bedside chats with Balaam, the Samaritan Pentateuch adds $mal'\bar{a}k$ before ' $e\bar{l}o\bar{h}\hat{l}m$ in Num 22:20. No such addition is made in verse 12, at the first nightly chat, but there the verb used to describe the deity's action is 'mr, "to speak," while in v. 20 it is the more physical bw', "to come." The theological concern seems to be with their explicit physical presence. SP Numbers 23:4 has the same addition of $mal'\bar{a}k$ where the verb is $m\bar{s}$, "to find," or "meet," and SP Num 23:5 has the mal'ak YHWH putting the deity's word in the mouth of Balaam. The $mal'\bar{a}k$ of Num 23:4 is also found at Qumran in 4QNum^b, and the spacing suggests it also appeared in that manuscript at Num 22:20 and 23:5.

This interpolative practice flourished in the Targumim, which also added other personified attributes of deity to mediate divine presence and activity. Targum Onqelos adds "messenger" at Exod 4:24 in agreement with LXX. Targumim Pseudo-Jonathan and Neophiti edit Jacob's encounter at Peniel in Gen 32:31 to read, "I have seen messengers of the Lord." Targum Pseudo-Jonathan also amends Eve's famous claim in Gen 4:1 to have conceived a man with YHWH, rendering, "I have got a man from the messenger of the Lord." Many of our scenes show textual instability in the versions, as well. In MT's version of the Hagar episode in Gen 16, the *mal'ak YHWH* appears in verses 7, 9, 10, and 11. The Septuagint adds an additional reference in verse 8, but the Vulgate lacks the references in verses 10 and 11. In the Vulgate's version of Exod 3:2, there is no messenger; only the Lord appears to Moses. In paraphrasing Exod 3, Josephus only mentions a "voice" calling Moses by name. In Gen 22, Josephus lacks all references to a messenger; there it is only the deity calling out to Abraham.

As with so many theories in biblical studies, James Barr (1960, 33) seems to be responsible for the most frequently quoted criticism of the interpolation theory: "The introduction of the mal'ak is too extremely spasmodic, and leaves too many fierce anthropomorphisms untouched, for its purpose to be understood in this way. The voice and presence of the mal'ak alternates in a number of stories so much with the voice and appearing of Yahweh that it is hardly possible to understand his place as a substitute for the latter." This concern hardly undermines the theory, however. First, the concern is not anthropomorphism, but the deity's immediate physical presence. Second, there is no reason to alter or add to every single verse in order to massage a text's interpretation when the hearer/reader needs little more than a contextualizing suggestion, particularly when it resolves or—if the ambiguity theory identifies the right rhetorical goals—muddies a theologically thorny reading. In Gen 32:24–32, Jacob's sparring partner is nowhere called a

functions as a sort of prosecutor. In 2 Sam 24:1, YHWH is described as influencing David to conduct a census of Israel and Judah. The much later version of this pericope preserved in 1 Chr 21:1 describes the $\dot{s}\bar{a}t\bar{a}n$ as the agent of influence. The insertion of the $\dot{s}\bar{a}t\bar{a}n$ here protects YHWH from the implications of engaging in what was considered inappropriate behavior.