"YOU WILL BE LIKE THE GODS": THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DEITY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE IN COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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Abbreviations

AJBA	*Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*
AJSLL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. Third Edition.* Edited by James B. Pritchard; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulleting of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin of Biblical Research*
BCog	*Brain and Cognition*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibArch	*Biblical Archaeology*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BT	*Bible Translator*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BuB	*Babel und Bibel: Annual of Ancient Near Eastern, Old Testament, and Semitic Studies.* Edited by Leonid Kogan; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.* Edited by A. L. Oppenheim, et al.; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011.
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CEDHL	Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English.* Jerusalem: Carta, 1987.
CMHE	Frank Moore Cross. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic.* Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1973.
CogLing	*Cognitive Linguistics*
CogPs	*Cognitive Psychology*
CogSci	*Cognitive Science*
ConS	*Conspectus*
COS	*The Context of Scripture.* 3 vols. Edited by William W. Hallo Leiden: Brill, 1997–2003.
DELTA	*Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada*
DevPsych	*Developmental Psychology*
DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible. Second Edition.* Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst; Leiden: Brill, 1999.
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
DWdO	*Die Welt des Orients*
EuroJTh	*European Journal of Theology*

FPP	*Faculty Publications and Presentations*
GBH	Paul Joüon and Takamitsu Muraoka. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew.* Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2006.
GBHS	Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Translated by A. E. Cowley. Second Edition.* Edited by E. Kautsch; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.
GL	*Glaube und Lernen*
GRBS	*Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* 5 vols. Edited by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm; Translated and edited under supervision of M. E. J. Richardson; Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
HR	*History of Religions*
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBHS	Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
ICS	*Illinois Classical Studies*
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion*
JANES	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JAR	*Journal of Archaeological Research*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCogCul	*Journal of Cognition and Culture*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEPG	*Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal for Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JLT	*Journal of Literature and Theology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JOT	*Journal of Translation*
JPrag	*Journal of Pragmatics*
JPSP	*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
JRAI	*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
JT	*Journal of Translation*

KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit.* Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976–.
KUSAT	*Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*
M&L	*Mind and Language*
MemCog	*Memory & Cognition*
MSA	*Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*
MTSR	*Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NedTheoT	*Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschift*
NT	*Novum Testamentum*
Or	*Orientalia*
PPSci	*Perspectives on Psychological Science*
PPsych	*Pastoral Psychology*
PSB	*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*
QS	*Quaderni di semantica*
RC	*Religion Compass*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RHR	*Revue de I'histoire des religions*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
SCog	*Social Cognition*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.* 15 vols. Edited by G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren; Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974–.
TGUOS	*Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*
THAT	*Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament.* 2 Vols.; Edited by E. Jenni and C. Westermann; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971.
TLOT	*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.* 3 vols. Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann; Translated by M. E. Biddle; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997.
TynBull	*Tyndale Bulletin*
UF	*Ugarit Forschungen* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1969–).
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDP-V	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

Abstract

This thesis has two primary goals: (1) to analyze the countours and extent of the generic category of deity in the Hebrew Bible, and (2) propose a semantic base for the term. It begins with a description of the fields associated with cognitive theory, and particularly cognitive linguistics. Chapter 2 examines the cognitive origins of notions of deity and discusses how this heritage is reflected within the biblical texts. The third chapter examines the conceptualization of Israel's prototypical deity, YHWH, beginning from the earliest divine profiles detectable within the text. In Chapter 4 the discussion returns to the generic notion of deity, highlighting references within the biblical text to deities other than YHWH. The conclusion synthesizes the different sections of the thesis, sketching the origins and development of the Hebrew Bible's representation of both prototypical and non-prototypical notions of deity. Implications for further research are then briefly discussed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Summary and Outline[1]

> "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened,
> and you will be like the gods, knowing good and evil."
> Gen 3:5[2]

This comment from the serpent that the man and the woman would be "like the gods" upon eating

the forbidden fruit, combined with the expectation's realization in v. 22, attests to a view held at least

by the author that a generic category of deity existed, and that knowledge of good and evil constituted

at least one of the features prototypical of members of that category. Similarly prototypical and even

non-prototypical features may be teased out of texts found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. The goal of

this thesis is to examine those features within a methodological framework constructed primarily

upon the insights of cognitive linguistics in order to better understand the nature and development of

the Hebrew Bible's conceptualization of the generic notion of deity.

It will seek to show that the category "deity" was not clearly delineated in the early history of the

Bible, but was determined largely by the usage of the term within the broader Syro-Palestinian

cultural matrix. This usage was not focused extrinsically on the boundaries of the category, but

intrinsically on its prototypical members. As the power struggles of surrounding nations convulsed

and fragmented the nation of Israel, and ethnic and cultural boundary maintenance became more

central to the worldviews of the biblical authors, it became necessary to delineate and

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[1] A glossary of terms unique to the field of cognitive linguistics is provided in Appendix A.

[2] For English biblical texts, this thesis will follow the NRSV unless otherwise noted. This verse differs in the use of the plural "gods" where the NRSV renders "God." The reasoning for this choice is offered in §4.1, nn. 1 & 2.

compartmentalize the category, granting YHWH an exclusive taxonomy. This was achieved both through the consolidation of other divine roles in the character of YHWH and through the creation of new ones. Because the concept of deity was continuously being adapted according to the social, religious, and political exigencies of each generation, it cannot be adequately understood through a basic and succinct *definition*. Rather, as with all complex cultural phenomena, it must be *described*.[3]

After first discussing cognitive linguistics and its employment in the field of biblical studies (Chapter 1), I will proceed in Chapter 2 with a discussion of cognitive anthropology and universal concepts of the divine. Using structures common to the human experience as our point of departure will provide a more secure foundation for subsequent interpretive decisions. The chapter will conclude with linguistic analysis of the three Hebrew words for "deity," with special attention paid to the relationship of the words' biblical usage to that of their cognates in other Northwest Semitic languages. Chapter 3 will address the conceptualization of YHWH, beginning with the two distinct divine profiles represented respectively within the exodus and patriarchal traditions, and then moving on to the conceptual blending of those profiles and subsequent conceptual developments. The relationship of those profiles to broader Northwest Semitic deity concepts will be highlighted. In chapter 4 I will examine the conceptualization of deities other than YHWH and use the data gathered to that point to identify the conceptual base for the notion of "deity" as well as prominent domains and some common matrices. A final chapter will briefly summarize the thesis' main conclusions.

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[3] James Barr states, "Complex social and religious movements cannot be defined in a few words: what has to be offered is not a definition, but an extended description" (Barr, *Fundamentalism* [London: SCM Press, 1977], 1).

1.2 Cognitive Linguistics

In general terms, cognitive science is the interdisciplinary study of the human mind and its attendant processes. A few different disciplines within this broad approach will be discussed during the course of this thesis, although in light of the mediating nature of language in the study of the biblical authors' approach to deity, cognitive linguistics will be its primary focus. Cognitive linguistics constitutes a broad linguistic approach that began in the 1980s and applies the insights of cognitive science to the study of language.[4] D. Geeraerts describes it as "an approach to the analysis of natural language that focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information."[5] The most fundamental hypothesis that guides a cognitive-linguistic approach is that language is not an autonomous faculty that exists outside the purview of human cognition. Rather, it is understood as one of many of the integrated functions of that cognition. Put more simply, language originates in, and is fundamentally shaped by, how we perceive the world. It does not exist apart from that perception. This hypothesis has many implications vis-à-vis meaning. To begin, if language is a function of our overall cognitive experience, rather than a separate system we simply access for communication, linguistic meaning will be based on that overall experience.[6] Croft and Cruse explain, "categories and structures in semantics, syntax, morphology and phonology are built up from our

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[4] While it has supporters and critics, my incorporation of the methodology does not include the complex areas of most frequent contention. The authors cited represent the leaders in the field. For instance, R. Langacker served as president of the International Cognitive Linguistics Association from 1997–1999. D. Geeraerts founded the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* and is the editor of the *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. J. Taylor is the managing editor of *Cognitive Linguistics Research* and is on the editorial boards of both *Functions of Language* and *Cognitive Linguistics*.

[5] Geeraerts, *Diachronic Prototype Semantics: A Contribution to Historic Lexicology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 7.

[6] On this, see D. Geeraerts, "A Rough Guide to Cognitive Linguistics," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings* (ed. D. Geeraerts; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 5–6.

cognition of specific utterances on specific occasions of use."[7] We know what words mean because we

have experience with their usage, not because they have inherent and autonomous semantic value.[8]

Next, if language is a cognitive faculty, conveying meaning relies on conceptualization, or the

mental mapping of an item. According to R. Langacker,

> The word concept alludes to the claim that meaning resides in conceptualization (in the broadest sense of that term). Semantic structures are simply the conceptual structures evoked by linguistic expressions, and viable semantic analysis ultimately reduces to conceptual analysis. However, an expression's meaning consists of more than just conceptual content—equally important to linguistic semantics is how that content is shaped and construed. There are many different ways to construe a given body of content, and each construal represents a distinct meaning; this is my intent in saying that an expression imposes a particular image on the content it evokes.[9]

These metaphorical structures establish patterns of understanding, and are often called *schemas* in

cognitive linguistics.[10] Linguists have identified a number of basic image schemas that aid in our

construal of semantic units. Some common schemas are *space* schemas (UP-DOWN, BACK-FRONT, NEAR-

FAR), *source/path/goal* schemas (TO, INTO, TOWARD, FROM), *container/containment* schemas (IN-OUT,

WITHIN-WITHOUT), and *force* schemas (COMPULSION, BLOCKAGE, ENABLEMENT).

The UP-DOWN schema is particularly relevant to our discussion. This schema maps abstractions

conceptualized in terms of a vertical relationship. The UP-DOWN schema most commonly reflects the

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[7] W. Croft and D. A. Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3–4.

[8] This distinguishes cognitive linguistics from generative grammar, which subordinates the level of language usage to the level of structure. In cognitive linguistics, language structure and usage occur at the same level. Cf. Geeraerts and Cuyckens, "Introducing Cognitive Linguistics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, 3–7.

[9] Langacker, *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar. Second Edition* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), xv. Langacker elsewhere describes "construal" as "our multifaceted capacity to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways" (Langacker, "Cognitive Grammar," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, 435).

[10] For recent discussion, see the essays in B. Hampe, ed., *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005). Schemas are also called "conceptual metaphors" (cf. G. Lakoff, "Image Metaphors," *MSA* 2.3 [1987]: 219–22). See §1.1.4 below.

relative position of an entity on a vertical axis. While the down position can extend below that axis'

zero point, the focus is usually trained on the space above it. Research has shown that this schema is

indigenous to human experience and cognition, and that a vast array of abstractions is intuitively

mapped against it. For example:[11]

GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN
       Things are looking *up*
       We are at an all-time *low*
HAPPY IS UP; SAD IS DOWN
       My spirits are *up*
       I'm feeling *down*
VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN
       She has *high* standards
       I wouldn't *stoop* that *low*
CONTROL IS UP; SUBJUGATION IS DOWN
       He's in a *superior* position
       You are *under* my control

The above conceptual metaphors all map against the same image-schema:

HIGH   ⬆   good, happy,
             virtuous, sovereign
             healthy, conscious

NEUTRAL

             bad, sad,
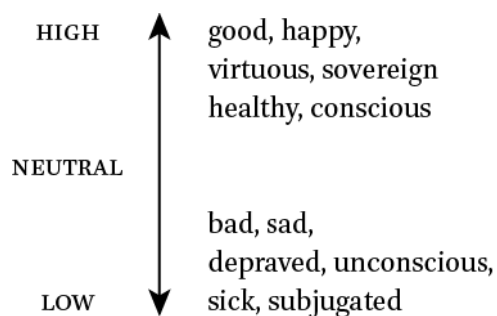   depraved, unconscious,
LOW   ⬇   sick, subjugated

Fig. 1.1

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[11] The examples are drawn primarily from J. I. Saeed, *Semantics. Second Edition* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 347.

Next, because our cognition as a whole contributes to language, meaning draws upon our "encyclopedic" knowledge rather than our "dictionary" knowledge. No one's understanding of words is strictly governed by dictionary definitions. Our experiences in the past with words and concepts will be brought to bear on how we understand them in a given context. It also means a lexical item is not governed by a strict linguistic boundary.[12] Rather, as Langacker states, "a lexical item draws upon (taps into) general knowledge in a gradient manner, with no specific cut off point."[13] He provides the following illustration of these differences:

(a) Dictionary Semantics   (b) Encyclopedia Semantics
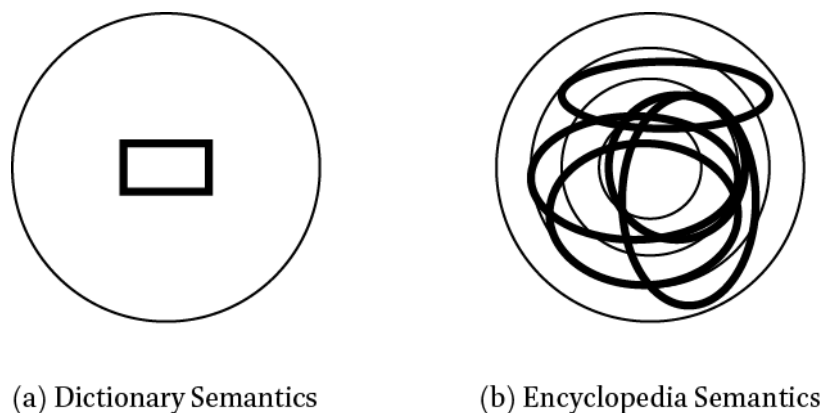
Fig. 1.2

As an example, if someone at work says, "Man, it feels like a Monday," an adequate understanding of the speaker's meaning is not achieved by awareness of the dictionary definition of Monday as "The day following Sunday and preceding Tuesday, traditionally regarded as the second day of the week,

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[12] There is also not a sharp boundary separating the two kinds of knowledge. See Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 30; Geeraerts, "Prototype Theory: Prospects and Problems of Prototype Theory," in *Cognitive Linguistics: Basic Readings*, 142–43. For encyclopedic knowledge, see J. R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 81–98; R. W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume 1* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987), 154–66. See also Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 31–33.

[13] "Context, Cognition, and Semantics," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 188.

but now frequently considered the first (following the weekend)."[14] Rather, we must be aware that in western cultures the workweek generally begins on Monday, and that the end of that time off and the beginning of another five-day work period is commonly viewed within those cultures as stressful or depressing. Any knowledge or experience an individual has about or with a given linguistic item has the potential to contribute to the production of meaning, but there is usually a hierarchy of relevant knowledge that becomes conventionalized within a culture's use of particular semantic units.

This all contributes to an understanding of meaning as "the accessing of a cognitive structure embedded in patterns of knowledge and belief."[15] When a statement is heard, the hearer intuitively hierarchizes the conceptual structures that they have come to understand to be symbolized by that semantic unit in order to *profile*, or designate, a particular sense as the most likely intended sense. The following describes some of the models that have been proposed to illustrate the conceptual structures our minds use to construe linguistic content and determine meaning. This section will incorporate theories associated with the fields of cognitive grammar[16] and cognitive semantics.[17]

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[14] This definition comes from the online *Oxford English Dictionary* (http://www.oed.com).

[15] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 26; cf. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization*, 83.

[16] Cognitive grammar views language as reducible to three kinds of entities: (1) phonological structure, or the aural/visual expression of language; (2) semantic structure, or the meaning of an expression; and (3) the symbolic relation, or the mutual symbolic invocation of each by the other. In other words, a spoken or written word, phrase, or clause maintains a symbolic association with a semantic structure. This differs from other grammatical theories in rejecting the central and independent function of syntax. For cognitive grammarians, syntax is one of the symbolic relationships that mediate phonological and semantic structures. See J. R. Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20–26; cf. R. W. Langacker, *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 14–26.

[17] Like cognitive grammar, cognitive semantics rejects the traditional division of linguistics into phonology, syntax, and pragmatics, instead focusing on semantics (meaning) as *meaning construction* and *knowledge representation*. Meaning, rather than being formulaic and binary, is conceptual and nuanced. For a helpful introduction, see L. Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics. Volume 1: Conceptual Structuring Systems* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).

1.2.1 Profiles and Bases

According to Langacker, "The semantic value of an expression . . . derives from the designation of a specific entity identified and characterized by its position within a larger configuration."[18] In other words, concepts do not exist autonomously; they must be understood in relation to other concepts.[19] For example, the word *radius* cannot be understood apart from the concept *circle*. Fig. 1.3 illustrates this relationship. The bold straight line is what the word *radius* "profiles," or designates, within the configuration, and is thus called the "profile."[20] The circle represents the "base" against which the word *radius* is understood.[21]
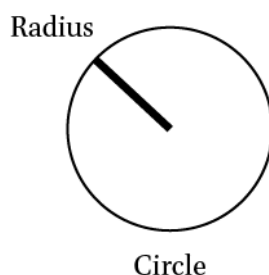
Fig. 1.3

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[18] Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 1.183.

[19] "A central principles of cognitive semantics is that concepts do not occur as isolated, atomic units in the mind, but can only be comprehended (by the speaker as well as by the analyst) in a context of presupposed, background knowledge structures" (T. C. Clausner and W. Croft, "Domains and Image Schemas," *CogLing* 10.1 [1999]: 2).

[20] The profile is not to be confused with an expression's referent (Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, 194). The former is a conceptualization that inhabits a mental space, while the latter is an instantiation in the real world of that concept. This organization of conceptual structures originated with a theory called Frame Semantics, which was pioneered primarily by Charles J. Fillmore in the 1970s and 80s (Fillmore, "An Alternative to Checklist Theories of Meaning," in *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* [ed. C. Cogen et al.; Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society, 1975], 123–31; Fillmore, "Frame Semantics," in *Linguistics in the Morning Calm* [Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Company, 1982], 111–37; Fillmore, "Frames and the Semantics of Understanding," *QS* 6 [1985]: 222–54). Cf. Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 7–39; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 28–31.

[21] This example is used as an illustration in several publications: Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 1.86–87; Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 14–16; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 29–30.

J. Taylor, whose model I will follow, defines a base as "the conceptual content that is inherently, intrinsically, and obligatorily invoked by the expression."[22] All semantic expressions require a conceptual base for an adequate understanding. Many semantic units have more complicated conceptual bases, and many incorporate more than one profile. For example, we may profile the concept of husband or wife against the same base:
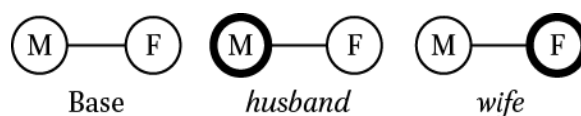
Fig. 1.4

The concept of *aunt* is profiled against a more complicated kinship system (Fig. 1.5). The parent/child, spouse, sibling, and male/female concepts are all required for an adequate conceptualization.[23]

Fig. 1.5

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[22] Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, 195.

[23] This and the following images are adapted from R. W. Langacker, "Theory, Method, and Description in Cognitive Grammar: A Case Study," in *Cognitive Linguistics Today* (ed. B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and P. James Melia; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 15–16.

1.2.2 Domains and Matrices

There is also other knowledge that is more general and relative that can be indicated by the context of a semantic expression, and in the current theoretical model it is organized into what are called "domains."[24] The word suggests a conceptual field within which there can be movement and differentiation, as opposed to the word "base," which suggests a foundation.[25] There is not always a clear difference between a base and a domain, but Taylor suggests considering "how intrinsic the broader conceptualization is to the semantic unit, how immediately relevant it is, and to what extent aspects of the broader conceptualization are specifically elaborated."[26] For instance, *Thumbnail* profiles against *thumb* as its base. *Thumb*, in turn, profiles against *hand*, which itself profiles against *arm*, which profiles against *torso*, or even *human body*. It would be imprecise to say *thumb* profiles against *human body* as its base, though. Rather, *human body* constitutes the domain within which multiple profile/base relationships may operate, with or without direct reference to the former.[27]

Just as a domain may comprise multiple different profiles and bases, most semantic expressions can be conceptualized against multiple domains.[28] Take, for instance, the earlier example using the notion of Monday drudgery. The profile and base of *Monday* may be illustrated as follows:

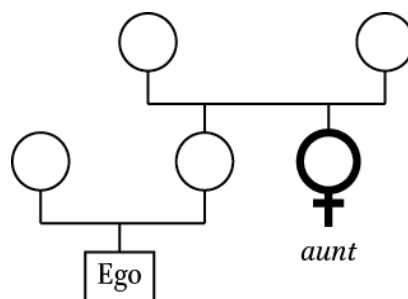[24] Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, 195–203. Other linguists do not distinguish between a base and a domain: Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 1.147–56; Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 24–32; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God",* 28–31.

[25] "The term 'domain' implies a degree of cognitive independence not found in a dimension [base]" (Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 25).

[26] Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, 195–96.

[27] For the question of the domain for *human body*, see Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 1.147–54.

[28] Taylor, *Cognitive Grammar*, 196–201.
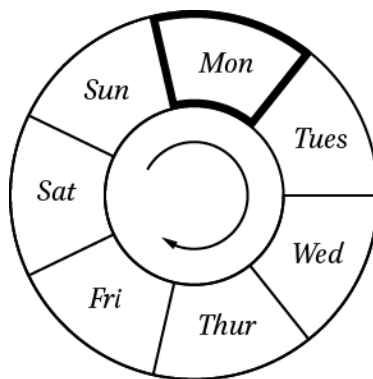
Fig. 1.6

In order for our statement to be adequately understood, the domains of the Western workweek, the weekend, and the drudgery of the "rat-race" are required (among others). Fig. 1.7 illustrates the conceptual matrix that forms to activate the appropriate semantic sense. The organization of multiple domains (here D^1–D^4)[29] into a conventionalized semantic construct will be called a "matrix."[30]
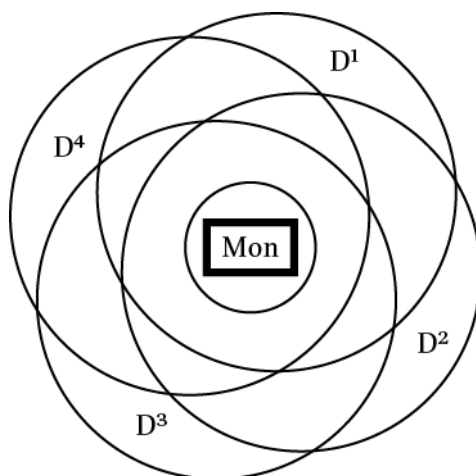
Fig. 1.7

[29] This is for illustrative purposes only. I am not identifying specific domains.

[30] G. Lakoff's term for this configuration is Ideal Cognitive Model, or ICM (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987], 68–76), but "matrix" has been more common in the scholarship (Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 25–27).

In the above illustration, each domain appears to contribute equally to the overall matrix, but in reality the different domains are hierarchized according to a number of factors. Often semantic meaning requires the foregrounding of one domain against another. According to Langacker,

> The semantic value of an expression is consequently not exhausted by specifying its designatum and listing the inventory of domains in its matrix. A predicate is further characterized by its ranking of domains in terms of their prominence and likelihood of activation.[31]

We might illustrate this hierarchizing in the following way (Fig. 1.8), with the darker circles representing the more prominent semantic domains:
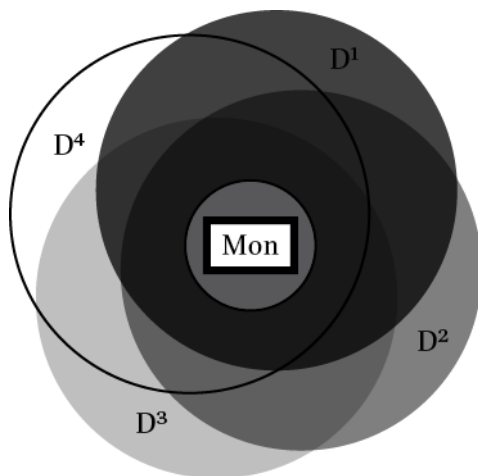
Fig. 1.8

A simple example that involves a variety of domains is that of the term *mother*.[32] G. Lakoff

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[31] Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 1.165.

[32] See, originally, Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 74–76, 79–89; cf. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization*, 86–87; Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 31.

identifies five different domains that may be activated by the term in reference to a female human:[33]

(1) Birth domain: "the person who gives birth is the *mother*."
(2) Genetic domain: "the female who contributes the genetic material is the *mother*."
(3) Nurturance domain: "the female adult who nurtures and raises a child is the *mother*."
(4) Marital domain: "the wife of the father is the *mother*."
(5) Genealogical domain: "the closest female ancestor is the *mother*."

In the prototypical matrix associated with the concept *mother*, these domains all converge, with the birth domain generally prioritized. Any particular instantiation of the concept, however, may profile against any number of these domains. For instance, a *birth mother* may not raise her child or be married to the father, thus only activating domains (1), (2), and (5), with domain (1) prioritized. A *donor mother* does not give birth to her child, and may only activate domain (2). A *foster mother* will not have given birth to the child or have contributed genetic material, activating only domains (3) and (4), with the former taking priority. In each case, the context or some qualifier will make it possible for informed listeners (those with the proper encyclopedic knowledge) to identify the hierarchy of domains and adequately interpret the term's meaning.

1.2.3 Prototype Theory

An important contribution made by cognitive linguistics is Prototype Theory, which developed out of research within the field of cognitive psychology. This research began with studies that showed colors

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[33] Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, 74. He uses the term "model," but the concept is the same as our term "domain" (cf. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization*, 86).

have natural focal areas, despite the lack of boundaries along the spectrum.[34] One shade of red could be more "red" than another. Some scholars wondered if this extended to other kinds of conceptual categories, and a series of experiments conducted in the 1970s provided empirical evidence that it did. In an early experiment, E. Rosch asked psychology students to rate a number of items according to how well they represented the image or meaning of a given category term (the categories were *furniture, fruit, vehicle, weapon, vegetable, carpenter's tool, bird, sport, toy*). She discovered that there was a high degree of consistency in the way the different items were ranked, and particularly among those items considered most representative of the categories. An apple was consistently ranked as a good example of "fruit"; a strawberry was a slightly less good example; a fig was a poor example. This consistency suggests categories have internal graded structure; certain items are better examples of a given category than others.[35] She described the fundamental process of categorization as follows:

> [P]eople form and use an idea and/or image of the category that represents the category to them, and which is more like (or more easily generates) the good than the poorer examples of the category. That representation often serves as the reference point to which people refer when performing tasks relevant to the category, such as identifying something as a member of the category or using the category in some other way.[36]

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[34] Rosch explains, "For English speakers, some colors are judged better examples of basic color names than others, and the better an example a color is, the shorter the time it takes to name it, the better the memory for the color in memory tests, and, for children, the earlier the color name is learned" (Rosch, "'Slow Lettuce,'" 94). The findings were the same for the Dani tribe in New Guinea, who do not have terms for different hues in their language. See also B. Berlin and P. Kay, *Basic Color Terms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); E. R. Heider, "'Focal' Color Areas and the Development of Color Names," *DevPsych* 4 (1971): 447–55; Rosch, "On the Internal Structure of Perceptual and Semantic Categories," in *Cognitive development and the Acquisition of Language* (ed. T. E. Moore; New York: Academic Press, 1973), 111–44; Mervis, Catlin, and Rosch, "Development of the Structure of Color Categories," *DevPsych* 11 (1975): 54–60; Rosch, "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories," 192–233.

[35] Rosch, "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories," 197–99.

[36] Rosch, "'Slow Lettuce,'" 99.

It is thus similarity to a prototype that determines membership in a category,[37] conflicting with the classical approach, which views membership as binary (100% member or non-member) and determined by necessary and sufficient features.[38] Prototypes are not particular members of a category, but cognitive exemplars or ideal conceptualizations.[39] We conceive of categories according to broad outlines rather than extensive details.[40] If asked to imagine the concept *bird*, for instance, most will imagine something closer to the shape of (a) rather than the detail and specificity of (b):

(a)   (b)

Fig. 1.9

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[37] The notion of "similarity" is itself quite a complicated concept that will not be dealt with here. See J. A. Hampton, "Associative and Similarity-Based Processes in Categorization Decisions," *MemCog* 25 (1997): 625–40.

[38] This approach has been universal since Aristotle. Taylor provides a helpful summary of this method of categorization (Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization*, 21–37). He identifies four basic assumptions inherent in that method (23–24): (1) "Categories are defined in terms of a conjunction of necessary and sufficient features"; (2) "Features are binary"; (3) "Categories have clear boundaries"; (4) "All members of a category have equal status."

[39] Describing developments in the field of prototype theory, P. Violi states, "It became clear that it was not possible, at least for semantic applications, to think of the prototype as the concrete instance of the most prototypical member of any given category, and consequently as a real individual. Instead, it was necessary to turn it into a mental construal: an abstract entity made up of prototypical properties. In his way the prototype, being the result of a mental construction, frees itself from any concrete evidence, and as such may well never be actualized in reality as any real instance" (Violi, "Prototypicality, Typicality, and Context," in *Meaning and Cognition: A Multidisciplinary Approach* [ed. L. Albertazzi; Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000], 107).

[40] This is limited to the basic level of categorization, which is the first level of categorization learned in childhood, the most common level used in language and cognition (Rosch, et al., "Basic Objects in Natural Categories," 383–84; Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization*, 48–51), and the level indicated by default throughout this thesis. The superordinate level of categorization brings together more disparate concepts that cannot be consolidated within a single illustration. One cannot draw an outline of the categories *animal* or *furniture*, but one can easily draw an outline of a *dog* or a *chair*. At the subordinate level, where we would find *mallard* or *beanbag chair*, there is a degree of specification that requires more detailed conceptualization. Prototype effects are found at each level, but we are concerned primarily with the basic level.

Three particularly relevant axioms have developed out of this approach to categorization. First, categories are not defined by a set of necessary and sufficient features, but by some manner of conceptual proximity to a prototype (physical, functional, etc.). Second, category membership is usually graded (categories have better and poorer members).[41] Third, categories usually have fuzzy boundaries. Attention is focused inward on the center of the category and its typical members, not outward on its boundaries or total membership. Categories are learned not through delineation of the boundaries, but through familiarization with the prototypical members.

1.2.4 Metaphor

Metaphor is a critical aspect of conceptualization that has received a great deal of attention within the field of cognitive linguistics.[42] Chief among the contributions of that field is the conclusion that metaphor is not just a way of speaking or writing, but a fundamental way of thinking.[43] We make sense of the abstract through association with the concrete. Metaphors, according to R. Gibbs,

> reflect underlying conceptual mappings in which people metaphorically conceptualize of vague, abstract domains of knowledge (e.g., time, causation, spatial orientation, ideas, emotions, concepts of understanding) in terms of more specific, familiar, and concrete knowledge (e.g., embodied experiences).[44]

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[41] W. Kempton, *The Folk Classification of Ceramics: A Study of Cognitive Prototypes* (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

[42] See, for instance, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980); Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought. Second Edition* (ed. A. Ortony; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 202–51; M. Tendahl and R. Gibbs, "Complementary Perspectives on Metaphor: Cognitive Linguistics and Relevance Theory," *JPrag* 40 (2008): 1823–64.

[43] "Metaphor is the nexus of mind and language" (Tendahl & Gibbs, "Complementary Perspectives on Metaphor," 1823).

[44] Gibbs, "Cognitive Linguistics and Metaphor Research: Past Successes, Skeptical Questions, Future Challenges," *DELTA* 22 (2006): 3–4. See also M. DesCamp and E. Sweetser, "Metaphors for God: Why and How Do Our Choices Matter for Humans? The Application of Contemporary Cognitive Linguistics Research to the Debate on God and Metaphor," *PPsych* 53.3 (2005): 215.

These conceptual mappings begin early in life and govern the way we conceive of and understand the abstract world. This process facilitates understanding that may otherwise be difficult to obtain.

Obviously this bears significantly on the way the authors of the biblical texts conceived of the God of Israel. Metaphors of all kinds abound in reference to God.[45] Some conceptualizations of deity found in the Bible have actually been shown to constitute near universal conceptual mappings that continue down to the present day.

Two related concerns must be raised about the study of the metaphorical representation of deity in the Hebrew Bible. First, it has become standard within confessional scholarship, and even some critical scholarship, to insist that God is described within the Bible through metaphor because the nature of deity is transcendent and indescribable. Thus, anthropomorphism and corporeality are just consciously inadequate ways of approximating communication of the incommunicable. T. Jacobsen was an early proponent of this notion, writing that metaphors "constitute the only means if communicating the experience of the Numinous."[46] M. Korpel, writing in 1990 about Ugaritic and Biblical descriptions of deity, asserted that anthropomorphic presentations of the Israelite deity were "merely a way of speaking."[47] M. Klingbeil manifests a similar approach in his treatment of YHWH as warrior fighting from heaven, stating that anthropomorphism "has to be seen in terms of an interactive act of speech that hints at the literally inexplicable realities connected with the character

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[45] M. DesCamp and E. Sweetser identify forty-four separate metaphors for God in the Hebrew Bible and fifty in the New Testament. Space limits their analysis of Hebrew Bible metaphors to the most significant six: God is (1) potter, (2) king, (3) rock, (4) bear, (5) woman, and (6) father (DesCamp and Sweetser, "Metaphors for God," 226–29).

[46] T. Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1976), 3–4.

[47] M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990), 627.

of God."[48] M. Brettler's analysis of the Israelite metaphor of God as king argues that, "If the entire vocabulary used of God were distinct to him, he would be 'incomparable,' but also not grounded in human experiences, and therefore, not understandable. For this reason, biblical rhetoric uses language typically belonging to the human sphere and applies it to God."[49]

This approach has been met in recent years with significant criticism. First, there is no indication anywhere that the biblical authors were at all conscious of such a restriction on their language. Next, cognitive linguistics asserts that such conceptual mapping is intrinsic to human cognition. Abstractions in general are metaphorized in speech as well as thought, not just ineffable deity. Finally, this theory is pragmatically self-defeating; an understanding of deity that cannot be couched in human language or experience cannot be communicated, and therefore cannot be shared.[50] Shared understandings can only be based on communicable concepts. Israelite conceptualizations of deity were determined by the conceptual mapping achieved by literature, cult, and oral tradition.

The second concern treats the dichotomy of literalness and metaphor. Traditional exegesis tends to assign anything and everything to figurative speech that does not fit into a contemporary philosophical view of deity as incorporeal, omniscient, and omnipresent. This obviously has more to do with theological presuppositions than with any criteria for distinguishing the literal from the figurative, but the practice shines a light on the lack of any such criteria. What is metaphor, exactly,

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[48] M. Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Switzerland: University Fribourg, 1999), 23.

[49] M. Z. Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

[50] D. Aaron's 2001 investigation of metaphor and descriptions of the divine raises the same concern: "If humans cannot accommodate ideas about or descriptions of the deity except through figurative forms of speech, how does the human intellect manage to perceive what it is that it is supposed to describe?" (Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 35). Apophatic theology, or theology that describes God in terms of what he is *not*, is entirely alien to the biblical perspectives.

and where does it stop and literalness begin? A number of attempts have been made to establish academic definitions and boundaries, but there is yet no consensus. The most productive and sensitive approach I have found is that of D. Aaron, which avoids the traditional binary view of metaphor *or* literalness, and suggests the two relationships form a spectrum. Aaron also adds another designation for relationships falling between the poles of metaphor and literality, calling them "ascriptive." Statements in this category "equate things *literally* without insisting upon ontological identity."[51] As an example, GOD IS A SHIELD seems *prima facie* to be purely metaphorical (cf. Ps 84:12a), but as God is conceived of as quite literally shielding Israel from her enemies, he qualifies in a literal sense as a "shield."[52] He literally functions as a shield without being identified ontologically with a small metal shield with a handle. There is an overlap of literalness and metaphor in this statement, leading to Aaron's proposal of the third "ascriptive" category mediating the two.

1.3 Cognitive Linguistics in Biblical Studies

1.3.1 Introduction

Biblical studies has tended in the past to lag quite a bit in the incorporation of newer interdisciplinary methodologies, but cognitive linguistics and prototype theory have been utilized for several years now by scholars of the Hebrew Bible and early Judaism. Some of the leading scholars of cognitive linguistics have also found value in incorporating discussion of the biblical texts into their own scholarship. Although not explicitly incorporating cognitive linguistics, J. Louw and E. Nida skirt the field with their 1988/89 *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New

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[51] Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 59.
[52] Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 58–59.

York: United Bible Societies). D. Clines' *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, published by Sheffield

Academic Press between 1993 and 2011, also incorporates a more sensitive approach to semantic

domains that draws from cognitive linguistics.[53] In a 1994 *JBL* article, E. van Wolde described

innovations in general linguistics that emphasized the need to treat language as inseparable from the

language user, although the word "cognitive" appears nowhere in the publication.[54] After the turn of

the millennium, a number of studies appeared that explicitly integrated cognitive linguistics into the

study of the biblical and related texts.[55]

An Academy Colloquium held in Amsterdam in 2002, entitled "The Book of Job: Suffering and

Cognition in Context," represents one of the most significant attempts to explore the overlap of these

two disciplines.[56] The colloquium was led by van Wolde, then of Tilburg University, and included

biblical scholars D. J. A. Clines, C. A. Newsom, T. Muraoka, and J. K. Aitken, as well as noted linguists D.

Geeraerts, J. Taylor, and R. Langacker. The theme was the analysis of Job 28 from a cognitive-linguistic

perspective.

Lexicology has benefited the most from the incorporation of cognitive linguistics, with several

publications coming out of C. H. J. van der Merwe's projects at the University of Stellenbosch in South

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[53] Cf. Clines, "The Challenge of Hebrew Lexicography Today," in *Congress Volume, Ljubljana 2007* (ed. A. Lemaire; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 87–98.

[54] Van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study of the Hebrew Bible, Illustrated with Noah and Job," *JBL* 113.1 (1994): 19–35.

[55] For example, Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 3–4; C. H. J. van der Merwe, "Some Recent Trends in Biblical Hebrew Linguistics: A Few Pointers Towards a More Comprehensive Model of Language Use," *HS* 44 (2003), 20–24; van der Merwe, "Biblical Exegesis, Cognitive Linguistics and Hypertext," in *Congress Volume, Leiden 2004* (ed. A. Lemaire; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 255–80; DesCamp, *Metaphor and Ideology*; van der Merwe, "A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective on הִנֵּה in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth," *HS* 48 (2007): 101–40; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Word for*; R. Williamson, Jr., "Pesher: A Cognitive Model of the Genre," *DSD* 17 (2010): 307–31; D. L. Rodriguez, "תחת: A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of the Biblical Hebrew Lexeme" (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2011).

[56] The published volume is *Job 28: Cognition in Context*. Cf. van Wolde, "Cognitive Linguistics and the Hebrew Bible: Illustrated with a Study of Job 28 and Job 38," in *The Professorship of Semitic Languages at Uppsala University 400 years* (ed. B. Isaksson, et al.; Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2007), 247–77.

Africa.[57] Other fields have also found value in the approach. For instance, several articles in a 2010

issue of *Dead Sea Discoveries* dedicated to genre in the Qumran literature incorporated a cognitive

linguistic approach.[58] Particularly relevant to the present topic, a Bible translator named T. R.

Wardlaw published in 2008 a cognitive-semantic investigation of the words used to refer to YHWH

within the Pentateuch. The publication, *Conceptualizing Words for "God" within the Pentateuch*, has

some important similarities to the current thesis, but also has some significant differences. This

section concludes with a brief outline of Wardlaw's study. I then follow with a description of my own

goals and methods.

1.3.2 Conceptualizing Words for "God" within the Pentateuch

Wardlaw's investigation begins with the question, "What do the key terms יהוה, אלהים, and אֵל mean

within the MT of the Pentateuch in the context of translating the Christian canon into minority

languages?"[59] The foundation for answering this question is laid in the introduction in three sections.

First, Wardlaw isolates the word "meaning" and offers comments about what a cognitive approach has

to say, specifically about lexical meaning in proper nouns. In the second section, he explains his

reasoning for settling on the final canonical shape of the Pentateuch as the locus for meaning. For

Wardlaw, the fixed literary context of the final canon is more firm a foundation from a

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[57] In addition to the dissertation mentioned above in n. 58, see van der Merwe, "Towards a Principled Working Model for Biblical Hebrew Lexicology," *JNSL* 30.1 (2004): 119–37; van der Merwe, "Biblical Hebrew Lexicology: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective," in *KUSAT* 6 (2006): 87–112; van der Merwe, "Lexical Meaning in Biblical Hebrew and Cognitive Semantics: A Case Study," *Bib* 87.1 (2006): 85–95; C. L. Miller-Naudé and van der Merwe, "הִנֵּה and Mirativity in Biblical Hebrew," *HS* 52 (2011): 53–81; Tiana Bosman, "Biblical Hebrew Lexicology and Cognitive Semantics: A Study of Lexemes of Affliction" (PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2011).

[58] Williamson, "Pesher"; Newsom, "Pairing Research Questions and Theories of Genre: A Case Study of the Hodayot," 270–88; B. G. Wright III, "Joining the Club: A Suggestion about Genre in Early Jewish Texts," 289–314; J. J. Collins, "Epilogue: Genre Analysis and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 418–30.

[59] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 1.

methodological point of view than the hypothetical divisions and arrangements that result from historical-critical approaches. A canonical approach provides a single "text-system" for analysis, and acknowledges the importance of the "contextual usage of words within the text-system."[60] The last section explains the need to restrict the discussion to the Pentateuch. In addition to the manageability of the smaller corpus, the Pentateuch was viewed in antiquity as a literary unit of superior authority. It also established the literary and conceptual frameworks that governed later compositions and reflections on divinity. It is therefore preferable to limit discussion to that corpus.

The main body of Wardlaw's investigation is divided into two sections. The first provides a thorough lexical analysis of the words for "God" in the Pentateuch, while the second is more literary in nature, and is not directly relevant to our analysis. Wardlaw adopts a cognitive-linguistic approach for the first in order to capture "the distinction between the conceptualization of words for 'God' as described by traditional philological scholarship and the conceptualization suggested from within the literary structure of the Pentateuch itself."[61] In other words, this approach is sensitive to the meaning produced by the context of the biblical canon itself, rather than by the hypothetical contexts. That is the level of meaning of superior relevance to Wardlaw. The most significant conclusions from this section of Wardlaw's publication, for this thesis' purposes, are the senses he describes for the profiles אלהים and אל. The latter has two primary senses: first, it is a class term meaning "deity, god," and second, hyponomously, it is a title (i.e., "God") that has reference to YHWH.

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[60] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 12.
[61] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 3.

1.4 The Method and Goals of This Study

I begin this section by contrasting my own approach with that of Wardlaw. Four methodological decisions can be highlighted. First, Wardlaw is concerned primarily with designations for YHWH, while I am concerned more broadly with the generic concept of deity, and only secondarily with unique conceptualizations of YHWH.[62] A primary conclusion of this thesis will be that YHWH was originally conceived of as one of numerous members of the generic "deity" category, and was only distinguished from it in later periods in response to political, social, and religious environments and events. Second, my investigation covers the entire Hebrew Bible rather than the Pentateuch alone. While this significantly expands the amount of text with which I must potentially interact, the number of verses that address the generic nature of deity rather than a specific or unique conceptualization of the God of Israel are limited.[63] Third, while Wardlaw dedicates a great deal of discussion to past scholarship on the Hebrew Bible's designations for YHWH, there is little scholarship available that directly addresses the generic concept of deity. The three studies to which I will most frequently refer are that of Wardlaw, Smith's *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, and J. Burnett's *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*.[64] Lastly, I do not prioritize a canonical view over and against a historical-critical approach. Rather, I seek to isolate specific conceptualizations of deity within their respective diachronic and synchronic contexts.

This last choice merits further discussion. Wardlaw makes a great deal out of his decision to

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[62] I dedicate the second chapter to discussion of the conceptualization of YHWH, and the third to the generic concept of deity. YHWH is the Israelite prototype for deity and thus must form the conceptual reference point for any exploration of its periphery.

[63] I will prioritize those readings where deity apart from YHWH is described or where an aspect of YHWH's divinity can be correlated with a more generic concept found elsewhere, whether within the biblical or cognate literature.

[64] Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

prioritize the final shape of the biblical text. While this is prompted in part by the goal of his study vis-à-vis contemporary Bible translation within a Christian context, several comments suggest a polemical view against the historical-critical method, despite the presence of some marginal qualification.[65] He states, for instance, "comparativists seek the historical referent of each word for 'God' by noting its use in theoretically analogous stages of religious development within the ancient Near Eastern *milieu*."[66] He also expresses concern that a comparative approach "levels the particular and distinctive conceptualization given to these words within the text of the Pentateuch by giving priority to the general usage and meaning of these words within the ancient Near East."[67]

While I am in agreement that Israel's idiosyncratic conceptualization of deity can be muted when comparative data is given too much weight in exegesis,[68] a canonical approach is by no means immune from such "leveling," although it occurs on a diachronic as well as a synchronic level. In a canonical approach, the regional and authorial differences within the text are largely overlooked in the interest of a univocal reading. Every section of text is read as a deliberate participant in the greater rhetorical message. A canonical approach also places the locus of meaning at the final shape of the text, in the editorial and redactional, rather than the compositional, stages. While the Pentateuch enjoyed a high degree of authoritativeness and stability much earlier than subsequent sections of the Hebrew Bible, the evidence from the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and even the Samaritan

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[65] He states, "the present investigation is not a rejection of either comparative philology or source criticism since both of these approaches have their place in biblical exegesis. Rather, the present investigation aims to use cognitive linguistics in conjunction with a literary approach on the grounds that these methods are best-suited for describing the meaning of words for 'God' for the purpose of translating the text of the Pentateuch into minority languages" (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God",* 4). His criticisms of a purely comparative-philological approach have merit, although I must disagree with his marginalization of historical criticism.

[66] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God",* 12.

[67] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God",* 13.

[68] Despite this concern, the earliest conceptualizations of deity will be shown to have derived from the broader Semitic culture, with more idiosyncratic perspectives developing later in time.

Pentateuch still show a degree of textual instability even into the Common Era.[69] This has a significant

impact on how the text is interpreted.[70]

My decision to isolate textual units from their canonical context also affects that way I understand

their literary contextualization. Wardlaw's principles of narrative linearity and cumulative reading

knowledge bring all preceding scriptural texts to bear on each semantic unit, and he emphasizes the

contextual dominance of very early themes like creation and covenant.[71] Because I am not

approaching the text canonically—and because readers in the time periods I am examining did not

consume the texts in the same rapid and chronological way they did after the formation of the

canon—I do not feel compelled to give the creation account of Genesis 1 and other textually distant

themes prominence of place in every passage I exegete. Rather, I believe the immediate context must

be prioritized in determining salient semantic domains. Other domains will be considered activated

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[69] The definitive work on textual criticism is E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible. Third Edition, Revised and Expanded* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2012). On the specific witness of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the shape of the Hebrew Bible, see the essays in P. W. Flint, ed., *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), and A. Lange, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Date of the Final Stage of the Pentateuch," in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies* (ed. J. K. Aitken, et al.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 287–304. For the Septuagint, see A. Schenker, ed., *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). Cf. J. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran: 4QpaleoExod^m and the Samaritan Tradition* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1986); N. Jastram, "A Comparison of Two 'Proto-Samaritan' Texts from Qumran: 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QNum^b," *DSD* 5.3 (1998): 264–89.

[70] As an example, Wardlaw provides three possible interpretations for the phrase בני אלהים in Gen 6:2, 4. It refers to (1) angels; (2) the Sethites; or (3) human rulers (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 111–12). All three of these readings date originally to the first few centuries of the Common Era. Because Wardlaw marginalizes comparative data, he cannot appeal to the same phrase in the Ugaritic or other literature (cf. S. Y. Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Study of Their Nature and Roles* [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007], 112–23; R. M. M. Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 87). Instead, Wardlaw appeals to the use of אלהים in 1 Sam 28:13, suggesting the sense of "spirit" is intended with בני אלהים. This, he says, is in agreement with the early and contemporary interpretations of the passages as references to angels. This is problematic in light of the fact that 1 Samuel 18 is subsequent to, and quite distant from, Gen 6:2, 4. Wardlaw is violating his principle of narrative linearity and is proposing a historical understanding that sits "behind the text" (where he does not think the exegete should go; cf., for instance, pp. 62, 97, 129. Wardlaw's explanation of "characterization by epithet" on pp. 278–79 cannot account for the distance here).

[71] For instance, "in Genesis אלהים is the Creator who is sovereign over the heavens and the earth, omnipotent, and purposes to work that which is good [Gen 1:1–2:3]. This is likely a macroproposition within the text-base" (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 279).

where the immediate context so indicates.

Because I hope to identify diachronic and synchronic differences, I favor a historical-critical approach to isolating textual units.[72] I do not think a modicum of textual stability is worth sacrificing the entire history and meaning of the biblical text prior to its final crystallization in the early Common Era. It is true that this is a somewhat more speculative endeavor, but it is an endeavor that is inevitable if one hopes to uncover early attitudes toward deity. Certainly the methodological challenges do not render unfeasible the possibility of approximating the text's meaning. I limit textual divisions to clear literary seams, and I believe in many places strong cases can be made for chronological priority.[73] Relative dating will be most critical to my argument than absolute dating, although there will be cases where I make an argument for the broad historical situating of the text.

While traditional approaches to source criticism of the Pentateuch identify four broad sources, JEDP,[74] I adopt in this thesis the recent Continental skepticism regarding the identification of J and E

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[72] P. Viviano, "Source Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning* (ed. S. McKenzie; Lousiville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 35–57; S. Boorer, "Source and Redaction Criticism," in *Methods for Exodus* (ed. T. Dozeman; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 95–130.

[73] J. H. Tigay, "An Empirical Basis for the Documentary Hypothesis," *JBL* 94.3 (1975): 329–42; Tigay, ed., *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Z. Talshir, "The Contribution of Diverging Traditions Preserved in the Septuagint to Literary Criticism of the Bible," in *VIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Paris 1992* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1995), 21–41; D. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 23–39; M. Zahn, "Reexamining Empirical Models: The Case of Exodus 13," in *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und Deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk* (ed. E. Otto; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 36–55.

[74] The Yahwist, the Elohist, the Priestly source, and the Deuteronomist. For recent discussions of these sources and their identification, see C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); J. S. Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); M. S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2010); T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

as anything more than scattered narrative fragments in Genesis.[75] J and E do not appear to be Pentateuchal "sources" in the sense of larger macro-narratives that cover multiple periods of Israel's history.[76] Instead of attempting to assign these fragments to broad ideological groups, I distinguish the Deuteronomic source, the Priestly source,[77] and the non-Priestly texts (whether earlier or later than P). I broadly assign Joshua through 2 Kings to the Deuteronomistic history,[78] which I date to the late pre-exilic into the exilic periods.[79] This corpus does appear to incorporate preexisting material, however, and that will be discussed where relevant. I understand the prophetic literature to range from pre-exilic to post-exilic, and will discuss individual cases where relevant. Most significant are Deutero-Isaiah and Daniel. The former I assign to the late exilic period, and the latter I assign to around 165 BCE. Other texts will be dealt with on an individual basis.[80]

Next, it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of a text as multifaceted and

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[75] T. B. Dozeman and K. Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); and T. B. Dozeman, K. Schmid, and B. J. Schwartz, eds., *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). The debate regarding the existence of J and E is ongoing and cannot be fully summarized or engaged here. For the most recent arguments in favor of traditional sources, see Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2012).

[76] In other words, there was no "pre-Priestly Pentateuch." Several scholars have recently argued that P appears to be the first redactor to join the patriarchal and exodus traditions. See E. Blum, "The Literary Connections between the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the End of the Book of Joshua," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* 89–106; and R. Hendel, "Is the 'J' Primeval Narrative an Independent Composition? A Critique of Crtisemann's 'Die Eigenstandigkeit der Urgeschichte,'" in *The Pentateuch*, 181–205.

[77] A convenient delineation of the Priestly source in recent years is found in P. Guillaume, *Land and Calendar: The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009). In addition to separating and translating the entire P document, Guillaume provides delimitations of P according to Lohfink, Pola, and Frevel (pp. 193–95).

[78] I use "Deuteronomic" to refer to the material within Deuteronomy, and "Deuteronomistic" to refer to non-Pentateuchal material reflecting the same "school" of thought. For further discussion, see R. Coggins, "What Does 'Deuteronomistic' Mean?" in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism* (ed. L. S. Schearing and S. L. McKenzie; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 22–35.

[79] On this, see R. Nelson, "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case is Still Compelling," *JSOT* 29.3 (2005): 319–37; Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*; J. C. Geoghegan, *The Time, Place, and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History: The Evidence of "Until This Day"* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006).

[80] Particularly relevant to our discussion will be Psalm 82, which I assign to the exilic period based on its literary and thematic continuity within the Psalms of Asaph. On this, see F.-L. Hossfeld and E. Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Minneapolis, Min.: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 332; C. Jones, "The Psalms of Asaph: A Study of the Function of a Psalm Collection" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2009).

chronologically fragmented as the Hebrew Bible requires great methodological care. The texts therein were not composed in an ideological or literary vacuum. They were influenced by different cultural and literary conventions and concerns, but also by the sacred past transmitted to them through earlier compositions.

I turn now to the application of cognitive linguistics to the biblical text. As was pointed out above, meaning derives from the identification and organization of semantic domains in relation to a lexical unit and a conceptual base by an informed reader/listener. Those domains are drawn from that individual's encyclopedic knowledge, and they are hierarchized and organized by that knowledge and the context of the lexical unit. My goal will be to approximate as much as possible that encyclopedic knowledge and thus gain some degree of access to the semantic domains that governed the conceptualization of deity in first millennium BCE Israel and their hierarchization.

Obviously a modern reader of the Hebrew Bible cannot survey native speakers of Biblical Hebrew, and we are limited regarding what has been preserved down to us. I must thus make use of whatever evidence is available, from biblical and cognate textual evidence to material remains from Israel and the surrounding environs.[81] There is always a danger in trying to synthesize material and textual data, especially in regards to ideology, but I believe the greater danger is in neglecting one in favor of the other.[82] I do not presume to be able to be at all comprehensive in my analysis. My goal is to gather from our understanding of the human mind and from the biblical text enough data to (1) identify the

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[81] Wardlaw's approach is basically to delineate the biblical text as the available encyclopedia of knowledge, thus producing an artificial, but canonically self-contained, literary context. Obviously such a context is not entirely self-contained, as much of our knowledge of Hebrew idioms and literary conventions comes from comparative study (and modern conservative dogmas also play a role in Wardlaw's exegesis).

[82] A recent contribution that shows sensitivity to the necessary methodological cautions is F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton, eds., *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

semantic range of the terms for deity and understand its development over time, (2) propose a likely

base for the concept of "deity," and (3) identify semantic domains and matrices associated with its

conceptualization. The comparative data will contribute to our discussion where it complements the

biblical data, rather than replaces it.[83]

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[83] I rely only secondarily on comparative data in order to remain sensitive to regional and chronological idiosyncrasies. The advantage of the cognate literature is that it helps—where it correlates with biblical concepts—in the identification of conceptualizations of deity that extend beyond the borders of Israel and are drawn from the wider Semitic conceptual matrix. Uniquely biblical concepts may be more likely to be developments within Israelite culture, although we can never be definitive about such judgments.

Chapter 2
Cognitive Origins of Deity Concepts

Social and cognitive scientists have identified two main types of belief common to the human mind, namely intuitive beliefs and reflective beliefs.[1] Intuitive beliefs are those that arise spontaneously and unconsciously from our perception. They are the product of innate cognitive processes, and as a result tend to arise independently of cultural context and to be quite firmly held. Reflective beliefs are those that derive from deliberate pondering and reasoning, or from outside sources such as religious authorities, parents, etc. They are interpretive, explanatory, and/or learned beliefs. Because reflective beliefs are not directly contingent upon innate cognitive mechanisms, they are more closely tied to cultural context, and vary far more widely than intuitive beliefs. They can also be less firmly held. This chapter hypothesizes that the Hebrew Bible's conceptualizations of deity represent a mix of both intuitive and reflective beliefs. More developed and consistent religious belief is usually the result of the combination of sustained theological reflection and authoritative channels of communication, but it is also derived from, and often tethered to, the more instinctual intuitive beliefs.

It is these intuitive beliefs that will be the starting point for this chapter, which will begin with a discussion of cognitive functions that lead to certain universal views about divinity. The departure from cognitive linguistics and into cognitive psychology is not arbitrary. Mental conceptualization and linguistic representation derive consecutively from the same cognitive foundations. The intention of this chapter is to identify and evaluate some intuitive concepts and related image-schemas that constitute areas of conceptual overlap between modern and ancient conceptualizations of the divine.

[1] D. Sperber, "Intuitive and Reflective Beliefs," *M&L* 12 (1997): 67–83; T. Tremlin, *Minds and Gods: The Cognitive Foundations of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 137–42.

This will help to contextualize the Bible's view of deity within the ancient world, but also to anchor our analysis to something empirical, providing a more stable conceptual framework that may facilitate the accurate situating of the more enigmatic and sparse biblical data.[2]

The chapter will conclude with lexical analysis of the three main Hebrew words for "deity" in the Hebrew Bible, namely אלהים, אל, and אלוה. That analysis will flesh out some of the terminology used to describe YHWH and the other gods and interact with contemporary theories about that terminology's meaning. It will be shown that our three base terms for deity reflect intuitive and cross-cultural semantic trends. In other words, the Israelite usage of the words אלהים, אל, and אלוה did not produce, as the result of theological reflection or innovation, uniquely Yahwistic or Israelite semantic senses. They remain primarily generic class nouns. The titular use of the terms is parallel to the same usage in cognate languages.

2.1 Intuitive Conceptualizations of Deity

It has long been a truism in the study of religion that concepts of deity developed out of attempts by early humans to explain the world and its natural phenomena.[3] We do not know the details of this process, but research has provided empirical evidence for an innate cognitive mechanism that accounts at least for its catalyst. This research, as we will see, suggests that evolution has hardwired

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[2] Biblical exegesis relies in many ways on the speculative interpretation of symbols belonging to a vastly different time and culture. Scholars do their best to acknowledge and overcome subjective interpretive lenses, but large portions of the ancient worldviews are still beyond retrieval. Scholars are thus forced to formulate cultural models and theories based in large part on assumptions about what symbols mean. The cognitive study of religion, however, has shown that some religious symbols are the products of universal functions of human cognition, and can operate independent of cultural influence. With this approach we must still accept that human cognition has not fundamentally changed in the last two or three thousand years, but, as will be shown, there is ample evidence to support this conclusion.

[3] S. Guthrie, "Why Gods? A Cognitive Theory," in *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religion Belief, Ritual, and Experience* (ed. J. Andresen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 94.

the human mind to be predisposed to attribute unknown events to some intentional agency.[4]

Religious belief in some manner of powerful mind or consciousness is common to all human cultures,[5] and it appears to derive from the default settings that our minds have developed through the millennia. A focus of much recent cognitive research has been the mechanisms that lead to universal and near-universal conceptualizations of supernatural beings. Although there is no widespread consensus concerning the details of these mechanisms, their outcomes are readily observable and the contemporary theories are certainly instructive (particularly those that identify and account for phenomena found in the biblical texts).

2.1.1 Anthropomorphism

One of the broadest of these theories comes from Stewart Guthrie, who advocates for a universal anthropomorphic bias based on perceptual schemas. According to his theory, humans will interpret the ambiguous in terms of what is most familiar and important to them, namely other humans. He states, "perception is interpretation; interpretation aims at significance; and the most significant

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[4] While the cognitive science of religion is a relatively new discipline, the research found in this chapter comes from leaders in the field who are held in high esteem by their colleagues. See, for example, comments from two reviews of Pascal Boyer's book *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2002) comment: "The subtle process Boyer outlines . . . can resolve many paradoxes in cognitive psychology, and deserves to be incorporated into basic research in the field" (L. Cosmides and J. Tooby, "Review of Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*," *JCogCul* 3.1 [2003]: 109–13); and "Pascal Boyer is one of the leading figures in the cognitive psychology of religion. . . . This is a tremendously important book, and anyone interested in promising new currents in the psychology of religion should read it" (J. Bulbulia, "'Unweaving the Religious Mind': A Review of Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*," *Eras* 4 [2002]).

[5] As far as we can tell, no culture has ever held to an atheistic worldview. Atheism has existed for millennia, but always as a segment of a culture based on religious ideas. See P. Bloom, "Religious Belief as an Evolutionary Accident," in *The Believing Primate: Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Reflections on the Origin of Religion* (ed. J. Schloss and M. J. Murray; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 118; cf. J. Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God?* (Landham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 108.

possibilities usually are alive and humanlike."[6] Humans quickly learned it was more beneficial to assume an intentional agent influenced some unknown event rather than assume there was no intention behind it. That this tendency has deep evolutionary roots is evinced for Guthrie in the fact that animals have also been shown to assume an agency behind unknown events and entities. An anecdote from J. Goodall about a group of chimpanzees at the outbreak of a storm punctuates this observation. As the storm broke out, Goodall observed the male chimps hooting and taking turns charging down a hill, tearing off branches along the way and hurling them into the air. They would reach a group of trees and stop, only to march back up the hill and repeat the pattern. After twenty minutes, they stopped and moved on. Their actions seemed a performance based on behavior normally used to intimidate other animals, as if they inferred some living agent responsible for the storm that they might be able to influence. Goodall herself comments, "With a display of strength and vigor such as this, primitive man himself might have challenged the elements."[7]

This tendency toward anthropomorphism has been empirically established most thoroughly through a series of experiments conducted in the 1990s by J. Barrett and F. Keil. The first publication arising from these experiments sought to understand how the mind conceptualized of non-natural entities such as God,[8] particularly where preexisting beliefs existed about the nature of that entity. Three studies were designed to observe how the human mind fills in gaps in recalling short stories about gods and other non-natural concepts. When asked to answer basic questions about a narrative, subjects tended to err on the side of anthropomorphizing the main character when it was described as divine. Other characters, like a fictional omniscient and omnipresent supercomputer, were not as

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[6] Guthrie, "Why Gods?" 104.

[7] Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man* (New York; Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 52–55; Guthrie, "Why Gods?" 105–06.

[8] Barrett and Keil, "Conceptualizing a Nonnatural Entity: Anthropomorphism in God Concepts," *CogPs* 31 (1996): 219–47.

commonly anthropomorphized. Barrett and Keil concluded that "subjects do use anthropomorphic concepts of God in understanding stories even though they may profess a theological position that rejects anthropomorphic constraints on God and God's activities."[9] Here the distinction between intuitive and reflective beliefs becomes important: anthropomorphism represents an intuitive belief that can, with cognitive pressure, override the reflective belief in a non-anthropomorphic deity, one of the most fundamental theological principles of the modern era.[10]

2.1.2 Agency Detection

Others have criticized the emphasis on anthropomorphism as cognitively foundational.[11] Although a marked *tendency* toward anthropomorphism can be empirically shown, it has not been shown to be universal or evolutionarily fundamental. P. Boyer points out that, "anthropologists know that the *only* feature of humans that is *always* projected onto supernatural beings is the mind."[12] For Boyer, the nature of this mind is not automatically inferred, just its influence; rather than "faces in the clouds" (Guthrie's phrase),[13] people see "traces in the grass." In other words, humans "do not so much visualize

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[9] Barrett and Keil, "Conceptualizing a Nonnatural Entity," 240.

[10] An objection that may be raised to these conclusions is the role of narrative in influencing the results. Historical narrative promotes a social conceptualization, tending toward anthropomorphism. While Barrett and Keil introduce controls in order to detect such influence, the nature of the narratives themselves may have influenced subjects. For instance, one narrative discussed a boy who became stuck while swimming in a river. He prayed to be saved. The narrative continues, "Though God was answering another prayer in another part of the world when the boy started praying, before long God responded by pushing one of the rocks so the boy could get his leg out" (Barrett and Keil, "Conceptualizing a Nonnatural Entity," 239). Responses that suggested the deity in the story was physically discreet and unable to do two things at the same time were interpreted as incorrectly anthropomorphizing the character, but the narrative is obviously designed to strongly imply such anthropomorphism. Some subjects' responses qualified their anthropomorphic readings as the position implied by the narrative, not their own. Despite these methodological concerns, much of the data securely establishes an anthropomorphic bias (cf. J. Barrett, "Theological Correctness: Cognitive Constraint and the Study of Religion," *MTSR* 11 [1999]: 325–39).

[11] E.g., P. Westh, "Anthropomorphism in God Concepts: The Role of Narrative," unpublished manuscript.

[12] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 144; cf. Tremlin, *Minds and Gods*, 101.

[13] Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

what supernatural agents must be like as detect traces of their presence in many circumstances of their existence."[14] Evolution has instilled in humans a hyperactive sensitivity to those traces. Anthropomorphic interpretation thus may represent a second-level cognitive bias.

T. Tremlin follows Boyer in acknowledging this sensitivity to agency, but the two also agree on a more important contribution to our discussion. Our sensitivity to agency derives from our fundamental social nature—humans are social/interactive creatures. "Objects, events, and even mental concepts related to intentional agents automatically activate the mental mechanisms involved in social cognition and cause us to take note."[15] The most important social interactions are those that furnish us with strategic information, which Boyer defines as "*the subset of all the information currently available (to a particular agent, about a particular situation) that actives the mental systems that regulate social interaction.*"[16] That information that helps us to make decisions about how we interact socially (on whatever level) is strategic. We commonly seek from others strategic information we do not have, whether directly or through inference or observation. We also make choices in our social interactions about how much strategic information to make available to others, although we may unintentionally reveal what we intend to conceal. The gods, on the other hand, are presumed to have full access to such information. According to Boyer and Tremlin, from a cognitive point of view, this is the single most salient characteristic of the gods.[17] Religion is fundamentally pragmatic, and the most important gods are those that provide the most aid. Strategic information represents, as far as social psychologists can tell, the most important aid that can be offered. Good or bad, the gods that matter

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[14] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 144. Thus Goodall's chimps were not arriving at a concrete concept of what was causing the storm; they were just reacting to a perceived agent of some kind.

[15] Tremlin, *Minds and Gods*, 110.

[16] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 152, emphasis in original.

[17] Boyer, *Religion Explained*, 155–60; Tremlin, *Minds and Gods*, 113–18.

in each culture are those that "know the truth, keep watch, witness what is done in private, divine the causes of events, and see inside people's minds."[18]

A final consideration concerns theories regarding the way people move from these foundational cognitive structures to the more complex theological ideas. In order for god concepts to become well enough embedded within cultures for continuity and theological development over multiple generations, those concepts require intuitive as well as counterintuitive properties. The gods must agree well enough with common intuitions about their ontological categories for a coherent cultural profile and for flexibility within changing ideological climates. At the same time, however, they must display enough counterintuitive properties to attract attention and develop cultural salience; they must be interesting and influential enough for people to care.

2.1.3 The Next Step

The frameworks for filling out the divine ontological categories developed as assumptions were made about the unobservable natures and functions of particular deities as members of a particular taxonomy. That taxonomy was usually a hybrid form based on the combination of a known ontological category and the most salient nonintuitive properties. "The basic assumptions needed to understand supernatural beings are supplied by intuitive knowledge about quite natural ones."[19] New and unilaterally unique taxonomies are rarely able to take root within a culture, and thus rarely survive. The majority of cultures produce ontological assumptions that conceive of the gods as human-like in form and behavior: social entities that experience emotion and are organized according

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[18] Tremlin, *Minds and Gods*, 115.

[19] Tremlin, *Minds and Gods*, 99; cf. P. Boyer, *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 91–94.

to significant cultural institutions. Given the intuitive bias toward anthropomorphism discussed

above, we should not be surprised to find in a given culture ontological overlap between divine and

human categories. Such overlap conceptually anchors the deity to the human taxonomy,

guaranteeing conceptual coherence within a given culture.[20] Cultural influence at this developmental

level was minimal, but not absent. [21] Social conventions and expectations guide the next

developmental level, where flesh accreted to the conceptual skeletons provided by basic cognitive

functions. Discreet ethnic and social groups were often defined by their shared political, social,

religious, and/or linguistic mechanisms and structures. While these structures could be shared on a

broad level across cognate cultures, the maintenance of cultural identity necessitated the

prioritization of the level at which distinction occurred. Thus those divine features that distinguished

a culture's deities from those of its neighbors became more salient over time.

At this point we may begin to correlate these cognitive data with the biblical material. The

evidence points to the cognitive origins of several of the Hebrew Bible's fundamental

conceptualizations of deity. We certainly find anthropomorphic god concepts throughout the Hebrew

Bible, and particularly in earlier strata.[22] YHWH made noise as he walked through the garden of Eden

(Gen 3:8); he covered Moses' face with his hand, revealing only the back of his body (Exod 33:22–23);

the gods were attracted to human woman and procreated with them (Gen 6:2–4). Many

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[20] Basic image-schemas guide the configuration of these conceptualizations (see next section).

[21] That some societies entirely avoid anthropomorphism in conceptualizing their most prominent deities attests to the influence of culture.

[22] J. Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament," in *Congress Volume: Oxford 1959* (ed. G. W. Anderson, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 31–38; E. Yamauchi, "Anthropomorphism in Ancient Religions," *BibSac* 125 (1968): 29–44; M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990); O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (translated by T. A. Trapp; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); S. Friedman, "Anthropomorphism and Its Eradication," in *Iconoclasm and Iconoclash: Struggle for Religious Identity* (ed. W. van Asselt, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 157–78; E. Hamori, *"When Gods Were Men": The Embodied God in Biblical and Near Eastern Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008).

conceptualizations of deity also appear to be based on contemporary social and political institutions:[23] God is a king (Ps 47:2, 6, 7) and a judge (Ps 43:1; 82:8); the gods are warriors (Deut 33:2; Judg 5:20) and sons (Gen 6:2, 4; Deut 32:8; Ps 29:1). The data also suggest that primeval Israelite notions of deity were framed by natural phenomena like weather and celestial bodies.[24] The gods were manifested in the sun, moon, and stars (Deut 4:19; 17:3; Judg 5:20; Job 38:7), while the power of YHWH was manifested in violent storms and his control of the rains (Gen 7:4; Exod 9:18; Judg 5:4; Ps 18:14–15).

The notion of an entity with full access to strategic information is uniquely described as a fundamental characteristic of deity within the Hebrew Bible. For example, God laments in Gen 3:22 that "the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." The phrase "good and evil" may constitute a merism referring to all knowledge, or to a comprehensive understanding of good and evil actions. Either way, strategic information is most likely in view, and access to this information makes the humans like the gods. Another example comes from Isa 41:23, where YHWH challenges the gods of the nations to make known "what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." These verses communicate one of the Hebrew Bible's most explicit criteria for divinity.

2.2 Universal Image-Schemas

In chapter 1 image-schemas were described as structures that "shaped and construed" semantic content. There are several primitive image schemas that are generally thought to be universal to

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[23] L. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven: The Syro-Palestinian Pantheon as Bureaucracy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994); K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 236–86; M. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic T*exts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 54–61.

[24] Recent scholarship related to the concept of the divine council has addressed the cultural institutions undergirding the council's structure. Handy, for instance, finds Syro-Palestinian bureaucracy at the foundation (Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven*, 10–15), while Smith argues for the royal household (Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 58–66).

human conceptualization of the abstract world, likely as a result of shared bodily experience and cognitive development in childhood.[25] In this section we discuss two such image-schemas that helped to shape and construe some of the culturally specific god concepts that developed within Syria-Palestine, and Israel more specifically.

2.2.1 The UP-DOWN Image-Schema

The more ubiquitous of these image-schemas is the UP-DOWN schema. As explained in chapter 1, this schema maps abstract concepts in terms of a vertical relationship. That which is sovereign, which is more, and which is better tends to be conceptualized as higher than, or above, that which is submissive, which is less, and which is worse. Studies of contemporary subjects have shown that concepts of the divine show a strong tendency toward the upper end of the verticality scale,[26] while concepts of wickedness and humiliation tend strongly toward the lower end. This culturally independent trend indicates the universality of the image-schema. Kenneth McElhanon lists several "primary conceptual metaphors based upon the VERTICALITY image-schema" from the Hebrew Bible, with the following reflecting the mapping of deity:[27]

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[25] M. Johnson, *The Body in the Mind. The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); T. Regier, *The Human Semantic Potential: Spatial Language and Constrained Connectionism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996); E. Dodge and G. Lakoff, "Image Schemas: From Linguistic Analysis to Neural Grounding," in *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics* (ed. B. Hampe; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 57–91; B. P. Meier and S. Dionne, "Downright Sexy: Verticality, Implicit Power, and Perceived Physical Attractiveness," *SCog* 27.6 (2009): 883–92; D. Pecher, et al., "Abstract Concepts: Sensory-Motor Grounding, Metaphors, and Beyond," in *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation* (ed. B. Ross; Burlington: Academic Press, 2011), 217–48.

[26] See, recently, B. P. Meier, et al., "What's 'Up' With God? Vertical Space as a Representation of the Divine," *JPSP* 93.5 (2007): 699–710; see also K. A. McElhanon, "From Simple Metaphors to Conceptual Blending: The Mapping of Analogical Concepts and the Praxis of Translation," *JT* 2.1 (2006): 38–40; K. Zanolie, et al., "Mighty Metaphors: Behavioral and ERP Evidence That Power Shifts Attention on a Vertical Dimension," *BCog* 78.1 (2012): 50–58.

[27] McElhanon, "From Simple Metaphors to Conceptual Blending," 39–40.

HEAVEN IS UP; EARTH/SHEOL IS DOWN (Ps 14:2; 55:15)
HOLY IS UP/HIGH; EVIL IS DOWN (Isa 57:15; Prov 14:19)
STRENGTH IS UP; WEAKNESS IS DOWN (Ps 21:13; 88:4)

This is, of course, only a sampling. We may add that God "makes the clouds his chariot" (Ps 104:3; cf. Isa 19:1; Ps 68:5, 34); he is sovereign "*over* all the earth" (Ps 47:3; 83:19); he is "*exalted* far *above* all gods" (Ps 97:9); he must "go down" to observe humanity and their actions (Gen 11:7; 18:21); he is עליון, "Most High" (Gen 14:18–22; Deut 32:8; 2 Sam 22:14; Ps 7:17). Wardlaw identifies the most salient metaphors reflected in the biblical usage of this last term as HAVING CONTROL OR FORCE IS UP, HIGH STATUS IS UP, and particularly DIVINE POWER AND AUTHORITY IS UP.[28]

Other gods are also mapped against this conceptual space. The gods are conceptualized as astral bodies in Deut 4:19, 17:3, and Job 38:7, inhabiting the heavens above the earth. Ps 8:6 declares that humanity was made "a little lower/less than the gods" (ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים), showing humanity's mapping against the same space. The rhetorical exaltation of Israel's deity over those of other nations required the extension of the scale of verticality, leading to the notion of the "heaven of heavens," and ultimately God's transcendence beyond even that conceptual space: he cannot be contained within the heaven of heavens (1 Kgs 8:27; 2 Chr 2:6; Isa 66:1). The verticality scale also extended downward beyond the zero-point to accommodate especially evil and harmful divine entities, YHWH's

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[28] Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 136–38. For more on this epithet, see M. H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 55–57; R. Rendtorff, "The Background of the Title עֶלְיוֹן in Gen xiv," in *Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Papers, Vol. 1* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967), 167–70; Cross, *CMHE*, 50–52; Elnes and Miller, "Elyon עליון," *DDD* 293–99; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 20–21; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 55–57; S. Mitchell, "The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews, and Christians," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (ed. P. Athananssiadi and M. Frede; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 81–148; Mitchell, "Further Thoughts of the Cult of Theos Hypsistos," in *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (ed. S. Mitchell and P. V. Nuffelen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–208; G. Granerød, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 160–61.

conceptual antitheses. Isa 14:12–15 illustrate the conceptual contrast between the highness of God and the extended lowness of the wicked:

> How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!
>   How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!
> You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven;
>   I will raise my throne above the stars of God;
>   I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon;
> I will ascend to the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."
> But you are brought down to Sheol, to the depths of the Pit.

The imagery in these verses draws from the UP-DOWN image-schema inherent in the ancient Jewish conceptualization of the cosmos. The high god dwells above the stars, themselves understood as symbols of second-tier deities, but he also sits enthroned on mount Ṣaphon, overseeing the council of the gods. Humanity is located at ground-level, whence comes the would-be usurper.[29] The "Shining One" manages to ascend to heaven, at least rhetorically (cf. Gen 11:3–6), but falls. His fate is to be brought down to Sheol—to the underworld, the realm of death and sorrow (Prov 5:5; 9:18; Isa 5:14). Conceptual space has been found below the zero-point for the mapping of the divine antithesis to the exalted YHWH.[30] We may illustrate this UP-DOWN scale in the following way:

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[29] This tradition is usually held to reflect a mythological background wherein a subordinate deity seeks to usurp the divine royal throne (e.g., KTU 1.6:1:54ff; E. T. Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 149; although cf. Heiser, "The Mythological Provenance of Isa. XIV 12–15: A Reconsideration of the Ugaritic Material," *FPP* 280 [2001]: 354–69, who argues that no usurpation is in view, only divine arrogance on the part of ʿAthtar). In the context of Isaiah 14 the hubris is attributed to the human king (considered divine within his own culture).

[30] For the contrasting of the height of heaven against the lowness of hell, see Job 11:8; Ps 139:8; Amos 9:2.

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HIGH          ↑           God Most High
                   Heavens
                              sons of God,
                              stars of El

ZERO-POINT (LOW)  —    Earth        humans

                   ┆
LOWER          ↓    Underworld      demons
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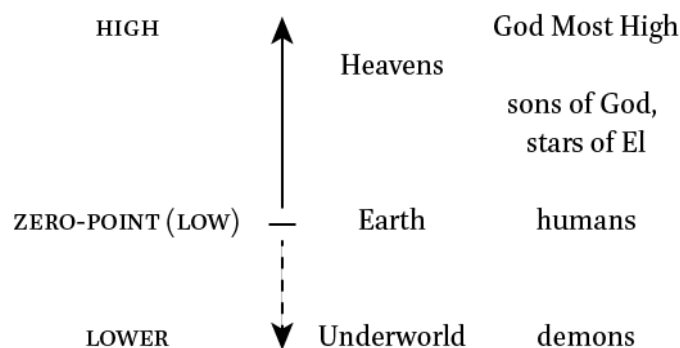
Fig. 2.1

2.2.2 The CENTER-PERIPHERY *Image-Schema*

The content of this scale may also be mapped against horizontal conceptual space, and particularly our other prominent image-schema: the CENTER-PERIPHERY image-schema.[31] This schema reflects the experience of the body as central to some value or another that decreases with distance.[32] That which is near and central is familiar and important, while that which is peripheral and far is unknown and unimportant (or dangerous). This schema is mapped most explicitly against geographic and cosmological space. Throughout the Hebrew Bible the land of Canaan is represented as centrally located. It is the geographic point of reference in the text. Israel was placed in the center of the nations by God, surrounded on all sides by the people of the earth (Ezek 5:5).[33] Although the patriarchs came from outside Canaan, they were promised the land, which became theirs through

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[31] A helpful discussion of this conceptual schema as it relates to biblical and Syro-Palestinian notions of deity, from which some of the above discussion is drawn, is found in Smith, *The Memoirs of God*, 88–91.

[32] It is closely linked with the CONTAINER and NEAR-FAR schemas. M. Kimmel, "Culture Regained: Situated and Compound Image Schemas," in *From Perception to Meaning: Image Schemas in Cognitive Linguistics* (ed. B. Hampe; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 289.

[33] In several places this centrality is manifested in "Zion Theology," or the notion of Jerusalem (Zion) as God's chosen holy city. This guaranteed God's protection and favor. The destruction of the temple in the early sixth century BCE dealt a significant blow to this ideology, and much of the exilic literature grapples with the implications. See C. Broyles, *Psalms: New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 24–25; R. Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 133, 157, 294.

covenant. They merely "sojourn" (גור) at Canaan's periphery, with the texts always hinting at the gravitational pull of the Promised Land.[34] The segments reflecting Israel's situation in Egypt and Babylon also maintain Canaan as the spatial point of reference (e.g., Dan 6:11; cf. 1 Kgs 8:35). Note the centrality of the Promised Land in Isa 43:5*b*–6, written in Babylon:

> I will bring your offspring from the east,
>   And from the west I will gather you;
> I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
>   And to the south, "Do not withhold;
> Bring my sons from far away
>   And my daughters from the end of the earth."

While the periphery in this mapping is linked with the borders of Israel and the other nations of the earth, the beyond—the antithesis to the center—is represented by the concept of the wilderness, which was harsh and barren (Job 38:26), and was inhabited by marginalized/reviled peoples (Gen 21:20–21; Jer 3:2; 9:26) and undomesticated animals (Isa 34:14–15).[35] Some texts reflect the wider Near Eastern concept of the wilderness as the realm of demons and ghosts (Lev 16:8, 10, 26; Isa 13:21; 34:14; Jer 50:39).[36] The wilderness was so antithetical to the values of developed Israel that the threatened demises of cities like Jerusalem and Edom were described with images of desiccation and a lack of civilization, concepts drawn from the wilderness (Isa 13:19–22; 34:9–15). S. Talmon summarizes the *midbār* motif in the following way:

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[34] Gen 13:3–4; 15:7, 16; 21:34; 46:4; 50:24–25; cf. E. R. Kennedy, *Seeking a Homeland: Sojourn and Ethnic Identity in the Ancestral Narratives of Genesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 55–60.

[35] A recent attempt to salvage the biblical image of the wilderness is L. Feldt, "Wilderness and Hebrew Bible Religion—Fertility, Apostasy, and Religious Transformation in the Pentateuch," in *Wilderness in Mythology and Religion: Approaching Religious Spatialities, Cosmologies, and Ideas of Wild Nature* (ed. L. Feldt; Boston: de Gruyter, 2012), 55–94.

[36] H. Frey-Anthes, "Concepts of 'Demons' in Ancient Israel," *DWdO* 38 (2008): 43–49.

[T]he predominant aspects of *midbār*-wilderness in the Bible bear witness to the unfamiliarity with and the loathing of the desert which were typical of the ancient Israelites. They reflect the attitude of the city-dweller, the farmer, the semi-sedentary shepherd, even the assnomad, who may traverse the desert on beaten tracks, but would not venture into its depths by free choice.[37]

The location of all of Israel's cultural institutions in the mountains and valleys, over against the harsh conditions of the wilderness, lent quite naturally to the mapping of cultural ideals against this same conceptual space. In these cases geography's symbolic rather than physical sense becomes salient.[38] Sedentary culture is the ideal in this map,[39] over and against nomadism (which is negatively stigmatized) and the complete lack of civilization in the wilderness.[40] The institutions of the center are the pillars of ancient civilization: the temple, the crown, and the household. Biblical tradition preserves rhetoric attempting to exalt either temple or crown over the other, but both perspectives are undergirded by the concept of kinship and the household.

As an example, the perpetuation of the throne as well as the priesthood was dynastic. Further, the Davidic kingdom was the "house of David,"[41] while the temple/tabernacle was conceptualized as God's

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[37] S. Talmon, "Har and Midbār: An Antithetical Pair of Biblical Motifs," in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Mindlin, et al.; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987), 114.

[38] See Feldt, "Wilderness and Hebrew Bible Religion, 58: "What is so interesting about the Hebrew Bible desert wilderness is exactly that it oscillates between a real and a fantasmatic presentation, in between cosmology, literary motif, spatial practice and geography."

[39] According to A. de Pury, the "promise of the land" was "a promise of sedentarization" (De Pury, "The Jacob Story and the Beginning of the Formation of the Pentateuch," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* 53). Nomadism was an unwanted state that the relationship with YHWH remedied.

[40] N. Wyatt, citing S. Talmon, asserts there is no "nomadic ideal" in the Hebrew Bible (Talmon, "The 'Desert Motif' in the Bible and in Qumran Literature," in *Biblical Motifs, Origins and Transformations* [ed. A. Altmann, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966], 34–38; N. Wyatt, "Sea and Desert: Symbolic Geography in West Semitic Religious Thought," in *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* [London: Equinox, 2005], 47–48).

[41] 1 Sam 20:16; 2 Sam 3:1; 1 Kgs 12:19–20, 26; 14:18; 2 Chr 21:7. Cf. ביתדוד in line 9 of the Tel Dan inscription (against G. Athas, who reads the word as a toponym. See G. Athas, *The Tel Dan Inscription: A Reappraisal and a New Interpretation* [London: T&T Clark, 2003], 280–81).

house (Judg 18:31; 21:2; 1 Chr 9:11).[42] David Schloen points to the use of terms like "father," "son," "brother," "master," and "servant" to express political relationships as indicative of the "household basis" for political discourse.[43] The household represented "domestic safety and protection, as well as familial patrimony and land"[44]—all ideals that extended into the political arena. Other cultural institutions were commonly conceptualized as appendages to the household. Crops and pastures provided sustenance for the cities around which they were located, physically and conceptually extending from the center—at the periphery but not beyond it.[45] The wilderness, where kingship was irrelevant, food was scarce, and animals were undomesticated, represented the beyond.

The conceptual overlap of cultivatable land with civilization, social and cultural institutions, and goodness, over and against the chaotic, uncivilized, and barren wilderness/sea, naturally contributed to the association of divinity (at least, benign divinity) with the former. As the creator of, and provider for, humanity, the God of Israel was conceptualized as the patron of humanity's agricultural and familial reproductivity, cultural institutions, and physical security. He was the source from which prosperity and safety flowed. In addition to his conceptual centrality as provider and protector, he was conceived of as dwelling בתוך, "in the midst" of Israel (Exod 25:8; 29:45–46; 1 Kgs 6:13).

The physical symbol of the presence of deity in Israel—the medium for his dwelling amidst Israel—was the temple. As the house of God and the source of divine guidance, the temple took on

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[42] The rhetoric of transcendence eclipses the notion of the temple as God's dwelling-place, but the notion endured in its later conceptualization as the dwelling-place for God's name (Deut 12:11; 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 5:5; Ezra 6:12).

[43] J. D. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 256–62.

[44] Smith, *The Memoirs of God*, 89.

[45] Schloen remarks that "urban-rural" is roughly synonymous with "center-periphery" (Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 317, n. 1). Here the concept of the container comes into play. They remain "inside" society as long as they are not beyond the periphery.

functions as the "central, organizing, unifying institution in ancient Near Eastern society."[46] It could represent the religious, economic, judicial, and even political core of a city or nation. Often this conceptual centrality was accompanied by physical centrality: the temple would occupy the center of a city or fortress, both for the building's protection and for symbolic reasons.[47] A cult structure of some kind or another was important in early Israel to a city's independent identity. Despite the ultimately successful Deuteronomistic campaign to centralize worship in one single temple in Jerusalem,[48] ancient Israel commonly offered worship in a number of different cultic structures.[49] The biblical texts describe several encounters with deity in the patriarchal and later narratives that were commemorated with the construction of an altar or standing stone (Gen 12:7; 28:18, 22; 31:13; 33:20; 35:1, 7), meant to delineate space that had been sacralized by the presence of deity. Settlements would accrete around these cultural and cultic foci (or so the traditions go),[50] most significantly at Mount Moriah, where the messenger of YHWH—"standing between the earth and the heavens" (1 Chr

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[46] J. M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* (ed. H. Huffmon, et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 212.

[47] Cf. J. C. de Vos, "'Holy Land' in Joshua 18:1–10," in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort* (ed. J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten and J. C. de Vos; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 61–72. De Vos argues that the "divine presence" in Shiloh was the "holy centre," laying between the land of Joseph and of Judah, surrounded by the lands of the other tribes.

[48] That campaign would not be universally successful until around the turn of the era. Archaeological and textual data assert the existence of Jewish cultic installations at Elephantine and Leontopolis from the post-exilic and Greco-Roman periods: B. Porten, "The Structure and Orientation of the Jewish Temple at Elephantine—A Revised Plan of the Jewish District," *JAOS* 18.1 (1966): 38–42; A. Wassertstein, "Notes on the Temple of Onias at Leontopolis," *ICS* 18 (1993): 119–29.

[49] See M. Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985); Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 123–266.

[50] Early Israelite cultural centers included Bethel, Shechem, Gibeon, and Shiloh. Cf. G. Wright, "The Myhtology of Pre-Israelite Shechem," *VT* 20.1 (1970): 75–82; Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*, 49–52; N. Na'aman, "Beth-Aven, Bethel, and Early Israelite Sanctuaries," *ZDP-V* 103 (1987): 13–21; D. G. Schley, *Shiloh: A Biblical City in Tradition and History* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 185–200; van der Toorn, "Saul and the Rise of Israelite State Religion," *VT* 43.4 (1993): 519–42; J. Gomes, *The Sanctuary of Bethel and the Configuration of Israelite Identity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 62–140.

21:16)[51]—designated the place where an altar (and ultimately the "house of YHWH, the god") was to be built (1 Chr 22:1). That temple would become the center of Jewish cultural identity.

The temple as a symbol of the cosmic mountain also provides a convenient physical manifestation of the conceptualization of the blended CENTER-PERIPHERY and UP-DOWN schemas. Following is a diagram of these two schemas together as they relate to deity:

Heaven of Heavens — God Most High

Heavens

Sons of God
Angels

Inhabited World

Israelites
Other Nations
Desert Nomads

Wilderness — Wildlife

Sheol,
Underworld

Spirits of the Dead,
Evil spirits, Demons,
Lilith, Azazel
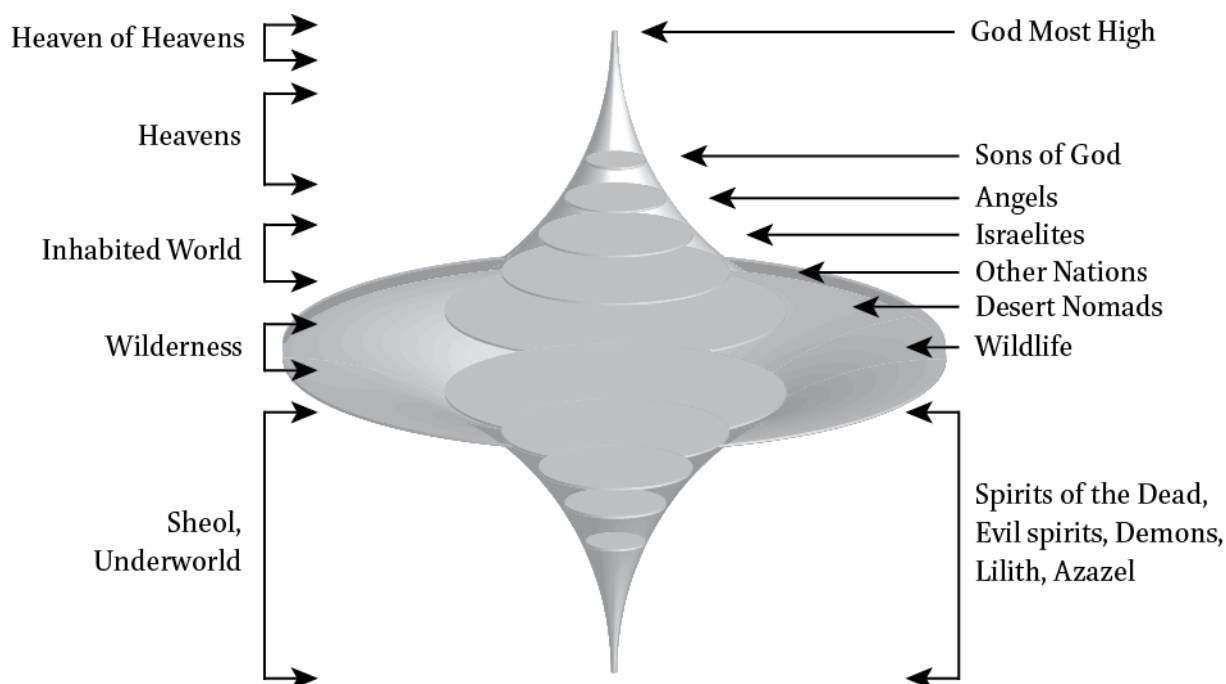
Fig. 2.2

With the earth and its wildlife representing the zero-point, the conceptual space extends upward and

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[51] עמד בין הארץ ובין השמים. Like the Garden of Eden, these points of contact between the celestial and terrestrial worlds took on particular significance in antiquity as the localization of the *axis mundi*, or center of the world, holding together the heavens, the earth, and the underworld. The temple was both a microcosm and the "navel of the universe": M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Harcourt, 1959), 35–37, 52–54; D. Lioy, "The Garden of Eden as Primordial Temple or Sacred Space for Humankind," *ConS* 10 (2010): 25–57; Wyatt, "The Significance of the Burning Bush," in *The Mythic Mind*, 14–15.

inward as it progresses toward the divine prototype, the height and the center of creation and Israelite identity. Space is provided on both horizontal and vertical axes for the compartmentalization of the main divisions of the conceptual spectrum. The space below the zero-point represents the underworld, antithetically reflecting the upward progression toward the divine. Evil spirits were likely thought at one time to have sovereignty over the wilderness and/or the underworld, but several biblical pericopae are crafted so as to assert YHWH's sovereignty over the whole of heaven and earth. The frequent references to his sustaining life in the wilderness and providing water, as well as the futility of hiding from him in the underworld, are clear examples of that rhetorical campaign.[52]

2.3 Lexical Considerations

This section provides a lexical examination of the Hebrew words meaning "deity," namely אל, אלהים, and אלוה. This will lay the groundwork for the exegetical and cognitive-semantic evaluations of the subsequent chapters, but will also show the broader cultural context for the semantic sense of this terminology. One of the goals of this section will be to engage the notion that Israelite and/or biblical usage of these words produced a unique and distinct semantic sense. Cognitive-semantic considerations will be reserved for the following chapters, which will discuss individual occurrences of the words and their contexts.

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[52] Exod 16:32; Isa 35:6; 41:18; 43:19–20; Ps 78:15; 107:35; 139:8; Job 25:5–6. The wilderness wandering tradition associated with the Exodus may represent the most extended version of that campaign.

2.3.1 אלהים

אלהים is the most common word for "deity" in the Hebrew Bible,[53] appearing some 2600 times.[54] Of those occurrences, around 1400 are in the construct state or have pronominal suffices, indicating an appellative sense.[55] The majority of these occurrences refer specifically to YHWH, but 230 occurrences refer instead to other deities or to the generic concept of deity, with almost half in the plural. The noun's frequency of occurrence by book is as follows:

Gen:	219	Ezek:	36	Mal:	7
Exod:	139	Hos:	26	Pss:	365
Lev:	53	Joel:	11	Job:	17
Num:	27	Amos:	14	Prov:	5
Deut:	374	Jonah:	16	Ruth:	4
Josh:	76	Mic:	11	Eccl:	40
Judg:	73	Nah:	1	Dan:	22
1–2 Sam:	154	Hab:	2	Ezra:	55
1–2 Kgs:	204	Zeph:	5	Neh:	70
Isa:	94	Hag:	3	1–2 Chr:	321
Jer:	145	Zech:	11		

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[53] The only known direct cognate is the Ugaritic *ʾlhm* (KTU 1.39:9; 1.41:6, 12, 14, 18, 30; 1.87:16).

[54] I include all uses of the term that may be classified as the adjectival genitive (I do not consider אלהים to appear in a "superlative" sense; cf. Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 57–60; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 106–07). Wardlaw identifies 2,602 (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 97). Several scholars count 2,570 occurrences (K. van der Toorn, "God (I) אלהים," *DDD* 352; Davies, "'God' in the Old Testament," 178; A. J. Schmutzer, "Did the Gods Cause Abraham's Wandering? An Examination of התעו אתי אלהים in Genesis 20.13," *JSOT* 35.2 [2010]: 151, n. 3; M. Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [London: Continuum, 2011], 27).

[55] "Appellative" is defined by the OED as "a 'common' noun or name applicable to any one member of a whole class." Thus it may function as a generic noun or a title (cf. Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 129, n. 86). Personal names, as a general rule, do not appear in the construct. Epithets may be an exception to this rule (J. H. Choi, "Resheph and *YHWH ṢĔBĀʾÔT*," *VT* 54.1 [2004]: 17–28), but there is no indication pronominal suffices ever appear with names. The word also appears around 375 times with the definite article, with 100 of those occurrences representing the vocative, and eight referring to other deities (Exod 18:11; Deut 10:17; Judg 10:4; 1 Sam 4:8 [2x]; Jer 11:12; Ps 136:2; 2 Chr 2:4).

The etymological root of the word אלהים is irretrievable,[56] but some manner of relationship to the Hebrew אל is likely—and appears to be presumed by the biblical authors[57]—and so Marvin Pope's conclusion on the matter will be our starting point: "the problem is philologically insoluble on the basis of the materials now at our disposal. The word *ilu*, *ʾēl* is simply a primitive noun and as such cannot be further analyzed."[58] Its usage in the Hebrew Bible indicates it is fundamentally a generic noun meaning "deity" that became lexicalized in its most frequent usage as a reference to YHWH, either with or without the definite article (ויאמר לו האלהים, 1 Chr 14:14; ויאמר לו אלהים, Gen 35:10). Based on the trends within the scholarship, one may be tempted to understand the usage of the article to reflect different stages in the progression toward אלהים as a personal name for YHWH ("god" > "The God" > "God" [DN]),[59] but the development is not linear (e.g., P rarely uses the definite article,[60] while Chronicles frequently inserts it).[61] The appellative sense of the word is clearly maintained throughout the Hebrew Bible, as well, even in reference to YHWH (cf. אלהינו, Deut 6:4; Dan 9:9; Joel 1:6; Mic 4;5; Zech 9:7). In light of this, אלהים is best understood as a common noun that appears often in a titular

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[56] Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 2, n. 4; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 92–97, n. 4. The root *ʾW/YL, meaning "to be in front" (and by semantic extension, "to be strong"), was most commonly cited in early scholarship in light of the conceptual proximity to איל ("leader," "chief," or "ram"), but the explanation has no evidentiary support and has little to no explanatory power for the term in the other Semitic languages (cf. Ringgren, "אלהים *ʾelōhîm*," 273). Other suggestions, like *ʾLH and the Arabic root *ʾillun* have been equally unsuccessful (On the latter, see F. Zimmerman, "*ʾEl* and *Adonai*," *VT* 12.2 [1962]: 190–95).

[57] Cf. Ringgren, "אלהים *ʾelōhîm*," 273: "It is usually assumed that el and elohim are related." While Ringgren acknowledges that this theory is not without problems, no more secure solution is available.

[58] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, 19 (cf. pp. 19–20 for discussion of אלהים as a plural form of אל).

[59] See, for instance, Arnold and Choi, *GBHS*, 30–31: "The definite article can mark a common noun as a proper noun. . . . Related to this category is the solitary use of the definite article . . . in which appellatives referring to unique persons, places, or things are on their way to becoming a name: הָאֱלֹהִים, 'God [literally: *the* God].'" Cf. Gesenius, *GKC* §125*f*: "In a few instances original appellatives have completely assumed the character of real proper names, and are therefore used without the article; thus הָאֱלֹהִים *God*."

[60] It does appear, for instance, in Gen 6:4, 9; 17:18; Exod 2:23 (following the outline of P given in W. H. C. Propp, "The Priestly Source Recovered Intact?" *VT* 46.4 [1994]: 477). Gen 6:4 is omitted from P by Friedman, Guillaume, Lohfink, and Pola (see P. Guillaume, *Land and Calendar: The Priestly Document from Genesis 1 to Joshua 18* [New York: T&T Clark, 2009], 193–95; R. E. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed* [New York: HarperCollins, 2003], 42).

[61] Ninety-six of the 375 occurrences with the article are in 1 & 2 Chronicles.

sense.[62] The latter interpretation is preferred by most scholars for its anarthrous and referential use,[63]

but that usage is too inconsistent, and I see no clear method for making the distinction.

Much has been made of the morphologically plural form of אלהים despite explicitly singular

referents, including YHWH (Gen 1:1; 1 Kgs 11:33; 18:27).[64] The most common explanation has for some

time been the notion of a "plural of majesty," which views the plural as honorific or intensifying.[65]

Three observations militate against that explanation, however: (1) the plural אלהים appears in

pejorative references to singular foreign deities,[66] (2) אל and אלהים are used interchangeably in places

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[62] Wardlaw argues the titular sense precludes any possibility of prototype effects, as there is only one member of the category (Warldaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 98), but as I understand it, a title that carries a definite article or pronominal suffices like "our" and "my" reflects a generic sense. In other words, the article suffices to specify individual members of the category, not the titular usage of the lexical term alone. Prototype effects can thus be identified. In fact, the titular usage highlights the prototypicality of the individual member. YHWH is THE God among gods.

[63] For instance, Gesenius, *GKC* § 125*f*; K. van der Toorn, "God (I) אלהים," *DDD*, 353; "אֵל," *HALOT* 1.52; Arnold and Choi, *GBHS*, 30–31. Konrad Schmid argues ("The Quest for 'God,'" 282–87) that the term is used as a proper noun in P, indicating an inclusive monotheism ("Others may venerate him as Zeus or Ahuramazda, but actually, it is just God" [285]). He rejects a titular reading on two grounds: (1) it "gambles away the innovative and creative aspects of Priestly language," and (2) it "neglects the nongrammatical use of *Elohim*, where it is used as a determined noun in spite of the article's absence" (286). Schmid does not comment on the exceptions to P's tendency toward the anarthrous use of the term. On proper names in a cognitive linguistic approach, see Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 2.58–60.

[64] Sometimes plural verbs occur alongside what appear to be singular referents. Discussing Exod 22:8–9, David Wright calls this an "emphatic formulation," citing in addition, Gen 20:13; 31:53; 35:7; Josh 24:19; 2 Sam 7:23 (Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], 256, n. 78). Several other Semitic languages attest to the morphologically plural use of words for "god" with singular referents. Extensive coverage is found in Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 7–53. Two representative examples include a letter from Taanach roughly contemporary with the Amarna correspondences (A. F. Rainey, *Canaanite in the Amama Tablets: A Linguistic Atutysis of the Mixed Dialect Usedby the Scibes from Canaan* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 1:147; Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 9): EN DINGIR.MEŠ-nu / ZI-ka lí-iṣ-ṣur; *bēlu ilānū / napištaka liṣṣur*, "May the lord, the god, protect your life!"; and a portion of the Phoenician Azatiwada inscription (KAI 26 C iii:15–16; Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 27): *wyšb / ʾnk hʾlm z bʿal krntryš*, "And I caused this deity, Baʿl-KRNTRYŠ, to dwell (in the city)."

[65] Gesenius, *GKC* §124; A. Ember, "The Pluralis Intensivus in Hebrew," *AJSLL* 21.4 (1905): 195–231; Waltke and O'Connor, *IBHS* 7.4.3*a–f*; Joüon and Muraoka, *GBH* §136*d*; Byrne, *The Names of God in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, 28.

[66] E.g., 1 Kgs 11:33; 2 Kgs 1:2–3, 6, 16. This demonstrably non-honorific usage of the "plural of majesty" is found in other Semitic literature as well. For instance, a "plural of majesty" in the Amarna correspondences is particularly undermined by the occurrence of the morphologically plural IR.MEŠ ("servant") with a singular referent in EA 47:11. Franz Böhl tried to harmonize the grammatical explanations by suggesting "Plurales modestiae" for this occurrence (Böhl, *Die Sprache der Amarnabriefe* [Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1909], 36; cf. Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 19, 23), which would indicate the "intensification" is contingent upon the sense of the word. It is not "honorific," or "majestic," it just highlights whatever abstract semantic qualities the word evokes. In other words, it derives directly from the abstract plural. Wardlaw's defense of the plural of majesty on the grounds that it is "at least attested in Amarna Akkadian" is thus problematic (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 98).

(e.g., Exod 20:3//34:14; Deut 32:21//Hos 8:6; Ezek 28:2//9), and (3) no heightened sense of honor or majesty is demonstrable in any occurrence of אלהים. These observations undermine the notion of any intensifying or honorific sense for the plural.[67] The difference seems to be one of style, not sense.[68]

The most compelling explanation of this usage from recent years is that of Joel Burnett,[69] who argues that the most common use of אלהים is as a "concretized abstract plural." That is, the morphologically plural אלהים had the abstract sense of "divinity," but became concretized in reference to actual instantiations of divinity, and thus came to mean "deity."[70] This final sense is largely synonymous with the singular אל and אלוה, but as Burnett notes, an abstract nuance may be detectable in some places.[71] For instance, in 1 Kgs 11:33 the masculine plural אלהים appears in reference to a feminine singular deity. The abstract sense of "deity" is gender neutral, while non-abstract אלהים, "god," is masculine. While Biblical Hebrew has no word for "goddess"—leaving the author little choice—the masculine plural ʾlm in reference to singular feminine deities is also found in Phoenician, which does have a word for "goddess" (ʾlt).[72] This is not definitive proof of the same usage in Hebrew, but it is suggestive, and it links unusual usage to the same phenomena in cognate languages that is otherwise left unexplained by the plural of majesty. The adjectival genitive use of אלהים is also better

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[67] The notion of intensification seems to sit at the root of most arguments for the plural of majesty (Waltke and O'Connor, *IBHS* §7.4.3a–b; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 104), with contradictory data dismissed as "exceptions" (Waltke and O'Connor, *IBHS* §7.4.3b n. 16). The predominance of the plural in reference to YHWH over and against other deities is a product only of the paucity of references to single foreign deities.

[68] That is, the words are synonyms, alternated for stylistic rather than semantic reasons. Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 24.

[69] Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 7–53.

[70] In essence, the abstract sense expressed the salient abstract qualities associated with the noun. Concretization took place through the firm or repeated association of those qualities with some entity. Burnett cites as another example of a concretized abstract plural the word בתולים (Deut 22:15), meaning "evidences of virginity," rather than the abstract "virginity" (Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 22).

[71] Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 57–60.

[72] Burnett quotes two such texts (Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 27): *bbt ʾlm ʿštrt*, "in the house of the deity Ashtart"; *lrbty lʾlm ʾdrt ʾš ʾlm ʿštrt wʾlnm ʾš*, "to my Lady, to the majestic deity Isis, the deity Ashtart and the deities who . . ." Note the use of the variant plural form *ʾlnm* following the occurrences of the singular *ʾlm* in the latter text.

explained if we understand the term as an abstract plural (e.g., חרדת אלהים, "divine trembling," 1 Sam

14:15).[73] While Burnett's argument and presentation are not without problems, his explanation seems

the best available explanation of the data.

Another question related to the use of אלהים in the Hebrew Bible is the historical interpretation of

some passages as a reference to human rulers or judges.[74] The passages considered most supportive of

this reading are Exod 21:5–6 and 22:8–9.[75] The former describes a ritual whereby a slave may elect to

stay on permanently with his master's household:

> [5]But if the slave declares, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out a free
> person," [6] then his master shall bring him אל־האלהים. He shall be brought to the door or the
> doorpost; and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him for life.

Exod 22:8–9, on the other hand, describes the juridical process should an individual's property go

missing while in a borrower's possession and no thief is found.

> [8] If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall be brought אל־האלהים, to determine

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[73] Burnett, *A Reassessment of Biblical Elohim*, 57–59; cf. Joüon and Muraoka, *GBH* §141*n*.

[74] This tendency appears to have developed in the Rabbinic period. The Septuagint renders κριτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ, "tribunal of God," at Exod 21:6, but 22:8 has only τοῦ θεοῦ. Targum Onqelos is the first translator of whom I am aware who renders "judges" (דיניה), which he does at Gen 3:5; Exod 21:6; 22:7–8, etc. Miamonides, citing Onqelos, insists that "every Hebrew" knows אלהים is a homonym that refers to God, angels, judges, and rulers (*Guide for the Perplexed* 1.2). In contemporary scholarship the "judges" reading has been all but abandoned outside of fundamentalist and apologetic publications (cf. J. R. Vannoy, "The Use of the Word *hāʾⁱlōhîm* in Exodus 21:6 and 22:7, 8," in *The Law and the Prophets* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974], 225–41).

[75] The phase בני אלהים, "sons of God," "divine beings," or "deities," is sometimes interpreted as a reference to humans (cf. S. Fockner, "Reopening the Discussion: Another Contextual Look at the Sons of God," *JSOT* 32.4 [2008]: 435–56), but this reading must be considered to be precluded in several instances, such as Job 38:7, where the בני אלהים shout for joy at the creation of the earth, or Gen 6:2, 4, where the בני אלהים are contrasted with the בנות האדם, "daughters of Adam/humanity." Fockner's attempt to read Gen 6:2, 4 as references to distinct human lineages demands a series of unsupportable and question-begging presuppositions.

whether or not the owner had laid hands on the neighbor's goods. [9] In any case of disputed ownership involving ox, donkey, sheep, clothing, or any other loss, of which one party says, "This is mine," the case of both parties shall come עד האלהים; the one whom אלהים condemns (pl. יַרְשִׁיעֻן) shall pay double to the other.

Nothing internal to either text is suggestive of the reading "judges," or "rulers." In fact, the context militates against such a reading. "Judges" are referred to already with the term פללים in Exod 21:22, and in a context that indicates their presence is presupposed by these laws. There is no need to prescribe appearance before them. It is theological sensitivity alone that compels reading the ostensibly plural use of אלהים in Exod 22:9 as a reference to human judges or rulers (contributing to the same reading in 21:6).[76] That sensitivity, however, is lexicographically irrelevant, as well as unjustified. While a number of scholars suggest that the plural reading "gods" is likely,[77] the most judicious analysis of the evidence points to an intended singular sense: "God."[78] A singular sense for אלהים with plural verbal elements, pronouns, or adjectives is not unheard of (cf. Gen 20:13; 31:53; 35:7; Exod 32:4, 8; Josh 24:19; 1 Sam 28:13–14; 2 Sam 7:23),[79] and the context of Exod 22:9 clarifies the prescribed process.[80]

Exod 22:10–11 stipulate an "oath of YHWH" for a strikingly similar situation. Specifically, if an animal is entrusted to another, and it disappears or dies, the borrower must swear an oath that he has

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[76] One of two arguments undergirds this theory: (1) the etymological fallacy is employed, and the notion of "strength," or "might" is asserted for the root אל (cf. KJV Ps 29:1); or (2) as representatives of God, Israelite judges may be metonymically referred to as "gods" (cf. Exod 7:1).

[77] For instance, see C. H. Gordon, "אלהים in Its Reputed Meaning of Rulers, Judges," *JBL* 54.3 (1935): 139–44; A. E. Draffkorn, "Ilāni/Elohim," *JBL* 76.3 (1957): 216–24.

[78] There are no plural verbal forms to complicate the interpretation of Exod 21:5–6. See B. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1962), 34–37; B. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 113 n. 43; Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 255–56.

[79] See Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, 113 n. 43; Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 255–58 and n. 78; Heiser, "Should אלהים (*ĔLŌHÎM*) with Plural Predication Be Translated 'Gods'?" BT 61.3 (2010): 123–36. On Gen 20:13; 31:53; 35:7, cf. Schmutzer, "Did the Gods Cause Abraham's Wandering?," 149–66.

[80] See Heiser, "Should אלהים (*ĔLŌHÎM*) with Plural Predication Be Translated 'Gods'?" 129–32.

not stolen or destroyed the livestock, which the original owner is then obligated to accept. It is unlikely that we have two entirely different processes prescribed for such comparable scenarios, with one defendant appearing before human judges—who will somehow determine guilt or innocence without witnesses or evidence—and the other appearing before YHWH to swear an oath that definitively determines innocence. Rather, both cases appear to command the same procedure: an oath sworn before God.

Through what means, then, does God "condemn" (hiphil רשע) a guilty party?[81] The juridical swearing of an oath before deity to determine guilt or innocence was quite common to the ancient Near East. As an example, requirements very similar to those of Exod 22:8–9 are found for a variety of legal situations in the laws of Hammurabi (LH).[82] According to section 120, if a man stores grain with another, and somehow the amount of grain is reduced, the former may declare the original amount "before the god" (*maḫar ilim*)[83] and be restored double that amount. According to section 249, if a man rents an ox, and it dies through no fault of the renter,[84] he may go free if he swears an oath "before the god" (*nīš ilim*) that he was not at fault. The oath was a test of the swearer's belief in their own innocence. One who had the courage to swear an oath before God/the gods, or who could do so without divine intervention, must not be guilty. On the other hand, one who knew their own guilt

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[81] This was the consideration the compelled J. R. Vannoy to determine Exod 22:8–9 must be referring to human judges as representatives of God (Vannoy, "The Use of the Word *hāᵉlōhîm*," 225–41, esp. 240).

[82] Wright argues convincingly for the literary dependence of the Covenant Code on the laws of Hammurabi (Wright, *Inventing God's Law*). While the laws are not imported verbatim, but are adapted to serve the authors' cultural and rhetorical needs, dependence is evident in many places. Relevant to the above discussion, LH §282 commands the severing of a slave's ear should he reject the ownership of his master. CC reverses the relevance of the mutilated ear to the slave/master relationship, having the ear pierced to indicate lifelong commitment (Wright, *Inventing God's Law*, 133–35 and n. 57). Note, particularly, the discussion of appearance (*ina*) *maḫar ilim*, "before the god" (pp. 135–37; 245–48; 252–58).

[83] Cf. *Laws of Eshnunna* 37. I understand the singular sense of *ilim* to be intended, but the discussion is hardly undermined by a plural reading.

[84] Literally, *ilum imḫaṣma imtūt*, "a god strike it and it die."

would fear the consequences of swearing falsely before the deity or deities. The individual would be condemned by their own fear, or, if they managed to swear the oath, by the deity's swift and decisive punishment (such as described in Num 5:27–28).[85]

2.3.2 אֵל

אֵל is the most lexically basic term for "deity" in Biblical Hebrew. A search using the Groves-Wheeler Westminster Hebrew Morphology identifies 236 occurrences of the word אל in the Hebrew Bible, but I add Ezek 32:21[86] and Ps 58:2[87] to bring the total to 238.[88] Not included in this tally are possible uses in Deut 33:2;[89] Judg 9:46;[90] and Gen 31:29 (and related).[91] The term's frequency by book is as follows:

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[85] "[27] When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her womb shall discharge, her uterus drop, and the woman shall become an execration among her people. [28] But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, then she shall be immune and be able to conceive children."

[86] יְדַבְּרוּ לוֹ אֵלֵי גִבּוֹרִים מִתּוֹךְ שְׁאוֹל, "The gods of the mighty will speak to him from the midst of Sheol."

[87] הַאֻמְנָם אֵלֶם צֶדֶק תְּדַבֵּרוּן, "Truly, O gods, do you decree what is just?" Most recent translations read אֵלִים (ESV, JPS, NASB, NIV, NRSV), although some read אֵלֶם as "silent," or "muteness," and more conservative translations preserve outdated renderings like "rulers" (NIV), or "mighty ones" (JPS). J. Kselman and M. Barré have argued that the form is intentionally ambiguous in order to suggest both "muteness" (אֵלֶם) and "gods" (אֵלִים): Kselman and Barré, "A Note on *ʾelem* in Ps LVIII 2," *VT* 54.3 (2004): 400–402. See also Heiser, "Should אֱלֹהִים (*ʾĔLŌHÎM*) with Plural Predication Be Translated 'Gods'?" 135–36.

[88] The usual number is 238 (G. Davies, "'God' in Old Testament Theology," in *Congress Volume: Leiden 2004* [ed. A. Lemaire; Leiden: Brill, 2006], 177), but that number appears to be based on *Strong's Concordance*.

[89] MT preserves מִימִינוֹ אֵשְׁדָּת לָמוֹ, but BHS restores מִימִינוֹ אֲשֵׁרוּ אֵלִים, P. D. Miller restores מִימִינוֹ אֲשֵׁד אֵלִם (Miller, "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33," *HTR* 57.3 [1964]: 240–43 [note גִבּוֹרֵי אֵלִים in 1QM xv:14]), and Cross restores מִימִינוֹ אֲשֵׁר אֵלִם (Cross, *CMHE*, 101).

[90] בָּאוֹוִי אֶל צְרִיחַ בֵּית אֵל בְּרִית, "And they went into the tunnel of the house of El-Berith." Most render El-berith (ESV, JPS, NASB, RSV; note that v. 4 refers to the temple of Baal-berith), but cf. Davies, "'God' in Old Testament Theology," 177. That Davies follows *Strong's Concordance* may be supported by the KJV's rendering of this phrase as "the god Berith." *Strong's Concordance* and its dictionary are based on the KJV translation.

[91] וְאֵין לְאֵל יָדְנוּ. Related phrases also occur in Deut 28:32; Mic 2:1; Prov 3:27; Neh 5:5. Cross confidently suggests a redivision of the words to read אֵין לֹא לְיָדְנוּ, with לֹא understood as the root *L'Y (Cross, "אֵל *ʾēl*," *TDOT* 1:260–61), but this view has garnered few adherents. Wardlaw, citing Schmidt, notes that "there is not enough evidence to draw any firm conclusions" regarding this usage (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 155; cf. W. H. Schmidt, "אֵל," *THAT* 1:142). It is therefore omitted from consideration.

Gen:	18	Hos:	3
Exod:	7	Jonah:	1
Num:	10	Mic:	1
Deut:	13	Nah:	1
Josh:	4	Mal:	3
Judg:	1	Pss:	77
1–2 Sam:	6	Job:	56
Isa:	22	Lam:	1
Jer:	2	Dan:	4
Ezek:	5	Neh:	4

Of these 238 occurrences, we may take references to other deities[92] and all occurrences with the definite article or pronominal suffices as reflecting a generic sense ("god[s]").[93] The nature and function of the remaining occurrences is somewhat unclear. They may be understood in the appellative sense (as a generic noun or a title ["god" or "God"]), or אל may be a proper name belonging originally to the Canaanite deity 'Ilu.[94] The latter interpretation has been common among those scholars emphasizing Israel's cultural and religious continuity with the wider ancient Near East,[95] but criticisms have been leveled against this line of thinking on the grounds that linguistic and thematic borrowing do not indicate referential equality.[96] In other words, Israelites may have adopted the

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[92] Twenty-four occurrences appear to refer to other deities in the singular: Exod 34:14; Deut 32:12, 21; Isa 9:6; 31:3; 43:10, 12; 44:10, 15, 17 (2x); 45:20; 46:6; Ezek 28:2 (2x), 9; Mic 7:18; Mal 2:11; Ps 44:21; 77:14; 81:10 (2x); 82:1;[92] Dan 11:36. Seven occurrences use the plural: Exod 15:11; Ezek 32:21; Ps 29:1; 58:2; 89:7; Job 41:17; Dan 11:36.

[93] Arthrous אל appears twenty times: Gen 31:13; 46:3; Deut 7:9; 10:17; 2 Sam 22:31, 33, 48; Isa 5:16; 42:5; Jer 32:18; Ps 18:31, 33, 48; 68:20, 21; 77:15; 85:9; Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5; 9:32. The first common singular pronominal suffix appears eleven times: Exod 15:2; Isa 44:17; Ps 18:3; 22:2, 11; 63:2; 68:25; 89:27; 102:25; 118:28; 140:7.

[94] The name Jacob gives to the altar in Gen 33:20, אל אלהי־ישׂראל, seems *prima facie* to include a proper name followed by an appositive construct phrase: "El, the god of Israel." Other interpretations have been offered, though.

[95] Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*; O. Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," *JSS* 1 (1956): 25–37; Cross, *CMHE*, 1–75; van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 258–59; M. Smith, *The Early History of God*, 19–43; Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 137–40.

[96] R. Rendtorff, "El, Ba'al und Jahwe. Zum Verhältnis von kanaanäischer und israelitischer Religion," *ZAW* 78 (1966): 277–92; J. G. McConville, "Yahweh and the Gods in the Old Testament," *EuroJTh* 2 (1993): 107–17; Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 124–29.

vernacular, imagery, and traditions associated with Canaanite ʾIlu, but that does not necessarily mean they identified their deity as ʾIlu, or understood the lexeme אל as a proper name. On the other hand, if the ethnic roots of Israel are indigenous to Syria-Palestine, then the presence of El epithets may not constitute borrowing, but the simple perpetuation of the ancestral cult. In this case, the referent could originally have been ʾIlu, which identification could have been rejected following the rise of Yahwism.

The most salient usage of biblical אל in the context of this problem is its appearance in epithets. The Pentateuch in particular contains several ostensibly early El-epithets, including אל עליון (Gen 14:18–22); אל ראי (Gen 16:13); אל שׁדי (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25; Exod 6:3); אל עולם (Gen 21:33); אל בית אל (Gen 31:13; 35:7); אל אלהי־ישׂראל (Gen 33:20); אל קנא (Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; cf. Josh 24:19).[97] Many have understood these epithets to reflect the borrowing or perpetuation of designations for the Canaanite ʾIlu, but that view is not without significant criticism. Several scholars have argued that proper nouns cannot appear in the construct state,[98] mitigating the range of possible interpretations of these epithets as containing the proper name El (although not eliminating appositive readings). Careful consideration of the data, however, undermines such an absolute grammatical proscription. "YHWH of Teman" and "YHWH of Samaria" appear in the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions,[99] showing the proper name YHWH may be modified by place names.[100] Additionally, an Ugaritic epithet, *ršp ṣbʾi* ("Reseph of the Host"),[101] provides a remarkable parallel to the Hebrew

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[97] On these epithets, see Cross, *CMHE*, 44–60; P. D. Miller, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 73; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 32–41; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 41–43; Wardlaw, *Contextualizing Words for "God"*, 134–50;

[98] Gesenius, *GKC* §125*d*; Joüon and Muraoka, *GBH* §131*n*.

[99] J. A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *ZAW* 94 (1982): 12–13.

[100] This phenomenon also occurs in epithets associated with Baal and Anat (Choi, "Resheph and *YHWH ṢĔBĀʾÔT*," 17–18).

[101] KTU 1.91:15. Cf. Choi, "Resheph and *YHWH ṢĔBĀʾÔT*," 19 n. 11.

יהוה צבאות ("YHWH of Hosts"), and illustrates the appearance of Northwest Semitic proper names in the construct to emphasize some particular function or aspect of the deity.[102]

The epithet אל אלהי־ישׂראל, given by Jacob to a stela[103] in Gen 33:20, appears *prima facie* to be a clear example of a proper name with a construct phrase in apposition: "El, the God of Israel."[104] Of course, it may just be a case of repetitive apposition,[105] thus "God, [namely] the God of Israel." It has also been interpreted as a verbless clause: "God [is] the God of Israel."[106] A very similar construction in Gen 46:3 (האל אלהי אביך) attaches the definite article to אל, precluding the use of אל as a proper name, and perhaps indicating the intended sense of the construction in Gen 33:20. Ultimately, Gen 33:20 does not provide conclusive evidence that Biblical Hebrew אל should be taken as a personal name.[107] The possibility certainly exists that it was understood as a proper noun—that appears to be the case with the Ugaritic use of the lexeme—but the appellative sense dominates in the Hebrew Bible, and I see no clear method for definitively identifying a particular instantiation as a proper name. As a result, this thesis will consider the noun to function fundamentally as a generic and common noun.

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[102] The Ugaritic epithet also shows there is no need to posit the suppression of an "appellative idea contained in the name" (Gesenius, *GKC* §125*h*), or insist on an original causitive verbal sense for the name YHWH (Cross, *CMHE*, 70).

[103] The text has "altar," but verb used to refer to the erecting of the altar, נצב, "to stand," does not occur elsewhere with "altar," suggesting the text originally had מצבה, "stela" (cf. Gen 35:14, 20; 2 Sam 18:18; 2 Kgs 17:10; van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 257, n. 93).

[104] Cf. Num 16:22 (אל אלהי הרוחת), and Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 144–46. Van der Toorn cites Köckert's rejection of the *nomen proprium* usage in Gen 33:20 and 46:3 and asserts he "fails to explains [*sic*] the resulting redundancy of El and Elohim" (van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 258 n. 98, referring to M. Köckert, *Vatergott und Vaterverheissungen: eine Auseinandersetzung mit Albrecht Alt und seinen Erben* [Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1988], 83, 86–87).

[105] Waltke and O'Connor, *IBHS*, §12.5a.

[106] Wardlaw suggests this reading, drawing from Rashi's interpretation and Van Seters' updating of the argument, which marshals the name of Gideon's altar from Judg 6:24 as an analogue: יהוה שלום (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 144; Van Seters, "The Religion of the Patriarchs in Genesis," *Bib* 61.2 [1980]: 222–23; van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 257).

[107] Rahmouni draws a clear distinction between an epithet and a divine name (Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Texts*, xix–xx). As long as the construction contains at least one element that is a common noun, it is an epithet (e.g., "Rašap of the Army" is an epithet, while "Rašap of [the city] Ribiti" is not). Note individual elements within the epithet may themselves represent divine names.

2.3.3 אֱלוֹהַ

The singular noun אֱלוֹהַ appears fifty-eight times in the Hebrew Bible, with approximately eight occurrences referring to gods other than YHWH (Isa 44:8; Hab 1:11; Ps 18:31; Dan 11:37, 38 [2x], 39; 2 Chr 32:15). Its frequency of occurrence by book is as follows:

Deut:	2
2 Kgs:	1
Isa:	1
Hab:	2
Pss:	4
Job:	41
Prov:	1
Dan:	4
Neh:	1
2 Chr:	1

Many suggest the word constitutes the singular form originally underlying the plural אֱלֹהִים,[108] which may be true if the latter derives from אֱלוֹהַ, as is widely thought.[109] The plural אֵלִים for אֵל certainly leaves room for a different form underlying אֱלֹהִים. It is a rare form, however, and appears primarily in late texts. The phrase כׇּל־אֱלוֹהַ, "every god" (Dan 11:37; 2 Chr 32:15), suggests it can function as a generic noun. The only books with more than two occurrences are Psalms (4x), Daniel (4x), and Job (41x). The high number of occurrences in Job may be attributed to the book's poetic and archaizing style. The author may have thought the word to reflect great antiquity.

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[108] For instance, E. Klein, *CEDHL*, 29.

[109] See D. Pardee, "Eloah אֱלוֹהַ," *DDD* 285. Cognates exist in Ugaritic, Aramaic, Arabian, and Arabic.

2.4 Summary

This chapter shows that common biblical conceptualizations of deity remained firmly rooted in their cognitive origins. We need not assume that they are the products of lost cultural idiosyncrasies; they developed from the same cognitive patterns that guide our assumptions about deity today. As was mentioned above, there is a point at which individual cultural traits and conventions are the proximate influence on the development of deity concepts, but even at that level we find universal cognitive frameworks (image-schemas) that give structure to that conceptual content. While the cultural features that contextualize and give impetus to the more developed god concepts are sometimes impossible to access, the discussion up to this point should serve to establish some basic conceptual foundations that serve to point the subsequent investigation in the right direction.

This chapter's discussion of linguistic considerations demonstrated that the primary designations for God in the Hebrew Bible, aside from the divine name YHWH, are predominantly appellative in nature. That is, they function primarily as generic class nouns or as titles. All three of the terms analyzed have direct cognates in the languages of the surrounding cultures, and their usage is generally parallel, indicating that Biblical Hebrew did not attach unique grammatical significance to the use of generic terms for deity when they referenced YHWH. There are no grounds, then, to argue that the terminology in and of itself suggests any kind of taxonomic compartmentalization.[110] Rather, YHWH was designated as a member of the deity class, albeit the preeminent member for Israelites.

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[110] For instance, observe Wardlaw's endorsement: "This form intensifies the concept 'god, deity,' and therefore the plural linguistic form with singular meaning suggests that God is supreme or ultimate. Moreover, in terms of register or tone, this is a highly respectful way of referring to God—an honorific. Therefore Hengstenberg may not have been far off of the mark when he concluded that this form 'calls the attention to the infinite riches and the inexhaustible fullness contained in the one Divine Being, so that, though men may imagine innumerable gods, and invest them with perfections, yet all these are contained in the one אלהים'" (Wardlaw, *Conceptualizing Words for "God"*, 104, quoting E. W. Hengstenberg, *Dissertations on the Genuineness of the Pentateuch* [trans. by J. E. Ryland, Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1847], 1:272–73).

Chapter 3

The Conceptualization of YHWH

This chapter begins with analysis of YHWH's relationship to the concepts of deity shared by surrounding cultures. The strongest connections with the wider Semitic conceptualizations of deity in the Hebrew Bible occur in the earliest depictions of Israel's God. That early imagery is concentrated primarily in conceptual constellations associated with the two primary Israelite traditions of ethnogenesis, namely the ancestral and exodus narratives.[1] Each tradition presents configurations of divine imagery that have clear points of contact with those of the cultures of the broader ancient Near East. Socio-political circumstances and shared divine imagery facilitated the subsequent conflation of the two divine profiles, which would later be followed by the joining of the two traditions. Those conceptualizations of God not conveniently incorporated into the picture of Israel's God, or that otherwise complicated the rhetorical campaigns of the biblical authors, were marginalized or ignored.

The division of these two conceptualizations roughly along the boundaries of the patriarchal and exodus traditions merits some attention. That division is by no means arbitrary; the texts themselves strongly indicate such a dichotomy, and even go so far as to explicitly attempt to reconcile it. Most clearly, Exodus 6:3 depicts YHWH equating the two divine identities he associates with the respective textual traditions: "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name YHWH I was not known to them."[2]

If the claim of this verse regarding the absence of the Tetragrammaton from the patriarchal tradition is to be taken seriously—and there is little reason it should not be—the explicit use of the

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[1] By "exodus tradition" I refer both to the exodus from Egypt and to the Sinai narratives.
[2] NRSV renders נודעתי reflexively ("did make myself known"), but the simple passive is more likely.

designation YHWH by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob within the Genesis narratives (e.g., Gen 15:2; 26:25; 32:9; 49:18) must indicate one of three scenarios: YHWH's name (1) was subsequently interpolated into narratives, (2) appeared in narratives not yet in existence or otherwise unknown to the author of Exod 6:3, or (3) appeared in narratives rejected or set aside by that author. The narrative doublets and incongruities associated with the use of the divine name YHWH in different segments of Genesis weaken the strength of conclusion (1).[3] Conclusion (3) is certainly a plausible scenario, and the account of the Chronicler provides a handy analogue, but this conclusion requires additional assumptions about P's editorial decisions. The most logical explanation is that P was unaware of YHWH's incorporation into the patriarchal traditions, either because it circulated outside of P's literary scope, or because it did not yet exist.[4] YHWH is not the God of the patriarchs in P's textual heritage, but rather El Shaddai, or more likely a collection of epithets of varying origin containing the generic noun אל or some other metonymic reference to deity.[5] The separate origins of the traditions and the depictions of deity within them support the proposed conceptual division.

This chapter thus proceeds with separate analyses of the patriarchal and exodus traditions. Both will be shown to rely directly and heavily on broader Near Eastern divine imagery. While the primary expression of these divine profiles is found in the books of Genesis and Exodus, respectively,

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[3] See Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*; K. L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2008), 82–88; Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 34–44.

[4] This suggests the original merging of the patriarchal and exodus traditions was executed by P, which complicates the view that the J or E sources represented coordinated pentateuchal macro-narratives. Rather, they appear to be narrative fragments that were limited to portions of Genesis and later supplemented the growing textual tradition of the Pentateuch. Unfortunately, there is not space to fully address this fascinating area of study, but see the contributions of Schmid and Blum in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* as well as the responses by Levin, Van Seters, and Carr. For the most extended criticism of Schmid, see J. S. Baden, "The Continuity of the Non-Priestly Narrative from Genesis to Exodus," *Bib* 93.2 (2012): 161–86. For Baden's broader campaign to revive the Documentary Hypothesis, see Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*.

[5] Such as פחד יצחק, "Fear of Isaac" (31:42); אביר יעקב, "Bull of Jacob" (49:24); אבן ישראל, "Stone of Israel" (49:24). In Genesis, the El epithets include אל עליון, "God Most High" (14:18, 19, 20, 22); אל ראי, "God of Seeing" (16:13); אל שדי, "God of the Mountains/Wilderness" (17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3); אל עולם, "God Eternal" (21:33); אל אב, "God of the Father" (49:25).

witnesses to the two traditions in their independent forms are sporadically found elsewhere. Several

prophetic texts appear to have been written prior to the authoritative combining of the two traditions.

The chapter will then move on to the conflation of these two divine profiles and the new god concepts

that developed out of that conflation and the resulting socio-religious dynamics.

3.1 The Portrayals of Deity in the Patriarchal and Exodus Traditions

3.1.1 The Portrayal of the God of the Patriarchs

One of the oldest witnesses to the patriarchal conceptualizations of deity is found in the blessing of

Joseph, in Genesis 49:24–25:

24 Yet his bow remained taut, and his arms were made agile
   by the hands of the Bull of Jacob,[6]
  by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
25 by the God of your father, who will help you,
   by the Shaddai who will bless you
  with blessings of heaven above,
   blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
  blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

Several epithets here evoke imagery associated with divine patriarchy and the broader Syro-

Palestinian notion of the ancestral deity, especially in his procreative capacity. God is called "Bull of

Jacob,"[7] "God of your father,"[8] and "Shaddai."[9] The title "Bull of Jacob" likely educes the concept of

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[6] This translation departs from NRSV only in literally rendering the divine epithets, rather than using traditional titles like "Almighty," or "Mighty One of Jacob."

[7] אביר יעקב. Cf. Isa 1:24; 49:26; 60:16; Ps 132:2, 5. For this reading, see P. D. Miller, "Animal Names as Designations in Ugaritic and Hebrew," *UF* 11 (1979): 177–86; T. J. Mafico, "The Divine Compound Name יְהוָה אֱלֹ הִים and Israel's Monotheistic

fecundity[10]—as opposed to ferocity—particularly in light of God's promise to multiply Jacob's progeny (Gen 28:13–15). The title "God of your father" reflects the archaic notion of the "god of the father," a generic reference to a family deity found frequently in the cognate literature.[11] "The context of Genesis 49:24–25 also supports a procreative understanding of Shaddai, specifically in light of the blessings of שדים ורחם, "breast and womb," at the end of v. 25. El Shaddai is connected in Genesis 17:16–19 with a stock literary motif wherein the high god promises offspring to the childless and/or elderly.[12]

Outside of Genesis, Deuteronomy 32:6b provides a series of designations that are widely

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Polytheism," *JNSL* 22.1 (1996): 160; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 38; Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Dick; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 5.

[8] אל אביך. Cf. Gen 28:13; 31:53; Exod 3:15; 6:3.

[9] שׁדי. The possibility exists that the direct object marker את should be amended to אל, giving us אל שׁדי. He is also "Shepherd" and "Rock of Israel." This imagery is less central to the current discussion, but will be mentioned further below. Shaddai occurs forty-eight times throughout the Hebrew Bible. Note that the Deir Alla inscription refers to deities known as the *šdyn* in close connection with the divine name 'Ilu. Cf. J. Hackett, *The Balaam Texts from Deir 'Alla* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 85–89; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 207–10; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 32–34; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 34, 58–59; Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice: Biblical Distortions of Historical Realities* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2004), 270–82.

[10] In the Ugaritic texts, 'Ilu is frequently "his/your/my Father" (e.g., KTU 1.3.5.35–36). On seven occasions, this epithet is followed by a second epithet with a verb of procreation (Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*, 324–26). The Ugaritic epithets prefer the word *ṯr* for bull, however, suggesting the imagery in Gen 49:24–25 is more generic. For the various uses of bull imagery in reference to YHWH, see Smith, *The Early History of God*, 83–85.

[11] A deity called *'il'ib* ("god of the father/ancestor") appears in several places throughout the Ugaritic corpora, with multiple references to the "stela of *'il'ibh/k*" in the Aqhat narrative (KTU 1.17.i.26–27; 44–45; 1.17.ii.0–1; cf. "The 'Aqhatu Legend," translated by Pardee [*COS* 1.103:344, n. 6]). Cf. A. Alt, *Der Gott der Väter: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der israelitischen Religion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1929); Cross, *CMHE*, 3–43; Wyatt, "The Problem of the 'God of the Fathers,'" *ZAW* 90.1 (1978): 101–04; N. Sarna, *Genesis בראשית: The Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 396–97; Schmid, "Der Gott der Väter und der Gott des Exodus: Inklusive und Partikulare Theologie am Beginn des Alten Testaments," *GL* 16 (2001): 116–25; J. Healey, "The Nabataean 'God of the Fathers,'" in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. K. J. Dell, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 45–57.

[12] Cf. the Ugaritic Kirta Epic, in which 'Ilu promises offspring to the king Kirta. In the Epic of Aqhat, it is Ba'lu pleading to El for offspring on behalf of Dan'ilu. The motif of the barren wife siring offspring is taken up later by the Yahwistic authors in Gen 25:21 and 29:31 in connecting Isaac to Jacob and Jacob to his oldest sons.

acknowledged to reflect broader Syro-Palestinian ancestral deity imagery:[13]

הלוא־הוא אביך קנך   Is he not your father, who created you,[14]

הוא עשׂך ויכננך   who made you and established you?

Compare these descriptors with similar Ugaritic material in KTU 1.3.v.35–36:[15]

ṯr ʾil abh   Bull El his father

ʾil mlk d yknnh   King El, who created him

The epithets of Genesis 14:18–22 also betray very early concepts of the god of the patriarchs.[16] There

Melchizedek, the Canaanite king of Salem and priest of אל עליון ("God Most High"), blesses Abram by

his patron deity.[17] The epithet is invoked four times in total—once by Abram—and is connected twice

with the title קנה שׁמים וארץ, "Creator of Heaven and Earth."[18] Later Yahwistic authors altered the

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[13] See T. N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and the Message of the Everlasting Names* (trans. by F. H. Cryer; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 66–67; Heiser, "The Divine Council," 86–87; D. Tasker, *Ancient Near Eastern Literature and the Hebrew Scriptures About the Fatherhood of God* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 81–87; A. Curtis, "Encounters with El," in *"He Unfurrowed His Brow and Laughed": Essays in Honour of Professor Nicolas Wyatt* (ed. W. G. E. Watson; Münsten: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007), 59–72.

[14] The rendering "who begot you" for קנך in Deut 32:6 reflects a contemporary scholarly conclusion that the verbal root קנה has a procreative nuance in certain contexts: W. Irwin "Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?" *JBL* 80.2 (1961): 133–42; N. Habel, "'Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth': A Study in Tradition Criticism," *JBL* 91.3 (1972): 326–32; S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 68–69; Bokovoy, "Did Eve Acquire, Create, or Procreate with Yahweh? A Grammatical and Contextual Reassessment of קנה in Genesis 4:1," *VT* 63.1 (2013): 22–30.

[15] According to Rahmouni, seven times the phrase *ṯr ʾl abh/k/y* is parallel to another procreative epithet (Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*, 324–26).

[16] YHWH in v. 22 may be a late interpolation. It is absent from the Greek, the Syriac, and Qumran's *Genesis Apocryphon*.

[17] The Semitic divine names *ʾl* and *ʿlyn* elsewhere designate distinct but associated deities. They are listed beside each other in the Aramaic Sefire inscription (J. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* [Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995], 42). In Philo of Byblos' *Phoenician History*, Elioun is the grandfather of El, whose mother is "Earth" and father is "Heaven" (Eusebius, *Praeperatio evangelica* 1.10.14–30). Cf. G. Della Vida, "El 'Elyon in Genesis 14:18–20," *JBL* 63.1 (1944): 1–9; Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup 2; Leiden: Brill, 1955), 49–58; Habel, "Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth,'" 321–24.

[18] This epithet no doubt derives from the Syro-Palestinian *ʾl qn ʾrṣ*, found in the Azatiwada Inscription (KAI 26 A.3:18–19; A. Schade, "A Text Linguistic Approach to the Syntax and Style of the Phoenician Inscription of Azatiwada," *JSS* 50.1 [2005]:

formula slightly, giving us עֹשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, "Maker of Heaven and Earth."[19]

These epithets and their attendant contexts manifest a picture of the god of the patriarchs as an ancestral high god who oversees both cosmogony and procreation—he is creator and father.[20] These conceptualizations draw from the stock literary conventions of the family religion of Syria-Palestine. The god of the patriarchs may not have been the very Canaanite 'Ilu, but he is certainly patterned after him. The frequent repetition of his role as personal god of the patriarchs establishes the centrality of his role as ancestral deity.[21] The frequent appearance of this deity in the context of lineage and offspring further reinforces the importance of the kinship network, and particularly the patriarchal household, to his conceptualization.[22] Melchizedek's dual responsibilities as priest and king in Genesis 14:18 may connect the deity with kingship, which is clearly the case in the Ugaritic imagery, but this concept is subordinate in the patriarchal tradition to tribal hierarchies. The tradition may predate the rise of a centralized state in Israel. In Genesis 49:24 the patriarchal deity is described as Shepherd, Rock, and Bull, which are suggestive of the agrarian origins of the deity's constituency. The role of the divine patriarch as legal mediator appears in the tradition of Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31:53, witnessing to a view of the god as judge. The "king" and "judge" metaphors are sporadic, however, and were not firmly embedded in the divine profile until after the rise of the monarchy.

Before moving on to the conceptualization of the god of the exodus, we may illustrate the divine

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53–54; "The Azatiwada Inscription," translated by K. Lawson Younger, Jr. [*COS* 2.150]) and in an eighth/seventh century BCE Jerusalem inscription (P. Miller, "El, Creator of the Earth," *BASOR* [1980]: 239 43–46). Cf. the Hittite rendering Elkunirša, from a thirteenth century BCE text (CTH 342; "Elkunirša and Ašertu," translated by G. Beckman [*COS* 1.149]).

[19] Ps 115:15; 131:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6.

[20] The overlapping notion of theogony may very well underlie the title קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, which can be rendered "Procreator of Heaven and Earth." See Bokovoy, "Did Eve Acquire, Create, or Procreate with Yahweh?" 22–26.

[21] He is the "God of Abraham" (Gen 26:24) and "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (1 Kgs 18:36). Note the similar Yahwistic appropriation of the "god of PN" formula: "YHWH, the god of Shem" (יהוה אלהי שם, Gen 9:26); "YHWH, the god of Elijah" (יהוה אלהי אליהו, 2 Kgs 2:14); "YHWH, the god of David" (יהוה אלהי דוד, 2 Kgs 20:5).

[22] Cf. Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 255–61; Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 52–61.

profile of the god of the patriarchs as follows, with the foundational concept located centrally:
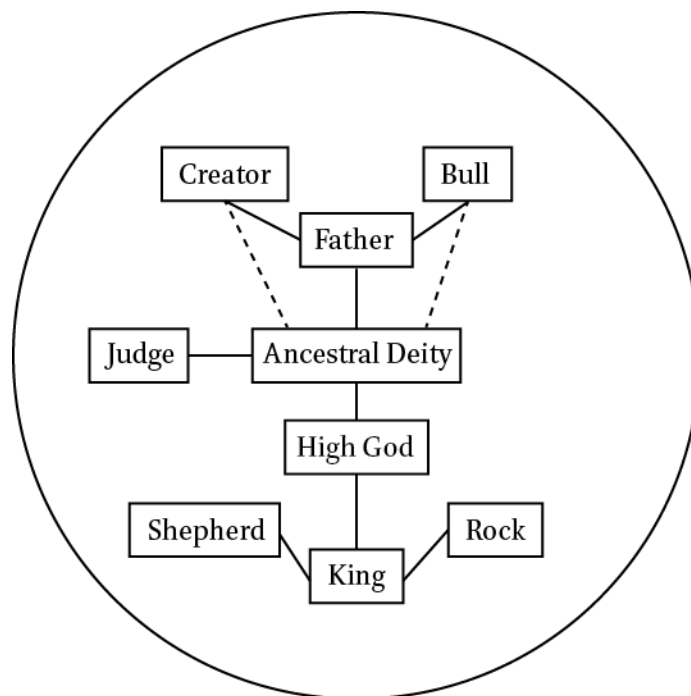
Fig. 3.1 The Conceptualization of the God of the Patriarchs

The patriarchal deity thus closely resembles the Canaanite ʾIlu, borrowing literary imagery and epithets from him, although the available evidence is insufficient to determine whether or not the Israelites viewed their deity as identical with the high god worshipped by their neighbors. They may simply have appropriated literary conventions without adopting the deity wholesale, although if the primeval Israelites mentioned in the Merneptah inscription were indeed split directly off from indigenous Canaanites, the object of their worship would not have been borrowed, but simply carried on through the cultural separation.

3.1.2 The Portrayal of the God of the Exodus

The earliest texts which witness to the conceptualization of YHWH are associated with the tradition of the exodus and divine warfare. The most well-known of these is likely the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–18), which describes YHWH as a ferocious warrior who overwhelms the Egyptian forces and casts them into the sea. Vv. 4–6 are representative:

> 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea;
> His picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea.
> 5 The floods covered them;
> They went down into the depths like a stone.
> 6 Your right hand, O YHWH, glorious in power—
> Your right hand, O YHWH, shattered the enemy.

Another archaic iteration of warrior imagery associated with the exodus tradition is Judges 5:4–5:[23]

> 4 YHWH, when you went out from Seir,
> when you marched from the region of Edom,
> the earth trembled, and the heavens poured,
> the clouds indeed poured water.
> 5 The mountains quaked before YHWH, the One of Sinai,
> before YHWH, the God of Israel.

Two observations may be made here concerning YHWH's representation. First, the references to Seir, Edom, and Sinai closely connect early Yahwistic tradition with the region of Edom and its immediate

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[23] YHWH's march forth from Sinai for battle is explicitly connected with the exodus tradition in Deut 33:2, and texts that associate YHWH's origins with the Edomite/Midianite territory have been shown to be primevally connected with Moses and the broader exodus/Sinai tradition. See J. Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah," *JSOT* 33.2 (2008): 131–53. Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 283–302.

environs.[24] Other texts connected in varying degrees to the Exodus confirm this association (Exod 3:1–6; Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3),[25] and the extra-biblical witnesses to the name YHWH associate it with the same area.[26] More importantly for the conceptualization of YHWH, however, is the divine imagery evoked by the verses. The trembling earth, the quaking mountains, and the pouring heavens are conventional storm-god imagery most commonly associated in Syria-Palestine with Baʿlu.[27] Throughout the Hebrew Bible YHWH's power—and particularly his military prowess—is repeatedly described as manifested through the weather (cf. Ps 29:3–11; 104:32; Nah 1:5). Psalm 18:8–16 are particularly rich in this literary imagery:

8   Then the earth reeled and rocked;
    the foundations also of the mountains trembled
  and quaked, because he was angry.
9   Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth;
    glowing coals flamed forth from him.
10 He bowed the heavens, and came down;
    thick darkness was under his feet.
11 He rode on a cherub, and flew;
    he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.

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[24] L. Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Negev and Southern Judah* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 1987); van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 281–86.

[25] Note, too, the sympathetic representation of the ethnic groups from that region within the earliest exodus tradition: Moses was married the daughter of a Midianite priest and received his priesthood training from him (Exod 2–3; cf. 18:7); the Israelites are commanded not to abhor the Edomites, who are their brothers (Deut 23:7); several early Israelite heroes are identified as Kenites (Caled: Num 32:12; Josh 14:6, 14; Othniel: Judg 3:9; Jael: Judg 4;17; 5:24; the Rechabites: 2 Kgs 10:15–17, 23; Jer 35:1–19; 1 Chr 2:55).

[26] The earliest witnesses come from thirteenth and fourteenth century BCE Egypt, and designate a portion of Edomite territory with *tꜣ šꜣśw yhwꜣ*, "the land of the Shasu, namely Yhwꜣ." See Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up from Seir;* T. Schneider, "The First Documented Occurrence of the God Yahweh? (Book of the Dead, Princeton 'Roll 5')," *JANER* 7.2 (2008): 113–14; Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited," 131–53; Smith, *God in Translation*, 96–98, n. 22.

[27] For the most thorough treatments of this imagery, see P. Dion, "YHWH as Storm-god and Sun-god: The Double Legacy of Egypt and Canaan as Reflected in Psalm 104," *ZAW* 103.1 (1991): 48–58; A. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003); and D. Schwemer's extended critique of the latter in Schwemer, "The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies. Part 1," *JANER* 7.2 (2008): 121–68, and Schwemer, ""The Storm-Gods of the Ancient Near East: Summary, Synthesis, Recent Studies. Part 2," *JANER* 8.1 (2008): 1–44. Cf. Klingbeil, "Mapping the Literary to the Literary Image," *DWdO* 39.2 (2009): 205–22.

12   He made darkness his covering around him,
  his canopy thick clouds dark with water.
13   Out of the brightness before him there broke through his clouds
  hailstones and coals of fire.
14   YHWH also thundered in the heavens,
  and Elyon uttered his voice.[28]
15   And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
  he flashed forth lightnings and, routed them.
16   Then the channels of the sea were seen,
  and the foundations of the earth were laid bare
  at your rebuke, O YHWH, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

YHWH is thus a warrior whose power is displayed through violent weather (or through drought[29]). In his capacity as storm-god he also promotes agricultural fertility through the provision of rain.[30] These two roles facilitated the association of the storm-god with the ferocious and fecund bull.[31] YHWH's association with the bull is vestigially preserved in the pejorative references to the calves constructed at Sinai (Exod 32:4) and at Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12:28–29) to cultically commemorate the event of the exodus.[32] His warrior function also overlaps with his conceptualization as king, which very station may have developed out of the powers arrogated to those who succeeded in battle in antiquity.[33] In the Ugaritic literature Baʻlu accedes to the throne after defeating his fraternal challenger, Yammu

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[28] "Hailstones and coals of fire" are repeated here in Ps 18:14, but NRSV follows 2 Sam 22:14 in omitting the dittography.

[29] Deut 11:17; 1 Kgs 8:35//2 Chr 6:26; 17:1–18:2; Isa 5:6; Jer 3:3; Zech 14:17–18; 2 Chr 7:13.

[30] Gen 2:5–6; Lev 26:4; Deut 11:14; 28:12; 1 Kgs 18:1; Isa 30:23; Jer 5:24; 10:13; Zech 10:1; Ps 65:10–11; 68:10; Job 5:10; 37:6; 38:26.

[31] In the Sargonic period, the storm-deity's attendant animal began to shift from the lion-dragon to the bull. The fertility aspects of bull imagery were particularly dominant in northern Syria in the Early Iron Age (Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 118–20; T. Ornan, "The Bull and Its Two Masters: Moon and Storm Deities in Relation to the Bull in Ancient Near Eastern Art," *IEJ* 51.1 [2001]: 1–26).

[32] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 288–91; Smith, *The Memoirs of God*, 35; B. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 53; cf. S. Cook, *The Social Roots of Biblical Yahwism* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 251–59.

[33] This according to Jacobsen: "When attack threatened, a young noble was chosen *pro tem* to lead the community in battle and was granted supreme powers during the emergency" (Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976], 83; appearing without quotations in Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989], 12).

("Sea"), in battle.[34] Psalm 29—widely considered a Yahwistic adaptation of a hymn originally associated with Baʿlu—declares in v. 10 that YHWH reigns as eternal king "over the flood waters."[35] Elsewhere the recurring West Semitic motif of victory over a sea monster is invoked in praise of YHWH's authority and power over creation (Isa 27:1; Ps 74:13–17; Job 26:13).[36] His recurring title יהוה צבאות, "YHWH of Hosts," reflects his command of divine troops.[37] At least in terms of terrestrial kingship, YHWH's rule over Israel was given to him by El Elyon in virtue of his position as one of the sons of God (Deut 32:8–9 [4QDeutʲ]), which parallels Baʿlu's role as son of the Ugaritic high god ʾIlu.

The imagery central to YHWH's conceptualization thus appears to be grounded in his role as storm-god. Closely connected to that role is his function as warrior, as guarantor of fertility. Occasionally he is connected with king imagery, but this does not take firm root until after the rise of the monarchy. The image of the bull overlaps with the first two of these roles, and the broader concept of fertility further overlaps with cosmogonic traditions.

A final and critical aspect of YHWH's conceptualization was his limited purview. The earliest references to his worship indicate that his authority was limited to the land of Israel.[38] The

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[34] The deity is also referred to as *nhr*, "river" (KTU 1.2.iii 9–10). On the conflict between Baʿlu and Yammu, see Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Volume I* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 319–62; Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 178–88.

[35] יהוה למבול ישב. The word מבול occurs only in the context of the deluge (Gen 6:17; 7;6, 7, 10, 17; 9:11, 15, 28; 10:1, 32; 11:10). Another possible rendering, "YHWH has reigned *since* the flood," is proposed by Gary Rendsburg as part of an argument for a northern origin for the Psalm. In that region the inseparable prefix ל- may signify "from," or "since" (Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* [Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990], 36). Cf. KTU 1.2.iv:10, where the craftsman deity Kothar wa-Hasis proclaims before Baal's battle, *tqḥ.mlk.ʿmk / drkt.dt.dr.drk*, "You will take your eternal kingship / your dominion will be forever and ever." For Psalm 29, see F. M. Cross, "Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament," *BASOR* 117 (1950): 19–21; Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, 261–64; but cf. P. C. Craigie, "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition," *VT* 22.2 (1972): 143–51; and D. Pardee, "On Psalm 29: Structure and Meaning," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. P. W. Flint and P. D. Miller, Jr.; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 153–83.

[36] J. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (London: Cambridge: 1985).

[37] 1 Sam 1:3, 11; 2 Kgs 23:5; Ps 46:7; 84:12; Deut 4:19; 17:3; Judg 5:20. On the occurrence of a personal name in the construct, see Choi, "Resheph and *YHWH Ṣĕbāʾôt*," 17–28.

[38] M. Tsevat, "God and the Gods in Assembly: An Interpretation of Psalm 82," *HUCA* 40–41 (1969–1970): 123; R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period. Volume I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy*

predominant view in the surrounding cultures was that each nation's patron deity ruled over their particular polity, but was out of their jurisdiction in other nations. That this view was held by early Israel is suggested by several texts. For instance, in Deuteronomy 32:8–9 YHWH is given the land of Israel as his allotted share, with the other nations going to other sons of God. David's insistence at 1 Samuel 26:19 that being forced from the land of Israel, the "inheritance of YHWH" (נחלת יהוה; cf. Deut 32:8–9), was paramount to being forced to worship other gods suggests that YHWH could not be worshipped beyond Israel's borders. This is also supported by 2 Kings 5:17, in which Naaman asks for two mule-loads of earth so that he may offer worship to YHWH. The implication is that he must be on Israelite soil. Finally, the Israelite/Judahite/Edomite coalition against Moab succeeded in destroying numerous Moabite locales, but was forced to retreat from Kir-hareseth after the Moabite king sacrificed his son on the city wall, catalyzing a "great wrath" that must be interpreted as divine in origin. The author appears to be attributing the coalition's failure to take the Moabite stronghold to the intervention of Moab's patron deity, Chemosh. YHWH was either back at home or unable to defeat Chemosh.[39] Finally, Psalm 137:4 laments, "How could we sing YHWH's song in a foreign land?"

(translated by J. Bowden; Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 228; J. Blenkinsopp, "The Age of the Exile," in *The Biblical World. Volume I* (ed. J. Barton; London: Routledge, 2002), 430; Smith, *God in Translation*, 120–25.

[39] See B. O. Long, "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," *VT* 23.3 (1973): 337–48; B. Margalit, "Why King Mesha of Moab Sacrificed His Oldest Son," *BAR* 12.6 (1986): 62–63; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988), 40–52; J. B. Burns, "Why Did the Besieging Army Withdraw? (II Reg 3,27)," *ZAW* 102.2 (1990): 187–94; J. D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Vail-Ballou Press, 1993), 14–17; Müller, "Chemosh כמוש," *DDD* 189; Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice*, 176–77; R. Westbrook, "Elisha's True Prophecy in 2 Kings 3," *JBL* 124.3 (2005): 530–32; Smith, *God in Translation*, 116–18; S. Morschauser, "A 'Diagnostic' Note on the 'Great Wrath upon Israel' in 2 Kings 3:27," *JBL* 129.2 (2010): 299–302; T. Stark, *The Human Faces of God: What Scripture Reveals When It Gets God Wrong* (*and Why Inerrancy Tries to Hide It*) (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 91–92. For deities associated with specific nations, see §4.1.3 below.
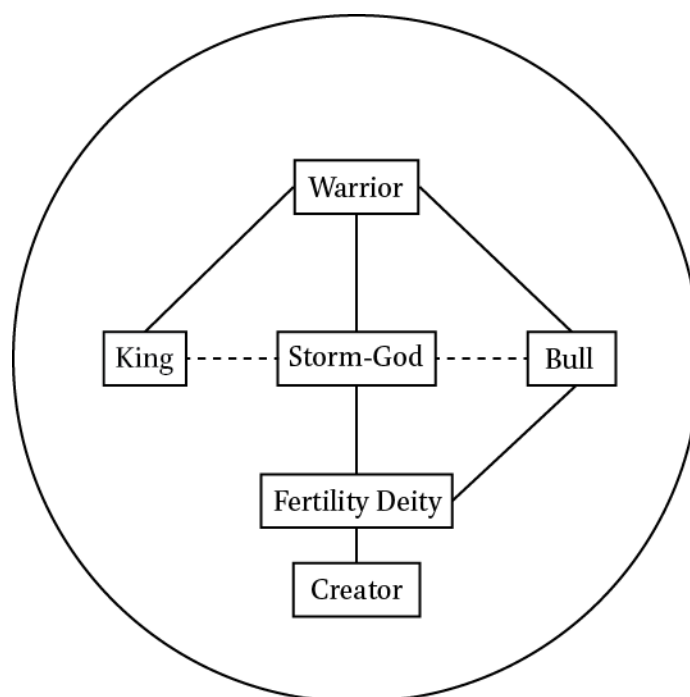
Fig. 3.2 The Conceptualization of the God of the Exodus

This analysis has shown close literary affinities between YHWH and the Canaanite deity Baʿlu. Many have plausibly suggested that the latter was the main object of worship in Israel prior to YHWH's importation.[40] According to this scenario, YHWH would have simply taken Baʿlu's place in the cult and in the mythos, contributing to the antagonism against the latter in the biblical texts. Whether or not this was the case, Hosea 2:18 is certainly suggestive of the use of the generic title בעל, "master/owner," in reference to YHWH (cf. Judg 6:32; 2 Sam 2:8; 1 Chr 8:33, 34).[41] The continued use of the divine name YHWH more clearly shows the appropriation of imagery rather than identity. The case above with Canaanite ʾIlu is less clear, particularly in light of the absence of polemic against an El

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[40] Van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 238–46. The storm-god imagery likely marks a departure from YHWH's primeval conceptualization, whatever its exact nature may have been. The most thorough attempt to reconstruct his Edomite divine profile is N. Amzallag, "Yahweh, The Canaanite God of Metallurgy?" *JSOT* 33.4 (2009): 387–404.

[41] Day, "Hosea and the Baal Cult," in *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel* (ed. J. Day; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 202–24.

figure. What can be said with certainty is that authors and editors of the exodus and patriarchal traditions drew their respective notions of deity from conceptualizations developed within, and common to, the surrounding cultures. Due to gaps in the historical and material records, however, the degree to which Israelite authors altered those conceptualizations to serve their own exigencies is not perfectly clear.

3.2 The Conflation of YHWH and the God of the Patriarchs

Before we discuss the cognitive and literary mechanisms by which these deities were conflated, we will consider the processes that rendered that conflation desirable or necessary. Inscriptions from the eighth and seventh centuries BCE already show the use of appellatives *ʾl* and *bʿl* in reference to YHWH, indicating the conflation of the two divine profiles had been made, if not settled, by this time period.[42] Moving backwards in time to detect the earliest stages of this identification is beset with methodological problems, but merits consideration. The most common theory is that the deities were merged in an effort to consolidate religious allegiance at the unifying of the northern and southern kingdoms.[43] In following we examine the biblical evidence for this theory.

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[42] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 311–12; L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 150–51; B. Mastin, "The Inscriptions Written on Plaster at Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *VT* 59 (2009): 110–13; J. Hutton. "Local Manifestations of Yahweh and Worship in the Interstices: A Note on Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *JANER* 10.2 (2010): 197–98, esp. n. 86.

[43] Archaeologists debate the date of the rise of the first Israelite state. The two most prominent theories are the Low Chronology, called LC (see, most recently I. Finkelstein, "A Low Chronology Update: Archaeology, History and Bible," in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science* [ed. T. E. Levy and T. Higham; London: Equinox, 2005], 31–42; D. Ussishkin, "Archaeology of the Biblical Period: On Some Questions of Methodology and Chronology of the Iron Age," in *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* [ed. H. G. M. Williamson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 131–41), which sees the rise of the state occurring no earlier than the ninth or eighth centuries BCE, and the Modified Conventional Chronology (J. Cahill, "Jerusalem at the Time of the United Monarchy: The Archaeological Evidence," in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period* [ed. A. G. Vaughn and A. E. Killebrew; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001], 13–80; A. Mazar, "The Debate over the Chronology of the Iron Age in the Southern Levant: Its

3.2.1 The Historical Data

According to the Bible's broad outlines of the rise of the united monarchy, it appears the gods of the

exodus and the patriarchs were identified around the time of David's accession to throne, which

united Israel and Judah for the first time.[44] While data for this period are scarce and are debated, some

circumstantial evidence exists to aid in a tentative reconstruction of the events leading up to YHWH's

identification with the god of the patriarchs. As we have seen, the earliest textual remnants, both

biblical and extra-biblical, point to YHWH's provenance within Edomite and Midianite territory.

Within the Bible, the texts that attest to that provenance have a uniquely northern frame of reference.

Perhaps the clearest example is the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:2–31), already partially treated above.[45]

Broadly speaking, the poem tells the story of Israel's battle against the Canaanite forces of Megiddo

and Taanach. Judges 5:13–18 list the tribes associated with YHWH that were called upon to join the

battle. Six tribes answered the call: Ephraim, Benjamin, Makir (Manasseh; cf. Num 26:29), Zebulun,

Issachar, and Naphtali. Four tribes familiar to us did not: Reuben, Gilead (likely representing Gad),

Dan, and Asher. A tribe or locale called Meroz is also cursed in v. 23 for neglecting the call. The

southern tribes of Simeon and Judah are entirely absent, suggesting the poem describes a situation

predating the monarchy as well as Judah's incorporation into Israel.[46] Whether or not the poem was

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History, the Current Situation, and a Suggested Resolution," in *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating*, 15–30), which holds that the Israelite state developed in the tenth century BCE. Ultimately, the exact date of the rise of the state does not impact our analysis of the conflation of the two divine profiles. The same religio-political processes can be at work in either period.

[44] The universally acknowledged division of Judah and Israel, even during the United Monarchy, indicates their primeval distinction from each other. See Wyatt, "Of Calves and Kings: The Canaanite Dimension in the Religion of Israel," *JSOT* 6.1 (1992): 70; Smith, *The Memoirs of God*, 52–53.

[45] The poem, at least in its oral form, likely predates the rise of an Israelite state (K. Sparks, "Religion, Identity and the Origins of Ancient Israel," *RC* 1.6 [2007]: 601–02; Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament*, 177–81; but cf. van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 236).

[46] Smith, *The Memoirs of God*, 52–53: "Judahite rule over the northern tribes of Israel was achieved by force and persuasion; the united monarchy of David and Solomon was hardly the natural state of affairs. The reversion to a divided

actually committed to writing before the monarchy, the tradition on which the text is based portrays

primeval Israel as a coalition or federation of tribes concentrated in the northern hill country.[47]

This observation raises the question of the nature of the relationship of the southern territories to

the Northern Kingdom, which cannot be definitively answered with the available evidence. Few have

ventured to unpack what evidence is available, but van der Toorn has provided one proposal—albeit

speculative—arguing that the onomastic overlap between the Gibeonite genealogy of 1 Chronicles

2:50–55 and the Edomite genealogy of Genesis 36 is suggestive of the ethnic origins of the Gibeonite

strain in Edomite stock.[48] Additional circumstantial evidence for this conclusion is thought to exist in

the prominence of Doeg the Edomite in Saul's court as well as in Saul's sparing of the Kenites because

of their association with Edom (1 Sam 15:6). Similar evidences incorporate Saul into the Gibeonite

lineage.[49] Following this line of thought, YHWH would have been a tribal deity worshipped by a

minority of the population within the Israelite federation.[50]

Whatever the precise makeup of the early Israelite polity, Saul's rise to the Israelite throne would

have institutionalized the cult of YHWH and provided an apparatus for the perpetuation of traditional

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monarchy was in fact a return to the earlier situation prior to David's kingship." Note the comment in Deut 33:7: "O YHWH, give heed to Judah, and bring him to his people."

[47] We may also point to Deut 33:2–5 and Hab 3:2–15 (Axelsson, *The Lord Rose up from Seir*, 48–65). Consider, as well, the juxtaposition at Kuntillet ʿAjrud of references to *yhwh šmrn*, "YHWH of Samaria," and [*y*]*hwh tmn*, "YHWH of Teman" (Hutton, "Local Manifestations of Yahweh and Worship in the Interstices," 177–210). Ps 68:8–9, which preserve a retelling of portions of the Song of Deborah, quote Judg 5:4–5, omitting the references to Seir and Edom. The centrality of Judah and her temple indicate a Judahite frame of reference (vv. 28–30; cf. van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 285).

[48] J. Blenkinsopp, *Gibeon and Israel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 14–27, 53–64; D. Edelman, *The Rise of the Israelite State Under Saul* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 229; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 284–86. The problem of Saul's fighting against the Gibeonites and Edom is addressed by Blenkinsopp (60–61).

[49] Blenkinsopp, *Gibeon and Israel*, 59–62; van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 267–84; cf. "Gibeah of Saul" in 1 Sam 11:4; 15:34; 2 Sam 21:6; Isa 10:29, and van der Toorn's identification of Gibeah and Gibeon (268–70). Van der Toorn posits that trade routes would have facilitated the migration of Yahwistic Gibeonites north to Central Palestine (particularly Gilead) and the Transjordan between 1200–1000 BCE, during the time of the hill country's demographic expansion.

[50] The other main deities would have been related to, if not identical to, Canaanite ʾIlu, Baʿlu, and perhaps Asherah (van der Toorn, *Family Religion*, 238; Smith, *The Early History of God*, 30).

associations with the territory of Edom. In light of its connections with Egypt, the exodus tradition may have originated with other ethnic groups assimilated into Israel, but if so, it appears to have quickly become embedded within Yahwism and Israel.[51] If we assume the Israelite kingdom was coterminous with the territory inherited by Saul's son, Ishbaal,[52] it will have constituted "Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin" (2 Sam 2:9). Neither the far northern tribes nor Judah would have been a part of the first Israelite polity.

According to van der Toorn's reconstruction, further south, a devotee to El named David would have been ruling over a smaller pastoral political entity called Judah. In time, Israel would fall to David. The processes by which this occurred have been obscured, but multiple factors may have contributed. David's marriage to Saul's daughter Michal may have been instrumental (2 Sam 3:14), along with his service as a prominent officer within Saul's military (2 Sam 5:2). On the other hand, the traditions regarding his ingratiation into Saul's family and administration may only be propaganda meant to legitimize his claim to the Israelite throne. In any case, the biblical text presents Judah growing in prominence as Israel became weaker and weaker (2 Sam 3:1), incentivizing the northern tribes to seek consolidation with Judah (2 Sam 5:2–3).

One of David's first acts was to relocate the Ark of the Covenant, the primary symbol of Yahwistic authority, from Baale-judah in the north to Jerusalem. This displayed the adoption of Yahwism as the new combined kingdom's official cult, but it also asserted Judah's central role in administering that cult. The rhetorical point seems to have been the placating of the new vassal territories, but it effected an entirely new national identity for Judah that would become immortalized in its sacred tradition.

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[51] For instance, Jeroboam's proclamation that the calves at Dan and Bethel represent "your gods . . . who brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kgs 12:28) links Israelite identity with the exodus and with storm-god imagery.

[52] Ish-bosheth, "Man of Shame," is an editorialized version of the name. For the original, see 1 Chr 8:33; 9:39.

Among other things, it introduced a new deity into the Judahite pantheon. If Gen 14:18–22 accurately represents the situation at Jerusalem prior to the united monarchy, the patron deity of Jerusalem and Judah up to that point was El Elyon or some other manifestation of the Syro-Palestinian ancestral deity. The identification of YHWH with the high god of the Judahite pantheon could have been catalyzed through some manner of campaign or propaganda that is now lost to us, but as we shall see, the overlap in the conceptualization of the two divine profiles facilitated that campaign and likely guaranteed its perpetuity.

3.2.2 Conceptual Blending

Conceptual blending is understood as a basic cognitive mechanism that "involves the merger of two or more input spaces into a blended space."[53] According to the early versions of the theory,[54] conceptually relatable elements of two or more input spaces are projected onto a "blend space," which represents the focal point of the conceptual blend. The structural elements shared by the input spaces are retained in a "generic space." The pioneers of this theory, Fauconnier and Turner, illustrated the concept in the following way:

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[53] B. Li, et al., "Goal-Driven Conceptual Blending: A Computational Approach for Creativity," in *Proceedings of the 2012 International Conference on Computational Creativity, Dublin, Ireland, 2012* (Forthcoming), 1. For a recent application of this theory to biblical studies, see P. Van Hecke, "Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4,16," in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Van Hecke; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 215–32.

[54] See G. Fauconnier and M. Turner, "Conceptual Integration Networks," *CogSci* 22.2 (1998): 133–87; Fauconnier and Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

Generic Space

Input Space 1   Input Space 2

Blend Space
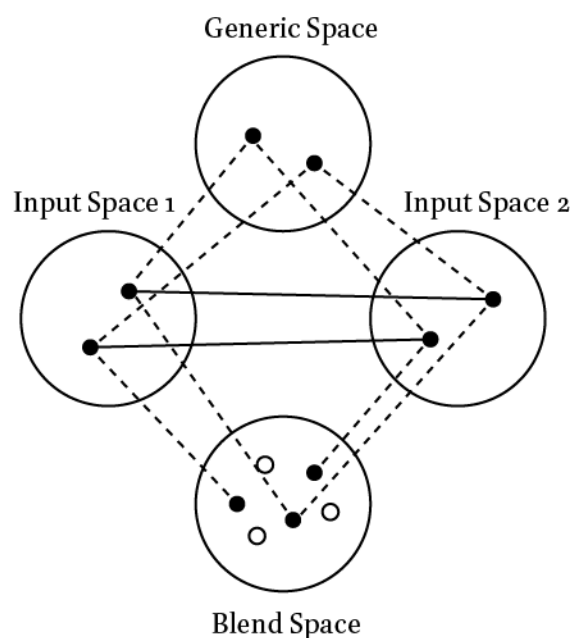
Fig. 3.3

Within this illustration, the circles represent mental spaces, and the black dots represent their relevant constituent elements. The dotted lines indicate correspondences among the elements, while the solid lines show mappings between the input spaces. The small circles in the blend space represent emergent structures arising from the blend.

While most conceptual blends occur within active "on-line" discourse, and function primarily to highlight certain properties of one input space by comparing them to elements of another ("this surgeon is a butcher," for example[55]), standalone blends are those that produce an independent and durative concept that ultimately develops its own conceptual profile. A simple example of such a blend is the lightsaber, which combines into an independent blend space the properties of a sword and a laser emitter. In this way, the familiar swordsmen motifs of classical adventure tales can be

[55] Li, et al., "Goal-Driven Conceptual Blending," 1; cf. T. Veale and D. O'Donoghue, "Computation and Blending," *CogLing* 11 (2000): 253–81.

carried over into futuristic science fiction contexts. The lightsaber is not merely a metaphor used to comment on either a sword or a laser emitter, but rather functions independently as a discreet entity, developing its own conceptual structures as it operates within its own contexts.[56]

The generic space governing the conceptual blending of our two deities is the early first millennium BCE Northwest Semitic pantheon. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the structure of this pantheon was primarily patterned after the royal patriarchal household,[57] and is commonly referred to in the scholarship as the divine council.[58] The authoritative deity inhabited the top echelon of this council with his consort and ruled over the gods. In the Ugaritic and early biblical iterations of this type-scene, El stood at the head of the council (cf. עדת־אל in Ps 82:1 and *ʿdt ʾilm* in KTU 1.15.ii.7).[59] Asherah was El's consort at Ugarit, and may have filled the same role in the early Israelite pantheon. The numerous offspring of the divine pair constituted a second tier of deities who had stewardships over different responsibilities related to the functioning of the universe and human civilization. In the Hebrew Bible this group is alternatively called the בני (ה)אלהים, בני עליון, or בני אלים.[60] Whether we

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[56] Later iterations of the theory criticized Fauconnier and Turner's neglect of the context in which conceptual blends take place, but as we are not addressing blends arising within active discourse, that omission need not concern us. For context-dependent blending, see L. Brandt and P. Brandt, "Making Sense of a Blend," *Apparatur* 4 (2002): 62–71; Li, et al., "Goal-Driven Conceptual Blending," 2–8.

[57] The tiers discussed in following are addressed throughout Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven*, and in Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 45–53.

[58] F. M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *JNES* 12 (1953): 274–77; G. Cooke, "The Sons of (the) God(s)," *ZAW* 76 (1974): 22–47; Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods*; D. M. Fleming, "The Divine Council as Type Scene in the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989); P. D. Miller, "Cosmology and World Order in the Old Testament," in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 422-44; Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven*; Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 41–66; Heiser, ""The Divine Council"; M. S. Kee, "The Heavenly Council and Its Type-Scene," *JSOT* 31.3 (2007): 259–73; D. Bokovoy, "שמעו והעידו בבית יעקב: Invoking the Council as Witnesses in Amos 3:13," *JBL* 127.1 (2008): 37–51.

[59] LXX Ps 81:1 renders συναγωγῇ θεῶν, "assembly of the gods," which may indicate עדת־אלים in its *Vorlage*.

[60] While the designation בני אלים would be most simply rendered "sons of the gods," such a phrase is unknown to Northwest Semitic literature. On the other hand, "sons of El" occurs repeatedly. The epithet *bn ʾil* occurs only once in the Ugaritic texts, and in the singular in reference to Baal (KTU 1.17.VI.29), although Ilu is called *ʾab bn ʾil*, "Father of the Sons of Ilu" on multiple occasions (KTU 1.40.33, 41; cf. Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*, 11–13). Particularly

understand "sons of Elyon/God/El" as a filial designation or a category designation (as is likely in later texts), what is clear is that the gods are grouped together by their subordination to the high god.

The poorly attested third tier was inhabited, according to Mark Smith and Lowell Handy, by craftsmen deities who served the divine-royal family. The only clear inhabitant of this tier from Syria-Palestine is the Ugaritic Kothar wa-Hasis, who created Ba'lu's weapons and built his palace (KTU 1.2.iv). The biblical texts do not, as far as anyone can tell, attest to this tier. The final tier is constituted by servant deities, most frequently messenger gods.

Syro-Palestinian Pantheon

Divine Council
El
Sons
Craftsmen
Messengers
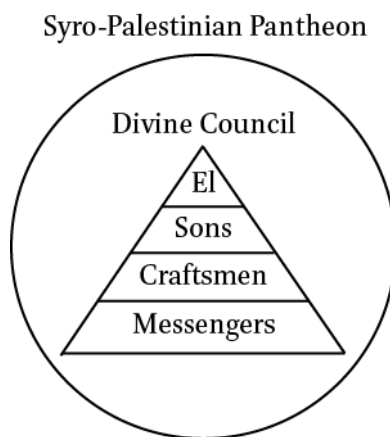
Fig. 3.4

This structure underlay the theological worldview that nurtured the conceptualizations of the gods of the exodus and the patriarchs. We may adapt Figs. 3.1 and 3.2 for our two input spaces. Three elements of the respective divine profiles would have mapped quite naturally to each other upon their

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relevant is (*pḫr*) *bn 'ilm* (KTU 1.4.iii.14), which is cognate with בני אלים from Ps 29:1; 89:7 (cf. KAI 26.iii.19: *kl dr bn 'ilm*, "the entire circle of the sons of El"). In each of these instances I take *'ilm* as the name Ilu with an enclitic *mem*. Support for this is found in the appearance of the same formulae with the singular *'il* in KTU 1.65.3 (*mpḫrt bn 'il*) and KTU 1.40.25, 33–34 (*dr bn 'il*). See S. Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2008), 112–36.

cultic juxtaposition, with or without a programmatic attempt on the part of the monarchy to identify the two deities. Both deities had royal functions, were considered creators of some kind, and were associated with bull symbolism. Although the exact nature of these elements, as well as their cultic and literary contexts, differed, the overlap certainly reduces the cognitive effort necessary for the conflation of the two input spaces. In light of the predominance of YHWH's name in the onomastica[61] and in the subsequent biblical literature, we will consider his divine profile to constitute input space 1, and to contribute the primary structures to the blend space. In other words, the god of the patriarchs will be considered to have become mapped against, or assimilated to, YHWH's divine profile.

God of the Exodus   God of the Patriarchs

Fertility Deity   Ancestral Deity
          Creator ———————— Creator   Judge
Storm-God
          King ———————— King   High God
Warrior
          Bull ———————— Bull   Procreator
Son of God   Father
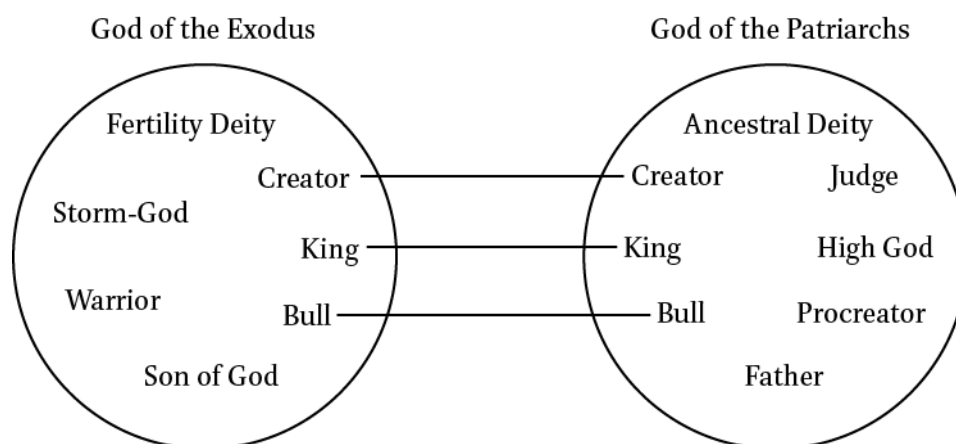
Fig. 3.5

The precise moment that this conceptual blend occurred is irretrievable, and was probably a process that took place over the course of many years. By the time of the exile, some of the elements of the input spaces represented in Fig. 3.5 became central to YHWH's conceptualization, some of

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[61] See J. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1986), 5–20, 47–63.

them had become marginalized or rejected, and some new ones had developed. The goal of the remainder of this section will be to plot the first two processes along the course of Israelite history. Conceptual developments subsequent to the initial blend will be addressed in this chapter's final section.

We first discuss those elements of each input space that were not carried through to the resulting blend space.[62] The earliest concepts jettisoned from YHWH's profile were subordinating roles, such as the "son of God" position held by the Syro-Palestinian storm-god.[63] Given the royal and patriarchal character of the El figure, and the utility of the "father" metaphor, there was little conceptual space in the resulting composite divine profile for subordination; the driving concept was preeminence or supremacy.

Other concepts seem to have grated against developing theological sensitivities. Primary among these were associations with procreation, a consort, and anthropomorphic/theriomorphic cult practices. The function of the Israelite divine consort Asherah appears to have been assimilated to YHWH's profile in the late pre-exilic period,[64] leaving only a cult object that was reinterpreted as a Yahwistic symbol. Without a consort, theogony and procreation also fell by the wayside. The bull

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[62] While some were no doubt rejected in the blending process—and others in light of subsequent conceptual development—we are not in a position to draw clear boundaries to such categories.

[63] YHWH's subordinate position is attested in Deut 32:8–9 (4QDeut^j), and perhaps vestigially in Psalm 82 (O. Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," *JSS* 1.1 [1956]: 25–37; Smith, *God in Translation*, 135–43, 195–212; Machinist, "How Gods Die," 196–203).

[64] The Deuteronomistic literature preserves fragments of anti-Baʻlu polemic that appears to ignore the parallel relationship of YHWH to Asherah. Jehu, for instance, slaughtered the priests of Baʻlu (2 Kgs 10:18–28), but ignored the cult of Asherah. Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baʻlu makes reference in the narrative framework to the prophets of Asherah (1 Kgs 18:19), but similarly omits them from punishment (1 Kgs 18:22–40). This suggests sensitivity to a consort arose after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, perhaps as a part of the Deuteronomic reform movement, which emphasized strict loyalty to YHWH and YHWH alone (D. Freedman, "Yahweh of Samaria and His Asherah," *BibArch* 50 [1987]: 241–49; T. Binger, *Asherah: Goddesses in Ugarit, Israel and the Old Testament* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 94–141; J. Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah': The Goddess or Her Symbol?" *VT* 49.3 [1999]: 315–37; J. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 104–05.

imagery associated with both input spaces would fail to be decoupled conceptually from the iconic representation of YHWH and would ultimately be marginalized and polemicized (Exod 32:4–20; 1 Kgs 12:28–30).[65] The frozen epithet "Mighty One of Jacob" remained in use in poetic texts, although it appears to generically invoke the notion of power (Ps 132:2, 5; Isa 49:26; 60:16).[66]

Other points of contact would prove to be quite essential, and particularly the central and driving concept of God as king,[67] which was shared throughout the ancient Near East.[68] That metaphor imports a broad conceptual matrix that not only contributes to the production of more extended metaphors, but also serves to conceptually link many of the independent concepts brought together for the first time in the blend space. The notion of kingship provided a conceptual vehicle for YHWH's status as high god, ancestral deity, and as covenant-maker, among others.[69] That notion frames the discussion for the remainder of this section.

The utility of the kingship metaphor[70] in the blending of our two profiles was complemented by the combination of two quite distinct views of God as king, which provided a richer palette for literary expression. According to the broader El profile, God's kingship is a function of his patriarchy and consequent authority over the gods. This would become emphasized in YHWH's sovereignty over the

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[65] Miller, *Israelite Religion*, 31–38.

[66] Byrne, *The Names of God*, 39–41.

[67] This concept has been called a "root metaphor" in light of its foundational and generative nature (Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 92; cf. Brettler, *God is King*, 17–28; Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 33–40, 146–48). We find the term "king" used in reference to Israel's God forty-three times. The word "kingdom" is associated with God ten times, and "throne" eleven times. The verb "to be king" (מלך) occurs thirteen times, with eight occurrences of משל, "to rule, govern." For scriptural references, see Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 116–17.

[68] B. Levinson, "The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah," *VT* 51.4 (2001): 512–18.

[69] "It comprises the genetic code for a broad complex of ideas" (Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 92).

[70] The metaphoric nature of God's kingship is addressed most thoroughly in Brettler, *God is King*, but cf. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 33–40, who correctly argues that God as king is ascriptive rather than wholly metaphorical; in all his functionality vis-à-vis humanity, he is a king.

divine council/family (Deut 4:19; Ps 89:7–8; Job 1:6; 2:1).[71] By contrast, the storm-god arrogated kingship through victory in battle with the forces of chaos.[72] This promoted his role in the Near Eastern ideology of divine warfare, which viewed military conflict between nations as divinely decreed and executed.[73] A prototypical example of this process is the visit by an Israelite/Judahite/Edomite coalition to the prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 3:11–19. YHWH commanded the coalition regarding their invasion of Moab and then promised their victory. The storm-god's role as king and warrior, and the conceptualization of violent weather as a manifestation of divine military aggression, thus found a means of conceptual perpetuity alongside YHWH's rule over the pantheon.

The role of creator is also carried through and developed via the concept of divine kingship. The oldest means of creation in the ancient Near East was theogony, but for first millennium BCE Israel, creation was the prerogative of the ruling deity, who exercised dominion over the natural order and created by divine fiat. He who created the heavens and the earth also ruled over them as king. The divine council plays a role in the early iterations of this tradition, as we find preserved in Gen 1:26, but exilic antagonism toward Neo-Babylonian deities soon lead to the assertion of YHWH's solitary role

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[71] Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1.133: "First there was the more static notion of the kingship of El, the supreme god in the Ugartitic pantheon: he was called 'king of eternity' (*mlk 'lm*) and 'Lord of the great gods' (*'adn 'ilm rbm*), and as such was head of the divine assembly (*pḫr 'ilm*)." For thorough analysis of the Canaanite notion of the divine council/family, see Schloen, *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*, 349–57.

[72] This is true of the Ba'lu myth as well as the Neo-Babylonian Enuma Eliš. The context of this arrogation of kingship is the battle with the personified sea (cf. Ps 74:12–14; Isa 27:1; Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 94–97). There are no creation accounts in the Ugaritic texts, but as with Enuma Eliš, YHWH's victory in battle brought about the creation of the cosmos (Ps 74: 12–17; 89:9–12; cf. Isa 27:1). Cf. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 1.133: "But there was also the more dynamic notion of the kingship of Baal, who first wrested his kingdom from Yam by his victory over the power of chaos: 'Yam is truly dead, Baal is (may Baal be) king!'"

[73] See Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament*. An extension of this worldview is the idea that dispossession of foreign land is the work of the conquering nation's deity. The clearest indication of this is Judg 11:24: "Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess? And should we not be the ones to possess everything that YHWH our God has conquered for our benefit" This possession is also conceptualized as an "inheritance" in Deut 4:21; 15:4; 26:1 (cf. H. Forshey, "The Construct Chain *naḥᵃlat YHWH/ᵉlōhîm*," *BASOR* 220 [1975]: 51–53).

(Isa 37:16; 44:24; cf. Deut 32:12).[74] The gods of the divine council were recast in the prophetic and later literature as YHWH's "hosts" (צבאות), the very objects of his creative activity (e.g., Neh 9:6). The frequent intersection of YHWH's hosts, the Jerusalem temple, and royal imagery (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Kgs 22:19–22; Ps 24:10; Isa 6:5; 37:16) suggest the ideology of divine kingship provided the conceptual framework for the development of the notion of "YHWH of Hosts."[75]

Another responsibility of the ideal Syro-Palestinian monarchy was the administration of justice, or judgment. In addition to secular responsibilities with the law, the generic notion of providing for the poor, the widowed, and the orphan was often assigned to the king.[76] This ideal was a conceptual extrapolation from the ideology of kingship, and more specifically the mediatory space the king occupied between the deity and the masses. The epilogue to Hammurabi's laws provides an example, asserting that the laws were erected, "in order that the mighty not wrong the weak, to provide just ways for the waif and the widow."[77] Of course, there is not a single law in his collection that actually provides for the widow or the orphan. Their provision arises out of the general cosmic order, which is maintained by Hammurabi's righteous administration and the oversight of the gods (cf. Ps 82:2–4). That oversight contributed to the notion of the sovereign deities as judges, and YHWH's profile drew heavily from that imagery. Not only was he responsible for rendering judgment in juridical processes (e.g., Exod 21:6; 22:8–11), but his relationship with Israel and the other nations of the earth was

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[74] Indeed, the antagonism that resulted from the juxtaposition of Judahite and Babylonian theology spurred the most explicit rhetorical rejections of the efficacy of non-Israelite deities (Isa 43:10–12; 44:6–8; 45:5; Hos 13:4; cf. Isa 47:10; Zeph 2:15). See M. Smith, "The Polemic of Biblical Monotheism: Outside Context and Insider Referentiality in Second Isaiah," in *Religious Polemics in Context* (T. Hettema and A. van der Kooij, eds.; The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 2004), 201–34.

[75] Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 123–42.

[76] See M. Silver, "Prophets and Markets Revisited," in *Social Justice in the Ancient World* (ed. K. D. Irani and Morris Silver; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 182–83 (italics in original): "The Ancient Near East designated victims by terms more or less conventionally translated as 'orphan,' 'widow,' 'poor person,' and 'peasant.' The referents are much less real-world social groupings than intellectual constructs. That is, the terms refer to the *ideal victim.*"

[77] "The Laws of Hammurabi," translated by M. Roth (*COS* 2.131: 336, 351).

commonly conceptualized in terms of court proceedings, particularly in prophetic and poetic

material. The "dispute" (ריב) was a juridical term frequently associated with YHWH.[78] For instance, in

1 Samuel 24:16 David appeals to YHWH to judge the case between Saul and himself.[79] Elsewhere

YHWH initiates court proceedings on behalf of Israel (Isa 19:20; Jer 51:36; Ps 74:22), and at times Israel

found itself being conceptually served by YHWH (Isa 3:13; Jer 2:9, 29; Hos 12:2; Mic 6:2).

Although its primary goal was likely the consolidation of political and cultic allegiances, the

conceptual blending of the god of the patriarchs and the god of the exodus forever changed the shape

of Israelite theology. The main areas of conceptual overlap between the input spaces facilitated the

identification of the two deities and, with the exception of the bull imagery, became central to the

conceptual framework of the blend. The conceptual foundation upon which the subsequent divine

profile appears to have been built was the notion of kingship, which lends support to understanding

the conflation of the two deities to date near to the establishment of an Israelite/Judahite state. That

foundation undergirded the central concepts of YHWH as warrior, father, creator, and judge. As we

shall see, the conceptual fecundity of that foundation also contributed to the further development of

those central concepts and other related concepts.

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[78] M. Deroche, "Yahweh's *rîb* Against Israel: A Reassessment of the So-Called 'Prophetic Lawsuit' in the Preexilic Prophets," *JBL* 102.4 (1983): 563–74; D. R. Daniels, "Is There a 'Prophetic Lawsuit' Genre?" *ZAW* 99.3 (1987): 339–60;

[79] There we find the cognate accusative "And dispute my dispute" (וירב את־ריבי).

Fig. 3.6
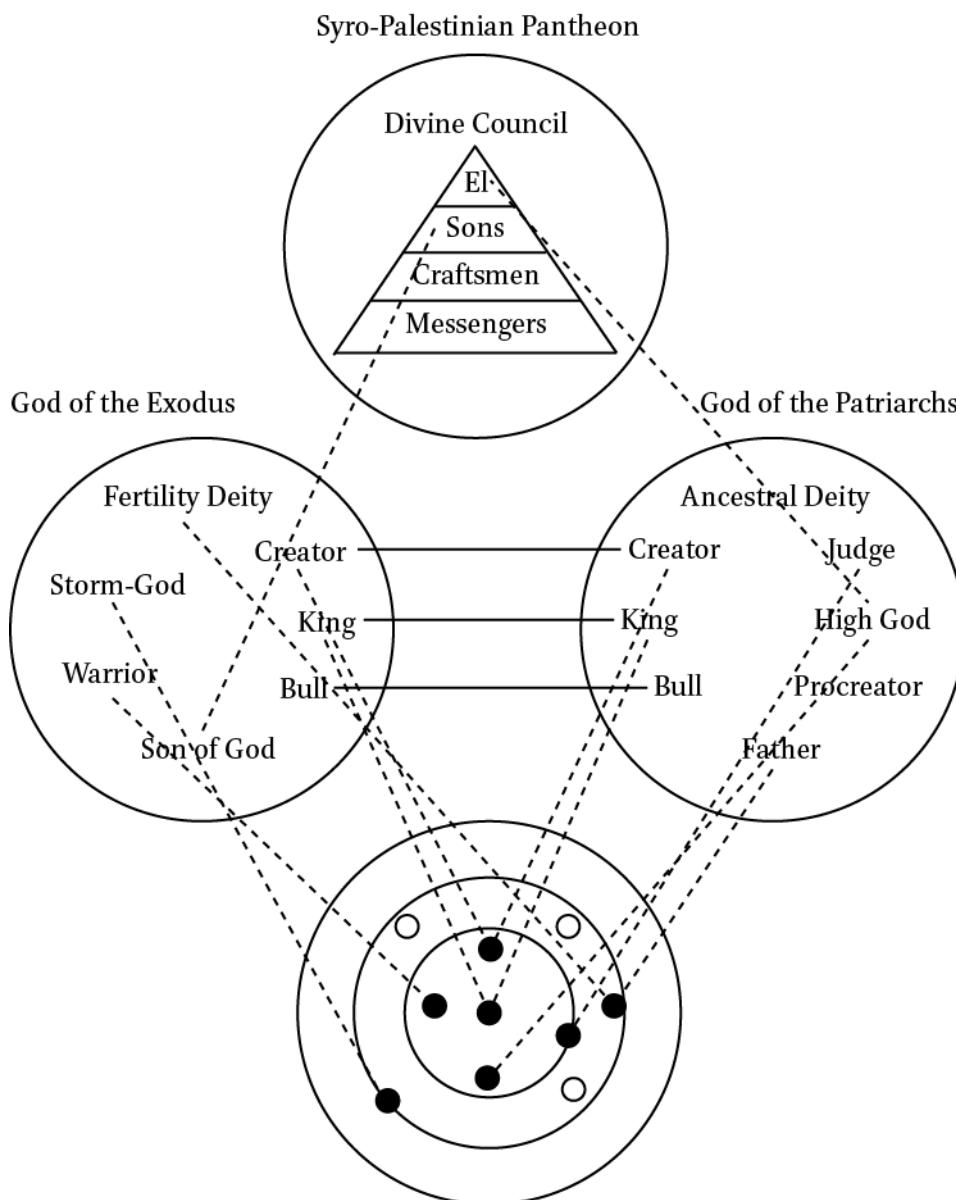
3.3 Subsequent Conceptual Development

Our analysis of subsequent conceptual developments will address five textual units that interact with

earlier God concepts while manifesting significant innovations vis-à-vis YHWH's divine profile. The

analysis is not meant to be comprehensive, but to highlight particularly influential God concepts. The

textual units addressed are Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 4), the Deuteronomistic literature (1 Kings 8), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1), and Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40–55).

3.3.1 Isaiah

Isaiah 6 places Isaiah's prophetic commission within a theophanic vision.[80] Drawing upon royal imagery (complemented by the UP-DOWN image-schema), the author conceives of YHWH as sitting upon an exalted throne within a temple, surrounded by his divine retinue. The hem of his garments fill the entire temple, evoking an image of the enormous deity extending well beyond the walls of the sanctuary; he is in no way confined to the holy of holies. The author calls God "YHWH of Hosts" in vv. 3 and 6, as well as "King" in v. 6, reflecting a constellation of literary imagery known as "Sabaoth theology," to which we will return later. YHWH's retinue comprises the שׂרפים ("Burning Ones"), which only appear as divine beings (rather than serpents) here in vv. 2 and 6.[81] The seraphim are otherwordly attendants (perhaps serpentine) that likely serve two primary rhetorical functions.[82] First, as royal attendants they amplify YHWH's kingly grandeur, praising his name and carrying out his directives. Next, their praises cause the doors of the temple to quake and the building to fill with smoke, recalling the quaking and the smoke of Psalm 18:8–9, which was associated with YHWH's storm-god imagery. In that sense they may serve as a repository for that imagery that decouples it from YHWH himself.

Returning to Sabaoth theology, the phrase יהוה צבאות, "YHWH of Hosts," occurs 259 times

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[80] On the imagery in this vision, see J. Roberts, "The Visual Elements of Isaiah's Vision in Light of Judaean and Near Eastern Sources," in *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honor of Brian Peckham* (ed. J. Wood, et al.; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 197–213.

[81] Elsewhere they are "fiery serpents" (Num 21:6, 8; Deut 8:15; Isa 14:29; 30:6).

[82] Day understands them to be personification of the mythological thunders and lightnings associated, for instance, with Psalm 29 (Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI," *VT* 29.2 [1979]: 149–51).

throughout the Hebrew Bible, primarily concentrated in prophetic books, and more particularly those with strong connections to Jerusalem and temple ideology.[83] It appears frequently in juxtaposition with Jerusalem as Zion and the mountain of the temple (Isa 8:18; Zech 8:3; Ps 48:8). The phrase also occurs in close connection with YHWH's enthronement above the cherubim (ישב הכרבים, 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Isa 37:16; cf. Ps 80:2, 4, 7, 14, 19), which links the imagery to the widespread Near Eastern use of the cherubim throne as a symbol of royalty.[84] (Below are illustrations of two such examples.) Particularly significant in light of YHWH's invisibility may be the tenth century BCE Tanaach cult stand, which in one register portrays two cherubim flanking an empty window.[85] Other Syrian iconography shows empty sphinx thrones that may have represented the sky god Baal Shamem ("Lord of the Heavens"), who ruled from heaven.[86] "Taken together, these features communicate with visual explicitness an important insight: the temple was the palace of the invisible God."[87]

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[83] For instance, the phrase occurs sixty-two times in Isaiah, fourteen times in Haggai, fifty-three times in Zechariah, and twenty-four times in Malachi. By contrast, it does not occur in Ezekiel, and occurs only eight times in Isaiah 40–55. The corpora usually designated the Deuteronomistic History contains about fifteen occurrences. Problematically, there are seventy-seven occurrences in Jeremiah, which does not fall conveniently into that ideological faction, but see Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Kund: CWK Gleerup, 1982), 62–66; cf. Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 124–26, 152; Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 84–87.

[84] M. Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Biblical Ritual," IEJ 9.1 (1959): 30–38; M. Metzger, *Königsthron und Gottesthron* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1985), 237–47; Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 21; D. Hannah, "Of Cherubim and the Divine Throne: Rev 5.6 in Context," NTS 49.4 (2003): 528–42; Roberts, "The Visual Elements in Isaiah's Vision," 201–02.

[85] Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 157–60.

[86] W. Culican, "The Iconography of Some Phoenician Seals and Seal Impressions," *AJBA* (*Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1.1 (1968): 82–83; E. Stockton, "Phoenician Cult Stones," *AJBA* 2.3 (1974): 9–10; J. Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 24–36; P. Beck, "The Cult-Stands from Taanach: Aspects of the Iconographic Tradition of Early Iron Age Cult Objects," in *Palestine, From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (ed. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 352–81; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of*, 157–60.

[87] Mettinger, *In Search of God*, 129.

Fig. 3.7   Fig. 3.8

Closely related to—and conceptually underlying—Sabaoth theology is the divine council. The "hosts" referred to in the epithet "YHWH of Hosts" likely do not refer to the singular "host" elsewhere connected with astral bodies and YHWH's military outfit (Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 21:3). Rather, the "hosts" are the royal attendants surrounding the deity's throne (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 82:1). No doubt some conceptual overlap was effected over the years as the imagery of both concepts interacted, but "YHWH of Hosts" likely developed as an epithet intended to exalt God's kingly authority and sovereignty.

The particular conceptualization of the divine council in Isaiah 6 is an iteration influenced by Neo-Assyrian literature, which grants prophetic access to the heavenly assembly.[88] The biblical author, however, significantly moves beyond the passive access afforded the prophets of the Mesopotamian literature, granting Isaiah a direct and active role in the council's decision-making (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19–22;

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[88] Miller, "The Divine Council and the Prophetic Call to War," *VT* 18 (1968): 100–07; M. Polley, "Hebrew Prophecy within the Council of Yahweh, Examined in its Ancient Near Eastern Setting," in *Essays on the Comparative Method* (ed. C. Evans, et al.; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1983), 141–56; R. Seitz, "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah," *JBL* 109.2 (1990): 229–47; M. Nissinen, "Prophets and the Divine Council," in *Kein Land für sich Allein* (ed. U. Hubner and E. Knaur; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 4–19; R. Gordon, "Standing in the Council: When Prophets Encounter God," in *The God of Israel* (ed. R. P. Gordon; Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2007), 190–204; A. Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008), 1–50.

Jer 23:18). The prophet is meek and humble, and expresses dread at beholding YHWH in light of his and the people's uncleanliness.[89] This reflects a view of YHWH's countenance as deadly for the impure and the unclean—a reflection of the warning to Moses in Exodus 33:20 that likely reflects priestly concepts of holiness (cf. Isa 6:3).[90] The references to deportation situate the final redactional layer for this vision in the exile, but the strong temple connections suggest a pre-exilic date for its underlying structure.[91] The conceptual emphasis is on the variety of manifestations of YHWH's divine kingship.

3.3.2 Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic literature perhaps require the most methodological care.[92] No consensus is current regarding the boundaries dividing one corpus from the other, much less the exact shape of either collection of texts.[93] We may broadly define the Deuteronomistic literature as those texts composed or redacted in alignment with the ideologies of Deuteronomy or some subsequent development of those ideologies. As we will see, there are literary layers stratifying both corpora.

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[89] The "people" are the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom (M. Haran, "Isaiah as a Prophet to Samaria and His Memoirs," in *Genesis, Isaiah and Psalms*, 95–103; cf. M. J. de Jong, *Isaiah Among the Ancient Near Eastern Prophets: A Comparative Study of the Earliest Stages of the Isaiah Tradition and the Neo-Assyrian Prophecies* [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 55).

[90] See G. W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 190–203, also 19, n. 51, which alludes to the fact that P emphasizes the holiness of the temple and its constituent parts, and thus the danger of entering unworthily.

[91] Haran, "Isaiah as a Prophet to Samaria and His Memoirs," 56–57.

[92] See the essays in L. Shearing and S. McKenzie, eds., *Those Elusive Deuteronomists*; A. Mayes, "Deuteronomistic Ideology and the Theology of the Old Testament," *JSOT* 82.1 (1999): 57–82; T. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*; K. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate? (A Thought Experiment)," *JSOT* 31.3 (2007): 311–45; S. Chavel, "The Literary Development of Deuteronomy 12: Between Religious Ideal and Social Reality," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. T. Dozeman, et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 303–26; Schmid, "The Deuteronomistic Image of History as Interpretive Device in the Second Temple Period," in *Congress Volume Helsinki, 2010* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 369–88.

[93] Regarding the delineation of the two sources in the scholarship, R. Coggins' observation remains true: "no element of consistency can as yet be detected" (Coggins, "What Does 'Deuteronomistic' Mean?" in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists*, 23).

The rhetorical core of the book of Deuteronomy is understood by most to comprise the laws of chapters 12–26, and to focus on political, cultic, and economic centralization. According to 2 Kings 22:8–13, these laws were unknown to the divided kingdom until their discovery in the temple by the high priest Hilkiah. The dating of the laws is hotly debated in the scholarship, but chapter 4 is almost certainly subsequent to them, dated by most scholars to the exile.[94] To the laws of chapters 12–26 accreted a narrative framework that situated them within the broader exodus tradition, including two introductions in chapters 1–4 and 5–11, a series of blessings and curses in chapters 27–28, and a narrative conclusion running from chapters 29–34 that also contains the older "Song of Moses" (Deut 32:1–43). This section will examine the conceptualization of YHWH as found in Deuteronomy 4. While not the earliest literary stratum of Deuteronomy, chapter 4's representation of YHWH would become one of the central theological messages of the book in its final form (second only to Deut 6:4).[95]

The theological theme of Deuteronomy 4 is YHWH's proprietorship over Israel and the notions of his invisibility and immanence. Several important innovations are found in the author's case for the exclusive worship of YHWH. A central innovation involves the relationship of YHWH to the gods. Deuteronomy 4:19 anticipates and reinterprets the tradition preserved in 32:8–9, placing YHWH in the role of high god and distributor, and marginalizing the gods by having them distributed to the nations rather than the nations to them.[96] Here YHWH's sovereignty over the divine council is asserted, but

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[94] Several considerations lead to this dating. Most clearly, v. 27 refers to deportation, as well as the proclivity of the exiled Israelites to adopt foreign religious practices. Additionally, the polemic against the gods of the nations, as well as the claim that "YHWH is God; there is no other besides him" (vv. 35, 39), find their closest conceptual parallels in Deutero-Isaiah, dated to the late exilic period. See, for instance, Albertz, *Israel in Exile*, 284–85.

[95] The Shema would ultimately become the defining theological message of Deuteronomy and, indeed, of all of Judaism. Chapter 4 represents a more thorough conceptualization of YHWH, however.

[96] They are astralized as well, likely reflecting Assyro-Babylonian influence. See Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 316–23; I. Zatelli, "Astrology and the Worship of the Stars in the Bible," *ZAW* 103.1 (1991): 86–99; Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*, 16–18; J. Cooley, "Astral Religion in Ugarit and Ancient Israel," *JNES*

the members of that council are being depersonified in the interest of promoting YHWH's incomparability.[97] In v. 28 they are described as inanimate idols, and vv. 35b and 39b certainly appear absolute in asserting, "YHWH is God . . . there is no other." It may be tempting to understand this chapter to move toward, if not achieve, a strict philosophical monotheism, but the context does not fully support such an interpretation.[98] The acknowledgement in v. 19 of astral bodies as appropriate objects of foreign worship mitigates such a reading (cf. Deut 17:3; 32:8–9, 43), and the phraseology of v. 35, repeated elsewhere in Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah,[99] may reflect the rhetoric of incomparability rather than monotheism per se.

Also central to chapter 4's conceptualization of YHWH is the ostensible paradox of his dual presence in heaven as well as on earth. V. 36 asserts,

> From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, while you heard his words coming out of the fire.

The author paints a picture of a deity exercising sovereignty over the heavens above and earth below (cf. vv. 19, 26, 36, 39), uttering his will from heaven, which is mediated on earth through a fire. We may also contrast v. 7's rhetorical question, "what other great nation has a god so near to it as YHWH our

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70.2 (2011): 281–87; F. Rochberg, "The Heavens and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia: The View from a Polytheistic Cosmology," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, 117–36; Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 137–87.

[97] On this rhetorical campaign in Deuteronomy, see J. Hadley, "The De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy," in *The God of Israel*, 157–74.

[98] For this reason, many investigations of monotheism describe Deuteronomy as nearly monotheistic compared to Deutero-Isaiah's full-fledged monotheism. See, for instance, R. Gnuse, *No Other Gods: Emergent Monotheism in Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 206: "Yet there is some limitation in the rhetoric of these Deuteronomistic passages; there is not quite yet a categorical denial of the existence of all other deities save Yahweh." Of course, the rhetoric is the same in Deutero-Isaiah; it just does not have the repeated references to the function of other gods.

[99] Deut 32:12, 39; Isa 43:10–12; 44:6–8; 45:5–7, 14, 18, 21.

God is whenever we call to him?" with the rejection of his physical appearance in v. 12: "YHWH spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice." According to vv. 15–17, the absence of a visible form serves to remove the temptation and opportunity to produce handmade idols as YHWH's earthly avatars. The Deuteronomic concept of his jealousy precludes it (vv. 23–24). The result was the institutionalization of a programmatic aniconism drawn from an earlier de facto "empty space" tradition. This would have been facilitated or complemented by the notion of God's face as dangerously glorious (Exod 33:20; Deut 4:12).[100]

3.3.3 Deuteronomistic Literature

Deuteronomistic literature is understood as comprising those compositions subsequent to Deuteronomy that take up the vernacular and central ideologies of the latter. The list of those ideologies varies, but central to it are cult centralization, exclusive fidelity to YHWH, and YHWH's fidelity to those who keep his covenant. Certain imagery also became closely associated with these ideologies. There is little scholarly agreement regarding the exact boundaries of the Deuteronomistic corpora, or their dating, and although a minority view questions the rhetorical value of 1 Kings 8 to a deuteronomistic author,[101] there has been a consensus since Noth that Solomon's dedicatory prayer there (1 Kgs 8:12–53) represents a prototypically Deuteronomistic text.[102] The two overarching

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[100] Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 16; van der Toorn, ed., *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997); Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 133–40; N. MacDonald, "Aniconism in the Old Testament," in *The God of Israel*, 20–34.

[101] Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomic Debate," 313, n. 7.

[102] M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History. Second Edition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991 [1943]), 18–19; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 37; M. O'Brien, *The Dueteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 151 and n. 74; R. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Insitution* (Atlanta, Ga.: Schlars Press, 1998), 12–

theological themes of that prayer are the dwelling of YHWH's name in the Jerusalem temple (vv. 16–20, 48), and YHWH's own dwelling place in heaven (vv. 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45, 49). The rationale for the stress the author puts on this spatial dynamic is found in v. 27:

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!

Already in Isaiah 6 the notion of YHWH's enormous size is found. Here that enormity is further hyperbolized: God cannot even fit within the heavens or the heavens above the heavens. At the same time, however, those heavens are repeatedly designated as the place of his dwelling (מקום שבתך). It is from there that YHWH hears his people. The locating of YHWH's presence in the heavens appears to have served one or both of two functions: to separate God's presence from personal and local worshippers, facilitating its state proprietorship; and/or to free YHWH from the geographic confines of a destroyed temple and an abandoned land.[103] Whatever its origin, for exilic Israel relocating YHWH's presence to the heavens was an initial step in God's universalization, which would find its clearest expression in Deutero-Isaiah.[104]

God was hardly confined to the heavens, however; he was God of both heaven and earth (Deut

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28; J. Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomic Contribution to the narrative in Genesis–Numbers: A Test Case," in *Those Elusive Deuteronomists*, 94; Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 37.

[103] This is simply a traditional notion. Much of the nation of Judah actually remained behind (H. M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study of the History and Archaeology of Judah During the "Exilic" Period* [Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996].

[104] D. W. Van Winkle, "The Relationship of the Nations to YHWH and to Israel in Isaiah 40–55," *VT* 35 (1985): 446–58; J. Kaminsky and A. Stewart, "God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40–66," *HTR* 99.2 (2006): 139–63.

4:39).[105] The numinous power and divine presence associated with the temple was maintained for the access of devotees through its inhabitation by YHWH's name (שֵׁם). This concept is referred to often as "Name theology." Inspiration for this notion came from a practice found repeatedly in Akkadian sources whereby the names of rulers were inscribed on monuments, edifices, or stele in order to stake ownership, or claim offerings or credit.[106] In locating YHWH's name in the temple, the Deuteronomistic faction could reject the discrete presence of YHWH within the walls of the temple and still maintain the sanctifying influence of his presence and authority. This Name theology "dethroned" the prior Sabaoth theology,[107] along with its attendant imagery. God no longer reigned from upon the cherubim—he dwelled in the heavens. The ark was no longer God's footstool; it became merely a container for the tablets of the law (1 Kgs 8:9; Isa 66:1). The expansive divine retinue surrounding YHWH's throne also became marginalized in the literature. The Deuteronomists had little use for angels or other gods.

3.3.4 Ezekiel

Our analysis of Ezekiel's conceptualization of YHWH focuses on three segments of texts (Ezek 1:4–28; 43:1–9; 10:1–22), each conveying details of separate visions of YHWH.[108] The first gives a detailed description of YHWH's chariot throne and his attendant cherubim. While the temple is not explicitly

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[105] Michael Hundley has recently argued that references in the Deuteronomistic literature to God's presence on earth are intentionally vague as part of an effort to obscure the exact nature of that presence (Hundley, "To Be or Not To Be: A Reexamination of Name Language in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History," *VT* 59.4 [2009]: 533–55).

[106] I. Wilson, "Divine Presence in Deuteronomy," *TynBull* 43.2 (1992): 403–06; S. L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology:* lᵉsakkēn sᵉmô šām *in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002); Richter, "The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy," *VT* 57 (2007): 342–66; Hundley, "To Be or Not To Be."

[107] See Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*.

[108] On the contrast in YHWH's representation between the two visions, see J. Middlemas, "Exclusively Yahweh: Aniconism and Anthropomorphism in Ezekiel," in *Prophecy and the Prophets*, 309–324.

mentioned, the imagery evokes the holy of holies and its accouterments. As with Isaiah 6, Ezekiel's description uses storm imagery to charge the vision with a sense of terrifying power (Ezek 1:4, 13–14, 24). Where Isaiah depicts six-winged seraphim, Ezekiel expands on the concept of the cherubim, describing them as humanoid, but with four faces (like that of a human, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, respectively), human hands, and four wings (Ezek 1:5–11). Two wings were extended by each to touch the wings of the others—evoking the image of the cherubim over the mercy seat (1 Kgs 6:27)—while the other two wings, in contrast to the cherubim in the holy of holies, were used to cover the bodies of the cherubim (Ezek 1:11, 23). These creatures appear alongside wheels which all support a crystal dome that bears up the throne of YHWH (Ezek 1:15–28). A more extended description of their activity is found in Ezekiel 10:1–19.

The wheels and the flying creatures imbue God's throne with mobility (Ezek 10:16–18), decoupling the holy of holies and its glory from the temple in Jerusalem and allowing it to attend to Israelites outside of the land of Israel. For Ezekiel and his priestly faction, כבוד—here understood as "glory"— extended God's power and authority. As many scholars have concluded, "*kābôd* theology was founded on the belief in a mobile presence, so that the deity could be present in the Temple while free to move about at will."[109] We may understand "Kabod theology," found primarily in Ezekiel and in the Priestly literature, as rhetorically parallel to Deuteronomy's "Name theology." Both seek to distance YHWH from humanity while maintaining the immediacy and mobility of his divine agency. While Name theology rejected YHWH's visibility and discrete presence in the temple—as well as the existence of attendant divine beings—Kabod theology, driven by priestly ideals, emphasized royal imagery

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[109] Middlemas, "Exclusively Yahweh," 314; cf. G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (London: SCM, 1952), 37–44; Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*. On the pre-priestly sense of כבוד as "body," or "substance," see Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, 202; Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 52–54; Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 60–62.

associated with God's rule from his throne within his temple.

The description of YHWH himself in vv. 26–28 is particularly important:

> And above the dome over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form (דמות כמראה אדם). Upward from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire enclosed all around; and downward from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendor all around. Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendor all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of YHWH (מראה דמות כבוד־יהוה).

The author evokes numerous images of fiery brilliance, reflecting what some scholars call "transcendent anthropomorphism,"[110] but there is also a unique use of abstractions that buffers that anthropomorphism and extends YHWH's form just beyond the reader's conceptual grasp. He does not describe YHWH directly, but rather his glory (כבוד), which itself is only described as the likeness (דמות) of the appearance (מראה) of a human (אדם). "Ultimately, the divine form is elusive."[111]

The next description of YHWH, embedded within the extended vision of the restored temple in Ezekiel 40–48, provides a different picture.[112] Ezekiel 43:2–3 explain that the theophanic approach of YHWH was "like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face." The statement "I fell upon my face"

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[110] Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism"; J-P Vernant, "Dim Body, Dazzling Body," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body. Part One* (ed. M. Feher, et al.; New York: Zone Books, 1989), 19–47; Hamori, *"When Gods Were Men"*; W. Williams, "A Body Unlike Bodies: Transcendent Anthropomorphism in Ancient Semitic Tradition and Early Islam," *JAOS* 129.1 (2009): 19–31.

[111] Middlemas, "Exclusively Yahweh," 319; Middlemas, "Transformation of the Image," in *Transforming Images: Transformation of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel* (ed. W. Tooman and M. Lyons; Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 113–38; cf. R. Kasher, "Anthropomorphism, Holiness and Cult: A New Look at Ezekiel 40–48," *ZAW* 110.2 (1998): 192–208.

[112] The unity of chapters 1–39 and 40–48 has long been debated. Our discussion does not rely on the text's unity, but for the more recent discussions, see P. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 12–16; J. Middlemas, *The Templeless Age* (Louisville, Kent.: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 81–83.

immediately follows after the description of YHWH and his attendants in Ezekiel 1:28, suggesting a parallel sequence of events. It may be that the author intends for the reader to import the entirety of the original vision into this subsequent vision, and is reasserting the divine imagery described in the first chapter. Alternatively, the omission may be intentional, reflecting a hope for the complete omission of images from the ideal restored temple. J. Middlemas argues for the latter, concluding,

> Even when Ezekiel sees the divine effulgence, however, no single or stable image emerges to represent Yahweh. After that event and in conjunction with the construction of the new, purified, and restored Temple, Ezekiel no longer sees any image—not of the cherubim throne, not of the ark, and certainly not of the figure of the deity. Ezekiel had been aniconic and iconoclastic all along.[113]

This reading understands the evasiveness of the description of YHWH from chapter 1 to be an intentional attempt to mitigate the possibility of promoting iconism. If the nature of YHWH is beyond our grasp to describe, his form can hardly be represented materially. Here is reflected the default cognitive yearning for anthropomorphism alongside the reflective anti-anthropomorphism of the priestly class. In the description of the idealized temple, established following the eradication of the idolatry and defilements of times past, the relics of iconism and their literary inspiration are entirely absent. This is the state of the cult for which Ezekiel aches.

3.3.5 Deutero-Isaiah

The primary conceptual innovation of Deutero-Isaiah is the rhetorical notion that the gods exist only

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[113] Middlemas, "Exclusively Yahweh," 320–21.

insofar as handmade objects of worship are designated "gods." There are indications, however, that the author was in places interacting with older notions of the divine council. Frank Moore Cross noted in a 1953 article that the opening chapter of Deutero-Isaiah appeals to divine council phraseology, and can be read to appeal to the associated imagery.[114] Specifically, vv. 1–8 employ a series of plural active imperatives that have no clear subjects. While speculation has abounded over the years regarding the identity of the verbs' subjects, careful study of the divine council type-scene has linked similar serial imperatives—especially those involved with witnessing—with directives given to the members of the Syro-Palestinian council of gods.[115]

On the other hand, the author of Deutero-Isaiah is quite vehement about the exclusive sovereignty of YHWH, and is most likely utilizing the literary convention for rhetorical effect. Isaiah 40:13–14 repeatedly ask whom YHWH would need to ask for counsel or advice, with the implication that he needs no council of gods to advise him. Another example of his rejection of the gods is that of Isaiah 41:23, which challenges the gods to prove their divinity:[116]

> Tell us what is to come hereafter,
>   that we may know that you are gods;
> do good, or do harm,
>   that we may be afraid and terrified.

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[114] Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," 274–77.

[115] R. Whybray expanded significantly on Cross' analysis in Whybray, *The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah xl 13–14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971). David Bokovoy has more recently used similar imperatives in identifying the divine council type-scene in Amos (Bokovoy, "שמעו והעידו בבית יעקב," 37–51). For more on the literary type-scene, see Kee, "The Heavenly Council and Its Type-Scene."

[116] Reflecting the same brand of plural imperatives from chapter 40, the opening verse of the chapter commands the coastlines to "listen to me in silence."

The rhetoric found elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah has long been understood to flatly deny the existence of other gods. The following table shows the phraseology employed:

Isa 43:10	לפני לא־נוצר אל	before me no god was formed
Isa 43:11	אין מבלעדי מושיע	besides me there is no savior
Isa 44:6	מבלעדי אין אלהים	besides me there is no god
Isa 45:5 (6, 14, 18)	אין עוד	there is no other
Isa 45:5	זולתי אין אלהים	besides me there is no god
Isa 45:6	אפס בלעדי	nothing apart from me
Isa 45:21	אין־עוד אלהים מבלעדי	there is no other god besides me
Isa 45:21	אין זולתי	there is no one besides me

The conceptual congruency of these comments is immediately evident (cf. Deut 4:35, 39; 32:29),[117] apart from 43:10, which employs the verb יצר, "to form," to reject the divinity of handmade idols (Isa 44:9, 10, 12). Although there is slight lexical variation in the other verses, such as between מבלעדי and זולתי, or אין and אפס, there is no contextual semantic difference.[118] The two pairs of terms mean "beside me," and "there is not," respectively, but whether or not they indicate absolute exclusivity is not clear.[119] A look at similar terminology elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah reveals the author's hyperbolic flourishes, though. For instance, the nations of the earth are asserted in Isa 40:17 to be "as nothing" (כאפס), and "less than nothing and emptiness" (מאפס ותהו; cf. Isa 44:9). אפס occurs again in Isaiah 41:11–

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[117] On this terminology in Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah, see MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of Monotheism*, 78–96; M. Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism? Toward an Assessment of Divine Plurality in the Hebrew Bible," *BBR* 18.1 (2008): 4–18.

[118] See MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of Monotheism*, 81–89 for linguistic considerations (cf. R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008], 69–71).

[119] Michael Heiser argues that the parallel terminology used in Deuteronomy—which does not indicate absolute exclusivity—determines the semantic sense of the rhetoric for Deutero-Isaiah, even though the terminology is slightly different (Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?" 5). This stands on methodologically shaky ground, but ultimately does not undermine the argument against absolute exclusivity, as will be shown.

12 in the author's declaration that those who fight against Israel are "nothing at all." In Isaiah 40:23 the author uses אין to insist that YHWH brings worldy rulers to "nothing."[120]

Most significantly, in Isaiah 47:8, 10 the author places the statement אני ואפסי עוד, "I am, and there is no other," in the mouth of personified Babylon (Nineveh in Zeph 2:15).[121] The statement undoubtedly reflects the same rhetorical claim made in the verses shared above. It strains credulity to understand the author to be suggesting the cities are claiming to be the only cities in existence. Rather, the rhetorical message is one of incomparability. Babylon and Nineveh believe themselves to be the only cities that matter. This contextualizes our interpretation of the verses from the table above. As with Babylon and Moab, and as with the characterization of the nations and rulers that fight against Israel, the gods are nothing *in comparison to YHWH*. While Deutero-Isaiah seems to be asserting a brand of practical monotheism (the gods are so meaningless that their very existence can be ignored), the ontological declarations are best read as hyperbole.

3.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to outline the trajectory of Israel's developing conceptualization of YHWH. While the innovations of the earliest Israelite literature are primarily aimed at internal concerns related to king and cult, the texts composed during periods of Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony wrestle almost exclusively with the relationship of Israel and her God to the nations of the earth. As the nations around Israel grew in size and power, they found themselves brought into more

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[120] NRSV renders "naught," which mitigates the rhetorical force of the verse. Here the concept of YHWH as savior and deliverer also comes into focus. He is the only one capable of delivering Israel, and for that, allegiance is also owed YHWH.

[121] Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?" 4–5.

extended contact within a subservient role, which threatened their cultural identity. The preservation of that cultural identity required significant boundary maintenance, meaning more firm identity markers were developed. YHWH's divine profile and Israel's cultic practices became the primary identity markers of the late pre-exilic and exilic periods. Connections with the broader Syro-Palestinian pantheon were either rejected in favor of newer innovations, or they were reinterpreted so as to promote YHWH's incomparability over and against the gods of the nations. Iconism gave way to aniconism, theogony gave way to creation by divine fiat, and the divine council gave way to the divine king surrounded by innumerable and servile divine beings, which itself gave way to an evacuated pantheon that was later reinhabited by numerous concourses of angels.[122]

A variety of further conclusions could be drawn from this chapter's analysis, but in light of our focus on cognitive processes, the remainder of this section will be used to highlight two important links between YHWH's conceptualization and the discussion on the cognitive origins of deity from the previous chapter, namely anthropomorphism and agency. Both concepts figure heavily in YHWH's divine profile down into the Greco-Roman period and beyond. The aniconistic campaigns of the biblical authors obscured the physical nature of YHWH, but his fundamental anthropomorphism remained the default presupposition throughout. Israelite cultural memory was built upon narrative traditions, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, lend themselves to the anthropomorphic representation of unnatural entities. This is reflected across historical, legal, and poetic texts. The motivations and mechanisms for the philosophical rejection of an anthropomorphic vision of the

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[122] S. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

deity were, after all, still centuries off.[123]

The significance of agency is highlighted in the above discussions of the Kabod and Name theologies, which sought to distance YHWH's discrete presence without removing his divine influence and authority. Similar extensions of influence and authority have been observed for years in other ancient Near Eastern textual and material culture, particularly within the astral religions of Assyria-Babylon. While biblical scholarship lags in addressing this question, it has been a topic of particular interest to Assyriology. An article recently published by Beate Pongratz-Leisten provides an attractive solution that also incorporates insights from cognitive science. For Pongratz-Leisten, research that highlights our cognitive predisposition to the attribution of agency to unknown and inanimate entities explains

> why agency can be exercised by supernatural beings that are imagined not only in abstract and anthropomorphic terms but also in inanimate, invisible, and polymorphic terms, such as statues or other symbolic representations of the divine, body parts of divinities or celestial bodies alike, and even the transcendent invisible God.[124]

According to this approach, the statues, symbols, and other "indices of presence" associated with the heavenly deities were "secondary agents" endowed with the divine agency to act on behalf of and in the name of the deity to which they are connected.[125] Through this communicable agency the invisible,

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[123] On this process within Judaism, see Friedman, "Anthropomorphism and Its Eradication."

[124] Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods," 146.

[125] In Assyro-Babylonian cultures the vivification of the cult statues—its endowment with the deity's agency—was effected through the *miš-pî*, or "opening of the mouth," ritual. See C. Walker and M. Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian* Mīs Pî *Ritual* (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Texts Corpus Project, 2001); M. Dick, "The Mesopotamian Cult Statue: A Sacramental Encounter with Divinity," in *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East* (ed. N. H. Walls; Boston, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005), 43–68; A. Berlejung,

enormous, or dangerously glorious deity can be present in nations, temples, or even homes, while also inhabiting the heavens or some far off realm.

In the context of YHWH's conceptualization, this phenomenon would provide mediation between Israel and her increasingly distant God. For the Deuteronomistic and Priestly authors, YHWH's name and glory, respectively, fill this role. More concrete examples of this phenomenon will be discussed in the next chapter, but we may conclude with an exilic innovation to the Deuteronomist's Name theology. Despite the Deuteronomistic distaste for subservient divinities, later promoters of the royal ideology, under the pressure of the exile, appear to have personified YHWH's "name" via the highly utilitarian divine messenger, or angel. The clearest example of this concept is found in Exodus 23:20–21, which describes the Israelites being guided by the messenger of YHWH, who possessed the authority to speak on God's behalf as well as pardon or refuse to pardon sins.[126] In other texts the identity of the messenger and YHWH appear equally conflated (Gen 16:7–14; Exod 3:2–6; Judg 6:11–24; 13:3–22).[127] While many scholars have suggested the messenger of YHWH was a type of hypostasis, or

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"Washing the Mouth: The Consecration of Divine Images in Mesopotamia," in *The Image and the Book*, 45–72; F. Rochberg, "'The Stars Their Likenesses': Perspectives on the Relation between Celestial Bodies and Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *What Is a God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia* (ed. B. Porter; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 41–92. On divine objects in Egypt, see D. Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," in *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth*, 123–210; G. Robins, "Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," in *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East*, 1–12.

[126] On the angel within this pericope, and its relationship to the Deuteronomistic movement, see J. Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomic Contribution to the Narrative in Genesis–Numbers: A Test-Case," 94–97; H. Ausloos, "The 'Angel of YHWH' in Exod. xxiii 20–33 and Judg. ii 1–5. A Clue to the 'Deuteronom(ist)ic' Puzzle?" *VT* 58.1 (2008): 1–12.

[127] This confusion arose originally from the interpolation of the word מלאך, "messenger," before the name of God in order to obscure the deity's presence and interaction with humanity (Sarna, *Genesis* בראשית, 383; Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 296; and Meier, "Angel of Yahweh מלאך יהוה," *DDD* 106. See also W. Baumgartner, "Zum Problem des Jahwe-Engels," in *Zum alten Testament und seiner Umwelt. Ausgewählte Aufsätze* [Leiden: Brill, 1959], 245; and D. Irvin, *Mytharion: The Comparison of Tales from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East* [Germany: Verlag Butzon & Berker Kevelaer, 1978], 101–04). Exod 23:20–21 manifests a later interpretation that seeks to reconcile the confusion.

extension of YHWH's identity,[128] the more likely conclusion in light of the cognitive research is that the "name" represents YHWH's communicable divine agency.[129] The messenger was thus endowed with God's own authority, authorizing him to represent God to others and act on his behalf, becoming a "self-propelled agent."[130]

With that we turn to discussion of the conceptualization of the generic notion of deity.

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[128] W. Heidt, *Angelology of the Old Testament* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 70; K. Galling, ed., "Geister, Dämonen, Engel," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen, 1957–65), 2.1301–02; A. van der Woude "De *Mal'ak Jahwe*: Een Godsbode," *NedTheoT* 18 (1963/64): 6–13; R. Friedman, *The Hidden Face of God* (San Fransisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 13; C. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 67–69; L. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism, Second Edition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 37; Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*, 99–101; Sommer, *The Bodies of God*, 43–44. For a summary of interpretations up to 1998, see Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 53–57.

[129] This will be especially important to the discussion of images in the next chapter. On divine agency, see Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods," 144–52.

[130] Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods," 149.

Chapter 4
The Conceptualization of Deity

The analysis to this point has traced the trajectory of Israel's conceptualizations of deity from their early origins in evolutionary cognitive processes through to the conflation of the divine profiles associated with the deities YHWH and El and the subsequent development of the resulting profile. The focus has primarily been on Israel's prototypes of deity, but this thesis' goal is to explore the contours and boundaries of the category, and so we now turn back to the generic concept of the divine. While much of YHWH's conceptualization demonstrably draws from generic imagery, a secure way to positively isolate generic notions of deity is to restrict our analysis to those texts that represent deities other than YHWH. There are certainly ample references throughout the biblical text, although they are not as extensive or concentrated as references to YHWH. As a result, we do not have the luxury of a comprehensive set of divine profiles, and will move directly into analyzing individual segments of text that witness to particularly widespread or significant conceptualizations of deity. Nor are we able to limit our analysis to a small set of texts from which a variety of divine images may be extrapolated. Rather, we must draw individual conceptual elements from a variety of textual divisions. As a result, our results will cover a broad chronological range and may not correlate across those textual boundaries. Diachronic and synchronic variation will be discussed where relevant.

4.1 Generic Deity in the Hebrew Bible

4.1.1 The Primeval History

אלהים occurs three times in reference to gods other than YHWH in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

The earliest occurrence is found in Genesis 3:5: "when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."[1] Later, in v. 22 God acknowledges that the man had become "as one of us, knowing good and evil."[2] This text characterizes the "gods" primarily in terms of "knowing good and evil," which is likely a merism indicating all strategic knowledge.[3] This is further supported by Isaiah 41:23a, which challenges the gods of the nations to prove their divinity: "Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods." Even the deceased prophet Samuel, referred to with the Hebrew אלהים, is sought after by Saul for the strategic knowledge that he is able to offer (1 Sam 28:7–20).[4] These texts evince the notion of gods as "full-access strategic agents,"[5] and anchor the biblical conceptualization of deity to cognitive functions that remain operative even today.

In Genesis 3:22, upon acknowledging the human's possession of knowledge, God's immediate concern is to prevent the man's arrogation of immortality, which appears to be presented as equally prototypical of deity. Other passages, biblical and non-biblical, bear this out.[6] Psalm 82:6, for instance, contrasts the immortality of divinity with the mortality of humanity (to which the gods of the nations have been condemned).[7] Outside of the Hebrew Bible, the hero of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* laments,

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[1] NRSV renders "like God," providing the variant "gods" in a footnote. The plural ידעים may have the humans as its referent, but two considerations support the plural reading of אלהים: (1) the parallel comment in Gen 3:22 that the man became "like one of us," and (2) the broader use of the plural in reference to the gods of the primeval history (Gen 1:26; 6:2, 4; 11:7). See Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 17–92; Machinist, "How Gods Die, Biblically and Otherwise," 210–14.

[2] Unlike v. 5, the verb here is in the infinitive, which does not indicate number; but it is unlikely ממנו is to be understood as a plural reference to the singular YHWH. God is speaking about the generic deity class.

[3] This is not omniscience. Cf. 2 Sam 14:17, 20. See also C. Gordon and G. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (New York: Norton, 1997) 36–37; Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*, 39–41.

[4] NRSV renders "I see a divine being coming up out of the ground." In keeping with wider Northwest Semitic conventions, we may render "underworld" for ארץ. The deceased were thought to inhabit dark regions under the living world (Ps 22:29; Job 17:16; Isa 26:19; Jonah 2:6; cf. M. Ottosson, "אֶרֶץ 'erets," *TDOT* 1:399–400).

[5] See above, §2.1.3. The phrase "full-access strategic agent" comes from P. Boyer, "Functional Origins of Religious Concepts: Ontological and Strategic Selection in Evolved Minds," *JRAI* 6 (2000): 195–214.

[6] YHWH's antiquity and immortality are frequently highlighted in the Hebrew Bible as a contrast to earthly entities and institutions. The contrast with other deities is not made until the late exilic period at the earliest (cf. Ps 82:6–7; Isa 43:10).

[7] That the text refers to gods and not humans is the overwhelming consensus of contemporary scholars. See J.

When the gods created mankind,
Death for mankind they set aside,
Life in their own hands retaining.[8]

It is noteworthy that humanity in Genesis 3 is shown as potentially capable of divinization. The ontological dichotomy that is assumed today to separate divinity from humanity is not only crossable, but in the earliest narratives, crossable via human initiative alone.[9] In Gen 11:1–9, humanity has set out to build a tower to heaven. YHWH insists that nothing will be beyond humanity's grasp if they are successful, and so he proposes to confound their language and scatter them around the world. YHWH is here presented as jealous of his status, laboring to prevent the overlap of the two categories of being.

The next two occurrences of אלהים, from Genesis 6:1–4, appear to manifest the same opposition:

When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of אלהים saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then YHWH said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years." The Nephilim[10] were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of אלהים went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.

Morgenstern, "The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," *HUCA* 14.1 (1939): 29–126; A. Gonzalez, "Le Psaume LXXXII," *VT* 13.3 (1963): 293–309; Tsevat, "God and the Gods in Assembly," 123–37; P. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 120–24; S. Parker, "The Beginning of the Reign of God—Psalm 82 as Myth and Liturgy," *RB* 102.4 (1995): 532–59; M. Heiser, "The Divine Council," 74–89; S. Diez, "'Nun sag, wie hast du's mit den Göttern?' Eine Forschungsgeschichte zu Ps 82" (PhD diss., Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, 2009); Machinist, "How Gods Die."

[8] *Epic of Gilgamesh* 10.3.3–5, translated by E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 90).

[9] Garr, In His Own Image and Likeness, 59–61.

[10] "Nephilim" most likely derives from the root נפל, and means "Fallen Ones" (Hendel, "The Nephilim Were on the Earth: Genesis 6:1–4 and Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," in *The Fall of the Angels* [edited by C. Auffarth and L. Stuckenbruck; Leiden: Brill, 2004], 21–22; cf. P. Coxon, "Nephilim נפלים," *DDD*, 618–20). These beings are described as existing already when the events of vv. 1–4 take place. At least in this pericope, they are not the offspring of the "sons of אלהים," although they are described as "giants" in Num 13:33, presumably as a result of their divine ancestry. For an attempt to harmonize these two groups, see D. Clines, "The Significance of the 'Sons of God' Episode (Gen 6:1–4) in the Context of the Primeval History (Gen 1–11)," *JSOT* 13 (1979): 37–38, n. 25.

This segment represents a mythical narrative fragment that has been worked into the Noachide flood tradition,[11] perhaps to provide a bit of background for God's displeasure.[12] Given the placement of the narrative unit immediately before God's disgust with the wickedness of humanity in vv. 5–6, we may understand this boundary crossing to again displease the deity.[13] This would reflect the understanding resulting from the juxtaposition, rather than that of the original composition of vv. 5ff (which seem unaware of vv. 1–4). As with Genesis 3:5, the boundaries of the divine world are strained, with human women presented as genetically compatible with gods.[14] Those gods are represented as autonomous, anthropomorphic, and corporeal, as well as impetuous and mischievous, like unruly adolescents.[15]

4.1.2 The Jacob Cycle

In the patriarchal narratives we find a different usage of אלהים, particularly concentrated in Genesis 31:30, 32; 35:2, 4. The first of these pericopae describes Laban's confrontation of Jacob after the latter

[11] This pericope has a long history of interpretation stretching back to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament. For scholarly analyses, see P. Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6," *JJS* 23 (1972): 60–71; D. Peterson, "Genesis 6:1–4, Yahweh and the Organization of the Cosmos," *JSOT* 13 (1979): 47–64; L. Eslinger, "A Contextual Identification of the *bene ha'elohim* and *benoth ha'adam* in Genesis 6:1–4," *JSOT* 13 (1979): 65–73; R. Hendel, "Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4," *JBL* 106.1 (1987): 13–26; H. Kvanvig, "Gen 6,1–4 as an Antediluvian Event," *SJOT* 16 (2002): 79–112; Hendel, "The Nephilim Were on the Earth," 11–34; A. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1–4 in Early Jewish Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 51–95; S. Fockner, "Reopening the Discussion: Another Contextual Look at the Sons of God," *JSOT* 32 (2008): 435–56; C. Kaminski, "Beautiful Women or 'False Judgment'? Interpreting Gen 6:2 in the Context of the Primeval History," *JSOT* 32 (2008): 457–73; H. Kvanvig, *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic. An Intertextual Reading* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 274–310.

[12] One possible reading understands God's anger to result from the overpopulation of the earth. Another sees his anger stemming from the threat against the boundaries separating the divine from the human (a theme repeated in the primeval history). Neither is without exegetical issue, however. For a recent interpretation of the "sons of אלהים" as humans, see Fockner, "Reopening the Discussion," 435–56.

[13] The story is not perfectly consistent with the description of the state of the earth in vv. 5–6, but attempts to harmonize the pericope by reading the "sons of אלהים" as humans in general neglect their divine literary profile, which is consistent throughout the Hebrew Bible and cognate literature (see, particularly, Cho, *Lesser Deities in the Ugaritic Texts and the Hebrew Bible*). The story's relationship to the flood tradition appears to be assumed by the author to be known.

[14] Discomfort with this observation would inspire later interpretations of the "sons of אלהים" as humans (cf. Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6," 67–69)

[15] This supports the conceptual identification of the "sons of אלהים" with the second-tier deities of the Ugaritic texts, who are portrayed in much the same way (although even El is presented as a deity given to women and wine).

flees from Laban's presence with his daughters, Leah and Rachel. Unbeknownst to Jacob, Rachel has absconded with her father's אלהים, which appear to be small cultic statues. Laban and Jacob refer to the entities as אלהים, while the narrator calls them תרפים (31:19, 34, 35), a word of unknown origin that appears only ten times in the Hebrew Bible[16] and seems to refer pejoratively to handcrafted representations of deities.[17] The biblical authors are reticent to refer to the objects as אלהים. Jacob, either to accommodate his father-in-law or because of his own cultural conditioning, equates the תרפים with אלהים.[18] The objects are described as small enough to hide under a camel saddle, and after Laban's exit we find no indication Rachel's possession of them was considered problematic.

The last occurrences of אלהים in Genesis that clearly refer to deities other than YHWH are found in Gen 35:2, 4. Here Jacob announces his intentions to move his household to Bethel, and commands his family to turn over to him all their אלהי הנכר, "foreign gods." Genesis 35:4 states,

> So they gave to Jacob all the אלהי הנכר that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem.

This is another indication that handmade objects small enough to be held in one's hand could be referred to as אלהים, at least within the earliest strata of biblical tradition. While the biblical authors use other pejorative terms in narration, the characters themselves, whether Israelite or otherwise, appear to be comfortable with the designation אלהים.

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[16] Always morphologically plural. Gen 31:19, 34, 35; Judg 18:17, 18, 20; 1 Sam 19:13, 16; 2 Kgs 23:24; Zech 10:12. In 1 Sam 19:13, 16 singular pronominal suffices are used to refer to the תרפים, which may suggest another concretized abstract plural.

[17] See K. van der Toorn, "The Nature of the Biblical Teraphim in the Light of the Cuneiform Evidence," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 203–22; H. Rouillard, "Rephaim רפאים," *DDD*, 699–700; T. Lewis, "Teraphim תרפים," *DDD*, 844–50.

[18] Micah does the same in Judg 18:24 after men from the tribe of Dan steal his cultic goods and recruit his Levitical priest.

The repeated reference to these items as אלהים raises one of the central questions of this thesis, namely the specific sense of the term in reference to cultic objects.[19] Are the objects understood as having numinous divine qualities (being deities themselves), or are they mere representations of deity referred to metonymically or sarcastically as אלהים? Most modern study of divinity has concluded the latter, but this seems to me to be the result of deductive approaches influenced by modern monotheistic and anthropocentric conditioning. As Spencer Allen has recently written, "for Western English speakers, the connotations of the common noun 'god' usually yield to those of the proper noun 'God.'"[20] In other words, our analysis of ancient concepts of "gods" tends to start with our own assumptions of what a "god" is. Rather, we should begin with the entities the texts themselves designate as "gods." While the conceptualization of a deity as an anthropomorphic being may align quite well with the prototypical notions of divinity in ancient Israel, we are here concerned with identifying the contours and extent of the semantic sense of the word אלהים, including prototypical and non-prototypical examples.

The ascription of divinity to cultic statues and other objects is well known within the field of Assyriology, and has actually been a focus of discussion in recent years. The main questions have been related to (1) the nature of the relationship shared by the deity and its associated cultic objects, and (2) the nature of the divinity ascribed to non-anthropomorphic objects. While scholars have long

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[19] The word פסל, "image," appears in Exod 20:4; Lev 26:1; Deut 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 27:15; Judg 17:3, 4; 18:14, 17, 18, 20, 30, 31; 2 Kgs 21:7; Isa 40:9, 20; 42:17; 44:9, 10, 15, 17; 45:20; 48:5; Jer 10:14; 51:17; Nah 1:14; Hab 2:18; Ps 97:7; 2 Chr 33:7. אליל, commonly translated "idol," occurs in Lev 19:4; 26:1; Isa 2:8, 18, 20; 10:10, 11; 19:1, 3; 31:7; Jer 14:14; Ezek 30:13; Had 2:18; Zech 11:17; Ps 96:5; 97:7; Job 13:4; 1 Chr 16:26.

[20] S. Allen, "The Splintered Divine: A Study of Ištar, Baal and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2011), 18. Allen cites (19–20, n. 8) B. Porter's recent suggestion that Mesopotamian deities have been treated far too anthropomorphically due to the prioritization of myths and hymns over the data provided by other cultic texts and objects. Porter argues that a personality was not a necessary feature of a deity. See Porter, "Blessings from a Crown, Offerings to a Drum: Were There Non-Anthropomorphic Deities in Ancient Mesopotamia?" in *What is a God?* 158–59.

prioritized hymns and myths in the evaluation of Mesopotamian notions of divinity,[21] more recent

publications detect an anthropomorphic bias resulting from that focus.[22] Scholars have since shifted

the focus to cultic texts and remains, which offer a different perspective on the nature of divinity.[23]

These texts frequently refer to inanimate objects with divine determinatives, and even mention

offerings made to them. Several offering lists contain divine names alongside associated cultic objects.

An example is K 252.ii.26:[24]

26	^{d}30 ^{d}UTU ALAM ^{d}UTU	Sîn, Šamaš-the-cult-statue, Šamaš
27	^{d}NIN.GAL ^{d}a-a	Ningal, Aya
28	^{d}BU.NE.NE ^{d}EN.TI	Bunene, Ebiḫ
29	^{d}kit-tu$_4$ ^{d}u$_2$-mu	Kittu, Umu
30	^{d}ta-am-ba-a-a	Tambâya
31	DINGIR^{meš} ša$_2$ E$_2$ ^{d}30 ^{d}UTU	Gods of the temple of Sîn (and) Šamaš
32	ša$_2$ ^{uru}ŠA$_3$.URU	of the Inner City.

This text does not otherwise repeat any divine names, raising the question of whether or not the cult

statue of Šamaš, itself prefixed with a divine determinative, was considered a separate deity from

Šamaš. That both entities were given offerings suggests some distinction in their divine activity.

    This brings us back to B. Pongratz-Leisten's proposal, which suggests divinity, as a result of our

cognitive predisposition to the attribution of agency to natural events and processes, operated in

Mesopotamia as a communicable kind of agency with which inanimate and non-anthropomorphic

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[21] J. Bottéro explicitly calls for scholars to turn to hymns and prayers to determine the nature of the gods in ancient Mesopotamia (Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* [T. Fagan, trans.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], 59).

[22] For instance, see Dick, "The Mesopotamian Cult Statue," 46: "The Mesopotamian gods possess corporeality: they share with us size, age, gender, attractiveness, and even in rare cases mortality." Bottéro also insists that divine objects are inferior expressions of divinity and do not experience "true divinity" (Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 63).

[23] Porter, "Introduction," in *What is a God?* 1.

[24] This example and its translation are taken from Allen, "The Splintered Divine," 20–21.

objects or entities could be endowed. Although these secondary divine agents "had a referential quality to a particular aspect of divinity and represented part of the 'distributed agency' of the divinity,"[25] they were "self-propelled,"[26] or at least semi-autonomous. Thus a supplicant might appeal to a secondary agent in conjunction with—as in K 252.ii.26 above—or *instead of* an appeal to the primary deity.[27] For instance, at the end of an exorcistic prayer to Marduk, the divine name Asalluhi, representative of Marduk's healing functionality, is invoked alongside cultic objects associated with other deities:

> May the water stoup of Asalluhi bestow favor upon me,
> May the censer and torch of Girra and Kusu cleanse me.[28]

The eighth century BCE inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud[29] and Khirbet el-Qôm[30] may provide an Israelite analogue to this view of divine agency. The inscriptions mention blessings "by YHWH and *l'šrth*" ("by his *asherah*"):

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[25] Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 147.

[26] Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 149.

[27] Pongratz-Leisten suggests that the secondary agents functioned "as media in the cult—that is, the context of social interaction—facilitating communication between the human and the divine spheres" ("Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 148).

[28] Quoted in Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 148. Original text is B. Foster, *Before the Muses* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2005), 682–86. In support of reading these cult objects as secondary agents of Marduk, rather than independent deities, note that this particular prayer is addressed to Marduk, and Asalluhi is one of his fifty names, according to *Enūma Eliš* (1.185–93). For the relationship between Marduk and Asalluhi, see T. Oshima, *Babylonian Prayers to Marduk* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 42–47 (for the full text and translation of the prayer, see pp. 357–62).

[29] Emerton, 'New Light on Israelite Religion," 2–20; J. Hadley, "Some Drawings and Inscriptions on Two Pithoi from Kuntillet ʿAjrud," *VT* 37.2 (1987): 185–86.

[30] W. Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet El-Kôm," *HUCA* 40-41 (1970): 139–204; A. Lemaire, "Les inscriptions de Khirbet El-Qom et l'Ashérah de Yhwh," *RB* 84 (1977): 597–608; Z. Zevit, "The Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription Mentioning a Goddess," *BASOR* 255 (1984): 39–47; J. Hadley, "The Khirbet el-Qom Inscription," *VT* 37.1 (1987): 50–62; B. Margalit, "Some Observations on the Inscription and Drawings from Khirbet el-Qôm," *VT* 39.3 (1989): 371–78; W. Shea, "The Khirbet el-Qom Tomb Inscription Again," *VT* 40.1 (1990): 110–16.

Kuntillet ʿAjrud Pithos 1[31]

1. *ʾmr . ʾ[••] h[••]k ʾmr . lyhl[yw] wlywʿśh . wl[•••] brkt ʾtkm*
2. *lyhwh . šmrn . wlʾšrth*

Says [PN   ]: Say to Yahil[yaw] and to Yawʿasa and to [PN   . . .], I hereby bless you by YHWH of Samaria and by *ʾšrth.*

Kuntillet ʿAjrud Pithos 2

1. *[ʾ]mr*
2. *ʾmryw ʾ*
3. *mr l . ʾdn[y]*
4. *hšlm . ʾ[t]*
5. *brktk . l[y]*
6. *hwh tmn*
7. *wlʾšrth . yb*
8. *rk wyšmrk*
9. *wyhy . ʿm . ʾd[n]*
10. *y[ ]*

[S]ays Amaryaw: Say to [my] lord, Are yo[u] well? I hereby bless you by [Y]hwh of Teman and by *ʾšrth.* May he bless and keep you and may he be with my lord[. . .]

Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription

1. *ʾryhw . hʿšr. ktbh*
2. *brk . ʾryhw . lyhwh*
3. *wmṣryh lʾšrth hwšʿ lh*
4. *lʾnyhw*
5. *lʾšrth •••*
6. *r[•••]h*

Uriah the rich commissioned it. Blessed was Uriah by YHWH, and from his enemies by *ʾšrth* he has delivered him. (Written) by ʾOniyahu. . . . . by *ʾšrth . . .*

Debate has raged over the identification of *'šrth* as a deity or a cultic object,[32] but most scholars

support the latter interpretation, especially in light of the singular verbs in line 3 from the Khirbet el-

Qôm inscription and from lines 7*b*–9 in Pithos 2 from Kuntillet 'Ajrud. This indicates the *'šrt*

functioned as some kind of Yahwistic medium for blessing rather than an independent goddess. If the

word indeed reflects a cultic object associated with YHWH, the appeal to both divine entities parallels

the Mesopotamian pattern quite closely.[33]

The biblical witness is less explicit and can be read a number of ways, but the material remains

provide a helpful lens for analyzing some of the more enigmatic biblical references to cultic objects

and communicable divine agency. To begin, however, several portions of the biblical text explicitly

reject the notion that cultic objects were considered divine.[34] As we have seen, some of the biblical

authors themselves display quite a bit of reticence when it comes to labeling them "gods."[35] Jeremiah

16:20 insists, "Does a human make for himself a god? They are not gods!"[36] Authors like Jeremiah (Jer

10:5, 8) and Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40:19–20) in fact go to lengths to mock the perceived divinity of

handmade cultic objects.[37]

From a canonical point of view, such texts take priority and provide the interpretive lens for the

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[32] Cf. Dever, *Did God Have A Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 197–208; R. Hess, "Asherah or Asheratah?" *Or* 65 [1996]: 209–19); Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 84–187; Emerton, "'Yahweh and His Asherah,'" 315–37.

[33] J. Tigay notes a conceptual parallel in rabbinic texts: "According to Tannaitic sources, the altar was addressed on the seventh day of Sukkoth: 'When they departed, what did they say? "Praise to you, o Altar! Praise to you, o Altar!"' (Mishnah Suk. 4:5). According to Rabbi Eliezer b. Jacob, they said 'To Yah and to you, o Altar! To Yah and to you, o Altar!' (Tosefta Suk. 3:1 end)." See Tigay, "A Second Temple Parallel to the Blessing from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *IEJ* 40 (1986): 11.

[34] Consider, for instance, Ps 96:5: כי כל־אלהי העמים אלילים, "For all the gods of the peoples are idols." The rendering "worthless" may better fit the term אלילים, which approximates אלים while still denigrating the gods of the nations. The association with idols likely developed out of its repeated use in reference to divine images, but it is unlikely the author is suggesting all divine beings are just handmade objects to which deity has been falsely attributed.

[35] But this is not entirely consistent. Exod 20:23, for instance, reads, אלהי כסף ואלהי זהב לא תעשו לכם, "Gods of silver and gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves."

[36] היעשה־לו אדם אלהים והמה לא אלהים.

[37] See Dick, "Prophetic Parodies of Making the Cult Image," 1–54; Smith, "The Polemic of Biblical Monotheism," 201–34.

earlier usage, but from a historical-critical point of view, the rhetoric of Deutero-Isaiah and Jeremiah is comparatively late. While some biblical authors are uncomfortable using the term אלהים, no such discomfort is evident in characters like Jacob. Some early texts are suggestive of the very view polemicized in the exilic texts above. In Genesis 33:20 Jacob sets up an altar and gives it the name "El, the God of Israel."[38] Unlike other standing stones set up by Jacob and dedicated to God (Gen 28:16–19; 31:13; 35:14), this altar appears to be given the designations "El" and "God."[39] Does this indicate the altar is somehow perceived as divine, or only that it represents the deity? A clue may be found in Genesis 28:22, where Jacob declares that a stela he has set up "will be the/a house of אלהים." The text avoids the proper noun "Bethel" and seems to suggest that the stone functions as some kind of dwelling place for the deity.[40] Exodus 23:21 provides an interesting analogue to this notion of divine indwelling. In that text God warns the Israelites that they must obey the angel he will send because "my name is in him" (שמי בקרבו). The angel has authority to execute judgment as a result of having YHWH's name "in him." Rather than the deity himself, his authority, or divine agency—conceptualized as his "name"—resides in him. This may reflect the concretization of that agency in YHWH's communicable "name."

Another example, obscured over the years by heavy redaction, is the Ark of the Covenant, originally conceived of as functioning on multiple levels as an idol, or divine image.[41] As one example, treaties and pacts were commonly deposited "before," or "at the feet of," the idols of the ancient Near

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[38] The possibility exists that מזבח represents an alteration of an original מצבה. While there is no textual evidence to support this, the verb נצב occurs with מצבה rather than מזבח, which are "built" (בנה). See van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel*, 258, n. 94.

[39] Compare Exod 17:15 (יהוה נסי, "YHWH is My Refuge/Banner") and Judg 6:24 (יהוה שלום, "YHWH is Peace").

[40] B. Sommer has pointed to the *betyl* (באת אל or βαίτυλος) as evidence of an early Israelite belief in divine inhabitation of stone cultic objects (Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, 28–29).

[41] This discussion draws from Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 170–79.

East in an effort to engage their enforcement.[42] The same phenomenon may be detectable in the earliest witnesses to the ark's function. David Aaron has pointed out that the earliest references of the relationship of the Decalogue—patterned after Neo-Assyrian vassal treaties[43]—to the ark do not appear to have the tablets *placed inside it* (שׂים ב-), as in Deuteronomy 10:2, 5, but *given to it* (נתן אל).[44] Modern translations align the earlier verbiage with the sense of the Deuteronomistic vernacular, as we see with the NRSV below (emphasis is mine).

Exodus 25:16

ונתת אל הארן את העדת אשׁר אתן אליך   You shall *put into* the ark the covenant that I shall give you.

Exodus 25:21

ונתת את הכפרת על הארן מלמעלה   You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark;
ואל הארן תתן את העדת אשׁר אתן אליך   And *in the ark you shall put* the covenant that I shall give you.

Note the grammatical parallelism of these verses: Moses will *give to* (נתן אל) the ark the covenant that God will *give to* (נתן אל) Moses. In light of the subsequent shift in verbiage, it is likely that the sense here is delivery to, or placement before, the ark, rather than a depositing within. It should also be pointed out that there is no indication in 1 Samuel 5 that the ark functioned as a container. The tablets of the covenant are also nowhere detectable. This supports the conclusion that the notion of the ark as a container for Moses' tablets was a secondary interpretation of the object's function that was

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[42] Smith, God in Translation, 56–57.

[43] T. Lewis, "The Identity and Function of El/Baal Berith," *JBL* 115.3 (1996): 404–10.

[44] Aaron states that he was unable to find any occurrences in the MT of the verb נתן occurring with the preposition אל with the sense of the placement of one object inside another (*Biblical Ambiguities*, 172–73), but several such occurrences exist: Gen 39:20; Exod 28:30; Num 4:10; Deut 23:25; etc.

intended to disassociate it from narratives treating it as an image and divine pedestal or throne (Exod 25:22; cf. 1 Kgs 8:6–9).[45]

The ark also exercised divine power, just as the deities' images were believed to. It precedes the Israelites like a military standard as they march forth (Josh 3:3–6) and displays divine power in impeding the waters of the Jordan river (Josh 3:15–17). The Philistines' capture of the ark and placement of it before Dagon in his temple (1 Sam 5:2) clearly manifests their understanding of its function as a divine image. The author plays off the same understanding in portraying Dagon's image as destroyed by the presence of the ark (vv. 3–4). The implication is that the ark functioned as a channel or conduit for YHWH's divinity, which overpowered that of Dagon's image.

A final example of communicable divine agency, and particularly one related to the inscriptions discussed above, is the אשרה. 2 Kings 23:6 refers to the אשרה being brought out of the temple of YHWH to be destroyed. The multiple biblical references to אשרה suggest this object was a stylized wooden pole or tree trunk.[46] Deuteronomy 16:21 commands Israel not to plant "an אשרה, any wooden thing" next to the altar, which also indicates proximity to, and association with, the worship of YHWH. The presence of secondary stele, altars, and incense stands alongside YHWH's own altars, stele, and stands at Arad and Megiddo's room 2081 suggest that a goddess might well have been worshipped alongside YHWH in early Israelite cultic installations.[47] The אשרה in 2 Kings 23:6 is distinguished, however, from

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[45] Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 175–78; C. Broyles, "The Psalms and Cult Symbolism: The Case of the Cherubim-Ark," in *Interpreting the Psalms* (edited by P. Johnson and D. Firth; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005): 139–56.

[46] References to the destruction of the cultic אשרה incorporate words like "uprooted" (Mic 5:13), "cut down" (Exod 34:13), "hewn to pieces" (Deut 7:5), and "burned" (2 Kgs 23:4). See P. McCarter, "Aspects of the Religion of the Israelite Monarchy: Biblical and Epigraphic Data," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (edited by P. Miller, et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 144–46; Dever, *Did God Have A Wife?* 222–32.

[47] See G. Gilmour, "The Archaeology of Religion in the Southern Levant: An Analytical and Comparative Approach" (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 1995), 59–61; Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel*, 223–24, 247–49.

the objects mentioned in v. 4 that were dedicated to Baal, Asherah, and the Host of Heaven, and so the association may not be with the goddess, but with YHWH himself.

Some scholars have suggested that by the eighth century BCE the goddess' divine agency had eclipsed her identity and had been subsumed in YHWH's own identity. In other words, the divine blessings of fertility and childbirth—the goddess' purview—lost identification with Asherah and began to be attributed to YHWH.[48] The divine agency responsible for these blessings was self-propelled and semi-autonomous, but YHWH could claim proprietorship. Evidence for this is found in the *asherah*'s supplemental presence in the inscriptions above (although not explicitly associated with fertility or childbirth). In lines 2 and 3 of the Khirbet el-Qôm inscription YHWH is the originator of generic blessings, but the *asherah* appears to mediate specific types of blessings. Other inscriptions at Kuntillet ʿAjrud mirror this. Lines 7*b*–10 of Pithos 2 uses the singular to emphasize the blessing of YHWH.[49] A plaster inscription from the debris in Kuntillet ʿAjrud's "bench room" repeats the blessing formula, omitting the *asherah* the second time when speaking generically of "favor"[50]:

1. [•••]*ʾrk . ymm . wyšb ʿw*[•••]*ytnw . l*[*y*]*hwh . tymn wlʾšrt*[*h*]
2. *w*]*hyṭb . yhwh . hty*[*mn•••*]

. . .] longevity, and may they be sated [. . .] be granted by [Y]hwh of Teman and by *ʾšrt*[*h and*] may YHWH of (the) Te[man] favor[51] [. . .

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[48] See Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God*, 236–37: "The iconographically important evidence, referring transparently to the goddess by means of a stylized tree, but which even more frequently represents a gender-neutral symbol of numinous power, can best be understood if we interpret the Iron Age IIB *asherah* as a *mediating entity* associated with Yahweh, rather than as a personal, independently active, female deity." Cf. Hadley, *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 80.

[49] Another inscription from the edge of a 200 kg stone bowl found near Pithos 1 mentions only YHWH: *lʿbdyw bn ʿdnh brk hʾ lyhw*, "(Belonging) to ʿObadyaw, the son of ʿAdnah. Blessed be he by Yhw."

[50] While the subjects follow the verb, and "YHWH of (the) Teman" is the last word before the lacuna in the Hebrew, the verb is singular.

[51] "Favor" here renders *hyṭb*, literally "do good."

The *asherah* is thus best understood as a secondary divine agent operating under YHWH's auspices, similar to the messenger of YHWH discussed above. Where they are mentioned, specific kinds of blessings were associated with the *asherah*. One may compare this ideology to the contemporary Roman Catholic practice of appealing to specific patron saints to mediate specific types of blessings. Saint Eurosia, for instance, is the patron saint of bad weather, and is called upon to intercede against it (and specifically against damaging hail and waters).

In light of this excursus, there is little reason to reject as metaphorical the early biblical references to cultic objects as אלהים. The notion of communicable divine agency is detectable in many early texts, whether in association with an angel, a divine image, or even an altar. In this the immediacy of the divine presence was realized without compromising the growing sensitivity to YHWH's visibility. This concept of deity reflects a view of inanimate and non-anthropomorphic objects as potentially divine, albeit subservient. Our understanding of the semantic range of the term should accommodate this.

4.1.3 Deuteronomy

Gods other than YHWH figure prominently in the book of Deuteronomy, primarily in the context of worship, and particularly the vehement prohibition of their worship. That prohibition is more explicit in Deuteronomy than any other book, which reveals some insights into the author's conceptualization of the gods and the modes of their worship. For instance, worship can take place on high mountains, on hills, or under green trees (Deut 12:2). It can include graven images containing gold and silver (Deut 7:25), and according to Deuteronomy 12:31, it even included the sacrifice of male and female children. The same author, however, forbids in v. 30 the investigation of foreign patterns of worship:

> Take care that you are not snared into imitating them, after they have been destroyed before you: do not inquire concerning their gods, saying, "How did these nations worship their gods? I also want to do the same."

This prohibition rests in Deuteronomy on the grounds that the other gods were the purview of other nations, and that YHWH had not given them to Israel (Deut 29:26). Deuteronomy 4:19 highlights this allotment:[52]

> And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that YHWH your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven.

This reflects a view of the gods as objects of worship by virtue of their sovereignty over political entities. This concept was quite fundamental to the ancient Near Eastern worldview and is well represented outside the Hebrew Bible.[53] In the Mesha Inscription, for instance, the Moabite king explains that Israel was allowed to oppress Moab because "Chemosh was angry with his land,"[54] namely Moab. The inscription of Eshmunazar from Sidon refers to Dor and Joppa as the "lands of Dagan."[55] The Yeḥawmilk inscription mentions "the gods of Byblos,"[56] while the Sefire inscription is

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[52] The celestial nature of the gods is also introduced here. While Israelite religion had long had astral characteristics, that aspect of Assyrian religion was here being emphasized and polemicized by the Deuteronomistic Historian as a foreign element. See Cooley, "Astral Religion in Ugarit and Ancient Israel," 281–87; F. Rochberg, "The Heavens and the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia: The View from a Polytheistic Cosmology," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism*, 117–36; Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods in Ancient Mesopotamia," 137–87.

[53] See D. Block, *The Gods of the Nations. Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2000), 21–74.

[54] יאנף כמש בארצה. See K. Jackson and A. Dearman, "The Text of the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab* (edited by A. Dearman; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989), 94; cf. Jackson, "The Language of the Meshaʿ Inscription," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, 107.

[55] *KAI* 14:19.

[56] *KAI* 4:4, 7; "The Inscription of King Yaḥimilk," translated by S. Segert (*COS* 2.29).

presented as a treaty between "the gods of KTK and the gods of Arpad."[57] Esarhaddon's vassal treaty

calls upon the respective gods of Ashur, Ninevah, Calah, Arbela, Kalzi, Harran, Assyria, Babylon,

Borsippa, Nippur, Sumer, and Akkad, in addition to "all the gods of every land" and "the gods of

heaven and earth," to act as witness.[58] The concept of deities associated with regional purviews is

widespread throughout the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East.

In the biblical material, the notion that the gods were prototypically linked with specific nations

or peoples is suggested by the occurrence of phrases like "gods of the nations" (אלהי הגוים, 7x),[59] "gods

of the peoples" (אלֹהי העמים, 6x),[60] and "their gods" (אלהיהם/הן, 20x).[61] Several deities in the Hebrew

Bible are explicitly identified with specific nations. Chemosh is linked with Moab in almost every

occurrence of the name (Num 21:9; 1 Kgs 11:7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 48:7, 13, 46),[62] as is Milcom with

Ammon (1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 49:1, 3),[63] Ashtoreth with Sidon (1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13),[64] Baʿal-

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[57] *KAI* 222 B:5–6; "The Inscriptions of Bar-Gaʾyah and Matiʿel from Sefire," translated by J. A. Fitzmyer (*COS* 2.82).

[58] "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," translated by D. J. Wiseman (*ANET* 534–35).

[59] Deut 29:18; 2 Kgs 18:33; 19:12; Isa 36:18; 37:12; 2 Chr 32:14.

[60] Deut 6:14; 13:18; Judg 2:12; Ps 96:5; 1 Chr 16:26; 2 Chr 25:15.

[61] There are three occurrences of the feminine plural (Exod 34:16 [2x]; Num 25:2) and seventeen occurrences of the masculine plural (Exod 23:33; 34:15 [2x]; Deut 7:16, 25; 12:2, 3, 30 [2x]; Josh 23:7; Judg 3:6; 1 Kgs 11:2; 2 Kgs 19:18; Isa 37:19; Dan 11:8; 1 Chr 10:10; 14:12).

[62] Judg 11:24, with its second person singular pronominal suffices, seems to identify Chemosh as the god of the Ammonites, the antagonist of the chapter (cf. vv. 27–28), but this conflicts with all other references to the national deities of the Moabites and Ammonites and is understood as a misidentification. See H.-P. Müller, "Chemosh כמוש," *DDD*, 187–88; Smith, *God in Translation*, 110–11.

[63] In Jer 49:1, 3; Zeph 1:5, MT vocalizes מַלְכָּם, "their king," but most modern translations render "Milcom," given the explicit association with Ammon in the immediate context. Zeph 1:5 is less explicit, as Ammon is not mentioned until Zeph 2:8, 9 (cf. E. Puech, "Milkom מלכם," *DDD*, 576). In 1 Kgs 11:7, Molech is identified as the "abomination of the Ammonites" (שקץ בני עמון).

[64] The singular עשתרת refers to Astarte, who is linked in multiple inscriptions to Sidon (G. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984], 235; J. W. Betlyon, "The Cult of ʾAšerah/ʾĒlat at Sidon," *JANES* 44.1 [1985]: 53–56). J. M. Hadley notes that these verses are all generic and polemical Deuteronomistic references to Solomon's "going after" other deities. Chronicles lacks such references, which may indicate the Deuteronomist's fabrication of the polemic (Hadley, "The De-Deification of Deities in Deuteronomy," 159–66, esp. 160). Judg 2:13; 10:6 link the plural Ashtaroth (עשתרות) with the "Baalim" (בעלים) and with Syria, distinguishing them from the "gods of Sidon" (cf. 1 Sam 7:4, 5; 12:10; 31:10; cf. usage as a toponym in Josh 9:10; 12:4; 12:12, 31, 1 Chr 6:71). It may be that the plural usage (occurring only in Judges and 1 Samuel) is to be rendered with the generic "goddess." This is the sense in the Akkadian *ilāni u-ištarāti*, and *CAD* lists the singular *ištaru*

Zebub with Ekron (2 Kgs 1:2, 3, 6, 16),[65] Dagan with the Philistines (1 Sam 5:2 [2x], 3 [2x], 4 [3x], 5 [3x], 7; 1 Chr 10:10),[66] Bel/Marduk with Babylon (Jer 50:2; 51:44),[67] and Amon with Thebes (Jer 46:25). We may also point to the identification of YHWH as Israel's god alongside the identification of other gods as belonging to other nations. YHWH is called the "God of Israel" (אלהי ישראל) about 200 times,[68] and the "God of Jerusalem" twice (2 Chr 32:19; Ezra 7:19). Israelites refer to YHWH as "our God" (אלהינו) around 150 times,[69] and when the text is addressed to Israelites, YHWH is called "your God" about the same number of times.[70]

4.1.4 Isaiah[71]

The most striking use of the Hebrew for "deity" in Isaiah is Isaiah 9:5, which states that a forthcoming child would be known as "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God (אל גבור), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This text is most commonly understood among critical scholars as having reference to the

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as a common noun ("goddess") similar to the Hebrew אל ("*ištaru*," *CAD* 7.272–73). This is supported if we understand Baalim to refer generically to foreign deities (see Judg 2:11; 3:7; 8:33; 10:6, 10; 1 Sam 7:4; 12:10; 1 Kgs 18:18; Jer 2:23; 9:14; Hos 2:13, 17; 2 Chr 34:4).

[65] Baʿal-zebub ("Lord of Flies") is widely understood to be a polemical corruption of Baʿal-zebul (Baʿal the Prince), cognate with the Ugaritic *zbl bʿl*, "Prince Baʿlu" (KTU 1.2.I.28, 43; 1.2.IV.8; 1.3.I.3; 1.5.VI.10; Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, 77–81; Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*, 159–61). The original epithet appears to be preserved in the epithet βεεζεβουλ, found in Symmachus' translation of 2 Kgs 1:2, 3, 6, 16, and in Matt 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15, 18–19.

[66] More specifically, Dagan is associated with Ashdod in 1 Sam 5:3, 5, 7. Cf. Rahmouni, *Divine Epithets in the Ugaritic Alphabetic Texts*, 94–97, 180–81; B. Crowell, "The Development of Dagan: A Sketch," *JANER* 1 (2001): 32–83; L. Feliu, *The God Dagan in Bronze Age Syria* (W. Watson, trans.; Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[67] Bel is a title meaning "Lord" that is assumed by Marduk at his enthronement in *Enuma Eliš*. Bel is also mentioned in Isa 46:1 alongside Nebo, although no mention of Babylon is made.

[68] For instance, Gen 33:20; Exod 5:1; Num 16:9; Josh 7:13; Judg 4:6; 1 Sam 1:17; 1 Kgs 1:30; Isa 17:6; Jer 7:3; Ezek 8:4; Zeph 2:9; Mal 2:16; Ps 41:14; Ruth 2:12; Dan 2:18, 19, 37, 44; Ezra 1:3; 5:11, 12; 6:9, 10; 7:12, 21, 23; 1 Chr 4:10.

[69] For instance, Exod 5:3; Deut 1:6; Josh 18:6; Judg 10:10; 1 Sam 7:8; 1 Kgs 8:57; Isa 1:10; Jer 3:22; Mic 4:5; Ps 18:32; Dan 9:9; Ezra 8:17; Neh 4:4; 1 Chr 13:2.

[70] For instance, Gen 43:23; Exod 6:7; Lev 11:44; Num 10:9; Deut 1:10; Josh 1:11; Judg 6:10; 1 Sam 10:19; 2 Kgs 17:39; Isa 40:1; Jer 13:16; Ezek 20:5; Joel 1:13; Zech 16:5; Ps 76:11; Neh 8:9; 1 Chr 22:18.

[71] The Hebrew אלהים occurs eleven times (Isa 21:9; 36:18, 19 (2x), 20; 37:12, 19 (2x); 41:23; 42:17; 45:21). אל occurs ten times (Isa 9:6; 31:3; 43:10, 12; 44:10, 15, 17 (2x); 45:20; 46:6), with all but two occurrences contained in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40–55).

birth of the Israelite king Hezekiah.[72] That an Israelite king could be called a god may be arresting to

some, but it is not unique. Psalm 45:7–8 twice refers vocatively to the king as אלהים, although it

perspectivizes that divinity by referring to the king's own God.[73] There is no evidence of a cult devoted

to the Israelite king, and even in Egyptian and other texts where the language of divinity is even more

explicit, the king was acknowledged as subordinate to, and dependent upon, the gods of the

pantheon.[74] The intended meaning is likely that the king is understood as divine insofar as he acts as a

representative for God on earth. The sense may be related to the notion discussed earlier of a self-

propelled divine agent. Similarly, in Exodus 4:16 and 7:1 Moses is said to be a god to Aaron and the

pharaoh, respectively. While this usage is not prototypical, it highlights the extensiveness of the

semantic field of the Hebrew words for "god."

4.1.5 Ezekiel

The majority of the references to other gods in Ezekiel replace the traditional lexemes with pejorative

terms like גלולים, "dung idols" (Ezek 6:9; 20:16), שקוצים, "detestable things" (7:20; 11:18), and תועבות,

"abominations" (Ezek 7:4, 8, 9; 16:36).[75] In making these replacements, the author refuses to recognize

the legitimacy of the other gods, although he does make an exception in chapter 28. There the Hebrew

אלהים and אל each occur three times, twice in v. 2 and once in v. 9, respectively:

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[72] Some have argued the text refers not to birth, but to an enthronement, as in Ps 2:7. For a helpful discussion, see A. Collins and J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 10–15, 36–42. The conservative Christian messianic reading of the text can only be found through Christian typological exegesis.

[73] "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore, O God, your God has anointed you with joy above your friends."

[74] Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God*, 22–24; N. Wyatt, "Royal Religion in Ancient Judah," in *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 61–81.

[75] J. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 32–42; Middlemas, "Exclusively Yahweh," 309–10, n. 2.

> Mortal, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord YHWH: Because your heart is proud and you have said, "I am a god (אל אני); I sit in the seat of the gods (אלהים), in the heart of the seas," yet you are but a mortal, and no god (ולא־אל), though you compare your mind with the mind of a god (לב אלהים). . . . Will you still say, "I am a god (אלהים אני)," in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a mortal, and no god (ולא־אל), in the hands of those who wound you?

The text reflects the Northwest Semitic belief in the divinity of the king, but at the same time rejects that divinity—at least for the king of Tyre—and contrasts the human category with the divine. The concept of kingship underlies both the human and divine categories, but the author here works to distinguish the two from each other. That distinction is repeated in v. 9's assertion: אתה אדם ולא־אל, "you are a human and not a god." This assertion is framed by accusations of impending death at the hands of foreign invaders (Ezek 27:35–36; 28:7–10), keying the reader to the expectation of immortality for the gods, and using that expectation to delineate between the human and the divine. The imagery of the divine throne situated over the seas centralizes divine kingship over and against human kingship. The author, writing during the exile, emphasizes the sovereignty of God in the absence of the Israelite monarchy.

4.2 The Semantic Base and Domains of Deity

The analysis up to this point provides enough data to propose a semantic base and some recurring domains for the concept of deity in the Hebrew Bible.

4.2.1 The Semantic Base of Deity

As was mentioned in chapter 1, concepts do not exist autonomously, but must be understood in

relation to other concepts. All conceptual expressions invoke underlying concepts of some kind or another. The simple example given earlier was the word *radius*, which cannot be understood without being profiled against the conceptual base of a *circle*. The situation with *deity* is considerably more complicated, as the biblical texts use the word to refer to entities ranging from small handmade objects all the way to the anthropomorphic creator of the heavens and the earth. That usage also spans a period of time from around 1000 BCE to around 150 BCE, with multiple different cultural frameworks—Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Greco-Roman—influencing the conceptualization and literary expression of the concept.

Our base must represent a conceptual context outside of which the notion of "deity" cannot be adequately understood. This is not to say that we are looking for a necessary or sufficient feature of deity, per the Aristotelian approach to categorization; the base represents a wider conceptual context that includes other profiles as well. It would not be inaccurate to say that the *profile* is itself a feature of the *base*, though neither necessary nor sufficient. We therefore seek a concept against which every literary reference to deity must be profiled in order for the appropriate sense to be invoked.

In light of the application of the terms for deity to cult objects and to humans, as well as characteristics that overlap with human ontology (corporeality, sexuality, etc.), it cannot be as dichotomous as the classical notions of spirit being vs. material being, or creator vs. creation.[76] These

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[76] For instance, Heiser suggests the following definition for deity (Heiser, "Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry, or Henotheism?" 30, n. 63): "In briefest terms, an אלהים is a being whose proper 'habitation' was considered the 'spirit world,' and whose primary existence was a disembodied one." The notion of a "disembodied" existence is nowhere promoted in the Hebrew Bible, however. Isa 31:3 is frequently appealed to in defense of such a notion, but v. 1 provides the proper context, describing the flesh/spirit dichotomy as a contrast of vulnerability/ invulnerability, not materiality/immateriality. The Egyptian horses represent Egypt's power, but v. 3 points out that they are still flesh, and thus destructible. "Spirit" was not conceptualized in the ancient Near East as incorporeal and immaterial until the Greco-Roman period (R. Renehan, "On the Greek Origins of the Concepts Incorporeality and Immateriality," *GRBS* 21.2 [1980]: 105–38).

are largely remnants of a Platonic cosmology, and as has been noted by Smith, it is the *function* of deity more than its *nature* that is most often operative within ancient Near Eastern literature.[77] The prototypical Israelite conceptualization of deity is certainly a supernatural anthropomorphic being that resides in the heavens and has influence over the earth, but there are too many exceptions for that dichotomy to be fundamental to an adequate understanding of the concept. The Israelite cosmological model does seem to underlie all conceptualizations of deity, although no clear boundary between the celestial and the terrestrial is necessary. A deity is not necessarily a being that resides in the heavens, although it does exercise an agency that is fundamentally super-terrestrial. Cultic objects and humans are divinized in virtue of some relation to celestial sovereignty.

That concept, sovereignty, is a theme common to all conceptualizations of deity. Deities are worshipped and called upon because of their power over some aspect of the world in which humans live and function. Even extra-biblical myths which address only the goings on in the heavens apart from humanity deal with questions of sovereignty over some function of the heavens or another. For early Israelite authors, gods were gods over nations, natural phenomena, astral bodies, ancestors, knowledge, creation, war, etc., insofar as they control those domains in some way or another. The spheres of divine sovereignty reflect areas of particular human inadequacy or ignorance. As Mark Smith has stated, "Many characteristics of divinity correspond to the great problems of human existence, with their attendant contradictions. . . . Characteristics of deities ultimately relate to human characteristics, actions, capacities and incapacities." Deities often function to bring conceptual order

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[77] Smith, *God in Translation*, 68; cf. M. Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31; Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods," 141.

and control to a chaotic human existence.[78] Smith remarks, however, that "divinity is not simply humanity writ large."[79] Human nature and institutions may provide the template for the conceptualization of the celestial world, but the most influential traditions regarding the divine were those that broke new conceptual ground and violated expectations.

I suggest the conceptual base of biblical notions of "deity" is best represented as a spectrum between the celestial and terrestrial planes of being. While these planes are represented physically in Israelite cosmology (the heavens and the earth), I propose they reflect an UP-DOWN sovereignty/divine agency image-schema. The celestial is "above" the terrestrial, just as deities are "above" humanity. To be high is to be sovereign. To be lower is to be subordinate. Figure 4.1 illustrates this spectrum:
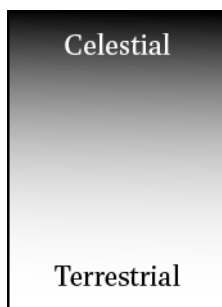
Fig. 4.1.

Deities thus derive their sovereignty from a higher plane of being that maps to the heavenly realms and is conceived of as *above* (physically and in terms of authority) the terrestrial plane. Underworld deities represent an antithetical reflection of this spectrum in places within the Hebrew

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[78] Apart, of course, from the many Near Eastern deities of chaos. Such deities are muted within the biblical conceptualization of the divine.

[79] Smith, Origins of Biblical Monotheism, 103.

Bible, but the fundamental concept of divine agency—ultimately deriving from celestial realms—is the same. They are profiled against the same notion of sovereignty, even if the cosmological regions represented are flipped. That this cosmology is conceptualized as a spectrum allows for the mobility of divine sovereignty—conceptualized as divine agency—within the celestial and terrestrial spheres.[80] Cultic objects and humans holding special offices may be thought of as wielding that agency within the context of specific relationships with celestial entities.[81] We may profile some of the more prominent subjects of this thesis against this base in the following way:
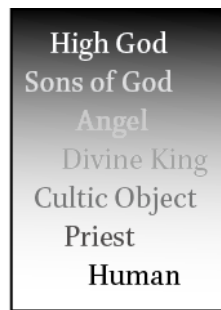

Fig. 4.2

While the profile *human* does not necessarily have this schema as its semantic base, it does successfully profile against it within the context of the divine/human relationship. That such a hierarchy was active within the Israelite conceptualization of the cosmos is evinced by the assertion

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[80] While this model is adequate for the conceptualizations of deity found in the Hebrew Bible, the Christian scriptures present a distinct view. There divinity has been wholly consolidated within the God of Israel and has been separated from the created order. God himself does not (or cannot) personally visit the earth. He can appear from heaven and can send angelic representatives in person and in dreams, but the dichotomizing effects of the Platonic worldview seem to be in full force by the time of the later New Testament authors. Cf. Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World*, 10–14.

[81] For a recent discussion of humanity as the repository of that divine agency in P (rhetorically over and against cultic images), see S. Herring, *Divine Substitution: Humanity as the Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

in Psalm 8:6 that humans were made "a little less than the gods."[82] Those gods were no doubt

themselves considered "less" than YHWH himself.

4.2.2 Semantic Domains of Deity

Against this semantic base we may begin to construct the more frequent and significant semantic

domains that informed the biblical conceptualizations of deity. From the discussion in this and the

previous chapters, a number of semantic domains are identifiable that are associated with deity,

whether prototypically or otherwise. Three will be discussed, respectively representing the gods' (1)

conceptual congruity to YHWH, (2) active marginalization, and (3) demotion to angelic status. We

may structure the presentation of these domains with the following predication: A deity may be . . .

- a full-access strategic agent
- a member of the divine council
- an immortal being
- a patron over a nation
- a provider
- a warrior
- a judge
- a king
- anthropomorphic
- non-anthropomorphic
- a creator
- a savior of a nation
- an entity that exercises divine agency

Some of these domains are activated only within YHWH's conceptualization, as a result of his

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[82] מעט מאלהים. The Septuagint as well as the quotation in Heb 2:7 render παρ᾽ ἀγγέλους for מאלהים.

appropriation in later texts of virtually the entire divine category. In early texts, however, the domains are more evenly spread. For instance, Judges 11:24 attributes the following statement to an Israelite:

> Should you not possess what your god Chemosh gives you to possess? And should we not be the ones to possess everything that YHWH our God has conquered for our benefit?

The cross-cultural functional equivalence of YHWH and Chemosh in this verse is sometimes referred to as "translatability."[83] In short, the deities are profiled against the same conceptual backdrop. The profile here is the patron deity. The primary domains activated in this verse are the notions of a deity as warrior and provider. These would be central to the conceptualization of deity within this verse, but in the background are other domains associated with the broader ancient Near Eastern concept of divine warfare, such as full access to strategic information.[84] National deities, within this conceptualization, also act as saviors, defending the nation from the patron deities of other nations. They may be conceived of as anthropomorphic, or as a storm or a raging bull, depending upon the context and the rhetorical stylings and needs of the author. Here the deities are likely anthropomorphic by default. They are also sources of blessings and are generally considered immortal within this context. (The mortality of the gods relates mostly to cosmogonic battles rather than national warfare.) This semantic matrix may be illustrated as follows, with the darker shades reflecting more prominent domains:[85]

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[83] Smith, *God in Translation*, 110–12.

[84] The deity dictates strategy based on their knowledge of the campaign's future outcomes; cf. 2 Kgs 3:18–19.

[85] I only illustrate the matrix for this first example. The others could be illustrated as well, but the structure would not change much, just the labeling of the domains.
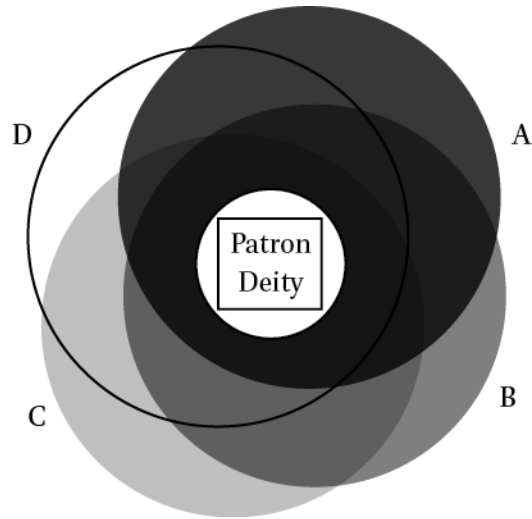
Fig. 4.3: A: Warrior; B: Provider; C: Full Access to Strategic Information; D: Anthropomorphism, Immortality, etc.

This translatability is actively rejected in Psalm 82, which seeks to rearrange the role of the gods in the cosmos.[86] Several domains are again evoked, although there is a marked difference between those against which YHWH and the gods are respectively profiled.

1 God has taken his place in the divine council;[87]
    in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:
2 "How long will you judge unjustly
    and show partiality to the wicked?   *Selah*
3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
    maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
    deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
    they walk around in darkness;
    all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
6 I say, "You are gods,

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[86] Smith, *God in Translation*, 131–39. On this psalm, see above, n. 8.

[87] Literally, עדת־אל, "council of El." Cf. *ʿdt ʾilm* in KTU 1.15.ii.7. LXX Ps 81:1 renders συναγωγῇ θεῶν, "assembly of the gods," which may indicate עדת־אלים in its *Vorlage*.

children of the Most High, all of you;
7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince."
8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for you will inherit all the nations![88]

The setting is the heavenly assembly, or divine council, which evokes that domain and others linked with it (patron deity, full-access to strategic information, etc.). The function of the patron deity as judge is explicitly highlighted. YHWH is also conceived of as presiding over the divine council and acting as its judge.[89] His authority is supreme here, and because the other deities have failed in their responsibilities to uphold the cosmic order in their respective stewardships, they are stripped of a fundamental characteristic of deity: their immortality.[90] Far from depicting a mythological slaying of the deities, the gods are simply condemned to mortality, effectively de-deifying them. This leaves YHWH as the sole possessor of immortality and sole divine patron and judge over all the earth (cf. Ps 83:18). In the context of the exile, this allows YHWH to exercise sovereignty over his people wherever they may be. The other gods are pushed to the conceptual periphery.

The final semantic matrix we will construct draws from the conceptualization of the gods as angels in Dan 10:5–21. That text, dating to the mid-second century BCE,[91] appeals to imagery associated with several semantic domains of deity, but relocates the habitation of the divine beings to

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[88] I depart from NRSV in rendering v. 8's תנחל with the future tense. The sense is obviously that YHWH will take over the stewardships evacuated by the deposed gods (cf. Deut 32:8–9 [4QDeut^j]).

[89] For the possibility that YHWH is here subordinate to El, see Smith, *God in Translation*, 135–36; Machinist, "How Gods Die," 195–203; cf. D. Frankel, "El as the Speaking Voice in Psalm 82:6–8," *JHS* 10 [http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/] (2010).

[90] The contrast in vv. 6–7 between their nature as gods and their impending mortality highlights the fundamental immortality of divinity. The gods are usually understood as the referents in v. 5, but a forthcoming article from Brent Strawn argues for understanding the peoples of the various nations as the unknowing and the lost (Strawn, "The Poetics of Psalm 82: Three Notes (and a Plea for the Poetic)," *RB* [forthcoming 2013]). The deities' full access to strategic information would be rhetorically rejected with the traditional reading, but the shift in pronominal suffices undermines such a reading.

[91] The best analysis of its dating is Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 24–33.

the lowest tier of the Syro-Palestinian pantheon. Multiple biblical traditions are also brought together to inform the vision. The divine beings there are called "princes" (שׂרים), but comparison with contemporary Jewish literature makes clear that Michael and the others are angelic beings.[92]

The messenger who speaks to Daniel is described in v. 6 as having a "face like lightning . . . eyes like flaming torches . . . arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze," evoking the fiery vision of the "living creatures" (חיות) in Ezekiel 1:13–14. Ezekiel's description of YHWH (1:26–27) is alluded to in v. 18's reference to one of the angels as appearing "in human form" (כמראה אדם). The being is anthropomorphic, but the overwhelming glory of the divine being saps Daniel's strength and sends him into a trance, face down on the ground (alluding to the danger understood to be inherent in the theophanic vision; cf. Exod 33:20). His strength comes back and he is enabled to speak after one of the messengers touches his lips, invoked the theophanic vision of Isaiah 6. The patron deity domain is brought to the foreground in vv. 13 and 20–21, which refer to the "princes" of the kingdoms of Persia and Greece, as well as to Michael as "one of the chief princes" (אחד השׂרים הראשׁנים). The primacy of place given to Israel in Deuteronomy 32:8–9 grants Michael a position of authority among the various guardian angels. That the "princes" fight against each other no doubt indicates a Greco-Roman period interpretation of the divine warfare motif that limits the participants to the angelic taxonomy. The divine council domain lies in the background, providing conceptual structure for the divine hierarchy.

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[92] See, for instance, *1 Enoch* 20; 89:55–90:19; *Jub* 10:22–23; Sir 17:17; *Test. Naph* 8–10; 4Q403 1.i:1–29; cf. D. Hannah, "Guardian Angels and Angelic National Patrons in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings*, 418–23.

4.3 Summary

This chapter proposes a semantic base for the generic conceptualization of deity that is based on the Hebrew Bible's various witnesses to the category. It acknowledges that significant synchronic and diachronic differentiation exists between the conceptualizations employed by the various textual units, and so constructs the concluding semantic base not on an aggregation of features, but on underlying conceptual structures that link each iteration of the generic notion of deity not only to each other, but to the cognitive foundations described in Chapter 2. The individual features of each author's representation of deity were shown to differ greatly according to their individual contexts and rhetorical exigencies (which illustrated the possible contours and extent of the category), but tying them all together is the backdrop of deity as an entity exercising a divine agency originating in a superhuman realm. With the establishment of that semantic base, the remainder of the chapter examined the construction of more prototypical semantic domains that gave narrative utility to the entities thought to exercise that divine agency. This thesis' concluding chapter will discuss the significance of this semantic base for future research related to the conceptualization of deity.

Chapter 5
Conclusions

The goal of this thesis has been to explore the breadth and boundaries of the Hebrew Bible's conceptualization of deity within a cognitive framework. The investigation began with the hypothesis that the earliest textual strata would evince a broad and generic conceptualization that would grow more restricted and unique over time as the shapers and purveyors of Israelite and Jewish ideology consolidated their sacred pasts with the exigencies of their presents. This conclusion summarizes and synthesizes the results of the preceding exploration, and then provides possible trajectories for future research.

Following the introduction, Chapter 2 established cognitive foundations for the main features of earliest Israel's view of deity, which served to show the generic nature of early Israel's conceptualization of deity, as well as anchor the analysis to an empirical reference point that is accessible to modern scholars. The discussion showed that notions of God as an anthropomorphic and social full-access strategic agent are near universal cognitive settings that are deeply rooted in the human experience. Two universal image-schemas, the UP-DOWN and the CENTER-PERIPHERY schemas, were also shown to have heavily influenced the metaphorical mapping of the God of Israel within the biblical tradition. More prototypically Near Eastern concepts—God as king, judge, inhabiting the heavens, manifested in the storm, etc.—developed as the lenses of Israelite cultural mores colored developing reflective beliefs. Early Israel's linguistic framing of God's nature and function was also shown to have developed within the context of broader Northwest Semitic philology.

Chapter 3 investigated the conceptualization of YHWH, the God of Israel. Specifically, it examined

the movement away from more broad and generic conceptualizations of deity and toward exclusively Israelite divine imagery. It was argued that the major paradigm shift that catalyzed this movement was the conflation of the divine profiles of YHWH and El, distinct deities in the earliest recoverable literary strata. Scholars suggest this conflation was the result of political maneuvering during the rise of a centralized Israelite state. Whether or not this is the case, the conceptual overlap between the two divine profiles facilitated the conflation and contributed to the success of the resulting composite divine identity, which now had access to a much larger conceptual repertoire to utilize in the process of image crafting. The most prototypical semantic domains associated with YHWH's divine profile remained central throughout: full access to strategic information, anthropomorphism, divine patronage, and divine warfare. As we have seen, various domains and aspects of those domains may be fore- or backgrounded through the author's shaping of the text and the type-scenes they determine to be most useful to their rhetorical goals.

Nationalism would soon become a driving force in the care and maintenance of the resulting divine profile. YHWH's cross-cultural translatability became a casualty of this campaign of reinvention as the state and the priesthood emphasized more and more Israel's insularity and autonomy, and fought to preserve the cultic loyalty of their constituencies.[1] As the scope of this campaign breached the borders of Israel and had to accommodate for worshippers located throughout the Near East, the image of YHWH expanded to assimilate the hegemonies of the national deities of surrounding nations.[2] While the theology of early Israel and Judaism is more accurately labeled monolatrous, the compartmentalization of the divine category and the exaltation of YHWH

[1] §3.3 provides a number of examples of how different authors made use of existing divine imagery and innovated new concepts of God in order to achieve their rhetorical goals.

[2] Psalm 82 represents the literary expression of this hostile takeover.

over the other gods would set the stage for the monotheistic theologies of the Common Era.

While chapters 2 and 3 outlined the rise of the notion of deity and the prototype of that notion within the nation of Israel, chapter 4 sought to grasp the breadth of the category, deductively examining the fringes of the notion of deity. A series of divine features were identified that generally attended the biblical texts' delineation of the divine from the human, with the concept of sovereignty undergirding the category's semantic base. Critical to this chapter was the observation that deity appears to have been communicable in the form of a type of divine agency. In the earlier periods of Israel's history this agency was acknowledged in cultic paraphernalia like altars, stele, and stands, as well as in the human execution of the responsibilities of kingship. This is true of biblical and archaeological material. For instance, the Davidic king is called אלהים in Psalm 45:7–8 and is said to be begotten by God at his accession to the throne in Psalm 2:7. At the same time, the references to YHWH's *asherah* at Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Khirbet el-Qôm provide helpful material witnesses to an approach to deity that is largely obscured or polemicized by the rhetoric of the biblical authors and editors. Within that rhetoric, and particularly in the later periods, the notion of divine agency is removed from cultic media (that might be made widely available) and is concentrated in the angelic exercise of divine power. The purveyors of Israel's cultural memory thus appropriated control over the exercise of that agency; it could no longer be called upon within the privacy of one's home.

The questions raised at the beginning of this thesis may be best encapsulated in a question Victor Hurowitz wrote in the margins of an early manuscript of Mark Smith's *The Early History of God*—a question that Smith himself described as "absolutely central": "what is an *ilu*?"[3] It is a simple question,

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[3] Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 6–8.

but one that has evaded sustained evaluation within the academy. The theories associated with the cognitive sciences show a number of facets may be identified which contribute to an answer. If we focus intensively—that is, on the core of the category—as Prototype Theory suggest our brains prefer to do, then the answer is relative, both diachronically and synchronically. Within the cultures of early Israel and Judaism, YHWH constituted the center of the divine category, but his conceptualization was neither monolithic nor consistent. An extensive focus (on the boundaries of the category) reveals a similar inconsistency, although less tightly monitored. As L. Wittgenstein famously pointed out, there is no boundary for many categories until a need to draw one arises.[4] Early chapters of Genesis betray a concern for the integrity of those boundaries, but those are exceptional examples, and concern for that boundary maintenance remained distantly secondary to the focus on the nature and function of the God of Israel. Who God was remained far more important than who was a god. The prototypical features of YHWH's conceptualization were his anthropomorphism, his kingship and patriarchy, and his power over creation.

Cognitive semantics, and the concepts of semantic bases, domains, and matrices, provide an additional framework for examining the boundaries of the divine category. Chapter 4 assessed the various entities labeled "gods" throughout the biblical texts and proposed a number of semantic domains associated with their activity. It was also suggested that the semantic base of "deity" represented a spectrum running between the celestial and terrestrial realms of existence (and antithetically reflected in the region and denizens of the underworld), mapped against an UP-DOWN sovereignty-based image schema. Within that base, any entity possessing divine agency—an

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[4] "[H]ow is the concept of a game bounded? What still counts as a game and what no longer does? Can you give the boundary? No. You can *draw* one; for none has so far been drawn. (But that never troubled you before when you used the word 'game.')" Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (translated by G. Anscombe; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 33.

authority and power deriving from super-human spheres—could be called a deity, an *ilu*.

This conclusion has significant implications for the study of the development of monotheism in early Judaism and Christianity. Among other things, it demands a fresh evaluation of the meaning of the phrase "one God" in a religious environment that accommodated innumerable divine beings occasionally referred to soberly as "gods." The possession of divine agency by humans also betrays an occasional overlap of the human and divine categories, which provides an attractive conceptual framework for the development within early Judaism and Christianity of concepts of messianism and divinization.[5] Current trends in christological research emphasize the notion of Jesus' shared "divine identity" with YHWH, the God of Israel,[6] but this attempts to force the square peg of later trinitarianism into the round hole of first century Jewish and Christian theology. Christ as "divine agent" has been evaluated by some scholars of early Christianity in recent years,[7] but the insights provided by research in the cognitive sciences have yet to be incorporated into that field.[8]

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[5] On this, see, particularly, Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 216–18.

[6] Most fervently, R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008).

[7] P. Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Interpretation of John* (ed. J. Ashton; London: SPCK, 1986), 67–78; A. E. Harvey, "Christ as Agent," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (ed. L. Hurst and N. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 239–50; J. Collins, "Jewish Monotheism and Christian Theology," in *Aspects of Monotheism: How God is One* (ed. H. Shanks and J. Meinhardt; Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1997), 81–105; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 17–70; J. Dunn, *Did the Early Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (London: SPCK, 2010), 60–90.

[8] Pongratz-Leisten's incorporation of cognitive science into her discussion of deity in Mesopotamia (Pongratz-Leisten, "Divine Agency and Astralization of the Gods," 140–52) is an important recent example of the significance of this research to the question of monotheism in antiquity.

Appendix A:
Glossary

Ascriptive — A term promoted by David H. Aaron in *Biblical Ambiguities*, "ascriptive" refers to a middle ground between the poles of metaphor and literalness where the two categories overlap.

Base — The semantic "base" in cognitive semantics is the conceptual backdrop against which a concept must be profiled in order for an adequate understanding to be produced. For instance, the word *radius* cannot be understood without first knowing what a *circle* is.

Cognitive Exemplar — A prototype, or an ideal conceptual model for a given category. Sometimes compared with the notion of the *Gestalt*.

Cognitive Linguistics — A branch of linguistics related to cognitive psychology that examines language via underlying concepts. Three principles are considered fundamental to this approach: (1) language is not an autonomous linguistic faculty, (2) grammar is conceptualization, and (3) knowledge of language develops from experience with language use.

Cognitive Semantics — A constituent of the cognitive linguistic movement that is based on the same underlying principles and seeks to understand the way semantic meaning is produced and represented.

Conceptualization — The formation or interpretation of concepts using imagery and mental spaces that do not faithfully represent reality, but utilize idealized cognitive models, or generalized mental representations.

Domain — The conceptual field of a semantic expression within which a number of different conceptual profiles can move and operate. This is sometimes distinguished from the "base," which is the conceptual foundation of a profile, but there is significant overlap between the two concepts, and some scholars see the terms as synonyms.

Frame — A concept similar to "matrix," but part of a theory pioneered by Charles J. Fillmore known as frame semantics.

Image-Schema — Conceptual structures that shape and construe semantic content, usually in the interest of conserving cognitive effort. As an example, semantic expressions of power and sovereignty are very commonly construed using the UP-DOWN image-schema. That is, power and sovereignty are up, or "high," while subordination and weakness are down, or "low."

Mapping — The recognition of correspondence between elements of different conceptual spaces. As an example, thinking of measurements of temperature in terms of high and low "maps" temperature against an UP-DOWN image-schema.

Matrix — A configuration or constellation of semantic domains within which precise meaning can be produced through the foregrounding and backgrounding of individual domains and profiles. A common example can be found in George Lakoff's discussion of the "mother" matrix, which may incorporate in a given instantiation any of a number of combinations of the Birth, Genetic, Nurturance, Marital, and Genealogical domains.

Profile — A concept symbolically represented by a lexical term. The concept is understood in relation to a conceptual background, or base, against which it is *profiled*. A simple example is the *radius*, which is understood only insofar as it profiles against the base of a *circle*.

Prototype — A cognitive exemplar or an ideal conceptual model for a given category. Sometimes compared with the notion of the *Gestalt*.

Prototype Theory — A theoretical model of graded categorization developed primarily by Eleanor Rosch within the field of cognitive psychology. According to prototype theory, categories develop around cognitive exemplars, have better and poorer category members, and tend to have fuzzy boundaries.

Appendix B:
Occurrences of the Hebrew Words for "Deity"

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Appendix C:
Hebrew Words for "Deity" Not in Reference to YHWH

אלהים, 228 — **Gen** 3:5; 6:2, 4;[1] 31:30, 32; 35:2, 4; **Exod** 12:12; 20:3, 23 (2x); 23:13, 24, 32, 33; 32:1, 4, 8, 23, 31; 34:15 (2x), 16 (2x), 17; **Num** 25:2 (2x); 33:4; **Deut** 4:28; 5:7; 6:14 (2x); 7:4, 16, 25; 8:19; 10:17; 11:16, 28; 12:2, 3, 30 (2x), 31 (2x); 13:3, 7, 8, 14; 17:3; 18:20; 20:18; 28:14, 36, 64; 29:17, 25 (2x); 31:16, 18, 20; 32:17, 37; **Josh** 22:22 (2x); 23:7, 16; 24:2, 14, 15 (2x), 16, 20, 23; **Judg** 2:3, 12 (2x), 17, 19; 3:6; 5:8; 6:10; 9:9, 13, 27; 10:6 (5x), 13, 14, 16; 16:23 (2x), 24 (2x); 18:24; **1 Sam** 6:5; 7:3; 8:8; 17:43; 26:19; **2 Sam** 7:23; **1 Kgs** 9:6, 9; 11:2, 4, 8, 10, 33 (3x); 12:28; 14:9; 19:2; 20:10, 23 (2x); **2 Kgs** 1:2, 6, 16; 5:17; 17:7; 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 38; 18:33, 34 (2x), 35; 19:12, 18 (2x); 22:17; **Isa** 21:9; 36:18, 19 (2x), 20; 37:12, 19 (2x); 41:23; 42:17; 45:21; **Jer** 1:16; 2:11 (2x), 28 (2x); 5:7, 19; 7:6, 9, 18; 11:10, 12, 13; 13:10; 16:11, 13, 20 (2x); 19:4, 13; 22:9; 25:6; 32:29; 35:15; 43:13; 44:3, 5, 8, 15; 46:25; **Ezek** 28:2 (2x),[2] 9; **Hos** 3:1; 8:6; **Nah** 1:14; **Zeph** 2:11; **Ps** 82:1, 6; 84:8; 86:8; 95:3; 96:4, 5; 97:7, 9; 135:5; 136:2; 138:1; **Job** 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; **Ruth** 1:15; **Dan** 11:8, 37; **Ezra** 1:7; **1 Chr** 5:25; 10:10; 14:12; 16:25, 26; **2 Chr** 2:4; 7:19, 22; 13:8, 9; 25:14 (2x), 15, 20; 28:23 (2x), 25 (2x); 32: 14, 17, 19; 33:15; 34:25.

אל, 31 — **Exod** 15:11; 34:14; **Deut** 32:12, 21; **Isa** 9:6; 31:3; 43:10, 12; 44:10, 15, 17 (2x); 45:20; 46:6; **Ezek** 28:2 (2x), 9; 32:21; **Mic** 7:18; **Mal** 2:11; **Ps** 29:1; 44:21; 58:2; 77:14; 81:10 (2x); 82:1;[3] 89:7; **Job** 41:25; **Dan** 11:36 (2x).

אלוה, 8 — **Isa** 44:8; **Hab** 1:11; **Ps** 18:31; **Dan** 11:37, 38 (2x), 39; **2 Chr** 32:15.

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[1] While the *nomen rectum*, אלהים, does itself refer to YHWH, the referent of the genitive construction as a whole is not YHWH (cf. Ps 29:1; 89:7; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

[2] Following NRSV and others, I interpret both occurrences of אלהים and both occurrences of אל in this verse as indeterminate generic nouns, rather than designations for YHWH (or the Phoenician El).

[3] While עדת אל is likely a frozen formula (*ʿdt ʾilm* is attested at KTU 1.15.ii.7), by this time period the original connotation is unlikely to have had currency. The generic sense of "divine assembly" is the better reading in light of the inverted parallelism:

A	אלהים נצב
B	בעדת אל
B′	בקרב אלהים
A′	ישפט

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