The Revelation
of the Name YHWH
to Moses

Perspectives from Judaism,
the Pagan Graeco-Roman World,
and Early Christianity

edited by George H. van Kooten

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Themes in Biblical Narrative

Jewish and Christian Traditions

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INTRODUCTION

The revelation of YHWH's name to Moses, described in chapters 3 & 6 of the Book of Exodus, is a momentous event according to the Old Testament. The name 'Yahweh', connected with the phrase *ehyeh asher ehyeh* ('I am that I am'; Exod 3:14), is of central importance in Judaism, and 'Yahwism' became tantamount to Jewish monotheism. As such, this designation of God also attracted the attention of pagan writers in the Graeco-Roman period. And early Christians, who considered themselves to be in direct continuity with Judaism, had to deal with this divine name as well. These three perspectives on YHWH—from the point of view of the Old Testament & Early Judaism, the pagan Graeco-Roman World, and the New Testament & Early Christianity, respectively—constitute the framework for this volume. The papers were presented at the 2004 Themes in Biblical Narrative conference, which took place at the Faculty of Theology & Religious Studies of the University of Groningen from 26th–27th July 2004. That year the conference coincided with, and formed part of, the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and the International Organization of Qumran Studies (IOQS), which met in Groningen at the same time. This must have been the largest gathering of biblical scholars ever witnessed by the university in the almost four centuries since its foundation in 1614.

The first part of this volume focuses on the Name in the Old Testament & Early Judaism. Wout Jac. van Bekkum (Groningen) and Eibert Tigchelaar (Groningen) each first introduce the readers to central features of the narrative of Exodus 3, and subsequently follow the path of some of these features through time. Van Bekkum, after exploring the text of Exodus, continues his journey by further tracing hymnical, mystical, and kabbalistic traditions on the divine Name.

Tigchelaar calls attention to a specific phenomenon in the narrative, that of God's command to Moses to bare his feet (Exod 3:5). As Tigchelaar argues, one would be mistaken to assume this to be a trivial detail. With the combined aid of source, form, tradition, and, in particular, redaction criticism, Tigchelaar maintains that 'the

command to Moses is a literary foreshadowing of priestly customs
in the Tent of Meeting and later the Temple'. For that reason, 'the
bare feet command is not just a descriptive element in the episode
of Exod 3, but prescriptive for the author's intended audience, priests
and pilgrims'. After discussing the possible Arabian background of
these customs, and the earliest reception of the bare feet command
in the Book of Joshua, Tigchelaar sketches the history of the prac-
tice of barefootedness on the Temple Mount in early Jewish, early
Christian, and Islamic sources.

Within the Old Testament, the narrative of YHWH's name is of
consequence for the theologies of other books. This is shown in
detailed studies by Horst Seebass (Bonn) and Eep Talstra (Amster-
dam). Seebass discusses the name 'YHWH' as it occurs in the so-
called 'Aaronic blessing' in Numbers 6:22–27, the blessing which
became the exclusive prerogative of Aaron and the Aaronides, the
priests descended from him. Seebass contextualizes the Aaronic bless-
ing in the Book of Numbers and shows how the theology of YHWH's
name in Numbers is related to the Book of Exodus.

Talstra, subsequently, also contributes to disentangling the various
Old Testament reflections on the Name. He does so by comparing
the way 'the Name' functions in the Deuteronomistic literature, espe-
cially in the books of Deuteronomy and Kings, on the one hand,
and the book of Chronicles, on the other hand. Whereas many schol-
ars have stressed the transcendence of YHWH in the former,
'demythologizing' literature, they have tended to consider the later
literature as a retreat from this advanced position. Questioning the
validity of discussing the book of Chronicles in terms of 'intellectual
progress', Talstra shows that, in Chronicles, 'the Name is attached
to the main participants in the religious history of Israel: the temple,
the city and now also the people itself. Rather than being an idiom
of transcendence, it has become part of the language of identity.
The Name is called upon the people.'

The last two papers in the first section, by Jacques van Ruiten
(Groningen) and Ronit Nikolsky (Groningen), respectively, deal with
early-Jewish and rabbinic interpretations of the story of the revela-
tion of God's Name. Van Ruiten draws attention to the rewriting
of this story by the second-century BCE Jewish poet Ezekiel Tragicus
in his *Exagoge*. Whereas some deviations from the text of *Exodus* are
due to the rendering of a narrative text into drama, Ezekiel's *Exagoge*

also solves contradictions, reflects particular exegetical traditions, and introduces particular concepts for the sake of his pagan audience. At the same time, the notion of the promised land is omitted. This might reflect the changed perspective of a Jewish author living outside the boundaries of Judaea in the Hellenistic period. Moses is also portrayed as less rebellious to God, and the sometimes difficult relationship between Moses and the Israelites is smoothed, probably for apologetic reasons.

Nikolsky, in turn, highlights the remarkable fact that rabbinic literature from the second century CE onwards does not show particular interest in the revelation of God's name: 'Even when the event is discussed in late-antique rabbinic literature, the name revealed [in Exodus]: "I am who I am", is *not* mentioned.' Instead other aspects of the revelation story attract discussion, either on the allegorical meaning of the burning bush itself, the duration of God's revelation to Moses (which was assumed to have lasted for seven days), and Moses' attitude towards God (his refusal to comply with God's will).

The second part on the Name in the pagan Graeco-Roman world opens with a contribution by George van Kooten (Groningen) on how Moses and his God were perceived from an outsider's perspective in the Classical world. Criticizing scholarly views which hold that the figure of Moses in pagan sources is depicted primarily in anti-Semitic terms, Van Kooten stresses the rich and varied reception of Moses and the name of his God. They received a remarkably positive treatment in authors who emphasized Moses' outstanding wisdom and philosophical, aniconic theology, identified him with no less a figure than the mythical singer Musaeus, made the philosopher Pythagoras dependent on the mysteries of Moses-Mochos, and characterized Moses' God, in an ontological way, as 'He who is', as 'the noetic light', and 'the highest God'. These authors considered him unnameable and invisible, called him the 'one true God', 'He who is above the seven celestial spheres, i.e. the creator', and named him not only 'Iao' (Greek for 'Yahweh') and 'Sabaoth' but also 'Dionysus' and 'Jupiter Sabazius'.

The philosophical ontological potential and meaning of YHWH's Name ('I am that I am'), already briefly mentioned, is explored in full by Myles Burnyeat (Oxford) in his contribution on the second-century CE pagan Greek philosopher Numenius of Apemea. Burnyeat shows that in Numenius' eyes Moses holds a special status as a

Platonist *avant la lettre*, and that the episode of the revelation of God's Name as 'Being' (ὁ ὤν) is deliberately echoed in Numenius' work *On the Good*. In Numenius' view, among the other nations, 'Moses and the Jews will have stood out because they alone got so far in tracking the truth as to *identify* God with being. The others will have earned praise for expressing allegorically in their myths and ceremonies the less abstract doctrine (. . .), that material things must be held together and governed by some changeless incorporeal entity.' The way in which Numenius reveals the Name of God as 'Being' in book II of *On the Good* 'was meant to recall Moses' encounter with the burning bush.'

Numenius' positive evaluation of Moses, the Jews and their God contrasts sharply with the attack by another second-century CE Platonist, Celsus, on the Christian Origen. This issue is treated in a separate contribution by ROBBERT VAN DEN BERG (Leiden). Whereas Numenius considers the Jews to stand out from the other peoples who claim to possess age-old wisdom, Celsus criticizes the Jews and the Christians for claiming a monopoly in this. He argues 'that the Jews and the Christians were wrong not to worship Zeus, for this is in fact the same god as theirs, be it that the Greeks just happen to call him differently.' Van den Berg shows in detail how the discussion between Celsus and Origen about the name of God 'is tied up with ancient Greek ideas about divine names'.

The third and final part of this volume is concerned with the Name in the New Testament and Early Christianity. Van den Berg's paper already gave an introduction into the direct polemical encounter between particular pagan Greek philosophers and early Christians. Now the function of the Name in early Christianity is explored further. BERT-JAN LIETAERT PEERBOLTE (Kampen) and RIEMER ROUKEMA (Kampen) deal with New Testament testimonies of this reflection. LIETAERT PEERBOLTE highlights the so-called 'Christ hymn' in Paul's *Letter to the Philippians* (2:6–11), which speaks of 'the Name above all names' being bestowed on Jesus Christ after his resurrection by God. After reconstructing this hymn, Lietaert Peerbolte addresses his main question: 'what is the meaning of the Name above all names as ascribed to Christ in this hymn and how does the act of bestowing the Name relate to Christ's resurrection?'

ROUKEMA, in his contribution, deals with the divine Name in the Gospel of John. In this gospel, Roukema argues, 'Jesus is presented

as the Old Testament *Kyrios*, YHWH.' To establish this hypothesis, Roukema scrutinizes the various correspondences between Christ and YHWH in the Gospel of John. Drawing a parallel with Paul's Philippian hymn, he argues that 'if it is correct that in the Gospel of John Jesus is presented as the Old Testament *Kyrios*, this is not a new phenomenon, since it occurs already in the epistles of Paul.' Both contributions on the New Testament show the great importance which was attached to the divine Name in the earliest Christian circles.

The final two contributions, by ALBERT GELJON (Utrecht) and GERARD LUTTIKHUIZEN (Groningen), relate to the further reception of the Name in early Christianity. GELJON shows how the Jewish-Hellenistic exegete and philosopher Philo of Alexandria influenced the way in which Christians such as the fourth-century AD theologian Gregory of Nyssa understood the story of Moses and the burning bush. This is but an example of the great impact which Philo had on early-Christian writers.

LUTTIKHUIZEN explores another side of early Christianity by commenting on Gnostic reflections on the name and identity of God. Drawing their inspiration from the book of Exodus, Gnostics designated God 'The-One-who-is' (Exod 3:14) but they were likely to understand this designation in a Platonist way. Despite this general consensus with contemporary views, at the same time they differed from both mainstream Christians and pagan philosophers.

This selection of papers allows us to conclude that the Name of God and its revelation to Moses constitute a major theme which runs from the book of Exodus through the Old Testament, early Judaism, and early Christianity. It also attracted pagan philosophical interest, both positive and negative. One of the most important results to emerge from this volume is the insight that the Name of God was not only perceived from an insider's perspective, but also provoked a reaction from outsiders. The combined perspectives show the fundamental importance of the divine Name for the formation of Jewish and Christian identities.

We are very grateful to the Faculty of Theology & Religious Studies of the University of Groningen for hosting this large gathering. We would also like to express our thanks to the Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities for making the conference possible. The staff at Brill Academic Publishers have, as

always, given us their meticulous assistance in preparing the volume
for publication.

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PART I

THE NAME IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND
EARLY JUDAISM

WHAT'S IN THE DIVINE NAME?
EXODUS 3 IN BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC TRADITION

Wout Jac. van Bekkum

1. INTRODUCTION

ועל דבר כבוד שמך, כי שמך כן תהלתך, ובשמך ינילון עמך, ולמען שמך תאריך
אפך, ותתן כבוד לשמך, כי כל אשר ידע את שמך, מפני שמך נחת הוא, והשומרו
מזכירו ביראה ובטהרה ובקדשה, כי לפי כבודך העלמתו מרב בני אדם, ואיננו
נמסר אלא למי שהוא ענו ושפל רוח וירא שמים, ואינו כועס ואינו עומד על
מדותיו, ובכל דור סוד ממנו בארת.[1]

> As far as Your glorious name is concerned, Your name is in accor-
> dance with Your praise, in Your name Your people will rejoice, for
> the sake of Your name You will be lenient, You will bestow honour
> to Your name, because every one who knows Your name, it is Your
> name that is pleasing, the one who guards it will mention it in awe,
> purity, and holiness, in accordance with Your glory You have con-
> cealed it from the majority of the people; it has only been handed
> down to anyone who is modest, humble, God-fearing, slow to anger
> and not seeking his own interests. In each generation You have dis-
> closed something from its secret.[2]

This quotation has been derived from the standard medieval prayer
book of Saadia Gaon, the great scholar and rabbi who was the head
of the celebrated Babylonian Talmudic academy of Sura and later
of Baghdad in the first half of the tenth century. Specific mention-
ing of the name of God as being a part of God's glory and mys-
tery is essential in all branches of Jewish tradition.[3] In Saadia's time
biblical and rabbinic and even Islamic notions fused into a single
idea: the holy name of God contains power and embraces the secret
laws and harmonious order which pervade and govern all existence.

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[1] I. Davidson, S. Assaf, and B.I. Joel, *Siddur R. Saadja Gaon*, Jerusalem 1978, 379.
[2] Cf. also M. Reisel, *Observations on 'HYH 'SHR 'HYH, HW'H', and SHM HMPHRSH*,
Assen 1957, 79.
[3] The mystery of God in modern days: H. Ott, 'Does the Notion of "Mystery"—
As Another Name for God—Provide a Basis for a Dialogical Encounter between
the Religions?', in: F. Sontag and M.D. Bryant (eds), *God: The Contemporary Discussion*,
New York 1982, 5–17.

In earlier sources both mystical and non-mystical, the sages professed their belief in the pre-existence of the Hebrew language and its creative and communicative purposes. A fine biblical demonstration of the uniqueness of Hebrew as the divine language is the episode in which Adam names the animals. Later interpretations, which do not diverge meaningfully from the literal text in Gen 2:19, indicate that the animals had their names from the very beginning: Adam only recognized and pronounced them. We can learn that medieval scholars and sages added new linguistic ideas to the body of traditional rabbinic lore, but ancient concepts remained vivid in numerous commentaries on *Sefer Yezirah*, 'The Book of Creation', a brief mystical work on God's creation of the world by means of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the numbers one to ten, that is to say, by the spiritual forces represented by these letters and numbers.

Creation and name (either by the power of the name of God or by combining letters to names) were considered as parts of formative processes by which God succeeded to bring the world and its creatures into being. In following the development of certain biblical and rabbinic ideas concerning the divine name, we shall see how lasting an influence some of these quite complicated ideas exerted on the theology of post-biblical, medieval and also modern Judaism.

Praising the name of God was certainly not a novelty. The prophet Isaiah explicitly says: 'He who lives for ever, whose name is holy' (Isa 57:15). A famous formula in the Psalms is: 'Praise be to his glorious name for ever' (Ps 72:19), 'Blessed be his glorious name' (Neh 9:5), etc. Paying respect to God's name in the cultic sense defines the relation between God and Israel, as can be illustrated by Exod 20:24: 'Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honoured, I will come to you and bless you'. A divine name may contain a divine message: with regard to the biblical name of God many questions and discussions about the meaning and function of the proposed name are based on Exodus, chapter 3.

2. Exodus 3

Exodus 3 is one of the main sources for the biblical attitude to the name of God which has been studied in great detail by many

scholars.[4] The rabbinic evaluation of this biblical source leaves room for further investigation. The story of Exodus 3 is remarkable for its sequence of motifs: Moses is introduced here as a tender of the flock of his father-in-law Jethro who was previously called Reuel ('Shepherd of God'?). He leads this flock to the far side of the desert (literally, אחר המדבר—'behind the desert') which *Targum Onkelos* translates as שפר רעיא, the choice pasture, alluding to his task of shepherding the flock and seeking after a good pasture. For this purpose he reached Horeb, already called the mountain of God according to the text. In later commentaries one would read: this is meant על שם סופו 'as it was destined' to become the mountain of God.

It remains unclear whether the next scene takes place on the mountain itself or in the vicinity of the mountain in the desert, but here Moses was vouchsafed a vision (מראה). This vision starts with 'an angel of God (מלאך יהוה) appearing to Moses in a flame of fire rising out of the midst of a bush'.[5] The angel as an introductory manifestation of God's presence is immediately linked with a unique kind of fire flame (בלבת-אש), producing the fire of itself, because 'the bush was burning with fire, yet it was not consumed'. What presented itself to Moses was unusual and clearly intended to arrest his attention and to bring him near. It is quite unclear what is meant with a 'bush', in Hebrew סנה (see also Nikolsky, this vol., Introd.), and all commentators have difficulty with the word which is understood in Löw's famous *Flora der Juden* as a varicoloured blackberry

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[4] K. van der Toorn, 'Yahweh', in: Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (eds), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (DDD)*, Leiden 1995, 1711–30. The name YHWH is either a promise ('I will certainly be there'; Buber-Rosenzweig: 'Ich bin da') or an allusion to the incomparability of YHWH ('I am who I am', i.e. without peer). The Israelite explanation is evidently a piece of theology rather than a reliable etymology. Some scholars believe that YHWH is the abbreviated name of a deified ancestor: YHWH-El ('May El be present'), cf. Mari texts: 'Yahwi-Ilu'; also reconstructed cult name El YHWH ('El who reveals himself'). HWH is more plausibly connected to a storm god; El has a solar appearance; elements in theophany texts describe YHWH as a solar deity. Official gods like YHWH of (*be-*) Zion (Ps 99:2) and of (*be-*) Hebron (2 Sam 15:7) point to a situation of poly-Yahwism. The Deuteronomic emphasis on the unity of YHWH (אחד) must be understood against this background.

[5] G.H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible*, Ontario 1975, 46–7; Morgenstern claimed that the Elohist narrative consists of verses in which a Yahwist insertion has been made by the redactor. Others have warned for the difficulties of disentanglement of J and E in Exodus 3. The expression מלאך יהוה points to some distinction between a theology of transcendence and a theology of immance according to two speculative interpretations of God descending from his heavenly abode or God who dwells permanently in the bush.

bush or *rubus discolor* [3, 183]. The confusion in the understanding of the words ורצון שכני סנה in Deut 33:16, usually translated as 'the favour of the Thorn bush-dweller', has led to the explanation of the word as a variant of the name סיני, Sinai. However, this is hardly appropriate and seems to be employed for exegetical purposes of a later date.[6]

Verse 4 establishes the transition from vision to speech, as God, in Hebrew אלהים, twice calls Moses by his original name, commands him to take off his sandals (see also Tigchelaar, this vol.), for the place on which he is standing is holy ground, and introduces himself as the God of his own father, and the God of the three ancestors, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In traditional Jewish exegesis or Midrash the idea of this divine introduction was even taken further in the explanation of Rabbi Joshua the priest, son of Nehemiah, saying that when God revealed himself to Moses, Moses was a novice in prophecy; hence God thought: 'If I reveal myself to him in a loud voice, I will terrify him, and if in a soft voice he will think lightly of prophecy'. So what did God do? He revealed himself in the voice of Moses' father. Thereupon Moses said: 'Here am I (הנני); what does my father desire?' Then God said: 'I am not your father, but the God of your father; I have come to you gently so that you will be not afraid, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'.[7] An argument for this midrashic

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[6] M.C.A. Korpel, 'Thornbush', in: *DDD*, 1618–21: שכני סנה is an epithet that 'was maintained in spite of the strong corrective tendency of later tradition'. This might be interpreted as an argument in favour of its authenticity. The Yahwistic account of the appearance of the deity in a burning סנה in Exod 3:1–6 confirms the importance of this concept in early Israel. Because the סנה may probably be identified as *Ziziphus spina Christi*, this designation comes very close to the Ugaritic 'god of the Ziziphus (jujubetree)'. The fact that already in the New Kingdom Egyptian gods—even the highest god Amun—may be described as dwelling in or sitting under the holy Ziziphus may be an extra argument for identifying the Hebrew סנה with this Ziziphus; J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism: The Roots of Israelite Monotheism* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 91), Louvain 1990, 182–97. There may be a connection between the name of the Ziziphus-bush and the name of Sinai. In Judg 5:5 and Ps 68:18 God is called זה סיני ('He-of-the-Sinai') which may refer to an earlier 'He-of-the-Thornbush'. If the Ugaritic 'god of the Ziziphus' was an ancestral spirit, it may be that the Hebrew epithet 'Ziziphus-dweller' points to the earliest phase of Yahwism when YHWH was still an ancestral manifestation of El; also 2 Sam 5:24: 'As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean YHWH has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army'.

[7] Saadia Gaon in his *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* discusses this passage and

approach of the verse is the unexpectedness of a God describing himself as the god of one's own father, and Moses' immediate reaction, only then hiding his face, whereas the reverse should have been the case. Moses first believed it was his father and then realised it was God.[8]

The text of Exodus 3 indicates that the verses 7 to 21, the end of the chapter, reflect a dialogue between God and Moses. Moses is confronted with the divine plan to redeem the Hebrew people and with the leading position he is invited to accept. A central issue is raised when he asks: 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them: "The God of your fathers has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?' (v. 13). This question receives in fact a threefold or at least a twofold answer in vv. 14–15: 'God [אלהים] said to Moses: "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I am has sent me to you". God also said to Moses: "Say to the Israelites: God, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you"'. Numerous commentators and exegetes have observed that we are given here an explanation of the tetragrammaton that connects it with the stem h-w-h- or h-y-h, 'to be', also 'to become, to befall'. Whatever reservations one may have regarding the etymological correctness of this derivation, one cannot negate the fact that a connection with h-w-h/h-y-h gives meaning to the divine name, although one theologian once called the attempts to interpret the letters Y-H-W-H in terms of 'being', 'happening', or 'bringing to pass' as 'hayyaology'.[9]

The form of the verb that is nowadays called in Hebrew 'imperfect' or 'future' could signify any tense, past, present, and future, and this is how it was already understood in the first centuries CE in *Shemot* or *Exodus Rabba* 3.6 by Rabbi Isaac who said: 'God said to Moses: Tell them that I am now what I always was and always will be'; for this reason the word אהיה is written three times. In a majority of midrashic statements the sense of אהיה is not exclusively

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concludes that the repetitive attachment of God's name to each of the three Patriarchs is intended as an expression of God's esteem and high regard for them, edn. S. Rosenblatt, New Haven, 126.

[8] *Midrash Exodus Rabba* 3.1, edn. Avigdor Shinan, Jerusalem 1984, 119–21.

[9] Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible*, 48–62, 98; J.C. Hoekindijk, in: Bruce O. Boston, 'How are Revelation and Revolution Related?', *Theology Today* 26 (1969) 143.

connected to the presence of God but to his involvement with the
people of Israel. Rabbinic explanation implies God's help and involve-
ment in times of exile and oppression, to a large extent inspired by
v. 7 ('I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt . . . and
I am concerned about their suffering'). 'I am', therefore means: I
am in virtue of my deeds; it is I who am with my creatures in their
hour of trouble and need, it is I who am with my people in times
of suffering. A historical-actual note to this explanation has been
added by R. Jacob b. Abina in the name of R. Huna from the city
of Sepphoris:

> Tell them that I will be with them in this servitude (שעבוד), and in
> servitude will they always continue, but I will be with them. Whereupon
> Moses said to God: Shall I tell them this? Is not sufficient for the hour
> the evil thereof? God replied: No, thus shall you say to the Israelites:
> I am has sent me to you. To you only do I reveal [the future peri-
> ods of servitude] but not to them (*Exodus Rabba* 3.6).

In the same way, R. Solomon bar Isaac, the famous Rashi from
Troyes in France (twelfth century) considers אהיה as 'God accompanying
the Israelites in any troublesome time' (Exod 3:14). The words 'This
is what you [Moses] are to say to them' imply that Moses should
be silent about any future period of trouble and enslavement.

This and similar expositions seem to imply that the divine name
in the form of the tetragrammaton possesses some kind of a pro-
tective value for both community and individual, an aspect which,
as we have mentioned before, became essential in Jewish magic and
mystic lore, strengthened by the fact that the tetragrammaton in the
sense of 'being', either 'being there/existing' or 'being with', estab-
lishes the revelation of a name, or rather a title, without any addi-
tional relevant information with regard to the divine essence. The
divine name 'as it is' asserts the transcendental and hidden nature
of this deity, although the name is manifest and made known by
God himself.[10] Of course, biblical and rabbinic tradition defend the
exclusivity of this God proclaiming his true existence as 'You alone

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[10] Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, Jerusalem 1976, 29–33:
'Shekhinah is not mishkan, not God's dwelling-place but both his manifest and hid-
den presence'; Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic
Background and the Ugaritic Texts*, Oxford 2001, 149–66.

are God of all the kingdoms of the earth . . . You alone, O YHWH, are God' (2 Kgs 19:15/Isa 37:16), whereas all other deities are idols in the sense of 'non-existing' or 'nothing', expressed as a denial of the reality of other deities: 'YHWH alone is God, there is none beside him' (Deut 4:35); 'YHWH is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other' (Deut 4:39). Modern scholarly research has coined such phrases as expressions of a 'YHWH-alone movement', subsiding other main gods like El and Ba'al but not preaching monotheism in the strict sense of the term.[11]

It has been sufficiently shown that outside Israel a god with the name YHWH was not worshipped, and except for the Mesha Stela the name YHWH is absent in West Semitic epigraphical texts. Presumably there is a topographical link between YHWH and the mountain area south of Edom. According to some theophany texts, as in Judges 5:4 ('YHWH, when you went out of Seir'), Ps 68:8 ('The One of Sinai'), Deut 33:2 ('YHWH came from Sinai, and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran'), Hab 3:3 ('God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran'—with a remarkable confirmation of this topographical connection in one of the Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions: '[y]hwh [.]tmn wl'shrt[h] = YHWH of Teman and -to- his Asherah'),[12] all these places are in or near Edom, including Mount Sinai, often located in the Sinai peninsula, but actually in southern Edom or northern Midian, as Frank Moore Cross has argued.[13] This hypothesis would turn YHWH into an Edomite-Midianite deity whose cult was established in Israel and who evolved into an official god of the nation and a patron god of the Israelite monarchy.[14] There would be much

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[11] Karel van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*, Leiden 1996, 334–8, esp. note 93: 'The message of the YHWH-alone movement was one of monolatry. True monotheism, as a metaphysical statement, probably did not gain ground in Israel until the Hellenistic period'.

[12] Idem, 322. A by now famous fragment of a storage-jar from Kuntillet Ajrud, an Israelite caravanserai 50 kilometres south of Kadesh-barnea, contains a blessing by 'YHWH of Samaria and his Asherah'.

[13] Frank Moore Cross, 'Reuben, First-Born of Jacob', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 100 (1988) 46–65.

[14] This is the 'Kenite hypothesis': The Kenites were the mediators of the Yahwistic cult, cf. *DDD*, 1715–17; Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 145–8: 'YHWH's original profile as deity may be, at least, in part, irretrievably lost, especially if the

more to say about this, but let us proceed to later times when there is absolutely no question about YHWH as the existing single God with the names of El or Eloah or Elohim as consolidated and redesigned identifications of the same unique divine being.

3. PIYYUTIC TRADITIONS ON THE DIVINE NAME

Later Jewish prayer and praise are entirely directed to the worship and sanctification of the divine name as the representation of a true and powerful God whose activities for the sake of the people of Israel in past and present are to be exalted in songs and poems for the sake of the future: let God do the things which are prayed for by the people who worship and praise him. Particularly Byzantine-Jewish liturgical poetry or *Piyyut* from the late antique period serves as an important guide for the Jewish attitude toward the divine and the understanding of Exodus 3. A great liturgical composer like Yannai in the sixth century CE offers an extensive poetic treatment of the subject, supplementing the biblical content of Exodus 3 with midrashic material in describing the greatness of Moses as a loyal shepherd of his people. To Yannai's mind, Moses' identification with the sufferings of the Israelite slaves in Egypt and his devotion to the people of Israel make him suitable for a divine revelation. The problematic parts of the dialogue between God and Moses, his objections and hesitations to perform the task of liberating the slave people, are mostly ignored. Moses is God's instrument in the release and redemption of Israel, as was once promised to Abraham.[15] The burning bush turns in Yannai's mind into a symbol of acute redemption of

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earliest biblical sources reflect secondary developments in the history of the deity's profile'.

[15] Rabbinic explication takes the truthfulness of Moses' mission in verse 12 as a central exegetical issue, aptly summarized by Maimonides in his *Halakhot Yesodey ha-Torah*, and repeated in the Yemenite compilation *Midrash ha-Gadol*: 'And he said, I will be with you, that is, my Shekhinah will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who has sent you: as far as a prophet is concerned, his prophecy could be only for himself for broadening his knowledge or understanding those same deep mysteries or for the sake of personal success. It is also possible that a prophet tells his prophecy to a people or to town folk to draw their attention and to admonish them and to bring them back on the right track. When they send him off they give him a token of truth so that the people of Israel would know that God has sent him in truth' (*Midrash ha-Gadol*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1976, 53–4).

Israel from the hands of the Byzantines. The symbol of God's omnipresence in the world is (divine) fire or אש to which he devotes a separate poem in a nine-part composition on the words 'Thus an angel of God appeared to him in a flame of fire': Fire which is consuming fire (אש אשר היא אוכלה אש); fire burning dry and wet (אש בוערת ביבשים ובלחים); fire glowing in snow and clouds (אש נוחלת בשלג וקיטור); fire shining like a lying lion (אש דומה לארי רובץ); fire showing many images (אש המראה כמו מראות); fire surely not to be extinguished (אש וודיי כי לא כבה); fire, radiating, roving about (אש זורחת ומשוטטת); fire burning flashingly (אש חושישת ומתלקחת); fire flying in stormy wind (אש טסה ברוח סערה); fire burning without wood (אש יוקדת באפס עצים); fire every day renewed (אש כי כל יום מתחדשת); fire not been blown by fire (אש לא נופחה באש), etc.

The first three poetic parts of the composition demonstrate a clear relation to the biblical text, to be inserted and read or recited in the Sabbath morning service when the reading of the Pentateuch pericope within the triennial reading cycle has reached the words 'Now Moses was tending the flock'. Most remarkable are the opening lines of the second and third poem: מידדה היה איש אלהים, נוהין ובא—'Pulling [a בניסי אלהים, שאתו עיניו בהר אלהים, עליו נחה רוח אלהים flock] was the man of God, tending and experiencing the miracles of God, when he lifted up his eyes on (to) the mountain of God, upon him rests the spirit of God'. There is not a single reference here to the revelation of God's name apart from a quotation of Mal 3:6: 'I, YHWH, do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed', and the opening line of the third part of the composition which addresses God as the divine shepherd: יה הסוף ידך, ואסוף צאן ידך, במטה עזך ובשבט מעוזך—'God, reveal your hand [power], and let your hand gather your flock, by your mighty sceptre, and your powerful staff'. Whether the decision of Yannai to omit the rabbinic implications of the divine name was theologically or artistically inspired, we do not know, but the poetic discussion of the holy name of God was restricted to the idea of v. 12:

'I will be with you', as it is exemplified in the fourth part of Yannai's composition for Exodus 3: (בכל צרותינו לך צרה, והבטחתנו עמו אנכי בצרה) In all our distress you too are distressed, as you have promised us: with him (the faithful one) I will be in trouble; (כי אתה אלהינו ואנחנו עמך, כי אתה רועינו ואנחנו צאנך) because you are our God and we are your people, you are our shepherd and we are your flock; (במצרים בעת הצר לנו שונא, נינליתה במקום צר מתוך הסנה) in Egypt, when the enemy

oppressed us, you appeared on a narrow place from amidst the bush; (פרוכים בלבנים לנו עת ראיתה, תחת רגליך לבינה הראיתה) forced labour we did with bricks when you saw us, under your feet you showed a pavement; (ראו ראיתה, וידוע ידעתה, פקוד פקדתה, וקרוא קראתה) you have surely seen, you have surely known, you have surely promised, you have surely called; (למשה ממרעה, מתוך מראה, ועת אשר ראה אשר לא הראה) Moses from the pasture, in a vision, at the time he looked, at what cannot be seen; (כבודך הנראה, באימה ויראה, האמירך קדוש) your glory was seen, in awe and will be seen, to let you declare—holy.[16]

Yannai's reluctance to touch upon the essential names of God as '-h-y-h or y-h-w-h is significant—as a possible reflection of general rabbinic reluctance to add explanations to the divine essence, I would like to add—and understandable. His poems are written and recited for one purpose: to embellish one specific part of standard prayer in Jewish liturgy called *Qedushah* or *Trishagion*, the threefold glorification of God according to Isa 6:3 (קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו—'Holy holy holy is YHWH of hosts; the abundance of the entire earth is his glory'). The *Qedushah* is a matter of great liturgical interest, but we leave it here to the intentions of the composer who was concerned with an actual functioning of his 'lyrics' in comparison with those of others who drew closer to the holy name of God according to so-called magical or mystical texts.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the holiness of the divine name was emphasized by the concept of the Ineffable Name (שם המפורש), a century-old use of substitution of Adonay or Lord for YHWH, probably a mark of veneration but a rather conspicuous shift to the concept of God's lordship or sovereignty as the most important aspect of his being with a peculiar basis in early Midrash. The words 'This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial to all generations' in v. 15 lead to the following observation: 'for ever' is spelled l-'-l'm (לעלם); 'the letter *waw* is omitted so that a man should never pronounce the name according to its letters [as the root עלם means to hide or to be hidden; the name YHWH is never pronounced as it is written]; "This is my memorial to all generations", namely that one is to pronounce it only by its substitute'.[17] The change of the

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[16] Z.M. Rabinovitz, *Machzor Yannai*, vol. 1, 263–74.
[17] *Exodus Rabba* 3.7; BT Pesachim 50a adds in an explanation of the word א(ח)ד 'one': 'Not like this world is the future world. In this world God's name is written with yud-heh and read as aleph-daleth (+nun-yud) but in the future world it shall

divine name into Adonay seems to allude to the period of time in which no one was acquainted with the direct name of God any longer. Among Jews of the Diaspora, *Kurios* was the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew name of God. The Septuagint shows that only in Exodus 3 the Greek renders אהיה אשר אהיה as *Ego eimi ho oon* (not without philosophical overtones; see Burnyeat, this vol.), but יהוה is translated here and elsewhere into *Kurios* (*ho Theos*).

4. MYSTICAL AND KABBALISTIC TRADITIONS ON THE DIVINE NAME

The conception of the holy name found its most significant development in mystical and kabbalistic literature. The *Book of the Name* or ספר השם by Rabbi Eleazar ben Yehudah of Worms comprises an extensive theology of the tetragrammaton.[18] The cosmological-magical

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all be one: it shall be written with yud-heh and read as yud-heh', edn. Avigdor Shinan, Jerusalem 1984, 130: זה שמי לעלם. חסר ו"ו, שלא יהנה את השם באותתיו. וזה זכרי לדר דר, שאין אומרים אותו אלא בכנוי.

[18] Joseph Dan, *The Heart and the Fountain: An Anthology of Jewish Mystical Experiences*, Oxford 2002, 101–105 at 103. The most detailed Jewish work dedicated to the reverence of the holy name is *Sefer ha-Shem*, 'The Book of the Holy Name', written by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms around 1220. This work, which is one of the few major works in Jewish mysticism and esotericism that has never been printed (it is found in manuscript British Library 737 and several others), is a part of Rabbi Eleazar's presentation of the central themes of the secret traditions that he received from his forefathers, which he called 'the Secret of Secrets' (*Sodey Razaya*: see Hanna Liss, *El'azar Ben Yehuda von Worms: Hilkhot ha-Kavod. Die Lehrsätze von der Herrlichkeit Gottes*, Tübingen 1997). The *Book of the Name*, a three-hundred page treatise, includes commentaries on several names, but mainly on the tetragrammaton. It begins with a brief introduction, which describes the secret ceremony in which a rabbi transmits the traditions concerning the name to a disciple. This ritual has to be performed when the two participants are immersed in water, and it includes several biblical verses referring to God's name's presence in waters and seas. Another short treatise, *Sefer ha-Malbush*, 'The Book of the Garment', describes the ritual in a similar way, and adds another that is not found in Rabbi Eleazar's version: The name is to be worn like a mantle. The treatise includes detailed instructions on how to cut the mantle from the parchment of a deer; it must also include a head cover, but it can be without sleeves. The holy name—given in the work—is to be written on the mantle and the hat, and after seven days of fasting and self-purification the practioner has to go to a water source and put it on while immersed in the water. The author promises to the wearer of such a name infinite powers and divine protection. The magical element, dominant in 'The Book of the Garment' is almost completely absent from Rabbi Eleazar's version, in which the knowledge of divine secrets is the paramount motive. These texts assert that knowledge of the secret divine name was not purely intellectual but included a mystical element of a sense of elevation, excitement, and a feeling of touching, however remotely, the hidden essence of God. Also in his *Sefer ha-Rokeach*, 'The Book of the Provider' (of medicine

power of God's name culminates in the creation of a *golem*, a human being created by the use of the tetragrammaton in combination with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In classical Kabbalah God is actually without name: אין סוף, the Infinite, God understood as 'He in Himself', whereas his biblical epitheta are applied to the ten spheres as ten manifestations of his being. The thirteenth-century Spanish scholar, exegete, and mystic Nahmanides (1194–1270) argues that the entire Pentateuch is one inventory of divine names or can be understood as one and unique long name. In the words of his much younger contemporary the Spanish kabbalist Joseph b. Abraham Gikatillah (1248–1305):

> The entire Torah is a fabric of appellatives, *kinnuyim*—the generic term for the epithets of God, such as compassionate, great, merciful, venerable—and these epithets in turn are woven from the various names of God [such as El, Elohim ('creative power'), Shaddai, Zevaoth ('host of letters')]. But all these holy names are connected with the tetragrammaton YHWH ('as He is') and dependent upon it. Thus the entire Torah is ultimately woven from the tetragrammaton.[19]

This is much in accordance with the view of Abraham Abulafia who states that the actual name of God does not occur in the Pentateuch; tetragrammaton and the expression *Ehyeh* ('I am', 'I will be') are only allusions to or reflections of the real or true name of God.[20]

So far I have adduced a number of observations on the theophany and the divine name in Exodus 3 on the basis of some explanations, ideas and symbols in biblical and rabbinic, also in piyyutic and even mystical or kabbalistic traditions. The study of this chapter in Exodus reflects the complications of the question and the deep division between these traditions which represent different branches of Jewish religious culture. This is a fact which also implies the significant differences between Jewish, Christian, and scientific

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and perfume; numerical value of the name Eleazar), are meditations on the (numerical) values of God's name and unity. On pp. 175–180: Automatic writing or the writing holy name, *shem ha-kotev*, in a magical treatise by Rabbi Joseph Taitazak of Salonica (early 16th century) on writing without pen and ink and the secrets of celestial writing by invoking the princes of the writing of divine writing with the finger of God.

[19] Gershom G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, New York 1969, 37–44.

[20] Joseph Dan, 'The Book of the Divine Name by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms', *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 22 (1995), 27–60.

approaches.[21] The immersion in a biblical text like Exodus 3 establishes a number of important philological and historical concepts which still deserve extensive scholarly study. Let this be a modest contribution to both research and discussion of such an essential issue in our field.

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[21] See also Jacques Derrida in *De la grammatologie*, Paris 1967: the 'word' of God is not oral but written; writing functions not in the presence of the author but in his absence. Writing has permanence, ever to be consulted again, therefore its effect is not once-only but demands hermeneutics. The written text is a source of meanings no longer covered by someone responsible. Text is ever *vouloir-dire*.

BARE FEET AND HOLY GROUND: EXCURSIVE REMARKS ON EXODUS 3:5 AND ITS RECEPTION

Eibert Tigchelaar

Within the narrative of the revelation of the divine name in Exod 3 one encounters a motif that has a strange history of reception: the command given to Moses to remove his sandals from his feet, because the place on which he was standing was holy ground (Exod 3:5). The custom to remove one's sandals or shoes from one's feet before entering places of worship is common among many religious groups. For example, the Samaritans take off their footwear in their synagogue, and explicitly refer to Exod 3:5. The Karaite Jews remove their sandals when entering the synagogue, and so do Muslims when they enter a mosque, or perform *ṭawāf*, the circumambulation round the Kaaba. Yet, this motif plays hardly any role at all in the later literary tradition of rewritings of and commentaries on Exod 3. What are the reasons? Was the tradition to unloosen one's sandals before entering holy ground so common that it needed no comments? And why do we find this command only in Exod 3, and at a most unusual other place, Josh 5:15, when Joshua encounters the 'commander of the army of YHWH' in, or close by Jericho? And, why in fact should one remove one's footwear before entering sacred ground?

This paper does not attempt in any way to give a comprehensive answer to these questions. Instead it discusses a few texts that refer to bare feet on holy ground (especially Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15; *mishnah Berakhot* 9:5 and *tosefta Berakhot* 6:19) and comments on the suggestion of an Arabian background of the custom. The following therefore consists of remarks, excursions and thoughts on texts and topics which I encountered in a first survey of Exod 3:5, its background and its possible influence.

1. READINGS OF EXOD 3:5

We may start with Exod 3, the narrative that stands at the centre of this volume. The first part of the chapter introduces the encounter between God and Moses in the following manner:

(1) When Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. (2) There the angel of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.
(3) Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.'
(4) When YHWH saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'
(5) Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'
(6) He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

At first sight the text is straightforward, without narrative problems. Moses, who was wandering as a shepherd in the desert, saw in the vicinity of Mount Horeb a strange appearance, a burning bush, which he wanted to investigate. It appeared that God was at that moment dwelling in the bush, and he warned Moses not to come nearer, but to take off his sandals, since the ground was holy. Yet, this is a remarkable story. Why did God, who revealed himself as the God of Moses' forefathers, choose a burning bush to dwell in? Or, put differently, why did the author choose to introduce such an extraordinary setting for what was going to be such an important revelation?

Biblical scholars have long recognized that most biblical texts were not written from scratch, but that their authors used older stories and oral traditions, and moulded them into literary works, and that successive authors edited these literary works, for literary, political or religious reasons. Thus, the distinction between two different divine names, YHWH and Elohim, served to distinguish two major sources, called J and E (later more sources were distinguished), which were used by the composers of the books as we now have them. German biblical scholarship developed this approach to distinguish between sources, and successive editions of these books, to great depth. With regard to Exod 3, the application of this source-criticism resulted in the distinction between two different sources, J and E, primarily on the basis of the divine name which is being used. Thus, the J source consists essentially of the following verses: v. 1 (without the last part), vv. 2–4a, v. 5, vv. 7–8, and 16–17.[1] Since we are primarily dealing

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[1] The commentaries in the *Biblischer Kommentar* series generally present the best

with the first part of the chapter, we may represent the following text which would have belonged to the J-source.

> (1abα) When Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law [Jethro], the priest of Midian, he led his flock beyond the wilderness. (2) There the angel of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. (3) Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' (4a) When YHWH saw that he had turned aside to see, (5) He said, 'Come no closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'

The reconstruction of original sources is not the goal of German biblical interpretation, but a first indispensable step towards the analysis of the literature, religion and history that lies behind the texts we now have. Early twentieth-century literary and biblical scholars realized that many stories consist of a set series of narrative elements, and that recognition and analysis of these forms help one to understand the basic structure and setting of those stories. Thus, the reconstructed J-text presented above, shares the general form as well as most of the separate elements of the literary form which is called the 'sanctuary legend' (*Heiligtumslegende*).

This particular form consists typically of the following elements: the accidental discovery by an important figure of old of a sacred place; a divine apparition at that place; and the inauguration (or renewal, or purification) of cult at that place.[2] Some elements do not always appear, such as the naming of the place. In general, these stories would serve to validate the authenticity of the cult at those places. Some of the examples are very short, such as Abraham at Sichem in Gen 12:6–7, others are more elaborate such as Jacob at Bethel in Gen 28. The (reconstructed J) story of Exod 3 fits to some extent in the paradigm of the sanctuary legend: Moses accidentally comes across the bush and YHWH appears to him at that place. However, some elements do not correspond to the model. Unlike other sanctuary legends, this story is not attached to a publicly known

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summation of German biblical scholarship. For Exodus see: Werner H. Schmidt, *Exodus. 1. Teilband Exodus 1–6* (BK II/1), Neukirchen 1988. On pp. 107–10 he distinguishes the following sources: J (vv. 1abα*, 2–4a, 5, 7–8*, 16–17*) and E (vv. 1bβ*, 4b*, 6, 9–15*). The asterisk indicates that later corrections have somewhat altered the original source text.

[2] Schmidt, *Exodus*, 113–15.

cultic place. Also, it does not record the inauguration or transformation of a cult, by means of the setting up of a *massebe* or pillar, the building of an altar, or the bringing of some kind of offering.

One should therefore either call this form-critical analysis into question, or move towards a third component of German biblical scholarship. Such short stories, especially those connected to places, may have been told for generations or ages. During this process of tradition, some elements may have been elaborated upon, others may have dwindled. Small indications in the text, such as the reference to 'the' bush, and the use of the word 'place' which is often used for cultic places, indicate that even though the place was not any more a cultic place, the text preserves an old tradition from the times that it still was. Also, the removal of sandals from the feet may be read as a ritual act which emphasized the cultic character of the place. From this tradition-critical perspective, the text preserves a 'sanctuary legend' which was originally attached to a non-Israelite local cult place, but was incorporated in stories about Moses. Since this local cult place should be located someplace in Northern Arabia, it may even have preserved an ancient Arabian ritual custom of taking off the shoes.

In short, if we go along all the way and apply these methods to the text, the reference to the bare feet and the holy ground go back to a pre-Israelite sanctuary legend of a cult place somewhere in Northern Arabia, where one of the rituals consisted of the taking off of one's sandals. This could also be the reason why, except for Joshua 5:15, none of the other biblical texts describing holy places pay any attention to feet or shoes.

However, it is unlikely that any of the ancient Jewish readers, or even authors and editors, would have been aware of such possible backgrounds of or traditions behind the text. Instead, they would have been concerned with the composition as they heard, wrote, or edited it, and with its meaning for their own situation. The authors and editors did not just fit sources together and insert traditions for historical, geographical or anecdotal reasons. They may have inserted older traditions, but only if they thought they fitted within the larger framework. Likewise, the readers (or, initially, hearers) would have understood texts within their own thought-world. Within the present text of Exodus, the encounter between God and Moses in Exod 3 anticipates the major second encounter on Mount Sinai, and Exod 3:12 ('you shall worship God on this mountain') refers to the cele-

bration of Pesach in the wilderness of Sinai described in Num 9. More specifically, the reference in Exod 3:5 to holy ground anticipates the off limits character of Mount Sinai in Exod 19, and the limited accessibility of Sinai in Exod 24, and after that of the Tent of Meeting. Thus, in Exodus, we find a triptych of Bush—Sinai—Tent of Meeting, which is also expressed in other aspects, such as the fire connected to all three, and the speaking of God to Moses from those specific places, whereas for both authors and readers the Tent of the Meeting in turn anticipates the Temple.[3]

Within this kind of reading, Exod 3:5 is not primarily concerned with behaviour connected to the sacred area of the burning bush, but it should be connected to Sinai and the Tent of Meeting. According to Num 5:17 the earth or dust on the floor of the Tent of Meeting has some kind of holy or even magic properties. This, however, does not directly explain the taking off of the sandals. Indirectly, though, Moses' removing of his sandals, refers to the priestly barefootedness in the Tent of Meeting, and later in the Temple. The biblical texts nowhere state explicitly that priests go barefoot, but this is clear from the detailed description of the priestly dress in Exod 28–29 (and more briefly in Lev 16:3–5), which lacks references to footwear. Barefootedness may also be deduced from rituals which involve the repeated washing of hands and feet (Exod 30:19, 21; 40:31), as well as the putting of blood on the big toes of one's right feet (Exod 29:20). Hence, the command to Moses is a literary foreshadowing of priestly customs in the Tent of Meeting and later the Temple.

If we read the text from that literary perspective, we should also rethink the translation and interpretation of the first part of Exod 3:5. Generally the two commands in Exod 3:5: 'Do not come closer,' and 'Remove your sandals,' are understood as two separate commandments, meaning that Moses should not come any closer, *and* that he should take off his sandals. Indeed, the notice in the next verse, that Moses 'hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God,'

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[3] Not from a literary view, but from a motif-historical perspective, N. Wyatt, 'The Significance of the Burning Bush,' *Vetus Testamentum* 36 (1986) 361–5, suggests that the burning bush, which combines the image of the tree of life, and that of light shining, 'evokes the cultic lamp stands—the *mᵉnōrôt*—of the temple.' Cf. similarly, Bernard P. Robinson, 'Moses at the Burning Bush,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 75 (1997) 107–22.

would seem to imply that he indeed did not come closer. However, in light of the priestly practice, the commands probably mean: 'do not come closer, before you have first removed your sandals.'[4] More generally: treading on holy ground is only allowed after certain preparatory acts. In fact, the priestly entrance into the Tent of the Meeting is expressed by the same verb *qārab*, 'to approach,' or 'to come closer,' and ritual washing does enable the priests to go into the Tent of Meeting and to come to the altar. In sum: from a redaction-critical perspective Moses' encounter with God in Exod 3 cannot be read apart from the Sinai and Tent of Meeting stories. Moses' simple act of taking off his sandals on holy ground anticipates a much more complex priestly behaviour required to serve in the sanctuary.

Mark Smith, to whose analysis on the structure of Exodus I am indebted, proposes an additional and most functional aspect of the redaction. The text is indeed focused on holiness, and has been redacted by priests. They, however, did not only focus on priestly service, but arranged Exodus according to ancient Israel's experience of pilgrimage, which, according to his reading, is reflected in the entire literary structure of the book.[5] He argues that the descriptions of the Exodus events both reflect and prescribe actual pilgrimage behaviour. Thus, the removal of footwear at a place of divine appearance would reflect actual practice at holy places, by which pilgrims, in a non-verbal manner recognize that place's holiness. In either case, in a redaction-critical reading, the bare feet command is not just a descriptive element in the episode of Exod 3, but prescriptive for the author's intended audience, priests and pilgrims.

2. Excursus: Arabian Background

Before we move to other texts, one may raise the question of the possible origins of the connection of bare feet with holy ground, or, more specifically, of bare feet with ritual at holy places. If we read Exod 3 from the latter perspective, as prescriptive for the audience, than the text most probably codifies already existing behaviour at

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[4] Cf. also below (§4) the rewriting of the text by Ezekiel the Tragedian.
[5] Mark S. Smith, *The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus*, with contributions by Elizabeth M. Bloch-Smith (JSOTSS 239), Sheffield 1997.

sacred places. In fact, Mesopotamian reliefs of much older date already show barefooted priests (but then, possibly for stylistic reasons, bare feet are the rule, not the exception, in Ancient Near Eastern depictions). The widespread phenomenon of barefootedness in ritual throughout many regions of the world may in part be attributed to dissemination of the practice, but on the other hand, it may also reflect atavistic custom that precedes rationalization. In general, it is thought that rudiments of old customs, such as walking barefoot, are maintained in custom. Or, removing one's sandals may be a residue of an ancient custom of appearing naked before the deity, in the same manner as the few drops of water of baptism in many churches are a residue of entire immersion into water. The taking off of one's clothes, or merely of one's sandals, would signify taking off impurity. Other sorts of rationalizations include the following: bare feet allow for more direct contact with the holy; sandals carry dust and pollution from outside into the holy place, which should be avoided (therefore the feet are also washed); sandals are made of leather, i.e. dead animals, and are therefore impure, and should not be brought into a holy place; or, simply, the custom serves to express one's submission to or respect towards the one whom one wants to meet.[6]

Of course, these explanations are not necessarily exclusive. Barefootedness might be a residue of ancient customs, but then have been reinterpreted as a symbol of taking off impurity, and eventually end up as being a custom that expresses respect.

Above we saw that some scholars argued that Exod 3 might preserve elements of an ancient non-Israelite sanctuary legend, in Midianite, or, more generally, Northern Arabian area. It has therefore been suggested that, at least in this legend, the removal of one's sandals has an Arabian background. We know nothing about ancient Midianite rituals, and Knauf has argued there is in fact very little knowledge at all about Midian preserved in Exodus, except perhaps for the name Jethro and a vague idea that YHWH may have been

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[6] Cf. the extensive overviews in William H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18* (Anchor Bible 2), New York 1999 and C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 1 (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament), Louvain 1993. These overviews surpass the comments in Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, London 1969, vol. 1, 231–2. The following list is mainly based on Houtman.

a Midianite deity.[7] But even though there may be little Midianite about the story, this does not exclude a Northern Arabian setting. The stock arguments for an Arabian background are the Horeb-Sinai setting, and the bush (*sne*) typical for that area (see also Nikolsky, this vol., Introd.), but there is also some scant linguistic evidence for an Arabian setting. The particle *hălom*, 'here,' which is used in the first biblical books only here and in the Hagar story in Gen 16:3, instead of the more usual *hinnē*, corresponds to the Arabic interjection *halumma*, 'come on,' 'here.'[8] In popular thought, the removal of one's sandals is seen as a typically Islamic practice, but one cannot retroject without further ado this Islamic custom before entering the mosque back to Arabian customs in Mosaic or Israelite times. Some scholars therefore refer to pre-Islamic Arabian customs, as reported by Ibn Hisham or Ibn Ishaq and gathered by Wellhausen. Thus, Gaster mentions that 'the pre-Islamic Arabs often performed the *ṭawāf*, or ritual circumambulation of the altar *in puris naturalibus*,' stark naked.[9] This often quoted statement, however, goes far beyond the evidence gathered by Wellhausen, who also tells that the Hums, the confederation of clans guarding the sanctuary in Mekka in the century before Islam, imposed upon other Arabs severe restrictions with regard to food and clothing.[10] Ibn Ishaq tells:

> nor could they circumambulate the House except in the garment of the Hums. If they had no such garments they had to go round naked. If any man or woman felt scruples when they had no Hums garments, then they could go round in their ordinary clothes; but they had to throw them away afterwards so that neither they nor anyone else could make use of them.

Bukhari puts it slightly differently:

> The Hums used to give clothes to the men who would perform the Tawaf wearing them; and women (of the Hums) used to give clothes to the women who would perform the Tawaf wearing them. Those to

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[7] Ernst Axel Knauf, *Midian: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Palästinas und Nordarabiens am Ende des 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* (Abhandlungen des deutschen Palästinavereins 9), Wiesbaden 1988, 156.

[8] The particle may also be attested in Ugaritic, but most occurrences of *hălom* are used in narratives with a specific geographic setting. The two examples from Genesis and Exodus are in narrative settings south of Kadesh-Barnea, but most other ones are clustered in the stories in Judges and Samuel around Gibeah.

[9] Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, vol. 1, 231–2.

[10] J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, Berlin 1897², 110.

whom the Hums did not give clothes would perform Tawaf round the Kaaba naked.

According to these early Islamic writers therefore, circumambulating naked was not the usual practice, but was the only possible way for those without means. It is not at all clear to what extent this practice reflects the pre-Hums period. Moreover, all these practices concern the pre-Islamic *ḥajj*, and in particular the *ṭawāf*, the ritual circumambulations during the *ḥajj*, whereas such kind of circumambulations are not referred to in Exod 3, even though there are cultic circumambulations in the Jericho-story and in the Mishnah description of Sukkot. In that respect, there is no correspondence between Exod 3 and any pre-Islamic Arabian custom, and no evidence that the custom of barefootedness was adopted from Arabia.

3. Readings of Josh 5:15

In Josh 5:15 we find almost the same command as given to Moses, but in a completely different context:

> (13) Once when Joshua was in Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, 'Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?' (14) He replied, 'Neither; but as commander of the army of YHWH I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and he said to him, 'What do you command your servant, my lord?' (15) The commander of the army of YHWH said to Joshua, '*Remove your sandal from your foot, for the place on which you are standing is holy*.' And Joshua did so.

The episode is placed after the communal circumcision and the celebration of Pesach at Gilgal in the plains of Jericho, before the fall of Jericho. Older commentators have argued that here too we have the remnants of a sanctuary legend, probably connected to Gilgal, which was an important cultic centre in pre-Davidic times,[11] but the problems in this small unit are manifold. For example, the text places Joshua 'in Jericho,' before the city had been conquered. Therefore

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[11] E.g., Carl A. Keller, 'Über einige alttestamentlichen Heiligtumslegenden II,' *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 68 (1956) 85–97 at 89: 'Ein Stück eines echten Hieros Logos.'

most translations render 'by Jericho.' Second, the speech of the com-
mander of the army of the LORD ends with 'Now I have come,'
where one would expect a clause expressing the purpose of his com-
ing. In addition to these tensions there is the fact that the command
of Josh 5:15 is almost identical to that of Exod 3:5. This suggests
that v. 15, and probably also v. 14b, are redactional additions by a
redactor of the book.[12] All of this make it unlikely that the story was
originally a sanctuary legend.

But why would this command to take off the sandal have been
inserted here? Scholars have argued that some redactor of Joshua
(they differ whether this was a jahwistic one, or a late post-exilic
priestly one) wanted to establish a concentric structure covering the
entire text from the exodus to the conquest. Thus, the apparition to
Moses in Exod 3, as the first announcement of the exodus from
Egypt, is paralleled by the apparition to Joshua as conclusion of the
desert wanderings. The concentric structure not only pertains to
apparitions and the command to take off one's sandals, but also to
the celebration of pesach (Exod 12:1–28 // Josh 5:10–12), circum-
cision (Exod 12:43–50 // Josh 5:2–8), and the crossing of the Red
Sea and the Jordan (Exod 13–14 // Josh 3–4), with the Sinai com-
plex standing in the middle.[13] The structure is neat, and according
to this interpretation the command to Joshua, that he should take
off his sandals, only serves a literary purpose, to conclude the con-
centric structure.

A more convincing explanation, which accounts for many details
of the text, is that a redactor of the book of Joshua aimed at pre-
senting the figure of Joshua as a new Moses: a second, but lesser
Moses. This theme runs indeed throughout Joshua, most explicitly
in the first chapters. Josh 1:1 presents Joshua as the servant of Moses,
and in 1:5 it continues with the promise: 'As I was with Moses, so
I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.' Again, in
1:16–18 the people respond to Joshua in terms of their previous rela-
tion to Moses: 'Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will
obey you'. From this perspective, the apparition to Joshua with a

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[12] Cf., e.g., Volkmar Fritz, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT I/7), Tübingen 1994, 65, who
attributes this to DtrH, one of several Deuteronomistic redactions of the book.

[13] Here I have given as an example the scheme of Klaus Bieberstein, *Josua—
Jordan—Jericho: Archälogie, Geschichte und Theologie der Landnahmeerzählungen Josua 1–6*
(OBO 143), Freiburg, Schweiz/Göttingen 1995, 415–18.

command that almost verbally corresponds to the one used in the initial commission of Moses, serves to underline once more at this critical stage of Joshua's leadership that he, too, like Moses, has been commissioned by God. A related motif in this redaction is Joshua's obedience, both to Moses and to God. This again is emphasized in this short episode of Josh 5:13–15, by the introduction, where Joshua presents himself as a servant, but it also accounts for one of the differences between Exod 3:5 and Josh 5:15.

Exod 3:5 reads: 'Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground"', whereas Josh 5:15 has: 'The commander of the army of YHWH said to Joshua, "Remove your sandal from your foot, for the place on which you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.' Exod 3:5 does not tell that Moses obeyed God's command, but Josh 5:15 explicitly emphasizes Joshua's obedience. Another important difference between the two commands is that Exod 3:5 states that the place is holy *ground*, where Josh 5:15 merely states that the place is holy. One may speculate that in the case of the Horeb, the ground itself was holy, both before, during, and after the apparition, whereas the unknown place where Joshua stood was only temporarily holy because of the apparition.

Yet, there is an alternative possibility, which also takes account of the present position of the episode in the book of Joshua, before the conquest of Jericho. In Joshua bare feet are found in two other contexts. One of those is the crossing of the Jordan by the barefooted priests in Josh 3 and 4: as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of YHWH touched the water of the Jordan, the water heaped up into a bank, allowing the Israelites to cross the river. The other is the promise to Joshua in Josh 1:3: 'Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I give to you, as I promised to Moses.' This expression has been taken from Deut 11:24 where the same is promised to Moses, another example of the correspondence between Joshua and Moses. The phrase 'sole of the feet' may be taken as a general phrase, but sometimes it is used literally, implying 'bare feet' (Deut 28:56). In this light it is striking that at the beginning of the book Joshua has been promised all the land which the sole of his foot treads upon, and that at the beginning of the conquest Joshua is told to take off his sandal. In this reading, the command to remove his sandal has nothing to do with ritual at holy places, but is a sign that the conquest of the land is going to start.

But how does this relate to the holiness of the place? This may merely be a quotation from Exodus, but in the Joshua context it gets a new meaning: the place where Joshua stands is holy, because it is *ḥerem*, 'proscribed,' that is dedicated, to the LORD.[14] Now the statement that Joshua was in (or by) Jericho, the place that was 'proscribed' (Josh 6:17), makes sense. This reading, according to which Josh 5:15 refers back to 1:3, also explains the small textual differences between the Joshua and the Exodus command. In the case of Jericho it is not the ground that is holy, but the place itself, Jericho that is 'proscribed.' Also, the singular 'take your sandal off your foot,' corresponds to the singular 'sole of your foot' of Josh 1:3.

4. (No) Reception of Exod 3:5

The Joshua episode is an interesting example of a quote which in a different context receives an entirely different meaning. However, if we return back to the meaning posited for Exod 3:5, namely that it prescribes behaviour, we may ask whether there is evidence for barefootedness in holy places, in particular the Temple, or the Temple Mount. We have seen that the prescriptions for the priestly dress in Exod 29 and Lev 16 indicate that the priests officiated without footwear. But what about pilgrims who visited the Temple or the Temple area? And was Exod 3:5 in later times interpreted to refer more generally to barefootedness in the Temple?

Beginning in the third cent. BCE Jews began to comment upon and to rewrite biblical narratives. Some of these writings, such as *Jubilees* and the *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, do include accounts from the life of Moses, but omit the burning bush episode altogether. This also goes for the preserved parts of the so-called *Apocryphal Moses* texts from Qumran.[15] Other works do rewrite Exod 3, and pay attention to the phenomenon of the burning bush, and the revelation of the Name, but entirely skip the motif of the removal of the sandals. Artapanus (third to second cent. BCE) briefly mentions the episode

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[14] On the relation between 'holy' and 'proscribed,' cf. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (AB 3B), New York 2000, 2391–3.

[15] On these texts, cf. Eibert Tigchelaar, 'A Cave 4 Fragment of Divre Mosheh (4QDM) and the Text of 1Q22 1:7–10 and Jubilees 1:9, 14,' *Dead Sea Discoveries* 12 (2005) 303–12.

of Moses' encounter with God, and the sudden appearance of fire (see also Van Kooten, this vol., §1), but has no reference to sandals, feet, or holy ground, or, for that matter, to the bush itself.[16] Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 1.63–70, gives a long description and explanation of the burning bush, but disregards the command to the baring of the feet. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 2.264–276, retells the entire Exod 3 episode, and even relates that the place was divine and that Moses should keep away from the flame (2.267), but does not mention the sandals. *4 Ezra* 14:3 only briefly summarizes the episode in one verse, and it therefore comes as no surprise that the bare feet command is omitted from the summary. Only a few texts include the reference to the bare feet, but without any substantial interpretation or comments. Ezekiel the Tragedian (second cent. BCE; see also Van Ruiten, this vol.) does little more than putting the biblical text in verse (*Exagōgē* 96–99):

> Stay, Moses, best of men, do not come near
> till you have loosed the bindings from your feet;
> the place on which you stand is holy ground,
> and from this bush God's word shines forth to you.[17]

Another reference to Exod 3:5 is Acts 7:33, which quotes the command verbatim in the telling of Moses' calling in Acts 7:30–34. It is remarkable that the author has changed the order of the scenes: Moses is told to take off the sandals from his feet, after, and not before, God has revealed himself as the God of the ancestors.

Also Rabbinic Literature pays little attention to the command. For example, *Exodus Rabbah* 2.6 merely comments: 'Wherever the Shechinah appears one must not go about with shoes on; and so we find in the case of Joshua: Put off thy shoe. Hence the priests ministered in the Temple, barefooted.'[18]

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[16] Artapanus, Frg. 3:21 (Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica.* 9.27.21): 'Moses prayed to God that he might thereupon give the people an end to their sufferings. God was propitiated, and he (Artapanus) says that fire was suddenly kindled from the earth and it burned although there was no wood or other kindling material in the place' (transl. J.J. Collins, in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, New York 1985, 901).

[17] Transl. R.G. Robertson, in: Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 813.

[18] Transl. S.M. Lehrmann, *Midrash Rabbah. Exodus*, London 1939. Compare *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* 40.2.

5. EXCURSION: BARE FEET (JEWISH, MUSLIM, CHRISTIAN)
ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT

The texts referred to in the previous section do not refer to a gen-
eral practice of barefootedness in relation to the Jewish Temple. This
may be because the command to Moses was not interpreted as pre-
scriptive in a general sense, or because the practice was so undisputed
and normal that the texts did not bother to refer to it. Two texts
from the period of the Second Temple are sometimes quoted as
indirect evidence of this practice. *Psalms of Solomon* 2:2 complains that
'Gentile foreigners went up on thy altar, and were trampling on it
with their shoes in their insolence.'[19] This verse accumulates all pos-
sible flagrations of the purity of the Temple, but it is not evidence
that non-priestly Jews entered the Temple area at large barefooted.
Also, Juvenal, *Saturae* 6.159, 'the [Jewish] kings observe there the
Sabbaths barefooted,' is hard to understand, but certainly does not
as such imply that Jews entered the Temple Mount without sandals.[20]

Evidence for the removal of sandals when entering the Temple
Mount is found in tannaitic and amoraic rabbinic literature, both
halahkic and narrative.[21] Thus, the fourth-century C.E. rabbi Pinhas
affirms that he saw rabbis taking off their sandals and leaving them
at the entrance to the Temple Mount, an anecdote that may reflect

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[19] Cf. also the much later (fifth or sixth cent. CE) *Lamentations Rabbah* 2.7 (edn.
Buber, 113) which, in the suggested reading by the Arukh, says that 'the nails of
their [the nations'] shoes left marks in the Temple floor.'

[20] The most recent edition, Iuvenalis, *Saturae* (edn. J. Willis [Bibliotheca Scriptorum
Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana], Stuttgart/Leipzig 1997), emends *nudo pede*
(some mss have *mero pede*) to *udo pede*, 'with wet feet,' following a suggestion of
R.G.M. Nisbet in *Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962) 235, which Nisbet himself 'con-
sidered, though with very little confidence.' On the general attitude of Romans
towards the Sabbath, cf. Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the
Ancient World*, Cambridge, MA/London 1997, 86: 'the condemnation of resting on
the Sabbath as idleness and indolence, which seems to be distinctively Roman.' Cf.
for a different explanation, Adolph Büchler, 'The New "Fragment of an Uncanonical
Gospel",' *Jewish Quarterly Review* 20 (1908) 330–46, who refers to some stories about
the aristocracy visiting the Temple for prayer. For an entirely different interpreta-
tion of the *Fragment Oxyrhynchus 840*, cf. recently François Bovon, '*Fragment Oxyrhynchus
840*, Fragment of a Lost Gospel, Witness of an Early Christian Controversy Over
Purity,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000) 705–28.

[21] References to the prohibition of footwear in the Temple or on the Temple
Mount are dealt with most recently by Yaron Z. Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the
Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' *Hebrew Union College Annual* 74 (2003) 49–112,
and idem, *God's Mountain. The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory*, Baltimore
2005 (chapter 6 is a shorter version of the *HUCA* article).

actual practice.[22] The depiction of two pairs of shoes on one of the panels in a mosaic in a Sepphoris synagogue that portrays scenes from the binding of Isaac, may reflect the same practice.[23] Again, reflection of the practice may account for the anecdote about Alexander the Great's arrival in Jerusalem. When he wanted to enter the Temple Mount, a Jew named Gabiah asked him to replace his shoes with some kind of socks.[24]

Halahkic rulings concerning the removal of one's footwear, are found in different texts dealing with reverence for the Temple Mount, such as *Sifra Qedoshim* 7:1, *Sifre Deuteronomy* 258, *mishnah Berakhot* 9:5, *tosefta Berakhot* 6:19, *Yerushalmi Berakhot* 14b–c and *Bavli Berakhot* 62b– 63a, which give rules about proper behaviour on the Temple Mount.[25] The Mishnah gives four rules: 1. not to behave lightly when facing the Eastern gate;[26] 2. not to enter the Temple Mount with a walk- ing-stick, shoes, a purse, or dusty feet; 3. not use the Mount for a short-cut; 4. not to spit.

The Tosefta, composed shortly after the Mishnah, but probably being an autonomous, and perhaps even earlier composition, does not mention rules 1 and 3, and mentions the forbidden items differently: coins that are wrapped up, dusty feet, a purse girded to the outside (of one's clothing), after which rule 4 is mentioned.[27] The rule of not wearing sandals is not mentioned as a separate rule in the Tosefta, perhaps since it is included in the 'dusty feet.' However, it is men- tioned as part of the *a fortiori* reasoning attached to the prohibition against spitting: if wearing shoes, which is not contemptuous, is for- bidden, how much more spitting which is contemptuous. In this explanation the Tosefta mentions: 'The torah says: "Do not enter with a shoe".'[28] On the whole *tosefta Berakhot* uses more scriptural

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[22] Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 56, 106.

[23] Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 107. Cf. the figure in Eliav, *God's Mountain: The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory*, 231, fig. 20.

[24] Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 63.

[25] A list of all sources is in Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 74, n. 76. He gives the text of the main versions in a table on pp. 76–77.

[26] This is interpreted by the Talmuds as referring to toilet practices, especially with regard to the direction in which one should relieve oneself.

[27] On the relation between *mishnah Berakhot* 9:5 and *tosefta Berakhot* 6:19, cf. Alberdina Houtman, *Mishnah and Tosefta* (TSAJ 59), Tübingen 1996, 114.

[28] The normal introduction of a scriptural quotation is 'as is written.' Houtman,

passages than *mishnah Berakhot* to legitimate its rules.[29] In this section, *tosefta Berakhot* quotes Eccl 4:17 (5:1), 'Guard your steps when you go to the house of God,' and Esth 4:2 'for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.' However, one does not find here a quotation of the biblical command to remove one's sandals.

The Talmuds combine the material of Mishnah and Tosefta, but whereas the Jerusalem Talmud adds nothing of interest, the Babylonian one elaborates on the question whether shoes and spitting, which are forbidden on the Temple Mount, are permitted in a house of prayer (the answer is yes!). In addition, where the Tosefta says: 'The torah says "Do not enter with a shoe"', *Bavli Berakhot* 62b replaces this with the biblical verse 'The Torah says: "Remove your sandals from your feet".'

Both the Mishnah and the Tosefta do not emphasize the restriction on shoes, but merely mention it as a matter of fact alongside other items. Therefore, they again give evidence of the practice to enter the Temple Mount barefooted. The Tosefta does not even mention this as a separate rule, but embeds it as a matter of undisputed fact in its discussion of spitting. A question of interest is why *tosefta Berakhot* does not quote Exod 3, but refers to a general rule (torah), whereas *Bavli Berakhot* is the first text to explicitly quote Exod. 3:5 in relation to the practice of barefootedness on the Temple Mount. An explanation may be that in Mishnaic and Toseftan time the custom was still undisputed, and needed no explicit proof texts, whereas Babylonian Jews, living in a different culture, and apparently wearing shoes in their synagogues, needed a scriptural argumentation for the prohibition of shoes on the Temple Mount.

A different point altogether is the reason lying behind these different commands, especially the list of forbidden items, and the prohibition of shortcuts. Eliav shows that many of the halakhic rulings related to the Temple Mount are modifications of rulings that were originally related to the Temple.[30] One of those modifications is, for example,

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Mishnah and Tosefta, 114, states that in this explanation the Tosefta makes use of the Mishnah rule. Also in other quotations introduced by 'the torah says,' the Tosefta gives a general rule based on Scripture, not a literal quotation.

[29] Houtman, *Mishnah and Tosefta*, 121.

[30] Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 75–76, refers to a manuscript of *Deuteronomy Rabbah*, which refers to the "Temple," instead of the "Temple Mount." Cf. Saul Liebermann, *Midrash Debarim Rabbah*, Jerusalem 1974 (third edition), 34, 43.

the prohibition of using the Mount for a shortcut, which would reflect the layout of Roman Aelia Capitolina.[31] One should note that neither Mishnah nor Tosefta relates these rules to a matter of purity, and the Tosefta explicitly states that the wearing of shoes on the Temple Mount is simply forbidden as such (because the torah requires it), not because wearing shoes would be a token of disrespect. The common element in the Mishnah's second and third rule would seem to be that they prohibit those activities and items that are usually related to travelling.[32] This implies that the Mount itself is marked off as a special place, but perhaps also that the visitor is different. One might say: these restrictions transform the visitor from a traveller into a pilgrim or worshipper.

If one reads the Tosefta independently from the Mishnah, the issue may be a different one. Whereas the *mishnah Berakhot* merely refers to a purse, the Tosefta describes two different manners in which money could be brought along, and which involve two kinds of girding oneself. One wonders whether the issue is the money or the girding. If the latter would be the case, the prohibitions would result in bare feet and ungirded clothes, the typical dress of grief or penitence.

Even though the Babylonian Talmud faithfully records Mishnah and Tosefta, it apparently is not concerned with ancient practical manners, but with the question whether these rules apply to their own context. Most striking is that the Talmud explicitly connects Exod 3:5 to the practice of barefootedness on the Temple Mount.

Later evidence for the Jewish practice of removing one's sandals when treading on the Temple Mount may be given by Ṭabarī. He reports that after Umar had conquered Jerusalem, he summoned Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, the famous Yemenite Rabbi who converted to Islam and died 34 a.H., and who is thought to have been responsible for the dissemination of many Jewish thoughts in Islam. Umar asked him (on the Temple Mount) where one should put the place of prayer. Al-Aḥbār replied: 'By the Rock.' Umar said to al-Aḥbār: 'By God, you are still following Judaism! I saw you take off your

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[31] Eliav, 'The Temple Mount, the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 106.

[32] Samuel Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, Hildesheim 1966 (repr.), vol. 1, 183 states that shoes are forbidden, not because of the custom that holy places should be entered with bare feet, but because shoes that have been used for travelling and are associated with a normal work day are not befitting.

sandals. But we were not commanded concerning the Rock, but we were commanded concerning the Kaaba.'[33]

This same Kaʿb al-Aḥbār features in a *hadith* transmitted by Mālik in his *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, which again deals with sandals.

> Kaʿb al-Aḥbār said to a man who took off his sandals, 'Why have you taken off your sandals? Perhaps you have interpreted this ayat, "Remove your sandals. You are in the pure valley of Ṭuwā?" (Sura 20 ayat 12) Do you know what the sandals of Musa were?'. Mālik said, 'I do not know what the man answered.' Kaʿb said, 'They were made from the skin of a dead donkey.'[34]

This latter *hadith*, which is also told in other sources, but not once mentions the setting, shows that the command given by God to Moses in Exod 3:5 and in Sura 20:12, by that time had been interpreted in a more general way, prescribing the taking off of sandals at special places. These *aḥādiṯ* connected to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār also suggest that in these first years of Islam the taking off of the sandals was not yet as common as later, and was initially restricted to the Kaaba.

If we return to the first *hadith*, we must reconsider whether it really means what is seems to say. After the destruction of the Temple, Jews could not enter the Temple Mount at free will, but in part of the fourth to the fifth century they were permitted access to the Mount on the ninth of Ab, to commemorate and to lament over the destruction of the Second Temple.[35] Since this was a day of fasting, they would not wear shoes for that very reason. In later practice these two originally distinct reasons to take off one's sandals may have merged.[36] However, Umar's reference to the Kaaba indicates that he interpreted it as a mere religious custom, comparable to the Muslim one.

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[33] Cf. Israel Wolfensohn, *Kaʿb al-Aḥbār und seine Stellung im Ḥadīṯ und in der islamischen Legendenliteratur* (diss. Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main), Gelnhausen 1933, 27. Note that Wolfensohn published in Arabic under the name of Abū Ḏuʾayb Isrāʾīl Wilfinsūn, and in Hebrew under the name Yisraʾel Ben-Zeev.

[34] Wolfensohn, *Kaʿb al-Aḥbār*, 39–40.

[35] The first reference to this practice is given by the Bordeaux Pilgrim in 333 CE: 'Two statues of Hadrian stand there, and, not far from them, a pierced stone which the Jews come and anoint each year. They mourn and rend their garments, and then depart.' Transl. John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, Warminster 1999, 30. A much fuller description is given by Jerome, *Commentary on Zephaniah* 1.15–16, probably written when Jerome stayed in Jerusalem, between *c.* 385–392.

[36] Cf. the fragment from the Cairo Geniza quoted in Eliav, 'The Temple Mount,

On the whole, Christian pilgrims who went to Jerusalem had no special feelings towards, or special behaviour with regard to the Temple Mount. In several respects its holiness was transposed. Geographically, the holiness has moved to the holy places of the Lord's Holy Cross and Resurrection whereas the Temple Mount is reduced to 'that famous place where once there stood the magnificent Temple.'[37] In fact, traditions that were connected to the Temple Mount, such as the identification with the place where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac, are transposed to these other places. Theologically, the holiness of the ground has been transformed into the holiness of tangible and visible history. The places are holy because of what happened there, and in particular because some object conveys that history to the pilgrim. Physically, one approaches the holy place, but in particular the object, not with one's feet, but with veneration, one's eyes, one's mouth and forehead.[38] Origen, *Commentary on John* 1.28 (frg. 640) states that these Christians pilgrims wanted to 'trace the footprints of Jesus and his disciples, and of the prophets,' and indeed, they found the Lord's footprints and other bodily impressions everywhere in stones, pillars, and indelibly in the ground.[39] The pilgrims' reports describe that they saw, and that they kissed, but only very rarely do they tell that they entered a holy place barefooted. An exception is the Russian Abbot Daniel who tells the

the Rabbis, and the Poetics of Memory,' 109 and idem, *God's Mountain*, 231: 'If you have the good fortune to go up to Jerusalem, when you look at it from Mount Scopus, if you are riding on a donkey step down, and if you are wearing shoes take them off, and rend your garments . . . and enter in mourning.' Here the removal of the shoes is related to the rending of the garments, and not explicitly to the entering of the Temple Mount.

[37] Adomnan, 1.1.13–14. Transl. John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, Warminster 2002, 170.

[38] Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Anacreonticon* 19.47. Transl. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 162.

[39] The list is extensive, but most remarkable is the description by the Piacenza Pilgrim of the Lord's footprint in the stone upon which the Lord stood in front of Pilate: 'his footprints are still on it. He had a well-shaped foot, small and delicate.' Transl. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 141. Also Muslim Pilgrims had their share of footprints. The Persian pilgrim Nâsir-i-Khusrau, *Diary of a Journey Through Syria and Palestine* (transl. Guy le Strange), London 1893, 47, recounts: 'The Rock inclines on the side that is towards the Kiblah (or south), and there is an appearance as though a person had walked heavily on the stone when it was soft like clay, whereby the imprint of his toes had remained thereon. There are on the rock seven such footmarks, and I heard it stated that Abraham—peace be upon him!—was once here with Isaac—upon him be peace!—when he was a boy, and that he walked over this place, and that the footmarks were his.'

following about the Holy Sepulchre and its keeper: 'Opening the sacred portal for me, he ordered me to take off my shoes; and then, having admitted me barefooted to the Holy Sepulchre . . .'[40]

Christian barefootedness is not primarily related to holy ground, but to prostration or penitence (see also Geljon, this vol., §2 on Gregory of Nyssa's allegorical interpretation). This must be the explanation of the group of Christians entering the Mount barefooted, an account which is given by Fulcher de Chartres, in his description of the Ceremony of the Descent of the Holy Light in 1101 A.D. The Holy Light (or Fire) did not appear on Holy Saturday. Therefore, at early dawn on Easter Day 'the Latin clergy, with the King and his suite, and most of the people went in procession, barefooted, to the "Temple of the Lord," where God promised Solomon to listen to his prayers, and there they prayed the Almighty to send the Holy Light.'[41]

6. CONCLUSIONS

A paper that consists mainly of remarks and excursions cannot end with comprehensive conclusions, but can only highlight some preliminary observations. The most important is the paucity of explicit literary references to ritual barefootedness in Biblical and Jewish texts. There is hardly any indirect or explicit mention of Exod 3:5 in later texts. The first text that refers to Exod 3:5 in a discussion of barefootedness is *Bavli Berakhot* 62b–63a. From the lack of emphasis on the phenomenon of ritual barefootedness, one might conclude that ritual barefootedness was common practice, related to the holiness of a place, that needed no explicit description, prescription or validation.[42]

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[40] *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land 1106–1107 AD*, London 1895, 75.

[41] Appendix V: 'Abstract of the Description of the Ceremony of the Descent of the Holy Light by Fulcher de Chartres, 1101 AD', in: 'Gesta dei per francos,' 407, in: *The Pilgrimage of the Russian Abbot Daniel in the Holy Land 1106–1107 AD*, 107.

YHWH'S NAME IN THE AARONIC BLESSING
(NUM 6:22–27)

Horst Seebass

In this paper I wish to focus on three major points. Firstly I want to explain the probable meaning of the pericope in question (§1). Secondly I shall connect our pericope not so much with Exod 3 or Exod 6 as with Exod 33:12–23 (§2), because that is a pericope 'de Deo' characterizing the divinity of YHWH in a scenario partly similar to Num 6:22–27 and with the famous idem-per-idem formulation of v. 19 at its core. After trying to show that Num 6:22–27 is a real jewel in the midst of Num 1:1–10:10 or in 5:1–9:14, I wish to find an understanding for the erratic place of the Aaronic blessing in the composition of the first part of Numbers (§3).

1. The meaning of Num 6:22–27

In my opinion the most thorough investigation of our text was done by Klaus Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, in 1977. What makes this work superior to other explanations is the precision with which he described nearly every word of the pericope.[1] I follow his explanations in principle reserving judgment on the questions of its compositional location and on hermeneutic details. Summarizing the scholarly literature one has to discern between the act of blessing described in v. 23 and v. 27 and the words of blessing in vv. 24–26. It has long been recognized that the words of the blessing do not specifically represent priestly language as in vv. 22–23a where Moses gets God's order to commission the words of the blessing to the Aaronites. Even v. 27 is not specifically priestly though it is clearly connected with v. 23, both framing vv. 24–26. So I begin with the interpretation of vv. 24–26, and in a second step I go to vv. 22–23, 27.

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[1] With this judgment I do not deny that some commentaries interpret things similarly, as e.g. P.J. Budd, *Numbers* (WBC), Waco, Texas, 1984, 75–7, but nowhere as thoroughly as Seybold. As far as I see his booklet was only noted by G.J. Wenham, *Numbers* (TOTC), Leicester/Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981, 90 note 3 and E.W. Davies, *Numbers* (NCBC), London/Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, 67.

Once more it is common knowledge that in vv. 24–26 there are three lines with three, five and seven words, so the wording is at least rhythmic or metric, like a cascade. Some authors observed that there is a vertical composition of the three lines, too, since all three begin with a verb in modal imperfect[2] with the name of YHWH as subject followed by a second stichos, which describes a further action of God giving weight to the whole of each line.[3] And there is even a diagonal scheme leading from יברכך יהוה in the first line to שלום in the last line as the aim and final point of the wording: they summarize the essence of the blessing.[4] So what begins with a blessing meaning good material conditions of life for the blessed[5] ends up in shalom as a well-kept social order of life or a state of wholeness.[6] Grammatically in every line there is a speaking subject that is in no way prominent (the Aaronites), addressees in singular to meet each Israelite according to vv. 23a, 27a, and the hidden, but present and real subject of YHWH in the indirect language that would be used of officials in the presence of a sovereign and is here used by Aaronites as officials in the presence of the highest possible person in a cultic situation. It is YHWH and not a priest or priests who issue(s) the blessing, clearly in contrast to Ps 118:26[7] where a blessing of priests seems to be indicated, and to the non-cultic situation of answering a greeting as in Ruth 2:4.[8]

All the words used in vv. 24–26 are well known as used in other cultic situations, especially in the Psalms.[9] 'May He bless you' is

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[2] Jussive forms are יאר in v. 25a and וישם in v. 26b. Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 22 argued convincingly that all verb forms are jussive since all three lines are constructed in the same modus.

[3] P.D. Miller, 'The Blessing of God: An Interpretation of Num 6:22–27', *Interpretation* 29 (1975) 240–51 opted for a synthetic, M. Fishbane, 'Forms and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983) 115–21 for a consequential understanding of every second stichos.

[4] Cf. J. Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS Torah Commentary), Philadelphia 1990, 51. This recalls Ps 29:11b.

[5] Exemplified in Deut 28:2–14.

[6] Budd, *Numbers*, 76 following the translation of M. Noth.

[7] Very impressively observed by Milgrom, *Numbers*, 50f. See already Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 52–4 differentiating the form of our blessing from ברוך-formulas, from hymns, prayers (*pace* T.R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers* (NICOT), Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992, 149) and performative speaking as in Arad Ostrakon 16.2f. (J. Renz, *Handbuch der althebräischen Epigraphik*, vol. 1, Darmstadt 1995, 379).

[8] B.A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20* (AB 4), New York 1993, 238 repeats independently what Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 26ff. had already exposed.

[9] Most commentators compare especially the Psalms of Ascent 121–134.

found in Pss 29:11; 115:12f.; 134:3, all with hymnic additions. But the combination with 'May He protect you!' only appears in v. 24 though the idea of protection appears often in the Psalms.[10] V. 25 'May YHWH cause His face to shine in your direction' (rather than 'upon you')[11] is deeply embedded in the language of the Psalms, especially through the topos of the shining face,[12] and the same is true, even more so, for ויחנך 'may he give you grace', since חנן is an important word in prayers of a single person. But the combination of these two motifs is only attested by Num 6:25. So once more our text has its originality, now in the sphere of the cultic life with its possibilities of no answer or a helpful word of God. Lastly, both parts of the third line are not otherwise attested either in the Psalms[13] or in the rest of the OT. To lift the face to someone is a well-known phrase but never used of God as the subject of looking. It seems to be transferred from the phrase 'to lift the eyes to someone' used even of God (Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 40f.). The exceptional wording means: the whole cultic presence of YHWH

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[10] Cf. Pss 121:3ff.; 140:4; 141:9. See, too, Gen 28:15 at the sanctuary of Bethel in a vow of Jacob.

[11] So already B. Baentsch, *Numeri* (HAT), Göttingen 1903, 484. It is the only case of יאר אל. Ps 67:2 which is probably dependent on Num 6:25 reads יאר פניו אתנו while יאר על 'shine upon' is attested only in Ps 31:17; Dan 9:17. Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 38f. explained: v. 25 shows a personal characterization of God, as His openness of personal acceptance for the addressees.

[12] Pss 31:17; 44:4; 67:2; 80:4, 8, 20; 89:16; 119:135; Dan 9:17. See Prov 16:15a for the face of the king, democratized in Prov 15:30; Job 29:24. This topos is well-known, too, outside the Israelite culture in Mesopotamia, see F. Nötscher, *'Das Angesicht Gottes schauen' nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung*, Darmstadt 1969², 10ff.; A.L. Oppenheim, 'Idiomatic Accadian', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 61 (1941) 251–71 at 256ff.; Fishbane, 'Forms and Reformulation of the Biblical Priestly Blessing', 116f. A Ugaritic parallel transferred this topos into diplomatic language: *pn mlk nr bn* 'May the face of the sun (= Hittite king) shine with us' UT 117.17f. (see, too, Levine, *Numbers*, 236f. with only a reference to a study of C. Cohen in Hebrew). Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 42 note 12 commented, that unlike the Mesopotamian usage there is no solar component in the OT usage. Opposed to that M. Arneth, *'Sonne der Gerechtigkeit': Studien zur Solarisierung der Jahwe-Religion im Lichte von Psalm 72* (BZAR 1), Wiesbaden 2000, 9–17 tried to show that there was a broad solarisation of YHWH through the reception of Shamash imagery in Neo-Assyrian times which had its effect on Num 6:25. R. Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Numeribuches im Kontext von Hexateuch und Pentateuch* (BZAR 3), Wiesbaden 2003, 514–17 proposes to observe a strong new influence of solarisation in Neo-Babylonian times with the consequence that only in Persian times a positive reception of solar motifs was possible for the YHWH religion. At least this last consequence is not convincing, see the Ugaritic parallel.

[13] The text of Ps 4:7a should not be emended from נסה to נשא.

shall be lifted to the addressee. This is a kind of declaring an election proposed to YHWH by YHWH for all the blessed persons. So it is no more astonishing that the last stichos, too, speaks quite singularly: 'May He set/appoint you shalom, social wholeness!' The first stichos seems to be playing with the negative phrase 'to set the face against someone' used in the juridical sense of proceeding against a wrong done by someone. The blessing is going in the opposite direction: May God as the judge of all the world decree the judgement of wholeness for all the addressees! Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 40f. compared this plausibly with the Mesopotamian cultic appointing of a destiny of wholeness for kings democratized in the Neo-Babylonian era for other persons.[14] That the name of the/a god is mentioned in every line and always in a clearly marked position has parallels in Mesopotamian traditions, too.[15] In the OT one should not compare our words of blessing to the covenant declaration of YHWH in Exod 34:6f. as some commentators do though it seems that the origin of its wording is as cultic (besides of being prophetic in origin).[16] For this extremely well balanced formula[17] YHWH Himself is pronouncing His name as

> YHWH, YHWH, a god compassionate and gracious, long withholding wrath and rich in communication and faithfulness, extending communication with the thousand, forgiving guilt, rebellion and sin, but does certainly not make unguilty and avenges the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons and grandsons to the third and fourth generation.

The contents are openly different. Whereas Exod 34:6f. entails a self-characterization of YHWH as abounding in grace but never forgetting his wrath with regard to the communal Israelite life under the covenant,[18] Num 6:24–26 only mentions the richness of simply

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[14] Quoting W.G. Lambert, 'Literary Style in the First Millenium Mesopotamia', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968) 130ff.

[15] See Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 32 for quoting an example; the fact is well received in recent literature.

[16] See the discussion in my paper 'Mose in einem seiner Ausnahmegespräche mit Gott' mentioned below.

[17] So A. Michel, 'Ist mit der "Gnadenformel" von Ex 34:6 (+7?) der Schlüssel zu einer Theologie des Alten Testaments gefunden?', *Biblische Notizen* 118 (2003) 85–109.

[18] A. Dillmann, *Numeri* (KHAT), Leipzig 1886², 38 compared v. 25 with Exod 34:6f. (20:6). But see recently M. Franz, *Der barmherzige und gnädige Gott: Die Gnadenrede vom Sinai (Exodus 34:6–7) und ihre Parallelen im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (BWANT 160), Stuttgart 2003 and esp. Michel, 'Ist mit der "Gnadenformel" . . .', 110–23. For the different interpretation of Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 149f., 153 see below.

being with YHWH by means of a threefold self-revelation of His name without mentioning the possibility of wrath.

This leads to the frame of the words of blessing. Before going to the main points one has to make some smaller observations. Whereas Deut 10:8 says that the whole tribe of Levi got the divine commission to bless the people of Israel 'up to this day' and a small note in Deut 21:5a continues that the priests as the sons of Levi had the authority to bless, Num 6:23, 27 exclusively commission the Aaronites not only to bless in the name of YHWH with the wording of vv. 24–26 but to lay His name on the people.[19] This change conforms with the idea of Num to give the Levites only lower services at and for the sanctuary.[20] Though Lev 9:22 P[g] mentions Aaron's blessing of the whole Edah at the inauguration of the cult at the new sanctuary without giving his words, most commentators agree that though the wording of Num 6:24–26 may be older than its context[21] the whole pericope is more recent than Lev 9:22.

Now to the main points: (1) The importance of vv. 23–27 is shown by the fact that they are an express revelation of YHWH to Moses. Though it seems very probable that the wording of vv. 24–26 originates from a cultic background and may be formulated either as it is or in a pre-text, v. 22 makes vv. 23–27 an order of YHWH even in the way of invoking Himself as the hidden, but real and present subject of the blessing. This is all the more astonishing as we find no prayers and only few words of God in the rituals of Lev 1–9

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[19] The wording looks like a recollection of Lev 9:22 where Aaron lifts his hands upon the Edah; but v. 27 does not mention the lifting of the hands. Both were synthesized later, so Ben Sira 50:22 and then the Mishna.

[20] U. Dahmen, *Leviten und Priester im Deuteronomium* (BBB 110), Bodenheim 1996, 49f. proposed to reverse the nearly unanimous opinion of the commentators that Deut 10:8 is older than Num 6:23, 27 by postulating that Deut 10:8 later corrected Num 6:22ff. by giving the Levites more rights than Num 6. Without going into the details of Dahmen's theory on the Levites Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora*, 512 note 66 rightly observes that Deut 10:8 (21:5a) and Num 6:23–27 make use of old traditional language with regard to priestly blessings. So it is not conclusive that Deut 10:8 is younger than Num 6. In all probability Num 6:22ff. change Deut 10:8. In my opinion Num 17:16–26 preserves the older use, too, because it is not Aaron's exceptional priesthood that is confirmed in the blossoming of Aaron's rod but the exclusive service of the house of Levi, represented by Aaron's rod, denying the erroneous postulate of the 250 aristocrats that all the community was holy in the sense of being competent to bring spice sacrifices at the holy tabernacle, see H. Seebass, *Numeri* (BKAT 4.2), Neukirchen-Vluyn 2003, 185–8, 204–8.

[21] So M. Noth, *Das 4. Buch Mose: Numeri* (ATD 7), Göttingen 1966, 59; Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 43–51; Budd, *Numbers*, 76; Davies, *Numbers*, 66ff. against Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora*, 515f., with plausible arguments.

and 16 up to Num 6 as if the Aaronites had to watch over a 'sanctuary of silence'.[22] This is certainly a very important authorization of the Aaronites in postexilic times as we shall see. But on the other hand YHWH's order makes them simply servants of the Lord to transmit what He Himself whished to be said and done.

(2) YHWH orders the Aaronites in v. 27a to lay His name on the Israelites through the words of blessing in vv. 24–26. This recalls strongly the Deuteronomistic topos of laying His name on the one and only sanctuary attested in the Deuteronomistic History.[23] The wording is clearly one of election as well as of pronouncing Israelites as the property of YHWH (Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 44). By themselves vv. 24–26 were pronunciations of the holy name. But v. 27a makes the blessing a proclamation of this name over the Israelites. So in every recital of this blessing there should be a renewal of the election of the Israelites and a renewal of their being made the property of YHWH. Since v. 22 makes vv. 23–27 a revelation of YHWH to Moses there can be no doubt that the blessing together with the laying of the name on the Israelites is a way of revealing the name as the character of YHWH, elucidated in vv. 24–26.

(3) This is confirmed by v. 27b. The אני before אברכם stresses YHWH as the one who acts, while the blessing was recited only by His servants so that YHWH Himself was the one who blessed the Israelites when the Aaronites did what they were ordered to. To be sure: v. 27b does not say that YHWH would only bless through the Aaronites—remember 2 Sam 6:18 where David blesses the people in a cultic scene—but it should be the Aaronites who pronounced the blessing specially ordered by Him.[24] In the midst of this blessing

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[22] See I. Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*, Minneapolis 1995, 89, 140 note 59, 148 note 97: only the holiness school as reconstructed by him would have broken this silence. Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora*, 512 who quotes Knohl comments this as if the Aaronic priest would come from the inner parts of the sanctuary then appearing to the Edah. But this is found only in Ben Sira 50:22, not in Num.

[23] The plausibility of this famous hypothesis is convincingly shown by Th. Römer & A. de Pury, 'L'Historiographie Deutéronomiste (HD): Histoire de la recherche et enjeux du débat', in: A. de Pury, Th. Römer, J.-D. Macchi (eds), *Israel construit son histoire: L'historiographie deutéronomiste à la lumière de recherches récentes* (Le Monde de la Bible 34), Geneva, 9–120.

[24] *Pace* Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora*, 512f. who thinks that Num 6:22ff. exclusively commission the Aaronites with all possible blessings. But the late 1Kgs 8:56f. saw Solomon, too, as blessing his people.

v. 25 and v. 26 made allusions to a court scene: an official speaking in a third person of the real subject of the blessing with regard to the topos of causing to shine his face and for directing his face to the addressee.[25] This seems to be brought to its fulfilment in v. 27. The blessing is that of the highest possible person in the cult, though it is pronounced by his officials, the sons of Aaron, as His servants.

All in all there seems to be a hidden glory expressed by vv. 22–27. This gives rise to the question why the pericope has its place just where it now stands. Surely there are now many answers deviating from the opinion of Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 54 in 1977, that our pericope was part of the 'Rumpelkammer' (odd chamber) of Num between 6:1–21 and 7:1–89. But that will be discussed in the third part of this paper. There is something more to say on Num 6:22–27 as a scene of YHWH's self-revelation through his name.

2. Num 6:22–27 and Exod 33:12–23

In an essay with the title 'Mose in einem seiner Ausnahmegespräche mit Gott: Zu Exod 33:12–23'[26] I have tried to show that Exod 33:12–23 is to be interpreted as one unit since the narrative beginning in v. 12 only finishes in v. 23. A mostly accepted distinction between vv. 12–17 on the one hand and vv. 18–23 on the other cannot be justified though recently vv. 12–17 was argued to be a separate unit where Moses in a scene with many parallels in court scenes of kings brings YHWH as His unwilling suzerain diplomatically to the promise to stay with His very guilty people in spite of the idolatry of the golden calf.[27] But v. 18 does not open up a new scene, it continues the scene beginning in v. 12 with the wish of Moses to look at the glory of God leading to important revelatory acts of YHWH 'de

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[25] For references see note 27.

[26] See M. Witte (ed.), *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: FS O. Kaiser* (BZAW 345.1), Berlin/New York 2004.

[27] To summarize a rich literature I mention especially E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189), Berlin/New York 1990, 64 note 81; for the parallels to court scenes F. Hartenstein, 'Das "Angesicht Gottes" in Exodus 32–34', in: M. Köckert & E. Blum (eds), *Gottes Volk am Sinai: Untersuchungen zu Ex 32–34 und Dtn 9–10* (Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 18), Gütersloh 2001, 157–83 (based on his Habilitations-thesis, which will be published in FAT).

Deo' to Moses. In the scholarly literature there is some uncertainty
about where these acts come to an end, e.g. in 34:1–9 or in 34:1–28.
But Exod 34 is certainly to be separated from 33:12–23, while Exod
33:19, the famous idem-per-idem formulation of YHWH's name, is
the obvious and necessary conclusion of vv. 12–17 since after the
hard words of YHWH in Exod 32:30–34 on Israel's idolatry and
after the ungranted forgiveness in 33:1–11 there must be a word of
explanation why YHWH did not contradict Himself in accompany-
ing the people after harshly punishing without forgiveness.[28] For 33:17
stresses only God's favour for *Moses* granting him a willingness to go
with him and his people. It is only v. 19 which makes God's action
understandable as His grace for His people from then on, because
YHWH announces a theophany of all His goodness together with
a proclamation of his name before Moses with the famous expla-
nation: 'I, who will be gracious, will be really gracious and I who
have compassion, will have really compassion.' This far too often
underrated word which became central in later Judaism is the aim
of vv. 12–17, and because of its importance it is combined with vv.
18, 21–23 creating a narrative reflection on the Deity of the Bible
(see esp. B.S. Childs).[29]

    Some scholars commenting on Num 6:22–27 mentioned Exod
33:19 when interpreting Num 6:25,[30] because nowhere else in the
OT does one find such a close connection between the name of
YHWH and his being gracious. But they did it rather obliquely.
There cannot be much doubt that Exod 33:19 is to be understood
as basic for the people of God with its terrible guilt in its past, later
deepened in the reflection on the Exile and its causes, and once
more deepened in the canonical book of Daniel and its apocalyptic
relatives. In Num this has its equivalent in Num 13–14, the narra-
tive of the guilt of unbelief with the consequence of the death of
one whole generation in the desert mediated only through the inter-

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[28] YHWH does not even express forgiveness at the last intercession of Moses in
34:9. Exod 32–34 do not base Israel's future on forgiveness but on the continua-
tion of the singular relationship YHWH-Israel as expressed in Exod 33:19: He will
not reject His people after punishing it, but will go with it graciously. For argu-
ments see my abovementioned essay.

[29] *The Book of Exodus*, Philadelphia 1974, 597f.; see, too, the commentaries of
U. Cassuto, N.M. Sarna and B. Jacob *ad locum*, as referred to in the essay in note 26.

[30] Milgrom, *Numbers*, 305 note 63; D.T. Olson, *Numbers* (Interpretation), Louisville
1996, 42 and with sense of its role Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 153.

cession of Moses. So it was important for Israel's later future that 6:22–27 was placed before Num 13–14 in the composition of Num. While Num 15–36 do not mention a blessing of the people after the catastrophe of Num 13–14, Num 6:22–27 are looking forward into a far future to the sons, grandsons and so on of the Israelites.

But the main point connecting Num 6:22–27 with Exod 33:12–23 is that both important traditions are concerned with the revelation of the name of YHWH.[31] Certainly both are very different in their actual content. Exod 33:19 is a revelation at one of the deepest points in the history of Mosaic Israel looking into the future in no simplistic way. In spite of the affair of the golden calf it stresses the goodness of YHWH and His being basically gracious in going with Israel to the promised land and through all its life. Num 6:22–27 have all this as background and see into the future of the people of the Name stressing that YHWH is absolutely willing to bless by protection, grace and social wholeness and effectively laying His name on the Israelites. Exod 33:19 certainly knows that YHWH is not making unguilty those who are guilty, and Num 6:22–27 probably knows that, too. But both go to the basis of election: Exod 33:19 in an outstanding way and Num 6:22–27 in a basic cultic formula which in principle is not spectacular, but reliable in its content. So it seems that Exod 33:12–23 enhance the understanding of Num 6:22–27 as a jewel of a self-revelation of YHWH. What of the context?

3. The place of the Aaronic blessing in the composition of Num

Asking why Num 6:22–27 takes the place where it is now in Num is not new.[32] But there is a new and very strong scholarly interest

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[31] This does not contradict the facts (1) that a blessing had a firm place in the very normal acts of greeting (Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 26–28 and recently, without mentioning Seybold, Levine, *Numbers*, 237f.), and (2) that the single parts of the blessing have rich parallels in Mesopotamian literature (summarized by Levine, *Numbers*, 236ff.) showing that the Biblical tradition rests on a broad international basis. But that is just what explains the necessity of the threefold name of YHWH and the necessity to say that the priests had to lay the name of YHWH on the Israelites.

[32] An old proposal suggests that 6:24–26 or 6:22–27 were originally the continuation of Lev 9:22, 23b, 24a (vv. 23a, 24b seem to be additions). But one has to prefer a solution which explains its present position. Levine, *Numbers*, 243f. defended

in the composition of Num coming together with the question of
the place of Numbers in the whole of the Pentateuch or, for some,
of the Hexateuch.[33] The verdict of the famous and influential Martin
Noth, *Numbers* (Engl. transl.), 5 has roused many voices to show the
opposite: 'From the point of view of its contents, the book of Numbers
lacks unity, and it is difficult to see any pattern in its construction.'
For the purpose of this paper it is not necessary to look into the
composition of Num as a whole,[34] but rather for its place in 1:1–10:10.
Of interest was the proposal of G.B. Gray in 1903 that 5:1–4 and
6:22–27 are framing chaps 5–6, because at least these two pericopes
have a correspondence: a blessing could not be given if the Israelite
camp was impure (5:1–4).[35] The proposal of some commentators that
Num 5–6 are to be put under the heading of purity or impurity
was convincingly rejected by Davies, *Numbers*, 43 because 5:5–10
do not tell of a case of impurity, and the purity is certainly not
the main subject of the Nazirite Vow (6:1ff.).[36] J. Sturdy, *Numbers*

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the old proposal with the new theory that 6:22–27 originally belonged to Lev 9
but was later transposed to its place in Numbers because the date of the conse-
cration of the Edah and that of the altar would be the same. But then 6:22–27
should not have its place before but after 7:1–88, just before 7:89, see below.

    [33] See H. Seebass, 'Pentateuch', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 26 (1996) 185–209. A
very different point of view with regard to the rest of the research proposed Ashley,
The Book of Numbers, 149f., 153: In his opinion the great bloc of laws ranging from
Lev 1 to Num 6 ends with 6:22–27 because 7:1–88 or better 7:1–8:28 leads back
to the establishment of the holy tabernacle in Exod 40. On this ground he con-
cludes that 6:22–27 affords an Israel obeying all the laws of Lev 1—Num 6. But
I do not think that it is possible to distinguish as sharply as Ashley does between
Num 5–6 or 1–6 and Num 7–8 (-9:14), and no word in 6:22–27 verbalizes the
exact observation of all laws. This certainly does not mean that the laws were not
meant to be observed but that as in Exod 34:6f. there are two great characteriza-
tions of YHWH. Grace and Law are distinguishable as in Exod 34:6f. though they
go back to the one and same character. But this is not the place to go into obe-
dience of the law.

    [34] Personally I prefer to work inductively on Num seeking to understand peri-
cope after pericope in its context, before developing a theory of the whole, see
Seebass, *Numeri* (2003). So I did not begin with an overall design of the Num
composition. A first try on developing a concept is H. Seebass, 'Das Erbe Martin Noths
zu Pentateuch und Hexateuch', in: U. Rüterswörden (ed.), *Martin Noth—aus der Sicht
der heutigen Forschung* (Biblisch-Theologische Studien 58), Neukirchen-Vluyn 2004,
44ff.

    [35] Milgrom, *Numbers*, 33 recently accepted this proposal looking on 6:22–27 as
an appendix (50ff.) though on p. xiv he said: '. . . the most likely basis for the join-
ing of these pericopes is that in each the priest plays a prominent role . . .'. This
seems to be the opinion of Budd, *Numbers*, xvii—a far better proposal, see below.

    [36] Davies gives a detailed critique of the defence of this idea by Budd, *Numbers*,

(Cambridge 1976), 58 thought that the priestly blessing would be a good continuation after looking on persons who consecrated themselves to their God for a time (6:1ff.). But this does not help much to interpret the composition of Num 5–10. Even the proposal of Davies that Num 5–6 interrupt the preparations for the march in Num 1–4 and 7:1–10:10 is problematic because only 7:1–9 and 8:1–26 mention preparations for the following march to the holy land, while 7:10–88; 7:89; 8:1–4 and 9:1–14 do not show a connection with the beginning march.

What if the role of priests in Num 5–6 is the one unifying topos (cf. Budd, *Numbers*, xvii; Milgrom, *Numbers*, xiv)? It makes sense to follow this line. 5:1–4 do not mention a priest, though. But Lev 13 leaves no doubt that it was absolutely necessary to get the judgment of a priest (an Aaronite priest—Lev 13:2) on what kind of skin disease was to be isolated and if it made the affected person impure. 5:5–10 mention a priest in two functions. Firstly he had to offer a ram of atonement (Kippurim) before the Lord, as a sacrifice for the wrongdoer. Secondly, the officiating priest got the restitution and an additional one-fifth of the atonement, if the person to whom the wrong was done was no more alive and had no traceable heirs. As some commentators observe this is an increase in priestly responsibility because of an ethical conflict.[37] 5:11–31, the great and in its details difficult[38] case of the Sotah, describes the duties of a priest in vv. 15–27, that is in its main parts. The jealousy of a suspicious husband against his wife because of a possible adultery could not be brought before a normal court. The husband could only go to the sanctuary with a formal suit to determine whether his wife was impure because of adultery or pure without guilt. The difficult details mentioned in vv. 15–27 needed a priestly expert. The law on the Nazirite vow, 6:1–21, mentions a priest in two cases. The more important one is a ritual in the sanctuary at the end of the vow-observance helping to end the holy status of the Nazir and preparing

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54, too. More details already in J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuch und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, Berlin 1963³, 174.

[37] The case is based on Lev 5:20–26, but gives an important new stipulation: Before the wrongdoer who had defrauded a peer was allowed to make a reparation he had to confess his sin. See Milgrom, *Numbers*, 34 for details.

[38] See the Mishna which developed a judgeable case and my forthcoming commentary.

him for normal life (6:13–21). The other one is only a possibility. If
by an unhappy chance the Nazir became impure through a person
dying just next to him so that he could not avoid contact with the
dead he needed a priest for sacrifices cleansing his impurity. But
clearly a priest was necessary in both cases.

No doubt, there is an increase of priestly expert competence from
case to case. So 6:22–27 is no appendix to 5:1–6:21 but the highest
possible valuation of the priests. What 5:1–6:27 binds together is not
only the mention or need of priests, but the need of the priestly
expert. Then 6:22–27 make very good sense *in situ*. For it is the
word of a revelation of YHWH's name only allowed to be recited
by the Aaronite priests to lay it on the Israelites.

Looking on the difficult composition of Num, in this case espe-
cially on 1:1–10:10, it seems that a little more can be said. Clearly,
7:1–88, the list of votive gifts of the chieftains or heads of ancestral
houses, shows a break after 5:1–6:27. But the scholarly research is
nearly unanimous that 7:1–88 must be a late addition,[39] because 7:1
dates the acts narrated here back to a month earlier than that of
1:1, to the time of Exod 40, when Moses finished the establishment
of the tent of meeting, and the initiation of the cult in Lev 9. After
vv. 1–88 Num 7 closes with a small notice on Moses getting reve-
lations in the tent of meeting, v. 89, and it is certain that the suffix
'him' which follows אתו meaning that the voice of YHWH talked to
Moses[40] has no exact reference in the text before. This would allow

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[39] For the reasons see Davies, *Numbers*, 70f.

[40] See the discussion on לדבר אתו in D. Kellermann, *Die Priesterschrift von Numeri
1:1 bis 10:10* (BZAW 120), Berlin 1970, 108 though he himself prefers to under-
stand the notice as Moses speaking to God. But he could not bring forward a con-
vincing parallel, while all parallels are in the direction of YHWH speaking to Moses.
Since the following מדבר is pointed in MT as a hitp. (not emended by Noth, *Numeri*,
59) with the meaning 'sich bereden' as if to take counsel with Moses (*pace* Kellermann,
in the place cited) it seems that the MT wishes the inf. לדבר to be understood with
God's voice as its subject and the following phrase as its explication: 'he (Moses)
heard the voice as talking for itself in his direction from . . .'. Though it may be
easier grammatically to point the pi. ptcp. of מדבר (Ges[18], 239; Ashley, *The Book of
Numbers*, 164f.; Levine, *Numbers*, 258) not only HALAT 202 correctly retains MT,
but just now K.N. Grüneberg, *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and
Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in its Narrative Context* (BZAW 332), Berlin/New York
2003, 198 interprets MT in a grammatical study as correct. That he opts to trans-
late the word simply with 'speak' seems to be the result of not having an English
equivalent of e.g. German 'sich bereden'. מדבר constructed with אל as in Ezek 2:2;
43:6 expresses in Hebrew a distance of God and man: 'in direction of'.

for the following thesis. Excluding 7:1–88 as a late insertion would make 7:89 follow 6:22–27. 7:89 would then be the equivalent to 6:22 'YHWH spoke to Moses', and so the curious 7:89aα‫ א‬has its reference coming back to Moses as a revelator.[41] The function of 7:89 after 6:22–27 would be to distinguish Moses from Aaron: Aaron and the Aaronites should be servants of the Lord obeying orders that Moses had got from above the kapporet (underlining 6:27). Then 8:1–4, a unit that should be separated from 7:89,[42] is a plausible continuation. For Moses got a new order for Aaron with regard to the design of the menorah to shed light on the altar of incense and the table of the bread of presence in the holy tent. Stressing that the Aaronites are only the servants of the Lord that had to obey the words of Moses then allowed to push the Levites to the fore. It is not fortuitous that the following act is the consecration of the Levites *by* the Israelites and *through* the Aaronites beginning with a ritual of purification (8:5–22). Without going into details it seems that the consecration of the Levites aimed at a higher valuation of the Levites than in Num 3–4 matching that of Num 18:1–7.

Now, as said before, 7:1–88 was inserted later. What does that mean for the composition of Num 1:1–10:10? Firstly it is remarkable that 7:1–9 now mention Levites as experts of the tent of meeting for its transport expressly after five pericopes speaking of priests as experts. Together with the erection and consecration of the holy tent and of all the interior vessels through Moses and in the context of the initiation of the cult by Aaron and Moses in Lev 9 mentioning the first blessing of Aaron, Num 7:1–9 wishes to mention the Levites

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[41] Milgrom, *Numbers*, 53–59 who added 7:89 to 7:1–88, acknowledged the connection of 7:89 with 6:22–27 (p. 59). The first who connected 7:89 with 6:22–27 seems to be P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Numeri* (HSAT 2.1), Bonn 1936, 39. On the contrary Davies, *Numbers*, 71 holds 7:89 to be 'clearly a later addition . . . certainly a displaced fragment the original context of which can no longer be determined.' But G.B. Gray, *Numbers*, Edinburgh 1903, 4 saw Num 1:1; Exod 25:22 and Num 7:89 in one line nearly saying the same, with the tent of meeting meaning 'that Yahweh *meets* Moses to communicate to him his will'. Gray, *Numbers*, 77; Noth, *Numeri*, 59 interpreted 7:89 as opening a new word of God, but Noth observed that all pericopes in the next three chapters have their own opening formula. So 7:89 is to be seen as a tradition for itself which Noth dated as a later addition because he missed a connection before or after, but see below. According to Noth, 7:89 is certainly not the reaction of Moses and God on 7:1–88, as Achenbach, *Die Vollendung der Tora*, 538 thinks. This can be said only if one does not want to look at the wording because of the thesis of a very late redaction.

[42] *Pace* Budd, *Numbers*, 87.

in an elevated way though understandably later than the priests. So
the insertion of 7:1–88 (vv. 10–88 seem to belong to the same origin
as vv. 1–9) made it possible to stress the importance of the Levites
next to that of the priests—in preparation of the role of the Levites
in the Chronicles?[43] In this new context 7:89 expresses the excep-
tionality of Moses in view of the priests and the Levites though not
seeing YHWH face to face (Exod 33:11) or speaking to YHWH
from mouth to mouth (Num 12:8) but hearing the voice of Him
speaking from the kapporet between the two cherubim further explain-
ing Exod 25:22.[44] This is the priestly way of expressing the excep-
tionality of Moses.[45] But if this is the necessary understanding of 7:89
in its present context then one has to answer the question why the
last redaction moved 7:89 away from 6:22–27 where it made a much
better sense. The answer is: the reason can only be the date included
in 7:1. It was not necessary for the late redaction to put 6:22–27
under the date of 7:1 because the revelation of YHWH's name in
the way of the future Aaronic blessing should be a new act after
the inauguration of the holy tent (Exod 40) and of the cult (Lev 9).
But because of Exod 25:22 the redaction found it appropriate that
already at the inauguration of the altar[46] Moses went to YHWH
who would take counsel with him.[47]

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[43] See Th. Willi, 'Leviten, Priester und Kult in vorhellenistischer Zeit', in: B. Ego
and others (eds), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel* (WUNT 118), Tübingen 1999, 75–98.

[44] The second priestly expression of Moses' exceptionality will be 27:12–23, the
majesty of Moses in the eyes of YHWH (v. 20).

[45] G. von Rad, *Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch: Literarisch untersucht und theologisch gew-
ertet* (BWANT 4.13), Stuttgart 1934, 9 called 7:89 'ein Stück vom Besten' in priestly
literature.

[46] Milgrom, *Numbers*, 364 argues that Hebrew ביום does not exactly signify a cer-
tain day, but often means 'when' and mentions that Exod 29:36f. attest to a 7-day
consecration of the altar. If one adds to this the ten days of following offerings (vv.
10–88) then the chieftains would violate a Sabbath and the Passover. But that can
be avoided if one reads vv. 10–88 with Milgrom, *Numbers*, 363f. as only bringing
the gifts and sacrificing them later. Then the problem rests unsolved why 7:1–9
mention the job description of the Levites about three weeks earlier than their
official job description in Num 3–4. Milgrom tries to solve this by postulating that
ביום is unfixed and one can translate it as 'About the time when . . .'. This inter-
pretation seems very artificial only to arrive at no mistake in the Torah. A better
understanding was given by Kellermann, *Die Priesterschrift von Numeri*, 99: 'about the
time of . . .' does not mean exactly the day of Exod 40 or Lev 9, but certainly a
time before the one mentioned in 1:1.

[47] Interpreted in this way there is nothing missing to understand 7:89. Though
J. de Vaulx, *Les Nombres* (Sources Bibliques), Paris 1972, 113f. misunderstood v. 89a
he made the useful observation that 7:1–88 mention much more gifts at the con-

So my thesis to explain the composition of 1:1–10:10 is as follows: Num 5–6 continue Num 1–4 as a second bloc looking on the priests as experts in five special cases and leading to an absolutely high point in the Aaronic blessing. Num 7–8 constitute a third bloc looking on Levites and priests as experts in four cases (7:1–88; 7:89; 8:1–4; 8:5–28) with the consecration of the Levites as its highlight. 9:1–14 is an appendix, as its superscription tells. 9:15–10:10 signal the beginning of the march.

Summary

Before summarizing the three steps of this investigation there should be mentioned two critical issues since for the most part I have argued synchronically.

1. There is the question of the date of 6:24–26. Gray, *Numbers*, 72 proposed plausibly the Josianic reform as being able to produce such a YHWH centred blessing—only vv. 22–23a show later priestly language. Since I cannot discuss this point in all its details I simply propose to take this as a *terminus a quo*. Observing that even v. 27 does not show priestly language it seems to be possible that vv. 23b–27 as one whole is earlier, too, than its framing through vv. 22–23a and is directed to priests as in Deut 10:8 but not specifically to the Aaronites. In my opinion the silver amulets of Ketef Hinnom are of no great help in dating our blessing not only because it is so far uncertain how to date them: either in the 7th/6th century or in the 2nd/1st century BC. For even the longer text of the two does not represent Num 6:24–26 in full, and there seems much to be said for the thesis of Levine, *Numbers*, 238ff. that the longer text should not be emended, because it might be simply a variant, either older or later. So I think that vv. 23b–27 are to be dated between the Josianic reform and the constitutive composition of Num which I would date in the first half of the fourth century.[48]

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secration of the altar than at the consecration of the holy tent. So just at the moment of this very important consecration it should be mentioned that God was exceptionally talking with Moses.

[48] Differing from Kellermann, *Die Priesterschrift von Numeri*, 97 and Davies, *Numbers*, 66f., my view is that vv. 23b, 27 come from the same author and are probably older

2. The use of the blessing in rabbinic times and later is documented
   by some commentators (Seybold, Milgrom, Levine). This will be
   mentioned in my commentary at its proper place. But it should
   be mentioned now that the blessing is still used today in the syn-
   agogal and the non-catholic service. For the latter it is important
   that the threefold name should not be explained by a triune for-
   mula, but by an equivalent to the character of YHWH as name.
   The LXX should be the prototype by giving κύριος as the equiv-
   alent of אדני.

And now to the summary.

1. The place of Num 6:22–27 in Num 1–10 is not fortuitous. It
   belongs to the bloc of Num 5–6 collected to show expert actions
   of priests with 6:22–27 as its high point. Num 7:1–88 seem to
   be intentionally set between 6:22–27 and 7:89 to make Num 7–8
   a following bloc specifying Levites as experts together with priests,
   having the consecration of the Levites in 8:5ff. as its high point
   and positioning Moses clearly above the priests and the Levites.
   Both blocs follow intentionally on Num 1–4. In consequence of
   that Num 1–8 seem well organized with 9:1–14 as an appendix
   which helps Israelites and Gerim living with them to have Pesach
   they were not able to celebrate it on its normal date.
2. V. 22 together with v. 27 make the pericope of 6:22–27 a tra-
   dition of the revelation of YHWH's name. The comparison with
   Exod 33:12–23 with 33:19 at its core showed that the revelation
   comprised election.
3. The content of the blessing though expressed in an original way
   specifically for this act of putting the name of YHWH on the
   Israelites is one of universal normality. Ps 67 which is probably

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than vv. 22–23a. For v. 23b is not in a priestly diction, but certainly addressed to
priests who were redactionally supplied by the Aaronites. Maybe it is significant
that the singularly attested formulation of v. 26b has its next parallels in two Aramaic
texts of the Achaemenid time: an inscription of king Yehawmilk of Byblos said: the
Lady of Byblos 'had set him שלמא. May the Lady of Byblos bless Yehaw-milk . . .'
(H. Donner & W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, Wiesbaden 1966²,
No. 10.2ff., quoted by Seybold, *Der aaronitische Segen*, 33) and in a letter of the 5th
century the line 'prayer will be offered כזי אלהיא ישמימו שלם that the god/gods grant
you well-being' (G.R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford 1954,
35 N2.XIII, quoted by Levine, *Numbers*, 237). If this last parallel is a direct quota-
tion of Num 6:26b (Davies, *Numbers*, 68) it would be a *terminus ante quem* for the
words of blessing in vv. 24–26.

dependent on Num 6:22–27 has brought this into words of a hymn. So it is important that the name of God in the Bible of old Israel as the expression of a distinct character of divinity in the world is to be found as connecting the OT with its Near Eastern culture and with the New Testament through its universalism.[49]

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[49] This was what I proposed in my book *Der Gott der ganzen Bibel*, Freiburg 1982.

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THE NAME IN KINGS AND CHRONICLES

Eep Talstra

1. The Name: Is God within Reach or beyond Reach?

Three times in the Hebrew Bible king Solomon frames a direct question about God's presence on earth: Would God really live on earth (1 Kgs 8:27, 2 Chr 2:5 and 6:18)? Exegetes debate the meaning of that question: what is actually being expressed by these words? And why are they written precisely at moments in the story line of Kings and Chronicles where the building of the temple is starting or has just finished? Asking this question at these moments actually puts into perspective the human effort of temple building: if God's dwelling on earth is a real question, why do people erect sanctuaries and temples at all?

If one continues reading Kings and Chronicles one finds that various answers are given: the temple is a place for human prayer (1 Kgs 8); it is a place for human worship: sacrifices (2 Chr 2:6 and 7:12); it also is a place where God is present among his people through the presence of his Name, his eyes, and his heart (2 Chr 7:16 and 20:8).

So what seems to be expressed by the very existence of the sanctuary is the possibility to address YHWH. The question raised in this contribution is: how is the word *Name* (of God) used in this context in the books of Kings and Chronicles? Is the *Name* the answer to Solomon's questions? Does the Name signify the distance between God and men? The true God being transcendent, can we only speak of His Name as being attached to the human world, i.e. the temple? Or does the Name signify God's presence? Is God to be addressed especially at this location, the temple, since it is here that He will hear prayers and sacrifices?

One can observe that for a considerable period the scholarly debate on the Name used to focus on the Deuteronomistic literature, especially the books of Deuteronomy and Kings. Scholars frequently claim that the reference to the Name is indeed intended to be an answer to the question formulated in Solomon's words: would God really

live on earth? God is present in the temple, though not restricted
to the temple. The Name indicates divine presence and divine dis-
tance at the same time. If this is the case, however, one may also
have to conclude that this answer is valid only for the book of Kings.
For with respect to the book of Chronicles a number of different
opinions exist. According to Japhet,[1] the words of Jehoshaphat's
prayer in 2 Chr 20:8 indicate that God is thought to be really pre-
sent in the temple. Other scholars suggest that one cannot find much
theological consistency in Chronicles. Clements[2] holds that the
Chronicler has a 'diversity of inherited ideas' and does not 'possess
a systematic doctrine of the divine presence and dwelling place on
earth.' If that is the case, does it mean that the debate on God's
presence and transcendence is no longer applicable in Chronicles?
But for what reason should we judge a book based on whether it
presents a systematic doctrine of divine presence or not? We may
appreciate the book of Kings, since it seems to present an answer
to the problem of transcendence when speaking of the presence of
the Name and about the house of prayer. But then what is the con-
tribution of Chronicles? If in Chronicles the emphasis is on the tem-
ple as a place for sacrifices (2 Chr 2 and 7) and a place of God's
real presence, does that imply a retreat from the intellectual progress
exegetes thought to observe in the books of Kings?

   My intention in this paper is first to evaluate the discussion of the
Name as it takes place mainly on the basis of the Deuteronomistic
literature. In the second place I will ask the question what the books
of Chronicles change or add with respect to the function of the
Name.

2. The Debate on Presence: 'Mode' or 'Location'

What does it mean when texts say that God's Name has been *estab-
lished* in the House (1 Kgs 9:3), or is *called upon* the House (1 Kgs
8:43), or simply *is* there (1 Kgs 8:16)? Is this expression a metaphor
emphasizing the mode of God's presence? Or is it emphasizing the
location of God's presence?

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[1] S. Japhet, *2 Chronik* (HThKAT), Freiburg im Breisgau 2003, 250.
[2] R.E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Israel*, Oxford
1965, 128.

2.1. *The Name: Mode of Presence Demythologized?*

Biblical theology of an earlier generation usually sketches the theology of the Name as an intellectual theological achievement. Von Rad, in his *Deuteronomium-Studien*,[3] claims that in older Israelite religion the presence of God was identified with the presence of the ark in the sanctuary. In his view the emphasis on a location for the Name and not for divine presence itself, as expressed in the books of Deuteronomy and Kings, has a polemic element in it. It is a theological correction. Not God himself, but his Name is present in the sanctuary. Deuteronomy also changes the function of the ark: from the place of divine presence it is turned into a box with the tablets of the Torah. For this movement Von Rad uses the term *Entmythologisierung*. The Deuteronomic writers modernize the religion of Israel. Their reformation of sacral traditions is a process of rationalising them into a more ethical function. In his *Theologie* Von Rad[4] elaborates his view. Deuteronomy claims the unity of the Torah in connection with the one place of the cult and the oneness of God himself. Von Rad again describes this in terms of intellectual progression. Theology becomes more abstract: 'Diese theologische Einheitsschau des Dt setzt ein beachtliches Abstraktionsvermögen voraus.'[5] At the same time, however, based on his form critical view of the cultic background of Deuteronomy, Von Rad states that a covenant festival is the original life situation of the text. Then he formulates the background of the book as something ceremonial, not purely intellectual. The fact that a cultic festival dominated the literary genre of the book of Deuteronomy proves to him that it was very difficult for Israel to develop theology in a purely theoretical way. Thus, '. . . kann man wieder einmal sehen wie schwer es Israel gefallen ist, theologische Inhalte theoretisch aus sich selbst heraus zu entfalten.'[6]

However, expecting that independent 'theoretical thinking' produces a step forward in religion seems to be mainly a characteristic of modern Protestant theology. It is probably a western cultural habit to assume that independent religious 'thinking' brings us further and

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[3] G. von Rad, *Deuteronomium-Studien* (FRLANT 40), Göttingen 1947, in: *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, vol. 2 (Theol. Bücherei 48), Munich 1958 (1971⁴), 25ff.
[4] G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, vol. 1 (1962⁴), vol. 2 (1965⁴).
[5] *Theologie*, vol. 1, 235.
[6] *Theologie*, vol. 1, 233.

that religion is a matter of intellectual skills, imagination and cog-
nition, rather than being about the life of a community. Nevertheless
these assumptions about intellectual progression achieved by an
increase of abstraction have dominated the debate of the Name for
a considerable period.[7] M. Weinfeld,[8] in Part II of his study of the
Deuteronomic History speaks in terms similar to the ones used by
Von Rad: 'Demythologization and secularisation'. The theological
importance of the cult is being theologically restricted. The Deutero-
nomistic writers present a more 'abstract religion'. According to
Weinfeld 'the Deuteronomic conception of the cult . . . represents a
turning-point in the evolution of the religious faith of Israel'. So the
question remains: does not this imply that the books of Chronicles
represent a second turning point, this time backward?

In his study *God and Temple*, R.E. Clements[9] also emphasizes that
the discussion about God, the Name and the glory (*kabōd*) is con-
cerned with the nature and the mode of God's presence. Since the
Deuteronomistic writers very much emphasised the transcendence of
YHWH, their theology resulted in a reinterpretation of the temple
from a house of God's presence into primarily a house of prayer.
Clements calls this a religious development, a movement from mythol-
ogy into transcendence, and, like Von Rad, he claims that the con-
cept of God's presence was 'demythologized' and replaced by the
concept of the presence of the Name. The movement from a mythol-
ogy of a present God into a theology of a transcendent God meant
that YHWH was 'protected' from the suggestion that He could be
regarded as part of the cosmic order. The concept of the Name
ensures that God is the Other One.[10]

It is interesting that Clements also asks questions about the books
of Chronicles in this respect.[11] Starting from his views on the the-
ology of the Deuteronomist, Clements concludes that there is no the-
ological consistency regarding the Name and the mode of God's

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[7] See the criticism by Van der Woude: A.S. van der Woude, 'שם šm Name',
in: E. Jenni & C. Westermann (eds), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*,
vol. 2, Munich/Zürich 1976, 935–63 and A.S. van der Woude, 'Gibt es eine
Theologie des Jahwe-Namens im Deuteronomium?', in: *Übersetzung und Deutung* (FS
A.R. Hulst), Nijkerk 1977, 204–10.
[8] M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*, Oxford 1972, 190ff.
[9] Op. cit., 135.
[10] Op. cit., 63ff., 89, 97.
[11] Op. cit., 127, 137.

presence in Chronicles. Regarding the divine presence he observes a diversity of beliefs in the postexilic community. The Jerusalem cult has been restored. God is living in the midst of His people, but not tightly connected to one place (2 Chr 2 and 6). It looks like an accumulation of various concepts. The Name concept of the Deuteronomists may have been replaced by the concept of the glory (*kabōd*) in Ezekiel and the Priestly writers. But in Chronicles it appears that these concepts are present together. The idiom of the Name is kept and even seems to easily combine with an increase of the idiom of the *kabōd* (2 Chr 5:14; 7:1, 2, 3).

While one finds modern terminology such as demythologization (Entmythologisierung) in the thinking of Von Rad, Clements and Weinfeld, Tryggve Mettinger,[12] taking into account the effects of destruction and exile, speaks of dethronement: God is losing or leaving the divine throne. Mettinger does not perform his analysis of the place of the cult in Deuteronomy and Kings primarily in terms of intellectual concepts as, e.g., transcendence. Therefore he does not think about the function of the Name in terms of intellectual progress either. The Name does not express the need to save or protect YHWH from popular religion. The function of the Name in Deuteronomistic theology was evoked by the actual experience of disaster. Judah and Jerusalem were facing destruction and exile: if the temple is in ruins, can his people still reach YHWH? That was not a matter of developing theology into a higher level of abstraction. It was a line of thinking the writers were forced into by the destruction of the temple. The very concept of the Name of YHWH enthroned in the sanctuary over the ark was simply no longer applicable. But the Name remains attached to the place, even after the destruction of the temple. God, dwelling in heaven, is untouched by that fact. Instead of words like demythologization or protection, Mettinger uses the words 'strategic retreat'.[13] God may have withdrawn from his temple, but the 'dethronement of Sabaoth' is only temporary. After the Exile the circle fully comes around. Mettinger refers to texts of YHWH returning to Zion and he concludes his book with a quote from Lamentations 5:19: 'You, YHWH, you are enthroned for ever, your throne is from generation to generation.'

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[12] T. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Coniectanea Biblica 18), Lund 1982.

[13] Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 50.

In fact, with Mettinger one makes the transition from a study of God's presence with emphasis on its mode to an emphasis on the location of his presence.

2.2. *The Name: the Place Mediating the Presence*

More recently biblical theology has left behind the discussion of the Name in relation to transcendence and God's mode of presence. Now the question of religion, institution and location is posed.[14] Where can God be found or be addressed? Why do people speak of God's presence anyway? Might that just be a matter of sacral thinking to be left behind in favour of higher theological abstraction? The issue of seeing intellectual progress no longer functions as a fundamental force in biblical theology studies. Rather it is the issue of the identity of a religious community and the location or institutions its beliefs are attached to. In current exegetical or biblical theology studies one sees much more interest in actual religious communities, cultic ceremonies, and in the question raised by Solomon as such: would there be a place where God could be met, where God is present in one way or another? What happened to the post-exilic communities, when they were involved in—again—establishing their identity as a people of God and trying to establish institutions again to express that?

This means that it does not seem to be very helpful any more to claim that the Deuteronomistic theology of the Name is just an intellectual leap ahead. And thus one finds room for a different line of thinking about the book of Chronicles. Rather than presenting an inconsistent theology about transcendence, when compared to Deuteronomy and Kings, the book presents new thinking about God, religious community, and identity. However, one must admit, a possible upgrading of Chronicles' view of divine presence moves slowly.

In the *Theology of the Old Testament* by Walter Brueggemann[15] one can observe an interesting tension between theology as the use of texts to testify of God versus the actual religious communities and

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[14] Cf. L.C. Jonker, *Reflections of King Josiah in Chronicles: Late Stages of the Josiah Reception in 2 Chr* (Textpragmatische Studien zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte der Hebräischen Bibel 2), Gütersloh 2003, 34f.

[15] W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, Minneapolis 1997.

rituals. In a way Von Rad still comes first: when speaking of God, we start with words, we have testimony and dispute. The emphasis is on 'Israel's utterance of Yahweh'. But from Part IV of his book onward Brueggemann speaks of Israel's 'embodied testimony'.[16] Besides language and texts we also have to deal with community life and institutions: these are mediating the presence of Yahweh. Therefore Brueggemann speaks of the cult as mediator. God's presence is mediated by it, and it is the real presence that is mediated. And this is what constitutes religious community. 'There must be important and intentional lines of defence and maintenance of a peculiar identity to endure, and worship is the most likely place in which such an identity is to be guarded and maintained.'[17] So there is a limit to Brueggemann's metaphor of the court and the dispute as the genuine setting of biblical theology. For the question is: after all that has been testified about YHWH, what is the actual relationship of YHWH and Israel? In many respects Brueggemann follows Von Rad, such as in the priority seen in the intellectual, in design. Cultural and religious institutions are of a secondary nature. But unlike Von Rad he does not follow the order of historical development. We do not move from the original sacral to the intellectual or moral. We have a logical order: the intellectual categories come first (testimony), the cultural and sacral expression dependent on it are secondary in nature. Therefore the king, the prophet, the sage, and the cult are institutions mediating between God and Israel. In a way this approach helps, since it creates more room for a role for the temple, the *kabōd* and the Name, not only in theological thinking, but also in real life. In terms of theological analysis Brueggemann more or less follows the views of Clements and Mettinger. The concepts of the Name and the Glory represent a strategy. It was necessary to disconnect the presence of YHWH from a failing temple system.[18] About the theology of Chronicles Brueggemann does not say much. He makes but one remark in footnote 52 on p. 671. After he has explained the 'Twin Jerusalem Trajectories', i.e. the theology of the Name and the theology of Glory, he says about Chronicles:

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[16] Op. cit., 565, 567.
[17] Op. cit., 653.
[18] Op. cit., 673.

> Given this neat polarity, it is not easy to place the Chronicler in rela-
> tion to the Deuteronomic and the Priestly traditions, though he seems
> to have most in common with the Deuteronomists. I have not taken
> up the Chronicler, because his work follows in general the more read-
> ily discerned practices of these two traditions.[19]

So what one gains with the approach taken by Brueggemann is a—
cautiously—positive re-evaluation of cult, religious institutions and
identity. This line of analysis is continued in the work of D.L. Smith-
Christopher[20] on theology in exilic and post-exilic times.

Of importance for this discussion is R. Albertz's view of Old
Testament theology[21] as a continuing response to the experiences
and challenges of Israel, its struggle to maintain and formulate its
identity. To Albertz references to the Name in Chronicles seem only
to be part of the writers' thorough knowledge of traditions, follow-
ing the Deuteronomic heritage,[22] using all traditions to execute their
own programme, i.e. to maintain a middle ground between the inter-
ests of the elite and the poor.[23] Thus, speaking of the learned writ-
ers of post-exilic times Albertz is critical of the writers of Chronicles.
Of course, they acted wisely in keeping traditions and revitalizing
them. They are mediating between the priestly elite of the temple
and the middle class of writers and manual workers. But they fail
to act as prophetic critics of their time (4th century BCE) regarding
the position of the poor.

Now one may ask whether a theology of the Old Testament should
argue that strongly in terms of sociological interests as Albertz does,
especially when this approach is connected with one's own religious
value system, such as: the learned writers should have been more
prophetic! But the positive effect of these movements is that one is
now asking other questions about the Name. The concept of the
Name no longer is seen as referring to the mode of God's presence.
Rather, the Name in Chronicles can now be interpreted as part of

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[19] Op. cit., 671 note 52.
[20] D.L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Overtures to Biblical Theology), Minneapolis 2002.
[21] R. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit* (ATD Ergänzungsreihe 8.1–2), Göttingen 1992, 605ff.
[22] Cf. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, 353 note 204 regarding Mettinger's position.
[23] Cf. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte*, 619 note 88, criticizing Willi that Chronicles would be mainly an intellectual theological product. Rather biblical (re)interpreta-tion serves actual interests: 'Gegenwartsinteressen'.

the idiom expressing Israel's identity in Persian and in Hellenistic times.

3. Kings and Chronicles:
a Move from Transcendence to Presence?

The idea of intellectual progression is unable to explain what happened to the concept of the Name in Chronicles, unless one regards the Chroniclers' emphasis on temple, ark, *kabōd* and sacrifices as a theological regress. To gain more insight into the way the concept of the Name is functioning in Chronicles, I will first focus on a comparison of some elements from the text of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in Kings and Chronicles. For that reason I present separate summaries of both texts below, with some comments. One can observe a clear shift between the two texts of Solomon's prayer, both in their composition and in the terminology used for God's presence in the temple. Second, I will present some more details about the usage of the idiom of the Name in Chronicles.

3.1. *The Name in Kings: the Context of the House, the City, the Prayer*

1 Kings 8: *The ceremony of the dedication of the temple, textual structure*[24]

8:2 The festival; bringing the ark
8:5   Sacrifices; positioning the ark
8:11   A cloud fills the house: *kabōd*

8:14   Solomon blesses the entire assembly of Israel
8:15   Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has fulfilled . . .
8:19   Your son shall build the house for my *Name.*
8:25   *'your servant, my father David'*

8:29   in that your eyes are opened night and day *towards this house*
                to listen to the prayer of your servant and of your people Israel

8:30–51   Seven prayers

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[24] E. Talstra, *Solomon's Prayer: Synchrony and Diachrony in the Composition of 1 Kings 8:14–61*, Kampen 1993.

| 8:52 | ..., in that your eyes are opened *to the plea* of your servant and the plea of your people Israel, to listen to them |

| 8:56 | Solomon blesses the entire assembly of Israel Blessed be the Lord who has given rest ... *'your servant, Moses'* |

8:63 Sacrifices
8:65 The festival

For our investigation some observations on the structure of the prayer in 1 Kgs 8 are of special importance. In the first place, praying by the king and the people *in the temple* (verse 29) shifts to praying by the king and the people as such, without any reference to the temple (verse 52). Praying remains an option, even in exile, when the temple is in ruins, when it is praying in the direction of the temple. Is the Name still attached to the place? (1 Kgs 8:48ff.). In the second place, there is the shift from David to Moses in the formulation of the two blessings. So the textual structure allows for the question: what comes next, once the Davidic dynasty has become powerless or no longer exists, and how to pray, once the temple is in ruins and we might be somewhere else in exile? Are the fundamentals of our history, Exodus and Moses, still valid?[25] Thirdly, the seventh prayer, in verse 50, combines 'forgive' (סלח) with 'mercy' (רחמים) to be extended, it is hoped, by oppressors. By contrast, these elements found in the text of Kings are no longer present in the parallel text of 2 Chronicles. Interestingly the use of the Name is part of this shift of characteristics. Therefore could the Name really have been a vehicle of a theology of transcendence in Kings, which disappears in Chronicles, even when the use of the Name remains the same in both texts of Solomon's prayer?

3.2. *The Name in Chronicles: the Ark, the Glory and the People*

2 Chronicles 5–7: *The ceremony of the temple dedication, textual structure*

5:3 The festival; bringing the ark
5:6   Sacrifices; positioning the ark

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[25] Cf. Talstra, *Solomon's Prayer*, 167f. regarding the shift of participants in the text of Kings.

5:12	*The Levites sing: 'For he is good'*	
5:14	A cloud fills the house; *kabōd*	

6:3		Solomon blesses the entire assembly of Israel
6:4		Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has fulfilled . . .
6:9		Your son shall build the house for my Name.

6:14		*your servant my father David*
6:20		in that your eyes are opened night and day towards this house
		to listen to the prayer of your servant and of your people Israel

6:22–39	Seven prayers

6:40	*Now* may your eyes be opened and your ears attentive
	to the prayer *of this place*
6:41	*Now rise up, O Lord, and go to your resting place*

7:1	When Solomon ends his prayer
	fire comes down from heaven, consumes the sacrifices
7:2	*the kabōd, glory of YHWH fills the house*
7:3	*the people sing: 'For he is good'*

7:4	Sacrifices
7:6	*the Levites sing: 'For he is good'*
7:8	The festival

Some observations on the Chronicles' version. In 1 Kgs 8 the ark and the *kabōd* were mentioned only at the beginning of the ceremony. In Chronicles the singing of the Levites is added before the prayer. All three elements, the ark, the *kabōd,* and the Levites are mentioned again after the prayer, forming an *inclusio* around it. In addition 7:3 says that the community, the people, are also singing. The composition is altered in this way and shows a clear change of participants in comparison to Kings. New in the ceremony are the contribution of the Levites and the people.

Of importance too is the fact that there is no second blessing. The entire section of 1 Kgs 8:52–61 is not represented in the text of Chronicles. This creates some substantial differences. First, instead of the words in 1 Kgs 8:52: 'Let your eyes be opened to listen to our supplication' (without mentioning the temple), we now read in 2 Chr 6:40: 'Let your eyes be opened to the prayer of *this place*'.

Thus the explicit reference to the temple has returned. Secondly, the shift from David as the main authority for Solomon to Moses as the fundamental authority for Israel is not made here. The theme of the Exodus as such is absent in Chronicles. Instead we read a reference to Psalm 132, about David, the temple, and the ark. An interesting connection, however, is made by the words dealing with 'resting place' in both texts, while at the same time emphasising the difference: the resting place given to Israel (1 Kgs 8:56), versus the resting place of the ark (2 Chr 6:41).

Clearly the references to the Name in both texts of the prayer do not change. The idiom of the Name is used in 1 Kgs 8:16–20, 29, 44, 48 and all cases are present in the text of Chronicles too. The word *Name* in both texts gives expression of God's relationship to the temple. So how is this to be related to the increased emphasis on *kabōd*, the ark, and the sacrifices in Chronicles? Does this prove that Chronicles only seems to present an accumulation of traditional idioms, rather than a consistent doctrine of divine presence? Or should one conclude that, unlike current views on Deuteronomistic theology concerning the Name and transcendence, the idiom regarding the Name cannot be explained exclusively with reference to God and temple, but is used to cover a much broader area?

One clue can be found in the direct context: God's answer to the dedication prayer in 2 Chr 7 expands the idiom of the Name. In verse 14 it is said that the Name is called over *the people*. After mentioning the temple and the city, this is new. The reference to the people is a part of an inserted section in the words to Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 9) where YHWH utters his response to the temple dedication prayer. Japhet[26] speaks here of the honour of bearing God's Name. In my opinion the implication goes beyond that. In Chronicles the people are brought onto the scene as an institution in itself. They sing just as the Levites do. After that it is said that the Name is called upon the people. Though God's presence is in principle independent from institutions such as the king, the temple, or the city, these institutions nevertheless are, or have been, witnesses to his presence in the world. In Chronicles, one may suggest, the people are added to the list of institutions that in some way represent the Name

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[26] Japhet, *2 Chronik*, 103.

in the world. A further look at the texts of Kings and Chronicles may confirm that.

4. The Name: the Language of Identity in Chronicles

Generally speaking one can state that texts in Chronicles containing the idiom of the Name, when quoting Kings, do not change the Name formulas from Kings (with some minor exceptions). However, in lines not quoted from Kings, but used in freely formulated segments of text, one finds more variety in the idiom used for the temple and the Name. The books of Chronicles use three expressions with the Name related to the temple. Some examples:

(1) Build a House for the Name
In most cases the text of Chronicles quotes the idiom with the Name from the text of Samuel and Kings, e.g. 1 Kgs 8:19//2 Chr 6:9. The same idiom is used in 1 Chr 22:7, 10 and 19. In one case the formula is shorter: 'Build a house for Me' (1 Chr 17:10) instead of 'for My Name' (2 Sam 7:13). A combination of various idioms is found in 1 Chr 22: the Name in verse 7 and 10; the house, the ark and the Name in combination in verse 19. Similarly in 1 Chr 28:2–3 where the Name is used in combination with the house and the ark. Also in 2 Chr 2:3–5, where the Name is found in combination with the house and sacrifices. The combination of idioms is present in texts that appear to be a free formulation of Chronicles and not a direct quotation.[27]

(2) The Name is called upon the house or the people
In 2 Chr 6:33 the text of 1 Kgs 8:43 (the prayer of the stranger) is quoted where it is said that the Name is called over the house. In 2 Chr 7:14 Chronicles formulates independently: the Name is called over the people. This idiom itself is not restricted to Chronicles (Dtn 28:10; Isaiah 63:19; Dan 9:17–19, compare Jeremiah 14:9, 15:16), but it clearly is a new idiom in this context, since the words are part of a section inserted into the words of YHWH to Solomon, as his response to the temple dedication prayer. The context of the

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[27] Japhet, *2 Chronik*, 36 on 2 Chr 2:1–13.

saying is Israel's vulnerable position among the peoples, similar to
the context of the same saying in Isaiah 63:19 and Daniel 9:17f.

(3) To put the Name / let the Name be there
Quotes from Kings can be found, e.g. in 2 Chr 6:5f., 20 (1 Kgs
8:16, 29) or 2 Chr 33:4, 7 (2 Kgs 21:4, 7). 2 Chr 6:17 parallels
1 Kgs 9:3: 'I have sanctified this house to let my Name be there
forever'. But before this one finds the insertion in 2 Chr 6:12ff.: 'I
have chosen this place to be a house of sacrifice', followed in verse
14 by the expressions already mentioned: 'the Name is called upon
the people'. This idiom in the freely formulated sections of text can
be related to the different design of the dedication prayer in Chronicles:
we do not move from David to Moses and from temple to prayer
as in Kings, we stay with David, with the presence of the ark and
in combination with that we combine the presence of the *kabōd* with
the singing Levites and the singing of the entire community. It does
look like a cooperation of all cultic roles, from priests to people,
from sacrifice to singing. Clearly Chronicles sees no reason to change
the idiom of the Name being in the house, but it can expand it to
the Name being called upon the people as well. Does this express
an opposition of interests between the traditional priestly elite versus
the Levites and the people, a process of *Demokratisierung*[28] as Labahn
suggests? Or is it the developing language of Israel's identity, based
on exilic experiences: the Name of YHWH has proven to be with
the people as much as it was with the temple and the city? This
may fit in with Japhet's observations on 2 Chr 20:8–9.[29] Jehoshaphat's
prayer refers to the prayer of Solomon (1 Kgs 8:37ff.): if the enemy
oppresses us, and we come in the temple to pray, hear in heaven.
Jehoshaphat, however, prays: we will come and stand in front of this
house, since your Name is in this house. We will pray and your will
hear. Jehoshaphat's prayer assumes God's presence in the temple
itself. With respect to the presence of God the Name does not func-
tion to emphasise a crucial distance between heaven and the temple.

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[28] Cf. A. Labahn, 'Antitheocratic Tendencies in Chronicles', in: R. Albertz &
B. Becking (eds), *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives in Israelite Religion in the Persian
Era*, Assen 2003, 115–35. She stresses the position of the Levites in the book of
Chronicles and their importance for the people in opposition to the interests of the
elite (p. 134f.).

[29] Japhet, *2 Chronik*, 250.

The word appears to be able to accommodate to a more general usage for God's presence, which allows for various combinations with words like ark, *kabōd*, or sacrifices.

5. Concluding statements

(1) The Name is part of the tradition expressed in the books of Kings: YHWH's presence is related to the institutions of dynasty and temple, but he is not restricted to them. The temple is the place where he is to be addressed by human prayers. In the books of Chronicles it becomes clear that the theology of divine presence in the cult uses other words: the *kabōd*, the place of sacrifices, and prayer. The 'Name' appears to be a term capable of being used more broadly.[30]

(2) So, when the composers of the books of Chronicles do not just quote traditional language in their work, they add new formulas that illustrate that the Name and the House are not exclusively tied together. The Name is related to the communal history of God and people, originally in formulas related to the institutions such as temple and city, later in formulas referring to the identity of the people.

When in the books of Chronicles the use of the Name is a contribution to the formulation of Israel's identity, it remains connected to the place it has been connected to first, i.e. the temple, later on the city (2 Kgs 21).[31] But now its function is extended to include the people of Israel as well. Unlike the *kabōd* it is not the vehicle of holiness, or a feature of the temple that can leave and has to return. The people to whom the Name was attached, return to the place where the Name remained attached to as well. God's presence was connected to the ark and the *kabōd*. The ark was gone (Jer 3); the *kabōd* would return (Ezekiel). But the Name continued to be called upon the place, the house, the city and, as is claimed in 2 Chr 7:14 and Daniel 9:18–19, upon the people too. In the book of Chronicles the full history of God and Israel is now identified with the Name.

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[30] Unfortunately the position of Chronicles is not considered separately in the overview by H.B. Huffmon, 'Name שׁם', in: K. van der Toorn and others (eds), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden 1999².

[31] E. Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Judentums* (FRLANT 69), Göttingen 1956.

God's history with Israel is itself a sign of God's presence in the world.

(3) The idea that with the presence of the Name in the temple the books of Kings express a kind of protection of God's transcendence and hence render it a religious turning point in terms of secularisation and demythologisation, implies that the books of Chronicles cancelled and nullified this Deuteronomistic intellectual achievement. But the theology of Chronicles is neither inconsistent, nor is it a retreat in comparison to the Deuteronomic History. The writers of Chronicles use a number of concepts to express the presence of God in the temple, the Name being a much broader term indicative of God's presence. Chronicles demonstrates that the Name is attached to the main participants in the religious history of Israel: the temple, the city and now also the people itself. Rather than being an idiom of transcendence, it has become part of the language of identity. The Name is called upon the people. Israel is the fundamental sign of how God is present in the world: by liberating them, by electing them, by taking them into exile and by bringing them home again (Dan 9:18f.; Ps 102:13, 16f., 22f.).

A BURNING BUSH ON THE STAGE: THE REWRITING OF EXODUS 3:1–4:17 IN EZEKIEL TRAGICUS, *EXAGOGE* 90–131

Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten

1. Ezekiel Tragicus' *Exagoge*

The *Exagoge* ('Leading out') of the Jewish poet Ezekiel Tragicus ('The Tragedian') is the only surviving example of a Hellenistic tragic drama.[1] The content of the work is based on the biblical narrative of Exodus 1–15 from the translation of the Septuagint.[2] In some places Ezekiel has shortened the text, in others expanded it. He has rearranged the sequence and added completely new elements.[3] The work originated sometime during the second century BCE,[4] probably in Alexandria, although an alternate place of origin cannot be excluded.[5] The *Exagoge* is at least partly preserved by quotations in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius (fourth century CE), in which he quotes nearly 270 lines.[6] Eusebius says that his quotations are based on the Greek writer Alexander Polyhistor, who lived in the first century BCE. Polyhistor, in his work 'Concerning the Jews', gives excerpts taken from several Jewish and non-Jewish writers.[7]

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[1] H. Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, Cambridge 1983, 1–5; E. Vogt, *Tragiker Ezechiel* (JSHRZ 4.3), Gütersloh 1983, 113–33, esp. 115; R.G. Robertson, 'Ezekiel the Tragedian', in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 803–19, esp. 803; P.W. van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, Kampen 1987, 11.

[2] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 40–7.

[3] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 20–3; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 14.

[4] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 5–13; Vogt, *Tragiker Ezechiel*, 117; Robertson, 'Ezekiel the Tragedian', 803–4; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 17.

[5] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 13–17; Robertson, 'Ezekiel the Tragedian', 804; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 17.

[6] A smaller piece is also preserved by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis*, 1.23, 155).

[7] G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten and Expanded', in: M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (CRINT 2.2), Assen 1984, 89–156, esp. 125–30; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 11–12.

The surviving verses of the *Exagoge* are but a fraction of the entire play. Most scholars think that the play consisted of five acts:[8] (1) Moses' monologue and his meeting with the daughters of Raguel (= Jethro) (1–67). (2) Moses' dream and its interpretation by Raguel (68–89). (3) The burning bush and God's appearance to Moses (90–192). (4) The messenger's speech recounting the crossing of the Red Sea and the complete destruction of the Egyptian army (193–242). (5) The scout's report on finding Elim and the description of the Phoenix (243–269).[9]

In this paper I focus on *Exagoge* 90–131, which describes the episode of the burning bush. This is part of Act 3 (90–192), which can be subdivided as follows: (a) Moses' call (*Exagoge* 90–131; cf. Exod 3:1–4:17); (b) the ten plagues (*Exagoge* 132–151; cf. Exod 7–11); (c) Passover (*Exagoge* 152–174; cf. Exod 12:1–20); and (d) Moses' instruction of the people (*Exagoge* 175–192; cf. Exod 12:21–28).

Exagoge 90–131 follows Exodus 3:2–10 and Exodus 4:1–17, as can be seen in the following overview:

Exodus	*Exagoge*
2:23–3:1	–
3:2–10	90–112
3:11–22	–
4:1–17	113–131
– 4:1–9	– 113–119
– 4:10–17	– 120–131

In considering this rewriting of the biblical story, we need to take into account that we are dealing with the rendering of the biblical narrative into a poetic text written in *iambic trimeters*. This implies that, as far as the use of words is concerned, there is little resemblance. Only on a few occasions does the same word appear in both Exodus and the *Exagoge*, and even when the same word is used the form or syntactical structure in which the word is used may be

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[8] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 28–36; Nickelsburg, 'The Bible Rewritten', 126–9.

[9] Robertson ('Ezekiel the Tragedian', 805) and Vogt (*Tragiker Ezechiel*, 115–16) describe a structure in five acts, which is slightly different (1–65; 66–89; 90–192; 193–242; 243–269); Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 13, describes seven scenes, dividing into two passages both the first scene (1–65; 66–67) and the third (90–174; 175–192). Moreover, Van der Horst suggests that originally there must have been a separate scene between ll. 174 and 175, describing the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh. For this last point, cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 35.

different. The rendering should be seen as a sort of *ad sensum* rendering and not as an *ad litteram* rendering.[10]

Moreover, we are concerned with the rendering of a biblical text, which derives from *narratives* with direct speech, into a *dramatic* text, which is to be played or recited on stage. Several changes are thus easy to explain. One of the consequences, for example, is that *introductions to direct speech* (cf. Exod 4:3a, 4d, 5a, 6a, 7a; 4:10a, 11a, 13a, 14b; 4:1a, 2a, 2c, 3a, 4a) are not taken over by Ezekiel, nor are *doublets* (e.g., Exod 3:3d, 8b, 9; 4:3c, 4de, 6c, 7c). In addition, *narrative descriptions* (e.g., Exod 3:2ab, 4ab) are not taken over but are intended to be evoked in direct speech on the stage.

Some deviations in *Exagoge*, with regard to the biblical text, can also be explained by the rendering of a narrative text into a drama. It would have been difficult to represent the burning bush[11] and the transformation of the rod into a snake on stage, so Ezekiel adds phrases that make the miraculous events, which were unexpected and threatening, more explicit. This explanation can be given for the *additions* in lines 90–95 in comparison to Exodus 3:2–3, for example the expression of surprise 'ha' (l. 90),[12] the phrase 'miraculous and hard for a man to believe' (l. 91), the word 'suddenly' (l. 92), and the phrase 'for it is hard to believe' (l. 95). Additions in lines 120–127 in comparison to Exodus 4:2–4 also strengthen the miraculous and threatening character of the scene.

2. *Exagoge* 90–112 and Exodus 3:2–10

In the first part of the passage under consideration (*Exagoge* 90–112), the text of Exodus 3:2–10 is followed quite closely. The first unit (ll. 90–95) is a reworking of Exod 3:2–3, and is seen from the perspective of Moses. The second unit (ll. 96–112) is a reworking of Exod 3:4–10, and is seen from the perspective of God. I shall start with the first unit.[13]

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[10] With this in mind, it seems to me quite unnecessary to look for parallel passages or even deviant manuscripts when there are words used differently from any given Septuagint text.

[11] It is possible that the burning bush was visualised on the stage. Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 98–99; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 15–16, 33.

[12] For ἔα ('ha'), see Liddell-Scott, 465.

[13] I will put the texts side by side in the synoptic overviews. Although *Exagoge* is

LXX Exodus 3:2–3	*Exagoge* 90–95[14]
2a [ ] *An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire* from *the* bush; [ ]	90 'HA, WHAT IS *this portent* from *a* bush,
	91 MIRACULOUS AND HARD FOR A MAN TO BELIEVE?
b AND HE SAW THAT the bush has [ ] burst into [ ] flame,	92 [ ] The bush has SUDDENLY burst into FURIOUS flame,
c *yet the bush was not consumed.*	93 *yet all its foliage stays green and fresh.* [ ]
3a AND MOSES SAID, [ ]	94 WHAT IS GOING ON? *I shall approach and see the great miracle,* [ ]
b '*When I pass by*	
c *I will see this great sight,*	
d WHY THE BUSH IS NOT CONSUMED'. [ ]	95 FOR IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE.'

I would like to highlight some important variations in this part of the text. First, the appearance of the 'angel of the Lord' (Exod 3:2a) is not taken up by Ezekiel. He uses the word σημεῖον (l. 90: 'portent'), which can denote extraordinary phenomena with divine reference,[15] but this could also refer to the burning bush.[16] The reason for omitting the angel could be that the appearance of an angel on the stage was difficult or impossible, in relation to the audience.[17]

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not an *ad litteram* of Exodus, I will nevertheless try as far as possible to give a classification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Exodus 3:1–4:17 and *Exagoge* 90–131. I put in SMALL CAPS the elements of Exodus which do not occur in *Exagoge*, and vice versa, i.e. the OMISSIONS and ADDITIONS. The corresponding elements between both texts, i.e. the quotations of one or more words of the source text in *Exagoge*, are in 'normal script'. I put in *italics* the *variations* between Exodus and *Exagoge*, other than additions or omissions. The quotations and the modifications of them can occur in the same word order or sentence order in *Exagoge* as in Exodus. However, sometimes there is a <u>rearrangement</u> of words and sentences. I <u>underline</u> these elements, with the exception of the rearrangement between Exod 4:1–19 and Exod 4:10–17.

[14] The translation is taken from Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 50–67, esp. 56–9, with some alterations. For the Greek text of the *Exagoge*, see B. Snell, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 1, Göttingen 1986, 288–301, esp. 292–5; cf. also Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 50–67, esp. 56–9.

[15] L.H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1–4* (Flavius Josephus Translation and Commentary 3), Leiden 2000, 209 note 703.

[16] Cf. Liddell-Scott, 1593.

[17] Cf. H. Jacobson, 'Mysticism and Apocalyptic in Ezekiel's Exagoge', *Illinois Classical Studies* 6 (1981) 272–93, esp. 280.

In addition, however, by omitting the angel, Ezekiel gets rid of a problem in the biblical text. In Exod 3:2a, the biblical author speaks about 'an angel of the Lord' appearing in the burning bush, whereas in Exod 3:4c it is 'the Lord' who calls him from inside the bush. By ignoring the angel, Ezekiel avoids getting involved in a contradiction.[18] In line 99, Ezekiel makes clear that it is God who is speaking (cf. also Van Kooten, this vol., §1 on Alexander Polyhistor and Ezekiel).[19] There is no intermediary.

Line 93 ('*yet all its foliage stays green and fresh*') is a variation of Exodus 3:2c ('*yet the bush was not consumed*'). This interpretation seems to reflect an exegetical tradition, since it also occurs in other post-biblical Jewish texts.[20] I refer to Flavius Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* II.266: 'There, indeed, a wondrous marvel appeared to him. For a fire, feeding on a bush of brambles, *had left the greenery around it and its blossom unharmed, and none of its fruit-bearing branches was destroyed*, and this although the flame was great and very fierce');[21] to *Targum Neophyti* (marginal note to Exod 3:3: '*and the thornbush was green and not consumed*'); to *Targum Yerushalmi* (on Exod 3:2: 'The bush was burning with fire, *but it thrived and was not consumed*'); and to *Midrash ha-Gadol Exod 3:2* ('Moses saw a great miracle, for he saw that bush *and it was blossoming* and shooting up in the midst of the fire'). The basis for this interpretation might be an association with the Hebrew (ב)לבת אש in Exod 3:2a ('in a flame of fire'; LXX: ἐν πυρὶ φλογὸς). The verb לבלב ('to give flower') is connected with the verb לבה ('to get in flame').[22] According to these interpreters, the bush was in fact blossoming despite the fire. Ezekiel would thus be the first witness for this tradition of interpretation, although it is somewhat odd that he employs Hebrew wordplay while using the Greek text of the Bible.[23] Some other post-biblical texts stress the miracle that there was *no fuel* used while the bush was burning: Artapanus, Fragment 3, 27.21:

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[18] Cf. Jacobson, 'Mysticism', 280.

[19] In line 99 it is said that 'the voice of God shines forth'. Verbs of seeing mixed up with the voice of God can also be found in Exod 20:18. Cf. Jacobson, 'Mysticism', 280; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 33.

[20] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 100–1.

[21] Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 209.

[22] Cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerusahlmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, Jerusalem 1903, 688–9.

[23] According to Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 101, *Exagoge* preserves a Palestinian exegetical tradition.

> Moses prayed to God that the people might be delivered from their sufferings. While he was supplicating, fire suddenly appeared up out of the ground (he [Artapanus] says), and it burned, although *there was no firewood nor other wooden substances in that place.* Moses was frightened by what happened and he fled;[24]

and Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.65:

> There was a bush, a thorny, puny sort of plant, which, without anyone setting it on fire, suddenly started burning and, although spouting flames from its roots to the tips of its branches, as if it were a mighty fountain, *it nonetheless remained unharmed. So it did not burn up, indeed, it appeared rather invulnerable; and it did not serve as fuel for the fire, but seemed to use the fire as its fuel.*

The second unit (ll. 96–112) runs parallel with Exod 3:4–10:

LXX Exodus 3:4–10		*Exagoge* 96–112	
4a	WHEN THE LORD SAW		
b	THAT HE MOVED FORWARDS TO SEE,		
c	*the [ ] Lord called to him from the bush,*		(cf. l. 99)
d	SAYING:		[ ]
e	'Moses, Moses!'.	96a	*Halt, great sir. Moses,*
f	AND HE SAID:		[ ]
g	'WHO IS THERE?'.		
5a	HE SAID:		
b	'Do not come near HITHER;	96b	*do not come near* [ ]
c	*remove your shoes from your feet,*	97	*until you have removed your shoes from your feet;*
d	*for the place on which you are standing is holy ground'.*	98	*For the ground on which you are standing is holy.*
	(cf. Exod 3:4c)	99	*The* VOICE *of God shines forth to you* from the bush.
	[ ]	100	HAVE COURAGE, MY CHILD, AND HEAR MY WORDS—
	(cf. Exod 3:6cd)	101	*for that you, a mortal, should see my face is impossible.*
		102	BUT YOU MAY HEAR THOSE WORDS OF MINE
		103	THAT I HAVE COME TO SPEAK TO YOU.

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[24] See J.J. Collins, 'Artapanus', in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 889–903, esp. 901.

6a He said to him:	[ ]
b 'I am the God of your *father*,	104 I am the God of your *fathers* (as you call them),
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob [ ].'	105 [ ] of Abram, and [ ] Isaac, and [ ] of Jacob the third. (cf. l. 101)
c *And Moses turned his face away,*	
d *for he was afraid to look at God face to face.*	
7a The Lord said to Moses: [ ]	[ ]
(cf. Exod 3:8a)	106 I have called them to mind, them and my gifts,
	107 *and so I have come to save my people, the Hebrews,*
b 'I have well seen the suffering [ ] of *my people who are in Egypt,*	108 For I have [ ] seen suffering and *distress* of my servants.
c and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters;	[ ]
d I know their *affliction.*	
8a *And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,*	(cf. l. 107)
b and to lead them out of that land	
c and to bring them to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.	
9a And now, look, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to me,	
b and I have seen the oppression	
c with which the Egyptians oppress them.	
10a *And now go,*	109 *Now go, and report* in my words,
	110 to all the Hebrews first, and
b *I have to send you to* [ ] Pharaoh, *king* of Egypt [ ]	111 then *to* [ ] *the king* my instructions to you,
c *and you will lead* my people, the sons of Israel, *out of* the land of Egypt'.	112 *that you lead* my people from the land.

In line 99, as well as in the following lines 100–103, Ezekiel stresses that Moses may only *hear* words. He may not see God. It is the *invisible* God who speaks out of the bush. Line 101 ('for that you, a mortal, should see my face is impossible') seems to refer to Exod 3:6cd ('Moses turned his face away, for he was afraid to look at God face to face'), although it does not say exactly the same thing. Exod 3:6cd does not say that it is impossible to see God—Moses is only afraid to look at God's face. When God calls to Moses from the burning bush, announcing himself as the God of the Patriarchs, Moses turns away so as not to look at God. Ezekiel goes one step further. God says that Moses should listen to his *words* because he is not allowed to *see* God. He may only hear him. He is possibly referring not to Exod 3:6cd, but to another text in Exodus, i.e. Exod 33:18–23, especially Exod 33:20, in which it is said that no man can see God and live: 'You cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live'. In other passages, it seems that God can be seen (on this issue, see also Roukema, this vol., §1). For example, in Exod 24:10 it is said that seventy of the elders of Israel 'saw the God of Israel'; in Exod 33:11, it is said that God spoke 'to Moses face to face'; and in Isa 6:1 the prophet says: 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne'. It is possible, however, that rather than wanting to make a statement about the invisibility of God, Ezekiel was just reluctant to present God on the stage.[25]

Lines 104–108 parallel Exodus 3:6–9 in a condensed form. Several exegetical techniques are used here: omissions, additions, variations other than omissions and additions, and finally rearrangment of words and sentences. As far as the content is concerned, several elements occur in Exod 3:6–9: the theophany (3:6); God hears and sees the suffering of Israel (3:7, 9); the promise to deliver them out of Egypt (3:8ab), and the promise to bring them into a land of milk and honey. This sequence also occurs at other places in Exodus 3–6, for example 3:16–17 and 6:2–8. In some places, the covenant or the remembering of the covenant is also mentioned (Exod 2:24; 6:4–5). From Exodus Ezekiel takes the theophany (ll. 104–105), the fact that God sees the suffering of Israel (l. 108), and the promise to deliver Israel out of Egypt (l. 107). His rendering of these elements is quite

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[25] According to Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 99, Greek tragedy itself rarely puts Zeus on the stage.

concise, with several doublets omitted. For example, while Exod
3:8ab and 3:8b both mention the deliverance out of Egypt, this ele-
ment occurs only once in the *Exagoge* (l. 107). Further, Exod 3:7
mentions God's compassion for Israel's suffering three times ('I have
seen' . . . 'I have heard' . . . 'I know') and this is repeated twice in
Exod 3:9 ('The cry . . . has come to me'; 'I have seen'), whereas
God's compassion appears only once in *Exagoge* (l. 108). The word-
ing in *Exagoge* 108 comes closest to that of Exod 3:7b.[26] The strik-
ing thing is that the phrase 'my people who are in Egypt'[27] is replaced
by 'my slaves' (i.e. God's slaves). In the biblical book of Exodus, the
Israelites are nowhere called 'slaves of God'. They are slaves of
Pharaoh (cf. Exod 5:16; 6:6; 13:3; 14:5, 12). Elsewhere in the Bible,
however, the Israelites are called 'slaves' of God (cf., e.g., Lev 25:42,
55; Deut 32:36; Isa 41:8–9; Ps 113:1), and in rabbinic literature it
is emphasised that the exodus from Egypt was in fact a transition
from being slaves of the Pharaoh to the state of being slaves of God
(Palestinian Talmud, *Tractate Pesahim* 5:5 [32c]; Babylonian Talmud,
Tractate Baba Qamma 116b; Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Baba Mesia*
10a; Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Qiddushin* 22b).[28]

In Exod 3:8c, God says that He will take the Israelites into a
good and broad land, the land of the Canaanites, flowing with milk
and honey. A similar promise is found in Exod 3:17. In *Exagoge*,
there is no explicit mention of this land nor of a displacement of
the Canaanites and the establishment of an independent state in the
land. Possibly the addition of line 106, 'having remembered them,
and my gifts' (ἐμῶν δωρημάτων), could be understood as an allusion
to the promised land. Several exegetes interpret 'my gifts' in the
sense of the promises connected with the covenant.[29] This suits the
context very well. God recalls the patriarchs and the promises he
made to them. In lines 154–155 Ezekiel combines the promise of
the new land with the mention of the patriarchs: 'In this month I
shall bring the people into another land, as I promised (ὑπέστην) the
patriarchs of the Hebrew race'. However, δώρημα means 'present'

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[26] According to Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 107, Exod 3:9 is the source of *Exagoge* 108.
[27] 'Egypt' (Exod 3:7b, 10b, 10c) and 'Egyptians' (Exod 3:8a, 9c) occur no less
than five times in Exod 3:7–9. These terms are not mentioned at all in the paral-
lel passage in *Exagoge*.
[28] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 108.
[29] Vogt, *Tragiker Ezechiel*, 125; Robertson, 'Ezekiel the Tragedian', 813.

or 'gift', but not 'promise'.[30] Jacobson has put forward the interpre-
tation 'the gifts that I have received' for 'my gifts' (ἐμῶν δωρημάτων).
Although this notion is without parallel in Jewish tradition, it is pos-
sible that, for the sake of the pagans in the audience, Ezekiel intro-
duced the Greek theological concept of *do ut des*.[31] As an alternative,
Jacobson has put forward the conjecture ἐμῶν δὴ ῥημάτων ('my
words').[32] This could refer to the promises to the patriarchs con-
nected with the covenant.[33]

The last alteration in this part of the passage is in lines 109–112.
Instead of the single mission to Pharaoh in Exod 3:10, Ezekiel states:
'Now, go . . . to all the Hebrews first, and then to the king'. This is
more in line with Exod 3:16–18, where God first orders Moses to
approach the elders of Israel and then to go to Pharaoh. Also, in
Exod 6:6–11 Moses is sent first to the children of Israel and then
to Pharaoh. This variation results in a restructuring of the text and
is closely connected to the second part of the passage under con-
sideration, lines 113–131.

3. *Exagoge* 113–131 and Exodus 4:1–17

Ezekiel rewrites Exodus 4:1–17 as a tense, structured dialogue between
God and Moses in *Exagoge* 113–131. It is striking that Ezekiel reverses
the sequence of events. The first unit (ll. 113–119) is a rendering of
Exodus 4:10–17 and consists of the 'objection of Moses against the
call to go to the king' (ll. 113–115//Exod 4:10), followed by 'the
answer of God, which is the sending of Aaron to Moses' (ll. 116–119//
Exod 4:14–17). The second part of the passage (ll. 120–131) is a
rendering of Exodus 4:1–9, in which the wonders of the serpent
(ll. 120–128//Exod 4:1–5) and the white hand (ll. 129–131//Exod
4:6–9) are described.

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[30] Liddell-Scott, 464.
[31] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 110.
[32] Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 111–12.
[33] Cf., e.g., Exod 2:24; Gen 15:18; 17:2; 26:3–4; 28:13–14.

a. *Exodus 4:10–17 and* Exagoge *113–119*

LXX Exodus 4:10–17	*Exagoge* 113–119

10a BUT MOSES SAID TO THE LORD: [　]
b   'OH, LORD, *I am not competent,*   113 '*I am not articulate.*
     EITHER SINCE YESTERDAY OR   [　]
     BEFORE YESTERDAY OR SINCE
     YOU STARTED TO SPEAK TO
     YOUR SERVANT;
c   *but I am weak of speech and slow*   *My tongue is*
     of tongue'.   114 *neither skilled at speech nor fluent.*
     [　]   I CANNOT
                                         115 ADDRESS THE KING'.
11a THE LORD SAID TO MOSES: [　]
b   'WHO HAS MADE MAN'S MOUTH?
c   WHO MAKES HIM DUMB, OR DEAF,
     OR SEEING, OR BLIND?
d   IS IT NOT I, THE LORD GOD?
12a NOW, GO,
b   AND I WILL OPEN YOUR MOUTH
c   AND TEACH YOU
d   WHAT YOU SHALL SPEAK'.
13a AND MOSES SAID:
b   'OH, LORD, APPOINT, I PRAY,
     SOMEONE WHO IS COMPETENT
c   ANOTHER PERSON YOU SHOULD
     SEND'.
14a AND ENRAGED WITH ANGER
     TOWARDS MOSES,
b   THE LORD SAID:
c   'IS THERE NOT Aaron, your   116 'I SHALL SOON SEND your
     brother, THE LEVITE?   brother Aaron
d   I KNOW THAT WHEN HE SPEAKS   [　]
     HE SPEAKS FOR YOU;
e   AND LOOK,
f   HE IS WILL COME OUT TO MEET
     YOU,
g   AND WHEN HE SEES YOU
h   HE WILL BE GLAD IN HIMSELF.
15a And you will speak to him   117 And you will speak to him
b   *and put my words in his mouth*;   *everything I have spoken.*
c   AND I WILL OPEN YOUR MOUTH   [　]
     AND HIS MOUTH,
d   AND WILL TEACH YOU
e   WHAT YOU SHALL DO.

16a He will speak FOR YOU *to the people*;

b   AND HE SHALL BE YOUR MOUTH,

c   *and you shall be to him for the relation with God.*

17a AND YOU SHALL TAKE IN YOUR HAND THIS ROD WHICH WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A SERPENT,

b   WITH WHICH YOU SHALL DO THE SIGNS'.

118 He will speak [   ] *before the king.*

[   ]

119 *You shall converse with me, Aaron will receive my instructions from you.'*

[   ]

The most important difference between Exodus 4:1–17 and *Exagoge* 113–131 is the completely different structuring of the passage. This is due to the complicated structure of the text of Exod 3:1–7:12 with regard to the mission of Moses. In Exodus 3:1–7:12 there is a quite complex interaction between God and Moses, in which God charges Moses to bring the people out of Egypt and instructs him, but Moses repeatedly hesitates, agrees and withdraws himself. The commission, the objection and the removal of the objection appear several times (cf. Exod 3:10–12, 13–15, 16–17, 18–19; 4:1–9, 13–17; 6:10–12; 6:29–7:7). Moses hesitates so much that God becomes furious (Exod 4:14). In the text of Exodus, the *goal* of the mission is also confusing. Although Moses is being sent to Pharaoh (Exod 3:10), his first objection is related to a mission to the children of Israel (Exod 3:13); after this Moses is sent to the children of Israel (Exod 3:16), and somewhat later the elders of Israel are sent to Pharaoh (Exod 3:18). In Exod 6:6–8 Moses is again being sent to the children of Israel, and finally, in Exod 6:10, 13, 29, to Pharaoh.

Performing this complicated sequence of text would have been difficult on the stage. It would have been somewhat strange for Moses to go to the king, and then come back from the children of Israel, and then be sent to the children of Israel, etc. This structure has not been taken over by Ezekiel and the simplification can be at least partly explained by the rendering of the text into drama. In lines 109–112, which are connected to Exodus 3:10, Ezekiel shows the basic structure of the continuation of the text. Moses will go first to his people (the Hebrews), and after that to the king. The structure in *Exagoge* is as follows: (a) the commission of Moses to go to his people, then to the king (ll. 109–112); (b) Moses' objection to going to the king (ll. 113–115); (c) the first removal of the objection (ll. 113–119), which is concerned with the sending of Aaron and

addresses Moses' objection that he cannot speak; (d) the second removal (120–131), which is concerned with the wonders. Ezekiel leaves out the remarks in the text of Exodus (Exod 4:1, 5, 8–9) that the wonders should take away the unbelief of Israel.

The character of the rewriting of Exodus 4:1–17 in lines 113–131 is clear. The complicated and even contradictory structure of Exodus is highly simplified in the *Exagoge*. Doublets and obscurities have been left out. For Ezekiel there are only two missions, one to the children of Israel and one to the king. In the remaining text of the *Exagoge*, only the second mission (i.e., to the king) is represented, together with the objection and the removal of the objection. The mission to *the people of Israel* (together with Moses' objection and its removal) is not taken over, although we cannot exclude the possibility that the mission to Israel had a place in the *Exagoge* between lines 112 and 113. Polyhistor's editorial observation (between ll. 112 and 113), 'And a few speeches farther down', points in this direction, suggesting that there would have been some text between ll. 112 and 113. In that case, it may have been connected to Exodus 3:11–22. In any case, it is striking that *Exagoge* does follow Exod 3:2–10 and Exod 4:1–17, but not the passage in between.

The restructuring of the text also involves some important transformations. In the first place, Moses is represented as much less rebellious (on this issue, see also Nikolsky, this vol., esp. Introd., §1.2 and §2). He does not drive God to distraction. The omission of Exodus 4:11–14a is quite deliberate. Moses simply says that he has some problems with going to the king because he is not able to speak well. God's reply is also simple and straightforward. He will send Aaron to speak before the king. There is no conflict between God and Moses at all. In the second place, there is no conflict between Moses and the people either.[34] In the biblical text, Moses says several times that the people will not believe him, even though he is sent by God. This conflict does not exist in the surviving text of *Exagoge*, which, however, does not exclude the possibility that a conflict between Moses and the people did appear in lost portions

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[34] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 102–3; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 32.

of *Exagoge*.[35] Ezekiel makes both Moses and the Jewish people appear in a favourable light, probably due to apologetic concerns.[36]

b. *Exodus 4:1–9 and* Exagoge *120–131*

LXX Exodus 4:1–9		Exagoge 120–131	
1a	THEN MOSES ANSWERED AND SAID:	[ ]	
b	'IF THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE ME		
c	OR LISTEN TO MY VOICE,		
d	FOR THEY WILL SAY:		
e	GOD DID NOT APPEAR TO YOU,		
f	WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THEM?'		
2a	THE LORD SAID TO HIM:		
b	'What is this in your *hand*?' [ ]	120	'What is that in your *hands*? SPEAK QUICKLY'.
c	HE SAID:		[ ]
d	'A rod' [ ].	121	'A rod WHEREWITH TO CHASTISE BEASTS AND MEN'.
3a	AND HE SAID:		[ ]
b	'Throw it *on the ground*' [ ].	122	'Throw it *on the ground* AND WITHDRAW QUICKLY.
c	AND HE THREW IT ON THE GROUND,		[ ]
d	*and it became a* [ ] *serpent* [ ];	123	*For it shall turn into a* FEARSOME *snake* AND YOU WILL MARVEL AT IT'.
e	AND MOSES FLED FROM IT. [ ]		[ ]
		124	'THERE, I HAVE THROWN IT DOWN. OH MASTER, BE MERCIFUL.
		125	HOW DREADFUL, HOW MONSTROUS. HAVE PITY ON ME.
		126	I SHUDDER AT THE SIGHT, MY LIMBS TREMBLE'.
4a	AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES:		[ ]

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[35] The passages that have been left out between ll. 112–113 could have dealt with Moses' mission to the Hebrews, and could have included a conflict. It must be admitted, however, that the rendering of Exod 4:10–17 in lines 113–119 is not polemical at all.

[36] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 102–3; Van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische poëzie*, 32. Contrast Acts 7:30–40 where emphasis is laid upon the rejection of Moses by the Jews.

b '[ ] *Reach out your* hand,
c *and seize the tail*'

127 'Have no fear. *Reach out your*
     hand *and seize its*
128 *tail.*
     [ ]

d —then he reached out his
   hand
e and seized the tail,
f *and it became* a rod *in his hand*—   *It shall turn back into* a rod.
5a 'That they may believe   [ ]
b that the Lord, the God of
   their fathers, God of
   Abraham, God of Isaac, and
   God of Jacob, has appeared
   to you'.
6a Again, the Lord said to him: [ ]
b 'Put your hand into your   129 Now put your hand into your
   bosom'.   bosom
c And he put his hand into his   [ ]
   bosom;
d *and he brought his hand out of his*   *and withdraw it*.
   bosom,
e [ ] and *his hand* became as   130 'There, I've done it.
   snow.[37]   *It's* become like snow'.
7a And he said: [ ]
b '*Put your hand back* into your 131 *Put it back* into your bosom
   bosom'.
c And he put the hand into his   [ ]
   bosom;
d and brought it out of his
   bosom,
e *and again, it was restored* to the   *and it shall be as it was before*'.
   color of his flesh.
8a 'If they will not believe you,   [ ]
b or listen to the voice of the
   first sign,
c they will believe you because
   of the voice of the last sign.
9a And it will be if they will
   not believe you for these two
   signs or listen to your voice,

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[37] The Septuagint omits the word 'leprous' of the Hebrew text ('leprous, like the snow') in order not to play into the hands of anti-Semites who claimed the Jews in Egypt were all lepers and were banished from the country. Other early Jewish sources also omit the word 'leprous'. Cf. C. Houtman, 'A Note on the LXX Version of Exodus 4:6', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97 (1985) 253–4; Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 106–7; Feldman, *Judean Antiquities*, 210–11 note 723.

b   YOU SHALL TAKE SOME WATER
     FROM THE RIVER
c   AND POUR IT UPON THE DRY
     GROUND;
d   AND THE WATER WHICH YOU
     SHALL TAKE FROM THE RIVER
e   WILL BECOME BLOOD UPON THE
     DRY GROUND'.

The second part of the text (*Exagoge* 120–131) is a rewriting of Exod 4:1–9, and can be subdivided into two units. The first unit describes the miracle with the rod (*Exagoge* 120–128; Exod 4:1–5), the second, the miracle with the white hand (*Exagoge* 129–131; Exod 4:6–9). In Exodus Moses protests that the people will not believe him (Exod 4:1). God responds with a display of signs Moses can use to convince those who do not believe him (cf. Exod 4:5, 8). If they will not be convinced, God describes a third sign (Exod 4:9). Ezekiel changes several aspects. As a consequence of the restructuring of the confusing composition of Exodus, in *Exagoge* 113–131 only the mission of Moses to the king is brought up. The mission to the people is not mentioned in *Exagoge*, except for lines 109–112, although, as mentioned above, it could have had a place between lines 112 and 113. From line 113 onwards, only the mission to the king is at issue. Although the description of the signs is taken over by Ezekiel, their original function, i.e. to convince the disbelieving people, is lost. The wonders are instead used to convince Pharaoh. This transformation of function presupposes doubt by Moses with regard to his mission to Pharaoh, which is not obvious in the text. This doubt occurs elsewhere in the book of Exodus, i.e. in Exod 7:8–9 where God says: 'And if Pharaoh should speak to you, saying: "Give us a sign or wonder", you also shall say to Aaron, your brother: "Take the rod, and throw it upon the ground before Pharaoh and before his attendants and it will be a serpent"'. The resemblance between Exod 4:2–3 and Exod 7:9 makes it easy to apply the words of Exod 4:1–9 to Moses' visit to Pharaoh.

As far as the rendering of Exod 4:2–9 in *Exagoge* 120–131 is concerned, several elements are noticeable. In the first place, there are several *omissions*. These can be simply explained by the fact that the narrative biblical text has been transformed into a drama. As a result, the introductions to direct speeches (Exod 4:2a, 2c, 3a, 4a, 6a, 7a) disappear as well as the repetitions in the narrative text of

an element in the direct speech (Exod 4:3c, 4de, 6c, 7c). In the second place, there are many *additions*. In lines 120–123, the author has filled up each line with phrases that do not occur in the biblical text. Ezekiel has possibly tried to embellish the text or had some difficulties with the alternation of the characters within one line.[38] By means of his additions, Ezekiel stresses the rapidity of the acts (120: 'Speak quickly'; 122: 'And withdraw quickly'). He highlights the frightening and threatening aspects of the serpent more than the biblical text. The added phrases 'A fearsome snake' (l. 123) and 'Have no fear' (l. 127), as well as the complete addition of lines 124–126, illustrate this. Lines 124–126 are, in a certain sense, a rewording of Exod 4:2e, where Moses' reaction is simply represented by: 'And Moses fled from it'. In short, much attention is paid to expressing the effect of the metamorphosis of the rod because it could not be performed on the stage.

4. Conclusions

The *Exagoge* is an interesting example of rewritten biblical text. Many of the alterations between the biblical source text and the *Exagoge* are dictated by the transmission of the genre: from a narrative text into a poetic and dramatic text. The omission of introductions to direct speech, doublets and narrative descriptions can be explained by this change of genre. The simplication of the complicated narrative structure of Exod 2:23–4:17 into a coherent text can also be explained as such. Finally, when it is difficult to perform specific episodes on the stage (e.g., the burning bush and the transformation of a rod into a snake) they are evoked by words. Other alterations, such as the more positive view of Moses and the Jewish people, are probably due to the Hellenistic environment in which the play took its form. It presents a much more positive view of the origins of the Jewish people and their first leader than was common in pagan circles in the Hellenistic Era (on this issue, see also Van Kooten, this vol., esp. §1). The omission of the promised land might also be due to this Hellenistic environment. For Jews living outside Palestine the

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[38] Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 105.

'land' was probably not as important as for Jews living inside it. Finally, some motifs that Ezekiel uses in his reworking of Exodus recur in later rabbinic literature. He is probably preserving (older) exegetical traditions.

'GOD TEMPTED MOSES FOR SEVEN DAYS':
THE BUSH REVELATION IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

Ronit Nikolsky

INTRODUCTION

It would come as a surprise that rabbinic literature of the late-antique and Byzantine era does not tell us much about the extraordinary revelation which took place, as it is told in Exodus 3:1–4:17, next to the Bush—the revealing of God's name. Even when the event is discussed in late-antique rabbinic literature, the name revealed there: 'I am who I am', is *not* mentioned. The bush revelation was not acknowledged by the rabbis as a name revealing event; we find only very few references to the name which was revealed by the bush. These references are listing this name together with other names of God while discussing halakhic or theological aspects of it such as: can this name, once written, be erased or which aspect of God does this name represent?[1] It seems that other aspects of the revelation story were easier for the rabbis, and are better represented in rabbinic literature of Late Antiquity. In rabbinic writings we find discussions about the allegorical or symbolic interpretations of the *Sne* bush itself (see also Geljon, this vol., §1; cf. Tigchelaar, this vol., §2);[2] for example, in *Shmot Rabba* we read: 'As the *Sne* has thorns and has flowers, so among the Israelites there are pious ones and evil ones'.[3] We find the revelation interpreted as a pedagogical event; again in *Shmot Rabba*:

> When God revealed himself to Moses, he [Moses] was a 'beginner' in prophecy. God said: if I reveal myself in a loud voice I will frighten Moses; in a low voice—he will despise prophecy. What did He do? He revealed Himself in the voice of his [Moses'] father . . .[4]

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[1] This name does appear two times in the Hekhalot literature in connection to the revelation at the bush, but also there the discussion of it is not elaborated.

[2] In this article I will use the term 'Sne' to refer to the bush described in Exod 3:1–4:17, 'Sne' being the Hebrew name of the plant by which this event took place.

[3] *Shmot Rabba* (Wilna), parasha 2:5.

[4] *Shmot Rabba* (Wilna), parasha 3:1.

There are linguistic or semantic discussions about the various lex-
emes and phrases of the biblical narrative. An example is found in
Midrash Lekah Tov: What is the meaning of the word 'Sne'? It is
derived from the word 'sin'a', hatred, to indicate the hatred which
fell on the worshippers of stars [when Israel received the Torah].[5]
Or in *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer*: 'Sne' because it's the same mountain
where they later received the Torah, i.e. 'Sinai'.[6]

   In this article, I will examine the development of one rabbinic
narrative which is part of the story of the revelation at the *Sne*: it
claims that the event lasted seven days. I will chronologically trace
the development of the narrative throughout the various rabbinic
writings, and show how it changes in a way which reflects rabbinic
attitudes towards the event described in the biblical story. We first
encounter the idea that the revelation lasted seven days in the second-
century Rabbinic chronicle *Seder Olam*; it later appears in Rabbinic
texts which seem to reflect negatively on Moses' behaviour during
the *Sne* revelation (§1). The next step is the crystallization of this
narrative, which falls into a fixed textual unit in the classical midrash
(§2). In turn, this fixed textual unit loses its negative attitude in the
midrash corpus known as the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature (§§3–4).

   The criticism of Moses' behaviour is not the invention of the rab-
bis, but is already part of the biblical narrative (see also Van Ruiten,
this vol., §3a). In the biblical story itself Moses is criticized and Aaron
is elevated: Moses twice refuses to comply to God's request to go
and talk to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites our of Egypt (Exod 3:11
and Exod 4:10), and God, being angry, brings Aaron forth as a
replacement for Moses in telling the Pharaoh: 'and God was angry
with Moses and said: here is Aaron your brother the Levite, I know
that he will speak, and here he comes happily to greet you' (Exod
4:14). There are more episodes in the Bible in which Moses is crit-
icized; a famous one being the episode in Numbers 20:1–14, known
as 'The Water of Disputation', when Moses fails to follow God's
instructions as to the manner of extracting water from the rock:
Moses sanctifies God by hitting the rock instead of talking to it as
was expected. Nonetheless the overall and prevailing opinion about
Moses in the Bible is highly positive, presenting him as the prophet

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[5] *Lekah Tov* (*Psikta Zutarti*), Shmot, 3.
[6] *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer*, Xorev, 6th descent.

of the highest level (Deut 34:10) '...and there was not a prophet like Moses in Israel, whom God knew face to face'.

In what follows we will see how the rabbinic view about Moses changes over time, and how the rabbis use the texts which were in front of them, biblical or others, to convey their opinion.

1. Early Rabbinic Reference to the *Sne* Revelation: *Seder Olam* and *Mekhilta de rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai*

1.1. *Seder Olam*

The earliest attestation of the *Sne* revelation in rabbinic literature is in *Seder Olam*, a second-century chronography of biblical events.[7] Regarding the revelation at the *Sne* we find there the following:

> כל שבעת הימים היה הקב״ה מדבר עם משה בסנה. ויאמר משה אל ה׳ ״לא איש דברים אנכי״ תמול ״גם תמול״, שלשום ״גם שלשום״, מאז דברך אל עבדך ״גם מאז דברך אל עבדך כי כבד פה [וכבד לשון אנכי]״.

> All of the seven days the Holy One Blessed be He spoke to Moses in the *Sne*. 'And Moses said to the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent (Exod 4:10)'. [Now, instead of saying] yesterday [Moses said] 'and yesterday', [instead of saying] the day before yesterday [Moses said] 'and the day before yesterday', [instead of saying] since you spoke to your servant [Moses said] '...and since you spoke to your servant because I am slow in speech' (Exod 4:10).[8]

Seder Olam says that the revelation at the *Sne* lasted seven days. God was speaking for seven days, and only afterwards Moses reacted, saying: 'I am not a man of words, says Moses—according to *Seder Olam*—, therefore I did not say anything throughout the seven days, not yesterday, not on the day before yesterday because I am not eloquent in speech.' *Seder Olam* explains the words 'I am not a man of words' as relating to the seven days of the revelation, and not—as could be understood from the biblical text—to the past life of Moses as a whole. The clumsiness of Moses' answer, which is illustrated by his excessive use of the word 'and', proves that Moses was indeed: '...not eloquent in speech'!

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[7] Milikowsky 1986, 311.
[8] *Seder Olam*, chap. 5.

Why does *Seder Olam* speak of a seven-day revelation, while there is no trace in the biblical text for this time period? This chronicle includes the dates and duration of the biblical events since the early days of humanity, until late into the second temple period. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that it can tell us how long the revelation at the *Sne* lasted. *Seder Olam* also says that the event took place on the 15th of Nisan, as did the exodus event exactly one year later; the chronicle goes into great length, showing how the flight of the Israelites from Egypt also lasted seven days, starting with their leaving Egypt until their safe arrival on the other side of the Red Sea.[9] It is clear that *Seder Olam* makes the *Sne* event parallel or typological to the exodus event: both began on the 15th of Nisan, and lasted seven days. The assigning of seven days to the revelation at the *Sne* is, thus, part of a general scheme of *Seder Olam*.

1.2. *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai*

We see a different attitude in an early midrash, discussing aspects of the *Sne* revelation, the *Mekhilta of R. Shimon Ben Yochai*. This third-century[10] halakhic midrash is concerned with other parts of the *Sne* story.

The question put forward by the *Mekhilta* is concerned with Moses' reaction to God's request to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Why does Moses refuse to carry out God's command when he should have complied?[11] Various reasons are given as to why Moses should have agreed, e.g.: 'It is, after all, the fulfilment of the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15), and you, Moses, refuse to carry it out?', or:

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[9] *Seder Olam*, chap. 5: 'from Ramses to Sukkot, from Sukkot to Eitam, from Eitam to Pi-Hahirot—this is three [days], and on the fourth [day] "and it was told to the king of Egypt" and in the fifth and sixth "the Egyptians chased them" (Exod 14:9), in the evening before the seventh day they went into the [Red] sea . . . and in the morning they were singing the song on the sea . . . and this was the seventh day, which is the last day of the holiday of Passover.' On this symmetry in *Seder Olam*, see Milikowsky 1993.

[10] Thus according to some scholars whereas others think of it as a later text (4th or even 5th century). Still this particular tradition could be of early date. The text of this midrash is re-composed into a more or less sequential narrative from quotes appearing in other midrashim and fragments found in the Geniza and other places.

[11] The formulation of this question is: הרי שבועה מבוהלת ובאת לפני להוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים ואתה אומר שלח נא ביד תשלח?! (and now this promise to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, hurries and comes before me, and you tell me 'send in the hand of whom Thou wilt'?!).

'I, the merciful God, want to save the Israelites from their hardship and slavery, and you do not want to carry it out?' The *Mekhilta* is critical of Moses' refusal, which is looked upon as disturbing the execution of God's plan.[12]

A different paragraph in the *Mekhilta* tells of another aspect of the *Sne* story:

לפיכך כבש הקב״ה את משה ששה ימים ובשביעי אמר לו שלח נא ביד תשלח שנא׳
ויאמר משה אל ה׳ בי ה׳ לא איש ונו׳.

> Therefore God held Moses for six days, and on the seventh, he [Moses] said to him: 'send by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send' (Exod 4:13), as it is said: 'and Moses said to God, Please Sir, I am not a man of [words]' (Exod 4:10).[13]

What is told here is nothing new; the *Mekhilta* is recounting what was previously told in *Seder Olam*. It is likely that the *Mekhilta* took this idea over from *Seder Olam* or from a mediating source.

But there is an important difference between what is said in the *Mekhilta*, and what was said in *Seder Olam*. The *Mekhilta* adds an extra biblical verse to the version quoted in *Seder Olam*, hereby giving the narrative another meaning. *Seder Olam* quotes verse 10 ('and Moses said to God, Please Sir, I am not a man of [words]') of Exodus 4, as an illustration for Moses' heaviness of speech; the *Mekhilta* inserts verse 10 before verse 13 of the same chapter ('send in the hand of him whom Thou wilt send') in which Moses expresses his refusal to succumb to God's request, and is asking God to send someone else instead. This sequence results in a narrative which says, that after God spoke to Moses for seven days, Moses refused God's request. Moses is here presented in an unfavourable way. He refuses, not because he was ineloquent, but for an unexplained reason. Thus the reader may easily assign Moses bad qualities, such as stubbornness or laziness.

To make sure the reader has understood this point, the *Mekhilta* goes on to explain what happened at the *Sne* by way of a parable:[14]

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[12] We do find in the *Mekhilta* favourable attitudes towards Moses' behaviour, explaining Moses' answer to God as stemming from his lack of assertiveness due to his meekness, or from his trying to allow his brother to share his honour. These statements come under the name of R. El(i)azar Hamodai, and Chakhamim.

[13] *Mekhilta de R. Shimon ben Yochai*, edn. Epstein & Melamed, Jerusalem 1955.

[14] *Mekhilta de R. Shimon ben Yochai*, chap. 3.

This is similar to a king who had a slave, whom he loved dearly, and the king wanted to make him the *Apotropos* [= one responsible] for his property; what did the king do? He took the slave by the hand and led him into his palace of treasures and showed him all his vessels of silver, gold and precious stones and everything which he had in his storage place; then he took him out and showed him trees and gardens and plantations and fields and everything he had in his fields.

Then the slave took [back] his hand and said: 'I cannot become *Apotropos* for all the things of the king.'

The king said to him: 'Since you cannot become responsible for all my things, why did you let me bother with you for so long?' And the king was angry with him, and ordered him not to enter his palace.

This is how God held Moses for seven days, and in the seventh he (Moses) told him: 'send by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send'. God swore to him that he will not enter the land of Israel, as it is said: 'therefore you shall not bring [this crowd into the land which I have given to them'] (Num 20:12).

God's talking to Moses at the *Sne* has been likened to a king who went to much trouble to convince his beloved slave to accept a position of an *Apotropos* of the entire king's treasure. The slave rejected the honour. The king became angry with the slave for letting him go to so much trouble all to no avail, and forbids him from entering his palace altogether. Thus, claims the *Mekhilta*, because Moses did not want to bring the Israelites out of Egypt God stopped him from entering the land of Israel.

The *Mekhilta* goes even further in changing the biblical account of the *Sne* event: the story in the *Mekhilta*, unlike the biblical version, does not end well. Rather we are left with a bitter taste concerning the relationship between God and Moses, and as a result of his refusal to comply to God's will, Moses is prohibited from entering the Holy Land.[15] In the biblical text, as we saw above, this prohibition is connected to the Water of Disputation episode (Num 20:12, 20:24, 27:14; Deut 32:51).

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[15] The same connection is made two times later on in the *Mekhilta*, first without attribution to any rabbi: אמר לו [הק' אתה או' שלח נא] ביד תשלח הרי יהושע תלמידך ומשרתך ונידול ידך הוא [יכניס את יש' לארץ אתה] [א]ין אתה נכנס עמהן (God said to him: 'you say "send in the hand of whom Thou wilt", Joshua your disciple and servant, whom you nurtured, he will bring the Israelites into the land, and you will not enter with them'). And still later in chap. 6, with attribution to the name of R. Akiva: ר' עקיבא אומ' אמ' הקב"ה למשה בשבועה בנזירה באמירה נשבעתי שלא תכנס לארץ ישראל (R. Akiva said: 'God said to Moses: by an oath and a verdict and a [Godly] statement I swear that you will not enter the land of Israel'.)

To sum up, we find in the *Mekhilta* criticism of Moses' refusal to comply with God's demand. In addition, when retelling what is known from *Seder Olam*, that the event lasted seven days, the *Mekhilta*'s account presents Moses more negatively than the *Seder Olam* by adding another biblical verse, and arranging the verses in a specific order. This attitude does not exist in the earlier rabbinic text, *Seder Olam*.

We can now see how the tradition of the seven-day revelation and the criticism of Moses' behaviour are utilized in the classical midrash.

2. The Classical midrash:
Development of a fixed textual unit

In what is known as classical midrash,[16] the attitude as well as the narrative which was presented above became widespread, and crystallized into a fixed textual unit. Being a fixed textual unit, means that not only the idea that the revelation at the *Sne* lasted seven days passes on from one text to another; it does so in the exact same wording, or at least some of its key words are found in the narrative. The idea crystallized by now into an actual text. This does not necessarily mean that the text was written; it could have been memorized and passed on orally.[17] This fixed unit is found, for example, in *Vayikra Rabba*:[18]

אמר שמואל בר נחמן: כל שבעת ימי הסנה היה הקב״ה מפתה את משה שילך בשליחותו למצרים הה״ד ״גם מתמול גם משלשום גם מאז דברך אל עבדך״ הרי ששה. ובשביעי אמר לו ״שלח נא ביד תשלח״. אמר לו הקב״ה: משה, את אומר שלח נא ביד תשלח – חייך שאני צוררה לך בכנפיך! אימתי פרע לו? רבי ברכיה אמר: ר׳ לוי ור׳ חלבו. ר׳ לוי אמר: כל ז׳ ימי אדר היה משה מבקש תפלה ותחנונים שיכנס לא״י ובשביעי אמר לו ״כי לא תעבור את הירדן הזה״. ר׳ חלבו אמר: כל ז׳ ימי המילואים היה משמש בכהונה גדולה וכסבור שלו היא בז׳ אמר לו לא שלך היא אלא של אהרן אחיך היא הה״ד ״ויהי ביום השמיני״.

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[16] The vagueness of dating midrashic compositions is a known fact. The period of the classical midrash can roughly be designated to late-antique until pre-Islamic period (fourth to sixth centuries).

[17] See Mandel 2000, 74–8, also Kipperwasser 2005, 34–42.

[18] *Leviticus Rabba*, parasha 11. A parallel is found in *Shir-Hashirim Rabba*, parasha 1 and in *Midrash Tehilim*, on Psalm 18. The passage in *Leviticus Rabba* seems to be more comprehensive than *Shir-Hashirim Rabba*, and perhaps preserves a version close to the original. *Midrash Tehilim* does not have the rabbis' opinions about Moses' punishment, maybe because of a tendency which will be discussed below, in §3 on the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature.

R. Shmuel son of R. Nachman said: all seven-days-of-the-*Sne*, God was tempting Moses to go as His messenger to Egypt, as it is said: (Num 4:10) 'also from yesterday also from the day before yesterday, since You spoke to Your servant'—this is six [days], and on the seventh day he said to Him: 'send with whom Thou wilt send'. God said to him: Moses, you are telling me 'send with whom Thou wilt send'—I swear that I will tie it in your clothes[19] [= this will be remembered as your sin].

When did He repay him [for this sin]?

R. Berachia said: [There are two opinions about this, the one is of] R. Levi and [the other is of] R. Chelbo.

R. Levi said: All seven days of [the month of] Adar Moses was asking [through] prayer and supplication to enter the Land of Israel, and on the seventh day He told him (Deut 3:28) 'you shall not cross this Jordan'.

R. Chelbo said: All seven days of *Milluim*[20] [Moses] served as the chief priest, and he thought that this [position] was his; on the seventh [day] He told him: It is not your [position], but it is Aaron's, your brother, as it is said (Lev 9:1) 'and on the eighth day [Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel' and ordered Aaron to serve as a priest.]

Some of the 'key words' that tend to appear in this textual unit, which will appear again and again in others texts, are:

1. The allocation of its first part to R. Shmuel bar Nachman, a third generation Palestinian *Amora*.
2. The word 'tempting' (מפתה) which is used to describe God's action to convince Moses to go in his mission.[21]
3. The expressions 'I will tie it to your clothes' (which means here: I will remember it [as your sin]), and 'when did he repay him?' (מתי פרע לו).
4. R. Berachia, a fifth-generation *Amora* from Palestine, who brings the two opinions: of R. Chelbo (the student of R. Shmuel mentioned above, thus a fourth-generation *Amora* from Palestine, and a teacher of R. Berachia) and R. Levi.

This text parallels the seven-day revelation by the *Sne* on the one hand, with the seven days in which Moses asked God to allow him

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[19] The meaning of this expression is close to the modern meaning of carrying something in one's pocket.

[20] The *Milluim* is part of the ritual of inauguration of a new priest; see Exodus 29, Leviticus 8. Moses served as a priest in the *Milluim* ritual of Aaron and his sons.

[21] See Bregman 2003, 109 and 218.

to enter the Land on the other; as Moses refused to comply with God's request at the beginning of his career, so did God refuse Moses' request at the end of his life. God's refusal to grant Moses his wishes is presented as the punishment for Moses' refusal to succumb to God's will. The idea that Moses was punished for his refusal is known already in the *Mekhilta*. There we may also find other, more positive, attitudes towards Moses' refusal. Here, in the fixed textual unit, the negative attitude appears to be prevailing. The only issue which is still being discussed is the nature of Moses' punishment. R. Levi says that the prohibition of entering the Land of Israel was the punishment, an idea which was already expressed in the *Mekhilta*. The other opinion, that of R. Chelbo, claims that denying Moses the position of high priest is a punishment for his refusal at the *Sne*.

The two views about this punishment are a development of the negative attitude towards Moses' behaviour at the *Sne* beyond what is found in the *Mekhilta*. Another development concerns the duration of the *Sne* event. In the fixed textual unit this duration is learned from the Bible in the following manner:[22] the word גם (also) means one day; מתמול (from yesterday) means two days; the next word גם (also) is three days; משלשם (from the day before yesterday) is four days; another גם (also) is five days and the expression מאז דברך אל עבדך (since you spoke to your servant) refers to the sixth day; on the next, the seventh day Moses spoke. The very same verse (Exod 4:10) was used by *Seder Olam* to illustrate Moses' heaviness of speech. Here, in the fixed textual unit, the duration of the *Sne* event is learned from the same verse.

The claim that the event by the *Sne* lasted seven days is by now an independent tradition, no longer a part of an overall chronological system, as it used to be in *Seder Olam*. It is justified, then, to question the origin of this information. The rabbis answer that this is learned from a calculation in the biblical verse itself.

This fixed textual unit seems to be based on the story as it appears in the *Mekhilta*; it is not a part of an overall chronological system, and it is quoting the same two verses as the *Mekhilta* (verses 13 and 10 of chap. 4 in Exodus), albeit in the order of their appearance in the biblical text (i.e. first verse 10 and then 13).

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[22] In the two other versions (in *Midrash Tehilim* and in *Shir Hashirim Rabba*) the calculation is slightly different.

The expression 'tied in his clothes' which is used in the fixed tex-
tual unit adds a unique connotation. This expression is used in con-
nection with the episode of the Water of Disputation, with regards
to Moses, in two early midrashim: the haggadic section of *Sifre
Deuteronomy*[23] and *Mekhilta on Deuteronomy*. In these two midrashim, the
event by the *Sne* is interpreted in a positive manner, and contrasted
against Moses' behaviour at the Water of Disputation. The expres-
sion under discussion is used for Moses' punishment for his mis-
conduct at the Water of Disputation; he was punished in not being
allowed to enter the land of Israel:

> you did not hesitate [to perform] the early miracles [of converting
> your stick to a snake, by the *Sne*], [why did] you hesitate within this
> effortless miracle? How does one know that Moses did not leave this
> world without God tying [this mistake] into his clothes? As it is said
> 'for you see land opposite you [and do not enter it]'[24] (Deut 32:53).

The negative view of Moses' behaviour during the revelation at the
Sne is by now an acceptable thesis. The difference in opinion con-
cerns only the nature of the punishment bestowed on Moses. The
fixed textual unit presents a crystallization of the previous tradition,
which can now be recognized as 'a text', and as such it can be writ-
ten or memorized.

Now, we can proceed to see how this textual unit is used in the
Tanchuma Yelamdenu corpus.

3. The fixed textual unit in the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu*

The *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* corpus is a group of midrash texts, which
have been developed over hundreds of years. Parts of it can be
traced back to fourth-century Palestine. The bulk of the composition
is from the vague period of 5th-8th centuries Palestine. It is of drashic
nature, and many drashot typically open with the words ילמדנו רבנו:
'Let our Rabbi teach us'.[25]

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[23] The date of this midrash is uncertain; according to one conjecture it was cre-
ated between the third and early-fifth century.

[24] ומה אם נסים הראשונים שהיו קשים לא עיכבת מהם הדבר הזה שהוא קל צרך היית
לעכבו: מכ' אתה אומ' שלא יצא משה מן העולם עד שצררה בכנפו שנ' כי מנגד תראה את
הארץ, *Midrash Tanaim*, on Deuteronomy 32.

[25] See Bregman 2003, 3–20; Teugels 2001, x–xi.

The fixed textual unit, which was studied above, appears in the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* six times.[26] Surprisingly, it is not found in the place where we would most expect it to be: in connection to the biblical account of the revelation at the *Sne* (i.e. Exodus 3).[27] It appears in connection with other biblical narratives, and always in a fragmentary or altered form. The part dealing with the nature of Moses' punishment is omitted in all places, except for one, and in this one place, its meaning is completely changed. The fact that in one occurrence, the discussion concerning Moses' punishment is included may indicate that in other cases an editor omitted these discussions purposefully.

The first occurrence of the fixed textual unit in the *Tanchuma* literature is a drasha about Genesis 25:1, 'and Abraham got another wife'. The drasha starts with a halakhic question, about prayer.[28] In the answer we read about the three Jewish prayers, explaining that '... a man should always be increasing the number of prayers, and not only his prayers, but he should also be "increasing" in his study of the Torah, and not only there, but also in sons, so if his wife dies, he should take another wife and have more sons' as Abraham did in the biblical story under discussion.

The midrash then goes on to discuss a verse from Job 8:7 'Your beginning was low and your end will be very elevated'. The midrash explains this verse as follows:

> This [verse] is about Moses. R. Shmuel bar Nachman said: seven days God was tempting Moses, and he (Moses) was running away, as it is said: 'Send with whom Thou wilt' (Exod 4:13) and it is written 'I am not a man of words' (Exod 4:10), and it is said 'Moses hid his face' (Exod 3:6).
> '... and your end will be very elevated', as it is written: 'and he looked at the image of God' (Num 12:8); Rabi Shimon Ben Yochai said: it means that he saw the form [of God].

This passage from the *Tanchuma* is using the fixed textual unit to show that Moses was in a poor state at the beginning of his career, but later on his position was elevated. The midrash then returns to

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[26] In the *Printed Tanchuma*: parashat Hayey Sarah, siman 6; parashat Toldot, siman 12; parashat Vayikra, siman 3; in *Tanhuma Buber*: parashat Vayikra, siman 4. In *Deuteronomy Rabba*, parashat Vaetchanan, 'ata hachilota'.

[27] An exception is found in the *Tanchuma Buber*, but was probably added later. About this quality of *Tanchuma Buber* see Bregman 2003, 168–9.

[28] ‏ילמדנו רבנו כמה תפילות אדם מתפלל ביום‎.

discuss the original biblical text about Abraham taking another wife (Gen 25:1), telling that Abraham too was in a low position in the beginning, because he was childless; later he begot two sons, and still later, after the death of his first wife, he begot even more children.

When quoting the fixed textual unit the *Tanchuma* adds the words 'and he was running away' referring to Moses, and omits the parts which talk about Moses' punishment; Moses emerges, then, not as a person being punished or deserving a punishment; on the contrary, he ends up seeing the form of God, a level never superseded by any prophet. For this purpose the *Tanchuma* adds another verse (Exod 3:6) to the fixed textual unit 'Moses hid his face' in order to contrast it with Moses' later development, when he sees the form of God.

The structure of this drasha is typical of a *Tanchuma* drasha. I have discussed here only a part of it, that which shows how the fixed textual unit was used. There is no need to analyse in such details the other parts of this drasha, or other occurrences of the fixed textual unit in the *Tanchuma* literature. I shall briefly describe the other occurrences.

The next occurrence of the fixed textual unit in the *Tanchuma* literature is in connection with the story of how Jacob deceived Isaac in order to get his blessing, and Isaac's reaction when realizing the lie (Gen 27:33). The midrash talks about the control a man has of his organs; it concludes that some organs are under man's control—legs, hands, mouth, and some not. If God wants, says the midrash, He can take control even over organs which are usually under man's control. This happened, for example, to Moses by the *Sne*: he did not want to go, using his legs, to Pharaoh, but God compelled him to do so. How do we know that Moses did not want to go? 'As R. Shmuel bar Nachman said, seven days God was tempting Moses by the *Sne*...' etc. The midrash quotes here the fixed textual unit, but without mentioning Moses' punishments.

The context of the next occurrence[29] is a discussion about achieving a high social status. If a man is chasing an honourable status, this status will escape him, but if he tries to avoid high honour, the honour will as if 'chase' him. This is what happened to Moses by the *Sne*: 'Seven days God was tempting Moses by the *Sne*' and Moses, being meek, rejected the honour. But in the end Moses became an

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[29] *Printed Tanchuma*, parashat Vayikra, siman 3.

honourable leader, not only bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, but he also parted the Red Sea, brought them to the desert, fed them the quail, gave them a well, made the tabernacle and so forth; all things brought him the honour, of which he was trying to escape because of his meekness. There are no negative overtones about Moses here, and the fixed textual unit is used in part.

Another passage from the *Tanchuma* literature was published by Mann[30] and was later republished[31] from a Geniza fragment TS C$_1$ and analyzed in detail by Bregman.[32] Here, the fixed textual unit serves to show that the *Sne* revelation lasted a long time; the author needs the length of time for a lengthy dialogue between God and Moses to take place.[33]

The next occurrence from the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature is from *Deuteronomy Rabba*.[34] Here the fixed textual unit is used in connection to the verse (Deut 3:24) 'You (God) started showing Your servant (Moses) Your mightiness and Your strong hand . . .' The midrash explains that God started showing His greatness to Moses at the *Sne*, when he was talking to him for seven days. The parts about the punishment are again omitted.

In one case in the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature,[35] the punishment of Moses is mentioned. This is in connection to Leviticus 9:1 '. . . and in the eighth day Moses called Aaron . . . and said . . . take a calf . . . and sacrifices before God'. In this episode Moses asks Aaron for the first time to perform the task of chief priest. The midrash discusses Moses' emotions toward his brother who was appointed to this high position:

"ויהי ביום השמיני . . .״ אז״ל: כל שבעת הימים שהיה משה בסבה, א״ל הקב״ה:
לך בשליחותי והוא אומר לו: ״שלח נא ביד תשלח״. כך יום ראשון ושני, א״ל
הקב״ה אני אומר לך לך ואתה אומר לי שלח נא ביד תשלח?! חייך למחר
אני פורע לך; כשיעשה המשכן תהא סבור בעצמך שאתה משמש בכהונה נדולה
ואני אומר לך: קרא לאהרן שישמש. לכך נאמר: ״קרא משה לאהרן
ולבניו״ . . . א״ל משה: כך אמר לי הקב״ה למנותך כהן נדול. א״ל אהרן:
אתה ינעת במשכן ואני נעשה כהן נדול? א״ל: חייך אע״פ שאתה נעשה כהן נדול
כאילו אני נעשה, שכשם ששמחת לי בנדולה כך אני שמח בנדולתך.

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[30] Mann 1940.
[31] Bregman 2003, 295–7.
[32] Bregman 2003, 97–137, esp. 108–9.
[33] This analysis was offered by Bregman 2003, 109.
[34] *Deuteronomy Rabba*, parashat Vaetchanan on Deut 3:24.
[35] *Printed Tanchuma*, parashat Shmini, siman 3.

'And it was on the eighth day' . . . The rabbis said: all seven days in
which Moses was by the *Sne*, God told him: go as my messenger, and
he (Moses) told him: 'Send with whom Thou wilt send' (Exod 4:13).
Thus it was in the first day, and in the second day God told him: I
am telling you: go, and you are telling me: send with whom Thou
wilt send?! I swear to you that I will repay you in the future. When
the tabernacle will be constructed, you will think that you will be the
chief priest, but I will tell you: call Aaron so that he will serve. Thus
it is said: 'Moses called Aaron and his sons' (Lev 9:1) . . . Moses said
[to Aaron]: This is what God told me, to make you the Chief Priest.
Aaron said to him: You troubled yourself so much with the taberna-
cle, and I am becoming the Chief Priest? [Moses] said to him: I swear
to you that although you are becoming the Chief Priest, it is as if I
am becoming [it], as you were happy for me in my greatness [when
I was called to speak to Pharaoh (Exod 4:14)], thus I am happy for
you for your greatness.

Only one of Moses' punishments is quoted in this passage, and even
this one has the very opposite meaning to that in the fixed textual
unit. The punishment is used to show the greatness of Moses: he is
not jealous of his brother, but happy for him. Moses' prohibition to
enter the land is omitted here, as well as the expression 'I tie it to
your clothes', which entered the fixed textual unit from a text which
discusses exactly this prohibition in *Sifre Deuteronomy*, as we saw above.

The negative attitude of the fixed textual unit is systematically
avoided in the *Tanchuma* literature, even though this textual unit is
widely used here.

4. THE FIXED TEXTUAL UNIT IN LATER TEXTS

This seven days' tradition appears in a few later rabbinic texts and
midrashic collections.

Shmot Rabba[36] (a medieval compilation) discusses extensively the *Sne*
revelation, and is using the fixed textual unit, not actually quoting
it, but using some of the key words from the fixed unit, such as
'tempting' (מפתה), and the calculation of the number of days from
the biblical verse Exod 4:10, albeit in a different manner. The con-
tent of the fixed textual unit is altered here heavily: the seven days,
according to *Shmot Rabba* occur *before*, not during the revelation; after
the revelation took place Moses was persuaded by God's words, and
was ready to go in order to punish Pharaoh.

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[36] *Shmot Rabba*, parasha 3, 14.

Collections of midrashim are quoting earlier compositions. Such is the case with *Midrash Agada* on Lev 9:1[37] (quoting the text from the *Tanchuma* on the same biblical verse and again when discussing Lev 1:1[38] it is quoting the *Tanchuma* on this same verse).[39] *Yalkut Shimoni*[40] is a re-telling of *Seder Olam*, thus not being critical of Moses at all; and again on another instance it is quoting the fixed textual unit as it is found in *Vayikra Rabba*, in a context similar to *Midrash Tehilim*.[41]

Many other later compositions about Moses do not include the fixed textual unit or the idea that the revelation at the *Sne* lasted seven days. Such is the case in *Sefer Pitron Torah, Midrash Espha, Divrei Yeme Moshe, Midrash Petirat Moshe* or the *Zohar*.

Conclusions

We can observe four stages in the narrative which assigns seven days to the revelation at the *Sne*:

1. In *Seder Olam* we first encounter the opinion that the revelation by the *Sne* lasted seven days. The attitude toward the revelation is neutral.
2. A negative attitude towards the *Sne* revelation develops in *Mekhilta de rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai*: Moses is seen as a person who misbehaved and should be punished. The prohibition on Moses to enter the Land of Israel is suggested as a punishment for his behaviour at the *Sne*.
3. A fixed textual unit develops on the basis of the text in the *Mekhilta*, where a critical attitude towards Moses' behaviour is taken for granted. Two possible punishments are suggested here: not entering the land, and not being appointed high priest.
4. The next stage is represented by the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature. This corpus systematically avoids presenting Moses in a negative way: the fixed narrative unit is being reused in a manner which

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[37] *Midrash Agada*, chap. 9.
[38] *Midrash Agada*, chap. 1.
[39] *Printed Tanchuma*, parashat Vayikra, siman 3.
[40] *Yalkut Shimoni* on the Torah, remez 172.
[41] *Yalkut Shimoni* is not quoting *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* when talking about the duration of the *Sne* revelation. It is therefore the only late rabbinic text which has a negative attitude towards Moses' behaviour.

does away with all negative aspects of it. We do not find this unit in connection to the biblical story of the *Sne* revelation, only within contexts of other biblical narratives.

With regards to the seven days' revelation, the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* literature serves as a barrier between earlier rabbinic and medieval traditions. Except in the case of *Yalkut Shimoni*, medieval rabbinic texts follow the *Tanchuma Yelamdenu* in avoiding criticism of Moses' behaviour. *Yalkut Shimoni*, which uses *Vayikra Rabba* as its source, keeps the negative view on Moses' behaviour.

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PART II

THE NAME IN THE PAGAN
GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

MOSES/MUSAEUS/MOCHOS AND HIS GOD YAHWEH, IAO, AND SABAOTH, SEEN FROM A GRAECO-ROMAN PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

The revelation of Yahweh's name to Moses on Mount Horeb is a decisive episode in the narrative of Moses according to the book of Exodus (3:1). Mount Horeb also features later in Jewish Scripture. It is the place where Moses transmits Yahweh's Ten Commandments to Israel (Deuteronomy 1:6; 4:10; 4:15; 9:8; also 1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 8:9). Furthermore, it is the destination of Elijah's journey: an angel takes him out of his depressed state of mind under a broom bush and sets him on his feet for a journey to Mount Horeb, where Yahweh reveals himself to him, too (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 19:8). Yahweh's revelation on Mount Horeb is a powerful theme in the Jewish Scripture, and in this paper I shall address the question of whether something of the revelation of Yahweh's name to Moses, the second founding father of Judaism after Abraham, was known to the Greeks, and how *they* perceived Moses and Yahweh. As Martin Goodman has indicated, Graeco-Roman authors, aware of Jerusalem and the Temple as dominant features of Jewish religion,

> wrote much about the role there of the priestly caste and the high priests as leaders of the people. There would be much less certainty about the divinity worshipped. Pagan writers mostly agreed that Jewish cult was aniconic, but they differed widely in their views on the deity understood by Jews as the recipient of their offerings. Was it Jupiter, as Varro thought, or Dionysus, as Plutarch suggested? Other suggestions included Iao, the sky, or the god 'of uncertain name'.[1]

In this paper, I shall comment on the variety of these attempts at identifying the God of the Jews. First, I shall sketch a general picture of Greek views on Moses, paying special attention to the contexts

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[1] Goodman 1998, 10.

in which the issue of the Jewish God's name arises. The specific relevant passages can only be appreciated, however, when viewed against the more general background of Graeco-Roman evaluations of Moses (§1). Secondly, this tracking of the 'Greek Moses' gives rise to a further consideration about whether in fact, in a particular Greek source, Moses might also have been identified with the figure of Mochos, who is frequently mentioned in Greek sources (§2). Thirdly, I shall give an analysis of Greek references to Iao, as Yahweh is referred to by Greek authors (§3). Finally, this analysis will be concluded with a discussion of Sabaoth, a name which also occurs in Greek authors and derives from the Hebrew Yahweh Sabaoth, as Yahweh is often called in full (§4).

Although nobody would decline the help of Menahem Stern's monumental, three-volume collection of Greek and Roman sources about the Jews, entitled *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem, 1974–84), I have first undertaken independent research into the Greek sources and supplemented this research with my use of Stern's collection. This procedure results in a different emphasis on one Greek source, Alexander Polyhistor, and has also yielded a text by the first-century AD physician Dioscorides not included in Stern. Nevertheless, I will make continuous reference to the numbers of Stern's texts.

1. The Figure of Moses in Graeco-Roman Authors

First, we turn to the figure of Moses in Graeco-Roman authors. I shall deal with the occurrences in chronological order. As we shall see, there is no reason to conclude with the lexicon article on Moses by Beate Ego in *Der neue Pauly*, that 'die Figur des Moses in der paganen Literatur vor allem im Kontext antisemitischer Aussagen (steht)'.[2] Ego's conclusion is at odds with Gager's much more balanced study by the name *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (1972), in which he shows that 'anti-Semitism was not a constant companion of the Jews in antiquity' and that there is little foundation for the view that the intelligentsia were the 'true anti-Semites' of the ancient world.[3] The views among the intelligentsia were much more varied.

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[2] Ego 2000, 417–18.
[3] Gager 1972, 18.

At the end of his study, Gager concludes: 'The first and most endur-
ing reaction of the Greek world to Moses was positive. (. . .) In the
end, (. . .) the more positive view of Moses prevailed.'[4] Although there
does appear to have been a specific anti-Jewish polemic in Egypt in
the Hellenistic-Roman era, the entire reception of Moses in antiq-
uity seems to have been much less black-and-white than Ego sug-
gests, and to have included a considerable positive perception.

The oldest reference to Moses in Greek literature seems to have
been made by the sixth-century BC ethnographer and chronicler
Hellanicus of Lesbos. Hellanicus is ranked with Herodotus and
Thucydides as one of the authors who have done most to influence
the development of Greek historiography. The next to refer to Moses
was Philochorus (c. 340–260 BC), a scholar-historian who took a schol-
arly interest in local Greek history, chronography, cult, and litera-
ture. Both names we have on the authority of Pseudo-Justin Martyr
(3rd–5th cent. AD), who says in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, that 'those
who write the Athenian history, Hellanicus and Philochorus, the
author of *The Attic History*, (. . .) have mentioned Moses as a very
ancient and time-honoured prince of the Jews' (*FGrH* 4 frg. 47b;
328 frg. 92b; Stern, No. 565).[5]

Lysimachus of Alexandria (355–281 BC), a contemporary of Philo-
chorus, is perhaps an instance of animosity towards Moses and the
Jews, as Josephus tells of him that he brings up the same theme as
later writers such as Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon, to the effect
that the Jews in Egypt became afflicted with leprosy. According to
Lysimachus, they took refuge in the temples and lived a mendicant
existence, and spread the disease throughout Egypt. When the
Egyptians were about to purge the temples of these impure and
impious Jews, drive them out into the wilderness, and drown the
lepers, Moses advised them to take their courage into their own
hands, leave Egypt, and make their way straight through the wilder-
ness until they reached inhabited country and settled in Judaea (*Against
Apion* 1.304–311; cf. 2.145; Stern, No. 158). As we shall see, Lysima-
chus' anti-Semitic stance is also taken by other Egyptian authors like
Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon.

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[4] Gager 1972, 163–4.
[5] Stern doubts if Pseudo-Justin's statement concerning the references to Moses
by Hellanicus and Philochorus is indeed true; see Stern 1984, vol. 3, 38–40.

This anti-Jewish account contrasts sharply with the more positive account of Lysimachus' contemporary Hecataeus of Abdera (4th–3rd cent. BC), who likewise tells the story of the outbreak of pestilence in Egypt, but goes on to include not only the Jews, but also the Greeks as victims of the Egyptian measures against foreigners. The most outstanding and active foreigners banded together and arrived in Greece, among other destinations, whereas the greater number of foreigners were driven into Judaea. In this interpretation, both Jews and particular notable Greeks originated from Egypt, when they were expelled by the Egyptians. Within this framework, Hecataeus draws a more sympathetic picture of Moses. As Momigliano has suggested, his interest seems to be part of the Hellenistic discovery of Judaism after the Greeks' conquest of the Persian Empire. Although Greek curiosity extended to other barbarians as well, the

> Jews were the newcomers. Everything had still to be learnt about them. It is perhaps not by chance that the first Greek book to speak extensively about the Jews was written by an adviser of Ptolemy I [Hecataeus, that is] in the years in which he was campaigning for the conquest of Palestine.[6]

In Hecataeus, Moses is called outstanding both for his wisdom and courage, and, as the founder of the temple of Jerusalem and the one who instituted its forms of worship and ritual, is credited with a very philosophical theology: 'he had no images whatsoever of the gods made for them, being of the opinion that God is not in human form; rather the heavens which surround the earth are alone divine, and rule the universe'.[7] Hecataeus also highlights Moses' function as a lawgiver, and explicitly remarks that 'at the end of their laws there is even appended the statement: "These are the words that Moses heard from God and declares unto the Jews"' (cf. Deuteronomy 29:1;

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[6] Momigliano 1971, 83–84.

[7] Hecataeus' positive remarks encouraged the writing of a pseudepigraphic work under his name *On the Jews*. According to Origen, 'a book about the Jews is attributed to Hecataeus the historian, in which the wisdom of the nation is emphasized even more strongly [in comparison with Numenius and Pythagoras, that is]—so much so that Herennius Philo in his treatise about the Jews even doubts in the first place whether it is a genuine work of the historian, and says in the second place that if it is authentic, he had probably been carried away by the Jews' powers of persuasion and accepted their doctrine' (*Against Celsus* 1.15). See the commentary by Chadwick 1953, 17 note 4 on this Jewish forgery. On Pseudo-Hecataeus, see, extensively, Bar-Kochva 1996.

Hecataeus in Diodorus Siculus 40.3.1–6; Stern, No. 11).[8] As will become clear, this line of positive appreciation also runs through history and comes to the fore, for instance, in Strabo, who seems to elaborate on Hecataeus' positive representation of the Jewish concept of God.

An anti-Jewish image of Moses arises again in Manetho, who was an Egyptian high priest in Heliopolis in the early Ptolemaic period, around 280 BC, and wrote a history of Egypt. Interestingly, Manetho, a Heliopolitan priest himself, regards Moses as a former priest of the god Osiris at Heliopolis, who changed his allegiance, and in the place of his theophoric name Osarseph, which referred to Osiris, took on a new name, Moses (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996, frg. 12: Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.250; cf. frg. 13; Stern, No. 21).

A very interesting case of Greek acquaintance with Moses is presented by Alexander Polyhistor. His familiarity with Moses also includes knowledge of the revelation of God's name to Moses. Born at Miletus in about 105 BC, Alexander was brought to Rome as a slave in the aftermath of the Mithradatic Wars. Having received Roman citizenship at Rome after he had been freed, Alexander became a teacher and produced, among other works, geographical compilations, including works on Rome, Delphi, Egypt, the Chaldaeans, and the Jews. His interest in the Jews may well have been prompted by Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and the subsequent incorporation of Judaea into the Roman Empire in 63 BC.[9]

Within this material, Alexander also drew comparisons between various historical sources and sought their congruence. This can be demonstrated from a remark on Moses. Commenting on a certain 'Cleodemus the prophet', who in his history of the Jews lists Abraham's descendants by his second wife Katura, Alexander explicitly remarks that this information is in conformity with the narrative of the Jews' lawgiver Moses (Josephus, *Jew. Ant.* 1.240).[10] The congruence between Moses and other historical writers is of interest to this Roman ethnographer. This comparative historical research is also in evidence in

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[8] Hecataeus also regards Moses as having introduced 'an unsocial and intolerant mode of life', but explains this 'as a result of their [the Jews'] own expulsion from Egypt'.

[9] Cf. Stern 1974, vol. 1, 157.

[10] On Alexander Polyhistor's reference to Moses as a very ancient figure, see also Pseudo-Justin Martyr, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, edn. Morel, p. 10B; = K. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum (FHG)*, frg. 24b.

the first-century BC historian Nicolaus of Damascus, who, in his universal history, draws similar lines between extrabiblical accounts and Moses.[11]

Among his Jewish sources, Alexander Polyhistor also consulted the Jewish writer Artapanus, who lived in the third or second century BC. Although hardly a fragment of Artapanus has survived apart from the summaries which Alexander gives of Artapanus' works in his compilations,[12] and which, in turn, are now only extant in Eusebius of Caesarea, most scholarly attention seems to have been drawn to the Jewish author Artapanus himself, rather than his later Greek compilator Alexander Polyhistor, as if the latter were only the uninteresting vessel in which the literary remains of Artapanus were stored. Stern's collection of Graeco-Roman authors on Jews and Judaism is no exception. Stern gives the outline of Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel* IX.17–39 (Stern, No. 51a), in which Polyhistor's fragments from Artapanus are transmitted, yet does not give the full texts of the fragments themselves. It is highly remarkable, however, that Alexander made such extensive use of Artapanus' views on Moses, as we shall see presently, and included them in his encyclopaedic material.

These views on Moses included the idea that Moses, when grown up, was called Musaeus by the Greeks (Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* IX.27.3).[13] Among the Greeks, Musaeus was known as a mythical singer with a descriptive name which pointed at his affiliation to the Muses. The second-century AD Greek philosopher Numenius, too, identified Moses with Musaeus (frg. 9; see below at the end of §1 and also Burnyeat, this vol., §1). Alexander Polyhistor, however, also took over Artapanus' view that Moses became *the teacher* of Orpheus (Eusebius IX.27.4). Whereas in Greek sources Musaeus is in fact viewed as *the disciple* of Orpheus, according to Artapanus' identification of Musaeus with Moses, followed by Alexander Polyhistor, this relationship is inverted and Orpheus is represented as *the disciple*

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[11] Josephus, *Jew. Ant.* 1.94–95, with regard to the history of the Flood (Stern, No. 85).

[12] One fragment, which overlaps with a fragment transmitted through Alexander Polyhistor and Eusebius, has also been preserved via Clement of Alexandria; see Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 192 and 240 note 85.

[13] Greek text and English translation, with annotations, in Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 208–243.

of Moses, alias Musaeus. This representation could be due to a cor-
ruption of Alexander Polyhistor's text in Eusebius, who preserved
Alexander's summaries of Artapanus, but it seems likely that Alexander
found Artapanus' identification of Moses with Musaeus and his rever-
sal of the relationship between Musaeus and Orpheus unproblematic.
As Holladay has pointed out, this is in fact only a modification of
the Greek view in Hecataeus of Abdera (*FGrH* 264, frg. 25 = Diodorus
Siculus 1.96.2) that 'Orpheus transmits to the Greeks the sacred wis-
dom gained in his Egyptian travels (. . .). It is altered by Artapanus
so that Moses, not the Egyptian priests, becomes the ultimate source
of Greek wisdom.'[14] In this way Moses was interwoven into Greek
history in an encyclopaedic work of a respected scholar in first-
century BC Rome. Moses is even described as the first inventor of
philosophy (IX.27.4). This philosophical characterization of Moses
runs parallel to his depiction, as discussed above, by Hecataeus of
Abdera.

Of direct relevance to the topic of this conference volume is the
fact that Alexander also includes Artapanus' material on the revela-
tion of God's name to Moses. On this account, once, as Moses was
praying to God on behalf of the Jews, 'suddenly (. . .), fire appeared
out of the earth, and it blazed even though there was neither wood
nor any other kindling in the vicinity. Frightened at what happened,
Moses fled but a divine voice spoke to him' (IX.27.21). After he met
with the Egyptian king, Moses told him that he had come 'because
the Lord of the universe had commanded him to liberate the Jews'
(IX.27.22). The divine voice which revealed itself to Moses appears
to be understood as 'the Lord of the universe'. Not amused by this
statement, the king imprisoned Moses, but during the night Moses
was miraculously freed from prison and gained access to the king,
who, interrupted in his sleep, 'ordered the name of the god who
had sent him.' As soon as Moses revealed this name to him, the
king fell down speechless. Having been resuscitated by Moses, the
king 'wrote the name on a tablet and sealed it securely, but one of
the priests who showed contempt for what was written on the tablet
died in a convulsion' (IX.27.23–26).

This extensive use of material from Artapanus by Alexander
Polyhistor is proof of pagan acquaintance with the narrative of the

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[14] Holladay 1983, vol. 1, 232 note 45.

revelation of God's name to Moses in first-century BC Rome. Much emphasis is now laid on the magical influence of this name.[15] Apart from Artapanus' report of this revelation, Alexander Polyhistor also knew the similar, though much briefer account in another Jewish author, Ezekiel the Tragedian, who is dealt with by Jacques van Ruiten is his contribution to this volume. Ezekiel, in his tragic drama *The Exodus*, also mentions the episode of the burning bush (frg. 8; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.29.7) and talks about 'the divine word' (θεῖος λόγος) which beams forth from this bush (frg. 9; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 9.29.8).[16] Yet, Ezekiel does not mention the revelation of the name, but, in accordance with the play's central topic, only God's order to Moses to tell the Egyptian king that he should allow Moses to lead the Jews forth from Egypt (frg. 9). Since both accounts of the burning bush became part of Alexander's ethnographic, encyclopaedic compilations, it is no exaggeration to assume that this story must have become widespread, dependable information in particular circles at Rome. This is particularly probable if one bears in mind that Alexander taught people in Rome such as Hyginus, who was in turn the teacher of Ovid and was appointed by Augustus librarian of the Palatine Library, which might, therefore, well have included copies of Alexander Polyhistor's works.

Nevertheless, in Rome scholarly visitors and residents will have held varying and conflicting views of Moses. We know from Josephus that in the first century BC, Apollonius Molon of Alabanda, in the province of Asia, was among those whom Josephus deemed to have espoused ignorant and ill-willed reflections on Moses and his law code (*Against Apion* 2.145). Apollonius lectured at Rhodes and visited Rome in the 80s BC, and taught Romans such as Cicero (Stern, No. 49).

It was also in Rome that the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus settled down and, after decades of work, completed his grand universal history around 30 BC. The *Library of History*, as this universal history is called, runs from mythological times to 60 BC. The first six books are devoted to the period prior to the Trojan War and include a description of Egypt with mention of Moses in book 1, the contents of which Diodorus drew from Hecataeus of Abdera.

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[15] Cf. Gager 1972, 142.

[16] Both fragments have also been preserved via Alexander Polyhistor. See Holladay 1989, 451 note 91 and 453 note 100.

Dealing with the first lawgivers in Egypt, Diodorus reports that, 'After the establishment of settled life in Egypt in early times (. . .), the first, they say, to persuade the multitudes to use written laws was Mneves (Menas).'[17] To convince the people, Mneves claimed that the laws had been given to him by the god Hermes, 'with the assurance that they would be the cause of great blessing,' and this device—Diodorus adds—was also used by the Greeks, who claimed to have received their laws from Zeus or Apollo, and by several other peoples, such as the Jews, among whom 'Moses referred his laws to the god who is invoked as Iao'. Whereas Alexander Polyhistor shows that the story of the revelation of God's name to Moses is known outside Jewish circles, Diodorus is the first testimony of Greek acquaintance with the actual name itself. Diodorus mentions this name in a context in which he discusses the alleged divine origins of human law. Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and others ascribed their laws to the gods, 'either because they believed that a conception which would help humanity was marvellous and wholly divine, or because they held that the common crowd would be more likely to obey the laws if their gaze were directed towards the majesty and power of those to whom their laws were ascribed' (Diodorus 1.94.1–2; Stern, No. 58).[18]

This passage from Diodorus is particularly relevant here, as it demonstrates that Greeks such as Diodorus were aware of the name of Moses' God, called 'Iao' in Greek. This is remarkable, as after the return from the Babylonian Exile in 539 BC, the Jews increasingly refrained from invoking and pronouncing the name of Yahweh.[19] The Aramaic papyri from the Jews at Elephantine show that 'Iao' is an original Jewish term.[20] It is also found in a Septuagint version

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[17] Pseudo-Justin Martyr (3rd–5th cent. AD), *Exhortation to the Greeks*, edn. Morel, p. 10Bff., where he draws extensively on the passage from Diodorus Siculus, mistakes the reference to Mneves for Moses, turning the latter into the first lawgiver of the Egyptians.

[18] This criticism of the divine origins of human law is also applied to Moses' law by Apion; see Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.25 (Stern, No. 165): 'Moses went up into the mountain called Sinai, which lies between Egypt and Arabia, remained in concealment there for forty days, and then descended and gave the Jews their laws'.

[19] See, e.g., Bickerman 1988, 262–6 at 262: 'Another marked change in the attitude of the new age to the ancient revelation was the progressive disuse of the proper name of the Deity, YHWH (disclosed to Moses in the burning bush), and the adoption of various circumlocutions to denote the God of Jerusalem. The change is postexilic'; and Rösel 2000.

[20] Stern 1974, vol. 1, 172; and Schäfer 1997, 232 note 128, with detailed references to Cowley 1923 and Kraeling 1953.

of a fragment of Leviticus among the Dead Sea Scrolls, *4Q120*, dat-
ing probably from the first century AD.[21] Given the increasing use
of 'Iao' in Graeco-Roman authors and in the Greek magical papyri,
as we shall see below, Peter Schäfer's observation that Iao as the
name of the Jewish God 'has gone out of fashion gradually on
"official" documents [of the Jews] and has been favourably adopted
by pagan writers and by literary genres (magical papyri, amulets,
etc.) which tend to be syncretistic' seems to be most apt.[22] From the
surviving evidence, this development first comes to light in Diodorus'
designation of Moses' God as Iao.

Moses is also referred to in other passages in Diodorus' universal
history. We have already discussed the passage from Hecataeus, pre-
served in Diodorus, in which Moses was hailed for his wisdom and
admired for his philosophical conceptions of God and aniconic form
of worship (Diodorus 40.3). In passing, Diodorus also mentions Moses
in his description of the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by
the Greek-Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who, ironically in
view of Moses' supposed institution of aniconic worship, finds there
'a marble statue of a heavily bearded man seated on an ass, with a
book in his hands,' which Antiochus supposes 'to be an image of
Moses, the founder of Jerusalem and organizer of the nation, the
man, moreover, who had ordained for the Jews their misanthropic
and lawless customs' (1.94; Stern, No. 63).

The fact that despite such anti-Jewish overtones, one would be
mistaken to lay too much emphasis on the anti-Semitic setting of
pagan references to Moses, thereby obscuring some telling passages
to the contrary, becomes clear again from Strabo, who studied in
first-century BC Rome, and made several visits to Rome on later
occasions. In his *Geography*, Strabo also discusses Judaea, whose inhab-
itants he regards as descendants of the Egyptians (16.2.34): 'Moses,
namely', Strabo continues, 'was one of the Egyptian priests (. . .), but
he went away from there to Judaea, since he was displeased with
the state of affairs there, and was accompanied by many people who

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[21] See *pap4QLXXLeviticusᵇ (4Q120)*, published in Skehan 1992 in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 9, frg. 20.4 (Lev 4:27), p. 174 and probably frg. 7.12 (Lev 3:12), pp. 170–1 (= Göttingen LXX Manuscript 802; edn. Wevers & Quast 1986, pp. 13, 58, 69). I owe this reference to my colleague Eibert Tigchelaar. See also Howard 1977 and Skehan 1980. For an occurrence of Iao, see also *PHeid 1359 Onomasticon of Hebrew Names*, third/fourth century AD: Io or Iao (edn. Deissmann 1905).

[22] Schäfer 1997, 232 note 128.

worshipped the Divine Being (τὸ θεῖον).' Similarly to Hecataeus and Diodorus, Strabo contrasts Moses' view on God with the animal worship of the Egyptians and the anthropomorphic representation of the gods among the Greeks: 'for, according to him, God is this one thing alone that encompasses us all (τὸ περιέχον ἡμᾶς ἅπαντας) and encompasses land and sea—the thing which we call heaven, or universe, or the nature of all that exists: ὃ καλοῦμεν οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν (16.2.35; Stern, No. 115).[23] It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that Strabo's interpretation of the Jewish God as 'the nature of all that exists,' ἡ τῶν ὄντων φύσις, is an allusion to the revelation of God's name to Moses as Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν (Exodus 3:14). This ontological meaning of the name of Yahweh in Greek sources is the topic of Myles Burnyeat's contribution to this volume.

By offering this ontological interpretation of the Jewish God, Strabo moves beyond Hecataeus. Already Hecataeus, as we have seen, equated the God of the Jews with the heavens. Talking about Moses, Hecataeus says that 'he had no images whatsoever of the gods made for them, being of the opinion that God is not in human form; rather the heavens that surround the earth are alone divine, and rule the universe' (Diodorus 40.3.4; Stern, No. 11; cf. Burnyeat, this vol., beginning of §4: 'material things must be held together and governed by some changeless incorporeal entity'). As Stern informs us, Hecataeus explains the aniconic Jewish worship of God in the same way as Herodotus commented on the Persians: 'The first nation known by the Greeks to have spurned idolatry were the Persians; see Herodotus, I, 131. Herodotus, who had some difficulty in defining an abstract deity, thought that the Persians worshipped the sky'[24] (see also Van den Berg, this vol., §2).

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[23] A similar stress on the one-ness of God, combined with respect for the Jewish criticism of idols, is found in Varro, Strabo's older contemporary in Rome. See Varro apud Augustine, *The City of God* 4.31: 'He [Varro] also says that, for more than 170 years, the Romans of old worshipped the gods without an image. "If this practice had remained down to the present day", he says, "the gods would have been worshipped with greater purity". In support of this opinion, he cites, among other things, the testimony of the Jewish nation (. . .). Hence, when he says that only those who believe God to be the governing soul of the world have perceived what He is; and when he deems that the rites of religion would have been observed more purely without images: who can fail to see how close he has come to the truth?' (transl. R.W. Dyson; Varro, frg. 18 edn. Cardauns).

[24] Stern 1974, vol. 1, 30: commentary on Diodorus 40.3.4.

Hecataeus' characterization of Jewish religion as worshipping the heavens is not only taken over by Strabo, but surfaces again in later authors such as Juvenal, at the beginning of the second century AD, and Celsus. In his fourteenth Satire, Juvenal depicts an instance of pagan reverence for the Sabbath. This devotion, in Juvenal's view, amounts to worshipping the heavens: 'Some who happen to have been dealt a father who reveres the Sabbath, worship nothing but the clouds, and the divinity of the heavens' (Juvenal 14.96–97; Stern, No. 301). Likewise, though only implicitly in his attack on the Christians, Celsus says: 'It is because certain Christians have mis-understood sayings of Plato that they boast of a God who is above the heavens and place Him higher than *the heaven in which the Jews believe*' (Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.19; Stern, No. 375; see also *Against Celsus* 5.41 and Van den Berg, this vol., §2). Perhaps, as Bickerman suggests, this way of equating the abstract Jewish God with the heavens is also reinforced by the frequent designation of God in the Septuagint as 'the God of Heaven' (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ).[25]

To return to Strabo, Strabo clearly shares this tradition, but it is interesting to see that he not only identifies the Jewish God with the heavens that surround the earth, as does Hecataeus, but also with the universe and, even more importantly, with 'the nature of all that exists (ἡ τῶν ὄντων φύσις)'. Strabo continues this passage by explain-ing the attraction of Moses' aniconic conception of God to 'not a few thoughtful men', whom Moses led away from Egypt to Jerusalem, and hailing Moses' establishment of an appropriate worship, ritual, and government. His descendants, however, are blamed for degen-erating into superstitious and tyrannical people (16.2.36–37; Stern, No. 115).

Explicit anti-Jewish remarks come to the fore in first-century AD authors such as Apion and Chaeremon. Both are Egyptian, and their anti-Jewish attitude cannot be divorced from the Jewish-Greek ten-sions in Alexandria, which increased when Rome annexed Egypt in 30 BC. In this, they continue the line developed by Lysimachus and Manetho in the fourth/third century BC. Apion, who was head of

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[25] Bickerman 1988, 263: 'translated into Greek (or Latin), this designation of the Lord was somewhat equivocal; "the God of Heaven" could seem to refer to the sky and therefore, to the cosmic deity of the philosophers. In fact, Greek savants perpetuated this interpretation of the God of Jerusalem; it still appears under the pen of Juvenal and even in Celsus' critiques of the Christian faith.'

the Alexandrian School, like Manetho regarded Moses as a native of Heliopolis, and, like Lysimachus and Manetho, considered the exodus from Egypt as a consequence of an outbreak of leprosy among the Jews (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.8–9; Stern, No. 164).[26] Apion, whose anti-Jewish views were addressed by Josephus in the work now known as *Against Apion*,[27] was also part of the delegation sent by the Greeks of Alexandria to Gaius Caligula in order to resolve the Greek-Jewish tensions.[28] The designation of Moses as the leader of a group of lepers also occurs in Chaeremon of Alexandria, who taught the young Nero, wrote on Egyptian history and religion, and himself had Stoic inclinations (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.288–290; Stern, No. 178).[29] It can hardly be a coincidence that the most anti-Jewish reports on Moses, those by Lysimachus, Manetho, Apion, and Chaeremon, and the depiction of Moses as having 'much dull-white leprosy on his body' by later authors such as Nicarchus (Stern, No. 248), Ptolemy Chennus (Stern, No. 331), and Helladius (Stern, No. 472) all emanate from Egypt. This is not to say that this view on the exodus of Jewish lepers from Egypt remained restricted to Egyptian circles. It is also voiced by authors such as Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 34–35, 1.1–2; Stern, No. 63), Pompeius Trogus at the turn of the Common Era (Iustinus, *Historiae Philippicae* 36.2.12; Stern, No. 137), Tacitus (*Histories* 5.3.1; Stern, No. 281) and, perhaps also by Herennius Philo of Byblos (Stern, No. 329; cf. No. 472). Nevertheless, the predominance of Egyptian writers among those expressing anti-Semitic views is significant.

A fascinating case in its own right is that of Herennius Philo of Byblos (c. AD 70–c. 160), who links the Jews and the name of their God with the history of the period before the Trojan War (*FGrH* 790, frg. 1; Stern, No. 323) in the following way.[30] Philo, who came from Byblos in Phoenicia, wrote a history of this area in Greek, and

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[26] Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.9–14.

[27] On the figure of Apion in Josephus' *Against Apion*, see Jones 2005.

[28] Apart from the references to Apion in Josephus' *Against Apion* 2.9–14 (Moses as a Heliopolitan), 2.15 (Moses' leadership during the exodus), 2.25 (Moses at Mount Sinai) and 2.28 (introduction of novel features into the story of Moses), Apion is also mentioned in connection with Moses in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* X.10.16 as a source for the dating of Moses and the Jewish exodus from Egypt.

[29] Cf. the article by Frede 1989 on Chaeremon; fragments edited by Van der Horst 1984.

[30] This fragment has been preserved in Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.9.20–21 via Porphyry.

claimed that he derived his material about the Jews from Sanchu-
niathon of Berytus, who is credited with having written 'the truest
history' of the Jews, and whose writings Philo purports to have trans-
lated into Greek.[31] Philo underlines the trustworthiness of Sanchu-
niathon's report on the Jews by stating that Sanchuniathon himself
had received the records from Hierombalus, 'the priest of the god
Ieuo', and had had his history approved of by Abibalus, king of
Berytus, and by 'the investigators of truth in his time'. It seems likely
to me that Hierombalus, who is otherwise unknown in Greek sources,
and is presented as the priest of the god Ieuo, a name equally unique
to this passage, was understood, either by Philo or by his source, as
a priest of the Jewish god Iao[32]—the name we already encountered
in Diodorus Siculus. For this reason Sanchuniathon's history of the
Jews would have been regarded by Philo as reliable, inasmuch as
Sanchuniathon was presented as having derived his information about
the Jews from a Jewish priest of Iao. As we shall see in due course,
Philo himself, in another fragment from his works, proves to be
familiar with Iao as the name of the Jewish God. This all adds up
to the reasonable assumption that Philo of Byblos associated the Jews
with the divine name Ieuo or Iao, and inferred that this name was
already in use before the Trojan War.

Not far from Byblos in Phoenicia, other references to Moses are
found in the surviving fragments of writings by the Platonist philoso-
pher Numenius of Apamea in Syria, a near-contemporary of Philo
of Byblos. Like Alexander Polyhistor before him, Numenius identifies
Moses with Musaeus (frg. 9; Stern, No. 365; see also Burnyeat, this
vol., §1 note 10). Whereas his fellow-Platonist Celsus 'rejects Moses
from the list of wise men', which comprises, among others, Musaeus
and Orpheus (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.16; Stern, No. 375; see also
Burnyeat, §1), Numenius shows a very different assessment of Moses,
and even poses the rhetorical question: 'What is Plato but Moses
speaking Attic?' (frg. 8; Stern, No. 363; see also Burnyeat, §§1–2).
As is clear from Myles Burnyeat's contribution to this volume,

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[31] Scholars agree that Sanchuniathon's writings do not antedate the Trojan War,
but are probably a product of the Hellenistic era. Cf. Goodman 1996; Attridge &
Oden 1981; and Baumgarten 1981, 51, 55, 57, 58–60.

[32] The name 'Ieuo' in this passage from Philo of Byblos (which has been preserved,
via Porphyry, in Eusebius' *Preparation for the Gospel*) is indeed changed into 'Iao' in
Theodoretus of Cyrrhus in Syria (*c*. AD 393–466), *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 2.44.

Numenius' high esteem for Moses has to do with the latter's onto-
logical appellation for God as 'I am that I am' (Exodus 3:14).[33]
Numenius himself is also reported to have quoted Moses (frg. 1c),
and to have told a story about Moses' confrontation with the Egyptian
magicians Jannes and Jambres (frg. 10; cf. Exodus 7:11; cf. Burnyeat,
§2). Indeed, among his fragments there is evidence of Numenius'
acquaintance with the creation account of Genesis (frg. 30; Stern,
No. 365).[34]

    This outline of the earliest Greek evidence concerning Moses may
now suffice, and, apart from some occasional remarks, I will not go
into the reception of Moses in the later Greek writers Galenus, Celsus
(who is dealt with by Robbert van den Berg in this volume), Porphyry,
and Julianus, and in the Greek magical papyri. These later authors
are left out from further systematic consideration, as it has become
sufficiently clear that the reception of Moses in Greek literature up
to Numenius was varied, and reactions towards him certainly not
predominantly hostile. There are even traces of acquaintance with
the name of the Jewish God in Alexander Polyhistor, Diodorus
Siculus, Strabo, Philo of Byblos, and Numenius. I shall add some
other evidence below, but shall first discuss an interesting possibility
that Moses was not only identified with Musaeus (as Alexander
Polyhistor and Numenius have it), but also, elsewhere, with the
Phoenician prophet and natural philosopher Mochos of Sidon, who
allegedly lived before the Trojan War.

2. MOCHOS IN GREEK WRITINGS:
PYTHAGORAS, THE DESCENDANTS OF MOCHOS, AND THE JEWS

The reason to assume that Moses was identified with Mochos of
Sidon lies in the fact that the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus
(c. AD 235–c. 325), in his book *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, sketches
Mochos in a way which is reminiscent of Moses. As John Dillon
puts it, 'this Mochos (. . .) sounds suspiciously like a garbled form of

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[33] Cf. also Stern 1980, vol. 2, 209: 'It has been suggested that Numenius had in
mind the way in which Plato, introducing the Artificer, used the term τὸ ὂν ἀεί
which Numenius combines with the ὁ ὤν of the Septuagint', with reference to
Merlan 1967, 100.
[34] On this fragment, see Van den Berg 2005.

Moses himself.'[35] According to Iamblichus, the philosopher Pythagoras, sent by his teacher Thales from Miletus to the Egyptian priests for further studies, first sailed to Sidon in Phoenicia (2.11–3.13). There,

> he joined the descendants of Mochus, the prophet and natural philosopher, and other Phoenician hierophants, and was initiated into all sacred rites of the mysteries celebrated especially in Byblos and in Tyre, and in many parts of Syria. (. . .) Having learned besides that those which existed there (in Syria) were somehow derived and descended from the sacred rites in Egypt, he hoped thus to participate in the more noble, more divine and pure rites of Egypt. Filled with admiration for them, then, in accord with instructions from his teacher Thales, he was transported without delay by some Egyptian seamen who had most opportunely anchored at the shore under Carmel, the Phoenician mountain where Pythagoras spent a good deal of time alone in sacred pursuits. (. . .) And they (the seamen) remembered how, when they first anchored, he was seen coming from the top-most crest of Carmel; for they believed it the holiest of mountains, and not accessible to the common multitude (3.14; transl. J. Dillon & J. Hershbell).[36]

The setting of this passage in Iamblichus gives the figure of Mochos a particularly Jewish aura. (1) It is suggested that the descendants of Mochos do not just live in Phoenician Byblos and Tyre but, more broadly, in Syria, which includes Syria Palestina. (2) Moreover, even the term 'Phoenician' seems to have been a rather general reference which overlaps to some extent with 'Hebrew' and 'Jewish'. This is apparent from a passage in Philo of Byblos, which will be discussed later, in which Philo regards the divine name Iao, which we have already encountered in Diodorus Siculus as a designation of the *Jewish* God, as *Phoenician* (*FGrH* 790 frg. 7). This suggests that 'Phoenician' and 'Hebrew' are somehow interchangeable. (3) The rites which the descendants of Mochos celebrate in Syria are said to derive from Egypt. This might point to the Egyptian provenance of Moses and suggest that Mochos and Moses are considered identical. In that case, the mention of rites derived from Egypt and now common among Mochos' descendants in Syria might presuppose the event of the exodus of Moses and his descendants from Egypt to Syria

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[35] Dillon 1996, 143.
[36] Text quoted in Stern 1980, vol. 2, 443–444, but not as a separate number. Stern refers briefly to Mochos in Stern 1974, vol. 1, 129, mentioning Iamblichus merely in passing.

Palestina.[37] (4) Although Mount Carmel, mentioned in Iamblichus as the place of Pythagoras' regular retreat, is known in Antiquity as the holy mountain of Zeus (Scylax, *Periplus Scylacis* 104; 5th/4th cent. BC) and is also noted for a cult and oracle consulted by Vespasian (Tacitus, *Histories* 2.78.3 = Stern, No. 278; Suetonius, *Vespasian* 5.6 = Stern, No. 313), it also has a strong Jewish association inasmuch as it is linked with the prophet Elijah (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 18:19–20) in Jewish tradition. Like Pythagoras in Iamblichus, Elijah is said to have climbed to the crest of Carmel (1 Kings [= 3 Kings LXX] 18:42).

All these features seem to warrant Dillon's surmise that Mochos in this passage 'does sound suspiciously like a garbled form of Moses himself'.[38] If Mochos here is indeed to be identified with Moses, Iamblichus' picture of Pythagoras studying with the descendants of Mochos/Moses seems also to be congruent with views entertained by the third-century BC Greek biographer Hermippus of Smyrna, who had closely linked Pythagoras and the Jews (Stern, Nos 25 & 26; see also Burnyeat, this vol., §1 note 6). His views have been preserved in Josephus and Origen. According to Josephus, 'Hermippus (. . .), in the first book of his work on Pythagoras, (. . .) states that the philosopher (Pythagoras) (. . .) was imitating and appropriating the doctrines of Jews and Thracians' (*Against Apion* 1.163–165; cf. 1.14, 1.162 and 2.168, and Aristobulus, frgs. 3 and 4).[39] Origen, in a similar vein, says that 'Hermippus in his first book on "Lawgivers" related that Pythagoras brought his philosophy to the Greeks from the Jews' (1.15). Both reports on Hermippus talk about Pythagoras' contact with the Jews and thereby seem to confirm the likelihood that Iamblichus, in his story of Pythagoras' visit to Syria and Mount Carmel, blended Mochos and Moses.

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[37] The Jewish emigration from Egypt to 'Syria Palestina' is also mentioned by the Stoic geographer Polemon of Ilium (fl. *c.* 190 BC); see Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 10.10.15: 'a part of the Egyptian army was expelled from Egypt and established itself in the country called Syria-Palaestina not far from Arabia' (Stern, No. 29).

[38] Dillon 1996, 143. Cf. also, more cautiously, Dillon & Hershbell 1991, 41: 'The connection of "Mochus" with Moses is tenuous.'

[39] The Thracians seem to be mentioned in one breath with the Jews, because the Thracians 'worshipped the god Sabazius, who was identified with the Jewish God' (Stern 1974, vol. 1, 96). On Sabazius and his identification with the Jewish God, see §4 below.

The close link between Pythagoras and the Jews is also established in other sources. According to Antonius Diogenes, an early imperial Greek writer of an encyclopaedic novel, 'Pythagoras came also to the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Chaldaeans and the Hebrews, from whom he learnt the exact knowledge of dreams' (Diogenes apud Porphyry, *The Life of Pythagoras* 11; Stern, Nos. 250 & 456a). In line with this picture of Pythagoras' interest in Judaism, there appear to be allusions to the Septuagint in Pythagorean writers such as Ocellus Lucanus (Stern, No. 40) and Pseudo-Ecphantus (Stern, No. 564). Conversely, a Jew such as Josephus could also compare a particular strand of Judaism, that of the Essenes, with Pythagoreanism: Essenes constitute 'a group which follows a way of life taught to the Greeks by Pythagoras' (*Jewish Antiquities* 15.371).[40] These cross-references between Pythagoreans and Jews make it probable that Iamblichus, in his account of Pythagoras' visit to the descendants of Mochos in Syria, in fact identified Mochos with Moses. Just as Alexander Polyhistor and Numenius saw no objection in identifying Moses with Musaeus, Iamblichus felt no hesitation in blending the figures of Moses and Mochos of Sidon.

That is not to say that this identification of Mochos with Moses occurred frequently. Let me make it clear: Jewish and Christian sources which mention Mochos resist such identification, nor do other pagan sources on Mochos reflect Jewish associations with this Phoenician sage. Josephus refers to Mochos as one of the number of Greek and barbarian historians of antiquity who provide external verification for the trustworthiness of Moses' account on the longevity of the patriarchs, thereby implying that Mochos and Moses are not one and the same (*Jew. Ant.* 1.107). The second-century AD Christian philosopher Tatian, in his proof of the early date of Moses, before even the foundation of Troy, also refers to Mochos, who is said to confirm in his Phoenician history, albeit in a indirect way, Moses' antiquity (*Oration to the Greeks* 36–37).[41] Tatian too excludes an identification of Mochos with Moses.

Iamblichus' judaizing portrait of Pythagoras, in which Mochos and Moses are blended, perhaps becomes somewhat more understandable if one takes into consideration the fact that, in Greek sources,

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[40] For traces of Pythagorean thought in Judaism, Stern refers to Lévy 1927, 211ff. and Walter 1964, 166ff. (Stern 1984, vol. 3, 33–34).

[41] Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 10.11.10–11 is dependent on Tatian.

Mochos was not only regarded as a writer on Phoenician history,[42] but was also credited with particular views on creation. According to the Stoic philosopher Posidonius (*c.* 135–*c.* 51 BC), as reports in Strabo and Sextus Empiricus have it, 'the ancient dogma about atoms originated with Mochos, a Sidonian, born before Trojan times' (Strabo, *Geography* 15.2.24–25; Edelstein—Kidd, frg. 285). Mochos regarded atomic bodies to be the primary and most fundamental elements of the cosmos (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Physicists* I.359–363 [= *Against the Mathematicians/Professors* IX.359–363]). Such views on Mochos will have lent weight to claims that the study of philosophy had its beginning among the barbarians, as Diogenes Laertius asserts in the opening of his compendium on the lives and doctrines of the ancient philosophers; he mentions Mochos as an example (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.1).

Mochos' purported views on the physical constituents of creation may have facilitated Iamblichus' merging of Mochos with Moses. Iamblichus calls Mochos not only 'prophet', but also 'natural philosopher' (φυσιολόγος). At the same time, Moses was known among Greeks for his creation account, as Numenius demonstrates (frg. 30), and the Jewish god was regarded by the Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry as the creator of all things (Stern, No. 452). The Jewish god was also called the 'god of the four elements', or the demiurge by the schools of Numenius' fellow-Neoplatonists Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus (Stern, Nos. 467, 544 & 545). Because of his supposed views about the demiurge and creation, Moses was even preferred by Galen to Epicurus (Galen, *De usu partium* 11.14; Stern, No. 376).[43] The fact that Iamblichus himself seems to have characterized the Jewish god as 'the god of the four elements', as a creator god, might have expedited the coalescence of Mochos, as natural philosopher, and Moses, as author of a creation account.

However, from the description of Mochos' atomistic view in ancient sources outside Iamblichus, it is clear that not all ancient authorities subscribed to Iamblichus' view that Mochos and Moses were one and the same. This becomes even clearer if Damascius' late-antique description of Mochos' cosmogonic mythology is taken into account (*De principiis* 3.3.2; 5th/6th cent. AD). Nevertheless, the evidence from

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[42] See also Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 3.126A, where Sanchuniathon and Mochos are mentioned together as the historians of Phoenicia.

[43] On Galen and Moses' creation account, see Tieleman 2005.

Iamblichus on Pythagoras' period of study among the descendants
of Mochos/Moses, combined with that of Hermippus and Antonius
Diogenes on the close connection between Pythagoras and the Jews,
shows that a common identity between Mochos and Moses could
be established by some, just as Alexander Polyhistor and Numenius
did not disapprove of identifying Moses and Musaeus.

3. Iao in Pagan Greek Writings

Having analysed the varied reception which Moses received from
pagan Greek authors, I shall now focus on the question of whether
these sources show any awareness of the name of Moses' God. We
have already come across three relevant instances. (1) First, in first-
century BC Rome Alexander Polyhistor included information from
Artapanus in his encyclopaedic ethnography, regarded Moses as iden-
tical with Musaeus, and narrated at some length the story of God's
revelation to Moses. The account describes the powerful impact of
the name of the Lord of the universe on the Egyptian king and his
entourage as soon as this name was uttered or read from a tablet.
(2) Secondly, Diodorus Siculus, a near-contemporary of Alexander
Polyhistor, designates the name of Moses' God as Iao, and consid-
ers Moses to have ascribed his self-made laws to his God, in accor-
dance with the general custom among ancient peoples. (3) Thirdly,
Strabo interprets the Jewish God as 'the nature of all that exists',
thereby probably alluding to the ontological meaning of his name.
(4) Fourthly, like Diodorus Siculus, Philo of Byblos also mentions the
name 'Iao', this time in the form of Ieuo, whose priest Hierombolus
is named as the source of Sanchuniathon's history of the Jews,
allegedly written before the Trojan War. (5) And fifthly, Numenius
shows himself aware of the ontological meaning of Yahweh's name.

Other passages in pagan Greek writers which refer to the name
of Moses' God can be added to the list. (6) The first-century medical
author Dioscorides mentions Iao's name in a prayer in a work by
the name of *On the Peony (Περὶ παιωνίας)*. Dioscorides, who studied
under Areius of Tarsus, was known mainly for his extensive *De materia
medica*, in which he lists the effects of drugs employed in medicine
and alludes to products of Judaea (Stern, Nos. 179–184). In this con-
text, he gives the characteristics of herbs, minerals, and animal prod-
ucts. Although *De materia medica* is characterized as 'relatively free of

supernatural elements, reflecting keen, critical observation of how drugs react,'[44] it is clear that Dioscorides did not entirely reject the supernatural; in the passage in question in *On the Peony* (not mentioned in Stern), Dioscorides implores God as follows: 'Wherever I am in the cosmos, which is subject to me, be thou with me, lord God Iao, Iao' (edn. Zuretti 1934, 166: ὅπου ἄν εἰμι ἐν κόσμῳ ὅς ἐστιν ὑπήκοός μοι, ἔστω μετ' ἐμοῦ, κύριε Θεὲ Ἰάω Ἰάω). This passage shows the degree to which Iao's name was known among the Greeks, and was also invoked by them. This also happens frequently in (7) the Greek magical papyri in late antiquity.[45]

Another occurrence of Iao's name is found in (8) the remaining fragments of Varro, the great Roman scholar from the first-century BC. In a fragment which probably formed part of his *On Human and Divine Matters of Antiquities*, in which he studies the human construction of the divine, Varro says 'that among the Chaldaeans, in their mysteries, he (i.e. the God of the Jews) is called "Iao"' (Varro, edn. B. Cardauns, frg. 17; Stern, No. 75). This passage from Varro, preserved in the sixth-century Lydus from Constantinople, is directly followed in Lydus by a reference to (9) Philo of Byblos, according to whom—Lydus says—'Iao, in the Phoenician tongue, refers to the noetic light' (Lydus, *De mensibus* 4.53 = *FGrH* 790, frg. 7; Stern, No. 324). This addition shows that Philo of Byblos indeed appears to have known the Jewish God not only as 'Ieuo' (as we have seen above; Stern, No. 323), but also as 'Iao'. The actual fragment from Varro serves to underscore the fact that in the first century BC the

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[44] Riddle 1996, 483–4.

[45] See the many occurrences in Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 1–8, 10, 12–13, 15, 19a, 22ab, 28b, 35–36, 61, 67, 71, 78. See also the *Anthologiae Graecae Appendix: Oracula*, epigram 135 (edn. Cougny 1890), and the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963). On the Jewish elements in the magical papyri, see Smith 1996. It is important to notice Gager's observation in this respect: 'the distinction between Jewish and pagan in many cases presents a false alternative. The magical papyri and amulets reveal such a complex interpenetration of different religious vocabularies and ideas that traditional distinctions break down under the overwhelming weight of syncretism. From the perspective of descriptive analysis it is often more accurate to speak of the Jewish or Greek contribution to a syncretistic document than to limit one's assessment of the document as a whole to Jewish or Greek. (. . .) certain individual terms like Iao, Adonai, Sabaoth, and Moses were so embedded in the vocabulary of syncretistic magic that they became permanent elements of the environment and thus were no longer strictly Jewish' (Gager 1972, 136).

information about the name of the Jewish God found its way into various encyclopaedic works: not only those by Alexander Polyhistor and Diodorus Siculus as discussed above, but also Varro himself.

Later in pagan sources, the name Iao is also attested in (10) the fifth-century AD author Macrobius (1.18.19), who claims to have derived this name from the third-century AD history of Romano-Etruscan religion by Cornelius Labeo (Stern, No. 445). In his work *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*, Cornelius Labeo discusses a remarkable oracle that called Iao the highest God and characterized him, in winter, as Hades, in spring as Zeus, in summer as Helios, and in autumn as the graceful Iao.[46] This is another instance of the general development in which the name Iao, while barely featuring in Jewish texts, becomes more and more widespread in non-Jewish texts, whether it be pagan accounts of Judaism, pagan theological texts based on theocrasy (such as the Clarian oracle in Cornelius Labeo), Gnostic Christian texts, Orthodox Christian writings, or magical papyri.[47]

From all these instances it becomes clear that the name Iao was fairly well-known in the Graeco-Roman world. Sometimes Iao was also explicitly coupled with the figure of Moses, as we can see from Alexander Polyhistor and Diodorus Siculus. For this reason Celsus even regards Moses as the actual name-giver of the Jewish God. Moses, he says, 'acquired a name for divine power': ὄνομα δαιμόνιον ἔσχε Μωϋσῆς (Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.21; Stern, No. 375). The high degree to which Moses was known is underlined by the fact that the Roman rhetorician Quintilian in *The Orator's Education*, written in the second half of the first century AD, can refer to Moses simply

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[46] On this text, see Stern 1980, vol. 2, 411–412; and Schäfer 1997, 52–53, with notes 124–130 on p. 232.

[47] For Gnostic Christian writers, see (the references in) Irenaeus, Origen, the *Testamentum Salomonis*, and Epiphanius. Orthodox Christian writers include Eusebius, Didymus Caecus, Basilius Caesariensis, Cyrillus Alexandrinus, Theodoretus, Joannes Chrysostomus, and Hesychius. Stern also considers the possibility that the name Iao influenced the emergence of the fable that the Jews worshipped a golden ass's head in their sanctuary. This fable comes to the fore in Mnaseas of Patara (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.114; Stern, No. 28), Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 34–35, 1.3: 'a marble statue of a heavily bearded man seated on an ass, with a book in his hands'; Stern, No. 63), Apion (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.80; Stern, No. 170), and Damocritus (Stern, No. 247). According to Stern, 'the fact that the name Iao, known also to pagan circles as the name of the God of the Jews, is similar in sound to the Egyptian word for ass probably contributed something to the emergence of the fable' (Stern 1974, vol. 1, 98).

as 'the founder of the Jewish superstition', without specifying his name, apparently assuming that this name would already be known to his public (3.7.21; Stern, No. 230). The same assumption is also made by Pseudo-Longinus, who refers to 'the lawgiver of the Jews', without mentioning him by name (*On the Sublime* 9.9; Stern, No. 148).[48]

That Moses was a well-known figure in pagan circles is an important observation which is, for instance, not always sufficiently taken into account in New Testament studies. It means, for example, that when Paul speaks about Moses in his *Letter to the Romans*, his predominantly pagan-Christian readership at the time[49] will have been familiar with Moses not only through the Roman churches, but already in their pagan past. As pagans too they could have entertained an interest in Moses. As we have seen, particularly in Rome they could have come across Moses' name in encyclopaedic works such as those by Alexander Polyhistor, Diodorus Siculus, and Varro. The same applies to Paul's Corinthian epistles, the only other place in his surviving works where he mentions Moses by name. This correspondence was also mainly addressed to a Christian public of pagan origin. The many references to Moses and/or the Jewish God in pagan literature show that knowledge about this topic, if limited, was not restricted to Jewish circles.

Nevertheless, although Moses was such a well-known figure that authors such as Quintilian and Pseudo-Longinus could presuppose their readers to be familiar with him, knowledge of the actual identity of Moses' God will have had its limitations. The most important

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[48] Cf. Feldman 1993, chap. 8.1, 233–42: 'The Portrayal of Moses by Pagan Writers', esp. 240: 'When Quintilian (3.7.21), at the end of the first century, refers to "the founder of the Jewish superstition," he, like Pseudo-Longinus, does not deem it necessary to name him, because Moses was apparently well-known.'

[49] Paul's Roman public was predominantly of pagan background, since the Jews, including the Christian Jews, had been expelled from Rome by Claudius in AD 49 (Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4; Stern, No. 307); only after the death of Claudius in AD 54 were they able to return to Rome, but when Paul wrote his letter, in AD 56, the predominant ethnic identity of the Christian communities of Rome to which he wrote must still have been pagan rather than Jewish. Moses is mentioned in *Rom* 5.14, 9.15, 10.5, 10.19, and in the Corinthian epistles in *1 Cor* 9.9, 10.2 and *2 Cor* 3.7, 13, 15. In *2 Tim* 3.8 Moses is mentioned together with the two Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres, a tradition which also occurs in Graeco-Roman writers such as Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 30.11; Stern, No. 221: Moses, Jannes, and Lotapes), Apuleius (*Apology* 90; Stern, No. 361: Iohannes [= Jannes], Moses, and others), and Numenius (frgs. 9, 1c, 10a; Stern, Nos. 365–366: Jannes, Jambres and Moses/Musaeus).

reason for this seems to be the declining willingness of Jews to pro-
nounce and invoke the name of Yahweh. It is very revealing to
examine pagan reflections on the lack of readily available informa-
tion about the Jewish God's identity. First of all, this ignorance was
used to cast Judaism into disrepute, by highlighting its secretive,
arcane character. According to Juvenal, those pagans who revere the
Jewish Sabbath have contempt for the laws of Rome, but 'learn and
practise and revere the Jewish law, and all that Moses handed down
in his secret tome (*arcano volumine*), forbidding them to point out the
way to anyone not worshipping by the same rites' (*Satires* 14.96–103;
Stern, No. 301). As Stern observes, 'In labelling the Book of Moses
a "secret" work, Juvenal is casting on Judaism the disrepute that
attached to esoteric religious societies, while pointing out the danger
inherent in its exercise'.[50] In this way, by implicitly comparing Judaism
with mystery religions, Juvenal was able to make sense of the lack
of knowledge about the Jewish religion, including, we may assume,
the name of the god worshipped.

Secondly, a different, more sophisticated strategy used by pagan
authors to account for their ignorance regarding the name of the
Jewish god involves the concept of the anonymous and unknown
God. The first to stress the anonymity of the Jewish God in the evi-
dence still extant is Livy. His view on these matters has only come
down to us in reports by later writers, but these show that, accord-
ing to Livy, the Jews 'do not state to which deity the temple at
Jerusalem pertains' (Stern, No. 133: *Hierosolimis fanum cuius deorum sit
non nominant*), so that 'the god worshipped there is unknown (ἄγν-
ωστος)' (Stern, No. 134). Interestingly, Livy virtually explicitly says
that pagan ignorance of the identity of the Jewish God is due to the
reluctance of the Jews themselves to state which deity they worship.

The first-century AD author Lucan is probably dependent on Livy,
when he states (from the perspective of Pompey) in *The Civil War
(Pharsalia)*: 'My standards overawe Cappadocia, and Judaea given
over to the worship of an unknown god' (*incertus deus*; 2.592–593;
Stern, No. 191). Or, as Lucan is paraphrased in Lydus: 'In confor-
mity with Livy Lucan says that the temple of Jerusalem belongs to
an uncertain god ('Ο Λούκανος ἀδήλου θεοῦ τὸν ἐν 'Ιεροσολύμοις
ναὸν εἶναι λέγει)' (Stern, No. 367). The fact that the Jewish God is

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[50] Stern 1980, vol. 2, 107: commentary on *Satires* 14.102.

called an 'incertus deus' (ἄδηλος θεός) underlines, as Stern puts it, that 'there was no specific name for him in post-biblical times'.[51]

In a similar way, the fourth-century AD authors of the *Historia Augusta* refer to the Jewish God as an 'incertum numen', an uncertain divinity. The context is a discussion about the maximum of man's longevity:

> the most learned of the astrologers hold that 120 years have been allotted to man for living and assert that no one has ever been granted a longer span; they even tell us that Moses alone, the friend of God, as he is called in the books of the Jews, lived for 125 years, and that when he complained that he was dying in his prime, he received from an unknown god (*ab incerto numine*), so they say, the reply that no one should ever live longer (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae: Divus Claudius* 2.4; Stern, No. 526).

Livy, Lucan and the authors of the *Historia Augusta* talk about the Jewish God as an unknown, uncertain god. In Dio Cassius, this is cast in terms of the philosophical consideration that God is even unnameable (cf. Geljon, this vol., §1 on Philo, and at the end of §2 on Gregory of Nyssa). According to Dio Cassius, the Jews do not have a statue of their god in the temple of Jerusalem, but believe him to be 'unnameable and invisible': ἄρρητον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀειδῆ αὐτὸν νομίζοντες εἶναι (*Roman History* 37.17.2; Stern, No. 406). It is probably this point that the sixth-century AD scholiast Lactantius Placidus wishes to emphasize, in his discussion of the nature of the Highest God. To support his view that the name of the Highest God cannot be known, he refers, inter alia, to the authority of 'Moses, the priest of the Highest God' (Stern, No. 553). In short, all these authors show that Graeco-Roman authors could interpret their lack of knowledge about the name of the Jewish God in terms of the well-established concept of the uncertain, unknown, unnameable God.[52]

Authors who did have knowledge about the name of the God of the Jews demonstrate, as we have seen, that this name was applied

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[51] Stern 1974, vol. 1, 439. Stern also points out that the 'concept of *di incerti* is found already in Varro's terminology, where he used it for those gods of whom he had no clear knowledge (. . .). Varro did not, however, include the Jewish God among the *incerti*.' Indeed, as we have seen above, Varro calls him 'Iao' (Varro, frg. 17 edn. Cardauns; Stern, No. 75).

[52] On the concept of the unknown God, which is also applied in Acts 17:23, see Norden 1913; Gärtner 1955, chap. 9, 242–247; Des Places 1959; Wycherley 1968; Van der Horst 1988 and 1989; Henrichs 1994; and Carabine 1995.

in magic (see Alexander Polyhistor on the Name's magical influence and, explicitly, the Greek magical papyri),[53] prayers (Dioscorides), 'mysteries' (Varro: 'among the Chaldaeans, in their mysteries'), and oracles (Cornelius Labeo). The link between the name 'Iao' and magic seems to be an instance of the much wider association of Jews with magical practices in Antiquity. According to Pliny the Elder, there is a 'branch of magic, derived from Moses, Jannes, Lotapes and the Jews' (*Natural History* 30.11; Stern, No. 221; cf. Burnyeat, this vol., §2 note 20), and Apuleius mentions Moses by name among other prominent magicians (*Apology* 90; Stern, No. 361). Likewise, Celsus points out that the Jews 'are addicted to sorcery, of which Moses was their teacher' (Celsus apud Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.26 and cf. 5.41; Stern, No. 375), Lucian of Samosata talks about foolish people who 'fall for the spells of Jews' (*Tragodopodagra* 173; Stern, No. 374), and Damascius narrates the story of the wife of the Neoplatonist philosopher Hierocles, from whom a bad spirit was expelled by the invocation of 'the rays of the sun and the God of the Hebrews' (Stern, No. 547; cf. also Van den Berg, this vol., §§3–5 on Origen and the Neoplatonists on the power of divine names in magical spells). This kind of acknowledgement of the power which the Jewish God exerts over spirits seems also to be reflected in Porphyry's statement about the 'one true God, the creator and the king prior to all things, before whom tremble heaven and earth and the sea and the hidden places beneath, and the very divinities shudder; their law is the Father whom the holy Hebrews greatly honour' (Porphyry apud Augustine, *The City of God* 19.23; Stern, No. 451). As Augustine, who preserves this passage, remarks: 'In this oracle of his own god Apollo, Porphyry cites the God of the Hebrews as being so great that the very divinities shudder before him'. In all likelihood, this prominence of the Jewish God in magical applications, prayers, mysteries, and oracles has chiefly to do with the importance attributed to his name.

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[53] Cf. Feldman 1993, chap. 8.4, 285–7: 'Moses the Magician', esp. 287: 'In particular, it is Moses' alleged knowledge of the Divine Name (*Papyri Magicae Graecae* 5.108–18) and of the Divine mysteries which made him so important. Thus, knowledge of the Divine name was thought to make possible the performance of miracles'.

4. Sabaoth in Pagan Greek Writings

In Hebrew Jewish writings, as well as 'Yahweh', the God of the Jews was also often called 'Yahweh Sabaoth' in full. Although this name never occurs in pagan writings in its full, composite form as 'Iao Sabaoth', 'Sabaoth' does indeed occur by itself on several occasions. An examination of these passages will conclude our investigation into Greek familiarity with the revelation of God's name to Moses.

The first surviving evidence seems to be contained in the passage from Varro and Philo of Byblos in the sixth-century AD author Lydus, which has already been discussed (Stern, Nos 75 & 324). Lydus not only supplements his fragment from Varro on Iao with the explanatory remark that Philo of Byblos regards 'Iao' as a Phoenician name referring to the noetic light.[54] He also adds that Iao 'is also often called Sabaoth,' which stands for 'he who is above the seven celestial spheres, i.e. the creator': καὶ Σαβαὼθ δὲ πολλαχοῦ λέγεται, οἷον ὁ ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἑπτὰ πόλους, τουτέστιν ὁ δημιουργός (*FGrH* 790, frg. 7).

A very striking case, further, is offered by Plutarch in a discussion, in his *Table-Talk*, on the question: 'Who is the God of the Jews?' In this discussion, one proponent, the Athenian Moeragenes, argues that Dionysus and the God of the Jews have much in common, are in fact even identical, as is apparent when their rites and festivals are subjected to phenomenological comparison. Their similarities, Plutarch's proponent argues, relate also to the Jewish Sabbath: 'Even the feast of the Sabbath is not completely unrelated to Dionysus' (*Table Talk* IV.6, 671C–672C; Stern, No. 258). This identification between the Jewish God and Dionysus (or Liber Pater, the Italian god of fertility and wine, commonly identified with Dionysus) is also made in Tacitus (*Histories* 5.5; Stern, No. 281), and in Cornelius Labeo: 'the explanation of the deity and the name by which Iao is denoted Liber Pater and the sun [is] expounded by Cornelius Labeo in a book entitled *On the Oracle of Apollo of Claros*' (Cornelius Labeo apud Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.18.18, 21; Stern, No. 445).

The logic which underlies this identification of the Jewish God with Dionysus is apparently as follows, as Herbert Hoffleit explains:

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[54] On this Platonist concept of the true, noetic light, see Van Kooten 2005a, 151–62, esp. 156–7 on the passage in Lydus under consideration.

> When the Hebrews spoke of *Sabaoth* (...) they would seem to a Greek
> to be referring to *Sabazios* or *Sabos*, who was identified with Dionysus.
> The Romans in 139 BC put themselves on record officially as guilty
> of the same confusion by expelling the Jews for allegedly introducing
> Sabazios to Rome.[55]

The later observation is based on Valerius Maximus, according to
whom praetor Cnaeus Cornelius Hispalus, who had 'ordered the
astrologers by an edict to leave Rome and Italy', also 'compelled
the Jews, who attempted to infect the Roman customs with the cult
of Jupiter Sabazius, to return to their homes' (*Memorable Deeds and
Sayings* 1.3.3; Stern, No. 147b).[56] Stern summarizes this explanation
of the interchangeability of Sabaoth and Sabazios as follows: 'the
similarity of the name Sabazius to that of the Jewish Sabaoth (...)
induced an identification with the Jewish God'. Yet he also men-
tions the possibility of explaining 'the connection between the Jewish
God and Sabazius by the conception of Sabazius as the God of the
Sabbath'.[57] In any case, in Greek sources, not only could Moses be
identified with Musaeus and Mochos, Yahweh himself was thought
to share a common identity with Jupiter Sabazius and Dionysus.

That this is possible from the Greek perspective is confirmed by
passages from Varro and Celsus. Varro, as Augustine reports, 'thought
the God of the Jews to be the same as Jupiter, thinking that it makes
no difference by which name he is called (*nihil interesse censens, quo
nomine nuncupetur*), so long as the same thing is understood' (Varro
apud Augustine, *On the Agreement of the Evangelists* 1.22.30; Stern, No.
72b). According to Celsus, 'The Goatherds and shepherds (the Jews,
that is) thought that there was one God called the Most High, or
Adonai, or the Heavenly One, or Sabaoth.' In Celsus' view, how-
ever, 'it makes no difference whether one calls the supreme God by
the name used among the Greeks, or by that, for example, used
among the Indians, or by that among the Egyptians' (Celsus apud
Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.24; Stern, No. 375). Or as Origen reports
Celsus' view elsewhere: 'it makes no difference whether we call Zeus
the Most High, or Zen, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Amoun like the
Egyptians, or Papaeus like the Scythians' (5.41; Stern, No. 375).

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[55] Hoffleit 1969, 364–5 note *a*.
[56] See also Williams 1998, 98 (transl.) and 192 note 61 (comments), with reference
to Lane 1979.
[57] Stern 1974, vol. 1, 359.

Origen's reaction and the background to Celsus' view is the topic of Robbert van den Berg's paper in this volume. It will suffice here to underline that identifications between Yahweh Sabaoth and Dionysus were considered possible on the general principle that, in the final instance, all (major) gods bear one and the same identity.[58] For the same reason, pagan Greeks also made abundant use of the names Iao, Sabaoth, and Adonai, as is shown by the Greek magical papyri.[59]

5. Conclusions

This paper has focused on the Graeco-Roman knowledge of Moses and the name of his God, Iao, Sabaoth, or Adonai. These names are specifically Jewish designations for God, yet they were apparently known to, and even taken over by Greeks.[60] Moses and the name of his God did not remain hidden in the Greek world. In pagan sources, this disclosure did not occur exclusively, or even predominantly, in an anti-Semitic context. The entire reception of Moses and the name of his God was greatly varied. Graeco-Roman authors were vague and inconsistent in such matters; they had no need for consistency. Apart from negative interpretations in primarily Egyptian sources, and ample applications in magic, Moses and his God also received a remarkably positive reception in authors who stressed

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[58] On the various ways in which Iao was incorporated into the pagan Graeco-Roman pantheon, see also Bohak 2000, 4–11.

[59] For 'Sabaoth', see Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 2–10, 12–13, 13a, 15–16, 18a, 21, 22ab, 28ab, 32a, 35–36, 42–43, 47, 59, 67. Cf. also Zosimus of Panoplis (fl. *c*. AD 300), author of a book on the God of the Hebrews, the Lord of Powers Sabaoth (edn. Berthelot & Ruelle 1888), the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963) and particular astrological writings accessible via TLG searches. For 'Adonai', see Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.24 and 5.41; Preisendanz 1928–31, 2 vols, Nos. 1–5, 7–8, 10, 12–13, 22b, 28c, 32a, 35–36, 43, 57, 62, 68; the *Hymni Anonymi e Papyris Magicis Collecti*, frg. 5 (edn. Heitsch 1963); and several astrological writings in the TLG corpus.

[60] This study could be further extended to other designations for God which were frequent among the Jews: Pantokrator and Theos Hypsistos. Although these terms were not specifically Jewish, and even originated in Greek writings, Jews seem to have had a specific preference for them, and this intensity in itself became influential in the Greek world. On 'Theos Hypsistos', see Mitchell 1999, esp. §5, 110–15: 'Theos Hypsistos and the Jews'. See, e.g., 112: 'most "pagan" or "Jewish" examples of the term Theos Hypsistos are formally indistinguishable from one another', and 114: 'We are evidently dealing with an area of belief where Jews, judaizers, and pagans occupied very similar territory.'

Moses' outstanding wisdom and philosophical, aniconic theology (Hecataeus; Diodorus Siculus; Strabo), identified him with no lesser than Musaeus (Alexander Polyhistor; Numenius), made Pythagoras dependent on the mysteries of Moses-Mochos (Iamblichus), and characterized Moses' God, in an ontological way, as 'He who is' (Numenius), as 'the noetic light' (Philo of Byblos), and 'the highest God' (Cornelius Labeo); they considered him unnameable and invisible (Dio Cassius), called him the 'one true God' (Porphyry), 'He who is above the seven celestial spheres, i.e. the creator' (Philo of Byblos), and named him not only 'Iao' and 'Sabaoth' but also 'Dionysus' (Plutarch) and 'Jupiter Sabazius' (Valerius Maximus). What is perhaps most remarkable about this positive reception is that we are surprised about it.[61]

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PLATONISM IN THE BIBLE:
NUMENIUS OF APAMEA ON *EXODUS* AND ETERNITY*

M.F. Burnyeat

Let me begin with the customary modest disclaimers. About the *Book of Exodus* I have nothing to say. I shall refer to the narrative, but on scholarly matters my ignorance is total. About Numenius[1] my ignorance is extensive, but compensated for by some opinions—opinions about how he responded to a famous passage in *Exodus*, where God reveals his name to Moses from the burning bush: 'I am that I am'. The Greek of the Septuagint translation is Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, 'I am He who is'. That Greek is my starting point here, for Numenius' interpretation of it encourages me to persevere in a view of eternity I have maintained since I began debating the concept with Richard Sorabji in the 1960's and 1970's.

1. 'What is Plato but Moses Talking Attic?'

Perhaps the best introduction to Numenius is his most quotable line (frg. 8.13), 'What is Plato but Moses talking Attic?' (Τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων;).[2] Let this quip serve notice that we are

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[1] Whom I cite from the Budé edition by Édouard des Places: *Numénius: Fragments, Texte établi et traduit*, Paris 1973, where 'fragments' include testimonia. The translations are my own, but most of the fragments I quote derive from Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, which is helpfully translated into English by E.H. Gifford, Oxford 1903; his rendering often strikes me as more accurate than that of des Places.

[2] So quotable that apparently it circulated on its own. Eusebius quotes it twice. (i) at *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX.6.9 (followed by frgs 1a and 9) he has it from Clement (*Stromata* I.22.150.4), who assures us that his near-contemporary Numenius did write the words but does not say where. Then again (ii) at XI.10.14, just after quoting Numenius' account of eternal being in frgs 5, 6, 7, and 8 to confirm the claim he made at XI.9.4–5 that Plato reworked Moses' words into the *Timaeus*. (Later appearances of the saying in Theodoret, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* II.114 and the Suda s.v. 'Numenius' presumably derive from Eusebius.) This *rapprochement* between Plato and Moses on the subject of eternal being leads Eusebius to comment that Numenius'

to discuss a writer of wit and verve—the only witty Platonist after
Plato himself, whose deep understanding of the Platonic philosophy
is set forth in prose of high literary sophistication.

  I shall come to the importance of Attic shortly. The importance
of Moses for Numenius is that by tradition he was author of the
Pentateuch, the first five Books of the Bible, not just a hero of the
story (on Numenius and Moses, see also Van Kooten, this vol., end
of §1).[3] That made him a star witness in a project announced in
frg. 1a, carefully copied out by Eusebius from Book I of Numenius'
dialogue *On the Good*:

> On this question [sc. the incorporeality of God],[4] having cited and
> sealed the testimonies of Plato, we should go back further and bind
> these testimonies together with[5] the teachings of Pythagoras, and then
> summon the peoples of good repute, adducing their rites and doctrines
> and the traditions they celebrate in agreement with Plato (τὰς τελετὰς
> καὶ τὰ δόγματα τάς τε ἱδρύσεις συντελουμένας Πλάτωνι ὁμολογουμένως),
> such as those ordained by the Brahmans and Jews and Magi and
> Egyptians (frg. 1a).

For Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in the fourth century AD, this and
other texts he quotes from *On the Good* support the idea that Plato
had somehow come to know the philosophy of Moses (see also
Luttikhuizen, this vol., §1). Either he heard about it when he travelled
to Egypt, or he reached the same results by his own reflection on
the nature of things, or he was inspired by God (*Praeparatio Evangelica*
XI.8.1). Platonism is thus shown to derive from, or to embrace the
same truths as, the Judaic tradition.[6] Numenius' thesis is unam-

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well-known saying (<u>ἐκεῖνο</u> τὸ λόγιον) is reasonably attributed to him. We should
agree, even if we cannot know which work the saying comes from. Such doubts
about authenticity as have been expressed are effectively rebutted by John G. Gager,
Moses in Graeco-Roman Paganism, Nashville/New York 1972, 66–8.
   [3] Frg. 30.5–6 treats *Gen* 1:2 as the words of 'the prophet'.
   [4] A safe inference from frg. 1b.4–6.
   [5] For Numenius' use of συνδέομαι, cf. frgs 18.8 and 24.59.
   [6] The idea that Plato's philosophy, and Pythagoras' too, derives from the Jews
goes back to a commentary on the Pentateuch (standardly dated 2nd cent. BC) by
the Jewish Peripatetic Aristobulus, who claims they studied the *Exodus* story and
'our' law in translation (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX.6.6, followed by Numenius'
λόγιον; XIII.12.1). Pythagoras' borrowing of Jewish (and Thracian) ideas is already
found in the third-century biographer Hermippus quoted in Josephus, *Contra Apionem*
I.165 (see also Van Kooten, this vol., §2). Such claims are but one symptom of a
widespread ancient tendency (anxiously combated in the opening chapters of Diogenes
Laertius) to find foreign origins for Greek philosophy. By the early modern period

biguously about agreement on the truth (cf. frg. 1b.2–3: δόγματα . . .
ἀληθῆ), not about historical derivation. All these peoples, not only
the Jews, agree with Plato that the divine is incorporeal.[7] Not of
course that they express it as clearly as he does, but the agreement
discernible in their teachings and cults—coming as it does from other
places and times—corroborates the truth of Platonism. They are all
independently responding to the same truth as he did. As a mod-
ern philosopher might put it, they all 'tracked the truth'.[8]

   But why Attic? No quotable quote could be made of the trite
point that Moses did not speak Greek at all. The contrast is not
between Greek and Hebrew, but between two dialects of Greek, the
Attic used by the Athenian Plato and the Doric of the Pythagorean
writings. Modern scholars regard the extensive corpus of Pythagorica
as Hellenistic forgeries, leaving only a few fragments of Philolaus
and Archytas to represent earlier Pythagoreanism in written form.
For later antiquity, that corpus was simply 'the Pythagorean writ-
ings'. Numenius, writing in the second century AD, would know that
neo-Pythagoreans of the previous century like Moderatus had adduced
three disabling factors to explain the extinction of the good old
Pythagorean philosophy: (i) τὸ αἰνιγματῶδες, the enigmatic form in
which it was presented, (ii) *the inherent obscurity of the Doric dialect* (ἐχούσης
τι καὶ ἀσαφὲς τῆς διαλέκτου), plus (iii) the fact that the really fruitful
ideas were filched and propagated as their own by Plato, Aristotle, and
the Academy, who made things worse by collecting the sillier-looking

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some were ready to believe that Pythagoras was himself a Jew: J.B. Schneewind,
The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy, Cambridge 1998, 536–40.
   [7] On my understanding of frg. 1a, which is indebted to Michael Frede's ground-
breaking study, 'Numenius', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36.2 (1987),
1034–75 at 1048, the non-Greek peoples are commended for agreeing with Plato,
who sets the standard of truth jointly with Pythagoras. Contrast G.R. Boys-Stones,
Post-Hellenistic Philosophy: A Study of its Development from the Stoics to Origen, Oxford 2001,
114–18, who has frg. 1a commend Plato for his skill in deriving ancient wisdom
from non-Greek sources. That derivationist line was taken by many other thinkers
discussed in Boys-Stones' interesting book, but Numenius is importantly different.
Even Eusebius allows for the possibility of Plato reaching the truth on his own. An
even more derivationist reading appears in Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The
Limits of Hellenisation*, Cambridge 1975, 147, who cites the question 'What is Plato
but Moses talking Attic?' as typifying later antiquity's subordination of reason to
revelation, Greek thought to oriental wisdom. That is quite unjust to Numenius, in
whose thought Greek confidence remains as strong as it was in the days of Hippias.
   [8] See Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, Cambridge, Mass., 1981, 172–96.
Roughly, to track the truth is to be reliably receptive to truth and, in addition,
reliably unreceptive to what is false.

stuff (i.e. the ἀκούσματα) and publishing it as the distinctive teaching of the Pythagorean school.[9] Moral: Attic is the language of clarity.

By contrast, the Greek of the LXX is not Attic, and it is often unclear. The same may be said of the supposed hexameters of Musaeus (Diels/Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 2 B), whose name Numenius uses to speak of Moses in frg. 9 (cf. Van Kooten, this vol., end of §1).[10] However Numenius understood the identification of Moses with Musaeus, he undertakes to show that the Jews and other peoples of good repute share an understanding of God which is most clearly expressed in Plato's Attic prose. Hence his pointed exclamation, 'What is Plato but Moses talking *Attic*?'.[11]

Now already in the fifth century BC the sophist Hippias (Diels/Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 86 B6) had included Musaeus, Orpheus, and poets like Homer, together with prose writings of Greek *and barbarian* authors, in a doxographical miscellany designed to bring out the underlying kinship between wildly different expressions of the same idea. For example, he relates Thales' choice of water as the origin of things to the role of Oceanus as progenitor of the gods in Homer and

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[9] Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae* 53. Although the source is usually taken to be Moderatus himself, this is not certain and (iii) is cited as a complaint of 'the Pythagoreans' generally.

[10] It is clear from Eusebius' commentary before and after frg. 9 that he has no doubt that Numenius does mean Moses when he writes 'Musaeus', and Origen confirms in frgs 1b, 1c, and 10a that Numenius did quote Moses and recount his adventures in Egypt. The identification of Moses with Musaeus is otherwise attested only in the romancing Jewish historian Artapanus (probably 2nd cent. BC), who says that when Moses reached manhood the Greeks called him Musaeus; he became the teacher of Orpheus and the inventor of numerous things including philosophy (Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX.27.3–4; cf. Van Kooten, this vol., §1). Gager, *Moses in Graeco-Roman Paganism*, 139, doubts that Numenius would endorse much of this and diagnoses 'a simple adjustment of the orthography to the common Greek name'. I find that unlikely and suggest two alternatives. (i) 'Moses' could easily oust an original 'Musaeus' as the λόγιον circulated on its own, for reasons both of clarity and of Christian propaganda. (ii) Although in the other surviving fragments 'Musaeus' occurs once (frg. 9.4), 'Moses' not at all, Numenius might still have used 'Moses' in some work other than *On the Good*.

[11] Since by Numenius' day Plato had become a model (albeit a disputed model) in the war of styles between the 'Atticists' and 'Asianists', one might suspect further word play on ἀττικίζων = 'Atticizing'. Although Numenius' own style is a vigorous, often picturesque Asiatic, the virtue claimed for Atticism was its naturalness and lucidity, a virtue in which Plato excels, at least for much of the time: 'When he expresses himself in plain, simple and unartificial language, his style is extraordinarily agreeable and pleasant; it becomes altogether pure and transparent, like the most pellucid of streams.' (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De Demosthene* 5; transl. Usher.) Once again, Attic is the language of clarity.

Orpheus, and probably also to the figure of Nun, the primeval waters, in Egyptian mythology.[12] A certain amount of allegorizing is inevitable in such a programme. You show that your non-philosophical sources, however venerable, poetic, or foreign, contain obscurely condensed expressions of thoughts which the philosophers articulated in more adequate form. Most Greek philosophers were happy to continue the practice that Hippias began.[13] Numenius is thus a relative latecomer in a long tradition, and he too is devoted to the art of allegorizing:

> I am also aware [writes Origen] that Numenius the Pythagorean, a man who expounded Plato with very great skill and maintained the Pythagorean doctrines, quotes Moses and the prophets *in many passages* in his writings, and gives them no improbable allegorical interpretation, as in the book entitled *Epops* and in *On Numbers* and in *On Place*. In Book III of *On the Good* he even quotes a story about Jesus, though without mentioning his name, and interprets it allegorically . . . He also quotes [cf. frg. 9] the story about Moses and Jannes and Jambres (frgs 1c and 10a recombined; transl. Chadwick, slightly altered; emphasis mine).

The novelty Numenius brings to this tradition is his detailed attention to the Bible and the Jews.[14] The shock value of his question 'What is Plato but *Moses* talking Attic?' can be gauged by comparing another Platonist of the second century AD, contemporary with or somewhat later than Numenius, the Celsus against whom Origen wrote his *Contra Celsum* (see also Van den Berg, this vol.). Celsus agrees with just about everything I have ascribed to Numenius so far, with one exception: Moses and the Jews (cf. Van Kooten, this vol., end of §1). According to Celsus, Moses was a corrupt Egyptian

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[12] See Andreas Patzer, *Der Sophist Hippias als Philosophiehistoriker*, Munich 1986, esp. chap. 2. Patzer builds here on the pioneering work of Bruno Snell.

[13] Aristotle, for example, is reported (Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* I.8) to have written in the first Book of his *De philosophia* about the Magi and their dualism of good and bad principles, Oromasdes (Zeus) and Areimanios (Hades); cf. *Metaphysics* N4, 1091^{b}4−12, where the Magi are cited alongside the ancient poets, Pherecydes, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras. His pupil Eudemus collected the cosmotheological views of the early Greeks and the Near East.

[14] I am not bothered if someone prefers to postulate that Numenius got his knowledge of the Bible second-hand from a compendium of some kind. It must have been pretty detailed, to judge by Origen's report, with quotations included. But I do reject the outright disbelief in Origen manifested by M.J. Edwards, 'Atticising Moses? Numenius, the Fathers and the Jews', *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990) 64−75, who urges that Eusebius would have quoted more if there had been more to quote in *On the Good*.

priest, not one of the wise men of old who tracked the truth. The
Jews were a band of rebellious slaves who escaped with him, not
one of the peoples who expressed in their cults and institutions the
Ἀληθὴς Λόγος, the one true account which Celsus finds indepen-
dently witnessed to, not only by the non-Jewish peoples Numenius
cites in frg. 1a, plus the Assyrians, Odrysians, and Samothracians,
but even by the Druids, Getae, Hyperboreans, and Galactophagi.
To exclude the Jews Celsus is prepared to go to the limits of the
known world and beyond.[15]

By contrast, Numenius not only includes the Jews and their prophet
Moses. He also appears to *exclude* the Doric Pythagorica. Frg. 1a,
quoted above, puts Pythagoras on a par with Plato as a wise man
who tracked the truth,[16] but not once in the extant remains does
Numenius appeal to a Pythagorean source to determine what Pytha-
goras taught. He proceeds as if the best and only way to find that
out is by careful interpretation of Plato.[17] His sole attested reference
to 'certain Pythagoreans' (frg. 52.15–24) is a contemptuous dismissal
of their claim that matter and the Indefinite Dyad derive from the
One. As one of the last Platonists to abide by the correct dualist
interpretation of the *Timaeus*, he is sure that Plato's doctrine on mat-
ter agrees (*concinere*) with that of Pythagoras (frg. 52.3–4). Frg. 1a

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[15] For a helpful detailed account of Celsus' philosophical outlook, see Michael
Frede, 'Celsus philosophus Platonicus', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36.7
(1994), 5183–5213.

[16] Frg. 24.18–20 counts Plato 'no better than Pythagoras, and doubtless (ἴσως)
no worse either'. Is Numenius hesitating to rank Plato with Pythagoras? Although
some have read frg. 7.4–7 as allowing that Plato could have missed a truth that
Pythagoras knew, this is merely the concession of an abstract possibility to pacify
(παραμυθήσεσθαι) a troublemaker, followed up at once by a quotation which shows
Plato tracking the truth at issue. Accordingly, I suspect that frg. 24.18–20, is not
hesitation, but rather a recherché mathematical joke to affirm the equality of the
two sages. In Eudoxus' theory of proportions two magnitudes A and B are equal
if, and only if, A exceeds and is exceeded by the same magnitudes as B, whether
the magnitudes (so long as they are homogeneous) are commensurable *or* incom-
mensurable. Plato and Pythagoras are both philosophers (homogeneity), but in such
different styles that no unit of magnitude will measure both (incommensurability).
Nonetheless, they are equal to each other if Plato is neither better nor worse than
Pythagoras, because this means that Plato does not exceed in wisdom anyone whom
Pythagoras does not also exceed, and he is not exceeded by anyone who does not
also exceed Pythagoras. We will meet more examples of Numenius' remarkable
even-handedness (§2 and note 25 below).

[17] This point is forcefully argued in Frede, 'Numenius', 1044–8. I follow Frede
in declining to describe Numenius either as a Pythagorean or as a Middle Platonist.

proposes that we go back to Pythagoras *from* Plato, implying that Plato is the one true exponent of Pythagoras' philosophy. Plato's writings need the careful interpretation Numenius provides because, mindful of the fate of Socrates (cf. frg. 23), he did not think it safe to be completely open about theological topics. Instead, his exposition of the Pythagorean philosophy took the middle way between clarity and unclarity (frg. 24.57–62), striking a mean between Socrates and Pythagoras (frg. 24.73–74). Plato is clearer than the Pythagorean writings, and clearer than Moses, but still not as clear as Numenius endeavours to be. For he undertakes to give us Plato 'himself in himself', separated like the Forms (χωρίζειν . . . αὐτὸν ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ) from Aristotle, the Stoic Zeno, and the New Academy, so that we may see his Pythagorean essence (frg. 24.66–70).[18]

Question: if while expounding the Pythagorean philosophy Plato is at the same time Moses talking Attic, does that not imply a rather special status for Moses too? I shall argue that in Numenius' eyes Moses did indeed excel other foreigners as a Pythagorean/Platonist *avant la lettre*, and that the *Exodus* account of his receiving the revelation of the divine name is deliberately echoed in Book II of *On the Good*.

2. The Scene with the Burning Bush

Having sketched a context for Numenius' interest in Moses, I can turn to my next task, which is to make it plausible that Numenius has Moses in mind when he discusses eternity. Remember the conversation with the burning bush. In the King James translation Moses asks, 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' Then, when he has been reassured that the Lord will be with him in this undertaking, he asks, 'When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?'. *Exodus* 3:14 gives the answer to these questions (I insert the LXX Greek at the crucial points): 'And God said unto Moses, I AM

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[18] My last four references do not relate to *On the Good*. Frg. 23 is cited by Eusebius from a work entitled *On the Secrets of Plato*, frg. 24 from Numenius' scintillating *On the Academics' Infidelity to Plato*.

THAT I AM (Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν): and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you (Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς)'.[19]

It is often thought that Numenius has this biblical text in mind when in frg. 13 he calls the First God of his version of Platonism ὁ ὤν. Eusebius, our source for frg. 13, had no doubts, but some modern scholars have hesitated to follow, and a number have resorted to emendation of the MSS reading ὁ ὤν. Eusebius can be vindicated, I believe, by independent evidence of Numenius' detailed interest in the *Exodus* narrative.

The scene with the burning bush comes at the beginning of the narrative of the Israelites' escape from Egypt. Numenius frg. 9 (already cited from Eusebius) is about the sequel, the story of how Moses-Musaeus led the Jews out of Egypt after defeating Pharaoh's magicians. Except that in Numenius' retelling Pharaoh's magicians are a match for Moses and are able to disperse even the most violent of the plagues. And they have names: Jannes and Jambres. Numenius did not get those names from the *Book of Exodus*. Their first appearance in the Bible is *2 Timothy* 3:8 (*c.* 120 AD), which assumes they will be familiar to its readers from earlier Jewish tradition.[20] Evidently, Numenius has not only studied the *Exodus* narrative. He has also done some back-up research.

There were plenty of sources to draw upon. Pro-Egyptian versions of the story had been written by Manetho (3rd cent. BC), Lysimachus (2nd cent. BC), Apion (1st cent. BC), and the Stoic philosopher Chaeremon (1st cent. AD; see also Van Kooten, this vol., §1).[21] Josephus (1st cent. AD) in his *Contra Apionem* took up arms on the other side, as had Ezekiel (perhaps 2nd cent. BC), who gave a pro-Jewish presentation of the events in the form of a Greek tragedy on the Aeschylean model, from which extensive fragments survive (see also Van Ruiten, this vol.).[22] As Michael Frede has shown,[23] there

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[19] The Vulgate has: 'Ego sum qui sum. Ait: Sic dices filiis Israel: Qui est, misit me ad vos'.

[20] References to Jewish literature in Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, Edited with Introductions, Translations and Commentary*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1980, 213. Jannes at least had been heard of at Rome, being coupled with Moses as known magicians by Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* XXX.11 and Apuleius, *Apologia* 90.

[21] For discussion of this anti-Semitic historiography, see Boys-Stones, *Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*, chap. 4.

[22] Text, translation, and commentary in Howard Jacobson, *The Exagōge of Ezekiel*,

was a philosophical issue at stake in these polemics about how and why the Israelites left Egypt. Did the Jews qualify as an ancient people in their own right, with a wisdom of their own? Not if they originated as a rabble of Egyptians, either slaves on the run (Celsus) or expelled lepers (the more usual view). If, on the other hand, they were a genuine people, their wisdom would be worthy of an allegorizing elucidation to show its affinity with the latest modern philosophy, whether Stoic or Platonic. Chaeremon, like Celsus later, was happy to do this for the Egyptians, but not for the Jews. What is most interesting about Numenius' version of events is that he treats both sides with an even hand.[24] In striking contrast to the Bible, frg. 9 reports that Jannes and Jambres were equal to Moses in their powers of magic.

Philosophically, this fits the programme of frg. 1a, where the Egyptians track the truth no less than the Jews.[25] *Ergo*, they had better be equally skilled in applying their knowledge to work wonders. Yet wonders are worked within the created realm. According to frg. 17 (from *On the Good* Book VI), while the Divine Craftsman is generally known among the peoples of the world, the First Mind is altogether unknown. This First Mind, the First God of Numenius' version of Platonism, senior to (πρεσβύτερος)[26] and more divine than the Demiurge, is Being itself (αὐτοόν). Could it be that in the scene with the burning bush, where Moses writes of a God called ὁ ὤν, Numenius found an exception to the general ignorance of the divinity of Being itself?

Let me repeat here that I know nothing about the *Book of Exodus*. I am not discussing the merits of ὁ ὤν as a translation of the Hebrew.[27] Let me add that we have no evidence that Numenius read Philo Judaeus, who does of course have a great deal to say about ὁ ὤν in

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Cambridge 1983. What survives of the scene with the burning bush does not include 'I am that I am'.

[23] 'Chaeremon der Stoiker', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 36.3 (1989), 2067–2103, esp. 2072–5.

[24] Cf. note 16 above.

[25] Cf. the equable juxtaposition of Moses, the Egyptians, and Heraclitus in frg. 30.

[26] As the Good is superior πρεσβείᾳ at *Respublica* 509b 9–10.

[27] Those as ignorant of Hebrew as I am may be interested in a variant translation given by Hippolytus in his account of a self-styled Gnostic sect, the Naasenes: γίνομαι ὃ θέλω καὶ εἰμὶ ὃ εἰμί (*Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* V.7.25, p. 84 Wendland). The first clause comes close to 'I will be what I will be', which knowledgeable colleagues tell me is the meaning of the original. (I owe the reference to Christopher Stead.)

Exodus 3:14 (see Geljon, this vol., §1).[28] My sole concern is what a
Platonist philosopher of the second century AD would make of the
information that the name of the Jewish God is ὁ ὤν.[29] It might, for
instance, remind him of Plutarch's *On the E at Delphi*, where the highest-
level interpretation of the inscription *E* is εἶ = 'Thou art', which in
turn is explicated in terms of the Platonic contrast between being
and becoming, eternity and time (cf. Luttikhuizen, this vol., §1). The
message is that Apollo is to be worshipfully addressed 'Thou art'—
an utterance complete in itself (392a: αὐτοτελὴς προσαγόρευσις) with-
out any complement after the verb 'to be'—because his being is an
eternal present, with no trace of past or future. Plutarch could easily
have called the God at Delphi ὁ ὤν, meaning He whose eternal
being transcends time.[30]

   This brings me back to frg. 13, where Numenius' First God is
called ὁ ὤν and distinguished from the Demiurge. If the First God
is Being itself, there is no call for Dodds's emendation of the phrase
ὁ γε ὤν ('He who is') to ὅ γε ἁ (= πρῶτος) ὤν ('He who is first').[31]
Dodds argued that the received text 'cannot be defended as a
Hebraism'. There is no need to do so, for in itself the phrase is
impeccable Greek. The issue is not whether Numenius borrowed it
from the LXX,[32] but whether the LXX expression struck him as an
exceptionally advanced point of agreement with Plato's conception

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[28] *De Aeternitate Mundi* 53 and 70; *De Vita Mosis* I.75; *De Opificio Mundi* 170 (cf.
172); *De Posteritate Caini* 168; *De Praemiis et Poenis* 40; *De Specialibus Legibus* I.41, II.225.
Philo does not connect the name with eternity, but explains it as designating noth-
ing but God's ὕπαρξις in contrast to his οὐσία or ποιότης, which are beyond our
comprehension. Conversely, *Quod Deus Sit Immutabilis* 32 denies past or future to
eternity without mention of ὁ ὤν (though cf. τὸ ὄν in 33).

[29] Frg. 56 shows Numenius responding to the commandment 'Thou shalt have
no other gods before me' (*Exodus* 20:3).

[30] Plutarch also exhibits the shift between masculine and neuter designations of
God which some have urged against ὁ ὤν as an alternative to the αὐτοόν of frg.
17: εἶς ὤν . . . ὄντως ὄν (393ab).

[31] See des Places *ad locum* and E.R. Dodds, 'Numenius and Ammonius', in: Idem
(ed.), *Les Sources de Plotin: Dix Exposés et Discussions* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique
5), Geneva 1960, 1–32 at 15–16, with a parallel emendation of frg. 16 to boost
the suggestion. More recently, John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, London 1977, 368
note 1, would read ὁ γεωργῶν, picking up the image of the First God as farmer
in line 1. This and other emendations are firmly rebutted by John Whittaker,
'Numenius and Alcinous on the First Principle', *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 144–54.

[32] Although in his excellent defence of the MSS reading, John Whittaker, 'Moses
Atticising', *Phoenix* 21 (1967) 196–201, shows that the phrase travelled from the
LXX into quite a spread of later ancient literature. Frg. 13's designation of the
Demiurge, Numenius' Second God, as lawgiver derives not from the Bible, but
from Plato's *Timaeus*: νόμους τε τοὺς εἰμαρμένους (41e), διαθεσμοθετήσας (42d).

of the first principle of everything. Did he find Moses agreeing with Plato that it is a principle whose being is an eternal present without trace of past or future?

3. Numenius' Identification of the Good with Being

But surely, you may protest, Plato's first principle is the Good, which we all know is 'beyond being' (*Respublica* 509b 9: ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας; cf. Luttikhuizen, this vol., §2). It is bad enough having to endure these later Platonists' predilection for treating as Mind and God a principle which for Plato was the supreme *object* of the mind's quest for a kind of knowledge that God, the divine mind, already has. Is it not a travesty of Plato to ascribe eternal (or any other kind of) being to his first principle, and to identify the Good with Being itself?

Not at all. From a philosophical point of view, Numenius' interpretation is quite defensible. In frgs 19 and 20 he argues that if the Demiurge is good, it must be because, like any other good thing, he participates in the Form of Good.[33] Quite generally, he continues, anything which is *F* (a human, horse, ox, etc.) is so because it is modelled after and participates in the corresponding Form, the *F* itself. Now apply this causal principle to the famous passage in *Republic* 509b where Socrates proclaims that the Good is cause of the being (τὸ εἶναί τε καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν) of the Forms which are the objects of knowledge. If Plato's first principle, whether we call it the Good or the One,[34] is itself good and itself one, because it is the cause of goodness and unity throughout the intelligible realm, must it not also, as cause of the Forms' being, *be* in its own right too? Must not the first principle be Being itself, just as Numenius holds, as well as Goodness and Unity? When Socrates says that the Good is beyond being, perhaps his meaning is that, like any Form in its causal role, it is beyond and distinct from the being it explains.

That Numenius read the passage this way seems to be confirmed by frg. 16.8–10, which argues that if the Demiurge of becoming is

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[33] Cf. also frg. 16.8–10 and 14–15; frg. 19.8–11.

[34] Numenius, frg. 54 derives Apollo's epithet 'Delphian' from an old Greek word δέλφος (unknown to LSJ) meaning 'one'! A strange twist on the then common etymology of 'Apollo': α privative + πολλά (e.g. Plutarchus, *De E apud Delphos* 393c). The identity of the Good and the One is unambiguously expressed at frg. 19.12–13, echoing Aristoxenus' report of Plato's Lecture on the Good: τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἕν; see des Places *ad locum*. Numenius also equates his First God with the *Timaeus*' Form of Animal or Living Thing (frg. 22).

good, the Demiurge of being must be the Good itself, which is by nature one with Being (αὐτοάγαθον σύμφυτον τῇ οὐσίᾳ). Frg. 16.15–16, then distinguishes the being (οὐσία) of the First God from that of the Second. Nor is Numenius the only Platonist to take such a view of 'beyond being'. Both the view and the argument for it are found in an anonymous commentary on Plato's *Parmenides* which Hadot attributed to Porphyry, but which some people think could be earlier.[35] The commentator is discussing the second deduction of Part II of the *Parmenides*, the positive deduction about the One which is. He claims that this One which is derives its being from the One 'beyond being' of the negative first deduction, by participating in it. (After all, it is the *second* One in the dialogue and where else could its being come from?) In that case, he argues, the first One must be Being as well as One, a Being beyond the being that Socrates was talking about in the famous passage of the *Republic*. Plato was riddling (αἰνισσομένῳ) when he spoke of the One beyond being simply as the One which is not.[36]

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[35] Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus*, 2 vols, Paris 1968. The ascription to Porphyry is powerfully questioned by M.J. Edwards, 'Porphyry and the Intelligible Triad', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990) 14–25. Gerald Bechtle, 'The Question of Being and the Dating of the Anonymous *Parmenides* Commentary', *Ancient Philosophy* 20 (2000) 393–414, asserts, not without reason, a pre-Plotinian date. The best ground for the earlier date is given by Michel Tardieu, 'Recherches sur la formation de l'Apocalypse de Zostrien et les sources de Marius Victorinus', *Res Orientales* 9 (1996) 9–114, who shows that a lengthy passage of Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* (I.49.9–50.21), corresponds closely with material in a Gnostic *Apocalypse of Zostrianus*, now preserved in Coptic translation from the lost Greek original which Plotinus got Amelius to refute (Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae* 16). The correspondence is so close as to indicate that Victorinus and the Gnostic author used a common source, which Tardieu suggests was none other than Numenius himself. In reply, Hadot, '"Porphyre et Victorinus": Questions et Hypothèses', *Res Orientales* 9 (1996) 117–25, rightly doubts that Numenius would speak of the first principle as Pneuma (*spiritus* in Victorinus). Still, the source has to be from around his time, the time of so-called Middle Platonism. Hadot remains disinclined to backdate the Anonymous Commentator as well, though it was he who spelled out the parallels between him and Victorinus, which include the primacy of Being. An alternative to a predecessor of Plotinus is a conservative contemporary, reluctant to deny being to the First God of Platonism. One such, according to a suggestive paper by Paul Kalligas, 'Traces of Longinus' Library in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*', *Classical Quarterly* 51 (2001) 584–98 at 594–5, was Longinus, who may even have followed Numenius in appealing to Moses and ὁ ὤν. S. Pinès, 'Les textes arabes dits plotiniens et le courant "porphyrien" dans le néoplatonisme grec', in: *Le Néoplatonisme*, Paris 1971, 303–13, adduces three Arabic texts which cannot derive from Plotinus because they state or imply that the first principle is itself Being.

[36] Anonymus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, ed. Alessandro Linguiti, in: *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*, iii: *Commentari* (1995), XII.23–35; cf. IV.8–9, 27, V.4–5, X.16–25.

But whatever the date of this Anonymus, already in the first century AD Seneca's *Epistle* 58 records a Platonist division in which the supreme genus is that which is, *quod est*.[37] In Aetius, Plato's God is that which really is (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) as well as the One (Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* 304.24). We have already seen that the same holds for Plutarch, who expressly declares that what is must be one even as the one must *be* (*De E apud Delphos* 393b: ἓν εἶναι δεῖ τὸ ὄν, ὥσπερ ὄν τὸ ἕν). Another representative of such views is Alcinous, author of a *Handbook of Platonism* usually dated around AD 150, which would make him Numenius' contemporary. Alcinous' line is that God, the first principle of Platonism, is not totally inexpressible as Moderatus had claimed, and as Plotinus and many others will insist later, but only nearly so (*Didaskalikos* 164.8). Rather like the elements of the *Theaetetus*, God can be named but not described, and among his names we find not only 'Good(ness)', 'Proportion', 'Truth', and 'Divinity', but also: οὐσιότης, Beingness (164.33–34).

All in all, around this period a significant group of Platonists maintain that the *Republic* should be interpreted in such a way that, if the Good is beyond and explanatory of the being of the Forms, it must itself be Being.[38] And this is hardly surprising if we recall that long ago Aristotle had said that much the hardest and most puzzling problem for first philosophy was whether or not unity and being (τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὄν) are the very substance of the things that are (οὐσία τῶν ὄντων), as 'the Pythagoreans and Plato maintain' (*Metaphysics* B1, 996ᵃ 4–7). The ground he reports for this claim is that unity and being are the highest genera, predicated of everything whatsoever, hence principles of everything whatsoever (B3, 998ᵇ17–21; cf. Z16, 1040ᵇ16–19). Half a millennium later, we find Origen (3rd cent. AD) confessing that the issue of whether the highest principle of Platonism is Being or not remains hard to decide (δυσθεώρητος).[39]

I do not myself undertake to defend Numenius' and others' interpretation of 'beyond being'. But I do defend the *question*, 'Is the

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Linguiti himself ends his thorough review of previous scholarship by proposing a fourth-century date (p. 91).

[37] Discussion in David Sedley, 'Stoic Metaphysics at Rome', in: R. Salles (ed.), *Metaphysics, Soul, and Ethics in Ancient Thought: Themes from the work of Richard Sorabji*, Oxford 2005, chap. 6, 117–42.

[38] Cf. also Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam* I.281.11–12, citing unnamed persons who ask why the Good cannot be both οὐσία and ὑπερούσιον.

[39] *Contra Celsum* VI.64.14–28.

Good also Being itself as well as Unity itself? If not, why not?', as
a question that any thoughtful Plato scholar should consider today.
What I find so admirable in Numenius and later Platonists is the
way they can force us to notice aspects and problems in Plato that
we moderns have long lost sight of. We have lost sight of them
because we no longer approach Plato's writings in the way they did,
as repositories of sacred truth. When faced with the phrase 'beyond
being' in *Republic* VI, modern scholars tend to respond like Glaucon
does. He says Ἄπολλον, δαιμονίας ὑπερβολῆς (509c 1–2), which is
Greek for 'Wow!'. Like him, they do not feel impelled to ask what
'beyond being' actually means. Geoffrey Lloyd cites the phrase as a
paradigm Greek paradox to compare with the Nuer belief that 'twins
are birds' and mysterious Pythagorean injunctions such as 'Abstain
from beans', 'Do not stir the fire with a knife'.[40] How many modern
scholars have bothered to confront the phrase 'beyond being' with
later passages of the *Republic* which describe the Good as 'the bright-
est part of being' (518c 9: τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον), 'the most blessed
part of being' (526e 3–4: τὸ εὐδαιμονέστατον τοῦ ὄντος), and 'the
best among beings' (532c 5–6: τοῦ ἀρίστου ἐν τοῖς οὖσι)?[41]

4. 'What is Being?'

On the Good came out in at least six Books. Since Aristotle and the
early Academy, Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ had been a standard title for discussing
the fundamentals of Platonism—*die Prinzipienlehre* as our German col-
leagues put it. In Book I Numenius raised the question 'What is
being?' (frgs 2.23; 3.1; 4a.7–9: τί ἐστι τὸ ὄν;), already equating this
with the good (frg. 2.5: τἀγαθόν). He argued in familiar Platonic style
that what is, properly so called, cannot be matter or anything bodily
such as earth, air, fire, or water, nor even all these elements taken
together, because all such things are subject to change (frg. 3). Conse-
quently, only the incorporeal can qualify as being (frg. 4a.25–32).
Alongside these philosophical arguments he ranged the testimony of
peoples of good repute who agree that God is incorporeal (cf. frg. 1a,

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[40] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Demystifying Mentalities*, Cambridge 1990, 16–17.
[41] An admirable exception is Matthias Baltes, 'Is the Idea of the Good in Plato's
Republic Beyond Being?', in: M. Joyal (ed.), *Studies in Plato and the Platonic Tradition:
Essays Presented to John Whittaker*, Aldershot 1997, 3–23; repr. in his *ΔΙΑΝΟΗΜΑΤΑ:
Kleine Schriften zu Platon und Platonismus*, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1999, 351–71.

quoted above).[42] No details of Numenius' ethnographical survey have come down to us, but I surmise that Moses and the Jews will have stood out because they alone got so far in tracking the truth as to *identify* God with being. The others will have earned praise for expressing allegorically in their myths and ceremonies the less abstract doctrine proved in frg. 4a, that material things must be held together and governed by some changeless incorporeal entity (cf. Van Kooten, this vol., §1 on Strabo and Hecataeus).

On now to Book II, where Numenius introduced his positive philosophical account of being. As a Platonist, he naturally turned to the *Timaeus*, where Plato himself raises the question 'What is being?', presupposing (on the strength of other dialogues containing arguments like those Numenius rehearsed in Book I) that this means: 'What is it that always *is* and never comes to be?' (27d 6: τί τὸ ὂν ἀεί, γένεσιν δέ οὐκ ἔχον;). Numenius' interpretation of Plato's answer to this question exploits not only the *Timaeus*' initial dichotomy between being and becoming at 27d–28a (cf. Luttikhuizen, this vol., §1), but also its subsequent elaboration in terms of the contrast between eternity and time at 37d–38b. Here is how he summons his readers to the task:

> Come then, let us mount up as close as our power permits to what is (τὸ ὄν), and let us say this: What is never was, nor will it ever come to be. Rather, it always *is*, in a definite time, the present only (ἔστιν ἀεὶ ἐν χρόνῳ ὁρισμένῳ, τῷ ἐνεστῶτι μόνῳ). If anyone wants to call this present 'eternity' (αἰών), I join them in that wish. But time past, now that it has fled away, we should think to have fled away and escaped into not being any longer, while time future as yet is not, but professes that it will be able to have made its way into being. It is not therefore reasonable to suppose what is, at least in one sense of the phrase (ἑνί γε τρόπῳ),[43] either not to be, or to be no longer, or not yet to be. For when it is put that way, the statement contains a single mega-impossibility, that the same thing both is and is not, all at once.
>
> —In that case, any other thing could hardly be, seeing that what is itself is not, in respect of its very being (τοῦ ὄντος αὐτοῦ μὴ ὄντος κατὰ αὐτὸ τὸ ὄν).[44]

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[42] Where note the legal overtones of σημηνάμενον, μαρτυρίαις, ἐπικαλέσασθαι, προσφερόμενον.

[43] An acknowledgement, and dismissal, of the ordinary language usage of the verb 'to be' in connection with changeable material things, e.g. 'There is a fire burning in the hearth which is hot and yellowish-red'.

[44] The first quotation in this essay to bring on an interlocutor. In frg. 14.16 he

—So what is is eternal (ἀΐδιόν) and is stable always in its character
and identity (κατὰ ταὐτὸν καὶ ταὐτόν) (frg. 5.1–20).

The special mark of being is that it can only be expressed in the
present tense, and must always be expressed in the present tense. A
thing that *is*, in the sense that it enjoys true being, has no past or
future; nothing can be said of it in the past or future tense. You
cannot even say, as Melissus did (frg. 2), that it always was and
always will be, for that would imply its enduring through the whole
of ordinary time in the same way as a flower lasts through a small
part of ordinary time and an Oxford college through a somewhat
larger part of ordinary time. Epicurus' atoms and Aristotle's God do
last in that way for all time, but being as Plato understands it is
eternal in a different sense. It does not *last through* time at all.

   The question is, What does that mean? According to Richard
Sorabji, a being, in the sense relevant to eternity, does not last
through time because true being, according to Plato, simply has no
temporal dimension.[45] It not only has no past or future, it has no
present either. Eternity, on Sorabji's view, is just *timelessness*, the ab-
sence of all aspects of temporality. Consequently, the 'is' of Plato's
true being is the tenseless 'is' that many philosophers find in math-
ematical statements like '2 + 2 = 4' or in trivial tautologies like
'Justice is justice', 'A bachelor is an unmarried man'. According to
Numenius, on the other hand, the 'is' of Platonic being is still tensed:
it is *present* tense.[46] The reason why a Platonic being does not last
through time is that eternity is present time which stays fixed and
never becomes past. A Platonic being always *is*, in a definite time,
the present only.

   This is an extraordinarily difficult idea to grasp. It is very hard
to see how 'always in the present' is not a contradiction in terms
or, as Hobbes would have it, unintelligible nonsense:

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is addressed ὦ ξένε, but in truth there are few signs of the dialogue form as we
find it in Plato, or even Cicero. Frede, 'Numenius', 1050, points out that *On the
Good* fits better into a genre which became popular in later antiquity, that of expo-
sition enlivened by the occasional question and answer, such as Maximus, *On Matter*,
quoted *in extenso* at Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* VII.21–64. We can be reassured
by this parallel that the interlocutor's role is not a casualty of Eusebius' transcription
of Numenius, but was as intermittent in the original as in the surviving fragments.

   [45] Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, London 1983, chaps. 8–9,
where he gives his own translation and interpretation of the texts of Plato, Plotinus,
and Boethius discussed below.

   [46] The Greek χρόνος was used for 'tense' as well as 'time'.

> [T]hey will teach us, that Eternity is the Standing still of the Present, a *Nunc-stans* (as the Schools call it;) which neither they, nor anyone else understand, no more than they would a *Hic-stans* for an Infinite greatnesse of Place (*Leviathan*, chap. 46).

Yet, however difficult, the idea of an eternal present is a vital ingredient in the long history of responses to *Exodus* 3:14. When Aquinas came to discuss the divine names, the present tense of the verb 'to be' was one of several reasons he gave why the 'Qui est' of God's answer to Moses is the most appropriate of all names for the deity. 'Est' signifies 'esse in praesenti', which is maximally appropriate to a being whose esse knows neither past nor future (*Summa Theologiae* 1a qu. 13, art. 11).

Aquinas cites Augustine for this conception of eternity,[47] which points us back towards the Platonic tradition. I believe that the entire tradition, from the *Timaeus* onwards, understands eternity as present being with no past or future, not as mere timelessness. But let me start with Parmenides, for both parties to the debate agree that the history of eternity begins with Parmenides frg. 8.5–6: 'It never was nor will be, since it now is, all together, one, continuous'.

Many students of Presocratic philosophy have taken Parmenides to be speaking of what is as something with a present but no past or future. Given this interpretation, some find themselves puzzled, others ready to embrace the idea with enthusiasm. I count Plotinus among the enthusiasts, since his treatise 'On Eternity and Time' is full of Eleatic echoes, including 'all together as one' (III.7[45].3.12), 'as in a point' (3.18),[48] 'unextended' (2.33; 3.15; 6.46–7; 11.54; 13.44 and 63), 'always all present' (3.17), 'partless' (3.18; 6.48–50), 'unshakeable' (5.21; 11.3), 'whole' (4.33–34; 5.4; 11.54–56), 'full' and 'not lacking' (6.36). But Sorabji rejects the interpretation outright, for both Parmenides and Plotinus. Parmenides may seem to speak of a detached present without a past preceding it or a future to follow, but a more charitable interpretation is to see him as 'groping for the concept of timelessness'.[49] And what Parmenides groped for, Plotinus will grasp.

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[47] See *Confessiones* XI.13 ('semper praesentis aeternitatis'), *De Trinitate* V.2.

[48] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 118, rightly observes that this need not mean it *is* a point or instant.

[49] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 120–1; cf. 50–1, 99, 128. An important Whiggish influence here, I take it, is G.E.L. Owen's brilliant paper, 'Plato and

Sorabji's argument for his reading of Parmenides is purely philo-sophical, not textual. All he says is that the idea of something 'always in the present' is incoherent. 'How are we to understand *endurance* without a past or future?' Indeed, 'the enduring present . . . appears so baffling that argument would be needed to establish not its inco-herence, but its coherence'.[50] He then proceeds to survey a large number of later accounts of eternity, beginning with Plato's *Timaeus* and going on to Plotinus and subsequent Platonists. But however suggestive of a detached present their language may be, he declines to admit that any of them could believe that the 'is' of eternity is genuinely present tense.

Numenius is absent from the survey, despite his contribution to our debate. It is an important contribution because he comes rela-tively early in the Platonic tradition. His clear testimony, and his well-known influence on Plotinus, make it a live possibility that later Platonists will have shared his understanding of eternity. In some cases at least, that suggestive language is to be taken at face value. The most celebrated example is Boethius' definition of eternity as 'the complete possession all at once of an infinite life' (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*), a definition he immediately relates to Plato:

> Some people who hear that Plato held that this universe had no begin-ning in time and will have no end wrongly think that in this way the created world is coeternal with its creator. It is one thing to be extended through an infinite life, which is what Plato ascribed to the world, quite another to encompass all at once the whole presence (*totam pariter . . . praesentiam*) of an infinite life, which is manifestly a property peculiar (*proprium*) to the divine mind (*De Consolatione Philosophiae* V.5).

Mere timelessness is hardly the prerogative of God.[51]

This is not the place to conduct a passage-by-passage debate on Platonist texts. Having put a question mark against the lot, I pro-pose to concentrate here on the crucial sentences of the *Timaeus* from which Numenius begins. That will fortify me to broach the under-

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Parmenides on the Timeless Present', *Monist* 50 (1966) 317–40, cited from his *Logic, Science and Dialectic*, London 1986, chap. 2.

[50] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 100, criticizing unpublished early work of mine on Parmenides.

[51] Sorabji's chap. 8 considers whether timelessness is plausibly attributed to uni-versals, numbers, or truth.

lying issue in this disagreement, namely: How far is it legitimate to allow ourselves, when interpreting philosophical texts from traditions other than our own (be they past or contemporary), to be guided by what 'we' can make sense of?

5. Eternity as *Present* Being

If eternity was mere timelessness, as Sorabji holds, the creation of time would require the creation of the present as well as the creation of past and future. But that is not what we find in *Timaeus* 37e–38a:

> There were no days and nights, months and years, before the Heaven came into being, but he planned that they should now come into being at the same time that the Heaven was framed. All these are parts of time, and 'was' and 'will be' are forms of time that have come to be; we are wrong to transfer them unthinkingly to eternal being. For we say that it was and is and will be, but 'is' alone really belongs to it and describes it truly; 'was' and 'will be' are properly used of the becoming that proceeds in time, for they are changes (κινήσεις γάρ ἐστον), whereas that which is always changelessly in the same state cannot become older or younger by the lapse of time—it neither became so ever, nor has it become so now, nor will it be so hereafter (transl. after Cornford & Zeyl).[52]

Only 'was' and 'will be' have come to be (37e 4). Only they are changes (note the dual ἐστόν at 38a 2)—as Plutarch put it (*De E apud Delphos* 393a), 'They are displacements and deviations of a nature unfitted for constant being'.[53] Unlike 'was' and 'will be', the present

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[52] The discussion of this text in Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 109, concentrates on the word 'always' at 38a 3, a topic I shall come to later. For as Sorabji tells the story of eternity, Plato's use of this and other terms implying duration set a problem for Plotinus and his successors when they grappled with the *Timaeus*.

[53] ἐγκλίσεις τινὲς καὶ παραλλάξεις τοῦ μένειν ἐν τῷ εἶναι μὴ πεφυκότος. The phrase κινήσεις γάρ ἐστον is usually translated 'for they are motions'. That would be correct for days and nights; as parts (μέρη) of time, they are units measured by the Sun's motion around the Earth. But 'was' and 'will be' are contrasted with such parts and called forms or types (εἴδη) of time. *Theaetetus* 181cd distinguishes local motion (φορά) and alteration (ἀλλοίωσις) as two forms or types (εἴδη) of κίνησις, where 'alteration' covers growing older as well as change of quality. Given the focus in 38a 3–5 on becoming older or younger (first brought out properly, to my knowledge, by Owen, 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present', 39, and now reflected in Zeyl's translation), it seems best to take our cue from Plutarch and read κινήσεις γάρ ἐστον in terms of the *Theaetetus*' generic notion of change (Plotinus III.7[45].3.35 writes μεταβάλλειν εἰς τὸ ἔσται). A close association between being in time and becoming older and younger can be observed at *Parmenides* 141ad, 151e ff.

tense 'is' is not said to have come to be and is not characterized as change (κίνησις). It should be perfectly clear that the 'is' which really belongs to the realm of true being is the very same 'is' as occurs in the mistaken pronouncement 'It was and is and will be' (37e 6). It is also the same 'is' as occurs in a list of supposedly 'inaccurate' statements with which Timaeus rounds off the paragraph: 'What came to be *is* a thing which came to be', 'What comes to be *is* a thing which comes to be', and again 'What will come to be *is* a thing which will come to be', plus 'What is not *is* something that is not'. Timaeus defers for a more suitable occasion the task of picking over these sentences to expose their faultiness, but at least in the first three it seems clear that his analysis would turn on the point that 'is' is *present* tense[54]—exactly the point which Numenius insists upon.

Once again, the admirable Platonist Numenius can force our jaded modern eyes to notice a feature of Plato's text—only past and future are created—which has not been sufficiently emphasized in modern attempts to understand Plato's doctrine of eternity. It is true that Plato does not echo Parmenides' emphatic 'now', still less does he anticipate the later Platonist distinction between the 'now' of eternity and the 'now' of ordinary time (Boethius' *nunc stans* and *nunc fluens*). But throughout the passage he is plainly thinking in terms of the present tense use of 'is', not of some detensed alternative. All honour to Numenius for confronting us with a particularly forthright statement of the idea that eternity is genuinely *present* being. Let that serve as prelude to his equally interesting account of *being*.

6. The Name of the Incorporeal

For all these remarks about eternal being, Numenius tells us at the start of frg. 6, have been by way of introduction. Frg. 5 on eternity led immediately to the great revelation:

> I will not make any more pretences, nor claim not to know the name of the incorporeal. Perhaps this is the point at which it is more agreeable to say it than not to say it. So then—I say that its name is the very thing we have long been inquiring into (λέγω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῷ εἶναι

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[54] If the second example seems innocuous, because τὸ γιγνόμενον is present tense like ἐστί, turn to *Parmenides* 153c 7–e 3 and *Sophista* 245d 1–4 (cf. Aristotle, *Topica* IV.5, 128ᵇ6–9): only at the end of the process does τὸ γιγνόμενον come to be ὄν and ὅλον.

τοῦτο τὸ πάλαι ζητούμενον). Let no one laugh if I say that the name
of the incorporeal is 'substance and being' (οὐσίαν καὶ ὄν).

The reason why 'being' (ὄν) is its name is that it has not come to
be and will not perish, nor can it undergo either any other change or
any better or worse development. Rather, it is simple and unalterable
and constant in its form, neither voluntarily departing from its same-
ness nor being forced to do so by anything else. Then again[55] Plato
said in the *Cratylus* that names themselves are applicable to things by
virtue of their likeness to them. So let it be granted and decided thus:
the incorporeal is that which is (frg. 6).[56]

Appropriately for a climactic moment, this passage is dense with
allusions to other texts. It will take time to spell them out in detail.
I shall proceed in chronological order.

First, the *Book of Exodus*. There is no parallel in Plato or any other
Greek philosopher I know for such a revelation of the divine name,
let alone for the revelation to consist of so common or garden a
name as 'being'. Given that Numenius' First God has already been
called ὁ ὤν,[57] and given that the *Exodus* narrative has already been
used to show the Jews agreeing with Plato, I trust that readers will
find it overwhelmingly likely that Numenius' own revelation scene in
frg. 6 was meant to recall Moses' encounter with the burning bush.

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[55] This use of δὲ καί (J.D. Denniston, *The Greek particles*, Oxford 1959², 305) adds
a further reason for the name; a reason based on the nature of the name supple-
ments a reason based on the nature of its nominatum.

[56] So Gifford translates εἶναι τὸ ὂν ἀσώματον. Des Places has it the other way
round: 'l'être est incorporel', which he admits is not the conclusion we have been
led to expect. He cites the same formula in the first sentence of frg. 7, which fol-
lowed closely after frg. 6, but this reports what the speaker has just said and so is
not independent evidence for what he meant to say in frg. 6. The solution is to
read Plato as closely as Numenius did, for there one can find definitions stated in
this form, with the definiendum lacking an article and seemingly in predicate posi-
tion: e.g. *Respublica* 332b 9–c 2 with d 7–8, 335c 1–5 with 336a 9–10. Des Places
gets it right at frg. 19.12–13: τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἕν.

[57] More than once, it would seem from the resumptive γε in ὅ γε ὤν. The πάλιν
in frg. 13.1 introduces a *second* proportion to explain the relation between the First
God and the Demiurge. This disposes of the confident assertion of M.J. Edwards,
'Numenius, Fr. 13 (des Places): A Note on Interpretation', *Mnemosyne* 42 (1989)
478–82, that it is 'sufficiently plain' that Numenius had done nothing earlier in *On
the Good* to prepare his readers for the unusual nomenclature ὁ ὤν. Edwards there-
fore goes back to Gifford's construal: ὤν as copula with σπέρμα its predicate. In
reply to the usual objection that a sower cannot sow himself, he cites texts on the
consubstantiality of parent and offspring. But then, in a construction he admits to
be difficult, to secure an object for the verb σπείρει he detaches χρήματα σύμπαντα
(understood as a periphrasis for the soul mixture of the *Timaeus*) from εἰς τὰ μετα-
λαγχάνοντα αὐτοῦ. The complications soon multiply *praeter necessitatem*.

Second, Plato. At first sight, he may seem to yield precedence to
Moses here, with only a supplementary argument from the *Cratylus*
expressly attributed to him. But a work *On the Good* can hardly neglect
the famous simile of the Sun in Plato's *Republic*. The link is the words
'Let no one laugh', which take us back to Glaucon's reaction on
being told that the Good is 'beyond being, surpassing it in dignity
and power'. Socrates reports, 'And Glaucon said μάλα γελοίως,
"Apollo, what daemonic excess"' (509c 1–2). Translators divide over
μάλα γελοίως. Is Socrates laughing at Glaucon ('Glaucon very ludi-
crously said')[58] or the other way round ('with much amusement
Glaucon said')?[59] The Greek could mean either, but the second alter-
native is a better match for 506d, where Socrates feared that if he
tried to say what the Good is, even at the level of his earlier account
of the virtues, he would disgrace himself and incur laughter. He
plays safe by offering a likeness of the Good instead of a definition—
and still incurs laughter. Numenius' speaker has even more reason
to fear being laughed at when, like Moses, he announces that the
name of the incorporeal is just 'being'. All that palaver building up
to the revelation of the divine name, and then, when the revelation
arrives, as in *Exodus* it is more of a puzzle than the question it
answers. The name of the incorporeal, the name that is to say of
God, is ὄν. But surely we have all along been arguing that only the
incorporeal is ὄν. Are we not now being told the utterly trivial truth
that τὸ ὄν is named ὄν? Besides, as the most unspecific word in the
language ὄν would seem to be the *least* revelatory name you could
come up with.

This is the point at which to note a third allusion threaded into
frg. 6. For anyone familiar with Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the phrase τοῦτο
τὸ πάλαι ζητούμενον should leap off the page as a semi-quotation
from Z1, 1028[b]2–4,[60] where Aristotle states that the question every-
one has been asking and puzzling over since philosophy began, the
question τί τὸ ὄν; ('What is that which is?') is the question τίς ἡ
οὐσία; ('What is substance?'). The allusion explains why the word
οὐσία ('substance') suddenly appears alongside ὄν in frg. 6.7. Already,

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[58] So Shorey, in line with Proclus (*In Platonis Rem Publicam* I.274.5, 286.1), Jowett,
Adam, Lindsay, Bloom. Lee has 'to the general amusement'.

[59] So, in effect, both Grube and Reeve. *Respublica* 398c 7 shows that it is not
out of character for Glaucon to laugh at what Socrates says.

[60] So too Frede, 'Numenius', 1051, but no sign of recognition from des Places.

in Book I, Numenius was asking τί τὸ ὄν; and treating it precisely as an old, old question on which ancient peoples agreed with Plato. He does not need Aristotle's support for going back to the distant past. His reuse of Aristotle's phrase τὸ πάλαι ζητούμενον is more likely to point a way forward from the seemingly laughable conclusion that the name of the incorporeal is the very name we have been puzzling over all along, τὸ ὄν. Numenius, I suggest, follows Aristotle in thinking that the question τί τὸ ὄν; can usefully be recast as the question τίς ἡ οὐσία; Let me explain why this would be a helpful way forward.

In a much cited passage of his classic study *L'Être et L'Essence*,[61] Étienne Gilson claimed Z1, 1028ᵇ2–4 as proof that Aristotle made no distinction between essence and existence. To this interpretation there are two important objections.

The first objection is to Gilson's understanding of οὐσία in this text as essence rather than substance. Aristotle's view is that the Presocratics did not have, save for a few fumbles, the concept of essence, so they could not possibly have been asking 'What is essence?'.[62] When read in its entirety, *Metaphysics* Z1 shows that the question Aristotle conceives himself to share with the older philosophers is the question, 'What are the fundamental underived constituents of the universe? What are the things that exist and are what they are independently and in their own right, such that everything else owes its being to them?' To *that* question Numenius as a Platonist quite naturally replies that what exists and is what it is independently and in its own right is: Being with a capital B, Being itself, the αὐτοόν of frg. 17.

Like Aristotle's *Metaphysics, On the Good* is written as an arduous journey which starts from the principles needed to explain the sensible world and ascends to a divine first principle very different from the gods of popular religion, different even from the Divine Craftsman of the *Timaeus* (frg. 12.7–14). It is easy to see how the question 'What is it that everything else owes its being to?' would fit the context of God's speaking from the burning bush in *Exodus* 3:14. The God of the Old Testament is precisely that to which everything else owes its being. But a Platonist can understand this in two ways, one as

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[61] Étienne Gilson, *L'Être et L'Essence*, Paris 1948, 59.
[62] *Physics* II.2, 194a18–21; *Metaphysics* A6, 987b3–4; M4, 1078b17–29.

efficient causation by a Divine Craftsman, the other as imitative participation in Being itself, whether directly or by way of less exalted Forms which themselves derive from Being. Numenius could well have been encouraged to take 'I am that I am' in this second way by the fact that Aristotle speaks of 'What is the primary, fundamental being?' as the old, old question which everyone has been grappling with since philosophy began. Numenius would not be the first to count Moses the discoverer of philosophy itself.[63]

The second objection to Gilson is that Aristotle does not mean that there is no difference at all between his two questions τί τὸ ὄν; and τίς ἡ οὐσία; On the contrary, precisely because οὐσία signifies that which is in the primary way, that which explains the being of everything else, if we can answer the second question we will have the key to answering the first. There is a difference between the two questions because the highest level of being, whatever it may be, is the one that explains the rest. And it seems to me that, as against Sorabji on Plato on eternity, so against Gilson on Aristotle Numenius has it right.

Finally, Plato's *Cratylus*. The speaker has already explained (frg. 6.7–12) why the name ὄν is appropriate to the incorporeal, viz. because the incorporeal, and only the incorporeal, is immune to change. This explanation of the name, based on the nature of its nominatum, is a straightforward corollary of the thesis argued at length in Book I that nothing corporeal can be ὄν, because all bodily things are subject to change. We now expect a supplementary explanation based on the nature of the name ὄν itself,[64] which should display some likeness to its incorporeal nominatum. But our expectation is frustrated. Numenius moves at once to trumpet his conclusion ('So let it be granted and decided thus: the incorporeal is that which is') without stopping to specify any resemblance between name and bearer.[65] He is as much of a tease as the God of *Exodus* 3:14.

Since we are left to speculate on our own, I suggest we recall the etymology of ὄνομα ('name') as 'search for a being' at *Cratylus* 421ab: τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὄν, οὗ τυγχάνει ζήτημα τὸ ὄνομα (cf. Van den Berg, this vol., §2 on Plato's *Cratylus*). I cannot help thinking that Numenius'

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[63] See note 10 above on Artapanus.
[64] Cf. note 55 above.
[65] Des Places *ad locum* seems oblivious to the difficulty, merely referring us to *Cratylus* 430a 10 for a general statement of the likeness theory of names.

strangely worded sentence λέγω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῷ εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ πάλαι ζητούμενον (frg. 6.5–6: 'I say that its name is the very thing we have long been searching for') is a transposition of this etymology into a context where it can be fused with Aristotle's τὸ πάλαι ζητούμενον to suggest that the name of the incorporeal signifies *the* object of search, the being which, once found, will explain everything else. Its name is Name itself, from which all ordinary names derive as all beings derive from Being itself.[66]

7. The Etymology of 'Eternity'

But enough of speculation. The ancient obsession with etymology does not appeal to modern philosophers trained in the analytic tradition. But please put up with it a little longer, for etymology can provide a useful focus on the debate I began from.

Here is Plotinus on the etymology of αἰών, 'eternity':

> When we use the expressions 'always' (τὸ ἀεί) and 'not a thing which at one time is and at another is not' (τὸ οὐ ποτὲ μὲν ὄν, ποτὲ δὲ μὴ ὄν), it is *for our own sake* (ἡμῶν ἕνεκα)[67] that we put it that way. No doubt 'always' is not used in its proper (κυρίως) sense. When applied to the incorruptible it might mislead the soul into imagining an extension of something becoming more, something indeed which is never going to fail. It would have been better perhaps just to say 'being' (ὤν). But even though 'what is' (τὸ ὄν) is a satisfactory name for being (οὐσία), since people tended to think that becoming is in fact [or: is also] being (οὐσία), to grasp <the difference> they needed the addition of 'always'. For it is not the case that being (ὄν) is one thing and *always* being another, any more than a philosopher is one thing and the true philosopher another. It is because there is such a thing as putting on a pretence of philosophy that 'true' got added. Just so, 'always' (ἀεί) was added to 'being' (τῷ ὄντι), i.e. to ὤν, so that the word αἰών ['eternity'] means 'always being'. For this reason, the 'always' should be taken to mean 'truly' being (ἀληθῶς ὤν), and it should be contracted into an extensionless power which in no way needs anything besides what it already has. Rather, it has everything there is (ἔχει τὸ πᾶν) (III.7[45].6.22–36; transl. after Armstrong).

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[66] Another route to the same conclusion would be a different etymology: ὄνομα = ὄν + ὁμοιώσει.

[67] In their *editio maior* (1951) Henry-Schwyzer put a comma between ἡμῶν and ἕνεκα to join ἕνεκα with τῆς σαφηνείας. Their *editio minor* (1964) accepts, as does Armstrong's Loeb (1967), Dodds' proposal to excise τῆς σαφηνείας as a gloss on ἡμῶν ἕνεκα.

The etymology αἰών = ἀεί + ὤν may come from Aristotle (*De Caelo* I.9, 279a 22–8), but Plotinus gives it a pedagogical twist towards Platonism. 'Always' is said from the point of view of ordinary people immersed in the sensible world of becoming, to guide them to a higher perspective. Sorabji takes a different view of this 'crucial passage'. Its purpose is to introduce a novel, non-temporal sense of 'always' in which the word 'merely has the function of denoting *true being as opposed to coming to be*'.[68] This makes it sound as if Plotinus bids us disregard the usual meaning of 'always' and substitute a quite different, unrelated sense, which only the philosophically enlightened will understand. For anyone else—for anyone, that is, unacquainted with the Platonist concept of true being—the etymology of 'eternity' will be more of a hindrance than a help.

In ancient theories of language the 'proper' (κυρίως) sense of a word may contrast with a variety of 'improper' extended, figurative, or catachrestic uses, not all of which would call for a separate entry in the dictionary. For example, when Homer speaks of the 'ten thousand noble deeds' accomplished by Odysseus (*Ilias* 2.272), that grand hyperbole counts for Aristotle (*Poetica* 1457ᵇ11–13) as 'metaphor' (μεταφορά), i.e. as an 'improper' (οὐ κυρίως) meaning of the number word. The example is pertinent because Plotinus clearly wants people to keep in mind some part, but not all, of the ordinary meaning of 'always', otherwise he would not warn them against extrapolating to an infinite extension. (We would not ask Odysseus to tell us about deed no. 9,997.) The helpful force of the etymology αἰών = ἀεί + ὤν is negative: an eternal thing is *not* a thing whose being has a beginning and end in time—hence Plotinus' addition of the phrase 'not a thing which at one time is and at another is not' (τὸ οὐ ποτὲ μὲν ὄν, ποτὲ δὲ μὴ ὄν). What we must resist is the temptation to infer (with Aristotle) the positive conclusion that an eternal thing *endures forever* throughout an infinity of time. Only so will the etymology of 'eternity' help us transcend the temporal order to renew contact with the extensionless present of true being.

We live, Plotinus goes on to say (7.1–6), in both time and eternity. We have a share of both. This calls attention to the 'we' who read and respond to his treatise. Is it the 'we' who grew up Here

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[68] His phrase, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, 112, where in translating the passage he renders ἡμῶν ἕνεκα 'as a concession to ourselves'.

in the sensible world of time or the 'we' who most truly belong
There in the realm of eternity? Plotinus answers 'Both'. He is writ-
ing for those who attempt the journey of thought from Here to
There. The phrase 'always in the present' joins the view from Here
with the view from There to express, not a contradiction in terms,
but the termini of an arduous transition from one all-encompassing
perspective to another. Remember Boethius' comparison: God sees
the whole of history in his eternal present as a traveller on a high
mountain sees things far and near all at once, in a single temporal
present (*De Consolatione Philosophiae* V.6). A more mundane comparison
would be with a novelist's synoptic grasp of all the events and life-
histories in a story. Such analogies offer a many-one mapping from
the infinitely numerous successive times of ordinary experience to
the unitary present of the divine (authorial) perspective. As *homo
viator* 'we' are on the way to that height. 'Always in the present' is
meant to help us upwards, not to fix in a formula the perspective
we are struggling to achieve. Sorabji's disambiguation would frus-
trate Plotinus' pedagogic aim. To repeat, 'It is *for our own sake* that
we put it that way'.

Let me concede that Plotinus' more scholastic successors do make
formulaic use of two senses of 'always'.[69] But this concession offers
less than Sorabji wants, because when they speak of the 'always' of
ordinary time and contrast it with a non-temporal (ἄχρονος) 'always'
belonging to eternity, the question arises whether the second term
of this contrast is the bare contradictory of the first, as Sorabji holds,
or the richer notion of an eternal present. For any follower of Plato,
time is a likeness (εἰκών) of eternity, its moving image (*Timaeus* 37d).
Time's model is non-temporal in the sense that it is other than time,[70]
but it can hardly be a mere absence or negation of time. Without a
strong positive notion of eternity Platonic metaphysics would collapse.

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[69] See Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum* I.239.2–6 and other passages cited by Sorabji,
Time, Creation and the Continuum, 115—where, however, note the beautifully fluid
treatment of 'always' quoted from the Christian Origen, fellow-student with Plotinus
in the school of Ammonius Saccas. It does credit to their teacher.

[70] So already, long before Plotinus, Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos* 393a: κατὰ τὸν
αἰῶνα τὸν ἀκίνητον καὶ ἄχρονον καὶ ἀνέγκλιτον, where the last epithet picks up
the description of 'was' and 'will be' as ἐγκλίσεις (n. 53 above) and in the very
same sentence God is assigned to a single 'now' for always.

8. THE IDEA OF AN ETERNAL PRESENT

There is much in Platonism that does not make sense to a mind content with the conceptual framework of ordinary experience. Plato speaks frequently of the bafflement and hostility that philosophy arouses, in intellectuals as well as others. His word for what philosophy—his type of philosophy—is up against is δόξα, inadequately translated 'opinion', by which he intends the full range of beliefs, assumptions, values, and habits of mind we acquire, largely without realizing it, by being brought up to live in the sensible world.[71] The dialogues record many confrontations between Opinion and Philosophy, but the refutation of Opinion is less an end in itself than a means of opening our minds to the possibility of an alternative perspective. That is why the dialogues are full of images as well as arguments. Opinion is so deeply rooted in our soul that it tends to be intransigent, blind to alternatives, resistant to argument. An image like the Ship of State in the *Republic*, or the Charioteer with his two horses in the *Phaedrus*, can liberate us from the familiar chains of Opinion to the realization that alternative perspectives are available, which provide novel starting points for argument. And the famous similes of Sun, Line, and Cave offer the prospect of progressing, gradually, from the temporal perspective of ordinary life in the sensible world towards the godlike perspective which the *Timaeus* identifies with eternity in contrast to time. Such progress, a turning *of the whole soul* from the realm of Becoming to that of Being (*Respublica* 518c), will transform everything: our understanding of the world, our values, the way we live—*and thereby our standards of what makes sense.*

This transformative intent is characteristic of all ancient philosophy,[72] but the other-worldly leanings of Platonism take it to extremes and thereby set a problem for historians of philosophy, especially those like Sorabji and myself whose background in the analytic tradition encourages a critical engagement with the views and arguments of past philosophers.[73] The problem is this. From what standpoint are

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[71] Cf. Numenius, frg. 52.53–55: Pythagoras did not hesitate to defend the truth with assertions that go against people's opinion and expectations.

[72] See my 'The Sceptic in his Place and Time', in: Richard Rorty, J.B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner (eds), *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, Cambridge 1984, 225–54, or in Myles Burnyeat and Michael Frede (eds), *The Original Sceptics: A Controversy*, Indianapolis 1997, 92–126.

[73] I do not mean that critical engagement is bound to be hostile. On the contrary,

we to judge the coherence of the idea of an eternal present? Who are the 'we' who write the history of this long-lived notion? I suspect that Plotinus would hear in Sorabji's objections the voice of a 'we' who insist, with Aristotle, that the temporal framework we grew up with Here—the framework which shaped our language and thought— is the only one there is, hence the only one we can make sense of. From this perspective a present tense without past or future connections is 'a kind of logical torso',[74] a defective remnant of ordinary time. Which is to say, with Borges, that 'eternity is an image wrought in the substance of time'.[75] But does not that inversion of Plato simply beg the question?[76]

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Eleanor Stump and Norman Kretzman, 'Eternity', *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981) 429–58, give an admirable display of how analytic techniques, sympathetically applied, may be used to rescue the eternal present from over-quick dismissal.

[74] Owen, 'Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present', 40.

[75] Jorge Luis Borges, 'A History of Eternity', in: *Selected Non-fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, Harmondsworth 1999, 123.

[76] This essay began as a pagan contribution to a memorable inter-faith (Jewish, Christian, Muslim) conference on 'The Great Tautology', organized by myself, Alexander Broadie, and George Steiner at Robinson College, Cambridge on 22–24 May 1992 to discuss the centuries-long reception of *Exodus* 3:14 by philosophers of the three religions. Subsequent versions benefited from discussions at Cambridge (the Patristic Seminar and the B Club), Cornell, Dublin, London, and Princeton. For advice and help I am most grateful to John Dillon and Michael Frede, for usefully critical comments to Paul Kalligas, Ricardo Salles, and David Sedley. I signed off the original version of this essay on 1 May 2003, soon after the fall of Baghdad to the US and British invasion, which gravely damaged the prospects for any renewal of such interfaith philosophical dialogue. Corrections to the reprinted version were completed on 1 January 2006, when the consequences of that invasion were threatening much more than philosophical dialogue.

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DOES IT MATTER TO CALL GOD ZEUS?
ORIGEN, *CONTRA CELSUM* I 24–25 AGAINST
THE GREEK INTELLECTUALS ON DIVINE NAMES[1]

ROBBERT M. VAN DEN BERG

1. INTRODUCTION

At some time in the second half of the second century CE, an otherwise unknown Platonic philosopher Celsus wrote an attack on Christianity entitled *Alêthês Logos, The True Doctrine*. This true doctrine consisted in age-old wisdom in which all peoples where supposed to partake, Greeks and non-Greeks alike, including the Jews (cf. Burnyeat, this vol., §1).[2] However, the Jews and the Christians following in their wake, claimed that they held a monopoly on wisdom concerning the divine. Celsus did his best to expose the misguided arrogance of this position. History is written by the victors, in this case by the Christian Origen. Celsus' work is lost, and for its content we have to rely on Origen, who attacked it around 248 CE in his still extant *Contra Celsum*, in which he quotes and paraphrases large portions of the work that he sets out to refute.

In this paper, I wish to explore their discussion on the issue of divine names. Celsus had argued that the Jews and the Christians were wrong not to worship Zeus, for this is in fact the same god as theirs, be it that the Greeks just happen to call him differently (cf. Van Kooten, this vol., end of §4). I shall concentrate particularly on the way in which this discussion is tied up with ancient Greek ideas about divine names, and especially with Platonic views on language. My point will be that Origen thinks little of the speculations on the topic by Greek intellectuals on which Celsus relies. This is as one might expect given the special place of the name of God in the

[2] On Celsus and his work, see Frede 1994 & Frede 1997; cf. Boys-Stones 2001, 105–22.

Jewish and Christian tradition. Yet, in general, scholars miss this point and tend to connect Origen's position to the views held by Platonists and Stoics.

2. GREEK VIEWS ON DIVINE NAMES:
FROM HERODOTUS TO *THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS*

According to Origen, Celsus had this to say on the topic of divine names:

> **T.1**   The goatherds and shepherds thought that there was one God called the Most High, or Adonai, or the Heavenly One, or Sabaoth, or however they like to call this universe; and they acknowledged nothing more. Later he [Celsus] says that it makes no difference to call the supreme God Zeus by the name used among the Greeks, or by that, for example, used among the Indians, or by that among the Egyptians. My answer [sc. of Origen] to this is that a profound and obscure question is raised by this subject, that concerning the nature of names (Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 24).[3]

In Antiquity Jews and Christians were infamous for their refusal to worship other gods besides their own one god. Origen proudly claims that 'Christians strive to the point of death to avoid calling Zeus God or naming him in any other language' (*Contra Celsum* I 25). To Celsus this was sheer stupidity, the result of a lack of theological understanding on the part of the rural simpletons that he believed the ancient Jews to be. Zeus, thus Celsus, is just the Greek name for the Jewish Adonai, just as the Indians will worship him by yet another name. There is thus no reason not to worship Zeus, and it is certainly no reason to get killed over it.[4] To a modern reader this may seem a bizarre argument made up by the intellectual Celsus that was not likely to convince anyone. After all, as Origen hastens to point out, Zeus is the son of Cronus and Rhea, the husband of Hera, who has sexual intercourse with his daughter Persephone. God has nothing of such a complicated family life. Yet, Celsus could claim a long list of Greek intellectuals in support of his view, to begin with

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[3] All translations in this paper of *Contra Celsum* are after Chadwick 1953.

[4] Frede 1997, 228–30 rightly insists that Celsus' quarrel with the Christians is not about polytheism versus monotheism, but about the fact that the latter deny the existence of an *alêthês logos* shared by different nations on the basis of which the gods of these nations may be identified with each other.

Herodotus, to whom he explicitly refers, down to Plato, who gave the position such philosophical credibility that it was even taken up by Hellenized Jews, as we shall see below. Let us first start with Herodotus, who in the second book of his *Histories*, which is dedicated to Egypt, makes the following, at first, puzzling remark:

> **T.2** The names of almost all the gods came from Egypt to Greece. That they came from barbarians, I have discovered in this way; I think they came particularly from Egypt. Apart from Poseidon and the Dioscuri, as I said before, and Hera and Hestia, Themis, the Charites and Nereids, the names of the other gods always existed in Egypt. I say what the Egyptians themselves say. The other gods whose names they say they do not know, I think, were named by the Pelasgians, except for Poseidon; this god they learnt from the Libyans. No one except the Libyans has used the name of Poseidon from the beginning and they have always honoured this god. The Egyptians do not honour any heroes (Herodotus, *Histories* II 50; transl. R. Thomas).

What does Herodotus mean by this? It seems unlikely that he wishes to claim that the name 'Zeus' is in fact an Egyptian name, for he appears to know that 'the Egyptians call Zeus "Amoun"' (II 42, 5). Many suggestions have been made to solve this seeming inconsistency, yet, the great scholar Walter Burkert has come up with what seems to be the ultimate solution. He argues that we should read Herodotus' remark against the background of contemporary Greek debates about the nature and function of names, which for the ancient Greeks include both the proper names of gods and men, as well as the names of things, i.e. what we would now call nouns.[5] According to one of these views, the function of names is to distinguish things from one other, preferably in a manner that reflects reality. Giving names, on this view, is a process of classification and ordering a hitherto confused world. And indeed, Herodotus reports that the Pelasgians, before they learnt the names of the gods from the Egyptians, did not distinguish the individual gods, but just worshipped them as gods (*theoi*) (II 52, 1). Likewise, the Greeks had initially not a clue about how to order the divine world. According to Herodotus it was only when Homer and Hesiod came 'to construct a theogony for

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[5] See Burkert 1985; cf. also the discussion by Thomas 2000, 274–82, who discusses Herodotus' ideas about divine names as a good example of the fact that the *Histories* are a product of the intellectual climate of the late fifth century BCE. On the idea of naming as classification in fifth-century Greek intellectual circles, see further Sluiter 1997, 174–5.

the Greeks and gave epithets to the gods and apportioned their offices and described their forms' (II 53) that these things were sorted out for the Greeks. It is in this context that the claim that the Greeks learnt the names of the gods from the Egyptians should be understood: it does not mean that they learnt certain sounds from them, but a certain way to classify the divine world. 'Amoun' and 'Zeus' may sound differently, yet these names are the same in so far as they both indicate the king of the gods. One important implication of this view is apparently that Herodotus thought that the divine world of Egyptians and Greeks was essentially the same, be it that the Egyptians had failed to distinguish some gods which the Greeks had, such as Poseidon, the Dioscuri and some others. To my mind, the same sentiment underlies a remark that Herodotus makes at the beginning of book II:

> **T.3**   I am not keen to expound those divine matters of which I heard, except only the names, thinking that all men understand these equally (Herodotus, *Histories* II 3.2; transl. Thomas).

Burkert assumes that Herodotus intends to say that all men understand of these divine matters equally little.[6] Yet, to me it seems that he means that all men understand the divine names equally, i.e. all men recognize, for example, a Zeus/Amoun type of deity. Since these names are common knowledge there is no reason why one could not talk about them, as opposed to certain mystery rites and other pieces of arcane knowledge among the Egyptians that were supposed to be kept secret.

   Celsus explicitly mentions Herodotus as a source of inspiration. In *Contra Celsum* V 41, in what reads like another version of the same passage currently under discussion, Celsus takes the Christians to task for assuming that the Jews had some deeper wisdom than other peoples (cf. Burnyeat, this vol., §1). In fact, Celsus argues, the ideas of the Jews are commonplace among the ancient peoples. As we have seen in T.1 above, Celsus holds that the Jews identify their god with the heaven and the universe (see also Van Kooten, this vol., §1 on Strabo, Hecataeus, Juvenal, and Celsus). Celsus protests that

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[6] Cf. Burkert 1985, 131.

T.4 not even their doctrine of heaven is their own but, to omit all other instances, was also held long ago by the Persians, as Herodotus shows in one place. 'For their custom', he says, 'is to go up at the highest peaks of the mountains to offer sacrifice to Zeus, and to call the whole circle of heaven Zeus'.[7] I think, therefore, that it makes no difference whether we call Zeus the Most High, or *Zen*, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Amoun like the Egyptians, or Papeus like the Scythians.

I do not think that Herodotus wanted to maintain that 'Zeus' is a Persian name any more than that he wished to claim that it was an Egyptian one, rather that the Persian cosmic god is the same god as the Greek Zeus. Celsus' point is that if the Jews venerate a supreme god who is identified with the heaven, they are apparently talking about the same god who is venerated by the Persians and who in Greek is called Zeus. What is wrong with Judaism and Christianity is not so much the god in whom they believe but rather their claim of exclusiveness, the fact that they deny the validity of the *alethês logos* in which all peoples share.

The idea that the different names in different languages actually refer to the same person or thing remained popular after Herodotus, not least because it was adopted by Plato in the *Cratylus*, his dialogue about names (cf. Burnyeat, this vol., end of §6). In this work Plato has Socrates investigate the question of the correctness of names, i.e. what makes a name a correct name of a thing or a person. Socrates argues that names have a specific function. Good, correct names are names that perform that function well. Their job is to instruct, i.e. 'to divide things according to their natures' (*Cratylus* 388c).[8] Any name that performs its function well, be it a Greek or a barbaric name, is a correctly given name, even though they may sound differently. To illustrate his point, Socrates compares the activities of the name givers in various languages to those of blacksmiths. Both, thus Plato, are craftsmen (*dêmiourgoi*). The blacksmiths, either Greek or barbarian, when making drills from iron, have a common certain idea of what a drill should look like. This they embody into iron, each in a different piece. In the same way, the craftsmen who make names when naming the same thing embody the identical meaning of a name into the different languages with their own sound

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[7] Herodotus, *Histories* I 131, 2.
[8] All translations of the *Cratylus* are from Reeve 1998.

patterns. Even if these names sound differently, they are still the same names, because they have an identical meaning, just as the drills are of the same type, yet of different bits of iron.

Plato suggests furthermore that correctly established names reflect the natures of the things that they name. He illustrates this by means of a long list of etymologies of names of all sorts of things, including gods, that take up much of the *Cratylus*. In the context of the present discussion, his explanation of the name of Zeus is of special interest. It is based on the fact that the name has two declensions, one of which has '*Zēna*' in the accusative, the other '*Dia*'.

> **T.5**   . . . Zeus also seems to have had an altogether fine name given to him—but it isn't exactly easy to figure out. That's because the name 'Zeus' is exactly like a phrase that we divide into two parts, '*Zēna*' and '*Dia*', some of us using one of them and some the other. But these two names, reunited into one, express the nature of the god—which is just what we said a name should do. Certainly, no one else is more the cause of life (*zēn*), whether for us or for anything else than the ruler and king of all things. Thus '*Zēna*' and '*Dia*' together correctly name the god that is always the cause of life (*di' hon zēn*) for all creatures. But, as I say, his name which is really one, is divided in two (Plato, *Cratylus* 395e–396a).

What are we to think of these and the other etymologies in the *Cratylus*? Even though some of Plato's etymologies involve a certain degree of play, he seriously believes—with many other Greek intellectuals—that etymologies reveal something about the ideas of the primitive name-givers about this world.[9]

Plato's theory was a source of inspiration to many, Platonists and non-Platonists alike. In the present context, one of the most interesting examples comes from the so-called *Letter from Aristeas to Philocrates*, which narrates the story of the *Septuaginta* translation. When Aristeas learns of the desire of the king, Ptolemy II, to acquire a translation of the books of the Jews for his library at Alexandria, he jumps at

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[9] See, for example, Plato, *Cratylus* 411b: 'the people who gave things their names in very ancient times'; *Cratylus* 425a–b: 'It was the ancients who combined things in this way. Our job—if indeed we are to examine all these things with scientific knowledge—is to divide what they put together, so as to see whether or not both the primary and derivative names are given in accord with nature. For, any other way of connecting names to things, Hermogenes, is inferior and unsystematic.' The point that according to Plato (and Aristotle) names reveal the ideas of primitive men has been forcefully argued by Sedley 2003, see esp. 25–50.

the occasion to plead the case of the Jews who were at the time held in captivity in Egypt. He assures the king that the beliefs of the Jews are not that much different from those of the Greeks:

> **T.6**   They worship the same God, the Lord and Creator of the Universe, as all other men, as we ourselves, o king, though we call him by different names, such as '*Zêna*' and '*Dia*'. This name was very appropriately bestowed upon him by our first ancestors, in order to signify that He through whom all things are endowed with life and come into being, is necessarily the ruler and lord of the Universe. Set all mankind an example of magnanimity by releasing those who are held in bondage (*Aristeae Epistula* 16; transl. R.H. Charles).

This passage readily calls to mind the theory about names from the *Cratylus* as well as the etymology of the name of Zeus derived from the double accusative *Zên* and *Dia*. Apparently there were some Jews who were willing to succeed, if only for political reasons, that indeed there is no reason not to identify their God with the Greek Zeus.

3. Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 24:
Greek Philosophers Versus the Wise Men of All Nations

Unlike the author of *The Letter of Aristeas*, Origen has no intention to convince his public that his god is no stranger to the classical pantheon. He stresses the differences instead. He starts his reply by a quick perusal of the views of various Greek philosophers on the issue of names:

> **T.7**   The problem is whether, as Aristotle thinks, names were given by arbitrary determination; or, as the Stoics hold, by nature, the first utterances being imitations of the things (*ta pragmata*) described and becoming their names (in accordance with which they introduce certain etymological principles); or whether, as Epicurus teaches (his view not being the same as that held by the Stoics), names were given by nature, the first man having burst out with certain sounds descriptive of the objects (*ta pragmata*).

Origen answers the question by an appeal to magical practices:

> **T.8**   Now if by a special study we could show the nature of powerful names, some of which are used by the Egyptian wise men, or the learned men among the Persian magi, or the Brahmans, or Samanaeans among the Indian philosophers, and so on according to each nation, and if we could establish that so-called magic is not, as the followers of Epicurus and Aristotle think, utterly incoherent, but as the experts

in these things prove, is a consistent system, which has principles known
to very few; then we would say that the name Sabaoth, and Adonai,
and all the other names that have been handed down by the Hebrews
with great reverence, are not concerned with ordinary created things
(*pragmata*), but with a certain mysterious theology that is related to the
Creator of the universe. It is for this reason that when these names
are pronounced in a particular sequence which is natural to them,
they can be employed for certain purposes; and so also with other
names in use in Egyptian which invoke certain daemons who have
power only to do certain things; and other names in Persian which
invoke other powers, and so on with each nation.

I have quoted this passage at length since it is, I think, usually mis-
understood. It is generally assumed that Origen wants to take sides
in a debate among ancient philosophers about the nature of names,
whether they are by convention, thus Aristotle in *De Interpretatione*,
or by nature, either in the sense that they imitate the things to which
they refer, thus the Stoics, or as some kind of natural reaction to
the perception of the surrounding world, as the Epicureans hold,
who compare the production of language to coughing or sneezing.[10]
Origen is believed to side with the Stoics and ultimately with Plato,
who curiously is not mentioned here even though he will be quoted
with approval at the end of Origen's discussion of the nature of
names.[11] There are seemingly good reasons for this interpretation.
First of all, Origen is generally regarded as a Platonist, be it that
this view has recently been challenged.[12] Furthermore, when we turn
to *Contra Celsum*, we find on the one hand that Origen explicitly
rejects the Aristotelian and Epicurean positions, while on the other
hand he reaches the very Platonic conclusion that there exists a nat-
ural correct name for each thing:

> **T.9** A man, then, who has grasped a more profound understanding
> of these matters, even if only to a small extent, will take care to apply
> names correctly in their respective connections, some in one case, some
> in another.[13]

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[10] The literature on the semantic theories of Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the
Stoics is vast. For a first introduction see, for example, Sluiter 1997, 188–200 on
Aristotle; Long & Sedley 1987, 97–101 on Epicurus, and 195 on the Stoics. See
also Sorabji 2004, 213–19.
[11] See, for example, Dillon 1985, 207; Sorabji 2004, 220.
[12] Edwards 2002 provocatively argues that on many important issues Origen was
radically opposed to Platonism. He does not deal with the issue of divine names.
[13] Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 24.

I would like to argue, however, that Origen finds fault with *all* the philosophical accounts that he mentions. Origen claims that according to the Epicurean *and* the Stoic theories names refer to 'the things', *ta pragmata*. This seems a vague enough term to include almost anything, but Origen wants us to draw a distinction between the names of *ta pragmata* and of the divine, for he makes the point that the divine names in use among the Hebrews 'are not concerned with ordinary created things (*pragmata*), but with a certain mysterious theology that is related to the Creator of the universe.' This criticism is not just directed against the Aristotelians and Epicureans, it is also aimed at the Stoics, as appears from the people who act contrary to those who 'have a more profound understanding of these matters, even if only to a small extent'. Such a person will take care to apply names correctly,

> **T.10**   lest he should be like those who mistakenly apply the name of God to lifeless matter, or degrade the name of goodness from the first cause or from virtue and beauty to the level of blind wealth and to the harmony of flesh and blood and bones that exists when we are in good health and vigour, and to supposed nobility of birth.[14]

Those who identify wealth, health, and nobility of birth may perhaps be Aristotelians, for Aristotle considers such things as necessary ingredients of the good life. Those who apply the name of God to lifeless matter are probably the Stoics, who assume that Zeus is an intelligent fire that pervades the whole cosmos. Some pages earlier, Origen had already criticized this view 'of the Stoics, that even God is a material substance, and they are not ashamed to say that he is capable of complete alteration and transformation'.[15]

Thus, the point that Origen raises against the views of the Greek philosophers in general, whether they believe that names are purely a matter of convention or that there exists a natural relation of some sort between the object and its name, is that they *all* assume that naming the gods is comparable to naming the sensible world around us. And indeed the general assumption with most Greek authors is that the naming of gods is comparable to the naming of things in the world around us. This holds true, as we have seen, for Herodotus who, no matter where the Egyptians got their divine names from,

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[14] Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 24.
[15] Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 21.

presents the process of naming the gods as an ever more accurate division of the divine world, not unlike the explorations of such people like Herodotus himself, who sought to map out the world and name what previously had been a *terra incognita*. In the same manner, Plato compares the name-giver to a blacksmith, a human craftsman. He recognizes that the gods have special names that they use among themselves, yet since they surpass human understanding, he focuses instead on man-made divine names, such as the example of the name of 'Zeus'.[16] It even holds true in the case of the *Letter to Aristeas*, where it is said that the name of Zeus was 'very appropriately bestowed upon him by our first ancestors'.

Origen takes an altogether different line (cf. Geljon, this vol., §1 on Philo). In keeping with the revelatory character of the Jewish and Christian fate, he assumes a divine origin for names of divine beings and language in general. As he writes elsewhere in *Contra Celsum* when he returns to the issue of divine names:

> **T.11**   Accordingly, now we say also with regard to the nature of names that they are not arbitrary conventions of those who give them, as Aristotle thinks. For the languages in use among man *have not a human origin*, which is clear to those able to give careful attention to the nature of spells which were adapted by the authors of the languages in accordance with each different language and different pronunciation.[17]

Origen's argument for the divine origin of divine names, both in this text and the passage under discussion, is that this explains the power of these names in magical spells (cf. Van Kooten, this vol., end of §3 on Jews and magic). These names are powerful *because* they originate from the divine powers, which they activate. The use of magical powers furthermore indicates that we should not change anything about them, like translating them into another language. Origen points out that by means of the invocation 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' one may subject daemons, whereas if one translates the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and invokes 'the God-of-the-chosen-father-of-the-echo, and the God-of-laughter, and the God-of-the-man-who-strikes-with-the-heel', nothing of the sort happens (*Contra Celsum* V 45).

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[16] Cf. Plato, *Cratylus* 391d.
[17] Origen, *Contra Celsum* V 45.

An important point to note is that Origen acknowledges that the existence of powerful names is not limited to the Hebrew language alone. He explicitly refers, for example, to Egyptian and Persian powerful names. These divine names, though, address only minor, local divine powers, daemons, who 'only have power to do certain things'. They are in use by the 'wise men' of the various nations. This is in line with Origen's overall theory of pagan wisdom. Origen holds that all wisdom is derived from the divine, be it that the Hebrew-Christian tradition has access to a better source: whereas the pagans depend on demons for their knowledge, the Hebrews and Christians have God as their source of knowledge. Pagan wisdom is deemed to be inferior since the demons themselves are subordinate to God and their knowledge is correspondingly inferior.[18]

What Origen does, then, is to oppose the views of the Greek philosophers, of Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics, to the wise of all peoples. The former, students of *ta pragmata*, the created things, fail to understand the divine nature of names: they just assume that these are the product of human invention. The latter, experts on dealing with divine powers, understand that these have a higher cause. The implicit point against Celsus is clear: you, Celsus, accuse us Christians to deviate from the universal *alêthês logos*, whereas it is in fact you with your philosopher-friends who are the ones who stray from the collective wisdom of ages.

4. Origen, *Contra Celsum* I 25: Origen and the Platonists

Origen ends his discussion by quoting from Plato:

> **T.12** And if Plato is admired for his words in the *Philebus* (12c), 'My reverence, Protarchus, for the names of the gods is profound', when Philebus had called pleasure a god in his discussion with Socrates, why should we not give even more approval to the Christians for their carefulness not to apply any of the names used in the mythologies to the Creator of the universe? (*Contra Celsum* I 25)

This quotation from Plato's *Philebus* in combination with the fact that the Platonists of late Antiquity, contrary to Plato himself, took a lively interest in magic and divine names has led scholars to compare

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[18] On demonic and divine wisdom in Origen, see Boys-Stones 2001, 196–7.

Origen's position to that of those Platonists.[19] I think that there is less similarity of Origen's position to this Platonic magic, called theurgy, than they assume. Let me explain.

As we have seen, Origen reproaches the Greek philosophers for degrading the name of God or Goodness to the level of inferior things as matter, blind wealth and the nobility of birth. Yet, this criticism only paves they way for Origen's main point:

> **T.13** Perhaps also it is no less dangerous for a man to degrade the name of God or that of goodness to things to which these names ought not to be applied, than it is for a man to change names the nature of which is in accordance with a certain mysterious principle, and to apply the name of what is bad to what is good and of what is good to what is bad (*Contra Celsum* I 25).

As we have seen, Origen assumes that the divine names of Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and the like do refer to actually existing daemonic powers and do hold real magical power. It is precisely for that reason that there is a danger in using these names in order to invoke God: one may well end up with daemons, 'the entire race of whom', thus Origen, 'is evil'.[20] Even though Plato does not make the mistake to degrade the name of God, he is not credited with the superior insight that one should not apply the names of inferior beings to superior ones. Origen's whole point in referring to Plato seems to be to fight one Greek philosopher with another.

In fact, had Origen known the views of those later Platonists, he would not have been impressed, since all of them maintain that human beings play an important role in the formation of divine names. The Neoplatonist Iamblichus (*c.* 235–*c.* 325 CE), discusses the role of divine names in theurgy, i.e. Neoplatonic magic, in his intriguing treatise *De Mysteriis*.[21] In it he seems to come close to Origen's position, still he claims that it is absurd to assume that the gods

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[19] See, for example, Dillon 1985; cf. also the notes to the translations of Chadwick 1953, 25 note 3 and Borret 1967, 142 note 2.

[20] On Origen on evil daemons, cf. *Contra Celsum* I 31.

[21] Neoplatonists objected to calling theurgy magic, since magic implies *Götterzwang*, whereas the pious Neoplatonists denied that they forced the gods. Yet theurgical techniques do not essential differ from magical ones. See Van den Berg 2001, 66–85 for a discussion of theurgy and 101–6 for the role of divine names in Proclus' theurgical hymns. For the comparison of Iamblichus to Origen, see Dillon 1985.

speak, for example, Egyptian. Instead we have to assume that the Egyptians who learnt the first names of the gods 'mixed these with their own tongue', i.e. they expressed these names in accordance with their own language. It is true that Iamblichus holds that some barbaric divine names are better than Greek ones, yet this has to do with the fact that these are very old as well as with the fact that some barbaric languages are better suited to express the divine because they make a greater impression and are more precise.[22]

Another Neoplatonic aficionado of arcane matters, Proclus of Athens (c. 410–485 CE), presents an interesting case. Like Origen he is completely convinced that there exist divine names that have been revealed by the gods to us and that carry great theurgical powers. Moreover, just as Origen believes that these names are related to the Creator of the Universe (T.8), Proclus assumes that the first name-giver is the Platonic Demiurge. And yet Proclus equally assumes that there need not be anything wrong with names that have been given to the gods by knowledgeable human name-givers. He compares these names, for example, to theurgical statues, i.e. to other man-made objects. Just as these may be used to call forth divine powers, in the same way divine names, when analysed, reveal the nature of the gods.[23] Proclus' confidence in the capacity of the human name-giver is based on his psychology. Human beings have innate knowledge that enables them to be adequate name-givers and thus imitate the divine name-giver. Proclus claims in fact that the aim of the *Cratylus* is precisely to demonstrate man's similarity to the Demiurge through an analysis of our capacity to name things.[24] To go short, then, Neoplatonists like Proclus had it both ways. Their interest in theurgy had taught them about magically powerful revealed divine names, yet Plato's *Cratylus* had given them reason to be confident about the products of (expert) human name-givers.

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[22] Cf. Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* VII 4–5.

[23] See Proclus, *Theologia Platonica* I 29, pp. 124, 22–125, 2 (edn. Saffrey-Westerink) for the comparison of names to magical statues. For Proclus' view that some names are given by God and some by human beings, see Sorabji 2004, 221–5.

[24] Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria* I, p. 1, 1–9. I will deal in great detail with Proclus' interpretation on the *Cratylus* in a forthcoming monograph.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion it can be said that Origen does not wish to suggest any close similarity between his view on divine names and any of the Greek philosophical schools. This has to do with the altogether different views on the divine and the functions of names in the Jewish-Christian and Greek tradition. Whereas in the latter case, it is generally assumed that most peoples know the same gods to which they happen to refer by different names, just as they refer to the same things by means of different words. Divine names, furthermore, reflect human attempts to theologize. In the former perspective, not all peoples know the same gods. Divine names are a form of divine revelation. Origen's main argument for the divine origin of these names is that they have magical powers. Against Celsus' charge that the Jews and the Christians do not adhere to the *alêthês logos*, he claims the support of the magicians, the wise, of all nations. He deploys their authority against that of Celsus' Greek philosophers who appear to be hopelessly divided among themselves.

On the basis of similarities between Origen and later Neoplatonists, such as Iamblichus and Proclus, it has been concluded that Origen constitutes 'the best available evidence for contemporary Platonist doctrine'.[25] There is good reason to doubt this. Even though these Neoplatonists acknowledge the existence of magically powerful revealed divine names, they also maintain, in keeping with the Greek tradition, that other magically powerful names are expressions of human knowledge concerning the divine. Similarities between Origen and these Neoplatonists can be explained from this common interest in magic, their difference from the fact that Origen was not a Platonist.

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[25] Dillon 1985, 216.

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THE NAME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

THE NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES (PHILIPPIANS 2:9)[1]

Bert-Jan Lietaert Peerbolte

One of the most important Pauline passages with regard to christology is the so-called 'Christ hymn' of Phil 2:6–11.[2] This famous section contains a lyrical description of the importance and meaning of Jesus Christ. Paul apparently quotes a text that describes Christ's fate in a way that is, to say the least, open to many different interpretations. Many questions surround this passage. To mention but a few of them: Is this pericope a poem or should it be read as lyrical prose? Has this passage been written by Paul or by someone else? And, if the latter were to be found true, by whom and when? These are the most prominent literary questions surrounding the so-called 'Christ hymn', but there are also difficulties with regard to the content of the passage. The most important of these is no doubt: does the hymn describe Christ's condescension from and subsequent ascent to heaven, while presupposing some kind of pre-existence, or does it describe Christ's earthly ministry and his heavenly exaltation in glory? In other words: does the Christ-hymn speak of a pre-existent Christ or not? And finally there is the question: how does the hymn depict the Christ's resurrection?

These issues have to be dealt with in order to be able to study the use of the designation 'name' in this hymn. Since the verses 9–11 describe the climax of the pericope under discussion, the mention

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[1] This contribution is dedicated to Marinus de Jonge on the occasion of his 80th birthday, December 9, 2005, as a token of gratitude for his continuing friendship and support.

[2] Among the bulk of literature on this text, a number of studies stand out. To mention the most important of those: Ernst Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus: Eine Untersuchung zu Phil. 2,5–11* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 4), Heidelberg 1928; Ernst Käsemann, 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5–11', in: idem, *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, i, Göttingen 1960, 51–95 (originally published in *ZThK* 47 [1950] 313–60); Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, Downers Grove 1997 (original version: *Carmen Christi*, 1983); Ralph P. Martin & Brian J. Dodd (eds), *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2*, Louisville 1998. An extensive bibliography on the passage is offered by Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (Word Biblical Commentary 43), Waco 1983, 71–5.

of the 'Name above all names' God bestows on Jesus Christ evidently forms a clue to the christology of this text. In order to place the bestowal of the Name in its proper context, all questions mentioned will have to be addressed to the extent the limits of this volume allow. Hence, the first section of this contribution will deal with the position of the Christ-hymn within the letter to the Philippians as a whole. The second section will discuss the status of Phil 2:6–11 as a pre-Pauline poem, or better: hymn. The third section will discuss the views expressed in this hymn on the ministry and glorification of Christ. Some attention will be given to the assumed *Sitz im Leben* of the hymn. Then, in section four, the main question will be addressed: what is the meaning of the Name above all names as ascribed to Christ in this hymn and how does the act of bestowing the Name relate to Christ's resurrection?

1. Phil 2:6–11 Within the Context of the Letter as a Whole

The literary structure of the letter to the Philippians presents us with some difficult problems.[3] The key-problem is, that Paul's tone in the first part of the letter is substantially different from that in chapters 3 and 4. From 1:7 it is evident that Paul was in prison when he wrote to the Philippians. His tone is somewhat resigned, and he appears to accept his fate. He prays for the Philippians and hopes them to do the same for him. Then, in 3:2, suddenly his tone changes and becomes angry and fierce. Paul argues vehemently against the influence of preachers who apparently proclaimed the gospel in such a way that the laws of circumcision had to be applied to Gentile converts as well. Some interpreters therefore choose to regard 3:2–4:9 as an inserted part of a different letter.[4] In my opinion the clue to solving this problem lies in 3:1. In that verse Paul states 'to write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard' (τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές; transl. NRSV). This may imply that Paul introduces the next part of the letter (3:2–4:9) as a repetition of something he had

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[3] For an introduction to Philippians, see Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xxvii–lii.

[4] For a discussion of the integrity of Philippians, see Hawthorne, *Philippians*, xxix–xxxii. Hawthorne himself decides against the option of Philippians as a composite letter.

written earlier, perhaps even a quotation from an earlier letter.[5] But regardless of any decision regarding the literary integrity of Philippians, it is evident that the pericope under discussion here, the so-called 'Christ hymn', is not part of the section that may refer to an earlier letter. The Christ hymn belongs to the letter Paul wrote from prison and is intrinsically connected to the content of that letter.

The immediate context of the Christ-hymn is the section 1:27–2:18. The hymn forms the core of this passage, in which Paul exhorts the Philippians to live a life of humility (the ταπεινοφροσύνη mentioned in 2:3). Without taking a decision with regard to the possible pre-Pauline or hymnic character of 2:6–11, it is clear that the pericope forms *the* central passage in the first part of the letter to the Philippians in its present form. It forms the backbone of Paul's argument in this part of the letter, perhaps even in the letter as a whole. Not just 1:27–2:5, the verses leading up to the Christ hymn, focus on humility, harmony and concord among the Philippians, but also the pericope following the hymn does so (2:12–18). The Christ hymn thus forms the central section of Paul's exhortation on concord and humility, the attitude he wants to stimulate among the Philippians. And the position of this text within the letter points out that its content is of crucial importance to the argument of the letter.

It is because of the way in which the Christ hymn is embedded in its literary context that Geza Vermes's interpretation of the passage has to be rejected. In his *The Changing Faces of Jesus* Vermes argues that this particular hymn probably dates to the second century instead of the first.[6] He thus adapts the theory suggested in 1932 by Ernst Barnikol that at least the first part of the hymn was a Marcionite insert into the Pauline text of Philippians.[7] Vermes does not relate

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[5] The interpretation of 3:1 is of crucial importance for our understanding of the literary structure of the letter as a whole. In the above, the words τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν κτλ. are taken as a reference to what follows. Another option would be to take them to refer to the preceding words (χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ). This is argued as the most likely interpretation by e.g. Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Black's New Testament Commentary), London 1998, 177–82. Bockmuehl's strongest argument is, that 'it is significant that Paul literally says that he is writing "the same things" (*ta auta*), not that he is writing "once again" (*palin*)' (178). Nevertheless, Bockmuehl's analysis fails to account for the sudden transition in 3:2, which is less difficult to understand if 3:1 is a reference to something Paul had already written to the Philippians.

[6] Geza Vermes, *The Changing Faces of Jesus*, London/New York 2000.

[7] Ernst Barnikol, *Philipper 2: Der Marcionitische Ursprung des Mythos-Satzes Phil 2,6–7.*

the hymn to Marcion, but he does suggest a second-century date for its origin:

> The expressions 'in the form of God,' 'grasping equality from God,' and 'emptying himself' echo mythological concepts familiar from the Gospel of John and from later heretical Gnostic speculation. If so, chronologically they point to the early second century A.D. rather than the age of Paul. The hymn makes much better sense if it is taken as an existing liturgical composition inserted into the letter to the Philippians not by Paul himself but by a later editor. The fact that this poem can be removed without spoiling the general meaning of the chapter strongly favors the theory of its post-Pauline origin.[8]

Vermes's reconstruction is open to at least two points of criticism. First of all, the dating of any given text by means of traditio-historical arguments of content is risky. It is true that the hymn appears to reflect a so-called 'high' christology, but that does not mean that the pericope in which this 'high' christology is found, should *for that reason* be dated to a period later than Paul. A second problem with Vermes's reconstruction is the literary observation we just made: if the hymn forms the core of the first part of the letter to the Philippians, we cannot remove it as easily from its literary context as Vermes proposes. A synchronic literary reading of the hymn points out that this pericope is part and parcel of the letter to the Philippians. As a result the conclusion is justified that the hymn has either been written by Paul himself or was taken by Paul from oral tradition and inserted to ease his communication with the Philippians.

2. PHIL 2:6–11 AS A PRE-PAULINE HYMN

Now that we have seen the literary position of 2:6–11 within the letter as a whole, we should turn to the question whether or not the pericope under discussion is a pre-Pauline hymn. I will first discuss the hymnic character of the passage, then I will give some arguments in favour of its pre-Pauline origin. Finally, I will briefly look at the consequences. One preliminary remark should be made first, however: the adjective 'pre-Pauline' is used here, but not in its strictest

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Prolegomena zur neutestamentlichen Dogmengeschichte, ii (Forschungen zur Entstehung des Urchristentums, des Neuen Testaments und der Kirche), Kiel 1932.

    [8] Vermes, *Changing Faces*, 86.

sense, i.e. as an indication that a 'pre-Pauline' text pre-dates the period in which Paul proclaimed Christ. Instead, it is used as the common designation for pre-literary units in Paul's letters, that were probably not written or composed by Paul himself. Chronologically speaking, these units may just as well be 'para-Pauline'.[9]

a. *Character and Structure of Phil 2:6–11*

It is tempting to define Phil 2:6–11 as a hymn on the basis of the typography in Nestle-Aland[27], but the presentation of the same text in the Greek New Testament points out that it can be read just as easily as prose. What, then, are the reasons for regarding this passage as a hymn?[10]

First of all, there is the rhythm in the text: the Greek contains a rhythmic structure, and almost all lines consist of three accents.[11] Apart from the rhythm, there is also congruence between the text's content and its form.[12] The description of the self-chosen humiliation of Christ in vv. 6–8 and his subsequent exaltation in vv. 9–11 adds a certain movement to the text. The expressions used are lyrical by nature, in that they are polyvalent and open to different interpretations. And finally, there is the possibility to reconstruct a structure in different stanzas.

With regard to the structure of the text, several proposals have been made. The most important reconstruction is no doubt the one by Ernst Lohmeyer, who argued that the text should be divided into six stanzas of three lines.[13] Lohmeyer's attempt has a number of very strong points, but the difficulty is that he is forced to leave out the words θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ as a Pauline interpolation.[14] Furthermore, his view of the sequence of these stanzas as a series of *sorites* (a

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[9] See my *Paul the Missionary* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 34), Leuven/Paris 2003, 90–1.

[10] The most fundamental discussion of this pericope as a hymn, or better: 'psalm', is the classic treatment by Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*; cf. below. Most subsequent publications take Lohmeyer's work as their point of departure.

[11] See esp. Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 9. Lohmeyer's reconstruction is revised by Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*, 24–41.

[12] For a discussion of the hymn as an example of an encomium, see Klaus Berger, 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament', in: *ANRW* 2.25.2 (1984), 1031–432, esp. 1179–89.

[13] Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 5–6.

[14] Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 44–5.

'Kettenschluß') forming a logical progression is not fully convincing.[15]

Related to the question of the exact structure of the pericope is the issue whether or not this text is to be seen as a poem. Gordon Fee, among others, is reluctant to regard this pericope as poetry, and suggests an interpretation as 'exalted pauline prose'.[16] Fee points to the fact that the second part of what is often considered a 'hymn' 'lacks both the poetry and the balanced clauses of Part I. Instead, it takes the form of basic Pauline argumentation.'[17] This observation holds true with regard to the rhythm of the text as well as to the polyvalence of the expressions used. Nevertheless, also the second part of the pericope is characterized by an exalted style as well as a certain rhythm. This may be taken as an indication for its poetic character.

The one thing that is clear with regard to the structure of this pericope, is that there is a caesura between the verses 8 and 9: vv. 6–8 describe the humiliation of Christ and vv. 9–11 his exaltation. Regardless of whether vv. 6–7 should be interpreted as a description of Christ's pre-existence[18] or as a doxological expression of Christ's high status even during his earthly ministry,[19] it is clear that the first part of the pericope describes the dissonance between Christ's actual status and his human appearance. Since vv. 9–11 evidently present his exaltation, the pericope can be said to fall apart in at least two sections. Lohmeyer argued that each of these two sections contains three stanzas of three lines, but a serious alternative for this reconstruction would be a division into four stanzas of five lines. In this case, the text does not show a series of *sorites* and the words θανά-του δὲ σταυροῦ do not have to be regarded as an interpolation.[20]

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[15] For a recent discussion of Lohmeyer's analysis, see Colin Brown, 'Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*', in: Martin & Dodd, *Where Christology Began*, 23–4.

[16] G.D. Fee, 'Philippians 2:5–11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2 (1992) 29–46; and idem, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, Grand Rapids 1995, 192–7.

[17] Fee, *Philippians*, 196.

[18] See among many others Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*, 99–133.

[19] James D.G. Dunn interprets the passage as evidence of what he considers a wide-spread 'Adam christology' dating from the pre-Pauline period; cf. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, London/Philadelphia 1980, 114–21; see also idem, 'Christ, Adam, and Preexistence', in: Martin & Dodd, *Where Christology Began*, 74–83, and idem, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 1998, 245–6.

[20] As proposed by Lohmeyer, and in a different manner by Brown, 'Ernst Lohmeyer's *Kyrios Jesus*'.

Instead, a structure appears in which the first two stanzas describe Christ's condescension and his earthly fate, whereas the last two focus on his exaltation.[21] Lines 1 and 6 both start with a description of Christ's status or appearance in a construction with ἐν followed by a noun, a defining genitive, and a participle (l. 1: ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων; l. 6: ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). Line 5 counterbalances line 1 by mirroring the μορφὴ θεοῦ by the μορφὴ δούλου. In the second stanza lines 6–7 give a double description of the human status of Jesus Christ, whereas lines 9–10 give a double description of his death. The third stanza is a preparation for the fourth: line 11 introduces God as the subject, and lines 12–14 describe Jesus' exaltation as effected by God. Line 15 introduces the fourth stanza, which is totally dedicated to the doxological praise of Jesus Christ and God, and consists of a reworking of LXX Isa 45:23:[22]

0. [2:5] Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, [2:6] ὃς

0. [2:5] You have to have the attitude among yourselves that also Christ Jesus had, [2:6] who

1. ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων

1. while being in the shape of God,

2. οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο

2/3. did not consider being equal with God

3. τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,

2/3. as something to hold on to

4. [2:7] ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν

4. [2:7] but emptied himself

5. μορφὴν δούλου λαβών

5. by taking the shape of a slave.

6. ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος

6. Having become in the likeness of men

7. καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος

7. and having been found in human form

8. [2:8] ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν

8. [2:8] he humiliated himself

9. γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,

9. by becoming obedient unto death,

10. θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.

10. death of the cross.

11. [2:9] διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς

11. [2:9] Therefore, God has

12. αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν

12. exalted him highly

13. καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ

13. and bestowed on him

14. τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,

14. the Name above all names,

15. [2:10] ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ

15. [2:10] so that in the name of Jesus

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[21] In Lohmeyer's view, the last three stanzas refer to Jesus' exaltation, whereas the first three describe his condescension; Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, passim.

[22] Paul refers to this same text in Rom 14:11; cf. Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 57.

16. πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ	16. every knee should bend
17. ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων	17. of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth
18. [2:11] καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται	18. [2:11] and every tongue should confess
19. ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς	19. that Jesus Christ is Lord
20. εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός	20. to the glory of God the Father.

Since this poetic text focuses primarily on Christ, the designation 'Christ hymn' is not only understandable, but also correct. The absence of meter does not necessarily indicate that it is a prose text we are dealing with; it may rather be taken as evidence that this particular hymn did not originate in literary circles. The rhythm and structure of the text, in combination with the character of the language used, are convincing to regard the pericope as a poetic hymn. But whose hymn was it? In other words: who wrote the hymn?

b. *The pre-Pauline character of Phil 2:6–11*

In his monograph *The Gospel of Paul* the Korean scholar Joong Suk Suh has given a new and original reconstruction of the composition of the Christ hymn.[23] Suh considers the Christ hymn as the result of cooperation between Paul and the church of Philippi itself. According to Suh, the Philippian congregation partly consisted of gnostic Christians who left their mark on the hymn: it was written by members of the Philippian congregation who sent their draft of the text to Paul in order to have it validated. It was Paul who subsequently added the verses 5, 7ac, 8, 9bc, 10–11. The remaining part of the hymn consists only of vv. 6, 7bd and 9a. Suh is thus left with six lines of the hymn that Paul apparently did not write. These are the lines the Philippians would have sent to Paul, whereas all the rest was added by him. Suh's reconstruction is far-fetched, highly speculative, and unnecessary. Nevertheless, the question he addresses is relevant: was Paul the author of the Christ hymn or did he incorporate an existing text into his letter?

   The first indication that Paul inserted an existing hymn instead of writing it for the occasion of his letter to the Philippians comes from the language of the hymn. The text contains a relatively large

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[23] Joong Suk Suh, *The Gospel of Paul* (Studies in Biblical Literature 53), New York 2003, 98–112.

number of *hapax legomena*,[24] and uses the expression ἴσα θεῷ, which Paul does not use anywhere else in his letters.[25] This indicates that the words used in this passage do not belong to standard Pauline vocabulary, but that does not turn the text into a pre-Pauline hymn. What additional arguments can be given for that view?

First of all, there is the form-critical observation that speaks of a probability: Paul does indeed make use of existing texts like confession formulas and liturgical acclamations.[26] This observation enhances the probability that something similar happened in the case of the Christ hymn. Paul indeed appears to introduce the whole pericope with a kind of introduction formula in 2:5, which by itself stands apart from the rest of the hymn.

Secondly, a possible argument against the pre-Pauline hymnic character of the text could be the fact that it is difficult to envisage followers of Christ singing and exchanging hymns at this early stage of the Christ-movement. This problem is encountered by the point developed by a.o. Larry Hurtado in his *Lord Jesus Christ*.[27] Hurtado points at 1 Cor 14:26, where Paul states ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει ('when you come together, each has a song/psalm'), and the remark by Pliny (admittedly much later, but still), that the Christians recite 'a song to Christ as to a God' (*carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere*).[28] Hurtado's analysis is helpful: both Paul and a later outsider like Pliny indicate that the singing of songs was part of the worship of Christ in the first century. Combine this with the other hymnic material Hurtado mentions (Col 1:15–20; John 1:1–18; Eph 5:14; 1 Tim 3:16), and the probability that Phil 2:6–11 is a pre-Pauline hymn turns into a plausibility.

The form and content of the pericope under discussion define it as a hymn, and it is highly plausible that this hymn was pre-Pauline in character. In that case, Paul uses an existing composition that he knew was known to the Philippians in order to underscore his point, viz. that they should practice humility and concord among themselves.

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[24] The *hapax legomena*: ἁρπαγμός; ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν; θανάτος σταυροῦ; ὑπερυψόω; τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα; καταχθόνιος. The word μορφή is used twice here (θεοῦ/δούλου), whereas the only other NT text in which it occurs is in the secondary ending of Mark (16:12), where it has a totally different meaning.

[25] It is used in John 5:18 in the reproach against Jesus.

[26] See my *Paul the Missionary*, 90–105.

[27] Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2003, 146–8.

[28] Pliny, *Epistula* X.96.7.

c. *Consequences*

What are the consequences of this approach? For our present purpose, two elements are important. Firstly, Paul quotes an existing text that was apparently known to the Philippians. By means of this song Paul hopes to further stress his views in his attempt to console and exhort the Philippians. Through this hymn Paul establishes common ground between himself and his audience, and he enables himself to point out that being a follower of Christ implies a specific attitude, viz. the attitude this hymn ascribes to Christ himself: an attitude of humility and self-sacrifice. Secondly, the Christ hymn indicates not only a hymnodic attitude in the earliest traceable layers of the Christ-movement, but it also points out that already at this very early stage of the movement that would eventually turn into Christianity, Jesus was identified as the Anointed One, and this Anointed Jesus, Jesus Christ, was honoured in high terms as the κύριος, the Lord. If indeed the christology of the Christ hymn of Philippians turns out to be a so-called 'high christology', as will be argued below, this type of response to Jesus is traced back into the earliest post-Easter history. Paul wrote his letter somewhere during the fifties, which means that the hymn must have circulated before that. As a result its origin must be dated to the late forties, early fifties at the latest. The christology it reflects is therefore an important element for the reconstruction of the earliest responses to Jesus in a Greek Jewish context.

3. Some Remarks on the Structure and Sitz im Leben of Phil 2:6–11

In the above the decision was taken to regard vv. 6–11 as the actual hymn, introduced by a remark by Paul in v. 5. In that case the relative pronoun ὅς of verse 6 probably also belongs to Paul's introductory remark.[29] If the hymn is read in this fashion, the subject of the participle ὑπάρχων remains unmentioned until line 16. The first two stanzas have an unmentioned subject, which is turned into the

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[29] *Pace* the many interpreters who argue that this relative pronoun reflects a standard opening of confession formulas. See e.g. Gerald F. Hawthorne, 'In the Form of God and Equal with God (Philippians 2:6)', in: Martin & Dodd, *Where Christology Began*, 96–110, esp. 96–7. Lohmeyer substituted the article ὁ for the relative ὅς.

object from the third stanza onward. In line 11 (verse 9) God becomes
the subject and Christ remains unmentioned. The ὄνομα mentioned
in line 14 is taken up in the first clause of the final stanza, although
the name 'Jesus' is evidently not the 'Name above all names' referred
to in line 14. The most probable identification of this 'Name above
all names' is the predicate κύριος used in line 19 to identify Jesus
Christ as the Ruler.[30] Reading the hymn in this manner points out
that there is a strong movement towards the end.

a. *2:6–8 (= ll. 1–10; the first two stanzas): condescension*

The first part of the hymn is often interpreted as describing a con-
descension of Christ. Although James Dunn, with others in his wake,
argues that these lines relate Christ to Adam and describe his earthly
ministry instead of a state of heavenly glory that preceded his incar-
nation, there is reason to suspect that they nevertheless do refer to
some kind of pre-existence.[31] The words μορφὴν δούλου λαβών may
be interpreted as a description of the humiliation of Jesus during his
earthly ministry, which would mean that the first stanza would not
describe a condescension from heaven, but instead characterizes Jesus'
earthly fate. In that case, however, the lines 6 and 7 become difficult
to interpret: ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς
ὡς ἄνθρωπος; these words can hardly be taken in another way than
as a description of the human appearance of a divine character. An
important indication in favour of this view is the earliest retrievable
debate on the passage, viz. Marcion's interpretation and the view
he was apparently arguing against. Marcion interpreted these words
as support for a docetic christology: *effigie servi, non veritate; . . . in simil-
itudine hominis, non in homine.*[32] Marcion probably directed his argument

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[30] The fact that the predicate is mentioned first does not mean that this intends
to give special emphasis to the title 'Lord': '(. . .) the predicate comes first, simply
because, as a rule, the predicate is the most important thing in the sentence'; A.T.
Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*,
London 1914, 417.

[31] A brief but good criticism of Dunn's view is given by Marinus de Jonge,
Christology In Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus, Philadelphia 1988, 121.
See for a more extensive discussion Hawthorne, 'In the Form of God and Equal
with God', 96–110. Hawthorne concludes that the two expressions used (ἐν μορφῇ
θεοῦ ὑπάρχων and ἴσα θεῷ) are used as synonyms (cf. esp. 104).

[32] See Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott. Eine Monographie
zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche*, Leipzig 1921, 134. Harnack also

against an interpretation of these words in which the divine Jesus was seen as fully having become human.

As said, the identity of the divine character described in 2:6–7 remains obscure for listeners (or singers) who do not yet know him. The characterization of Jesus is polyvalent and already the early church heavily discussed this passage. It is telling to see that there was no real doubt about whether this passage should be understood as a reference to Christ's pre-existence and his incarnation.[33] Instead, there was vehement discussion of the exact status of Christ in his pre-existent period, his relation to God, and the nature of his con-descension.[34] The church fathers may of course have been so much influenced by the creed of pre-existence, that they did not even seri-ously consider the option that the first part of this hymn could refer to Christ's human existence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the early church interpreted this passage as a reference to Christ's pre-existence.

The movement of the first two stanzas finds its focus in Jesus' death. The humiliation is complete up to the point of his being obe-dient unto death. Line 10 emphatically adds its character by stating it was 'death at the cross'. As said, Lohmeyer regarded this line as a Pauline insert into the existing hymn, but in the reading that is proposed here, this is not necessary. The real problem of the first part of the pericope is probably the word ἁρπαγμός. It is a rare word that is rendered by Liddell, Scott and Jones as a 'prize to be grasped'.[35] The problem ultimately comes down to the question whether the word should be interpreted as *res rapta, res rapienda* or *res retinenda*.[36]

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quotes Chrysostomos' quotation and refutation of Marcion with regard to this inter-pretation: ἐνταῦθα ἐπιλαβόμενοι τοῦ ῥητοῦ οἱ Μαρκίωνος· ἰδοῦ, φασιν, οὐκ ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπου γενόμενος.

[33] John of Damascus certainly understood the Christ hymn to refer to Christ's pre-existence. In his exposition he points out that the hymn accurately reflects the Dogma: ὅτι καὶ ἴσος τῷ Πατρὶ ὁ Χριστὸς, καὶ ὅτι ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, καὶ ὅτι ἄνθρωπος γέγονε, καὶ ὅτι ἑκών—Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 95, col. 865. Oecumenius explains Paul's argument by implicitly referring to Phil 2:6–11: Ἔπειτα αὐτοὺς προτρέπεται ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν, ἐξηγούμενος τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος φιλανθρωπίαν, ὅτι θεὸς ὤν, ἄνθρωπος γέγονε δι᾽ ἡμᾶς (Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 118, col. 1236).

[34] An extensive survey of the discussion is given by the 11th-century author Theophylactus. See Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 124, cols 1161–66. It is interesting to see that Theophylactus does not note the reference to Isaiah in Phil 2:9, and interprets the name that is assigned to Jesus as υἱὸς θεοῦ, relating this verse to the prediction of Luke 1:35, τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται Υἱὸς Θεοῦ (col. 1165).

[35] H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996, rev. edn., s.v. ἁρπαγμός.

[36] The problem is apparent in modern English translations of the phrase. The

In my opinion this debate has been settled by N.T. Wright's discussion of the problem.[37] According to Wright the expression should be translated as 'something to exploit'.[38] It is thus highly plausible that the first two stanzas describe the fact that Christ did not consider his being equal to God as something to hold on to, but rather showed himself in human form to be obedient unto death.

b. *2:9–11 (= ll. 11–20; the last two stanzas): exaltation*

The second part of the pericope describes the exaltation of Christ, but also stresses the presence of God in that exaltation. From line 11 (v. 9) onward it is God who is the subject, and in the final line it appears that the condescension and subsequent exaltation of Christ are meant to glorify God the Father. God exceedingly exalts Jesus and bestows on him the 'Name above all names'. This exaltation is the direct result of Jesus' acceptance of his humiliating fate: it is because of this obedience that God vindicates him. The idea is similar to the description Paul gives in Rom 1:3–4. There, Paul describes that Christ 'was designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord' (RSV). It is remarkable that in Rom 1:4 the description continues with a reference to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, whereas here in Phil 2:9–11 description of the exaltation of Jesus ends with his acclamation as κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Apparently both descriptions are based on a doxological scheme in which Jesus' fate after his death was described as an exaltation that caused him to be

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King James Version reads 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God', the *American Standard Version* 'counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped', the *Revised Standard Version* has 'did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped'. The *New Revised Standard Version* chose the best option: 'did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited'.

[37] N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, Minneapolis 1991, 56–98. This chapter contains a revision of Wright's earlier article on the subject: 'ἁρπαγμός and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5–11', *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986) 321–52. See also R.W. Hoover, 'The Harpagmos Enigma: A Philological Solution', *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1971) 95–199, and Charles F.D. Moule, 'Further Reflexions on Philippians 2:5–11', in: W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin (eds), *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, Exeter 1970, 264–76.

[38] Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 97: 'The thrust of the passage in itself is that the one who, before becoming human, possessed divine equality did not regard that status as something to take advantage of, something to exploit, but instead interpreted it as a vocation to obedient humiliation and death . . .'.

acclaimed as the Lord Jesus Christ.[39] This acclamation must be the
result of a double identification process: first Jesus was identified as
the Anointed One, the Christ, and then Jesus Christ was identified
as Lord.[40] The identification of Jesus Christ as Lord in the literary
context of Philippians 2 is characterized by the words 'God bestowed
on him the Name above all names', a characterization that was taken
from Deutero-Isaiah. Before this identification can be dealt with a
brief look is necessary at the possible *Sitz im Leben* of the Christ
hymn.

c. *Sitz im Leben*

In his discussion of the Christ hymn Ralph Martin concludes that
the context in which the hymn most likely was used was a baptismal
setting.[41] It is not necessary to repeat his argument in detail here.
Martin notes that the hymn as a whole focuses on the proclamation
of Jesus Christ as Lord, and points at the fact that this confession
of Jesus Christ as Lord was made by initiates at the moment of their
baptism. Of course, the baptismal context was not the only setting
in which that confession was used, but it was a prominent one.
Furthermore, Martin shows that a number of words that are used
in the hymn also occur in pericopes where Paul speaks of the
significance of baptism. The 'shape' of Christ (μορφή), for instance,
reminds him of the 'sharing in the shape of Christ's death' Paul
mentions in his discussion of baptism in Rom 6:4–6. There, Paul
uses the verb συμμορφοῦσθαι. Strangely enough, Martin does not
argue on the basis of the content of the hymn, something that would
have made his reconstruction even more plausible. The first part of
the hymn consists of a downward movement, followed by the upward
exaltation in its second part. This is exactly the movement described
by Paul in Romans 6 as the movement of baptism, and it is this
movement we know that Christian initiates made when they were
immersed in water, to rise to a new life in Christ afterwards. Although
this *Sitz im Leben* is hypothetical—we do not have any hard evidence

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[39] The same scheme is found in Heb 1:3–4, where also the 'Name' is mentioned;
cf. below.

[40] Vernon H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (New Testament Tools and
Studies 5), Leiden 1963, 42–68, discusses the *homologia* 'Jesus is Lord' as the most
important Pauline confession.

[41] Martin, *A Hymn of Christ*, 292–4.

that this hymn was sung during baptismal ceremonies—it is difficult to assume a more fitting context for the hymn. This probable *Sitz im Leben* therefore points out that the hymn was not just a random doxological expression of piety, but represents a central element in the devotional practice of the earliest Christ-movement. This means that the bestowal of the 'Name above all names' was not just a random expression of faith. Rather, it forms the core of the confession uttered on Jesus by his early followers within a Greek Jewish context.[42]

4. The Name Above all Names

The climax of the hymn is the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord in line 19 (v. 11). The last stanza evidently focuses upon the significance of the 'Name' bestowed on Jesus (ll. 13–14). There can be no doubt that this 'Name above all names' is not the name 'Jesus' (l. 15), but ultimately refers to the divine name YHWH.[43] The aorist ἐχαρίσατο points at a specific moment at which the bestowal of the name took place, and that moment must have either coincided with or immediately followed upon Jesus' death. In Rom 1:3–4 Paul states that Jesus was 'declared Son of God (. . .) on the basis of the resurrection from the dead' (ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ . . . ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν), but the reference to Jesus' resurrection is lacking from the Christ hymn of Philippians.[44] It is probably this correspondence with the opening lines of Romans that led Theophylactus and others to identify the 'Name above all names' as 'Son of God'.[45] Given the reworking of LXX Isa 45:23 in the immediate context, however, it is more

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[42] Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 9, concludes: 'dann ist aber der Schluß unausweichlich, daß das Gedicht wohl ursprünglich griechisch geschrieben ist, aber von einem Dichter, dessen Muttersprache semitisch war'.

[43] Cf. among many others Richard J. Bauckham, 'The Worship of Jesus in Philippians 2:9–11', in: Martin & Dodd, *Where Christology Began*, 128–39, who bluntly states: 'There can be no doubt that "the name that is above every name" (v. 9) is YHWH: it is inconceivable that any Jewish writer could use this phrase for a name other than God's own unique name' (131).

[44] The correspondence with Rom 1:3–4 is also noted by Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, 49–50. On the absence of a reference to the resurrection, cf. Lohmeyer, *Kyrios Jesus*, 50: 'Es ist seltsam, daß hier nirgends von Auferweckung oder Auferstehung unmittelbar gesprochen wird . . .' Lohmeyer explains this phenomenon by interpreting the exaltation of Christ as a 'sessio ad dextram dei'.

[45] Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 124, col. 1165.

likely that the title referred to by the words 'Name above all names'
is 'Lord', which in itself is used as a circumscription of the divine
name YHWH (cf. also Roukema, this vol., §2.1 on the importance
of Deutero-Isaiah in John, and §2.5).[46]

The identification of Jesus as 'Lord' raises the question of the ori-
gin of this terminology within the cult of Christ. Wilhelm Bousset,
in his classic *Kyrios Christos* (1913), has argued that this title was taken
from the religious context of the early Christ movement.[47] There, it
functioned as the title for deities who were worshipped as cultic
heroes, but also as the fixed designation of the Roman Emperor.
The early followers of Jesus Christ borrowed this terminology from
their pagan context and addressed their cult hero with the same
term as 'Lord'. This *history of religions* approach has been influential
and does point at an important parallel phenomenon. Still, the use
of the title 'Lord' for the Roman Emperor is not attested for the
early first century CE. Next to that, Bousset's theory cannot explain
the Aramaic title *marya* or *mar* that was used early in the development
of the Christ-movement (cf. e.g. *marana tha*, 1 Cor 16:22). Recently,
the better alternative has been described by Larry Hurtado.[48] He
argues that the use of the title 'Lord' for Jesus originated very early
in circles of Aramaic speaking members of the Christ-movement, to
cross the language border into Greek, where the noun κύριος was
used in similar fashion as the Aramaic מריא or מר. Hurtado not only
accounts for the use of the Greek as well as the Aramaic title of
'Lord' for Jesus, but also argues that the Greek and the Aramaic
parts of the Christ-movement were deeply connected: '(. . .) there
was a shared religiousness, and not merely an inherited vocabulary'.[49]
This shared religiousness was formulated in a shared vocabulary,
though, and the use of the title 'Lord' within this vocabulary facil-

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[46] Cf. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*, 57: '(. . .) the *name*, belonging to
God in the Old Testament, is now given to Jesus' (italicized by Neufeld). There is,
of course, the problem that the word κύριος only appears in *Christian* copies of the
LXX. In all likeliness, however, during the act of reading this word was substituted
for the written tetragrammaton; cf. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 249: 'This
is confirmed not only by Paul's use of *kyrios* in scriptural quotations, but also by
the usage of Philo and Josephus.'

[47] Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des
Christentums bis Irenaeus*, Göttingen, 1913.

[48] See also Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 244–52.

[49] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 111.

itated exegetical manoeuvres like the one we find in the Christ hymn of Philippians.

The reference to Jesus as Lord is clearly described in words that allude to LXX Isa 45:23.[50] That passage contains a prediction of worship described by God himself, and this prediction is transferred to a new context to describe the exaltation of Christ in the hymn of Philippians. The print above presents the words of lines 16 and 18 printed in italics. The reason for this is, that these lines take up the words of Isa 45:23 and apply them to Jesus. In the Masoretic Text of Isaiah (לִי תִכְרַע כָּל־בֶּרֶךְ תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל־לָשׁוֹן), YHWH announces that a righteous word will go forth from his mouth, and the expected result is described in the words 'to me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear' (NRSV). The translation of these words in the LXX is remarkably equal to the phrase we find in Philippians: ἐμοὶ *κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα* τῷ θεῷ.[51] In the Christ hymn these words have been adapted to their new context: the future tense of κάμψει is turned into a subjunctive κάμψῃ because of ἵνα, and for the same reason the future ἐξομολογήσεται has been altered to ἐξομολογήσηται. Furthermore, the order of the words has been inverted: LXX Isa reads κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ, whereas Phil 2:11 reads πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ, and ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα (LXX Isa) becomes πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται (Phil 2:11). Here, also a change of meaning has occurred, because in the LXX ἐξομολογέομαι is used as 'praise' ('every tongue shall praise God'), whereas the combination with ὅτι in Phil 2:11 cannot mean anything else than 'confess that' ('every tongue shall confess that').

The most important difference between Isaiah and Philippians, however, is the identity of the 'Lord'. In Isaiah the words discussed are uttered by God, who, in the LXX, is introduced in verse 18 as 'the Lord, who has created heaven' (οὕτως λέγει κύριος ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανόν). In Phil 2:11 this same title 'Lord' is applied to Jesus, and this identification leads to the astonishing fact that already in this early christological hymn Jesus is identified as the Lord God of the Jewish bible, as YHWH.

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[50] Already Bousset acknowledged this: 'Der heilige Kultname des altestamentlichen Jahve, der über dem Kult in Jerusalem waltet, erscheint hier übertragen auf den neuen Kyrios, das feierliche Bekenntnis des Deuterojesaja (45,23) zu dem allmächtigen Gott ist an Jesus gerichtet.' Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 89.

[51] The LXX translates the words אַךְ בַּיהוָה with the dative construction τῷ θεῷ and relates these words to the verb ἐξομολογέω.

The use of the LXX of Isaiah as the source for the description of Jesus Christ here points out that the hymn probably originated in Greek Jewish circles.[52] We can even further refine the quest for the provenance of this text: the universal tone is reminiscent of imagery found in apocalyptic sources. The words of Isaiah are expanded by the characterization ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων. It is not just Israel or every human being, that should confess Jesus as Lord, as YHWH, but every single creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth. Thus, Isaiah's words are fitted into an apocalyptic scheme in which Christ's death and resurrection are relevant to creatures living in all spheres of the cosmos. This apocalyptic view of Christ is described most clearly in Revelation 5. Verse 3 of that chapter uses the same tri-partite reference by stating that 'no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it' (NRSV)—only the Lamb, who mediates between God ('the one seated on the throne') and all other beings (vv. 6–7). After opening the scroll the Lamb is worshipped by the four creatures surrounding the divine throne, as well as by the twenty-four elders who form the heavenly senate (vv. 8–10). Next, the angels join them in their worship of Christ (vv. 11–14) in a scene that looks much like an narrative exposition of the doxology found in Phil 2:9–11. The parallel with Revelation 5 indicates that the reference to Christ's cosmic importance probably originates in apocalyptic circles.

Another text that appears to take up the divine worship of Christ in vocabulary that may have been influenced by the Christ hymn is Heb 1:3–4. There, the enthronement of Christ is described as taking place after he had made 'purification for sins' and his high status is referred to by the expression that he 'inherited' a 'name' superior to those of the angels (διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοὺς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα).

The last words of the Philippian hymn are the acclamation εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός that diverts the attention back to God. These

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[52] Joseph Fitzmyer, a.o., has argued that the hymn was originally written in Aramaic, and composed a version of the text in Aramaic: 'The Aramaic Background of Philippians 2:6–11', *Catholic Biblical Quarterley* 50 (1988) 470–83. As brilliant as Fitzmyer's translation may be, it holds no argumentative force: the *possibility* of translating the hymn in Aramaic does not indicate a *plausibility* that the text was indeed originally composed in that language.

words may indicate a difference between 'God the Father' and YHWH the Lord, with whom Jesus is identified (cf. Roukema, this vol., §2.5). The structure of the hymn, however, suggests that the bestowal of the divine Name on Jesus is to be seen as a restoration of his divine status, which is hinted at in the first part of the hymn by the words μορφὴ θεοῦ and ἴσα θεῷ. Most likely, the hymn should not be read as describing two separate deities. Rather, it depicts the restoration in heavenly glory of Jesus Christ as the divine agent who humiliated himself by abstaining from the worship he could claim, being equal with God, and instead chose to be obedient unto death. The vocabulary of 'Father' and 'Son' (the latter is of course lacking in Philippians 2) is also used by Paul in Rom 1:3–4, the passage referred to above, and probably forms the background to the acclamation in line 20. It is not necessary to read a two-deities-scheme into this hymn.

In the interpretation offered here, the special importance of this hymn is that it describes Jesus Christ in terms of a pre-existent divine agent who is exalted by God after his death, identified even with God by the bestowal of the divine Name. An indication that this is a very early interpretation of Jesus' death is, that it describes this event as being followed by a heavenly enthronement without even so much as mentioning the resurrection. Jesus' obedience unto death leads to a divine vindication, to an exalted state of divine glory, to an equation even with the divine Name YHWH, but—as noted above—the hymn does not mention Jesus' resurrection. Instead, it interprets Jesus' state of heavenly glory as an exaltation immediately after his death. The best explanation for this phenomenon is, that the hymn describes Jesus' resurrection as a divine vindication in heaven, not as a bodily resurrection. This draws the hymn very close to the martyrological view of resurrection as a heavenly vindication of the suffering righteous, which is found in e.g. the Books of the Maccabees. Phil 2:6–11 should therefore be regarded as an early expression of the Christ-devotion in which Jesus was considered to have been exalted by God because of his death as a righteous martyr. The hymn thus indicates that the martyrological interpretation of Jesus' death could apparently be easily combined with a vocabulary in which his divine status was expressed by means of the idea of pre-existence.[53]

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[53] A martyrological view of resurrection as heavenly vindication immediately after

CONCLUSION

In the above it is argued that Phil 2:6–11 reflects a pre-Pauline hymn that describes the death and heavenly vindication of Jesus. It circumscribes some kind of pre-existence of Christ, who as divine agent accepted his fate to die at the cross. The second part of the hymn pictures how God has exalted Christ to an exceedingly high status. This exaltation is expressed by means of the phrase 'God bestowed on him the Name above all names'. The phrase refers to the title 'Lord', which is used in the LXX as an equivalent for the divine Hebrew name YHWH. The reworking of LXX Isa 45:23 in the Christ hymn points out that the bestowal of the 'Name above all names' effects in a high status for Jesus Christ: God has made Christ equal to himself. Thus, the terminology of the 'Name' of God was used in the early Christ movement in an interpretation of Jesus' death as that of a righteous martyr who was vindicated by God to a state of heavenly glory immediately after his death.

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the death of the suffering righteous is clearly present in 2 and 4 Maccabees: cf. 2 Macc 7:9, 14; 12:44–45; 4 Macc 7:3; 9:22; 13:17; 14:5–6; 15:3; 16:13, 25; 17:12, 18–19. On this belief, see Jan Willem van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 57), Leiden 1997, 172–5, and Ulrich Kellermann, *Auferstanden in den Himmel: 2 Makkabäer 7 und die Auferstehung der Märtyrer* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 95), Stuttgart 1978. On the belief in Jesus' resurrection as the heavenly resurrection of a martyr, see Joost Holleman, *Resurrection and Parousia: A Traditio-Historical Study of Paul's Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 84), Leiden 1996, 144–57.

JESUS AND THE DIVINE NAME IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Riemer Roukema

The Gospel of John is an important witness to an early Christian conviction concerning the divine Name. This paper intends to under-pin the hypothesis that in this Gospel Jesus is presented as the Old Testament *Kyrios*, YHWH. The question inextricably connected with this hypothesis is, how, then, one should establish Jesus' relationship with his heavenly Father. We will see that, if it is true that the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as the *Kyrios*, this seems to imply that according to its theology there is a subtle distinction between the *Kyrios* and God the Father.

1. Seeing God

As an introduction, we will discuss some texts that deal with the impossibility or possibility of seeing God. This is not the most impor-tant theme of our investigation, but it should awaken some sensi-tivity to the more significant questions of Jesus' true identity and his relationship with the Father in the Gospel of John.

John 1:18 reads: 'No one has ever seen God'[1] (θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε). This idea is repeated in John 5:37, where Jesus, being in Jerusalem, says about his Father: 'You have never heard his voice or seen his form' (οὔτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἑωράκατε). A third text expressing this view is John 6:46, where Jesus says in Galilee: 'Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father' (οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἑώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἑώρακεν τὸν πατέρα). Of course, Jesus himself is meant to be the exception. That Jesus has seen the Father is implicitly said in John 1:18: 'The only

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[1] Unless indicated otherwise Bible translations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Sometimes we will use the Revised Standard Version (RSV) or the New English Bible (NEB).

God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known' (μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο).[2]

These affirmations seem to contradict several Old Testament texts that deal with some way of seeing God (see also Van Ruiten, this vol., §2). For instance, Jacob says in Gen 32:31 (32:30 in translations), after his nocturnal wrestle with the mysterious man at the place he then called Peni'el, 'Face of God': 'For I have seen God (כי־ראיתי אלהים) face to face, and yet my life is preserved'. In the Septuagint Peni'el is translated εἶδος θεοῦ, and the first part of the quotation reads: εἶδον γὰρ θεὸν πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. For Philo it is unproblematic that Jacob was capable of seeing God; he explains that for this reason Jacob received the name of 'Israel', which he translates as 'the one who sees God' (ὁ ὁρῶν τὸν θεόν).[3] However, in Philo's view this vision of God does not imply a physical or almost physical encounter, but an activity of the mind or soul (cf. Geljon, this vol., §1).[4]

Another text that speaks about seeing God is Exod 24:9–10, which reads that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up and 'saw the God of Israel' (ויראו את אלהי ישראל), i.e., YHWH. In the Septuagint this text was theologically corrected, for it reads that 'they saw the place where the God of Israel stood' (καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἱστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ). The words in the next verse (Exod 24:11), 'they beheld God' (ויחזו את־האלהים), are translated 'and they appeared in the place of God' (καὶ ὤφθησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ). Philo explains that 'the place' is the Logos.[5]

We will not go into other Old Testament texts that deal with appearances of YHWH or God in which he could be seen,[6] except for one that is referred to in the Gospel of John. In John 12:40 the evangelist quotes Isa 6:10 that speaks of the blinding of the Israelites' eyes and the hardening of their hearts. In his comment in John 12:41 he says that 'Isaiah said this because he saw his glory (ὅτι

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[2] For the variants see the critical apparatus of Nestle-Aland's 27th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*. The translation of John 1:18 deviates from the NRSV.

[3] Philo, *De migratione Abrahami* 200–201; *De mutatione nominum* 81; *De somniis* 1.129; numerous references are listed in F.H. Colson, *Philo* X (Loeb Classical Library 379), Cambridge MA/London 1962, 334.

[4] See, e.g., *De somniis* 1.240.

[5] Philo, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* 2.39.

[6] E.g., Gen 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 35:9; 48:3; Exod 33:11; 33:18–23; Num 12:8; Judg 13:21–23; 1 Sam 3:21; 1 Kgs 3:5; 9:2; 2 Chr 1:7.

εἶδεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ) and spoke about him'.[7] This refers to Isaiah's temple vision that is described in Isa 6, the chapter from which the prophecy in John 12:40 was quoted. In this vision Isaiah saw, according to the Masoretic text of Isa 6:1, the Lord (וָאֶרְאֶה אֶת־אֲדֹנָי), which was translated εἶδον τὸν κύριον in the Septuagint. Targum Jonathan reads that the prophet saw 'the glory of the LORD' (חזיתי ית יקרא דיוי). In Isa 6:5, Isaiah says: 'Woe is me! . . . . my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts' (אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינָי); the LXX has: καὶ τὸν βασιλέα κύριον σαβαωθ εἶδον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μου. Targum Jonathan reads 'my eyes have seen the glory of the *shekhina* of the King of ages, the LORD of hosts' (ארי ית יקר שכינת מלך עלמיא יוי צבאות חזאה עיני). For the present moment we maintain that according to the Gospel of John no one has ever seen God, whereas Isaiah has seen 'his glory', which is the glory of YHWH.

Yet it should also be observed that John 12:41 neither says that Isaiah saw the *Kyrios*, nor that he saw God, but that he saw 'his glory'. This term deserves some special attention.[8] The word 'glory' also occurs in Isa 6:1 LXX: 'and his house was full of his glory' (τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), whereas the Masoretic text reads שׁוּלָיו instead of 'glory'; שׁוּלָיו means the skirt of his robe ('and the skirt of his robe filled the temple', NEB). Several commentators correctly remark that the wording of John 12:41, ὅτι εἶδεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, corresponds with the targum that also speaks, in Isa 6:5, of the glory of the *shekhina* of the King of ages.[9] Perhaps John said deliberately that Isaiah did not immediately see the *Kyrios*, but his glory. In addition, however, another observation should be made on this aspect of the text.

For whose glory did Isaiah see, according to this Gospel? Several commentaries explain that this text deals with the glory of the pre-existent Logos or Christ.[10] Raymond E. Brown points out another

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[7] Instead of ὅτι, the Majority text and some other manuscripts read ὅτε, but ὅτε seems a correction of ὅτι. Instead of αὐτοῦ in τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, some manuscripts (Θ f[13] l sy[h] sa bo) read τοῦ θεοῦ, whereas D has τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ.

[8] For a fuller treatment of δόξα in the Fourth Gospel see J.J. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 158), Sheffield 1998, 219–33.

[9] C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, London 1978[2], 432; R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 5–12* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament IV.2), Freiburg i.B. 1971, 520; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (i–xii)* (The Anchor Bible 29), New York 1966, 486–7.

[10] R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar

possibility, namely that Isaiah saw the future life and glory of Jesus;[11] for this interpretation he refers to the *Ascension of Isaiah*, a text that, in its Christian adaptation, may stem from the second century CE. Probably Brown has *Ascension of Isaiah* 9:13 in mind, where Isaiah says: 'The LORD will indeed descend into the world in the last days, (he) who is to be called Christ after he has descended and become like you in form, and they will think that he is flesh and a man'.[12] But Schnackenburg points to the context of John 12, where the prophecy of the blinding of the Israelites' eyes and the hardening of their hearts has been quoted just before, which implies that the interpretation of John 12:41 with regard to Jesus' earthly life is less likely. More likely is the supposition of those exegetes who maintain that John 12:41 deals with the glory of the pre-existent Christ, and that the prophecy of Isa 6:9–10 about the hardening of the Israelites' heart has to be attributed to Christ as well. For instance, Maarten Menken writes: 'In his temple vision, the prophet saw the pre-existent Jesus, and not God himself (cf. John 1:18; 6:46; 1 John 4:12); therefore it is Jesus who addresses the prophet in Isa. 6:9–10'.[13]

The first text in the Fourth Gospel concerning Christ's glory is John 1:14, which reads (cf. NRSV): 'And the Logos became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father (ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός), full of grace and truth'. This text deals with the same person as in John 12:41; Isaiah saw the δόξα of the pre-existent Christ, and the community of Johannine believers, referred to as 'we' in John 1:14, has beheld the δόξα of the incarnate Logos, who is Jesus Christ.

Other references to Christ's δόξα occur in John 17:5, 'and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the δόξα which I had

über das Neue Testament), Göttingen 1953, 347; Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium 5–12*, 520.

[11] Brown, *John (i–xii)*, 487; similarly E.C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, London 1947², 347; N.A. Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', in: W. Klassen & G. Snyder (eds), *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper*, London 1962, 124–42 at 131–2.

[12] Transl. M.A. Knibb, in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ii, London 1985, 170.

[13] M.J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 15), Kampen 1996, 119; similarly: Bultmann, *Johannes*, 347; Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism'*, 224–6; G. Reim, 'Wie der Evangelist Johannes gemäß Joh 12,37ff. Jesaja 6 gelesen hat', *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 (2001) 33–46 at 35–6.

with you before the world was made' (cf. RSV), and John 17:24, 'Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my δόξα, which you have given me before the foundation of the world'.

It may be concluded that the Gospel of John speaks of a three-fold δόξα of Christ: (1) before the foundation of the world (John 17:5, 24); (2) in the Old Testament period (John 12:41); and (3) during the life of the Logos on earth, the Logos being incarnate in Jesus Christ (John 1:14). Moreover, concerning the hypothesis that was formulated in the first lines of this paper, we may conclude that the Logos, who figures in the Prologue as the pre-existent and incarnate Christ, corresponds with the *Kyrios*, YHWH, whose glory was seen by Isaiah and who is referred to in John 12:41.

2. OTHER INDICATIONS OF CORRESPONDENCES BETWEEN CHRIST AND YHWH

We will now investigate if in the Fourth Gospel there are other indications that Christ, who is called the Logos and who existed prior to his earthly existence, corresponds with YHWH, the God of Israel (§2). After this survey we will go into the question whether this Gospel makes a subtle distinction between the *Kyrios* (or YHWH) and God the Father (§3).

2.1. *Jesus'* I am-*sayings*

First of all, Jesus' *I am*-sayings allude to the Old Testament name of God. Like many other exegetes, David Mark Ball associates these sayings not in the first place with Exod 3:14 LXX (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν), but predominantly with Deutero-Isaiah (cf. also Lietaert Peerbolte, this vol., §4 on the Deutero-Isaian background of Phil 2:9), where אני, אני־הוא, and אנכי הוא frequently occur as sayings of YHWH, which were translated in the Septuagint as ἐγώ εἰμι.[14] We will look at some of the *I am*-sayings in the Gospel of John.

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[14] E.g., Isa 43:25; 45:18–19; 46:4; 48:12; 48:17; also 41:10; 43:10; 45:22; 52:6. See D.M. Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 124), Sheffield 1996. Ball's views are confirmed by C.H. Williams, *I am He: The Interpretation of 'Anî Hû' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.113), Tübingen 2000, who also points to Deut 32:39. N.I.

In John 6:20 Jesus says, when he walks on the water and a strong
wind was blowing: ἐγώ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε.[15] Ball points to several Old
Testament texts where YHWH combines the very same expressions,
'I am' and 'do not be afraid' (Gen 26:24; 46:3; Jer 1:8; 1:17; 26:28
LXX = 46:28 MT; 49:11 LXX = 42:11 MT).[16] One might add
that the story that Jesus walks on the water also corresponds with
YHWH trampling the waves of the sea, according to Job 9:8 and
Ps 89:10.

In John 8:12 Jesus says: 'I am the light of the world'. Thus the
evangelist identifies him with the Logos in the Prologue, who is called
the light of men (John 1:4–9).[17] In the Old Testament YHWH is
repeatedly called the light (Exod 13:21–22; Ps 27:1; Isa 60:1; 60:19).

In John 8:18, 24, and 28 Jesus again says ἐγώ εἰμι; in vv. 24 and
28 it is used without predicate. Ball interprets these texts as allu-
sions to words of YHWH in Deutero-Isaiah (43:10; 43:25; 52:6).[18]

In John 8:56–58 Jesus refers to Abraham who rejoiced to see 'my
day', after which he says: 'before Abraham was, I am'. The day that
Abraham saw may be interpreted with regard to the three angels,
one of whom was YHWH, who visited Abraham and Sarah (Gen
18:1–15),[19] but the day of Jesus has also been identified as the escha-
tological day of YHWH.[20] In the commentaries Abraham's vision of

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Soteropoulos, *Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Γιαχβέ*, Athens 1988², interprets the same texts in order
to demonstrate that essentially Jesus is YHWH.

[15] This pronouncement has also been transmitted in the synoptic versions of Matt
14:27 and Mk 6:50. For more synoptic texts, see G. Geiger, 'Die *ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ*-Worte
bei Johannes und den Synoptikern', in: A. Denaux (ed.), *John and the Synoptics*
(Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 101), Leuven 1992, 466–72.

[16] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 181–5.

[17] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 87.

[18] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 185–94; also C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the
Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1963, 350.

[19] A.T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament*, Edinburgh
1991, 125–7; he quotes John 8:39–40, which says implicitly that Abraham believed
the man who told him the truth, which refers to the words of YHWH/Jesus in
Gen 18:1–15.

[20] Thus Bultmann, *Johannes*, 247; M. Hengel, 'The Old Testament in the Fourth
Gospel', in: C.A. Evans & W.R. Stegner (eds), *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*
(Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 104), Sheffield
1994, 380–95 at 387. D. Boyarin, 'The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism
and the Prologue of John', *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001) 243–84 at 275, pro-
poses that John 8:56 refers to Gen 15:1, which he translates 'the Word [λόγος] of
God appeared to Abraham'. Though the Septuagint does not read λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ
but ῥῆμα κυρίου (from דבר־יהוה), this suggestion should not be wholly excluded;
cf. Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', 134.

Jesus' day in John 8:56 is often related to Isaiah's temple vision of Jesus (John 12:40–41), but it must be admitted that the purport of John 8:56 is less precise.[21] In any case, in John 8:58 Jesus clearly alludes to his pre-existence. Since ἐγώ εἰμι occurred in John 8 several times already, and since these words could be interpreted as references to YHWH, it may be assumed that in John 8:58 as well the Johannine Jesus alludes to his essential nature.[22]

John 10:11, 'I am the good shepherd', refers among other texts to Ezek 34, where YHWH is the shepherd who will take care of his people (Ezek 34:12–22; 34:31; only in 34:23 the shepherd is David). Some other texts that depict YHWH as a shepherd are Pss 23:1–4; 79:13; 80:1; Isa 40:11.[23]

In John 18:5–6 Jesus' twofold saying 'I am', without predicate, was so impressive that those who had come to arrest him drew back and fell to the ground. This looks like a theophany. In John 18:8 Jesus confirms his 'I am' for the third time.[24]

Ball concludes from these and other texts in the Fourth Gospel that by the application of ἐγώ εἰμι to the Johannine Jesus, an identification with the words and salvation of the God of Deutero-Isaiah, i.e. YHWH, is implied.[25]

2.2. *Other Old Testament quotations and allusions*

Furthermore, in order to establish the Johannine view on Jesus' identity, it is enlightening to pay attention to several other Old Testament quotations and allusions. We saw that John 1:14 describes the Logos, the only Son from the Father, as being 'full of grace and truth' (πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας). Moreover, John 1:17 says, 'The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth (ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια) came through Jesus Christ'. Many commentators consider 'full of grace and truth' an echo of רב־חסד ואמת in Exod 34:6, where these qualities are ascribed to YHWH; in this context Moses is allowed to see YHWH at least imperfectly (Exod 33:18–34:8; cf. 34:29–35).[26] With reference to these passages Anthony Tyrrell Hanson

[21] Cf. Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium 5–12*, 298–9.
[22] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 80–93; 195–8.
[23] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 35; 93–101; 224–32.
[24] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 137–45; 201.
[25] Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 258.
[26] E.g., R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium 1–4* (Herders Theologischer

establishes that, 'according to John, on those occasions in Israel's history when God is described as being seen, it was not in fact God who was seen, but the Logos'.[27]

In John 1:23 John the Baptist affirms that he is 'the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the *Kyrios*"'. In the Hebrew version of the quoted text, Isa 40:3, we read YHWH. Menken investigated the relationship between this quotation and the text of Isaiah and referred to several commentators, like Bultmann, who interpret *Kyrios* in John 1:23 as a reference to Jesus.[28] Thus John the Baptist implicitly says that Jesus represents the Old Testament *Kyrios*.

In this context John the Baptist also says that Jesus is 'he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' (John 1:33). In the Old Testament prophecies it is YHWH who will pour out his Spirit (Isa 44:3; Ezek 36:25–27; Joel 3:1–2 [2:28–29 in translations]). Once we see the relationship between Jesus and YHWH in this Gospel, the story of the marriage at Cana (John 2:1–11) also reminds us of the marriage between YHWH and his people. Brown points here to, e.g., Isa 54:4–8 and 62:4–5.[29] It is noteworthy that Jesus is said to have manifested his δόξα there (John 2:11). This points back to the δόξα of the Logos that 'we' have beheld, δόξα as of the only Son from the Father (John 1:14).

In John 3:29 John the Baptist alludes to the same image of a marriage: 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice'. The friend is John the Baptist, the bridegroom is Jesus, and thus John the Baptist alludes to YHWH who married his people. For this image Barrett refers to Isa 62:4–5; Jer 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; 23:4; Hos 2:21[-22] (2:18–19/19–20 in translations).[30]

Kommentar zum Neuen Testament IV.1), Freiburg i.B. 1979, 248, who also points to other texts where חסד ואמת are mentioned together in relation to God (2 Sam 2:6; Pss 25:10; 40:12; 61:8; 85:11; 89:15 etc.).

[27] A.T. Hanson, *New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, London 1980, 103 = 'John i. 14–18 and Exodus xxxiv', *New Testament Studies* 23 (1976) 90–101 at 96; also idem, *The Prophetic Gospel*, 21–32, and Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', 132.

[28] Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 21–35 at 30; Bultmann, *Johannes*, 62; also Ball, *'I Am' in John's Gospel*, 232–4.

[29] Brown, *John (i–xii)*, 104.

[30] Barrett, *St John*, 222.

In John 12:13 the crowd cries to Jesus when he entered Jerusalem: 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, [even] the King of Israel', which is a quotation from Ps 118:26 (117:26 LXX), to which the title 'the King of Israel' has been added. Andrew C. Brunson argues that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem actualizes YHWH's return to Zion. For the title 'the King of Israel' he refers in the first place to Zeph 3:14–15, besides numerous other Old Testament texts.[31] He concludes: 'Jesus does not only symbolize the return of Yahweh, nor as his vice-regent reign representatively. Instead, (. . .) Jesus enters Jerusalem as the presence of Yahweh'. He even speaks of 'a carefully constructed theological scheme to identify Jesus with Yahweh that includes at its core a network of allusions to the coming one of Ps 118'.[32]

2.3. *Jesus and his Father's name*

To conclude this incomplete survey of Johannine texts that point to Jesus as corresponding to YHWH, some other texts deserve to be briefly discussed.

Sometimes Jesus mentions the name (ὄνομα) of the Father, e.g., 'I have come in my Father's name' (John 5:43), and 'The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me' (John 10:25). In John 12:28 he prays, 'Father, glorify your name', in John 17:5–6, 'Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me out of the world', and John 17:26, 'I made your name known to them, and I will make it known' (cf. also John 17:11–12). C.H. Dodd associates the glorification and revelation of the name of God with Christ's enunciation of the divine name ἐγώ εἰμι, which he equates with אני־הוא.[33] We should not understand that

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[31] A.C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.158), Tübingen 2003, 179; 223–39; 277–9. He refers (p. 237), e.g., to Num 23:21; Ps 146:10; Isa 6:5; 24:23; 33:22; 43:15; 52:7; Jer 8:19; Mic 2:13; 4:7. See also, e.g., Ps 89:19; Isa 41:21; 44:6.

[32] Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 239.

[33] Dodd, *Fourth Gospel*, 93–6; 417. Similarly, R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (xiii–xxi)* (The Anchor Bible 29A), Garden City/New York 1970, 755–6; C.T.R. Hayward, 'The Holy Name of the God of Moses and the Prologue of St John's Gospel', *New Testament Studies* 25 (1978) 16–32 at 29: 'Jesus is God's name come in the flesh'; see also J. Daniélou, *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme*, Tournai 1958, 199–216.

Jesus literally revealed the pronunciation of the divine name,[34] but
we may conclude that in his teaching and by his acts he revealed
the Father's nature.[35]

2.4. *Correspondence with 'Lord' and 'God'*

Finally, in John 20:28 Thomas says to Jesus: ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός
μου. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is often addressed in the vocative
κύριε, and in John 13:13 Jesus says to his disciples that they were
right in calling him ὁ διδάσκαλος καὶ ὁ κύριος.[36] It is unmistakable,
however, that the titles 'my Lord and my God' in John 20:28 are
far more significant than the common vocative κύριε.[37] This use of
'my God' points back to John 1:1, 'The Logos was with God and
the Logos was God'.[38] If it is correct that elsewhere in this Gospel
the pre-existent Logos, who is God, corresponds with the *Kyrios* or
YHWH, this correspondence is confirmed by the close connection
of ὁ κύριος and ὁ θεός in Thomas's confession of Jesus.

2.5. *Jesus as the Kyrios in Paul*

The view that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is to be closely associated
with the Old Testament *Kyrios*, or even identified with YHWH, is
less strange than it may appear, for it also appears in the Pauline
epistles, insofar that there several YHWH texts are applied to Jesus.
David B. Capes wrote an interesting book on this theme.[39] For
instance, in Rom 10:13, 'everyone who calls upon the name of the
Lord shall be saved', the Lord is Jesus (Rom 10:9), but in the quoted
text (Joel 3:5 LXX) *Kyrios* is a translation of YHWH.[40] Another rel-
evant text is Romans 14:11, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee
shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God'; this is
mainly a quotation from Isa 45:23, where the prophet speaks in

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[34] Barrett, *St John*, 505.

[35] See also C.A. Gieschen, 'The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology', *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003) 115–58 at 135–41.

[36] Other texts where Jesus is called ὁ κύριος: John 4:1 (according to some impor-
tant manuscripts); 6:23; 11:2; 20:2, 13, 18, and 25; 21:7.

[37] In John 12:21, where Philip is addressed as κύριε, this simply means 'sir'.

[38] Barrett, *St John*, 572–3.

[39] D.B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology* (Wissenschaftliche
Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.47), Tübingen 1992.

[40] Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 116–23.

name of the *Kyrios* (Isa 45:18), who is YHWH. In the context of Rom 14, however, the *Kyrios* is Christ (Rom 14:8–9).[41] The same text from Isa 45:18 is alluded to in Phil 2:9–11, which says that God 'gave him [i.e., Jesus] the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'. According to many commentaries 'the name that is above every name' is the name of YHWH (see also Lietaert Peerbolte, this vol., §4).[42] The distinction between Jesus the *Kyrios* and God the Father is noteworthy as well (cf. Lietaert Peerbolte, end of §4).[43]

Furthermore, Paul applies the expression 'to boast in the *Kyrios*', which he quotes as Scripture, to Jesus (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17; cf. Jer 9:22–23 LXX),[44] and there are several other quotations in which *Kyrios* relates to Jesus (1 Cor 2:16; 10:26; also 2 Tim 2:19).[45] Yet Capes notes that Paul applies other YHWH texts to 'God' (Rom 4:7–8; 9:27–29; 11:34; 15:9–11; 1 Cor 3:20; 2 Cor 6:18), which shows that Paul does not consistently identify Jesus with the *Kyrios*.[46] In any case, one may conclude that if it is correct that in the Gospel of John Jesus is presented as the Old Testament *Kyrios*, this is not a new phenomenon, since it occurs already in the epistles of Paul.

3. The Distinction between the *Kyrios* (or YHWH) and God the Father

3.1. *Jesus and the Father*

After our excursion on Paul we return to the Gospel of John. Our survey of texts from this Gospel appears to imply that in Jesus the Old Testament *Kyrios*, YHWH, visited his people and the world. At the same time it seems that the *Kyrios*, who is also the Logos, does not completely coincide with God the Father. In the prologue ὁ θεός

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[41] Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 123–30.
[42] See, e.g., G.D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids MI 1995, 221–2; Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 157–60.
[43] Cf. 1 Cor 8:6; 15:23–28.
[44] Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 130–6.
[45] Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 136–49.
[46] Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts*, 90–115.

is distinguished from the Logos, although the latter is God as well
(John 1:1). 'No one has ever seen God', John 1:18 says, but Isaiah
did see the δόξα of the *Kyrios*, the pre-existent Jesus. With regard to
the vision of God some more texts are worth mentioning. In John
12:45 Jesus says: 'whoever sees me sees him who sent me', in John
14:7: 'If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now
on you know him and have seen him', and in John 14:9: 'Whoever
has seen me has seen the Father'. So, in spite of God's essential
invisibility, it appears to be possible to see God, that is, to see him in
the person of Jesus, in whom the Logos and *Kyrios* was incarnated.[47]

However, if in the Fourth Gospel one can perceive a certain dis-
tinction between God the Father and the *Kyrios*, YHWH, the fol-
lowing question should be raised: Is not YHWH the Father of his
people, or of the king, according to numerous Old Testament texts?[48]
The answer is that this is true indeed, but when in the Fourth Gospel
Jesus, being the *Kyrios*, speaks of *his* Father, he speaks of God of
whom he himself is the Son. In the conception of the Fourth Gospel
the *Kyrios*—YHWH, or the Logos—seems to be the Son of God, the
μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρός. At the same time, this Gospel not only dis-
tinguishes between God the Father and the *Kyrios* Jesus, it also empha-
sizes their unity, for Jesus says: 'I and the Father are one' (John
10:30).[49] This means that the evangelist wants to preclude any dithe-
ism; in his own way he testifies to the plurality in God that is already
displayed in the Old Testament.[50] In spite of the merits of the inves-
tigations by Ball and Brunson, we miss there this subtle distinction
between God the Father and YHWH in the Fourth Gospel, since
they take it as a matter of fact that YHWH is in all respects the
Most High God and Father.[51]

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[47] For a survey of the different modes of seeing in the Fourth Gospel see C.
Traets, *Voir Jésus et le Père selon l'Évangile de Saint Jean* (Analecta Gregoriana 159),
Rome 1967; Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism'*, 214–18.

[48] See 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:27; Isa 63:16; Mal 2:10; cf. Deut 14:1.

[49] Cf. John 17:11; 17:22. The fact that Jesus and the Father are not said to be
εἷς but ἕν means that they are not one person, but that they are inseparable; cf.
Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 389–90; E. Haenchen, *Johannesevangelium: Ein Kommentar*,
Tübingen 1980, 392.

[50] See A.R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God*, Cardiff
1961².

[51] This distinction is also missed by W. Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*
(Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie 23), Frankfurt a.M. 1989; D. Moody
Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, Cambridge 1995; P.N. Anderson, *The*

3.2. *Parallels to the distinction between God the Father and the Kyrios or Logos*

The distinction within God that may apparently be perceived in the Gospel of John has some parallels that are roughly contemporaneous.

First, according to Wisdom of Solomon 18:14–15 it was God's almighty Logos (ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος) who leaped from the heavenly thrones in order to save the people of Israel from Egypt.

Secondly, Philo calls the Logos God's πρωτόγονος, υἱός θεοῦ and ἀρχὴ καὶ ὄνομα θεοῦ.[52] He identifies him with the angel who was sent before Israel and who bears God's name (Exod 23:20).[53] In his comment on Jacob's dream in Gen 31:11–13 Philo distinguishes between θεός with and without article.[54] He explains that θεός with article is the true—which means fully transcendent—God who appeared to Jacob 'in the place of God' (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ, Gen 31:13); the latter God, for whom the article is not used, is the Logos who is improperly (ἐν καταχρήσει) called God (cf. Geljon, this vol., §1). Philo adds that 'He that is truly God is One, but those that are improperly so called are more than one'.[55] He also perceives

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Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.78), Tübingen 1996; the authors of A. Reinhartz (ed.), *God the Father in the Gospel of John* (Semeia 85), Atlanta GA 1999; J. Kügler, *Der andere König: Religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Christologie des Johannesevangeliums* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 178), Stuttgart 1999; C. Cebulj, *Ich bin es: Studien zur Identitätsbildung im Johannesevangelium* (Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge 44), Stuttgart 2000; J.F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 111), Cambridge 2001; M.M. Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John*, Grand Rapids MI/Cambridge 2001; L.W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids MI/Cambridge 2003, 370–89. Traets, *Voir Jésus et le Père*, appears to be aware of this distinction, but does not stress it (81–4, 91–4, 200). In spite of methodological flaws, M. Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God*, London 1992, is stimulating in raising the sensitivity for the distinction between the Most High God and YHWH.

[52] *De confusione linguarum* 146.

[53] *De agricultura* 51 (in Philo's text of Exod 23:20 here even ἐγώ εἰμι occurs, for he quotes: ἰδοὺ ἐγώ εἰμι, ἀποστέλλω ἄγγελόν μου εἰς πρόσωπόν σου); *De migratione Abrahami* 174; *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* 2.13.

[54] Although this seems relevant for the interpretation of John 1:1 (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος), one should not make too much of it, for θεός without article is predicative and describes the nature of the Word; thus Barrett, *St John*, 156; B.A. Mastin, 'A Neglected Feature of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel', *New Testament Studies* 22 (1975) 32–51 at 35–7; cf. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and F. Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Göttingen 1990[17], §273.

[55] *De somniis* 1.227–230; transl. F.H. Colson & G.H. Whitaker.

God's Logos in the angel addressed by Hagar when she said: 'You are the God that looks upon me' (σὺ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιδών με, Gen 16:13).[56] It is noteworthy that the same verse first says that Hagar 'called the name of the Lord' (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Αγαρ τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου), which implies that Philo interprets the Lord as the Logos. This is confirmed by a remark of his on swearing oaths. He interprets Deut 6:13, which says 'and you will swear by his name', as a commandment to swear by the name of the Lord, who is 'the interpreting Logos' and who is God for the imperfect, whereas for the wise and perfect the primal Being (ὁ πρῶτος) is God.[57]

Thirdly, the distinction between the highest and absolutely transcendent God and the Lord re-emerges in Gnosticism (cf. Luttikhuizen, this vol., §3). For instance, in the early second century CE Satornilus of Antioch maintains that there was one Father unknown to all, who made angels, archangels, and powers. In Satornilus' view the world was made by seven of the angels, one of whom was the God of the Jews.[58] Although Irenaeus, to whom we owe this account of Satornilus, does not say so explicitly, the God of the Jews can be no one else but YHWH. It must be admitted that in most Gnostic belief-systems there is an antagonism between the highest, fully transcendent Father and the Old Testament God, whereas in the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and the Gospel of John the two are closely related; it may be surmised that the former positive relationship between the highest God and YHWH has turned to antagonism in Gnosticism.[59]

Fourthly, in a way that resembles Philo and John, Justin Martyr distinguishes between the heavenly God and the *Kyrios* who manifested himself on earth. Although it must be admitted that Justin might be influenced by Philo[60] and by the Fourth Gospel,[61] his tes-

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[56] *De somniis* 1.238–241; cf. *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin* 3.34–35.

[57] *Legum allegoriae* 3.207.

[58] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I.24.1–2.

[59] See R. Roukema, *Gnosis and Faith in Early Christianity: An Introduction to Gnosticism*, London/Harrisburg 1999, 105–18.

[60] D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum III.3), Assen 1993, 97–105, shows that Justin's knowledge of Philo's works is doubtful.

[61] F.-M. Braun, *Jean le Théologien et son Évangile dans l'Église ancienne*, Paris 1959, 135–9, maintains that Justin knew this Gospel. T. Nagel, *Die Rezeption des Johannesevangeliums im 2. Jahrhundert* (Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 2), Leipzig 2000, 94–116, is less definite about Justin's knowledge of John's Gospel, but he concludes nevertheless that Justin appears to be influenced by the Johannine Logos Christology (115).

timony is still relevant to our theme. In his first *Apology* Justin writes
that Christ spoke to Moses from the burning bush (see also Geljon,
this vol., §2). We may observe that according to Exod 3:2 LXX it
was the Angel of the Lord (ἄγγελος κυρίου) who appeared to Moses,
whereas in Exod 3:4 LXX this angel is twice called *Kyrios*. Justin
interprets the words said to Moses, 'I am the Being (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν),
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God
of your fathers' (thus his quotation from Exod 3:14–15) as said by
Jesus Christ, who first was the Logos. He distinguishes this inter-
pretation from the Jewish view, according to which it was the ineffable
God who spoke to Moses.[62] Similarly, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin
distinguishes between God who appeared as Logos or Angel or Lord
to Abraham and Moses, and the other God, the Creator and Father,
who dwells in the supracelestial spheres.[63]

Fifthly, in the targums YHWH or God frequently acts and com-
municates with men in his Word (ממרא דייי). This *memra* or Word
is at least related to God's Logos in the Wisdom of Solomon, in
Philo, and in John's Gospel.[64]

3.3. *Jesus and his Father once again*

Now we return to the fundamental question: who is God the Father
in the Gospel of John, if it seems that we have to distinguish him
from the *Kyrios*, YHWH? The background of this question is that in
the Old Testament YHWH is called the only and Most High God,[65]
and that the appellations YHWH and 'God' (אלהים) are often used
alternately.

It seems that in the Fourth Gospel Jesus Christ in his capacity of
Logos and *Kyrios* represents God as far as he reveals himself to
mankind, and that God the Father is God in his absolute transcen-
dence and invisibility. Yet according to this Gospel God the tran-
scendent Father does not stay aloof from mankind. He loves the

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[62] *I Apology* 62.3; 63.7–10; 63.1. Cf. Bultmann, *Johannes*, 347.

[63] *Dialogue with Trypho* 56–60, esp. 56.1; 56.4; 58.3.

[64] See, e.g., Hayward, 'The Holy Name'; Barker, *The Great Angel*, 134–61; Boyarin,
'The Gospel of the *Memra*', 247–61 .

[65] YHWH the Most High God (עליון or אל עליון): Pss 7:18; 9:2–3; 21:8; 46:5,
8; 47:3; 83:19; 91:1–2; 97:9. In Gen 14:22 Abram swears by the Lᴏʀᴅ God Most
High (יהוה אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ), but the name YHWH is lacking in the Genesis
Apocryphon (*1QapGen* 22,16 reads אל עליון מרה אמיא וארעא), the Septuagint, and
the Syriac translation, which implies that is has been added to the Masoretic text.

world and sends his only Son (John 3:16–17), and can also be wrathful at the one who does not believe in the Son (John 3:36). He seeks those who worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:23), he is working like Jesus is working (John 5:17), he raises the dead (John 5:21), and sends the Paraclete to take Jesus' place (John 14:16, 26).

Once we have established the subtle distinction between God the Father and the *Kyrios* in this Gospel, it is most noteworthy that Jesus repeatedly says about his contemporaries that they do not know his Father and have never heard his voice.[66] To some extent this is similar to the Gnostic view, which emerged in the same period as the Gospel of John, that Jesus proclaimed the knowledge of the unknown and fully transcendent God. But in order to prevent misunderstandings, we should immediately add that in the Gospel of John Jesus' proclamation of God the Father does not imply any devaluation of the *Kyrios* or of the Old Testament, as we often find it in Gnostic testimonies (cf. Luttikhuizen, this vol., §3). Quite the contrary, according to John Jesus is even to be associated very closely with the *Kyrios*, that is YHWH; one may even daringly speak of his identification with the *Kyrios*, YHWH.

In the perspective of Jesus' revelation of the unknown Father, it is remarkable that the evangelist emphasizes that it is Moses, and not God, who gave the law (John 1:17; 7:19) and that Moses and the patriarchs, and not God, gave circumcision (John 7:22). 'The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ' (John 1:17).[67] To his contemporaries Jesus even speaks of 'your law' (John 8:17; 10:34) and in their absence he speaks of 'their law' (John 15:25), as if he distances himself from it. But although this Gospel apparently distances itself from the law of Moses in some respect, it also emphasizes that Moses and the prophets wrote of Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:45), and contains many Old Testament quotations that testify to a positive relationship between the Jewish Scriptures and Jesus.[68] If the foregoing argumentation is correct, we should even interpret Jesus' saying, 'If you believed Moses,

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[66] John 5:37; 7:28; 8:19, 55; 14:7; 15:21; cf. 3:8–12.

[67] See Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, 104 = 'John i. 14–18 and Exodus xxxiv', 96–7.

[68] A similar ambiguity towards the Old Testament is expressed in Rom 3:21, 'But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets'.

you would believe me, for he wrote about me' (John 5:46), not as a reference to some isolated prophecy, like Deut 18:15, 18,[69] but to far more texts that speak about YHWH revealing himself to the Israelites.[70]

CONCLUSION

In our view, this investigation shows that according to the Fourth Gospel Jesus manifested the divine name, since he himself was not only the incarnate Logos and the Son of God, but even the incarnate *Kyrios* or YHWH himself. In this capacity he revealed the transcendent Father who had sent him. But notwithstanding the distinction that can be perceived between God the Father and Jesus the *Kyrios*, their fundamental unity is essential as well. This is only one of the paradoxes that permeate the Fourth Gospel, which testifies to Jesus as the shepherd and the lamb, as the Lord and the servant, and as the Word made flesh.

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[69] Thus Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium 5–12*, 182.
[70] Thus Dahl, 'The Johannine Church and History', 132–3, relates John 5:46 with Moses' vision of Christ's glory in Exod 33:17–34:9; 34:5–6.

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA AND GREGORY OF NYSSA ON MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

Albert C. Geljon

One of the famous episodes in Moses' life is his encounter with God at the burning bush, recorded in Exodus 3. God makes himself known to Moses and gives him the order to free the Jewish people from their slavery in Egypt. In this article I will investigate the way in which two exegetes with a different background deal with this story. First I will discuss the interpretation given by the Jewish exegete Philo of Alexandria, who lived in Alexandria at the beginning of the Christian era. Since Philo had great impact on the first Christian writers with his allegorical interpretation of Scripture, I will secondly investigate how an important Church father from the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa, interprets Exod 3 and how he makes use of Philo.

1. Philo of Alexandria

Philo wrote a biography of Moses, *De vita Moysis* in which he gives a literal account of Moses' life, based mainly on Exodus and Numbers in the Greek translation of the Septuagint. Characteristic of *De vita Moysis* is that Philo does not offer complex allegorical exegesis as he does in his other works. *De vita Moysis* is meant as a biography to introduce the reader to Moses' philosophy as explained by the Jewish exegete in his other works. It should be studied before one reads Philo's allegorical commentaries. Because of its introductory character it can be compared with Porphyry's *Vita Plotini* and the treatises on Plato and Democritus by Thrasyllus.[1]

God's appearance is of course a significant event in Moses' life and Philo recounts the story in the first book of *De vita Moysis*. Retelling Exod 3 Philo gives a more detailed description than the

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[1] See A.C. Geljon, *Philonic exegesis in Gregory of Nyssa's* De Vita Moysis, Providence 2002, 31–46.

biblical account. He adds that the bush is thorny and of the most
weakly kind, and he compares the burning bush with a spouting
fountain (§65). He narrates that in the bush an image of Him-who-
is appears. The image is rightly called an angel, because it forecasts
the future (§66).[2] Next Philo proceeds to give a symbolical interpre-
tation of the event. The burning bush is a symbol of those who
suffer wrong, and the flame is a symbol of the wrongdoers. The fact
that the bush is not burned indicates that the sufferers will not be
destroyed by their assailants. The angel appearing in the bush is
explained as a symbol of God's providence. We have here, Philo
declares, a description of the situation of the Jewish people at that
moment: those who wish to destroy the people will not be success-
ful, in the same way as the fire cannot destroy the bush. The wrong-
doers become the saviours of the people, in the same way as the
fire is preserving the bush (§67).[3] In this passage we meet some ele-
ments that are part of the Jewish tradition and occur later on in the
Midrash: the reference to the bush as thorny, and the symbolic inter-
pretation of the burning bush (cf. Nikolsky, this vol., Introd.).[4]

In what follows, Philo interprets the words that God says to Moses.
When God gives his command to Moses to go to the Pharaoh, Moses
asks God about his name, and God replies:

> Tell them that I am He-who-is, that they learn the difference between
> what is and what is not, and that no name can be properly used of
> me (ἐπ' ἐμοῦ κυριολογεῖται), to whom alone existence (τὸ εἶναι) belongs
> (§75). If the people look for a title to use, tell them not only that I
> am God, but also God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their names
> express the virtue that each has acquired: Abraham by teaching, Isaac
> by nature, and Jacob by practice (§77).

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[2] Philo identifies an angel with God's Logos (cf. Roukema, this vol., §3.2). In *De
Cherubim* 3 he narrates that Hagar meets an angel, that is the divine Logos (cf. Gen
16:7).

[3] J.C.H. Lebram ('Eine stoische Auslegung von Ex. 3,2 bei Philo', in: *Das Institutum
Judaicum der Universität Tübingen in den Jahren 1971–1972*, Tübingen 1972, 30–5) dis-
cerns Stoic elements in Philo's explanation: the mentioning of providence (πρόνοια),
and the preserving fire is the Stoic πῦρ τεχνικόν, which causes growth and preser-
vation (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 1.120).

[4] *Midrash Rabbah Exodus*, translated by S.M. Lehrman, London/Bournemouth
1951, 2.5.

Philo interprets here Exod 3:14–15:

> And God said to Moses: I am He-who-is, and he said: You will tell
> to the sons of Israel He-who-is sent me to you; and God said to Moses
> again: You will tell to the sons of Israel the Lord God of your fathers,
> God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob sent me to you.[5]

The most important theological issue in Philo's interpretation is the
notion that God does not have a proper name, and that human
beings use the title 'Lord God' to name the highest Being (see also
Burnyeat, this vol., §2 note 28: 'Philo does not connect the name
with eternity, but explains it as designating nothing but God's ὕπαρ-
ξις in contrast to his οὐσία or ποιότης, which are beyond our com-
prehension').

In *De vita Moysis* Philo offers only a summary of this notion because
of the introductory character of the work. A more elaborate account
is found in the treatises of the so-called 'Allegorical Commentary'.
I refer to the beginning of *De mutatione nominum*, which is an exegesis
of Gen 7:1 'the Lord was seen by Abraham'.[6] Philo explains that
we should not think that the Existent (τὸ ὄν), which truly exists, is
grasped by men. Moses also yearns to see God but he does not suc-
ceed, and God says to him: 'You will see what is behind me, but
you will not see my face'. This means that all that is behind the
Existent is comprehensible, but God alone by his nature cannot be
seen (§§8–10; cf. Roukema, this vol., §1). The Alexandrian exegete
refers here to Exod 33:13, where Moses asks God to manifest him-
self but gets the answer that he cannot see God's face. A conse-
quence of the incomprehensibility of the Existent is that no proper
name can be assigned to it (cf. Van den Berg, this vol., §3 on Origen).
To confirm this statement Philo quotes God's self-disclosure in Exodus
3:14. God's words 'I am He-who-is' indicates that God's nature is
to be (see also Burnyeat, this vol., on Numenius), not to be spoken
of (§11). This is fully in accord with the explanation in *De vita Moysis*:

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[5] For Exod 3:14 in Philo, see E. Starobinski-Safran, 'Exode 3, 14 dans l'oeuvre
de Philon d'Alexandrie', in: P. Vignau (ed.), *Dieu et l'être, exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de
Coran 20, 11–24*, Paris 1978, 47–55.

[6] The text is analysed by D.T. Runia, 'Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic
Theology with Special Reference to the *De mutatione nominum*', in: R. van den Broek,
T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld (eds), *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-roman world* (Études
préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain 112), Leiden 1988, 66–91.

no name can be properly used of God, to whom alone existence belongs. But human race needs a name for the highest Being, and therefore Gods gives them the improper use of the title κύριος ὁ θεός ('Lord God'), as if it were a proper name (δίδωσι καταχρῆσθαι ἂν ὀνόματι τῷ κυρίῳ κύριος ὁ θεός;[7] §12). Here Philo employs the notion of κατάχρησις, borrowed from Greek grammatical theory.[8] Usually it is defined as the transference of a word from an object that is properly named to an other object that is properly unnameable (cf. also Van Kooten, this vol., end of §3) and does not have any proper name. Such a definition is given by the rhetorician Tryphon, who lived in Alexandria one generation before Philo.[9] It is evident that the Alexandrian exegete makes a theological application of this notion. Human beings apply words or names to God, who is actually unnameable and who bears no proper name. Because no name can be assigned to God properly, titles for God are employed improperly. The rhetorical theorists refer to the unnameable object as ἀκατονόμαστος, exactly the same adjective Philo uses for God (*De somniis* 1.67).

To support this view Philo quotes God's words from Exod 3:15: 'This (= the title "Lord God") is my age-long name, and a memorial for generations'. 'Age-long' indicates that the name belongs to the age of human existence, not to God, who transcends human existence. It is 'a memorial', which indicates that the name is easily remembered. The name is 'for generations', that is not for ungenerated natures but fitting human beings (§12). Next the Jewish exegete cites Exod 6:3: 'I was seen by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being their God, and I did not make clear to them my name of Lord (τὸ ὄνομά μου κύριον).' This verse is connected with the main biblical text which is commented on (Gen 7:1) by the verbal agreement of the expression 'The Lord was seen.' Philo discerns in Exod 6:3 an example of an unusual word order (hyperbaton). It should be read: 'I did not make

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[7] Mss: ὡς ἐν ὀνόματι τῷ κυρίῳ. Wendland: ὡς ἂν ὁ ὢν ὀνόματι τοιούτῳ (= Johannes Damascenus, *Sacra Parallela*). I follow the conjecture proposed by Runia, *art. cit.* (n. 6), 76–7 note 28.

[8] For the notion of κατάχρησις in Philo, see Runia, *art. cit.* (n. 6), 82–89, and J. Whittaker 'Catachresis and Negative Theology: Philo of Alexandria and Basilides' in: S. Gersh & C. Kannengiesser (eds), *Platonism in Late Antiquity*, Notre Dame 1992, 61–82.

[9] L. Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*, Leipzig 1856, 3: Κατάχρησίς ἐστι λέξις μετενηνεγμένη ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου κατονομασθέντος κυρίως τε καὶ ἐτύμως ἐφ᾽ ἕτερον ἀκατονόμαστον κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον.

clear my proper name (ὄνομά μου τὸ κύριον)'. God only reveals his
improper name, that is the title 'Lord God' (§13). Philo makes use
of the different meanings of κύριος. κύριος can mean 'legitimate',
'proper' and a κύριον ὄνομα is a proper or personal name. ὁ κύριος,
used as a substantive, means 'Lord', and is frequently used in the
Septuagint. Philo also employs the verb κυριολογέω 'to speak prop-
erly', as opposite to κατάχρησις.[10] Employing the notion of hyper-
baton, Philo can read Exod 6:3 as saying that God did not make
clear his proper name.

    In what follows Philo gives a summary, stating that the highest
Being (τὸ τῶν ὄντων πρεσβύτατον) is ineffable, and if it is ineffable,
it is also inconceivable and incomprehensible.[11] After the discussion
of Exod 6:3, the exegete returns to his starting-point: when it is writ-
ten 'The Lord was seen by Abraham' (Gen 7:1), we should not think
that God himself appears. It is his royal power that appears, for
'Lord' is the title of God's rule and kingship (§15). Here the notion
of the divine powers comes to the fore. In Philonic theology God's
powers play an important role. God is accompanied or surrounded
by two powers. The first is the creative power, by which the world
was created, and which is called θεός. Philo derives θεός from the
verb τίθημι, that can mean 'to create'. The second power is the
royal power, by which God rules created reality, and this power is
called κύριος.[12] The powers can be regarded as that aspect of God
that is turned towards the creation and by which God has contact
with his creation. When it is written 'The Lord was seen by Abraham',
it is not God himself who appears, but his royal power, named Lord.
We saw above that Philo interprets the appearance in the burning
bush as God's angel or Logos (cf. Roukema, this vol., §3.2), who
connects and unifies the two powers on a higher ontological level.[13]

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[10] Cf. *De sacrificiis* 101; *De Abrahamo* 120; *De vita Moysis* 1.75.

[11] For God's incomprehensibility in Philo, see L.A. Montes-Peral, *Akataleptos Theos:
Der unfassbare Gott* (ALGHJ 16), Leiden 1987, 148–61; D. Carabine, *The Unknown
God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition—Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain Theological
and Pastoral Monographs 19), Leuven/Grand Rapids 1995, 191–222.

[12] In *De Cherubim* 27 Philo allegorically explains the two Cherubim and the sword
of flame (Gen 3:24) as the two divine powers and the Logos. For a discussion of
God's powers in Philo, see D. Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria*,
Cincinatti 1985, 19–22.

[13] For the doctrine of the Logos in Philo's thought, see Winston, *op. cit.* (n. 12),
9–25, and T.H. Tobin, art. 'Logos', in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, iv, New York
1992, 348–56.

Philo brings up the story of the burning bush twice in *De fuga et inventione*. In a discussion about seeking and finding, Philo depicts Moses as looking for God. When Moses shrinks from his commission, thinking that he is not able to liberate the people, God says to him: 'I will be with you' (Exod 3:11–12). Moses looks for God and he finds that God is with him. But Philo qualifies God's manifestation: God does not manifest himself as he is to those who look for him. This is impossible, and therefore Moses turns his face away, fearing to see God's face (Exod 3:6). Philo states that God reveals himself so far as created nature can look at God's power (§§140–142).

Later on in the same treatise Philo treats the story within the context of a discussion of seeking, but not finding. Moses is presented as searching the causes by which the most essential occurrences in the universe are brought about. Seeing that all created things come into being and pass away, he is astonished and cries: 'Why ever does the bush burn, and is not burned?' (§161; Exod 3:2–3). The Alexandrian exegete explains that Moses inquires curiously about the inaccessible place, and that he is about to engage in an endless and futile labour. His task is made easier by God, who says from the inaccessible: 'Do not draw near' (Exod 3:5a), that is, 'Do not conduct such an inquiry.' This work requires a curiosity too great for human power. One should marvel at the created things, but not inquire about the causes by which they come into being and pass away (§162). God continues saying: 'The place where you stand is holy' (Exod 3:5c). What kind of place is this? It is a place of causation (αἰτιολογικός), accessible only for divine natures; no human being is able to study the causes (§163).

The discussion in *De fuga et inventione* differs from the treatment in *De vita Moysis* and *De mutatione nominum* because of the thematic approach of seeking and finding. In §§140–142 Philo presents Moses as seeking for God and finding that God is with him, because God promises this. The Jewish exegete, only quoting God's words in Exod 3:12, passes God's self-disclosure over in silence. Philo's treatment in §§161–163 is based on Moses' inquiry about the burning bush, which shows that Moses is looking for the causes of phenomena. He does not succeed, for God says: 'Do not draw near'. An exegesis of God's words in Exod 3:14–15 is absent. The discussion in *De mutatione nominum* stands on a high philosophical and theological level. In his interpretation Philo makes use of the notion of hyperbaton, derived from grammatical theory, and applies the idea of κατάχρησις in a

theological way. Furthermore, the idea of unnameability is elaborated extensively, and he uses the more philosophical τὸ ὄν, and not ὁ ὤν. So, it is more the God of the philosophers whom we meet here than the personal, living God.

Summarizing Philo's interpretation of Exod 3:14, we can state that God's self-disclosure as 'I am He-who-is' indicates that God's essence consists in being (see also Burnyeat, this vol., on Numenius), and that his nature cannot be expressed in words. God does not have any proper name, which can be used properly. He is ἀκατονόμαστος. But because human beings search for a title to name the highest Being, God gives to them the improper use of the title 'Lord God', for which Philo finds biblical support in Exod 3:15. In his explication of God's unnameability Philo employs the notion of κατάχρησις in a theological context. God is not only unnameable, he is also incomprehensible. It is impossible for human beings to know God's essence, how God really is. Philo connects Exod 3 with Exod 33, where Moses asks God to manifest himself, but God makes clear that he cannot be seen. In the discussion of the burning bush in *De fuga et inventione* Philo does not refer to God's self-manifestation, because he approaches the story within the theme of finding and seeking. In *De mutatione nominum* the story is discussed to prove God's unnameability and incomprehensibility. Philo is obviously a representative of the tradition of negative theology, in which the highest Being is approached in a negative way (see also Luttikhuizen, this vol., §2). The church father Gregory of Nyssa stands in the same tradition.

2. Gregory of Nyssa

Gregory of Nyssa lived in Cappadocia in the 4th century and is mainly known for his mysticism. From his writings it appears that he had a profound knowledge of the Philonic corpus. He refers a few times to Philo by name and many borrowings from Philo can be found in his treatises.[14] Like Philo, Gregory wrote a treatise entitled *De vita Moysis*. It consists of two parts: in part one, named ἱστορία, Gregory retells Moses' life in a literal way, and in part two, named

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[14] Cf. D.T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, Assen/Minneapolis 1993, 243–61; Geljon, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 51–3.

θεωρία, he offers an allegorical exegesis in order to show how Moses'
life is an example of a virtuous life. The essential difference between
Philo's *De vita Moysis* and Gregory's treatise is that Philo does not
give any allegorical interpretation, whereas Gregory allegorizes Moses'
life elaborately. Nevertheless, Gregory makes extensive use of Philo,
not only of the *De vita Moysis*, but also of other writings of Philo.

Gregory gives God's manifestation to Moses a prominent place in
his *De vita Moysis*. His description of the burning bush is borrowed
from Philo, as we see, when we place the texts side by side:

Philo, *De vita Moysis* 1.65–66	Gregory, *De vita Moysis* I.20
βάτος ἦν, <u>ἀκανθῶδές</u> τι φυτὸν καὶ ἀσθενέστατον· οὗτος, οὐδενὸς πῦρ προσενεγκόντος, ἐξαίφνης ἀνακαίεται καὶ περισχεθεὶς ὅλος ἐκ ῥίζης εἰς ἀκρέμονα πολλῇ <u>φλογὶ</u> <u>καθάπερ ἀπό</u> <u>τινος πηγῆς ἀνομβρούσης</u> διέμενε σῶος, . . .	. . . ἐν σταθερᾷ μεσημβρίᾳ φωτὸς ἑτέρου ὑπὲρ τὸ ἡλιακὸν φῶς τὰς ὄψεις περιαστράψαντος.[15] τὸν δὲ ξενισθέντα τῷ ἀήθει τῆς θέας ἀναβλέψαι τε πρὸς τὸ ὄρος καὶ ἰδεῖν θάμνον[16] ἀφ' οὗ πυροειδῶς τὸ φέγγος ἐξήπτετο, τῶν δὲ κλάδων τοῦ θάμνου <u>καθάπερ ἐν δρόσῳ</u> <u>τῇ φλογὶ</u> συναναθαλλόντων, . . .
	De vita Moysis II.20
	Εἰ δὲ καὶ θάμνου τινὸς <u>ἀκανθώδους</u> τὸ φέγγος ἐξάπτεται, . . .

Both Philo and Gregory describe the burning bush more extensively
than the biblical account does. An element common to both is the
comparison in which water takes part: Philo depicts the flame as
coming from a spring gushing water. Gregory remarks that the
branches of the bush sprout up in flame as in pure water. Both refer
to the bush as thorny, but this is also found in Clement.[17] Because
there are more borrowings from Philo in Gregory's *De vita Moysis*,
the Cappadocian has here, in all likelihood, Philo's description in
mind.[18]

In book II Gregory offers an interpretation of the story of the
burning bush. Following common Christian exegesis, he gives a

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[15] Does Gregory remember the description of Saul's conversion in Acts 22:6: περὶ μεσημβρίαν ἐξαίφνης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ περιαστράψαι φῶς?

[16] The Septuagint reads βάτος, which Gregory uses in *De vita Moysis* II.26.

[17] *Paedagogus* 2.8.75.

[18] See Geljon, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 94–5.

Christological exegesis of the appearance in the bush: It is Christ, God's Logos, who appears (see also Roukema, this vol., §3.2).[19] Gregory and the Church fathers follow Philo, who interprets the appearance as God's angel or Logos, as we saw above. In Gregory's reading it is thus not God the Father who manifests himself but God the Son, who is the light that has come down to human nature (II.20). The fact that the bush is not burned refers to the mystery of Mary, who does not lose her virginity begetting her son. Knowledge of the truth will follow, when one takes off one's shoes (Exod 3:5; on this issue, see Tigchelaar, this vol.). Truth is the sure apprehension of real Being (τὸ ὄντως ὄν), which possesses existence by its own nature (II.23). Gregory describes this real Being in terms used by Plato to describe the world of Ideas (cf. Burnyeat, this vol., §3; and Luttikhuizen, this vol., §1):

> Always to exist in the same way, never to become greater and never to be diminished, to be totally beyond all change whether it be for the better or the worse, means that the Divine is doubly incapable either of deterioration or of improvement. To be totally independent of all else and, at the same time, to be the sole object of desire; to be participated in by all, yet to be in no way thereby diminished, that is to be The Really Real (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) and knowledge thereof is the knowledge of the truth (II.25).[20]

The scriptural basis for this Platonic interpretation can clearly be found in God's self-disclosure in Exod 3:14.[21]

In Gregory's interpretation the words ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν are thus spoken by God the Son, because it is the Son who appears in the bush. Here, we have the most essential difference between Philo and Gregory. For Gregory God and God's Logos, Christ, stay on the

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[19] Cf., e.g., Justinus Martyr, *Apologia* 1.62–63, and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.164.4; 5.100.4.

[20] Translation A. Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa* (The Early Church Fathers), London 1999, 104. An analysis of this passage is given by D.L. Balás, *Μετουσία θεοῦ: Man's Participation in God's Perfections According to Saint Gregory of Nyssa* (Studia Anselmiana 55), Rome 1966, 102–22.

[21] Reference to God's appearance in Exod 3 occurs also in the 11th homily on the Song of Songs. God manifests himself to Moses by light, which means a transition from darkness to light. This consists in a withdrawal from false and wrong opinions about God (*In Canticum Canticorum* 11, 322.9–15). For Exod 3:14 in Gregory, see M. Canévet, *Grégoire de Nysse et l'herméneutique biblique*, Paris 1983, 98–103. See also M. Harl, 'Citations et commentaires d'Exode 3, 14 chez les Pères Grecs des quatre premiers siècles', in: P. Vignau (ed.), *op. cit.* (n. 5), 87–108, esp. 101–6.

same ontological level. Both God the Father and God the Son can be called ὁ ὤν Being should be ascribed to all the persons of the divine trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For Philo, only God can be named ὁ ὤν and has real Being. God's Logos, subordinated to God and having a less real existence, does not stay on the same ontological level as God himself. Philo names God the fountain of the Logos (*De posteritate Caini* 69), and even suggests that the Logos belongs to created nature: he refers to God's Logos as the oldest of all created things (*Legum allegoriae* 3.175).

The place of the Logos is an important issue in Gregory's controversy with the neo-Arian Eunomius, and Gregory composed a vast work against him, *Contra Eunomium* (*CE*), in reaction to Eunomius' work *Apologia apologiae*. In this work the neo-Arian propounds the view that the Logos, God's Son, is subordinated to God in some way or another. Eunomius' position appears clearly from the following quotation given by Gregory in the first book of *Contra Eunomium*:

> The account of (sc. his) teachings consists of the highest and most real being, followed by a second, superior to all other beings, while being after the first. Finally, there is a third being, ranked with neither of the others, but subordinate to the first as to the cause, to the second as to an activity (*CE* 1.156*)*.[22]

Gregory discerns a kind of Judaism in Eunomius' thought.[23] In a passage from *Contra Eunomium* he claims that Eunomius has derived a sentence from Philo, remarking that there is a kinship of thought between Philo and Eunomius. He refers to the neo-Arians as the neo-Judaic sect (*CE* 3.7.8–9).[24] At more places Gregory associates Eunomius' followers with the Jewish belief. In *Contra Eunomium* 1.177–178 the Cappadocian states that Eunomius and his disciples teach the Jewish doctrine that only the being of the Father exists, and that the beings of the Son and the Spirit are counted among the non-existents. But if the being of the Son is denied, the salvation through the Son is at risk. Gregory urges Eunomius' followers to leave the Church and go back to the synagogues.

This difference between Gregory and Eunomius comes to the fore in the interpretation of Exod 3. Eunomius explains that first an angel

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[22] Translation Meredith, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 29–30.
[23] See Geljon, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 54–62.
[24] This is one of the two passages in which Gregory refers to Philo by name. The other is 3.5.25.

appears and next God the Father says: 'I am He-who-is'. We saw that Gregory has a different view. Discussing Eunomius' exegesis (*CE* 3.9.37–41), Gregory admits that in Exodus first an angel is mentioned (Exod 3:2) and later on it is God who speaks, saying 'I am He-who-is' (Exod 3:12–14). But for Gregory angel and He-who-is refer both to Christ. The highest Being is called angel in order to show that the meaning of the words might not be referred to the Father, as it would have been if the title of Being alone had been found. The Son is called angel because he is the messenger of his Father's will; he is called 'Being' because he does not have any name that gives knowledge of his essence, transcending every designation by name (cf. Phil. 2:9; cf. Lietaert Peerbolte, this vol.).

Gregory refers also to Exod 3:14 in *CE* 3.6.3–8, where he emphasizes the eternity of the divine being against Eunomius, who upholds the view that there was a time when the only begotten was not. The Cappadocian father quotes God's words, and states that we have to believe that the divine is eternal and infinite in respect of being. All that is seen around it is always the same, neither growing nor diminishing. If one says about God that he was earlier, but now he is not, or that he now is, but earlier he was not, we regard both sayings as godless (§3). He who manifests himself to Moses by the light calls himself 'being', when he says: 'I am He-who-is'. God says to Isaiah: 'I am the first and I am hereafter' (Isa 44:6), which indicates the eternity of the divine being. The divinity cannot be comprehended and designated by any name, and to show the unnameability Gregory refers to Judg 13:17–18, where Manoah asks the angel of the Lord his name. The angel answers: 'Why do you ask my name? It is marvellous' (§4). The Cappadocian exegete points also to the prologue of John's gospel in order to prove that the only begotten existed already in the beginning (§7). According to Moses the mark of true divinity is that we know nothing else of God but only that he is; this is indicated by the words 'I am He-who-is' (§8).

From the last two passages in *Contra Eunomium*, in which Gregory refers to God as unnameable, it is evident that he stands, like Philo, in the tradition of negative theology, describing the divine being as unnameable, invisible, incomprehensible, and infinite (cf. also Luttikhuizen, this vol., §2).[25] God's incomprehensibility is an important

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[25] For God's incomprehensibility in Gregory, see R.S. Brightman, 'Apophatic

theological issue in *De vita Moysis*, and is related to Exod 20:21, where it is written that Moses entered the darkness, where God was. Gregory explains that Moses sees God in the darkness, and this means that he knows that the divine is higher than all comprehension.[26] The divine nature is beyond all knowledge and is surrounded by incomprehensibility as by darkness. Gregory refers to John, who says: 'No one has ever seen God', and cites Ps 17:12: 'God made darkness his secret place' (II.163–164).

3. Conclusions

It is time to make a few concluding remarks. As we saw, Philo and Gregory offer a different theological interpretation of God's self-disclosure in Exod 3:14. For the Jewish exegete the title 'He-who-is' refers only to God, not to God's Logos, which is subordinated to God in some way or another. By way of contrast Gregory argues that God's Logos, which stands on the same level as God the Father, can also be named Being. Philo's view is followed by the neo-Arian Eunomius, who assumes a difference in being between God and the Logos, and for this reason Gregory charges him with Judaism. But, at the same time, picturing the burning bush, Gregory takes over elements form Philo's description. What is more, Gregory agrees with Philo regarding theological items as the unnameability and incomprehensibility of God. Concluding, Gregory's attitude towards Philo is double: overtly, he accuses Eunomius of Judaism and of following the Jew Philo, but he himself also makes use of Philo's work.

Theology and Divine Infinity in St. Gregory of Nyssa', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 18 (1973) 97–114; Carabine, *op. cit.* (n. 11), 236–58.

[26] This interpretation of Exod 20:21 derives from Philo. See Geljon, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 128–34.

THE REVELATION OF THE UNKNOWABLE GOD
IN COPTIC GNOSTIC TEXTS[1]

Gerard P. Luttikhuizen

1. The-One-who-is

In several Gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi collection, God is designated or—in prayers and hymns—addressed as 'The-One-who-is', 'You-who-are'. For instance, in the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ* it is stated that 'The-One-who-is' is ineffable.[2] In *Allogenes*, God is addressed as 'You are The-One-who-is'.[3] In the first *Apocalypse of James*, Christ exhorts James to cast away the bond of flesh that encircles him, and continues:

> Then you will reach The-One-who-is. And you will no longer be James; rather you are The-One-who-is.[4]

This passage renders the gist of Gnostic soteriology: the Gnostic should cut the bond with the material world; then the inner self will be able to return to its origin and be united with 'The-One-who-is', the transcendent God.

Was this designation for God inspired by the book of Exod 3:14, where the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob speaks to Moses from

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[1] A slightly different version of this essay is included in G.P. Luttikhuizen, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories and Early Jesus Traditions* (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 58), Leiden/Boston 2006, chap. 9, 108–16.

[2] *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (Nag Hammadi Codex [NHC] III.4), p. 94.5 (cf. Berlin Codex [BG] 3, p. 83.5). See the parallel passages in *Eugnostos* (NHC III.3), p. 71.13f. and NHC V.1, p. 2.8f.

[3] NHC XI.3, p. 54.32f.; cf. *Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* (NHC VI.6), p. 61.15f. In the *Three Steles of Seth* (NHC VII.5, p. 119.25), the prototypical Seth addresses Adam ('Adamas' or 'Geradamas') as 'The-One-who-is'.

[4] NHC V.3, p. 27.7–10; cf. 24.20, 23; 25.1, 3; 26.27; 27.15; 29.18f.; 36.10f. Cf. *Gospel of Truth* (NHC I.3), p. 28.13; *Tractatus Tripartitus* (NHC I.5), p. 91.6; 114.15; 130.29f.; *Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III.2), p. 66.16, 21; 67.26; *Authentic Teaching* (NHC VI.3) 25.29; *Treatise of Seth* (NHC VII.2) 67.18f.; 68.12; *Apocalypse of Peter* (VII.3) 84.6; *Silvanus* (VII.4), p. 101.24; *Zostrianos* (VIII.1), p. 16.6; *Marsanes* (NHC X.1), p. 7.5f., 24f.; 13.17; *Allogenes* (NHC XI.3), p. 49.26f., 35f. Note that the Coptic language has no neuter gender and therefore does not distinguish between 'he who is' and 'that which is'.

question 'What, then, really is being?', argues that only God can be said to be, while all other things are transitory and perishable and therefore unreal (see also Burnyeat, this vol., §2). It is interesting to read Plutarch's explanation of the inscription of the letter E on the temple of Delphi. Plutarch suggests that E is short for Eἶ.[9] 'You are' (without any nominal or verbal complement), he argues, is the correct way to address God because it is characteristic of God that he 'is', while all other things are in the process of creation or destruction. Plutarch makes an exception for addressing God as 'You are One' for, he comments, 'Being must have Unity' whereas humans are compounded of many different factors.

Similar theistic interpretations of Plato's real and eternal being were proposed by second-century pagan writers such as Maximus of Tyre, Alcinous, Apuleius, and Numenius.[10] Furthermore, the theological understanding of Plato's teaching of real being enabled early Christian philosophers to speak of God in Platonic terms.[11]

Philo of Alexandria combined the Mosaic title for God and the *Timaeus* passage. In *Quod deterius potiori insidiari solet* 160, he writes:

> God alone has veritable being. This is why Moses will say of Him as best as he may in human speech, 'I AM He that is', implying that others lesser than He have not being, as being indeed is, but exist in semblance only, and are conventionally said to exist.[12]

Significantly, Philo uses the neuter as well as the masculine form to refer to God.[13] Christian writers also noticed the resemblance between

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as a living and thinking being ('Monotheism and Pagan Philosophy', in: P. Athanassiadi & M. Frede [eds], *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 1999, 48).

[9] *De E apud Delphos* 392e–393f (F.C. Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia* [Loeb Classical Library], vol. 5, 242–8).

[10] Maximus in his treatise devoted to this question, *Who is God according to Plato?* (*Oratio* 11 edn. H. Hobein, 127–45); Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* X (see the quotation in §2 below); Apuleius, *De Platone* I; Numenius, fragments of *On the Good* and other treatises (edn. É. des Places). Cf. A.J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, vol. 4: *Le Dieu inconnu et la gnose*, Paris 1954, 92–140; J.P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism: A Study in Ancient Platonic Theology*, Hanover/London 1991, 32–90.

[11] Athenagoras, *Supplicatio* 19 (with reference to *Timaeus* 27d 6f.); Justin Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 3: God is τὸ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως αἰεὶ ἔχον.

[12] Transl. F.H. Colson (Loeb Classical Libray; Philo II). Cf. *De mutatione nominum* 11; *De somniis* I.231.

[13] C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1958, 61: 'Philo's favourite designation for God is Ὁ ὤν or Ὁ ὄντως ὤν. When however he turns this into the neuter and speaks of Τὸ ὄν or Τὸ ὄντως ὄν, he is deserting the Old Testament, and assimilating the God of his fathers to the impersonal Absolute of

Exod 3:14 LXX and the *Timaeus* passage. In Pseudo-Justin's *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 22 (second half of the third century) we read:

> Moses said, 'He who is' and Plato, 'That which is'. But either expression seems to apply to the ever-existent God, for he is the only one who always is, and has no origin.[14]

Eusebius explains the supposed agreement between Moses and Plato with reference to the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher and exegete Aristobulus (second century BCE) who claimed that Plato borrowed many of his teachings from Moses (see also Burnyeat, this vol., §1).[15]

It is generally assumed in recent scholarship that the second-century philosopher Numenius of Apamea had some direct or indirect knowledge of the Greek Bible.[16] One of the surviving fragments of his treatises suggests that he used the Septuagint title ὁ ὤν as well as more Platonic terms (e.g. αὐτοόν, 'being itself') to refer to his 'First God' (see, extensively, Burnyeat, this volume).[17] The correspondence between the Mosaic and the Platonic conception may have confirmed him in his view that Moses taught essentially the same truths as Plato.[18] Hence Numenius' remarkable statement, quoted approvingly by Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius: 'What is Plato but Moses talking Attic (τί γάρ ἐστι Πλάτων ἢ Μωσῆς ἀττικίζων)?' (see Burnyeat, this vol., §1).[19]

It is difficult to decide to what extent Gnostic authors were aware of the biblical connotation of the title 'The-One-who-is'. But even if they were familiar with the Exodus text, they are likely to have

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the Platonists'. Cf. J. Whittaker, 'Moses Atticizing', *Phoenix* 21 (1967), 197, who adds: 'This identification of the supreme deity with Platonic reality constitutes the cornerstone of Philo's system and no doubt of Alexandrian Jewish theology in general'.

[14] 22.2 (edn. M. Marcovich, 53).

[15] *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX 6.6; cf. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I.165; II.168, 257; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 40.1; 41.1f.; Clement, *Stromateis* V, chap. 14 (97.7); Origen, *Contra Celsum* VI.19 with H. Chadwick's comment, 'That Plato and the Greek philosophers plagiarized the Hebrew prophets and Moses was a commonplace of Jewish apologetic, taken over by Christian writers' (*Origen: Contra Celsum*, Cambridge 1965, 332 note 3). Cf. J.G. Gager, *Moses in Graeco-Roman Paganism* (SBL Monograph Series 16), Nashville/New York 1972, 76–9.

[16] M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1980, 206–16; G. Rinaldi, *Biblia Gentium*, Rome 1989, 264f.

[17] Frg. 13 des Places (22 Leemans) and frg. 17 des Places (26 Leemans).

[18] Cf. frg. 1a des Places (9a Leemans) and the discussion by Whittaker, 'Moses Atticizing', 199.

[19] Clement, *Stromateis* I, chap. 22 (150.4); Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX 6.9; XI 10.14 (frg. 8 des Places, 10 Leemans).

understood this designation for God in basically the same Platonist way as their contemporaries. In that case, 'The-One-who-is' is a biblical term with a typically Greek-philosophical meaning.

2. A God Beyond Being and Comprehension

At the same time there was a tendency to stress God's transcendence to such a degree that he was believed to be elevated above— and prior to—any form of being.[20] This idea was also inspired by Plato's texts. In their discussion of monism and pluralism, the dialogue partners in Plato's *Parmenides* reach the conclusion that the One (τὸ ἕν) cannot be known and is beyond being.[21] Cf. Socrates' statement in the *Republic* (509b 9): 'the Good is not a being but still beyond being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας)' (see also Burnyeat, this vol., §3). Later Platonists applied both notions of transcendence to the divine: on the one hand God was regarded as the only real Being, on the other, as the One beyond being. The strong emphasis on God's transcendence induced philosophers to avoid positive descriptions of the Divinity and, instead, to use the *via negationis* (see also Geljon, this vol., §1 and end of §2). In particular, the method of abstraction (*aphairesis*) developed by Aristotle became a mode of dealing with what is beyond the senses.[22]

One classic example is chapter X of Alcinous' philosophical textbook, the *Didaskalikos*. I shall quote section 4, and the beginning of section 5 (in the translation by J. Dillon). Although Alcinous expresses himself in negative-theological terminology, he holds to the idea that God is 'graspable by the intellect':

> (4) God is ineffable and graspable only by the intellect, as we have said, since he is neither genus, nor species, nor differentia, nor does he possess any attributes, neither bad (for it is improper to utter such a thought), nor good (for he would be thus by participation in something, to wit, goodness) nor indifferent (for neither is this in accordance with the concept we have of him), nor yet qualified (for he is not endowed with quality, nor is his peculiar perfection due to

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[20] For the following see R. Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, vol. 1: *The Rise and Fall of Logos* (Theophaneia 30), Bonn 1986; Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism*; A.P. Bos, 'Immanenz und Transzendenz', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 17 (1996) 1041–92.

[21] 137c–142a (the 'First Hypothesis').

[22] Mortley, *From Word to Silence*, vol. 1, 125–62.

qualification) nor unqualified (for he is not deprived of any quality which might accrue to him).

Further, he is not a part of anything, nor is he the same as anything or different from anything; for no attribute is proper to him, in virtue of which he could be distinguished from other things.

Also, he neither moves anything, nor is he himself moved.

(5) The first way of conceiving God is by abstraction of these attributes, etc.[23]

Similar formulations occur in a variety of contemporary texts: not only texts in the mainstream of Platonist philosophy but also in Hellenistic Jewish (Philo), early orthodox Christian (Aristides), Hermetic and Gnostic writings.[24] The most marked and detailed instances in Gnostic literature occur in the *Apocryphon of John* (quoted directly below), *Eugnostos, The Wisdom of Jesus Christ, Allogenes* and *Tractatus Tripartitus*.[25] Note that in the opening section of Christ's revelation to John in the *Apocryphon of John*, the *via negationis* is alternated with the *via eminentiae* and that, just as in Alcinous' *Didaskalikos*, (quasi-) philosophical foundations are added to several statements:

It is not right to think of him as a god or something similar, for he is more than a god.
He is a rule over which nothing rules for there is nothing before him. (. . .)
He is illimitable since there is no one prior to him to set limits to him;

[23] J. Dillon, *Alcinous: The Handbook of Platonism*, Oxford 1993, 18. Subsequently, Alcinous mentions two further ways to conceive of God: the *via analogiae*, for which he refers to Plato's Sun Simile in *Republic* VI, and the *via eminentiae*: 'one contemplates first beauty in bodies, than one turns to the beauty in soul, then to that in customs and laws, then to the "great sea of Beauty", after which one gains an intuition of the Good itself'.

[24] A particularly interesting parallel occurs in Aristides' *Apology*, J.R. Harris (ed.), *The Apology of Aristides*, Cambridge 1893, 35f. Cf. W.C. van Unnik, 'Die Gotteslehre bei Aristides und in gnostischen Schriften', *Theologische Zeitschrift* 17 (1961) 166–174 at 174: 'Die Gottesprädikate der philosophischen Sprache wurden Aussagen einer höheren Form des Christentums, und deshalb kann man sie (. . .) als die höchste *christliche* Offenbarung predigen'; R. van den Broek, 'Eugnostos and Aristides on the Ineffable God' (in: R. van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld [eds], *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, Leiden 1988), 202–18; M. Waldstein, 'The Primal Triad in the *Apocryphon of John* ' (in: John D. Turner and Anne McGuire [eds], *The Nag Hammadi Library After Fifty Years* [Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 44], Leiden 1997), 138–53.

[25] *Eugnostos* (NHC III.3) 71.13–73.3 = NHC V.1 2.8–3.8; *Sophia of Jesus Christ* (BG 3) 83.5–86.6 = NHC III.4, 94.5–95.18; *Allogenes* (NHC IX.3) 61.32–67.38; *Tractatus Tripartitus* (NHC I.5) 52.2–53.5.

the unsearchable One since there exists no one prior to him to exam-
ine him;
the immeasurable One since no one else measured him, as if being
prior to him;
the invisible One since no one saw him.
(. . .)
He is neither perfection nor blessedness nor divinity but he is some-
thing far superior to them.
He is neither unlimited nor limited, but he is something superior to
these.
For he is not corporeal, he is not incorporeal.
He is not large; he is not small.
He is not quantifiable, for he is not a creature.
Nor can anyone know him.
He is not at all something that exists, but he is something superior to
them,
Not as being superior, but as being himself.[26]

While Alcinous states that the ineffable God is 'graspable by the
intellect', this is explicitly denied in the *Apocryphon of John*: no-one
can know him. Accordingly, *Allogenes* characterises the knowledge of
God as '*not*-knowing knowledge' and as 'ignorance that sees'.[27] This
raises the question, how could Gnostics narrow the distance to a
God beyond being and intelligibility and claim to possess this spe-
cial knowledge (while denying it to others)?[28]

We find several answers to these questions in Gnostic literature,
notably in narrations of the myth of origins. A summary of the rel-
evant ideas in the *Apocryphon of John* may suffice here. The myth tells
how the inferior creator and ruler of the physical world came into
existence, how he usurped a portion of divine substance and, sub-
sequently, breathed it into Adam's soul. When the demiurgical God
realized his mistake he fashioned the human body from the four ele-
ments with a view to tying the divine core of Adam's soul to the
earth.

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[26] BG 23.3–7; 23.15–24.1; 24.9–25.1.
[27] M.A. Williams, 'Negative Theologies and Demiurgical Myths' (in: J.D. Turner
and R. Majercik [eds], *Gnosticism and Later Platonism* [SBL Symposium Series 12],
Atlanta 2000), 277–302 at 290, with reference to *Allogenes*, p. 59.28–32; 60.8–12;
61.1f.; 64.10–14.
[28] In the opening sections of *Eugnostos* and *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, Gnostic knowl-
edge is contrasted with the allegedly superficial theologies of several philosophical
schools.

This mythical story suggests that in their inner selves, human beings are consubstantial to the transcendent God, and so are able to 'know' him. It is important to note that according to the *Apocryphon of John, all* Adam's descendants belong to the supreme God[29] and that Gnostics are not likely to have distinguished themselves from other people because they believed to *possess* the divine pneuma, but because they claimed to *be aware* of their divine 'power' (and to live a life in conformity with it) while others were not.

The *Apocryphon of John*'s narration of the myth deals primarily with the origin of the present condition of humanity: given the existence of a perfect good God, why are human beings forced to live in such an imperfect and evil world? The revelation of the unknowable God is not the main topic of its teaching. The *Trimorphic Protennoia*, a closely related Gnostic text, is more explicitly devoted to this theme. Therefore I add an analysis of the *Trimorphic Protennoia*'s basic line of thought.

In the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, Protennoia introduces herself as the Thought of the Father.[30] The obvious implication is that God *thinks*, and therefore has self-knowledge:[31] his Thought is his image.[32] In the Greek language, the word for 'thought'—ἔννοια—is feminine. This may have contributed to the idea that God's spiritual image is a female being. Although they often addressed him as 'Father', Gnostics of various schools imagined their God as an androgynous entity.[33]

As God's *Thought*, Protennoia is present in everything that exists outside God.[34] This is her first μορφή. In her second manifestation,

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[29] See Luttikhuizen, *Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories* (above, note 1), chap. 7.

[30] NHC IX.1, p. 36.17; 42.6; cf. 48.14 and the opening lines: '[*I*] am [*Protennoia, the*] Thought that [*dwells*] in [*the Light*]' (transl. J.D. Turner, in: Ch. W. Hedrick [ed.], *Nag Hammadi Codices XI, XI, XIII* [Nag Hammadi Studies 28], Leiden 1990, 403); cf. G. Schenke's translation: '[Ich] bin die Pro[tennoia, der Ge]danke, der exi[stiert] in [dem Vater]' (*Die dreigestaltige Protennoia*, Berlin 1984, 27).

[31] This reminds us of the Aristotelian definition of God as a metacosmic Mind which thinks that which is best, to wit itself; see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII 1074b.

[32] *Apocryphon of John* (BG 2), p. 27.1f., 4f., 17–19 and parallel passages: 'he perceived (νοεῖν) his own εἰκών'; 'his Thought became actual'; 'she is his first Thought, his image'.

[33] In the *Apocryphon of John*, NHC II, God is sometimes addressed as Μητροπάτωρ, 'Mother-Father', II.1, p. 5.6; 6.16; 14.9; 19.12; 20.9; 27.33.

[34] This basically pantheistic concept is somehow related to contemporary Stoic thought. Cf. C. Colpe, 'Heidnische, jüdische und christliche Überlieferung in den Schriften aus Nag Hammadi, III', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 17 (1974) 109–125 at 119. But note that the Stoics denied the existence of a metacosmic God.

Protennoia is also God's *Voice*. Although we find few traces of the demiurgical-Gnostic myth in the *Trimorphic Protennoia*,[35] there can be little doubt that this is the background to the idea of Protennoia's descending into the lower world in order to wake up the divine seed scattered in humanity.[36] Protennoia refers to the lost divine substance as part of herself.[37] Her Voice sounded all through the history of humanity. The third time, Protennoia descended at a certain moment in time as God's *Word*, in the likeness of a human being. This third manifestation is introduced in the following way:

> The third time I revealed myself to them [in] their tents (σκηνή) as Word (Λόγος) and I revealed myself in the likeness of their shape (εἰκών).[38]

We find in this passage a clear allusion to verse 14 of the Prologue of John's Gospel: Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. But the information in the Johannine verse is reinterpreted in a Gnostic way.[39] This applies first of all to the different metaphorical use of the term 'tent': in the *Trimorphic Protennoia* it is a reference to the body, the temporary dwelling-place of human beings. It was in the likeness of that shape, the body of Jesus, that Protennoia revealed herself as Word. On the last page of the text, this statement is repeated in other terminology. Here Protennoia states: 'It was I who put on Jesus'.[40] Apparently Protennoia does not fully coincide with her third manifestation, for following on the phrase, 'It was I who put on Jesus', she discloses that she bore God's Word from 'the cursed wood' and that she established it (him) in 'the dwelling-places of his Father'.[41]

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[35] Cf. p. 39.13–40.7 and p. 41.7–20.

[36] Cf. p. 36.15f.: 'I cry out in everyone, and they recognize it (i.e., the voice), since a seed (σπέρμα) indwells [them]' (transl. J.D. Turner); cf. the last lines of the text (p. 50.16–20).

[37] P. 40.12–15: 'I am coming down to the world of mortals for the sake of my portion (μέρος) that was in that place from the time when the innocent Sophia was conquered'; cf. p. 41.7: 'my members (μέλος)'; p. 50.18: 'my seed'.

[38] 47.13–16.

[39] J. Helderman, '"In ihren Zelten . . .". Bemerkungen bei Codex XIII Nag Hammadi p. 47:14–18, im Hinblick auf Ioh i 14', in: T. Baarda and others (eds), *Miscellanea neotestamentica*, vol. 1 (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 47), Leiden 1978, 181–211.

[40] 50.12–13.

[41] The expression 'the dwelling-places of his Father' is also an echo of John's Gospel, to wit John 14:2, where Jesus says 'In the house of my Father are many μοναί'.

3. Conclusion

The strong emphasis on God's transcendence is a common feature of the theological literature of the first centuries of our era. We find it in pagan philosophical, Hellenistic-Jewish and early-orthodox Christian as well as in Gnostic texts. On other points, the theological ideas of the Gnostics differed considerably from those of their contemporaries (cf. Roukema, this vol., §§3.2 and 3.3).

Differently from mainstream Christians, they believed in two Gods, the true transcendent God and an inferior creator and ruler of the physical world whom they identified with the biblical God. Their mythical stories, among other things, tell how the demiurgical God usurped a portion of spiritual 'power' and how he tried to detain it in his dark world.

Differently from pagan philosophers, Gnostic and non-Gnostic Christians alike regarded the transcendent God as a merciful Father. The *Apocryphon of John*, the *Trimorphic Protennoia* and several other Gnostic writings tell how representatives of the true God descended into the world of darkness in order to inform humanity about its origin and true nature. In the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, traditions about the crucifixion and ascension of Jesus are included in the story of God's self-revelation. This document can be read as a more or less systematic attempt to explain how the completely transcendent and unknowable God reveals himself and can be known by human beings.

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