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Feature: Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity in Ancient Israel

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Introduction

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On December 15, 2012, CISMOR invited two guest speakers, Prof. Mark Smith (New York University) and Prof. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith (Union Theological Seminary) and held a public lecture and workshop on the theme "The Concept of Monotheism in the Time of the Hebrew Bible," at the School of Theology, Doshisha University.

The 20th century brought new perspectives to the study of the religion of the Hebrew Bible (=HB) due to new interpretations using new methods, which were introduced to the research of the religions of Ancient Israel. A great part of this development is due to the availability of new texts and artifacts of the ancient cultures that neighbored Ancient Israel. Texts from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Levant (i.e. Syria-Lebanon) that have been deciphered and studied, have allowed scholars to trace the origins and background of some biblical stories concerning historical events, as well as ideas and beliefs expressed in the HB. Further, the intensive archaeological activities in all these regions, and especially the region of Ancient Israel itself, opened new doors to our understanding of the complicated religious picture drawn in the HB texts. One of the central questions in the study of the ancient Israelite religion was the understanding of the origin of "Monotheistic belief" – the belief in one exclusive God, the creator and ruler of the universe, who chose for himself the people of Israel as a nation. The more texts from the Ancient Near East are studied, the more the uniqueness of this belief becomes apparent.

The study of the HB texts shows that a clear change in religious beliefs occurred at the time of kings Hezekiah and Josiah in the 7th century BCE. Different interpretations have been given to this change, one of which was a historical interpretation based on international developments of that time. This topic has occupied much of the research in the past thirty years or so, and several attempts have been made to describe the state of the religious world of Ancient Israel during the first half of the first millennium BCE.

Prof. Mark Smith has been one of the leading scholars during these past thirty years in the quest for understanding the question of the rise of the belief in YHWH. His work has focused on the comparison of YHWH with the other deities of Canaan as they appeared in texts from Ugarit, and his studies have enabled us to see the background of the HB portrayal of YHWH. His studies also led him to search for the origin of the monotheistic definition of YHWH. The

results of his recent studies on which he elaborated in his lectures delivered at our workshop, point to the transitional period of the 7th century and the appearance of Assyrian dominance of the entire Ancient Near East as a crucial turning point for the origin and creation of Israelite Monotheism. Smith indicated the new, shaky social situation of Israelite families that echoed in the new concept of individual responsibility for one's own sins. The concept of individuality was projected into the understanding of the divine as a "single national god responsible in the sphere of divine activity."

Prof. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith brought the archaeological perspective, based on excavations in the land of Israel, into the discussion. She presented evidence of changes occurring during the 7th century BCE by the appearance of the Assyrian army, which brought about the centralization of the cult in the kingdom of Judah. In her paper she presents two aspects of Assyrian influence: one being the impact of the Assyrian war campaign on Judean cities and the total devastation it caused, and the other, by presenting the archaeological findings from the town of Arad, she argues that it resembles the Deuteronomic demand to abolish cult centers outside of Jerusalem i.e. "the place God chose to place his name upon."

In addition to the papers delivered in the lecture and the workshop I have added a paper on our ability to grasp the concept of divinity in the HB taking into consideration the concept of divinity in the Hittite culture. This paper aims at examining the Israelite religion as part of the religious beliefs of its contemporary Ancient Near Eastern neighbors. In this paper I did not try to explain the concept of "Monotheism" but rather wished to point to the existence of one special, mostly personal, deity worshiped separately, but not exclusively.

Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity in Ancient Israel[1]

Mark S. Smith

Abstract

Biblical monotheism remains central in contemporary discussions concerning Israelite religion and identity. This essay discusses scholarly objections about the use of the term; the importance of the seventh-sixth century for the emergence of monotheistic rhetoric and worldview in Israelite texts; and the subsequent shifts in the definition of divinity in Israelite texts.

Keywords: Assyria, divinity, Israel, monotheism, polytheism

I. Introduction

Monotheism, commonly defined as the belief in only one god or goddess, has long been thought to constitute a hallmark of ancient Israelite religion. Roman authors singled out monotheism as one of Judaism's admirable features. In several older scholarly accounts,[2] monotheism in biblical tradition was traced back to Moses, as expressed in the Ten Commandments: "you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3 and Deuteronomy 5:7). For many, if not most, scholars today, this view of early biblical monotheism has been overstated, as monotheism would not acknowledge "other gods" who would be "before" Yahweh (or "besides," in some translations). Exodus 15:11 likewise shows a less than monotheistic understanding of divinity, since the verse takes note of other "gods": "Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?" The older view that monotheism is to be traced back to Moses has been replaced by a reconstruction that situates the emergence of monotheistic discourse in the seventh-sixth centuries, based on the critical density of monotheistic texts attested at this time and later: "there is no other besides Him" (Deuteronomy 4:35); "The Lord is God in heaven above and on earth beneath; there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:39); "There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you" (1 Samuel 2:2, possibly a later gloss interrupting the verse's poetic parallelism); "there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears" (2 Samuel 7:22 = 1 Chronicles 17:20); "you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth… You, O Lord, are God alone" (2 Kings 19:15, 19; cf. Isa 37:16, 20). These and other biblical

passages, particularly in Isaiah 40-55 or "Second Isaiah" (Isaiah 43:10-11, 44:6, 8, 45:5-7, 14, 18, 21, and 46:9), as well as other biblical works (Jeremiah 16:19, 20; Nehemiah 9:6/Psalm 86:10; Psalm 96:5 = 1 Chronicles 16:26), suggest an articulation of a monotheistic worldview in the seventh-sixth century context and later.[3]

The term monotheism is not an ancient term. Although the term "monotheist" is attested earlier in the work of the Cambridge Platonist Ralph Cudworth,[4] the word "monotheism" is considered to be the coinage of Cudworth's friend, another Cambridge Platonist, Henry More (1614-1687), in his 1660 work, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness; or a True and Faithful Representation of the Everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*[5] The term developed in the Enlightenment to provide a comparative grid for mapping religions inside and outside of the European context. This coinage came "at about the time when the terms 'deism' and 'theism' were first introduced into scholarly and popular parlance."[6] The same applies to the modern use of the term, polytheism, although it appears to be older. Apparently coined in antiquity by Philo of Alexandria, polytheism is thought to have entered modern vocabulary first with Jean Bodin in 1580 in French, who used the term in conjunction with atheism.[7] In the seventeenth century, polytheism was, like monotheism, part of the verbiage of philosophy of religion and interreligious polemics. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, monotheism continued to serve in scholarly efforts to classify religions worldwide. Additionally, these forms were assigned relative value or importance. In this approach, monotheism (and particularly Christianity) represented the highest form of religion.

For much of the twentieth century, monotheism continued to constitute a distinctive cornerstone in scholarship of ancient Israelite religion and the Bible. In the 1970s, the discussion shifted, with efforts made to locate biblical monotheism within the wider context of the ancient Near East. On the one hand, ancient Mesopotamian texts that represent other deities as the manifestations of one god or goddess came to be compared with biblical representations of monotheism.[8] On the other hand, social and political developments in the seventh and sixth centuries came to be seen as influential in the development of Israelite monotheism.[9] These developments are important, as they issued not only in a new understanding of Israel's central god but also in the nature of divinity itself. Before presenting these developments in the part III and this redefinition of divinity in part IV, we turn in part II to objections to the application of the term monotheism to Israelite understandings of divinity.

II. Monotheism's Modern Discontents

In recent years, scholars have offered reasons for discarding the term, monotheism. Each of these will be reviewed very briefly.

1. Monotheism as an anachronism

It has been objected that the term is anachronistic and therefore inappropriate to use in discussions of Israelite religion. However, biblical scholars and historians of religion use several anachronistic terms, including Bible, religion, book, and monotheism. In reaction to the criticism of employing the term religion, Jonathan Z. Smith suggests its positive value when used critically:

> 'Religion' is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore it is theirs to define. It is a second-order, generic concept that plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that a concept such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays in anthropology. There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon…it will not do…to argue that the modern sense of the word, as a generic term, bears no relation to its Latin connotations. It is the very distance and difference of 'religion' as a second-order category that gives it its cognitive power.[10]

The biblical field uses several anachronistic terms, both to serve as entry-point into ancient cultures, and to gain a critical sense of the distance and difference between the modern and ancient contexts. Accordingly, anachronism does not constitute a serious objection in itself. Instead, it points up the importance of distinguishing indigenous understandings of the ancients (what anthropologists called the "emic") from modern interpretations of these indigenous understandings (the "etic"). Such a procedure provides a critical basis for probing the ancient cultural and religious contexts that informed such terms in the modern context.

2. Monotheism used to assert religious superiority

It is rightly objected that the term monotheism may encourage a championing of modern religious traditions that understand themselves as monotheistic. In addition, monotheism is part of the modern heritage of western imperialism and colonialism; it served as a polemical term and seems hardly a neutral term suitable for scholarly usage. When scholars use the term, they may become complicit in its polemical purpose inherent in "monotheistic" religious traditions.

From an educational — and ethical — perspective, there is a counter-consideration: avoiding the term may have the opposite effect of what is desirable, namely critical awareness and discussion. The issue is not simply a scholarly one. People outside the scholarly field know this term. Without some acknowledgment of the term, scholars may miss an opportunity to show the critical issues with the term. One might argue that its familiarity outside of academic settings suggests retaining it as part of a larger academic effort to engage society in a critical manner about ancient religion. The term's familiarity as well as its problems arguably provides a teaching moment about the religion of ancient Israel. How the term is handled can serve to

educate people, professionals and non-professionals alike, in seeing the term's methodological difficulties and the critical considerations faced by modern scholarship. Taking cognizance of the term may serve to show the critical issues involved, thereby offering a deeper understanding of the ancient sources bearing on divinity. This is a particular value that scholars should not relinquish too hastily. Indeed, the ancient and modern usages of the word would suggest instead that scholars need to recognize its polemical force in both contexts.

3. The dualistic opposition of monotheism versus polytheism

Many scholars object to the term's dualism as constructed with its counterpart, polytheism. Jonathan Z. Smith regards the two terms as one of "the host of related dualisms, all of which finally reduce to 'ours' and 'them.'"[11] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza would deconstruct the dualistic categories in these terms: "We also have to relinquish the colonialist-theoretical model that constructs the relation between *Monotheism* and *Polytheism* in oppositional dualist terms, valorizing either *Monotheism* as was done in the colonial period or *Polytheism* as is the case in post-modernism."[12] It is true that the terms monotheism and polytheism construct too sharp a contrast in the ancient data. As noted below, there is something "mono" in ancient polytheism and something "poly" within ancient monotheism. Scholars have noted how the divine council and divine family serve as "mono-concepts" with multiple deities. In turn, scholars are giving thought to the problem of the many within a single deity.

Speaking from the opposite end of the theological spectrum as Schüssler Fiorenza, Brevard Childs remarked on the term's flattening of biblical data: "Although the historian of religion has every right to employ the term monotheism to the religion of Israel in contrast to polytheistic religions, the term itself is theologically inert and fails largely to register the basic features of God's self revelation to Israel."[13] Childs is critical of history of religion and sociological reconstructions as reductionist not only on theological grounds, but also with respect to historical and literary issues. For MacDonald,[14] monotheism is an intellectualized or philosophical term of the Enlightenment that does not speak sufficiently to the nature or character of the biblical God. Despite these objections, it may be asked why a single term should be expected to cover the nature or character of any given deity. In short, the past history of the term need not be the meaning that it carries in present or future discussions.

As a related objection, it is claimed that theoretically in antiquity monotheism as a term does not make sense until the term developed in opposition to the term polytheism. It is assumed in the scholarly discussions that the use of these terms mars the ancient evidence. Depending on how the terms are used, there is some truth to this claim. At the same time, it is possible to detect the emergence of monotheistic representations of the Bible with older expressions of Israelite polytheism. Deuteronomy 32 is sharply monotheistic (see "no god" in v. 21; "there is no god beside me," v. 39). Yet this passage contains the older world theology of the seventy gods in vv. 8-9 (especially in the Greek version and one Hebrew version in the Dead Sea

Scrolls). The opening of the book of Job uses an older polytheistic "mono-concept" of the divine council along with an assumed single God over all. In other words, biblical texts sometimes in their expression of monotheism stand between the older, limited polytheism and the new monotheistic worldview. Even Deuteronomy 4:19, much heralded for its seeming acceptance of polytheism or concession to polytheism, seems to be drawing on the older family worldview of the gods of the nations to explain the idolatry around Israel that Israel must avoid.In short, monotheistic texts in the Bible draw on older polytheistic representations of divinity even as they re-situate these within their monotheistic contexts. Overall it seems that the objection of the complexity of monotheism and polytheism is suggestive more of an interesting research agenda rather than a reason to discard the terms.

4. Reductionism of divinity to a matter of form

Discussions of monotheism, especially when it is praised as the cornerstone of both ancient Israelite religion and modern western religion, may reduce the understanding of divinity to a matter of form (what might be regarded as the problem of reducing any phenomenon to an "-ism") without little or no reference to its content (what may be regarded as truth-claims about a deity) or attendant praxis. A similar reduction to form informs the uncritical correlation of monotheism with violence. For the ancient context, there is no ancient correlation of monotheism and violence: both ancient monotheism and polytheism entail violence. In fact, it is notable both monotheism and polytheism both involve the same sort of violence known as *herem*-warfare (or "the ban"). This tendency towards reductionism also is an underlying issue for the longtime comparison of biblical monotheism with the so-called monotheism of the Egyptian king Amenophis IV, better known as Akhenaten. This search was made infamous in modern times, thanks to Sigmund Freud. However, the strongly differing content of the so-called monotheism of Akhenaten and Israelite monotheism makes for a dubious comparison.

Biblical scholars who use the term monotheism today do not wish to restrict the understanding of any particular deity to the form of theism, but include further understandings about the deity as represented in the primary sources. This has been true for a long time. For example, W. F. Albright and Yehezkel Kaufman did not understand the monotheism centered on Yahweh in only general or abstract terms, such as the existence of only one deity.[15] It included other features, such as the deity's lack of mythology, sexuality, birth or death. Despite difficulties incurred by their particular positions, their descriptions show that the use of the term monotheism need not cover all aspects of a deity, but may serve to show a distinctive dimension of that deity's profile.

A focus on the form of divinity may also run the risk of ignoring the context of its production or the practices connected with it. A number of scholars, including Nathaniel B. Levtov and myself,[16] have related the expression of monotheism in Second Isaiah not only to

its polemical context, that the one-deity discourse of Second Isaiah is a polemical rhetoric that stakes a claim against other claims known in the environment of Second Isaiah's audience of Judeans. In addition, monotheism should not be presented and exalted as some sublime idea (as it has served at times in modern religious discourse). Instead, it should be understood in a broader religious and cultural context involving a more complex understanding of reality and a corresponding set of social and religious practices. Monotheism is only one part of the study of ancient Israelite divinity; it provides a threshold into a broader social and political context for Israel's self-understanding with respect to others as represented by a number of biblical texts. Just as importantly, monotheism is part of an inner community discussion that represents reality by reference to others in order to form and shape the identity of the texts' addressees.

5. Defining monotheism

Defining monotheism has been a challenging enterprise, as the quest for definition has often been shaped by additional concerns. It has served as a religious belief, even a "sublime idea," used to distinguish and exalt modern monotheistic traditions. It is clear that it is embedded in biblical texts as part of their rhetoric; it also is a central element in the worldview being represented. Defining monotheism is no less a problem because the ancient evidence may give the appearance of fitting poorly with monotheism as commonly defined. This is an area for exploration, which is addressed in the discussion below, but it is to be noted for now that definitional difficulty in itself does not seem to be a strong reason for discarding a term. This issue is illustrated well by the reflections of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz on the problem of defining the word, culture:

> Everyone knows what cultural anthropology is about: it's about culture. The trouble is that no one is quite sure what culture is. Not only is it an essentially contested concept, like democracy, religion, simplicity, or social justice, it is a multiply defined one, multiply employed, ineradicably imprecise. It is fugitive, unsteady, encyclopedic, and normatively charged, and there are those, especially those for whom only the really real is really real, who think it vacuous altogether, or even dangerous, and would ban from the serious discourse of serious persons. An unlikely idea, it would seem, around which to build a science. Almost as bad as matter.[17]

6. Monotheism as a sort of philosophical argument about divine ontology

It is sometimes thought that monotheism is at its heart a modern philosophical construct, one that should not be retrojected to the biblical context prior to Greek philosophizing. This is a view that depends on what constitutes philosophy. While biblical texts do not approach the question of reality in terms of abstract treatises associated with early western philosophy, biblical texts do narrate and discuss reality; within these texts are embedded either explicit

statements about reality or implicit representations of reality. Within such statements or representations are embedded presuppositions or notions about reality, in other words implicit theory or theories of reality. Whether or not monotheism constitutes or embeds philosophy, it is the task of scholars to understand the worldview of the texts with their operating assumptions and procedures, in other worlds, their theories. Such biblical theorizing entails biblical passages prior to the Greco-Roman philosophical enterprise. It is to be noted as well that the same point applies to polytheistic representations of reality outside of the Bible, not to mention non-biblical discourse focused on a single deity.

7. Biblical monotheism as a mistaken claim

The claim that ancient Israel is monotheistic seems misplaced, as there are other divinities within the religion of ancient Israel. This objection has gained a great deal of traction in recent discussions. The basic issue in this matter is not whether or not Israel's one-god discourse was characteristic of ancient Israel in general, but whether or not it is observable in texts of the seventh-sixth century or later. The issue is in the first instance a textual issue. How it did or did not work itself out in Israel's society remains part of the research agenda. A further objection sometimes arises as a matter of definition involving the word, *ĕlohim* ("gods, divinities") and its related forms. In other words, if other phenomena are labeled with this term, then as the objection goes, there is no monotheism. This approach misses the point about a number of important texts of the sixth century and later – and here I am thinking of Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-55), Ezekiel, and Genesis 1, among others. They are making a basic representation about Yahweh vis-à-vis other deities. For these texts, Yahweh is the only one that is indispensable in the picture of reality, that other forms of divinity are at best relatively minor and only make sense with Yahweh as the god beyond their power, that they only have agency thanks to this one deity permitting them or giving them power. In other words, from the perspective of such authors, if Yahweh is removed from the picture of reality, then the picture of reality does not stand.

8. The ongoing debate about the biblical texts claimed to be monotheistic

Some scholars object to the application of the term to the ancient textual evidence claimed to be monotheistic. In recent decades, it has been popular to pick away at the monotheistic biblical passages noted at the outset of this essay. These, for MacDonald,[18] are to be viewed not as claims as to a single deity in reality, but instead as statements about Israel's singular allegiance to one god. It seems that despite some well-placed criticisms, both points are embedded in these biblical expressions. The overall picture in these texts represents all reality as dependent on this one deity. Furthermore, there are other biblical texts that represent other deities as lifeless (Second Isaiah) or missing from the picture of reality (Genesis 1). These, too, presuppose a monotheistic worldview, or what in the next part of this essay I call "one-deity

discourse."

III. The Context for Monotheistic Discourse in the 7th-6th centuries

This section sketches an historical reconstruction for the emergence of the ancient Israelite monotheistic worldview. Israel emerged between two times of periods of empire. At Israel's beginning was the end of the Late Bronze Age and at the other end was the rise of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians beginning in the eighth century and down through the seventh and sixth centuries. The monotheism of Israel emerged in the context of these later empires, and they will leave their mark on Israel's expressions of monotheism. The period entailed several momentous events for Israel: the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel (the so-called "the lost ten tribes") to the Assyrians in the year 722; the deportation of over two hundred thousand Israelites in 701; and the fall of Jerusalem and Judah to the Babylonians in 586; the exile of the Israelites in Babylonia in the 590s and 580s; the initial return and settlement of exiles under the Persians in 538; and the rebuilding of the temple in 518. These events produced some of the most heart-wrenching poetry of the biblical corpus, such as the book of Lamentations and the book of Jeremiah with its own laments (which is unusual for prophetic books). This was also the time of some of the most inspiring poetry of the Bible, namely Isaiah 40-55 also called Second Isaiah, with its references to Cyrus the king of Persia and the promise of God leading Israel home. This period also produced some of the most sustained reflections on God and reality, from the book of Deuteronomy's reformulation of the Sinai covenant in Exodus-Numbers, to the priestly composer that produced the vision of reality in Genesis 1.

The biblical literature of this period, the seventh and sixth centuries, seems to have been participating in a wider international discussion over the nature of reality and the gods. Biblical authors, such as the priestly authors of Genesis 1 and Ezekiel, may have been familiar with some of the wider currents of thought about reality known during the sixth century BCE. This sense of biblical authors working with knowledge of international literature is perhaps best seen in the highly literate book of Ezekiel, which reflects knowledge of various facets of Phoenician and Egyptian culture. A comparable case has been made for seeing Second Isaiah both as a priest and as a literate figure aware of wider international currents of thought. Broadly speaking, the priestly work of Genesis 1, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, works all rooted in the sixth century, spoke to the same imperial world emanating out of Mesopotamia. All of these great biblical works also contain important creation passages, which probe the nature of God's power and the reality of God for Israel in a time dominated by foreign powers. All of these writings explore God's relationship with Israel, and all of them condemn or leave other deities out of the picture.[19]

With the sixth century and especially the exile to Babylon, Israel stood at a major turn in its sense of the world, and it was not simply because its experience of the world was so

different from the time of David, Solomon and their successors. The world was in the middle of dramatic change, and Israel was drawn into that change. Israel's world at this time became an empire world, something that it had never experienced before. Empires changed the world of the time, and they also influenced thinking about reality. This is not only true for ancient Israel; it was also true for thinking about reality taking place within the empire powers. The one feature that seems common to the larger international discussion is a particular focus on a single deity, or what we may call a one-god or one-goddess vision of reality. In most cases, it is a male "one-deity" discourse, though the discourse sometimes involves a goddess.

Up to the time of the Assyrian expansion in the west in the eighth century, ancient Israel had a national-god, Yahweh, the great warrior-king. This male god was monarch over the other divinities, who were minor compared with Yahweh. This Yahweh seems to have been identified with El by this time (see Exodus 6:2-3). El's consort was Asherah, and perhaps as a result of Yahweh-El merger, it seems that this Yahweh-El had Asherah as his consort. In addition, other deities become regarded either as secondary in status, such as Baal and Astarte, and the Sun and Moon; other deities seem to have dropped out of the picture, such as Anat; and still other deities become servants of Yahweh, such as Resheph and Deber in Habakkuk 3, where these two gods are depicted as part of Yahweh's military force. There are still other deities as known from personal names, such as "Dawn" and "Dusk"; it is hard to know how active these deities were considered to be. As these deities undergo changes in status or acceptance, their language and imagery became associated with Yahweh, or one might say incorporated into the nature or character or Godhead of Yahweh. Even the language associated with Baal and with Anat is incorporated into the imagery of Yahweh, sometimes with considerable modifications, and at other times with only minor differences. The notion of the divine council or assembly of the gods led by the monarch Yahweh-El also remained in use, while divine family language is becoming more of a cliché. The divine council continues to serve as an expression of the chief god's status as the unrivalled monarch. At the same time, Israel recognized that other nations had their main, national gods who ruled over those countries. This "world theology" just before the rise of the Assyrians in the west was centered on the notion of a large royal, divine family consisting of the seventy-gods ruling the seventy countries of the world (this would later become the idea of the seventy guardian angels of the seventy nations, as seen in the book of Daniel); Yahweh was the royal god ruling Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8-9 in the Septuagint and one of the Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts; cf. Psalm 82). As long as there was relative parity between Israel and its neighbors, this "world theology" seemed to work. When there are negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, their gods are recognized sometimes as doing for them what Yahweh the god of Israel does for Israel. For example, in Judges 11:24, Jephthah sends a message to the king of Ammon and asks him: "Did you not inherited what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we inherit everything that Yahweh our god gives us to possess."[20]

The impact that the Assyrian empire had on Israel changed its traditional "world theology."

When the armies of Assyria moved west in the ninth and eighth centuries, there was no longer parity. Assyria conquered and incorporated other lands to Israel's north, until the northern kingdom of Israel itself was swept into the Assyrian empire. Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom, fell to Assyria in the year 722, and about 28,000 Israelites were taken into captivity to Assyria; initially Jerusalem and the small kingdom of Judah survived the Assyrians. At first glance, it would seem that Judah managed fairly well, since it would last another 150 years until the fall of the city of Jerusalem in the year 586.

This reading of history misses a crucial point. In the year 701, the Assyrian army led by Sennacherib swept into Judah and conquered the country, with the exception of the besieged Jerusalem. Matters in Mesopotamia called the Assyrians back home, and it seemed like a miraculous victory for Israel (Isaiah 37:36a, 37). Despite an apparent divine intervention, there were devastating consequences: according to Assyrian records, 201,150 Judeans were taken to Assyria. If exiles means the loss of people and not only land, then the exile of Judah to Assyria began already in the year 701, for the numbers of people lost were about seven times the number taken from the northern kingdom in 722. By occupying the northern kingdom of Israel and turning it into part of an Assyrian province, Assyria remained on the doorstep of Judah, which was required to produce monetary tribute to the Assyrian empire. Thus Assyria loomed very large over the society of Judah from 701, until the fall of Assyria itself ca. 630 or so; the Babylonians and Persians would follow in succession. One of the results of these losses of land and population was the loss of traditional family structure: the loss of family land and family members decimated Israel's traditional family structure, and the seventh-sixth centuries witnesses the individual taking its place alongside the family as an important expression of social identity.

The individual according to changes taking place within Israelite society is to be responsible for her or his own sins and no longer the sins of the parents. According to three great works on this period, children no longer responsible for sins of parents: "In those days, they shall no longer say, 'Parents have eaten sour grapes and children's teeth are set on edge.' But every one shall die for his own sins: whoever eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set of wedge" (Jeremiah 31:29-30; cf. Ezekiel 18 and 33:12-20; Deuteronomy 24:16). As a matter of general correlation, a society that would begin to see individual persons as responsible for their own actions in their sphere of activity could also see a single national god as responsible in the sphere of divine activity, namely the universe as a whole. In short, this was the internal societal context for Israel monotheism for asserting a single god over the entire universe. Monotheism was an assertion of identity in the face of tremendous loss.

There is also an outsider context to consider for Israelite monotheism. The Assyrian empire developed a new world-view that corresponded to its place in the world, and followed by the Babylonian empire, which would assume Assyria's place by the end of the seventh century. In both Assyria and Babylonia, texts emerge showing what is called above a "one-deity

discourse." The best-known example of this worldview is found in the so-called Epic of Creation or *Enuma Elish*. According to *Enuma Elish*, Marduk defeats the personified cosmic waters, Tiamat, and then Marduk receives the acclamation of divine kingship from all the deities and builds the universe out of the dead corpse of Tiamat. In addition, the other deities are given their places in the universe that Marduk has now created. Crucial for this discussion, the final portion of *Enuma Elish* presents the names of the other gods as Marduk's own names. He is the sum of divinity relative to them.

Another text given its modern name based on its first line, "I will praise the lord of wisdom" (*Ludlul bel nemeqi*), shows Marduk's "super-god" status in a different manner. The "one-god" vision is expressed here largely in terms of the divine mind and thought:

> The lord [Marduk] divines the gods' innermost thoughts,
> (but) no [god] understands his behavior.
> Marduk divines the gods' innermost thoughts,
> Which god understands his mind?

The mind of Marduk penetrates into the minds of the other deities, but they cannot grasp even the external manifestation of his behavior. Marduk is far beyond all other deities. Elsewhere, other deities are understood as aspects of Marduk's supreme rule:

> Sin is your divinity, Anu your sovereignty,
> Dagan is your lordship, Enlil your kingship,
> Adad is your might, wise Ea your perception,
> Nabu, the older of the tablet stylus, is your skill,
> Your leadership (in battle) is Ninurta, your might, Nergal,
> Your counsel is Nus[ku], your superb [minister],
> Your judgeship is radiant Shamash, who arouses [no] dispute,
> Your eminent name is Marduk, sage of the gods.

Another text discusses all the deities as functions of Marduk:

Urash (is)	Marduk of planting
Luglalidda (is)	Marduk of the abyss
Ninurta (is)	Marduk of the pickaxe
Nergal (is)	Marduk of battle
Zababa (is)	Marduk of warfare
Enlil (is)	Marduk of lordship and consultations
Nabu (is)	Marduk of accounting

Sin (is)	Marduk who lights up the night
Shamash (is)	Marduk of justice
Adad (is)	Marduk of rain
Tishpak (is)	Marduk of troops
Great Anu (is)	Marduk…
Shuqamuna (is)	Marduk of the container
[ ] (is)	Marduk of everything.

Marduk was not the only deity who could be recast in these terms.

Parts of the bodies of a supreme god, whether it is Marduk or Ishtar or Ninurta, could be identified with other deities. For example, in the case of the warrior-god Ninurta, there is this hymn:

O lord, your face is the sun god, your hair Aya,

Your eyes, O lord, are Enlil and Ninlil.

The pupils of your eyes are Gula and Belet-ili,

The irises of your eyes are the twins, Sin and Shamash,

The lashes of your eyes are the rays of the sun that…

The appearance of your mouth, O lord, is Ishtar of the stars

Anu and Antum are your lips, your command…

Your tongue (?) is Pabilsag of the above…

The roof of your mouth, o lord, is the vault

Of heaven and earth, your divine abode,

Your teeth are the seven gods who lay low the evil ones.

In these cases, this one-deity discourse remained grounded in traditional Mesopotamian polytheism; other deities remain recognized, and the devotion to them in the form of sacrifices and temples continued. In these texts, their representation of their major deities as THE deity corresponded with the place of Assyria and Babylonia in the world.

As this discussion over divinity was taking place in Mesopotamia, a corresponding discussion was taking place in Israel. As the Mesopotamian empires swept up the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah, the world definitively changed for Israel. A vision of a more restricted pantheon, in effect a monotheistic vision emerged in Israel at this time. There is no goddess, and Baal and Asherah are criticized; the sun, moon and the stars are not to be regarded as deities; and the asherah becomes a symbol of blessing from God and God's teaching. In effect, there is only one god, with angelic divinities viewed as only having any reality because they work for the one god; in other words, their being is entirely dependent on the one god. In sum, for Israelite monotheism, the "head god" became

the "Godhead." Where Mesopotamian "one-deity discourse" allowed for the divinity of other deities even as extensions of a super-god, Israelite monotheism excluded the sacrifices and temples of such extensions.

IV. Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity

Israelite monotheism did not just redefine the profile of the older, traditional Yahweh-El. It also redefined divinity. First and foremost, all positive divine power and character resided in this God or Godhead. Whatever could be said positively about divinity in ancient Israel was predicated only of Israel's god. In turn, other divinity is abolished. The older middle levels of divine hierarchy were eliminated: sun, moon and the stars as not divinities. Angels served as divine accompaniment to humans (as opposed to the "personal god" or "household god"), and they are not regarded as divinities. The "seventy" gods became seventy angels. Divine military retinues were also identified as angels (see "angels" Genesis 19:1 regarded as "destroyers" in 19:13). Accordingly, the divine council or assembly was viewed as populated only by angelic "sons of God" (see Job 1-2). In other words, "sons of God," formerly important members of upper divine hierarchy, were demoted to angels, and the divine council became a new vehicle for reflection on divine agency of a single deity (again Job 1-2). Language of divine family became residual. In sum, there was a *total polarity* between the top and bottom of divinity such that the bottom is no longer recognized as divine, with angels as a category between divinity and humanity. Oneness of divinity was located in a single divine figure, with the remainder being angelic figures drawing their reality from this one.

As a corollary, all other divinities apart from Yahweh were defined in utter opposition from Yahweh; in short, they were redefined precisely as "*other* gods." (The roots of this development can be seen already in the separate worship of Yahweh expressed in the Ten Commandments, noted at the outset of this essay.) Stated differently, other deities were regarded as absolutely other from Yahweh in that they were demarcated as not deities, but as illusions or nothing. For Second Isaiah, God and not Marduk is the super-god in the universe. Isaiah 46:1 mentions Marduk (under his title Bel) as nothing other than a lifeless idol that weighs down those who carry it, unlike the living God who bears up the House of Jacob whom this God created (see vv. 3-4).This approach to other gods is consistent with the genericization of the names of some deities (e.g., Astarte as term for fertility of flocks; Resheph as flame and Deber as pestilence). With the denial of "other gods" as not Israelite (see Judges 2:13, 3:7, 10:10, and Hosea 11:2), there emerged claims that older traditions formerly associated with Yahweh did not belong to Yahweh, e. g., denunciation of the asherah and of the "sun, moon and the stars." Similarly, symbols were divorced from other deities: the asherah was no longer a symbol of goddess, but a symbol of Yahweh ("his asherah") and the divine torah (cf. the possible wordplay on the asherah in Proverbs 3:18).

With other gods defined as not gods, the redefinition of divinity had further repercussions. Apart from angels, other former divinities moved from the category of the uncreated to the created order. While being created need not necessarily entail a redefinition of divinity in general,[21] it does seem to be the case in several biblical texts. First, the sun, moon and stars were no longer viewed as lower level divinities but as created (Genesis 1:16 and Psalm 148:2-3, 5). Second, angels were no longer regarded as lower level divinities but as created (Nehemiah 9:6 and Psalm 148:2-5; see also Jubilees 2:1). Third, cosmic waters were no longer divine (much less personified as in Psalm 104:7), but created (Psalm 148:4-5; see also Jubilees 2:2). Fourth, cosmic enemies such as Leviathan are represented as created (Psalm 104:26). The overall result seems to be a *total polarity* between other deities as non-divine individuals or as members of the divine collective *versus* total individuation of divinity in Yahweh and also of notions of divinity in Yahweh.

This survey suggests that monotheism is not an unreasonable label for some Israelite expressions of ancient Near Eastern one-deity discourse. This Israelite subset of ancient Near Eastern one-deity discourse was arguing for a redefinition of divinity via the one divine figure over and against other deities. This was not a wholly new turn, but one building on many older strands. This subset of Israelite discourse in this period differs from what is seen in Mesopotamia, with its continuation of the deities predicated as manifestations or parts of a single deity. In the polemics against other deities that accompany the expressions of monotheism in biblical works, there seems to be a redefinition of both major deities and divinity taking place in tandem in both Israel and Mesopotamia (and perhaps elsewhere as well). In ancient Israel, it occurs with its national god and that one deity only (this is something that could be happening with some of Israel's immediate neighbors, but nothing is known about it). Perhaps as a clarification of older tradition or its implications from a later perspective, this interpretive turn created new possibilities and new problems in understanding divinity. At this time, Yahweh seems to become an individual deity with a depth and difference. A number of literary critics speak of Yahweh becoming a real character in the Bible; this representation of this deity may be tied to the larger literary and religious picture.

With this manner or method of redefinition, the one divinity/the divine appears as the divine paradox of ineffability and good, as known from older traditional divine roles, functions and emotions. When historians of religions look at divinity, they see a three-dimensional structure of the divine world. Jan Assmann speaks in terms of "shapes" (cult images and representations of a deity in the temple cult); "transformations" (cosmic manifestations as sun, moon, stars and the like); and "names" (linguistic representations that include not only proper names, but also titles, pedigrees, genealogies and myths).[22] According to Beate Pongratz-Leisten,[23] Mesopotamian polytheism is focused on "imagery, concepts, roles and functions," which serve to delineate deities and often show overlap between them. These — and other — scholars see a multiplicity of alignments or even fluidity in a number of ancient Near Eastern

contexts with divine names, titles, and posited characteristics shared by various gods and goddesses and evidently moving between gods and goddesses. By this I do not refer simply to deities that display paradox or double-sides in their representation (Ishtar, Anat, Marduk in *Ludlul bel nemeqi*). I also mean the shifting use of titles and features moving across deities. In biblical monotheism, the "fluidity" across deities in divine representation "flows" to a single divinity, and in this sense monotheism reflects a process of differentiation or redefinition of prior norms for divinity.[24] In the Israelite deity, whatever of these features and titles was available in the environment of ancient Israel became dimensions of this deity, even as these may also have been modified.

As a result, the names of deity and all the roles properly identified for divinity in these biblical representations constitute a single reality of a single deity. The result was not simply a concentration of divine names, titles and powers in a single deity. There were also the other remaining divine entities ultimately understood as having reality thanks only to this divine entity. The important corollary of this situation was that the one divine entity had the range of character elsewhere spread across a number of deities; and no less importantly, this deity had the range within the divine self or person. In other words, this deity was not more divine only in encompassing various divine characteristics, but this deity was also represented as more human than before in encompassing the human personalities seen across the range of other deities. The biblical God – and here I consciously am not suggesting that this is entirely the same as the Israelite God – perhaps seemed both more divine and more human compared with earlier versions of this God. If one may speak of a revolution of ancient Israel's deity, it may involve the unity of not only of the deity's roles and functions, but also the deity's personality in the full range of available divine and human roles.

Notes

1) This essay is appearing (with minor differences) in *Companion to Ancient Israel* (ed. Susan Niditch; Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2013). It appears here with permission of Wiley Blackwell.

2) See William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (second edition; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1957); and Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginning to the Babylonian Exile* (Trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg; New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

3) See Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 149-94.

4) See Nathan MacDonald, *Deuteronomy and the Meaning of 'Monotheism'* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 6 n. 4

5) MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 5-58. See also Laurel C. Schneider, *Beyond Monotheism: A*

Theology of Multiplicity (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 19-25.

6) R. W. L. Moberly, "Is Monotheism Bad for You? Some Reflections on God, the Bible, and Life in the Light of Regina Schwartz's *The Curse of Cain*," in *The God of Israel* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 95 n. 4.

7) See Francis Schmidt, "Polytheisms: Degeneration or Progress?" *History and Anthropology* 3 (1987 = *The Inconceivable Polytheism*, ed. Francis Schmidt): 9-60.

8) Smith, *Origins*, 87-88.

9) Smith, *Origins*, 163-66.

10) Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 193-94 and 207-8.

11) Smith, *Relating Religion*, 174.

12) Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 220.

13) Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflections on the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 355.

14) MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 2, 4, 210.

15) Albright, *From the Stone Age*, 271-72; and Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel*, 29.

16) Nathaniel B. Levtov, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008); and Smith, *Origins*, 179-94.

17) Clifford Geertz, *A Life of Learning* (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1999), 9.

18) MacDonald, *Deuteronomy*, 78-85, 209.

19) For the points and data in this section, see Smith, *Origins*; and *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Second edition; The Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans; Dearborn, MI: Dove Booksellers, 2002). Note also Sven Petry, *Die Entgrenzung JHWHs* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

20) For this passage and others in this vein, see Mark S. Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 99-126.

21) This contrasts with the situation where the creation of the gods is not paired with any notion of the gods other than one as non-gods. For Marduk as creator of the other gods, see the bilingual Sumero-Babylonian incantation (CT 13, 35-38), translated by W. G. Lambert, "Mesopotamian Creation Stories," in *Imagining Creation* (ed. Markham J. Geller and Mineke Schipper; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 35-36. For the text, see Claus Ambos, *Mesopotamische Baurituale aus dem 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Dresden: Islet, 2004), 200-7, esp. 202. References courtesy of Saul Olyan.

22) Jan Assmann, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison,

WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

23) Beate Pongratz-Leisten, "When the Gods are Speaking: Toward Defining the Interface between Polytheism and Monotheism," in *Propheten in Mari, Assyrien und Israel* (ed. Matthias Köckert and Martti Nissinen; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 163, 166.

24) Smith, *Early History*, xxii, xxx, xxxvii, 189-90, 195-202; cf. Pongratz-Leisten, "When the Gods Are Speaking," 168.

Questions about Monotheism in Ancient Israel:
Between Archaeology and Texts

Elizabeth Bloch-Smith

Abstract

Archaeologists offer different perspectives and new and multiple types of evidence to the discussion of emerging monotheism in late eighth to sixth century B.C.E. Israel. Two examples exemplify how archaeology clarifies the historical context in which texts were produced and received, and demonstrates the religious practices of the period. The first example considers the effects of the later eighth century Assyrian campaigns on centralization of the cult in Jerusalem and in prophetic exhortations. In the second example, excavation of the royal Judahite fort of Arad situated on the nation's southern border revealed religious worship at a temple in a military outpost including animal sacrifice and the veneration of massebot ("standing stones"). These two archaeological studies contribute to our understanding of emerging monotheism both in practice and as depicted in biblical texts.

Keywords: Sennacherib, Arad, monotheism, archaeology, Bible

Archaeologists offer different perspectives and new and multiple types of evidence to the discussion of emerging monotheism in late eighth to sixth century B.C.E. Israel.[1] Two examples exemplify how archaeology clarifies the historical context in which texts were produced and received, and demonstrates religious practices of the period. The first example considers the effects of the later eighth century Assyrian campaigns on centralization of the cult in Jerusalem and prophetic exhortations. In the second example, excavation of the royal Judahite fort of Arad situated on the nation's southern border revealed religious worship at a temple in a military outpost including animal sacrifice and the veneration of massebot ("standing stones"). These two archaeological studies contribute to our understanding of emerging monotheism both in practice and as depicted in biblical texts.

Assyrian Campaigns and the Centralization of the Israelite Cult

During an approximately thirteen year period in the later eighth century, Assyrian campaigns led by Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, and Sargon II devastated cities and towns

of Israel, Philistia, and Judah. As claimed by Tiglath-Pileser III in his Summary Inscription 13, "[the land of Bit Humria,] all [of whose] cities I leveled [to the ground] in my former campaigns, [...] I plundered its livestock, and I spared only (isolated) Samaria.[2] However, archaeology demonstrates that not all settlements suffered the same fate. The Assyrian army traversed the major highways attacking strategic and administrative sites situated along these roads. Some sites the army utterly devastated while others suffered the destruction of their city gate and nearby walls, occasionally also palaces, and storehouses. Compromising the city's fortification perhaps sufficed for the population to concede defeat, or, it may have marked with humiliation a city that surrendered. Sites to be utilized as administrative centers, such as Megiddo and Samaria, suffered little, if any, destruction. This evidence reveals Assyrian claims of widespread devastation to be an exaggerated boast but also demonstrates the extent of Assyrian destruction and the seemingly miraculous salvation of Jerusalem.[3]

A more detailed look at the evidence begins with the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III. According to biblical and Assyrian texts, in the initial foray into the area in 734 B.C.E., the so-called "Syro-Ephraimite War," Tiglath-Pileser III proceeded along the coast as far south as Gaza, destroying Philistine and Judahite strategic sites along the way (Summary 8).[4] Assyria next subjugated the territory of Samaria and north, "all the cities of Bit-Humria except Samaria" (Annal 18). 2 Kings 15:29 lists towns in Upper Galilee and Assyrian Annals 18 and 24 add towns in Lower Galilee.[5] With the conquered territory reconfigured into Assyrian provinces, Israel was reduced to a rump state centered on Samaria. Partial and complete destruction levels attributed to Tiglath-Pileser III throughout the territory of Israel include along the coast (Acco, Shiqmona, Dor, Tell el-Qudadi, Ashkelon) and through the north (Dan, Hazor, Chinnereth/ Tel Kinerot/Tell el-Oreimeh, Beth-Shean, Tel Rehov, Geshur/ Bethsaida, En Gev, Chinnereth). The Assyrians devastated Hazor but only selectively damaged the sites of Dan, Chinnereth, and Beth Shean. Not every settlement burned or was abandoned. Villages continued through the end of the Iron Age (Tel Par, Rosh Ha'Ayin, Horbat Eli, Nahal Barqai), though in some cases with a reduced, impoverished population (Yoqneam).[6]

Approximately twelve years later, the Assyrian Kings Shalmaneser V and Sargon II laid siege to and conquered Samaria in 722-21 B.C.E. completing the transformation of the independent kingdom of Israel into Assyrian provinces. The Bible (2 Kgs 17:5-6; 18:9-11), the Assyrian Great "Summary" Inscription, and the Nimrud Prism all recount the events.[7] Archaeology demonstrates that the Assyrians destroyed select, prominent, Israelite heartland towns (Dothan, Shechem, Tell el-Far'ah (N)) but spared the capital city of Samaria for use as an administrative center.[8]

In addition to Samaria, Sargon II claims to have vanquished cities as far south as Philistine Gaza, and boastfully refers to himself as "subduer of the land of Judah which is far away."[9] Archaeology attests to no destruction of Philistine towns though Sargon II claims to have conquered cities as far south as Gaza and battled at Raphia as recorded in the "Great 'Summary'

Inscription" and the Annals 53-57, as depicted on palace wall reliefs, and as marked with a memorial stele at Ashdod.[10]

While details vary, both the Assyrian and biblical sources mention Sennacherib's 701 B.C.E. campaign and siege of Jerusalem during the reign of King Hezekiah. The Bible acknowledges that "King Sennacherib of Assyria marched against all the fortified towns of Judah and seized them" (2 Kgs 18:13; Isa 36:1) while Sennacherib boasts "I besieged 46 of his fortified walled cities and surrounding smaller towns, which were without number" and deported over 200,150 persons.[11] Both biblical and Assyrian sources mention a ransom paid to spare Jerusalem, with Hezekiah minimizing the payment (2 Kgs 18:14-16) and Sennacherib elaborating and detailing the range of items and individuals comprising the payment.[12] The salient fact is that numerous fortified towns and cities fell to the Assyrians but Jerusalem emerged unscathed.

Attribution of destruction levels to Sennacherib rests on pottery correlations, *lmlk* stamps, and Sennacherib's iconographic record of the conquest of Lachish. Sennacherib depicted the gruesome conquest of Lachish in 701 B.C.E. on stone carved reliefs lining his Nineveh palace walls. This royal portrayal of the battle enabled the Lachish excavators to date pottery in the destruction level to the very end of the eighth century and then through pottery correlations with other sites to attribute other destructions to Sennacherib as well. Scholars consider the storejar handles stamped with *lmlk*, "belonging to the king," retrieved from the Lachish destruction debris and many other sites in Judah, to be an administrative mechanism initiated by Hezekiah to amass supplies in anticipation of his rebellion against Assyria.[13]

Sennacherib secured lowland, Shephelah, and northern Negev sites at road junctions to encircle the highlands and isolate Jerusalem (Beit Mirsim, Batash, Beth Shemesh, Aitun/'Eton). Excavation and survey throughout the region demonstrate disruption and abandonment but not wide-spread destruction. Though not the case, both Assyria and Judah foster the impression of extensive devastation, for the Assyrians in order to enhance their military prowess and for the Judahites to celebrate the miraculous, divine deliverance of Jerusalem. Sennacherib's campaign, while not as devastating as described, targeted Shephelah forts, which had the effect of isolating Jerusalem, precluding Egyptian military assistance, and disrupting east-west commerce. Comparable to earlier campaigns, some cities were selectively destroyed with only the city gate, nearby buildings, and public buildings targeted while other, like Lachish, were laid waste. Some sites, including fortified towns in the hills north of Jerusalem, continued without disruption.[14] Farmsteads, situated off the major routes, also escaped Assyrian assault. No eighth to seventh century farmstead from Samaria in the north to Hebron in the south evidenced destruction, though the Shephelah suffered wide-spread abandonment. During the protracted sieges and battles, Assyrian soldiers likely availed themselves of food and supplies from farmsteads throughout the region but the rural population survived the military campaigns.[15]

Reviewing the archaeological evidence illustrates the extent and magnitude of Assyrian

devastation, providing a backdrop for late eighth and early seventh century royal policies and prophetic activity. The Assyrians did not utterly ravage the country; they traversed major roads destroying forts and administrative centers. Except to attack the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem and proximate prominent towns, Assyrian armies refrained from entering the highlands. Villages, hamlets and farmsteads were not targeted, though some settlers, especially in the Shephelah, abandoned their homes at Sennacherib's campaign.

What was the import of these devastating campaigns? The combined destructions, loss of independence for the northern kingdom, and seemingly miraculous salvation of Jerusalem provided a major impetus for Yahwistic cultic centralization in Jerusalem. Punishment perpetrated by the Assyrians for northern Israelites' alleged infidelity to Yahweh's covenant justified the cultic reforms. Jerusalem's salvation, along with the destruction of most other cultic and administrative centers, confirmed her status as Yahweh's chosen city with Hezekiah as the divinely-ordained terrestrial ruler. Centralizing the cult with its resources in Jerusalem also facilitated royal provisioning in preparation for a revolt against Assyria. The cumulative Assyrian campaigns culminating in 701 B.C.E. fostered Hezekiah's initiative to centralize the cult in Jerusalem. These devastating campaigns also added urgency to the eighth century prophetic pleas, such as those of Isaiah and Hosea, for Israelites to reform their ways lest Yahweh subject them to Assyria as punishment (Isaiah 8:5-8a; Hosea 9:3). In this example, archaeological evidence vividly illustrates the context for Hezekiah's religious reforms and the prophets pleas for Israelite adherence to the covenant.

The Arad Temple and Massebot ("Standing Stones") in the Yahwistic Cult

The royal fortress at the site of Arad on Judah's southern border incorporated a temple dated by the excavators from the late tenth through the seventh century (see below for further discussion of the dates). [16] A royally sponsored border temple for Yahweh focused on a massebah ("standing stone") raises questions regarding royal centralization of worship in Jerusalem, representations of Yahweh, and the diversity of beliefs and practices in pre-exilic Israel. We begin with the archaeological evidence from Arad and then turn to the broader issue of standing stones in Yahweh's cult. As in the previous example, archaeological evidence provides both the historical context for understanding the biblical text and examples of Israelite cultic features, in this case a temple and massebot.

One entered the temple from the east into a large courtyard (12.0 x 7.5 m) with an auxiliary room along the northern side. Within this courtyard stood an altar fashioned of unhewn stones in mud mortar (2.40 x 2.20 x 1.5 m high). In the vicinity of the altar lay an incense burner, a large lamp, three Judean Pillar Figurine fragments, and a small bronze figurine of a crouching lion, probably a Mesopotamian weight. [17] One crossed the courtyard to enter a narrow broad room (10.5 x 2.9 m) with benches along the western and southern walls. In the center of the

rear wall of this room, along the central axis of the temple, steps led up into a recessed niche (1.80 x 1.10 m). Within the niche stood an arched limestone stele considered a massebah, standing .90 m high, with a flat face, rounded back and sides, and remnants of red paint adhering to one side. Two additional stones, both characteristically shaped but smaller and composed of flint, had been plastered into the niche walls. While all three perhaps functioned as massebot, it is equally plausible that one or two of the flint stones were constructional stones with no cultic significance. Two carved stone incense altars with burnt organic remains on top, measuring .50 m and .30 m high, originally flanked the niche entrance.[18] The two incense altars permit, though in no way prove, the likelihood that two stones stood in the niche.

Archaeologists fail to agree on dates for the temple's construction and demise. The disagreement results from collapse of part of the structure into an underlying water system and problematic pottery assemblages from the temple proper and the strata immediately preceding and succeeding it. While the excavator argued for a two stage decommissioning by Kings Hezekiah and Josiah in accordance with their cultic reforms (2 Kgs 18, 23), other archaeologists proposed either a single decommissioning or destruction in conjunction with the rest of the fort. All that can be argued with conviction is that the temple existed for an indeterminate period beginning perhaps as early as the tenth or ninth century and lasting perhaps as late as the early sixth century.[19] All agree that during the second half of the eighth century a royal shrine functioned with at least one and likely two massebot standing in the niche.

The Arad massebot, erected in the architectural equivalent of the Jerusalem temple holy-of-holies, demonstrate that the Jerusalem kings sponsored a temple where Israelites venerated massebot. Military correspondence found in the fort confirms the identity of the deity manifest in the large massebah as Yahweh, the sole deity invoked in the correspondence ("A blessing to Yahweh for you" (#16), "May Yahweh seek your welfare" (#18), and "I have blessed you to Yahweh" (#21)). Theophoric names with the elements El (Elyashib, Elisha) or Yahu/Yehu (Hananyahu, Ge'alyahu, Azaryahu, Eshyahu, Shemaryahu, Yehukal, Malkiyahu, Yermiyahu, Nehemyahu) also attest to the kingdom's patron deity manifest in the temple niche.[20]

If a second massebah stood in the niche, Yahweh may not have been alone. Based on the two incense stands and four Judean Pillar Figurines found in the temple, and A/asherah's association with Yahweh including in his Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs 23:6), the second, smaller massebah likely stood for A/asherah.

Whatever its precise dates, the Arad temple significantly impacts discussions of Israelite religion. A sanctuary outside of Jerusalem, built and maintained by the royal court, challenges the Deuteronomistic ideal of a centralized cult with a single legitimate site at which to offer sacrifices to Yahweh. Furthermore, the massebah in the focal niche joins the cherubs in Jerusalem and calves in the Dan and Bethel temples (1 Kgs 12: 28-30) as marking Yahweh's presence. Perhaps this massebah functioned like the one invoked in Isaiah's oracle, to represent Yahweh establishing and guarding the southern border of his territory and his people (Isa

19:19-20). While the temple may have been dismantled as part of a religious reform, its very existence as a royally-sponsored temple and site for sacrifices, the fact that it isn't mentioned in the Bible, and the venerated/worshipped massebot challenge the biblical narrative.

Given the difficulties in dating biblical passages, the following understanding of massebot in the Yahwistic cult suggests the evolution of one practice representative of broader developments. From the Middle Bronze Age and into the Iron Age, Israelites and their predecessors and neighbors erected massebot in various contexts east and west of the Jordan River, in shrines or temples (Umayri, Shechem, Bull Site, Hazor, Atarot, Arad), public space such as the city gateway (Dan, Bethsaida), a domestic, outdoor courtyard (Rehov), and a street/path (Lachish).[21] Throughout the region, erecting massebot appears to have greatly diminished by the late eighth century (based on a paltry sample of less than 15 good examples from the twelfth through the eighth century).

Biblical texts mention massebot, both acceptable Yahwistic examples and objectionable stones to other gods, in the Jacob stories (Gen 28:16-18; 31:45, 51-2), Hosea (3:4; 10:1-2), Micah (5:12), Isaiah (19:19-20), Israelite law codes (Exod 23: 24; Deut 12: 2-3; 16: 21-22), and the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kgs 3:2; 18:4; 23:13-14). Sanctioned biblical massebot served multiple functions. As markers of divinity, sanctioned massebot marked divine presence either in a theophany or as an unseen eternal witness — Yahweh, Elohim, and ancestral gods (Gen 28:11-18; 31:44-53; 35:13-15). Massebot also staked divine proprietary claim to land, functioning as a form of divine homestead and boundary stone (Gen 31:52; Isa 19:19-20). A stone also served as a shrine or divine residence, as Jacob proclaimed, "This is none other than the abode of God" (Gen 28:17). In a non-explicitly divine capacity, massebot memorialized the twelve tribes at Sinai (Exod 24:4b) and prominent individuals including Rachel and King David's son Absalom (Gen 35:20; 2 Sam 18:18).

By the second half of the eighth century, the prophets Isaiah and Micah, both from Judah and prophesying during the reign of King Hezekiah, differed in opinion regarding massebot. Isaiah accepted Yahwistic massebot as a divine witness (Isa 19:19-20); Micah opposed them as objects of worship (Mic 5:12). If this Micah passage dates to the later eighth century, then it constituted an early condemnation of Yahwistic massebot — though Yahweh is presumed but not explicitly identified.

The seventh to sixth century Deuteronomistic Historian condemned massebot as stones associated with foreign gods or erected by Israelites in imitation of indigenous rituals (2 Kgs 10: 26-27; 17: 9-11; 23: 13-14). Several factors suggest that the attacks were polemical and the references likely secondary and late. Standing stones occur in association with the fixed phrase "on every lofty hill and under every leafy tree" (1 Kgs 14: 23; 2 Kgs 17: 10) and they figure in Hezekiah and Josiah's cultic reforms but no king, except Rehoboam, explicitly erects them (1 Kgs 14: 23; 2 Kgs 18: 4; 23: 13-14). Their denigration as a practice of the dispossessed nations conveniently ignores Jacob and Moses.

However, even as the Deuteronomistic Historian denounced massebot to foreign gods, select, possibly time-honored Yahwistic stones were sanctioned by referring to them not as a massebah but as a "stone/*'eben.*" Sanctioned stones represented Yahweh and the twelve tribes: Joshua's twelve "stones" at the Jordan River (Josh 4: 4-9), the stone erected at Shechem to witness Yahweh's covenant with the people (Josh 24: 25-27), and King Saul's "stone of help" marking Yahweh's presence at the territorial boundary (1 Sam 7: 12). This evasive maneuver protected revered Yahwistic standing stones by referring to them by another name.

The Arad temple and massebot further our understanding of the evolving practices and beliefs of the eighth through the sixth century Yahwistic cult. Jerusalem royalty sanctioned and sponsored a second temple located on Judah's southern border. Comparable to Jeroboam's temples at Dan and Bethel on Israel's northern and southern borders, the Jerusalem and Arad temples marked Judah's northern and southern borders. The one or two stones in the focal niche, the holy-of-holies counterpart, stood for the patron deity of the kingdom, Yahweh, and perhaps Asherah the goddess or her powers as a subsumed aspect of the god.[22] Among the contemporary prophets, Isaiah similarly sanctioned the custom while Micah railed against it. Even though the Deuteronomistic Historian disparaged the tradition, a new designation applied to select stones rendered them acceptable.

Conclusions

Archaeology, as an independent witness to ancient Israel, enables reconstructing the historical context for the production of Bible texts and in which they are to be understood. The devastating Assyrian campaigns formed the backdrop for Hezekiah's reforms and prophetic oracles. In the Tel Arad example, archaeology supplies material correlates for Israelite features such as massebot and a temple (not mentioned in the Bible) and the actual features and practices to which biblical authors and editors were responding. As the two case studies demonstrate, studying the physical remains together with the literary record provides insight into actual practices of the late eighth through the sixth centuries, the historical circumstances that shaped those actions, and the evolution of Yahwistic cultic practices through the last centuries of the Davidic kingdom.

Notes

1) All dates cited are B.C.E.
2) L. Younger, "Tiglath-pileser III" in W. Hallo ed. *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pg. 292.
3) Further details published in Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "Assyrians Abet Israelite Cultic Reforms: Sennacherib and the Centralization of the Israelite Cult" in J. David Schloen

ed. *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009, pp. 35-44.

4) H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translations and Commentary.* Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994, pp. 176-79.

5) Younger, "Tiglath-pileser III" pp. 286, 288, 291, 292; Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III* pp. 81-83, 201-03.

6) Z. Gal, "Tel Par" *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 15 (1995) 33; H. Hizmi, "Horbat 'Eli" *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 18 (1998) 51-52*, 74-75 (Hebrew); R. Avner-Levy and H. Torge, "Rosh Ha-'Ayin" *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 19 (1999) 40*, 58-59; S. Givon, "Nahal Barqai" *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 15 (1995) 88-90; "Nahal Barqai 1996-1997" *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 110 (1999) *55-56, 73-74 (Hebrew); A. Ben-Tor, "Jokneam" in E. Stern ed. *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993, pg. 807.

7) L. Younger, "Sargon II" in W. Hallo ed. *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 296, 297.

8) R. Tappy, *The Archaeology of Israelite Samaria*. Vol. 2, *The Eighth Century B.C.E.* HSS 50. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001, pp. 222-26, 572-75.

9) Younger, "Sargon II" pp. 296-98.

10) H. Tadmor, "Fragments of an Assyrian Stele of Sargon II" in M. Dothan ed. *Ashdod*, vols. 2-3, *The Second and Third Seasons of Excavations, 1963, 1965, Soundings in 1967, Atiqot* English Series 9-10. Jerusalem: Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums, 1971, pp. 192-97.

11) M. Cogan, "Siege of Jerusalem" in W. Hallo ed. *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 2, *Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pg. 303.

12) Ibid.

13) N. Na'aman, "Sennacherib's Campaign to Judah and the Date of the *LMLK* Stamps" *Vetus Testamentum* 29 (1979) 61-86; http://www.lmlk.com/research/lmlk_corp.htm.

14) A. Mazar, "Three Israelite Sites in the Hills of Judah and Ephraim" *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982) 174-176.

15) Some rural dwellers may have been relocated by the Judahite royal administration (B. Halpern, "Jerusalem and the Lineages in the Seventh Century B.C.E.: Kinship and the Rise of Individual Moral Liability" in B. Halpern and D. Hobson eds. *Law and Ideology in Monarchic Israel*, 11-107. JSOTSupp 124. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1991, pg. 27).

16) Y. Aharoni, "Excavations at Tel Arad: Preliminary Report on the Second Excavation Season, 1963" *Israel Exploration Journal* 17 (1967); Miriam Aharoni, "Preliminary Ceramic Report on Strata 12-11 at Arad Citadel" *Eretz Israel* 15 (1981) 181-204

(Hebrew); Zev Herzog, Miriam Aharoni, Anson Rainey, and Shmuel Moshkovitz, "The Israelite Fortress at Arad" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 254 (1984) 1-34.

17) An additional pillar figurine fragment was found in the small room in the southeast corner of the courtyard. Raz Kletter, *The Judean Pillar Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah.* BAR International Series 636, Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996, pp. 211-12; Herzog, *et al.*, "The Israelite Fortress at Arad" 16, fig. 20.

18) Y. Aharoni, "Excavations at Tel Arad" 247-49; Y. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple" *Biblical Archaeologist* 31 (1968) 20-32.

19) Herzog, *et al.*, "The Israelite Fortress at Arad" 1-34; Y. Yadin, "A Note on the Stratigraphy of Arad" *Israel Exploration Journal* 15 (1965) 180; O. Zimhoni, "The Iron Age Pottery of Tel 'Eton and its Relationship to the Lachish, Tell Beit Mirsim and Arad Assemblages" *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985) 84-86; A. Mazar and E. Netzer, "On the Israelite Fortress at Arad" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 263 (1986) 87-90; D. Ussishkin, "The Date of the Judaean Shrine at Arad" *Israel Exploration Journal* 38 (1988) 149-51; Z. Herzog, "The Stratigraphy of Israelite Arad: A Rejoinder" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 267 (1987) 77-79; Z. Herzog, "The Date of the Temple at Arad: Reassessment of the Stratigraphy and the Implications for the History of Religion in Judah" in A. Mazar ed. *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan.* JSOTSupp 331. Sheffield, 2001, pp. 161-62.

20) D. Pardee, "Arad Ostraca" in W. Hallo ed. *The Context of Scripture III: Archival Documents from the Biblical World.* Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002, pp. 81-85; Y. Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions.* Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981, pp. 30-31, 35-38, 42.

21) See Z. Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001) for discussion of many of these examples.

22) M. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Dearborn, MI: Dove Booksellers, 2002, pp. 47-48.

Concept of the Divine in Hittite Culture and the Hebrew Bible: Expression of the Divine

Ada Taggar-Cohen

Abstract

In contemporary research most scholars refrain from pointing out direct cultural relations between the Hittites of Anatolia, who flourished during the second half of the second millennium BCE, and the Israelite kingdoms, which existed in Canaan in the first half of the first millennium BCE. However, both cultures belonged to the milieu of the Ancient Near East, which witnessed intensive communication between Egypt in the south, Anatolia in the north and Mesopotamia in the east; there is therefore a common ground for their religious concepts and practices to be explored.

This paper will present the Hittite concept of the divine, including gods and goddesses and their cult, and will try to draw some possible correlations with the ancient Israelite cult and beliefs. Some specific characteristics of the Hittite divine entities will be pointed out and an attempt will be made to explain through them some Israelite traditions.

Keywords: Hittite divinity, Ancient Near East, Bible, Ancient Israel, Monotheism

1. Introduction

The Hittites, whose great kingdom expanded from central Anatolia into Northern Syria during the second half of the second millennium BCE, were part of the Ancient Near Eastern cultures, absorbing many cultural phenomena from their neighbors. They themselves have had some influence on their neighbors' practices and cult, especially in North Syria.[1] In contemporary research it is not common to point out direct cultural relations between the Hittites of Anatolia and the Israelite kingdoms, which existed in Canaan in the first half of the first millennium BCE. However, both cultures belonged to the Ancient Near Eastern milieu, which witnessed intensive communication between Egypt in the south, Anatolia in the north and Mesopotamia in the east; there is therefore a common ground for their religious concepts and practices that can be explored.[2] The Hittite concept of divinity has some characteristics that may shed light on biblical concepts of the divine in the period prior to the strictly monotheistic perception found in Second Isaiah. In the following I will present some of the

main characteristics of Hittite divinity, and then explore some of the ancient Israelite material, pointing out some potential correspondences between the two.

2. The Hittite Texts

Some of the Hittite texts, which are written mostly on clay tablets excavated at ancient Hittite sites, contain translated compositions or religious rituals and customs borrowed from other ethnic groups in Anatolia and neighboring countries, including Mesopotamia. In the following I will describe mostly the Hittite concept of divinity as it arises from texts of the Hittite New Kingdom period starting with Šuppiluliuma I and his successors (c.1400 until 1200 BCE). Thus, even if these compositions are borrowed or translated ones, they have already undergone Hittite cultural and religious editing.

The divine world, according to Hittite understanding, was somewhat a replica of the human one, although the gods were stronger than human beings and were eternal. They did not die, however new gods also appeared, and thus the previous ones were called "Old Gods." These gods were part of family-related gods, and they fulfilled their duties as a group in an assembly called in Hittite *tuliya-*.[3]

Divine powers could be manifested according to the Hittites in any form and in any place; this is conveyed in the texts by the use of the Sumerian sign read DINGIR, placed before names of divine entities as well as mountains, springs, stones or parts of temples. Deities were not restricted to the stellar or earthly elements, or to meteorological forces, but also to dead souls and demons.[4] They were in heaven, earth and the netherworld.

The word for a god in Hittite is *šiu-*, an old Indo-European form of the Greek "*theos* = God"; it can also appear as *šiuni-/ šiuniyatar*.[5] It seems that the term *šiuniyatar* is more indicative of the image of the god baring its presence.[6] The word can appear in several declinations indicating divinity as an abstract or in a physical form — a statue or a symbol of a deity. The statues of Hittite gods could be made from wood, stone or metal, ornamented with gems, in a human form or theriomorphically, such as in the form of an animal: bull, bird, deer etc.[7] Statues were made in all sizes from small to the size of a human, or they could be represented and symbolized, for example, in a solar disc.[8] The physical form of the god is termed in Hittite: *ešri-/ eššari* when referring to a human-shaped statue, an image[9]; *šena-* refers to a figurine or statuette, mostly used in ritual magic to transfer curse or illness.[10]

The Hittite gods could choose the form and shape in which they appeared as learned from a ritual text: "He will come and celebrate the goddess. In addition if she (the goddess) prefers a pithos vessel, he will make her stand as a pithos vessel. But if not, he will make her stand as a *ḫuwaši*-stone. Or he will 'make' (worship?) her as a statue."[11] The Hittite texts mention a large number of temples named in Hittite *šiunaš per-* (written also ideographically É.DINGIR*LIM*) meaning "house of the god".

The Hittite texts mention a large number of divine names of the gods and goddesses. The Hittite themselves named this large assembly of gods "the thousand gods." The difficulty is not so much with the large number of the divinities, but rather with the fact that they come from several different religious traditions, between which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish. The distinctions are mostly made on linguistic grounds, but sometimes according to their geographical local. In Hittite texts there is a sense of the concept of the gods as one unit, as it appears in the following greeting formula:

> Say to (my) lord (Pallanna), my dear father, and to my lady, my dear mother: Thus speaks Tarḫunmiya, your son: "May everything be well with (my) lord. May **the Thousand Gods** keep both of you alive! May they hold their hands lovingly around you and protect you. May they keep giving you life, health, vigor, longevity, the god's love, the god's kindness, the joy of spirit. And may the gods keep giving you what you ask from them."[12]

The formula identifies the "Thousand Gods" as a unit of divine force by which good or evil can be afflicted upon a person.

3. The National Characteristic of the Hittite Pantheon

In an intriguing article on Hittite comprehension of the divine world, Itamar Singer studied the definition "The Thousand Gods of Ḫatti," and offered a historical glimpse at Hittite national and religious self-consciousness.[13] As can be learned from the texts, the Hittites worshiped any deity that could have been of benefit to them. They have thus seemed to incorporate gods of other countries as well into their pantheon. Singer termed the Hittite pantheon 'an everlasting growing one.'[14] This pantheon is the official national one, and thus has grown with the expansion of the Hittite empire. However, as it becomes clear from the time of king Šuppiluliuma I onwards, this pantheon had strict limits marked by geographical boundaries of the core land of Ḫatti, at the time the texts were composed.

Hittite texts preserved the concept of the pantheon in lists recording names of deities hierarchically. These lists are known to us mostly from international and inter-state treaties and from prayers. The most important prayer recalling a list of deities is the prayer of Muwatalli II to his personal god, the Storm-god of Lightening- *piḫaššašši*, to which I will come back later.

As Singer asserts in his above-mentioned article, during the period of the Old Hittite Kingdom connections were made with Syrian deities, and the ones from Aleppo were integrated into the cult at Ḫattuša, which was originally based on the ancient Ḫattian local pantheon and the Hittite Indo-European one. The later expansion of the pantheon was a result of the incorporation of the southeastern part of Anatolia and North Syria, which brought the Ḫurrian and Luwian deities to Ḫattuša.[15] The Hittites have been said to approach their gods in

a "syncretistic" way; the most often quoted passage in this respect is from a prayer of the queen Puduḫepa of the 13th century, who equates the highest goddess in the Hittite pantheon, the Sun-goddess of the town Arinna, with the Ḫurrian goddess Ḫebat of northern Syria: "O Sun-goddess of (the town of) Arinna, my lady, you are the queen of all the lands! In the land of Ḫatti you have assumed the name Sun-goddess of Arinna, but in respect to the land that you have made the land of the cedars (i.e. Syria), you have assumed the name Ḫebat."[16]

The Hittite royal family worshiped equally the Ḫurrian and the traditional Hittite pantheon through the late phase of the Hittite empire, although Ḫurrian influence stands out in the existing iconography, especially that of the rock carvings at Yazilikaya.[17] The official lists of the gods in the pantheon are comprised of Sun-gods and Storm-gods, protective gods and goddesses and other gods of fate, health etc. Leading them are the Storm-god of Ḫatti and the Sun-goddess of Arinna, the king and queen of the Hittite gods in parallel to the earthly Hittite king and queen.

One of the most important distinctions in regard to the deities would be their locality; the deities were identified through their local affiliation, the town they resided in and where they would have had their temple, in which other deities might also have been worshiped. In this respect the prayer of Muwatalli II has a very important place (CTH 381). Singer, who re-edited this text,[18] has shown that the list was organized according to well-known cult centers, such as Arinna, Katapa, and Zippalanda, all in close proximity to the capital Ḫattuša. For each locality there is the god of the town with its consort, and mountains and rivers are also mentioned: "Storm God of Zipalanda, Mount Daḫa, male gods, female gods, mountains and rivers of Zipalanda (i, 57-58)"; other gods appear as Storm-god of (the city) Neriqqa, Storm-god of (the city) Šarišša, Storm-God of (the city) Ḫurma, etc. As a result the borders of the core land of Ḫatti at the time of Muwatalli II are listed, and in Singer's words:

> For the author of this list of local deities, the Hittite Assembly of Gods comprises the deities of the central districts of the Hittite kingdom — Ḫatti proper (the Halys bend), the Upper Land, Iššuwa, Kizzuwatna, and the Lower Land.[…] The list extends only as far as dose the Hittite presence. […] As for the south and southeast, the significant presence of Ḫurrian, Mesopotamian, and Syrian gods should in no way be interpreted as an extension of the Hittite Assembly of Gods into these distant territories. These gods were adopted into the various Anatolian cults and throughout the centuries became integral members of these cults.[19]

The list, then, represents the direct correlation of "Hittite Gods" with land; the land of Ḫatti is represented through its gods. All these gods were being worshiped in this land, as indicated in the texts, "in the way of Ḫattuša" (h. *Ḫattušaš iwar*).[20]

The Hittites had a special definition for gods who were not Hittite; they were called "gods

of the enemy land."[21] They were requested to support the Hittite king by deserting their land so that the Hittite king could conquer it. However, they would not become part of the Hittite pantheon. The Hittite group of gods — the Assembly — acting as a unit, represented the "Land of Ḫatti." They were the national representation of Ḫatti, against the foreign gods.[22] The foreign gods' statues were usually brought to Ḫattuša and placed in different temples, mostly as spoils of war.[23] If they were worshiped in the "Hittite way," it was only out of respect. They were important in their own land which they governed, and this was the reason they were requested to help in conquering it. In spite of the large number of gods from foreign lands mentioned in ritual texts, they are not well demonstrated as being worshiped. The fact that the Hittites understood the deity as related to a location, explains the need to worship each deity in its own local temple, and that also explains the constant journeying of the Hittite king, queen and princes to different towns in the core land of Ḫatti during festivals, to celebrate the gods in their towns.[24] One may indeed say that the Hittite religion as it appears in the documents from Ḫatti mostly represented the royal religion and thus was indeed highly national in character.

4. The Nature of Relations between the Divine and the Worshipper

As indicated above much of the Hittite documentation comes from royal archives and thus deals with royal and state religion. In the prayers of the royal family the pleading royals are presented as the direct servants of the gods in a relationship of master-servant, which guided the Hittite understanding of the relationship between humans and gods. Muršili II's prayer indicates that understanding in the following words:

> O gods, my lords! Since ages past you have been inclined towards [men] and [not] abandoned mankind. And mankind [became] populous and your divine servants [were] numerous. They always set up for the gods, [my] lords, offering bread and libation.[25]

A king or queen's appeal and prayer to the gods will always use the words "my Lord/ my Lady"/ "your servant." An explanation of this relationship is found in the instructions to the temple personnel of Ḫattuša as follows:

> Is the soul of a human and the gods any different? No! [Th]is is certainly not so! The soul, however, is one and the same. When a slave is present in front of his master, he is washed, and he is dressed in clean (clothes). […] Is the soul of the gods any different? If at some point the slave angers his master, either they kill him, or they may injure his nose, his eyes, his ears. Or he (=the master) [will sei]ze him, his wife, his children, his brother, his sister, his in-laws, his family, either his male slave or his female slave. They (may) only call him

over, and they (may) do [no]thing to him. But whenever he dies, he will not die alone, his family is together with him (CTH 264, i, 21-33).[26]

These relationships put human beings in a very dependent state of needing to constantly satisfy their masters, the gods and goddesses. And indeed in order to learn whether the gods were satisfied, the Hittites perfected their own oracular system, originally learned from Mesopotamia, through which they inquired about the will of the gods.[27] The system was put to work once there occurred an ailment of a king, a plague or any other natural disasters, or defeat in war. The most important question would have been to discover which god was responsible for the situation, next to try and learn the reason for his or her anger, and then to ask that deity what compensation is required in order to pacify his/her anger. The inquiry could also be on whether the king's stay in Ḫattuša during the winter would be safe,[28] as well as questions regarding the desire of the deity to have certain garments or new servants.[29]

The royal house had to care for the deities, and especially their physical domain on earth, where they had their own houses, furniture, clothing, and other possessions; they had to be cared for through the temples' system and according to the king's instructions. Care of the gods in the hands of the priesthood was the focal interest of all Hittite kings. The constant instructions delivered to the priesthood of specific cult centers directly from the king, is evidence of the importance given to their task.[30]

A god might not have been constantly available, since he might have gone to other countries. To bring the god back, rituals had to be conducted. One text from which we learn of the disappearance of a deity and the terrible consequences is the myth of the Storm-god Telipinu, who became angry and left the world causing all humans, trees and animals to die or suffer. By means of ritual magic the practitioner soothed the rage of the god Telipinu, who returned to take care of his land.[31] It is also evident in invocations to the gods, such as the invocation to the Sun-goddess of Arinna:

> [O, Sun-goddess of Arinna! A mighty and honored goddess are] you! Mursili, [the king, your servant,] sent me saying: "Go and say to my [lady, the Sun-goddess] of Arinna: 'I shall invoke the Sun-goddess of [Arinna], my personal [goddess]. [Whether] you [O honored] Sun-goddess of Arinna, are above in heaven [among the gods], or in the sea, or gone to the mountains […] to roam, or if you have gone to an enemy land [for battle], now let the sweet odor, the cedar and the oil summon you.'" (The goddess is then given offering of cedar and oil odor bread and libation in order to pacify her). [32]

Another facet of the nature of the gods is that the gods are basically part of the universe, even though they have a certain location — land or city — which belongs to them and in which they reside. If the people of their land or city anger them by sinning against them in any way,

the gods will leave their place and support the enemy who is fighting against that city or land. A ritual conducted on behalf of the Hittite king who had laid siege on a rebel city proceeds as follows: a woman practitioner uses cloth of different colors to create seven paths on which food and different symbolic artifacts are placed, and evokes the gods (male and female) thus: "See! Gods of the enemy town […] May those cloths be trails for you. Go away over those (trails)! Turn in favor towards the (Hittite) king, and indeed step away from your land!"[33] After that she makes sacrifices to the gods of the enemy town, and offers them food and beer several times calling on them to eat, and thus become favorable to the Hittite king. The Hittite king appears to be present while the ritual is being performed.[34]

In the Telipinu mythical story the entire world was afflicted, but an individual could also be affected by a single god, especially by what the Hittites regarded as a personal god, called in Hittite: DINGIR*LUM* *ŠA* SAG.DU-*YA* – lit. "the god of my head," or just *šiummi-* "my god."[35] Ḫattušili III thanks his personal goddess *IŠTAR* for bringing him along the path to becoming the king of Ḫatti:

> [A]t the behest of the goddess I took Puduḫepa, the daughter of Pentipšarri, the priest, for my wife: we joined (in matrimony) [and] the goddess gave [u]s the love of husband (and) w[i]fe. We made ourselves sons (and) daughters. Then the goddess, My Lady, appeared to me in a dream (saying): "Become my servant [with] (your) household!" so the goddess' [serv]ant with my household I became. In the house, which we made ourselves, the goddess was there with us and our house thrived: that was the recognition of Ištar, My Lady. […] I became King of Ḫakpiš while my wife became [Queen of] Ḫakpiš.[36]

The personal god intervened in favor of his worshipper. Thus says Puduḫepa, the great queen of Ḫatti, in her letter to Ramsses II, king of Egypt:

> (It was) my personal deity who did it. And when the Sun-goddess of Arinna (together with) the Storm-god, Ḫebat, and Šauška made me queen, she (the personal goddess) joined me with your brother (Ḫattušili), and I produced sons and daughters, so that the people of Ḫatti often speak of my experience? and capacity for nurture?.[37]

Puduḫepa boasts of her fertility and her position as the result of being blessed by her personal goddess. Similarly we find prayers in which the worshipper appeals to his/her patron, personal god for protection and even requesting that they appeal before other god(s) who is(are) responsible for their suffering:

> The god that has become terribly … angry [with] him, turned [aside his eyes] els[ew]here and does not give Kantuzzili ability to act; [whether that] god [is in heaven] or whether [he

is] in the netherworld, you, O Sun-god, will go to him. Go, speak to that deity of mine [and] convey [to him] Kantuzzili's words (CTH 373 i, 1-5).

Above the personal gods were the "family-related gods" appearing in a text for substitution for the king; a list of gods are invoked thus:

The gods of my body, [the god]s of my person (lit. head), the Fate-goddesses, the grandmother goddesses, the gods of the co[untr]y, the gods of the city, the mountains (and) rivers, the gods of father and mo[ther,] male [god]s, female gods, all the upper gods (KUB 17.14 rev.! 14-17). [38]

And also: "May the gods of the father(s) (i.e., the family gods) protect the younger (and) the elder son" (KUB 45.20 ii 10-11).[39] In this regard it is interesting to note that the family of gods is related to a location as well. In a letter to Muršili II, Mašḫuiluwa, the ruler of the land Mira-Kuwaliya, writes about a servant of his:

Say to his Majesty my Lord: This is what your servant Mašḫuiluwa say: "Pazzu has recently become ill, and his ancestral gods have begun to trouble him. I have sent him (back to Ḫatti) to worship his ancestral gods (ŠA A-BI-ŠU DINGIR^MEŠ "the gods of his father"). When he finishes worshiping the deities, may my lord send him back immediately; Let my lord also question him concerning the affairs of the territory." (KUB 18.15)[40]

Since he believed all gods were liable to hurt him, as well as do him good, a Hittite person looked for a way to appease the deity or appeal to it even if he/she were of foreign origin. A divination text mentions that two foreign gods from Aḫḫiyawa and from Lazpa were brought to the Hittite court for consultation over the destiny of an ill Hittite king. The visiting gods received the same ritual as the Hittite gods of Ḫattuša for three days; we can therefore assume that the statues of these gods were brought to Ḫattuša.[41]

One more interesting point regarding the gods is that Hittite kings joined the world of the gods at their death. On earth the Hittite kings and queens were totally human, but when they died they "become a god (šiuš kiš-)"[42] and rituals were presented to them. In this way they became minor gods and belonged to the great family of the gods.

To conclude this general description of the gods we could say that they shared many of the characteristics of human beings, having both the form of a body and a mind, they could eat and drink, and enjoy music. They were even eager to gain possessions.[43] They had a will which needed to be understood. The priests' duty was to supply both their physical needs and learn of their will in order to comply with it.

5. "Dividing a god" and the "New god"

Hittite gods, as seen above, could bear the same name or definition such as Storm-god, but be located in different places. The list of Hittite Storm-gods is probably the most obvious and surprising for its large number of names.[44] How could there be so many manifestations of the same deity?

Among the Hittite documents there is a text of Kizzuwatian origin from the southeastern part of Anatolia, which describes how to build a new temple for the Goddess of the Night and how to set up a statue of that deity there (CTH 481). In this text the Goddess of the Night is being built a new temple in which she is expected to reside, but without having to leave her old temple. Richard Beal, in an article from 2002, discussed the Hittite verb used in this text, *šarra-*, which describes the "establishing" of the deity from the old temple in the new one. Scholars ascertained two meanings to the verb *šarra-*: "to cross a boundary/ to transgress an oath" and "to divide/ split off/ apportion."[45] Beal showed that in using this verb in regard to the "establishment" of gods the meaning of "divide" should be applied.[46]

The text, telling of the building of a new temple for an existing deity that already had a temple, describes various activities, including specific rituals to be carried out, while constructing the new temple. In 2004 Jared Miller published a new edition of that text,[47] and subsequently published a separate article on the concept of "dividing" the deity, which reasserts Beal's conclusions.[48]

The activities in this text include sets of rituals, which "activate" the new temple and the "new deity," through a transformation from the "old temple" and "old deity."[49] The text includes a call to the deity at the old temple in the following words: "Honored deity! Preserve your being, but divide your divinity! Come to that new temple, too, and take yourself the honored place! And when you make your way, then take yourself only that place!,"[50] however, the rituals themselves do not clearly show a "dividing" act in the sense of splitting the divine entity. The main acts which take place are as follows: after the new temple with the new statue and its paraphernalia are set up, the priests at the old temple "attract" (lit. "pull") the deity to some objects called *uliḫi-* (made of wool) which are tied to the statue of the old deity; they also "pull" her from a pit in the ground of the temple. The goddess is assumed to come to its old temple because of the rituals offering her much food. The priests attract the deity to the *uliḫi-,* which are put in a container and transferred to the new temple. From the new temple the priests go to a river in order to "pull" the deity from various locations; they take the *uliḫi-* to a tent, where they perform a sacrifice. They return to the new temple where they set down the statue in the storehouse and bring the *uliḫi-* and tie them to the new statue. They then wash the walls of the new temple with pure water and oil from the old temple, which purifies them. They make a sacrifice and a ritual pit in front of the deity. Then they smear the new statue, the walls and the implements of the new temple with the blood of the sacrifice. The text ends with the words:

"Then the [ne]w deity and the temple become sacred."[51] I believe this means that they are functioning.

These acts must mean that the deity acknowledges a new place for its worship. The manifestation of the deity reaches the new temple, but the divinity itself is "diffusive" — it could be anywhere in the world while at the same time being worshiped in a certain place. As can be seen in the ritual activities, the cultic implements, including the statue of the deity, do not possess the presence of the deity exclusively, but, being pure and sacred, enable its presence when summoned.[52]

The gods were perceived as having a body; they hear and smell, eat and drink, and have other anthropomorphic characteristics, but at the same time they are ungraspable and travel throughout the universe. What can be understood from this text is that the same deity is manifested in different places. It is not a different god or goddess but rather the same deity. Thus a text of Muršili II recalls the creation of a "new goddess" by his grandfather Tudḫaliya: "When my ancestor, Tudḫaliya, the Great King, split off the Deity of the Night from the temple of the Deity of the Night in Kizzuwatna and worshiped her separately in a temple in Šamuḫa" (KUB 32.133 i 2-4). Hittite "new gods" were created by establishing new temples or cult centers for existing deities — the more temples the better.[53] A mention of a "new god" in an oracle text inquiry ascertains that the cause of a plague was "a new god of kingship"; we can thus assume that it was a manifestation of a god who received a new temple and cult image.[54] On the one hand the deity is one and the same only "split off," but once it assumes its functioning state it is a "new god" and thus a separate "independent" deity, which can bring good or evil.

6. Muwatalli II and the idea of Religious Reform

Muwatalli II, son of Muršili II, is known to have made a religious reform that would have seriously affected the Hittite religion of the 13th century BCE, had his successor not stopped it. At a certain moment in his reign Muwatalli took all the gods of Ḫattuša and moved them to a new capital named Tarḫuntašša, where he venerated as the most important god his patron god, the Storm-god of Lightening (*piḫaššašši*).[55] Singer compared this move to a newly established capital to the move of other rulers in the Ancient Near East: "The Late Bronze Age witnessed an unprecedented wave of new foundations throughout the Near East — Dur-Kurigalzu in Babylon, Akhetaten and Piramesse in Egypt, Dur-Untash in Elam, Tarḫuntašša in Ḫatti, Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta in Aššur."[56] It is quite clear that Muwattalli's change of the head of the pantheon caused a negative reaction in the royal family. Taking the entire cult images from Ḫattuša, the most important cult center and the seat of the Storm-god of Ḫatti, could have been regarded as an insult to the gods. The seat of the Hittite king in the Hittite tradition was determined by the Storm-god of Ḫatti as Ḫattuša.[57] According to Muwatalli's prayer, Singer suggested that experiencing difficulties at court, Muwattalli took up his personal god, a

Luwian deity, which was identified with the generic Storm-god of Heaven, to be the main god of the Hittite pantheon. In Muwatalli's prayer his god "occupies a prominent place in the list, replacing the Storm-god of Ḫatti as the consort of Ḫebat and the Sun-goddess of Arinna." The Storm-god of Lightening thus became for Muwatalli the "one god" as suggested in his prayer to this god:[58]

> Storm-god of Lightning, my lord, I was but a human, whereas my father was a priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna and to all the gods. My father begat me, but the Storm-god of Lightning took me from my mother and reared me; he made me priest to the Sun-goddess of Arinna and to all the gods; for the Ḫatti land he appointed me to kingship.
>
> ... In the future it will come to pass that my son, my grandson, kings and queens of Ḫatti, princes and lords, will always show reverence towards the Storm-god of Lightning, my lord, and they will say as follows: 'Truly that god is a mighty hero, a rightly guiding god!' The gods of heaven, the mountains and the rivers will praise you.
>
> ... As for me, Muwatalli, your servant, my soul will rejoice inside me, and I will exalt the Storm-god of Lightning. The temples that I will erect for you and the rites that I will perform for you, Storm-god of Lightning, my lord, you shall rejoice in them.

The Storm-god of Lightening, according to this prayer, however, is the most exalted god among the many gods of the pantheon, and being so exalted, many temples would be built for him all over the land of Ḫatti. Both the Storm-god of Ḫatti and the Storm-god of Lightening are Storm-gods, but for their worshippers they were different deities. Like the "new Goddess of the Night," who was retrieved from the previous "old deity," but is still a different divine entity, such as the "*IŠTAR* of Šamuḫa" and the above-mentioned "new god of kingship." They are not the same deities as the older ones. It is as if they were born or created from the previous generations of gods. Muwatalli, for sure, would worship his patron god *piḫaššašši* more devotedly than the other gods.

7. Biblical Israelite Deities and YHWH

The last three decades have witnessed an improvement in our understanding of the Israelite concept of the divine in light of the Ancient Near East religions and especially from North Semitic material, including Ugaritic texts.[59] The Israelite religion was in fact polytheistic in its origin, and flourished as such until the destruction of the first temple. Biblical texts, as well as inscriptions from the regions of Israel and Judah, demonstrate the acknowledgment and the worship of other gods beside YHWH. There have been many publications on this topic, which cannot be summarized here in their entirety. My only aim here is to see in what way the Hittite religion as portrayed above, may shed light on some of the expressions encountered in

the Israelite religion. In the following overview only a few issues are addressed.

7-1. YHWH in Regard to Geographical Definition

An important characteristic of YHWH in the Pentateuch is that this god is the ruler of the land of Canaan, to where he leads his people. He is a territorial god as well as a continuation of an ancient family-god (or gods), identifying himself in Exodus as "Ehyeh-asher-Ehye" and "YHWH the god of your Fathers" (Ex. 3:14-15). His rule over Canaan enables him to decide who will inherit that land (Gen. 15:18). In this capacity he is identified as the one who sets boundaries (Deut. 32:8). It is through war that it becomes clear which god gives which land to which ruler, as in the story of Jephtah in Jud. 11:24 "Do you not hold what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So we will hold on to everything that YHWH our God has given us to possess." This idea is clearly expressed in the Hittite ritual mentioned above, asking the gods of the enemy city to allow the Hittite king to conquer their land. According to Hittite royal ideology the Srorm-god of Hatti gave the land and all that is on it to the king, as the text IBoT 30.1 declares: "May the Labarna-king be dear to the gods! The land (is) only of the Storm-god, and the Heaven and Earth troops (are) only of the Storm-god. He made the Labarna, the king, an administrator. To him he gave Ḫattuša and all the lands. Let the Labarna govern by hand (i.e. personally) the entire land. Whoever intrudes into the vicinity of the body of the Labarna [king], may the Storm-god destroy him!"[60]

Similar ideology for the relations between YHWH and the biblical king regarding the land is in Ps. 72:8: "Let him rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth"; and in Ps. 2:6: "But I have installed My king on Zion, My holy mountain!"; and Ps. 2:8: "Ask it of me, and I will make the nations your domain; your estate, the limits of the earth." The biblical king is in fact designated as YHWH's son (Ps. 2:7).[61]

YHWH, though, described in the biblical text mostly from the Judean Kingdom religious point of view, has become clearly identified with one capital — Zion or Jerusalem.[62] King David transferred the capital to Jerusalem, Zion, and left behind his ancestral cult center in Hebron. He adopted the god YHWH as his patron god.

From the biblical texts we learn that besides Jerusalem there were other cult centers,[63] but it is even more clearly apparent from the inscriptions found in the land of Israel during the last century. The inscriptions show cultic centers with a manifestation of a sub-regional YHWH. The inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud show the divine manifestation of YHWH of Shomron (Samaria), the northern Israelite capital, as well as the regional YHWH of Teman, representing the southern region of the land of Israel. As Jeremy Hutton concludes: "Far from providing evidence for mere localized reflections of a single, unified Yahweh, the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions more likely depict the fragmented, fluid divine self of the early 8th cent. BCE, appearing in small scale, geographically constrained manifestations."[64] Hutton suggested that while the regional deity at Kuntillet 'Ajrud was YHWH of Teman, one could have also

worshiped other manifestations of YHWH at the same place.[65)] This site, which dates to the first half of the 8th century BCE, was under the rule of the Israelite king, probably Jeroboam II. Thus, being an Israelite site, it is supposed to reveal the Israelite religious concept of the divine world. These inscriptions also reflect the existence of a female divine entity, Asherat(a)/ Ashera, as also found in another inscription from Judah at the site of Khirbet el-Qom. But this subject requires a separate discussion.[66)]

Aside from these inscriptions there is another one found at Khirbet Beit Lei which reads according to Nave as follows: "YHWH is God of all the Land. The mountains of Judah belong to the God of Jerusalem."[67)] The land that is the possession of YHWH is clearly Judah, and the god is the "God of Jerusalem." This clear definition is to be found in Chr. 32:19: "And they spoke of the **god of Jerusalem** as though he was like the gods of other peoples on the earth, made by human hands."[68)]

The evidence for a number of manifestations of YHWH is small but it exists. Benjamin Sommer recently wrote an interesting book presenting the topic he named "Bodies of God," while in essence he is speaking of the "fluidity" characteristic of YHWH.[69)] In his introduction he determines that the biblical God had a body and was perceived anthropomorphically in some of the texts of the Hebrew Bible. Sommer then examines the nature of the North-Semitic and Mesopotamian gods and comes to the conclusion that each deity could be perceived as "fluid" and multiple: "A single deity could exist simultaneously in several bodies. Further, a deity could have a fragmented or ill-defined self […] Somehow, it was possible for various local and even heavenly manifestations of a single god to be effectively identical with each other and also distinct from each other" (p. 12, 14). In Chapter Two of his book he deals with the terminology "fluidity" of the deity in Israel where he uses the Kuntillet ʿAjrud inscriptions as evidence (p. 38). Sommer then determines that a "fluid" YHWH exists in the J and E (sources) of the Hebrew Bible texts, but he also concludes that the biblical texts show two conflicting traditions: one that accepted the "fluidity" of the divine (JE), but its account was veiled by the second tradition, that of the Deuteronomic (D) and Priestly (P) texts, which emphasized the stability of the temple with the one deity and its sacredness. This god is permanently dwelling in the temple.[70)] Sommer's term "fluidity" can also be applied to the Hittite concept of the divine.

Following Sommer, Hutton suggested[71)] that "while both manifestations share the name Yahweh — and thus, in Sommer's locution, 'are… the same deity' — they also seem to have led separate lives in the experience of worshippers. […] Their existence at Kuntillet ʿAjrud was not considered self-contradictory, but rather must be thought of as 'fragmented,' a case of Yahweh's presence 'manifesting [itself] as separate beings in separate places.'"[72)] Hutton following Sommer then suggests seeing the "ambiguity of Deuteronomy's pronouncement" in Duet. 6:4 "Yahweh our god is One Yhweh" (his translation). Hutton concludes: "The deliberate use of an atypical syntactic construction in Duet 6:4 — i.e., the enigmatic use of a proper name as a count noun, …may have been designed precisely in order to draw attention to the impropriety, both

syntactic and theological, of differentiating between local manifestations of Yhweh."[73]

In light of the Hittite texts in speaking of the "dividing the deity" in the sense of splitting up its presence into many temples located in different places in the land, and thus gaining a new name ("deity of such and such place"), we may indeed interpret the pronouncement in Deut. 6:4 as an objection to the dividing of YHWH into various local manifestations.[74]

The early Israelites saw YHWH as a divine entity among other gods, and when worshiping other gods in Samaria and Judah during that period, they did so with images and symbols, being part of the West Semitic religious world. The origin of YHWH is not totally clear, but it seems safe to say that King David made YHWH the head of his royal cult. Cult rituals for YHWH were held in Jerusalem, and at the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam brought back a different procedure for the worship of YHWH in order to differ from the royal cult of Jerusalem. He thus facilitated the cult of YHWH of Samaria, although the biblical text still speaks of his renovation of the cult centers of Beit-El and Dan (1Kings 12). Samaria was to become a royal seat only from the time of King Omri, about half a century later (1Kings 16:24).

7-2. The Construction of God's Ark and other Paraphernalia for the Tabernacle

The Hittite text on establishing a new temple for the Goddess of The Night prescribes the building of the structure of the temple and the creation of the statue of the goddess. The text starts with the description of the creation of the deity's image and continues with the other paraphernalia. Detailed instructions on how to make the new temple suggest some similarities with the instructions given to Moses in Ex. 25ff for the construction of the tabernacle. In the Hittite text the first step is making the image of the deity; in the biblical text it is the Ark. Both items are plated with gold and receive additional decorations. Later in both texts appear detailed instructions for material quantities and qualities and how they should be put into use. The biblical text presents the instructions as if they were given for the first time, but it would seem that the text follows an older tradition, one that could have been shared with the Hittite (Kizzuwatnian) one.[75]

In constructing the new Hittite temple there is one person who initiates the building and it is he who always performs the rituals together with the priests. He must be the king (or a ruler who has the means to construct such an expensive temple). He is termed in the text "the ritual patron who sets up the deity separately."[76] It is very tempting to compare him with Moses in Exodus, Solomon in Kings or David in Chronicles. The Hittite text mentions oil for making the new temple sacred, and it ends with the indication that after smearing blood over all the temple implements and deity image, the temple becomes consecrated (h. *šuppeš-*). The biblical text ends the story of the tabernacle in the same way, by smearing oil and blood to make it and the priests sacred (Lev. 8 and Ex. 29).[77]

From Hittite texts and iconography we learn that the Hittite priests were responsible for carrying the divine statues to and from ritual locations. The priests used oxen-pulled wagon,

reminiscent of the moving of the ark in 1Sam. 6:15 & 2Sam. 6. Only priests and priestesses are mentioned as carrying the gods' images by hand, and in one case they can be seen putting them into a box, which is carried on a wagon.[78]

Another point of contact between the Hittite concept of the divine and the Bible appears in the genre of prayers. As mentioned above, a large number of prayers were found among Hittite texts. Among the prayers we find the individual prayer of Kantuzzili who was a prince and probably a priest:[79]

> My god, ever since my mother gave birth to me, you, my god, have raised me. Only you my god, are [my name] and my reputation. You [my god] have joined me up with good people. To an influential (lit. strong) place you, my god, directed my doings. My god, you have called me Kantuzzili, the servant of your body and your soul.[80] My god's mercy, which I have known since childhood, I know and [acknowledge] it.[81]

The worshipper is termed by Kantuzzili "the servant of your body and your soul." This terminology points to the fact that he was indeed a priest, since this is the warning given to the priests in the instructions, where they were instructed to care for the gods' mundane presentation and to their *ištanzana-* "soul, will, desire." See the biblical term רצון in Ps. 143:10 "Teach me to do your will (רצון), for you my God as your spirit (רוח) is gracious will lead me on land of uprightness."

8. Conclusion

The more we learn about the cultures of the Ancient Near East, the more we find similarities in their practices and beliefs. Although there may not have been direct contacts between the Hittite empire and the Israelites, both cultures were part of the Ancient Near East, with its extensive interchange of commodities and ideas, as well as literary tradition. The Hittite texts reveal older traditions, in comparison with the Israelite ones; however, searching in the biblical texts we might find the remnants of older traditions, which have undergone adaptations according to the later way of thinking of their editors. I agree with Sommer who pointed out the "fluidity" of god in JE which the Priestly and Deutronomistic editors tried to conceal; I further find that Hittite material may supply additional corroboration to confirm this insight.

Notes

1) For an example see Itamar Singer, "Hittite Cultural Influence in the Kingdom of Amurru," in: Itamar Singer, *The Calm Before the Storm: Selected Writings of Itamar Singer on the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia and the Levant* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012),

253-258.

2) After this article was already in process for printing a new volume on the divine presence in the ANE appeared, however it does not relate its results to the Hebrew Bible. Its description of the Hittite divinity is in similar lines with this paper, though. See Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East* (Writings from The Ancient World Supplements; Atlanta, SBL, 2013), esp. 285-332 on Hittite culture.

3) See for this term Gary Beckman, "The Hittite Assembly," *JAOS* 102 (1982), 435-442.

4) For a short presentation see Gary Beckman, "Hittite Religion," in: *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World*, Vol. 1: *From the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Age* (eds. Michael Renee Salzman and Marvin A. Sweeney, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 86-90.

5) See Chicago Hittite Dictionary (=CHD) Š/3 *šiu-*, 472ff. See also Alwin Kloekhorst, *Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon* (Leiden, Brill, 2007), 763-765. *šiu-* will be represented ideographically besides DINGIR also by the Sumerogram ALAM or Akkaddian *ṣalmu* (Heb. צלם).

6) Billie Jean Collins, "A Statue for the Deity: Cult Images in Anatolia," in: *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Neal H. Walls, Boston, American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005), 21.

7) Lists of inventories of divine statues and divine attributes describe the forms of visualization of the Hittites gods in what is termed "Hittite inventory texts"; see Joost Hazenbos, *The Organization of the Anatolian Local Cults During the Thirteenth Century B.C.* (Cuneiform Monographs 21; Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), esp. the introduction, 1-9.

8) For detailed descriptions and illustrations see Billie Jean Collins, "A Statue for the deity: Cult Images in Hittite Anatolia," 13-19.

9) Jaan Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary* Vol. 2 (Berlin-Amsterdam, De Gruyter, 1984), 313-315.

10) CHD Š/3, 369-372.

11) Joost Hazenbos, *ibid.*, 175.

12) Hittite letter from Maṣat-höyük, (HKM 81); see the transliteration and translation in Harry A. Hoffner Jr., *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom* (ed. Gary M. Beckman, Writings from the Ancient World 15; Atlanta, SBL, 2009), 240-241. For this kind of greeting formula in other Hittite texts see Harry A. Hoffner Jr., ibid., 59-61.

13) Itamar Singer, "'The Thousand Gods of Hatti': The Limits of an Expanding Pantheon," *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994), 81-102.

14) Itamar Singer, ibid., 90: "gods from various lands met in the large, almost bottomless melting pot of the Hittite pantheon, where all were incorporated in a single, indissoluble entity."

15) For a description of the Hittite pantheon see Maciej Popko, *Religions of Asia Minor* (Warsaw, Academic Publications, 1995), 91-102, 110-115. For a specific description of the Luwian religion in Anatolia see Manfred Hutter, "Aspects of Luwian Religion,"

in: *The Luwians* (ed. H. Craig Melcher, HOS 68, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 211-279.

16) KUB 21.27 i, 3-6; see Gary Beckman, "Hittite Religion," 89. It might be that this pronouncement of the queen derives from a need to explain the worship of Ḫebat, since the gods responsible for kingship in Ḫatti were the Storm-god of Ḫatti and the Sun-goddess of Arinna.

17) For the latest study of rock carvings of the Hittite gods' assembly at Yazilikaya, Ḫattuša, see Jörgen Seeher, *Gods Carved in Stone: The Hittite Rock Sanctuary of Yazilikaya* (tr. Giles Shepard, Istanbul, Yayinlari, 2011).

18) Itamar Singer, *Muwatalli's Prayer to the Assembly of Gods through the Storm-God of Lightning (CTH 381)* (ASOR, Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1996).

19) Itamar Singer, *Muwatalli's Prayer*, 176-177.

20) That included also the ritual worship for foreign gods in the land of Ḫatti.

21) Interestingly they do not receive the title "foreign" *h. araḫzena-* "outside." But it is strictly forbidden by Hittite religious and state law to allow foreigners to enter a temple, or come near the gods. Only diplomatic representatives may come to worship — by royal permission — at the temple. See CTH 264 ii, 6-10: "If, however, to someone a foreign official comes, and if he is one (permitted) of going up [into] the temple, (and) usually crosses the threshold of the gods and of the king, let the temple man [bring] him up, let him eat and let him drink. If he is however, [an outsi]der, not of the me[n] of the city Ḫattuša, (and) he steps to the gods, [he shall die! Who]ever brings (him into the temple), it is a capital penalty for him." See Ada Taggar-Cohen, *Hittite Priesthood* (Theth 26; Heidelberg, Winter verlag, 2006), 73-74.

22) Itamar Singer in "The Thousand Gods of Hatti," 83 has taken the Old Hittite text of Annita mentioning the concept of "our God(s)" vs. "their God(s)" namely as a distinction between Hittite gods and gods of other ethnic groups.

23) Daniel Schwemer, "Fremde Götter in Hatti: Die hethitische Religion im Spannungsfeld von Synkretismus und Abgrenzung," in: *Ḫattuša-Boğazköy: das Hethiterreich im Spannungsfeld des Alten Orients 6.* Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 22.-24. März 2006, Würzburg (ed. Gernot Wilhelm, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2008), 137-157.

24) Ada Taggar-Cohen, *Hittite Priesthood*, 377-380.

25) Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers* (Writings from the Ancient World 11; Atlanta, SBL, 2002), 65.

26) For the text and commentary see Ada Taggar-Cohen, *Hittite Priesthood*, 71ff.

27) For a detailed description of the different methods of oracular inquiries see, Richard Beal, "Hittite Oracles," in: *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World* (eds. Leda Ciraolo and Jonathan Seidel, Ancient Magic and Divination II; Leiden, Brill, 2002), 57-81. See also Richard H. Beal, "Gleaning from Hittite Oracle Questions: On Religion, Society, Psychology and Decision Making," in: *Silva Anatolica, Fs Popko* (ed. Pioter Taracha, Warsaw, Agade, 2002), 11-37.

28) For a translation of the texts see Ricahrd Beal, "Assuring the safety of the king during the winter" in *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-

Boston, Brill, 2003), 207f.

29) Gary Beckman, "Oracles," in: *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 206f. See more on the description of the relations between the divine world and humans in Billie Jean Collins, "Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy of the Hittite and Hurrian Deities," in: *Göttlicher Zorn und göttliche Barmherzigkeit in den Religionen des Orients und der Antike* (eds. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spieckermann, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 2008), 67-77.

30) For the different instructions texts to the Hittite priesthood and their relevancy to the understanding of the biblical priesthood see Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Covenant Priesthood: Cross-Cultural Legal and Religious Aspects of Biblical and Hittite Priesthood," in: *Priests and Levites in History and Tradition* (eds. Mark Leuchter and Jeremy Hutton, Ancient Israel and Its Literature series; Atlanta, SBL, 2011), 11-24.

31) "Telipinu came back home and concerned himself for his land. The mist released the window. The smoke released the house. The altars were reconciled with the gods. The hearth released the log. In the fold he (Telipinu) released the sheep. In the corral he released the cows. Then the mother tended her child. The sheep tended her lamb. The cow tended her calf. And Telipinu <tended> the king and queen. He concerned him-self for them in regard to life, vigor, and future (existence)." For the translation see Gary Beckman, "The Wrath of Telipinu," in: *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 151-153f.

32) Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, 50 (§1).

33) KUB 7.60 ii, 31-32: *nu-uš-ma-aš ke-e* TÚG^[ḪI.A] KASKAL^[MEŠ] *a-ša-an-du nu-kán ke-e-da-aš še-er ar-ḫa i-ya-an-ni-ya-at-ten nu-kán A-NA LUGAL aš-šu-li an-da ne-ya-at-ten šu-me-el-ma A-NA* KUR^[TI] *a-wa-an ar-ḫa nam-ma ti-ya-at-ten*.

34) For a treatment of this text see Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Between ḥerem, Ownership, and Ritual-Biblical and Hittite Perspectives," in: *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature: The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond* (eds. Roy E. Gane and Ada Taggar-Cohen Resources for Biblical Study (RBS) series of SBL Publications). (Forthcoming 2014)

35) See CHD Š/3, 476-477.

36) For translation see Theo van den Hout, "Apology of Ḫattušili III," in: *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 202 (Column 3:1-13).

37) KUB 21.38 obv. 57ff. See the translation by Harry A. Hoffner Jr., *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom*, 287.

38) See CHD Š/3, 478.

39) See CHD Š/3, 481.

40) Harry A. Hoffner Jr. , *Letters from the Hittite Kingdom,* 321-322.

41) As noted by Singer in "The Thousand Gods of Hatti," 96, such an act is also mentioned in a text from El Amarna, Egypt (EA23), where the Mitanni king Tušrata sends *IŠTAR* of Nineveh to probably cure an ailing Egyptian King. For the Hittite text CTH 570.1 ii, 57'-64' see transliteration and translation in Gary Beckman, Trevor Bryce and Eric

Kline, *The Ahhiyawa Texts* (Writing from the Ancient World 28; Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 192-193.

42) See CHD Š/3, 494.

43) For a fascinating oracle text showing the inquiry after the anger of the Deity of Arušna regarding the fact that the Queen made herself a gold headband in the Storehouse of the God LAMMA; The God of Arušna asked her for it in her dream, but she refused. She put it down in the chamberlain's house. Instead she had two silver headbands made for the god of Arušna, but the god did not accept them, and became angry. For the description of the oracular procedure see Richard Beal, "Gleaning from Hittite Oracle Questions," 14ff. For a translation of the text KUB 22.70 see Gary Beckman, "Excerpt from an Oracle Report," in: *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 204-206.

44) See Philo H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "The Hittite Storm God: his Role and his Rule According to Hittite Cuneiform Sources," in: *Natural Phenomena: Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the ANE* (ed. D.J.W Meijer, Amsterdam, 1992), 83-148.

45) Richard H. Beal, "Dividing A God," in: *Magic and Ritual in The Ancient World* (eds. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2002), 197-208. Up until then scholars translated the text according to the context with words such as "transfer" or "remove."

46) See two examples in Beal, ibid, 198: "Then during the reign of my brother (Muwatalli II) I (Ḫattušili III) *šarra*-d goddess Šausga of Šamuḫa and made her new temples in Urikina"; "The goddess who was determined by oracle to be *šarra*-d, [was determined by oracle] to be carried to Zitḫara. She will be placed in her inner chamber." This was also the meaning given to these passages in the CHD Š/2, 235: "to split off a deity by creating a duplicate cult statue, temple and cult for the deity elsewhere."

47) Jared L. Miller, *Studies in the Origins, Development and Interpretation of the Kizzuwatna Rituals* (StBoT 46; Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2004), 259-439.

48) Jared L. Miller, "Setting Up the Goddess of the Night Separately," in: *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours* (eds. B. J. Collins, M. Bachvarova and I. C. Rutherford, Oxford, 2008), 67-72. In this paper Miller mainly tries to understand the "evolution" of the deity, and whether the Goddess of the Night is to be identified with the *IŠTAR* of Šamuḫa.

49) The new deity GIBIL DINGIR; New temple GIBIL É.DINGIR[LIM] // Old deity *karuili* DINGIR[LIM]; Old temple *karuili* É.DINGIR[LIM].

50) The following is Jared L. Miller's translation, "Setting Up the Goddess of the Night Separately," 67. A slightly different translation by Billie Jean Collins, "Establishing a New Temple for the Goddess of the Night," in: *Context of Scriptures* vol. 1 (eds. William W. Hallo, *et al.*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2003), 177: "You, honored goddess, protect your person/body, divide your divinity, come to these new temples, take an honored place."

51) In Hittite: *nu* DINGIR GIBIL É.DINGIR-[LIM]-*ia* š*u-up-pe-e*š-*zi* (KUB 29.4 iv, 40).

52) As far as I know there is no ritual in the Hittite texts that is exactly parallel to the

Mesopotamian *mīs-pî* ritual of washing the mouth of the deity statue making the deity enter it. For a recent attempt to correlate a Kizzuwatna Hittite-Hurrian *itkalzi*-ritual to the Mesopotamian ritual see Rita Strauss, *Reinigungsrituale aus Kizzuwatna: Ein Beitra zur Erforschung hethitischer Ritualtradition und Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin-New York, De Gruyter, 2006), 216-283. For this ritual of *mīs-pî* see Christopher Walker and Michael Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: the Mesopotamian Mīs Pî Ritual: transliteration, translation, and commentary* (Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001).

53) In a cult inventory text an inventory of the Storm-god of the town Ariuwa is given as 2 *ḫuwaši*-stones which are identified as "2 old gods" and one statue, one mace and one solar disk identified as "3 new gods." KUB 38.23 obv. 7-9, 10, 11 CHD Š/3, 496.

54) KUB 5.3 ii, 1-2; 5-6 see CHD Š/3, 476.

55) We know of that act only from a short mention made by Ḫattušili III in his text called "Apology," for which see Theo van den Hout, ibid, 200: "Now, when my brother Muwatalli at the behest of his own deity went down to the Lower Land, he left (the city of) Ḫattuša behind. He took up [the gods] of Ḫatti and the Manes (=deceased kings) and [c]arried them to the land of [Tarḫuntašša]."

56) Itamar Singer, "The failed reforms of Akhenaten and Muwatalli", *BMSAES* 6 (2006), 37-58, http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmsaes/issue6/singer.html. The quotation is from p. 37.

57) IBoT 1.30. See CHD Š/1, 102.

58) Itamar Singer's translation, *Muwatalli's Prayer*, 40.

59) For a comprehensive work on this topic with reference to previous studies see Mark S. Smith, *The Origin of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford University Press, 2001). See also idem, *Early History of God: Yahweh and Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Biblical Resource Series; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 2nd Edition, 2002).

60) For the translation see CHD Š/1, 102; and compare Hans G. Güterbock, "Authority and Law in the Hittite Kingdom," *JAOS Supp.* 17 (1954), 16. For the transliteration of the Hittite text see Ada Taggar-Cohen, *Hittite Priesthood*, 235.

61) See Norman C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Ideologies* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1995), 17-32.

62) For a short introduction to the issue of the diversity in the two kingdoms' religious beliefs and conduct, see Francesca Stavrakopulou and John Barton, "Introduction: Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah," in: *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (eds. Francesca Stavrakopulou and John Barton, London, T&T Clark International, 2010), 1-8.

63) See Diana Edelman, "Cultic Sites and Complexes Beyond the Jerusalem Temple," in: *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (eds. Francesca Stavrakopulou and John Barton, London, T&T Clark International, 2010), 82-103.

64) Jeremy M. Hutton, "Local Manifestations of YHWH and Worship in the Interstices: A Note on Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *JANER* 10.2 (2010), 205.

65) Jeremy M. Hutton, ibid, 202-204.

66) On whether Asherah is in these inscriptions a generic term for a female consort to YHWH or the private name of the deity Asherata, see the note of Nadav Na'aman, "The Inscriptions of Kuntillet 'Ajrud Through the Lens of Historical Research," *Ugarit Forshungen* 43 (2011), 299-324. For the latest publication of these inscriptions and their locations see Ze'ev Meshel, *Kuntillet 'Ajrud (Horvat Teman): An Iron Age II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border* (Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society, 2012).

67) This inscription, dated to the 6th century and found in a cave, reads (Khirbet Beit Lei 5): יהוה אלהי כל הארץ הרי יהד לו לאלהי ירשלם. This reading is not accepted by all; see for reference F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp *et al.*, *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 2005), 128.

68) In Hebrew: וידברו אל אלהי ירושלם כעל אלהי עמי הארץ מעשה ידי האדם. We also find the designation of YHWH as the god of Zion in Ps. 147:12 (see other definitions of YHWH in relation to the city: Is. 4:5, 18:7, 24:23; Joel 4:16-17 and more). As Spencer Allen says the "*b*-locative (YHWH in Zion) does not function like a full name," and therefore we should avoid taking the name YHWH found in a certain city as a name for a separate deity; see Spencer L. Allen, "An Examination of Northwest Semitic Names and the Beth-Locative," *JESOT* 2,1 (2013), 61-82; quotation from p. 71.

69) Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (The JTS, Cambridge University Press, 2009); I used the Kindle electronic version of the book.

70) More on his explanation of the sacredness concept and its relation to the characteristic of YHWH see his chapters 4-5.

71) Jeremy M. Hutton, ibid, 205-206.

72) Quotes are from Benjamin D. Sommer, ibid, 13, 15.

73) Jeremy M. Hutton, ibid, 260.

74) In contrast to Is. 43:10: "Before me no god was created, And after me none shall exist."

75) The biblical ark of God will then hold in it the tablets of law so that the God of Israel "will reside among Israel and will be their God" (Ex. 29:45); YHWH's presence is seen in a cloud over the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), and later in Solomon's temple (1Kings 8:10-11).

76) *nu-za* DINGIR^{LAM} *ku-iš ha-an-ti-i a-ša-ši nu-za a-pa-a-aš* EN.SISKUR ^{LÚ}SANGA MUNUS^{MEŠ} *kat-re-eš-ša pa-ra-a* UD-*an wa-ar-ap-pa-an-zi* "The ritual patron, who sets up the deity separately, the SANGA-priest and the Katri-women wash themselves on the following day." See Jared Miller, *Studies in the Origins, Development and Interpretation of the Kizzuwatna Rituals,* 277-278 (§8 A i, 52-54).

77) These biblical stories include different traditions, and are mentioned here in short. For a treatment of the Hittite text of the Goddess of the Night in relation to biblical use of blood in the consecration of the biblical priesthood, see Yitzhaq Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Rituals: Origins, Context, and Meaning* (Writings from the Ancient World SS 2; Atlanta, SBL, 2011), 26-33. For another interpretation

of the blood see Billie Jean Collins, "A Statue for the Deity," 29-32.

78) KBo 24.107 "They place/ install(?) the divine image in the basket"; and KUB 53.14 iii, 15-16 "They set the divine image back up in the carriage. His priest takes his place beside it; he holds the divine image in place." Probably so that it will not fall from the carriage. In the biblical text when Uzza — who was not a priest — touched the ark of God he dropped dead (2Sam. 6:7); only the priests are allowed to handle the divine tools. See CHD Š/3, 496. Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, "The Return of the Ark and Implemented Ox Omens," in: *All the Wisdom of the East: Studies in Near Eastern Archaeology and History in Honor of Eliezer D. Oren* (eds. Mayer Gruber *et al.*, OBO, Fribourg-Göttingen, Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2012), 177-185, suggested that the religious activities done by the Philistines in 1Sam. 6 can be explained through Israelite religious practice. However, it can very likely be explained through Hittite oracular divination for pacifying an angry deity.

79) More on Kantuzili and his prayers see Itamar Singer, "Sin and Punishment in Hittite Prayers," in: *An Experienced Scribe Who Neglects Nothing: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Jacob Klein* (eds. Yitschak Sefati *et al.*, Bethesda, CDL Press, 2005), 557-567.

80) [*nu-mu-za*] *ammel* DINGIR-*YA* ᴵ*Kantuzilin tuggaš-taš ištanzanaš-taš* IR-*KA ḫalzait* (KBo 21.22 obv. 14-15).

81) Itamar Singer, *Hittite Prayers*, 31 (§2').

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Editor's Postscript

We are pleased to present the ninth issue of the *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (JISMOR).*

The Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR) invited Prof. Mark S. Smith of New York University and Prof. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith of Union Theological Seminary and held a public lecture and workshop on the theme "The Concept of Monotheism in the Time of the Hebrew Bible" on December 15th, 2012. This issue contains their lectures as well as an article written by Prof. Ada Taggar-Cohen. Recent historical, archaeological and philological discoveries in and outside of Israel are shedding new light on the religion of the Hebrew Bible, thereby rapidly expanding our knowledge concerning the dawn of Abrahamic Monotheism. Each of the three articles conveys vividly new developments in this exciting field of research.

Many of the lectures, interviews, symposia, and other resources held at CISMOR, including the lecture delivered by Prof. Smith, have been recorded and uploaded on YouTube. We invite you to take a look.

JISMOR is published only online starting from this issue. This decision has been made partly for the purpose of promoting electronic publication of academic journals, but mainly because of budgetary restrictions due to the economic situation surrounding CISMOR. We ask for your understanding and continued support for CISMOR and JISMOR.

March 2014
Takehito Miyake, Chief of Editorial Committee

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Revised on March 31, 2014

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