

SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF THE PATTERN *QÔṬĒL*

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I.

THE COMMON STATEMENT that the form *qôṭēl* in biblical Hebrew (which goes back to a Proto-Semitic form *qāṭil*) usually has the function of an active participle of the simple stem (*qal*), and that as a participle it exhibits a dual character of the verb and the noun,¹ is inaccurate. The *qôṭēl*-pattern contains a significant number of primary nouns, of denominatives, and of nouns connected with the derived stems. *qôṭēl*, then, differs essentially from the participles of the derived conjugations the linkage of which to their respective conjugation is exclusive and constant.² The very existence of nouns in the *qôṭēl*-pattern exerts a strong influence on the *qôṭēl* as *qal* participle. If one views the latter only from the angle of its syntactic behavior, one may indeed conclude that sometimes it has a verbal character, at other times a nominal character.³ When,

1. See Moscati (1969, pp. 77f, 146), Brockelmann (1908, pp. 342f, 577; 1913, p. 162), Gesenius (1910, §§ 50, 83, 116), Bergsträsser (1918, § 14r), Bauer-Leander (1922, pp. 317f, 475), Avineri (1976, p. 388).

2. On the participles of the derived stems see Moscati (1969, pp. 157f), Bauer-Leander (1922, pp. 323, 327f, 332).

3. Sellin (1889), in his thorough treatise, examines the occurrences of the participle when construed as a verb and when construed as a noun. Lambert (1932, p. 268) states: "Le participe . . . peut, d'un côté, avoir les mêmes compléments que le verbe . . . ; de l'autre, il peut se décliner comme le nom et prendre l'article."

however, our analysis includes semantic aspects, such absolute polarity vanishes. Between the two extremes of *qôṭēl* as substantive on the one hand, and *qôṭēl* in a pronouncedly verbal function on the other hand, there are gradations in which the verbal and nominal forces combine in varying intensity.⁴

The question of genetic priority of the noun or the verb does not concern us here.⁵ Starting from the observable stage of the Semitic languages in which the dichotomy is a linguistic fact,⁶ we are bound to regard *qôṭēl* as one of the simple nominal patterns. It is typical of the individual patterns that they embrace heterogeneous elements; only occasionally we detect within a specific pattern a group of lexemes that exhibit a semantic affinity. Thus Hebrew *qāṭil* comprises noun adjectives, noun substantives and a group of terms denoting agricultural work (Bauer-Leander, 1922, pp. 470 f). In *qittēl* we find various nouns but also a specific use; namely, that of denoting bodily defects (Bauer-Leander, 1922, p. 477). It stands to reason that the powerful process of analogy has brought together those terms that belong to the same conceptual field.

This applies to *qôṭēl*⁷ as well. It annexed the function of an active participle and was subsequently almost absorbed by this function. Yet, as is well known, *qôṭēl* never gained the sole status as *qal* participle: *qāṭēl* and *qāṭōl* compete with it. To say that the latter belong to stative verbs is to beg the question. If there is a strong tendency in that direction, this is probably also due to analogy. The distinction between active and stative verbs is not a product of logical classification (Brockelmann, 1913, p. 133). There can be no reason why words like *bôdēd* ("alone"), *kô'ēb* ("to feel pain"), *nôhēl* ("to wither") and many more like them have not been included amongst the stative verbs unless we close the vicious circle by declaring that to the Hebrew mind these verbs of state had an active connotation. It is also significant that occasionally *qôṭēl* and *qāṭēl* alternate: *šôkēāh* and *šākēāh* ("to forget"), *lô'ēg* and *lā'ēg* ("to deride") (Gesenius, 1910, § 116b); *'ôrēb* ("to stand surety") becomes in post-biblical Hebrew *'ārēb*, and contrariwise, Isa 66:2 *hārēd* becomes *hōrēd* in the scroll I Q Is^a.

4. Lambert (1932) adduces as examples of substantival participles that express a constant action *šôpēl* ("judge") and *mēneqet* ("wet-nurse"). But *šôpēl* belongs to a nominal pattern; *mēneqet* does not; and the constancy of action differs extremely in the two instances.

5. For a summary of the different views see Sellin (1889, pp. 6–11).

6. König (1895, p. 374). Cf. Brockelmann (1908, pp. 329f).

7. Disregarding the variant spelling in the Hebrew Bible, קטל and חטל, we shall use the form *qôṭēl* throughout this article.

We must admit, then, that not all *qôṭēl*-forms are *qal* participles, nor are all *qal* participles of the form *qôṭēl*.

Before we set out to describe the semantic diversity within the bounds of the *qôṭēl*-pattern, we may ask ourselves if the ancient Hebrews were aware of this diversity. In other words, did or did not the use of one formal element entail the obliteration of the various significations it actually had? Was, e.g., the word *šōpēṭ* taken to mean "judge" in some contexts, "he is judging" in other contexts; or was it rather understood as "the judging one" at all times? Was *rō'e* "the seer, prophet" at one time, and "he sees" at another occasion, or is this a differentiation carried into the Hebrew from the point of view of alien tongues only? Those who assume that our thinking is decisively shaped, if not absolutely determined by the structure of our native tongue⁸ will be inclined to dismiss semantic discernment that lacks formal marks. But their basic assumption is questionable. The English speaker using the epicene word *teacher* in a definite situational context has in mind a clear notion of either a male or a female person, just like the German who is forced by the structure of his language to distinguish between *Lehrer* and *Lehrerin*. Similarly, in order to adduce an example closer to our purpose, the English speaker does also distinguish between the varied shades of signification of the morpheme *-er* in words like *fisher* (a profession), *drinker* (a habit), *overseer* (a task), *onlooker* (a transient activity) and the like.

It is provable that speakers of biblical Hebrew were cognizant of the semantic complexity of *qôṭēl*. They noticed a difference between *rōzēn* ("prince") which does not possess any radical cognates in Hebrew⁹ and *hōlēk* ("walking") which relates to a verbal root, although both *qôṭēl*-forms point to an *agens* of masculine gender. Indeed *rōzēn* exclusively maintains *paradigmatic* relations with nouns like *melek* ("king") while *hōlēk* enters into *syntagmatic* relations with this noun.¹⁰ Contrast: "Listen, you kings; give ear, you *rōzānīm* ("princes")" (Judg 5:3) with "And King David *hōlēk* ("was walking")" (2 Sam 3:31).

Now a word like *šōpēṭ* ("judging; judge") is capable of entering into either *paradigmatic* or *syntagmatic* relations with a noun. Compare: "And now, O kings, exercise prudence; let yourselves be corrected, O

8. Such view was put forward by B. L. Whorf. See Robins (1964, p. 301).

9. It appears in the noun-pattern *qāṭōl*: *rāzôn* (Prov 14:28). Sellin (1889, p. 29) adduces *rōzēn* as an example of a participle.

10. On syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations see Lyons (1968, pp. 70–74) and Robins (1964, pp. 44–46).

šōpəṭē ("judges") of the earth" (Ps 2:10) with "A king *šōpeṭ* ("judging") the poor in trueness . . ." (Prov 29:14). Evidently the word *šōpēṭ* connoted different notions in the two instances. In fact, some abortive attempts at differentiation are found in biblical Hebrew: *yōledet* ("mother; a woman that has given birth") against *yōlədā* ("a woman in travail, giving birth");¹¹ *hōrā* ("mother," parallels *'ēm*, "mother," Cant 3:4) against *hārā* ("pregnant"), and if the text is correct, *šōlēṃ* ("a man of peace," Ps 7:5) against *šālēm* ("peaceful," Gen 3:21). Furthermore, denominatives like *kōrēm* ("vinedresser" from *kerem* "vineyard") prove that *qōṭēl* had developed an additional morphemic value, that of an agent noun, which it could carry without the support of a verbal root.

Where nominal factor *and* verbal factor are present, namely, in *qōṭēl* as participle *qal*, the potential intensity of each of these factors depends on the semantic character of the verb. A verb may denote an activity which in certain social conditions becomes a vocation; its *qōṭēl* turns into a term of profession (though occasionally retaining the function of a genuine participle): *yōšēr* ("potter"), *zōnā* ("prostitute"). Such terms sometimes exist simultaneously with synonymous nouns: *rōqēāḥ* and *raq-qāḥ* ("apothecary"), *hōrēš* and *hārās* ("artisan"), *hōbēr* and *habbār* or *hābēr* ("conjurer"), *yōqēš* and *yāqōš* ("fowler"). The existence of such a synonym is influential: *mōšēl* ("ruler") has more nominal force than *mōlēk* ("kingly ruler") because the later had to compete with the frequently used noun *melek* ("king"). *mōšēl* parallels the substantives *qāšīn* and *'ādōn* ("lord," Prov 6:7, Ps 105:21), while *mōlēk* could be replaced in all its occurrences by verbal constructions (e.g. Esth 1:1 **'āšer mālak* "who ruled").

Other verbs denote qualities or permanent occupations that are considered characteristic of the subject. Here also *qōṭēl* undergoes a substantiation; again, it may have to compete with other nominal synonyms: *hōṭē* beside *ḥattā* ("sinner"), *'ōšēq* beside *'āšōq* ("oppressor").¹² Those verbs which express a persistent activity or state of mind developed similarly: *'ōhēb* ("lover"), *'ōyēb* ("enemy"), *bō'ēr* ("brute"), competing with synonymous *ba'ar*, etc.

A great number of verbs, probably the majority, are from the first

11. On the feminine forms corresponding to *qōṭēl*; namely, *qōṭelet*, *qōṭēlā*, and *qōṭēlā*, see Brockelmann (1908, pp. 101f, 407), Gesenius (1910, §§ 84^as, 94d), Bauer-Leander (1922, pp. 589–590). The difference between *qōṭēlā* and *qōṭēlā* is of a purely phonetic nature.

12. Driver (1892, p. 165) postulates a semantic difference between *'ōšēq* and *'āšōq* which is absolutely unattested. The two lexemes appear in two otherwise identical phrases (Jer 21:12 and 22:3, "and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor").

precluded from such evolution: they denote actions of limited duration. But even here *qōṭēl*-forms may occasionally assume the functions of substantives; namely, when the action described is considered essentially characteristic of the subject in a particular context: *ōbēr* ("passer-by"), *qōne* ("buyer").

It therefore seems inadequate to make grammatical form our only criterion in the analysis of *qōṭēl*.¹³ The difference between *bōzīm dābārāw* ("despised his words," 2 Chr 36:16) and *bōzē šāmī* ("despising my name," Mal 1:6), *hōsīm bō* and *hōsē bō* ("trusting in him"), *ōzābīm* and *ōzābē* ("abandoning . . .") are almost negligible. On the other hand, one and the same form may represent divergent meanings. Thus *hōlēk bāḥālīl* ("he who walks with a flute," Isa 30:29) is a denotation of only temporary validity, i.e., a participant in a festive procession; *hōlēk bāḥokmā* ("he who walks with wisdom," Prov 28:26) denotes a permanent trait. *hārō īm hārō īm 'et 'ammī* ("the shepherds who tend my people," Jer 23:3) combines the uses of the same *qōṭēl* as term of profession and as participle of an activity. This combination should not be confused with an intended paronomasy like *haššōdēd šōdēd* ("the spoiler spoils," Isa 21:2). The latter verse has to be understood roughly like this: "The one, of whose traits we are concerned only with his being a spoiler, continues his usual practice of spoiling."¹⁴ In the previously quoted verse (Jeremiah), the two identical forms meet, as it were, by accident.

Of course, once we focus our attention on semantic differences, we will notice problems hitherto unsuspected. We may, e.g., decide that *qōne* ("buyer") refers to the person who concludes a specific purchase; how does *mōkēr* ("seller") relate to this? Is he the one selling in one particular case (Akkadian *nādinānu*) or is he a merchant, a vendor (Akkadian *nādinu*; formally cognate with *qōṭēl*)? To this question of semantic ambiguity we shall return at the end of our review.

II.

We may now attempt a classification of the various *qōṭēl*-types according to the semantic value they carry. This classification does not boast absolute precision; it aims to be suggestive.

13. Sellin (1889, pp. 43–63), Gesenius (1910, § 116).

14. Brockelmann (1956, § 26). See below class *f*.

Synopsis of Classes:

		←-----NOMINAL-----→										←-----VERBAL-----→	
class		<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>i</i>			
example		<i>sórâq</i> "choice vine"	<i>rôzên</i> "prince"	<i>kôrêm</i> "vine- dresser"	<i>kôbês</i> "fuller"	<i>sôpêf</i> "judge"	<i>sômê</i> "enemy"	<i>qône</i> "buyer"	<i>yôqêd</i> "burning"	<i>nôlên</i> "giving"			
formal features		no radical cognates		derived from nouns	connected with verbal root in derived stem	identical with participle of <i>qal</i> conjugation					verbal		
signi- fication		substantive denoting object		profession, term of agent		permanent activity		temporary activity		attributively denoted action		predicative denoting action	

Class a. The *qôṭĕl*-form of these lexemes seems incidental; it lacks any morphemic value. Thus, e.g., Hebrew 'ôrēb ("raven") corresponds to Arabic *gurāb*.¹⁵ In particular instances it may be difficult to decide whether a root is isolated in biblical Hebrew or, granting this be the case, if the limited scope of this literary source reflects the actual situations of the language in the course of centuries.¹⁶ But the impression we gather from the linguistic corpus as we have it before us is that lexemes pertaining to this class are either radically isolated or their etymology has become obscure or doubtful. In fact some may be loan words, while the *qôṭĕl*-form of others appears spurious from a diachronic point of view. These questions need not, however, occupy us here. We are concerned with the attraction towards the nominal pole which this class exerts. The following words,¹⁷ in the *qôṭĕl*-pattern to all appearance, denote objects: *hômā* ("wall"), *yôbēl* ("horn"),¹⁸ *môrā* ("razor"),¹⁹ *sôhērā* ("protective weapon? bulwark?", Ps 91:4), *sôheret* ("marble?", Esth 1:6),²⁰ *qôrā* ("beam"),²¹ *sôrēq* ("vine"), *sôrā* ("millet").²² 'ôrēq (Job 30:17) has been explained either as "sinew," "vein" or as "gnawer," i.e., gnawing pain.

Mention should also be made of the proper names that belong here because of their pattern and the opacity of their etymology: *bôṣeš*, *môše*, *h'ôrēb*. *dô'ēg* could be a title; 'ôdēd probably is one.

Class b. Again the roots of the lexemes to be included here are isolated but their *qôṭĕl*-form is significant: it indicates the holder of an office or a profession, *h'ôbēr* ("astrologer," Isa 47:13; IQ Is^a *h'ôbēr*), *kôhēn*

15. Namely *quṭāl*, the Hebrew equivalent of which would be *'ârôb. Akkadian *aribu* corresponds to the Hebrew form.

16. Post-biblical Hebrew, expanding the use of many roots, gives evidence of either early usage not preserved in the Bible or later linguistic development.

17. Chapter and verse are quoted only when the word is very rare or there may be a doubt as to the specific occurrence referred to. The English renditions do not pretend to be more than rough identifications.

18. Barth (1889, p. 149) regards this word (and other *qôṭĕl*-forms of abstract meaning) as derived from an infinitive. According to the Babylonian Talmud (*Rosh Hashana* 26a), *yôbēl* denoted "ram" in Arabic; this meaning is also in Phoenician. See Buhl (1915, p. 292), Köhler-Baumgartner (1953, p. 371).

19. Perhaps from a root 'rh (Buhl, 1915, p. 408; Köhler-Baumgartner, p. 506), i.e., historically no genuine *qôṭĕl*. But König (1910, p. 214) derives this word from *nirh*. (Thus Rashi *ad* Judg 13:5).

20. Apparently two loan words. See Buhl (1915, p. 541). Therefore Avineri's remark (1976, p. 418) on the formal difference between the two seems irrelevant.

21. Akkadian *qarṭu*. The derivation from *qrh* ("to meet"), as König (1910, p. 406) proposes, is doubtful. *maqāre* and *pi'ēl qrh* are denominatives.

22. Same word and spelling in an Aramaic inscription, see Donner-Röllig (1964, Nr. 215, 6.9).

("priest"),²³ *nôqēd* ("sheepraiser"),²⁴ 'ôdēd (2 Chr 15:1, 28:9 mistakenly taken as a proper name; rather "seer, prophet," cf. the Aramaic phrase *byd hzyn wbyd 'ddn*, "through prophets and soothsayers," Donner-Röllig, 1964 Nr. 202 A 12), *rôzēn* ("prince," Donner-Röllig, 1964, Nr. 26 A III, 12: *rzn* parallels *mlk*), *sôṭēr* ("officer"), *rôbe* ("archer").²⁵ *bôlēs šimim* (Amos 7:14) probably does not denote a temporary activity, as Versions and many commentators have it, but rather "a grower of sycamore trees." *hōze* (Isa 56:10; IQ Is^a has the more common *hōze*) should perhaps also be understood as "diviner"; namely, a professional who claims to obtain knowledge of secret things in an artificially induced trance. The feminine form *pôkeret haššəbāyīm* (Ezra 2:57) though it figures in a list of personal names, seems to have some functional meaning: "hunter, binder of gazelles."

Class c. Lexemes of this class exhibit linguistic linkage within the Hebrew vocabulary but they are connected with items other than verbs. In a number of cases *qôṭēl* denotes a person who occupies himself with the object indicated by a noun from which the *qôṭēl* is derived. Thus *bôqēr* ("herdsman") from *bāqār* ("cattle"), *hōbēl* ("sailor") from *hebel* ("rope"),²⁶ *yôgēb* ("field laborer?") from *yāgēb* ("field?"),²⁷ *kôrēm* ("vinedresser") from *kerem* ("vineyard"), *sō'ēr* ("gatekeeper") from *ša'ar* ("gate"). *rôkēl* ("merchant") possesses a common root with *rākīl* ("to go around [with defamatory intentions]"); the noun *rəkullā* ("merchandise") is derived from the *qôṭēl*. All these are terms of profession. Slightly different is the case of 'ôrēāh ("wayfarer") from 'ōrah ("way") and of *pōhēz* ("loose") from a root *phz* which seems to denote something like "uncontrollableness." We may assume, though, that originally both nouns also defined a status and did not just describe a transient situation: the wayfarer as well as the landless and loose person (Judg 9:4) were not protected by the community and its laws. *sō'ēn* (Isa 9:4) is a difficult word and the text is doubtful. Whether or not the exact meaning of that verse is "for every boot stamps furiously," the ease with which a denominative

23. *pi'el* from *khn* are denominative forms. Thus it does not help to consider *kōhēn* as "originally participle Qal" (Gesenius, 1910 § 84^ds).

24. Ugaritic *nqd* ("shepherd") and the honorific title *rb nqdm*. See Gordon (1947, p. 252).

25. To this *hapax legomenon* an explanatory synonym was added: *qaššāt*.

26. This derivation like some others is not certain.

27. Köhler-Baumgartner (1953, p. 361): "unpaid laborers" and "compulsory service," respectively.

qôṭēl, namely *sô'ēn*, could be derived from the noun *sə'ōn* ("shoe, boot"; Akkadian *šēnu*) is noteworthy.

A peculiar item in this class is *bôdēd* which shares its root with *ləbad* ("separately") and *bādād* ("alone, isolated").²⁸ The word appears in difficult verses but it seems evident that we have to interpret it in a very active sense; the usual rendition "alone" will not do. *bôdēd* is someone who withdraws and wishes to keep aloof. This is confirmed by Ben-Sirach 12:9, "... when he is in need, even his friend *bôdēd*, i.e., withdraws."

Most of the terms adduced above are *hapax legomena*. It stands to reason that now and again a certain rare professional skill was borrowed from another culture together with its denomination. At any rate the independent morphemic value of *qôṭēl* is demonstrated again.

Class d. Members of this class are supported by verbal roots which, however, appear only in the derived stems, not in the simple stem *qal*.²⁹ *qôṭēl* does not substitute for the regular participle of the respective conjugation: thus, e.g., we find *pi'el dibber*, *kissā* (never *qal *dābar*, **kāsā*) and the participles *mədabbēr*, *məkasse* beside the *qôṭēl*-forms *dôbēr*, *kôse*. Occasionally this absence of *qal* might be merely a matter of linguistic transmission: by chance no finite form of the simple stem has been preserved in biblical language. There are, however, too many instances of this phenomenon to permit such an assumption as an overall explanation. Rather this constitutes a confirmation of our preceding finding that *qôṭēl* has not contracted an exclusive relationship with the *qal*.

Professional terms are less predominant than in the previous classes: *nôqēš* ("fowler")³⁰ from the root *nqš* which appears in *nip'al*, *pi'el* and *hitpa'el*; *sôkēn* ("steward") from *skn* (*hip'il*);³¹ *rôqēm* ("weaver; needle-worker") from *rqm* (*pu'al*); *kôbēs* ("fuller; laundryman") from a root *kbs* which appears in *pi'el*, *pu'al*, and *hitpa'al*.

Permanent status or occupation is denoted by *'ômēn* ("custodian") from *'mn* (*nip'al*, *hip'il*), *hôtēn* ("father-in-law") from *hṭn* (*hātān* "bridegroom," also *hitpa'el*). More frequently lexemes of this class denote permanent traits and behavioral patterns; in some cases the *qôṭēl* can fulfill this function only in conjunction with an explanatory noun:

28. Rabbinic Hebrew makes use of passive *bādūd*, see Jastrow (1903, p. 139).

29. Lambert (1932, p. 269) is driven to this contradiction in terms: "Les participes actifs et passifs du *qal* se rencontrent parfois dans des verbes dans lesquels cette conjugaison n'existe pas. . . ."

30. The classical versions, however, read *nip'al* from *yqš*.

31. On the etymology and meaning of *sôkēn* see Donner-Röllig (1964, pp. 211f).

dôbēr 'ēmet (*šālôm, tāmîm*, etc.) ("speaker of truth, peace, integrity, etc."), the root *dbr* is used in *pi'ēl*. (This is also the case in the following examples, and thus *pi'ēl* will not be annotated.) *kôzēb* ("liar"); *kôse da'at* ("reticent") and *kôse qālôn* ("temperate"), lit. "concealer of wisdom and of affront," respectively; *nôkēl* ("deceiver"); *pôšēq šəpātayim* ("talkative"), lit. "he who opens wide his lips"; synonymously, *pôte šəpātayim; šo'e* ("captive" Isa 51:14), lit. "he that is bent down"; *šosē' šesa' (parsā)* ("[animal] that cleaves [its claws]"). *'ôdēp* ("remainder; surplus"; the *hip'il* with root *'dp* is perhaps a denominative) and *kôteret* ("capital of column," from *ktr*, "to surround," *pi'ēl*) denote objects.³² *qôhelet* (Ecc 12:8) seems to denote an office ("assembler," *qāhal* "assembly," *qhl* in *nip'al* and *hitpa'ēl*) and was then taken as proper name (Ecc 1:1).

Class e. This class—like all the subsequent ones—consists of *qôṭēl*-forms from roots present also in the simple *qal* stem. In fact, lexemes pertaining to this class are, from a historic point of view, *qal* participles and they maintain formal identity with those genuine participles of their respective roots that have preserved verbal function. Semantically, however, these lexemes have undergone an essential change: they no longer describe the actual exercise of an activity but have become fixed denotations labelling a subject on the basis of one distinctive feature which is durable and objectively observable.

The foremost group is that of terms for professions. *'ôrēg* ("weaver"), *bône* ("stone-cutter, builder," 2 Kgs 22:6), *gôdēr* ("mason," *ibid.*), *zônā* ("prostitute"), *hōbēr* ("diviner"), *hōze* ("seer, prophet"), *hōqēq* ("law-maker," Isa 10:1), *hōšēb* ("stone-mason"), *yōšēr* ("potter"), *sōpēr* ("scribe"), *šôrēp* ("goldsmith"), *qôsēm* ("diviner"), *rô'e* ("prophet"), *rô-qēāh* ("apothecary"), *sôher* ("merchant"), *rōpē* ("physician," Gen 50:2), *šōpēt* ("judge"), *sōmer* ("watchman"), and so on. In many cases *qôṭēl* becomes a substantive only in conjunction with other words; thus, e.g., terms denoting skills: *yôdēā naggēn* ("musician," lit. "skilled in playing an instrument"), *yôdēā šayîd* ("hunter"), *yôdēā nehî* ("hired mourner"), *tôpēs kinnôr* ("harp player"); denoting warlike occupations: *dôrēk qešet* or *tôpēs qešet* ("archer"), *yôšē šabā* or *'ôrēk milhāmā* ("warrior"). *dôrēš 'el hammētîm* and *sô'el 'ōb* (Deut 18:11) are specific kinds of diviners. *rô'e pānē hammelek* (2 Kgs 25:19) and *tômēk šēbet* (Amos 1:5) denote persons

32. The late word *keter* ("crown") may be etymologically unrelated, see Buhl (1915, p. 369). *'ômānôt* (2 Kgs 18:16) is also a substantival *qôṭēl* as an architectonic term.

of rank, lit. "he that is allowed to see the king's face, i.e., into his presence" and "the holder of the sceptre," respectively.

qôṭēl describes a person's position in society: *yôlēd* ("father," Prov 17:21, lit. "begetter," parallel with 'ab "father"),³³ *yônēq* ("suckling"), *yôšēb* ("inhabitant," Amos 1:8), *yôšēb 'ôhel* ("tent dweller"). *gô'ēl*, a participle of a verb signifying "to claim; to buy back; to redeem," frequently denotes the "repurchaser" of family property in specific cases; but when it broadens its meaning indicating any "next of kin" (Ruth 3:13), it pertains to the present class.

We might be inclined to view this substantival use of a participle as an originally elliptical construction: *sôḥārīm* ("merchants") for 'ānāsīm . . . *sôḥārīm* ("people going around, trading," Gen 37:28), *zônā* for 'iššā *zônā* ("a prostitute woman," Josh 2:1), and so on. But as far as the observable stage of the language is concerned, such apprehension would be unsound. The addition of a word like 'iš ("man") to the *qôṭēl* is appositional, exactly like 'is *nābī* ("a prophet man," Judg 6:8). However, where a *qôṭēl*-form has become a fixed name of an animal or an object, the impression of ellipsis seems better grounded, e.g., *qôṛē* ("partridge," Jer 17:11, lit. "the calling [bird]"), 'ôkēl (probably "locust," Mal 3:11, lit. "the devouring [insect]"). The last word belongs here if it was a commonly understood appellation of that insect; this use of 'ôkēl has to be distinguished from that in Judg 14:14 (Samson's riddle): "Out of the 'ôkēl ("the eater") came forth something to eat" (against Ehrlich, 1900, III, p. 497). In a riddle ambiguity is intentional: 'ôkēl was definitely not known as an epithet of "lion." 'ôlā ("burnt-offering," lit. "the ascending [offering]"). *ḥôberet* ("junction," Exod 26:4) stands elliptically for *yārī'ā ḥôberet* ("the coupled tent-cloth"). Those expressions that are spontaneously created synonyms of commonly used nouns seem to be similarly elliptical: *sôkebet ḥēqekā* ("your wife," lit. "she that lies in your bosom," Mic 7:5), cf. Deut 13:7 "the wife of your bosom"; *rô'ē ḥaššemeš* ("men alive," Eccl 7:11, lit. "those who see the sun"; cf. "all the living who walk under the sun," Eccl 4:15); *ṭôḥānôt* ("teeth," lit. "the grinders") and *rô'ôt* ("eyes," lit. "the peering ones," Eccl 12:3).

The highest degree of remoteness from verbal function is exhibited by *qôṭēl*-forms of abstract meaning: 'ôbēd ("destruction," Num 24:20),³⁴

33. Evidently used substantively; against Avineri (1976, p. 386).

34. Regarding Barth's view on these words, see above note 18.

hōwā ("disaster," Isa 47:11), *yōnā* ("oppression," Jer 25:38), *rō'e* ("vision," Isa 28:7). That at least some of these forms were originally participles can be learned from comparing *hā'îr hayyōnā* ("the oppressive city," Zeph 3:11), *hereb hayyōnā* (either "the oppressive sword" or "sword of oppression," Jer 46:16) and *hārôn hayyōnā* ("wrath of oppression," Jer 25:38). Similarly, *gōlā* ("the exiles," "exile") is originally a feminine participle functioning as a collective noun, like *yōsebet siyyôn* ("the inhabitants of Zion," Brockelmann, 1908, p. 427).

The pronouncedly nominal character of these lexemes does not need substantiation: their potentiality of occurrence equals that of ordinary nouns.

Class f. Lexemes of this class are *qal* participles that denote a permanent feature of the subject in character or behavior. Substantivation can take place when such a feature is considered sufficiently distinguishing as to function as denotation. This process is best observable in paronomastic constructions, direct or inverted: *habbōgēd bōgēd* ("the traitor deals traitorously," Isa 21:2), *lā'ahāba 'et sōnā'eka wālīsnō 'et 'ōhābēka* ("loving those hating you and hating those loving you," 2 Sam 19:7). In the speaker's view, the predominant quality of the subjects consists in their "dealing traitorously," "hating" and "loving," respectively. He can thus go further and turn this quality into an appellation.

Another aspect is indicated by the above examples: in contradistinction to the contiguous classes, the present one contains a strong element of emotive subjectivity. A *šōpēl* ("judge"; class *e*) and a *qōšēr* ("reaper"; class *g*) will appear as such from all points of view, including their own. Not so the *qōtēl*-forms of the present class: the words *hōtē* ("sinner"), *hōse* ("confiding [in God]") and their like reflect the speaker's sentiments. This class then has less nominal force than the previous class but since it contains denotations of abiding qualities, it has more nominal force than the following class.

Here are a few instances out of many: *'ōyēb* ("enemy"), *bōtēāh* ("over-confident," Amos 6:1), *bō'ēr* ("brutish"), *bāšēā* ("covetous," Ps 10:3), *dōhēq* ("persecutor," Judg 2:18), *hōlēl* ("foolish," Ps 5:6), *lōhēs* ("oppressor," Judg 2:18), *mōre* ("rebellious," Num 20:10), *sōrēr* ("rebellious," Ps 68:7), *pōte* ("simpleton," Job 5:2), *pōšēā* ("revolter," Isa 1:28), *šōge* ("erring," Prov 20:1), *šōne* ("he that is given to change?, he that is of a different mind?"; Prov 24:21).

'ōne in the obscure phrase *'ēr wā'ōne* (Mal 2:12) functions substantively, no matter how precisely we interpret the clause: "'*ēr wā'ōne* shall be cut off." (See Buhl, 1915, pp. 573f.)

It is not surprising that compounds abound in this class: *hōlēk*, *dōbēr*, (“walking,” “speaking”) express transient activities; in combination with other words they become terms for abiding virtues and thus for denotation of persons: *hōlēk šadāqōt wadōbēr mēsārīm* (“he that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly,” Isa 33:15).³⁵ Thus we have: *’ohēb rā’ā* (“villain,” lit. “lover of wickedness”), *gōzēl ’ābīw w’immō* (“despoiler of his parents,” Prov 28:24), *bōteāḥ bəYHWH* (“he that trusts the Lord”), *dōrēš rā’ā* (“he that seeks evil”), *hōšek šibṭō* (“he that spares his rod,” i.e., a lenient educator, Prov 13:24), *yōdēā’ šedeq* (“righteous,” lit. “he that knows justice”), *mō’ēs bəbeša’ ma’āšaqqōt* (“he that rejects the gain from extortions”), *mōnēā’ bar* (“he that speculates in corn”), *nōtēn lahmī* (“my provider,” lit. “he who gives my bread,” Hos 2:5), *mōsēl bərūhō* (“temperate, restrained,” lit. “he that dominates his spirit,” Prov 16:32), *’ōkēr yiśrā’ēl* (“destroyer of Israel”), *pō’ēl ’āwen* (“wrongdoer”), *pōrēā’ mūsār* (“he that shuns discipline,” Prov 15:32), *qōbēs ’al yād* (“he that collects by slow labor,” lit. “. . . by the hand,” Prov 13:11), *qōne lēb* (“he that acquires wisdom,” lit. “. . . a heart,” Prov 19:8), *sōmēr rūāḥ* (“he that watches the wind,” i.e., postponing his labor under a pretext), and many more like them. The gnomic saying especially makes use of *qōṭēl* in this way: it intends to depict its subject only by referring to his relevant trait.³⁶

To this class belong also *qōṭēl*-forms referring to divine activities or attributes that have turned into epithets: *bōrē* (“Creator,” Eccl 12:1), *hōbēb ’annīm* (“He that cherishes the tribes [of Israel]?”), Deut 33:3), *yōšēr* (“Moulder,” Ps 94:9), *yōšēb baššāmayim* (“the One sitting in the heavens”), *yōšēb kərūbīm* (“He that sits between the cherubs”), *nōšēr hā’ādām* (“Preserver of man,” Job 7:20), *’ōse* (“Maker,” Job 4:17), *rōkēb hā’ārābōt* (“the One riding through the clouds,” Ps 68:5), *rōkēb šāmayim* (“the One who rides upon the heaven,” Deut 33:26). One need not include here the many *qōṭēl*-forms that are used predicatively indicating divine attributes.³⁷ Thus we may disregard a phrase like *YHWH bōra’ākā* (“YHWH, your creator” or “YHWH, who has created you,” Isa 43:1) and relevant verses such as Amos 4:13, 5:8, etc., Ps 136 and the like. Yet the divide is fluid: *dōrēš dāmīm* (Ps 9:13), originally a predicative state-

35. On the pregnant construction see Gesenius (1910, § 117r, note).

36. Driver (1892, p. 168) stresses the fact that the participle in this case denotes a general truth. He considers this a mark of the later period of the language.

37. Isa 19:1, “YHWH rōkēb upon a swift cloud.” This is precisely an instance of semantic ambiguity—“YHWH, the rider” or “YHWH riding”—to which we shall return later.

ment about God's justice ("He avenges the blood of the innocent") has become an epithet of God and the subject of the verse "The avenger of the blood remembers them . . ."; 'ōšē sālôm bimrômāw (Job 25:2, "He makes peace in his high places") becomes an epithet in a later prayer ("the Peace Maker in his high places shall bestow peace on us").

It seems evident that the substantival use of *qôṭēl* can be interpreted as elliptical to some extent.³⁸ 'ānāšīm bô'ārīm ("brutish men," Ezek 21:36) becomes shortened to bô'ārīm (Ps 94:8); 'iš šōge ("person that errs, has erred," Ezek 45:20) becomes šōge (Prov 20:1). The nominal force of the *qôṭēl* of this class used absolutely can be clearly seen from its syntactic linkages: *hôtē* joins *rāšā'*, a noun, and stands in opposition to *saddīq*, a noun (Prov 11:31); similarly *pōšēā'* joins *rāšā'* (Ps 37:38) and combines with the clearly nominal agent noun *hattā* (Isa 1:28); and so on.

Some lexemes pertaining to this class have acquired abstract meanings: *tō'ā* ("error," Isa 32:6), *bōgədīm* (Prov 23:28) and *bōgədôt* (Zeph 3:4) ("treachery"). *hōbəlīm* ("union?"; according to Jewish commentators "destroyers," Zech 11:7) parallels the noun *nō'am*.

Class g. To this class belong *qal* participles that function as substantival designation of a subject in a clearly definable situation of *limited* duration. The activity as expressed by the verb is considered sufficiently distinguishing and essentially describes the subject in that situation. Thus, e.g., Lev 16:27 orders the sin offerings to be burnt; then vs. 28 speaks of *haššōrēp* (lit. "the burning one; burner"), i.e., the person about whom the only relevant information to be given at this point is his specific task. Isa 14:8, in a fragmentary allegory, reports the joy of the trees: "no *kôrēt* ("feller; woodcutter") comes up against us." Any specification would be superfluous: the only fact that concerns us in this context is that someone might cut the trees down. Similar is the notion behind paronomastic constructions that in biblical Hebrew stand for "whosoever hears it," "whosoever sees it": *wašāma' haššômēā'* ("the hearer will hear"), *yir'e hārō'e* ("the onlooker will see") (2 Sam 17:9 and Isa 28:4, respectively; cf. Brockelmann, 1956, § 37).

In theory every verb has the potentiality of producing a *qôṭēl*-form that can serve as a designation under certain circumstances; in fact, however, such usage is arbitrarily limited. Somewhat analogously, English has *dreamer*, *writer*, *killer*, etc., but does not permit forms like

38. Evidently so in a case like Isa 32:9 *bānôt bōṭəhôt* ("confident daughters") and vs. 11, just *bōṭəhôt*.

*frightener, *prover, *willer, and so on. Countless Hebrew verbs do not exhibit a substantival *qôṭĕl*, used absolutely. Those that do, present themselves in clusters.

Temporarily characteristic are the seasonal occupations of agriculture: *tôpēs maggāl ba'ēt qāšîr* ("the one handling the sickle in the time of harvest," Jer 50:16). Thus *bôšēr* ("grape gatherer"), *dôrêk 'ânâbîm* and *dôrêk baggat* ("treader of grapes"), the latter also elliptically *dôrêk* (Isa 16:10), *hôrēs* ("plower"), *zôrēā'* ("sower"), *qôṭēp* ("picker," Job 30:4), *qôšēr* ("harvester"). Jurisprudence defines the delinquent according to his crime: *gôzēl* and *gônēb* ("robber, stealer"), *lôqēāh šôhad* ("he that accepts a bribe"), *nô'ēp* ("adulterer"), *nôqēb sēm YHWH* ("blasphemer"), *rôšēāh* ("murderer"). *šôpēk dām* ("he that sheds blood"). In the sphere of transactions: *yôrēs* ("inheritor"), *lôwe* ("borrower"), *nôše* ("creditor, usurer"), *'ôrēb* ("guarantor, surety"), *qône* ("buyer"). In battle: *bôzēz* ("plunderer"), *bôrēāh* ("fleeing"), *hôrēg* ("slayer"), *lôkēd 'îr* ("conqueror of a city"), *nôpēl* ("fallen warrior"), *šôbe* ("capturer"). People depicted in motion: *hôlek* ("walking"), *rôkēb* ("riding"), *'ôbēr* ("passer by"), *šôhe* ("swimmer").

As abstracts of this class we suggest to consider the following forms: *'ôrēb* ("ambush," 1 Sam 22:8),³⁹ *môšə'ôl* (Josh 2:23) and *qôrôl* (Gen 42:29) ("happenings," lit. "[things] that have found, have met [a person]").⁴⁰ *bôkûm* (Job 30:31) probably stands for "a whine."⁴¹

Finally, we should include in this class most of the negative statements of the pattern *'ên qôṭĕl* ("there is no one who . . ."). Only a few instances could be interpreted as referring to a profession (*'ên yô'ēš*, "there is no counsellor," Isa 41:28) or to a permanent situation (*'ên yôšēb*, "without an inhabitant," Jer 44:22). Usually such a *qôṭĕl* denotes the activity expected under the circumstances: "they fell down but *'ên 'ôzēr* ("none to help," Ps 107:12); "I called but *'ên 'ône* ("none did answer," Isa 66:44); "the cities . . . have been shut up and *'ên pôṭēāh* ("there is no one opening them," Jer 13:19). Cf. 1 Sam 26:12, Isa 22:22, 63:5 and many more.

Class h. *qôṭĕl*-forms of this class are adjuncts which in combination with primary words constitute junctions (cf. Jespersen, 1924, pp. 87, 108,

39. Josh 8:12. "and set them (plural) as *'ôrēb* (singular)."

40. Perhaps also *hômîyyôl* (Prov 1:21). The word denotes "noisy (places)" or perhaps, a further abstraction, "throng." But the Septuagint exhibits a variant reading (*hômôt*).

41. Perhaps Ugaritic *w'l bkm* (Gordon, 1947, 76:III:30) could be compared. Gordon (p. 22) explains the form *bkm* as adverbial accusative.

114). By this definition we wish to exclude participles in appositions and in relative clauses which occasionally are described together with junctions as being the attributive use of participles. According to the semantic classification as suggested here, a clause like (*hātānāw*) *lôqəhē bənôtāw* (“[his sons-in-law] married to his daughters,” Gen 19:14) would be assigned to class *e*. In a relative clause, on the other hand, *qôṭēl* performs a verbal function and thus belongs to class *f*.

By junction we mean a combination of a qualified noun and a qualifying *qôṭēl* that constitutes one conceptual and syntactic unit: *birkayim kôrā’ôt* (“knees giving way,” Job 4:4), *sukkat dāwīd hannôpelet* (“the fallen tabernacle of David,” Amos 9:11), *šippôr nôdedet* (“bird of passage,” Prov 27:8).

Distinction between junction and nexus is admittedly not as formally precise as it is in European languages. English distinguishes between “a fire that devours (the stubble)” (Joel 2:5) and “a devouring fire” (Isa 33:14), while Hebrew exhibits in both instances ‘ēš ‘ôkələ. The latter phrase taken by itself could either be a complete sentence (“a fire is devouring”); or a subject and a transitive verb to be completed by an object (as in the case in Joel), or else a junction (Isaiah) which is one element in the sentence. Consequently, an immediate constituent analysis is needed in Hebrew (cf. Hockett, 1958, pp. 147–156):

Joel 2:5		
‘ēš	‘ôkələ	qāš

Isa 33:14			
mī	yāgūr	‘ēš	‘ôkələ

Only the second instance is a junction. Similarly:

Prov 11:15		
šônē	tôqə’im	bôṭēāḥ

Judg 18:10			
tābō’û	‘el	‘am	bôṭēāḥ

The asyndetic relative clause is a construction contiguous to junction. This is not surprising since the relative clause may be understood as an expansion of an adjective, or for that matter of an adjectival participle. Compare: *gepen pōriyyā* (“fruit-bearing vine,” Isa 32:12), a junction, with *šōreš pôre rōš wəla’ānā* (“a root that bears the fruit of poisonous plants and bitter plants,” Deut 29:17).

Some *qôṭēl*-forms in junction are *epitheta ornantia*: ‘ēš bô’eret (“burning fire”), *ḥereb nôqemet* (“avenging sword,” Lev 26:25), ‘ēlōhīm sôpəṭim

("a God that judges," Ps 58:12). Others function as restrictive adjectives: *kātēp sôreret* ("a stubborn shoulder," i.e. "disobedience," Zech 7:11), *lēb šômēā* ("understanding heart," i.e. "wisdom," 1 Kgs 3:9), *šīš nōbēl* ("fading blossom," Isa 28:1). An *epitheton ornans* might be omitted without essential change of the message; for a noun with a restrictive participle one single term may substitute. Examples: 'ēš 'ōkālā ("devouring fire," Deut 9:3), *nahal šōṭēp* ("flooding stream," Jer 47:2), *māṭār sōhēp* ("sweeping rain," Prov 28:3), *pereš nōpēl* ("tumbledown breach," Isa 30:13) and *hāmôn hōgēg* ("festive crowd," Ps 42:5; cf. *hōgāgīm*, "merymaking," 1 Sam 30:16), 'ōp nōdēd ("wandering bird," i.e. "homeless," Isa 16:2), 'iš sōge ("man making a mistake," Ezek 45:20, parallels *petī*, "ignorant," in this verse).

The position of such a *qôṭēl* resembles paradigmatically that of a noun adjective: beside *lēb šômēā* (1 Kgs 3:9) we have *lēb hākām* ("wise heart," 1 Kgs 3:12) and *lēb raggāz* ("angry heart," Deut 28:65). It differs from the substantival *qôṭēl* since it does not stand absolutely; it also differs from an adjective insofar as it does not express a fixed quality of a subject but rather its action, potential or real. This verbal force becomes evident when we compare *qôṭēl*-constructions with synonymous verbal constructions: 'arye ṭōrēp ("a ravaging lion," Ps 22:14) and *zə'ēb yiṭrāp* ("a ravaging wolf," Gen 49:27), 'ēš bō'eret ("burning fire," Jer 20:9) and *lappīd yib'ār* ("burning lamp," Isa 62:1).

Class i. The *qôṭēl*-form of this class functions as a predicate and thus substitutes for the two tenses, perfect and imperfect. *šōpēṭ 'ānī 'et bêtō* ("I will judge his house," 1 Sam 3:13) compares with *šəpattīk* ("I will judge you," Ezek 7:3); *hū yōšēb* ("he was sitting," Gen 18:1) compares with *wayyēšēb* ("he was sitting," Exod 17:12) and so on. Of course, there is a very specific use of the participle instead of a finite verb. This aspect has been frequently and well described and analyzed: there is no need to go into it here.⁴² Suffice it to say that the verbal potentiality of the *qôṭēl* reaches its realization in this class.

To say that the use of the participle as predicate (in the case of *qal: qôṭēl*) produces a noun-clause is justified only from a formal point of view. Formally all of the following verses are nominal sentences: "and Eli *šômēr* ('was watching') her mouth" (1 Sam 1:12); "a guardian of his mouth, a *šômēr* ('keeper') of his life" (Prov 13:3); "you 'ōbārīm ('are crossing') the Jordan" (Josh 1:11); "you 'ōzābē *YHWH* ('are deserters of

42. Driver (1892, pp. 165–173); Brockelmann (1956, § 44; this paragraph is included in the chapter on the verbal sentence).

YHWH')" (Isa 65:11). According to our classification only the second and fourth verses are genuine noun-clauses; their *qôṭēl*-forms belong to a substantival class. The first and third verses, however, pertain to the present class: they contain *qôṭēl*-forms of an evidently verbal force.

III.

If we have established the wide semantic range of the *qôṭēl*-morpheme and the fact that the Hebrew speaker proved his awareness of it by the consistent use he made of the various classes, we may now sketch the consequent semantic ambiguity in particular instances. It is unnecessary for our purpose to adduce a great number of such instances; their exploration remains the task of every student of biblical texts. Some illustration of this ambiguity, however, may be required.

When rare and obscure words are of the *qôṭēl*-pattern we must include this given fact in our attempts at elucidating the meaning. But our conclusions will hardly be clear-cut. *dôḇārôt* ("log rafts," 1 Kgs 5:22) is changed by the later narrator into *rapsôdôt* (2 Chr 2:15). Is the earlier word to be understood as "the floating ones" which would indicate the perplexity of the Hebrew writer whose vocabulary lacked an appropriate term, or had **dôḇārā* already become the accepted term for "raft"? Similarly, *môšākôt* (Job 38:31) may be taken as verbal "the drawing ones" or else as substantive "cords, bands." *kārûb hassôkêk* (Ezek 28:16) may mean either "the covering cherub" or "the cherub of the defense" (cf. Nah 2:6).

Well-known lexical items present a similar problem: *ḥāsôrā môšêt* (2 Sam 18:22), *ḥāsār šô'el* (Mic 7:3). These two *qôṭēl*-forms can be taken as active participles of transitive verbs in which case one has to supply the missing object ("a message finding a reward" and "a prince who asks for a bribe," respectively);⁴³ yet the *qôṭēl* could denote qualities: "favorable message," "corrupt prince." Such a meaning probably developed through brachylogy but was later taken absolutely. ". . . In a land of peace *'aitā bôitēh*" (Jer 12:5) may be interpreted as "you have put your trust in a peaceful land, how then etc." (cf. Qimḥi *ad loc.*) or, more convincingly, as "if you are careless in a land of peace, . . ."

The famous phrase *qôl qôrē* (Isa 40:3) can be understood in various

43. Ehrlich (1900, pp. 238f); Driver (1913, p. 331); Avineri (1976, p. 387).

ways according to the value we assign to the *qôṭēl*: "a voice calls, is calling" (cf. Isa 40:6), "hark! a caller (someone is calling)," "the voice of a herald." The far-reaching theological consequences of the last-mentioned interpretation are well known (cf. Matthew 3:3).

Substantival meaning may be ascribed, but not necessarily, to the following words: *šômēā'* (2 Sam 15:3) in the verse "you have no one to *hear* on the part of the king"; *šômēā'* could refer to an official arbitrator. The same word stands for a "receiver of an oracle" (Num 24:4). Connected with oracles are also *šō'ēl* ("he that consults," Deut 18:11) and *'ōne* ("he that delivers the response," 1 Kgs 18:29, Mal 2:12?).

A pronounced substantivation can be observed in Ezek 20:32 *hā'ōlā 'al rūhākem lo tihye* ("what is coming up into your mind will not happen"). The relevant expression should not be compared to *'ālā 'al lēb* (Isa 65:17, Jer 3:16; "call something to mind, to remember"). *hā'ōlā* is the subject of the sentence and refers to the elders' intentions as specified there. Thus we may be tempted to translate: "the *scheme* you have on your mind will not work."

It is of historical interest whether *šōdēd* ("robber," Isa 16:4) was an accepted appellation of a specific invader, and whether *hōsīm* ("the pious," Ps 17:7) was the appellation of a specific sect.⁴⁴ It is of sociological interest whether *nōṭērā* (Cant 1:6), *hōṭēb 'ēšīm* and *šō'ēb mayim* are to be taken as participles denoting occasional occupations ("guarding," "cutting wood," and "drawing water," respectively) or as terms for professional and social rank (Deut 29:10). *rōkēb* ("riding") and *hōlēk* ("walking," Judg 5:11), though at first sight taken as descriptions of activities, are probably designations of opposite social ranks.

The term *'ōbādē ba'al* stands in opposition to *'abdē YHWH* (2 Kgs 10:23). On the surface the meaning could be "worshippers of Baal" or even "those that worship Baal" as against the "servants of YHWH." However, the preceding verses (19–22) make it clear that the first term refers to cult personnel; *'ōbēd* has an absolutely substantival meaning ("functionary"). *'abdē YHWH* is employed for the sake of an impressive antithesis (tendentious vocalization?) and it is noteworthy that *'ōbēd* combines with the worship of an idol (2 Kgs 17:41) while *'ebed* combines with YHWH frequently. Thus, contrary to appearance, an appropriate rendition of the narrator's intention would be: "the cultic officials of Baal against the people who worship YHWH."

44. Cf. the commentaries by Guthe (1922, p. 617) and Chajes (1902, p. 31), respectively.

yô'ēs (Prov 15:22) denotes either "official counsellor" or "one that gives advice." If the first interpretation is correct, the scene is a royal court (Prov 23:1), if not, it may be that of a family or a small community. *wayāhī bōne* (Gen 4:17) and *wayāhī 'ômēn* (Esth 2:7) have been interpreted "he built" and "he brought up," respectively, or "he became a builder" and "he became a foster-father." *'ômēd 'al* is commonly explained "to serve" and "to be in charge, superior in rank" and the like. These two meanings are contradictory. In view of 1 Kgs 12:8 ("they were the *'ômādīm*") we have to regard *'ômēd 'al* as a title of a courtier, "minister." Thus also Zech 4:14b is not a relative clause but apposition: "the two anointed ones, the ministers of the Lord of the whole earth." Num 7:2 looks like an attempt to identify tribal chieftains with high government officials.

Many more examples could be cited. We content ourselves with pointing at one other area. Divine attributes are frequently formulated by means of participles. We should note, however, that some denote continuous activities (e.g. "who keeps [*šômēr*] truth forever," Ps 146:6), others denote a historic act (e.g. "who divided [*gôzēr*] the Red Sea," Ps 136:13). This situation creates a problem in countless occurrences of such a participle: Gen 14:19 (*qōne*), Amos 4:13 (*yôšēr*), Amos 5:8 (*'ôše, hōpēk, qôrē*), Isa 51:13 (*nōte, yôsēd*), Ps 33:7 (*kônēs*), and so on. Finally, does *bôrē* (Isa 42:5) stand for "Creator," "the One who has created," or "the One who creates and is creating"?

Ambiguity is inherent in human language. Linguistic symbols can never reflect complex reality. In most cases ambiguity is due to the distance between speaker and listener: the speaker knows accurately enough what the notion is he wishes to convey. In some cases, however, ambiguity may have been the speaker's aim. Semantic ambiguity is the tragedy and the splendor of speech.

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