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LORD מַלְאָךְ, אֲדֹנָי

I. The title 'ādōn, Aramaic *mara*, 'lord', is used of men and of gods and denotes one's authority (not: ownership; this notion is more attributed to the word →Baal). Usually it concerns the relation between a lord and his subordinates. Its etymology is uncertain (see for a survey of the many options JENNI 1971:31). Most likely seems to be a connection with Ugaritic *ad*, 'father' (EISSFELDT 1973:63; DLU, I, 8–9).

Heb 'ādōnāy exclusively denotes the god of Israel. It is attested about 450 times in the OT, especially in Ezekiel (more than 200 times), usually with the name →Yahweh (see for exact figures JENNI 1971:32). 'ādōnāy is usually translated as 'my Lord', assuming a plural form (pluralis majestatis) of 'ādōn, but with a different vocalisation of the last syllable (*qāmēš* in stead of *patah*, as in Gen 19:2). The use in the context of a prayer in the first person plural in Ps 44:23–24 suggests that at least here the poet no longer had this suggested original meaning in mind. Otherwise, he would have said 'ādōnēnū, 'our lord'. The same phenomenon is attested in the use of 'ādōnī addressed to human beings (Gen 44:7, Num 32:25, 2 Kgs 2:19). We have to assume that the word 'ādōnāy received its special form to distinguish it from the secular use of 'ādōn. With

the rise of monotheism this epithet of the god of Israel as a mode of address became more and more a name in itself. In Judaism (presumably from the third century BCE onwards) it replaced the holy name Yahweh. Being used as a name its original meaning must have receded into the background.

It is difficult to trace precisely this development from the use of 'ādōnāy as a title to its use as a name, because it cannot be excluded that the Hebrew text of the OT was edited according to new theological and liturgical insights. In the transmission of the text the final form of this name may have been used to replace older forms.

According to EISSFELDT it is also possible to regard the ending of 'ādōnāy as a postpositive element which is also attested in Ugaritic writing (1973:72) and which was probably meant to give emphasis. But his examples of this phenomenon in Ugaritic suggesting in his opinion a relation to Heb 'ādōnāy are open to debate. The first is taken from a part of the myth of Baal describing the struggle between →Yam and Baal: *larš ypl ulny wl 'pr 'zmny* (KTU² 1.2 iv:5), 'The strength of the two of us fell to the earth, the power of the two of us to the dust'. EISSFELDT translates *ulny* with 'Vollmächtige' and 'zmny with 'Vollstärke'. But it seems more appropriate to assume a dual suffix pertaining to Baal and his helper (probably this is the goddess →Athtart, who is mentioned in line 28; ARTU 39; DLU, I, 25, 96).

The letter KTU² 2.11 offers a better example of the use of the ending -(n)y: *hnny 'mny (...) tmny 'm adtny* (10–15), 'here with us (...) there with our mistress'. LORETZ (1980:291) adds to these examples the word *n'my*, 'happiness', consisting of *n'm* and *y* as used in KTU² 1.5 vi:6 and 1.6 ii:19. Instead of interpreting it as a 'Koswort für Baal', however, it is more likely to be one the euphemisms for the dreaded world of the dead (ARTU 79).

II. The title 'lord' for a god can be found in most religions. The word 'ādōn, however, is only known in the Canaanite languages. The most relevant parallels to the

god of Israel being called *'ādōn* are found in the literature of Ugarit. It appears that very few gods received this title. →El is called *adn ilm*, 'lord of the gods' (*KTU²* 1.3 v:9; *ARTU* 16) and it is addressed to Yam, when he is at the height of his power: *at adn tp'r*, "you are proclaimed lord (of the gods)" (*KTU²* 1.1 iv:17). Clearly the title *adn* is ascribed to them to denote their exceptional, superior place among the other gods. This can be compared to what is said to →Marduk in the Mesopotamian creation epic *Enūma eliš*. He is said to be 'the most honoured of the great gods' and the other gods say to him: "Lord, thy decree is first among gods" (iv 21).

In *KTU²* 1.16 i:44 and 1.124:1-2 the title *adn* seems to have been ascribed to Baal. This is a matter of dispute; because Baal is not explicitly mentioned in these passages. The interpretation of *adn ilm rbm*, 'lord of the great gods' in *KTU²* 1.124:1-2 decides the question. For a survey of the many different proposed identifications of the *adn* see DIETRICH & LORETZ (1990:207-216). They have retracted their earlier opinion that it was a title of Baal and now translate as 'der Meister über die 'Großen Göttlichen'', assuming that this was a human being performing the necromancy. VAN DER TOORN, again, states that this *adn ilm rbm* having to make a journey to the netherworld is hardly a human functionary. He argues that the most likely candidates are the chthonic deities Milku, Yarikh, Yaqar, and possibly also El (1991:60-61).

In the background of this discussion there is the question of the relation between Ugaritic *adn* and the god →Adonis. Because *adn* in *KTU²* 1.16 i:44 and 1.124:1-2 is used absolutely, it can be interpreted as a first step towards using this word as the name of some deity. Moreover, it is tempting to relate Adonis to Baal as we know him from Ugaritic mythology, their stories and cults having so much in common (EISSFELDT 1973:64; LORETZ 1980:292; *ARTU* 89-90).

Finally, it should be noted that it was not unusual in the ancient Near East to refer to a god by a title only and that this title event-

ually replaced the original name. The best known examples of this are the Mesopotamian Bel for Marduk and the Canaanite Baal for →Hadad.

III. The use in the Old Testament of *'ādōn* to denote the god of Israel resembles the use of *adn* in Ugaritic literature as outlined above. It means that this one god is singled out and is superior to the other gods. There is no need to assume here some kind of dependance, because the use of this title is so widespread. But texts like Deut 10:17 "Yahweh your God, is the God of gods and the Lord of lords", indicate that the writer had these other religions in mind (cf. also Pss 135:5 and 136:2-3). And a name like Adoniah, 'Yahweh is lord' or 'my lord is Yahweh', is a confession of faith over against others ascribing this title to El, Yam, or possibly Baal.

When Yahweh is called *'ādōn* it emphasizes his power over the whole earth (Josh 3:13; Mic 4:13; Zech 4:14; 6:5; Pss 97:5; 114:7; cf. also Isa 10:33) and over all people (Exod 34:23-24; Isa 1:24; 3:1; and 19:4).

It is quite normal for the Israelite believer to address his god as '(my) lord'. The reason why this is written *'ādōnāy* instead of the normal *'ādōn*, *'ādōnī*, or *'ādōnay* may have been to distinguish Yahweh from other gods and from human lords. Whether this special title was formed by simply changing the vocalisation of the word *'ādōnay* or by using some kind of archaic ending, cannot be decided with certainty, nor when it was used for the first time. The attempt by EISSFELDT to prove the early origin of this word is not convincing. We have to reckon with the possibility mentioned above of editors changing the original text, e.g. its vocals, according to later principles. EISSFELDT points to the fact that *'ādōnāy* and Yahweh are used separately in parallel poetic lines (cf. Exod 15:17; Isa 3:17). He compares this to the phenomenon attested in Ugaritic texts that the double name of some deities could be split likewise (1973:73-74). He fails to notice, however, that in Ugaritic these double names are always connected by the conjunctive *w*. And with none of these

double names does the first part show signs of having first been the title of a deity.

It seems logical to assume that 'ādōnāy developed from a title used to address Yahweh to a name gradually replacing the holy tetragram. This development must have been furthered by the fact that it fitted Yahwism very well, as it is symbolic for a belief accepting no other lords, be they divine or human, than Yahweh.

IV. Bibliography

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LORDSHIP → DOMINION

LYRE → KINNARU