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**Semantic and Stylistic  
Differences between  
*Yahweh* and *Elohim*  
in the Hebrew Bible**

**by  
Laura Yoffe**

PhD  
The University of Edinburgh  
1998





I hereby declare that both this thesis and the research upon which it is based are my own work.

Laura Yoffe

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to understand the authorial and editorial choice between the two most common designations for God in the Hebrew Bible: *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. The main body of the thesis divides into four sections, the first two parts containing the background and methodological material against which the second two are to be read.

Part one deals with the major methodological issues relevant to the thesis. It examines previous academic debate relating to the divine names (=DNs), especially the works of Cassuto and Segal, the documentary hypothesis, the Rabbinic tradition, and Dahse's preference for the Septuagint. It outlines the approach taken here (synchronic, based on the MT), and justifies this as being the most appropriate for this particular task.

Part two is also preliminary in character, giving a brief but comprehensive account of the meanings and uses of three designations (*Elohim*, *Adonai Yahweh*, *Yahweh Elohim*) throughout the Hebrew Bible, so that their significance (or lack of significance) will be recognized when they appear in parts three and four.

Part three gives a *quantitative* account of DN usage in two corpora - Psalms and Wisdom Literature. This reveals a number of facets of DN choice: suitability to genre, arrangement of sections, poetic sequence, and in the case of the Elohist Psalter, editorial change. A possible reason for this editorial change is offered in an appendix.

Part four consists of a series of *qualitative* analyses of texts which display a high degree of DN variability (including Exodus 1-6, Jonah). It is argued in each case that DN variation is a literary device intended to highlight certain aspects of the text. Examination of a prophetic text (Amos) reveals possible structural reasons for the placement of *Yahweh* and other designations. As the criteria for DN use are different in each text examined, it is suggested that the significance of each DN is dependent on, and limited to the text in which it is found.

This thesis does not conclude with a single (or even several) satisfying answer(s) to the question of the interchange between *Yahweh* and *Elohim*, as Cassuto and Segal attempted to do. Instead, it points to the kind of answers which are relevant: from use in stock phrases and quotations, to bespoke commentaries on the text. It also demonstrates the wide variety of DN patterns and predilections which we must recognize as 'normal'.

## PREFACE

A word is due concerning some of the styles and conventions used in this thesis. Translations from the Bible are from the NRSV unless otherwise indicated. Transliterations are generally avoided - Hebrew text is normally represented in Hebrew. For the sake of convenience, names which appear frequently are sometimes written in the "modern Hebrew system" (Clines, *The Sheffield Manual for Authors and Editors in Biblical Studies*, Sheffield; Academic Press, 1997:156). In other words, אלהים is written אלהים or *Elohim*, but not 'elōhîm. The reader may therefore note the distinction between Yahweh (the Israelite god) and *Yahweh* (the Hebrew word יהוה). When a Hebrew root is referred to, final letters are not used, i.e. שקפּל.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### General abbreviations:

DN	Divine name
EP	Elohistic Psalter
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Massoretic Text

### Periodicals, Reference Works, Serials:

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> (6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992)
AIBI	Association Internationale Bible et Informatique
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages</i>
AJT	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
ASOR	American Society of Oriental Research
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907)
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniesium
BIOSCS	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Monograph Series</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> 54-56 Jerome ed. Isidore Hilberg (Vindobonae, 1910-18)

DDD	Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. van der Horst (eds) <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> (Leiden: Brill, 1995)
DJD	<i>Discoveries in the Judean Desert</i> (27 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955-97)
EJ	<i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> (27 vols.; Jerusalem: Keter, 1971-72)
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses</i>
HAL	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: The new Koehler-Baumgartner in English</i> (trans. M.E.J. Richardson [ed.]; Leiden: Brill, 1994).
HeyJ	<i>The Heythrop Journal</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible</i> (4 vols.; New York, Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1962); <i>Supplemental Volume</i> (1976)
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religions</i> (=JBR)
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i> (=JAAR)
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNL	<i>Journal of North-West Semitic Languages</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JQRSup	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PAAJR	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>

PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca</i> ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1857-64)
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina</i> ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1878-)
Princeton	<i>The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics</i> eds Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1993)
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RQ	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SJOT	Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SPCK	Society for the Preservation of Christian Knowledge
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> ed. Gerhard Kittel (London: A&C Black)
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> Supplement Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

#### **Tractates of the Talmud and Mishna:**

Ber.	Berakot
Ker.	Keritot
Men.	Menaḥot
Qid.	Qiddušin
Sanh.	Sanhedrin

#### **Further Rabbinic Abbreviations:**

<i>b</i>	Babylonian Talmud
Ex. R.	Exodus Rabbah

Gen. R.	Genesis Rabbah
Lev. R.	Leviticus Rabbah
Mek.	Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael
Mek. SbY	Mekhilta deSimeon ben Yoḥai
Midr. Ps.	Midrash on Psalms
Num.R.	Numbers Rabbah
y	Palestinian Talmud

**Works of Philo:**

Abr.	De. Abrahamo
Deus Imm.	Quod Deus sit immutabilis
Jos.	De Josepho
Migr. Abr.	De migratione Abrahami
Mut. Nom.	De mutatione nominum
Plant.	De plantatione
Quaest. in Exod.	Quaestiones in Exodum
Rer. Div. Her.	Quis rerum divinarum heres sit
Somn.	De somniis
Spec. Leg.	De Specialibus legibus
Vit. Mos.	De vita Mosis

*No attention is to be paid to the fact that one of these two appellatives is used in the description of one action whilst the other is used in describing another.*

Saadia Gaon, *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*,  
treatise 2, chapter 3, concerning the names  
Yahweh and Elohim

# **PART ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER 1

### METHODOLOGY

"My name is Alice, but -"

"It's a stupid name enough!" Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently.

"What does it mean?"

"Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully.

"Of course it must," Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: "my name means the shape I am - and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost."<sup>1</sup>

Carroll's editor, Gardner remarks:

In real life proper names seldom have a meaning other than the fact that they denote an individual object, whereas other words have general, universal meanings. In Humpty Dumpty's realm, the reverse is true. Ordinary words mean whatever Humpty wants them to mean, whereas proper names like "Alice" and "Humpty Dumpty" are supposed to have general significance... Carroll's humor is strongly colored by his interest in formal logic.

However, Humpty Dumpty's view cannot be dismissed quite as easily as this. Fromkin and Rodman comment of the same text:

Humpty Dumpty thought his name meant his shape, and in part it does.<sup>2</sup>

Support for their view may be found in the Oxford Reference Dictionary, which defines *dumpy* as 'short and stout' and *dumpling* as 'a small fat person'. Carroll was pointing to the questions of *how* words mean, and of *whether*

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll (ed. Gardner 1965:263).

<sup>2</sup> Fromkin and Rodman (1988:216).

names mean at all. This thesis applies such questions to two of the most frequent and important names in the Hebrew Bible: *Yahweh* and *Elohim*.

There has always been a fascination with the name *Yahweh*, as it in itself seems to have theological significance:

Thus God's being is concentrated in his name. The name is both the quintessence of His person and the bearer of His power.<sup>3</sup>

The puzzle as to why the one character should so frequently be referred to by a description (אלהים) has eluded any simple or comprehensive answer, as is shown in the next chapter. The documentary hypothesis has failed to account for the use of the names throughout the Pentateuch, while no hypothesis has adequately explained the Elohist Psalter. The attempts to give 'blanket answers' which cover the whole Hebrew Bible are even less satisfying. This thesis does not contain one answer, or even a hundred answers, which can explain divine name usage throughout the Hebrew Bible. While this goal is finite and attainable, it is not a realistic one for a Ph.D. thesis. Instead the present study points to a way by which this goal may be achieved in the future.

This thesis was sparked off not by an intrinsic interest in the larger questions mentioned above, but by a study of the use of names in Exodus 1-6 (now Chapter 10). The pattern of divine names there seems to complement the plot development in such a subtle way that it appears that sources and crude 'rules of use' are of little or no relevance. Instead, the pattern of divine names in Ex. 1-6 is uniquely tailored to the plot of Ex. 1-6. The idea arose that the divine names might mean exactly what the author/editor wanted them to mean, that they could be endowed with connotations so as to serve the purpose of the passage.<sup>4</sup> I began to experiment with the idea that rather than following broad rules or guidelines, the meaning of the divine name usage is specific to and dependent on each context in which it is found. Analysis of the divine names therefore becomes an entry-point into exegesis.

However, a list of carefully selected texts with analysis of divine name usage, together with interesting (and possibly wrong!) interpretations, is surely not enough. There must be some 'broad rules or guidelines', some default setting, which the biblical author or editor took as a starting point. It

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<sup>3</sup> Foerster and Quell (1958:59). See also Exodus 3, and Parke-Taylor (1975:1-2).

<sup>4</sup> This is precisely what Magonet (1995:95) implies.



is impossible at this stage to analyse the entire Hebrew Bible in the same way as Ex. 1-6, and so give a comprehensive answer, but *something* comprehensive is required. Parts of the thesis, therefore, deal with problems which are comprehensive but limited, for example the Elohist Psalter, and the title אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה. The thesis as a whole is prefaced by some of the major preliminary questions like 'surely Wellhausen/Cassuto/the rabbis have already done that?' The present chapter provides some of the methodological background necessary for a thesis heavily grounded in interpretation of the context.

Interpretation of the context, or close reading, goes hand-in-hand with a field of biblical research which is associated with such terms as synchronic, holistic, literary, poetics, stylistics, rhetoric, inner-interpretation, total-interpretation, final form, Bible-is-literature.<sup>5</sup> Scholars who work in this field, while following quite a wide range of ideologies and methods, have in common the trait that they attempt to study the Biblical text as it is (synchronically), as opposed to trying to find earlier layers or meanings of the text (diachronically). The purpose of this chapter is to examine this type of scholarship (its presuppositions, methods, and its results) both in terms of what its proponents have in common with each other (and opposed to diachronic or historical critical research) and how they differ from each other. I take as my starting-point the major tenets of an analogous literary-critical movement known as New Criticism, and then investigate how these have been applied to biblical studies. Finally, I clarify my own position on the same topics.

### Issues in Contemporary Literary Criticism

The New Criticism has its roots in 1930s Chicago. It flourished in America and Britain in the 1950s, and while its legacy is still felt, few would pursue it today with the same initial zeal. Similar European schools are known as "*Werkinterpretation*" and "*explication de texte*". While any one of these schools covers a wide range of views, I shall offer here only an extremely telescoped view of the tenets of the American school. According to *The New Princeton*

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<sup>5</sup> "and forget about the *as* literature kludge" (Marquis 1996:214).

*Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (=Princeton), the chief hallmarks of the New Critical school are:<sup>6</sup>

- 1 **close reading**
- 2 **lack of separation of 'form' and 'content'**: "Thus such factors as metaphor, tone and even rhythm cannot be dismissed as mere incitements to emotion; they have a bearing on meaning itself."
- 3 **the unity of the literary work**: "They argued that the most mature literary art was not content to associate like with like but sought to bring into meaningful relation materials that we commonly think of as quite unlike."
- 4 **the "Intentional fallacy"** This is the most wide ranging and complex issue and requires special attention here.

The classical definition of this principle is given by Beardsley and Wimsatt in their famous essay appropriately entitled "The Intentional Fallacy":

We argued that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of art.<sup>7</sup>

The two major arguments supporting this view are that the authors are often not the best critics of their own work, and that as literature is communicated via public language (as opposed to 'private language'), its meaning is governed by that public language, and it is basically a public object. A text means what it says, not what it was supposed to say.

Before continuing to explore the more fundamental questions that the intentional fallacy raises, it is prudent to mention a proviso that was

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<sup>6</sup> "New Criticism" in *Princeton*; 833-4, the direct quotations which follow are taken from p. 833.

This definition (which forms the basis for this essay) is more detailed than that of Barton (1984b:144): (1) literary text is an artefact, (2) Intentional fallacy, (3) meaning of text is a function of place within a canon. As will be seen in the discussion, (1) and (2) boil down to very much the same issue. (3) appears to be regarded as important only by Barton, for whom it serves a useful function in his bringing together of 'biblical New criticism' with canon criticism as uneasy bed-fellows.

Another useful discussion is given by Weiss (1984:8ff), who covers much the same ground as *Princeton*, albeit under a different taxonomy. His major addition is the concept of 'historicism', which is discussed here under 'intention'.

<sup>7</sup> In Newton-de Molina (1976:1-13). Previously published in *Sewanee Review* 54 (1946), and in Wimsatt (1954:3-20).

generally understood by both sides; that is that a word must be taken to mean that which it was generally taken to mean in the time and place in which it was written.<sup>8</sup> To take a simple example, the word 'pavement' in British English denotes the place where the pedestrian walks, whereas in North American English the same word means the place where the car is driven. So, if an American were to read a British story in which a child ran on the pavement, then they should be aware of the difference in meaning, and not impose on the child's activity the interpretation of rashness and danger that immediately springs to mind.

Stated in the form above, the New Critical position is simply that a poem should be judged on its own merits; the critic should not inquire of the author what he meant to say, and then judge the poem on the basis of whether he actually managed to say it or not. Or, to put it more eloquently:

Wimsatt and Beardsley do not deny the presence of an element of intention in the structure of a poem; rather, they deny the usefulness of any genetic analysis of the concept of intention.<sup>9</sup>

But whatever they said, they were certainly taken to mean that the author's intention is irrelevant not only to judge the *success*, but also the *meaning*, of a work of art. This is quickly established by Cioffi in his rejoinder:

it is a thesis about the *meaning* of a work of art that they are concerned to advance; that certain ways of establishing this meaning are legitimate whereas others are not.<sup>10</sup>

Cioffi challenges the discreteness of 'internal' (i.e. text-based, admissible) and 'external' (i.e. biographical, inadmissible) categories of evidence, and points out that when reading the words of a famous author, we cannot help but interpret them in the light of what we know about that author. In answer to the point that a poet is very often the worst critic of his own poems, he replies that the poet may have been mistaken.

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<sup>8</sup> Barton (1984:150).

<sup>9</sup> 'Intention' in *Princeton*:611.

<sup>10</sup> Cioffi 'Intention and Interpretation in Criticism' in Newton-de Molina (1976:57). His interpretation is also shared by Barton (1984b:149).

A more crucial objection is that of the problem of objectivity. Hirsch's essay is used here to represent this line of argument.<sup>11</sup> The object of interpretation, he posits, is to establish what the meaning of the text *is* and what the meaning of the text *is not*. Without the principle of authorial intention, criticism must wallow in "subjectivism and relativism":

One of the consequences arising from the view that a text is ... a purely public object, is the impossibility in principle of defining the nature of a correct interpretation.

This accusation is most vehemently denied by Wimsatt and Beardsley in 'The Affective Fallacy.'<sup>12</sup> Stripped of authorial intention, the poem is not a mere mirror for the fancies of the interpreter; instead the text itself, as an "autonomous object",<sup>13</sup> is capable of correct, objective interpretation. This idea of 'text as autonomous object' will be seen to be of crucial importance in Biblical studies.

Related to authorial intention is the issue of historicism. Ellis describes this issue in relation to literary criticism at large:

One group of theorists views the literary text strictly in relation to the social and historical context in which it arose... In the opposing view, the fact that literary texts rise above their own time to speak in a vital way to future ages makes their relevant context ... possibly all of civilization... On this view, local, transitory concerns of the historical moment would give too restrictive account of a text's meaning...<sup>14</sup>

It can be seen that the question of authorial intent opens up a whole Pandora's box of "fundamental questions about what a work of art is and what is proper to criticism."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, it was a problem that was addressed not just by literary criticism, but by the field of aesthetics at large, encompassing music, fine art, etc. For example, Macdonald writes of the implausibility of recreating the artist's mind:

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11 Hirsch 'Objective Interpretation' in Newton-de Molina (1976:26-54). Quotations here are from pp. 39-40.

12 *Sewanee Review* 57 (1949); also published in Wimsatt (1954:21-40).

13 'Subjectivity and Objectivity' in *Princeton*: 1229.

14 'Theory' in *Princeton*:1284-5.

15 'Intention' in *Princeton*:612.

Do we really care whether a portrait painter feels genuine sentiment for his sitters?<sup>16</sup>

Examples could be enumerated at length to show how different fields have dealt with the shift in emphasis from creator to creation. Coming now to the specific field of biblical studies, the general methodological issues are the same in principle, but in practice take on quite different values.<sup>17</sup> I shall now discuss each of New Criticism's tenets with reference to the biblical context.

## Issues in Biblical Criticism

### 1 Close Reading

While the issue of close reading is frequently mentioned in the synchronic field of biblical studies, its precise meaning is quite ambiguous.<sup>18</sup> However, Alter's definition of his own method can be taken as representative:

I have tried throughout to focus on the complexly integrated ways in which the tale is told, giving special attention to what is distinctive in the artful procedures of biblical narrative, what requires us to learn new modes of attentiveness as readers.<sup>19</sup>

### 2 The lack of separation of 'form' and 'content'

The most vociferous scholar on this particular topic must be Luis Alonso Schökel. It is worth repeating here the full version of his 'credo':

- In literature the form is meaningful.

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<sup>16</sup> Macdonald (1965:102).

<sup>17</sup> Sternberg (1985:8) criticizes Biblical scholars for importing the credo of the other discipline without making the necessary adjustments.

<sup>18</sup> For comprehensive examples of such readings see: Fokkerman *Narrative Art in Genesis* (1975), Alter *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981), Berlin *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (1983), Sternberg *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (1985), Bar-Efrat *Narrative Art in the Bible* (1989), Gunn and Fewell *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (1993), and concentrating more on poetry, Weiss *The Bible from Within* (1984). Such readings pay close attention to the words, letters and sounds used, and how features such as repetition and chiasm give a running commentary on the story.

Robertson (1977) whose examples of supposed New Critical interpretations involve mostly summary and paraphrase, is not typical.

<sup>19</sup> Alter (1981:179).

- In science the form is subservient to the meaning; in literature the form creates meaning.
- There is no realized and perfect meaning before it takes verbal form.
- The perfect separation between form and content is, in fact, impossible.
- In literature the meaning exists in and through the form.
- The concrete literary work is a sign constituted by the correspondence of the signifier with the signified.<sup>20</sup>

The importance of form, and its bearing on content, is crucial for the task that Schökel thinks biblical studies should be dealing with:

Exegesis does not give the meaning according to the formula 'Work minus form equals Meaning' so that the text could be suppressed as unnecessary; exegesis is an introduction to reading or giving an account of what has been apprehended in the reading... The reason is that the literary work is a revealing of meaning, and not a concealing of meaning through the artifice of form.<sup>21</sup>

His complaint is that the techniques of biblical writing (e.g. chiasm, alliteration, anaphora) are all too often unnoticed by the scholar. Even when they are commented upon, they tend to be seen as decorations, rather than integral to the text.

Rather than using Schökel's own examples (which naturally illustrate his point well) I shall cite an unrelated instance where careful observation of the form has added insight to the meaning of the text.

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<sup>20</sup> Schökel (1975:7). Similar views are expressed by Bar Efrat (1989:10-11), Fokkelman (1975:6), and Weiss (1984:21-25).

<sup>21</sup> Schökel (1975:16) is arguing against the situation which has dominated scholarship, and which is succinctly described by Barton (1984b:162-3) in his summary of Frei (1974): "Whether English scholars were concerning themselves with the historical information ... or German theologians were reducing the Bible to a theological system, they shared a common conviction that the main function of the narrative books was to provide information ... something that could be extracted from the text by applying appropriate techniques, and then organized into an independent system by the scholar... It is to treat them as reference-books, when in fact they are literature."

While this view of diachronic scholarship is quite pessimistic (surely he really meant to say 'organized into a *better* system by the scholar'), Barton develops this line of reasoning to show the internal incoherencies that result from the synchronic stance. The solution, to see the Bible as literature, equally requires an assumption (that the Bible is literature). To refer to the second line of Schökel's credo, how are we to decide what is 'literature' and what is 'science'? If we judge that anything that was 'originally written' as literature is in fact literature, then we have succumbed to the intentional fallacy.



Gunn and Fewell's analysis of Daniel 3<sup>22</sup> shows how the narrator's long and oft-repeated lists of officials and musical instruments mocks Nebuchadnezzar's party as a ridiculous need for a show of loyalty from his subjects:

Rather than explaining what the image [that Nebuchadnezzar erected] represents, the narrator spends time repeatedly listing officials and musical instruments. The pomp of the event is given more emphasis than the meaning of the event.<sup>23</sup>

Daniel's speech in 3:16-18, is held in contrast:

Not only do they fail to use the full-scale repetition themselves, they speak without waiting for the musical signal and thus deprive the narrator of the final chance to relist the instruments.<sup>24</sup>

The meaning of the whole episode, the clash between the Jewish and idolatrous Babylonian cultures is expressed both by the plot, and by the narrative style, but without the need for overt comment from the narrator.<sup>25</sup>

There are countless other examples that could be used to illustrate the integration of form and meaning in the biblical context. The challenge for synchronic research is to recognize *and interpret* significant form where it exists.

### 3 The unity of the literary work

Here for the first time, the issue that concerns the field of biblical criticism differs significantly from that of contemporary criticism. The New Critics valued the fusion of opposites, or the retelling of the ordinary in a fresh and exciting way, and this they called 'unity'. Such an achievement seems quite mundane, however, when compared to the problems faced by the researcher into an ancient literature which is largely anonymous and which we know in

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<sup>22</sup> Gunn and Fewell (1993: 174-188).

<sup>23</sup> Gunn and Fewell (1993:177).

<sup>24</sup> Gunn and Fewell (1993:181).

<sup>25</sup> Most other commentators limit themselves to speculation on the precise nature of the musical instruments (e.g. Lattey 1948:66). Montgomery (1927:193) constitutes an exception: "Over against the satirically exaggerated details of the heathen ceremonial ... the simple and unflinching faith of the Confessors...". Unfortunately, this observation is neither developed nor illustrated.

many cases to be composite. Again, when the New Critics speak of 'genetic research' they refer to the psychological processes of the artist's mind; while the biblical scholar is determining which range of centuries a text was created in.

While the synchronic position by definition deals with the text as we have it, few would advocate a position as extreme as Whybray when he describes the Pentateuch as a "work composed by a single historian."<sup>26</sup> Instead, a number of positions may be taken. On the historical level, it may be argued that a particular text was written as a single work of art, so that repetition, incongruity, etc. are interpreted as an integral part of the narrative art, and therefore capable of interpretation.<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, the view may be taken that whatever the complex process of evolution, adaptation, redaction, etc. that the text has been through, *somebody* saw fit to put it in its present form, and therefore *this* text is equally worthy of study.<sup>28</sup> Hand-in-hand with

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<sup>26</sup> Whybray (1987:233). Only Robertson (1977) appears to take this line. It is difficult to see how he takes himself seriously, let alone how he expects others to do so: "The circular character of the critic's task could hardly be more apparent. One assumes that a text is a whole and then proceeds to show that indeed it is a whole" (p. 33). It is hardly surprising that Robertson himself fails to keep within such dubious methodological grounds. For example despite claiming to take unity in the book of Job with the "utmost seriousness" (p. 34), he is unable to reconcile the prose epilogue with his interpretation of the book as a whole, and so slips back into historical criticism: "Apparently the folk tale originally contained speeches by Job and the friends but in these speeches Job argued that God is just, and the friends that he is unjust..." (p. 54).

The advantage of having such an absurdly extreme view is that often the extreme reveals the problems that are insidiously invisible in the more moderate. As Dempster (1991:186) succinctly remarks:

One's method determines in a large part one's results. If the text is assumed to be a disunity and the end process of a long chain of rather arbitrary accretions, then the text will be interpreted accordingly. If the assumption is unity, there may well be different results.

The circularity of assuming a text is a unity and then proving that it is a unity is really not much different from assuming that it is literature and then proving that it is literature (see note 21 above). Robertson's reversion to diachronic techniques to bolster his dubious synchronic interpretation is obviously a fix. When Zakovitch (1991:31, see note 31 below) mixes his methods more skillfully, the problem is not as immediately apparent.

<sup>27</sup> Thus, for example, Polzin (1989:22-26) interprets the anomalous description of Samuel's name (1 Sam. 1:20), more fitting of Saul, not in terms of a wayward segment of text (as does McKane 1963:35), but as part and parcel of the metaphor by which Samuel *is* Saul. He does this on the basis of extended root-play ( $\sqrt{\text{לש}}$ ) in 1 Sam. 1:27-8 and of the other characters in the story (Hannah asking for a son = Israel asking for a king; rejected Elqanan = rejected Yahweh, etc.).



this approach comes the raising of the status of the redactor from an automaton to an artist in his own right.<sup>29</sup>

Arguing that a text was composed as a unity by a single author is still arguing for a particular text-history (i.e. that it was composed by a single author). This is quite different from (but often confused with) *ignoring* text history. Bar Efrat and Alter would very much like to ignore text-history altogether. One solution to this problem is only to examine texts which can be dealt with reasonably as unities, and that is exactly what Bar Efrat and Alter do.

From a methodological point of view, historical-criticism may be paid lip-service, but only with the proviso that the synchronic groundwork be completed first.<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, biblical scholars of a 'synchronic persuasion' may engage in the traditional historical methods of text criticism, redaction criticism, etc. according to the text under scrutiny.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Thus Bar-Efrat (1989:10): "The literary approach and methods are no less important than the historical ones, however, since the *being* of biblical narrative is equally as interesting as its *becoming*."

<sup>29</sup> Thus Alter (1981:20): "biblical critics frequently assume, out of some dim preconception about the transmission of texts in 'primitive' cultures, that the redactors were in the grip of a kind of manic tribal compulsion, driven again and again to include units of traditional material that made no connective sense, for reasons they themselves could not have explained."

<sup>30</sup> Thus Berlin (1983) deals with diachronic methods at times sympathetically, but generally regards them as less reliable: "Knowledge of poetics can, at the very least, provide some limit and control on diachronic study. It prevents the mistaking of certain features of the present text's discourse for evidence of earlier sources." (pp. 20-21).

Fokkelman (1975) similarly maintains that any historical-critical questions must be preceded by a thorough synchronic reading. The reverse situation (which he sees as normative contemporary scholarship) "means that the exegesis rests on a foundation (the genetic history of the text) which will never leave the realm of what is in fact hypothesis" (p. 2). He goes on to warn of the dangers of circular logic if the synchronic reading is seen as a mere means to diachronic study.

Polzin (1989:1) presents his methods thus: "The reader will find precious little in the way of textual criticism or history in the following pages; this activity, so necessary in itself, tends to become addictive and can divert one's efforts all out of proportion to the preliminary task of getting a global picture of what a 'book' even as textually corrupt as 1 or 2 Samuel is driving at."

<sup>31</sup> Berlin is to a certain extent forced into this position regarding Gen. 37 (1983:121). She is unable to claim that the text is a unity ("Whatever the sources of the present text ... To be sure, there are gaps, inconsistencies, retellings, and changes in vocabulary ...") but clearly would very much like to ("The whole thrust of source criticism is toward the fragmenting of the narrative into sources, while, at the same time it ignores the rhetorical and poetic features which bind the narrative together.").

Zakovitch, on the other hand, embraces a source hypothesis of the same passage, not flinching from words like "original stratum" and "later redactor" in a chapter titled "A Chapter in Inner-biblical Interpretation" (1991:31). While his position is on the one hand more immediately satisfying than Berlin's indecision, it does raise the issue of

#### 4 The Intentional Fallacy

As with 'unity', the 'intentional fallacy' has quite a different relevance when taken into the field of biblical studies.<sup>32</sup> Only Sternberg, however, seems to have recognized that the question of authorial intention does not arise in biblical scholarship in the same way as in New Criticism.<sup>33</sup> We have no hope of knowing the name of the author of a particular Psalm, let alone what mood he was in when he wrote it.

This having been said, it is possible to find the same arguments used of contemporary criticism recycled into biblical studies. The clearest example is in the exposition by Weiss. In a simplified version of the New Critical stance, he cites a number of instances where the artist seems particularly clueless about his own work and concludes:

If the author does not know the intention of his creation, then the legitimate goal of interpretative research is not the author and his "intentions", but the creation itself.<sup>34</sup>

Bar-Efrat, who is very much influenced by Weiss, does not address this issue directly, but his position is apparent in the following:

It makes no difference if the author used the techniques consciously or not, the crucial point is what formal methods are actually present in the work, what they contribute and how they function.<sup>35</sup>

He has learned Weiss's lesson well: the author is not important - the text is. The author does not even warrant explicit discussion as to how we should refrain from discussing him. In doing so, Bar-Efrat opens up the possibility of

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whether it is acceptable in principle to use diachronic analysis to aid a synchronic interpretation, according to one's discretion (or one's bias? see note 26 above).

<sup>32</sup> According to an extreme New Critical stance, the best interpretation of literature comes when the interpreter is unaware of the identity or nature of the author, and the date, place and circumstances of composition. If this is the case, biblical studies should be the most certain branch of literary studies, as in our ignorance, we should all agree on the correct interpretation!

<sup>33</sup> Sternberg (1985:8-9).

<sup>34</sup> Weiss (1984:13-14). Robertson (1977:2) fails even to argue the point but exhorts the reader to interpret the Bible "regardless of original intentions" and "in precisely the same framework and according to the same set of assumptions as we consider the quote from Hemingway."

<sup>35</sup> Bar-Efrat (1989:10-11).

subconscious authorial intention, an important issue which will be raised later.

Apart from these instances, synchronic scholarship appears to assume without too much argument that the meaning of the text and the meaning of the text's author are pretty much equal.<sup>36</sup> In other words, when biblical scholars make such statements as:

If some readers may have been skeptical about the intentionality of the analogies I have proposed..., such doubts should be laid to rest by...<sup>37</sup>

they are simply asserting that a particular feature of the text is *meaningful* (and therefore *not coincidental* or *an editorial accident*) and doing so not by appealing to the psyche of the supposed author, but by pointing out other supporting features in the text.

The proviso given by New Criticism that a word must be taken to mean only that which it meant in the time and place in which it was written, again takes on new significance in biblical studies. The examples of transatlantic false friends pale in comparison to our difficulties in understanding and translating a long-dead language. The public language referred to so joyfully by Wimsatt and Beardsley is not accessible to today's public without historical investigation. Even if it is conceded that the interpreter may consult the dictionary (which itself is only as good as its editors), and refer to other Semitic languages, even this will often not be enough to reveal the 'plain meaning' of the text. Words and concepts which appear similar in different languages are often actually different.<sup>38</sup> How do

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<sup>36</sup> For example: Alter speaks very generally of the "author's intention" (1981:189); as does Polzin (1989:6): "When I do use the adjective *authorial* in the following pages, it will generally be my code word for *artful* and will point to some aspect of the crafting of the text". Sternberg, who we have already seen is most aware of the differences between the two fields, sees the author's intention as: "a shorthand for the structure of meaning and effect supported by the conventions that the text appeals to or devises" (1985:9)

<sup>37</sup> Alter (1981:10).

<sup>38</sup> For example, modern Hebrew מיד consistently translated by dictionaries as 'immediately, now', means nothing of the sort. It actually means 'later, when I feel like it'. Is this an issue of semantics or cultural attitude? The problem of drawing the line between 'what the word actually means' and deeper hermeneutical issues is frequently illustrated in Robertson (1977). Despite his avowed intention to disregard original meaning, he frequently explains both the plain meaning of Hebrew words (e.g. תם and ישר, p. 34) and of concepts and customs which are not obvious to the 20th century reader (e.g. "in the Hebrew conception the sea lies not only to the side of the land but under it",

we distinguish between the *plain meaning* (for which we may use a dictionary, a historical tool) and the *deeper meaning* (which is to come about via close reading and *not* historical investigation)?

We saw above that the most serious charge levelled against the New Critics was that of subjectivism and relativism. If the text is not to be taken as meaning what the author meant it to mean, than how can we in principle assert one interpretation over another? The stances taken over this issue vary, but can be broadly categorized into those which are unashamedly relativist,<sup>39</sup> those which reject relativism altogether,<sup>40</sup> and those which tread an uneasy path between the desire to be correct and post-modern humility.<sup>41</sup>

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p. 36; "The typical Hebrew thought that if a human kinsman failed to secure vengeance for him, God could be counted on to do so", p. 45).

<sup>39</sup> Such positions hold that all interpretations are subjective, but that they at least are prepared to admit that they are subjective.

Thus Gunn and Fewell (1993:xi) "Meaning is always in the last analysis, the reader's creation, and readers, like texts, come in an infinite variety. No amount of learning to read biblical narrative 'correctly' will lead inexorably through the 'given' poetics of the text to the 'correct' interpretation." Their epistemological view is related to a particular way of seeing text and interpretation: "No word ... is ever in an absolutely fixed relationship with meaning ... but is always dependent upon its relationship to other words ... The process of establishing meaning is never complete, since the meaning of one word is always dependent on that of another, in an infinite circle" (p. 155).

Likewise Fokkelman (1975:4) "Whereas the creation of a text is finite, finished after hours, years or centuries, its re-creation is infinite. It is a task for each new age, each new generation, each new reader, never to be considered complete."

The impossibility of reaching a final interpretation is given positive light in a metaphor by Staiger (quoted in Weiss 1984:27): "This is the hermeneutic *circulus* about which we will no longer say that it is a magic circle from which we can't escape but rather we must strive to walk it with care and concern."

Robertson (1977) takes agnosticism one stage further. He seems to offset his unquestioning acceptance of every part of the New Critical dogma with ultimate indifference: "The assumption that the Bible is imaginative literature is arbitrary. No one forces us to make it... We make it because we want to... Literary criticism is not superior to alternative methodologies, just different." (p. 4). He then goes on to redefine 'truth' as 'appropriateness' (p. 11).

<sup>40</sup> Like Beardslay and Wimsatt, this position holds that while it is not possible to be objectively correct about what the author meant to say, it is possible to be objectively correct about what the text actually says.

Despite some imagery to the contrary (see next note) Weiss's inexorable search for the "correct interpretation" and his rejection of other interpretations shows him to be very much the positivist.

<sup>41</sup> This position (while being difficult on logical grounds) seems to be the most common, and therefore must be psychologically the easiest.

Thus Weiss to an extent welcomes the personal input of the interpreter "The interpreter of a poem is not ... like a surgeon who stands with his scalpel over the patient, but rather like a friend who maintains a friendly dialogue with the poem" (1984:18), but on the other hand, sees subjectivity as a very real danger, the only corrective to which is the close reading of the text (p. 20). Exactly how the interpreter escapes subjectivity for *this* close reading is not explained.



We therefore find ourselves in the ironic position of having Weiss, the most vehement anti-intentionalist being very much the objectivist, while others who express no opinion on the intentional issue are being openly relativist. Can this anomaly be explained by the high spiritual regard that Weiss has for the text? If, as he appears to hold, the text is so artful, so insightful, yet susceptible of "correct interpretation", and if we are not to attribute all this to human inspiration, perhaps divine inspiration is really at issue? This brings us back to Bar-Efrat, for is there really much difference between divine inspiration and subconscious authorial intention?

There may be a grain of truth in this speculation. On the other hand, no-one suspects Beardslay and Wimsatt of religious motives when they hold a similar anti-intentionalist and anti-relativist stance. Perhaps, however, we should cease to see a necessary connection between the intentionalist vs. anti-intentionalist and the subjectivist vs. objectivist arguments.<sup>42</sup> So what then is the difference between an intentionalist and an anti-intentionalist stance? From the point of view of results (i.e. interpretation), there is very little difference at all. Scholars with different opinions on the intention issue seem quite able to achieve compatible results. What then is the point in raising the issue at all?

What is at stake is not two different interpretations, or even two different types of interpretation, but two fundamentally different ways of viewing the biblical text. Just as in the original New Criticism debate, the issue is one of possession: whether the text is *private* (belonging to the author) or *public* (belonging to itself, to the interpreter, or to a community of believers). For those in the former camp, the text is, in the final analysis, embedded within given historical and geographical parameters,<sup>43</sup> for those in the latter, the text is an *organic entity in itself*. The latter position is illustrated eloquently by Fokkelman:

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Similarly Alter (1981:179): "I do not presume to judge whether a literary text may ever be thought to have an absolute, fixed meaning, but I certainly reject the contemporary agnosticism about all literary meaning..."

and Berlin (1982a:327): "I would like to think that although we may never arrive at a total and complete understanding we are moving ever closer to that goal."

<sup>42</sup> Thus the situation is described regarding contemporary literary criticism: "The issue ... is generally limited to the question of whether the text has a stable and delimitable meaning, understood as authorial meaning. In effect the matter of intention is confused with the quite separate issue of the nature of critical knowledge." *Princeton*:1287, 'Theory'.

<sup>43</sup> Thus Berlin (1983:16) describes the "sin of New Criticism" as "closing off the world of the text from the real world."

the birth of a text resembles that of a man: the umbilical cord which connected the text with its time and the man or men who produced it, is severed once its existence has become a fact; the text is going to lead a life of its own...<sup>44</sup>

This gulf, which may be equated with the one we already encountered in literary theory,<sup>45</sup> rebounds back on the issue of synchronic vs. diachronic research. Those scholars for whom the text is ultimately a *historical artefact* feel the need to justify a synchronic approach in historical terms (by arguing that it is a historical unity created by an artist, whether author or redactor).<sup>46</sup> Those who view the text as an *entity* are more content to ignore historical questions and get on with the job at hand.<sup>47</sup>

It must be said, however, that many 'synchronic' scholars have a genuinely positive approach to what they see as real historical research,<sup>48</sup> what they object to is historical research pretending to be literary.<sup>49</sup>

### The Way Forward

What emerges from the preceding discussion is (hopefully) a clarification of issues: the anti-intentionalist vs. intentionalist debate is inextricably linked to text-as-entity vs. text-as-historical-artefact debate. It forms a sub-debate within the synchronic side of the larger synchronic vs. diachronic question. It is quite separate from issues of subjectivity and objectivity. In other words, to enter into even the most extreme of synchronic positions is not in any way to

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<sup>44</sup> Fokkelman (1975:3).

<sup>45</sup> See p. 7 n. 14. Weiss describes this in the biblical context under the rubric 'historicism'. He sees a purely historical perspective as limiting to the interpreter.

<sup>46</sup> Thus Berlin tortures herself over Gen. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Thus Weiss, Bar-Efrat, and Fokkelman do not tend to address texts replete with diachronic problems (such as Gen. 37) specifically.

<sup>48</sup> Thus Alter (1981:13): "It would be easy to make light of the endless welter of hypotheses and counter-hypotheses generated in everything from textual criticism to issues of large historical chronology; but the fact is that, however wrong-headed or extravagantly perverse many scholars have been, their enterprise as a whole has enormously advanced our understanding of the Bible." He then uses the example of how the finds at Ugarit have aided our understanding of the language as well as the themes of the Bible.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Polzin's criticism of van Seters (1989:13-17).

Polzin (1989:2) describes the work of most scholars who integrate the "holistic" and the "fragmenting" camps as "schizophrenic. Their poetic sides apologize for the 'flawed' composition of the final text they are trying to make good sense of, while their genetic sides are working hard to portray a supposed earlier stage as more coherent or clear before those inept redactors got their damned hands on it."

abandon the aims of scientific rationalism in favour of religious or personal opinionating. Within the synchronic arena, quite a wide difference of opinion is to be found on both axes (that is, the anti-intentionalist vs. intentionalist and the objectivist vs. relativist). What remains is for me to clarify what my position is.

There are two reasons for finding the synchronic approach to biblical studies to be more convincing than the diachronic: one of principle and one of practice.

Firstly, we have received a text, and whether we like it or not, we have to read that text as it is before we can do anything else with it. The issue at stake is whether this reading is done properly or not. Proponents of the historical approach would counter (quite reasonably) that one has to read the correct text before one can interpret it. However, as Fokkelman has pointed out, identifying the 'correct text' will always be an issue of uncertainty. While we are in the business of research, we should be trying to move from uncertainty to certainty, not the other way round.

A secondary reason for my approach is based on the observation that the practical outcomes of synchronic research tend to be compatible with each other, and without being repetitious, build on each other. To cite just two examples: Alter's analysis of Gen. 38 (Judah and Tamar) which Gunn and Fewell refer to and complement; Berlin's observation about the diverging points of view of Moses and Pharaoh in Ex. 9:33 and 34 as revealed by reverse repetition complements my own interpretation of Moses's use of the Divine Name *Yahweh Elohim* in Ex. 9:30 as Moses's seeing through Pharaoh's claims of repentance of (Berlin 1983:73, see pp. 131-35 below).<sup>50</sup> The results of diachronic research, on the other hand tend to diverge and disagree with one another. On this basis alone, synchronic approaches have a better chance of being 'correct'.

It should be noted that neither of these factors denies the value of good diachronic research. It would be wonderful to be sure of the genetic history of the Bible, and anything that brings us closer to this must be welcomed. But as soon as hypothesis leaves the realm of hypothesis and

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<sup>50</sup> To cite just two examples: Alter's analysis of Gen. 38 (Judah and Tamar) which Gunn and Fewell refer to and complement; Berlin's observation about the diverging points of view of Moses and Pharaoh in Ex. 9:33 and 34 as revealed by reverse repetition complements my own interpretation of Moses's use of the Divine Name *Yahweh Elohim* in Ex. 9:30 as Moses's seeing through Pharaoh's claims of repentance of (Berlin 1983:73, see pp. 131-35 below).

serves to confirm the scholar's own system of values it becomes worse than useless.<sup>51</sup>

Historical research (as opposed to historical criticism of literature) is another matter altogether, valuable as it is both in its own right, and in the light that it can shine on literary criticism. But its actual relevance must be governed by the biblical agenda, not our own. For example, if an Akkadian root throws light on a Hebrew *hapax legomenon*, so much the better. But the decision of the meaning of the *hapax* must be taken primarily in consultation with the Hebrew context. The reason for this is that, on methodological grounds, if given the choice of three different meanings for a root (one from Akkadian and the others from southern Arabic) we must not be influenced by what *we* want the text to say. Just because the text *can* be made to say what we want it to does not mean that this reading is better than all others.<sup>52</sup> The same holds true for information that fills other cultural gaps, like stories, images, concepts. Thus Alter is quite right in saying that Ugaritic discoveries have greatly enhanced our understanding of certain allusions in Job. But Baal does not explain Job. Only Job explains Job (and perhaps not even he).

Within the synchronic position, the contentious issues turned out to be those of authorial intention and the status of the biblical text. In contemporary literary criticism the issue of intention leads to questions "about what a work of art is and what is proper to criticism."<sup>53</sup> So according to one stance, art is a telescope to the artist's soul, and criticism is the study of that soul. In the other position, art inheres in itself and criticism is the study of that art. The choice of which opinion is taken is not just a matter of fashion or personal preference, but also of the type of art that is under examination.<sup>54</sup> Romantic poetry, which either lends itself to intentionalist

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<sup>51</sup> Barker's *The Older Testament* (1987) is a case in point. The methods she uses to reveal the 'original meaning' of the text before it was subverted are no worse than any of those she criticizes. But just like Robertson, she illustrates the problems inherent in that whole type of research. The criticisms used against her (self-fulfilling textual emendations, having her cake and eating it, Williamson [1988:380-1]) could equally be applied to the vast majority of 'genetic' treatments of the Bible. Yet the same flaws are invisible to us in the work of well-respected, salaried gentlemen (or at least feminists, in the case of women) because, by familiarity, we have become immune to them.

<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Kennedy (1898:viii): "no endeavour has been made to point out the relation subsisting between the Hebrew words discussed and cognate terms in sister languages... comparison may seriously mislead; for, even when the primary idea of the Shemitic root may seem to have been ascertained, the actual meaning of the term in the HB may be metaphorical, and far removed from the original sense."

<sup>53</sup> See p. 7, n. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Barton (1984b:145-6).



criticism or was originally intended as the outpourings of the artist's soul went out of fashion in the heyday of New Criticism. New Critical critics tended to write New Critical poetry, consisting not of a profound emotion, but of the mundane expressed in a surprising or beautiful way. So we should not just be asking what are the methodological pros and cons of a type of interpretation, but what biblical texts themselves require.

When we look at biblical passages we find that they are mostly anonymous. Even in cases like the prophets or the Psalms where authorial names are given, or in Ezra and Nehemiah where the named author speaks in the first person, the aim of the text is the text itself, not the author. We are not called upon to understand the author, but the text. On these grounds alone, we are justified in asking questions primarily of the text, not of the author. However, there is little difference between claiming that an element is present in a text, and claiming that somebody (author or redactor, consciously or unconsciously) put that element in the text. In biblical studies, the investigation of what an author meant is still a literary (and not a psychological, as in Romantic poetry) question. For this reason, there is no harm in using the concept of the biblical author in the way that Polzin and Sternberg do.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, while we have seen the debunking of the need for authorial intent to avoid relativism, there is no doubt that it can be useful to ask 'Is it reasonable to suppose that somebody intended this?' as a check on the imagination of the scholar.

The issue of intention also leads to questions about the unity and literary nature of the text. Synchronic criticism will only be profitable if the text hangs together as a unified piece of art. Otherwise it will degenerate into forced and unconvincing interpretations. We cannot assume either artfulness or unity as Robertson does so cheerfully.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that a text was preserved and canonized would suggest that we should at least look for artfulness. What I propose is first to apply literary criticism to a text: if it works, the text may have been unified literature, if it does not, it was not. In

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<sup>55</sup> As is apparent from their terminology (see n. 36 above: 'code word' and 'shorthand' respectively). Thinking about the author is a way of thinking about the text.

<sup>56</sup> Robertson (1977:3): "reading the bible as literature does not mean that we attempt to decide what texts, if any, were originally written as pure literature... Rather, we assume that the entire Bible is imaginative literature and study it accordingly." The problems inherent in either deciding that the bible is literature, or that it is information, or that it contains both and we must judge each text on its own merits, have been discussed in note 21.

other words, we shall know that a text hangs together (whatever its genetic history) if different literary<sup>57</sup> aspects of it fit the same interpretation. An interpretation based on just one aspect is likely to be flawed, probably because it was asking too much of the text.

The same principle applies to the unity of the text. If a passage has, by redaction or corruption, become less of a work of art, then we cannot hope to derive from it the same kind of exegesis. We are not condemned to extract ever-more-complicated solutions out of hopelessly corrupted texts. Where reconstruction or emendation is convincing, so much the better. But it is dangerous to base a synchronic interpretation on a diachronically fragmented text. The reason for this is again one of methodological integrity. If we are trying to make a text support a particular interpretation, and we then allow ourselves to alter the text in any way, we have lost that aspect of synchronic scholarship which makes it convincing.

On this very subjectivity/objectivity axis, I do not advocate a relativist position, such as that of Gunn and Fewell. Instead I see subjectivity as a danger and objectivity as a goal. This is not to pretend that any kind of research can completely rid itself of the biases and prejudices of the researcher, and of those endemic in the culture in which the researcher lives. However our task should be to minimise and recognise these biases, and not hide behind the truism that everything is subjective anyway.<sup>58</sup>

It is my personal observation that, in the Hebrew Bible, 'form' is a good deal more 'meaningful' than first meets the eye, that is, that a good deal of the Hebrew Bible is a good deal more literary than is commonly thought. My thesis applies this observation to two words which are often thought to be synonymous: *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. If they can be found to interact in a text, to have different semantic or stylistic functions, then they can be shown to have

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<sup>57</sup> By literary I mean those aspects which cannot simply be explained as being necessary to carry the message. Thus we can profitably turn around Schökel's principles: if form can be shown to be meaningful, if form creates meaning, we are dealing with literature; if form is subservient to meaning we are dealing with 'science'.

What I am proposing is a practical way of proceeding from the impasse described in note 21. We are forced to judge what is literature and what is not. To do anything other than this is to relinquish critical thinking in favour of presuppositions which will always turn out to justify themselves. Making this judgement is not necessarily succumbing to the Intentional Fallacy, as the object of the judgement is the *text*, not the *author*.

<sup>58</sup> For this reason, any work which can identify the prevailing prejudices (e.g. Barker 1987, Whitelam 1996) must be welcomed.

a literary role in that text. If only one occurs in a text (or both at random,<sup>59</sup> with any degree of dominance), then no literary conclusion of that order can be drawn. That is not to say that no conclusion *at all* can be drawn. By comparing the prevalence of the names in different sections of text (for example, the Elohist Psalter and the rest of the Psalms, conventional and sceptical wisdom literature) it may be possible to draw more general conclusions about the names.

Because the first type of investigation (literary, in the strictest sense) relates to (deliberate) artistic design of specific texts, it is necessarily bound to those texts. In all probability, conclusions about how the names are used in one text will have little bearing on how they are used by a different author in another. Ironically, little can be deduced about the actual names. On the other hand, comparative investigation of *unaffected* use of the names in different types of literature may prove to be of more relevance to determining their normative use. Being less text-specific, it may tell us more about the names themselves.

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<sup>59</sup> For a description of organic oscillation between 'synonyms' see Whybray (1987:57, criteria 3).

## CHAPTER 2

### YAHWEH AND ELOHIM IN PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

H.G. May, in giving a critique of Alt's *The God of the Fathers* makes the observation that a great deal of biblical scholarship suffers from "an over-emphasis on similarities and lack of attention to peculiarities."<sup>1</sup> This principle has been at work in the attitudes to authorial choice between the two commonest names for the deity of the Hebrew Bible, *Yahweh* and *Elohim*.<sup>2</sup>

The effort that has been put into understanding these two names and the differences between them has centred largely around their etymology (meaning = translation of the etymology)<sup>3</sup> and significance with respect to source criticism.<sup>4</sup> Both of these areas of investigation are of little help when it comes to *literary* investigation.

### Etymology

The following, taken from Hartman,<sup>5</sup> gives an illustration of the kind of help offered by etymological investigation. If *Yahweh* is derived from the hiphil of the root הוה then it may mean 'He causes to be, He brings into existence'. Alternatively, it may be understood 'I am who I am' on the basis of the etymology given in Exodus 3:14. *Elohim*, on the other hand, is usually thought to correspond to the English word G/god, which may mean either

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<sup>1</sup> May (1941:155).

<sup>2</sup> This may in part stem from the very fact that they are the common, 'default' references and therefore inherently boring. Lack of attention to the difference is illustrated by Hertzberg (1964: re 2 Sam. 6:9), who translates ארון יהוה as 'ark of God' without any explanatory comment.

<sup>3</sup> Murtonen (1952-6), Anderson (1965), Hartman (1971), Rose (1992).

<sup>4</sup> Classic examples of this are expounded by Noth (1972, 81) and Eissfeldt (1965:158-81).

<sup>5</sup> Hartman (1971:680). Parke-Taylor (1975:47-51) gives a wide-ranging survey of the other suggested derivations, but is fully aware of the limitations of this kind of investigation and of its speculative nature.

the one true deity or other false deities. Alternatively, the plural ending may be taken as abstract (as, for example, זקונים means 'old age') meaning 'divinity'.

However important such research is, it is rarely helpful in the interpretation of biblical text. For example, in the following passage:

Job 1:21b-22

יהוה נתן ויהוה לקח יהי שם יהוה מברך  
בכל זאת לא חטא איוב ולא נתן תפלה לאלהים

'the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.'

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with any wrongdoing.

The NRSV translation given above is in no way improved by the above etymologies of the names:

'He who causes to be gave, and He who causes to be has taken away; blessed be the name of He who causes to be.'

In all this Job did not sin or charge the Divinity with any wrongdoing.

Eytmological explanations are also of no help in explaining why the text reads as it does and not:

\*אלהים נתן ואלהים לקח יהי שם אלהים מברך  
בכל זאת לא חטא איוב ולא נתן תפלה ליהוה

Furthermore, the study of the text cannot help us choose between the different etymological solutions, which remain more-or-less equally plausible. Which of these makes more sense:

'He who brings into existence gave, and He who brings into existence has taken away; blessed be the name of He who brings into existence.'

or:

'I am who I am gave, and I am who I am has taken away; blessed be the name of I am who I am.'

Research into the meaning of a name via its etymology is therefore not an avenue that is helpful to literary biblical criticism, and likewise literary criticism is of no help in determining the actual etymology. The reasons for this involve both the place of etymology in linguistics, and also the nature of names in general and Semitic names in particular.

Appealing to historical etymology as evidence for meaning is a popular technique,<sup>6</sup> but one which has no linguistic basis. A good demonstration of this 'etymological fallacy' is given by Crystal using the word *nice* as an example:

The 'real' meaning of *nice* is 'fastidious', because that is what it meant in Shakespeare's time... Such reasoning is tempting, but we must guard against it. If it is true that the older a meaning, the 'truer' it is, we cannot ... stop with Shakespeare. The word *nice* can be traced back to Old French, where it meant 'silly', and then back to Latin, where *nescius* meant 'ignorant'. We can even take the word further back in time, and guess at what it might have meant in ... Indo-European - perhaps a meaning to do with 'cut'. So what is the correct meaning of *nice*, if we insist on looking to history? Is it 'fastidious', 'silly', 'ignorant'? Or must we conclude that we do not know what *nice* means, because its original use in Indo-European is obscure or lost?<sup>7</sup>

A similar phenomenon (the 'root fallacy') is discussed in the context of Biblical Hebrew by Gibson<sup>8</sup> and Barr<sup>9</sup>. Barr's book shows how linguistic 'evidence' has been abused by scholarship in order to bolster weak theological arguments:

One form is that where the etymological sense is regarded as 'fundamental' and extant senses regarded as contingent 'modifications' of it... In more serious cases etymological connections which appear to be theologically attractive are simply allowed to take charge of the whole interpretation and no real attention is given to the things being said and the particular semantic contribution of words used.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This quite often occurs when an author wants to assert that a word means one thing and not another. For example: "When the word *discipline* is used many parents become flustered because they associate it with punishment, but that is not what it is all about. The word *discipline* has a Latin origin which means teaching or training... I like the idea of little children as disciples." (Green 1992:42).

<sup>7</sup> Crystal (1988:42-3).

<sup>8</sup> Gibson (1981:175).

<sup>9</sup> Barr (1961:107-160) and (1974:13-15).

<sup>10</sup> Barr (1961:159).



Another area in which the study of DNs has fallen foul of good linguistic practice is the assumption that because Semitic peoples were much more aware of what their names meant, the semantic content of their name must somehow reflect on their character. In the words of Pedersen:

To know the name of a man is the same as to know his essence.<sup>11</sup>

A good example of this is Nabal, the rather foolish character of 1 Sam. 25 whose name means 'fool'. Furthermore, his wife explicitly states the connection between his name and his character in 1 Sam. 25:25. However, Barr points out the impossibility of extending the logic of 1 Sam. 25:25 to biblical names generally.<sup>12</sup> Most names (like Elnathan, Obadiah) tell us more about the parents' conception of God than about the person who bears them. Other names are even less plausible:

It might conceivably in some cases be held that the person was supposed to embody and exemplify the features specified in the name, e.g. that Deborah was to be a sort of bee and Rachel a sort of ewe, and that Tamar was to be tall and straight like a palm tree. But even in these cases this is not a necessary interpretation and perhaps not even a likely one, while in other it verges on the impossible. Was Caleb expected to embody the qualities of a dog? Was Hulda ... really to be a mole-rat or badger, and the prophet Habakkuk really to act out the existence of the garden plant *ocimum basilicum*?<sup>13</sup>

Biblical names have the same opaque and arbitrary nature as our own. Or, as Gibson puts it regarding 2 Sam. 18:10 ('I saw Absalom hanged in a oak'):

The sense of a PN is its reference [i.e. not its semantic content]... the personal names in Near Eastern texts display an apparent internal syntactic structure which does not make a linguistic contribution to its external linguistic environment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Pedersen (1926:245).

<sup>12</sup> Even Pedersen (quoted above) seems to realise the difficulty of his own position, for he also writes: "It is impossible that a Hebrew should not know the linguistic value of 'Benjamin'. But it does not exclude the possibility that for him the name may be essentially connected with ideas of quite a different kind. The substance of a name must, to a very large extent, depend on the contents imparted to it by those who have formerly borne it." (1926:52).

<sup>13</sup> Barr (1969-70:20). The same point is made by R. Jose b. Hanina in Gen. R. 71.3

<sup>14</sup> Gibson (1981:126, 131).

This does not prevent the biblical narrator from drawing on coincidental connections which might arise between a character and his or her name, for example, the name Moses and the verb משה (Ex. 2:10). Gibson describes this as follows:

Only rarely does a text exhibit a utilization of the alleged non-referential semantic content of a PN, and this is invariably in the context of a pun or production of the PN from components in natural language usage.<sup>15</sup>

This proviso is important for Barr, who, having made his point, is left without an explanation for Nabal and similar names. Barr reasons (somewhat uncomfortably) that no parent in their right mind could call a child 'fool', and proceeds to give a variety of other etymologies from which 'Nabal' could have been derived. Even if Barr is granted his case, he surely is unable to explain every instance where a name's semantic content is significant (e.g. Moses, Jacob [Gen. 25:26], Ichabod [1 Sam. 4:10], etc.) When such cases are seen as *puns* (Gibson), Barr's need to find different etymologies for Nabal is eliminated. If the narrator can draw on accidental links between the name and the character, then there is no reason why from this narrator may not invent a name to suit a character.

Thus far, we have identified three possible relations between name and character: there may be no semantic connection (e.g. Habakkuk); there may be an accidental connection (e.g. Moses); or there may be a causal, probably fictitious, connection (e.g. Nabal). Into which category does *Yahweh* fit? The presence of the etymology in Ex. 3:14 precludes the first category - someone, somewhere made a semantic link between Yahweh's name and his character. On the other hand, if the name Yahweh had been invented along the rationale described in Exodus 3, surely it would have been easier to parse! Therefore, I suggest that the semantic relation between Yahweh's name and his 'person' is a coincidental one. As with Moses, there is an isolated instance where Yahweh's name *means* something (i.e. it is the basis of wordplay). However, the colour of Moses' name comes from his confrontations with Pharaoh, his leadership in the wilderness, and especially at Mt. Sinai, rather than the detail of whether he was drawn, lifted, or fished

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<sup>15</sup> Gibson (1981:128).



out of the water. Similarly, the colour of Yahweh's name is its association with this particular deity, with his particular attributes and deeds.

### Source criticism

The other major area of interest regarding the names *Yahweh* and *Elohim* is source criticism, specifically the documentary hypothesis. Astruc used the interchange of DNs in his initial observations,<sup>16</sup> and the DNs gave their names to two of the pentateuchal sources, the *Elohist* and the *Yahwist*. Proponents of the documentary hypothesis regard the DNs as valuable criteria for distinguishing sources.<sup>17</sup>

This having been said, they are only of use before E and P begin to use the name *Yahweh* regularly (Ex. 3:14 and 6:2 respectively).<sup>18</sup> Redford has shown that the sources in the Joseph narrative (Gen. 37-50) cannot be distinguished by DN alteration.<sup>19</sup> Further, it is argued in chapter 10 of the present study that the DNs in Exodus 1-6 are a literary device rather than an indication of sources. If this is correct, then the criterion is limited in scope to Genesis 1-36.

Since its inception, the documentary hypothesis has always provoked a certain amount of hostility.<sup>20</sup> There has always been scepticism regarding the usefulness of DNs for biblical scholarship.<sup>21</sup> Westermann points out that quite large sections of the Pentateuch have no reference to God at all.<sup>22</sup> After

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<sup>16</sup> Astruc (1753:10-13).

<sup>17</sup> For example, Eissfeldt (1965:182), Noth (1972:23).

<sup>18</sup> Eissfeldt (1965:183), Whybray (1987:64). However, Mowinckel (1937:55) argues that E uses *Yahweh* even before Ex. 3. In Ex. 3: "Yahwe is not telling his name to one who does not know it. Moses asks for some 'control' evidence that his countrymen may know, when he returns to them, that it is really the God of their fathers that has sent him... The whole conversation presupposes that the Israelites know this name already." While this position has some logical difficulties, it is nevertheless possible.

<sup>19</sup> Redford (1970:128-9) shows that in the Joseph story, *Elohim* is used throughout (only ever in direct speech), while *Yahweh* appears only 5 times (all in ch. 39, all in narration). For him, the choice of DN here is a question of genre, rather than sources (p. 127). He also gives bibliography of those who unsuccessfully try to link sources to DNs regarding the Joseph narrative (p. 130 n. 2).

<sup>20</sup> Hengstenberg (1848a), Wiener (1910a:1-4), Dahse (1912), Cassuto (1934, 1961a), Motyer (1959), Segal (1955, 1967), Whybray (1987).

<sup>21</sup> See works in previous note, also: Troelstra (1912), Baumgärtel (1914:80), Volz-Rudolph (1933), Rudolph (1938:148), Lacocque (1957-8:69-84), Nielsen (1954:93-103), Redpath (1904:286-301), Hertz (1929:17, 107).

<sup>22</sup> Westermann (1974:579). The passages (in Gen. 1-11 alone) are: Gen. 4:17-24, 9:18-24, 10:1-32 (save v. 9), 11:10-32.

his defence of DNs as criteria for source criticism in the mammoth *Introduction*,<sup>23</sup> Eissfeldt abandons them in 1939:

Among the arguments proven by Rudolph to be often not very reliable is the interchange of the divine names Yahweh and Elohim...<sup>24</sup>

More recently, source criticism has been accused of doing violence to the text:

... the alternation in the use of divine names has resulted in the complete fragmentation of otherwise unified stories and episodes.<sup>25</sup>

No source critic has ever been able to account for all of the DNs, even within the limited pericope of Genesis 1-36.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Whybray complains about:

its [the hypothesis'] assumption that the authors of the three documents ... were necessarily consistent in their use - and in their avoidance - of the names.<sup>27</sup>

However, proponents of the documentary hypothesis have never claimed complete consistency in any given source, precisely because they *cannot* (as seen above). They have always had to qualify the criterion with the exceptions where it does not work.<sup>28</sup> It is unfair to criticise them on both counts.

In amongst this there are a few voices of moderation. Van Seters, for example, suggests that while DNs alone are not enough to justify fragmenting an otherwise coherent text, they may be used in a corroborative sense. That is, they may help to identify sources once they have already been

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<sup>23</sup> Eissfeldt (1934, English translation 1965:182).

<sup>24</sup> Eissfeldt (1939:212): "Zu den von Rudolph als vielfach wenig tragfähig erwiesenen Argumenten gehören der Wechsel der Gottesnamen Jahwe und Elohim ...". Eissfeldt refers to both the 1933 and the 1938 publications.

<sup>25</sup> Van Seters (1975:126-7).

<sup>26</sup> Eissfeldt (1965:182) regards the following passages as difficult: Gen. 15:1-6, 22:1-14, 29:31-30:34, 32:23-32. Noth (1972:29) attributes Gen. 27:1-45 to J, but cannot explain the האלהים in v. 28; likewise (1972:17), Gen. 21:1b-5 is in P, but what about יהוה in v. 1b?

<sup>27</sup> Whybray (1987:66).

<sup>28</sup> Thus Eissfeldt (1965:182): "Sometimes an *Elohim* has crept secondarily into the *Yahweh* stratum, and a *Yahweh* into the *Elohim* stratum"; similarly Noth (1972:23): "To be sure, this criterion is never one hundred percent reliable in any given source since there is always the possibility that names have been exchanged secondarily." It would be good to know what they both meant by 'secondarily'.

distinguished by other means.<sup>29</sup> Redford, while denying DNs any diachronic usefulness in his own study (Gen. 37-50), points out how they may be useful in other texts:

Qoheleth uses only Elohim, the writer of Ruth only Yahweh. The Book of Deuteronomy favours Yahweh ... because the whole intent of D is to underline the covenant relationship between the specific, national deity and his people; Leviticus also uses Yahweh almost exclusively, since it contains ritual prescription, purporting to come in origin from the Israelite ethnic deity, Yahweh, and his people. These predilections ... become characteristic of the four books, and if the latter were quoted *verbatim* as sources in a third work, would *ipso facto* become criteria for source analysis.<sup>30</sup>

He goes on to suggest that this is precisely what happened in Samuel-Kings, where detailed court records were available for Saul, David and Solomon, and the other kings known from "the Day-book of kings of Israel and Judah."<sup>31</sup> This might explain why the reign of Solomon is a watershed for the use of *Elohim*.

While Redford's scenario is quite plausible,<sup>32</sup> it has a limited remit. If, as he maintains, the predilection for one name or the other is made primarily on the basis of genre, how is it that J and E, while being of the *same or similar genre* (despite any alleged differences of theology), use different names? How often, for example, does Qohelet quote from Leviticus?

This points toward the real problem for the documentary hypothesis, for even when it is shown that for a particular passage (e.g. the flood story), the DNs can best be explained as coming from different 'sources', this begs more questions than it answers. Why did two versions of the same story exist, each consistently using a different DN? Why did an editor combine the two stories, each retaining the original DNs?

Answering these question is clearly beyond the scope of the present study. Instead they are the challenge that faces diachronic research, if it is to take synchronic research seriously. For this thesis, it is recognised that text history has a role to play in explaining various aspects of the text, including

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<sup>29</sup> Van Seters (1975:126-7).

<sup>30</sup> Redford (1970:109).

<sup>31</sup> Redford (1970:109 n. 1).

<sup>32</sup> It is the most likely reason for the only case of יהוה in the poetry of Job: 12:9 יד יהוה (cf. Job 19:21 יד אלוה). Job 12:9 is probably a quotation from Isa. 41:20 (יד יהוה עשתה זאת); alternatively, both may be using a common source.

DNs. This role, however, is limited by two factors. Firstly, it can only be applied to those texts which are composite. Secondly, it must be borne in mind that an appeal to 'different sources' is only one part of the question.

### Literary Approaches

In 1911, during the height of the debate concerning the documentary hypothesis, and the relevance of DNs for it, the Theology Faculty of Leipzig University initiated a contest for a solution to the variety in DNs in the Old Testament. The winner of the contest, Friedrich Baumgärtel, approached the task obliquely, rather than head-on. He saw the variety of DNs in the Pentateuch as a subset of the same variety in the Old Testament as a whole, hence the title of his work, *Elohim ausserhalb des Pentateuch*.<sup>33</sup> From an inner-Masoretic study, he found that the DNs in the Prophets and Writings are not without rule or plan,<sup>34</sup> but display a certain 'Gesetzmässigkeit' or 'regularity'. By this, he appears to mean both that different books use אלהים in starkly different proportions,<sup>35</sup> and also that certain expressions (e.g. כמהכת אלהים) appear consistently with אלהים. For Baumgärtel, such regularity is evidence of originality, rather than subsequent editorial change, for surely editorial change would have been applied to all biblical books!<sup>36</sup> Although he does not say this explicitly, his implication appears to be that what is true for the Prophets and the Writings applies also to the Pentateuch.

Baumgärtel evidently did not want to lay his own head on the block by developing the idea of 'regularity'. But he did open the possibility of literary preference or convention in DN choice, and this was later taken up separately by Cassuto<sup>37</sup> and Segal.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Baumgärtel (1914).

<sup>34</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:80): "kein regelloser und planloser". On p. 79 he claims it is possible to determine text-critical issues from inner-Masoretic observation.

<sup>35</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:78-79): "In den geschichtlichen Büchern kommt יהוה gegenüber אלהים sehr selten vor, die Propheten vermeiden אלהים ganz. Ebenso Prov. Hi. Ru. Thr. Erst der Chronist hat wieder einige אלהים, die jedoch gegenüber der יהוה kaum in Betracht kommen."

<sup>36</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:80).

<sup>37</sup> Cassuto (1934:1-92), (1961a:15-41), (1961b:87).

<sup>38</sup> Segal (1955:89-115, 1961:68-114, 1967:103-124).

Cassuto lays out a set of criteria by which, he claims, biblical authors chose to refer to God by one name or the other. In order to state his position concisely, the following presents quotations<sup>39</sup> in the form of a table:

<i>Yahweh</i>	<i>Elohim</i>
<i>Ethical aspect that belongs specifically to the people of Israel</i>	abstract conception of God that was current in the international circles of the Sages, the idea of God ... as the Creator of the <i>material</i> world
Direct and intuitive notion of God that is characteristic of the unsophisticated faith of the multitude	the concept of the philosophically minded who study abstruse problems connected with the existence of the world and humanity
His personal character, and in direct relationship to human beings or to nature	God as transcendental being, who stands entirely outside nature

Thus, Cassuto claims, *Yahweh* is preferred in the prophetic writings and in the law codes in the Pentateuch and Ezekiel (as these concern Israel specifically), and also in poetry, which is:

the direct and spontaneous expression of the soul of the people, who are accustomed to think of their God in personal terms.<sup>40</sup>

Wisdom literature, dealing as it does with abstruse, universal problems shows a strong preference for the Elohist divine names. Lying between these poles comes narrative of the Pentateuch, Former Prophets, etc, which use both names in close proximity, still according to the criteria set out.

The exceptions to these rules, Cassuto claims, turn out to prove the rules themselves. Thus the only prophetic book to use *Elohim* as a DN (Jonah) is narrative rather than true prophecy. The Psalms, which actually use *Elohim* quite frequently, have been influenced by Wisdom, and Second Isaiah, which also uses *Elohim* quite frequently, has been influenced by the Psalms.

Nevertheless, he is not unaware of a more fundamental methodological problem:

<sup>39</sup> Cassuto (1961b:87) - italics are Cassuto's.

<sup>40</sup> Cassuto (1961a:24).



Sometimes, of course, it happens that two opposite rules apply together and come in conflict with each other; then, as logic demands, the rule that is more material to the primary purport of the relevant passage prevails.<sup>41</sup>

However, he gives no indication of how to decide what the 'primary purport of the relevant passage' is. This becomes evident in his 'corroboration' - an analysis of the first 17 chapters of Genesis with respect to the choice of DN. To give but one example, Cassuto describes the DNs in the flood story: *Elohim* is the name most commonly used as the deity appears as the agent of destruction in his role as master of the universe, while *Yahweh* is mentioned only when moral or ethical matters are at issue (Gen. 6:5, 7:1, 5, 8:20, 21). But Cassuto does not mention that *Elohim* also deals with moral issues in Gen. 6:11, 12.<sup>42</sup>

The most serious objection that should be raised against Cassuto's hypothesis, however, is that the actual occurrence of DNs in the Hebrew Bible is not as he claims. Poetry frequently uses *Elohim*, and not necessarily in the context of wisdom (e.g. Ps. 3:3). In Chapter 8 it is demonstrated that there is no correspondance between wisdom Psalms and Elohist Psalms. Within that huge umbrella called narrative there are wide variations in the amount *Elohim* is used: in Genesis *Yahweh* and *Elohim* are used with more-or-less equal frequency; whereas in Kings, *Elohim* hardly appears as a DN at all.

While there is no doubt that Cassuto opened up a whole new area for discussion, and perceived some interesting nuances of biblical writing (for example why in Gen. 9:26-27 Shem is blessed by *Yahweh*, and Japheth by *Elohim*), it must be said that his thesis as a whole does not add up.

Segal gives quite a different analysis. According to him, *Elohim* is a "complete synonym of YHWH."<sup>43</sup> In those passages which use both names, the interchange:

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<sup>41</sup> Cassuto (1961a:32).

<sup>42</sup> Cassuto's method here is similar to that of Hengstenberg (1848a:308-393). Hengstenberg goes through the entire Pentateuch describing and explaining DN choice on a case by case basis, making even less effort than Cassuto to systematize his criteria. Colenso (1863:181-4) shows just how easy it is to destroy this kind of argument, simply by citing another verse which contradicts the criterion.

<sup>43</sup> Segal (1967:105).

must be ascribed to the fondness of Hebrew writers for a variety of expression by the use of synonyms, as exemplified especially in the parallelistic construction of Hebrew poetry.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, he recognises that the DNs are not found randomly, but in varying proportions in different parts of the Hebrew Bible. He explains this with a historical scenario which I will repeat here only briefly. In the early period (up to Solomon) both names of God were used freely, but *Elohim* was especially popular with the masses. During the time of the divided monarchy:

the polytheism of Canaanite idolatry became a potent influence ... the faithful worshippers of YHWH adopted the exclusive use of the name YHWH and eschewed the use of the plural form *Elohim*.<sup>45</sup>

Naturally, it is the faithful Yahweh-worshippers who are reflected in the biblical literature of this time. Then in the post-exilic period:

A heightened sense of the sanctity of the Deity and of the sacredness of its own proper name led to the avoidance of a too frequent employment of the name YHWH ... and to its replacement by a synonymous substitute [i.e. *Elohim*].<sup>46</sup>

Segal's evidence for this comes from the biblical texts. The early period is represented by those books in which *Elohim* is used freely: Genesis, the early chapters of Exodus, Num. 22-23, Judges, and Samuel. The gradual phasing out of *Elohim* begins in Kings, with the end of Solomon's reign as the watershed: after this, *Elohim* is only found inflected, or in standing expressions, or in an appellative sense.<sup>47</sup> Also in this period and style come Ruth, Joshua, the narrative of Jeremiah, and the Lachish letters (which, luckily for Segal, were written by faithful Yahweh-worshippers). The post-exilic revival of *Elohim* is attested in Chronicles (according to Segal, about 500 cases of *Yahweh* and 140 of *Elohim*), Jonah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Qohelet, Daniel, the Elohist Psalter and Job. Prophetic and poetic literature, apart from

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<sup>44</sup> Segal (1967:108).

<sup>45</sup> Segal (1967:111).

<sup>46</sup> Segal (1967:111).

<sup>47</sup> By 'appellative', Segal clearly means 'as a common noun', e.g. 1 Kings 18:39, 2 Kings 1:3 (1967:111).

coming largely from the middle period has an additional reason for its especially Yahwistic tendency:

Since ... Elohim ... has its ultimate origin in the Hebrew of pre-monotheistic ages, it follows that the prophets and religious poets, with their devotion to pure monotheism and their diction elevated far above colloquial speech, avoided the use of Elohim as a synonym with YWHW.<sup>48</sup>

Even if we were to accept Segal's idea of Israelite history as a gradually and reluctantly emerging monotheism surrounded by a sea of alluring polytheism (a view which was largely unchallenged in his day, and still persists today) we can see that his scenario has a number of internal inconsistencies. If, during the divided monarchy, the faithful Yahweh-worshippers avoided *Elohim* because of its foreign, polytheistic connotations, and if in the late period, the faithful were inspired to avoid the name *Yahweh*, then surely they would not have replaced it with a word with foreign, polytheistic connotations like *Elohim*!

His dating system also introduces problems. In Chapter 8, compelling evidence is presented to show that the Elohist Psalter predates Pss. 90-150, which are even more 'Yahwistic' than Pss. 1-41. Segal's dating of Ruth to the divided monarchy appears to be for the sole purpose of explaining why it does not use *Elohim* in contrast with the rest of the Writings.<sup>49</sup> He dates Joshua (where *Yahweh* is used almost exclusively) to the same period because:

the unhistorical conception in these narratives that Joshua had effected a complete conquest of the land ... could only have arisen in a time then the slow process of conquest had long been forgotten.<sup>50</sup>

The same could easily be said of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Judges, Samuel and Kings!

As with Cassuto, one major problem is that the actual occurrence of DNs is not exactly as Segal would like it. Chronicles, it is true, often attests *Elohim* much more frequently than its parallel material, but 500 cases of *Yahweh* (according to Segal's estimate) are hardly evidence for the avoidance

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<sup>48</sup> Segal (1967:112).

<sup>49</sup> Segal (1967:111).

<sup>50</sup> Segal (1967:118).



of *Yahweh*.<sup>51</sup> Segal frequently uses circular logic to overcome these difficulties: thus *Elohim* in Malachi may suggest that it is post-exilic,<sup>52</sup> the Elohist chapter 24 of Joshua may be older than the rest of the book.<sup>53</sup>

Interestingly enough, when it comes to actually explaining individual uses of *Elohim*, Segal tacitly reverts to criteria remarkably similar to Cassuto's. For example, Gen. 17 uses *Elohim* because its subject matter (circumcision) applies to all Abraham's children, and not just Israel.<sup>54</sup>

The above review shows that Cassuto and Segal came to quite different kinds of conclusions regarding the DNs *Yahweh* and *Elohim*: one that the names are different and are used according to a discernible set of criteria, and the other that the names are synonymous and used differently during different periods. And yet they started from very much the same position: both Jewish scholars arguing against the worst excesses of the documentary hypothesis. Both claimed to give comprehensive accounts of the authorial choice between *Yahweh* and *Elohim*, both rejected any form of source criticism. Both filled out their hypotheses with historical claims.<sup>55</sup> The very fact of their inability to agree should make us wary not just of their results, but also of their methods as a whole.<sup>56</sup>

Neither Cassuto's nor Segal's hypotheses were subject to much critical debate which might have encouraged refinement. The very nature of what they put forward - a complete and comprehensive, self-justifying case - did not lend itself to criticism or improvement. Neither did they enter into a fruitful debate with each other.<sup>57</sup> However, after the two poles of the debate

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<sup>51</sup> A point made by Japhet (1993:338).

<sup>52</sup> Segal (1967:113).

<sup>53</sup> Segal (1967:119).

<sup>54</sup> Segal (1967:121).

<sup>55</sup> Cassuto (1961a:28) supplements his analysis with a theory about the historical relationship of the two names: in the time of the second temple, the Sadducees, influenced by international wisdom and Greek thought, used the name *Elohim*, while the lower classes, Pharisees who were more nationalistic and traditional, used *Yahweh* in their everyday speech. Cassuto gives little evidence for this theory. For example, he refers to the Pharisaic enactment that a man should mention the Name in greeting his fellow, but gives no reference for this enactment.

<sup>56</sup> The fact that Cassuto and Segal come to such differing conclusions is conveniently overlooked by Whybray when he uses them to attack the documentary hypothesis (1987:67).

<sup>57</sup> Segal only very occasionally takes the trouble to point out that Cassuto is wrong (e.g. 1967:113-4 n. 5).

The approach taken by Engnell is broadly in line with Cassuto: "Thus the name *Yahweh* is used in contexts which distinguish Israel's national god from foreign gods, relate the history of the ancestors, etc., while the name *Elohim*, "God", expresses a more

were set, a number of notable contributions were made. Among these are: Kidner's extremely short article 'The Distribution of Divine Names in Jonah,'<sup>58</sup> a number of articles by Magonet 'The Bush that Never Burned: Narrative Techniques in Exodus 3 and 6,'<sup>59</sup> 'Rhetoric of God: Exodus 6,'<sup>60</sup> and more recently 'The Names of God in Biblical Narrative'<sup>61</sup> and Dempster's 'The Lord is his name: A Study of the Distribution of the names and titles of God in the Book of Amos'<sup>62</sup> which builds on Tromp's 'Amos 5:1-17: Towards a Stylistic and Rhetorical Analysis.'<sup>63</sup>

All of these can be described as synchronic research, in that they seek to understand the text as it is, rather than the history of the text, or the historical situation reflected in the text. They are mostly concerned with two issues: examining the *choice* of DNs with respect to context; and examining the *positioning* of DNs with respect to structure. The former question is

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theological, abstract, cosmic idea of God, and therefore is used in a broader, more comprehensive way" (1970:56).

Berkovits, on the other hand, adheres to the precise opposite of one of Cassuto's criteria. For Berkovits, Yahweh "is the biblical name for God in the universal sense, as the God of all creation, known as such by all nations (1969:63), while Elohim is the immanent "to be understood in the specific sense, as the manifestation of Y, who notwithstanding his Sovereignty and aloofness, is yet near and providentially concerned" (p. 64). Berkovits does not explain what led him to this conclusion, but rather applies it to several texts including the Mt Carmel episode in 1 Kings 18. Regarding verse 21, he claims that *אם יהוה האלהים* does not mean 'if Yahweh is God' or even 'if Yahweh is the God', for the Israelites knew very well that he was. The question was rather whether Yahweh was the *leader*, i.e. the immanent one whom they should follow. In one sense, Berkovits is right - the Israelites were hardly accused of believing Yahweh to be a cat or a herb. Nevertheless, they were being challenged to decide who was 'the god' - Yahweh or Baal? In v. 21, the term *אלהים* applies to Baal just as much as to Yahweh (even though it is absent by ellipsis). If the Israelites knew that Yahweh was god, then they also knew that Baal was god, and I doubt this is what Berkovits had in mind.

That Berkovits' hypothesis is not universally valid is easily demonstrated by Parke-Taylor: "(e.g. transcendence: Ps. 29:10 YHWH; Ps. 77:13 Elohim; immanence Ps. 34:18 YHWH; Ps. 14:5 Elohim)" (1975:11). But that is not the point. The point is that he is able to maintain his theory throughout his book and refer to it frequently. It is a good example of how, once a particular formula has been decided upon, it can be used at will, uncritically, as a purely subjective hermeneutical tool. The eisegetical nature of Berkovits's analysis is apparent because he takes an unconventional line. Cassuto's analysis, on the other hand, has a more familiar ring to it, and the eisegetical element is harder to spot.

58 Kidner (1970:126-8).

59 Magonet (1975).

60 Magonet (1983).

61 Magonet (1995). This article covers a number of texts: Genesis 22, Exodus 3, 19-24, Num. 22, Judges 13, 1 Sam. 4-6, Jonah.

62 Dempster (1991: 170-89).

63 Tromp (1984).

addressed by Kidner<sup>64</sup> when he identifies *Yahweh* in Jonah as pertaining to Israelites, and *Elohim* as pertaining to non-Israelites; and by Magonet<sup>65</sup> when in Exodus 3 *Yahweh* is used to indicate 'objective' reality and *Elohim* to describe Moses's 'subjective' perception of events. The works of Dempster and Tromp, however, are more concerned with the latter. Each shows how the positioning of the DNs יהוה and אֱלֹהִים affects the impact of Amos's message. Magonet<sup>66</sup> likewise analyses the structure of his text (Ex. 6:2-8) and shows how the formula אֲנִי יְהוָה appears at crucial points of the chiasmic structure.

The scope of each of these studies is limited to the texts under scrutiny and although there is general encouragement for this type of research to be extended to other texts, there are few specific suggestions as to how this is to be achieved. For example, Magonet concludes:

The frequency of the phenomenon suggests that an approach to it is needed that is more comprehensive, and raises interesting questions about the literary conventions of the biblical authors and editors... To what extent did there exist a range of 'legitimate' or 'acceptable' interpretations of the names for God that were a part of common currency?<sup>67</sup>

Kidner rather meekly hopes:

If some principles are discernible in these usages they could possibly throw a little light on the larger question of their distribution in the Pentateuch.<sup>68</sup>

It may be significant that none of them refers to the more systematic analyses of Cassuto and Segal, and it is certainly significant that none of them claims "ultimate value"<sup>69</sup> to the nuances of the names of God that they identify in their specific texts. What becomes clear is that their very unwillingness to generalise, to systematise, or to be comprehensive is what enables them to be true to their texts, and makes them convincing. The failed attempts of Cassuto and Segal must open us to the possibility that there is no one system or principle of DN choice to which the whole Hebrew Bible adheres. Or to

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<sup>64</sup> Kidner (1970:126-8).

<sup>65</sup> Magonet (1995:83).

<sup>66</sup> Magonet (1983).

<sup>67</sup> Magonet (1995:95).

<sup>68</sup> Kidner (1970:126).

<sup>69</sup> Magonet (1995:95).

paraphrase Magonet, that there were very few accepted values attached to the names of God that were part of common currency, but that authors felt free to attach values to them as suited their literary purpose. If that is the case, then we must free ourselves of the need to find a comprehensive system, and be content with a series of potted text-based analyses.

An important contribution to the study of the DNs has come from Revell's *The Designation of the Individual: Expressive Usage in Biblical Narrative*.<sup>70</sup> It is set along lines quite different from anything described up till now. Rather than taking as material the whole Hebrew Bible, or just one short passage, Revell has taken what he regards as an "adequate but not excessive body of more or less homogeneous material:"<sup>71</sup> the narrative of Judges, Samuel and Kings. By isolating the references to individual characters (of whom God is only one) he identifies contextual criteria by which one or the other reference is chosen, using a technique similar to Cassuto's. It is somewhat unfortunate that, specifically in relation to DNs, his corpus is anything but homogeneous, as we have already seen from Segal. This makes many of the points that he raises, just like Cassuto's, rather limited in value. Nevertheless his work is an interesting pointer of a possible bridge between two extremes: the unconvincing systems of Cassuto and Segal, and the valid but limited analyses of Kidner, Dempster and Magonet.

This thesis attempts to move research forward on both fronts. By collecting together a series of short studies, it aims to show the variety of ways in which biblical authors used DN choice and placement for their literary purposes. It also aims to show how the investigation of a 'homogeneous corpus' can reveal some of the general values attached to DNs.

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<sup>70</sup> Revell (1996).

<sup>71</sup> Revell (1996:12).

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RABBINIC TRADITION

#### Introduction

No treatment of the divine names *Yahweh* and *Elohim* would be complete without some consideration of the rabbinic tradition, which would appear to have already answered our question:<sup>1</sup>

Sifre Deut. 26:

כל מקום שנאמר השם זו מדת רחמים כל מקום שנאמר אלהים זו מדת הדין

Wherever it mentions the LORD this is the attribute of mercy;  
wherever it mentions *Elohim* this is the attribute of justice.

The first part refers to Ex. 34:6 (יהוה יהוה אל רחום חנון) and the second to Ex. 22:8, 27, in which אלהים appears in its meaning of 'judges'. Thus the two names of God refer to two essential aspects of his character. As we know that rabbinic traditions can be very old indeed,<sup>2</sup> we must take seriously the possibility that this tradition dates to the biblical period,<sup>3</sup> and that it is therefore an indispensable tool in understanding the DNs in the Bible. It is used, for example, by Magonet with reference to DNs in the book of Jonah,<sup>4</sup> by Mitchell regarding the Asaph Psalms,<sup>5</sup> and by Hayman regarding the continuity of Ugaritic and rabbinic traditions.<sup>6</sup>

Philo, however, taught the exact opposite, for example:

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<sup>1</sup> Sifre Deut. is the earliest reference to this tradition. It also appears in Gen. R. 33, 3 (re Gen. 8:1); Tanḥuma Lev.; Num. R. 9:18 (re Num. 5:21); Midr. Ps. 56:3 (re Ps. 56:11), Rashi on Gen. 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs (1977:1-11).

<sup>3</sup> Hayman (1991:13-14).

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 12; Magonet (1976:33-38, summarized in 1995:89-91); Strikovski (1976:125).

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell (1997:181). See p. 151 below.

<sup>6</sup> Hayman (1991:13).

for 'tis said 'he called upon it the Name of the Lord, as God eternal' (Gen. 21:33). The titles, then, just mentioned exhibit the powers of Him that IS; the title 'Lord' the power in virtue of which He rules, that of 'God' the power in virtue of which He bestows benefits.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly:

the senior potencies, the nearest to Him, the creative and the kingly. The title of the former (ἡ ποιητικη) is God, since it made and ordered the All; the title of the latter (ἡ βασιλικη) is Lord, since it is the fundamental right of the maker to rule and control what he has brought into being.<sup>8</sup>

For some time modern scholarship orientated itself around this rabbi/Philo axis. Thus Marmorstein claimed that Philo gave the older version, which was later deliberately reversed by the rabbis;<sup>9</sup> while others argued that the rabbinic tradition was the correct version which Philo either misunderstood because of his poor knowledge of Hebrew (Fraenkel<sup>10</sup>) or reinterpreted to fit the accepted sense of the names of God in Greek (Urbach<sup>11</sup>). However, quite a different understanding of this tradition is given by Dahl and Segal. They argue that:

the Philonic and the rabbinic interpretations of the names of God are not independent parallels but variants of one and the same tradition.<sup>12</sup>

This chapter challenges the relevance of both the Philonic and the rabbinic traditions from two perspectives: firstly the rabbinic perspective, and secondly the biblical.

### **The Rabbinic Tradition vs Philo**

Marmorstein's evidence provides a convenient entry-point into the discussion. He argued that the rabbinic tradition (as expressed in Sifre Deut. 26) is only present in the later literature, while in the earlier literature two

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<sup>7</sup> *Plant.* 20, 85ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Abr.* 24, 121ff.

<sup>9</sup> Marmorstein (1927:48).

<sup>10</sup> Fraenkel (1851:26ff).

<sup>11</sup> Urbach (1975:I:453); see also bibliography cited in Strikovsky (1976:125 n. 20).

<sup>12</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:5).





However, Marmorstein does not explain how אל or אלי relate to אלהים in the later tradition.

The third text, which Marmorstein uses in a later publication,<sup>17</sup> comments on the repetition of אני יהוה in Lev. 18:4 and 5:

Lev. R. 23,9

תני ר' חייא למה אני יהוה כתיב שני פעמים  
אני הוא שפרעתי מדור המבול ומאנשי סדום ועמורה ומצרים  
ואני עתיד ליפרע ממי שעושה כמעשיהם

R Ḥiyya taught: Why is *I am the Lord* written twice [i.e. vv. 4 and 5]? It implies: I am He who inflicted punishment upon the Generation of the Flood, upon Sodom and upon Egypt, and I am the same one who will inflict punishment upon any one who will act in accordance with their practices.

While these texts are generally compatible with Philo's analysis, they are not equal to it. Only one name and one attribute is dealt with at a time; none of them equates two divine names with two divine attributes, as in Philo. In each case, the association of a name with an attribute depends primarily on the text at hand. Thus the main foundation of Marmorstein's argument, that the old, tannaitic tradition agrees with Philo, is not supported by the evidence.

Marmorstein's scenario as to why the 'original' tradition was 'reversed' is quite unconvincing:

It seemed natural [to the gnostic dualists] that *κruptos* should be interpreted as the God of the Jews, the God of rigid judgement, and *Elohim*, the general name of God, as the Highest God, the most perfect God, the God of love and mercy. Consequently the teachers of the middle of the second century changed the order.<sup>18</sup>

Firstly, Marmorstein gives no evidence whatsoever that the Gnostic dualists did indeed identify *κruptos* as the strict god of the Jews and *Elohim* as the

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Lauterbach follows suit. Neusner, however, translates both terms as 'quality of mercy', and presumably has good reason to do so. For this reason, and also because the following context mentions only the merciful aspect, we can accept Marmorstein's reading over Lauterbach's.

<sup>17</sup> Marmorstein (1931:298).

<sup>18</sup> Marmorstein (1927:50).



Highest, merciful god. Secondly, if this were the case, then simply switching the names around would be both an impractical and ineffectual measure: impractical because it would not be convincing precisely to those dualists, and ineffectual because it would not have eradicated the two powers heresy, but merely altered it.

This having been said, Dahl and Segal's article demonstrates that while Marmorstein's *conclusions* were flawed, that he was at least "led by correct intuition."<sup>19</sup> They show that the opposite view (i.e. that the rabbis were right and Philo was wrong) is also difficult. The three passages discussed above are not a reiteration of Philo's doctrine, as Marmorstein claims, but neither are they particularly in line with the later rabbinic tradition. Dahl and Segal point out that chronology is on Philo's side:

In order to explain the Philonic system as due to poor information or conscious alteration of rabbinic doctrine one has to adopt the precarious position that the rabbinic doctrine existed a hundred years before its earliest attestation.<sup>20</sup>

They also draw attention to the closeness of Philo's vocabulary, (the 'power of goodness', δυναμις ἀγαθοτητος, ἰληος, ἐνεργεσαιας, and the 'punishing power', δυναμις κολαστηριος) to what Marmorstein identified as the 'older' terms: מידה טובה and מידה פורענות.<sup>21</sup>

Segal suggests that the debate between these two sides has diverted our attention away from the real issue:

the important point is not the disagreement between the rabbis and Philo over the interpretation of the names of God but their fundamental agreement that God is the author of both justice and mercy... It is the mixture that is important.<sup>22</sup>

In support of this they re-evaluate both the rabbinic and the Philonic materials. When Philo deals with mercy and judgement in *Deus Imm.* his point is not that one 'power' corresponds to a particular name, but rather they are 'mixed':

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<sup>19</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:3).

<sup>20</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:3).

<sup>21</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:4). This point is also made by Marmorstein support of Philo (1931:298).

<sup>22</sup> Segal (1977:46), see also Dahl and Segal (1978:11).

Noah found grace with Him, that so He might mingle this saving mercy with the judgement pronounced on sinners. (*Deus Imm.* 16, 74)

Into this context, Philo brings 3 verses from the Psalms:

Ps. 100:1

חסד ומשפט אשרה לך

Ps. 75:9

כי כוס ביד יהוה ויין חמר מלא מסך

Philo quotes here from the LXX (οίνου ἀκρατου πληρες κερασματος - *filled with a mixture of unmixed wine*) which presents a paradox not found in the original. The LXX has rendered חמר (bubbling, fermenting) with ἀκρατος (full strength, unmixed). The LXX uses the same expression in Jer. 32:15 (του οίνου του ἀκρατου) to render Hebrew Jeremiah 25:15 היין החמה, *the wrathful wine*.

Ps. 62:11

אחת דבר אלהים שתיים זו שמעתי

The common thread between them is the theme of *mixture*, and in the final quotation, of unity in what appears to be duality.

Dahl and Segal cite a passage from the Mekhilta<sup>23</sup> which deals with the merciful aspect of *Elohim* and the punitive aspect of *Yahweh*:

*I Am the Lord Thy God.* Why is this said? For this reason. At the sea He appeared to them as a mighty hero doing battle, as it is said: "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. 15:3). At Sinai He appeared to them as an old man full of mercy. It is said: "And they saw the God of Israel," etc. (Ex. 24:10). And of the time after they had been redeemed what does it say? "And the like of the very heaven for clearness." (ibid.) Again it says: "I beheld thrones were placed" (Dan. 7:9). And it also says: "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him," etc. (ibid., v. 10). Scripture, therefore would not let the nations of the world have an excuse for saying that there are two Powers, but declares: "I am the Lord thy God." I am He who was in Egypt and I am He who was at the sea. I am He who was at Sinai. I am He who was in the past and I am He who will be in the future. I am He who is in this world and I am He who will be in the world to come, as it is said: "See now that I, even I, and He," etc. (Deut. 32:39). And it says 'Even to old age I am the same" (Isa. 46:4). And it says: "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts: I am the first, and I am the last" (ibid. 44:6). And it says: "Who hath wrought and done it? He that

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<sup>23</sup> Mek. Bahodesh ch. 5, also in Shirta ch. 4, Mek. of b Yoḥai Beshlah 15, p 81.

called the generations from the beginning. I, the Lord, who am the first," etc. (ibid. 41:4).<sup>24</sup>

Dahl and Segal suggest that the two passages in which the names were associated with the *opposite* attributes (i.e. the punishing aspect of *Yahweh* in Ex. 15:3, and the merciful aspect of *Elohim* in Ex. 24:10) were used to illustrate the central message of the text, that "the different names of God ought not to impugn his unity."<sup>25</sup> The first commandment which uses both names is cited to clear up any remaining confusion.

Dahl and Segal show that Philo's 'version' of the tradition cannot easily be dismissed as due to his ignorance of Hebrew and the influence on him of the connotations of the words in Greek. They suggest that the question of which attribute relates to which name is minor. The important point is rather that the two attributes are reconciled with each other, by means of the two names.

The arbitrary nature of the relationship between the names and the attributes goes hand in hand with the nature of scholarly activity in that era. Both the rabbis and Philo concerned themselves with formulating solutions to problems such as repetition and redundancy.<sup>26</sup> From Philo we can cite his explanations of the changes in name of other biblical characters (e.g. Abram to Abraham in Gen. 17:5):

Such changes of name are signs of moral values, the signs small, sensible, obvious, the values great, intelligible, hidden... For Abram is interpreted as "uplifted father," Abraham as "elect father of sound." How the two differ we shall understand more clearly if we first discover the meaning of each... (*Mut. Nom.* 65-6)<sup>27</sup>

On the rabbinic side, the technique is evident, for example Lev. R. 23.9 (cited above - explaining the repetition of אֱנִי יְהוָה in Lev. 18:4 and 5), and the Psalms Midrash cited below explaining the verbose title of Ps. 50:1 (יְהוָה אֵל (אלהים)). It is what would be described by Strack as 'creative philology.'<sup>28</sup>

A close analogy is the midrashic speculation on the difference between משפט and חקתי (Lev. 18:4) in *b* Yoma 67b. Apparently, משפט refers to

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<sup>24</sup> Translation from Lauterbach II 231-2.

<sup>25</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:17).

<sup>26</sup> Dahl and Segal (1978:1).

<sup>27</sup> See also Grabbe (1988:45).

<sup>28</sup> Strack and Stemberger (1991:260).

laws such as morality and theft, which should be self-evident to the human mind, while *קק* refers to those laws which have no obvious, underlying rationale.<sup>29</sup>

Akiba is traditionally thought to be the epitome of this kind of rabbinic activity, as illustrated by the following aggadah:

When Moses ascended on high he found the Holy One, Blessed be He, engaged in affixing coronets (כתרִים) to the letters. Said Moses, 'Lord of the Universe, Who stays thy hand?' He answered, 'There will arise a man, at the end of many generations, Akiba ben Joseph by name, who will expound upon each tittle heaps and heaps of laws.' (*b Men. 29b*).

*EJ* describes Akiba's techniques thus:

The guiding principle of Akiva's system of exegesis is that the Torah, emanating from God, contains no redundancies and that even a particular spelling (where an alternative spelling is possible) has a definite purpose.<sup>30</sup>

The opposite position, held by Akiba's rival, Ishmael, is expressed:

*b Ker. 11a*

דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם

By implication we can say that Akiba thought the Torah to speak in non-human (super-human?) language. This principle was very influential among the rabbis - even Ishmael is credited with 13 hermeneutical tools for 'extracting' interpretation from the Torah.<sup>31</sup> Akiba's insistence on finding meaning in every aspect of the Torah in a legal debate prompted Ishmael's retort:

'Because you interpret the superfluous 'and' is this woman to be condemned to death by fire?' (*b Sanh. 51b*).

If a redundant *vav* and the crowns on the *yod* are capable of interpretation, how much more so should the two 'synonymous' names for God, from whom the Torah emanated, also be capable of interpretation? The tradition that there was a meaningful difference between the names was not based on

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<sup>29</sup> Halivni (1986:7).

<sup>30</sup> *EJ* vol 2:491 'Akiva'.

<sup>31</sup> *EJ* vol 8:367-370 'Hermeneutics'.

an analysis of their use throughout the scriptures (what we would call empirical, or scientific). Rather, there the difference in names had meaning because *every difference had meaning*.

Halivni spells out in religious terms the need for such an activity:

[Midrash] divines God's will from words uttered by Him in the past, since man can no longer talk to, or be addressed by Him now. Results obtained through Midrash, which enjoys only derivative status, had to be designated clearly as such.<sup>32</sup>

The rabbis, in other words, were engaged in 'divining' or 'creative philology,'<sup>33</sup> rather than what we would call 'objective exegesis'. The identification of *Yahweh* with Mercy and *Elohim* with Justice was not engraved in stone, or for that matter in scripture. Midrash was by nature atomistic rather than systematic. The rabbis were therefore free to deviate from or bypass the tradition, and they did so quite consciously, as the following texts demonstrate.

The first text comments on the curse against the adulterous woman in which the name *Yahweh* is invoked:

let the priest make the woman take the oath of the curse and say to the woman - 'the Lord make you an execration and an oath among your people, when the Lord makes your uterus drop, your womb discharge; (Num. 5:21)

The commentators are alerted to the incongruous use of the Divine Name (incongruous, that is, to their tradition):

*The Lord Make Thee*. Woe unto the wicked, for they change the divine Attribute of Mercy into one of ruthlessness! Wherever the Divine Name is spelled *yod he*, it symbolizes the Attribute of Mercy; for it says, *the Lord, the Lord, God merciful and Gracious* (Ex. 34:6), *but in our text* [my italics] it represents the attribute of ruthlessness (אכזריות). (Num. R. 9:18)

The important point here is not the reiteration of the rabbinic doctrine, but rather that it is *possible* for the names to change their connotations. The requirements of the specific text have priority over the tradition.

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<sup>32</sup> Halivni (1986:16).

<sup>33</sup> See p. 46 n. 28.

Similarly, Gen. R. 33, 3 cites the rabbinic rule precisely because its own text (Gen. 8:1 ויזכר אלהים את נח) breaks it. It then gives two other places (Gen. 30:22, Ex. 2:24) where *Elohim* is found in a particularly compassionate role.

The third text, from the Psalms Midrash, deals with redundancy in poetry:

Ps. 50:1

אל אלהים יהוה דבר ויקרא ארץ

In response to the heretic's argument that the three names indicate plurality, R Simlai points out that the following verb is singular. Why, then are three names needed?:

To teach that the Holy One, blessed be He, created the universe by three names that stand for the three goodly attributes (שלש מדות טובות) of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. (Midr. Ps. 50:1)

The tradition has been 'overlooked': *Elohim* here corresponds to understanding and *Yahweh* to knowledge.

The final text comments on the word הַקְהָתִי in Num. 4:18:

When the Holy One, blessed be He, saw that Korah and his assembly were later to oppose Moses and Aaron, He said: 'What am I to do with these? Kill them now? I cannot; for they are mixed up with the others, who are righteous.' In order, therefore, that the Attribute of Justice might not strike them all, the Holy One, blessed be He, took half of His name, 'Yah' and attached it to theirs. For the Holy One, blessed be He, changed it to 'Ha-kehath' (the Kohathites) by appending to 'Kehath' a *he* at the beginning and a *yod* at the end, thus making 'Yah'. This was in order to place them in safe keeping until their day of punishment come. (Num. R. 5.6)<sup>34</sup>

Two letters of the name of *Yahweh* are used as a mark for impending doom. They are, of course, used only because they come conveniently at the beginning and end of the term ה-ק-ה-ת-י. Nevertheless, there is no correspondence here of two attributes with two names. The tradition has been side-stepped in a way which would have been impossible had the name

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<sup>34</sup> There are no doubt many more passages which could be quoted in the same vein, e.g. Mek. Bahodesh 4: "God (*Elohim*) designates the judge who is just in exacting punishment and faithful in giving reward."



*Yahweh* been inextricably and essentially linked to the attribute of mercy. The tradition expressed in Sifre Deut. 26 can be regarded as a *convention*, or a *norm*, but not a *rule*.

### Conclusions

Marmorstein sets out the task ahead of him:

Let us endeavor first of all to see clearly, on whose part the greater misunderstanding ... is. Is it on Philo's side, or on the side of the Haggadah?<sup>35</sup>

This survey has shown that Marmorstein came up with the right answer, but to the wrong question. He found rabbinic voices that were not in keeping with Sifre Deut. 26, and interpreted them as justifying Philo.

Dahl and Segal found that the specifics of which attribute was related to which name were less important than the underlying principle, which was the same in both cases, namely, that two names were 'married' to two attributes. The rabbis had no scheme of meanings into which everything must fit; instead, the text at hand always took precedence. Thus the 'dissenting voices' to which Marmorstein drew attention can easily be accommodated within this analysis.

The implications of this in practical terms are that if the rabbis did not take their own convention seriously as a consistent method of exegesis, then we should certainly not do so either.

### Biblical Evidence

The very fact that the rabbis and Philo *could* come to opposite conclusions about which name corresponds to which attribute, and that modern scholarship *could* be so divided on who was 'right', in itself suggests that nobody is 'right'. Lack of agreement is a result of the fact that the Hebrew Bible does not consistently associate any name with any one of these aspects of God. Both names are used in a variety of contexts.

The merciful nature of *Yahweh* might be illustrated by the testing of Abraham (Gen. 22). While *Elohim* tests and commands Abraham throughout

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<sup>35</sup> Marmorstein (1931:296).



the story (22:1, 3, 9), it is the מלאך יהוה who stays his hand at the last minute (22:11-12). However, in the prophets, it is routinely *Yahweh* who brings about judgement (e.g. Amos 1:3ff, Nahum 1:2-3). Ex. 34:6 is traditionally given as the proof for *Yahweh's* merciful nature, yet the very next verse (34:7) shows us his other side:

yet by no means clearing the guilty,  
but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children  
and the children's children,  
to the third and fourth generation.

*Yahweh* is specifically mentioned twice in one verse (Gen. 19:24) as the bringer of punishment to Sodom and Gomorrah.

While *Elohim* acts in an almost vindictive manner toward Jonah (Jon. 4:7, 8, 9), he is the same *Elohim* who is merciful to the people of Nineveh (Jon. 3:10). *Elohim* is also particularly compassionate to Noah and his sons (Gen. 8:1, 9:8, 11), to Abraham (Gen. 19:29), and as Gen. R. 33.3 helpfully reminds us, to Rachel (Gen. 30:22) and to the oppressed Israelites (Ex. 2:24).

To these could be added many more examples. What is clear is that neither the Philonic nor the rabbinic line may be used as an interpretative tool for the Hebrew Bible. Both names are used in a variety of contexts. It is therefore methodologically unsound to use the rabbinic tradition to explain the choice of divine name.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SEPTUAGINT

A separate treatment of the Septuagint seems appropriate both because of its importance in text-critical issues, and also because of its relevance in academic debate about the Divine Names. The sometimes bitter debate concerning the relative merits of the MT and the LXX as a witness to DNs, which reached its peak in the works of Dahse and Skinner,<sup>1</sup> can be traced back to an article by Redpath at the beginning of this century.<sup>2</sup>

The debate began and continued to be, in essence, a debate about the documentary hypothesis. Redpath began from the unusual angle that the documentary hypothesis is *extremely* complicated, and that:

if only some simpler theory could be produced with any amount of substantial evidence on its side, it would be gladly welcomed... if only a reasonable account could be given of the use of the divine names Yahweh and Elohim, a fresh point of departure might be made in the study of the Pentateuch.<sup>3</sup>

Put bluntly, he appears to have set himself the task of creating *any* theory, with *any* amount of evidence, simply in order to make Pentateuchal studies easier to understand! For this he can perhaps be forgiven. But rather than presenting *a* theory, he went on to advocate no less than five different theories as to how the present situation could have been achieved. It is necessary to outline them here in order to gain a perspective on the later debate.

Firstly, he suggested that just as the palaeographer may need to consult a second manuscript when the first is badly preserved, so the

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<sup>1</sup> Dahse (1912), Skinner (1913, 1914). Accounts of this debate are given by Parke-Taylor (1975:6), and Whybray (1987:69).

<sup>2</sup> Redpath (1904:286-301).

<sup>3</sup> Redpath (1904:286, 8).

redactor may have had to consult the Yahwistic text when the Elohist failed for some reason.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, he deduced from *Greek* manuscript practice that the *Hebrew* scribal tradition involved abbreviating divine names, and that the abbreviations would be difficult to distinguish in a badly preserved text.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, he listed the differences in the Pentateuch between the MT and the LXX regarding DNs. MT יהוה is represented by θεος 104 times; while אלהים is rendered by κυριος only 10 times.<sup>6</sup> From this he concluded:

the source of variation cannot have been a scribal error on the part of the writers of the Greek manuscripts. In that case the confusion between the two Greek words would have occurred in more equal proportions. It must have had its origin in the Hebrew.<sup>7</sup>

His fourth suggestion is a historical scenario. He posited that at different stages in history, texts were composed with both *Yahweh* and *Elohim* (e.g. Ps. 14), while at a later stage, *Elohim* became dominant for fear of transgressing Lev. 24:16 (e.g. Ps. 53). Finally, he suggested the following possibility:

If a Jew were dictating the Hebrew to a Greek translator, he would substitute Adonai or Elohim for Yahweh, at the same time generally indicating the substitution he was making. If he occasionally forgot to do this, the result would be that θεος would appear in the Greek instead of κυριος.<sup>8</sup>

At this point the reason for such a digression should become apparent. Redpath set out to weaken the documentary hypothesis, and in a way he did. He achieved this not by setting up a convincing rival theory, but by demonstrating that anyone who looks hard enough for a hypothesis is bound to find one (or five). Hypotheses come cheap. Additionally, it becomes clear that the supposition that the Septuagint *by its nature* gives a more accurate picture of DNs than the Hebrew rests on very shaky ground indeed. Redpath's own words demonstrate this, as his final suggestion explains the LXX trend toward θεος quite adequately.

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<sup>4</sup> Redpath (1904:291-2).

<sup>5</sup> There is now evidence to suggest that such abbreviations did indeed take place in Hebrew (Tov 1992:257). Given Redpath's line of argument, and the evidence available to him, it is hard to see why he thought that the confusion would have arisen in the Hebrew *more* than in the Greek.

<sup>6</sup> Redpath (1904:296-297, nn. 4, 6).

<sup>7</sup> Redpath (1904:297).

<sup>8</sup> Redpath (1904:300).

A second article by Redpath extended this research into the Prophets and Writings.<sup>9</sup> He classed books into those with frequent deviations in DNs (1 Sam., 1&2 Chr., 1 Esdr., Pss., Prov., Isa., Jer. 1-28) and those with infrequent deviations (Judges, 2 Sam., 1&2 Kings, Ezra-Neh., Minor Prophets, Jer. 29ff, Dan.[LXX] and Ezek). The former group, he concluded, were written before the establishment of the 'authorized Hebrew text'. In this article, however, he seems to have kept an open mind regarding whether the differences originated in the Hebrew *Vorlage*, or in the translation process itself, and he made no further comment regarding his previous suggestions.<sup>10</sup>

Most of Redpath's ideas were quickly forgotten. Dahse, however, took up Redpath's third theory (that the Greek preserves a *different* DN pattern) and developed the hypothesis that the Septuagint preserves a *more reliable* DN pattern than that found in the Masoretic text.<sup>11</sup> Like Redpath, Dahse hoped to weaken the documentary hypothesis by destroying one of its major tenets.<sup>12</sup> The basis of Dahse's argument was the elaborate 'pericope hypothesis', based on the two Jewish lectionaries. The DNs in the LXX, he claimed, were influenced by the Palestinian division of the Pentateuch into 154 (or up to 175) *Sedarim*, while the MT's version of DNs was influenced by the Babylonian division into 54 *Parashot*. The Palestinian lectionary was older, and therefore the Greek reading was to be preferred.<sup>13</sup>

Dahse was taken to task by Skinner,<sup>14</sup> not only on his presuppositions (the dating of the lectionaries, the influence of each on the version<sup>15</sup>), but also with textual evidence especially from the Samaritan Pentateuch, and on the coherence of Dahse's specific readings. He describes Dahse's emendation of

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<sup>9</sup> Redpath (1906:606-615).

<sup>10</sup> His later reticence may be due to the factor pointed out later by Baumgärtel (1914). Once the DNs in the *whole* of the Hebrew Bible have also been studied, those in the Pentateuch appear less alarming, less indicative of redaction or corruption, and more 'normal'.

<sup>11</sup> Dahse (1912:93). Accounts of this debate are given by Parke-Taylor (1975:6), and Whybray (1987:69).

<sup>12</sup> Dahse (1912).

<sup>13</sup> Dahse (1912:93-4), summarized by Skinner (1914:33-34). Dahse may have been influenced by the Christian practice described by Metzger (1981:44): "In lectionary manuscripts the wording of the Scripture text at the beginning and, more rarely, at the end of the lection very frequently has been slightly altered in order to provide a more intelligible commencement or conclusion. For example, αὐτός of the Scripture text might be replaced with the name of the person to whom it referred."

<sup>14</sup> Skinner (1913, 1914).

<sup>15</sup> Skinner (1914:34). For important 'circumstantial' evidence, see also pp. 138, 142.

Ex. 6:2 (“*And Yahwe spoke to Moses and said, I am Yahwe: and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being their God; but my name I did not make known to them*”<sup>16</sup>) as “bald and jejune.”<sup>17</sup> To Dahse’s reply that it is certainly meaningless as an independent narrative, but quite fitting as a chapter heading,<sup>18</sup> Skinner comments:

one does not readily apprehend how a sentence in itself meaningless becomes meaningful when regarded as the reproduction of another writer’s meaning, especially when that writer’s words had been read in the synagogue two weeks before this commentator is allowed to be heard.<sup>19</sup>

Few scholars remained convinced by Dahse having read Skinner,<sup>20</sup> as the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Dead Sea Scrolls overwhelmingly support the MT over the LXX regarding DNs.<sup>21</sup> Dahse’s lasting contribution to scholarship was wider recognition that the MT is not one hundred percent reliable.<sup>22</sup> Yet the pericope hypothesis did not usurp the documentary hypothesis as the standard point of departure for higher criticism.

Nevertheless, the basic concepts underlying the Dahse/Skinner debate are relevant to modern scholarship. One of these concepts is the notion of ‘reliability’. The following gives an indication of what Dahse meant by ‘reliable’:

Skinner himself quotes from Herrmann that in Ezekiel Adonai Jahweh occurs 217 times and Jahweh 218. Is this fortuitous? ... did he [Ezekiel] count the number of names of God that he was going to use in the book, or is this a later alteration (juggling with figures)? And what relation has it to the fact that in Genesis Jahweh and Elohim occur 165 times each, in the story of Abraham and in the story of Jacob 108 times each, and in the two sections of the history of the sons of Jacob (which are divided by the death of Isaac) 42 times each.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Dahse (1913:508).

<sup>17</sup> Skinner (1914:32).

<sup>18</sup> Dahse (1913:508).

<sup>19</sup> Skinner (1914:270).

<sup>20</sup> Parke-Taylor (1975:6), Whybray (1987:69). However, Dahse is cited favourably by Mowinckel (1937:53) and Engnell (1970:55). See also Pietersma (1984:99).

<sup>21</sup> Skehan (1957:149-50), Parke-Taylor (1975:6).

<sup>22</sup> Thus, while still defending the names as source-criteria, Eissfeldt is forced to admit that “transmission is not always certain”, citing Gen. 4:1, 4, 16, 12:17 as examples where MT יהוה corresponds to LXX ὁ θεος (1965:182).

<sup>23</sup> Dahse (1913:491).

It is interesting to compare these observations with a remarkably similar one from Cassuto regarding the occurrence of the number 'seven' in Gen. 1:1-2:3:

Each of the three nouns that occur in the first verse and express the basic concepts of the section, *viz.*, *God, heaven, earth* are repeated in the section a given number of times that is a multiple of *seven*... In the *seventh* paragraph, which deals with the *seventh* day, there occur the following three consecutive sentences (three for emphasis), each of which consists of *seven* words and contains in the middle the expression *the seventh day*... This numerical symmetry is, as is were, the golden thread that binds together all the parts of the section and serves as a convincing proof of its unity against the view of those ... who consider that our section ... was formed by the fusion of two different accounts.<sup>24</sup>

The point at issue in juxtaposing these two quotations is not the arithmetic, nor the methodological problems associated with selecting the boundaries of a pericope, but the fact that they can draw opposite conclusions from the same kind of observation. The conscious artistry which for Cassuto is proof of unity (i.e. *reliability*), is for Dahse evidence of juggling (i.e. *unreliability*). The difference is all the more marked when it is considered that both Dahse and Cassuto were arguing *against* the documentary hypothesis. When the criteria for reliability differ so radically, it can be seen that the concept of reliability was different for the two authors, but was never properly defined by either.

The element underlying these divergent concepts of reliability is the suspicion that Dahse and many others had for the Masoretic Text. The reasons for this suspicion are rarely spelled out as clearly as in an article by Pope.<sup>25</sup> Pope, like Dahse, inveighs against the documentary hypothesis on the grounds that its main tenet, DNs in the MT, is flawed. Only the Greek and Latin versions can accurately reflect the true pattern of DNs. The plenitude of LXX manuscripts, dating up to 500 years earlier than (what was at the time) the first extant Hebrew manuscript, certainly features in his argument.<sup>26</sup> However, Pope seems mostly obsessed with the Jewish revision (i.e. corruption) of their scriptures.<sup>27</sup> Pope uncritically accepts Jerome's

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<sup>24</sup> Cassuto (1961b:14).

<sup>25</sup> Pope (1913).

<sup>26</sup> Pope (1913:379).

<sup>27</sup> This appears to be due to prevalent anti-semitism, e.g. "The Exile had had at least the effect of making the Jews devoted to the letter of their 'Law,' and from the date of the



accusation that the Jews “changed the text of their Hebrew Bible to suit their own anti-Christian apologetics.”<sup>28</sup> The Christian scriptures are put in sharp contrast to the Jewish, which was the “result of a revision or series of revisions based upon principles of which we are ignorant”. St. Jerome’s translation was “careful” and the Septuagint *copyists*(!) were “faithful”.<sup>29</sup> Only momentarily does Pope consider that divergence might be due to translation technique:

[re: Gen. 1:26, 28, 8:21] it would seem much more natural to omit the Divine Name after *Et ait*, its repetition would seem cumbersome as the sentence now stands in Latin, and St. Jerome may have been guided by his sense of fitness.<sup>30</sup>

This possibility, however, is immediately rejected on *Jerome’s own* account of his accuracy.

The argument presented by Pope is full of logical difficulties. If the Jews corrupted their own writings even before the time of Christianity,<sup>31</sup> then all translations based on them are also corrupt. How did Jerome manage to obtain a reliable manuscript to work from? In particular, Pope vacillates between the Septuagint and the Vulgate as the most reliable text. Like Redpath, Pope was more interested in slinging mud at an existing proposal than offering a new one, so these logical difficulties troubled him little. He merely sought to rescue Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch by showing the MT to be *unreliable*.<sup>32</sup>

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Restoration began that minute and careful study of it *which later degenerated into Pharisaism.*” (my italics, 1913:394).

Tov (1997:33-34, nn. 44-47) identified prejudice on both sides of the MT vs LXX debate. The role of Divine Names in these perspectives is demonstrated by the following:

The Bible whose God is Yahweh is a national Bible; the Bible whose God is *κύριος* is a universal Bible. (Deissman 1903:174, quoted in Würthwein [1995:69]).

Dahse shares with Pope a mistrust of Jewish scriptures, e.g.

Why do I do often prefer the LXX to the consentient testimony of MT and Sam.? ... it has remained free from the revision of the Sopherim in these passages. (1913:508-9).

<sup>28</sup> Pope (1913:380).

<sup>29</sup> Pope (1913:391).

<sup>30</sup> Pope (1913:388).

<sup>31</sup> As Pope thinks is evident from the Elohist Psalter (1913:392).

<sup>32</sup> The essential unreliability of the Masoretic text has been a source of endless fascination for scholars, e.g. Cornill (1907:505) “the MT is not identical with the original text”

The textual fluidity evidenced in the Dead Sea Scrolls has permanently altered the way we think about reliability. *Urtext*, that stage of the text between composition and corruption, has become a hypothetical construct.<sup>33</sup> We are now faced with the reality that different text types co-existed alongside each other.<sup>34</sup> To maintain the general superiority of the LXX over the MT, it is necessary not only that the LXX reading derived from its *Vorlage*, but also that the MT reading resulted from corruption.

A word is due about the methodology followed in this thesis. It is mainly concerned with the DNs as found in the MT, rather than any other version. This is not based on the belief that *only* the MT is “authoritative and generally trustworthy.”<sup>35</sup> It is based on the MT being a central witness to ancient tradition, generally supported by the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and a witness which we can access in its original language.<sup>36</sup> While the Septuagint has not been ignored, neither is there a comprehensive effort to catalogue and discuss every variant DN which appears in the course of the thesis. Attention drawn to the LXX differs significantly (i.e. enough to alter the conclusions drawn). Often, no judgement is made regarding whether the variant was present in the Hebrew *Vorlage*, occasionally it can be shown that the difference is most likely to be attributed to translation technique. In some areas (e.g. the Psalms) the sample is so large and the statistical bias so clear, that the same conclusions would be reached even if the MT were proven ‘wrong’ in a dozen or so cases.

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(Cornill’s italics), Noth (1966:361): “It must be definitely assumed that the ‘Original Text’ of the Old Testament has been corrupted.” Both scholars give lengthy descriptions of how errors occurred during transmission of the Hebrew text: little attention is paid to any errors in the Greek text.

<sup>33</sup> Tov (1992:171-2).

<sup>34</sup> Skehan (1957).

<sup>35</sup> Segal (1967:103).

<sup>36</sup> The uncertainty in reconstructing variants will always make non-Hebrew readings less certain than Hebrew ones, especially when so many unanswered questions remain about the pronunciation and transmission of DNs (pp. 109-114 below). Each translation has its own characteristic way of dealing with DNs. The Targums, for example, have a marked preference for the tetragrammaton (or a euphemism for it): Cassuto (1961a:29), Skinner (1914:136-145).

# **PART TWO**

**NAMES**

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SEMANTIC RANGE OF ELOHIM

#### Introduction

The editors of BDB allow אלהים 4 different categories, 12 sub-categories:

##### 1 Plural

- a rulers, judges
- b divine ones
- c angels
- d gods

##### 2 Singular

- a god or goddess
- b godlike one
- c works of god
- d God (see 3 and 4)

##### 3 האלהים the (true) God

##### 4 אלהים God

- a absolute
- b construct
- c with suffixes

One factor of this categorization is the artificial separation of, for example דגון אלהינו (2a: 1 Sam. 5:7) from יהוה אלהינו (4c, not actually listed). The function of אלהים in these two cases is exactly the same: it is a common noun, singular in meaning, with possessive suffix, describing and qualifying a proper noun. Interestingly, BDB includes in section 2a the word אלהי referring to Yahweh if it is spoken by heathens in situations which emphasise their ignorance:

1 Kings 20:28

אלהי הרים יהוה ולא אלהי עמוקים

See also 2 Kings 17:26 (twice ), 27.

Comparison with more 'neutral' words may illustrate the problem. The word **היכל** in the meaning of 'royal palace' is used both concerning the Israelite king (1 Kings 21:1) and the Babylonian king (2 Kings 20:18). As the word is used equally in both Israelite and non-Israelite contexts, BDB rightly groups these in the same category. Similarly, **מלך** means 'king', whether this is the king of Egypt (1 Kings 3:1) or the king of Israel (1 Kings 15:9), and these are also grouped together. Biblical Hebrew did not have a separate vocabulary for foreign peoples, and there is no reason for instances of the same word to be categorised according to the ethnicity of the character who uttered them. The job of a dictionary is surely to describe how words are used, rather than to impose on these descriptions broad theological biases which may or may not be justified.

The separation of the Israelite and 'foreign' conceptions of God is achieved in the BDB entry by an 'intellectual illusion'. While 3 and 4 appear to be separate categories, they are in reality, subdivisions of 2d. Once sections 3 and 4 are subsumed into 2d, it becomes clear that the principle organising feature of the BDB entry is the singular/plural axis. However, the construal of **אלהים** as singular or plural in many cases is dependent on the context, and interpretation of the context often relies on dubious grounds. For example, BDB regards **אלהי נחור** as plural, which would result in the following hypothetical translation:

Gen. 31:53

אלהי אברהם ואלהי נחור ישפטו בינינו

\*May the God of Abraham and the gods of Nahor judge between us.

This reading perverts the flow and plain sense of the text, and no major translation follows it.<sup>1</sup> The rule of thumb for translations is to render Israelite **אלהים** singular and foreign **אלהים** plural wherever possible. The obsession with the 'fact' that *Elohim* in non-Israelite contexts must be plural has led to some bizarre conclusions, e.g. Parke Taylor:

The plural sometimes refers to a single non-Israelite deity, such as Dagon (1 Sam 5:17), or Baal (1 Kings 18:24).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> However, the New JPS reads: 'The God of Abraham and the god of Nahor', similarly Koren.

<sup>2</sup> Parke Taylor (1975:5). How can a plural refer to a singular anything?

The difficulties posed by the BDB entry on אלהים are explicable only if we realise the need to differentiate the use of *Elohim* in Gen. 1:1 (בראשית ברא) (אלהים) and Ps. 70:2a (להצילני) (אלהים) from the phrase אלהים אחרים or the appellation אלהי מואב. The context of Gen. 1:1 (Gen. 2:4 יהוה אלהים) and Ps. 70:2a (70:2b יהוה לעזרתי חושה) makes clear that the *Elohim* referred to is *Yahweh*, not *Chemosh*. However, it is not necessary (nor is it possible!) to rely on the singular/plural axis to make this distinction.

A more even-handed approach is given by *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (=HAL).<sup>3</sup> In its entry on אלהים, it employs a tripartite division: section 1 deals with the plural meaning, section 2 with the singular (including both אלהי ישראל and אלהי צדנים!), and a lengthy section 3 bearing that most useful of headings, 'Miscellaneous.' Under 'Miscellaneous' come the specific and special uses of אלהים: ghost, superlative, etc. Also under 'Miscellaneous' comes the following:

- 3di אלהים with and without the article, like a proper noun equivalent to and alternating with יהוה in the Pentateuch ... and elsewhere, often hard to distinguish from appellative use ...
- 3dii in Pss 42-83 אלהים is mostly a substitute for יהוה

I suggest, in accordance with HAL, that a category be 'set aside' for the term אלהים in those places where it functions *as a divine name*. When *Elohim* in Gen. 1:1 and Ps. 70:2a is understood as a proper divine name, it can be distinguished from אלהי מואב without prejudice. The dividing line should come not between אלהי מואב and אלהי ישראל, but between אלהי ישראל and ברא אלהים.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter I attempt to describe the range of meanings that can be connoted by the term אלהים, beginning with the category of divine name. Many of the meanings are or have been subject to debate. Integrated in this is a selection of 'worked examples', showing how interpretation of some of the more difficult cases can be achieved.

<sup>3</sup> HAL (Koehler-Baumgartner). The entry given by the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (ed. Clines) suffers from much the same problem as BDB: it separates אלהי ישראל in אלהי ישראל (#1) from that in אלהי מואב (#2a; 1 Kings 11:33) for no good linguistic reason.

<sup>4</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:75-77) calls for a similar distinction.



## Divine Name?

While it is sometimes assumed that *Elohim* is a name<sup>5</sup> and sometimes assumed that it is not<sup>6</sup>, rarely is it *argued* either way. Girdlestone at least raises the question:

Whatever may be the opinion about **Elohim**, it is generally agreed that **Jehovah** is not a generic or class name, but a personal or proper name.<sup>7</sup>

More recently, A. Gibson gave the following reasons why אלהים is not a proper name:

it is quantifiable by the article, and scope operators such as *kwl*; it does not appear as a proper name for a group, but as a description.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, Durrant argues that 'God' cannot be a proper name in Christian or religious language<sup>9</sup> because it is frequently prefaced by words like 'almighty', 'everlasting', and 'merciful'.

What bars אלהים and even האלהים in the following from being just as much a divine name as Yahweh?

Gen. 20:17-18

ויתפלל אברהם אל האלהים  
וירפא אלהים את אבימלך ואת אשתו ואמהתיו וילדו  
כי עצר עצר יהוה בעד כל רחם לבית אבימלך  
על דבר שרה אשת אברהם

There are precedents to the claim I am suggesting:

In a few instances original appellatives have completely assumed the character of real proper names, and are therefore used without the article; thus אלהים *God*, to denote the one true God (as elsewhere יהוה) Gn1:1 ... Moreover, אדם *Adam* from Gn 5:1 onwards (previously in 2:7

<sup>5</sup> For example, Cassuto (1961a), Segal (1967), Noth (1972:23 n. 69).

<sup>6</sup> See BDB entry, above, Redford (1970:108, 110), Motyer (1959:7 n. 18).

<sup>7</sup> Girdlestone (1897:36).

<sup>8</sup> Gibson (1997:76). Gibson's paper relates mostly to the Dead Sea Scrolls and only minimally to the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>9</sup> Durrant (1973:7, ix).

האדם &c. *the first man*); סטן *Satan*, I Ch 21:1 (but Zc 3:1, Jb, 1:6, &c., הסטן *the adversary*)...<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the Ugaritic cognate *il* covers the same semantic range: it can either mean 'El,' or just 'god.'<sup>11</sup>

The decision as to whether the term אלהים is a common or proper noun (or is functioning in one of its other uses) must be made in the context in which it is placed.<sup>12</sup> Cassuto gives a list of cases where ... אלהי cannot be a proper name, but this list still leaves a great many cases undecided.<sup>13</sup> The guidelines set out here necessarily have the same failing, and marginal cases need to be determined by context.

If the term אלהים occurs in construct (אלהי ישראל) or suffixed (אלהינו) forms, then it cannot be a proper name. For example, if I say 'My God' then I am conceiving of *a* god (i.e. mine, as opposed to someone else's). I could refer to 'my table' but not to 'my *Yahweh*.'<sup>14</sup> This point may seem too obvious to need stating, but some biblical scholars do not feel the need to be accurate.<sup>15</sup>

It could be held that the definite form האלהים should be precluded from being a proper name for the same reason. 'The God' means 'this one, not that one', and so implies 'a god'. That is certainly the sense of:

Deut. 4:35

הראת לדעת כי יהוה הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו

It was shown to you so that you would know that *Yahweh* is THE god; there is no other [god] except him. (own translation)

<sup>10</sup> Gesenius-Kautzsch p402 #125f.

<sup>11</sup> Del Olmo Lette (1996:23-25).

<sup>12</sup> The status of an example of אלהים should not be confused with whether its translation into English is capitalised. There are (among many) two reasons which affect the capitalisation of 'God' in English: firstly to indicate a proper noun; and secondly to refer to the 'correct' god (Rosin 1956:12). Therefore the capitalising of 'God' in an English translation does not necessarily mean the original אלהים is a DN. Conversely, because scholars know that 'God' may in fact be a common noun, they may be reluctant to give it full DN status even when the Hebrew context warrants it.

<sup>13</sup> Cassuto (1961a:19-20).

<sup>14</sup> There may be idiomatic exceptions to this, as in English (Fromkin and Rodman 1988:218). Notably, the Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qôm inscriptions attest thrice the blessing by ואשרתו ... יהוה suggesting '*Yahweh ... and his Asherah*' (Devers 1984:21-2). However, this is not the only possible reading, e.g. Margalit (1990:269) suggests '*Yahweh ... and his consort*'. From the Ugaritic corpus comes *krtn* (KTU 1.16.I.39) read by many as 'our Keret' (e.g. Ginsberg 1946:27, Gibson CML:95). Gibson notes that the *-n* may simply be a fuller form of the name (n. 7), while de Moor and Spronk, suggesting it may be a term of endearment (1982:183).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Dempster (1991:184) cites MT יהוה אלהיך as יהוה אלהים.

However, sometimes האלהים also seems to function as a divine name:

Gen. 27:28

ויתן לך האלהים מטל השמים

Waltke and O'Connor discuss this phenomenon:

Sometimes ... the article not only points out a particular person or thing, but it also elevates it to such a position of uniqueness that the *noun + article* combination becomes the equivalent of a *proper name*.<sup>16</sup>

They give the examples of האלהים, הבעל, הסטן and in English, 'The City'.

The converse, however, does not follow. *Elohim* (absolute) without the article is not necessarily a proper name:

Isa. 45:5

אני יהוה ואין עוד זולתי אין אלהים

I am Yahweh and there is no other, except for me there is no god.  
(own translation)

This must be borne in mind even when the אלהים in question is Yahweh:

Jer. 10:10

ויהוה אלהים אמת הוא אלהים חיים ומלך עולם

But Yahweh is a true god, a living god and everlasting king.<sup>17</sup>

'*Elohim*' here is no more a proper name than מלך. Similarly:

Josh. 22:22

אל אלהים יהוה

אל אלהים יהוה

God of gods is Yahweh!

God of gods is Yahweh!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Waltke and O'Connor (1990:249). See also p. 242 where the common noun plus article designates a "*unique referent*": האלהים (Gen. 6:2), המלך (1 Sam. 8:9), הכהן הגדול (Num. 35:25).

<sup>17</sup> Own translation. See also pp.138-39 below.

<sup>18</sup> Translation of Smith (1990:8). The same words in a different context must be construed quite differently:

Ps. 50:1

אל אלהים יהוה דבר ויקרא ארץ

All three words must be read as one subject, that is three Divine Names. This lengthy title must be seen in the light of many others to be found in the Elohist Psalter (Pss.

See also Gen. 20:17 quoted above. In Ecclesiastes, אלהים and האלהים are used interchangeably, with no apparent difference in meaning, and Hebrew poetry often lacks the article altogether.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, האלהים cannot be excluded from being a proper name.<sup>20</sup>

Likewise, the issue as to whether אלהים takes verbs and adjectives in the singular or plural is of little help. While plural אלהים always takes the plural, and while singular אלהים normally takes the singular, it occasionally takes the plural. Thus we have אלהים חיים in Deut. 5:23, 1 Sam. 17:26, 36, Jer. 10:10, 23:36.<sup>21</sup> Joshua 24:19 describes *Yahweh* as an אלהים קדשים.<sup>22</sup> Plural verbs are given to singular אלהים in Gen. 20:13, 35:7, 1 Sam. 28:13 and 2 Sam. 7:23.<sup>23</sup> Gesenius<sup>24</sup> suggested that the plural construal was avoided in later times, as it smacks of polytheism, giving the examples of Ex. 32:4, 8 cf. Neh. 9:18 (see below) and 2 Sam. 7:23 (הלכו אלהים לפדות לו) cf. 1 Chr. 17:21 (הלך אלהים לפדות לו).

It can easily be seen that there are few 'automatic' context-indicators that can be of help in the decision of how to construe the word אלהים. There are cases which are discussed in the course of the thesis, where I argue אלהים to be ambiguous - to convey several different meanings deliberately.<sup>25</sup> However, in most cases, the context suggests one meaning over the others.

### Common noun: Singular or plural?

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59:6, 80:5, 20, 84:9, and in p. 163 n. 63 below). It is of course possible that the elohistic editor had the Joshua chant in mind.

<sup>19</sup> Watson (1984:54). See Ps. 100:3 (יהוה הוא אלהים) cf. Deut. 4:35, 39 (יהוה הוא האלהים).

<sup>20</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:82) discusses with clarity the effects of the presence and absence of the article on אלהים.

<sup>21</sup> Compare אלהים חי in 2 Kings 19:4, 16. Is this an indicator of lateness? See below.

<sup>22</sup> Ps. 58:12 reads אלהים שפטים, although a case is made below for a plural meaning.

<sup>23</sup> More dubious cases are Ex. 32:4, 8 (discussed below) and Gen. 31:53. Concerning the latter, it is not clear to me that אלהי אביהם ... אלהי נחור constitutes a singular subject.

<sup>24</sup> GK #145h. Suspicion of the plural construal is present in the following: "That a plural attribute with *elohim* is often an indication of some atypical use of the noun may be seen from Gen. 1:26, 6:2ff, etc." (Draffkorn 1957:216 n. 1). However, in Gen. 6:2, the plural attributes quite correctly agree in numer with the plural האלהים בני האלהים, and in Gen. 1:26, it is not obvious that God (ever the grammarian) is talking to himself. It is quite possible that he is talking to others who are with him. I suspect that by 'atypical', Draffkorn means 'difficult for a 20th century theologian'.

<sup>25</sup> For example, in Ex. 1:21 do the midwives fear God, the gods, or the god, and if the latter, which one? In Ex. 9:28, is Pharaoh accepting that *Yahweh* is God, or just describing 'loud thunder', or is he using diplomatic double-talk?

We have already noted the tendency to understand the ambiguous אלהי in Israelite contexts as singular, and in 'foreign' contexts as plural, e.g:

Judges 10:6: ויסיפו בני ישראל לעשות הרע בעיני יהוה  
ויעבדו את הבעלים ואת העשתרות ואת אלהי ארם ואת אלהי צידון  
ואת אלהי מואב ואת אלהי בני עמון ואת אלהי פלשתים  
ויעזבו את יהוה ולא עבדוהו

BDB, along with all the major translations, construes אלהי in every case as 'gods of...'<sup>26</sup> However, on biblical evidence alone there is nothing to suggest that the Israelites were 'more monotheistic' than any of the other nations. We hear about the 'other gods' (or at least other divine beings) all through Israelite literature often in the context of Yahweh's superiority.<sup>27</sup> In Job 1-2 we get an idea of how they might have acted (although here they are called בני אלהים).<sup>28</sup> Zech. 12:8 suggests that the *elohim* are Yahweh's angels.

The same literature rarely portrays any other nation worshipping a plurality of gods.<sup>29</sup> More commonly, a nation is identified with its own god, and judging by the consistent way these identifications are made, each nation worships its god only. Sidon has Ashtoreth, Moab has Chemosh,

<sup>26</sup> Other examples are Ex. 23:31-33, Num. 25:2, Jud. 6:10, 1 Sam. 17:43, 1 Chr. 10:10, Dan. 1:2 (twice).

<sup>27</sup> Ex. 18:11, Deut. 10:17, Pss. 8:6, 82, 86:8, 136:2, 2 Chr. 2:4.

<sup>28</sup> They are also present in Dan. 7:10 and Deut. 33:2.

<sup>29</sup> More commonly, cultic objects are found in the plural: Gen. 31:34 (טרפים), 1 Sam. 31:9 (עצביהם) 1 Kings 21:26 (גללים), 2 Kings 21:11 (גלוליו), 1 Chr. 10:9 (עצביהם), Isa. 2:6-8 (אלילים). In 1 Sam. 5:2 the Philistines appropriate the ark and house it in Dagon's temple, but we have no description of them worshipping Yahweh. More problematic is 1 Sam. 31:10, where the Philistines put Saul's armour in בית עשתרות. If this is read as a simple error for עשתרת, or if עשתרות itself is taken as a singular form (Wyatt *DDD*:210), then the question arises as to what the Philistines are doing with the Sidonians' god. It is possible, however, that the plural meaning is intended, and that the עשתרות were similar to the אשרות, the אשרים and the בעלים (see the expression את הבעלים in Jud. 10:6, 1 Sam. 7:4, 12:10).

In 2 Chr. 28:23, the numerous plural indicators given the אלהי ארם bring us to the conclusion that Aram had several gods. However, there is evidence to suggest that the term ארם might represent a conglomeration or alliance of nations. Aram has *kings* (plural) in this passage, as well as 1 Kings 10:29 = 2 Chr. 1:17. Aram in 1 Chr. 19:10 is described in the preceding verse as המלכים אשר באו - 'the kings who had come', and in 2 Sam. 10:8 as וארם צובא ורחוב ואיש טוב ומעכה - 'the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob, and the men of Tob and Maacah'.

Ammon has Milcom, and the Philistines have Dagon.<sup>30</sup> Not infrequently, the word אלהים refers to a single, named deity, for example:

1 Kings 11:33

יען אשר עזבוני וישתחוו לעשתרת אלהי צדנין  
לכמוש אלהי מואב ולמלכם אלהי בני עמון

See also Jud. 11:24 (Chemosh), 18:24 (Baal), 1 Sam. 5:7 (Dagon). Each nation worships its own god consistently; while the 'other gods'<sup>31</sup> only appear when the foreign nations are viewed as a single whole.

Returning to the the problem of the ambiguous אלהי, the translation 'god of...' requires an equally arbitrary assumption, namely that a *single* god is intended. However, the singular reading can be seen as preferable in the following case:

• 1 Chr. 10:10

וישימו את כליו בית אלהיהם  
ואת גלגלתו תקעו בית דגון

NRSV: They put his armour in the temple of their gods,  
and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

While this translation is grammatically possible, it is strange that one place is given a title, and the other a general description (the temple of their gods). In the Samuel parallel, two place names are given: בית עשתרות and חומת בית שן (1 Sam. 31:10). Further, this translation depicts the Philistines as having two temples, one for Dagon, and one for all the others *except* Dagon (for if he had been included, then surely he, being the chief deity, would have been named).

If אלהיהם is taken as singular, 'the temple of their god (i.e. Dagon)', then the whole verse reads as perfect Hebrew poetry:

They put his armour in the temple of their god,  
and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

<sup>30</sup> To cite just a few examples: Jud. 16:23 and 1 Sam. 5:2-5 (Dagon), 1 Kings 11:5 (Ashtoreth, Milcom), 1 Kings 11:7 (Chemosh, Molech), 1 Kings 11:33 (Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Milcom), 2 Kings 23:13 (Milcom/Molech), Jer. 48:46 (Chemosh), 1 Chr. 10:10 (Dagon).

<sup>31</sup> אלהים אחרים (e.g. Ex. 20:3), אלהי העמים (Deut. 6:14), אלהי הגוים (2 Kings 18:33).



Compare this sequence to the following:

1 Sam. 28:3

ושמואל מת ... ויקברוהו ברמה ובעירו

Ramah *was* Samuel's city (cf. 1 Sam. 1:1). Returning to Saul's burial, Japhet describes how the Chronicler's account differs from Samuel:

In the narrative of Chronicles all this aspect of the story is greatly understated. The bodies are not displayed on the walls of Beth-shan, and therefore all the details which follow are altered. The Chronicler spared Saul and his sons this ultimate degradation.<sup>32</sup>

This interpretation is quite compatible with the suggested reading, whereby Saul's head and his personal effects are at least retained in the one place, rather than being spread over the whole country, and put on public display.

• Ex. 32:4, 8

אלה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלוך

The incident of the Golden Calf in Ex. 32 is a problematic one, for while the text describes one molten calf (Ex. 32:4 עגל מסכה), it is repeatedly referred to in the plural (v. 4: אלה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלוך). The problem is only heightened if we look elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. A parallel story (probably the antecedent of Ex. 32<sup>33</sup>) is to be found in 1 Kings 12 in which Jeroboam makes two calves, which are consistently referred to in the plural, and are housed in two separate locations. However, when Ezra (Neh. 9:18) and Moses (Deut. 9:21) recount the Exodus version, only a single calf is depicted.

Wyatt suggests that Ex. 32:4 and 8 originally read:

El is your god, Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Japhet (1993:228). She considers the similarity of wording as evidence that the Chronicler had the Samuel text as his source:

1 Sam. 31:10

ואת גויתו תקעו בחומת בית שאן

1 Chr. 10:10

ואת גלגלתו תקעו בית דגון

<sup>33</sup> Wyatt (1992:73) gives bibliography on this issue, as well as several reasons of his own. Most importantly, we can see that the Kings story is prompted by feasible political circumstances, whereas the Exodus account is more developed *as a story*. However, the present analysis does not rely on this assumption being correct.

<sup>34</sup> Wyatt (1992:68-91).

And offers the following scenario of how this changed to the text we read today:

we may envisage a southern scribe handling the text, and coming across אֵל (naturally to be construed as El), wondering why this should be a scandal, since in the cult in Jerusalem El and Yahweh had always been identified without hesitation... So he would supply the alternative vowels that אֵל could bear, that is *ē, e*, giving the plural demonstrative, later to be standardised with the *mater* as אֱלֹהִים. By the time of this putative scribe, monotheism being the norm, the worst possible offence would have been for Israel to be polytheistic.<sup>35</sup>

This scenario poses several assumptions which may or may not be correct: that the *Exodus* text is northern;<sup>36</sup> that El-worship was abomination in the north; that the text was copied by a southern scribe, who was both monotheistic and largely ignorant of northern tradition. However, even if all of these are granted, a much stickier problem remains. Wyatt suggests that אֵל אֱלֹהֶיךָ be rendered 'El is your God'. While this is possible, if it had been the intended meaning, the text would more likely have eliminated the ambiguity with the 'copula' הוּא.<sup>37</sup> With Wyatt's suggested original, the declaration becomes series of subordinate clauses:

El, your god, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

A further problem for Wyatt is that the 'original' text (as he agrees that the Kings version is the older) actually reads הַנֶּחֱסֵה rather than אֱלֹהִים. He explains this as follows:

I think that originally this interpretation of the formula must have been Jeroboam's intention too. There is no need to alter the text of 1 Kings 12:28 to make it conform to Exod 32:4 and 8. In pointing to the image, to which הַנֶּחֱסֵה is the obvious verbal accompaniment, he would expect those assembled before him immediately to recognise which deity the image represented. [i.e. El]<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wyatt (1992:79).

<sup>36</sup> We can easily see why the Kings story might be northern, but that does not mean that the Exodus version was also.

<sup>37</sup> As in Deut. 4:35, 39, 1 Kings 8:60, 18:39 (twice), 2 Chr. 33:13 יהוה הוא האלהים; and Deut. 7:9 יהוה אלהיך הוא האלהים. 1 Kings 18:21 dispenses with the copula, but the context makes it clear that it is implied: אם יהוה אלהים לבו אחריו ואם הבעל לבו אחריו.

<sup>38</sup> Wyatt (1992:80).

However, the Kings passage clearly depicts two images. It is possible, as Wyatt suggests that:

two similar images ... are simply two manifestations of one god.<sup>39</sup>

However, given that Jeroboam attaches a plural verb (העלויך) to the subject אלהים, it is closer to the plain sense of the text to take אלהים, to mean 'images', as it does in many other places (e.g. Gen. 31: 30, 32). Most importantly, Wyatt has not explained how it is that the original version (\*אל אלהיך) is closer to what he agrees is the later (אלה אלהיך) than it is to the earlier (הנה אלהיך).

A much simpler solution is to be found in the text itself. The following table identifies those elements which indicate number (ambiguous terms such as אלהים in v. 1 and אלהי זהב in v. 31 are not included), and specifies whether they appear in direct speech, or in narration:

verse	Singular:	Plural:
1		ילכו speech
4	עגל מסכה narrative	
4		אלה speech
4		העלויך speech
5	לפניו narrative	
8	עגל מסכה speech	
8	לו speech	
8	לו speech	
8		אלה speech
8		העלויך speech
19	העגל narrative	
20	העגל narrative	
23		ילכו speech
24	העגל speech	
35	העגל narrative	

The table shows that the singular and plural indicators fall neatly into a pattern. The narrative consistently refers to the calf in the singular: עגל מסכה in vv. 4 and 8; העגל in vv. 19, 20, 24 and 25. Prepositions referring to it are also

<sup>39</sup> Wyatt (1992:75).

always in the singular: לפניו in v. 5, לו twice in v. 8. Over half of these are in narration. Where a singular indicator occurs in speech (Yahweh in v. 8, and Aaron in v. 24), the speech is recounting narration, not speech. Another set of words consistently view the calf as plural: ילכו in vv. 1 and 23, אלה in vv. 4 and 8, and העלויך in vv. 4 and 8. These words all occur in direct speech; and they all relate to the term אלהים/אלהיך in vv. 1, 4, 8 and 23.

The preceding data can be understood as follows. Ex. 32 describes an event involving a single calf. Whenever the term אלהים/אלהיך is used of it, however, (and this only ever happens in direct speech) the grammar switches to plural. We have already seen that singular אלהים can be accompanied by a plural verb or adjective, without altering the singular meaning. Thus we can accommodate the plural verbs ילכו and העלויך without too much difficulty. The plural demonstrative אלה ('these') is quite another matter. I suggest that the story attributes plural grammar to the Israelites' speech in order to emphasise the sinful nature of their actions.<sup>40</sup> They are able to refer to the calf in the plural by dint of the plural noun אלהים, but that they do so over and above what is grammatically reasonable conveys a sense of wilful apostasy far greater than if they had actually just made two calves. A parallel can be found in the string of plural suffixes which the confused Philistines are said to have used of Yahweh:

1 Sam. 4:8

מי יצילנו מיד האלהים האירים האלה  
הם האלהים המכים את מצרים בכל מכה במדבר

The differences between the different 'versions' of the story can also be accounted for.

1 Kings 12:28

הנה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלויך מארץ מצרים

Ex. 32:4, 8

אלה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלויך מארץ מצרים

Neh. 9:18

זה אלהיך ישראל אשר העלך מארץ מצרים

<sup>40</sup> Similar suggestions were made by Driver (1918:349): "it seems ... though the image represents Jehovah (v. 5) that the people are represented as speaking polytheistically" and Noth (1962:248): "the description of the one golden calf in the plural ... is striking ... the one golden calf is condemned with this phrase as an element of polytheistic worship."

When the Pentateuchal writer took the Jeroboam story, he 'polarized' it, making the two calves into one, and at the same time changing the neutral הנה into the plural אלה, in order to maximise the gravity of the sin. Similarly, the Exodus story changes the speaker from the singular Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:28 ויאמר) to the plural Israelites (Ex. 32:4, 8 ויאמרו). This pluralization also conveys the eagerness of the Israelites, and also creates dissonance, as they address themselves in the vocative!<sup>41</sup> Nehemiah, however, condenses a chapter of 35 verses into a single sentence spanning only two verses. He cannot reflect all the nuances present in the full story, so, just like Moses in Deut. 9:21, he summarises the basic story in which there was only one calf.

• Ps. 58:12

ויאמר אדם אך פרי לצדיק  
 אך יש אלהים שפטים בארץ

Hebrew grammar allows us 3 possible translations for the second half of this verse:

- |   |   |                       |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | God exists, who judges on the earth     | (divine name)         |
| 2 | there is a god, who judges on the earth | (common noun, sing.)  |
| 3 | there are gods who judge on the earth   | (common noun, plural) |

The second option seems improbable from the start, as it is unlikely that such faith would be put in an 'indefinite' and nameless god. So while translations invariably opt for #1, there is nothing to preclude #3. The choice between them must be determined by the rest of the Psalm.

The only unambiguous divine names appear in v. 7:

Ps. 58:7                      אלהים הרס שנימו בפיו מלתעות כפירים נתן יהוה

Dahood notes that the inclusion 'O God ... Yahweh' is similar to that in Ps. 77:14 (God ... God).<sup>42</sup> However, he does not note that verse 7 appears in the precise centre of our poem, preceded and followed by 5 bicola. Further, the exhortation in v. 7, bounded by the two divine names, is the turning

<sup>41</sup> If our assumption is incorrect and the Exodus version is primary, the basic thesis (the ambiguity in number of אלהים being the key to the chapter) is still valid. The Kings version would have adapted all the singular references to plural.

<sup>42</sup> Dahood (1965-70:II:60).

point in the sense of the poem - from despair about the prevalence of evil, to hope for the destruction of that evil. The vocatives in Ps. 77:14 perform the same function, turning despair into confidence (although the turning point is not in this case in the precise centre).

Just as אלהים and יהוה form an *inclusio* round the central verse, so the first verse (v. 2) and the last (v. 12) form an *inclusio* around the poem as a whole.

Ps. 58:2	מישרים תשפטו בני אדם	האמנם אלהם צדק תדברון
Ps. 58:12	אך יש אלהים שפטים בארץ	ויאמר אדם אך פרי לצדיק

Dahood notes the repetition of four words: "men and God, justice and equity."<sup>43</sup> The second pair of words are to be found in the same order in the two verses: a צדק // משפט ב.<sup>44</sup> The other pair, however, appear in a chiasmic arrangement:

Ps. 58:2	בני אדם	אלם
Ps. 58:12	אלהים	אדם

This *stylistic* feature (combining similarity and reversal) accurately reflects the *content* of the two verses: the last is an exact reversal of the challenge made in the first:

v. 2 Do the (divine) leaders really speak rightly? Do they judge people correctly? [expects no]

v. 12 And a man can say, 'There is a reward for the righteous. There is/are God/gods who judge(s) on the earth.'

The parallel element of the problematic אלהים in v. 12, is therefore the equally problematic אלם in v. 2. This word is sometimes rendered 'gods' (NRSV) and sometimes 'rams', i.e. metaphorically 'leaders.'<sup>45</sup> In either case, it is plural. I suggest that the plural beings who are challenged in v. 2 are the same ones

<sup>43</sup> Dahood (1965-70:II:63).

<sup>44</sup> Watson (1984:286).

<sup>45</sup> Watson (1984:286). See also Ex. 15:15 (אלופי אדם אילי מואב), 2 Kings 24:15 (qere), Ezek. 17:13, 31:14 and 32:21.



who are confirmed as effective in v. 12. The difference is that Elohim/Yahweh, invoked in v. 7, is now playing an active role.

The 'gods' described in Ps. 58 are very close in role to those of Ps. 82. They are accused of exactly the same crime: failing to judge correctly. In Ps. 82 they are dethroned, while in Ps. 58, faith is expressed in their better performance.<sup>46</sup>

### Humans as *Elohim*

To add to the ambiguity of the term אלהים, there are a surprising number of instances where humans are described as *elohim*, whether in the Israelite king's rhetorical question:

2 Kings 5:7

האלהים אני

Or in the boast attributed to the prince of Tyre:

Ezek. 28:9

אלהים אני

See also Ezek. 28:2. The snake promises Eve:

Gen. 3:5

נפקחו עיניכם והייתם כאלהים ידעי טוב ורע

On the day of victory:

Zech. 12:8

בית דויד כאלהים כמלאך יהוה

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<sup>46</sup> In the light of Chapter 8, it is possible to draw conclusions regarding the historical development of this Psalm. The plural noun אלהים is not a special characteristic of the Elohist editing (which dealt only with divine names). The same word with similar sense is attested in non-Elohist Psalms, e.g. Pss. 8:6, 138:1. On the other hand, the vocative use of אלהים in v. 7, particularly in the combination אלהים // יהוה ב is a common feature of the Elohist Psalter only (see Pss. 47:6, 55:17, 56:11, 68:17, 27, 70:2, 6). In addition, we may note that Dahood's similar case (Ps. 77:14) is also within the Elohist Psalter. In all likelihood, the pre-elohistic Psalm had a single vocative Yahweh in v. 7, and the same structure in vv. 2 and 12 that we see today. If this is correct, we can discern how the elohistic editor used existing structures for his own alterations. He saw the *inclusio* at the beginning and end of the Psalm (similar but different) and created his own at the beginning and end of the central verse (two names for the same being - similar but different).

Moses is said to be as a god to Aaron:

Ex. 4:16

תהיה לו לאלהים

Compare this to similar language concerning Yahweh:

Gen. 28:21

יהיה יהוה לי לאלהים

Also Jer. 11:4. With Pharaoh, however, the preposition is dropped:

Ex. 7:1

נתתיך אלהים לפרעה

### Judges?

The BDB assigns אלהים bears the meaning of 'judges' (humans or divine) in a number of cases: Ex. 21:6, 22:7, 8, 27, Jud. 5:8, 1 Sam. 2:25, Pss. 82:1, 138:1. The tradition that אלהים can mean 'judges' goes back to Onkelos (re Ex. 21:6) while the Septuagint of the same passage compromises (προς το κριτηριου του θεου). However, Schwally<sup>47</sup> interpreted them as household gods, while Baentsch<sup>48</sup> suggested they might have been fixed to the door of Ex. 21:6. The term אלהים is interchangeable with תרפים in Gen. 31:30, 32 cf. 20, 35 and Jud. 18:24 cf 14, 18, 20. Gordon<sup>49</sup> sought to confirm this suggestion with Nuzi court records, in which the threat of having to 'swear by the gods' was often enough to make criminals admit their crime. Murtonen considered Gordon to have succeeded in proving his case,<sup>50</sup> and Draffkorn supplemented Gordon's arguments with more biblical and extra-biblical material.<sup>51</sup> Since Gordon's day we have come to be a little more sceptical of the precise 'biblical' parallel found at every archeological site. It is not obvious that:

the oath of the gods is a well-attested ceremony in ancient oriental court procedure and there is no doubt that the same ceremony is indicated by וינקרב בעל הבית אל אלהים<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Schwally (1891:181-183).

<sup>48</sup> Baentsch (1903:190) cited in Gordon (1935:139).

<sup>49</sup> Gordon (1935:139-144).

<sup>50</sup> Murtonen (1952-6:42 n7).

<sup>51</sup> Draffkorn (1957:216-224).

<sup>52</sup> Gordon (1935:143).

However, it is perfectly possible that a *similar* ceremony is intended.

Of the instances cited in BDB, three point more persuasively than the others toward the 'judges' meaning. They are cited here in turn, and the context examined.

The first instance gives the correct procedure for dealing with a slave who acquires wife and children from his master, and, at the time of his release, chooses to stay with his master than leave his family:

Ex. 21:6                      והגישו אדניו אל האלהים והגישו אל הדלת או אל המזוזה  
ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע ועבדו לעלם

The *elohim*, the door and/or the *mezuzah* are witness to the ear-boring by which the slave is bonded to his master permanently. The apposition of *הדלת* and *המזוזה* suggests that they too are 'inanimate'. In addition, we may wonder what the point is of bringing the slave to human judges, if he is not asked to declare his waiving of rights to them, and if they do not act or speak in any way.

The second case deals with the suspected theft by the house-owner of items entrusted to him:

Ex. 22:7                      אם לא ימצא הגנב ונקרב בעל הבית אל האלהים  
אם לא שלח ידו במלאכת רעהו

We could again ask what the point is of doing all this before human judges if they do not hear or say anything. In this case, however, it may be that the terseness of the passage precludes any superfluous description of the proceedings.

The final case involves disputed ownership:

Ex. 22:8                      על כל דבר פשע על שור על חמור על שה על שלמה על כל אבדה  
יאמר כי הוא זה עד האלהים יבא דבר שניהם  
אשר ירשיען אלהים ישלם שנים לרעהו

In this case the *elohim* act by condemning (ירשיען) the guilty party, but even this does not necessitate human agents. Guilt can be determined by bitter

waters (Num. 5:23-28) or by lots (Jonah 1:7), and so it is perfectly possible that oracles or images could 'condemn' a person.<sup>53</sup>

While the contextual evidence does not exclude the possibility of human judges, it does seem to point more toward cult objects, or images. Gordon is quite right when he says:

it is a canon of criticism not to seek an unusual meaning, if the plain one makes sense.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, if the text had intended human judges, then there are several much clearer terms it could have used, for example זקנים or שפטים. We do not even need to look for a complex reason as to how these instances came to be understood as 'judges',<sup>55</sup> for it is a canon of the human condition to imagine that everyone else is more or less like ourselves, and the readership of the Hebrew text, Jewish and Christian, has become more accustomed to human judges than to oracles.

At the same time, it is important to appreciate that the אלהים (images) in these passages clearly *act* as judges. What we might regard as 'inanimate cult images' were in every sense living and effective judges to those who were tried by them. On this level, the translation 'judges' is perfectly valid.<sup>56</sup> At this point we enter into the problems of translating a word whose semantic field is not represented by a single word in the receptor-language.

• 1 Sam. 2:25

אם יחטא איש לאיש ופללו אלהים

ואם ליהוה יחטא מי יתפלל לו

RSV: If a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?

Eli uses the principle of escalation to get his point across to his corrupt sons: if a man sins against another man, there is a higher authority (אלהים) who can intervene. If, on the other hand, a man sins against Yahweh, then there can

<sup>53</sup> A similar case is that of the oxen in 1 Sam. 6:7-12. There are differences: namely that the question is not guilt, but the cause of misfortune; and that the 'oracle' is the path of two oxen. However, the principle is the same - that the unknowable can be made known by natural phenomena.

<sup>54</sup> Gordon (1935:139).

<sup>55</sup> As does Gordon (1935:143-4).

<sup>56</sup> See also Pss. 82, 58 and 1 Sam. 2:25.

be no intervention, because there is none higher than Yahweh. The question for us is whether the אלהים is to be taken as singular or plural, and if the former, is he identical to Yahweh in the second clause?

While the present text gives אלהים singular verb (פללו), it does not take much imagination to reposit it to the plural (פללו). If אלהים is the DN 'God', then the interchange from אלהים to יהוה is startling in a verse where everything else is so carefully balanced (ואם - ואם, יחטא - יחטא, ופללו - ופללו). Further, if the author had been using poetic parallelism, he would most likely have used the standard form אלהים ב // יהוה א.<sup>57</sup> The interchange between the names, compared to the tightness of the rest of the verse, suggests that they are not the same being. Elohim may be on a par with Yahweh, or a little below him (he could not be above him, or the rhetorical question would be meaningless).

The similarity of the situation described in the first clause to those given in Ex. 22:7-8 is at first glance lessened by the traditional meanings given for פילל - mediate, arbitrate (cf. התפלל - intercede). The piel form is used in three other places, of which one (Gen. 48:11) is not relevant because the context (and hence its meaning) is quite different. Of the two remaining:

Ps. 106:30

ויעמד פינחם יפלל ותעצר המגפה

This verse refers to the events described in Num. 25:7-8. While this passage is undoubtedly composite, the rationale of Phinehas's actions is clear enough: he killed a man and a woman in order to stay the plague which was to be punishment for the Israelites' sins. From Ps. 106:30, the meaning of פילל appears to be 'to exact a certain punishment in order to avert a more severe one'.

Ezek. 16:52a

גם את שאי כלמתך אשר פללת לאחותך  
אשר התעבת מהן תצדקנה ממך

Here the NRSV seems to have caught the correct meaning:

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<sup>57</sup> For example, Prov. 2:5, Pss. 14:2, 84:12. Construct and suffixed forms: Deut. 32:3, 1 Sam. 2:2, Pss. 3:8, 18:7, etc. in Boling (1960:243).

Bear your disgrace, you also, for you have brought about for your sisters a more favourable judgement; because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you.

Both she and her sisters are sinful - all deserve punishment. But she is so dreadful that, by comparison, her sisters' fates will not be quite as bad.

The meaning of פִּילֵל is not, therefore to arbitrate or mediate, but to judge (i.e. to punish), in order that this punishment should be more lenient than what the consequences would have been if justice had not taken place. This meaning is also valid for 1 Sam. 2:25, where it is clear that one man has sinned, and therefore justice must be served, and also for Ex. 22:8, where compensation is exacted from the liar. In both cases, we can presume that a worse fate would have befallen the guilty party had the plaintiff simply taken revenge.

While it is possible that *Elohim* in 1 Sam. 2:25 is the name of a particular divine being, or a synonym for *Yahweh*, the immediate context does not particularly suggest this. On the other hand, comparison with other material suggests divine judges (cf. Pss. 58 and 82) or cult images (cf. Ex. 22:7-8), if indeed we are correct to distinguish between the two.

### Divine Name or Superlative?

A thorough study of the superlative interpretation of divine names including (but not exclusively<sup>58</sup>) אלהים is supplied by Thomas.<sup>59</sup> The earliest example he finds is the Targum's translation of אל הררי in Ps. 36:7 as טורייא תקיפיא (mighty mountains). Thomas details the history of this interpretation through the medieval Jewish commentators to the present century, including those who deny its existence altogether.<sup>60</sup>

Before coming to his own conclusion, Thomas clarifies exactly what he means by the claim that divine names have a superlative meaning:

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<sup>58</sup> Similar claims are made for יה (Jer. 2:31, 32:19, Pss. 78:12, 89:9, 118:5, Song 8:6); יהוה (Ruth 2:20, 3:10), and אל (Ps. 36:7). Thomas (1953) describes similar uses of שאול and מות; while Waltke and O'Connor (1990:268) add ובל in 1 Kings 8:13.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas (1953:209-224, 1968:120-124).

<sup>60</sup> For example, Prat (1901:497-511).



It is possible to understand by this two quite different things. First, it may be understood to mean that the divine names when so used have no religious significance at all, and that they are used only as intensifying epithets in the sense of "great, mighty"<sup>61</sup>... It may, on the other hand be understood to mean that the presence of the divine names raises a person or object to a pre-eminent degree by virtue of the fact that the person or object in question is brought into relationship with God. The divine names, that is to say, do not lose their religious significance.<sup>62</sup>

According to Thomas, only the latter view can be supported by the evidence. In his first article, he reckons the list of such examples to be about 50, and then adds some more in 1968. Waltke and O'Connor give the following examples with אלהים: Gen. 23:6, 1 Sam. 14:15, Isa. 51:3, Jer. 3:3.<sup>63</sup>

In some cases, it is difficult to read אלהים as anything but a superlative. For example, when Abraham requests from the Hittites a plot of land in which to bury Sarah, they address him as אדני נשיא אלהים (Gen. 23:6). As we have no reason why they would have thought him to be 'a prince of God', it seems more sensible to translate 'a mighty prince'. They were being polite, as also indicated by אדני. Similarly, when Rachel describes the strife with her sister in Gen. 30:8 as נפתולי אלהים, it is difficult to know what God had to do with it. 'Great wrestlings' suits the context much better than 'wrestlings of God'.

However, once the point has been made, it is important to know when to stop. When the מושב אלהים in Ezek. 28:2 is given by the Targum as מושב תקיפין (followed in the eighteenth century by Glassius<sup>64</sup>), it renders the whole passage meaningless (which is exactly what the Targum wanted to do).<sup>65</sup> What is the point of the claims אל אני (v. 2) and אלהים אני (v. 9) if the prince of Tyre was envisaged as sunbathing in a large deckchair?

Between these extremes are a great many passages in which the superlative meaning may or may not be intended. It is to two of these that I now turn.

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<sup>61</sup> As is meant by Strikovsky (1976:120) re Jonah 3:3: "In the expression עיר גדולה לאלהים the word לאלהים has no religious connotations."

<sup>62</sup> Thomas (1953:215).

<sup>63</sup> Waltke and O'Connor (1990:268).

<sup>64</sup> Thomas (1953:211-2).

<sup>65</sup> Zimmerli (1983:II:74).

- **Mal. 2:15** (a) ולא אחד עשה
- (b) ושאר רוח לו
- (c) ומה האחד מבקש
- (d) זרע אלהים
- (e) ונשמרתם ברוחכם ובאשת נעוריך אל יבגד

This is undoubtedly the most difficult verse in Malachi, and Thomas regards it as “too obscure to be profitable.”<sup>66</sup> Whether or not the text is corrupt, it is not too corrupt or too difficult for us to decide whether זרע אלהים uses אלהים in the superlative sense, or in a plain sense (e.g. seed of God). Only the last line (e) is transparent in meaning:

So take care of your spirits, and do not betray the wife of your youth.

This exhortation gives us the crucial information that only those who have ‘taken care of their spirits’ are likely to be faithful. This is important in understanding the significance of שאר רוח (b). Whatever is meant by (a) - (d), we can expect that it would predispose the audience to follow the exhortation (e).

The main problem in the verse is the identity of ‘האחד’. The NRSV renders ‘God’: ‘Did not one God make her?’ Jones thinks that a later scribe was so troubled by the identity of the first ‘one’, that he inserted ‘what is the one?’. He therefore deletes the ‘ומה האחד’ and translates:

Not one who has any spirit left in him, and seeks a (holy) seed of God, has done this (i.e. contracted such marriages).<sup>67</sup>

However, this strains the word order of the remaining text intolerably. The balance of (a) and (c) strongly suggests that the ‘one’ is the same in both cases:

*vav* + interrog. + אחד + verb

Therefore I suggest that a translation should reflect this:

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas (1953:214).

<sup>67</sup> Jones (1962:197).

And what did one not do? ...  
And what did that one want?

Malachi is therefore juxtaposing actions and motivations. Only the second question is given an answer (d): זרע אלהים. The first question instead is supplied with a subordinate clause (b), qualifying 'one'.<sup>68</sup> The translation can now be put together:

And what did one not do?  
[the one] in whom there was a vestige of spirit left.  
And what did that one want?  
זרע אלהים  
So take care of your spirits, and do not betray the wife of your youth.

The theme of the oracle as a whole is the sanctity of marriage. Present troubles are caused by men being unfaithful to the wives at whose weddings Yahweh was a witness (v. 14). Yahweh hates divorce (v. 16), and the exhortation is repeated:

Mal. 2:16

ונשמרתם ברוחכם ולא תבגדו

On this ground, the most likely meaning for זרע אלהים is 'legitimate, hence pure, whole offspring'. In other words: 'If you do not want bastards for children, do not sleep around.'<sup>69</sup> Malachi's technique for motivating his audience to obey his exhortation is to remind them of the necessary consequences of their actions. 'Guard your spirits so that you have enough spirit (i.e. integrity) to act according to what you know you really want'.

Now it becomes clear why we are not told exactly what the 'one' did. It is unclear whether the vestige of spirit was only enough to make him *want* the right thing, or whether it sufficed him to achieve this aim. The audience are supposed to make up their own minds, and by so doing, resolve to have enough spirit themselves.

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<sup>68</sup> Verhoef (1987:262-3).

<sup>69</sup> In Zech. 9:6, a bastard dwelling in Ashdod is part of Yahweh's wrath against the nations. In Deut. 23:3, a bastard (as well as one with defective genitals) may not enter into Yahweh's congregation.

On this level, there is no justification for translating 'seed of God', or even 'godly/holy offspring', as there is no suggestion that even the children of a legitimate marriage will be particularly 'holy' in the same way that Samson (Jud. 13:5) and Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11, 22) were.

However, there is a subtheme to this oracle, expressed at the beginning. The people are breaking *two* contracts:

Mal. 2:11

בגדה יהודה ותועבה נעשתה בישראל ובירושלם  
כי חלל יהודה קדש יהוה אשר אהב ובעל בת אל נכר

By marrying women of another god, Judah is betraying Yahweh whom he used to love. Now it is not altogether obvious that the two describe the same situation: marrying women of another god may be synonymous with worshipping the other god (1 Kings 11:2); divorcing your wife is not necessarily divorcing an Israelite wife for a foreign one. However, the theme that marital incontinence is a sin against *Yahweh* runs throughout. Therefore it is impossible to say that זרע אלהים has *no* reference to Yahweh (or to God), as the children of a legitimate marriage are pleasing to God. A similar situation is described in Ezra regarding the marriage with foreign peoples:

Ezra 9:2

כי נשאו מבתיהם להם ולבניהם והתערבו זרע הקדש בעמי הארצות

It is impossible to say that God has *nothing* to do with זרע אלהים, only that the main sense of the text is *legitimate, whole* children. Therefore we can conclude that in the expression זרע אלהים, the אלהים appears in the superlative sense in the way described by Thomas - its main force is 'whole, pure', while the sense of divine is also present.

- Isa. 13:19, Jer. 50:40, Amos 4:11 כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה

It is worth listing this phrase and related expressions in full:

Deut. 29:22	כמהפכת סדום ועמרה אדמה וצביים אשר הפך יהוה
Isa. 1:7 <sup>70</sup>	כמהפכת זרים
Isa. 13:19	כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה
Jer. 49:18	כמהפכת סדם ועמרה ושכניה
Jer. 50:40	כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה ואת שכניה
Amos 4:11	כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה

While all translations and commentaries that I am aware of consider אלהים to be singular (God), there is no grammatical or contextual reason why it should not be plural (gods). However, there is yet another dimension to the ambiguity of אלהים here:

The description of the disaster is further intensified by adding ... the name of the deity אלהים ... which here, as in other passages, expresses not only the source of the catastrophe, but also its incomparable enormity and immensity.<sup>71</sup>

We must therefore also consider the possibility that אלהים functions here mostly in the superlative sense i.e. '*a great/divine overthrowal of Sodom...*'. However, in the other examples of superlative אלהים there is no other role that אלהים could play. נשיא אלהים could either be 'mighty prince' or 'prince of god'; נפתולי אלהים could either be 'great wrestlings' or 'wrestlings of God'. In our phrase, on the other hand, אלהים is already 'employed' as the understood subject of the action (מפכהת).<sup>72</sup> While there may be some superlative force to אלהים, its major role is the agent of disaster on Sodom and Gomorrah.

<sup>70</sup> Isa. 1:7 immediately stands out as different from the others. The context requires overthrowal *by* foreigners, rather than overthrowal *of* foreigners:

Isa. 1:7	אדמתכם לנגדכם זרים אכלים אתה ושממה כמהפכת זרים
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However, as Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned twice in the next few verses (1:9, 10), it is not impossible that the prophet is using מהפכת in order to allude to the stock phrase.

<sup>71</sup> Paul (1991:149), Baumgärtel (1914:56 n. 1).

<sup>72</sup> For verbal nouns acting as verbs (having subjects and objects marked with את) see GK #115d and Waltke and O'Connor 1990:603. Some examples are:

Num. 10:2	והיו לך למקרא העדה ולמסע את המחנות
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This is, however, of no help in deciding whether אלהים here is 'God' or 'gods'. The grammar is completely ambiguous, and perhaps conveniently so. For while the expression itself is clearly an old, set phrase,<sup>73</sup> it may be its ambiguity and therefore adaptability which led to its popularity among the prophets. It serves equally well for one who considers אלהים to be a 'synonym' for Yahweh, or for one who considers אלהים to be unnamed divine beings (perhaps on Yahweh's payroll?).

Compare the two Jeremiah oracles:

Jer. 50:39-40

לכן ישבו ציִים את איים וישבו בה בנות יענה  
ולא תשב עוד לנצח ולא תשכון עד דור ודור  
כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה ואת שכניה  
נאם יהוה לא ישב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם

Jer. 49:18

-  
-  
כמהפכת סדם ועמרה ושכניה  
אמר יהוה לא ישב שם איש ולא יגור בה בן אדם

The oracle against Edom (Jer. 49:18) is considerably shorter than that against Babylon (Jer 50:39-40). Jer. 50:39 (which has no parallel in Jer. 49) is justifiably regarded as part of the oracle because it deals with the same subject (uninhabitability, compare *עוד תשב* to *לא ישב שם*) and also because it is shared with the Isaiah oracle (Isa. 13:20 *עד דור ודור ולא תשכון*). It seems that Jer. 49:18 preserves an 'abbreviated' version of the oracle given more fully in Jer. 50:39-40.<sup>74</sup> Dispensing with אלהים and with את (thrice) was part of this abbreviation. This certainly gives the impression that it mattered little to the prophet who overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their inhabitants - his point was the destruction itself. Indeed all four instances use the expression as a *metaphor* for dreadful destruction: in Isaiah and Jeremiah,

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(understood subject of מקרא and מסע is 'you')

Deut. 1:27

בשנאת יהוה אתנו

(understood subject of שנאת is Yahweh)

See also 1 Kings 10:9, Gen. 19:29, Isa. 11:9, 30:28, Deut. 1:27, 4:10, 5:26, 10:12 (twice), 10:15.

<sup>73</sup> Segal (1967:106).

<sup>74</sup> In addition, Jer. 49:19, 20, 21 parallels Jer. 50:44, 45, 46.



the future destruction of Babylon (or Edom); and in Amos, the past warnings against Samaria. Deuteronomy, however, does not seem to have been comfortable with this ambiguity:

Deut. 29:22

כמהפכת סדום ועמרה אדמה וצביים אשר הפך יהוה

Deuteronomy replaces the 'verbal noun clause' with a subordinate clause. It removes אלהים from its position as 'subject' (also removing three cases of את, the object marker, thereby turning the verbal noun מהפכת into a noun), and replaces it with the subject *Yahweh* in a subordinate clause appended to the whole expression. Hence NRSV of Deut. 29:22 '*like the destruction of Sodom ...*'. This is not the only case where Deuteronomy differs from parallel material in the Hebrew Bible regarding the divine name:

Ex. 21:6

והגישו אדניו אל האלהים והגישו אל הדלת או אל המזוזה

ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע ועבדו לעולם

Deut. 15:17a

ולקחת את המרצע ונתתה באזנו ובדלת והיה לך עבד עולם

Compare also Deut. 23:4 (בקהל יהוה) to Neh. 13:1 (בקהל אלהים).

The confusion regarding the agent of destruction in these five instances is paralleled by confusion in the Genesis account itself (Gen. 18-19). The men/angels give the impression that *they* will carry out the attack (19:21), then *Yahweh* rains fire and brimstone (19:24), and later we hear that *Elohim* did it (19:29). The confusion cannot be completely attributed to different sources, as it is deeply ingrained in the story. The men/angels explain to Lot that *Yahweh sent them* to destroy the place (19:13) and in the very next verse, Lot explains that *Yahweh* is about to destroy it.

The very fact that we are dealing with a stock phrase makes it extremely unlikely that we will be able to ascertain its 'original' meaning. We cannot rely on the contexts in which it is found: Isaiah did not choose אלהים over יהוה: rather אלהים came as part of the package. We cannot conclude from the Deuteronomy variant that the original expression was 'dangerously polytheistic', because it seems that Deuteronomy has taken a dislike to the word אלהים in any context. On the other hand, we cannot conclude from the Jeremiah variant that the אלהים was 'insignificant', and therefore not a DN. However, the variable treatment that the phrase received suggests that its ambiguity may be related to that already found in the Genesis story. The

proximity of מלאכים to אלהים (Zach. 12:8) suggests that the expression may refer to these angels, and the ambiguity may also relate to the ambiguity in the Genesis story.<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusions

This chapter gives an account of the different ways in which the term אלהים is used in the Hebrew Bible. I have attempted to show which meanings are possible, and how the decision between one meaning and another can be made. The bulk of this chapter has dealt with the various 'profane' meanings (which are not the main subject of the thesis) but which are important to define *in order to* separate them from the category of divine name.

The establishment of אלהים as divine name is an important preliminary to the whole study. For if *Elohim* is not a name, but a generic description, then the difference between the two could be explained quite simply as comparable to difference as between דוד and המלך.<sup>76</sup> In practice, however, אלהים is used quite differently from מלך. We do not find, for example, extended narratives where מלך acts and speaks.

An analogous debate is that of Durrant discussed previously. Having established that 'God' cannot be a proper name because it can be qualified by adjectives, he considers the following case:

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels and all just works do proceed ...<sup>77</sup>

Here, 'God' appears to be a proper noun after all. A natural solution to this might be to suggest that 'God' functions in some places as a description, and in other places as a proper name (as I have suggested in biblical Hebrew). Durrant seems to find this particularly offensive:

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<sup>75</sup> אלהים also has a close relationship to אנשים (Gen. 32:29, Jud. 9:9, 13). Gen. 18-19 seem determined to refer to the three and then the two as אנשים as many times as possible (18:2, 16, 22, 19:5, 8, 10, 12, 16) despite the fact that they are not 'men' in the ordinary sense of the word. One of them is Yahweh (18:17-33), and the other two are מלאכים (19:1, 15). They foretell the future, cause blindness and destroy cities! The curious repetition of אנשים leads me to wonder if it could be a code-word here for אלהים.

<sup>76</sup> See Revell (1996), Magonet (1995:81), also Berlin (1983:59-61, 87-91).

<sup>77</sup> Durrant (1973:1); *Book of Common Prayer*: Second Collect at Evening Prayer.

To so say however would be indirectly to accuse Christianity of employing its central word in radically incompatible ways, for no word can genuinely be both a proper name and a description.<sup>78</sup>

However, he gives no reason why not. It is perfectly possible for a word may have more than one meaning. Sometimes, a word can even have two incompatible and easily confused meanings, for example, 'quite':

- 1 completely, entirely, wholly
- 3 somewhat, to some extent<sup>79</sup>

The sentence '*the glass was quite full*' may mean '*the glass was completely full*' or '*the glass was somewhat full*', and in this case the total context would need to be available before the correct meaning could be ascertained. However, Durrant's objection is not to a word having two different *meanings*, but to the one word existing in two different *orders* - proper name and description. Geach, on the other hand, rejects the idea that these are mutually exclusive categories. He writes of the:

ease of transition between proper and common nouns, with intermediate forms like 'I fear Cook is drunk again' said by a Victorian *materfamilias*.<sup>80</sup>

Even Gibson, who largely agrees with Durrant, accepts the condition:

I do not dispute that 'God' in some English theology purports to function as a PN [personal name] ... but such cases would be homonyms of the noun.<sup>81</sup>

In other words, Gibson accepts that 'God' as a proper noun (e.g. 'O God...') is a homonym of 'God' as a common noun (e.g. 'Almighty God ...'). There is no logical objection to one word functioning in both categories, according to context.

The difference between Durrant on the one hand and Geach on the other corresponds to the difference between prescriptive and descriptive linguistics. One analyses language according to a set of preordained rules

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<sup>78</sup> Durrant (1973:4).

<sup>79</sup> *The Oxford Reference Dictionary* (1987).

<sup>80</sup> Geach (1975:158).

<sup>81</sup> Gibson (1981:154 n. 20).

(‘no word can genuinely be both a proper name and a description’<sup>82</sup>) while the other describes language as it is used.<sup>83</sup> The tension between the two approaches was immortalised by Churchill, who wrote (when corrected for ending a sentence with a preposition):

This is the sort of ridiculous grammar up with which I will not put!

While the debate between the approaches will no doubt continue indefinitely concerning modern languages, it is not at all relevant to a dead language like biblical Hebrew. (Prescriptive linguistics can only be of value in spotting places where the text may be corrupt.) Therefore, the fact that אלהים can also function as a common noun (or, in Gibson’s terminology, it has a homonym which is a common noun), is not a logical objection to its full Divine Name status.

There has been and still is a great deal of debate concerning what the term אלהים may and may not mean. Few words can lay claim to as many distinct meanings that are so difficult to distinguish from one another. This is one challenge. Yet it is important not to lose sight of the fact that in a large proportion of the Hebrew Bible, אלהים functions unselfconsciously *as a name* for the Israelite god. I argue in the course of this thesis that in these places it bears only those connotations specified it by the author, and that its ‘profane’ meanings do not have any bearing on this. Discerning those connotations is the other challenge.

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82 Durrant (1973:4).

83 Crystal (1988:25-29).

## CHAPTER 6

### ADONAI YAHWEH

#### Introduction

The term אדני appears in its own right as one of a number of appellations for the deity, along with שדי, עליון, etc. It has the connotations of lordship.<sup>1</sup> Of the 425 appearances of אדני in the Hebrew Bible, 65% (=278 cases) are in the combination אדני יהוה (particularly common in Ezekiel and Amos), and a further 4 as יהוה אדני. We are concerned here with the authenticity and meaning of these combinations. In other words can אדני יהוה be read simply as יהוה, or does it have a value of its own?

Two factors have arisen, which though quite unrelated to the original use of the title, now serve to cloud the issue:

- The tetragrammaton has traditionally been pronounced 'adonai'. This blurs the distinction between אדני and יהוה,<sup>2</sup> and leaves the uninitiated reader of אדני יהוה in the puzzling position of having to say 'adonai adonai'.
- The accepted solution to the above problem is to read 'adonai elohim' which is of course a homonym for יהוה אלהים, leading to an additional confusion between these two forms.

The above confusions, though in themselves not insurmountable, have contributed to widespread silence concerning the significance of the title.<sup>3</sup> In many instances, the failure of the Septuagint to translate it

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<sup>1</sup> אדון (with possessive suffixes) is used of humans: Gen. 42:30 'ruler', 24:26 'master', 18:12 'husband'. It is particularly used in direct speech when addressing one's superior, e.g. Gen. 23:6, 15, 24:18, and also occurs with plural meaning: Gen. 19:2 (with a patach).

<sup>2</sup> For example, the NRSV renders אדני in Amos 9:1 LORD.

<sup>3</sup> Among those who give no comment on the unusual title are: von Rad (1961:183-6) re. Gen. 15, (1966:45, 78-9) re. Deut. 3:24, 9:26 respectively, Mayes (1979:147) 203 re. Deut. 3:24, 9:26 respectively, Gray (1967:84, 299, 361) re. Josh. 7:7, Judges 6:22, 16:28 respectively, Soggin (1981:166-7, 255) re. Judges 6:22, 16:28 respectively, Moore (1895:189, 362-3) re. Judges 6:22, 16:28 respectively,

accurately is considered enough to pass the אדני off as a gloss.<sup>4</sup> Apparently, אדני was written in the margin as the qere for יהוה, and then later erroneously incorporated in the main text.

There are several reasons why this strategy cannot be justified. Careful observation shows that אדני יהוה is in most cases a title quite distinct from the simple יהוה, with its own meaning. In those places where we do not understand its significance, we should start looking in terms of meaning, not careless redaction.

The view that the Septuagint shows אדני יהוה to be a gloss is the result of an over-simplification of the textual evidence. The LXX itself has a long text history, and the very earliest textual witnesses attest the presence of the double title.

Finally, it must be said that the gloss theory itself does not have much to commend it in terms of credibility. We would expect a quite different distribution throughout the Hebrew Bible if the אדני was the result of a random scribal error. To the best of my knowledge, no evidence has been found of marginal אדני acting as qere.<sup>5</sup> In all probability the Hebrew reader needed no reminding not to pronounce the name Yahweh, except for a very short transitional period. To suggest that during such a period, enough scribal errors occurred to explain the proliferation and regularity of the title in, for example, the book of Ezekiel, is to stretch the imagination beyond belief.

This chapter argues for the meaningful and intentional role played by אדני יהוה in the Hebrew Bible along two independent lines: that אדני יהוה is used differently from יהוה (and that this difference is meaningful); and secondly a re-examination of the relevant textual evidence.

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McKane (1963:216-7) re. 2 Sam. 7

Eichrodt (1965:59) re. Ezekiel 2:4 translates: "And you shall say to them 'Thus says Yahweh'" and does not even tell the reader what he has omitted from the text in the comment (p. 61)!

<sup>4</sup> This is the line taken consistently by Elliger throughout BHS Ezekiel and Amos, and in most commentaries. Wevers explains (1969:52) re. Ezekiel 2:4: "Apparently 'Lord' as the perpetual Qere for 'Yahweh' crept into the text and only 'Yahweh' should be read throughout Ezekiel." Wolff takes the same view on Amos (1977:101 and 130 note "o" to Amos 1:8), and Mays (1969:32 note b to Amos 1:8) implies the same. More recently, Keown *et al* comment of אדני in Jeremiah (1995:41) "Not in LXX. MT typically expands titles."

<sup>5</sup> In 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, אדני above the line is characteristic of an insertion, and there is no reason to interpret it as a gloss. See note 51 below (p. 102).



## The Meaning and Significance of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

The title אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה occurs primarily in the books of Ezekiel and Amos, but also in the other prophetic books, the narrative of the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, and the Psalms.

It has long been noted that the title אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה is a form of address for the deity.<sup>6</sup> Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets, where in 14 out of 15 cases, the context is that of a *mortal addressing Yahweh by name*:<sup>7</sup> Gen. 15:2, 8 (Abram), Deut. 3:24, 9:26 (Moses),<sup>8</sup> Josh. 7:7 (Joshua),<sup>9</sup> Jud. 6:22 (Gideon),<sup>10</sup> 16:28 (Samson), 2 Sam. 7:18, 19 (2x), 20, 22,<sup>11</sup> 28, 29 (David), 1 Kings 8:53 (Solomon).<sup>12</sup> The exception is 1 Kings 2:26.<sup>13</sup>

The picture is less clear in the prophetic books. While אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה continues to be a standard form of address,<sup>14</sup> it is scattered through most of the prophetic books in a variety of contexts. The aim here is to make sense of the usage in different books where sense is there to be found.

By far the largest cluster of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה is to be found in **Ezekiel** (217 cases).<sup>15</sup> We noted above (note 14) that it appears 5 times as an address to

<sup>6</sup> Spronk (*DDD*:994-998), Hartman (*EJ*: 674-682).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. note 1 above where a human superior is addressed.

<sup>8</sup> In the Pentateuch texts concerned the phrase אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה was an *essential* part of talking directly to God. Abram addresses god only twice in Gen. 15, both times invoking אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה at the beginning (however in other stories, e.g. Abram's debate with God, Gen. 18, the phrase is not used). Similarly, the two Deuteronomy passages mentioned are the only ones in that book where anyone talks to God.

<sup>9</sup> Joshua uses it as normal to begin his speech (v. 7) but in the following verse uses the related phrase בִּי אֲדֹנָי.

<sup>10</sup> Gideon first addresses the angel of Yahweh בִּי אֲדֹנָי as he mistakes him for a human. When he realises his mistake he calls אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה to protect him (v. 22). From this and the Joshua instance we see the close connection between the address to a human (אֲדֹנָי), the address to the deity (אֲדֹנָי). The primary connotation is humility.

<sup>11</sup> See below pp. 108, 115.

<sup>12</sup> Solomon uses אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה only at the end of his prayer, possibly as a climax (see further for the strategic use of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה in the minor prophets). Other DNs in his prayer are chosen as being relevant to the immediate context, e.g. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (vv. 23, 25) and אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (v. 26) when reminding Yahweh of his obligation to Israel by the Davidic covenant and יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי (v. 28) during a personal plea; see also אֱלֹהִים (v. 27) and יְהוָה (v. 44).

<sup>13</sup> Revell (1996:201-2) interprets this unusual form according to the context: "This designation, referring to Solomon's personal relationship to God, presents Abiathar's service to '(my) lord Yahweh' as to 'my father David' as the motivation for his decision to spare Abiathar's life"

<sup>14</sup> Jer. 1:6, 4:10, 14:13, 32:17, 32:25 (though here it appears in the middle of a speech, not at the beginning); Ezekiel 4:14, 9:8, 11:13, 21:5, 37:3; Amos 7:2, 5.

<sup>15</sup> The statistics in the Ezekiel section are taken from Zimmerli (1983:II:556-7). McGregor presents them in tabular form (1985:213-221).

Yahweh. Apart from this, it is found almost exclusively in the formulae introducing and concluding Yahweh's words: *נאם אדני יהוה* and *כה אמר אדני יהוה*.<sup>16</sup> The question arises of how to explain the cases of *אדני יהוה* outwith those formulae, and the formulae without *אדני יהוה*.

Concerning the 9 occurrences of *אדני יהוה* outwith these formulae, Zimmerli regards them as secondary intrusions on the grounds that most DN's in these contexts are simply *יהוה*.<sup>17</sup> While it may be neater to ascribe these as secondary, it is not so easy to imagine how the intrusion took place. In the case of *יד אדני יהוה* (8:1) the presence of the additional *אדני* may be related to the more figurative phrase as a whole. In every other case, Yahweh's hand *was on* (*היה על/אל*) Ezekiel; in this case the hand *fell* (*תפל*) upon him.

Zimmerli also calls into question the authenticity of most of the seven occasions where these formulae occur without *אדני*.<sup>18</sup> This also is less than convincing. To take just one example, 11:5 is said to be secondary as it comes within the section 11:1-21 which "is marked out as a foreign element in the surrounding section."<sup>19</sup> It is not possible to dispute that this section lacks continuity with material before and after it, but if its secondary nature explains the absence of *אדני* in verse 5, what then explains its sudden presence in verse 7?

The problem with Zimmerli's approach is that it requires the author to be entirely consistent and subsequent editors, contributors, etc., to be consistently inconsistent. In any case, the numbers of exceptions are few, and not entirely unexpected. Authors and editors alike are humans, not computers, and inconsistency of under 5% is hardly cause for concern.

The significant point is that the association between the title *אדני יהוה* and the introductory and concluding formulae is very strong. McGregor summarizes:

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<sup>16</sup> *נאם אדני יהוה* 122 times; *כה אמר אדני יהוה* 81 times; address 5 times = 208 (= 96% of total 217).

<sup>17</sup> Zimmerli (1983:II:556): 5 cases of *אני אדני יהוה* (13:9, 23:49, 24:24, 28:24, 29:16) cf. 87 cases of *שמעו דבר יהוה*; 3 cases of *אני יהוה* (6:3, 25:3, 36:4) cf. 7 cases of *שמעו דבר יהוה* (13:2, 16:25, 21:3, 34:7, 9, 36:1, 37:4); 1 case of *יד אדני יהוה* (8:1) cf. 6 cases of *יד יהוה* (1:3, 3:14, 22, 33:22, 37:1, 40:1).

<sup>18</sup> *כה אמר יהוה* 11:5, 21:8, 21:14, 30:6. *נאם יהוה* 13:6, 7, 16:58, 37:14. In 13:6-7 the change of style is quite appropriate, coming as it does from the mouths of false prophets. Nevertheless, they begin the prophecy in verse 3 in Ezekielian style *אדני יהוה*.

<sup>19</sup> Zimmerli (1983:I:231).

This is most definitely a non-random distribution and should lay to rest a view that ought to have died years ago, namely, that אדני was added gradually here and there as a reminder to pronounce יהוה as "adonay". If this view were true, we should expect a random distribution of אדני יהוה. The distribution is not random, so the premise is wrong.<sup>20</sup>

**Amos** is examined separately here, as its frequent use of אדני sets it apart from the other minor prophets in this respect. The DN אדני occurs here 24 times in total: of these 20 are in the combination אדני יהוה<sup>21</sup>, 3 stand alone, and 1 appears in another combination<sup>22</sup>.

There is no hard and fast rule which can be found to explain all of these occurrences, and this has led most commentators to ignore them or to attribute them to secondary addition.<sup>23</sup> However, an article by Dempster, which builds especially on the work of Tromp, demonstrates how special DNs including אדני had been used to complement the structure given to the book in its redaction. A fuller treatment of Dempster's and Tromp's research is given in chapter 13. The following is a summary only of that which is directly relevant to the title אדני יהוה:

- Symmetrical distribution in the book as a whole:<sup>24</sup> אדני is highly concentrated in the central two parts of the book (3-6, 7-9:6) and found less frequently in the prologue (1-2) and epilogue (9:7-15).
- 5:1-17:<sup>25</sup> The only occurrences of אדני are in A (v. 3) and A' (v. 16) of a chiasm, providing a frame for the whole oracle. The final אדני forms the pinnacle of the climax of DNs (יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני). The first and the climactic DN themselves form a chiasm (A: אדני יהוה; A': יהוה ... אדני)
- Recurring symmetrical pattern in visions:<sup>26</sup>

7:7-9 (vision 3): אדני - יהוה - אדני

8:1-3 (vision 4): אדני יהוה - יהוה - אדני יהוה

<sup>20</sup> McGregor (1985:77).

<sup>21</sup> That is, including 3:13 (אדני יהוה אלהי הצבאות) and 9:5 (אדני יהוה הצבאות).

<sup>22</sup> 5:16: יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני.

<sup>23</sup> See footnotes 3 and 4 above.

<sup>24</sup> Dempster (1991:176).

<sup>25</sup> Based on analysis by Tromp (1984:63-70).

<sup>26</sup> Dempster (1991:172-3) on Andersen and Freedman (1989:617).



The use of the title again in vv. 14 and 15 (in the formulae ... נאם and ... אמר כה) is not entirely unexpected.

- **28:16, 22:** אדני יהוה here forms an envelope round a section within an oracle. While the oracle clearly begins at v. 14 (in that the argument is coherent, and there is repetition of שאול/מות at verses 15 and 18), verse 16 marks a change in perspective, from the scoffs of the scoffers, to the establishment of God's justice. This oracle is quite distinct from the following verses, which have their own introduction (v. 23) and continue with a series of rhetorical questions (vv. 24-25).
- **50:4-9:** The repeated use of אדני יהוה marks this out as a distinct unit of poetry:

Isa. 50:4	אדני יהוה נתן לי לשון למודים
50:5	אדני יהוה פתח לי און
50:7	ואדני יהוה יעזר לי
50:9	הן אדני יהוה יעזר לי

This short poem is coherent in content (what the *Lord Yahweh* has done and continues to do for the servant) and in style (repetition as outlined above, 2 qatal strophes + 2 yiqtol strophes, with a climactic !הן; a proliferation of body parts in the first half [לשון, און, גוי, לחיי, גוי]). The poem in which the prophet speaks in first person is distinct from the preceding verses which are the words of Yahweh (v. 1 כה אמר יהוה), and the following two verses, in which the prophet addresses an audience (v. 10 מי בכם, v. 11 לכם, כלכם). Nowhere else in this chapter is the deity referred to as אדני יהוה, but simply as יהוה.

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occurred. This is necessary because in the interlude the reader was taken to a different scene." (p. 126) She also notes two characteristics of the repeated phrase: chiasmic in relation to the first; and beginning with *vav* + personal name. Our example fits with the first (note the position of אדני יהוה), but not the second. This does not constitute a problem, both because our example differs in being prophecy, not narrative, and because the 'exceptions' to the characteristics in the narrative examples (1 Sam. 4:11, 22 also does not fit the second characteristic; 2 Chr. 12:2, 9 fits neither) show that authors were using a form, they were not slaves to it.

For the strategic placing of word and phrases in poetry, see Muilenburg (1953:99).



- **61:1, 11:** In this chapter, אדני יהוה forms an envelope round the poem which constitutes the chapter, appearing in the first and last verses. Apart from the chapter division, this poem is distinguished at the beginning by a change in speaker (from God to prophet) and at the end by a change in topic (from God's actions to the restoration of Zion).<sup>32</sup>
- **65:13, 15:** Here the title אדני יהוה demarcates a section within an oracle. This section deals with the consequences to the unfaithful, whereas the preceding verses deal with the actions of these unfaithful, and the following verses with the rewards for the faithful.

We can conclude that the title אדני יהוה does not feature as highly in the language of Isaiah as it does in Amos or Ezekiel. There are, however, enough occurrences to justify the conclusion that it tends to occur in strategic positions: in the introductory and concluding formulae, and to demarcate sections of text, especially poetry.<sup>33</sup> Its use is better described as a tendency than as a fixed pattern, as many introductory and concluding formulae have only *Yahweh*, or some other title; many poems begin and end without its assistance, while 4 cases of אדני יהוה are not explained by any of the above.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the tendency is marked enough to make the accidental intrusion of אדני in the text most unlikely.

The evidence from **Jeremiah** is entirely consistent with this. All three of the cases of אדני יהוה (that is, not counting those places where it is an address) occur in introductory and concluding formulae.<sup>35</sup>

In the **minor prophets** אדני יהוה tends to occur in a prominent place:

- Obad. 1 The *first* oracle is introduced אדני יהוה אמר (cf. נאם יהוה v. 4, 8; כי יהוה דבר v. 18).

<sup>32</sup> Brettler (1989:176 n. 36) notes a connection between אדני יהוה in Isa. 50:4-9 and 61:1, 11, and suggests common authorship.

<sup>33</sup> These two functions, in introductory and concluding formulae and demarcating poetry account for 84% (i.e. 21 out of 25) cases of אדני יהוה. It may be objected that the title demarcates poetry only because it is used in introductory and concluding formulae. Notice, however, that most of those noted above as having strategic functions are *not* formulaic, and vice versa.

<sup>34</sup> Isa. 10:23, 25:8, 40:10, 48:16.

<sup>35</sup> Jer. 2:22, 7:20, 49:5.



- Mic. 1:2 After the introductory דבר יהוה אשר the *first* mention of *Yahweh* in the oracle itself is אדני יהוה, followed by simply יהוה throughout the book.
- Hab. 3:19 Here the *reversed* title (יהוה אדני) is found in the *last* verse of the book.
- Zeph. 1:7 This אדני יהוה comes not at the beginning but at a pivotal place, interpreted either as the end of the first oracle or introducing the ‘day of Yahweh’ oracles which follow. See also the connection with יום יהוה in Isa. 22:5, 12 above.

The only occurrence in the minor prophets (apart from Amos) that does not occur at a structurally strategic point is Zech. 9:14. Taken in context, however, its presence is meaningful, as it forms a bridge between יהוה and יהוה צבאות:

Zech. 9:14a	... ויהוה עליהם יראה ...
9:14b	... ואדני יהוה שופר יתקע ...
9:15a	... יהוה צבאות יגן עליהם ...

The close relationship between אדני and צבאות is not immediately apparent from this one isolated instance, but there are quite a number of corroborating examples. See for example how Amos uses them both for similar purposes (Ch. 13); how Jeremiah uses the one as Ezekiel uses the other (below); how when first Isaiah uses אדני, צבאות tends to be present also (e.g. 3:15, 10:23, 24, 22:5, etc.); and how David in his prayer uses אדני 7 times (8 if we include v. 25) and צבאות twice (2 Sam. 7).<sup>36</sup>

The only other cases of this title are to be found in the **Psalms**. אדני יהוה occurs twice in the Psalter, both in the same Psalm (Ps. 71:5, 16). It is probably to be taken as part of the reorganization of DNs in the Elohist Psalter, אדני יהוה being a peculiarity of this Psalm.

The reversed form אדני יהוה appears 4 times: once in the Elohist Psalter (Ps. 68:21) and 3 times in book 5 (Pss. 109:21, 140:8, 141:8). For these there is no ready explanation. It may be that Ps. 68:21 is also related to ‘elohistic’ redaction. Two of these (Pss. 109:21 and 141:8) address God

<sup>36</sup> Murtonen (1952:80-81) is evidently aware of some connection between these two DNs when he lists those books in which both appear, neither appears, or one appears but not the other.

directly, and may be related to the form of address in the Pentateuch and Prophets. However, the Psalms contain a great deal of material addressed directly to God without the use of this phrase. For the case in Ps. 140 there is even less explanation, but perhaps it itself is the reason that Pss. 140 and 141 were placed together.<sup>37</sup>

Having established some specific patterns of use, adherents of the gloss theory would have to explain how a meaningful phrase could have entered the text accidentally. We may not know what the authors' intentions were in every case, but surely we cannot deny that the authors actually had intentions on the basis of our lack of knowledge.

The question still remains of exactly what was intended by this title. Its use in Amos, Isa. 50, and the minor prophets may have been as no more than a structural marker; while its presence in a number of books in the introductory and concluding formulae of oracles may have simply been convention. With respect to Ezekiel, Zimmerli reiterates the observations of Baumgärtel, that in Jeremiah the designation יהוה צבאות is using the same formulae (introductory/concluding/address) and can therefore be seen as coming from the same formulaic stock.<sup>38</sup> A further suggestion, made in the context of DNs in the introductory and concluding formulae of Jeremiah (and not specifically of אדני), is that:

Additional titles magnify the authority of the sender and the urgency of the commands.<sup>39</sup>

These suggestions may in themselves be correct, but they skirt round the question rather than actually addressing it. Speaking of Ezekiel's frequent use of the title, Skehan reasons from a 'literal' understanding of the title:<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The arrangement of biblical material according to key words as an aid to memory has been studied by Cassuto (1973:I:1-6). Specifically with relation to the Psalms see Cohen (1945), Hirsch (1960) and Mitchell (1997:56).

<sup>38</sup> Baumgärtel (1914:18). Zimmerli (1983:II 561): "Baumgärtel himself supposes that Ezekiel, living in exile, has consciously replaced the cult name Yahweh Sabaoth, with its associations with the ark, by the irreproachable archaic name יהוה אדני which survived in the ancient cry יהוה אהה אדני יהוה, since for him Yahweh was no longer enthroned above the ark."

<sup>39</sup> Keown *et al* (1995:11). The reader is referred there to Jer. 33:2, 34:2, 37:7, 27:4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Skehan (1980:35).

That structure makes sense when אדני יהוה is understood as “My Lord, Yahweh,” with “lord” not a title or name, but a personal claim by the prophet that he is servant of the Lord for whom he speaks.

Similarly, Brettler:

in these cases [prophetic formulae] אדני ‘my master’ retains its semantic content, invoking God’s power, and should not be construed as a personal name.<sup>41</sup>

A further suggestion is given by Greenberg, also regarding Ezekiel:<sup>42</sup>

אדני meaning something between ‘my lord’ (in its literal, vocative sense) and a divine name ... This preference appears to be rhetorical, a verbal signature to the oracle.

Given that אדני יהוה is used in narrative when an individual addresses God directly, should we be so surprised that it appears more frequently in the prophets who spend entire books speaking directly to and hearing directly from God? As to why Ezekiel should use this title so regularly, the answer is obvious: God told him to:

Ezek. 2:4

ואמרת אליהם כה אמר אדני יהוה<sup>43</sup>

### Textual Matters

Observation of the use of the title אדני יהוה has pointed toward it being an integral and intentional part of the text in almost every case. This position will now be strengthened from an independent line of argument - textual criticism. The very earliest Hebrew witnesses will be examined first, followed by a survey of the Greek translations, as the LXX is often claimed to support the gloss theory. Special attention will be paid to the LXX of Ezekiel, as recent conclusions drawn from it must make us re-examine the way the LXX is used in textual criticism.

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<sup>41</sup> Brettler (1989:43).

<sup>42</sup> Greenberg (1983:64) re Ezekiel 2:4. See also Foerster and Quell (1958:42).

<sup>43</sup> This is the only occasion I am aware of in the commission of a prophet where God specifically states *how* he is to be referred to in the oracle, without giving any oracle.

Of the biblical books which attest the title, only Isaiah is well represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls. McGregor notes that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup><sup>44</sup> dated 2nd century BCE has a considerable number of יהוה אדוני<sup>45</sup> but does not elaborate further. In fact, this manuscript attests יהוה אדוני accurately<sup>46</sup> 15 times out of the 25 occurrences in the MT, and יהוה אדוני once where the MT knows only יהוה.<sup>47</sup> This is evidence that the form was known but hardly resounding proof of its stability. The 10 cases of deviation from the MT יהוה אדוני break down to 4 where אדוני appears above the line,<sup>48</sup> 2 which attest a homophone,<sup>49</sup> and 4 that exhibit simple יהוה.<sup>50</sup> The cases where a homophone is given can be explained as simple error, and those where אדוני appears above the line, as correction of scribal omission,<sup>51</sup> bring the correspondence of the revised Qumran tradition and the MT up to 21/25 (=84%).

This must be taken within the context of a manuscript which exhibits considerable deviation from the MT with respect to DNs. A list of some 28 deviations concerning DNs is given by Burrows with the following conclusion:

Several of the above variants and the apparently haphazard nature of most of them ... suggest that the Ms was written from dictation, that the reader probably read אדוני wherever the Tetragrammaton occurred in his copy, and that the scribe wrote either יהוה or אדוני whichever occurred to him in each instance.<sup>52</sup>

However, an examination of these deviations reveals that 'haphazard' may not be an appropriate description: we have seen that well over a third (i.e. 11

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<sup>44</sup> Burrows (1950).

<sup>45</sup> McGregor (1985:75) cf. Ziegler (1959:57-8).

<sup>46</sup> Except that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> used the spelling אדוני.

<sup>47</sup> Isa. 49:7. It is unlikely to be coincidental that this takes place in the introductory formula: כזה אמר אדוני יהוה.

<sup>48</sup> Isa. 3:15, 28:16, 30:15, 65:13.

<sup>49</sup> Isa. 50:5 יהוה אלהים; 61:11 יהוה אלהים.

<sup>50</sup> Isa. 49:22, 52:4.

<sup>51</sup> The opposite could be argued, that the אדוני above the line represents the very qere postulated by the gloss hypothesis. However, the 4 cases bear all the hallmarks of scribal omission followed by subsequent insertion, and none of correction of incorrect text. This manuscript exhibits no qere as such, marginal markings are thought to delimit sections of text, while only one mark in the body of the text may indicate a variant reading (Burrows, 1950:xvi re Isa. 33:19). Insertions of whole words in this manuscript are characterised by being above the line, and beginning slightly to the right of the next word. Incorrect words on the other hand are erased, scored out or marked by dots, and the correction written above or in the space.

<sup>52</sup> Burrows (1949:31), see also Byington (1957:58-59).

out of 28) concern the title אדוני יהוה. Given that this title occurs just 25 times over 66 chapters, such a large amount of deviations seems disproportionate.

We are fortunate in having fragments from several other manuscripts with which to compare these data. The sizeable portion given in 1QIsa<sup>b53</sup> gives us two examples of correspondence with the MT (22:12 and 15) although the אדוני יהוה of 22:14 is not preserved.<sup>54</sup> 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> (4Q163)<sup>55</sup> agrees with the MT twice (10:23 and 24) but lacks the אדוני in Isa. 30:15.<sup>56</sup>

The evidence from the Isaiah manuscripts is open to interpretation. We can be sure that the form אדוני יהוה was known, and that its place in the text was largely similar to that in the present MT. We can also deduce that it presented a considerable problem to the scribes. What we cannot know is exactly how similar the Qumran tradition was to the MT, and if the deviations should be explained as mere scribal error, or a different textual tradition. Indeed, the distinction I am making is based on the probably erroneous assumption that a single 'Qumran tradition' existed by which all copies could be corrected. The safest conclusion to draw is that placing of אדוני at that time was relatively fluid. The gloss hypothesis has not found overwhelming support, such as the total absence of the combination יהוה אדוני or marginal אדוני acting as qere.

To date, the only other relevant material from the Dead Sea Scrolls is 4QEz<sup>a</sup>.<sup>57</sup> Fragments I and II contain sections of Ezek. 10:17-11:10. Only a small section of the middle of the column remains and sadly the two cases of MT אדוני יהוה are lost. However, by reconstructing the text and counting the number of letters in each line, McGregor argued on the basis of a letter count that the אדוני was indeed present.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> DJD 1:67 Pl 12.

<sup>54</sup> A letter-count of reconstructed text shows that the אדוני is unlikely to have been present. Five surrounding lines average 52.8 letters - this line has 53 without the אדוני (hence 57 with it).

<sup>55</sup> DJD V:19 (fragment 47 column II lines 19 and 20).

<sup>56</sup> Fragment 22, column II line 3 p. 24.

<sup>57</sup> Photograph on the endpapers of Zimmerli (1983), see also McGregor (1985:76-7, 259), Lust (1986:90-100), and Sinclair (1989:99-105).

<sup>58</sup> McGregor (1985:76-7) calculates that without the אדוני found in the MT, the two lines would have been 3.55 and 4.55 letters shorter than average. These results have been replicated both by myself and by Sinclair (1989:105). Sinclair notes that one of these lines would then be left with no room for the petuḥah of the MT (Ezek. 11:7), but nevertheless reconstructs the text with אדוני and without the petuḥah. This is quite reasonable because the petuḥah would have entailed a new line rather than a short space, as at 11:2.

Fragment III ii is cited by Lust as follows:<sup>59</sup>

Ezek. 23:46

כי כה אמר [אדני יהוה] העלה עליהם קהל

Naturally, the word(s) crucial for our question are only reconstructed, but with such a short lacuna, it is reasonable to trust that Lust would be able to judge whether there is space for four letters, or eight. Lust himself claims to have had access to photographs,<sup>60</sup> although to my knowledge these photographs are not publicly available (they do not appear under this title on the *Electronic Library*).<sup>61</sup>

Recently, Lust gave preliminary details of a much larger section of Ezekiel (35:11-37:14).<sup>62</sup> The fragments, dated to the second half of the first century BCE, had been recovered from Masada by Yadin, and are due to be published by Talmon. Lust's article is based on a draft given to him by Talmon. Referring specifically to the title אדני יהוה, Lust says of the fragments:

In general the text accords with the MT.<sup>63</sup>

The name, or traces of it are preserved in 35:14, 36:2, 3, 7, 22, 23, 37:3, 5, 9, 12. However, Lust does not mention the presence *or* absence of the name in 36:4, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 32, 33, 37. We therefore have no way of knowing if the text makes it clear that אדני is not present, if the text is beyond reconstruction, or if a reconstruction indicates one way or the other. Thus, until the fragments themselves are made available, the Ezekiel evidence does little but confirm what we already concluded from Isaiah: the title אדני יהוה was certainly present, but its exact positioning may not have been fixed.

Thus far, the relevant passages from the other prophetic books have not been found. The evidence presented cannot prove that אדני is *original* to the text, but it does demonstrate that it is very early. This must make us re-evaluate the significance of the LXX in this case.

There is no doubt that the popularity of the gloss theory of אדני יהוה was due in no small part to the evidence of the LXX. The weight given the LXX in this case must be seen in the wider context of the MT vs. LXX rivalry,

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<sup>59</sup> Lust (1986b:98).

<sup>60</sup> Lust (1986b:93).

<sup>61</sup> Lim (1997).

<sup>62</sup> Lust (1996:138-145).

<sup>63</sup> Lust (1996:139).



described previously (Chapter 4). Lust criticizes the arbitrary and uncritical use of the LXX in previous Ezekiel scholarship:

A large majority of both the text-critical and the literary critical faction adhered to the thesis of the superiority of the LXX. Only a small minority gave a solid underpinning to this assertion. [Cornill (1886)] did not bother to give full proof of the corruption of the MT, since he took it for granted.<sup>64</sup>

Whatever the decision on the relative merits of the MT and the LXX, it is important to remember that *the LXX is a translation*. As such it suffers the same problem of all translations, namely how to translate accurately and yet idiomatically into the receptor language. The specific problem for translators here is that both יהוה and אדני are titles which would normally be rendered κύριος in Greek.<sup>65</sup>

In those places where אדני יהוה is used by a mortal addressing Yahweh, the LXX almost invariably tries to indicate this with an unusual Greek title. A comparison of these unusual titles, however, presents a picture of general confusion.<sup>66</sup> The distribution of different solutions shows both that different translators opted for different kinds of solutions (compare, for example Genesis δεσποτα, Deuteronomy κύριος κύριος and 2 Sam. κυριε μου κυριε), and that individual translators vacillated between one option and another

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<sup>64</sup> Lust (1986a:9). For similar criticisms, see Greenberg (1978: 131-148, 1986:123-135).

<sup>65</sup> At least this is how they are rendered in the *current* LXX. For a more historically accurate picture of the Greek 'translation' of יהוה, see the pp. 109-114 below.

<sup>66</sup> Pentateuch: In Genesis 15:2, 8 Abram uses δεσποτα and δεσποτα κυριε respectively. Moses addresses κυριε κυριε in both Deuteronomy passages (3:24 and 9:26). The latter combination may have inspired the New Testament expression κυριε κυριε (Matt. 7:21, 22, 25:11, Luke 6:46) used specially for beseeching salvation.

Former prophets: In Joshua 7:7, אדני יהוה is rendered by a mere κυριε. However, the translator has conveyed the connotation of supplication by his unique rendering of אהה as δεομαι (i.e. אהה אדני יהוה ⇒ δεομαι κυριε). Δεομαι (I beseech) conveys humility, unlike the other translations of אהה e.g. ἄ ἄ, ὦ, ἡθηδαμωσ, οἰμμοι. Codex Alexandrianus of the two Judges passages (6:22, 16:28) uses κυριε κυριε; while codex Vaticanus has κυριε μου κυριε in the first instance and ἀδωναιε κυριε in the second. David's prayer in 2 Sam. 7:18-29 uses κυριε μου κυριε throughout. The אדני יהוה at the end of Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 8:53) is rendered κυριε κυριε. The only אדני יהוה rendered simply κύριος out of all those in the Pentateuch and Former prophets is the non-address case - 1 Kings 2:26.

Latter Prophets: The two addresses in Amos come in 7:2, 5. These are the only cases of אדני יהוה in this chapter to be rendered κυριε κυριε - those in vv. 1, 4 (twice) and 6 which are formulaic are simply translated κύριος. (There is, however, another κύριος κύριος in LXX Amos 5:3, which is not an address.) In Jeremiah, the first two cases are rendered δεσποτα κυριε (1:6, 4:10), the second two simple κυριε (14:13, 32:17, LXX 39:17) and in the final case the whole title is omitted (32:25 LXX 39:25).

(Genesis 15:2 δεσποτα, 15:8 δεσποτα κυριε; Judges [B] 6:22 κυριε μου κυριε, 16:28 ἀδωναιε κυριε).

The situation with the non-address cases is hardly any clearer. A comprehensive presentation of how different Greek and Latin manuscripts of Ezekiel dealt with the title is given by McGregor in *The Greek Text of Ezekiel*.<sup>67</sup> Three important points emerge from his study:

- Most manuscripts have at least three alternative renderings for אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. The most common being ἀδωναι κυριος, κυριος κυριος, κυριος (ὁ) θεος, and simple κυριος.<sup>68</sup>
- These alternatives are not distributed evenly throughout the texts. While manuscripts vary considerably, most show changes of style at ch. 20 and again at ch. 40/42.<sup>69</sup>
- The earliest witnesses use single κυριος more often, prompting the reasonable speculation that an even earlier stage (now lost) had only κυριος throughout.<sup>70</sup>

McGregor concludes that the different renderings for אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה are the result of subsequent correction on the basis of the MT by different copyists, each responsible for different scrolls. In this case it becomes clear that the LXX of Ezekiel itself has a long and complicated text history, and cannot be used as a reliable witness for a pre-MT *Vorlage*.

It could of course be argued that the supposed 'single κυριος throughout' stage supports an אֲדֹנָי-free *Vorlage*. This is a scenario that McGregor unfortunately does not address directly. Nevertheless, it is most unlikely, both because of all the evidence presented in his thesis (and this chapter), and because there is another perfectly good explanation for a 'single κυριος stage' (see below).

The other non-address cases of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה give us no cause to alter our conclusions. In Amos, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה is found 18 times, excluding 7:2 and 7:5 where it forms an address to God. It is rendered κυριος 10 times,<sup>71</sup> κυριος κυριος once,<sup>72</sup> and κυριος ὁ θεος 7 times.<sup>73</sup> The case of κυριος κυριος makes the gloss

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<sup>67</sup> McGregor (1985).

<sup>68</sup> McGregor (1985:80).

<sup>69</sup> McGregor (1985:81).

<sup>70</sup> McGregor (1985:85). For support of this view, see Johnson, Gehman and Kase (1938:48-51).

<sup>71</sup> Amos 1:8, 4:2, 6:8, 7:1, 4 (twice), 6, 8:1, 3, 11.

<sup>72</sup> Amos 5:3.

<sup>73</sup> Amos 3:7, 8, 11, 13, 4:5, 8:9, 9:8.

theory untenable as it would need to be postulated that one אדני (i.e. 5:3) entered the text as a gloss before the Greek translation, the others after it. Despite this Wolff suggests that even this אדני is “probably” an addition.<sup>74</sup> In addition, the translator of Amos is not entirely random in his varied renderings of יהוה אדני. Instead we find clusters of solutions (κυριος ὁ θεος 4 times in ch. 3 and κυριος 4 times in ch. 7) suggesting perseverance (even if indecisive perseverance) on the part of the translator.

In Isaiah 22 out of 25 cases of יהוה אדני are translated as κυριος, two as ὁ θεος (25:8, 30:15) and one is omitted altogether (3:15). The three Jeremiah cases are each rendered κυριος (2:22, 7:20, 49:5 LXX 30:20). In the minor prophets, κυριος appears once,<sup>75</sup> κυριος ὁ θεος three times<sup>76</sup> and κυριος παντοκρατωρ once.<sup>77</sup> In the latter case, it is clear that the translation was influenced by יהוה צבאות in the following verse.

Nothing found in the other prophets is inconsistent with the conclusions of McGregor on the basis of Ezekiel, namely that LXX κυριος (or indeed κυριος ὁ θεος) is not valid evidence against the authenticity of MT אדני יהוה. This may not seem credible to a modern editor of BHS, for whom accuracy is paramount. The translators and copyists of the LXX apparently had other priorities, for example the attempt not to baffle their readers unnecessarily.

The translation of יהוה אדני by κυριος is not unprecedented, as pointed out by Baumgärtel and Zimmerli.<sup>78</sup> The title יהוה צבאות in Jeremiah is in the majority of cases rendered by the simple κυριος even when the traditional translation κυριος παντοκρατωρ is commonly used in the rest of the Septuagint<sup>79</sup> and even in Jeremiah (e.g. 23:16).

In other words, the Septuagint is simply not a relevant source for the question of the authenticity of יהוה אדני. The only relevant materials are the fragments from DSS Isaiah and Ezekiel, both in Hebrew, and both affirming the very early presence of אדני.

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<sup>74</sup> Wolff (1977:130 note “o”).

<sup>75</sup> Mic. 1:2.

<sup>76</sup> Obad. 1, Hab. 3:19, Zeph. 1:7.

<sup>77</sup> Zech. 9:14.

<sup>78</sup> Baumgärtel (1961a:18), Zimmerli (1983:561).

<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, BHS appears to be unaware of this.

## Possible cases of corruption

There are a number of possible cases of corruption in the historical books for which the LXX proves useful. In the prayer in 2 Sam. 7, David addresses god as אדני יהוה in verses 18, 19 (2א), 20, 28 and 29, and as יהוה אלהים in verse 25, (in v. 22 the Leningrad Codex, BHS and BHK read אדני יהוה; while the Aleppo Codex, Koren and Snaith give יהוה אלהים) without any apparent difference in meaning. The LXX gives εμὸν θεόν throughout. This is best explained as confusion of homophones at a stage after אדני יהוה was pronounced 'adonai elohim'. We may be reasonably certain that at some stage, David used אדני יהוה throughout.

A second instance is 1 Kings 2:26 (אדני יהוה ארון rendered εὐαγγελιστὴς αὐτοῦ). We noted that this was the only occurrence of אדני יהוה in the historical books that is not an address to God; it stands in contrast to the אדני יהוה of 1 Kings 8:53 which is rendered θεός αὐτοῦ, presumably by the same translator. In this case, we may speculate that the אדני of 2:26 may have been added later along the lines suggested by Revell.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, it may have been original, and omitted by the translator because *he* thought it was out of place. With only two cases of אדני יהוה in Kings it is impossible to be sure.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusions

The preceding discussion has shown that even apart from its use as an address to God, the title אדני יהוה has certain characteristic usages, namely in introductory and concluding formulae of prophetic oracles, as a structural marker, and in close proximity to (or replacing?) יהוה צבאות. These are followed to greater and lesser degrees by different authors. The presence of אדני in the text is therefore not accidental. The failure of the LXX to translate it consistently and accurately tells us much about the problems faced by translators and nothing about the *Vorlage* they read from.

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<sup>80</sup> Revell (1996:201-2) see note 13 above.

<sup>81</sup> Chronicles has no parallel of this whole episode. If (as implied by Auld 1994) this means it is later, then perhaps it is an example of organic use of אדני יהוה in direct speech, like יהוה אלהים in Chronicles (see ch. 7)?

**Excursus:**  
**יהוה or κύριος in the earliest Septuagint?**

Having argued that the combination יהוה אדני was indeed original to Ezekiel, McGregor backs up his position with an article by Skehan.<sup>82</sup> The article in question brings together evidence of how the earliest Septuagint manuscripts dealt with the tetragrammaton: not with the Greek κύριος, but by retaining it in Aramaic or Palaeo-Hebrew script. Thus, McGregor reasons, it was possible for the present translations of יהוה אדני to have occurred:

Our text [the LXX] would thus contain a mixture of יהוה and κύριος readings. At some stage the יהוה form was changed to κύριος. This procedure was straightforward until a κύριος יהוה was met, and here we may find the key to our problem. Certainly, the scribe had a number of options before him, including ἀδωμαι κύριος, κύριος κύριος, and κύριος ὁ θεός. But there was also the possibility that he assumed the κύριος in the text already stood for יהוה and so he would just have written a single κύριος in his copy instead of the double form.<sup>83</sup>

The move McGregor makes here is interesting because Skehan's conclusions are contested.<sup>84</sup> Pietersma uses the LXX translations of יהוה אדני to prove precisely the *opposite* point, namely that an even earlier LXX-stage had κύριος. It would seem pertinent at this point to examine the Septuagint question independently.<sup>85</sup>

Many traditional sources favour the Hebraic practice. Origen writes:

In the more accurate exemplars [of the LXX] the (divine) name is written in Hebrew characters; not, however, in the current script, but in the most ancient.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> McGregor (1985:88), Skehan (1980:28-34). See also Pietersma (1984:86-88), Royse (1991:168-69), McGregor (1985:86-7), Metzger (1981:33-35), and Hurtado 1998:20-23.

<sup>83</sup> McGregor (1985:88).

<sup>84</sup> Pietersma (1984:96-7).

<sup>85</sup> The question of whether or not the original LXX had κύριος is separate from Fitzmyer's demonstration that יהוה, מרא, אדון, and κύριος were all used of Yahweh in pre-Christian Palestinian usage (1979:115-142). Fitzmyer's evidence includes the Letter of Aristeas's allusion to Deut. 7:18-19 (155, κύριου) and Luke's translation of Deut 6:5 (10:27, κύριου).

<sup>86</sup> *Selecta in Psalmos* 2.2, Migne PG 12/1104B9-12, Pietersma (1984:87). This view is repeated in several ancient sources, including Montfaucon (*Hex* i 86), Evagrius, and Jacob of Edessa (see Driver 1890:x, McGregor 1985:86 # 3, Ceriani 1863:110), Burkitt 1879:15.



Jerome notes the practice of writing and pronouncing a bastardized form of the name (in Greek) ΠΙΠΙ.<sup>87</sup> It is often said that the Syrohexaplar version renders **פפ**.<sup>88</sup> In the Palestinian Talmud, **פפי** is found as a substitute for the Divine Name.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, Baudissin concluded that “the ancient LXX read *kyrios* as a surrogate for *Yhwh*, and not a form of the Hebrew tetragram.”<sup>90</sup>

Skehan’s article brings together the palaeographic evidence which has come to light more recently, also supporting the palaeo-Hebrew/Aramaic practice. He concludes that the tetragrammaton was represented by a number of conventions (Iאω<sup>91</sup>, tetragrammaton in Aramaic<sup>92</sup> or palaeo-Hebrew<sup>93</sup> letters) before the present solution (κΥΡΙΟΣ<sup>94</sup>) became commonplace.

<sup>87</sup> *Prologus galeatus* (PL 28, 594-95) in Pietersma (1984:87); also Epistle 25 (Ad Marcellam, Letter to Marcellus, Concerning the Names of God, PL 22 col 429, CSEL 54.219) in Roysse (1991:177) and Skehan (1980:32).

<sup>88</sup> One example is in Field (1875:1:20 re Gen. 4:26, margin). The phenomenon is discussed in Ceriani (1863:110, 1868), Burkitt (1879:16), Metzger (1981:35 n 73), in Roysse (1991:168), McGregor (1985:86) and Skehan (1980:32). However, the Syro-Hexaplar’s standard substitute for יהוה is **𐤎𐤓𐤕**, sometimes with the marginal note **𐤌𐤌**. It is certainly an exaggeration to suggest that the Syro-Hexaplar uses **פפ** “freely” (McGregor 1985:86).

<sup>89</sup> *y. Nedarim* XI, 1. Skehan (1980:32), Mercati 1947:188-90.

<sup>90</sup> Baudissin (1929), summarized by Pietersma (1984:85). I have been unable to find the original work.

<sup>91</sup> Skehan (1980:28-31). 4Q120 papLXXLev<sup>b</sup> reads Iאω for *Yahweh* once clearly, and once partially. This is dated late 1st century BCE or early 1st CE by C.H. Roberts (1979:30 n. 1).

<sup>92</sup> Skehan (1980:31-2). P. Fouad 266 (Rahlfs 848) dated 1st cent BC containing Deut. chapters 21-2 represents יהוה consistently in square Aramaic script. See Wadell (1944:158-161), *DJD* IX pl xxxix-xli p167ff fragment 20:4, Metzger (1981:60 Pl 3), Aly and Koenen (1980).

The Ambrosian Palimpsest (Mercati 1958:xxxii) preserving parts of the Hexapla Psalms, routinely reads יהוה, sometimes יהוה פפ, and at least once יהוה פפ ΠΙΠΙ (frag II, table V, Ps. 27:8).

<sup>93</sup> Skehan (1980:32-34). The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll (W. Khabra XII καιγε) published by Barthelemy (1953:18-29, 1963). The scroll was found near Engedi in the Judean desert, and dates to 50 CE. In the three plates (1953:24, 1963:168) the tetragrammaton can be seen in palaeo-Hebrew no less than seven times. See also *DJD* VIII (1990:12).

Aquila fragments of Kings and Psalms dating to 5th or 6th century CE also use palaeo-Hebrew. Burkitt (1897:15-16), Taylor (1900:53-84), Metzger (1981:34 fig. 9).

P. Oxy. vii. 1007, a late third century CE LXX parchment codex of Genesis “has twice the abbreviated form: two palaeo-Hebrew *yods*, with the horizontal stroke in the middle continuous through both” (Skehan 1980:33, published by Hunt, 1910:1-3).

<sup>94</sup> Skehan (1980:34) P. Oxy. iv. 656 (Grenfell and Hunt 1904:30-33), giving parts of Genesis and dated 2nd century CE, testifies to κΥΡΙΟΣ. Here, however, the DN was added by a second scribe.



Recently, however, Pietersma argued on the basis of *internal* LXX (Pentateuch) evidence that Greek κυριος for the tetragrammaton was indeed present in the earliest LXX. He argues:

The almost universal equivalent of ליהוה in the Pentateuch is *kyrios* in the dative case... Now if we posit that the original LXX did not have *kyrios* but the indeclinable tetragram instead, we would have to believe that the *kyrios* surrogator, without any help whatsoever from his Greek text, hit upon such a remarkably high degree of correspondence between ליהוה and κυριω. Impossible it is perhaps not, but certainly improbable.<sup>95</sup>

This is not nearly as improbably as Pietersma makes out. An intelligent and well-educated scribe would have had a great deal of help from his Greek text - he had the *context*. For example, in Lev. 1:2, Yahweh instructs Moses to say to the Israelites:

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן ליהוה מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם

We can imagine that the 'surrogator' was faced with a text closely resembling the following:

Ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐὰν προσάγαγῃ δῶρα ἰεὺς ἀπὸ τῶν κτηνῶν, ἀπὸ τῶν βοῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν προβάτων, προσοίσετε τὰ δῶρα ὑμῶν.\*

In this context, nominative or genitive cases for κυριος are out of the question. The scribe had only two choices: accusative (προς κυριου) and dative (τω κυριω). Is it really surprising that he chose dative, and that this choice became a relatively consistent feature of his translation?

Similarly, Pietersma concludes from the following that the LXX translators understood both אדון and יהוה as κυριος:<sup>96</sup>

Ex. 23:17 האדן יהוה -> κυριου του θεου σου

Ex. 34:23 האדן יהוה אלהי ישראל -> κυριου του θεου Ισραηλ

<sup>95</sup> Pietersma (1984:95).

<sup>96</sup> Pietersma (1984:95).

However, if the same logic as before is applied, then the following is perfectly conceivable. יהוה (MT Ex. 23:17) was initially translated κυριου יהוה\*. When the 'surrogator' came to change all tetragrammatons into Greek, he was faced with a problem. Rather than being accused of dittography, he used the expression κυριου του θεου σου possibly influenced by κυριου του θεου σου in verse 19. At Ex. 34:23, the surrogator faced with κυριου יהוה του θεου 'Ισραελ\* may have felt that the name was quite long enough, and simply omitted the tetragrammaton.

What I am suggesting therefore, is that the 'surrogator' was in fact a *translator*. The translation was staggered: the tetragrammaton was at first left untranslated and then translated later on. As soon as the 'surrogator' or 'copyist' is granted the intelligence of a *translator*, all of Pietersma's arguments can similarly be turned on their heads.

Pietersma explains the extant textual evidence of יהוה in LXX manuscripts as a re-hebraizing process, beginning in 2nd century BCE, sparked off by the influx of Palestinian Jews to Egypt. He links this process to the letter of Aristeas:

Aristeas' point is clear: the accuracy of the LXX makes all revision both unnecessary and illegal. Nothing is either said or implied about the scope of such revision. The kind of systematic replacing of the familiar and hallowed *kyrios* with the parochial Hebrew tetragram which reduced the LXX to an inferior status vis-à-vis the Hebrew ... would seem to be perfectly capable of having provided an occasion for Aristeas to launch his counter-attack.<sup>97</sup>

Pietersma brings no evidence that Palestinian or Egyptian Jews thought of the name יהוה as parochial. This is surely a Christian, not a Jewish perspective. And if יהוה had parochial connotations, then so also did the whole of the Hebrew text, and there would be no question of the LXX being inferior to the Hebrew.

Royse<sup>98</sup> adds to this debate the evidence from Philo, and although he does not say so explicitly, his findings make Pietersma's position even more difficult. While the extant manuscripts of Philo contain only the Greek κυριος, the fact that they have been copied over the centuries by Christian scribes opens the possibility that he too *could* have written the tetragrammaton in

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<sup>97</sup> Pietersma (1984:100).

<sup>98</sup> Royse (1991:167-183).

Hebrew, and that this also could have been translated into Greek at a later date.

From passages like *Rer. Div. Her.* 23 (κύριος μὲν γὰρ παρὰ τὸ κύριος), Royse establishes that Philo must have known and written the word κύριος.<sup>99</sup> However, it is also clear from some of Philo's comments that he knew of the tetragrammaton.<sup>100</sup>

A piece of gold plate, too was wrought into the form of a crown with four incisions, showing a name which only those whose ears and tongues are purified may hear or speak in the holy place, and no other person, nor in any other place at all. That name has four letters, so says that master learned in divine verities. (*Vit. Mos.* 2:114-15)

Above the turban is the golden plate on which the graven shapes of four letters, indicating, as we are told, the name of the Self-Existent, are impressed (*Vit. Mos.* 2.132)

Royse goes on to ask why Philo thought that the *tetragrammaton* was inscribed on the plate, while the MT of the passage states that *two* words, קדש ליהוה, were to be inscribed (Ex. 28:36 [= LXX 28:32 ἁγιασμα κυριου], 39:30 [= LXX 36:39 ἁγιασμα κυριω]).<sup>101</sup> The solution, according to Royse, is that Philo read in *his* LXX ἁγιασμα יהוה, and was therefore unaware of the syntactic relationship between the two words. Royse could therefore have come across exactly the problem of case-confusion that Pietersma claimed was lacking.

Royse's suggestion, however, leaves us with another problem. If Philo had seen and understood the verse as described by Royse, he would have been left with a rogue word (ἁγιασμα) in the nominative, hanging uncomfortably in the sentence. It is difficult to see that this would not have been a problem for Philo. There is a much simpler way of understanding his comments. He may very well have understood that the inscription was to include the word ἁγιασμα, but *he was more interested in the tetragrammaton*. It may still be, of course, that Philo saw ἁγιασμα יהוה in his LXX, or it may be that he knew from some other source that the name of God contained four letters.

<sup>99</sup> Royse (1991:174). See also *Somn.* 2.29, *Jos.* 28, *Spec. Leg.* 1.30, *Quaest. in Exod.* 2.62.

<sup>100</sup> Royse (1991:179-181). *Vit. Mos.* 2:114-15, 132-5 (vol vi).

<sup>101</sup> Philo does get it right at *Migr. Abr.* 103, (ἁγιασμα κυριω) but here Royse introduces the idea of scribal corruption (1991:179).

The contributions of both Royse and Pietersma in themselves do little to clarify the problem, but they do suggest a direction for further research (i.e. internal investigation). While Royse cannot yet prove that Philo saw יהוה and used κυριος in his own writings, the evidence is quite compatible with this scenario. It is still possible that the original translation contained κυριος, or even that some manuscripts read κυριος while others had יהוה.<sup>102</sup> However we have no palaeographic evidence for such an early stage, and neither does Pietersma's evidence point toward it.

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<sup>102</sup> This seems likely on palaeographic evidence. *Kyrios* is first attested 2nd century CE (p. Oxy iv 656, n. 93 above), the palaeo-Hebrew practice dates to the 5th or 6th century CE (Aquila fragments, n. 92 above).

## CHAPTER 7

### YAHWEH ELOHIM

#### Introduction

The combination *Yahweh Elohim* appears only 40<sup>1</sup> times in the Hebrew Bible. Genesis 2-3 accounts for half of these (20); 9 are found in Chronicles (1 Chr. 17:16, 17, 28:20, 29:1, 2 Chr. 1:9, 6:41 (2x), 42, 26:18); and 6 in the Psalter (Pss. 59:6, 72:18, 80:5, 20, 84:9, 12). The remainder are scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible: Ex. 9:30, 2 Sam. 7:25, 2 Kings 19:19, Jer. 10:10, and Jon. 4:6 The editors of BDB describe the title thus:

probably always due to later editors, or to a Qere which has crept into the text.<sup>2</sup>

This attitude is no doubt influenced both by a similar one regarding אדני יהוה and by the title's debut coming as it does in the first chapters of Genesis - the very chapters which are so often used to demonstrate the relevance of DN's to the documentary hypothesis. Thus BDB's editors suggest that אלהים in Gen. 2-3 may have been inserted by the Priestly redactor, or by J into an older source, and are quick to point out that every other instance is either late (e.g. Ps. 72:18), secondary (e.g. 2 Chr. 26:18), or textually problematic (e.g. Ex. 9:30<sup>3</sup>).

One of the few comprehensive treatments of this title is given by Murtonen. He translates *Yahweh* as 'Lord' on the basis of later אדני and κυριος; *Elohim* by 'gods' (plural on account of Gen. 3:22: "And Yahweh Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as *one of us* ...");<sup>4</sup> the two names coming together

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<sup>1</sup> That is, according to the Leningrad Codex, BHS and BHK. The Aleppo Codex, Koren and Snaith attest another יהוה אלהים at 2 Sam. 7:22 where BHS/K read אדני יהוה. This is not the only minor difference between the various versions of the MT, see Tov (1989:2-8).

<sup>2</sup> BDB: 219 under יהוה:הוה II.1.h.

<sup>3</sup> The Septuagint of Ex. 9:30 reads τοῦ κυριου.

<sup>4</sup> Murtonen (1952:70), Murtonen's translation and italics.

in construct state; resulting in the translation 'the Lord of (the) gods.'<sup>5</sup> He argues that this meaning is quite appropriate in both the Genesis and Exodus cases:

In order to indicate that the orders of *Yhwh* are above those of the other gods, [i.e. the serpent] it was necessary to emphasize that *Yhwh* was, not only the Lord of Israel, but also the Lord of (all the) gods. The meaning also fits well the the passage Ex. 9:30. Because the Pharaoh himself was god, it was necessary to indicate that the god of Israel was the Lord of (all the) gods.<sup>6</sup>

Of the others, Jonah and the Psalms are to be disregarded as imitations, 2 Chr. 6:41-42 fits because Solomon was not a monotheist, and there is nothing in the other cases (2 Sam. 7, Chronicles) to preclude the use of the title.

Murtonen's analysis is seriously flawed, and can be criticised on numerous grounds. Firstly, regardless what we know from archeology, neither the serpent nor Pharaoh make any claims to divinity *in these texts*. Gen. 3:1 clearly describes the snake as one of the *animals* (חית השרה) that God had made (עשה). In Gen. 3:5, the snake claims that Eve can become like *God* (or gods, כאלהים), not like *one of us*. As regards the Exodus text, no Israelite or Egyptian makes any reference to Pharaoh's divinity.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, other texts in which mortals arrogantly claim to be divine (Isa. 14, Ezek. 28) or Yahweh argues his position with another heavenly being (Job 1) do not use the title *Yahweh Elohim* as Murtonen's logic would require.

It should also be observed that the actual occurrence of *Yahweh Elohim* and the supposed context according to Murtonen do not coincide. Gen. 2-3 covers a lot more than just the serpent episode, and in that specific episode (3:1-7) *Yahweh Elohim* is not used (except once, by the narrator). The serpent uses *Elohim* - if he were a competing divinity, we might expect him to use the personal name of his opponent (*Yahweh*) not his title (*Elohim*). Regarding Exodus, Murtonen does not explain why the phrase is used in this verse, and not in the whole plagues narrative, which is where the supposed combat between Yahweh and Pharaoh takes place.

As for the other cases, if *Yahweh Elohim* were used every time a polytheist prayed, and every place it was not precluded for some other

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<sup>5</sup> Murtonen (1952:72).

<sup>6</sup> Murtonen (1952:73-4).

<sup>7</sup> This does not imply that Pharaoh was not generally understood as being divine, only that his divinity is not the issue in this text.



reason, we would surely find more than 40 occurrences. Why should Jonah and the Psalms imitate Gen. 2-3?

It is interesting to compare Murtonen's analysis to that of Mowinckel.<sup>8</sup> Mowinckel regards the name as the result of the conflation of sources, and also as "a sort of monotheistic confession of faith." He translates it: "Yahweh is (the only) God" or "Yahwe, who is the God." The disparity between the explanations of Mowinckel and Murtonen (which is anything but monotheistic) illustrates the arbitrary nature of their method. Murtonen relies primarily on etymology and translation of the title, and only secondarily on examining those texts in which it is found. He starts from the assumption that the ancient Semitic had no 'pure proper names,'<sup>9</sup> and therefore that every name *must mean something*. He then engages in the etymological fallacy, and crudely bends the interpretation of texts to fit his definition. The flaws in his results are a good illustration of the fundamental problems inherent in this kind of logic.

A more fruitful method of understanding the name is to look at those places where it is used, ask what it adds to the text there. This chapter will examine each case in turn and then draw conclusions.

### Genesis 2-3 (20x)

*Yahweh Elohim* is the usual term for the deity from Gen. 2:4 to the end of chapter 3. Before the *Yahweh Elohim* section comes a text in which *Elohim* is consistently used for the deity (Gen. 1-2:3), and after it comes a section where *Yahweh* is consistently used (Gen. 4).<sup>10</sup>

This must be seen in the context of a number of traditions in which the name *Yahweh* was not known from the beginning of time but started to be used at a particular point in history. According to Gen. 4:26 ('J'), people began to invoke the name *Yahweh* in the time of Seth. In the tradition of Exodus 3 ('E') *Yahweh's* name was revealed to Moses: he described himself as the same as the god of the ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 'P' (Exodus 6:2) agrees with this, while adding that the same god appeared to those ancestors under the name El Shaddai. The details vary but the theme is

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<sup>8</sup> Mowinckel (1937:50-51).

<sup>9</sup> Murtonen (1952:81).

<sup>10</sup> My reasons for dividing the text thus, rather than the convention (1:1-2:4a + 2:4bff) are stated below, under 'style'.

the same: while Yahweh had been there since the beginning of time, he had not always been known by this name.

Seen in this context, *Elohim* in Gen. 1:1-2:3 and *Yahweh Elohim* in 2:4-3:24 are another version of the names by which Yahweh was known at the beginning of time. *Yahweh Elohim* therefore serves as a transition between *Elohim* and *Yahweh* and makes the point that they are one and the same.<sup>11</sup>

Murtonen dismisses this possibility on two counts.<sup>12</sup> He claims that if the editor had merely wanted to identify *Elohim* with *Yahweh*, he would have used the formula Y הוא X, eg: עשו הוא אדום Gen. 35:1, 8. The case of Esau, however, is quite different. The *character* is known only as Esau before and after the identification is made, the purpose of this identification being to link the man (Esau) to the nation (Edom). In any case, Gen. 36:43 shows that more than one formula may be used for this purpose.

Murtonen also argues that the identification of *Yahweh* with *Elohim* was needed only for 20th century commentators, and not for the first readers of the Pentateuch and that such an identification need be made only once, not twenty times. However, the theme that 'Yahweh is God' is one which is hammered out quite explicitly, for example by the reiteration of יהוה הוא האלהים.<sup>13</sup> Even Esau is identified with Edom three times in the one chapter (Gen. 36:1, 8, 43).

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that the 'transition' interpretation is incorrect. There remains the question of whether the change in DNs that occurs in the text is semantically related to the meaning of the text itself. Does the text itself apart from the DNs, betray a transition, and if so from what to what? Determining the answers to these questions depends on determining the exact difference between the two creation stories. Much has been said in general terms about the differences between these two accounts. For example, Westermann states:

The first chapter of the Bible deals with the creation of the human race as only one of the works of creation. The second chapter deals almost exclusively with the human race as God's creation.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This is the line taken by Redpath (1904:292), Cassuto (1961:33), Kidner (1967:58-9), and Hayman (oral communication).

<sup>12</sup> Murtonen (1952:69).

<sup>13</sup> Deut. 4:35, 39, 7:9, 1 Kings 8:60, 18:39 (twice), 2 Chr. 33:13.

<sup>14</sup> Westerman (1987:10).

While Westerman's conclusion is not in doubt, the manner in which he proceeds is dubious. He goes on to reason that the first chapter must be considerably later than the second because the ability of humans to see the world from anything other than a human perspective is a sign of a much more 'advanced' society. Primitive culture (as reflected in Gen. 2:4ff) could only perceive the world from its own point of view. The fact that over 2000 years on, an even more advanced society still fails to see the world and behave toward it in anything other than an anthropocentric manner does not seem to bother Westerman.

A different angle of research is to examine exactly *how* the texts achieve their differing perspectives. Thus we are saved from the need to enter into wild speculation about the growth of human civilisation. We also have the opportunity to hone the generalisation given above to a more accurate and nuanced one. The specific differences that contribute to the overall one can, for the sake of convenience only, be divided into differences of content and style (it will be observed that the two often overlap).

## Content

In Gen. 1-2:3, creation is organised according to type, and ordered according to plan: first the parameters of time and space, the conditions necessary for life, then plant life, then animals. Cassuto noted that the first three days' creation are balanced by the second three:<sup>15</sup>

- |               |                   |                            |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Light      | 2. Sea and Heaven | 3. Earth (with its plants) |
| 4. Luminaries | 5. Fish and Fowl  | 6. Land creatures and Man  |

The effect is that creation proceeds according to a pattern or plan. While Adam is presented as the pinnacle of creation (1:28-9), he remains just one created being along with all the others (1:30).

In Gen. 2:4ff, creation begins with Adam, and is thereafter organized *solely* according to his needs: a garden in which to put him (2:8), nice plants for *him*<sup>16</sup> to eat (2:9), animals to keep him company (2:19), and, at length, woman to be his mate (2:21-22). Moreover, the impression given is that

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<sup>15</sup> Cassuto (1961:17).

<sup>16</sup> There is no mention of what the animals are to eat!

rather than following a pre-ordained plan, God is making it up as he goes along. He does not predict the eventuality that Adam might be lonely until he is well installed in the garden (2:18), and does not realise that the animals cannot provide Adam with proper company until the lengthy process of creation and naming is complete (2:18-20).

A similar distinction is to be found in the concepts of geography and space. In the first account, interest in terrestrial geography is limited to there being areas of dry land and areas of water, while vertical geography is given much more consideration.<sup>17</sup> The first spatial concept in creation is the *רקיע* (1:6-8) which gives the universe an up-down orientation by dividing the waters that are under it (*מתחת*) from those that are over it (*מעל*). The *רקיע* which is then named *שמים* (1:8) and under the combined name *רקיע השמים* is lavishly decorated with lights (*מארת*, 1:14-18): consisting two great lights (*המארת הגדלים*, 1:16), of which one is greater (*המאר הגדל*) and one lesser (*המאר הקטן*), and the stars (*הכוכבים*). The vertical plane is also the organising principle in the creation of fauna. On the fifth day are created those creatures who swim *below* or fly *above* the surface of the earth (*על פני רקיע השמים*), on the sixth are created those who live *on* the surface of the earth. These observations can be related back to Cassuto's description of the way that the second three days balance the first three. In terms of geography, his analysis can be further reduced:

1/4 Light(s)                      2/5 Above and below      3/6 Middle

The second account, on the other hand, makes little of this vertical plane. Certainly, a mist goes up (2:6 *יעלה*) from the earth, but apparently not very far, because it goes straight back down again to water the earth. Birds of the air (*עוף השמים*) are put in the same category as beasts of the field (*השדה חיה*) and there is no mention of seas or sea-beasts. Instead, four rivers are named, and their destinations described in some detail (2:10-14). Only the course of the fourth river is not located, presumably because everyone knows where the Euphrates goes. The other names are also known from biblical geography and mythology: the land of *Havilah* from Gen. 25:18 and 1 Sam. 15:7; *Gihon*

<sup>17</sup> The vertical concept of heaven and earth (in the sense of 'underworld') is common to both accounts (Gen. 1:1, 2:4). It initiates the up-down orientation predominant in the first account. For *אֵרֶץ* meaning 'underworld' see Wyatt (1993:543-5), also 1 Sam. 28:13, Pss. 71:20, 89:12.

as the spring in Jerusalem<sup>18</sup> (e.g. 1 Kings 1:33, 38); the land of Cush (e.g. Ezek. 29:10); the river H̄ideqel (=Tigris, Dan. 10:4); and finally Assyria. The lengthy description of the rivers locates the narrative in geographical terms that the audience will find more-or-less familiar. The number of rivers as four recalls the four winds and the four corners of heaven (Jer. 49:36, Dan. 7:2 cf. 7:10). Eden, and therefore Adam, are at the source and the centre of this world.<sup>19</sup> The narrative also contains relative geographical terms: east (2:8,<sup>20</sup> 3:24 מקדם, 2:14 מקדמת); inside/outside the garden (3:3 בתוך הגן העץ אשר 3:23 מגן עדן; and in between a sword guarding עץ דרך (3:24). The second creation story is set in terrestrial, or horizontal geography.

The accounts also differ in respect to their concepts of time. The first account is very conscious of the cycles of time that govern the created world. This is conveyed by the repeated phrase: ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום X. Larger cycles of time are governed by the lights in the sky which not only separate day and night but also mark:

1:14

לאתת ולמועדים ולימים ושנים

However the narrated events themselves appear to exist outside the patterns they create. It is somehow unbelievable that all the events described could have taken place in only 6 days! Day and night are created before the sun

<sup>18</sup> For the serpentine element of גחון see Neiman (1977:326) and Wyatt (1996:99). The belly of the snake is גחון (Gen. 3:14, Lev. 11:42). There may also be a phonetic allusion from or to Dan. 7:2, where the four winds מניחן (stir up, attack נגח) the great sea.

<sup>19</sup> On this, see Wyatt (1996:48-70).

<sup>20</sup> Although a case could be made here for taking מקדם in the temporal sense, i.e. *of yore* (Wyatt 1981:13, Wyatt, Watson and Lloyd 1996:55). In particular, as מקדם is not followed by 'ל + toponym' as usual (Gen. 3:24, 12:8, Num. 34:11, etc.), the question arises, *east of what?* However, the same question arises in Gen. 13:11 where the meaning is indubitably spatial: ויסע לוט מקדם.

When מקדם occurs in the temporal sense, the context usually makes this quite clear with other time-words (מאז Isa. 45:21, [עולם-מים] Mic. 5:1, Ps. 77:6, Prov. 8:32, Pss. 77:6, 143:5, Neh. 12:46, זכר-√ Pss. 77:12, 143:5). In Gen. 2:8, מקדם does not fit well into either understanding. The reading preferred here 'east' is influenced by the other space-words in the context (עדן, שם). It also seems to me that background information (*when* this all occurred) is better placed at the beginning (2:4 יהוה אלהים) than in the midst of rapid action indicated by the succession of *vav*-constitutive clauses:

(7) וייצר יהוה אלהים ... (8) ויסע יהוה אלהים ... וישם שם ... (9) ויצמח יהוה אלהים



and moon. The plants created in day 3 cannot already be producing fruit and seed for Adam to eat on day 6.

The opposite situation is found in Gen. 2:4ff where time *as a concept* is given little attention. The only time-words used are כל ימי חייו (3:17) and לעולם (3:22) both significantly coming from God's mouth.<sup>21</sup> Instead, the plot is set in real time, as conveyed in the elements of plot development. For example the sequence of *problem* (Adam is alone, 2:18), *false solutions* (2:19-20), and *real solution* (2:21-24). The use of the motif of nakedness to mark differing stages in the development of plot is described below. However, the over-riding aspect of plot in this text has to be that an action (3:6) has consequences (3:14-24), and cannot be undone. Thus it can be said that while the first creation story deals specifically with the creation of time, it itself is 'timeless', while the second sets its plot within time, but does not deal with time as such. In other words, the first deals with the theory of time, and the second with the practicalities.

Naturally related to the cycles of time are those of reproduction. Thus we should not be surprised to find that the first account places a good deal of emphasis on reproduction, by the command to be fruitful and multiply (1:22, 28), and by repetition of the roots מין (10x) and זרע (also 10x). The overall effect is that once instituted, these patterns of life will continue with a fixed inevitability: birds will have baby birds, beasts will have baby beasts.

Gen. 2:4ff, however, deals not with the inevitability of the cycle of life as seen from afar, but rather with the complexities of it as it actually happens. It deals with the mixed blessing of youthful naivety (sinless bliss consists of not knowing good and evil), the process of maturation (becoming aware of nakedness, 3:7), having to leave parents before joining a partner (2:24), the need to bear children despite the pain of doing so (3:16), and the sheer difficulty in making ends meet (3:17-19).

It becomes clear that the two accounts deal with the same general issue (i.e. creation) from two angles, which we can picture (drawing from the section on geography above) as vertical and horizontal. In the middle, the two lines coincide, and here we find shared concepts. The second account consists mostly of the expansion, the realistic working out of these shared concepts. For example, the first account disposes neatly and quickly (but rather inadequately!) with the issue of gender and sex:

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<sup>21</sup> There is also the background information in 2:4 (ביום עשות), and possibly מקדם in 2:8.



The second story, on the other hand does not miss the opportunity to spin a story about Adam being lonely, the rib operation, etc. Now having two human characters to work with, the author uses them to good effect in the account of the sin. Here they work as a kind of 'domino effect' (snake causes Eve to sin, Eve does same to Adam) which is then reversed in the admission to God (Adam tells on Eve, Eve tells on snake).

Another concept which is presented as being quite simple in the first account is *good*, טוב. This word appears in the phrase וירא אלהים כי טוב seven times (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 24, 31, the only possible complicating feature being the extra מאוד in the last example). However, the word טוב takes on darker and more complicated nuances in the second account, in עץ הדעת טוב ורע (2:9, 17, see also 3:5 and 22).

Almost any element in the second account can be traced back to something in the first. However, the reverse is not true. The first deals with numerous issues which are not present in the second: heaven and earth, dry land and seas, day and night, sun, moon and stars, sea-monsters and sea-life generally.<sup>22</sup> The second story selects only a fraction of the elements in the first and develops them. A survey of those that it selects and those that it rejects quickly shows that it is only interested in those aspects of creation that are directly related to the human experience. The very few elements in the second account that are genuinely new all confirm this bias: obedience to rules (2:17), emotions (2:18), relationships (2:24).

## Style

A comparison of the first verses of each account demonstrates the difference in phraseology between them:

Gen. 1:1

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

Gen. 2:4 אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות יהוה אלהים ארץ ושמים

<sup>22</sup> Indeed this prompts Segal (1967:32) to assert that Gen. 2:4ff is not a creation story at all.

In contrast to Gen. 1:1's textbook verb-subject-object, 2:4 is much more verbose and loosely constructed. It mentions heaven and earth twice, has two different words for creation, and for all that contains not one finite verb. A translation reflecting these elements might be:

These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created in the day of the LORD God's making of earth and heaven.  
(own translation)

This is not to say that the verse is artless, as evidenced by the chiasm: השמים את הארץ ואת הארץ את השמים. Gesenius notes the difference in the use of את between את השמים ואת הארץ (1:1) and את הארץ ואת השמים.<sup>23</sup> This, however, is just the tip of the iceberg, for while 1:1 revels in the crispness and correctness of את השמים ואת הארץ where the את is not absolutely necessary,<sup>24</sup> while 2:4 enjoys the lack of finite verb (hence direct object, hence את) and is not even sure whether heaven and earth should get the article or not!

#### **Excursus: The Position of Gen. 2:4a**

This interpretation is incompatible with the current consensus found in commentaries and translations which breaks v. 4 into two: 4a being a summary of what went before, and 4b the true beginning of the second story.<sup>25</sup> The line taken here is not unprecedented.<sup>26</sup> According to Cassuto,<sup>27</sup> the primary reason for the majority position is that אלה תלדות is a P phrase, and therefore cannot belong to the same section that refers to God as 'Yahweh'. Also, the looseness and repetitiveness of 2:4 which has been described here is felt to be 'unacceptable'. However, Cassuto points out that

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<sup>23</sup> Gesenius #117a p. 363.

<sup>24</sup> The use of the particle את is neither limited to the definite direct object, nor compulsory for it (Gibson 1994:115-6). Gibson notes that it is more likely to be used of people and animals than an inanimate object (such as heaven and earth) See, for example, Gen. 11:8 ויחדלו לבנות העיר. It is also not unprecedented for only one object out of two in a list to receive את e.g.: Jud. 1:4 ויתן יהוה את הכנעני והפרזי בידם and Gen. 2:19: ויצר יהוה אלהים מן האדמה כל

<sup>25</sup> So von Rad (1961:45, 71), Speiser (1964:5, 14), Westerman (1987), and NRSV. Von Rad even notes that this division makes both 2:4a and 2:4b difficult (1961:61, 74).

<sup>26</sup> Cassuto (1961b:96-99), Segal (1967:32), and Koren translation.

<sup>27</sup> Cassuto (1961:96-97).

removing 4a from the following material still leaves a syntactical problem, since 4b is not a complete sentence.

The most substantial criticism of this position, however, concerns the phrase אלה תלדות. The whole reliance of the documentary hypothesis on 'typical' words and phrases must be re-evaluated in the light of van Seters:<sup>28</sup> אלה תלדות may well be a P phrase, but this does not stop other documents and writers from using it (e.g. Ruth 4:18). In particular, since the P document accounts for the vast majority of genealogical material, it is hardly surprising that it also accounts for the majority of cases of אלה תלדות. So it might be more accurate to describe it as a genealogical phrase, rather than a P phrase. In fact it does occur several times in close proximity to *Yahweh*, with no obvious signs of editing to separate the two: אלה תלדות in Gen. 10:1 cf. יהוה twice in 10:9; אלה תלדות in Gen. 25:19 cf. יהוה in v. 21 (twice), 22, 23. More importantly, the contexts in which אלה תלדות is found show it to be an introductory phrase.<sup>29</sup> This in itself is not 'proof' that 2:4a is an introduction, because it could always be argued that it functions differently in this particular context. However, nothing in this context does so (2:3 is a perfectly good ending in itself). Therefore we can see the modern desire to break up the verse into two as a symptom of our need to 'correct' its loose style.

Apart from grammatical style, the two accounts differ also in general narrative style, the way the narrative is constructed and presented. Gen. 1:1ff follows a tight rhythm (introduction, 6 days creation, 7th day of rest). Within this rhythm, each day follows a pattern more-or-less faithfully:

ויאמר אלהים  
ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום X

Which is frequently punctuated by two phrases:

וירא אלהים כי טוב  
ויהי כן

<sup>28</sup> van Seters (1975: 156).

<sup>29</sup> The formula X אלה תלדות is found a further 11 times in the Hebrew Bible: of these in 8 cases it is unmistakably an introduction to what follows (Gen. 6:9, 11:10, 25:12, 19, 36:1, 37:2, Num. 3:1, Ruth 4:18) and in the remaining 3 ambiguous cases it could conceivably be a conclusion, but is more likely an introduction (Gen. 10:1, 11:27, 36:9).

In addition, the description of each day's creation is tightly bound together by two means: alliteration/root repetition, and expanded repetition of whole verses. The fifth day is used as an illustration, firstly of alliteration or root repetition:

1:20a sibilants (ש, ש, צ)	ישרצו המים שרץ נפש חיה
1:21a	כל נפש החיה הרמשת אשר שרצו המים
1:20b (פ)	ועוף יעופף
1:21b	כל עוף כנף

It also illustrates the expanded repetition by the narrator of God's words in the previous verse:

1:20	ויאמר אלהים ישרצו המים שרץ נפש חיה ועוף יעופף על הארץ על פני רקיע השמים
1:21	ויברא אלהים את התנינם הגדלים ואת כל נפש החיה הרמשת אשר שרצו המים למינהם ואת כל עוף כנף למינהו

The incessant repetition by the narrator in each day of creation emphasises just how well everything goes according to plan.<sup>30</sup> No sooner has God spoken than the objects of creation appear. Nothing happens to disrupt the flow of creation, or the daily rhythm of evening and morning. There is no suspense, no drama, no different points of view, no conflict.

In contrast with this, the narrative style of Gen. 2:3 flows with the plot as required, digressing at times with lengthy descriptions (e.g. the rivers, the naming of the beasts, the rib operation). Repetition here does not dictate the plot, but rather follows it (e.g. the sin 3:1-6, Adam's admission 3:12, Eve's admission 3:13). In contrast with the first account, the plot development is complex. For example, the insertion of an apparently insignificant detail, that

<sup>30</sup> This suggests that כִּי should be given its emphatic force in Gen. 1:4, etc. That is 'And God saw how good the light was.' Compare with Ps. 25:19 רבו ראה אויבי כי רבו where NRSV 'Consider how many are my foes' is certainly preferable to 'Consider that I have many foes'. The emphatic use could also be argued for in Gen. 6:2, 49:15, Ex. 2:2, 32:22, Isa. 3:10, Job 31:26, see Schoors (1981:240-76).

they were naked and not ashamed (2:25) becomes the inward and outward manifestation of their sin (3:7 they knew they were naked and covered themselves) which leads directly to their guilt becoming apparent to God (3:10-11). As a nice finishing touch, God shows his sensitivity to their needs by providing them with clothes (3:21).

Another repeated motif which the narrator uses to good dramatic effect is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Its impact as described here would be greatest on an audience who had already heard the story many times before. The first mention of the tree seems innocuous enough (2:9) - it appears naturally with the creation of the garden, plant life, and other trees. The initiated audience, however, would begin to get excited, as they would see in it the first sign of drama. However, their hopes for action would be quickly dashed by the onset of a lengthy geography lesson - the description of the rivers (2:10-14). The digression's beginning betrays its purpose, which is total disconnection with what came before:

*A river flows out of Eden (what river? what has the river got to do with anything?) to water the garden (Oh, I see. But if it is to water the garden, why does it flow out, and not in?)*

The storyline (which was just beginning to look promising) flows out of the drama, just as the river flows out of Eden. And from there it splits up further, becoming increasingly disconnected with the mention of each branch-river.

When the plot returns (2:15), the audience heaves a sigh of relief. This time the mention of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is even more ominous, as it is accompanied by a command and therefore becomes 'forbidden fruit' (2:17). From this point on, Adam is doomed and the audience knows it. And yet, rather than continuing with this element, the narrator digresses once more, this time into the search for a mate for Adam, and the ensuing creation of the animals and a woman (2:18-25). Here too comes the element of discontinuity:

Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone...'

This is unexpected because there had been no previous hint either that the man's aloneness was not good, or that his feelings had any bearing on God's

thought or actions. This diversion is made all the lengthier by the introduction of the false solution (animals) before the real solution (woman). In addition the false solution is filled out by expanded repetition:<sup>31</sup>

2:19                    ויצר יהוה אלהים מן האדמה כל חית השדה ואת כל עוף השמים  
2:20                    ויקרא האדם שמות לכל הבהמה ולעוף השמים ולכל חית השדה

That both diversions serve to delay the action that the audience is waiting for can be deduced by that fact that both immediately follow the mention of the tree. Progress in the main plot is indicated by the fact that at first the tree is mentioned as simply being there, and the second time it is accompanied by the command not to eat its fruit. Yet both diversions contribute secondarily to the wider plot (creation) by filling in the details. And the second diversion actually turns out to be the very element (woman) that brings about the action that the audience has been waiting for (3:1-6).

The stylistic differences between the two accounts of creation range from grammatical precision to the higher unit of narrative style like repetition, recurring motifs, etc. On each of these levels, the difference consists of Gen. 1:1ff. following exactly a tight rhythm, while Gen. 2:4ff. dances to a more complex tune that involves drama and suspense, and fully embraces the idiosyncratic and asymmetric nature of life. This is completely consistent with the difference between the accounts regarding content: that the first follows a pre-ordained schedule for the creation of the universe, while the second focusses specifically on the human experience.

The question that faces us now is can this difference be meaningfully linked to the different DNs used, or is the transition from *Elohim* via *Yahweh* *Elohim* to *Yahweh* a separate issue?<sup>32</sup> There are several reasons to see the DN

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<sup>31</sup> A similar type of repetition in Gen. 1:20-21 emphasised how well creation went according to plan. Here, however, it serves as a delaying tactic. The difference is that in Gen. 1:1ff., each of God's utterances is subject to expanded repetition, ie the whole description of creation consists of repetition. However, 2:19-20 is a lone example, which in its context delays the realisation that the animals are a false solution, and the subsequent real solution (woman, both within the sub-plot of the diversion), and hence the return to the main plot (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil).

<sup>32</sup> Cassuto (1961:87-8) answers this in the affirmative, relating to his criteria for the use of DNs (see pp. 32-33 above): "The name *Elohim* had necessarily to be used in the story of creation, for there God appears as the Creator of the material universe, and as the Master of the world who has dominion over everything and forms everything by His word alone, without there being any direct relationship between Himself and nature... In the narrative of the garden of Eden, on the other hand, God appears as the ruler of the moral



choice as integral to the different narratives. Firstly, the DNs are quite striking,<sup>33</sup> for example, the incessant repetition of *Elohim* in the first account, the sudden change at the beginning of the second account to *Yahweh Elohim* (an unusual combination), and the elimination of *Yahweh* from Eve's conversion with the snake.<sup>34</sup> More specifically, the designation *Elohim* in the first account shifting to *Yahweh Elohim* in the second follows a pattern we have already identified in other concepts (i.e. good -> the knowledge of good and evil; unisex Adam -> male Adam and female Eve). Another specific link between the differing DNs and the differing natures of the stories requires the examination of the concepts of language.

In the first account, God's uttering of the correct word stimulates creation of that object. For example:

1:3

ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור

Occasionally, one thing is called another, but this is always done by God, for example:

1:8

ויקרא אלהים לרקייע שמים

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world, for He enjoins a given precept on man, and demands an account of his actions; that apart, stress is laid here on His personal aspect, manifested in His direct relationship with man and the other creatures."

The criticisms levelled against Cassuto's thesis as a whole still apply. On the other hand, the above quotation shows that in many ways his analysis of the accounts is similar to mine. Apparently, Cassuto's criteria for the use of DNs were strongly influenced by the first chapters of Genesis. His mistake was in supposing that the tendency found here must have absolute validity, and can therefore be applied to the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>33</sup> Cassuto (1961:14) notes that a number of keywords appear in multiples of 7: e.g. *Elohim* in 1:1-2:3 appears 35 times, and DN in one form or other appears 77 times in chapters 1-4.

<sup>34</sup> In the episode of the serpent (3:1-5), *Yahweh Elohim* is mentioned only once, by the narrator, while the serpent and Eve both use *Elohim* only. This requires some kind of explanation.

One possibility is that, in accordance with Gen. 4:26, people before Gen. 4:26 did not use *Yahweh's* name. This theory has the advantage of explaining why the *narrator* refers to *Yahweh Elohim* in 3:1a but the *serpent* speaks only of *Elohim* in 3:1b. However in Gen. 4:1 Eve speaks of *Yahweh* in the most explicit terms!

A second possibility, suggested by Cassuto (1961a:33), is that *Yahweh's* name was deemed inappropriate for the first act of sin out of reverence. In this case, it would need to be postulated that the actual account of the sin was contained in 3:1b-5, while 3:1a merely gave background information.

The idea that these words are absolutely connected to the objects they denote is reinforced by the repetition of words within a day's creation (see above).

The second account also assumes some underlying language, but significantly realises that a word or name is an arbitrary symbol of its object, not equal to the object itself. The names of the first three rivers are introduced *as names*; only in the fourth is the river *equated* with its name, and this is clearly for the sake of brevity and variation:

2:11	שם האחד פישון
2:13	שם הנהר שני גיחון
2:14	ושם הנהר השלישי חדקל ... והנהר הרביעי הוא פרת

This idea is taken further with the animals. After creating them, the LORD God brings them to Adam:

2:19	לראות מה יקרא לו וכל אשר יקרא לו האדם נפש חיה הוא שמו
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The name of each animal arose after the animal itself; it was decided upon by someone other than the creator. The LORD God is actually curious to see what Adam will call them! The final naming is of course that of the woman. Almost as if to prove the point she is named twice:

2:23	ויאמר אדם ... לזאת יקרא אשה כי מאיש לקחה זאת
3:20	ויקרא האדם שם אשתו חוה כי הוא היתה אם כל חי

Another interesting point of comparison is the the word שם appears six times in the second account<sup>35</sup> but not at all in the first. From 2:4 onward things *have names*; before that things just *are*.

The difference between the two stances (words are absolute; words are arbitrary human constructs) can be related to the difference that we have already observed (idealistic and pre-ordained; realistic and anthropocentric). It also corresponds to the change in DN. The first account uses *Elohim* because that is *what* he is, the second uses *Yahweh* because that is *who* he is.

The above has shown that the difference in nature between Gen. 1:1ff. and Gen. 2:4ff. can be quantified both in terms of content and style: that the

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<sup>35</sup> Gen. 2:11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 3:20.



'Although you are afraid of the severity of the plague, and also generally of the Divine Power, nevertheless the Lord God, the God whom we designate by the name YHWH, you have still not recognized and you still do not fear.'<sup>37</sup>

He therefore refers back to Pharaoh's plea of 9:28 and Cassuto's comment:

Ex. 9:28

העתירו אל יהוה ורב מהית קלת אלהים וברד  
ואשלחה אתכם ולא תספון לעמד

He does not refer to the thunder as 'the Lord's voices' but as 'God's voices'; he regards it generally as a Divine phenomenon, but not as the specific act of YHWH, the God of Israel.<sup>38</sup>

Cassuto does not give Pharaoh all the credit he deserves, for if Yahweh was in no way connected to the plague, why would Pharaoh specifically ask Moses to pray to *Yahweh* for mercy? In fact, up to this point in the story, Pharaoh had been referring to Yahweh by name for some considerable time (Ex. 8:8, 28, 9:27). He evidently knew *who* Yahweh was, but not *what* he was. That is, he knew that Yahweh was the god of the Hebrews, but as the Israelites were a subjugated nation, he has no particular reason to fear their god, or to think that their god was **the** God. He had yet to learn the importance of Israel in international events, a fact which Cassuto took for granted.

At the seventh plague, however, he appears to take a step forward in understanding, for he links *Yahweh* (the god of the Hebrews) to *Elohim* (divinity as a whole). This being the point of the whole exercise (see further), it demands a response from Moses. Moses sees through Pharaoh's admission as half-hearted and superficial: he did not, after-all, make an explicit Isaianic statement of Yahweh being The Everlasting God, Creator of the Corners of the Earth,<sup>39</sup> but merely implied that Yahweh was responsible for the קלת אלהים. It is not even clear exactly what he means by קלת אלהים - great thunder, God's voices, god's voices? Pharaoh puts Moses in the position of having to interpret whether he means אלהים as a proper noun, a common noun, or even as an adjective.

<sup>37</sup> Cassuto (1967:121) re Ex. 9:30.

<sup>38</sup> Cassuto (1967:120) re Ex. 9:28. Rosin (1956:31) also links the two occurrences of אלהים.

<sup>39</sup> Isa. 40:28.

Independent corroboration for this interpretation is to be found in the observation made by Berlin regarding Ex. 9:33-34.<sup>40</sup> She notes how the reversal in the items of the plague indicates differing points of view:

Ex. 9:33

ויחדלו הקלות והברד ומטר

Ex. 9:34

וירא פרעה כי חדל המטר והברד והקלת

What the narrator describes is not the same as what Pharaoh perceives. The underlying discord between Pharaoh and the narrator is the same as that between Pharaoh and Moses, as reflected in Moses' rejection of Pharaoh's 'repentance'.

So far *Yahweh Elohim* in 9:30 has been explained on the basis of 9:28. This however begs the question of why Pharaoh refers to the thunder as קלת in 9:28, when elsewhere it is known as simply קלת (ה) (9:23, 29). Why should the whole encounter have been provoked at this plague?

This crucial step for Pharaoh represents an element of progress within the plagues narrative. It is not, however, an isolated instance of progress. The story of 9 ineffectual plagues would easily have become boringly repetitive if it had not been for the dramatic effect of 'virtual movement' in the negotiations between Pharaoh and Moses. The movement can be described as 'diplomatic' or 'virtual' because no real aim is achieved until after the 10th plague. To understand why this discourse took place at plague 7, we must see what role is played by this plague in terms of virtual movement or progress. The following table summarises these elements in the first 9 plagues. The final plague is not included as it belongs to a story of victory, of actual movement, while the rest constitute a story of struggle, virtual movement.

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<sup>40</sup> Berlin (1983:73).

**Table 1: Virtual Progress in the Plagues Narrative**

(P= Pharaoh)

Plague	Ref	No. of verses	Elements of progress
1: Blood	7:14-24	10	7:23 P does not take it to heart
2: Frogs	7:25-8:15	16	8:4(8) P 'You may go'
3: Gnats	8:16-19	3	8:15(19) They call it אצבע אלהים
4: Flies	8:20-32	12	8:21(25) P 'Sacrifice within the land' 8:24(28) P 'Go, but not too far'
5: Cattle plague	9:1-7	6	
6: Boils	9:8-12	4	
7: Hail	9:13-35	22	9:27 P 'I have sinned' 9:28 P 'I will send you'
8: Locusts	10:1-20	19	10:11 P 'Go but without children' 10:16 P 'I have sinned'
9: Darkness	10:21-29	8	10:24 P 'Go with children, but not livestock'

It becomes immediately apparent that plagues 5 and 6 are both very short, and contain no hint of progress. They are fillers. We are left with two phases of virtual progress: plagues 1-4, and plagues 7-9. They share certain similarities. In both, Pharaoh claims he will let the people go (8:8, 9:28) and then reneges on this. This claim is followed in both cases by two concessions on Pharaoh's part: in the first case on *where* the people may go (8:25, 8:28); and secondly on *who* may go (10:11, 10:24). The outcome of these concessions is still not acceptable to Moses. Both contain a discourse in which the word אלהים (absolutely) is mentioned (8:19, 9:28, 30).

There is an additional element of progress running consecutively through the two phases, concerning the gravity with which Pharaoh treats the affair. He barely notices the first plague (7:23) but responds to the second with a promise (8:8). In the second phase he admits twice that he has sinned (9:27, 10:16). The first mention of אלהים comes from the mouths of the magicians, to which Pharaoh does not respond, while the second comes from Pharaoh himself. Also the קל is a more fearful aspect of the divine than the mere אצבע.



Now we can examine plague 7 specifically to see what role it plays in the whole. It begins the second phase of virtual movement, and it is the longest of all 9 plagues. Its length is due to its verbosity, which is particularly noticeable coming as it does after two extremely brief plagues. The extended warning of this plague includes the following elements:

- statement of the aim of knowledge of Yahweh (9:14, 16)
- statement of the need for this knowledge ie. hubris (9:17)
- option to demonstrate knowledge of Yahweh by action (9:19-21)

Yahweh's warning belongs not to the strand of the Exodus story in which the Israelites seek to gain freedom from slavery (this could have been achieved much more easily) but to that strand in which Yahweh seeks to be 'known'. Hughes speaks of the 'double plot' of the Exodus story:<sup>41</sup>

This double plot becomes clearly illumined in the Plagues narratives with explicitly stated dual intentions: the intention to leave the land (Plague #1- 1:16, #2- 7:26, #4- 8:16, #5- 9:1, #7- 9:13, #8- 10:3) and the intention that knowledge of Yahweh become evident (Plague #1- 7:17, #2- 8:6, #4- 8:18, #7- 9:14, 29, #8- 10:2).

The theme of knowledge of Yahweh, with the keyword ידע, is found throughout the story. Pharaoh's first objection to the Israelites' leave to worship is not that they have work to do, but that he does not *know* Yahweh:

Ex. 5:2

מי יהוה ... לא ידעתי את יהוה

Yahweh must be *known* to Pharaoh (1:17, 8:6, 8:18, 9:14, 29, 11:7), *known* to the Egyptians (7:5, 14:4, 18) and *known* to the Israelites (6:7, 10:2).

Emphatic restatement is needed here, at the beginning of the second phase of false promises and negotiations, because at this point the gratuitousness of the whole affair overwhelms the reader. If Yahweh had simply wanted to free the Israelites, he could have done so much more quickly. He could have just killed all the Egyptians. However, freeing Israel was only one of his objectives. The other (that they should know him) is only justified as the reason for more plagues if it is clear that they did *not* know him. Hence the explicit statement in the warning, and the subsurface

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<sup>41</sup> Hughes (1994:106).

tensions revealed in the name *Yahweh Elohim*, and the reversal noticed by Berlin.

That this theme runs high in plague 7 is also apparent from a significant omission. In 9:20-21 some Egyptians shelter their workers and livestock, while some leave them in the open. In 9:25-6 we learn that everything left in the open was destroyed; only the Israelites were spared. What about those Egyptians who took shelter? The text does not mention them again because they are not high on its agenda. It is concerned with the ignorance and disobedience of the Egyptians, as only that justifies the actions against them.

The mention of יהוה אלהים in Ex. 9:30 is therefore a pointer to some of the underlying tensions in the text. It tells us why Moses is correct in seeing through Pharaoh's confession. In doing so, it heightens the ignorance and insincerity of the Egyptian side, which is necessary to maintain the plausibility and drama of the Exodus narratives as a whole. As such we have no reason to consider the unusual title as anything but an integral part of the narrative.

#### Isolated Examples (4/5x)

- **2 Sam. 7:25**                      ועתה יהוה אלהים הדבר אשר דברת על עבדך  
ועל ביתו הקם עד עולם ועשה כאשר דברת

Reference to the deity in David's prayer of 2 Sam. 7:18-29 is dominated by the title יהוה אדני (18, 19, 19, 19, 28, 29). At v. 25, however we find יהוה אלהים, which would have at later times been a homonym of יהוה אדני. As if to prove the point, different editions of the MT cannot agree which form occurs at v. 22: Koren and Snaith opting for יהוה אלהים with the Aleppo codex, while BHS and BHK read יהוה אדני with the Leningrad codex. The Septuagint consistently reads  $\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\ \mu\omicron\sigma\tau\alpha$  in every case. This translation fits the meaning of יהוה אדני as it renders the first person possessive suffix, and is also one of the known translations of יהוה אדני (see Codex Vaticanus of Judges 6:22). There seems no doubt, therefore, that יהוה אלהים is a scribal error for יהוה אדני in both cases.

Even apart from the Greek, there are several reasons for preferring יהוה אדני as the original reading: it occurs more frequently, and so supposes our copyist made only 1 or 2 mistakes, as opposed to 6 or 7; but more

importantly, its use here is consistent with the use of אדני יהוה as the correct form of address when speaking to God (described in chapter on יהוה אדני).

- **2 Kings 19:19b** וידעו כל ממלכות הארץ כי אתה יהוה אלהים לבדך

Compare two translations of the end of Hezekiah's prayer:

Koren: That thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

NRSV: That you, O LORD, are God alone.

The NRSV allows for understanding of אלהים as a common noun, not part of a proper name or title.

However, it is one thing to say that it is *possible* to read אלהים as a common noun, and quite another to say that it is *better* to do so. In fact there are several reasons why this reading is better. Firstly, it divides the phrase in a more satisfactory way. The NRSV translation balances 3 words with 2:

(That you, O LORD) כי אתה יהוה  
(are God alone) אלהים לבדך

Whereas that of Koren sets 4 against 1

(That thou are the LORD God) כי אתה יהוה אלהים  
(even thou only) לבדך

Koren's rendering of one Hebrew word (לבדך) by three (even thou only), mitigates this somewhat in translation.

Secondly, it is clear that the last phrase in Hezekiah's prayer comes in chiastic relation to the first:

2 Kings 19:15aβ

יהוה אלהי ישראל ישב הכרבים

אתה הוא האלהים לבדך

לכל ממלכות הארץ

2 Kings 19:19b

וידעו כל ממלכות הארץ

כי אתה יהוה אלהים לבדך

The equivalent element at the beginning of the prayer does not contain the unusual title *Yahweh Elohim*, but the common noun האלהים as predicate.<sup>42</sup>

However, the most important reason for reading אלהים here as a common noun, and not part of a special title, is the context of the prayer. Inside the besieged city, Hezekiah and his people are subjected to the demoralising rhetoric of Rabshakeh. In an attempt to persuade the people to surrender, he implores them not to rely on their god (v. 10), pointing out that countless other peoples were failed by their gods (vv. 11-13). Against this, Hezekiah's prayer (no doubt aimed at the people) counters that those other gods were not really gods (v. 18: לא אלהים המה) but mere objects (v. 18: מעשה ידיו אדם). Yahweh, on the other hand, is a living god (v. 16: אלהים חי). The message in v. 19 is not so much a monotheistic one that Yahweh is alone in the heavens (as Koren suggests), but that he is *a god*, whereas the others (whose nations were subjugated by Assyria) are *not gods*. It is a message of hope for his people that Yahweh can be relied upon for protection, and that they can succeed where their neighbours failed.

In the case of 2 Kings 19:19, syntax and context both warn against reading the combination יהוה אלהים as the unusual title *Yahweh Elohim*. Instead, אלהים should be construed as a common noun, the predicate in the sentence: *Yahweh is god*.

- **Jer. 10:10**                      ויהוה אלהים אמת הוא אלהים חיים ומלך עולם

This verse presents a similar situation to that found previously, as reflected in the NRSV (with which Koren largely agrees):

But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting king

Construal of the title LORD God would involve the translation:

But the LORD God is true; he is the living God and everlasting king

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<sup>42</sup> The opposite could conceivably be argued: that v. 19 is saying something different from v. 15, but nothing in the context suggests such a development.

This is less satisfactory as it disrupts the rhythm of three two-word expressions describing Yahweh (especially the balance of אלהים חיים and אלהים אמת) and none of the major translations follow it.

It is interesting to note that the angle of Jer. 10:1-16 is not dissimilar to that of Hezekiah's prayer: contrasting the true god Yahweh with those of other nations, which are merely products of human hands (v. 3 מעשה ידי חרש).

- **Jonah 4:6** וימן יהוה אלהים קיקיון ויעל מעל ליונה

Like the Gen. 2-3 cases, יהוה אלהים in Jon. 4:6 comes at a transitional point. However, this time in the opposite direction, that is from *Yahweh* to *Elohim*. See Chapter 12 on how the gradual transition from *Yahweh* to *Elohim* corresponds to the gradual increase in Jonah's despair; while the sudden change back again corresponds to the sudden shift away from Jonah's grievance to the much wider picture of God's compassion.

### Psalms (6x)

The title יהוה אלהים alone appears in the Psalter twice (Pss. 72:18, 84:12), while the longer title יהוה אלהים צבאות appears four times (Pss. 59:6, 80:5, 20, 84:9). It should be noted that all of these except Ps. 84:9 and 12 fall within the Elohist Psalter (Pss. 42-83), and should therefore be understood as part of the 'Elohist editing'. While the EP conventionally ends at Ps. 83, I argue (see Chapter 8) that incomplete editing continues up to Pss. 88-89, so the two occurrences in Ps. 84 constitute no problem.

Of note is the doxology:

Ps. 72:18 ברוך יהוה אלהים אלהי ישראל

We may be reasonably certain that אלהים has been appended to יהוה in the well attested original doxology:<sup>43</sup>

Pss. 41:14, 89:85, 106:48, 1 Chr. 16:36 ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל

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<sup>43</sup> See also pp.179-181 for a more detailed discussion.

We cannot, however, know what lay behind the other instances. The doxology, together with the awkwardness of יהוה אלהים צבאות (where we would expect יהוה אלהי צבאות) points to a certain artificiality. The implications of this must be considered along with the Elohist editing as a whole.

### Chronicles (9x)

The title *Yahweh Elohim* appears in 1 Chr. 17:16, 17, 28:20, 29:1, 2 Chr. 1:9, 6:41 (2x), 42, and 26:18. The only feature common to each case is that the title occurs in direct speech, never in narration. Apart from this, the cases defy the search for a common denominator. Most are uttered by either David or Solomon, but not all (2 Chr. 26:18). While some are addressed directly to God (1 Chr. 17:16, 17), others are addressed to humans and refer to God in the third person (1 Chr. 28:20, 29:1). Some are in material shared with Samuel/Kings (1 Chr. 17:16, 17), others in small Chronicles pluses (2 Chr. 1:9), and others in large Chronicles pluses (2 Chr. 26:18).

Nevertheless, a recurring feature is that *Yahweh Elohim* tends to appear in Chronicles in the same kinds of places *Adonai Yahweh* would appear in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. For example in 2 Chr. 1:9 its vocative use in prayer would not look out of place in Chapter 6 regarding *Adonai Yahweh* as a form of address (its parallel here is עתה יהוה אלהי 1 Kings 3:7). A clearer example, however, is David's prayer in 1 Chr. 17:16-27 (// 2 Sam. 7:18-29). The following compares the use of vocatives in this prayer:

2 Sam. 7:18-29	1 Chr. 17:16-26
18 אדני יהוה	16 יהוה אלהים
19 אדני יהוה	17 אלהים
19 אדני יהוה	17 יהוה אלהים
20 אדני יהוה	19 יהוה
22 אדני יהוה	20 יהוה
24 יהוה	22 יהוה
25 יהוה אלהים <sup>44</sup>	23 יהוה
27 יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל	25 אלהי
28 אדני יהוה	26 יהוה
29 אדני יהוה	27 יהוה

<sup>44</sup> Probably a copyist's mistake for אדני יהוה.



Thus we can see that while the Samuel versions sticks to יהוה אדני almost all the way through, the Chronicler begins with a variety: יהוה אלהים, אלהים, and יהוה before settling on יהוה.

Also in this category comes 2 Chr. 6:41-42, a quotation from Ps. 132:8-10, which comes at the end of Solomon's long prayer at the dedication of the temple:

2 Chr. 6:41a	ועתה קומה יהוה אלהים לנוחך אתה וארון עוןך
6:41b	כהניך יהוה אלהים ילבשו תשועה וחסידך ישמחו בטוב
6:42	יהוה אלהים אל תשב פני משיחך זכרה לחסדי דויד עבדך

The Psalms version differs in many respects, and lacks the repetition of the vocative DN, having only a single vocative יהוה in the first clause. The closest analogy to the way that יהוה אלהים punctuates the poetry in the Chronicles version is the use of יהוה אדני in Isa. 50:4-9 (see Chapter 6). Apart from the punctuating use of the title, it shares the climactic use of יהוה אדני, coming as it does at the end of a prayer. The Kings version of this prayer ends:

1 Kings 8:53	כי אתה הבדלתם לך לנחלה מכל עמי הארץ כאשר דברת ביד משה עבדך בהוציאך את אבותינו ממצרים אדני יהוה
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We thus find some of the typical differences between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles: Kings ends the prayer with the memory of Moses and the Exodus, finishing with a vocative יהוה אדני, Chronicles quotes a passage concerning David from the Psalter, and punctuates it with vocative יהוה אלהים.

In order to understand this, we must consider that the Chronicler never uses either of the titles יהוה אדני or אדני of God anywhere in his work. For example 1 Kings 22:6 אדני becomes האלהים in 2 Chr. 18:5. On the other hand, *Yahweh Elohim* appears often enough to be considered an organic part of the Chronicler's vocabulary. It would appear that *Yahweh Elohim* has to a certain extent replaced *Adonai Yahweh* in Chronicles. Their semantic ranges overlap, but are by no means identical (eg. 2 Sam. 7:20 אדני יהוה // 1 Chr. 17:19 יהוה; 1 Kings 3:7 עתה יהוה אלהי // 2 Chr. 1:9 עתה יהוה אלהים).

The question of how and why this came about is much harder to answer. According to Japhet:

This systematic omission is undoubtedly a result of theological considerations, stemming from a reluctance to write down the form אֲדֹנָי.<sup>45</sup>

However she does not address the question of why the Chronicler should be reluctant to write down אֲדֹנָי. Any hesitancy about the name אֲדֹנָי must have come at a time when אֲדֹנָי had so completely replaced יהוה that it itself was considered sacred,<sup>46</sup> yet Japhet correctly rejects the suggestion that the frequency of אֱלֹהִים in Chronicles is due to reluctance to write down יהוה. In all likelihood, we will never know what the Chronicler had against אֲדֹנָי, but there is no reason to jump to theological conclusions before considering that it may have been a very simple vocabulary shift. Alternatively, it may be that the Chronicler was writing in a time after the oral replacement of *Yahweh* with *Adonai* had become universally accepted. In this case, he may have viewed written אֲדֹנָי as a throwback to the 'bad old days' and preferred to write יהוה confident in the knowledge that his readers would not pronounce it. This theory has the advantage of explaining how יהוה אֱלֹהִים came to be roughly equivalent to אֲדֹנָי יהוה, as by this time they would have been homonyms.

### Conclusions

This survey of the use of the title *Yahweh Elohim* in the Hebrew Bible leaves us with no single thread with which we can link all the occurrences. Jeremiah 10:10 and 2 Kings 19:19 should be discounted as they do not contain the title as such, but rather *Yahweh* followed by the common noun 'god'. 2 Sam 7:(22,) 25 should also be discounted, this time because the evidence of the context and of the Greek points to יהוה אֱלֹהִים being a scribal error for אֲדֹנָי יהוה.

Of the others, יהוה אֱלֹהִים in Gen. 2-3 and Jonah 4:6 form transitions between sections where the one name dominates and sections where the other dominates. In Ex. 9:30, the unusual title complements the underlying tensions present in that part of the narrative. Each case in the Psalms is subsumed under the larger question of 'elohistic' editorial activity in that part of the Psalter. Each of these betrays a quite deliberate use of an unusual form at different stages of the composition process. In the Exodus and Jonah

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<sup>45</sup> Japhet (1993:338).

<sup>46</sup> As today some religious Jews replace אֲדֹנָי with השם and אֱלֹהִים with אֱלֹקִים.

cases, this was probably at the stage of initial narration. In Genesis, the title only makes sense at the point when the different blocks of material were put together in their present arrangement. In the Psalms, the 'Elohistic editing' took place after the Psalms had been composed, and after they had been placed together.

Only in Chronicles does the title *Yahweh Elohim* appear to have a natural, organic life of its own. Here its use overlaps with (but is by no means identical to) *Adonai Yahweh* in the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

# **PART THREE**

## **SURVEYS**

## CHAPTER 8

### THE PSALTER

#### Introduction and review of scholarship

The Book of Psalms presents to its reader the bizarre phenomenon known as the Elohist Psalter (=EP). This group of Psalms, Pss. 42-83, is distinguished by its unusual use of Divine Names, for while the name *Yahweh* dominates in Pss. 1-41 and 84-150, *Elohim* is the most common name for God in Pss. 42-83.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the EP is usually attributed to the work of an Elohist redactor, who went through these Psalms changing most of the *Yahwehs* to *Elohims*. It is almost universally assumed, particularly when the EP is mentioned only in passing, that the reason for this redaction was related to the prohibition against pronouncing the tetragrammaton.<sup>2</sup> Evidence for the redaction is given routinely in the commentaries, and I will limit myself here to presenting that given by Day. Certain collocations in the EP read awkwardly, for example Ps. 50:7 (I am God, your God) and Ps. 45:8 (God, your God, has anointed you). In addition, where Psalms or sections of Psalms from the EP appear elsewhere in the Bible, *Yahweh* appears instead of *Elohim*: Ps. 68:1 = Num. 10:35; Ps. 68:7,8 = Jud. 5:4,5; Ps. 53 = Ps. 14; Ps. 70 = Ps. 40:14-18. As for the one exception, Pss. 57 and 60, whose counterpart Ps. 108 retains *Elohim* in every case, it:

is no problem, since it is clear that Ps 108 has appropriated its verses from the EP; this is apparent from the situation that (apart from Ps. 144:9) Ps. 108 contains the only instances of *Elohim* within the whole of Pss. 90-150.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Day (1992:114) gives the statistics as follows: Pss. 1-41: 278 x *Yahweh*, 15 x *Elohim*; Pss. 42-83: 44 x *Yahweh*, 200 x *Elohim*; Pss. 84-89: 31 x *Yahweh*, 7 x *Elohim*; Pss. 90-150: 339 x *Yahweh*, 6 x *Elohim* (figures include headings and doxologies).

<sup>2</sup> Murtonen (1952-6:71 n. 2); Segal (1967:115); Skehan (1980:20); Whybray (1987:70); Brettler (1989:43); Japhet (1993:338).

<sup>3</sup> Day (1992:114).

However, the apparent unanimity of the commentaries on this point, together with the brevity which the EP is often dealt with, should be enough to arouse suspicion. Two scholars associated with Psalms research<sup>4</sup> have rejected this scenario altogether, as does the only study (that I am aware of) to compare the *stylistics* of Divine Names usage in the Elohist and non-Elohist portions of the Psalter.<sup>5</sup> It would seem that the closer one gets to the wood, the more one sees that it may not be made entirely of trees after all. A critique of the differing opinions on the phenomenon will therefore help to clarify what *sorts* of answers might be appropriate.

Goulder points to the fact that the so-called Elohist redactor left in place quite a number of *Yahwehs*:

we not only are unable to provide a motive for him, but we cannot make him a credible editor either. Lady Bracknell said that to lose two parents seemed like carelessness; to overlook forty-four uses of Yahweh seems like negligence so great as to be unbelievable!<sup>6</sup>

Rather than an Elohist redactor, he makes a case for an 'Elohist community':

there is nothing to show that these substitutions did not take place in a community which used Elohim naturally, when the Psalm was composed, rather than at the hands of a redactor in a later period.<sup>7</sup>

His objections are related to the hypothesis that the Korah Psalms (Pss. 42-9, 84-5, 87-8) were the liturgy of the autumn festival of the northern cult at Dan. After the fall of the northern kingdom, the priesthood (the sons of Korah) fled to Jerusalem, taking with them the two sets of Psalms, and establishing for themselves a position in the Jerusalem temple.<sup>8</sup> He claims that the collocations, such as "God, your god..." seem odd to our ears only because we are unused to them, but a community that was accustomed to using the name *Elohim* like this would not have found them strange.

As for the 'doubled Psalms', he claims that in every case, the Elohist Psalm is the earlier, i.e. that Ps. 14 derives from Ps. 53, and Ps. 40 from Ps. 70.

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<sup>4</sup> Goulder (1982, 1990, 1996); Wilson (1985).

<sup>5</sup> Boling (1960).

<sup>6</sup> Goulder (1982:5).

<sup>7</sup> Goulder (1982:6).

<sup>8</sup> The main arguments are given by Goulder in 1982:16-22, 51-84.



Apart from this claim being unnecessary (for if the two versions were maintained by two 'parallel communities' then it does not matter which is earlier), it leaves Goulder open to attack from his own argument: we have no motive for the 'Yahwistic redactor' who missed two *Elohim* in Ps. 14 (vv. 1, 2)! This in turn shows that Goulder's own 'lack of motive' argument is a weak one: just because *we* cannot understand the motive for an 'Elohistic editing,' does not mean that the motive did not exist.

A major difficulty for Goulder is that the first series of Korah Psalms occur within the EP, while the second series does not. He must therefore explain how this community changed style so radically. He points out that the end of the EP is not as neat a cleavage as is often assumed, and so that the first and second groups of Korah Psalms are held together by common vocabulary, not separated by use of DNs. Nevertheless, the fact remains that each of the EP Korah Psalms has more cases of *Elohim* than of *Yahweh*, while each of the non-EP Korah Psalms has more cases of *Yahweh* than of *Elohim*! He is left suggesting that:

the psalms in the second sequence [84-5, 87-8] are older than most of those in the first; and it could be, for example, that *Yahweh* was more used in the Korah community in the early period, but eschewed later.<sup>9</sup>

While it certainly "could be", there is no particular reason why it *should* be.

The most serious problem, however, is that he fails to consider the preference for *Elohim* in the *whole* of the EP. While he claims to have disproven the elohistic redactor theory with the arguments given above, he fails to notice that his own theory deals with only a fraction of the EP, and therefore still leaves the question unanswered. When Goulder turns his attention to some of the other Elohistic Psalms, the Psalms of Asaph, he gives a different account:

The Israelites did not enter the promised land as one people led by Joshua. Only a part of the people had become *Yahweh* worshippers. In time all Israelites accepted *Yahweh* as the national God, but the traditional names in earlier use were retained, including the Canaanite אֵל, the old high god spoken of as עליון at Ugarit. There was a long period of tolerance, and our psalms, as well as the Korah Psalms and the others in Books II - III, belong to this time. The syncretistic process became controversial with the great prophets from Elijah to Hosea,

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<sup>9</sup> Goulder (1982:7).

and critical in the reign of Manasseh, and from that time יהוה increasingly became normative and אלהים in retreat, as we find in Books I, IV, and V.<sup>10</sup>

The historical trend of DN usage is now reversed: in 1982 Goulder thought that the Yahwistic series was *earlier*. In order to show the basic implausibility of his revised scenario, it is not necessary to ask how אל became אלהים, or how the 'traditional names in earlier use' can then be described as 'syncretistic'. It is enough to ask for independent (e.g. linguistic) evidence that every single Psalm in Books II - III is earlier than every Psalm in Book I. That this is impossible to give is demonstrated regarding Pss. 14 and 53 on p. 166-67 nn. 78-9 below.

Putting aside the problems with Goulder's specific thesis, his treatment raises a number of issues that must be taken seriously. Firstly, the second group of Korah Psalms (Goulder's earlier group) are indeed more 'elohistic' than one might expect for 'Yahwistic' Psalms. This is a point which will be taken up later on. Secondly, we must not be too hasty to dismiss the collocations "God, your god" as obvious signs of editing. The possibility still exists that a community within Israel held the word *Elohim* to be not just the generic, but the personal name for their god.<sup>11</sup> The fact that we have no direct evidence for such a community does not mean that it did not exist.<sup>12</sup> Additional evidence must be gathered to show that the 'elohistic' of the EP is a literary phenomenon, and not one indicative of a separate community.

An article by Boling also points to the possibility of what he cautiously calls "divergent traditions."<sup>13</sup> A careful study of DNs in parallelism establishes that יהוה in the Yahwistic Psalms appears overwhelmingly as the A-word, rarely as a B-word, while elohistic names are more commonly B-words.<sup>14</sup> In the EP, the situation is reversed, with elohistic names appearing as A-words, and Yahweh as a B-word. He concludes that:

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<sup>10</sup> Goulder (1996:19).

<sup>11</sup> A similar phenomenon may be seen today among English-speaking Christians who use the same word as a generic and a personal name.

<sup>12</sup> We have no direct biblical evidence for an Elephantine community, and yet we know that it existed.

<sup>13</sup> Boling (1960:247).

<sup>14</sup> Boling's use of the terms 'A-word' and 'B-word' is compatible with Watson's definitions: the 'A-word' is "the first element of a parallel word-pair" and the 'B-word' as "its counterpart in the second colon" (Watson 1984: 129).

J and E are distinguished not only by contrast in frequencies but also by consistent preference for contrasting stylistic forms...<sup>15</sup> It is highly improbable that the frequency of *elohim* in E, where it is A-word in parallelism, could result from editorial adjustments of a pattern in which it was predominantly B-word, since this would presuppose a highly sophisticated approach to editorial problems. These distributions thus reflect preferences for sharply contrasted stylistic forms in which divine names are used in a fixed traditional order.<sup>16</sup>

He gives only a brief and tentative suggestion as to what might account for these two traditions:

The recensional doublets suggest that *yahweh* and *eloh(im)* were independently substituted for "Baal" (or another pagan divine name) in the adaptation of Canaanite religious poetry. In some cases *yahweh* may be the original substitute and *eloh(im)* a somewhat younger alternative, as is often suggested for the pentateuchal documents.<sup>17</sup>

A quite different view to challenge the elohistic redactor hypothesis is put forward by Wilson:<sup>18</sup>

The really striking feature of the data is not so much the reduced occurrence of the name YHWH in the "Elohistic Psalter" as it is the *almost complete elimination* of *'lhym* as a designation for the God of Israel elsewhere. Could this be evidence of a concerted effort to eradicate the more ambiguous term in favor of the more particularistic YHWH?

This suggestion must also be taken seriously. If we say that Pss. 1-41, 84-150 represent the original pattern of DNs and not Pss. 42-83, then we must say why. It is not enough to say that one Psalm type is more common than the other; we must look to biblical comparisons outside the Psalter.

Having surveyed the three major views opposing the elohistic redaction theory, we may return to the first objection posed by Goulder - the motivation for such a redaction. Adherents of the consensus position are remarkably brief on this subject. Briggs, Day, Dahood, and Delitzsch simply

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<sup>15</sup> Boling (1960:242). Boling uses "J" to refer to Pss. 1-41 and 84-150, and "E" to denote Pss. 42-83.

<sup>16</sup> Boling (1960:248).

<sup>17</sup> Boling (1960:255).

<sup>18</sup> Wilson (1985:196-7).

assume the presence of editorial activity, without even asking why.<sup>19</sup> Oesterley at least considers that there *may* have been a reason:

Whatever may have been the reason for this varying use of the divine name, the present point is ...<sup>20</sup>

Only Kirkpatrick and Cheyne discuss the issue at any length. Kirkpatrick<sup>21</sup> lists a number of suggestions: a movement against the “Jewish spirit of exclusiveness;”<sup>22</sup> avoidance of uttering the tetragrammaton outside the Temple, i.e. in Babylon;<sup>23</sup> but concludes that “no positive result can be arrived at.” Cheyne quickly dismisses the possibility of early reverence for the tetragrammaton, as it is used in later Psalms quite freely.<sup>24</sup> For Cheyne, as for Goulder, rejection of the ‘reverence’ theory leads to rejection of the whole idea of redaction, and the construction of a historical explanation:

The God of Israel was habitually called, at any rate in Judah and the Israelite territory in the Negeb, not only Yahwe, but also Yahwe-*jerahmeel*, and even *Jerahmeel* alone... It is not strange then that some of the pre-exilic writers should have used *Jerahmeel* or *Yahwe-*jerameel** (editorially changed into *Elohim* and *Yahwe-*elohim**) as names of Israel’s God, nor need it surprise us if some of the redactors of psalms used as a divine name, not only *Yahwe*, but *Elohim*... the change of *Jerahmeel* into ‘*Elohim*’ is to be accounted for by the growing repugnance of faithful Jews to the corrupt heathenish cultus of the very large non-Jewish population of the Negeb.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of changes from one name to another, this begs more questions than it sets out to answer. We also lack any evidence that each Elohist Psalm (and none of the others) is pre-exilic. In addition, we may note that it is just as easy to argue the fight against ‘syncretism’ and the ‘other nations’ led to the phasing of out *Elohim* (Goulder, 1996) as that it led to its increase (Cheyne).

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<sup>19</sup> Briggs (1906-7:ixix), Day (1992:113-4), Dahood (1965:I:xxxix), Delitzsch (1887:I:27).

<sup>20</sup> Oesterley (1937:59).

<sup>21</sup> Kirkpatrick (1902:lvi-lvii).

<sup>22</sup> Ottley (1897:191).

<sup>23</sup> Jacob (1896:158).

<sup>24</sup> Cheyne (1904: I:lix - lx)

<sup>25</sup> Cheyne (1904:I:lix).

Another historical explanation is given by Colenso,<sup>26</sup> who argues that all the Elohist Psalms are either by David, or at least early, while all the others are later. This is therefore congruous with Colenso's endorsement of the controversial documentary hypothesis, according to which E is earlier than J. It suffers from the same problems as the views of Goulder and Cheyne.

Another *type* of answer to the Elohist question concerns the *content* of the Psalms. For example, Mitchell argues that the name *Elohim* (in association with the attribute of justice) is appropriate for the Asaph Psalms (Pss. 50, 73-83):

In the Asaph Psalms, where God has in anger scattered his people, is estranged from them, and is judging Israel and the nations *elohim* is the most frequent divine epithet.<sup>27</sup>

He thus depends on the validity of the Rabbinic tradition expressed in Sifre Deut. 26. However, we have already seen in Chapter 3 that this tradition does not have a sound basis for support throughout the Hebrew Bible as a whole. In addition, not all of the Asaph Psalms deal with estrangement of God and people. There are other Psalms outside the Asaph group that deal with the same issues, for example Ps. 44.

There is also the problem of historical credibility to overcome if we are to accept Mitchell's thesis, similar to the objections raised to that of Goulder. Even if the Asaph Psalms were originally Elohist because the judgement connotations of *Elohim* seemed suited to the mood of this collection, why is it that the whole of Pss. 42-83 is Elohist? Mitchell is certainly aware of this problem, as he speculates:<sup>28</sup>

the Asaph Psalms may have been more originally Elohist than other psalms in the Elohist Psalter. They contain only one of the locutions thought to indicate later redaction (50:7).

It seems to the present author that just one locution is quite enough.<sup>29</sup> In any case, it seems quite unlikely that Pss. 50 and 73-83 were *originally* Elohist,

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<sup>26</sup> Colenso (1863:328-329).

<sup>27</sup> Mitchell (1997:181).

<sup>28</sup> Mitchell (1997:181 n. 29).

<sup>29</sup> This chapter identifies other Elohist indicators which certainly are present in the Asaph Psalms.



and that subsequently, Pss. 42-49 and 51-71 were *edited* to match this. If the mood of a group of Psalms suited *Elohim* and the mood of others did not, then why would those others be subject to deliberate Elohist editing?

This review of scholarship has revealed that certain methodological errors tend to recur regarding the question of the Elohist Psalter. If we are to learn anything from the past, then these errors must first be identified.

One mistake has been to examine only a part of the EP rather than the EP in its entirety. Goulder (1982) may claim that Ps. 42 is Elohist because it is a Korah Psalm, but then Mitchell (1997) claims that Ps. 50 is Elohist because it is an Asaph Psalm. The EP is *one phenomenon*, and we must look for *one explanation*.

Another requirement for our explanation is that it must account for *each of these* Psalms being Elohist, while *each of the others* (except Ps. 108) is 'Yahwistic'. None of the historical explanations can hope to account for this. According to Goulder,<sup>30</sup> the Elohist Psalms date to a syncretistic period before Elijah, Boling<sup>31</sup> thinks them to be younger than the other Psalms, Jacob<sup>32</sup> dates them to the exile, Cheyne<sup>33</sup> puts them in the pre-exilic period, while Colenso<sup>34</sup> attributes them to the historical David and his courtiers. When the various theories are presented side-by-side in this manner the basic methodological flaw becomes obvious: it is very difficult to date any Psalm accurately and reliably, and impossible to do so with a group of Psalms. On the other hand, it is very easy to assume a date to fit a scenario, and then find a few pieces of circumstantial evidence to support it.

This chapter aims to go beyond the standard position given in commentaries, both by examining the issues in more detail than is traditionally done, and by asking the right sorts of questions.

The first task is to describe the EP in relation to the Psalter as a whole. How Elohist is the EP, and how Yahwistic is the rest of the Psalter? Are there differences between these sections apart from the frequencies of names? Looking beyond the statistics to the context, what can we derive from the *way* that DNs are used? As the investigation continues, it centres on

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<sup>30</sup> Goulder (1996:19).

<sup>31</sup> Boling (1960:255).

<sup>32</sup> Jacob (1896:158).

<sup>33</sup> Cheyne (1904:I:lix-lx).

<sup>34</sup> Colenso (1863:328-329).



two questions: are Pss. 42-83 to be regarded as unusual, or is it the case that they represent the norm, and that the other Psalms have been edited (Wilson)? And are we to look for an elohistic *redactor*, or an elohistic *community* (Goulder)? The two questions will be dealt with simultaneously as much of the evidence pertains to both.

### Distribution of Divine Names in the Psalter

The variant readings of the Septuagint are not noted in this chapter. There are, to be sure, variant readings of DNs (e.g. the lack of θεος in Ps. 68:9), but there are no more than could reasonably be expected, and they do not form a meaningful pattern.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Yahweh and Elohim*

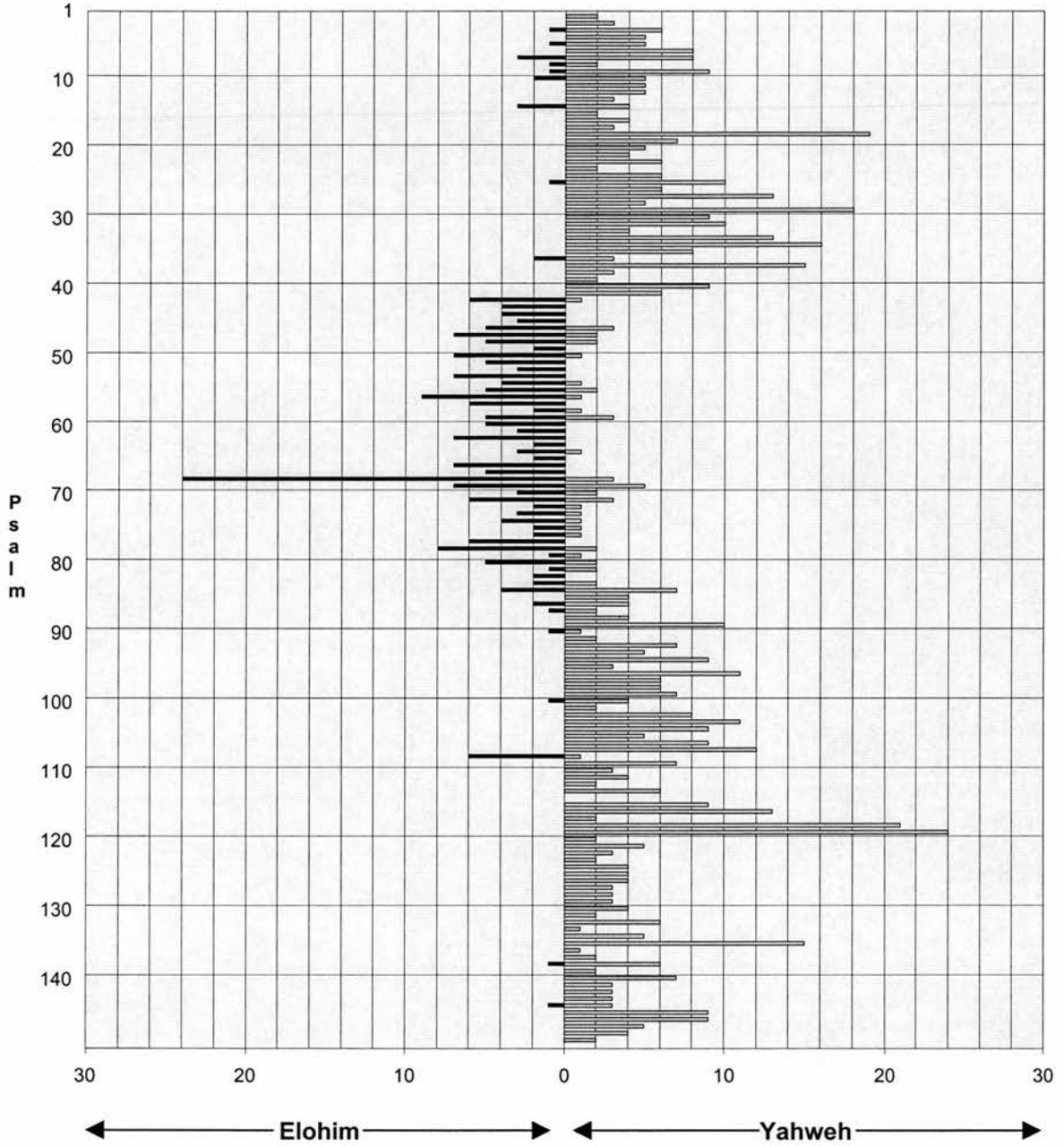
Table A details the occurrences of the DNs *Yahweh* and *Elohim* in the individual chapters of the Psalter. It is intended to give the reader a sense of the scale of the EP (in terms of proportion of the Psalter, how elohistic it is, and how this compares to the 'Yahwisticity' of the rest of the Psalter), and also a sense of the amount of variation in different Psalms (some are longer, some address the deity more by name, etc.).

Unfortunately, the advantages of showing the larger picture are offset by the disadvantage that many details cannot be represented. In dealing with compound names, for example, יהוה צבאות is counted as יהוה; יהוה אלהים צבאות is counted as both אלהים and יהוה. Names found in headings and doxologies (e.g. Ps. 72:18-20) have been included; אלהים has been excluded where it is clearly a common noun (e.g. Ps. 82:1b בקרב אלהים ישפט ב) but included in ambiguous cases (e.g. Ps 8:6 ותחסרהו מעט אלהים). While any of these decisions are open to criticism, it was felt that as long as they were applied consistently, they would not affect the general proportions that are to be conveyed.

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<sup>35</sup> Redpath notes the places where MT יהוה -> LXX θεος: Pss. 29:9, 34:27, 45:9, 48:32, 70:1, 83:3, 88:7, 90:2, 97:4, 104:1, 141:2. In other words, before, during and after the EP.

**Table A**  
**Distribution of Elohim/Yahweh by Psalm**



The Elohist Psalter is easily distinguished from the table as running from Ps. 42 to Ps. 83, comprising about a third of the whole Psalter. When the three divisions of the Psalter are compared (Pss. 1-41, 42-83, 84-150), it becomes clear that *Yahweh* dominates in the Yahwistic Psalter far more than does *Elohim* in the EP. In the first section (Pss. 1-41), 32 out of 41 Psalms (78%) have no DN *Elohim*; while in the final section (Pss. 88-150) the figure is 57 out of 62 (92%).<sup>36</sup> Both these are remarkably high compared to the EP: only 17 out of 42 Elohist Psalms (40%) contain no *Yahweh*. In other words, the EP uses *Yahweh* much more frequently than the *Yahweh* sections use *Elohim*.

This has considerable implications for the supposition that an 'elohistic editor' intended to eliminate the use of the name *Yahweh*. Not only did he 'miss' a number of *Yahweh*'s, he 'missed' a relatively large number of them. Neither did he simply change all *Yahwehs* into *Elohim*s and vice versa - this would have left the EP being roughly symmetrical to the Yahwistic sections.

The table clearly shows that there is considerable variation among the Psalms regarding the number of references to God (e.g. Ps. 68 has 24 *Elohim*s; Ps. 150 has neither DN). This is entirely to be expected, considering that some Psalms are much longer than others, and that different Psalms have different styles and subject matters. Given that this is the case, it is remarkable that no Elohist Psalm has more *Yahwehs* than *Elohim*s, and that no Yahwistic Psalm (except Ps. 108) has more *Elohim*s than *Yahwehs*. The Psalms, it would seem are either Yahwistic or Elohist, with very little in between.

Perhaps one of the most striking points revealed by the table is difference between the beginning and the end of the EP. While the start of the EP is sudden, preceded by a straight run of 5 Psalms (Pss. 37-41) lacking any *Elohim*, its end-point is rather vague and difficult to discern from the table alone. Indeed, the editors of BDB consider the EP to cover Pss. 42-86.<sup>37</sup> Pss. 84-89 have a relatively high proportion of *Elohim*s, especially in comparison with Pss. 90-150, for whom the use of *Elohim* is almost negligible. For this reason, and others which are considered later, I will refer to Ps. 84-89 as the 'tail' of the EP.

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<sup>36</sup> This excludes the transitory beginning, Pss. 84-87, as explained shortly.

<sup>37</sup> BDB:44.

## Other designations for God

It has long been noted that the EP delights in a variety of appellations for God.<sup>38</sup> The following table compares the frequency of a number of more unusual DNs in the Elohist and Yahwistic parts of the Psalter:

	Pss. 1-41	Pss. 42-83	Pss. 84-89	Pss. 90-150	Total
אדני <sup>39</sup>	13	23	9	9	54
צבאות <sup>40</sup>	1	10	5	0	16
אל <sup>41</sup>	6	19	2	11	38
עליון	4	10	2	5	21
אלהי יעקב	1	6	1	1	9
יהוה אלהים <sup>42</sup>	0	4	2	0	6
אלוה	1	1	0	2	4
שדי	3	2	0	1	6

It is important to note from the table that Pss. 84-89 contribute significantly to the trend observed in the EP. Despite being outwith the EP, in terms of unusual references to God, they share the characteristics of the EP, and not of Pss. 90-150.

Having established this, we may add up the figures for the EP and its tail: while accounting for 35% of the Psalter,<sup>43</sup> this section contains 59% of cases of אדני, 93% of צבאות, 55% of אל, 57% of עליון, 78% of אלהי יעקב and all

<sup>38</sup> Delitzsch (1887:27); Mitchell discusses this in the context of Asaph Psalms (1997:182).

<sup>39</sup> Kirkpatrick noted that אדני was more common in the EP than in the rest of the Psalter Kirkpatrick (1902: lv - lvi).

<sup>40</sup> יהוה צבאות occurs 284 times in the Hebrew Bible according to Mettinger (in *DDD*), 15 times in the Psalter. He categorises these 15 attestations as occurring in hymns (Pss. 46, 48, 84, 89), psalms of lament (Pss. 59, 69, 80) and an entrance liturgy (24), but does not appear to notice that of these Psalms, all but 1 stand within the EP and its tail. Additionally, in order to arrive at a count of 15, Mettinger must have included such variations as יהוה אלהים צבאות, יהוה צבאות, אדני יהוה צבאות, אלהי צבאות, and even אלהים צבאות. (I have additionally counted מלכי צבאות in Ps. 68:13.)

<sup>41</sup> For the sake of consistency, אל is counted here under the same principles as אלהים: excluded when clearly a common noun (Ps. 18:3), but included in ambiguous cases, even if the definite article is present (Ps. 18:31).

<sup>42</sup> See also Chapter 7.

<sup>43</sup> Pss. 42-83 and 84-89 take up 30% and 5% of the Psalter respectively, based on pages in BHS.

cases of the combination יהוה אלהים. Only אלוה and שדי are not especially favoured by the EP.

The EP is therefore much more varied in its choice of reference to God, than the rest of the Psalter. The term 'Elohistic Psalter' is in itself something of a misnomer.

## Stylistic differences

### Parallelism

The only study that I am aware of to look beyond the raw frequency-statistics of the EP, and consider stylistics is that by Boling.<sup>44</sup> We have already seen that he identifies the specifically 'Elohistic' sequence of DNs in parallelism: in the Yahwistic sections, *Yahweh* is frequently an A-word, and *Eloh(im)* a B-word; in the EP, *Eloh(im)* is frequently an A-word and *Yahweh* a B-word.<sup>45</sup> He also notes that אל is more frequently an A-word in J and a B-word in E,<sup>46</sup> and that both עליון<sup>47</sup> and אלהי יעקוב<sup>48</sup> are B-words throughout. An additional observation is that parallel repetition of *Yahweh*<sup>49</sup> is common in the Yahwistic sections, while parallel repetition of *Elohim*<sup>50</sup> is found in the EP. He concludes that the EP shows a "consistent preference for contrasting stylistic forms."<sup>51</sup>

While Boling's analysis is clear and thorough, it obscures one important aspect of the EP. Throughout his article, he does not distinguish between the proper noun אלהים and the common noun which may appear with possessive suffixes (e.g. אלהינו) or in construct (e.g. אלהי ישעי); instead he

<sup>44</sup> Boling (1960:221-255).

<sup>45</sup> Boling (1960:248). The frequencies are as follows:

	Pss. 1-41, 84-150		Pss. 42-83	
	A	B	A	B
<i>Yahweh</i>	77	7	5	11
<i>Eloh(im)</i>	6	27	30	3

<sup>46</sup> Boling (1960:228) אל: Yahwistic Psalms: (7-3 i.e. *El* appears 7x as A-word and 3x as B word), EP: (3-5). *El* then behaves like *Yahweh*, rather than *Elohim*.

<sup>47</sup> Boling (1960:235-6): עליון (3-13).

<sup>48</sup> Boling (1960:228): אלהי יעקוב (0-6).

<sup>49</sup> Boling (1960:249): Pss. 6:3, 10, 11:4, 19:9, 10, 29:1, 3, 4, 7ff, 30:11, 40:14, 89:7, 96:1, 7 ff, 118:15, 25 ff, 135:13, 142:2, 146:8 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Pss. 46:6, 47:9, 60:12, 67:7 ff, 77:2.

<sup>51</sup> Boling (1960:242).

uses the notation *eloh(im)* to refer to any form of that word. He justifies this decision thus:

The doublets preserved in 40:18 and 70:6, with *adonay* for *elohim* and *elohay* for *yahweh* in the former, prove that suffixed and construct forms of *elohim* must be included in any comparison.<sup>52</sup>

While this comparison does show that other forms (such as אֱלֹהֵי and אֱלֹהֵי) should be taken into account, it does not necessarily follow that אֱלֹהֵי is 'equal' to *Elohim*, any more than אֱדֹנָי is equal to *Yahweh*. When his analysis is re-examined taking account of the difference between the proper name and the common noun, an interesting distinction arises. *Eloh(im)* as a B-word in the Yahwistic Psalter is predominantly a common noun; while *eloh(im)* as an A-word in the EP is predominantly a proper noun. The correlation of these two factors is far too strong to be ignored as 'coincidental'.<sup>53</sup> It is therefore quite wrong to suggest that Elohist style is a reversal or inversion of Yahwistic style, as Boling does in the table and comment:

	J Psalms	E Psalms
<i>yahweh</i>	584 (86.1%)	45 (17.6%)
<i>eloh(im)</i>	94 (13.9%)	210 (82.4%)

The contrasting frequencies of *yahweh* and *elohim* in J are inverted in E... the ratio in one group is so neatly inverted in the other.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Boling (1960:254).

<sup>53</sup> Of the 27 times that *eloh(im)* appears in the Yahwistic Psalms as a B-word, it is found suffixed or in construct 23 times (Pss. 3:8a, 13:4, 18:7a, 22, 29, 32, 47, 24:5, 31:15, 35:24, 38:22, 40:18, 91:2, 92:14, 94:22, 104:33, 116:5, 118:28, 135:2, 146:2, 10, 147:7, 12) and in the absolute 4 times only. Of these 4 cases, the parallelism is doubtful twice (Pss. 14:2, 100:3a), and the other two cases appear within the EP's tail (Pss. 84:12a, 86:10).

Conversely, of the 30 cases in the EP where *eloh(im)* is an A-word, it appears absolutely 28 times (Pss. 43:4, 44:9, 22, 47:6, 7, 50:14, 54:6, 55:17, 56:11, 57:3, 58:7, 60:14, 66:1-2, 68:5, 27, 70:2, 6, 74:10, 75:2, 76:2, 77:14, 78:7, 35, 56, 81:2, 82:8, 6\*, 83:2) and as a common noun twice (71:22, 79:9a). \*In Ps. 82:6, however, אֱלֹהִים is a common noun plural, not referring to Yahweh.

For the sake of completeness, it is worthwhile including here the two remaining categories: of the 6 times that *eloh(im)* is an A-word in the Yahwistic portions, it appears absolutely 3 times (Pss. 7:11, 7:12, 108:14) and suffixed 3 times (Pss. 20:6, 40:4, 145:1). Of the 3 times it appears as a B-word in the EP, one case is a common noun plural (Ps. 82:1), one case is absolute (Ps. 68:6), and one is suffixed (Ps. 48:2). While the numbers in these two categories are small, the fact that they are split evenly between proper name and common noun suggests that there was no fixed convention for these exceptional cases.

<sup>54</sup> Boling (1960:254).



The parallel verse which Boling uses to justify his decision is a prime example of the distinction which his analysis obscures:

Ps. 70:6

אלהים חושה לי יהוה אל תאחר

Ps. 40:18

אדני יחשב לי אלהי אל תאחר

Each verse exemplifies the 'normal' parallelistic style for its context: Ps. 70 being elohistic, has *eloh(im)* for the A phrase and *yahweh* for the B phrase; Ps. 40:18 has a different DN for the A phrase and *eloh(im)* for the B phrase. But the *eloh(im)* in the elohistic Psalm is a proper divine name, while the *eloh(im)* in the Yahwistic Psalm is a common noun with possessive suffix. Boling is not comparing like with like.

### Structure

Watson lists the following Psalms as being alphabetic acrostics: Pss. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145.<sup>55</sup> Of these 8 acrostics (counting Pss. 9-10 as one Psalm), none are Elohistic. In order to ascertain whether this has any significance, we must first look for any special use of DNs in acrostic poems. The acrostic Psalms never begin a letter-unit with a DN (i.e. *Yahweh* is never the *yod* component; *Elohim* never begins the *aleph* line). However, *Yahweh* often features as the second idea in the line. It seems that the difficulty in composing a poem with words beginning with specific letters was partly offset by the following formula:

verb/noun/preposition + *Yahweh* + rest of line

The creativity lay in the 'rest of line' which was not bound by the constraints of the acrostic beyond having to make sense with the preceding words. To give but a few examples:

- verb + *Yahweh* + rest of line:

Ps. 9:2

אודה יהוה כל לבי

(see also 9:10, 12, 14; 10:12, 25:6)

<sup>55</sup> Watson (1984:192), also Craigie (1983:128-31).



- 46:8+12:

יהוה צבאות עמנו משגב לנו אלהי יעקב

Both יהוה צבאות and אלהי יעקב are characteristic of the EP.<sup>58</sup> As neither armies nor Jacob are mentioned anywhere else in this Psalm, their role is one of surprise.

- Ps. 80:4                      והאר פניך ונושעה                      אלהים השיבנו
- 80:8                              והאר פניך ונושעה                      אלהים צבאות השיבנו
- 80:20                             האר פניך ונושעה                      יהוה אלהים צבאות השיבנו

Here the DNs in the refrain form a crescendo. The full form 'Yahweh-Elohim of Hosts' is unique to the EP. Its presence in the refrain is anticipated in verse 5, yet it does not appear again until the final refrain: the Psalmist keeps the audience in suspense till the very last verse. The result is climax, and the climax is achieved by absence and presence of DNs.<sup>59</sup>

- Ps. 99:3b                      קדוש הוא
- 99:5                              קדוש הוא                      רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחוו להדם רגליו
- 99:9                              כי קדוש יהוה אלהינו                      רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחוו הר קדשו

As with Ps. 80, the three refrains form a crescendo, and the crescendo involves the Psalmist becoming increasingly explicit about the deity. Unlike Ps. 80, Ps. 99 conforms to Yahwistic DN usage, using *elohim* only as a common noun.

The refrain was (at least in Pss. 46, 80 and 99) an opportunity for the Psalmist to draw attention to DNs by repetition in the form of a refrain; in Pss. 46 and 80 under Elohist principles and in Ps. 99 under Yahwistic principles. Refrain Psalms, for which DN play an important punctuating, climactic role, are clustered in the EP. Acrostic Psalms, where DNs are not a major feature, but rather 'fillers' which help to overcome the difficulties of composition, are clustered before and after the EP.

<sup>58</sup> Ps. 84:9, standing in the 'tail of the EP' parallels יהוה אלהים צבאות with אלהי יעקב.

<sup>59</sup> For another example of the 'staircase pattern in DNs' in this and the next example, see Tromp on Amos 5 on p. 250 below. They also share the anticipation of the climax (in Amos 5:3 יהוה אדני יהוה then 5:16 יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני).

## *Elohim* in the Elohistic Psalter

Cheyne noted regarding the Elohistic Psalter:

*Elohim* in these psalms (like *Sebaoth* in *Yahwe Sebaoth*) is virtually a proper name, and not an abstract term for deity.<sup>60</sup>

However, the judgement as to what is a 'proper name', what is an 'abstract term', and what is 'virtually a proper name' is a good deal more complicated than might at first appear. This section examines the way in which *Elohim* in the EP has taken on what can best be described as a 'Yahweh-role'. It lists specific points of comparison between the EP and the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

### Collocations

If the *Elohim*-form is found to be limited to the EP, and its *Yahweh* equivalent spread throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible, then systematic editorial activity would seem to be indicated.

God, my/your/etc. god:

- 43:4 אלהים אלהי
- 45:8, 50:7 אלהים אלהיך
- 48:15, 67:7 אלהים אלהינו
- 63:2 אלהים אלי אתה

God, god of ... :

- 68:9 אלהים אלהי ישראל
- 51:16 אלהים אלהי תשועתי

Compound DNs:

- 50:14,\*<sup>61</sup> 57:3, 78:56 אלהים עליון

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<sup>60</sup> Cheyne (1904:I: lx).

<sup>61</sup> In those marked with an \* the compound DN is separated by 'break-up of stereotype phrases.' Melamed (1961:115-44). Dahood (1965:I:xxxiv) describes the phenomenon: "The biblical poets habitually separate compound linguistic stereotypes into their components, placing one in the first half of the verse and the other in the second, with

Compare יהוה עליון in 7:18, 18:14,\* 21:8,\* 57:3, 92:2\* 97:9, 83:19\* and אל עליון in 78:35, 107:11\*.

- 80:8, 15 אלהים צבאות
- 80:5, 20, 84:9 יהוה אלהים צבאות
- 59:6 62-הוה אלהים צבאות אלהי ישראל
- 50:1 63אל אלהים יהוה
- (89:9 יהוה אלהי צבאות)

Other phrases:

- 46:11 אנכי אלהים

No other occurrences; cf. 8 occurrences of יהוה אנכי יהוה<sup>64</sup> and 158 of יהוה אני.

- 42:3 פני אלהים

Found elsewhere only once;<sup>65</sup> פני יהוה occurs 27 times, once in Psalms.<sup>66</sup>

- 43:4 מזבח אלהים

No other occurrences; מזבח יהוה occurs 22 times.

- 69:31 שם אלהים

Both other occurrences refer to שם אלהים אחרים<sup>67</sup> cf. 121 occurrences of שם יהוה.

Other unusual references to the 'Elohim's name' are 44:9 שמך ... באלהים, 48:11 אלהים בשמך, 54:3 כשמך אלהים.

- 66:20, 68:36 ברוך אלהים

No other occurrences; cf. 29 attestations of יהוה ברוך. Other combinations are 45:3 על כן ברכך אלהים לעולם; 67:7,8 ; יברכנו אלהים ; 68:27 ברכו אלהים.

the result that both halves become more tightly interlocked" Further examples are Ps. 21:8 and, from the Ugaritic texts, 2 Aqht v 10-11.

<sup>62</sup> This lengthy combination brings to mind "the legend which in the 1980's adorned public pictures of a certain African leader: 'His Excellency, the Right Honourable Reverend Comrade Canaan S. Banana, the President of Zimbabwe.'" (Mitchell 1997:181 n. 31).

<sup>63</sup> Mark Smith's translation of the same words in Josh. 22:22 (God of gods is Yahweh!, 1990:8) cannot be applied to Ps. 50:1 as Smith implies. Here, the context requires we read all 3 DNs as the one subject, rather than an independent sentence:

אל אלהים יהוה דבר ויקרא ארץ

<sup>64</sup> Ex. 4:11, 20:2, 5, Deut. 5:6, 9, 2 Sam. 7:18, Isa. 43:11, 51:15.

<sup>65</sup> Gen. 33:10. The context here also prefers *Elohim*, see 33:5, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Ps. 34:17.

<sup>67</sup> Ex. 32:13, Deut. 18:20.

- 46:45 עיר אלהים
- 87:3 עיר האלהים

No other occurrences; Compare עיר יהוה Ps. 101:8, Isa. 60:14, also עיר יהוה צבאות in Ps. 48:9!

- 82:1 אלהים נצב בעדת אל בקרב אלהים ישפט

This verse is included here although the strangeness of *Elohim* here is more a matter of style, as the verse seems overloaded with *Elohim*s.

- Proximity to the word עו

*Elohim* appears in close proximity to the word עו 5x in the Hebrew Bible, all of which occur within the EP.<sup>68</sup> Yahweh is found in this context 9x in the rest of the Psalter,<sup>69</sup> and 7x outwith the Psalter.<sup>70</sup>

- Ps. 42:3 וַאֲרָאָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
- (also Ps. 84:8 יִרְאֶה אֶל אֱלֹהִים)

The combination  $\sqrt{\text{ראה}}$  in niph'al + פני יהוה is a technical expression regarding cultic duty, used elsewhere only of Yahweh:<sup>71</sup>

- Ex. 23:17 (also 34:23, Deut. 16:16) יִרְאֶה כָּל זָכוֹרְךָ אֶל פְּנֵי הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה
- Ex. 34:24, Deut. 31:11 לִקְרֹאוֹת אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
- Deut. 16:16 לֹא יִרְאֶה אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה רִיקִם
- 1 Sam. 1:22 וַנִּרְאֶה אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה

## Phrases

It is notoriously difficult, given two parallel verses, to decide which is primary. Almost any argument can be turned on its head. In only two of the following cases can an independent judgement be made about priority.

- Ps. 55:2 האוינה אלהים תפלתי ואל תתעלם מתחנותי
- cf. Ps. 86:6 האוינה יהוה תפלתי והקשיבה בקול תחנונותי
- Ps. 56:14: כי הצלת נפשי ממות הלא רגלי מדחי

<sup>68</sup> Pss. 46:2, 62:8, 12, 68:35, 81:2. עו + אלהים

<sup>69</sup> Pss. 21:2, 14, 28:7, 8, 29:11, 93:1, 105:4, 118:14 (יה), 140:8. עו + יהוה

<sup>70</sup> Ex. 15:2 (יה), Isa. 12:2, 62:8, Jer. 16:19, Micah 5:3, Prov. 18:10, 1 Chr. 16:11. עו + יהוה

<sup>71</sup> It also appears in Ex. 23:15, 34:20 and Isa. 1:12, but in these cases Yahweh speaks in first person, so we have פני יהוה instead of פני.



להתהלך לפני אלהים באור החיים

cf. Ps. 116:8-9: כי חלצת נפשי ממות את עיני מן דמעה את רגלי מדחי אתהלך לפני יהוה בארצות החיים

This is an example of a simple *Yahweh/Elohim* interchange. Compare the description of Enoch in Gen. 5:22, 24: ויתהלך חנוך את האלהים. Cassuto<sup>72</sup> comments on this passage that it would have been inappropriate for Enoch to walk *with Yahweh*, whereas walking *with Elohim* is acceptable. He notes that biblical Hebrew prefers the preposition לפני in the context of walking in proximity to *Yahweh*. Cassuto's observation is confirmed by quantitative analysis. In the Hebrew Bible, the deity is the indirect object of the verb התהלך eleven times. Of these eleven, five attest לפני יהוה,<sup>73</sup> three have את אלהים,<sup>74</sup> and only two texts read לפני אלהים (of which the above text is one).<sup>75</sup> The final case reads לפני אל שדי.<sup>76</sup> There are no instances of את יהוה. The Psalm passages in question use the preposition לפני, giving circumstantial evidence that the *Yahweh* version is primary.

- Ps. 68:2 יקום אלהים יפוצו אויביו ויגוסו משנאיו מפניו  
cf. Num. 10:35 קומו יהוה ויפוצו איבך ויגוסו משנאיך מפניך
- Ps. 47:7 זמרו אלהים זמרו זמרו למלכנו זמרו  
Ps. 68:5a שירו לאלהים זמרו שמו  
Ps. 68:33b שירו לאלהים זמרו אדני  
cf. Ps 104:33 אשירה ליהוה בחיי אזמרה לאלהי בעודי  
Ps. 105:2 שירו לו זמרו לו  
and Ex. 15:21 שירו ליהוה
- Ps. 68:8-9 אלהים בצאתך לפני עמך בצעדך בישימון סלה  
ארץ רעשה אף שמים נטפו מפני אלהים  
זה סיני מפני אלהים אלהי ישראל

<sup>72</sup> Cassuto (1961a:35).

<sup>73</sup> יהוה אשר התהלכתי לפניו: Gen. 24:40; 1 Sam. 2:30, 2 Kings 20:3 = Isa. 38:3, Ps. 116:9 (noted above).

<sup>74</sup> את אלהים: Gen. 5:22, 24, 6:9.

<sup>75</sup> לפני אלהים: Gen. 48:15, Ps. 56:14. The Genesis case, like that in the Psalms, appears in an 'elohistic context'. *Elohim* is found at Gen. 48:9, 11, 15, 15, 20, 21, *Yahweh* does not appear at all in that chapter.

<sup>76</sup> לפני אל שדי: Gen. 17:1. It is interesting that El Shaddai here follows 'Yahweh-terminology' rather than 'Elohim terminology'.



- Ps. 14 cf. Ps. 53

Ps. 14		Ps. 53	
1	אמר נבל בלבו אין אלהים	2	אמר נבל בלבו אין אלהים
2	יהוה משמים השקיף על בני אדם	3	אלהים משמים השקיף על בני אדם
2	לראות היש משכיל דרש את אלהים	3	לראות היש משכיל דרש את אלהים
4	יהוה לא קראו	5	אלהים לא קראו
5	כי אלהים בדור צדיק	6	כי אלהים פור
6	כי יהוה מחסהו	6	כי אלהים מאסם
7	בשוב יהוה שבות עמו	7	בשוב אלהים שבות עמו

Ps. 14:1 uses *Elohim* to express the thoughts of the wicked, as do Pss. 3:3 and 10:4 (see below). The Psalm as a whole seems to follow a pattern, alternating *Elohim* and *Yahweh*, with *Yahweh* twice at the end. Ps. 53 uses *Elohim* throughout.

- Ps. 40:14-18 cf. Ps. 70

Ps. 40: 14-18		Ps. 70	
14	רצה יהוה להצילני	2	אלהים להצילני
14	יהוה לעזרתי חושה	2	יהוה לעזרתי
17	יגדל יהוה	5	יגדל אלהים
18	אדני יחשב לי	6	אלהים חושה לי
18	אלהי אל תאחר	6	יהוה אל תאחר

Both Psalms typify the two stylistic traditions in which they are placed (see discussion of Boling above).

- Ps. 57:8-12 + Ps. 60:7-14 cf. Ps. 108

Ps. 57:8-12 + Ps. 60:7-14		Ps. 108	
57:8	נכון לבי אלהים	2	נכון לבי אלהים
10	אורך בעמים אדני	4	אורך בעמים יהוה
12	רומה על שמים אלהים	6	רומה על שמים אלהים
60:8	אלהים דבר בקדשו	8	אלהים דבר בקדשו
12	הלא אתה אלהים ונחתנו	12	הלא אתה אלהים ונחתנו
12	ולא תצא אלהים בצבאותינו	12	ולא תצא אלהים בצבאותינו
14	באלהים נעשה חיל	14	באלהים נעשה חיל

Note the single difference: from אדני to יהוה. Commentators have for a long time agreed that Ps. 108 must be considered a copy of the Elohist Psalms, due to the fact it has 6 out of 10 occurrences of Elohim in Pss. 90-150. Thus, a chronology is established whereby books 4 and 5 were added to the Psalter later. The note at the end of Ps. 72: כְּלוּ תַפְלוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן יִשָׁי where a number of David Psalms follow, confirms this, as does recent research on the dates of Qumran Psalm manuscripts.<sup>80</sup>

There are, however, two instances cited above (Pss. 56:14 and 68:5a), whose later, non-EP parallels do not retain the *Elohim*. This does not constitute a serious problem, as both of these parallels are short (1 or 2 verses), can therefore be seen as two independent versions of a stock phrase in every-day use. The parallel Psalms, on the other hand, are clear examples of literary dependency.

## Conclusions

This section has brought together a collection of examples showing how the EP differs from the rest of the Psalter, and indeed the rest of the Hebrew Bible, with respect to Divine Names. The parallel Psalms, so often held up as the great proof for the Elohist redactor, actually give us little information about the phenomenon. The meaningful findings are rather the collocations, and the highly unusual forms such as אלהים עליון and אלהים צבאות, particularly as they find a large number of Yahweh-comparisons throughout the Hebrew

<sup>80</sup> Flint (1997:148).

Bible. The number of collocations which fit into this category show that Pss. 1-41 and 90-150 must be regarded as 'normal'. If any redaction has taken place, it is of Pss. 42-83. Of 7 instances of parallel phrases taken individually, one (72:18) provides us with good evidence (because it has several non-EP parallels), and another (56:14) gives at best circumstantial evidence to support the above conclusion. Taken cumulatively, however, the evidence is overwhelming, because the Yahwistic parallels come from other parts of the Hebrew Bible, not just the Psalms.

The instances above show how in the EP, *Elohim* appears in places where our experience from the rest of biblical literature leads us to expect *Yahweh*. We thus find ourselves in broad agreement with Cheyne: *Elohim* is the *usual* name for the deity in the EP - it does not have any particular connotation as elsewhere (e.g. divinity generally, universalism) but is rather a *proper* DN.

One final observation is pertinent here. Earlier I criticized Boling for not distinguishing between the proper name *Elohim* and the common noun which can appear with suffixes or in construct. It will be noted that in all but one of the examples of parallel phrases and Psalms, *Yahweh* has been replaced by the DN *Elohim*, and not by any other DN, nor by the common noun אלהים. In the one instance where the common noun אלהי is found in the EP parallel (Ps. 71:12), there are additional changes to the word order of the phrase. We can therefore be very specific about the different ways in which the DN *Elohim* has taken over the 'Yahweh-role' in the EP: it has not only taken over the role of the dominant A-word, but also in specific collocations and particular poetic passages.

### Criteria for Divine Name Use

Having established that *Yahweh* is the usual name for the deity in Pss. 1-41 and 84-150, and *Elohim* in Pss. 42-83, the next logical line of inquiry concerns the circumstances under which the less-favoured DN is used. It is clear that poetry requires variation, but what are the specific conditions which prompt the poet to use this variation? This section is therefore divided into three: the first examining the use of *Elohim* in the Yahwistic parts of the Psalter, and second looking at the use of *Yahweh* in the EP. Pss. 84-87, which despite being Yahwistic, still form a bridge between the EP and what follows, are dealt with separately.





- Ps. 7:10 (also vv. 11, 12) יגמר נא רע רשעים ותכונן צדיק  
ובחן לבות וכליות אלהים צדיק

However, *Yahweh* also appears as the judge of the wicked (Ps. 5:7, 11:5, 12:4) *Elohim* (never *Yahweh*) is used in close proximity with humans:

- Ps. 36:8 מה יקר חסדך אלהים ובני אדם בצל כנפיך יחסיון  
Proximity of God to 'man' emphasized by the Hebrew punctuation although the sense of the verse requires that these be separated (NRSV: How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings).

- Ps. 8:5-6 מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ובן אדם כי תפקדנו  
ותחסרהו מעט אלהים

While in this case *Elohim* is not close to the mortals on paper, the sense of the text brings them together. It may be, however, that this *Elohim* is better understood as a common noun, see below.

The preference to use *Elohim* in proximity to mortals can also be seen in a number of closely related phrases: אלהים ואנשים (Jud. 9:9, 13); עם אלהים ועם אנשים (Gen. 32:29); עיני אלהים ואדם (Prov. 3:4<sup>81</sup>); אלהים ואדם (11QT64:12); אלה ואנש (Dan. 6:13); θεου και ανθρωπου (Si. 45:1); אלהים ומלך (1 Kings 21:10, 13 cf. Isa. 8:21 במלכו ובאלהיו (Hos. 12:4). It is also evident in parallelism: Ps. 58:12 a אדם // b אלהים; Prov. 25:2<sup>82</sup> a אלהים // b מלכים; Ex. 22:27 a אלהים // b ושיא.

In a number of cases, the context suggests that אלהים might be taken as a common noun. If the common noun reading is the intended one, then *Yahweh* would have been inappropriate in these places:

- Ps. 8:6 ותחסרהו מעט אלהים  
The Septuagint here reads ἀγγελους; some modern translations are a god (NEB); gods<sup>83</sup>; God and angels, divine beings, gods<sup>84</sup>.

81 See also p. 184.

82 See also p.184.

83 Oesterly (1937:I:140).

84 Briggs (1906-7:I:64).



However, *Yahweh* may also occur as the *first* of a pair.<sup>86</sup>

- *Yahweh* appears in compound DNs:

50:1	אל אלהים יהוה
46:8, 12, 48:9	יהוה צבאות
47:3	יהוה עליון
59:6	יהוה אלהים צבאות אלהי ישראל
69:7	יהוה אדני צבאות
71:16, 73:28	אדני יהוה
80:5, 20	יהוה אלהים צבאות

- *Yahweh* sometimes appears in the last verse of a Psalm, or as the last DN in a Psalm. Here the DN functions as a 'literary cadence', possibly to indicate climax or closure: Ps. 46:12, 64:11, 70:6, 73:28, 76:12, 80:20, 81:16.

As with *Elohim* in the Yahwistic Psalter, we must note that several factors may be in operation at the same time: Pss. 46:12 and 70:6 are covered by two categories, and Ps. 73:28 is included in all three! The criteria account for only 24 out of the 44 instances of *Yahweh* in the EP, leaving 20 unexplained.<sup>87</sup> From this alone we can conclude that the elohistic editor was *in no way* reluctant to use the name *Yahweh*.

On comparing this with the previous section it immediately becomes clear that different *kinds* of criteria for the use of DNs are involved. *Elohim* in Pss. 1-41 was an indicator of theology or semantics, whereas *Yahweh* here is much more a *literary choice* - being part of the poetic structure.

### Pss. 84-89

We first established that while Pss. 84-89 are primarily Yahwistic, the name *Elohim* and other designations characteristic of the EP appear quite

<sup>86</sup> Boling (1960:250-1) notes that in some places in the EP where *Yahweh* appears in the first colon, that colon is metrically overloaded (Pss. 50:1a, 59:9, 64:11, 72:18, 76:12, 79:5, 83:19).

<sup>87</sup> Pss. 42:9, 46:9, 48:2, 54:8, 55:23, 59:4, 9, 69:14, 17, 32, 34, 71:1, 5, 74:18, 75:9, 78:4, 21, 79:5, 83:17, 19.

frequently. Now after examining the criteria of use in both Elohist and Yahwistic Psalms, we should be able to comment on whether Pss. 84-89 use DNs according to Yahwistic or Elohist principles.

Ps. 83 is traditionally called the last Psalm of the EP. It is the only EP Psalm (apart from Ps. 79, itself rather close to the end of the EP) to have equal numbers of *Yahwehs* and *Elohim*s. This in itself seem to indicate a 'toning down' of the elohistic bias. However, the use of names runs according to elohistic principles: one אלהים appears as an A-word (v. 2); אל (v. 2), יהוה (v. 17), and עליין (v. 19) appear in the second strophe; and יהוה occurs in the final verse.

While Ps. 84 has almost twice as many *Yahwehs* as *Elohim*s, the use of DNs still betrays elohistic principles. *Yahweh* appears in a variety of compound names: יהוה צבאות (vv. 2, 4, 13), יהוה אלהים צבאות (v. 9) and יהוה אלהים (v. 12). The *Elohim* in v. 10 is inexplicable by Yahwistic principles, but is linked by ראה<sup>√</sup> to Elohim in v. 8. The latter expression (יראה אל אלהים) is reminiscent of Ps. 42:3 (see above, p. 164 and references given there). I thus suggest the interpretation *He will be presented to God on Zion* (he being the anointed one of v. 10), rather than the NRSV *God of gods will be seen on Zion*. This interpretation is congruous with v. 10, in which God is to *behold*, not to be seen. In v. 9, the sequence יהוה אלהים צבאות // ב יהוה יעקב brings to mind Ps. 46:8 and 12. Even the *Yahweh* in the opening verse has elohistic precedents in Pss. 48 and 71.

Ps. 85, with no *Elohim*s is unquestionably Yahwistic. There are, however, further instances of 'elohistic-looking' editing in the next few Psalms: While the אלהים of Ps. 86:10 may be generic, that in 86:14 is clearly a proper DN, used here in the vocative; there are also 6 occurrences of אדני in Ps. 86 (vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12); also יהוה אלהי צבאות in 89:9; the expression עיר האלהים in Ps. 87:3 is unusual, and finds a parallel in Ps. 46:45 (see p. 164). עליין in 89:28 refers to the king, and so is not relevant to the question of DNs. It would probably be unwise to regard אדני in 89:50, 51, etc. as indicators of elohistic editing. They do not appear in contexts significantly different from any other part of the 'Yahwistic Psalter.'

At this point, the reader would be entitled to ask exactly where the EP should be considered to end. It seems on balance that Ps. 83 is rightly considered to be the last true EP Psalm, but that a diluted form of editing went on as far as Ps. 89. We have established that the end of the EP is gradual, in contrast to its abrupt beginning. This is true both in terms of the

numbers of times *Yahweh* and *Elohim* are used, and in the *way* that they are used.

## Conclusions

The first task of this investigation was to establish whether Pss. 1-41 and 84-150, or Pss. 42-83 represent 'normal' Hebrew Psalmody. This was in response to Wilson's suggestion that Pss. 1-41 and 84-150 show such a dearth of *Elohim*s that we may suspect that they had been edited to remove that name. I have presented here a large number of varying types of examples showing that it is the EP that is out of step, not just with the rest of the Psalter, but with the entire Hebrew Bible. There is, however, one parallel which may be found to uphold Wilson's suggestion:

Ps. 132:8-10:

קומה יהוה למנוחתך אתה וארון עוז  
כהניך ילבשו צדק וחסידיך ירננו  
בעבור דוד עבדך אל תשב פני משיחך

2 Chr. 6:41-42:

ועתה קומה יהוה אלהים לנוחך אתה וארון עוז  
כהניך יהוה אלהים ילבשו תשועה וחסידיך ישמחו בטוב  
יהוה אלהים אל תשב פני משיחך וזכרה לחסדי דויד עבדך

The Chronicles version gives three instances of *Elohim* which are not found in the Psalms parallel. There is, however, another explanation for this difference. Although the designation אלהים יהוה is relatively rare, Chronicles accounts for its second largest cluster, after Genesis 2-3.<sup>88</sup> It sometimes plays a 'punctuating' role in poetry, comparable to that of יהוה אדני in Isaiah. The Kings counterpart of this passage reads אדני יהוה (1 Kings 8:53). Additionally, if the Chronicles version had originally stood behind the Psalms version, and had its *Elohim*s edited out, there is no reason why the editor would also have wanted to edit out two cases of *Yahweh*. This parallel gives no grounds to think that the later Psalms were 'Yahwistically edited.'

In addition, if portions of the Psalter had been edited to remove *Elohim*s, then we need an explanation for why Ps. 108 was overlooked. The idea that the last two books of the Psalter are suspiciously 'lacking' in *Elohim*s is borne out of a general ignorance regarding the Hebrew Bible's use of

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<sup>88</sup> See pp. 140-142.

Divine Names. This thesis shows that DN use is *extremely* variable, and the first few chapters of Genesis are not representative.

Having established that the EP is 'out of step', and not the surrounding material, the next task is to identify its cause. Boling rejects the idea that an editor could have been responsible for such an intricate and consistent reversal of the rules of Hebrew poetry. Leaving aside specific suggestions as to what might be responsible for this separate stylistic tradition, two possibilities spring to mind: firstly a separate community,<sup>89</sup> and secondly, composition in a different period.<sup>90</sup> Thus one stylistic tradition is separated from the other by time, space, or ethnicity. There are two fundamental problems with this kind of answer.

Firstly, the 'elohistic style' is not recorded anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible. A brief survey of some of the non-Psalter 'psalms' can serve as a control for this. Taking the 5 psalms in Ex. 15, Deut. 32, Jud. 8, 1 Sam. 2 and Jonah 2,<sup>91</sup> we see that they all follow the same principles as the 'Yahwistic Psalter'. In each, the name *Yahweh* is the usual name for God, while Ex. 15 and Deut. 32 use other names sparingly. *Elohim* (absolute) only ever appears as a common noun meaning 'gods' (e.g. Deut. 32:17, 39). On the other hand, *elohe...* in inflected form (i.e. god of ...) appears at least once in each poem. If Boling's method of analysis is applied to these Psalms, they again correspond closely to the 'Yahwistic Psalms': *Yahweh* is more commonly an A-word than a B-word, while *elohe...* only ever appears as a B-word.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> See, e.g. Goulder (1982).

<sup>90</sup> See, e.g. Goulder (1996).

<sup>91</sup> A word is necessary about the choice of these texts. For the purposes of a 'control', it was necessary that passages which were also found in the Psalter (e.g. 2 Sam. 22, 1 Chr. 16) be excluded. Psalms which do not use names of God (2 Sam. 1:18-26) were also excluded.

<sup>92</sup> Divine Names in parallelism:

	A-word	B-word		A-word	B-word
Ex. 15:2	אלי	אלהי אבי	Jud. 5:3	יהוה	יהוה אלהי ישראל
Ex.15:3	יהוה	יהוה	Jud. 5:5	יהוה	יהוה אלהי ישראל
Ex. 15:6	יהוה	יהוה	Jud. 5:11	יהוה	פרונו בישראל
Ex. 15:17	יהוה	אדני	Jud. 5:23	יהוה	יהוה
Deut. 32:3	יהוה	אלהינו	1 Sam. 2:1	יהוה	יהוה
Deut. 32:15	אלוה	צור ישעתי	1 Sam. 2:2	יהוה	אלהינו
Deut. 32:18	צור	אל	1 Sam. 2:6-7	יהוה	יהוה
			1 Sam. 2:10	יהוה	יהוה

*Yahweh* 12x A-word, 8 x B-word

*Elohe...* never A-word, 5x B-word



Secondly, we must ask what the chances are that a community (or a period), so distinctive in its references to God, would not show other differences of vocabulary or poetic style. Of course it is possible that such differences exist, but that nobody has found them because nobody has ever looked for them. Taking one line of inquiry, I looked through the common nouns in Boling's study. Nowhere could I find a significant difference in the poetic use of a word (whether it appears as an A-word or a B-word) between the Yahwistic and the Elohist parts.

All the evidence presented points toward the Elohist Psalter being the result of a highly skilled editorial process. The only obstacle raised by Boling's excellent survey against this conclusion is that it does not square with our presupposition that editors were simply not up to the job of rewriting the rules of poetry:

It is highly improbable that the frequency of *Elohim* in E, where it is A-word in parallelism, could result from editorial adjustments of a pattern in which it was predominantly B-word, since this would presuppose a highly sophisticated approach to editorial problems.<sup>93</sup>

The assumption that there can never have been a "highly sophisticated approach to editorial problems" remains merely an assumption. I suggest we change our assumptions rather than our conclusions.<sup>94</sup>

Next, we must consider Goulder's major objection to the Elohist redaction: the question of motive. The consensus opinion, that the Elohist redactor wanted to eliminate or reduce the pronunciation of the name Yahweh out of reverence, becomes increasingly tenuous. Mitchell notes that EP redaction must have taken place before avoidance of pronouncing Yahweh was widespread, otherwise *all* of the Psalter would have been so edited, and that the later Psalms are even more Yahwistic than the earlier ones.<sup>95</sup> Cassuto argues that if the reason had been reverence for the tetragrammaton, then the copyists would definitely *not* have tampered with the text, but made אלהים the Qere.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Boling (1960:248).

<sup>94</sup> One of the tenets of the 'synchronic approach' is the raising of the editor's status from 'simple automaton' to a literary craftsman in his own right, see Alter (1981:20), quoted above p. 12 n. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Mitchell (1997:70-71).

<sup>96</sup> Cassuto (1961a:26).

The only possible scenario to overcome these difficulties is that of Moore:

when the bulk of ... Psalms 42-83 was compiled and edited, יהוה was pronounced when it was written, but that, in the circle to which the editor belonged ... there were scruples about the free use of the name, in deference to which the appellative אלהים was substituted in the text. That in the considerably later compilation, books IV and V, יהוה only is used, shows that by that time the custom of substituting אדני (or אלהים) for the proper name *in reading* was fully established; exactly as in the Targums יהוה could be written everywhere, because no one dreamed of pronouncing it.<sup>97</sup>

While there is no evidence for such a dating of either the compilation of the Psalms, nor the avoidance of pronouncing the tetragrammaton, it has to be said that Moore's scenario is theoretically possible. It also accounts for the 44 cases of Yahweh in the EP: at that time its pronunciation was not banned, but it "was used only with considerable hesitation."<sup>98</sup>

However, the 'considerable hesitation' theory does not square with the redactor of Ps. 70, who changed an inoffensive אדני into אלהים, and then אלהי into the tetragrammaton (Ps. 40:18 -> 70:6)! It is also at odds with our observation that *Yahweh* plays a more significant role in the EP than *Elohim* does in the Yahwistic portions of the Psalter.

### Implications

It is frustrating to reject one hypothesis without having a better one to put in its place. (The author's own solution to this problem is of a more speculative nature, and can be found in the Appendix.) However, the firm conclusions that we have been able to reach can give us an insight into the work of the redactor. We may not be able to reconstruct the original Psalms, but we can discern some of the formulae which the elohistic redactor used.

In many places, *Yahweh* was replaced by *Elohim*. Because of the nature of parallelism in the original poetry, this would have left a great deal of bicola with elohistic names in both halves, as we can see in Ps. 71:12. Perhaps to avoid monotony, other names were brought in to replace the B-words in these cases, leading to an increase in traditional B-words like עלין and אלהי

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<sup>97</sup> Moore (1930:III:128).

<sup>98</sup> Craigie (1983:29-30).

יעקוב. Names that were previously A-words (like יהוה and אל) were re-employed as B-words. The freedom to innovate lead to bizarre forms often including the name *Yahweh*, for example יהוה אלהים צבאות אלהי ישראל and יהוה אדני. *Yahweh* was particularly favoured at the end of Psalms.

Observations on acrostics and refrains point to the idea that certain types of Psalms were considered suitable for Elohist style, and other types for Yahwistic style. Therefore we must consider the idea that selection or organization of the EP was carried out simultaneously with the redaction of a pre-ordered Psalter. Thus acrostics Psalms might have been removed, refrain Psalms brought in, or refrains added to existing Psalms. The refrain gave the editor ample opportunity to draw attention to the unusual name forms.

We must also ask how likely it is that Pss. 53 and 70 once stood as 'twins' of Pss. 14 and 40:14-18, and that coincidentally, one of each pair happened to be Elohistically redacted. Surely it is more probable that Elohist versions were commissioned for the new collection, and that both versions were retained.<sup>99</sup> Ps. 68 is particularly replete with quotations from the rest of the Hebrew Bible, begging the question of whether it is an 'elohistic creation'.

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<sup>99</sup> Ps. 108 (constructed from Pss. 57:8-12 and 60:7-14) may seem to be a precedent for the former alternative. However, Ps. 108 puts old material in a new context, and is therefore a different kind of 'copying'.

## Case study: The Doxologies

The four doxologies separating the books of Psalms, and the one in Chronicles, all follow the same general pattern, providing us with a good opportunity for comparison:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| (1) Ps. 41:14    | ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל<br>מהעולם ועד העולם<br>אמן ואמן  |
| (2) Ps. 72:18-20 | ברוך יהוה אלהים אלהי ישראל עשה נפלאות לברו<br>וברוך שם כבודו לעולם וימלא כבודו את כל הארץ<br>אמן ואמן<br>(כלו תפלות דוד בן ישי) |
| (3) Ps. 89:53    | ברוך יהוה<br>לעולם<br>אמן ואמן  |
| (4) Ps. 106:48   | ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל<br>מן העולם ועד העולם<br>ואמר כל העם האמן הללו יה  |
| (5) 1 Chr. 16:36 | ברוך יהוה אלהי ישראל<br>מן העולם ועד העולם<br>ויאמרו כל העם האמן והללו ליהוה  |

The structure to which all these doxologies conform can be expressed thus:

- 1: ברוך - phrase
- 2: עולם - phrase
- 3: אמן - phrase

Each doxology contains each of these elements in the same order. This having been said, no two doxologies are identical. The descriptive ואמר כל העם of Ps. 106:48 and ויאמרו כל העם of 1 Chr. 16:36 set these apart from the first three, all of which attest a simple אמן ואמן.

Doxologies 4 and 5 are similar enough to be described as two versions of the same text. This is in contrast to doxologies 1, 2 and 3, which vary considerably, having 9, 19 and 5 words in length respectively (not counting Ps. 72:20, which would bring the total from 19 up to 24).

There is good reason to see the hand of the elohistic redactor in the length of Ps. 72:18-20. The extra אלהים in the first line is certainly his, and so we may suspect that the other unparalleled elements of this doxology are also his: the addition of עשה נפלאות לבדו; the expansion of a simple עולם phrase to a second blessing. The addition regarding the prayers of David may also be his. The material clearly attributable to the elohistic redactor represents a large proportion of the whole. Here it is presented in bold:

Ps. 72:18-20

ברוך יהוה אלהים אלהי ישראל עשה נפלאות לבדו  
 וברוך שם כבודו לעולם וימלא כבודו את כל הארץ  
 אמן ואמן  
 (כלו תפלות בן ישי)

The expanded first blessing and the new second blessing are well-balanced in terms of length. They are bound together by several features: the rhyme of לבדו... כבודו... כבודו<sup>100</sup> and also the initial-repetition (ברוך... וברוך).<sup>101</sup> The repetition A + *vav*A' is a feature of the doxology form (אמן ואמן also מן העולם (ועד העולם). So we can see that the editor is using an existing pattern to incorporate his new material.

By its nature and position, the doxology cannot be taken as typical of the rest of the elohistic redactor's work. The artistry of his work is seen rather by the systematic, but not mechanical, way in which he rewrote the rules of Hebrew poetry.

<sup>100</sup> See Watson (1984:229-234).

<sup>101</sup> See Watson (1984:276), Nahum 3:2.

## CHAPTER 9

### WISDOM LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Wisdom literature is often cited as having its own particular way of referring to God. Zimmerli notes that it uses creation language (Prov. 14:31, 17:5, Eccl. 12:1) to designate God, but never a term specifically related to the covenantal history, e.g. יהוה צבאות, אלהי אבות ... אלהי ישראל.<sup>1</sup> Others emphasize the Elohistic element in wisdom literature, e.g. Crenshaw:

Qohelet terms the deity *Elohim* rather than *Yahweh*, but that preference for the term that refers to the God of all peoples is characteristic of wisdom literature.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed there is not one mention of *Yahweh* in the whole book of Ecclesiastes. Cassuto gives more evidence on the same theme:<sup>3</sup> the poetry of Job uses *Yahweh* only once, preferring *Eloah*; a section of the Psalter shows a preference for *El* and *Elohim*; *Elohim* and *Eloah* are also to be found in Proverbs; and the last words of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7) which have a definite wisdom flavour use *Elohim* and *El*. Cassuto<sup>4</sup> and Redford<sup>5</sup> demonstrate that the wisdom genre of neighbouring cultures, especially Egypt, prefers general designations for gods over specific names.

Indeed there is much natural logic behind the proposition that wisdom literature, dealing as it does with universal truths and not merely national issues, would use generic terms for god, similar to those used by neighbouring societies, rather than the name of the national deity. However, even the briefest of glances at the text shows that this is by no means the whole story: *Yahweh* is also frequently used.

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<sup>1</sup> Zimmerli (1964:148), see also Rose (1992:1010).

<sup>2</sup> Crenshaw (1988:73 re Ecc. 1:13).

<sup>3</sup> Cassuto (1961a:20-21).

<sup>4</sup> Cassuto (1961a:21-23).

<sup>5</sup> Redford (1970:110-127).



For example, Proverbs features יהוה 87 times as against 6 occurrences of elohistic nouns. The poetry of Job may well eschew the name *Yahweh*, but the prose uses it frequently. There are also problems in using Psalms to support this theory. Before any such sweeping generalization can be made, it is necessary to describe the actual use of DNs in each of the wisdom books.

## Divine Name Usage in the Wisdom Books

### Proverbs

There can be no doubt that the name *Yahweh* dominates as a reference to the deity in the book of Proverbs. There are exceptions, however, and these demand special attention.

The six occurrences of elohistic nouns in Proverbs are 2:5, 17, 3:4, 25:2, 30:5, 9. Of these, 2 have a possessive suffix (אלהיה in 2:17 and אלהי in 30:9) and are therefore generic (however in 30:9 the LXX reads του θεου, possibly suggesting אלהים.)

In three of the four remaining cases, אלהים can be understood on stylistic or semantic grounds.

- Prov. 2:5

או תבין יראת יהוה  
ודעת אלהים תמצא

*Elohim* here is ambiguous, capable of either singular or plural interpretation. If the intention was plural, then clearly *Yahweh* would have been inappropriate.<sup>6</sup> If on the other hand, the meaning is singular, then אלהים comes as a poetic variant for יהוה, in standard poetic sequence.<sup>7</sup> Quite apart from these considerations, both יראת יהוה and דעת אלהים are set phrases. יראת יהוה appears elsewhere 21 times, compared to only three cases of יראת אלהים.<sup>8</sup> The expression דעת יהוה is never found, whereas דעת אלהים appears twice in Hosea.<sup>9</sup>

Twice, *Elohim* is used in proximity to mortals:<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The plural interpretation is suggested by Wyatt (1996b:275 n. 109). He compares דעת קדושים (Prov. 9:10, 30:3).

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 8, also Boling 1960:247-8.

<sup>8</sup> Namely Gen. 20:11, 2 Sam. 23:3, Neh. 5:15.

<sup>9</sup> Hosea 4:1, 6:6. Compare also ויהייתם כאלהים ידעי טוב ורע (Gen. 3:5).

<sup>10</sup> For numerous other examples, see p. 171.

- Prov. 3:4 ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם
- Prov. 25:2 כבוד אלהים הסתר דבר  
וכבוד מלכים חקר דבר

The construction כבוד אלהים is an unusual one, not found elsewhere, compared to 28 instances of כבוד יהוה.

The last occurrence is אלוה:

- Prov. 30:5 כל אמרת אלוה צרופה  
מגן הוא לחסים בו

Not only does the context provide us with no reason for the unusual DN, but it appears to be a quotation with *Yahweh* in the original:<sup>11</sup>

- Ps. 18:31, 2 Sam. 22:31b אמרת יהוה צרופה  
מגן הוא לכל החסים בו

In this light, the אלוה version looks distinctly odd.

Apart from this, there may be two cases of אל in the first verse this chapter (ch. 30). At present, we read the name לאיתאל twice, but there is good reason to suppose that the text may have been corrupted, and then subsequently corrected to form the present text. Specifically, Ucal is unknown as a personal name; and it is unclear how the statement 'A man has spoken to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal' should lead to the interjection כי (v. 2). Suggestions as to how the text should be understood abound,<sup>12</sup> and are not

<sup>11</sup> It is of course possible that the literary borrowing is the other way round, or that both quote a common source or stock phrase. However, the balance of probability would seem to suggest that the Eloah version is the later. The Psalms up to Ps. 72 are earlier than those after it (Flint 1997:148); Prov. 30, on the other hand consists of a number of units which appear to have been appended to the book of Proverbs (like Prov. 31) at a 'later' stage.

<sup>12</sup> At present the MT reads:

To Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal לאיתאל לאיתאל ואכל

This has traditionally been reconstructed to:

לאיתי אל לאיתי אל ואכל  
I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed. (English Revised Version margin, similarly NEB, NRSV, etc.)

limited to the modern era,<sup>13</sup> but they all have in common the repetition of *El*. It is, of course, impossible to put much weight on emendation (neither is it necessary for the present argument), nevertheless, may bear in mind that the text may originally have referred to El.

We can conclude that Proverbs is a predominantly Yahwistic book, with the exception of chapter 30 (although it also attests יהוה, 30:9). Chapter 30 is clearly not a coherent unit, but a collection of separate units. It may be that certain 'elohistic elements' influenced the collection of material in its present form.<sup>14</sup>

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Other suggestions are as follows:

Torrey (1954:95):	לא אנכי אל לא אני אל ואוכל
I am not a god, I am not a god, that I should have power	
Scott (1965:175-6):	לא איתי אל לא איתי אל ואוכל
There is not God! There is no God, and I can[not know anything]	
Barker (1987:100-101 n. 15):	לא אתיתי לאל לא אתיתי לאל ואכל
I have not come to God, I have not come to God and endured/ that I should have power.	

The Septuagint has little help to offer. For ואכל it has και παυομαι (*and I cease*, i.e. √כלה), and for לאיתיאל, τοις πιστευουσιν θεω. The latter is harder to understand, except that Tov notes (1992:337) that the translator mistook headings in Prov. 24:23, 30:1a, 31:1, in the latter two examples *by failing to recognise proper names*. (Tov's evaluation of LXX Proverbs for text-critical purposes is far higher than that of Cook, 1997:334: "By far the greatest number of differences compared to the MT are the result of the translator's creative approach.")

In evaluating these reconstructions (none of which is especially convincing), I have only a few comments to make. Firstly, it seems a little too convenient to suppose that only those words which are corrupt happen to have been written in Aramaic (Scott). The Hebrew Bible does occasionally lapse into Aramaic (e.g. Jer. 10:11), but not very frequently. Secondly, I do not see the need to assume that a corruption must *necessarily* be a deliberate corruption of a blasphemous passage (Torrey 1954:95, McKane 1970:644, Barker 1987: 100 n. 15). Texts have become corrupt without any help from 'pious' scribes (Job and Samuel spring to mind). In this case it seems that the scribe responsible for restoring the text took advantage of the name Ithiel, known from Neh. 11:7. Perhaps the scribe was fond of palindromes? (לאיתיאל becomes a double palindrome when repeated, see also Skehan 1967:483).

- <sup>13</sup> Exodus Rabbah (6.1) understands the text as the words of Solomon who believed he could marry foreign wives and withstand the temptation into idolatry: (*lo othi el*) God did not direct his command against me, for (*itti el*) God is with me, so I can withstand (*we ukkal*).
- <sup>14</sup> See, for example Cassuto (1973-5:I:1-6) on the ordering of material. It is also worthwhile noting that while the LXX displaces all of chapter 30, it keeps verses 1-14 together.

## Psalms

It is true, as Cassuto claims, that there are Elohist Psalms, and it is also true that there are wisdom Psalms. But one might expect these two groups to coincide, or at least show a strong correlation. According to *EJ*, the wisdom Psalms are: Pss. 1, 19B, 32, 34, 37, 49, 78, 112, 119, 128, 133.<sup>15</sup> By no stretch of the imagination can they be seen to cluster in the Elohist Psalter (Pss. 42-83). Further, I have already concluded (Ch. 8) the Elohist Psalter is best explained as the result of editing a group of psalms that were originally Yahwistic. In the same chapter I show that the Yahwistic Psalms use *Elohim* quite infrequently, and usually for a discernible reason.

## Job

Cassuto pointed out that the poetry of Job overwhelmingly uses Eloah, the only occurrence of Yahweh being contested by some manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> However, the prose shell, that is 1:1-3:1 and 42:7-17 reveals a different pattern.<sup>17</sup>

This section contains 24 cases of יהוה and 11 of אלהים. Isolation of these cases quickly reveals *Yahweh* as the acting character in the story, not Elohim. Yahweh is the one who speaks (1:7,8,12, 2:2,3,6, 42:7 twice, 9) and who is spoken to (1:7,9, 2:2,4). It is Yahweh before whom the בני אלהים present themselves (1:6, 2:1 twice) and from whose presence they withdraw (1:12,

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<sup>15</sup> *EJ* 'Wisdom' 16:562. Naturally, no two scholars agree on exactly which Psalms should be included in this category, nonetheless, there is a degree of convergence. Compare Day's summary of four scholars (1992:54): Mowinkel (1955:205-24): Pss. 1, 34, 37, 49, 78, 105, 106, 111, 112, 127; Murphy (1962:156-67): Pss. 1, 32, 34, 37, 49, 112, 128; Whybray (1974:93-98): 1, 19B, 37, 49, 73, 90, 92, 94, 104, 107, 111, 119; Perdue (1977:261-343): 1, 19, 32, 34, 37, 49, 73, 112, 119, 127.

<sup>16</sup> Job 12:9 (MT) reads יד יהוה עשתה זאת (cf. Job 19:21 יד אלוה however, some Hebrew manuscripts of Kennicott and de Rossi have יד אלוה also at 12:9). It is probably best explained as a quote from Isa. 41:20, alternatively, both could be using a stock phrase, see also Isa. 66:2, Ps. 109:27, where variant is used without DN, but in generally Yahwistic context. Dhorme (1967:173-4) doubts that יהוה is original, but thinks it may have been altered to the present text because of the similarity to the Isaiah text.

Also worthy of note is the unique combination יראת אדני (28:28). Gordis (1965:325 n. 33) considers this a stock phrase (יראת יהוה occurring 22 times, cf יראת אלהים 3 times), however, this only holds if יהוה and אדני are homonyms.

<sup>17</sup> Gordis (1965:71) notes that the use of DNs separates the prose from the poetry, but he erroneously links the cases of אלהים in the prose to the 'international' setting of the book (1965:325 n. 32). It is inaccurate to suggest that non-Israelites do not use the name *Yahweh* (Jonah 1:14).

2:7). It is Yahweh, not Elohim or Eloah, who is the subject of the verbs in 42:9, 9, 10, 10, 11, 12. Yahweh is even the character identified in the solitary lines of prose that introduce the speeches of God:

Job 38:1

ויען יהוה את איוב מנהסערה ויאמר

and so on in 40:1, 3, 6 and 42:1. Elohim, on the other hand, is never the subject of a verb. He does not act, he does not speak, nor is he spoken to. Instead, the word אלהים is used in several ways.

*Elohim* appears in a number of construct phrases: בני האלהים (1:6, 2:1), אש אלהים (1:16). בני האלהים is a stock phrase, בני יהוה is not known in the Hebrew Bible. The אש אלהים in 1:16 can just as well be translated 'a great fire' as 'the fire of God.' This is indeed how the Septuagint understands it (πυρ).

Secondly, the word אלהים is used in contexts where God is mentioned only in passing - the real focus is on mortals. Many of these concern whether a person can be classed as 'good' or 'bad.' Job is described as one who fears God (1:1, 8, 2:3). The adversary questions Job's motive for fearing God (1:9). Job fears that his children may have "despised God in their hearts" (1:5).

When Job's wife asks:

Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God and die. (2:9)

cursing God is synonymous with suicide and escape. It has little to do with the deity as a character. Likewise, Job's reply:

Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?  
(2:10)

is more an expression of Job's equanimity than a direct reference to the deity.

Job's first response to his troubles uses *Yahweh* and *Elohim* in close proximity (1:21-22):

He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
and naked shall I return there;  
the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away;  
blessed be the name of the LORD.'

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with any wrongdoing

*Yahweh* is the character who acts by giving and taking away, he is the character whose name may be blessed; *Elohim* is used in a phrase that has more to do with Job's piety than with a named deity.

### Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes never mentions *Yahweh*, using אלהים and האלהים to refer to the deity.

### Wisdom Themes

The reason for these patterns of DN usage, I shall argue, is to be found in the differing attitudes expressed in the wisdom corpus. The following analysis of wisdom thought is in no way intended to be comprehensive.<sup>18</sup> Only those elements which are relevant to DNs and which justify the treatment of the wisdom corpus together have been noted.<sup>19</sup>

Wisdom literature is characterized by its high regard for wisdom (Prov. Ps. 1, Job 28). There are certain recurring themes, e.g:

Prov. 22:1

נבחר שם מעשר רב

Eccl. 7:1

טוב שם משמן טוב

See also the danger of an over-active tongue (Prov. 17:28, Eccl. 5:6), and the need to keep from extremes (Prov 30:7-9, Eccl. 7:16-17).

Ecclesiastes, however, overtly asserts the *futility* of wisdom (1:18, 2:13-14, 6:8, 7:15). In the book of Job, God speaks of the *inaccessibility* of wisdom (Job 38-41), and the humiliated Job agrees (compare 38:2 to 42:3). Both the

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<sup>18</sup> For a thorough treatment, see Perdue (1994) and bibliography cited there.

<sup>19</sup> Barker (1987:81-103) and Wyatt (1996b:277) are quite right in insisting that wisdom does not end with common sense materialism. Royal wisdom, and the revelation of secrets, were all part of the same tradition. These elements are not absent from the wisdom corpus described here - wisdom is attributed to *royal* figures at Prov. 10:1, 25:1, 31:1, Eccles. 1:1, 12. Eccles. 8:1 asks rhetorically:

מי כהחכם ומי יודע פשר דבר

The word פשר recalls both the Aramaic פשרא (Dan. 2, 4, 5, 7) and the Hebrew פתרון (Gen. 40, 41), both used exclusively regarding the interpretation of dreams.



inaccessibility of wisdom and the rhetorical style of questioning are mirrored in Prov. 30:

Prov. 30:3-4 <sup>20</sup>	ודעת קדשים אדע	ולא למדתי חכמה
	מי אסף רוח בחפניו	מי עלה שמים וירד
	מי הקים כל אפסי ארץ	מי צרר מים בשמלה
	ומה שם בנו כי תדע	מה שמו
cf. Job 38:36-37	או מי נתן לשכוי בינה	מי שת בטחות חכמה
	ונבלי שמים מי ישכיב	מי יספר שחקים בחכמה

A central and binding theme throughout Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and the related Psalms is the doctrine of retribution:

Prov. 10:7 <sup>21</sup>	זכר צדיק לברכה ושם רשעים ירקב
Ps. 1:6	כי יודע יהוה דרך צדיקים ודרך רשעים תאבד
Job 4:7-8	זכר נא מי הוא נקי אבד ואיפה ישרים נכחדו
	כאשר ראיתי חרשי און וזרעי עמל יקצרהו
Eccl. 10:12	דברי פי חכם חן שפתות כסיל תבלענו

Yet they differ dramatically in their attitude to retribution. In Proverbs, good and evil actions appear to rebound directly on their agents, as if by some physical law of nature (Prov. 11:5, 6, 17, 14:1, 22:3), although in some places Yahweh is the active agent of retribution (Prov. 10:3, 27, 15:25, 21:1, 25:23).<sup>22</sup>

Ecclesiastes puts an ironic twist on this: God rewards the one who is good before him (2:26 NRSV: *the one who pleases him*), as does the adversary in Job 1:9-11. The poetry of Job, on the other hand, follows the system to its logical conclusion: if the dealing out of fates is as automatic as this, what role is left for God, for mercy? After Job and his associates have argued the finer

<sup>20</sup> For v. 3 the Septuagint has two positive clauses: θεος δεδίδαχεν με σοφίαν, και γωντισιν ἀγίωσιν ἐγώσκα. Accordingly, Wyatt (1996b:275) reads לו instead of לא, i.e. *El has surely taught me wisdom*. I suggest we take imperfect אדע in the sense of *would or should* i.e. *I have not learned wisdom, but I should have gained knowledge of the Holy Ones*. For this use of the imperfect, see GK#107 n: Job 10:18 (אניע *I ought to have given up the ghost*), Lev. 10:18, Num. 35:28. In this way, the verse can be interpreted in a way that fits the context (the speaker does not have the knowledge that he or she would clearly very much like to have) without recourse to emending the text. At the same time, it is easy to see how the Septuagint translation or *Vorlage*, using the same logic as Wyatt, could have arrived at its present reading.

<sup>21</sup> See also Prov. 10:7, 25, 13:25.

<sup>22</sup> McKane (1970:15-16).

points of philosophy and theology, in steps God and shows them just how inadequate is their frame of reference.

Theory aside, wisdom literature is left to account for reality, in which the good are not always rewarded, nor the evil always punished.

There is a sort of people who defame their fathers,  
and do not speak well of their mothers;  
a sort who are pure in their own eyes,  
and yet are not cleansed of their filth. (Prov. 30:11-12, see also Job 9:22,  
Eccl. 4:1)

More traditional elements in the wisdom tradition attempt to explain this from within their religious framework of justice. Apparent injustice may only be temporary:

The wicked mutter against the righteous man  
and grind their teeth at the sight of him;  
the LORD shall laugh at them,  
for he sees that their time is coming. (Ps. 37:12-13, see also vv. 24-25,  
Job 5:3-4)

This is precisely what happens in the *prose story* of Job. As an extended proverb,<sup>23</sup> it remains within the conventional assertion that the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished.

No one is perfect (Prov. 20:9, Eccl. 7:20), so misfortune may be the result of a long-forgotten sin. Furthermore, suffering may be due to God *testing* the faithful (Job prose, Prov. 17:3, Eccl. 3:18).

### Conclusions

Within these themes, two opposing views may be discerned: optimism and pessimism regarding the accessibility of wisdom, and the reality of justice. Most of the book of Proverbs, all the wisdom Psalms, and the prose story of Job have a predominantly positive attitude to wisdom, granted certain provisos, e.g. that reward/punishment may be delayed. Proverbs ch. 30, Job

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<sup>23</sup> Albertson (1983:219).

poetry, and Ecclesiastes, on the other hand have a basically negative attitude: wisdom is futile, or inaccessible, and in any case, justice does not prevail on the earth.

In Proverbs and Job, the change in the way of thinking neatly coincides with the change in DN usage described above: the optimistic portions prefer *Yahweh*, while the pessimistic ones prefer elohistic names. The wisdom Psalms (optimistic and Yahwistic) and Ecclesiastes (pessimistic and elohistic) confirm these data. Within this admittedly limited corpus of wisdom material, it seems that *Yahweh* was appropriate for affirming wisdom, and *Elohim* (also *El*, *Eloah*) for questioning it.

# **PART FOUR**

## **SAMPLE READINGS**

## CHAPTER 10

### EXODUS 1-6

#### Introduction

The Psalter and Wisdom literature are two corpora large and homogeneous enough to lend themselves to comparative study. The DN usage in any given 'block' (e.g. Pss. 1-41, Prov. 1-30) is stable enough to be compared statistically with another block (e.g. Pss. 42-83, Ecclesiastes), and the contrast revealed is marked enough to be significant. It demands explanation of one kind or another. The basis of comparison is quantitative - one more יהוה here or there, and our results would not be greatly altered.

Not all biblical texts lend themselves to this kind of investigation. Sometimes it is not obvious which corpus they belong to, or the dividing line between the 'blocks' is blurred. Perhaps DN usage is not stable, but varies wildly within a short span of text, for no obvious reason. Such a text requires a different sort of analysis. If DNs vary for no obvious reason, then perhaps a non-obvious reason is involved. Changes in vocabulary, such as DNs, may reflect other tensions in the undercurrent of the text: differing perspectives, unspoken motives and emotions. This line of inquiry involves a different approach: first a text must be isolated, and its undercurrents examined carefully. If changes in DN usage can be found to be related to these undercurrents, then they can be explained as a kind of commentary on that text.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I do not advocate reading the findings of one text into another. For example, if (as in the present chapter), האלהים is found to be 'anonymous' and יהוה the 'specific' in Ex. 1-6, it would not be sound methodology to apply these connotations to another passage. There are theoretical and practical reasons for guarding against this. Firstly, the meaning of a word is determined by its context - *its* context, and not some other context. If it were to be determined by *any* other context, there would be infinite freedom and subjectivity of interpretation. Finally, it is demonstrated here that the meanings given the names do indeed change from one text to the next.

It can be objected that, if one looks hard enough, one can find some sort of connection between any two variables. There is no easy answer to this, as the validity of each interpretation is, to an extent, in the eye of its beholder. The force of the technique I am proposing does not depend on a single text, but is rather cumulative. That it can be applied to a given text is not surprising - but that it is employed in several (if not many) texts is much more significant.

The first text was chosen not only because it provides a particularly clear demonstration of variation in DN usage, but also because its content bears directly on the biblical understanding of the name *Yahweh*. Here I argue that the DN pattern in Ex. 1-6 has literary function, rather than betraying evidence of its composition. The documentary hypothesis is dealt with subsequently.

### Exodus 1:1 - 6:1: Masoretic Text

The revelation of the name *Yahweh* marks a turning point in the narrative of the Pentateuch:

Ex. 3:14-15

ויאמר אלהים אל משה אהיה אשר אהיה  
ויאמר כה תאמר לבני ישראל אהיה שלחני אליכם  
ויאמר עוד אלהים אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל  
יהוה אלהי אבותיכם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב שלחני אליכם  
זה שמי לעולם וזה זכרי לדר דר

In one breath, *Yahweh* identifies himself (as the god of the patriarchs), reveals his name, and interprets its meaning. The final phrase (... זה שמי) drives the point home. Nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is God's name dealt with as deliberately and explicitly as this. Indeed in the surrounding material, designations for God are used in a very careful and deliberate way. For example, in dialogues with Pharaoh and in reports about the meetings with Pharaoh, the deity is never called אלהי אברהם יצחק ויעקב because Pharaoh does not know who Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are. Instead he is called יהוה אלהי העברים and אלהינו in Ex. 3:18, and יהוה אלהי ישראל in Ex. 5:1 - all of these are appellations that Pharaoh can understand.

These designations for God used in *speech* are essentially descriptive - they draw attention to a particular aspect of God which is relevant to the



context. A subtler effect, but one which is nevertheless striking, is achieved by the choice of DNs for the *narration*. The narration does not indulge in heavy, descriptive designations for God, but is limited to three names: יהוה, אלהים, and האלהים. The distribution of these names is quite striking: in Exodus 1 and 2, יהוה is not used at all; however in 4:1-6:1 יהוה dominates and אלהים(ה) is found in only a few instances and for specific reasons<sup>2</sup>. All three DNs are found in chapter 3. The overall effect, which is entirely consistent with the plot, is that Yahweh *becomes* the god of the Israelites in chapter 3.

A more detailed examination reveals further interesting patterns. In chapters 1 and 2, the word אלהים(ה) appears eight times: in three cases as the object of action (1:17, 1:21, 2:23), and in five cases, as the subject of a verb (1:20, 2:24 twice, and 2:25 twice). In every instance where אלהים is object, it receives the definite article, and in all the cases where it is subject, it does not. For example:

Ex. 1:17 (object)	ותיראן המילדת את האלהים
1:21	ויהי כי יראו המילדת את האלהים
cf. 2:24 (subject)	וישמע אלהים ... ויוזכר אלהים ...
2:25	וירא אלהים ... וידע אלהים ...

The article introduces an element of ambiguity concerning the thoughts of the midwives. We know from the context (e.g. 1:20-1) that the midwives are loyal to the Israelites rather than to Pharaoh, but we know little about their religious affiliation. Do they fear Yahweh, another god, some other gods, or are they just women of integrity? The uncertainty is emphasized by the fact that in these chapters no Israelite directs worship to any particular god, neither to Yahweh nor to any other god. But while the midwives do not seem to know who their god is, the narrator and the audience do. And God, being the subject of four main verbs, certainly knows who he is. The effect of the selective use of the article is to underline that while the people do not know God, he knows them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The only uses of אלהים by the narrator are either with a preposition: 4:16 לאלהים - *as a god*; or in a construct phrase: 4:20 מטה האלהים and 4:27 הר האלהים.

<sup>3</sup> Cassuto (1967:16) makes a similar point: "Although there remained with them the knowledge of God, that is, the general belief in the Godhead, which is shared also by enlightened people among the Gentiles, yet it was not the concept of the Deity that belongs specifically to Israel and finds expression in the name YHWH."

It is the complex chapter 3 which brings us from the entirely Elohist chapters 1 and 2 to the predominantly Yahwistic chapters 4 and 5. The distinction between subject and object is maintained in chapter 3. On all three occasions that God is the *object* of a verb (3:6, 11, 13), the term used remains *האלהים*. This is consistent with the plot, for the Israelites (and so also Moses) still do not know Yahweh until the revelation in 3:14-15. As subject, however, God is known by two designations: *אלהים* (3:4b, 14, 15) and *יהוה* (3:4a,<sup>4</sup> 7). In other words, during the dialogue between Moses and God, *Yahweh* or *Elohim* speaks to Moses while Moses speaks to 'the god.'

The presence of the name *Yahweh* from 3:4 onward has the effect of letting the audience know something that is hidden from the character in the story. This is a technique which adds drama to the dialogue.<sup>5</sup>

We are left with the question of why the narration uses both *יהוה* and *אלהים* as subject (and not just *יהוה*). This is answered by the observation of Cassuto:

Whenever the Lord is spoken of objectively, the name *YHWH* occurs; but when the reference is to what Moses was or heard or felt subjectively, the name *Elohim* is used. Here in v. 4 the text has, *then YHWH saw*, because an objective statement concerning the Lord was intended; but Scripture says, *Elohim called to him*, because the call heard by Moses appeared to him at the moment as the voice of *Elohim*. He learns only subsequently that it is the voice of *YHWH*.<sup>6</sup>

Cassuto applies this consistently throughout chapter 3, for example in explaining the tetragrammaton in verse 7:

*And YHWH said*, and not 'and Elohim said', since it is not explicitly stated that He said 'to Moses' or 'to him', as in verse 4 and in vv. 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Although the Samaritan Pent. here has *אלהים*. This analysis allows for either.

<sup>5</sup> Magonet (1975:310, 1995:83). This technique is used to good dramatic effect in the book of Job. Throughout the book, the audience know the reasons for Job's suffering (the debate between Yahweh and the adversary), but Job and all his friends do not.

<sup>6</sup> Cassuto (1967:32). The same point is made independently, and along different lines, by Magonet (1975:304-310, 1995:83). According to Magonet, the two perspectives are established in v. 2 by the use of *ראה* in the *niphal* and *qal*, and also by *הנה*. For general discussion of points of view and *הנה*, see Berlin (1982b, 1983:43-82).

Cassuto and Magonet both make the distinction between subjective subject (*אלהים*) and objective subject (*יהוה*), but they do not distinguish between subject (*אלהים*) and object (*האלהים*)! Neither do they relate this to the wider issue of Ex. 1-6 - how Yahweh *becomes* god of the Israelites.

In other words, when God speaks he is Yahweh; when God speaks *to Moses* or *to him*, he is Elohim.

Thus we have a three-fold division of DNs in the narration of Exodus 3:

objective	Yahweh, who acts
↓	Elohim, who acts toward Moses
subjective	haelohim, who is perceived by Moses

In addition, the use of אלהים in 3:14 and 15 provides suspense to the revelation of the name Yahweh:

3:14	ויאמר אלהים אל משה אהיה אשר אהיה
3:15	ויאמר עוד אלהים ... יהוה

God Himself is granted the glory of pronouncing his own name without having his thunder stolen by the narrator.

Our preliminary conclusion is that the DNs in this text have been carefully chosen according to literary criteria. The two over-riding criteria are Yahweh *becoming* the Israelites' god, and the dramatic effect of the audience knowing more than the characters in the story. These features are supported by the Hebrew pericope. However, before we can be certain of the validity of this interpretation, we must seek confirmation from other sources. They will act as 'controls' on our conclusions.

### Exodus 1:1 - 6:1: Septuagint

While the MT uses three designations for God in this material (אלהים, האלהים, and יהוה), the Greek uses only two: ὁ θεός and κυριος. In chapters 1 and 2, both האלהים and אלהים are translated as ὁ θεός. In 4-6:1 there is a definite preference for κυριος. Twelve out of 14 occurrences of יהוה in the narration are translated by κυριος and the other two (4:30-31) by ὁ θεός. In these two cases, יהוה appears in a subordinate clause referring to reported speech:

Ex. 4:30	הדברים אשר דבר יהוה אל משה
Ex. 4:31	ישמעו כי פקד יהוה את בני ישראל

The Septuagint of this section shows a tendency to translate יהוה in subordinate clauses or direct speech with a θεος designation, for example ὁ θεος (Ex. 4:1) or τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν (5:17). The unusual rendering of יהוה in 4:30 and 31 appears to be related to this tendency.

In Ex. 3 we find both κυριος and ὁ θεος. Their relation to the Hebrew can be summarized as follows:

האלהים	→	ὁ θεος
אלהים	→	κυριος (v. 4) or ὁ θεος (vv. 14, 15)
יהוה	→	κυριος

In other words the Greek does not lump אלהים and האלהים together in the same category. Instead it senses the difference between them, even if it does not maintain this difference in chapters 1 and 2.

### Exodus 6:2-30

Ex. 6:2-30 roughly parallels the content of Ex. 1-6:1.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, the same trend of DNs in the narration is also found here, but much more briefly.

The revelation of the name and identity of Yahweh is given in 6:2b. Before this, in 6:2a the Hebrew uses אלהים and the Greek ὁ θεος. After the revelation, the narrator uses the divine name 7 times: all are יהוה in the Hebrew, of which 6 are translated κυριος and one (6:26) ὁ θεος. The single ὁ θεος can again be explained by context.

Ex. 6:26

הוא אהרן ומשה אשר אמר יהוה להם ...

Just as before, the Septuagint translates the divine name in a subordinate clause introducing reported speech as ὁ θεος.<sup>8</sup>

This analysis has shown that the author(s) of this material used changes of DNs in the narration to enhance and complement the story as it unfolded. Thus they endow the different DNs with different connotations. In

<sup>7</sup> There are, of course, elements found in the first narrative absent in the second, and *vice versa*. The second narrative continues without obvious break into the plagues in chapter 7. The cut-off point given here (6:30) is, to this extent, arbitrary.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of the structural function of יהוה אני in Ex. 6:2-8, see Magonet (1983b:56-67).

a graded scale, האלהים is the most anonymous, יהוה is the most individual and personally involved in Israelite history, and אלהים lies somewhere in between. It was not always obvious that Yahweh is actually the same as Elohim - this is a fact that had to be revealed. The god of Ex. 1-6:1 changes from האלהים to אלהים to יהוה. There are large areas of overlap between stages, making the transition gradual.<sup>9</sup>

The situation in the LXX is somewhat complicated by the fact that it uses only two divine names in the narrative, as opposed to the three in the MT. Nevertheless, within these constraints, it maintains the same tendency, although in a less precise way than in the MT. All of the divergence between the MT and the Septuagint can be explained in terms of translation technique - there is no reason to suppose that the MT has been corrupted.

### The Documentary Hypothesis

No amount of harmonizing the fields of synchronic and diachronic research can hide the fact that the above analysis is totally incompatible with explanation of Ex. 3 according to the documentary hypothesis. Changes in DNs are *either* a literary technique *or* a sign of different sources - they cannot be both. A word about source criticism of this chapter is therefore due.

A broad consensus has been reached among commentators with regard to the allocation of verses to J and E:<sup>10</sup>

E:	1c	4b	6	9-15
J:	1a+b	2-4a	4c, 5	7, 8

Changes in DNs provide a primary criterion for this division.<sup>11</sup> The use of the name *Yahweh* in 2-4a puts this section in the J narrative. The mention of הַר הָאֱלֹהִים is thought to preclude 1c from being part of the same source. Richter feels that 1c cannot have been an original introduction to the

<sup>9</sup> The same tendency is to be found at the beginning of the other starting point of Israelite history: *Elohim* in Gen. 1-2:3, *Yahweh* in Gen. 4 and a transitional *Yahweh Elohim* in Gen. 2:4-3:24 (pp. 117-131 above).

<sup>10</sup> There are qualifications to this consensus: Hyatt (1971:70) notes that the name 'Jethro' in 1a should really be an E addition. Richter (1970:70) differs on a number of points: he puts 4c in E, and 6b in J. For a survey of 19th and early 20th century opinion, see Morgenstern (1920-21: 243).

<sup>11</sup> Noth (1962:34) : "We can see how the passage 3:1-16 is formed from both J and E by the striking abrupt changes in the divine name Yahweh and the word 'God.'"

narrative of the burning bush because the statement about the mountain of God anticipates the climax. But does it really? Moses is surprised by the appearance of the angel of the LORD, because he strays unwittingly onto the holy ground. The audience is not surprised because *they know* that this is the mountain of God. Not only that, but *they know* that *Moses does not know*.<sup>12</sup>

Noth suggests that the phrase הַר הָאֱלֹהִים (1c) is an E expression, on the basis of Ex. 18:5, an E passage which also mentions the mountain of God.<sup>13</sup> He allocates chapter 18 to E on the basis that:

the word 'God' (and not the divine name Yahweh) is used in particularly important places<sup>14</sup>

The few mentions of Yahweh in verses 1, 8 (twice), 9, 10 and 11 show a later J expansion. Now, *if* divine names are an accurate guide to allocation of sources to J and E then the occurrence of Yahweh in verses 1, 8 (twice), 9, 10 and 11, might make one hesitate before stating with such certainty that a phrase in verse 5 is definitely an E phrase.<sup>15</sup> The only other occurrence of הַר הָאֱלֹהִים that might be useful in determining the provenance of this phrase is Ex. 24:13. Noth neglects to mention this passage. The verse immediately preceding (i.e. 24:12) mentions *Yahweh*, as do 24:16 and 24:17. In the section from verse 12 to the end of the chapter there is no mention of Elohim apart from in the phrase הַר הָאֱלֹהִים. There is no reason to separate Ex. 3:1c from the surrounding verses on the grounds that הַר הָאֱלֹהִים is an E expression.

Apart from the mountain of God, *Horeb* is said to identify 1c as E. Eissfeldt notes:

The *Yahweh* stratum uses the name *Sinai* (Exod. 19:11,18) for the mountain of God, E uses *Horeb* (Exod. 3:1, 17:6).<sup>16</sup>

Noth, however, does not concur with Eissfeldt that Exodus 17:6 is E.<sup>17</sup> Instead, he assigns most of the material in 17:1-7 to J on the basis of the

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<sup>12</sup> This is therefore another manifestation of the dramatic technique described above where the mention of Yahweh in the narrative lets the audience in on what is hidden to Moses.

<sup>13</sup> Noth (1962:38).

<sup>14</sup> Noth (1961:146).

<sup>15</sup> It could be argued that my criticism is invalid because E does use Yahweh after its revelation in Ex. 3. However, my purpose is to show that the documentary hypothesis *in the form given it by its proponents* (regarding this passage) is untenable.

<sup>16</sup> Eissfeldt (1965:183).

<sup>17</sup> Noth (1962:137).



recurrence of the divine name *Yahweh* and the absence of '*Elohim*.' The only other occurrence of Horeb which might be useful to us is Ex. 33:6, which is equally Yahwistic in context. There is no reason why Horeb should be used as an E-indicator.

Verses 4a and 4b are separated on the grounds that the subject of 4a is *Yahweh* while the subject of 4b is *Elohim*. We have already seen that Cassuto explains this without any recourse to altering the text. 4b also makes a smooth transition between 4a 'Yahweh seeing' and 4c 'his words to Moses', by bringing us down from the realm of Yahweh to the scene of Moses and the bush. 4b acts as an effective bridge between these two. The progression straight from 4a to 4c is logical, but in no way superior to the progression 4a, 4b, 4c.

The E narrative up to this point would run as follows:

Ex. 1c

ויבא אל הר האלהים חרבה

4b

ויקרא אליו אלהים מתוך הסנה

This reads strangely, as we have a god calling to Moses from within the bush without ever being introduced to the bush. The net result of the documentary hypothesis is therefore to split one perfectly coherent story into two: one of which is coherent but faulty (J lacks the preparation of the audience for the appearance of the angel of Yahweh), while the other (E) is completely incoherent.

Verses 5 and 6 are said to exemplify the differing theological outlooks of their documents (J and E respectively):

E emphasises the remoteness of God from the world and from man more strongly than does the Yahweh stratum... To this difference between J and E corresponds the fact that E represents men as fearful when they are honoured with a theophany, whereas J pictures them rather as attracted by it. In the narrative of the burning bush (Exod. iii), Moses appears in E as fearful (v. 6), but in J as too bold, so that he has to be warned by Yahweh (v. 5).<sup>18</sup>

Firstly we should note that 4b describes Elohim calling to Moses from *within the bush* (ויקרא אליו אלהים מתוך הסנה). The bush is hardly a remote place as Eissfeldt seems to require. Regarding verses 5 and 6, it is interesting that

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<sup>18</sup> Eissfeldt (1965:184).

Eissfeldt reads verse 6 first and 5 second. When verses 5 and 6 are read in the *given* order they make perfect sense: Moses is warned (v. 5) and thereafter is afraid (v. 6). There was no reason for him to be afraid before he knew he was looking at a divine revelation. Verse 6 follows 5 logically, as 5 follows 4, and there is no reason to separate them.

The rest of our text, 3:7-15 is divided into two corresponding accounts. Verses 7-8 give J's version of God's message to Moses, while 9-15 gives that of E. The E version incorporates the revelation of the name Yahweh, which, according to the J narrative, has been used ever since Gen. 4:26. The main criterion for this division is the observation of doublets, the same material being given twice in differing accounts. Richter calls this "Das sicherste Kriterium."<sup>19</sup> He notes that the seeing of the misery is doubled in verses 7 and 9; as is the call by God.<sup>20</sup> Noth summarizes the standard position of verses 7-15:

3:7f and 3:9ff are again clearly doublets; the divine name Yahweh shows that 3:7f belong to J, while the repeated occurrence of the word 'God' in 3:9-15 is a feature of the Elohist narrative.<sup>21</sup>

There is no question that 7-8 and 9-15 cover much the same material. However, repetition is also a recognized literary technique.<sup>22</sup> No-one would dream of suggesting that a verse of poetry derives from two separate sources, as the second half of the verse is an expanded repetition of the first. Why should we allow the writer of poetry this privilege, and yet not the writer of prose? And why should we assume that no 'original author' would stoop so low as to repeat himself, while the lowly editor is not even clever enough to notice that he is giving two accounts of the same story!

The other argument used to separate 7-8 from 9-15 involves again the contrast between the distant God of the E with the closer God of J:

Moses is in E given the command to 'bring forth' Israel out of Egypt (vv. 10, 11, 12) whereas according to J it is Yahweh himself who will 'bring up' Israel out of Egypt (vv. 8, 17)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Richter (1970:66).

<sup>20</sup> Richter (1970:67).

<sup>21</sup> Noth (1962:34).

<sup>22</sup> As described by Sternberg (1985:365-440) and Alter (1981:88-113).

<sup>23</sup> Noth (1962:40).

But again it can be observed that the God of the so-called elohistic strand is not consistently distant, for example:

Ex. 3:12

כי אהיה עמך

Within the E strand of 9-15, there has been much debate on the primacy of the three answers given by God to Moses in verses 14 and 15. Hyatt's position has gained widespread acceptance:

verses 14-15 are over-crowded in their present form... It is not likely that all three of these were in the original account given by E... It is much more natural to suppose that the original reply to verse 13 was verse 15, which gives the name of Yahweh in a straightforward way, identifying him with the God of the patriarchs. If this is true, verse 14 is a secondary addition ... verse 14a was first added, and subsequently verse 14b.<sup>24</sup>

However, Hyatt's position is totally unnecessary according to Buber:

If you wish to ask a person's name in Biblical Hebrew ... you never say, as is done here, "What (*mah*) is your name?" ... but "Who are you?" ... "Who (*mi*) is your name?". Where the word "what" is associated with the word "name", the question asked is what finds expression in or lies concealed behind that name.<sup>25</sup>

Understood in this way, it is not at all surprising that the question should be answered by a series of descriptions, rather than a simple name-revelation.

Buber's proposition finds some (but not total) support from the biblical evidence, as demonstrated by Motyer.<sup>26</sup> For example, Motyer finds that the interrogative מה when asked of a person, "suggests inquiring into sort or quality of character", whereas מי "expects an answer instancing individuals."<sup>27</sup> Regarding the specific question 'what/who is your name?', we have only three other instances, of which one is too obscure to be helpful.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Hyatt (1971:77).

<sup>25</sup> Buber (1946:48).

<sup>26</sup> Motyer (1959:17-21).

<sup>27</sup> Motyer (1959:19). For example: מה: Ex. 16:7, 8, Num. 16:11, 2 Sam. 9:8; מי: Gen. 24:65, Ex. 10:8, 15:11.

<sup>28</sup> Prov. 30:4 (מה שמו ומה שם בנו) . The questioner might want to know the names, or something more about them - a case could be made either way.

Of the remaining two, both seem to require a simple answer (a name, rather than a quality). One uses *מה*, and the other uses *מי*.<sup>29</sup>

In reviewing Motyer's analysis I was struck not by the sharp semantic distinction between the questions *מה שמך* and *מי שמך*, but rather by the rarity that either formulation is used. Unlike ourselves, the characters portrayed in the Hebrew Bible did not often meet people whose names they did not already know. When they did, the newcomers are described in relation to someone already known (Gen. 33:5, 48:8, Ruth 2:5).

While Buber was only half right, it is possible to formulate more accurately what he was alluding to. We should not artificially impose on the text the distinction between name and character. An inquiry into one may automatically imply an inquiry into the other. The effect of this reformulation on our text is much the same as what Buber intended - the present triple answer to Moses' question is perfectly reasonable, and it is quite possible that it was originally composed in the same form we see today.

All that Hyatt has done is to say that v. 15 is the most straightforward answer. This is true. But why assume that the *original* author wanted a straightforward answer and that only a later editor could have confused things by adding an incorrect etymology? Only because Hyatt likes to think in terms of a straightforward verse as *original* and therefore *better* text. He likes to believe that the biblical author thought in simple terms, correct terms. Because the etymology in verse 14 does not come up to our standards of linguistic investigation, it must be a popular saying, *later* confusion. The value judgements implied when the text is split into 'original' and 'addition' are made quite explicit by Hyatt in his comment on verse 14:

it is an infelicitous addition, fitting awkwardly into the context and obscuring the original answer given in verse 15.<sup>30</sup>

Here then is the scene that Hyatt portrays: after the initial introduction of God, and his commission of Moses he asks God what his name is. God replies that his name is Yahweh and continues to instruct Moses. This misses

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<sup>29</sup> Gen. 32:28 (ויאמר אליו מה שמך ויאמר יעקב). Jud. 13:17 (ויאמר מנוח אל מלאך יהוה מי שמך). Manoah would clearly like to know much more, but phrases his question to make it appear he is only asking a small thing, and only in the interests of the angel, in the hope that he might get it.

<sup>30</sup> Hyatt (1971:77-8).

the point entirely. The point is that here the Israelites are working out the nature of God, the meaning of the name of God, in terms of a story/history that tells them what they are. What kind of God is it that brings his people out of slavery? It is a god that *is*, a god that is *with* his people, as he was with their ancestors.

Ex. 1:1-6:1 is currently enough of a literary unit that we cannot discern its text history by the methods proposed up till now. (This is not the same as saying that it has no text history.) Nevertheless, a clear break is found at Ex. 6:2, which begins what is essentially a re-telling of the same story. This is undeniably a problem for those who would see the whole Pentateuch as having one author. Magonet arrives at a compromise solution:

Thus all these passages can be seen not as a mere repetition of what has gone before, but as a necessary complement to it ... We would therefore suggest that Ex. 3:15- and 6:2-5 were composed in conscious relationship to each other and represent complementary parts of a skillful didactic-narrative composition.<sup>31</sup>

However, Magonet fails to demonstrate that 'one was written in conscious relationship to the other.' The connections between them are no more striking than those between any two accounts of the same tradition. He still explains the text in terms of separate authorship, one text being written after the other. It is still repetition. Given this, we have to ask whether it matters if the author of the second had read the first, and structured his own account as a counterpoint to it. The impact of the repetition is the same.

### Conclusions

Even on its own terms, the documentary hypothesis fails to give a coherent account of Exodus 3. Splitting the text into two on the basis of DNs violates the dramatic impact of the narrative and results in less than coherent documents. Instead the changes in DNs reveal a technique which is subtle, but nonetheless striking when Ex. 1-6:1 is viewed as a whole. While the explicit plot of these chapters deals with the 'reuniting' of God and people, the DNs in the narration progress from *Elohim* to *Yahweh* (the turning point being the revelation of the name *Yahweh*). They also reveal the tension

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<sup>31</sup> Magonet (1975:311).

between objective reality, and the subjective perception of the Israelites and Moses, who have yet to be introduced to their God.

This analysis receives support both from the corresponding Septuagint text, and also from the parallel account in Ex. 6:2-30. The presence of this parallel, in which the DNs follow essentially the same pattern as before, provides an opportunity to demonstrate that 'synchronic' research need not abandon its 'diachronic' counterpart. It is neither assumed nor concluded here that Ex. 1-6 is a literary unity. The documentary hypothesis has done us a service in noting that 6:2 begins a parallel account. The present contribution consists in noting the DNs play little part in *separating* the documents, but a large part in *interpreting* them.



## CHAPTER 11

### THE ARK IN SAMUEL-KINGS

#### Introduction

In his book *The Designation of the Individual*, Revell undertakes to give an account of the different designations (“the names or other words and phrases used to represent the biblical characters in reference or address”) in the narrative of Judges, Samuel and Kings.<sup>1</sup> His approach is in many ways similar to that taken here, that is that names or titles for an individual may be interpreted as a meaningful part of the narrative. This makes his study as a whole (both the methods and the results) of great importance to mine. Of particular relevance, however, is the section on the designation of God.<sup>2</sup>

When considering the use of nominal structures, Revell concludes:

God (אלהים) represents the general concept of “deity”, “Yahweh” (יהוה) represents “God” as an effective force in the world.<sup>3</sup>

This conclusion is based on observation of the use of the following construct phrases: ארון יהוה / ארון (ה)אלהים, רוח יהוה / רוח אלהים, מלאך יהוה / מלאך אלהים. Here

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<sup>1</sup> Revell (1996:11).

<sup>2</sup> Revell (1996:197-217).

<sup>3</sup> Revell (1996:202). In support of his conclusion he cites Rose (1992:1006) who, he claims, reaches the same conclusions on different grounds. Rose’s position starts from the assumption that the J theologian understood יהוה as derived from the root היה meaning “to be” in the sense of a helpful and effective being” and concludes “The powerful effectiveness which one expects from every divinity ... is realised only by Yahweh as the unique true Elohim. In this way the (particular) name of Yahweh can step behind the (universal) Yahweh function (=Elohim).” (p. 1006-7). Leaving aside initial problems such as whether “J” ever existed, and if he did, on what grounds we call him a theologian (to mention nothing of why היה should be taken to mean ‘to be helpful’, or why the name *Yahweh* must mean anything at all), Rose’s conclusion turns out to be little more than an assertion. It is based on the fact that יהוה refers only to the god of Israel whereas אלהים can refer either to Israel’s god, or to other gods, depending on the context. Rose gives no shred of evidence as to how the additional, separate meaning of אלהים affects its connotation when used to designate Yahweh.

we consider in some detail whether the use of ארון יהוה and ארון (ה)אלהים justify his conclusion.

Revell categorizes the use of these terms as follows:<sup>4</sup>

ארון (ה)אלהים: when the ark is captured by the Philistines,<sup>5</sup> being in a place, or being moved without ceremony;<sup>6</sup> and several other uses.<sup>7</sup>

ארון יהוה: when the ark is viewed by Israelites<sup>8</sup> or Philistines<sup>9</sup> as a source of power, especially dangerous power; when the ark is transported with fitting ceremony.<sup>10</sup>

ארון ברית האלהים: in connection with priestly attendants especially when seeking counsel of the ark.<sup>11</sup>

ארון ברית יהוה: when the ark is brought to the Israelite camp to ensure victory (thus seeking active support, not just counsel).<sup>12</sup>

Superficially, Revell's scheme appears convincing: it is based on the text itself and supports his later conclusions. On a more detailed examination, however, several problems arise.

It is also not obvious why 'the ark as a matter of concern to Eli, Saul and Obed Edom' should be grouped with 'the ark captured by the Philistines and moved without ceremony', except that the text uses ארון האלהים for both. Secondly, the categories given (transported with/without ceremony, seen/not seen as source of power) are not nearly as clear cut in the text as the

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<sup>4</sup> Revell (1996:200-202). The following instances should also be mentioned although they do not affect the *Yahweh/Elohim* division:

ארון ברית אדני (1 Kings 3:15) related to Solomon's sacrificing and gratitude

ארון אדני יהוה (1 Kings 2:26) Solomon's personal relationship to god as reason for sparing Abiathar.

<sup>5</sup> Captured by the Philistines: 1 Sam. 4:11, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 5:1.

<sup>6</sup> Moved without ceremony: 1 Sam. 3:3, 4:13, 5:2, 10, 10, 14:18, 2 Sam. 6:2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 12, 7:2, 15:24, 25, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Other uses: in relation to Eli (1 Sam. 4:13), Saul (1 Sam. 14:18), and Obed Edom (2 Sam. 6:12).

<sup>8</sup> Israelites see as source of power: 1 Sam. 6:15, 18, 19, 21, 7:1, 1, 2 Sam. 6:9, 10, 11 (here source of blessing).

<sup>9</sup> Philistines see as source of power: 1 Sam. 4:6, 5:3, 4, 6:1, 11. In these instances the *narrator* uses the term in relation to the Philistines, although Revell gives the impression that the Philistines themselves used it. He does, however, correctly note that they use it in 1 Sam 6:2, 11 while more commonly saying ארון אלהי ישראל in 1 Sam. 5:7, 8, 8, 10, 11, 6:3.

<sup>10</sup> Moved with ceremony: 2 Sam. 6:13, 15, 16, 17, 1 Kings 8:4.

<sup>11</sup> Priestly attendants, seeking counsel: Jud. 20:27, 1 Sam. 4:4, 2 Sam. 15:24 (in the latter two cases, the request for counsel is implicit, according to Revell).

<sup>12</sup> Seeking active support: 1 Sam 4:3, 4, 5.

scheme would suggest. For example, who is to say whether in 2 Sam. 6:3, the detailed description of the new cart, the singing, the dancing, the musical instruments, do not add up to ceremony? Whether or not this was the *correct* ceremony will be discussed later, but it is certainly problematic to describe the procession as 'the ark being moved without ceremony' without justifying such an interpretation. In 1 Sam. 4:4 the ארון ברית האלהים is indeed accompanied by the sons of Eli the priest, but the text betrays nothing to suggest that they are seeking counsel of it. Revell also fails to explain why the same verse refers additionally to the ארון ברית יהוה הצבאות ישב על הכרובים, and how the context justifies two different designations. In 2 Sam. 15:24 (ארון אלהים ברית האלהים) it is easier to see an implicit request for counsel, but such a request would surely also affect verse 25 in which the king commands Zadok to carry the ארון אלהים!

More fundamentally, the principles established cover several different axes of meaning. What would happen if the ark was seen as a source of dangerous power, but moved without ceremony (as happens in 2 Sam. 6:10)?

Another contribution to this topic comes from Magonet.<sup>13</sup> He analyses the terms used to refer to the ark in 1 Sam. 4-6 and comes to the following conclusion:

It would seem that in the narrative the terminology is deliberately used to distinguish the living God of Israel acting autonomously with full power (YHWH) from that same God as perceived by the Philistines or 'misused' by the Israelites (Elohim).<sup>14</sup>

However, just as with Revell, the details of the text do not always support his conclusions. In describing the 'smiting' incident at Bet Shemesh (6:19 -7:1) Revell writes:

that same ark ... is overwhelmingly powerful against the Philistines, and others, when it is left alone in alien hands or mistreated by the Israelites themselves - and here the name YHWH is invariably used.<sup>15</sup>

In this section, two of Magonet's principles conflict: 'the living God of Israel acting autonomously with full power' requires *Yahweh*, while 'misuse' by the Israelites requires *Elohim*. The phrasing of his sentence emphasises the

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<sup>13</sup> Magonet (1995:92-95).

<sup>14</sup> Magonet (1995:95).

<sup>15</sup> Magonet (1995:94-5).

'powerful Yahweh' aspect of the text, but if *Elohim* had been used, then this also could have been explained.

Both Revell and Magonet make invaluable observations regarding several aspects of the context which may have influenced the author's choice of word. However, in doing so they have somewhat over-simplified what is clearly a very complex matter. While this type of research is fruitful in looking at the context to explain the use of designations, it does not examine the context in enough detail. Improving on these results requires an analysis based on the text and what the text is trying to tell us, rather on the designations themselves.

The texts directly concerned with the ark are 1 Sam. 4-7:1 and 2 Sam. 6. My analysis will begin with 2 Sam. 6 as it is shorter and shows a pattern which is much more clearly defined. I will then proceed to 1 Sam. 4-7:1 to see if the findings can be confirmed.

## 2 Samuel 6

This chapter, concerned primarily with the ark and with David, forms a unit within the larger context. Before it comes David's military triumphs and after it comes clarification of David's relationship to God. On the level of content, therefore, we are justified in studying it as a unit.

The first thing that is drawn to our attention is that the chapter falls into two parts: the first half (= A story) consisting 6:1-11 and the second half (= B story) 6:12-23.<sup>16</sup> The primary indicator of this division is the break of

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<sup>16</sup> The alternative division proposed by Fokkelman (1990:177: vv. 1-12b + 12c + 13-23) is based entirely on his need to achieve a symmetrical pattern (number of words = 72:107:12:107:72) rather than on the events related in the text. The word count itself is based on the over-optimistic assumption that it is possible to determine the 'correct text' of this corrupt chapter. Fokkelman here illustrates well the dangers of basing a synchronic reading on a diachronically altered text, for while he criticises "McCarter and every commentator who attempts premature diachronic analysis" (1990:179 n. 60), he himself accepts the deletion of 7 words in vv. 2 and 4 on the grounds of dittography and syntax (1990:377). While it is true that these deletions are usually accepted by many commentaries, Carlson (1964:75) disputes them, seeing instead deliberate repetition. The reason Fokkelman wants us to accept these emendations and no others is obvious: "the numerical precision carries a warning against further deletion and addition because this would disrupt the proportions" (1990:179). He has therefore put forward a circular argument whereby *numerical precision* becomes the basis for emending and analysing the text.

One example of traditional, well founded emendations that Fokkelman rejects out of hand is *על השל* in v. 7 (1990:378). *על השל* is frequently understood as a corruption of something like *על אשר שלח ידו על הארון* as attested in 1 Chr. 13:10. This is supported by

three months in v. 11 followed by a resumption of activity in v. 12. It is reinforced by a number of themes and motifs which justify the division into two related episodes:<sup>17</sup>

- In both episodes David transports the ark.
- Both episodes contain one 'ugly incident': in A the death of Uzza (vv. 6-7), and in B Michal's anger (vv. 16, 20-23).
- Both 'ugly incidents' involve the anger of an onlooker (in A Yahweh, in B Michal) to which David responds in anger. In both cases David's response is indicated using the same root as the initial outburst:

A: 6:7	ויחר אף יהוה בעוזה
6:8	יחר לדוד על אשר פרץ יהוה
B: 6:20	ותצא מיכל ... ותאמר
6:21	ויאמר דוד

- Both cases of anger are provoked by incidents which occurred during the transportation of the ark: in A Uzza touches the ark (v. 6), and in B David uncovers himself (v. 20).
- Both episodes use a number of terms:

מות	A: 6:7 שם, B: 6:23 מותה <sup>18</sup> - in both cases regarding the 'ugly incident'
נטה	A: 6:10 ויטהו, B: 6:17 לו אשר נטה - in both cases regarding the resting place of the ark, with David as the subject
שם יהוה צבאות	A: 6:2, <sup>19</sup> B: 6:18

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4QSam<sup>a</sup> where we read אל [ה] ארון [על אשר שלח ירו] (Ulrich 1978:195). Fokkelman, however, rejects Chronicles and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> as expansions, despite the fact that they are far superior texts regarding this chapter (Ulrich 1978:197), and despite the fact that של is not known to exist in biblical Hebrew. Fokkelman suggests that we assume that Hebrew knew the biblical Aramaic word שלו meaning 'negligence, fault' (Dan. 6:5, Ezra 4:22, 6:9), and therefore translate 'because of his negligence'. His forced explanation requires both the sudden existence of an Aramaism, and the loss of the *vav* by haplography.

- <sup>17</sup> Both Polzin and Fokkelman note the 'symmetrical' nature of the two halves of the text. Polzin (1993:64-5): "By making Uzzah's grasping act homologous to David's, the Deuteronomist indicates to readers that God's actions in the first half are somehow related to Michal's in the second half." Fokkelman (1990:176) also sees a connection between the "serious incidents ... Both cases end up in a specific death."
- <sup>18</sup> The mention of Michal's death is not necessary to the statement of her childlessness, as the author could have said לא היה לה ילד כל ימי חייה or לא היה לה ילד.
- <sup>19</sup> Ulrich (1978:201) deduces from space requirements that 6:2 of 4QSam<sup>a</sup> has no צבאות. The majority of Greek texts, however, do represent צבאות by εὐσεβειῶν, and the Lucianic by σαβαωθ. If 4QSam<sup>a</sup> does reflect an earlier version of the text, then it may be that צבאות



All this suggests that the two episodes reflect each other, both on the level of plot, and on the level of word-choice. On the other hand, obvious symmetry and repetition has been avoided - the A-story ends in death and despair, and the B-story in blessing and triumph. We are not presented with the same story told twice and invited to look for differences; instead we are presented with two different stories and invited to look for similarities.

When we begin to look at the use of DNs in reference to the ark, several observations indicate a deliberate strategy. The designations ארון יהוה and ארון האלהים both appear seven times.<sup>20</sup> The chapter begins with almost incessant repetition of ארון האלהים as if to drive it thoroughly into the mind of the reader. When the occurrences of ארון יהוה and ארון האלהים are plotted in the order in which they occur, a pattern emerges which centres around the division at vv. 11-12:<sup>21</sup>

ארון האלהים	2	3	4	6	7		12	12				
ארון יהוה						9	10	11	13	14	16	17

Each episode may be divided into two phases: the first consistently uses אלהים ארון and the second consistently uses ארון יהוה. The same change takes place in both the A- and the B-stories. Interpretation of this change must therefore centre around vv. 7-9 and 12-13.

### A: 2 Samuel 6:7-9

These are the verses that deal with the death of Uzza. The death is described in v. 7 by 3 clauses, giving the impression of slow-motion: firstly the divine motivation (*and Yahweh was angry with Uzza*), then the act of killing (*so God*

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was added to the text by an editor who wanted it to perform the functions described here.

<sup>20</sup> Fokkelman (1990:180).

<sup>21</sup> Quite a number of these are textually problematic, as noted by McCarter (1984:161-6): For v. 3, LXX<sup>BAMN</sup> read 'ark of Yahweh' (as does 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, Ulrich 1978:194); v. 4 LXX<sup>BAMN</sup> read simply 'the ark'; the second reference in v. 12 is 'the ark of Yahweh' in LXX, Syr and Targum; and v. 16 LXX<sup>BMN</sup> read 'the ark'. While this may reflect inaccuracies in transmission at some point in the Greek translation, the sheer volume of textual problems, one of which is supported by 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, invites us to take seriously the possibility that the pattern discerned here is not original. It might therefore be an example of the kind of biased editing in Samuel-Kings proposed by Auld (1994).



*smote him there*), then the death scene (*and he died there with the ark of God*). In contrast to the lengthy description, the death itself (being a sudden, divine killing) must have been quite quick. In other words, Uzza would already have been fully dead by the time the reader reaches “ark of God” at the end of the verse. The change of designation therefore coincides with *David’s reaction* to Uzza’s death rather than the death itself.

In addition, David’s reaction is described at more length and in more detail than Uzza’s death. While death is described in 3 clauses, David’s reaction occupies 3 entire verses:

- verse 8: anger, place-naming
- verse 9: indecision (איך יבוא אלי ארון יהוה), negative decision
- verse 10: positive decision

Note that the order of David’s thoughts is entirely plausible from a psychological point of view: initial, knee-jerk reaction (anger), followed by acceptance (place-naming), followed by an appraisal of how these events affect the future (indecision, negative decision, positive decision). From v. 8 onward, David fears Yahweh, and the text correspondingly uses the term יהוה ארון. Implied, therefore, is David’s lack of fear for Yahweh in the preceding events where the ark is designated by ארון האלהים.

Having identified the connotations associated with the different terms for the ark, we must no longer read the information given about the ark in verse 2 as incidental, but as crucial to creating a sense of foreboding:

And David ... went up to bring up from there the ark of *God*, over which the name ‘Name<sup>22</sup> of *Yahweh of Hosts Enthroned on the K<sup>e</sup>rûbîm* is invoked (or possibly<sup>23</sup> ... which belongs to ‘Name of *Yahweh of Hosts Enthroned on the K<sup>e</sup>rûbîm*’)

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<sup>22</sup> It is frequently noted that שם שם is probably due to dittography (LXX attesting only one ὄνομα), and many translations omit the second שם (e.g. McCarter:1984:161,3). Another solution, supported by the Syriac and espoused by Carlson (1964:63, 70) is to repoint שם to שש, with the meaning of calling his name *there*. This compromise *almost* sticks to the traditional reading and *almost* makes good Hebrew, but actually does neither entirely satisfactorily.

Given the problematic nature of much of the chapter, dittography may well be present. However, in the light of שם ... שם in verse 7 (also attributed to dittography) we can entertain the possibility that שם שם was indeed intended here in the way translated above, with ‘Name’ being an additional title that accentuates the ‘Yahwehness’ of Yahweh and contrasts it to the plainness of ‘the god’.

<sup>23</sup> Thus following McCarter (1984:168) “calling Yahweh’s name over the ark implies his having or taking possession of it.” McCarter (1984:312) gives other uses of the same

The difference in DNs, which in other contexts might point to synonymy, here leads to tension.<sup>24</sup> The piling up of epithets which should have been invoked or recognised (but were not) clashes with the repetition of the designation 'ark of God' which we now know to signify David's lack of proper respect (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7). The audience is forewarned that David does not know what he is doing.<sup>25</sup>

A number of commentators have noted questionable aspects of David's behaviour in this chapter, but have not pieced them all together as a systematic criticism of David.<sup>26</sup> Fokkelman raises the question of whether an ox-driven cart is the proper means of transport for the ark.<sup>27</sup> The closest thing we have to explicit instruction on how the ark should be carried comes from several passages in Numbers. In Numbers 7:6-9 Moses distributes carts (העגלות) and oxen (הבקר) to the three groups of Levites to enable them to carry out their duties.

But to the Kohathites he gave none, because they were charged with the care of the holy things that had to be carried (ישאו) on the shoulders (Num. 7:9)

The responsibilities of the same three Levite groups are specified in Num. 3:21-37. Verse 31 specifies that among the responsibilities of the Kohathites

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formula: Deut. 28:10, 2 Sam. 12:28, 1 Kings 8:43 = 2 Chr. 6:33, Isa. 4:1, 63:19, Jer. 15:16, 25:29, 1 Chr. 13:16. To these we may add Amos 9:12.

<sup>24</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that the 'normative' reference to the deity in this chapter is *Yahweh* (*Elohim* being used only once in v. 8 as a variant for *Yahweh* which appears in the previous clause). Fokkelman (1990:180) notes the dominance of the name *Yahweh* in this chapter, and the 'specialness' of its first appearance: "The dominance of the tetragrammaton commences majestically in v. 2 where [it] is inserted in doubly solemn words."

<sup>25</sup> Fokkelman (1990:186) notes the changes in the ark's designation, but fails to attach any significance to this. He notes that the change following the incident had been anticipated by the narrator's explanation in v. 2, but regards the designation ארון האלהים as 'relatively neutral'.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Hertzberg (1964:280-1) concludes that David did uncover himself, but does not find this at all unusual in the service of the Lord, as "reverence is to become lowly before God." Polzin (1993:64) identifies Uzza as David's 'agent' but does not carry Uzza's punishment (and therefore his sin) over to David. Carlson writes in a footnote (1964:83 n. 4): "it would be tempting to explain Uzzah's death as a sort of substitutionary sacrifice for David. As 'High Priest' David is ultimately responsible for the transport of the Ark" but in the main text "David was not the guilty party."

<sup>27</sup> Fokkelman (1990:186).

was the ark. Also in Numbers comes the instruction for the Kohathites not to touch the holy things on pain of death, and reference to their *burden* (משא, Num. 4:15).

Other biblical passages support the preference for carrying the ark, as opposed to driving it on a cart. According to Deut. 10:8:

At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry (לשאת) the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...<sup>28</sup>

Japhet points out that the Chronicler relies on this verse for David's decree in 1 Chr. 15:2.<sup>29</sup> The only other example in the Hebrew Bible of the ark being driven is 1 Sam. 6, and that is on the advice of Philistine diviners (עגלה חדשה 2 Sam. 6:3 cf. 1 Sam. 6:7<sup>30</sup>). In 1 Kings 8:3 the priests carry (וישאו) the ark; later in 2 Sam. 6 the ark is successfully carried by bearers (v. 13 נשאי ארון יהוה).

Also relevant here is Parke-Taylor's observation regarding the word play on נשא in Isa. 46:1:

the Babylonian idols will be carried on the back of cattle [חיה, בהמה]; YHWH, who has carried Israel from the womb, will continue to bear them.<sup>31</sup>

Fokkelman additionally notes the rootplay in 2 Sam. 6:2-3 of כרבים and וירכבו which is also found in 2 Sam. 22:11a (וירכב על כרוב) precisely in the context of Yahweh's unique way of travelling, and wonders whether this is an allusion implying criticism. However, he does not follow through with the natural conclusion that it is the person responsible for the decisions, David, who is at fault.

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<sup>28</sup> Alternatively, Carmichael's logic may be applied here (1974, 1985, 1992, 1996). Rather than the laws being 'independent' background information against which we read the story in Samuel, it may be that the laws in Numbers and Deuteronomy are in fact secondary to our story. They may themselves be explanation of and interpretation on the the difficult incident in 2 Sam. 6. If this could be proven, then it would add even more support to my interpretation of the passage. (I am grateful to Prof. Carmichael for his suggestions on this matter.)

<sup>29</sup> Japhet (1993:297).

<sup>30</sup> Note that in 1 Sam. 6:14 the people of Bet Shemesh split up the cart and offer the cows as sacrifice (probably burning them on wood from the cart), thus ridding themselves of any trace of the ark's captivity and that mode of transport.

<sup>31</sup> Parke-Taylor (1975:72).

Apart from the way in which the ark was transported, negative connotations may be found in the festivities described in v. 5. The text makes it clear that David alone is the instigator of the procession (ידוד וכל בית יהוה ישראל משחקים לפני יהוה).<sup>32</sup> While the root שחק in piel can simply mean 'dance, play music', its construction with לפני brings to mind another case in which it had fatal implications:<sup>33</sup>

2 Sam. 2:14	ויאמר אבנר אל יואב יקומו נא הנערים וישחקו לפנינו
2 Sam. 2:16	ויחזקו איש בראש רעהו וחרבו בצד רעהו ויפלו יחדו

In connection with this construction, the following may also be cited:

Judges 16:25	ויאמרו קראו לשמשון וישחק לנו
	ויקראו לשמשון מבית האסירים ויצחק לפניהם

Here there is a clear parallelism between וישחק ל and ויצחק לפני.<sup>34</sup> In this case, the 'sport' was immediately followed by the deaths of 3,000 Philistine men and women as well as Samson. In this light, the fatality in 2 Sam. 6 is somewhat less surprising.

David is well-known for his musical talent on the lyre (כנור, 1 Sam. 16:23) and it is perhaps unsurprising that his procession should include music (עצי ברושים בכנרות ובנבלים ובתפים ובמנענעים ובצלצלים).<sup>35</sup> Long lists of musical instruments have consistently positive connotations in only the books of Psalms, Chronicles, and Nehemiah.<sup>36</sup> By contrast, in the Prophetic books, a single instrument may be acceptable,<sup>37</sup> but a long list is most

<sup>32</sup> Japhet (1993:273-4) shows how comparison with the Chronicles account emphasises this point: "The people are mentioned in the story [Samuel] as being present at the occasion ... but their role is negligible. The focus of the story is David, his actions, feeling, words."

<sup>33</sup> Although the same combination in Prov. 8:30 exhibits no such connotation.

<sup>34</sup> Indeed the two roots are close, and this passage suggests that some of the derisory connotations of שחק may be justifiably applied to צחק. See, for example, Gen. 18:12, 13, 15, 21:9, Ex. 32:6.

<sup>35</sup> As it stands, this may be translated as something like 'with all kinds/rattles/instruments of fir-trees'. In all likelihood, the present text is an unsatisfactory correction of a corruption. עצי בכל should probably be read עצי referring to the previous phrase, and ברושים as בשרים as preserved in 1 Chr. 13:8 and also in 4QSam<sup>a</sup>: [עו ו]בשרים. McCarter (1983:163-4) reads עו בכלי that is "with instruments of might," a compromise which neither makes good sense, nor follows any textual precedent. The present hypothesis does not rest on any of these options.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Pss. 33:2-3, 150:3-5, 1 Chr. 15:16, 28, 25:6, Neh. 12:27.

<sup>37</sup> For example Jer. 31:3(4), but contrast Isa. 14:11.

definitely sinful.<sup>38</sup> In other books, lists of musical instruments tend to appear in negative,<sup>39</sup> satirical,<sup>40</sup> or ironic<sup>41</sup> contexts.<sup>42</sup>

Sternberg writes at length at the gap-filling process which is required to understand literature in general and the Bible in particular.<sup>43</sup> He demonstrates how the reader makes causal links between different details offered by the narrative on the basis of the context given in the narrative. If we apply this process to 2 Sam. 6 we find that the text implicates David at every point on the way to the process which eventually ends in Uzza's death: given all this music, singing and dancing, is it any wonder the oxen stumbled - oxen which would have better served God by satisfying his appetite for meat than pulling his ark?

The change in designation in the A story centres on the psychological process of David's reaction to Uzza's death: not the sadness of losing a subject, but anger directed at the deity, and re-adjustment of the concept of deity. David comes to realise not only that he does not know how to deal with this god, but also that he did not know that he did not know this.

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<sup>38</sup> The instruments of those drunkards about to be exiled in Isa. 5:12 (כגור נבל תף וחליל) is close enough to our passage to wonder if deliberate borrowing is present here, or perhaps use of a stock phrase. Note that the additional instruments in the Samuel list are those which are varied in the Chronicles parallel (1 Chr. 13:8: ובשרים ובכנרות ובנבלים ובחצרות ובתפים ובמצלתים ובחצצרות). See also Isa. 24:8, 30:32, Amos 5:23, 6:5 (explicitly critical of *David!*).

<sup>39</sup> Job 21:12 - reminiscent of the prophetic use. In Judges 11:34 the music is neither excessive nor sinful, but it does herald death.

<sup>40</sup> Gunn and Fewell (1993:174-89) demonstrate how the repetition of the list in Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15 serves to satirise the narrator's portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar's ridiculous ceremony.

<sup>41</sup> Gen. 31:27 For more evidence of the cutting irony behind Laban's words, see Fokkelman (1975:166-7).

<sup>42</sup> In the following, the context of a list of musical instruments is ambiguous or neutral: 1 Sam. 10:5, 18:6, 1 Kings 10:12. It may be significant that 4 lists of musical instruments in Samuel-Kings relate to the three kings of the united Israel: 1 Sam 10:5 to Saul, 18:6 heralding sour relations between Saul and David, 2 Sam. 6:5 to David, and 1 Kings 10:12 to Solomon. Those relating to Saul may be ominous because Saul was the wrong choice (1 Sam. 15:35), and 2 Sam. 6:5 for reasons described in this chapter. In 1 Kings 10:12 the instruments are made from the gift of Hiram, they are part of the international glory of Solomon. The very next chapter gives a critique of this international glory by describing how Solomon's foreign wives led him astray in the worship of other gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). Thus while each of these contexts is not explicitly sinful, a case can be made for viewing the lists of instruments with some trepidation.

<sup>43</sup> Sternberg (1987:186ff).



## B: 2 Samuel 6:12-13

The turning point in the A story focussed on David's attitude, and particularly his realisation that the deity he had treated so lightly was in fact demanding and quick to judge. No explicit comment is given in the turning point of the B story concerning David's state of mind. Instead, external events, including David's actions, are described, and from these we are left to assess his motivations. Consider the process leading up to verse 12:

- the ark of Yahweh stays with Obed-Edom for 3 months.
- Yahweh blesses Obed-Edom and all his house.
- David is told that Yahweh has blessed Obed-Edom's house and everything he has because of the ark of God.
- David goes and retrieves the ark of God from Obed-Edom's house with joy.

That David's motivation is entirely materialistic hardly needs spelling out.<sup>44</sup> It is clear both from the pace and causality of the narrative and from the exaggerated account given to David (no doubt by a messenger who knew exactly what the king wanted to hear) in which *Obed-Edom and all his house* (6:11) becomes *Obed-Edom's house and everything he has* (6:12).

In verse 13, on the other hand, David improves his behaviour, having the ark carried (נשא ארון יהוה) and arranging appropriate sacrifices. To be sure, there are still festivities, but their description is this time well-distributed (from שמחה in v. 12 to שחקתי in v. 21) rather than condensed into one revelrous verse (v. 5).

We are therefore justified in linking the term 'ark of God' in v. 12 (twice) with David's blatantly selfish motives and 'ark of Yahweh' in vv. 13-17 with David's improved religious performance. This interpretation is quite compatible with the A story where we found that 'ark of God' signified the ignorant David while 'ark of Yahweh' coincided with the repentant David.

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<sup>44</sup> As in the text preserved in LXX<sup>L</sup> and OL "[David] said to himself, 'I'll bring the blessing back to my own house!'" McCarter (1984:161) concludes that this must have been original, because no editor would have dared add something so negative about David, whereas it would be understandable if someone wanted to omit such a suggestion. Carlson (1964:85) on the other hand, sees it as "probably secondary, though correct in its intention." Only total immersion in the ideology of the Chronicler allows one to be as generous to David as Japhet (1993:282).



Thus far, we have arrived at an interpretation of the chapter which can be summarised as follows:

	Term for ark	David's moral state	... as inferred from
		...	David's:
A i 6:1-7	ארון האלהים	ignorant	actions
A ii 6:9-11	ארון יהוה	enlightened, sorry	thoughts
B i 6:12	ארון האלהים	selfish	actions
B ii 6:13-23	ארון יהוה	??	??

The question that faces us now is: did David really learn his lesson? What is his moral state at the end of the chapter? The text provides two directions in answer to this question: firstly concerning David's relationship to Michal, and secondly his relationship to God.

What exactly made Michal so angry? Our only clues are the details of the confrontation and the events immediately preceding it:

- v. 16 Michal sees David leaping and dancing, she despises him.
- v. 20 She accuses him of uncovering himself.
- v. 21-22 David identifies her problem as jealousy over kingship (יהוה) (אשר בחר בי מאביך ומכל ביתו).
- v. 23 Statement that Michal never has children.

There are good reasons why we should take Michal's accusation of uncovering at face-value. Her accusation is emphatic and David does not deny it. While David identifies her problem as jealousy over kingship, this is inextricably linked to their sexual relationship, as a child between them would have been a continuation of Saul's house as well as David's. The theme of sexual jealousy is congruous with the immediate context: in v. 16 she was angry because David was willing to reveal more to common subjects than to his wife above;<sup>45</sup> verse 23 probably refers to the withdrawal of sexual attention (David's repayment in kind) rather than barrenness.<sup>46</sup> It also fits the

<sup>45</sup> שִׁקְפָה (BDB:1054) = "overhang, look out and down" see especially Num. 21:20, 23:28.

<sup>46</sup> The startling reference to Michal's death (יום מותה) brings to mind David's concubines of 2 Sam. 20:3 (יום מתן) for whom the denial of sex and therefore offspring is quite explicit (בא (ואליהם לא). The narrator's sympathy toward the imprisoned concubines and criticism of David is made clear from the expressions צָרְרוּ וְתַהַיְיְנָה *and they were shut*

wider context, from which we know that David was good-looking,<sup>47</sup> that Michal loved David<sup>48</sup> and that David nowhere expresses reciprocation for this love.

A good deal of debate has taken place concerning the significance of the ephod. It has been suggested<sup>49</sup> that the *linen* ephod (as opposed to the solid cultic object, also known as the ephod<sup>50</sup>) was a child's loin-cloth (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:18), and would therefore have been inappropriate garb for an adult. This hypothesis rests on a number of cases where the priest is traditionally thought of 'wearing the ephod-garment' being re-read as 'carrying the ephod-object'. However, it is quite clear from passages like Ex. 28:4 that the ephod is included in the *garments* of the priest (v. 3 בגדי אהרן v. 4 ואלה בגדים). The fact that the child Samuel wore an ephod does not disprove this, because Samuel was a priestly child. However, in other cases where people are described as wearing the ephod (except the child Samuel<sup>51</sup> and David), they are described as wearing it over other clothes.<sup>52</sup> (Why would a priest or king wear a child's loin-cloth over his fine clothes?) If only David and the child Samuel are described as wearing *only* an ephod,<sup>53</sup> then we may justifiably conclude that it was a priestly garment which a child could wear alone, but that an adult would have to wear something under it (unless he was to uncover himself).

This solution avoids two untenable extremes. On the one hand, the biblical evidence simply does not support the theory that the ephod could be *only either* a cultic object, *or* a child's loin-cloth, but makes it clear that it is also a priestly garment. On the other hand, if the ephod does not point in some way to David's indecency, then the whole Michal episode is reduced to a *non-sequitur*.<sup>54</sup> Finally, we must ask what function the mention of the ephod

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*up/harassed/made rival wives* (cf. Lev. 18:18); and *living as if in widowhood* (NRSV)/ *widows of the living?*

- <sup>47</sup> 1 Sam. 16:12 ראי וטוב ראי see 'Good looks in Samuel' Sternberg (1985:354-64).  
<sup>48</sup> 1 Sam. 18:20, 28. Berlin (1983:24) notes that this is the only instance where a woman expresses love for a man.  
<sup>49</sup> Phillips (1960:487).  
<sup>50</sup> Ephod as cultic object: Jud. 8:27, 1 Sam. 30:7-8; carried: 1 Sam. 23:6.  
<sup>51</sup> Even Samuel may have worn it with the little jacket (מעיל קטן) his mother brings him (1 Sam. 2:19).  
<sup>52</sup> 1 Chr. 15:27, Lev. 8:7.  
<sup>53</sup> Fokkelman (1990:199) does not make it clear whether he thinks David did or did not uncover himself, but he does interpret David as wearing *nothing but* the linen ephod.  
<sup>54</sup> For example, Hertzberg (1964:280) "Michal's feelings are only comprehensible if the tradition knew that David really uncovered himself." On the other hand, Polzin

fills if it is not to be so interpreted, as comments on the attire or appearance of characters are not normally made unless they have some bearing on the plot.<sup>55</sup> In the light of the immediate context of the ephod:

And David was whirling with all his might before Yahweh (now David was girded with a linen ephod). (2 Sam. 6:14)<sup>56</sup>

we see that the mention of the ephod qualifies David's dancing in some way - it is intended to influence the audience's attitude to David's dancing. If our interpretation is correct, then its relevance to his dancing is immediately clear - the ephod flew high and he exposed himself. If no such meaning is intended, then we must ask why the ephod is mentioned in this verse: if the ephod had connoted David's joy then it might have been attached to verse 12; if it had cultic connotations then it might have been mentioned along with the sacrifices in verse 13.

We have found David to be at best inconsiderate and at worst intentionally provocative toward his wife in this section. Nevertheless, he successfully houses the ark, and blesses his house. The chapter ends with the emphatic statement of the election of David over Saul by God. Confirmation of the importance of the election of David and his house is found in the next chapter.<sup>57</sup> It would therefore be inconsistent for a chapter with such a positive outcome to portray David in a totally negative light.

David's cultic activities are described here in some detail: offerings, blessing of people and of his own house, distribution of food. In all of this, one detail harks back to the serious omission of David back at the beginning of the chapter. While in v. 2 he had failed to invoke the name of the LORD of Hosts, and had even failed to associate the ark with the name Yahweh, in v. 18 he blesses the people *in the name of the LORD of Hosts*. The cultic requirement which symbolised his initial botched job has been fulfilled, and the chapter provides closure.

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(1993:66) dismisses "efforts to describe him as scantily clad" but is unable to give a coherent explanation of Michal's words and how they relate to the episode as a whole.

<sup>55</sup> Sternberg (1985:321-364). As an example, on Esau being hairy and red, see Fokkelman (1975:90ff.)

<sup>56</sup> Own translation.

<sup>57</sup> For example, in the use of the key-word *דָּוִד* (of David): 2 Sam. 7:1, 2, 13, 16, 18, 25, 26, 27, 29; of God: 7:5, 6, 7. See also references to David: the king: 7:1, 3; King David: 7:18; my servant David: 7:5, 8; your servant (David): 7:20, 25, 26.

David's moral state is therefore quite complex. It is now possible to complete the table:

	Term for ark	David's moral state ...	... as inferred from David's:
A i 6:1-7	ארון האלהים	ignorant	actions
A ii 6:9-11	ארון יהוה	enlightened, sorry	thoughts
B i 6:12	ארון האלהים	selfish	actions
B ii 6:13-23	ארון יהוה	to Michal, offensive to God, pleasing	actions, words

David pays when he offends God, but gets away with offending his wife. The chapter is constructed as an asymmetric balance. If in his relations to God he is portrayed as bad, good, bad, good, then the final good is somewhat soured by the bad he does to Michal. Good itself is tempered by uncertainty as to how long it will last. The message here is that the king is the king, warts and all. David is at no point a perfect character; instead he has learned to play the game.

### 1 Chronicles 13-15

If the above interpretation is correct, then we would expect that it would have posed significant theological problems for the Chronicler. On the one hand he cannot portray David as grossly careless and negligent, as this would not fit with the Chronicler's concept of the 'golden age' of Yahweh worship during the reigns of David and Solomon. On the other hand, the Chronicler cannot portray God as being arbitrarily mean. Instead of omitting the story altogether, as he does with the Bathsheba incident, he reorganizes and adapts it to give it his own theological flavour.

In Chronicles, the corresponding material is found in 1 Chr. 13:1-14 and 15:25-16:3. The most striking effect of the split between the two attempts is the elimination of the ulterior motive in David's second attempt. At the end of chapter 13 we are told that Yahweh blessed Obed-Edom, and some time later (at the beginning of chapter 15) David spontaneously makes preparations for a second attempt. Chronicles lacks the parallel of 2 Sam. 6:12 where *David* is told that Obed-Edom has been blessed *because of the ark*.

David's second attempt is therefore removed in every way possible from the fact of Obed-Edom's blessing and the the ulterior motives it implies.

The intervening material consists of 14:1-17 (parallel to 2 Sam. 5) and 15:1-24 (unparalleled). Each of these serves the Chronicler by removing the guilt of Uzza's death from David's shoulders.

In Chronicles, the election of David by God to the throne of Israel, and his subsequent victories over the Philistines (1 Chr. 14) follows the Perez Uzza incident, but precedes it in Samuel. According to Japhet,<sup>58</sup> this has the effect for the Chronicler of making the bringing up of the ark David's first act as king. However, given the thematic link between the two episodes, each of which contains a place-naming based on  $\sqrt{\text{פרצ}}$ ,<sup>59</sup> it seems that something more than this is implied. Fokkelman, regarding the Samuel parallels, writes:

One Perez passage is the obverse of the other.<sup>60</sup>

The question that presents itself here is what is gained for the Chronicler by having Baal-perazim follow Perez-uzza, or for the Deuteronomist by having Perez-uzza follow Baal-perazim? In 1 Sam. 5 David is led to believe that Yahweh is on his side and then has a rude awakening in 1 Sam. 6 - the overall effect is bitter, uncertainty. In 1 Chr. 13-14 the unfortunate incident is superseded by the fortunate. Chapter 14 appropriates the Perez-etymology from its nasty connotations and replaces them with good connotations. The overall effect is certainty - certainty that Yahweh *is* with David in battle. The positive effect of chapter 14 is increased as it proves to be the inspiration for David's second attempt (following Japhet 1993:285). It therefore plays a critical role in the dramatic process, for without the initial setback, and the good omen which follows, the eventual success is devoid of any dramatic impact.<sup>61</sup>

The preparations for David's second attempt (1 Chr. 15:1-24) serve a number of functions. Firstly the elaborate preparations emphasise just how

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<sup>58</sup> Japhet (1993:272).

<sup>59</sup> 1 Chr. 13:11: ויקרא למקום ההוא פרץ עוא.

1 Chr. 14:11: על כן קראו המקום ההוא בעל פרצים.

<sup>60</sup> Fokkelman (1990:189-90).

<sup>61</sup> Lest I be accused of answering only one side of the question, further comment is due on the effect of order in Samuel. If the interpretation given here is correct, that 2 Sam. 6 is critical of David, then it would appear that the connecting etymologies reinforce the 'divine grace-human ingratitude' pattern that occupies much of Deuteronomy.



well everything goes according to plan.<sup>62</sup> Secondly comes the explicit interpretation, from David's mouth, of the reason for the failure of the first attempt (1 Chr. 15:13). The verse is difficult and frequently mistranslated:

1 Chr. 15:13

כי למבראשונה לא אתם פרץ יהוה אלהינו בנו  
כי לא דרשנהו כמשפט

The problem is how to deal with the לא אתם - you did not what? The NRSV inserts the explanation of carrying vs. transporting the ark on a cart:

Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God burst out against us, because we did not give it proper care.

However, this disrupts the purpose of לא which was to distinguish second person from first person, as understood by Japhet:

'When it was not *you* - the LORD smote *us*'  
This is an admission of sin and an acceptance of full responsibility. It was not Uzza who sinned, but 'we.'<sup>63</sup>

The picture of blame and responsibility is therefore diametrically opposed to that in Samuel: in Samuel David is first negligent and then unrepentantly careful, whereas in Chronicles David is first absolved of blame and then humbly seeks to take the blame upon himself.

Some of the other more obvious differences between the Samuel and Chronicles accounts can be similarly explained as glorifying David and his age. David's speech (1 Chr. 13:1-4) reflects not just David, but all Israel at that time as living in the golden age of enthusiasm for the worship of Yahweh.<sup>64</sup> David links the bringing of the ark with the ingathering of the people, and contrasts his own aspirations with that of Saul's reign when the ark was not consulted. Michal is mentioned looking on and despising David (1 Chr. 15:29), but she never gets a chance to air her complaint. We have already

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<sup>62</sup> Japhet (1993:293-4).

<sup>63</sup> Japhet (1993:301).

<sup>64</sup> Japhet (1993:274) notes that David uses persuasion to gain the approval of his people: 13:2: 'If it seems good to you ...' whereas in Samuel David takes the initiative, makes decisions and lead the people all by himself. This serves the Deuteronomist by heightening the responsibility on David, and the Chronicler by lessening it.



mentioned that the Chronicler portrays David as wearing fine linen robes as well as the ephod. The word order of 15:27 (David wore a robe of fine linen; so did the Levites, etc; and David wore a linen ephod) turns the ephod into something special that only David (and none of the others) wore.

There are, however, a number of less obvious differences between the two accounts, still related to the merit or demerit of David, that are only obvious when specific wording is examined.

2 Sam. 6:2 ויקם וילך דוד ... להעלות משם את ארון האלהים אשר נקרא שם שם יהוה צבאות יושב הכרובים עליו	1 Chr. 13:6 ויצל דויד ... להעלות משם את ארון האלהים יהוה יושב הכרובים אשר נקרא שם
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In Chronicles, the lack of the preposition עליו disturbs the belonging/invoking formula and makes the reading אשר נקרה שם - *which happened to be there* - more likely.<sup>65</sup> If this is the case, יהוה יושב הכרובים ceases to be an unfulfilled cultic requirement and becomes instead an explanatory note, describing and qualifying האלהים.

The two accounts differ noticeably in the details which they relate concerning the transportation of the ark:

2 Sam. 6:3-4 וירכבו את ארון האלהים אל עגלה חדשה וישאהו מבית אבינדב אשר בגבעה ועזה ואחיו בני אבינדב נהגים את העגלה חדשה וישאהו מבית אבינדב אשר בגבעה עם ארון אלהים ואחיו הלך לפני הארון	1 Chr. 13:7 וירכבו את ארון האלהים אל עגלה חדשה מבית אבינדב ועזה ואחיו נהגים בעגלה
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The second וישאהו מבית אבינדב אשר בגבעה in Samuel is almost certainly due to dittography<sup>66</sup> - the copyist's eye slipped from העגלה החדשה at the end of verse 3 to עגלה חדשה at the beginning of the same verse. This also explains the lack of definite article in את העגלה חדשה.

Even apart from this dittograph, every divergence consists in the Samuel text being longer than the Chronicles, especially in details concerning

<sup>65</sup> Thus Japhet (1993:278) and Seeligman (1961:204-5).

<sup>66</sup> Dittography not present in the LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.

Uzza and Ahio. According to Japhet, this is “another example of the Chronistic tendency to shorten the story and omit what might appear to be superfluous detail.”<sup>67</sup> While this may be true, this particular divergence has a very specific effect. Samuel introduces Uzza and Ahio to us very carefully: first by naming the house from which the ark was taken (being on a hill, it must have been a respectable house, something else Chronicles does not tell us), and then by qualifying Uzza and Ahio as the sons of this house. For Samuel, Uzza and Ahio are the natural and proper choice for the task; for Chronicles, they are plucked out of thin air and planted by the ark.

This trend is continued in the spatial detail given in Samuel and absent from Chronicles, that Ahio walked in front of the ark.<sup>68</sup> There is no need to add here (as many commentators do<sup>69</sup>) that Uzza was beside the ark, and that this phrase was lost by haplography. To do so is to fail to engage in the mental gap-filling required by the biblical text. Telling us where Ahio is makes us speculate where Uzza is: to the side of the cart, or perhaps behind. This is important because in our mental picture of the procession we must realise that Uzza is the only one *near* the cart who can actually *see* the ark. He is therefore the natural victim in what follows. But to state explicitly that he was beside the ark is as good as saying that he was watching it, waiting for it to fall, which would ruin the drama that is about to unfold. An additional effect of the gap-filling required by the reader is to bring Uzza and his position to the front of the reader’s mind. This ultimately evokes all the more sympathy for Uzza, because the *reader* put him there!

Minor changes of wording are also found to be significant in the account of the touching of the ark:

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<sup>67</sup> Japhet (1993:279).

<sup>68</sup> The issue of being in front of/not being in front of the ark recalls Polzin’s discussion of the same regarding 1 Sam. 6 (1989:68). The Philistine leaders walked safely behind the ark (v. 12) whereas the people of Bet Shemesh despair: מי יוכל לעמד לפני יהוה. (For standing before Yahweh as equivalent to ministering to the ark, see Deut. 10:8, Jud. 20:27-8, McCarter 1984:289). But here the roles are reversed, as Ahio, who walks in front of the ark, remains unharmed.

<sup>69</sup> Hertzberg (1964:276); McCarter (1984:161, 3).

2 Samuel 6:6	1 Chronicles 13:9
ויבאו עד גרן נכון וישלח עזא אל ארון האלהים ויאחז בו כי שמטו הבקר	ויבאו עד גרן כידן וישלח עזא את ידו לאחז את הארון כי שמטו הבקר

The main difference between the accounts consists here in the rhythm and tempo of the ... וישלח phrases. It is customary to insert את ידו (supported by Chronicles and 4QSam<sup>a70</sup>), again on the grounds that it was lost by haplography.<sup>71</sup> McCarter, however, also entertains the possibility that the text may be elliptical.<sup>72</sup> Both explanations are plausible: the chapter as a whole is quite corrupt, so one more scribal error is perfectly possible; on the other hand, deliberate omission suits well the suddenness and immediacy of the phrase. Uzza did not have time to think what he was stretching out: he acted on impulse. That he sent out his hand is obvious (what else could he have sent out?<sup>73</sup>), but precisely because it is obvious it is also irrelevant.

For the same reason, Samuel makes two short *vav*-consecutive clauses out of the same material that Chronicles makes a single longer one. The slight difference of grammar changes the meaning and the tempo considerably. In Samuel, one clause/act follows fast on the heel of the other:

And Uzza reached out... and grabbed it.

Uzza had no more time to think about grabbing the ark than he did about reaching out. In Chronicles, however, the pace is slower and more deliberate:

And Uzza reached out his hand (in order) to grasp the ark.

The Uzza of Chronicles is in full control of the situation and is therefore responsible for his decision to touch the ark.

<sup>70</sup> Ulrich (1978:195).

<sup>71</sup> Hertzberg (1964:276), McCarter (1984:161, 3).

<sup>72</sup> McCarter (161, 3) cites GK # 117g and 2 Sam. 22:17, which is, however, poetry, and therefore more prone to ellipsis.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Ex. 24:11: לא שלך ידו. This verse is remarkable in its phonetic similarity to ours (ויחזו את אלהים).

Apart from the name of the threshing-floor, Samuel and Chronicles disagree on details at no point. They do, however, differ significantly in the selection of details given and the way in which they are told. In every case, the differences result in sympathy being elicited for Uzza in Samuel, but not in Chronicles. Samuel presents the character more fully, which in itself arouses interest; in Chronicles the lack of even the barest personal details (like family name, or status) gives Uzza a lesser degree of personhood. The description of the touching of the ark exonerates Uzza from any conscious action in the case of Samuel; and blames him squarely in the case of Chronicles. This naturally goes in indirect proportion to the blame apportioned to David: in Samuel, our sympathy for Uzza increases the responsibility to be borne by the king; in Chronicles, the impossibility of King David doing wrong requires a scape-goat to explain a theologically difficult incident.

Both the Samuel and the Chronicles version of events involves a list of six musical instruments, with minor variations in the instruments. We do not have enough information about these instruments to know if one list is more 'flattering' than the other. However, we do know that it is peculiar to Chronicles, Psalms, and Nehemiah, for lists of instruments to be a positive feature (see above nn. 36-42).

The way that Chronicles deals with this affair is consistent with its positive attitude toward David. As the criticism of David is (in Samuel) reflected in the designations for the ark, we would expect to find the Chronicler using these designations quite differently. This is indeed what happens. Rather than switching from one term to another within a story to indicate direction, the Chronicler chooses a mode of designation for a particular episode and sticks to it. Thus, the first attempt at transporting the ark (13:1-14) prefers ארון האלהים (vv. 5, 6, 7, 12, 14) but once uses ארון אלהינו (v. 3). This exception is entirely consistent in its context, where David in his speech emphasises *Israel as community* at every opportunity (v. 2 יהוה אלהינו, v. 3 דרשנהו, אלינו, v. 3 נשלחה על אחינו). The second and successful attempt involves ארון ברית יהוה (15:25, 26, 28, 29), but finishes its account with a variety of names: ארון האלהים (16:1), ארון יהוה (16:4), ארון ברית האלהים (16:6), as if to end by uttering each possibility just one more time. The preparatory material in chapter 15 uses both ארון האלהים (15:1, 2, 15) and ארון יהוה (15:2, 3, 12, 14). This may reflect, for the Chronicler a progression from the unsuccessful incident (ארון האלהים) to the successful one (ארון ברית יהוה) with a transitory stage

(fluctuation between ארון יהוה and ארון האלהים). However, it reflects no change of attitude on the part of David, and no moral judgement on David's attitude.

The problem of who was responsible for the death of Uzza and the interruption of the ark's progress hangs uncomfortably over the whole incident, in both the Samuel and the Chronicles versions. Samuel implies rather than states an inept king; Chronicles distances itself from all these connotations.

### 1 Samuel 4-7:1

Much has been written on the links between 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Sam. 4-7:1.<sup>74</sup> More specifically than this, however, David's two encounters with the ark echo those of the Philistines (1 Sam. 5:1-6:12). Just as David's first attempt to transfer the ark was inconclusive (A), and the second attempt successful (B), so the Philistines first tried unsuccessfully to appropriate the ark (a:5:1-5), but finally managed to transfer it to the appropriate place (b:5:6-6:12).

Certain key-words confirm such a correspondence. In David's first attempt, we already noted the absence<sup>75</sup> of the word יד (2 Sam. 6:6); in Dagon's temple (1 Sam. 5:4), it is not just the deity's head, but his *hands* (שתי כפות ידיו) that are cut off (as if he had tried to touch the ark!)

In David's second attempt (B), the mention of Michal's death (יום מותה) links this to b (5:6-6:12), the second encounter of the Philistines with the ark. Here the root מות appears four times in three verses (1 Sam 5:10, 11, 12).

<sup>74</sup> They were thought to have originated as a single 'ark narrative' by Rost (1982:9, 33) and Campbell (1975:6). Tur-Sinai (1951) argues that 1 Sam. 6 and 2 Sam. 6 are two versions of the same story. Polzin (1993:60, 68-70) and Fokkelman (1990:186-7) put forward a number of interesting connections without speculating on the history of the text. For example, Polzin notes (1993:60-61) that the 30,000 men who accompany David in 2 Sam. 6:1 reflect the 30,000 who died in its capture in 1 Sam. 4. He also notes (1989:69) that the ark spends a few months in non-Israelite hands in both stories. The numbers here are not without significance: 7 months in 1 Sam. 6:1 and 3 months in 2 Sam. 6:11. (On the complementarity of the numbers three and seven, see Weiss 1983:25). Fokkelman (1991:187) compares the naming of the ark's attendants בני אבינדב in 2 Sam. 6:3 with שני בני עלי ... חפני ופינחס in 1 Sam. 4:4 and the extended designations ארון האלהים אשר יושב הכרבים (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2) with ארון ברית יהוה צבאות יושב הכרבים (1 Sam 4:4; Fokkelman 1991:186). To this can be added בתרועה ובקול שופר (2 Sam. 6:15) cf תרועה גדולה (1 Sam. 4:5); קול התרועה הגדולה, קול התרועה (1 Sam. 4:6).

<sup>75</sup> Assuming that the MT is to be preferred over 4QSam<sup>a</sup>. If, however, the MT is emended to include ידו the link with 1 Sam. 5:4 remains. The present hypothesis rests neither on an emendation to the MT, nor on excessive reliance on a corruption in the MT.



### Excursus: 1 Samuel 4:12-22

Between the Philistine victory, and the beginning of their encounter with the ark, comes the account in which the news of the capture of the ark is made known to the Israelites. This account is divided into two (called here  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ), which have links to both the David (A and B) and the Philistine (a and b) stories. It is relevant here because it completes the links between the David and Philistines stories: it has neither changes of references to the ark,<sup>78</sup> nor in attitude to it.

The news that the ark has been captured is told to two people: Eli ( $\alpha$ : 4:12-22) and Eli's daughter-in-law ( $\beta$ : 4:19-22). The message results both times in the death of the hearer.

In  $\alpha$ , the blind Eli waits for news יד דרך (4:13: almost certainly to be corrected to יד[ל]יד דרך).<sup>79</sup> When Eli hears the terrible news he falls against יד השער (4:18: a term not used elsewhere in the Bible, and not at all self-explanatory). All this harks back to the 'missing' hand of Uzza (2 Sam. 6:6) and the broken hands of Dagon (1 Sam. 5:4). Not only that, Eli breaks his neck in the fall (4:18) as does Dagon (5:4).

The theme of death in  $\beta$ , this time of Eli's daughter-in-law (4:19 ומת, 20 ויכעת מותה), parallels 2 Sam. 6:23 and 1 Sam. 5:10-12. The comparison with 2 Sam. 6:23 betrays irony, for while Michal was childless till the day she died (לא היה לה ילד עד יום מותה), Eli's daughter-in-law died giving birth to a son (בן ילדת). The concept of כבוד gains significance in the naming of the child, and giving the explanation (v. 21) and then in repeating that explanation (v. 22), thus paralleling כבוד in 1 Sam. 6:5 and 2 Sam. 6:22. The verb that appears with כבוד in 4:21 and 22 is גלה in the sense of 'removed, exiled' - but still with echoes of Michal's accusation of uncovering: 2 Sam. 6:20: כהגלות נגלות גלה.

<sup>78</sup> The ark is known as ארון אלהים throughout this section.

<sup>79</sup> The final kaf of דרך could have influenced the scribe in copying יד. In support of this emendation, Polzin (1989:62) connects יד הדרך (1 Sam. 4:13) and בעד יד השער (1 Sam. 4:18) with על יד דרך השער (2 Sam. 15:2). This is one of several links he makes between the two passages.



The allusions that link A to a and  $\alpha$ , and B to b and  $\beta$  can therefore be summarised:

<p>News of captured ark 1 Sam. 4:12-22</p>	<p><math>\alpha</math>, 1 יד הדרך (4:13) יד שער (4:18) 2 ותשבר מפרקתו (4:18)</p>	<p><math>\beta</math> 1 כעת מותה ... בן ילדת (4:20) 3 גלה (4:21, 22) 4 כבוד (4:21, 22)</p>
<p>Philistines and ark 1 Sam. 5:1-6:12</p>	<p>a 1 שתי כפות ידיו (5:4) 2 ראש דגון (5:4)</p>	<p>b 1 להמיתנו (5:10) מהומת מות (5:11) האנשים אשר לא מתו (5:12) 2 אל תשלחו אתו ריקם (6:3) 4 כבוד (6:5)</p>
<p>David and ark 2 Sam. 6</p>	<p>A 1 Uzza's missing hand</p>	<p>B 1 לא היה לה ילד עד יום מותה (6:23) 2 אחד הרקים (6:20) 3 אשר נגלה ... כהגלות נגלות (6:20) 4 כבוד (6:22)</p>

## The Wider Context: Judges, Samuel and Kings

While this investigation has centred so far around the two stories which concern themselves primarily with the ark, other references to the ark are to be found scattered throughout Judges, Samuel and Kings. These designations can be plotted as follows:<sup>80</sup>

א ברית האלהים	ארון (ה)אלהים	ארון אדני יהוה	ארון ברית אדני	ארון ברית יהוה	ארון יהוה
Jud. 20:27	1 Sam 3:3 14:18 14:18 2 Sam 7:2				
2 Sam 15:24	2 Sam 15:24 2 Sam 15:25 2 Sam 15:29	1 Kgs. 2:26	1 Kgs. 3:15	1 Kgs. 6:19 1 Kgs. 8:1 1 Kgs. 8:6	1 Kgs. 8:4 1 Kgs. 8:21

The DNs in these scattered references again splits the material in two: one where אלהים designations are used (Judges and Samuel) and the other where יהוה designations are used (Kings). The appearance of two unusual designations (ארון אדני יהוה and ארון ברית אדני) at the beginning of the יהוה section suggest a transition.<sup>81</sup>

It may be that this observation is just part of the wider phenomenon in which *Elohim* is phased out of the 'history' of Genesis-Kings. There are some indications that the trend in this designation is connected with the

<sup>80</sup> Excluding בארון/הארון in 2 Sam. 11:11, 1 Kings 8:3, 5, 7, 9, 2 Kings 12:11.

<sup>81</sup> ארון אדני יהוה may here be acting in a similar way to the homonym with which it is sometimes confused, i.e. יהוה אלהים. The latter is interpreted as acting as a transition between one name and the other in Gen. 2-3 and Jonah 4:6.

succession of Solomon to the throne, and more specifically to the fact that Solomon was the one to build the house to put the box in. The transitional 1 Kings 2:26 appears in the context of Solomon beginning his reign by settling old scores from the time of his father. Given also that the ark is referred to most frequently in 1 Kings 8, Solomon's dedication of the temple, we are justified in seeing the building of the temple as the key to the transition. Thus ארון יהוה was associated with the time when the ark was housed in the temple, and ארון אלהים with the time of the judges and kings before the temple.<sup>82</sup>

Concerning the ברית element of the title, it can normally be seen to occur in either isolated references to the ark (e.g. Jud. 20:27, 1 Kings 6:19) or as the first in a series of references (e.g. 2 Sam. 15:24, 1 Kings 8:1). It also plays a part in the extended reference given as a final flourish:

1 Kings 8:21

ואשם מקום לארון אשר שם ברית יהוה  
אשר כרת עם אבותינו בהוציאו אתם מארץ מצרים

It could be argued that any pattern is only visible when viewed from the appropriate angle, and that this pattern breaks down when all the material is included (including that already analysed in 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Sam. 4-6). And if this pattern is to be based on 'scattered references' then surely 2 Sam. 15:24-29 and 1 Kings 8:1-21 should be excluded as they refer to the ark several times. However, in both these cases the ark is a static and passive object, the plot includes no development of characters relating to it. It is acted upon as opposed to the semi-animate character we find in 2 Sam. 6 and 1 Sam. 5. In favour of the above analysis can be cited 1 Sam. 4:12-22, the spread of the news of the capture of the ark. This section has already been discussed in connection with the word links between David's encounter with the ark and the Philistines' encounter with the ark. It was noted that, while continuing and completing some of the links, this section (the spread of the news) showed no change in attitude to the ark, nor change of designation. It is not the ark itself which is the focus of attention, but rather the devastating effect that the news of its capture has on those who hear it. The designation

<sup>82</sup> An explanation along these lines would need to account for the fact that in the Pentateuch and Joshua, the ark is never called ארון האלהים, but rather other designations, e.g. ארון יהוה (Josh. 6:6 ff.), ארון ברית יהוה (Num. 10:33), ארון העדת (Ex. 40:5, 21), ארון ברית (Josh. 3:6 ff.), and simply הארון (Ex. 25:14ff.).

used throughout this episode is thus congruous with the pattern set out above. Being pre-Solomonic, the designation used is ארון האלהים.

Also absent from the scheme above are the references to the ark in the material immediately surrounding the Philistine encounter with it and the spread of the news of the ark's capture, that is the account of the ark coming to the Israelite camp, and its subsequent capture (1 Sam. 4:1-11); and the return of the ark after its sojourn with the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:13-7:1). Both of these sections use not ארון האלהים as we would expect, but prefer Yahwistic terms:

יהוה	ארון ברית יהוה	4:3	4	5		
יהוה	ארון יהוה			6	6:15	18 19 21 7:1 1
יהוה	ברית האלהים	4:4				
יהוה	ארון אלהים			11		

This may reflect an emphasis on the presence of Yahweh with the Israelites immediately before and after the months in which 'he' was stolen away from them. In both cases where אלהים is used, the ark is mentioned in the same breath as Hophni and Pinhas, the two 'scoundrel' sons of Eli. This may again reflect the tension between the corrupt priesthood and the presence of Yahweh.

### Conclusions

We have seen that throughout most of Judges, Samuel and Kings (i.e. in places where the ark is a passive symbol and not a 'character'), the overriding principle of choice of DN is ארון האלהים for Judges and Samuel and ארון יהוה for Kings. Within this, Samuel contains two separate but related accounts (1 Sam. 5:1-6:12, 2 Sam. 6) where the ark itself is a character demanding certain treatment from the humans around it, and inflicting punishment when this standard is not maintained. Within these two episodes, the human characters concerned offend then improve their behaviour, re-offend, and again improve. The designation ארון האלהים corresponds to the offending behaviour and ארון יהוה corresponds to the improvement. Before and after the first account (the capture by the Philistines) come sections where the ark is *with* the Israelites, and ארון יהוה is used here, to contrast its presence with its absence during the capture.

This chapter began with a critique of two authors who had addressed the issue of designations for the ark on the basis of context. Both identified principles according to which the context was to have influenced the author's choice of words. However, for both Revell and Magonet, instances could easily be found where the text did not support the conclusions. It was felt, especially in the case of Revell, that the principles had been allowed to influence interpretation of the text. The obvious solution was therefore the opposite approach, firstly to interpret the text, and only then examine references to the ark.

Having done so, the principles uncovered are not that dissimilar to those put forward by Revell. We agree that in 2 Sam. 6:1-7, the name ארון האלהים appears because the ark was used without fitting ceremony, and in 6:13-23 ארון יהוה is used because the ark is accompanied by fitting ceremony. But Revell could not explain why his principles did not fit across the board. For example, in 6:11 (David diverts the ark to Obed-Edom's house), the ark is still transported without ceremony, and yet the designation used is ארון יהוה. According to Revell, this verse comes under another category, the ark being viewed as a source of power (here as blessing). Revell, with his principle-orientated approach, cannot explain why one principle should be applied here and another there. The present study, which interprets the story as a whole, does not have the same weakness. It is David's ignorance (leading to the inappropriate ceremony) which corresponds to ארון האלהים in 6:1-7, and his stunned realisation which is reflected in ארון יהוה in 6:11. The fact that no ceremony is described in 6:11 is of no consequence: what is important is that David has had to change his plans, and no longer feels that he is in control.

The Chronicler's versions of events provides an effective control on our analysis. Not only did the Chronicler go to great lengths to remove any blame from David and place it on Uzza, he also changed the designations for the ark.

The first ark narrative (1 Sam. 4-6) illustrates how different principles come into operation at different points in the structure of the narrative. At the beginning (4:1-11) and end (6:13-7:1) of this narrative, the ark is known as ארון יהוה.<sup>83</sup> This has the effect of emphasising the presence of the ark (and Yahweh) with the Israelites at the beginning and end (as opposed to its

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<sup>83</sup> Exceptions to this brief summary (e.g. the ark being called ארון האלהים when Hophni and Pinhas are mentioned) have already been discussed.

captivity in the central part). It also provides a sense of closure, of having come full circle, to the narrative as a whole. The central part of the narrative breaks down into three parts: one where the news of the ark is spread (4:12-22), and two where the ark is an autonomous being (5:1-5, 5:6-12). In the former, the term ארון אלהים is used, both to indicate estrangement from Israel, and also because that is the normal term for the ark before the time of Solomon. In both cases where the ark is an autonomous being, it inflicts a learning process on the Philistines: here the designation starts with אלהים and changes to יהוה at the point when the Philistines learn.

While both Revell and Magonet identified valid principles, they failed to explain why one principle was operational here and another one there. The above analysis attempts to do this by finding out which principle is uppermost in the implicit text at any time. The biblical author, it seems, did not set out to write with a plan of different situations in which he would use one designation or the other. Instead, he wrote according with a general trend (the phasing out of אלהים) and in specific episodes where the plot revolved around the ark, and human attitudes to the ark, he used contrasting designations to reflect those attitudes. The fact that he added the meanings to the designations deliberately, and felt free to turn them on or off as he chose, and according to what he wanted to highlight in the plot, is of much greater significance than the specific meanings themselves.



## CHAPTER 12

### JONAH

#### Review of Scholarship

The subject of choice of DN in the book of Jonah is not one which has over-vexed commentators. This is not, apparently, because consensus has been reached,<sup>1</sup> but more because the question has not appeared particularly important. The attempt to use DNs as criteria for source division<sup>2</sup> was not well received even in its time.<sup>3</sup> However, a number of studies have approached the question independently, and from a contextual basis.<sup>4</sup> The conclusions that they draw appear to be quite different, but on a closer examination are in many ways compatible.

Kidner begins with a brief overview of DNs in the book: the only DNs to be used are *Yahweh*, *Elohim* and *El*. *El* comes once only in the phrase “אלֹהֵי חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם” (4:2), *Yahweh* 25 times, and *Elohim* 15 times of which only 8 are absolute. We are concerned here with the absolute occurrences in which the author had a real choice between the DNs *Yahweh* and *Elohim*.

Kidner quickly establishes that a single principle can account for the choice of DN for over 90% of the book, that is, up to 4:6: *Yahweh* is used in Israelite contexts, and *Elohim* in non-Israelite contexts.<sup>5</sup> *Yahweh* is used in the parts of the story concerning Jonah (1-3:3 and 4:1-4) while *Elohim* is used for the repentance of Nineveh (3:5-10). He notes, however that this principle

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<sup>1</sup> Eissfeldt (1965:406) examines a number of possibilities, including Rosin's numerical solution (Rosin 1959:5-33), but concludes: “A satisfactory explanation of the facts has not been given.” Over half a century later, Sasson can shed no further light on the subject: “we cannot easily account for the change of divine names”(1990:17 n. 15).

<sup>2</sup> Böhme (1887:224-284) summarized by Bewer (1912:15); Schmidt (1905:285-310).

<sup>3</sup> Bewer (1912:15), Eissfeldt (1965:406), Bentzen (1948:II:145), Burrows (1970:80-107), Kidner (1970:127), Magonet (1983a:34, 123 nn. 106-108).

<sup>4</sup> The suggestions of Kidner (1970:126-8), and Magonet (1983a, 1995:89-91) will be dealt with in some detail here. The latter draws heavily on the ideas of Strikovsky (1976:118-126).

<sup>5</sup> In this observation, Kidner is actually going no further than Bewer before him (1912:64).

breaks down from 4:6 on. In the final encounter between Jonah and his god, the deity is known as *Yahweh Elohim* (4:6), then *haElohim*, and finally *Yahweh* (4:10). On the basis of the principle established above we would have expected *Yahweh* to be used throughout. Kidner suggests that the move to *Elohim* may be related to alienation between Jonah and God in the final scene, but concludes:

the purely aesthetic impulse towards variety of language also asserts itself, freeing the narrator from undue bondage to his rules, and at the same time reminding the reader that the names are in the last resort interchangeable ...<sup>6</sup>

While Kidner's short analysis has much to recommend it, it leaves some questions unanswered. In particular he fails to notice that the *Yahweh* section (1-3:3) is not entirely Israelite. The sailors cry out to *Yahweh* and call him by name twice (1:14); they fear him and sacrifice to him (1:15). In addition, neither of his solutions for the enigmatic end to the book is particularly satisfying. While the theme of alienation may be in some way connected to the change in DN, it is unlikely to be the sole cause, as alienation has nothing to do with the DN choice in the rest of the book. We do not find, for example, Jonah complaining to *Elohim* in 4:3, or the Ninevites repenting to *Yahweh* in 3:8. The final speech (4:10) has nothing obviously to do with reconciliation that would explain the about-turn to *Yahweh*.<sup>7</sup> Kidner's second solution, that of interchangeability and literary freedom also lacks any basis in the rest of the book. After over 3 chapters of adherence to a principle, surely some better explanation is required?

A second approach to the problem of DNs in Jonah is given by Magonet.<sup>8</sup> He sees two guiding principles: one applying to chapters 1 and 3, and the other to chapters 2 and 4. In the first, a distinction is made between אלהים served by the sailors (1:5) and the Ninevites (3:5) and האלהים perceived as the one and only God by the captain of the ship (1:6) and the King of Nineveh (3:9). As the sailors go on to identify the אלהים with יהוה, they represent those foreigners who are willing to recognize *Yahweh* as Israel

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<sup>6</sup> Kidner (1970:128).

<sup>7</sup> Unless, of course, this is what the 'Yahweh' signifies. The text apart from this is ambiguous, and leaves us no clue as to Jonah's response.

<sup>8</sup> Magonet (1976:33-38), summarised in 1995:89-91.

does. The Ninevites, who never mention Yahweh, represent those heathens who will not.

In chapters 2 and 4, Magonet interprets DNs in relation to the keyword *וימן* in accordance with the rabbinic principle<sup>9</sup> that *Yahweh* corresponds to the attribute of mercy, and *Elohim* to the attribute of justice:

2:1	וימן יהוה דג
4:6	וימן יהוה אלהים קיקיון
4:7	וימן האלהים תקלעת
4:8	וימן אלהים רוח כדים

Thus, in 2:1 *יהוה* in mercy sends out a fish to save Jonah; in 4:7 and 8 *האלהים* uses the worm and the wind as corrective measures against Jonah. In 4:6, the double-name corresponds with a double-edged purpose of the plant, which is emphasized by the word-play:

Jonah 4:6	להיות צל על ראשו להציל לו מרעתו
	<i>to be a shade upon his head to 'shed' him of his evil.</i> <sup>10</sup>

While being sensitive to some of the features of DN choice in Jonah, Magonet has failed to identify others. For example, he observes that both the leaders of the foreigners (i.e. the captain and the king) refer to *האלהים*, The God, and distinguishes this from *אלהים* the gods. However, he fails to distinguish between the sailors praying each to his *אלהיו* (1:5, god as a common noun) and the Ninevites believing in *באלהים* (which is probably to be understood as a DN, although a generic meaning could be argued for). And he does not explain why, after the King of Nineveh uses *האלהים* in 3:9, the narrator continues to use it twice in 3:10 (*וינחם האלהים, וירא האלהים*). Surely this must be (agreeing with Kidner) because the section as a whole deals with non-Israelites.

The greatest objection to Magonet's thesis is the unlikelihood of a single author approaching a composition with two quite distinct sets of

<sup>9</sup> Sifre Deut. 26, see Ch. 3 of this thesis. Magonet cites Strikovsky (1976) on this issue. Strikovsky, however, is aware that the rabbinic principle cannot be used uncritically: "for in the Torah the names J and E are used interchangeably to suggest the God of Mercy and the God of Justice" (p. 125). Instead, he suggests that it may have been this passage that inspired the rabbinic tradition itself (p. 126).

<sup>10</sup> Magonet's translation (1995:90), see also Strikovsky (1976:124 n. 17).

criteria for DN choice, and using them in alternating chapters. If, in chapters 1 and 3, the distinction between האלהים and אלהים is so significant, then why are they used in parallel, and with no apparent difference in meaning in 4:7 and 4:8? If the rabbinic principle operates in chapters 2 and 4, how is that *Elohim* can be so compassionate in 3:10?

### Analysis

The analyses of both Kidner and Magonet are based on interesting and astute observations, yet both fail to give a complete, coherent explanation. It is almost as if the one has picked up only on what the other has missed. The following analysis attempts to bring these, and other, observations together into a whole. Apart from general dominance of the DN יהוה, the DNs אלהים, האלהים and יהוה אלהים appear in Jonah in two contexts: firstly in the dealings with foreigners, and secondly in the final episode of the book (i.e. 4:6 ff.).

### Non-Israelite Contexts

Kidner is correct in identifying the link between אלהים(ה) and foreigners, and Magonet is also correct in observing that the sailors recognize this אלהים as יהוה, while the Ninevites do not. However, the plot does not support Magonet's interpretation that the sailors and the Ninevites represent two different types of foreigners, as both are ultimately rescued from doom. Instead, the difference between them stems from a very simple and important aspect of the plot: what Jonah tells them. Only after Jonah makes a full confession of his nationality and religion (1:9) do they refer to Yahweh by name. Previously the helmsman refers to "your [i.e. Jonah's] god" and to "the/that god" (1:6), and the narrator describes them as praying "each to his god" (1:5). The Ninevites, on the other hand, had no access to Yahweh's name, as Jonah did not tell them. All he said was '*Forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown!*' (3:4). The author set the story in a polytheistic society in which non-Israelites would not know that Yahweh was the relevant god unless they were specifically told so.

Taking this line of reasoning a step further, we can see that the amount of information Jonah gives the two groups of foreigners is quite different, and related to his motivation in each case. He was prepared to give his life to save the sailors, but for Nineveh, even when faced with death,

could only be bothered walking for *one* day (3:4) in a city which took *three* days to cross (3:3). In this way, it may be said that the DN used by the foreigners is a reflection of Jonah's feelings toward them.

### The Final Scene

Both Kidner and Magonet agree that the end of Jonah employs a different set of criteria for DN usage than the narrative in most of the rest of the book. Magonet's observation that varying names are used in conjunction with the verb *וַיִּמַן* is no doubt significant. When taken in isolation, the DNs in the final chapter are:

Jonah 4:3	יהוה
4:4	יהוה
4:6	יהוה אלהים
4:7	האלהים
4:8	אלהים
4:9	אלהים
4:10	יהוה

Up to v. 4, the normal DN is יהוה; the names יהוה אלהים and האלהים form a transition<sup>11</sup> to an אלהים section, which suddenly returns to יהוה in the last verse. The important elements here are the transition, and then the sudden change; the use of the transition in v. 6 serves to emphasize the abruptness of the final *Yahweh*. Together they form a deliberate pattern,<sup>12</sup> whose meaning must be dependent on the context.

Apart from the change in DNs, one noticeable aspect of this text is that of repetition. A similar discourse takes place twice: once between *Yahweh* and Jonah, and once between *Elohim* and Jonah. They are separated

<sup>11</sup> Both forms יהוה אלהים and האלהים have been found to be 'transitional' names in other parts of the Hebrew Bible: יהוה אלהים in Gen. 2-3 (see pp. 119-131 above); האלהים in Ex. 1-6 (Ch. 10). This seems more likely than Bewer's suggestion concerning יהוה אלהים (1912:65): "Our author did not write that combination, he wrote simply יהוה. A copyist, or reader, under the influence of ch. 3 wrote אלהים probably all through ch. 4, but in some instances the original readings reasserted themselves. There can be no doubt that the author wrote יהוה all through ch. 4, for here there was no reason for אלהים, as in chs. 1-3." This kind of argument could explain anything!

<sup>12</sup> The rarity of the form יהוה אלהים is evidence of the deliberate nature of the pattern. It appears only 36/7 times in the Hebrew Bible: see Ch. 7.

by the incident with the plant. Where there is similarity the differences may be crucial in helping us understand what purpose the different DN is intended to serve.

4:3-5	4:8b-9
<p>A עתה יהוה קח נא את נפשי ממני כי טוב מותי מחיי</p> <p>B ויאמר יהוה ההיטב חרה לך</p> <p>C ויצא יונה מן העיר...</p>	<p>A' וישאל את נפשו למות ויאמר טוב מותי מחיי</p> <p>B' ויאמר אלהים אל יונה ההיטב חרה לך על הקיקיון</p> <p>C' ויאמר היטב חרה לי עד מות</p>

**A and A':** (Jonah's requests)

In the first instance Jonah asks Yahweh to take his life; in the second Jonah asks this of his soul because he is no longer even on speaking terms with God. Kidner was correct in that alienation is a factor in the discourse.

**B and B':** (God's questions)

These differ on two points, apart from the different DN. The second contains the extra words "to Jonah" and "about the plant." Both additions are indicative of the different circumstances. In the first conversation, Yahweh replies directly to Jonah's words; in the second, God must initiate the conversation (as Jonah had been talking to himself), thus requiring "to Jonah". "About the plant" focuses on that episode in the plot that separates the repetition. The rise and fall of the plant was orchestrated by God with the specific intention of irritating Jonah and bringing matters to a head. He transferred Jonah's anger onto something small and dispensable, something that (God hopes) Jonah will be able to remove himself from enough to realize that his anger is unreasonable.

The tactic God uses here is similar to that used by Nathan on David concerning his affair with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:1-15). Instead of confronting David directly with his sin, he presents him with a hypothetical situation, to which David responds correctly (v. 5: *'the man who has done this deserves to die'*). When Nathan then transfers this scenario to reality, David has no option but to admit his guilt (v. 13 *'I have sinned against the LORD'*). In the same way, God does not directly tell Jonah that he in being unreasonable, but provides an allegory - the plant. On the destruction of the plant, Jonah is



appropriately angry. Having elicited the correct response, God (now Yahweh) transfers the allegory back to reality.<sup>13</sup>

### C and C': (Jonah's responses)

In the first case Jonah does not respond verbally. He feels the emotion but is not able to identify it. Instead he sulks, and does not speak to God again until spoken to. In the second, Jonah is in no doubt that he is angry, and that anger is the correct response to what has happened to him. God's psychological manoeuvring has worked thus far.

The despair from Jonah and manipulation from God come in stark contrast to the compassion evident in the words which follow:

*4:10-11: And Yahweh said "You worry about the plant for which you did not work, and which you did not grow, that came in one night and died in the next; and should I not worry about Nineveh, the great city which contains more than one hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right from their left, as well as many animals?"<sup>14</sup>*

These words do more than just show Jonah's god to be a caring creator: they show that *Yahweh* is the caring creator. Without the break in perspective from Nineveh to the plant and back, this episode would have been mere melodrama. Without the break from *Yahweh* to *Elohim* and back, there would have been no question about the identity of the deity. The point is that *Yahweh* is that *elohim* who cares for the well-being not just of his own people, but of foreigners, and yes, even their animals. In case the reader had thought that because the Ninevites repented to *Elohim*, then *Yahweh* was not responsible for the affair, the narrator makes the point: *Yahweh* is the God whom all nations serve, even if they do not know it. This is a fundamental message coming from the plot of Jonah: it is additionally driven home by subtler means such as this.

The gradual increase in Jonah's despair corresponds to the transitional name (*Yahweh Elohim*) between the *Yahweh* section and the *Elohim*

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<sup>13</sup> Strikovsky comes to the same conclusions by somewhat different reasoning (1976:122-123, n. 15). As other examples of God "educating man through making him teach himself," he cites Gen. 3:9, 4:9, 1 Sam. 15:14, 1 Kings 19:12.

<sup>14</sup> Own translation.

section; whereas the sudden shift between Jonah's despair and the larger picture (Yahweh's compassion) corresponds to the sudden shift in DN at v. 10. Both *Elohim* and the plant draw the audience and Jonah imperceptibly away from the immediate situation. It is only when the narrative returns with full force to Yahweh, and to Nineveh that we all realize we had been drawn away.

### Conclusions

This analysis builds on the observations made by Kidner and Magonet. Kidner is correct that the *אלהים* is related to alienation of Jonah from God, and Magonet is correct that *אלהים (ה) וימן* signifies God in his 'corrective' role as opposed to the merciful. Kidner is additionally correct that the author wants to emphasize the point that God *is* Yahweh, and vice versa. The present contribution shows how these features are related to the plot, and how the author used changes in DN to supplement the effect of the plot.

In the final analysis, the whole question of DNs boils down to the figure of Jonah. Those foreigners whom he enlightens can plead to *Yahweh*; those foreigners he leaves in the dark can only repent to *Elohim*. In the final scene, the use of DN centres around Jonah's learning process. His egocentrism extends even to the narrator!

## CHAPTER 13

### AMOS

#### Introduction

In the book of Amos, as in the rest of the prophetic literature, the name *Yahweh* dominates, and *Elohim* as a DN is found rarely, if at all.<sup>1</sup> Thus the kind of analysis given of the first chapters of Exodus and the book of Jonah would clearly be inappropriate for Amos.

There are, however, other points of interest regarding DN usage in Amos. The unusual frequency of the title אדני יהוה, if not a gloss, requires some kind of explanation.<sup>2</sup> Dempster presents the frequency of titles in tabular form:<sup>3</sup>

Chs	1-2	3-6	7:1-9:6	9:7-15
יהוה	15	20	13	4
אדני יהוה	1	7	10	1
אדני	0	0	3	0

In other words, יהוה is found in a high concentration in the prologue (1-2) and epilogue (9:7-15), and אדני יהוה in the words (3-6) and visions (7-9:6). Dempster then goes through the book, isolating divine names and titles and commenting on possible meanings and patterns. Andersen and Freedman also note the structural role that DNs play in the book,<sup>4</sup> however this is denied by Noble.<sup>5</sup> There are also a number of isolated observations and

1 Amos 4:11 (כמהפכת אלהים או סדם ואת עמרה) see pp. 85-88 of this thesis.

2 For example, Hammershaimb (1970:31).

3 Dempster (1991:176). Andersen and Freedman also point this out (1989:618).

4 Andersen and Freedman (1989:618).

5 Noble (1996:623-626).

suggestions regarding various aspects of DN use, for example Tromp (re. Amos 5:1-17),<sup>6</sup> Andersen and Freedman.<sup>7</sup>

### Observations on Individual Units

This chapter builds on the work mentioned above, and in particular highlights some aspect of methodology which have previously been neglected. It follows the order of the book of Amos, examining suggestions from different authors (and offering new ones) where appropriate.

#### Amos 1-2

*Yahweh* appears 15 times and *Adonai Yahweh* once in 1:8. Dempster notes:<sup>8</sup>

The constant use of the one name has a powerful impact. It occurs in emphatic position as the first word in the title, is used repeatedly at the beginning of each oracle, within some (2:4, 11), at the end of others (1:5, 15, 2:3) and is the last word of the speech cycle (2:16).

The question that Dempster does not address here, however, is, if the constant repetition of the name *Yahweh* is used for deliberate effect, why should there be the additional *Adonai* at 1:8? This would seem to have the effect of breaking the pattern. Yet there is nothing obviously different about either this oracle (1:6-8) or the next that would explain the change in DN. I would suggest that the variant marks the middle of the chapter, and that it is intended to break the monotony of the repeated *Yahweh*.<sup>9</sup> *Adonai Yahweh* would be a good choice of alternative DN, because it both interrupts the pattern and maintains the constant reiteration of *Yahweh*.

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<sup>6</sup> Tromp (1984:56-85).

<sup>7</sup> Andersen and Freedman (1989: 617-8, 717-8).

<sup>8</sup> Dempster (1991:177).

<sup>9</sup> In this chapter there are four instances of *Yahweh* before it (1:2, 3, 5, 6) and four after it (1:9, 11, 13, 15). However, this relies on the present chapter division, and we have no way of knowing how old this is. The second chapter has 6 instances of *Yahweh* (2:1, 3, 4, 6, 11, 16) and also has a variant in the middle. Verse 5 is the only concluding verse in this chapter that *does not* have the formula "says *Yahweh*". This variant may be less obvious than an extra appellation, but may give credence to the idea that the prologue was constructed in two halves (chapters 1 and 2), each with a 'surprise' in the middle.

### Amos 3:1-15

Dempster finds here an alternating pattern of יהוה and אדני יהוה (יהוה [vv. 1, 6], אדני יהוה [7, 8], יהוה [10], אדני יהוה [11], יהוה [12]) culminating in the lengthy and unexpected אדני יהוה אלהי הצבאות. The 'alternating pattern' is less than convincing, as it begins inexplicably with two of each name. Without any precedents for this kind of pattern, we must conclude that the distribution of יהוה and אדני יהוה is most likely random.

### Amos 4:1-13

Of note here are the two occurrences of אלהים, once absolutely (v. 11) and once with a possessive suffix (v. 12). Dempster interprets them thus:

In the context, the name functions to mark an abrupt transition - the onset of climax. Yahweh (4, 6, 8, 9, 10) is the God (אלהים 11) who destroyed the cities of the plain. This Yahweh (11) is Israel's God (אלהיך 12)! And He is none other than the Lord God of Hosts (יהוה אלהי הצבאות 13).<sup>10</sup>

By isolating DNs from their context, Dempster interprets them in a way that sounds feasible, but is not supported by the context. All he has really done is to take a selection of words (his selection) and fill them with his words. This puts his point more in the realm of eisegesis than exegesis.

### Amos 5:1-17

The most detailed analysis of this section comes from Tromp. He breaks the oracle down into the following chiasmic structure:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dempster (1991:179).

<sup>11</sup> Tromp (1984:63-4). Essentially the same structure is identified by de Waard (1977:176).

5:1	introduction
5:2,3	A
5:4-6	B
5:7	C
5:8,9*	D
5:10-13	C'
5:14,15	B'
5:16,17	A'

\* Tromp takes this to be minus the יהוה שמו

However, Tromp does not follow his analysis through to its logical conclusion: the central point of a chiasm *is* the centre. And in the centre of vv. 8,9 comes the doxology 'Yahweh is his name!'<sup>12</sup> Tromp rightly points out that this occurs in the centre, and that its tone is basically threatening,<sup>13</sup> but does not fully spell out the natural conclusion which follows: that 'Yahweh is his name!' is the *basic message* being put across.

DNs in this section are presented by Dempster thus:<sup>14</sup>

5:3	אדני יהוה
5:4	יהוה
5:6	יהוה
5:8	יהוה
5:14	יהוה אלהי צבאות
5:15	יהוה אלהי צבאות
5:16	יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני
5:17	יהוה

The climax which builds up in vv. 14, 15 reaches its peak in 16 'staircase fashion'<sup>15</sup> with a combination unique in the Hebrew Bible. The title יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני serves for Dempster as the focal name for this section (see below).

<sup>12</sup> It may well be that the doxologies in Amos are not original (Crenshaw 1975:24), but that is quite different from saying that they cannot be interpreted in their present position.

<sup>13</sup> Tromp (1984:76).

<sup>14</sup> Dempster (1991:180), see also Tromp (1984:70).

<sup>15</sup> This is Dempster's term (1991:179), not to be confused with *staircase parallelism* (see, e.g. Watson 1984:150-156) as, in this case, the staircase pattern is only apparent when the DN's are isolated from the surrounding poetry. A similar case of the repeated building up of DN's 'staircase fashion' is the refrain in Ps. 80 (p. 161).



However, neither Tromp nor Dempster note that the climax of vv. 14-16 reaches its peak precisely in the final appellation - אדני אדני. Its presence in the final climax (A') and at the beginning (A). Its presence in the 'outer frame' of the oracle (and its absence elsewhere) seems to be deliberate. The first אדני יהוה serves as an appetizer for the later אדני ... יהוה, arranged in the same chiasmic structure characteristic of the oracle and indeed of the book of Amos as a whole.<sup>16</sup> The final יהוה (v. 17) does not constitute a problem, as there is no reason why the 'climax' needs to be at the end (e.g. אדני יהוה in 3:13, cf. יהוה in 3:15).

### Amos 7-9:6 (5 Visions)

Andersen and Freedman note that אדני יהוה tends to occur at strategic points in the visions.<sup>17</sup>

The two-word formula אדני יהוה is used a number of times in the series of visions to mark divisions and separate units. It occurs eight times in the first four visions.

This includes אדני יהוה at the beginning of the series (7:1) and אדני יהוה צבאות at the end (9:5). It is, however, hard to be more precise than this, as there is no rule to which all five visions adhere (vision 3 [7:7-9] does not even contain a single אדני יהוה). Andersen and Freedman look instead for patterns concerning the names יהוה and אדני separately:

For the visions as a whole we have the following data: including the five visions between 7:1 and 9:5 there are nine instances of the combined expression אדני יהוה, and there are three instances of each separately in contexts in which the longer expression would be appropriate. Altogether, then, there are twelve pairs, nine actually together and three separated, but overall in alternating order: יהוה (7:3), אדני (7:7), יהוה (7:8), אדני (7:8), יהוה (8:2), and אדני (9:1).<sup>18</sup>

The problem with this lies in the idea of "contexts in which the longer expression would be appropriate." for we are far from knowing which contexts would be appropriate and which phrases would not. Andersen and

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<sup>16</sup> Ps. 80 also has this element of anticipation (v. 5).

<sup>17</sup> Andersen and Freedman (1989: 717).

<sup>18</sup> Andersen and Freedman (1989: 617).

Freedman find it easier to fit the text to the thesis rather than the other way round. Two cases of יהוה are omitted from the above scheme without explanation: נחם יהוה in 7:3 and 7:6. There is no obvious reason why a נחם phrase requires a יהוה and not an אדני יהוה. To this must be added the considerable amount of hymnic and bibliographic material (7:10-17, 8:4-14) that further disrupts the alternation.<sup>19</sup> The tortuous way in which the pattern must be calculated argues against this approach.

Dempster's interpretation of Andersen and Freedman is less ambitious and more fruitful. He points out that they have identified a recurring pattern in visions 3 and 4:<sup>20</sup>

vision 3 (7:7-9)	אדני
	יהוה
	אדני
vision 4 (8:1-3)	אדני יהוה
	יהוה
	אדני יהוה

The title צבאות only appears once here - in the hymn following vision 5 (אדני 9:5). Dempster regards it as the focal name concluding the 5 visions as a group. In this way they form a single unit, corresponding to each of the oracles in chapters 3-6.<sup>21</sup>

Neither Dempster nor Andersen and Freedman deal with the question of DNs in two other portions of Amos: 7:10-17 and 8:4-14. Each of these texts has its own characteristic way of using DNs. The autobiographical information of 7:10-17 uses *Yahweh* only (including נאום יהוה). The hymn of 8:4-14, however, has *Yahweh* 3 times and *Adonai Yahweh* twice. Both occurrences of *Adonai Yahweh* come in the formula נאם אדני יהוה (8:9, 11a); none of the cases of *Yahweh* alone are in this or any other similar formula (8:7, 11b, 12).

While both these sections of text are quite short, the criteria identified are simple and therefore convincing. They themselves tell us little about the

<sup>19</sup> It could, of course, be argued that this material is intrusive, but then one is in the position of arguing for two redactors, the second being quite unaware of how his clumsy insertions upset the delicate patterns arranged by the first.

<sup>20</sup> Dempster (1991:172-3), on Andersen and Freedman (1989: 617).

<sup>21</sup> Dempster (1991:182).

DNs. Their significance instead comes in demonstrating that two pieces of text, even within the same book, can use the same DNs according to different criteria. The hymn in Amos 8 uses lone יהוה in non-formulaic contexts; the material in Amos 7 uses the same name for both formula and non-formula. This must make us aware of how important it is to approach a text without preconceived ideas about how DNs should be used.

### **Amos 9:7-15**

The epilogue, like the prologue, uses mostly *Yahweh*. Given this, our attention is drawn to the two exceptions: אדני יהוה (v. 8) and יהוה אלהיך (v. 15). Dempster's interpretation of the latter is convincing:<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the section a name is lengthened to indicate closure for the unit and closure for the book. יהוה is lengthened to יהוה אלהיך. This collocation of forms is unique in the book and highly appropriate to its context, the only one in the text in which there is no longer any alienation and distance between God and his people. It is also probably not accidental that the first and last references to God in the book combine to form the same name יהוה אלהיך.

Other features of the text point toward this interpretation. Israel is twice called עמי (9:10, 14), while in the rest of the book it is referred to as ישראל (e.g. 1:1), בני ישראל (e.g. 3:1), בית ישראל (e.g. 5:1).<sup>23</sup> There is also a reference to Yahweh's name being called over Israel (9:12), i.e. Israel belonging to Yahweh.

However, Dempster makes little mention of the first exception (אדני יהוה in v. 8). We may note that אדני יהוה, coming as it does near the beginning of the unit, balances the final name (יהוה אלהיך).

### **Observations on the Whole Composition**

The observations made up to this point have concerned the connections between divine names and titles, and their immediate context. Some have been convincing, other have not. But, according to Dempster and others, the

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<sup>22</sup> Dempster (1991:183).

<sup>23</sup> The reference עמי also occurs once in 8:1, although in a thoroughly threatening context.

certain titles relate to others in *other sections* of the book. It is to these possibilities that we now turn.

Dempster introduces and develops the concept of ‘focal names.’ These are names, titles, and combinations of titles which, according to him, perform some kind of climactic function in each section of the book. Having identified them, he tabulates them as follows:<sup>24</sup>

Chapters:	focal name
1-2	יהוה
3:1-15	1 אדני יהוה אלהי הצבאות
4:1-13	2 יהוה אלהי צבאות
5:1-17	3 יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני
5:18-27	4 יהוה אלהי צבאות
6:1-14	5 יהוה אלהי הצבאות
7-9:6 (5 visions)	6 אדני יהוה הצבאות
	7 יהוה שמו
9:7-15	יהוה אלהים

The progression of 6 final focal names together with the statement ‘Yahweh is his name’ (the seventh) indicated to Dempster that “this declaration is thus the theme of the book.”<sup>25</sup> The 6 focal names reiterate what Yahweh is: Yahweh is God of Hosts; the seventh declaration, conversely asserts that God of Hosts is *Yahweh*.

While there is no doubt that the reiteration of such statements as ‘Yahweh is God of Hosts’ at prominent points in the book has its effect on the message of the book as a whole, it must be remembered that the persuasiveness of his argument rests largely on his division of the book, selection and presentation of material.

Noble calls attention to the different ways of dividing the book of Amos and to the lack of attention given the criteria for division.<sup>26</sup> This having been said, he does not properly identify his own criteria. His own division of the book revolves around the validity of a large ‘palistrophic’ structure which can be supported only by means of textual emendation.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Dempster (1991:184).

<sup>25</sup> Dempster (1991:184).

<sup>26</sup> Noble (1995:209).

<sup>27</sup> Noble (1995:215).

If, as Noble suggests, the structure of the book of Amos centres round the palistrophic structure, then what is the point of the repeated use of DNs? Noble thinks that the formula **נאם יהוה** has an emphatic, rather than a structural function. It marks attached material as 'unexpected, paradoxical, or obscure'. Whether or not this is convincing depends on whether his explanation of a particular passage as 'paradoxical'. Noble cannot find something paradoxical in all of these cases.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, a great deal of the material in Amos is paradoxical without being marked by the formula **נאם יהוה**.<sup>29</sup>

Both Dempster and Noble use the following methodology: if the book is divided in the following way, then such-and-such a pattern is revealed. The coherence of the pattern confirms that the division/selection/emendation originally made was indeed valid. The circularity of the reasoning is plain to see. The only way to avoid circularity is by use of an independent factor, i.e. a separate reason for dividing, selecting, and emending the text.

Deliberate patterning does not end there, according to Dempster. He points out that the oracles consist of 3 units beginning with **שמעו** and two beginning with **הוי**. Of the three **שמעו** oracles, the third has three extended titles for god (5:14-16); of the two **הוי** oracles, the second has two extended titles (6:8, 14). This is followed by the visions, which he takes as a single unit, and ends with one extended title (9:5).<sup>30</sup>

A further observation made of the book as a whole is that of Andersen and Freedman. They note that the elements **אדני יהוה** and **צבאות** occur together three times in Amos:<sup>31</sup>

3:13	<b>אדני יהוה אלהי הצבאות</b>
5:16	<b>יהוה אלהי צבאות אדני</b>
9:5	<b>אדני יהוה צבאות</b>

While the element **אדני** appears at the beginning in the first and last occasions, the middle title uses it at the end, forming a chiasm. As with several of the

<sup>28</sup> Noble (1996:625).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g. Gitay (1980:300) who describes Amos 3:2 as 'contradictory, absurd, and paradoxical'.

<sup>30</sup> Dempster (1991:185).

<sup>31</sup> Andersen and Freedman (1989: 618).

'patterns' that have been found in this book, it is easier to find than to justify properly. The 'chiasm' is only visible when the titles are presented thus, isolated from the rest of the text; and with such a small number of elements, almost anything could be described as a pattern.

### Conclusions

Not all of the observations above are entirely convincing as evidence of deliberate patterning. If Dempster had attempted to redress the problem of not being able to see the wood for the trees, then he may have gone too far in the other direction. For Dempster's wood is made only of the trees he selects, and hence lies more in the realm of eisegesis than exegesis. In particular, the choice between *Yahweh* and *Adonai Yahweh* is sometimes a random one, and thus an example of organic use of *Adonai Yahweh*. Extended titles including the element צבאות do often appear in climactic and concluding positions, but whether they were intended as subliminal messages or theurgic devices is another question. Rather, their role can be explained in much simpler, literary terms, as climax and conclusion. However, enough has been found to justify Dempster's conclusion:<sup>32</sup>

It is clear that the usage of the names and titles of God in Amos is not the haphazard word of a redactor or glossator with a pleonastic style.

It is crucial to remember that Dempster's thesis does not require the DNs to have been original to the orally delivered oracles. Instead, they seem to have been an integral part of the message of the editor who ordered the material together as we have it. Thus, it may be argued that in Amos 3:8 an intrusive אדני disrupts the original rhythm of the poetry:

Amos 3:8

אריה שאג מי לא יירא  
אדני יהוה דבר מי לא ינבא

This may well be true, but this argument in itself does not mean that the אדני is accidental. This critique of Dempster has uncovered a number of aspects of DN usage (from the deliberate to the sporadic and random) which were incorporated into the text in a variety of its stages of development.

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<sup>32</sup> Dempster (1991:184).



Dempster's point is that these uses are capable of interpretation, and are therefore intentional.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to understand the reasons surrounding the authorial or editorial choice between the names *Yahweh* and *Elohim* in the Hebrew Bible. It has identified a number of different kinds of criteria, impressive in their diversity.

Firstly, there are the broad trends that can be observed throughout the Hebrew Bible. Psalmic poetry prefers *Yahweh* (especially in the first clause), as does prophecy. Sceptical wisdom favours *Elohim* and other 'elohistic' designations, whereas pious wisdom prefers *Yahweh*.

Then there are the specific contextual circumstances which consistently require one name over the other: the preference for *Elohim* in comparison with or close proximity to mortals, and in describing and judging the wicked; the use of expressions which seem to demand one name or the other (e.g. יראת יהוה, איש אלהים).

Over and above these general trends are the specific roles which individual authors and editors have devised for the two names: thus in the prose of Job, *Elohim* is divinity while *Yahweh* acts; at the beginning of Exodus *Elohim* is the anonymous and *Yahweh* the revealed; while in Jonah and the Samuel Ark stories, changes in DNs reveal aspects of character development. In Genesis 1-4 and Ex. 9:30, the use of the special combination *Yahweh Elohim* complements and emphasizes other aspects of the context.

Various structural elements have also come into consideration. In Amos, DNs seem to play a part in the organization of individual oracles, as well as the book as a whole. Various structural roles are performed by *Adonai Yahweh* in the prophetic poetry, as well as *Yahweh Elohim* in the poetry of the Chronicler. In Proverbs 30, the connotations of DNs seems to be related to the juxtaposition of different pieces of material.

There are also number of what appear to be direct quotations (or use of stock phrases) where DNs are left intact, and may appear 'strange' in the new context (Ps. 108, Job 12:9, possibly also Isa. 13:19, Jer. 50:40, Amos 4:11).

This gives credence to the idea that DN changes elsewhere (e.g. the flood story) may be indicative of sources.

However, we are also faced with the opposite situation - the alteration of DNs in 'borrowed' material. The designations for the ark in 2 Sam. 6, compared to 1 Chr. 13-15 show how different DN patterns function according to their different purposes, see also 1 Chr. 17:16-26 cf. 2 Sam. 7:18-29. Examples of alteration in individual verses are Prov. 30:5 cf. Ps. 18:31 and 2 Sam. 22:31b; Deut. 15:17a cf. Ex. 21:6; Neh. 13:1 cf. Deut. 23:4; Deut. 29:22 and Jer. 49:18 cf. Isa. 13:19, etc.; and 2 Chr. 6:41-42 cf. Ps. 132:8-10 and 1 Kings 18:53. Closely related is the issue of *editorial* change, most pronounced in the Elohist Psalter (numerous examples are given in Chapter 8, see also Ps. 58 p. 75 n. 46).

As this thesis is not comprehensive, it would be quite wrong to attempt to conclude with some overarching conclusion such as *Elohim* being the generic and *Yahweh* the specific, *Elohim* the international and *Yahweh* the Israelite, etc. While I have no doubt that the methods I have explored here will prove fruitful in other passages, I cannot claim to have exhausted all the criteria according to which DNs are used. Thus I cannot confidently assure my reader:

If you will examine the remaining sections, you will be convinced that the variations in the use of the names YHWH and *Elohim* can always be explained without difficulty on the basis of the rules that we have set forth.<sup>1</sup>

To be truly comprehensive, a study would need to deal with the reasons for *every* occurrence of *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. Apart from sheer volume, such a study would encounter one difficulty which has been largely avoided in the present thesis. Specifically, I have concentrated on texts and topics about which I can say something meaningful. Nevertheless, there are some biblical texts for which the methods employed here might prove fruitless, or might produce hypotheses too tenuous to be credible. This has already been encountered and noted regarding, for example, יהוה אלהים in Chronicles. There are two conclusions which might be drawn from this kind of situation. Firstly it might be concluded that DNs are employed randomly in 'natural'

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<sup>1</sup> Cassuto (1961a:40).

usage.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, it may be that a criterion was indeed employed in the creation of the text, but that it currently escapes the exegete.<sup>3</sup>

The problem identified here is not limited to this thesis, or even biblical scholarship, but to the research process generally, as illustrated by the following anecdote recounted by Richard Feynman:

I was upstairs typewriting a theme on something about philosophy. And I was completely engrossed, not thinking of anything but the theme, when all of a sudden in a most mysterious fashion, there swept through my mind the idea: my grandmother has died... Immediately after that the telephone rang downstairs. I remember this distinctly for reasons you will hear. The man answered the telephone, and he called, "Hey, Pete!" My name isn't Peter. It was for somebody else. My grandmother was perfectly healthy, and there's nothing to it.<sup>4</sup>

The moral? In studies of clairvoyance, we must also consider those cases where it did not work.

Notwithstanding this limitation, the thesis does have implications for biblical scholarship above and beyond those listed above. One topic which has recurred a number of times in the course of this study is the prohibition against pronouncing the name *Yahweh*. The dating of this ban is somewhat difficult. Philo and Josephus certainly knew of it.<sup>5</sup> The confusion of יהוה and ארני in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> gives us a pre-Christian date.<sup>6</sup> If much weight is to be put on

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<sup>2</sup> Whybray (1987:72) speaks of 'unconscious alteration.'

<sup>3</sup> Deciding between these two conclusions is difficult in practical terms, for the following reason. When I approach a text I look for meaning in the interchange of names. Sometimes I see meaning, and sometimes I do not. I have frequently found meaning where others have failed. Logically, it is quite possible that someone else could find meaning where I could not. How long should I look before I conclude 'no discernible meaning'? When can I say that 'no discernible meaning' equals 'random'? (And who wants to read a long discussion of possibilities, each rejected in turn, where the final conclusion is 'random', or even worse 'I do not know'?)

The key to this problem may be in a thorough understanding of the statistical concept of 'randomness', as used, for example, in the social sciences. Two variables are plotted against each other (e.g. social class and voting behaviour; DN and formulaic/non-formulaic context) and the correlation between the two can be described as significant or not significant by its Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*). With experience, it should be possible to demonstrate whether or not a pattern is random.

Furthermore, the *implications* of randomness would need to be explored. If deliberate usage indicates 'genuine' text, might random usage indicate scribal corruption, e.g. יהוה and ארני in Lamentations?

<sup>4</sup> Feynman (1998:82).

<sup>5</sup> Philo (*Vit. Mos.* II 114, 205), Josephus (*Antiquities* II 275).

<sup>6</sup> Byington (1957:58-9). Trever (1949:23) dates 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> to 125-100 BCE on orthographic grounds.

the LXX of Lev. 24:16, the ban may date as far back as 3rd century BCE.<sup>7</sup> Yet, Cassuto claims knowledge of a *Pharisaic* injunction, according to which “in the salutation between a man and his fellow, the Tetragrammaton should be employed.”<sup>8</sup> *EJ*’s claim that the ban dates to the 3rd century BCE because the LXX translates יהוה with κυριος must be seen as invalid in the light of Ch. 6 (excursus).<sup>9</sup> Lev. 24:16 (LXX) may tell us little more than what we already knew from the MT, that there was concern for the *appropriateness* of uttering Yahweh’s name, possibly from a very early time (Ex. 20:7, Lev. 24:10-15, Deut. 5:11, Amos 6:9-10).

To this we can add our own internal evidence. There is a certain amount of fluidity between יהוה and אדני in the Psalms, as well as the confusion of 2 Sam. 7:22, but these can be explained as occurring in a later period. The invocation יהוה אדני makes little sense if *Yahweh* were not pronounced as written, yet the corresponding combination in Chronicles is the homophone יהוה אלהים.<sup>10</sup> The same point can be made regarding the oath חי יהוה, and it too is all but absent in Chronicles.<sup>11</sup> This having been said, the prevalence of חי יהוה in Kings is limited to large Kings pluses, and so may tell us more about Kings than about Chronicles.<sup>12</sup> The one instance of חי יהוה in Chronicles, plus one in Ruth (3:13) makes us hesitant to conclude that its absence in the later material is evidence for the prohibition. In other words, I have found very little by way of internal biblical evidence for a prohibition against pronouncing Yahweh’s name. If the ban does date to biblical times, then it had little impact on the written text.<sup>13</sup>

This thesis has stayed firmly within the realm of literary study, and has barely touched on the historical and theological question of monotheism.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless arguments made in the monotheism debate rely heavily on literary (i.e. biblical) sources. It is therefore imperative that such

<sup>7</sup> Lev. 24:16: MT: ונקב שם יהוה מות יומת; LXX: ὀνομαζω δε το ὄνομα κυριου θανατω θανατουσθω.

<sup>8</sup> Cassuto (1961a:29). Although he gives no reference, and I have been unable to trace any such rule.

<sup>9</sup> *EJ* 7:680 (‘Yahweh’).

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 140-42.

<sup>11</sup> Save 2 Chr. 18:12 = 1 Kings 22:14.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Kings 1:29, 2:24, 17:1, 12, 18:10, 15, 22:14, 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6, 3:14, 4:30, 5:16, 20. The only exception to this is 1 Kings 22:14, whose verbatim parallel (2 Chr. 18:12) has already been noted.

<sup>13</sup> See also Cassuto (1961a:26).

<sup>14</sup> Regarding this debate, see Albright (1968), Tigay (1986), Hurtado (1988, 1993), De Moor (1990), Hayman (1991), Barker (1992), and Mafico (1996).

arguments be made on a proper, grounded reading of those biblical sources. For this to be achieved, greater clarity is needed especially concerning the problematic word אלהים. It is important that the exegete be aware of its various functions and meanings (discussed in Ch. 5) and not come too hastily to a biased interpretation.

Apart from this, the implications of this study on the monotheism debate can conveniently be summarized here. I have not found any clear evidence of a deity called Elohim who exists separately from the Israelite god Yahweh.<sup>15</sup> Elohim is neither above nor below Yahweh in the pantheon, nor do the two need to be assimilated. The kind of pantheon situation found in the Ugaritic literature, or in Deut. 32:8 (LXX) does not apply to the interchange between the names *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. For this reason, it cannot be assumed that אלהים is simply another way of saying אל, for example, as in de Moor's expression "YH(WH) El(ohim)."<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, a number of passages have come to light in which the word אלהים could well have been intended in its plural form (i.e. *gods, angels, divine judges* e.g. Isa. 13:19, etc., Ps. 58:12, Prov. 2:5, 1 Sam. 2:25). That the word אלהים has this meaning is neither new nor disputed - I simply suggest that it appears in this meaning more than we are accustomed to think.

It is hoped that the thesis will also have wider methodological implications. For while its overall thrust is undoubtedly synchronic, diachronic elements (editing, comparison with other versions) have been considered where appropriate, and diachronic conclusions have been drawn. I have on various occasions been aware that other versions may be superior to the MT (e.g. the LXX of 2 Sam. 6), but I have stopped short of emending the MT or interpreting an emended text.

The way forward for synchronic and diachronic scholarship is not to 'bridge the gulf' by making one more like the other, but to realize and respect the differences, and to apply method as dictated by the circumstances, for there is no fundamental incompatibility between the two. Thus I hope to

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<sup>15</sup> The only instances which might support such an interpretation are Isa. 13:19, etc. and 1 Sam. 2:25. In these cases, the singular interpretation (the god Elohim) is in no way superior to the plural (gods).

<sup>16</sup> De Moor (1990:260). The same confusion is made by Albright (1968:30), Hayman (1991:13), and Barker (1992:4-11). Tigay wisely refrains from calling 'names with the theophoric element אל' *elohistic*, and excludes them from his calculations (1986:12).



have demonstrated that while synchronic biblical scholarship *can* stand independent of its diachronic counterpart, there is no reason why it *should*.

**APPENDIX:**  
**THE ANSWER TO THE MEANING OF LIFE,  
THE UNIVERSE AND THE ELOHISTIC PSALTER**

**Introduction**

In Chapter 8 regarding the use of Divine Names in the Psalms, I came to two conclusions: firstly that the Elohist Psalter was the result of a highly skilled editorial process, and secondly that this process was unrelated to the later reluctance to pronounce the tetragrammaton. These conclusions are fully supported by a large amount of evidence, and represent a step forward in our understanding both of the Psalms, and of the scope of what is meant by 'editing'. Nevertheless, the first is hardly a new suggestion, and the second is wholly negative. The question of exactly who paid the Elohist editor and why has not been answered. In this appendix I would like to suggest a solution to this problem. By its nature, it must remain speculative, but I do hope to remove the primary obstacles to its plausibility.

The solution may lie in the question which has been addressed, but not yet answered, of why *these* Psalms were edited while others were not. The Elohist Psalter runs from Ps. 42 to Ps. 83. Ps. 42, being the beginning of Book II, is a reasonable starting point, as we can easily imagine it would have begun a second scroll. Ps. 83, however, is not an obvious ending point, as a second scroll would most likely have contained the Psalms either of Book II (42-72) or of Books II and III (42-89). What then, connects Pss. 42 and 83? The answer (as has already been established in another context<sup>1</sup>) is forty-two. The Elohist Psalter comprises 42 Psalms, beginning with Psalm 42. It is therefore my suggestion that the Elohist editing was motivated by the desire to link the names of God with the number 42, to alter them according

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<sup>1</sup> In Adam's *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, philosophers wait seven and a half million years for the great computer, Deep Thought, to calculate that the answer to the Great Question of Life, the Universe and Everything is, in fact, forty-two. After a long silence, one philosopher says to the other: 'We're going to get lynched aren't we?' (p. 146-7). See also *The Hunting of the Snark* (Carroll), Fit the First.

to the number 42, possibly by reducing the instances of the DN *Yahweh* in these Psalms to 42.<sup>2</sup> The reasons lying behind this connection will be considered later, but for now we may note that there may have been a magical or theurgic purpose.

Such a suggestion may immediately sound so absurd as to not warrant further consideration.<sup>3</sup> However, evidence will be presented from two angles to show that it is a *possible* answer to the question (unlike some others, which have been shown to be *impossible*):

- 1 The number 42 is a special, sometimes magical number, and is often connected with the name(s) of god(s).
- 2 Large units of Psalms are highly organized, and certain aspects of this organization are governed by significant numbers.

Before these lines of argument are presented, however, a more immediate problem must be overcome, namely that in the biblical period the Psalms or chapters would not have been numbered at all. The present division of the biblical text was carried out by Stephen Langton (1150-1228 CE) and adopted into the Hebrew only in the 14th century.<sup>4</sup> If an editor had wanted find the forty-second Psalm, he might well have arrived at what we know as Ps. 44

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<sup>2</sup> BHS attests 44 occurrences of יהוה in these Psalms, however, given the degree of textual fluidity between יהוה and אדני, it is not beyond belief that there may once have been only 42. For example, the Aleppo codex has אדני at Ps. 68:27, in place of BHS יהוה.

<sup>3</sup> The very concept of *counting* does not feature highly in modern biblical scholarship. Yet it was taken with utmost seriousness at least in Rabbinic times as a means of checking the accuracy of copying biblical texts. According to *b* Qid. 30a:

The early scholars were called *soferim* because they used to count all the letters of the Torah. Thus, they said, the *waw* in *g#on* [Lev 11:42] marks half the letters of the Torah; *darosh darash* [Lev. 10:16] half the words; *we-hithgalah* [Lev. 13:33] half the verses. *The boar out of the wood [mi-ya'ar] doth ravage it* [Ps. 80:14], the *ayin* of *ya'ar* marks half of the Psalms. *But he being full of compassion, forgiveth their iniquity* [Ps. 78:38] half the verses.

As these particular practices are characteristic of the period after which the biblical text was considered to be fixed, it would be quite wrong to suppose that exactly the same techniques were necessarily also in use in the biblical period. Nevertheless, the comparison with what I am suggesting is striking, especially as the examples given in the Talmud are from the Torah and the *Psalms*.

For more suggestions regarding the connection between names and numbers, see Hurtado (1998 re Christian *nomina sacra*), Skehan (1967 re Proverbs), and Dempster (1991:177 re the 14-fold repetition of *Yahweh* in Amos 1-2).

<sup>4</sup> Würthwein (1995:20)

(Pss. 9 and 10 are generally considered to be one Psalm as indeed they are in the LXX, similarly Pss. 42 and 43).

The multiplicity of different divisions of the Psalter is given in *Encyclopedia Judaica*.<sup>5</sup> One well-attested tradition knows of 147 Psalms in the Psalter,<sup>6</sup> while a text from the Cairo Geniza knows of 149.<sup>7</sup> The Geniza text, however, actually strengthens our case. It does not consider Ps. 115 a separate Psalm, and therefore up to Ps. 114, the numbering is identical to the MT. Further support comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Flint compares the ordering of Psalms in the scrolls to the Masoretic order and concludes:

This stabilization took place not gradually, but in two distinct stages: Psalms 1-89 (or thereabouts) prior to the first century BCE, and Psalms 90 onwards toward the end of the first century CE... the scrolls strongly suggest that during the entire Qumran period Psalms 1-89 were virtually finalized as a collection while Psalms 90 and beyond remained much more fluid.<sup>8</sup>

If it is the case that the ordering and numbering of Psalms in books IV and V was not set until a much later date, then we can easily account for the differing traditions about the total numbers of Psalms, while maintaining that the received numbering of Psalms in books I, II and III is very ancient. In other words, the fact that the present chapter divisions are late, and that the other traditions (including the LXX) disagree on the total number of Psalms does not preclude the possibility that the key to the EP is the number 42.

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<sup>5</sup> EJ 13:1306.

<sup>6</sup> *y* Shabbat 16:1, Soferim 16:11, Psalms Midrash 22:19. In this tradition, the 147 Psalms are said to correspond to the 147 years of Jacob. Braude (editor of Midr. Ps.) notes that this may involve the combining of 3 of the 4 following pairs of Psalms: Pss. 1 and 2, 9 and 10, 114 and 115, 116 and 117. The number 147 is, like 42, a multiple of seven, and we may note that Jacob's life is governed by the number seven. He worked seven years for his first wife (Gen. 29:20), fulfilled her nuptial week (שבוע Gen. 29:27), and then served seven years for the second wife (Gen. 29:30). He went to Egypt with a household of seventy (Gen. 46:27), lived there for seventeen years before dying at the age of 147 (Gen. 47:28). Therefore the tradition of 147 Psalms in the Psalter appears to be stylised, rather than based on an 'obvious' counting of the Psalms.

<sup>7</sup> Yeivin (1969:76-102) dates the text as pre-900 CE on the basis of the vocalisation system. The text itself is a list of the open sections in the Psalter. Yeivin concludes: "The *List* indicates, in general, that an OS [open section, פתוחה] precedes every one of the 149 Psalms (115 not being considered a separate Psalm)." (p. 78). The manuscript is now in the Bodleian Library, MS.Heb.d.33,3v-6r.

<sup>8</sup> Flint (1997:148).

## The Number Forty-two

The idea that seven and its multiples were significant numbers in the Ancient Near Eastern world is not new. A lengthy list of the appearance of seven in the Hebrew Bible can be found in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.<sup>9</sup> Attention is drawn there to the “innate, mystical power of 7,” with the examples of the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6), the capture of Samson (Judges 16:13, 19) and the healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5:10, 14), and of the Shunamite woman’s son (2 Kings 4:35). Multiples of 7, according to *EJ*, add emphasis, for example Lev. 12:5 (14 days for a girl) cf. v. 2 (7 days for a boy), Num. 29:13 (14 lambs) cf. v. 8 (7 lambs), and finally 1 Kings 8:65. Here, the context of the next verse requires us to understand the actual number of days as 7, with the multiple, 14 as a literary device meaning that these were very great days - days ‘worth twice their length’:

At that time, Solomon held the festival, and all of Israel was with him, a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath to the wadi of Egypt, before the LORD our God, for seven days and seven days, that is fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away ...<sup>10</sup> (1 Kings 8:65-6)

Examples of multiples of seven also appear in the New Testament, in Jesus teaching on forgiveness:

Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times (lit: seventy times seven).’ (Matthew 18:21-22)

An early witness of the significance of the number forty-two comes from the Egyptian Book of the Dead, spell 125. These spells were copied in order to be buried with the deceased for the purpose of easing the passage to the afterlife. In this particular scene, the heart of the deceased must be

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<sup>9</sup> *EJ* 12:1257-8. See also Hengstenberg (1848b:393-4) for further examples. Hengstenberg rejects the idea that 7 arose from some causal factor (for example, the addition of God [3] to the world [4]). Instead he argues it was innately and inherently pleasing to God.

<sup>10</sup> Own translation.

weighed, and any found to be heavy with sin will be eaten. The deceased speaks:

Hail to you, great god, Lord of Justice! I have come to you, my lord, that you may bring me so that I may see your beauty, for I know you and I know your name, and I know the names of the forty-two gods of those who are with you in this Hall of Justice, who live on those who cherish evil and who gulp down their blood ...

The 42 gods are then named, and a denial of a specific sin addressed to each. In order to reach 42, several sins have had to be duplicated:

O white of teeth who came forth from the Faiyum, I have not transgressed.  
O Demoraliser who came forth from Xoïs, I have not transgressed.

The Hebrew Bible also has a tradition of forty-two. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites are slain for not being able to say 'shibboleth' in Judges 12:6. In 2 Kings 2:24, Elisha curses children who had been taunting him - two bears come out of the wood and kill forty-two of them. In 2 Kings 10:14, the 42 relatives of Ahaziah are killed by Jehu. While the Chronicler does not specify how many relatives were killed (2 Chr. 22:8), he does alter the age at which Ahaziah came to the throne from 22 years (2 Kings 8:26) to 42 (2 Chr. 22:2). Japhet notes of this:

As this is the only instance in Chronicles where chronological information of this kind deviates from the source material, there seems to be no doubt that 'forty-two' is a textual error... Obviously, if Jehoram was forty years old at his death (21:5, 20), his son was not forty-two at that time.<sup>11</sup>

Given that this is a rare deviation, we can improve on Japhet's explanation. The Chronicler wanted to maintain the link between the number 42 and Ahaziah.

In the New Testament (Matthew 1) we have the 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus, grouped in 1:17 into three phases of 14 generations each.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Japhet (1993:820).

<sup>12</sup> In order to arrive at 14 in the final phase, we must count both Joseph and Mary as separate 'generations'. Verse 17 clearly indicates that this is what was intended. The division of the 42 generations into 3x14 corresponds to that of the DN on an Aramaic incantation bowl (Schiffman 1973:97-102, see below). Alternatively, Brown (1977:80)



In Revelation 11:2, the period of 42 months marks a time of rampage (or put differently, one thousand two hundred and sixty days in Rev. 11:3, 12:6), while in Revelation 13, a beast with blasphemous names on its head (v. 1) spends a period of 42 months (v. 5) blaspheming against God *and his name* (v. 6).<sup>13</sup>

From Soferim<sup>14</sup> 2:6 comes the ruling that in a Torah scroll, the number of lines per column allowed are 42, 60, 72 or 98, according to the size of the handwriting. Forty-two is said here to correspond to the 42 stations of the Exodus in Numbers 33:2.

The number 42 re-surfaces in later Jewish tradition, especially in the form of a 42-lettered name of God. This tradition has been well-documented, the most comprehensive account being that of Schiffman.<sup>15</sup> The earliest Jewish reference is in the Talmud, *b Qid.* 71a:

Our Rabbis taught: At first [God's] twelve-lettered name (שם בן שתיים) used to be entrusted to all people. When unruly men increased, it was confided to the pious of the priesthood, and these 'swallowed it' during the chanting of their brother priests...

Rab Judah said in Rab's name: The forty-two lettered Name (שם בן ארבעים ושתיים) is entrusted only to him who is pious, meek, middle-aged, free from bad temper, sober, and not insistent on his rights. And he who knows it, is heedful thereof, and observes it in purity, is beloved above and popular below, feared by man, and inherits two worlds, this world and the future world.

According to the attribution, this tradition dates to early third century CE.<sup>16</sup> However, it is possible that Schiffman is correct in his interpretation, that both names had been used in the second temple.<sup>17</sup>

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suggests that 14 was calculated by gematria from David's name (ד=4, ו=6, ר=4). This is less than convincing, as gematria can 'prove' almost anything, and many questions remain: why multiply by 3?; why David?; why the *ḥaser* spelling, and not *plene* (דויד=24), which by then was more common? Skehan (1967:485) does not show that the value of David's name was permanently fixed at 14.

<sup>13</sup> That numbers are significant in Rev. 13 is evident from 13:18, however the sum 666 is achieved. In a similar passage in Daniel, the penultimate kingdom is allotted 'a time, two times and half a time' (NRSV, Dan. 7:25), that is three and a half 'times', which is half of seven.

<sup>14</sup> *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud* (vol. 1) ed. Cohen.

<sup>15</sup> Schiffman (1973), see also Parke Taylor (1975:93-4) and Urbach (1975:I:130-131).

<sup>16</sup> According to Strack and Stemberger (1991:93-4), Rab is Abba Aricha, the first generation Babylonian Amora who founded a college at Sura in 219 CE, and died 247 CE. His pupil, Rab Judah, died 299 CE (Strack and Stemberger 1991:96-97).

<sup>17</sup> Schiffman (1973:98).

In connection with the 12 and the 42 lettered names, we should also mention the 72 letter name, referred to in Genesis Rabbah 44:19 (comment on 'Will I judge' Gen. 15:14):

R Eleazar said in R. Jose's name: The Holy One, blessed be He, promised our fore-fathers that He would redeem his children with these two letters [i.e. הן] but if they repented, He would redeem them with 72 letters. R Judan said: In the passage "[Or hath God essayed] to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and be a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors" (Deut. 4:34) will find 72 letters; and should you object that there are 75, deduct the second 'nation' which is not to be counted. R Abin said: He redeemed them by His name, the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, consisting of 72 letters.

We learn more about these names from a responsum of Ḥai Gaon,<sup>18</sup> the head of a Babylonian school who died 1037 CE. He tells us that the name of 42 letters (which he equates with שם המפורש<sup>19</sup>) begins with אבגיתח and ends with שקוצית but that he does not know the exact pronunciation, because the tradition had not been properly transmitted. He denies that this name has the power, for example, to calm the sea. Ḥai is clearly referring to a widely-held belief according to which this name had protective, and possibly magical properties. This tradition was still very much alive until modern times, as attested by the use of the full name (אבגיתח שקוצית שטנ נגד יכש בטר צתג) in Sefer Raziel<sup>20</sup> and Jewish amulets.<sup>21</sup> This combination of letters is formed from the initial letters of the acrostic poem *ana be-koah*

<sup>18</sup> In Oṣar ha Geonim to Qid. p176, and note of Lewin, also Ḥag. p. 23

<sup>19</sup> According to Bacher (1901) two remarks of Rashi (on Sanh. 60a and Erubin 18b) support the equation of שם המפורש with the 42-letter name, while Maimonides (*The Code: ספר המדע*, תפילה וברכת כהנים, ספר אהבה, 6:2; also יסודי התורה, 14:10) stated that שם המפורש was in fact יהוה. However, Rashi's comments do not support this view. On Erubin 18b, Rashi merely implies that the 'explicit name' is *not* the tetragrammaton (שם בן ארבע אותיות ושם המפורש) while on Sukka 45a he quite clearly identifies שם המפורש with the 72-lettered name. Regarding Sanh. 60a, his comments leave open the possibility that the 42-lettered name was one of several explicit names:

שם בן ארבע אותיות שם הוא ולא בעיני שם המפורש בן ארבעים ושתיים אותיות

<sup>20</sup> It appears on geometric designs in two exemplars for childbirth amulets: Raziel 34b (copied in Schrire 1982:63 fig. 4) and Raziel 40b (Schrire 1982:62 fig. 3, front and back covers).

<sup>21</sup> Schrire (1982:97-98, pl 16, 20, 26, 28-30, 39-41, 45, 49, 53). Most of these amulets originate from Persia, one from Iraq and one from Kurdistan. See also the 18th century amulet featured in EJ's entry on the 'Evil Eye' (vol 6:997-1000).

attributed to the 1st century tanna Neḥunia ha-Qana.<sup>22</sup> As for the name of 72 letters, Ḥai tells us that it is result of combination of letters in 3 verses (Ex. 14:19-21), but he does not know which letters.<sup>23</sup>

Also written by Ḥai is a book of spells called *The Sword of Moses*,<sup>24</sup> in which the 42-lettered name has protective properties. In appendix I, section III, R Akiba asks R Eliezer the Great how to make the Angel of the Presence come down and reveal secrets. R Eliezer first warns of the dangers of such an exercise, and then gives advice on how to protect oneself: 7-day period of cleansing, followed by a fast, and the following incantation:

'I conjure you in the name of X, who is mighty and over all, and rules over all, and everything is in His hands, that you do not hurt me, nor terrify me, nor frighten me...' After this he may commence his conjuration, for now he has fortified himself and has sealed himself with the name of God of 42 letters, before which all who hear it tremble and are frightened, and the heavenly host are terror-struck.

An altogether more philosophical approach is given by Maimonides (1135-1204):

They also had a name having forty-two letters. Now it is known to everyone capable of mental representation that it is in no way possible that forty-two letters should form one word; these were certainly several words, the number of letters of which amounted to forty-two. There is no doubt that these words were necessarily indicative of several notions and that these notions came near to a representation of

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<sup>22</sup> According to *EJ* 3:25-26, the poem was probably composed by 13th century Spanish Kabbalists. It "gives expression to the longing of Israel for deliverance from the Diaspora and implores God's support and protection." The poem consists of seven verses, each with six words.

אבגיתח בייך also appears in a recipe for love from the Cairo Geniza: אבגיתח בייך (Naveh and Shaked 1993:150, from Geniza 9 T-S K 1.15 page 2 line 2).

<sup>23</sup> The full name is given in *Sefer Raziel* p23b and Schrire (1982:98). Its derivation is explained by Rashi (on Sukka 45a) and by Schrire (1982:98). Rashi quotes the beginnings of the three verses, Ex 14:19, 20 and 21 and continues:

The three verses each contain 72 letters, and from them comes the explicit name: the first letter of the first verse, the last [letter] of the middle [verse], and the first [letter] of the last [verse], and so on in that order (own translation of Rashi on Sukka 45a).

The name therefore consists not of 72 letters, but 72 groups of three letters each, starting ויהו יי. Rashi describes it here as 72 *names*. It is also found on amulets, but less frequently, presumably because of its length (Schrire 1982:98-9, pl 27). The 72 names of God are also found in 3 Enoch (Hebrew Enoch), ch 48. For a discussion of 72 in Kabbalistic literature see Idel (1988:122-4, 169).

<sup>24</sup> Published in Gaster (1896) *Cod. Hebr.*, Gaster, 178.

the essence of Him, may He be exalted, in the way we have stated. [Maimonides then quotes *b* Qid. 71a] For most people think that it dealt solely with the pronunciation of letters, and it is not taken into consideration that these letters may have meaning. (*Guide* I 62).<sup>25</sup>

The number forty-two also appears in connection with the Divine Name in the Kabbalistic literature. The following extract concerns the Upper Mysteries in the Final Letter *He* (of the tetragrammaton) from a text called 'The Secrets of the Letters of the Divine Name', dated to the end of the 13th century.

Consequently, this point completes every side, since it stands in the middle; *ten* on the east side, *ten* on the west side, *ten* on the north side, *ten* on the south side - Ten Sephirot on every side. These are the Forty Letters that exist in the mystery of *In the Beginning* below, in the mystery of the Holy Name, plus two Handles for holding the Left and the Right. These all exist in the mystery of *he*. Consequently, *he* is found to [participate] in all these upper mysteries: the Holy Chariot, the *thirteen*, the mystery of the Ten Sephirot, the mystery of the Forty Two Engraved Letters that are in the Holy Name - for all [of them] are included in the image of *he*. They are all arranged diagonally...<sup>26</sup>

The forty-two here consist of ten sephirot on each side of the *he*, plus two 'Handles', emanating diagonally from the tetragrammaton out toward the material world. In *Sefer ha Ḥokma* of R Eleazar of Worms, the name of 42 letters is used to place the *Atarah* on the head of the Creator.<sup>27</sup>

In an Aramaic incantation bowl,<sup>28</sup> demons are banished in the name of:

יהיהיהיהיהיה יהיהיהיהיהיה יהיהיהיהיהיה

The name consists of the syllable יה repeated 21 times, arranged in three groups of fourteen letters each, amounting to forty-two letters.

### Numbers as an Organizing Principle in the Psalter

<sup>25</sup> The same thinking is apparent in the suggestion of Bacher (1913:17-20) that the name was constructed from the 10 creative powers (תבונה דעת כח גבורה גערה צדק משפט חסד רחמים) which, however, come to only 38 letters.

<sup>26</sup> Wald 1988:82 lines 124-42, for Aramaic see p159.

<sup>27</sup> MS Oxford 1812, quoted in Idel (1988:195).

<sup>28</sup> Schiffman (1973:97-102), first published by Gordon (1941:123ff) and Rossell (1953:80ff). The bowl is in the Louvre (AO 1915). Unfortunately, neither Gordon nor Schiffman give any information concerning either the provenance or the date of the bowl.

Recent studies on the book of Psalms have rejected the idea that it is a random collection of prayers and liturgies. Instead, they have focused on the idea of *deliberate* structure and order in the final redaction.<sup>29</sup> The beginning of the EP at Ps. 42 is in itself a confirmation of the importance of book divisions. According to Wilson,<sup>30</sup> the ordering of Psalms into books, and according to their headings, is quite deliberate and intentional. He speaks of the 'seams' and 'bindings' which display intentionality in the ordering of Psalms. Changes in authorship mark the 'seams' that are the book divisions of books 1, 2 and 3: 1-2 = David - sons of Qorah; 2-3 = Solomon - Asaph; 3-4 = Qorah (Etan) - Moses.<sup>31</sup> Changes of authorship also occur within book divisions, but these are 'bound' together by other means.<sup>32</sup> To cite just one example, the first Qorahite group ends at Ps. 49, followed by one Asaph psalm (Ps. 50), and then another David group (Pss. 51ff.) The area of the transition (Pss. 47-50) is marked by מִזְמוֹר in the heading which is not used in the Qorahite group before Ps. 47, nor used again until Ps. 62.

Over a hundred years ago, Hengstenberg wrote at the end of his commentary on the Psalms:

The arrangement - so the author believes he has proved in his commentary - is formed ... by means of the numbers, which were regarded by the Israelites as having a kind of sacred and important meaning - viz., 3, 4, 7, 10, 12; ... These numbers often also determine, besides the groups of verses, the position of the names of God.<sup>33</sup>

It must be said that many of the cases that he identifies exist purely in the eye of the beholder. Some of the characteristics of stanza division which he notes (for example the seven-verse stanza divided into two (three verses, followed

<sup>29</sup> Some of the main views are represented in McCann (1993) and reviewed in Whybray (1996:15-33), see also Mitchell (1997). These studies have consistently failed to agree on the *single* plot or message that Psalms, *as a book*, portrays. This is due to the method employed whereby a particular theme or passage is extracted, labelled 'important' while the rest of the material is ignored. By their very nature, the Psalms cover such a wide range of themes that it is possible to extract by this method almost any 'plot' under the sun. The idea that the Psalms may be *ordered*, but without any single recognizable plot, has not been widely considered.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson (1985). This is in contrast to the previous prevailing view that the book divisions were superficial and artificial, discussed by Mitchell, (1997:66-78). The NEB even omits the headings from the text!

<sup>31</sup> Wilson (1985:157).

<sup>32</sup> Wilson (1985:163-7).

<sup>33</sup> Hengstenberg (1845-8:vol III:xxxii).



by four, e.g. Ps. 54:3-9, Ps. 59:12-18, in both cases the division is supported by the *Selah*) can more readily be explained as the characteristic rhythm of Hebrew poetry, than by the government of scripture by numbers.

However, some of Hengstenberg's observations do warrant further attention. For example, he notes that Ps. 6 has the superscription על שמינית and repeats the name Yahweh eight times.<sup>34</sup> This kind of observation should surely promote lateral thinking regarding some of the poorly-understood headings in the Psalms. Unfortunately, Hengstenberg stops, having made his point, but without checking the other occurrences of the expression שמינית. It appears as the superscription שמינית to Ps 12, which has only 5 occurrences of Yahweh. It does, however, have 8 verses (not counting the heading).<sup>35</sup>

By far the most convincing of Hengstenberg's observations is that on the structure and placing of the name *Yahweh* in the Maalot Psalms (Pss. 120-

<sup>34</sup> Hengstenberg (1845-48:vol I:89).

<sup>35</sup> There are two prevailing views regarding the meaning of שמינית: that it is an eight-stringed musical instrument (*EJ* 13:1320; Oesterly 1937:16; NIV); and that it refers to the octave, or musical scale (Briggs 1906:I:lxvii; Kirkpatrick 1902:xxv). The latter suggestion rests rather dubiously on the assumptions that the Israelites *had* the octave, that they *knew* they had it, and that they had counted its notes. Support for the former suggestion, according to *EJ*, comes from the only other occurrence of שמינית:

1 Chr. 15:21

בכנרות על השמינית לנצח

Apparently, the proximity of שמינית to כנרות lends weight to שמינית being some kind of musical instrument. However, several features of the Chronicles text point to this interpretation being unlikely. Firstly, the most common preposition meaning on/by an instrument is כ (as in בכנרות). על השמינית would be an unusual way of expressing 'on the shminit-instrument'. Additionally, we do not find the *vav* which would be expected if both lyres *and* shminits were played.

The wider context also reduces the likelihood of שמינית being a musical instrument. This verse is parallel to the previous one:

1 Chr. 15:20

בנבלים על עלמות

עלמות is another word found only here and in the heading of a Psalm (Ps. 46) and *EJ* also regards it as some kind of musical instrument. However, the same syntactical difficulties described regarding this reading of 15:21 apply here also, namely the unusual preposition, and the lack of *vav*. Instead, the context indicates that both the terms עלמות and שמינית are technical terms (like לנצח, v. 21) describing how the instruments were played, or possibly indicating something about the music that they accompanied.

Also regarding the context of this verse, we may note that in verse 16 David instructs the Levite chiefs to appoint musicians from among their brothers to play three instruments: נבלים וכנרות ומצלתיים. Verses 17 and 18 introduce us to the Levites chosen, and 19-21 specify which Levites play which instrument: v. 19 those who play נהשת, v. 20 those who play בנבלים, and v. 21 those who play בכנרות. The six verses can be seen to be constructed around these 3 instruments. To understand the words עלמות and שמינית as 'extra' instruments disrupts the balance of the text.



134).<sup>36</sup> The central Psalm 127 is surrounded by 2 heptads, each of which, as a group, contains the name Yahweh 24 times, and a “Ya” once in the third Psalm. These Psalms reveal more when looked at more closely:

Pss.	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134
To:	לְדָוִד				לְדָוִד			לְשִׁלְמֹה	לְדָוִד				לְדָוִד		
יהוה	2	5	3	2	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	2	6	1	5
Total	=12				=12				=12				=12		
יה	1								1						

Each heptad consists of a group of 4 Psalms with 12 occurrences of Yahweh, followed by a group of 3 Psalms, again with 12 occurrences of Yahweh. The central Psalm is to Solomon, each of the subgroups of four and three contains one Psalm to David. This reveals not only deliberate and sensitive placing of Psalms, but *concern to take note of the divine name*.

It would appear that the Elohistc Psalter and the Maalot are complementary structures, one being a precedent for the other. Both groups are presented together in the Psalter, while other groups (Asaph, *maskilim*) are split up almost as a matter of principle.<sup>37</sup> They both share concern for divine names, and ingenuity and initiative regarding the creation of structures by which to glorify these names. If my suggestion concerning the EP is correct, both structures are determined by numbers, especially seven.

### Conclusions

The above material has not yet demonstrated a meaningful link between the 42-lettered name of God (first attested 3rd century CE) and the 42 Psalms in which the names of God are altered. Even if the Book of the Dead testifies to the antiquity of the tradition, the connection to the Elohistc Psalter may seem far-fetched. The most meaningful material to compare with the Elohistc Psalter should surely be biblical, not post-biblical material. If we therefore restrict ourselves to the Hebrew Bible, we find that 42 is consistently a number of death and destruction: 42 thousand slain Ephraimites (Jud. 12:6); 42 relatives of Ahaziah massacred (2 Kings 10:14); 42

<sup>36</sup> Hengstenberg (1845:vol III:410).

<sup>37</sup> The only ‘Elohistc Psalm’ outside the EP is Ps. 108, which has already been discussed.

children mauled (2 Kings 2:24). It is a number of ill-omen: Ahaziah's age altered to 42 (2 Chr. 22:2<sup>38</sup>). The New Testament evidence supports this with 42 months as a period of cosmic war (Rev. 11:2) or rampage.

Of these biblical instances, two involve Divine Names:

2 Kings 2:24

ויפן אחריו ויראם ויקללם בשם יהוה

ותצאנה שתיים דבים מן היער ותבקענה מהם ארבעים ושני ילדים

Rev. 13:5-6 Και ἔδοθη αὐτῷ στομα λαλουν μεγαλα και βλασφημιας και ἔδοθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσια ποιησαι μηνas τεσσαρακοντα και δυο. και ἤνοιξεν το στομα αυτου εἰς βλασφημιας προς τον θεον βλασφημησαι το ὄνομα αὐτου και την σκηνην αὐτου τους ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοντας

In the first case the evil of 42 is activated by the name Yahweh, in the second, the evil of 42 acts upon God and his name. The first is a curse (√קלל), and the second a 'blasphemy', probably best understood as 'slander'. The two acts are related in that both involve uttering an evil thing.<sup>39</sup>

Returning to the Elohist Psalter, we find 42 Psalms in which Divine Names have been rearranged, and in their midst an *extra blessing*:<sup>40</sup>

Ps. 72:19

וברוך שם כבודו לעולם וימלא כבודו את כל הארץ

The doxology of Ps. 72 was the only place where the elohistic redactor could have added a comment about his work without disrupting the Psalms themselves. If this is the case, we should take his additions here seriously. This second blessing incorporates the required עולם element, but also gives a connection to the nature of the elohistic redaction - שם. The redaction which focuses on the *names of God* contains an extra blessing to *God's name*.

<sup>38</sup> This is surely the correct interpretation of the Chronicler's unprecedented alteration. If 42 was a number of ill-omen, then having Ahaziah ascend to the throne at the age of 42 is for the Chronicler another technique in his portrayal of Ahaziah as ill-fated rather than evil. Japhet notes (1993:821):

In the Chronistic version, Ahaziah indeed perpetuates all these evils, but the weight of responsibility shifts first of all to his mother Athaliah [22:2,3], and also to the treacherous 'counsellors' of the 'house of Ahab' [22:3,4], all of whom acted to lead him astray... Chronicles sees him as a victim rather than an instigator.

<sup>39</sup> For the proximity of βλασφημεω to the idea of ברך/קלל see Isa 66:3 מברך און = LXX βλασφημος.

<sup>40</sup> See pp.179-181.

The Elohist Psalter and the biblical tradition described above have in common the number 42 and the name of God. They differ in that the former involves a blessing, and the latter a curse. Blessing and cursing themselves are closely related concepts, often mentioned together (Deut. 11:26-28, Josh. 8:34, Ps. 109:17-18, Prov. 27:14). In the prose prologue to Job, the same root (ברכ) serves for both blessing (1:21) and cursing (1:5, 11, 2:5). The root ברכ also means curse in Ps. 10:3 and 1 Kings 21:10, 13 (cf. קלל in Isa. 8:21). A blessing can be counted as a curse (Prov. 27:14), and a curse can be turned into a blessing (Num. 22-24, Deut. 23:6, Neh. 13:2). I suggest that the Elohist Psalter is precisely this - a curse turned into a blessing. The curse of 42 that involved the name of God could be effectively warded off by a blessing that also involved 42 and the name of God.<sup>41</sup> It is this apotropaic tradition which survived in later Judaism in the form of the protective 42 lettered name (as described by Hai, and evidenced by amulets).

The doxology of Ps. 72 also has an appendage: כְּלוּ תַפְלוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן יֵשׁׁי. This remark is strange, not only because it is not true,<sup>42</sup> but also because Ps. 72 is not a Psalm of *David*, but of *Solomon*. There are no other notes about the beginnings or ends of collections in the Psalms, making this remark quite unprecedented. Its function is to mark off the first 72 Psalms from the Psalms that follow, in a kind of 'mini-Psalter.'<sup>43</sup> Just as the 42 Elohist Psalms may be related to the later 42-lettered name of God, so I propose that the 72 'Davidic' Psalms are also related to the 72-lettered name of God. The two structures - one of 72 Psalms and the other of 42 Psalms - overlap and were born out of the same thought-processes. They may have originated from the same era, or even from the same hand. They both reappeared in later Judaism in the same context - the name of God.

The solution put forward here is, and must remain conjectural, as it lacks direct evidence. It is quite possible that it was constructed as a secret blessing, so that direct evidence would never have been written down. It must also be remembered that the survey of previous explanations for the

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<sup>41</sup> Using like to fight like features highly in both the ancient and modern worlds. The eye that protects against the evil eye, homeopathic medicine, and immunization, are all examples of the same thing.

<sup>42</sup> There follow 16 attributions to David in the remaining Psalms, the first of which (Ps. 86) is not a שִׁיר nor a מְזֻמָּר, but a תְּפִלָּה.

<sup>43</sup> It is of course possible that the note dates from a time when there were only 72 Psalms in the Psalter. If this is the case, the connection I am proposing to the 72-lettered name of God still holds.

Elohistic Psalter found each of them wanting. The evidence, presented logically, points firmly in the direction of an elohistic editing, and yet gives us no clue as to what prompted it. Rewriting such a large number of Psalms would have been a considerable amount of work, not to be undertaken lightly. Logically speaking, there must have been a reason, but logic does not give us the reason. In such a situation, lateral thinking should surely be given a voice.

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