, making the addressees again the recipients: 'do not give *yourselves* rest' (Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 32.1:148).
[687] Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, 119.

Negated דמי with human subject is thus equated with crying out in prayer (i.e., not being silent/resting), while negated דמי with divine subject suggests God's action on behalf of someone (i.e., he will not be idle, but active). This meaning might derive from the idea of 'silence', or, more likely, from 'cease', which is also more easily associated with the root דמה.

Is. 38:10
אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי **בִּדְמִי** יָמַי אֵלְכָה בְּשַׁעֲרֵי שְׁאוֹל פֻּקַּדְתִּי יֶתֶר שְׁנוֹתָי׃

דמי is also used in Isa. 38:10, but its meaning is unclear. It is part of Hezekiah's response to being near death with illness only to be told by Isaiah that he would recover and live another fifteen years. In his written prayer he expresses feelings of both distress and confidence in God's salvation. It begins with the enigmatic v. 10: 'I said/thought: "in the דמי of my days let me go,[688] at/by the gates of Sheol I was summoned,[689] the rest of my years"'. How to interpret בדמי ימי, and its relation to the rest of the verse, is uncertain. It could be a temporal modifier for אמר describing the time he spoke: based on other uses of דמי, perhaps 'in the rest/quiet of my days' or 'in a restful or quiet period of my life', but this contradicts the following context of his dramatic illness. If דמי derives from דמה II, the phrase could mean 'in the destruction/perishing of my days', as a parallel to the following reference to Sheol (though unlikely, since this meaning is usually in the Niphal). If דמי derives instead from דמם, it could mean 'at the cessation of my days', or even 'in the mourning of my days'.[690] דמי is commonly interpreted, however, as referring

[688] The form אלכה is clearly cohortative, but might also have a non-volitive meaning. GK §108g explains that sometimes the cohortative form is used simply for 'fuller sound' even after its meaning was lost.
[689] Or 'mustered, appointed' based on Qal meanings of פקד. Pual פקד is used elsewhere only in Exod. 38:21 in reference to the recording (or counting) of things made for the tabernacle. Here that would suggest 'I was counted/numbered'. Although Pual would not normally take an object, the following יתר שנותי could be an oblique apposition referring to the speaker: 'I (that is to say, the remainder of my years) was numbered'.
[690] Dahood translates 'sorrow' (claiming support from the Targum) and rearranges the line divisions: 'I said in my sorrow: I have marched my days'. The redivision is problematic in giving אלכה a direct object and leaving the time phrase יתר שנותי hanging at the end ('Textual Problems in Isaia', 401). Fohrer offers 'in

to the middle of life, either assuming similarity to בחצי ימי (Ps. 102:25 [24]; Jer. 17:11), or a cognate relationship with Arabic دام.[691] There is not much Hebrew evidence for translation as 'middle' or 'midday', however. Some have simply associated the middle of life as a time of quiet.[692]

The versions vary widely. The LXX translates ἐν τῷ ὕψει τῶν ἡμερῶν μου ('at the height of my days'), again seeming to read *resh* for *daleth*. The Vulgate translates 'in the middle of my days' (*in dimidio dierum meorum*), as does the Peshitta with ܒܦܠܓܘܬ ܝܘܡܝ. The Targum translates בדוון יומי ('in the misery of my days'), possibly because of phonetic similarities to Hebrew, or from context. In 1QIsa[a] a supralinear *waw* is inserted before ימי, separating it from דמי and making it more likely to relate to אלכה; the end is changed to ומר שנותי, 'bitterness of years',[693] which could parallel דמי if interpreted as 'mourning'.[694] Modern translations also vary, most translating 'in the middle of my days/life',[695] but some interpreting דמי as 'cutting off',[696] and others favourably as 'rest',[697] or 'best years of my life', perhaps in connnection to 'quiet'.[698]

The most likely interpretation seems to be: 'I spoke at the end ('perishing') of my days: I must walk at the gates of Sheol; the rest of my years have been numbered' (or: 'I must

meiner Trauer' between angled brackets to indicate textual corruption and subsequent improvement by emendation (*Das Buch Jesaja*, 2:183). Barré also interprets as 'sorrow', having emended to בדם ימי: 'in mourning for my days' (*The Lord Has Saved Me*, 55-57).

[691] Delitzsch claims it means 'quiet' (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 390), Duhm the 'midday stillness of the sun' (*Das Buch Jesaia*, 280).

[692] Dillmann interprets it as a time of quiet in his life that equates to the 'midday' period of his life (i.e., 'I must depart in middle-age') (*Der Prophet Jesaia*, 336).

[693] Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 32.1:64.

[694] Barré, The Lord Has Saved Me, 58-59.

[695] TNK, NASB, ESV, EIN, Rev. LUT; JPS and NRSV with the archaic variant 'noontide'.

[696] KJV/AV.

[697] LSG: 'Quand mes jours sont en repos'.

[698] TOB: 'au meilleur temps de ma vie'; SCH: 'In meinen besten Jahren'; NBK: 'i min beste alder'.

go; at the gates [or 'by the gatekeeper'?][699] of Sheol I was counted/appointed (for) the rest of my years'. This assumes an otherwise unattested nominal form of דמה II, 'destroy'. A second option is that דמי refers to quietness (from דמם, 'be still'): 'I spoke during the quiet of my days (i.e., when I should not be threatened with death): I am going to the gates of Sheol'.

vi) דממה

דממה clearly derives from דמם, though its meaning is less clear, with a tradition of interpretation ranging from stillness and silence to low sounds, whispers, and breezes. I begin with the most straightforward use of דממה.

Psalm 107:29-30
29 יָקֵם סְעָרָה **לִדְמָמָה** וַיֶּחֱשׁוּ גַּלֵּיהֶם׃
30 וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כִי־יִשְׁתֹּקוּ וַיַּנְחֵם אֶל־מְחוֹז חֶפְצָם׃

Ps. 107 has a clear, repetitive structure, with four descriptions of people in difficulty, each one followed by the refrain 'then they cried to the LORD in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress', a brief description of the deliverance, and then the concluding exhortation 'let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love'. The fourth section (vv. 23-32) portrays people on the sea in ships, afraid when they see the storm and waves. After the refrain 'they cried…he delivered' (v. 28), God is described stilling the storm (v. 29), enabling the people to arrive at their 'desired haven' (v. 30). The action of stilling is described using the Hiphil יָקֵם, usually 'erect, put up, raise up', or 'fulfil',[700] here: 'he raised (up) the storm into stillness (דממה)'. It is also possible to translate קום ל as 'turn into' or 'cause to become',[701] yielding the smoother 'he turned the storm into stillness'. דממה is thus directly opposed to סערה ('storm'), representing either its cessation or the stillness it

[699] Barré, The Lord Has Saved Me, 63.
[700] *HALOT*, 1088.
[701] The preposition ל elsewhere contributes the nuance of 'becoming', often after היה. See *HALOT* (509), where the 13th entry under ל is 'indicates result or product of an action', with reference to Gen. 2:7, 2:22, 12:2, etc. For Hiphil קום ל meaning 'turn into', see Job 16:12: ויקימני לו למטרה ('he set me up as his target'); for Qal see Ezek. 17:11: החמס קם למטה־רשע ('Violence has grown up into a rod of wickedness'). Delitzsch interprets יקם ל as having the sense of transferring to a different existence or state (*Psalmen*, 630).

turns into. In the second hemistich, חשׁה describes the 'silencing/stilling' of the waves, and in v. 30 שׁתק the resulting stillness which gladdened the people. דממה is best interpreted as cessation of the storm, thus 'stillness', based both on its opposition to 'storm' and on the common meaning 'cease' for the verb דמם.

Both the LXX and Vulgate, however, translate as 'breeze' (αὔρα and *aura*, respectively), almost certainly relying on the tradition of interpretation for דממה in other verses. The Vulgate opposes *aura* to 'storm': *et statuit procellam eius in auram et siluerunt fluctus eius* ('he made the storm a breeze and the waves were silent'), but the LXX changes the beginning of the verse: καὶ ἐπέταξεν τῇ καταιγίδι καὶ ἔστη εἰς αὔραν καὶ ἐσίγησαν τὰ κύματα αὐτῆς ('he commanded the storm and it became[702] a breeze, and its waves were silent'). The Targum translates with the noun לשתיקותא: 'into silence', also using a verbal form of שתק to translate חשׁה. The Peshitta uses multiple words for silencing from the roots *šly*, *štq*, and *nwḥ*: ܫܪܝ ,ܡܫܬܩ ܘܫܬܟ ܕܝܡܐ ܘܢܚ ܠܝܡܐ ܕܝܡܐ ('he quieted [or 'caused to cease'] the storm, and it was quiet; and the waves of the sea were at rest/quieted'). Modern translations interpret based on context, a majority with 'calm',[703] though some as 'whisper' (in line with other translations of דממה),[704] and some as 'silence'.[705] Others translate with a verb ('be still',[706] 'be silent'[707]), but few translate in light of the meaning 'cease' of the verbal root.

1Kgs 19:12
וְאַחַר הָרַעַשׁ אֵשׁ לֹא בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ קוֹל **דְּמָמָה** דַקָּה׃

[702] ἔστη εἰς, as Hiphil קום, can also mean 'establish, set up'.
[703] JPS, KJV/AV: 'he made/maketh the storm a calm'; ELB: 'er verwandelte den Sturm in Stille'; LSG: 'ramena le calme', and others.
[704] TNK: 'he reduced the storm to a whisper'.
[705] TOB: 'il a réduit la tempête au silence'.
[706] NRSV: 'he made the storm be still'; Rev. LUT: 'und stillte das Ungewitter'.
[707] SCH: 'er stillte den Sturm, daß er schwieg'; Seybold: 'der Sturm schweigt' (*Die Psalmen*, 430).

A well-known but less well-understood use of דממה is in 1 Kgs 19:12, where it describes a sound (or lack of sound) in the midst of a theophany experienced by the prophet Elijah. In the preceding chapter he had disgraced and defeated over 450 prophets of Baal, but despite this resounding victory, chapter 19 portrays a frightened Elijah fleeing for his life and asking to die. After a forty-day journey to Horeb, having twice been fed supernaturally, God asks Elijah what he is doing there. He replies that he has been jealous for the LORD, but is now left alone, and people are seeking to take his life. In response, God tells him to stand before him on the mountain, and a succession of three powerful natural phenomena are described—a great wind breaking rocks, an earthquake, and a fire—after each of which it is stated that the LORD was not in them. The fourth event is the enigmatic קול דממה דקה, conspicuously *not* followed by notice of the LORD's absence. Traditionally it is translated a 'still small voice',[708] but could instead be the 'sound of cessation', a 'thin silence', or even a 'crushing silence'. Other interpretations are a 'gentle whisper', a 'breeze' (LXX and Vulgate), or a 'roaring sound'.[709] Elijah subsequently hears a voice asking him what he is doing there (v. 13, repeating v. 9 exactly), to which he replies as before (vv. 10, 14). This time, however, instead of responding with a trio of natural phenomena from which he was absent, God gives a threefold command to anoint Hazael king over Aram, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha as prophet. God further promises that these leaders would kill many, but that 7,000 would be left in Israel who had not bowed to Baal.

A noteworthy structural feature of the passage is its 3+1 pattern: three powerful phenomena from which God is formulaically said to be absent are followed by a fourth in which the very absence of that formula implies his presence. This recognised biblical

[708] KJV/AV, JPS.
[709] Lust, 'A Gentle Breeze or a Roaring Thunderous Sound?', 110-15.

pattern of 3+1 is called a 'topped triad' by Talmon, who observes that the fourth, or 'topping', event is qualitatively different from the preceding three and 'invested with special propensities'. The pattern conveys 'the qualitative ascendancy, in substance or importance, of the fourth *vis à vis* the triad…the fourth, the one up, is singled out as being intrinsically different from the three that are considered a tripartite unit, putting in relief the qualitative singularity of the "one" that outranks them'.[710] Although Talmon does not mention this passage, it confirms his conclusions, with the fourth event, the קול דממה דקה, clearly different from the preceding three and contextually and structurally the most significant.

What it *is* precisely is harder to determine. In form קול דממה is an indefinite two-member construct followed by the fs adjective דקה, which modifies דממה. The noun קול could mean 'sound' or 'voice', but it can also refer to specific noises (such as thunder) or simply to the contents of speech (i.e., a message or proclamation).[711] When used in construct with inanimate nouns (as it is here), it usually describes the *type* of noise heard,[712] or a category of sound, in which case it is not always translated explicitly as 'sound' but rather as the type of noise itself.[713] In this passage, therefore, קול need not be translated as 'sound of' or 'voice of', but could simply introduce the quality of sound suggested by דממה, that is, the sound of cessation (or silence, or holding still) in contrast to the preceding commotion, which, in light of the above observations on קול, could be translated simply as 'cessation' or 'stillness': 'and after the fire, stillness'. That Elijah

[710] Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible, 79-80, 87-88.
[711] *HALOT*, 1084-85.
[712] E.g., the sound made by an instrument (trumpet, pipe), the expression of human emotion (sadness, joy, fear), the sound of war (Exod. 32:17), the sound of steps or marching (2 Sam. 5:24), the sound of feet (1 Kgs 14:6), the sound of a lot of rain (1 Kgs 18:42), even the sound of a driven leaf (Lev. 26:36).
[713] E.g., 'lowing of oxen' for וְקוֹל הַבָּקָר (1 Sam. 15:14), 'my loud groaning' for קוֹל אַנְחָתִי (Ps. 102:6), 'glad songs' for קוֹל רִנָּה (Ps. 118:15), 'crackling of thorns' for כְּקוֹל הַסִּירִים (Eccl. 7:6). (English renderings from ESV.)

could ‘hear’ this cessation is not a paradox, but precisely what one would expect following the cessation of the three turbulent phenomena.

This fourth event (of cessation or stillness) is also contrasted to what follows, as the LORD speaks directly to Elijah with an intelligible voice: והנה אליו קול. The attention-calling particle הנה introduces something new and the fronting of the preposition ‘to him’ emphasises the contrast between the first and second קול: first the sound of the turbulence ceasing, then a voice speaking to him asking: ‘What are you doing here?’ This contrast between the קול of v. 12 and of v. 13 makes it even more likely that the קול דממה was not a voice (not even a whispering one) but instead cessation of the preceding natural phenomena in preparation for the subsequent speaking voice.

What nuance could דקה add to this ‘cessation/silence’? The adjective דק describes things that are thin, scarce, fine, finely ground, or thinly spread, and can be used negatively (for emaciated cows) or positively (for finely beaten incense).[714] It derives from דקק, which as a Qal is used with both the active meaning ‘crush’ and the stative meaning ‘be fine’ (as a result of crushing/grinding).[715] The adjective is normally used in physical descriptions of something thin, famished, thinly spread, or finely beaten, though it can be used metaphorically to describe someone’s unimportance.[716] Since there is no physical referent in 1 Kings 19:12, it must be used figuratively. The meaning ‘inconsequential’ (as in Isaiah 29:5; 40:15) would not suit the context, as this stillness communicates God’s presence to Elijah, who then covers his face in anticipation of God’s speech. Perhaps the

[714] Gen. 41:3-7; Lev. 16:12.
[715] *HALOT*, 229-30; BDB, 200-201.
[716] It is used for: thin, famished cows and thin, blighted grain of Joseph’s dream (Gen. 41:3-7, 23-24); thin spreading of manna on the ground (Exod. 16:14); thin, diseased hair (Lev. 13:30); finely beaten incense (Lev. 16:12); and for the the destruction or inconsequence of other nations: Israelites’ enemies as fine/thin dust (Isa. 29:5); coastlands as dust (Isa. 40:15).

meaning ‘thin, fine’ could apply to duration (‘a brief stillness’), or simply refer to a refined or delicate quality (as with beaten incense), which here might be ‘a delicate stillness’ in contrast to the powerful natural phenomena. Another alternative is to interpret דקה as a Qal verbal form of דקק, either a fs participle (דַּקָּה) or a 3fs *qatal* (requiring only a shift of stress to the first syllable). דקק can refer both to physical crushing (of gold, incense, etc.) and figurative (destruction of enemies).[717] As a participle, it could function as a relative clause describing what the silence or cessation was doing to Elijah: ‘a stillness/silence that was crushing’.[718] The English idiom ‘deafening silence’ might similarly convey the significant effect of a sudden or unexpected lack of sound contributing to the intensity of Elijah’s experience. Following the wind, shaking, and fire, Elijah recognised God’s presence in the following stillness, to which he responded by covering his face in deference.[719]

Translation of this verse has been anything but straightforward. LXX and Vulgate translate as a ‘breeze’ (φωνὴ αὔρας λεπτῆς, ‘a sound of a light breeze’, and *sibilus aurae tenuis,* ‘a whistling of gentle air’). The Targum translates קָל דִּמשַׁבָּחִין בֶּחשַׁי (‘a voice that was praising quietly’), reflecting later exegetical traditions evidenced in the DSS, in which קול דממה came to be associated with angelic praise. The Peshitta differs with ܩܠܐ ܕܡܚܫܐ ‘the sound of soft speech’). Modern translations have a similar breadth:

1. a still small voice (KJV/AV; JPS; RSV); a gentle whisper (NIV); a sound of a light whisper
2. a soft murmuring sound (TNK); ein sanftes, leises Säuseln (EIN); un murmure doux et léger (LSG)

[717] 2 Sam. 22:43; Mic. 4:13.
[718] A ms is expected to match קול, but perhaps a relative could begin with an implied reference to the fs דממה.
[719] God’s presence is not stated, but is implied since he is not, per formula, said to be absent.

3. a sound of gentle blowing (NASB);
4. a sound of sheer silence (NRSV).[720]

There clearly is lack of agreement as to whether the קול is an inanimate sound or an animate voice and whether דממה refers to silence (lack of sound) or quiet (lack of loudness). דקה is interpreted as 'small', 'soft', or 'gentle', figurative interpretations of what 'fine' or 'thin' could imply in this context. Commentators tend to base their analysis more on the context than on the semantic value of the individual words.[721] An extreme example of this is found in a suggestion that קול דממה must be a 'roaring thunderous sound'.[722] This argument is based primarily on the theophanic context of this passage,[723] but also on the Akkadian cognate *damāmu*, which means 'mourn, moan' and describes sounds made by mourners and animals such as doves,[724] but certainly not roaring or thunder. It is true that קול can refer to thunder, but far more often it is the usual 'sound/voice'.

Although a problem-free interpretation does not emerge from the above discussion, I conclude that דממה means 'stillness' or 'cessation' (of the natural phenomena) and that קול simply classifies it as an auditory event (i.e., with the quality of 'stillness'), and need not be translated. The adjective דקה is more difficult, but perhaps could be:

1) 'a brief stillness' (דקה as figuratively 'thin' in reference to duration);
   'a gentle stillness' (דקה as figuratively 'fine' in contrast to the preceding three events);

[720] Montgomery, *The Books of Kings*, 313-14.
[721] See the helpful survey of approaches taken in Eidevall, 'Horeb Revisited', 92-111.
[722] Lust, 'A Gentle Breeze or a Roaring Thunderous Sound?', 110-15. De Boer interprets it as a 'high, penetrating sound', but he does not explain how he reached this conclusion (*Koningen en Kronieken*, 79).
[723] Some question interpretation as 'silence' since it does not feature in any other biblical theophanies.
[724] CAD 3:59-61.

2) ‘a crushing silence’ (דקה as from Qal דקק, ‘crush’, indicating the impact on Elijah).

Job 4:16
יַעֲמֹ֥ד וְלֹא־אַכִּ֖יר מַרְאֵ֑הוּ תְּמוּנָ֥ה לְנֶגֶד֙ עֵינָ֔י **דְּמָמָ֖ה** וָקֹ֥ול אֶשְׁמָֽע׃

The third use of דממה is in Job 4 in a speech by Eliphaz, who both condemns Job and reports a frightening vision. The description of the vision (vv. 12-16) is replete with syntactic difficulties and lexical ambiguities which make interpretation of v. 16 more difficult. It begins with the 3ms יעמד: ‘he/it stood, and I did not recognise his/its appearance’. The subject is not specified but would most logically be the רוח, ‘spirit’, of v. 15. Although usually feminine, רוח is used there with a masculine verb, suggesting the same is possible here. יעמד could also simply be the impersonal: ‘it was still’.[725] The LXX has the first-person ‘I stood’.[726] Because יעמד is too short to be considered a line by itself,[727] some suggest that God should be the subject,[728] or that the line is intentionally short to convey the fearful breathlessness caused by the revelation.[729] The second line describes the sighting of a form, which challenges the interpretation of this vision as a theophany. Both LXX and Peshitta add a negative to indicate that no form was seen,[730] certainly a theologically motivated change to maintain consistency with other divine revelations.[731]

[725] Tur-Sinai suggests ‘it ceases’, referring to the ‘subsiding of the storm’, as he interprets שׂערת of v. 15 as ‘storm’ rather than ‘hair’ (*The Book of Job*, 83).
[726] This could be an emendation to match the first-person of the next verb, אכיר. Gordis proposes phonetic confusion of י and א (*The Book of Job,* 49).
[727] Richter finds it ‘rhythmisch ungefällig’ and proposes rearranging the words of the verse (*Textstudien zum Buche Hiob*, 5-6).
[728] Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 46.
[729] Duhm at first speculates that the shortness of the line may reflect textual corruption, but then suggests it is an intentional poetic device to emphasise the unearthly and scary nature of the vision (*Das Buch Hiob*, 28). Rowley proposes the line is intentionally broken off to suggest a ‘sudden catch of the breath’, also that ‘the vagueness heightens the terror’ (*Job*, 55).
[730] LXX: οὐκ ἦν μορφὴ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν μου; Peshitta: ܠܝܬ ܚܙܘܬܐ ܩܕܡ ܥܝܢܝ.
[731] See Deut. 4:12, 15 with which this passage has been compared.

The syntactic relationship between the remaining three words, דממה וקול אשמע, is unclear. The conjunctive *waw* between קול and דממה could join them as a hendiadys or as a compound direct object. Alternatively, the *waw* could begin a new clause, leaving דממה on its own as a circumstantial clause. Interpretations of דממה fall into three main categories:

1) as a circumstantial clause: 'there was stillness/silence' (Targum: חשיי, 'quiet');[732]
2) as a direct object of שׁמע:
    a. as the first of two objects:
        i. 'stillness (or silence) and a voice/sound';[733]
        ii. 'a murmur (or whisper) and a voice/sound';[734]
        iii. 'a breeze and a voice/sound' (LXX: αὔραν καὶ φωνὴν ἤκουον);
        iv. 'a sound/song and a voice that said' (Peshitta: ܙܡܪܐ/ܙܡܪܬܐ ܘܩܠܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ);[735]
    b. as a single object (דממה וקול as hendiadys):
        i. 'a quiet voice', 'a whisper';[736]
        ii. 'a roaring noise';[737]
        iii. 'a voice as a gentle breeze' (Vulgate: *et vocem quasi aurae lenis audivi*)
3) as an adverb ('quietly') to a supplied verb:
    a. 'a voice that murmured softly'
    b. 'I heard him say softly'.[738]

The first category above is the simplest and initially seems to be the most viable translation, but it creates a one-word line, complicating line divisions in a poetic passage with mostly three- and four-member lines. Category 2a is seen as problematic for its questionable logic of hearing stillness/silence, so translations often choose 'murmur' or 'whisper' instead of silence'. It is perfectly logical to 'hear' silence in contrast to preceding noise, however, so the translation 'I heard silence, then a voice' is possible.

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[732] ESV, KJV/AV, RSV, and others.
[733] I have not yet found a translation that treats דממה as a direct object meaning 'silence' ('I heard silence and [then] a sound'), but I believe it is a viable option.
[734] TNK: 'I heard a murmur and a voice'; ELB: 'ein leises Wehen und eine Stimme hörte ich'; French Darby 1885: 'un léger murmure et une voix'.
[735] The variant ܙܡܪܐ, 'anger, heat', seems to be a coyping error within the Syriac tradition.
[736] JPS: 'a still voice'; NIV: 'a hushed voice'; SCH: 'eine flüsternde Stimme'.
[737] Lust, 'A Stormy Vision', 310-11; Clines, *Job,* 112.
[738] EIN: 'ich höre eine Stimme flüstern'; LSG: 'j'entendis une voix qui murmurait doucement'; RVA: 'lo oí decir muy quedo' ('I heard him/it say very softly'). Saʿadia also interprets with a verb applied to the first-person speaker (in English a predicate adjective): 'I silent and listening' (*The Book of Theodicy*, trans. Goodman, 187).

Interpretation as hendiadys (2b) is difficult and unlikely, as it juxtaposes two seemingly contradictory words.[739] Reymond demonstrates that words of silence do sometimes modify words of speech to indicate speaking quietly in Aramaic and rabbinic Hebrew, but the syntax of his examples is different, having both a preposition (בחשׁי, which even the Targum of this verse does not have) and the modifier placed after the verb of speech rather than before, as here.[740] To express the idea of a quiet voice this passage could have used קול בדממה, for example, or an adjectival or verbal phrase, but the placement of דממה before קול, along with the *waw*, suggest that both דממה and קול are objects of שׁמע.[741] The third category combines קול and דממה to supply the idea of speaking quietly, producing similar results to category 2b. A very different interpretation of דממה וקול as a roaring or thunderous noise (2b ii) is proposed by Lust.[742] He first argues on contextual grounds: 'Since the term *qol* in the context of a revelation implies a thundering sound, something similar must be true for *demamah*'; he then proposes derivation from דמם II, which he defines as 'to moan, to mourn'.[743] Translation as 'thundering sound' or 'roaring voice', however, is an unjustifiable stretching of the cognate evidence[744] and seems to be an imposition of the theophanic context from 1 Kings 19.[745]

[739] See Lillas, who identifies the frequent misapplication of this term. She catalogues a number of authors who have classified the phrase דממה וקול as a hendiadys equating 'silence and a voice' to a whispering or low voice, but she does not extensively comment on this specific phrase ('Hendiadys in the Hebrew Bible').
[740] The interpretation as quiet speaking is due to the later exegetical tradition around דממה more than evidence from biblical Hebrew ('The Hebrew Word דממה', 379-80, 384).
[741] Dhorme, relying heavily on 1 Kings 19, assumes דממה is fronted for emphasis: 'la construction קול דממה de *I Reg.* xix, 12 prouve que le mot דממה dans notre passage a simplement été détaché de son contexte pour être mis en relief. En fait, c'est וקול qui devrait ouvrir l'hémistiche' (*Le Livre de Job*, 47).
[742] Lust, 'A Stormy Vision', 310-11; he is followed by Clines, *Job 1–20*, 107, 112.
[743] This definition was added to *HALOT* after the 1953 edition. In the 1994 English translation, דמם II is defined as 'to wail, lament'. I could not tell if Lust's translation is from the German or another English edition.
[744] The Akkadian cognate never refers to roaring or thunder (CAD 3:59-61).
[745] Although 1 Kings 19 and Job 4 do overlap lexically and thematically, they also differ significantly and should not be conflated. For example: Eliphaz is not a prophet, nor is it the God of Israel who appears to him, but only a dream-like spectre. It is of course possible that the author has in mind the phrase from Kings, but he is clearly not using it exactly.

A new proposal, not found above, is that דממה could be a 3fs verbal form (revocalised as דָּמָה,[746] meaning ‘ceased/held still’) functioning in parallel with the verse-initial יעמד.[747] It would logically have תמונה as its subject: ‘a form stopped before my eyes’, and would create two parallel hemistichs with the pattern ABC/C′B′A′, followed by ‘and I heard a voice’.

C מראהו	B ולא־אכיר	A יעמד
A′ דממה	B′ לנגד עיני	C′ תמונה
וקול אשמע:		

יעמד and דממה open and close the couplet as parallels referring to cessation of movement. The noun מראה (‘appearance, visible form’) in position C corresponds to תמונה (‘likeness, form’) in C′, even though the two words fulfil different syntactic roles as object and subject, respectively. The lack of recognition (Hiphil נכר) in B corresponds loosely to the eyes (עיני) in B′ of the second line, highlighting the curious fact that he did not recognise the form even though it was right before his eyes.[748] The final shorter line וקול אשמע initially seems to break with the metrical pattern of Eliphaz’s speech, which has mostly three- or four-member poetic lines, but in fact it fits another pattern in which short, one- or two-member lines are occasionally interjected to introduce new sections or changes in topic. In 4:7, for example, Eliphaz interrupts his speech with a direct address to Job, זכר־נא, ‘remember’, after which he slightly shifts topic; in 4:8 Eliphaz again interrupts his speech with כאשר ראיתי, ‘as I have seen’, to focus attention on the first-person nature of his observations. 5:1 begins with another imperative: קרא־נא, ‘call now’ (though possibly joined with היש עונך, ‘will anyone answer you?’ as a four-member line), and in 5:17 הנה

[746] דמם usually follows the stative paradigm (קָלָה), but if perceived to mean ‘cease moving’, perhaps it could be considered part of the active paradigm (סָבַב). The tenses of יעמד-דממה are not a problem: it is not unusual in poetic couplets for a *qatal* and *yiqtol* to be paired. Cf. Job 4:3 (יסרת, תחזק) and 4:21 (נסע, ימותו).
[747] דמם and עמד are also parallel in Joshua 10:12-13; 1 Samuel 14:9-10.
[748] The same combination of Hiphil נכר and עין are used in Job 2:12 when Job’s friends lifted up their eyes from a distance yet did not recognise him: וישאו את־עיניהם מרחוק / ולא הכירהו.

again draws attention to a shift in topic. The short וקול אשמע in 4:16 performs the same function: it interrupts the metre and the flow of thought to focus attention on a new topic: the position of humankind before God. It also reminds the reader that this is direct address, a function performed by some of the other short lines as well.

This offers an improvement to line divisions, but is not a perfect solution. It requires changing the Masoretic pointing of דממה, and also disregards the *ethnach* under the immediately preceding עיני (which indicates that דממה was perceived to belong to the following וקול אשמע). Also, the *qameṣ* of וָקוֹל suggests it was linked as a pair with דממה.

A further difficulty is that none of the early versions treat דממה as a verb. If the vowels are retained without the accents, a similar sense could be obtained by interpreting דממה as a noun referring to the state of holding still (i.e., the result of cessation of movement, as in Ps. 107:29; 1 Kings 19:12). It could then still correspond to יעמד:'It stood still, and I did not recognise its appearance / a form was before my eyes, holding still (i.e., in a state of cessation)'. Both refer to the stilling of the frightful vision, marking the transition to the subsequent speaking voice.

The interpretation of דממה as a semantic parallel to יעמד is an attractive solution, in my view, with the best alternative solution being interpretation of דממה as an asyndetic circumstantial clause separating the night vision from the following voice: 'there was silence, and I heard a voice'. The intervening stillness is reminiscent of the theophany experienced by Elijah.

Conclusion for דממה

In all three of these passages, storm-like elements (the waves and storm of Ps. 107, the wind, earthquake and fire of 1 Kings 19, the fear-inducing, hair-bristling wind/spirit of Job 4) are directly contrasted to the following דממה, which should be interpreted as cessation or stillness.

Additional biblical references from the Dead Sea Scrolls

דממה is found in two additional biblical texts in 1QIsa[a]. Isa. 33:3 (1QIsa[a] XXVII,3) has מדממתך ('from your stillness'?) for MT מרוממתך: 'when you lift yourself up'. It could be a case of the common *resh*/*daleth* graphic confusion, but since the verse begins with a tumultuous noise (מקול המון), 'stillness/silence' could provide a contrast (though puzzling: 'at the sound of the multitude peoples fled, at your silence nations were scattered'). Perhaps God's stillness/silence was seen as equally fear-inducing as a human multitude's noise, but this cannot be demonstrated. Isa. 47:5 (1QIsa[a] XXXIX,23) has דממה for MT דומם, though neither is easy to understand. Both שבי דומם and שבי דממה could mean 'sit in silence', or indeed something else.

Extrabiblical references

Ben Sira

דמה appears three times in Ben Sira, but only as דמה I, 'be like'.

Non-Biblical DSS (including *Pesharim*)

Forms of דמה/דום/דמם appear twenty times in the non-biblical DSS, fourteen of which are the derived form דממה. Usage is similar to that in biblical passages apart from a unique development for דממה in the Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice (SSS).

Verbal forms

דום/דמם	4Q171 1-2i17	Psalms Pesher	**[דו]ם** ל[יהוה ו]הֿתחולל לו

Ps. 37:7 is quoted in a pesher on psalms, though the verse-initial דום is badly damaged and reconstructed from the MT. The following pesher says it is about the man of lies 'who has led many astray with words of falsehood, for they chose worthless things and did not lis[ten] to the Mediator of Knowledge'.[749] It is possible that דום here implied listening, as do other silence words, but the text is not clear enough to suggest with confidence.

דמה	4Q418 229,3	4QInstruction^{d}	]**להדמות** בכו[ל

להדמות is found in 4QInstruction^{d}, the only case of a Niphal or Hiphil infinitive construct of דמה, but the text is so fragmentary that no conclusions can be drawn.

דמם/דמה	1QpHab V,10	Habakkuk Pesher	ואנשי עצתם אשר **נדמו** בתוכחת מורה הצדק

In Hab. 1:13 the prophet asks God why he is 'silent' (תחריש) in not acting against the wicked who swallow up the more righteous. The question is reconfigured slightly in its quotation by the Habakkuk Pesher, with a plural תביטו, 'look on', making the following בוגדים, 'treacherous' or 'faithless' ones, its likely subject. The pesher to the verse answers this reformulated question: 'Its interpretation concerns the House of Absalom, and the men of their counsel, who were quiet (נדמו) at the rebuke of the Righteous Teacher and did not support him against the Man of the Lie who rejected the Torah in the midst of all their counsel' (V,9-12).[750] The verb נדמו has traditionally been interpreted 'be silent',[751] and is a Niphal of either דמה or דמם. Niphal דמה usually means 'be destroyed' in contexts of threatened judgement, however, and Niphal דמם, used only in Jer. and 1 Sam. 2, seems to be a byform also meaning 'be destroyed'. The Qal of דמם means 'cease, stop', and thus sometimes 'be silent', but there is no attested passive sense 'be silenced' unless

[749] Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4*, DJD 5:45.
[750] Horgan, 'Habakkuk Pesher', 168-69.
[751] Horgan: 'who were silent' (*Pesharim*, 15); Delcor: 'qui se turent' (*Essai sur le Midrash D'Habacuc*, 24). Williamson quotes Lohse: 'die stumm blieben'; Dupont-Sommer: 'qui se turent'; Carmignac: 'qui se sont tus' ('The Translation of 1 Q p Hab V,10', 263-64).

figuratively understood as the silencing brought by destruction. In light of biblical texts, therefore, נדמו should mean 'they were destroyed', as referring to a threatened but unrealised judgement (as in Isa. 6:5), here perhaps from the rebuke of the righteous teacher. The following description of their refusal to help him offers further evidence for their deserved judgement.

It must be noted, however, that semantic contamination between דמם and דמה increases in later biblical texts,[752] making it possible that by the time of the DSS they were byforms without distinguishable meaning. It would therefore be possible to interpret נדמו as 'be silenced' ('they were silenced by the rebuke of the teacher'),[753] or even perhaps 'caused to cease'. Another possibility, based on the Pesher's apparent association of נדמו with MT's תחרישׁ, is that דמם/דמה had taken on the nuance of other silence words in referring to an action that is not done although it is expected or appropriate. This would fit the Pesher's condemnation of the 'house of Absalom' for not supporting the righteous teacher as they should have. This is not elsewhere a meaning of דמם/דמה, however, and remains a speculation based on the semantic field.

Derived forms

דומם

דומם	1QpHab XII,15	Habakkuk Pesher	]לֹעֹצ הקיצה עֹ[ורי]לֹ[א]בֹן **דומם**

[752] Evidence in Jeremiah suggests contamination of דמם by דמה (with Niphal דמם as 'be destroyed'), but there is less evidence for influence the other direction. דמה does not ever mean 'be silent', but it does mean 'cease' twice in the Qal (Jer. 14:17; Lam. 3:49), suggesting that דמם had also begun to influence דמה, a process that likely continued in the centuries before Pesher Habakkuk.
[753] See Williamson, 'The Translation of 1 Q p Hab V,10', 264-65.

The text referring to the ‘silent/immobile’ stone idol of Hab. 2:19 is damaged in the Habakkuk Pesher,[754] and because no text is preserved below this line, no pesher has survived to give clues as to how דומם was understood.

דומה

דומה	4Q184 1,7	‘Wiles of the Wicked Woman’	ותשׂכון באהלי **דומה** בתוך מוקדי עולם

דומה, a synonym of death or the underworld in two psalms, is used with a similar sense in a text similar to Proverbs in warning against the dangers of the ‘strange’ woman.[755] The addressee of the text is repeatedly warned of the danger, sin, and corruption that await him with this woman, who is never explicitly identified but is associated with death, the pit, and Sheol, as in Proverbs.[756] Line 7 describes her dwelling ‘in the tents of דומה, in the midst of everlasting fire’. With the surrounding references to the ‘pit’ (both בור and שחת), ‘darkness’, and ‘death’, it seems clear that this is referring to the underworld or death, as in the psalms, whether it is connected semantically to cessation, silencing, or destruction.

דממה

דממה, with 14 references, is by far the most-attested form in the DSS. Apart from the references in SSS, it is mostly used in texts similar to either the theophany of 1 Kings 19 or the cessation of the storm in Ps. 107, and refers to ‘stillness’ (including stillness of spirit).

[754] For discussion, see Brownlee, *The Text of Habakkuk*, 88-90; also Nitzan, *Pesher Habakkuk*, 197. Talmon suggested דומה is a shorter form of the expected fem. adjective דוממה (‘Notes on the Habakkuk Scroll’, 37), others suggest רומה.
[755] Allegro identified it as sapiential and named it ‘The Wiles of the Wicked Woman’; see his article of the same title, 53-55; also Allegro, ed., *Qumrân Cave 4*, DJD 5:84.
[756] Cf. Prov. 2:18; 5:5; 7:27.

1QH^{a} (Hodayot)

In Hodayot, also called the 'Thanksgiving Scroll', all three references bear similarity to Ps. 107:29, with דממה referring to 'quiet' and opposed to either a storm or a stubborn spirit.[757]

1QH^{a} VIII,16	[ג]בֹּורֹי עֹולם ורוח עורף קְשֹׁה **לדממה**[*large*]הואלת[ה]ל[עשות] *vacat*

In column 8, line 16, a new clause seems to begin with ורוח: 'And a stubborn spirit into calmness (דממה)[…] yo[u] decided to [make]'.[758] דממה here contrasts the רוח עורף קְשֹׁה (stubborn spirit),[759] and must refer to its opposite, presumably a still or calm spirit. No verb is preserved to specify the process of transformation, so it can only be inferred.

1QH^{a} XIII,20	[20] ואתה אלי תשיב נַפְשִׁי סערה **לדממה** ונפש אביון פלטתה כצפֹּור[ר מפח ו]כְּטרף מפי [21] אריות *vacat*

In 13,20, as part of a poem in which the speaker thanks God for his deliverance from enemies who 'crush his soul all day' (line 19), דממה is used in contrast to the 'storm' they create: 'But you, O my God, turn the storm into stillness (דממה), and the soul of the poor one you have rescued like a bir[d from the snare, and] like prey from the mouth / (21) of the lions'.[760] The verb indicating transformation into דממה is preserved: תשיב, 'you turn back/restore'. נפשי was written after תשיב, and would have meant 'you restore my soul to quiet/stillness', but it was marked to be erased, and סערה written in as the object of the verb instead.[761] The 'storm' in this context represents the speaker's difficulties with his

[757] Schneider defines דממה in *Hodayot* as 'Ruhe' (rest, quietness), metaphorically the change of the soul's inner turmoil into peaceful quiet (*TWQ* 1:701).
[758] Text and translation from Schuller and Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 26-27.
[759] The biblical קשה־ערף is opposed to righteousness and obedience or listening (Deut. 9:6; Neh. 9:16-17), and is parallel to sin, rebellion and refusing to obey or listen (Exod. 34:9; Deut. 31:27; Jer. 17:23; 19:15). דממה is not likely to imply righteousness, but it could potentially be linked to listening.
[760] Schuller and Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 42.
[761] It is possible that נפשי was written here under influence of 14,26, where it follows the infinitive להשיב.

opponents, and its being turned into stillness (or cessation) is parallel to God's deliverance in the second half of the line.

1QH[a] XIV,26	25 ... וְ[אני היי]תי כמלח באוניה בְּזֹעף 26 מים גליהם וְכול משבריהם עלי המו רוח עועיֵם[לאין]**דממה** להשיב נפש ואין 27 נתיבת לישרְ דרך על פני מים ויהם תהום לאנחתי ונְגְשׁ[ו חיי]עד שערי מות ואהיה 28 כבא בעיר מצור.....

The text of column 14 bears even more thematic and lexical similarities to Psalm 107. In lines 25-26, the speaker says 'And I [was] like a sailor on a ship in raging (26) seas. Their waves[762] and all their breakers roared over me, a whirling wind[with no] respite (דממה) to restore the soul nor (27) a path to make a straight course upon the surface of the water.'[763] Here too דממה is contrasted to a storm, though this storm continues to torment the speaker, who finds relief only through God's later deliverance. The context suggests that דממה is to be negated, but there is a gap in the text, so it must be supplied.[764] If that is correct, דממה refers to a state of calm and stillness that the speaker cannot attain because of the storming waters and wind.

4QInstruction

דממה is used twice in the sapiential texts known as 4QInstruction or *Mûsār Lᵉ Mēvîn*. It is in fragmentary contexts, but seems to be opposed to a storm or destructive spirit.

4Q417 2i3	וגם את רוחו לא תבלע כיא **בדממה** דברת[ה

4QInstruction[c] (2i3) gives instructions on being righteous and humble, but the limited amount of text and broken line endings make it difficult to interpret. Strugnell and Harrington translate: 'Moreover thou shalt not *confound* (בלע) his spirit, for in *silence*

[762] Identical to the contextually more difficult גליהם in Ps. 107:29.
[763] Schuller and Newsom, *The Hodayot*, 46-47.
[764] The restoration of the negative אין is deemed certain by Stegemann, Schuller and Newsom, with other possible reconstructions given as: לאין, ואין, and באין (as meaning 'without'). Their translation 'without a respite' is said to literally mean 'without a keeping silent' (*1QHodayot[a]*, DJD 40:192).

(*calmness*) (בדממה) thou hast spoken [*vacat*]'.[765] If speaking in/with דממה is a reason not to destroy or confound another's spirit, it likely has connotations of gentleness and tranquility that are opposed to destruction and/or deception. It probably refers to a stillness of spirit (rather than silence) that is opposed to destructive actions (rather than to speaking). It creates a similar opposition to the 'stubborn spirit' of Hodayot 8,16.

4Q418 34,2-4	2. [ ]וסער הרוח [ ] 3. [ ]ם פֿהכו **לדמ**[ ] 4. [ ] ים ושׂ[ ]

דממה might appear in 4QInstruction[d], but the context is extremely fragmentary.[766] Only -דמ preceded by ל is preserved, but דממה seems likely following the stormy wind of the previous line and the potential 'sea' of the following.

Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice

דממה is used nine times in the SSS, some reminiscent of the theophany of 1 Kings 19, but with a significantly different meaning, often in construct referring to angelic noises.[767]

4Q401 16	4Q402 9
1) אלוהי אלי]ם ירומ[מו] 2) י]שמיעו **בדמ֯מ֯ת** 3)]קדושי קורב	2) א]לוהי אלי[ם ירוממו 3) י]שׂמיעו **בדמ֯]מת** 4) קדו]שׁי קו֯]רב
1) …God of the go]ds. [They] ex[alt]… 2) …]they announce in the **stillness** of… 3) …] holy ones of the inner sanctum…	2) …G]od of the god[s. They exalt… 3) …]They announce in the **sti[llness** of… 4) … the hol]y ones of the inner [sanctum…

A construct form of דממה is used in two fragmentary but seemingly identical texts from 4Q401 and 4Q402. It is preceded by the Hiphil שמיעו[י, suggesting: 'they proclaimed in stillness/quietness' (of something, though the absolute noun is not preserved).[768] The context refers to heavenly beings praising (ירומ֯ in 4Q401 16,1), who must be the subjects

[765] Strugnell and Harrington, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 34:172, 176.
[766] Strugnell and Harrison translate: ']and the tempest of wind[/] . . . *they turn* to calm (לדמ) [' (*Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 34:250).
[767] Schneider defines it as an acoustic phenomenon (i.e., not silence), since it so often appears together with reference to a voice, noise, or the verb 'cause to hear' (*TWQ* 1:699-702).
[768] Translation by Newsom, in Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 11:210, 235. Davila translates 'they shall proclaim in silence' (*Liturgical Works*, 163).

of שמיעו[י, but they could be proclaiming something *in* (a state of) stillness, or *by* their stillness.

4Q405 18,2-5	
2)]לְכלכל קדושים דביר מ [3) קו]דשים ברוח **דממת** אלוהי[ם 4)]דְּבִיר ימהרו מקול הכבו[ד 5) ת]הלי פלא **בדממת** ק[ול	2)]to support the holy ones. The shrine *m.*[3) hol]iness with the **quiet** divin[e] spirit of god-like being[s 4)]shrine, they make haste at the sound of the glor[y 5)]wondrous [ps]alms with the **quiet** so[und

Two more uses of דממה in construct are found in 4Q405 18, but with broken lines and without a verb, the syntax and meaning remain ambiguous. The phrase ברוח דממת אלוהים in line 3 could be interpreted 'in/by a quiet, divine spirit' or 'with the quiet spirit of (the) gods'.[769] Newsom's translation above, however, interprets אלוהים as both the attributive adjective 'divine' and as 'god-like beings'.[770] In line 5 only the initial ק of the word following דממת is preserved. If it is דממת קול, as reconstructed, it could be translated 'with quietness/stillness of voice',[771] or 'a calm voice', but its relation to the preceding פלא is not clear, and there is insufficient following context to reconstruct the meaning.

4Q405 19abcd
6 (19d only) אלוהים חיים כול מעשיהם 7 (19a-d) וצורות בדניהם מלאכי קודש מתחת לד[בירי] הפלא קול **דממת** שקט אל[והי]ם ברכים[מ]
6 (19d) Living god-like beings (are) all their construction 7 (19a-d) and the images of their figures (are) holy angels. From underneath the wondrous s[hrines] (comes) a sound of quiet **stillness**, god-like beings blessing

The four small fragments of 4Q405 19 (a, b, c, d) can be connected based on similarities with 11QShirShabb VI. Although the text seems to describe the sanctuary and chariot throne, it is, in Newsom's candid evaluation, 'so extraordinarily obscure' that even the

[769] As Newsom's earlier and simpler translation: 'with the quiet spirit of the godlike being[s' (*Songs*, 291). Davila translates: '[. . . ho]ly ones with a spirit of quiet of divinit[ies . . .]' (*Liturgical Works*, 141).
[770] In Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 11:338.
[771] Davila: '[…] wondrous [ps]alms with a quiet vo[ice…]' (*Liturgical Works*, 141).

subject is unclear.[772] A sound from below the 'wondrous shrines' is described (assuming הפלא is in construct with the reconstructed [לד[בירי]),[773] followed by the construct phrase קול דממת שקט, which must refer to a voice or sound with the quality of quietness. שקט in biblical texts refers to a quiet, peaceful state, while דממה refers to cessation, but it would be difficult to interpret here as 'a sound of cessation of quiet' (i.e., an 'outbreak of noise'). The context suggests that שקט and דממה should be interpreted as synonymous: 'the sound of quiet stillness', or 'a quiet voice of stillness'[774] This seems to be linked to the following blessing, but with only one word of the subsequent line legible, the context does not give further clues.

4Q405 20ii–21–22
7 ... במשכ[ן אלוהי] דעת יפל[ו] לפנו ה[כרו]בים וב[ר]כו בהרומם קול **דממת** אלוהים 8 [נשמע]והמון רנה ברים כנפיהם קול[**דממ]ת** אלוהים תבנית כסא מרכבה מברכים ממעל לרקיע הכרובים . . . 12 ... וקול **דממת** ברכ בהמון לכתם והללו קודש בהשיב דרכיהם בהרומם ירוממו פלא ובשוכן 13 [יעמ]דו קול גילות רנה השקיט **ודממ[ת]** ברך אלוהים בכול מחני אלוהים [ו]קול תשבוח[ות]
7 … In the tabern[acle of the God of] knowledge the [*cheru*]*bim* fall before Him; and they bl[es]s as they lift themselves up. A sound of divine **stillness** 8 is heard;]and there is a tumult of jubilation at the lifting up of their wings, a sound of divine **[stillnes]s**. The image of the chariot throne do they bless (which is) above the platform of the *cherubim.* . . . 12 There is a **still** sound of blessing in the tumult of their movement a holy praise as they return on their paths. As they rise, they rise wondrously; and when they settle, 13 they [stand] still. The sound of glad rejoicing falls silent, and there is a **stillne[ss]** of divine blessing in all the camps of the godlike beings; [and] the sound of prais[es

4Q405 20ii–21–22, which overlaps with 11QShirShabb VII, has four forms of דממה, two partially reconstructed.[775] All are in construct, twice with אלוהים, twice with ברך, and all

[772] In Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4,* DJD 11:339-41.
[773] הפלא could instead be a Niphal or Hiphil verb with קול as its subject, describing the sound (of quiet?) as wondrous, surprising, or extraordinary (BDB, 810).
[774] Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 142.
[775] In line 8, only the bottom-left trace of ת from a potential דממת is barely visible, but the preceding space is larger than that needed for other attestations of דממת, and its reconstruction is based primarily on contextual

but one is preceded by קול. In lines 7-8 the sound of a 'divine stillness' is heard (קול דממת אלוהים, twice),[776] but also a tumultuous, joyful noise as the angels lift their wings. It seems difficult to reconcile the 'divine stillness' with the tumult of rejoicing, though perhaps they represent two extremes: happy noise and solemn stillness, or the clamour of the angels and the stillness of God. Alternatively, the sound of the angels' rejoicing could itself be identified as a 'sound of stillness', as in other passages of SSS.

Lines 9-12 describe the angels' motion on wheels and their appearance of fire, then a 'still sound of blessing' (קול דממת ברכ, lit. a 'sound of stillness of blessing'),[777] seemingly paradoxically followed by the 'tumult of their going/walking' (בהמון לכתם).[778] Again דממה could describe the sound(s) made by the heavenly beings as quiet, or it could refer to a stillness in contrast to the noise and commotion they make, or even a 'sound of angelic praise', corresponding to the sound produced by the cherubim's wings in line 7.[779] When their rejoicing falls silent (השקיט), there is a 'stillness of divine blessing', or perhaps a 'divinely blessed stillness', in the camps of God/angelic beings (line 13).[780] דממה, which is portrayed as a result of השקיט, could here refer to stillness in contrast to the preceding noise of praise. However, since in the previous line דממת ברכ was a sound *made* by angelic movement and linked to praise, it may not be possible to eliminate ambiguity.

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clues. In light of the tumult of rejoicing (המון רנה) beginning line 8, it seems preferable to restore גילות or תשבחות in the gap (suggested as alternatives by Newsom), both of which also end in ת and are used elsewhere in the text following קול. It would be translated: 'the sound of the praise of God' (Newsom, in Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4,* DJD 11:350).

[776] Perhaps 'the voice of God's quietness'; Davila translates 'a voice of quiet of God' (*Liturgical Works*, 147).

[777] The absolute noun ברכ could function attributively to describe the sound as a blessed one, rather than necessarily one 'of blessing'.

[778] Davila translates 'and a quiet voice of blessing is with the tumult of their going' (*Liturgical Works*, 147).

[779] Newsom, in Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4,* DJD 11:353.

[780] Only the initial -דמ and the end of לוהים- are clearly visible (Newsom, in Eshel et al., *Qumran Cave 4,* DJD 11:346).

Conclusion on דממה in SSS

דממה clearly has a special meaning in SSS, where it describes a sound made by the angels in their movement and praise. It also seems to be used in the more traditional way, however, as meaning 'stillness'. Although the tradition of the קול דממה and דממת אלוהים of SSS is very interesting and illustrates significant semantic expansion through exegetical developments, it is not pursued here as it does not reflect the *biblical* semantic value of דממה.[781]

Inscriptions

Forms potentially related to Hebrew דמה/דום/דמם appear in three inscriptions:

1) a Hebrew letter found on an ostracon at Yavneh Yam,
2) a Phoenician funerary inscription, and
3) the Aramaic cuneiform incantation.

All attestations are both textually and semantically uncertain, and are therefore of only limited significance for this semantic study.

Meṣad Ḥashavyahu/Yavneh-Yam

At Meṣad Ḥashavyahu, near Yavneh-Yam, a seventh-century BCE letter was found on ostraca fragments.[782] In it a tenant farmer (or corvée worker) appeals to an official requesting the return of a garment that had been taken from him by someone to whom he owed a debt. The text is somewhat broken at the end of the letter, but the speaker seems to promise repayment and request mercy and restoration of the garment. The final line is reconstructed: [..]נְ תדהם ולא בדך [דבר ע]את עֻת [ושמ].[783] The speaker asks to be heard, and that the official not דהם. This root is attested only once in biblical Hebrew (Jer. 14:9: למה

[781] Even if its use in *Songs* comes from textual dependence on 1 Kings 19, it also differs in its lack of דקה, and has clearly acquired a special meaning, possibly reflected in the Targum's quiet sound of praise.
[782] See the initial publication by Naveh, 'A Hebrew Letter', 129; also Amusin and Heltzer, 'The Inscription', 148-49.
[783] Donner and Röllig, *KAI*, 46.

תהיה כאיש נדהם), where it is thought to mean 'astonish, astound'.[784] נדהם is related or parallel to being unable to save, since it is followed by: כגבור לא־יוכל להושיע ('like a mighty man who cannot save'). It could therefore refer to a man who is idle, inactive, confused, or unable to deliver. This meaning also makes sense in the letter, as the speaker desires that the official not דהם but instead 'deliver' him by returning his garment.[785] Many have claimed that דהם is related to דום as a byform, concluding that the plea means 'do not be silent'.[786] If it did, it would fit the biblical usage of silence in reference to restraint from action,[787] but the philological grounds for this association are not defensible. First, there is little evidence for assuming a connection between II-ה and II-ו verbs.[788] Second, not only is the existence of דום as a root uncertain, but even if it were a byform of דמם, its meaning would more likely be 'cease, be still'. דום eventually might have come to be understood as 'be silent' in post-biblical Hebrew, but this should not be assumed for a 7th-century text.

Phoenician funerary inscription (RÉS 56)

A small Phoenician funerary inscription on marble might have the name דמד,[789] which has been associated with the roots דום/דמם, but no semantic value is given and even its reading is uncertain.

[784] BDB, 187.
[785] Naveh translates 'and be not helpless to save' ('A Hebrew Letter', 134-35).
[786] Amusin and Heltzer translate 'and do not be speechless (or: unresponsive)' ('The Inscription from Meṣad Ḥashavyahu', 150, 154). They are followed at least by Pardee ('Judicial Plea', 54; *Handbook*, 21); Gibson (Hebrew and Moabite I*nscriptions*, 29-30); Lemaire ('L'ostracon', 76); and Weippert ('Die Petition', 462n.33).
[787] E.g., as the psalmist's repeated plea: אל־תחרש.
[788] I surveyed all such verbs in biblical texts and found only one example of possible semantic overlap, but since it also required an unlikely alternation in first consonant, I determined that II-ה/II-ו verbs are unlikely byforms.
[789] From Répertoire de l'Épigraphie Sémitique, 1:56.

Aramaic cuneiform incantation

An incantation tablet written in Aramaic using cuneiform signs repeatedly mentions silence (see description under חרשׁ). It might have a form of *d-m-y*,[790] but its reading is very tenuous.[791]

Cognate Languages and Post-biblical Hebrew

There are many cognates of דמם/דום/דמה with a broad range of meanings, suggesting multiple Proto-Semitic roots that merged and developed differently. Whether some of their meanings should influence the way we interpret the Hebrew roots is a matter for careful consideration.

Akkadian

The G-stem verb *damāmu*, meaning 'mourn', and the Š-stem *šudmumu*, 'cause to mourn', are well-attested in Akkadian literature, with some nominal derivatives as well. They appear in a diversity of genres: from legal to literary and religious texts, and with a variety of subjects: human, animal, and inanimate. The verb is used not only for mourning but also for a type of moaning noise.[792] It can describe human moaning 'like a dove',[793] the mourning of a widow, the moaning of an ill person, and noises made by certain animals (doves, a donkey, wildcats, a ewe, a snake). Even inanimate objects can 'moan', including a reed swamp, a house, a city and town. Nominal forms (*dimmatu, dimmu, dumāmu*)[794] refer to moaning and are parallel to words meaning 'weeping' and 'sighing', often in a context of mourning.The sheer number of attestations in contexts of mourning where one also expects moaning make the meaning of this root very certain, as do the parallels with weeping and sighing.

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[790] Dupont-Sommer is one of few who normalised as *di-ma-a-a-ʾ[i-i]*, suggesting a connection to Hebrew דמי, which he translates 'repos' (rest) ('La Tablette Cunéiforme', 52).
[791] It also is not found in more recent publications, e.g., Geller, 'Aramaic in Cuneiform', 132-33.
[792] References and translations are from CAD, 3:59-61, but I have also checked many of them individually.
[793] Tablet I, lines 107-9, in Annus and Lenzi, *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi*, 33.
[794] CAD 3:143-44, 179.

Ugaritic

Forms of *dmm* appear with two different meanings in the Ugaritic story of KRT (traditionally Keret, or Kirta). All attestations have only the two root letters *dm*, making the original root (*dmm* or *dwm*) harder to identify with certainty.[795]

KTU 1.14

Two parallel texts of the first tablet of Keret (III.10 and V.3) contain a command-fulfillment sequence: Keret receives instructions in a dream, then he is described carrying them out. He is first commanded: 'Go (*lk*) a day and a second, a third, a fourth day, a fifth, a sixth day,' after which he would arrive at his destination, the city Udum, on the seventh. Later, the days one through seven are again counted, this time preceded by *dm* insteak of *lk*.

parallel texts in KTU 1.14[796]

III.10-13	V.3-5	
… . ***dm*** . *ym* . *w* *tn* *tlt* . *rbʿ* . *ym* . *ymš* *tdt* . *ym* . …	***dm*** . *ym* . w *tn* [[tlt]] *tlt* . rbʿ . *ym* *ḫmš* . *tdt* . *ym*.	'**stay** a day and a second a third, fourth day, a sixth day'

With strong parallelism to the passages in which Keret is told to 'go' (and reported going) for seven consecutive days (*lk* III.2; *ylk* IV.44), it seems clear that *dm* is meant in contrast. After journeying for seven days to the city, he is told to *dm* ('remain' or 'stay quiet',[797] 'rest',[798] 'then halt',[799] 'tarry',[800] 'verhalte dich ruhig',[801] 'demeure tranquille'[802]) over seven more days.[803] Then Pabil the king would send peaceful messengers offering riches

[795] Halayqa has DMM 2, which he defines as 'sich ruhig, bewegungslos verhalten' (*A Comparative Lexicon of Ugaritic and Canaanite*, 124); del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín have it as as middle weak: /d-m/, defining it as 'remain still' (*Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language,* 272).
[796] Text from *KTU*[3], 39, 41. Roman font is used by *KTU* to indicate a less certain letter.
[797] Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 85; de Moor, Anthology of Religious Texts, 196, 200.
[798] Wyatt, Religious Texts from Ugarit, 194.
[799] Greenstein, 'Kirta', 16, 20.
[800] Ginsberg, 'Ugaritic myths, epics and legends', 144-45.
[801] Dietrich and Loretz, *Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen*, 1224.
[802] Caquot, Textes Ougaritiques, 1:521.
[803] A minority, however, interpret *dm* as the particle 'then' (Pardee in Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, 1:335; Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*, 70, 72). Non-verbal *dm* is defined as: '1) illative "since" and 2) asseverative "so, then, for certain"' (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language,* 272).

to Keret, who was instructed to ask instead for the king's daughter as a wife. Nearly identical language reports his fulfillment of these instructions.

The meaning 'stay', 'wait' matches the Hebrew cognate evidence, but since the understanding of Ugaritic *dm* has almost certainly been influenced by knowledge of Hebrew, we risk circular logic if we then use it to confirm Hebrew meanings. It does, however, strengthen the possibility of there being a Proto-Semitic root *dmm/dwm* meaning 'hold still, cease moving', but with only two attestations, and those in parallel contexts, it must remain an interesting side note to the well-attested Hebrew דמם.

KTU 1.16

Later in the story of Keret forms of *dmm/dwm* are used with an entirely different meaning, parallel to the verb *bky,* 'to weep'. They are spoken by Keret in an address to his son telling him not to weep at Keret's upcoming death, but instead to call his sister to weep for him.[804] Both verb forms are written as *tdm*, the first a negated 2ms (line 26), and the second a positive 3fs (line 30). A third form, *dm* (line 32), could be from the same verb, but the reading of the *d* is uncertain and the line broken, so its meaning is unclear.

KTU 1.16 I 25-32[805]

*b*n . a*l* . *tbkn* . *al* ***tdm*** . *ly* . *al tkl* . *bn* qr . *ʿnk* . *mḫ* . *rišk* *ud**m**ʿt* . *ṣḥ* . *aḫtk* *ṯtmnt* . *bt* . *ḥmḥ*<mt>*h* dn*n* . *tbkn* . *w* ***tdm*** . *ly* . qmm aḫr . *al* . *t*rgm . *l aḫtk* tr[gm .]llm . ***dm*** . *aḫtk*	'Son, weep not, **lament** not for me; exhaust not, son, the well of your eyes (and) the marrow of your head with tears. Call your sister Thitmanat, a daughter whose…is strong; let her weep and **lament** for me. Hero, of a truth do you speak to your sister, speak to [her] (and) let [her] **lament**' (Gibson)[806]

[804] Del Olmo Lete suggests that the sister was asked because mourning was not appropriate for a prince (*Mitos y Leyendas*, 266).
[805] Text from *KTU*[3], 45.
[806] Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 95. The ellipsis dots are in the place of *ḥmḥ* in the *KTU* text.

There is very little variation among translations, except for the difficult *mḫ rišk* in line 27, which seems to refer to tears.[807] The verb *tdm*, clearly parallel to *tbkn* ('weep') in both uses, is related to mourning, though it is less clear if it indicates an audible and physical response ('weep', 'wail') or only an emotional state ('mourn', 'grieve'). Dictionaries tend to refer to the physical, outward manifestations of mourning ('wail, moan, lament'),[808] perhaps as a parallel to *bky*. It is noteworthy that although mourning is a common theme of the story and *bky* appears frequently, *dmm/dwm* is used with this sense only in these lines. The meaning of the final *dm*, in line 32, is less clear. Some do not translate the line due to the obscurity of the text,[809] while others translate: 'no need to tell your sister to mourn',[810] or, following a different transcription: 'speak to [her] (and) let [her] lament',[811] or the similar 'you will tell her (?) that she [should] moan'.[812] Others translate *dm* as a particle.[813]

Summary for Ugaritic

Ugaritic seems to attest both an East Semitic meaning (similar to Akkadian 'mourn, moan') and a West Semitic meaning (similar to Hebrew 'cease, be still') for the root *dmm/dwm*, leading to many interesting, if ultimately unanswerable, questions. If both meanings are 'native' to Ugaritic, are they two separate roots or did they come from one root that developed new meanings, perhaps because of similarity in form and proximity in

[807] De Moor translates: 'Do not use up, my son, the fountain of your eyes' (*Anthology of Religious Texts*, 212-13); Ginsberg: 'waste not thine eye with flowing' ('Ugaritic Myths, Epics and Legends', 147).
[808] Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language, 274; Halayqa, A Comparative Lexicon of Ugaritic and Canaanite, 124.
[809] Ginsberg, 'Ugaritic Myths, Epics and Legends', 147; Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*, 78.
[810] Pardee in Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, 1:340.
[811] Gibson transcribes: [t]r[gm] l[h.t]*dm* (*Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 95).
[812] Del Olmo Lete, *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan*, 311. His translation includes the question mark. He also transcribes differently: *ʿw(?)[ ]*ṣ/llt*(/).dm.aḫtk.*
[813] De Moor translates 'for' (*Anthology of Religious Texts*, 213); Dietrich and Loretz translate: 'siehe' (*Weisheitstexte, Mythen und Epen*, 1242). See Gordon's 1947 *Ugaritic Handbook*, where *dm* II is defined as 'behold' (224), then in his later 1965 *Ugaritic Textbook* as 'lo! now' (385).

meaning?[814] If they are *not* both 'native', one of the meanings could have entered as a loanword or from the influence of a similar sounding foreign word. The scribe could very well have known Akkadian and Ugaritic in addition to other Canaanite dialects, for example, and could have either used a foreign word, or associated a foreign meaning with a similar sounding Ugaritic root.[815] The fact that *dm/dmm* is used only two (potentially three) times in close proximity in a text that refers to weeping (*bky*) many other places hints slightly that *dm* might have been less common, or indeed a loanword (from cultural and linguistic contact with Akkadian sources), but this cannot be demonstrated with our limited textual evidence.

Aramaic

Aramaic דמם is used in post-biblical Jewish Palestinian literature, but not much in earlier texts. דמם is defined as 'be silent, dumb, at rest; be stricken dumb', 'in a stupor' or 'to leave off', with a causative 'to silence, bring to a stand-still'. Since many of the texts referred to relate to biblical uses of דמם, however, they do not necessarily offer external cognate evidence for דמם. The quadriliteral דמדם, the Pilpel of דמם, is defined as 'be silent, overwhelmed, in a stupor', describing the effects of wine. The nominal דמדום means 'stillness' and is used for the time of dawn and sunset.[816] דום/דמם are not used in Babylonian Aramaic, but the quadriliteral דמדם means 'to mumble',[817] as in Arabic and Mandaic.

דום is defined as 'to speak in a low voice' or 'to suspect', and some derived forms (דימה, דמאי/דמי) refer to rumours and 'evil reports'.[818] A connection between suspicion and

[814] This phenomenon has been documented in modern languages. See, for example, Geeraerts, 'Homonymy, Iconicity, and Prototypicality', which describes a merger of two words in both form and meaning.
[815] This is especially likely if phonetically similar words have meanings in related or contiguous domains.
[816] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 312, 314; Sokoloff, Dictionary of JPA, 152.
[817] Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JBA*, 341.
[818] Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 286, 300, 312.

rumour and speaking quietly is possible, but difficult to trace.[819] דמי can mean 'mumble, think, be silent', and the Niphal 'be silenced, undone', in addition to the meanings shared with Hebrew דמה I ('be like, compare').[820]

The main differences from Hebrew are the additional meanings 'mumble, whisper' (with the negative connotations of rumours), and the meaning 'be in a stupour' (for quadriliteral forms). There also seems to be a clearer meaning 'be silent' in the Aramaic attestations, rather than 'hold still', though this could be due to later tradition.

Samaritan Aramaic

One instance of דום is recorded in Samaritan Aramaic, when ודומו translates Hebrew ושמעו in Gen. 49:2. Its definition is uncertain, but two potential glosses are 'be silent/quiet' and 'stand'.[821] In its context, translating שמע and with a preceding command to gather, it seems more likely to refer to being quiet in order to listen rather than to standing or holding still.

Mandaic

In Mandaic DMM means 'to come to a stop, stand', though only one attestation is given. The hollow DWM is glossed as 'be quiet', 'be silenced' (again in one text), but the meaning is doubtful.[822] The root is attested more frequently in its reduplicated forms DMDM and the dissimilated DNDM,[823] which is defined as 'be deprived of speech or movement by emotion, be stupefied' and also 'murmur, whisper'. Its doublet DMDM is defined as 'mutter, grumble' (or, in the entry for DMDM itself, as 'whisper', 'say silently,

[819] The Talmud uses both דמם and דום for 'evil whispering', suggesting that the meaning spread to byforms (Montgomery, *The Books of Kings,* 317).
[820] Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 313. He also defines it as 'be dumb', but as this is only to translate Hebrew דומם in the Targum of Habakkuk 2:19, it should not be relied on too heavily.
[821] Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 173. The latter he links to Arabic دام.
[822] Drower and Macuch, *Mandaic Dictionary*, 104, 112. I follow their convention of listing roots in capital letters and vocalised forms in lower-case.
[823] According to Macuch, biradical roots are frequently reduplicated (to form the palpel), often accompanied by dissimilation (Macuch, *Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic*, 248).

in the heart' regarding prayers), and the nominal derivative *dandamta* is translated 'muttering together, whispering together'.[824] In another source *dandumia* is glossed as 'standing quiet', the participles *mdandmia* as 'they are silent' and *mdand(i)mitun* as 'ye are quiet'.[825] The meanings of these roots seem well established (with over a dozen combined references), with two main meanings: a quiet, murmuring noise (with negative connotations that accompany grumbling), or a lack of speech (from astonishment or other emotion).

Post-biblical Hebrew

Unsurprisingly, post-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic share some meanings. In both, דמדם means 'be in a daze, confused', and some forms came to be associated with an 'evil report' (דּוּמָה, which also continued to be used to refer to the place of the dead). Other forms were also associated with whispering or quiet noises (including דְּמָמָה).

דמם continued to mean 'hold still, stop',[826] but 'be silent' became dominant, and many derivatives referring to silence and being silent were created (דְּמוּם, דְּמִימָה, דּוֹמֵם). Other *binyanim* were also used, retaining evidence of both meanings: a Piel דִּמֵּם meaning 'restrain movement', as well as Hithpael, and even Hiphil and Hophal.[827]

דום is defined as 'wait, hope' (and דּוּמִיָּה as 'patience, relief'),[828] but only in biblical examples, and it never seems to become a full-fledged verb, though derived forms were used.

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[824] Drower and Macuch, *Mandaic Dictionary*, 100, 111-12.
[825] Macuch, Handbook of Classical and Modern Mandaic, 199, 208n.149, 279.
[826] The modern דֹּם לֵב, for example, means 'cardiac arrest', literally 'stop of heart' (Even-Shoshan, *Milon Even-Shoshan*, 325).
[827] Defined נִשְׁתַּתֵּק (Hitp.), הִשְׁתִּיק, הִפְסִיק אֶת הִתְנוֹעָה (Hiph.), and הֻשְׁתַּק (Hoph.) in Kenaʿani, *Otsar ha-lashon ha-ʿIvrit*, 2:631-32.
[828] Ben-Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary*, 7:905-6.

The use of דמה II to mean ‘cease’ or ‘be destroyed’ (Niphal) seems to have fallen out of use after biblical Hebrew, which is interesting especially as it is also without cognate evidence.

In summary, the meanings ‘perish’ for דמה and ‘be silent’ for דמם are particular to Hebrew, and the Aramaic interpretation as ‘be silent’ can be attributed to influence from Hebrew. The meaning ‘be silent’ seems to have become more prominent in post-biblical Hebrew, which also will have influenced later biblical interpretation. It must be noted, however, that the meanings ‘hold still’ and ‘be silent’ were probably perceived to overlap in the semantic field, and therefore cannot so easily be separated.

Arabic

There is an Arabic root *dmm* (دمّ), but it means to smear or cover (with dye, mud, ointment), so does not have any obvious semantic connection to Hebrew דמם.[829] A more significant potential cognate from Arabic is the middle-weak دوم (*dwm*), meaning ‘continue, endure, remain’, or ‘become extended or prolonged’.[830] It can also refer to something becoming still or motionless: ‘it stopped, or stood still’.[831] Derived forms refer to duration and continuance (دوام, دائم, and دائماً ‘always’). This evidence from Arabic strengthens the likelihood of a Proto-Semitic hollow root *dwm*, which would also make more likely the existence of originally separate Hebrew roots דמם and דום, with the latter, as in Arabic, meaning ‘stop, hold still’.[832] Another Arabic cognate is the reduplicated دمدم (*damdama*), ‘to mutter, grumble, growl’, as also in Babylonian Aramaic.

[829] Unless, of course, it was used for covering the mouth and then came to mean ‘be silent’.
[830] Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon, 935-36; Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 303.
[831] This later usage reported in Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 936.
[832] The existence of this root in earlier stages of Hebrew seems to me likely, but not demonstrable. Its existence in Hebrew was suggested by Schick on the basis of the Arabic root in his 1913 article ‘The Stems dûm and damám in Hebrew’, but his work relied almost entirely on emendation of the biblical texts to match his conclusion. G.R. Driver also argued for a Hebrew root דום meaning ‘stand still, halt, cease, wait’ (‘A Confused Hebrew Root’, 2).

Ethiopic/Geʿez

Ethiopic languages have a number of potential cognates.[833] Some forms of *dmm* I, such as *tadamma:* 'be silent, stop, be immobile', show semantic overlap. Other meanings for the same root reveal a broad semantic range: 'be stupefied, be astonished, be amazed, marvel, wonder, be dumbfounded, be confused', with a causative quadriliteral *dmdm* 'cause to be astonished'. Other forms of *dmm* I are defined as 'stupefy, astound', 'remain immobile', 'be surprised, wonder', along with corresponding adjectives and nouns, including 'wonder' and 'silence'. *Dmm* II is defined as 'close, cover, fill up, heap up, level', and *dmm* III as 'shouting, noise'. Although Leslau links this as a cognate to Ugaritic, Akkadian and (perhaps overconfidently) Hebrew forms meaning 'grieve, weep', a direct semantic and cognate relationship cannot be assumed between roots meaning 'make noise' and 'mourn' without intermediary textual evidence. The breadth of Ethiopic meanings lends support to my suggestion below that Hebrew may have undergone a similar semantic expansion, with דמם referring also to surprise, wonder, and astonishment.

Cognate Summary Charts

By root and language:

root	***dwm / d-m***	***dmy/dmh (≠ be like)***	***dmm***	***reduplicated / quadriliteral***
Akkadian	be giddy, stagger (*dâmu*); wander about (G), make to fumble (D) (*da'āmu* II)	have/cause convulsions	mourn, moan	mule
Ugaritic	stay, be still	-----	mourn	-----
Aramaic	whisper, suspect; rumours stop? be silent? (Sam.) be quiet ? (doubtful) (Mand.)	mumble, think, be silent (Jastrow)	be silent; be in a stupor (JPA) be silent, at rest, stricken dumb (Jastrow) stop (Mand.)	silence, be overwhelmed (Jastrow) mumble (Baby. Aram) whisper, murmur, mutter, grumble, be stupefied; or 'be silent' (Mand.)
Arabic	continue, endure, remain	bleed	smear, cover (with dye, mud, ointment)	mutter, grumble, growl (poss. also 'smear, cover')

[833] Leslau, Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez, 134.

Ethiopic	area, region	-----	be silent, stop, be immobile, stupefy, be stupefied, marvel close, cover, fill up shouting, noise	cause to be astonished or stupefied
Hebrew	be still ? (uncertain)	destroy, perish; cease stop	stop, be still, be silent	be in a daze, confused (postbiblical Hebrew)[834]

By meaning

stay, remain, stop	Arabic *dwm* = continue, endure, remain Aramaic *dwm* (Sam.) = stop?; *dmm* (Jastrow) = be at rest Ethiopic *dmm* I = stop, be immobile Hebrew *dmm* = stop, be still; *dwm ?* = be still ? Mandaic *dmm* = stop Ugaritic *dm* = stay, be still
be silent; be in a stupor, be astonished	Aramaic *dmy* = be silent; *dmdm* = silence, be overwhelmed; *dmm* = be silent, stricken dumb, be in a stupor; *dwm* (Sam.) = be silent? Ethiopic *dmdm* II = cause to be astonished or stupefied; *dmm* I = be silent, stupefy, be stupefied, marvel Hebrew *dmm* = stop, be still, be silent Mandaic *dmdm / dndm* = be stupefied; be silent
mumble, mutter, whisper, and other noises	Akkadian *dmm* = moan (and mourn) Arabic *dmdm* = mutter, grumble, growl Aramaic *dmy* = mumble, think; *dmdm* = mumble; *dwm* = whisper, suspect; rumours Ethiopic *dmm* III = shouting, noise Mandaic *dmdm / dndm* = whisper, murmur, mutter, grumble
close, cover (also smear)	Ethiopic *dmm* II = close, cover, fill up Arabic *dmm* = smear, cover (with dye, mud, ointment)
mourn, moan	Akkadian *damāmu* = mourn, moan Ugaritic *dm* = mourn, weep?
destroy, perish	Hebrew *dmh II*
be giddy, stagger	Akkadian *dâmu*
have/cause convulsions	Akkadian *damû*

Cognate Conclusion and Implications for Biblical Hebrew

The broad semantic range of these many potential cognates can be attributed to at least two causes: 1) their likely derivation from multiple Proto-Semitic roots and 2) semantic expansion within each language. It has become impossible to trace their development with accuracy, not only because of insufficient (diachronic) textual evidence, but also because the forms of these weak roots have merged and in some cases become

[834] Klein, Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary, 126; Targarona Borrás Diccionario Hebreo-Español, 214.

inseparable. I will nonetheless attempt to sketch out possible paths of semantic development and the implications for biblical Hebrew.

There are three main groups of meanings, the first two also in biblical Hebrew:

1) 'stay, stop, be still' and 'remain, continue';
2) 'be silent, be astonished'; and
3) 'mumble, mutter, whisper' (possibly also 'moan').

In addition, both Arabic and Ethiopic have a root *dmm* meaning 'cover, close' (Arabic with the nuance 'smear something over'). Both Akkadian and Ugaritic have a meaning 'mourn'. It is noteworthy that Hebrew alone has the meaning 'perish, destroy' for *dmh.*[835] Akkadian is also alone in its meanings for the hollow and third-weak roots ('stagger, have convulsions').

If a Proto-Semitic root *dmm* originally meant 'close' or 'stop up', it could theoretically have later transferred to the domain of sound to mean 'be deaf' and thereby relate to silence. Semantic parallels in related languages confirm this possibility, with Arabic صم (*ṣm*) meaning both 'close, plug' and 'be deaf'; Akkadian *katāmu* meaning 'cover' in the G stem and 'silence' in the D stem; Aramaic אטם meaning 'shut, close' and 'become deaf'; Ethiopic *ṣmm* (*ʾaṣmama*) meaning 'stop up, close' and 'deafen, stop (ears)'.[836] If Hebrew דמם ever meant 'cover', it would make sense in at least two verses. In 1 Sam. 2:9 Hannah says the wicked will יִדָּמוּ, traditionally translated 'be cut off' or 'silenced'. If it meant 'they will be covered', however, it would make more sense of the adverbial בחֹשֶׁך, 'in/by darkness'. In Ezek. 27:32 Tyre is enigmatically described as being כְּדֻמָּה in the sea.

[835] I have wondered if there might be any historic connection between the common Semitic *dm*, 'blood' and the Hebrew דמה II meaning 'destroy, perish', but I am not aware of any evidence. Theoretically, it could have originated as a denominative verb from the plural of *dm*, which refers to bloodshed and death.
[836] A connection might also be made to Hebrew אלם, meaning 'mute' in the Niphal and 'bind' in the Piel, suggesting that muteness might have been conceived of as being 'bound' up, or closed off.

Is she like one ‘cut off’, ‘destroyed’, ‘silenced’, or perhaps one ‘covered’ within the sea? Though attractive in these verses, there is insufficient evidence to suggest ‘cover’ as a biblical Hebrew meaning. There is also no evidence of a link in Hebrew between ‘cover’ and ‘be deaf/silent’, as far as I can tell.

Cognate evidence also shows that a verb meaning ‘be silent’ can have the nuance ‘be astonished’, ‘wonder’, ‘be stupefied’ (Aramaic, Ethiopic, Mandaic, also postbiblical Hebrew),[837] a meaning included by some older biblical Hebrew dictionaries.[838] Although it is missing from modern dictionaries and translations, the meaning ‘be astonished, amazed’, ‘be stupefied’, would make sense in a number of biblical passages. For example, when the Egyptians become like stone in fright (Exod. 15:16); they could have been ‘stupefied’, not merely silent/immobile. In Job 29:21, when Job speaks of his counsel being received in silence, he could instead have been describing its reception with amazement and wonder, which more strongly conveys the respect he is alluding to. Other verses in which דמם might mean ‘be amazed’ or ‘be stupefied’ are: Lev. 10:3 (when Aaron learns of his sons’ death), Isa. 23:3 (as a response to the prophecy against Tyre and in parallel to the command ‘wail’), Isa. 47:5 (spoken against Babylon: sit in astonishment and come into darkness), Ezek 24:17 (groan, be astonished, but do not mourn), and Amos 5:13 (the wise will be stupefied because of the evil time). Although often translated ‘be silent’ in these passages, a nuance of astonishment or dumbstruck amazement fits the context and might have been intended.

[837] English does the same, with ‘dumbfounded’, ‘dumbstruck’, implying silence from astonishment.
[838] BDB has ‘be struck dumb, astounded’ as the third definition for דמם (though it is suggested only for Exod. 15:16 and Isa. 23:3) (199). See also Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (1846), 203. It is not in Ges18 or *HALOT*, although both identify motionlessness, nor is it in *DCH*.

The third most common meaning is ‘grumble’, ‘murmur’, ‘whisper’, which does not seem to be found in Hebrew. If it was, and could be interpreted as whispering or speaking silently in prayer, as in one Mandaic text, it could potentially fit a number of Psalms: 4:5 (as parallel to speaking in the heart and not trembling in anger), 37:7 (as a command to pray to the LORD parallel to a command to wait for him), 62:2, 6 (‘only to the LORD is my prayer’), and 65:2 (‘prayer and praise belong to you’). However, this Mandaic cognate is not sufficient evidence to conclude Hebrew דמם means ‘murmur’.

It is the Akkadian meaning ‘mourn, moan’, however, that has had the greatest influence on Hebrew interpretation, and although it is indeed a possibility that earlier Hebrew דמם had this meaning, there are reasons for hesitation in accepting it as already established. Most potential Akkadian cognates of these roots (*dwm*, *dmy*, *dmdm*) differ significantly in meaning from other Semitic languages, with the exception of the two (potentially borrowed) uses of *dm/dmm* in Ugaritic. If there *had* been a Proto-Semitic root with the meaning ‘mourn’ in use in Hebrew, it is surprising: 1) that this meaning has not been preserved for דמם in any of the early versions, despite its relatively frequent attestation,[839] and 2) that this meaning has not survived in any other (later) Semitic languages.[840] It could of course simply have been lost, or could have undergone significant semantic development making it unrecognisable.[841] Another option is that it was not Proto-Semitic

[839] It could, of course, simply have been forgotten or already superseded by other meanings, but the (proposed) complete disappearance of this meaning is notable.
[840] Since no Semitic language retains both meanings ‘mourn, moan’ and ‘cease, be silent’, it is worth asking if the same root could have simultaneously had both meanings in a language. Languages do allow contranyms (homographs with opposite meaning) but forms tend to evolve in order to lessen confusion. The meanings ‘be silent’ and ‘moan’ are not contranyms, precisely, but they might not be sufficiently differentiated to remain stable in a language system, which could explain a potential disappearance of the meaning ‘mourn, moan’ from Hebrew, or, alternatively, the lack of the meaning ‘be silent’ in Akkadian.
[841] Possibly ‘moan’ developed into ‘mutter, grumble’ in other languages; or possibly a semantic shift occurred between ‘moan/mourn’ and ‘cease, be silent’ (as portraying what people do as a natural result of mourning).

but borrowed into Akkadian/East Semitic as a loanword and from there into Ugaritic (and therefore potentially also into Hebrew).

Passages in which the meaning ‘mourn’ has been accepted by many commentaries and dictionaries are: Isa. 23:3, Ps. 4:5, Ps. 31:18, and Lam. 2:10.[842] Other potential passages with this meaning are: Lam. 3:28 (ישב בדד וידם כי נטל עליו), Isa. 47:5 (שבי דומם ובאי בחשך), and the more commonly suggested Lev. 10:3 (וידם אהרן), Ezek. 24:17 (האנק דם), and Amos 5:13 (המשכיל בעת ההיא ידם). In none of these passages, however, is interpretation as ‘mourn’ *demanded* by the context, and it therefore seems preferable on philological and semantic grounds to interpret דמם in these passages with its established meaning ‘be still’, ‘cease’, or perhaps with the nuance ‘be astonished, stunned’, as found in later Hebrew and the closer cognate language Aramaic. These meanings should ideally also be restored to the dictionaries, perhaps even replacing the now common ‘mourn’.

Conclusion

Summary of Semantic Range

The focus of the roots דמם/דום and דמה seems to be on cessation, with דמה particularly communicating destruction. They are used in poetic texts, often with a sense of gravity, identifying responses to death, evil, fear, and more. They do not refer to an accidental, insignificant or light-hearted silence. דמם is used in parallel to עמד to mean ‘stop, hold still’, in parallel to words for quiet and silence (חשׁה, שׁקט, שׁוה, רגע), and in opposition to verbs of commotion (רתח, קרע). Niphal דמה is used to mean ‘be destroyed’ in contexts of pending judgement, often in close proximity with words referring to destruction (שׁדד, שׁבר, רעה). Derived forms are difficult to pin down in form or semantic value. Some refer

[842] *HALOT* defines דמם II as ‘wail, lament’ and lists these verses (226).

to cessation, some figuratively to death, others more positively to rest in a peaceful state of trust.

Semantic Development

It seems most likely that the meanings ‘hold still’ or ‘cease’ extended to the domain of speech and sound to mean ‘be silent’, which became more common in post-biblical Hebrew, with many new forms created as well. It is possible that the meaning ‘stop, stay’ derives from the hollow root *dwm,* which is attested in Arabic, potential in Ugaritic, and hinted at in Hebrew, but with the overlap of forms among weak roots, it has become impossible to demonstrate. The forms and meanings of דמה and דום/דמם show evidence of semantic contamination, as seen in Jeremiah and Lamentations, with Qal דמה unusually meaning ‘cease’ and Niphal דמם ‘be destroyed’.[843] דמה in these meanings eventually fell out of use, though the more common דמה I did not, and דום/דמם became completely inseparable. The semantic development of the derived form דממה is particularly interesting, as it is affected by a later literary/exegetical innovation and used to describe the noise made by movements of angels in the heavenly court.

Semantic Field

The use of דמם bears some similarities to the biblical שׁתק, which refers to cessation of commotion, although in Aramaic and later Hebrew it refers more specifically to silence (as does דמם).

דמה is similar to צמת, as both refer to destruction, and neither have a demonstrable connection with silence, apart from as a potential byform in the case of דמה, and strong cognate evidence in the case of צמת.

[843] The exceptions that challenge this observation are the Qal דמה in Hos. 4:5 and the Niphal דמם in 1 Sam. 2:9.

The roots דום/דמם and דמה are very different from other words referring to silence. Unlike חשׁה and חרשׁ, דמם does not refer to restraint from action or lack of initiation of activity. Instead its focus is on cessation (of noise, emotion, commotion, or simply the motion of nature, such as storm or sun). It also differs from other roots in not being focused on human communication or on the physical ability to speak and hear (as are אלם, חרשׁ, חשׁה), though it can refer to speech abstractly (e.g., Job referring to men not speaking in reverence).

Chapter 5: הס

Distribution

הס is used in only eight biblical references: five times in the minor prophets, and once each in Numbers, Judges, and Nehemiah. It is an interjection, but twice is conjugated as a finite verb (Num.; Neh.), and once used as an infinitive (Hodayot). Apart from the reference in Numbers, these seem to be later developments as back-formations, suggesting a chronological development from interjection to finite verb. As an interjection, it is mostly used in direct speech, and is not strictly speaking poetic, though it is predominantly found in prophetic discourse.

Lexicographical Survey

All dictionaries identify הס as an interjection meaning 'be silent'. Many associate it with English 'hush' (or German 'pst'), and BDB suggests it is onomatopoetic. The single Hiphil is usually labelled 'denominative' (except in *DCH*) and given a separate entry under הסה (except in BDB). It is defined as 'stilled' (BDB), 'quieten' (*HALOT*), 'silence' (*DCH*), and 'beschwichtigen' (Ges18). The Piel הַסּוּ, in contrast, is usually included under the main entry for הס and is not always identified as a Piel. Only *DCH* groups both finite forms under הסה.[844]

Grammatical Analysis

Most reference grammars identify הס as an interjection (Waltke-O'Connor, Joüon-Muraoka, Gesenius-Kautzsch, Bauer-Leander, Bergsträsser, and Brockelmann), though its form could also be considered a ms imperative (a Piel of הסה or a Qal of הסס).

[844] BDB, 245; *HALOT*, 253; *DCH* 2:579; Ges18, 283.

Although some refer to the onomatopoetic nature of הס, this seems to be primarily in connection with English ‘hush’, and I am not sure it can be demonstrated.[845]

Some grammars (as the dictionaries) identify הסו in Neh. 8:11 as a plural form of the interjection. Another example of an interjection with plural form is found in Arabic and mentioned by Brockelmann.[846] Others, however, identify הסו as a plural imperative verbal form. As pointed, it could be from Piel הסה or Qal הסס, but the unpointed הסו could come from other roots, including הוס and יהס (unattested).[847]

The apocopated Hiphil ויהס in Num. 13:30 is usually described as denominative, despite deriving from an interjection. Denominative Hiphils can have a causative sense (i.e., ‘bring something forth’) or a factitive sense (i.e., ‘become like something’), the former of which would fit here, with Caleb causing the people to be silent.[848]

These finite verbal forms most likely derived as back-formations from the interjection, but it is hard to be certain, as the interjection could instead be a frozen form of a formerly productive verbal root.[849] Another possibility is that הַס is simply the normal Piel imperative of הסה, rather than an onomatopoetic interjection.

[845] It would be interesting to investigate further the prevalence of sibilants in words referring to silence. Six of the eight roots in this study (including שקט) contain a sibilant, as do many silence words in other languages.
[846] The interjection *hālammu* has a plural form *hālummū* (*Grundriss*, 503).
[847] Waltke and O’Connor identify it as a Qal, though without explanation or root (*Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 683).
[848] See Bauer-Leander §38x"-z"; GK §53g.
[849] As happened with הב (‘give’), for example, presumably from the root יהב (common in Aramaic but not attested in its full form in biblical Hebrew).

The two finite forms are in similar contexts and discussed first, followed by the command given by King Eglon in Judges 3. The five minor prophet references follow: two difficult uses in Amos and three similar statements found in Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah.

Leader(s) Quieting the People

Numbers 13:30	וַיַּ֤הַס כָּלֵב֙ אֶת־הָעָ֔ם אֶל־מֹשֶׁ֖ה וַיֹּ֣אמֶר עָלֹ֤ה נַעֲלֶה֙ וְיָרַ֣שְׁנוּ אֹתָ֔הּ כִּֽי־יָכ֥וֹל נוּכַ֖ל לָֽהּ׃

The Hiphil ויהס suggests a causative: Caleb caused the people to become quiet, either a silence of not speaking so they could listen, or an internal quieting of turmoil and fear.

The preposition אל is difficult to interpret but suggests that Caleb's action was done either before[850] or towards (אל) Moses. It could mean, for example, that Caleb spoke *to* Moses so that the people could hear (though it should then follow אמר).[851] Others interpret אל as 'against', as if it were על.[852] Others find Caleb's silencing out of place, as no noise-making has previously been mentioned, and therefore believe this verse to be a later addition or misplaced.[853]

The LXX translates as 'silence' (κατεσιώπησεν), but the Vulgate differs, with *conpescens* ('confine, hold in check'), perhaps interpreting 'silencing' as restraining.[854] The Targums vary: Onqelos with ואצית ('listen', perhaps 'make to listen'), Pseudo-Jonathan with ושתיק

[850] Milgrom translates 'before', indicating it is so they will listen (*Numbers*, 106).
[851] Schart, *Mose und Israel*, 65.
[852] 'Caleb silenced the murmurings of the people against Moses' (Gray, *Numbers*, 150); 'Wegen der seltsamen Konstruktion mit אל geht es kaum um eine bloße Beschwichtigung. Vielmehr bemüht sich Kaleb, das Volk gefaßt Mose zum Kampf zuzuführen' (Seebass, *Numeri*, 113). See also Schart, who mentions possible influence of על of the Samaritan (*Mose und Israel*, 65).
[853] 'The v. seems out of place; for the commotion of the people to which it refers is not mentioned till 14:1' (Gray, *Numbers* ICC, 150). See also Frankel, *The Murmuring Stories*, 154-55. Wenham argues to the contrary that the text could be a unity (*Numbers*, 126).
[854] Some modern translations also emphasise stillness and quiet rather than silence (RSV: 'quieted'; JPS: 'stilled'; EIN 'beruhigte').

('silenced'), and Neofiti with ושתק ('was silent', likely to have a causative sense since it is followed by the direct object ית עמה). A fragment Targum seems to double up, with ויהס ושתק. It does seem possible that silence was associated with listening, and that the two might even have been nearly synonymous (see also the chapter on סכת, which the Targums interpreted as 'listen').

This verse suggests that הס communicated not just vocal silence but also a willingness to listen, and possibly calmness of spirit (in contrast to the people's fear).

Nehemiah 8:11	וְהַלְוִיִּם מַחְשִׁים לְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר **הַסּוּ** כִּי הַיּוֹם קָדֹשׁ וְאַל־תֵּעָצֵבוּ׃

Nehemiah 8 portrays Ezra reading the book of the law before all the people, who are told not to weep, but rejoice. In 8:11 the Levites quiet the people by saying הַסּוּ, the reason for which is that the day is holy. The people then go on their way to eat and drink with rejoicing. Both the LXX and Vulgate use a verb commanding silence or stillness, but interestingly, in the corresponding passage of 1 Esdras 9:38-55, no silence is mentioned in contrast to the weeping.

The command הסו here does not clear the way for someone else to speak, but instead puts a stop to the weeping and prepares the people for celebration. Noise is not the focus (indeed, both weeping and rejoicing can be noisy), but the end of their weeping to prepare for rejoicing. הסו here could have the semantic nuance of cessation or of calm and stillness.

Judges 3:19	וְהוּא שָׁב מִן־הַפְּסִילִים אֲשֶׁר אֶת־הַגִּלְגָּל וַיֹּאמֶר דְּבַר־סֵתֶר לִי אֵלֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר **הָס** וַיֵּצְאוּ מֵעָלָיו כָּל־הָעֹמְדִים עָלָיו׃

In Judges 3:19 the Israelite judge Ehud brings a 'secret word' to King Eglon of Moab, then secretly kills him behind closed doors and manages to escape before being

discovered. Various difficulties surround the interpretation of הס. Neither its speaker nor addressees are made clear. If the Moabite king is speaking to Ehud, he is telling him to bide his time until they are alone before revealing his secret.[855] If the king is instead speaking to his servants, there is an unclear connection between the command הס and their subsequent departure,[856] and some have therefore suggested textual corruption. An innovative (if unlikely) explanation is that the command to silence was directed not at any individual but at the environs of the king, making his request a desire to be in quiet, and therefore alone.[857] Another possibility is that הס is spoken by Ehud, either to the king or to the servants, but there is little to support this.

All of these interpretations leave a gap in the narrative, which lacks an explicit command telling the servants to leave. Some versions and commentators therefore supply this command in place of הס. The Targum does this with סליק (‘remove, go up’), and the Peshitta with: ܐܬܚܙ (variant: ܐܙܕܥ), followed by ܡܢ ܬܡ, ‘go away from there’. The A version of Greek Judges indirectly supplies a command for the servants to leave, with Eglon saying to everyone ἐκ μέσου (‘out from the midst’). Although there may have been a variant Hebrew text including this command, it is equally possible that these versions were re-interpreting based on context. The B version of Greek Judges keeps the command to be silent: καὶ εἶπεν Εγλωμ πρὸς αὐτόν σιώπα. It removes some of the MT’s ambiguity by specifying the subject as Eglon and the addressee as the ms αὐτόν, implying Ehud.

[855] ‘Le roi dit *Chut!* à Éhoud pour l’inviter a attendre at les autres à sortir’ (Lagrange, *Le Livre des Juges*, 54).
[856] Moore presents the command as addressed to the attendants, ‘who are to leave him in privacy’, associating silence with privacy and secrecy (*Judges*, 95).
[857] Bertheau describes הס ‘als Ausruf, der nicht einem einzelnen bis dahin Redenden Schweigen gebietet, sondern an die Umgebung des Königs gerichtet ist: Stille soll sein! in dem Sinne: ich will allein sein, denn Folge des Ausrufs ist, dass die ganze Dienerschaft das Zimmer des Königs verlässt’ (*Das Buch der Richter*, 77).

The Vulgate retains the ambiguity by stating simply '*et ille impervit silentium'* ('and he commanded silence').

Unlike Num. 13:30, the purpose of הס is not silence for listening, but for secrecy.[858]

Silence and Dead Bodies

וְנָשָׂא֩וֹ דוֹדוֹ֙ וּמְסָרְפ֔וֹ לְהוֹצִ֥יא עֲצָמִ֖ים מִן־הַבַּ֑יִת וְאָמַ֗ר לַאֲשֶׁ֤ר בְּיַרְכְּתֵי֙ הַבַּ֔יִת הַעֹ֖וד עִמָּ֑ךְ וְאָמַ֖ר אָפֵ֔ס וְאָמַ֕ר **הָֽס** כִּ֥י לֹ֖א לְהַזְכִּ֥יר בְּשֵׁ֖ם יְהוָֽה׃	**Amos 6:10**

In chapter 6 Amos declares woe against the prosperous and those 'at ease in Zion' (6:1, 4), whose punishment will be exile (6:7), death (6:9), and the breaking up of houses (6:11). Amos 6:10 portrays a strange conversation between family members: one who is removing bones (i.e., dead bodies) asks if anyone else is left, and the answer from the innermost parts of the house is 'none' (אפס). Then someone (probably the דוד removing bones) answers, saying 'הס', 'be silent', also giving a reason: 'the name of the LORD is not to be mentioned'. Commentators have pointed out the difficulty with this command for silence coming from someone who has just asked a question demanding an answer.[859]

The context is difficult, and the interpretation not clear.[860] The use of הס as an exclamation seems straightforward, as well as its semantic opposition to להזכיר, 'to mention, call upon, keep in remembrance'. The reason for the silence, however, is less obvious. It might be out of fear of further punishment if discovered,[861] or out of despair that any prayer (or even speaking of God) is futile. Because of the difficulties, some have

[858] Silence and secrecy are also associated with the single use of חֲרַשׁ in Josh. 2:1.
[859] Van Hoonacker, Les Douze Petits Prophètes, 260; Nowack, Die Kleinen Propheten, 157.
[860] Nowack goes so far as to say that v. 10 'spottet jeder Erklärung' and suggests it might not be in its original place (*Kleinen Propheten,* 157-58).
[861] 'Dies deutet vielmehr auf Furcht hin, daß durch Anrufung des göttlichen Namens das Auge Gottes auch auf diesen letzten hingelenkt werden möchte, daß er auch noch dem Gerichte des Todes anheimfalle' (Keil, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten,* 217).

suggested that ואמר הס is a dittography of ואמר אפס, or that the text should be emended to הסכילו אלה.[862]

Both the LXX and the Vulgate translate הס as 'be silent' (σίγα, *tace*) but alter the sense of the verse as a whole.[863] Targum Jonathan and the Peshitta, in contrast, do not have 'be silent', and significantly alter the second half of the verse by having the one inside the house reply 'they have perished' (ספו), instead of MT's 'none' (אפס). This could result either from metathesis (perceived in reading) or from the desire to offer a clearer interpretation. Death can certainly be associated with silence, which might be a source of the translation ספו, but its position here corresponds to אפס rather than to הס. They differ syntactically as well, with הס as a command and ספו as a description of what has happened. In the Targum the response is then given: 'Remove (them), because when they were living they did not pray in the name of the LORD' (סליק ארי כד הוו קיימין לא הוו מצלן בשׁמא דיוי). 'Remove' (סליק) certainly cannot be a translation of הס,[864] but might reflect an exegetical tradition, or possibly translation as if from הסר.[865] The Peshitta is similar to the Targum, though it uses the much closer equivalent ܠܐ ('none') for Hebrew אפס. It also uses the same verb ܗܦܟ ('perish'), although in a different location, and corresponding to Hebrew הס. Unlike the Targum it uses the verb ܐܬܕܟܝ (cognate with Hebrew להזכיר) instead of מצלן.

[862] 'These have done foolishly'. See Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 152, 155; Nowack, *Die Kleinen Propheten*, 157.
[863] LXX translates ירכתי as προεστηκόσι, 'leaders'; Vulgate translates אפס as 'finis est' ('it is finished').
[864] Although סליק means 'remove', Jastrow gives 'stop, hush, keep silence' as its third definition (*Dictionary of the Targumim*, 997), though certainly only because of its correspondence to Hebrew הס in three passages (Judg. 3:9; Amos 6:10; 8:3). It seems that the verb was chosen in Judg. 3:9 to correct a perceived omission in the text, and then taken as a gloss in other passages, unless סליק was independently chosen in trying to make sense of each text.
[865] Smolar and Aberbach propose translation from הָסַר, a Hiphil of סוּר meaning 'remove, take away', which would correspond to the Targum's סליק (*Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 165n241, 194n417).

The most valuable semantic contribution of this verse is its opposition of הס to להזכיר, a verb that refers to speaking, mentioning or recording (i.e., causing to remember). The command הס is therefore the opposite of, or restraint from, speaking and mentioning.

וְהֵילִ֨ילוּ שִׁירוֹת֙ הֵיכָ֣ל בַּיּ֔וֹם הַה֖וּא נְאֻ֣ם אֲדֹנָ֑י יְהוִ֗ה רַ֚ב הַפֶּ֣גֶר בְּכָל־מָקוֹם֙ הִשְׁלִ֣יךְ הָס׃ פ	**Amos 8:3**

Amos 8:3 is an extremely difficult verse that immediately follows his vision of the basket of summer fruit (כלוב קיץ) and the accompanying prophecy of the end (קץ) of the people of Israel. The context is one of mourning, with mention of wailing and many dead bodies, and is possibly cultic, if היכל refers to the temple rather than a palace. The many corpses are the cause of the mourning, but the role of the verse-final interjection 'silence' is obscure, despite numerous attempts at interpretation. Some suggest emendation;[866] some declare it to be unintelligible.[867] Some interpret הס as an adverb or noun in order to relate it to the rest of the sentence; others claim this is impossible for an interjection.[868] The preceding השליך is also difficult, with both unclear subject (God? impersonal?) and unclear object (are corpses being cast? or silence?). The various syntactic roles given to הס and the interpretations of השליך are represented below.

הס as:	**English translation:**	**Source:**
adverb	in/with silence or stillness; into silence	ESV, KJV/AV, RST, NBK, R95; LUO (Lutherbibel 1912); Nowack (165)
	secretly	LUT (Lutherbibel 1984)
noun (passive subject)	silence will be cast	Vulg, JPS, TOB
noun (direct object)	I cast silence	LXX (1cs subjunctive)
direct speech/interjection	Hush	NAS, TNK, EIN, SCH, NRS, ELB

Interpretations of השליך

active	I will cast silence	LXX

[866] See Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, 180-82. Some emend השליך הס to אַשְׁלִיכֵם or אַשְׁלִיכָם (*BHS*), or אַשְׁלִיכֵהֶם (Gesenius 17th ed., quoting Duhm). The ם- ending turns the syntactically awkward הס into a more logical 3pl object suffix referring to the corpses being 'thrown down'. but requires significant changes to the text.
[867] Nowack: 'Leider is 3 fin. השׁליך הס unverständlich' (*Die Kleinen Propheten*, 165).
[868] Keil, Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten, 226; van Hoonacker, Les Douze Petits Prophètes, 272.

	they will cast them (corpses)	RST, LBA
	unspecified subject: one will cast (or perhaps 'God cast'?)	ELB, EIN, LSG; Keil (226)[869]
passive (impers.)	sg: silence will be cast	VUL, JPS
	pl: they (corpses) will be cast	Nova Vulgata, Peshitta (with Dt *šdy*) also: RSV, NAU, KJV, NAB, R95
command	Remove (them)	TAR

Silence could be commanded in recognition of the gravity of the multitude of corpses (or, if read in a cultic sense, the defiling of the temple by the corpses). Silence might also indicate a stage of mourning.[870] Alternatively, silence might be commanded in order to listen, an interpretation worth considering in light of the imperative 'listen' (שִׁמְעוּ־זֹאת) beginning the following verse. It is attractive to read as 'be silent and listen', but this is made less likely by the significant break in the text following הס, indicated by פ. Another option is to interpret הס as a phrase on its own, functioning as a rhetorical break (i.e., creating a pause of silence in the text out of respect for the dead bodies and before a further message is delivered).

The LXX translates הִשְׁלִיךְ with a first-person singular subjunctive followed by silence in the accusative: ἐπιρρίψω σιωπήν ('I will throw/inflict silence'), while the Vulgate has a 3sg future passive and silence in the nominative: *proicietur silentium* ('silence will be cast'). The Targum has a double imperative: רמי וסליק ('throw [off/down/out] and remove') and does not seem to translate הס, although since סליק is used for הס also in Judg. 3:19 and Amos 6:10, it could be a gloss borrowed from one of these references. Other possibilities, suggested by Hoftijzer, are that הס was understood to be a form of הנס, which is attested

[869] It is perhaps unsurprising to find this in German and French translations, as both languages have a common 3s impersonal construction.
[870] Although Harper finds the text 'doubtful', if it does mean 'hush' he suggests: 'so deep is the despair, and so great the danger, that silence is enjoined by those who are removing their dead' (*Amos and Hosea*, 182).

in Old Aramaic inscriptions and possibly means 'remove', or that הנס is a Haphel of נוס, meaning 'tremble', and 'remove' as a causative.[871] The Peshitta retains the sense of 'casting out' but adds a destination: ܢܬܬܪܡܝ ܠܐܒܕܘܢ ('they will be hurled out to Abaddon/destruction'). If הס was in the source text, it might suggest an association between silence and the land of the dead, or perhaps a phonetic association between הס and Greek Hades. It is also possible that the translator simply chose not to translate הס or did not have it in his *Vorlage.*

Because the syntactic role and semantic value of הס here are difficult to determine, its contribution to the study is only tentative: it either associates silence with mourning or defilement or fear, or it prepares the way for the following command to listen.

Silence as Reverence

The final three verses with הס are very similar, all calling for silence before (מפני) the LORD, probably out of reverence or fear, and all referring to the presence of God in his temple. All also suggest a judgement context, Zeph. 1:7 most clearly, but also Hab. 2:20 (in a series of woes) and Zech. 2:17 (in a passage promising restoration after scattering and punishment). It would be illuminating if these commands for silence had cultic connotations (i.e., regarding temple decorum),[872] but this is unlikely as their focus is on God's heavenly abode, not an earthly temple. Unlike other biblical calls for silence, these do not prepare the way for speech, but for proper reverence and fear (of coming

[871] Dictionary of the North-west Semitic Inscriptions, 290.
[872] This has been claimed, but is not demonstrable in these passages. Smith describes it as 'probably a characteristic feature of the sacrificial ritual, which is here used figuratively (in *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*, 194).

judgement).[873] Because of their similarities, commentators have suggested that they borrow from one another, but not always agreeing on the direction of influence.[874]

וַיהוָה בְּהֵיכַל קָדְשׁוֹ **הָס** מִפָּנָיו כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃ פ	**Habakkuk 2:20**
הֹס מִפְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה כִּי־הֵכִין יְהוָה זָבַח הִקְדִּישׁ קֹרְאָיו׃	**Zephaniah 1:7**
הָס כָּל־בָּשָׂר מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה כִּי נֵעוֹר מְמְעוֹן קָדְשׁוֹ׃ ס	**Zechariah 2:17[13]**

Habakkuk 2:20 follows a series of five woes, with the one immediately preceding referring repeatedly to the silence of idols and pronouncing woe against one who makes and speaks to mute idols (אלילים אלמים), which are no more than mute or immobile stone (אבן דומם). The image of mute idols is sharply contrasted with the LORD in his holy temple, before whom the whole earth is told to be silent (הס).[875] The juxtaposition of images creates a literary reversal: first portraying man in control of the mute idols he creates and speaks to, then portraying man and all creation as silenced before the LORD in his temple. Although God does not speak in this verse, his dialogue with Habakkuk is reported earlier. Since this verse ends the chapter, no direct result of הס can be observed. In the context, however, in which the LORD is strongly contrasted to idols, and the role of man is reversed from maker of idols to 'made' creation (as part of 'all the earth'), the silence commanded by הס demands reverence, perhaps fear, and a recognition of who is truly God.

In Zephaniah 1, God speaks through his prophet to proclaim a coming day of punishment against Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. הס in 1:7 is addressed to the idolaters in particular, and a twofold reason is given for silence: the day of the LORD is near, and the

[873] Van Hoonacker describes the motive for silence in all three as 'la terreur à l'approche du jugement divin' (*Les Douze Petits Prophètes,* 604).
[874] Nowack suggests Hab. copies from Zeph. (*Die Kleinen Propheten*, 288), though Keil suggests Zeph. and Zech. borrow from Hab. (*Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten,* 439).
[875] 'Jahvé est mis en opposition avec les nullités muettes que sont les idoles' (van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophètes,* 486); 'in v. 20 wird den stummen, lebenslosen Götzen Jahve, der lebendige Gott gegenüber gestellt' (Keil, *Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten,* 439).

LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests. As in Hab. 2:20, the folly of idolatry is highlighted with an emphasis on the living, acting God.

In Zechariah 2:17[13][876] הס is commanded to 'all flesh', with the reason that the LORD is roused out of his holy habitation. This calls to mind the reason given in Hab. 2:20, that the LORD was in his holy temple. The context of this chapter is not coming judgement, but the promise of restoration, judgement having already been accomplished. Despite the more positive context, there is still an element of reverential fear in the command for silence.[877] The LORD will dwell in their midst, and many nations will join the LORD and be his people. Since הס of 2:17 immediately precedes a chapter break, it is lacking further context.

Because of the similarity in these verses, the versions are analysed together.

	LXX	Vulgate	Targum	Peshitta
Hab. 2:20	εὐλαβείσθω	sileat	יסופון	ܬܪܥܫ
Zeph. 1:7	εὐλαβεῖσθε	silete	ספו	ܐܫܬܩ
Zech. 2:17[13]	εὐλαβείσθω	sileat	ספו Fragment: דחילו, ווי (possibly ויסופון)	ܐܫܬܩ

The LXX translates הס with the middle verb εὐλαβέομαι, meaning to act in reverence, fear, or take care. The Peshitta also translates with a verb meaning 'fear' in Zech. and Zeph. (אשת), but in Hab. a verb meaning 'tremble, shake' (רעש) that can also imply 'fear'. Translation as 'fear' could be inferred from the context, but I do not think it is directly related to הס. The Vulgate translates each הס with a form of *sileo*, 'be still, silent'. Targum Jonathan translates each הס with a form of סוף, 'perish, come to an end', which could simply reflect exegetical tradition or perhaps an association of silence with cessation or

[876] MT begins chapter 2 with the first mention of lifting of eyes to see a vision, while the English begins chapter 2 four verses later, with the second mention of lifting of eyes to see a new vision.
[877] Nowack, Die Kleinen Propheten, 352.

death. The Targum also significantly changes the sense of the verses, which can only briefly be summarised here.

The Targum to Habakkuk adds the sense of the LORD's desiring to dwell in the temple, and instead of commanding silence to 'all the earth', it says 'all idols of the earth will perish from before him'. In Zephaniah and Zechariah it is the wicked who perish from before the LORD. A fragment Targum incorporates multiple traditions such as: fear (דחילו כל בירייתא, 'fear all creatures' for MT's 'all flesh'), perishing of the wicked (ויסופון כל רשׁיעיא), and woe to the wicked (ווי לכל רשיעיא in the following Tosefta).

These final three verses seem to associate silence with reverential worship, but they cannot be used as evidence of actual temple practice. A similar message is found in Eccl. 5:1-2, ending with: 'God is in heaven and you on earth, therefore let your words be few'.

Extrabiblical references

הס appears twice in the DSS, but is not found in Ben Sira or inscriptions.

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QHodayot[a]

The infinitive להס is used in 1QHodayot[a] 18,17, but לספר, to which it is contrasted, is unfortunately not fully preserved, having only the first two letters visible and traces of the last two.[878] Additional support is found in a parallel phrase in lines 22-23: אספרה נפלאותיכה.

1QHodayot[a] 18,16-17[879]
16 ברוך אתה אדוני אל הרחמים וֹ[רב ה]חסֹד כי הודעתנֹי אלה לסֹפֹר
17 נפלאותכה ולוֹא **להס** יומם ולוֹילֹה[ ]אֹ לֹך כוֹלֹ החיל בֹרֹבֹ [ ]

[878] Notes in Stegemann et al., indicate that the ל and ס are 'clearly seen', and there are 'traces at the end of the line that can belong to the *pe* and *reš*' (*1QHodayot[a]*, DJD 40:237).
[879] Ibid., 234.

The speaker blesses the LORD, God of compassion and kindness, for making known to him 'these things' (אלה) in order to recount (לספר) his wonders and not keep silent (להס) by day ('or night', reconstructed). The meaning of להס is relatively certain, as the proper response to God's 'wonders' is to declare them and not to be silent. Its form, however, raises many questions. Had הס become a full-fledged verb by this time (rather than remain an interjection)? If so, was it understood as a biliteral הס, or as a weak triliteral root? A geminate root הסס is the most likely source for the infinitive להס, and might also suggest that biblical Hebrew forms are from הסס.[880] הסה is more often posited based on the Hiphil ויהס, but then the III-ה infinitive להסות would be expected. If instead a 'hollow' root is posited, a middle *waw* or *yod* would be expected in the infinitive.

1QpHab

The Habakkuk Pesher quotes the הס of Hab. 2:20 with slight textual variation (מלפניו for מפניו; הרץ missing א). Its interpretation does not elaborate on silence but does seem to share the exegetical tradition evident in the Targums, with the wicked perishing in judgement.

1QpHab 13,1-4[881]
1 **הס** מלפניו כול ה<א>רץ פשרו על כול הגוים
2 אשר עבדו את האבן ואת העץ וביום
3 המשפט יכלה אל כול עובדי העצבים
4 ואת הרשעים מן הארץ

Horgan translates (with caps for biblical citations): 'ALL THE EARTH KEEPS SILENT BEFORE HIM. The interpretation of it concerns all the nations who have served stone and wood, but on the day of judgment God will wipe out completely all who serve the idols and the evil ones from the earth'.[882] Horgan translates with a present indicative 'keeps silent' rather than with a command, perhaps because what follows is portrayed as a

[880] Suggested by Bauer and Leander as the root of הַסּוּ (*Historische Grammatik*, 653), though in dictionaries it is more commonly parsed as from הסה.
[881] Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations*, 9 (at end of book following index).
[882] Ibid., 21.

result. If the writer of the pesher understood הס as an indicative, it could theoretically be a finite form of a weak root. It is also possible, however, that it was interpreted as a command, even though it is God's judgement that will accomplish the 'silencing' of the wicked.

Cognate Evidence

Aramaic

Jastrow defines הסה as 'be silent', quoting Numbers Rabbah, but has no entry for הס.[883] Only one other text is tentatively mentioned, though its reading is unclear. Sokoloff lists a Babylonian Aramaic root חסס with *ḥet* (to which he links הסס), meaning 1) 'be apprehensive' (with six references), and 2) 'perh. to be silent' (listing one reference from an incantation bowl).[884] The form חסי on this bowl could also be understood as from חוס/חוש ('hasten'), however, and is therefore inconclusive.[885] There is also a root חסם meaning both 'muzzle' and 'silence', which is interesting from a semantic and cognitive perspective. If it confirms a strong association between the idea of binding and silencing, it could provide support for the suggestion that אלם came to mean 'mute' via semantic extension from 'be bound', but these forms offer little evidence for הס.

Akkadian

Tawil suggests a correspondence between Hebrew הסה and Akkadian *azû*/*asû*, meaning 'to produce unnatural sounds',[886] such as 'scream', 'yelp', 'gurgle', 'hiss', and 'groan'.[887] Not only do the meanings not correspond, however, but the supposed root correspondences are tenuous. The word-initial 'a' could reflect a Proto-Semitic guttural, but these are now undistinguishable, and ס does not correspond to Akkadian 'z'. I do not think a direct cognate can be proposed.

[883] Dictionary of the Targumim, 359.
[884] *Dictionary of JBA*, 388, 475-76.
[885] Montgomery, Aramaic Incantation Texts, 181.
[886] Akkadian Lexical Companion, 86-87.
[887] CAD A2 528-29.

Arabic

HALOT and Ges18 suggest that Arabic *hassa* (to whisper), *hashasat* (secretive talk), *huss* (pst! still!), *hass* (Geflüster) and *hassa* (flüstern) are related to הס.[888] Different forms of هس do mean 'whisper' as a verb and noun, also 'hush! quiet!' as an interjection.[889] Since Arabic س can correspond to Hebrew שׂ and ס,[890] a connection is possible, but with the weak ה/ه, not much confidence should be put in a cognate connection. Further evidence for an onomatopoetic connection between sibilants and hushing, however, might be claimed.

Ethiopic

Cohen mentions a potential Ethiopic cognate meaning 'silence' (Tigre *həs*), but given the variable nature of both root letters in regards to Semitic correspondences, a connection must be deemed speculative.

Onomatopoeia

As suggested above, הס might be connected to similar-sounding words by onomatopoeia. If a voiceless fricative and final sibilant are used cross-culturally to silence others, or to refer to soft speech or being quiet, that might explain the similarities between languages and justify its identification as onomatopoetic. More comparative work, however, particularly in Semitics, would be desirable.

Conclusion

Given the use of הס almost exclusively in direct speech and usually in the same form, it indeed fits the profile of an interjection. The two uses as a finite verb and once as an infinitive, however, call into question its classification. Since Nehemiah and Hodayot can be considered later texts, these verbal uses seem to have developed as back-formations.

[888] *HALOT*, 253; Ges18, 283.
[889] Wehr, 1028; curiously, I did not find it in Lane.
[890] See Moscati, *Comparative Grammar*, 44.

The verbal usage in Num. 13, therefore, would either be unique or a potential later addition. There is little evidence for הס in post-biblical Hebrew, and the few references there are conjugate as a verb most likely from the root הסה.[891]

Semantic Field

When used in human dialogue to command silence, הס is most similar to חרשׁ, which is also used in commands not to speak (as with חשׂה, twice). When הס is opposed to mourning (Neh. 8:11), it might be similar to דמם in Lev. 10:3 and Ezek. 24:17, but these references are too difficult to be interpreted with certainty.

In divine-human exchanges (God speaking to the people through his prophets), the focus of הס is more on reverence than on speech. It might bear some similarity to דמם in Ps. 37:7 (דום ליהוה והתחולל לו), though here and in other Psalms (4:5; 62:6) דמם seems to refer more to rest and trust than fearful, reverential silence.

Unlike other silence words, הס is not used to refer to restraint from action (as חרשׁ, חשׂה) or cessation of movement (as דמם, שׁתק). It also does not refer to voluntary silence, as אלם can, which could be due simply to its nature as an interjection.

If הסכת in Deut. 27:9 is understood to mean 'be silent', it would have the clearest semantic overlap with הס, since both are used to quiet people in order to listen. The meaning of this *hapax* is ambiguous, however, though it is possible that the interpretation of הסכת as 'be silent' derived from its phonetic similarity to הס.

[891] Ben Yehuda lists only three post-biblical examples of הסה, and none with הס (*Dictionary*, 2:1134, 1136).

Chapter 6: שׁתק

Distribution

שׁתק is used in only four biblical references: once each in Psalms and Proverbs, and twice in Jonah. Its limited usage means it cannot be classified as belonging to a poetic or prose register, though its chronological development can be more clearly traced, with much higher frequency in later Hebrew texts and Aramaic, leading to the suggestion that it is an Aramaism.[892]

Lexicographical Survey

Lexica entries for שׁתק are fairly uniform. BDB has 'be quiet' and identifies it as late, offering also 'be silent'.[893] *HALOT* gives the gloss 'grow silent', thereby emphasising process. For Middle Hebrew and Samaritan it gives 'be silent' and mentions its use in Aramaic, along with classification as 'an Aramaising stem'.[894] *DCH* offers two glosses: 1) 'become quiet, calm down,' and 2) 'be quiet, i.e. have quietness'.[895] Ges18 has the similar 'sich beruhigen, ruhen'.[896]

שׁתק is treated briefly in *TWAT* under the entry for שׁקט by E. Bons, who suggests that the roots are related, possibly via metathesis. He defines שׁתק as 'schweigen' without further analysis.[897] שׁתק is also treated briefly in *NIDOTTE,* which summarises its usage as 'the sea growing calm' and 'the dying down of a quarrel'.[898]

[892] Nöldeke, review of Kautzsch, *Die Aramaismen, ZDMG* 57 (1903), 417; Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramäismen*, 117.
[893] BDB, 1060.
[894] HALOT, 1671, with reference to Wagner, Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramäismen, 117.
[895] *DCH* 8:579.
[896] Ges18, 1419.
[897] *TWAT* 8:450 (*TDOT* 15:453).
[898] Oswalt, *NIDOTTE* 4:264.

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

שׁתק is used in biblical texts only as a Qal verb, and interestingly only with inanimate subjects: three times the sea,[899] and once strife.

Jonah 1:11-12
11 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ **וְיִשְׁתֹּק** הַיָּם מֵעָלֵינוּ כִּי הַיָּם הוֹלֵךְ וְסֹעֵר׃ 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שָׂאוּנִי וַהֲטִילֻנִי אֶל־הַיָּם **וְיִשְׁתֹּק** הַיָּם מֵעֲלֵיכֶם כִּי יוֹדֵעַ אָנִי כִּי בְשֶׁלִּי הַסַּעַר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה עֲלֵיכֶם׃

שׁתק appears twice in Jonah in a question-answer sequence, with the sailors asking what they should do to Jonah that the sea might 'be quiet'. He replies that they should throw him into the sea, and it would be quiet for (lit. 'from') them. As *yiqtols* preceded by a conjunctive *waw*, they express purpose (*that* the sea may quiet down).[900] שׁתק here refers to the process of quieting/ceasing rather than a state of quietness/calm. The sea is the grammatical subject of both, but divine agency is the cause. The preposition מן follows the subject in both cases, with pronominal suffix referencing the sailors as those benefitting from the quieting of the sea.

The Septuagint and Vulgate translate with 'cease' (κοπάσει**,** *cessabit*). The Targum has וינוח, meaning 'rest, become quiet', while the Peshitta has ܫܠܝ (from *šly*, 'stop, be silent').

When Jonah finally is thrown into the water (v. 15), the verb עמד is used to describe the cessation of the storm: ויעמד הים מזעפו (lit. 'the sea stood from its raging'). Here the LXX and Vulgate translate as 'stand' (ἔστη, *stetit*), while both the Targum and Peshitta use a form of נוח (ונח, ܢܝܚ), 'rest' (used by the Targum to translate שׁתק). The use of שׁתק

[899] Though there is some ambiguity in Ps. 107:30.
[900] That the *wəyiqtol* always carries the connotation of purpose or result is argued by Baden in 'The Wəyiqtol and the Volitive Sequence', 147.

and עמד in parallel contexts referring to the end of a storm provides further evidence for the semantic connection between being 'silent' and standing still, also evidenced by the parallels between עמד and דמם.[901] The semantic field of 'silence' in biblical Hebrew seems to have included the idea of cessation from movement.

Ps. 107:29-30
29 יָקֵם סְעָרָה לִדְמָמָה וַיֶּחֱשׁוּ גַּלֵּיהֶם׃
30 וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ כִי־**יִשְׁתֹּקוּ** וַיַּנְחֵם אֶל־מְחוֹז חֶפְצָם׃

שׁתק has the sea as its (probable) subject also in Ps. 107. It is closely connected to דממה and חשׁה, referring to the stilling of the storm and of the waves, respectively. The surrounding context (vv. 23-31) describes those who went down to the sea in ships and saw the LORD control the wind and waves. When they cried to him for help, he stilled the sea. Verse 30 reports the result: 'they were glad because (or perhaps 'that') they were quiet'. The identity of the plural subject of ישׁתקו is not specified, however, and could be the people ('they rejoiced that they themselves were quiet'—referring to the rest they received at the stilling of the storm), an impersonal ('all was quiet'),[902] or the combined storm and waves that became silent (v. 29). It seems most likely to be the waters, grammatically plural in Hebrew and mentioned in v. 23 (מים רבים). This plural subject could also provide the missing referent for the plural suffix on גליהם ('their waves').

The versions all translate with a verb meaning 'be silent',[903] but שׁתק here could just as easily be interpreted 'be quiet' or 'cease', any of which would suit the context of the end of a storm.

Prov. 26:20
בְּאֶפֶס עֵצִים תִּכְבֶּה־אֵשׁ
וּבְאֵין נִרְגָּן **יִשְׁתֹּק** מָדוֹן׃

[901] Josh. 10:12-13; 1 Sam. 14:9-10; possibly Job 4:16.
[902] NJPS.
[903] ἡσύχασαν, שׁתקין, ܐܫܬܟ, *siluerunt.*

A ‘quarrel’ is the subject of שׁתק in Prov. 26:20, where an observation from the physical world in the first hemistich serves to illustrate the truth of the second: just as fire is extinguished when there is no wood, so strife and contention are silenced (or caused to cease) when there is no murmurer or whisperer. The verse halves are syntactically parallel, both beginning with a negative prepositional phrase, followed by a verb and then the subject. שׁתק is thus parallel to כבה, ‘extinguish’, and its meaning related more to cessation or quieting (as related to extinguishing) than to noise.

The LXX and Targum translate as ‘be silent’ (ἡσυχάζει, ישׁתק), though the Vulgate translates *conquiescunt* (‘they rest, are idle or inactive’). The Peshitta again uses a form of *šly* meaning ‘stop’ or ‘be silent’ (ܫܠܐ).[904]

Versions (Summary)

	Ps. 107:30	Prov. 26:20	Jon. 1:11-12
LXX	**ἡσυχάζω** (be silent or quiet; cease, rest)		**κοπάζω** (cease, stop)
Targum	**שׁתק**		**נוח** (rest, become quiet)
Vulgate	***sileo*** (be silent)	***conquiesco*** (to find rest, be idle)	***cesso*** (cease from, stop)
Peshitta	**ܫܠܐ**	**ܫܠܝ** (to cease; to be silent, calm)	

Extrabiblical references

שׁתק is found in two biblical DSS references, possibly in a DSS Aramaic version of Tobit, and in three Aramaic inscriptions. It is not, however, found in Ben Sira, the non-biblical Hebrew DSS, or Hebrew inscriptions.

Dead Sea Scrolls

שׁתק is found on two documents preserving text from Jonah (Murabbaʿât 88 and 4QXII^{f}), but both are fragmentary and do not contribute any new semantic information on its usage.[905]

[904] Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon,* 1563.

שתק might also be attested in the Aramaic Tobit 6:1 (4Q197, fragment 4 i, line 4), but the text is very broken: ושתק]ה עוד ולא בכת (‘And becoming sile]nt, she wept no more’),[906] and its reconstruction relies exclusively on other versions.[907] It is worth noting, however, that silence is linked with (or opposed to) weeping also in the Genesis Apocryphon, in which Abraham weeps and is silent (חשה).

Inscriptions

Sefire Inscription (mid-8th century BCE)

The Sefire inscription is a collection of three texts inscribed on stelae preserving a treaty (and curses against anyone who violated it) between Matiʿel king of Arpad and Bar-Gaʾyah king of KTK (of unknown location). The treaty was made probably between 754 (when Aššurnirari V made a treaty with Mati‘el as king of Arpad) and 740 BCE, when Tiglathpileser III conquered Arpad.[908]A form of שתק appears in the Sefire inscription to express the desire that the treaty be guarded and its words not be ‘silent’:

Stele I, face B, line 8
[אלן כל אלהוא] וצרן ואל **תשתק** הדה מן מלי ספרא זנ
[And all the gods] shall guard [this] treaty. Let not one of the words of thi[s] inscription be silent.[909]

Although some suggest that line 8 indicates a belief in the magic qualities of the stele to speak or be silent,[910] it is not necessary to assume such a literal meaning for שתק. Since

[905] Benoit et al., *Les Grottes de Murabbaʿât*, DJD 2.1:190; Fuller, ‘The Twelve’, in Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 15:269.
[906] Broshi et al., *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 19:44-45.
[907] The Greek has ἐπαύσατο (‘ceased’) in the LXX, and ἐσίγησεν (‘was silent’) in Codex Sinaiticus, while the Old Latin has *cessavit* (‘ceased’) and the Vulgate both *cessavit* and *tacuit* (‘ceased’ and ‘was silent’). Wagner, *Polyglotte Tobit-Synopse*, 64-65.
[908] Fitzmyer, Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire, 18-19.
[909] Fitzmyer, Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire, 48-49.
[910] See Dupont-Sommer: ‘l’inscription elle-même est considérée comme une réalité magiquement active, vivante, proférant sans cesse les paroles qui sont gravées dans la pierre. Cette pierre, en effet, est sacrée, habitée par les dieux; elle est proprement une demeure divine, un *bétyle*’ (*Les Inscriptions Araméennes de Sfiré*, 71). He also refers to a large stone set up by Joshua to be a witness, since it had heard the words spoken by the Lord (Josh. 24:26-27).

‘silence’ is elsewhere used to represent inaction or neglect of duty,[911] the negative אל תשתק should be interpreted here as equivalent to an order that the treaty be observed and enacted, that is, that it not be neglected. This interpretation is supported by the reappearance of the phrase מלי ספרא (Stele I, face C, line 17) as part of a curse against those who do not observe the words of the inscription.[912] The forbidden ‘silence’ of the words of the inscription (I B, line 8) should be interpreted as their not being observed.

Proverbs of Aḥiqar (5th century BCE)

שׁתק is attested in an obscure context on an Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine in a proverb following the story of Aḥiqar. The proverb appears to deal with a bear (דבא) who speaks to lambs (though Cowley transcribed רבא and translated ‘master’).[913]

Lines 121-22
אשתק ענו אמרִיאْ ואמרו לה שא לך זי ת[נ]שא מנן אנחנה [. . .] כי לא בידי אנ[ש]א מנ[שׁ]א רגלהם ומנחת[ו]תהם

Lindenberger translates the statement made by the bear as ‘I will be content’ (אשתק), adding the more literal ‘quiet’ in his notes. The lambs reply: ‘Take whichever of us you will, we …’, followed by missing text. Line 122 ends with ‘For it is not in men’s power to lift their feet or set them down’.[914] The meaning of אשתק is not clear: it could indicate that the bear offered to be silent,[915] but it seems more likely that he offered to leave the lambs alone.[916] If being silent can refer to not acting as expected, as in some biblical texts, it would be a logical interpretation here, with the bear’s ‘silence’ indicating he would

[911] E.g. 1 Kgs 22:3 (MT מחשׁים, Targum שׁתקין).
[912] Fitzmyer translates lines 16-17: ‘Whoever will not observe the words of the inscription which is on this stele’, and curses follow in lines 21-24 (*Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire*, 55).
[913] Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C., 216, 224.
[914] *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 110-11. Others have also translated שתק as indicating contentment. See Baneth (‘Bemerkungen’, 348), Ginsberg (‘Aramaic Proverbs and Precepts’, 381).
[915] Some translate with ‘silence’: Grelot restores another (hypothetical) שׁתק in the lacuna, translating the bear’s speech as ‘Faites silence, et moi aussi] je ferai silence’ (‘Les Proverbes’, 186). Kottsieper translates ‘[ich] werde schweigen’, and in a glossary offers both ‘schweigen’ and ‘sich zufrieden geben’ as glosses of שׁתק (*Die Sprache der Aḥiqarsprüche*, 21, 237).
[916] Weigl interprets as ‘ich will Ruhe geben’ (*Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche*, 417), but interpretation of שׁתק as a transitive verb seems to be unfounded.

refrain from attacking the lambs. This interpretation, if correct, confirms the biblical usage of verbs meaning 'be silent' to refer to refraining from expected action.

Cuneiform Incantation Tablet (3rd century BCE?)

In the Seleucid-era Aramaic incantation tablet written in cuneiform (see more under חרשׁ), the root שׁתק is used twice, both transliterated *šá-ti-iq*. The incantation is intended either to silence an angry enemy (so Landsberger) or to heal a person 'afflicted with insanity, deaf-and-dumbness…and convulsions' (so Gordon).[917] The speaker in this text puts a magic (silencing?) knot under his tongue and enters the house of an enemy (or a house 'full of words'). When he enters, the house becomes silent, a table (of one who ties the tongue?) is turned over and the bowl (of one who mixes poison?) is poured out.[918] The precise interpretation is not clear, however, and translations vary.

The first use of *šatiq* is in line 2, but the reading of the first syllable is uncertain and it has had various interpretations. It might identify the role of the knot that is taken from the wall and subsequently placed under the tongue,[919] so some have translated *šatiq* as a 'silencer': 'un "se taisant", un "silencieux", c'est-à-dire sans doute, par métonymie, un *instrument qui rend silencieux*'.[920] Landsberger similarly translates as: 'ein Schweiger',[921] and Delsman as 'der zum Schweigen bringt'.[922] Others interpret *šatiq* adverbially, as referring to the speaker doing something in silence.[923] G.R. Driver translated line 2 as

[917] Landsberger, 'Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 247; Gordon, 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform', 108.
[918] Dupont-Sommer, 'La tablette cunéiforme araméenne de Warka', 39.
[919] The word for knot is *kiṭar*, and a parallel 'knot'/'silencer' relationship might be found later in the text, with *kiṭar* on line 27 and *miḫaššê* on line 28. It is possible that both *šatiq* and *miḫaššê* refer to something causing silence.
[920] Dupont-Sommer, 'La tablette cunéiforme araméenne de Warka', 42.
[921] Landsberger: 'Ich habe einen Knoten genommen von der Holzwand, einen "Schweiger" von den Angelstein des (Haus)tores' ('Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 251).
[922] Delsman, 'Eine Aramäische Beschwörung', 433.
[923] Gordon, 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform', 108; Franz Rosenthal in Pritchard, *ANET*[3], 658; Macuch, 'Der Keilschriftliche Beschwörungstext aus Uruk', 188.

'There is silence from the threshold to the door'.[924] A more recent interpretation by Geller does not have the sign *šá* of *šatiq* at all, but instead indicates the text is unclear and suggests reconstruction as: 'I *locked* you out from the door'.[925]

The text then describes the motions of the speaker who had put the knot under his tongue and entered the enemy's house, which became silent (*šatiq,* line 7). The reading of this word is more certain, but translations vary. Dupont-Sommer translates 'la maison pleine de paroles fait silence', which he attributes to the effect of the knot, the mysterious *šatiq* the enchanter placed in his mouth.[926] Landsberger offers a similar interpretation: 'Das Haus, voll mit Worten, schwieg (wurde still)',[927] as does Delsman: 'Als sie mich sahen, verstummte das Haus, das voll von Worten ist'.[928] The silencing of the house is presented as a result of the magic actions described in lines 1-3. Gordon first translated: 'When they saw me, the house of (the) adversary became silent' but later changed his translation slightly to 'the hostile house'.[929] Macuch interprets similarly: 'Die zungenbindende Platte, die Mischschale von Gift, sobald sie mich sahen, schwieg das Haus des Gegners'.[930] Geller interprets differently again, with *šatiq* as 'quiet' and describing a 'prattler' rather than a house: 'When they saw me — why is the prattler quiet?'[931]

[924] 'An Aramaic Inscription', 48.
[925] He identifies *-ti-ik* as an object suffix and suggests the verb *ʾḥd*, 'seize', which he translates 'locked you' ('The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 133, 136). Macuch also determines the reading is uncertain, calling the reading *šatiq* 'fraglich' but the reconstruction 'sinngemäß' ('Der Keilschriftliche Beschwörungstext aus Uruk', 188).
[926] 'Que l'incantateur a placé, comme un contre-charme, dans sa bouche' (*Les Inscriptions Araméennes de Sfiré,* 45).
[927] 'Zu den aramäischen Beschwörungen in Keilschrift', 254.
[928] 'Eine Aramäische Beschwörung', 433.
[929] 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform', 108; 'The Cuneiform Aramaic Incantation', 36.
[930] 'Der Keilschriftliche Beschwörungstext aus Uruk', 191.
[931] 'The Aramaic Incantation in Cuneiform Script', 133.

The uniqueness of this tablet makes it difficult to interpret, though parallels might be found in other Babylonian incantation texts.[932] It does confirm that the root שׁתק was used in Aramaic of this dialect and period to refer to silence, silencing, or being quiet, but the uncertainties preclude firmer conclusions.

Cognate Evidence

In addition to the evidence from Aramaic inscriptions cited above, the root שׁתק continued to be used widely in later Aramaic, and also became more common in post-biblical Hebrew. Its meaning seems to have shifted more clearly to 'be silent', again probably under the influence of Aramaic.

Aramaic

Due to the frequent appearance of שׁתק in Aramaic, I will offer only a survey of its uses. It is used as a *peʿal* and *itpaʿʿal* to mean 'be silent' and as a *paʿʿel* meaning 'to silence'.[933] The nouns שתיקה and שתיקות, both meaning 'silence', are also used.[934] In Samaritan Aramaic שׁתק means 'be silent' and 'be deaf', as well as 'lack, cease'.[935] Followed by the preposition מן, it is glossed as התעלם מן ('ignore, disregard').[936]

In the Targum שׁתק is the root most commonly chosen to translate the Hebrew verbs meaning 'be silent'. Targum Onqelos, for example, uses a form of שׁתק in 77 verses, about 45% of the total number of verses in this study.

[932] Landsberger addresses suggested similarities to the incantation text in Ebeling, ed., *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* I:43, 63. A ritual is described involving taking a knot from the wall of the house and putting it in one's mouth in order to quiet the wrath of an enemy. Landsberger concludes that the ritual itself must be Babylonian in origin, but he argues that this incantation is not actually very closely related to any known Babylonian text.
[933] Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JPA*, 569; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of JBA*, 1186-85.
[934] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 1638.
[935] Tal, Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic, 935.
[936] Greenfield, 'Dialect Traits in Early Aramaic', 364.

The root *štq* is also common in Syriac, with the meanings 'be silent' (Pe.), 'silence' or 'abolish' (Pa.), 'be permitted to keep silent' (Etpe.) and 'be forced to be silent, still', 'be abolished, ceased' (Etpa.). There is also a nominal form: *štq'*.[937]

A root *šdq* is attested in Mandaic and glossed as 'be silent'.[938] The change of middle radical *t* to *d* is attested in other roots as well.[939]

Akkadian

The cognate *šatāqu*, 'be silent', is attested in late Babylonian. Since it is likely to be a loanword from Aramaic,[940] however, it is not significant for this study.

Ugaritic

Dictionaries suggest that Hebrew *štq* is a cognate of the Ugaritic root *štk*,[941] the G stem of which means 'leave, go backwards, cease'.[942] Although a semantic connection to Hebrew *štq* is possible, it is not certain, nor do the roots correspond exactly. A change from emphatic *q* to non-emphatic *k* would have to be assumed, perhaps from assimilation to the non-emphatic *t*. Gray recognised that any connection between these roots 'can only be fortuitous'.[943]

The root *štk* is found at least four times in KTU 1.12, once each on lines 57-60, and possibly on line 56 following a suggested textual emendation. Both its interpretation and its relation to the rest of the Baal cycle are uncertain, and various translations have been suggested, including: 'desist', 'cease', 'pour out' (as a *Shafel* of *ntk*), and 'put, appoint'

[937] Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon*, 1616.
[938] Drower, A Mandaic Dictionary, 450.
[939] Nöldeke, Mandäische Grammatik, 42.
[940] von Soden, 'Aramäische Wörter', 267.
[941] *HALOT*, 1671; Ges18, 1419.
[942] Del Olmo Lete, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language*, 852. Tropper defines it as 'aufhören, innehalten' (*Kleines Wörterbuch des Ugaritischen*, 124).
[943] Gray, 'Ba'al's Atonement', 67n.54.

(from a proposed root *štt* related to *šyt*).[944] If the cognate relationship between roots could be more reliably demonstrated, and if the meaning of Ugaritic *štk* was certainly 'cease', it would provide valuable evidence for a semantic connection between 'silence' and 'cessation' in ancient Semitic languages.

Relation to other Hebrew Roots

A possibility exists, and is often posited in the literature,[945] that the Hebrew roots שׁתק, סכת, and שׁקט are related to one another, having undergone both metathesis and changes in root letters. Their similarities are obvious, but very few offer any justification for the differences in root letters,[946] and a direct connection should not be assumed.[947]

Conclusion and Semantic Field

From the limited biblical evidence, we can conclude only that שׁתק is used with inanimate subjects (storm and strife) to indicate the cessation of commotion or turbulence, and that it does not strictly mean 'be silent' in the sense of not making noise.

In Mishnaic Hebrew and Aramaic שׁתק has a wide range of meanings related to being silent, including not speaking, causing someone else to be silent, and cessation. It is of course possible that the root had a similar range of meanings in biblical Hebrew, but is simply not attested. Based on the four references we do have, it differs from other words in this study in not being used in relation to human communication. It also lacks the nuance of restraint or holding back found with חרשׁ and חשׂה, and is not used in association with wisdom (none of which are surprising with a lack of human subjects).

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[944] Ibid.
[945] See *HALOT*, 1671; Ges18, 1419. Bauer links Arabic *saqaṭa* ('fall'), *sakata* ('be silent'), and Syriac *škt*. See 'Ein aramäischer Staatsvertrag', 13.
[946] An exception is Bons, who includes *štq* in his article on *šqṭ*, but signals uncertainty regarding their connection with a question mark: 'durch Metathesis entstandene?' (*TWAT* 8:450).
[947] For further discussion, see 'Relation to other Hebrew Roots' in my chapter on סכת.

In contrast to שׁקט, which indicates a state of rest, peace, or quiet, שׁתק refers to the process bringing stillness, in particular to the cessation of turbulence. In this way שׁתק is similar to the words referring to cessation, particularly דמם and derivatives. Like דמם, it is also used in parallel to עמד to express the idea of holding still.

Chapter 7: סכת

Introduction

The root סכת is used once in biblical texts as a Hiphil and once in Ben Sira as a Niphal. As a biblical *hapax legomenon*, its meaning must be deduced from context, exegetical tradition, and/or cognates, all of which have been used with differing results. In one tradition of interpretation, found in the Targums, Peshitta, Vulgate, Aquila, later Hebrew, Samaritan Aramaic, and the exegetical tradition up to the late 17th century, סכת is understood to mean 'listen, pay attention'. In another tradition, found in the Septuagint, Ben Sira and modern scholarship, it is understood to mean 'be silent'.

Lexicographical Survey

A survey of dictionaries produced between the 13th and 21st centuries reveals a significant shift in the understanding of this root beginning in the 17th century. The medieval dictionaries interpreted סכת as 'listen', reflecting the Targum and Vulgate as well as exegetical tradition. Since this interpretation is logical in the context, there was little reason to question its meaning. In the mid-17th century, however, 'be silent' began to appear in dictionaries as a meaning of סכת, at first in addition to 'listen', and eventually in place of it. The dictionaries where this meaning first appeared were those to include cognate information, especially the Arabic سكت.[948] Dictionaries relying solely on Latin, in contrast, kept the more traditional interpretation as 'listen' (*ausculta* or *attende*).[949] The LXX, which in this case supports cognate evidence, had begun to be considered a valuable textual witness and was also being cited in dictionaries. 'Be silent' eventually

[948] The earliest dictionary I found including cognate roots for סכת is Hottinger's 1661 *Lexicon Harmonicum,* in which the traditional interpretation *attendit* is given alongside cognates (including Arabic سكت, glossed *siluit*). Castell's 1669 *Lexicon Heptaglotton* follows the same practice, giving first the traditional gloss *auscultavit*, then the LXX's translation 'be silent', followed by the Samaritan understanding as *attendit,* and the Arabic root meaning 'be silent'.

[949] See Stock's 1753 *Clavis Linguae Sanctae* and Olonne's 1765 *Lexicon Hebraico-Chaldaico-Latino-Biblicum*. Entries in both are entirely in Latin, without any mention of cognates.

became the only translation for סכת in modern translations and biblical dictionaries.[950] A third factor likely to have contributed to this shift is the post-Reformation demand for new translations alongside the decreasing normativity of the Vulgate.

Modern dictionaries of biblical Hebrew define סכת as 'shew silence',[951] 'be quiet'[952] or 'remain silent'.[953] Ges18 distinguishes between the biblical Hiphil as 'still sein' and the Niphal in Ben Sira as 'schweigen'.[954] In *TWAT* סכת is defined as 'be silent' and associated with cognates.[955] In *THAT* סכת is given as a synonym of חרשׁ and defined as 'sich still halten'.[956]

Dictionaries covering post-biblical Hebrew, however, do define סכת as 'listen', a meaning retained by the root in post-biblical texts such as the Talmud. The root also came to be used in other *binyanim,* with the Qal defined as 'hear, listen', and the Hiphil (sometimes also Niphal) as 'keep silent, listen attentively'.[957] A nominal form סֶכֶת means 'listening'.

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

Deut. 27:9
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר **הַסְכֵּת** וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִהְיֵיתָ לְעָם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ׃

[950] There is a relatively long period of overlap, with even mid-18th century dictionaries having both definitions. In Clodius's 1744 *Lexicon Hebraicum*, for example, הסכת is translated as 'be silent', then explained as 'and in silence, listen', thereby keeping both definitions. Guarin's 1746 *Lexicon Hebraicum et Chaldæo-Biblicum* also gives both the LXX's σιώπα and the Vulgate's *attende,* then suggests a connection to Arabic سكت.
[951] BDB, 698.
[952] *HALOT,* 756. It also suggests a connection to the root שׁקט.
[953] *DCH* gives this definition for the biblical Hiphil, while for the Niphal of Ben Sira it is 'be silent', quieten down', perhaps 'be (respectfully) silent' (6:158).
[954] Ges18, 888.
[955] E. Bons, *TWAT* 8:450.
[956] Delcor, *THAT* 1:641.
[957] See Alcalay, Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary, 2:1774; Efros et al., Compendious Hebrew-English Dictionary, 251; Even-Shoshan, Milon *Even-Shoshan*, 4:1294; Klein, Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary, 447.

סכת appears in Deuteronomy 27:9 at the beginning of a speech given by Moses and the Levitical priests to the people, just prior to the pronouncement of blessings and curses from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal in chapters 27-28. The form הַסְכֵּת is a Hiphil imperative but could also be an infinitive absolute (which could have the same imperatival sense). It is joined by a conjunctive *waw* to the following Qal imperative: וּשְׁמַע, though also separated from it by a paseq.

Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations

With the command וּשְׁמַע (‘and hear/listen’) immediately following, הַסְכֵּת could be either: 1) parallel and synonymous to it, or 2) a precursor for it, to create the necessary conditions to enable them to hear. It is illuminating to survey which commands tend to collocate with the imperative of שמע,[958] listed below in order of frequency.

imperatives that collocate with an imperative of שמע		**references**
listen (or a synonym):	הַאֲזִינָה	Gen 4:23, Num 23:18; Deut 32:1; Judg. 5:3; Job 33:1; 34:2, 16; Isa 28:23 (Deut. 27:9?)
	הַט אָזְנְךָ (נטה אזן)	2 Kings 19:16; Isa 37:17; Ps. 17:6; Prov. 22:17; Dan. 9:18
	הַקְשֵׁב	Job 13:6; 33:3, 31; Jer. 18:19; Ps. 17:1; Isa 28:23
come here / draw near (to hear)	קְרַב	Deut. 5:27
	גְּשׁוּ	Josh. 3:9
	לְכוּ	Ps. 34:12; 66:16
be quiet / be silent (to listen / so I may speak)	שְׁמַע־לִי הַחֲרֵשׁ...	Job 33:31, 33 (also Deut. 27:9?)
gather together	הִקָּבְצוּ	Gen 49:2; Isa 48:14

There is a clear preference in biblical texts to link שׁמע with other acts of listening or with the movement of drawing near in order to hear. Based on this inner-biblical evidence, it is

[958] Gousset undertook a similar survey (with similar results) in his 1743 lexicon. He considered the textual context and other commands that precede the second imperative ושמע. He concluded that it was difficult to select which meaning should be chosen here (*Lexicon linguae Hebraicae*, 1067-68).

more likely that סכת should function in *parallel* to שׁמע and have a similar meaning, such as 'listen'. Even so, the possibility cannot be excluded that the command הסכת is intended as preparation for the subsequent act of hearing, whether by being silent, drawing near, or something else.[959] Listening is associated with silence also when Job commands his friends to be silent (הַחֲרֵשׁ) in order to hear him,[960] and in Neh. 8:11, in which the Levites quiet the mourning people, saying 'be quiet (הַסּוּ), for this day is holy.' Their act of silencing is in response to the people's weeping, however, while in Deut. 27 it is to enable them to listen to the blessings and curses about to be pronounced. Although 'be silent' could be a preparatory command for listening, the weight of biblical evidence suggests that the command 'listen' is more likely.

Translations and Versions

The LXX alone among the versions interprets סכת as 'be silent' (σιώπα),[961] leading to questions about its uniqueness (why did it not exert more influence on tradition?) and origin. Did the translator associate הסכת with שׁקט or even שׁתק? This is possible if by that time sibilants had begun to merge and emphatics were no longer easily distinguished. Alternatively, could a dialect known to the translator have had a cognate precursor of Arabic *skt* meaning 'be silent', or could the translator simply have guessed from context?

All other versions interpret the Hebrew imperatives הסכת ושׁמע as parallels: listen and hear, the Targums and Peshitta all with different forms of the root צית/צות/ܨܝܬ:

Onkelos[962]	ומליל משה וכהניא ליואי עם כל ישראל למימר **אצית** ושמע ישראל יומא הדין הויתא לעם קדם יוי אלהך:
Neofiti[963]	ומליל משה וכהנייה ליווי עם כל ישׂראל למימר **אציתו** ושׁמעו ישׂראל יומא הדין

[959] Another suggested interpretation of סכת was 'to receive', apparently a point of contention between ibn Janaḥ and David Qimḥi. See Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena*, 96, 99.
[960] Job 33:31, 33.
[961] The Syro-Hexapla follows suit with ܣܬܘܩ (שׁתוק) and a barely legible marginal reading from Aquila.
[962] Sperber, *Targum Onkelos*, 335.
[963] The Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, 422.

	איתמניתון לאומה קדם ייי אלהכון:
Pseudo-Jonathan[964]	ומליל משה וכהניא בני לוי עם כל עמא למימר **ציתו** ושמעו ישראל יומנא אתבחרתון למהוי עמא קדם ייי אלקכון:
Cairo Geniza[965]	(text missing)… **[א]צִיתוּ** וְשִׁמַעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵ[ל] יוֹמָה הָדֵין [אָ]תְחַשַּׁבְתּוֹן לְעַם [קדי]שׁ לְשֻׁמֵיהּ[דיי א]לָהְכוֹן
Peshitta[966]	ܫܡܥ ܐܝܫܪܝܠ ܗܘ ܝܘܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܬܚܫܒ ܠܟ ܠܥܡ ܩܕܝܫ ܠܫܡܗ ܕܐܠܗܟ. ܐ֗ ܫܡܥ ܠܡܠܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܒܐܕܢ ܠܟ. ܫܬܘ ܘܐܫܡܥ.

The Vulgate translates with *attende* (‘give attention to, listen’), though some manuscripts reflecting the *Vetus Latina* translate ‘*Audi, Israel, et tace’* (‘hear…and be silent’), perhaps influenced by the LXX.[967] Aquila translates πρόσχες, ‘take heed’,[968] a verb he uses elsewhere for Hebrew קשׁב (7 times), and once each for כסה and שׁמע.[969] This can be attributed to his Jewish sources and the apparent dominance of the early interpretation as ‘listen’.

Translation as ‘listen’ seems to have been standard until the late-17th century, and even into the 18th, as shown by the lexicographical tradition and translations. The 1611 Authorised Version, for example, translates ‘take heed and hearken’, and the 1599 Geneva Bible before it ‘take heede and heare’. The same tradition is reflected in the Louis Segond (‘sois attentif’), the Lutherbibel (‘merke auf’), and the Russian Synodal (‘внимай’, ‘pay attention’).

Most 20th-century translations, in contrast, interpret סכת as ‘be silent’, presumably because of the shift in lexicographical tradition after the inclusion of cognates, but also

[964] Clarke et al., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, 240.
[965] Klein, Palestinian Targum, 1:351.
[966] Old Testament in Syriac: Leviticus (I:2, II:1b), 72.
[967] See the *Vetus Latina* database at http://apps.brepolis.net (Vetus Latina Institute, Beuron).
[968] Wevers, *Deuteronomium*, 288; also Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 311.
[969] Reider and Turner, *Index to Aquila*, 205.

because of increased attention to the LXX. In summary, the two traditions divide sharply along chronological rather than confessional lines.

Extrabiblical References

סכת is not used in DSS or inscriptions, but is found once in Ben Sira.

Ben Sira

Ben Sira 13 portrays the relations and differences between the rich and poor, with verses 22-23 contrasting the positive reception given the speech of the rich (even when repugnant) with the lack of attention to the speech of the poor (even when sensible).[970] In v. 23 a Niphal of סכת describes everyone's reaction to the speech of the rich: 'The rich speaks, everyone becomes silent; his understanding they make reach up to the cloud.' This is contrasted in the following line: 'the poor speak, people say "who is this?"', implying scorn and lack of reception.[971]

13.23	עשיר דובר הכל **נסכתו** ואת שכלו עד עב יגיעו דל דובר מי זה יאמרו ואם נתקל גם הם יהדפוהו[972]

Although the plural verb נסכתו does not agree grammatically with the singular subject הכל, it has traditionally been understood as 'they are silent', as in the Greek and Latin translations: ἐσίγησαν and *tacuerunt*.[973] The nuance contributed by the Niphal is not clear: it could be understood as reflexive (making oneself quiet), as tolerative (allowing oneself to be silenced) or as reciprocal (silencing each other), but it does not easily lend itself to a passive meaning.[974]

[970] Verse 22 is translated by Skehan and di Lella: 'Many are the supporters for the rich when he speaks; though what he says is repugnant, it wins approval. When the poor speaks they say, "Come, come, speak up!" but though he is talking sense, they will not give him a chance' (*Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 250).
[971] Parker and Abegg translate: 'When a rich man is speaking, all are silent and his understanding they exalt to the clouds. When a poor man speaks they say, "Who is this?" And if he stumbles they will also push him away' (www.bensira.org).
[972] Text (manuscript A) from *The Book of Ben Sira*, 19.
[973] Ges18 offers the literal 'die Gesamtheit ist es, die schweigt', accommodating the singular subject (888).
[974] See Siebesma, The Function of the Niph'al, 9.

The idea of silence demonstrating respect and a willingness to listen to someone is also found in biblical passages. Job, for example, refers longingly to the time when men used to be silent to listen to him speak (Job 29:9-10, 21-22).[975]

It would be equally plausible, however, to interpret נסכתו in this passage as 'they listen/pay attention', perhaps as a reflexive Niphal: 'making oneself listen'. This would maintain the clear contrast with the following line: when the rich speak, all listen, but when the poor speak, others do not pay attention. Given the dominance of the Greek translation, this meaning has not been considered, but it is certainly possible.

Later Hebrew: Talmud

סכת is not used in the Mishnah, but it does appear in three discussions concerning recital of the *Shemaʿ* in the Talmud tractate *Berakoth*,[976] where הסכת is understood as a synonym of הקשׁיב or האזין ('listen, pay attention'). In *Berakoth* 15b and 16a, the command of the *Shemaʿ* is linked to הסכת ושׁמע of Deut. 27:9, with הסכת emphasising the need to pay close attention.[977] In *Berakoth* 63b, linguistically playful interpretations of הסכת derive its meaning from other roots: 'Make yourselves into groups (כתות) to study the Torah, since the knowledge of the Torah can be acquired only in association with others';[978] 'Cut yourselves to pieces (כתתו) for words of Torah'; and 'Be silent (הס) and then analyse (כתת)', for one 'should always first learn Torah and then scrutinize it'.[979] Greenspahn identifies this breaking up of roots and reinterpretation from other roots as a pattern of interpretation for *hapax legomena*.[980]

[975] Men are said to restrain their words, put their hands on their mouths, their voice hidden, and tongues stuck to their palettes.
[976] Kosovsky, Otsar leshon Talmud Yerushalmi, 27:203.
[977] Epstein, The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Zeraʻim, 94.
[978] Ibid., 400.
[979] Ibid., 401.
[980] Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena*, 68.

הסכת in postbiblical Hebrew clearly was understood to mean ‘pay attention’ more than ‘be silent’. Only the final example suggests a possible concomitant interpretation as ‘be silent’, but for this it relies on הס.

Evidence that סכת could have been interpreted as ‘be silent’ is mentioned by Cohen, who refers to Saadiah’s use of יסכתון for ידמו in Exod. 15:16. This could attest to a tradition of interpretation different from that found in the Talmud, or it might reflect influence from the Arabic vernacular.[981]

Cognate Evidence

There is strong cognate evidence for a Semitic root *s-k-t* that relates to silence. In both Akkadian and Arabic it is a well-established root with many attestations as well as derived forms. The relation to Hebrew סכת is uncertain, however. If סכת *does* mean ‘be silent’ in Hebrew, it might better be explained as a direct loan rather than as a cognate.

Arabic

Arabic سكت means ‘be or become silent, mute, speechless’ in its first (basic) verb form and can also communicate becoming quiet, calm, motionless. The fourth (causative) form اسكت can refer to being silenced (cut short or broken off from speech),[982] or concealing or refusing to tell something.[983] Nominal forms refer to the state of silence, but also to reticence, to diseases that cause ‘silence’ (including stroke and heart failure as a ‘silencing’ of the heart), to the pause between musical sounds, and to things that quiet others (such as a lullaby).[984]

[981] Cohen, Biblical Hapax Legomena, 111.
[982] Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 1389.
[983] Wehr, Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, 417.
[984] Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 1389-90.

Akkadian

The Akkadian G stem *sakātu(m)* means ‘to be silent’, and the D stem *sukkutu* ‘to silence’,[985] meanings confirmed by parallels meaning ‘be silent’ (*qūlu*) and the negative command ‘do not speak’.[986] It is noteworthy that ‘being silent’ in Akkadian refers not only to lack of speech, but also to lack of action, an overlap with biblical usage.[987]

Amorite

The West Semitic proper name *Yaskit-ilu* might be an attestation of the root *s-k-t* and has therefore been interpreted with meanings related to ‘calm’ or ‘rest’. Its transcription is uncertain, however, with suggested variants *Yasqiṭ* and even *Ia-áš-ki-id(t,ṭ)*.[988] As a proper name without evidence of its meaning, it cannot elucidate semantic value.

Aramaic and Syriac

Aramaic and Syriac have a seemingly unrelated root *skt* meaning ‘thorn’, ‘peg’, ‘nail’.[989] In Samaritan Aramaic, however, it means ‘listen’ or ‘pay attention’,[990] almost certainly reflecting later Hebrew and the exegetical tradition reflected in the Targums.

I did not find the root in Ugaritic or Ethiopic.

Relation to other Hebrew Roots

Dictionaries often associate the root סכת with שׁקט and שׁתק, although without explanation. *DCH*, for example, identifies סכת as a byform of שׁקט, and *HALOT* less explicitly links them.[991] Given the semantic overlap and rough phonological approximation, this is understandable, but it is not as foregone a conclusion as many suggest.

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[985] *AHw* 1011b; CAD 15:74b.
[986] See CAD 15:74.
[987] CAD 15:74-75: ‘*ul askut*’=‘I was not silent’ (in response to an appeal for help).
[988] *HALOT*, 756; Bauer, *Die Ostkanaanäer*, 30, 81; Dhorme, ‘Les Amorrhéens’, 86; Huffmon, *Amorite Personal Names in the Mari Texts*, 44, 253; Ungnad, Review of *Archives d’une famille*, 157.
[989] Jastrow, Dictionary of the Targumim, 993.
[990] Tal has ‘to hearken’ in *Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 589.
[991] *HALOT*, 756; *DCH* 6:158.

All three roots have a sibilant in initial position and then either a velar (כ) or uvular (ק) stop and a dental stop (ת or ט). They also have similar (though not identical) meanings, with שׂתק meaning ‘cease moving, become still’ (later ‘be silent’), and שׂקט meaning ‘be quiet, calm, at rest’. The roots also differ, however, and a hypothetical relation must be explained.

The association of סכת with שׂקט presumes a correlation between ס and שׂ (possible at a later stage of the language when the sibilants were less well distinguished)[992] as well as a correlation between the emphatic ק and ט and the non-emphatic כ and ת, respectively. Such a change could have happened through assimilation, but it would be desirable to see similar examples before assuming the process here. Furthermore, although the consonants כ/ק and ת/ט are similar in standard modern pronunciation, they would have been more distinct at earlier stages of the language and can certainly be traced to different Proto-Semitic consonants. It should therefore not be assumed that ת and ט nor כ and ק can ‘trade’ places. It remains possible, however, that by later stages of the language, when the distinctions had lessened, they began to be perceived as byforms.

The association of סכת with שׂתק would require explanation not only for the change in sibilants but also for the identification of כ with ק, and for metathesis in תק/כת.

A relationship between שׂתק and שׂקט might more easily be explained, as they share the שׂ, and the combination קט theoretically could have undergone metathesis and subsequent

[992] See Joosten, ‘Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls’, 88.

dissimilation of ט to ת to become תק. As שׁתק seems to be a loanword from Aramaic, however, it is unlikely to be directly related to Hebrew שׁקט.[993]

With the limited Hebrew attestation of סכת and its questionable correspondence with שׁקט/שׁתק, it seems more likely to be a loanword, potentially distantly related to שׁקט by a common Proto-Semitic ancestor.

Conclusion

The tradition of interpretation for סכת shifts from 'listen' to 'be silent' when Arabic cognates begin to be incorporated in dictionary entries in the mid-17th century. This occurs alongside increased attention to the LXX, which supports the meaning 'be silent'. This tradition eventually became dominant, despite the long tradition of interpretation as 'listen' supported by internal Hebrew evidence and other early versions.

Semantic Field

With its single appearance and ambiguity of meaning, not much can be said about the place of סכת in the semantic field. It either means 'be silent', probably as a loanword, or 'listen', as an otherwise unattested root. Since either meaning makes sense in the contexts of Deut. 27:9 and Ben Sira 13.23, its meaning cannot be conclusively determined.

If it does mean 'be silent', it would be similar semantically either to the Hiphil of חרשׁ, used to refer to restraint from speaking, or to the interjection הס commanding silence.

Speculatively, if the two traditions were not mutually exclusive but allowed to co-exist, it could indicate that being silent and listening were in fact seen to be synonymous. If so,

[993] Albright is one of few who, having assumed a connection between שׁקט and שׁתק, offers a partial explanation. He suggests that ט is partially assimilated to ק, 'perhaps due to the ש', but without explanation for the metathesis ('The Solar Barks of Morning and Evening', 142).

this would enhance our understanding of biblical conceptions of silence. Speculation aside, we are left with the certainty only of a bifurcated tradition for סכת.

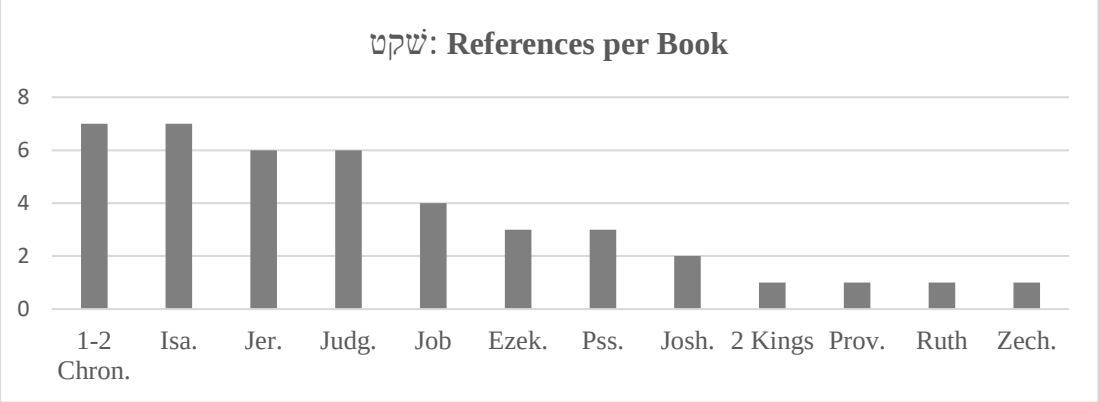
Part III: Related and Peripheral Categories

Chapter 8: שׁקט

שׁקט is on the periphery of the semantic field, not referring to silence, but to a state of quiet, rest, or peace. Since many of its uses overlap with other words in this study, however, it will be treated briefly.

Distribution

שׁקט is found in 42 biblical references, 28 times in Dead Sea Scrolls (14 biblical and 14 non-biblical), and 3 times in Ben Sira.



Genre

שׁקט has a more equal genre distribution between prose and poetry than other silence words. The historical narratives of Joshua, Judges and Chronicles have 15 references, while the major prophets have 16, and there are 8 references in poetic parallelism (Job, Pss. and Prov.).

Chronology

שׁקט becomes more frequent in later books, which is demonstrated most clearly by its frequency in Chronicles compared to its near absence from Samuel and Kings. Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in a transitional period of the language, have 9 between them. The Isaiah references are distributed throughout the book without a clear chronological

distribution.[994] Joshua and Judges, not generally understood to be late, have 8 between them. The increasing frequency of the root is confirmed as a later development, however, by its more common usage in post-biblical Hebrew.

Lexicographical Survey

Dictionaries are unanimous in defining שׁקט as related to 'quiet', 'rest', and 'peace'.

	Qal	**Hiphil**	**noun**
BDB[995]	be quiet, undisturbed; 1. at peace (of land); 2. be quiet, inactive	1. shew quietness; 2. cause quietness	quietness
HALOT[996]	1. be at rest; 2. be peaceful, quiet; 3. maintain a quiet attitude	1. give peace; 2. keep the peace; 3. carefree peace	political peace
DCH[997]	1. be quiet, at peace, have rest, be settled; 2. be quiet (in attitude), hold one's peace, be inactive, be still	1. show quietness, be quiet, rest; 2. cause quietness, give respite; 3. (with object) quieten, calm, make inactive; 4. (inf. abs.) quietness; שׁקט II (Hi): drop down, let fall (*Lachish ost. 6,7*) שׁקט III (Hi): declare just (*proposed emendation of Job 34:29*)	quietness, silence
Ges18[998]	1. ruhig, still, ungestört sein, Ruhe haben; 2. sich ruhig, still, neutral verhalten	1. beruhigen, beschwichtigen; 2. Ruhe vershaffen; 3. Ruhe halten, sich ruhig, neutral verhalten	Ruhe, Sorglosigkeit

Only *DCH* records multiple roots for שׁקט, which does not seem warranted.

In *TWOT* the 'basic idea' of שׁקט is said to be 'tranquillity', which is granted as a blessing and implies absence both of 'strife, war, or trouble' and 'worry or anxiety'.[999] *NIDOTTE* identifies the nuance of שׁקט as 'being tranquil or having rest', which includes the idea of peace as a blessing (of righteousness and God's redemption). It can also be opposed to

[994] They are: 7:4; 14:7; 18:4; 30:15; 32:17; 57:20; 62:1.
[995] BDB, 1052-53.
[996] *HALOT*, 1641-42.
[997] *DCH* 8:550-51.
[998] Ges18, 1408.
[999] H.J. Austel, *TWOT* 1:953.

anger, and to motion ('lie motionless' in Job 37:17; Jer. 48:11).[1000] In the longer article by Bons in *TWAT*/*TDOT*, he concludes that שׁקט refers to both 'internal and external peace' (often God-given) after military actions. It can also refer to a situation of security before war or destruction, or to 'carefree ease'. The meaning 'inactivity' or 'cessation of activity' is also mentioned.[1001]

Grammatical and Semantic Analysis

שׁקט is used almost exclusively as a verb in biblical texts: 31 times as a Qal, 10 times as Hiphil. Only once is it a noun: שֶׁקֶט, a form that becomes more common in later Hebrew.[1002] The subject of שׁקט is the earth, land, or a country or city in 19 verses, and the sea is subject in 2. It has a human subject in 12 verses, and twice in Jeremiah it has a personified sword as subject. God is the subject 6 times.

Its most common context is describing the 'quiet', or peace, of the land after a time of war, particularly in Joshua, Judges, and Chronicles. It also describes the peace of other locations, such as city, nation, and sea. The second most common context for שׁקט is in reference to inhabitants of a land who are at peace and therefore 'quiet', often describing people about to be attacked. It can also be used to indicate lack or cessation of motion or activity.

1) Quiet Land (or City, Nation, Sea)

The land is described as being quiet after a period of war with the formulaic: והארץ שׁקטה ממלחמה (Josh. 11:23; 14:15); שקטה הארץ ואין־עמו מלחמה (2 Chron. 14:5 [6]). Without explicit reference to war, it describes a peaceful period of a given duration (usually 40 years, once each 10 years and 80 years): שׁקטה הארץ (2 Chron. 13:23); ותשׁקט הארץ (Jdgs

[1000] P.J. Nel, *NIDOTTE* 4:234-35.
[1001] Bons, *TWAT* 8:449-54 (*TDOT*, 15:452-57).
[1002] Ben-Yehuda, *Complete Dictionary*, 15:7429; Klein, *Etymological Dictionary*, 678. An adjective שָׁקֵט also develops.

3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28). The city is 'quiet' after the death of Athaliah: והעיר שׁקטה (2 Kgs 11:20=2 Chron. 23:21), and the kingdom (הממלכה/מלכות) is 'quiet' in 2 Chron. 14:4; 20:30. In 1 Chron. 4:40 the participle describes the peacefulness of the land: ושׁקטת ושׁלוה. The nominal pair ושׁלום ושׁקט is used in 1 Chron. 22:9 to describe the peace and quiet that God promised to give to Israel in the days of David's son.

Other references differ from the formulaic usage just described. The quietness of the earth is associated with rest and joy in Isa. 14:7, and with peace resulting from withheld judgement in Zech. 1:11. It is linked with fear of God's judgement in Ps. 76:9[8], and with the hot south wind in Job 37:17. It is negatively associated with complacency in Jer. 48:11 (Moab) and Ezek. 16:49 (Sodom). The tossing sea, which cannot be quiet, is an image describing people not at peace: the wicked in Isa. 57:20, and the people of Hamath and Arpad in Jer. 49:23.

2) Quiet Sword

שׁקט is also used to describe the sword of the LORD that cannot be still because it is appointed for judgement: עד־אנה לא תשׁקטי…איך תשׁקטי ויהוה צוה־לה (Jer. 47:6-7). Here it has the nuance of restraint from motion and action.

3) Quiet People

At rest and trusting

People are said to be 'quiet' when they are at peace and when their needs are met. In this usage שׁקט is frequently paired with בטח. In some cases these people are subsequently attacked (Jdgs 18:7, 27; Ezek. 38:11), but in Isaiah it describes the promised and lasting peace of God's people: the word-pair בהשׁקט ובבטחה in 30:15 is parallel to בשׁובה ונחת, and the pair השׁקט ובטח in 32:17 is parallel to peace (שׁלום), both the result of righteousness (הצדקה).

Asleep

Twice in Job שׁקט is parallel to verbs referring to rest and sleep: שכבתי ואשקוט ישנתי אז ינוח לי (3:13); לא שלותי ולא שקטתי ולא־נחתי ויבא רגז (3:26, where it is also in opposition to רגז).

Unafraid

שׁקט is opposed to fear in Isa. 7:4 (השמר והשקט אל־תירא ולבבך אל־ירך) and in two nearly identical Jeremiah references (30:10; 46:27), where שׁקט is parallel to שאנן (ושב יעקב ושקט ושאנן ואין מחריד).

Without strife

Hiphil שׁקט describes a dispute (ריב) made 'quiet' by a man slow to anger (ארך אפים), who is opposed to a hot-tempered man stirring up strife (איש חמה יגרה מדון) (Prov. 15:18).

Inactive

The Qal of שׁקט is opposed to the Piel of כלה ('finish, complete') in Ruth 3:18: Boaz will not be 'quiet', but will act and complete the matter today (כי לא ישקט האיש כי־אם־כלה הדבר היום). This usage of שׁקט is similar to חרש and חשה in representing inactivity as silence.

4) Quiet God

When God is the subject of שׁקט, his quietness usually refers to a lack of action. The only exception is Ps. 94:13, where the Hiphil of שׁקט has a human object: God gives rest to his people from the trouble caused by the wicked.

In two verses שׁקט is in opposition to judgement: in Ezek. 16:42 God declares that his jealousy will depart from them, and that he will be quiet and no longer angry (וסרה קנאתי ממך ושקטתי ולא אכעס עוד); in Job 34:29 Elihu claims that if God is silent, no one can declare guilty (והוא ישקט ומי ירשע). In two other verses, שׁקט is contrasted to God's activity on behalf of his people: in Ps. 83:2[1] it is one of three parallel requests made by the psalmist that God not be silent (אלהים אל־דמי־לך אל־תחרש ואל־תשקט אל); in Isa. 62:1 God

himself declares that he will not be silent or quiet (שׁקט//חשׂה) until Jerusalem's righteousness and salvation shine forth (למען ציון לא אחשה ולמען ירושלם לא אשקוט עד־יצא כנגה צדקה וישועתה כלפיד יבער).[1003]

In Isa. 18:4 God is the subject of the cohortative אשקוטה,[1004] followed by: ואביטה במכוני. שׁקט is thus an action either parallel to or preceding that of looking down from his place, though some interpret it adverbially (I will look down quietly).[1005] The context is difficult but seems to be one of judgement, with reference in the previous verse to trumpets and in the following to harvest and branches being cut off. God's quietness here most likely refers to a temporary restraint in judgement while he looks down on inhabitants of the earth.

Versions and Translations

The LXX most frequently translates with a form of the verb ἡσυχάζω or the noun ἡσυχία, referring to quiet and rest (22 times). In 5 references it uses a form of the verb ἀναπαύσομαι, 'to cease, stop', and in 4 a form related to 'peace' (εἰρηνεύω or εἰρήνη).

The Vulgate translates 22 times with a form of *quiesco*, meaning 'rest, keep quiet/calm, be at peace/rest, be inactive', and twice more with a prefixed form of the same verb. It is alone among the versions in translating שקט with a word referring to silence (6 times, with the verb *sileo* or the noun *silentium*). It translates as 'peace' (*pax*) 3 times, and 'cease' (*cesso*) twice.

[1003] It is possible to interpret the first-person verb as spoken by the prophet, but since only God could accomplish the desired goal, he also seems the most likely subject.
[1004] This is the *kethiv*, also in 1QIsa[a]; אשקטה is the *qere*.
[1005] Cf. ESV, NRSV.

In the majority of references (22), the Targum translates with a form of the root שדך, referring to ease and quiet. In 9 references it uses a form of the root שקט, and in 8 a form of the root נוח. It does not, interestingly, use שתק, which is the root most commonly used to translate the other words in this study.

Extrabiblical references

Ben Sira

שׁקט is used three times in Ben Sira. In 40.6, attested only in the B manuscript, כרגע ישקוט refers to the general plight of man getting rest for only a moment, in a chapter that describes the 'heavy yoke' (40.1) and trouble that all men must face. שׁקט could refer to the short rest of sleep (suggested by עת נוחו על משכבו and שינת לילה in the previous line), or to the more general rest of spirit (suggested by the contrast to קנאה דאגה ופחד אימת מות at the beginning of 40.5).

The other two references (41.1 and 44.6) refer to someone who is quiet, or resting, at his place, similar to biblical passages with שׁקט referring to someone's peaceful state.[1006]

	Masada ms.	**B ms.**
41.1	לאיש **שקט** על מכונתו	לאי֯ש **שוקט** על מכונתו
44.6	אנשי חיל וסומכי כח **ושוק**[...]	אנשי חיל וסומכי כח **ושוקטים** על מכונתם

Chapter 41 speaks of death as the portion of all flesh (41.4), and 41.1 laments the bitterness of death to one 'at peace (שׁקט) in his place', similar to Jdgs 18:7, 27, in which people are (falsely) secure and at peace, but about to be attacked.

[1006] Texts from *The Book of Ben Sira*, 44, 53.

Chapter 44 lauds men of past generations for their honour, might, understanding, wisdom and power. They are described as 'resting/at peace in their places' in 44.6, similar to biblical passages portraying peace as a reward (Jer. 30:10; 46:27).

Dead Sea Scrolls

Of the 14 biblical DSS references, only Isa. 57:20 differs significantly from the MT:

MT	כי **הִשְׁקֵט** לֹא יוּכַל וְיִגְרְשׁוּ מֵימָיו רֶפֶשׁ וָטִיט
1QIsa[a] (47,20)[1007]	כיא **לאשקוט** לוא יוכלויתגרשו מימיו רפש וטיט

The spelling of the verb with א could reflect the a-vowel of the Hiphil infinitive,[1008] or it could suggest interpretation as an Aphel. The plene spelling with ו is found also in MT Isa. 18:4 (*kethiv*) and 62:1. The added ל also happens in 7 other references.[1009] The unwieldy יוכלויתגרשו is certainly a mistake and not meant to be read as one word. Ulrich and Flint suggest a scribe might first have written the plural form יוכלו before noticing that the *waw* belongs to the following verb,[1010] although this does not explain the addition of the ת. It might indicate that the Hithpael of גרש was perceived to fit the context better.

The five verbal uses of שׁקט in the non-biblical DSS closely mirror biblical uses. It is paired with בטח in 4Q163 23ii4, and associated with rejoicing in 4Q405 20ii-22,13. The earth is said to be quiet forever (לעולמים) in 4Q475 6.

The nine nominal שׁקט references suggest that this form became more common in post-biblical Hebrew. Many contexts are fragmentary, but it appears to be associated with שׁלוה, שׁלום and בטח, as in biblical contexts. In two SSS references it is associated with

[1007] Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 32.1:94.
[1008] Kutscher documents at least 15 other places where MT's ה is replaced by א, a result of the weakening of laryngeals and pharyngeals (*Isaiah Scroll*, 506).
[1009] Kutscher, *Isaiah Scroll*, 346.
[1010] Ulrich and Flint, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD 32.2:116.

דממה (4Q405 19,7; 20ii-22,13), and in another it appears in construct as למשפטי שקט (4Q400 1ii11). In the overall context of heavenly praise, this is more likely to have the positive connotation of peaceful judgements (or judgements bringing peace), rather than 'quiet' judgements, which might imply a lack of justice.[1011]

Inscriptions

A form of שׁקט might be used in Lachish letter 6, though only the letters קט are preserved at the beginning of line 7.[1012] If reconstruction as the Hiphil infinitive להשׁקט is correct, being 'quiet' (or resting, being inactive) could be parallel to the 'slackening' or weakening of hands (לרפת ידיך), deemed 'not good' (לא טבם). Alternatively, it is suggested that שׁקט might mean 'drop down' (see cognates below and *DCH* above), but 'dropping' hands would have the same sense as רפת יד, and the context is too fragmentary to be certain of שׁקט.

Cognate Evidence

An Arabic cognate سقط (*sqṭ*) means 'fall' or 'drop'.[1013] It can refer to repentance and is used to describe abortion or stillborn births. A semantic connection has been suggested between this Arabic root and Hebrew שׁקט, based on another suggestion that Hebrew בטח, 'trust', often paired with שׁקט, also corresponds to an Arabic cognate meaning 'fall'.[1014] The rationale is that if one falls on and then lies on something, it implies rest and relying on, thus trust.[1015] Barr mentions both roots in a discussion of comparative semantic analogies, to which he adds the Hophal הָשְׁלַכְתִּי ('I was cast/thrown'), which in context clearly refers to being caused to trust (Ps. 22:11).[1016] A further example might be the

[1011] Newsom translates 'for precepts of silence' in Eshel, *Qumran Cave 4*, DJD 11:185.
[1012] See Pardee, *Handbook*, 100-101.
[1013] Lane, *Lexicon*, 1379-82.
[1014] Blau, citing Skoss and G.R. Driver, proposes that בטח should be translated 'fall' in Jer. 12:5 ('Über homonyme', 244).
[1015] Kopf determines that בטח refers not to 'ein einfaches Fallen oder Liegen', but to 'ein Sichausbreiten und bequemes Daliegen' ('Arabische Etymologien', 166-67).
[1016] Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 90-91. The verse is also cited by Blau, 'Über homonyme', 244.

Hiphil of נוח, which in its B form (with dagesh in the nun) means ‘lay or set down, place’, while the A form means ‘cause to rest’, ‘quiet’ (transitive). It is possible that verbs tend to develop semantically from ‘fall, drop’, to ‘rest, trust’ (potentially in the opposite direction for נוח), but in the case of שׁקט, it seems relatively clear that by the time of biblical Hebrew, it did not mean ‘fall’, but only ‘rest, be quiet’.

Aramaic is closer to the Hebrew, with meanings such as ‘settle, be at rest, at ease’, with a nominal form meaning ‘rest, ease’.[1017] Sokoloff cites only one Aramaic reference meaning ‘be in a peaceful state’.[1018]

Syriac has a nominal formation (*šqṭ̈*) meaning ‘silence’, but it is not productive as a verb.[1019] Interestingly, a Syriac verb *škt* means both ‘be still, quiet’ and ‘sink down, precipitate’, which might validate the suggested semantic link between falling and being quiet.[1020] It does not correspond exactly in form, but might, through dissimilation of emphatics, relate to שׁקט/سقط.

The Akkadian verb *šaqātu(m)* is defined as ‘trip up’ (presumably based on Arabic ‘fall’),[1021] though a later dictionary suggests it might mean ‘slope’ but is uncertain.[1022] I did not find obvious cognates in Ethiopic or Ugaritic.

[1017] These definitions are שׁקט II in Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim,* while שׁקט I is defined as ‘cut off, shorten’, and the form שָׁקוּט as ‘stubby, abnormally short, abruptly bent’ (1621-22), which seem to have no connection to Hebrew שׁקט.
[1018] Dictionary of JBA, 1173.
[1019] Sokoloff, *Syriac Lexicon,* 1593.
[1020] Ibid., 1559.
[1021] *AHw* 3:1179a.
[1022] CAD 17:14.

Conclusion and Semantic Field

Although peripheral to other silence words, שׁקט does overlap in referring to internal rest and peace resulting from trust. In this it is similar to derivatives of דמם. It is opposed to the restless commotion of both humans (Ps. 94:13) and nature, particularly the sea (Isa. 57:20; Jer. 49:23), in which it is similar to שׁתק and דממה. It is also used in opposition to activity: Boaz will not be 'quiet' (Ruth 3:18) but will 'settle the matter', and the psalmist asks God not to be quiet (Ps. 83:2[1]) but to act on his behalf. In this way שׁקט is similar to חשׁה and חרשׁ, with which it is also sometimes in parallel (חרשׁ in Ps. 83, חשׁה in Isa. 62:1).

Like דמם, שׁקט can indicate cessation. In Jer. 47:6-7 it refers to the being still of the sword. In Ezek. 16:42 it indicates an end of God's wrath and is thus opposed to anger and judgement. In Job 34:29 it also contrasts with judgement: if God is silent, no one can condemn. Other silence words (חשׁה and חרשׁ) contrast with God's judgement, but by indicating a restraint of anger rather than its end, as in Ezek. 16:42. שׁקט also refers to the end of anger in Prov. 15:18, similar to שׁתק in Prov. 26:20. Unlike דמם/דמה, however, שׁקט is not used in contexts of judgement to refer to destruction or death. Instead, it is either the positive rest resulting from lack of war, or a foreboding rest (implying complacency) before coming destruction. שׁקט is also not used in wisdom contexts, in contrast to חרשׁ.

To properly situate שׁקט in a semantic field, other words for 'rest', particularly נוח, would need to be studied. Both roots describe God giving rest, but נוח is given to people, while שׁקט is given to the land.[1023] An exception is Isa. 14:7, where the land is subject of both נוח

[1023] The distinction between נוח and שׁקט can be clearly seen in 1 Chron. 22:9; 2 Chron. 14:5, 20:30. שׁקט as used for the land/earth is seen in Deut. 3:20, 12:10, 25:19; Josh. 1:13,15; 22:24; 1 Chron. 22:18; 2 Chron. 14:5, 6.

and שׁקט,[1024] perhaps due to the personification of the earth in vv. 7-8, with even trees rejoicing. Other roots that would have to be considered in the semantic field of שׁקט are שׁבת (referring both to cessation and rest) and words for 'ease' and 'prosperity', such as שׁלוה and שׁאנן.

[1024] The two roots are also parallel, with human subject, in Job 3:13, 26.

Chapter 9: Periphery: Other Related Words

As with any semantic field, this one has 'fuzzy' boundaries,[1025] with a 'periphery' of words that share nuances with one or more of the words meaning 'be silent' (such as 'rest', 'cease', 'hold still', etc.).[1026] I have kept an ever expanding list of related words, but due to space constraints I will present only the most relevant.

Words referring to cessation and holding still, such as שׁבת ,חדל, שׁבח,[1027] and more, are related to דמם. דמה, in contrast, relates to words referring to destruction in contexts of judgement (שׁמם, שׁדד, שׁבר, etc.).

חרשׁ, אלם, and חשׁה, when they refer to lack of communication, overlap with collocations such as לא ענה and לא שׁמע. When they refer to a lack of engagement or ignoring someone, these words overlap with the idea of hiding (כחד, עלם, סתר, צפן), especially hiding one's face. When they refer to restraint from action or speech,[1028] they are related to words such as עצר, אפק, חשׂך, and to collocations such as יד על פה ('hand on mouth').

שׁקט and derivatives of דמם/דמה represent the presence of peace and rest, sharing nuances with the related words שׁלו/שׁלה, שׁאנן, בטח, שׁלום, נוח, and references to lack of war or enemies.

Wisdom is represented not only as being silent (חרשׁ), but also as restraining words (עצר מלים, חשׂך שׂפה), and by the roots בין and חכם. Silence as reverence before God is

[1025] Semantic fuzziness refers to ill-defined and sometimes subjective boundaries of categories. See Murphy and Koskela, *Key Terms in Semantics*, 72.
[1026] What I have designated 'peripheral' ideas can be seen in the semantic field diagram in the conclusion.
[1027] It can mean either 'praise' or 'still' (Ps. 65:8[7]; 89:10[9]; Prov. 29:11).
[1028] Miller also identifies silence as a metaphor for inactivity based on the collocation 'not answer' in 1 Kgs 18:26, also 2 Sam. 22:42, where not saving is linked with not answering ('Silence as Response', 37).

represented not only by הס, but by other words representing reverential fear, such as פחד, and collocations such as ‘let your words be few’ (יהיו דבריך מעטים; Eccl. 5:1[2]).

Another word that could have been included in this study is צמת, not because it is obviously peripheral (though with meanings related to destruction,[1029] it might be for דמה), but because a cognate in Arabic, Ethiopic and Syriac means ‘be silent’. The Hebrew root might also have had connotations of silence, or ‘silencing’, that came to mean ‘destroy, being destroyed’ in causative and passive constructions, but the texts do not make this clear. It would be very interesting to investigate the chronological development of this root as well as its lexicographical tradition. This in turn might shed light on the tradition of סכת, which shows a shift in understanding towards cognate meanings that is *not* found with צמת. Reasons for this might be its more frequent usage and clearer contexts, but it would nonetheless be worth investigating other possible influences.

[1029] Some biblical uses of צמת might mean ‘be silenced’ (Job 23:17), but most refer to destruction.

Conclusion

Summary of Results

The semantic field of silence in biblical Hebrew covers far more than a simple lack of noise. In fact, it seems rather unconcerned with noise, being focused instead on 1) communication, either enabled or prevented by a lack of speech; 2) expected or appropriate actions that are not done; and 3) the cessation of motion or turbulence (physical or emotional). These uses unrelated to speech and sound might at first be considered semantic extensions into the neighbouring domains of action and motion, but in light of the overall picture of the field, it seems more likely that they are integral parts of a verbal field referring to lack, restraint, or cessation of an expected action, with application to speech only a part of this larger field.

Distribution

Subjects

With God as subject, being ‘silent’ can refer to inaction, either restraining judgement (particularly when he speaks in first person) or failing to act on behalf of someone (found in the pleas of the psalmist that he not be silent). God’s ‘silence’ never, however, refers to an actual inability to hear or speak, nor does it often refer to a lack of speech. God can also be the subject of the unusual Qal דמה meaning ‘destroy’, perhaps peripheral.

These results differ significantly from the more common interpretation of God’s silence as reflecting an uncaring nature, absence, or even non-existence. Some elements of this type of silence are seen in the psalmists’ pleas, but affirmative biblical representation of God’s silence relate only to his restraint from judgement. This observation should, however, be expanded by additional study of collocations such as ‘not answer’.

When human subjects are silent in relation to God, it represents reverence (esp. with הס). Human silence in relation to others relates to communication, either facilitating it (by listening, seen with Job and friends), or hindering it (by not speaking, not hearing). It can also refer to inaction or not doing what is expected (e.g., 2 Sam. 19:10; 1 Kgs 22:3; 2 Kgs 7:9; Est. 4:14). Human 'silence' might also be connected to death and destruction (depending on how closely דמה is connected to the field)—those in the grave cannot praise.

Animals are rarely said to be silent, but there is a reference to mute dogs (who cannot do their job; Isa. 56:10) and a deaf snake (who cannot be charmed; Ps. 58:5[4]). Idols are also described as 'mute' (אלם), a reference to their futility (Hab. 2:18). Natural inanimate objects can also be described as 'silent' when they cease moving or become calm, especially water (the sea, waves, and storm are stilled in Ps. 107:29-30 and Jon. 1:1-12, using the roots חשׁה, שׁתק, דממה). When the sun is 'silent' (דמם), it stops moving (Josh. 10:12-13), and when a quarrel is 'silent' (שׁתק), it ceases (Prov. 26:20). The land is frequently described as 'quiet' (שׁקט, not strictly 'silent') in reference to a state of peace and lack of war.

Genre

Words meaning 'be silent' appear in poetry far more often than in prose, with about 70% of references in poetic texts.[1030] This is certainly attributable to the poetic (and non-literal) use of the image of silence; it might also reflect the types of texts found in Hebrew Bible, or simply the fact that silence is rarely a topic of narrative texts.

[1030] 116/161, excluding proper names and those with uncertain meaning.

Chronology

The words in this study exhibit some chronological development, but not uniformly. אלם and חרשׁ come to be used more frequently for the physical disabilities of muteness and deafness in the DSS, while in biblical texts they tend to be used metaphorically or in reference to voluntary constraints. This may, however, be a reflection of textual genre more than chronology. דום/דמם and דמה become more common in later biblical texts, and also begin to blend meanings; דממה becomes more common in the DSS, where it also takes on new meanings. דמה in reference to destruction falls out of use in post-biblical Hebrew, perhaps because it had begun to overlap with דמם as a byform. Other verbs show changes in function: the interjection הס, for example, is treated as a verb in a later biblical text (Neh.) and a DSS (1QHodayot[a]), while חשׁה seems to shift from intransitive to transitive usage. שׁתק becomes far more common in post-biblical Hebrew, probably under the growing influence of Aramaic.

Grammar

The semantic field of silence is made up primarily of verbs, with just over 80% of references containing a verb (136/168); this percentage increases to 84% (178/211) when שׁקט is included. The reason for this predominance of verbs—as well as the wide variety of verbal options—seems to be related to the focus of the field on failure to perform or cessation of motion (rather than on absence of noise).

The nominal forms included in this study either indicate the inability to speak or hear (אלם/חרשׁ), or are forms of דום/דמם and דמה that seem to mean ‘rest’, ‘cessation’, or ‘stillness’. Even though some are translated as ‘silence’, they are often semantically obscure, leaving no noun with the clear meaning ‘silence’ in biblical Hebrew (though in later Hebrew nominal forms developed from שׁתק and דמם to mean ‘silence’). Although

this dearth of nominal forms could be an accident of textual preservation, it seems likely to reflect the semantic field and perceptions of speakers, perhaps indicating the lack of a concept of absolute silence.

Representation of the Semantic Field

As observed earlier, biblical Hebrew words for silence relate not only to communication, but also to action, motion, emotion, and life itself. Silence not only appears in a broad range of semantic domains, it is also a remarkably flexible image and can represent opposite ends of a spectrum, with both positive and negative connotations.

positive silence	**negative silence**
inaction (withholding judgement)	*inaction (inappropriate)*
listening	*inability to speak (constraint, disability)*
wisdom	*not being answered (i.e., ignored)*
secrecy (helpful)	*death, destruction*
reverence, worship	*sorrow, mourning*
calmness, rest, trust	*futility*
peace, security	*being disadvantaged*[1031]
patience, waiting	*being afraid*[1032]

Other seeming ‘opposites’ represented by silence along different ‘axes’ are:

restraint	*lack of initiation, a time before expected action*	cessation	*stopping activity, motion, commotion*
presence	*of peace, rest, security; of trust, reliance*	absence, lack	*of life, of sound, communication, of commotion, fear, strife, of required action*
choice	*self-constraint to not speak/hear*	constraint	*unable to speak/hear*
transitive	‘silence / destroy someone’	intransitive	‘be silent’

[1031] I.e., people who cannot speak for themselves, or whose voices are not heard (Prov. 31:8).
[1032] Fear makes one unable to speak; cf. Amos 6:10, 8:3.

Uses of silence can be organised according to different semantic realms, but there is some overlap between categories.

SEMANTIC REALM	**restraint**	**cessation**	**lack/absence**	**presence**
ACTION / MOTION (EXTERNAL RESPONSE)	not act, delay, hesitate	stop moving, become still	not doing what is expected	as rest, peace
SOUND	temporary physical limitation (e.g., mouth bound)		physical disabilities: deaf / mute	*what Elijah heard in the theophany?*
VERBAL COMMUNICATION	not speaking when expected to	stop talking; stop listening	lack of human communication (not speaking or listening); secretly	silence to listen; as validation of vow
EMOTION (INTERNAL RESPONSE)	restraint of anger	stop fretting	*lack* of judgement	reverence before God; peace, security
STATE / CONDITION	restraint of words = wisdom	cessation of life, destruction	lack of war	peace

Word meanings at the periphery are partially represented by the outermost circles of the diagram below.



Biblical Hebrew Words for Silence

The Hebrew words used for silence tend to overlap categories. Both חרשׁ and חשׁה can refer to not speaking or to not acting. Both tend to indicate restraint, while other words, such as דמם and הס, indicate cessation of speech. דמם and שׁתק can also indicate cessation of motion, commotion, or turbulence (emotional or physical). Niphal דמה, 'be destroyed', might not properly belong in this study, but is included because it began to overlap with דמם as a byform and was sometimes used to mean 'cease' (דמם was also influenced by דמה and sometimes used to mean 'be destroyed'). It is difficult to judge if the development of a byform relationship between דמם and דמה was encouraged by a perceived connection between death/destruction and being silenced (or even an association between the place of the dead and silence), or if instead that association developed *because* of their formal similarities; the former, however, seems more likely.

The following charts map the seven Hebrew roots in this study into the two domains of restraint and cessation.

Restraint	*from*
חרשׁ (Hiph.) אלם (Niph., adj./noun) חשׁה (Qal, Hiph.)	speaking
חרשׁ (adj./noun, some Qal)	hearing
חרשׁ (Hiph., some Qal) חשׁה (Qal, Hiph.)	acting

Cessation	*of*
דמם (Qal) שׁתק	motion, turbulence, speech
דמה (Qal)	tears, other action
דמם (Niph.) דמה (Niph.) דְּמָה, דוּמָה	life
דּוּמִיָּה	speech (?)[1033]
דֲּמִי	crying out (?)
דּוּמָם	speech, mobility
דְּמָמָה	turbulence, poss. speech
הס	speech
סכת	speech?

	Lack of	**Presence of**
שׁקט	action, worry, war	peace
דֲּמִיה/דּוּמִיָּה	respite (?)	rest, peace, trust

[1033] In the case of Ps. 39:3[2] only (נאלמתי דומיה).

Further Research

This study could be improved by further research that was not conducted for reasons of space constraints.

Versions

It would be interesting to analyse the versions individually to determine how they understood silence generally, and Hebrew words specifically, also to observe where and why they differ from the Hebrew text, and how many lexemes are used for these Hebrew roots.[1034] I would be especially interested to examine the Targum's use of שתק, which seems to translate the majority of biblical Hebrew words for silence, even when different roots are used in close proximity. A study focused on the widely varying LXX translations of דמם and דמה would also be worthwhile. There is not only apparent 'confusion' of דמה/רמה but also frequent translation with 'repent/be pricked', the source of which would be interesting to determine.[1035]

Periphery and Collocations

A closer examination of the periphery of the semantic field (see above) and of collocations (such as 'not answer') could help to provide a more detailed understanding of the lexemes chosen for this study, as much for their overlap as their difference.

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It would be beneficial to further survey references to silence in Akkadian and other ancient Near Eastern texts to find similarities in usage or overlap of semantic fields. This has been done in part by Korpel and de Moor in their *The Silence of God*, but it would also be desirable to do more generally with a view to understanding ancient conceptions of silence and how they differ from our own. It would be particularly interesting to find

[1034] I suspect it would be far fewer.
[1035] See the 'excursus' under דמם.

references to silence representing the lack of an expected action, for which I have found some evidence.[1036]

Comparative diachronic semantic developments

It would also be worthwhile to investigate the diachronic semantic development of words for physical disabilities in the ancient world. For example, do words related to muteness in other languages also derive from a verb meaning 'bind', as in Hebrew? Are there certain verbs that tend to develop meanings related to deafness, and if so, are they related to homonyms of חרשׁ?

Study of semantic parallels between languages can sometimes be more informative than the traditional comparison of formally cognate roots. It was noted, for example (under cognates of דמם), that words meaning 'close, cover' extended to mean 'be mute, silent' in a number of languages. Further comparisons of diachronic semantic developments in related cultural and linguistic milieus could lead to a better understanding of word development and meanings.

Although later Hebrew development of these words was not the focus of my study, it could be interesting to pursue from the point of view of semantic development, in addition to exegesis and textual reception. The later interpretation of key difficult verses (such as Lev. 10:3, 1 Kings 19:12, and Ezek 24:17), and the very different uses of דממה in the DSS and later *Merkavah* literature would be interesting to examine more fully.

Translation

Further questions for research relate to translation and questions of pragmatics: if 'be silent' in some cases means 'not act', or refers to restraint, should it be translated using

[1036] In *Enûma Eliš* I:114 an Akkadian verb for 'be silent' is used by the gods to criticise Tiamat for not acting in defence of her husband (Kämmerer and Metzler, *Das babylonische Weltschöpfungsepos Enûma Eliš*, 138).

what seems to be the intention or should the translation ‘be silent’ be kept for the poetic image?

Lexicography and byforms

Larger questions arising from this study relate to lexicography and byforms. It is often claimed in dictionaries that סכת and שׁקט are byforms, but there is little attempt to justify this. It would not be possible formally but could conceivably have happened after changes in pronunciation decreased the distinction between sibilants and emphatics. It would not account for the single usage of סכת, however, nor for its split lexicographic tradition. Further research could also be done on the potential byform relationship between דמם and דמה, which certainly seem to be originally separate roots that later merged as byforms. The process of byform formation and development, a study much larger than there was room for here, would be worth documenting in the hopes of identifying patterns and tendencies. Finally, my work on סכת has shown that an investigation into the history of Hebrew lexicography (tracing influences, sources, and decision-making) could be interesting and illuminating.

Application to Biblical Studies

The results of this study can be applied to lexicography and interpretation on a practical level by suggesting adjustments to specific word meanings. On a more theoretical level it can suggest changes in methodology related to how dictionary entries are made and presented and related to deciding between ‘literal’ vs. pragmatic translations.

I would propose adjusting dictionary entries for חרשׁ and חשׁה, for example, by adding a gloss such as ‘refrain from acting’. Modern readers cannot be expected to infer this meaning from the definition ‘be silent’ in all relevant texts, even though in some it is contextually obvious. I also question the inclusion in dictionaries of דום (for which there

is no proof), as well as the tendency to multiply roots for דמם. The definition of דמם as 'mourn' is uncertain, in my analysis, and its hypothetical nature should be indicated in dictionaries. I suggest דמם be defined as: 'cease, stop' (with a note that it can be applied to motion, turbulence, or speech), with a second definition 'be stunned into silence' or 'astonished'. I would also suggest changing entries for אלם that define it as 'silence' for Pss. 56, 58. This meaning makes little sense in these texts and is supplied based on past lexicons and inferences from the meaning of (the differently pointed) אלֵם as 'mute'. It might also be appropriate to adjust the meaning of שׁתק in biblical dictionaries from 'be silent' to 'be still, cease moving', which better fits the limited textual evidence. Although it is possible that שׁתק meant 'be silent' in biblical Hebrew, the textual evidence supports this definition only in Aramaic and later Hebrew. A final proposal would be to adjust the entry for סכת to include the possible meaning 'listen'.

Suggestions to improve the methodology of lexicography are perhaps overly idealistic and premature, being not yet tested by practice. Nonetheless, I make a few general observations on where dictionary entries are lacking and might be improved:

a. dictionaries usually give no indication of the degree of certainty of a meaning (except in very unclear cases); the relative certainty of a definition should be acknowledged and perhaps graded somehow;
b. dictionaries also usually do not indicate the source of a given definition (i.e., cognates, parallels, exegetical tradition, etc.), which would be helpful for reader understanding;
c. idiomatic (or non-literal) meanings should be included esp. when they fall outside the expected semantic range of the readers' language (i.e., English)

The findings of this thesis also bring to light questions on translation: if חרשׁ and חשׁה are defined as 'be silent' but used to mean 'not act as expected', should a translation reflect

what might be seen as the ‘literal’ meaning, or the pragmatic? In many cases the more pragmatic translation is chosen (for example, translations of דמם in Josh. 10:12 say the sun ‘stood still’ rather than ‘was silent’), but in others the more ‘literal’ translation is chosen (e.g., ‘be silent’ in Exod. 14:14), suggesting that translators might simply be unaware of the range of applications and potential domains of a word in its native semantic field. A greater symbiosis is therefore desirable between detailed semantic studies and lexicographical output.

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