

HURVITZ REDUX: ON THE CONTINUED SCHOLARLY INATTENTION  
TO A SIMPLE PRINCIPLE OF HEBREW PHILOLOGY

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1. *Introduction*

In 1968 Avi Hurvitz wrote a programmatic article on the subject of Aramaisms in BH (Hurvitz 1968). Therein he noted that not every form or lexeme which at first glance looks like an Aramaism can automatically be used to date a specific biblical text to the Persian period and beyond. Clearly, as Hurvitz noted, there is a great increase in the number of Aramaic features in BH during the Persian period (late sixth through to late fourth centuries BCE), as even a surface reading of such books as Esther, Ezra–Nehemiah, and Chronicles demonstrates. But as he also noted, Aramaic (or perhaps better, Aramaic-like) features ‘appear sporadically in earlier texts of the Bible as well’ (Hurvitz 1968: 234).

Such Aramaic-like features (I shall use this term when referring to elements in texts which I deem to be pre-exilic, while reserving the term ‘Aramaism’ for traits which entered Hebrew from Aramaic in the post-exilic period) are to be found in specific settings. These include:

- (a) Words that are part of Hebrew poetic diction, present in poetry ‘because poets normally employ an extensive and recondite vocabulary which naturally makes considerable use of archaisms’ (Driver 1953: 36).
- (b) Words which appear in certain Wisdom texts such as Job and Proverbs, which may have circulated throughout the West Semitic world in Aramaic guise before being adapted by Hebrew writers.
- (c) Words which appear in books or narratives set in northern Israel, whose dialect included features forming isoglosses with Aramaic to the northeast but not with JH to the south.
- (d) Words which occur in stories in which Arameans play a prominent role, and which therefore were employed by the

authors for specific stylistic purposes (see Kaufman 1988: 54-55; Greenfield 1981: 129-30).

We may illustrate each of these with the following examples:

- (a) The roots מלל ('speak'), אהה ('come'), אזל ('go'), נחת ('go down'), חזה ('see'), and so on, forming the basic vocabulary of all Aramaic dialects, occur in the Bible almost without exception in poetry.
- (b) The best instance of proverbial material with Aramaic-like features is Prov. 31.1-9, with forms such as בר ('son', v. 2) and מלכין ('kings', v. 4).
- (c) 2 Kings 15, detailing the reigns of the kings of Israel from Zechariah through Pekah, includes the following features attested more commonly in Aramaic: קבל ('before', v. 10), בני רביעים ('those of the fourth generation', v. 12), ירח ('month', v. 13), מן הטאות ('from the sins', v. 28—with unassimilated *nun*).<sup>1</sup>
- (d) The oracles of Balaam, the prophet from Aram, are filled with Aramaic-like features, for example, מן ארם ('from Aram', Num. 23.7—again, with unassimilated *nun*), יתחשב ('accounted', v. 9) (one expects the niph'al here, but since Aramaic lacks this conjugation and utilizes T-stem forms instead, the author places this form—the only hithpa'el of the root חשב in the Bible—in the mouth of Balaam), רבע ('dust-cloud', v. 10), נמיו ('stretch out', 24.6—with retention of the *yod*), מלכות ('kingdom', v. 7), etc.

There is, of course, overlap between these categories. Thus, since the proverbial material is poetic, an Aramaic-like feature in a particular Wisdom saying belongs to both category (a) and (b). Or, because Arameans frequently interact with Israelians (= members of the kingdom of Israel) in the material recorded in Kings, an Aramaic-like feature in such a setting, such as the word נחתים ('descend' > 'encamp') in 2 Kgs 6.9, may belong to both category (c) and (d).<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the book of Job presents points in common with three categories: (a), (b), and (d). That

1. For detailed discussion of these features, see Rendsburg 2002a: 126-28, 132.

2. Schneidewind and Sivan (1997: 325) considered this example as belonging to category (c). Young (1995) most likely would concur, though his study is limited to examples of unusual linguistic items occurring in speech, whereas נחתים in 2 Kgs 6.9 occurs in third-person narration. Finally, in Rendsburg (2002a: 101-103) I treated this example as belonging to category (d), though I also stated (p. 146) that I am quite willing to see an example such as this as more appropriate for category (c).

is to say, Job is poetry, it is a Wisdom book, and because its geographical setting is the Transjordanian desert fringe, its characters speak a language on the boundary between Canaanite and Aramaic (and Arabian too),<sup>3</sup> though of these I see category (d) as most operative.

In addition to Hurvitz's four categories, I would posit the following additional three contexts in which Aramaic-like features may appear:

- (e) In addition to the 'obvious' cases in category (c) above, sometimes we encounter a cluster of Aramaic-like features in compositions which do not disclose a northern setting per se, but which are to be explained as IH texts nonetheless. Such texts usually exhibit other IH features unrelated to Aramaic, to wit, lexical and/or grammatical traits better known from Phoenician and/or Ugaritic. Moreover, with no overriding Persian-period evidence in such texts, one should assume a pre-exilic date for these compositions. Prime examples of such texts include the various psalms treated in my book *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Rendsburg 1990b), among them Psalm 116 to be discussed further below.
- (f) Instances of addressee-switching, that is to say, prophetic speeches to the foreign nations, especially those which spoke Aramaic, which in classical prophetic times, the eighth–sixth centuries BCE included not only Aram, but also Assyria and Babylonia. This phenomenon, which is closely related to category (d) above, will explain the presence of such forms as יְהַמְיוּן ('they roar', with retention of the *yod*) and כְּבִירִים ('great, strong, mighty'), both in Isa. 17.12 within the pronouncement addressed to Damascus and with possible or probable reference to Assyria.<sup>4</sup>
- (g) Occasional instances in which lexemes more characteristic of Aramaic than of Hebrew are invoked by authors for the purposes of alliteration, especially in prose texts—for in poetic texts we might have merely another case of category (a) above. An excellent example is the use of the root מַלַּל ('speak') in Gen.

3. If one accedes to the view of Freedman (1969) that the dominant *defectiva* spelling in the book of Job demonstrates Phoenician influence over a northern Israelite writer, then category (c) would be operative as well. I, for one, am not convinced by Freedman's proposal.

4. For a brief comment on the former, see Rendsburg 1990b: 42. For a treatment of the latter, along with other uses of כְּבִיר in the Bible, see Rendsburg 1992d.

21.7, the only instance of this vocable in a BH prose text, invoked by the author to produce the sound effect with the root מוּל ('circumcise') in v. 4 and the root גּמַל ('wean') in v. 8 (twice).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the noun יָרַחִים ('months') is employed in Exod. 2.2, instead of the much more common and indeed SBH synonym חֲדָשִׁים, to enhance the aural nexus with בַּחֲמֶר וַתַּחֲמֶרָה ('and she smeared it with pitch') in v. 3, with a further echo heard in וַתַּחֲמַל ('and she took pity') in v. 6.

The first four settings delineated above—laid out in the aforementioned Hurvitz article (Hurvitz 1968), developed by several scholars since 1968 (e.g. Kaufman 1988), and reiterated by Hurvitz on several occasions during the intervening 35 years (e.g. Hurvitz 1996a<sup>6</sup>)—along with the additional three settings that I have described, together create a comprehensive picture of the inter-relationship between Hebrew and Aramaic. One would expect that all scholars would recognize and accept this picture, especially the four categories presented by Hurvitz, since his article has become a classic over the years. Such, however, is not the case. Instead, as the following will illustrate, one is surprised to find how often this simple principle of Hebrew philology embodied by Hurvitz's approach (with or without my contributions) is ignored.

## 2. *The Rush to Late-Dating*

In the recent decades, as is well known, there has been a rush among scholars to date virtually the entire biblical canon to the Persian period. The ideological underpinnings of this movement are manifest.<sup>7</sup> In my reading of this literature—from the pens of such people as Niels Peter Lemche, Thomas L. Thompson, and Keith W. Whitelam—I have been struck as to how infrequently, if ever, these individuals invoke the evidence of language.<sup>8</sup> The reasons for this are clear: the linguistic

5. The oddity of the root מַלַּל ('speak') in Gen. 21.7 triggered the attention of rabbinic commentators as well (*Ber. R.* 53.9; Rashi) though naturally he offered a totally different explanation: the *gematria* of מַלַּל is 100, equaling Abraham's age at this point in the story. My thanks to my son David E. Rendsburg for bringing this comment by Rashi to my attention.

6. An English version of this article appears in the present volume.

7. See the convenient summary and critique of the movement by Dever (1998). A more recent and more comprehensive treatment is Dever (2001).

8. Philip R. Davies typically is mentioned in the same breath as Lemche,

evidence, in line with the above outline, contradicts the effort to shift the date of clearly pre-exilic compositions to the post-exilic period. Accordingly, those involved in this movement simply ignore the evidence. This is true not only of the aforementioned individuals, who are the most public figures in the minimalist movement, but also of others who have followed suit.<sup>9</sup>

One can respond to these studies in general terms, as Hurvitz has done recently (Hurvitz 1997a; 1999; 2000a; 2001),<sup>10</sup> but (1) it is difficult to present linguistic facts to dispute a case which does not utilize linguistic evidence, and (2) it is unlikely that those who ignore linguistic evidence will be convinced by an argument that utilizes the testimony of language. Accordingly, the present article will not respond to the silent approach invoked by Lemche *et al.*, but instead will offer a response to selected other essays which have utilized linguistic data in their work. In general, these essays are devoid of the kind of ideological argumentation at the heart of the minimalist movement, though their ultimate conclusions are similar. That is to say, they too attempt to shift the date of texts traditionally assigned by the majority of scholars to the pre-exilic period to the period of Persian rule.

I already have treated two such attempts in a recent article entitled ‘Some False Leads in the Identification of Late Biblical Hebrew Texts: The Cases of Genesis 24 and 1 Samuel 2.27-36’ (Rendsburg 2002b). The first part of this article responded to an attempt by Alexander Rofé to view the many Aramaic-like features in Genesis 24 as evidence of the late date of that chapter.<sup>11</sup> Rofé was absolutely correct to identify and isolate these

Thompson, and Whitelam; but Davies at least has tried to deal with the linguistic evidence (Davies 1992: 102-105; see also his contribution to the present volume), even if I disagree with his approach and assumptions.

9. For example, in his monograph on Exod. 15, considered by most scholars to be the oldest piece of Hebrew literature in our possession, M.L. Brenner (1991) argued for a Persian-period dating of this poem, but with no real linguistic argument to support his claim. Brenner referred to the work of earlier scholars (e.g. A. Bender and F. Foresti) who claimed to have identified ‘a series of Aramaisms’ in Exod. 15 (Brenner 1991: 3), but he did not provide the evidence in detail. Furthermore, when Brenner attempted to rely on linguistic evidence, the analysis was quite weak. For example, he asserted that *מְצוּלָה* (‘depths’) in v. 5 is a LBH feature, because it appears ‘11 times outside the Song and never before the exile’ (p. 95), thereby asking the reader to accept at face value that texts such as Mic. 7.19, Pss. 68.23(!); 69.3, 16; 88.7, are late.

10. See also Wright 1998.

11. Rofé’s treatment appeared in three versions, in Hebrew (Rofé 1976), in Italian

features, but whereas he viewed them as true Aramaisms, that is, the result of linguistic influence during the Persian period, I explained them, to use the term above, as Aramaic-like features employed by the author of Genesis 24 to provide an Aramaic coloring for a story set in Aram. Among the relevant traits in this chapter, note the expression אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם ('God of Heaven', vv. 3, 7), well known from Aramaic sources; אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִקַּח ('that you not take', v. 3), as a calque on a postulated Aramaic דְּלֵא תִסַּב (indeed, this is the rendering of *Targum Onqelos*); and אֲמָ לֹא ('but rather', v. 38), modeled after Aramaic אֲמָ לֵאן (= later Aramaic אֲמָ לֵאן). In other words, my analysis is guided by category (d) above.

The second part of my article responded to an attempt by Marc Brettler to view 1 Sam. 2.27-36 as an exilic addition to the story of Eli in order to serve as a legitimation of the house of Zadok. Brettler posited three linguistic markers of LBH in these ten verses in support of his position. Only one of these items is due to Aramaic influence, namely, the verbal root בָּרַא ('make fat, make well, strengthen', v. 29), so we will limit the discussion to this single feature. Apart from the problems inherent in demonstrating that a particular verse or set of verses is a late addition to a text, in the present instance we are not dealing with a true Aramaism in an exilic Judahite text, but rather with an IH feature in a section of the Bible replete with other northern traits, for example, the noun דָּוָד ('pot, kettle, vessel') in 1 Sam. 2.14 (for details, see Rendsburg 2002b: 42). The heroes of 1 Samuel 1–2 are from the territory of Ephraim and the action centers on Shiloh in Ephraim, so it is not surprising to find IH elements in the author's prose. In other words, in this case I am invoking category (c) above. If this were a section of the Bible focused on events in Judah, then Brettler's argument would be strengthened. But since the setting is Ephraim, one should regard the presence of Aramaic-like features in the story as evidence for northern composition. In addition, 1 Samuel 1–2 evinces IH features with no connection to Aramaic whatsoever, for example, the unusual infinitive construct form שָׁתָה ('drinking') in 1.9, paralleled elsewhere only in Judg. 13.21 (with a Danite setting) and 1 Sam. 3.21 (again with a setting at Shiloh). Such IH features, I would argue, act as a control against explaining usages such as בָּרַא and דָּוָד as Aramaisms which penetrated Hebrew after 586 BCE.<sup>12</sup>

(Rofé 1981), and in English (Rofé 1990).

12. Notwithstanding the fact that IH features occur sporadically in LBH as well, apparently due to the reunion of Israelian and Judahite exiles during the sixth century BCE. See Gordon 1955a.

### 3. *The Case of Psalm 116*

There is no need, of course, to rehearse all the material presented in my recent article. Instead, I would like to discuss three additional articles that have appeared in the secondary literature. The first of these is not an article devoted expressly to promoting a late date for a specific biblical composition, but *en passant* remarks within the essay provide fodder for the current study. I refer to an article by Michael Barré on Psalm 116 entitled ‘Psalm 116: Its Structure and Its Enigmas’ in which the author treats a series of issues towards the elucidation of this poem (Barré 1990). As I just indicated, the date of this composition was not the main thrust of Barré’s article, yet it figured in his treatment in the following way. Barré rejected the Masoretic reading of הַמָּוֹתָי (‘death’—this meaning is recognizable notwithstanding the atypical form) in v. 15, and instead posited an original הַמְנוּתָי (‘faith, trust’) from the root מָנָן, with the quiescent *aleph* not represented as common in Aramaic orthography (Barré 1990: 72). Barré further explained: ‘As for the proposed *hm<n>wth* itself, during much of the history of the Hebrew alphabet the letters *mem* and *nun* were similar in appearance. The scribal omission of a *nun* after a *mem* is an understandable error’ (Barré 1990: 72). And still further:

But why did the poet employ an Aramaic word here? The other Aramaisms in Psalm 116 consist of Aramaic pronominal suffixes—*lmnwlyky*, *lyky* (v. 7), and *tgmwlwhy* (v. 12). But in the case of *hm<n>wth* we have a purely Aramaic vocable. The author may have chosen this particular word, rather than some other noun based on the root *’m-n*, because it corresponds most closely to *h’mnty* [‘I trust’ in v. 10], being derived from the hiphil form of the Hebrew verb. Moreover, this word establishes the closest sonant connection to *h’mnty*, both words beginning */hēman-/*. (Barré 1990: 73)

At this point, Barré added a footnote with the following: ‘Given the probability of a late date for Psalm 116, indicated especially by the undeniable presence of Aramaisms, I am assuming that the *aleph* in *h’mnty* is quiescent’ (Barré 1990: 73 n.47).

How are we to judge this suggestion? First of all, as the reader familiar with my publications will recognize, I am a strong proponent of working with MT, difficult as it may be in many places (see, e.g., Rendsburg 1999b). Accordingly, I am unsympathetic to the entire procedure worked out by Barré. MT הַמָּוֹתָי is a difficult form, and all of v. 15 is a difficult

verse, but Barré's string of emendations and reconstructions certainly takes us further from the poet's intent than does it bring us closer.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the notion that the *aleph* in **אֱלֹהֵי מִנְתֵי** was originally quiescent in Aramaic-like fashion and that somehow the ancient Jewish tradents in time read the form in Hebrew-like fashion (not stated explicitly by Barré, but implied of course) is without foundation.

But more to the point of the present article: Barré assumed that the 'Aramaisms' in Psalm 116 are evidence of a late date for the poem, and this opened the door for him to propose reading still another Aramaic feature in this psalm. But I question whether these features—the pronominal suffixes in particular—are to be seen as true Aramaisms. In my book devoted to Israelian material in the book of Psalms, I analyzed these items as IH features (Rendsburg 1990b: 83-86). To be fair, of course, they could be seen as either. Unusual grammatical and lexical features in Hebrew which are better attested in Aramaic, as suggested above, can be seen equally as either evidence for IH, in which case we should posit a pre-exilic date, or as true Aramaisms, in which case we should posit a post-exilic date. Or to put this in other terms: the question is: Where does the default lie? For most scholars, almost in knee-jerk fashion, and contrary to Hurvitz's approach, the default is to assign a late date to any composition with Aramaic features. For me, with no overriding Persian-period evidence (such as the setting of a particular book such as Haggai, the presence of Persian loanwords as in Qohelet and Song of Songs, and so on), the default is to assume a pre-exilic date.

In the case of the specific items under discussion—excluding Barré's posited **הַמְנוּתָהּ** ('faith, trust') in v. 15, which must remain hypothetical in the extreme—obviously the 3rd masc. pl. pronominal suffix on **תְּגִמּוּלָהּ** ('his good-deeds') in v. 12 is unique in BH. It occurs, however, in the eighth–seventh century Deir 'Alla inscription (Hackett 1980: 115-16), which should be viewed as a Canaanite dialect (Rendsburg 1993), and it may occur in Moabite as well (Naveh 1979: 136; Greenfield 1980: 250; Garr 1985: 108). There is, therefore, no reason to exclude the possibility, even the probability, that some regional dialect of ancient Hebrew, presumably a Gileadite one, included this feature. As for the 2nd fem. sg. pronominal suffix **כִּי**–, attested three times in the psalm (vv. 7 [twice], 19), note that this form occurs four times in the *kethib* in 2 Kings 4 (vv. 2, 3, 7 [twice]), all in the mouth of Elisha, who most likely hailed from Gilead

13. In my opinion, the best solution to Ps. 116.15 is that of Emerton (1983).

(see Rendsburg 1981: 71). And while scholars typically associate this feature automatically with Aramaic, one should recall that it also occurs in Punic (Segert 1976: 96), suggesting that it was a Phoenician trait throughout the first millennium BCE, even though one could never demonstrate the point since Phoenician orthography excluded all *matres lectionis*, including final ones. Other BH examples of the 2nd fem. sg. pronominal suffix כַּי־ appear in Jer. 11.15; Pss. 103.3 (twice), 4 (twice), 5; 135.9; 137.6. The first of these occurrences may be a true Aramaism c. 600 BCE, or this may reflect the Benjaminite dialect of the prophet from Anathoth, while the examples from Psalms 103, 135, and 137 clearly are Aramaisms. I make this latter statement not on the basis of this feature alone, or even the presence of other linguistic features in these psalms with analogs in Aramaic (e.g. the verb רָחַם governing the preposition עַל in Ps. 103.13, on which see Hurvitz 1972a: 107-109), but on the cumulative evidence. The lateness of Psalm 103 is evident from crucial non-linguistic testimony, namely, the appeal to God's heavenly angels, hosts, and ministers in vv. 20-21, reflecting a well-recognized late theological development (pp. 122-26), and a bit of a quasi-linguistic testimony, namely, the replacement of מֶלֶךְ ('king') with מַלְכוּת ('kingdom') as witnessed in v. 19), reflecting an increased abstraction in the concept of God as divine king, paralleling a similar abstraction in the understanding of the human king (Hurvitz 1972a: 110-13).<sup>14</sup> Once the lateness of Psalm 103 is established on these grounds, then, yes, 2nd fem. sg. כַּי־ and other elements are to be seen as LBH traits and/or true Aramaisms (for a full survey of such features see Hurvitz 1972a: 107-30). Similarly, with Psalm 135, which is a pastiche of passages from other biblical books, including Jeremiah (see Ps. 135.7 quoting Jer. 10.13; 51.16 [with variation]), and which therefore must be a sixth-century composition at the earliest; and of course likewise with Psalm 137 whose setting is clearly an exilic one. But without hints of lateness from non-linguistic testimony, I submit that there is no reason to date Psalm 116 to the post-exilic period, just as there is no suggestion that 2 Kings 4 should be assigned to the Persian epoch.

There are other linguistic traits in Psalm 116 relevant to our discussion. Two grammatical items are (1) the form יְהוֹשִׁיעַ ('saves') in v. 6, with retention of the *he* of the hiphil prefix-conjugation (PC); and (2) the use of

14. I do not refer to the form of the word מַלְכוּת ('kingdom'), which, once the lateness of this psalm is established, can be deemed an Aramaism, but rather to the concept involved, the use of the abstract form 'kingdom' (in any morphological shape) as opposed to the more concrete idea of 'king'.

*lamed* as the direct object marker, clearly present in פתחת למוסרי ('you released my bonds') in v. 16 (as noted by Barré 1990: 61 n. 1), and most likely to be seen in נגדה נא לכל עמו ('lead now my people') in vv. 14, 18 (for this interpretation, see Fokkelman and Rendsburg forthcoming). Lexical features include (1) the root דבר 'carry off, pursue' in v. 10 (Driver 1934: 382); (2) the word יקר meaning 'grievous' in v. 15 (as opposed to its usual connotations 'precious, costly, expensive'; Emerton 1983); and (3) the root נגד in the qal meaning 'lead' in vv. 14, 18 (see above, and again see Fokkelman and Rendsburg forthcoming). All of these features have strong parallels in Aramaic, but I repeat: their presence in Psalm 116, with no other evidence in support of such a conclusion, should not *a priori* lead one to conclude that we are dealing with a Persian-period composition. As parallels, note that grammatical item (1) above, the retention of the *he* in the hiphil PC, occurs in Ps. 45.18, in a poem dated by almost all scholars to the period of the Israelian monarchy (see Rendsburg 1990b: 48-49 for discussion of this feature); and that grammatical item (2) above, the use of *lamed* to mark the direct object, occurs in Exod. 32.13 (three times), in a chapter with well-known links to the cult established by Jeroboam I in northern Israel, even if there is no agreement among scholars as to the exact nature and consequences of these links.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the radical minimalists, however, there is no rush to date these texts to the Persian period, a policy which should govern our judgment of Psalm 116 as well. In short, given the neutral evidence, my preference is to date Psalm 116 to the pre-exilic period and to assume that it was authored by someone who hailed from the Northern Kingdom of Israel (or, if written some time after 721 BCE, then from the territory of the former kingdom of Israel).

There is an additional grammatical feature in Psalm 116 which is germane to the present discussion. The 'double plural' construct chain ארצות החיים (lit. 'lands of the living' > 'land of the living'), that occurs in v. 9. The term 'double plural' construct chain refers to those cases in which both *nomen regens* and *nomen rectum* appear in the plural, though logically—and, according to the norms of Hebrew grammar, that is, those of SBH = JH, also grammatically—one or the other should be in the singular. In the present example, we may point to the well-known biblical expression ארץ (ה) החיים ('land of the living'), attested 14 times in the

15. The use of the name 'Israel' as the name of the third patriarch in this passage (thus the MT; the Samaritan Pentateuch reads 'Jacob') may suggest a northern nexus as well.

corpus, as witness to the typical formulation. Such double plural constructions are known from Ugaritic and Phoenician, they occur in IH compositions of the pre-exilic period, they then become common in LBH texts emanating from Judah in the main, and finally they become a standard feature of MH. Based on this evidence, I reconstruct the following history of this syntagma (see Rendsburg 2002a: 130-31 for further details). The double plural construction originally was at home in northern Canaanite dialects, represented by Ugaritic, Phoenician, and IH. With the reunion of Israelian and Judahite exiles in the sixth century (on which see Gordon 1955a), this feature penetrated JH as well, and thus it occurs frequently in LBH, especially in Chronicles (see further Polzin 1976: 42; Gevirtz 1986). I would explain its regular presence in MH on the grounds that this dialect of Hebrew represents the speech of the Galilee during the Roman period (Rendsburg 1992b), while others would be inclined to see here a chronological continuity from LBH to MH (though in my opinion the relative absence of this grammatical trait from QH makes this less likely). This is a totally inner-Hebrew development, I hasten to add, with, unlike the elements treated above, no connection to Aramaic. To cite just two of the many examples of the double plural construction in IH texts, note the following: (1) בני גלעדִים (lit. ‘sons of the Gileadites’, that is, ‘Gileadites’), in 2 Kgs 15.25, in the course of relating the history of the kingdom of Israel (see my illustrations of category [c] above from the same chapter)—this atypical usage is even more striking because the *nomen rectum* is a toponym in this case and we expect בני גלעד\* of course (cf. בני יהודה, בני דן, בני חת, etc.); and (2) נדיבי עמים (lit. ‘princes of the peoples’ = ‘princes of the people’) in Ps. 47.10, part of the Korah collection in which both a northern setting has been detected (Goulder 1982) and in which numerous IH features may be found (Rendsburg 1990b: 51-60); here we may contrast the expected form נדיבי עם found in Num. 21.18 and Ps. 113.8 (the former with the definite article, the latter with a pronominal suffix). In the case of ארצות החיים, the *nomen rectum* must be plural (because of the nature of the word חיים), and this has caused the *nomen regens* to shift from its usual singular form to a plural form. In most ‘double plural’ construct chains, as in my two additional examples above, the *nomen regens* must be plural (for the sense of the expression), and this has caused the *nomen rectum* to shift from its usual singular form to a plural form. Either way, the creation of this syntagma is a characteristic of IH in pre-exilic times, forming an isogloss with the contemporary Phoenician dialect of Canaanite and with the older

Ugaritic dialect. Once more, to be fair, this evidence from Psalm 116 is neutral. It could be viewed as evidence for the northern provenance of the poem, or it could be viewed as evidence for the LBH nature of the psalm. But again, to reiterate what I stated above, with no *a priori* reason to date this composition to the Persian period, a pre-exilic date should be assumed.

As an aside, I note that Barré treated the expression ארצות החיים in Ps. 116.9 in a separate article devoted to the widespread use of ארץ (ה)חיים throughout the Bible (Barré 1988). His main proposal, that the expression ‘land of the living’ or ‘land of life’ refers to the Jerusalem Temple in certain passages (e.g. Pss. 27.13; 52.7, as well as 116.9), is plausible. More pertinent is his suggestion that ארצות החיים in Ps. 116.9 is intentionally worded in this fashion to create a long-range paronomasia with בית יהוה הצרות (‘courts of the house of YHWH’) in v. 19, especially since the latter clearly refers to the Temple. I am happy to accept this suggestion, but I would emphasize that it is specifically someone writing in the Israelian dialect who would have this usage in his store of linguistic usages.

The final point to make about the language of Psalm 116 stems from another comment by Barré:

A word is in order here about the verbs in Psalm 116. It is difficult to see any logic to the author’s use of *qtl* and *yqtl* forms. Perhaps in this relatively late (postexilic) poem he is attempting to imitate classical Hebrew poetry, without much success. Thus, I would translate the verbs in the indicative mood (*qtl* and *yqtl*) as follows: (1) *past*: those in vv. 2-8, 11, 16c, plus *yšm* ‘ in v. 1a and *’dbr* in v. 10a; (2) *present*: *’hbt*y in v. 1a and *h’mnt*y in v. 10a; (3) *future*: those in vv. 9, 12-18. (Barré 1990: 76-77 n. 60)

I do not quite follow Barré’s logic here, but it is possible that we have different ideas about the verbal system in CBH poetry. In my view, what he describes is absolutely typical of verbal usage in CBH poetry, with poets shifting naturally between *qtl* forms and *yqtl* forms, irrespective of tense concerns. Or to put this in other words, *qtl* forms can indicate past, present, and future, and *yqtl* forms also can indicate past, present, and future. In poetry, that is, these forms serve more as universal tenses. The proof would be those cases in Hebrew poetry in which *qtl* and *yqtl* forms of the same verb (or even of different verbs) stand in parallelism, for example, Ps. 38.12 and Isa. 60.16 (Berlin 1985: 35-36; Watson 1986: 279-80). In the words of Adele Berlin, ‘It is important to emphasize that the *qtl-yqtl* shift, of which we have given only a few examples, occurs not for semantic reasons (it does not indicate a real temporal sequence), but for

what have been considered stylistic reasons' (Berlin 1985: 36). In short, I am a bit puzzled by Barré's statement above, though to repeat what I said above, it is possible that we have different understandings of the verbal system in CBH poetry.

After this lengthy discussion about various linguistic issues in Psalm 116, the bottom line is: I see no reason to ascribe this poem to the post-exilic period. The psalm evinces no theological or social setting that would situate it in the Persian period; the so-called Aramaisms are better seen as Aramaic-like features typical of the northern dialect of ancient Hebrew; the 'double plural' construction אֲרֻצוֹת הַחַיִּים is another trait of IH attested in pre-exilic northern texts; and the verbal system is consonant with that of CBH poetry. I hasten to add that Barré is not alone in ascribing Psalm 116 to the post-exilic period, as a glance at various standard commentaries indicates (see, e.g., Kraus 1960: 794; Anderson 1972: 790). If I have focused on his article, it is because Barré has dealt with the language issues in a more appropriate way than most scholars, even though, as I stated above, the date of Psalm 116 was not the main focus of his treatment.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. *The Case of 1 Kings 21*

The next article to be discussed is another essay by Alexander Rofé, this time devoted to 1 Kgs 21.1-20 entitled 'The Vineyard of Naboth: The Origin and Message of the Story' (Rofé 1988b). According to Rofé, the story dates to the Persian period and thus it allies with 'the complaint of the oppressed against the upper class, elsewhere vented by Nehemiah, Malachi and Trito-Isaiah[,] as well as the protest against intermarriage as broached by Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah' (p. 102). That is to say, Ahab the king takes advantage of Naboth of lower status in order to obtain his vineyard, all the while driven onward by his foreign wife Jezebel. Once more Rofé is to be distinguished from the radical minimalists who make similar assertions but who do not support their claims with linguistic evidence. In this article, Rofé put forward six items of a linguistic nature to bolster his interpretation of the story. Only one of these features (the

16. To return to the point which served as the springboard for this discussion, while I do not accept Barré's proposal to read an original הַמְנוּחָה ('faith, trust') in v. 15, if this reconstruction were accepted it could be seen as simply another Aramaic-like feature in a poem composed in IH, and not a true Aramaism borrowed during the post-exilic period.

fifth one to be discussed below) is linked to Aramaic per se, so to some extent Rofé's treatment of 1 Kings 21 is not totally germane to the present article. But as it attempts to use linguistic evidence to date a chapter of the Bible to the post-exilic period, it is relevant to the larger picture being painted in the present enterprise. I will not review the six linguistic items isolated by Rofé in 1 Kings 21 with the same detail as I examined his work on Genesis 24 (Rendsburg 2002b: 24-30), but instead I will discuss them more schematically. My conclusion is predictable: as with my analysis of Brettler's effort to date 1 Sam. 2.27-36 (Rendsburg 2002b: 35-45), and as with my approach to Psalm 116 above, I view the linguistic data put forward by Rofé as fodder for the IH dialect in which the Israelian material in Kings was composed (see Rendsburg 2002a).

Rofé's six items (delineated in Rofé 1988b: 97-100), along with my comments, are as follows:

(1) מלך שִׁמְרוֹן ('king of Samaria') in 1 Kgs 21.1 (see also 2 Kgs 1.3). I think even Rofé would admit that this is not a major piece of evidence. As he himself noted, analogs exist in Assyrian texts, in which both Joash and Menahem are referred to as *Samerināya* (Cogan and Tadmor 1988: 26). Furthermore, note that in both cases, 'king of Samaria' is used by the author(s) of Kings specifically when the monarch (or his messengers) is/are away from the capital city. In 2 Kgs 1.3, Ahaziah sends his messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub of Ebron, while in 1 Kgs 21.1 Ahab is in Jezreel. Yair Zakovitch recognized the literary effect of the latter usage:

the Hebrew refers to Ahab as 'King of Samaria'...in order to remind us that *Samaria*, not Jezreel, is Ahab's royal city. The latter is a sort of royal retreat, an extra home. The contrast is clear: against the simple villager Naboth, whose one inherited piece of property is in his own ancestral home, stands the king from Samaria, who has an additional palace in Jezreel, and yet covets the villager's land. (Zakovitch 1984: 384)

(2) The verb דָּבַר ('speak') not followed by לֵאמֹר ('saying'), or any other form of the verb אָמַר ('say'), in vv. 5, 6. As Rofé noted in another treatment (Rofé 1988a: 37 n. 23), this usage occurs in scattered passages throughout the Bible: Gen. 41.17; Exod. 32.7, 13; Lev. 10.12, 19; Num. 18.8; Josh. 22.21; 1 Sam. 4.20; 1 Kgs 13.7, 12, 22; 2 Kgs 1.3; Ezek. 40.4, 45; 41.22; Ps. 116.10; Dan. 2.4 (and in Aramaic in Dan. 6.22). One can hardly assume on the basis of this evidence that we are dealing here with a late feature, nor would I press the case for a northernism, notwithstanding the appearance of a goodly number of these examples in northern texts

(e.g. 1 Kgs 13 and 21, 2 Kgs 1, all of which deal with kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel).

(3) The syntax of קראו צום והושיבו את נבותר ברש העם ('they proclaimed a fast, and they seated Naboth at the head of the people'), in v. 12, with two suffix-conjugation (SC) forms, as opposed to the expected *wayyiqtol*. Rofé correctly noted that this is more typical of MH. But given the many links between IH and MH which I have established in previous research (most importantly in Rendsburg 1992b, but in scattered comments elsewhere as well, e.g., Rendsburg 2002a: 69), a nexus with MH does not automatically permit one to date 1 Kings 21 to the late biblical period. Moreover, again we may have to reckon with a literary factor. The author of this pericope wished to show that the men of the city carried out Jezebel's instructions exactly (note the striking similarity between her words in v. 9 and the above third-person narration in v. 12) up to this point, in contrast to what is related in the next verse. In v. 10 Jezebel directed that the scoundrels should address Naboth in second person—'you have cursed God and king'—but when push comes to shove in v. 13 they are unable to face the accused directly and therefore state in third person 'Naboth has cursed God and king'.

(4) The use of קרוב אצל ('near') in v. 2. Rofé astutely noticed that this compound preposition is a *hapax legomenon* in the Bible, but that it has a very similar parallel in the Mishnah: כהן הקרוב אצל המזבח ('a priest who is near to the altar') in *m. Pes.* 5.6.<sup>17</sup> Again, we must consider that IH–MH links are part of the larger picture of northern Canaanite regional dialects; accordingly this usage is not necessarily evidence for lateness. Once more, we also may need to reckon with a literary purpose. The inclusion of the word קרוב serves to produce an alliteration with the key word כרם ('vineyard') in the same verse (twice), the sounds of which are echoed later in the chapter with the rare verb התמכר ('take counsel') in vv. 20, 25.<sup>18</sup>

(5) The word חורים ('nobles, freemen') in vv. 8, 11. Rofé stated that 'this is a loan-word from Aramaic, Imperial Aramaic to be sure' (Rofé 1988b: 98). True, our earliest attestations of the word come from the Persian imperial period (Elephantine, Behistun, Ahiqar—see Hofstijzer and Jongeling 1995: 401), but there is no reason not to assume the existence of this lexeme in Aramaic centuries earlier. This is especially so given the

17. Quoting from the Kaufman Ms; some textual witnesses read הקרב.

18. I also owe the recognition of the alliteration between כרם and התמכר to my son, David E. Rendsburg.

fact that newly discovered Old Aramaic inscriptions frequently provide for us the attestation of a particular Aramaic word known previously only from later sources, whether it be Imperial Aramaic or even Middle Aramaic. And if חורִיִּם existed in Aramaic of, let us say, the ninth century BCE, there is no reason not to assume its existence in Hebrew guise during the same period in the Israelian dialect. My studies into IH have shown that time and again we may trace isoglosses between IH and Aramaic to the exclusion of JH. To my mind, the important word חורִיִּם is a stellar example of this phenomenon (see already Rendsburg 2002a: 72-73). Eventually, under the overwhelming influence of Aramaic throughout the Persian empire, the word entered JH as well; thus one finds חורִיִּם seven times in Nehemiah, for example.

(6) The verb הִעִיד in the sense of ‘testify’ (as opposed to ‘warn’ or ‘cause someone to testify’) in vv. 10, 13. As Rofé himself recognized, this is ‘the best piece of evidence for the late date of our story’ (Rofé 1988b: 99). Apart from 1 Kgs 21.10, 13, this usage occurs only in Mal. 2.14 and Job 29.11, after which it is attested at Ben Sira 46.19 (the occurrence in Ben Sira 4.11 means ‘warn, admonish’), three times in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QSa 1.11; CD A 9.20; CD B 19.30), twice in the Murabba‘at letters (42.13; 43.3), and then several hundred times in Tannaitic texts.<sup>19</sup> I have no counter to Rofé’s argument here, which is indeed quite convincing, except to suggest that the nexus between IH and MH would explain the use of הִעִיד (‘testify’) in both 1 Kgs 21.10, 13, and Tannaitic sources, though I admit that this would leave unexplained the other two biblical attestations and the handful of post-biblical occurrences.

How are we to evaluate this evidence? As I hope to have shown, of the six features put forward by Rofé, only the last of these items points to a late date for 1 Kings 21. In my estimation, items (1) and (2) are not relevant, while items (3) and (4) point to an IH–MH continuum, but do not bear on the dating of the chapter. Most germane for the present study is item (5), which is not to be viewed as an Aramaism per se, but as an Aramaic-like feature appearing in a northern source, and therefore belonging to category (c) denoted at the outset. The presence of חורִיִּם

19. These figures are based on the database of *Ma‘agarim: The Hebrew Language Historical Dictionary Project*, CD-ROM version of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (Jerusalem, 1998). The verb הִעִיד occurs a total of 335 times in Tannaitic texts, but *Ma‘agarim* does not differentiate between the two meanings ‘warn, admonish’ and ‘testify’. I have not done an exhaustive study of these attestations, but a quick glance suggests that in the majority of them the connotation ‘testify’ is present.

(‘nobles, freemen’) in vv. 8, 11 should in no way be utilized to establish the date of this story. The question, then, is: Is the use of one linguistic trait, item (6), *העיד* in the sense of ‘testify’ in vv. 10 and 13, sufficient grounds to affix a Persian-period date to the story of Naboth’s vineyard? Were there no evidence to the contrary, I would be the first to answer this question in the affirmative. There is, however, evidence to the contrary, which I now present.

I refer to the methodology recently introduced into the study of biblical narrative by Frank Polak (1997–98; 1998). This approach pays attention to (1) the ratio of nouns to verbs (NV ratio) in biblical prose, and (2) among verbs, the ratio of finite to non-finite verbs (NF ratio). According to Polak, the lower the ratio, for both sets of data, the earlier the date of composition. A thorough survey of the biblical narrative corpus reveals that the Elijah cycle belongs solidly to the classical stratum, in sharp contrast to those sections which are to be dated to the late pre-exilic/exilic period and to the Persian period. In fact, the .600 NV ratio for the Elijah cycle is the third lowest NV ratio among the different sections analyzed, and the .133 NF ratio is the second-lowest NF ratio. Or to put it differently, even within the classical stratum of biblical prose, with its mean ratios of .612 and .154 respectively, the Elijah cycle is decidedly on the low end of the spectrum (Polak 1998: 70; see also Polak 1997–98: 156-57 for percentages as opposed to ratios).

An analysis of the specific pericope under discussion reveals the following figures, presented here in three sets of numbers: (1) for 1 Kgs 21.1-20, that is, the limits of Rofé’s study; (2) for the final nine verses (vv. 21-29) of the chapter, especially since some scholars view these verses as a later addition; and (3) for the chapter as a whole.<sup>20</sup> Below these figures appear Polak’s mean ratios for the three major groupings of biblical narrative.

	<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>NV ratio</i>	<i>Finite</i>	<i>Nominal</i>	<i>NF ratio</i>
<i>1 Kgs 21.1-20</i>	147	107	.579	86	21	.196
<i>1 Kgs 21.21-29</i>	59	36	.621	27	9	.250
<i>1 Kgs 21.1-29</i>	206	143	.590	113	30	.209
<i>Classical Stratum</i>			.612			.154
<i>Late Pre-Exilic/Exilic</i>			.724			.207

20. I am indebted to Professor Frank Polak of Tel-Aviv University for an e-mail exchange in June 2002 in which we discussed the various figures for the story of Naboth’s vineyard.

<i>Persian Era</i>			.739			.326
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If we focus on the NV ratio of .579 for 1 Kgs 21.1-20, we note that this pericope ranks as the lowest unit in Polak's entire database, even lower than the Samson cycle with an NV ratio of .581 (Polak 1998: 70). The NF ratio of .196 is a bit higher than might be expected, placing the material in between the classical stratum and the late pre-exilic/exilic grouping, but clearly this figures points to a pre-exilic date nonetheless. The figures for the last nine verses of the chapter suggest a somewhat later date, but the .621 NV ratio, the more crucial of the two discriminants under consideration here, is still squarely within the classical stratum. In addition, one must keep in mind that the more limited the database—in this case only nine verses—the greater the chance for skewed figures. When the two sets of data are incorporated into one set of figures for the chapter as a whole, the .590 NV ratio is, as expected, among the lowest in the corpus, though once more the .207 NF ratio suggests a slightly later date. In no way, however, do any of these ratios point to the Persian period as the time of composition for 1 Kings 21.

I admit that the NF ratios for this chapter provide potential support for a later dating of this story than I would countenance. Accordingly, the following point is worth emphasizing. As intimated above, when the NV ratio and the NF ratio do not correspond exactly as one would expect in a given narrative section, it is clear from Polak's research that the former deserves pride of place. Accordingly, I would argue that the extremely low NV ratio for the story of Naboth's vineyard far outweighs any other data that could be presented in assisting us in our quest to date this chapter.

In other words, given the choice of relying on the NV ratio calculated using Polak's methodology, on the one hand, and the presence of one apparent LBH feature, namely, הֵעִיד ('testify'), even with the support of the NF ratio computed via Polak's method, on the other hand, I would rely strongly on the former as a guide to establishing the date of the text, and therefore seek a different explanation for the latter. As noted above, הֵעִיד could be an IH feature; or it simply could be an early attestation of a feature which becomes more common in late biblical and post-biblical times.

At this point, I hasten to add that there are, not surprisingly, additional IH features in 1 Kings 21 which impact upon our discussion. These are (1) the use of הַיִּכְלָה in v. 1 with the sense of 'palace' (as opposed to 'temple'), a usage found in other northern texts (Ps. 45.9, 16; Hos. 8.14; Amos 8.3) as well as in Ugaritic and Aramaic; (2) the syntagma כִּי אָדַבֵּר אֵל נְבוֹת

(‘because I spoke to Naboth’) in v. 6, with the preterite use of the PC, especially in a clause introduced by כִּי, exactly as in Mesha Stele ll. 5-6 *כי יאנף כמש בארצה* (‘because Kemosh was angry with his land’—the parallel between these two lines was first noted by Gibson 1971: 78); and (3) the verb *התמכר* (‘take counsel’), to be related to the verb *מלך* (‘advise, counsel’), known from Aramaic and MH (as well as Akkadian), notwithstanding the fact that this relationship involves ‘both a metathesis and an interchange of consonants’ (Greenfield 1993: 33 n. 36—for thorough discussion of these three features, see Rendsburg 2002a: 70-74). Now, these IH features in 1 Kings 21 do not preclude the possibility that 1 Kings 21 was written in the Persian period—for a text may be both late and northern (see, e.g., Rendsburg 1991a on Nehemiah 9). But a far preferable approach is to conclude that this story, like the other stories about Elijah and Elisha, along with the annalistic material about the kings of the Northern Kingdom in the book of Kings, was composed while the kingdom of Israel still existed.

The total picture, according to the above analysis, reveals a story which is written in pre-exilic northern Hebrew. Polak’s work demonstrates that 1 Kings 21, consonant with the Elijah narratives as a whole, belongs to the classical stratum of biblical narrative prose; while my linguistic research yields a series of lexical and grammatical traits characteristic of IH, suggesting a composition during the time of the kingdom of Israel’s existence. Aramaic-like features in 1 Kings 21, such as the word *חורים* (‘nobles, freemen’), reflect the fact that Aramaic and IH shared linguistic features that straddled both sides of the Aramaic–Canaanite divide within Iron Age West Semitic.

### 5. *The Case of Judges 5*

The final case that we will investigate is the recent attempt by Michael Waltisberg to date the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 to the Persian period (Waltisberg 1999). The author understood a series of unusual linguistic features as Aramaisms, which in his mind lead to the conclusion that the poem was composed in the Persian period. As the reader can predict by now, I take a different tack: these elements are to be viewed as Aramaic-like features which were part of the Israelian dialect; they are not evidence of late date, but rather are further examples of traits shared by IH and Aramaic. As most scholars have concluded, the Song of Deborah is to be viewed as one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew poetry in our possession,

albeit one composed in the northern part of the country, as one would expect from a poem which lauds the heroics of brave individuals from the general region of the Jezreel Valley and the Lower Galilee.

The features that Waltisberg isolated (1999: 218-26), along with my comments, are the following:

(1) The 2nd fem. sg. SC marker  $\text{־תִּי}$  in  $\text{קָמַתִּי}$  ('you arose') in v. 7. True, this feature is representative of Aramaic (see, e.g., Muraoka and Porten 1998: 97-98), but most likely it was a feature of the majority of Canaanite dialects as well, though not of JH. Unfortunately, we have no way of demonstrating the point, first, because the strictly consonantal orthography of Ugaritic and Phoenician is not helpful in this regard,<sup>21</sup> and second, because our meager remains from the other dialects which do represent final vowels by means of a *mater lectionis*, for example, Moabite, do not attest to any 2nd fem. sg. SC verbs (nor is Amarna helpful; see Rainey 1996, II: 287). But with no evidence to the contrary, especially since this feature is a trait of proto-Semitic (Lipiński 1997: 360-62), one will assume that its presence in Judg. 5.7 is indicative of ABH and/or IH with a link to Aramaic. Its occurrence in later books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, on the other hand, is probably the result of true Aramaic influence, unless the Jeremiah examples attest to the presence of this feature in the Benjaminite dialect. The occurrences in Ruth 3.3-4 (both in *kethib*) may serve a literary function: these are archaisms placed in the mouth of Naomi, representing the older generation, in contrast to the youthful (nubile?) Ruth (Campbell 1975: 25; see also Young 1997: 10).

(ii) The masculine plural nominal ending  $\text{־יָן}$  in  $\text{מַדִּיָּן}$  ('blankets[?]' ) in v. 10. This ending is clearly identified with Aramaic in all its dialects. The evidence from BH is complicated. Some examples occur in decidedly Judahite texts, for example, 2 Kgs 11.13, for which I have no ready explanation. An example such as  $\text{מַלְכֵיָן}$  ('kings') in Prov. 31.4 was referenced above as an illustration of category (b). The 13 cases of  $\text{מַלְיָן}$  ('words') in Job belong to category (d) above. A true Aramaism would be  $\text{יָמֵיָן}$  ('days') in Dan. 12.13. But the best explanation of this feature in Judg. 5.10 is to assume a regional dialectal trait, in line not only with Aramaic but also with Moabite and Deir 'Alla (see Garr 1985: 89).

(iii) Reduplicatory plural of a noun based on a geminate stem, occurring twice, in  $\text{עַמְמֵיךָ}$  ('your people') in v. 14, and in  $\text{חֻקֵּיךָ}$  ('decisions [of][?]' ) in v. 15. This too is a feature of Aramaic, but its distribution in various

21. Punic frequently aids us in reconstructing the vowels of Phoenician, but in this case there is no evidence (Segert 1976: 131).

Israelian texts in the Bible, for example, Ps. 36.7, reveals it to be an element of IH as well (see Rendsburg 1991a: 356-58).

(iv) The root תנה ('praise, relate') in v. 11. Once more Waltisberg is correct to note the affiliation between this usage and Aramaic. Proto-Semitic /t/ shifts to /š/ in Hebrew but to /t/ in Aramaic. Thus SBH yields the root שנה, but Aramaic produces the root תנה. But one should not *a priori* conclude that תנה in Judg. 5.11 is therefore an Aramaism.<sup>22</sup> The verb occurs again in Judg. 11.40 in the story of Jephthah's daughter set in Gilead, suggesting that we are dealing once more with a regional dialectal feature. Note that the same phonological shift is attested in ברותים ('cypresses') in Song 1.17 in a book replete with IH features.<sup>23</sup>

(v) The noun פלגות ('divisions') in v. 15-16. The same noun occurs in Job 20.17 with the meaning 'stream'. A byform פלגות occurs in 2 Chron. 35.5. The root is clearly to be associated with Aramaic. Waltisberg (1999: 222) pointed to פלגתהון 'their divisions' in Ezra 6.18; plus the word is well attested in later Aramaic dialects (see, e.g., Sokoloff 1990: 434). But one should note that the root *plg* ('divide'), along with the noun form *plg* ('stream'), occurs in Ugaritic (del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 1996–2000: 349). In addition, פלג occurs in the Phoenician Umm el-Awamid inscription (KAI 18.3), and although there is some uncertainty regarding its meaning, probably it means 'district', clearly related to the meaning

22. I desist from a detailed discussion of the complicated question of the actual realization and graphic representation of Proto-Semitic /t/ in both Aramaic and IH at the time of composition of Judg. 5, let us say, c. 1100 BCE. But the following brief comments are in order. Our earliest Aramaic inscriptions use the letter ש to represent /t/ and only later do we encounter the letter ת to represent /t/ (I exclude here the evidence of the Tell Fakhariye inscription, which uses ט to represent /t/). This evidence suggests that in Early Aramaic /t/ was still pronounced as [t̪], though represented by ש, and only later did the shift of /t̪/ > /t/ occur, with ת quite naturally used to represent this sound. Accordingly, we have two options for explaining the root תנה in Judg. 5.11. One option is to assume that also in IH, or at least in the subdialect reflected in the Song of Deborah, the phoneme /t̪/ was retained, that is, realized as [t̪], but that scribal convention among the Israelians called for the letter ת to graphically represent this sound. The second option is to assume that in IH the shift of /t̪/ > /t/ occurred earlier than in Aramaic, with Judg. 5.11 as testimony thereto (thus Rabin 1973: 27, citing E. Y. Kutscher, though I have not been able to locate the specific reference; see also Young 1993: 60).

23. I have presented the evidence from Song of Songs in several public lectures, most recently at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in December 2001. The published version will be included in a co-authored book with Scott Noegel tentatively entitled *Studies in Song of Songs*.

‘division’ (Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 913). This Ugaritic–Phoenician evidence indicates that the root פלג ‘divide’ and nouns derived therefrom was part of the Canaanite lexis as well, even if this root was not standard in the JH lexicon. Its scattered occurrences in the Bible are restricted to poetic texts, suggesting that it was part of Hebrew poetic diction, including JH poetic diction—category (a) above—but not in everyday use in JH. The totality of the evidence yields the conclusion that פלגות (‘divisions’) in Judg. 5.15-16 is a lexical trait of IH.

(vi) The root מַחַק (‘strike’) in v. 26. As Waltisberg correctly noted, the picture concerning this root is complicated (Waltisberg 1999: 222-24). This verb could derive from proto-Semitic *mḥq*, in which case it is not particularly relevant to our discussion. The meaning of this root, as attested in Aramaic, for example, is ‘blot out, wipe out, erase’ (see, e.g., Sokoloff 1990: 301), a slightly different connotation from ‘strike’ and one which does not quite fit the context of Judg. 5.26. I therefore prefer the alternative approach, to derive מַחַק in v. 26 from the proto-Semitic root *mḥd*, which in Hebrew appears as מַחֵץ, but which in Old Aramaic would appear first as מַחַק and then as מַחַע, though neither of these is attested, since only the later form מַחַח/מַחַה, reflecting dissimilation of *ḥet-ayin* to *ḥet-aleph*, occurs (see, e.g., Sokoloff 1990: 299). Of course, in v. 26 the expected Hebrew form מַחֵץ occurs adjacent to מַחַק, but this is typical in the Bible, with standard and non-standard forms occurring side-by-side (as a parallel note that Job includes not only the aforementioned 13 cases of מַלִּיץ, but also ten cases of מַלִּים; and see the discussion in Young 1992b; 1993: 124). In any case, I analyze מַחַק as an Aramaic-like feature in the Song of Deborah due to its northern provenance. The shift of /d/ > /q/, I should note, occurs in Deir ‘Alla as well (Hackett 1980: 111).<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these six items, Waltisberg also treated the verbal system, though I must confess that I do not fully follow him here (Waltisberg 1999: 224-26). He appears to admit that the verbal system in Judges 5 is archaic in nature, in line with most scholars who point to the repeated use of the PC to express the preterite; but since he wishes to date the poem to the late period, he simply concludes that during the Persian and Hellenistic

24. The discussion in note 22 vis-à-vis the phoneme /t/ is relevant here as well for the phoneme /d/. That is to say, the use of the letter ק to represent this sound may reflect an actual phonetic shift of /d/ > /q/, or it simply may be a scribal convention to graphically represent the sound /d/, that is, [d], which still was pronounced at this time in Aramaic, in the Deir ‘Alla dialect, and in at least the subdialect of IH represented in Judg. 5.

epochs it was possible for Hebrew poets to write poetry in an archaizing style. I agree that this is possible, but it seems much more preferable simply to conclude that the Song of Deborah is ancient.

From all of the above, it is obvious, to me and to many previous scholars (indeed as early as Burney 1903: 172-73), that Judges 5 is an ancient poem written in the northern dialect of ancient Hebrew. The features which Waltisberg considered to be Aramaisms are instead to be understood as Aramaic-like features, lexical and grammatical traits shared by IH and Aramaic. There are, in fact, many other IH features in the poem, including items with parallels in Aramaic and items with parallels in Ugaritic-Phoenician. These include (I continue the numbering system from above):

(vii) The use of the relative pronoun –וּ in v. 7 (twice), to be correlated with the same or similar (𐤗𐤍) form in Phoenician, Ammonite, and MH (see Rendsburg 2002a: 103).

(viii) The 3rd masc. sg. SC ַדַּרְדַּר (‘went down’) in v. 13 (twice), with a vocalization reflecting that of Aramaic.

(ix) The presence of מִן שָׁמַיִם before an anarthrous noun, as in מִן שָׁמַיִם (‘from the heavens’) in v. 20 (see other examples in categories (c) and (d) at the outset; and see Rendsburg 2002a: 132).

(x) The noun סַפֵּל (‘bowl’) in v. 25, attested elsewhere in the Bible only in Judg. 6.38 in the Gideon cycle, twice in Ugaritic and more than 20 times in MH (see Rendsburg 1999a: 257-58).

(xi) The root יַבֵּב (‘whine, shrill’) in v. 28, a *hapax legomenon* in the Bible, but slightly better attested in MH (one occurrence in a Tannaitic source [*m. Roš Haš.* 4.9] and one occurrence in an Amoraic source [*y. Yeb.* 15.4]) and in Aramaic.

(xii) The fem. sg. nominal ending –ôṭ in חַכְמֹת (‘wise woman’) in v. 29, as in Phoenician (see Rendsburg 2002a: 99-101).

This long list of items—twelve in number if item (i) is seen as evidence of IH, eleven in total if this item is simply a feature of ABH—together demonstrate that Judges 5 is to be seen as an Israelian composition. As to the antiquity of the poem, we may point to item (i) noted above, that is, the 2nd fem. sg. SC marker הִי–, along with two other features: the use of זֶה as a relative marker זֶה סִינַי (‘the one of Sinai’) in v. 5 (see Robertson 1972: 62-65), and the use of the 3rd fem. sg. PC with energetic –nā in תִּשְׁלַחנָה (‘she sent’) in v. 26 (see pp. 116-17 for discussion<sup>25</sup>).

25. I disagree, however, with Robertson’s comment, ‘It is, of course, obvious that the MT is in error’. The energetic ending can take different forms; see JM: 172-73).

In short, the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 is representative of both ABH and IH, with several markers of the former and numerous markers of the latter.<sup>26</sup>

### 6. *Conclusion*

Thirty-five years after it was published, Hurvitz's classic study of Aramaisms and Aramaic-like features in BH (Hurvitz 1968) stands as a solid statement. It presents in very concise terms a simple principle of Hebrew philology. Some additional work in the intervening years has enlarged and enhanced the picture, but nothing has contradicted the basic outline described by Hurvitz.

It is unfortunate that various scholars totally ignore linguistic evidence in their rush to date a panoply of biblical texts to the Persian period and even to the Hellenistic period. Notwithstanding some recent attempts by Hurvitz, there is little that the serious scholar of Hebrew philology can do to combat an argument that consciously disregards the testimony of language.

Far more praiseworthy are those scholars who realize that efforts to date texts to the late period need to be supported by linguistic evidence. Foremost among these individuals in his attention to such details has been Alexander Rofé. But a closer examination of five such attempts reveals (1) that in one case we are dealing with the intentional use of Aramaic-like features for stylistic purposes, because the story is set in Aram (Gen. 24); (2) that in three cases we must keep in mind that the geographical setting is in northern Israel, with the resultant conclusion that the linguistic evidence bespeaks the Israelian dialect of ancient Hebrew (1 Sam. 1–2; 1 Kgs 21; Judg. 5); and (3) that in one additional case, even when there is no clear connection to northern Israel, the evidence of language nevertheless points to that region as the place of composition (Ps. 116).

I have written this article as a call to the authors of the studies treated above, and to all other scholars who wish to date sections of the Bible to the late period, to consider the totality of the linguistic evidence. I congratulate the individuals whose work I have critiqued herein for realizing—unlike too many other scholars—that research of this ilk needs to incorporate the evidence of language. But in their rush to identify

26. The conclusion that Judg. 5 is representative of ABH (in addition to its being a hallmark of IH) is not dependent on how one defines ABH. For a general discussion, see Young 1992b; 1993: 122-30.

Aramaisms in these texts, these authors have neglected the guidelines so excellently drafted by Hurvitz. Due consideration of the whole picture reveals that even a conglomeration of so-called Aramaisms in a particular text is insufficient grounds to assign a Persian-period date to the section of the Bible under study.

I wish to conclude with a personal statement. Over the years I have enjoyed warm relationships with both Marc Brettler and Alex Rofé (with the latter notwithstanding the distance of 6000 miles which separates us). Their erudition is obvious to all, and I have learned much from their numerous excellent publications. In like spirit, I have benefited from the many writings of Michael Barré on Hebrew poetry and on Phoenician inscriptions, though I do not know this scholar personally. (I cannot say more about Michael Waltisberg, because his treatment of Judg. 5 is the first of his writings that I have encountered.) My critical assessment of these individuals' work contained herein should be viewed solely as an indication of how seriously I take their scholarship.