

THE NUANCES IN ELEVEN DANCE-DERIVED EXPRESSION IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

BY
MAYER I. GRUBER

Dvora Lapson in her article, "Dance", in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* notes, "The Bible contains eleven Hebrew roots employed to describe dancing activity and to highlight the nuances of dance movements". Moreover, she claims, "This points to an advanced stage of choreography among the Jews (in Biblical times)".(1) In her classic, "Symbolic Gestures in Akkadian Contracts from Alalakh and Ugarit" Anne Draffkorn Kilmer notes that it would be of general interest to trace "figures of speech . . . from the symbolic act in an original context to the symbolic figure of speech, attempting to establish whether the act was performed or not in the latter situation".(2) In my own comprehensive study of references to postures, gestures, and facial expressions attested in Akkadian, Ugaritic, Biblical Hebrew, and Biblical Aramaic, "Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East",(3) I demonstrated that criteria could indeed be established for determining when verbs or expressions whose literal meanings denoted postures, gestures, or facial expressions were employed in their literal meanings and when they were employed idiomatically to denote attitudes or emotions such as praise, entreaty, anger, grief, happiness, etc. I showed that the most important criterion for determining when a particular verb or expression is employed literally to refer to a body movement is its being juxtaposed with other expressions denoting physical acts while the most important criterion for determining when a particular expression is employed idiomatically is its being juxtaposed with other abstract expressions.

In this paper I examine the nuances of the eleven verbs which Dvora Lapson cites in her encyclopedia article. Previous studies of which the most important was the still classic *The Sacred Dance* by W. O. E. Oesterley(4) relied almost exclusively upon etymology for the determination of meaning. In this paper I present the findings of my re-investigation of the nuances of the eleven verbs based upon (a) the criteria explained in the previous paragraph; (b) the determination of semantic equivalents in Biblical Hebrew and cognate languages; (c) traditions preserved in Rabbinic

literature; and (d) comparisons with terminology employed in other cultures whose dance has been systematically investigated. The eleven verbs to be considered in the following order are:

חגג, טבב, רקד, קפץ, דלג, כרכר, פוז, פסח, צלע, חיל/חלל, שחק.

חגג – 'dance in a circle'

In thirteen of its sixteen occurrences the Hebrew verb חגג means simply 'celebrate (a prescribed festival)'. In Ps. 107:27 חגג is juxtaposed with the verb נע 'move about', and both verbs are said to describe the behavior of a drunk. Based on the assumed etymological relationship between the verb attested in Ps. 107:27 and the verb חג 'draw a circle' attested in Job. 26:10, it has been assumed that Ps. 107:27a means "They shall move about going in circles like a drunk". Hence it has seemed plausible to suggest that in I Sam. 30:16 and Ps. 42:5 – the only other instances where חגג does not mean 'celebrate (a prescribed festival)' – may mean 'dance in a circle'. If so, I Sam. 30:16 where the verb is juxtaposed with the verbs אכל 'eat', שתה 'drink', and נטש 'scatter' should be rendered as follows: "So he (the Egyptian boy) led him (King David) down, and there they (Ziklag's band) were scattered all over the ground eating and drinking and dancing in a circle in commemoration of the vast spoil they had taken from Philistia and Judah".

In Ps. 42:5 the words בקול־רנה ותודה המון חוגג may be rendered "The multitude dances in a circle to the tune of a song of thanksgiving". It cannot be demonstrated, however, that in either I Sam. 30:16 or Ps. 42:5 the verb חגג does not mean simply 'celebrate' as it does everywhere except in Ps. 107:27 where the context calls for a verb of motion. Nevertheless, the most plausible explanation as to how a single verb can mean 'move in circles (like a drunk)' and 'celebrate (a prescribed festival)' is that the verb חגג whose

basic meaning is 'move about in a circle' was used to refer to dancing in a circle in celebration of victory as perhaps in I Sam. 30:1 and to dancing in a circle in praise of God as perhaps in Ps. 42:5. The semantic development בכה 'weep' to בכה 'weep (in mourning)', to בכה 'mourn'. Thus it is reasonable to assume that חג 'festival' derives from a verb 'celebrate', which, in turn, is a nuance of a verb which meant 'dance in a circle'. This does not mean that by designating the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot as חג the Bible means to tell us that a sacred (or non-sacred) dance was a common feature of these festivals although it may have been.

There does seem to be one clear reference to the circle dance or processional dance about the altar which employs the noun חג in the sense 'procession'. This is Ps. 118:27 where we read, "Make a procession with branches up to the sides of the altar".(5) This interpretation of the verse, which seems to refer to the Sukkot procession with lulav and etrog, is supported by reference to the Akkadian cognate of Heb. אסרו, which is usually rendered 'bind'. In light of the Akkadian cognate eseru, which may mean 'enclose, surround', it would appear that Heb. אסרו חג should mean 'make a procession, form a circle'.

סבב - 'encircle, turn about'

Especially worthy of note are the four attestations of סבב 'encircle, turn about' in Jer. 31:22; Ps. 114:3, 5; and Eccles. 12:5 precisely because these references to dancing are generally ignored both in the previous discussions of dance in the Bible and in Bible commentaries and translations.

The most obvious instance of סבב 'encircle' which refers to a dance is Ps. 26:6 where the psalmist says, "I shall wash my palms with innocence so that I may walk in the procession around Your altar, O LORD". Here סבב refers to the same rite of worship as is described in I Sam. 30:16 by the verb חגג. Incidentally, the reference to palms washed by innocence reflects the idea expressed in Isa. 1:5 that God will not heed prayer or worship by those whose hands are defiled with guilt, an idea which derives its poignancy from the fact that ancient Israelites supplicated with palms spread apart, a gesture I have discussed at length in my "Aspect of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East".

That Josh. 6 where the verb סבב is attested six times describes a ceremonial processional dance around the walls of Jericho is well known, and it has frequently been discussed. While the aim of the circumnabulation in Ps. 26:6 is worship, the purpose of the circumnabulations prescribed and carried out in Josh. 6 is symbolically to lay claim to the territory of Jericho.(6) Perhaps the psalmists' metaphoric description of the conspiracy of his enemies in Ps. 118:11a, סבבני גם סבבוני "They encircled me; indeed, they encircled me" is an extension of the circumnabulation as a symbolic act designed to conquer or overpower an enemy. That the same verb of motion or idiom may describe several different meanings determined by context in life is discussed at length in my "Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East".

In Ps. 114:3-4 we have additional attestations of סבב referring to a dance performed as an act of divine worship. Here we are told that in response to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt "The sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned around, the mountains danced like rams, the hills like young sheep". These verses combine three images. These are (a) the primordial battle between the LORD and the rebellious Sea/River (Isa. 51:10; Ps. 66:6; 74:13; 89:10-11; 104:6-8; Job. 26:12; etc.); (b) the splitting of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21 etc.) and of the Jordan River (Josh. 3:13-17) to enable the Israelites to pass over on dry land; and (c) dancing as a form of praise and worship of the LORD. Just as the personified mountains (probably Lubnan = Mt. Lebanon and Sirion = Mt. Hermon; see Ps. 29:6) are said to have danced the רקוד 'skipping dance' so are Sea and Jordan said to have danced the circle dance. Similarly in Ps. 114:7 ארץ 'the land' (Eretz Israel?) is commanded חולי 'dance the mahōl' in praise of God.

In Jer. 31:22 סבב refers neither to an act of worship nor to laying claim to territory but to the universal phenomenon of circumnabulation of the bridegroom, bride, or bridal couple. According to folklorists the origin of this practice is "to obstruct the entry of demons and noxious influences" that might seek to harm the bridegroom and/or bride.(7) Bible commentators have long been puzzled as to why Jeremiah calls the practice of woman circumnabulating man an innovation when he says (Jer. 31:22b), "Indeed, the LORD creates an innovation in the land: a woman will circumnabulate a man". To those who had become so completely used to disaster that they said of Judah and Jerusalem, "It has been destroyed . . . no one lives here" (Jer. 33:10) it was indeed an innovation that weddings should again be celebrated here (see Jer. 33:11). Using *pars pro toto* the prophet describes a wedding as "a woman will circumnabulate a man".

Seeing that טבב 'encircle, turn about' can and does refer to the circle dance or processional dance elsewhere called חג, we may be able to appreciate the Bible's single reference to dancing as a rite of mourning. In *The Sacred Dance* Oesterley wrote, "There is no instance to be found in the Old Testament of dancing being performed as a mourning or burial rite; that must be acknowledged; yet in spite of this there are strong reasons for believing that the custom did exist among the Israelites".(8) He went on to say, "The strongest reason for believing that this custom was in vogue among the ancient Israelites is that it exists at the present day".(9) He refers specifically to the seven circumnabulations of the bier which are still part of the prescribed rites of burial according to the custom of the Sephardim. It is likely that the Mishnaic and modern term for funeral לוויה derived from the common Semitic root לוי 'to encircle' refers to the circumnabulation of the bier.

We have seen that Biblical Hebrew refers to circumnabulation either by means of the verb חגג, the noun חג, or the verb טבב. Hence it is probable that טבב 'participate in a circle dance or procession' refers to the circumnabulation of the bier in Eccles. 12:5b where we read, כִּי־הֵלַךְ הָאָדָם אל בית-עולמו וסבבו בשוק הספדים "When a person goes to his eternal home, the mourners in the street participate in the circumnabulations". It is indeed remarkable that this reference to circumnabulation has not been recognized in any of the major translations of the Hebrew Bible into English nor in the major critical commentaries on Ecclesiastes.

רקד - 'skip'

Curt Sachs in his monumental *World History of the Dance* points out: "Skip dances as movements in which either foot is used ought to be distinguished from the jump dances, in the real jump dance the dancer leaves the ground with both feet at the same time. It seems to me that only the Hebrew language discriminates carefully between the two terms".(10)

Sachs' distinction between רקוד 'the skip dance' and קפוץ 'the jump dance' derives from the assertion of Rabbi Jeremiah in the name of Rabbi Ze'ira in the name of Rab Huna (d. 296 C.E.) in the Jerusalem Talmud, Beza 5:1: "in qippus one removes one foot from the ground while placing the other foot upon the ground". Sachs concludes that King David's dance before the Ark described in I Ch. 15:29 as מרקד was a skip dance.

Sachs' conclusion seems to be corroborated by the Bible's characterization of רקוד as the activity of rams (Ps. 114:4, 6), calves (Ps. 29:6), he-goats (Isa. 13:21). The similes 'dance like a calf' in Ps. 29:6, 'dance like rams' and 'dance like young sheep' in Ps. 114:4, 6 suggest that in ancient Israel רקוד was regarded as an imitation of the skipping or romping of large and small cattle.(11) Like raqadu, the Akkadian cognate of Heb. רקד, another Akkadian verb, dakaku, is employed both to refer to the romping of animals including calves, sheep, donkeys, and foxes and to refer to the dancing of young girls. Moreover, like רקד in Joel 2:5 and Nah. 3:5, Akkadian dakaku may refer to the gathering together like a flock of sheep of military troops.

Because the dance is frequently a feature of mourning rites it should not be surprising that in Syriac the root רקד came to have the two meanings 'dance' and 'mourn'. In the Hebrew Bible, however, רקוד was understood to be a dance of joy and, perhaps like מחול in Lam. 5:15 and in Ps. 30:12 to be a dance-derived expression for 'joy'. Hence Eccles. 3:4 informs us, "There is an appointed time to cry, and an appointed time to laugh, an appointed time to beat the breast, and an appointed time to dance".

In Job. 21:11-12 Job, describing the happiness and prosperity of the wicked seems to characterize the רקוד both as a dance imitative of the behavior of sheep and goats and as an expression of joy. There we read, "They produce their little ones like a flock, and their children continually dance. They play the tambourine and the lyre, and they rejoice at the sound of the flute".

רקד and דלג 'jump'

As the above-cited passage from the Jerusalem Talmud indicates both רקוד and קפוץ were attested as terms designating specific and distinct dance forms during the Amoraic period. The Jerusalem Talmud passage is useful for the evaluation of the biblical evidence although the single biblical attestation of קפץ in the sense 'jump' is not in a dance context. The single attestation is Cant. 2:8 where the woman in love says of the man she loves, "Hark, my beloved! There he comes, leaping over mountains, jumping over hills". The fact that in the Talmudic period קפוץ designated the jumping dance and the fact that the two verbs דלג and קפץ are employed as synonyms in Cant 2:8 help us fully appreciate the single clear reference in the Hebrew Bible to the jumping dance, Isa. 35:6. Here the prophet who is generally said to have been the Second Isaiah, the author of Isa. 40-66, tells us that when Israel is vindicated

by God, "Then the lame will dance like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing a joyous song". Only if the verb ידלג is taken to refer to a kind of dance will its juxtaposition with 'sing a joyous song' make sense, for the association of song and dance is natural and universal.

כרכר – 'whirl, pirouette'

The verb כרכר 'whirl' is twice attested in the account of King David's dancing in the procession that brought the Ark to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:14, 16). The interpretation of כרכר as a whirling dance is based primarily on the view that כרכר is an intensive (pilpel) of the verb כרר 'rotate'. (12) Moreover, Julian Morgenstern suggested that כרר is a secondary formation from כור 'be round', from which we get the noun ככר (13) (= Akkadian *kakkaru*) 'a round loaf of bread, a round weight, a round district'. (14) Thus Emil G. Hirsch in his article "Dancing – Biblical Data" suggested that כרכר is "most likely the turning round and round upon the heels on one spot, as practised by the dervishes". (15) Equally plausible from an etymological point of view and to be preferred by reason of its antiquity is the suggestion presented anonymously in Numbers Rabbah 4:20 that כרכר designates 'pirouette'.

Notwithstanding the plausible arguments to the contrary advanced by Avishur, (16) the interpretation of כרכר as 'dancing', specifically 'pirouette', is supported by numerous attestations of the verb and derived nouns in Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic referring either to dancing or to verbal circumlocution. (17) Nevertheless, there is some evidence both in Rabbinic literature and in Ugaritic literature for כרכר denoting a gesture of the hand rather than a movement upon the heel or toe. That כרכר 'dancing' may also denote a gesture or gestures of the hand or fingers is plausible in view of the following: (a) Curt Sachs' delineation of sitting dances in which all significant movement takes place from the waist upward; (18) and (b) the hasta 'single hand gesture' and *samyuta hasta* 'double hand gesture' "which have now become the hallmark of Indian dance throughout the world". (19)

The first of the two biblical attestations of כרכר 'whirling, pirouette' is II Sam. 6:14a where we read, "David was whirling with all (his) might before the LORD". The adverbial phrase "before the LORD" indicates that the dance was performed as an act of worship. The second attestation of כרכר is found in II Sam. 6:16 where we read, "When the Ark of the LORD was coming to the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul was peering through the window

when she saw King David skipping and whirling, and secretly she despised him".

The substitution of the verb שחק 'dance' for כרכר in the parallel accounts in I Ch. 13:8; 15:29 seems further to support the interpretation of כרכר as 'whirling, pirouette'. Nevertheless, Numbers Rabbah 4:20 records the following alternative interpretation: "What is *mekarker*? (It is that) he struck his hands against each other, clapping them and saying, 'kyry ram' ". כירי, a play on the word מכרכר, seems to be the Greek word *kyrios* 'Lord' (= אדוני) + the Hebrew first person singular possessive suffix while רם is Hebrew for 'He (my Lord) is exalted'. This interpretation underscores the fact that in II Sam. 6:14a כרכר is an act of divine worship. The suggestion that כרכר may designate a gesture of the hand is supported also by the following Ugaritic text: "When El saw her (Asherah), he parted his jaw, and he laughed. He put his foot on the footstool, and he twiddled (*wykrkr*) his fingers". (20) For the significance of the *gestus* of putting foot on footstool see my "Aspects of Nonverbal Communication in the Ancient Near East".

פזז – 'skip'

The verb פזז attested with reference to a dance step only in II Sam. 6:16 is usually rendered 'skip' on the basis of I. Ch. 15:29 which seems to equate the common verb רקד 'skip' with the rare verb פזז. Given the two lines of evidence that כרכר means 'pirouette', the expression מפזז ומכרכר 'skip and whirl' must refer to the raising of one foot (Heb. פזוז, רקוד) while the other foot, the pivot executes the pirouette (כרכור).

פסח – 'limp'

Frequently it has been suggested that the festival of Pesah derives its name from a limping dance performed on this festival in hoary antiquity. In fact, there is no basis for this suggestion other than the presumed derivation of the noun *pesah* from the verb *pasah* 'limp'. Nevertheless, the Bible does refer at least once to פסוח 'a limping dance'. In I Ki. 18:26 the behavior of the priests of Baal in their contest with Elijah is described as follows: "They took the bull that he (Elijah) had given them, and they prepared it. They called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, 'Baal, answer us!' There was, however, no sound,

and there was no one who answered, so they performed the limping dance (Heb. ויפסחו) about the altar which he (Elijah) had made”.

The limping dance referred to in this description of the priests of Baal has been compared to the manner in which devout Muslims on pilgrimage to Mecca circle the Ka'aba “with a peculiar limping walk, dragging one foot behind the other”.(21) There is a controversy among Bible commentators as to whether or not Elijah refers to the limping dance also in I Ki. 18:21, “It is long enough that you are limping between two opinions”. Arnold Ehrlich takes the Hebrew word סעפים ‘opinions’ as a biform of ספים ‘thresholds (of temples)’, and he interprets Elijah’s remark as a reference to the persons who have been worshipping both Baal and the LORD by means of the limping dance. He is asking these people to perform the limping dance either for the one deity or for the other, not for both.(22) Other commentators see the two references to limping in vv. 21 and 26 as coincidental, and they hold that only in v. 26 does the verb refer to a dance. They hold that this dance is peculiar to the worship of Baal and foreign to the worship of the LORD.(23) Regardless of the tenability of this contention there is no question but that the author of the narrative has deliberately employed two forms of the same verb in the two verses. It is equally certain that there is no other attestation of the limping dance in the Hebrew Bible.

צלע – ‘limp’

Because Dvora Lapson took her list of eleven verbs directly from Oesterley(24) she included צלע ‘limp’. Oesterley listed צלע as a verb meaning ‘dance’ because he held that Gen. 32:32, “The sun rose upon him (Jacob) just as he passed Penuel, limping on his hip”, refers to a ritual dance similar to פסחו.(25) While there may have been such a dance referred to by the verb צלע, there is, in fact, no attestation of such a dance. Oesterley suggested also that the place-name Zelah (Josh. 18:28; II Sam. 21:14) usually taken to mean ‘side’ or ‘slope’ “was possibly an ancient sanctuary where this special kind of limping dance was performed”.(26)

It is worth taking note of Oesterley’s untenable suggestions concerning צלע in order to appreciate the great extent to which the most recent discussions of dance in the Hebrew Bible slavishly rely upon Oesterley’s pioneering but no longer adequate treatise.

מחול – ‘whirling dance’

The most frequently attested and hence the most frequently discussed term for ‘dance’ in the Hebrew Bible is מחול. Just as the Hebrew word מטפד and its Akkadian cognate sipittu, which originally designated a gestus of mourning, ‘beating the breast’, came by synecdoche to denote simply ‘mourning’ so did מחול, which originally designated a kind of dance associated with joyous occasions, come by extension to denote ‘joy’. For example, in Lam. 5:15 the Jews who suffered defeat at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar lament, “Our happiness has ceased, our joy has been turned into mourning”. Reflecting the same semantic development מחול ‘dance’ ‘joy’, the author of Ps. 30, a psalm of thanksgiving, gives thanks to the LORD, saying, “You turned my mourning (Heb. מטפדי) into joy (Heb. למחול) for me; You ungirded my sackcloth, and You girt me with (a garment appropriate to) happiness”.

It should not be surprising that of all the terms for ‘dance’ in Biblical Hebrew the one that develops the nuance ‘joy’ is מחול seeing that this is the type of dance which is danced as an expression of joy upon the safe return from battle of the armies of Israel. For example, when Jephthah returns from defeating the Ammonites, “Behold, his daughter went forth to greet him with drums and with מחלות ‘dances’ ” (Judg. 11:34). Likewise, in response to David’s victory over Goliath “the women went forth from all the Israelite cities for song and the to greet King Saul with drums, with joy, and with sistrums. The dancing (Heb. המשחקות) women chanted, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his myriads” (I Sam. 18:6–7). The Association of מחלות with the verb ענה ‘chant’ is clearer still in I Sam. 21:12b, “They chanted in the מחלות, saying, ‘Saul slew his thousands, and David his myriads,’ ” and I Sam. 29:5b, “They chanted to him in the מחלות, saying, ‘Saul slew his thousands, and David his myriads’ ”. The association of chanting and מחול lends support to the theory developed by Jack Sasson that מחול is both etymologically related to and semantic equivalent of Akkadian melultu, which, in turn, corresponds to Greek hyporchema, a multi-media performance including instrumental music, dance, choral singing, and mime.(27)

It is the association of מחול with military victory demonstrated in Judg. 11:34; I Sam. 18:6–7; 21:12b; and 29:5 as well as Ex. 15:20 that probably accounts for the term מחלת המחנים ‘dance of the two camps’ in Cant. 7:1:

Return, return Shulamite.

Return, return that we may see you.

“What,” (she asks) “will you see in the Shulamite?”

(They answer): “Of course, the dance of the two camps.”

Just as by synecdoche מחול came to be employed to designate ‘joy’ in Lam. 5 and Ps. 30 so, apparently, the same term came to designate a drum in Ps. 149 and Ps. 150 where the term מחול appears among a list of musical instruments. This nuance of the term מחול, which was stressed by the medieval philologists Ibn Janah, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and David Kimhi and in modern times by N.H. Tur-Sinai, has been accounted for by J.S. Licht. He suggests that the drum, which was used to provide the rhythm during the dancing of the מחול came to be designated מחול (28). Support for this suggestion is provided by the Rabbinic Hebrew term אירוס, lit., ‘betrothal’, which designates a gong played at weddings.

If, in fact, the term מחול, which may designate a multi-media event like the Greek *hypocheima*, can also designate ‘joy’ or ‘drum’, we should not be surprised that in Cant. 7:1 it can designate a specific dance step rather than the entire multi-media event. Apropos of Cant. 7:1 Sachs observed, “When we read these verses from the Song of Songs we are convinced that what is referred to is a facing in all four directions”. (29) Indeed, the interpretation of מחול as a whirl dance in which the dancer rotates and thereby exhibits her beauty accounts for the audience’s exclamation שובי שובי “Return, return” and their saying, “And let us look at you”. This interpretation of מחול is supported by the derivation of the noun from the root חול ‘whirl, writhe’. Julian Morgenstern long ago suggested that the root חלל, which is the derivation preferred by contemporary scholars such as Sasson, (30) is related to חול as is כרר to כור. (31)

The whirling dance of the nubile woman to exhibit herself to prospective marriage partners is suggested by the passage which follows in Cant. 7:2–10 where one of these eligible men praises her beauty from bottom to top, beginning with “How beautiful are your (dancing) feet in sandals, O noble woman!” (Cant. 7:2). Moreover, מחול refers to precisely such a dance in Judg. 21:21 and in Mishnah Ta’anit 4:8. Finally, the interpretation of מחול as whirling or turning around is supported by the Rabbinic Hebrew expression מחול הכרם ‘circumference of the vineyard’ attested and defined in Mishnah Kilayim 4:1–2. There is no basis in the exegetical tradition for Morgenstern’s clever suggestion that this term designated an open space surrounding every vineyard, which was provided for the performance of the dances alluded to in Ta’anit 4:8. (32).

שחק – ‘dance, play’

Particularly interesting is the variety of nuances of the pi’el of the verb שחק. In II Sam. 6:21 King David tells Michal that he intends to do more of that which he is described as having done in II Sam. 6:14. In II Sam. 6:21 King David says, “I shall dance” while in 6:14 King David is described as “whirling with all (his) strength”. I Ch. 15:29 transforms the unusual דוד מפוז ומכרכר “David (was) skipping and whirling” of II Sam. 6:16 into דוד מרקד ומשחק “David (was) skipping and dancing”. Moreover, I Ch. 13:8a, “David and all Israel were dancing before God with all strength” seems to be another parallel to the expression found in II Sam. 6:14 while II Sam. 6:5 seems to be a corruption of the text which has been faithfully produced in I Ch. 13:8.

In most other cases the pi’el of the verb שחק has nothing to do with dancing, it means ‘play’. Typical of this usage are Ps. 104:26b, “Leviathan whom You created to play with him” and Prov. 8:30–31, “. . . playing in His presence continually, playing on His earth . . .” In I Sam. 18:17, however, we find another nuance of the verb שחק. Here we find, “The *mešahaqōt* women chanted, ‘Saul slew his thousands, David his myriads’”. In II Sam. 21:12b and 29:5b we have instead of “The *mešahaqōt* women chanted” the equivalent expression, “They chanted in the *meholōt*, saying”. The equation of שחק and מחול should not be surprising in that, as we have seen, מחול is both semantically and etymologically equivalent of Akk. *melulu*, which may designate both ‘play’ and ‘dance’ precisely as does Heb. שחק. Hence it is possible also to appreciate the expression מחול משחקים ‘dancers’ dance’ in Jer. 31:4. Once we can go beyond etymological speculation to the establishment of semantic equivalents between expressions in Biblical Hebrew and dance terminology in the cognate languages we can expect to be able to clarify the Hebrew terms by reference to the rich legacy of pictorial art from the surrounding cultures. This, in turn, opens up the possibility of reconstructing the ancient Hebrew dance and accomplishing for ancient Israel what Maurice Emmanuel did for the classical world in his *The Antique Greek Dance*. (33) This challenge I leave for another time. □

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) *Encyclopedia Judaica* 5:1262.
- (2) *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974): 182, n. 24.
- (3) Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1977. The work is now being prepared for publication by the Pontifical Biblical Institute Press in the series *Studia Pohl: Series Maior*.
- (4) (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1923).
- (5) Cf. Revised Standard Version: "Bind the festal procession with branches up to the horns of the altar!"
- (6) See Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1969) p. 411.
- (7) See *ibid.*, p. 412.
- (8) Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance*, p. 194.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- (10) Trans. Bessie Schönberg (New York: W.W. Norton, 1937), p. 30.
- (11) For numerous examples from all over the world of dances imitative of animals see Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, pp. 79–85; Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers, 1939), pp. 25–26; Samuel Marti and Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, *Dances of Anáhuac* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 94–102.
- (12) Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance*, p. 45.
- (13) Julian Morgenstern, "The Etymological History of the Three Hebrew Synonyms for 'to Dance,' HGG, HLL and KRR, and their Cultural Significance", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 36 (1917): 321.
- (14) Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 503.
- (15) *The Jewish Encyclopedia* 4:425a.
- (16) Y. Avishur, "Krk̄r in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic", *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976): 257–61.
- (17) See dictionaries; of G.W. Ahlstrom, Krkr and tpd", *Vetus Testamentum* 28 (1978): 100–02.
- (18) Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, pp. 37–41.
- (19) Faubion Bowers, *The Dance in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), p. 34.
- (20) C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) No. 51, col. 4, ll. 27–30.
- (21) J. Robinson, *The First Book of Kings* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 209.
- (22) Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Mikrâ ki-Pheschutô*, 3 vols. (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1899–1901), 2:314.
- (23) See James A. Montgomery, *The Books of Kings*, ed. Henry Snyder Gehman, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951), pp. 301–10.
- (24) See Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance*, p. 44.
- (25) *Ibid.*, p. 51. So also André Caquot, "Les danses sacrées en Israël et à l'entour", in *Les danses sacrées*, ed. André Caquot, *Sources Orientales*, vol. 6 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), p. 140, n. 18.
- (26) Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance*, p. 51.
- (27) Jack M. Sasson, "The Worship of the Golden Calf", in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., *Alter Orient und Altes Testament*, vol. 22 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Becker, 1973; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1973), pp. 157–59.
- (28) J.S. Licht, "Mahôl", *Encyclopedia Miqra'it*, 4:790.
- (29) Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, p. 43.
- (30) Sasson, "The Worship of the Golden Calf", p. 158.
- (31) Morgenstern, "The Etymological History", pp. 321–24
- (32) *Ibid.*, p. 324.
- (33) Trans. Harriet Jean Bealey (New York: John Lance Co., 1916; London: The Bodley Head, 1916).