Artikel

"Abdi-Aširta, the Slave, the Dog": Self-Abasement and Invective in the Amarna Letters, the Lachish Letters, and 2 Sam 3:8*

Jeremy M. Hutton (Cambridge, Mass.)

1. Introduction

In 2 Sam 3:7 Eshbaal[1] confronts Abner concerning Abner's rendez-vous with Rizpah, the dead king Saul's wife. Presumably, this action by Abner was political in nature, a clear statement that he aspired to the kingship of Israel, to which station he had only recently elevated Eshbaal.[2] Stone determines the political nature of Abner's tryst with Rizpah to be an anthropological statement, namely, that by failing to safeguard sexual access to the deceased king's concubine, Eshbaal had proven himself to be ineffective as a societally potent "man," and therefore as king.[3] Whether or not this anthropological explanation holds true, the effect remains the same: Eshbaal felt that his kingship was threatened by Abner's actions.[4] While the subject of *way-yō(ʾ)mer* in v. 7 has been lost through textual corruption, context dictates that the speaker be Eshbaal, who asks Abner, "Why have you gone into my father's concubine?" This demand constitutes a direct assault upon the extent of Abner's power within the exiled royal house of Israel. Abner's response in v. 8 is enigmatic at best:

* This paper is a refinement of a paper written in 2001. I wish to thank John Huehnergard for his comments on and criticisms of the earlier paper. All mistakes are, of course, my own.

1 For my use of Eshbaal, see 1 Chr 8:33, 9:39. But cf. G.J. Hamilton, *New Evidence for the Authenticity of bšt in Hebrew Personal Names and for Its Use as a Divine Epithet in Biblical Texts*, CBQ 60, 1998, 228-250, especially 241, who argues that *bšt* was a productive element in west Semitic derived from an Akkadian loanword *bāštu*, meaning "protective spirit." I thank J. Huehnergard for pointing this reference out to me.

2 See, e.g., P.K. McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, AB 9, New York 1984, 113; G. Henschel, *2 Samuel*, NEB 34, Würtzburg 1994, 13.

3 K. Stone, *Sexual Power and Political Prestige*, BiRe 10/4, 1994, 53. Cf., however, A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC 11, Dallas 1989, 56, who argues that although possible, this political aspect is far from certain, since "the kingship was, practically, Abner's for the taking." This interpretation fails to take into account the socio-political ramifications of Absalom's assumption of the Israelite throne (2 Sam 16:20-23) and, almost contemporaneous with the situation at hand, David's own attempts at marrying into the Judahite and Israelite royal families. See J.D. Levenson and B. Halpern, *The Political Import of David's Marriages*, JBL 99, 1980, 507-518.

4 R.D. Bergen, *1/2 Samuel*, New American Commentary 7, Nashville, Tenn. 1996, 307, points out that it is never fully corroborated by the text that Abner had had sexual relations with Rizpah, only that Eshbaal accused him of such an indiscretion. I contend, however, that by not notifying the reader otherwise, the narrator *does* assume such action on the part of Abner.

הראש כלב אנכי אשר ליהודה היום אעשה־חסד עם־בית שאול אביך אל־אחיו
ואל־מרעהו ולא המציתיך ביד־דוד ותפקד עלי עון האשה היום:

"Am I a dog's head which is Judah's? Today I act loyally towards the house of Saul your father, towards his brothers, and towards his friends, and I have not handed you over to David, yet today you assail me concerning the iniquitous affair of the woman?"

While most of this sentence is easily read, its opening rhetorical question has caused much controversy and is usually glossed over by commentators who do not explain what social function a "dog's head" (*rō(ʾ)š keleb*) might have had in early first millennium B.C.E. Judah (or, for that matter, late first millennium B.C.E. Judah, during the period of canonization).[5] A few suggestions for a metaphorical (or even completely different) meaning of Hebrew *keleb* should be examined here.

2. Previous Scholarship

D.W. Thomas has followed the early work of G. Margoliouth by asserting that the phrase *rō(ʾ)š keleb* refers in fact to one of two species indigenous to Punt, the *Cynocephalus hamadryas* and the *C. babuinus*, suggested by Margoliouth to be the "dog-headed, dog-faced baboon." According to Thomas, "there is no reason why the Hebrews should not have been acquainted with the *C. hamadryas*."[6] While this historical contingency may be true (and may be circumvented if not), the relative paucity of materials pertaining to apes and baboons in biblical and extra-biblical texts does not lend itself to support such an intriguing interpretation. It is much more probable that the answer is not to be found so far afield, but rather in a context in which *keleb* means simply "dog".

Another argument is put forth by O. Margalith, who asserts that the predominant usage of Hebrew *keleb* in the Bible "was not a metaphorical self-abasing use of the quadruped's name, but simply [as] a synonym of 'slave'." This conclusion is reached by comparison with the cases in the Amarna letters of self-deprecatory phrasing using the pairs *ardu-kalbu* and *amēlu-kalbu*, as well as the Lachish letters in which we find the pair *ʿebed* and *keleb*.[7] While Margalith allows that there did exist a Semitic root *k-l-b* for which "dog" is an appropriate translation, he proposes a separation into two roots, preferring to call them homophones, one meaning "dog" and the other "slave". According to this logic, Abner asks Eshbaal if he is the *head slave* of Judah. Again, this solution to the phrase *rō(ʾ)š keleb* seems contrived. Not only should we expect *rō(ʾ)š hakkĕlābîm* for "head slave," but the problem is considerably greater when we take into account that the phrase *ʾăšer lîhûdâ* in v. 8 was not rendered in the LXX, suggesting that it might not have been part of the original text. Without the reference to Judah, this rhetorical question makes little sense as a

5 Even McCarter, *II Samuel*, 113, seems to be at a loss, citing Freedman's suggestion that this was a euphemistic substitution for an original "rear end of a dog" which was "obviously worse," as well as the interpretation of G. Margoliouth, expanded by D.W. Thomas, cited below, n. 6.

6 D.W. Thomas *Kelebh 'Dog': Its Origin and Some Usages of it in the Old Testament*, VT 10, 1960, 420.

7 O. Margalith, *Keleb: Homonym or Metaphor?*, VT 33, 1983, 491-494. Cf. G. Brunet, *L'Hébreu Kèlèb*, VT 35, 1985, 485-488, who systematically dissembles Margalith's arguments.

protestation of Abner's loyalty, and amounts to nothing more than an argument over rank: "Am I [your] head slave?" This solution ultimately fails to encapsulate the true nature of the argument between Abner and Eshbaal: namely, whether the fledgling king can hope to profit from – much less survive – a war with Judah without the *explicit loyalty* of Abner. Indeed, this conflict is the source of tension throughout the remainder of 2 Sam 3, in which Abner eventually *does* change his loyalty. A solution must therefore be found in which the phrase *hărō(ʾ)š keleb ʾānōkî* may be read independently of the possible MT addition *ʾăšer lîhûdâ*, while at the same time accepting "dog" as an authentic, albeit metaphorical, rendering of the Hebrew noun *keleb*.

It is clear that this difficult answer given by Abner is some sort of reply to an implicit invective made by Eshbaal. Whatever Eshbaal's accusation was must have implied that Abner was tantamount to a *rō(ʾ)š keleb*, whatever that signifies. In turn, Abner's answer seems to be a sarcastic self-abasement, meant to turn the accusation on its head, rather than a sincere attempt at groveling. From the context of 2 Sam 3, it is possible to make a few initial statements to clarify the usage of this phrase within the text:

1) Abner has committed an act which has made Eshbaal fearful for his official position of power. Eshbaal's reprimand in v. 7 appears to be an attempt to delineate the boundaries of acceptable behavior viz-à-viz Abner and the royal household. Therefore, Abner's protestation must be read as a proclamation of loyalty within the setting of the royal household.
2) Although Abner proclaims loyalty, he does so in such a way as to negate implicitly the precise terms of his rhetorical question. By asking, "Am I a *rō(ʾ)š keleb*?" Abner is in fact asserting that he is *not* a *rō(ʾ)š keleb*.
3) The foregoing suggests that it is somehow not desirable to be a *rō(ʾ)š keleb*, at least not under Abner's circumstances.

Perhaps an appeal to the vocabulary and structure of self-abasement and invective formulas in the ancient Near East might be instructive towards a more credible interpretation of this passage. I hope thereby to demonstrate that *rō(ʾ)š keleb* is improperly understood as a construct chain, and that our understanding of the phrase may be deepened through comparison with the Amarna texts written well before the solidification of the Israelite state (14th c. B.C.E.) and a series of letters written on ostraca near Lachish shortly before the fall of Judah to the Babylonian empire (early 6th c. B.C.E.). I also hope to show that Hebrew *keleb* should be read as a metaphorical usage of the animal's name, rather than as Margalith's synonym for "slave".

3. Invectives using **k-l-b*

The metaphorical use of the Semitic word *kalbu* "dog" is well known from self-deprecatory and invective material throughout the Late Bronze and Iron Age Levant. An examination of the structure of the occurrences of the word *kalbu* at Amarna, as well as those instances of the word in the Lachish letters, will provide us with a cultural background for the study of the use of *keleb* in 2 Sam 3:8. It should be noted that since the following examples are only those instances of self-abasement or invective utilizing the word *kalbu*, this exercise is not necessarily complete with

respect to *all* possible types of invective or self-abasement at Amarna. The scope of this study does not permit such a broadening of the topic.

3.1. The Amarna Letters

There are two basic usages of the word *kalbu* at Amarna (generally designated by the Sumerogram UR.GI$_7$ – some exceptions occur, but are not addressed here): 1) *kalbu* used in reference to the speaker (or writer) connotes loyalty and humility; 2) *kalbu* used in reference to a third party connotes disloyalty and presumptuous action. The word *kalbu* and its derivatives are used 34 times, according to the glossary-concordance of J. A. Knudtzon.[8] A 35th occurrence has been [presumably mistakenly] left out of the concordance (EA 88:10). Of these, three occurrences appear in broken contexts (EA 159:17; 92:7; 168 rev. 13) and cannot be used definitively for comment. Two occurrences appear in a list of gifts, and seem to designate golden and silver statuettes of dogs, hence, would not be metaphorical in usage (EA 22:8,9). The remaining 30 occurrences are metaphoric in nature, and all occur in letters in which an inferior king addresses his superior. The occurrences in which the speaker/writer designates himself as a *kalbu* are five in number. Of these, three occurrences appear in the form of a question:

- *(u) miya-mi anāku kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *ištēn u lā illaku*
  ...and who am I, a mere[9] dog, that I would not go? (EA 201:14-16; 202: 12-14).
- *u mi[ya-mi a]nāku kal[bu* (UR.GI$_7$) *ištēn] u lā [išme*[10] *ana i]riš[ti šarri] bēlīya.*
  ...and wh[o am] I, a [mere d]og that I would not [obey the de]man[d of the king] my lord? (EA 247:14-18).

These three occurrences of *kalbu* appear in letters written from Artamanya of Ṣiribašani, Amawaše, and probably Biridya,[11] respectively, to the king of Egypt. These political leaders are not among the most prolific writers in the Amarna corpus, and will not be heard from again in this discussion. The form in which these sentences appear, however, will be discussed at length. In order to facilitate discussion, I have designated this general form as Self-Abasement Question (SA$_Q$).

The remaining two instances in which *kalbu* is used by the speaker to refer to himself occur in statement form:

- *amur anāku arad* (ÌR) *šarri u kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *ša bītīšu u* ^{kur}*amurri gabbašu ana šarri bēlīya anaṣṣaršu*
  See, I am the slave of the king and a dog of his house, and I am protecting all Amurru for the king my lord. (EA 60:6-9).
- *[um]ma* ^{l}*abdi-aširte ard[uka* (ÌR) *u] ṭīd šēpēka ka[lbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *š]a bīt šarri bēlīya*
  [Thu]s Abdu-Ashirta [your] slave [and] the mud of your feet, the do[g o]f the house of the king my lord... (EA 61:2-4).

8 J.A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln: Mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen*, Aalen 1964, 1432.
9 For *l-en* as "mere," see W.L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters*, Baltimore 1992, EA 201, n. 2, p. 278.
10 On analogy with the *yaqtulu* form used in the above example, it might be possible that [*išmu*] should be supplied here.
11 For this identification, see Moran, *Amarna Letters*, EA 247, n. 1, p. 301.

Both of these occurrences are found in letters to the king of Egypt sent by Abdu-Ashirta proclaiming his loyalty to Egypt. Since these sentences appear in the form of a declarative statement, I have designated this subset as Self-Abasement Statement (SA_S).

The bulk of the remaining 25 metaphoric uses of *kalbu* can be classified as invective. As with the self-abasement formulas, these uses may be divided into an Invective Question (I_Q) and Invective Statement (I_S) form. There can be found several examples of the I_Q type, a few of which are presented here:

- *mīnu* [I]*abdi-aširta ardu* (ÌR) *kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *u* [*y*]*ilqu māt šarri ana šâšu*
  Who is Abdu-Ashirta, the slave, the dog, that [he] takes the land of the king for himself? (EA 71:16-19).
- *mīnu šūt* [I]*a*[*bd*]*i-aš*[*ir*]*ta kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *u yuba*ʾʾ*u* [*la*]*qā kali ālāni šarri* (!LUGAL-*ru*)
  Who is *he*, A[bd]u-Ash[ir]ta the dog, that he seeks to [ta]ke all the cities of the king...? (EA 76:11-13).

The same form of question found in these two examples (I_{Q1}) is found in nine other examples: EA 79:45-47; 84:16-18; 85:63-66; 88:9-11; 104:17-24; 108:25-28; 117:35-37; 125:40-45; 129:7. Each of these occurrences asks the question "Who is/are *x*, the dog(s), that he/they do(es) *y*?" In each of these questions, the assumption of the speaker is that it is undesirable to be called a *kalbu* because a *kalbu* is one who is disloyal and acts presumptuously against the king.

There is one abbreviated form of this structure which does not include a verbal clause after the nominal clause. This subset will be referred to as I_{Q2}:

- *miya šunu kalbū* (UR.MEŠ-*ka-bu*[12])
  Who are they, the dogs? (EA 129:81).

It is probably not insignificant that *all* the letters using *kalbu* in structure I_Q were written by Rib-Haddu; the use of this question-style invective seems to have been an important element in his rhetorical style.

Furthermore, it is significant that in both subsets of I_Q either a name or a third person pronoun appears in the initial question clause. The invective calls into question the presumptuous attitude of the third-person referent. This distinguishes the structure from a different type of question, a hypothetical question (H), in which there is found no pronoun:

- [*u*] *man*[*n*]*u-mi* [lú][*ka*]*l-*<*bu*> *ša lā yišm*[*u*] *ana awāte*[meš] *šarri bēlīšu*...
  [And] w[h]o is the [d]o<g> who doesn't obey the words of the king his master...? (EA 319:19-22)

There exist two more uses of *kalbu* in this type of structure: EA 320:22-25 and EA 322:17-19. As with set I_Q, it is probably not unimportant that all three of these uses occur in letters written by one ruler, in this case Yidya of Ashkelon. Furthermore, the questions are not meant to belittle any specific person. Rather, the use of *kalbu* seems to apply merely to anyone who does not follow the commands of the king or

12 For *-ka-bu* as a possible phonetic compliment, see Moran, *Amarna Letters*, EA 129, n. 4, p. 210. Note also the unexpected use of UR instead of UR.GI$_7$.

his governor (implying, of course, that Yidya is *not* one of these "dogs", since he so assiduously follows every command of the king! – see, e.g., EA 320:18-21).

Parallel to the SA_S described above, there exists an invective style which takes the form of a simple declarative sentence (I_{S1}):

- *inanna šūt k*[*īma* lú]SA.GAZ.ZA.MEŠ *kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) *ḫalqu*...
  Now he is a missing dog like the ʿApiru... (EA 67:16-17).

Such statements with similar declarative structure include EA 75:41-42; 84:31-35; 108:52-56; 109:9-11; 129:76-77; 130:33-35; 137:25-26.

Finally, the term *kalbu* is used as an invective, with specific referent, in the form of a circumstantial clause joined to a question with the insults appended directly to the name or the pronoun designating the object of the speaker's disdain. Since this type is more closely related formally to I_{S1}, rather than relating it to either of the I_Q sets which require an interrogative particle, I have given it the designation I_{S2}:

- [*an*]*a m*[*īni*] *ašbāta* [*u*] *qā*[*l*]*ā*[*t*]*a u yilqu* [*ālānīk*]*a* [lú][G]AZ.MEŠ *kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$).
  [W]h[y] have you sat [and] be[en] neglect[fu]l while the ʿApiru, the dog, takes yo[ur cities]? (EA 91:3-5).

This simple additive structure is also exemplified by EA 84:6-10. While this subset of invective does retain the implication of disloyalty and presumptuousness, it obviously does not bear the same weight of indignity on the part of the speaker that the I_Q form does.

The preceding discussion has outlined five major types of invective/self-abasement – SA_Q, SA_S, I_Q, I_S, H – subdividing I_Q and I_S each into two subsets: I_{Q1}, I_{Q2}, I_{S1}, I_{S2}. Of these, only SA_Q, I_Q and H may properly be considered formulaic, since there is a uniform structure for *all* the examples of each set. In the Statement sets (SA_S and I_S), the invective or self-deprecatory elements are used attributively with respect to the object of derision, and may be used in several varying contexts, from introductory formulas (EA 61:2-4, above) to rhetorical questions (EA 84:6-10). These types of structure, then, are not formulaic in themselves, and amount to catch-all categories. They will therefore be disregarded throughout the remainder of this study.

G. W. Coats has established a schema for dissecting self-abasement and invective formulas in the Bible. The schema, as Coats has noted, may be applied with equally valid results to the Amarna texts as well. The formulas generally occur with two fundamental clauses:

a) A nominal sentence, introduced by an interrogative particle, regularly either מִי or מָה and followed by a personal pronoun, a proper name or a noun...Nouns serve basically as circumlocutions for personal pronouns or proper names...

b) A verbal sentence, connected to the introductory question by a כִּי, or more rarely by an אֲשֶׁר... or a *waw* consecutive with an imperfect verb.[13]

The structure of the examples cited above, then, may be described in terms of these clause types *a* and *b*. According to this schema, my types delineated above may be

13 G.W. Coats, *Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas*, JBL 89, 1970, 14-15.

qualified using the following description of elements. Clause type *a* consists of the elements:

1) an interrogative particle *miya-(mi)* (the Amarna Canaanite cognate to Biblical Hebrew *mî* and epigraphic Hebrew *my*), *and:*
2) one of 2a, 2b, or 2c:
   2a) the pronoun *anāku* (type SA_Q)
   2b) a proper name of a third party or a third person pronoun *šū(t)* or *šunu* (type I_Q)
   2c) *Ø* (type H), *and:*
3) a series of metaphorically attributive nouns, such as *ardu kalbu*. The content of this element will be discussed below in section 4.

If the second clause type (*b*) is present, it consists of:

1) a conjunctive purposive *u* (a usage of Akkadian *u* known only in the Amarna texts where a North-West Semitic substrate cognate *wa-* served this purpose),[14] *and:*
2) one of 2a, 2b, or 2c:
   2a) a predicate, the verb of which is a negated first-person imperfective (prefix-conjugation) verb, here a *Ø*-affix *yaqtulu* form.[15] The verb is invariably something which is understood to be favorable to the king, which makes its negative unfavorable to the king (type SA_Q).
   2b) a predicate, the verb of which is a negated third-person imperfective (prefix-conjugation) verb, here a *y*-prefix *yaqtulu* form.[16] As in 2a, the verb negated is invariably something which is understood to be favorable to the king, which makes its negation unfavorable to the king (type H).
   2c) a predicate, the verb of which is a third-person verb whose subject is usually the referent of clause *a*,[17] usually a prefixed *yaqtulu* form (EA 71:16-19; 76:11-13; 79:45-47; 85:63-66; 117:35-37; 125:40-45; and possibly 108:25-28), but also potentially a *yaqtul* form (EA 88:9-11; possibly 108:25-28), or a third-person suffix form (EA 84:16-18; probably 129:7). These forms all seem to play the same role, without much variation in meaning. The verb is invariably understood to be disrespectful or downright insulting and disloyal towards the king. (type I_{Q1}).

If there is no *b* clause in the invective, then the formula is of type I_{Q2}. This is hardly problematic, since, as Coats has noted, the use of only clause *a* suggests that "*a* carries the full impact of abasement...because of its implied answer. Generally that

14 Coats is correct when he states that this "would parallel the...Hebrew conjunction by a *waw* consecutive imperfect..." (p. 16).

15 While it is possible that the form could have been *yaqtul* or *yaqtula* as well, only the *yaqtulu* form is attested; see EA 201:14-16; 202:12-14.

16 Again, it is possible that the form could have been *yaqtul* or *yaqtula* as well, but only the *yaqtulu* form is attested; see all the examples of type H, given above.

17 The only exception to this might be in EA 85:63-66, where Knudtzon, EA, 411, interprets an unspecified fourth-party (i.e., neither the speaker Rib-Haddu, nor the king of Egypt, nor Abdu-Ashirta) as the subject. I would argue, however, that the passage is equally meaningful if the referent of clause *a* (i.e., Abdu-Ashirta) is, in fact, the subject of [*i*]*qabbu*.

answer is left unexpressed, although it is anticipated in those texts that refer to the object as a servant, a dog."[18]

Before proceeding, a brief schematic overview of the types of self-abasement and invective formulas presented so far is warranted. My designations are to be related to the preceding qualification of elements as follows:

SA_Q: *a*1-*a*2a-*a*3-*b*1-*b*2a
I_{Q1}: *a*1-*a*2b-*a*3-*b*1-*b*2c
I_{Q2}: *a*1-*a*2b-*a*3
H: *a*1-*a*2c-*a*3-*b*1-*b*2b

A final feature of Amarna self-abasement and invective formulas is that they need not consist only of *a* and *b* clauses. Coats notes that the formulas can be compounded with a parenthetical *c* clause inserted between *a* and *b*, yielding a form *a-c-b*:

- *miya-mi mārē* [l]*abdi-aširta ardi* (ÌR) *kalbi* (UR.GI$_7$) *šar* [kur]*kašši u šar* [kur]*mitanni šunu u tilqûna māt šarri ana šâšunu*
  Who are the sons of Abdu-Ashirta, the slave, the dog – are they the king(s) of Kašši or the king(s) of Mitani? – that they take the land of the king for themselves? (EA 104:17-24).

3.2. The Lachish Letters

The Lachish letters provide another set of occurrences of self-abasement formulas. These letters, discovered at Tell ed-Duweir, were found in the destruction layer of 586 B.C.E., above the destruction layer of 597 B.C.E.[19] This archaeological context dates the ostraca firmly at the beginning of the 6th century, nearly 700 years after the Amarna texts were written, and 400 years after when David and Abner would have lived.

By tracing the use of the word *klb* used throughout the Lachish corpus, it is possible to find several examples of self-abasement. As with the Amarna corpus, this exercise does not necessarily yield *all* the possible instances of literary self-abasement, but rather only those which contain the word *klb*. Five occurrences of *klb* may be found in Lachish Letters (L) 2, 5, 6, 12, and 21. Of these, Letter 12 is too fragmentary to be of much use in a discussion, although the occurrence of *klb* in ln. 1 ([ ]*klb ʾdny h*[ ]) is clearly not of the same form as those seen in Letters 2, 5, and 6, and probably should fall under my rubric SA_S (see above). Likewise, the occurrence of *klb* in Letter 21 appears in a declarative sentence:

- *ʾl ʾdny ʾt ʿbdk klb ywṣʾ*...
  To my lord; your servant, a (mere) dog, he (?) will bring forth... (L 21:1-4).[20]

18 Coats, 18.

19 For a more detailed discussion of the archaeological context and bibliography, see D. Pardee, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters*, Chico, Calif. 1982, 67-78.

20 For Lachish 21, see S.L. Gogel, *A Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 23, Atlanta 1998, 421. The broken context does not allow for a clear understanding of the word *ʾt*.

This occurrence as well falls under my rubric SA_S, since it occurs as a metaphorical description of the referent (*ᶜbdk*).

The three remaining occurrences, however, appear in self-abasing questions, connoting humility and loyalty to the superior:

- *my . ᶜbdk klb ky . zkr ᵓdny ᵓt [ᶜ]bdh .*
  Who is your servant, a (mere) dog, that my lord has remembered his [ser]vant? (L 2:3-5)
- *my . ᶜbdk klb . ky . [š]lḥth ᵓl ᶜbdk . ᵓ[t] . hs[prm k]zᵓ[t] .*
  Who is your servant, a (mere) dog, that you have [s]ent [t]hes[e] let[ters] to your servant? (L 5:3-6)
- *my ᶜbdk klb ky . šlḥ . ᵓdny ᵓ[t sp]r hmlk [wᵓt] spry hšr[m...*
  Who is your servant, a (mere) dog, that my lord has sent the king's [lett]er [and the] letters of the official[s... (L 6:2-4).

Clearly, these formulaic questions belong to the class of Self-Abasement Questions described above. Their assumed attitude is one of humility, the implication being that the speaker is of such low stature that he is surprised that his superior would look upon him so favorably. The structure of these formulas, however, differs slightly from that of the Amarna Self-Abasement Questions. While they contain an interrogative clause (*a*) and a predicative clause (*b*), the arrangement of the individual elements of the two does not conform exactly to any structure previously known from Amarna. Elements in common are an interrogative particle, here *my* (*a*1); the metaphorically attributive noun *klb* (*a*3); and a conjunctive purposive *ky* taking the place of the conversive *u/waw* seen in Amarna (*b*1). But two more possible elements must be added to the above schematic in order to account for the structure of the Lachish Self-Abasement:

*a*2d) the use of a noun (here the term *ᶜbdk* "your servant/slave") to designate the speaker, rather than any pronoun or proper name. The speaker refers to himself throughout the formula in the third-person.[21]

*b*2d) a predicate, the verb of which is either a second- or third-person perfect form. In each case, the subject of the verb is the superior whom the speaker is addressing, referred to in the second or third person, corresponding to the appropriate verbal form.

Lachish, therefore, had its own peculiar formulaic question of self-abasement, which is schematized as:

SA_{QL}: *a*1-*a*2d-*a*3-*b*1-*b*2d

[21] The term *ardu* does appear above in the Amarna Self-Abasement Statement set (EA 60:6-9 and 61:2-4), but used attributively, parallel to *kalbu*. This usage, while similar to that found at Lachish described here, cannot be considered parallel because the Amarna Self-Abasement Statements include a pronoun (*anāku*; EA 60:6-9) or a proper noun (Abdu-Ashirta; EA 61:2-4) to designate the speaker, which the structure at Lachish describes the speaker *only* with the term *ᶜbd*.

3.3. The Bible

The Bible itself presents us with a few examples of self-abasement formulas. A comprehensive discussion of all biblical examples of the formula is beyond the scope of this paper,[22] but those instances in which the term *keleb* is used metaphorically to designate disloyal enemies or extreme humility on the part of the speaker will be examined here. Aside from the occurrences of *keleb* in sentences of types I_{S1} (Is 56:10, 11; Ps 22:17, 21) and I_{S2} (1 Sam 24:14; 2 Sam 16:9), the word is used four times in variations on the self-abasement or invective formulas already discussed.

A self-derogation based on the basic template of type SA_{QL} appears in 2 Sam 9:8, when Mephiboseth speaks to David saying:

מה עבדך כי פנית אל־הכלב המת אשר כמוני

Who is your servant that you have looked upon a dead dog such as myself?

The structure of this question differs slightly from the structure delineated above as SA_{QL}, insofar as element *a*3 (the metaphoric noun used as debasement) has been subsumed into the predicative clause *b*. This exchange of position is relatively minor, and will be considered only a minor variation of the basic type. The other occurrence of a question based on the same archetype appears in 2 Ki 8:13 when Hazael asks Elijah:

כי מה עבדך הכלב כי יעשה הדבר הגדול הזה

For who is your servant, the dog, that he should do this great thing?

In this case, the structure nicely follows that of the Lachish Letters (SA_{QL}) until the *b* clause, at which point the speaker refers to himself as the object of the metaphorical abasement using a third-person verb (much like in element *b*2c used at Amarna), with the difference that in Amarna, the subject of *b*2c was only used in reference to a third party in invectives, not to the speaker. The schematized structure of this passage would appear as *a*1-*a*2d-*a*3-*b*1-*b*2c, a slight and insignificant variation on SA_{QL}. Together with the instances found in the Lachish Letters, above, these two occurrences suggest that in the period before the Babylonian destruction, Hebrew used a formula for self-abasement which had several possible variations. It is entirely probable that the structures of all possible variations have not survived in the extant literature.

One final rhetorical structure must be analyzed. This structure appears twice in the Bible using the word *keleb*. It is neither invective nor self-derogation. Rather, it is a form which responds explicitly in structure to a perceived invective delivered by the addressee of the remark. It is an outright refusal of self-abasement, and implicitly a self-aggrandizement. The first of these occurrences is fairly straightforward. When David comes before Goliath in 1 Sam 17 lightly armed – implicitly insulting the heavily-armed warrior's capabilities – Goliath says to him in v. 43:

הכלב אנכי כי־אתה בא־אלי במקלות

Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?

This structure shares several elements with that of the Amarna invective and self-abasement questions, as well as with that of the Lachish Letters. Clause *a* contains

[22] The reader is referred to Coats's article for a comprehensive discussion of the biblical occurrences.

an interrogative (albeit non-pronominal) particle *hă-* (*a*1), a metaphorically attributive noun (*a*3), the first-person singular pronoun (*a*2a), and the conjunctive purposive *kî* of the Lachish letters (*b*1). The significant difference from any previously studied structure is the predicate:

*b*2e) a predicate, the verb of which is a second-person form. The verb is understood to be somehow insulting to the speaker, and may occur either as a second-person pronoun followed by a participle (as is the case here), or as a converted imperfect (see below) parallel to the use of *u* + *yaqtulu* in the Amarna letters.

This new structure is not a self-abasement, in that the speaker does not believe the addressee's insult to be applicable. Neither is this form an invective, insofar as it does not attack the addressee, nor does it attack a third party. Rather, this structure functions as a response to an implicit or explicit insult delivered by the addressee. As we have seen, the formulaic nature of the invective question can be simply expressed as, "Who is *x*, that he should do *y*?" This structure, in turn, directly addresses every aspect of that invective question, explicitly questioning the applicability of *x* to the speaker, and therefore implicitly questioning the propriety of the invective question that the addressee asked in the first place. The reply to "Who is *x*, that he should do *y*?" on the part of the besmirched, then, is not merely a matter of denial – "I am not *x*" or "I did not do *y*" – but rather is an attack on the applicability of both *x* and *y*: "Am I *x*, that you accuse me of *y*?" In the present instance, we may present the situation in terms of the already discussed material. In v. 26, while talking with his brothers who are standing in Israel's battle-formation, David poses his disdain of Goliath in a form that follows the invective described above: "Who is Goliath, this uncircumcised [one], that he should taunt the battle-lines of the living God?" David approaches the mighty warrior Goliath meagerly armed. The double-pronged insinuation of such an action is: "Who is Goliath but a dog (i.e., non-human and base creature), that he could fight me even when I have just a stick?"[23] Goliath, insulted, cannot counter with a statement, "I am no dog," or, "Do you think I can't fight you when you have just a stick?" because anyone familiar with the matrix of Levantine insult formulas (known since at least the 14th c. B.C.E.) will have interpreted David's actions as an implicitly double-edged attack. Countering with one of these statements, Goliath would leave himself open on the other flank. Instead, he

[23] For David, the fact that Goliath is uncircumcised is a point of disgust, probably rendering Goliath as worthless as a dog in the Israelite worldview. Indeed, while talking to Saul in vv. 34-35, David cites his past actions as a shepherd as qualification enough for facing Goliath: "Your servant herds sheep for his father; whenever a lion or a bear would come and carry off a sheep from the flock, I would go out after it, and strike [the animal] and save [the sheep] from its mouth, and if it rose up against me [i.e., attacked me], I would seize it by the beard, and strike it, and kill it. Just as your servant has struck the lion and the bear, so too will this uncircumcised Philistine be like one of them…"
David's qualifications, then, include the ability to kill wild beasts, presumably using only those weapons that lay at hand: sticks from the ground and stones thrown from the sling. After David has incapacitated Goliath, the author of the text takes care to state plainly that David did not have a sword (1 Sam 17:50).

must use a formal structure of rhetoric which directly addresses both facets of the insult: "Am I a dog, that you come to [fight] me with sticks?"
A similar problem confronts Abner in the passage with which this study began. Eshbaal asks Abner "Why have you gone into my father's concubine?" Abner takes this question as an insult, applying to it the standard structure of Levantine invective. He understands Eshbaal's insult as having two edges: the first insinuation made is that Abner is a base creature (i.e., a dog), the second is that because of his relative position of power as king, Eshbaal believes that he has the right to command Abner when in fact it is Abner who is becoming strong within the house of Saul (2 Sam 3:6). To counter this double-attack, Abner responds:

(1) הראש כלב אנכי
(2) אשר ליהודה
(3) היום אעשה־חסד עם־בית שאול אביך אל־אחיו ואל־מרעהו
ולא המציתך ביד־דוד
(4) ותפקד עלי עון האשה היום:

Am I a dog's head (*rō(ʾ)š keleb*) which is Judah's? Today I act loyally towards the house of Saul your father, towards his brothers, and towards his friends, and I have not handed you over to David, yet today you assail me concerning the iniquitous affair of the woman?

The structure of this rhetorical question is one of *a-c-b*, as has been seen above in EA 104: 17-24, in which clause (3) of Abner's speech should be considered parenthetical, and may be disregarded in the following discussion. On the basis of the absence of phrase (2) in LXX, it has been suggested that *ʾăšer lîhûdâ* was a gloss inserted because a scribe or editor mistook *rō(ʾ)š keleb* for the graphically identical *rō(ʾ)š kālēb* and wanted to clarify the tribe to which Caleb belonged.[24] Comparatively speaking, the supposition that the phrase is a later gloss makes much more sense than assuming otherwise. In the thirty-sum other occurrences of the root *k-l-b* in positive contexts described so far, none states to whom the metaphorical dog might have belonged. In any case, the authenticity of phrase (2) does not significantly shape the argument here one way or the other. For now, the sentence will be considered under the assumption that (2) is a gloss. This leaves only (1) and (4):

הראש כלב אנכי ותפקד עלי עון האשה היום:

Am I a dog's head (*rō(ʾ)š keleb*) so that today you assail me concerning the iniquitous affair of the woman?

The structure of this sentence closely matches that of Goliath's response to David. Only a slight variation occurs in clause *b*. Above, *b*1 used the conjunctive purposive *kî* (=*ky* of the Lachish letters), coupled with a second person pronoun followed by a participle in *b*2, while here *b* consists of the converted imperfect *u* + *yaqtul*(*u*) forms recognizable from the Amarna letters.
The similarity in structure reveals the similarity in situation: Abner's response to Eshbaal's question answers Eshbaal's implied invective "Who is Abner, the dog,

[24] H. Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i, p. 25, cited in D. W. Thomas, *Kelebh* 'Dog', VT 10, 1960, 414. McCarter, *II Samuel*, follows the basic assertion of this interpretation, but Thomas does not.

that he may have an iniquitous affair with the woman?" Abner simultaneously explicitly denies that he is a base creature, and that Eshbaal had any right whatsoever to question his loyalty. Whether Abner understood his words to imply that he was not having sexual relations with Rizpah will never be known with certainty. An understanding of the situation can only be supplied through conjectural comparison with other cases of the take-over of the past king's harem. However, the present study seeks to find a more adequate solution to the problem of the phrase *rō(ʾ)š keleb*.

4. Nouns used in invective formulas

Any consideration of the phrase *rō(ʾ)š keleb* must take into account the other occurrences of the metaphoric usage of *keleb* in biblical Hebrew, *klb* in extra-biblical Hebrew, and *kalbu* in Amarna Akkadian. Not only should the study examine the specific use of the term, but also the elements of structure and similar vocabulary. Section 3studied the variations in structure of the matrix of self-abasement, invective, and response to [implied] invective prevalent in the Late Bronze and Iron Age Levant. Section 4 therefore, must examine similar vocabulary in the parallel elements and clauses of the other occurrences. Since *rō(ʾ)š keleb* occurs in clause *a* of the response to invective found in 2 Sam 3:8 – specifically in the element containing the metaphorically attributed nouns called *a*3 above – , this portion of the study will focus on the chains of metaphorically attributed nouns (element *a*3) in other occurrences of the self-abasement formula, as well as those nouns used in element *a*2 which are neither pronouns nor proper names.[25]

At Amarna, the word *kalbu* is used metaphorically to refer to humans, either invectively or as a personal expression of humility, 30 times in a meaningful context. Of these, the term *kalbu* is used alone as a metaphor a total of 17 times. Of these 17 occurrences, three appear in contexts of type H (EA 319:19-22; 320:22-25; 322:17-19), five in contexts of type I_S (EA 84:6-10, 31-35; 108:52-56; 130:33-35; 137:25-26), six in type I_Q (EA 76:11-13; 79:45-47; 108:25-28; 125:40-45; 129:7, 81), and the remaining three in contexts of type SA_Q (EA 201:14-16; 202: 12-14; 247: 14-18). Since in these 17 occurrences *kalbu* is the only noun metaphorically modifying the referent of the abasement or invective, we need not consider them any further.

There are two occurrences in which the referent of the invective is compared – either by metaphor or by simile – to the ʿApiru (EA 67: 16-17; 91:3-5). Since there is as yet no scholarly consensus on the precise meaning of the gentilic ʿApiru, we must be content to state that in these two invectives, the designation is clearly meant as an insult towards the referent of the comparison. It was by no means a favorable thing to be considered one of the ʿApiru.

In one instance of type I_Q, the speaker uses two nouns in element *a*3:

- *mi[ya-mi šū]t* ^{lú}*sarru*[26] *u kalbu* (UR.GI$_7$) [*u d*]*an*.

[25] In this study, this group comprises only the noun *ʿbd* as used in element *a*2d. It is not inconceivable that a speaker could use another self-abasing noun in element *a*2d to designate his perceived position relative to the addressee.

[26] For the reading of LÚ.LUL as *sarru*, see Moran, *Amarna Letters*, 84, n. 4, p. 155.

Wh[o is *h*]*e*, the traitor and dog, [that he is st]rong? (EA 84:16-18).

This combination of *sarru* with *kalbu* in element *a*3 serves as a springboard into a problem of larger scope. The remaining ten occurrences of *kalbu* in self-abasing and invective structures at Amarna juxtapose the noun *kalbu* with the noun *ardu*. In the context of one of these pairs (EA 75: 41-42), a broken spot in the text obscures the logogram ÌR. But the remaining nine occurrences of the pair *ardu-kalbu* can be read with little difficulty. In two cases, the pair occurs in invectives of the type I_S (EA 109:9-11; 129:76-77). It appears twice again in self-abasing statements (EA 60:6-9; 61:2-4), the remainder appearing in invective questions (EA 71:16-19; 85:63-66; 88:9-11; 104:17-24; 117:35-37). Since the word-pair is usually written logographically, it is difficult to tell in many cases whether the nouns should be read as two absolute nouns in apposition ("the slave, the dog"), or as a construct chain ("the slave of a dog"). In EA 60:6-7, the phrase *arad šarri* is juxtaposed with *kalbu ša bītīšu*, both through context and through the use of a conjunctive *u*. Likewise, in EA 61:2-4, the two phrases are separated by an intermediate phrase *ṭīd š*[*ēp*]*ēka*. Not only this, but enough room appears at the end of ln. 2 for Knudtzon to have supplied *ard*[*uka*] and enough room at the beginning of ln. 3 for [*u*]. Clearly these occurrences of *ardu* and *kalbu* do not form a construct chain, but in the rest of the occurrences of the word pair *ardu-kalbu*, no conjunction appears, and the two are written one after the other: ÌR.UR.GI$_7$. Only in EA 84:16-18 are the logograms LÚ.LUL and UR.GI$_7$ separated by a conjunctive *u*, negating any chance of a construct chain.

A comparison of *a* clauses in the Lachish letters reveals a similar trend towards a semantically identical word pair *ʿbd-klb*. In each of the three self-abasing questions found in the Lachish corpus, clause *a* reads *my ʿbdk klb* (L 2:3-5; 5:3-6; 6:2-4). Furthermore, the declarative sentence in Letter 21 uses *klb* to modify metaphorically the subject *ʿbdk* of the verb (L 21:1-4).[27] In each one of these cases, it is quite clear that both nouns stand in apposition, since the first of the two (*ʿbd*) always has the *-k* suffixed possessive pronoun denoting a non-bound form. Assuming that these results may be retrojected onto the language of the Amarna texts, this suggests that *ardu* and *kalbu* were indeed read as two absolute nouns in apposition to one another.[28]

The corpus from Lachish is suggestive of the frequent juxtaposition in colloquial ancient Hebrew of the term *ʿbd* "servant/slave" with *klb* when one is speaking in a self-abasing manner to a superior. Unfortunately, this trend is only once attested in the biblical texts, in a passage already cited above:

כי מה עבדך הכלב כי יעשה הדבר הגדול הזה

For who is your servant, the dog, that he should do this great thing? (2 Ki 8:13).

Here too the word *ʿabděkā* is juxtaposed with *hakkeleb* in the *a* clause. As in the Lachish letters, each of these forms is clearly non-construct, *ʿabděkā* because of its

[27] The fifth occurrence of *klb* in the Lachish letters is preceded by a lacuna, and therefore not useful in the present inquiry.

[28] The legitimacy of equating *ardu* with the West Semitic term *ʿbd* is supported by two lexical texts in which *abdu* is given as a possible meaning of *ardu*. See CAD, s.v. *ardu*, 244.

suffixed pronoun and *hakkeleb* because of its definite article. This consistency in structure and vocabulary suggests that a reappraisal of the Hebrew phrase *rō(ʾ)š keleb* in 2 Sam 3:8 is warranted.

The first question to be asked is whether the two words should be considered a construct chain, as is the normal reading (hence, "dog's head"), or as two absolute nouns in apposition. The latter option is supported by the clearly appositional nature of the word pair in the preceding biblical passage, as well as in four of the Lachish Letters. Additionally, this appositional nature seems to be the best reading of the instances of the word pair in the Amarna letters (since "slave of a dog" hardly makes sense). The obstacle to interpreting *rō(ʾ)š keleb* as two appositional nouns is the lack of a clear meaning. While it is quite easy to determine what "the slave, the dog" means, it is quite difficult to understand what the appositional phrase "the head, the dog" means. The word *rō(ʾ)š* in biblical Hebrew seems to connote only favorable opinions of the thing discussed: "chief, front, choicest" are a few of the definitions given for the word in BDB.[29] But clearly, if we are to read the word appositionally in Abner's diatribe, then *rō(ʾ)š* must take on a more negative connotation in this circumstance.

In Akkadian, the cognate term *rēšu* came to mean not only "head," but also "slave." This usage of *rēšu* for "slave" can be found throughout Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian, as well as in texts dating from the time of Merodachbaladen, Assurbanipal, and Esarhaddon.[30] Is it possible that Hebrew once admitted this meaning for *rō(ʾ)š*, only for it to be subsequently forgotten? An analysis of several lexical texts suggests that at some point, the language of Canaan had the opportunity to acquire a possible semantic value for *r-ʾ-š* "servant/slave," parallel to the same meaning in Akkadian. In one of the *abdu=ardu* texts mentioned above, a third synonym appears: *rēšu*.[31] In another, *rēšu* is given as an equivalent for LÚ.ÌR.[32] Furthermore, *ardu* was given as a possible value of SAG, normally the logogram used for *rēšu*, and often both *ardu* and *rēšu* are given together as values of SAG.[33] Conversely, *rē*[*šum*] is given as an equivalent of [*ni-i*]*n*(?)-*ta* ÌR.[34] This complex of equations and recognized synonyms provides the background for the recognition of a rarely used semantic value "servant/slave" for Canaanite (or perhaps only Hebrew) *r-ʾ-š*.

Since the Massoretic tradition has preserved the pronunciation /*rō(ʾ)š*/ (derived from **raʾš* through the Canaanite shift after quiescence of the *ʾaleph*), there exist three possibilities to explain how Hebrew gained the meaning "servant/slave" for its lexeme *rō(ʾ)š*: 1) the semantic value was present already at the Proto-Semitic stratum, and was inherited by Hebrew through Northwest Semitic; 2) the semantic value was not inherited through Northwest Semitic, but rather the orthographic realization *rʾš* actually represents a pronunciation /*rēš*/, which pronunciation Hebrew borrowed

29 BDB, s.v. ראש.
30 CAD, s.v. *rēšu* 2, 280-281.
31 CAD, s.v. *ardu*, 244.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 243. *abdu* also appears in close proximity to the equation SAG= *rēšu* ; see CAD, s.v. *rēšu*, 277.
34 CAD, s.v. *rēšu*, 278.

from Akkadian to denote its semantic value "servant/slave"; or 3) the Massoretic reading /*rō(ʾ)š*/ is correct, in which case Hebrew borrowed the semantic value of Akkadian *rēšu*, and applied it to the already extant word *rō(ʾ)š*. Of these three possibilities, both 1) and 2) seem highly unlikely. The meaning "servant/slave" is not found for the word *rō(ʾ)š* in Aramaic,[35] and is otherwise unknown in Classical Hebrew. That Proto-Semitic had developed a semantic value "servant/slave" for its lexeme **raʾš* is doubtful. The second solution presented here is unlikely, because *ʾaleph* was never used as a *mater lectionis* for an *i*-class vowel such as would have been taken into Hebrew from the Akkadian loan *rēšu*.[36] The third solution – semantic borrowing – is by far the most favorable option. Such borrowing of semantic values from Akkadian into Hebrew is not unheard of. P. Mankowski has traced certain meanings of the Hebrew words *dĕrôr*, *taʿam* and *māne(h)* back to similar, but not identical Akkadian words.[37]

5. Conclusion

It is unnecessary to go to the lengths of proposing that two homophonous roots – one *k-l-b* meaning "dog" and the other *k-l-b* meaning "slave" – have developed in Hebrew.[38] I suggest, rather, that 2 Sam 3:8 contains evidence for yet another instance of semantic borrowing from Akkadian into Hebrew. On the basis of comparative evidence from the Amarna Letters and the Lachish Letters, we should no longer translate Abner's vitriolic response to Eshbaal as has so often been done in the past, with *rō(ʾ)š keleb* interpreted as a construct chain. Rather, Abner's response is to be read in light of the invectives and self-abasement formulas prevalent throughout the Amarna letters: "Am I a slave, a dog, so that today you assail me concerning the iniquitous affair of the woman, (even though) today I act loyally towards the house of Saul your father, towards his brothers, and towards his friends, and I have not handed you over to David?"

35 DictTalm, s.v. ראש.
36 Note, for instance, the case of Hebrew *sārîs*, a loan from Akkadian *ša rēši*. See P.V. Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew*, Harvard Semitic Studies 47, Winona Lake, Ind. 2000, 123.
37 Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords*, 9 n. 27.
38 Contra the work of Margalith, above.

Abstract:

An appeal to the vocabulary and structure of self-abasement and invective formulas in the ancient Near East leads towards a more credible interpretation of the passage 2 Sam 3:8 than those that have been previously suggested. *rō(ʾ)š keleb* is improperly understood as a construct chain, and our understanding of that phrase is deepened through comparison with the Amarna Letters and the Lachish Letters, as well as with other passages from the Bible. Hebrew *keleb* should be read as a metaphorical usage of the animal's name, rather than as a synonym for "slave" (as some have proposed). Furthermore, *rō(ʾ)š* may be read as a Hebrew borrowing from its Akkadian cognate *rēšu* of the semantic field "slave". The phrase *hărō(ʾ)š keleb ʾānōkî* in 2 Sam 3:8, therefore, should be translated as "Am I a dog, a slave...?"

Address of the author:

Jeremy M. Hutton, NELC Dept., 6 Divinity Ave. Cambridge, MA 02138, USA,
e-mail: jhutton@fas.harvard.edu

Untersuchungen zum hebräischen Kohortativ

Ernst Jenni (Basel)

Im Anschluss an die in der *presidential address* zum *XVII. International Congress for the Study of the Old Testament Basel 2001* gebotenen Ausführungen[1] über den sogenannten Adhortativ[2] (Erweiterung des Imperativs sing. masc. durch das Morphem *-â*) soll hier die Verwendung des Kohortativs, der mit der gleichen Endung *-â* markierten Nebenform der 1.Pers. Sing./Plur. des Imperfekts (אֶקְטְלָה / נִקְטְלָה), untersucht werden. Die dort wegleitenden pragmatischen und sprechakttheoretischen Überlegungen können auch hier zum Tragen kommen. Es soll gezeigt werden, dass die Kohortativform gegenüber der endungslosen Imperfektform deren bestehende Bedeutung modifiziert, indem sie ein pragmatisches, auf das in der Redesituation intendierte Verhältnis zwischen Sprecher und Adressat bezogenes Element grammatikalisiert.

Die einleitenden Bemerkungen zu Bibliographie, Methode und Terminologie können kurz gehalten werden. Anstelle einer Forschungsgeschichte zum Thema sei nur auf die gegenwärtig wohl umfassendsten Orientierungen über den Kohortativ in §45 (*Cohortative*), §114a-f (*Direct volitive moods*) und §116a-c (*Indirect volitive moods*) der Grammatik von Joüon/Muraoka und in §34.5 der Syntax von Waltke/O'Connor hingewiesen.[3] Eine ausgezeichnete Einführung in die neuere Sicht des klassisch-hebräischen Verbalsystems gibt der ZAH-Aufsatz von Hendel.[4] Zur Methode der Untersuchung wäre anzumerken, dass es nicht genügt, nach einer sprachhistorisch-etymologischen Herleitung der Verbalform, die vielleicht zutreffen kann, aber nicht ohne weiteres von einer früheren, sprachvergleichend gewonnenen Bedeutung auf die aktuelle Bedeutung schließen lässt, die wichtigsten Gebrauchsweisen an ausgewählten Beispielen isoliert aufzuzählen.[5] Die sprachliche Erscheinung ist vielmehr

1 „Höfliche Bitte im Alten Testament", in: A. Lemaire (ed.), Congress Volume, Basel 2001, VTS 92, 2002, 1-16.

2 Die Bezeichnung ‚Adhortativ' für die mit *-â* „verstärkte" Form des Imp. sing. masc. geht wohl auf das von K. Budde seit der 8. Auflage 1895 neubearbeitete „Hebräische Schulbuch" von J. Hollenberg zurück, hat sich aber in der Hebraistik neben den Umschreibungen wie ‚emphatischer Imperativ' oder ‚Imp. mit Kohortativendung' wenig durchgesetzt.

3 P. Joüon, T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (SubBi 14/I-II), 1991, 138.373-376.380-383; B.K. Waltke, M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 1990, 573-577.

4 R.S. Hendel, *In the Margins of the Hebrew Verbal System*, ZAH 9, 1996, 152-181.

5 Vgl. etwa in knappster Form R. Meyer, *Hebräische Grammatik. III Satzlehre*, ³1972 (Nachdruck 1992), 47f. (§100.4b): „Der Koh., ein Rest des alten Fin[alis]., ist der Modus der Selbstaufforderung in der 1. Person: אלכה „ich will gehen" נלכה „lasst uns gehen!", ferner der Bitte: אעברה „möchte ich durchziehen dürfen (Dt. 2,27)." Darauf aufbauend J. Körner, Hebräische Studiengrammatik, 1983, 127f., unter der Überschrift „Finalis/Konjunktiv: ... Die alte Endung *-a des Finalis ist – wie die Indikativendung *-u* – abgefallen. Reste dieser *a*-Endung finden sich noch in der sogenannten Kohortativendung *-â* bei der 1. Pers. com. Sg. und Pl. ... Der Kohortativ gibt die Richtung des