



DAVID KIMHI'S STUDY OF אלוהים IN HIS BOOK OF ROOTS ANALYSED FROM AN EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVE¹

O estudo de David Kimhi sobre אלוהים em seu Livro das Raízes, analisado a partir de uma perspectiva exegetica

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RESUMO

O presente trabalho explora o estudo de David Kimhi (רד"ק) de אלוה e אלוהים contidos em seu Livro das Raízes (ספר השרשים) que, por um lado, utilizou o legado de lexicógrafos anteriores, por outro lado, expandiu a pesquisa hebraica a este respeito. A elucidação de Kimhi de אלוהים situa-se contra antigas traduções bíblicas (Targumim, a Septuaginta com suas revisões) e contra a literatura judaica clássica (Midrashim, Mekhiltas, Pirkes, Yalkutim, Talmude da Babilônia) e comentários.

Palavras-chave: David Kimhi. Livro das raízes. História da gramática hebraica. História da lexicografia hebraica. Nome genérico de Deus.

ABSTRACT

The present paper explores David Kimhi's (רד"ק) study of אלוה and אלוהים contained in his Book of Roots (ספר השרשים) which, on the one hand, utilised the legacy of earlier

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lexicographers, on the other hand, expanded the Hebrew scholarship in this regard. Kimhi's elucidation of אלהים is situated against ancient biblical translations (Targumim, the Septuagint cum its revisions) and against the classic Jewish literature (Midrashim, Mekhiltas, Pirkes, Yalkutim, the Babylonian Talmud) and commentaries.

Keywords: David Kimhi. *Book of Roots. History of Hebrew grammar. History of Hebrew lexicography. Generic name of God.*

1 HISTORICAL AND EXEGETICAL CONTEXT

In view of both divine and non-divine denotations of אלהים and given the plural grammatical forms, which occasionally occurred with it (e. g. Genesis 35.7)³, the Jewish tradition in antiquity and in the Middle Ages studied the use of אלהים and elucidated the meaning thereof. The Jewish exposition of אלהים was a part of the Jewish Hebrew scholarship and it developed accordingly.

From a Jewish perspective, the proper interpretation of אלהים was necessary for two principal reasons, firstly, to expound the Tanakh, secondly, not to allow the concept of God's absolute unity to be undermined which might happen if אלהים would be misconceived. The former concern was evident from Philo's remarks⁴, whereas the latter was attested in the Babylonian Talmud⁵. Actually, the phenomenon of the plural grammatical forms connected to the Divinity appertained not only to אלהים as the generic name of God but also to God's very

³ RINGGREN, Helmer. מיהלה. In: BOTTERWECK, Gerhard Johannes and Helmer RINGGREN (Ed.). **Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament**, Vol. 1, Trans. John T. WILLIS. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, p. 267-284.

⁴ PHILO ALEXANDRINUS. De opificio mundi. In: COHN, Leopold and Paul WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 1. Berlin: Reimer, 1896, p. 24-25 [24]. Idem. Legum allegoriarum libri I-III. In: COHN and WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 1. Berlin: Reimer, 1896, p. 90 [II, 1]. Ibidem, p. 134 [III, 31]. Idem. De confusione linguarum. In: COHN and WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 2. Berlin: Reimer, 1897, p. 261-264 [33-36]. Idem. Quis rerum divinarum heres sit. In: COHN and WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 3. Berlin: Reimer, 1898, p. 37-38 [33]. Idem. De fuga et inventione. In: COHN and WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 3. Berlin: Reimer, 1898, p. 124-126 [13-14]. Idem. De mutatione nominum. In: COHN and WENDLAND (Ed.). **Opera quae supersunt**, Vol. 3. Berlin: Reimer, 1898, p. 161-163 [4]. Idem. Philonis Quaestionum et solutionum quae in Genesi: Sermo I. In: AUCHER, Joannes Baptista (Ed.). **Paralipomena Armena**. Venice: Lazari, 1826, p. 12-14 [XV-XIX]. Ibidem, p. 34-37 [LII-LIV].

⁵ סנהדרין. In: תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 13. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1862, p. 38v [No. 38b]. מגילה. In: תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 5. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1860, p. 9r [No. 9a]. סופרים. In: תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 13. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1862, p. 48v [I, VIII].

name (**) as exemplified by Genesis 11.7.

Granted that the literature both on the origin of the Jewish Hebrew scholarship⁶ and on the generic name of God⁷ is immense, the present paper is focused on David Kimhi's (רד"ק) study of אלהים contained in his Book of Roots (ספר השרשים)⁸. In his Hebrew grammar (ספר מכלול)⁹ Kimhi also made reference to אלהים, discussing the plural forms related to the Divine evidenced in Genesis 1.26 and examining the suffixed and unsuffixed forms of אֱדוֹן. Since Genesis 1.26 ought to be studied in its own right¹⁰, while the issue of אֱדוֹן is vast and complex,

⁶ BACHER, Wilhelm. *Abraham ibn Ezra als Grammatiker: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Hebräischen Sprachwissenschaft*. Strasbourg and London: Trübner, 1882. Idem. *Die Anfänge der Hebräischen Grammatik*. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1895. Idem. *Die Hebräische Sprachwissenschaft vom 10. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert*. Trier: Mayer, 1892. BRISMAN, Shimeon. *A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*. Hoboken: KTAV, 2000. DELITZSCH, Franz. *Isagoge in grammaticam et lexicographiam linguae Hebraicae*. Grimma: Gebhardt, 1838. GEIGER, Ludwig. *Das Studium der Hebräischen Sprache in Deutschland vom Ende des XV. bis zur Mitte des XVI. Jahrhunderts*. Breslau: Schletter, 1870. KHAN, Geoffrey. The Book of Hebrew Grammar by the Karaite Joseph ben Noah. In: *Journal of Semitic Studies* vol. 43, n. 2, 1998: p. 265-286. KOLATCH, Yonatan. *Masters of the Word: Traditional Jewish Bible Commentary from the First through Tenth Centuries*, Vol. 1. Jersey City: KTAV, 2006. ROSENAK, Leopold. *Die Fortschritte der Hebräischen Sprachwissenschaft von Jehuda Chajjug bis David Kimchi: X. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*. Bremen: Diercksen and Wichlein, 1898. SÆBØ, Magne (Ed.). *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, Vol. I/1-2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996-2000.

⁷ DAHL, N. A. and Alan F. SEGAL. Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God. In: *Journal for the Study of Judaism* v. 9, n. 1, 1978, p. 1-28. DRAFFKORN, Anne E. Ilani / Elohim. In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* v. 76, n. 3, 1957, p. 216-224. GORDON, Cyrus Herzl. אלהים in Its Reputed Meaning of >Rulers<, >Judges<. In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* v. 54, n. 3, 1935, p. 139-144. HARRIS, Murray J. The Translation of Elohim in Psalm 45:7-8. In: *Tyndale Bulletin* v. 35, 1984, p. 65-89. HEISER, Michael S. Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God. In: *Bibliotheca Sacra* v. 158, n. 629, 2001, p. 52-74. JOOSTEN, Jan. A Note on the Text of Deuteronomy 32:8. In: *Vetus Testamentum* v. 57, n. 4, 2007, p. 548-555. RINGGREN, 1974, p. 267-284.

⁸ Critical edition: KIMHI, David. *Radicum liber sive Hebraeum bibliorum lexicon*, Ed. Johann Heinrich Raphael BIESENTHAL and Fürchtegott LEBRECHT. Berlin: Bethge, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁹ Critical edition: KIMHI. ספר מכלול, Ed. משה העכים and יצחק ריטטענבערג. Lyck: פעטצאלל, 1862, p. 7r [שער דקדוק הפעלים, IV]. Ibidem, p. 11v-12r [שער דקדוק הפעלים, XI].

¹⁰ WESTERMANN, Claus. Excursus: The History of the Exegesis of Gen 1:26-27. In: *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, Trans. John J. SCULLION. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984, p. 147-148 [Genesis 1:26-27]. WILSON, Robert McLachlan. The Early History of the Exegesis of Gen. 1:26. In: *Studia Patristica* v. 1, 1957, p. 420-437.

the present essay does not deal with those topics. Rather, Kimhi's elucidation of אלוהים is situated against ancient biblical translations (Targumim, the Septuagint cum its revisions) and against the classic Jewish literature (Midrashim, Mekhiltas, Pirkes, Yalkutim, the Babylonian Talmud) and commentaries.

2 CONTRIBUTION OF DAVID KIMHI'S PREDECESSORS

Although Kimhi's dictionary laid the foundations for modern Hebrew lexicography, the Book of Roots was not the first Hebrew lexicon which was produced. In fact, lexicographers, who preceded Kimhi, such as Menahem ben Saruq (מנחם בן סרוק), Jonah ibn Janah (יונה אבן גינאה), Nathan ben Jehiel of Rome (נתן בן יהיאל מרומי) or Solomon Parhon (שלמה פרחון) treated of אלוהים in their dictionaries. Generally speaking, prior to David Kimhi, Hebrew scholars were not clear about the concept of the root as comprised of three consonants. Therefore, in the pre-Kimhian lexica it happened that words of different roots were subsumed under the same entry. The Book of Roots won recognition for its comprehensiveness and for its advanced methodology and thus, it paved the way for the 16th-century Hebrew lexicography.

While expounding אלוהים, major mediaeval dictionaries by Menahem ben Saruq¹¹, Jonah ibn Janah¹², Nathan ben Jehiel¹³, Solomon Parhon¹⁴ and David Kimhi¹⁵ referred to the following biblical passages:

¹¹ MENAHEM BEN SARUQ. *מחברת מנחם*, Ed. Herschell FILIPOWSKI. London: Hebrew Antiquarian Society, 1854, p. 24-25 [s. v. אל]. Ibidem, p. 25 [s. v. אלה].

¹² Arabic original: JONAH IBN JANAH. *The Book of Hebrew Roots*, Ed. Adolf NEUBAUER. Oxford: Clarendon, 1875, p. 49 [s. v. אלה]. Hebrew translation by Tibbon: JONAH IBN JANAH. *Sepher Haschoraschim: Wurzelwörterbuch der Hebräischen Sprache*, Trans. JUDAH IBN TIBBON, Ed. BACHER. Berlin: Itzkowski, 1896, p. 32 [s. v. אלה].

¹³ NATHAN BEN JEHIEL. *Plenus Aruch: Targum-Talmudico-Midrash verbale et reale lexicon*, Vol. 1, Ed. Alexander KOHUT. Vienna: Brög, 1878, p. 87 [s. v. אלה].

¹⁴ PARHON, Solomon. *Lexicon Hebraicum*, Vol. 2, Ed. Salomo Gottlieb STERN. Pressburg [Bratislava]: Schmid, 1844, p. 4v [s. v. אלה].

¹⁵ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

Menahem ben Saruq	Jonah ibn Janah	Nathan ben Jehiel	Solomon Parhon	David Kimhi
	Genesis 6.2-4	Genesis 6.2-4	Genesis 6.2-4	Genesis 6.2-4
Genesis 17.1				
Genesis 31.29				
Genesis 32.30-31				
Exodus 4.16				Exodus 4.16
				Exodus 7.1
				Exodus 12.12
Exodus 15.11				
Exodus 22.7-8				
			Exodus 22.19/20	
Exodus 22.27/28	Exodus 22.27/28		Exodus 22.27/28	Exodus 22.27/28
				Numbers 20.16
			Deuteronomy 4.7	
	Deuteronomy 31.16			
Joshua 22.22				
	Joshua 24.19		Joshua 24.19	Joshua 24.19
			2 Samuel 7.23	2 Samuel 7.23
				Isaiah 1.26
			Jeremiah 10.10	
		Jeremiah 10.11		
				Hosea 12.14
	Habakkuk 1.11			Habakkuk 1.11
Habakkuk 3.3	Habakkuk 3.3		Habakkuk 3.3	Habakkuk 3.3
Psalms 29.1				
Psalms 50.1				
Psalms 63.2				
Psalms 82.6				
				Psalms 136.2
				Job 1.6
Job 9.13				
Proverbs 3.27				
Daniel 2.11		Daniel 2.11		
		Daniel 2.20		
		Daniel 3.28		
		Daniel 5.4		
		Daniel 6.7/8		
		Daniel 6.12/13		
	Daniel 11.38-39		Daniel 11.38-39	
	2 Chronicles 15.3		2 Chronicles 15.3	2 Chronicles 15.3

3 ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIANs ON אלוהים

Since most of the ancient church fathers, except for Origen and Jerome, did not know Hebrew, they seldom reflected on אלוהים. In one of his letters Jerome¹⁶ mentioned that אלוהים might denote either God or gods, depending on

¹⁶ HIERONYMUS STRIDONENSIS. Epistola XXV ad eandem Marcellam de decem nominibus Dei. In: **PL**, Vol. 22, p. 429-430.

the context. Aphrahat¹⁷, a Syriac church father flourishing in the first half of the 4th century, realised that different appellations, which were also used to speak of God, including the generic name of God (אלוהים), expressed varying degrees of authority and power. For instance, God was the very King of the universe and the source of all terrestrial authority. Therefore, it was appropriate to call both God and an earthly ruler “king” though God’s kingship was absolute, while the earthly kingship was limited and derived from it. Consequently, the same titles expressive of glory, power and authority could be predicated both of the Creator and of his creatures on condition that varying degrees of the attributes, which they communicated, would be acknowledged. To illustrate his thesis, Aphrahat referred to Exodus 4.16 (לאלהים) and 7.1 (נתתיך אלהים לפרעה), pointing out that in the former passage Moses was designated as a leader for Aaron, while in the latter the LORD empowered Moses to hold sway over Pharaoh. Thus, to be אלוהים or to act as אלוהים meant to have the authority and to exercise the authority.

Notwithstanding their unfamiliarity with Hebrew, the ancient and mediaeval Christian theologians must admit a non-divine signification of אלוהים in certain passages because otherwise biblical monotheism would be endangered. Commenting upon Genesis 6.2-4 (בני האלהים), Chrysostom¹⁸ ascertained that sons of אלוהים could not denote sons sired by God because the LORD did not sire anyone in physical terms. Therefore, Chrysostom presumed that בני האלהים signified either angels of God or people designated by God (i. e. God’s people¹⁹). The same strategy of interpretation was adopted by Theodoret of Cyrus²⁰ and by Procopius of Gaza²¹. Although none of those interpretations touched upon the denotation of אלוהים, Christian exegetes felt compelled to explain such phrases in the light of the context.

Processing Exodus 7.1, Theodoret of Cyrus²² clarified that Moses was

¹⁷ APHRAATES. Demonstratio XVII. In: GRAFFIN, Rene (Ed.). **Patrologia Syriaca**, Vol. 1. Paris: Didot, 1894, p. 787-796 [3-6].

¹⁸ CHRYSOSTOMUS. Homilia XXII. In: **PG**, Vol. 53, p. 187-190 [2-3 (Genesis 6)].

¹⁹ EPHRAEM SYRUS. Explanatio in Genesim. In: **Opera omnia quae exstant Graece, Syriace, Latine: Syriace et Latine**, Vol. 1. Rome: Salvioni, 1737, p. 48 [Genesis 6:2-4].

²⁰ THEODORETUS CYRENSIS. Quaestiones in Genesim. In: **PG**, Vol. 80, p. 147-152 [XLVII (Genesis 6)].

²¹ PROCOPIUS GAZAEUS. Commentarius in Genesim. In: **PG**, Vol. 87/1, p. 265-268 [Genesis 6:2].

²² THEODORETUS CYRENSIS. Quaestiones in Exodum. In: **PG**, Vol. 80, p. 243-244 [XVII (Exodus 7)].

made by the LORD אלהים to Aaron in the figurative sense. In his opinion, Moses was “god” to Aaron in terms of authority. Accordingly, the LORD was in a position to command Moses, whereas Moses was in a position to command Aaron. Reading Exodus 22.27/28 (אלהים לא תקלל), Theodoret²³ elucidated the Septuagint rendition (θεός) which was challenging theologically. For Theodoret, human judges (κριταί) might be called gods (θεοί) because both God as the Judge and human judges were dispensing justice. Therefore, in Exodus 22.27/28 θεός were explicated by Theodoret as judges and reference to Psalm 82.1 and 82.6 was made by him as well. Since such a meaning of θεός was unprecedented in the Greek, non-Jewish literature²⁴, it appears that Theodoret’s insights originated from Jewish sources and were explicitly or implicitly based on the Hebrew אלהים.

Working on Psalm 82.1-6, Eusebius of Caesarea²⁵ stated that in the aforementioned passage θεοί denoted the righteous who were invited by God to join him in dispensing justice. He also referred to Exodus 7:1 in order to corroborate a non-divine, honorific signification of θεός. A similar interpretation was proposed by Augustine²⁶. Lecturing on Psalm 82.1-6, Theodoret of Cyrus²⁷ explained that among Jews rulers (ἄρχοντας) and judges (κριταί) could be depicted as gods (θεοί) because such leaders dispensed justice in the world, while God dispensed justice in heaven. Consequently, leaders might be called θεοί by comparison with θεός as far as judging was concerned. In Theodoret’s opinion, the parallelism, which was found in Exodus 22.27/28 and which was preserved in the Septuagint²⁸, lent credence to a non-divine denotation of אלהים in that verse:

Hebrew	LXX	Hebrew	LXX
אלהים	θεός	וְשִׂיא בְעַמְךָ	καὶ ἄρχοντας τοῦ λαοῦ σου
אָל	οὐ	אָל	οὐ
לְקַלְקֵל	κακολογήσεις	לְאָר	κακῶς ἐρεῖς

²³ Ibidem, p. 273-274 [LI (Exodus 22)].

²⁴ STEPHANUS, Henricus (Ed.). *Thesaurus Graecae linguae*, Vol. 3. London: Valpy, 1821-1822, p. 4214-4238 [s. v. ΘΕΟΣ].

²⁵ EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS. *Commentaria in Psalmos*. In: **PG**, Vol. 23, p. 981-990 [Psalm 82 /LXX 81/].

²⁶ AUGUSTINUS HIPONENSIS. In *Psalmum LXXXI enarratio*. In: **PL**, Vol. 37, p. 1046-1051 [Psalm 82 /LXX 81/].

²⁷ THEODORETUS CYRENSIS. *Interpretatio in Psalmos*. In: **PG**, Vol. 80, p. 1527-1530 [Psalm 82:1-6 /LXX 81:1-6/].

²⁸ SWETE, Henry Barclay (Ed.). *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1887, p. 148 [Exodus 22.27/28].

From the above parallelism it is evident that אלוהים corresponded to ἄρχοντας τοῦ λαοῦ (rulers of the people). Later, a Byzantine exegete, Euthymios Zigabenus²⁹ utilised and recapitulated Theodoret's interpretation.

4 DAVID KIMHI EXAMINING אלוהים IN HIS BOOK OF ROOTS

The study of אלוהים in David Kimhi's Book of Roots³⁰ began with Habakkuk 3.3 (אלוה) where אלוה, which Kimhi regarded as the singular form of אלוהים, denoted God of Israel. Kimhi's interpretation of אלוה in Habakkuk 3:3 as true God dovetailed with the Septuagint³¹, its revisions³² and the Targum³³. It also concurred with the classic Jewish commentaries. Commenting upon Habakkuk 3.3, Rashi (רש"י)³⁴, Joseph Kara (יוסף קרא)³⁵, Abraham ibn Ezra (אברהם אבן עזרא)³⁶, and David Kimhi³⁷ emphasised that God of Israel was referred to.

Subsequently, David Kimhi³⁸ examined Joshua 24.19 (אלהים קדשים) in which אלוהים was modified by the plural form of the adjective (קדשים). In the Septuagint³⁹ and in the Targum⁴⁰ the singular form of the adjective was used to qualify the generic name of God. This phrase (אלהים קדשים) was admissible from

²⁹ EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS. Commentarius in Psalmos Davidis. In: PG, Vol. 128, p. 851-854 [Psalm 82.1-6 /LXX 81.1-6/].

³⁰ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

³¹ SWETE (Ed.). *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894, p. 61 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³² FIELD, Frederick (Ed.). *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt: Sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, Vol. 2. Oxford: Clarendon, 1875, p. 1007 [Habakkuk 3.3 (Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion)].

³³ LAGARDE, Paul de (Ed.). *Prophetiae chaldaice*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1872, p. 469 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³⁴ RASHI. חבקוק. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 278 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³⁵ KARA, Joseph. חבקוק. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 278-279 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³⁶ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. חבקוק. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 278 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³⁷ KIMHI. חבקוק. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 278 [Habakkuk 3.3].

³⁸ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

³⁹ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 473 [Joshua 24.19].

⁴⁰ LAGARDE, 1872, p. 32 [Joshua 24.19].

a grammatical perspective because regardless of its denotation אלוהים, could, as the plural form of אלוה, occur with verbal, adjectival, participial, pronominal and imperatival forms which were either singular or plural. The above phenomenon was discussed by Rashi⁴¹ and by David Kimhi⁴² in their commentaries on Joshua 24.19.

Working on Joshua 24.19, Rashi⁴³ observed that אלוהים expressed the authority (שררה), whereas in Hebrew the plural number was instrumental in conveying a sense of majesty. To substantiate his statement, Rashi referred to Genesis 39.20 (אדני יוסף), 42.30-33 (אדני הארץ) and Exodus 22.14 (בעליו) where the plural forms of אדון and בעל highlighted human authority. In those verses the forms, which were plural in terms of parsing, denoted single phenomena which was evident from the context and which was supported by the fact that those plural forms functioned as subjects of singular verbs⁴⁴. Indeed, the Septuagint⁴⁵ and the Targumim⁴⁶ invested the aforementioned plural forms with the singular meaning. Furthermore, Rashi maintained that in 2 Samuel 7.23 the plural verb (הלכו) with אלוהים as its subject underscored the divine majesty though in his commentary on that verse he presented a more complex interpretation. Since 2 Samuel 7.23 was evoked by David Kimhi in the Book of Roots, this passage will be discussed later.

In his commentary on Joshua 24.19 David Kimhi⁴⁷ clarified that אלוהים קדשים could also be taken for the plural of majesty (לשון תפארת) which, in his opinion, was embodied in אלוהים itself and which was exemplified by עשי in Job 35.10 and by בעשיו in Psalm 149.2. This Psalm will be studied later, while in Job 35.10 the plural form of the suffixed participle (עשי) was appositive to God (אלוה)

⁴¹ RASHI. יהושע. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 7. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1875, p. 74 [Joshua 24.19].

⁴² KIMHI. יהושע. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 7. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1875, p. 74 [Joshua 24.19].

⁴³ RASHI. יהושע. 1875, p. 74 [Joshua 24.19].

⁴⁴ In Genesis 39.20 the verbs ויקח and ויתנהו were singular, whereas in Genesis 42.30 and 42.33 אדני הארץ was appositive to the singular noun האיש which was the subject of singular verbs דבר and ויאמר, respectively.

⁴⁵ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 77 [Genesis 39.20]. Ibidem, p. 84 [Genesis 42.30-33]. Ibidem, p. 147-148 [Exodus 22.14].

⁴⁶ BERLINER, Abraham (Ed.). **Targum Onkelos**, Vol. 1. Berlin: Kauffmann, 1884, p. 44 [Genesis 39.20]. Ibidem, p. 49 [Genesis 42.30-33]. Ibidem, p. 84 [Exodus 22.14]. BRÜLL, Adolf (Ed.). **Das samaritanische Targum zum Pentateuch**. Frankfurt am Main: Erras, 1875, p. 47 [Genesis 39.20]. Ibidem, p. 52 [Genesis 42.30-33].

⁴⁷ KIMHI. יהושע. 1875, p. 74 [Joshua 24.19].

and was modified by the singular form of the participle (נתן)⁴⁸.

In connexion with Rashi's commentary on Joshua 24.19, it should be noted that while expounding Genesis 20.13, Rashi listed the same passages, adding Exodus 21.29 (בבעליו) as reminiscent of a terrestrial splendour and Deuteronomy 5.23/26 (אלהים חיים), 10.17 (ואדני האדנים) as illustrative of the divine glory⁴⁹. In Exodus 21.29, although the suffixed form בעליו should be parsed as plural, the context made it singular and this form functioned as the subject of the singular verb והועד. Moreover, the Targumim⁵⁰ and the Septuagint⁵¹ interpreted בעליו as singular. Similarly, in Deuteronomy 5.23/26 the Targum Onkelos⁵² and the LXX⁵³ translated the plural form of the adjective (חיים) modifying אלהים by means of the singular forms. Analysing Deuteronomy 5.23/26, Abraham ibn Ezra⁵⁴ remarked that the plural form of the adjective could be used with אלהים because, grammatically speaking, אלהים was the plural form of אלה. Despite the fact that in Deuteronomy 10.17 אדני was the construct state of the plural form of the noun אדון, the Septuagint⁵⁵ and the Targumim⁵⁶ construed אדני as singular, while the Samaritan text⁵⁷ read ואדן in lieu of ואדני. In the light of the ancient translations and according to the Jewish luminaries⁵⁸ ואדני האדנים denoted "the Lord of lords", namely, Lord supreme. Actually, the structure of the Hebrew superlative entails

⁴⁸ The LXX and the Targum read עשי as singular. SWETE (Ed.). **The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint**, Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907, p. 586 [Job 35.10]. WALTON, Brian (Ed.). Targum. In: **Biblia sacra polyglotta**, Vol. 3. London: Roycroft, 1656, p. 72 [Job 35.10].

⁴⁹ BERLINER (Ed.). **Raschi: Der Kommentar des Salomo b. Isak über den Pentateuch**. Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1905, p. 40 [Genesis 20.13].

⁵⁰ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 84 [Exodus 21.29]. BRÜLL, 1875, p. 90 [Exodus 21.29].

⁵¹ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 146 [Exodus 21.29].

⁵² BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 202 [Deuteronomy 5.23/26]. The Samaritan Targum retained the plural form of the adjective. BRÜLL, 1875, p. 213 [Deuteronomy 5.23/26].

⁵³ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 354 [Deuteronomy 5.23/26].

⁵⁴ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. דברים. In: מקראות גדולות דברים. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 79 [Deuteronomy 5.23/26].

⁵⁵ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 364 [Deuteronomy 10.17].

⁵⁶ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 206 [Deuteronomy 10:17]. BRÜLL, 1875, p. 219 [Deuteronomy 10.17].

⁵⁷ BLAYNE, Benjamin (Ed.). **Pentateuchus Hebraeo-Samaritanus**. Oxford: Clarendon, 1790, p. 472 [Deuteronomy 10.17].

⁵⁸ BERLINER, 1905, p. 368 [Deuteronomy 10.17]. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. דברים. [s. a.], p. 131 [Deuteronomy 10:17]. NAHMANIDES. דברים. In: מקראות גדולות דברים. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 130 [Deuteronomy 10.17].

such an interpretation because the superlative is modelled on “the X of [all] Xs” (e. g. the king of kings = king supreme).

Examining אלוהים, David Kimhi⁵⁹ referred to Psalm 136.2 (לאֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים) in order to demonstrate that although אֱלֹהֵי was the construct state of אלוהים, which was the plural form of אלוה in terms of parsing, the superlative construction rendered it singular. In their commentaries on Psalm 136.2 Abraham ibn Ezra⁶⁰ and David Kimhi⁶¹ interpreted אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים as God of angels and אֱדְנֵי הָאֱדְנִים - as the Lord (God) of celestial beings, noticing the following parallelism:

Hebrew	LXX ¹	Hebrew	LXX
לאֱלֹהֵי	τῶ θεῶ	לאֲדְנֵי	τῶ κυρίῳ
הָאֱלֹהִים	τῶν θεῶν	הָאֲדְנִים	τῶν κυρίων

Affirming, that in Joshua 24.19 and in Psalm 136.2 אלוהים, which should be parsed as the plural form of אלוה, denoted God of Israel, David Kimhi⁶² contended that the meaning of אלוה and אלוהים was determined not by sheer grammatical features but rather by usage. Thus, in Joshua 24.19 and in Psalm 136.2 plural אלוהים signified true God, while in Habakkuk 1.11 singular אלוה indicated an idol. The context of Habakkuk 1.11 and the Aramaic rendition thereof⁶³ designated אלוה as an idol. Commenting on Habakkuk 1.11, Rashi⁶⁴, Joseph Kara⁶⁵, Abraham ibn Ezra,⁶⁶ and David Kimhi⁶⁷ adopted such an interpretation.

Citing the example of Exodus 22.27/28 (אלהים לא תקלל) and of 2 Chronicles 15.3 (ללא אלהי אמת), David Kimhi⁶⁸ argued that אלוהים could denote leaders (שופטים) in the wide sense of that term as exemplified by Isaiah 1.26 (שפטיר). In fact, Exodus 22.27/28 was one of the several loci pregnant with אלוהים in its non-divine signification in Exodus 22. For instance, the Babylonian Talmud⁶⁹

⁵⁹ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁶⁰ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. In: תהלים. מקראות גדולות ספר תהלים. Lublin: [s. n.], [s. a.], p. 506 [Psalm 136.2].

⁶¹ KIMHI. In: תהלים. מקראות גדולות ספר תהלים. Lublin: [s. n.], [s. a.], p. 506 [Psalm 136.2].

⁶² KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁶³ LAGARDE, 1872, p. 467 [Habakkuk 1.11]. It appears that the LXX interpreted the entire locus differently. SWETE, 1894, Vol. 3, p. 59 [Habakkuk 1.11].

⁶⁴ RASHI. חבוקק. 1885, p. 272 [Habakkuk 1.11].

⁶⁵ KARA. חבוקק. 1885, p. 272 [Habakkuk 1.11].

⁶⁶ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. חבוקק. 1885, p. 272 [Habakkuk 1.11].

⁶⁷ KIMHI. חבוקק. 1885, p. 272 [Habakkuk 1.11].

⁶⁸ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁶⁹ בבא קמא. In: סנהדרין. 1862, p. 2v [No. 2b]. Ibidem, p. 3v [No. 3b]. Ibidem, p. 4v [No. 4b].

was on a regular basis using אלהים with reference to judges, especially, discussing Exodus 22⁷⁰. Moreover, the interpretation of אלהים as the judge(s) was embedded in the Jewish tradition which associated God's generic name with the divine judgment, whereas God's very name (י) - with the divine grace⁷¹. Thus, אלהים in its divine sense could naturally portray God as the Judge.

From an exegetical perspective the fact, that אלהים was parallel to נשיא, cast light upon the meaning of אלהים in Exodus 22.27/28. Therefore, the Targum Onkelos⁷² construed אלהים as a leader or a judge and this interpretation was embraced by the grand Midrash on the Book of Exodus⁷³, by the Mekhilta⁷⁴ and by the Babylonian Talmud⁷⁵, which gave an account of the Rabbinic discussion about the signification of אלהים in Exodus 22.27/28.⁷⁶

Accordingly, rabbis discussed whether in Exodus 22.27/28 אלהים was to be interpreted as sacred (קודש), to wit, denoting the LORD, or as profane (חול), namely, referring to the non-divine agent(s). It appears that although both theses were considered acceptable, preference was given to the non-divine denotation (i. e. a judge / leader) for the sake of its comprehensiveness. In the Talmudic view, granted that a judge or a leader was perceived as appointed by the LORD to guide Israel, a formula “do not revile a judge / leader (אלהים)” could be applicable both to judges / leaders (explicitly) and to the LORD (implicitly) because by reviling God-given judges / leaders, the One who was said to appoint them (i. e. God) would be reviled too. Thus, if the Scripture (Exodus 22.27/28) condemned reviling judges / leaders, such a prohibition would extend to God as well. Consequently, the Targumic interpretation of אלהים in Exodus 22.27/28 as judges was accepted by

תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 11. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1861, p. 84r-84v [No. 84a-84b].

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 56v [No. 56b].

⁷¹ יומא. In: תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 6. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1860, p. 87r [No. 87a]. THEODOR, Julius and Chanoch ALBECK (Ed.). **Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar**: Parascha I-XLVII. Berlin: Poppelauer, 1912, p. 308 [No. 33 פרשה (Genesis 8.1)]. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. ספר יסוד מורא וסוד תורה. Prague: Landau, 1833, p. 41v-43v [XII]. See DAHL and SEGAL, 1978, p. 1-28.

⁷² BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 85 [Exodus 22.27/28]. To the contrary, the LXX translated אלהים as “gods”. SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 148 [Exodus 22.27/28].

⁷³ מדרש שמות רבה. In: ספר מדרש רבות על התורה. Leipzig: Wienbrack, 1864, p. 254 [No. 31 פרשה (Exodus 22.26-28)].

⁷⁴ WEISS, Isaac Hirsch (Ed.). **Mechilta: Der älteste halachische und haggadische Kommentar zum zweiten Buch Moses**. Vienna: Schlossberg: 1865, p. 103r-103v [No. 19 משפטים (Exodus 22.27/28)].

⁷⁵ סנהדרין. 1862, p. 66r [No. 66a].

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

the Jewish luminaries such as Rashi⁷⁷, Samuel ben Meir (רשב"ם)⁷⁸, Abraham ibn Ezra⁷⁹ or Nahmanides (רמב"ן)⁸⁰.

In 2 Chronicles 15.3 (ללא אלהי אמת) both the Septuagint⁸¹ and Symmachus' version⁸² explicated the construct state of אלהים as θεός, while Symmachus replaced an idiosyncratic ἐν οὐ of the LXX with an idiomatic ἄθεο. Similarly, the Targum⁸³ translated אלהים as אלהא, reasoning that "to be without God" indicated that the Torah was neither taught nor practised properly. A statement, that "for long seasons Israel was without the true God" (JPS) recorded in 2 Chronicles 15.3, was discussed in the Babylonian Talmud⁸⁴ which declared that those, who only studied the Torah, but did not practise any benevolence (גמילות חסדים), were living as if there was no true God in their lives.

The classic commentaries on 2 Chronicles 15:3 (ללא אלהי אמת) permitted of two interpretations. In his commentary⁸⁵ and in the Book of Roots⁸⁶ David Kimhi asserted that לא אלהי אמת meant either that in exile Israel would worship the idol(s) instead of the LORD or that in exile Israelites would be destitute of God-fearing leaders. According to the former interpretation, the construct state of אלהים denoted true God, while the latter interpretation explicated לא אלהי אמת as לא שופטי אמת (without true leaders). From David Kimhi's perspective, both interpretations were interrelated and were complementary because without God-fearing leaders, without teaching the Torah and without putting the Torah into practice Israelites would be vulnerable to any sort of idolatry. Expounding 2 Chronicles 15.3,

⁷⁷ BERLINER, 1905, p. 161 [Exodus 22.27/28].

⁷⁸ SAMUEL BEN MEIR. שמות. In: מקראות גדולות שמות. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 377 [Exodus 22.27/28].

⁷⁹ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. שמות. In: מקראות גדולות שמות. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 377 [Exodus 22.27/28].

⁸⁰ NAHMANIDES. שמות. In: מקראות גדולות שמות. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 377 [Exodus 22.27/28].

⁸¹ SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 84 [2 Chronicles 15.3].

⁸² FIELD (Ed.). **Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt: Sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta**, Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon, 1875, p. 741 [2 Chronicles 15.3 (Symmachus)].

⁸³ תרגום. In: מקראות גדולות ספר דברי הימים. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 263 [2 Chronicles 15.3].

⁸⁴ עבודה זרה. In: תלמוד בבלי, Vol. 16. Warsaw: Orgelbrand, 1863, p. 17v [No. 17b].

⁸⁵ KIMHI. ספר דברי הימים ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר דברי הימים. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 263 [2 Chronicles 15.3].

⁸⁶ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

Gersonides (רלב"ג)⁸⁷ consolidated these two interpretations, arguing that no leaders of the LORD, no study of the Torah and no life according to the Torah must eventuate in idolatry which meant to be “without true God”.

Analysing 2 Chronicles 15.3 in his Book of Roots, David Kimhi⁸⁸ made reference to Isaiah 1.26 (שפטיך) which ought to be understood in accordance with its purpose. The Septuagint⁸⁹ translated שפטיך as τὸς κριτὰς σου, while the Targum⁹⁰ interpreted שפטיך as דייני קושטא (pious judges). Thus, in Isaiah 1.26 the Hebrew appellation שופט and the Greek and Aramaic renditions thereof alluded to the Book of Judges (ספר שופטים) by virtue of which שופטים was presented as a generic term.

The classic Jewish exegesis debated whether the restoration of שופטים mentioned in Isaiah 1.26 appertained to Hezekiah’s reforms⁹¹ or to the Messianic future. The latter proposition was propounded by David Kimhi⁹² in his commentary on Isaiah 1.26, yet in his Book of Roots Kimhi⁹³ suggested that 2 Chronicles 15.3 and Isaiah 1.26 treated of the exile (i. e. of the Babylonian captivity) provided that 2 Chronicles 15.3 pictured the loss of God-fearing leaders, whereas Isaiah 1.26 - the restoration of them.

Furthermore, David Kimhi⁹⁴ examined Genesis 6.2-4 and Job 1.6 (בני האלהים), maintaining that in those passages sons of אלהים denoted sons of leaders (נגידים) and of the nobility (אצילים). In Genesis 6.2 the Septuagint⁹⁵ translated בני האלהים as angels of God (οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ) though a variant “sons of God” (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) was attested as well⁹⁶. In Genesis 6.4 the LXX read “sons of God”.⁹⁷

⁸⁷ GERSONIDES, ספר דברי הימים ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר דברי הימים. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 263 [2 Chronicles 15.3].

⁸⁸ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁸⁹ SWETE, 1894, Vol. 3, p. 103 [Isaiah 1.26].

⁹⁰ LAGARDE, 1872, p. 226 [Isaiah 1.26]. See Rashi’s comment ad locum: RASHI, ספר ישעיה. In: מקראות גדולות ספר ישעיה. Lublin: אוצר הספרים, [s. a.], p. 15-16 [Isaiah 1.26].

⁹¹ As exemplified by: ABRAHAM IBN EZRA, ספר ישעיה. In: מקראות גדולות ספר ישעיה. Lublin: אוצר הספרים, [s. a.], p. 15-16 [Isaiah 1.26].

⁹² KIMHI, ספר ישעיה. In: מקראות גדולות ספר ישעיה. Lublin: אוצר הספרים, [s. a.], p. 15-16 [Isaiah 1.26].

⁹³ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

⁹⁴ Ibidem.

⁹⁵ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 9 [Genesis 6.2-4].

⁹⁶ FIELD, 1875, Vol. 1, p. 22 [Genesis 6.2/3 (LXX)].

⁹⁷ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 9 [Genesis 6.2-4].

As regards Genesis 6.2, Theodotion's version⁹⁸ preferred "sons of God", while Aquila's version⁹⁹ proposed "sons of gods" (οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν θεῶν). The Symmachus' revision¹⁰⁰ explicated האלהים from Genesis 6.2 as the "sons of the mighty" (οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν δυναστευόντων).

In Genesis 6.2 and 6.4 the Targum Onkelos¹⁰¹ interpreted בני האלהים as "sons of leaders" (בני רבביא), while the Samaritan Targum¹⁰² - as "sons of rulers" (ברי שלטניה). The grand Midrash on the Book of Genesis¹⁰³ mentioned that a 2nd-century sage Simeon bar Yochai (רשב"י) interpreted בני האלהים as "sons of judges (דיינים)", condemning anyone who would dare to speak of "sons of God" (בני אלהיא) in the literal sense as if the LORD could ever sire anyone. Similarly, Yalkut Shimoni (ילקוט שמעוני) suggested that בני האלהים were "sons of judges"¹⁰⁴.

Pirke attributed to Rabbi Eliezer¹⁰⁵ drew on the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan¹⁰⁶ which in Genesis 6.4 identified הנפלים with two angels who were said to fall from heaven and to get involved with the daughters of men. The Pirke elaborated upon this subject, assuming that in Genesis 6.2-4 בני האלהים and הנפלים were identical with those fallen angels. However, from the exegetical point of view, it is debatable whether in that narrative בני האלהים and הנפלים were synonymous. The same Pirke affirmed that in the Scripture the expression בני האלהים regularly denoted either Israelites as God's children (see Deuteronomy 14.1) or God's angels.

Generally speaking, the Jewish exegesis accorded with interpretation enshrined in the Targum Onkelos. Elucidating Genesis 6.2-4, Saadia Gaon (סעדיה) construed בני האלהים as "sons of nobles (אצילים)", while Rashi¹⁰⁸ presented two interpretations which, in his opinion, were convergent.

According to Rashi, בני האלהים in Genesis 6.2-4 meant either sons of

⁹⁸ FIELD, 1875, Vol. 1, p. 22 [Genesis 6.2/3 (Theodotion)].

⁹⁹ Ibidem, [Genesis 6.2/3 (Aquila)].

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, [Genesis 6.2/3 (Symmachus)].

¹⁰¹ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 6 [Genesis 6.2-4].

¹⁰² BRÜLL, 1875, p. 6-7 [Genesis 6.2-4].

¹⁰³ THEODOR and ALBECK, 1912, p. 247-248 [No. 26 פרשה (Genesis 6.2-4)].

¹⁰⁴ ילקוט בראשית. In: ספר ילקוט שמעוני. Vilnius: Romm, 1863, p. 36 [No. 43].

¹⁰⁵ פירי רבי אליעזר. Warsaw: זיסבערג, 1874, p. 36-37 [No. 20 /22/].

¹⁰⁶ WALTON (Ed.). Targum Jonathan. In: **Biblia sacra polyglotta**, Vol. 4. London: Roycroft, 1657, p. 11 [Genesis 6.2-4].

¹⁰⁷ SAADIA GAON. בראשית. In: פירוש על התורה ועל נ"ך. London: Gad, 1959-1960, p. 11 [Genesis 6.2].

¹⁰⁸ BERLINER, 1905, p. 12-13 [Genesis 6.2-4].

princes (השרים) and of leaders (השופטים) or those princes (השרים) who were going (ההולכים) on a mission (בשליחותו) on behalf of (של) the LORD that was pictured as the very Presence (מקום). It is unclear whether those princes commissioned by God were human princes or God's angels. The appellation שליחות is generic, while its cognate (שליח) could refer to any messenger of the LORD, either human or angelic. Consequently, Rashi observed that in the Tanakh אלוהים communicated a sense of lordship and authority (לשון מרות) either with reference to God or with reference to human or angelic beings as exemplified by Exodus 4.16 and 7.1.

Exodus 4.16 (ואתה תהיה לו לאלהים) stipulated that Moses was to be or to act as אלהים for Aaron. The Septuagint¹⁰⁹ offered a descriptive and evasive translation (σὺ δὲ εἰς τὸ θεῖον πρὸς τὸν θεόν) according to which Moses was to serve or to be for Aaron as “what was towards to God”, namely, as things pertinent to God. The Targum Onkelos¹¹⁰ announced that Moses was to be a leader / teacher (רב) in relation to Aaron. Similarly, the grand Midrash on the Book of Exodus¹¹¹ portrayed the relationship between Moses and Aaron in terms of leadership, construing אלהים as the object of awe (מורא). In this sense, Moses functioned as אלהים in relation to Aaron. Commenting on Exodus 4.16, Rashi¹¹² followed the Targum Onkelos and emphasised that Moses was to be a teacher (רב) and a leader (שר) for Aaron. Subsequently, Samuel ben Meir¹¹³ explicated אלהים in Exodus 4.16 as a leader (שר and שופט) and declared that since Moses was אלהים in relation to Aaron, Aaron did whatever Moses commanded him to do. It should be noted that in the work attributed to Maimonides (רמב"ם)¹¹⁴ אלהים from Exodus 4.16 was classified as non-divine (חול). Moreover, his son, Abraham ben Maimonides (אברהם בן הרמב"ם)¹¹⁵, cited the Targum Onkelos, stating that the interpretation of אלהים as the one who was vested with power (רב) was instrumental both in Exodus 4.16 and in Exodus 7.1 because in the former passage Moses was called to exercise authority over Aaron, while in the latter passage - over Pharaoh. Later, Obadiah Sforno (עובדיה) (ספורנו)¹¹⁶ added that the fact that Moses was to be אלהים for Aaron implied that

¹⁰⁹ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 110 [Exodus 4.16].

¹¹⁰ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 63 [Exodus 4.16].

¹¹¹ מדרש שמות רבה. 1864, p. 206 [No. 3 פרשה (Exodus 4.16)].

¹¹² BERLINER, 1905, p. 108 [Exodus 4.16].

¹¹³ SAMUEL BEN MEIR. שמות. [s. a.], p. 53 [Exodus 4.16].

¹¹⁴ MAIMONIDES. ביאור שמות קדש וחול. Berlin: דביר, 1923, p. 16 [No. 19 (Exodus 4.16)].

¹¹⁵ ABRAHAM BEN MAIMONIDES. פירוש ספר שמות. In: פירוש על בראשית ושמות. London: Sassoon, 1957-1958, p. 230 [Exodus 4.16].

¹¹⁶ SFORNO, Obadiah. שמות. In: מקראות גדולות שמות. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 52 [Exodus

Aaron was authorised to perform signs (miracles) on Moses' behalf.

In Exodus 7.1 (נתתיך אלהים לפרעה) the LXX¹¹⁷ translated אלהים as θεός, while the Targum Onkelos¹¹⁸ - as a leader (רב). Commenting on Exodus 7.1, Rashi¹¹⁹ explained that Moses was אלהים in relation to Pharaoh in the sense that Moses acted as a leader (שופט) and he was the instrument for bringing the LORD's judgement on Pharaoh. This instrumental role was noticed by Abraham ibn Ezra¹²⁰ who wrote that Moses was presented to Pharaoh as the LORD's messenger (מלאך). Abraham ben Maimonides¹²¹ elaborated upon אלהים from Exodus 7.1, beginning with the Targum Onkelos. He also recapitulated a statement made by Saadia Gaon (סעדיה גאון) which could not be identified by the author of the present paper¹²². According to Abraham's recollection, Saadia taught that in the Tanakh אלוהים could be predicated of true or false God / god, of the LORD's messenger(s) [מלאך / מלאכים], of the mighty person(s) [נגידים / נגיד] or of the judge(s) [דיינים / דין], while in Exodus 7.1 the intended meaning was clearly that of being God's messenger to Pharaoh. On the other hand, for Saadia, in Exodus 4.16 Moses was said to be God's messenger (אלהים) to Aaron.

Joseph Bekhor Shor (יוסף בכור שור)¹²³ asserted that in Exodus 7.1 אלהים should be understood as denoting a judge¹²⁴ in the same way as האלהים in Exodus 22.8 (האלהים יבא). In the latter passage the Jewish exegetical tradition, except for the Septuagint¹²⁵, construed both האלהים and אלהים as the judge(s). Thus, the Targum

4.16].

¹¹⁷ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 115 [Exodus 7.1].

¹¹⁸ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 66 [Exodus 7.1].

¹¹⁹ BERLINER, 1905, p. 113 [Exodus 7.1].

¹²⁰ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. שמות. [s. a.], p. 89 [Exodus 7.1].

¹²¹ ABRAHAM BEN MAIMONIDES. פירוש ספר שמות. 1957-1958, p. 246-248 [Exodus 7.1].

¹²² A contemporary edition of extant fragments by Saadia simply reproduced an account given by Abraham ben Maimonides. SAADIA GAON. שמות. In: פירוש על התורה ועל נ"ך. London: Gad, 1959-1960, p. 46 [Exodus 4.15].

¹²³ SHOR, Joseph Bekhor. שמות. In: JELLINEK, Adolph (Ed.). **Kommentar zum Pentateuch**, Vol. 1. Leipzig: Gerhard, 1856, p. 96 [Exodus 7.1].

¹²⁴ To communicate this idea, Joseph Bekhor Shor resorted to a French word "justice" transliterated into Hebrew.

¹²⁵ The LXX read "God". SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 147 [Exodus 22.8].

Onkelos¹²⁶, the Mekhilta¹²⁷, the Babylonian Talmud¹²⁸ and Yalkut Shimoni¹²⁹ took **בני האלהים** and **אלהים** in Exodus 22.8 for the judge(s) [דין]. This interpretation was espoused by the classic Jewish exegesis¹³⁰.

In his commentary on Genesis 6.2-4 Abraham ibn Ezra¹³¹ distinguished three traditional interpretations of **בני האלהים** and he propounded his own exposition as well. According to the first interpretation, **בני האלהים** were sons of leaders (השופטים) who were meting out God's justice (משפט אלהים) in the world. According to the second interpretation, in Genesis 6.2-4 **אלהים** denoted the LORD himself and therefore **בני האלהים** were the LORD's children, namely, those who were living a holy life on earth as typified by Deuteronomy 14.1. The third interpretation presupposed that **בני האלהים** were sons of Seth, whereas the daughters of men came from Cain's family. To understand this proposition, it must be remembered that according to Genesis 5.1-3 Seth was begotten in Adam's image and after Adam's likeness. Thus, since Adam and Eve were created in God's image and Seth was begotten in Adam's image, Seth's offspring, sons, to be exact, could be viewed as endowed with God's image which was transmitted to them by Seth who acquired it from Adam. Therefore, Seth's sons could be called "sons of God". In contrast, Cain's offspring might be thought of as tainted with an evil inclination and at least partially estranged from God's image. According to the interpretation invented by Abraham ibn Ezra, **בני האלהים** were those men who had insights into the divine and who by virtue of such a supernal knowledge could find women that were a perfect fit for them and that gave birth to heroes (גיבורים).

Commenting upon the Book of Genesis, David Kimhi¹³² interpreted

¹²⁶ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 84 [Exodus 22.8].

¹²⁷ WEISS, 1865, p. 98v [No. 15 משפטים (Exodus 22.8)].

¹²⁸ סנהדרין. 1862, p. 2v [No. 2b]. Ibidem, p. 3v [No. 3b]. Ibidem, p. 4v [No. 4b]. Ibidem, p. 56v [No. 56b]. בבא קמא. 1861, p. 84r-84v [No. 84a-84b].

¹²⁹ ילקוט שמעוני מדרש על תורה נביאים וכתובים, Vol. 1. Warsaw: גאלדמאן, 1876, p. 198-200 [No. 345-346 (Exodus 22.8)].

¹³⁰ BERLINER, 1905, p. 158 [Exodus 22.8]. SAMUEL BEN MEIR. שמות. [s. a.], p. 367-369 [Exodus 22.8]. ABRAHAM BEN MAIMONIDES. פירוש ספר שמות. 1957-1958, p. 350 [Exodus 22.8]. NAHMANIDES. שמות. [s. a.], p. 366-369 [Exodus 22.8]. SHOR. ספר שמות. 1856, p. 129 [Exodus 22.8]. SFORNO. שמות. [s. a.], p. 366-368 [Exodus 22.8]. Furthermore, **אלהים** and **האלהים** in Exodus 22.8 were classified as non-divine (חיל). MAIMONIDES, 1923, p. 20 [No. 21-22 (Exodus 22.8)].

¹³¹ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. ספר בראשית. In: מקראות גדולות ספר בראשית. New York: פריעדמאן, 1970-1971, p. 81-83 [Genesis 6.2].

¹³² KIMHI. פירוש רד"ק. In: מקראות גדולות חומש בית דוד, Vol. 1. Lemberg [Lviv]: Balaban, 1909, p. 52v [Genesis 6.2].

אלהים as sons of leaders (השופטים), of the mighty (הגדולים) and of those who were leading countries (מנהיגי המדינות). In his opinion, such persons, namely, those, who were vested with special powers, could in Hebrew be denominated as אלהים. To corroborate his proposition, David Kimhi referred to Exodus 22.27/28 (אלהים לא תקלל) and cited the Aramaic rendition of Genesis 6.2-4, combining the Targum Onkelos with the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. Furthermore, David Kimhi recapitulated the exposition of Genesis 6.2-4 offered in the grand Midrash on the Book of Genesis and he summarised the original interpretation propounded by Abraham ibn Ezra in his commentary on Genesis 6.2-4.

Expounding Genesis 6.2-4, Nahmanides¹³³ recalled that according to Rashi, בני האלהים were sons of princes (השרים) and of leaders (השופטים), and he contended that the grand Midrash on the Book of Genesis supported such an interpretation. In Nahmanides' opinion, בני האלהים were supposed to follow in the wake of their fathers, who were leaders and princes, by acting as judges (הדיינים) dispensing justice in the community, yet they proved to commit offences.

In his commentary on the Book of Genesis Joseph Bekhor Shor¹³⁴ simply identified בני האלהים as sons of princes (השרים). Later, Bahya ben Asher (בהי בן אשר)¹³⁵ relied on David Kimhi's explanation according to which בני האלהים were sons of princes (השרים) and of leaders (השופטים), and in Exodus 22.27/28 (אלהים לא תקלל) such persons were called אלהים on account of their authority. Consequently, Bahya reminded his readers that the Targum Onkelos interpreted אלהים in Exodus 22.27/28 as a judge which, in his view, elucidated the meaning of בני האלהים in Genesis 6.2-4 as well. Moreover, Bahya epitomised Nahmanides' exposition of Genesis 6.2-4. Finally, Gersonides (רלב"ג)¹³⁶ emphasised that in Genesis 6.2-4 בני האלהים were the mighty who were called to act on God's behalf but failed.

In the Book of Roots David Kimhi¹³⁷ evoked both Genesis 6.2-4 and

¹³³ NAHMANIDES. ספר בראשית. In: מקראות גדולות ספר בראשית. New York: פריעדמאן, 1970-1971, p. 81 [Genesis 6.2].

¹³⁴ SHOR. תישארב רפס. In: JELLINEK (Ed.). *Kommentar zum Pentateuch*, Vol. 1. Leipzig: Gerhard, 1856, p. 14 [Genesis 6.2].

¹³⁵ BAHYA BEN ASHER. ביאור על ספר בראשית. Lemberg [Lviv]: Salat, 1864, p. 33v [Genesis 6.2].

¹³⁶ GERSONIDES. בראשית. In: פירוש על התורה על דרך ביאור. Venice: Bomberg, 1546-1547, p. 18v [ביאור המלות (Genesis 6.2-4)].

¹³⁷ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

Job 1.6. The latter passage was auxiliary because the LXX¹³⁸ and the Targum¹³⁹ translated בני האלהים as the angels. This interpretation was also adopted by Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁴⁰ and by Gersonides¹⁴¹ who was speaking of בני האלהים in Job 1.6 in a more general way, namely, as of celestial leaders. Gersonides' remark explains why David Kimhi listed Genesis 6.2-4 and Job 1.6 together. The former treated of human leaders (of sons of human leaders who were supposed to be leaders as well, to be precise), whereas the latter - of celestial leaders.

In David Kimhi's opinion, אלהים denoted sons of the nobility (אצילים) and of leaders (נגידים) in Genesis 6.2-4 and Job 1.6, while in 2 Samuel 7.23 - prophets or angels. Granted that in 2 Samuel 7.23 אלהים was the subject of the plural verb (הלכו), David Kimhi interpreted אלהים as angels or prophets whom the LORD was said to use as his instruments for delivering Israelites from captivity in Egypt. In the case of 2 Samuel 7.23 the Septuagint¹⁴² was evasive, while the Targum¹⁴³ explicated אלהים as messengers (שליחין) to whom the action of delivering Israelites from captivity in Egypt was assigned. The term "messengers" found in the Targum was generic enough to denote either angels or agents (prophets, for instance) who were acting on the LORD's behalf.

In 1 Chronicles 17.21 there was a text parallel to 2 Samuel 7.23 but with the singular form of the same verb (הלך). This could be explained in two ways. Firstly, the tradition of the Book of Chronicles could presuppose that אלהים as the subject might occur with a plural (הלכו) or singular (הלך) form of the verb. Secondly, the tradition of the Book of Chronicles might construe the plural form of the verb as challenging and therefore could make it singular. The fact that in 2 Samuel 7.23 אלהים was the subject of the plural verb was noticed in the Babylonian Talmud¹⁴⁴ which explicated it in the light of the singular form of the pronominal suffix (לו). Since this suffix (ו-) stood for אלהים, the Talmud concluded that in 2 Samuel 7.23 the singular suffix protected the singular denotation of אלהים

¹³⁸ SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 520 [Job 1.6]. The variant οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ was attested as well. FIELD, 1875, Vol. 2, p. 4 [Job 1.6].

¹³⁹ WALTON. Targum. 1656, p. 2 [Job 1.6].

¹⁴⁰ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. ספר איוב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר איוב. Bnei Brak: ספרי קודש מישור, 1990, p. 4-5 [Job 1.6].

¹⁴¹ GERSONIDES. ספר איוב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר איוב. Bnei Brak: ספרי קודש מישור, 1990, p. 4-5 [Job 1.6].

¹⁴² SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 625 [2 Samuel /LXX 2 Kings/ 7.23].

¹⁴³ LAGARDE, 1872, p. 117 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁴⁴ סנהדרין. 1862, p. 38v [No. 38b].

regardless of the plural הלכו. It seems that the Talmud interpreted אלהים in 2 Samuel 7.23 as denoting God and for that reason took precautions to ensure the absolute unity of the Divinity.

Expounding 2 Samuel 7.23, Rashi¹⁴⁵ cited the Targum and identified the messengers with Moses and Aaron, arguing that in Exodus 7.1 Moses was described as אלוהים in relation to Pharaoh. Consequently, Rashi wrote that Moses and Aaron were sent by God as his messengers to Israelites and were acting as the LORD's instruments for delivering Israelites from Egypt. On the other hand, Joseph Kara¹⁴⁶ asserted that אלהים signified God in whom Israelites trusted and who delivered them from captivity.

David Kimhi processed 2 Samuel 7.23 both in his commentary¹⁴⁷ and in his Book of Roots.¹⁴⁸ In the commentary he ascertained that by comparison with 1 Chronicles 17.21 אלהים in 2 Samuel 7.23 ought to denote God, whereas the plural verb (הלכו) occurring with the Divine should be regarded as the plural of majesty (דרך כבוד). Furthermore, David Kimhi cited the example of Psalm 149.2 (בעשיו) as characteristic of the plural of majesty and he admitted that in view of the Targum אלהים in 2 Samuel 7.23 might be construed as the LORD's agents delivering Israel, to wit, as Moses and Aaron. In the Book of Roots David Kimhi quoted the Targum and thus presented Moses and Aaron as אלהים, videlicet messengers, in that verse. In his opinion, אלהים in 2 Samuel 7.23 could also be explicated as the LORD's angel(s) on the basis of Numbers 20.16 which stipulated that the LORD sent an angel to deliver his people from Egypt.

Two passages (i. e. Numbers 20.16 and Psalm 149.2) referred to by David Kimhi should be analysed in their own setting. From the syntax of Numbers 20.16 it is not clear whether the LORD sent a messenger who delivered Israelites from Egypt (ויצאנו as the subject of מלאך) or the LORD both sent a messenger and delivered Israelites (ויצאנו as the subject of יי). In the former interpretation a messenger was a direct agent of the LORD, whereas in the latter interpretation - an indirect agent because both readings recognised that the LORD engaged his messenger in the work of deliverance. Since מלאך could denote a human or angelic

¹⁴⁵ RASHI. ספר שמואל ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר שמואל. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 301-302 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁴⁶ KARA, Joseph. ספר שמואל ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר שמואל. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 301-302 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁴⁷ KIMHI. ספר שמואל ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר שמואל. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 301-303 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁴⁸ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

deputy of the LORD¹⁴⁹, it would be advisable to translate it as a messenger unless further specification is intended.

The LXX¹⁵⁰ translation of Numbers 20.16 (ἀποστείλας ἄγγελον ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς) employed the circumstantial (adverbial) participle (ἀποστείλας) to render the Hebrew syntax and interpreted מלאך as an angel. It is difficult to determine in what way the participle ἀποστείλας actually modified the verb ἐξήγαγεν but two options seem to be plausible. Firstly, the LORD delivered Israelites by sending his angel that virtually accomplished this task on his (i. e. the LORD's) behalf. Secondly, while delivering Israelites, the LORD sent his angel that assisted him (i. e. the LORD) in this task.

The Targum Onkelos¹⁵¹ to Numbers 20.16 retained the ambiguity of the syntax of the Hebrew original and of מלאך. The Samaritan Targum¹⁵² did likewise, translating מלאך as שליח which was a generic term too. Commenting upon Numbers 20.16, Rashi¹⁵³ opined that מלאך, through whom the LORD delivered Israelites from Egypt, was Moses, and avowed that in the Tanakh prophets could be depicted as messengers (מלאכים). In fact, in Hosea 12.14 Moses was described as a prophet which was noticed in David Kimhi's commentary¹⁵⁴ on that verse. To illustrate his thesis on Numbers 20.16, Rashi¹⁵⁵ referred to 2 Chronicles 36.16 where he treated v. 16a (ויהיו מלעבים במלאכי האלהים) and v. 16c (ומתעתעים בנבאיו) as parallel to one another. In this instance, the LXX¹⁵⁶ translated מלאכי האלהים as God's angels (ἄγγελοι). The late mediaeval Targum¹⁵⁷ attempted to highlight the parallelism between מלאכי האלהים (v. 16a) and the prophets (v. 16c), which was articulated by Rashi, and it rendered מלאכי האלהים as messengers of the LORD (אזגדיא דיי). Expounding 2 Chronicles 36.16, Rashi¹⁵⁸ identified מלאכי האלהים as

¹⁴⁹ The generic signification of מלאך was well-known to the Jewish lexicographers. MENAHEM BEN SARUQ, 1854, p. 117 [s. v. מלאך]. NATHAN BEN JEHIEL. **Plenus Aruch: Targum-Talmudico-Midrashic verbale et reale lexicon**, Vol. 3, Ed. KOHUT. Vienna: Brög, 1882, p. 147 [s. v. מלאך].

¹⁵⁰ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 300 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁵¹ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 172 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁵² BRÜLL, 1875, p. 182 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁵³ BERLINER, 1905, p. 320 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁵⁴ KIMHI. הושע. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 199 [Hosea 12.14].

¹⁵⁵ BERLINER, 1905, p. 320 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁵⁶ SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 127 [2 Chronicles 36.16].

¹⁵⁷ תרגום. [s. a.], p. 392 [2 Chronicles 36.16].

¹⁵⁸ RASHI. ספר דברי הימים ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר דברי הימים. Lublin: שניידמסער, [s. a.], p.

God's messengers (שליחים), while David Kimhi¹⁵⁹ equated מלאכי האלהים (v. 16a) with God's prophets (v. 16c). Thus, the possibility of interpreting מלאך as a messenger or a prophet was firmly rooted in the Jewish tradition.

Working on Numbers 20.16, Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁶⁰ presented two interpretations of מלאך. According to the first interpretation, which was favoured by Abraham ibn Ezra, מלאך was the LORD's angel of deliverance mentioned in Isaiah 63.9. According to the second interpretation, מלאך denoted Moses in the same way as in Haggai 1.13 Haggai, the prophet, was called מלאך of the LORD. In his commentary on Isaiah 63.9 Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁶¹ repeated that in Numbers 20.16 מלאך signified the LORD's angel, not Moses, yet in his commentary on Haggai 1.13 he¹⁶² acknowledged מלאך as equivalent to a messenger (שליח). As regards Haggai 1.13, Rashi¹⁶³ perceived Haggai as the LORD's messenger, while David Kimhi¹⁶⁴ reminded his readers that מלאך denoted God's messenger, and cited the example of Numbers 20.16 in which he identified מלאך with Moses.

In Psalm 149.2 (בעשיו) the plural form of the suffixed participle appertained to God though modern scholars are more circumspect about classifying such grammatical forms as plural¹⁶⁵. The Septuagint¹⁶⁶ took בעשיו for singular, while the Targum¹⁶⁷ was ambiguous because it read either "in his maker(s)", "in his servant(s)" or "in his deed(s)". Expounding Psalm 149.2, Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁶⁸ and David Kimhi¹⁶⁹ recognised בעשיו as the plural of majesty (בלשון תפארת) resembling the grammatical features of אלוהים.

392 [2 Chronicles 36.16].

¹⁵⁹ KIMHI. ספר דברי הימים ב. [s. a.], p. 392 [2 Chronicles 36.16].

¹⁶⁰ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. במדבר. In: מקראות גדולות במדבר. Union City: Bros, [s. a.], p. 263-265 [Numbers 20.16].

¹⁶¹ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. ספר ישעיה. [s. a.], p. 489 [Isaiah 63.9].

¹⁶² ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. חגי. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 290 [Haggai 1.13].

¹⁶³ RASHI. חגי. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 290-291 [Haggai 1.13].

¹⁶⁴ KIMHI. חגי. In: מקראות גדולות, Vol. 10. Warsaw: Schriftgiesser, 1885, p. 290-291 [Haggai 1.13].

¹⁶⁵ GESENIUS, Wilhelm. **Hebrew Grammar**, Ed. Emil KAUTZSCH and Arthur Ernest COWLEY. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966, p. 273-274 [§ 93 ss]. Ibidem, p. 399 [§ 124 k].

¹⁶⁶ SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 414 [Psalm 149.2].

¹⁶⁷ WALTON. Targum. 1656, p. 316 [Psalm 149.2].

¹⁶⁸ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. תהלים. [s. a.], p. 547-548 [Psalm 149.2].

¹⁶⁹ KIMHI. תהלים. [s. a.], p. 547 [Psalm 149.2].

As regards 2 Samuel 7.23, Joseph ibn Caspi (יוסף אבן כספי)¹⁷⁰ and Gersonides¹⁷¹ offered relevant expositions thereof. Caspi pointed out that in 1 Chronicles 17.21 the same narrative was retold with the singular form of the same verb and he argued that such a mighty act of deliverance must be attributed to the LORD. In addition, Caspi reminded his audience that in 2 Samuel 7.23 אלהיו denoted god(s) of Egyptians, namely, the idol(s) in the same way as אלהיו in 1 Samuel 17.43.¹⁷² Similarly, Gersonides taught that the act of deliverance was so unique that it was performed by the LORD himself.

In his Book of Roots David Kimhi¹⁷³ juxtaposed אלהיו from 2 Samuel 7.23 with אלהי from Exodus 12.12 (אלהי מצרים), realising that אלהים in those passages could be interpreted at least in two ways which was noteworthy from an exegetical perspective. Commenting on אלהיו in 2 Samuel 7.23, David Kimhi¹⁷⁴ recognised that אלהיו could signify either the idol(s) worshipped by Egyptians (literally: Egypt's idol[s]) in the light of Exodus 12.12 or Egyptian leaders (literally: Egypt's leaders) in the same way as אלהים was said to denote leaders (שופטים) in Exodus 22.27/28 (אלהים לא תקלל).

In Exodus 12.12 the Septuagint¹⁷⁵ translated אלהי מצרים as gods of Egyptians, while the Targum Onkelos¹⁷⁶ - as the idol(s). The same exposition was enshrined in the grand Midrash on the Book of Exodus¹⁷⁷ and in the Mekhilta¹⁷⁸. Additionally, the Midrash made reference to Numbers 33.4 (באלהיהם) as to a text parallel to Exodus 12.12. In the case of Numbers 33.4 the LORD brought

¹⁷⁰ JOSEPH IBN CASPI. **Adne Keseph**: Kommentar zu den prophetischen Büchern der heiligen Schrift, Vol. 2, Ed. Isaac LAST. London: Narodiczky, 1912, p. 34 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁷¹ GERSONIDES. ספר שמואל ב. In: מקראות גדולות ספר שמואל. Lublin: שניידמעסער, [s. a.], p. 301 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁷² In 1 Samuel 17.43 the Targum translated אלהיו as the idol(s), while the LXX - as gods. LAGARDE, 1872, p. 90 [1 Samuel 17.43]. TISCHENDORF, Konstantin (Ed.). **Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes**, Vol. 1. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1869, p. 350 [1 Samuel /LXX 1 Kings/ 17.43]. See: JOSEPH IBN CASPI, 1912, Vol. 2, p. 20 [1 Samuel 17.43].

¹⁷³ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

¹⁷⁴ KIMHI. ספר שמואל ב. [s. a.], p. 301-303 [2 Samuel 7.23].

¹⁷⁵ SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 126 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁷⁶ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 72 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁷⁷ מדרש שמות רבה. 1864, p. 221 [No. 15 פרשה (Exodus 12.12)].

¹⁷⁸ WEISS, 1865, p. 10r [No. 7 משפטים (Exodus 12.12)].

judgment on “their [i. e. Egyptians’] gods (LXX)¹⁷⁹ or idols (Targum Onkelos)¹⁸⁰”. Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁸¹ was inclined to interpret אלהים in Numbers 33.4 as idols, while Joseph Bekhor Shor¹⁸² mentioned that in the Tanakh the mighty (גדולים) and leaders (דיינים) could be called אלוהים and he adduced Exodus 22:8 (האלהים יבא) as proof of his thesis. Therefore, Shor tended to explicate אלהים in Numbers 33:4 as leaders of Egyptian society (שופטים).

Following the Mekhilta, Rashi¹⁸³ clarified that in Exodus 12.12 אלהי מצרים denoted idols. Abraham ibn Ezra¹⁸⁴ interpreted אלהי מצרים from Exodus 12.12 in the same way, comparing it to Numbers 33.4 (באלהיהם). Nahmanides¹⁸⁵ recapitulated this prevailing interpretation cum the reference to Numbers 33.4, adding that in view of Isaiah 24.21 (צבא המרום במרום)¹⁸⁶ אלהי מצרים might also be understood as the heavenly princes (שרי מעלה) who were shielding Egyptians. This “celestial” explanation was subsequently advanced by Obadiah Sforno¹⁸⁷. On the other hand, Hezekiah ben Manoah (חזקיה בן מנוח)¹⁸⁸ maintained that אלוהים in Exodus 7.1 (נתתיך אלהים לפרעה), 12.12 (אלהי מצרים) and in 2 Samuel 7.23 (הלכו אלהים) denoted human agents of power (שרי), either good (Exodus 7.1; 2 Samuel 7.23) or bad (Exodus 12.12).

¹⁷⁹ SWETE, 1887, Vol. 1, p. 330 [Numbers 33.4].

¹⁸⁰ BERLINER, 1884, Vol. 1, p. 189 [Numbers 33.4].

¹⁸¹ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. במדבר. [s. a.], p. 441 [Numbers 33.4].

¹⁸² SHOR. ספר במדב. In: פירוש על ויקרא ובמדבר. London: Hamadfis, 1959-1960, p. 132-133 [Numbers 33.4].

¹⁸³ BERLINER, 1905, p. 122 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁸⁴ ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. שמות. [s. a.], p. 157 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁸⁵ NAHMANIDES. שמות. [s. a.], p. 156-157 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁸⁶ Expounding Isaiah 24.21 (צבא המרום במרום), Rashi and Joseph Kara spoke of celestial princes (שרים), while Abraham ibn Ezra and David Kimhi - of celestial messengers (מלאכים) that could plausibly be equated with angels. RASHI. ספר ישעיה. [s. a.], p. 197 [Isaiah 24.21]. KARA. מקראות גדולות ספר ישעיה. Lublin: אוצר הספרים, [s. a.], p. 197 [Isaiah 24.21]. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA. ספר ישעיה. [s. a.], p. 197 [Isaiah 24.21]. KIMHI. ספר ישעיה. [s. a.], p. 197 [Isaiah 24.21].

¹⁸⁷ SFORNO. שמות. [s. a.], p. 157 [Exodus 12.12].

¹⁸⁸ HEZEKIAH BEN MANOAH. ספר שמות. In: ספר חזקוני על חמשה חומשי תורה. Lemberg [Lviv]: Schrenzel, 1859, p. 11r [Exodus 12.12].

5 CONCLUSION

In his Book of Roots David Kimhi¹⁸⁹ offered a multi-faceted study of אלוה and אלוהים which, on the one hand, utilised the legacy of earlier lexicographers, on the other hand, expanded the Hebrew scholarship in this respect. His study of אלוה and אלוהים found in the Book of Roots can be perceived as representative of the mature Hebrew lexicography which was flourishing among the Jewish Hebrew scholars in the Middle Ages.

In the present paper the passages referred to by David Kimhi in his study of אלוה and אלוהים were analysed from an exegetical perspective which included the ancient Greek and Aramaic translations and the ancient and mediaeval Jewish reception of those loci. Notwithstanding the pluralism of ideas inherent in the Jewish exposition of the Tanakh, the interpretations of those passages propounded by Jewish commentators preceding or succeeding David Kimhi proved to be convergent.

Finally, examining אלוה and אלוהים, David Kimhi¹⁹⁰ was attentive to the literary context of the passages in question and his study duly served its twofold purpose. Firstly, it helped to understand a complex use of those appellations in the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, a diligent and contextual analysis of the subject matter made the Jewish exegesis immune to such interpretations which might undermine the concept of the absolute unity of God. The 16th-century Christian Hebrew lexicography was dependent on David Kimhi's masterpiece which we can discern by comparing his entry "אלוה / אלוהים" in the Book of Roots¹⁹¹ to the Christian Hebrew lexica of the first half of the 16th century such as the Alcala dictionary¹⁹², which was a part of the Complutensian Polyglot, or the dictionaries compiled by

¹⁸⁹ KIMHI, 1847, p. 17 [s. v. אלה].

¹⁹⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁹¹ Ibidem.

¹⁹² **Vocabularium Hebraicum atque Chaldaicum totius Veteris Testamenti.** Alcala: In Academia Complutensi, 1515, p. 5r-5v [s. v. אל]. Ibidem [s. v. אלה].

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¹⁹³ REUCHLIN, Johann. *Principium libri: De rudimentis Hebraicis*. Pforzheim: Anshelm, 1506, p. 55 [s. v. אלוהים]. An expanded version: Idem. *Lexicon Hebraicum*. Basel: Petrus, 1537, p. 82-83 [s. v. אלוה].

¹⁹⁴ MÜNSTER, Sebastian. *Dictionarium Hebraicum*. Basel: Froben, 1523, p. 20 [s. v. אלוהים]. Idem. *Dictionarium Hebraicum ex Rabbiorum commentariis collectum*. Basel: Froben, 1525, p. C8v [s. v. אלוה]. Idem. *Dictionarium Hebraicum [...] ex Rabinis praesertim ex Radicibus David Kimhi auctum et locupletatum*. Basel: Froben, 1535, p. C7r [s. v. אלוה]; Basel: Froben, 1539, p. D2r-D2v; Basel: Froben, 1548, p. D2r-D2v; Basel: Froben, 1564, p. D2r-D2v.

¹⁹⁵ PAGNINI, Sante. *Thesaurus linguae sanctae*. Lyons: Gryphius, 1529, p. 81-82 [s. v. אלה].

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(Footnotes)

1 SWETE, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 397 [Psalm 136.2 /LXX 135.2].

