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探寻圣经上帝的多元起源 [Searching for the Origins of the Biblical God]

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Searching for the Origins of the Biblical God

探寻圣经上帝的多元起源

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Abstract

This essay examines the earliest evidence for the biblical god, Yahweh, in the Bible. The evidence outside the Bible largely involves an Egyptian place-name that looks very similar to the name of Yahweh. The evidence inside the Bible entails two of the oldest texts in the Bible, Judges 5 and Psalm 68, which contain a small piece of poetry describing God, specifically in Judges 5:4-5 and Psalm 68:8-9. This is a rather small piece, perhaps an excerpt, of a longer hymn to Yahweh.

The two versions of this old bit of poetry contain the oldest representations of God in the Bible. How do they represent God in earliest Israel? What shifts in the idea about God can scholars see with the small poetic piece, as it is changed and expanded in the later poems of Deuteronomy 33 and Habakkuk 3? The essay closes with a series of theological reflections on these four biblical attestations to the Israelite god, emphasizing their canonical position and their genre designations as well as their reflections of time and space.

Keywords: Yahweh, Edom, Seir, Sinai

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the oldest references to the god Yahweh in the Bible. What are these oldest references to the god Yahweh and what was the nature of this deity? Most people get a general picture of this god from reading through the Bible beginning with Genesis and going through the rest of the Bible. But the Bible did not become a complete work until relatively late in Israel's history. My question is what the idea of God was at the beginning of Israel's history. To see who the god Yahweh was in the earliest historical record available, I want to look at the oldest passages within the Bible and also at some texts from outside of the Bible.

Bible scholars do not assume that the oldest material in the Bible is what the Bible presents first. For example, the prose stories of Genesis are not the oldest texts in the Bible. To determine the dates of biblical texts, scholars look at various criteria, such as the earliest stage of the language of biblical Hebrew, and references to early Israelite culture and society. It is not my aim to go into these criteria in great detail, but according to a long line of biblical scholarship, the language of a number of poems, especially Judges 5 and Psalm 68, is old relative to the Hebrew prose of Genesis through Kings. It would be like English speakers listening to the ancient story of Beowulf compared with the later Shakespeare and then compared further to the twentieth century poet, T. S. Eliot. There are phases of the English language, and there are phases in Biblical Hebrew.

Two of the oldest texts in the Bible, Judges 5 and Psalm 68, contain a

small piece of poetry describing God. In this paper, I wish to explore this small and old piece of poetry embedded within Judges 5 (specifically in verses 4-5) and Psalm 68 (in verses 8-9). It is a rather small piece (perhaps an excerpt of a longer hymn to Yahweh). So I am not investigating the whole poem of Judges or Psalm 68, but a short segment that predated these poems and was incorporated into these poems. This old bit of poetry contains the oldest representations of God in the Bible which reflect on God, humanity and the world. This raises a lot of questions: What are the contents of the small poetic piece in Judges 5 and Psalm 68? What does it say about God? How does what it says about God relate to the rest of these poems? How did it fit into the larger context of these two poems? What further development in the idea about God do we see with the small poetic piece as it is changed and expanded in the later poems of Deuteronomy 33 and Habakkuk 3? In the end, what is the theorizing about reality in these texts?

For our story, we need to look first at some Egyptian evidence thought to show the name of Yahweh. Then I will turn to the old piece of poetry embedded in Judges 5:4-5 and Psalm 68:8-9, and then look at its expanded form as it appears in Deuteronomy 33:2-5 and Habakkuk 3:3-7 (I will make only passing reference to this passage). An audience might expect me to focus on the prose narrative describing Israel's first meeting with God in the Book of Exodus, but the prose story is considerably later than the poems of Judges 5 and Psalm 68. These poetic representations of the Israelite god show not only high antiquity, namely the concern of historians, but also the process of Israel's religious thinking, namely the concern of historians of religion and theologians.

2. First Glimpses of Yahweh beyond the Bible: Egyptian Evidence

So let us begin with first clear glimpses claimed for Yahweh in Egyptian texts. To understand the Egyptian evidence that we are about to review, we need to set the time and place. The critical date for our consideration is 1200 BC. Inside the Bible, the time just before 1200 is thought of as the time of the period of the Conquest in the book of Joshua and the beginning of the time of the Judges. Outside of the Bible, the year 1200 is the customary date given for the end of the Bronze Age, with the fall of the Hittite empire and the receding of the Egyptians from the area that will come to be known as Israel. By that time Israel, as it was recalled in the books of Joshua and Judges, emerged in the hill-country of what readers of the Bible think of as biblical Israel.

Outside of the Bible, Israel is clearly attested first in the year 1208. An Egyptian monument celebrating the victories of king Merneptah (ca.1212-1202) brags about his victories over his Libyan enemies to the west of Egypt. The end of the monument turns to his victories in the east, in particular to the land of Canaan and its various parts:

The princes are prostrate, they say, “mercy! (shalam)”

Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.

Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified;

Plundered is the Canaan with every evil;

Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;

Yanoam is made like what does not exist;

Israel is laid waste, its seed is not;
Hurru has become a widow for Egypt!
All lands together, they are pacified;
Everyone who is restless, he has been bound.

In this text, Israel is the only name that is marked in Egypt as a people; the regions of Canaan, Hatti, Hurru, and also the towns of Ashkelon, Gezer and Yanoam, are all place-names. (The Egyptian text marks this difference with special signs: Israel has the special sign for people while the other names have the special sign for place.) So Israel is a people somewhere in the environs of the place called Canaan. Where exactly is unknown, but by the date of this monument, ca. 1208, Israel is in the land.¹ How far back the name of Israel went in Egyptian tradition remains an open question. In any case, Merneptah's monument is one of the last Egyptian monuments devoted to this region in this period, as Egypt began to recede in power.

The story of Yahweh outside of the Bible begins in a different set of Egyptian texts. Standing in a long line of scholarship,² a recent survey of

1 By the way, recently it has been claimed that even an older Egyptian inscription (Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687), dating to the reign of Ramesses II (reigned ca. 1279-1218) or even earlier, attests to the name of Israel. See Peter van der Veen, Christoffer Theis, and Manfred Görg, "Israel in Canaan (Long) Before Pharaoh Merneptah? A Fresh Look at Berlin Statue Pedestal Relief 21687," *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 2 (2010): 15-25 (<http://jaei.library.arizona.edu>).

2 For example, Shmuel Ahituv, *Canaanite Toponyms in Ancient Egyptian Documents* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Leiden: Brill, 1984), pp. 121-22; Lars Eric Axelsson, *The Lord Rose Up from Seir: Studies in the History and Traditions of the Neger and Southern Judah* (CBOT 25; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), pp. 48-59; Jean Leclant, "Le 'Tétragramme' à l'époque d'Aménophis III," in *Near Eastern Studies dedicated to H. I. H. Prince Takahito Mikasa on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), pp. 215-219; Manfred Görg, "Jahwe," in *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* II (1992) 265, and "YHWH als Toponym? - Weitere Perspektiven," *Biblische Notizen* 101 (2000),

the Egyptian evidence for Israel's god opens with the claim: "It has become a commonly accepted view both in Egyptology and Biblical Studies that the name of the later god Yahweh - the tetragrammaton YHWH - makes an early appearance in Egyptian topographical lists of the New Kingdom, where it is closely associated with a provenance that is characteristic to statements about Yahweh's origins in the Old Testament."³ The author of this quote, the Egyptologist Thomas Schneider, is referring to a fifteen-century list of places produced under Amenophis III at a temple in Soleb and a later compilation of place-names under Ramesses II at Amara-West; both places are located north of the third cataract of the Nile in Nubia, today belonging to Sudan.

These entries include the listing, t3 s3sw yhw3, which Schneider renders "the Shasu-land, (more precisely:) Yhw3."⁴ Schneider makes the

pp.8-12; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 272-273; Manfred Weippert, *Jahwe und die anderen Götter: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel in ihrem syrisch-palästinischen Kontext* (FAT 18; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), pp. 40 and 97; Frank Moore Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 67 n. 51; Karel van der Toorn, "Yahweh," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (ed. Karel van der Toorn et al.; second edition; Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 911-912.

3 Thomas Schneider, "The First Documented Occurrence of the God Yahweh? (Book of the Dead Princeton 'Roll 5')," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion* 7 (2008): 113-120, here p. 113. See also Schneider's German presentation in his study, "Zur Interpretation des Eigennamens des Papyrus-Besitzers," in Barbara Lüscher, *Der Totenbuch-Papyrus Princeton Pharaonic Roll 5* (mit einem Beitrag von Thomas Schneider; Beiträge zum Alten Ägypten 2; Basel: Orientverlag, 2008), pp. 102-110.

4 For further discussion with hieroglyphs represented and transliterated, see R. Giveon, *Les bédouïnes Shosou des documents égyptiens* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 26-28, no. 6a and 74-77 no. 16a, with reading corrected by Manfred Weippert, "Semitische Nomaden des zweiten Jahrausends," *Biblica* 55 (1974): 265-280 and pp. 427-33, here 427, 430. See also <http://www.divinenameno/archaeology.htm>.

point that this yhw³ “would be a mountainous region linked to the worship of a god named Yahweh after the place of worship.”⁵ For scholars, this yhw³ is a place-name named after the god, Yahweh. In addition, this place yhw³ is the name for the Shasu-land. The Amara-West version lists another place within the “Shasu-land” called sa-‘-r-ir, thought to be related to biblical Seir,⁶ which we will see below in our discussion of the biblical evidence.⁷

This old Egyptian evidence is particularly appealing to biblical scholars for three reasons. First, the name yhw³ looks quite similar to the biblical divine name. Second, the antiquity of the Egyptian evidence seems to fit with the old biblical poetry. Third, the location of the Egyptian place-name works well with Yahweh’s southern location, especially in Judges 5:4 where God’s home is called Seir and Edom. The places mentioned are not part of Israel in the land, as known in the Merneptah stele (ca. 1208) and possibly earlier. Instead, the references to Seir and Edom in the Egyptian evidence for the Shasu and the references to Seir and Edom also in the old biblical poems point to a location to the southeast of Israel and not in Israel. I would also highlight the gap in time between the Egyptian evidence and the biblical evidence. The Egyptian evidence would suggest at least a fifteenth century date for the worship of Yahweh if not earlier, while the biblical references even in a more optimistic scenario

5 Schneider, “The First Documented Occurrence of the God Yahweh?” p. 114.

6 Noted by Redford among others; see Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 272. Critics note the irregular spelling; see Cross, *From Epic to Canon*, p. 67 n. 51. As a result, some scholars reject the identification; see de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism*, p. 124.

7 Until recently, these were the only alleged Egyptian references to the god, yhw³. It has also been claimed by Schneider that even an older Egyptian text contains the short form of the name of Yahweh, the form Yah, as in the Hebrew word, Hallelu-yah (which corresponds to Greek Alleluia) and translates in English as, “Praise Yah.”

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would not date earlier than the twelfth century. Thus some centuries stand
between the Egyptian evidence and the biblical record.

3. First Glimpses of Yahweh in the Bible: The Early Poetic Fragment

With this Egyptian background in mind, we may turn to the two old
witnesses to the short poetic piece about God found in Judges 5:4-5 and
Psalm 68:8-9. These two poems, Judges 5 and Psalm 68, are not well
known to everyone. To me they are particularly intriguing as the oldest
pieces in the Bible and also for what they suggest of the oldest portrait of
the god Yahweh that we have in the Bible. In fact, Judges 5:4-5 and Psalm
68:8-9 are so close in wording that scholars have understood them to point
to an independent piece of poetry that the authors of Judges 5 and Psalm
68 inherited and incorporated into their poems. It may be easier to see this
old, short poetic piece if we lay out its two versions in Judges 5 and Psalm
68 side by side⁸:

Judges 5:4-5

i Yahweh, when you went from **Seir**,

ii When you marched

from the field of **Edom**,

Psalm 68:8-9

God, when you went **before your**

people,

When you marched in the wasteland

[Selah],

8 See the layout and discussion of the two passages by Walter Gross, *Richter: Übersetzt und ausgelegt* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 2009), p. 306.

iii Earth shook,	Earth shook,
iv Also heavens poured,	Also heavens poured,
v Also clouds poured water,	
vi Mountains flowed/quaked,	
vii From before Yahweh, the One, of Sinai	From before God, the One of Sinai ,
viii From before Yahweh, the god of Israel.	From before God, the god of Israel.

Scholars of the Bible have noted the remarkable amount of language shared in common by the two passages. As a result, many biblical scholars see this piece as originally part of an independent piece that the authors of Judges 5 and Psalm 68 independently incorporated into their poems. I will not engage in a discussion of all the details of this short piece, but I will note some seminal similarities as well as the relationship of this set piece to its context in the two poems.

In both poems, the first two lines (Romans numerals lines i-ii) show God on the march. At the same time, the idea of the divine march differs in the two passages. Psalm 68 shows God marching “before your people” in the “wasteland.” In other words, we see here a protecting God in circumstances inhospitable to people. Unlike Psalm 68, Judges 5 provides geographical references. For Judges 5, this God is grounded in real places. The place-names are important because they show the march of God beginning from a location outside of the land. Edom is located to the southeast of Israel, and Seir also belongs to this region to the far southeast of Israel. This Seir seems to be related to one of the place-names

associated with the Shasu that we noted in connection with the Egyptian evidence for Yahweh. This location, best known today as Sinai, was according to Saint Paul located in “Arabia” (Galatians 4:25) and not in the so-called Sinai peninsula. In other words, the earliest biblical reference to God locates God’s home in Arabia (more specifically, northwest Arabia).

Both Judges 5:4 and Psalm 68:8 show God as the divine warrior,⁹ but it also needs to be noted that in both cases the divine march engages no enemies, divine or human. The picture in Psalm 68 shows divine protection of the people, while Judges 5 is open-ended. While these passages have been received and fitted into military contexts and perhaps even had a military context in an older setting, the military is hardly what is stressed here. Instead, the manifestation of God on the earthly level is the focus.

In the next two lines (Roman numerals iii-iv), both poems use the same words to describe the effects of the divine march, with the earth trembling and the heavens flowing with precipitation. Both lines show some super-terrestrial perspective as well, with the heavens flowing with precipitation along with the earth shaking. Thus the earliest picture of God is quite natural: God is a warrior god and storm-god.

With the next two lines (Roman numerals v-vi), Judges 5:4 expands the description. The result is a structure that balances “earth” with “mountains” and “heavens” with “clouds.” This fact of addition is not insignificant. Other examples of this set piece that we will see later, in Deuteronomy 33:2-5 and Habakkuk 3, also have additions. In the case of

9 See Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 91; p. 107.

Judges 5:4-5, the expansion is inside the description; in the case of Psalm 68, the expansion follows as an addition. It is intriguing to get to see the Bible as a literary tradition, with expansions of older material within passages of the Bible.

In the next two lines (Roman numerals vii-viii), both poems call the god, “the one of Sinai” and “the god of Israel.” These are earthly designations, and they are different from the older Egyptian sources that we discussed earlier: neither Sinai nor Israel is known from the specific Egyptian sources that we noted above. For the early tradition that produced this set piece, this god was the god of the people of Israel, and this god was associated with Sinai, a place outside of the land of Israel. Thus this God is associated with providing rain with and for a specific people and within a specific place outside of the land of Israel.

Now let us turn to the larger context of the set piece in Psalm 68 and Judges 5. We may start with Psalm 68. The small poetic piece in verses 8-9 is not particularly well integrated into the context, as it follows a hymnic introduction in verses 5-7. These verses praise divine help to orphans and widows (verse 6) and the lonely and the imprisoned (verse 7). As a result, many biblical scholars see verses 8-9 fitted secondarily into this context. Psalm 68 also expands at the end of the piece, in verses 10-11, in commenting further on the rain provided to the land and the benefit it provides for the people. Psalm 68 adds a further focus, with the mention of Sinai in verse 18. Here the poem picks up on the divine title, “the One of Sinai” (zeh sînay), seen in verse 9. When the two references to Sinai are connected, they name Sinai as the earthly location of the divine army under Yahweh. Sinai is evidently also the mountain mentioned in verse 17

that God “desired for his dwelling.” As the name for the ancient divine dwelling, Sinai is the particular focus of Psalm 68, with Jerusalem named only later in verse 30. In the poem, Sinai and Jerusalem stand as coordinated centers of the deity’s action. From the perspective of the poem as a whole, one place, Sinai, represents the past and the other, Jerusalem, represents the present. For the poem as a whole, the two places belong ultimately to the same realm of God’s action on behalf of the people. In other words, the past and present belongs to a single order of divine reality.

The context in Judges 5 is intriguing. Apart from verses 4-5, Judges 5 contains no reference to Sinai. Judges 5:4-5 is preceded by a hymnic introduction in verses 2-3 and followed by a second hymnic address in verses 6-9. Just as we see in Psalm 68, the geographical locations in verse 4 stands at considerable odds from the location of the battle in the body of the poem of Judges 5. The battle of Judges 5 is in the central hill-country of Israel, while the march in verses 4-5 is from the distant southeast. In the poem, these two battles stand in a single order of reality, of divine victories on behalf of Israel. In the case of both Judges 5 and Psalm 68, both poems signal the coordination of space and time as a single, continuous reality of divine aid and acknowledgement. For the biblical composers, the order of experience as separate events is not the order of reality, which is an ultimately related whole. Furthermore, the past serves to understand the present and to ground that present in a distant past; it signals a claim of divine care that reaches back into Israel’s primordial past.

One final thought about the short poetic piece and its two contexts before we move on to Deuteronomy 33:2-5. The earliest alleged revelation

of God, as we see it Judges 5:4-5 and Psalm 68:8-9, came in the form of a poetic fragment, perhaps an excerpt of a longer hymn. Moreover, this early, short piece was received and re-interpreted in the larger contexts of Judges 5 and Psalm 68. So in this case, revelation involves both the older piece and its newer contexts in Judges 5 and Psalm 68. In other words, in these two poems receiving revelation was a dynamic process involving receiving an old description of God from the past, expanding its words, and interpreting it by placing it in a larger context. Revelation was not a frozen, static piece of data about God; it was shaped and expanded in a dynamic process of human reception and interpretation. Thus the process of revelation from the very beginning involved a dialogue between God and humanity.

4. A Later Example of the Poetic Piece: The Case of Deuteronomy 33:2-5

Let us turn to a later and expanded example of the short poetic piece, in Deuteronomy 33:2-5. Before I provide you with my translation, I have to add that this passage has many translational difficulties, which is why English translations of this passage differ so much:¹⁰

10 For the text critical issues, see Stefan Beyerle, "Evidence of a Polymorphic Text: Towards the Text-History of Deuteronomy 33," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 5 (1998): 215-232, here 223 and 225 n. 52, which notes that of the Qumran material, only 4Q45 provides readings for these verses. For the interpretation of vv. 2-5, see T. H. Gaster, "An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33.3-5, 26-29," *JBL* 66 (1947): 53-62; F. M. Cross, Jr. and D. N. Freedman, "The Blessing of Moses," *JBL* 67 (1948): 191-210; Patrick D. Miller, "Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33," *HTR* 57 (1964): 240-243; H. Seebass, "Die Stammesliste von Dtn XXXIII," *VT* 27 (1977): 158-169; David Noel Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the

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- 2 Yahweh from Sinai came,
and he shone from Seir for them (lamo),¹¹
he appeared from Mount Paran.¹²
And¹³ he came¹⁴ with myriads of holy (ones),¹⁵
At his right hand¹⁶ fire flew for/to them.¹⁷

Framework of Deuteronomy 33,” in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa and Nathan H. Winter; Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House and The Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980), pp. 25-46; Duane L. Christensen, “Two Stanzas of a Hymn in Deuteronomy 33,” *Biblica* 65 (1984): 382-389; and Adam Simon Van der Woude, “Erwägungen zum Rahmenpsalm von Deuteronomium 33,” in *Studies in Deuteronomy* (ed. García Martínez Florentino; Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 281-288.

- 11 Based on several versions (see LXX, S, V, T), many wish to read instead *l'mw for MT lmw, e.g., Adam Simon van der Woude, “Erwägungen zum Rahmenpsalm von Deuteronomium 33,” in *Studies in Deuteronomy* (ed. García Martínez Florentino; Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 281-288, here 282-283. This seems to be the easier reading.
- 12 Or, “the highland country of Paran.”
- 13 Deleted by F. M. Cross, Jr. and D. N. Freedman, “The Blessing of Moses,” *JBL* 67 (1948): 191-210, here 198 n. 7.
- 14 Following the Targums, the Vulgate and in part the LXX (*sun muriasin kades*), Cross and Freedman (“The Blessing of Moses,” 198 n. 8) read 'itto-m (enclitic -m), “with him.”
- 15 Here following T. H. Gaster, “An Ancient Eulogy on Israel: Deuteronomy 33.3-5, 26-29,” *JBL* 66 (1947): 53-62, here 57; and Cross and Freedman, “The Blessing of Moses,” p. 193, 199 n. 9 (which reconstructs a plural ending, with final -m lost by haplography). See also F. M. Cross, as reported by Patrick D. Miller, “Two Critical Notes on Psalm 68 and Deuteronomy 33,” *HTR* 57 (1964): 240-243, here 241. LXX instead attests to *kades* (Kadesh) as a fourth place-name. See Van der Woude, “Erwägungen zum Rahmenpsalm von Deuteronomium 33,” p. 283.
- 16 For the sense, “at,” Cross and Freedman (“The Blessing of Moses,” 199 n. 10) compare the same form in 1 Kgs 22:19, which also involves a depiction of the heavenly host.
- 17 Here I am following the reading of the second verb of Richard C. Steiner, “Dat and 'en: Two Verbs Masquerading as Nouns in Moses' Blessing (Deuteronomy 33:2,28),” *JBL* 115 (1996): 693-698. Steiner's reading enjoys the particular merit of semantic, morphological and syntactical parallelism. Cf. A. F. L. Beeston, “Angels in Deuteronomy 33,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1951): 30-31. Beeston believed that LXX aggeloi correctly was rendering an otherwise unknown Hebrew word meaning “warriors” based on Sabeian 'sd. If so, the function of the final feminine -t on the BH form is unclear. Beeston also believed that LXX mef autou presupposes Hebrew *immo, “with him,” which he thought ought to be read here.

- 3 Indeed, O lover of (?) peoples/forces,
All his holy ones are by your hand;
They prostrate themselves¹⁸ at his feet,
They uphold your orders (?).¹⁹
- 4 Moses²⁰ commanded instruction for us,
As a heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
- 5 He became king in Jeshurun,
when he assembled the heads of the people,²¹
the tribes of Israel together.

18 So Cross and Freedman, "The Blessing of Moses," pp. 193 and 200-201 n. 16. They note the root **mkk* in the meaning "to bend, to be low or humiliated." See also David Noel Freedman, "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. Gary Rendsburg, Ruth Adler, Milton Arfa and Nathan H. Winter; Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House and The Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980), pp. 25-46, here 42. Cf. tkwn in 4Q45, in Stefan Beyerle, "Evidence of a Polymorphic Text: Towards the Text-History of Deuteronomy 33," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 5 (1998): 215-232, here 223.

19 The line is most difficult. The plural imperative reading in Samaritan Pentateuch is noted by Seeligmann, who reads a plural indicative and cleverly suggests translating, "they stalk along behind Him." See Isaac Leo Seeligmann, "A Psalm from Pre-Regal Times," VT 14 (1964): 75-92, republished in *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (ed. Erhard Blum; FAT 41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), pp. 349-364.

20 Gaster ("An Ancient Eulogy," 58) thought the name is "hypermetrical," arising either from *morasha* or out of the necessity of providing a subject for what he regarded as the "incorrect" verb, which he took as an imperative. Some scholars, such as Karl Budde and Raymond Tournay, believe the name of Moses to be secondary with the deity as the original subject; see the summary of the discussion in Van der Woude, "Erwägungen zum Rahmenpsalm von Deuteronomium 33," p. 284. However, no textual-critical evidence is given for this deletion, and the name fits the line length for the two lines here. Van der Woude (p. 282; see also p. 286) brackets the entire line as secondary. This leaves the following line as a monocolon, which seems dubious. If anything, the entire verse would be secondary, and if so, reflecting another level of the trope's interpretation. (Note that with v. 4, Moses would seem to be the antecedent for the subject of v. 5.)

21 Or, "the heads of the people assembled," taking the -t- form of the verb as intransitive.

The location of this poetic piece in the overall context of Deuteronomy 33 is notable. Unlike the other examples, this one is at the very beginning of the poem. In context, verses 2-5 are prefixed to a list of sayings about tribes. Furthermore, it has little to do with warfare, unlike Judges 5 or Psalm 68. Whether or not the short poetic piece in verses 2-5 was secondarily fitted to its context,²² it has been reshaped and expanded. To show how, let me make some remarks on the different verses.

Verse 2, with its triplet of lines, shows the language of divine movement. At first glance, this seems quite like the older examples in Judges 5 and Psalm 68. However, there are a number of significant departures. First, the initial unit with the place-names expands into three lines (compared with the two-line units in Judges 5:4 and Psalm 68:8). Thus there is a certain development in Deuteronomy 33. Second, the divine name is not invoked in the second person as a hymnic piece, but evoked in the third person as the beginning of a narrative. Third, the verbs as well as their forms differ from the military march that we saw in the older cases of Judges 5 and Psalm 68. In these two poems, Yahweh is a god on the march issuing in the storm and shaking of the world, but in Deuteronomy 33, Yahweh is a god of shining appearance, a source of light. Fourth, the initial verse of Deuteronomy 33 lists three locales, Sinai, Seir and Paran. Sinai is known from Judges 5:4 and from Psalm 68:8 in the divine title, and in Psalm 68:18 apparently also as the place-name. Seir, as we have seen, is known from Judges 5:4 (also Numbers 24:18). The name

22 Verses 2-5 and 26-29 have been thought to constitute a prior piece (or part of one) about military victory. Called "ein Kriegslied" by Seebass, "Die Stammeliste," p. 160; see also Van der Woude, "Erwägungen zum Rahmenpsalm von Deuteronomium 33," p. 285.

of Paran in Deuteronomy 33:2 is the most notable innovation by comparison with the other older exemplars. The name appear also in Habakkuk 3:3, another later example. The distribution suggests the addition of a name better known later than the older examples. Edom has also dropped out of the later examples just as we saw for Psalm 68:8. Many scholars have suggested that this may reflect a negative perception of Edom in Israelite tradition. Interesting overall is the fact that the names change over time.

Verses 2b-3 in Deuteronomy 33 expand in more mythic terms compared with Judges 5 or Psalm 68. Where Psalm 68 and Judges 5 mention the military forces of God later in their poems (Psalm 68:18, Judges 5:20), Deuteronomy 33:2 brings the military force together with the divine march. And in this case, God is rendered in terms of fire, which thematically follows the solar description in the verb, “to shine,” in verse 2. The divine march here includes a divine retinue of holy ones, along with a characterization of the theophany’s fiery character.²³ With verses 4-5, the narrative shifts more explicitly to the human community of the god. These balance the divine forces that attend Yahweh in verse 2. Verses 4-5 add a new focus on Moses and his teaching, along with a claim to Israelite unity under the banner of Yahweh. Overall Deuteronomy 33:2-5 serves an introduction to the poem and it serves to illustrate an integration of all the tribes into an Israel under God and the heavenly hosts, and additionally under Moses and Torah, which are otherwise lacking from the tribal sayings themselves that follow in verse 6 and afterwards. All in all, Deuteronomy 33:2-5 shows a great deal of expansion and development,

23 Cf. “myriads” in Yahweh’s chariotry in Psalm 68:18.

compared with the old poetic piece in Judges 5:405 and Psalm 68:8-9. It may be said that with all the changes that we see in Deuteronomy 33:2-5, revelation becomes all the more creative. The same may be said about the piece as it appears in Habakkuk 3. In this prophetic poem, the short poetic piece is expanded in several ways. Moreover, it offers a basis in the past to hope for the future.

5. Reflections on the Four Versions of the Poetic Piece within the Bible

In this final section, I would like to offer some reflections on the poetic pieces in their four contexts in the Bible. I will begin with a canonical reflection, and then will address two major rubrics of time and space.

A “Canonical” Approach

The four versions of the short poetic piece show a broader significance, when we look at them from the perspective of their location within the Bible. This way of looking at a passage in the Bible from the perspective of its location within the Bible as a whole is sometimes called a “canonical approach.”²⁴ It focuses on the Bible as a whole and on its parts

24 Fundamental works are Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflections on the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); and *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). To regard the “canonical” as literary in some manner is John Barton’s reading, but Childs rejected the point; still it seems to me that it involves both the literary and theological.

within this whole. Instead of thinking about the four poems as four separate pieces, a canonical approach considers them as parts within the whole Bible.²⁵ Since the Bible did not come together as a whole until considerably after the individual books were composed, the canonical approach is one that largely looks back over the whole Bible in retrospect,²⁶ in order to see Israel's theological witness to God in Israel's life and experience. In this sense, the canon represents an additional, "biblical context" for reading these texts in tandem with one another over and above their earlier situation as separate pieces. Accordingly, this approach may be understood as part of the theological enterprise of late biblical times and afterwards.

In terms of its position in the Bible, the first of our four poems is Deuteronomy 33:2-5. This poem comes at the end of the first five books of the Bible, called the Torah in Jewish tradition and the Pentateuch by Christians. It has been suggested that the insertion of the poem was made precisely at the end of Deuteronomy because of the reference to Moses and the teaching in verse 4.²⁷ In context, verses 2-5 offer a poetic reflection on the prose origins story of God and Israel meeting, and of

25 Many scholars regard the term "canon" as a post-biblical anachronism. For this matter, see Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (SDSSRL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 1999).

26 For the phenomena of "Scriptures" in the Second Temple period and "scripturalizing" activity from the sixth century onwards, see Mark S. Smith "What is a Scriptural Text in the Second Temple Period? Texts between their Biblical Past, their Inner-Biblical Interpretation, Their Reception in Second Temple Literature, and their Textual Witnesses," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref; Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 89; Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 271-298.

27 Seeligmann, "A Psalm from Pre-Regal Times," pp. 78-79.

the divine gift of “teaching” to Israel. This teaching or “torah” commanded by the figure of Moses serves not only as a special possession given to Israel; it also marks Israel’s identity as commanded by God. The second exemplar in Judges 5 is in the next part of the Bible, namely the Former Prophets (or Historical Books). With this case, the revelation of the God of Israel’s earliest memory carries forward from the Pentateuch into the Former Prophets where God aids Israel in the land. It offers an expression of divine presence to Israel in the land. Thus the revelation of God known from the earliest moment outside of the land continues to be revelation for later moments in the land. The third and fourth instances show the expression of God’s original revelation in psalm (Psalm 68) and prophecy (Habakkuk 3). The revelation for Psalm 68 celebrates divine victory for Israel as well as the prosperity of the rain (verses 10-11). For Habakkuk 3, the expanded piece describes a past victory of mythic proportions, which in turn provides the basis for hope for the future.

In connection with looking at the position of the four poems within the Bible, their broader significance may be gauged thanks also to their labels and from the people thought to have spoken them. From this perspective, the ancient revelation of God is heard across the Hebrew Bible in different ways, as we see in their labels. They are variously called “blessing” (Deuteronomy 33:1), “song” (Judges 5:1; see verses 3 and 12), “psalm” and “song” (Psalm 68:1), and “prayer” (Habakkuk 3:1). Moreover, the poems are expressed through four very different human voices: Moses (Deuteronomy 33:1); Deborah (Judges 5:1; cf. verse 12); David (Psalm 68:1), and Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:1). The original revelation to Israel by

the God of Israel continues to speak to Israel in different modes and voices, in different times and places, with different additions and expansions; in other words, in different generatings of revelation.

Time

Let us turn to the matter of time in the four examples of the poetic piece. Each one contains a reflection on the past. The older contexts in Judges 5:4-5 and Psalm 68:8-9, not to mention the pre-biblical context that originally gave rise to the piece shared by these passages, represented a fragment of a “lost world” to the composers who produced the poems as a whole. It may have been the very suggestiveness of the ancient “lost world” that may have contributed to the appeal of the piece. It gave the poems’ composers a small piece, a textual totem, of this “lost world.” At the same time, the lack of further particulars in the poetic piece opened it up to its manifold variations and expansions that we have seen. For the composers of the poems, the past unfolded into the present, which in turn gave understanding and meaning to this past. The importance of the past was not restricted to its factuality, that is, whether it is true in and of itself in the past. Rather, it was true in shedding light on the present circumstances of the receivers of that past. In several instances, especially Judges 5 and Deuteronomy 33, the poems show efforts to coordinate the theme sounded in the poetic introductions with some material in the body of the poem that represents the “present” from the perspective of the composers. Habakkuk 3 also makes this coordination of past and present explicit, between the time of the poetic piece’s events and the time of the

prophet. For all of these texts, the reality of the past is linked to the reality of the present. Israel expressed its view about God as a matter of coordinating the past and the present, the old and the new. This is more than stating that the force of tradition is one of continuity. The antiquity of the piece itself highlights the antiquity of the deity's relationship with Israel, and its incorporation into later poetic contexts and the later transmission of those poems offered a claim about the future, namely that in the face of discontinuity or changing circumstances the only underlying reality through time is Yahweh's relationship with Israel. This relationship is understood to go back to Israel's earliest history, and it served, I think, also as an expression of hope for the future.

Space

Israel reached its understandings of the divine not only between its ancient past and its present, but also between distant lands and its home in the land of Israel. When it comes to space in the four different poems, we may note that they capture different aspects of Sinai. Physically, the named places are all understood to be located in the south of Edom or the like. One of the more interesting aspects of the way the poems refer to the place is that its specific location is hardly known. Instead, their meaning as space is largely a matter of the conception of the places as the home of the deity. Sinai appears as the mountain in Psalm 68:18, but its importance lies first and foremost in the divine title, "the One of Sinai" in Judges 5:5 and Psalm 68:9: this mountain belongs to the deity of the author. Thus the place is important for signaling the deity's old home. Furthermore, these

places function not only as the old home of the deity but also as a spatial marker of the ancient antecedent of divine support in battle. Psalm 68, which refers not only to Sinai but also to Jerusalem, understands Sinai as the past corollary to Jerusalem in the present. Deuteronomy 33:2-5 expands its notion of Sinai as the ancient site of the deity. Sinai also is the site of divine teaching and the personage of Moses. As a result, Deuteronomy 33:2-5 presents the foundational story of Sinai in the form for which it is famous, namely as the site of Moses and the divine teaching. At the end, with Deuteronomy 33:4, we finally reach what became the canonical sense of Sinai for later biblical readers. In a sense, the three different forms of the piece that we have examined capture what we may call the early history of Sinai.

The biblical poetic piece that we have studied also suggests that Israel recognized that the God of the people of Israel came from outside of the land of Israel. In this perspective, the people belongs to God, even apart from the land that is Israel. The poetic pieces compared with prose story of Exodus perhaps show a paradox: for the poems, God came to Israel, while for the story of Exodus Israel came to God. For both the poems and the prose story, this movement took place outside of the land of Israel, and both the poems and the prose story of the Pentateuch lead to God and the people together in the land. There is a way in which this movement between “the there and the here,” would be a hallmark understanding of God’s relationship with Israel. Whether in the early poetic piece, or in the prose Exodus story, or in other biblical texts such as Second Isaiah, God comes to Israel wherever Israel is, not only in Israel but also when, and perhaps especially when, it is not in Israel. While Israel’s prose tradition

recalled Moses unknowingly coming to God at the mountain and then came with Israel to this mountain to meet God, the God of Israel of the oldest poetic memory came to Israel.²⁸ The prose and poetry suggest a dialogical model of the divine-human relationship, that the human pursuit for God is sometimes its unknowing response to God's pursuit of humanity.

28 See Y. Muffs, "On Biblical Anthropomorphism," *Bringing the Hidden to Light: The Process of Interpretation. Studies in Honor of Stephen A. Geller*, K. F. Kravitz and D. M. Sharon ed., *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 2 (2011): 166-167.

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摘 要

本文探讨圣经上帝即“耶和华”在圣经中最早期的证据。经外文献的证据主要涉及到一个埃及地名，它看来与“耶和华”这一名字非常相像。圣经内的证据是两篇最古老的文献即《士师记》第 5 章与《诗篇》第 68 篇，即《士师记》5:4-5 与《诗篇》68:8-9 都有一小段描述上帝的诗句。这些片段很可能是一个更长的耶和华颂诗的一小部分。这两段小诗是圣经对上帝的最古老描述。在最早期的以色列，它们是怎样描述上帝的呢？与后来的诗歌如《申命记》33 章与《哈巴谷书》3 章相比，学者能发现关于上帝的观念有哪些变动、变化和扩充呢？本文将对以色列颂赞上帝的这四段小诗为对象，进行神学反思，既强调它们在正典中的处境和特定文体，又对它们反映的时空观进行探究。

关键词：耶和华、以东、西珥、西奈