

ABSTRACT

YHWH'S INHERITANCE AND HIS ENTHRONEMENT

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The first part of this article supports the claim that Deuteronomy 32:8-9 and 43 were part of an ancient psalm which connected the exaltation of YHWH by lesser deities to his inheritance of a special lot among them. New evidence is given from Mesopotamian compositions that contain similar images and mainly from an Akkadian text, 'Enmešarra's Defeat', which deals with Marduk's victory over his enemy, and from a hymn entitled the 'Syncretistic Hymn to Ishtar'. In those works, passages with the theme of allotting portions to the deities are included in connection with the exaltation of one of them. Those additional texts reinforce the proposed analysis of the passages from Deuteronomy 32:8-9, 34.

The Mesopotamian parallels indicate that the tradition concerning the allocation of lots among the gods referred also to their geographic properties, as in Deuteronomy 32:8-9, and shed light on further details regarding those verses. The verses in Deuteronomy 32 might well have been understood at the time of their composition as claiming that YHWH was responsible for the allotment of portions, and at the same time, that He took a special lot for Himself. Furthermore, it seems that the YHWH's exaltation psalm which is preserved in Deuteronomy 32, already included the last part of verse 43, which speaks about YHWH's victory over Israel's foes. This explains the relationship between the exaltation psalm and other biblical passages, and especially Psalm 82.

The second part of the article focuses on the implications of the Mesopotamian texts for understanding Psalm 47. Various elements of the psalm are illuminated in light of the Mesopotamian sources, especially the combination of the exaltation of a deity, the allotment of shares, and the deity's victory over his foes. In addition to the recognition of YHWH's enthronement by the nations in Psalm 47, we also find His exaltation over lesser deities, and His ascension to His throne. The resemblances to the Mesopotamian texts suggest a new interpretation of verse 10 and a new solution to the crux of עַם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם. It is suggested that the original version was נְדִיבֵי הָעַמִּים נֹאסְפוּ עִם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, and that the present text is the consequence of a pious emendation. The original meaning of verse 10 was probably that the gods and their worshipers, the nation's nobles, will gather to recognize the kingship of YHWH. Accordingly, Psalm 47 can be interpreted as a relatively early Enthronement Psalm.