

THE DATE OF THE PROSE-TALE OF JOB LINGUISTICALLY RECONSIDERED

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I

On several occasions we have attempted to demonstrate the significance of a certain type of linguistic analysis, for discussing biblical texts whose date of composition is questionable. The main advantage of this analysis lies in the fact, that, being an autonomous and independent criterion, one may use it without subscribing to any particular theory prevailing in biblical Higher Criticism. Most of the complicated and unresolved problems of Higher Criticism — literary, historical and theological — simply have no bearing upon its procedures.

This analysis seeks to identify linguistic elements, the very existence and the unusual concentration of which may reveal the late origin of chronologically problematic texts. It is the distinct corpus of unquestionably late compositions written in post-exilic times — as manifested by the historical episodes and persons mentioned therein — which provides us with reliable data for determining just exactly what late Biblical Hebrew (= LBH) is. Examples are the book of Esther (which tells about “the days of Ahasuerus” [I 1], Chronicles (which mentions Zerubabel [I Ch. III 19]) or Ezra (the hero of which lived “in the reign of Artaxerxes King of Persia” [VII 1]). The late linguistic elements in such compositions are unmistakably discernible.¹ Most significant among these are the Persianisms, which constitute, so to speak, an “Archimedean point” for confirming the whole system. This is so, since the close contact between Hebrew and Persian — through the mediation of Imperial Aramaic — is not recognizable, in the literary sources at our disposal, prior to the Persian conquest in the sixth century B.C.E.

¹ Cf., for instance, S.R. DRIVER, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, New York 1956 [=Meridian Library], pp. 473-4; 505-6.

Furthermore, it has been already pointed out that the late features, characteristic of post-exilic writings, are by no means restricted to *prose works*. Non-classical expressions and idioms, which are best explained as imprints of post-classical Hebrew, may be found in the elevated style of the *late prophecy* as well.² The same holds true of compositions which fall under the category of *poetic literature*. Thus, both in Psalms included in the canonical Psalter³ and in non-canonical Psalms discovered at Qumran,⁴ distinct elements of "Late Hebrew" are clearly traceable.

Here we shall apply the above mentioned analysis to the language of the Prose Tale of Job (chapters I-II; XLII 7-17), which is said to preserve *epic elements*.⁵ We believe that there is some exaggeration in the statement saying that "the prose tale in the prologue and epilogue is written in exquisite biblical Hebrew, on a par with the classic narratives in Genesis and Samuel"; or that "the author [of the Prose Tale — A.H.] uses perfect classical Hebrew with practically no trace of a later style".⁶ It would appear that in spite of his efforts to write pure classical Hebrew and to mark his story with "Patriarchal colouring", the author of the Prose Tale could not avoid certain phrases which are unmistakably characteristic of post-exilic Hebrew, thus betraying his actual late date.⁷

² *Ibid.*, p. 505.

³ Cf., for instance, A. HURVITZ, "When was the Hebrew Phrase שָׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל coined?" *Leshonenu* XXVII-XXVIII, 1963-4, pp. 297-302 [in Hebrew].

⁴ *Idem.*, "Observations on the Language of the Third Apocryphal Psalm from Qumran", *RdQ* V, 1965, pp. 225-232.

⁵ N.M. SARNA, "Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job", *JBL* LXXXVI, 1957, pp. 13-25. Cf. also U. CASSUTO, *Knesset* VIII, 1944, p. 142 [in Hebrew]. For the reasons why the method cannot decidedly be utilized for the poetic discourses of Job, see our remarks in *IEJ* XVIII, 1968, p. 236. An interesting parallel in another Wisdom composition, where a clear distinction between the language of the narrative framework and the gnomic portions must be drawn, is supplied by the Aramaic *Words of Ahiqar*: here as well the kind of language in which the proverbs are formulated is distinctively different from that used in the framework story (Cf. E.Y. KUTSCHER, *JBL* LXXXVI, 1957, p. 338; J.C. GREENFIELD, *Leshonenu* XXXII, 1967-8, pp. 364-5 [in Hebrew]).

⁶ R. GORDIS, *The Book of God and Man*, Chicago-London 1965 [1966], pp. 163; 164 (Gordis allows, however, for one exception — לָקַבֵּל; *ibid.*, p. 345, n. 32).

⁷ Mention should be made here of K. KAUTZSCH's study *Das sogenannte Volksbuch von Hiob*, Leipzig 1900, pp. 22-39, where, while discussing the chronological problems of Job's Prose Narrative, he analyses its peculiar expressions. Unfortunately, however, some good observations were indiscriminately mixed up with dubious material and, as a result, completely neglected by subsequent scholars. It seems that

II

Job I 6, 7, 8, 9, 12; II 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7: שָׁטָן (ה) ⁸

The biblical concept of *Satanic figures*, which exist in the universe, goes back to ancient times. The word שָׁטָן itself is found already in Numbers (XXII 22,32), 1 Sam. (XXIX 4), 2 Sam. (XIX 23) and 1 Kings (V 18; XI 14,23,25). However, שָׁטָן — whatever its etymology — still carries in these passages the general meaning of “stumble”. The clear emergence of a definite image of “The Satan”, as was pointed out by many scholars, is late. It is not until Zechariah (III 1,2) and 1 Chr. (XXI 1) that The Satan as such is first mentioned in the Bible (with or without the definite article).⁹

Furthermore, the appearance of “The Satan” in Chronicles illustrates very clearly the decisive transition which took place in biblical thought — as well as in Biblical Hebrew (=BH) — in the post exilic period. For the early parallel of 1 Ch. XXI 1, in 2 Sam. XXIV 1, is quite unaware of “The Satan”: ¹⁰

2 Sam. XXIV 1 — . . . לַחֲרוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסַּת אֶת דָּוִד
1 Ch. XXI 1 — . . . יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסַּת אֶת דָּוִיד.

That the phenomenon under discussion is indeed late, is particularly obvious in the light of the post-biblical sources. Both Rabbinic and Apocryphal literature, when referring to various biblical episodes, tend — like Chronicles — to insert “The Satan” into the context. Yet, in the biblical models The Satan is missing

Kautzsch's failure is due mainly to his lack of disciplined standards in determining what “late” linguistic elements actually are. Nevertheless, our criticism of the Old School *methods* — in this case as well as in others — hardly justifies a complete discarding of the *issues* they dealt with. In the light of the new data available — and the refined methods developed — we are at present in a much better position to examine thoroughly the whole issue of LBH. Cf. A. HURVITZ, *Bein Lashon Lelashon* (the Transition Period in Biblical Hebrew: a Study in Post-Exilic Hebrew and its Implications for the Dating of Psalms), Jerusalem 1972.

⁹ In order not to enter into detailed reconstructions, which inevitably involve non-linguistic considerations, the following discussion is limited to a presentation of the essential semantic development of שָׁטָן in its general outline only.

¹⁰ Cf., for instance, S.R. DRIVER — G.B. GRAY, *The Book of Job* (=ICC), 1921, pp. 10-11. Ps. CIX 6 is of no help for a chronological study, since its date is unknown.

¹¹ Cf., for instance, DRIVER, *op. cit* (*Supra*, n.1), p. 434.

altogether.¹¹ On the other hand, even in such a passage as 1 Kings XXII 21, where the heavenly court is gathered and a seducer is called upon for stumbling Ahab, that seducer is still named רִיח. The term שָׁטָן (ה) obviously has not been coined yet in BH.

It is also significant to note, in this context, that the occurrence of Angels with proper names in the Bible (מִיכָאֵל, גַּבְרִיאֵל) is exclusively limited to the late book of Daniel. Though much is said about Angels in early biblical literature, those heavenly beings do not have yet proper names and definite jobs which are so characteristic of the angelological phraseology in the later times.¹²

In sum: the discussion of heavenly affairs and assemblies of celestial beings is by no means restricted to the late literature.¹³ However, the emergence of the figure of The Satan in the Bible — which is linguistically associated with a semantic development שָׁטָן = "Stumble" > שָׁטָן = "The Satan" — is an exclusive feature of post-exilic literature. It would thus appear, that הַשָּׂטָן of Job's Prose Tale — whatever its exact position in this development — is a part of LBH.¹⁴

Job II 10: ל פ ק ל
 — :

לִקְבֹּל = "to receive, take" is widely used in post-exilic Hebrew, in Tannaitic and Talmudic literature alike.¹⁵ It is also very common in the Aramaic sources: earlier and later, western and eastern.¹⁶ In BH, however, the usage of לִקְבֹּל is clearly char-

¹¹ Cf. C. BRANDWEIN, "The Legend of Job According to its Various Stages", *Tarbiz* XXXV, 1965-6, p. 9 [in Hebrew]. Cf. also 11Q Ps^a Plea, line 15: אֵל תְּשִׁלֵּם: אֵל תְּשִׁלֵּם בִּי שָׁטָן as against Ps. CXIX 133 וְאֵל תְּשִׁלֵּם בִּי כָּל אֹיֵן (R. POLZIN, HThR LX, 1967, pp. 470-471).

¹² Cf., for instance, M. TESTUZ, *Les Idées Religieuses du Livre des Jubilés*, Genève-Paris 1960, p. 87. In Yer. *Rosh Hashana* I 2 it is explicitly stated, that the names of the angels — as well as the names of the months — were introduced by those who returned from Babylonia: שְׁמוֹת הַמַּלְאָכִים עָלוּ בִּידֵן מִבָּבֶל.

¹³ Cf., for instance, SARNA, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 5), p. 22.

¹⁴ In non-linguistic terms: The Satan in Job is far from being an immediate "reflex of early Near Eastern mythology" (*ibid.*; italics are mine — A.H.). Its late character within Hebrew suggests that rather we ought to consider it a reflex of *post-exilic* angelology.

¹⁵ See the rich variety of examples quoted in E. BEN-IEHUDA'S *Thesaurus* . . . XI, s.v.

¹⁶ Cf. the etymological references in KOEHLER-BAUMGARTNER'S *Lexicon*, p. 1117 s.v.

acteristic of the post exilic writings: out of 9 occurrences outside Job, 8 are found in Esther, Ezra and Chronicles — all of which are known to have been written in the Persian period at the earliest. Once (XIX 20) לקבל also appears in the chronologically disputable book of Proverbs — which, therefore, cannot bear upon our discussion — but never does it occur in any of the biblical compositions which were without doubt written in pre-exilic times.

Furthermore, in not a few cases it is possible to illustrate how other roots, which clearly belong to the stock of classical BH, are functioning in pre-exilic literature — before the penetration of the late לקבל — in the same meaning. This is explicit particularly when we come to confront certain BH idioms with those of MH or Targ. Aram.¹⁷ Cf., for instance,

Deut. XVI 19 —	ולא תקח שחד	Ex. XXIV 7 —	נעשה ונשמע
Onkelos —	ולא תקביל שוחדא	Onk. —	נעביד ונקביל
B.Ket. 105a —	מקבלי שוחד		

Gen. XXIII 13 —	ממני	השדה קח	כסף	נתתי
M. Sheq. V 4 —	ומקבל ממנו חותם			ונותן לו מעות

Lev. XIV 15 —	השמאלית	כף הכהן	על	מלג השמן ויצק	ולקח ...
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Tos. Zeb. I 11 —	במינו ונותן בשמאלו	לוג שמן של מצורע מקבל
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Ps. VI 10 —	ה' תפלתי יקח
Targ. —	ה' צלותי יקבל
Jewish liturgy —	וקבל ברחמים ... את תפלתנו

Within BH see:

Esr. VIII 30 —	וקבלו הכהנים ... משקל הכסף והזהב ... להביא לירושלם ולבית אלהינו
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Num. XXXI 54 —	ויקח משה ואלעזר הכהן את הזהב ... ויבאו אתו אל אהל מועד
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II Ch. XXIX 22 —	ויקבלו הכהנים את הדם ויזרקו המזבחה
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Ex. XXIV 6 —	ויקח משה חצי הדם ... וחצי הדם זרק על המזבח
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¹⁷ Cf. E.Y. KUTSCHER, *Leshonenu* XXX, 1965-6, pp. 21-23 [in Hebrew]; A. BENDAVID, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, Tel Aviv 1967, index [in Hebrew].

¹⁸ לקבל דם is a common expression in MH. Cf., for instance, M. Yoma III 4;

Est. IV 4 —

ולא קבל

ותשלח בגדים להלביש את מרדכי ...

Gen. XXXIII 10-11 —

ויקח

... ולקחת מנחתי ...

חן

אם נא מצאתי

[But Onk. —

.אם כען אשכחית רחמין ... ותקביל תיקרובתי ... וקביל]

Compare also לְקַבֵּל בְּרָכָה in 11Q Ps^a Zion,¹⁹ whereas classical BH employs instead לְקַחַת/לְשֹׂאֵת בְּרָכָה:

11Q Ps^a Zion. 13 —

צדק עולמים ... וברכות נכבדים תקבלי

Ps XXIV 5 —

ישא ברכה

[But the Targ. —

! יקבל ברכתא]

Gen. XXVII 35 —

בא אחיך במרמה ויקח ברכתך

Onk. —

על אחיך בחוכמא וקביל ברכתך

Num. XXIII 20 —

הנה ברך לקחתי

Onk. —

הא בירכן קבילית.²⁰

It seems, therefore, that the usage of לְקַבֵּל in BH²¹ is indeed

Me'ila I 1; Zeb. III 1. It is being discussed, among other technical idioms, in "The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code (a Linguistic Study in Technical Idioms and Terminology)", RB LXXXI, 1974, pp. 52-83.

¹⁹ R. POLZIN, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 11), p. 474.

²⁰ Many instances for the equations קָבַל = נָשָׂא, קָבַל = שָׁמַע, קָבַל = לָקַח may be found in CH. J. KASOWSKI, *Thesaurus Aquilae Versionis* I, Jerusalem 1940, s.v. קָבַל. It should be emphasized that only after קָבַל found its way into literary/written Hebrew, a clear differentiation in use was developed between קָבַל on the one hand, and לָקַח, נָשָׂא, שָׁמַע on the other. This was not the case with classical/pre-exilic Hebrew; since in that period various connotations of the yet-not-known קָבַל are being expressed, as mentioned above, by לָקַח, נָשָׂא, שָׁמַע. For a parallel development compare בָּא/נָכַנס in MH, which employs both roots, there is a clear distinction between בָּא (meaning "come, arrive") and נָכַנס (meaning "enter"). However, in BH — which is unaware yet of the post-biblical נָכַנס — the meaning "enter" may be conveyed by בָּא (Jos. VI 1; Cf. E. Y. KUTSCHER, *Words and their History*, Jerusalem 1961, p. 76 [in Hebrew]).

²¹ "Though W.F. ALBRIGHT believes he has discovered the root in a *Canaanite* Gloss in the Tel-el-Amarna Letters ... the exclusively late usage of the verb makes it a late word in *Hebrew*" — GORDIS, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 6), p. 345, n. 32 (italics are mine — A.H.). Against the uncritical identification — prevailing in certain circles — of Hebrew = Ugaritic = Amarna Glosses = Phoenician, see A.F. RAINY's most important remarks in *Leshonenu* XXX, 1965-66, p. 253 [in Hebrew]. This point was emphasized, as a matter of fact, by ALBRIGHT as well. Cf. his "A Re-interpretation of an Amarna Letter", JCS II, 1948, p. 240, footnote: "research on each dialect must take constant stock of pertinent phenomena in all the other dialects, without reading interpretations valid for one dialect into another unless these interpretations fit the facts of the case in question". [due weight is not given to

late.²² Consequently its employment in Job II 10 should be considered late.

Job XLII 8:

להתפלל על

In standard BH the meaning of "to intercede, to pray for [the sake of] somebody" is expressed by means of התפלל בעד (about fifteen times). Cf., for instance, Gen. XX 7 השב אשת האיש כי (קבצו את כל ישראל... or 1 Sam VII 5 נביא הוא ויתפלל בעדך (ואתפלל בעדכם אל ה'). Once this meaning is conveyed through התפלל ל (1 Sam. II 25), but never does one find, in the earlier sections of the Bible, the combination התפלל על with the meaning "intercede".²³ התפלל על = "intercede" occurs in the Bible — outside Job — only in Nehemiah and Chronicles:

Neh. I 6 —

אנכי מתפלל לפניך היום... על בני ישראל

2 Ch XXX 18 —

כי התפלל יחזקיהו עליהם

התפלל על is, further, used for "intercede" in post-biblical literature. Cf.

M. Ber. V 5

אמרו עליו... שהיה מתפלל על החולין

Mech. Bo' (Ex. XII 32)

התפללו עלי כדי שתכלה ממני הפורענות.²⁴

It seems, therefore, that the appearance of התפלל על "intercede" in Job XLII 8 reflects late Hebrew phrasaeology.²⁵

this *linguistic* point in K.A. KITCHEN, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*, London 1966, p. 145. However, as far as the *book* of Proverbs is concerned, K. is undoubtedly right in insisting, that the occurrence there of קבל cannot be taken as evidence for the lateness of the book. Cf. our remarks in IEJ 18, 1968, p. 236].

²² BDB., p. 867 s.v.

²³ 1 Sam. I 10 על ה' להתפלל means, of course, "to pray to God" (and not "to intercede for God"). Ps. XXXII 6; 2 Ch. XXXII 20 על זאת להתפלל again do not belong here, since they involve "something" and not "somebody".

²⁴ Note that the preposition על is also used in the Aramaic equivalent על which renders, in the Targumim, the biblical בעד התפלל. Cf., for instance,

Gen XX 7	<u>ויתפלל בעדך</u>	השב אשת האיש...
Targ. Onk.	<u>עלך</u>	אחיב איתת גבר...
Syr.	<u>עלך</u>	אחפך אנתת גברא...
(Gen. Apocr. XX 23)	<u>על ויחזקיהו</u>	(ו)ישלח אנתתה מנה... וישלח על ויחזקיהו

התפלל על may be considered, consequently, as a further illustration of late Aramaic "calque" in Hebrew. Cf. E.Y. KUTSCHER, "Aramaic Calque in Hebrew," *Tarbiz* XXXIII, 1963-64, pp. 118-130 [in Hebrew].

²⁵ The fact that in XLII 10 use is made of the normal בעד התפלל seems to indicate that the author — unwilling to repeat himself — deliberately modified his wording.

Job XLII 16

אחרי זאת

Classical BH makes intense use of the expressions ויהי אחרי כן, (1) אחרי (י) כן, ויהי אחרי (י) הדברים האלה, אחר הדברים האלה. This is true of Genesis as well, a book whose language constitutes our only means for determining what biblical "Patriarchal colouring" should look like. In connection with summing up of years of primeval generations, another formula — אחרי הולך²⁶ — is repeatedly employed. Job's Epilogue, however, does not adopt any of these:

Job XLII 16 —

מאה וארבעים שנה

ויהי איוב אחרי זאת

as against

Gen V 7 —

ויהי שם אחרי הולידו את אנוש שבע... ושמנה מאות שנה

Josh. X 26 —

ויכם יהושע אחרי כן וימיתם

Gen. XXIII 19 —

ואחרי כן קבר אברהם את שרה²⁶

Gen. XV 1 —

etc. אחרי הדברים האלה היה דבר ה' אל אברם

A glance at the concordance reveals, that the peculiar אחרי זאת — as well as אחרי כל זאת and אחר זה — is entirely missing not only from the book of Genesis, but from classical Biblical prose as a whole.²⁷ On the other hand, אחרי (כל) זאת and אחר זה — which are duplicated in באתר דנה and אחרי דנה of Biblical Aramaic (Dan. II 29,45; VII 6,7) — appear in BH solely in Ezra (IX 10) and 2 Chr. (XXI 18; XXXII 9; XXXV 20). See, for instance,

2 Chr. XXXII 9 —

שלה סנחריב... ירושלימה

אחר זה

as against

Gen. XV 1 —

אחר הדברים האלה היה דבר ה' אל אברם...

Gen. XL 1 —

ויהי אחר הדברים האלה חטאו משקה מלך מצרים...

The relevant point for discussion is that such interchanging, between התפלל על and התפלל בעד, could not arise before the idiom התפלל על was coined. It is only in the late period — when התפלל על found its way into BH — that a biblical writer was able to play with the two synonymous idioms (for a parallel phenomenon cf. Eccl. III 1, where עַתָּה and זִמֵּן are used synonymously. This interchangeability however, is inconceivable in pre-exilic Hebrew, before the penetration of the late, obviously Persian, זִמֵּן into BH.).

²⁶ In Job III 1 this idiom was indeed employed: ואחרי כן פתח איוב את פיהו. Cf. *Supra*, n. 25.

²⁷ 1 Kings XIII 33 אחר הדבר הזה being close, but not identical, to them.

Job I 6; II 1:

להתיצב על

2 Ch. XI 13 —

Josh. XXIV 1 —

Zech. VI 5 — רחות השמים יוצאות מהתיצב על אדון כל הארץ
against

³¹. ועתה התיצבו לפני ה' לשבטיכם. I Sam. X 19 —

²⁸ *BDB*, pp. 29; 30; 260.

³⁰ The definitions are taken from *BDB*, s.v. יָצַב, p. 426.

³¹ Numb. 33: 3 (15) על עילק (כה); החיצב; Hab II 1 מצור; Ps. XXXVI 5 טוב לא מוב על דרך לא טוב — all cases of "loc. el." — not "pers. el." — and therefore are irrelevant to our discussion.

³² *BDB*, s.v. לָבַד 6c, p. 756.

³⁸ Cf., for instance Gen. XVIII 2 שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו; Gen. XLV 1 וְהָיָה עִמָּךְ וְהָיָה עִמָּךְ is also found in similar contexts (BDB., *op. cit.*). Cf., for instance, Gen. XVIII 8 והוא עמד עליהם; Jud. III 19 ויבא עמו ויבא עמו... כל העמדים עליו. Both roots are found in parallelism in Ex. XVIII 13-14

ועל of Job thus is not just a stylistic variant of accepted pre-exilic phrasaeology (where either התיצב לפני or נצב על are used). התיצב על is an idiom whose late character is attested by 2 Ch. XI 13 and Zech VI 5.⁸⁴

Job I 18:

עַד + Participle

עַד = "while", followed by a present participle, is exceedingly rare in BH: it is found once in Neh. VII 3 — וְעַד הֵם עֹמְדִים (ועד זה מדבר — יָגִיפוּ הַדְּלֹתוֹת) and another time in Job I 18 — וְעַד הָאֵל.⁸⁵ In classical BH it is עוֹד — not עַד — which serves in such contexts.⁸⁶ However, עַד + pres. part. (or adj.) is a standard Aramaic expression which renders, in the Aramaic translations, the Heb. עוֹד + pres. part. (or adj.), thus illustrating the correspondence between "the Aram. עַד construction" on the one hand, and "the BH עוֹד construction" on the other. Compare:

1 Kings I 42 —	וְהָנָה יוֹנְתָן ... בָּא	עוֹדְנוּ	מְדַבֵּר
Aram. Targ. —	וְהָא יוֹנְתָן ... אַתָּא	עַד דְּהוּא מְמַלֵּל	
Syr. —	וְהָא נְתָן ... אַתָּא	וְעַד הוּא מְמַלֵּל	⁸⁷
Gen. XXV 6 —	חִי	בְּעוֹדְנוּ	יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ
Onk. —	דְּהוּא קִים	עַד	יִצְחָק בְּרִיהַ
Syr. —	חִי	הוּא	עַד אִיסְחָק בְּרֵה
2 Sam. XII 22 —			בְּעוֹד הִילֵד חִי
Aram. Targ. —			עַד דְּרִבְיָא קִיִּים — צְמִית וּבְכִיתִי

The Aramaic construction, substituting עַד for עוֹד, is attested in MH as well. Like Targumic Aramaic, which employs ... עַד = "while" with pres. part. (or adj.), MH resorts to ... עַד שׁ.

עַד שׁ (Ps. LXXXII 1) and עַד שׁ (1 Kings XXII 19) may denote — beside "stand" — "participate as a member" in the court. This is suggested in particular by the Accadian parallel *uzuzzu*; cf. F.M. CROSS, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah", *JNES* XII, 1953, pp. 274-5, n. 3.

⁸⁴ The late Prof. KUTSCHER called my attention to MH הַתְּקִיִּים עַל (Cf. E. BEN-IEHUDA, *Thesaurus* . . . XII, p. 5918), which may elucidate the preference for עַל in LBH.

⁸⁵ *BDB*, s.v. III עַד, II 2c, p. 725.

⁸⁶ This normal expression is used twice in Job I 16, 17 — וְעַד הָאֵל. Cf. *Supra*, n. 25.

⁸⁷ For the same construction with the same root — עוֹדְנוּ/ה מְדַבֵּר(ת) — Cf. Gen. XXIX 9; 1 Kings I 22; 2 Kings VI 33. All of these are rendered, in the Aram. Targumim and the Syriac, by מְמַלֵּל(י)ל/מְמַלֵּל(א) עַד.

Compare:

Mech. Beshall. (Ex. XIII 22)

עד שעמוד הענן קיים — יהיה עמוד האש צומח

Ibid. (Ex. XVI 6)

עד שאתם ישנים במטותיכם — הקב"ה מפרנס אתכם

Cant. Rabbati (Can. IV 8)

עד שאתם עסוקין בטיט ולבנים — קפצתי וגאלתי אתכם.

The characteristically post-biblical nature of this ... עד ש, meaning "while", is further attested by the formally identical expression of MH ... עד ש meaning "before, prior to, in place of, instead"; ³⁸ for instance,

M. Neg. X 1 —

עד שאנו למדים מן הקנה — נלמד מן השער

M. Nid. VI 14 —

עד שאתם מתקנים את השומות — בואו ותקנו את הפיקחות

Yer. Suk. V 1 —

עד שאת מכבש את הברכריים — בו וכביש את היהודים

B. Bab. Bat. 18^a —

עד שאתה אומר לי הרחק חרדלך ... — הרחק דבוריך ...

Compare also:

Mech. Mishp. (Ex. XXIII 1)

לא היה ... הולך ... — עד שהוא יודע מי הולך עמו

against

Is. VII 16

בטרם ידע הנער ... — תעזב האדמה

where the same MH עד + part. is again preferred in post-biblical literature; this time replacing another old biblical idiom — בטרם.

We may, therefore, conclude:

- (1) the active and wide-spread employment of parallel forms in Aramaic and MH, using the same עד construction, make it unnecessary and unjustifiable to "correct" the punctuation of Job I 18 עד into עד, as suggested repeatedly by many commentators.³⁹

³⁸ Note that in "Jewish Aramaic" as well ... עד covers both BH עור and עד: ... עד ד means "während ... bis ... ehe"; cf. G. DALMAN, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch*, Frankfurt a. Main 1922, p. 306. See also:

Is. LXV 24

והיה טרם יקראו לו — ואני אענה; עור הם מדברים — ואני אשמע

Num. XI 33

הבשר עודנו בין שניהם טרם יכרת — ואף ה' חרה ...

³⁹ Cf., for instance, H. GRAETZ, "Verwechslung der Partikeln על mit עד ... und

- (2) its existence in MH and Neh., and its total absence from standard BH, where classical עוֹד is used instead, further indicates the lateness of the phenomenon under investigation. Consequently the penetration of the non-classical עַד + pres. part. into the Prose Tale of Job is to be considered an imprint of post-classical Hebrew.

Job I 1:

אִישׁ הָיָה . . . (ו) שְׁמוֹ

The opening formula וַיְהִי אִישׁ . . . וְשְׁמוֹ — either commencing a new book or a new scene — serves in pre-exilic narratives as a classical introduction for presenting the person (אִישׁ) around whom the story is going to be centered. Cf.

Jud. XIII 2 —	וְשְׁמוֹ מִנּוּחַ	וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִצְרַעָה . . .	וַיְהִי אִישׁ
Jud. XVII 1 —	וְשְׁמוֹ מִכִּיָּהוּ	מֵהָר אֶפְרַיִם	וַיְהִי אִישׁ
1 Sam I 1 —	וְשְׁמוֹ אֶלְקָנָה	אֶחָד מִן הָרַמְתִּיִּים . . .	וַיְהִי אִישׁ
1 Sam IX 1 —	וְשְׁמוֹ קִישׁ	מִבְּנֵימִן	וַיְהִי אִישׁ

In contradistinction to the above, a quite different formula is employed in Esther II 5, where (a) the order of the words is reversed; (b) the Waw consecutive form is discarded and replaced by the regular past form הָיָה:

Est. II 5 — אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשֵׁן הַבִּירָה וְשְׁמוֹ מְרְדֳּכִי.

It was correctly noted, that the preference for this new expression in Esther is but one of a whole series of linguistic neologisms, "indicating the forthcoming Mishnaic Hebrew".⁴⁰ As is well known, the complicated system of the consecutive tenses has been completely discarded in MH.⁴¹ This revolutionary development affected the whole grammatical and syntactical structure of the Hebrew language, and its traces are to be found in LBH and Qumran Hebrew as well.⁴² Thus, the emergence of the new open-

עַד mit עוֹד " *MGWJ* XXX, 1881, pp. 233-5. GRAETZ, failing to take into consideration Aram. and MH, concluded that עַד = "While", "ist grundfalsch" and, as a result, "corrected" the pertinent biblical examples of עַד into עוֹד.

⁴⁰ A. BENDAVID, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 17), pp. 61-62.

⁴¹ M.H. SEGAL, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, Oxford 1927 [1958], § 104, p. 54.

⁴² Cf. A. KROPAT, *Die Syntax des Autors der Chronik*, Giessen 1909 [= BZAW XVII], p. 22; E.Y. KUTSCHER, *The Language . . . of the Isaiah Scroll*, Jerusalem 1959, p. 269 [in Hebrew].

ing איש היה in Est II 5, which approaches the prevalent opening ... חד באנש קם/אזל/הוה מהלך etc. recorded in the Palestinian Talmud, is a by-product of that comprehensive process.⁴³ The lack of mastery of LBH writers in the use of the out-dated ויהי is further manifested by a great many of temporal sentences, which in post-exilic literature significantly omit the prefixed ויהי prevalent in classical BH. Thus, for instance,

2 Kings XXII 3 —

בשמנה עשרה שנה למלך ... שלח ... ויהי

against

2 Ch. XXXIV 8 —

ובשנת שמונה עשרה למלכו ... שלח >

1 Kings VIII 54 —

ויהי ככלות שלמה להתפלל ...

against

2 Ch. VII 1 —

ובכלות שלמה להתפלל ... >⁴⁴

The איש היה ... (ו) שמו formula is found in the Bible, beside Esther, only at the beginning of Job:

Job I 1

איוב שמו

איש היה בארץ עוין

Here the lack of ויהי has often been interpreted as being due to the tendency of ויהי to denote continuity of happenings (cf. Josh I 1; Jud I 1; 1 Sam I 1; 2 Sam I 1) rather than completely new events. Since Job is not linked in contents to any of the preceding compositions, it was claimed that this is the reason why the author avoided ויהי. The commentators further maintained that the Nathan Story in 2 Sam. XII 1 בעיר אחת שני אנשים היו proves the sequence of Job איש היה to be classical.⁴⁵ However, these explanations miss the basic points of the issue: (I) it is not an isolated ויהי/היה and its position in the sentence that needs clarification, but rather a certain fixed and stereotyped formula which consists of three elements: איש + היה

⁴³ The disuse of biblical ויהי also underlies the other types of opening, current in the Tosephta and Bab. Talmud (BENDAVID, *op. cit.* [*Supra*, n. 17], pp. 210-211): ... מעשה באדם אחד ש ... מעשה באחד ש ... (ויהי איש אחד ... against ...).

⁴⁴ Cf. S.R. DRIVER, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 1), pp. 538 (n. 37), 506 (n. 12); *idem*, *Notes on ... the Books of Samuel*², Oxford 1913[1960], p. 148. Cf. also KROPAT, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 42), pp. 22-23.

⁴⁵ Cf., for instance, DRIVER-GRAY, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 9), Part II, p. 1.

+ שָׁם; ⁴⁶ (II) The classical pattern of this formulaic introduction, as manifested in pre-exilic literature, is וַיְהִי אִישׁ . . . וַשְּׁמוֹ; (III) The non-classical construction (וַ)שְּׁמוֹ אִישׁ הָיָה . . . — which is in accord with linguistic developments characteristic of post-exilic Hebrew — is found, outside Job, only in the late book of Esther. It would thus appear, that Est. II 5 and Job I 1 — both avoiding the formalized opening וַיְהִי in their peculiar formulation of the classical model וַשְּׁמוֹ אִישׁ . . . וַיְהִי — reflect the same linguistic background; that of LBH.

III

The story of Job may well have been known among the Israelites long before the sixth century B.C.E., as suggested particularly in the light of the ancient Near Eastern records: ⁴⁷ the "Babylonian Job" (*Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*) provides us with a parallel to the story of Job, while other sources attest to the antiquity of the name of Job among the West Semites throughout the second Millennium B.C.E. — from the Egyptian Execration Texts ('ybm), via the Alalakh Letters (A-ia-bu/i) to the Amarna Tablets (A-ia-ab).⁴⁸ That the figure of Job was indeed considered by the Israelites as belonging to primeval times is clear from biblical sources as well. In Ez. XIV 14 Job is mentioned in one breath with נֹחַ and דָּנִיֵּאל,⁴⁹ two non-Israelite heroes, the far off adventures of whom are well-known to us from the Mesopotamian literature (*Utnapishtim* the hero of the flood story) and the Ugaritic epos (*Dan'il* the righteous judge). Needless to say, such an exegesis

⁴⁶ Besides, as far as וַיְהִי itself is concerned, it had lost its contextual connotation already in biblical times. The optional choice of וַיְהִי by a LBH writer is particularly instructive in the case of Esther: on the one hand, the book opens in I 1 with וַיְהִי, although Esther has nothing to do in contents with any of the books it follows; on the other hand, the book of Esther avoids וַיְהִי in II 5 though we are right in the middle of the plot. The conclusion seems inevitable: the use or disuse of the introductory וַיְהִי is not necessarily indicative of the text's narrative relationship with the surrounding compositions.

⁴⁷ Cf., for instance, M. POPE, *Job* [= Anchor Bible], 1965, p. XXXV.

⁴⁸ W.F. ALBRIGHT, *JAOS* LXXIV, 1954, pp. 225-226; B. MAISLER, *Tarbiz* XIII, 1941-2, p. 72. Probably *Hayabum* of the Mari Letters reflect the same name; Cf., ALBRIGHT, *op. cit.* and H.B. HUFFMON, *Amorite Personal Names* . . . , Baltimore 1965, pp. 103; 161.

⁴⁹ Cf. S. SPIEGEL, "Noah, Danel and Job", *L. Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, English section, New York 1945, pp. 305-355.

finds support in the "Patriarchal colouring" which characterizes the prose framework of Job. This is noticeable, *inter alia*, in idioms and phrasaeology encountered elsewhere, in biblical literature, only in connection with personalities mentioned in the Pentateuch.⁵⁰ Sarna's conclusion, that an "epic substratum" is preserved in the Prose Tale of Job, also relies on the occurrence of idioms which are ascribed to a language of remote antiquity.⁵¹

However, all this does not imply that the prose narrative, in its extant version, is necessarily old.⁵² As was emphasised long ago, "it is a mistake to infer the age of the *writer* from the circumstances of the *hero* of the book." We have to consider the possibility, that it may be only the writer who "intends us to think of Job as living" in the Patriarchal age.⁵³ That is to say, we may actually be dealing not with an archaic but rather with an archaizing language. Another possible explanation of the existence of old linguistic elements could be, of course, that (some of) the material in the Prose Tale is indeed old, its final form being shaped, however, in a late period.⁵⁴ Be that as it may, we ought not to be misled by these seeming archaisms. This is true

⁵⁰ זקן ושבוע ימים, עבדה רבה, קשיטה (See the commentaries).

⁵¹ SARNA, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 5). The interpretation which links Job with the background of the Pentateuch was already adopted — and further developed — in Rabbinic Literature, in the early Bible Translations and in the Apocryphal Literature: in Bab. Baba Bathra 14^b we find the view that "Moses wrote his own book and the portion of Balaam [Num. XXII-XXIV] and Job" (though other Rabbis assume that "Job was among those who returned from the [Babylonian] Exile" or "in the time of Ahasuerus [*ibid.*, 15^a; 15^b]"); In a certain tradition of the Peshitta the book of Job immediately follows the Pentateuch; the addition appended to the Septuagint of Job identifies יוב with יובב King of Edom, mentioned in Gen. XXXVI 33, and so does the apocryphal composition "The Testament of Job". This composition even claims that Job was married to Dina, Jacob's daughter (as do the Aramaic Targum to Job II 9 and other Rabbinic sources).

⁵² This is also SARNA's own view (orally).

⁵³ S.R. DRIVER — G.R. GRAY, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 9) p. LXVI. See also GORDIS, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 6), p. 164.

⁵⁴ Note that for our discussion it is irrelevant to decide whether the author "ein schriftlich niedergelegtes Volksbuch vorgefunden hat" or "er eine mündlich überlieferte, obwohl schon in ziemlich feste Form gebrachte Volkserzählung übernahm oder verwertete"; Whether "er die Erzählung umgearbeitet, redigiert oder frei gestaltet hat" or "sie ihm nur als äusserer Anknüpfungspunkt für sein Gedicht gedient oder ihn dazu inspiriert hat"; whether or not "die Rahmenerzählung nicht vom Dichter selbst mit seinem eigenen Werk verbunden, sondern erst später zu diesem hinzugefügt worden sein" (these being the alternative explanations usually suggested while analysing the book of Job: C. FOHRER, "Zur Vorgeschichte und Komposition des Buches Hiob", *VT* VI, 1956, pp. 250-1; Cf. also H.H. ROWLY, "The Book of Job and its Meaning", *BJRL* XLI, 1958-9, p. 177).

particularly at present, when the current tendency to push back the date of biblical compositions is rather exaggerated, resulting occasionally in uncritical consequences.

The conclusion seems therefore inevitable, that we are unable to infer from *old* idioms and phrases, embodied in a given text, definite conclusions as to the date of its author.⁵⁵ However, the situation is different when we treat *late* linguistic elements. Such elements do betray their actual background; and if they are not few or sporadic — in which case their occurrence may be regarded as purely incidental — they effectively date a given text.⁵⁶ It is, therefore, the existence of possible late elements which has to be considered in the first place, while discussing the age of the prose narrative of *the biblical book of Job as we have it*.

Above, it has been our purpose to show that the examples discussed are not merely deviations from the accepted standards of classical BH. Neither are they problematic Aramaisms, whose date is often undetermined. These deviations from standard BH are duplicated in late Hebrew phrasaeology, both in biblical and non-biblical sources. Their wide usage in the late sources — as well as their complete absence, in similar contexts, from early biblical writings — is undeniable. Owing to the existence of a considerable number of such elements in the Prose Tale, there seems to be no justification either for ignoring them altogether⁵⁷ or for claiming that their concentration in Job I–II; XLII 7–17 is a mere matter of chance. As far as can be judged from the linguistic data at our disposal, these *non*-classical idioms ought to be explained as *post*-classical — namely, as imprints of late He-

⁵⁵ Cf., for instance, S. MOWINCKEL, "Zur Sprache der biblischen Psalmen", *ThL* LXXXI, 1956, p. 201: "das Vorhandensein von an sich alten . . . Vorstellungen und Wendungen in einem Gedicht nichts über die chronologische Ansetzung desselben beweist".

⁵⁶ Cf. A. HURVITZ, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 4), p. 231. Some of the linguistic peculiarities discussed above involve the substitution of prepositions, and not of words or roots. It must be emphasized that it is often the selection of prepositions which indicates mastery of a language and, therefore, deviations from classical usage in this regard should be given due consideration.

⁵⁷ "Apart from the reference to the Satan, there is scant ground for dating the Prologue-Epilogue in the Post-exilic period" — M. POPE, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 47), p. XXXV.

brew — thus making the final shaping of the extant Prose Tale incompatible with a date prior to the Exile.

This suggestion is, of course, not new. In fact, the book of Job as a whole "is by most held to be post-exilic".⁵⁸ However, as far as Job's Prose Tale is concerned, it is not *in spite of*,⁵⁹ but rather *because of*, its language that we consider it to be an exilic/post-exilic product.

APPENDIX

Some other peculiar expressions employed in the Prose Tale, though being definitely non-classical, were not included in the main discussion above since they do not seem to exist in post-exilic Hebrew. Two of these will be mentioned here:

I. A common mourning practice in antiquity was the placing of dust (עפר) upon the head. This practice is described in detail in Josh VII 6, Ez. XXVII 30, Lam. II 10 and Job II 12. However, it is only in Job that the root זרק = "throw" is employed in such a context: "the rite of putting dust on the head is nowhere else expressed by this vb.; the usual phrase is . . . העלה" (DRIVER-GRAY, *op. cit.* [*supra*, n. 9], Part II, p. 15. In 2 Sam XIII 19 (אפר) לקח is employed. Cf. also Ugaritic (עפר . . . לקדקה) יצק — Text 67VI, 14–16 [C.H. GORDON, *UT*, p. 180]). To this excellent observation it may be added, that in the Aramaic translations the parallel Aramaic (and Syriac) expression is ארמי עפרא (Aram. רמה = Heb. זרק). Cf. the Syriac to Josh. VII 6, Ez. XXVII 30 and Lam II 10 mentioned above as well as to Neh. IX 1 (though, curiously enough, not in the case of Job II 12). Compare also the Hebrew text of 2 Sam XV 32 ונאדמה על ראשו, where the verb "put" is only implied, with the syriac and Targ. Jon., where it is explicitly expressed by means of רמה: (י) ש בר(י) א/י ועפרא רמא/י (Cf. also Targ. Jon. to 1 Sam IV 12, 2 Sam I 2 and Syriac to 2 Sam XIII 19). We suggest, therefore, to regard the non-classical זרק עפר as a further "calque" (Cf. *Supra*, n. 24), resulting from the Aram. expression ארמי עפרא. Whether or not the writer of Job's Prose Tale was influenced by Ex. IX 8; 10 — which supplies the only biblical parallel for זרק . . . השמימה used in Job II 12 (DRIVER-GRAY, *ibid.*) — the basic argument is not affected. In creating the unique expression זרק עפר, the author of the

⁵⁸ H.H. ROWLEY, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 54), p. 197.

⁵⁹ R. GORDIS, *op. cit.* (*Supra*, n. 6), p. 163.

Prose Tale did two things: (1) he sharply deviated from the phraseology prevalent in BH (with which, allegedly, he was thoroughly familiar and which, certainly, he was eager to follow); (2) he strikingly approached the phrasaeology prevalent in Aramaic.

II. In Job XLII 8 the punishment imposed by God on Job's friends is strangely referred to in terms of עֲשֵׂה נְבִלָה — an idiom common in classical BH, but invariably with a strong negative connotation ("do a thing disgraceful according to Israel's standard" — *BDB*, p. 615. This is, probably, why the Septuagint takes עֲשֵׂה נְבִלָה in Job as (עֲשֵׂה כִלָּה). The best explanation to reckon with the anomalous meaning implied by Job XLII 8 seems to be supplied by Aram. קִלְנָא: קִלְנָא — which indeed renders in the Aram. Targumim BH נְבִלָה — means both "disgrace" (= BH נְבִלָה) and "shame" (= BH קִלְיוֹן). Thus Job XLII 8 ... עֲשֵׂה נְבִלָה עִם, being influenced by Aram. קִלְנָא (Cf. *Supra*, n. 24), means "to do shame to" (Cf. Gen. XXVI 29 ... עֲשֵׂה רָעָה עִם = ... עֲשֵׂה רָעָה לְ = "to do hurt to").

If we are right in our interpretation of עֲשֵׂה נְבִלָה and זָרַק עֵפֶר, then the author of the Prose Tale may be denounced for his loss of "Sprachgefühl" for genuine classical BH — which is rather surprising for a pre-exilic writer. However, in order to advance the argumentation that these two Aramaisms are in fact *post*-classical — not just *non*-classical — elements in BH, it would be desirable to follow one of two procedures:

- 1) To adduce parallels for the Aramaisms under investigation from late Hebrew sources (which we were unable to reveal);
- 2) To evaluate these Aramaisms only after the lateness of the Prose Tale has been established on grounds other than זָרַק עֵפֶר and עֲשֵׂה נְבִלָה (for instance, relying on the analysis carried out above, on pages 19–30). Only after it has been agreed that the Prose Tale is written in LBH, may, perhaps, these two Aramaisms be regarded as late. ("The Chronological Significance of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew," *IEJ* 18, 1968, pp. 234–403).

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