Job's Texts of Terror

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ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PEOPLES feared less the prospect of their going to hell than that of hell's coming to them. Anatolian peoples feared demons with names like "The Fear before the Lion," "The Terror before the Snake," and "The Thing That Sticks to the Mouth."[1] Mesopotamians feared a variety of demons. In the Amarna version of *Nergal and Ereshkigal,* for example, Nergal is accompanied by no fewer than fourteen of them, with ominous-sounding names like "The Driver," "The Seizer," "The Decayer, " and "The One Who Brings up the Void."[2] According to the portal amulets discovered at Arslan Tash, Syro-Palestinians chanted incantations against demonic beings called "The Stranglers," "The Splatterer," and "The Spoiler."[3]

[1] See V. Haas and H. J. Thiel, *Die Beschwörungsrituale der Allaituraḫ(ḫ)i und verwandte Texte* (AOAT 31; Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) texts 104.5′; 146.47-48. For a discussion, see J. Friedrich, "'Angst' und 'Schrecken' als niedere Gottheiten bei Griechen und Hethitern," *AfO* 17 (1954–56) 148.

[2] See J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln* (2 vols.; Vorderasiatische Bibliothek 2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1915; reprinted, Aalen: Zeller, 1964), text 357.68-71 for the demons ᵈ*ṭi-ri-id,* ᵈ*ṣi-i-da-na,* ᵈ*mi-ki-it,* and ᵈ*mu-ta-ab-ri-qá.* For a discussion, see Manfred Hutter, *Altorientalische Vorstellungen von der Unterwelt: Literar- und religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu "Nergal und Ereškigal"* (OBO 63; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985) 70-73. A classic study is R. Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia* (London: Luzac, 1904).

[3] See *KAI* 27.4 (*ḥnqt*). Cf. the "two strangling goddesses" (*iltm ḫnqtm*) in *KTU* 1. 102.13. See also *TSSI,* 3. 24.1 (*mzh*), 24.5-6 (*ʾl šyy*). For a discussion, see F. M. Cross, "Leaves from an Epigraphist's Notebook," *CBQ* 36 (1974) 488.

Alongside the broadly generic term *ʾēl,* the more specific term used to describe these beings is *šēd.* In Akkadian, *šēdu* appears with or without the determinative for deity, and it stands for protector daimons as well as devouring demons in a number of exorcistic texts.[4] In Biblical Hebrew, the *šēdîm* are the demons before whom the Israelites sacrifice their own children in Transjordan.[5] In Late Aramaic, the emphatic plural of this term (*šdyʾ*) appears in an inscription from Palmyra,[6] while the plural (*šydyn*) adorns a number of incantation bowls.[7]

To this already extensive evidence must now be added the appearance of the term *šdyn* in the plaster texts from Tell Deir ʿAllā, also in Transjordan.[8] Like the Satan in Job 2:1, the *šdyn* in these texts "take a stand" (*nṣb*) in a divine "council" (*mwʿd*) in order to accuse some mortal of wrongdoing.[9] Before this council the *šdyn* then issue the following decree:

> Sew up the bolts of heaven with your cloud!
> Ordain darkness, not light! Gloom, not radiance![10]

[4] Both usages of ᵈ*šēdu* appear in an incantation ritual to Nusku in E. Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"* (Berlin: Akademie, 1953) 38–40. In line 42 on p. 38, ᵈ*šēdu* appears alongside the *gallu, rabiṣu,* and *utukku* demons. Four lines down the tablet, ᵈ*šēdu* appears again in parallel with *ilu*: "Establish a guardian of salvation and life for me, a protecting *šēdu,* a healing god" (*ma-ṣar šul-me u balaṭi šu-kun eli-ia₅* ᵈ*šēdu na-ṣi-ru ilu mu-šal-li-mu*). The paralleling of *ʾēl* with *šdy* occurs repeatedly in the dialogues of Job (5:17; 6:4; 8:3; 13:3; 22:17,26; 27:10; 31:2,35).

[5] Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37. The author of Deut 32:17 admits that although the *šēdîm* were *ʾĕlōhîm* of a sort "unknown" to Israel, they certainly were not equivalent to *ʾĕlōah.*

[6] Adopted conditionally by J. Hoftijzer in *DISO* 292.

[7] C. D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (SBLDS 17; Missoula: Scholars, 1975) texts 3.14; 7.17; 47.2; 48.1.

[8] The *editio princeps* is that of J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAllā* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). Our references to the Deir ʿAllā texts will be given according to the text number and line in this edition. Jo Ann Hackett (*The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* [HSM 31; Chico: Scholars, 1980] 88) writes that "Akkadian *šēdu* is generally a protective spirit, and only means 'demon' with the addition of *lemnu,*" but this is inaccurate. See G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû* (*AfO* Beiheft 2; Berlin: [privately published], 1937; reprinted, Osnabruck: Biblio-Verlag, 1967) 21 (2.210-12): "May the *šēdu* demons seek after you! May the *utukku* demons gaze after you! May the spirits of the dead surround you!" (ᵈ*šēdê*ᵐᵉˢ *li-ba-ʾ-ki utukkê*ᵐᵉˢ *liš-te-ʾ-u-ki eṭimmê*ᵐᵉˢ *lis-saḫ-ru-ú-ki*). Neither *lemnu* nor a comparable synonym is present. In fact, Meier translates ᵈ*šēdē*ᵐᵉˢ as "die *šêdu*-Dämonen."

[9] Deir ʿAllā 1.6: "the *šdyn* took their stand in the assembly and said . . ." (*wnṣbw šdyn mwʿd wʾmrw*).

[10] Ibid. 1.6-7: *trpy skry šmyn bʿbky šm ḥšk wʾl ngh ʿṭm wʾl smr,* reading *ʿṭm* (gloom) with van der Kooij (*Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAllā,* 106) on epigraphic grounds and with A. Wolters ("Aspects of the Literary Structure of Combination I," *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā Re-Evaluated* [ed. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij; Leiden: Brill, 1991] 295) on literary grounds.

Interpreters of this text continue to disagree over who these *šdyn* were and what their intentions may have been.[11] I have argued that the language of this Transjordanian inscription substantively and stylistically echoes the technical incantation literature of the ancient Near East.[12] The motif of the "bolts-of-heaven," for example, plays an important role in exorcistic ritual.[13] One of an exorcist's primary tasks is to ensure that the heavenly doors remain open, i.e., unbolted, so that the *ilānī rabûti*—the "great gods" who live behind the doors of heaven—might protect the mortal world from demonic attack.[14] Like benevolent parents, the *ilānī rabûti* always leave the door open and the night light on, so to speak, for their children. The *šdyn* at Deir ʿAllā, like all other demonic beings, want to lock the door and blow out the light.

Whatever else the Deir ʿAllā texts might teach us—and they have already taught us a lot—they seem best interpreted against this often overlooked, yet highly illuminating incantation literature.[15] The purpose of this paper is to ask whether another difficult set of texts might be illuminated by this literature as well.

As is well known, the book of Job sustains only minimal historical contact with the primary themes of Israelite religious tradition.[16] The dialogues of chaps. 3–31, in particular, are almost certainly non- or pre-Yahwistic,[17] regardless of the way one interprets the book's final form or the way one assesses its significant contribution to the development of Hebrew religion.[18] Scholars tend, therefore, to look to non-Israelite sources for hints

[11] A recent sampling of opinions appears in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā Re-Evaluated,* passim.

[12] M. S. Moore, *The Balaam Traditions: Their Character and Development* (SBLDS 113; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 66-96.

[13] Recognized by Hoftijzer, *Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAllā,* 193-94, and confirmed by several reviewers: S. Kaufman, *BASOR* 239 (1980) 73; M. Dahood, *Bib* 62 (1981) 125; M. and H. Weippert, *ZDPV* 98 (1982) 92.

[14] An Assyrian incantation against pestilence begins, "Quiet are the steppes, locked are the doors, secure are the bolts, silent are the gods of the earth, open are the doors of the wide heavens" (E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931] 163, lines 8-10 of the text).

[15] See further Baruch Levine, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ʿAllā: General Interpretation," *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā Re-Evaluated,* 58-72.

[16] J. J. M. Roberts, "Job and the Israelite Religious Tradition," *ZAW* 89 (1977) 107-14; A. Maillot, "L'apologétique du livre de Job," *RHPR* 59 (1979) 567-76.

[17] Admitted even by J. Gerald Janzen (*Job* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1985] 11-12), who argues that beneath the dialogues is a "covenanting religious consciousness" in need of reeducating, even if no explicit covenant with Yahweh is discussed.

[18] F. M. Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* [Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973] 344) sees Job as a major corrective to the enfranchised priestly and deuteronomistic schools of Hebrew religious tradition. Janzen (*Job,* 9-14) sees more affinities between Job and Israelite tradition than do either Cross or Roberts.

and clues to the origins of the Leviathan,[19] the "king of terrors,"[20] "death's firstborn,"[21] "the night flyers,"[22] and "the Satan."[23]

Emboldened by the Deir ᶜAlla texts, Baruch Levine has recently suggested that the dialogues in Job, along with other sections of the Hebrew Bible, may have had their origin in an "El repertoire" of mythical or ritualistic material, and that the Deir ᶜAllā sanctuary may have been some sort of depository for this repertoire.[24] Even if we do not limit ourselves to the Canaanite deity El, this appears to be an intriguing hypothesis worth serious consideration. In light of the parallels now coming to light within the inscriptional evidence, how *are* we to explain the strikingly non-Yahwistic cast of the Joban dialogues? The present paper will attempt to engage this question with a more specific one: What can we learn about the Šadday texts in Job—Job's "texts of terror"—by examining them against the non-Yahwistic backdrop of the incantation literature?

I. *Šdyn* in Job 19:29

The most important observation we want to make is that the term *šdyn* in Deir ᶜAllā 1.6 also occurs in Job 19:29. The context of this *hapax* occurrence in the MT is Job's famous "Redeemer" speech, in which Job laments his illness, his loneliness, and the pain inflicted by his accusers. Defensive and

[19] H. Rowold, "*Mî hûᵓ? Lî hûᵓ!:* Leviathan and Job in Job 41:2-3," *JBL* 105 (1986) 104-9; D. A. Diewert, "Job 7:12: *Yam, Tannin,* and the Surveillance of Job," *JBL* 106 (1987) 203-15; J. G. Janzen, "Another Look at God's Watch Over Job," *JBL* 108 (1989) 109-16.

[20] W. A. Irwin, "Job's Redeemer," *JBL* 81 (1962) 217-29; N. P. Sarna, "The Mythological Background of Job 18," *JBL* 82 (1963) 315-18.

[21] N. Wyatt, "The Expression *bĕkôr māwet* in Job xviii 13 and Its Mythological Background," *VT* 40 (1990) 207-16; W. L. Michel, "*Ṣlmwt:* 'Deep Darkness' or 'Shadow of Death'?" *BR* 29 (1984) 5-20.

[22] H. Torczyner (Tur-Sinai) has a discussion of *ᶜypth* in Job 10:22 in "A Hebrew Incantation against Night-Demons from Biblical Times," *JNES* 6 (1947) 20.

[23] See P. L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: śāṭān in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 43; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 69-106. On the advantages and disadvantages of comparative approaches generally, see R. G. Albertson, "Job and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature," *Scripture in Context 2: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. W. Hallo, J. Moyer, and L. Perdue; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 213-30; R. Albertz, "Der sozialgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Hiobbuches und der 'Babylonischen Theodizee' [*ludlul bēl nēmeqi*]," *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. J. Jeremias and L. Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 349-72; Elmer Smick, "Another Look at the Mythological Elements in the Book of Job," *WTJ* 40 (1978) 213-28.

[24] B. Levine, "The Balaam Inscription: Historical Aspects," in *Biblical Archaeology Today* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985) 326-39; idem, "The Plaster Inscriptions from Deir ᶜAllā: General Interpretation," 58-72.

angry, Job demands that a *gōʾēl* be provided to plead his case.[25] He further demands that a written record be made of his entire dispute with the deity and with his "friends." Finally, in 19:28-29 he concludes his lament as follows:

If you continue to say—
"Let's go on persecuting him!
The root of the problem is in him!"—
Then beware of the fever![26]
For wrath's punishment is fever,
In order that you (too) might come to know *šdyn*!

Scholars have interpreted *šdyn* here in at least three different ways. In the Greek tradition, Codex Alexandrinus apparently reads *šdyn* as a derivative of Heb *šādad,* " to overpower, destroy," offering *ischys* as a translation.[27] The Vg reads *iudicium,* a term many feel goes back to an original Hebrew relative particle *š* + the verb *dyn,* "to judge, decide."[28] Thirty years ago Loren Fisher noted several occurrences of *šdyn* in business lists at Ugarit, and he proposed that the term might be an archaic variant of Šadday.[29]

In light of the newer Transjordanian evidence, and in light of the similar contexts in which both terms are found, I propose that we translate *šdyn* in Job 19:29 and *šdyn* in Deir ʿAllā 1.6 as "evil daimons," recognizing in this non-Yahwistic material in Job what appears to be the same or a similar pack of demons operating in the Transjordanian non-Yahwistic material. Deciding whether or not both texts come from a common El repertoire will obviously require scrutiny of a great deal more evidence than is presently available. Still, both texts use identical terms within what appear to be practically identical juridical contexts. Job 19, read in light of this newer evidence, not only seems to be pleading for a *gōʾēl* to protect *Job* from divine wrath and caprice: it also appears to be warning Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar that they, too, should be careful. Instead of looking for "the root of the problem" in *Job,* Job's friends should prepare seriously for the day when they, too, may need a benevolent *gōʾēl* to protect them from the same malevolent forces which now terrify him.

[25] Norman Habel (*Job* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985] 306-7) intimates that this *gōʾēl* most likely refers to a non-Yahwistic redeemer.

[26] Reading *ḥrb* in 19:29 twice as the noun *ḥōreb,* "heat/fever"; see Job 30:30 and BDB 351. The fever of illness was widely believed to be demonic in nature and origin. For a discussion, see G. Fohrer, "Krankheit im Lichte des Alten Testaments," in Fohrer, *Studien zu alttestamentlichen Texten und Themen (1966-1972)* (BZAW 155; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981) 172-87.

[27] *Septuaginta* (ed. A. Rahlfs; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935) 2. 303.

[28] Klostermann, Budde, Gray, and Fohrer have thought so, according to H. H. Rowley, *Job* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 140.

[29] Cited in M. Pope, *Job* (AB 15; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973) 147-48.

II. Eliphaz's Debate With Job

From a comparative point of view, therefore, the single appearance of *šdyn* as well as the multiple appearances of *šdy* in the Joban dialogues seem neither arbitrary nor accidental. The etymological kinship of *šdy* and *šdyn* may forever remain obscure.[30] Still, the phenomenological function of *šdy* in Job seems clear, however it may be etymologically related to the MT's *hapax, šdyn*. *Šdy* stands at the vortex of a fierce theological debate between Job and his friends (particularly Eliphaz) regarding the source and nature of evil. One could well argue, in fact, that the most fundamental point about which Job and Eliphaz disagree is that of the essential characteristics of this mysterious deity both men call Šadday. Analysis of this debate may, therefore, open up another door toward understanding whether Job's texts of terror intend to communicate to us something deeper than mere physical pain and mental anguish.

A. Eliphaz versus Job on Šadday's Intentions

Eliphaz fires the first salvo in this debate by confidently affirming Šadday's ability to rescue Job from seven evils, should Job knuckle under and accept Šadday's "discipline" (Job 5:17). These evils are famine, death, war, the hands of the sword, the scourge of the tongue,[31] destruction, and the beasts of the earth (Job 5:20-23).[32] Eliphaz further hints at the possibility of making a covenant in order to corral these terrors (Job 5:23).

This is neither the first nor the only time seven evils come together in the Hebrew Bible. In the Torah, seven curses are threatened by Moses in Deuteronomy 28: consumption, fever, inflammation, fiery heat, the sword, blight, and mildew.[33] In the Prophets, seven attendants of Lord Yahweh appear in Ezekiel 9, one of whom marks out the righteous remnant of Jerusalem for salvation while the other six attack the unmarked majority.[34]

Perhaps the closest parallel, however, is the pack of seven demons which terrorizes Babylon in the *Epic of Erra*.[35] Like Nergal, Erra is a feared deity

[30] Listing no fewer than eight etymological possibilities for *šdy*, K. Koch ("Šaddaj: Zum Verhältnis zwischen israelitischer Monolatrie und nordwest-semitischem Polytheismus," *VT* 26 [1976] 308-09) concludes: "Welcher Theorie man auch zuneigt, für die Interpretation der alttestamentlichen Texte ergibt sich keine Hilfe."

[31] *šôṭ lāšôn*. Cf. *šûṭ* in Job 1:7; 2:1.

[32] "Destruction" (*šōd*) is repeated twice, perhaps for emphasis.

[33] Deut 28:22.

[34] Ezek 9:1-11.

[35] Erra 1.23-44; cuneiform text in L. Cagni, *Das Erra-Epos: Keilschrifttext* (Studia Pohl 5; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970) 3-4; English translation in Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*

who accomplishes his malevolent will through demonic lackeys, only tenuously subordinated to his control. The Seven, however, have their own personality and history. They can act alone or in concert with a higher deity.[36] In Anatolia, an "old woman" (salŠU.GI) can seek magical protection for the king's family by chanting an incantation against "the Seven."[37] An Assyrian ritual from Assurbanipal's library begins with an involved list of preparations for their arrival, after which an *āšipu* exorcist cries out, "Accept (it), O Seven . . . accept (it)!"[38]

According to the *Epic of Erra,* the old high god Anu impregnated the earth, and from this union the Seven were spawned. Anu then "fixed their destinies" as follows: the first "spreads terror," the second "burns like fire," the third takes the form of a "beast of the field" (a lion), the fourth uses weapons strong enough to "flatten mountains to the ground," the fifth blows like a wind, checking on the activities of the entire earth, the sixth "strikes upwards and downwards," sparing no one, and with viper venom the seventh kills everything left alive.[39] The guardian entrusted with the difficult job of keeping these demons from bursting free and terrorizing the entire universe is Išum, Erra's steward, who is significantly called a "door bolted before them."[40]

Covenants could be negotiated as a further means of neutralizing these beings. Even as the gods could be invoked in formal state treaties to enforce covenant stipulations between potentially hostile parties,[41] so also the demonic world could be held in check by similar procedures. At Arslan Tash, for example, a number of demons are driven away by a "covenant" (*ʾlt*) made between "all the sons of the gods" (*kl bn ʾlm*) and "all the holy ones" (*kl*

(Sources from the Ancient Near East 1/3, Malibu Undena, 1977) 26-28 May, Frankena, and Bodi all argue for a parallel between the seven executioners of Ezekiel 9 and the "Seven" in Erra see H G May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL* 56 (1937) 320 n 34, R Frankena, *Kanttekeningen van een Assyrioloog bij Ezechiel* (Leiden Brill, 1965) 18-19, D Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra* (OBO 104, Gottingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 95-110

[36] J J M Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon* (Baltimore Johns Hopkins, 1972) 115

[37] See A Kammenhuber, *Orakelpraxis, Traume und Vorzeichenschau bei den Hethitern* (Texte der Hethiter 7, Heidelberg Carl Winter, 1976) 46

[38] H Zimmern, *Beitrage zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion Die Beschwörungstafeln Šurpu Ritualtafeln fur den Wahrsager, Beschworer und Sanger* (Assyriologische Bibliothek 12, Leipzig J C Hinrichs, 1896-1901) text 26 2 28-29

[39] Erra 1 23-44

[40] *dI-šum dal-tùm-ma e-dil pa-nu-*[*uš-šu-u*]*n,* Erra 1 27 Cf the "bolting of doors" in Deir ʿAllā 1 6-7

[41] Note, for example, the treaty between Bir-Gaʾyah and Matiʾel (*KAI* 222-24) For a discussion, see J A Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (BibOr 19, Rome Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967) 23-38

qdšm) under the watchful eye of either Aššur or El.[42] Presumably this covenant was an apotropaic means of guaranteeing the peace and protection of all who lived in the dwelling under which these portal plaques were hung.

Eliphaz, in other words, appears to be drawing from two well-known traditions in his first speech to Job: (1) the belief that evil runs in packs, particularly in packs of seven, and (2) the belief that this demonic pack can be subordinated and controlled by making covenants, either with the pack itself or with the deity in charge of the pack, like El or Aššur in northern Syria.

Job, however, rejects Eliphaz's attempt to distance Šadday from these seven evils. He, too, is familiar with traditional chthonic motifs, and he chooses one of the more common ones to strike back at his accuser. Job 6:4 reads:

> The arrows of Šadday are in me.
> My spirit drinks their wrath.

"Arrows of Šadday" is a graphic metaphor, one to which Job and Eliphaz return repeatedly in the dispute which follows.

Heavenly archers appear with great frequency in the incantation texts of the ancient Near East. At Ugarit, for example, Rešep is called *bʿl ḫẓ*, "lord of the arrow."[43] In a Neo-Assyrian incantation, Nergal is called "(lor)d of the bow, the arrow, and the quiver, who wields the sword, who shrinks not from battle."[44] In the *Šurpu* rituals, Asalluḫi, the "exorcist of the gods," has the power to drive away the "oath" of the arrow and the lance, that is, the demonic curses which have bound his clients.[45] In the *Erra Epic,* one of Erra's "arrows" penetrates Babylon's inner wall. Mortally wounded, the wall itself cries out, "Ah, my heart!"[46]

Like Rešep at Ugarit and Nergal in Babylon, Šadday is a foreboding, menacing figure in Job's suffering eyes, a divine bowman who seems to delight in shooting poisonous arrows at helpless human targets (Job 16:12).

[42] *KAI* 27.8-12. F. M. Cross reads *ʾšr* as the goddess Asherah and *ʿlm* as "the Eternal One," an epithet for El in Northwest Semitic: see F. M. Cross and R. Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B.C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria," *BASOR* 197 (1970) 45 n. 15. Z. Zevit reads *ʾšr* as the god Aššur ("A Phoenician Inscription and Biblical Covenant Theology," *IEJ* 27 [1977] 115).

[43] See *UT* 1001.3 (*bʿl ḫẓ ršp*).

[44] Ebeling, "*Handerhebung,*" 116, line 4 of the text ([*bē*]*l* ^is^*qašti u-ṣu u iš-pat ta-mi-iḫ nam-ṣa-ri la a-di-ir ta-ḫa-za*).

[45] See E. Reiner, *Šurpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations* (AfO Beiheft 11; Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1970; repr. of 1958 ed.) 19 (3.29).

[46] Erra 4:16. In Israelite tradition, famine and fire are also styled divine "arrows" (Ezek 5:16; Ps 7:14).

B. Eliphaz versus Job on the Fate of the Wicked

Eliphaz, in his second speech, responds to Job's archery metaphor by agreeing with him: mortals often *are* forced to drink deeply of evil. Yet the source of this poison cannot be Šadday—at least, not the Šadday Eliphaz knows. For Eliphaz, evil must ultimately come from some other source. Eliphaz admits readily that a divine council exists in the heavens, but he remains firm in his belief that Šadday is above putting trust in his holy ones (*qĕdōšaw,* Job 15:15).[47]

Eliphaz seems to have little difficulty recognizing the reality of evil in the cosmos, so it is important for him to emphasize that it is because the wicked choose to participate in this evil that they suffer the "sounds of terror." When they persist in deluding themselves into believing that everything is going well, the "destroyer" (*šōdēd,* not Šadday) is the one who sneaks up on them and plunges them into chaos. Because of their immorality, they deserve to die by the sword. Because of their wickedness, they deserve to suffer from hunger, and their crops deserve to fail from drought, blight, and fire. The wicked fear that a "day of darkness" is at hand, destined to envelop them. They fear further that it is a darkness from which there is no escape (Job 15:21-24). All this suffering is ultimately deserved, Eliphaz argues, because the wicked have "stretched forth their hands against El and vaunted themselves against Šadday" (Job 15:25).

Many of the traditional evils mentioned in Eliphaz' first speech are simply revisited and reworked in his second one. Against so easy a dichotomy between good and evil, however, Job stubbornly asks why there seem to be so many exceptions to the rule (Job 21:7-20). Why do the wicked live in safehouses exempt from terror? Why is it that no "rod of Eloah" ever falls upon them?[48] Why do their families and herds remain so fertile? Why would an allegedly all-powerful deity like Šadday allow the wicked to ridicule him the way they do, spewing blasphemous taunts like this one:

Who is Šadday
 that we might serve him?
What is our "profit"
 if we approach him?[49]

[47] Cf. *qdšm* on the first tablet discovered at Arslan Tash (*KAI* 27.12). Tikva Frymer-Kensky (*In the Wake of the Goddesses* [New York: Free Press, 1992] 217-20) suggests that radical monotheism (like that of Eliphaz) is too heavy a burden for mortals to bear alone without help. Hence, Job frequently requests a mediator figure to help plead his case before God.

[48] See R. Press, "Das Ordal im alten Israel," *ZAW* 51 (1933) 129, and Moore, *Balaam Traditions,* 71-78.

[49] Job 21:15. "Profit" (*yʿl*) is used in the OT almost exclusively in texts which ridicule foreign gods and those who worship them (e.g., Isa 44:9; 47:12; 57:12; Jer 2:8,11; 16:9).

Frustrated by Eliphaz' shallow orthodoxy, Job seems forced, nevertheless, to agree with his accuser that the wicked do deserve to suffer. His problem has to do with why the *innocent* have to suffer. Returning again to the poisonous arrow metaphor, he buttresses his case with another unflattering portrait of Šadday:

In his anger he lays out snares . . .
  Let their eyes see his snare!
  Let them drink of Šadday's wrath![50]

Snare imagery, like the aforementioned archery imagery, is quite common in the incantation texts. In Anatolia particularly, the breeding and ensnaring of exotic birds for ritualistic consumption is an important task, entrusted to a person who specializes in laying snares.[51] According to a number of the Bogazköy texts, the denizens of the Hittite netherworld apparently had an insatiable appetite for bird flesh.[52]

In Mesopotamia, moreover, we find images of demons who actually ensnare human beings as if they were doomed birds. In *ludlul bēl nēmeqi,* the sufferer laments that in spite of all his attempts to consult the exorcists, the "Seven" have successfully conspired to lay him low.[53] On the second tablet, he lists several of these demons by name, summarizing his dilemma as follows:

My eyes stare, but do not see,
My ears are open, but do not hear.
Feebleness has seized my whole body,
Concussion has fallen upon my flesh.
. . .
A snare (*na-aḫ-bal*) is laid on my mouth,
And a bolt (*si-ki-ir*) bars my lips
. . .
All my country says, "How crushed (*ḫa-bíl*) he is!"[54]

The Akkadian term for "snare" in this text (*ḫabālu*) thus seems to have a clear Hebrew cognate in Job 21:17, where Job says of the wicked,

[50] Job 21:17,20.

[51] Viz., the lúMUŠEN.DÙ priest.

[52] V. Haas and G. Wilhelm, *Hurritische und luwische Riten aus Kizzuwatna* (AOAT Sonderreihe 3; Kevelaer: Butzon und Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974) 50-59, 137-43.

[53] *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* 1.65; see W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960) 32.

[54] *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* 2.73-76,84-85,116 (Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature,* 42, 46 for the text; 43, 46 for the translation).

Their destruction comes upon them
In his anger he (Šadday) lays out snares (*ḥăbālîm*) [55]

For Job, then, Šadday appears not only as a sadistic archer who delights in shooting arrows into the chests of innocent mortals he is also a divine fowler who endlessly delights in laying snares for them as well

C Eliphaz versus Job on Job's Personal Fate

As is well known to students of Job, Eliphaz really loses control in his final speech Frustrated to the breaking point, Eliphaz has by this time grown thoroughly disgusted with Job's insistence that the blame for Job's suffering be laid at Šadday's holy feet To hold such a position strikes Eliphaz as unwarranted, unproven, even blasphemous In his final speech, therefore, he virtually explodes at Job, throwing aside all third-person gentility about theology and ethics and going straight for the sufferer's jugular vein

Apparently misguided by anger, Eliphaz misquotes Job horribly Even though Job makes it plain in an earlier speech that the wicked are the ones who say things like, "Who is Šadday that we might serve him?" and "What is our 'profit' when we approach him?" Eliphaz rips these questions out of context and responds to them sarcastically, as if Job had asked them himself "Can a man be 'profitable' to El?" he snorts "Is it violent gain to Šadday if your paths are blameless?" For Eliphaz, to ask such questions is to doubt God's righteousness Job must, therefore, be convinced of the arrogance of his position Apparently, Eliphaz has now thoroughly convinced himself that even a man as righteous as Job deserves to be "ensnared " He deserves to be overcome by "sudden terror " He deserves to have his "light darkened" (Job 22 1-11)

If Eliphaz actually is aware of the *šdyn* oracle at Deir ʿAllā or one with similar imagery, he may even be playing subtly on two key words here in his final jab at Job Job 22 17 reads *hāʾōmĕrîm lāʾēl sûr mimmennû, ûmâ yipʿal šadday,* "They say to El, 'Leave us!' and 'What can Šadday do?'" The two words I have in mind are the noun *šdy* and the verb *paʿal* The same two terms are linked together (coincidentally?) in the words of Balaam to his people in Deir ʿAllā 1 5 *ʾhwkm mh šd[yn pʿlw] wlkw rʾw pʿlt ʾlhn,* "I will tell you what the *šd[yn* have done] [56] Come! See the doings of the gods!"

Should there actually be a play on words here, Eliphaz would appear to be launching one last subtle salvo in this, his last speech to Job Whereas Balaam bluntly warns his people about the malevolent "doings" (*pʿlt*) of the

[55] The nearest antecedent subject for the verb *yehallēq* in Job 21 17 is *šadday* in 21 15

[56] Restoring *šd[yn pʿlw]* with Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAllā* 25

šdyn in Deir ʿAllā 1.5, Eliphaz may be adroitly using the same terms to mock the despondent nihilism of those "wicked" souls who, like Job, have come to believe that Šadday is powerless to "do" (*pʿl*) anything at all.

At any rate, Job's response to Eliphaz' final onslaught is one of utter despair:

> El has made my heart faint!
> Šadday has terrified me!
> . . .
> Here is my mark (*tāw*)! Let Šadday answer me![57]

If a play on the words *šdy* and *pʿl* seems tenuous, the use of the word *tāw*, "mark," seems a bit more deliberate. As in the earlier "Redeemer" speech of chap. 19, Job again pleads for something to be written down on his behalf. Here at the end of his dispute with Eliphaz, however, he appears to have another kind of writing in mind. Instead of a written record of his dispute with Šadday, he asks instead for a *tāw* mark to be inscribed over his head, perhaps a *tāw* mark like the one inscribed over the heads of the righteous in Ezekiel 9 to protect them from attack.[58]

In the end, Job no longer pleads a case for his integrity. No longer does he engage Eliphaz in theological dispute. No longer does he plead for a *gōʾēl* to intervene on his behalf. Thoroughly battered and bludgeoned, Job finally reverts to the same magical instinct that animates his non-Yahwistic contemporaries, the primordial, deeply ingrained instinct to hide in a protected place until somehow the door to healing can again be unlocked, and the light to salvation can again be illuminated.

III. Conclusions

It goes without saying that we desperately need to uncover and analyze more evidence for demonic activity in and around Israel before anything truly substantive can be said about the extent to which the incantation literature has influenced Job. Much work remains to be done on Job from a comparative perspective in general.[59] So we must be very cautious, content merely to reflect on the hints and clues alluded to above and summarized below in the following tentative conclusions:

[57] Job 23:16; 31:35.

[58] This is how the Arslan Tash amulets function as well.

[59] Marvin Pope's *Job* is the best contemporary commentary written from a broadly comparative perspective.

First, the terror facing Job seems fundamentally plural in the dialogues of chaps. 3–31, unlike the single *śāṭān* who initiates the action of the book in chaps. 1–2. This appears to be overtly demonstrated by the plural term *šdyn* in Job 19:29 and covertly implied by the phenomenological contours of the material in which the Šadday texts—Job's "texts of terror"—are now embedded. Both Eliphaz and Job seem to assume this plurality throughout the course of an increasingly caustic conversation.

Second, the dispute between Eliphaz and Job over the nature of Šadday's character is never truly resolved. From first to last in these dialogues, Eliphaz sees the world as a relatively secure cosmos under Šadday's protection. Job, however, sees it as an unstable chaos under no single protector. Eliphaz holds the pervasive forces of evil responsible for Job's suffering. Job, however, holds Šadday himself responsible. Eliphaz sees Šadday's intentions as essentially benevolent. Job sees them as essentially malevolent. Interpreters of Job need, therefore, to avoid the temptation to resolve conflicts which the text itself leaves unresolved.

Finally, in light of the comparative evidence, we have to ask questions about the potential sources of the non-Yahwistic material in Job. The Deir ᶜAllā texts and other ancient Near Eastern texts cited above offer a number of striking parallels to what clearly seems to be occurring in the Joban dialogues, parallels which must be examined and tested against their common sociohistorical environment, not ignored or dismissed. While it may seem certain at this point that much more hard evidence needs to come to light before anything truly definitive can be said about the existence or the function of a non-Yahwistic "repertoire" behind this section of the Hebrew Bible, it may yet turn out, after more evidence is brought to the fore, that Levine and others are on the right track. We now know enough to state unequivocally that El religion coexisted alongside Yahwism as a matter of historical record.[60]

If the comparative approach contributes anything to the study of Job, it is this: from the book of Job itself, there does not appear to be any real evidence that Job "repented" of any "sin." To hold such a position is to identify too closely with Eliphaz' harsh theology of retribution, not with the message

[60] See, for example, C E L'Heureux, *Rank Among the Canaanite Gods El, Baᶜal and the Rephaʾim* (HSM 21, Missoula Scholars, 1979) 67 "There is no evidence that El was in decline during the Israelite period On the other hand, there are a number of indications that throughout the time in which the Hebrew Bible was being formed, there was periodic contact with El traditions which continued to be alive outside of Israel" For further discussion, see J C de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (BETL 91, Leuven Leuven University/Peeters, 1990) 42-100, Mark S Smith, *The Early History of God Yahweh and the Other Deities of Ancient Israel* (San Francisco Harper & Row, 1990) 145-60

of Job.[61] Nor can we justifiably conclude that Job, upset as he was by his own plight as innocent sufferer, rebelliously repudiated Šadday altogether. To hold this position is to ignore the fact that the Book of Job now stands in a canon put together by Hebrews fully devoted to Yahweh as the one true God.[62] Both positions are extreme. Both tend to ignore the questions raised by a reading of the book in its sociohistorical context.

[61] *Contra* B. Lynne Newell, "Job: Repentant or Rebellious?" *WTJ* 46 (1984) 298-316. Daniel Simundson (*The Message of Job: A Theological Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986] 13-45) recognizes the havoc that Eliphaz' brand of retribution theology can wreak within contemporary believing communities, yet his understanding of Job's "repentance" in 42:6 remains quite traditional.

[62] *Contra* John B. Curtis, "On Job's Response to Yahweh," *JBL* 98 (1979) 497-511. Charles Muenchow ("Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6," *JBL* 108 [1989] 610) plausibly argues that Job's final response in 42:6 is less a confession of repentance than an ancient Near Eastern expression of shame before an acknowledged superior.

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