AN ANALYSIS OF THE POETIC PORTION OF THE ANGEL OF

THE LORD'S ADDRESS TO HAGAR:    GENESIS 16:11-12

by

Michael R. O'Donnell

Ishmael, a name long associated with the Arabs both in Old Testament and modern times, remains an enigmatic character in Scripture.  A study of the target passage will help start the biblical groundwork for a no-nonsense reconstruction of what can and cannot be biblically asserted concerning Ishmael and his descendants, and concerning their relationship with Abraham's descendants through Israel down through the ages.

The passage in the MT is free of Masoretic Kethib/ Qere notations and even BHK and BHS have little to offer in the way of textual emendations.  A comparison of the MT with some of the ancient Vss (T$^O$, LXX, OL, Vulgate, S and Arabic), although revealing some problems in the area of interpretation, leave no doubt as to the soundness of the text as it stands in the MT.

Performing lexical and syntactical exegesis on the passage, one finds the text to be rather straightforward, while still containing several problems that lie in the area of interpretation:  particularly the significance of the expressions "wild ass man," "hand against all," and "dwell against the face of."

In the task of interpretation, one sees that the theophanic Angel of the Lord, in response to Hagar's affliction, announces that she is to bear a son.  In verse 12 the Angel describes Ishmael.  The concept of a wild ass is rather universally taken to figuratively represent the nomadic life.  The matter of Ishmael's having his hand against all, and vice versa, is found to be a figure for mutual violent enmity between the man (and his clan) and all others.

The figure concerning Ishmael's dwelling place, although often taken either in a geographical or in a characterizing sense, is best taken as a description of the nomad's threatening life-style with regard to those in his vicinity (taking brethren in the broadest sense of the term). Ishmael's descendants probably have intermingled with other nomadic desert peoples, who together have become the true ethnic (but not all the self-acclaimed) Arabs of both Old Testament and modern times.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
Master of Divinity

_James R Batten_____
Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Ak. | Akkadian |
| Ar. | Arabic |
| Aram. | Aramaic |
| ASV | American Standard Version |
| AV | Authorized (King James) Version |
| BDB | Brown, Driver and Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon |
| BHK | Biblia Hebraica, Kittel |
| BHS | Biblia Hebraica, Stuttgart edition |
| def. | definition |
| Gk. | Greek; also "Grk." |
| id. | idem ("the same"; also "idem") |
| KB | Koehler and Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, 1951 and 1958 |
| Lat. | Latin |
| LXX | Greek Septuagint Old Testament |
| mg. | marginal reading in a version |
| MH | Modern Hebrew (also "Mod. Heb.") |
| MS | Manuscript |
| MSS | Manuscripts |
| MT | Masoretic Text |
| NASB | New American Standard Bible |
| OL | Old Latin Version |

| | |
|---|---|
| S | Syriac Peshiṭta |
| sec. | section |
| Syr. | Syriac |
| TDNT | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Kittel, Friedrich, Bromiley |
| $T^O$ | Targum of Onkelos |
| trans. | translation |
| Ug. | Ugaritic |
| Vss | Versions |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today there is a recurrence of the interest in
apocalyptic literature that was common in Israel in the
intertestamental period.[1]  Naturally, the focus of such
literature is the Near East, and the explosive nature of
the political arena in that area of the world.  Those who
genuinely regard the inscripturated Word of God to be the
true key to unlocking the basic truths underlying such
matters are sometimes, in their eagerness, more careless
in their exegesis and hermeneutics than are those who hold
a sub-biblical view of inspiration.

Such careless handling of the Word of God not only
shows disregard for James 3:1, but it also shakes the faith
of young believers.  With regard to the Arab-Israeli con-
flict today, there is no denying that its roots lie in the
Old Testament.  However, much time has elapsed since the
time of Abraham, and the tapestry of history has been
intricately woven with many a fine thread.  The biblical
enthusiast must not allow his eagerness to get to the

---

[1]John F. Walvoord, Daniel, The Key to Prophetic
Revelation (reprinted; Chicago:  Moody Press, 1976),
pp. 13-14.

earliest scenes in the panorama to cause him to handle carelessly the intermediate events.

Thus, the safest way to arrive at the most accurate conclusions possible is to start at the beginning, i.e., on a clear exegetical basis, and, using the wealth of tools now available, to assimilate all one can learn from the Bible, philology, history and the like, in order to reconstruct the past.

Not altogether without reason, one of the key texts used in explaining the character of the Arabs today is Genesis 16:11-12. However, the passage is not without its cryptic phraseology. Its laconic style requires careful, unhurried, and (insomuch as is possible) unbiased, in-depth study.

This paper will attempt to do just that. With the use of sane text-critical methods, thorough lexicology, grammatical investigation, and sound hermeneutics, this paper will attempt to prove that, although Genesis 16:11-12 has a definite bearing on the present character of the "Arabs" (another term carelessly bandied about today), and their conflict with Israel, it does not necessarily apply to every member of today's Arab League. Nonetheless, this thesis will also endeavor to show that, given the nature of Ishmael, as portrayed in the target passage, no undertaking short of the Lord's establishment of the millennial kingdom

is likely to bring any form of "a just and lasting peace" to the Near East.

At the outset, let it be said that the writer will in no way try at every juncture to point out such contemporary applications. Rather, he will start with a foundation that will allow him, at the end of this paper, to point out, in the broadest possible way, the implications of Genesis 16:11-12 for any sound Bible-oriented explanation of contemporary Arab-Israeli (or, for that matter, pan-Arab) politics, and the relationship thereof to eschatological events.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHING THE TEXT

## Procedure

In the process of treating the target passage, it is necessary to establish accurately the text itself. In this chapter, Genesis 16:11-12 will first be presented in the form of a tentative (NASB's) translation of the Masoretic Text. Then, a discussion of suggested emendations to the MT will follow. Next, a comparative review will be made of the passage as it appears in several of the ancient versions (Vss). Finally, some attention will be given to the question of the integrity of the passage under consideration.

## Tentative Translation

The target passage is translated from the MT by NASB as follows:

Verse 11
The angel of the LORD said to her
further,
"Behold, you are with child,
And you shall bear a son;
And you shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the LORD has given heed
    to your affliction.

Verse 12
"And he will be a wild donkey of a man,
His hand /will be/ against everyone,

> And everyone's hand /will be/ against him;
> And he will live to the east of all his
> brothers."

## Suggested Emendations

While there are no Kethib/Qere variants either in this passage or in its immediate context as far as the Masoretic notations are concerned, some emendations have been proposed by recent scholarship. Verse 12 seems to be generally accepted as it stands in the MT. Certain Difficulties in verse 11, however, have given rise to suggested possible changes from some quarters.

## The Stuttgart Apparatus

The critical apparatus of BHS suggests that the difficult pointing of ﬡﬢﬧ in verse 11 is possibly a mixed form amalgamated from the two forms ﬡﬢﬧ and ﬡﬢﬧ, and it also notes the occurrence of the same phenomenon in Judges 13:5.[1]

## The Kittel Apparatus

Similarly, the lower register of the critical apparatus found in Biblia Hebraica Kittel lists ﬡﬢﬧ as a possible reading for this form, also providing a reference to the Judges 13:5 occurrence of the same interesting

---

[1] Otto Eissfeldt, ed., Liber Genesis, Fasc. 1 of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolf, editio funditus renovata (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), p. 22. (Hereinafter: BHS.)

reading.[1]  Further, on the basis of one Hebrew manuscript (MS), which finds support in several Greek and Old Latin MSS, the editors of BHK note that the divine name יְהוָ֫ה in verse 11 may be read as יְהוָ֫ה אֱלֹהִים.[2]  In the upper, and (in the view of BHK's editors) less noteworthy,[3] register of the BHK apparatus, one notes the occurrence of עֳנְיֵךְ for עָנְיֵךְ (verse 11) in one MS.[4]  This latter variant is scarcely worth mentioning.[5]

### The Proposal of Mitchell Dahood

In addition to the emendations suggested by the editors of BHS and BHK, there is the suggested repointing of the final clause of Genesis 16:11 put forth by Mitchell Dahood on the basis of "the application of the principles of Northwest Semitic philology."[6]  Instead of the MT

---

[1]Rudolph Kittel, ed., Biblia Hebraica, editio duodecima emendata (Stuttgart:  Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1961), p. 20.  (Hereinafter:  BHK.)

[2]Ibid.    [3]Ibid., p. XXVI.

[4]BHK, p. 20.

[5]Weaknesses of the textual apparatus in BHK, especially with regard to its references to the LXX are pointed out in John W. Olley, "Biblical Exegesis in a Cross-Cultural Context:  The Study of the Septuagint," The South East Asia Journal of Theology, 16:1 (1975), 2, n. 8, and especially in Harry M. Orlinsky, "Qumran and the Present State of Old Testament Text Studies:  The Septuagint Text," Journal of Biblical Literature, 78 (March, 1959), 27-28.  (Hereinafter: Orlinsky, "Qumran.")

[6]Mitchell Dahood, "The Name yišmāʿēl in Genesis 16,11," Biblica, 49 (1968), 88.  (Hereinafter:  Dahood, "Name.")

pointing of this clause, which the <u>American Standard Version</u> renders as "because Jehovah hath heard thy affliction," Dahood would point and translate the clause in question as follows:[1]

$$\text{כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְהוָה}$$
$$\text{אֵל עָנָךְ}$$

For Yahweh has heard you,

El has answered you.

## Resumé

In the view of this writer, MT readings are generally to be greatly preferred to all others, except in obviously corrupted or strongly disputed passages. In such exceptional cases (of which Genesis 16:11-12 is not one), the early versions <u>may</u> be preferred to the MT in some instances. In rare cases, however, are such late emendations as are offered in modern textual apparati (particularly that of <u>BHK</u>) to be given any great weight when they tamper with the consonantal text. The suggested resolution of the problem pointing of וַיֶּלֶד in both <u>BHS</u> and <u>BHK</u> is worthy of consideration because the pointing as it stands in the MT is questionable (and so designated by a small Masoretic circle), and because their suggestion respects the consonantal MT. Dahood's suggested repointing of the

---

[1]Dahood, "Name," p. 87.

final clause of Genesis 16:11, on the other hand, while raising some interesting questions, seems unnecessarily drastic in view of the perfectly acceptable MT pointing of the clause.

### Comparison with the Versions

Reason for Comparing Versions

Such widely different scholars as Orlinsky and Dahood acknowledge the growing respect which is being enjoyed by the MT in learned circles today, especially as a result of studies related to the findings at Qumran.[1] At the same time, one must acknowledge with Dahood the weaknesses of the ancient versions of the Old Testament (OT).[2] Having acknowledged these facts, one must also acknowledge with Battenfield that "it is unscientific to base one's text on one manuscript only, a sort of mystical textus receptus, to the exclusion of all others."[3]

It is, then, with the desire to establish the correct text that some of the ancient versions will be

---

[1] Orlinsky, "Qumran," p. 32, and Mitchell Dahood, "Northwest Semitic Notes on Genesis," Biblica, 55 (1974), 77. (Hereinafter: Dahood, "Notes.")

[2] Dahood, "Notes," pp. 76-77.

[3] James R. Battenfield, "Hebrew Stylistic Development in Archaic Poetry: A Text-critical and Exegetical Study on the Blessing of Jacob, Genesis 49:1-27" (unpublished doctor of theology dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN, 1976), p. 99. (Hereinafter: Battenfield, "Hebrew Stylistic Development.")

considered. The versions will be treated in what this writer views as their descending order of value for Old Testament studies.

Targum Onkelos

The Aramaic of the Targum Onkelos (T[O])[1] gives a version of verse 11 that could be translated into English identically with the Hebrew, except for the last word צְלוֹתִיךְ, which must be translated "your prayer,"[2] a translation which sheds a different light on the עָנְיֵךְ of the MT, meaning "your affliction," or "your poverty."[3]

Verse 12 of T[O] is quite interesting. The first phrase וְהוּא יְהֵי מְרוֹד בְּאֱנָשָׁא, although rendered by Walton to parallel closely the Hebrew (et ipse erit onager in hominibus),[4] may also be translated "and he shall be running wild among men,"[5] מְרוֹד being taken from the verb

---

[1]Cf. מִקְרָאוֹת גְּדוֹלוֹת, Vol. I (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1951).

[2]Marcus Jastrow, comp., A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1950), II, 1282. (Hereinafter: Jastrow, Dictionary.)

[3]Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, eds., A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 777. (Hereinafter: BDB.)

[4]Brian Walton, Vol. I of Biblia Sacra Polyglotta (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1964), p. 61. (Hereinafter: Walton, Polyglotta.) Translation of the Latin: "And he shall be a wild ass among men."

[5]Jastrow, Dictionary, I, 838.

מָרַד, meaning "to rebel, run away."[1]  However, Jastrow notes that the adjective is used especially of the wild ass.[2]

The next two clauses in T[O] are quite curious וְהוּא יְהֵא צְרִיךְ לְכֹלָא וְכָל־בְּנֵי־אֱנָשָׁא יְהוֹן צְרִיכִין לֵיהּ).  According to Jastrow, צְרִיךְ means "needing, needed, he (she, it) must."[3]  Thus the thought seems to be that Ishmael will be in a mutual state of need with all men.

The final clause is a word for word translation of the Hebrew and is most easily rendered as:  "And he shall dwell in the presence[4] of all his brethren."

## Septuagint

The Greek text of the Septuagint (LXX)[5] follows the Hebrew word for word in verse 11.  As with T[O], the only word in this verse that calls for comment is the Greek parallel for עָנְיֵךְ ("your affliction"), which is τῇ ταπεινώσει σου.  According to Arndt and Gingrich, this phrase could be understood in three ways:  1) "your humiliation" (as an experience), 2) "your humiliation" (as

---

[1]Jastrow, Dictionary, I, 838.

[2]Ibid.          [3]Ibid., II, 1301.

[4]Ibid., I, 99.  ("In the presence of" for עַל־פְּנֵי.)

[5]Taken from Alfred Rahlfs, Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpretes (Stuttgart: Priviligierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950), p. 21. (Hereinafter:  Rahlfs, LXX.)

a state of being), and 3) "your self-abasement."[1]  Judging

from the context and from the Hebrew original, this writer

prefers the first definition.

Verse 12 of the LXX also parallels the MT very

closely, giving word for word the same meaning except in

one case.  The Greek equivalent for אדם פרא ("wild ass[2]

of a man") is ἄγροικος ἄνθρωπος .  According to Liddell

and Scott, ἄγροικος  can mean either 1) "a countryman, a

clown, or a boor," or 2) "boorish, rude, or rough."[3]  In the

context, the second meaning clearly is better.  Thus the LXX

here reads:  "And he shall be a rough man."

The LXX renders the final clause with wooden adher-

ence to the Hebrew word order.  Thus it is said of Ishmael

that he will dwell κατὰ πρόσωπον of all his brethren.  As

with the Hebrew equivalent על־פני,[4] the most literal ren-

dering of the Greek phrase is "upon the face of."[5]  However,

the preposition can be taken in a spacial ("along") or in a

---

[1]William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago:  The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 812.  (Hereinafter:  Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon.)

[2]BDB, p. 825.

[3]Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comps., A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford:  Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 14.  (Hereinafter:  Liddell and Scott, Lexicon.)

[4]BDB, pp. 816, 818-819.

[5]Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 406-407, 728-729.

directional ("toward") sense as well.[1]  This writer would
translate the Greek here as "toward the fact of."

### Old Latin

Turning now to the Old Latin (OL),[2] one can observe
that the wording of the text closely parallels that of the
MT.  The points in the Old Latin text which call for comment
are the same ones that have been noted so far in the other
versions.  In verse 11, the OL parallel for עָנְיֵךְ is
humilitatem tuam.  Humilitatem can here be translated in
either of its two transferred senses:  1) "insignificance,
obscurity" (of birth, position, rank), or 2) "submissive-
ness, abjectness" (of mind or character).[3]  Since the Hebrew
עֳנִי is taken to mean either "affliction" or "poverty," the
OL can be said to support the MT wording, intending humili-
tatem in its sense of "insignificance," apparently taking
עֳנִי in the sense of "poverty."

Focusing on verse 12, one notes that the OL follows
the LXX in its treatment of אֲדָם תֵּמָה.  The manuscripts

---

[1]Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 406-407.

[2]Taken from Bonifatius Fischer, comp., Genesis, vol.
2 of Vetus Latina:  Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach
Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der
Erzabtei Beuron (Freiburg, Germany:  Verlag Herder, 1951-54),
pp. 182-183.  (Hereinafter:  Fischer, Vetus Latina.)

[3]D. P. Simpson, comp., Cassell's New Latin Dic-
tionary (New York:  Funk & Wagnall's, 1968), p. 280.
(Hereinafter:  Simpson, Dictionary.)

(MSS) vary in wording, but not much in sense at this point. The favored European texts here have rusticus homo,[1] with rusticus meaning literally "a countryman," and, by transferral, "rustic, country-like," either with the favorable connotation of "plain, simple," or in the pejorative connotation of "clownish, countrified, boorish."[2]  Another reading[3] has rusticanus, meaning "rustic, in the country,"[4] and three MSS[5] have the reading agrestis, meaning literally "belonging to the fields, or wild, rustic," and by transferral, "countrified, boorish, or brutish."[6]

The last clause of verse 12 in the OL is noteworthy for its almost surprisingly close adherence to the Hebrew wording as it is found in the MT.  It is said that Ishmael will dwell (either commorabitur[7] or habitabit[8]) ante[9]

---

[1]Fischer, Vetus Latina, p. 183.

[2]Simpson, Dictionary, p. 528.

[3]Fischer, Vetus Latina, p. 183.  (Namely:  HI Gal.; i.e., Jerome's Gallican translation.)

[4]Simpson, Dictionary, p. 527.

[5]Fischer, Vetus Latina, p. 183.  (They are:  91, 94 and 95.)

[6]Simpson, Dictionary, p. 31.

[7]Fischer, Vetus Latina, p. 183.  (MS 100.)

[8]Ibid.  (HI.)          [9]Ibid.  (MS 100.)

("before") or <u>contra</u>[1] ("against") the face of all his brethren.

## Vulgate

The Vulgate,[2] although further removed in time from the originals than the OL, is not without critical value, being based in the Old Testament on the Hebrew, whereas the OL is based on the LXX.[3]  In verse 11, Jerome has <u>adflic-tionem</u> for עֳנִי, which can be rendered "bodily pain, torture,"[4] or, from the meaning of <u>adflicto</u>, "distress."[5] Thus the Vulgate, in contrast to the OL, brings out more the concept of "affliction" than that of "poverty."

In verse 12, אָדָם פֶּרֶא is represented in the Vulgate by <u>ferus homo</u>, with <u>ferus</u> meaning literally "a wild animal."  Vergil uses this word of a horse, and Ovid of a boar.  By transferral, <u>ferus</u> can also mean "wild, rough, savage, uncivilized, cruel."[6]  Thus Jerome does not follow

---

[1]Fischer, <u>Vetus Latina</u>, p. 183.  (HI; i.e., Jerome, but neither the Vulgate nor HI Gal.)

[2]Taken from Robertus Weber, ed., <u>Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem</u>, Tomus I (Stuttgart:  Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969), p. 22.

[3]Cf. F. F. Bruce, <u>The Books and the Parchments</u> (third, revised, edition; Westwood, NJ:  Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), pp. 203-205.

[4]Simpson, <u>Dictionary</u>, p. 13.

[5]<u>Ibid.</u>        [6]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 245.

the OL here.  In its literal sense, _ferus_ ("a wild animal")
is closer to לְרֵאָה than are the OL renderings at this point.
In the last clause of the verse, עַל־פְּנֵי is translated by
_e regione_, which can mean in this context "opposite, over
against."[1]  Thus, in this case, the Vulgate is less lit-
eral than the OL with respect to the Hebrew, and more
interpretive.

## Peshiṭta

Being written in a Semitic language, the Peshiṭta[2]
(S), like the Targums, offers some insights upon comparison
with the Hebrew that are not possible in the case of the Vss
in Indo-European languages, especially so since it closely
follows the Hebrew original.[3]  In the passage under con-
sideration, the close fidelity to the Hebrew is readily
evident.

Verse 11 shows virtually a word for word correspon-
dence with the MT.  The Syriac equivalent for אֶל־עֵינֶיךָ
is ܒܥܘܢܕܟ̣ܝ.  Disregarding the inseparable preposition
(ܒ) and the possessive pronomial suffix (ܟܝ), the word
under consideration is ܥܘܢܕ, which can have only three
possible meanings in this context:  1) "subjection,

---

[1]Simpson, _Dictionary_, p. 509.

[2]Taken from Walton, _Polyglotta_, I, 60.

[3]Battenfield, "Hebrew Stylistic Development," p.
123.

oppression, servitude"; 2) "submission, obedience"; and 3) "domination, tyranny."[1] In the immediate context, the first and third definitions (especially the first, cf. Walton's Latin translation, oppressionem tuam, "your oppression") are the best.[2] This particular rendering of עָנְיֵךְ, unique in all the Vss covered thus far, seems closer to the lexical value of "affliction" for that Hebrew word.

Then, in verse 12, S again gives an almost verbatim Syriac version of the Hebrew of the MT. Unlike the other versions so far examined, the Peshitta renders פֶּרֶא אָדָם with a rather literal translation, ܚܙܘܪܐ ܘܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ,[3] translated by Walton as onager hominem.[4]

The word ܚܙܘܪܐ means simply "a wild ass."[5] In the next two clauses concerning the "hand of Ishmael" and the "hand of all," S varies from the wording of the MT only in that it uses two different prepositions, ܥܠ (here meaning

---

[1]J. Payne Smith, ed., A Compendious Syriac Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 567. (Hereinafter: Smith, Dictionary.)

[2]Walton, Polyglotta, I, 60.

[3]Smith, Dictionary, pp. 51, 56, 81, 427. (Translation: "a wild ass of--or, against--the sons of men.")

[4]Walton, Polyglotta, I, 60.

[5]Smith, Dictionary, p. 427.

"against")[1] and ﺑ (here meaning "on, upon"),[2] while the MT has the same preposition (בְ, "against")[3] occurring twice.

In the final clause, the Peshitta interprets, rather than woodenly translates, the term אֶל־פְּנֵי. The text has ܥܰܠ ܬܚܽܘܡܐ, meaning, with the verb, that Ishmael will dwell "near the border (or limit, or boundary)"[4] of all his brethren--an interesting translation of a Hebrew _Vorlage_ apparently very close (if not identical to) the MT.

## Arabic

Although the Arabic version[5] is the last and, without doubt, the least important of the versions to be considered in this study, it is not without value. Some scholars believe that Arabic parallels provide valuable insights into obscure Hebrew terms.[6] The Arabic version is the most paraphrastic of the versions under comparison with the target passage.

---

[1]Smith, _Dictionary_, p. 413. (Definition _d_.)

[2]_Ibid_., pp. 33-34.    [3]BDB, p. 89.

[4]Smith, _Dictionary_, pp. 413, 609; also, pp. 595-596.

[5]Taken from Walton, _Polyglotta_, I, 61.

[6]James Barr, _Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament_ (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 240-242. See also G. R. Driver, "Supposed Arabisms in the Old Testament," _Journal of Biblical Literature_, 55 (1936), 101-120.

In verse 11, the angel of the Lord tells Hagar that God has heard دُعَاكِ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ شَقَائِكِ, "your prayers (or calls) unto him of your distress."[1] In verse 12, Ishmael is prophetically described as a وَحْشِيًّا مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ. The term وَحْشِيًّا, from وَحْشِيّ, can mean in this context: 1) "a wild beast"; 2) "barbarous (man); or 3) "wild" (beast).[2] Definition number one clearly is best taken here. As to Ishmael's residence, it is told that he will dwell بِحَضْرَةِ, "in the presence, or vicinity, of,"[3] all of his brethren.

## Vss--Resumé

While the MT is highly reliable,[4] it is both a scholarly and reassuring measure to compare the Hebrew of the MT with the texts of the ancient Vss in order to gain insights as well as support in one's effort to establish the text of a target passage. Having compared the MT Hebrew of Genesis 16:11-12 with the texts of several ancient Vss, this writer has demonstrated, in view of the

---

[1]J. G. Hava, Al-Faraid Arabic-English Dictionary (Beirut: Dar-el-Mashreq, 1970), pp. 207, 372. (Hereinafter: Hava, Dictionary.)

[2]Ibid., p. 856.    [3]Ibid., p. 129.

[4]The MT is assumed to be more reliable than any of the Vss because of its more continuous tradition. Cf. D. R. Ap-Thomas, A Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 19.

close agreement among the traditions,[1] that there is little doubt as to the <u>reliability</u> of the Hebrew of the MT in the target passage. However, several problems as to the exegesis and interpretation of the passage have been raised. It will be the task of subsequent chapters to deal with these problems.

## Integrity of the Text

Although this writer does not espouse a documentarian view of the composition of the Old Testament, a brief survey of the passage under consideration, as it is seen by two of those who see the Scriptures so composed, is in order. John Skinner classifies most of Genesis 16 (including verses 11-12) as coming from the J (Yahwistic) document. Within that family, he would attribute the chapter's origin to "the oldest stratum of Abrahamic legends ($J^b$)." Otto Eissfeldt similarly assigns verses 4 to 14 of Genesis 16 to J.[3]

---

[1]Even were there significant disagreement between the MT and the versions, one would still have to be very cautious before calling for emendation of the MT. Cf. Emmanual Tov, "On 'Pseudo-Variants' Reflected in the Septuagint," <u>Journal of Semitic Studies</u>, 20 (Autumn, 1975), 165-177.

[2]John Skinner, <u>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis</u>, in the <u>International Critical Commentary</u>, ed. by S. R. Driver, <u>et al</u>. (2nd edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930), p. 285. (Hereinafter: Skinner, <u>Genesis</u>.)

[3]Otto Eissfeldt, <u>The Old Testament: An Introduction</u>, trans. by Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 182.

Thus, although not all documentarian scholars agree on the classification of the sources of the various portions of the Pentateuch,[1] at least two well-known documentarians attribute both verses of the target passage to the same author. Consequently, defense of this writer's a priori assumption of single authorship (i.e., Mosaic) of this passage seems unnecessary. The passage will be treated accordingly.

## Concluding View

Having examined Genesis 16:11-12 from the textual critic's point of view, the writer has adequately established the reliability and the integrity of the text as it stands in the MT. Exegetical and hermeneutical problems that have been raised either implicitly or explicitly, especially during the survey of the Vss, will now have to be treated in more detail in the next two chapters, respectively.

----

[1]Skinner, Genesis, p. 285.

CHAPTER III

EXEGESIS OF THE TARGET PASSAGE

Statement of Method of Procedure and Goal

This chapter will first undertake a lexical analysis
of Genesis 16:11-12, and subsequently a syntactical analysis
of certain key or difficult constructions in these two
verses.  The goal of this chapter is to determine what the
text says, in order that accurate interpretation might be
possible in the next chapter.

Lexical Exegesis

Genesis 16:11

Introductory Phrase

The words וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה, "And the angel of
the Lord said to her. . . ," constitute a routine phrase in
the Old Testament, as can be seen by a comparison with
verses 9 and 10.  However, it should be noted that the term
"the angel of the Lord" occurs for the first time in the
Old Testament in verse 9.[1]  Although this identical phrase
introduces verses 9 through 11 respectively, only in verse
11 is it separated from what follows in the MT as a prosaic

_____

[1]Gerhard Lisowsky, Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten
Testament (Stuttgart:  Württembergische Bibelanstalt,
1958), p. 797.  (Hereinafter:  Lisowsky, Konkordanz.)

introduction to a section of poetry.  Following the MT, the
rest of verse 11 and all of verse 12 will be considered as
poetry.  This poetic section will be the focal point of the
study.

Poetic Section

Hagar's Pregnancy

The angel of the Lord first announces to Hagar that
she is pregnant.  He opens His words with הִנָּךְ, "Behold!
(You). . . ."  The word is a contracted form of הִנֵּה with
an attached second person, feminine singular pronominal
suffix.  This word means "Lo!" or "Behold!"[1] (cf. Arabic
اِنَّ ; Ugaritic hm, hn).[2]  It is used in several senses--
usually as an interrupting call for attention.[3]  Here, its
use in the opening of an important birth announcement is
parallel to similar occurrences in Judges 13:3,7 and
Isaiah 7:14.[4]  The LXX renders this word in the text as
ἰδού, which is the same word used to introduce another

---

[1]BDB, p. 243.

[2]Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds.,
Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden:  E. J.
Brill, 1958), Vol. I, p. 278.  (Hereinafter:  KB.)

[3]Ibid., I, 238.

[4]Gerhard Delling, "παρθένος," in Vol. V of
Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, G. Friedrich,
ed.; G. Bromiley, translator, ed. (reprinted; Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 836, n. 66.
(Hereinafter:  TDNT.)

angelic birth announcement of paramount importance two millennia later (cf. Lk. 1:31).[1]

In describing Hagar's state, the angel of the Lord uses the term הָרָה, which, used as an adjective to describe the pregnant state, occurs ten times in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 38:24,25).[2] The word is derived from the verb הָרָה, "to conceive, become pregnant," identical in lexical form, and occurring in various forms about forty times in the Old Testament.[3]

A Son to Be Born

Next, Hagar is informed that she will bear a son: וְיֹלַדְתְּ בֵּן. The וְ, the virtually omnipresent and very versatile inseparable Hebrew conjunction, may here be translated "and." The word יֹלַדְתְּ is derived from יָלַד, meaning "bear, bring forth, beget" (cf. Ugaritic yld; Akkadian walādu, alādu; Modern Hebrew, יָלַד; Aram., יְלַד יְלַד; Syriac ܝܠܕ; Arabic وَلَدَ, "to bear, bring forth").[4] Although the verb יָלַד is a routine phenomenon in the Old Testament, the particular form which appears in the verse in question, as was mentioned in the last chapter, is pointed somewhat anomalously. KB would, along with BHS,

---

[1]TDNT, V, 836, n. 66.

[2]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 435.

[3]BDB, pp. 247-248.

[4]BDB, p. 408; and KB, I, 381.

offer two different "Qere" forms as substitutes: יִלְדָה

or יַלְדָה.[1] BDB also suggests that perhaps יֹלֵדָה was the

intended form, and identifies the form as an active parti-

ciple, feminine singular.[2] She will thus bear, or bring

forth, a son ( בֵּן ). This last word is a common term in the

Old Testament (cf. Arabic اِبْن; Aramaic בַּר ).[3]

Ishmael

The next two clauses of verse 11 deal with the nam-

ing of the son whom Hagar is to bear. The angel of the Lord

says וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׁמָעֵאל, rendered by the ASV as "and

thou shalt call his name Ishmael" (cf. T⁰ וְתִקְרִין

שְׁמֵיהּ יִשְׁמָעֵאל; also, LXX καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα

αὐτοῦ Ισμαηλ). As the   is pointed in this context, it

must be taken as a "waw" consecutive, giving the perfect

verb an imperfect sense.[4] As a result, it should be ren-

dered "and thou shalt call," here in the sense of "name"

(which BDB calls the most common use of the verb, being

accompanied by שֵׁם, "name," and the person's name, as in

this verse).[5] Thus, nomen proprium plus accusative of

---

[1]KB, I, 381.    [2]BDB, p. 408.    [3]Ibid., p. 120.

[4]J. Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical
Hebrew (second edition; reprinted; Oxford:  The Clarendon
Press, 1972), pp. 90-91. (Hereinafter:  Weingreen,
Grammar.)

[5]BDB, pp. 894-896.

person (pronominal) plus אֶת שְׁמוֹ can be called a lexical

term or formula (BDB: "call one's name, so and so").[1]

"And you shall call his name Ishmael" (lit.

yiš-mā'-'ēl). This name is a composite of two Hebrew words.

BDB translates it "Ēl heareth."[2] "Ēl" can also be rendered

"God."[3] BDB suggests that in the present context the con-

notation of "hear and answer" is intended for the verb

שָׁמַע.[4] A similar compound name, יהו שמעאל, has been found

in the Elephantine papyri.[5]

Reason for the Name

The reason for the choice of the name is introduced

by כִּי־שָׁמַע. The conjunction כִּי, having several nuances,

is here best understood in the sense of "because, or

since" (cf. Grk. ὅτι ).[6] The conjunction כִּי is joined by

a maqqeph to the verb of the clause--שָׁמַע ("he has heard"),

the same verb of which Ishmael's name is composed. The

Lord, יְהוָה, had heard Hagar's affliction.

As was demonstrated in Chapter II, the Vss diverge

in their translations of this final term. The masculine

---

[1]BDB, pp. 894-896.    [2]Ibid., p. 1035.

[3]Ibid., p. 42.    [4]Ibid., p. 1034.

[5]L. Hicks, "Ishmael," in Vol. 2 of The Interpreter's
Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962),
p. 747.

[6]BDB, p. 471-473.

noun עֳנִי is given the values of "affliction" and "poverty" by BDB.[1]  Lisowsky gives the meaning of "misery," which seems acceptable to this writer.[2]  The term עֳנִי occurs 36 times in the Old Testament, and here for the first time.[3] The LXX regularly translates it with ταπείνωσις ("humilia-tion, humility, humble station"), and the term is often used to describe the unhappy situation of an individual (cf. Leah, Gen. 29:32; Jacob, Gen. 31:42; and Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:11).[4]

### Genesis 16:12

## First Segment

Verse 12 may be divided, according to its flow of thought, into three sections or segments.  The first segment is composed of the clause וְהוּא יִהְיֶה פֶּרֶא אָדָם.  The first word of the verse is composed of the inseparable conjunc-tion וְ ("and") attached to הוּא, "he."  The verb of the clause, יִהְיֶה, is from הָיָה, meaning "fall out, come to pass, become, be."[5]  Here the verb should be taken in the sense that BDB lists as the third major definition, "to be (often with subordinate idea of becoming)."[6]

---

[1]BDB, p. 777.

[2]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 1099.     [3]Ibid.

[4]Walter Grundmann, "ταπεινός, κτλ ," in Vol. 8 of TDNT, p. 11.

[5]BDB, p. 224.     [6]Ibid., p. 226.

The predicate nominative of the first clause of verse 12 is the expression which was so frequently considered in the previous chapter in comparison with the Vss, פֶּרֶא אָדָם. The first of these two words, פֶּרֶא, is listed in BDB as פֶּרֶא (II), (masculine noun), "wild ass" (cf. Ar. فَرَأ, فِرَاء, id.[1]; also Ak. purimu[2]). Of the Vss compared, only S (ܚܙܘܪ) and possibly T⁰ (עֲרוֹד) translated פֶּרֶא with precisely the lexical value listed above. Although this is the term's first appearance in the Bible, it occurs nine other times in the Old Testament, four of which are in Job,[3] pointing to the antiquity of the term.

The following word, אָדָם, listed as אָדָם (I) in BDB, is the common noun for "man, mankind."[4] (See below for grammatical considerations of this clause.)

## Second Segment

In the second segment of verse 12 several terms, or parts of terms, occur twice. The first term to occur twice is יָד (first with וֹ, the pronominal suffix, attached, and next, with a waw conjunction prefixed[5]). This noun (usually

---

[1]BDB, p. 825.    [2]KB, II, 775-776.

[3]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 1183.

[4]BDB, p. 9.   (Dahood would translate אָדָם in this context as "steppe"; cf. Dahood, "Repointing," p. 78.)

[5]Weingreen, Grammar, p. 40.

feminine) is common in the Old Testament, and means "hand" (cf. Mod. Heb. יָד; Ar. يَد; also Ug. yd).[1] The term has many connotations, but it should probably be taken as meaning "the literal hand as strong, helpful, etc." (cf. Dt. 8:17, עֹצֶם יָדִי, "the might of my hand"; and Num. 20:20, בְּיָד חֲזָקָה, "with a strong hand").[2] However, the term יָד may here be intended in the figurative sense of "strength, power" (cf. 1 Chr. 18:3, לְהַצִּיב יָדוֹ בְּ, "to establish his dominion at").[3]

Next occurs the inseparable preposition בְּ, "properly denoting in, Gk. ἐν, but applied in many derived and figurative significations."[4] Here, the term should be taken both times as meaning "against" (cf. Dt. 13:10; Isa. 5:9).[5] Williams, categorizing uses of this preposition, writes of its sense here: "Adversative, expressing disadvantage, e.g. . . ., 'his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him' (Gen. 16:12); cf. 1 Sam. 18:17."[6] In its first occurrence, בְּ is attached to כֹּל; in its second, to וֹ, the objective pronominal suffix.

----

[1]BDB, p. 388; and KB, II, 362.   [2]BDB, pp. 388-389.

[3]Ibid., p. 390.   [4]Ibid., p. 88.

[5]Ibid., p. 89 (definition 4a).

[6]Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline (second edition; reprinted; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 44, sec. 242. (Hereinafter: Williams, Syntax.)

The word כֹּל occurs a second time unattached.  In both occurrences, this masculine noun, meaning generally, "the whole, all" (cf. Aram. כּוֹל; Syr. ܟܠ; Ar. كُلّ),[1] should be taken to mean all of humanity.  The first time it occurs, it has the definite article (according to the MT pointing), evidently intended in a wider sense, e.g., "all humanity."[2]  The meaning of the second, anarthrous, appearance of כֹּל is largely determined by the meaning of the first occurrence in the context.  As a rule, when כֹּל appears in the absolute state, as it does both times here, it retains a wider, more universal sense.[3]

## Third Segment

The third and last segment of verse 12 begins with the compound term עַל-פְּנֵי, consisting of the preposition עַל (representing a host of lexical values derived from its basic meaning, "upon"[4]) attached by a maqqeph to the term פְּנֵי.  This latter term is the construct of the hypothetical noun פָּנֶה, meaning "face, faces, edge."[5]  The term is used regularly in conjunction with several prepositions, including עַל.[6]

---

[1]BDB, p. 481.

[2]Ibid., p. 482 (definition 2b /b̄ 7).

[3]Ibid. (definition 2a).    [4]Ibid., p. 752.

[5]Ibid., p. 815.      [6]Ibid., pp. 816-819.

Thus, the term עַל־פְּנֵי, which would seem to have the literal meaning of "upon the face of," actually has a number of different meanings in the Old Testament.[1] KB lists the following meanings for this term: 1) "in the face of, in the sight of, before" (Lev. 10:3); 2) "in the front of" (cf. 1 Ki. 6:3); 3) "facing, opposite to" (cf. Gen. 23:19); 4) "against, to the cost of" (cf. Dt. 21:16); 5) "to your face"--with the second person, masculine singular suffix (cf. Job 6:28); and 6) "against my face, in defiance of me"--with the first person, common singular suffix (cf. Ex. 20:3; Dt. 5:7).[2]

Checking BDB, one can find the additional (possibly) relevant shades of meaning: 1) "in the presence of"--i.e., "in the lifetime of," said of dying (cf. Gen. 11:28); 2) "in addition to" (cf. Job 16:14); 3) of direction, "in front of," usually, but not always equivalent to "east of" (cf. 1 Ki. 6:3)--and in the case of Genesis 16:12, carrying the "collateral idea of defiance"; 4) with verbs implying direction, (a) "over towards" (cf. Gen. 18:16), (b) "overlooking" (cf. Num. 21:20), and, rarely, (c) "before" or "against" (someone's face)--in a hostile sense (cf. Nah. 2:2; Ps. 21:13).[3] For the time being, the last definition will be tentatively adopted.

---

[1] BDB, pp. 818-819.  [2] KB, II, 1767.
[3] BDB, pp. 818-819.

The term כָּל is the construct form of כֹּל, already
seen in this verse, and meaning here "the whole of," or
"all."[1]   The following term, אֶחָיו, is the plural construct
of the masculine noun אָח, "brother," plus the third person,
masculine singular possessive pronominal suffix, and means
"his brethren."   The Hebrew אָח, "brother," has several
nuances, and BDB classifies this occurrence as "indefinite =
relative," covering anything from a nephew (cf. Gen. 29:12,
15) to a member of the same tribe (cf. Num. 16:10), or of
the same people (cf. Ex. 2:11).   The term is also used to
describe the relationships between Israel and Judah (2 Sam.
19:42), and between Israel and Edom (cf. Num. 20:14),
between friends (David and Jonathan; cf. 1 Sam. 1:26), and
between allies (cf. Amos 1:9).[2]

Finally, the verse terminates with the verb, יִשְׁכֹּן,
from שָׁכַן, "settle down, abide, dwell" (cf. Aram. שְׁכֵין,
and Syr. ܫܟܢ "dwell"; also Ar. سكن "rest, dwell").[3]   BDB
assigns the verb the value of "abide, dwell" in verse 12
(cf. Job 18:15; Jer. 5:17, 48:28).[4]   This verb is rather
consistently rendered in the Vss as follows:   T[O] יִשְׁרֵי,
"dwell"[5]; Vulgate figet tabernacula, "fix his tent"[6]; OL

---

[1]BDB, p. 481 (definition 1a).

[2]Ibid., p. 26 (definition 2).   [3]Ibid., p. 1015.

[4]Ibid.   [5]Jastrow, Dictionary, II, 1630.

[6]Simpson, Dictionary, pp. 247, 591.

commorabitur, "remain, dwell on,"[1] or habitabit, "dwell"[2];
S رُهُوَّل, "dwell"[3]; Arabic يَسْكُنُ بِ, "dwell in."[4]  The
third segment of verse 12 then (while withholding a final
verdict on the precise translation) can be translated very
literally for now as "and he shall dwell against the face
of all his brethren."

## Syntactical Exegesis

Some questions of syntax were touched upon in the
preceding section on lexical exegesis.  Some further matters
which have not yet been discussed as well as some familiar
ones which require further comment will be considered here.

## Verse 11

"Behold"

The wording of the opening clause of verse 11 as
uttered by the angel of the Lord calls for comment.  The
emphatic demonstrative particle[5] הִנֵּה (meaning literally,
"here," but through usage having acquired the interjec-
tional value of "behold"[6]) may take a pronominal suffix

---

[1]Simpson, Dictionary, p. 120.    [2]Ibid., p. 271.

[3]Smith, Dictionary, pp. 595-596.

[4]Hava, Dictionary, p. 388.

[5]E. Kautzsch, ed., Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (second
English edition; reprinted; Oxford:  Clarendon Press, 1970),
p. 359, sec. 116 n. (Hereinafter:  Kautzsch, Grammar.)

[6]Ibid., p. 297, sec. 100 c.

(as in the case in point) which, according to Gesenius, "would be the natural subject of a noun clause."[1]

Davidson[2] and Gesenius[3] both mention the Arabic parallel of اِنَّ clauses. If the Hebrew were following this pattern, the pronominal suffix attached to הִנֵּה must technically be seen as an accusative, governed by הִנֵּה and therefore not properly able to function as the subject of the noun clause "you are pregnant."[4] Davidson, apparently drawing the parallel with Arabic, says that the /understood/ construction here is actually הִנָּךְ אַתְּ הָרָה,[5] and so he translates "see thou art with child!".[6] Young, apparently inferring the parallel with Arabic, and yet not supplying an understood אַתְּ to form the noun clause, translates "Behold thee--pregnant. . . ."[7]

---

[1]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 469, sec. 147 b.

[2]A. B. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax (third edition; reprinted; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973), p. 163, sec. 117, Rem. 2. (Hereinafter: Davidson, Syntax.)

[3]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 469, sec. 147 b.

[4]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 469, sec. 147 b; cf. also W. Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language (third edition; reprinted; Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), vol. I, pp. 284-285, sec. 362 l-n; II, 78-83, sec. 36; esp. Rem. g.

[5]Davidson, Syntax, p. 163, sec. 117, Rem. 2.

[6]Ibid., p. 163, sec. 117.

[7]E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol. 1 of 3 vols. in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament, R. K. Harrison, ed. (second edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 284.

However, Kautzsch incisively observes that, since
Hebrew has long lost its case endings, one has no way of
evaluating how the pronominal suffix attached to הָרָה was
once viewed.[1]  Interestingly, although Kautzsch and
Davidson disagree in theory, they seem to agree in trans-
lation.[2]  Thus, it becomes a moot point whether, in this
case, one sees ךְ- as the subject of a noun clause with
הָרָה (as this writer does) or whether one sees with
Davidson the suffix as an accusative governed by the
demonstrative particle, and mentally supplies a "you under-
stood" to complete the noun clause.

## "You Shall Bear"

The next clause, בֵּן וְיֹלַדְתְּ, "and you shall bear a
son," presents a situation in which a participle functions
as a predicate.  Gesenius notes that following a subject
introduced by הִנֵּה, a participle functioning as a predicate
is especially likely to carry a future connotation if, as
is the case here, the event is announced as imminent or near
at hand, and sure to happen, in which case it is called
futurum instans (cf. Gen. 6:17; Isa. 7:14).[3]

As for the curious pointing of וְיֹלַדְתְּ, Gesenius
terms this phenomenon the "ground-form" of וְיֹלַדְתְּ (waw plus

---

[1]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 469, sec. 147 b, n. 2.

[2]Ibid., p. 359, sec. 116 n.

[3]Ibid., p. 359, sec. 116 p.

the active participle, feminine singular of ‏יֹלֵדָה‎), which occurs elsewhere in the same kind of context (cf. Gen. 17:19; Isa. 7:14).[1]

## "And You Shall Call"

The use of the <u>waw</u> consecutive plus ‏קָרָאתָ‎ at this juncture to describe a future occurrence (the naming of Ishmael) is an example of the use of <u>waw</u> plus the perfect tense of a verb following a participle (in this case, ‏יֹלֵדָה‎). Gesenius notes that this use of the <u>waw</u> consecutive plus perfect, following a participle in order to express future actions is especially common when the participle is introduced by ‏הִנֵּה‎, as is true of the case in point.[2]

## "/To/ Your Affliction"

The function of ‏אֶל‎ in verse 11 is to denote the indirect object, just as ‏ל‎ often does.[3]

<center>Verse 12</center>

## "A Wild Ass of a Man"

The term ‏פֶּרֶא אָדָם‎ is genitive (possessive) in form, but not in sense. Very often, the absolute term of a

---

[1]Kautzsch, <u>Grammar</u>, p. 276, sec. 94 <u>f</u> and p. 223, sec. 80 <u>d</u>.

[2]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 333-334, sec. 112, no. 3, <u>c</u>, (ε).

[3]Williams, <u>Syntax</u>, p. 53, sec. 300 (cf. also p. 48, sec. 269).

genitive construction, rather than showing possession of the
term with which it is in construct, instead further defines,
specifies or names the term immediately preceding it.[1] Such
a construction is sometimes called genitivus explicativus or
genitivus epexegeticus, or genitivus appositionis.[2] In
fact, such a construction often performs the same function
that an adjective-plus-noun construction does in English
(cf. Isa. 37:22; 41:14).[3] Such is the case with פֶּרֶא אָדָם.
The expression (a genit. explicativus geni) can be rendered
"a wild ass of a man" or, more awkwardly, "a wild ass man"
(cf. Prov. 15:20; 21:20, where כְּסִיל אָדָם, literally "a
fool of a man," may be rendered "a foolish man"[4]; cf. also
Skinner here: "the wild ass of humanity"[5]).

"His Hand. . . ."

Immediately following the prediction of Ishmael's
wild ass-like nature, the Hebrew text reads as follows:
יָדוֹ בַכֹּל, "His hand shall be against all." In Hebrew,
(non-relative) noun clauses are often used to describe
attendant or simultaneous circumstances under which a

---

[1]Kautzsch, Grammar, pp. 415-416, sec. 128, also l
and k; and Davidson, Syntax, p. 32, sec. 24; also a.

[2]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 416, sec. 128 k.

[3]Davidson, Syntax, p. 32, sec. 24; also a.

[4]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 416, sec. 128 k-l.

[5]Skinner, Genesis, p. 287.

certain event or occurrence will or has come to pass.[1]
Such clauses are very often introduced by a waw of accompaniment, but it is sometimes omitted (as it is here).
Furthermore, the predicate of the circumstantial noun clause may in fact be a prepositional phrase.[2] Such phrases are closely governed by a preceding substantive,[3] in this case פֶּרֶא אָדָם. In a similar way, the following clause וְיָדוֹ בַכֹּל is a circumstantial noun clause parallel to, and coordinate with, the preceding clause. However, this clause begins with the waw of accompaniment described above.

Having understood these two clauses as circumstantial, the exegete must read them as subordinate to, simultaneous with, and attendant to the preceding clause, "And he shall be a wild ass of a man."

## "All. . . All"

Ishmael's hand will be against כֹּל and the hand of כֹּל will be against him. In these two occurrences, this noun appears, as was mentioned earlier, in its absolute state, thus retaining its wider connotation. Here it can be rendered each time by "all, everyone."

---

[1]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 489, sec. 156 a.

[2]Williams, Syntax, p. 83, sec. 494.

[3]Kautzsch, Grammar, p. 489, sec. 156 b.

## Concluding View

Having established the text in the second chapter, it was then possible to make a thorough lexical and syntactical analysis of the target passage. Having done that, the stage has been set for the role of the interpreter. To this task the next chapter is devoted.

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT

## Writer's Approach Explained

Now that the text of Genesis 16:11-12 has been
established through examination of text-critical matters
and comparison with some of the ancient Vss, and subse-
quently, that the passage has been thoroughly analyzed
both lexically and syntactically, it is time to reap the
fruit of these labors.  The passage must be accurately
interpreted on the basis of the ground-work which has been
laid in the foregoing chapters.

As has been alluded to earlier, this writer is an
adherent of the grammatico-historical method of interpret-
ing the Scriptures,[1] believing that they are God-breathed
plenarily and verbally in the originals.[2]  However, this
paper will consider opinions from adherents to other views
in order to test this writer's conclusions, as well as to
avoid neglecting any helpful insights that such a wider

---

[1]A. Berkeley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible
(reprinted; Grand Rapids:  Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing
Company, 1970), p. 40.

[2]E. J. Young, Thy Word Is Truth (reprinted; Grand
Rapids:  Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp.
20, 40-41; and Gleason L. Archer, Jr., A Survey of Old
Testament Introduction (reprinted; Chicago:  Moody Press,
1968), pp. 16-19.  (Hereinafter:  Archer, Survey.)

consideration might provide. Because of the nature of the contents of the target passage, verses 11 and 12 will be considered separately.

## Statement Concerning Authorship

One's view of the origin and provenance of the Bible, the Pentateuch, and especially the earlier chapters of Genesis, drastically affects the interpretive "blinders" with which he approaches Genesis 16:11-12.[1] An in depth discussion of matters of introduction to Genesis are beyond the scope of this paper. Let it be said here, however, that this writer, along with Young,[2] Archer,[3] and Unger,[4] views the Pentateuch as having been written by Moses.

## Larger Context of Target Passage

The context of Genesis 16:11-12 should be considered. The target passage falls into the broader context of the life of Abraham (Gen. 11-25), Ishmael's life being intertwined with that patriarch's by virtue of being the eldest of his offspring. Subsequent to the announcement of

---

[1]Young, Thy Word Is Truth, pp. 5-7.

[2]Idem, An Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 47.

[3]Archer, Survey, pp. 108-109.

[4]Merrill F. Unger, Introductory Guide to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951), p. 76.

Ishmael's birth in Genesis 16, this Bible character is taken up again in Genesis 21, when he and his mother are thrust out from Abraham's household, and in Genesis 25, when he attends Abraham's burial.

In the former chapter, an incident is described which throws some light on Ishmael's character (his mockery of Isaac, cf. Gen. 21:9).[1] In both passages, information is given concerning Ishmael's later life, and concerning his descendants (cf. Gen. 21:20-21; 25:12-18). Ishmael's name, together with a list of his progeny, reappears within the large chronology found in 1 Chronicles 1 (cf. vv. 28-32). In accordance with sound hermeneutical principles, reference will be made, when appropriate, to such related passages in order to shed more light on the meaning of the target passage.[2]

## Verse 11 Considered

### Interpretation

As far as interpretation is concerned, verse 11 is rather straightforward. The angel of the Lord tells the

---

[1]John Peter Lange, "Genesis, or the First Book of Moses," translated and edited by Tayler Lewis and A. Gosman, in Vol. I of Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, edited by J. P. Lange (reprinted; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), pp. 457-458. (Hereinafter: Lange, "Genesis.")

[2]Cf. Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics (reprinted; Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), pp. 186-187. I.e., the principle of comparison of parallel passages is the one specifically in the writer's mind at this point.

runaway Hagar that she is to name the son whom she will
bear Ishmael ("God hears") because God has heard her
distress.  However, several matters in this verse are
worthy of consideration:  the identity of the angel of the
Lord; the originality of the name יְהֹוָה in this text; the
precise meaning of עֳנֵךְ; and the form-critical school's
analysis of the subject matter of the passage.

## The Angel of the Lord

An in-depth discussion of the identity of the angel
of the Lord is beyond the scope of this paper.  However,
it should be noted from the immediate context that, (1)
Genesis 16:7 marks the first appearance of this term,[1]
which appears so prominently in the Old Testament (cf. Gen.
22:11,12; Ex. 3:2-15, etc.)[2]; and that, (2) the statement
by this entity in verse 10 indicates, as is abundantly
supported in later Scriptures (cf. Gen. 31:11,13; 48:15,16,
etc.), that the angel of the Lord is indeed deity.[3]

## The Divine Name Yahweh

Although in the second chapter it was stated that
one common view among documentarian scholars was to view

---

[1]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 1099.

[2]J. G. Murphy, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary
on the Book of Genesis (reprinted; Minneapolis:  James Pub-
lications, n.d.), p. 302.  (Hereinafter:  Murphy, Genesis.)

[3]Ibid.

Genesis 16:4-14 as having come from the pen of both J and E, with verses 11 and 12 being Yahwistic, it was also recognized at the time that documentarians are not always unanimously agreed in their parcelling out of the diverse parts of the Pentateuch to their various supposed sources.[1]

One such scholar who denies the integrity of the text, O. Loretz, asserts, in rebutting Dahood's proposed repointing of the passage (mentioned in Chapter II), that the sections referring to Yahweh are actually later glosses. Loretz, then, sees this passage as basically Elohistic, but containing later Yahwistic glosses. Loretz identifies the following sections as later glosses: v. 11 מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה ("the angel of the Lord"), and כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל־עָנְיֵךְ ("for the Lord has heard your distress"); and in v. 12, the entire last clause beginning with וְעַל־פְּנֵי ("and against the face of. . .").[2] Loretz assumes a multiple source for this passage, as he also assumes the fact that the deity who originally appeared to Hagar was El rather than Yahweh.[3]

---

[1]Cf. Archer, Survey, pp. 73-95, for a brief but informative survey of modern schools of higher criticism.

[2]Oswald Loretz, "Repointing und Redivision in Genesis 16,11," in Band 8 of Ugarit-Forschungen, K. Bergerhof, M. Dietrich, and O. Loretz, eds. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1976), pp. 452-453. (Hereinafter: Loretz, "Repointing." Thanks are due to Jonathan Bosse, student at Grace Theological Seminary, for translating this article.)

[3]Ibid., p. 452.

Ironically, in his apparently sarcastic criticism of Dahood's repointing of the MT in this passage, he opposes him, not on the cogent basis of Dahood's ungrounded disregard for the pointing of the MT, but on the charge that he is changing the /assumed/ history (i.e., JE) of the text.[1] Due to the unsubstantiated nature of his assumptions and arguments, this writer finds Loretz's line of reasoning in this connection to be somewhat less than convincing. On what single factual historical basis does he posit his objection to Dahood's receiving the consonantal text of the MT as original in this instance?[2]

## The Meaning of עָנֵיךְ:
### Ancient Vss

As was noted in Chapter II, upon comparison of the MT with the Vss, the interpretations vary as to what exactly God "heard" in this passage. T[O] would lead one to think it was Hagar's prayer (צְלוֹתִיךְ:); the Vulgate, her bodily pain or torture (adflictionem tuam); the OL, her abjectness or submissiveness (humilitatem tuam); the Arabic, her call or prayer from her lips (دُعَاكَ مِنْ شَفَتَيْكَ); and S, her oppression (ܣܘܚܩܟ).

---

[1]Loretz, "Repointing," p. 453.

[2]Ibid., p. 452.

Modern Translations

  The lexical values for the Hebrew term are "afflic-
tion," and "poverty."  Lisowsky reveals that the same term
is used in a similar connection in Exodus 3:17, of Israel's
trouble in Egypt--"I will bring you up out of the affliction
of Egypt" (מִצְרַיִם מֵעֳנִי).[1]  If the ASV is correct in its
translation of Exodus 3:17 (above), it would appear to be
correct in Genesis 16:11 as well.  The AV and the NASB use
this translation also.

  Gosman renders the term "distress,"[2] as do Keil,[3]
Leupold (who suggests that pleas to God for help may be in
view here),[4] and Skinner.[5]  Speiser opts for "woes,"[6] and
Murphy for "humiliation."[7]  This writer prefers
"affliction."

---

[1]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 1099.

[2]Lange, "Genesis," p. 415.

[3]C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch,
translated by James Martin, in Vol. I of Commentary on
the Old Testament (reprinted; Grand Rapids:  Wm. B.
Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 220.  (Hereinafter:
Keil, Pentateuch.)

[4]H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Columbus,
Ohio:  The Wartburg Press, 1942), pp. 503-504.  (Herein-
after:  Leupold, Genesis.)

[5]Skinner, Genesis, p. 287.

[6]E. A. Speiser, Genesis, in Vol. I of the Anchor
Bible (Garden City, New York:  Doubleday and Company, Inc.,
1964), p. 117.  (Hereinafter:  Speiser, Genesis.)

[7]Murphy, Genesis, p. 303.

Observation

This example illustrates something of the varying accuracy of the different Vss, as well as the hints into the meanings of difficult words that they can sometimes provide.

Form-Critical Approach

Gunkel, one of the pioneers of the form-critical approach to the Old Testament, held that Genesis 12-50 is composed of patriarchal sagas--e.g., the life of Abraham--dealing with the ancestors and the origin of Israel.[1] Beneath this large category of patriarchal sagas he subdivided many lesser categories of saga motifs. Gunkel saw Genesis 16 as a juncture where several kinds of these subcategories of saga motifs could be found. Such motifs (as are relevant to the target passage) include: the "ethnographic" (dealing with relations between tribes--here, presumably, between the Israelites and the Ishmaelites); the "ethnological" (dealing with the origin of a people--here, the Ishmaelites); the "etymological" (dealing with the origin of Ishmael's name).[2]

---

[1]Jay A. Wilcoxen, "Narrative," in Old Testament Form Criticism, John H. Hayes, ed. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), pp. 57, 61. (Hereinafter: Wilcoxen, "Narrative.")

[2]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

## Resumé

Verse 11, rather simply, is the prophecy of Ishmael's birth and of his name, along with an explanation of the reason for the choice of the name. The message, delivered by the angel of the Lord to Hagar, a run-away bond-servant, is a poignant display of undeserved divine mercy.

## Verse 12 Considered

### Parameters

Verse 12 is as enigmatic as it is intriguing. Several books could easily be written were all the related issues raised by this verse to be pursued in full. Certain important problems will be raised in an attempt to interpret properly this verse in the light of the rest of Scripture as well as Near Eastern history. However, no claim is made that such problems have been dealt with fully here.

### Procedure

In analyzing this verse, the three obvious segments of thought will each be considered separately. Then the entire verse will be considered, especially as to its significance with regard to the larger biblical and secular historical picture.

Interpretation

"Wild Ass"

Biblical Concept

"And he shall be a wild ass among men." As was
noted in the last chapter, the use of a genitive construc-
tion in a descriptive sense is not uncommon in Hebrew.
Furthermore, other references to the wild ass (פֶּרֶא) are
also not unknown, either in the Hebrew Bible or in other
ancient Near Eastern sources.[1] The wild ass is spoken of
at some length in Job, where the term פֶּרֶא occurs more
frequently than in any other book (four times:  6:5; 11:12;
24:5; 39:5).[2]

Perhaps the best biblical passage describing the
characteristics of the wild ass is Job 39:5-8 (ASV):

> Who hath sent out the wild ass free?
> Or who hath loosed the bonds of the swift ass,
> Whose home I have made the wilderness,
> And the salt land his dwelling-place?
> He scorneth the tumult of the city,
> Neither heareth he the shoutings of the driver.
> The range of the mountains is his pasture,
> And he searcheth after every green thing.

Extent of Prophecy

The patent image here of the unbridled and roaming
wild ass conjures up a vivid image in the reader's mind.

---

[1]F. Charles Fensham, "The Wild Ass in the Aramean
Treaty between Bar-Ga'ayah and Mati'el," Journal of Near
Eastern Studies, 22:3 (July, 1963), 185-86.  (Hereinafter:
Fensham, "Wild Ass.")

[2]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 1183.

This writer takes the parallel reference in Genesis 25:18 to Ishmael's descendants[1] as well as the reference to Hagar's promised numerous offspring in Genesis 16:10,[2] as confirmation that the descriptions of Genesis 16:12 are intended by the angel of the Lord to apply to Ishmael's descendants, as well as to Ishmael himself.

Modern Concept

Commentators are not slow to make the reasonable conclusion that the idea intended in the angel of the Lord's metaphor is that Ishmael will become a wandering nomad, such as have traditionally made their home in the deserts of the Near East for millennia.[3] Some such who make this connection are Speiser (who would translate here "a wild colt of a man"),[4] Skinner (who suggests, on the basis of S and Targum Jonathan, the possible translation

---

[1]Cf. Skinner, Genesis, p. 287; and Speiser, Genesis, p. 118.

[2]Cf. Murphy, Genesis, p. 304; and Leupold, Genesis, pp. 504-505.

[3]I. Eph'al, "'Ishmael' and 'Arab(s)'," Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 35:4 (October, 1976), 227-228. (Hereinafter: Eph'al, "Ishmael.")

[4]Speiser, Genesis, p. 118.

"the wild ass of humanity"),[1] Murphy,[2] Leupold,[3] Keil,[4] Lange,[5] and Gosman.[6]

Ancient Concept

More convincing than the association in the minds of recent scholars of the concept of the wild ass as a description of the desert nomad (Beduin), is a similar association in the minds of men of the ancient Near East. Fensham enumerates the associations of the wild ass with desert nomadism contained in ancient treaties (e.g., the vassal-treaties of Esarhaddon, as pointed out by J. Nougayrol and D. J. Wiseman).[7] For residents of the ancient Near East, the wild ass, rather prominent in ancient Near Eastern literature (cf. The Gilgamesh Epic[8]), probably conjured up an image similar to that which the wild horse conjures up in the American mind.

---

[1] Skinner, Genesis, p. 287.

[2] Murphy, Genesis, p. 304.

[3] Leupold, Genesis, p. 504.

[4] Keil, Pentateuch, p. 220.

[5] Lange, "Genesis," p. 417.

[6] Ibid., cf. footnote (column 1).

[7] Fensham, "Wild Ass," pp. 185-186.

[8] E. A. Speiser, "The Epic of Gilgamesh," in The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts, James B. Pritchard, ed. (reprinted; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 60-61.

Recapitulation

Desert nomadism, then, would characterize Ishmael and his descendants. Genesis 21:20-21 confirms that, upon his departure from the household of Abram, Ishmael took up his abode in the wilderness of Paran. Furthermore, in Genesis 25:18, it is stated that his descendants dwelt from Havilah to Shur, which, according to Leupold, includes the sandy regions east of Egypt[1]--a wilderness area.

The qualities of the wild ass, as delineated in Job 39, include freedom from bondage, freedom to roam, scorn for the sedentary urban life, and a need to rove in search of sustenance. Such qualities quite aptly fit the picture of the Beduin. The picture is not all bad; in fact, it is rather romantic in some respects, and Keil so presents the picture in glowing terms.[2] However, the rest of verse 12 must modify any such romantic notions.

A Man of Contention

The next two clauses, shown in the last chapter to be grammatically subordinate to and temporally simultaneous with the clause discussed above, are quite striking. This Ishmael is going to be a "wild-ass man,"[3] whose life will

---

[1]Leupold, Genesis, p. 700.

[2]Keil, Pentateuch, p. 220.

[3]Ibid.

be characterized by his having his hand against all men, with a similar reciprocal response on the part of all men. Even the literal translation of this Hebrew idiom suggests hostility. A survey of four other יָד plus בְּ passages chosen from Lisowsky at random[1] can help to better secure the thrust of this phrase.

In Genesis 37:27, Judah counters his brothers' evil desire to slay Joseph (v. 18) with the alternative of selling him into slavery, exhorting, "and let not our hand be upon him" (ASV). In this case, the Hebrew idiom of יָד plus בְּ is synonymous with killing. In 1 Samuel 18, in a similar context, Saul uses the same expression three times in connection with his wishes for David's death. He says to himself "Let not my hand be upon him," and twice mentions his desire to see "the hand of the Philistines. . . be upon/against him /David/" (1 Sam. 18:17,21; ASV). Again the idiom in question is used synonymously with killing, again in an illicit context.

The same expression is used anthropomorphically of Yahweh as well in the Old Testament, in describing His punitive destruction of rebels. Moses, recounting the fate of the generation of Israel's fighting men who died in the wilderness, uses the same יָד plus בְּ idiom of the Lord (Dt. 2:15). Later, Samuel warns the people of Israel that

---

[1]Lisowsky, Konkordanz, p. 568.

if, after being granted an earthly king, they rebel against the Lord, His hand will be against them (1 Sam. 12:15).

From this survey of passages, it can be readily seen that the expression of "having one's hand against" another is a strong Old Testament expression. Actually it is a euphemism for slaying (or, at least, attempting to slay) someone (either with evil or righteous motives), expressed by means of synecdoche. One can thus say accurately that Ishmael's life will be characterized by contention with his brethren, as Murphy notes.[1] As the word order suggests, one can say even more specifically that Ishmael will not be a man of peace, but an aggressor against all others, with the result that all others will respond in kind.[2] Leupold asserts, "This idiom, of course, conveys the idea of being continually at loggerheads with others."[3]

Over all, these two "hand" clauses are the least problematic of any in verse 12. Ishmael and his descendants are to be at the center of bloodshed and conflict.

## Ishmael's Third Characteristic

The most unyielding clause in the entire target passage is the last one. The compound term, עַל־פְּנֵי, as

---

[1]Murphy, Genesis, p. 304.

[2]Leupold, Genesis, p. 504.    [3]Ibid.

was noted in the last chapter, represents a wide range[1] of
meaning.  Moreover, few if any questions regarding the
meaning of "all his brethren" (אֶחָיו־כָל) are ever raised.
Actually, however, as was noted in Chapter III, this term
can represent a dismaying variety of meanings.  Some ques-
tions have been raised as to the intended meaning of
יִשְׁכֹּן,[2] usually taken here as "settle, dwell."  The net
result is a variety of different interpretations for this
verse.  These should be briefly surveyed.  The verse is
variously taken to refer to Ishmael's geographical location,
personal character, and manner of life.

Geographical Location

Some take this verse to be dealing with the location
in which Ishmael and his descendants will dwell.  The
interpretations here include the following.

To the East of.--BDB asserts that, in describing
localities in the sense of "in front of," עַל־פְּנֵי usually
(though not always) is identical to the expression "to the
east of," as in the cases of 1 Kings 6:3 and 7:6[3] where
עַל־פְּנֵי is translated by the ASV as "in front of," and
"before," respectively.  They also cite Genesis 16:12 and

---

[1]Cf. Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpreta-
tion (third edition; reprinted; Grand Rapids:  Baker Book
House, 1976), p. 131.

[2]Speiser, Genesis, p. 118.    [3]BDB, p. 818.

25:18b as such uses of עַל־פְּנֵי (although allowing that the "collateral idea of defiance" may be intended in these two cases as well).[1] Keil asserts that the idea of "to the east of" is part, but not all, of the meaning intended by this term.[2] Skinner, however, denies that a geographical notation is recorded in this clause.[3] The parallel in Genesis 25:18 seems to use עַל־פְּנֵי in the same, enigmatic way, but with the verb נָפַל, "fall, lie."[4]

In the Presence of.--Another geographical interpretation of עַל־פְּנֵי is that which takes the expression in the sense of "in the sight of" (cf. Ps. 9:19; Lev. 10:13).[5] Murphy seems to take this view (although he also includes the concept of independence), asserting that Ishmael will dwell "among all his brethren."[6] Lange also includes the idea of "in the presence of" in his translation and interpretation of this clause.[7]

Personal Character

It is possible to take this verse to be referring to another, or, in greater detail, to an already

[1]BDB, p. 818.    [2]Keil, Pentateuch, p. 220.

[3]Skinner, Genesis, p. 287.

[4]BDB, p. 656.  (In this context, BDB would render this verb as "settle," cf. p. 657.)

[5]KB, II, 704.    [6]Murphy, Genesis, p. 304.

[7]Lange, "Genesis," p. 417.

mentioned personal characteristic of Ishmael.  Examples
should be cited.

Independence.--As mentioned above, Murphy includes
the concept of independence in the term פְּנֵי־עַל, as well
as the geographical idea of "among."[1]  Keil, likewise,
while including the connotation of "to the east of," seems
to lay more of the weight of his interpretation here on the
idea that "Ishmael would maintain an independent standing
before (in the presence of) all the descendants of Abraham,"
citing history as a proof of this view.[2]  Likewise, Lange
asserts that the idea here is that Ishmael will dwell in the
presence of his brethren as a free man.  Following Keil, he
also marshalls historic facts (the control by the Beduin
Arabs of the East Arabian Peninsula) in support of this
view.[3]

Defiance.--As is clearly demonstrated from Job 1:11b
(ASV:  "and he shall renounce thee to thy face"), עַל־פְּנֵי
can have the connotation of defiance.[4]  Thus, Leupold,
although allowing for inclusion of the connotation "to the
east of," throws the weight of his interpretation on the
idea of defiance.  Offering the possible translations of

---

[1]Murphy, Genesis, p. 304.

[2]Keil, Pentateuch, p. 220.

[3]Lange, "Genesis," p. 417.

[4]Leupold, Genesis, p. 505.

"upon the face of," and "against the face of," he aptly
comments:

> Apparently, the fellow himself as well as his descen-
> dants will not be of a peaceable disposition.  We
> should say, he will carry a chip on his shoulder and
> have his finger on the trigger.[1]

Skinner, with some hesitation, also cites Job 1:11, and
states that the idea of defiance seems to be expressed here.
His uncertainty is based on the belief that the verb יִשְׁכֹּן
is with difficulty connected with such a connotation.[2]

Manner of Life

Although it is perhaps with a fine line of distinc-
tion, still another connotation to the last clause can be
found, which views the final expression as more of a
description of Ishmael's Beduin life-style, than an analysis
of his character.  Speiser suggests the translation "in the
face of."

While he also cites Job 1:11 (also 6:28 and 21:31)
for the idea of defiance, Speiser further cites Deuteronomy
21:16, where עַל־פְּנֵי is used in a similar way, but with
the additional connotation of "in disregard of" ("he shall
not be able to give the birthright. . . in disregard of
. . . the /older/ son. . .").[3]  He also cites in this

---

[1]Leupold, Genesis, p. 505.

[2]Skinner, Genesis, p. 287.

[3]Speiser, Genesis, p. 118.   (Translation Speiser's;
emphasis this writer's.)

connection the parallel passage in Genesis 25:18, for which
he offers the novel translation of "they /Ishmael's descen-
dants/ shall make raids against all their kinsmen"
(עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־אֶחָיו נָפָל), instead of the usual render-
ings along the lines of dwelling to the east of or in the
presence of all their brethren (cf. Leupold,[1] Keil,[2]
et al).[3] The idea in both passages, Speiser asserts, is
the description of "a typically Bedouin mode of life,"
which customary translations miss, due to what Speiser sees
as a disregard for idiom and context.

If Speiser's new approach to Genesis 25:18 is sound
(and נָפָל can certainly be used in the sense of "fall upon =
attack"),[4] then, on the basis of the valid hermeneutical
principle of consulting parallel passages (after consulting
the immediate context),[5] he has some support for his case
regarding Genesis 16:12.

In addition to his reliance on Genesis 25:18,
Speiser's interpretation of Genesis 16:12 is also based on
a somewhat different translation of יִשְׁכֹּן. He renders

---

[1]Leupold, Genesis, p. 700.

[2]Keil, Pentateuch, p. 265.

[3]Speiser, Genesis, p. 118.

[4]BDB, p. 657. (Definition 4 a. However, BDB lists
no occurrence of this use of נָפַל with עַל־פְּנֵי.)

[5]Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation,
pp. 140-142.

verse 12 as follows: "And in the face of all his kin he shall camp."[1] Now, עַל־פְּנֵי כָל is not accorded the value of "to camp" per se in BDB,[2] but a Bedouin's manner of "dwelling" is to "camp." (The Qal stem of this verb is not used with עַל־פְּנֵי anywhere else in the Old Testament.[3])

Furthermore, the Peshitta renders this verb in verse 12 by (ܠܠܐ) ܢܶܫܪܶܐ, from the stem ܫܪܐ, which in its intransitive use can have the values, "to pitch /a camp/, encamp, halt (with the preposition ܥܠ) by, opposite, against," hence "to besiege."[4] Thus, it is possible to add some support to Speiser's handling of verse 12 from a valid alternate translation of S.

This writer, having long puzzled over the final clause of verse 12, and having read many unsatisfying translations and interpretations thereof, finds Speiser's suggestions, in light of both the immediate context and the close parallel in Genesis 25, the most compelling.

### Resumé of Interpretation

Ishmael, then, is to be characterized by his wild ass nature--untameable and unrestrained in his love of

---

[1] Speiser, Genesis, p. 117.

[2] BDB, pp. 1014-15. (It is listed under definition 2 a "to abide, dwell," of men.)

[3] Cf. Lisowsky, Konkordanz, pp. 1433-34.

[4] Smith, Dictionary, pp. 595-596.

roaming the regions of the desert.  He and his descendants are to be Beduins.  They will be aggressive towards all men, and perpetual mutual conflict will be the result.  He shall, in true Beduin fashion, make his camp in defiant disregard of his brethren, even including in this disregard, the cold-blooded intent to raid them as part of his livelihood.

## Wider Significance of the Passage

From this Bible passage, and particularly the parallels in Genesis 21 and 25 (but cf. also Gen. 37:25, 27-28; 39:1; Jud. 8:24; Ps. 83:7[1]), as well as from many secular sources as ancient as the ninth century Monolith Inscription of Shalmanezer III (which mentions Gindibu "the Arab"),[2] and as modern as yesterday's newspaper, a myriad of questions and implications can be raised.  Only two questions will be raised and briefly treated here: (1) who is meant by Ishmael's "brethren" mentioned in Genesis 16:12, and (2) what is the relationship between the descendants of Ishmael and the Arabs?

---

[1] G. M. Landes, "Ishmaelites," in Vol. 2 of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 748-749.

[2] Eph'al, "Ishmael," pp. 227-228.

His Brethren

Problem

Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar the Egyptian (cf. Gen. 16:1), and the half-brother of Isaac. Furthermore, Ishmael married an Egyptian woman (Gen. 21:21). Also, Genesis 16:12 indicates that Ishmael and his descendants are to become Beduins--inhabitants of the wilderness. As was noted in Chapter II, the term "brother" in the Old Testament has a large variety of uses.

Commentators' Views

From the context of the life of Abraham (cf. esp. Gen. 21) the most obvious choice for the interpretation of the term "brethren" is the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, and Lange[1] and Keil[2] so interpret. Skinner more generally interprets the term to mean the Ishmaelites' "settled brethren."[3] Murphy interprets the term quite widely, referring it to the Joktanites (descendants of Heber; cf. Gen. 10:25), whom he asserts composed the original thirteen tribes of the Arabs (based on Arab

---

[1]Lange, "Genesis," p. 417.

[2]Keil, Pentateuch, p. 220.

[3]Skinner, Genesis, p. 288.

tradition?[1]), as well as the Palgites (from Peleg), among whom are numbered the descendants of Abraham (cf. Gen. 11:18-26).[2]  Speiser appropriately translates the term as "kin,"[3] which is loose, and allows the term to function rather broadly.

## Writer's View

In considering this problem, this writer would want to exclude from the category of "his brethren" neither the Israelites, nor any contemporary non-Ishmaelite desert-dwellers (e.g., the Moabites and the Ammonites), nor the Egyptians, who, although they are today considered to be Arabs culturally, really are not racially (for the most part), and whom the Beduin Arabs have conquered as recently as A.D. 640.[4]

---

[1]Cf. Eph'al, "Ishmael," p. 234; cf. Edward William Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon in Eight Parts (reprinted; New York:  Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1956), Book I, Part 5, p. 1993.  (Hereinafter:  Lane, Lexicon.)

[2]Murphy, Genesis, p. 304.

[3]Speiser, Genesis, p. 117.

[4]M. A. Shaban, Islamic History, A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132):  A New Interpretation (Cambridge:  The Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 34.  Cf. also Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present (tenth edition; New York:  Macmillan, 1970), pp. 10-12, 174-175, 232.

## Ishmaelites and Arabs

### Eph῾al

A difficult problem to handle adequately in a short space is the question of the relationship between the two groups known as the Ishmaelites and the Arabs. Eph῾al, in his treatment of the problem, effectively demonstrates that, within the scope of the Old Testament one is by no means required to take the two terms as identical.[1] However, that the two groups clearly overlap is missed by Eph῾al, who dismisses the Genesis 25 list of Ishmael's descendants (containing some names of Arab tribes found in Assyrian sources as ancient as the ninth century B.C.), as somewhat of an "ethnological 'midrash' on Ishmael."[2]

### Arab Tradition

Moreover, Arab tradition itself is divided; Lane notes several traditions held by the Arabs concerning their origins. Two of the traditions list Ishmael's descendants as musta῾riba, or "arabicized," while one of the traditions treats Ishmael's descendants as muta῾riba, genuine Arabs in origin.[3]

---

[1]Eph῾al, "Ishmael," pp. 226-227.   [2]Ibid., p. 228.
[3]Lane, Lexicon, Bk. I, Pt. 5, p. 1993.

## Writer's View

Since nothing in the Bible or history suggests that
Ishmael was the original Arab (in the Old Testament, a term
for desert-dweller, or Beduin),[1] and neither the Bible nor
the Arabs view the terms Arab and Ishmaelite as identical,
but rather, as overlapping, this writer feels compelled to
take a similar view.  All of today's Arabs are not--at least
not completely--descendants of Ishmael.  Even as the Bible
links the terms Midianite and Ishmaelite,[2] the sons of
Ishmael are undoubtedly one of several ethnic groups who
have over the years lost their distinct identities through
intermarriage, and who have inhabited the Near Eastern
deserts since the time of Abraham--and even before.

---

[1]Eph'al, "Ishmael," p. 227.  Cf. A. K. Irvine, "The
Arabs and Ethiopians," in Peoples of Old Testament Times,
D. J. Wiseman, ed. (Oxford:  Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 289,
who writes " Arab in the Old Testament should rather be
understood in the collective sense of 'nomads', that is
the bedouin of North Arabia, Syria, and Sinai. . . ."

[2]Eph'al, Ibid., p. 225.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

## The Text

In the foregoing treatment, Genesis 16:11-12, the target passage, was subjected to a text-critical analysis as well as to a comparison with several of the ancient Vss. It was found that the passage as it stands in the MT is highly reliable, being confirmed by the consistency of the Vss as well as by the dearth of Masoretic corrections. Even the textual apparatus of BHK, noted for its tendency to emend freely the MT, had few suggestions to offer. The only real oddity in the MT is the pointing of וְיֹלַדְתְּ, which is not even a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον, being found also in Judges 13:5 and 7.

## Exegesis

Having thus been confident that the text was established, the writer, with close reference to lexicons and grammars, as well as occasional consultation with the Vss, the commentators, and a concordance--first lexically and then syntactically--performed exegesis on the passage. Although several problems remained yet to be explained, these lay in the province of Chapter IV.

## Interpretation

### The Passage

In Chapter IV, a systematic, clause-by-clause examination of the target passage (not without consideration of the larger context) treated the most pressing questions raised either in commentaries or in the writer's own course of study.

Then answers were suggested to the problems raised, e.g., the meaning of עַל־פְּנֵי, the significance of פֶּרֶא אָדָם, the nature of Ishmael's predicted characteristics, and the meaning of the last clause, traditionally taken as meaning that Ishmael will dwell to the east of, or in defiance of his brethren. Following Speiser, a new approach to the last problem (also possibly intended by S), "and he shall encamp in the face of all his kin," was proposed. This latter translation points more to the manner of Beduin life (which includes raiding others for a livelihood) than to a geographical location or to an attitude of hostility alone (already expressed in the two previous noun clauses).

### Related Issues

From his treatment of the passage, the writer concluded that Ishmael's sons were to be found among the Beduin inhabitants of the Arabian deserts. However, the questions as to the entities intended by the term "all his brethren" as well as the question as to the degree to

which the two terms "Ishmaelite" and "Arab" are coextensive
still had to be considered.  It was decided, from context as
well as usage, that "all his brethren" should be taken in
the broadest possible terms (cf. Speiser, "all his kin").

It was further decided, both on the basis of
Eph'al's study of the biblical use of the two terms "Arab"
and "Ishmaelite," as well as on the basis of Lane's accounts
of Arab traditions concerning the same question, that the
two terms overlap.  There is no reason, biblical or other-
wise, to assume that Ishmael was the first Arab, or that the
Arabs today are completely, or even mostly, descended from
Ishmael.

Nonetheless, Ishmael's blood does flow today in Arab
veins, and included among his "kin" are the descendants of
Abraham through Isaac, both of biblical and of modern times.
Part of the explanation for the humanly irresolvable politi-
cal impasse in the Near East today undoubtedly lies in the
contents of the message related by the angel of the Lord to
a runaway, pregnant Egyptian bondslave at a well in the
desert to the east of Egypt (near Kadesh?)[1] about 4000[2]
years ago.

---

[1]Cf. Skinner, Genesis, p. 288.

[2]Cf. Battenfield, "Hebrew Stylistic Development,"
p. 95.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ap-Thomas, D. R.   A Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism.
        Second edition; reprinted.  Philadelphia:  Fortress
        Press, 1966.

Archer, Gleason L., Jr.   A Survey of Old Testament Intro-
        duction.  Reprinted.  Chicago:  Moody Press, 1968.

Arndt, William F., and F. Wilbur Gingrich.   A Greek-English
        Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Chris-
        tian Literature.  Fourth, revised and augmented,
        edition; reprinted.  Chicago:  The University of
        Chicago Press, 1973.

Barr, James.   Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old
        Testament.  Oxford:  The Clarendon Press, 1968.

Battenfield, James R.   "Hebrew Stylistic Development in
        Archaic Poetry:  A Text-critical and Exegetical
        Study of the Blessing of Jacob, Genesis 49:1-27."
        Unpublished doctor of theology dissertation.  Grace
        Theological Seminary, Winona Lake IN, 1976.

מקראות גדולות.  5 vols.; reprinted.  New York:  Pardes
        Publishing House, Inc., 1951.

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs, eds.   A
        Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.
        Oxford:  The Clarendon Press, 1962.

Bruce, F. F.   The Books and the Parchments.  Third edition;
        revised.  Westwood NJ:  Fleming H. Revell Company,
        1963.

Dahood, Mitchell.   "The Name yišmā''ēl in Genesis 16,11."
        Biblica, 49 (1968), 87-88.

_____.  "Northwest Semitic Notes on Genesis."  Biblica,
        55 (1974), 76-82.

Davidson, A. B.   Hebrew Syntax.  Third edition; reprinted.
        Edinburgh:  T. & T. Clark, 1973.

Delling, Gerhard. "παρθένος." In Vol. 5 of Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Friedrich. Translated and edited by G. Bromiley. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974. Pp. 826-837.

Driver, G. R. "Supposed Arabisms in the Old Testament." Journal of Biblical Literature, 55 (1936), 101-120.

Eissfeldt, Otto, ed. Liber Genesis. Fasc. 1 of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Editio funditus renovata. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969.

_____. The Old Testament: An Introduction. Translated by Peter R. Ackroyd. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.

Eph'al, I. "'Ishmael' and 'Arab(s)'." Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 35:4 (October, 1976), 225-235.

Fensham, F. Charles. "The Wild Ass in the Aramean Treaty between Bar-Ga'ayah and Mati'el." Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 22:3 (July, 1963), 185-186.

Fischer, Bonifatius, ed. Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron. Vol. 2. Freiburg, West Germany: Verlag Herder, 1951-54.

Grundmann, Walter. "ταπεινός, κτλ." In Vol. 8 of Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Friedrich. Translated and edited by G. Bromiley. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974. Pp. 1-26.

Hava, J. G. Al-Faraid Arabic-English Dictionary. Beirut: Dar-el-Mashreq, 1970.

Hicks, L. "Ishmael." In Vol. 2 of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962. Pp. 747-748.

Hitti, Philip K. History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present. Tenth edition. New York: Macmillan, 1970.

Irvine, A. K.  "The Arabs and the Ethiopians."  In Peoples
    of Old Testament Times.  Edited by D. J. Wiseman.
    Oxford:  Clarendon Press, 1973.  Pp. 287-305.

Jastrow, Marcus, comp.  A Dictionary of the Targumim, the
    Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic
    Literature.  2 vols.; reprinted.  New York:  Pardes
    Publishing House, 1950.

Kautzsch, E., ed.  Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.  Second English
    edition; reprinted.  Oxford:  The Clarendon Press,
    1970.

Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch.  The Pentateuch.  Translated
    by James Martin.  Vol. 1 of Commentary on the Old
    Testament.  Reprinted.  Grand Rapids:  William B.
    Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975.

Kittel, Rudolph, ed.  Biblia Hebraica.  Editio duodecima
    emendata.  Stuttgart:  Württembergische Bibelan-
    stalt, 1961.

Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, eds.  Lexicon in
    Veteris Testamenti Libros.  Leiden:  E. J. Brill,
    1958.

Landes, G. M.  "Ishmaelites."  In Vol. 2 of The Interpret-
    er's Dictionary of the Bible.  Nashville:  Abingdon
    Press, 1962.  Pp. 748-749.

Lane, Edward William.  An Arabic-English Lexicon in Eight
    Parts.  Reprinted.  New York:  Frederick Ungar
    Publishing Company, 1955.

Lange, John Peter.  "Genesis or The First Book of Moses."
    Translated and edited by Tayler Lewis and A. Gosman.
    In Vol. I of Commentary on the Holy Scriptures.
    Edited by J. P. Lange.  Reprinted.  Grand Rapids:
    Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.

Leupold, H. C.  Exposition of Genesis.  Columbus OH:  The
    Wartburg Press, 1942.

Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott, comps.  A Greek-
    English Lexicon.  Revised and reprinted.  Oxford:
    The Clarendon Press, 1961.

Lisowsky, Gerhard.  Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten
    Testament.  Zweite Auflage.  Stuttgart:  Württem-
    bergische Bibelanstalt, 1958.

Loretz, Oswald. "Repointing und Redivision in Genesis 16,11," in Band 8 of Ugarit-Forschungen. K. Bergerhof, M. Dietrich, and O. Loretz, eds. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1976. Pp. 452-453.

Mickelsen, A. Berkeley. Interpreting the Bible. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970.

Murphy, J. G. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Reprinted. Minneapolis: James Publications, n.d.

Olley, John W. "Biblical Exegesis in a Cross Cultural Context: The Study of the Septuagint." The South East Asia Journal of Theology, 16:1 (1975), 1-12.

Orlinsky, Harry M. "Qumran and the Present State of Old Testament Textual Studies: The Septuagint Text." Journal of Biblical Literature, 78 (March, 1959), 26-33.

Rahlfs, Alfred, ed. Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpretes. Editio quarta. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Priviligierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1950.

Ramm, Bernard. Protestant Biblical Interpretation. Third edition; reprinted. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976.

Simpson, D. P., comp. Cassell's New Latin Dictionary. Revised. New York: Funk and Wagnall's Company, 1968.

Shaban, M. A. Islamic History, A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132): A New Interpretation. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Skinner, John. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis. In The International Critical Commentary. Edited by S. R. Driver, et al. Second edition. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930.

Smith, J. Payne, ed. A Compendious Syriac Dictionary. Reprinted. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967.

Speiser, E. A.  "The Epic of Gilgamesh."  In The Ancient
        Near East:  An Anthology of Texts.  J. B. Pritchard,
        ed.  Reprinted.  Princeton:  Princeton University
        Press, 1969.  Pp. 40-75.

_____.  Genesis.  Vol. I of the Anchor Bible.  Garden
        City NY:  Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964.

Terry, Milton S.  Biblical Hermeneutics.  Reprinted.  Grand
        Rapids:  Zondervan Publishing House, 1975.

Tov, Emmanual.  "On 'Pseudo-Variants' Reflected in the
        Septuagint."  Journal of Semitic Studies, 20
        (Autumn, 1975), 165-177.

Unger, Merrill F.  Introductory Guide to the Old Testament.
        Grand Rapids:  Zondervan Publishing House, 1951.

Walton, Brian.  Biblia Sacra Polyglotta.  Tomus Primus.
        6 vols.; reprinted.  Graz, Austria:  Akademische
        Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1963.

Walvoord, John F.  Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation.
        Reprinted.  Chicago:  Moody Press, 1976.

Weber, Robertus, ed.  Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem.
        2 vols.  Stuttgart:  Württembergische Bibelanstalt,
        1969.

Weingreen, J.  A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew.
        Second edition.  Oxford:  The Clarendon Press, 1961.

Wilcoxen, J. A.  "Narrative."  In Old Testament Form
        Criticism.  John H. Hayes, ed.  San Antonio:
        Trinity University Press, 1974.  Pp. 57-98.

Williams, Ronald J.  Hebrew Syntax:  An Outline.  Second
        edition.  Toronto and Buffalo:  University of
        Toronto Press, 1976.

Wright, W.  A Grammar of the Arabic Language.  2 vols. in
        one.  Translated from the German of Caspari.
        Revised by W. R. Smith and M. J. DeGoeje.  Third
        English edition; reprinted.  Cambridge:  The
        Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Young, E. J.  The Book of Isaiah.  Vol. 1.  In the New
        International Commentary on the Old Testament.
        Edited by R. K. Harrison.  Second edition.  Grand
        Rapids:  William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
        1972.

_____. An Introduction to the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949.

_____. Thy Word Is Truth. Reprinted. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.