

THE CONSONANTAL FORCE OF *HE* IN THE TETRAGRAMMATON*

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Over twenty-five years ago, W. F. Albright stated in his review of Cyrus Gordon's *Ugaritic Grammar*, "thorough knowledge of Ugaritic grammar, vocabulary and style is an absolute prerequisite for comparative research on the part of biblical scholars. Moreover, the significance of Ugaritic for historical Hebrew grammar, on which will increasingly rest our reconstruction of the literary history of Israel, cannot be overestimated."¹ The validity of this observation by Albright is confirmed by Cyrus Gordon in his latest revision of the *Ugaritic Grammar* (now entitled, *Ugaritic Textbook*) where he states without reservation, "Ugaritic has already revolutionized the study of the Old Testament."² The linguistic significance of Ugaritic is noted by Gordon in the following manner: "As the evidence now stands the most important change in the status of Semitics since Brockelmann's *Grundriss*³ is the addition of Ugaritic to the repertoire of the Semitic languages. This will sooner or later necessitate the revision of nearly every section of the *Grundriss*."⁴ If Gordon had elaborated on other revisions which Ugaritic will necessitate, no doubt, he would have included historical Hebrew grammar, in full agreement with Albright.

Several studies have appeared in recent years dealing with Hebrew and Northwest Semitic (Ugaritic) language and linguistics, including William Moran's "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background,"⁵ and Mitchell Dahood's *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology* and

"Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography."⁶ The insights derived from such comparative Northwest Semitic studies have already yielded excellent results in solving some of the enigmas in Biblical Hebrew. So much so, that Northwest Semitic philology has become one of the necessary tools for contemporary Hebrew grammarians.

Such comparative studies do not generally assist the scholar by offering conspicuous parallels; rather it is in the careful analysis of grammatical and/or syntactic details that benefit is usually derived. With this in mind, the writer's purpose in this study is not to deal with Ugaritic and historical Hebrew grammar in general, but to assemble the Ugaritic and Hebrew evidence indicative of one particular phonetic phenomenon, the quiescence and/or elision of the postvocalic *he*. After presenting and evaluating the evidence of this phenomenon in Ugaritic as well as Hebrew, the significance of this material for a current problem in Japanese biblical scholarship will be presented, namely, the problem of how to represent the tetragrammaton YHWH in Japanese syllabic orthography (ヤハ ウエ or ヤーウエ or the like).

I

INTERVOCALIC ELISION OF *HE* IN HEBREW

Before surveying the new evidence for the postvocalic quiescence and elision of *he*, it may prove beneficial to review the evidence for the intervocalic elision of *he*, and loss of *he* by assimilation. This material is presented with varying degrees of detail in the Hebrew grammars of Wilhelm Gesenius,⁷ G. Bergstrasser,⁸ and Hans Bauer and Paul Leander.⁹ Utilizing these studies, some six types of elision, or conditions under which intervocalic *he* is lost, can be summarized as follows.

(A) Syncope of the definite article following a preposition. In ele-

mentary descriptive grammars this phenomenon is described as the weak *he* of the article surrendering its vowel to the preposition and then disappearing, i. e. an original **l^hhā'ām* became *lā'ām*, 'to the people.'¹⁰ Such an explanation, or even that in Gesenius' grammar that this elision takes place when the 'vowel is thrown back to the place of a preceding *š^wā mobile*,'¹¹ is inadequate in light of the forward movement of the spoken language wherein it would not be possible to 'throw back' a vowel to an already uttered syllable. The explanation of Bauer and Leander seems more reasonable, namely that the elision of the *he* of the article came before the reduction of the original short vowel of the preposition to *š^wā* (e.g. before **la* became *l^o*).¹² Thus MT *lā'ām* would go back to an original **laha''ām*, which with loss of intervocalic *he* would become **la''ām* > *lā'ām*. The long *ā* vowel is due to compensatory lengthening since the *ayin* cannot take the *dagesh* of gemination. Otherwise there would be no compensatory lengthening of the initial *a* vowel since gemination of the first radical of the noun produces a closed, unaccented syllable.

(B) Elision of the *he* of the *Niphal* and *Hiphil* infinitive after a preposition. This elision of *he* is much like the above syncope of the article. However, examples of such an elision in the *Niphal* infinitive are problematic, for while Bauer and Leander cite seven examples, Bergstrasser makes no reference to such examples in his discussion of the *Niphal* infinitive, and Gesenius-Kautzsch prefer to read them according to the *Kethib*, as *Qal* infinitives.¹³ But if the *Qere* is correct, one does have a *Niphal* infinitive plus preposition with *he* elided, as *bikkāš^olō* (Ez. 26:15) for an original **b^hikkāš^olō* < **bahikk āš^olō*. The elision of the *he* of the *Hiphil* infinitive after the preposition is frequent, but not normative.¹⁴ Alongside such usual forms as *l^hhašmid* and

l^hhašmi'a are the elided forms *lašmid* and *lašmi'a*, which obviously go back to **lahašmid* and **lahašmi'a*.

(C) Loss of the preformative *he* of the *Hiphil* imperfect and participle. As noted immediately above, the *he* of the *Hiphil* infinitive is sometimes elided after a preposition, but in the *Hiphil* imperfect and participle it is regularly elided.¹⁵ Thus the paradigm form *yaqtīl* is derived from a proto-semitic **yahaqatīl*, with the elision of the intervocalic *he* and the loss of the short *a* vowel of *qa* between the primary and secondary accents (*yàq-tīl*). Similarly, the participle *maqtīl* goes back to a proto-semitic *mahaqatīl*, with loss of intervocalic *he* and reduction of the vowel between primary and secondary accents.¹⁶

(D) Elision of the *he* in the third person pronominal suffixes. For clarity, this category may be sub-divided into the following five types: elision after a short *ā* vowel; after a short *i* vowel; after a long *i* vowel; after a long *ū* vowel; and elision after the diphthong *ay*.¹⁷

(1) Examples of elision after short *ā* include the 3 m. s. suffix, as in MT *rūḥô* ('his breath') from **ruḥahū*, due to loss of the intervocalic *he* and contraction of the diphthong *aū* to *ô*. So also *lô* ('to him'), from **lahū* > **laū* > *lô*. An example with the 3 f. s. is in MT *ḥēlā* ('her wall') from **ḥaylaā* < **ḥaylahā*, i.e., with loss of intervocalic *he*, coalescence of *aā* into *ā*, along with contraction of the diphthong *ay* to *ē*. The *he* of MT *ḥēlāh* is only a vowel letter, not the *he* of the original feminine suffix-*hā*. But when there is a *mappiq* in the *he*, one has to assume with Bergstrasser that the 3 f. s. suffix is *hā*, not *hā*, with the *hā* losing its final short vowel, whereby the final *he* would be consonantal and take the *mappiq*.¹⁸ So also *lāh* ('to her'), from **lahā* > *laā* > *lā* > *lā*. Examples of the 3 m. pl. are MT *lāmô* ('to them') from an original **lahumū*, and MT *bêtām* ('their house') from an original **baytahumu*.¹⁹

(2) Examples of elision after short *i* vowel are with the 3 m. pl. suffix attached to verbs, which appears only as *m* in Biblical Hebrew, although it goes back to an original **-humū*. The final short *ū* of *-humū* was dropped, and after short *i*, **-ihum* developed into *-ēm*, as in MT *'ettēnēm* ('I will give them') from an original **'antinihumu*.²⁰ Quite similar is the development of MT *yo'kēlēmō* from **yo'kilihumo* ('he will eat them').

(3) The *he* of the third masculine suffixes is elided after a long *i* vowel.²¹ Examples are MT *'ābiw* ('his father'), from **'abihū*; MT *pimō* ('his mouth'), from **pihumō*; and MT *yēda'tim* ('I knew them') from **yada'tihumu*.

(4) The *he* of the third person plural suffixes is elided after a long *ū* vowel, as in the MT *'akūlām* ('they ate them') from **'akalūhumu* and MT *yahargun* ('they killed them') from **yahrugūhinna*.²²

(5) The *he* of the third masculine suffixes is elided after the diphthong *ay* as in MT *bānāyw* ('his sons'), from **banayhū*, and MT *'ālēmō* ('upon them'), from **'alayhumō*. Cross and Feedman are no doubt correct in maintaining that MT *-āyw* (as in *bānāyw*) is a mixture of two forms, representing (1) the northern Israelite pronunciation in the orthography (*bnyw* = *banēw*), where with the early contraction of the diphthong **-ayhū* > *ēhū* > *ēw*, and (2) the southern Judahite pronunciation in the vocalization (*bnyw* = *banāw*), where there was no contraction of diphthongs (hence **-ayhū* > **-ayū* > *-āw*).²³

The retention of the *he* in the following suffixed forms is only a graphic representation of diphthongs that otherwise would be lost in the strictly consonantal orthography: *-ēhū* (**-eu*), *-ehā* (**-ea*), *-ihā* (**-ia*), and *-ūhā* (**-ua*).²⁴ This being the case, the force of the *he* in these suffixes is more that of *matres lectionis* for the *a* or *u* vowel

of the diphthong, rather than full consonantal force as attributed to it in the Masoretic tradition. Although in the vocalization the *he* had quiesced, it was retained in the orthography to represent the diphthong that developed after its quiescence.

(E) Related to the complete elision of the *he* in the third person suffixes is the assimilation of the *he* of the 3 m. s. verbal suffix, e. g., as in *q^otālattû*, a variant form of *q^otālathû* ('she killed him'), and similar variants for the first and second person perfect verbs with 3 m. s. suffix: *q^otaltāhû/q^otaltô* and *q^otaltihû/q^otaltiw*. These variants may well be examples of a literary form (with *he* represented in the orthography) and a colloquial form (spelled phonetically without *he*). The loss of the *he* of the suffix when attached to verbs with the energetic ending should also be noted, for example *-enhû* may become *-ennû*.²⁵

(F) Quiescence of the *he* in the trigrammaton YHW when used in the formation of personal names. The theophoric element used as the final element in Hebrew names appears as either *-yāhû* or *-yâ* (*-yh*), but as the initial element it appears as either *Yô-* or *Y^ohô-*. The theophoric *Yô* element is generally assumed to go back to **yahû*, which became *yô-* through elision of intervocalic *he* and contraction of the diphthong.²⁶

The variation between *Y^ohô-* and *Yô-* is much like the variation in the *Hiphil* forms *y^ohôdeh* and *yôdeh* ('he will praise'), *y^ohôšî'a* and *yôšî'a* ('he will save'), or like the variant spellings for proper names: *Y^ohôsēp* and *Yôsēp*, *Y^ohûkal* and *Yûkal*. Albright has convincingly argued that the MT *Y^ohô-* is only an artificial Masoretic spelling, formed on the analogy of the contracted form *Yô-*.²⁷ Though vocalized by the Masoretes as *Y^ohô-*, it was still pronounced as *Yô-*.

The Masoretes took the spelling YHW, handed down to

them, and tried to vocalize it. They were faced with the same problem as in other cases of superfluous letters due to historical spelling.....They found the spelling YHW with the pronunciation Yô. There was only one way out of the difficulty.....to point the initial *yâd* with *šewâ*.....At all events, their system forced them to create an anomalous punctuation which presently became a literary pronunciation.....²⁸

Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that the names *YHWSP* and *YHWKL* were actually pronounced as *Yôšēp* and *Yûkal*, with full quiescence of the intervocalic *he*, though the *he* was either retained as historic spelling or later introduced as an archaizing feature. The same would be true of the variant forms of the *Hiphil* imperfect given above.²⁹

In concluding this summary on the elision of intervocalic *he*, the following observations can be made. First, intervocalic *he* was elided in some of the most common and frequently recurring forms in Hebrew. In some cases it was obviously retained in the vocalization to differentiate between otherwise indistinguishable forms: *q̄tālûhû* ('they killed him') does not become *q̄tālû*, which would be identical with the same verb without a suffix. In some cases *he* was retained in the orthography even though it had been lost in the pronunciation. Variant spellings of the same noun or verb in MT offer undisputable evidence for this, and it is reasonable to assume that behind the vocalization of other words in the Masoretic tradition there are additional examples of simple historic spelling, wherein the *he* has no real consonantal force.

II POSTVOCALIC ELISION OF *HE* IN UGARITIC AND HEBREW

The Hebrew reference grammars used above, because of the limited comparative material available for Northwest Semitics, do not deal with the postvocalic elision or quiescence of *he*. One reads in Gesenius-Kautzsch the simple statement, "the *he* is stronger and firmer than the *aleph*, and never loses its consonantal sound (i.e. *quiesces*) in the middle of a word except in the case noted below."³⁰ The exceptions that follow therein are the syncope of the article after prepositions (above I-A) and the syncope of *he* in the third person suffixes (above I-D), plus the quiescence in the names *'šā'ēl* and *p'dāšûr* and the artificially divided *y'pēh-piyyāh*.

At best there are only two examples of the postvocalic elision of *he* cited in these grammars:

(a) The shift from final *he* (with *mappiq*) to final *he* with *rāphē*.³¹ Examples include *lāh* > *lā* ('to her') from **laha*, and *yāh* > *yā* (as in *hal'-lā-yāh* 'hallelujah', but *yirm'yā* 'Jeremiah') from **yahū*. These examples are problematic in that one must assume final short vowels for *yahu* and the 3 f. s. suffix, although they are usually long.³² (Final short vowels were lost in Hebrew, but not final long vowels.)³³ *He* with *mappiq* would suggest the loss of final *a* short vowel, and the variant forms of *he* with *rāphē* would suggest further elision of the postvocalic *he*; whereas if the final vowel were long there would be an intervocalic elision of *he*, with the resulting long vowel being indicated by a vowel letter.³⁴

(b) The elision of the postvocalic *he* in the Hiphil of the verb

hālak, wherein MT *hōlik* was derived from **hahlík*. This is frequently described as a dissimilation of *hah-* to *hê-*, analogous to the development of *'a'-*, as in **'a'kul* which became *'ôkal* ('I will eat') because of the elision of the second *aleph*, compensatory lengthening of the *a* vowel, then the shift of long *ā* to long *ō*, followed by the dissimilation of the thematic vowel from *ū* to *ā*.³⁵ The *Hiphil hōlik* is assumed to have then developed on the analogy of the *pe-yodh*, *pe-waw* verbs.³⁶

The variant forms of the *Qal* imperfect of *hālak* (*yēlēk* and *yah^alōk*) may reflect in their consonantal spelling (a) the colloquial phonetic spelling of **yahluk*, which with elision of the post vocalic *he* became *ylk* (= MT *yēlēk*, the Masoretes having vocalized on analogy of *pe-yodh* verbs), and (b) a literary spelling found in poetry and later books where the archaic **yahluk* was retained as *yhlk* (= MT *yah^alōk*).³⁷

It is now known that the quiescence or elision of the postvocalic *he* is not limited to just these few examples. Numerous examples have been noted in Ugaritic, and the evidence of this development in Ugaritic has led to the recognition of other examples in Biblical Hebrew.³⁸ To the two kinds of examples listed above it is now possible to add the following examples from either Ugaritic or from Hebrew, as proven by Ugaritic cognates.

(1) First it should be noted that in the *yqtl* (=imperfect) of the G-stem (*Qal*) and Gt-stem (reflexive stem of G, equals Arabic VIII) of Ugaritic *hlk*, 'walk' the *he* is absent, so that, in Gordon's words, "in these forms.... the verb is to all intents and purposes treated like *pe-yodh*."³⁹ But in the causative stem (Ugaritic *Šāpēl*, for Hebrew *Hiphil*) the *he* is retained. (Compare the forms *ylk*, 'goes', *itlk*, 'I was going,' but *ašhlk*, 'I shall cause to flow.')

More than mere analogy to *pe-yodh*, these variations are similar to

what happens in some *pe-aleph* verbs.⁴⁰ That is to say, the weak nature of *he* in *hālak*, 'walk' appears to be the same as weak *aleph* in 'āzal, 'go,' where the *aleph* is elided in the imperfect (reading *tēz'li*, 'she will go,' for the expected *te'z'li*). Therefore, Hebrew and Ugaritic *ylk* is to *hlk* what *yzl* is to 'zl: the weak postvocalic consonants have been lost.

(2) Usually in Ugaritic the *he* is retained in the orthography of the *yqtl* of *pe-he* verbs, but with the root *hlm*, 'to strike,' the *yqtl* appears as *ylm*, 'he strikes,' although the imperative retains the *he* as in *hlm* 'strike!'⁴¹ This appearance of the *he* in the imperative but not in the *yqtl* is analogous to those *pe-aleph* verbs where there are similar forms. For example, 'ēhāb, 'I will love' (<*e'hab), where the *aleph* of the root has been lost, but in the imperative it appears, 'hab, 'love!'⁴²

The Ugaritic forms *ylk* instead of *yhlk* and *ylm* instead of *yhlm* suggest that although the weak postvocalic *he* was not regularly elided in verb forms, like the weak postvocalic *aleph*, it was at least irregularly elided in the orthography. And permitting the very real possibility of historical spelling, both weak postvocalic *he* and *aleph* may have quiesced with greater regularity in the pronunciation than indicated in the written text.

(3) The enigmatic spelling of MT *bāttim*, 'houses' (with *dagesh* in the *taw* after the long *ā* vowel) finds its explanation in the plural of this noun in Ugaritic: *bhtm* (vocalized as *bahtim-*). In both Hebrew and Ugaritic the plural is built on a different stem than the singular; the singular being *bayt > *bēl* (with the contraction of the diphthong) while the plural is *bht* (or possibly *bwt*).⁴³ In Ugaritic the postvocalic *he* was retained in the orthography and the pronunciation; but in Hebrew this *he* was elided—but only after the process of spirantization

had ceased. Consequently, in Hebrew **bahtim* became *batim*, with the *dagesh lene* retained to indicate the original stop of the *taw* when the *he* of **bah-* had full consonantal force. It is clear, then, that the *dagesh* in the *taw* of *btm* is not *dagesh forte* (= *bttm*), but *dagesh lene* (= *batim*). Just as the lack of spirantization in MT *malk* (k after the closed syllable *mal-* would naturally have the *dagesh forte*) reflects the presence of the original *a* vowel (**malak*), so the presence of the *dagesh lene* in *taw* of *btm* reflects the lost *he* between the *b* and *t*.

(4) The word *bāmāh*, 'high place,' goes back to the root *bhm* and is related to the word *behēmāh*, 'beast.' This identification was convincingly argued by Albright and Ivry and was suggested to them in part by the fact that in the Qumran text 1QIs^a the word *bāmāh* appears three times as *bwmh* (*bāmāh*).⁴⁴ The *waw* in the Qumran spelling suggests an original **bahmāh*, which, with loss of postvocalic *he*, compensatory lengthening, and the shift of long *ā* to long *ō*, became *bōmāh*. In Albright's own words:

The original form of the word was certainly **bahamatu*, whence *bāmatu*.... In any event the initial accented vowel (in proto-Hebrew) was long, so the spelling with *ō* is correct, while the spelling with *ā* perhaps reflects the fact that *he* was preserved until a time after the bulk of proto-Hebrew words had already shifted accented *ā* to *ō*.... After collecting a large number of cases in Hebrew, Ugaritic, Aramaic, Accadian and Arabic, in which an anomalous *ā* or *ū*, without recognized phonological explanation, go back to *ah* or *uh*, where *he* quiesced in the preceding short vowel, it becomes obvious that *bāmāh-bōmāh* should go back to **bahmatu*; the uncertainty of the quality of the vowel may be due to dialectal

phenomena, *ah* being preserved in some places until after the principle that an accented *ā* became *ô* had cease to operate.⁴⁵

Albright goes on to note that those words which still preserve the *he* of the stem have usually developed different meanings. He illustrates by noting that *behēmāh*, 'beast' goes back to an original sense of "back" or "torso" of an animal, *bāmāh*. And parallel to this loss of *he* in Hebrew is the same development in Ugaritic where both words are found, *bmt*, 'back,' without the *he*, and *bhmt*, 'cattle,' with the *he*.⁴⁶

(5) Hebrew *'ōhel*, 'tent' indicates in its vocalization a similar development. It is clear from the Ugaritic *ahl*, 'tent' and Akkadian *ālu*, 'tent' that this noun is a *qatl* noun (like **malku*, 'king') and not a *qutl* form (like *'ōkel* < **'uklu*, 'food') nor a *qātil* form (like *'ōkēl* < **'ākil*, 'eating').⁴⁷ Yet it is vocalized with long *ō* and not *ā*. This comparative evidence makes it clear that the word developed as follows: **'ahlu* > **'ālu* > *'ōl*, due to quiescence of the *he* with the preceding homogeneous *a* vowel, with compensatory lengthening of *a* to *ā*, followed by the shift of *ā* to *ō*, and loss of case ending *ū*. The *he* of *'hl* was retained only as historical spelling. The Masoretes, however, treated the noun as a typical *segolate* and vocalized *'ōhl* (with quiescent *he*) as *'ōhel*.

(6) Whereas in *'ōhel* the quiescent postvocalic *he* is retained as historical spelling, there are other examples in Hebrew where the quiescent postvocalic *he* is completely elided in both pronunciation and orthography. Such an example is *qôl*, 'voice.' Albright's concise statement on the origin of this noun is as follows:

Hebrew *qôl*, "voice" cannot go back to **qawlu*, **qaulu*, as formerly thought, since it is written *QL*, not *QWL*, in the Siloam inscription (diphthongs were left uncontracted in the speech of Israel) and appears as *qâlâ* in Aramaic;

the true explanation is certainly that *qôl* goes back to **qahlu*, "call," from the stem QHL, "to call, assemble", cognate with Arabic *qalq*, "to speak".⁴⁸ Thus, **qahlu* became *qôl*, through elision/quiescence of *he* to the preceding homogeneous *a* vowel, compensatory lengthening of the *a* vowel, shift of \bar{a} to \bar{o} , plus loss of the case ending. MT *qwl* (*qôl*) is *scriptio plene*, while the Siloam inscription's *ql* (*qôl*) is *scriptio defectiva*.

(7) An Ugaritic example where postvocalic *he* is likewise completely elided is *zr*, 'top' which is from the root *zhr*, cognate to Arabic *zahrûn* and Hebrew *shr* (*sohar*, 'noon').⁴⁹

(8) Compared to the example listed above in (4) where the meaning of the word varies with the presence or absence of the *he*, there are two Ugaritic words written with or without the *he*, but either way having the same meaning. These are listed by Gordon and Dahood, and need only be noted here: *dhrt* and *drt*, 'vision' and *bht* and *bt*, 'hail, welcome'.⁵⁰

(9) The final point to be reviewed in reference to the postvocalic elision of *he* in Ugaritic and Hebrew is that of the so-called *he-locale*. In Ugaritic this *he* (unaccented *-ah*) is regularly indicated in the orthography as *h*, indicating—since vowel letters were not employed in Ugaritic—that the *he-locale* was originally consonantal.⁵¹ However, in Hebrew the *he-locale* is regularly expressed by $\text{--}\hat{a}$ (i.e. $\text{--}\bar{a}h$, without the *mappiq* in the *he*, indicating that the *he* is only a vowel letter with no consonantal force). Hebrew grammarians have until now assumed that the Hebrew *he-locale* was the original short *a* vowel of the accusative case ending, retained in Hebrew as a kind of adverbial accusative.⁵² But the Ugaritic evidence now indicates that this traditional explanation is

incorrect. To the contrary, Hebrew *he-locale* goes back to an original suffixed *-ah* where the *he* was originally consonantal. But in Hebrew this postvocalic *he* lost its consonantal value and quiesced with the preceding homogeneous *a* vowel, producing long \bar{a} . In turn this long \bar{a} vowel was represented through the use of *he* as a vowel letter (i. e., $-\bar{a}h = \bar{a}$).

Even in Ugaritic this weakening of the *he* in *he-locale* may be reflected in those cases where "heavenward" is written simply as $\check{s}mm$ and "to the elbow" is spelled *amt*.⁵³

Other examples of the elision of postvocalic *he* will certainly turn up in both Hebrew and Ugaritic. One wishes that Albright had published his list (mentioned above, II-4) of Aramaic, Arabic and Akkadian examples. In Hebrew there are no doubt many examples hidden behind the Masoretic vocalization, just as the quiescent *aleph* is hidden in the MT $b^e\text{'-er}$, which is artificially pointed for $b\check{z}'r$ from an original $*bi'r$.⁵⁴

Recognition of quiescent postvocalic *he* in Hebrew permits another possible explanation for the origin of the variant $y\hat{o}$ (yw) for $y\bar{a}h\bar{u}$ (yhw). The usual explanation is that $y\bar{a}h\bar{u}$ became $y\hat{o}$ through the elision of intervocalic *he*, followed by contraction of the diphthong.⁵⁵ This involves a rather long chain of development: $*yahw > *yahuw > yah\bar{u} > *ya\bar{u} > y\hat{o}$. Actually, $y\hat{o}$ may reflect a different (dialectal) development wherein $*yahw > *y\bar{a}w > y\hat{o}$, through elision of postvocalic *he* and contraction of the diphthong.

This same explanation could also apply to the $-yw$ of $\check{s}mryw$ ($\check{s}emar-yaw$) of the Samaria ostraca.⁵⁶ However, it cannot be applied to yw , a divine name in Ugaritic. B. W. Anderson, in his article in the *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, is incorrect in reading Ugaritic yw as $y\hat{o}$, since Ugaritic does not employ vowel letters.⁵⁷ In Ugaritic the

waw must be consonantal. If the Ugaritic *yw* is related to Yahweh and/or the imperfect (*yqtl*) of the root *hwy*, 'to be,' it can only be derived from the G-stem (*Qal*) jussive or the D-stem (*Piel*) jussive; i.e. either **yahwī* > *yāwī* (with postvocalic elision of *he*) or **yahawwī* > *yāwōwī* (with intervocalic elision of *he*). Since, as argued below, the pronunciation of *YHW* as 'Iaḥ points back to a Hebrew *Piel* jussive (**yahaw* > *yāhō*), Ugaritic *yw* is probably a similar D-stem jussive possibly with the force of a causative.⁵⁸

But even without these conjectural points there is sufficient undisputable evidence that not only was intervocalic *he* elided, but that postvocalic *he* in both Hebrew and Ugaritic was weak to the point where it frequently was quiescent, especially following the homogeneous *a* vowel. With this evidence on hand, it is now possible to consider the probable consonantal force of *he* in the tetragrammaton.

III

The Consonant *He* in *YHWH*

The final *he* of *YHWH* is a vowel letter with no consonantal force. This is clear from the Masoretic tradition which did not point the *he* with *mappiq*. In early Hebrew orthography *he* was used to represent *ō*, *ē*, and *ā*.⁵⁹ The attempts by some scholars to vocalize *YHWH* with a final *ō* or *ā* vowel have not met with wide acceptance, although there is some evidence from the early fathers that the divine name was pronounced as 'Iaḥ, 'Iao, and *Yahō*.⁶⁰ G. J. Thierry has convincingly argued that these three pronunciations of the divine name point to the trigrammaton, *YHW* (used in personal names), not to the tetrag-

rammaton, *YHWH*.⁶¹ In the opinion of this writer, these three vocalizations of *YHW* point back to the *Piel* jussive **yahaw* which became **yāh̄* with contraction of the diphthong. The root *hwy* / *hyh* regularly has the *Piel* causative; and if this derivation proves correct, *yāh̄* would have the same force as the *Hiphil* jussive *yāhū*, as argued by Albright.⁶²

The vocalization of *YHWH* is reflected in those traditions which give the pronunciation of the divine as *'Iabe*, *'Iaoue* or *'Iaē*.⁶³ Albright gives the most satisfactory derivation of *YHWH* by identifying it with the *Hiphil* imperfect, **yahwiy > yāhw*.⁶⁴ Consequently, with agreement from three converging lines of evidence (the Masoretic tradition, the early fathers, and a contemporary scholarly derivation of the form) it is quite certain that the final *he* is only a vowel letter and should not be represented in any phonetic transliteration wherein it would receive consonantal value. In English it is possible to represent the *he* (Yahweh = *yāwe*) for the *h* is homogeneous to the *e* vowel; but with Japanese syllabic orthography, this is obviously not possible.

The first *he* of *YHWH* is consonantal. But the question is what was the force of this consonant? It is well recognized that the Greek *'Iabe* or *'Iaoue* are of no help since Greek has no way to represent medial or final *h*. The Akkadian syllabic transliterations offer some help, however, since in Akkadian transcriptions of Hebrew names the *he* is sometimes reflected by the use of *h*, although in Akkadian itself the *he*, *het*, and *'ayin* had fallen together with *aleph*. Even though the following names have nothing to do with Yahweh as once thought,⁶⁵ they do illustrate the weak force of postvocalic *he* in the imperfect of the root *hwy*: (a) *Ia-ah-wi* and *Ia-ah-wi-ilum*; (b) *Ia-wi-ilum*, *Ia-wi-um*, and *Ia-wi-Dagan*.⁶⁶ The *h* in the spelling of the first two indicates the etymol-

ogical *he* of the root *hwy*; but the spelling in the last three, without the *h*, indicate that the *he* was weak. From this evidence it seems reasonable to assume that despite the fact that Akkadian could represent a strong consonantal *he* by using *h*, the postvocalic *he* of the imperfect **yahwi* was of such a weak nature that it was not regularly nor uniformly represented. Those forms without *h* may well be phonetic colloquial spellings, compared to the more formal spelling with *h*.

The Akkadian transcription of the names of Jonothan, Jehoahaz and Azariah, for example, offers similar evidence for the weak nature of intervocalic *he* in the trigrammaton. Whereas Jonothan is written as *Ya-a-hu-u-na-tan-nu* (with the *he* represented by *h*), Azariah is transcribed as *Az-ri-ia-a-u* (without any reflection of the *he*) and Jehoahaz appears as *Ia-u-ha-zi* (likewise without any representation of the *he*, though *h* is used for the *h*).⁶⁷ The first example, which Albright takes as a pronunciation used on formal occasions,⁶⁸ indicates that the *he* was present, but the last two indicate that it was weak, otherwise it would have been uniformly represented by *h*.

The material presented thus far in these three sections would permit the following conclusions. Unlike the Arabic *ha* (which was distinctly aspirated at the beginning and end of a syllable) the Hebrew *he* was naturally weak and could lose completely its consonantal force in both medial and final positions, both when intervocalic and postvocalic.⁶⁹ The weakness of the *he* in the digrammaton *YH* (*Yāh* and *Yā*) and in the trigrammaton *YHW* (*Yahā*, *Yōhw/Yō*), coupled with all the other evidence of the frequent quiescence of *he*, would certainly suggest that the *he* of the tetragrammaton *YHWH* did not have a very strong consonantal force. To be sure, there is no evidence that it was quiescent, but it obviously was not emphasized—especially since it followed

the homogeneous *a* vowel with which it frequently coalesced.

These conclusions lead clearly to the following principle when transliterating or transcribing the tetragrammaton into Japanese syllabic orthography, namely, every effort should be made to avoid emphasizing in Japanese what was naturally weak in Hebrew. Application of this principle would definitely favor transcribing *YHWH* in Japanese as ヤーウエ (*Yā—wē*) rather than ヤハウエ (*Yā^hawē*). There is little real difference between ヤハウエ and ヤハウエ (*Yāhāwē*), for in popular speech there is no noticeable difference between the anomalous ハ and the regular ハ. The ハ is questionable enough, for even when the pronunciation is carefully guarded, this ハ gives the *he* more consonantal force than it had in the days of early Israel.

The usual pronunciation of ヤハウエ as *Yāhāwē* actually reproduces a *yaqatala* form of the verb (like the Akkadian *ipar(r)as* or Ethiopic *yeqatel*). But it is highly doubtful that this verb form ever existed in Hebrew, let alone that it could be related to *YHWH*. Since Hebrew *he* was weak and should not be emphasized, it seems particularly unwise to try to represent it in Japanese by an anomalous use of a small ハ, which produces, even if unintentionally, a dubious verb form and an over-emphasis of the *he*. Japanese has no natural way to reflect weak consonants; indeed in Japanese orthography it is even difficult to represent some very strong consonants. But since postvocalic *he* and a preceding homogeneous *a* vowel often coalesce into *ā*, (the closed syllable *yah* of Yahweh, with a silent *š^wā* under the *he*, is only an artificial modern reconstruction based on analogy to the Tiberian system of vocalization), it might well be that *YHWH* is best pronounced as *Yā-wē*. At least this is what Northwest Semitic phonology strongly suggests. And since this should be the basis for any accurate translite-

ration of the Hebrew consonantal text, it seems that ヤーウ_エ is the more preferable transcription of *YHWH*. To be sure the consonantal *he* is not visually reflected, but it must be remembered that it wasn't usually represented in the contemporary Akkadian transcriptions. But there is a phonetic representation of the *he* by use of the *bō*(—), which well indicates a kind of compensatory lengthening of the *-ah* to *ā*.

The choice between ヤーウ_エ and ヤハ_ウ_エ cannot be made on the basis of which one sounds better or more forceful in Japanese. Such arguments are entirely subjective, superficial and outside the realm of sound scholarship on which such a decision has to be made. Transliteration, like translation, must be based on the best available evidence; and the knowledge of Ugaritic and early Hebrew phonology offers fresh evidence supporting the transcription of *YHWH* as ヤーウ_エ.

NOTES

*The system for transliterating Hebrew words is generally the same as that found in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. The Ugaritic words are transliterated as in Gordon's *Ugaritic Textbook*. The asterisk(*) indicates an original or later unattested form. The sign > means "became" or "which developed into," whereas < means "which developed from." Abbreviations are cited in notes 1-3, and 5-9.

1 In the *Journal of Biblical Literature* LX (1941), p. 438. (Cited hereafter as *JBL*.)

2 *Ugaritic Textbook*, *Analecta Orientalia*, 38 (Rome, 1965), p. 1. (Cited hereafter as *UT*.)

3 Carl Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1908-13). (Cited hereafter as *Grundriss*, with references being to section divisions.)

4 *UT*, p. 2.

5 In *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. G. Ernest Wright (New

- York, 1961), pp. 32-53.
- 6 *Biblica et Orientalia*, 17 (Rome, 1965) (cited hereafter as *UHP*); and *Biblica*, XLIV (1963), pp. 289-303; XLV (1964), pp. 393-412; XLVI (1965), pp. 311-332.
- 7 A. E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as Edited and Enlarged by the late E. Kautzsch* (Oxford, 1910). (Cited hereafter as *GKC*, meaning Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley.)
- 8 *Hebräische Grammatik mit Benutzung der von E. Kautzsch bearbeiteten 28. Auflage von Wilhelm Gesenius hebräischer Grammatik* (Berlin, 1918 and 1929; photographic reproduction in one volume, Hildesheim, 1962). (Cited hereafter as *Berg: I* [for I. Teil: Einleitung, Schrift-und Lautlehre] and *Berg: II* [for II: Verbum]. References are to the section divisions.)
- 9 *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes* (Halle, 1922; photographic reproduction, Hildesheim, 1965). (Cited hereafter as *B-L*, with references being to section divisions.)
- 10 E. g., A. B. Davidson, *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, revised by J. E. McFadyen, 24th ed. (New York, 1932), p. 51.
- 11 *GKC*, 23k and 35n.
- 12 *B-L*, 25w.
- 13 Cf. *B-L*, 25z; *Berg: I*, 16b; and *GKC*, 51L and 53q.
- 14 Cf. *GKC*, 53q; *B-L*, 25a', 46j'; *Berg: II*, 19k.
- 15 *Berg: I*, 16b; *Berg: II*, 19k; *B-L*, 25e'; *GKC*, 53q.
- 16' *B-L*, 46v and *GKC*, 53q.
- 17 *B-L*, 25L-v.
- 18 *Berg: I* 16f; see below, Section II (1).

The spirantization of the *b^gadk^hpat* letters following the 3f. s. suffix without *mappiq* (see *GKC*, 91g) is a kind of double evidence of the weak nature of final consonantal *he*. Compare the interchange of *aleph* and *he* in Is. 45:6, *kullā'* for *kullāh*.

- 19 See *B-L*, 14d', 17j, 21j, 25r, and 29p' for the various phonetic developments in these forms.
- 20 For this phonetic development, see *B-L*, 25u.
- 21 There are cases where the *he* is not elided after long *i*, see *B-L*, 25p.
- 22 The *he* of the 3 m. s. suffix *-hū* is not elided after verbal forms ending in long *ū* or *û*, e. g. *q^htalūhū* does not reduce to **q^htalû*, for this would lose the suffix completely in pronunciation and orthography.

- 23 Frank M. Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*, American Oriental Series, 36 (New Haven, 1952), pp. 68-9. The retention in MT of the 3 m. s. suffix with *he* (-*ehū*) may be a literary form, whereas the more common -*ayw* (-*āw* or -*ēw*) is a colloquial form.
- 24 See *Berg: I* 16d; and *B-L*, 25m. Compare *UT* 5.23 and 6.17 for the assimilation of *he* to the energetic *nun* in both Ugaritic and Hebrew.
- 25 See *GKC* 58k and paradigm C, p. 512; and *Berg: I*, 16d. It is also possible that in the case of *q^atālathū* becoming *q^atalāttā*, instead of actual assimilation of the suffix, the *he* was fully elided, but in order to keep the original accent structure there was an artificial gemination of the *taw*.
- 26 See *B-L*, 25c' and *Berg: I*, 16e. For another explanation on the development of *yô*, see the end of Section II and note 55.
- 27 "The Name *Yahweh*," *JBL* XLIII (1924), pp. 370-378.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 374. See also Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart, 1928), pp. 101-106.
- 29 See *GKC*, 53q and *B-L*, 25f' and g'.
- 30 *GKC*, 23k.
- 31 See *GKC* 23k, 58g, 91e, 103g.
- 32 See *Berg: I*, 16f.
- 33 See *B-L*, 12n.
- 34 See above, Section I:D-1.
- 35 *Berg: I*, 15a, 16a. On the shift of *ā* to *ō*, see *GKC*, 9b, 9q and 68b.
- 36 *Grundriss I*, 89k and 265k; *GKC*, 70x. For the more recent grammars, see Georg Beer and Rudolf Meyer, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Berlin, 1955), vol. II, p. 52.
- 37 See above, Section I (E), and Albright's article, cited in note 27, for other examples of colloquial and literary spellings. Other examples are cited in Albright's "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah'," *JBL*, XLVI (1927), pp. 151-185.
- 38 The major references for this evidence in Ugaritic are found in *UT*, 5.39 and *UHP*, 5.39 and 11.1.
- 39 *UT*, 9.49. Gordon's suggestion given in the glossary (p. 390) that the root *hlk* is a blend of **lk* and **hk* is problematic since there are other roots which elide the *he* but cannot be explained readily on the principle of a blend of different roots.
- 40 *Berg: I*, 15a and *UT*, 9.47.

- 41 *UT*: Glossary #770 and 9.49.
- 42 Compare the same with *wattōhez* in II Sam. 29:9, but *hōz* in Ex. 4:4.
- 43 Compare Gordon, *UT*: Glossary #463. Gordon's suggestion that the Hebrew plural should be vocalized as *bottim* (i. e., with the contraction of the diphthong *aw* to *ō*) is problematical since he fails to account for the retention of the diphthong in Ugaritic where one would expect it to contract and therefore not be represented in the orthography.
- 44 See Albright, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. IV (Leiden, 1957), pp. 242-258.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 245 and 256.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 256 and *UHP* 5.39.
- 47 On these noun forms, see *B-L*, 61 (pp. 455-460 and 475).
- 48 "The High Place in Ancient Palestine," p. 256. See below, note 54, the phonetic spelling of *n^ehi* as *ni*.
- 49 *UT*, 5.39.
- 50 *UT*: Glossary, #735 and *UHP* 5.39.
- 51 *UT*, 11.1 and *UHP* 11.1
- 52 *GKC*, 90c-i; and Beer and Meyer, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 119-120. Note especially Dahood's criticism of this traditional view, *UHP*, 11.1.
- 53 *UT*, 11.1.
- 54 *Berg*: I, 15b; Albright, "Further Observations on the Name Yahweh and its Modifications in Proper Names," *JBL* XLIV (1925), p.159. One such possibility is MT *n^ehi* 'wailing' which is simply written as *ni* in Ezek. 27:32. The spelling *ni* is phonetic, while the more usual *n^ehi* is historic spelling of the word (which was pronounced *ni* but artificially pointed by the Masoretes as *n^ehi*).
- 55 Albright, *ibid.*, pp. 158-159.
- 56 See Cross and Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 48 and H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, Vol. II (Wiesbaden, 1964), p. 183.
- 57 "Names of God," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II (New York, 1962), pp. 407-417.
- 58 See below, Section III, paragraph 1. For the equation of Ugaritic *YW* to *YHWH*, Gordon is certainly correct when he states that the equation has been dismissed too hastily (*UT*: Glossary, #1084). Albright's desire to read *yr* for *yw* (see *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 259) is questioned by John Gray who states, "Virolleaud's photograph seems clearly to read *w*, without

- any possible corruption (*La Déesse Anat*, Pl. XIII)." (See Gray, *The God YW in the Religion of Canaan*, " *Journal of Near East Studies*," XII [1953], p. 279, n. 7.) The root *hwy* is attested in Ugaritic (UT: Glossary, #754a), and the reading of Ugaritic *yw* as a *Piel* jussive causative would actually lend support to Albright's argument in reading *YHWH* and *YHW* as *Hiphil* imperfect and jussive, respectively. Compare the discussion of Gray in *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, V (Leiden, 1965), pp. 180-184.
- 59 Cross and Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 57; and on the Moabite *YHWH*, see p. 41, and Albright, *JBL* XLIV (1925), p. 161.
- 60 The evidence of the early fathers is summarily presented in the articles of B. D. Eerdmans, "The Name Jahu," and G. J. Thierry, "The Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton," both in *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, V (1951), pp. 1-6 and 31-34, respectively.
- 61 *Op. cit.*, pp. 30-32.
- 62 On the *Piel* jussive, see GKC 75bb; and on the *Piel-Hiphil* causative, GKC 53c. Compare Albright, *JBL* XLIII (1924), pp. 373-374; *JBL* XLIV (1925), pp. 158-159; and *JBL* XLVI (1927), pp. 176. On *YW-YHWH*, see above, note 58.
- 63 See above, note 60.
- 64 See above, note 62. For a more recent statement, see *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Anchor Book, 2nd ed. (Garden City, 1957), pp. 259-260. Not everyone finds this derivation as satisfactory as this writer; compare for example Hans Kosmala, "The Name of God (YHWH and HU')," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*, II (Leiden, 1963), pp. 103-106. But the objection to Albright's view on the basis of the lack of evidence for the *Hi-phil* of the root *hāyāh* in Hebrew is really not a very strong one! The only Hebrew available for any practical comparative purpose is Biblical Hebrew, but this has all passed through the hands of those who regarded any form of *yhw* as related to the ineffable name. No doubt originally there was a free interchange of the various names of God, but once *YHWH* was recognized as the holy name, synonyms were naturally used to express the profane idea of the verb wherever there was an audible similarity or graphic identity with the ineffable name. Surrogates of the divine name (*YHW*, *YH*, *YW*) were able to survive because there was no audible or graphic similarity to the divine name. In time even these surrogates share the sacredness of the ineffable name. The writing *lś* as *yodh* he was proscribed because it was a

profane use of a letter combination reserved to express a surrogate of the name of God; so also 16 was usually written *ʔet zayin*, instead of *yodh waw*. Profane graphic similarity (i.e., an isolated and independently standing YH or YW) of even the surrogates had to be avoided. When *yw* or *yh* formed part of a word there was no strictly graphic or audible similarity, except when used as the theophoric element in a personal name, but then they retain their "holy" quality. The ^{early} shift of 'ayin-waw verbs to 'ayin-yodh verbs and the shift of the imperfect preformative Qal from *ya-* to *yi-* ^{read} removed any graphic or audible similarity of *yhyh* to the tetragrammaton.

65 See Gray, "The God YW in the Religion of Canaan," p. 279, and references cited there.

66 See Gray, *ibid.*, and Noth, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-110.

67 See Albright, *JBL*, XLIV (1925), p. 160; and D. D. Lukenbill, "The Pronunciation of the Name of the God of Israel," *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, XL (1924), p. 281.

68 Albright, *ibid.*

69 For the possibility of Arabic influence upon the Tiberian vocalization, see Bledodyn J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff, 1951), pp. 59-63.