

In several places¹ I have assumed that the pronominal מִי beside the accepted plur. has also a sing. force,² like the Phoen. ם³. Thus it is often a cause of confusion as, for example, where עַמִּים has displaced עַמְמוֹ or עַמּוֹ (Is. iii 13, as restored by Lowth) or where עָרְיִי through an intermediate עָרִימִי has displaced עָרִים (Is. xiv 17, as restored by Procksch); in both cases the LXX and the Pesh. confirm the alteration of the text.

In conclusion, I can only hope that I have saved the M.T. from some of the drastic re-writing to which it has too often been subjected by keeping emendation within the narrowest possible limits.

G. R. DRIVER.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Since writing this article I have discovered that Perles (*Anal. z. Textkrit. d. A.T., N.F.* 76) has anticipated my suggestion about the meaning of רוּם in Is. xxx 18 (s. p. 44).

In a note on Ps. xii 8 in *J.T.S.* xxxvi 148 I suggested emending מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶל וְעוֹל into מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶל וְעוֹלָה, for which of course 'from a worthless and wicked generation' must be read; the intrusion of the ungrammatical article must have been due to the copyist who wrongly took וְ as the relative pronoun.

G. R. D.

THE LORD OF HOSTS

THE snakes of primitive worship had been etherealized into the flaming serpents attending their divine King, ever covering their faces in awe, and their bodies in humility, as they hovered above Him. And each kept calling out to the other, saying: *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.*

The LORD of Hosts. What do these words mean? In the Hebrew there are but two words, JHVH and Hosts (*Šebā'ôth*). Let us consider them separately and afterwards together.

I. JHVH, to be vocalized *JāHŌH*.⁴ But *JāHŪ* in compound words (often), and even *JāHVēH* as an independent word (very occasionally), have been used as surrogates.

¹ Namely, in Is. iii 12, xv 7, and xxxviii 16.

² Cp. Is. xxx 5 (לְמוֹ), xlii 15 (לְמוֹ), li 14 (לְחַמוֹ < לְחָמוֹ); s. *J.T.S.* xxxvi 402-403, liii 8 (לְמוֹ < לְמוֹ); s. *J.T.S.* xxxiv 386, lix 2 (פְּנִימוֹ < פְּנִימוֹ); cp. Ps. xi 7), lxiii 11 (הַמְעַלְמוֹ < הַמְעַלְמוֹ).

³ Schröder *Ph. Spr.* 154-157.

⁴ See my article in *J.T.S.* vol. xxviii pp. 276-283; cf. Burkitt's addition on pp. 407-409.

Its meaning is unknown, but it cannot possibly have any connexion with 'Lord', although the word *κύριος* has been used for it at least as early as the third century B.C. In the mind of the writer of Exod. iii 14 it had some connexion with the Hebrew word HVH (*to be*). If we may assume (but it is an assumption hardly warranted) that the Hebrew writer seriously intended 'Being' to represent the true and proper meaning of the word, then 'The Eternal' of the French and of some of our popular translations is as good a rendering as any. Yet in reality the thought of the word in this passage is not of the existence of God, but of His activity. He is, and will be, active in all that is required for the well-being and the blessedness of men, and especially of His servants. In any case, as already said, it contains no hint of ruling.

II. *Hosts*. This, without any doubt, is the proper translation of the Hebrew word *Ṣebāōth*. But what Hosts are they? Are they the armies of Israel, as is often assumed?¹ It may be so, and probably is so, in some passages. For the noun *ṣābā* in the singular means an organized body of men,² or perhaps even of women,³ and this meaning is also implied in the verb.⁴

The plural, however, occurs comparatively seldom apart from *Jāhō* or its equivalent, and always has the feminine ending *Ṣebāōth*. For the masculine form *Ṣebāīm* does not occur, although its existence may be inferred from the word *Ṣebāāyiw* (Ps. ciii 21, and cxlviii 2 Qri) if this should not rather be altered to *Ṣebāō*, 'His host'. When the plural *Ṣebāōth* does not follow a term for God it seems to refer always to the armies of Israel (*i.e.* the male population of districts regarded as forming armies). But when it does there is room for doubt.

The term *Jāhō Ṣebāōth* never occurs in the Pentateuch or in Joshua and Judges, but is often found in 1 and 2 Samuel. There it is either connected with the Tabernacle (1 Sam. i 13) or the Ark, or is used directly of the Hosts (*i.e.* armies) of Israel, and many writers are of opinion that the one implies the other. For they say that the LORD was regarded as a War-God, who dwelt in the Ark, and directed His armies from it. So at least the Israelites sometimes supposed (1 Sam. iv 4 sqq.).

For example, it is often said that 2 Sam. v 10 ('And David waxed greater and greater; for the LORD, the God of Hosts, was with him')

¹ e.g. E. König, *Gesch. d. A.T. Religion*, 1924, pp. 330-333; Briggs (*I.C.C.*) on Ps. xxiv 10.

² e.g. Num. i 3; xxxi 36; Deut. xx 9; Judges viii 6; cf. Ps. lxxviii 13 (12).

³ Ps. lxxviii 12 (11).

⁴ Exod. xxxviii 8; 1 Sam. ii 22. In Joshua xv 13-15 the army of Israel is directly called *the Host of Jāhō*.

suggests 'armies', but this is not necessarily the case. In 2 Sam. vi 2 the phrase is closely connected with the Ark, and probably also in v. 18. But in vii 8 it is quite general: 'Thus saith the LORD of Hosts (to David), I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over My people, over Israel'. So, too, in *vv.* 26 sq. David prays with quite a general reference, 'The LORD of Hosts is God over Israel. . . . For Thou, O LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying', &c. In Elijah's words, however, there is no hint of armies, when he says in 1 Kings xviii 15: 'As the LORD of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand', &c.; or in xix 10, 14: 'I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God¹ of Hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant', &c. In 2 Kings iii 14 Elisha's words to Jehoram may contain a reference to armies. But in xix 31 both the text of Isaiah's words and their reference are doubtful.

An examination of the writings of the Prophets gives a very different result. For in no case, as it seems, does the word 'Host', in the phrase 'The LORD of Hosts', or 'The LORD God of Hosts' refer to earthly armies. Imagine the Seraphim crying out to each other: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of armies'! There and always elsewhere in the Prophets, it refers to the Hosts of heaven. What, then, was intended by speaking of the Hosts of heaven? Were they the stars, or the heavenly bodies, as we call them? Sun, moon, planets, and stars proper? Or were they spiritual beings such as we designate by the term angels? Or were they, and this is more probable, supernatural beings, real or imaginary, who were acknowledged and worshipped by the various races of men?

Now which conception of the word Hosts, armies or the hosts of heaven, is, *a priori*, likely to have been the earlier? When we remember that the witness of the Old Testament is not at all decisive upon this, especially as the evidence of the Prophets implies a previous acceptance of the second meaning, viz. that of the heavenly Hosts, we may feel at full liberty to decide the question of priority on other grounds. Not indeed that it is of much importance which is the earlier (for the second certainly ousted the first, owing to the influence of the Prophets), yet the question is of some interest in itself.

Now to the modern mind, especially the modern mind of the nineteenth century in contrast to that of the twentieth, it has seemed natural to think that the visible powers of human organized forces would make special appeal. But it is more than doubtful whether this belief is most in accordance with the history of the development of the primitive mind. For this seems to have been impressed with the powers of Nature more

¹ *Sic* in R.V., but the A.V. omits 'the', *vide infra* pp. 53-54.

than with anything else, trembling as it did before every breath of wind, or wave of sea, or muttering of thunder. These and such like were the powers that primitive man feared; these were the hosts he did his utmost to appease. It seems therefore that on *a priori* grounds we must say that the meaning of the word Hosts, in the connexion in which we are considering it, is the heavenly Hosts, as we may roughly but inaccurately call them, for they include the powers that are on earth as well as those in the sky, and that this conception was earlier than the reference to the massed armies which men gradually began to organize.

III. What, however, is the relation of these two words, *JāHŌ* and *Šebāōth*, to each other?¹ Although proper names of places are sometimes 'in construction' both in fact and in form—*e.g.* Aram-Naharaim (Gen. xxiv 10)—those of persons are not.² With them when it is desired to make the second noun in some way dependent on the first (*i.e.* as though the second were in the genitive in Latin or Greek) a preposition is prefixed to the second. But in the phrase *The LORD of Hosts* the first word, *The LORD*, is a proper name, and *Hosts* stands alone without any preceding preposition. What is the explanation, and what is the meaning of the whole phrase?

The difficulty is often solved by saying that the full and proper phrase is 'The LORD, *the God* of Hosts' (יהוה אלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת),³ which indeed is often found.⁴ But one does not see why 'the God of' should have

¹ See Cripps, *Amos*, pp. 330-333; S. R. Driver in Hastings's *D. B.* iii 137 sq.; G. B. Gray, *Enc. Bib.* coll. 3328-3330.

² It has been suggested that in Gen. xv 2 the words 'Dammeseq Eliezer' should be transposed and translated 'Eliezer of Damascus', but probably the corruption of the text lies far deeper.

The name 'Baal' is no exception. For originally it was not a proper name but a common noun, meaning 'Master', 'Lord', with a strong sexual connotation. It was only later that the priests of Melkarth could shout it out as a proper name (1 Kings xviii 24).

Mr. G. R. Driver kindly points out to me that in Jer. xxxix 3 נְרַגְלֵ שְׂרָאֵר צַמְגִיר נִרְגַל must mean 'Nergal-sar-ezer of Sin-magir', as a cuneiform inscription tells us. But even so a solitary transliteration of a foreign name is not sufficient to prove the meaning of genuinely Hebrew terms. My attention has also been called to a Punic inscription mentioning נֵר הַיָּמִים נֵר הַשָּׁמַיִם 'Gad (Fortune) of the days' or 'of Heaven' (Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 157, No. C, l. 2); but I suppose that we hardly know enough about Punic to dogmatize about it in reference to our purpose here.

³ 'Breviloquence', A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, 1894, § 24, Rem. 6. 'An ellipse whereby the noun which really governs the genitive, *i.e.* the appellative idea contained in the proper name, is suppressed', Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, 1910, § 125 h. So also the *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 839 b.

⁴ *E.g.* 2 Sam. v 10; 1 Kings xix 10, 14; Amos iii 13. The A.V. is 'The Lord God of hosts', but the R.V. by inserting 'the' before 'God' evidently adopts this

been omitted if it were original, whereas its addition is what might have been expected.

How, then, are we to regard the relationship between the two parts of the phrase 'the LORD (of) Hosts'—'*JāHÔH* Hosts'? I suggest that the second noun is in apposition with the first. The phrase, that is to say, is like that of 'I Prayer' ('I *give myself unto prayer*', Ps. cix 4); and 'I Peace' ('I *am for peace*', Ps. cxx 7); in which cases the translators were obliged, out of due respect to the English language, to weaken terribly the force of the Psalmists' expressions, thus failing to give what was really meant, namely, that in each case the Psalmist felt himself to be wholly and entirely Prayer, or Peace. He identifies himself with Prayer, or with Peace. He equates 'I' and 'Prayer', 'I' and 'Peace'.¹

What then is the result of our study? That 'the LORD of Hosts', the Hosts of powers natural and supernatural, which were or are worshipped by the Nations, does not mean that He is their ruler, but that He is they and they are He; that He and none other is at their back (shall we say?), nay, more than that; that He and they are inseparable, and even that they and He are to be identified for at least all practical purposes affecting God in His whole relation to men, and especially to His faithful servants. He, the LORD, represents, that is to say, nay, is, all the Powers of Nature, in heaven and on earth, which men in their ignorance have feared, acknowledged, and worshipped. These are not only His servants, but also the representations of His Being, in His external and practical activity. Polytheism is thus excluded, for the LORD is all.

Is then this Pantheism in the usual acceptance of the term, *i.e.* the recognition of a nerve-less, will-less, impersonal Being? Not at all. In fact it is the very contrary. He is; and all the powers in heaven and earth are summed up in Him, the self-existent One, *JāHÔH*, or, rather, in Him who, so far as we can express our knowledge in terms of His external relation to us, is ever changeless, 'the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever'.

explanation, *i.e.* of 'breviloquence'. If the R.V. were accurate we should expect to find 'the hosts' as in the Hebrew of Hos. xix 5 (6); Amos iii 13; vii 14; ix 5.

¹ For Apposition in Hebrew, which is much commoner than in English, see Genesis-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, §§ 131, 141, c, d; S. R. Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, 1892, Appendix, iv.

So in the famous Messianic passage—unfortunately misinterpreted by Christians—in Ps. xlv 6 (7) the writer, when assuring the King of the stability of his Kingdom, says: 'Thy throne-God', meaning by his words that the throne and all for which it stands is from God, upheld by God, directed by God, yes, and even is to be identified, for all practical purposes, with God. The two words 'Thy throne' and 'God' are equated. So is it with 'The Lord-Hosts', *JāHÔH Šebāôth*.

IV. May I add one or two more suggestions on the same lines?

1. How are we to explain the use of the common phrase, common from the second chapter of Genesis onwards, 'The LORD God'? To us, no doubt, it seems natural from long association, but that is all. For, in fact, the connexion of these two words is very curious. Can it be that the solution of the paradox 'The LORD Gods' (as it strictly is) is much the same as that of 'The LORD Šabāôth'? Does *Elohim* (for we never find *Eloah*, or even *El* in this connexion), combine into one all the Gods many and Lords many who are or have been objects of human fear and worship? We know that Hebrew scholars generally attribute this curious use of the plural in a singular sense to what is called 'the plural of majesty', an idiom which probably does occur here and there (Prov. i 20; ix 1, where Wisdom is in the plural number), but it is not a very satisfactory explanation. I suggest that the plural word *Elohim* was intended to combine all the Gods, and therefore became used as though it were in the singular, and that this denotation made it admirably fitted to be used in apposition to 'The LORD', just as Šebāôth is used. The LORD is thus represented as equating Himself with all the Gods. Does not He stand for them, and they for Him? ¹

2. Can we find here the true explanation of the enigmatic word 'One' in the cry of the dying Israelite: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD' (Deut. vi 4)? Is the LORD there called One, not in mere contrast to the Gods many and Lords many of all the Nations, but also and primarily because He sums up in Himself and in truth is, all the powers and potencies that exist? ²

3. Lastly, let me call attention to the spiritual help that this interpretation of the title 'The LORD of Hosts' suggests to the Christian, perhaps even more than to the Prophets of old. The term means that our God is not merely ready to call up to our aid the various powers of the universe, although that would be much. He is Himself all that

¹ In this connexion it may be noted that we sometimes find not 'The LORD God of Hosts', but 'The LORD God Hosts' (אלהים צבאות), e.g. Ps. lix 6 (5); cf. Jer. xlii 10. It is commonly said that this occurrence of 'God' in its absolute form is due to carelessness on the part of the copyist. But may it not be due to his subliminal consciousness that *Elohim* is itself in apposition to *JāHÔH*, and is also in itself a plurality equated on the one hand with *JāHÔH* and on the other with *Šebāôth*?

² Dr. S. A. Cook suggests that the word 'One' asserts that 'all the different local Yahwehs are one' (*The O.T., a Reinterpretation*, 1936, p. 146). This at least illustrates my own suggestion.

It may be added that the Jews from the early Middle Ages onwards have understood the word to mean the absolute unity of God in essence, in contrast to any form of Christian belief in the Trinity. But this is to read into the language of Scripture what it certainly was never meant to include.

In several places¹ I have assumed that the pronominal לְמוֹ beside the accepted plur. has also a sing. force,² like the Phoen. ם-³ Thus it is often a cause of confusion as, for example, where עָפִים has displaced עָפִמוֹ or עָפוֹ (Is. iii 13, as restored by Lowth) or where עָרִי through an intermediate עָרִימוֹ has displaced עָרִים (Is. xiv 17, as restored by Procksch); in both cases the LXX and the Pesh. confirm the alteration of the text.

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