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*Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 86, No. 4. (Dec., 1967), pp. 385-401.

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## SECOND MILLENNIUM ANTECEDENTS TO THE HEBREW 'ŌḂ

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IN 1961 Professor Maurice Vieyra first called to the attention of the scholarly world the existence of extrabiblical parallels in Hittite and Assyrian to the ritual pit called the **בֹּרַי** in the OT.<sup>1</sup> He explained that the ritual pit appearing in Hittite texts under the names *a-a-pí*, *ḫat-teššar*, *AŠRU* (literally, "place"), *TÚL*, and *BÛR(U)* served the purpose of providing a means of presenting sacrifices to the chthonic deities, who are known in these texts by the name of *karuileš šiuneš* or *kattereš šiuneš* ("former deities" and "infernal deities" respectively). He further adduced evidence for the existence of similar pits in early Roman,<sup>2</sup> Greek,<sup>3</sup> Assyrian,<sup>4</sup> and Sumerian<sup>5</sup> religion. The terms employed to designate these pits in the various languages are by no means all cognate to one another, but Vieyra was able to show that a large degree of probability exists for deriving the Sumerian, Assyrian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Hebrew terms from a common source.<sup>6</sup> The chart below illustrates the similarity in sound shared by these various terms:

Sumerian	<i>ab(.lál),</i> <sup>7</sup>
Hittite	<i>a-a-bi,</i> <sup>8</sup>
Ugaritic	<i>'eb,</i> <sup>9</sup>
Assyrian	<i>abu,</i> <sup>10</sup>
Hebrew	<i>'ôḂ (בֹּרַי).</i> <sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Les noms du 'mundus' en hittite et en assyrien et la pythonisse d'Endor," *Revue Hittite et Asiatique*, fasc. 69 (1961), pp. 47-55.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman *mundus* was such a pit, an official installation in Rome near the Comitia. See Vieyra, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Primarily the passage from *Odyssey* XI (see text 8), although reference is made by Vieyra (*ibid.*) to Guthrie, *The Greeks and their Gods*.

<sup>4</sup> Vieyra, *op. cit.*, p. 48; cf. *RA*, 51, pp. 100 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> A. Deimel, *Sumerisches Lexicon*, II, p. 326, sign entry 128:2.

<sup>8</sup> J. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Wörterbuch* (abbrev.: *HWb*), p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (abbrev.: *UT*), p. 358, entry 165; J. Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache* (abbrev.: *WUS*), pp. 2 (entry 8) and 20 (entry 188).

<sup>10</sup> W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (abbrev.: *AHw*), p. 62 supplemented by Vieyra, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (abbrev.: *BDB*), p. 15.

The present essay aims at supplementing Vieyra's study in the following areas: (1) exploring the possible explanations of the phonetic shapes assumed by this common vocable, (2) utilizing all of the relevant Hittite texts to outline the complete *modus operandi* for the *a-a-bi*, (3) and attempting to show how Vieyra's suggested interpretation of Hebrew אֵבֶן harmonizes with the OT usages.

Before one can posit any theory as to the manner in which the hypothetical common source word for the five technical terms listed above developed phonetically into each of the target languages one must seek to be positive as to the exact pronunciation of these five words themselves. In particular, the Hittite and Ugaritic terms require some comment. The difficulty posed by the Hittite spellings is the pronunciation required by the writing with initial double *a* (i. e., *a-a-*). There are three current phonetic interpretations of the cuneiform spelling *a-a*: (1) Friedrich in his *HWb*<sup>12</sup> "normalizes" these forms with *ā* (i. e., long *a*); (2) Landsberger reads them as *a'a*;<sup>13</sup> and Goetze<sup>14</sup> and von Soden<sup>15</sup> read them as *ay* or *ayy(a/i/u)*. Friedrich's interpretation is the least acceptable, although unfortunately most Hittitologists (perhaps hypnotized by the *HWb*) tend to follow his example in transcribing Hittite words with *a-a*. This interpretation fits neither Hittite nor Hurrian phonology which cannot be shown to have possessed a consistent means of marking vowel length orthographically. No attempt has ever been made to justify this interpretation of the *a-a* spellings by an appeal to Akkadian texts. I would not presume to criticize Landsberger's interpretation of the Assyriological evidence for *a-a*, but it has always seemed to me that the use of these spellings in Hittite texts cannot be understood as indicating glottal catch (aleph). No one has ever demonstrated that Hittite possessed a glottal catch phoneme, but the *y* phoneme is universally recognized. The normalization *\*ay(a)bi*, then, seems preferable to either *\*ābi* or *\*a'abi*. An additional advantage to this normalization will be seen next, as we consider the Ugaritic form.

The Ugaritic term which contains a linguistic counterpart to Hittite-Hurrian *\*ay(a)bi* is transcribed *ilib* in the *Ugaritic Textbook* of C. H. Gordon,<sup>16</sup> although the first and third signs of the word could equally well be transcribed 'e, since this sign can represent glottal catch followed by either the *i* or *e* vowel. Gordon does not discuss the matter of whether short *i* at Ugarit was ever pronounced *e*, but he does acknowledge that

<sup>12</sup> Page 26.

<sup>13</sup> B. Landsberger, "Einige unerkannt gebliebene oder verkannte Nomina des Akkadischen," *Die Welt des Orients*, 3 (1964), p. 48, n. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *JAOS*, 74 (1954), p. 187, and *JCS*, 18 (1964), p. 96, n. 33.

<sup>15</sup> See the list of examples from von Soden's *AHW* and *GAG* assembled by Landsberger in *Die Welt des Orients*, 3 (1964), p. 48, n. 4.

<sup>16</sup> See above in n. 9.

the *i*-containing aleph sign “can also imply the inherent vowels *e* . . and *ê* (reduced from \**ay*).”<sup>17</sup> We could, therefore, just as well transliterate *ilib* as *il'êb*. It would thus be possible to understand the second part of this word as deriving from \**ayb(i)*. As for the meaning of *ilib*, *UT* remarks as follows on *skn ilib*: “designates a religious stela of some sort.”<sup>18</sup> The term *ilib* also occurs as a god's name (*UT* 17:14; 2004:5). The following passage from the Aqhat Tale is fundamental for the interpretation of *ilib*.

UT: 2 Aqht I:26–29 (= *Corpus* 19 I:26–29):

<i>wykn . bnh bbt</i>	“(So) shall there be his son in the house,
<i>šrš . bqrb (27) hklh</i>	a scion in the midst of his palace
<i>nšb . skn . ilibh</i>	who erects the stela(e) of his <i>ilib</i> ,
<i>bqdš (28) ztr . ʿmh .</i>	in the holy place the <i>ztr</i> of his ancestor(s),
<i>larš . mššu . qtrh</i>	who from the ground causes his <i>qtr</i> to go forth,
(29) <i>lʿpr . dmr . atrh</i>	from the earth the <i>dmr</i> of his ‘place.’ ”

It is not my purpose here to attempt a thorough exegesis of this passage. But a few details might be noted. First, the *ilib* itself is not necessarily a stela or a “memorial monument.”<sup>19</sup> It is the *skn* which is erected (*nšb*). This *skn* is then described (or further defined) as the “*skn* of his *ilib*.” The above arrangement of lines must be retained against that proposed by Aistleitner-Eissfeldt in WUS<sup>1,20</sup> since only this arrangement allows the majority of the lines in the larger context to consist of three members each. Thus (contra WUS) *ztr ʿmh* is parallel to either *skn ilibh* or *ilibh* by itself, but not to *mššu qtrh*. Neither *UT* nor *WUS* propose a semitic cognate for *ztr*. Taking my clue from Vieyra, I would understand *ilib* (or \**il'eb*) as “spirit of/from the pit.” The term 'êb (from \**aybi*) designates the ritual pit or *mundus* (to use the Latin term) from which by means of sacrifices and spells one may elicit the spirit of the deceased. The use of *il* to designate the spirit of the deceased recalls the words of the witch of En-dor in I Sam 28 13–14 when describing the apparition of Samuel emerging from the ritual pit: “I see gods (or ‘a god’?) coming up out of the ground . . . an old man is coming up, and he

<sup>17</sup> *UT*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> See above in n. 9.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Gordon, *Evidence for the Minoan Language*, p. 7, commenting on Eteo-cypriote *i-li-po-ti*.

<sup>20</sup> Page 98, entry 890.

is wrapped in a robe." Some of the Hittite evidence is relevant here as well, since the word *a-a-bi* occurs sometimes with the DINGIR determinative, even when the impersonal pit itself is in view (KUB VII 41++ iii 13, 16, 17; KUB X 63 obv i 18, 20, 24; etc.). In addition a deity is known from KUB VII 41++ obv i 52, ii 19, and iii 33 whose name is spelled <sup>d</sup>*A-a-bi*. That he is actually a deity (personal) is shown by his grouping with others of the *karuileš šiuneš*, such as Aduntarri, Zulki, Erbitiga, Nara, Napšara, Minki, and Amunki, all of whom are Hurrian deities. It is thus likely that Ay(a)bi is Hurrian.

If Ugaritic *'ēb* is from original *\*ayb(i)*, then we must rule out Albright's thesis that original *\*ibu* (preserved in Ugaritic, according to him) became *\*ubu* in South Canaanite under the influence of the labial, and that this latter vocalization explains Hebrew אֹב.<sup>21</sup> The *o*-vowel in the Hebrew noun must be considered as a reflex of either a pure long *a*-vowel affected by the "Canaanite shift" or accented short *a* following the Phoenician pattern.<sup>22</sup> It will be best to approach the vocalization of אֹב through the neo-Assyrian form *abu*. For a discussion of the meaning of Assyrian *abu* see Vieyra.<sup>23</sup> Goetze has formulated the rule that Akkadian words with initial *aya* in Old Babylonian become first *ya* and then *a* in neo-Assyrian.<sup>24</sup> Hence Old Babylonian *\*ayabum* became first *\*yabu* and then *abu* during the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods. It would be impossible to derive Hebrew אֹב from the neo-Assyrian *abu*, however, since the Hebrew (rather South Canaanite) term together with its frequent associate יְדִיעִי is obviously quite old and goes back at least to the time of Saul. The term has to be old enough in Canaanite for there to have occurred the semantic development from "pit" to "spirit of the pit" to "spirit" by the end of the biblical period. The usage of such pits for necromancy (if the Aqhat passage is correctly interpreted) is at home on Canaanite soil since the late second millennium B. C. The term אֹב must, therefore, have derived from the Hurrians themselves, who were present in enclaves of non-Semitic peoples on South Palestinian soil since the Amarna Age. Among these people the original term *\*ayabi* had undergone the change to *\*ēb*. But the stages and rationale behind the transformation are not clear.

Vieyra assumes that the prototype of all the other terms was the Sumerian *ab*.<sup>25</sup> But if we accept Goetze's normalization of Hittite *a-a-bi* as *\*ay(a)bi* and my understanding of Ugaritic *ib* as *\*ēb* (from *\*ayb*), the derivation of a Hurrian *\*ay(a)bi* from Sumerian *ab* is phonetically

<sup>21</sup> *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, p. 203, n. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Z. S. Harris, *A Grammar of the Phoenician Language*, pp. 21 and 26.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>24</sup> *JAOS*, 74 (1954), p. 187, and *JCS*, 18 (1964), p. 96, n. 33. See also von Soden, *GAG*, par. 22d, and Gelb, *Bibl. Orientalis*, 12 (1955), p. 102a.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

impossible. In this writer's opinion, it is better either to consider all of these terms as *ursprachliches Residuum* of an old substratum term (I borrow this terminology and viewpoint from Professor Landsberger), or (if one of the extant languages *must* be the source) to accept the Hurrian \**ay(a)bi* as the prototype. In my opinion it is even doubtful that the Sumerian *ab* belongs in the same group with the other four terms.

In order to facilitate the second phase of this essay — namely, the elucidation of the *modus operandi* for the \**ay(a)bi* pits, as described in Hittite, Greek, Assyrian, and Hebrew texts (the Ugaritic has already been discussed above) — I should like to transliterate and translate the selection of source texts and mark them with numbers. This will enable me to refer to them later with utmost brevity and convenience.

1. Hittite: KUB XXIX 4 rev iv 31–36 (Relocation of Black Goddess; cf. Kronasser, *Die Umsiedlung der schwarzen Gottheit*, pp. 30–31).

- [*ma-a*]h-*ha-an-ma* I-NA UD.2.KAM *ne-ku-uz me-ḥur* MUL-aš *wa-at-ku-zi*  
 32 [nu]EN.SISKUR.SISKUR I-NA É.DINGIRLIM *ú-is-zi na-aš* DINGIRLIM-ni  
 UŠ-KE-EN  
 [nu I]T-TI DINGIRLIM GIBIL *ku-e* 2 GÍRHÁ *i-ya-an nu a-pé-e*  
 34 [*da-a*]n-*zi nu A-NA* DINGIRLIM PA-NI GIŠBANŠUR *a-a-pí pád-da-an-zi*  
 [*na-aš-t*]a 1 UDU A-NA DINGIRLIM *e-nu-ma-aš-ši-ya ši-pa-an-da-an-zi*  
 36 [*na-a*]n-*kán ha-at-te-eš-ni kat-ta-an-da ha-ad-da-an-zi*.  
 "When at night on the second day (of the ritual) a star leaps, the offerer comes to the temple and bows to the deity. The two daggers which were made along with the (statue of) the new deity they take, and (with them) dig a pit for the deity in front of the table. They offer one sheep to the deity for *enumaššiya* and slaughter it down in the pit."

2. Hittite: KUB XXIX 4 ii 3–8, 19–21 (Relocation of Black Goddess; *ibid.*, pp. 14–17).

- 1 TUGku-re-eš-šar BABBAR 1 *tar-pa-la-aš* SÍG ZA.GÍN 1 *tar-pa-la-aš* SÍG SAš  
 1 SÍGki-iš-re-eš  
 4 1-NU-TIM KUŠNÍG.BÀR 4.TA.ÁM ŠA-PU-Ū 2 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR ŠÀBA 1 GÍN  
 KÙ.BABBAR  
*a-a-pí-ti-i* 1 GÍN KÙ.BABBAR-ma *ga-an-ga-ta-at-ti* 10 NINDA.SIGMEŠ  
 6 2 NINDA*mu-u-la-ti-iš* ŠA ½ UP-NI 1 GA.KIN.AG TUR Ì.DÜG.GA *te-pu*  
 ½ UP-NI Ì.GIŠ ½ UP-NI LÁL 1½ UP-NI Ì.NUN 1 *wa-ak-šur* GEŠTIN  
 8 1 SILÁ *na-as-ma MÁŠ.TUR ki-i A-NA* SISKUR.SISKUR *zu-ur-ki-ya-aš da-an-zi*  
 19 . . . *na-aš-ta* <sup>U</sup>SANGA DINGIRLAM *a-a-pí-ta-az*  
 20 ša-ra-a 7-ŠU *ḥu-it-ti-ya-az-zi* EN.SISKUR.SISKUR-*ya-kán*  
 7-ŠU ša-ra-a *ḥu-it-ti-ya-az-zi*.

(Among the items to be used in the *zurkiyaš* offering are:) "one white, woman's headress; one substitute-image (*tarpašaš*) of blue wool; one substitute-image of red wool; one woolen glove(?); one set of curtains of quadruple thickness; two shekels of silver, of which one is for the *a-a-bi* and one is for the *gangatatti*; ten thin loaves; two *mulatiš*-loaves of ½ *upnu* (of flour); one small cheese; a little perfumed oil; ½ *upnu* of vegetable oil; ½ *upnu* of honey; 1½ *upnu*'s of butter; one *wakšur* of wine; and either a lamb or a kid: these (items) they take for the *zurkiyaš*-offering. . . .

(There follows a further listing of items for the *ambašši*-offering, and this ends the activities of the second day of the ritual. When my translation resumes, the activities of the third morning are in progress.) The priest draws up the deity seven times from the *a-a-bi*, and the offerer (likewise) draws him up seven times."

3. Hittite: KUB XV 31 obv ii 6–26 (Ritual for drawing paths for <sup>d</sup>MAḪMEŠ and <sup>d</sup>Gulšeš).

- 6 *na-aš-ta ma-aḫ-ḫa-an IŠ-TU 9 KASKAL aš-ša-nu-an-zi nu GIŠBANŠURHÁ[ša-r]a-a kar-pa-an-zi na-at a-a-pí-ya-aš pé-e-di pé-e-da-an-zi*  
 8 *a-a-pí-ya-aš-ma ut-tar DINGIRMEŠ-it ki-iš-ša-an a-ri-ya-u-en 7 a-a-pí ki-nu-wa-an-zi NU.SIG<sub>5</sub> nu 8 a-a-pí-ma ki-nu-an-zi SIG<sub>5</sub>*  
 10 *nu 9 a-a-pí ki-nu-an-zi na-aš ma-aḫ-ḫa-an a-a-pí-ya-as pé-e-di ar-nu-an-zi nu DINGIRMEŠ kat-ta ti-en-zi nu 9 a-a-pí ki-nu-an-zi*  
 12 *ḫu-u-da-a-ak-ma-za GIŠAL da-a-i nu pád-da-a-i EGIR-ŠU-MA-za TU-DI-IT-TUM da-a-i a-pé-e-ez pád-da-a-i EGIR-ŠU-MA-za*  
 14 *GIŠša-at-ta GIŠMAR GIŠḫu-u-up-pa-ra-an-na da-a-i nu-kán ša-ra-a li-i-ša-iz-zi nam-ma-kán GEŠTIN 1 an-da ši-pa-an-ti NINDA.SIGMEŠ-ma*  
 16 *pár-ši-ya na-at a-ra-aḫ-za-an-da ke-e-ez ke-e-ez-zi-ya da-a-i nam-ma-kán GIŠKUN<sub>5</sub> KÜ.BABBAR TU-DI-IT-TUM KÜ.BABBAR ḫa-an-te-ez-zi*  
 18 *a-a-pí-ti an-da da-a-i A-NA TU-DI-TUM-ma-kán ḫa-zi-zi KÜ.BABBAR an-da da-a-i na-at-kán ḫa-an-te-ez-zi a-a-pí-ti kat-ta-an-ta*  
 20 *ga-an-ki ḫa-zi-zi-ta-as-ma-as-sa-an ap-pé-ez-zi-az TÚGku-re-eš-šar ḫa-ma-an-kán nu ma-aḫ-ḫa-an zi-in-na-i nu 1 MUŠEN*  
 22 *ḫu-u-ma-an-da-a-aš e-nu-ma-aš-ši-ya it-kal-zi-ya ši-pa-an-ti nu 9 a-a-pí iš-ḫar-nu-ma-iz-zi nam-ma A-NA 9 a-a-pí-ti 9[MUŠENHÁ]*  
 24 *1 SILÁ-ya am-ba-aš-ši ke-el-di-ya-ya 9 MUŠEN 1 SILÁ-ya ši-pa-a[n-ti] nu ku-e-da-ni-ya A-NA 1 a-a-pí-ti 1 MUŠEN da-a-i SILÁ-ma-kán m[ar-kán-zi]*  
 26 *na-an ḫa-an-te-ez-zi a-a-pí-ti ti-an-zi.*

"When they furnish (it) with nine paths, they pick up the tables and take them to the place of the *a-a-bi*. This is the way in which we determined the matter (place and number?) of the *a-a-bi* by the gods: they open up seven *a-a-bi*'s. (Result:) Unfavorable. Then eight *a-a-bi*'s they open up. (Result:) Favorable. Then nine *a-a-bi*'s they open up. When they bring them (images) to the place of the *a-a-bi*, they put the gods down and open up the nine *a-a-bi*'s. Quickly he takes a hoe and digs. Next he takes a pectoral ornament and digs with that. Then he takes a *šatta*, a shovel, and a *hupparaš*-vessel, and gathers up (the loose soil?). Then he pours in(to the pits) wine and oil. He breaks up "thin loaves" and puts them around (the mouths of the pits) on this side and that side. Next he puts down into the first *a-a-bi* a silver ladder and a silver pectoral ornament. On the pectoral he places a silver ear and hangs them down into the first *a-a-bi*. To the last of the ears a *kureššar*-headdress is bound. When he finishes, he offers one bird to all for *enumašši* and *iikalzi*. He smears the nine *a-a-bi*'s with blood. Then for the nine *a-a-bi*'s (there are) nine birds and one lamb. For *ambašši* and *keldi* he offers nine birds and one lamb. He puts one bird in each *a-a-bi*, but the lamb they cut up and put it at the first *a-a-bi*."

4. KBo XI 14 iii 28–31 (Incantation by Ḫantitaššu of Ḫurma).

- 28 *nu ka-ru-ú-li-uš DINGIRMEŠ-uš ú-wa-te [. . . ] a-pí-ya da-an-zi nu-za pa-a-an-du a-pí-[ti? an-da]*  
 30 *ták-na-aš dUTU-un mu-ki-iš-kán-du nu-w[a- . . . ] ku-ú DÜ-nu-un na-an-mu DINGIRMEŠ EG[IR-pa la-a-an-du].*

"They bring (the images of) the former deities. They take . . . there. Let them go,

and in the *a-a-bi* let them plead with the sun-god of the netherworld, so that whatever (crime) I have done let the gods forgive it to me!"

5. Hittite: KUB X 63 obv i 17–28 (Winter Festival for Ishtar of Niniveh).

- na-aš-ta* SAL.LUGAL *pa-ra-a ú-iz-zi nu-kán* LÚHAL  
 18 *A-NA PA-NI* dX *ma-ra-ap-ši da-a-pí-in ki-nu-zi*  
*na-aš-ta* LÚAZU 1 UDU *A-NA* dX *ma-ra-ap-ši ši-pa-an-ti*  
 20 *na-an-kán* LÚAZU *A-NA* *da-a-pí kat-ta-an-da ha-ad-da-a-i*  
*nu-kán e-eš-ḥar A-NA* GAL *kat-ta tar-na-i na-at ták-ni-i*  
 22 *A-NA PA-NI* dX *ma-ra-ap-ši da-a-i nu-kán* LÚAZU  
*A-NA* UZUNÍG.GIG UZUŠÁ *ḥu-u-i-šu nu te-pu ku-er-zi*  
 24 *e-eš-ḥar-ra te-pu da-a-i na-at-kán da-a-pí*  
*kat-ta-an-da da-a-i*  
 26 *na-aš-ta* *da-a-pí-in še-er IŠ-TU NINDA.KUR<sub>4</sub>.RA iš-ta(!)-a-pí*  
 UDU-*ma-kán pa-ra-a pé-e-da-an-zi*  
 28 *na-an-kán LÚMEŠ EN.DINGIRMEŠ mar-kán-zi.*

"The queen comes forth, and the diviner opens up an *a-a-bi* before the storm-god of *marapši*. The diviner offers one sheep to the storm-god of *marapši*, and down inside the *a-a-bi* the diviner slaughters it. The blood he lets flow down into a goblet, which he places on the ground before the storm-god of *marapši*. Next the diviner (proceeds) to raw intestines and heart (of the sacrifice) and cuts off a little. He takes also a little blood and puts it down into the *a-a-bi*. Then at the top he stops up the *a-a-bi* with 'thick bread.' The sheep they carry forth, and the temple servants cut it up."

6. Hittite: KUB VII 41++ , iii 13–20 (Incantation of Infernal Deities; cf. Otten, *ZANF* 20, 1961, p. 130 f.).

- nu PA-NI* dA.NUN.NA.GE<sub>4</sub> *da-a-pí-in GÍR-it ki-nu-zi*  
 14 *nu-kán* Ì LÁL GEŠTIN *wa-al-ḥi mar-nu-wa-an-na a-pí* (var.: *da-a-pí*)  
*an-da BAL-an-ti 1 GÍN KÛ.BABBAR-ya-kán an-da pé-eš-ši-ya-zi*  
 16 1 GAD ŠA QA-TI *da-a-i nu-kán da-a-pí-in še-er*  
*ka-ri-ya-zi nu kiš-an me-ma-i da-a-pí pár-ku-nu-ma-aš-za*  
 18 GİŠŠÚ.A *da-a nu-za-kán IGI-an-da pár-ku-nu-ma-aš KINTI a-ú*  
*na-aš-ta KÛ.BABBAR GUŠKIN AN.BAR AN.NA NA<sub>4</sub>ZA.GÌN NA<sub>4</sub>GUG*  
 20 *IŠ-TU GİŠNUNUZ ZI.BA.NA IGI-an-da a-ú.*

"Then before the Anunnaki-deities he opens up an *a-a-bi* with a knife and pours down into the *a-a-bi* oil, honey, wine, *walḥi*-drink, and *marnuwan*-drink. He throws in one shekel of silver. Then he takes a napkin (cloth for the hands) and covers up the *a-a-bi* on top, and says: 'Oh *A-a-bi*! Take the stool of purification and examine the materials for the purification (-ritual)! Among these (materials) examine the silver, gold, iron, tin, lapis lazuli, and carnelian by means of (your) balance!'"

7. Hittite: KBo II 9 iv 9–16 (Ritual and Prayer to Ishtar of Niniveh).

- na-a[š-ta] LÚHAL an-da a-pé-e-pát INIMMEŠ me-ma-i na-an-kán GIM-an*  
 10 *IŠ-TU NINDA.K[UR<sub>4</sub>.R]A? SUD-an-zi nam-ma-kán DUGKU-KU <-UB> A-ni-it*  
*šu-un-na-an-zi*  
*nam-ma a-pé-da-ni pé-di a-pé-e* (corr.: *a-a-pí*!) *ki-nu-wa-an-zi na-aš LÚHAL*  
 DINGIRLUM



12 *IŠ-TU NINDA* *ḥa-az-zi-zi-ta-za a-pí-ya ša-ra-a 7-ŠU SUD-an-zi*  
*nu me-ma-a-i ma-a-an LUGAL SAL.LUGAL DUMUMEŠ LUGAL-ya [k]u-iš-ki*  
*ku-ù-ki*

14 *i-ya-an ḥar-zi na-aš ḥa-ri-i-ya-an ḥar-zi na-aš-kán ka-a-ša*  
*ták-na-az SUD-an-na-ah-ki nam-ma-aš-{\aš}-ša-an ud-da-a-ar pa-ra-a*

16 *QA-TAM-MA me-ma-i nu a-pé-da-ni-pál pé-di kiš-an i-ya-an-zi.*

"The diviner says these words, and when they draw him/her/it with 'thick bread,' they fill a *kukūbu*-vessel with water besides. Then in that place they open up *a-a-bi*'s (text has misspelling: *a-pé-e*), and the diviner with ear-shaped loaves (alt. reading: with four ears) draws the deity up from thence seven times, and says: 'If anyone — king, queen (or) princes — has done something and has buried it, I am now drawing it forth from the ground.' Then he proceeds to speak other words of similar import, and they perform this action just so in that place."

8. Greek: *Odyssey* XI, 23–29, 34–43. (Reproducing of Greek text dispensed with because of the easy general access to editions of the *Odyssey* by the readers.)

"Here Perimedes and Eurylochus held the victims, while I drew my sharp sword from beside my thigh and dug a pit (*βόθρος*) of a cubit's length this way and that, and around it I poured a libation to all the dead, first with honeyed milk (*μελικρητορον*), thereafter with sweet wine (*ῥόδῳς οἶνος*), and in the third place with water, and I sprinkled thereon white barley meal (*ἀλφίτα λευκά*). And I earnestly entreated the powerless heads of the dead, vowing that . . . But when with vows and prayers I had made supplication to the tribes of the dead (*ἔθνεα νεκρῶν*), I took the sheep and cut their throats over the pit, and the dark blood ran forth. Then there gathered from out of Erebus the spirits of those that are dead . . . These came thronging in crowds about the pit from every side, with a wondrous cry (*θεσπεσίῃ λαχῇ*); and pale fear seized me."

9. Assyrian: KAR 146; Assyrian royal ritual. (Only a synopsis of the proceedings is given here with citations of selected passages.)

After making food offerings to the Lisikutu deities and singing a hymn, the *nāru*-singer takes the food offerings and drops them into the *abu* (*ina libbi abi ikarrar*) and pours on top of them honey, oil, beer, and wine. Then the *nāru* fills up the pit (*LÚnāru abu umalla*), and the king places his foot on top of the pit. Next the king bends down and kisses the ground and then goes straight back to the palace. In a variant version the king goes from the pit to the *akūtu*-house. On the basis of this and parallel passages Vieyra has shown that von Soden's *AHW* entries on *apu* must be revised to: *apu* (I) "Röhrlicht," and *apu* (II) "Loch."

10. Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh = Akkadian version, Tabl. XII, 83–84.

"Scarcely had he (Nergal) opened a hole (Sum. *ab-lāl-kur-ri*; Akkad. *taqqab eršetī*) in the earth, when the spirit (Akkad. *utukku*) of Enkidu, like a wind-puff (Akkad. *zaqīqi*), issued forth from the netherworld."

Based upon a comparison of the above ten passages concerning the use of ritual pits for the consultation with or veneration of the dead and the infernal deities, along with the passages from the Hebrew Bible, the following remarks can be made as to the *modus operandi*:

1) The time of day at which the sacrifices were made and the spirits sought was a matter of considerable importance. Guthrie<sup>26</sup> tells us that a principal difference between the sacrifices made to the Olympian deities and the *chthonioi* was that, whereas the former were performed in the bright morning sunshine, the latter were carried out in the dead of night. In text 1 the protocol specifies that the ritual is to be performed at night (*nekuz mehur*) under the stars. We are not informed in the Gilgamesh Epic passage (text 10) what time of day it was when Nergal opened up the pit for the return of Enkidu's spirit. In text 2 the priest draws the deity up from the *a-a-bi* early in the morning (*man lukkatta*, ii 14) before the sun had arisen sufficiently to disperse the grey. In text 8 there is no particular need to specify time of day, since Odysseus is in the land of the sun's setting, where flows Oceanus which bounds the earth and where is the land of the Cimmerians, wrapt in mist and cloud. "Never does the bright sun look down on them with its rays either when it mounts the starry heaven or when it turns again to earth from heaven, but baneful night is spread over wretched mortals" (*Odyssey* XI, 15-19). In this regard it is quite significant that in I Sam 28 s we are told that Saul came to the witch of En-dor *at night* (נָחַלַיִם). It must be admitted that the king did not wish to be conspicuous at the time of this visit. But the disguise which he wore would have been sufficient by itself, had not other factors favored a nocturnal interview. These factors are the very same which dictated that the Hittite rituals be carried out at night and that the *chthonioi* be worshiped at night.

2) Before the sacrificial pit could be dug, the practitioner had to determine a propitious spot. The value of propitious spots for acts of sorcery is, of course, clearly demonstrated (in the OT) in the Balaam narrative. Like the Mesopotamian *bārû* or Sumerian *azu*, Balaam had to make several attempts to find just the right location in order to insure the success of his execrations (Num 23 1-2, 13-14, 27-30). The Hittite text 3 informs us that even the number of the pits to be dug was subject to the will of the deity as manifested in oracle responses. In some cases, if the spirit sought were a deceased mortal, the most propitious location for the orifice might be near his grave. The tombs at Ras Shamra which have small tunnels connecting the crypts with the surface of the ground are probably related to this practice.<sup>27</sup> Unrelated to sacrificial pits but manifesting the same general concept is the hole in the lid of the gigantic sarcophagus of Ashurnasirpal II.<sup>28</sup> Similar "vents" were a standard feature in the funerary monuments of the Egyptian pharaohs. One cannot be positive, but there is a possibility that the *bqdš* of 2 Aqht I:27 ("who erects the stela(e) of his *ilib*, in the holy place the *ztr* of his

<sup>26</sup> *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 222.

<sup>27</sup> Vieyra, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> E. A. Speiser in *ANET*, p. 98, n. 253.

ancestor”) refers to the sacred spot selected for the ritual pit, hard by a stela to mark it. And just as Vieyra has shown that the Akkadogram *ašru* (“place”) indicates the ritual pit in Hittite texts on occasion, so in the same Aqhat text the revenant (called *qlr* “smokelike apparition” in line 28) is designated as *dmr atrh* (“guardian of his ‘place’”) in line 29. This spirit is evoked “from the ground” (*larš* and *l<sup>c</sup>pr*). No mention is made in I Samuel 28 of the witch’s activities in locating a proper spot for the pit. But since, as we shall soon see, the pits were sealed with sacrificial loaves or covered with cloths so that they might subsequently be re-used, it is not impossible that this woman lived in the vicinity of such a propitious spot which she had many an occasion to use for her clients. This might also explain the expression *בַּעֲלַת־אֹיִב* (“she who possesses an *אֹיִב*”) as the designation of the woman — that is, she alone had access to this particular sacred orifice.

3) The pit could be dug with any appropriate instrument. In Hittite text 3 a hoe (Sumerian *al*) is employed first, followed by the use of a silver pectoral ornament (Akkadian *tudittum*). In text 1, on the other hand, two specially prepared daggers (Sumerian *g<sup>l</sup>r*) are used to open the pit, as is also the case in text 6. The latter instances are of interest, because it is a sword which Odysseus uses to open his pit in text 8. The use of the sword, the daggers, and the pectoral as variants to the more prosaic hoe must point to some underlying symbolism which was important to the effectiveness of the rite. Just what that symbolism is (though transparent to the ancients themselves) must remain a matter of opinion and debate to the modern scholar.

4) Into the pit food offerings were lowered. An alternative (occasionally supplementary) practice was to arrange them around the mouth of the pit(s), presumably to entice the spirits up out of the pit to eat and drink. Such enticements were not always confined in their usage to the *chthonioi* or even to the pits. In Hittite rituals of the evocatio type (for a representative ritual in English translation see A. Goetze in *ANET*, pp. 351–53) such appealing foodstuffs were a principal means of luring the absent gods back to their temples. In the *Odyssey* passage (text 8) in addition to the libations of honeyed milk, wine, and water, a food offering of white barley meal was poured into the pit. The Hittite passages show that loaves of bread, cheese, butter, and GA.KU7 (usually translated “sweet milk,” but perhaps “honeyed milk” like the *Odyssey*’s *μελικρητον* in this context) accompanied the libations. The late Assyrian ritual mentions “food offerings” but fails to specify the items.

5) There is general unanimity among the various texts as to the liquids used for libation. The *Odyssey* mentions honeyed milk, sweet wine, and water. The Hittite texts include sweet (honeyed?) milk, oil, honey, wine, and beer. The Assyrian ritual names honey, beer, and wine. The conspicuous place which honey occupies in these rituals is note-

worthy, especially since in early Hebrew ritual law worshipers were forbidden to mix honey with any of their offerings to God (Lev 2 11).

6) But the beverage which these denizens of the underworld craved more than honey, beer, and wine was the blood of sacrificial animals. In the *Odyssey* the offerer cuts the sheep's throat over the pit and allows the blood to run down into the hole. The Hittite rituals reveal three distinct ways of handling the blood. In text 1 it is allowed to run down into the pit in the same fashion as the *Odyssey* passage (text 8). The sacrificial animal is actually lowered into the pit before its throat is cut.<sup>29</sup> In text 3 the blood is spattered around the mouth of the pit(s) in order to lure the spirits up. In text 5 the clearest evidence appears that the blood was regarded as a beverage for the deity or spirit. The sheep's blood is drained off into a goblet which is then placed on the ground before the cult image of the deity. In *Odyssey* XI, 48–50, 140–154 we are informed that all of the spirits in Hades which come up from the pits wish to drink of the sacrificial blood and that only when they have so drunk can they recognize the loved one who has solicited their appearance. Thus even Odysseus' own mother does not recognize him until she has drunk from the blood which he has with him. The OT passages concerned with כֹּחַ do not make reference to the spirits drinking the blood of sacrifices, although this is not an unreasonable assumption.

7) Other gifts not intended as food were also lowered into the pit. Substitute images made of colored wool, women's headdress, woolen gloves, silver models of the human ear, silver pectoral ornaments, and even a shekel of lump silver are dropped or hung down into the pits. The choice of silver rather than gold, copper, tin, lead, or iron as the metal out of which gifts to the *chthonioi* are fashioned is evident in all of the texts. One can only suppose that popular superstition dictated this metal as the only proper one, just as in European superstition from a much later period a silver knife or a silver bullet were the only kinds effective in the slaying of werewolves and other monstrous creatures of popular fantasy.

8) The object of the ritual was to lure the spirit or deity up out of the pit. The Hittite rituals do not specify the exact reasons for bringing the deities up. The passage from the *Gilgamesh* Epic cited as text 10 is followed by the record of an interview between the spirit of Enkidu and the god Nergal. "They embraced and kissed each other. They exchanged counsel, sighing at each other: 'Tell me, my friend, tell me, my friend, tell me the order of the nether world which thou hast seen' " (*Gilgamesh*, Tabl. XII, 85–88; translation of Speiser in *ANET*, p. 98). It has long been believed in OT circles that the significance of the term

<sup>29</sup> Compare Guthrie's remarks about the sacrifices to the *chthonioi* in *The Greeks and their Gods*, p. 221.

יָדַעְנִי, if it does not refer to the skill or knowledge of the black arts manifested by the practitioner, refers to the knowledgeable spirits of the underworld. Certainly Saul's declared reason for seeking an interview with Samuel's ghost is information (I Sam 28 15). Several centuries later Isaiah mocked such practitioners in words which must have been proverbial among the prophets of God who had been attacking this unorthodox rite for over a century: "Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa 8 19). The prophets also (though in mocking tone) accurately reflect the use of ritual pits in the ground for bringing up the ghosts with words such as these: "Then deep from the earth you shall speak, from low in the dust your words shall come; your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust" (Isa 29 4). Hittite text 2 makes it clear that both the practitioner and the client acted to bring the deity up. It is possible that in text 2 something very concrete is in view, namely, the hauling up of the cult statue from the pit, but it cannot be denied that such analogic forms were intended to solicit the presence of the living deity as well. The bait which was used to lure the deities or spirits up was the sacrificial blood and other food offerings. But other implements are also mentioned. In text 7 there is a slight problem in the reading of line 12. The deity is drawn up seven times with <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥazzizi-*zitaza*. The form is an ablative of the noun ḥazzizi(*ta*)- which in turn is a loan into Hittite via Hurrian from Akkadian ḥasīsu "understanding; ear" (*CAD H*, p. 126; *AHw*, p. 330). On the basis of this passage (including lines 18 and 23 as well) both the *CAD* (sub ḥasistū with erroneous reference to KBo II 8 ii 12 and 13!) and the *AHw* (sub ḥasīsūtu with omission of line 12) assume that an original Akkadian bread name has either been loaned via Hurrian into Hittite (*CAD*), or is used in Hittite texts as an Akkadogram (so apparently *AHw*). Yet (as E. Laroche has confided in me in personal correspondence) on the basis of this text alone there is reason to doubt the reading <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥazzizita(*za*) and to consider as equally plausible 4 ḥazzizita(*za*), since the GAR sign in cuneiform can be the numeral 4 as well as the NINDA determinative. Happily the existence of <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥazzizi(*ta*) no longer rests entirely upon this passage, since the publication of the building ritual KBo XV 24, where the following evidence is found: (1) ḥa-zi-zi ŠA NINDA i-ya-an, "ear(s) of bread (are) made" (iii 3), (2) 10 <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥa-zi-zi (with numeral before the NINDA sign!) is mentioned in iii 6, (3) 1 <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥa-zi-zi can be restored for iii 29, 32, and 35. In view of this confirmatory evidence, it is unnecessary any longer to doubt the reading <sup>NINDA</sup>ḥazzizita(*za*) in KBo II 9 iv 12, 18 and 23 (our passage). It appears then that ear-shaped loaves were used (text 7) to draw up the deity. The choice of an ear-shaped loaf is paralleled by the silver ear suspended from the pectoral ornament in text 3. Perhaps this symbolizes the willingness (eagerness)

of the offerer to hear from the deity or spirit and the desire of the offerer that the netherworld will hear his supplication. Compare the passage from the prayer to the sun goddess of the netherworld (KBo VII 28 i 11-13): "Incline your good eyes, lift up your thousand eyelids and gaze benevolently upon the king. Incline your ears and hear his good word(s)." Another quaint feature of one of the Hittite texts (3) is the mention of a silver ladder which was lowered into the pit. The size of the ladder is not stated, so that we do not know whether it is a mere model or a full-size ladder which was propped up against the wall of the pit to aid the deity in his ascent. The material (silver) perhaps favors the assumption that the ladder was only a model. Yet, as in the case of the model ears, it is the symbolism which is vital, and here there can certainly be no room for difference of opinion as to the meaning of the symbolism! As the ear communicates the desire of the offerer(s) for a "hearing" with the deity, so the ladder communicates an invitation to come up and out of the pit. This tantalizing bit of information provides a basis for a profitable comparison with the famous ladder which Jacob saw in his dream at Bethel (Gen 28 10-17). In this dream the patriarch saw a ladder (סֶלֶם) set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. "And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it" (Gen 28 12-13). When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it. . . . How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!" (Gen 28 16-17). Bethel was an awesome place, because (like the locations of the *a-a-bi*/אֵיב) it was one of the few spots known where intercommunication from one level of the three-storied cosmos to the others was possible. As deities might use a ladder to ascend from the netherworld to the surface of the earth, so might angels use a ladder to go back and forth from earth to heaven! We must not be misled by modern rationalistic considerations into discarding this ancient image for a ziggurat stairway, simply because it would be easier for angels to pass each other going up and down on a stairway than on a ladder! If this type of rationalization is pursued to its logical conclusion, there would be no need for a ladder or stairway at all! For why would angels need one? I stress this point, because the late Professor E. A. Speiser, a truly gifted Orientalist, argued for interpreting Genesis 28 in this fashion in his stimulating commentary on Genesis in the *Anchor Bible* (pp. 218-20), and has thus popularized this interpretation.<sup>30</sup> His

<sup>30</sup> Nor can Speiser's etymological analysis of Hebrew סֶלֶם on p. 218 of *Genesis* as derived from the root סָלַל go unchallenged, even if this analysis is shared by *BDB*, p. 700b and Gesenius-Buhl, *HAT*, p. 545b. None of these older Hebrew dictionaries could be expected to know of the Akkadian cognate *similtu*, though Speiser might have been expected to. Since we are confronted with an obvious case of metathesis, but cannot with certainty say which form is the more primitive, it stands to reason that

interpretation, in my opinion, is invalid even if consideration is given only to the OT passage itself. The ziggurat stairways were used by priests ascending to the summit, where worship was carried out. The deities did not use them to descend to the ground level. On the other hand, the symbolism of text 3 makes it quite clear that the deity or deities invoked from the netherworld were intended to ascend via the ladder to the upper world.

9) When the deity or spirit finally appeared, what were its sensory manifestations? The *Odyssey* passage gives the distinct impression that the form was clearly anthropomorphic and recognizable to the living loved one. Odysseus recognizes his mother and his old friends when he sees them. The *Odyssey* passage also mentions "crowds" (οἱ πολλοί) and "nations" (ἔθνεα) of the dead which throng the sacrifices. In the Gilgamesh Epic (text 10) Enkidu's spirit is called a *zaqīqu* "a phantom, or gust of wind." The *CAD* rejects the translation "wind" for *zaqīqu* and points out that the term is always used of ghostly phenomena of a supernatural nature. The word accordingly denotes something very close to our modern Western image of a specter. The appearance of Samuel to the woman of En-dor was clearly a terrifying sight. When she first saw him, she emitted a shriek, And when Saul had succeeded in calming her and asked her to describe what she had seen, she said: "I see gods (perhaps 'a god' here) coming up out of the earth . . . An old man is coming up and he is wrapped in a robe" (I Sam 28 13-14). The returned spirit is able to communicate to the client, but in a voice which is both eerie and supernatural. Enkidu's first words are described as "sighing" (Akkadian *anāhu*).<sup>31</sup> The spirits which throng the pit of Odysseus utter a "supernatural cry" (θεσπεσίη λαχῆ). Isaiah describes their utterances by the Hebrew participle מְשַׁחֲמֵחִים, which elsewhere is employed only for describing the sounds made by birds (8 19, 29 4).<sup>32</sup> To judge from the prophet's words, the practitioners in Judah elicited sounds from the open pit itself, since he says, "Your voice shall come from the ground like the voice of a ghost, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust" (29 4). It seems that one of the standard features of cultic activity directed toward the dead was the whisper. Other Hittite rituals which belong to the *genre* of texts called *Totenrituale* ("funerary rituals") frequently mention the whispering of the priests (the verb is *huštešk-*, on which see H. Otten, *Hethitische Totenrituale*, p. 148 with references).

10) Finally, it was necessary after the spirit had returned to the netherworld to seal up the hole. Perhaps it was a precautionary measure to insure that the spirits might not be allowed to roam the upper world indiscriminately. In the Gilgamesh Epic, when Shamash at first is

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we cannot be permitted to treat the *m*, which in the Hebrew form is final, as a formative element.

<sup>31</sup> E. A. Speiser in *ANET*, p. 98, n. 255.

<sup>32</sup> *BDB*, p. 861b.

reluctant to grant Ishtar's request to release the bull of heaven on Enkidu and Gilgamesh, the goddess threatens to "smash the doors of the netherworld and raise up the dead eating and alive, so that the dead will outnumber the living" (Tabl. VI, 96 ff.). All sorts of harmful forces from the netherworld might be released upon mankind if the points of exit were not properly guarded and sealed off. In a few Hittite texts we are given a glimpse of the netherworld as a place in which bronze cauldrons are set with lids of lead. Into these cauldrons are banished all sorts of evils which are then kept in by the lead lids.<sup>33</sup> What would be the plight of mankind if these evils were ever released from their underworld "Pandora's box"? In the neo-Assyrian ritual (text 9) the *nāru*-singer refills the pit, apparently with loose soil. In the Hittite text 5 the pit is sealed at the top with loaves of sacrificial bread, and in Hittite text 6 it is covered with a cloth, a fragile but apparently effective lid!

11) W. K. C. Guthrie<sup>34</sup> has assembled a short list of contrasts between the *modus operandi* for the worship of the *chthonioi* and that of the Olympians. It will be profitable for us to compare this material with what we have learned from these oriental texts. (1) "Name for the act of sacrifice: *θύειν* for the Olympians, *ἐναγίζειν* for the chthonians." There is no specialized term in Hittite texts for sacrifice to the *kattereš* *šiuueš* vs. the gods of heaven. Nor is this apparently the case in the Hebrew, Ugaritic, or Akkadian texts either. (2) "Method: animal killed with throat upward for Olympians, downward for chthonians (so that blood may most easily soak into the earth)." The Hittite texts make no overt mention of the position of the animal's throat, although (as we noted above) the animal itself was on occasions lowered into the pit before cutting its throat, so that the blood might flow into the ground. (3) "Type of altar: for Olympians the high-built *βωμός*, for the chthonians a low altar called *ἑσχάρα* (hearth), or else no altar at all, but the sacrifice performed into a pit or trench (*βόθρος*)." Here the parallel is most obvious, since the use of the *בִּינִי*, *a-a-bi*, or *abu* is found throughout the Near East and Asia Minor. The high-built altar, used for astral deities was called the *בִּינִי* in Hebrew, *ištananaš* in Hittite, *manzāzu* in Akkadian. (4) "Choice of victim: (a) Colour — for Olympians white, for chthonians black. . . (b) Species. The ram is the usual offering to the chthonians, also the pig, which had particular associations with sacrifices of expiations and purification. . . The ox which was commonly offered to the Olympians was absent. It may be added that as well as animal victims 'bloodless offerings,' e. g. of honey or the fruits of the earth, were commonly made to the powers of the earth." As to color,

<sup>33</sup> First version of Telepinu Myth, A iv 15 ff. (*RHA* f. 77, pp. 96 f.), and Disappearance of *ḏMAḤ*, A ii 5 ff. (*RHA* f. 77, pp. 138 f.). A discussion of these two passages and their relevance to the correlation of Hittite *tarpiš* with Hebrew תַּרְפִּים will be found in (forthcoming) *JNES*, 27 (1968).

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 221 f.



the same distinction between white animals for astral deities and black ones for *chthonioi* is made rather consistently in the Hittite texts. Thus, when the Hurrian hero of the Hittite Appu myth wishes to take an offering to the sun god of heaven, he brings a "white lamb" (KUB XXIV 8+, i 38–40). When, on the other hand, in the ritual of Pupu-wanni (KUB VII 2+, i 19–21) the sacrificer wishes to appeal to the powers of the nether regions (*dankuiš daganzipaš*, line 23), he selects a time before sunrise (*lukkatta* <sup>a</sup>UTU-*uš-kan nawi uizzi*, line 19) and assembles the following items for sacrifice and offering: "five loaves of sacrificial bread weighing a *tarnaš* each, vessels of beer, one black puppy, one black lamb, one black kid" (lines 20–21). Color specifications are absent from the ritual laws regarding lambs, kids, goats, sheep and oxen in the OT with the exception of the red heifer of Numbers 19. In the Mycenaean tablets offering lists reveal no color specifications for animal sacrifices, but do specific sex.<sup>35</sup> Even in the tablets discussed by Ventris and Chadwick in ch. 7 and not considered to be offering lists there is no apparent notation of color for the animals, although sex and other matters are clearly noted.<sup>36</sup> The distinction that female animals should be given to goddesses and male ones to gods does seem to be observed also in the Hittite offering lists and ritual texts. Thus in KUB XXIX 1 rev iii 22–23 when the builders have laid the foundation stones of the new palace, they sacrifice a bull to the storm god and a cow to the sun goddess of Arinna; and in KUB XXIX 7 rev 58 the animal sacrifice for the queen is a ewe, while that of the king is a bull. Because Israel's monotheism was male-oriented, the male animals were more valuable for sacrifice, even though any herdsman knows that it is easier to part with excess male animals than with the females, which are valuable for breeding. As to the species of the animal, Hittite texts reveal that, like the Greeks, the Hittites considered the pig to be an animal particularly appropriate as a sacrifice to the infernal powers.<sup>37</sup> In this category the Hittites also placed the dog.<sup>38</sup> We have already seen above that honey and the fruits of the earth were in fact also dropped into the ritual pits.

Guthrie also adds contrasts as to type of shrine, time of day, and the gesture in prayer, but we have already commented on these matters in the earlier parts of the study.

In summation, let me focus all of this collateral information upon the new understanding of the OT אֹבֹב. We are indebted to Vieyra for bringing to our attention the Hittite, Ugaritic, Assyrian, and Sumerian parallels to the Hebrew אֹבֹב. He sought to show that the אֹבֹב was (like the *a-a-bi*)

<sup>35</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, ch. 9.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, ch. 7.

<sup>37</sup> E. von Schuler, *Die Kaskäer*, p. 77 with n. 80.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; also A. Goetze, *Kleinasien*<sup>2</sup>, p. 164.

a ritual pit for communication with the netherworld. He also proposed that Hebrew **אֹב**, Ugaritic *ib*, Assyrian *abu*, and Hurro-Hittite *a-a-bi* were derived from Sumerian *ab*.<sup>39</sup> In the first point Vieyra acknowledges that he was anticipated by C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East*, pp. 88 f. But going beyond Gadd, Vieyra posits Hurro-Hittite *a-a-bi* as the intermediary link linguistically between Sumerian *ab* and Hebrew **אֹב**. We have sought here to add the following: (1) Bring to bear the objections of Goetze<sup>40</sup> to the normalization of *a-a-bi* as *\*ābi* and suggest the phonetic laws which might account for the passage of Hurro-Hittite *a-a-bi* (*\*ayabi*) into Ugaritic *ib* (*\*ēbu*), Assyrian *abu*, and Hebrew **אֹב**. (2) Assemble all of the relevant Hittite passages mentioning the *a-a-bi* together with the Greek, Ugaritic, Assyrian, and Sumerian, and utilize their information to reconstruct a collective *modus operandi* for these pits. It has not been my intention thereby to suggest that all of these elements of *modus* would have been present in any isolated instance, but only to show the entire range of possible actions which enter into the manipulations at the pits. It is my understanding that the **אֹב** was primarily a ritual hole in the ground dug to give infernal deities or spirits of the deceased access to the upper world for a brief interval of time. Officiating at such a pit would be a woman (or on occasions perhaps also a man) called the **בַּעֲלַת-אֹב** ("possessor of a pit"). She would be visited at night and under the proper conditions she would unseal such a pit and elicit the spirit(s) from it, perhaps using food offerings of the type employed in the Greek and Hittite sources. When the interview was completed, she would reseat the pit with loose soil, sacrificial loaves, or even a cloth. This would keep the spirits from gaining unsupervised access again to the upper world until she had occasion to visit the spot again with a client. In time the name which at first designated only the pit itself came to be applied to the spirits which issued from it, just as in the Hittite texts we see that a deity exists with the name <sup>4</sup>*A-a-bi*, and that the determinative for deity is sometimes written, even when no personal deity is in view. Thus the **אֲבוֹת** of the prophets are the spirits themselves, and can be paired with the **יְדַעֵי**. There is not likely to be any opportunity for archeological evidence to support this thesis, since such simple holes in the ground (most of them doubtless located outside the walls of the settlements!) would leave no appreciable traces. The word itself need not be of Hurrian origin, as indicated above. It may be an old substratum word whose ultimate linguistic affiliation is forever lost to us. What is reasonably certain, however, is that the evidence for similarity of function reinforces the approximate phonetic similarity in such a way as to assure us that Hebrew **אֹב**, Ugaritic *ib*, Hurro-Hittite *a-a-bi*, Assyrian *abu*, and possibly even Sumerian *ab*, are all variants of the same word.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> See above in n. 24.