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**The Infixes -t-
in Biblical Hebrew**

In recent studies,¹ M. Dahood has proposed that a considerable number of verbs in biblical Hebrew can be analysed as infixed -t- forms of the verbal root. That there was an infixed -t- conjugation in Northwest Semitic is clearly established: It is well attested in Ugaritic;² it appears in the Moabite of the Mesha Stele³ and in the Phoenician of Byblos.⁴ Prior to Dahood's work, a number of infixed -t- forms had been identified in the Bible,⁵ but the general

¹ M. Dahood, Psalms, Vols. I-II, The Anchor Bible, Vols. XVI-XVII (Garden City, N.Y., 1966-68); Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology (Rome, 1963) (hereafter = PNWSP); also his review of G. Garbini's Il Semitico di Nord-Ovest in Orientalia 32 (1963), pp. 498-500, and "Philological Notes on Jeremiah 18:14-15," ZAW 74 (1962), pp. 207-209. The publication of Psalms III (Garden City, N.Y., 1970) was too recent for the writer to have incorporated material from it in this study. A brief inspection of its contents, however, indicates nothing that would substantially alter the thesis of this article.

² C. H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook, Vol. III : Grammar (Rome, 1965), par. 9.33, and M. Dahood, Ugaritic Hebrew Philology (Rome, 1965), p. 24.

³ ואלתחם, lines 11, 15; בולתחמה, 1. 19: H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften (Wiesbaden, 1964), no. 181 (hereafter KAI).

⁴ תהתפר, תחתסר, 1. 2. KAI, No. 1.

⁵ In place names: אשחאול (Jos. 15:33), אלחקון (Jos. 15:59), אלחקא (Jos. 19:44, 21:23), אשחמוע (Jos. 21:14); Cf. H. Bauer, "Kanaanäische Miszellen," ZDMG /1 (1917), p. 410, and similarly, G. Bergsträsser, Hebräische Grammatik (Leipzig, 1918), Vol. II, par. 181; Z. Harris, The Development of the Canaanite Dialects (New Haven, 1939), p. 62. W. F. Albright interpreted Hebrew עתר, "to pray, to supplicate," as an infixed -t- form of the root ערר in "The North-Canaanite Poems of 'Alêyan Baal'

consensus was that the infixed -t- conjugation of the verb had disappeared in biblical Hebrew almost completely, and that its specific function was assumed by the niph^{Ca}l and hithpa^{Ca}l conjugations.⁶

Dahood proposes that the infixed -t- conjugation was much more frequent in biblical Hebrew than other scholars have supposed and offers some twenty-four examples, mostly in Psalms I and II, all of which had been understood as more conventional forms. Dahood's approach is controversial and has often been attacked in general, but as C. Brekelmans says:

General pronouncements pro or contra this commentary [Psalms I and II] are impossible and of no use at all. If one wishes to take a stand, one will have to deal with detailed questions and arguments. If, for example, scholars have criticised the somewhat bewildering method of Dahood, such assertion must be documented and even then it reaches no further than the instances quoted.⁷

Therefore, before too much ingenuity is exercised in uncovering more of these latent forms,⁸ it seems practical to review the instances presented by Dahood to see whether they will withstand a scepticism supported by the certain later disappearance of the infixed -t- form from Hebrew.

and 'The Gracious Gods,'" JPOS 14 (1934), p. 122, n. 105. F. M. Cross, Jr. and D. N. Freedman take the first words of Dt. 33:3b, הָיָה לָנוּ to be one word, הָיָה לָנוּ, an infixed -t- form from the root מָךְ (מָךְ or מָכַךְ) meaning "to bend, to be low or humiliated" in "The Blessing of Moses," JBL 67 (1948), pp. 193, 200. שָׁתִּיךְ from the root שָׁיַךְ, "to urinate," (Akk. šānu; Ugaritic tyn) has also been noted as an infixed -t- form, e.g., by Cross, Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry (Baltimore, 1950), p. 210. Likewise הַשְׁתַּחֲוֶה has been shown to be a št form of חָוִי, cf. yšthwy in Ugaritic.

⁶ See, for example, R. Meyer, Hebräische Grammatik, Vol. II, par. 72, 1a, pp. 125ff., or Z. Harris, Development, p. 62.

⁷ C. Brekelmans, "Some Considerations of the Translation of the of the Psalms by M. Dahood," Ugarit-Forschungen, Vol. 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), p. 5.

⁸ For example, the unpublished dissertation of A. M. L. Boyle, Infix-T Forms in Biblical Hebrew (Boston, 1969), which the writer knows only from the summary presented to the 1970 meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. See Dissertation Abstracts 29 (1968-69), p. 2122, and Papers and Abstracts of the Society of Biblical Literature 1970, p. 28.

The first examples to be considered here are those offered as single occurrences of an infixed -t- form of a given root. All of these, by the very fact that they are isolated cases without other textual support, are liable to the same methodological objection: the existence of a form cannot be inferred from one case unless that form is the only one possible in the case. A series of examples which might be infixed -t- forms does not provide adequate proof of the existence of the conjugation.

1. וּמַתַּחַת in Dt. 33:27⁹

The God of Old is a conquerer	מענה אלהי קדם
One who lowers his arms, the Eternal.	וּמַתַּחַת זרעה עולם

(Dahood's translations, here and in the examples following)

Dahood parses וּמַתַּחַת as a piC_{el} infixed -t- (Dt) participle of the verb "to descend," vocalised וּמַתַּחַת (sic), and parallel to מְעַנֶּה, "conquerer." The text is difficult,¹⁰ but clearly, the absence of any other instances of an infixed -t- form of נַחַת in Hebrew or in other Canaanite dialects leaves Dahood's understanding of the word without support. He cites Is. 30:30, וּנְחַת זְרוּעוֹ יֵרָאֵה, "And the descent of his arm will be seen," as a parallel. The comparison is not forceful, since it does not involve an infixed -t- form of the verb and since the word "arm" appears in the singular in Is. 30:30 and in the plural in Dt. 33:27, thus changing the metaphor significantly. Although Dahood's translation of מְעַנֶּה (his vocalization) as "conquerer" is acceptable, it hardly justifies his rendering of וּמַתַּחַת.¹¹

⁹ PNWSE, p. 45 and Psalms I, pp. 115, 235.

¹⁰ Cross, Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry, pp. 239f., and the studies of T. H. Gaster, H. L. Ginsberg, and R. Gordis cited there.

¹¹ For cnh/y "to subdue," cf., e.g., KAI No. 26: I: 18-20. The New English Bible takes קדם אלהי as the object of מענה and translates, "Who humbled the gods of old and subdued the ancient powers." This is essentially Gaster's solution: "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33:3-5, 26-29," JBL 66 (1947), pp. 60, 61.

2. יִנְחָשׁוּ in Jer. 18:14-15¹²

Do flints leave the field,	הִיעֲזַב מְצֹר שְׂדֵי
snow Lebanon?	שֶׁלֶג לִבְנוֹן
Or do men forget flowing waters,	אִם-יִנְחָשׁוּ מִיַּם זְרִימ
running springs?	קְרִימ נוֹזְלִים
Yet my people has forgotten me,	כִּי-שָׁכַחְנִי עַמִּי
to nullities they burn incense.	לְשׂוֹא יִקְטְרוּ

Dahood takes יִנְחָשׁוּ as a niphCal infixed -t- form of נָשָׁה, "to forget", on the basis of the parallelism with עֲזַב, "to forsake," and שָׁכַח, "to forget," and translates it as an impersonal third person plural masculine. In the light of all the uncertainties in this passage, especially v. 14b,¹³ the translation of יִנְחָשׁוּ as "dry up" (a metathesis of נָשָׁה), adopted by most versions, seems at least as satisfactory as Dahood's rendering.¹⁴

3. יִתְפָּשׂוּ in Ps. 10:21¹⁵

In the breast of the wicked	בְּגֹאֲת רָשָׁע יִדְלַק עֵינֵי
simmers affliction,	יִתְפָּשׂוּ בְּמִזְמוֹת זֵר
He pantingly pursues the	חֲשֹׁנֵי
plans he laid.	

In place of the MT יִתְפָּשׂוּ (a niphCal of תָּפַשׂ, "grasp, wield, capture") Dahood proposes יִתְפָּשׂוּ, an infixed -t- form of נָפַשׂ, "to pant after," evidently a denominative verb from נִפְשָׁה. He cites as an example of a similar semantic development the verb נָשָׁם (Is. 42:14) from the word נִשְׁמָה, "breath." Also in support of this meaning he mentions Arabic nāfasa (III), "to aspire after something." As another instance of the verb נָפַשׂ in biblical Hebrew, he cites Nah. 3:18b נִפְּצוּ עַמְּךָ עַל-הַרִים וְאֵין מִקְבֹּץ, where RSV, NEB and JB emend to נִפְּצוּ and render "your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather." Dahood would read נִפְּשׂוּ ("piCel privative"), "they expire on the mountains." Quite apart from the

¹² ZAW 74, p. 207.

¹³ The rendering of זְרִימ as "flowing" from the root זָוַר, "to flow" (related to זָוַר I, "to press, to squeeze" = to cause to flow) seems rather shaky.

¹⁴ Jerusalem Bible, RSV: "run dry"; NEB: "fail." They interpret יִנְחָשׁוּ as a metathesis for יִנְשָׁחוּ, "be dry, be dried up." Cf. Is. 19:5.

¹⁵ Psalms I, p. 61.

difficulty of the latter translation,¹⁶ the semantic connection between "expire" and "pantingly pursue" is not clear. Furthermore, the meaning of the niphCal forms of נָפַח (Ex. 23:12, 31:17; II Sam. 16:14) is normally "to refresh oneself," the very antithesis of "pantingly pursue."¹⁷ In the context of Ps. 10:2, the preposition ב goes much better with the meaning "be caught" than after a verb of pursuing. Finally, Dahood must also explain away the plural ending of the verb in order to sustain his analysis. Together these objections make Dahood's explanation of יִתְפַּחֵם unconvincing.

4. אֲשַׁחֲזֵן in Ps. 73:21¹⁸

But when my mind had soured,
and my emotions had dried up.

כִּי יִחַחְמָן לִבִּי
וּכְלִיֹּתֵי אֲשַׁחֲזֵן

Dahood would explain אֲשַׁחֲזֵן as the first person singular imperfect, infixed -t- conjugation of the verb שָׁחַז, "to dry up, to become old," with a reduplicated final consonant. The ingenuity of this analysis is impressive, but its probability is extremely low. There are no cases where the root שָׁחַז can be shown to mean "dry up" or "wither" in biblical Hebrew. As an adjective or a verb in the niphCal, it consistently means "old" in the Bible,¹⁹ and it appears as a technical term with wine in the Samaria ostraca.²⁰ Even if one were to grant the existence of a verb שָׁחַז, "to wither," there remains the duty on Dahood's part to present some evidence of infixed -t- forms with reduplicated final consonants (particularly of verbs primae-waw or yod) to illustrate the possibility of such a form.

¹⁶ According to GKC par. 52h, the privative picel expresses the taking away or injuring of the object denoted by the noun from which the verb form is derived. It is always transitive, while in the version offered by Dahood, "expire" is clearly intransitive. It is ironic that Dahood's example of a privative picel is intransitive while his example of an infixed -t- form from the same root is transitive.

¹⁷ It is true that in Arabic nāfasa does mean "to desire" or "to vie for," but not really "pant" or "pursue," and in any case, the analogy is remote. Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, p. 2826.

¹⁸ Psalms II, p. 194.

¹⁹ Lev. 13:11, 25:22, 26:10; Dt. 4:25; Is. 22:11; Canticles 7:14; Neh. 3:6, 12:39.

²⁰ KAI, Nos. 183:3, 184:4. Dahood's translation of נִשְׁחַז in Ps. 77:11 as the infinitive construct of the verb שָׁחַז, "to wither" (Psalms II, p. 229) is also unconvincing. In any case it is not an infixed -t- form.

5. יתמכו in Prov. 5:5²¹

Her feet go down to Death,
Her steps sink into Sheol.

רגליה ירדות מות
שאול צעדיה יתמכו

Dahood parses יתמכו as an infixed -t- form of ימך (a by-form of מכך) similar to the Ugaritic infixed -t- form itrt (VAB, D:44) from yrt. The hiph^{Cil} of ימך he finds in Ps. 16:5: תומיך, "you make fall." In spite of Dahood's suggestion, the existence of a verb ימך, "to sink down," in Hebrew is doubtful, and even its supposed cognate, מכך, is attested only three times.²² The root תמך, "to hold," from which the forms in Ps. 16:5 and Prov. 5:5 are usually derived, is well attested. An examination of forms similar in morphology to יתמכו (i.e., imperfects of תמך which might be supposed to have preserved infixed -t- forms of ימך incognito) yields no instance where a translation of the form by "sink down" would make any sense.²³ In this case, not only is there no solid evidence of the existence of an infixed -t- form of the verb, but there is no evidence of the existence of the verb at all.

6. נשתווה in Prov. 27:15²⁴

A constant drip on a rainy day
and a quarrelsome woman are alike.

דלף טורד ביום סגריר
ואשת מדוניה נשתווה

Dahood rejects the usual emendation of נשתווה to נשתווה (niph^{Cal}, 3 f.s.) and treats it as a niph^{Cal} infixed -t- form of the verb שווה, "to be alike." Once again, in the absence of any other instance of either a niph^{Cal} or niph^{Cal} infixed -t-, one can say only that the emendation is as likely as Dahood's interpretation of the text.

²¹ Psalms I, p. 89.

²² Ps. 106:43; Job 24:24; Ec. 10:18.

²³ Gen. 33:15, 48:17; Is. 42:1; Job 36:17; Prov. 4:4, 5:22, 11:16, 28:17, 29:23.

²⁴ PNWSP, p. 54.

There are two verbs for which Dahood adduces more than one example of the infixed -t- conjugation. One of these, פּוֹחַ , he discusses in connection with Ps. 49:5.²⁵

I will incline my ear to a proverb, אָטָה לְמִשַּׁל אֲזוּנִי
will breathe out my riddle on the lyre אַפְתַּח בְּכִנּוּר הַיָּדָיִם

The word אַפְתַּח, normally derived from פָּתַח, "to open," and translated something like "solve" (RSV), is related by Dahood to the root פּוֹחַ meaning "to blow, breathe." Other instances of this conjugation cited are (with his translations) Jer. 1:14, מִצְפוֹן חִפְתַּח הַרְעָה, "evil will blow down from the north"; Ps. 119:130, פָּתַח וְבִרְיָךְ יֵאִיר מִבֵּין פְּתִיִּים, "The mere utterance of your words gives light, giving intelligence to the uninstructed"; Prov. 8:6, מִפְּתַח שִׁפְתַּי, "The utterance of my lips"; and Prov. 17:19, מְגַבִּיהַּ פִּתְחוֹ, "He who speaks proudly."

Taking these examples in reverse order, מְגַבִּיהַּ פִּתְחוֹ is parallel to אֱהָב פְּשַׁע, "lover of evil." The usual translation, "who makes high his door" (RSV) is also possible in the context: פָּתַח does mean "door," or "opening of a tent, house, temple, or gate,"²⁶ and the idea that one who makes too big an opening invites disaster is plausible. Dahood's rendering might be acceptable given the meaning of the verb גָּבַהּ, which in the gal conjugation can mean "to be proud."²⁷ However, nowhere does the root פּוֹחַ denote the act of speaking or that which is spoken.²⁸

Prov. 8:6 does not confirm the existence of an infixed -t- conjugation of פּוֹחַ, since the expression מִפְּתַח שִׁפְתַּי seems to mean "to utter"²⁹ and מִפְּתַח שִׁפְתַּי could mean "my utterance," as well as "the utterance of my lips."

Dahood's rendering of Ps. 119:130 is liable to the same objections raised against his treatment of Prov. 17:19. That is, פָּתַח, as a verbal noun from פּוֹחַ, cannot be rendered "utterance" in light of Hebrew usage.

From the aspect of sense, Dahood's rendering of Jer. 1:14 seems to have the advantage over the derivation

²⁵ *Psalms* I, p. 297.

²⁶ E.g., פָּתַח-הַבַּיִת, Gen. 18:1; פָּתַח-הָאָהֳל, Gen. 19:11; פָּתַח-הַשַּׁעַר, Gen. 22:9; Ez. 40:11.

²⁷ Ps. 131:1; Is. 3:16.

²⁸ Those biblical verses which might seem to be exceptions to this statement (Ps. 27:12; Prov. 6:19, 12:17, 14:5 and 25,19:5 and 9) involve the noun יְפִיחַ, "witness" (עֵד), which is etymologically unrelated to the verb.

²⁹ Ps. 51:17; Job 11:5, 32:20.

from פתח (RSV: "Out of the North shall evil break forth..."). However, the context in Jer. 1 involves several plays on words,³⁰ and the use of פתח in an unusual way is not too surprising. Is the form הפתח a play on נִפְתָּח (v.13), a form closely related to פוּח in form and meaning, or is it related to פתח in a punning contrast to the double meaning of צפון, "north," and "hidden, stored up"? Again, no certain answer is possible. One can acknowledge the possibility of an infixed -t- form of פוּח, but one is by no means compelled by the evidence to reject פתח as the root of these forms.

By far the greatest number of instances of infixed -t- forms collected by Dahood are forms of הִסְתִּיר or נִסְתָּר. Traditionally, they have been translated "hide" and construed as forms of סָתַר, but Dahood considers them infixed -t- forms of סָרַר, "to turn aside." Most of the instances cited have to do with the expression הִסְתִּיר פְּנֵים, "to hide/turn away the face,"³¹ but forms in the niphCal are also cited³²--some seventeen examples in all. One assumes that in every case where the expression הִסְתִּיר פְּנֵים occurs Dahood would judge it to be from סָרַר --though he does acknowledge the root סָתַר, "to hide," and translates it as such on other occasions.³³ The reason for his rendering and analysis (apart from the context in Prov. 22:3, 27:12) is stated in Psalms I.

The fact that the LXX and the Vulgate in numerous passages (...) translated histir as though it derived from sūr, "to turn aside," permits the inference that the infixed -t- conjugation, so vigorous in Ugaritic and sporadically attested in Phoenician and Moabite, was much more frequent in biblical Hebrew than the standard grammars allow.³⁴

³⁰ E.g., לַנְּחֹשׁ, לַנְּחֹשׁ (v.10); שָׁקַד, שָׁקַד (vv. 11f).

³¹ In Psalms I and II: Pss. 10:11, 13:2, 22:25, 27:9, 30:8, 44:25, 51:11, 69:18, 88:15. Mentioned in Psalms I, p. 64: Ps. 102:3; Is. 50:6. Not mentioned in Psalms I or II, but probably to be included: Pss. 104:29, 143:7. Cited in PNWSP, p. 46, n. 1: Job 3:10.

³² Psalms I: Pss. 19:7, 13 (נסתרות "aberrations"), 38:10. Psalms II: Ps. 89:47. PNWSP, pp. 45f: Prov. 22:3, 27:12.

³³ NiphCal: Ps. 55:13, "hide"; hiphCal: Ps. 17:8, "hide" Pss. 27:5, 31:21, 64:3, "to shield or shelter"; hithpaCel: Ps. 54:2, "hide."

³⁴ Psalms I, p. xxxviii.

This is further amplified in his comment on Ps. 10:11:

But the fact that both the LXX and the Vulg. very frequently reproduce histîr pânâyw by apéstrepseñ tò prósopon autoú and avertit faciem suam respectively.³⁵

This argument from the ancient versions deserves a closer inspection.

The Vulgate is not consistent: of forty-four instances of יְהַסֶּה, it translates thirteen by avertere, "turn away"; twenty-five by abscondere, "hide" (including fifteen where פְּנֵי is the object); two by celare, "conceal"; three by protegere, "protect"; and one (Job 3:10) by afferre, "take away." It differs from the LXX in rendering יְהַסֶּה as "hide" in fourteen cases where the LXX has ἀποστρέφειν. In view of this inconsistency, it is difficult to argue that the translators of the Vulgate had any strong view about the derivation of יְהַסֶּה from הַסֵּה, as opposed to הַסֶּה. There is a predominance of the translation "hide," but the inconsistent treatment of פְּנֵי יְהַסֶּה tends to show a lack of firm distinction between avertere faciem and abscondere faciem. In the niphCal, the Vulgate translates all but two cases (of thirty-one) with verbs meaning "to hide."³⁶

The LXX shows a much greater consistency in its translations of forms of הַסֶּה. For the expression יְהַסֶּה פְּנֵי, which occurs thirty times,³⁷ the LXX uses ἀποστρέφειν τὸ πρόσωπον twenty-eight times: the only two exceptions are the two instances of the expression in the book of Job (13:24 and 34:29), where הַסֶּה is translated by κρύπτειν, "to hide." For forms of הַסֶּה without פְּנֵי as object, the LXX does not use ἀποστρέφειν at all, but in nine (or ten) instances a form of κρύπτειν, in four (or three)³⁸ instances a form of σκεπάζειν, "to shelter," and in one instance (Job 3:10) ἀπαλλάσσειν, "to remove." Ἀποστρέφειν, furthermore, according to Liddell and Scott,³⁹ means "to turn, turn back, or turn away." This is borne out by its occurrences in the

³⁵ Ibid., p. 64.

³⁶ The two exceptions are Ps. 89:47, avertis, and Gen. 31:49, recesserimus.

³⁷ Including Is. 57:17, where the versions all seem to suppose a יְהַסֶּה, missing in the MT.

³⁸ The uncertainty in the numbers is due to the uncertain manuscript tradition of the LXX at Is. 49:2, where the order of the verbs κρύπτειν & σκεπάζειν is inverted in some MSS.

³⁹ Greek-English Lexicon (9th ed., reprinted w. supp.) (1968).

LXX, where, of its 411 occurrences, 336 (or perhaps 337) are renderings of Hebrew verbs meaning "to turn, turn around, turn back," without counting הִסְתִּיר or נִסְתַּר.⁴⁰

To translate נִסְתַּר, ἀποστρέφειν is used only once⁴¹ out of a possible thirty-one occurrences of the form, while κρύπτειν (or a derivative like ἀπο- or κατακρύπτειν) is used twenty-five times.

If one takes the testimony of the LXX as a guide and assumes with Dahood that when הִסְתִּיר or נִסְתַּר were translated by ἀποστρέφειν, that the translators were linking it with סוּר, then one might conclude that הִסְתִּיר was treated as an infixed -t- form of סוּר only in the expression הִסְתִּיר פְּנִים and that with another object or in the niphcal, it was related to the root סָתַר, "to hide." It also seems arguable, however, that the LXX did not feel quite comfortable with the idea of God hiding his own face or himself, and so avoided using κρύπτειν in those places, substituting the less offensive "turn away." Where God is the one "hiding" (הִסְתִּיר) his own face, the LXX uses ἀποστρέφειν in every case except the two in Job (13:24, 34:29). Where God is "hiding" (הִסְתִּיר) someone or something else, or a man is hiding something, ἀποστρέφειν is not used in fourteen of the sixteen examples. The only exceptions are Moses "hiding" his face from God (Ex. 3:6) and the servant of the Lord who does not "hide" his face (Is. 50:6): In both cases פְּנִים is the object of the verb. This alternative explanation is perhaps supported by the fact that the only case where נִסְתַּר is translated by ἀποστρέφειν is Ps. 89:47 where the subject of the "hiding" is again God.

The possibility exists that ἀποστρέφειν τὸ πρόσωπον is an idiomatic expression in Greek meaning "to abandon," roughly equivalent to the Hebrew expression הִסְתִּיר פְּנִים, which seems to have that force where God is the one "turning" or "hiding" his face. However, it is beyond the competence of the writer to investigate this satisfactorily.⁴²

In short, the evidence from the LXX at its most favorable can be said to support Dahood only partially

⁴⁰ שׁוּב gal 198 (or 197), hiphcil 93, other conjugations 8; סָתַר niphcal 1, hiphcil 28; סָבַב gal 6, hiphcil 14; פָּנָה gal 10, hiphcil 2; שָׁבַח hiphcil 6 (all in Ezekiel); סוּר gal 1, hiphcil 4; and 22 other verbs less than five times apiece.

⁴¹ Ps. 89:47, one of the instances which Dahood translates "turn away."

⁴² Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon does list the expression with the meaning "to turn one's face away from, to abandon," but lists only two examples.

in his interpretation of הסתייר.⁴³ Other possibilities exist to explain the use of ἀποστρέφειν for forms of סתה. The argument from the versions for an infixed -t- form of סור is inconclusive.

It is the nature of the case that survivals of archaic forms in the MT will not be obvious and that for the most part, they will only have survived the leveling of the Masoretic tradition where they could be mistaken for something else. It is not the intention of this critical review of Dahood's infixed -t- forms to demand the impossible, but only to point out that many of his examples are only aequi-probable or less, and that they do not provide a solid foundation on which others may safely build. The multiplication of unsupported interpretations neither provides support nor increases their intrinsic probability.

In addition to the reservations noted above, there are some grammatical questions that need to be asked even though Dahood does not discuss them. Three of his examples are niphCai infixed -t- (Nt) forms.⁴⁴ How is it that this rarest of infixed -t- conjugations should appear with such relative frequency in biblical Hebrew? Similarly, what is the conjugation of הסתייר? Is it a hiphCil infixed -t- conjugation (Ht)? In the absence of more compelling evidence and explanations, the position of the traditional grammars on infixed -t- forms still seems tenable: With few exceptions, infixed -t- forms do not exist in biblical Hebrew.

⁴³ That is, only as a translation of פניססיר does ἀποστρέφειν reflect the nuance "to turn away." However, it should be noted that ἀποστρέφειν in the LXX is much more closely related to שׁיב or even סבב and פנה than to סור. (Cf. n. 40 above.)

⁴⁴ Examples nos. 2, 3, 6 above.