

argued that the messenger of YHWH's reification of the divine presence was rationalized in Exod 23:20–21 via the indwelling of the *šēm*, a traditional vehicle for divine agency that would also be employed by D/Dtr to serve their own rhetorical ends regarding the divine presence. By virtue of possessing the divine name, the messenger may not only be referred to by YHWH's own name—thus the first-, second-, and third-person references in the interpolated passages to the messenger as YHWH—but they may also exercise YHWH's own power and authority. In this sense, both the identity theory and the representation theory approximate some of the rhetorical goals of the messenger's function, but are off target regarding the governing conceptual framework. The ambiguity theory also likely accounts at least in part for the rhetorical salience of the messenger, as an additional layer of ambiguity was no doubt helpful for those authorities who were concerned to keep the community from getting too firm a grasp on the nature of deity, or too comfortable with the deity's immanence. The utility of that ambiguity also likely contributed to the survival of the discordant texts that seemed to conflate the identity of the messenger with the identity of YHWH. There would have been no compelling need to resolve a tension that so well served the interests of those authorities.