

## The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered

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### I. Introduction

The twenty-ninth psalm in the Hebrew Psalter is among the most widely discussed literary pieces in contemporary biblical (Old Testament) scholarship. The reason is not far to seek: the epochal discoveries at Ras Shamra have laid bare the "Canaanite" architecture of this composition in terms of its rhythm pattern ("metre"), motifs, imagery, and linguistic forms. Accordingly, a scholar of distinction could write in 1950: "Psalm 29 fills a real gap in the extant *Canaanite* literature" (1). This followed in the wake of H. L. Ginsberg's conclusion ten years previously (2) — and forcefully maintained some five years later (3) — that "a variety of evidence combines to demonstrate that Ps 29 'embodies' a foreign hymn, composed in Syria" (4).

Whatever one's estimate of this position — in the present writer's view, overstated (5) — it is clear that there remain a number of as yet unsolved problems whose bearing on the final verdict is considerable, even decisive:

- a) The strophic structure of the poem.
- b) The rhythmic pattern ("metre") of the poem *in toto* as well as the scansion of individual verses (e.g. vss. 3,8-9).

(1) F. M. Cross, Jr., "Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament", *BASOR* 117 (1950), 19-21. Quotation from p. 19 (emphasis added). Cp. ESSVELDT, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Eng. translation: Oxford 1965) 448.

(2) *Kiṭibe Ugarit* (Heb., henceforth *KU*), 1939, pp. 129-131; IDRM, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible", *BA* 8 (1945) 53-54. His paper "A Phoenician Hymn in the Psalter" in *Atti del XIX Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti*, Roma, 23-29 Settembre 1935 (Roma 1938), pp. 472-476, is unavailable to me.

(3) "A Strand in the Cord of Hebraic Hymnody", in *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969) 45 ff. (Eng. sec.) (henceforth: *EI*).

(4) *KU*, op. cit., p. 129 (top).

(5) Cf. below, Reflection 1.

- c) The denotative and/or connotative meaning of individual expressions: **שָׁבַב** / **לְפָנַי קָדַשׁ** / **מִדְבַּר קָדַשׁ** / **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲלֵלֵי** and the like.

In the notes and comments that follow on an attempt at reconstructing the undisturbed version of the psalm, we hope to shed some light on these and other problems. We intend to demonstrate:

- a) that the psalm is composed basically in a (4+3) metre, a liturgical metre par excellence (1);
- b) that its central theme is the enthronement of the *grānitas dei* (*kēbōd Yahweh*);
- c) that both composer and composition are *ab origine* Yahwistic;
- d) that the *terminus a quo* for the composition is the 10th cent. B. C. E.

### II. Reconstruction, Translation, and Comments

#### Reconstruction (2)

4	הָבוּ לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים
3	הָבוּ רַחֲמֵי יְהוָה
4	הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ
3	הַשְׁתַּחֲוֶי רַחֲמֵי קִדְשׁוֹ
[4 (3)]	דְּקוּל יְהוָה עַל־הַיַּמִּים
3	אֵל הַכְּבוֹד הַרְעִים
3	יְהוָה עַל־יָמִים רַבִּים
3	קוּל יְהוָה בְּכַח
[3	קוּל יְהוָה כְּהַר

(1) The method of scansion follows the so-called *Ley-Sievers* stress system, and counts every significant — generally polysyllabic — word as a stress unit. Monosyllabic particles like **וְ** / **בְ** / **עַ** / **אֵל** are sub-stress, while exceedingly long words (upwards of three syllables) are generally double-stress units

(2) Sigla: < > = restoration; [ ] = transposition; { } , var. [ ] = deletion, extraneous material; { } = normalization.

(3) **עַל יָמִים** is most probably a double-stress unit: *alhamayyim*. **Qd̄l**, though a monosyllable, is consistently an independent stress-unit cp. Is 13.4 (3+2); 40.3 (3+3); 66.6 (3+2/5); Ps 66.8 (3+3).

- 4 קול יהוה שבר ארזים  
 3 ר ז ישבר ר ז ארזי ר ז לבנון  
 4 קול יהוה הצבצבים  
 3 יחצב בלהבות אש  
 4 קול יהוה יחיל מדבר  
 3 יחיל ר ז מדבר קרש  
 4 קול יהוה יחולל אילות  
 3 יהשף <ס>ערות <תימן>  
 4 נוקדם כמו ענל לבנון  
 3 ר ז שריון כמרבן ראמבן

ובהיכלו רז <אמר

- 4 כבוד יהוה למשאל ישב  
 3 ר ז ישב ר ז מלך לעולם

- [4 רידיה עז לעמו יתן  
 [4 יהוה יברך את עמו בשלום

#### Translation

#### I

Bestow upon Yahweh, O sons of El/the gods<sup>1</sup>

Bestow<sup>2</sup> honour and power

Bestow upon Yahweh 'Honour'-is-His-Name<sup>3</sup>

Be prostrate<sup>4</sup> at the sight<sup>5</sup> of His<sup>6</sup> Holiness

#### II

[The voice of Yahweh is upon the water

The God of 'the Honour(-cloud)'<sup>7</sup> has thundered

Yahweh upon mighty waters

The voice of Yahweh is (uttered) in strength

[ The voice of Yahweh is (uttered) in splendour]

#### III

The voice of Yahweh topples cedars

It<sup>8</sup> topples the cedars of Lebanon

The voice of Yahweh hews rock

It hews<sup>10</sup> with fames of fire

The voice of Yahweh shakes the desert

It shakes the desert of Qadesh<sup>11</sup>

The voice of Yahweh riles (the Gulf of) Eloth<sup>12</sup>

It unleashes the storms<sup>13</sup> of Teman<sup>14</sup>

It makes the Lebanon prance like a calf<sup>15</sup>

The Hermon<sup>16</sup> — like a young buffalo

#### IV

In His Temple one says: <sup>17</sup>

The 'Honour(-cloud)' of Yahweh<sup>18</sup> is enthroned<sup>19</sup>

It will reign<sup>20</sup> as king forever

[Yahweh gives strength to his people

He blesses them with peace

יְהוָה

#### Comments

<sup>1</sup> A decision as between generic-plural 'elim and the proper-singular (cum *mem encliticum*) is no less difficult here than in Ugaritic. In either case the reference is to the Canaanite pantheon (cp. Ps 82,1), seventy in number (UT 51:VI:46; cf. also 4 QDt 32,8 [BASOR 136 (1954) 12]).

<sup>2</sup> The deletion of the Tetragrammaton may seem gratuitous; it is nevertheless a highly probable emendation, for the following reasons:

a) the retention of the Divine name in the B-hemistichoi (*consistently and exclusively*) of strophe III (and IV) as well as in the final line of strophe I is highly problematic on both metric and literary grounds. In the latter instance it yields a syllabically overloaded line: ten syllables (counting shewa mobile and hataf as a half-syllable) versus eight, eight and one-half (per MT), and seven and one-half for lines 1, 2, and 3 respectively. To this one needs to add the observation that the relatively long השתחוה (3.5 syllables) is most probably intended as a "ballast variant" to הכה ליהוה (4.5 syllables), hardly to the bisyllabic יהוה.

b) In strophe III (and IV) the deletion is dictated by the fragmentarily preserved v. 9<sup>b</sup>. It is transparently clear that a reconstruction model \* <X> יהושף יערות \* is to be preferred to \* <X>



do we find the definite article as an integral part of the line (in contrast with the sole occurrence in strophe III where it is an unmistakable accretion).

All this would appear to spell "secondary addition". But aside from an a priori reluctance to excise so large a quantity of material, such a conclusion is necessarily tempered by items such as **הָרֵעִים** (cf. El-Amarna, text 147:14, the Mesopotamian hymns to Adad-Ramman, and the new Ugaritic personal name *ygmδ'* [UT Glossary, no. 1159a]), **אֵל הַכְּבוֹד** "God of (the) Honour(-cloud)" — cf. below, Comment 18 — not to mention the tricolon form and the repetitive parallelism.

Nevertheless, if this part of the text is not foreign to the original composition — my (admittedly hesitant) preference — then one can only conclude that the strophe has been so severely damaged as to defy coherent reconstruction and interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> For the rendering cf. above, Comment 3 and below, Comment 18. I would observe here that **כְּבוֹד הַכְּבוֹד** in Ps 24 ought to be rendered "king of the Honour (-cloud)".

<sup>9</sup> On the deletion of the divine name cf. above, Comment 2. The deletion of the prosaism **אֵל** in "classical" Hebrew poetry is usually mandatory, seldom if ever improbable.

<sup>10</sup> A substantial loss of text at this point — presumably via homoeoteleuton — has long been assumed by the commentators (1), with reconstructions suggested more or less along the lines here proposed. For literary parallels cp. Ps 83,15; Na 1,6; 1 Kgs 19,11-12(2).

<sup>11</sup> The identity of *midbār Qadeš* is still the subject of a lively controversy (cf. Ginsberg, *El IX*, 45, n. 2). For the present writer's position on this question, cf. Comment 14 and Reflection 1 below.

<sup>12</sup> A. Traditional exegesis of this line tends to oscillate between "makes hinds (*ayyalôt* = MT vocalization) to calve" and — with slight emendation — "makes the oaks (*'ēlôth*) to whirl" (cf. e.g. RSV). Yet neither is contextually apt: "calving hinds" is naturalistic but banal, while "whirling oaks", though sufficiently majestic, is bizarre and unnatural.

(1) Cf. e. g. CHEYNE, BUDDÉ, BHP, GINSBERG, CROSS, and VOGT. Rejected by GUNKEL and ignored by KRAUS.

(2) *Lege* ... **וְיִקְרָא הַכְּבוֹד** in v. 11ab?

B. The place-name *Eloth* — variant *Elatib* — appears in the Bible in three principal contexts: as the scene of the maritime expedition by Solomon, 1 Kgs 9:26 = 2 Chr 8,17 (ca. 950 B.C.E.); as a city/town built by Azariah (1), 2 Kgs 14,22 (ca. 800-790 B.C.E.); and as a town/city conquered by the Arameans and upon expulsion of the Judaean inhabitants settled by Edomites (2), 2 Kgs 15,6 (ca. 734).

The intriguing question pertains to the Elath of Solomon. It has been maintained (3) that "since **עֵלֹתָי** (in this passage) most clearly (designates) the Gulf of Aqabah", Elath must be a land-site presently "buried under the layer of sand upon which Nabatean-Roman Aila was later built". This conclusion is problematic on a number of counts:

a) There is no evidence — literary or archaeological — for a town Elath/Eloth prior to Amaziah/Uzziah ca. 800 B.C.

b) It is highly improbable that two towns — viz. Ezion Geber and Elath — ever existed simultaneously at the northern tip of the Gulf. Thus, in describing the whereabouts of Ezion Geber, the author of 1 Kgs 9:26 is talking about a site which no longer exists at the time of writing. The phrase **אֶת־אֵילָתָי** means in this context "in the vicinity of (present-day) Elath"; otherwise the reader who knew the whereabouts of the one could hardly be ignorant of the location of the other (and vice versa).

c) It is increasingly clear that the original Sea of Reeds (*Yam Sûf*) of the Exodus account is to be sought to the north-north-west of the Sinai peninsula, in the vicinity of Lake Sirbonis (modern Bardawil) (4). This means that originally the name Yam Suf has little or nothing to do with the Red Sea, much less the Gulf of Aqaba (though there can be no doubt that the name was ultimately trans-

(1) After the way had been paved by his father Amaziah's military campaign (2 Chr 25,11-13; 2 Kgs 14,10) who may even have initiated construction.

(2) So MT and LXX, while Peshitta has the Arameans (1) both conquering and settling. Most scholars however are inclined to read "Edom(ites)" throughout.

(3) SIMONS, *Geographical and Topographical Texts*, (Leiden 1959) § 832-33.

(4) Cf. already EISSFELDT, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Casius und der Durchzug durchs Meer* (Haale 1932) and recently AHARONI, *The Land of the Bible* (London 1967), 178 ff. Differently NORTH, *Eisfeldt Festschrift* (Haale 1947), 181-191.

ferré to — and the Exodus miracle located in — these waters, and this no later than the Deuteronomistic history<sup>(1)</sup>, ca. 550 B.C.E.).

The conclusion is necessarily as follows: the original name of the present-day Gulf of Aqaba in the Hebrew tradition was Eloth/Elath, preserved only in Ps. 29:9<sup>(2)</sup>. Two settlements existed successively at its northern tip in biblical times: Ezion-Geber in the time of Solomon, destroyed between 850 and 800 B.C.E.<sup>(3)</sup>, and Eloth/Elath, built by Azariah/Uzziah and which took its name from the (now archaic?) designation of the Gulf<sup>(4)</sup>. Could we ascertain when the name of the Gulf became known as Yam Suf we should then be in a position to reduce the terminus ante quem for Ps. 29<sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> MT is suspect on the following grounds:

a) the plural of **יער** is normally **יערים** (though the possibility of an alloform **יערות** — on the analogy of **נדרות/נדרים** — cannot be categorically dismissed).

b) in view of the synonymy of the parallelisms in this strophe, the “stripping of forests” is hardly apt as a parallel to “calving hinds”, though admittedly more so opposite the “storming of (the Gulf of) Elath”<sup>(6)</sup>.

(1) M. NORD, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle 1943) 3-110.

(2) Is 17:6 (Gn 14,6) — note the *yôdh* in the first word — a corruption (via abbreviation?) of \***אֵיל־עֲמִי**” (the Gulf of) Elath (in the vicinity of) Paran”. On the identification, independent of this suggestion, cf. now MAZAR, *JNES* 28 (1969) 74.

(3) Cf. 1 Kgs 22,48. GLUECK, *Rivers in the Desert* (London 1959) 159 considers it the work of the Edomites. This is a priori likely but there is no explicit evidence.

(4) Cf. GLUECK, *ibid.* 157 ff. Whether or not *tell el-Kheleifeh* is Ezion Geber/Elath as maintained by GLUECK or *Jeziret Far'ân* as suggested by ROTHENBERG (*Bible et Terre Sainte* 72 [1965] 10-16) is not germane to the overall reconstruction.

(5) After writing these lines I came upon TUR-SINAI's commentary (*Pšuto šel Miqra*, IV-1, 55) on this verse: "... similar to the aforementioned **יריב קיש** it designates a place such as Elath/Eloth in the Gulf of the same name". But failing to solve the riddle of **יריב קיש** in the following hemistich — cf. immediately — this suggestion strikes him only as “likely”.

(6) There is little to be said for DRIVER's exegesis (*JTS* 32 [1930] 255) — and earlier GÖRTSBERGER, *BZ* 17 (1926) 74 — which presumes a hapax **יער** and a highly questionable meaning for **יער** (hardly more so as a result of its adoption first by KOEHLER in *Lexicon in V.T. libros* and now in BAUMGARTNER *et alii*, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon*

c) the most decisive evidence of all: MT is transparently one (at least) stress-unit short.

The case for emending to **יערות** (**הרשף**) rests on two considerations: a) the verb **החל/החיל** which parallels (presumably synonymously) **הרשף** is an idiomatic predicate of **הרשף**: cp. Jer 23,19, Is 29,6. (Observe in the latter text the combination of the motif elements **הרשף**, **הרשף**, **הרשף**).

b) the metaphor of “uncovering” meaning “to produce; cause-to-pour”<sup>(1)</sup> a storm, is found at least once elsewhere in the O.T. (though the verbal element used is **ערה** rather than **הרשף**):

Is 32,15 **ערה עלינו רוח מפרים** ... which may be rendered: “until the time that a (storm-) wind may be ‘uncovered’ from the heavens upon us” i.e. until rain falls (with a subtle double-entendre of **רוח** as storm-wind and Divine spirit) — as a result of which, continues the poet, “the steppes will become gardens (*karmel*) and (Mt.) Carmel will be thought a forest”.

Finally, an a priori consideration: it is at least surprising that the psalm to a storm-god that is Ps 29 should not contain a single explicit reference to storms!

On the problem of the missing stress-unit see immediately.

<sup>14</sup> The formal requirements of reconstructing the missing third stress are:

a) a *nomen rectum* which combined with the preceding **סערות** (assuming the latter has been demonstrated), should have a proverbial ring to it (cp. **ארוי לבנין**).

b) an appropriate parallel to **אילות** = Eloth (ex hypothesis), most probably a place-name (cp. **מדבר קדש**).

The correct restoration I submit is to be found in Zech 9,14:

**יריב קיש**  
**ארני**  
**יריב קיש**

*zum Alten Testament* (= 3rd edition of KOEHLER-BAUMGARTNER) (Leiden 1967) I, s. v. I, **רשף**.

Vogt's reconstruction — see above, Comment 2 — is hardly less difficult. Surely it is not sufficient to point to the parallelism to explain a reconstructed reading!

(1) Note that “pour, draw (water)” is an alternate meaning of **רשף** (e.g. Is 30,14) and the primary meaning of Ug. *hsp*.

The picture is that of the warrior storm-god whose terrestrial abode is the Sinai desert peninsula (e.g. Dt 33,2) <sup>(1)</sup>. It is clear beyond doubt that the post-exilic Deutero-Zechariah has not himself coined the expression **פעורת תימן** any more than he is the originator of the similitude **הצו ככרם** (cp. 2 Sm 22,15 = Ps 18,15).

The proposed reading **עלוב** = Elath and the reconstructed **תימן** (**פעורת**) have a decisive bearing on the identification of *midbar qādeš*, and would appear to tilt the balance heavily in favor of the Sinaïtic interpretation. It should be noted that the identification of *midbar qādeš* with the Syrian desert (Ginsberg) is by inference only. (On Ug. *midbr qāš*, cf. Aistleitner, *Wörterbuch* (1965), no. 2393. See further below, Reflection 1.)

<sup>15</sup> The transposition of this couplet — highly probable on purely literary ground — receives additional support from the textual consideration that MT can be seen as the result of "attraction" due to homoeoteleuton. Cp. **עניל לבנן ... ארזי יהלכנן** ...

<sup>16</sup> Heb. **שְׁרִיָן** (Ug. *šry*). For the rendering "Hermon", cp. Dt 3,9. This is probably the strongest argument for Ps 29 as an Israelite recension of a "Canaanite" hymn (so e.g. Ginsberg, Cross). I doubt that it is strong enough. For by this argument Ez. 27,5 and Cant 4,8 emerge as "Amaritic". The same proof-text, incidentally, was used by Gunkel (HKAT, 125) to demonstrate the North-Israelite origin and "high antiquity" of the poem.

<sup>17</sup> This traditional *crux interpretum* is resolved once it is recognized a) that *kābōd* is the divine hypostasis (in the form of a storm-cloud) and is in construct with the immediately sequent **יְהוָה**.

b) that the phrase **וְכַרְתֵּלֵי אֲמֹר** (<י>) — deleting the second **כל** cluster as ditigraphic <sup>(2)</sup> and reading the final *aww* as initial *yōd* of the following vocable — is a liturgical rubric and (poetically) anacrusis patterned on the fragmentary Song of the Ark (Nim 10,36) **וְנָחָה אֲמֹר** (similarly anacrusis).

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. my paper in VT 19 (1969) 202 ff. Cp. also Hb 3,3 (see my study in ZAW 82 (1970) (forthcoming) and Ps 68,18 (reading **ארזי חסני** — cf. *Tarbitz* 39 [1969-1970] 1-8).

<sup>(2)</sup> See already FAULHABER, BZ 2 (1904) 269.

The reference to "His Temple" is assuredly the Jerusalem Temple of Solomon — in the ritual, if not the "mythic" sense <sup>(1)</sup> — and establishes the latter's reign as the *terminus a quo* for the rubric (at the least) and probably for the composition as a whole. Cf. further below, Reflection 2.

<sup>18</sup> The text-division posited is preferable, even necessary, on metric grounds; its ultimate vindication, however, lies in the highly significant content which consequently comes to light.

a) In its reconstructed form the text presents us with what is possibly the oldest unambiguous statement in the O.T. literature of a divine enthronement ritual, and this at a time when this most daring and fundamental of Mowinckel's theses has been vigorously challenged <sup>(2)</sup>.

b) It furnishes the key to an understanding of the psalm as a liturgic unity. The storm-god theophany of strophe III (and II?) and the kingship scenes in strophes I and IV are now seen as complementary parts of a mythic ritual description of the Divine *gratias* making its way as a fiery storm-cloud from the Sinai desert region <sup>(3)</sup> northward to the Jerusalem temple, where it will be enthroned and proclaimed "king forever".

c) It is in the light of this reconstruction — both textual and phenomenological — that a newly published Ugaritic text <sup>(4)</sup> acquires a special significance, yielding evidence for what may perhaps be termed a "Canaanite *kābōd* — theology", standing in a direct line of historical development with the subsequent Israelite manifestation.

<sup>(1)</sup> i.e. both the heavenly and terrestrial Temples are mythico-ritually involved, but the ritual connotation is the "concrete" Temple in Jerusalem (contra KRAUS, BK I, 238; cf. correctly SCHMIDT, HAT (1934) 54). This is not to deny the "symmetry" of strophes I and IV; it is however to recognize the disjunctive role of the rubric. Cf. also the LXX — Syriac reading **וְיָרֵד עִמָּךְ** in verse 2 (above, p. 337, Comment 6).

<sup>(2)</sup> Cf. e.g. KRAUS, *Gottesdienst in Israel* (München 1962) 239 ff.; JOHNSON, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff 1955) 54 ff.

<sup>(3)</sup> Cp. Hb 3,3-15 (Urzeit) and Is 35,1-2; 40,13-15 (Endzeit).

<sup>(4)</sup> Ch. VIROLLEAUD, in *Ugaritica*, V (Paris 1968), 551 ff. (text 2), a full-length study of which is in preparation. Pending publication, note the following: 1) the first eight lines of the *recto* are composed in a consistent (4+3) metre 2) *šm bhbr štr šm* = "Koshar dispenses [G/D] *qtl* of *šm*: cp. e.g. Ps 23,5; Jer 31,14] good-things from the [beer-]vat." [cf. WUS, no. 896].



in the *B*-hemistich as part of the pattern of glosses in the poem must reckon with the deviant *a*-position of the alleged gloss compared with the *b*-position of all the other instances.

### III. Reflections

#### 1. Ps 29 as a Canaanite hymn.

The evidence for the position that, but for the recensical substitution of Yahweh for Baal-Hadad, Ps 29 is a veritable Canaanite hymn, has never been decisive. The case has rested heavily on such *prima facie* data as the undeniable Baal-like (note emphasis!) imagery, canons and characteristics of Canaanite prosody, and especially the alleged N. Syrian setting provided by the references to Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon (Sirion/Hermon), and an assumed identification of *midbar Qades* with the Great Syrian desert (<sup>1</sup>).

That the author of Ps 29 has gone to school with the Canaanite bards — and this in a relatively early period (cf. Reflection 2 following) — is undeniable, and is further strengthened by the comparative material newly available (cf. above n. 18). But the references to the Sinai / Red Sea area, to which *midbar Qades* may now be added in good conscience (<sup>2</sup>), leaves no room for doubting that the original subject of the poem was *Yahweh*, not Baal, and that its author was accordingly a Yahwist. The early historico-epic tradition is too clear-cut in fixing the Sinai peninsula — with co-ordinates like Teman, Edom, Paran, and Qadesh (Ex 17,2-7 = Nm 20,1-13) (<sup>3</sup>) — as Yahweh's terrestrial abode and base of operations for any other conclusion to be acceptable. That reverberations of this deity's activities are felt

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. the summary of the evidence by R. TOURNAY, *RB* 63 (1956) 173 ff.

(<sup>2</sup>) The only argument of substance against this conclusion is that the phrase *קדש קדש* occurs nowhere else in the O.T. with this signification. But the Sinitic interpretation is valid even if the phrase is rendered "desert of (his) holiness", "holy desert" or the like (contra W. SCHMIDT, *Königtum Gottes in Ugarit und Israel* (BZAW 80; Berlin 1966), 56 n. 6).

(<sup>3</sup>) Cp. Dt 33,2 *אֶרֶץ סִינַי קָדְשׁ קָדְשׁ* (*text. emend.*) and Ps 68,18 (*text. emend.*) *קָדְשׁ אֶרֶץ אֱלֹהִים* (ם = א) *אֶרֶץ אֱלֹהִים* ... אֶרֶץ אֱלֹהִים (cf. VT 19 [1969] 205-210; *Tarbiz.* 39 [1969] 1-8).

in the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon region is small wonder and is, moreover, fully consonant with the tradition of cosmic upheaval and disintegration associated with His epiphany (e.g. Jgs 5,4-3; Hb 3,3-5; Na 1,3-5; Pss 18, 50, 77, 97 etc.).

#### 2. Date of composition.

One searches the literature in vain for a coherent theory and method of dating biblical texts in terms of literary and / or linguistic criteria (<sup>1</sup>). The problem is especially acute in relation to the poetic material, and in no case more so than in the Psalter, where a given text is considered pre-monarchic by some and Maccabean by others.

Concerning Ps 29, one detects of late a growing consensus in favour of a pre-monarchic date. Yet few and far-between are the attempts to demonstrate its validity and fewer still the successes registered. Albright and Ginsberg, the standard-bearers of this consensus, argue from premises such as repetitive parallelism, mythological allusion and imagery, archaic linguistic forms, and orthography. Yet all are open to one trenchant criticism: the problem of distinguishing the truly archaic from the pseudo-archaic or archaizing (<sup>2</sup>).

One thing is certain (and this not least in the light of the foregoing analysis): there is no basis for the assertion that "fraglos liegen in Ps 29 archaische Metren vor, die sich von der sonstigen alttestamentlichen Psalmdichtung deutlich abheben" (Kraus, *Psalmen* I, 234). Quite the contrary: unlike Ugaritic prosody, words like *כָּנִי* (Ug. *bn*) and *כָּנָו* (Ug. *km*) (<sup>3</sup>) scan in Ps 29 as they do consistently in "classical" biblical verse, viz., as independent stress units (capable, to be sure, of "construction" with monosyllabic substress units).

In so far as the question of composition date can be decided, the following data is pertinent:

(<sup>1</sup>) An important exception — which bears however on the problem of "late" rather than "early" psalms — is the (unpublished) doctoral dissertation of A. HURVITZ (Hebrew University, 1967).

(<sup>2</sup>) Cf. MOWINCKEL, *VT* 5 (1955) 13-33, especially 27 ff.

(<sup>3</sup>) In the following Ugaritic texts the assumption of *km* as a substress unit is absolutely necessary: *UT Krt*: 28-30 (2+2+2), 103<sup>b</sup>-105 (3+3), 145-46 (3+3); *UT 127*: 35-36 (3+3). In the following texts the assumption is of the highest probability: *UT 2 Aqht* I: 19<sup>b</sup>-22<sup>a</sup> (3+2; 3+2 [Qinah]); 3 *Aqht* (I) 23-26<sup>a</sup> (3+3; 3+2+2); *UT 51:IV*:50<sup>b</sup>-51 (3+3); *UT 62:I*:2<sup>b</sup>-6<sup>a</sup> (3+2; 3+2; 4).

a) the unique reference to  $\text{נ(ח)בָּרַךְ}$  = the Gulf of Aqabah, subsequently Yam Suf, makes a pre-exilic date certain, and one prior to c. 800 B.C.E. highly probable.

b) the reference to "His Temple"; the court and enthronement imagery; and the new evidence for a Canaanite *kēbōd*-theology centered around the royal cult of El (cf. Gn 14, 18 ff) point to the second half of the tenth century as a terminus post quem<sup>(1)</sup> and to the Jerusalem cult tradition as origin<sup>(2)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> So e.g. ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore 1956) 129; but see now his *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (London 1968) 222.

<sup>(2)</sup> Cf. JOHNSON, *Sacral Kingship*, 55; KRAUS, *Gottesdienst*, 238; SCHMIDT, *Königtum Gottes*, 25-26.

## Foi et vérifiabilité dans le langage sapiencial de rétribution

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« Si la foudre tombait sur les lieux bas, les poètes manqueraient de preuves ». En notant cette pensée, Pascal caractérisait comme poétique et imaginative une manière de comprendre la destinée humaine qui associe la punition céleste avec l'exaltation orgueilleuse, en se référant au comportement de l'éclair. De même que la foudre frappe les sites élevés, de même Dieu sévit-il contre les superbes.

Le langage de rétribution n'a-t-il d'autre base que celle-là? Appartient-il au domaine d'expression mythique? <sup>(1)</sup> A le supposer religieux — ce qu'il est indubitablement dans la Bible, comme je le montrerai plus bas — faudra-t-il le tenir pour invérifiable et illogique? Autrement dit, un non sens? <sup>(2)</sup> Ou encore, ne deviendrait-il vérifiable et sensé qu'au prix de son caractère religieux? <sup>(3)</sup> Tel est le problème que je propose de débattre dans les pages qui suivent.

Il s'agit du langage religieux et de son statut logique, mais sur un cas d'espèce, celui de la rétribution. A vrai dire, il n'est pas évident au départ que le langage de rétribution soit de type religieux. Sa présence dans la Bible ne suffit certainement pas à le prouver.

<sup>(1)</sup> Plusieurs participants du colloque romain de 1967 l'ont pensé, cf. E. CASTELLI et autres *Le mythe de la peine* (Paris 1967).

<sup>(2)</sup> J. M. BOCHENSKI affirme un peu massivement et non sans ambiguïté: « Outside of logic there is nothing but nonsense » (*The Logic of Religion* [New York 1965] 48). Mais en donnant une signification suffisamment large au mot 'logique', on est sans doute justifié à faire coïncider ses bornes avec celles du sens et de la vérité.

<sup>(3)</sup> Ian T. RAMSEY croit que le langage de rétribution a cessé aujourd'hui d'être religieux dans la mesure où il se résorbe adéquatement dans le vérifiable empirique. « The language of retribution... nowadays... embodies nothing beyond what is spatio-temporally verifiable... » (*Freedom and Immortality* [Londres 1960] 131).