

conceptualizations of name and presence (e.g., de Vaux 1967), or have argued for the relevance of the Akkadian antecedent without denying that D and Dtr are overturning existing conceptualizations of that presencing (McBride 1969).<sup>26</sup> Still others have continued to defend both the “dwell” reading and Dtr’s reformation of the divine presence (Mettinger 1982, 41–46, 56–59). Some see no reformation taking place, but just a nuancing of the same concept of divine presence found elsewhere (McConville 1979; Wilson 1995; Knafl 2014, 99–109, 184–87).

In addition to the many stelai that were in use around Israel and Judah that did have or could have had inscribed or painted divine names, votives and other offerings set within sacred precincts could also include the names of human persons seeking favor through the presence of their names before the deities. Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme (2003) interrogates second-century BCE Aramaic votive inscriptions from Mount Gerizim that include the petition, “Remembered be PN before DN.” According to Gudme, the goal of including the personal name would be to catalyze the invocation of the names by visitors and passers-by, thereby ensuring the deity’s remembrance of the individual. I would suggest this and other conventions that link one’s name to their presence and interests flatly undermine the argument for the secularization of the name.

The most salient approach to “Name Theology” for this discussion is that of Sommer (2009, 65–66), who firmly sides with the reformative reading. He concludes that,

According to the deuteronomic Name theology, then, the *šem* is not God, it is not a part of God, and it is not an extension of God. The *šem* is merely a name in the sense that Western thinkers regard names: a symbol, a verbal indicator that points toward something outside itself.... the deuteronomists used the term *šem* not to endorse or even modify its more common theological use but to deflate it.

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<sup>26</sup> See also Hundley 2009, 542, citing Van Seters 2003, 871–72. I would agree with Hundley that Richter’s argument regarding semantic content may not be off target, but that does not necessarily preclude presencing. Even the use of the formula in the Akkadian literature could have a presencing dimension. William Hallo (1962, 6), for instance, insists the inscription of one’s name functioned “to proclaim one’s ownership of, or presence in, the inscribed object or place” (quoted in Richter 2002, 131). A good critique of Hallo and Richter by William Morrow (2010) concludes, “common to all of these interpretations surveyed is the inference that YHWH sets his name in the place he chooses in order to promote his divine presence and his claims to sovereignty” (381). Morrow posits that the “Assyrianism” of the specific form of the phrase is a product of “hybridity” or “colonial mimicry”: “In the very act of mimicking the dominating culture’s linguistic forms, there is an effort to make an ideological expression that serves the interests of the colonized, not the colonizer” (382).