Beatific Afterlife
in Ancient Israel
and in the Ancient Near East

von
Klaas Spronk

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Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel
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an de Theologische Academie
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door

Klaas Spronk

geboren te Zijderveld

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PREFACE

This study is my thesis submitted to the Theologische Academie of the Johannes Calvijnstichting at Kampen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor's degree. It was written under the guidance of Professor Dr. J.C. de Moor, to whom I am deeply indebted for his continuous support. I regard it as a privilege to have been his assistant for the last six years.

I wish to convey my thanks to Professor Dr. E. Noort for his friendly and stimulating interest and his valuable criticism.

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Kampen, December 1985

Klaas Spronk
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INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of civilization the question what man can expect after death seems to have occupied human thinking. Being aware of the fact that one day he is going to die distinguishes a human being from other living creatures. It also seems to be human to expect that life will continue after death in one way or another, because belief in an afterlife is found in almost all cultures and in all times. Not even the present fading of belief in heaven and its counterpart hell under the influence of secularization seems to lead to a loss of all expectations of a life after death. On the contrary, people seem to be looking for new ways to find security with regard to their afterlife. This could explain the growing interest in experiences of people who were on the brink of death and in spiritualistic phenomena, and also the devastating flood of literature discussing the Christian dogmas on this subject.

In these books the Old Testament appears to play a very small part when

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(Books and articles listed in the Bibliography are referred to by the name of the author followed by the year of publication.)

1 Cf. the remark of M. Eliade, in Religious Encounters with Death, ed. F.R. Reynolds and R.H. Waugh, London 1977, pp.20-21: "Death is inconceivable if it is not related to a new form of being in some way or another, no matter how this form may be imagined".

2 According to the famous anthropologist J.G. Frazer the question "whether our conscious personality survives after death has been answered by almost all races of men in the affirmative. On this point sceptical or agnostic peoples are nearly, if not wholly, unknown" (Frazer 1913:1,33). Cf. also F. Heiler, Unsterblichkeitsgläube und Jenseitshoffnung in der Geschichte der Religionen, München 1950, p.5; H.W. Obbink, in Leben und Tod, Haarlem 1961, p.1; R. Cavendish, Visions of Heaven and Hell, London 1977, p.7.


4 Cf. J. Hick, Death and Eternal Life, New York 1976, ch.VII.

Introduction

It comes to defending the hope for beatific afterlife. As König states:

"Wer als Christ gewohnt ist, bedenkenlos das Alte Testament in einer angeblich heilsgeschichtlichen Kontinuität mit dem Neuen zu rezipieren, mache sich klar, was das bedeutet: All die Väter Israels, Abraham, Isaak und Jakob, Mose und die Richter, die Könige und die Propheten, Jesaja, Jeremia und Ezechiel, gingen für sich wie für alle anderen Menschen von einem solchen Ende in Dunkelheit aus - und doch haben sie aus einem unerschütterlichen Glauben an Gott gelebt und gehandelt. Alle diese Juden - mehr als ein Jahrtausend - glaubten nicht an eine Auferstehung von den Toten, glaubten nicht an ein ewiges Leben im positiven Sinn des Wortes, an einen "christlichen" Himmel. In imponierender Konsequenz konzentrierten sie sich auf das Diesseits, ohne sich sehr um dieses - in jedem Fall trübe, dunkle, aussichtslose - Jenseits zu kümmern." 1

As the following survey of the history of research will show, this view is shared by most Old Testament scholars. Von Rad speaks of a "theological vacuum" in the Old Testament with regard to the afterlife. 2 This would imply that there is a tension in this matter between the Old Testament and the later Jewish and Christian belief in beatific afterlife and probably also between the religion of ancient Israel and the religion of its closest neighbor as it is attested in the ancient city of Ugarit.

The aim of the present study is to shed some light on these problems by giving an overview of the enormous amount of previous research on this topic and by studying the relation between ancient Israelite conceptions of the hereafter and the ideas about beatific afterlife in the ancient Near East, especially in Ugarit.

1 König, Ewiges Leben?, pp.111-112.
1. The History of Interpretation

We may find the roots of obscurities and conflicts in the present dis-
text itself may have become explicit in later traditions.

We also have to realize that the way we read the text is influenced by
the interpretation of former generations. Our viewpoint is often not as
objective as we think it is. In the history of interpreting certain texts
we may find the roots of obscurities and conflicts in the present dis-
cussion of these texts.

1.2. THE OLD TESTAMENT AND BEATIFIC AFTERLIFE
IN EARLY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

Among the Jews of the last few centuries B.C. there did not exist a uni-
form and clear-cut concept of the afterlife. We meet a lot of different
conceptions, which sometimes even exclude each other. Only the most
important of them are mentioned here. The belief in the resurrection of
the body was dominant in Judaism, but in the book of Wisdom of Sol-
mon the conceptions of life after death are based on the fundamentally dif-
derent idea of the immortality of the soul. It is usually assumed that
with regard to this element Judaism was influenced by Greek philos-
phy.

A third approach can be found in the writings of the community of Qum-
ran. It can be called a "two-way theology", because it teaches that there are
only two ways of life in this world: the life of the righteous according
to the principles of pure religion and the life of the sinners who act
against God and his commandments. It is suggested that life on the way
of the righteous will continue after death, whereas the sinners are already
dead although they seem to be living. Other important elements of the

1 Surveys of the Jewish conceptions of the afterlife in this period can
be found with Moore 1927:277-395; Bückers 1938:10-47,96-135; Wied 1967:
53-109; Nickelsburg 1972; Wahe 1972; Stemberger 1973; Cavallin 1974
and 1979; Plass 1978; and Martin-Achard 1981a:492-487.

2 Cf. Bückers 1938:181; J.M. Reese, Hellenistic Influence on the Book of
this some scholars emphasize the Hebrew background of this conception;


4 Cf. Nickelsburg 1972:165 and G. Vermees, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in

Jewish conceptions of afterlife are the belief in a heavenly ascent of hu-
mankind1 and the hope that the faithful may obtain beatific afterlife
through the suffering of the righteous. There was also scepticism with
regard to the hope for beatific afterlife. It is noteworthy that in the
book of Wisdom of Jesus Sirach, which was written in the same period as
the book of Daniel, the ideal of resurrection or any other element of a
positive belief in life after death is not explicitly mentioned. Accord-
ing to some scholars Koheleth criticized the contemporaneous belief in the
immortality of the soul by stating that men and beasts are alike, because
both have to die and "who knows whether the spirit of man goes upwards
and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?" (Eccles 3:21). This
can be regarded as a rhetorical question indicating that there is no dif-
ference. From the New Testament we know that the Sadducees rejected the
belief in the resurrection (cf. Mark 12:18 and Acts 23:6) and in the
Rabbinic literature the Samaritans are several times condemned for their
refusal to accept this dogma.

1 Cf. A.F. Segal, "Heavenly Ascent in Hellenistic Judaism, Early Christian-
ity and their Environment", ANRW 11,23,2, pp.1333-1394.

2 Cf. L. Ruppert, Der leidende Gerechte, Würzburg 1972; A. Goldberg, Ev-
lösung durch Leiden, Frankfurt 1976; and De Moor 1978B. According to
Nickelsburg 1972:170-171 one of the three main themes in the Jewish
conceptions of the afterlife in this period was "the story of the right-
eous man".

Sarcasmo is of the opinion that the idea of resurrection is mentioned
in Sirach 17:14; 48:13 and maybe also in 48:11 (cf. Saracino 1982),
but direct reference to this belief is lacking.


6 Cf. H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus
Talmud und Midrasch, München 1922-1928, 1, pp.551-552. The question
whether or not and from what time onwards the Samaritans accepted the
belief in the resurrection of the dead is a very complex problem. It
was only in the fourth century A.D. that this belief was clearly for-
mulated in the Samaritan writings. It is not easy to find out what
their opinion was before that time, because all we know of that per-
iod stems from external sources (cf. Bowman 1955:68-69; H.G. Kippen-
berg, Gassim und Synagoge, Berlin 1971, pp.141-142; and S. Lowy,
The Principles of Samaritan Bible Revelations, Leiden 1977, p.218). The role
of the sect of the Dositheans in this matter is very obscure. Accord-
ing to some scholars only those Dositheans or one of the two parties
with that name denied the belief in the resurrection (cf. J.A. Mont-
It is easy to understand that in this situation the different parties were forced to defend themselves by referring to their common tradition, especially the Tora. A few examples may illustrate this.

In the book of Wisdom of Solomon the idea of immortality of the human soul is based on Gen 1:26; for it is stated in Wisdom 2:23 that God "made man in the image of his own immortality". According to II Macc 7:6 the martyrs who were on the brink of death are comforted by Deut 32:36, "The Lord . . . will have compassion on his servants". Apparently they trust to this compassion being continued after death. When consoling them, their mother points to belief in God the creator: "It is the Creator of the universe who moulds man at his birth and plans the origin of all things. Therefore He, in his mercy, will give you back life and breath again, since now you put his laws above all thought of self." (II Macc 7:23; cf. also v.28). In IV Macc 18:18 and IV Esdras 8:14, both dating from the first century A.D., Deut 32:39, "I kill and I make alive", is used as proof-text.

Texts from the books of the prophets were used as well. Renaud has demonstrated that ch.3-5 of the book of Wisdom of Solomon speaking of the immortal souls being with God are built up after the pattern of Isa 57:1-2. And according to Amir the explanation in this book of the coming of death into this world (cf. esp. 1:16) is based on a midrash-like exegesis of a number of Old Testament texts, viz. Isa 5:18 (cf. Wisdom 1:12); 28:25; Prov 8:36; and Job 17:4. More direct quotations of prophetic texts as proof-texts can be found in IV macc 18:14 (Isa 43:2).17 (Ezek 37:3) and references to the Writings can also be found in IV Macc 18:16 (Prov 3:18) and IV Esdras 4:35 (Prov 7:27).

When Paul writes about the resurrection of the dead, he points first to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor 15:12-14), but he also quotes some words of the prophets, viz. Isa 25:8 and Hos 13:14 when he writes in I Cor 15:54b-55, "Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory: 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?''. In the conversation with the Sadducees about the resurrection of the dead (Mark 12:18-27) Jesus uses Exod 3:6 as a proof-text: "as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." (Mark 12:26-27). This line of argument seems to be related to belief in the prominence of religious heroes, especially the patriarchs, in the life after death, as can be found, e.g., in The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Judah 25:1; Benjamin 10:6-8; IV Macc 5:37; 7:19; 13:16-17; 16:23: The Assumption of Moses 1:15; 10:4.2 This is a very interesting phenomenon. Here we have a tradition with no firm roots in the Old Testament which seems, nevertheless, to have been rather widespread (cf. also Luke 16:22-23 and Talmud Sanhedrin 90-91). It may have been part of folk religion existing next to orthodox Yahwism. It can be compared to another ancient Jewish folk custom, viz. the honouring of the graves of holy men.

The classical formulation of the Jewish dogma of the resurrection of the dead is Mishna Sanhedrin X,1, "The following have no portion therein (i.e., the world to come): he who maintains there is no resurrection". Some manuscripts add: "according to the Tora", but this is certainly a
later addition to the original text. This addition was probably inspired by the controversy in this matter with the Sadducees and maybe also the Samaritans, who would only accept proof-texts which are taken from the books of Moses. The way in which the Rabbis used the Torah to prove that the resurrection of the dead is announced in the Holy Scriptures can be illustrated by the following passage of Talmud Sanhedrin 90b: "It has been taught: R. Simai said: Whence do we learn resurrection from the Torah? - From the verse, And I also have established my covenant with them (sc. the Patriarchs) to give them the land of Canaan (Exod 6:4): 'to give you' is not said, but 'to give them' (personally); thus resurrection is proved from the Torah." The Rabbis also used texts from the Prophets and the Writings, because they were convinced of the fact, as Rabbi Simai stated, that "there is no fragment from the Holy Scriptures that does not indicate the resurrection of the dead" (Sifre Deut 306). And so Talmud Sanhedrin 90b continues:

Sectarians asked Rabban Gamaliel: Whence do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, will resurrect the dead? He answered them from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, yet they did not accept it (as conclusive proof). 'From the Torah': for it is written, And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and rise up (again) (Deut 31:16). 'But perhaps', said they to him, 'the verse reads', and the people will rise up? 'From the prophets': as it is written, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out its dead. (Isa 26:19). But perhaps this refers to the dead whom Ezekiel resurrected? 'From the Hagiographa': as it is written, And the roof of thy mouth, like the best wine of my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak (Cant 7:9). But perhaps it means merely that their lips will move, even as R. Johanan said: If a halachah is said in any person's name in this world, his lips speak in the grave, as it is written, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak? (Thus he did not satisfy them) until he quoted this verse, which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them (Deut 11:21); not to you, but to them is said; hence resurrection is derived from the Torah.

It appears that this last text is considered as decisive. It was used also by Rabbi Simai and the saying of Jesus according to Mark 12:26-27 is related to it as well.

In the early church the use of the Old Testament in connection with the belief in afterlife was not very different. The same methods of exegesis were used. In defending the belief in the resurrection of the dead Christian theologians referred in the first place to the New Testament and especially, like Paul in I Cor 15, to the resurrection of Christ. There are some instructive passages for this in the first letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (96 A.D.):

Let us consider, beloved, how that the Lord is continually proving to us the resurrection that is to be, the firstfruits of which he constituted by raising the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Let us look, beloved, at the resurrection which takes place regularly. Day and night show us a resurrection: the night goes to rest, the day arises; the day departs, night comes on. Let us take the crops. How and in what manner does the sowing take place? 'The sower went forth' and cast each of the seeds into the ground. These fall on the ground dry and bare, and decay. Then the greatness of the Lord's providence raises them up from the decay, and from the one many grow up and bear fruit. (I Clement 24) This proof derived from the comparison with the cycle of nature as part of God's creation appears to be very popular (cf. already I Cor 15:35-44).


2 For the translation of this and the following texts of I Clement see W.K. Lowther Clarke, The First Epistle of Clement, London 1937.

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3 According to Le Moyne, p.172 and Strack-Billerbeck, p.893 these "sectarians" are Sadducees. In a note to this text in the edition of Epstein it is stated that this term is used as a designation of Judeo-Christian. The importance of the debate would lay "in the fact the Christians maintained that the resurrection of the dead was consequent upon the resurrection of Christ; this doctrine of course would be weakened if it could be shown that resurrection was already taught in the Torah". This, however, is not very likely, because Paul and also Jesus himself already referred to the Law and the Prophets to prove the resurrection. The way in which the texts are interpreted to Talmud Sanhedrin by these "sectarians" shows that they were probably Sadducees, who prefer a literal interpretation of the texts.
It can also be found in the Acts of Paul 8:III,24ff. and with Tertullian (Apol. 48,8f.) and Augustine (De quantitate animae 33,76). Related to this is the comparison with the growing of a child out of the seed of a man in the mother's womb (cf. Justinus, Apol. 1,19 and Theophilus, Ad Autolycum L.8, 13). The same metaphor was used in II Macc 7:22 and IV Esdras 4:40ff. and also in the later Rabbinical literature (cf. Talmud Sanhedrin 90b-91a).

The first letter of Clement also gives some examples of the use of the Old Testament in the first century A.D. with regard to the defence of the belief in the resurrection of the dead: "For it says somewhere: 'And thou shalt raise me up and I will confess to thee.' And 'I laid me down and slept. I rose up, for thou art with me.' And again Job says: 'And thou shalt raise up the flesh of mine which hath born all these things'." (I Clement 26:2-3). The first quotation seems to be a combination of Ps 27:7b (according to the LXX); 88:11b; and 139:18b or 23:4. The second is from Ps 3:6 and the last from Job 19:26.

With regard to the afterlife the Old Testament was usually cited only to prove that Jesus Christ had to die and then be resurrected again. Relevant texts were collected in so-called Testimonia. Such lists of proof-texts on certain subjects were already used in the first century A.D. Very clear examples can be found in the third century in Cyprian's Ad Quirinius, 11,24-26. Jesus Christ's victory over death is proved by Ps 3:6; 16:10 and 30; his resurrection after three days is proved by Hos 6:2; and Exod 19:10-11; that the resurrected Christ acquired everlasting dominion was foretold according to Cyprian in Dan 7:13-14; Isa 33:10-11; 1

1 Cf. Thierry, Opstandingsgeloof, p.185.


3 The text according to MPL IV, col.717 gives Isa 33:10-11, but probably this has to be corrected into 33:10-11.

For the general resurrection Cyprian refers to Gen 5:24; Exod 37:11-14; Wisdom of Solomon 4:11.14 and Ps 84:2-3 (III,58).

A very interesting Christian defence of the belief in the resurrection is found in the Acts of Paul (second century A.D.) 8:III,24-32. As in Mishna Sanhedrin X, those who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead are condemned. The resurrection is compared to the dying and rising of the writer also makes a connection with the story of Jonah, who was raised by God "from the deepest of the netherworld" and who had lost "not even a hair or an eyelid" (cf. Matt 12:39-40). Finally, he mentions the story of the revivification of a dead person after contact with the bones of Elisha (II Kgs 13:21): "Thus you, who are thrown on the body and the bones and the spirit of Christ, will be raised on that day with an undamaged body".

In later centuries things did not change much. Generally speaking, there was not the least doubt about the Old Testament teaching the resurrection of the dead. As long as exegesis remained purely practical and only had to support the dogmas of the church, this view was not likely to be criticized. On the other hand there have always been students of the Holy Scriptures who contested the validity of the proof derived from the Old Testament. The Sadducees had their successors. Marcion (second century A.D.) wanted to distinguish between the god who sent Jesus Christ and who will give heavenly bliss after death to the faithful, and the distant god who created the world, but whose blessings are restricted to this life. According to Marcion the Old Testament knows of the latter god only. Inspired by gnosticism he also refuted the resurrection of the body. Heavenly life can only have a spiritual form. Next to Marcion we can mention the Manichaeans (third century A.D.) who maintained that the patriarchs knew nothing of beatific afterlife.

1 Cf. MPL IV, cols.716-718; the numbers of the texts are given according to the numbering of the MT.

2 Cf. MPL IV, cols.762-767.


1. The History of Interpretation

The official church regarded such opinions as heresies. One of the scholars who defended the dogmas of the church against the attack by Marcion was Tertullian. In his *De resurrectione mortuorum* he states that the resurrection of the flesh can be proved from the proverbs, the deeds of the prophets, and also from the miracle of the hand of Moses which was made leprous and then healthy again (Exod 4:4-7) (ch. 28, 1). He also refers to Deut 32:39 (ch. 28, 5); Isa 25:8 (ch. 47, 13 and 54, 5); 26:19 (ch. 31, 16); 26:20 (ch. 17, 4); and Ezek 37 (ch. 29-30). Ezek 37 is regarded as one of the most important proof-texts. He admits that it is a metaphor, but this would have no sense if it did not point to a certain reality.

We can conclude that most Christian scholars of the first centuries did not have the least doubt about the Old Testament teaching the resurrection of the dead and beatific afterlife. They found proof for this not only in well-known texts like I Sam 28; Isa 26:19; Ezek 37; Ps 16; 49; 73; and Dan 12, but also in many other texts, which are often quoted more or less *ad sensum*. Such re-interpretations giving a new meaning to the text are based on the occurrence of words like "to live", "to rise", "to awake", which could easily be connected with belief in resurrection and beatific afterlife. This phenomenon has been described by Sawyer, who mentions twenty passages in the MT that could have been understood as referring to the resurrection of the dead.


1.3. REVISIONS OF OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS

There is reason to assume that the emphasis on the belief in the resurrection of the dead and the hope for beatific afterlife led not only to re-interpretations of many texts in the Old Testament, but also to alterations to the texts themselves in order to clarify the assumed reference to resurrection or beatific afterlife. We can expect to find this phenomenon in translations of the Old Testament, but it can also be observed in the MT itself.

1.3.1 THE TARGUMIM

Alterations to the text of the Old Testament are most likely to be found in free translations of the Old Testament. For this reason it seems to be justified to start this investigation with the Targumim. These Aramaic translations have their origin in the Jewish public worship in the last centuries B.C. The oldest written Targumim we know date from the first century B.C. Because most Jews did not understand biblical Hebrew anymore, the Holy Scriptures had to be translated for them into Aramaic, which was the current language in this period. Often the opportunity was used to explain or paraphrase the original text. The Targumim can be divided into two groups; first the Palestinian Targumim, which are known for their free rendering of the Hebrew text, then the so-called Babylonian Targumim with a more literal translation.

As could be expected, most alterations to the text influenced by the belief in the resurrection of the dead can be found in the Palestinian Targumim. Sometimes these revisions concern casual remarks added to the original text, as in Gen 19:26 where it is said that Lot's wife changed into a pillar of salt. The Targum adds here: "until the day of the resurrection of the dead, for she saw the resurrection of Christ."
dust and to dust you shall return”, is connected with resurrection and postmortal judgement by adding “but from the dust you will rise to account for the things you have done”. A good example of Targumic paraphrasing is the rendering of the famous text Deut 32:39, “I kill and I make alive”. This is explained in the Targum by “translating” it as “I kill the living in this world and make alive the dead in the world to come”. In the same way Deut 33:6a, “May Reuben live and not die”, has been adapted to the belief of the translator; for here we read in the Targum: “May Reuben live in this world, and not die in the second (death) in which the wicked die in the world to come”.

With regard to the date of these Aramaic translations in the Palestinian Targumim, Rodriguez Carmona remarks that texts like Gen 25:34 were probably directed against the Sadducees. This would imply that these texts belong to the period before the belief in the resurrection had been established. And because the way in which the resurrection is described in the Targum does not contradict the early Jewish writings on this subject, Rodriguez Carmona thinks of a date before the destruction of the second temple.

Traces of the belief in the resurrection can be found in the translations in the Babylonian Targumim as well. The Targum Jonathan of the prophets contains a number of revisions and additions referring to resurrection and beatific afterlife. The translator made clear that I Sam 2:6, “YHWH kills and brings to life; He brings down to Sheol and raises up”, refers to the afterlife by adding to the last words “to eternal life”. For the same reason the last words of Isa 55:11, “YHWH will guide you continually and satisfy your desire with good things and make your bones strong”, were changed into “and thy body will enjoy everlasting life”. We can also mention here the paraphrase of Hos 14:8, “They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow”. According to the Targum this shadow is the shadow of the Messiah: “they shall live in the shade of their Messiah, and the dead shall live”. As in the Palestinian Targum of Deut 33:6a, the idea of the second death, which is irrevocable, has been added in Isa 65:15. The original text, “your name shall be used as an oath by my chosen, and the Lord YHWH shall give you over to death; but his servants, the righteous, shall he call by another name”, has been revised into “you shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen, and the Lord Elohim shall kill you with the second death; but his servants, the righteous, shall he call by another name”. The combination of the giving of a new name opposed to the second death also occurs in Rev 2:11.17; 3:12. This may be an indication of the age of this Targumic tradition.

Hos 6:2, “After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him”, is clarified in the Targum: “He will revive us in the days of the consolation, which shall come in the future; on the day of the resurrection of the dead He will raise us up, that we may live before Him”. The revision of the original text probably has to be seen against the background of the discussion with Christians. By leaving out the reference to the third day a connection with the resurrection of Jesus Christ is no longer possible.

According to Rodriguez Carmona 1978:30-51 Issau is portrayed here as a Sadducean; cf. also the Targum of Gen 4:8 on Cain.

Gen 3:19 was the most important proof-text used by the Samaritans after they had accepted the dogma of the resurrection of the dead in the fourth century A.D. (see on the Samaritan conceptions of afterlife Bowman 1955; McDonald 1964:372-376; R.J. Coggins, Samaritans and Jews, Oxford 1975, pp.144-145). Just as in the Palestinian Targum the original text has been adapted in the Samaritan Pentateuch; for here we read: “to your dust you shall return”. This text was interpreted as a promise of a life in the hereafter in the same physical state and form as before death; cf. M. Gaster, The Samaritans, London 1925, p.98 and Rowan 1955:66-67.

1.3.2. THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION

It is quite obvious that interpretative readings in the light of the belief in the resurrection can be expected in the LXX as well, because this translation can be regarded as a document of Jewish thinking and Jewish exegesis in the last centuries B.C.\(^1\) Also the belief in afterlife as it was common in this period left its traces in the translation\(^2\).

This is very clear in the addition to Ps 66(=LXX 65):1. In the heading according to the LXX this Psalm is called "a Psalm of resurrection", whereas the MT only speaks of "a Psalm". This addition in the Greek translation may have been inspired by v.9a, "who quickens my soul in life"\(^3\). To the last words of the book of Job, "And Job died, an old man, and full of days"(Job 42:17), the LXX adds: "It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up".

A special study of the way in which the concept of the future life according to the belief of the Greek translators has influenced the text of the book of Job in the LXX, was made by Gard\(^4\). It may be worthwhile to evaluate his conclusions. According to Gard future life has been stated as fact in the LXX of Job 5:11; 14:14; and 42:17; it would have been implied in 3:21-22; 4:20; and 7:9-10; and conditions in the future life would have been described in 3:13-14; 6:10; 14:22; and 40:13. Of the texts of the first category we already mentioned the LXX of Job 42:17 which is a clear case of a pious revision of the original text. Job 5:11b, "Those who mourn are lifted to safety", is rendered in the LXX as "He raises them that are lost". Compared to the LXX text of 42:17 the reference to the hope in God after death is less clear, but it is certainly possible to connect the Greek text of Job 5:11, unlike the original Hebrew text, with the belief in the resurrection of the dead. This holds also true for the LXX of Job 14:14. The translator has changed the question in the original text, "If a man should die, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait till my release should come", into a positive statement: "If a man should die, he shall live again, having accomplished the days of his life. I will wait till I exist again"\(^5\).

It is remarkable that Gard did not mention in this connection Job 19:25-26. The MT does not clearly speak of hopes with regard to the afterlife:

I know my avenger lives: afterwards he shall stand upon the dust.
After my skin has thus been flayed and without my flesh I shall see God.\(^6\)

The LXX, however, is more explicit in this regard:\(^7\)

For I know that He is eternal who is about to deliver me upon the earth; to raise my skin that has endured these things. For these things have been accomplished to me of the Lord.

In some important codices we even read at the beginning of v.26: "He shall raise up my body". In the Greek translation the original text appears to have been clarified by taking the last word of v.25 (C1V') with the following verse, thus connecting it with "my skin". As the variant reading shows, this could only be interpreted as a reference to the resurrection of the body. According to the Greek translator the second part of v.26 runs from 199 to 27N. As in 1:5 the verb 1\(\nu\) was translated with "to accomplish". The difficult 1\(\nu\) was interpreted as a pars pro toto and translated with "me". The dropping of the verb 27N may have been furthered by the fact that this word also occurs in v.27.

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1. Cf. the remark of Wevers, who is one of the experts in this field: "Es kommt also darauf an, dass man die Bücher der Septuaginta als alten Zeugnisse jüdischer Exegese untersucht und sie als solche auffasst." (J.W. Wevers, Theologische Rundschau NF 22 (1954), 182).


5. Cf. also Prijs, Jüdische Tradition, pp.71-73 who points to an interesting parallel in the Syriac version of Ps 88:11a. Instead of the question in the MT, "Dost Thou work wonders for the dead?", to which the answer can only be "no!", the Syriac version reads "For the dead Thou workst wonders".

that the Hebrew text used by the Greek translator was the same as the MT. Gard concludes that there appears to be a "tendency on the part of the Greek translator to introduce a theological point of view. According to Orlinsky he disregards the fact that clear statements rejecting the idea of a beatific afterlife have not been corrected. We have to take into account, however, that the Greek translator probably could not just correct or adapt the text of the Holy Scripture whenever it pleased him. It is more plausible to assume that only when the text lends itself to be explained as pointing to the resurrection of the dead and beatific afterlife, someone might have felt free and justified in changing it a little to make its meaning clearer to the readers.

It was noted above that also a literal translation may have a meaning different from the original text, because of the different "associative fields" of the words used. This applies to most texts of the second and third category mentioned by Gard and probably also to Gen 6:3; Deut 32:39; I Sam 25:29; Ezek 37:1-14; Ps 1:5; 21(LXX 20):7; 22(LXX 21):30; 49(LXX 48):10,16; 139(LXX 138):18; 140(LXX 139):14; Job 33:30; Prov 3:18; 12:28; and 15:24; and furthermore to all texts that contain in one way or another the promise of life. The LXX of the book of Isaiah is known as a free translation which tends to be interpretative. This can be illustrated by the rendering of Isa 26:

19. In the MT we read:

Thy dead shall live again,
my bodies shall rise.
Awake and shout with joy,
o dwellers in the dust!
For thy dew is honey-dew
and the earth shall bring forth the shades."

The Greek translator seems to have wanted to give a clearer picture of the resurrection to which the Hebrew text is referring:

The dead shall rise
and those who are in the tombs shall be raised,
and those who are in the earth shall rejoice.
For thy dew heals them,
but the land of the ungodly shall perish.

By changing "thy dead" into "the dead" in the first line the text has become a more general statement. The change of meaning in the last sentence is also remarkable. Perhaps the translator did not understand the rare '79 and connected it with the "fall" of the wicked (from the verb '79, "to fall"). Thus he could interpret this verse as referring to the double judgement after death. For this reason he then translated '79 negatively as "ungodly", whereas it was translated in v.14 positively as "physicis".

Another interpretative rendering which might point to the translator's belief in beatific afterlife can be found in Isa 53:11. In the MT we read: "After the travail of his soul he shall see. He shall be satisfied with his knowledge", whereas the LXX renders: "And the Lord wills to deliver him from the travail of his soul, to show him light, to form (him) with understanding". Compared with the MT the LXX has changed the subject and added an object to the verb "to see", viz. "the light". The same addition is found in the Qumran scrolls 1QIs a and 1QIs b. Because of this strong textual support many scholars take this to be the original text. It is, however, easier to explain why this object was added than why it would have been left out. Moreover, the use of this verb in the text according to the MT is totally in accordance with the way it is used in the rest of Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Isa 49:7). Furthermore, "to see" is

1 See on this translation section 3.6.1.4. below.


explained in the text according to the MT by the following line: the Ser- 
vant shall understand the meaning of his suffering. In the LXX this pas-
sage contains a quite different message. It states that after the Lord 
has put his servant to death he will show him the light, that is, bring 
him to life again.

We can, finally, mention here the LXX of Isa 65:22, which clarifies the 
original text, "Like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be", 
by identifying this tree with the tree of life. This is clearly a remin-
iscence of Gen 2:9 and points to a time when death shall be no more.

The LXX of the book of Proverbs, which is known to be a rather free 
translation¹, probably also contains some alterations to the original 
text based on the belief of the translator in beatific afterlife. The 
following texts can be mentioned here². In Prov 9:6, "Leave folly, and 
you will live", the last words are changed into "you will live forever". 
This seems to be a quotation of Wisdom of Solomon 3:8 and 6:21 and may, 
therefore, be regarded as a reference to the same concept of afterlife 
as it is described in Wisdom of Solomon. The second line of Prov 10:25, 
"When the storm passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is es-
established", appears to have been interpreted as a reference to eternal 
life: "the righteous turnes aside and escapes forever"³.

1.3.3. THE MASORETIC TEXT

As the difference between the MT and the Qumran scrolls with regard 
to the text of Isa 53:11 shows, it is possible that new conceptions of the 
future life have influenced the textual tradition in a time when the text 
of the holy Scriptures was not yet fixed⁴. A clear example of this is the

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speaks of the possibility that the reasons for the difference between 
MT and LXX are non-textual in character "Ibid., p.35); cf. also O. Pflü-
ger, Sprühne Salomon, BK XVII, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1984, pp. XXIX-XXX.
² Cf. G. Bertram, ZAW 54(1936),164-166.
⁴ See in general on this phenomenon the article of Seeligmann mentioned 
on p.16, n.2 above and Fishbane 1985:65-77 who speaks of pious revisions 
and theological addenda.

way in which the Massorites have punctuated Ecc 3:21. They appear to have 
replaced the original interrogative particles by articles. In this way 
they changed the text into a firm statement about the difference in des-
tiny between man and beast: the spirit of man goes upward (after death), 
whereas the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth¹.

In some cases the consonant-text seems to have been adapted as well. As 
a rule such alterations have to be dated before the end of the first cen-
tury A.D. It is more difficult to find a terminus post quern. The compari-
son with the versions may be of some help here, but usually we have to 
rely on the date of the belief expressed by the assumed alteration to the 
text. However, the precise date of an idea is often difficult to deter-
mine. This implies that there is a great danger of circular reasoning: if 
one is not certain about the date of the origin of a certain belief, the 
assumed date cannot be used as a criterion.

A pioneer in the field of the study of ancient revisions of the MT in-
fluenced by the belief in resurrection and beatific afterlife is Tournay. 
In an important article on the subject of "relectures bibliques concer-
nants la vie future" he states as a kind of working hypothesis: "Ne se-
rait-il pas normal que plusieurs passages des Ecritures aient été rema-
înés, 'relois', dans la perspective nouvelle d'une survie individuelle, 
prévalemment progressive au sein du judaïsme tardif?"². He assumes that 
such alterations to the Hebrew text can be recognized by the fact that 
they may have caused uncommon grammatical structures³. So the most 
promising texts in this regard are difficult texts about death and afterlife. 
The first text he mentions in this connection is Isa 38:16a:

\[ \text{1.3. Revisions of Old Testament Texts} \]

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¹ Cf. Tournay 1962:497-498; W. Zimmerli, Prediger, ATD 16/1, 3rd ed., Gött-
tingen 1980, p.170, n.6; A. Laabs, Ezechiel, BK XIX, Neukirchen-Vluyn 
1978, pp.73,77; and Schoors 1983:155.
² Tournay 1962:481.
³ Cf. also Fishbane 1985:81.
⁴ Tournay 1962:482-489.
course, as with most assumed alterations in the MT the original text can not be reconstructed with certainty. With regard to Tournay's solution of the text-critical problems of Isa 38:16 it can also be remarked that it is not clear why somebody would have wanted to change the proposed original text; for just as in the text according to the MT the expression "the life of my spirit" might have been associated with the hope for eternal life.

According to Tournay the present text of Job 19:26 seems to contradict other sayings in the book of Job in which the hope for postmortal retribution is clearly rejected: "And after my skin has thus been flayed and without my flesh I shall see God". By rearranging the words of the Hebrew text Tournay creates a text which is more in line with the rest of the book, in which the hope for retribution seems to be restricted to this life: "And if my skin was cut of my flesh, even then I shall look at God". We can mention here also another attempt to reconstruct the original text of Job 19:26: according to A. de Wilde we have to read "...then Shaddai shall call me 'bei lebendigem Leibe'". A decisive argument against these reconstructions is that it appears to be possible to keep to the MT as fitting the context very well (see section 3.5.2.2. below).

Tournay assumes that the MT of Job 14:12 is also the result of a deliberate adaption to the belief in the resurrection of the dead. The original MT of the verb מַלַּא, "to disappear" would have been changed to מַלֵּאת. This resulted in a hopeful message: "Until the heavens are no more, he will not harmless against these reconstructions is that it appears to be possible to keep to the MT as fitting the context very well (see section 3.5.2.2. below).

The Massoretes would have deliberately changed the mem and nun of the second word to associate this verse with the hope for retribution after death. The reconstructed text offers an antithetical parallel to the first part of the verse as in the previous proverbs. It is also grammatically more plausible, because now the verb מַלַּא, which is never used absolutely, has an object. It is also possible, however, to defend the MT. Instead of antithetic parallelism as in the previous proverbs we can assume that as in the following proverb the second part of this proverb gives additional information about the subject of the first part. "His death" would refer then to the death of the wicked as described in v.32a. This assumption is supported by Prov 11:19b, "he who pursues evil will die", indicating that death is the result of evil-doing. So נושא is the object of מומש, the righteous is helped by the death of the wicked, because now he can harm him no more.

As a kind of conclusion we end this survey of possible deliberate alterations to the original Hebrew text with one of the best examples of this

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1 Ibld., p.497; cf. also McKane, Proverbs, p.451.
3 Tournay 1962:498; cf. also BHS.
4 Cf. Van der Weiden 1970 who wants to interpret this verse as a reference to the afterlife.
5 Cf. J. van der Ploeg, Spreuken, BOT VIII, Roermond 1952, p.55; G. Bertram, ZAW 54 (1936), 165 interprets יומדים in the same way, but he does not connect it with מומש: "während er (der böse) stirbt, findet der gerechte eine Zuflucht".
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phenomenon, viz. the MT of Prov 15:24: "For the wise man the path of life leads upwards, that he may avoid Sheol below". This text can be associated easily with the hope for beatific afterlife. Now Tournay rightly maintains that הַרְנִי and הַרְנוּ may have been added to support such an interpretation. The proposed original text, which is supported by the LXX, would have been: "A path of life (is reserved) for the wise man that he may avoid Sheol". The original text could also be interpreted as speaking of beatific afterlife, because as we saw "life" was often regarded as an indication of "eternal life". So the additions to the text can be seen as clarifying and not as correcting the meaning of this part of the Holy Scriptures.

Tournay 1962:497; cf. also McKane, Proverbs, pp.479-480. Plöger, Sprichworte Salomos, p.184 explains הַרְנִי as an indication of the "Stetigkeit des Lebensweges", but as the use of the same wordpair in Isa 7:11 and Ezek 3:21 shows this is very unlikely.

14. MODERN RESEARCH

"Das Problem des Todes im Alten Testament hört nicht auf immer neue Generationen von Gelehrten zu beschäftigen", Barth seems to sigh when he begins to review another study on this topic. To give a survey by enumerating the many studies of the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife chronologically together with a description of the content, would not contribute to a better overview of the history of interpretation. To handle the flood of information it will be divided, therefore, as much as possible into different streams.

1.4.1. THE BEGINNING OF MODERN RESEARCH

A survey of the research on our subject in the period until the nineteenth century can be found with Spiess. It appears that things did not change much compared to what was said about these matters in the first centuries A.D. (see section 1.2. above). It was usually assumed that there is no difference between the Old Testament and the teachings of the church with regard to life after death. A very good example of the arguments used to prove this can be found in Calvin's Institution. In the tenth chapter of the second book he pays much attention to the question whether the Old Testament contains the promise of a "spiritual and eternal life" and to the question whether this promise "was pressed in the hearts of all who agreed in truth to the covenant". In answering these questions he used the same line of argument as we found in early Jewish and Christian traditions: the patriarchs must have known that God would not fulfill his promise in their life before death and according to Gen 49:18 and Num 23:10 the patriarchs appear to have believed in beatific afterlife. The same holds true for David (cf. Ps 102:26-29; 103:17), because he sings about heav-

1 Tournay 1962:497; cf. also McKane, Proverbs, pp.479-480. Plöger, Sprichworte Salomos, p.184 explains הַרְנִי as an indication of the "Stetigkeit des Lebensweges", but as the use of the same wordpair in Isa 7:11 and Ezek 3:21 shows this is very unlikely.


3 Spiess 1877:409-416.
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only bliss (cf. Ps 17:15; 34:23; 49; 52:10; 55:23-24; 92:13-15; 97:10; 112:4,6,9; 140:14). Also Job, who was a "teacher of the people appointed by the Holy Ghost", was familiar with this hope for afterlife (cf. Job 13:15; 19:25). Calvin admits that the "grace of the future life" is not yet fully revealed in the Old Testament. The emphasis of the Old Testament is on this life. He explains this as a pedagogical measure indicating that the common people of this period were not prepared yet for the revelation of beatific afterlife (ch.11,1).

On the other hand there have always been people who challenged this view; e.g., the Socinians in the sixteenth century and two centuries later the so-called Deists², but they did not use new arguments either.

A new approach to our subject was initiated by the important change in biblical scholarship at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century as the study of the Bible was detached from dogmatics. Also the Old Testament and the New Testament were now studied separately. As a result of this development which is connected with the names of Gabler, Bauer and De Wette, the Old Testament was regarded no more as a summing up of proof-texts. It was studied as a source of historical information about the religion of ancient Israel. Many scholars stressed that this particular religion had to be studied in the same way as any other religion. This development also affected the study of the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife. In 1877 a study by Spiess was published on this issue as part of the Entwicklungsgeschichte der Vorstellungen vom Zustande nach dem Tode auf Grund vergleichender Religionsforschung. We might call this the beginning of modern research on this subject.

According to Spiess it is absolutely necessary to take as a starting-point, "dass wir ohne Rücksicht auf die verschiedenartige dogmengeschichtliche Auffassung der alttestamentliche Eschatologie das Material Über die Fragen von Jenseits nach denselben Grundsätzen betrachten und darstellen müssen, nach welchen wir auch bei den anderen verfahren sind" (pp.417-418). This implies that the religion of Israel can be compared with other religions in order to clarify certain conceptions. For this reason Spiess gives an extensive survey of the conceptions found with the "uncivilized or wild" peoples, Egyptians, Chinese, Buddhists, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Celts, ancient Germans, Slavs, Jews, and Muslims. He concludes: "Die Annahme einer Fortdauer des geistigen unbörperlichen Theils des Menschen und einer Verschiedenheit des Zustandes, in welchen die Seele eingeht je nach dem Verhalten der Person während des irdischen Lebens, ist gemeinschaftliches Eigenthum aller Eschatologien" (p.510).

In evaluating the results of his research, Spiess is clearly influenced by the theories of evolution, which were current in his days. All conceptions can be classified as stadia on the way to the highest insight, which is in his opinion the belief in a last judgement and eternal heavenly bliss: "Wir müssen constatieren, dass kein Volk ohne den Besitz von irgendwelchen Erwartungen über ein Jenseits gefunden worden ist ... wir erkennen darin trotz der sie verdeckenden Hullen Lichtstrahlen der ewigen Wahrheit" (p.172).

According to Spiess the religion of Israel had not yet reached the highest level. The Old Testament shows, "dass das jüdische Volk auf einer noch primitiven Stufe seiner religiösen Entwicklung stand, welche wir in derselben oder in ähnlicher Weise auch bei anderen Völker beobachtet haben" (p.433). The religion of Israel is concentrated on this life. The Israelites hoped for justice before death. Only Isa 24:22; 26:19; and Dan 12:1-3 point to positive expectations concerning life after death. The development which led to this insight may have been furthered by the contact with the religion of the Persians, but according to Spiess there are also "rayen of light¹" to be found in the period before these contacts, viz. in Isa 24-27; Ps 73:23ff.; 49:16; and 17:15.

¹ "Zwischen schimmert wie ein Lichtstrahl eine freundliche Ahnung von einem ewigen Leben in Ihre Seele, in solchen Augenblicken erhebt sich Ihr Geist, und ihre Gedanken übersteigen die Höhe des Mosaismus" (p.464).
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1.4.2. LOOKING FOR WORSHIP OF THE DEAD

The impact of the prevalent general anthropological theories of this period on the study of the religion of ancient Israel necessarily resulted in a tendency among Old Testament scholars to look in the Old Testament for traces of worship of the dead. This can be illustrated by the following statement of Frazer, which represents the common scholarly view on the beginnings of religion:

the worship of the human dead has been one of the commonest and most influential forms of natural religion, perhaps indeed the most commonest and most influential of all. Obviously it rests on the supposition that the human personality in some form, whether we call it a soul, a spirit, a ghost, or what not, can survive death and thereafter continue for a longer or shorter time to exercise great power for good or evil over the destinies of the living, who are therefore compelled to propitiate the shades of the dead out of a regard for their own safety and well-being. This belief in the survival of the human spirit after death is world-wide; it is found among men in all stages of culture from the lowest to the highest; we need not wonder therefore that the custom of propitiating the ghosts or souls of the departed should be world-wide also.1

This theory was developed at the end of the nineteenth century by Tylor and Spencer2. According to them religion has begun with the discovery by the "savage philosopher" of the vital force as an independent entity they called "soul". This soul seems to survive death, because it appears as the image of the deceased in dreams. At first, religion was no more than the veneration of these souls as superhuman powers. Spencer even maintains that ancestor-worship is the root of every religion3. From here it is only one step to the theory of Euhemerism, viz. that the gods were once mortal men.4

It was supposed to be only natural to find traces in the Old Testament of the same development. One of the first and also one of the most extreme attempts to prove the validity of the theory of the so-called animism for the study of the religion of ancient Israel was made by Lippert5. He not only defended the existence of a worship of the dead, but he also regarded the designation of the god of Israel as בַּדַיְם as a reminiscence of former animism. This plural form would refer to the many spirits that had been venerated at an earlier stage6. Less extreme, but more influential were the studies by Oort, Stade, and Schwally7. The arguments which were used by these scholars and by the scholars following them can be divided into five categories, viz. arguments concerning the idea of the "soul", mourning customs, funerary material, the family, and ritual laws and practices. In the following survey these will be dealt with separately. It will be necessary sometimes to describe later developments in Old Testament research in order to get a clear view on the validity of the arguments used.

1.4.2.1. CONCEPTIONS OF THE "SOUL" AND THE AFTERLIFE8

The theory of animism takes as a starting-point a general belief in the soul which survives the death of the body: "Looking at the religion of the lower races as a whole, we shall at least not be ill-advised in taking as one of its general and principal elements the doctrine of the soul's future life"9. This could easily be adopted in the study of early Israelite religion, because the belief in the immortal soul was usually

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3 Spencer, I, p.411.
taken for granted in the older studies of the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife as well. The animistic "soul" was identified by most scholars with the Old Testament.

Even Frey, who challenged the theory of a worship of the dead in Israel, states: "Da nun die Völker, nicht das Leben an sich, sondern das individuell existierende Leben ist, so ergibt sich hieraus die Vorstellung von einer individuellen Fortexistenz des Menschen nach dem Tode, richtiger seiner Seele, eine Vorstellung, die allen Völkern gemeinsam ist, selbst auf der primären Stufe der Erkenntnis."

 Apparently this belief in the lasting existence of the soul was not a matter of dispute. In this period around the turn of the century only Grünseisen was of a different opinion on this point. According to him the being of the soul after death cannot be seen as a form of existence anymore: "Die Nephew verlässt den Körper im Tode. Dann aber ist es aus mit ihr. Es ist überhaupt kein Teil des lebendigen Menschen, der nach dem Tode der Schöll verfallen wäre". All that remains are the shadowy souls, who have no power and were not worshipped. On this point Grünseisen met with much criticism. The most important argument used against his theory was that it would indicate a difference between the Israelite conceptions of the soul and the general conceptions in other "primitive" cultures: "(es wird) ein Bild von dem Seelenglauben Israels konstruiert, das in diametralem Gegensatz zu den Ansichten der Naturvölker steht ... Einen solchen Unterschied zwischen den ältesten und primitivsten Anschauungen der Nationen auf niedersten Kulturstufe anzunehmen, ist von vornherein höchst bedenklich und läßt sich nur durchführen, wenn man in mechanischer Weise Israel in allen Punkten eine Sonderstellung zugestehenwürde".

Although most scholars agreed with the opinion that the Israelites knew of an immortal, spiritual part of the human being, which leaves the body with death, it was not easy to get a clear picture of this from the Old Testament texts. It is difficult to find texts speaking about the existence of the soul in the world of the dead. To some the term מַעֲשֶׂה (Lev 21:11; Num 6:6) is a reference to the spirit of the dead. Matthes points to the texts describing the liberation of the מַעֲשֶׂה from the netherworld (e.g., Ps 16:10; 30:4; 86:19; 89:49; Prov 23:14). And he thinks that the description of the revivification of a dead person as the return of the מַעֲשֶׂה (I Kgs 17:21-22) indicates that the מַעֲשֶׂה was believed to exist somewhere separated from the body or the deceased.

The term מַעֲשֶׂה is usually regarded as just another name for the souls of the dead. According to Lods it denotes a distinct class of the dead; he speaks of the "aristocratie du séjour des morts". This distinction was not due to a judgement after death; it was merely the continuation of the situation before death.

It could not be denied that the dead are described in the Old Testament as weak. This does not fit within the theory of a cult of the dead: why would the living have worshipped beings without the power to influence their lives? The description of the dead as weaklings had to be explained as due to Yahwistic criticism on the worship of the dead as it was practised in earlier periods and probably still persisted in folk religion.

1 Haldéry prefers to identify the "soul" with the נְפֶהַשׁ (זילוגה, p.148). Lods takes the "nephew" with the נְפֶהַשׁ (Melanges, p.148). Halevy prefers to identify the "soul" with the נְפֶהַשׁ (Melanges, p.148). Lods takes an intermediate position: "nous croyons que les Israélites ont eu, non pas une, mais plusieurs notions sensiblement divergentes de la nefesh et de la rouah, et que la conception qui prédominait dans les temps anciens s'accordait entièrement avec l'idée du double" (Lods 1906:151).

2 Cf. Schwally 1892:7 and Matthes 1901:335-336 who is, however, more reserved in this matter.

3 Matthes 1901:333-334.

4 Ibid., pp.331-332.


7 Lods 1906:1,215.


According to Charles this development has influenced the conceptions of the soul. In the pre-Yahwistic stage the Israelites kept to a dichotomy: a human being consists of a body and a soul or spirit. This was the common view shared with other peoples, which "attributes to the departed a certain degree of knowledge and power in reference to the living and their affairs".1 In this situation a worship of the dead seems to be of course. Yahwism, however, furthered the idea of a trichotomy by distinguishing between the soul (n̄i) and the spirit (n̄i). According to this view the life-giving spirit leaves in death not only the body but also the soul, which now becomes a "dead soul" (n̄i) and does not "exist" anymore.2 This means that there is "neither knowledge, nor wisdom, nor life in the grave".3 We can compare this theory to what according to Pedersen has been the common view in Israel. He states that there "can be no doubt that it is the soul which dies".4 Pedersen has come to this conclusion, however, from another point of view. According to his Israelite thinking did not separate the soul from the body. He proposes a monistic view: "The dead is still a soul, a soul that has lost its substance and strength: it is as a misty vapour or a shadow." "Even after death the soul still maintains its intimate relation with the body. The dead body is still the soul."5 This rules out the possibility of the n̄i being venerated after death. Already Obbink criticized Matthes on this point: according to the Old Testament "the inhabitants of the netherworld are not souls or spirits, but men".6

This monistic view, which has become prevalent among Old Testament scholars, questions the assumed correlation between conceptions of afterlife and the conceptions of man and soul. This old dogma of Old Testament scholarship1, however, was not easily dismissed. E.g., Schilling still speaks of a "notwendige Zusammenhang zwischen der Psychologie und der Unsterblichkeitslehre": "Die Seelenlehre des Alten Testaments bringt eine Fasslichkeit mit, die es ermöglicht, sich einzupassen, sobald der Unsterblichkeitsglaube sich deutlicher entfaltete. Die Umkörplichkeit der n̄i, vor allem aber die Individualität und Substantialität der n̄i sind Tatsachen, die die Seelenvorstellung allmählich in die Unsterblichkeitsvorstellung einmünden lassen konnten". In this way Schilling tries to save for the Old Testament in a moderate form the old view of the immortal soul. However, nowadays it is usually assumed that the idea of an immortal soul appears for the first time in the writings in the second century B.C., especially in the book of Wisdom5, and that it has its origin in Greek philosophy5.

Some scholars assume that the monistic conception of man, because of its high valuation of physical life, called forth the belief in the resurrection of the body in the afterlife: beatific afterlife without a body would be unthinkable to an Israelite6.

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The interpretation of mourning customs plays an important part in the theories about animism, because it may be assumed that belief in a power-

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1 Cf. Touzard 1898:209: "Il existe une correlation intime et nécessaire entre les idées eschatologiques des Juifs et leurs conceptions psychologiques." Cf. against this Obbink 1907:240.
3 Cf. Bückers 1938.
5 Cf. already Schwally 1892:16, n.2 with regard to the later Jewish conceptions; cf. also Sellin 1919:235; Nötcher 1926:120,209; Schubert 1962:120, 183-184; Greenspoon 1981:252; and Fuglister 1983:34.
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ful soul leaving the body after death influenced the reactions to death. All mourning customs are explained out of the fear for the mighty dead who can harm the living. They would have been intended to drive away the hostile spirits of the dead. According to Schwally the Israelites did not want to defend themselves against the spirits of the dead, but instead submitted themselves to them. He thinks that it is possible to explain all mourning customs this way. Related to this is the attempt by Matthäus to explain them as references to a cult of the dead. E.g., the custom of cutting the hair was understood as an offering to the dead of life-power, which was supposed to be in the hair.

Very soon scholars realized that not all mourning customs can be explained as based on one and the same principle. Apart from the fear for the dead and for death, there must have been other motives for acting this way in the confrontation with death, such as the desire for a continuation of the communion with the beloved deceased. The dead may have been venerated as powerful spirits, at the same time they appear to need help. This second element was stressed by scholars who maintain that the Israelites never practised a worship of the dead. These scholars usually prefer an interpretation of the mourning customs as humiliating oneself before God, because the encounter with death reminds man of his limitations. In this way the survivors would try to cope with death. According to Pedersen this has nothing to do with rites aimed at the dead: "The mourning-rites express the humiliation and pain at having got into close touch with death. All attempts to explain the origin of the ..."

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mourning-rites by roundabout ways and through external means are vain, because they are not merely used as death-rites, but make themselves felt in all cases when people are brought face to face with unhappiness and sorrow. Sorrows and misfortunes have a humbling effect.

This view is shared by Kutsch, who maintains against those who try to explain the mourning customs as remains from a former cult of the dead: "So ist von vorneherein jede Deutung, die diese Riten unmittelbar mit den Toten in Verbindung setzt, ausgeschlossen. Keiner dieser Riten zielt auf den Toten, d.h. auf sein Ergehen oder auf das Verhältnis zu ihm; sie alle haben vielmehr Bezug auf denjenigen, der sie vollzieht. ... Wer sie vollzieht, gibt damit zum Ausdruck, dass er gebeugt ist, eine Minderung erfahren hat."

Old Testament scholars became also more careful with regard to the comparison with mourning customs of other peoples. E.g., Heinisch states: "So sehr es aber gerechtfertigt ist, dieselben bei der Erklärung der Brauche Israels zu berücksichtigen, so ist es doch nicht statthaft, ohne weiteres die Vorstellungen, welche die Naturvölker mit ihren Riten verbunden, einfach auf Israel zu übertragen". Heinisch represents the prevalent scholarly opinion when he states that the Israelite mourning customs primarily functioned as a memento mori and in this way expressed man's humility before death and before God. He admits that many mourning customs may have arisen out of the belief in the mighty dead and can be explained as a disguise for, defence against, or even offering to the spirits of the dead. Under the influence of Yahwism, however, they lost their original meaning: "Nehmen die Israelis beim Tode gleiche oder ähnliche Handlungen vor wie andere Völker - der Unterschied bestand: Sie ehren die Toten, aber die Eigenart ihrer Religion bewahrte sie davor, die Toten zu verehren."
1.4.2.3. FUNERARY MATERIAL

Although Schwally called the tombs "temples of ancestor-worship"\(^1\), it appeared to be very difficult to derive sound arguments for the existence of an ancient Israelite cult of the dead from the funerary material. In the first studies on the Israelite worship of the dead usually only the custom of throwing stones upon the grave is mentioned in this connection. This custom was interpreted as an action out of fear for the dead. In this way people would have tried to prevent the spirit of the dead from leaving the grave\(^2\). On the other hand grave-goods could be interpreted as offerings to the dead\(^3\). According to Sukenik traces of repeated offerings to the dead can be found in a tomb in Samaria. In this tomb there are two pits, which are interpreted by Sukenik as "receptacles of offerings connected with the cult of the dead as regularly practiced in ancient Israel in spite of the attacks of the prophets"\(^4\). We can, finally, mention here the theory of Karge on the role which the numerous megalithic monuments that can be found especially in Transjordan may have played in the religion of ancient Israel. According to Karge the Israelites regarded these so-called dolmens as the tombs of the mighty Rephaim\(^5\). For this reason the dolmens had become centres of hero-cult\(^6\).

The validity of most of these arguments with regard to the funerary material has been contested. The heap of stones above the grave may also have been meant as a memorial of the dead person buried there. Grave-goods not necessarily point to veneration of the dead; one can also regard them as an indication to the belief that the dead were totally dependant on the living to make "life" in the netherworld bearable\(^7\). Sukenik’s interpretation of the tomb in Samaria could be questioned for the same reason, whereas it may also be doubted whether he is right in calling it an Israelite tomb\(^8\). According to Galling the anonymity of the Palestinian graves implies that there was no cult of the dead, at least not near the graves. Otherwise one would expect an identification of the person buried there, e.g., in an inscription\(^9\).

Nowadays most scholars agree that from the material remains no certain evidence can be given for a worship of the dead. The only thing that can be derived from the facts revealed by archaeology seems to be that the inhabitants of Palestine believed in some form of continued existence of the deceased\(^10\).

1.4.2.4. THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD AND THE FAMILY

In a study published in 1864 Fustel de Coulanges tries to show that the worship of dead ancestors not only marks the beginning of religion, but also was the constituent principle of the family in "primitive" societies\(^11\). Characteristic of this "domestic religion" is the emphasis on progeny and the possession of land, because both are necessary for the cult of the dead. According to Fustel de Coulanges this implies that in cultures where the longing for progeny and for landed property take a prominent place, we may also expect ancestor-worship.

This theory could be easily applied to the Old Testament, because this longing for progeny and landed property is expressed in many texts; especially the institution of the so-called levirate marriage is very inter-

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\(^1\) Schwally 1892:57.


\(^3\) Cf. Schwally 1892:24.


\(^5\) Karge 1917:644.

\(^6\) Ibid., pp.528-556; Cf. also C. Epstein, RB 79(1972),406-407 and RB 80 (1973),562.

\(^7\) Fustel de Coulanges, La cite antique, 1864 (English translation The Ancient City, 1873, rpt. with a Foreword by S.C. Humphreys and A.D. Moniglano, Baltimore 1980).
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...ing in this regard. It is supposed that its original object was to provide the man who died childless with a son to take care of his cult. This assumed background was used to explain the contradictory statements about the levirate in the Old Testament. The oldest text was supposed to be Deut 25:5-10. Here the levirate marriage is mentioned without objection, whereas it is forbidden in the later priestly texts Lev 18:16 and 20:21. The reason for this would have been the connection with the ancestor-cult, which was forbidden by Yahwism. This would also explain why the levirate marriage appears to be unknown in the book of Ruth and also why it plays no part in the history of the daughters of Zelophehad (Num 27:1-11).

Special study of the relation between the family and the cult of the dead was made by Lods. According to him the cult of the dead was not exclusively a matter of the family. This cult is the answer to the fear for the dead and not only the dead within one's family are feared. Consequently he cannot agree with Fustel de Coulanges' model: "Ce n'est pas le culte des ancêtres qui a créé la famille israélite." Another important reason for Lods to assume that the cult of the dead was not restricted to the ancestors is the existence of cults honouring dead heroes, viz. the patriarchs. These were venerated at their graves by the whole nation or at least part of it. In this the Israelites were probably influenced by the Canaanites: while taking possession of the land, they may have also adopted Canaanite heroes as their ancestors.

Also the given interpretation of the levirate marriage as part of the model of Fustel de Coulanges met with serious criticism. The proposed connection with ancestor-worship was questioned. The reason for this institution which is given in Deut 25:6, "so that the name may not be blotted out of Israel", is acceptable to many scholars. From another point of view levirate marriage can also be regarded as a measure to protect the widow. Finally, it is not at all certain that Lev 18:16 and 20:21 exclude levirate marriage. These laws may have been meant to restrict the sexual contact within a relation that tends to incest and not as measures against ancestor-worship.

RITUAL LAWS AND PRACTICES

A clear reference to the offering of food to the dead during a funeral repast was found in Deut 26:14. The tithe-giver has to declare: "I have not eaten any of the tithe while in mourning, nor have I rid myself of it for unclean purposes, nor have I offered any of it to the dead" (cf. also II Sam 3:35; Jer 16:7-8; Ezek 24:17.22; and Hos 9:4). It is a matter of dispute whether this funeral repast had something to do with a worship of the dead. According to Schwally there is no difference between this offering of food to the dead and the sacrifices to the gods: "Der Tote bekam ebenso seinen Anteil vom Leichenschmaus, wie Jahve von den Opfermahlzeiten, die am der Cultstätte verzehrt wurden." In defending this interpretation against the criticism of Frey, Matthes distinguishes between a funeral repast directly following the funeral and one for the deceased offered to him at his grave some days after the burial. In Deut 26:14 both repasts would have been mentioned: first the funeral repast, then the repast for the dead. Because the dead were believed to be powerful spirits, not only the repast for the dead, but also the funeral repast was interpreted by Matthes as a form of venerating the dead. Other scholars are more reserved in this matter. Deut 26:14 probably only indicates the provision of sustenance to the dead. To Frey even this goes against...
too far; according to him the funeral repast is no more than a way of expressing the communion of the survivors with the deceased: "Einerseits wird der Verstorbene dadurch, dass man die Pietät gegen ihn nicht verletzt, sondern anlässlich seines Verscheidens ein Mahl hält, durch solches Thun geehrt, anderseits wird den Hinterbliebenen durch ein solches um des Toten willen geschehendes Mahl die Trostung zu teil, dass trotz des Todes die Zusammengehörigkeit nicht aufgehoben ist".

Jer 34:5; II Chron 16:14; and 21:19 mention kindling of fires and burning of spices in order to honour the deceased king. Some scholars regard this as an offering to the spirit of the dead, others deny this or take it as some kind of provision for the dead king's need. Everything depends here on whether or not the dead are believed to be powerful.

From the clearly attested practice of necromancy (cf. I Sam 28; Isa 8:19; 65:4) can be inferred that the spirits of the dead were supposed to know more than the living. Whether this implies that the dead were also venerated is a matter of dispute. To prove the religious character of necromancy, scholars usually refer to the spirit of Samuel being called דְּעָה (I Sam 28:13). Furthermore, they point to the fact that necromancy is forbidden according to the Old Testament (cf. Deut 18:11; Lev 20:6-7). This would imply that the contact with the spirits of the dead was a serious threat to Yahwism; for it shows that the dead were venerated as gods.

We know from other cultures that the cult of the dead was often practised before images representing the dead. According to Schwally the Israelites also had been familiar with this kind of cult objects: "Wie Jahve, so werden im alten Israel auch die Ahnen ihre Bilder gehabt haben. Und es spricht manches dafür, dass Teraphim ein Name für solche Ahnenbilder gewesen ist". He assumes a lexical relation between דְּעָה and the Hebrew word for the dead in the netherworld, דְּשָׁה. Another name for these images of the deceased ancestors might have been דְּעָה. This interpretation of the דְּעָה could not be easily refuted because of the many uncertainties with regard to origin and meaning of this word and the object it denotes, but it did not meet with much approval. Nevertheless, it still finds its advocates.

Schwally also made an attempt to reconstruct a festival in honour of the dead. He supposes Purim to be a "verkapptes Totenfest". His main arguments for this are the absence of the name of YHWH in the book of Esther, in which the origin of Purim is described, and the fact that Purim takes place in the month of Adar, which is connected in Judaism with the commemoration of Moses, Elijah, and Mirjam and in which all graves were white-washed. This hypothesis was criticized amongst others by Morgenstern. In his opinion not Purim but Passover was originally a yearly festival celebrated in honour of the dead. Of course, this origin was covered by Yahwistic traditions wherever possible, but some elements still remind us of it. E.g., the offering at night and the use of blood to keep away the "destroyer" (Exod 12:23). This "destroyer" was originally a malign spirit of the dead. With this supposed origin of Passover, Morgenstern can also explain the connection of the resurrection of Jesus Christ with this ancient feast. Until now, Morgenstern found no support for this daring theory.

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The relation between Yahwism and the assumed worship of the dead in the period before the exile is described by Schwally as follows: "Man wird sich in den kleinen Angelegenheiten des privaten Lebens an die Ahnen, für die gemeinsamen Interessen der Geschlechter und Stämme an Jahwe Sabaot gewandt haben. Wie diese Interessen für Beduinen hauptsächlich in Familien- und Stammsfehen aufgehen, so ist Jahwe von Haus aus Kriegsgott".

1.4.2.6. WORSHIP OF THE DEAD AND YAHWISM

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1 Frey 1898:122; cf. Heinisch 1931B:89; De Vaux, Institutions, I, pp.98f.
2 Frey 1898:87-88 and Aalders 1914:33-34.
4 Schwally 1892:25-262; and against this Frey 1898:107-112.
6 Schwally 1892:37; cf. also Lods 1906:236-238.
7 Schwally 1892:42-45; cf. also Pope 1977:165.
8 Schwally 1908:445-446.
9 Schwally 1892:24; cf. Margoliouth 1908:446.
10 Schwally 1892:24; cf. also Pope 1977:165.
11 Schwally 1892:24; cf. also Quell 1925:34.
In the course of time the monopolizing Yahwism gained control over the whole field of religion and left no room for ancestor-worship, although it could not be destroyed entirely. This may be due to the special character of ancestor-worship: "Der Kampf wurde dadurch erleichtert, dass der Ahnendienst entsetzlich wenig entwicklungsfähig ist. Gerade deshalb konnte er sich andererseits in seinem Bannkreise mit um so grosserer Zähigkeit halten". With this "Bannkreis" of the ancestor-worship Schwally points to certain areas in religious life which were, so to speak, left open by Yahwism. One of these areas concerns the conceptions of afterlife: "Jene Vorstellungen musste er vorläufig auf sich beruhen lassen, da er nichts Besseres an die Stelle zu setzen hatte. Denn die Jahrhreligion besaß von Neuse aus keine Eschatologie. Sie acceptierte diejenige der Naturreligion und bildete dieselbe nach ihren höheren Zwecken und Zieilen entsprechend aus". As in Yahwism the belief in the power of YHWH over death and the belief in retribution of the individual after death became prevalent, this belief was worked out with the help of the ancient animistic views. With regard to the relation between Yahwism and the worship of the dead Charles is of a different opinion. According to him there is a clear break in the development of the conceptions of afterlife, which can be traced in the change in Hebrew anthropology from a trichotomy to a dichotomy (see p.32 above). In no way could the former conception of afterlife have influenced Yahwism in this matter: "Yahwism annihilitall existence in Sheol, since the nature of this existence was heathen and nonmoral, and could in no sense form a basis on which to found an ethical and spiritual doctrine of the future life".

Most scholars who proceed on the proposition that the Israelites may have practised a cult of the dead tend to accept the opinion ventured by Schwally. The old animistic views must have lived on in popular ideas and eventually obtained a new meaning as they were incorporated in the Yahwistic conceptions. Some scholars maintain that this influence has been even greater than that; consider, e.g., the following statement by Lods: "Apres avoir essayé d'extirper la veneration des esprits trépassés... le Yahwisme finit par adopter certains éléments de la vieille religion des morts: sous la forme de l'espérance de la résurrection et de l'immortalité, il s'agissait de la croyance à la survie; et le culte même des trépassés se glissait dans la doctrine officielle sous les espèces de la prière des vivants pour les morts et de l'intercession des morts, spécialement des pères, pour les vivants". People expected most from the spirits of the dead of those persons who had been very important in life. For this reason Lods wants to distinguish the veneration of heroes from the normal worship of the ancestors. Margoliouth appears to be of the same opinion, because he maintains: "It is also true that in a certain modified form the exaltation of departed heroes, more especially of the spiritual type, was from the first quite compatible with the religion of Yahveh; and the final monotheistic development of Mosaism left still more room for the glorification of great human personalities in one form or another". This assumption has been further developed by Torge. He assumes that Yahwism could not completely eliminate the various hero-cults all together and for this reason was forced to accept some of them, be it in an adjusted form: "Der Jahwismus konnte die Heroenverehrung nicht kurz Hand beseitigen, er musste mit ihr paktieren. Die kleine Stadtheroen freilich verschwand, aber die Ahnenherren des Volkes entgingen diesem Schicksal... auf einige zusammengeknüpft, unterdessen die Erzväter den Vorrang hatten. Diese einmal gewaltigen Gestalten der starker, unwidriger Volkphantasie werden umgewandelt zu ruhigen, milden Vertretern des neuen Glaubens, der ihnen in der fernen Vergangenheit in derselben Licht erstrahlt ist wie den späteren Geschlechtern".

1.4.2.7. REVIVAL OF THE OLD THEORIES

It may have become clear that from the beginning the use of the anthropological studies...
polological theory of animism to reconstruct the ancient Israelite religion met with serious criticism. The main argument against the hypothesis put forward by Schwally and others was that it cannot be proved that the spirits of the dead were venerated as if they were gods. And also the assumed influence of an ancient Israelite cult of the dead upon Yahwism was questioned; e.g., by Kautzsch: "If Ancestor Worship ever prevailed in the pre-Mosaic period - and it is psychologically quite conceivable that respect for the dead bodies and the tombs of parents inspired at least tendencies to a kind of Ancestor Worship, - no consciousness of this survived to historical times, and the whole question ... has at best an interest from the point of view of Archaeology but not of Biblical Theology".

With regard to the concept of afterlife as described by Spencer and Tylor it has been remarked that the "savage philosopher" looks remarkably like a Greek philosopher in his way of defining the spiritual part of the human being. According to other anthropologists, especially in Germany, the belief in the continuation of life after death was originally not attached to some sort of soul, but to the body of the dead. The dead were believed to live on as long as their body was not decomposed; one can speak here of "living corpses".

In the course of time the theory of an ancient Israelite cult of the dead as it is described above lost much of its former influence in Old Testament scholarship. The prevalent opinion was that Yahwism could not possibly have allowed the existence of any kind of cult of the dead. This does not exclude popular conceptions of the survival of the dead in one way or another, but these had no influence upon the Yahwistic religion.

In the last few decades, however, we see a remarkable revival of the old theories. A number of scholars try to show, again, that some Israelite conceptions of afterlife cannot be understood without the influence of a cult of the dead. Unfortunately, these scholars not always use new arguments; so there is the risk of repeating the discussion of many years ago. This can be seen, e.g., in the articles on this subject by Lorenz, which were published in 1982. He associates the care for the dead and the importance of the mourning rites according to the Old Testament with an ancient Israelite "Totenkult", which might have had a religious meaning. The use of the term "Totenkult" by Lorenz is confusing. It is used to denote the sum of burial practices and mourning rites and not, as might have been expected, a veneration of the dead. Be this as it may, Lorenz cannot take us further than the dilemma already formulated by Frey between "Seelenglaube" and "Seelenkult".

A more serious effort to revive in some form the theory of an Israelite cult of the dead was undertaken by Albright in a lecture about the Hebrew Bible in 1956. He suggests a connection between this term, which he translates as "high place", and a hero-cult comparable to the Greek cult of heroes. His theory bears a close resemblance to assumptions of Lods and Torge (see p.43 above). Albright appears to be familiar with the study of Lods; his approach to these matters, however, is unprecedented.

Albright finds evidence for an Israelite hero-cult in a number of texts in the Old Testament, but he has to suspend all the passages he quotes. This suggests an intentional corruption of the texts involved. On his part, however, Albright gives no explanation of this remarkable phenomenon. The texts he refers to are given here in his translation: Isa 53:19, "His grave was put with the wicked and his funerary installation (in the cemetery) with demons"; Job 27:15, "His survivors will be buried in pagan graves and his widows shall not bewail (them) .”; Ezek 43:7b, "and the house of Israel, they and their kings, shall no longer profane my holy name by their idolatry and the funerary stelae (from gods) of their kings in..."


their *bēmah,* and finally Isa 6:13, which is in his opinion "classical for the description of a biblical *bēmah*", "like the terebinth goddess and the oak of Asherah cast out with the stelae of the high place". The archaeological evidence for his theory is based on the identification of several heaps of stones found in Palestine as cairns, some of which were built to commemorate deceased heroes. These cairns do not necessarily contain the graves of these heroes. They are in the first place memorial structures, which could be erected far from the grave, like the *Nabat of Absalom* (II Sam 18:17-18). According to Albright the *Nabat* is related to the *Nabat*, both denoting memorial stelae. This makes it possible for him to translate *Nabat* as "temple of stelae". Albright finds examples of such temples functioning as funerary shrines in Byblos (the so-called "Temple des Obelisques") and Hazor.

Albright also proposes an etymology of the word *bēmah,* which connects it with the hero-cult. He refers to Arabic *bhunatum* with the double meaning of "mass of rock" and "brave man," hero. This tallies with the "double use of *bēmah* as 'caim' and 'hero's shrine'". Albright comes to the following conclusion: "It is now evident that the hitherto scattered biblical references to veneration of heroic shrines (e.g. Rachel and Deborah), cult of departed spirits or divination with their aid, and high places in general add up to a much greater significance for popular Israelite belief in life after death and the cult of the dead than has hitherto appeared prudent to admit." If we look at the history of research, it would have been better to speak in the last sentence of the "last fifty years", because this conclusion is very similar to what has been said in this matter by, e.g., Torge and Margoliouth (see p. 43 above).

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7. Albright 1957:257; cf. already his remark in an article published in 1926: "The popular eschatological beliefs, though rigidly suppressed by adherents of puritanical Mosaism, finally succeeded in emerging from the obscurity of folk superstition" (Albright 1926:154). However, in this article he did not yet refer to a cult of the dead.
apparently almost disappeared in the period of the rise of the state of Israel. This might be regarded as "a deliberate disvaluation or suppression of local death cults in the interest of the wider community of Israel" (p. 82). With the decline of the political and religious unity the Israelites would have returned to the old practices of ancestor-worship in order to find there security for themselves and their families. Despite this interruption Ribar assumes like Albright a continuity between the cult of the dead and the later positive beliefs with regard to the hereafter. Finally, it must be noted that Ribar appears to confuse - like Lorenz - care for the dead and veneration of the dead. His definition of death-cult as "periodically conducted offerings oriented toward the dead at sites especially associated with the dead" points to care for the dead, the connection with the theory of Albright, however, to the veneration of the dead.

The elaborate study of Brichto about the "biblical complex" of "kin, cult and afterlife" published in 1973 is perhaps the best example of a revivification of the old theories of ancestor-worship. This is apparent already in the fact that Brichto takes as a starting-point the pattern discerned by Fustel de Coulanges (see p. 37 above): "in regard to elements of Coulanges' pattern which appear in the Bible, we have a basis for approximating the extent to which these elements were still meaningful to most Israelites throughout the span of time which we call the biblical period" (p. 6). This statement indicates that Brichto expects to find evidence for the existence of conceptions of afterlife according to the pattern described by Fustel de Coulanges in the ancient religion of Israel before the biblical period. And - what is more important - it is also assumed that these old conceptions remained influential for a long time.

Brichto distinguishes between worship and veneration of the ancestors in the same way as this was done before by Heinisch ("Totenehrung" or "Totenverehrung"; see p. 35). The model of Fustel de Coulanges is about worshipping the dead. Although Brichto accepts this model for Israel, he assumes that the relation between the living and the dead was different there, because otherwise it would not have been accepted by Yahwism. Brichto does not explicitly mention this adaptation of Fustel de Coulanges' model; nevertheless, it appears to be of prime importance. It can be found in the following statement (the italics are mine): "Whatever disturbances may have been occasioned in an ancestral cult-worship - if such ever existed - by its transition to a recognizable Yahw worship, it is clear that the veneration of the ancestors . . . must have been accommodated by and integrated with what became normative Israelite worship" (p. 11). The importance of the change of "ancestral cult-worship" into "veneration of the ancestors" becomes clear when Brichto states that "veneration is not worship" (p. 47). Worship of Yahw does not exclude veneration of other superhuman beings.

Because of his starting-point it is not surprising to find that most arguments used by Brichto to prove the existence of a veneration of the ancestors in Israel have been used before:

The way in which the world of the dead is described in, e.g., Isa 14 and I Sam 28 indicates that "the afterlife was an unchallenged reality for biblical Israel" (pp. 6-8).

The story of Abraham's purchase of the field of Machpelah (Gen 23) is taken as an account of "the all-important tie between sepulture and ownership of land". The land "belongs to the dead ancestors and to their unborn descendants - it is a sine qua non of their stake in immortality" (pp. 8-10).

The original aim of the levirate institution was to secure the lasting care of the dead ancestors, as can be seen in the book of Ruth (pp. 11-22).

The biblical view that the condition of the dead is connected with proper burial and the care of the progeny gives the deeper meaning of, e.g., Gen 22. According to Brichto Abraham was asked here to hazard his immortality by sacrificing his son (pp. 27-44-46).

There are references to ancestral cults of foreign families (cf. Ps 106: 28) and also to comparable rites within the families of Israel. Deut 26:14 even "attests that normative biblical religion accorded them the sanction of toleration" (p. 29); for apparently providing the dead was only forbidden in the situation mentioned there.

The fifth commandment is regarded as the "primary reference to the respect to be shown for parents after their death" (pp. 29-35).

The longing for a proper burial and the attachment to one's own land are explained within the framework of the cult of the dead (pp. 35-40).

A new element mentioned by Brichto is "the symmetry between the crime of disrespect for parents (i.e. neglect of their needs after death) and the
punishment visited, in fulfilment of poetic justice upon such trespasses" (p.40); who violates the rules of the proper care of the dead will lack this care after his own death as well (cf. Deut 21:18-21; Prov 20:20; 30:11.17; I Kgs 21:19ff.; Exod 1:15-21).

Finally, Brichto states that the physical representation of the household gods are taken to be designated by the word D'91n. It is not clear, however, whether these so-called household gods are the same as the venerated ancestors.

Brichto concludes: "the evidence deduced from earliest Israelite sources through texts as late as the exilic prophets testifies overwhelming ly to a belief on the part of biblical Israel in an afterlife, an afterlife in which the dead, though apparently deprived of material substance, retain such personality characteristics as form, memory, consciousness and even knowledge of what happens to their descendants in the land of the living. They remain very much concerned about the fortunes of their descendants, for they are dependent on them, on their continued existence on the family land, on their performance of memorial rites, for a felicitous condition in the afterlife" (p.48).

Just as Albright he is of the opinion that the concepts of immortality and reward and punishment after death are much older than hitherto assumed. According to Brichto they can even be found in the book of Deuteronomy. Brichto's judgement of previous scholarship with regard to this matter is not very flattering: "a millenium and more of good Bible scholarship failed to discern the basic view of afterlife permeating Scripture" (p.53). Apparently he is not familiar with the last century of this millenium of scholarship.

What has been proved by Brichto and by many other scholars before him is that like other peoples the Israelites knew the practices of a continued care of the dead. Without further comment Brichto takes this as an indication of a "concept of immortality and/or reward and punishment after death" and associates it with the hope "for a felicitous condition in the afterlife" (p.48).

Another attempt to revive the theory of an Israelite cult of the dead was made by Loretz in 1978. He brings new arguments in comparing the Canaanite cult of the dead which is described in the Ugaritic literature. Loretz cannot agree to the current opinion that Yahwism has always excluded the worship of the dead. This is probably only true for the period after the exile. He assumes that in the period before the exile the worship of the dead was tolerated by Yahwism. Just like Schwally (see pp.41-42 above) Loretz thinks that Yahwism and worship of the dead had their own place in the religion of Israel: "das Thema der Lobpreisung Gottes durch seinen Verehrer im Alten Orient (ist) nicht mit dem der Totenverehrung zu verwechseln . . . Das Verhältnis zwischen der Gottheit und dem ihr dienenden Menschen hängt wenigstens zum Teil vom Leben des Beteters ab . . . Dagegen regelt die Totenverehrung das Verhältnis zwischen den verstorbenen und lebenden Gliedern einer Familie" (p.153).

According to Loretz it is very difficult to get a clear view of the nature of the cult of the dead in Israel, because most traces of this cult have been purged away by orthodox Yahwism after the exile. We know more about the Canaanite cult of the dead, especially from texts found in the ancient city of Ugarit. By comparison with the practices mentioned there the assumed Israelite cult of the dead is reconstructed (pp.160-171). The venerated dead have the same name as in Ugarit, viz. D'N91/7/p'um, which means "Heilenden". For dogmatical reasons this word is connected
in the Old Testament with the verb הָעַל, "to be weak". The spirits of the dead were also called דֵּמוּת (I Sam 28:13; cf. Ugaritic 'il and 'ilm) and the technical term for invoking the dead is in Hebrew as well as in Ugaritic מַעַרְדָּן (cf. I Sam 28:15). In a later article Loretz refers also to the institution of the so-called Marzeah (Jer 16:5; Amos 6:7), which was in his opinion closely connected with the cult of the dead, both in Israel and in Ugarit.

From the Ugaritic evidence of the cult of the dead can also be deduced why and when this cult was forbidden in Israel. The cult of the dead appears to be related to the fertility cult of the Canaanite god Baal. For this reason it could no longer be tolerated after Yahwism had become a monotheistic religion in the period after the exile (pp. 171-172). The old customs and beliefs connected with the cult of the dead were adapted to this new situation. With regard to the commandment to honour one's parents Loretz remarks: "Die Verbindung mit dem Totenkult wird jetztersetzt durch den Hinweis auf den Besitz des Landes und ein langes Leben in ihm" (pp.174-175). Following De Moor, he supposes that the description in the Old Testament of the Rephaim as the inhabitants of Canaan in prehistoric times might be explained as a "Historisierung" of ancient traditions about ancestor-worship (p.176). Loretz now wants to extend this theory by explaining the origin of the stories of the patriarchs in the same way: "die jüdische Verehrung der Väter Israels, allen voran die Abrahams, ist in exilischer und nachexilischer Zeit an die Stelle der kananäisch-israelitischen Totenverehrung getreten" (p.178). He regards the patriarchs as they are described in the Old Testament "als Ersatz und Kompensation für eine frühere Verehrung der Ahnen in Kanaan und Israel" (p.178). This way of compensating the loss of an important religious tradition would be comprehensible from a psychological point of view: "Die Verehrung der vergöttlichten Ahnen wird verdrängt, und an ihre Stelle tritt jetzt die Verehrung der Väter, die als Gründer des jüdischen Volkes angesehen werden. Postulierte historische Vorgänge können wir so durch einen Prozeß ersetzen, der geschichtlich fassbar und tiefenpsychologisch erklärbar ist" (p.185).

1 Loretz 1982b.

According to Loretz his theory offers the solution to the still unsolved problem of the place in history of the patriarchs and it also explains why the tombs of the patriarchs and their wives were so important to the Israelites. To this can be added that the religion of the patriarchs as it is described in the Old Testament still contains references to the former cult of the dead; especially the fact of their god being named "god of the fathers" should be mentioned here.

Loretz sees a clear relation between the ancient Israelite cult of the dead and the Yahwistic belief in beatific afterlife: "Das Verbot der Totenverehrung wurde im Judentum der nachexilischen Zeit zur Keimzelle einerseits auf Abraham stützen konnte und die andererseits dazu führte, dass der fromme Jude erwartete, auch nach dem Tode weiterhin in der Gemeinschaft mit Jahwe zu verbleiben" (p.191). Apparently the transition of the venerated ancestors to earthly patriarchs raised the quality of life before death from a religious point of view by emphasizing the possibility of living in this life in communion with God. This probably has its consequences for the hopes with regard to the afterlife; for it may be assumed that this communion with God will not end at death.

Loretz is aware of the fact that his theory about the ancient Israelite cult of the dead is not new (pp.195-198). We may note the striking resemblance in this matter with the theories of Schwally, Lods, Margoliouth, and Torge. His study can be seen as an attempt to provide these old theories with a new and better foundation.

We can, finally, mention in this connection an article by Xella which was published in 1982. Xella wants to distinguish between funerary rites

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1 Cf. Schwally 1892:75-76; Lods 1906:II,89-106; Margoliouth 1908:445; Torge 1909:166; see also pp.41-43 above. The opinion that originally the Israelite patriarchs were Canaanite heroes can also be found with R. Weill, RHR 87(1923),69 (cf. B.H. Bowlay, From Joseph to Joshua. London 1950, p.126). According to E.M. Yamauchi, JBL 84(1965),283 Joseph can be compared to the Mesopotamian dying and rising god Tammuz and we can also mention in this connection the theory of G.R.H. Wright, "Joseph's Grave under the Tree by the Omphalos at Shechem", VT 22(1972), 476-486 that the story of Joseph is related to the concept of the young "dying-god" Dionysus.

2 Xella 1982A. The author did me the kindness of sending me an offprint of his article.
in general and the veneration of the dead and also between the mythic ancestors (e.g., the Ugaritic r'um) and the common ancestors (pp. 654-655).

In his opinion the cult of Baal Peor (Num 25:1-5; Ps 106:28) is a clear example of a cult of the dead. It appears to be quite similar to the Canaanite practices we know from Ugarit. The cult of Baal Peor, who is the same as the god of the dead Mot (p. 664), was strictly forbidden by Yahwism (pp. 657-664). According to Xella there was, however, next to the official religion with its negative conceptions of afterlife and its prohibition of veneration of the dead, also a popular religion which was not satisfied with the renunciation of all hopes for afterlife. In popular religion the living wanted to stay in contact with the dead, because they hoped to receive their help as healers. Despite texts like Ps 106:28 this popular cult of the dead was probably tolerated by Yahwism as being less dangerous to the belief in YHWH than, e.g., the cult of the Canaanite god Baal (pp. 665-666). For this reason Xella assumes that the cult of the dead existed next to the official religion (p. 656). In this respect his conclusions can be compared to those of Schwally (see pp. 41-42 above).

1.4.3. LOOKING FOR FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Justinus Martyr and Clement of Alexandria saw a resemblance between the Old Testament teachings and the writings of Plato with regard to the positive conceptions of afterlife, which proves that Plato was influenced by the Old Testament. In modern research the positions are usually reversed; because nowadays most scholars assume that the positive belief in afterlife appeared relatively late in the religion of Israel. For this reason it is often supposed that the Israelites were influenced by existing beliefs of the peoples they were in contact with. Also Schwall, who sees a link between the former Israelite cult of the dead and the later belief in the resurrection of the dead, assumes that there may have been some foreign, viz. Persian influence as well. Most scholars agree that

...the borrowing of elements from foreign religions must have been prepared by a certain development within the Israelite religion itself. It is unlikely that the whole Israelite conception of afterlife would have simply been taken over from another religion. The following statement of Moore can be regarded as representing the common view in modern research: "Borrowings in religion . . . are usually in the nature of the appropriation of things in the possession of another which the borrower recognizes in all good faith as belonging to himself, ideas which, when once they become known to him, are seen to be necessary implications or complements of his own."

It is not necessary to give an elaborate description of the research on this subject, because contrary to the study of the Israelite cult of the dead, its results are well-known. There are excellent surveys by Wied and, with regard to Persian influence, by König.

1.4.3.1. EGYPT

In the conclusion of his discussion of the possibility of Egyptian influence upon the Israelite belief in the resurrection of the dead Nötscher represents the common scholarly opinion of his days when he states: "Eine ägyptische Beeinflussung des israelitischen Auferstehungsglaubens ist hochst unwahrscheinlich, die kann, wenn wirklich vorhanden, nur unbedeutend gewesen sein und lässt sich für uns nicht mehr greifen."

Recently, however, we may note a tenacity in Old Testament scholarship to emphasize the resemblance between Egyptian and Israelite conceptions of afterlife:


Kellermann connects Ps 22:30 which speaks of the people "going down to the dust" and bowing before God with the Egyptian belief that the dead worship the sun-god on his nightly journey through the netherworld1.

Koenig sees Egyptian influence in Ezekiel's vision of the revivification of the bones (Ezek 37:1-10), because this resembles the recomposition of the body of Osiris according to the myth of Isis and Osiris2. Although Ezekiel only thought of the return of Israel from the exile, this vision was certainly of great importance for the growth of the belief in resurrection of the body after death. Also the Egyptologist Morenz compares the faith in Osiris with the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the flesh3.

On the other hand the Old Testament's reticence with regard to the afterlife is explained by Nicacci as a reaction to the Egyptian hope for resurrection being associated with the dying and rising of Osiris4. A similar reaction can be found according to Nicacci in the religion of Egypt itself, viz. in the period of Akhenaten, whereas the negative conceptions of the netherworld have parallels in the common death literature of Egypt as well5.

Griffiths is able to demonstrate that the Egyptian ideas of posthumous judgement were known to the writer of the book of Job (cf. Job 16:19-22; 19:25-27; 31). These ideas, however, were modified to fit into a system which does not include a belief in beatific afterlife6.

According to De Savignac the belief in the glorification of the resurrected (Dan 12:2) may have been influenced by the Egyptian identification of the beatific dead with the stars. Also the expression "dew of light" (Isa 26:19) may have an Egyptian background7.

Strange maintains that among the decoration of the walls and doors inside the first temple were reliefs of lotus flowers (cf. I Kgs 6:18.29.

1 Kellermann 1976:274.
3 Morenz 1960:222-223.
5 Ibid., pp.9-11.

As soon as the ancient religious texts of the Persians became available in the last century, the link was made between the Persian conceptions of afterlife and the Old Testament belief in the resurrection of the dead. This assumption was modified from time to time, but it never really disappeared. In the beginning of our century many scholars followed Bousset in his opinion that a lot of elements of the Jewish apocalyptic had been derived from the religion of Iran8. Other scholars were more careful in this, because it is difficult to prove that the belief in the resurrection of the dead was known in Persia earlier than in Israel. Baudissin also points to some differences between the Israelite and the Persian conceptions. In the Old Testament the dead are described as sleeping and their resurrection as arising. This belief is connected with the burial of the body in graves. The Persians, however, treat the corpse in a very different way. They leave it in the open field to be eaten by carrion birds and other animals. So the Persian belief in resurrection is in fact a belief in a new creation9.

2 Ibid., p.38.
5 Baudissin 1911:418-423. See against this Mayer 1965:198-200.
Nötscher assumes some Persian influence on certain elements in Jewish eschatology, but he found no conclusive proof for Persian influence in more fundamental matters. Also the result of the elaborate study on this subject by König is rather negative: “Alles in allem bleiben die behaupteten Fremdeinflüsse des Iran auf Israel unbewiesene Hypothesen für den Bereich der Jenseitsvorstellungen, weil die notwendige chronologische Basis fehlt, weil keinem wesentlichen Element der israelitischen Jenseitsvorstellung der organischen Zusammenhang fehlt und weil schliesslich ein Vergleich der einzelnen Elemente mehr Verschiedenheiten als Ähnlichkeiten aufweist." The first argument for this rebuttal is that it is not clear at what time the belief in the resurrection of the dead became prevalent in the Persian religion. There is only the external evidence of a remark by the Greek Theopomp in the fourth century B.C. In the Persian literature of that period no explicit reference to such a belief can be found. Moreover, König is of the opinion that the belief in the resurrection of the dead was known in Israel before the contacts with the Persians. It can be found already in Ezek 37. This means that the Israelites did not need the help from the Persian to come to a belief in beatific afterlife. In addition to this König notes some basic differences between the Old Testament and the Persian conceptions of afterlife. In the Old Testament life before death takes a prominent place, whereas in the Persian literature almost all attention is paid to the afterlife. The Old Testament does not know a separation of body and soul as is taught in Persian literature. Instead of a judgement immediately following death the Old Testament knows only of the shadowy existence in 71N~; the last judgement will follow at the end of times. Finally, with regard to this judgement itself König observes that the Persian religion knows nothing of reconciliation and the remission of sins.

König’s study affirms a tendency in Old Testament scholarship to stress the factors within Israelite religion itself leading to positive conceptions of afterlife. Persian influence is not regarded anymore as a crucial factor in this development. It probably was restricted to the influence of some elements of the Persian conceptions upon the way in which the Jewish eschatology was formulated.

1.4. Modern Research

1.4.3.3. MESOPOTAMIA

About one century ago the prominent Assyriologist Jensen thought he had found traces in the literature of ancient Assyria and Babylonia of the belief in resurrection. He assumed that this belief was based on the revival of the sun-god in spring and on the belief in the power of the god Marduk to revive the dead. The ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia would have hoped to be resurrected after death to become a star and to be like the gods. A reference to the idea of the resurrection of the dead was found in the Gilgamesh Epic. In the last tablet we are told how Enkidu’s spirit has come up from the netherworld to tell Gilgamesh about the realm of the dead. According to Jensen this would indicate that the people of Mesopotamia hoped to be freed from the netherworld as well and to acquire a beatific afterlife. Although many scholars contested Jensen’s theory, it was used by others to explain the growth of the positive conceptions of afterlife in the Old Testament. Beer assumes that it was at least one of the factors, next to Persian influence, which led to the later positive Jewish thoughts on afterlife.

Very soon Jensen’s theory appeared to be unfounded. According to Sellin the ancient religion of Mesopotamia may have influenced the Israelite belief in beatific afterlife in a different way, via through the “altorientalische Astralreligion”. He found traces of this in Num 24:17; Isa 14 and in the story of the assumption of Enoch in Gen 5:21-24, which may have

1 Nötscher 1926:185-195.
3 Ibid., pp.124-125.
4 Ibid., pp.271-283.
5 Beer 1902:24-25.
8 P. Jensen, ThLB (1991),2 and (1901),34.
been connected with the sun-myth. All this was probably known in Israel before the contact with the Assyrians and Babylonians, but this contact certainly promoted its use.

Other scholars are of the opinion that a Mesopotamian cult of the dying and rising god Tammuz has helped the Israelites to come to the belief that death can be overcome. According to Albright it is even possible to connect the Hebrew name of the netherworld, ים תמאים, with the Akkadian name of the abode of Tammuz in the netherworld, su'ara, which is according to him a "subterranean paradise". The nature of the Tammuz cult, however, is still a matter of dispute. And there are no clear references to a belief in the resurrection of human beings connected with this cult.

With the growing knowledge of Mesopotamian religion its conceptions of afterlife appeared to be very different from the later Jewish hopes for a beatific afterlife. The only clear point of similarity between the Old Testament and the Mesopotamian conceptions of afterlife seems to be the idea of a gloomy state of the dead in the netherworld.

1.4.3.4. GREECE

Greek philosophy has had a great influence upon Jewish and Christian thinking, to which it offered, e.g., the concept of the immortal soul. Whether the influence of Greek thought reaches further back to Old Testament times, remains doubtful. Leipoldt has pointed to basic differences between ancient Israelite and Greek thought in this matter. He even tried to demonstrate that the Christian belief in resurrection is closer related to the latter than to the former. On the other hand Glasson found many examples of Greek influence upon Jewish eschatology, especially in the Jewish apocalyptic literature of the period after the Old Testament. He even supposes that there has been Greek influence upon the belief in the resurrection of the dead, viz. through the Orphic teachings of reincarnation.

Other scholars also make mention of Greek influence upon the later Jewish conceptions of the state of the soul in the period directly following death. With regard to ancient Israelite conceptions of afterlife it has been remarked that Hellas and Israel agree in the miserable state of the dead.

It may be concluded that the comparison with the Greek conceptions of afterlife does not seem to be very fruitful when it comes to the study of the ancient Israelite conceptions of beatific afterlife. Only for those scholars who assume the existence of an ancient Israelite cult of the dead it may be interesting to look at the well-known Greek hero-cult.

1.4.3.5. CANAAN AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PATTERNS

Canaan is regarded by many scholars as the gate through which the Israelites came into contact with the common ancient Near Eastern world of ideas. The Israelites would have adopted the burial practices of their neighbours and apparently also their respectful care for the dead.

Through the Canaanites the Israelites were assumed to have good acquaintance with the concept of dying and rising gods of fertility, like Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Dionysus. In an elaborate study published in 1911 Baedissin tried to prove that the belief in the "Auferstehungsgotter" and "Heilsgotter" Adonis and Esmun influenced the Israelite concept of their god and also the Israelite belief in resurrection. Traces of the former

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2. Cf. Jeremias 1903:34-35 and also the theory of Wright (see p.53, n.1).
3. Albright 1926:151-152.
7. Leipoldt 1942; it must be noted, however, that Leipoldt was biased towards the relation between Jews and Christians as can be deduced from the subtitle of his book and the situation in which it was written (also noted by O. Jager, Het ongelieve leven, Kampen 1962, p.474, n.76).
are found in YHWH being called the one who saves from disease and distress (pp.385-402); traces of the latter in Hos 6:2 and Ezek 37 (pp.403-416). The metaphor of resurrection used in these texts would refer to the myths of rising gods of nature like Osiris and Attis. The belief in a real resurrection is likely to have originated also from the perception of dying and rising in nature: "In Anschluss daran, dass die Vegetation alljährlich in den alten Formen neu wird, scheint bei den Israeliten der Gedanke aufgekommen zu sein an eine Erneuerung des erstorbenen Menschenlebens in den alten körperlichen Formen. Die Naturreligion glaubte in der Vegetation das Sterben und Wiederauflachen eines individuellen Wesens, eines Gottes, zu beobachten. Diese Auffassung legte es nahe, nach einer Erneuerung auch der menschlichen Persönlichkeit in ihrer irdischen Erscheinung zu fragen" (p.432). According to Baudissin this does not imply that in this matter Israel was wholly dependent on Canaanite belief. Only the way in which this belief that was based on the trust in and communion with YHWH was expressed appears to be influenced by the Canaanite religion of nature (pp.439-449). Sellin, who is of the same opinion as Baudissin, describes the relation to the Canaanite religion as follows: "Die Naturreligion ist überwunden, aber hat sterbend die sittliche Errettungsreligion bereichert".

This theory was criticized by Notscher, because in his view too much remains uncertain with regard to the concept of the dying and rising gods. It is not clear that human beings would have been believed to share the fate of the gods of nature.

Despite this criticism Baudissin's theory assuming Canaanite influence upon the Israelite belief in the resurrection of the dead was very influential. Consider, e.g., the following statement by Steinberger in 1979: "Einzig der zielvollere Fremdeinfluss ist der Kanaanäische Vegetationsglaube, der sich lange gehalten und in Texten wie Hos.6 und Jes.26 weitergewirkt hat."

The theory of Baudissin has been modernized by Greenspoon who relates

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3 Riesenfeld 1948:66.
4 For a similar interpretation of Isa 53:8-12 see I. Engnell, BJRL 31 (1948),54ff, and Widengren 1969,416.
Birkeland reproached his fellow-countryman for not having distinguished between the resurrection at the end of time and life after death of the individual. Furthermore, Riesenfeld would have neglected the true nature of the Israelite belief, viz. "Yahweh's historical character", from which has sprouted the eschatological belief. According to Birkeland myth could not simply become eschatology.

In the course of time the assumption of a common Near Eastern concept of divine kingship proved to be untenable and nowadays most scholars agree with Birkeland that the belief in the resurrection of the dead cannot be deduced from such a pattern. We may note, however, that in a restricted form the theory of the concept of divine kingship returns in a number of recently published studies:

Wi fall wants to place the idea of an individual resurrection "within the framework of the old pre-exilic tribal and royal traditions". These traditions would have formed a "consistent mythological pattern" related to the concept of the "Divine Warrior". According to this pattern deceased leaders obtain a place in the heavenly court, whereas they also have a "symbiotic relation" with their living successors. Because of this relation the living leaders can already have "heavenly" titles like "star" or "god". Wi fall found evidence for this in Num 24:17; I Sam 29:9; II Sam 14:17-20; and Dan 12:3. The belief in the general resurrection of the dead can be regarded as a "democratization" of this pattern.

The assumption of a relation between the idea of beatific afterlife and an ancient Near Eastern concept of divine kingship can also be found with Healey and Strange.

Besides these common Near Eastern concepts there were also some elements

\[1\] Birkeland 1949:62-63.68.73.
\[2\] Very influential was the refutation of this theory by Frankfort in his Kingship and the Gods, Chicago 1948.
\[4\] Wi fall 1978:383-384.
\[5\] According to Wi fall Dan 12:3 does not describe the end of time; with Collins 1974 he prefers to speak here of the "transcendence of death".
\[6\] Healey 1984:250.253. See also p.81 below.
\[7\] Strange 1985:38.

in the Canaanite or - to be more precisely - the Ugaritic religion itself, which were thought to be of interest in the explanation of the development of the Israelite belief in the afterlife:

The proposed ancient Israelite hero-cult has been related to the Ugaritic cult of the `p'luw. According to Gibson the dualism of later Jewish apocalyptic is related to the ancient stories about the struggle between Baal and the god of death, Mot, as we know them from Ugaritic mythology. Isa 25:8, speaking of death as the last enemy who shall in the end be defeated by YHWH, would have to be seen against this background.

1.4. YAHWISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON AFTERLIFE

The previous survey of theories on external factors in the development of Israelite thoughts on afterlife might suggest that the advocates of these theories support the view of Gunkel, who stated: "Wir sehen den Auferstehungsglauben nirgends, wedez in Alten Testament, noch in nachkana- nischen Judentum entstehem; sondern wir beobachten ihn nur da, wo er voll- ständig fertig und sicher ist. Sicherlich ist er nicht aus 'Ahnungen' her- vorgegangen; denn so entsteht überhaupt kein Glaube. Sicher ist auch, dass er nicht religiöser Reflexion entstammet". There are, however, only few of the scholars mentioned above who share Gunkel's extreme point of view. To mention only two of the most influential of them: Schwally maintains that the belief in the resurrection was too important in later Judaism to be a borrowing from another religion. He regards the messianic hope as the crucial factor. Also Baudissin thinks of roots within Judaism itself, especially in the belief in the power of YHWH.

When it comes to describing the genuine Yahwistic perspectives on afterlife, there appears to be much agreement among the different generations

\[1\] Cf. Loretz 1978.
\[2\] Gibson 1979:166.
\[4\] Schwally 1892:150.
\[5\] Baudissin 1911:510.
of Old Testament scholars. The view of Spiess (see p.27 above) does not differ much from that of most modern scholars. The main problem remains when and how positive conceptions of the afterlife were accepted within Yahwism. On this point we still find diverging opinions, even among scholars who maintain that we have to think of an internal development within the Israelite religion.

1.4.4.1. THE NEGATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF AFTERLIFE

As soon as the Old Testament was not regarded anymore as a collection of proof-texts to be used in support of the traditions of the church, it appeared to contain very few references to a happy afterlife and to speak rather negatively about the world of the dead. In the Old Testament the netherworld is called ים. The etymology of this word is still a matter of dispute. Köhler gained much support in connecting it with the verb יָשָׁה, "to lie desolate," but it has also been connected with the verbs יָשָׁה, "to ask"; יָשָׁה, "to lie desolate," and with a verb rather negatively about the world of the dead לֵז. In the Old Testament the word ים appeared to contain very few references to a happy afterlife and to speak of proof-texts to be used in support of the traditions of the church, it seems to have been used as "pit." Vollers proposes a similar translation on the basis of Arabic adjali, "depth." According to Jensen ים might be deduced from Akkadian_isil(i)jam, "the West." Later he retracted this view and supposed a connection with Akkadian s'Hilu, "some kind of room." Finally, some attempts to explain the meaning of the word ים with the help of the Egyptian language can be mentioned. Devaud has proposed a connection with Egyptian δ-γ̄υ, "the Baru-field", the name of the habitation of the blessed in afterlife. This proposal has been defended recently by Görg, who criticizes the attempt of Wifall to explain ים as "lake of El" by analogy of Egyptian Shitu, "lake of Hurus." It also appeared to be very difficult to determine what the word ים denotes precisely. The traditional view is that it can be put on a level with the Greek Hades as it is translated in the LXX. However, there is reason to assume that it denotes more than just the netherworld. In his study published in 1857 Engelbert describes ים as "the Todesgefahr für den lebens- und thatkraftigen Mann, der personifizirte frühzeitige Tod, auch Grab in seiner einfachen Bedeutung, oder als Collectivausdruck eine proto-Semitic מַעָי and Hebrew ים, "hen of skirt", and Arabic ajāla, "hanging down." Thus ים would mean "the lowest part (of the world)."

Other scholars have tried to find a plausible etymology with the help of Akkadian words. The proposed connection with Akkadian āššu proved to be wrong, because this word does not exist in Akkadian. We already noted that Albright assumes a link with Akkadian saytu (see p.60 above). Haupt proposes a relation to Akkadian šašu, "to descend" and translates ים as "pit." Vollers proposes a similar translation on the basis of Arabic adjali, "depth." According to Jensen ים might be deduced from Akkadian šiš(i)jam, "the West." Later he retracted this view and supposed a connection with Akkadian šišu, "some kind of room." Finally, some attempts to explain the meaning of the word ים with the help of the Egyptian language can be mentioned. Devaud has proposed a connection with Egyptian δ-γ̄υ, "the Baru-field", the name of the habitation of the blessed in afterlife. This proposal has been defended recently by Görg, who criticizes the attempt of Wifall to explain ים as "lake of El" by analogy of Egyptian šihu, "lake of Horus." It also appeared to be very difficult to determine what the word ים denotes precisely. The traditional view is that it can be put on a level with the Greek Hades as it is translated in the LXX. However, there is reason to assume that it denotes more than just the netherworld. In his study published in 1857 Engelbert describes ים as "die Todesgefahr für den lebens- und thatkraftigen Mann, der personifizirte frühzeitige Tod, auch Grab in seiner einfachen Bedeutung, oder als Collectivausdruck eine proto-Semitic מַעָי and Hebrew ים, "hen of skirt", and Arabic ajāla, "hanging down." Thus ים would mean "the lowest part (of the world)."

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Sammlung von Grabern". So he assumes some kind of identification of \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) with the grave. In the theory of an ancient Israelite cult of the dead this would be problematical, because such a cult is connected with one particular grave as the habitation of the venerated dead person. This leaves no room for a general conception in which the grave is an insignificant part of the shadowy realm of the weak dead. Torge tried to solve this problem by taking the conception of \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) as a later development: "Die Wertschätzung des Grabes deutet auf eine Zeit zurück, in der man noch keine Unterwelt kannte und darin auch nicht an den Seelen der Verstorbenen ein bewusstloses Dämmerleben in der Scheol zuschrieb, sondern in der man sich von einem festen, geschützten Grabe nach dem Tode einen bestimmten Vorteil und Genuss versprach". Stade defines \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) as the "Mythologisierende Vereinigung" of family graves.

Pedersen has developed and modified the ideas of \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) as the collection of individual graves and of \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) as a power within the framework of his theory of the Israelite sense of totality: "the individual grave is not an isolated world; it forms a whole with the graves of the kinsmen who make a common world and are closely united. Nor does the thought stop at this totality. Viewed from the world of light, all the deceased form a common realm, because they are essentially subjected to the same conditions. This common realm the Israelites call \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) or the nether world".

Against the attempt of Stade and others to take \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) as a later and fundamentally different conception Pedersen has demonstrated that the ideas of grave and \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) cannot be separated. The relation of \( \text{\textit{Sheol}} \) and grave cannot be described simply as the former being a summing up of the latter: "Sheol is the entirety into which all graves are merged . . . All

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2 Torge 1909:109; cf. also Charles 1913:63; and for the opposite view Beer 1902:7-19 who maintains: "Der Scheoglaube ist ein Rest chthonischen Kultes" (Ibid., p.7).  
4 Pedersen 1926:460.

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1 Ibid., p.462.
3 Pedersen 1926:466.
4 E.g., Baumgartner 1959:94 and Nikolainen 1944:118.
5 Barth 1947; the Mesopotamian parallels are also discussed by Bertholet 1926:9; Nützner 1926:17-24; Hirsch 1968; and Steiner 1982:246.
6 Barth 1947:152-166.
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only reason for the lack of hope for the afterlife. It is assumed that it might have been caused by the wish to defend Yahwism against the influence of heathen conceptions of afterlife. Maag points in this connection to the difference between what he thinks to be the original nomadic Israelite religion and the religion of the Canaanite sedentary culture, in which a cult of the dead is customary. Such a cult and indeed the entire concept of afterlife just did not fit within the ancient Israelite nomadic religion. After the Israelites had settled in Palestine, they remained sceptical towards associating their god with the dead and their world. According to Maag the reason for this was the aversion to the Canaanite cult of Shalim in Jerusalem, which was practiced there until long after the conquest of the city by David. The Canaanites would have sacrificed their children to this chthonic deity in the valley of Hinnom.

The theory of a cult of Shalim, however, remains hypothetical and also the statement about nomadic religion is not at all certain; for nomads appear to have their family graves as well, which they visit from time to time to bury those who died on the way.

It can, finally, be noted that the negative conceptions of afterlife have often been regarded as a positive element of Yahwistic belief. According to Warburton the "divine legation of Moses" can be demonstrated "from the omission of the doctrine of a future state of reward and punishment" (see p.26 above). Spiess and Von Rad speak in this connection of the absolute trust in YHWH.


1.4.4.2. The Rise of Hope for Beatific Afterlife

The factors within Yahwism which are usually supposed to have ultimately led to the belief in beatific afterlife can be summarized as a growing sense of individuality next to the belief in YHWH being powerful and just and the hope for a lasting communion with YHWH. These elements were mentioned in practically all studies on this subject.

Deut 32:39; I Sam 2:6; Amos 9:2; and Ps 139:18 are interpreted by most scholars as early indications of the conviction that the power of YHWH also extends to the dead and the netherworld. This belief would have led to the hope that one day death shall be overcome (Isa 25:8).

With regard to the stories about the revivification of dead persons in I Kgs 17:17-24; II Kgs 4:18-37; and 13:20-21 most scholars emphasize the difference from the definitive resurrection of the dead as described in Dan 12:1-3. This revivification of recently deceased persons is more akin to the care of the very ill than to the final resurrection.

The stories about the assumption of Enoch (Gen 5:24) and Elijah (II Kgs 2:1-18) are usually regarded as exceptions to the rule; the connection with the later belief

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in the resurrection of the dead is found only in YHWH being able and willing to rescue these devoted men from death.

Sellin saw a parallel between the assumption of Enoch and Elijah and the resurrected wise leaders shining like stars mentioned in Dan 12:3. He connects them with a special concept of beatific afterlife, which has to be distinguished from the common belief in the resurrection of the dead:

"Diese von der Astralreligion herkommende Entrückungserwartung als aristokratisches Reservat für wenige Auserwählte (dürfte) schon früher neben der Auferstehungserswartung hergelaufen, ja sogar weit älter noch als diese sein, bis beide durch Daniel verbunden und mit dem Endheil des allmächtigen und gerechten Gottes Israels innigst verknaupft wurden".

One of the things which make life without positive expectations of the afterlife bearable was supposed to be the feeling that the community is more important than the individual (see p.70 above). Divine retribution for evil suffered or done may not always come in the life of the person involved, but it could also follow in later generations. Most scholars notice a break in this thinking in Jer 31:29-30 and Ezek 18:1-4 stating that a man shall die for his own wrong doing. As a consequence the fact that divine retribution apparently not always comes to the persons involved would have become a problem to the pious Israelite (cf. Job and Koheleth). It is usually assumed that this problem reached its climax in the persecution of pious Jews by the Seleucid government under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, which would have led to the break-through of the belief in a divine retribution after death (cf. Dan 12:1-3 and II Mac 7).

Against the assumption that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were the first to recognize the importance and worth of the individual some scholars argue that one cannot separate a period of collectivism from a period of individualism in Israelite thinking; there was always a combination of both.

For this reason May denies a direct relation of the belief in the resurrection and a growing sense of individuality. If there had been such a

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1 Sellin 1919:263.
relation, it would have left its traces in the period of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Belief in the resurrection of the dead appears, however, only centuries later. The assumed relation was also questioned by Wied. In his opinion it reverses the original Israelite way of reasoning in this matter: "die Hoffnung auf die Totenauferweckung (kann) kaum als Erzeugnis eines individuellen Vergeltungsgedankens angesehen werden...Nach unserer Ansicht motivierte nicht das ärztliche Leiden der Frommen die Erwartung der Auffüllung, sondern jenes geduldige Ausharren der Apostelpräacher, das in Notzeiten zum Leiden und Martyrium werden konnte, wurde gerade durch die Hoffnung auf eine Wiedererweckung begründet".

A third element which is mentioned as a factor in the rise of the belief in beatific afterlife is the hope for a continuation of the communion with YHWH. Texts speaking of this communion like Ps 16:10-11; 49:16; 73:23-24; and Job 19:25-27 are regarded by many scholars as a preparation for the later belief in the resurrection of the dead, being the counterpart of the view expressed in texts like Isa 38:18; Ps 30:10; and 115:17 that the dead cannot praise YHWH. The conviction that the praise of YHWH must never end would have contributed to the hope for res-

1 H.G. May, "Individual Responsibility and Retribution", HUCA 32(1961), 107-120; esp. pp.109-110. Fogelstr, who shares the opinion of individualism being not as late as the period of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, holds to the connection of the belief in retribution after death with a growing sense of individualism: "Doch konnte es nicht ausbleiben, dass eine derart intensive Verzierung zum Einzelnen Folgen hatte für jene Zukunftsschau, aus der sich stufenweise die individuelle Eschatologie entwickelte" (Fogelstr 1983:30).


3 Cf. Torgis 1909:245-246; Bertholet 1916B:21-23; Baumgärtel 1932:103-115; De Bovis 1938:192; Nikolainen 1944:121-128; Grelot 1971:119-122; Woudstra 1973:5-11; Gesel 1977:15-13; and Hamorese 1984. See on the Psalms the survey by Schabert 1970:388-389; to this can be added with regard to Ps 16:10-11: Quintens 1979; Beuken 1980; and Kaiser 1983. In his thesis Miller has tried to explain the existence of different positive conceptions of afterlife in a new way. According to him Ps 16:17; 49; 73; Job 19; Prov 12:28; 14:32; the stories of the assumption of Enoch and Elijah; and indirectly also Eccles 12:7 belong to the common ancient Near Eastern concept of immortality. This concept, however, was suppressed by Yahwism. He finds examples of this suppression in the Old Testament account of the flood, in which the original blessing of immortality granted to the survivors (cf. the Mesopotamian flood stories) has been replaced by a covenant, and in the story of the Garden of Eden. The later belief in immortality (cf. Dan 12) was based on the theology of the covenant: "Immortality emerged in the context of an eschatology which was based on the Kingdom of God motif, The Kingdom of God motif had its roots in the eternal kingdom of David and the suzerainty vassal treaty between Israel and Assyria..."
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Yahweh and Israel. There were other scholars before Miller who discussed the covenant texts that use the metaphor of resurrection, but Miller seems to be the first to connect it with the eschatological resurrection of the dead.

The opinion that the Israelite belief in a beatific afterlife is much older than Dan 12 can also be found with scholars who emphasize the harmony between the Old Testament and the New Testament in this matter. Of course, it cannot be denied that the Old Testament is less clear with regard to the hope for after-life than the New Testament, but this phenomenon can be explained as a well considered measure of God to give this revelation at the moment mankind is prepared for it.

According to Atzberger the harmony of the Old and New Testament also implies that there cannot have been a development from a negative to a positive view on the hereafter. Already in the Pentateuch he finds "wurzelhaft und keimartig die ganze christliche Eschatologie und die Fundamente aller weiteren eschatologischen Offenbarungen". Also Heidel maintains that "there is no conflict between the earlier and later writings of the Old Testament, correctly interpreted, in the matter of death and the afterlife". He assumes that the idea of divine retribution after death was known throughout the Old Testament period; for Ps 49 and 73 show that 'already according to the Old Testament, there was a great gulf fixed' (Luke 16:26) between the souls of the blessed and those of the damned. Logan goes even further by stating that "nothing less than resurrection was in the mind of Abraham and all the faithful after him". He derives this from John 8:

56; Acts 7:5; 26:6-7; Rom 4:13; Gal 3:29; and Heb 11:8-16 pointing to the patriarchs having died without having received what was promised to them by God. This old argument (see also pp.8-9 above) is used by Brodie as well. He assumes that Moses and the Patriarchs expected to stay alive after death, but "said it softly" in "respect for the sense of mystery".

The suggestion of the high age of the hopes for a beatific afterlife in the Old Testament is supported by the studies of Albright (see pp.45-47 above) and Dahood, who in his turn mentions the work of Albright on this subject with approval. Brodie welcomes the "drastic revision" by Dahood of the common scholarly opinion with regard to the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife.

Dahood mentions a great number of texts, especially in the books of Proverbs and Psalms, which testify in his opinion to the belief in resurrection and immortality. His new approach, which leads to this surprising conclusion, is based on the comparison of the Hebrew language with the old Canaanite language in which the literature of the ancient city of Ugarit was written. Biblical Hebrew shares many words with Ugaritic and among these words there are a few which in Ugaritic literature refer according to the interpretation of Dahood - to beatific afterlife. An important text in this connection is KU 1.16:1.14f. "In your life, our father, we rejoice; in your not dying we exult" (translation of Dahood).

The most important Ugaritic text in Dahood's theory is a passage of the epic of Aqhat, which describes an argument between the hero Aqhat and the goddess Anat:

And the virgin Anat replied: Ask for life, youthful Aqhat,
Ask for life and I will give it to you,
Immortality and I will bestow it upon you.
I will make you count years with Baal.

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1 Miller 1977:208-209.
4 Heidel 1946:222; the reference to Sellin 1919:234 in n.255 is misleading, because Sellin does not speak of positive expectations there.
5 Logan 1953:169.
You shall number months with the sons of Zi.
For Baal, when he gives life, invites to a banquet;
He invites the life-given to a banquet and bids him drink,
And in his presence, sweetly chants and sings.

Although Aqhat scornfully rejects this offer, Dahood deduces from the proposal of the goddess a "Canaanite belief in an unending blissful existence which the gods reserved at least for some mortals". Because of the Canaanite-Hebrew interrelationships Dahood supposes that Hebrew ד"נ (cf. Ugaritic bwy) in the first line of the text above denotes eternal life in Ps 16:11; 21:5; 27:13; 30:6; 36:10; 56:14; 69:29; 116:8-9; 133:3; 142:6; Prov 8:35-36; 12:28; and 15:24.

The negative answer is also of significance in this matter: "Man - what will he receive as his future life, what will man receive as afterlife" (KTU 1.17:VI.35-36; translation of Dahood). According to Dahood Ugaritic bwy, "future life", and bwy, "afterlife", are paralleled by Hebrew ד"נ also with regard to the reference to the afterlife, viz. in Num 23:10; Ps 37:37-38; 109:13; Prov 23:18; 24:14,20; and Sirach 7:36.

The element of the festive banquet mentioned in KTU 1.17:VI.30-31 is found by Dahood in the following texts: Ps 23:4-6; 43:3-4; and 91:15-16.

The existence of an Old Testament belief in beatific afterlife being firmly grounded on the comparison with Ugaritic literature, Dahood now also assumes that we can find the idea of the beatific vision in the hereafter in the Old Testament, viz. in Ps 17:15; 21:7; 27:4,13; 41:13; 51:6; 61:8; 63:3; and 140:14. He also found traces of the concept of paradise-like "Elysian Fields" as the habitation of the blessed dead in Ps 5:9; 36:10; 56:14; 97:11; 116:9; Job 33:30 and many other texts.

The verb מָתַת, "to lead", would mean "to lead into paradise" in Ps 5:9; 23:3; 61:3; 73:24; 139:24; 143:10. The verb יְלַח, "to awake", is interpreted as a reference to the resurrection of the dead in Isa 26:19; Ps 139:18; Prov 6:22; and Dan 12:2 and the verb מַתַת, "to take" means "to take to heaven in Gen 5:24; II Kgs 2:3,5; Ps 49:16; and 73:24.

To this can be added a more general observation. Dahood identifies a large number of perfect tense verbs as precative verbs, thus interpreting them as a wish for the future instead of referring to an action in the past.

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The negative answer is also of significance in this matter: "Man - what will he receive as his future life, what will man receive as afterlife" (KTU 1.17:VI.35-36; translation of Dahood). According to Dahood Ugaritic bwy, "future life", and bwy, "afterlife", are paralleled by Hebrew ד"נ also with regard to the reference to the afterlife, viz. in Num 23:10; Ps 37:37-38; 109:13; Prov 23:18; 24:14,20; and Sirach 7:36.

The element of the festive banquet mentioned in KTU 1.17:VI.30-31 is found by Dahood in the following texts: Ps 23:4-6; 43:3-4; and 91:15-16.

The existence of an Old Testament belief in beatific afterlife being firmly grounded on the comparison with Ugaritic literature, Dahood now also assumes that we can find the idea of the beatific vision in the hereafter in the Old Testament, viz. in Ps 17:15; 21:7; 27:4,13; 41:13; 51:6; 61:8; 63:3; and 140:14. He also found traces of the concept of paradise-like "Elysian Fields" as the habitation of the blessed dead in Ps 5:9; 36:10; 56:14; 97:11; 116:9; Job 33:30 and many other texts.

The verb מָתַת, "to lead", would mean "to lead into paradise" in Ps 5:9; 23:3; 61:3; 73:24; 139:24; 143:10. The verb יְלַח, "to awake", is interpreted as a reference to the resurrection of the dead in Isa 26:19; Ps 139:18; Prov 6:22; and Dan 12:2 and the verb מַתַת, "to take" means "to take to heaven in Gen 5:24; II Kgs 2:3,5; Ps 49:16; and 73:24.

To this can be added a more general observation. Dahood identifies a large number of perfect tense verbs as precative verbs, thus interpreting them as a wish for the future instead of referring to an action in the past.

1. The History of Interpretation

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Nötscher: "bei Hiob und in den Psalmen offenbart sich der Glaube, dass dem Gerechten wegen seiner Rechtschaffenheit aller Erfahrung zum Trotz, doch ein höheres Gut zuteil wird, als es das glücklichste Leben der Gottlosen sein kann: dieses Gut besteht in der Gnadenverbindung mit Gott, die als ein Schauen Gottes oder als ein Sein oder Sichfreuen bei Gott bezeichnet wird. Das Glück dieser Gottesgemeinschaft vermag kein Tod zu hindern oder zu zerstören". He refers in this connection to Job 19:26-27; Ps 11: 4ff.; 16:11; 73:23ff.; 49:16; and 17:15. Dahood does not mention Nötscher, nor has he - if we may believe Dorn - taken over his carefulness; for in his exegesis of the texts mentioned by Dahood Dorn comes to completely different results.

It was noted by some scholars that Dahood's reasoning does not differ much from the way in which the early church tried to prove its dogmas concerning the hereafter from the Old Testament; in other words: it looks like dogmatical exegesis.

Alongside these reproaches there appears to be a growing tendency among Old Testament scholars to support Dahood's theory on at least one point: the Israelites may have believed in eternal life after death for the king. The wish "the king may live forever" is usually interpreted as an extravagant expression of the royal court referring to the "eternal life" of the king's dynasty. According to some scholars, however, it may also have been meant literally as a reference to the personal afterlife of the king.

Eaton, who clearly shows sympathy with Dahood's views, mentions a number of Psalms "where the king claims 'life' not only as happiness in his present existence and in the continuance of his children, but also as a blissful communion with God that he himself will enjoy for ever". The

same view can be found with Quintens, who is a student of Dahood, in his exegesis of Ps 21:5. Quintens also refers to the observations of Brichto, who in his opinion rightly questioned the current opinion about the age of the positive belief in afterlife (see pp.48-51 below).

An important contribution to this discussion was offered recently by Healey. Like Vawter and others he criticizes Dahood's methods, but he does not question the discovered concept itself. He merely wants to provide it with "a more coherent and nuanced perspective within ancient Near Eastern studies". He does so by adding a number of Ugaritic and Eblaite texts, which prove in his opinion the existence of a belief in the immortality and even the deification of deceased kings. Traces of this "established tradition of royal immortality" are found by Healey in Ps 21:3-5 and other Psalms with royal elements and possible references to afterlife, viz. Ps 16; 23; 30(?); 36; 49; 56; 61; 91; 116; and 142. So there is ample evidence for the existence of this concept in Israel. Healey regards this "as a reflexion of royal ideology, an ideology derived in a partly demythologised form from Canaanite tradition. The eternity of the king arises in relation with God". He assumes that later "the notion of blessed eternal life was extended to all the righteous", a development which can be called "a democratization of what was formerly a royal prerogative".

Nötscher 1924:167.

1 Quintens 1978:530-531,541; cf. also Quintens 1979:240.
2 Dorn 1980:152-344; cf. also A. Hilary Armstrong, RAC XI, pp.1-21 who states that there are no references to the concept of beatific visions in the Old Testament.
5 Cf. Eaton 1976:38,67 with regard to Dahood's interpretation of Ps 16; 23.
6 Ibid., p.163.
1.5. SUMMARY

Our survey of the history of interpretation has confirmed Bailey's remark quoted in the introduction about the nature of the secondary literature on the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife. It is not easy to get a clear overview of all that has been written on this subject. Nevertheless, it may have become clear that on some points there is a remarkable continuity. We have noted that arguments which were used in the early church sometimes reappear with modern scholars and theories from the beginning of historical-critical research have found new advocates in our days.

Until the beginning of modern critical research of the Old Testament most Jews and Christians had no problem in relating their belief in the resurrection of the dead with the Old Testament. For it was taken for granted that the God who promises eternal bliss in the New Testament is no other than the God of the Old Testament. References to the expectation of beatific afterlife were found in Old Testament texts containing words and expressions which were also used in the dogmas of the church about the afterlife. One could also refer to texts expressing the belief in God as creator and to the unfulfilled promises to the patriarchs.

There is reason to assume that the belief of the editors and translators of the Old Testament in resurrection and beatific afterlife left its traces in the MT and the versions. A number of texts that could be more or less associated with this belief appear to have been revised or supplemented in order to support this interpretation.

Although the methods of the ancient Jewish and Christian scholars were questioned by the modern critical research arising in the nineteenth century, many of the proof-texts can still be found with modern scholars; especially with those who emphasize the harmony of Old and New Testament. They do not come, however, to these results by the use of the same associative method. A scholar like Dahood derives his arguments from the comparison with Ugaritic, and Greenspoon, who refer many Fathers of the Church to the cycle of nature in connection with the hope for resurrection of the dead, works with the assumption of an ancient Near Eastern pattern of the "Divine Warrior".

About one century ago an important impulse to the study of the Old Testament conceptions of afterlife was given by the anthropological theory of animism. Many scholars tried to prove the validity of this general theory about the origin of religion for the religion of Israel and started looking for traces of worship of the dead in ancient Israel. Scholars like Schwally and Lods were convinced of the existence of such a cult before the rise of Yahwism and as part of a folk religion next to Yahwism. This ancient Israelite cult of the dead would have influenced the later beliefs in resurrection and beatific afterlife as they are recorded in the Old Testament. Especially the assumed veneration of heroes has been regarded as the background of the later Yahwistic belief in beatific afterlife. This view can be found with Lods and Torpe in the beginning of our century and more recently with Albright and Loretz. We also find the opinion that the Israelites of the Old Testament period were familiar with the belief in a beatific afterlife of the king. It has even been supposed that this was accepted in certain Israelite circles (cf. the theories of Wifall and Healey).

It is still a matter of dispute whether and, if so, in what way the contact with other religions has influenced the Israelite conceptions of afterlife. Nowadays most scholars tend to assume Canaanite influence in the period before the exile and Persian and Greek influence after the exile. Especially the relation to the religion of ancient Ugarit has received much attention in recent studies. It is usually taken for granted that this religion represents the religion of the inhabitants of Canaan before the rise of Israel as a nation and before the rise of Yahwism and that it may have been closely related to the Israelite folk religion. With the help of the comparison with the Ugaritic conceptions of afterlife Dahood, Loretz, Xella, Healey and others have come to new insights in ancient Israelite beliefs with regard to the afterlife. The fact, however, that they did not come to unanimous conclusions shows that this approach is not without problems. Evidently further study is necessary.

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1 Cf. also E. Jacob, UP 11 (1979), 495 who states with regard to the influence of the discovery of ancient Ugarit upon the study of the Old Testament: "Il faudra donc nuancer, et en tout, cas revoir, tout ce que l'Ancien Testament dit du sujet de la mort".
1.6. Consequences for Further Study

From the history of research we learn that the comparative study of Old Testament ideas and ancient Near Eastern religions has many pitfalls. It appears to be absolutely necessary to study elements from different cultures within their own context before comparing them. And in this comparison we have to reckon with many different aspects. Before relating similar ideas occurring in different cultures it has to be asked whether these ideas are found in the same time and whether they were used in the same situation. It can be asked whether they were taken over by one from the other of by both from a third source, but it is also possible, especially when we are dealing with such a general topic as the ideas about life and death, that we have to do with more common human ideas that can be found with many other peoples.

Our survey of modern research showed that there appear to be many similarities between Old Testament conceptions of afterlife and ideas about this recorded in the literature of ancient Ugarit. We even noticed a tendency of simply describing Yahwism or else the ancient Israelite folk religion as a kind of pseudo-Ugaritic belief with regard to this matter, but this was rightly criticized; for we have to keep in mind the distance in time and place between Ugarit and Israel. In order to get some insight into what is characteristic of ancient Israel compared to its closest neighbour it is necessary to gain a view of the ideas about the afterlife in the whole region of the Near East, including Egypt. It would be superfluous to describe here comparable phenomena of the cultures outside this area. We can restrict ourselves to noting very remarkable parallels that may be helpful with regard to the interpretation of the phenomena involved. Within this framework it should also be taken into account that when ideas are borrowed from other religions this practically always implies that these ideas fit in with a development within the borrowing religion itself (see p. 55 above).

Finally, the survey of modern research draws our attention to two more matters which have to be mentioned before further study. First there is the problem of the assumed existence of an ancient Israelite folk religion next to the official religion as it is described in the Old Testament. Because our information on this part of the religion of ancient Israel is scarce, there is a danger of circular reasoning by working with hypotheses derived from the study of other religions but for which no factual proof can be given with regard to the religion of Israel.

Secondly, it appears to be very important to be precise and consistent in the use of terminology denoting different aspects of the afterlife.

This can be illustrated by the fact that the term "immortality" appears to take different meanings with different scholars. Some use it in its literal meaning as denoting life without end, that is, life without death; according to others it denotes eternal life after death and it has been used also as a term for everlasting beatific afterlife. To avoid confusion it is best to take each term literally and distinguish between terms denoting the transition from this life to the afterlife or from one situation in the hereafter to another and terms describing the afterlife itself. With regard to the latter it should be remarked that belief in life after death is certainly not always the same as the hope for beatific afterlife. We could define beatific afterlife as being forever with God (or the gods) in heaven (cf. 1 Thess 4:17).

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