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The author apologizes for the repeated error that appears in the printed
version of this article: in notes 32, 33, 51, 65, 69, and 82, the spelling
Ma^çagarim should be corrected to *Ma^ʾagarim*.



EISENBRAUNS

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In an article published 15 years ago, I called attention to a series of Israelian Hebrew (IH) features that appear in the blessings to the northern tribes in Genesis 49 (e.g., גֵרֶם ‘bone’ in the blessing to Issachar, שֹפָר ‘beauty’ in the blessing to Naphtali, etc.).¹ This essay, devoted to the similar blessings to the tribes in Deuteronomy 33, is a natural complement to that article. As we shall see, also in this poem one encounters grammatical forms and lexical items that reflect the regional dialects of the tribes.

It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this essay to my friend and colleague Jeffrey H. Tigay, whose many publications have illumined the world of the Bible and the ancient Near East and whose commentary on Deuteronomy is a singular achievement, destined to remain the standard work for years to come.² I am especially delighted to develop further the succinct statement penned by our jubilarian in that volume: “It is also possible that the poem uses words or forms from regional variations of Hebrew spoken by the individual tribes.”³

1. The noun מְגִדָּה ‘choice fruit’ appears five times in the blessing to Joseph in vv. 13–16. This word occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Song 4:13, 4:16, 7:14; the concentration of IH features in the Song of Songs reveals the

Author’s note: I am grateful to Aaron Rubin for fruitful discussions on a number of the issues raised in this article and for his critical reading of an earlier version thereof.

1. G. A. Rendsburg, “Israelian Hebrew Features in Genesis 49,” in *Let Your Colleagues Praise You: Studies in Memory of Stanley Gevirtz* (part 2; ed. R. J. Ratner, L. M. Barth, M. L. Gevirtz, and B. Zuckerman; Rolling Hills Estates, CA: Western Academic Press, 1991–92) = *Maarav* 8 (1992) 161–70.

2. J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996).

3. *Ibid.*, 519.

composition to be of northern provenance.⁴ The distribution of מְגֵד in the Bible, accordingly, demonstrates that this lexeme was at home in northern Israel but was not utilized in Judahite Hebrew (JH). The presence of an Aramaic cognate מַגְד, with meanings ‘precious ware, costly gift, etc.’ as well as ‘choice fruit’,⁵ solidifies this conclusion. One happily notes an adumbration of this position by the master Hebraist S. R. Driver more than a century ago: “The word may be here a North Isr. Aramaism.”⁶

2. The noun יָרֵחַ ‘month’ occurs in v. 14, also in the blessing to Joseph (in the plural form יָרֵחִים). The Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) form is חֹדֶשׁ ‘month’, appearing 281 times in the Bible; clearly it was used in all strata of ancient Hebrew. By contrast, יָרֵחַ appears only 12 times, with a distribution pointing to its home in northern Israel.⁷

The word יָרֵחַ appears in another decidedly Israelian context in 2 Kgs 15:13, within the short description of the brief reign of King Shallum.⁸

4. See my “Israelian Hebrew in the Song of Songs,” in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (ed. S. E. Fassberg and A. Hurvitz; Publication of the Institute for Advanced Studies 1; Jerusalem: Magnes / Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 315–23.

5. For Aramaic מַגְד, see M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, Midrashic Literature and Targumim* (2 vols.; London: Luzac, 1903) 2:726, with the meaning ‘precious ware’ as well as ‘fine fruit’; and M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1990) 289, with the form מַגְדִּינִין meaning ‘precious goods’. See also Syriac מַגְדָּא ‘costly gift’ in C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1928) 373; though J. Payne Smith (*A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1903] 249) offered the translation “some sort of fruit” for this word. For further discussion of this root, see my “Some False Leads in the Identification of Late Biblical Hebrew Texts: The Cases of Genesis 24 and 1 Samuel 2:27–36,” *JBL* 121 (2002) 29–30.

6. S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; New York: Scribner, 1895) 405.

7. The data from other sources are similar: חֹדֶשׁ occurs 2× in Ben Sira and 87× in the DSS (see *DCH*, 3:165), whereas יָרֵחַ occurs 0× in Ben Sira and 4× in the DSS (see *DCH* 4:296). The inscriptional evidence is an even split: the former occurs 8× in the Arad ostraca, while the latter occurs 8× in the Gezer calendar (see further below). I do not include Arad ostracon 20, line 2 (which apparently is counted by *DCH* 4:296, with 9 attestations of יָרֵחַ in Hebrew inscriptions), on which see F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, J. J. M. Roberts, C. L. Seow, and R. E. Whitaker, *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 43.

8. For previous discussion, see my *Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Kings* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2002) 127–28. Note that the numeral “28” given on p. 127 should be corrected to “281.”

We also encounter the noun ירה three times in the description of the building of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:37–38, 8:2). There is nothing more Judahite and “non-northern” than the temple in Jerusalem; thus, at first glance, the presence of ירה in these chapters would seem to counter our argument that this lexeme is an IH feature. When we recognize, however, that in each of its three usages ירה precedes month names known from Phoenician (Ziv, Bul, and Etanim, respectively), the evidence suggests the following: not only were Phoenician builders and artisans responsible for the construction of the temple, but Phoenician scribes were responsible for recording the activity.⁹ The individual responsible for the final form of the book of Kings simply “lifted” this material from an earlier source and retained the Phoenician elements.

The other text in which one finds the noun ירה in common usage is the book of Job (3:6, 7:3, 29:2, 39:2).¹⁰ Here we are dealing with the technique of style-switching, a prominent feature of this composition. The many Aramaic-like features (and Arabic-like features as well) in the book of Job provide local color to the story, geographically set in the eastern desert fringe.¹¹

The other three attestations of ירה in the Bible are as follows: Exod 2:2, Deut 21:13, Zech 11:8. The third of these may be explained as a true Aramaism in the prose of a postexilic writer; the other two require special comment.

Exod 2:2 is part of the Moses birth story and thus within the larger context of the slavery-plagues-exodus narrative, in which no other signs of IH are present. However, the author's desire to treat his readers to a superb display of alliteration led him to select the dialectal word ירהים (in the plural), because of the expression ותחמרה בחמר ‘she loamed it with loam’ in the next verse. Note the presence of the consonants *het*, *mem*, and *resh* in all three words.¹²

9. They apparently recorded not only these chapters but other sections of the account of Solomon's reign as well. Note the proper nouns חירום ‘Hirom’ (1 Kgs 5:24, 5:32, 7:40; the first two refer to the king of Tyre, the third refers to the master craftsman) and אלות ‘Elot’ (1 Kgs 9:26). Both forms reflect the characteristic Phoenician shift *a* > *o*, on which, see J. Fox, “A Sequence of Vowel Shifts in Phoenician and Other Languages,” *JNES* 55 (1996) 37–47. A thorough survey of the account of Solomon's reign with an eye toward identifying additional Phoenician features remains a desideratum.

10. There are two attestations of SBH חרש in Job (14:5, 21:21).

11. 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) 54–55.

12. On this and many other examples in the early chapters of Exodus, see my “Alliteration in the Exodus Narrative,” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. C. Cohen et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 83–100.

Concerning Deut 21:13, it is apposite to note that scholars have suggested that the book of Deuteronomy is a northern composition.¹³ A thorough investigation of this question using the linguistic evidence, especially the differentiations between IH and JH, still has not been conducted. I myself have pointed to an occasional Northernism in Deuteronomy,¹⁴ and yet at the same time one hesitates to claim that a significant concentration of elements of this sort is present in the book. Until this question is settled with some certainty, for the nonce we should judge Deuteronomy to be a Judahite composition, and thus I would not include this passage within the IH corpus.

The overall picture that emerges from this survey of ירה is that this lexeme is an IH trait, notwithstanding an occasional attestation in Judahite texts. This conclusion is bolstered by the presence of ירה in Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Aramaic.¹⁵ In the first two, *ḥdt* / *חדש* is limited to 'new moon',¹⁶ while *yṛh* / ירה is employed for 'month';¹⁷ whereas in Aramaic, ירה is attested in all dialects and is used for both 'month' and 'new moon'.¹⁸

The Gezer Calendar (KAI 182) utilizes the word ירה eight times (see above, n. 7). Given the location of Gezer in the territory of Judah, the presence of ירה in this inscription presents a problem for my thesis. Presumably, the dialect at Gezer—situated in the far northwestern corner of Judah, at the edge of the

13. See, among others, E. Nielsen, "Historical Perspectives and Geographical Horizons: On the Question of North-Israelite Elements in Deuteronomy," *ASTI* 11 (1977-78) 77-89; H. L. Ginsberg, *The Israelite Heritage of Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982) esp. 19-24; and M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 44-50. For a brief discussion, see Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, xxiii.

14. G. A. Rendsburg, "Notes on Israelian Hebrew (II)," *JNSL* 26 (2000) 33-45, esp. 35-36, 42.

15. Regarding the first two, I follow the classification schema of H. L. Ginsberg, assigning Ugaritic and Phoenician to the same subgroup within Canaanite, "Phoenic," to use Ginsberg's term; see H. L. Ginsberg, "The Northwest Semitic Languages," in *World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 2: *Patriarchs* (ed. B. Mazar; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970) 102-24, 293.

16. G. del Olmo Lete and J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica* (2 vols.; Aula Orientalis Supplementa; Barcelona: Editorial AUSA, 1996-2000) 1:173-74; and C. R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (OLA 90; Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 177-78.

17. Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica*, 2:536-37; and Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*, 215.

18. See, e.g., Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 245; Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 197; D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) 371; and A. Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 1:359-60.

coastal plain, bordering on the southern extreme of what would emerge as the Northern Kingdom of Israel within decades of the writing of this inscription—was a border dialect that included features of IH.¹⁹

In conclusion, the noun ירח ‘month’ is a classic example of an IH trait, based on (a) the distribution of this word in the Bible, (b) the opposition of this term to SBH חרש, and (c) the cognate data from Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Aramaic.

3. The form הַרְרִי ‘mountains (of)’ in v. 15, also in the blessing to Joseph, is an example of the reduplicatory plural of a geminate noun.²⁰ This particular form occurs 10 times in the Bible, as opposed to the standard form הַרְרִי, which occurs 28 times. The complete paradigm is offered by the noun עַם ‘people’, with the standard plural forms עַמִּים (absolute), עַמִּי (construct), and with the atypical plural forms עַמְמִים (absolute) in Neh 9:22, עַמְמִי (construct) in Neh 9:24 (see also עַמְמִיךָ in Judg 5:14). As the following will demonstrate, the latter forms appear in the Bible overwhelmingly in Israelian texts.

Before presenting the biblical evidence, note that this grammatical form is a standard feature of Aramaic, as witnessed, for example, by the following Old Aramaic forms: עַמְמַיָּא ‘peoples’, כַּדְדִּין ‘pitchers’, and שַׁלְלִיָּא ‘shades’.²¹ This feature, therefore, represents an isogloss shared by Aramaic and IH, a point recognized already by E. Y. Kutscher.²²

Biblical examples include: Num 23:7 הַרְרִי (as part of the style-switching device present in the Balaam oracles²³), Judg 5:14 עַמְמִיךָ and 5:15 חַקְקִי (both in the Song of Deborah, a northern poem²⁴), Pss 36:7, 50:10, 76:5, 87:1, 133:3,

19. Note that Shmuel Ahituv in his standard edition of Hebrew inscriptions (*Ha-Ketav ve-ha-Mikhtav* [Jerusalem: Bialik, 2005] 228–32, esp. 228) included the Gezer Calendar in his chapter on Israel, and not in his chapter on Judah. Ahituv’s main reason for designating the Gezer Calendar as Israelian is the presence of the contracted diphthong in the word קָץ in line 7 of the text.

20. For the term *reduplicatory* and for the Afroasiatic background of this formation, see J. H. Greenberg, “Internal *a*-Plurals in Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic),” in *Afrikanistische Studien* (ed. J. Lukas; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955) 198–204.

21. See S. Segert, *Altaramäische Grammatik* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1975) 537, 546.

22. E. Y. Kutscher, “Ha-Safa ha-’Ivrit u-Venot Livyata be-Meshekh ha-Dorot,” *Hadoar* 47 (1968–69) 507–9, in particular 507; reprinted in E. Y. Kutscher, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977) שֶׁה-שֶׁטוּ, in particular שוּ.

23. See my “Linguistic Variation and the ‘Foreign’ Factor in the Hebrew Bible,” *IOS* 15 (1996) 183–84.

24. See my “Hurvitz Redux: On the Continued Scholarly Inattention to a Simple Principle of Hebrew Philology,” in *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (ed. I. Young; JSOTSup 369; London: Continuum, 2003) 122–26.

all הררי, Ps 77:18 **הצצִיךְ** (all in northern psalms²⁵), Prov 29:13 **תככים** (in an IH composition²⁶), Song 2:17, 4:6 **צללים**, Song 4:8 הררי (in an IH composition²⁷), and Neh 9:22 **עממים**, Neh 9:24 **עממי** (in a text that is both northern and late²⁸). To this list we may add the following: Jer 6:4 **צללי** (either as part of the Benjaminite dialect or as an Aramaism²⁹), and Ezek 4:12, 15 **גללי** (most likely an Aramaism). This leaves only one occurrence in a Judahite text, Hab 3:6 הררי, and one occurrence in a text of uncertain provenance, Deut 8:9 הרריה (on which, see above, p. 171).

The evidence is clear: based on both the distribution of this feature in the Bible and its standard usage in Aramaic, we conclude that the reduplicatory plural of a geminate noun is an IH characteristic.

4. The noun **שָׂפַע** ‘abundance, multitude’ occurs in v. 19 in the joint blessing to Zebulun and Issachar. Elsewhere in the Bible, this lexeme takes the feminine form **שָׂפָעָה**, the distribution of which points to its being an Israelian feature.³⁰ The word occurs twice in Kgs 9:17, in a story set in northern Israel; twice in Job (22:11, 38:34), where style switching is at work; once in the prophet Ezekiel’s oracle to Tyre (26:10), where the related technique of addressee switching is at work;³¹ and once in Second Isaiah (60:6), which most likely should be considered an Aramaism in the lexis of the exilic prophet.

The two noun forms occur, albeit infrequently, in Mishnaic Hebrew (MH): **שָׂפַע** occurs 6 times in *Sipre Devarim* 354 (and only here), in an exposition of our verse; and **שָׂפָעָה** occurs twice in the corpus, in the parallel texts *m. Soṭah*

25. Idem, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (SBLMS 43; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 40–42, 58, 75, 93.

26. Relevant bibliography includes: Ginsberg, *Israelian Heritage of Judaism*, 36; and Y. Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984) 440 and n. 6. The most complete study is Y. Chen, *Israelian Hebrew in the Book of Proverbs* (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2000).

27. As noted above in the treatment of **מגד**; again, see my “Israelian Hebrew in the Song of Songs.”

28. G. A. Rendsburg, “The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9,” *Bib* 72 (1991) 348–66.

29. On these issues in the book of Jeremiah, see below, in the discussions of items nos. 5 and 7. In general, see C. Smith, “*With an Iron Pen and a Diamond Tip*”: *Linguistic Peculiarities in the Book of Jeremiah* (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2003).

30. See my *Kings*, 114–15.

31. On this technique, by which the prophets adopt linguistic features of the foreign nation being addressed, see my “Linguistic Variation and the ‘Foreign’ Factor in the Hebrew Bible,” 184–88.

8:1 and *Sipre Devarim* 192.³² More substantial is the productivity of the verbal root שפַע in MH: it occurs 36× in Qal, Piel, Pual, and Hiphil conjugations, with a range of meanings, such as ‘pour in abundance, overmeasure, etc.’, as well as the derived sense of ‘slant, make diagonal, etc.’³³ The MH evidence is relevant to our enterprise (see also below, item nos. 6, 7, 10), given the Galilean provenance of the Mishna and related Tannaitic literature.³⁴ This explains why many IH lexemes, which appear relatively rarely in the Bible, are attested more frequently in MH.

Even more generous evidence is forthcoming from Aramaic, in which the root is exceedingly common and productive, generating both nouns and verbs, especially in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, and Syriac.³⁵

Examples from the Targumim include *Tg. Neofiti* to Exod 26:12–13, with five instances of the root שפַע ‘overflow, abundant’ (3× in the text, 2× in the margin) to render the Hebrew root סרה. *Tg. Yonatan* incorporates the root שפַע into its slightly expansive rendering of Hebrew כנהר ‘like the River (Euphrates)’ in Isa 48:18, 59:19, 66:12: כשפַע נהר פרת ‘like the flow of the River Euphrates’. *Tg. Proverbs* uses the root שפַע to render Hebrew פּרץ in Prov 3:10 and to render Hebrew פּרץ in Prov 5:16. These examples—to which many more could be added—indicate the extent to which the root שפַע is utilized in Aramaic.

In addition, the word שפַעַת occurs in a Punic inscription with the meaning ‘abundance’.³⁶

This cognate evidence from Aramaic and Phoenician (Punic) provides the background for the presence of the noun שפַע/שפַעַה in the book of Job (style switching), in Ezekiel’s oracle to Tyre (addressee switching), and in Deut 33:19 within the blessing to Zebulun and Issachar (representing a lexical isogloss shared by IH and the neighboring dialects/languages to the north).

32. Information from *Ma’agarim: The Hebrew Language Historical Dictionary* accessible online at <http://hebrew-treasures.huji.ac.il/> (by subscription) or via the CD-ROM version (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1998).

33. Data from *Ma’agarim*; see also M. Moreshet, *Leqsiqon ha-Po’al she-nithaddesh bi-Leshon ha-Tanna’im* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1980) 375.

34. See my two main studies: “The Galilean Background of Mishnaic Hebrew,” in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (ed. L. I. Levine; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992) 225–40; and “The Geographical and Historical Background of the Mishnaic Hebrew Lexicon,” *Orient* 38 (2003) 105–15.

35. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 563–64; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 1172; Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 590.

36. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary*, 478–79.

5. Scholars are divided on the meaning and derivation of שְׁפוּנֵי in v. 19 at the end of the joint blessing to Zebulun and Issachar. While some prefer to derive this word from the root סָפַן ‘cover over’,³⁷ with the assumption of hyper-corrective orthography, namely, *śin* for *samekh*,³⁸ most likely the meaning of the word in our passage is ‘hidden’ to be derived from the root צָפַן ‘hide’. As such, the phrase וּשְׁפוּנֵי טְמוּנֵי חוֹל includes two relatively synonymous terms, to be rendered ‘the hidden treasures of the sand’.³⁹

For this interpretation to be valid, one must assume the shift of *śade* to *śin* in this instance. This shift is attested elsewhere in the Bible in the proper name יִשְׁחָק ‘Isaac’, occurring 4 times in the corpus in place of the standard form יִצְחָק. The picture is especially complicated given the many reflexes of the root for “laugh” in Semitic,⁴⁰ and yet the distribution of יִשְׁחָק indicates that we are dealing with an IH feature.

The form is best known from the book of Amos, where it appears two times (7:9, 7:16). To my mind, Amos is a northern book, in line with the argument first advanced by David Qimḥi, who identified the prophet’s home town as Tekoa of the Galilee and not Tekoa of the Judean wilderness.⁴¹ Even if one accepts the majority view, however, that Amos hailed from Judah,⁴² one still could imagine IH elements in his composition, either in light of the addressee-switching technique prevalent in other prophetic books (see above) and/or because the prophet’s words were recorded in the north.⁴³

The form יִשְׁחָק also occurs in Jer 33:26 (the only reference to Isaac in the book), about which two (not mutually exclusive) points may be made. First, it

37. Thus, e.g., BDB 706; and HALOT 928.

38. On this phenomenon, see, in general, J. Blau, *On Pseudo-Corrections in Some Semitic Languages* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970). Blau commented on this word on p. 124, though he doubts its derivation from סָפַן.

39. Thus E. Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken, 1995) 1010.

40. See the classic study by R. C. Steiner, *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic* (AOS 59; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1977).

41. For a recent treatment advocating this approach, see S. N. Rosenbaum, *Amos of Israel* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1990). For a convenient summary of the primary data, though with a contrary conclusion, see A. Hakham, “‘Amos,” in *Tre ‘Asar* (Da‘at Miqra’; Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1990) 6.

42. For a recent championing of this position, see R. C. Steiner, *Stockmen from Tekoa, Sycamores from Sheba* (CBQMS 36; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2003).

43. Steiner, *The Case for Fricative-Laterals in Proto-Semitic*, 116.

is possible that the form reflects the local dialect of Jeremiah from the village of Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Second, because the prophet refers to the reunion of the Northern and Southern tribes in this section (see vv. 14–15 in particular), he may have selected this form as a deliberate stylistic device.

The only occurrence of **ישחק** that I cannot readily explain is Ps 105:9, which presumably is a Judahite composition (there being no other immediate signs of IH in the poem). Interestingly, the parallel verse in 1 Chr 16:16 reads **יצחק**, which either reflects a different recension of the poem or may represent a reversion to the accepted form of the name by a late author incorporating an earlier psalm into his work.

We also should note the representation of the name Isaac in a Demotic ostraccon dated 152/151 B.C.E., where the orthography ʔyʕḥg suggests **ישחק** rather than **יצחק**, implying that the bearer of this name was a northern Israelite.⁴⁴ On the other hand, since **ישחק** is the only form of ‘Isaac’ that appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls (7×, including the attestation in CD A 3:3), one should conclude that the form with *śin* replaced the SBH form with *šade*, in line with the general trend in LBH and postbiblical Hebrew for the root **שחק** to replace the root **צחק**.⁴⁵

The picture that emerges from the evidence presented above is that the shift of *šade* to *śin* was a feature of IH phonology.⁴⁶ Even more fascinating is the geographical correlation reflected in the form **שפוני** in Deut 33:19 and the two occurrences of **ישחק** in Amos in particular.⁴⁷ Given the location of (northern) Tekoa within the territory of Issachar, we may wish to limit this feature to a relatively restricted area within northern Israel, namely, the lower Galilee, the Jezreel Valley, and the Carmel mountain range and surrounding coastal regions.⁴⁸

44. Thus R. C. Steiner, “On the Dating of Hebrew Sound Changes (*Ḥ > Ḥ and *Ġ > ʕ) and Greek Translations (2 Esdras and Judith),” *JBL* 124 (2005) 237 and n. 43. I am grateful to Richard Steiner for bringing this reference to my attention (e-mail, August 5, 2006).

45. M. Moreshet, “*šahaq—śahaq; yišḥaq—yiśḥaq*,” *Bet Miqra* 35 (1968) 127–30.

46. Regardless of the specific phonetic factors involved, a point that I have not touched on here.

47. Moreshet, “*šahaq—śahaq; yišḥaq—yiśḥaq*,” 129, specifically rejected the notion that **ישחק** represents a northern dialect. He attributed the usage of this form in Amos to literary effect, to allow the reader to hear the root **שחק**, in the sense of ‘scorn, disdain’.

48. As an aside, note that there is more evidence for the interchange of *šade* and *samekh*, which may be related to the present issue, and which also is an IH phonological trait. See further my *Kings*, 54–55.

6. The root **ספן** generally means ‘cover with, panel over’ in the Bible, but this meaning is unsuitable in the case of **סְפֹנִין** in v. 21 in the blessing to Gad.⁴⁹ Instead, one should follow the lead of the NJPSV translators, who rendered the word as ‘revered’, with an eye to MH **סְפֹנִין**.⁵⁰ This specific form (either singular or plural) occurs 4 times in Tannaitic texts (e.g., *Mekhilta Wayyissa* 2), with an additional 3 attestations of the verb **ספן** ‘honor, revere’ in the corpus (e.g., *t. Ket.* 7:5). In addition, there are 20 occurrences of the root in Amoraic and Geonic sources.⁵¹ The context of Deut 33:21 supports this interpretation, with **סְפֹנִין** serving as an adjective to the preceding noun **מְחַקֵּק** ‘ruler’, yielding the phrase ‘revered chieftain’ (thus NJPSV), ‘esteemed ruler’ (my suggested rendering), or the like.⁵²

49. Though the Jewish interpreters of late antiquity and the Middle Ages commonly interpreted the word in this fashion, leading to the idea that the term refers to the burial place of Moses; thus, for example, *Tg. Onqelos*, *Tg. Neofiti*, *Tg. Ps-J.*, *t. Soṭah* 4:8, *Sipre Devarim* 355, Rashi, Seforno, et al.

50. See also Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 410 n. 165, which calls attention to Rashi’s comment at *b. Meg.* 6a, in which he glossed **ספן** with the word **חשוב** ‘important’.

51. Information from *Ma‘agarim*. Normally in my studies I cite only the MH¹ (= Tannaitic) sources, which are representative of Hebrew while still a living language. In the present instance, I cite the material from MH² (= Amoraic period) and beyond, because to my mind the 20 additional attestations in these sources are evidence of our word’s vitality in the postbiblical period; that is to say, these usages are not based on a frozen, fossilized biblical usage that is being imitated but rather develop from the active and productive use of the word in the earlier Tannaitic period. The entries for this word in the older dictionaries are still valuable: J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (2nd ed.; 4 vols.; Berlin: Harz, 1924; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963) 3:567; and A. Kohut, *‘Arukh ha-Shalem / Aruch Completum* (2nd ed.; 8 vols.; Vienna: Menorah, 1926) 6:104.

52. The meaning ‘esteemed, revered’ for **סְפֹנִין** in this passage was adduced already by J. Leclerc (1657–1736) and J. A. Dathe (1731–91), whose interpretation was brought to the attention of modern scholars by A. Caquot (“Les Bénédictiones de Moïse [Deutéronome 33,6–25], II: de Joseph a Asher,” *Semitica* 33 [1983] 71). As far as I can tell, no medieval Jewish commentators interpreted the passage this way; my sincere thanks to colleagues Alan Cooper, Isaac Gottlieb, Robert Harris, and Martin Lockshin for their assistance on this issue (email exchanges, August 2006). The medievals may be silent, but note the following: Professor Lockshin directed my attention to the work of Moses Mendelssohn, who translated **סְפֹנִין** as **פּעֶרְעֶהֶרֶט**, i.e., ‘verehrt’, with the notes in the Be’ur (from the hand of Herz Homberg, who is responsible for the Deuteronomy volume) providing further elucidation. Apparently, this interpretation was very much in the air in the 18th century, as the works of Leclerc, Dathe, and Mendelssohn attest. I have not been able to determine whether the translators of the NJPSV consciously followed Leclerc

The root also occurs sporadically in Aramaic, though in a variety of forms, indicating that it remained productive: as a verb in Jewish Palestinian sources⁵³ and as an adjective **טְפִינְי** ‘worthy’ in Jewish Babylonian sources.⁵⁴

This trio of indications—sole attestation in the Bible in the blessing to Gad, more frequent usage in MH, and presence in Aramaic—demonstrates that the word **טְפִינְי** ‘esteemed, revered’ in Deut 33:21 is an IH lexeme.⁵⁵

As an aside, I note the juxtaposition of the blessings to Zebulun/Issachar and to Gad, thereby producing alliteration between **שְׁפִינְי** ‘hidden’ in v. 19 and **טְפִינְי** ‘esteemed, revered’ in v. 21. Above (item no. 2), I explained the presence of **יְרֵחִים** ‘months’ in Exod 2:2 *alliterationis causa*—and the present example is another illustration of this literary device in biblical literature.⁵⁶

7. The next word in v. 21, **וַיָּתָא** ‘he came’ derives from the root **אתה** (אתה) ‘come’.⁵⁷ This verb is the regular Aramaic verb for ‘come’ (the Targumim regularly use it to render Hebrew **בוא**, for example). In Hebrew, the root **אתה** is limited to certain contexts.

We begin with examples within style-switching environments. The root is used three times in the short passages concerning Dumah and Arabia in Isa 21:11–15. In addition, one finds 4 appearances in the book of Job (3:25, 16:22,

and Dathe, read Mendelssohn/Homberg, or independently arrived at the same explication based on the MH usage. There is no discussion of this point in H. M. Orlinsky, *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1970) 257.

53. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 386.

54. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 825.

55. This understanding of the passage, moreover, obviates the need for textual emendation of **טְפִינְי** and the following word **וַיָּתָא** to produce **וַיָּתָאטְפִינְי**, with the support of the LXX (also see Deut 33:5). This proposal has a long history in biblical scholarship, beginning with F. Giesebrecht (“Zwei *cruces interpretum* Ps. 45,7 und Deut. 33,21,” *ZAW* 7 [1887] 290–93). See also R. Gordis, “Critical Notes on the Blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxiii),” *JTS* 34 (1933) 390–92; N. H. Tur-Sinai, *Ha-Lashon ve-ha-Sefer* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1950–55) 2:112; and N. H. Tur-Sinai, *Peshuto shel Miqra’* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1962–68) 1:240. One may agree with I. L. Seeligmann (“A Psalm from Pre-Regal Times,” *VT* 14 [1964] 85 n. 2) that this proposal “is more surprising than convincing.” My thanks to Chaim Cohen for a very helpful exchange on this issue (e-mail, August 2006).

56. For a different interpretation regarding these two words, although also with an eye to literary effect, see I. Young, “The Style of the Gezer Calendar and Some ‘Archaic Biblical Hebrew’ Passages,” *VT* 42 (1992) 372–73.

57. I am less concerned with the atypical morphology of this form, which seems to be endemic to this root in the Bible; see H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1922) 442.

30:14, 37:22). All of these point to the Transjordan, which also holds for the location of Gad, of course.

Prov 1:27 provides an instance of the root אָתִי in a decidedly Israelian composition.⁵⁸ The two attestations in Jeremiah (3:22, 12:9) may be due to the prophet's Benjaminite dialect, or they may be Aramaisms in his diction. The largest distribution of the root אָתִי in the Bible is represented by 7 appearances in Second Isaiah (41:5, 41:23, 41:25, 44:7, 45:11, 56:9, 56:12); once more, Aramaic influence is indicated.⁵⁹

This leaves only a scattering of usages of the verb אָתִי: in Deut 33:2 and Ps 68:32, we are in the realm of archaic poetry;⁶⁰ and in Mic 4:8, we may have a conscious employment of an archaism to evoke "the memories of the language of old theophanies (Deut 33:2)."⁶¹

Finally, it is important to note the twofold presence of the root אָתִי 'come' in the Deir 'Alla inscription (I.1, II.14),⁶² thereby providing firsthand testimony to the use of this verb in the territory of Gad.

8. The verb יִנֹּק in v. 22 in the blessing to Dan is the only attestation of this root in the Bible.⁶³ The context suggests a meaning 'leap forth' for this verb, representative of an action typical of a lion: דָּן גּוֹר אַרְיָה יִנֹּק מִן הַבָּשָׁן 'Dan is a lion's whelp, leaping forth from the Bashan'.⁶⁴

The verb is better attested in Tannaitic sources, appearing 5 times in the corpus (*m. Hul.* 2:6, *t. Šabb.* 16:13, *t. Yom Ṭov* 3:13, *t. Hul.* 2:11, *Sipre Devarim* 355 [in this instance admittedly in explanation of Deut 33:22]).⁶⁵

In addition, the biblical *hapax legomenon* finds a congener in the relatively common Syriac verb ܩܬܩ 'shoot, hurl, sling, cast'.⁶⁶ The Hebrew and Syriac

58. See the references cited above, n. 26.

59. See M. Wagner, *Die lexikalischen und grammatikalischen Aramismen im alttestamentlichen Hebräisch* (BZAW 96; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966) 31. The entry is very short, though, and (I must add) the information conveyed there is not totally accurate; for example, the author listed Psalm 68 and Micah as exilic or postexilic texts.

60. See the classic study of G. R. Driver, "Hebrew Poetic Diction," in *Congress Volume Copenhagen 1953* (VTSup 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953) 26–39.

61. F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, *Micah* (AB 24e; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 437.

62. G. A. Rendsburg, "The Dialect of the Deir 'Alla Inscription," *BO* 50 (1993) 309–29, esp. 312–13.

63. At least as a verb, because many scholars ascribe זָקִים 'sparks, firebrands' to the root זָקַן.

64. For the evidence of the versions, see R. Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums* (Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A, Humaniora 64/1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1986) 43.

65. Information from *Ma'agarim*.

66. Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 118.

connotations fall within the semantic field—namely, action directed from one location to another—thus permitting the connection.

As we saw above in the case of **סָפוֹן** (item no. 6), the trio of indications—a singular attestation in the Bible in the blessing to a northern tribe, more frequent usage in MH, and presence in Aramaic (in this case Syriac specifically)—demonstrates that the verb **זָנַק** ‘leap forth’ in Deut 33:22 is an IH lexical element. Note further that the poem specifically places the described action in the Bashan, that is, the territory of Israel closest to Aramaic-speaking territory.

9. Hebrew has a series of words for ‘south’, most commonly **תִּימָן** (24×), **נֶגֶב** (21×), and **יָמִין** (8×)—the first and third words are obviously related to one another.⁶⁷ In v. 23, however, within the blessing to Naphtali, one encounters the word **דרום** ‘south’. This form appears 17 times in the Bible, including 13 times in Ezekiel (see further below). The other four attestations are in Job 37:17, Qoh 1:6, 11:3, and the verse under consideration, Deut 33:23.

Since the word **דרום** is the common Aramaic word for ‘south’ (see more below), one is able to explain all of the biblical appearances. Its presence in Deut 33:23 in the blessing to Naphtali represents an isogloss between IH and Aramaic. Its usage in Job 37:17 is once more part of the overall coloring of that book. In Qoh 1:6, 11:3, we are dealing with a true Aramaism in this postexilic book.⁶⁸ And the same holds for Ezekiel, composed during the early exilic period in Babylonia, with its 13 instances of **דרום** (one in Ezek 21:2; the remaining 12 appear in chaps. 40–42).

The term **דרום** is an example of an Aramaism that came to penetrate virtually all varieties of Hebrew in the postbiblical period: it occurs 6× in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4× in the Murabba‘at and Naḥal Ḥever documents, and throughout Tannaitic sources (129×).⁶⁹

דרום is so well documented in Aramaic sources, one hardly needs to provide examples.⁷⁰ The interested reader, however, could look at the Targumim, where

67. Number of occurrences derived from A. Even-Shoshan, *Qoṣṣordānšya Ḥadasha* (Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 1990) 472, 736, 1229.

68. Though it should be noted that Qoheleth also displays a concentration of IH features; see J. R. Davila, “Qoheleth and Northern Hebrew,” in *Sopher Mahir: Northwest Semitic Studies Presented to Stanislaw Segert* (ed. E. M. Cook; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) = *Maarav* 5–6 (1990) 69–87.

69. Data from *Ma‘agarim*. The standard biblical words occur sporadically, e.g., **תִּימָן** in Sir 43:16 and **נֶגֶב** in 11QT 31:10, 38:14, 39:12 (though in the last of these instances the word is glossed, as it were, by **דרום**).

70. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 155; idem, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 351; and Tal, *Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 1:194.

one finds **דרום** used to render the standard BH terms, e.g., *Tg. Onqelos* to Exod 26:18, 26:35, 27:9, rendering **תימן**; *Tg. Onqelos* to Gen 13:9, rendering **ימין**; and *Tg. Onqelos* to Gen 12:9, 13:1, 13:3, 13:14, rendering **נגב**.

In light of the regularity of **דרום** in Aramaic and in light of the additional evidence presented above, one should understand the presence of this word for 'south' in Deut 33:23 as an IH feature in the blessing to Naphtali.

10. The form **יִשָּׁה** 'possess!' (masculine singular imperative) occurs in v. 23 in the blessing to Naphtali.⁷¹ The final *-ā^h* is a sign of the lengthened imperative, while the vocalization arises from the retraction of the accent in pause (as occurs regularly, in lesser as well as in greater pause; compare, for example, the two instances in Dan 9:19).⁷²

The unusual element in this form is the retention of the *yod*, for typically the *yod* does not appear in the imperatives of *pe-yod* verbs. Thus, for example, one regularly encounters forms such as **שָׁבֵה** (Gen 27:19, 29:19; Judg 17:10; 1 Sam 22:23; Ruth 4:1; 2 Chr 25:19) and **רָדֵה** (Gen 45:9; 2 Kgs 1:9, 1:11; Ezek 32:19), two commonly attested lengthened imperatives.⁷³

The retention of the *yod* occurs in two other places in the Bible, 1 Kgs 18:34 **יִצְקוּ** and Ezek 24:3 **יִצֵק**, both from the root **יצק** 'pour'. When one recalls that this verb, along with other *pe-yod* verbs whose second root consonant is *ṣade*, attests to other atypical forms,⁷⁴ one is inclined to exclude this evidence from consideration altogether. In addition, as L. M. Kuriakos noted, these two imperatives are preceded in the same verses by strong imperatives with all three root consonants present (**מִלֵּא** 'fill!' and **שִׁפֹּת** 'place!' [2×], respectively), and thus the strong pattern may have influenced the weak pattern in both cases.⁷⁵

On the other hand, it is worth pointing out that 1 Kgs 18:34 occurs in a decidedly northern setting, the story of the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal atop Mt. Carmel.⁷⁶ We further recall that the retention of the

71. Some scholars have attempted to analyze this form as either a feminine noun or a 3rd-feminine-singular suffix-conjugation verb; see the brief discussion by S. Fassberg (*Sugyot be-Taḥbir ha-Miqra'* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994] 16 n. 23). I prefer to follow the Masora here, however, and understand the verb as a masculine singular imperative.

72. As noted by Driver, *Deuteronomy*, 413.

73. A standard exception (apologies for the oxymoron) to the norm occurs with the root **ירא** 'fear', in which the *yod* is always retained.

74. See P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991) 199–200.

75. L. M. Kuriakos, *Non-Paradigmatic Forms of Weak Verbs in Masoretic Hebrew* (Kerala, India: Assisi, 1973) 62–63.

76. For IH elements in this chapter, see my *Kings*, 52–55.

lamed in the imperative of the root לקח is an IH trait—one of the examples, in fact, is לקחי in 1 Kgs 17:11, also in the mouth of Elijah.⁷⁷ Given the parallel morphology between the root לקח and *pe-yod* verbs, one presumes a connection here. Furthermore, occasionally in Aramaic, one encounters the retention of the *yod* in the imperative of *pe-yod* verbs, e.g., *y. Git.* 50c יהב ‘bring!’, *y. Suk.* 54b יהבון ‘bring!’ (in the plural), Syriac *yiladi* ‘give birth!’ (feminine singular, obviously).⁷⁸ These usages might explain the retention of the *yod* in Ezek 24:3, assuming Aramaic influence on the Judahite prophet in Exile in Babylonia.

Though the cumulative evidence is limited, given the presence of ירשה in the Naphtali blessing in particular, I argue that this form is an IH feature. Note that the SBH form רש/רש (contextual and pausal, respectively) appears 4 times in the Bible (Deut 1:21; 2:24, 31; 1 Kgs 21:15), while the masculine plural form רשו appears twice (Deut 1:8, 9:23). These standard forms allow us to see the contrast between the JH morpheme (even if one of them occurs in 1 Kgs 21:15, in another story set in the north, with the specific word in the mouth of Jezebel) and the IH morpheme exemplified by ירשה in Deut 33:23.

11. The final item to consider is the root רבא in v. 25 in the blessing to Asher. The noun form רבאך ‘your power’ is a *hapax legomenon*, whose meaning is established by several routes.

First, we may rely on the ancient interpretive tradition stretching back to ἰσχὺς in the Septuagint and תוקף in *Tg. Onqelos*.⁷⁹

Second, we may point to the appearance of this root in a Ugaritic text.⁸⁰ CTU 1:10 II:21–22 reads as follows:

qrn dbatk btl ʿnt
qrn dbatk bʿl ymšḥ

Your horns of power, Maiden Anat
Your horns of power, may Baal anoint

77. For discussion, see *ibid.*, 46–48.

78. For the forms from the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, see Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 235. The two cited examples appear not only in the Leiden manuscript but in the Venice edition as well (and, in the case of יהב, in the Constantinople edition, too); see P. Schäfer, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi* (4 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991–2001) 3:330 and 2/5–12:173. In general, see C. Levias, *Diqduq ha-Aramit ha-Gelilit* (ed. M. Sokoloff; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1986) 117, though I cannot guarantee that all of the cited examples are accurate, on which, see the critique by M. Sokoloff on p. xiii. For the Syriac form, see E. Lipiński, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar* (OLA 80; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 427.

79. For a full survey of the versions, see Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums*, 43–44.

80. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 333 and 411 n. 189.

In conjunction with the word *qrn* ‘horn’, the traditional symbol of strength in the ancient Near East, we can assign the meaning ‘power’ to the word *dbat*.⁸¹

MH evidence for this root is very limited; indeed, there are but two (or three) attestations, both in *Sipre Devarim*, one of which expounds Deut 33:25 and all of which reflect the same phraseology. In the midrashic exposition of Deut 11:14, *Sipre Devarim* states: **וכל הארצות דובאות למלאות אותה כסף וזהב** (para. 42); which then is explained as **שיהיו כל הארצות דובאות כסף וזהב לארץ ישראל** (para. 42); regarding Deut 33:25, *Sipre Devarim* states: **שכל ארצות דובאות כסף לארץ ישראל** (para. 355).⁸² The sense is that the bounty of Israel will be indicated and enhanced by the flow of silver and gold from other lands to the land of Israel. The semantic interconnection between ‘power’ and ‘flow’—the former is the sense of the root in Ugaritic and BH, the latter is the sense in MH—is paralleled, for example, by English ‘fluent’ (from Latin *fluere* ‘flow’) > ‘influential’.

The totality of the evidence—though limited to single contexts in Ugaritic, the blessing to Asher, and *Sipre Devarim*—yields the conclusion that the root *דבא* was part of the IH lexicon, though not the JH vocabulary.⁸³

Conclusion

The 10 features discussed above appear in the poetry devoted to the northern tribes in Deuteronomy 33, specifically, the material concerning Joseph, Zebulun and Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, and Asher (vv. 13–25).⁸⁴ Notwithstanding the brevity of these blessings, each northern tribe has at least one IH trait contained in the poetry.⁸⁵ By contrast, there are no IH elements (not surprisingly) in the poetry devoted to Judah, Levi (associated with Jerusalem in

81. See del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica*, 1:127 s.v. “fuerza.” C. H. Gordon (*Ugaritic Textbook* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967] 383) noted the connection with Deut 33:25 but did not gloss the word.

82. In addition to consulting *Ma‘agarim*, see Moreshet, *Leqsiqon ha-Po‘al she-nithaddesh bi-Leshon ha-Tanna'im*, 131.

83. F. M. Cross (“Ugaritic *dbʾat* and Hebrew Cognates,” VT 2 [1952] 162–64) suggested that this root is present in Job 41:14 as well, which once again is outside SBH.

84. Five of the features discussed herein were not included in my most detailed listing of IH elements: “A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew: Grammar and Lexicon,” *Orient* 38 (2003) 5–35. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 of this essay are listed there; I identified nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 more recently, mainly while researching Deuteronomy 33 more thoroughly.

85. The only exception is Reuben (v. 6), assuming that it is “northern” on the basis of its Transjordanian location, though note the extreme shortness of this blessing.

Deuteronomy 33⁸⁶), and Benjamin (vv. 7–12).⁸⁷ Our analysis confirms Tigay's view stated at the outset and further suggests that the poems originated among the individual tribes themselves.⁸⁸

86. See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 522.

87. Though in theory, given what I stated above about the dialect of Benjamin, in the last of these three an IH feature would have been explicable.

88. An idea also noted by *ibid.*, 523. For a similar position regarding Genesis 49, see N. M. Sarna, *Genesis: The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 331.