

the temple), then the people standing and—after Ezra blesses YHWH—replying “Amen! Amen!” and bowing down to worship YHWH. Describing this scene, Lisbeth Fried (2013, 294) comments, “the torah scroll has become a manifestation or an epiphany of the god Yhwh, and a medium through which God may be accessed.”<sup>21</sup>

The recognition of these presencing capabilities is reflected in the later texts that deploy them in the democratization of access to the deity's agency through the integration of the law not with stelai—which were no longer acceptable—but with practices associated with inscribed amulets. Exodus 13:9, 16 and Deut 6:6–9; 11:18–21 (usually understood as Achaemenid period compositions) prescribe discussing, reciting, and meditating on specific passages from the law (since identified as Exod 13:1–10, 11–16; Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21; cf. Cohn 2008, 33–48). The texts in Exodus and Deuteronomy would come to be understood to prescribe the materialization of the identified texts on small scrolls that were to be a sign upon the hands of the people, an emblem between their eyes, and were to be written on doorposts and gates.<sup>22</sup> Appropriating the mode of divine presencing found in the Ketef Hinnom scrolls, these passages of the law that repeated the divine name (and also included the deity's own first-person speech) were to be inscribed on small scrolls and enclosed within small containers that were worn on the body (*tafillîn*), but could also be placed, much like stelai, at the threshold of the home and perhaps the city (*mezûzôt*).<sup>23</sup> The words of the law here are more salient—as they were to be recited—but as with the stelai of Deut 27, it is their material presence that is most important (Schaper 2007, 14–16). While cultic leaders in earlier periods sought to restrict access to the deity's presence and the private production of presencing media, the law provided a new means of expanding that access without compromising their structuring of power. The integration of specific texts of the law with more traditional small-scale media allowed those leaders to subjugate that media to their own authority and refocus

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<sup>21</sup> She also notes that in Ezra 7:10, the infinitive construct *lidrôš* is used in connection with the *tôrât YHWH*. As noted above in chapter 4, that infinitive construct is used overwhelmingly to refer to “seeking an oracle from a god, either directly or by means of a medium or prophet” (Fried 2013, 293).

<sup>22</sup> These practices are not clearly attested in the periods of these text's composition, and so it may not have been the intention of the authors and editors to institutionalize them (cf. Cohn 2008, 49–53). The gaps in the data are too numerous to reach firm conclusions.

<sup>23</sup> Note Gabriel Levy's (2012, 105) comments on the *tafillîn*: “One is literally binding the texts, and by extension the name of God, onto his arm. This aspect of being able to touch the text, by extension the name—is what makes writing so powerful. So it is the extensional feature of spoken and written language—the fact that it is materially present in the world, and then can interact with the higher mental functions of meaning and reference—that make is [*sic*] so compelling in practice.”