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Breaking Bread with the Dead: Katumuwa's Stele, Hosea 9:4, and the Early History of the Soul

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The discovery at Zincirli of an inscribed stele belonging to Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa, touches upon several longstanding issues concerning the meaning of the word *nbš* (Hebrew נַפְשׁ). Although the inscription was dedicated during the lifetime of Katumuwa, the continued provision of his “*nbš* that is in this stele” raises questions regarding not only the term’s nuance within a postmortem context, but also the nature of feeding the dead. These issues can be addressed by carefully examining the manner by which the term’s abstract and substantive forms relate to concepts of identity. The analysis of Katumuwa’s stele along with a new interpretation of Hos. 9:4 will show that *nbš*/נַפְשׁ is a ritually centered object that marks identity. In other words, postmortem identity is reified in the *nbš*/נַפְשׁ through ritual actions that include feeding the dead. This interpretation sheds new light on the substantive meaning of *nbš*/נַפְשׁ in inscriptions and in biblical literature, where the term signifies either a stele or a corpse.

The discovery in 2008 of a stele at Zincirli (ancient Sam'al)¹ has brought new impetus to the study of the Semitic root *npš/nbš*, classically translated in Hebrew (נַפְשׁ) as “soul.” The stele (Fig. 1), which dates to the eighth century B.C.E., bears an inscription and image of a royal servant named Katumuwa,² and describes the provisions necessary for sustaining his “soul that is in this stele.” In one single motion, this discovery opened anew several longstanding issues in the study of Semitic languages, most notably the following three: the relation of *npš* to concepts of selfhood in the term’s abstract and substantive forms, the use of this term in contexts that are distinctly funerary, and the cultural practice known as feeding the dead.³ Each of these issues has a direct bearing on the Hebrew Bible. Feeding the dead is

This paper has benefited from the comments of several people, namely Jacqueline Vayntrub, Justin Orr, Jeremy Smoak, K. Lawson Younger, Christopher Hays, and Dennis Pardee. I am especially indebted to Seth Sanders, and this essay is in many ways a dedication to our intellectual exchange over the past year. I bear sole responsibility, however, for any mistakes found within.

1. The quick announcement of this discovery is to the great credit of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli and its director J. David Schloen of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The discovery was first announced through the media, accompanied by an image of the stele; see J. N. Wilford, “Found: An Ancient Monument to the Soul,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 18, 2008 (accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/18/science/18soul.html?_r=2&8dpc=&pagewanted=all). The initial announcement was followed by the prompt publication in 2009 of the *editio princeps* by Dennis Pardee in *BASOR* 356, which also included important studies of the inscription by Schloen and Amir Fink, as well as by Eudora Struble and Virginia Herrmann (all cited within this current study).

2. The name is tentatively written Kuttamuwa in D. Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 51–71; however the vocalization Katumuwa has been suggested in light of Luwian names attested in Assyrian sources; see K. L. Younger Jr., “Two Epigraphic Notes on the New Katumuwa Inscription from Zincirli,” *Maarav* 16 (2009 [2011]): 159–66.

3. On the feasting motif depicted in the stele’s iconography, see E. J. Struble and V. R. Herrmann, “An Eternal Feast at Sam'al: The New Iron Age Mortuary Stele from Zincirli in Context,” *BASOR* 356 (2009): 15–49. The phenomenon in the northern Levant of funerary steles depicting the dead feasting is analyzed in D. Bonatz, *Das Syro-Hethitische Grabdenkmal* (Mainz: von Zabern, 2000). See also the contextual discussion in V. R. Herrmann, “The KTMW Stele

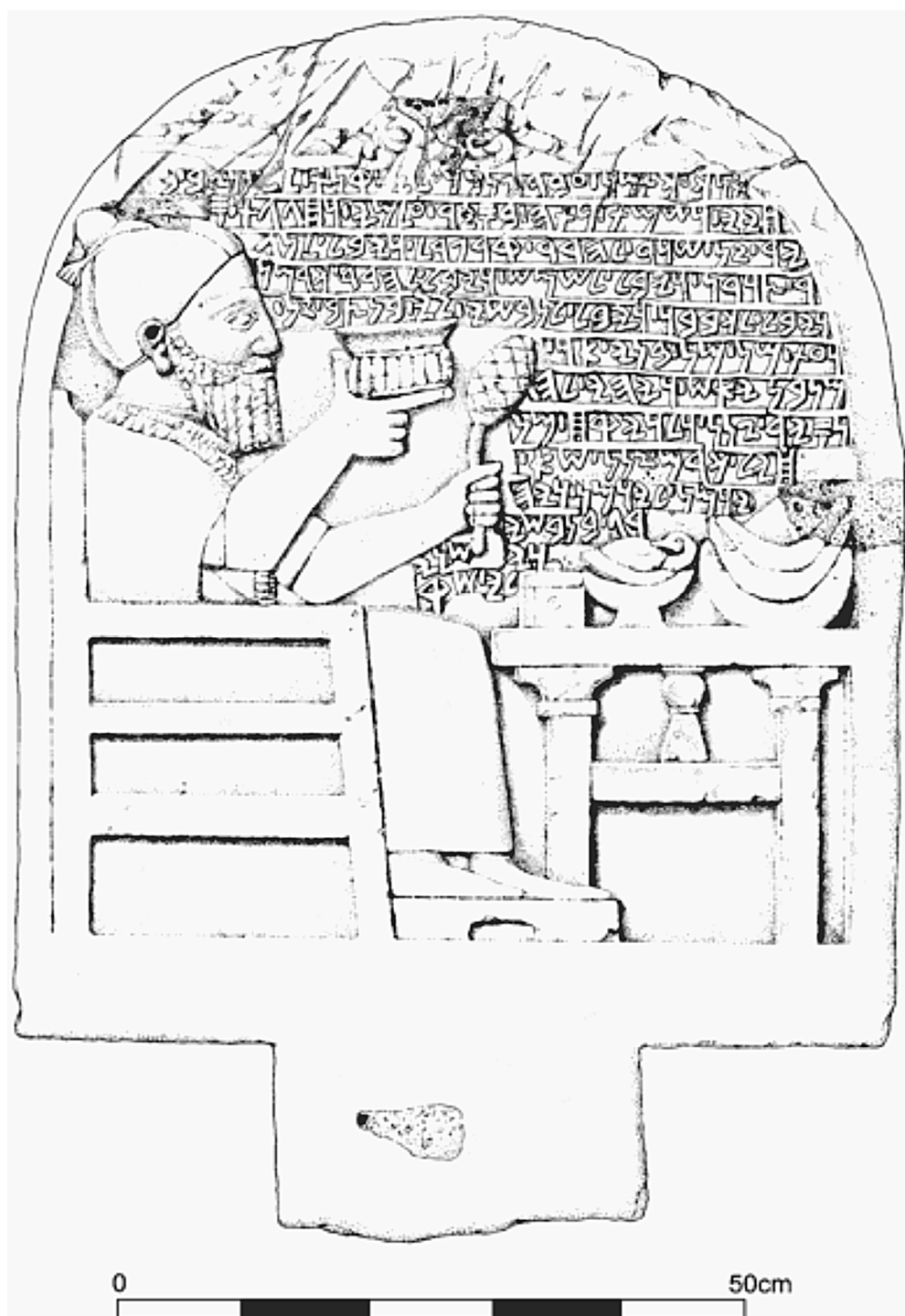


Fig. 1. The Katumuwa Stele, drawing by Karen Reczuch. Courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli.

attested in both biblical sources (see, e.g., Deut. 26:14; Jer. 16:7 [with the LXX]),⁴ and the archaeological remains of the southern Levant,⁵ yet it is poorly understood as a cultural practice. Moreover, נֶפֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible can stand for a person who is either living or dead. In the latter sense, the term stands for a type of body (corpse) that is ritually defiling, which raises questions regarding the very nature of the term. The semantic origins of *npš*/*nbš* are more assured, since it is attested throughout the Semitic languages, where the meaning “life” occurs as early as Ebla in a bilingual lexical list that glosses *nu-pu₃-uš-tu-um* with Sumerian ZI (“life”).⁶ Yet, the early history and exact nature of *npš* as a concept of self in postmortem contexts continues to elude a better understanding. A new interpretation of Hos. 9:4 will shed light on the nature of נֶפֶשׁ, drawing together texts from Zincirli (particularly Katumuwa’s stele), where the *nbš* is identified and provided with food, and biblical sources that involve feeding the dead.

The interpretation of נֶפֶשׁ/*nbš* is obscured by the modern metaphysical sense of “soul,” which involves a body/soul dichotomy that is taken from Plato and is heavily informed by Descartes’ similar division of body and mind.⁷ The modern concept of the term “soul” confuses the matter because in the Hebrew Bible the נֶפֶשׁ is neither inherently immortal nor entirely abstract.⁸ Certainly, rabbinic texts can speak of the נֶפֶשׁ as a core of being that is separated from the body at death, though the extent of Greek influence here can be debated.⁹ Yet biblical sources such as Num. 19:11–22 imply that the נֶפֶשׁ could be a physical body, either dead or living, and other texts indicate that the נֶפֶשׁ could die (e.g., Ex. 21:23 and Lev. 24:17). It is the physicality of death in these ancient sources (both biblical and inscriptional) that draws to the forefront an existential sense of “soul” that is both abstract and uniquely

from Zincirli: Syro-Hittite Mortuary Cult and Urban Social Networks,” in *Redefining the Sacred: Religious Architecture and Text in the Near East and Egypt 1000 BC – AD 300*, ed. E. Frood and R. Raja (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

4. There are other texts in the Hebrew Bible that are more ambiguous, such as Ps. 16:3–4 and Ps. 106:28 (referring to Num. 25:2 and Israelite apostasy in Moab). For a maximal reading of this cultural practice in different biblical sources, see E. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 123–26. It is important to consider the reference to feeding the dead in early Jewish sources (in Greek), Sir. 30:18 and Tob. 4:17. Bloch-Smith (ibid., 108 n.1) also cites rabbinical sources for such practices. For discussions of this practice in ancient Israel and Judah, see H. Nutkiewicz, *L’homme face à la mort au royaume de Juda: Rites, pratiques et représentation* (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 270–83, and R. Schmitt, “Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family,” in R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, 2012), 455–59. For a critical assessment of feeding rituals, namely the question of the Mesopotamian *kispu* in Northwest Semitic sources, and the putative role of the *marziḥu* (מַרְזִיחַ) as a funerary repast, see D. Pardee, “Marziḥu, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult: A Minimalist View,” in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C. L. Gibson*, ed. N. Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. B. Lloyd (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 273–87.

5. E. F. Maher and J. S. Lev-Tov, “Food in Late Bronze Age Funerary Offerings: Faunal Evidence from Tomb 1 at Tell Dothan,” *PEQ* 133 (2001): 91–110, and W. T. Pitard, “Tombs and Offerings: Archaeological Data and Comparative Methodology in the Study of Death in Israel,” in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place*, ed. B. M. Gittlen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 149–50. For Iron Age Judah, see Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 105–8.

6. See G. Pettinato, “The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla,” *BA* 39 (1976): 50, cited in L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (New York: E. J. Brill, 2001), 711 (henceforth = KBL); also H. Seebass, “נֶפֶשׁ; *nepeš*,” in *TDOT* 9, 498–99. Philologists speculate, however, that the original nuance of the term was “throat” (see further below).

7. See the discussion of Platonic thought versus the later Cartesian dichotomy in D. B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 3–37.

8. For example, Ex. 21:23 and Lev. 24:17; see Seebass, “נֶפֶשׁ; *nepeš*,” 513–14.

9. The conception of body and soul in rabbinic literature is obviously quite complicated; see N. Rubin, *Time and Life Cycle in Talmud and Midrash: Socio-Anthropological Perspectives* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 125–65. See also A. F. Segal, *Life after Death: A History of the Afterlife in the Religions of the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 621–23, on the rabbinic use of נֶפֶשׁ as “soul” versus נִשְׁמָה.

substantive in marking postmortem selfhood. This is not to affirm the older monistic view of the *נַפְשׁ*, as best argued by Johannes Pedersen, where body and soul represent a single totality of being.¹⁰ Nor is this to embrace anew a pleonastic interpretation of body and soul in the reading of pre-Hellenistic texts. It is to suggest instead that in certain texts the abstract essence of the *נַפְשׁ*/*nbš* is assigned a physical presence through ritual. This interpretation is critically linked to a definition of ritual that understands it (ritual) as the formalization of action and meaning through performance.¹¹

The basic problem of interpretation begins with the individual and mortality, and our limited understanding of the dialectical relationship between the two in the ancient Levant. By extension, little is known regarding the practices involved in preserving one's identity after death. What is argued here is that ritual action preserved the identity of the dead, objectified in the *נַפְשׁ*/*nbš*, creating a particularized notion of postmortem selfhood. In the ancient Near East, these ritual actions would include the evocation of the name of the dead, along with the use of food and drink for the sustenance of the dead. These actions can be referred to singularly as ancestor veneration. The same actions, however, could also serve as part of a funerary ritual when they are associated with the disposal of the dead. Although the situations may differ (ancestor veneration versus funerary rituals),¹² in each case the *נַפְשׁ*/*nbš* becomes situationally defined in a manner that marks its physical presence while also affirming its abstract quality. The reification of the abstract component (selfhood) perpetuates the life of the soul long after death, and in some cases this allows the *נַפְשׁ*/*nbš* to exist separately from the body. Yet the argument here is not for a disembodied soul, but instead for a concept of the soul that was embodied through ritual. Since the substantive form of the *נַפְשׁ*/*nbš* differs in Sam'al and Israel/Judah,¹³ it is important to examine the abstract sense that serves as the starting point for ritual action in the two cultures. The abstract sense can simply be described as the identity of the dead, and in the recently discovered stele from Zincirli (henceforth = *KTMW*) the identity of Katumuwa can easily be located not only in his image, name, and vocational role (royal servant), but also in his inscribed words that speak to us directly in first-person voice.¹⁴ Combined, these elements represent the enduring selfhood of Katumuwa, and they

10. J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), 102–4. J. W. Cooper (*Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 20 n. 36) briefly suggests that Pedersen's monism is really more of a spiritual type that can be termed "panpsychism." For discussions of *נַפְשׁ* and the self, see Cooper (ibid., 38–39); J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 36–47, and J. D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 110–11.

11. N. Laneri, "An Archaeology of Funerary Rituals," in *Performing Death: Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean*, ed. N. Laneri (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 2007), 2–3.

12. Brian Schmidt (*Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 4–13) includes ancestor veneration and feeding of the dead under the general category of mortuary cult, which he distinguishes from funerary rites, along with the distinct categories of necromancy and ancestor worship/cult of the dead. See similarly D. Pardee, "Marziḥu, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult," 274–75. Schmidt further separates the two as "situationally observed rites" (funerary rites) and "regularly instituted cults" (ancestor veneration and feeding the dead). This separation is important, although the term "situational" is applied much more broadly in this article (regular and irregular situations). Furthermore, there is considerable overlap between funerary rites and mortuary cult practices and the boundary between the two is not easily discerned in the sources.

13. At Zincirli the excavator quickly noted that the term *nbš* was invested in the stone object known as Katumuwa's stele. Schloen (quoted by Wilford in "Found: An Ancient Monument to the Soul") states: "Here we have a culture that believed the soul is not in the corpse but has been transferred to the mortuary stone" (quoted also in C. B. Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011], 128).

14. Throughout this study *KTMW* will serve as siglum for the text of the stele.

shape identity in a way that is individualized and defined within a specific context. Thus the $\text{נֶפֶשׁ}/nbš$ is materialized within a distinctly ritual setting, and a comparison of Hos. 9:4 with the text of Katumuwa's stele will show that the feeding of the dead was a critical component of this ritual setting at both Sam'al and ancient Israel/Judah.

1. THE DEFUNCT-SOUL

The meaning of נֶפֶשׁ in the Hebrew Bible is complicated and a full discussion is beyond the scope of this essay. Of the word's various nuances, this study will examine the single notion of postmortem selfhood, and for these purposes the term "defunct-soul" will be used to render נֶפֶשׁ (and $nbš$) in the texts discussed below.¹⁵ The translation provides consistency throughout the study, since the term will be applied to various objects (corpse and stele) that mark the identity of the dead. According to the accepted historical-philological understanding of the root, the word's earliest sense was "throat," and the line of meaning that descends from here ranges from "hunger" and "greed" to other affective senses.¹⁶ The second semantic range of נֶפֶשׁ , which stems from the core meaning "life," includes "living being," "person," "people," and "self." The postmortem essence that emerges from this semantic range includes "corpse" (in specific literary strands of the Hebrew Bible),¹⁷ and "stele" or "cenotaph," as well as "tomb" (in later phases of Hebrew and other Semitic languages).¹⁸ The

15. There are drawbacks to using the term "defunct-soul," beginning with the (modern) metaphysical assumptions inherent in the word "soul." Yet there is no better English equivalent that expresses the qualities of identity and selfhood embedded in $nbš/\text{נֶפֶשׁ}$. The consistent rendering of this term as "soul" in the treatment of diverse inscriptional corpora will highlight its divergence from any modern sense. (The translation of נֶפֶשׁ in construct forms will be the only exception to the use of "defunct-soul.") For a basic definition of "defunct," see J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 268. Certainly, Katumuwa may not have considered his $nbš$ "defunct," given that he established his stele during his own lifetime (Il. 1–2). Yet his $nbš$ continued to eat long after Katumuwa had died, as is expected of the dead in the ancient Near East (see the confession of Enkidu in Tablet 12 of the Standard Epic of Gilgamesh). The implications of a graded existence post-mortem are deliberately raised in this study through the intentional use of the term "soul." This implication (what might be called levels of defunctness) will be fully explored in a separate study. For discussions that touch upon similar issues (regarding the existence of the dead), see R. E. Tappy, "Did the Dead Ever Die in Biblical Judah?" *BASOR* 298 (1995): 63–64, and B. B. Schmidt, "Afterlife Beliefs: Memory as Immortality," *NEA* 63, 4 (2000): 236–39. See also the discussion of this topic with regard to the northern Levant (and the setting of Sam'al) in J. Voos, "Studien zur Rolle von Statuen und Reliefs im Syrohetitischen Totenkult während der frühen Eisenzeit (etwa 10.–7. Jh. v.u. Z.)," *Ethnographisch-archäologische Zeitschrift* 29 (1988): 360–62.

16. Seebass, " נֶפֶשׁ ; *nepeš*," 498–99; see also KBL 2, 711–13.

17. The Holiness Code (e.g., Lev. 22:4) and the Priestly Source (e.g., Num. 5:2; 9:6–10). The translation "corpse" is disputed by D. Michel, "*nepeš* als Leichnam?" *ZAH* 7 (1997): 81–84; followed by Seebass, " נֶפֶשׁ ; *nepeš*," 515–16. Regardless, the occurrences are largely confined to Leviticus and Numbers; thus, as Michel notes (*ibid.*, 82), the nuance occurs mainly in legislative traditions (with a few exceptions, such as Hag. 2:13).

18. R. Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 339–53. Hachlili identifies two associated uses of the term, the first being a feature of tomb architecture, the second a "column-pyramid" marker of burial (the second usage is most often represented in funerary art). Hachlili (*Jewish Funerary Customs*, 353; drawing from Jastrow) cites Tanaaitic sources that use נֶפֶשׁ for "tomb" (*Mishnah*, *tractate Oholot* 10, 7–8) or "funerary monument" (*Mishnah*, *mas. Shekalim* 2, 5); see M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, vol. 1 (New York: Judaica Press, 1989), 926. The architectural meaning in Nabatean and Palmyran Aramaic as well as Syriac varies according to region and time period; see the discussion in M. Mouton, "Les tours funéraires d'Arabie, *nefesh* monumentales," *Syria* 74 (1997): 81–98, and P. Clauss, "Les tours funéraires du djebel Baghoûz dans l'histoire de la tour funéraire syrienne," *Syria* 79 (2002): 178–79. The Nabatean use of the term has two meanings: slabs that are tall and thin, bearing an inscription, and column features that are represented in funerary art; see G. A. Bevan and M. B. Reeves, "A New Nabataean Funerary Inscription from Humayma," *JSS* 55 (2010): 500–501.

two seemingly disparate semantic fields of “life” and “throat” raise historical-philological questions of association and translation, particularly in Hos. 9:4.

To approach this problem, it is important to begin by recognizing that the defiling nature of נֶפֶשׁ in certain biblical sources (mainly P and H) implies physicality. In biblical literature, discussion of the defunct-soul (נֶפֶשׁ) occurs in restrictions on mourning rituals (Lev. 19:28) and in relation to ritual purity (Lev. 21:1; Num. 19:11–13).¹⁹ The defunct-soul, in these texts, is a source of contamination relational to any person who touches it, and with regard to the respective person’s participation in the ritual cult of the tabernacle/temple. As Seth Sanders has recently observed in his study of Katumuwa’s stele,²⁰ the wider context of ritual participation defines the parameters of the *nbš*, and within this context it becomes an object that is both singular and deictically near. Accordingly, the history of the term *nbš* (the allomorph of נֶפֶשׁ)²¹ is dependent upon the ritual of feeding described in this and other texts from Sam’al.²² The defunct-soul as the central object in rituals of veneration required sustenance; the ceremonial act of feeding the respective object reified the dead in the presence of the living. Consequentially, it becomes possible to understand a trajectory of meaning within a larger context of ritual that is recognizable in texts from the northern Levant and south Arabia. The *nbš* in the Sam’al inscriptions is not necessarily architectonic in essence, relative to a tomb; instead, it is representative of the defunct individual. Yet the term is used in a manner similar to Old South Arabian funerary inscriptions (= OSA), where the *nfsl* is apparently an architectural feature.²³ Thus, a history of the term נֶפֶשׁ emerges from the sources that suggests that the concept of selfhood began with the nuance “life” (in an individualized sense) and encompassed “corpse,” which extended to “tomb” and “cenotaph,” and ultimately the external “soul” (in the modern sense).²⁴ The questions of causality that underscore this historical-philological lineage must be recognized within the framework of ritual performance, a framework that is apparent in texts that refer to the dead as a *nbš* or נֶפֶשׁ.

In both biblical literature and Northwest Semitic inscriptions the defunct-soul is an object signifying an identity that was distinct, singular, and unique to the respective dead. The general examples given in the Hebrew Bible do not attach specific names to each soul in the direct manner that inscriptions identify the respective *nbš* (for example, “the soul of Panamuwa” [*nbš pnmw*] in KAI 214:17). Yet the defunct-soul signifies an identifiable person within a specific framework. A clear example is found in Lev. 21:1–6 (cf. v. 11), the divine

19. The specific idea of ritual impurity (versus purity) is rejected by Carol and Eric Meyers in their commentary on Hag. 2:13, following Jacob Neusner; see *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 79. Thomas Kazen (“Dirt and Disgust: Body and Mortality in Biblical Purity Laws,” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, ed. B. J. Schwartz et al. [New York: T & T Clark, 2008], 43–64) discusses problems of categorizing purity/impurity and suggests that the issue should be viewed from a notion of embodiment and recognition (specifically, feelings of disgust). The present article follows the concept of ritual purity/impurity found in the work of Mary Douglas, J. Z. Smith, and others. Citing Mary Douglas, Smith states: “[T]here is nothing that is inherently or essentially clean or unclean . . . There are situational or relational categories, mobile boundaries which shift according to the map being employed”: see *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), 291; cf. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 7–57. There is clearly a map drawn in texts such as Lev. 21:1–5, Num. 19:11–20, and (it will be argued) Hos. 9:4–5.

20. S. L. Sanders, “The Appetites of the Dead: The Language of the New Zincirli Stela and the History of a West Semitic Funerary Tradition,” *BASOR* 369 (2013): 85–105.

21. This orthography (where *p* > *b*) occurs once in epigraphic Hebrew (Arad 24 r. 7).

22. Sanders “Appetites of the Dead.” The occurrences of *nbš* in the inscriptions of Sam’al (related to the dead) are KAI 214:17, 21 (discussed below); KAI 215:17–18; and the fragmentary text of KAI 217:7.

23. See Sanders, “Appetites of the Dead,” discussed below.

24. Contra Seebass, “נֶפֶשׁ; *nepeš*,” 498–99, who denies a connection between the meanings “corpse” and “tomb.”

instructions regarding the purity of priests and their participation in funerary rituals. The passage begins by referring to the deceased as a defunct-soul (שִׁפְטָה in the absolute form): “for a *defunct-soul*, he will not defile himself among his relatives” (Lev. 21:1bβ). The priests, however, can defile themselves for close family members: parents, children, brothers, and unmarried sisters (Lev. 21:2–3; though not for wives, v. 4). The verb used throughout the passage is שִׁפְטָה (Hithpa ‘ēl),²⁵ and the act of defilement is additionally associated with different types of tonsure and self-laceration (v. 5). The actions of v. 5 define a certain state-of-being that marks the individual as a mourner and alludes to Lev. 19:27–28a, where these particular practices “for a *defunct-soul*” (שִׁפְטָה) are expressly forbidden.

Leviticus 21, however, implies physical contact, since the passage ends with the explanation that the priests are to remain holy (“and not profane the name of their God”) in order to handle the offerings to Yahweh (v. 6). More to the point, the purity/impurity of the priests must be controlled “because they themselves bring forth the fire offerings of Yahweh (and) the bread [לֶחֶם] of their God” (v. 6b).²⁶ In this passage, the שִׁפְטָה is presented within boundaries of community, and in the generic examples each defunct-soul is assigned a specific role within the social fabric of family and clan (mother, father, etc.).²⁷ Furthermore, the act of defiling oneself is controlled but not forbidden.²⁸ The regulations indicate that it was culturally acceptable to engage in certain actions vis-à-vis the dead; the fact that the Holiness Code has to place limitations on the priests’ role in such activities is an example of an exception that confirms a rule in cases not excepted.²⁹

In biblical literature the defunct-soul is assigned a physical presence, and as such it marks an element of selfhood that paradoxically counters that of the living. Numbers 19:11–22 provides one such example, bracketed within a single ritual framework.³⁰ The passage begins: “The one who touches a dead (body) for any person’s *soul* shall be unclean for seven days” (v. 11; cf. 13a). In v. 11 the substantive use of נֶפֶשׁ is followed by the prepositional phrase: לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם. The dative use of the ל signifies the general purpose of the contact,³¹ and

25. For the assimilation of the *–t–* in the Hithpa ‘ēl of שִׁפְטָה, see GKC §54c.

26. This position is enforced in the further restriction against the high priest (vv. 10–11), which forbids him from contact with “any *defunct-soul* of the dead” (v. 11b), even for his parents (cf. also the Nazirite in Num. 6:6–7).

27. In other words, the appropriate dead listed in Lev. 21:2–3 form a collective rubric, i.e., family and clan. As such, they represent the social index for recognizing individual identity and selfhood. See the important study of R. A. Di Vito, “Old Testament Anthropology and the Construction of Personal Identity,” *CBQ* 61 (1999): 217–37; also Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel*, 112–21. Compare KTMW 1. 1: ‘nk.ktmw. ‘bd.pnmw, “I am Katumuwa servant of Panumuwa.” Katumuwa’s selfhood is defined in relation to the king, as royal servant.

28. On this point, see the comments regarding feeding the dead in Deut. 26:14 in H. C. Brichto, “Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife—a Biblical Complex,” *HUCA* 44 (1973): 29, as opposed to the negative interpretation of K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 208–9.

29. Leviticus 21:5 notwithstanding. The mourning practices forbidden in this verse are banned for all Israel in Lev. 19:27–28. Additionally, while the biblical sources always define the defunct-soul as a defiling object, the sources never depict the object as an aggressively problematic entity similar to the Mesopotamian “ghost” (*etemmu*). The שִׁפְטָה is a passive object that functions without agency, and one that never possesses a foreign body. These points work against Michel’s theory that the defiling nature of the “soul” is caused by the released life-force’s efforts to find a new host during the event of death (“*naṣṣāš* als Leichnam?” 83–84).

30. Commentators have stressed the composite nature of Num. 19:11–22; see M. Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 142–43; however, cf. R. P. Knierim and G. W. Coats, *Numbers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 223. This is important to note in light of the varied usage of שִׁפְטָה (dead and living) within a single text that has been carefully edited.

31. The dative interpretation of the ל parallels the preposition in Lev. 21:1 and Num. 9:6–7, as well as in other texts (see the discussion below of Deut. 26:14 and the Phoenician text *CIS* 1, 58). N. Meshel (“Pure, Impure, Permitted, Prohibited: A Study of Classification Systems in P,” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible*, 38 and n. 16) renders the syntagma of ל followed by שִׁפְטָה as “impure by (the defiling object).” The point is to draw

the construct **נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** represents the personhood of the object being contacted. The term **נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** is encountered in Num. 9:6–7, where it stands for a defiling object (a corpse) that results in exclusion from the Passover. Yet the same construct signifies (living) human war-captives in Num. 31:35, 40, and 46. Furthermore, when the statement of Num. 19:11 is reiterated in expanded form in v. 13a, the same terms are stated in a slightly different manner: “Whoever touches a dead (body), the *soul* of a person who has died . . .” The conditional clause in v. 13a clarifies the type of dead object that is being touched, and the translation reflects the grammar of **אִשְׁרֵי-יָמוּתָהּ**, where the referent of the verb (3rd m. sg.) is **נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם**.³² The circumlocution in Num. 19:13a can be compared with the more terse reference to **נֶפֶשׁ מֵתָהּ** (“*soul* of a dead [body]”) in Num. 6:6).³³ Aside from their subtle differences in nuance, both Num. 19:11 and 13 indicate the recognition of two entities, one a concrete object (“dead body”) and the other an abstract concept (“soul/self”). The two entities are given unity through the rituals that assign physical presence to the **נֶפֶשׁ** in the form of the **מֵתָהּ**. The participation of the living in these rituals creates a problem of impurity that the passage seeks to resolve.

Although cultic purity is the singular concern here, the general example in Num. 19:11 is specified further in v. 13 in order to problematize the impurity of death. This perspective is evident in the *Wiederaufnahme* of vv. 13 and 20 that frames the explication of the ritual.³⁴ The elaboration in vv. 14–19 explains that any and all physical contact with the dead is defiling by nature, regardless of whether it was purposeful (through ritual) or incidental (finding a bone or recovering a slain body). Because the overarching concern is defilement through contact, the narrative description deals with physical bodies. The distributive sense of **נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** in the relative clause of v. 13 distinguishes the defiling (and physically dead) **נֶפֶשׁ** from the living person/**נֶפֶשׁ** who requires purification in vv. 13aβ–20. That is, each **נֶפֶשׁ** is physically present; one is fully alive while the other is dead (or dying) and as such impure. Within this literary framework the bodies are defined as different types of “souls” through the performance of ritual, and within a much larger cultic context concerning the tabernacle (vv. 13 and 20). In this way, the text is able to identify the conflicting nature of the situation for the cult of Yahweh. Certainly, the text broadens its definition of defilement in vv. 14–19, but this does not deny the physicality of the defunct-soul or its ritual environment in vv. 11–13. Instead, it asserts the material nature of the **נֶפֶשׁ** by expanding the explanation of ritual impurity into physical space, whether it is encountered at a tomb, in a field, or in a domestic setting (such as a tent).³⁵

the defiling thing (the indirect object) to the forefront of the text, but Meshel states that Lev. 21:3 (“for her”) implies actions on behalf of the corpse (citing also Num. 6:6–7).

32. Num. 19:13, **אִשְׁרֵי-יָמוּתָהּ נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** **בְּנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** **בְּנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם**. The sense of **נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם** in v. 11 is one of general (human) personhood. In v. 13 the article on **אָדָם** (literally “man”) indicates a distributive sense that requires further qualification. The clause can be rendered: “any man who has died.”

33. The translation is based on the occurrence of the *Qal* participle **מֵתָהּ**, which compares with the noun **אָדָם** (both masculine singular). The translation of Num. 6:6 follows that of Michel (“*naēaeš* als Leichnam?” 82–83), “soul of a dead man,” along the analogy of the gender agreement in **נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה** (“living soul”) in Gen. 2:7. This analogy led Michel to suggest that Num. 6:6 represented two separate entities (soul and dead body).

34. The repeated statements in vv. 13 and 20 (**וְנֶפֶשׁ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת לֹא יִתְחַטֵּא** . . . **וְנֶפֶשׁ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת לֹא יִתְחַטֵּא** [“and does not purify himself . . . and that soul shall be cut off”]) are associated with two different references to the tabernacle/sanctuary (**מִשְׁכָּן** **וְהֵיכָל** and **מִשְׁכָּן**, respectively), making the cultic concerns of the passage quite clear.

35. The tent (v. 14) contains the defilement, although it can transmit the impurity by touch (v. 18aβ). The tomb (cited in vv. 16 and 18) acts in similar ways, but it serves as a perpetually impure place for the dead. Thus, the ritual impurity is physically transmitted to anything with which it comes into contact, whether it is a tent, ceramic vessel, or person.

To summarize up to this point, the 𐤁𐤁𐤁 in these examples becomes a physical object and an identifiable entity regardless of whether it pertains to the living or the dead.³⁶ The corpse is recognized as a 𐤁𐤁𐤁 through ritual and through the regulation of cultic purity set against the background of the tabernacle and its community of participants.³⁷ This recognition is tangibly expressed through the delineation of physical space; that is, the defiling nature of the object and the object's ritual parameters are both defined spatially.³⁸ In these texts, contact with the dead is not forbidden; instead it is carefully controlled (Lev. 21:1–6, 10–11) and strictly contained (Num. 19:11–20) within the set boundaries of ritual space. Within these performative frameworks, the 𐤁𐤁𐤁 becomes an object of selfhood that transcends death.

2. FEEDING KATUMUWA'S SOUL

The text of *KTMW* offers a detailed description of feeding the dead that is accompanied by an image of Katumuwa feasting upon his throne (see Fig. 1). The stele is remarkable for its preservation,³⁹ as well as the fact that it was discovered *in situ* (Fig. 2). This last fact is significant in that the stele represents a ritual text that was discovered in its architectural context (i.e., its ritual space), and the circumstances of the stele's discovery offer some insight into the feeding of the dead. The analysis of the inscription begins with its translation, and the rendering below follows the *editio princeps* and the recent treatments by Sanders and Herbert Niehr.⁴⁰

- 1) 'nk.ktmw. 'bd.pnmw.zy.qnt.ly. nšb.b
- 2) ḥyy.wšmt.wth.bsyd. 'lmy.whggt.s
- 3) yd.zn.šwr.lhdd.QD/RPD/RL.wybl.lng
- 4) r.šwdn.wybl.lšmš.wybl.lhdd.krmn
- 5) wybl.lkbbw.wybl.lnbšy.zy.bnšb.zn.
- 6) w't.mn.mn.bny. 'w.
- 7) mn bny 'š.wyhy.lh.
- 8) nsyd.znn.wlw yqh.mn
- 9) ḥyl.krm.znn.š'.
- 10) ywmn.lywmn.wyh
- 11) rg.bnbšy
- 12) wyšwy
- 13) ly.šq

36. The interpretation offered here is similar to a recent theory regarding 𐤁𐤁𐤁 , a term for the dead in Israelite necromantic rituals. Christopher Hays (*Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah*, 170–73) has suggested that the term's etymology comes from Middle Egyptian *3bwt*, “family, household, image,” which can have both a physical presence as a cultic object and a numinous existence; see also C. B. Hays and J. M. LeMon, “The Dead and Their Images: An Egyptian Etymology for Hebrew *ʾōb*,” *JAI* 1:4 (2009): 1–4.

37. Similarly, the ritual context of Num. 6:6–7 regards a special type of dedicated individual (the Nazirite) and in 9:6–14 it is about the proper observance of Passover in the presence of the tabernacle.

38. The cultic landscape of H is well known; see for example J. Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 251–53. The spatial dimensions of impurity, described according to a “cultic topography,” are delineated nicely in D. P. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), 231–74.

39. The inscription is well preserved, although the shape and form of the *d* and the *r* are difficult to distinguish, and the language is a form of Aramaic that was local to Sam'al.

40. Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” 53–54; Sanders, “Appetites of the Dead,” and H. Niehr, “Religion in den Königreichen der Aramäer Syriens,” in *Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments II: Phönizier, Punier, Aramäer* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2010), 282–83.

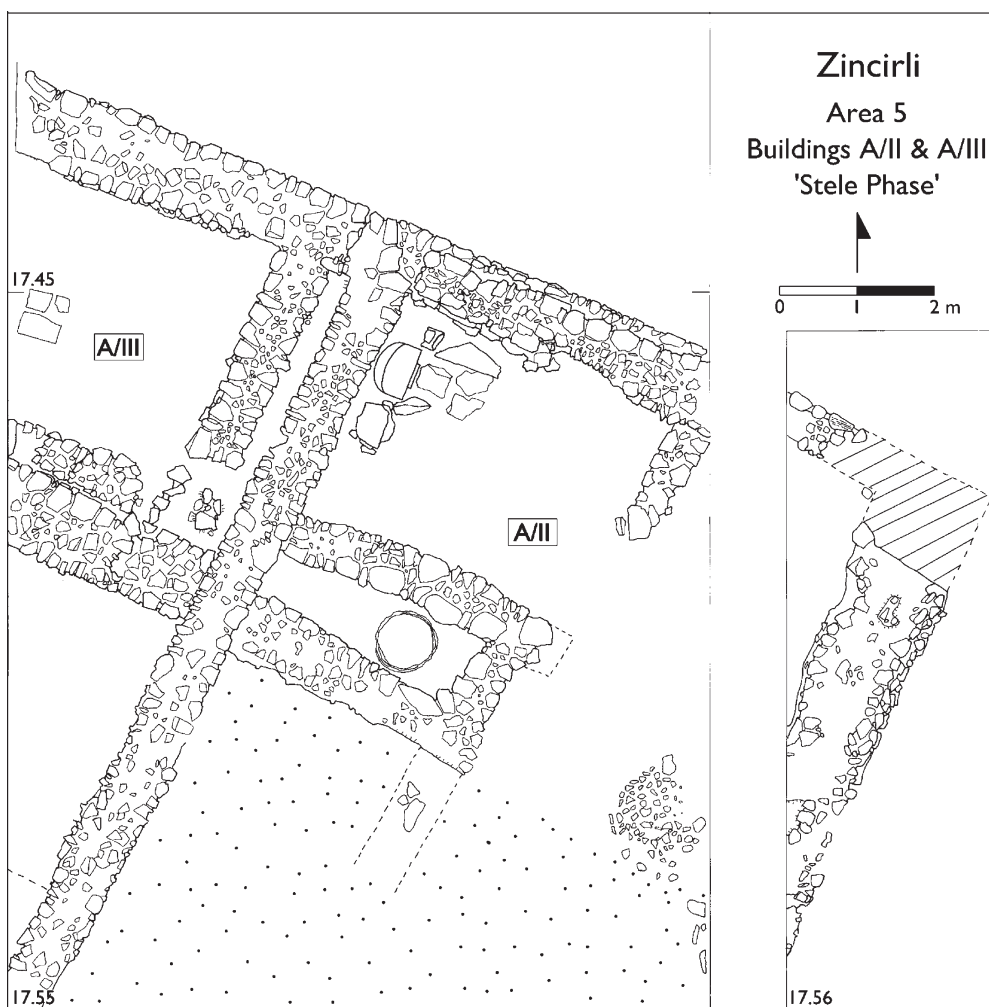


Fig. 2. Building II of Complex A. Courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli.

- 1) I am Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa, who acquired for myself (this) stele in
- 2) my lifetime, and placed it in my eternal chamber. And I established a feast⁴¹
- 3) (at) this chamber: a bull for Hadad *harpatalli*⁴² and a ram for Nik-
- 4) arawas of the hunters⁴³ and a ram for Shamash, and a ram for Hadad of the vineyards,

41. See Pardee, "A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli," 53 and 60–61. Compare also "ritually instituted" in Sanders, "Appetites of the Dead." As both Pardee and Sanders note, the term here is a D-Stem of $\sqrt{hgg}$ with the object being the *syd*. Rather than having a passive sense of "holding a feast" (as in Hebrew and Aramaic), the verbal form is factitive, resulting in the creation of a specialized place. The sense of this root has been elucidated by the recent edition of a Northwest Arabian inscription (Dedanitic), where it carries the same meaning: M. del Carmen Hidalgo-Chacón Díez, "Neubearbeitung der Dadanischen Inschrift Abū l-Ḥasan 197," *AulaOr* 27 (2009): 44 and 48–49.

42. Following I. S. Yakubovich, "The West Semitic God El in Anatolian Hieroglyphic Transmission," in *Pax Hethitica: Studies on the Hittites and Their Neighbours in Honour of Itamar Singer*, ed. Y. Cohen et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 396. Sanders (based on Yakubovich) translates this name as "Hadad of Hosts."

43. Tentatively following the suggestion by E. Masson, "La stèle mortuaire de Kuttamuwa (Zincirli): Comment l'appréhender," *Semitica et Classica* 3/3 (2010): 53, where the term is understood to be the Anatolian divine name

- 5) and a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my *defunct-soul* that is in this stele.
- 6) And now, whoever of my sons or
- 7) whoever of anyone [else's] sons who will come into possession of
- 8) this chamber, thus he must take from
- 9) the best of this vineyard a . . .
- 10) regular (offering)⁴⁴ and he should slaughter
- 11) for my *defunct-soul*
- 12) and offer
- 13) to me a thigh-cut.

In order to understand the sense of Katumuwa's *defunct-soul* (*nbš*), it is necessary to examine the spatial dynamics of ritual described in the two-part division of the text (ll. 1–5 and 6–13): the establishment of space (the “stele” [*nšb*] and “chamber” [*syd*]), and the formalized routine of feeding that is to occur within this space. Regarding the spatiality of the text, Giovanni Mazzini has recognized the etymological relationship of *syd* and OSA *ms³wd*. Sanders, however, was able to take the term (a special type of tomb chamber in Qatabanian) and place it in a distinct setting of ritual space.⁴⁵ The ritual space (the *syd*) is most likely the small room (3.75 x 3.0 m in size) in which the stele was discovered (Fig. 2).⁴⁶

Importantly, Sanders discovered that OSA funerary texts and *KTMW* share a similar three-part ritual pattern. In several OSA funerary inscriptions that describe the establishment of a tomb (*qbr*), comprised of an inner and outer chamber (*nfs¹* and *ms³wd*, respectively), the formulaic language used for establishing this space involved “making” (*s¹y*) and “acquiring” (*zrb*) the funerary complex according to a divine “decree” (nominal form of $\sqrt{hgg} > hg$). Similarly, Katumuwa “acquires” (*qny*) the stele and “places” (*šm*) it in his “eternal chamber” (*syd. 'lm*). The use of *hgg* is particularly striking in these inscriptions, and in *KTMW* the feast inaugurates the “regular offering” (*š'.ywmn.lywmn*) prescribed in ll. 6–13. The problematic term *š'* is interpreted as a by-form of *šy* (“offering”), although the orthography (*' < y*) makes it unique and otherwise unattested.⁴⁷

Nikarawas/Nikaruhas. For an alternative translation of *ngr.šwdn*, see “Chief of Provisions” in Sanders, “Appetites of the Dead”; cf. Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” 61.

44. Niehr (“Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments II,” 283) translates *š'* as “sheep,” which is possible and would provide a referent for the slaughter in ll. 10b–13. Yet, the masculine form of this word is unattested in Old Aramaic, where it occurs as *š't* (“ewe”); see KAI 222:A1, 21. This point is noted in Pardee, “A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” 65. Pardee suggests that the word is a *til* noun formation of $\sqrt{ns'}$: “(presentation?)-offering year by year.”

45. G. Mazzini, “On the Problematic Term *syr/d* in the New Old Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” *UF* 41 (2009 [2010]): 505–8, and Sanders, “Appetites of the Dead,” 9; see also V. R. Herrmann, “The Architectural Context of the *KTMW* Stele from Zincirli and the Mediation of Syro-Hittite Mortuary Cult by the Gods,” in *Symbols of the Dead*, ed. P. Pfälzner, E. Pernicka, and H. Niehr (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, forthcoming). Note that Masson (“La stèle mortuaire de Kuttamuwa [Zincirli],” 52) also suggests an etymological connection with OSA *syr* (apparently independently of Mazzini), although she does not discuss the term's nuance regarding mortuary space. Mazzini's etymological interpretation has been challenged by Gregorio del Olmo Lete (“*KTMW* and His Funerary ‘Chapel,’” *AulaOr* 29 [2011]: 308–10), who suggests “plastered chamber” based on the meaning “plaster” for *syd* in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. G. del Olmo Lete draws attention to a plastered antechamber attached to an intra-mural cremation burial in Carchemesh, originally excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley, and discussed in Struble and Herrmann, “An Eternal Feast at Sam'al,” 36–37.

46. The installation was located in Building II of Complex A, in Area 5 of Zincirli Höyük; see the discussion of the stele's context in Struble and Herrmann, “An Eternal Feast at Sam'al,” 33–36. The room was secondarily created, apparently to house the stele. See also A. Giliibert, *Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance: The Stone Reliefs at Carchemish and Zincirli in the Earlier First Millennium BCE* (New York: de Gruyter, 2011), 95. Niehr (“Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments II,” 283 n. 112) discusses the significance of *'lm* as a descriptor of this chamber. (This aspect of the inscription is discussed below.)

47. Pardee (“A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” 65) notes this reading as a possibility, and his translation “presentation” has the same effect (although the form is given a different philological explanation). The term occurs

Yet its occurrence in *KTMW* 9–10 closely parallels its occurrence in the Hadad Inscription (KAI 214:18). In both texts the *š'/šy* refers to the ritual act of feeding in its entirety.

The ritual act of feeding, which culminates in the slaughter and offering to Katumuwa's defunct-soul, becomes the primary means of veneration long after his life has ended. In this light, it is worth noting that the room in which the stele was found (again, probably the *syd*) contained no burials,⁴⁸ but did include evidence of food production.⁴⁹ The representation of Katumuwa's name and image marks his personhood; the representative object, the stele placed inside the eternal chamber, serves as a focus of ritual veneration. The rituals that occur inside this space reify Katumuwa's self; that is, the act of feeding objectifies his defunct-soul within a specialized location.⁵⁰ In this manner, the defunct-soul of Katumuwa "that is in this stele" (*zy.bnšb.zn*) is similar to the dead body that is identified with a hypothetical person's defunct-soul in the ritual landscape of Numbers 19. The נֶפֶשׁ in Num. 19:11 and 13 stands for the personhood of the corpse that is recognized through rituals of mourning. In the same manner, the soul (*nbš*) in *KTMW* stands for the personhood of the stele that is recognized through Katumuwa's feast and the regular rituals of feeding.

3. HOSEA AND CULTIC COMMENSALITY

The ritual feeding of Katumuwa's soul offers insight into the metaphor of food and funerary rites that occur in Hos. 9:1–6. In this passage, the symbolism of ritual impurity relates directly to the motif of feasting that the prophet builds in vv. 3–5.

3) לֹא יֵשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ יְהוָה וְשָׁב אֶפְרַיִם מִצִּרְיָה וּבְאֲשׁוּר טָמֵא יֹאכְלוּ:
 4) לֹא יִסְכּוּ לַיהוָה יֵין וְלֹא יִשְׂרְבוּ לֵו וּבְחֵיָהֶם כָּל־חֶם אוֹנִים לָהֶם כָּל־אֲכָלֵי יוֹ טָמֵא:
 כִּי־לֶחֶם לְנֶפֶשׁ לֹא יִבּוֹא בֵּית יְהוָה:
 5) מִה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיּוֹם מוֹעֵד וּלְיּוֹם חַג־יְהוָה:

They shall not dwell in the land of Yahweh, for Ephraim shall return to Egypt and in Assyria they will eat [that which is] impure.⁴⁾ They shall not pour drink offerings of wine to Yahweh, and their sacrifices shall not please him. Theirs is like bread of mourning,⁵² all who eat of it make themselves impure because their bread is for their *defunct-soul*—it shall not come to the house of Yahweh.⁵⁾ What would you do for the appointed day and for the day of Yahweh's feast?

in Ugaritic (*ly*) and the Hebrew Bible (עֹשֶׂה), although never with an *'āleph*. Its cultic significance (in relation to feeding the dead) is discussed in J. C. Greenfield, "Un rite religieux araméen et ses parallèles," *RB* 80 (1973): 50–51.

48. J. D. Schloen and A. S. Fink, "New Excavations at Zincirli Höyük in Turkey (Ancient Sam'al) and the Discovery of an Inscribed Mortuary Stele," *BASOR* 356 (2009): 10–11; Struble and Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Sam'al," 33.

49. Struble and Herrmann, "An Eternal Feast at Sam'al," 33.

50. This point is notable in the distinct genre of *KTMW*, discussed by S. L. Sanders, "Naming the Dead: Monumental Writing and Mortuary Politics in Late Iron Age Anatolia and Judah," *Maarav* (forthcoming). Compare, for example, the Neirab stelae (KAI 225 and 226), which are written in the first-person voice of the dead. These texts, however, are dedicatory rather than ritual in genre. Although the stelae venerate the name of the dead, they do not reference their *nbš*.

51. Following the pointing in the MT^A.

52. Although the *segholta* accent in the MT assigns "their sacrifices" to the bread of mourning, it makes more sense grammatically to read וּבְחֵיָהֶם (m.pl.) as the subject of the verb יִשְׂרְבוּ (3rd m. pl.). The syntax might seem difficult because the verbal clause that follows does not have a subject. So, for example, the critical apparatus of the BHS (edited by Karl Elliger) suggested וּבְחֵיָהֶם לֶחֶם for וּבְחֵיָהֶם לֶחֶם "their bread is like the bread of mourning." It is not necessary to emend the text, however, because the analogy that follows (which explains the problem with the sacrifices in v. 4a) is built upon a singular referent that has a general collective sense: "food" (לֶחֶם). The rendering here basically follows that of A. A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 343–44. Macintosh reads the וּבְחֵיָהֶם as a marker of ownership that qualifies the כֹּה as a *kaph veritatis* (citing GKC 118x). According to GKC, however, the particle is not a pleonastic means of supplying the predicate. Rather, in this sense, it serves to emphasize the comparison being made: "in every respect like bread of mourning for them."

The passage begins with an image of apostasy that relates to agricultural rites (the threshing floors of v. 1bβ) and continues with an image of failed food production (v. 2). The reason for this failure is the dislocation described in v. 3; the people will no longer benefit from the land that had been promised to them by their God. Instead, they will reside in Egypt and in Assyria.⁵³ As an assumed place of exile, Assyria (v. 3bβ) becomes a location for the consumption of impure food. This image of food relates to v. 2 (as well as the eating implied in v. 5b), and the motif of impure food specifically ties in with v. 4. The image of exile in Egypt (v. 3ba) portends the metaphor of burial in Egypt that occurs in v. 6.⁵⁴ Finally, the motif of separation from Yahweh, which begins in v. 3(a), relates to the denial of ritual interaction with the divine being (not offering libations or sacrifices in v. 4a), and the motif becomes the basis for the rhetoric in v. 5. Both exile and impurity naturally signify separation from Yahweh,⁵⁵ and in this passage food plays an important role in the construction of both images. The people will no longer benefit from the food of their land because they will live and die in exile; likewise, the people will be cut off from the worship of Yahweh as if they had become defiled through the consumption of ritually impure food. Within this intricate picture of socio-religious isolation, the metaphor of eating in Hos. 9:4 reflects the use of food in funerary rituals, and the particular use of נֶפֶשׁ implies the feeding of the dead.

In order to best observe the sense of נֶפֶשׁ in Hos. 9:4, it is necessary to look at the description of different rituals that runs through vv. 4–6.⁵⁶ Hosea 9:4 begins by stating that wine-libation offerings and sacrifices will not be acceptable before Yahweh, using a technical term (עֲרֵבֶל) that can be employed for sacrificial offerings.⁵⁷ The first part of v. 4 opens with two negated prefix verbs referring to cultic activity. The second part of the verse begins with the particle כִּי, which introduces the defiling agent, followed by a כִּי clause specifying the objection. The defiling agent is introduced using a unique term for impure food, לֶחֶם אֲוִיִּים, formed with the abstract plural אֲוִיִּים in construct state.⁵⁸ The defiling action, marked by the same verb as in Lev. 21:1–6 (אָכַל),⁵⁹ is the consumption of impure food. The כִּי clause

53. For a discussion of the exile motif in this passage, see G. Kwakkkel, “Exile in Hosea 9:3–6: Where and for What Purpose?” in *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50th Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa Otswa/Otssa, Pretoria, August 2007*, ed. B. Becking and D. J. Human (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 123–45.

54. The images of burial and exile are combined in v. 6 with an allusion to the great pyramids. “Egypt will gather/assemble (תִּקְבֹּץ) them” (v.6aβ) :: “Memphis will bury them” (v.6ac). H. W. Wolff compares the term (קָבַץ) with אָסַף (“gather / collect”); see *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 156. The root *qbs* occurs in a substantive form, referring to the dead, in an Ugaritic ritual text (KTU 1.161): the “council of the Didanu.” D. Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 85–87, and M. J. Suriano, “Dynasty Building at Ugarit: The Ritual and Political Context of KTU 1.161,” *AulaOr* 27 (2009): 107.

55. See similarly E. Ben Zvi, *Hosea* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 187.

56. The link between vv. 1–3 and 4–6 should not be denied, for as v. 3 represents an interpretation of vv. 1–2 (following Wolff, *Hosea*, 154–55), so too vv. 4–6 explains the prophetic image of religious isolation.

57. The nuance of this root is rather complicated; see Wolff, *Hosea*, 144 (with sources), and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 343–44. Andersen and Freedman, following earlier studies, translate it as “bring” in light of the Ugaritic cognate *’rb*, “enter,” used within a sacrificial context; see *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 526.

58. Macintosh, *Hosea*, 344; against “food of idols” in Andersen and Freedman, *Hosea*, 526–27, based on the reading יִנְיָ (“wickedness”). The term “bread of mourners” is probably parallel with the “bread of the people” in Ezek. 24:17, 22, which is consumed while mourning the dead. The other possibility is emendation (אֲוִיִּים for אֲנִישִׁים), Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah*, 174 n. 214; see similarly לֶחֶם לְהָם in Jer. 16:7, based on the LXX ἄντρος; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 208–9 and nn. 10–12.

59. The *Hithpa’el* of אָכַל, which refers to an action that results in the impurity of the actor, usually requires a preposition (KBL vol. 1, 376), either כִּי “by means of . . .” or לִי “on behalf of . . .” The use of the verb in Hos. 9:4 does not seem to take a preposition, although it is possible that the לִי in v.4ba (affixed to נֶפֶשׁ) takes on this function.

specifies the nature of the food by adding context: the לֶחֶם is intended for the נֶפֶשׁ of the people (rather than the cult of Yahweh).

Stated as such, the particular nuance of the term here has presented some difficulties in interpretation and translation. The association with food has led to various renderings such as a substantive object,⁶⁰ “gullet” or “throat”; an affective sense,⁶¹ such as “hunger” or “greed”; or a reflexive sense (“for themselves”).⁶² These interpretations are reasonable and represent attempts to make sense of the passage as a whole. Indeed, each interpretation is consistent in isolating the individual from Yahweh.⁶³ In other words, consumption of food does not play a role in divine communion, as it normally would in a sacrificial meal. Yet, this theme assumes a false dichotomy of sacred versus profane by implying that the food is worthy of personal use but not in formalized practice.⁶⁴ The nature of this object directly relates to activity that represents a ritual opposite to the cult of Yahweh. The activities that are described in this analogy are funerary rituals, mourning for the dead, and feeding the dead, which are separated from the ritual worship of Yahweh without any further condemnation (cp. Lev. 21:6).⁶⁵

The opposing nature of feeding the dead, versus the ritual cult of Yahweh, is apparent in the close parallel between Hos. 9:4 and Deut. 26:14.⁶⁶

לֹא־אָכַלְתִּי בְּאֵנִי מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא־בִעַרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטָמֵא וְלֹא־נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמֵת
שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשִׂיתִי כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָנִי

I have not eaten from it [the tithe] while in my mourning, and I have not removed from it while impure, and from it I have not offered [anything] for the dead. I have heard the voice of Yahweh my God, I have done according to all that you have commanded me.

60. Wolff, *Hosea*, 144 and 150.

61. The major English translations, the NRSV and the NJPS, read “hunger” (see also Macintosh, *Hosea*, 343 and 345), although this interpretation finds no support in the ancient versions (see φυχαις in the LXX).

62. For example, Luther’s translation: “denn ihr Brot müssen sie für sich selbst essen.” (For a brief discussion of the Nabatean form with the preposition l-, see A. M. Butts and H. H. Hardy II, “A Revised Reading of a Nabataean Inscription from Umm Al-Jimāl,” *JSS* 55 [2010]: 386 n. 6.) To be sure, the form in Hos. 9:4 is grammatically marked as a reflexive pronoun, as it is affixed with a prepositional prefix and a pronominal suffix. For examples of this grammatical form in the Hebrew Bible, see, e.g., Deut. 4:15; Josh. 23:11; and Ps. 11:1. Psalm 78:18 is an interesting occurrence among the other identical forms of לֶחֶם (see also Isa. 3:9 and Jer. 34:16). Nevertheless, in Hos. 9:4 the word is embedded within a statement about impurity and mourning that comes in a form of literature (poetry) that is multivalent by nature. See, similarly, the suggestion that the use of the word here represents a pun (“their soul/life/appetite”) in F. Landy, *Hosea* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1995), 114.

63. The singular form of the noun (rather than plural, which would match the 3rd m. pl. pronominal suffix) may imply the individual nature of the dead during their respective veneration and feeding.

64. Kwakkel, “Exile in Hosea 9:3–6,” 139. Several commentaries follow the translation “greed” and interpret the verse as a criticism of improper offerings being useful only for one’s selfish intentions.

65. Other commentators, such as Hans Walter Wolff (*Hosea*, 151–52 and 155–56), have understood Hos. 9:1–9 as a prophetic disruption of (and opposition to) the harvest festival, i.e., “Yahweh’s feast” in v. 5b.

66. S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (New York: Scribner, 1895), 291, citing Num. 19:11–13 and Hos. 9:4. More recently, see J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 244; Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 122–23; T. J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 102–4; and Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 664. Again, Deut. 26:14 only prohibits offering impure food as a tithe, yet van der Toorn (*Family Religion*, 208–9) takes the passage to be a polemic and prohibition against feeding the dead, which reads beyond the text at hand. Joseph Blenkinsopp (“Deuteronomy and the Politics of Post-Mortem Existence,” *VT* 45 [1995]: 6) situates the prohibition within a larger literary framework of cultic centralization that runs from Deuteronomy 12–26. Although this observation is important, the point of Deut. 26:14 is to bracket the power of funerary rituals and not necessarily to eradicate a putative cult of the dead.

The similar terminology of the three-part statement begins with the act of consumption ($\sqrt{\text{אכל}}$) in a state of mourning ($\sqrt{\text{אנח}}$), continues with the treatment of food in a state of impurity ($\sqrt{\text{טמא}}$),⁶⁷ and concludes with giving food to the dead ($\sqrt{\text{אכל}}$). The statement here represents a relatively comprehensive declaration with regard to mortuary cult practices, and the statement is a necessary component in the wider discussion of ritual propriety and the tithe in Deut. 26:12–15.⁶⁸ In addition, the translation given here stresses the force of the dative preposition in comparison with Lev. 21:1–4 and Hos. 9:4, where the ל marks the venerated dead.⁶⁹ In these biblical examples, a living subject does something on behalf of a dead object (defunct-soul); the relationship between subject and object is further reflected in the fact that the actions render the subject impure due to the object (see also Lev. 21:1). The ritual discourse of Deut. 26:14 can be productively compared with Phoenician dedications inscribed on “memorial pillars” (*mšbt* [$< \sqrt{\text{נשב}}$]), which are objects that bear some similarity to the memorial stele of the northern Levant (of which Katumuwa’s stele is an exemplar). An inscription from Kition, *CIS* 1, 58, which dates to the Persian Period, is a typical example:

- 1) *mšbt.bhym* The memorial pillar among the living
- 2) *š.ytn’.b* that ‘Abd-osīr set up
- 3) *d’sr.l’b* for (his) father,
- 4) *y.l’rkt’* for Arkīta.

In these texts, the *l*- attached to the indirect object always marks the dead individual for whom the object (the memorial pillar) is dedicated; the subject is always the surviving progeny of the dedicated dead.⁷⁰ In comparison with these inscriptions, the ל attached to the indirect object in Deut. 26:14bβ marks the dead person for whom the ritual actions of feeding are performed. This comparison works well with $\sqrt{\text{אכל}}$ in Hos. 9:4, where the defunct-soul is the indirect object in the description of ritual action.

The ambiguity of the passage lies in the meaning of food for the dead. Numerous Iron Age II tombs from Judah have revealed ceramic vessels related to the production, storage, and consumption of food; in most cases, these vessels are carefully placed beside the dead.⁷¹ Yet

67. The particle attached to $\sqrt{\text{אכל}}$, $\sqrt{\text{אנח}}$, and $\sqrt{\text{אכל}}$ is the so-called *beth essentiae* (see *GKC* 119 *i*). In each case this grammatical form follows the predicate and begins a statement of propriety. The use of the circumstantial ב offers some clarity concerning *KTMW* 1. 11 (*wyhrq.bnbšy*). The *b*- here indicates both propriety and presence, and compares with the proximal sense suggested by Pardee (“A New Aramaic Inscription from Zincirli,” 66).

68. On the threefold statement, see D. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12* (Waco: Word, 2002), 641.

69. Bloch-Smith’s rendering “I have not deposited any of it with the dead” is instructive (“The Cult of the Dead in Judah,” 220). See also Schmidt’s translation (*Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 191) “on account of the dead” in Deut. 26:14bβ. It is important to note that in these rituals of commensality the living and the dead probably shared food; the operative factor is the transmission of corpse contamination through contact. Food was placed inside the tomb, next to the dead, making it impure due to location and touch; at the same time, any person in a state of impurity (such as a mourner) would render food impure through touch.

70. The Nabatean inscription published by Bevan and Reeves (see n. 18) provides a conceptual parallel. The Nabatean inscriptions cited throughout this article are much later than the biblical texts and *KTMW*, but the cogent lexical and syntactical parallels indicate that the cultural practices were similar enough to warrant a comparison (in spite of their distinct historical settings).

71. Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 141. Among the Iron II materials, Bloch-Smith lists: “bowls, store-jars with dipper juglets, plates/platters, cooking pots, wine decanters and amphoras.” The remains of food are not as abundant as the number of related items (pots, bowls, jars, etc.) that have been excavated in mortuary sites (Bloch-Smith, *ibid.*, 108). For a case study, see Lev-Tov and Maher’s (“Food in Late Bronze Age Funerary Offerings,” 91–110) analysis of faunal remains from Tomb 1 of Tel Dothan’s western cemetery (which dates from the LB through early Iron Age I).

the question of feeding the dead in Judah is problematic,⁷² as there are three lines of interpretation: 1) the food is intended to placate the powerful dead, constituting a form of worship; 2) the food represents provisions for the dead, who are either weakened or at least dependent upon the living; 3) the references to feeding the dead instead represent the separate actions of mourners and their funerary repasts. The archaeological setting favors either the first or the second,⁷³ while the biblical sources favor either the second or third interpretations.⁷⁴ The ritual feasting reflected in Deut. 26:14 and Hos. 9:4 probably involved the living (as mourners) and the dead (symbolically). Keep in mind that while feeding the dead is alluded to in biblical literature, this practice is never defined more clearly nor is it described in precise terms that can be identified as worshipping of the dead.⁷⁵ In fact, the practice is never explicitly forbidden in any biblical text,⁷⁶ although it is tightly regulated. Different types of interaction with the dead are allowed, such as burial and feeding; however, the rituals that govern such interaction are kept separate from the cultic community of Yahweh.⁷⁷

As a whole, Hos. 9:1–6 concerns the harvest festival, and the funerary rituals in vv. 4 and 6 should be understood within this cultic context.⁷⁸ The final clause of v. 4(bß) segues nicely into the setting evoked in the next verse.⁷⁹ Katumuwa's act of dedicating the special chamber for his stele and soul (through feasting [hgg]) relates to the same form of ritual commensality implied in Hos. 9:5 "the day of Yahweh's feast [גִּתָּה]." In one, the ritual act of feeding/feasting concerns the veneration of the dead; in the other it concerns the worship of Yahweh. Again, it is instructive to look at Deut. 26:14, where the negative statement concerning funerary rituals

72. For different interpretations, compare Schmitt, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 455–57, with Bloch-Smith, *Judahite Burial Practices*, 122–23; ead., "The Cult of the Dead in Judah: Interpreting the Material Remains," *JBL* 111 (1992): 213–24.

73. Some studies state that there is nothing in the mortuary remains to privilege one interpretation over the other; see, e.g., Tappy, "Did the Dead Ever Die in Biblical Judah," 61. Yet the analysis of Lev-Tov and Maher ("Food in Late Bronze Age Funerary Offerings," 99) seems to eliminate the third line of interpretation. According to Lev-Tov and Maher (*ibid.*, 93), the low number of animal bones (relative to the high number of burials) suggests that they are not remains of extended feasts, but rather food offerings that were left in the tomb with each interment. The sample size is small (one tomb), yet Lev-Tov and Maher's analysis is important because of its attention to evidence of ritual patterning (*ibid.*, 94–96), following the methodology of L. K. Horwitz, "Animal Offerings from Two Middle Bronze Age Tombs," *IEJ* 37 (1987): 251–55.

74. The third interpretation was preferred by many early biblical scholars (see Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 244), and is also supported by Schmidt (*Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 190–200; cf. 10–11).

75. On the issues involved with cults of the dead in ancient Israel, see Schmitt, "Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family," 429–33; and the cautionary discussion of M. Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), 98–104. Schmidt's work (*Israel's Beneficent Dead*) serves as a counter-argument to reconstructions of the cult of the dead; however, cf. T. J. Lewis, "How Far Can Texts Take Us?" in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place*, 189–202. Pitard ("Tombs and Offerings," 150–55) deconstructs the feeding of the dead in a broader discussion of the topic, as does Pardee ("Marzihu, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult," 273–87).

76. Food offerings placed on tombs for the dead are even spoken of approvingly in early Jewish texts, preserved in Greek, notably Tob. 4:17: "Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to the sinners." Ben Sira seems to mock feeding the dead (Sir. 30:18): "Good things poured out upon a mouth that is closed are like offerings of food placed upon a grave." This statement, however, is not found in the Hebrew manuscripts (only the Greek and Syriac versions).

77. For a similar interpretation of Ps. 16:10–11, see O. Loretz, "Die postmortale (himmlische) Theoxenie der npš 'Seele, Totenseele' in ugaritischbiblischer Sicht nach Psalm 16,10–11: Die Ablösung der ugaritisch-kanaanäischen rapiuma/Ropheim/Repha'im durch npš 'Seele (eines Toten), Totengeist' im Judentum," *UF* 38 (2006): 445–98.

78. See n. 65. This aspect is widely noted in the commentaries; see, e.g., W. R. Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 190. See also J. L. Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 125–27, and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 347. Ehud Ben Zvi (*Hosea*, 185–86) breaks down the passage effectively as the denial of Yahweh's land, temple, and festival.

79. The 3rd plural description of v. 4 shifts to a 2nd plural accusatory statement in v. 5.

is concluded with an affirmation of the cult of Yahweh. The initial action questioned in Hos. 9:5, (“what will you do [עָשָׂה]?”) echoes the words in Deut. 26:14bβ (“I have done [עָשָׂה] according to all that you have commanded me”). Thus the prophetic vision of Hos. 9:4–5 is contrastive, pitting the rituals of the dead in vv. 4 and 6 against the cult of Yahweh in v. 5.⁸⁰

This same sense of ritual parity (or rather, disparity) is played out in Hag. 2:12–14 and the prophetic critique of the temple’s rebuilding. In this passage, Haggai makes it clear that contact with a priest carrying consecrated meat does not make food sacred, yet contact with an “impure *defunct-soul*” (נַפְשׁוֹתֵי הַמֵּתִים) will make food impure. It is a question of cultic purity versus impurity, where food plays a key role, and interaction with the dead (a corpse) is placed in opposition to interaction with Yahweh (and his temple). Bracketed as such, the נַפְשׁוֹתֵי of Hos. 9:4a should be understood as a component feature of the funerary rituals that come before it. The נַפְשׁוֹתֵי here parallels the house of Yahweh at the end of the verse, with the two serving as the focal point of ritual actions that are mutually exclusive.⁸¹

4. THE PLACE OF THE DEFUNCT-SOUL

Although the texts examined above involve a distinct sense of space, the ritual dimensions within which the “soul” is assigned meaning should be questioned further. This is not to deny the architectonic sense of the word that developed in later Semitic languages, attested already in OSA (Qatabanian). But it is important to understand the wider spatial framework of ritual performance that is intrinsic to the meaning of נַפְשׁוֹתֵי/*nbš*. The inauguration of Katumuwa’s soul that was in his stele was marked by a commensal dedication (*hgg*) of the chamber (*syd*) in which the stele was placed. *KTMW* refers to this totality, ritual and space, as the “eternal chamber” (*syd* ‘*lm*). A brief review will show that the נַפְשׁוֹתֵי/*nbš* in these ritual texts was as much about the object it signified as it was about the space in which it appeared.

The localization of ritual performance that is observable in Katumuwa’s stele can also be seen in another Aramaic inscription from Anatolia (Keseçek Köyü), albeit one that is later (Persian Period and probably fourth century B.C.E.). The first three lines of the inscription, published as KAI 258 (1–3),⁸² read:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1) <i>ptkr znh hqm nnšt</i> | The figure that Nanašta has established |
| 2) <i>qdm ’dr spnw nwh</i> | in front of ’DR. Respect ⁸³ the area |
| 3) <i>npšy zy lh</i> | of my <i>defunct-soul</i> that belongs to it . . . |

The text gives an explicit sense of place for the respective *npš* in l. 2, and the subsequent relative clause in l. 3 qualifies the location of the *npš* in a manner very similar to *KTMW* l. 5.⁸⁴

80. See also Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah*, 174.

81. The final verbal clause of the verse, לָאֵלִים בְּיַהּ בֵּיתָהּ (v.4bβ), is possibly redactional, as suggested by several commentators (see Wolff, *Hosea*, 155; and Macintosh, *Hosea*, 346–47). The house of Yahweh could also stand for the land of Israel, as some have proposed, going back to Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957 [original German publication, 1882]), 22 n. 1. See further Kwakkel, “Exile in Hosea 9:3–6,” 139–40, and J. A. Dearman, *The Book of Hosea* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 239–40.

82. The present state of the text makes it difficult to read; see the various treatments in R. S. Hanson, “Aramaic Funerary and Boundary Inscriptions from Asia Minor,” *BASOR* 192 (1968): 3–5, and E. Lipiński, *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics I* (Leuven: Leuven Univ. Press, 1976), 146–50. A new edition of the text, currently located in the Yale Babylonian Collection, is being prepared by Seth Sanders and Aaron Butts.

83. Reading *spnw* as a masc. plural imperative (G); see נִשְׁבַּח (“respect”) in Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1014.

84. In KAI 258, *KTMW* l. 5, and Hos. 9:4 personhood is distinctly manifest in the pronominal suffix, and in the two Anatolian texts the *nbš* (with attached 1 c. sg. suffix) precedes a relative particle plus a preposition that marks its

In KAI 258:3 the *nbš* is assigned to the *ptkr* (a Persian loan word for “figure”) that fronts the text.⁸⁵ The spatial context of this figure is a controlled environment within which the object is assigned personhood as the *nbš* of Nanašta.⁸⁶ KAI 258 and Katumuwa’s stele demonstrate the manner by which a ritual environment manifests and materializes identity, and conversely how identity can be localized in a ritual environment.

A closer parallel with *KTMW* is another inscription from the Kingdom of Sam’al by Panamuwa I, the early eighth-century B.C.E. king and precursor of Katumuwa’s royal patron (KAI 214). This text, known as the Hadad Inscription,⁸⁷ describes the feeding and veneration of Panamuwa’s defunct-soul (*nbš*) in ll. 17 and 21–22. Yet the object that Panamuwa erects (also a *nšb*) is dedicated to his patron god Hadad. The inscription does offer a context for the object (KAI 214:14–15): “the place of Panamuwa, son of Qarli, king of Y’DY, with the stele of [this] chamber” (*mqm pnmw br qrl mlk y’dy ‘m nšb ḥdr*).⁸⁸

Panamuwa’s postmortem existence here is assured through a routine process of remembering his defunct-soul and name (ll. 17 and 21, respectively). The defunct-soul of Panamuwa is actualized through the rituals of food and drink that occur before the stele of Hadad, set up in the place (*mqm*) dedicated to this king of Y’DY.⁸⁹ In other words, the defunct-soul

place. Thus, they are similar in their operative syntax: “my *defunct-soul* that is in this stele (*bnšb zn*) / that belongs to it (*lh*).”

85. Compare also the late Aramaic text published by Bevan and Reeves (“A New Nabataean Funerary Inscription from Humayma,” 497–507), a Nabatean inscription from the Transjordan that dates to the second or third century C.E.:

- 1). *dnh' npš' dy ḥq[ymw]* This is the *defunct-soul* esta[blished]
- 2). *'bdw w šbdy lm[. . .]* by 'Abdô and ŠBDY for M[-
- 3). *'bwhm bšnt [. . .]* their father in the year [. . .]

This Nabatean stele was not associated with any burials, but more to the point it compares with KAI 214:1 and the Keseçek Köyü Inscription (KAI 258:1) in its use of the causative stem of *√qwm*. The verbal form is apparently unusual in such Nabatean Aramaic texts, where the terms typically associated with *npš* are “make” (*'bd*) and “build” (*bnh*); see *ibid.*, 499. But the point of comparison is their genre: both KAI 258 and the Nabatean text are dedicatory inscriptions, where the praxis of the *nbš/npš* is assumed with very little description. The relative clause that ends the first line of the Nabatean text (restored as *dy ḥqymw*) qualifies the action of the subjects who created the fronted object (problematically written *dnh npš'*, instead of *d' npš'*). Compare also the Nabatean inscription recently discussed in Butts and Hardy, “A Revised Reading of a Nabataean Inscription from Umm Al-Jimāl,” 387 (which begins with [*d*]’ *npš'*). Although these inscriptions offer lexical and syntactical parallels, their genres contrast with that of *KTMW*. As several recent studies have observed (Sanders, “Naming the Dead,” and Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II*, 128), Katumuwa’s Stele is a mixed genre (dedicatory and ritual) that emulates royal inscriptions, notably KAI 214. Certainly in these examples, along with the Nabatean text published by Bevan and Reeves, the *nbš/npš* is abstracted from any mortal remains and is assigned a substantive sense through the dedication of the inscribed object. But unlike the other two texts, *KTMW* actually describes the ritual actions that give substance to the object, and the relative clause in l. 5 comes at the end of the initial dedication and before the prescribed offerings in ll. 6–13. These ritual actions are assumed in the other two dedicatory texts.

86. The phrase “controlled environment” for ritual space comes from J. Z. Smith, “The Bare Facts of Ritual,” *HR* 20 (1980): 124–25. See also Bonatz’s comments (*Das Syro-Hethitische Grabdenkmal*, 157) regarding the liminal space of the stele as an object of ritual.

87. The inscribed statue was discovered at Gerçin, outside of Zincirli Höyük; see “The Hadad Inscription,” translated by K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *COS* 2.36, 156–58, and also the general discussion in Niehr, “Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments II,” 280–81.

88. Translating *nšb ḥdr* as a construct, following Niehr, “Ein weiterer Aspekt zum Totenkult der Könige von Sam’al,” *SEL* 18 (2001): 84, and J. Tropper, *Die Inschriften von Zincirli* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1993), 57.

89. The term *mqm* can take on a mortuary sense in Northwest Semitic languages (particularly Phoenician-Punic), although the term does not necessarily mean “tomb.” See, for example, the suggestion “necropolis” in Niehr, “Ein weiterer Aspekt zum Totenkult der Könige von Sam’al,” 84–85 and 89–90; cf. his earlier discussion of the term (and the sources cited) in *id.*, “Zum Totenkult der Könige von Sam’al im 9. und 8. Jh. v. Chr.,” *SEL* 11 (1994): 69. Another example is Eshmunazor’s sarcophagus (KAI 14: 3–4), where the *mqm* represents the totality of place that

The Hadad Inscription demonstrates that within the controlled environment of the 'Im, the remembrance ($\sqrt{zkr}$) of a person's soul and name are synonymous actions.⁹¹ In recognition of the larger sense available within this particular nuance of 'Im, it is instructive to turn to Third Isaiah and the divine promise given to the eunuch (Isa. 56:4–5). The eunuch's "eternal name" (עוֹלָם עַד), which is better than progeny, metaphorically represents the ritual complex of "stele and name" (עַד וְזֵכֶר)⁹² that will be perpetually observed within the confines of Yahweh's house (v. 5). In these examples, name and memory are assured through performance associated with religious practice. The essential characteristics of postmortem selfhood are bound up in the routinization of ritual, the elements referred to as "the basic building blocks of religion" by J. Z. Smith.⁹³ The establishment of Panamuwa's *mqm* for his name and soul right beside (and along with) Hadad's stele insured that his defunct-soul would be fed so long as the storm god received food and drink offerings. Likewise, the placement of the eunuch's name and stele within the ritual space of the temple compound (Isa. 56:4) insured that his memory would be venerated so long as the community in Jerusalem remembered Yahweh's name.

encompasses the king's sarcophagus and tomb; M. J. Suriano, *The Politics of Dead Kings: Dynastic Ancestors in the Book of Kings and Ancient Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 156–57.

91. As Greenfield points out ("Un rite religieux araméen et ses parallèles," 46–52), the principal means of venerating the dead consisted of rituals of remembrance (invoking the name) and feeding.

93. Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual," 113. This is not to confuse ancestor veneration with ancestor worship; for one thing, the dead here lack agency.

95. See similarly Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 305 and 314. The unique spatiality of this text is due to the prophet's displacement of the tomb with the temple, which Francesca Stavrakopoulou (*Land of Our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims* [New York: T&T Clark International, 2010], 123–28) insightfully

symbolism of feeding the dead in Hosea 9 affirms Deuteronomic law (Deut. 26:14), which sought to carefully restrict and control the interaction with the dead through modalities of ritual purity and impurity.

CONCLUSION: BREAKING BREAD WITH THE DEAD

Ritual performance in the ancient Levant gave substantive qualities to death that are typically lacking in Western culture today.⁹⁶ In the ancient Near East, communion with the dead was effected through rituals of food, drink, and evocation.⁹⁷ As an object, the defunct-soul could be memorialized and could attain a level of immortality through the continuity of such ritual actions. Food and drink were part of the process of ritualization, that is, the structured routine of activities that are imbued with special meaning.⁹⁸ The quotidian activities of eating and drinking were assigned extraordinary value (feeding dead people) and enacted within a specialized location. Through this definition of ritual, it becomes possible to describe the defunct-soul (𐤎𐤁𐤔/*nbš*) as the essence of selfhood evoked by name and invested in an object that was ritually centered. Yet the vested objects in the biblical texts and the inscriptions from Sam'al are dissimilar; in the former it is a corpse while in the latter it is a stele. As such, each object indicates a different ritual setting. The 𐤎𐤁𐤔, as a defiling object, represented the corpse in ritual actions (mortuary cult and funerary rites) that were associated with the dead body and its disposal. In Katumuwa's stele the actions that surround the soul constituted a regularized system of veneration that was separate from the irregular occurrence of funerary rituals, and one that continued over an extended period of time. The different ritual settings, however, indicate the complicated historical-philological development of the root in Semitic languages, which included corpse and stele, as well as cenotaph and tomb.

With regard to the Hebrew nuance of "corpse," the accepted actions that caused defilement in Lev. 21:1–4 and Num. 19:11–13 are never specified beyond the basic defiling object (the 𐤎𐤁𐤔). These actions would not have included tonsure and laceration, which are specifically prohibited in Lev. 21:5 and other texts (Lev. 19:27–28a and Deut. 14:1) and never considered acceptable by P and H. Conversely, feeding the dead was probably part of the complex of ritual activities covered under Lev. 21:1–4 and assumed in Num. 19:11–13. These texts can now be linked with the explicit references to food for the dead in Deut. 26:14 through Hos. 9:4, in light of the parallels that Hosea's imagery shares with Northwest Semitic inscriptions

refers to as "entombing the temple." Yet, rather than fertility powers, the text is about the reconfiguration of ancestral identities. Membership in this new community, which could extend to foreigners and eunuchs, did not require any specific ancestral pedigree (which would be quite exclusive). Thus, the prophet was rejecting the foundations of the traditional kinship-based society. One's post-mortem existence was no longer dependent upon progeny so long as Yahweh was worshiped in his temple. This message, delivered to a community already fractured by the social dislocation of exile, replaced social performance (ancestor veneration) with a religious practice that was more enduring and "better than sons and daughters" (Isa. 56:5). For an extended discussion, see Loretz, "Sohnespflicht im Totenkult Kanaans und Israels," 244–46.

96. The title of this article is inspired by a quote attributed to the great twentieth-century poet W. H. Auden: "Art is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead." The perspective in Auden's quote is one of cultural memory as preserved through aesthetic appreciation.

97. Indeed, the Akkadian term used for the Mesopotamian repast, *kispu*, is likely derived from *kasāpu(m)*, "to break." See Greenfield, "Un rite religieux araméen et ses parallèles," 47–49; A. Tsukimoto, *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispu) im alten Mesopotamien* (Kevelaer, Butzon, and Bercker: 1985); Pardee, "Marziḥu, Kispu, and the Ugaritic Funerary Cult," 273–80; and Nutkiewicz, *L'homme face à la mort*, 277–83.

98. The use of the term "ritualization" draws from the work of C. M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 81–82. Laneri ("An Archaeology of Funerary Rituals," 3) also discusses the transformation of the ordinary to extraordinary through ritual.

(*KTMW* and *KAI* 214). The purpose of these rituals was the manifestation of the self, that is, the defunct-soul that represented the focus of action. In the biblical world, to feed the defunct-soul was to partake in rituals so powerful that they rendered all participants ineligible for participation in the cult of Yahweh. The dynamics of this ritual tension are obvious in the biblical sources and benefit from the additional comparison with Hag. 2:13. In all of these passages the message is quite clear: do not mix or mingle Yahweh's food with that given to the dead.