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The Revelation of the Divine Name to Moses and the Construction of a Memory About the Origins of the Encounter Between Yhwh and Israel

22

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Abstract

This chapter deals mainly with three questions: (1) The literary formation of the book of Genesis: In this regard the chapter interacts with the conference comments and/or contributions of Christoph Berner, Richard Friedman, and Konrad Schmid. (2) It also asks about the origins of the Exodus tradition(s) in the biblical texts by using the texts from Kuntillet Ajrud and comes to similar conclusions as Israel Finkelstein (Chap. 3). (3) It then addresses the question of how much "cultural memory" (see in Chap. 1 and also Chaps. 5 and 31) is contained in the two accounts of Moses' call in regard to the origins of the deity Yhwh and its veneration by seminomadic groups, a question also dealt with in contributions of Thomas Levy and Manfred Bietak.

The non-priestly and priestly stories in Exodus 3:1–4:18 and 6:2–8 agree on the idea that the name of the God of Israel was not revealed to the Hebrews before the time of Moses. In the context of the construction of the Pentateuch both texts underline somewhat differently Moses' role as mediator, who after the fall of Jerusalem becomes a substitute for royal mediation (although the royal image of Moses was already invented in the seventh century BCE). Both texts are not older than the sixth century, but they may preserve the historical memory that Yhwh had not always been the god of "Israel." This older memory can be traced back through texts such as Hosea 12 and the inscription of Kuntillet Ajrud in the monarchic period and perhaps even earlier.

Introduction: The Exodus, Yhwh, and Moses

There is no doubt that the Exodus tradition is at the very center of the "historical memory" of the Hebrew Bible. For instance, it begins the Decalogue with Yhwh presenting himself as the god who has brought Israel out of Egypt:

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אָנֹכִי יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים (Exod 20:2; Deut 5.6).
Interestingly here Yhwh appears as the only pro-
tagonist of the Exodus without any mention of
Moses. This is also the case in other allusions to
the Exodus tradition. The so-called historical credo
in Deuteronomy 26:5–9 also presents Yhwh as the
author of the exodus. This is further the case in
texts like Amos 2:10 and especially in the Psalms.
The case of the Psalms is particularly interesting.

In contrast to the traditions of the patriarchs,
the *exodus tradition* is at the very heart of the
"historical retrospectives" in the Psalms.[1] Inter-
estingly Moses is only mentioned in a few late
Psalms: Psalm 77:21 and 105:26. In Psalm 99:6
Moses and Aaron appear as priests: in Psalm
103:7 as mediator of Yhwh's will, and in
106:16 (together with Aaron) and 23, they are
mentioned in the context of the revolt of the
people in the wilderness. The other Psalms that
evoke the Exodus do not mention Moses, even
those that allude to the plagues, like Psalm
78:43–51; 111:4(?); 135:8–9 (especially the
destruction of Egypt's firstborn); and 136:10
(similar to 135:8–9), and allude to the miracles
at the Sea of Reeds (especially the annihilation of
the Egyptian army: Ps 76:7; 78:13; and 136:15;
the repelling of the Sea: Ps 114:3–6; the partition
of the Sea: Ps 77:10; 78:12; 136:13–14).

Moses is also missing in general allusions to the
exodus in Psalm 80:9–10. Psalm 135 links the
exodus tradition with the conquest of the
Transjordanian territory without mentioning
Moses or the conquest of Canaan. In the allegorical
Psalm 80, the exodus is linked to Israel's implan-
tation into the land (and also to the loss of that
land); in the same way Psalm 111:4–6 combines
Yhwh's miracles in Egypt with the evocation of
his "eternal" covenant (with the patriarchs? or at
Sinai?) and the conquest of the land.

The very few mentions of Moses in the allusion
to the exodus are confirmed by his sparse
appearances outside the Deuteronomistic History
(DtrH) (and the book of Chronicles and Ezra-

Nehemiah): he appears linked with the exodus
only in Isaiah 63:11–12 and Micah 6:4 (the other
few mentions in Jer 15:1, Mal 3:22, and Dan 9:11,
13 relate to the law or his function as an interces-
sor). This observation may indicate that there per-
haps existed an exodus tradition without Moses.

The story of 1 Kings 12 may also support this
idea. According to this narrative Jeroboam I
builds two sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan where
he places bull statues: "So the king took counsel,
and made two calves of gold. He said to the
people, 'You have gone up to Jerusalem long
enough. Here are your gods, O Israel, who
brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' He set
one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan" (1 Kgs
12:28–29):

הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרָיִם

The plural, which appears also in the story of
the golden calf in Exodus 32:4, is intriguing.
Even if the text speaks of two sanctuaries, it is
clear that the bulls or the calves are not
representing different deities, but the national
god. Should one understand then the plural as
alluding to the national god and his consort,
Ashera, as suggested by E. Axel Knauf (Knauf
1998: cols. 1375–1376)? However, there are no
clear hints elsewhere that Ashera might have
been associated with the exodus; thus this idea
remains very speculative.

Or should the plural allude to Yhwh in his
different manifestations: the Yhwh from Bethel
and the Yhwh from Dan? The easiest solution
might be to understand the plural as polemical, as
a transformation of an original cultic exclama-
tion. A comparison of 1 Kings 12:28 with the
opening of the Decalogue shows that both
exclamations are very similar. If there was an
original singular behind 1 Kings 12:28 the simi-
larity would be even more important.

The Judean redactors of 1 Kings 12 apparently
wanted to convince their audience that the North-
ern cult in Bethel and Dan (and elsewhere) was a
"polytheistic" one.

The mention of Dan in 1 Kings 12 is also
intriguing. According to Eran Arie, Dan became
part of Israel only in the eighth century (Arie 2008:

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[1] For more details on this question see Römer (2011).

34–38). In this case it is possible that 1 Kings 12 is a retroprojection from the time of Jeroboam II. One may even consider whether the figure of Jeroboam I as a whole is a creation based on the figure of king Jeroboam from the eighth century. But this speculation is beyond the topic of our chapter.

Coming back to Yhwh and the exodus it clearly appears that, at least since the eighth century, Yhwh was venerated in Israel (probably not yet in Judah) as a deity who brought his people out of Egypt. But in biblical texts, which can be confidently dated to the monarchic times, there is no mention of Moses; for now, we leave aside the Pentateuchal texts, whose dates are conspicuously complicated.

The construction of the exodus as the "real" national memory can be traced in chapter 12 of the book of Hosea. This chapter may reflect, if not the voice of the prophet himself, the situation in the North of the second half of the eighth century, although much later dates have also been suggested.[2] As A. de Pury (1992 and 2006) has shown, this text opposes the Jacob and the exodus traditions. Jacob is depicted very negatively in this text: he supplanted his brother and has become a "Canaanite," a merchant with false scales who likes to oppress (Hos 12:4 and 8). Even his battle with God is, in contrast to Genesis 32, related in a different and negative manner (Hos 12:4–5). Already at the very beginning of this poem, it becomes obvious that "Jacob" will be judged by Yhwh (12:3). Whereas Jacob is related to a deity that is called "elohim" or "el,"[3] Yhwh presents himself as the God from the land of Egypt:

וְאָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם (Hos 12:10). Again this statement is reminiscent of the Decalogue, although there is no verb for "bringing out"; Yhwh himself is described as a deity whose origins are related to Egypt.

In Hosea 12:13–14, Jacob's flight to Aram and his "slavery" on behalf of a woman are opposed to Yhwh's prophet who is leading Israel out of Egypt and who guards it:

וַיִּבְרַח יַעֲקֹב שְׂדֵה אֲרָם וַיַּעֲבֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּאִשָּׁה וּבְאִשָּׁה שָׁמָר

וּבְנָבִיא הֶעֱלָה יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִמִּצְרַיִם וּבְנָבִיא נִשְׁמָר

The mention of the prophet is prepared in v. 11, which claims that Yhwh reveals his will through his prophets. It is usually assumed that the prophet mentioned in v. 14 is Moses, but interestingly he is not named. Why is that so? Probably because of the prophetic group behind Hosea 12, a group which seeks legitimacy by claiming that there was already a prophetic mediation at the time of the exodus.

Summing up: Hosea 12 can be understood as a polemical text against the Jacob tradition. Against the attempt to establish the Jacob tradition as the official national origin myth in the North (Hos 12:4–5 hints at the change of Jacob's name into Israel), the author of Hosea 12 claims that Yhwh is related to Egypt and not to the Patriarch. This also means that the relation between Israel and his god is not "hereditary" or mediated by a Patriarch; it is the result of an encounter, and the mediator of this relation is a prophet. Hosea 12 is perhaps one of the first attempts to emphasize Moses' role in the exodus tradition. Interestingly the Pentateuchal narrative of the exodus also highlights the idea that Yhwh was known by the Hebrews only in relation with the Exodus and also constructs Moses as a prophet.

Exodus 3–4 and 6 and Their Functions in the Non-priestly and Priestly Exodus Narratives: Divergences and Convergences

In the current debate about the formation of the Torah, the traditional consensus built upon the documentary hypothesis has faded away. In Europe, most scholars have given up the Wellhausen paradigm, whereas in North

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[2] For an eight century date see de Pury (1992, 2006) and Blum (2009). For an exilic or a postexilic date: Whitt (1991) and Pfeiffer (1999).

[3] מַלְאָךְ in 12:5 is probably a gloss that transformed the original "El" into a gloss, see, e. g., Gertner (1960: 277, 281).

America the traditional documentary hypothesis is still popular, but the so-called Neo Documentarians have developed a variant that has not much to do with the traditional model.[4] In this difficult situation the distinction between P and non-P is apparently one of the few results of scientific analysis of the Pentateuchal text with which most scholars would agree. However the question whether P was originally an independent document or conceived as the redaction of an older narrative remains disputed. And many "non-P" texts (traditionally J/E) are now considered to be post-priestly.

This is also the case for the two variants of Yhwh's encounter with Moses (in Exod 3–4 and 6) in which Yhwh appoints him as the one who should lead the Hebrews out of Egypt into the land of Canaan.

Recently K. Schmid and others have argued that Exodus 3–4 should be understood as a unified text written by one author who already knew the priestly text of the revelation of the divine name to Moses and who wanted to question the notion that the divine revelation of the divine name happened first in Egypt by transferring it to the "mountain of God" (Schmid 1999: 186–208; Otto 1996; Kegler 2003). According to Schmid, Yhwh's statement according to which he has heard the cry of the Hebrews in 3:7 is taken over from the priestly passage in Exodus 6:2–8. Indeed the cry of the Israelites occurs in Exodus 3:7–9 (צעקה) as well as in Exodus 2:23 (ויזעקו). But this does not prove that the author of Exodus 3–4 already knew the priestly account in Exodus 6. The idea that the Israelites cried out because of their oppression also occurs in the Dtr historical credo in Deuteronomy 26:7 (וַנִּצְעַק), with the same orthography as in Exodus 3 (צעק instead of זעק in Exod 2:23). Thus, it is not necessary to postulate a literary dependency of Exodus 3–4 on the P-texts in Exodus 2:23–35 and 6.

It also seems difficult to maintain the idea that Exodus 3–4 is basically a uniform text written by one author. The literary analysis will demonstrate that the non-P version of Moses' call was revised and broadened several times. Therefore I prefer the traditional option that dates the first edition of Exodus 3–4 somewhat earlier than the P variant in Exodus 6:2–8 (see also Gertz 1999: 254–326). In the context of this chapter I cannot deal with all the literary questions of these chapters of Exodus. I will focus on the question of the revelation of the divine name and the construction of the figure of Moses in both texts.

Exod 3: Moses, the Prophet, and Yhwh, the Unknown God

In the present form of the book of Exodus, Exodus 3:1–4:18 is clearly a unit; it is framed by the mention of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, in 3:1 and 4:18, and by Moses' arrival at the mountain of God and his return from there.

There is a strange repetition between 4:18 and 4:19. In 4:18, Moses tells Jethro that he must return to Egypt to see his brethren and Jethro tells him to go in peace. In 4:19 however we read: "Yhwh said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt; for all those who were seeking your life are dead'." This verse does not make much sense after 4:18, since Moses had already informed Jethro about his return to Egypt. Verse 4:19 however fits very well after the beginning of Exodus 2:23: "After a long time the king of Egypt died" (2:23aßb–25 are commonly considered to be part of P). If we can read 2:23aα together with 4:19, one may conclude, as already envisaged by Julius Wellhausen (1963: 71), that there was an older story, into which Moses' call narrative had later been inserted. Apparently then the original account of Exodus 3:1–4:18 did not belong to the oldest Moses story.

As William Propp states in his commentary, "Exodus 3-4 is a key passage for the documentary analysis of the Torah" (1999: 190). However it has always been very difficult to reconstruct two parallel narratives in this text (see on this Römer (2006)). In regard to the use of the divine names

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[4] See on this question also the contributions of Schmid (Chap. 24) and Berner (Chap. 20) as well as the evaluation of the current situation in Pentateuchal scholarship in Römer (2013).

yhwh and *elohim*, it should be noted that there is a third variant: *ha-elohim* (3:6,11–13). The expression "ha-elohim" often contains the idea of a "mysterious" or an "unknown" God, and its concentrated use in Exodus 3 is probably related to the revelation of the divine name. The expression appears until Exodus 3:13, where Yhwh tells Moses about his identity. In an absolute form this relatively rare term, compared to *elohim*, no longer appears in the exodus narrative until Exodus 18, the story of Jethro's visit to Moses and his sacrifice for Yhwh. This already indicates a relationship between Exodus 3 and 18.

There is some redundancy in verses 7–10, but this redundancy underlines the importance of the divine speech, which, as sometimes observed, is chiastically structured: ABCB'A'. To Yhwh seeing his people's (עֲמִי) oppression in Egypt (בְּמִצְרָיִם) in v. 7a corresponds Moses' mission to bring Yhwh's people (עַמִי) out of Egypt (מִמִּצְרָיִם), v. 10. Yhwh hearing (שָׁמַעְתִּי) the people's cry (צַעֲקָתָם) in v. 7 is taken up in v. 9 by the statement that Israel's cry (צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) has come up (בָּאָה) to Yhwh. In the middle, in v. 8, we find the promise of Israel's transfer from "this land" into a good and spacious land, flowing with milk and honey. It is difficult to imagine that such a clear structure would only be an accidental result of the pasting together of two different documents.

V. 10 is linked to the following because it inaugurates Moses' appointment, which is constructed as a prophetic call. The closest parallel to Exodus 3:10–12 is Jeremiah's call in Jeremiah 1:4–10 (Köckert 2000 and Grätz 2007). Both passages contain the following elements:

	Exodus 3	Jeremiah 1
Sending	v. 10: Go, I will send you (לְכָה וְאֶשְׁלָחֲךָ)	v. 7: You shall go where I will send you (עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁלָחֲךָ תֵּלֵךְ)
Objection	v. 11: Who am I that I should go	v. 6: I do not know how to speak, for I am a boy

| Promise of assistance | v. 12: I will be with you (אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ) | v. 8: I am with you (אִתְּךָ אָנִי) |
| Sign | v. 13: this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: ... you shall worship God on this mountain | v. 9: then Yhwh ... put out his hand and touched my mouth |

Moses appears as the prophet by whom Yhwh will lead his people out of Egypt in agreement with Hosea 12. Exodus 3:10–13 expresses the same idea as Deuteronomy 18:15–20, a passage which by the way also displays parallels with Jeremiah 1:4–10. Therefore, with E. Blum and others, it seems appropriate to label the original narrative of Exodus 3 a "D-composition" (Blum 1990: 17–43) and to date it in the sixth century BCE.

After Moses' (prophetic) call, the narrative turns to the question of the identity of the deity that is about to appoint him. This question is already brought up in v. 6 in the scene of the burning bush where the divine self-presentation, "I am the God of your father," is followed by the apposition "the god of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This is grammatically awkward and already emended in the Samaritan Pentateuch and some Greek manuscripts. The apposition appears as a later attempt to create a link with the Patriarchal traditions (Weimar 1980: 38, 341).

One may recall here an observation made by Rendtorff, according to which the land that God promises to the Israelites is introduced in Exodus 3 as if it were a completely unknown land (Rendtorff 1990: 85). Interestingly it is not said to have been promised to the Patriarchs as is the case in the priestly story of Moses' call in Exodus 6:8. This may indicate that in the original story of Exodus 3 there was no mention of the Patriarchs at all.

After Moses makes a second objection—he does not know the name of the ancestral god in the name of whom he should speak to the Israelites—and Yhwh reveals himself (or not) through the abundantly commented expression אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, the following verse identifies Yhwh again as the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." There are strong arguments that this

verse did not belong to the original narrative. First of all, this speech is introduced after v. 14 by "*wayyomer 'od elohim.*" As in Genesis 22:15, *'od* ("further") already indicates that the following is an addition. This addition, which can be compared to Psalm 135:13, may be understood as an attempt to create a parallel with the priestly idea expressed in Exodus 6:2 that even if Yhwh did not appear to the Patriarchs under his real name, he is of course the god of the Patriarchs.

If one considers v. 15 as an addition then the transition from v. 14 to v. 16 is even smoother. There is only one divine speech which starts with the word play on the tetragrammaton, finally revealed in two steps (*'ehyeh*, then *Yahweh*).

If it is true that the names of the Patriarchs in v. 6 and 15 belong to a reworking of the original text, one may wonder whether this is also the case in v. 16. (Weimar 1980: 332–333, 341). This I admit may be suspected of circular reasoning; the decision is of course dependent on an overall theory about the composition of this text. One may however note that the mention of the patriarchal names is separated from *'elohe 'aboteka* by the verb and comes somewhat late. This could indicate that these words were first written on the margins of the scroll, before a later copyist integrated them into the text.

Time and space do not allow to demonstrate that the original account ended in 3:17 followed by 4:18. It contained approximately 3.1–2* (without the *mal'ak*?), 3–4, 6aαb, 7–14, 16aαb, 17, 4.18. (See for a similar reconstruction Gertz (1999: 394).) The intention of the original story is twofold: It legitimates Moses' status as Israel's proto-prophet, and it recognizes that knowledge of the divine name is connected to the exodus. The story, as observed by Michaeli, Berge, Schmid,[5] and others, shares with Exodus 6 the idea that the revelation of the divine name Yhwh is something new. In the original text, the deity

presented itself as Moses' patriarchal God (v. 6) and Moses identifies this god with the ancestral deity of the Israelites. The fact that ancestral gods do not bear personal names is attested by texts from Ugarit that often mention an *'ilu 'ibi* ("god of the father") (Van der Toorn 1993). The author of Exodus 3* wants to emphasize that this unknown god is in fact the deity Yhwh. A similar procedure can be observed in Exodus 6.

Before turning to this text, it should be mentioned again that Exodus 3 was not initially part of the oldest exodus-Moses story in which it has been inserted. The oldest story started with a brief description of the difficult situation of the Hebrews in Egypt and the story of Moses' birth and his "adoption" by the daughter of Pharaoh. The story of his birth and exposure displays literary dependence on the birth legend of Sargon, the legendary founder of the Assyrian Empire, as has often been observed (Cohen 1972; Ardiñach 1993).

Sargon and Moses are both exposed by their mothers, both of whom are in some ways related to the priesthood. Sargon's mother is a priestess, and Moses' mother is the daughter of Levi, the ancestor of Israel's priestly tribe. Their fathers do not intervene. They are set adrift on a river in a basket, to be found and adopted. In both cases, the adoption is presented as royal adoption: Sargon is "loved" by Ishtar, and Moses becomes the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Even though the Sargon story is about the third-millennium Assyrian king, it was written under Sargon II, his namesake, at the end of the eighth century. It contains Neo-Assyrian orthographic forms and idiomatic expressions attested only in this period (Lewis 1980: 98–110). Therefore the story of Moses, modeled on it, cannot be dated prior to the seventh century BCE. Exodus 2 presupposes no knowledge of Moses, his origins, or his name; everything needs to be explained. It is tempting, then, to understand the first written story about Moses (which cannot be reconstructed in detail) to be a reaction to Neo-Assyrian royal ideology, elaborated at Josiah's court. The Assyrian background is also present in the mention of the "store cities" (עָרֵי מִסְכְּנוֹת) in Exodus 1:11, which uses a loanword

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[5] Michaeli (1974:65); Berge (1997: 116): "Moses, already knowing the identity of the speaking God, now asks for his name because he does not know it"; Schmid (1999: 206).

from the Assyrian *maškanu*.[6] If a seventh-century setting of the oldest Moses narrative is plausible, one may speculate that the insertion of the figure of Moses into the narrative and its construction as a royal figure are linked to the Judean rewriting of an older Northern exodus tradition. But let us now turn to Exodus 6:2–8.

Exodus 6:2–8: The Unknown Name of Yhwh and the Theory of the Divine Revelation

The priestly account of the revelation of the divine name in Exodus 6:2–8 displays a clear structure (for a similar proposal see Magonet 1983):

in both cases followed by the almost identical statement: "who will bring you out from the burdens of Egypt." Here, as in Exodus 3, Yhwh characterizes himself as the god that brings out of Egypt. In contrast to the original version of Exodus 3, Exodus 6 insists on the strong continuity between the patriarchs and the exodus. The exodus and the conquest of the land are presented in the divine speech as the results of the divine covenant and promises to the Patriarchs.

This relation is theorized in v. 3, where P constructs a theology of the divine revelation: "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as El Shadday but by my name Yhwh I did not make myself known to them." This is a clear reference to Genesis 17:1 ("... Yhwh[7] appeared to Abra-

v.2	אני יהוה
v.3	וארא אל אברהם אל יצחק ואל יעקב
v.4	הקמתי את בריתי אתם לתת להם את ארץ כנען
v.5	נאקת בני ישראל אשר מצרים מעבדים אתם
	ואזכר את בריתי
v.6	אני יהוה
	והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים
v.7	וגאלתי אתכם
	ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם
	והייתי לכם לאלהים
	אני יהוה
	המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים
v. 8	והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר
	נשאתי את ידי לתת אתה לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ונתתי אתה לכם מורשה
	אני יהוה

This structure reveals the importance of the divine presentation, since the statement "I am Yhwh" appears four times. The self-presentations in v. 2 and 8 frame the divine speech, whereas the formula in v. 6 and v. 7 is

ham and said to him: I am El Shadday ..."), which allows the priestly author to construct a history of the divine revelation in three stages:

In the primeval history, God is known to all humans as "elohim." For Abraham and his descendant he is "El Shadday"; and only Moses

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[6] See Knauf (1988: 104); the rare description of the "bracketing of the bricks" in Exod 5:7 לבן לבנים, cf. also in Exod 1:14 (בַּעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה בְּחֹמֶר וּבִלְבֵנִים) can be related to the Accadian expression *libnate labanu*, which is for instance used in a building inscription of Esarhaddon (Uehlinger 1990: 361, cf. 250–251); these texts are however often attributed to priestly redactors.

[7] Some commentators have thought that the name Yhwh in Gen 17:1 does not fit with P's theory of the divine revelation. But this is not true: The tetragrammaton is used by the narrator in order to inform the reader about the identity of El Shadday. In the narrative, Abraham does not get any information on this.

and Israel in Egypt are instructed about God's personal name, Yhwh. This means that Israel's singular privilege is the knowledge of the divine name and through this privilege Israel becomes the only nation capable of worshipping God by means of an adequate sacrificial cult. On the other hand, however, P advocates—contrary to the Deuteronomists—an inclusive monotheism: all people of the earth venerate the same god, irrespective of whether they address him as *elohim, El,* or *El shadday.* This idea works better if P was the author of an independent document and not a redactor of older non-P narratives.

Intriguingly, God's revelation to Moses happens in Egypt, as opposed to Exodus 3, where the divine name is revealed to Moses at the "mountain of God." The idea of a divine revelation places Exodus 6 in parallel with Ezekiel 20 (v. 5: "I made myself known to them (*yd'*, Nif) in the land of Egypt," cf. Exod 2:25 and 6:3 where the same root occurs). According to the priestly tradition God disclosed his true name in Egypt. For the authors of P and of Ezekiel 20, the story of the exodus also and above all remains the story of the revelation of the divine name. The divine speech to Moses is, according to P, the last step in the history of God's revelation in which Israel, through Moses' intermediary, is informed of his real name.

Exodus 3 and Exodus 6: A Brief Comparison

Although Exodus 3 locates the divine revelation on the mountain of God (by using three expressions, הַר הָאֱלֹהִים, הֹרֵב and the rare expression הַסְּנֶה which only occurs in Exod 3:2–4; Deut 33:17 is probably also an allusion to the Sinai) and Exodus 6 places it in Egypt, both texts basically agree that Yhwh was not always Israel's God but he revealed himself to the people by the intermediary of Moses. And, even if Exodus 3 is constructed as an anticipation of the Sinai theophany, it is inserted in a narrative context in which Moses is sojourning in Madian, in the "south."

In the context of the Pentateuchal narrative this presentation emphasizes the central role of the exodus tradition (by transforming the patriarchal narratives into a prologue of a sorts) and also legitimates the figure of Moses as the exclusive mediator and Israel's first prophet.

Both texts are not older than the sixth century BCE, but they may preserve the historical memory that Yhwh has not always been the god of "Israel." For sure, neither Exodus 3 nor Exodus 6 are historical texts. But they may preserve a "longue durée," a long-term memory of the "adoption" of the deity Yhwh in relation to Egyptian or southern traditions.[8]

Some Historical Speculations About the Origins of Yhwh and His Adoption by "Israel"

We may start with a very basic observation about the name of Israel, which is attested outside the Bible at the end of the thirteenth century BCE in the stele of Pharaoh Merneptah and perhaps even somewhat earlier on a Statue Pedestal from the time of Ramses II (but this interpretation remains very speculative and, according to an oral communication of Thomas Schneider, is unconvincing).[9] The name "Israel" contains the theophoric element "El" and not Yhwh or Yhw. Even as Nadav Na'aman rightly emphasizes that the location of the entity "Israel" in the Merneptah stele "cannot be established with certainty and all attempts to locate it in the central highlands … rest on a pre-conceived idea of its place" (Na'aman 2011: 47), it is clear that the stele refers to a group located in the Levant whose patron deity is apparently El, or Ilu, like in Ugarit.

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[8] For the construction of a "cultural memory" see also the contributions of Jan Assmann (Chap. 1) and Aren Maeir (Chap. 31).

[9] Van der Veen et al. (2010: 15–25). The authors suggest to read "Ia-cha-ri" or "Ia-cha-l," which is quite different from the "Isrial" of the Merneptah stele. In the pedestal the toponym is written in an enclosure that indicates the name of a land or a city.

On the other hand, there are five biblical texts that locate Yhwh in the South and that describe an encounter between him and Israel.[10]

In Judges 5:4–5 and his "elohistic" parallel Psalm 68:8–9, Yhwh seems to be identified with the Sinai, and he is coming from Seir, according to Judges 5:4.

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

A similar statement is found in Deuteronomy 33:2:

> Yhwh came from Sinai, and dawned from Seir upon them; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He arrived from Meribat Qadesh; at his right, to the slopes, for them.[11]

Here again Yhwh comes from Seir, which is located in parallel to Mount Paran, whose location cannot be established.[12]

And finally, Habakkuk 3:3:

> God (*Eloah*) comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*. His glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise.

In this verse the name Yhwh is replaced by Eloah, but v. 2 and 8 suggest an identification of Eloah with Yhwh. Interestingly, this psalm locates Yhwh's origin in Teman, a name that appears in Gen 36 as the name of a clan in Edom. The Edomite connection for Teman is also clear in other Biblical texts (Jer 47:7,20; Ezek 25:13; Amos 1:11–12, Obad 8–9). An

Edomite location of Teman would also fit with the above-quoted texts mentioning Seir.

Of course it is also possible that Teman is a more general term for the South, but then the South evidently also includes the Edomite territory.

In regard to Teman, the inscriptions of Kuntillet Ajrud are of major interest. Even after the recently published editio princeps (Meshel et al. 2012), several questions remain debated, especially the function of the site. Was it a resting place or even a sanctuary in which Asherah played a central role as recently suggested by Nurid Lissovsky and Nadav Na'aman (2008)? According to I. Finkelstein and E. Piasetzky, "Kuntillet 'Ajrud functioned between ca. 795 and 730/20 BCE" (Finkelstein and Piasetzky 2008: 178). Two inscriptions mention a "Yhwh from Teman" (Meshel et al. 2012: 95, Inscription 3:6, and 98, Inscription 3:9 with article), associated with Asherah. This is an indication that still in the eighth century Yhwh was venerated as a deity from the South. On the other hand, another inscription invokes a "Yhwh from Shomron" with his Ashera (Meshel et al. 2012: 87, Inscription 3.1). If the site was used by travelers or worshippers from Israel/Samaria, it is interesting that they still acknowledge the existence of a "southern Yhwh."

The existence of a deity Yhwh from Teman in the eighth century BCE may then tentatively be related to the famous Shasu-nomads which in some Egyptian inscriptions, especially from the time of Amenophis III and Ramses II, appear as *t3š3šw yhw3*. The expression *yhw3* seems to be a toponym, which may also designate a deity (cf. the identification of Yhwh and Sinai in Judges 5). In the list from Amara, the different Shasu groups are listed under *t3š3šwś'rr* (the Shasu land Seir), which according to Manfred Weippert could be a kind of title indicating the location of the different Shasu tribes (Weippert 1974: 270–271). An Edomite location for those Shasu groups was made plausible by the excavations of Thomas Levy and his team in the Jabal Hamrat Fidan, who states that in the case of Wadi Fidan "the archeological record supports the biblical and historical evidence" (Levy et al. 2004: 89).

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[10] Of course, there is also a discussion about the age of these texts. According to Pfeiffer (2005: 268) the idea of Yhwh's original location in the Sinai is a late invention from the time of the exile after the destruction of the temple. This seems to me a kind of an "allegorical exegesis." For the possibility that those texts conserve old memories see also Leuenberger (2010).

[11] The second half of the verse raises a number of text-critical problems, see, e.g., Pfeiffer (2005: 182–183).

[12] Mount Paran which is only attested here and in Hab 3 in the HB, contrary to the wilderness of Paran, may be already a learned speculation; its identification with Qadesh, '*En el-qederat*, allows us to date the text between the tenth and sixth century BCE.

It might therefore be plausible that the veneration of Yhwh as a god who defeats the Egyptians was brought to Israel by a Shasu group. As N. Na'aman observed, "the biblical description of Egypt as a 'house of bondage' reflects very well the Egyptian reality of the New kingdom" (2011: 49). It is therefore a plausible speculation that Yhwh was brought to Israel by a group that worshipped an "Edomite" or a "Southern" Yhwh. Maybe there was also a narrative tradition about a figure like Moses, since his Midianite connections can hardly be explained as an invention, as well as the kernel of Exodus 18, where his Midianite father-in-law offers a sacrifice to Yhwh (Blenkinsopp 2008). Of course, any precise reconstruction is impossible. The biblical texts of the divine revelation of Yhwh's name however retain "traces of memories"—to use an expression of Jan Assmann—of a non-autochthonous origin of Yhwh.

Conclusion

The biblical exodus narrative was written down for the first time in Judah. Moses appears here as a prototype for Josiah, and the situation of Egyptian oppression seems to reflect the Assyrian situation. The exodus tradition is of course older and came to Judah from Israel after 722 BCE. The literary contours of this tradition cannot be reconstructed. Hosea 12 shows however how Yhwh, the God of the exodus, is opposed to the Jacob tradition. This may reflect the attempt to make the exodus the "official" foundation myth of Israel. The two accounts of Yhwh's revelation to Moses, although written in the sixth century, still keep the memory that Yhwh was not an autochthonous deity but was "imported" from the South. This theory gains support from the inscriptions of Kuntillet Ajrud but also from the evidence about the *Shasu* groups, since some of them apparently worshipped a deity called *Yahu*. Even if this brings us to the last centuries of the second millennium BCE, the biblical texts have preserved a *long-term* memory about the exodic origins of Yhwh.

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