

In reference to a Hebrew deity: Some remarks on Lamentations

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Upon reading the Hebrew version of Lamentations in comparison to its Greek counterpart, one is immediately struck by the peculiarities, alternatives and variants when reference is made to a Hebrew deity. The Hebrew version alternates between יהוה and אדני, whilst the Greek version sticks to the term κύριος. The Hebrew version does, however, transition into an almost exclusive use of the term יהוה from Lamentations 3:55 onwards. The immediate question that comes to mind is why certain terms were used at certain intervals of the text to refer to a Hebrew deity. This study aims at coming to a deeper understanding of whether the idiosyncrasies in relation to the terms were brought about by the nature and character of lamenting, their underlying theologies or whether it is a matter of a different Vorlage. This study will therefore offer a close reading of the Hebrew text in relation to the terms used to reference a Hebrew deity, whilst the focus will fall on the textual variants when it comes to the Greek version of Lamentations.

Contribution: This study contributes on three essential levels: (1) working towards a theology of the Septuagint in general and here specific the Greek version of Lamentations, (2) by focusing on the terms used to refer to a Hebrew deity in Lamentations, the study does contribute to a different perspective of reading the Lamentations text and (3) this study contributes towards a more nuanced understanding of a Hebrew deity in general and in the Septuagint in particular.

Keywords: Lamentations; YHWH; Elohim; El; Adonaj; Kyrios; Hebrew deity.

Introduction

A deity of the Hebrew people was called by more than one name and referred to using various terms: אלהים is one such a term, which occurs in 2248 verses and is used 2601 times, with אל used only 235 times spread over 225 verses. These figures are dwarfed by the 6828 occurrences of יהוה spread over 5790 verses. The term אלוה occurs in 56 verses and is used 57 times, of which 39 occur in Job. The term שׁד occurs 48 times, spread over 48 verses, used 22 times in close textual proximity to אל,¹ thrice with יהוה,² twice with עלייון³ and thrice with אלוה.⁴ These statistics are not to be taken too seriously, although they are helpful to understand overall about how frequently these terms were used, at least deduced from the Masoretic Text (MT). In addition to these statistics, the Old Greek version will most probably reflect a different overall, and with that simplistic, picture. To be more precise, in general the Old Greek version limits itself to the term κύριος and θεός when reference is made to a Hebrew deity; in many instances, it will opt for either one of these terms and use only the one throughout, as illustrated in Lamentations and Job. The interest of this investigation, however, is not to analyse, compare and discuss statistics; it is rather interested in what terms Lamentees used when reference was made to a Hebrew deity. More specifically, how the Lamentees as accounted for in Lamentations reference a Hebrew deity in both its Hebrew and Greek frame of reference. The aim is therefore to identify, discuss and determine the extent to which the genre of 'lamenting' impacts how reference is made to a Hebrew deity and to do so comparing the Hebrew and Greek versions of Lamentations. The terms that dominate Lamentations when reference is made to a Hebrew deity are יהוה and אדני, which makes for a fascinating reading of Lamentations in this respect.

1. Cf. Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25; Exodus 6:3; Numbers 24:4, 16 (used in combination with עלייון); Ezekiel 10:5; Job 8:3; 13:3; 25:5; 22:17; 23:16; 27:2, 11, 13; 33:4; 34:10, 12; 35:13.

2. Isaiah 13:6; Joel 1:15; Ruth 1:21.

3. Numbers 24:16; Psalm 91:1.

4. Job 5:17; 11:7; 31:2.

Note: Special Collection: Septuagint and Textual Studies, sub-edited by Johann Cook (Stellenbosch University).

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TABLE 1: Lamentations 1:17^{MT} and 4QLam line 8.

Lamentations 1:17a ^{MT}	4QLam, line 8
צפה ליעקוב אדוני צפה יהוה אתה צדיק אלהיך אלהיך מלכול	בלעזק יתנה צנה לה מנתם אין בנתיה ציון פרשה

Yahweh and Adonaj in referencing a Hebrew deity in the Hebrew version

In terms of referencing a Hebrew deity, what is striking about the Lamentations text is the frequent use of the term אדני in close literary and, one might add, conceptual proximity to the term יהוה; this is unparalleled in the Hebrew Scriptures. Equally noteworthy is the absence of the term אלהים, אל or any other term within the category of referencing a Hebrew deity, with a single exception where the term אל is found in Lamentations 3:41.⁵ The Hebrew version of Lamentations alternates between the terms יהוה and אדני, whilst its Greek counterpart consistently uses the term κύριος (cf. Lm 2:7, 18, 19, 20b; 3:31, 36, 37, 58). What is of interest is whether the theology underpinning the act of ‘lamenting’ in relation to a Hebrew deity has any significant impact on the terms used for such an entity when being in a state of either mourning or lamenting (O’Connor 2008:27). An appropriate place to start is Lamentations 1:12–18, as it attests to the use of three אדני terms in close concession and the alternating use of the term יהוה. According to the MT, the subject responsible for inflicting pain and sorrow is *Yahweh* (Lm 1:12).⁶ It is, however, *Adonaj* who is responsible for handing one over to one’s adversaries (Lm 1:14); in 4QLam this act is ascribed to *Yahweh*.⁷ The subject responsible for submission to one’s adversaries remains unchanged in the MT, with *Adonaj* tossing aside the weak (Lm 1:15a) and treading the virgin daughter Judah (Lm 1:15b).⁸ The 4QLamentations text is less ‘consistent’ because it is *Adonaj* (line 6) who tosses, but *Yahweh* the one who tramples (line 7).⁹ The alternating use of the term יהוה and אדני is further illustrated in Lamentations 1:17.

In Lamentations 1:17a^{MT}, Zion spreads her hands but finds no comfort; the inferred reason for this is that *Yahweh* commanded against Jacob (Lm 1:17b). As for 4QLam, Zion remains without comfort, but the text reads that *Yahweh* will watch over all those who love righteousness. It is, however, *Adonaj* who ‘watches’

5. For the Hebrew terms used to refer to a Hebrew deity, this study will use both the Hebrew-letter forms and the transcribed forms: *Yahweh*, *Adonaj*, *El*, *Elohim* and *Shaddai*. The reason for using both Hebrew characters and the transcribed forms are to draw a distinction between the linguistic value of the Hebrew characters (which might include a definite or indefinite article) and the transcribed form, often used to express a proper noun.

6. 3Q3 Lamentations fragment 1 does read the term יהוה in line 2 (cf. Lm 1:11), making a יהוה reading in line 3 (Lm 1:12) highly likely, although it is not visible on the fragment. The first *jod* of the term יהוה is visible in 4Q111 Lamentations, column 3, fragment 3, which supports the notion of a יהוה reading in 3Q3. According to Kotze (2013:75), the referent of the suffix refers to the narrator and his community, and such an interpretation is reminiscent of the directive addressed to YHWH in verse 7 of 4QLamentations.

7. 4QLam (111), column III, fragment 3.

8. The issue for Kotze (2013:98) is the question of which of the readings constitutes the more original reading.

9. I agree with Hillers’ (1992:73) assertion that the usage (of the term יהוה and אדני) was absolutely uniform and that there is no apparent preference for one over the other. Kotze (2013:92) is therefore correct to assert that ‘it is debatable whether an indiscriminate substitution of the term יהוה and אדני with יהוה throughout the whole of the book is justified in light of the inconsistency of usage reflected in the manuscript evidence’. To this point, this study will argue that there is a shift in Lamentations 3:54 onwards, whereby *Yahweh* becomes the dominant divine agent.

over Jacob if both the terms יהוה and אדני take the verb צפה. De Waard (2004:58) explained that 4QLam is composed of two elements: אלהייה מכול (a quotation from Lm 1:2) and the second element יהוה אתה צדיק (which appears to be a variant of the beginning of v. 18).¹⁰ In reference to DJD XVI, 237, he suggests that צפה is an ‘extremely awkward, if not impossible reading’.¹¹ To this end, de Waard holds the view that 4QLam presents the original Hebrew text.¹² The Masoretic scribe continues by confirming in Lamentations 1:18 that it is just for *Yahweh* to act this way because the Lamentee rebelled against the word of *Yahweh*, but for 4QLam (line 10) it is the word of *Adonaj*.¹³

The prominence of the term אדני in the Masoretic version of Lamentations is amplified in chapter 2; in Lamentations 2:1 and 2:2, the anger of *Adonaj* and his humiliation of the daughter of Zion and destruction of the dwellings of Jacob without mercy is a striking revelation of *Adonaj*’s character. It therefore comes as no surprise that these actions are interpreted as *Adonaj* having become the enemy of Israel (Lm 2:5), who even went as far as to scorn his altar and disown his sanctuary (Lm 2:7a). The dwelling of a Hebrew deity, however, remains the house of *Yahweh* (Lm 2:7b), who also determines the ruins of the wall of daughter Zion (Lm 2:8). To this end, *Yahweh* offers no resolve as he ‘ignores’ providing ‘insight’ by way of the prophets (Lm 2:9). The remarks in Lamentations 2:17 are of particular interest because they offer a collation of actions performed by a Hebrew deity; Lamentations 2:17 captures the essence of what this deity has done. The scribe thought it appropriate to use the term יהוה as opposed to אדני, who had dominated the scene up until this point. The scribe states that *Yahweh* has done what he planned to do, that he gave effect to the threats he made (Lm 2:17).¹⁴ The scribe then reverts back to using the term אדני in Lamentations 2:18 and 2:29, which negates any impression that the scribe ‘prefers’ the term יהוה over אדני. In Lamentations 2:18 and 2:29, *Adonaj* is the recipient of ‘calling upon’, ‘crying out’, ‘submitting before’; the scribe then reverts back to *Yahweh* with a plea to consider what he is doing to whom (Lm 2:20a), but an immediate question that derives from such a plea is put to *Adonaj* in Lamentations 2:20b. The question is whether priests and prophets should be killed in his sanctuary followed by the day of anger ascribed to *Yahweh* in Lamentations 2:22. This raises the question of why the scribe unproblematically substitutes the term יהוה and אדני with one another, as if he embraces a fluid manner by which he references a Hebrew deity.¹⁵ One possible reason for this is the elastic cognitive space produced by the act of

10. To this end, it seems plausible that יהוה אתה צדיק is an interpolation; it erroneously found its way into the text; cf. Kotze, *The Qumran Manuscripts*, 100–102.

11. The Targumim also reads the YHWH term.

12. The Vulgate and Syriac versions attest to the following renderings, respectively, *dominus* and *בגדו*, which reflects a *Yahweh* equivalent.

13. 4QLamentations 111 (line 10) does not read the entire אדוני term but only the *Aleph*, which indicates a strong possibility for a אדוני reading. Kotze (2013:98–115) offered a detailed analysis and discussion on the discrepancies between the MT and 4QLamentations readings.

14. Berlin (2002:110) simply stated that for the poet (scribe) it is all ‘God’s doing’.

15. One possible explanation is that the manuscript read the term יהוה with a superscript אדני and vice versa, as is the case in 1QIsaiah 3:15a–18; see the discussion on this in Nagel (2012:176–178); see figure 5 Nagel (2020:5). On closer investigation of the 4Q111–4QLamentations, this possibility should be ruled out; see examples here: <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-482315> and <https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-499725>.

lamenting. It allows the lamentee to express more ‘openly’, ‘freely’ and ‘honestly’, ignoring the proverbial ‘red tape’ when it comes to critically engaging a Hebrew deity on matters that are existentially threatening.¹⁶ To add to this appropriation, the unhindered fluctuation between the terms יהוה and אדני signals conceptual integration and blending; being less concerned about the different conceptual qualities these terms present, but to cognitively bridge the conceptual variety they offer. There is no evidence to deny such a probability, but equally true is that the data do not explicitly suggest such a postulation. There is, however, no uncertainty that the scribe is lamenting a dismal situation and is referencing a Hebrew deity; whilst doing so his adverse tone and sentiment continue in Lamentations 3:18, where he writes that all hope in *Yahweh* has been lost, but he makes an abrupt turn in Lamentations 3:22–25, with the scribe praising *Yahweh* for his steadfast love (Lm 3:22),¹⁷ that he is the one who shares in the soul (Lm 3:24), and for *Yahweh*’s goodness to those who wait (Lm 3:25), for salvation comes from *Yahweh* (Lm 3:26) and *Adonaj* will not reject forever (Lm 3:31). The scribe proceeds with rhetorical questions all directed at *Adonaj* (Lm 3:36, 37). But before the study moves on to the unique use of the term אל, it should acknowledge the significance of the term עליין, translated by the Old Greek as ὑψιστος, issued in Lamentations 3:35 and 38.¹⁸ These references reveal the mental state and transitional tone of the scribe as he moves to the next phase of lamenting, a phase characterised as self-reflection; the scribe encourages the readers to do just that and turn towards *Yahweh* (Lm 3:40). The scribe continues effortlessly to address deep-seated lamentations going back and forth between *Adonaj* and *Yahweh*. But the reference to אל in Lamentations 3:41 in close conceptual proximity to יהוה in Lamentations 3:50 interrupts this conceptual going back-and-forth between יהוה and אדני, revealing another facet of his conceptualisation of a Hebrew deity and how he relates it to lamenting, at least insofar as the concept of locality goes. As for the scribe, the referent of both אל and יהוה reside in שמים.¹⁹ The conceptual overlap and blend between *El* and *Yahweh* is masterfully demonstrated with a call to return to *Yahweh* (Lm 3:40), to lift hearts and hands to *El*, who is up in heaven, and then to have *Yahweh* look down and see their tear-filled eyes. The locality they share, שמים, and the actions they perform from this location effectively construct a conceptual bridge between *El* and *Yahweh* to the degree that one has no option but to consider an equation $El = Yahweh$. However, such an equation is not only premature but also creates a cognitive conundrum: if $El = Yahweh$ and $Yahweh = Adonaj$ then $El = Adonaj$. The latter is somewhat problematic from a Judean perspective,²⁰ therefore the blending of *El* and *Yahweh* is acknowledged, but the evidence is far too limited to

conclusively draw any inference other than in the context of Lamentations 3:40–41 they share a locality.

Another insightful reference to a Hebrew deity is found in Lamentations 3:55; the phrase יהוה שמך קראתי ‘I call your name *Yahweh*’ suggests that the ‘sacred name’ *Yahweh* is reserved for a Hebrew deity. This conceptual potentiality of the term יהוה does, notwithstanding the consistency by which the scribe alternates between these terms, distinguish itself from the term אדני and strengthens the argument that *Adonaj* can never conceptually equate to *Yahweh*. To be sure, the term אדני is never used as a name for a Hebrew deity; in fact, from the third-century BCE, it is used more often than not as a ‘substitute’ to avoid the pronunciation of the sacred name, יהוה (see Rösel 2000, 2011). Whilst the conceptual blending between *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* cannot be denied, there is most certainly a literary conceptual turning point in Lamentations 3:59–66; here the term יהוה is exclusively used for a Hebrew deity, and it remains the dominant term when reference is made to the divine subject until the end of Lamentations (cf. Lm 5:19, 21). An exception is the reference to *Adonaj* in Lamentations 3:58²¹; here it is affirmed that *Adonaj* takes up the cause of the lamentor.²² The fluctuation between terms יהוה and אדני up until Lamentations 3:55 is so consistent that it becomes prescriptive to the reader, to such an extent that it becomes impossible for the reader to draw any meaningful and clear distinction between *Yahweh* and *Adonaj*. To be sure, the steady alternation between these terms in close succession conceptually forces the reader to blend the concept *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* whilst lamenting. The ‘out-of-sync’ and unexpected use of the term אל in Lamentations 3:41 has an impact on the *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* conceptual integration. It is something the Lamentation text does not recover from, as it hones in on the term יהוה from Lamentations 3:55 onwards.²³ To further elaborate on the conceptual blending of the term יהוה and אדני, two diagrams (Figures 1 and 2) are added to illustrate the mental nodes of both these terms. To this end, a few remarks as a way of illustrating the blend should be in order.

The concept of ‘rejection’ is limited to *Adonaj*; he is the only one with the ability to reject (Lm 1:15a; 2:7a; cf. 4QLam 1:15a) and to embrace (Lm 3:31). ‘Eyesight’ and the concept of ‘seeing’ is dominated by *Yahweh* (Lm 1:9, 11, 20; 2:20a; 3:50, 59), but interestingly the negation of ‘seeing’ is ascribed to *Adonaj* (Lm 3:36). If one includes the conceptual domain of ‘watching’ over, then *Adonaj* is preferred in 4QLam 1:17b, whilst 5QLam A 4:16 prefers *Yahweh*. The ‘dwelling’ in a sanctuary concept is associated with *Adonaj* (Lm 2:20b), but

16. O’Connor (2008:28) remarks that ‘Lamentations is a book of voices, of stunning, intermingling and clashing testimonies by survivors of the city’s fall...By Voices, I mean the literary device of multiple speakers. But voice is also a metaphor. To have a voice signifies the human capacity to act in the world, in this case, by bringing pain to speech’.

17. Villanueva (2008:213) makes a noteworthy statement that in Lamentations 3, the individual lament dominates.

18. Origines and other Greek text witnesses prefer reading kupiou in this instance.

19. 3Q3 fragment 1 (Lm 1:10–12) and fragment 2 (Lm 3:53–62) do not account for any reference to a Hebrew deity as they are too fragmentary.

20. See De Troyer’s (2008:144–153) and Hartenstein’s (2008:73–81) discussions on the ‘names’ of a Hebrew deity and its history by which they offer some perspective of why it might have been problematic to equate *Yahweh* with *Adonaj* and *El*.

21. In this instance, it is acknowledged that *Adonaj* has elevated the cause of the lamentor.

22. Stone (2021:493–494) stated that the alternation between complaint and theodicy remains a puzzle in Lamentations 3; the uncertainty of whether to characterise the chapter as theodicy, antitheodicy or a mixture of both, typically seen in Lamentations 3:42b–66, can be answered by the rhetorical movement found throughout the last section of Lamentations. It is not coincidental that Lamentations 3:41 introduces a turning point in how reference is made to a Hebrew deity. It is worth mentioning that the thesis put forward by Begrich (1934:83) is that in Lamentations 3:57b the ‘wesentliches Moment’ of the giving of the oracle of salvation is testified.

23. If one accepts a part of Villanueva’s (2008:28, 214–216) thesis that laments are ‘capable of moving, and do in fact move, from praise to lament’, and if Lamentations 3 does in fact reflect a shift from lament to hope, then one can postulate that this is the reason for a shift in how a Hebrew deity is referenced from here onwards.

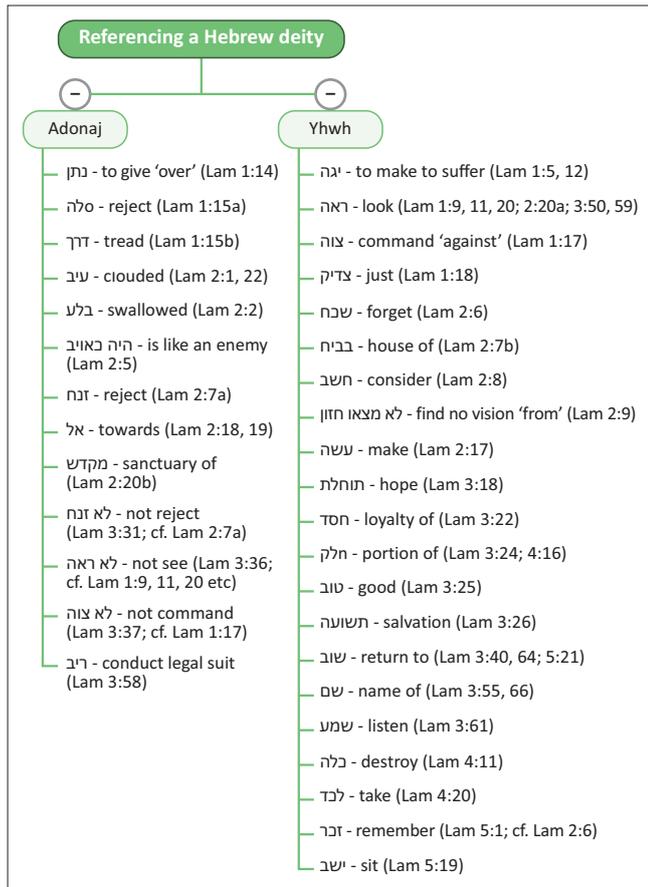


FIGURE 1: Mental Adonaj and Yahweh framework in the Masoretic text.

a 'house' is dedicated to *Yahweh* (Lm 2:7b). 'Verbal expression' – as a concept of 'calling out to' is directed at *Adonaj* (Lm 2:18, 19),²⁴ whereas to 'direct | align oneself' – to submit to, or to direct oneself is associated with both *Adonaj* (Lm 1:14) and *Yahweh* (Lm 3:40, 64; 5:21). 'Destruction' – the concept of having power to destroy – lies with both *Adonaj* (Lm 2:2) and *Yahweh* (Lm 4:11). If this includes an act of 'treading' or 'trampling', it again applies to both *Adonaj* (Lm 1:15b) and *Yahweh* (4QLam 1:15b). The Masoretes, however, do not ascribe the act of treading and trampling to *Yahweh*, but for them the concept of 'salvation' is exclusive to *Yahweh*. Inferred from these mental or conceptual frameworks, it will be difficult not to accept that both *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* are equally capable of operating within the earthly domain and that they are conceptually integrated for the most part.

Kyrios as reference to a Hebrew deity in the Greek version

The Greek version of Lamentations²⁵ simplifies matters to a large degree; the term κύριος is read irrespective of whether its Hebrew counterpart reads יהוה and אדני. To be sure, the old

24.The Masoretes did not seem to agree what to ascribe to whom in this case; Codex Leningradensis 19a (MT¹) prefer the *Adonaj* reading, whilst Codex Leningradensis 34b (MTL34) and the MT 1753 held as Cambridge opt for the *Yahweh* reading (cf. Lam 2:18, 19).

25.The Greek text used here is the critical edition established by Joseph Ziegler for the Göttingen Septuagint Series; Ziegler, J., 1957, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis editum XV: Ieremias Baruch Threni Epistula Ieremiae*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.

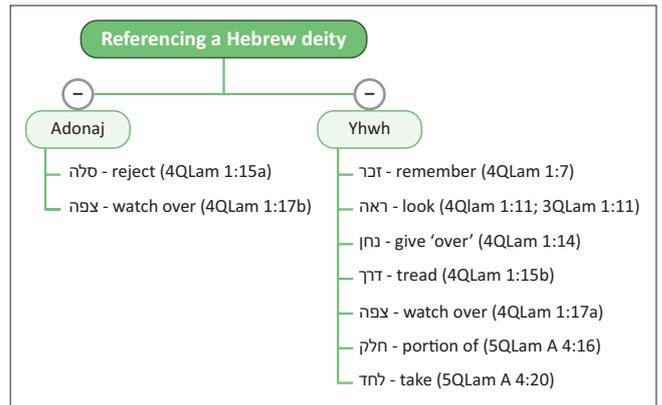


FIGURE 2: Mental Adonaj and Yahweh framework at Qumran.

Greek of Lamentation does not see the need to distinguish between lament and praise, lament and hope, lament and salvation with respect to a Hebrew deity. Therefore, it is not necessary to use a 'distinctly' different term, such as θεός, when the lamenting moves from one phase to another; the translators kept it monotonous by exclusively using the term κύριος when referencing a Hebrew deity. This raises the question of whether the term θεός is avoided because of the nature of lamenting or if it is a matter of a different *Vorlage*.²⁶ The study will return to this question, but first the study wants to address some of the textual variants relating to the term κύριος.²⁷

In Lamentations 1:11, the term κύριε is 'omitted' by Codex Alexandrinus (codex A), and the Arabic translation does not attest to any equivalent. The reverse is also true: codex A attests to a plus κυριος reading after ἀπέστρεψε με in Lamentations 1:13.²⁸ At the first occurrence of the term κύριος in Lamentations 1:18, a Codex Sinaiticus (codex S) redactor proposes to read it with a definite article,²⁹ suggesting that the scribe wanted to accentuate the 'absolute' form of the term.³⁰ Another interesting case is found in Lamentations 1:17; here, an 'original' scribe of ms 86 suggests reading εἰ κυριε in addition to Δικαίως. The occurrence of the term κύριος in Lamentations 2:1 is not without its own set of alternatives; mss 231 and 233 transpose the term, whilst Didymus Caecus (p. 1512), Origenes, Hieronymus and others attest to κυριε as a plus reading resulting in a κυριος κυριε reading.³¹ Codex A, however, 'omits' the term altogether.³² In fact, both the

26.Gentry (2009:934) remarked that 'Greek Lamentations is chiefly characterised by formal equivalence to the source language, that is, Hebrew'.

27.One example is a 10th century manuscript, 239, that offers κυριος as opposed to the vocative form of the noun in Lamentations 1:9 (cf. Lm 1:20 ms 239), whilst ms 86 attests to a definite article plus reading in Lamentations 1:12.

28.The Armenian translation attests to a plus reading of a term that is equivalent to the Latin *dominus* 'lord' in Lamentations 1:14 directly after Ἐργηγορήθη, thus making the subject of this action explicit. This seems to be a tendency with the Armenian and Boharian translations (cf. Lm 2:3, 4).

29.Cf. Lamentations 1:18 mss 130 239 and Didymus Caecus p. 1173. To this end, the equivalent for *deus* is a plus reading offered by the Armenian translation.

30.Ms 534 attests to a minus *Kyrios* reading in the second Lamentations 1:15 instance.

31.The Boharian translation read a plus *dominus* term in Lamentations 2:4 and 5; cf. Lamentations 2:17, where the Ethiopian translation attests to a plus *dominus*.

32.This is true for ms 87 reading form, whilst the Arabic translation does not attest to an equivalent. Interestingly enough, in the case of Lamentations 2:8, both codex A and the Arabic equivalent support a plus reading of the term *Kyrios*.

minus³³ and the plus³⁴ readings of the term κύριος occur often. Furthermore, in Lamentations 2:7b, the genitive form of the term κύριος in both codex B and S omit the term, whilst the Boharian translation ‘adds’ an equivalent for *dei*.³⁵ The Ethiopian translation, however, duplicates the term κύριος (dative form followed by a genitive form). The ‘omission’ of the term κύριος is again attested in Lamentations 2:8 by codex B and S, including the Ethiopian and Armenian translations. Codex A and the Arabic version present the direct opposite by ‘adding’ a term κύριος. Interestingly, ms 46 reads θεου as an alternative for κυρίου in Lamentations 2:9, with the Boharian translation attesting to another plus term *dei* (cf. Lm 2:7).³⁶ Not all Greek text witnesses were comfortable with reading the term κύριος in Lamentations 3:50–66; the term is ‘omitted’ by ms 534 in Lamentations 3:50, with Latin, Ethiopian and Armenian translations attesting to a minus reading of κύριος in Lamentations 3:66. However, the Syrio-hexapla (Origines recension) and Codex Marchalianus attest to a plus κυριε reading in Lamentations 3:61. In some instances in chapter 5, the term κύριος is omitted (cf. Lm 5:1, 21), whilst others attest to a plus reading (cf. Lm 5:19).³⁷

To return to the question of whether there is any reason to suspect a different Hebrew *Vorlage* as constructed by the Qumran text fragments and the Masoretic text, the answer is that there is no evidence to support such a proposition. What the textual evidence does suggest is that there is no alternative term to reference a Hebrew deity other than the term κύριος. Notwithstanding the fact that there is absolutely no consistency amongst the scribes with regard to when to read, duplicate, include or exclude the term κύριος.

Conclusion

A reasonable inference from the Hebrew version of Lamentations is that the nature, character and tone of the first phase in lamenting (Lm 1:1–3:54) created the necessary conceptual space to use alternating terms, יהוה and אדני, and by doing so, blending the concepts represented by these terms whilst referencing a Hebrew deity. Both the terms and the concepts they represent reveal a fluid, accommodating approach in ‘calling upon’ a Hebrew deity in the midst of turmoil. The scribe did not apply any literary or linguistic legalities with the use of either יהוה or ידא. It therefore seems that he allowed the process of lamenting to dictate, at least in the phase in which the desperation and vulnerable state is made explicit, which terms should be used when reference is made to a Hebrew deity. To this end, as soon as the lament reached a second phase, that of potential outcome, salvation and liberation, the term יהוה took prominence and was placed alongside the term אל. But even

33.Cf. ms 62 in Lamentations 2:5.

34.Cf. ms 106 in Lamentations 2:20.

35.Cf. Lamentations 2:9; in this instance ms 46 reads θεου.

36.In Lamentations 2:20 ms 239 reads κυριος as opposed to κύριε; cf. ms 544 in Lamentations 5:1, with other text witnesses (Syrio-Hexapla and a number of Latin manuscripts) ‘omitting’ the term κύριε altogether.

37.Ms 26 reads an additional κυριε term.

before the term יהוה took centre stage, the scribe deployed the term עליין ‘most High’ (cf. Lm 3:35, 38) to transition from lament to self-reflection and salvation and the prominence of the term יהוה in relation to אל. One possible reason for the alternating use of the terms יהוה and אדני is that it is used to accommodate those constructing a ‘theology from below’, an anthropocentric theology. But liberation and salvation can only come from ‘above’, a theocentric theology, aptly exemplified by the term עליין followed by ‘calling upon יהוה’ in association with אל in the dominion of the heavenly abode.

The fact that the term אל is used only once, and with this single occurrence blending with *Yahweh* was made possible, causes one to simultaneously draw a distinction between *El* and *Yahweh*, and to blend the characteristics of these concepts. It should be reiterated that associating *El* with *Yahweh* does not necessitate or automate the blending of *El* and *Adonaj*. In fact, even though the concepts *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* are blended, they are not assimilated, which makes an automatic blending with *El* inappropriate. The blending of these concepts as references to a Hebrew deity solidified the conceptual integration of these terms into the term κύριος. The Lamentations text allows for a combination of a more fluid and blending concept of a Hebrew deity, determined and informed, on the one hand, by the terms יהוה and אדני during the first phase of lamenting, and on the other hand, opting for a close association between *Yahweh* and *El* whilst making *Yahweh* prominent as the Hebrew deity who will liberate the lamentee. There is, therefore, conceptually no significant distinction drawn between *Yahweh* and *El*, but most certainly between *Adonaj* and *El*, notwithstanding the alternating use of *Yahweh* and *Adonaj* in Lamentations 1:1–3:54. This signals a more fragmented, fluid and complex concept of a Hebrew deity in the Hebrew frame of reference.

For the Greek version, the reference to a Hebrew deity during the process of lamenting and salvation is far more simplistic and minimalistic, almost to the point of being stale and giving off a monotone vibration. The fluidity of referencing a Hebrew deity, created by lamenting a desperate situation, got lost. The only instance where reference to a Hebrew deity was amplified is in Lamentations 3:35 and 38 with the use of the term ὑψιστος. In the Greek frame of reference, a Hebrew deity was referenced using a single term by the Lamentee, that of the term κύριος; the term used to refer to a Hebrew deity at the peak of lamenting, the same term used to address the deity responsible for deliverance. This signals a static, monotone and simplistic concept of a Hebrew deity, that is, *Kyrios*.

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