

Articles from 2013 and after
are now only accessible on
the Chicago Journals website at
JOURNALS.UCHICAGO.EDU

The Tetragrammaton: An Overlooked Interpretation

Author(s): William A. Irwin

Source: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Oct., 1944), pp. 257-259

Published by: [University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/542999>

Accessed: 11-02-2016 12:18 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

explanation of the text itself with its many difficult allusions." But not so others; a common view is that here we have the accession of the youth (which McNeille had alleged too soon) as king or as vizier: he stood in the king's place. Siegfried urges that the imperfect of the verb means that the event was yet future: *qui successurus erat*. Now, beyond a doubt, the phrase can mean this. "To stand in one's place" is good Hebrew for succeeding to his position or throne. And the imperfect would express the future from the point of the narrative. But, on the contrary, the Hebrew does not demand such interpretation. The crux of the matter is the reference in the suffix on תְּהִנְתֵּר. It is idle to invoke English usage and point out that "the youth" is the nearest antecedent. Nonetheless, such identification gives the one interpretation harmonious with the theme of the passage. The youth continued to stand in his own place, that is, remained poor and humble. It may be objected that Siegfried's interpretation is more in harmony with the tense of the verb; for "continuing to stand" we should expect a participle. Whatever force there may be in this is obviated by the fact that the imperfect is employed in this force by Koheleth (e.g., 3:13, 14, 15, 22).

Verse 16 is relatively simple. There was no

end of all the crowds at whose head the old king was enthroned; nonetheless, later generations will give no thought to him. The passage, then, translates:

- 13 Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who does not know enough to take advice,
- 14 even though he had come from prison to the throne, though, too, in his own kingdom he was born in poverty.
- 15 I saw all the living who move about busily under the sun, among them that youth, who continued in his own station in life—
- 16 there was no end of all the people: all whom he ruled; yet those who come later will never give him a happy thought.

The passage is a logically coherent unit. The king had every advantage. He rose from the most menial circumstances to a throne where for long years he was ruler of seemingly endless crowds of people; he ruled the youth also. But the youth had nothing, as wealth and power are commonly appraised: he was poor, and he continued poor to the end. For this is precisely the author's comparison: wealth and power along with foolishness, as against wisdom along with nothing at all. And, he says, the latter is better!

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE TETRAGRAMMATON: AN OVERLOOKED INTERPRETATION

WILLIAM A. IRWIN

THE problem of the tetragrammaton has been given renewed attention in recent months. In this *Journal*, III (1944), 1-8, Raymond A. Bowman advanced the view that the name is derived from a root meaning "to speak"; and in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LVII, 269 ff., Julian Morgenstern adduces the usage of Second Isaiah to show that the word *hû* was understood as a divine title. In this he was anticipated by Samuel I. Feigin, whose discussion in his *Missitrei Heavar*¹ is such as to merit its being presented to readers who may not have seen it in the Hebrew original. He says (pp. 355 and 430-31):

"The name Yahweh is an imperfect from *הָיָה* in the ancient form which had *pathah* with

¹ New York: Hebrew Publication Society of Palestine and America, 1943.

the preformative *yod* and *waw* as the second radical instead of the later *yod*. It appears also as the first person *הָיָה* when God speaks on his own behalf [Exod. 3:14; Judg. 6:16; Hos. 1:9].

"Perhaps, too, the participial form of the verb *הָיָה*, namely *אָנָה* [Hû²], is used to signify Yahweh.² Compare, 'I, I am He [Hû²], and

² [The form is a passive participle with stative meaning. As *רַבְשָׁתָה* is contracted to *רַבָּתָה*, so *הָיָה* (later *הָיָה*) was contracted to *הָיָה* and finally *אָנָה*, probably under the influence of the third person pronoun. While *הָיָה* expresses the existence of temporary things (Eccles. 2:22) and *הָיָה* (Exod. 9:3) expresses God's power acting temporarily, the passive form *אָנָה* expresses constant existence which is befitting as an epithet of God. For the passive participle expressing constant action compare *אַחֲזֵל herēb* (Song of Songs 3:8), "constant holders of sword"; *בָּטָעָה*

there is no god with me' (Deut. 32:39) with the verse in Isaiah, 'I, I am Yahweh, and beside me there is no saviour' (Isa. 43:11). The word *Hû* in Deuteronomy means Yahweh. The same meaning attaches to the verse, 'I, I am He [*Hû*] who wipes out your transgressions for my own sake, and your sins I will not remember' (Isa. 43:25), namely, 'I am Yahweh.' So likewise, 'I, I am He [*Hû*] who comforts you' (Isa. 51:12), namely, 'I, Yahweh, comfort you.' Also in the verses, 'I, Yahweh, am the first, and with the last I am He [*Hû*]' (Isa. 41:4), 'I am He [*Hû*], and none can deliver from my hand' (Isa. 43:13), 'And unto old age I am He [*Hû*], and unto gray hairs I will carry' (Isa. 46:4), 'I am He [*Hû*], I am the first, yea I am the last' (Isa. 48:12)—in all these verses one can interpret 'I am Yahweh.' Also the verse, 'For my mouth, it [*Hû*] has commanded, and his spirit, it [*Hû*] has gathered them' (Isa. 34:16), which Professor David Yellin explains as an ellipsis for 'His mouth, it has commanded' (*Higrê Migrâ* on Isaiah [1939], p. 36) is to be interpreted, 'For the mouth of Yahweh'; *Hû* serves in place of Yahweh.

"Also some proper names which end in *Hû* are to be explained as compounded of the participle of **תְּדִין**, standing for Yahweh, and another element. At times *Hû* is shortened still further. Compare, for example, *Abîhû*, son of Aaron, and *Abiyahu* or *Abiyah*, king of Judah. Both are one, but in *Abîhû* the name of God is expressed by the participle of **תְּדִין**,

(Isa. 26:3), "it is constantly trusting"; *haśsedûdah* (Pss. 137:8) "the professional robber"; *ṭāṣr̥ weṭāzûb* (Deut. 32:36) "permanent ruler and helper." The use of intransitive verbs in passive participle to express stative meaning is common in the Mishnah.

For another contraction of **ר** compare **כַּרְ**, "branding," from **כַּרְרִ** (Isa. 3:24). For contraction of **ג** compare **רַרְתָּ** (Mesha Stone, l. 12) for **רְאִירָתָ** "gazing stock." For contraction of **ע** compare **רַעַתָּ** "friendship."

For other examples of contraction of **ר** compare **שַׁחַר**, "swim," from *sahw* (Gesenius-Buhl, 16th ed., p. 781); **גַּחַר** "pasture" from *ṭahw*, which is still found in Aramaic **גַּחְנָא** (Onqelos Gen. 41:2, 18).

Compare also **רַחֲנָא** "it will be" (Eccles. 11:3) for **רַחֲנָה** with additional **א**.—S.I.F.]

while in *Abiyah* the name of God appears in the regular form. The name is to be interpreted as 'Yahweh is my God.' So too, *Elîhû* (I Chron. 26:7; 27:18), *Elîhu* (Job 32:2, 5, 6; 34:1; 36:1; I Sam. 1:1; I Chron. 12:20), and *Elijah* [*Eliyâh* and *Eliyahû*]: the interpretation of both is 'Yahweh is my God.'

"The name Solomon, too, is to be explained as compounded of *Shâlôm* and *Hû*, 'Peace of Yahweh,' but the name of Yahweh is written as the participle *Hû*, which can be shortened to *Hû*, and, finally, *waw* falls out and only *he* with *mappiq* is left, from which at length the *mappiq* also falls out as if a pronominal suffix were before us. And, indeed, Nathan called Solomon by the name *Jedidiah* (II Sam. 12:25), for the two names have the same meaning, 'The peace of Yahweh' and 'Beloved of Yahweh.' Compare the names *Shelemiah* and *Shelemiahû*, in which the tetragrammaton is preserved in shortened form.

"Sometimes the name is compounded of two divine names. The name *Dôdawâhû* (II Chron. 20-37) is compounded of *Dôd* and *Hû*, and even the *waw* connecting the two names is preserved. But in the name *Dôdô* (I Chron. 11:12, 26, etc.) not alone is the *waw* connecting the names lost but also the root *Hû* is contracted to *ô*, as at the beginning of names *Yahû* is reduced to *Yô*.³

"The *Dwdh*, mentioned in the stela of Mesha, the *r̥l* of which Mesha carried into the city of Ataroth and dragged before Chemosh in Keriath (Inscription of Mesha, ll. 12-13), was, it seems, compounded of *Dwd* and an abbreviation of the participle of **תְּדִין**, signifying Yahweh. We have here a divine name compounded of *Dwd* and *Hû*, but each one appearing in its own right. Professor Albright in his latest book, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (1942), explains *r̥l* as a proper name, Uriel; *Dwdh* he explains as *dodah* with *mappiq*—her *dod*, namely of Ataroth (p. 218, n. 86). But he gives a completely new meaning to the word *dwd*; that it is 'chief.' Against this one may note that the noun does not appear with this meaning anywhere in Hebrew. According

³ [For two deities used as a personal name compare **לְלִי-עַדְשָׁמָאשׁ**, **לְלִי-עַדְשָׁין**, **עַדְשָׁמָאשׁ** (see J. J. Stamm, *Die akkadische Namengebung* [1939], p. 135).—S.I.F.]

ingly it seems preferable to explain רְאֵל as an object of the cult which stood in the eyes of Mesha for Yahweh, and he dragged it before

⁴ [Ibid. For הָאֵל as the divine name see James A. Montgomery, "The Hebrew Divine Name and the Personal Pronoun הָאֵל " (*JBL*, LXIII [1944], 161–63). Professor Montgomery adduces other examples where הָאֵל stands for Yahweh. The phrase הָאֵל (*II Kings*

Chemosh his god. Dwdh, then, is the name of a deity, Dawidhu = Dawid + Hu.⁵

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

2:14) is possibly to be read אֲרָפָה הָאֵל . "Where is Hū," namely, Yahweh. Very instructive is the verse *Jer. 5:12*, where אֲרָפָה לֹא , "there is no Hu," is parallel to denying Yahweh.—S.I.F.] (Montgomery's article appeared since the above was written.—W. A. I.)

THE ORIGIN OF אֱלֹהִים , "GOD," IN HEBREW

SAMUEL I. FEIGIN

As is well known the name אֱלֹהִים , "God," is explained either as an enlargement of אֵל or as derived from a special root אָל .¹ It seems to me that we have in אֵל a compound name of אֵל , "God," and אָה a shortened form for אָהֵי , "I shall be," the designation of Yahweh in the first person (*Exod. 3:14*; *Judg. 6:16*; *Hos. 1:9*). As Yahweh the third person is related to אָהֵי , originally אָהַוְה the first-person *qal* of the root *hwy*,² also אָה abbreviation of אָהֵי in the first person is related to יְהָ shortened form of Yahweh in the third person.³ The אָ which was lost in the combination is compensated by lengthening the vowel אָ , as the lost אָ is compensated by lengthening the preceding vowel in syllables ending with אָ . Thus בָּרָא became בָּרָא , "he created"; רָאֵשׁ , "head," became רָאֵשׁ , "heads," finally רָאֵשׁ ; and יְהָמָר , "he will say," becomes יְהָמָר , finally יְהָמָר , so also אֵלָהִים became אֱלֹהִים .

The form אֵלָהִים is preserved in Aramaic and in Hebrew becomes, as usual, אֱלֹהִים . In cuneiform both forms are preserved *ilahi* and *iluha*.⁴

For such a combination of deities compare Dwdh,⁵ namely, Dawid + Hu.⁶ In the same region is found also Ishtar-Kemosh.⁶ It is in-

¹ See Gesenius-Buhl, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch* (16th ed.; 1915), p. 39.

² See *Missitrei Heavar*, p. 355, and above, p. 257. The origin of it is "I shall be with you," as is explained in *Exod. 3:12*.

³ For יְהָ being shortened from Yahweh see Gesenius-Buhl, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

⁴ Mesha Inscription, l. 12.

⁵ See *Missitrei Heavar*, pp. 430–31, and also above, p. 258. Professor Irwin calls my attention to the compound deity *ntyhu* (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century* [1923], No. 44:3).

⁶ Mesha Inscription, l. 17.

teresting to note that in both cases the other element precedes the element of the national deity, Ishtar before Kemosh, Dawid before Hū = Yahweh. Moreover, both may have some connection with the deity of love, Ishtar being the well-known deity of love in Babylonia and the West, and Dawid, judging from the name *dād*, means love also.

Whether Dwdh was regarded as a separate deity or was only a manifestation of Yahweh as god of fertility is hard to decide.

The two elements of אֵל and אָה , of which the name אֵלָהִים = אֱלֹהִים is compounded, may have been originally two special deities, אֵל being the deity of earth and אָה = Yahweh the deity of heaven and the national deity of the Hebrews in general and of Israelites in particular.⁷ But Professor G. Cameron pointed out to me that אֵל may have been a kind of determinative "god" in general and has no specific designation as "god of the earth."

The singular אֵלָהִים , pronounced אֵלָהָה , is used in plural form אֵלָהִים , originally "gods," but later "God" in the singular. This interchange between "god" and "gods" to designate the same divinity was found also in the old period in *ilAmurru*, "the god Amurru" and *ilAmurru* (*DINGIR.DINGIR.MAR.TU*). Also, *Ba'al* appears as *Be'ālīm*, *Ashtōreth* as *Ashtārōth*, *Anath* as *Anāthōth*, the manifestations of the deity in various places and in various functions.⁸

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

⁷ Cf. the interesting article of Professor G. Levi della Vida, "El 'elyon in Genesis 14:18–20," *JBL*, LXIII (1944), 1–9.

⁸ Cf. W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1940), p. 161.