

ISRAELIAN HEBREW FEATURES IN GENESIS 49

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No other biblical scholar and no other chapter of the Bible are as closely associated with each other as Stanley Gevirtz and Genesis 49. Through a life long series of articles devoted to this poem, our lamented colleague furthered our understanding of its many enigmas. My own research has followed closely upon Stanley's work in at least two specific areas. The first is the pun in biblical literature, for which Stanley had a unique appreciation,¹ and which I too have discussed in a minor way.²

The second is the question of a northern dialect of ancient Hebrew. This has been a major enterprise of mine for the last five years.³ After I had begun this work, I received two of Stanley's last articles, and it was gratifying to see that he too had moved in this direction.⁴ Most striking was his and my independent coinage of the term "Israelian Hebrew" (IH) based on H. L. Ginsberg's introduction of the term

¹See most importantly S. Gevirtz, "Of Patriarchs and Puns: Joseph at the Fountain, Jacob at the Ford," *HUCA* 46 (1975): 33–54.

²G. A. Rendsburg, "Bilingual Wordplay in the Bible," *VT* 38 (1988): 354–357.

³See G. A. Rendsburg, "The Northern Origin of 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam. 23, 1–7)," *Biblica* 69 (1988): 113–121; idem, "Additional Notes on 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam. 23, 1–7)," *Biblica* 70 (1989): 403–408; idem, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); idem, "Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew," in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (ed. W. Bodine; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992): 65–88; and idem, "The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, , 1992): 225–240.

⁴S. Gevirtz, "Of Syntax and Style in the 'Late Biblical Hebrew'—'Old Canaanite' Connection," *JANES* 18 (1986): 25–29; and idem, "Asher in the Blessing of Jacob (Genesis xlix 20)," *VT* 37 (1987): 154–163.

“Israelian” in his book *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism*.⁵ I already had completed several of the works listed above⁶ in which I use this term, when I received Stanley’s posthumously published article in which he used the same term.⁷ I was overjoyed when the words “Israelian Hebrew” leaped off the page and struck my eye.

With this as background, I dedicate this contribution to the memory of a man who embodied the concept of the gentleman and scholar. Stanley was kind and wise, decent and learned, always interested and always interesting.

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 49 has come down to us with an external unity, but as almost all scholars have noted, the individual sayings concerning the individual tribes originate as independent compositions. Nahum Sarna’s comment is emblematic of this position:

In origin, the collection of aphorisms about the tribes is not a unity, and no inner thread of logic binds the diverse elements together. The individual tribal traditions embedded in the poetry are undoubtedly independent of each other and relate to widely separate and discrete situations.⁸

Almost without doubt, the poem’s final redaction was Judahite,⁹ but since the individual poems originated in tribal territories throughout the land of Israel, it will not be surprising to find IH features in sayings concerning the northern tribes.

⁵H. L. Ginsberg, *The Israelian Heritage of Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1982): 1–2.

⁶See N 3.

⁷Gevirtz, “Of Syntax and Style” (N 4): 25.

⁸N. M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989): 331.

⁹This holds for all of Genesis, since throughout the book there are reflections of the Davidic-Solomonic empire. See B. Mazar, “The Historical Background of the Book of Genesis,” *JNES* 28 (1969): 73–83; G. A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986): 107–120; and idem, “David and His Circle in Genesis xxxviii,” *VT* 36 (1986): 438–446.

v 14. *gārem*

The word *gerem* (pausal *gārem*) “bone” in v 14 appears in the Issachar poem.¹⁰ Elsewhere in the Bible it occurs only in northern compositions: Prov 17:22, 25:15, Job 40:18.¹¹ With the derived meaning “self” the word also occurs in 2 Kgs 9:13 in a story concerning the Israelian king Jehu.¹² Moreover, the cognate *garmā*’ is the standard word for “bone” in Aramaic.¹³ The dictates of dialect geography teach us that Aramaic and IH will share more isoglosses than Aramaic and Judahite Hebrew (JH = the standard dialect of the Bible), and this is one

¹⁰I do not accept the view of earlier scholars, including our departed colleague, who believed that *gārem* must be emended. See, e.g., S. Feigin, “*Ḥamôr Gārîm—Castrated Ass*,” *JNES* 5 (1946): 230–233; and S. Gevirtz, “The Issachar Oracle in the Testament of Jacob,” *Eretz-Israel* 12 (1975): 104*–105*. My approach, stated elsewhere (e.g., Rendsburg, *Psalms* [N 3]: 16–17), is to work with the Masoretic Text and to avoid emendation. I wholeheartedly endorse the statement of A. Hurvitz (*A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel* [Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982]: 19) that “a linguistic study whose central purpose is to seek facts and avoid conjectures, should base itself on *actual texts*—difficult though they may be—rather than depend on *reconstructed texts*.”

¹¹On the northern provenance of Proverbs see W. F. Albright, “Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom,” in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup 3; ed. M. Noth and D. W. Thomas; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960): 1–15; Ginsberg (N 5): 36; and Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (AOAT 210; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984): 440 and n. 6.

Job is either a northern book (see D. N. Freedman, “Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job,” *Eretz-Israel* 9 [1969]: 35–44) and/or style-switching is in effect (see S. A. Kaufman, “The Classification of the North West Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic Languages [Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1988]: 41–57, especially 54–55).

¹²The narratives relating the history of the northern kingdom include numerous IH features. See C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903): 208–209; and M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings* (AB 11; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988): 9.

¹³L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953): 1062; M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London: Luzac, 1903): 1.270; and M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990): 136. Note as well the rendering of BH *šm* by Aramaic *gm* in 11QtgJob 5:5 (= MT Job 21:24) and 16:7 (= MT Job 30:17); see M. Sokoloff, *The Targum to Job from Qumran Cave XI* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1974): 201. See also *gmnyk* in Cowley 71:15 (A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C.* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923]).

such instance.¹⁴ In sum, distribution of *gerem* in the Bible and the cognate support of Aramaic point to this word having been characteristic of IH, in contrast with the JH lexeme 'ešem "bone." It is, therefore, not surprising to encounter *gerem* in the Issachar portion of Genesis 49.

v 15 *nā'ēmāh*

In a previous study I already have discussed at length the northern associations of the root *n'm* "good."¹⁵ I limit my remarks here to a summary of the material. The root *n'm* is the standard word for "good" in Phoenician and Ugaritic.¹⁶ In the Bible it appears 30 times; at least 22 of these occurrences and perhaps as many as 26 of them are in northern contexts. Thus, as was the case with *gerem* above, the data from the cognate languages and the distribution of this root in the Bible serve as converging lines of evidence to adduce the fact that *n'm* "good" was an IH feature. Accordingly, it is not unexpected to find *nā'ēmāh* in Genesis 49 in the Issachar poem.

v 21 'imrê

The word 'imrê in v 21 in the Naphtali line of the poem has been translated alternatively as "words" (*JPSV*), "fawns" (*RSV*), "boughs" (*NEB*), etc. The correct meaning is "lambs," as Gevirtz demonstrated beyond doubt.¹⁷ Cognates of this word are Phoenician 'mr,¹⁸ Ugaritic *imr*,¹⁹ Aramaic 'immērā²⁰ and further afield Akkadian *immeru*.²¹ I

¹⁴For a brief discussion with several examples see C. Rabin, "The Emergence of Classical Hebrew," in *The Age of the Monarchies: Culture and Society* (World History of the Jewish People; ed. A. Malamat; Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1979): 293 n. 4; and C. Rabin, "Leshonam shel 'Amos ve-Hoshea'," in *Iyyunim be-Sefer Tre-'Asar* (ed. B. Z. Luria; Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1981): 120.

¹⁵Rendsburg, "Additional Notes" (N 3); see also Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 30-31.

¹⁶R. S. Tomback, *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978): 215-217; and C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: PBI, 1967): 445.

¹⁷S. Gevirtz, "Naphtali in 'The Blessing of Jacob'," *JBL* 103 (1984): 513-521.

¹⁸Tomback (N 16): 24.

¹⁹Gordon (N 16): 361.

²⁰Early occurrences are Fakhariyeh 20 (see A. A. Assaf, "Die Statue des HDYŠ'Y, König von Guzana," *MDOG* 113 [1981] 13, 19) and Sefire I:A:23, II:A:2 (see J. A.

conclude, therefore, that the word was at home in the dialects and languages used to the north of Israel, and that it was current in the Hebrew of the tribe of Naphtali as well. The present usage in v 21 is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible. Thus, **'immār*, the presumed singular absolute of *'imrê*, is the IH word for "lamb," in opposition to *kebeš/kešeb*, the JH or standard biblical vocable. It is noteworthy that cognates to this latter word are to the south, e.g., Arabic *kabš*,²² South Arabian *kabš*.²³ Probably we are to reckon with two Proto-Semitic words for "lamb," a northern lexeme *'mr* and a southern lexeme *kbš*.²⁴ The meeting ground for these two words was the land of Canaan, with the Bible attesting to both.

v 21 *šāper*

Several scholars have attempted to explain *šāper* in v 21 in light of Akkadian *supūru* "sheepfold," especially in light of the resulting equivalence of Hebrew *'imrê šāper* and Akkadian *immir supūri* "sheep of the

Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* [Rome: PBI, 1967]: 43). See also C.-F. Jean and J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des inscriptions sémitiques de l'ouest* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965): 18; K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984): 515; Jastrow (N 13) 1.51; and Sokoloff, *Dictionary* (N 13): 50.

²¹CAD 7 [I, J]: 129; and AHW I: 378.

²²H. Wehr and J. M. Cowan, *Arabic-English Dictionary* (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Languages, 1976): 811. *kabš* actually means "ram."

²³See, e.g., T. M. Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987): 202.

²⁴Syriac *kebšā'* is very rare; only a few citations are given by R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879): 1.1675. And in any case it is a loanword from Arabic, as indicated by the *š* instead of expected *s*; see S. Fränkel, *Aramäische Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1886): 109.

Akkadian *kabsu* also is very rare and is attested only from the Neo-Assyrian period onward; see CAD 8 [K]: 23; and AHW I: 418. Presumably it was borrowed from Arabs on the desert fringe. As is well known, Assyrians rendered the /š/ phoneme of West Semitic languages with the *s*-sign in the cuneiform script; see H. Tadmor, "The Campaign of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," *JCS* 12 (1958): 39–40; S. Page, "A Stela of Adad-Nirari III and Nergal-Eres from Tell al Rimah," *Iraq* 30 (1968): 148; and A. Millard, "Assyrian Royal Names in Biblical Hebrew," *JSS* 21 (1976): 4. Alternatively, though less likely, Akkadian *kabsu* could have been borrowed from Hebrew or another Northwest Semitic dialect in which the phoneme /š/ was preserved. For Akkadian *s*-signs representing Hebrew /š/, note *Sir-'i-Ja-a-a* = *yīsrā'ēl*, *Sa-ni-ru* = *śānîr*, *Ma-sa'* = *maššā'* etc. See S. Parpola, *Neo-Assyrian Toponyms* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970): 304, 312; and I. Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982): 218.

fold.”²⁵ This is undoubtedly an attractive proposal, yet I demur in favor of the traditional derivation of *šaper* from the root *špr* “good, pleasing, beautiful.” First, although there are a few examples of Akkadian *s* = Hebrew *š*, the correspondence is atypical. Second, cognates to Akkadian *supūru* are not attested in Northwest Semitic, whereas *špr* “good, pleasing, beautiful” is well attested in this branch, specifically in Aramaic (see below). Accordingly, I see no reason to depart from the accepted meaning of *šāper* in v 21 as “beauty.”

Elsewhere in the Bible the root *špr* occurs in Ps 16:6, Job 26:13.²⁶ The former of these is in a clear instance of a northern psalm,²⁷ and the latter has northern affinities as well.²⁸ The root is slightly more common in Mishnaic Hebrew,²⁹ which represents the spoken dialect specifically of northern Israel.³⁰ Beyond Hebrew the root is extremely common in Aramaic; it appears at Sefire,³¹ five times in Daniel,³² and frequently in later Aramaic.³³ It may also appear in Ugaritic.³⁴ The combination of regularity in Aramaic and attestation in northern texts such as the blessing concerning Naphtali points to the root *špr* being a characteristic of IH.

²⁵F. I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970): 44, 123; and Gevirtz, “Naphtali” (N 17): 516–517.

²⁶I exclude the noun *šaprîrô* “his canopy (?)” in Jer 43:10, which may or may not be related to our root.

²⁷Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 28–33. See already M. Dahood, *Psalms I* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965): 87; and Avishur (N 11): 461.

²⁸See above (N 11). It is possible that *šprāh* in Job 26:13 is to be disassociated from *špr* “good, pleasing, beautiful,” in which case only Ps 16:6 remains in addition to Gen 49:21.

²⁹Jastrow (N 13): 2.1619–1620.

³⁰Rendsburg, “Galilean Background” (N 3):

³¹The word is used in Sefire III:29; see Fitzmyer, *Sefire* (N 20): 100–101, 120, 190.

³²Kochler and Baumgartner (N 13): 1134.

³³J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1* (Rome: PBI, 1971): 122–123; Jean and Hoftijzer (N 20): 317; Beyer (N 20): 717–718; Jastrow (N 13): 2.1619–1620; and Sokoloff, *Dictionary* (N 13): 563–564. Note as well that *špr* is still used in Aramaic. See, e.g., G. Krotkoff, *A Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Kurdistan* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1982): 149, 169.

³⁴The word *špr* appears in RS 24.252:10 in a broken context with a “sens indéterminé”; thus C. Virolleaud, “Les nouveaux textes mythologiques et liturgiques de Ras Shamra (XXIV^c Campagne, 1961),” *Ugaritica V* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1968): 555. For an attempt to reconstruct the line, see Gevirtz, “Naphtali” (N 17): 516.

v 22 *pōrāt*

I am not overly concerned here with the exact meaning of *pōrāt* in the Joseph blessing. Gevirtz accomplished more than could be expected of any scholar investigating this word, and I am happy to accept his translation of “she-ass.”³⁵ Instead, I would like to concentrate on the feminine singular nominal ending -*āt* in this word. As is well known, this ending occurs in most of the Canaanite dialects (JH and Deir ‘Alla are two exceptions) as well as in Aramaic in nouns derived from IIIw/y roots.³⁶

The Bible has quite a large number of feminine singular nouns ending in -*āt* (in absolute or construct state) and -*at* (in the absolute state). Most are to be explained as northernisms; only a limited number are to be explained otherwise (see below).³⁷ The examples occurring in northern contexts are as follows. *šip‘at* “multitude” in 2 Kgs 9:17 appears in a story about the northern kings Jehoram and Jehu and is actually placed in the mouth of an Israelian scout. Jeremiah utilizes the words *yitrat* “abundance” (48:36) and *təhillāt* “praise” (49:25Q) in speeches addressed to Moab and Damascus respectively; thus he has colored his native Anathoth dialect to reflect the speech of his addressees.³⁸ *mə‘at* “hundred” in Qoh 8:12 is one of many pieces of evidence pointing to the northern origin of this book.³⁹ Five examples appear in the northern psalms: Ps 10:2 *ga‘awat* “haughtiness,” Ps 16:5 *mənāt* “portion,” Ps 16:6 *naḥlāt* “heritage,” Ps 74:19 *ḥayyat* “beast,” and Ps 132:4 *šənat* “sleep.”⁴⁰ In addition, the musical instruments *māḥlāt* in Ps 53:1, 88:1, and *nəgīnat*

³⁵Gevirtz (N 1): 35–40.

³⁶W. R. Garr, *Dialect Geography in Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B. C. E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985): 59–60, 93–94; and S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag, 1975): 206–207.

³⁷See Rendsburg, “Morphological Evidence” (N 3).

³⁸I call this “addressee-switching,” a form of “code-switching.” See my forthcoming study: “The Strata of Biblical Hebrew.,” *JNSL*.

³⁹The northern provenance of Qoheleth was first proposed by M. Dahood in several studies: “Canaanite-Phoenician Influence in Qoheleth,” *Biblica* 33 (1952): 30–52, 191–221; “The Language of Qoheleth,” *CBQ* 14 (1952): 227–232; and “The Phoenician Background of Qoheleth,” *Biblica* 47 (1966): 264–282. In some of the particulars, he overstated his case, but the overall conclusion generally is correct. The possibility of northern influence in Qoheleth is entertained by D. C. Fredericks (*Qoheleth’s Language* [Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988]), though ultimately rejected. The best recent study is J. R. Davila, “Qoheleth and Northern Hebrew,” in E. M. Cook, ed., *Sopher Mahir: Northwest Semitic Studies Presented to Stanislav Segert = MAARAV 5–6* (1990): 69–87. See also Rendsburg, “Galilean Background” (N 3).

⁴⁰Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 23–24, 30, 71, 87.

in Ps 61:1 may have been borrowed from Canaanites who preserved the *-at* suffix. Moreover, the evidence from toponyms which retain *-āt/-at* is germane, in that they are concentrated mainly in the north: two in Asher (*ḥelqat*, *libnāt*), three in Naphtali (*ḥammat*, *ʿānāt*, *raqqat*), one in Issachar (*ʿānāḥārāt*), one in Zebulun (*dābrat*), one in Ephraim (*mikmētāt*), and two in Transjordan (*ṭabbāt*, *qānāt*).

Other forms with the ending *-āt/-at* are to be explained by different means. The vocables *moḥḏrāt* "morrow" (25x) and *rabbat* "much" (7x) are adverbs where the ending *-āt/-at* was felt to have an adverbial function and thus did not shift to *-āh*.⁴¹ The form *zimrāt* "might" in Exod 15:2 appears in an early poem dating presumably from a time before the shift of *-at* > *-āh*.⁴² Other nouns are borrowings, e.g., *qəṣāt* "end" in Dan 1:2, 1:5, 1:15, 1:18, Neh 7:20, is an Aramaism, and *bārqaṭ* "emerald" in Ezek 28:13 is most likely an Akkadianism (cf. Akkadian *barraqtu*).

In light of this analysis, I am inclined to view *pōrāt* in v 22 as a northern feature. The only other real option is to treat it as an archaic feature à la *zimrāt*, but since Genesis 49 "exhibit[s] numerous forms of standard poetic Hebrew,"⁴³ this is an unlikely explanation.⁴⁴ In sum, IH shared with Phoenician, Ammonite, etc., the retention of *-at* in feminine singular nouns, and *pōrāt* "she-ass" in the blessing to Joseph is an example thereof.

v 23 *baʿālê ḥiṣṣîm*

Gevirtz already compiled the evidence from Phoenician, Ugaritic, and Byblos Amarna to demonstrate that the "double plural" syntagma, with both the *nomen regens* and the *nomen rectum* of a construct chain in the plural, is a northern feature.⁴⁵ In a separate article he noted that *baʿālê ḥiṣṣîm* "masters of arrows" in v 23 within the Joseph poem is

⁴¹J. Blau, "The Parallel Development of the Feminine Ending *-at* in Semitic Languages," *HUCA* 51 (1980): 18.

⁴²On the early date of Exodus 15 see D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972): 153–156. The word *zimrāt* also appears in Isa 12:2, Ps 118:14 in the expression *ʿozzî wəzimrāt yāh*, but one can surmise that it is merely a fossilized form in the three-word phrase which apparently became a byword in ancient Israel.

⁴³Robertson, (N 42): 153–156.

⁴⁴This position of mine alters my statement in Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 23 n. 28.

⁴⁵Gevirtz, "Of Syntax and Style" (N 4): 28–29.

an example of this usage.⁴⁶ Accordingly, there is little for me to add concerning this phrase. But I do take the opportunity to put forward seven other examples of this feature, all from northern Psalms: Ps 29:1 *bənê 'ēlîm* “sons of the gods,” Ps 45:10 *bənôt mēlākîm* “daughters of kings,” Ps 47:10 *nədîbê 'ammîm* “princes of peoples,” Ps 74:13 *rā'šê tannînîm* “heads of the sea monsters,” Ps 77:6 *šənôt 'ōlāmîm* “years of eternities,” Ps 78:49 *mal'ākê rā'îm* “messengers of evils,” Ps 116:9 *'aršôt haḥayyim* “lands of the living.”⁴⁷

v 24 *zərô'ê yādāw*

The phrase *zərô'ê yādāw*, literally “arms of his hands,” in v 24 is another example of the “double plural” syntagma in the Joseph poem. It serves, therefore, as another IH element in the material concerning the northern tribes in Genesis 49.

v 24 *'ābîr ya'āqōb*

The divine epithet *'ābîr ya'āqōb* in v 24 in the Joseph poem occurs in four other places in the Bible.⁴⁸ Two are in the northern composition Psalm 132 (vv 2 and 5).⁴⁹ The remaining two instances are Isa 49:26, 60:16, examples of the reemergence of IH elements in Exilic and post-Exilic texts after the reunion of northern and southern exiles in Mesopotamia.⁵⁰ This distribution points to *'ābîr ya'āqōb* being an IH feature.⁵¹

⁴⁶Gevirtz, “Asher” (N 4): 160.

⁴⁷Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 35, 48, 57, 70, 78, 84.

⁴⁸For a complete discussion of this term see N. M. Sarna, “The Divine Title *'ābîr ya'āqōbh*,” in *Essays on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Dropsie University* (ed. A. I. Katsh and L. Nemoy; Philadelphia: Dropsie University, 1979): 389–396.

⁴⁹On Psalm 132 see Rendsburg, *Psalms* (N 3): 87–90.

⁵⁰C. H. Gordon, “North Israelite Influence on Postexilic Hebrew,” *IEJ* 5 (1955): 85–88; and E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982): 55.

⁵¹This has been suggested previously by J. Schreiner, *Sion-Jerusalem Jahwes Königssitz* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1963): 177–178 n. 17.

SUMMARY

These eight features of IH appear in the poetry devoted to the northern tribes in Genesis 49, specifically the material concerning Issachar, Naphtali, and Joseph. It is striking that there are no IH traits in the sayings concerning the southern tribes (Simeon [and Levi], Judah, Benjamin). In the case of others (Reuben, Zebulun, Dan, Gad, Asher), it is simply a matter of coincidence that IH features are not present.⁵² All of these poems are short, so to some extent it is only by chance that a northern characteristic appears in a saying devoted to a northern tribe. But irrespective of the lack of IH features in the poems of some of the northern tribes, it is still noteworthy that the eight IH features isolated above all appear in the Issachar, Naphtali, and Joseph compositions. The view that the individual poems originated among the individual tribes is strikingly confirmed by the linguistic evidence.

⁵²Through textual emendation, albeit only of the vowels and not of the consonants, Gevirtz ("Asher" [N 4]: 158–159) introduced two IH features in v 20 in the line about Asher. He proposed repointing *šəmənāh* "fat" to *šəmminnāh* "who rations," with both the relative pronoun *še-* and the verb *mnh* "appoint, ration" as northern features.

Similarly, Gevirtz ("The Reprimand of Reuben," *JNES* 30 [1971]: 88–91) suggested the reading *ytr s't = yeter šə'ēt* "pre-eminent in dignity" in v 3 in the Reuben poem, be reread as *ytr rš't* "pre-eminent in authority" on the basis of Phoenician *rš't* in the Karatepe inscription. If this proposal is accepted, then another northernism in Genesis 49 presumably could be counted, though one would expect more isoglosses with Moabite than with Phoenician in the Reuben sub-dialect of IH.