

Prepositional Ambiguity and the Semantics of Bamah Usage: A Response to J. A. Emerton

W. Boyd Barrick (Billings, USA)

The past quarter-century has seen a modest surge of interest in the so-called “high-places” (hereinafter “bamoth”) mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and in the commemorative inscription of the Moabite king Mesha (KAI 181). When I began my dissertation research on the topic in 1971, the only substantial treatment was W.F. Albright’s idiosyncratic but influential study of “The High Place in Ancient Palestine” (1957).¹ The scene is very different today, with monographs by P.H. Vaughan (1974)² and M. Gleis (1997),³ important treatments by E.C. LaRocca-Pitts (2001)⁴ and B.A. Nakhai (1994, 1999, 2001),⁵ and a number of major encyclopedia articles and focused articles (some by me).⁶ No new consensus has emerged, however, and J.A. Emerton’s

¹ W.F. Albright, “The High Place in Ancient Palestine,” *VTSup* 4 (1957) 242–58; cf. my critique in “The Funerary Character of ‘High Places’ in Ancient Palestine: A Reassessment,” *VT* 25 (1975) 565–95. For the prevailing consensus at that time see, e.g., R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. by J. McHugh; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961) 284–8; G.H. Davies, “High Place, Sanctuary,” *IDB* (1962) 2.602–4; I. Engnell, “Höjd, Höjder,” *SBU* (1962) 1.1015; M. Noth, *The Old Testament World* (trans. by V.I. Gruhn; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 177–8; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion* (trans. by D.E. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 157–8.

² P.H. Vaughan, *The Meaning of “bāmā” in the Old Testament* (SOTSM 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974). Cf. the critiques by P.W. Skehan, in *CBQ* 37 (1975) 607–09, T.L. Fenton, in *BSOAS* 39 (1976) 432–34, and M.D. Fowler, “The Israelite *bāmā*: A Question of Interpretation,” *ZAW* 94 (1982) 208–9.

³ M. Gleis, *Die Bamah* (BZAW 251; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1997); cf. my critique in *JBL* 118 (1999) 532–34.

⁴ E.C. LaRocca-Pitts, “*Of Wood and Stone*”: *The Significance of Israelite Cultic Items in the Bible and its Early Interpreters* (HSM 61; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001) ch. 5 (especially pp. 127–30).

⁵ B.A. Nakhai, “What’s a Bamah? How Sacred Space Functioned in Ancient Israel,” *BARev* 20/3 (1994) 19–29, 77–8; cf. now *idem*, “Israelite Religion beyond the Temple,” *World of the Bible* 1 (1999) 38–43, and *idem*, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel* (ASOR Books 7; Boston: ASOR, 2001) ch. 6. Nakhai, like Vaughan, draws heavily on data known from the archaeological record. Cf. the brief treatment by her dissertation mentor, W.G. Dever, “The Silence of the Text: An Archaeological Commentary on 2 Kings 23,” *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (ed. by M.D. Coogan *et al.*; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 148. A less optimistic appraisal of the intersection of archaeological and biblical data is presented in the excellent study by L. S. Fried, “The High Places (*Bāmôt*) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation,” *JAOS* 122 (2002) 437–465.

⁶ W.B. Barrick, “What Do We Really Know about ‘High Places’?” *SEA* 45 (1980) 50–7, and “High Place,” *ABD* (1992) 3.196–200. Other significant surveys include K.D. Schunck, in *TDOT* (revised, 1977) 2.139–45; J.T. Whitney, “‘Bamoth’ in the Old Testament,” *TynBul* 30

review of “The Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study” (1997) concludes pessimistically:⁷

The Old Testament tells us much about *bāmā*, but a precise definition eludes us. We do not know whether the word could be used of any local sanctuary, or whether there was something that differentiated *bāmôt* from other sanctuaries.

Very popular today is the view (as old as Jerome)⁸ that a “bamah” (*sensu stricto*) was a man-made “high place,” i.e., an altar-like cultic platform of some sort (cf. Mod. Heb. *bāmā*, “stage, platform; forum”).⁹ Emerton reviews this hypothesis, but is in the end noncommittal.¹⁰ I have argued that the biblical evidence, such as it is, does not easily support this idea, and that the cultic platforms known from the archaeological record of the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Levant (very influential for most proponents of the “platform hypothesis”)¹¹ probably have nothing to do with the biblical “bamah.” Part of my argument has been based on the Verb + Preposition idioms used to describe the use of a bamah. Emerton takes me to task for insisting that the 20 biblical occurrences of *babbāmā/babbāmôt* must mean “in” the bamah/bamoth, and that to interpret the phrase otherwise would be “completely contrary to attested Hebrew usage”:¹²

This argument seems to me to be difficult to sustain. When sacrifices are offered on an altar, it is possible to say either *‘al-hammizbēah* (I Kings 12:23; 13:1; 2 Kings 16.12) or

(1979) 125–47; Fowler, “Israelite *bāmā*: A Question of Interpretation,” 203–13; J.E. Catron, “Temple and *bāmāh*: Some Considerations,” *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (ed. by S.W. Holloway and L.K. Handy; JSOTSup 190; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 150–65; R.L. Omanson, “Translating *Bamoth*,” *BT* 46 (1995) 309–20.

⁷ J.A. Emerton, “The Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study,” *PEQ* 129 (1997) 116–32 (quotation from pp. 129–30). Dever rather cavalierly dismisses this quarter-century of work as so much needless spilt ink, since “it was already clear that *bāmôt* were simply raised platforms or outdoor shrines ...” (Silence of the Text,” 148).

⁸ Commentary on Jeremiah, at Jer. 32:35 (quoted by J.P. Brown, “The Sacrificial Cult and its Critique in Greek and Hebrew [II],” *JSS* 25 [1980] 2): “It should be noted, for the benefit of those who are uncertain what the word *bāmôt* means in the book of Samuel and Kings, that ‘altars’ [*arae*] and ‘high places’ [*excelsa*] in Hebrew are called *bāmôt*.”

⁹ A. Zilkha, *Modern Hebrew-English Dictionary* (New Haven/London: Yale University, 1989) 24. The modern word reflects the semantic intermingling of Gr. *bēma*, “podium, pulpit,” and Hebr. *bāmā* in Rabbinic Hebrew and cannot be automatically retrojected further into antiquity. Nonetheless E. Klein derives both the biblical sense “high place” and the modern sense “stage, pulpit” “apparently from base *BWM*” (*A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* [New York/London: Macmillan/Collier Macmillan, 1987] 76). On $\sqrt{*BWM}$ see n. 18 below. Against $\sqrt{*BWM}$ is Mod. Hebr. *bamma’y*, “stage director” (a mid-20th-century coinage) which “is based on the supposition that the n. *bāmā* derives from base *BMH*” (*ibid.*).

¹⁰ Emerton, “Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study,” 123–4.

¹¹ Vaughan’s argument rests almost entirely on the archaeological material.

¹² *Ibid.*, 122, quoting my assertion in “What Do We Really Know about ‘High Places’?” 54.

bammizbēah (Gen. 8:20; Num. 23:2, 4, 14, 3[0]), and the latter does not mean “within the altar.” It is not clear why the same should not be true of *babbāmôt*.

This sweeping defense of the “conventional wisdom” by such an eminent senior scholar is daunting, but not damning, and calls for a response.

Methodologically, the semantic limitations of a given syntactical construction, as established from those passages where the sense of the construction is not in doubt, define the semantic potential of the more problematic examples and limit the exegetical options available to the decoder; “where the sense is well known and the text established it is possible to discover fundamental rules, which may pave the way for new interpretation when applied to difficult or poetic texts.”¹³ These limitations have validity because they derive from known usage in the language system as a whole and not from the content and immediate context of the disputed passage(s) alone. The passages cited by Emerton wherein *bammizbēah* is claimed to be semantically equivalent to *‘al-hammizbēah* are clearly the exception to the rule.

1 The Use of *BMH* with the Prepositions *B* and *‘L*

The biblical writers regularly employ the preposition *B* when describing bamah usage. We read repeatedly in the Kings History that “still the people (were) sacrificing and burning incense¹⁴ *babbāmôt*” (1 Kgs. 22:44; 2 Kgs. 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; also 1 Kgs. 3:2; 2 Kgs. 17:11; 2 Chron. 33:17). Ahaz is said to have “sacrificed and burned incense *babbāmôt*” (2 Kgs. 16:4[2 Chron. 28:4]), as did Solomon (1 Kgs. 3:3). The kings of Judah are said to have installed priests “to burn incense *babbāmôt*” (2 Kgs. 23:5).¹⁵ Samuel is expected to preside at a sacrifice “*babbāmā*” (1 Sam.

¹³ M.H. [Goshen-]Gottstein, “Afterthoughts and the Syntax of Relative Clauses in Biblical Hebrew,” *JBL* 68 (1949) 35.

¹⁴ These conventional translations of *ZBH* and *QTR* are used for convenience.

¹⁵ The MT’s *wayēqattēr babbāmôt* is probably defective because it is mentioned incongruously in the recounting of Josiah’s reform activities. Virtually all commentators follow either LXX and Targ. which point to *wayēqattērū* (e.g., C.F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1903] 358; B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings* (trans. by R.E. Brünnow and P. Haupt; SBOT 9; Baltimore/Leipzig: Johns Hopkins University, 1904) 293; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings* [AB 11; Garden City: Doubleday, 1988] 279 n. f) or Pesh. and Vulg. which suggest *lēqattēr* (e.g., J.A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings* [ed. by H.S. Gehman; ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1951] 529, 539 J. Gray, *I–II Kings: A Commentary* [2nd edn.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970] 730 n. d). L.C. Allen sees the MT reading as another example of a marginal annotation (cf. 2 Kgs. 16:4) subsequently mistaken for a scribal correction and displacing an original *lēqattēr* in the text (“More Cuckoos in the Textual Nest: At 2 Kings xxiii.5; Jeremiah xvii.3, 4; Micah iii.3; vi.16 [LXX]; 2 Chronicles xx.25 [LXX],” *JTS* 24 [1973] 69–70). Note D. L. Washburn’s defense of the MT on the grounds that v. 5aβ is a parenthetical explanation that “[a komer-priest] burned offerings at the bamoth” (“Perspective and Purpose: Understanding the Josiah Story,” *Trinity Journal* 12 [1991] 69); cf. also R.H. Lowery, *The*

9:12). The Chronicler reports that the Tabernacle and Moses's altar of burnt offerings were "*babbāmā*" at Gibeon during David's reign (1 Chron. 16:39; 21:29). In Ps. 78:58 Israel is said to have angered Yahweh "*bēbbāmôtām*." The preposition *B* expresses the basic idea of position or movement "*within* some definite region."¹⁶ The most natural conclusion to be drawn from these passages is that their authors considered a bamah to be an installation – a building or precinct (cf. Solomon's Temple) – *within* which one performed cultic acts and placed cultic objects.¹⁷

On its face, this prepositional uniformity would seem to rule out of consideration the conjecture (induced by the presumed etymological connection with high-ness)¹⁸ that bamoth were natural or artificial elevations (hills, mounds, platforms, altars) *upon* which cultic acts were performed. If these passages do, in fact, refer to such installations, *B* must be assigned the idea of superimposition normally indicated by '*L*. Accordingly, Vaughan claims that the phrase *babbāmôt* "is ambiguous, and may mean either *upon* the bamoth (platforms), or *at* the bamoth (sanctuaries)."¹⁹ This supposed "ambiguity" is very much in evidence in the RSV/NRSV which vacillates among "in," "at," and "on."²⁰ The LXX is more consistent with its rendering *év*, but

Reforming Kings: Cults and Society in First Temple Judah (JSOTSup 120; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) 207.

¹⁶ GKC (1910) 379. Cf. also C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1913) 2.363, and *idem*, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen: Erziehungsvereins, 1956) 96; P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hébreu Biblique* (2nd edn.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1947) 403; KB (1967) 100 (= Richardson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1.104), and cf. Holladay, *Lexicon*, 32; D.G. Pardee, "The Preposition in Ugaritic [Part 2]," *UF* 8 (1976) 312; E. Jenni, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen I: Die Präposition Beth* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln: Kohlhammer, 1992); D.J.A. Clines (ed.), *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (vols. 1–5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 2.84–6.

¹⁷ Only the occurrence in Ps. 78:58 allows for the instrumental "with," recognized by most translations (see below).

¹⁸ The modern era of biblical scholarship inherited an understanding of *BMH* as signifying physical elevation (cf. LXX), particularly in a topographical sense, together with an etymological explanation for it: *BMH* has no known verbal root in Hebrew, but on the basis of the irreducible *qameš* in *bāmā/bāmôt* the root $\sqrt{*BWM}$ (cf. *QWM*: *qāmā*) had been hypothesized (e.g., W. Gesenius, *Thesaurus Philologicus Criticus Linguae Hebraeae et Chaldaeae Veteris Testamenti* [Leipzig: Vogel, 1829] 1.187, and successive editions of his *Handwörterbuch*); it is claimed that this non-existent verb means "to be high," thereby accounting for the presumed meaning of the noun. Albright posits a proto-Semitic ancestor **bahmatu*, the medial *h* having quiesced to produce *ā* in the first syllable of *bāmā/bāmôt*; this should have become *ō* in Hebrew phonetics (cf. **qahlu* > **qal* > *qōl*), and a few suffixed forms of *BMH* with an initial o-vowel are attested in the Qumran corpus (1QIsa^a 14:14; 53:9; 58:14) alongside the more familiar initial a-vowel (1QIsa^a 15:2; 16:12; 36:6): Albright, "High Place in Ancient Palestine," 256; cf. Emerton, "Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study," 117–8, 130–1.

¹⁹ Vaughan, *Meaning*, 31.

²⁰ *In*: 2 Kgs. 23:5; Jer. 48:35 (NRSV has "at a high place"); 1 Chron. 16:39; 21:29. *At*: 1 Kgs. 3:2, 3; 2 Chron. 33:17. *On*: 1 Sam. 9:12 (NRSV has "at the shrine"); 1 Kgs. 22:44; 2 Kgs. 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:11; 2 Chron. 28:4. The phrase in Ps. 78:58 is rendered "with their high places." A similar variation occurs in the Coverdale Bible (1535). The Geneva Bible (1560) is consistent with *in* (but *with* in Ps. 78:58); the KJV (1611) also has *in*, but un-

occasionally ἐπί is used (1 Kgs. 3:2; 2 Chron. 28:4; 33:17 [all rendering *BMH* by ὑψηλά]; Ps. 78:58 [rendering *BMH* by βουνός]; cf. also 1 Kgs. 12:31). These translations reveal the lack of systemization with which the *B* + *BMH* combination has been treated, for there is nothing in these passages (save for Ps. 78:58 where an instrumental sense – “with” [so RSV/NRSV, *et al.*] – is suggested by the context) to prompt different renderings of the preposition. This is the exegetical tradition which Emerton seeks to justify.

Discussions of prepositional ambiguity or interchangeability have centered on the apparent semantic fluidity of *B*, *L*, ‘*L*, and *MN* in Hebrew. It is claimed that because these prepositions “are not clearly distinguishable in meaning,” all can mean “from.”²¹ Given this so-called “principle of interchangeability,” it is reasonable to suppose that *B* could be the semantic equivalent of ‘*L* under certain circumstances. Hebrew lexica do admit this possibility: Koehler-Baumgartner states that when “connected with high objects *B* means ‘upon,’” citing *bēhōreb* (1 Kgs. 8:9) and *bassūsīm* (Isa. 66:20) as examples;²² Brown-Driver-Briggs observes that *bāhār* is used “even in cases where we could hardly avoid saying *on*” (e.g., 1 Kgs. 11:17; 19:11; cf. Ex. 24:17 and Ps. 72:16), and as further examples of *B* used where ‘*L* would be expected cites *besawwā’rīm* (Judg. 8:21), *bērō’sō* (Isa. 59:17), *bēmotnāyw* (1 Kgs. 2:5), and *bammizbēah* (Gen. 8:20 and Num. 23:2, two of the passages cited by Emerton).²³ The interchangeability of *B* and ‘*L* is claimed for Ugaritic as well.²⁴ The prospect of virtually unlimited prepositional interchange has not gone unchallenged. J. Barr rightly questions “the communicative efficiency of a language in

accountably (influence from Coverdale?) resorts to *on* in 2 Kgs. 14:4 and 15:4. Luther has *auf* throughout.

²¹ W. Chomsky, “The Ambiguity of the Prefixed Prepositions *MN*, *L*, and *B* in the Bible,” *JQR* 61 (1970–1971) 87. See further N. M. Sarna, “The Interchange of the Prepositions Beth and Min in Biblical Hebrew,” *JBL* 78 (1959) 310–6, and C. F. Whitley, “Some Functions of the Hebrew Particles BETH and LAMEDH,” *JQR* 62 (1971–1972) 199–206. The scholar who has exploited prepositional “ambiguity” to maximum advantage is M. Dahood: of his many discussions of the issue see, e.g., “Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography: I,” *Bib* 44 (1963) 299ff., and “Can One Plow without Oxen? (Amos 6:12): A Study of *ba-* and ‘*al*,” *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. by G. Rendsburg et al., New York: KTAV/Institute of Hebrew Culture and Education of New York University, 1980) 13–23. This claim is made with greater force for Ugaritic which evidently lacks a special preposition for “from”: see *UT* (1965) 92. On the apparent occurrence of *MN* in 1015.11 see D. G. Pardee, “The Preposition in Ugaritic [Part 1],” *UF* 8 (1975) 371, and *idem*, “Preposition in Ugaritic [Part 2],” 270 and especially 315–6. For a critique of Dahood’s approach, and an endorsement of the emphasis on Verb + Preposition idioms followed below, see now R. Althann, *Studies in Northwest Semitic* (Biblica et Orientalia 45; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1997) ch. 2.

²² KB (1967) 100 (= Richardson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1.104), and cf. Holladay, *Lexicon*, 32.

²³ BDB (1907) 88–9. Both *B* and ‘*L* can carry the hostile nuance “against”; cf. Joüon, *Grammaire*, 403–4.

²⁴ *UT* (1965) 93, with examples.

which the word for *to* and the word for *from* are apparently identical.”²⁵ This observation can be extended to the other cases of supposed interchange as well. In terms of methodology, as an alternative to the *ad hoc* mingling of prepositional meanings in exegesis, several critics have stressed the importance of assessing prepositional usage on the basis of complete Verb + Preposition idioms, taking into account the conceptual background, or “perspective” on the verbal action, underlying these syntactical combinations.²⁶ One must be attentive as well to the misleading translational interchanges arising from the incongruence of “perspectives” between different language systems (e.g., Fr. “boire *dans*” and Eng. “drink *from*”).²⁷

The two Verb + Preposition idioms regularly used with *BMH* are *ZBH* + *B* and *QTR* + *B*. If the preposition *B* does mean “upon” when these expressions are used of bamoth, this meaning should be applicable, at least occasionally, when these expressions are used of other locations or objects. If the idea of superimposition is confined to the bamah references alone, however, such an interpretation in these passages must be considered doubtful, or rejected outright, on the grounds that it would contradict known Hebrew usage. A survey of *ZBH* and *QTR* with both *B* and *L* and their attested prepositional objects finds the latter to be the case:²⁸

ZBH (in Qal) + *B*: ‘*ohel*, “tent” (Ps. 27:6); ‘*ereṣ*, “land” (Ex. 8:21); *bāmôt*, “bamoth” (2 Chron. 33:17); *gan*, “garden” (Isa. 65:3); *har*, “mountain” (Gen. 31:54); *midbar*, “wilderness” (Ex. 8:24); *māqôm*, “place” (Deut. 16:2); *ša’ar*, “gate” (Deut. 12:15, 21; 16:5)

ZBH (in Qal) + *L*: *har*, “mountain” (Ezek. 39:17); *mizbēaḥ*, “altar” (Ex. 20:24; Josh. 8:31; 1 Kgs. 13:2; 2 Kgs. 23:20; 2 Chron. 33:16); *pānīm*, “face” (Lev. 17:5)

ZBH (in Piel) + *B*: *bāmôt*, “bamoth” (1 Kgs. 3:2, 3; 22:44; 2 Kgs. 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 2 Chron. 28:4)

²⁵ J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (2nd edn.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987) 175. Cf. the rejoinder by M. Dahood, “Comparative Philology Yesterday and Today,” *Bib* 50 (1969) 76–7.

²⁶ Cf. E. F. Sutcliffe, “A Note on ‘*al*, *lê*, and *from*,” *VT* 5 (1955) 436–9; Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 117; C. Brekelmans, “The Preposition *B* = *FROM* in the Psalms according to M. Dahood,” *UF* 1 (1969) 5–14; G. Schmuttermayr, “Ambivalenz und Aspektferenz: Bemerkungen zu den hebräischen Präpositionen *B*, *L* und *MN*,” *BZ* 5 (1971) 29–51; Pardee, “Preposition in Ugaritic [Part 2],” 280ff. *et passim*; Z. Zevit, “The So-Called Interchangeability of the Prepositions *B*, *L*, and *MN* in Northwest Semitic,” *JANES* 7 (1975) 103–12; B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 190ff., 223ff.; Jenni, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen 1*, *passim*.

²⁷ Many instances of supposed prepositional interchangeability in the Hebrew or Ugaritic language systems are due to the necessities of an idiomatic translation in a modern European language system and are not actually part of idiomatic Hebrew or Ugaritic: see, e.g., Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 117; Brekelmans, “Preposition *B* = *FROM*,” 5–14; C.J. Labuschagne, in *UF* 3 (1971) 374; Pardee, “Preposition in Ugaritic [Part 1],” 336 n. 44 *et passim*; Jenni, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen 1*, 12–36 *et passim*; Althann, *Studies in Northwest Semitic*, ch. 2.

²⁸ Occurrences of the temporal use of *B* are omitted: this use is regular in Hebrew (and Ugaritic) and implies only a conceptual difference in time-reckoning from that underlying the Eng. idiom “on that day.”

- ZBH (in Piel) + 'L: *gib 'á*, "hill" (2 Kgs. 16:4; 2 Chron. 28:4); *rō 'š*, "top" (Hos. 4:13)
- QTR (in Piel) + B: *'eres*, "land" (Jer. 44:8); *bāmôt*, "bamoth" (1 Kgs. 22:44; 2 Kgs. 12:4; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:11; 23:5; 2 Chron. 28:4); *hūs*, "street" (Jer. 44:21); *māqôm*, "place" (Jer. 19:4); *'ir*, "city" (Jer. 44:21)
- QTR (in Piel) + 'L: *gib 'á*, "hill" (2 Kgs. 16:4; 2 Chron. 28:4; Hos. 4:13); *gāg*, "roof" (Jer. 19:13; 32:29); *har*, "mountain" (Isa. 65:7); *lēbēnā*, "brick (?)" (Isa. 65:3)
- QTR (in Hiphil) + B: *bāmôt* "bamoth" (1 Kgs. 3:3); *gay'*, "valley" (2 Chron. 28:3); *qōdeš*, "holy-place" (2 Chron. 29:7)
- QTR (in Hiphil) + 'L: *'iššeh*, "fire-offering" (Lev. 4:35; 5:12); *lebōnā*, "frankincense" (Lev. 2:16); *mizbēah*, "altar" (Ex. 30:7; 40:27; Lev. 4:10; 9:13, 17; 1 Kgs. 13:2; 2 Kgs. 16:13, 15; 1 Chron. 6:34; 2 Chron. 26:16; 32:12); *mōqēdā*, "altar-hearth" (Lev. 6:5); *ōlā*, "burnt-offering" (Lev. 3:5; 8:28; 9:14); *'ēšim*, "(fire)wood" (Lev. 1:17)

The pattern is clear. When the verbal action is envisioned as taking place on top of the prepositional object, this superimposition is indicated by the preposition 'L. The objects in question – mountains, hills, mountain-tops, roofs, bricks, altars, an altar-hearth (i.e., the top of the altar itself or a special fixture placed upon it), the wood and other offerings already placed upon the altar – are all capable of having sacrificial acts conducted *upon* them, directly as in the case of an altar where the offerings are placed, or indirectly as in the case of a mountain-top where the worshipper is located when making the offering.²⁹ In those passages where the preposition B is used, however, superimposition is precluded both by the context and by the nature of the objects in question – cities, a tent, gardens, streets (lit. "the area outside"), the wilderness, a valley, gates (here used figuratively for settlements), a place (here a sanctuary), a holy-place (here part of the Temple), a particular land (here Egypt). It is impossible to imagine sacrificial acts being conducted *upon* a tent or a valley or a settlement. But all of these objects are capable of being entered, either as regions, enclosed areas, or buildings, and the preposition used indicates that the verbal action is envisioned as taking place *within* them.

Exception might be taken at Gen. 31:54: *wayyizbah ya 'āqōb zebah bāhār*. The RSV reads "on the mountain" (NRSV: "on the height"), making *bāhār* synonymous with *'al-hāhār*. But such an interpretation misrepresents the scene, for it is clear from vv. 21ff. that the meeting with Laban and the culminating sacrifice are seen to take place *within* a mountainous region – "the hill-country of Gilead" – and not on the summit ('L) of a particular mountain.³⁰ The examples, cited above, of B conveying the idea

²⁹ When one is said to sacrifice "on the face of the field" (Lev. 17:5) the sense may be that the sacrificial act takes place directly "on the ground" or that the worshipper is "in the field" when he sacrifices. In Swedish these would be "på marken" (so the Swedish Bible) and "på landet," respectively. *På* (most closely equivalent to Eng. *upon*) cannot be considered "interchangeable" with *i* (= Eng. *in*), even though an English translation of the Swedish phrases would suggest it.

³⁰ Similarly, 'LH + B and 'LH + 'L are not synonymous. When used with *har* the sense of 'LH + B is "to go up into" a mountainous region (e.g., Ex. 19:12, 13; Deut. 5:5; Josh. 16:1; 18:12; Ps. 24:3). Many examples of the 'LH + Ø and 'LH + -H constructions seem to have this same

of superimposition when used with *har* are explicable in this fashion as well, and thus are not exceptions to the rule.³¹

On the basis of Hebrew usage, therefore, it is impossible to maintain that “sacrificing” and “incense burning” were conducted *upon* a “bamah.” Such an interpretation of the preposition *B* when used with *ZBH* and *QTR* would be without precedent in the Hebrew Bible: the nature of the prepositional objects and the context demand the sense of *position within* in every case. In none can *B* be said to be “interchangeable” with ‘*L*. When the two occur together, their meanings are clearly differentiated. Thus Isa. 65:3 speaks of “sacrificing in gardens and burning incense upon bricks” without any possibility of prepositional ambiguity.³² This text should be compared with 2 Kgs. 16(2 Chron. 28):4 which states that Ahaz “sacrificed and burned incense *babbāmôt* and ‘*al* the hills and under every leafy tree.” The burden of proof surely must lie with anyone wishing to equate *B* and ‘*L* here but not in Isa. 65:3.³³

These passages cannot be used to support the claim that a “bamah” was a type of altar. Biblical Hebrew regularly employs the preposition ‘*L* when describing use of an “altar” (*mizbēah*). Relevant idioms, all with ‘*L*, are: *B'R* (Neh. 10:35); *GLH* (Ex. 20:26); *ZBH* (Ex. 20:24; Josh. 8:31; 1 Kgs. 13:2; 2 Kgs. 2:20; 2 Chron. 33:16); *ZRQ* (Ex. 24:6; 29:16, 20; Lev. 1:5, 11; etc. [17 occurrences]); *HT'* (Ex. 29:36); *YQD* (Lev. 6:6); *KPR* (Ex. 24:36, 37); *NGŠ* (Mal. 1:7); *NWP* (Ex. 20:25); *NZH* (Lev. 5:9; 8:11); *NSK* (2 Kgs. 16:13); *NŠB* (Amos 9:1); *NTN* (Lev. 1:7; 17:11; 22:22; 2 Kgs. 16:14); ‘*LH* (Ex. 20:26; Deut. 27:6; Josh. 8:31; 22:23; Judg. 6:28; etc. [19 occurrences]); ‘*MD* (1 Kgs. 13:1); ‘*ŠH* (Ex. 27:2; 29:38; Deut. 12:27; 2 Kgs. 23:17; Ezek.

idea in mind (see below) and a measure of semantic overlap with ‘*LH* + *B* is not impossible. When the mountain is viewed as a concrete topographical feature which can be stood upon, however, ‘*LH* + ‘*L* is used (Isa. 40:9).

³¹ The mountain is seen as a region in 1 Kgs. 8:9, 11:7, and 19:11: e.g., when carrying out the instructions to “stand *bāhār* before Yahweh” Elijah stands at the entrance to his cave and not on the mountain-top (19:11). Ps. 72:16 parallels *bā'āreš* and *bērō's hārīm* as two areas “in” which grain will grow. In Ex. 24:17 the imagery is of a great fire filling (*B*) the area of the mountain-top upon (‘*L*) which the glory of Yahweh had settled (v. 16).

³² For Isa. 65:1–7 see the commentaries and especially S. Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (HSM 46; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989) 65–94. The meaning of *lēbēnim* in v. 3 is uncertain: “bricks” is more or less conventional (cf. D. Conrad, “Zu Jes 65 3b,” *ZAW* 80 [1968] 232–4), but Ackerman makes a strong case for “incense altars” (pp. 169–85). Whichever option one adopts, the semantic differentiation of *B* and ‘*L* is clear.

³³ Emerton simply asserts that “it is generally recognized that in some verses the translation [of the *w* as] ‘even’ is possible” (“Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study,” 122). While *w* is a semantically versatile particle, to be sure, is it Emerton’s position that we are free to call upon that versatility whenever it suits our exegetical pleasure? I can find no contextual indicators that such a “poetic” stylistic is intended in either test passage. Even so, Emerton’s readings do not seriously damage my position since they might indicate only that the two clauses refer to different but related loci of worship: Isa. 65:3 speaks of “sacrificing *b* gardens, even burning incense ‘*l* bricks [which are located in the gardens]”; 2 Kgs. 16(2 Chron. 28):4 reports that Ahaz “sacrificed and burned incense *babbāmôt*, even ‘*al* the hills and under every leafy tree [where the bamoth were located].”

43:27); *PSH* (1 Kgs. 18:26); *PRŠ* (Num. 4:11, 13); *QTR* (Ex. 30:7; 40:27; Lev. 4:10; 9:13, 17; 1 Kgs. 13:2; 2 Kgs. 16:13, 15; 1 Chron. 6:34; 2 Chron. 26:16; 32:12); *ŠYM* (Gen. 22:9; Deut. 33:10); *SRP* (1 Kgs. 13:2; 2 Kgs. 23:16, 20; 2 Chron. 34:5); *ŠHT* (Lev. 1:11); *ŠPK* (Deut. 12:27). It is obvious that an “altar,” unlike a “bamah,” is an object upon which one offers sacrifices and performs other ritual acts.

There are a few passages, however, in which *mizbēah* occurs with the preposition *B*: *YQD + B* (Lev. 6:2, 5); *NG' + B* (Ex. 29:37); *LH + B* (Gen. 8:20 and Num. 23:2, 4, 14, 30, Emerton's prooftexts). The rarity and the extremely narrow distribution of these anomalies dilute their value as precedents for the interchange of '*L*' and *B*' proposed *ex hypothesi* for the *BMH* passages reviewed above. Indeed, they may not be anomalies at all. In Lev. 6:1–6 the “hearth” (*môqēdā*) and its physical relationship to the “altar” (*mizbēah*) probably account for the seemingly interchangeable use of *YQD + B* (vv. 2, 5) and *YQD + 'L* (v. 6), and it may be that the former actually refers to the “hearth.”³⁴ The use of *B* with *NG'* and other verbs of striking and grasping is quite regular,³⁵ due to the way in which the verbal action was viewed (cf. Swed. “gripa tag i”). The five occurrences of '*LH + B*' with *mizbēah* are more problematic for my case. Strictly speaking, *mizbēah* designates a “place of sacrifice” which need not always be a piece of cultic furniture, least of all when syntactical or contextual indicators suggest otherwise; surveying the biblical attestations, C. Dohmen concludes that “*mizbēah* can refer to the slaughter site, to the place of *zēbah*, and to the sacrificial site in a general sense,” consistent with the semantic scope of *ZBH*.³⁶ With the five '*LH + B*' examples it is perfectly reasonable to imagine Noah and Balak preparing some sort of sacrificial area “within” which their offerings were consumed. Emerton allows that *babbāmā/babbāmôt* might be construed in this way – “within the area of the *bāmā* where sacrifice was offered”³⁷ – but doing so precludes using these same five passages as evidence that a bamah might have been an altar.

That a bamah might have been an altar-like platform or podium is likewise highly improbable. Note should be taken of the idiom '*MD + 'L*' used with *mizbēah* (1 Kgs. 13:1) and also with *kīyyôr* (2 Chron. 6:13) and '*ammūd* (2 Kgs. 11:14; 23:3; 2 Chron. 23:13; 34:31 [emended]); both words refer to platform structures of some sort within the precincts of the Jerusalem Temple and thus comparable, at least in terms of location, to many of the archaeologically known platforms commonly identified as bamoth.³⁸

³⁴ With J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 378–9, 383–4, citing Midr. Lev. Rab. 7:5 as the first recognition of this distinction; cf. B.A. Levine, *Leviticus* (JPSTC; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 35.

³⁵ Cf. GKC (1910) 279.

³⁶ Dohmen, in *TDOT* (1997) 8.210; see also *idem*, “*L-(H)MZH* – Zur Bedeutung und Verwendung von hebr. '*L*,’” *BN* 16 (1981) 7–10. For *ZBH* see J. Bergman, H. Ringgren, and B. Lang, in *TDOT* (1980) 4.8–29.

³⁷ Emerton, “Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study,” 122–3.

³⁸ For a discussion of '*ammūd*' in conjunction with archaeological data see A. Kusche and M. Metzger, “Kumudi und die Ausgrabungen auf Tell Kamid el-Loz,” *VTSup* 22 (1972) 165–6. Cf. G. von Rad, “The Royal Ritual in Judah, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. by E. W. T. Dicken; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) 223–4.

If Emerton's prooftexts fall short of the mark, there are two passages which appear to give evidence that bamoth – or at least some bamoth – were installations *upon* which cultic acts were conducted. Although it is hard to imagine that the testimony of these two texts should outweigh the unanimous testimony of the evidence presented above,³⁹ these passages – manifestly the exceptions to the rule – require special attention.

Isa. 16:12 (MT) reads: *wēhāyâ kî-nir'â kî nil'â mô'āb 'al-habbāmâ, ūbâ' 'el-miqdāšô lēhitpallēl wēlô' yūkāl*. The sense of the passage is clear enough: Moab's supplications for divine intervention on its behalf are in vain. Assuming a bamah to be an elevation of some sort, commentators have had no cause to take *'al-habbāmâ* as anything other than "upon the bamah."⁴⁰ But this assumption is contradicted by the syntactical indicators of *BMH* usage as a whole. It might be supposed that the reference is to an entirely different type of bamah installation, but this is unlikely (cf. 15:2)⁴¹ and the supposition itself, in the absence of any other supporting documentation, amounts to special pleading. If a bamah was some sort of sanctuary building within or in front of which worship normally was conducted (cf. Solomon's Temple), the personified Moab could be imagined to have climbed onto the roof of the bamah in his desperation; although culturally and contextually plausible (cf. 15:3),⁴² this explanation is no more than an exegetical harmonization.

The matter is perhaps best resolved by supposing that *'L* in Isa. 16:12 somewhat approximates *B* in meaning: thus J. Blenkinsopp's rendering "presenting himself at the hill-shrine."⁴³ This would be unusual, but not without precedent in biblical usage:

³⁹ According to Fenton (in *BSOAS* 34 [1976] 434): "[T]he term *bāmâ* in the Deuteronomic historiography of Kings signifies a building and not merely a platform ... [but] it would appear that *bāmâ* is indeed virtually a synonym for 'altar' at Isa. xvi, 13, and Ezek. xvi, 13, as Vaughan maintains – I would add Jer. xlviii, 35. This may have been its original denotation in cultic contexts." Vaughan cites but does not discuss Isa. 16:13 and Ezek. 16:16 (*Meaning*, 31). Fenton's citation of Jer. 48:35 probably reflects a common emendation of the MT which has the effect of adding the preposition *'L*: see W. B. Barrick, "The Bamoth of Moab," *MAARAV* 7 (1991) 87–8.

⁴⁰ See the commentaries. B.C. Jones lately evades the problem by citing occurrences of the "secular" *BMH* to show that the Hebrew Bible "frequently uses *'L* with *BMH* when referring to mountain (often mythic) high places" (*Howling over Moab: Irony and Rhetoric in Isaiah 15–16* [SBLD 157; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996] 205 n. 2), but these passages are irrelevant for determining whether the "cultic" *BMH* refers to an installation *upon* which cultic acts were performed.

⁴¹ See the discussion of the relevant textual and archaeological material in Barrick, "Bamoth of Moab," 67–89.

⁴² For rooftop worship in Judah see, e.g., Zeph. 1:5 (complaining of "those who bow down on the roofs to the Host of Heaven"), 2 Kgs. 23:12 (Josiah's agents destroy "the altars on the roof of the upper-chamber of Ahaz which the kings of Judah had made"), Jer. 19:13 and 32:29 (the houses of Jerusalem, including "the houses of the kings of Judah," upon the roofs of which they "burned incense" to the Host of Heaven/Baal and poured out drink offerings to "other gods" will be destroyed).

⁴³ J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York/London/Toronto/Sydney/Auckland: Doubleday, 2000) 30, 295; similarly T.G. Smothers, "Isaiah 15–16," *Forming Prophetic Literature*:

e.g., “they will be gathered together as prisoners in [‘L] a pit; they will be imprisoned in [‘L] a prison” (Isa. 24:22; cf. Gen. 37:20, 22). Considering the parallelism in v. 12, ‘*al-habbāmā* and ‘*el-miqdāšō* could be seen as virtually synonymous. A semantic overlap of ‘L and ‘L is well documented in biblical Hebrew:⁴⁴ e.g., “this shall you say, each man to [‘L] his neighbor and each man to [‘L] his brother” (Jer. 23:35); “and the two of them stopped at [‘L] the Jordan” (2 Kgs. 2:7). This overlapping seems most prevalent in exilic and post-exilic writings where it may reflect Aramaic influence;⁴⁵ this explanation would tend to support those commentators who regard this verse as a late gloss based on 15:2.⁴⁶ It is possible, of course, that ‘L is simply a scribal error for ‘L, a less elaborate solution for which there is some manuscriptal evidence.⁴⁷

The issue is complicated by the doublet *kī-nir’ā kī nil’ā*. Although its authenticity has been defended,⁴⁸ it is more likely a conflation of two readings. 1QIsa^a has R’H⁴⁹ which in Niphal is a technical term for “appearing” before (‘L or LPNY) a deity (e.g., Isa. 1:12). The usual idiom for “appearing” at a particular place is R’H (in Niphal) + B, never ‘L, and very rarely ‘L.⁵⁰ L’H, the rarer of the two verbs and virtually un-

Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D.W. Watts (ed. by J.W. Watts and P.R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: JSOT, 1996) 72.

⁴⁴ See the large collection of examples amassed by A. Sperber, *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) 59ff., 288. 631ff. His conclusion that ‘L and ‘L are used “promiscuously” (p. 633) is extreme, however. Cf. BDB (1907) 755 n. 6; Waltke-O’Connor, *Syntax*, 216.

⁴⁵ Cf. Jüon, *Grammaire*, 403; M.H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927) 142, 172; G. Gerleman, *Synoptic Studies in the Old Testament* (LUÅ 44.5; Lund: Gleerup 1948) 16; Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax*, 103.

⁴⁶ See Barrick, “Bamoth of Moab,” 82–5 and accompanying notes.

⁴⁷ B. Kennicott cites 18 manuscripts reading ‘L (*Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum Variis Lectionibus* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1780] 2.21). LXX’s ἐπὶ τοῖς βωμοῖς and Targ’s ‘*al bāmātā*’ are inconclusive. For the exchange of ‘L and ‘L in 1QIsa^a see now P. Pulikottil, *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran: The Case of the Large Isaiah Scroll 1QIsa^a* (JSPSup 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 112–3.

⁴⁸ E.g., F. Delitzsch considers it “a picturesque assonance such as Isaiah delights in” (*Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* [trans. by J. Martin; Clark’s Foreign Theological Library 14; Edinburgh: Clark, 1886] 337).

⁴⁹ 1QIsa^a reads *ky nr’h* and replaces *nl’h* with *b’*. The latter may be a deliberate simplification or an error (*b’* occurs in the phrase immediately following); if authentic, however, ‘L could easily be equivalent to ‘L (cf., e.g., Ex. 18:23 where the Sam. Pent. reads ‘L in place of ‘L).

⁵⁰ Of the seven other occurrences of R’H (in Niphal) + ‘L, the idea of superimposition is required only in 2 Sam. 22:11 (but cf. Ps. 18:11), Lev. 16:2 (although the neutral “at” would yield satisfactory sense), and possibly Ezek. 10:1 (where the imagery is mystifying; see the commentaries). The context of Ex. 5:21 and Zech. 9:14 (if “them” refers to the enemies) suggests that ‘L may have the hostile nuance “against.” In Ps. 90:16 ‘L and ‘L are synonymous; cf. also Isa. 60:2 where the phrase is in parallel with ZRH + ‘L, the regular idiom for the appearance of the sun at its rising (Ex. 22:2; 2 Kgs. 3:2; cf. Isa. 60:1), which may account for the overlap.

examined in Verb + Preposition idioms,⁵¹ has the support of the LXX and the Targum and is favored by most commentators.⁵²

The second apparent exception occurs in Ezekiel 16, an elaborate allegory representing the religious history of Jerusalem (and, by extension, Israel) as the shocking behavior of an ungrateful ward and wanton bride.⁵³ According to Vaughan, 16:15–25 is “the most detailed account in the whole Bible of what happened at a city bamah”:⁵⁴

the prophet describes how “she made ... gaily decked bamoth” on which she played the harlot (verse 16). Subsequently he mentions (verses 23–25) where these bamoth were situated, and indicates that they were specially built structures within a city: “You built yourself a mound (*gab*) and made yourself a lofty place (*rāmā*) in every square, at the head of every street you built your lofty place and prostituted your beauty.” The *gab* and *rāmā* will be words describing the appearance of a city bamah.

The matter is not as simple and straightforward as Vaughan would have it.

V. 16a reads: *wattiqhī mibbēgādayik watta ‘āšī-lāk bāmōt tēlu’ōt wattizēnī ‘ālēhem*. Vaughan assumes that the referent of ‘*ālēhem* is *bāmōt*,⁵⁵ but he fails to explain, or even mention, the incongruity of having a masc. pronominal suffix refer to a fem. noun. Notwithstanding the precedents in the Ezekiel corpus (e.g., 37:2, 4), using one anomaly to explain another anomaly inspires little confidence; it is preferable, therefore, to take the referent of ‘*ālēhem* as *bēgādayik*,⁵⁶ presumably the raiment (*riqmā*, *šēš*, *mešī*) given the woman in vv. 10, 13a. This does not really resolve the matter, however, because the analogy of Prov. 7:16–17 suggests that the “garments” would have covered a piece of furniture (a bed or couch). M. Greenberg’s translation – “You took some of your clothes and made gaily-colored shrines and harloted on

⁵¹ Gen. 19:11; Ex. 7:18; Isa. 47:13; Prov. 26:15. None are grammatically comparable.

⁵² See Barrick, “Bamoth of Moab,” 84–5 and accompanying note.

⁵³ In addition to the commentaries, special studies include: O. Eissfeldt, “Hesekiel Kap. 16 als Geschichtsquelle,” *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1963) 101–6 (= *JPOS* 16 [1939] 286–92); M. Greenberg, “Ezekiel 16: A Panorama of Passions,” *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. by J.H. Marks and R.M. Good; Winona Lake: Four Quarters/Eisenbrauns, 1987) 143–50; M.H. Pope, “Mixed Marriage Metaphor in Ezekiel 16,” *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. by A. B. Beck et al.; Biblical Interpretation Series 18; Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK; Eerdmans, 1995) 384–99; R. P. Carroll, “Whorusalamin: A Tale of Three Cities as Three Sisters.” *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkeli van Dijk-Hemmes* (ed. by B. Becking and M. Dijkstra; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 67–82; J. Stiebert, “The Woman Metaphor of Ezekiel 16 and 23: A Victim of Violence, or a Symbol of Subversion?” *OTE* 15/1 (2002) 200–8.

⁵⁴ Vaughan, *Meaning*, 30.

⁵⁵ Similarly, e.g., G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; New York/Edinburgh: Scribners/Clark, 1937) 1.172; K. W. Carley, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1974) 99–100. Cf. W.H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986) 229.

⁵⁶ So, e.g., W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* (trans. by R. E. Clements; ed. by F. M. Cross et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 326.

them” – is nonsensical⁵⁷ unless one imagines an improbable tent-like structure, the roof of which was strong enough to support a couple’s rambunctious lovemaking. The semantic overlap of ‘*L* and ‘*L* allows for the possibility that the noncommittal “at” is the intended sense.⁵⁸

The terminology also is problematic. *ṭēlu’ôt*, sparsely attested, describes the worn-out sandals of the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:5: customarily “patched” [e.g., NRSV], although “discolored” or “faded” could be considered) and the varied coloration or markings of Laban’s sheep and goats (Gen. 30:32, 33, 35, 39: customarily “spotted” [NRSV] or some such; it is juxtaposed with *NQD* and ‘*QD*, also descriptive terms but equally obscure), and neither is particularly helpful. It is more readily explicable as semantically comparable to *riqmâ* in 16:10, 13, 18, well-attested in the descriptive sense of “multi-colored” (or “colorful”) or “embroidered” (or “intricately decorated”);⁵⁹ if so, the fact that a form of *RQM* is not used in v. 16 is noteworthy. *rāmâ* plainly refers to a raised structure of some sort,⁶⁰ while the meaning of *gab* can only be approximated from its use in other contexts which themselves are not altogether clear (thus W. Zimmerli’s “swelling, hump, boss, pedestal”);⁶¹ making due allowance for rhetorical hyperbole, both refer to constructions utilized for sexual activity (cf. the Versions)⁶² associated in some fashion with cultic praxis in Jerusalem in the late monarchic period with which the author was familiar.⁶³ Both are “built”/“made”

⁵⁷ M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 271 (cf. 280). Cooke understands *bāmôt ṭēlu’ôt* as “the variegated curtains of the tents set up on the high places” (*Ezekiel*, 168), but fails to reconcile this with ‘*ālêhem*.

⁵⁸ Cf. the discussion of this verse by Fowler, “Israelite *bāmâ*,” 209. Among the commentators, note W. H. Brownlee’s paraphrase (*Ezekiel 1–19* [WBC 28; Waco: Word, 1986] 216, cf. 229): “You took some of your garments and made yourself gaudy tent shrines on mountaintops at which you performed as a prostitute.” Zimmerli translates ‘*ālêhem* as “on them” (*Ezekiel* 1, 326), but in his exegesis he speaks of structures “in which the acts of adultery took place” (p. 343).

⁵⁹ Cf. especially Ex. 35:35; 38:18; Judg. 5:30; Ezek. 17:3; 26:16; 27:7, 16, 24; Ps. 139:15. For discussion see, e.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 340, 361.

⁶⁰ There is absolutely no text-critical evidence to support Whitney’s suggestion that *rāmâ* is an error for *bāmâ* in vv. 24, 25, 31, 39 (“‘Bamoth’ in the Old Testament,” 134; Vaughan’s criticism (*Meaning*, 76 n. 64) is to the point.

⁶¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 1, 342. Cf. recently D. Wolfers, “What Is a *gb*?” *JBQ* 20 (1991) 17–23.

⁶² Cf., e.g., W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (trans. by C. Quin; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 200 nn. x–y: “They were high couches constructed of bricks, like the base of an altar, upon which the temple harlots who served the goddess of love gave themselves to ritual prostitution.” This specificity is based on Assyrian models, the relevance of which has not been demonstrated.

⁶³ Eichrodt (see the preceding note) exemplifies the customary understanding of this praxis as “cultic prostitution” in the service of a fertility deity, a hallmark of debauched “Canaanite” religious culture. This prejudicial notion of “cultic prostitution” is a hoary exegetical tradition with virtually no substantiation; as J.H. Tigay summarizes (*Deuteronomy* [JPSTC; Philadelphia/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1996] 481): “It is a case of conjectures that have been repeated so often, without examination of the evidence, that they have turned into ‘facts.’ There is, in fact, no evidence available to show that ritual intercourse was ever per-

in an urban setting (vv. 24–25, recapitulated in v. 31), and their destruction is explicitly predicted (v. 39a). The “bamoth” of v. 16a are conspicuously missing from this neatly symmetrical inventory. Although this omission could indicate that “bamoth” were cultic installations of a different type (e.g., native, “Canaanitic” installations in the countryside, as distinct from urban installations devoted to deities imported from abroad),⁶⁴ when coupled with the use of the un-Ezekielian *ṭēlu ’ôṭ* in v. 16 it suggests that the verse may be a late gloss reconciling Ezekiel’s *rāmā* and *gab* with analogous vocabulary used in historiographical literature (cf. 2 Kings 23 in which *bāmā/bāmôt* apparently identifies a variety of different urban cultic installations). If the latter option is adopted,⁶⁵ the verse contains little if any independent information about what a “bamah” actually was.

2 The Use of Hebrew *BMH* with the Verbs of Approach

That a “bamah” was not an installation upon which one performed cultic rites or made offerings, like an altar or cultic platform, is further indicated by the verbs used when one is said to approach it.

2a The Use of *BMH* with the Verb *BW’*

The word *BMH* as a “cultic” designation is twice used with the verb *BW’*: *wayyābō’ habbāmā* (1 Sam. 10:13), and *mā habbāmā ’āšer-’attem habbā’im šām* (Ezek. 20:29), usually rendered “he came to the high place/shrine,” and “what is the high place to which you go?” (RSV/NRSV). These translations are open to question. Strictly speaking, the verbal action expressed by *BW’* is movement *into* a destination (i.e., “to come into, to enter”), and only secondarily and under certain syntactic circumstances is movement toward a destination (i.e., “to come to, to approach”) possi-

formed by laymen anywhere in the ancient Near East, nor that sacred marriage, even if it involved a real female participant, was practiced in or near Israel during the biblical period.” Recent treatments include E.J. Fisher, “Cultic Prostitution in the Ancient Near East? A Re-assessment,” *BTB* 6 (1976) 225–36; R.A. Oden, Jr., “Religious Identity and the Sacred Prostitution Accusation,” *The Bible without Theology: The Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (New Voices in Biblical Studies 4; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 131–53, 187–92 (with an excellent review of the history of this tradition); P. Bird, “‘To Play the Harlot’: An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor,” *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. by P. L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 75–94; K. van der Toorn, “Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel,” *JBL* 108 (1989) 193–205, and *idem*, in *ABD* (1992) 5. 510–3. Cf. the moderate position taken by Dever, “Silence of the Text,” 153–4.

⁶⁴ Cf. J. Skinner, *The Book of Ezekiel* (Expositor’s Bible 13:1; Cincinnati/New York: Jennings & Graham/Eaton & Mains, n.d.) 133–4.

⁶⁵ Cf., e.g., Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 199 n. s; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 342 343–4; Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 229.

ble.⁶⁶ The *BW'* + *šām* construction in Ezek. 20:29 tells us nothing, its semantic content being dependent upon the nature of the destination to which *šām* refers, in this case the unknown *habbāmā*. In 1 Sam. 10:13 the traveler's destination, *habbāmā*, is subordinated to the verb by means of the "accusative" (or "verbal complement")⁶⁷ and not through a preposition (or "prepositional complement"). According to H. Ewald, "the ordinary accusative forms the proper completion and extension of the verb."⁶⁸ The comprehensive survey of Hebrew motion-verbs by H. J. Austel generally confirms Ewald's opinion; he concludes that the "basic idea" in this type of subordination is "the carrying out of the action indicated in the verb."⁶⁹ In the case of the *BW'* + \emptyset ("accusative") construction, therefore, it is *a priori* probable that the writer intended to convey the idea of entry rather than approach.

This surmise can be checked against actual usage of the *BW'* (in Qal) + \emptyset construction where the destination of the verbal action is a common noun as in 1 Sam. 10:13. There are 63 such passages.⁷⁰ Each of the destinations in these passages is capable of being entered⁷¹ and, for the most part, it is clear from the context that entry is actu-

⁶⁶ Cf. BDB (1907) 97ff; KB (1967) 108ff. (= Richardson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1.112–4), and cf. Holladay, *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 34ff.; H. D. Preuss, in *TDOT* (revised, 1977) 2.20–49; Clines (ed.), *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* 2.101–127.

⁶⁷ "Accusative" is the conventional designation: e.g., Waltke-O'Connor, *Syntax*, 169ff. ("accusative" of place). "Verbal complement" is the more strictly descriptive designation preferred by H. J. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements with Verbs of Motion in Biblical Hebrew* (unpublished dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1969), especially 30–1; cf. T. Muraoka, "On Verb Complementation in Biblical Hebrew," *VT* 29 (1979) 425–35.

⁶⁸ H. Ewald, *Syntax of the Hebrew Language of the Old Testament* (trans. by J. Kennedy; Edinburgh: Clark, 1881) 43. As to whether the "accusative" is locative or terminative see, e.g., GKC (1910) 373; T. J. Meek "The Hebrew Accusative of Time and Place," *JAOS* 60 (1940) especially 228; Joüon, *Grammaire*, 372; C. Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax*, 79.

⁶⁹ Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 323–9 (quotation from p. 323).

⁷⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 41–2: 'ōšār, "treasury" (Josh. 8:19); bayit, "house" (Josh. 2:1; 6:22; Judg. 9:27; 18:18; 1 Sam. 5:5; etc. [37 occurrences]); bāmā, "bamah" (1 Sam. 10:13); barzel, "iron [fetters]" (Ps. 105:18); gōren, "threshing-floor" (Ruth 3:14); heder, "chamber" (1 Kgs. 20:30; 22:25; 2 Chron. 18:24); hāšēr, "court" (Ps. 100:4); lēšākōt, "chambers" (Ezek. 42:12 [on bēbō'ām see J.A. Bewer, "Textual and Exegetical Notes on the Book of Ezekiel," *JBL* 72 [1953] 168, and W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* [trans. by R.E. Clements; ed. by F. M. Cross et al.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983] 396–7); mālōn "campground" (2 Kgs. 19:23; cf. Isa. 37:24b); miqdās, "sanctuary" (Lam. 1:10); 'ir, "city" (1 Sam. 9:13; 10:5; 21:1; 2 Sam. 10:14; etc. [11 occurrences]); petah, "door" (Isa. 13:2); ša'ar, "gate" (Gen. 23:10, 18; Ob. 11 [Qere]; Ps. 100:4).

⁷¹ The destination *mārôm*, "height," in Isa. 37:24b appears to be an exception. The 2 Kgs. 19:23 version reads *mālōn*; given the presence of *mārôm* earlier in the verse, the Isaianic version may be textually corrupt: so, e.g., K. Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (KHCAT 10; Tübingen: Mohr, 1900) 256; B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (3rd edn.; KHAT 3.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914) 244; E.J. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1941) 1.411. If it is retained, *mārôm* can be seen as the mountainous area which the traveler enters (cf. the discussion of *bāhār* above).

ally achieved: e.g., Josh. 6:19 (*'ôšār*: the valuables will be deposited in the treasury of Yahweh); 1 Sam. 5:5 (*bayit*: those who enter the House of Dagon do not step on the threshold); 1 Kgs. 14:4 (*bayit*: Ahijah hears the woman as she enters his house [cf. v. 6]); 2 Kgs. 10:21 (*bayit*: the Baal worshippers enter the House of Baal, filling it to capacity); 2 Kgs. 11:19 (*bayit*: Jehoiada and the assembly enter the royal palace and the king sits upon the throne); Jer. 36:5 (*bayit*: Jeremiah tells Baruch that he is forbidden to enter the House of Yahweh); Amos 5:19 (*bayit*: one does not expect to be bitten by a snake after entering a house); Ps. 105:18 (*barzel*: Joseph's neck was in fetters); 2 Sam. 10:14 (*'îr*: the Ammonites flee back into the city from their battlelines in front of the gate [cf. v. 8]); 2 Kgs. 7:4 (*'îr*: the lepers at the gate discuss whether they should enter the city). Even the construction in Jer. 32:24 – *hassôlêlôt bâ'û hâ'îr lëlokdâh* – conforms to this pattern: the image is of a besieged city whose walls have been breached so that the “ramps” used in the deployment of the enemy's battering-rams now lead into the city itself.⁷²

This may be compared to the subordination of a common noun to *BW'* by means of the preposition *'L* which is “properly an expression of *motion* or at least of *direction* toward something.”⁷³ There are 142 such *BW'* (in Qal) + *'L* passages.⁷⁴ In many of

⁷² Cf. 2 Sam. 20:15; 2 Kgs. 19:32; Isa. 37:33; Jer. 6:6; 33:4; Ezek. 4:2; 17:17; 21:27; 26:8; Dan. 11:15. On this technique of siege warfare see Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) 314–5 and illustrations. The remainder of the verse supports this interpretation: “... because of sword and famine and disease the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans fighting against it; what you said (would happen) has happened, and behold you are seeing (it).”

⁷³ GKC (1910) 378. See also BDB (1907) 39; Joüon, *Grammaire*, 403; Brockelmann, *Syntax*, 103–4; KB (1967) 48–9 (= Richardson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1.50–1), and cf. Holaday, *Lexicon*, 16. G.J. Thierry derives it from **'ilai-u*, “direction” (“Notes on Hebrew Grammar and Etymology,” *OTS* 9 [1951] 2–3). Cf. also Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, 2.385ff.; H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebraischen Sprache des Alten Testaments* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1962 [originally 1922]) 640; Waltke-O'Connor, *Syntax*, 193–4.

⁷⁴ Cf. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 46ff.: *'ôhel*, “tent” (Ex. 28:43; 29:30; 30:20; 40:32, 35; Lev. 9:23; etc. [14 occurrences]); *'ôšār*, “treasury” (Job 38:22); *'armôn*, “residences” (1 Kgs. 16:18; see E.A. Speiser, “The Etymology of *'armôn*,” *JQR* 14 [1923–1924] 329, and cf. H. L. Ginsberg, “The Ugaritic Texts and Textual Criticism,” *JBL* 62 [1943] 114 n. 9; on the verse see the commentaries); *'eres*, “land” (Ex. 12:25; 16:35; Lev. 19:23; 23:10; 25:2; etc. [20 occurrences]); *bayit*, “house” (Gen. 19:3; 39:16; Ex. 7:23; 12:23; Lev. 14:46; Deut. 24:10; etc. [32 occurrences]); *gidrôt haššô'n*, “sheepfold” (1 Sam. 24:4); *hëkâl*, “temple” (Mal. 3:1; Neh. 6:11; 2 Chron. 26:16; 27:2); *har*, “mountain” (Ex. 3:1); *hânût*, “cell (?)” (Jer. 37:16); *hâšër*, “court” (Ezek. 44:21, 27); *ya'ar*, “honeycomb” (1 Sam. 14:26; cf. S.R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* [2nd edn.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913] 113–4, and Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 144); *yeqeb*, “winevat” (Hag. 2:16); *lehem*, “food [feast]” (1 Sam. 20:27); *mâbô'*, “entrance” (2 Chron. 23:15); *mizbëah*, “altar” (Ps. 43:4); *mâlôn*, “campground” (Gen. 43:21); *mënuhâ*, “rest” (Deut. 12:9; Ps. 95:11); *më'arâ*, “cave” (1 Kgs. 19:9); *miqdâš*, “sanctuary” (Lev. 12:4; Isa. 16:12; Ezek. 23:39; 44:9, 16; Ps. 73:17); *mâqôm*, “place” (Gen. 22:9; Deut. 12:26; 29:6; 1 Sam. 20:19; 26:5; 2 Sam. 2:23); *mišteh*, “banquet” (Est. 5:45, 8, 14); *nahâlâ*, “inheritance” (Deut. 12:9); *'ayin*, “spring” (Gen. 24:42); *'îr*, “city” (Josh. 9:17; 10:19, 20; 20:6; 1 Sam. 30:3; etc. [13 occurrences]); *'ôpel*, “hill” or “citadel” (2 Kgs. 5:24; because the scene is not localized, both

these passages *BW'* + '*L*' expresses entry and not approach (e.g., 2 Chron. 23:6–7 [with *bayit*]) and is thus synonymous with *BW'* + \emptyset . In a significant number of *BW'* + '*L*' passages, however, actual entry is doubtful or clearly impossible because of the nature of the destination, or the larger context of the passage, or both; for example: Judg. 11:34 (*bayit*: Jephthah has come to, but has not yet entered, his house when he sees his daughter “coming out [of the house]” [*yōyē'ti*] to meet him [cf. v. 31]);⁷⁵ Judg. 18:15 (*bayit*: the spies come to [*BW'* + '*L*'] Micah's house in v. 15 and enter [*BW'* + \emptyset] it in v. 18;⁷⁶ [similarly in 2 Sam. 4:5ff.]);⁷⁷ 2 Sam. 17:18 (*bayit*: Jonathan and Ahimaaz come to the house of a man at Bahurim and hide in the well in the courtyard);⁷⁸ Ezek. 3:4 (*bayit*: the destination is *bēt-yīsrā'el*, the people to whom the prophet is told to come);⁷⁹ Ex. 3:1 (*har*: Moses approaches “the mountain of God” while moving his flocks through the wilderness); 1 Sam. 14:26 (*ya'ar*: the people approach the honeycomb, and Jonathan eats from it); Hag. 2:16 (*veqeb*: one approaches the winevat to draw from it); 1 Sam. 20:27 (*lehem*: Saul asks why David has not come to the feast); Ps. 43:4 (*mizbēah*: the speaker goes to the altar to praise God); Gen. 22:9 (*māqôm*: the “place” is the mountain-top (v. 2) to which Abraham and Isaac have come [cf. *HLK* + '*L*' in v. 3]); 1 Sam. 20:19 (*māqôm*: the reference is to the “place” in the field to which David is told to go to hide); 1 Sam. 26:5 (*māqôm*:

meanings of the word are possible; the second is perhaps preferable if Elijah was attached to the royal establishment at Samaria [cf. Burney, *Notes*, 282–3; Gray, *I–II Kings*, 420]); '*ārēmā* “heap” (Hag. 2:16); *pārōket*, “veil” (Lev. 21:23); *petah*, “door” (Num. 20:6; 1 Kgs. 17:10); *šeriah*, “chamber, citadel (?)” (Judg. 9:26: all that can be said with certainty is that the word refers to some part of the “house” of El-Berith; see the commentaries); *qeber*, “grave” (1 Kgs. 13:22; 14:13; Job 5:26); *qōdeš*, “holy place” (Ex. 28:29, 35; Lev. 16:2, 3, 23; Ezek. 44:27); *šadeh*, “field” (1 Sam. 6:14); *šedērā*, “line [of men]” (2 Kgs. 11:8); *šulhān*, “table” (1 Sam. 20:29); *ša'ar*, “gate” (Ezek. 40:6; 44:17; Est. 4:2); *tēbā*, “ark” (Gen. 6:18; 7:1, 7, 9, 13).

⁷⁵ The plan of Palestinian domestic architecture (on which see L. E. Stager, “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel,” *BASOR* 260 [1985] 11–23; E. Netzer, “Domestic Architecture in the Iron Age,” *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* [ed. by A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992] 193–201) and the concomitant semantic flexibility of *bayit* complicate the interpretation of those passages where the destination is a “house”: one may enter the courtyard of a dwelling compound (*bayit*) without entering the actual dwelling unit (*bayit*). In Judg. 11:34, however, the sense of *BW'* + '*L*' is evident from *šWB* used prefiguratively in v. 31.

⁷⁶ V. 18a repeats the verbal action described in v. 17a (*bā'ū sammāh*) which usually is regarded as a later gloss: cf. e.g., G.F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (ICC; New York/Edinburgh: Scribners/Clark, 1895) 396; C.F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (2nd edn.; London: Rivingtons, 1920) 413–4; J.A. Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (trans. by J. Bowden; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 274–5. R.G. Boling retains both, seeing v. 18a as an intentional repetition giving a chronological setting for the question in v. 18b (*Judges* [AB 6A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1975] 264).

⁷⁷ The house is not entered until v. 7 (which anticipates v. 8 and probably is corrupt; cf. the restoration proposed by J. Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1871] 161–2).

⁷⁸ The courtyard is entered but the dwelling unit is not; see n. 75 above.

⁷⁹ *BW'* + '*L*' is the expected construction when the destination is a person; cf. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 98–9.

the “place” is Saul’s encampment which David approaches and subsequently [vv. 6ff.] enters); 2 Sam. 2:23 (*māqôm*: the reference is to the “place” where Asahel lay dead; David’s army arrives and waits there until Joab’s return to remove the body [vv. 30ff.]); Est. 5:4, 8, 12, 14 (*mišteh*: the king and Haman come to Esther’s banquet); Gen. 24:42 (*‘ayin*: Abraham’s servant reports that he met Rebekah when he had come to the spring [cf. v. 11]); 2 Kgs. 5:24 (*‘ōpel*: the reference is to the place where Elijah’s house was located, either a hill or a building-complex of some sort – having obtained Naaman’s gifts, Gehazi returns to [BW’ + ‘L] the ophel and deposits them “in the house” [*bābbayit*], and then “goes in” [BW’ without stated destination] and talks with the prophet [v. 25]); Hag. 2:16 (*‘ārēmā*: one comes to a heap of grain to take from it); Lev. 21:23 (*pārōket*: no blemished Aaronite is permitted to approach [BW’ + ‘L] the veil or to approach [NGŠ + ‘L] the altar); 1 Kgs. 17:10 (*petah*: Elijah has come only to the gate of Zarephath when he meets the widow gathering sticks);⁸⁰ 1 Sam. 20:29 (*šulhān*: Jonathan explains why David has not come to the king’s table for the feast). This contrasts sharply with the BW’ + Ø construction in which entry always is achieved. If the text of 1 Sam. 10:13 read **wayyābō’ ‘el-habbāmā* one would be justified in translating “and he came to the bamah.” But to render the MT’s *wayyābō’ habbāmā* in this fashion (so, e.g., RSV/NRSV) would be without syntactical precedent in biblical usage.

2b The Use of *BMH* with the Verb ‘*LH*

BMH is used with the verb ‘*LH* (in Qal) in six biblical passages: *ya ‘āleh habbāmātāh* (1 Sam. 9:13); *la ‘ālôt habbāmā* (1 Sam. 9:14); *‘ālēh lēpānay habbāmā* (1 Sam. 9:19); *‘e ‘ēleh ‘al-bmty-‘āb* (Isa. 14:14); *‘ālā habbayit wēdībōn habbāmôt* (Isa. 15:2); *ma ‘āleh bāmā ūmaqṣṣr lē ‘lōhāyw* (Jer. 48:35b). The first three refer to the site of cultic activity (a sacrifice and a meal) in which Samuel and Saul participate. Isa. 15:2 is extremely problematic, but the reference clearly is to one or more cultic installations, as is the reference in Jer. 48:35b. *BMH* is a “secular” term in Isa. 14:14 where it figures in the boastful imagery applied to the king of Babylon.

The verb ‘*LH* signifies upward motion. It can be used to express upward movement toward a destination spatially higher than the traveler’s starting place (i.e., “to go up to”), or upward movement which concludes with the traveler located upon his destination (i.e., “to go up [to a position] upon”).⁸¹ If the latter is the case in those passages where the traveler’s destination is a bamah installation, those bamoth must be

⁸⁰ That the widow was the first resident of Zarephath whom he met, and that this occurred even before he had actually entered the city adds emphasis to the fulfillment of the prophecy given in v. 9b.

⁸¹ Cf. BDB (1907) 748ff.; KB (1967) 705–6 (= Richardson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 2.828–30), and cf. Holladay, *Lexicon*, 273; H. A. Brongers, “Das Zeitwort ‘ālā und seine Derivate,” *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to M.A. Beek* (ed. by M.S.H.G. Heerma van Voss *et al.*; *Studia Semitica Neerlandica* 16; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974) 30–40.

seen as elevations upon which cultic activity could take place. A number of syntactical factors suggest however, that the first possibility is the intended sense here.

In 1 Sam. 9:14, 19, and (apparently) Isa. 15:2 the nouns-of-destination *habbāmā* and *habbāmôt* are subordinated to the verb by means of the “accusative” which signals completion of the verbal action.⁸² The ‘LH (in Qal) + Ø construction occurs in MT with the following common nouns as the destination of the verbal action:⁸³ ‘armēnôt, “residences” (Isa. 34:13); *bayit*, “house” (Judg. 14:19; 2 Kgs. 19:14; 20:5, 8; 23:2; Isa. 15:2; 37:14; etc. [11 occurrences]); *bāmā/bāmôt*, “bamah/bamoth” (1 Sam. 9:14, 19; Isa. 15:2); *derek*, “highway” (Isa. 35:9);⁸⁴ *har*, “mountain” (Hag. 1:8; Ps. 104:8⁸⁵); *hômā*, “wall” (Joel 2:7); *yāsūa*, “bed” (Gen. 49:4); *midbar*, “wilderness” (Judg. 1:16); *mizbēah*, “altar” (Isa. 60:7); *mārôm*, “height” (2 Kgs. 19:23; Isa. 37:24); *miškāb*, “bed” (Gen. 49:4; Isa. 57:8); ‘*ir* (1 Sam. 9:14; Prov. 21:22); *rō’š*, “top” (Ex. 17:10; Deut. 3:27); *šamayim*, “heaven” (1 Sam. 5:12; 2 Kgs. 2:11; Isa. 14:13; Jer. 51:53; Amos 9:2; Ps. 107:26; Prov. 30:4); *ša’ar*, “gate” (Ruth 4:1). In none of these passages does the one “going up” demonstrably conclude his journey upon his destination. In many cases superimposition is obviously impossible: 2 Kgs. 23:2 (*bayit*: “the king went up [to] the House of Yahweh” [similarly in Judg. 14:19; 2 Kgs. 19:14; 20:5; Isa. 15:2 (?);⁸⁶ 37:14; 38:22; Jer. 26:10; 2 Chron. 29:20; 34:30]); Judg. 1:16 (*midbar*: the people “went up from the City of Palms [to] the wilderness of Judah south of Arad”); 1 Sam. 9:14 (‘*ir*: “they went up [to] the city” [so also in Prov. 21:22, unless ‘LH carries the hostile nuance of “attack” [regularly ‘LH + ‘L, “to go up against”]);⁸⁷ Ps. 107:26 (*šamayim*: “they went up [to] the heavens; they went down [to] the depths” [similarly in 1 Sam. 5:12; 2 Kgs. 2:11; Isa. 14:13; Jer. 51:53; Amos 9:2; Prov. 30:4]); Ruth 4:1 (*ša’ar*: “Boaz went up [to] the gate”).⁸⁸ When the nature of the destination will permit superimposition, the passage makes as good or better sense without introducing this idea: Isa. 35:9 (*derek*: “no ravenous beast will come up [to] it”); Joel 2:7 (*hômā*: “like warriors they charge; like men-of-war they come up [to] the wall”);⁸⁹ Isa. 60:7 (*mizbēah*: the animals “will come up [to] my altar”);⁹⁰ 2 Kgs. 19:23/Isa. 37:24 (*mārôm*: “I have gone up [to] the heights of the

⁸² See nn. 68–69 above.

⁸³ Cf. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 205–6.

⁸⁴ Cf. C.C. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Scribners, 1928) 299.

⁸⁵ Taking “the waters” as the subject with, e.g., C.A. Briggs and E.G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (ICC; New York/Edinburgh: Scribners/Clark, 1907) 2.333, and M. Dahood, *Psalms III* (AB 17A; Garden City: Doubleday, 1970) 36–7.

⁸⁶ For full discussion see Barrick, “Bamoth of Moab,” 78–86.

⁸⁷ Cf. W.A. van der Weiden, *Le Livre des Proverbes: Notes Philologiques* (Biblica et Orientalia 23; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970) 134.

⁸⁸ It is clear from the context that Boaz does not sit upon the gate (contrast 2 Sam. 18:24; 19:1; cf. Josh. 2:8 and Judg. 9:51).

⁸⁹ This suits the context of the passage perfectly: Joel 2:7–9 depicts a great army attacking Jerusalem, vv. 7–8a describing the final irresistible onslaught; in v. 8b the city is entered – through, not over, *haššelah* – and in v. 9 it is ransacked.

⁹⁰ The sense of the construction would be unchanged if *ya’ālū* is taken as Hiphil (on ‘LH [in Hiphil] + Ø see below). It is likely, however, that the construction here is ‘LH + ‘L (cf.

mountains, (to) the recesses of Lebanon,” to cut trees there [cf. also Ex. 17:10; Deut. 3:27; Hag. 1:8]). Only in Gen. 49:4 and Isa. 57:8 (both with *miškāb*) might mounting seem preferable to approaching, although here too it is not imperative.⁹¹

An identical situation obtains in those passages comparable to 1 Sam. 9:13 where subordination is by means of the *-H* suffix. The *-H* suffix was once considered a remnant of the old accusative case ending, the *h* being a vowel-letter,⁹² but its presence in Ugaritic where *matres lectionis* are rare suggests that the *h* stands for a consonant in its own right;⁹³ the formation is now thought to be an independent adverbial suffix.⁹⁴ Its primary semantic function is to mark the goal or direction of movement, i.e., it is basically terminative and not locative.⁹⁵ The ‘LH (in Qal) + *-H* construction conforms to this general rule:⁹⁶ *bāmā*, “bamah” (1 Sam. 9:13); *har*, “mountain” (Ex. 24:12; Deut. 1:24, 41, 43; 9:9; 10:1, 3); *ya’ar*, “forest” (Josh. 17:15); *’ir*,

1QIsa^a and the Versions). If so, the animals would “come up upon my altar” (in Qal) or be “brought up upon my altar” or “offered up upon my altar” (in Hiphil). For the problems in this verse see the commentaries.

⁹¹ On Isa. 34:13 and Ps. 104:8 see pp. 20–1 below.

⁹² Cf. C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1908) 1.464; GKC (1910) 249ff; Bauer-Leander, *Historische Grammatik*, 527ff.; L.H. Gray, *Introduction to Semitic Comparative Linguistics* (New York: Columbia University, 1934) 57; Joüon, *Grammaire*, 222ff, 372. C. Sarauw advocates an adverbial origin unrelated to the accusative case ending (“Der hebräische Lokativ,” *ZA* 20 [1907] 183–9).

⁹³ Cf. J. Blau and S. E. Loewenstamm, “Zur Frage der Scripto Plene im Ugaritischen und Verwandtes,” *UF* 2 (1970) especially 32–3.

⁹⁴ Cf. Meek, “Hebrew Accusative,” 228ff.; E. A. Speiser, “The Terminative-Adverbial in Canaanite-Ugaritic and Akkadian,” *Oriental and Biblical Studies* (ed. by J.J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1967) 494, 497–8 (= *IEJ* 4 [1954] 108, 109–10); H. Cazelles, “Quelques Publications récentes de Linguistique Sémitique,” *GLECS* 7 (1954–1957) 5–6; S. Moscati, “On Semitic Case Endings,” *JNES* 17 (1958) 143; M. Dahood, *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology* (Biblica et Orientalia 17; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) 33; C. Rabin, “The Structure of the Semitic System of Case Endings,” *Proceedings of the International Conference on Semitic Studies* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1969) 190 n. 4. It is considered an “adverbial accusative” by J. Margain, “Le ‘-AH de Direction’ en Hébreu,” *GLECS* 14 (1969–1970) 1–17; cf. Waltke-O’Connor, *Syntax*, 185.

⁹⁵ This is clearly the case in the great majority of occurrences. Meek claims that it is terminative only (“Hebrew Accusative,” 23), while Speiser admits a locative nuance as a secondary semantic development (“Terminative-Adverbial,” 496 [= *IEJ* 4 (1954) 109]); cf. Margain, “-AH de Direction,” 1–17. J. Hoftijzer identifies four types of semantic functions: local-terminative (“direction/movement to a certain place, leaving aside ... whether this place is reached, or whether it is a terminal point”); local-final (“movement to a certain place, the place being indicated as a terminal point”); local-separative (“direction/movement from a certain place”); and locative (“the presence in, or on, or at a certain place the idea of direction/ movement to or from being absent”): *A Search for Method: A Study in the Syntactic Use of the H-Locale in Classical Hebrew* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 12; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 23 n. 47; see also 157 n. 494 *et passim*.

⁹⁶ Cf. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 204–5.

“city” (Josh. 6:20); *šāmayim*, “heaven” (Deut. 30:12; Josh. 8:20; Judg. 13:20; 20:40); *ša‘ar*, “gate” (Deut. 25:7). In each case the traveler “goes up” to (i.e., in the direction of), not upon, his destination. There seems to be little if any semantic distinction between *‘LH + Ø* and *‘LH + -H*, save perhaps for emphasis.⁹⁷

When upward movement resulting in superimposition is the intended sense, subordination is by means of the preposition *‘L*. Attested nouns-of-destination in the *‘LH* (in Qal) + *‘L* construction are:⁹⁸ *‘āpīq*, “channel” (Isa. 8:7); *bmty-‘āb*, “bamoth of a cloud” (Isa. 14:14); *gāg* “roof” (Josh. 2:8; Judg. 9:51); *har*, “mountain” (Isa. 40:9); *mizbēah*, “altar” (Ex. 20:26; 1 Sam. 2:28; 1 Kgs. 12:33 [twice]; 2 Kgs. 16:12; Hos. 10:8; Ps. 51:21); *ma‘ālôt*, “steps” (Neh. 12:37); *mēšūdá*, “stronghold” (1 Sam. 24:23);⁹⁹ *‘alīyyā*, “upper chamber (?)” (2 Sam. 19:1);¹⁰⁰ *‘eres*, “bed” (Ps. 132:3); *šawwār*, “neck” (Lam. 1:14); *rō‘š*, “head” (Judg. 13:5; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11); *tīkôn*, “middle[-story]” (1 Kgs. 6:8).¹⁰¹ When the text is secure,¹⁰² the nature of the destination and the context of the passage leave no doubt as to the meaning of the construction: e.g., Judg. 9:51 (*gāg*: “they went up (to a position) upon the roof of the tower” [similarly in Josh. 2:8]); Ex. 20:28 (*mizbēah*: “you shall not go up (to a position) upon my altar by steps” [similarly in 1 Sam. 2:28; 1 Kgs. 12:33 [twice];¹⁰³ 2 Kgs. 16:12; Ps. 51:21); Judg. 13:5 (*rō‘š*: “a razor will not go up [to a position] upon his head”;¹⁰⁴ also in Judg. 16:17 and 1 Sam. 1:11).

The semantic contrast between *‘LH + ‘L* and the other two constructions is clear. In Isa. 8:7 Assyria is pictured as a river which has risen over (*‘LH + ‘L*) its embankments – i.e., the waters now flow on top (*HLK + ‘L*) of what had formerly contained them – and will flow unimpeded into Judah; this contrasts Ps. 104:8 where the waters

⁹⁷ E.g., “the people went up city-ward [and captured it]” (Josh. 6:20; cf. 1 Sam. 9:14); “the smoke of the city went up heaven-ward” (Josh. 8:20; cf. 1 Sam. 5:12); the woman “will go up gate-ward to the elders” (Deut. 25:7; cf. Ruth 4:1); “go up forest-ward [and clear land for settlement]” (Josh. 17:15; cf. 2 Kgs. 19:23 and Isa. 37:24). In Deut. 1:24 the destination is the “hill-country” (*har*) to which the spies were going; similarly in v. 41 and v. 43. On Ex. 24:12 and Deut. 10:1ff. see n. 106 below.

⁹⁸ Cf. Austel, *Prepositional and Non-Prepositional Complements*, 219ff. The hostile sense of “to go up against” occurs in 2 Kgs. 18:25 (twice), Isa. 36:1 and v. 10 (twice), Ezek. 38:11, and Joel 1:6.

⁹⁹ BHK cites 33 manuscripts reading *‘L*, also suggested by the LXX (*eis*) and the Targum (*L*), which may well be preferable to MT’s *‘L*; see n. 44 above.

¹⁰⁰ See Stager, “Archaeology of the Family,” 16–7, and cf., e.g., Moore, *Judges*, 96. 2 Kgs. 4:10 suggests a furnished rooftop chamber. If such is the case here, perhaps MT’s *‘L* (the LXX has *eis* and the Targum’s *L* is inconclusive) is in error for *‘L* (see 1 Kgs. 17:19 and cf. also 2 Kgs. 4:11); see n. 44 above.

¹⁰¹ BHK cites *‘L* in a number of manuscripts, and the LXX has *eis*; see n. 44 above. *‘L* is adopted by Gray, *I-II Kings*, 162 n. c; note that in v. 8b *‘L* is used in reference to the “third[-story].”

¹⁰² See the preceding three notes. As an alternative to emendation it could be argued that in these passages *‘L* semantically approximates *‘L*, a possibility considered in connection with Isa. 16:12 (p. 11 and n. 44) above.

¹⁰³ *ya‘al* in 1 Kgs. 12:33 could be taken in Hiphil, as it almost certainly should be in v. 32.

¹⁰⁴ In the act of shaving the razor is literally “upon” the head; but see also below.

are said to rise up to ('LH + Ø) the mountains but do not cover them.¹⁰⁵ In Isa. 40:9 the messenger is told to climb atop ('LH + 'L) a mountain in order to be heard by the cities of Judah. This contrasts Ex. 24:12 where Moses is ordered to go up mountainward ('LH + -H) to Yahweh; he obeys by going up (in)to ('LH + 'L) the mountainous region (vv. 13, 15, 18a), a journey which results in his being in (*bē*) – not on top of ('*al*) – the mountain for forty days and nights (v. 18b).¹⁰⁶ The contrast between Hos. 10:8a and Isa. 34:13a is not immediately apparent. Both passages refer to unwanted plant growth as a symbol of desolation and abandonment, but slightly different imagery is employed: the plant in Isa. 34:13a is a spiny thorn bush commonly used for hedges,¹⁰⁷ the picture being of wild shrubbery encroaching upon ('LH + Ø) the abandoned stately homes; the plants mentioned in Hos. 10:8b, on the other hand, are weeds¹⁰⁸ which will grow on top of ('LH + 'L) the ruined altars (cf. the use of 'LH + B in Isa. 34:13a).

In Hos. 10:8b the 'LH + 'L idiom expresses upward movement which occurs while the traveler (the plant) is positioned upon something else (the altars). This idea recurs in Neh. 12:37 where the procession goes up to the Water Gate by treading upon the steps of a particular stairway ('*ālū 'al-ma'ālōt ... 'ad ša'ar hammayim*), and perhaps also in Judg. 13:5; 16:17, and 1 Sam. 1:11 where the act of shaving might be understood as the razor moving ("going up") while upon the head. The only other occurrence which will permit this interpretation is Isa. 14:14a ('*e'ēleh 'al-bmty- 'āb*): "I will go up [to a position] upon *bmty- 'āb*," or "I will go up [while] upon *bmty- 'āb*." *BMH* is used with 'LH (in Hiphil) in Jer. 48:35b: *ma'āleh bāmā ūmaqīr lē 'lōhāyw*. The 'LH (in Hiphil) + Ø construction, although rare, is attested with the following nouns-of-destination: *bayit*, "house" (1 Kgs. 10:5; 2 Chron. 9:4); *bāmā*, "bamah" (Jer. 48:35); *īr*, "city" (2 Sam. 6:12); *šāmayim*, "heaven" (2 Kgs. 2:1). In addition, the construction occurs with the place-names "Hor the mountain" (Num. 20:25), "Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 2:15), "the Valley of Achor" (Josh. 7:24), and "Bamoth-Baal" (Num. 22:41). The Hiphil of 'LH can signify either "to bring [someone or something] up" or "to offer up (a sacrifice)." The first is the intended sense in all but one of these passages, and in none of these does the act of "bringing up" result in superimposition: e.g., "when Yahweh (was ready to) bring Elijah up (to) heaven" (2 Kgs. 2:1; cf. v. 11).¹⁰⁹ The construction seems to imply, as with this verb in Qal, general upward movement toward an elevated destination. The exception is 1 Kgs. 10:5: the Queen of Sheba was impressed by many things she saw at Solomon's court, including 'ōlātō

¹⁰⁵ The initial position of the primordial waters is '*al-hārīm*, i.e., covering the earth (v. 6b; cf. v. 9b); Yahweh causes them to recede to their proper place in an orderly cosmos (v. 8b).

¹⁰⁶ The scene in Deut. 10:1ff. is identical (cf. Ex. 34:2ff.).

¹⁰⁷ Cf. M. Zohary, "Flora," *IDB* (1962) 2.298.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹⁰⁹ Note that when the instructions are given in Num. 20:25 (*ha 'al 'ōtām hōr hāhār*) are carried out, the three men "went up to ['L] Hor the mountain" (v. 27b) and Aaron dies "there, *bērō 'š hāhār*," "in the upper-regions of the mountain" (v. 28; cf. also v. 23).

'āšer ya'āleh bêt yhwh, "his burnt-offering which he offered up (in) the House of Yahweh" (cf. 2 Chron. 24:14b).¹¹⁰

3 Summary

The material examined above indicates that at least some bamoth were so situated as to require the worshipper to "go up *to*" it and to "come down *from*" (YRD + MN, used in 1 Sam. 9:25 and 10:5) it.¹¹¹ The syntactical constructions employed in the passages in question require the conclusion that these bamoth were not installations which one climbed, but installations which one approached by climbing something else, such as a hill or built-up platform upon which the sanctuary stood. The archaeological record contains the remains of cultic installations of both types.¹¹² One

¹¹⁰ The parallel text in 2 Chron. 9:4 reads 'ālyyātō 'āšer ya'āleh bêt yhwh. The first word is probably a scribal error: the LXX presupposes 'ōlōtāyw or 'ōlātō (cf. L.C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles I* [VTSup 26; Leiden: Brill, 1974] 47). The tendency has been to emend both versions to read 'ālōtō, a reference to an architectural feature (cf. Ezek. 40:26; so, e.g., J.M. Myers, *II Chronicles* [AB 13; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965] 52, and F. Michaeli, *Les Livres des Chroniques, d'Esdras et Néhémie* [CAT 16; Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1967] 165) or to the royal procession up to the Temple (so, e.g., Montgomery-Gehman, *Kings*, 228; Gray, *I-II Kings*, 258 n.c.; H.G.M. Williamson, *1-2 Chronicles* [NCBC; Grand Rapids/London: Eerdmans/Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982] 234; and cf. S. Japhet, *I-II Chronicles: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993] 636). The second seems better suited to the context, but the only reason for abandoning 'ōlōtāyw/'ōlātō is the questionable assumption that a display of Solomon's "burnt-offerings" would have been less appropriate than a display of royal panoply to so impress the visiting dignitary: cf., e.g., Burney, *Notes*, 144; Jones, *1-2 Kings*, 223.

¹¹¹ The sense of this idiom is self-evident and consistent with the semantic implications of the various 'LH constructions discussed above.

¹¹² The "Bull Site" in the central hill-country would be an example of the first type (if it really is a cultic installation): for the archaeological data and their interpretation see A. Mazar, "The Bull Site – An Iron Age I Open Cult Site," *BASOR* 247 (1982) 27–41, and *idem*, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10,000–586 BCE* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1990) 350–1; Nakhai, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 170–1. The second type may be exemplified by the large stone platform in the sacred precinct at Dan (Area T) which initially was thought by Vaughan and others (following the preliminary reports by A. Biran, the principal excavator of the site) to be a bamah *qua* platform but may instead have supported a cult building of some sort: for the archaeological data see now A. Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994) ch. 10, with earlier literature. The latter function (cf. the Judahite palace at Lachish) is favored by a growing number of scholars (e.g., Y. Shiloh, "Iron Age Sanctuaries and Cult Elements in Palestine," *Symposia Celebrating the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research* [ed. by F.M. Cross; Cambridge: ASOR, 1979] 152–3; L.E. Stager and S.R. Wolff, "Production and Commerce in Temple Courtyards: An Olive Press in the Sacred Precinct at Tel Dan," *BASOR* 243 [1981] 98–9; J.S. Holladay, "Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach," *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* [ed. by P.D. Miller *et al.*; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987] 284 n. 23; Mazar, *Archaeology*

“enters” at least some bamoth and performs cultic acts “within” them, as one does the Temple of Solomon, indicating that these bamoth may have been comparable architectural complexes, but not altars or cultic platforms which one climbs and upon which one performs cultic acts. Finally, this material demonstrates that Gk. *bōmos*, “altar,” has nothing in common with Heb. *BMH* except an interesting but irrelevant phonological similarity.

Abstract

Very popular today is the view that a “bamah” (*sensus stricto*) was a man-made “high place,” i.e., an altar-like cultic platform of some sort. I have argued in several papers that the biblical evidence, such as it is, does not easily support this idea. Part of my argument has been based on the various Verb + Preposition idioms used to describe the use of a bamah, especially the 20 biblical passages locating cultic acts *babbāmā/babbāmôt* which must mean that those acts took place “in” the bamah/bamoth (as buildings or precincts). J.A. Emerton (in his survey of “The Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study,” *PEQ* 129 [1997] 116–32) objects to this assertion by invoking the principle of prepositional ambiguity, citing passages where *bammizbēah* appears to be synonymous with *‘al-hammizbēah*. In response, this paper systematically examines all of the relevant Verb + Preposition idioms in the Hebrew Bible. The preponderance of this evidence indicates that the bamoth in question were not installations which one climbed, but installations which one approached by climbing something else, such as a hill or built-up platform upon which the bamah

of the Land of the Bible, 492–4, and *idem*, “Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age,” *The Architecture of Ancient Israel from the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods* [ed. by A. Kempinski and R. Reich; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992] 184–6); Mazar reports that Biran is now of this opinion, but this is not readily apparent in his latest discussions (in *ABD* [1991] 2.12–7, *Biblical Dan*, *passim*, and “Tel Dan: Biblical Texts and Archaeological Data,” *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King* [ed. by M.D. Coogan *et al.*; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994] 1–17; note, however, fig. 1–13 of the last-mentioned [p. 14]: an isometric drawing of the 8th-century sanctuary which depicts the walls of a “broad-room” building atop the platform and the walls of a four-chambered building abutting its rear). Nakhai writes that the platform “may originally have supported a sanctuary,” but the caption to the photograph of the structure states that it “exemplifies the traditional understanding of a *bamah* as a raised platform where religious rites were performed” (“What’s a Bamah?” 27, 18; cf. also *idem*, *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*, 184–5, 199 n. 40). W.G. Dever allows for both possibilities (*Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* [Seattle/London: University of Washington, 1990] 133–4), but subsequently speaks of it as “no doubt a large outdoor altar” (“Silence of the Text,” 148). Finally, G. Barkay agrees that the platform supported a building, but thinks that it was secular in nature (probably a palace) because of its location near the edge of the mound (like the Megiddo palaces) and because bamoth were not building-centered cult places (“The Iron Age II–III,” *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* [ed. by A. Ben-Tor; trans. by R. Greenberg; New Haven/London: Yale University/Open University of Israel, 1992] 312).

stood; one “enters” these bamoth and performs cultic acts “within” them, as one does the Temple of Solomon, indicating that these bamoth may have been comparable architectural complexes, but not altars or cultic platforms which one climbs and upon which one performs cultic acts. Finally, this material demonstrates that Gk. *bōmos*, “altar,” has nothing in common with Heb. *BMH* except an interesting but irrelevant phonological similarity.