

LOT-CASTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The custom of reaching a decision by lot-casting is spread all over the world and has existed at all times. Ancient Israel is no exception. The Old Testament Scriptures, the oldest as well as the latest, contain many accounts of lot-casting on various occasions. Unfortunately most of them are expressed in such general terms that we cannot realize the exact method of proceeding. This was, of course, in practice so self-evident, that detailed descriptions and instructions were not needed.

By collecting the existing accounts and, not least, by attending to the terms used, it is, however, possible to attain some concrete results.

The land of Canaan was divided by lot between the different Israelite tribes (Num. xxvi 52ff.; xxxiii 54; xxxiv 13; xxxvi 2; Josh. xiii 6; xiv-xvii; xviii-xix).

Priests and Levites were given by lot certain cities to dwell in (Josh. xxi; 1 Chron. vi 39ff.).

A man, Achan by name, had sinned by taking a portion of the devoted spoil. The offender was detected by means of lot-casting (Josh. vii).

The pagan nations in Canaan were, figuratively speaking, allotted to the Israelites as an inheritance for the tribes (Josh. xxiii 4; cf. Ps. lxxviii 55) ¹).

On the occasion of a warlike expedition against the Benjaminites men were selected by lot-casting (Judges xx 9f.) ²).

¹) In 1 Macc. iii 36 we are told that Lysias, the Syrian commander, was ordered by King Antiochus to settle aliens within the territories of the Jews and distribute their land by lot.

²) The text is somewhat obscure. I believe that the LXX has preserved the original text (cf. *B.H.*). Thus the meaning would be: 'We will go up against it (Gibeah) after having cast lots'. The allusion seems to be to a double lot-casting, one referring to the selection of warriors, another for selecting men to bring provision for the people. The answer from Yahweh mentioned in *v.* 18 is probably to be assigned to a cult prophet in Bethel, whereas the oracle reported in *v.* 28 was delivered by means of the cultic oracle, 'Urim and Tummmim', which gave either affirmative or negative answers (see further below).

Saul became king of Israel by means of lot-casting (1 Sam. x 19ff.) ¹).

Saul's son Jonathan had sinned by taking food which was taboo. He was detected by lot (1 Sam. xiv 38ff.) ²).

The organization and the different charges of the officials of the temple in Jerusalem were determined according to lot (1 Chron. xxiv-xxvi).

The duty of furnishing the temple with firewood was regulated by lot (Neh. x 35).

After the return from exile every tenth man among the population of the country was selected by lot for settling in the re-built capital (Neh. xi 1).

The day of the pogrom against the Jews in Persia was determined by lot (Esth. iii 7; ix 24).

Lot-casting over fatherless children is regarded as the worst heartlessness (Job vi 27).

A man persecuted by enemies complains that they cast lots for his raiment (Ps. xxii 19; cf. Matt. xxvii 35 and parallels).

To cast lots together with others means friendship (Prov. i 14).

Yahweh distributes by lot the desolated land of Edom among the wild animals (Isa. xxxiv 17).

When having to choose between the way to Jerusalem and the way to Rabbath-ammon the king of Babylon comes to a decision by lot-drawing by means of arrows (Ezek. xxi 25ff.).

In a parable in the book of Ezekiel it is said that the pieces of flesh put in a pot will be taken out without lot-casting (xxiv 6).

In the Messianic age the land will be divided up anew among the Israelite tribes according to lot (Ezek. xlv 1, xlvii 22).

Illegitimate, pagan lot-casting is condemned by the prophets (Hos. iv 12).

Enemies cast lots for Yahweh's people (Joel iv 3).

Foreigners cast lots for Jerusalem (Ob 11).

In the legend of Jonah the crew cast lots to know who was burdened with guilt; the lot fell upon Jonah (i 7).

¹) The answer from Yahweh in *v.* 22 ('He [Saul] has hidden himself among the baggage') cannot have been given by lot-casting. Here a seer or a cult prophet is speaking. Yahweh was supposed to speak through lot-casting as well as through seers and prophets. By this the first '*ôd*' in *v.* 22 is explained. The second '*ôd*' must be eliminated, following the LXX. See further *B.H.*

²) For the text of this passage see below.

After the destruction of the state of Israel nobody will further cast lots for territory in the assembly of Yahweh (Mic. ii 5) ¹).

After the downfall of Thebes lots were cast over its honoured men (Nah. iii 10).

On the Day of Atonement the high priest assigned by lot-casting one of two goats for Yahweh, one for Azazel (Lev. xvi) ²).

The lot-stones could be thrown into the lap (Prov. xvi 33).

Lot-casting belonged to everyday life, e.g., for settling disputes (Prov. xviii 18).

By a careful philological and exegetical examination of the instances reported it is possible, at least in general outline, to form an opinion of the normal procedure of lot-casting in the O.T. It is not necessary to give the problem up as insoluble, as is often done in the commentaries.

The most common word for lot is *gôrāl*, the primary sense of which is 'stone, pebble' ³). In Palestine small stones were used as lot-objects, whereas, according to Olaus Magnus ⁴) Tacitus ⁵), and the ancient Swedish provincial laws in Ancient Germany and Scandinavia small pieces of wood were used. As an exception we find in the book of Esther the Accadian term *pûr*, directly translated by *gôrāl* ⁶). In the book of Ezekiel we are told that a Babylonian king performed lot-casting by means of arrows ⁷). The lot-object is here termed *kesem* in the sense of 'means of divination'. The cultic lot-

¹) The Hebrew text is: 'cast the measuring-line by lot'. Read *w^ggôrāl* for *b^ggôrāl* (cf. B.H.). A. ALT regards 'line' as a variant reading inferior to 'lot'; *Interpretationes ad VT pertinentes (Mowinckel Festschrift)*, Oslo, 1955, p. 22, n. 16.

²) The custom referred to in *vv.* 5-10 belongs to the ritual of the Day of Atonement and is post-exilic. Thus the lot-casting in question cannot have been performed by means of the Urim and Tummim, the function of which had ceased in the post-exilic period (cf. below). The lot-casting for the two goats must have been of the same kind as in the instances mentioned above. This is evident also from the terminology used. The only special feature is that on this occasion the ceremony was performed by the high priest and not by a layman.

³) See L. KOEHLER, *Lexicon in Veteris testamenti libros*, s.v.

⁴) *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*, III, 14.

⁵) *Germania*, 10.

⁶) iii 7; ix 24. See B. MEISSNER, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, II, Heidelberg, 1925, p. 275, and, above all, J. LEWY in *Revue hittite et asianique*, v, 1938-1940, pp. 117ff. In the text reproduced on p. 118 a phrase occurs which exactly corresponds to the Hebrew *bippil gôrāl*.

⁷) xxi 26f. Divination by means of arrows was also known among the pre-Islamic Arabs; J. WELLHAUSEN, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 2. Ausg., Berlin and Leipzig, 1927, pp. 132f.

apparatus is called *'úrîm and tummîm*; to this we shall return below ¹).

The very mode of action is illuminated by the verbs for lot-casting: 'cast, throw' (*hippîl*, *hislik*, *yārâh*, *hēîl*, *yādad*) and 'put, lay down' (*nātan*). Sometimes the verb *hippîl* occurs in the same sense without *gôrâl* as object. There are also examples of a construction where the allotted thing itself is the object of the same verb (Josh. xiii 6, xxiii 4; Ezek. xlv 1, xlvi 22). Then the verb has lost its primary and concrete meaning. The same is the case when it is said, for instance, that 'the lot fell (*nāphal*) upon Jonah' (i 7; cf. 1 Chron. xxvi 14). To this mode of expression there are equivalents in modern idioms. In the NT the Hebrew terminology occurs in Greek form. In the narrative of the completion of the apostolate in Acts i 23ff. we meet the phrases *ἔδωκαν κλήρους* and *ἔπεσεν ὁ κλήρος ἐπὶ Ματθαίαν*. The decision is expressed thus: the lot 'came up' ('*ālâh*) or 'came forth' (*yāsâ*'), or, simply, 'was' (*hāyâh*).

In some passages (Josh. vii 14ff.; 1 Sam. x 20f., xiv 41f.) it is said of a man upon whom the lot has fallen that he has been 'taken'. The Hebrew word is *lākad*, which means 'catch, seize, capture', and the like. What is the logical subject in this expression? According to Israelite conception it is obvious that Yahweh is the one who 'takes', i.e., lets the lot fall upon a certain person (thus, in express terms, in the passage Josh. vii 14); but the original sense was probably another: it was the magical power, active in the procedure of lot-casting, that 'caught' an offender or another person for whom lots were thrown. Perhaps the peculiar expression *hannilkād bahērem* Josh. vii 15 reflects the older mode of thinking.

Of him who was not 'taken' it is said that he 'went out', i.e., escaped. The verb used is *yāsâ*' (1 Sam. xiv 41).

In the case of Achan (Josh. vii) lots were first cast between the different tribes, then between the clans, then between the families, finally between the individuals. A similar method was applied when Saul was made king (1 Sam. x). In the case of Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv) lots were cast between the army standing on one side and Saul and Jonathan standing on the other, finally between Saul and Jonathan.

¹) As in modern languages, 'lot' occurs in the O.T. also in the sense of 'allotment', share allotted to somebody. The use of the word in this sense need not be considered in the present discussion. Metaphorically it is said in the Greek book of Esther, ch. x, that God *ἐποίησεν κλήρους δύο, ἓνα τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἓνα πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν· καὶ ἤλθον οἱ δύο κλήροι οὗτοι εἰς ὄραν* etc. Similarly we read in the Iliad viii 69f. about Zeus: *καὶ τότε δὴ χρύσεια πατὴρ ἐτίταινε τάλαντα/ἔν δ' ἐτίθει δύο κῆρε πανηγυγέος θανάτοιο*.

Still clearer is the account of the distribution of the land among some Israelite tribes in Josh. xviii-xix. Seven tribes had not yet had their territory allotted to them. Joshua charged some men to traverse the land in order to draw up a report of suitable territories and to indicate accurately their boundaries. Then Joshua executed the lot-casting in such a way that every tribe received its territory. The first lot 'came up', it is said, for Benjamin, the second lot 'came forth' for Simeon, the third for Zebulun, and so forth. The order of the tribes is here not the traditional, not even the geographical one, it was, obviously, likewise determined by the lot. In 1 Chron. xxiv-xxv, the report of the official duties of the Levites, we are also told of a sequence of the lots from the first to the twenty-fourth. At the distribution of the land we must assume that all the lot-stones were *marked*, one group with marks referring to the different territories, another group with marks referring to the different tribes. Then the lots were drawn alternately. According to Num. xxvi 52ff. (cf. xxxiii 54) a certain proportion should be observed, so that a greater tribe should have a greater territory, a smaller tribe a smaller one. This presupposes an additional classification of the two groups, so that the lot-casting for the smaller tribes was done by a particular procedure and that for the greater tribes by another, accordingly a rather complicated operation.

According to 1 Chron. xxvi 12ff. the gatekeepers in the temple of Jerusalem were assigned their particular gates by lot. Here the lot-stones, interestingly enough, are designated as 'the east-lot', 'the north-lot' and so forth, which indicates that the different lots were marked. The Chaldean king, when casting lots for the way he should have to choose, got in his right hand, it is said, 'the Jerusalem-lot' (Ezek. xxi 27).

In the narrative of the lot-casting upon the two goats on the Day of Atonement one of the lots is designated as 'the Yahweh-lot', the other as 'the Azazel-lot'. Consequently the lot-objects were marked.

Thus we have to assume that in lot-casting, at least in more complicated cases, marked stones were used ¹⁾.

¹⁾ Lot-objects marked with colours, signs, and letters are mentioned by Tacitus, Olaus Magnus, etc. In Greece officials and competitors for the race-courses were selected by lot-drawing with marked lots; see art. 'Losung' in PAULY-WISSOWA, *Real-Encyclopädie der class. Altertumswiss.*, xiii. Of great interest is the comment made by Jerome on Ezek. xxi 25ff., showing at least how lot-casting was executed in his time: *Ritu gentis suae oraculum consulit, ut mittat sagittas suas in pharetram et commisceat eas inscriptas sive signatas nominibus singulorum, ut videat*

As a matter of course the lot-stones were put in a vessel or another receptacle of some kind. In the Iliad III, 316 lots were shaken together in a helmet. Tacitus speaks of a cloth on which the lots were laid (Germ. 10). In the Swedish medieval provincial laws it is prescribed that at the distribution of an inheritance lots should be put into someone's lap and then 'drawn' by the inheritors. According to Jub. viii, at the division of the earth between the races of mankind lots were taken up from Noah's lap by his three sons. In the canonical scriptures of the OT such a 'lot-urn' is mentioned only once, namely in Prov. xvi 33, where it is said that the lot is thrown into the *hêk*, i.e., the 'breast-sack', the fold formed by the tunic over the girdle. We must assume that as a rule earthenware jars were used. The lot-objects were well shaken; the Hebrew term is *kilkal* (Ezek. xxi 26). Then the lot-stones were taken up (or 'drawn'), in important cases by an authoritative person. The lotdrawing by the high priest between the two goats is an example of this.

In this kind of lot-casting a layman usually drew the lot-stone.

Lot-casting seems to have been very frequent in ancient Israel. Apparently it was an everyday custom. It is said: 'The lot puts an end to disputes and separates powerful men from each other' (Prov. xviii 18). In important cases the lot-casting was performed 'before Yahweh' or 'before the face of Yahweh', scil., at a holy place. Then the procedure in question had the character of a sacral act. The distribution of the land of Canaan occurred before Yahweh in Shiloh. The lot-drawing between the two goats took place at the entrance of the temple in Jerusalem. When Saul was made king the people was assembled before Yahweh in Mizpah. The lot-drawing for the Levite cities took place in Shiloh, etc. Before a momentous lot-drawing the people had to undergo certain purification ceremonies (Josh. vii 13). Once it is recorded that the procedure was introduced by prayer (1 Sam. xiv 41)¹. The religious character of lot-casting is

cujus sagitta exeat, et quam prius civitatem debeat oppugnare. In the book of Jubilees it is told that the division of the earth between the three races of mankind was made by lot-casting, in which the lots had writing on them (ch. viii). As a modern instance Dr. Hilma GRANQVIST, the well-known expert on customs in the Arab world, tells me in a letter that during the Ottoman period lot-drawing was used in Palestine when men had to be selected for military service. The 'lots', partly black, partly white, were put in a leather bag. He who drew a black lot was registered as soldier; of him who drew a white lot it was said, 'He is free'.

¹ Prayer to the gods introducing lot-casting is mentioned also by Tacitus (Germ. 10). According to Acts i 21ff. the lot-casting by which the apostolate was completed was introduced by prayer.

evidenced by the statement: 'From Yahweh comes the decision given by the lot' (*mišpaṭ gôrāl*; Prov. xvi 33). In important cases it is said that the lot-casting occurred at Yahweh's command.

The lot-casting procedure was regarded as an inquiring of Yahweh and its result as an answer from Yahweh. This is shown by the account of Saul's making king (1 Sam. x 19-22).

The lot-casting (with following lot-drawing) that we have examined above was a civil affair, as a rule performed by laymen. From this we have carefully to distinguish the cultic lot-casting, always performed by priests and carried out by means of the Urim and Tummim.

The management of the lot-oracle of the Urim and Tummim was regarded of old as a privilege of the tribe of Levi (Deut. xxxiii 8). Its origin is quite obscure. The same is true of the meaning of the terms 'Urim' and 'Tummim'. It has been suggested that they are secondary interpretations of the letters א and ת in the old Hebrew alphabet, with which the lot-objects, probably two stones, would have been marked. The explanations given to these two letters are mere guesswork.

Apparently the priestly lot-oracle was closely connected with the ephod and the ephod in its turn associated with the teraphim. In connection with the ephod the teraphim, despite its plural form, must refer to an idol representing the divinity¹. Of its shape we can get an approximate idea from the narrative in 1 Sam. xix 11ff., where we are told that Michal laid the teraphim on David's bed in order to give the impression that David, who had run away, was lying in his bed. It is reasonable to suppose that an image of this kind is also referred to in Judges xvii 5 and, originally, in xviii 14ff., where, however, a later author has expanded the account assuming an entire little pantheon in the house of Micah. When the prophet Hosea (iii 4) says that one day the children of Israel will dwell without 'ephod and teraphim' he thinks, no doubt, of this idol associated with the ephod. It is here significant that, while all the other persons and things which will be lost are connected with each other by אִין the last mentioned cult-objects are closely joined by the copulative conjunction: אִפֹד וְתַרְפִּים. The same expression occurs also in Judges xvii 5 and xviii 14. In all these passages the plural probably designates

¹) Of course this does not imply that the term teraphim must always designate a single object. See further GESENIUS-KAUTZSCH, *Hebr. Grammatik*, 27. Aufl., Leipzig, 1902, § 124 h.

a single object just as *ʾēlōhîm* is used of the only God or of any single god ¹).

As regards the ephod there is much disagreement. Some years ago J. MORGENSTERN propounded the theory that the ephod was originally the ancient Israelite tent-sanctuary with its betyls or divine images. He argued that this ephod played precisely the same rôle which the pre-Islamic *ḵubbe* played for the Arab tribes ²). It seems to me more reasonable to compare the Israelite ephod with the *ependytes*, the clothing or case that covered the image of a god or a priest in the ancient Near East ³). In the Ugaritic texts Baal is attired in an ephod; its function is however somewhat uncertain ⁴). The opinion that the ephod was a sort of covering is supported by the passage Isa. xxx 22, where there is a reference to molten images with golden covering (אפדה; cf. also Ex. xxviii 8 and xxxix 5, where likewise the meaning 'covering' is plausible).

Instead of the expression 'ephod and teraphim' we sometimes encounter 'ephod' alone as designation for the same cult-object. This is the case Judges viii 27; 1 Sam. xiv 3, 18 (according to the better text represented by the LXX), xxi 10, xxiii 6, 9, xxx 7. Thus we have here an example of the stylistic feature *pars pro toto*. When it is said that the priest 'wears' the ephod or 'brings' the ephod to deliver an oracle it is clear that the ephod together with its idol is meant. This is true also of 1 Sam. xxi 10, where it is said that in the sanctuary of Nob the sword of Goliath was behind the ephod. That the ephod with the idol inside could be made of or adorned with precious material is evident from Judges viii 24ff.

Thus the ephod with its teraphim served not only as a representation of the divinity, but also as an oracle-instrument. The decision was probably given through the fashion in which the lot-stones, the Urim and Tummim, fell on the ground, when they were thrown by the priest. The decision was affirmative or negative, or no answer

¹) Many suggestions as to the meaning of the term teraphim are enumerated in A. R. JOHNSON, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, 1944, p. 31, note 3.

²) MORGENSTERN, *The Ark, the Ephod, and the Tent of Meeting*, Cincinnati, 1945, pp. 114ff.

³) Thus, above all, H. THIERSCH, *Ependytes und Ephod. Gottesbild und Priesterkleid im alten Vorderasien*, Stuttgart, 1936; *Artemis Ephesia*, Abh. d. Ges. d. Wiss. Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl., 3. Folge, Nr. 12, Berlin, 1935; *Z.A.W.*, liii, 1935, pp. 180ff.

⁴) *Syria*, xv, 1934, pp. 305ff.; G. R. DRIVER, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, Edinburgh, 1956, p. 103.

at all was given ¹). We must assume that the lot-stones had a peculiar marking or colouring. How the lot-stones were associated with the ephod we do not know. Possibly they were kept in a bag or a little sack attached to the front-side of the ephod. The divinatory force of the Urim and Tummim emanated, of course, from the deity within the ephod.

The priest who in ancient times was in charge of the ephod had to interpret the fall of the stones and then form an oracle answer. To seek for such an oracle was called 'to inquire of God' (*šā'al bēlōhām*). The oracle itself was regarded as an answer from God (*'ānāh 'elōhām* ²). It is narrated that Saul, during the war with the Philistines, brought with him a priest who wore (*nāsā'*) the ephod with the oracle-stones and communicated oracles ³) David is said to have consulted the priestly oracle frequently and in different affairs ⁴).

The correctness of the view of the ancient priestly oracle-apparatus here presented is supported by what is said about the corresponding parts of the attire of the high priest in the post-exilic period. There was, no doubt, a certain continuity. As is wellknown, the apparel of the high priest included a garment called the ephod, a sort of chasuble, to the front side of which was attached a double breast capsule (*bōšen*) containing the Urim and Tummim. Assuming that the post-exilic high priest in some measure played a part parallel to the idol of the ancient oracle-apparatus, the similarity between the latter and the priestly attire is striking.

The notices which are to be found in the OT concerning the priestly oracle in ancient times are scanty. There is, however, a text that seems to give us more detailed information of how it functioned, namely the text of the LXX in 1 Sam. xiv 38ff. Since most biblical scholars prefer this text to the MT it is necessary to examine its value. We devote the rest of this study to this problem.

The fourteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel deals with an episode during the war between Saul and the Philistines. At the beginning of the chapter a bold stroke of Jonathan upon an outpost

¹) Examples of indecisive results: 1 Sam. xiv 37 and xxviii 6.

²) 1 Sam. xiv 37, xxiii 4, xxviii 6, etc.

³) 1 Sam. xiv 3, 18.

⁴) 1 Sam. xxiii 2, 4, 9ff., xxx 7f.; 2 Sam. ii 1, v 19. Other examples of such oracle-giving Num. xxvii 21; Judges xviii 5f., xx 27f.; 1 Sam. xxii 10. The mention of the ark in Judges xx 27f. is the result of a later enlargement of the original tradition; cf. also 1 Sam. xiv 18.

of the Philistines is described. This occurrence gave the signal for a general advance by the Israelites. Before the start an oracle was to be sought for ¹⁾. But Saul, who wanted to take his chance immediately, ordered the priest who wore the oracle-apparatus to 'withdraw his hand'. The attack was not wholly successful. The enemy escaped and the battle was only partially won. Another misfortune the very same day was that when the oracle was consulted (now on the recommendation of the priest) about a planned pursuit of the enemy by night, it failed to give any decision.

These double misfortunes were clear evidences of Yahweh's anger with the people. What was the cause of them? The section *vv.* 38-45 deals with Saul's endeavour to find out which one among the warriors of the Israelite army had brought guilt upon the people by some wrong-doing. The transgression committed must come to light. This was brought about by another procedure of lot-casting. There is an interesting parallel in *Josh. vii*, where it is said that Achan, who had sinned by taking a portion of the devoted spoil, thus drawing misfortune upon the people, was discovered by lot-casting.

In the description of the lot-casting in *vv.* 38-42 the LXX has a peculiar text which is markedly divergent from the MT. The Hebrew text says that Saul commanded the leaders of the army to approach in order to establish the fatal transgression. Now a lot-casting procedure was performed in this way: the army was placed on one side, and Saul and Jonathan on the other. Lot-casting in such serious affairs was regarded as a sacral act, and the decision was held to come from Yahweh according to the principle expressed in *Prov. xvi 33*: 'From Yahweh comes the decision given by the lot'. Accordingly, it was quite as it should be that the procedure was introduced by a prayer pronounced by Saul: 'O God of Israel, give a true decision [*hābāh tāmīm*]'. Jonathan and Saul, it is said, were 'taken' (*yillākēd*),

¹⁾ In *v.* 18 the Greek text is preferable to the MT. The former says that the priest brought the ephod, the latter that he brought 'the ark of God'. The Greek text is in better agreement with *v.* 3.1 *Sam. xiv 18* and *Judges xx 27* are the only passages in which oracle-giving is expressly connected with the ark. Notwithstanding their late origin they may reflect a good tradition. It is possible that the ark had once something to do with oracle-giving, but the details are here quite obscure. GRESSMANN, who takes a close connection between ark and ephod for granted, refers also to *Ex. xxxiii 7* ('wo wahrscheinlich in dem Orakelzelt die Lade Jahves vorausgesetzt ist'), *Die Lade Jahves*, Berlin, 1920, p. 35. In *1 Sam. ii 28* the text is of a late origin and does not allow any conclusion as to the ancient priestly oracle-giving.

and the people escaped (*yāṣe'ū*). Then lots were cast between Saul and Jonathan. Jonathan was 'taken' and confessed his transgression.

The Hebrew text in its Massoretic form runs literally: (41) *And Saul said to Yahweh, 'O God of Israel, give a true decision'. And Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people went out.* (42) *And Saul said, 'Cast lots between myself and my son Jonathan'. And Jonathan was taken.*

The divergences in the LXX begin in the prayer of Saul and give to the content of *vv.* 41-42 quite a different form. The Greek text runs, according to the critical edition of the LXX by A. RAHLFS, as follows:

(41) Καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ Κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, τί ὅτι οὐκ ἀπεκρίθης τῷ δούλῳ σου σήμερον; εἰ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἢ ἐν Ἰωναθαν τῷ υἱῷ μου ἡ ἀδικία, κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραηλ, δὸς δῆλους· καὶ ἐὰν τάδε εἴπῃς Ἐν τῷ λαῷ σου Ἰσραηλ, δὸς δὴ ὁσιότητα. καὶ κληροῦται Ἰωναθαν καὶ Σαουλ, καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐξῆλθεν.

(42) Καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ Βάλετε ἀνά μέσον ἐμοῦ καὶ ἀνά μέσον Ἰωναθαν τοῦ υἱοῦ μου· ὃν ἂν κατακληρώσῃται κύριος, ἀποθανέτω. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ λαὸς πρὸς Σαουλ Οὐκ ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο. καὶ κατεκράτησεν Σαουλ τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ βάλλουσιν ἀνά μέσον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνά μέσον Ἰωναθαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ κατακληροῦται Ἰωναθαν.¹⁾

The essential difference between the Hebrew and the Greek text is that according to the latter the lot-casting occurred by means of the Urim and Tummim. If the Urim gave decision, the guilt was with Saul and Jonathan, if the Tummim gave decision, the guilt was with the people. Besides, the Greek text makes Saul ask God about the cause of the fact that the oracle had failed to give an answer concerning the pursuit of the enemies (cf. *v.* 37). Finally, it is said once more that the people raised opposition against the procedure in question (cf. *v.* 39) and that Saul overruled the people.

Since WELLHAUSEN in a study of the text of the books of Samuel published in 1871 had recommended the Greek text, most biblical scholars who have dealt with our passage have adopted it, entirely or partially²⁾. WELLHAUSEN himself rejected the latter half (*v.* 42). He held that it betrayed 'den Geist einer späteren Zeit'. Later (1901) K. BUDDE defended the Greek text in its entirety as representing the original text³⁾.

¹⁾ The Greek manuscripts vary in slight details, but the differences are of no importance for our problem.

²⁾ *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, Göttingen, 1871.

³⁾ In MARTI's *Kurzer Hand-Commentar*. He had a predecessor sixty years earlier in O. THENIUS in *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum A.T.* (Leipzig).

Many scholars have followed WELLHAUSEN. Among them may be mentioned S. R. DRIVER ¹⁾, R. KITTEL ²⁾, W. NOWACK ³⁾, H. GRESSMANN ⁴⁾. Editio tertia of *Kittel's Biblia Hebraica* recommends the Greek text in *v.* 41. *The Jerusalem Bible* follows WELLHAUSEN, and so does *the American Revised Standard Version*.

The Greek text in its entirety is adopted by H. P. SMITH ⁵⁾, P. DHORME ⁶⁾, H. TIKTIN ⁷⁾, S. MOWINCKEL ⁸⁾ and the *American Complete Bible* edited by J. M. P. SMITH and E. J. GOODSPEED. Even J. MOFFAT in his renowned translation of the Bible (1935) follows the text of the LXX as a whole. Similarly, recently, DE VAUX, *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, II (1960), p. 204.

MORGENSTERN in his above mentioned book says that the text in *vv.* 36-42 is to be emended in accordance with the Greek text (p. 127). H. W. HERTZBERG in his commentary leaves the question open for *v.* 41. The text of the LXX in *v.* 42 he calls an 'Ausspinnung' on the side of the Greek translators ⁹⁾.

Of course there are biblical scholars who adhere to the MT. The catholic commentator Alfons SCHULZ, who earlier adopted the Greek text, now, though on rather weak arguments, prefers the MT ¹⁰⁾. W. CASPARI also vaguely defends the Hebrew text ¹¹⁾, and P. A. H. DE BOER, who on the whole has a negative attitude towards the LXX as a help for the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, rejects the Greek text in our passage, too ¹²⁾.

The predilection for the LXX text which we have observed with many scholars is typical of a time when the LXX on the whole had the reputation of being a valuable help for the textual criticism of the OT. During a period towards the middle of this century the LXX was strongly depreciated. After the discovery of biblical texts in the Qumran caves the estimation of the LXX has increased again. These

¹⁾ *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, Oxford, 1890.

²⁾ In KAUTZSCH-BERTHOLET, *Die heilige Schrift des A.T.'s*, I, Tübingen, 1922.

³⁾ In *Handkommentar zum A.T.*, Göttingen.

⁴⁾ In *Die Schriften des A.T.s in Auswahl*, II, 1, 2. Aufl., Göttingen, 1921.

⁵⁾ In *The International Critical Commentary*.

⁶⁾ *Les livres de Samuel*, Paris, 1910.

⁷⁾ *Kritische Untersuchungen zu den Büchern Samuelis (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des A. und N. Testaments, N.F., 16)*, Göttingen, 1922.

⁸⁾ In MICHELET-MOWINCKEL-MESSEL *Det Gamle Testamente oversat. De tidligere profeter*, Oslo, 1935.

⁹⁾ In *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*.

¹⁰⁾ In NIKEL's *Exegetisches Handbuch zum A. T.*, Leipzig.

¹¹⁾ In SELLIN's *Kommentar zum A.T.*, Leipzig.

¹²⁾ *Research into the Text of 1 Sam. I-XVI*, Amsterdam, 1938.

texts compared with the MT on one hand and the LXX on the other make it evident that the LXX contains variant readings which in several cases are of great value for the textual criticism of the OT ¹⁾. Thus it is not sound to reject the LXX *a priori*.

In favour of the Greek text in our passage it may be argued that it is materially interesting, and that it gives an impression of originality. The Hebrew text for its part is extremely condensed and for this reason somewhat obscure. Some scholars have even maintained that it is meaningless and quite incomprehensible without the help of the text of the LXX. As regards the last statement some remarks may be made. The text in our passage is in its concentration an example of good Hebrew narrative style and does not differ much from many narratives in Genesis against which no objection is raised. The phrase *bābāh tāmīm* which I have translated by 'give a true decision' is often judged as unintelligible. But from the sense 'complete, intact, blameless' there is only a short step to the sense 'correct, true, reliable'. It is further maintained that the statement that Jonathan and Saul were 'taken', i.e., that the lot fell upon them, is all in the air because there was no mention of any lot-casting in the foregoing. But to every Hebrew reader or hearer it was immediately clear that the measures taken in the previous part of the narrative in order to discover who was guilty (the placing of the two parties opposite each other and Saul's prayer) had reference to an ordinary lot-casting procedure.

From general and formal points of view it is difficult to reach an incontrovertible result. There are, however, material grounds which in the opinion of the present writer compel us to reject the text of the LXX in our passage. *Its description of the lot-casting by which Jonathan was detected as the offender is materially unacceptable.* By the notice of the priestly lot-casting in vv. 36-37 the Greek translators (just like the great majority of modern interpreters) have been led to believe that the lot-casting in vv. 38-42 was also a cultic one performed by the priest. This is evident from the fact that they depart from the Hebrew text in introducing the cultic lot-objects, the Urim and Tummim, as the apparatus of lot-casting.

This interpretation of the narrative is, however, erroneous. Neither the Greek translators nor those modern scholars who adopt their

¹⁾ For the books of Samuel cf. F. M. CROSS in *B.A.S.O.R.*, 132, 1953, pp. 15ff., and *J.B.L.*, lxxiv, 1955, pp. 147ff.; F. MAASS in *Th.L.*, lxxxii, 1956, cols. 337ff.

text have properly distinguished between the two different forms of lot-casting in the OT. While *vv.* 36f. have reference to the priestly lot-casting *vv.* 38-42 refer to the civil one performed by the laity. This is evident even from the terminology used. The two parties were placed opposite to each other. Saul and Jonathan were 'taken' and the people 'went out'. Lots were thrown between Saul and Jonathan and Jonathan was 'taken'. And, above all, it was not a particular individual who performed the lot-casting, it was a group; behind the procedure stood the leaders of the army, i.e., a group of laymen. The priest had no function at all.

Explained in this way the Hebrew text makes good sense, whereas the Greek translators give a confused picture of what really occurred. Their text must be regarded as a valueless product of fancy. It is easy enough to establish how it emerged. Saul's prayer in the unvocalized Hebrew text was **תָּמִים הִבָּה תָּמִים**. The last word, which the Massorettes correctly read **תָּמִים**, was conceived by the Greeks as **תָּמִים** and as a designation for the priestly oracle. This became the starting-point for the creation of the expanded text ¹⁾.

Those who adopt the Greek text find in it an important notice of how the ephod-oracle functioned in ancient times. BUDDE, for instance, says that the administration of the priestly oracle-apparatus with the Urim and Tummim is by this passage 'völlig klar gestellt'. The naked truth is that the Greek text presents a wholly unhistorical picture of what occurred and that the Greek translators in Egypt had no certain conception of how the priestly oracle with its affirmative or negative answers really functioned. In their time this oracle had long ago fallen out of use, and they had no reliable tradition to build upon ²⁾. The liberty with which they dealt with this passage is in full accordance with the method which they often applied elsewhere just in the books of Samuel.

What we know is that the cultic lot-oracle was gradually transformed until it eventually went out of use. Teraphim of every kind

¹⁾ In the LXX **תָּמִים** is rendered by ἀλήθεια Ex. xxviii 30; Lev. viii 8; by δῆλοι Deut. xxxiii 8; **אוּרִים** by δῆλωσις Ex. xxviii 30; Lev. viii 8 by δῆλοι Num. xxvii 21; 1 Sam. xxviii 6, and by ἀλήθεια Deut. xxxiii 8. In 1 Kings ix 4 and Prov. xiv 32 δούτης corresponds to the Hebrew **תָּ**.

²⁾ This is evident even from the various translations of the Hebrew terms. In Ezr. ii 63 and Neh. vii 65 they show total ignorance of the sense of the Hebrew oracle terminology. The same is true of the free translation δῆλοι ἀληθείας by the grandson of Ben Sira in Sir. xlv 10; cf. CHARLES, *Apocrypha*, I, ad loc.

were condemned by the prophets as pagan idols. The Urim and Tummim must yield to the Torah; they lost their original function and became mere symbols. The Talmud denies the existence of a priestly oracle during the time after the destruction of the first temple¹⁾. The ephod became a piece of the cultic attire of the high priest. The name of the pectoral, *ḥōšen hammišpāṭ* (Ex. xxviii 15, 30), bore, however, till witness to the original function of the Urim and Tummim. The memory of their great importance in earlier times is reflected in a word of Sirach: 'A man of understanding trusts in the Torah; the Torah seems to him as an answer given by the Urim' (xxxiii 2).

¹⁾ Cf. R. PRESS in *Z.A.W.*, li, 1933, pp. 230f., and W. RUDOLPH's comment on Ezra ii 63 in EISSFELDT's *Handbuch zum A.T.*