

**SECOND
EDITION**
**EXTENSIVELY
REVISED**

D ICTIONARY OF
D EITIES AND
D EMONS IN
THE BIBLE

EDITED BY

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of their 'āšabbîm" although the LXX reads "among their idols". The parallel passage in 1 Chr 10:9, which speaks of "spreading the bad news to their 'āšabbîm," appears to reflect the Philistine point of view and uses 'āšabbîm to refer to the deities represented by or embodied in the statues (SCHROER 1987:317-320).

According to Ps 106:36.38 the Israelites learned from their Canaanite neighbours to worship and offer sacrifices to the Canaanite 'āšabbîm. According to 2 Chr 24:17 the death of the virtuous Judean high priest Jehoiada was followed by many of the Judean nobility's abandoning worship of the LORD in favour of the worship of 'āšabbîm. Zech. 13:2, however, looks forward to the eschatological time when "the very names of the 'āšabbîm" will be erased.

Isaiah son of Amoz, speaking in the name of the LORD, puts into the mouth of the Assyrian king (probably Sargon II) the rhetorical question: "Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her 'āšabbîm what I did to Samaria and her gods ('ēlîlîm)?" (Isa 10:11). Of course, Isaiah's audience is meant to understand that Jerusalem does not rely upon 'āšabbîm but upon God.

IV. Bibliography

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AZAZEL אַזַּזֵל

I. Both the etymology and the meaning of the name 'azā'zēl, which appears in the Old Testament only in Lev 16:8.10 [twice].26, are not completely clear. Although the etymological hypothesis 'z'z' < *'zz' < 'zz ('to be strong') + 'l ('god'), i.e. the result of a consonantal metathesis, appears to be the most likely explanation (JANOWSKI & WILHELM 1993:128 with n.

98, cf. the form 'zz'l in 4Q 180, 1:8; 11QTemple 26:13 etc., see TAWIL 1980:58-59), the meaning of the name 'z'z' remains controversial. In the main the following possibilities are under discussion (cf. also HALAT 762): 1) 'Azazel' is the name or epithet of a demon. 2) 'Azazel' is a geographical designation meaning 'precipitous place' or 'rugged cliff' (DRIVER 1956:97-98; cf. *Tg. Ps.-J.* Lev 16:10.22 etc.). 3) 'Azazel' is a combination of the terms 'ēz ('goat') + 'ozēl ('to go away, disappear', cf. Arabic *z'l*) and means 'goat that goes (away)', cf. ἀποπομπᾶιος (Lev 16:8.10a LXX), ἀποπομπή (v 10b LXX), ὁ διεσταλμένος εἰς ἄφεσιν (v 26) or *caper emissarius* (Lev 16:8.10a.26 Vg), English scapegoat, French bouc émissaire.

In order to define the word as the name or epithet of a demon one could refer primarily to the textual evidence: according to Lev 16:8.10 a he-goat is chosen by lot 'for Azazel' in order to send it into the desert (v 10.21) or into a remote region 'for Azazel'. Since *la'āzā'zēl* corresponds to *lēYHWH* (v 8), 'Azazel' could also be understood as a personal name, behind which could be posited something such as a 'supernatural being' or a 'demonic personality'. However, one should be cautious of too hasty an ascription.

II. Various theses have been proposed in recent scholarly discussion concerning the identity of the figure of Azazel, as well as concerning the understanding of the Azazel rite (Lev 16:10.21-22). These can be classified as the *nomadic*, the *Egyptian* and the *South Anatolian-North Syrian* models.

The underlying assumption of the *nomadic* model is that the 'scapegoat' is not only chosen by lot 'for Azazel' (Lev 16:8.10, cf. *mYom* III:9-IV:2), but is also sent 'to him' into the desert or a remote region (Lev 16:10.21-22, cf. 11QTemple 26:11-13; *mYom* VI:2-6). The result of this combination was the positing of a 'desert demon' Azazel. In other words, it was assumed that Azazel lived in the desert and was a demon. DUHM and others spoke of a 'Kakodämon der Wüste', who was to be appeased through the offering of a he-goat (*sā'ir*; DUHM 1904:56,

cf. *Ges.*¹⁷ 576; *HALAT* 762). This thesis is, however, to be viewed skeptically, since the goat chosen 'for Azazel' (v 8, the second goat is chosen 'for YHWH') is not sent 'to' ('*el* [or something similar]) Azazel but 'for Azazel into the desert' (*la'āzā'zēl hammidbārā*). The central issue is the explanation of the expression 'for (*lē*) Azazel'; the solution should lie in the *original meaning* of the ritual.

Nevertheless the thesis of a 'desert demon' Azazel has found acceptance and has been advocated until the present day. Variations of this thesis have been proposed by L. Rost (Passover ritual in the spring and 'scapegoat' ritual in the autumn as corresponding early Israelite rituals) and recently by A. Strobel (the integration of a pre-Israelite [El-]ritual into the Palestinian calendar and into the celebration of the Day of Atonement). In addition the original demonic character of Azazel was always underlined by positing a connection between the goat (*sā'ir*) chosen for Azazel with the **šē'irīm* ('demons'; Isa 13:21; 34:14, cf. Lev 17:7; 2Chr 11:15), which naturally results in the image of a demon in goat form for the 'scapegoat'. Finally, since the time of Eissfeldt the ivory plaque from Megiddo (LOUD, *The Megiddo Ivories* [OIP 52; Chicago 1939] Pl.5.4.5) has been viewed as an iconographic proof of the demon hypothesis (for a critique see JANOWSKI & WILHELM 1993:119-123).

Recently an *Egyptian* explanation has been proposed, which bases itself on the Egyptian '*dj*' 'injustice; evil-doer, culprit' and Egyptian *dr* 'to expel' or *dr* 'to keep at a distance, remove'. According to this theory an original ritual of elimination has been enriched through the addition of the concept of a 'scapegoat'-receiver in the form of a demon, who bears traits of the Egyptian god →Seth, the classic 'God of Confusion'. This relationship is expressed in his name. According to Görg the name '*z'zl*' < Eg. '*djdr/l*' (< '*dj*' + *dr/l*) means 'the expelled or removed culprit' and is an expression of the interpretative model 'the guilty one belongs there whence his guilt ultimately comes'

(GÖRG 1986:13), namely from the (eastern) desert. This is where the Egyptian model comes into contact with the nomadic one. This thesis is, however, unacceptable, since it neither accords with the perspective of Lev 16 nor is it supported by the adduced Egyptian comparative material (JANOWSKI & WILHELM 1993:123-129).

The third model is the *South Anatolian-North Syrian* one. It appears to be the most plausible one, both conceptually and philologically. It holds that the Azazel rite is a type of elimination rite (spatial removal [*eliminatio*] of a physically understood pollution through the agent of a living substitute), for which there are parallels both within (Lev 14:2b-8.48-53; Zech 5:5-11) and outside the OT. The extra-biblical parallels point to an origin in the South Anatolian-North Syrian ritual tradition, whence this rite spread on the one hand into the Palestinian-Israelite ('scapegoat' ritual, Lev 16) and on the other into the Ionian-Greek sphere (Pharmakos-rites in Kolophon, Abdera, Athens and Massalia/Marseille). Its home is to be found most probably in Southern Anatolia-Northern Syria, as has become increasingly evident in recent years. In support of this conjecture the relevant Hurrian material from Kizzuwatna as well as the Canaanite 'scapegoat' ritual (*KTU* 1.127:29-31), which may form a missing link between the South Anatolian-North Syrian and the Palestinian-Israelite ritual traditions, can be adduced. How this transfer of ritual proceeded has not yet been worked out in detail. Just as questionable is whether there are analogies for the name and person of Azazel in Ugarit; LORETZ (1985) postulates a 'lesser divinity' '*zz'l*' analogous to Ugaritic '*zb'l*' (*KTU* 1.102:27).

III. The decisive question in the interpretation of Lev 16:10.21-22 in the context (!) of Lev 16 is whether the figure of Azazel is original to the chapter or has 'developed' in connection with the composition/redaction of Lev 16. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to differentiate between the religious history of Lev 16:10.21-22 and the tradition/redaction history of Lev 16.

In its ritual-historical aspect the Azazel rite belongs to the oldest core of the ritual and represents a type of ritual (the elimination rite), which is at home in South Anatolia-North Syria and is also known in Mesopotamia (WRIGHT 1987:31-74). The 'motif of the scapegoat' in its various manifestations is well attested particularly in the Hittite-Hurrian rituals from Kizzuwatna in southeast Anatolia (KÜMMEL 1968; JANOWSKI & WILHELM 1993:134-158). Various animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys or mice, can be the bearers of the pollution which is magically eliminated by means of a living substitute. The term 'z'z'l could be interpreted against the background of these Hurrian ritual traditions. JANOWSKI & WILHELM have proposed tying the term in with the Hurrian *azus/zhi*. The latter is known in the form *azas/zhu(m)* already in the Akkadian language oath ritual from north Syrian Alalah (AIT 126:17.24.28), and in the form *azus/zhi* it appears frequently in the great *itkalzi*-ritual in connection with sacrificial terms with negative connotations (e.g. *ami* 'sin' [< Akk *arnu*] etc.). The root can be assumed to be *azaz-* or *azuz-*, for which, however, only a Semitic etymology (root 'zz < Akk 'ezēzu 'be angry', Heb 'āzaz 'be strong', etc.) but no Hurrian one can be posited. Since the 'anger of the divinity' in this ritual tradition can be understood as an impurity which is ritually redeemable, the expression l'z'z'l (< *l'z'z'l) could then be derived from an original definition of the elimination-rite, whose meaning one could then transcribe as 'for 'azāz'ēl = for [the elimination of] divine anger' (for a critique see DIETRICH & LORETZ 1993: 106-115).

The question of the integration of the Anatolian-North Syrian material of the second millennium BCE and in particular of the expression *'zz'l (> 'z'z'l) into the tradition of the Day of Atonement in Lev 16 cannot be simply resolved. The following development, however, would appear to be possible:

Azazel belongs to the oldest core of the ritual tradition of Lev 16. It is a part of the

religious-magical conceptual world of North Syria, as becomes evident in the ritual tradition borrowed from there (Alalah) and brought to Anatolia (Kizzuwatna). The Ugaritic religion possibly played the role of mediator in this process (see esp. KTU 1.127:29-31). At an early date the term *azaz/azuz*, also borrowed in this connection, would have been misunderstood (for a critique see DIETRICH & LORETZ 1993:115-116). In the attempt to understand the term, the pattern of El-names used to describe demonic beings may have been influential, and may have determined the interpretation in the sense of a 'desert demon'. The adaptive process took place in the context of the tradition formation of Lev 16, when one was able to view 'Azazel' as the name of a demon according to genuine Israelite interpretative presuppositions, i.e. from the perspective of post-exilic monotheism. The integration of the figure named 'Azazel' into the tradition of Lev 16 was occasioned by the motive of the 'desert/steppe' or the 'remote region' (v 10.21-22) into which the goat is sent to remove the impurity. The concept of the 'desert demon' Azazel was born together with the desert motif.

Characteristic of the final form of Lev 16 is the symmetry of the two goats, the one for →Yahweh and the one for Azazel (v 8-10). The rituals tied in with them (the atonement rites v 11-19 and the elimination rite v 10.21-22) are to be understood as complementary acts, which have given the complex construction of Lev 16 its unmistakable form.

IV. The Jewish and Christian history of interpretation of the figure of Azazel stands in no relationship to its laconic treatment in Lev 16. In the latter Azazel receives no sacrifices (the 'scapegoat' is no sacrificial animal), nor are any (demonic) actions ascribed to him. The eliminatory function of the Azazel-rite stands in the foreground.

The process of the demonization of Azazel was intensively pursued in early Judaism under the influence of dualistic tendencies (1 Enoch 8:1; 9:6; 10:4-8; 13:1; cf. 54:5-6; 55: 4; 69:2; Apoc. Abr. 13:6-14;

14:4-6 etc.; see HANSON 1977:220-223; NICKELSBURG 1977:357-404; GRABBE 1987: 153-155; JSRZ V/6 [1984] 520-521). Azazel taught human beings the art of working metal (*1 Enoch* 8:1), enticed them to injustice and revealed to them the primordial divine secrets (*1 Enoch* 9:6; cf. 69:2). As an unclean bird he is the personification of ungodliness (*Apoc. Abr.* 13:7; 23:9) and the lord of the heathens (*Apoc. Abr.* 22:6). As a serpentine creature he tempted Adam and Eve in paradise (*Apoc. Abr.* 23:5.9); the Messiah will judge him with his cohorts (*1 Enoch* 55:4; cf. 54:5 and RAC 5 [1962] 206f). In rabbinic Judaism the name is only rarely to be found (RAC 9 [1976] 684).

V. Bibliography

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