

YHWH TSEVAOT IN SAMUEL: GOD OF THE DAVIDIC AGE

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Abstract: *The article seeks to determine the significance of Yhwh Tsevaot in Samuel. Existing studies mostly focus on the semantics and syntax; fewer have taken a contextually sensitive approach. Why does the title appear for the first time in this book? The article first examines two views that do seek contextual meaning. One is actually diachronic—historical origin based on the text’s mention of Shiloh. Delineating the limits of 1 Samuel 1 assists in assessing this view. The other view is by Firth—the title as the marker of transition. The article develops Firth’s method, plotting all uses of the term within the book’s metanarrative. The proposal is that Yhwh Tsevaot marks the transformation of the religious and political landscape of Israel, so that all is unified around the Davidic king. The article also considers the use of divine titles across Genesis–Judges, to determine that the introduction of a new title in Samuel, with the use of the “name” terminology, is indicative of redemptive historical significance.*

Key words: *Yhwh Tsevaot, divine names, ark of the covenant, Davidic monarchy, Shiloh*

The book of Samuel records the transformation of a fledgling nation into a regional power, centered around a powerful monarchy. In that context there appears for the first time in canonical history the divine ascription, “Lord of Hosts,” *Yhwh Tsevaot*.¹ What is the significance of the title in the book? What connects “Lord of Hosts” with the proffered golden age?

Samuel is typically seen as an apology for the Davidic monarchy. Explanations of the divine ascription, however, are not always connected to the Davidic moment. The title’s terminology and grammar have captivated, but contextual significance has held less sway. Contextual study tends to focus on Shiloh in 1 Sam 1:3—the title as a cultic ascription. This produces a diachronic history, from cultic origins to broadened significance in the latter prophets. However, is this what Samuel intends to say? What of the title’s literary significance? The contention is that *Yhwh Tsevaot*, within the theological, sociological, and historical intentions of Samuel, is the title of the God of the Davidic era. It flags entrance into this new revelatory and salvational golden age, and the centralizing of Israel’s institutions around the monarchy.

Procedurally, initial evidence of the programmatic status of the term will be presented from 1 Sam 1:1–2:11. Two theories that treat the title contextually will

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¹ *Sabaoth* is the most familiar English form, being derived from the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew expression. $\Sigma\alpha\beta\alpha\omega\theta$ is used in the LXX and twice in the NT (Rom 9:29; Jas 5:4). The Hebrew is צבאות , *tsevaot*, *ṣəḇ’ōt*.

then be examined: the diachronic cultic theory and Firth's synchronic proposal. A "macro-contextual" proposal will next be made, in which the title will be analyzed within canonical history from Genesis to Samuel, followed by a "micro-contextual" proposal, evaluating every use in Samuel.

To reiterate, semantic meaning is not in view.² Was "hosts" drawn from Canaanite religion? Is the relationship between "Yhwh" and "Tsevaot" genitival? Are the "hosts" heavenly or earthly? These questions need discussion elsewhere, even though they influence this paper. The assumptions are: not Canaanite; genitival; and earthly, the armies of Israel. It is widely accepted that the hosts are also heavenly, but the roots of the term in the exodus are significant (Exod 7:4; 12:17, 41, 51), and Samuel's concern is not with angels but with Yhwh's sovereign care for Israel.

I. PROGRAMMATIC STATUS: THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION (1 SAMUEL 1:1–2:11)

The title is flagged as having programmatic status from the outset of the book. To understand this, the limits of the first section of Samuel need to be determined. The chapter division is misleading. The action proper commences with the *wayyiqtol* of 1:8 (וַיֹּאמֶר, "And he said"). All until this point is backgrounded information, introducing relationships and annual practices, not a particular event. The section continues with a chain of *waw*-consecutives frequently interrupted by emphatic X-qatal statements, until the new section commencing in 2:12.³ One

² Notwithstanding the comment of Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 152, that there are "methodological faults" in merely connecting the name with the ark and not pursuing lexical and linguistic study.

³ Only the MT has Elkanah mentioned in 2:11, but this is not currently relevant. For the textual issues, see Jason K. Driesbach, *4QSamuel^b and the Text of Samuel* (VTSup 171; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 211. On the opening structure of Samuel, Serge Frolov, *The Turn of the Cycle: 1 Samuel 1–8 in Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives* (BZAW 342; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 56–57, has two opening sections, 1:1–3, being the prologue, and 1:4–2:11a. However, although he is unsure of the significance of the shifting syntax in 1:1–7, he notes that in 1:8, "the sequence of *waw*-consecutive imperfect verbs begins to reestablish itself" (p. 56). He is correct that 2:11b could be the start of the next section. Stephen B. Chapman, *1 Samuel as Christian Scripture: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 74, has 1:4 as the commencement, "disguised" by the parenthesis of vv. 4b–7, which is an attractive explanation. Roy L. Heller, *Power, Politics, and Prophecy: The Character of Samuel and the Deuteronomistic Evaluation of Prophecy* (LHBOTS 440; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 48, 50, takes the first section as 1:1–2:10a (perhaps meaning just 2:10, p. 45), with the next section starting at 2:11.

The two related textual variants of 1:28; 2:11 have been taken by some as evidence that Hannah's prayer was added later. Stephen Pisano, *Additions or Omissions in the Books of Samuel: The Significant Pluses and Minuses in the Masoretic, LXX and Qumran Texts* (OBO 57; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 25–27. Having added the prayer, there was need to emphasize Hannah in 1:28 and 2:11. Pisano finds that if Hannah were original, later versions would not have departed from it, which leaves the choice between the masculine singular and plural for "worship" in 1:28, excluding the feminine singular. The MT is thus the *lectio difficilior*, since it would have been easier if the text spoke of Hannah. See also on 1:28, Julio Trebolle, "Textual Criticism and the Composition History of Samuel: Connections between Pericopes in 1 Samuel 1–4," in *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History* (ed. Philippe Hugo and Adrian Schenker; VTSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 264–66.

could argue for a minor break at 1:20 (וַיְהִי, “And it happened”), but there is no basis for a break at 2:1, in which there is simply another *waw*-consecutive (וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל ותתפלל, “And Hannah prayed and said”).⁴ The chapter division is more about demarcating the ensuing poem—a genre shift, to be sure, although the prayer is embedded in narrative—than following the Hebrew syntax. It could be said that 1:1 set the pattern of commencing narrative with a *waw*-consecutive, but the 1:1 *wayyiqtol* is about the book’s canonical placement, a feature of other books in the Former Prophets (Josh 1:1; Judg 1:1).⁵ Like Hannah’s prayer, the vow in chapter 1 is also poetic or semi-poetic, but no one argues that it should be demarcated by chapter division, and neither should the prayer be.

The observation reinforces, first, what is already well acknowledged, that Hannah’s prayer is an interpretative key to the book. It is properly part of, and the climax of, the first section and introduction. Second, 1 Sam 1:1–2:11 as a whole can be taken as a theological introduction to the book of Samuel, not an entirely uncontroversial statement.⁶ There is not just an initial slice of history (chap. 1), followed by theological reflection (2:1b–10), but there is one whole section that is as close to being a formal, thematic introduction as a narrative can have.

Within this comes 1:3, the first theological assertion of the introductory narrative. The easier theological clarity of the poetic 2:1b–10 ought not to overshadow it. From the outset, the book takes a profound theological step. Verses 1–2 commence the narrative in an ordinary-enough fashion, and does not look theologically or even thematically promising. “And there was a man,” namely Elkanah, a seemingly incidental figure. One could wonder whether he is just a foil for Hannah,⁷ since he seems to comply so meekly with her leadership, but the narrator carefully

⁴ That the Septuagint truncates 1:28 and 2:1 is irrelevant to the syntactical question. It not only gives the inferior reading, but even with it, 2:1 still opens with a *wayyiqtol* (וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל).

⁵ But in Ruth, Jonah, and Esther, it “does not indicate a connection to the previous book.” Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on the First Book of Samuel* (UBS Handbook Series; New York: United Bible Societies, 2001), 23.

⁶ Rachele Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup 143; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99, complaining that scholarship has focused on diachronic rather than thematic issues. Was Samuel’s birth placed with the narrative about Saul because of the wordplay on the names? Is Hannah’s prayer not from Hannah and a later insertion? Gilmour (p. 100) denies that the prayer is a point of disconnect from Hannah, since Watts has noted that victory songs seem to be the provenance of women (Exodus 15 and Judges 5). This draws on James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (JSOTSup 139; Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1992), 29, who still thinks that the prayer was a later addition.

⁷ Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), 11, speaks of Elkanah as “displaced” by Hannah, though he appears again at the conclusion of the section, 2:11 (MT, not LXX). It is undeniable that Samuel is unique in the way it focuses upon a woman in the opening narrative, and it is readily seen that the point is (not Hannah or Elkanah, but) to move to the transitional Samuel. Thus April D. Westbrook, “*And He Will Take Your Daughters...*”: *Woman Story and the Ethical Evaluation of Monarchy in the David Narrative* (LHBOTS 610; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 34. Neither is the point to subvert gender roles, since Hannah’s role is in connection with children and her husband, and her husband sanctions her vow. Her assertiveness might subvert a modern stereotype of Israelite society.

prioritizes his piety. He went up (emphatically “this man,” v. 3; **הַאִישׁ הַהוּא**) yearly to worship.

This was to Shiloh. The book is concerned with the place where God “puts his name for a dwelling place” (Deut 12:5, but there are also other altars in Samuel, so, *contra* Noth, this is not Josiah’s program of Jerusalem centrality). At Shiloh were the “priests of Yhwh,” and the reader is alert to what is foreshadowed. Yhwh will kill and make alive within the Aaronic family. All this is pertinent to the book’s theological interests: Yhwh who insists on particular worship, who moves in history to establish the place, who requires worship and sacrifice, who judges the guilty.

Of even greater significance is the expression, “to Yhwh of hosts” (**לַיהוָה** **עֲבוֹדָתוֹ**). Still, initially, there is no linguistic indication of its importance. It is not the focus of the sentence. The syntax of the introductory narrative gives the perfect verb first (“and went up,” **וַעֲלָה**), and pronominal stress on the subject (“this man,” **הַאִישׁ הַהוּא**), and “to Yhwh Tsavaot” seems incidental.⁸

That it reoccurs in the introduction dispels any misconception (1:11). It now stands prominently in the verse, at the outset of Hannah’s vow, “O Yhwh Tsevaot.” Hannah’s vow could be seen as poetic,⁹ and so it and the prayer of 2:1b–10 act as question and answer, problem and resolution, and all headed by Yhwh Tsevaot. Yhwh Tsevaot is at the least the *immanent* God, present and active, who is going to meet Hannah’s desires—and bring the real resolution that the introduction is seeking: “his king” (1 Sam 2:10).

The title’s significance emerges in other ways. First, in chapter 1 are two of the eleven uses in the book, and chapter 1 is one of only seven chapters that contain the title. Second, a narrator’s use in 1:3 might seem incidental, but Hannah in 1:11 is one of only four characters who speak the name: Hannah, Samuel, David, and Yhwh—esteemed company. Third, it is the first occurrence of the term in the canon¹⁰—and the *nam*-consecutive of verse 1 ensures that it is read in its canonical location.¹¹

⁸ Most commentators at least see historical value in the title’s use in 1:3. For whatever reason, some omit comment: Chapman, *1 Samuel*, 74; Robert B. Chisholm, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Teach the Text Commentary Series; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 9–10; A. Graeme Auld, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 27; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *1 and 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1964), 24.

⁹ Peter Kyle McCarter Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes & Commentary* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday, 1980), 49, formats the vow as poetic lines in his translation, and later (p. 60) speaks of Northwest Semitic vows being “in stereotyped formulae.” Hannah’s vow has “a quatrain of long lines ... and a couplet of short lines,” but at the head is the “extrametrical invocation of the deity.”

¹⁰ The first use in the LXX is in Josh 6:17—**κύριω σαβαωθ** for **יהוה**. Similar expansions are made in 1 Sam 1:20; 2 Kgs 10:16; Isa 5:25; 7:7; 22:17; 23:11; 45:14. There is relevant DSS testimony only for Isa 5:25; 7:7; 22:17; 45:14, according with the MT. 1 Samuel 4:4 LXX omits **σαβαωθ**, although the MT has **עֲבוֹדָתוֹ**. Elsewhere, the LXX uses **κύριος παντοκράτωρ** in place of *Yhwh Tsevaot* (e.g. 2 Sam 5:10; 7:8, 27) or **κύριου τῶν δυνάμεων** (e.g. 2 Sam 6:2, 18).

¹¹ Diachronism is always murkier. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. 1* (OTL; London: SCM, 1961), 194, thought it might be possible to draw “definite conclusions” from the omission of the name in Joshua and Judges, but then remembered that “a later redaction may have deleted it.” Still, most have been open to connecting the “literary first” with the “historical fact” that the name originated in the later judges’ period, as it is cautiously put by Matitiahu Tsevat, *The Meaning of the Book of*

The title thus needs explanation in its narrative placement. What is the title's programmatic significance? Bodner is alert to the issue. After briefly defining the title—"God is champion of the battle array of Israel"—he says, "there is less discussion about why, of all places, this name occurs at *this particular* juncture of narrative time and space."¹² To his question, Bodner offers a "guess": "the name is used here as a reminder of divine sovereignty at the outset of Israel's experiment with kingship."¹³ This insight can be developed.

II. DIACHRONIC CONTEXTUAL THEORY: CULTIC NAME

The theory has understandably been advanced that Yhwh Tsevaot is a cultic title for the deity, developed at Shiloh.¹⁴ It is, after all, the name that by context is connected with the ark, and the first use of the term locates it at Shiloh.¹⁵ This can be buttressed by appealing to the Psalter (e.g. Psalm 24), though Mettinger is alert

Job and Other Biblical Studies (New York: Ktav, 1980), 119–20 (first published as Matitiahū Tsevat, "Studies in the Book of Samuel," *HUCA* 36 [1965]: 49–58).

¹² Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 13. Koowon Kim, *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the 'aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of Ktu 1.14 I–1.15 III, 1.17 I–II, and 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11* (VTSup 145; Leiden: Brill, 2011), suggests that 1 Sam 1:1–2:11 is an incubation type-scene, paralleled at Ugarit, in which one would sleep in a holy place to receive revelation. However, Yhwh Tsevaot suggests that the theological interest lies elsewhere. Kim discusses the opening verses of chap. 1 in detail (pp. 276–78) but offers no comment on the title.

¹³ Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 13.

¹⁴ For other views of origins (with Amos and Isaiah; at Jerusalem and projected back to Shiloh), see H. J. Zobel, "צְבָאוֹת *Tsevaot*," *TDOT* 12:221–22.

¹⁵ Dempsey Rosales Acosta, "Lord of Hosts," *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (ed. John D. Barry et al.; Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), electronic: "strong links" to Shiloh, with a Canaanite background; David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 110, it "may originally have been specially connected with the Shiloh sanctuary." He (p. 109) follows Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (IOTC 24; London: Tyndale, 1972), 44–45, who has the term connected "with worship rather than with battles"; Zobel, "צְבָאוֹת *Tsevaot*," 222, the "present consensus"; Trygve N. D. Mettinger, "Yahweh Zebaoth," *DDD* 920–21, the "cradle of the concept," and hence related to Canaanite El traditions; Choon Leong Seow, "Hosts, Lord of," *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:304: "likely that the title was first used at Shiloh in association with the ark"; E. Theodore Mullen Jr., "Hosts, Host of Heaven," *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, 3:303; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 68, says Eissfeldt "argued persuasively" for the Shiloh cultus origin; B. W. Anderson, "Hosts, Host of Heaven," *IDB* 2:655, has it as first appearing at Shiloh, and transferred by David to Jerusalem. Robert P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (Library of Biblical Interpretation; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 72, is uncommitted: "may have been specially connected ... conjectural"; Joyce G. Baldwin, *First and Second Samuel* (IOTC 8; London: IVP, 1988), 55–56, simply says that the term is first used in 1 Sam 1:3 "in connection with the Shiloh sanctuary," without speaking of origins; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 59, speaks of the term as a "cultic epithet" without mentioning Shiloh. Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1902), 4, has Yhwh associated with various shrines: Yhwh Tsevaot of Shiloh, 1 Sam 1:3; Yhwh of Hebron, 2 Sam 15:7. See the discussion in John A. Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion: The Implications of the Inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *ZAW* 94.1 (1982): 12. However, it is not stated that Absalom's vow was cult-orientated, and the only other reference that could have Hebron as a significant cultic centre ("before Yhwh"; 2 Sam 5:3) shows that the *beth* preposition on the place name adverbially modifies the main verb. The covenant was cut "at Hebron" and "before Yhwh," just as Absalom vowed "to Yhwh" and "at Hebron" and Elkanah sacrificed "to Yhwh Tsevaot" and "at Shiloh."

to the difficulty that the allegedly cultic name occurs in a cultic book only fifteen times in eight Psalms.¹⁶ Two aspects will be discussed together: the titular connection to Shiloh and the ark. That the cultic perspective intersects with the semantic alignment of “hosts” with the ark’s “cherubim” will not be addressed.

While many things are possible, there are reservations with the cultic theory. As an offhand comment, it is surprising that 1 Sam 1:3 is usually taken at historical face value. The title, Yhwh Tsevaot, did exist in the late judges’ period, and was used at Shiloh. Earliness seems self-evident, if the name is connected to the ark (the ark being increasingly shrouded by silence moving towards the exile). Some correlate the name with even earlier Canaanite religion. The surprise emerges because, canonically, the title predominates in the 8th-century prophets and thereafter, which accords with the dating usually assigned to the Former Prophets. Furthermore, why would Samuel affirm a Shiloh (or even Canaanite) cultic name if Josiah’s program is centralization at Jerusalem? Yet again, Hannah can be held to speak anachronistically of the “anointed” Davidic king. Why would Yhwh Tsevaot not also be anachronistic?

In any case, in 1 Sam 4:4 and 2 Sam 6:2 there is the ark “of Yhwh Tsevaot” and the ark “whose name is called by the Name, Yhwh Tsevaot.” The name is connected to the ark, the ark is connected to Shiloh, and hence the title is a cultic name. However, the ark has multiple connections: to the sanctuary, the army, King David, Jerusalem (but not to law in Samuel). Why prioritize only the sanctuary? Yes, Samuel’s introduction mentions Shiloh, but that is not all that is said there. Hannah speaks the name, and she is from Ephraim. Soon, she speaks of the anointed, so why not a Davidic name? First Samuel 1:3 receives an unusual priority.

Furthermore, the ark narratives (1 Samuel 2–6; 2 Samuel 6) are disruptive, arguing that the ark is not the property of priesthood, army, or king. It gives pause for thought in allocating the origins of the title. The book partly seems to want to resist such connections, but failing that, it demonstrates that the book’s interest in the ark and title is theological, not historical to the point of giving the original life-setting. Samuel does address theological-historical development regarding the titles “seer” and “prophet,” but Saul did not create the term “prophet” while looking for some donkeys.

Second, does “hosts” well suit the Shiloh context? Most accept that “hosts” partly refers to Israel’s armies. Why connect that to Shiloh?¹⁷ Perhaps the hosts gathered there, Shiloh being Israel’s only national institution in the judges’ period. However, Shiloh is portrayed as divisive, not unitive. At Shiloh, “men abhorred the Lord’s offering” (1 Sam 2:17). Hophni and Phinehas appear as national leaders in 1 Samuel 4, but, like Judges, the battle was probably more a smaller, tribal affair. The

¹⁶ Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 126.

¹⁷ So far from suggesting a Canaanite shrine with the worship of Baal Tsevaot. John Paton Ross, “Jahweh Šḥā’ōt in Samuel and Psalms,” *VT* 17.1 (1967): 89–90, maintains that the Canaanite temple had a cherub throne. Israel took it over, and incorporated the ark. There is no data for this, so it is unproven, and the simpler approach is to root Tsevaot in the exodus.

priests' involvement was coincidental. Aphek being proximate to Shiloh, the elders call for the ark (4:3), and Eli's sons attend as the ark's retinue. A military connection to Shiloh seems tenuous.

One can imagine the title emerging in the judges' period—not that it was a stable time for sustained theological development. The final narratives of Judges convey a fraught but emerging sense of national unity. Albright says, "One can hardly be surprised if under such conditions [of external dangers and inter-tribal war] Israel became martially minded and Israel's God became 'Yahweh, God of (the) Hosts (of Israel),' one of whose primary functions was to defend His people against foes."¹⁸ Freedman has it as the "amphictyonic motto." This is not a Shiloh-related phenomena.

Moreover, the theological trajectory is not solely military. The socio-theological development of the judges' period is towards monarchy. First Samuel 1:1–2:11 commences by introducing Yhwh Tsevaot and concludes by introducing the anointed king (2:10). Ross's comment is apt: "However, when we turn to the contexts in which this title of God appears, we shall find them far from overwhelmingly military. Rather, as Eissfeldt pointed out, we shall find them predominantly royal."¹⁹ Was Shiloh the creative, theological crucible and all-imposing authority center that could lead to such a creation and promulgation? One might stress the "anointed" aspect of monarchy to support the Shiloh connection (or the obscure Gen 49:10), but that is some distance from the cultic-name theory.

Third, the ark is "of the covenant of Yhwh Tsevaot," and it is the ark "whose name is called by the Name, Yhwh Tsevaot." These explanations do not closely relate the title to the ark. First, these are narratorial comments. It is possible that they are not intended as historical testimony. Second, regarding 1 Sam 4:4, is it an "ark" reality, or a "Yhwh" reality? Had the people realized something about the ark, or about Yhwh, that led them to say Tsevaot? It need only indicate that it had become acceptable to expand "Yhwh" to "Yhwh Tsevaot," including when using the stock expression, "ark of the covenant of Yhwh" (Num 10:33; 14:44; Deut 10:8; 31:9, 25, 26; Josh 3:3, etc; 1 Sam 4:5).

Second Samuel 6:2 connects "ark" to "the Name." The explanation of "the Name" is supplementary. "Yhwh Tsevaot" is about "the Name" more than "the ark." The altar is called, "Yhwh is my banner" (Exod 17:15, ויקרא שמו יהוה נסי), and the "place" is called "Yhwh will provide" (Gen 22:14, ויקרא אברהם שם-המקום, (ההוא יהוה יראה), but Samuel does not say that the ark is called Yhwh Tsevaot, but "Name" (אשר-נקרא שם שם יהוה צבאות), "which was called Name, the Name Yhwh Tsevaot," or even, "which was called Name. The Name is Yhwh Tsevaot"; following the MT but noting that many manuscripts have the first שם as שָׁם, "there"). First Chronicles 13:6 concurs, rearranging the sentence so that the ark is only called "Name," and changing Yhwh Tsevaot to Elohim Yhwh (ארון האלהים יהוה יושב).

¹⁸ William Foxwell Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), 287.

¹⁹ Ross, "Jahweh שָׁבָאֹת," 78.

הכרובים אשר־נקרא שם, “the ark of Elohim Yhwh, who dwells *between* the cherubim, which is called Name”).

Samuel does not indicate that Yhwh Tsevaot has a primary connection with Shiloh. It does not give the specific origin of the title. Broadly, “Yhwh Tsevaot” emerged in the late judges’ period as a reflection upon Yhwh. Thereafter, significance will come from analyzing all uses of the term, not just the Shiloh and two ark references.

III. SYNCHRONIC CONTEXTUAL THEORY: MARKER OF SOCIAL TRANSITION

Firth says of Yhwh Tsevaot, “it is perhaps more important to note its use within the narrative.”²⁰ He observes that the name occurs in three blocks, and “each block recounts a significant change in the power structures within Israel.”²¹ First, there is the movement from Eli to Samuel (1 Samuel 1–4), then there is Saul’s rejection (1 Samuel 15–17), and finally there is “the establishment of the promise to David” (2 Samuel 5–7).²² The conclusion is thus: “Within Samuel the name is thus a key marker of the reign of Yahweh so that all forces are subject to Yahweh.”²³

He also puts it thus: “Where the first block concerns a transition in cultic leadership and the second in political leadership, the third block brings these elements together.”²⁴ The title points to “social change” and “Yahweh’s authority to institute change.”²⁵

In response, seeking to find contextual significance of all the uses of the title is astute. Firth’s conclusion would then broadly be correct. Yhwh Tsevaot is about transition, since that is the context. To go further, however, Samuel is not only about individual sets of transition. The transitions all head to a conclusion, being the Davidic monarchy. The title is bound to be about kingship.

Firth’s construal of the data needs further consideration. Are the delineated sections actually about transition, and have all transitions been covered? Where is the Samuel-to-Saul transition? In the table below, Yhwh Tsevaot texts are plotted against the narrative’s transitions. The transitions themselves are plotted from beginning, through midpoint or low point, to completion. Unlike Firth’s three blocks, the three main transitions of the book are tabled: from Eli to Samuel, Samuel to Saul, and Saul to David (the incomplete and subordinate transition from David to Solomon is not examined).

²⁰ David G. Firth, *1 and 2 Samuel: A Kingdom Comes* (Phoenix Guides to the OT 9; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013), 57.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Nottingham, UK: IVP, 2009), 55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 384–85. The title is “never explained” as having “warlike overtones” in Samuel (p. 384).

	Eli-to-Samuel transition	Corresponding Lord of Hosts texts	Samuel-to-Saul transition	Corresponding Lord of Hosts texts	Saul-to-David transition	Corresponding Lord of Hosts texts
Commencement	1 Sam 1:1 – 2:11	1 Sam 1:3, 11	1 Sam 8	-	1 Sam 13–15	1 Sam 15:2
						1 Sam 17:45
Midpoint/low point	1 Sam 4 or 1 Sam 6:19	1 Sam 4:4	1 Sam 10:24?	-	1 Sam 21:10 – 24:22? 1 Sam 27?	-
Completion	1 Sam 7	-	1 Sam 12	-	2 Sam 5–7	2 Sam 5:10; 6:2, 18; 7:8, 26, 27

The table is telling. The completion of the Eli-Samuel transition is not marked, whereas the completion of the Saul-David transition (or the next start made under David, since one could argue that the transition is complete in 2 Samuel 5) is marked profusely. Only one midpoint or low point, if that is a reality in the text, is marked, so the question would be why one is marked but no others. The Samuel-Saul transition is not marked. Then there is 1 Sam 17:45, which falls outside the main transition points, though one could extend the commencement of the Saul-David transition from 1 Samuel 13–15 to 1 Samuel 13–17. Yhwh Tsevaot does not look to be a literary transition marker in this way.

Still, the title's location does have programmatic or metanarrative meaning, gathering from the double use in the book's introduction, and the profuse use in the section that has David's kingdom established. It is remembered that the introduction is not only chapter 1, but 1:1–2:11, and culminates with the expression of royal hope. The title's use in chapter 1 is not restricted to Shiloh. The *inclusio* is of Davidic expectation to Davidic realization.

Still, this does not account for the three intervening uses of the title. First Samuel 17:45 can be explained within the metanarrative as a pivotal moment in which David is presented to the nation, but 1 Sam 4:4; 15:2 are more difficult to connect—although there is nothing in Samuel that is not Davidic. Also, there is more in these texts than just Davidic expectation and realization. For example, the name is used in the prophetic formula, “Thus says Yhwh Tsevaot” (1 Sam 15:2; 2 Sam 7:8). The individual texts need further analysis.

IV. MACRO-CONTEXTUAL PROPOSAL: EPOCHAL SIGNIFICANCE

Before looking at the individual uses of the title, comment should be made on its canonical location. The title first appears in canonical history in 1 Sam 1:3, and quite apart from the precise meaning of the terminology, the fact that a new

“name” for Yhwh is used (בשם יהוה צבאות), “in the name, Yhwh Sabaoth,” 1 Sam 17:45) is of profound importance. Titles for deities in ANE religion were not inconsequential, and in Israel’s canonical story before Samuel, they played an epoch-defining role. In Genesis, God appeared to the patriarchs at the most pivotal moments declaring, “I am El Shaddai,” and he was in that period present and known more as the God of power than the God of redemption. To Moses, “Yhwh” came to the fore—the God who redeems his people. These titles epitomize and summarize their respective stages of revelation and salvation history. Exodus overtly attaches such significance to Yhwh, and whilst Genesis does not make similar overt claims about the titles contained therein, Exodus is still able to isolate El Shaddai in Genesis as having epochal significance (somewhat surprisingly, at one level, given how infrequently El Shaddai occurs in Genesis).²⁶

The book of Samuel aligns itself with canonical history, relating Israel’s continuing story after the Law, Joshua, and Judges. The evidence of this relationship is profuse throughout the book (including the opening *nam*-consecutive). Furthermore, the point of tension in the opening narrative is familiar. Hannah is barren, like patriarchal wives and like Samson’s mother (Judg 13:2).²⁷ Since Yhwh intervenes, a salvational moment is about to ensue. The canonical story is being advanced.

The possibility is, then, that in ascribing to Yhwh a new name, the author is taking up and developing the prior theology of the “name” (Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; Exod 3:13, 15; 6:3; 9:16; 20:7; Lev 18:21; 20:3; Deut 5:11; 12:5; Josh 9:9; Jdg 13:18; 1 Sam 17:45; 20:42; 2 Sam 6:2, 18; 7:13, 26; 22:50). Admittedly, Yhwh Tsevaot is not used in the same way as El Shaddai and Yhwh. In Genesis and Exodus, these two names are portrayed as divine self-identification, definition, and declaration. The deity speaks the terms. “Yhwh appeared ... and said ... ‘I am El Shaddai’” (Gen 17:1). “God said ... ‘I am who I am’” (Exod 3:14, assuming a connection between this and the name Yhwh). Exodus 6:3 is particularly interested in the fact of self-revelation. “I appeared ... as El Shaddai.” In Samuel, Yhwh Tsevaot does speak (2 Sam 7:8: “Thus says Yhwh Tsevaot”), and he does speak his own name (2 Sam 7:8 being the start of the message that Nathan is to deliver to David), but he does not say, “I am Yhwh Tsevaot.”

Still, the language of “name” suggests that there is a similar, epochal significance attached to Yhwh Tsevaot. Samuel does seek to convey that this is the new, updated way in which Yhwh can be referenced. David confronts Goliath בשם יהוה צבאות, “in the *name* of Yhwh Tsevaot” (1 Sam 17:45). In 2 Sam 6:2, the narrator explains what the name is. The ark is called by the “name,” and that name is Yhwh Tsevaot. In 2 Sam 7:26, the name is magnified forever, and that name is Yhwh Tsevaot.

²⁶ See Jared C. Hood, “I Appeared as El Shaddai: Intertextual Interplay in Exodus 6:3,” *WTJ* 76 (2014): 167–88, for an explanation of why El Shaddai is accorded central status in Genesis.

²⁷ This is frequently commented on. E.g. Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 12.

These statements follow on from the background to “name” in Genesis and Exodus. In Genesis, first, there are generic narratorial references to people calling on the name of Yhwh (Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 26:25). Two texts are more specific, though, and the reason for the specificity regarding the name is evident. Hagar receives revelation from Yhwh, and ascribes to him a name that encapsulates the salvation that she has experienced. He is “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees” (Gen 16:13, or just “God who sees,” **אל ראי**; LXX, $\Sigma\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\delta\acute{\omega}\nu\ \mu\epsilon$, reading a 1cs suffix). The implication is that this is now who her God is. With this, she starts a new phase of her life and a new relationship with her deity. After this, Abraham frames a new title, **אל עולם** (El Olam, Gen 21:32). It begins to look like a new name may be easily ascribed to Yhwh, upon little basis. However, this underestimates the text, in which not only is there a new name delineated for Yhwh, but a “covenant” is formed, a place is named, and a terebinth tree is planted. The Beersheba events are significant in patriarchal history, delineating the southern boundaries of the land.²⁸

Exodus 3:13–15 and 6:3 most fully evidence the importance of the name. “What is his name?” “I am who I am ... This is my name forever.” “My name Yhwh” (cf. 15:3: “Yhwh is his name”).²⁹ The “name” is protected in the Decalogue (Exod 20:7). No other names for Yhwh are spoken of in the rest of the Pentateuch (unless one counts alternative mixings of Yhwh and Elohim, such as “this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God” (Deut 28:58. Deut 32:4 is not taken as a new name).

The “name” remains Yhwh in Joshua (Josh 9:9, the LORD your God). Neither is there development in Judges, despite there being a request similar to Exod 3:13, in which Manoah asks for the name of the angel (Judg 13:17). It is remarkable, then, that Samuel commences with Yhwh Tsevaot, and the use of the language of “name” signifies an intentional development of the earlier theme.

Thus, coming to the monarchy period, the author wants to say that a new stage of revelation and salvation has been reached. The extent of the newness needs qualification, however. First, this new stage is not fundamentally different or separate from the Mosaic, for he is still “Yhwh.” This is not merely an admixture of Yhwh and Elohim with a personal pronoun (“Yhwh our Elohim”), but neither is it a radical reconceptualization of the deity. Second, just as the divine names in Genesis that are not divine self-identification and designation (i.e. not El Shaddai) are of secondary importance (none of the other names in Genesis rises to the significance of El Shaddai, according to Exod 6:3), so too is Yhwh Tsevaot not divine self-designation and so it is of secondary importance to Yhwh itself.

²⁸ El Olam is quickly followed by another naming, but of a place rather than another divine name. Of the place where Abraham sought to sacrifice his son, “Abraham called the name of the place, Yhwh will provide” (Gen 22:14).

²⁹ There is another naming in Exodus, of the altar at Rephidim. Moses named it, **יהוה נסי** (“Yhwh is my banner,” Exod 17:15), an expression not used elsewhere in the MT. As with “The Lord will provide,” this is not another divine name.

Thus, the Davidic period is still the period of the Mosaic Yhwh. It should not be absolutely differentiated from the Mosaic. Nevertheless, under the auspices of the Mosaic, comes the Davidic. It is the Yhwh age of redemption, but with development.

The meaning of the new title, then, can be discerned not only by its particular terms, but also by looking at the age that it demarcates, in other words, by looking at the revelatory and salvational advances in the book of Samuel. Thus, Yhwh Tsevaot is the title that corresponds with monarchy—anoointed, Davidic, imperial, covenanted monarchy, harmonious with the prophetic voice, and the patron of the Jerusalem sanctuary—and the salvation rest that monarchy brings and yet will bring.

V. MICRO-CONTEXTUAL PROPOSAL: DAVIDIC NAME

Turning to the individual uses of the title, tabling the data is helpful. It quickly emerges that a Shilohic origin does not explain all other uses. Hence, commentaries that quickly adopt the Shiloh explanation struggle to offer cogent explanation of the title elsewhere.³⁰ The table below takes an admittedly straightforward approach to collating data. Yhwh Tsevaot texts are categorized according to who uses the term and whether various features are present in the immediate context. Is the sanctuary mentioned or is the army evidently present? “Prophetic context” is not to search for diachronic influence, whether from a prophetic tradition or the Deuteronomist, but is a prophet said to be present and operative in the text? “Kingship context” is whether the text is overtly about David as king (hence 1 Sam 17:45 is not counted, because the chapter does not speak of David being king). “Jerusalem context” is not tracing a Zion tradition, but only asking if Jerusalem or Zion is mentioned in the context. Little exegetical detail is offered, in favour of considering the overall shape of the tabled data. The assumption is that context is relevant to the title’s meaning.

³⁰ Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, 462, only says of David’s use of the title in 1 Sam 17:45 that it “expressed well David’s complete trust in his God.”

Refer- ence	Term	Term used by	Used of the ark	Sanctuary, or ark present	Military con- text	Pro- phetic context	King- ship context	Jerusa- lem context
1 Sam 1:3	לִיהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Narra- tor	No; possi- bly im- plied	Yes, but ark not men- tioned	No	No	No, but 2:10	No
1 Sam 1:11	יהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Han- nah	No	Yes, but ark not men- tioned	No	No	No, but 2:10	No
1 Sam 4:4 ³¹	אָרוֹן בְּרִית־ יהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Narra- tor	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
1 Sam 15:2	כֹּה אָמַר יהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Samu- el	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
1 Sam 17:45	בְּשֵׁם יהוָה צְבָאוֹת	David	No	No (or ark not men- tioned)	Yes	No	No	No
2 Sam 5:10 ³²	וַיְהִי אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת	Narra- tor	No	No	No	No	Yes (David became great)	Yes

³¹ LXX mss have $\alpha\beta\omega\tau\delta\nu$ ($\tau\sigma\upsilon$) $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon$ (“ark of Yhwh”) instead of “ark of the covenant of Yhwh Tsevaot.” This is the translational flexibility for which the LXX is known, especially regarding technical Hebrew expressions. “Ark of the covenant of God” is also shortened, and “covenant” is again omitted in the ark reference in v. 5 (but “covenant” stands in 2 Sam 15:24, the other use of “ark of covenant” in MT Samuel, and the LXX adds the expression in other places where it is omitted in the MT, e.g. 1 Kgdms 6:3, 18). Qumran gives no witness.

³² Elohe is omitted in the title in both the LXX ($\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ $\pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\omega\rho$) and at Qumran (וַיְהוֹה צְבָאוֹת (4Q51 Sam^a), casting significant doubt upon the longer form. Still, Elohe is the *lectio difficilior*. Its omission was to bring conformity with the regular, shorter expression.

2 Sam 6:2 ³³	אָרֹן הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא שֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֹשֵׁב הַכְרִבִּים עָלָיו	Narra- tor	Yes	Yes (David's tent, not Shiloh)	Yes #	No	Yes	Yes
2 Sam 6:18	בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Narra- tor	No	Yes (David's tent, not Shiloh)	No	No	Yes	Yes
2 Sam 7:8	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	Yhwh	No	Yes (David's tent, not Shiloh)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
2 Sam 7:26	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	David	No	Yes (David's tent, not Shiloh. Ark perhaps in 7:18)	No	No	Yes	Yes
2 Sam 7:27	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	David	No	Yes (David's tent, not Shiloh. Ark perhaps in 7:18)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

There are eleven uses of the title, including the longer form that includes Elohe (2 Sam 5:10), in seven chapters or sections. Some observations are in order.

1. *Ark texts.* Only two uses out of eleven connect the name to the ark. It could be concluded that the ark relationship is only one among many. However, four out of seven contexts have the ark present or are located in or around the sanctuary at Shiloh or David's Jerusalem tent. It is unclear whether "sat before Yhwh" signifies the ark in 2 Sam 7:18 (there are multiple "before Yhwh" events in Samuel, some of which are unlikely to signify the ark). It would be possible to max-

³³ See above for the alternative pointing of the first ׀ש in some Hebrew mss.

imize ark references, but if taking only the explicit references, only two texts relate the title to the ark.

The ark is far more profusely “the ark of Elohim” (25 times), many times “the ark of Yhwh” (20 times), occasionally “the ark of Elohe of Israel” (7 times), sometimes “the ark of the covenant of Elohim” (3 times) or “the ark of the covenant of Yhwh” (2 times, excluding 1 Sam 4:4, “Yhwh Tsevaot”), and four times just “the ark.” If Yhwh Tsevaot is the title for Yhwh in association with the ark, why is it used so infrequently (although infrequent use is an issue for any contextual theory of the name)? Using Yhwh Tsevaot rarely in connection with the ark is sufficient for the author to make a point, but that point is unlikely to be that this is the title’s origin and predominant significance.

2. *Military texts.* Just as four out of seven contexts have the ark present or are sanctuary or tent related, four out of seven contexts are “military,”³⁴ including 2 Sam 6:2.³⁵ The ark is not always present where the army is (1 Sam 15:2; 17:45), but the connection is not weaker than that to the ark, so the former is not derivative of the latter (and the term “of hosts” makes it unlikely). If anything, the military connection is stronger, for 1 Sam 17:45, as Zobel points out, is the “only OT passage offering an explanation” of the title: “I come to you in the name of Yhwh Tsevaot, the God of the armies of Israel (אלהי מערכות ישראל).”³⁶

The connection to the army is not unequivocal, given the ark narratives. The ark is not the guarantor of military victory. This is evident in 1 Samuel 4, and the presence of the army in 2 Samuel 6 is probably still a problematic factor. This does not discredit the military connection. The army is not sent home in 2 Samuel 6. It does ensure that Yhwh is seen as over the army, not subservient to it. David was not wrong, then, to present himself as a warrior acting in the name of Yhwh Tsevaot, in the definitional 1 Sam 17:45.

3. *Kingship texts.* Excluding 1 Sam 1:3, 11 for the meantime, three out of seven contexts directly reflect upon the nature and development of kingship. This excludes the use in the David and Goliath text, too, in which kingship is not directly

³⁴ I.e. the title is used in contexts in which Israel’s army is present. Ross, “Jahweh Š^hā’ōt,” 80, points out that in 1 Samuel 4, Yhwh Tsevaot does not himself act in battle (and so elsewhere in Samuel). He is no warrior-god. “His characteristic is to sit on a throne,” rather like Xerxes at Salamis. However, Yhwh Elohe Tsevaot magnifies David in 2 Sam 5:10, which can include the ensuing victory. He is thus “Baal Perazim,” no less (5:20). One would not expect to find the deity fighting in a human way, or fighting in every engagement. It is sufficient for the metaphor that he commands others to battle (1 Sam 15:3). Also, it is not a surprise that he is not involved in the 1 Sam 4:4 disaster.

³⁵ *Contra* Ross, “Jahweh Š^hā’ōt,” 82. The episode begins with the gathering of 30,000 chosen men (6:1), a military expression (1 Sam 13:2; 24:2; 26:2; 2 Sam 10:9; 17:1). The atmosphere of military victory is implicitly evoked by reference to the timbrel (v. 5). The “timbrel” or “tambourine” (תִּפְלִי, *tophi*) is never said to be a worship instrument. It is omitted in 2 Chr 5:12–13. It belonged especially to national and victory celebrations (Gen 31:27; Exod 15:20; Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6; Job 21:11; Ps 81:1; probably Ps 149:2; Isa 5:12; 24:8; 30:32; Jer 31:4; but also by the band of prophets, 1 Sam 10:5). The restriction from worship may have been the instrument’s close association with pagan festivities. Alternately, as it was connected with dancing, it may have been predominantly an instrument used by women (Exod 15:20; Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6; Jer 31:4), not easily incorporated into the cult.

³⁶ Zobel, “צְבָאוֹת,” *Tsevaot*, 218.

mentioned, although the liberty has been taken to include the 2 Samuel 6 references as kingship-related, being in the complex of events in chapters 5–7 that establish David's position.

The first of these kingship contexts (2 Sam 5:10) has no direct connection to ark or army, and the third connects to the ark only by deduction (2 Sam 7:8, 26, 27). The first bears further thought: "David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him." First, the name is expanded, Yhwh *Elohe* (אלהי; see above on the textual question), but this is probably stylistic.³⁷ First Samuel 1–2 makes the same expansion on the title, "God of Israel." He is Elohe Yisrael in 1:17, Yhwh Elohe Yisrael in 2:30 with no seeming rationale for the variation, he is Yhwh Elohe Yisrael for a total of nine uses throughout Samuel, except when the title is used of the ark ("the ark of the God of Israel" appears profusely) and the one use of the shorter title in 1 Sam 6:5 and the combined titles in 2 Sam 7:27 ("Yhwh Tsevaot, Elohe Yisrael"), and he returns to being "God of Israel" in the final use of the title in the book (2 Sam 23:3).

Second, what is of significance in 2 Sam 5:10 is what Yhwh Elohe Tsevaot is implicitly said to have done. He was "with" David, implying that he was the one who made David great. David's greatness is not only that of military conquest, but in the context, there is the taking of "Zion, that is, the city of David" (v. 7), the building of the Millo (v. 9) and David's palace (v. 11), the growth of David's family (vv. 13–16), and the defeat of the Philistines (vv. 17–25). In other words, Yhwh Elohe Tsevaot is responsible for David's military, administrative, and political success.

The same three contexts which have been categorized as "kingship" contexts are also "Jerusalem" or Zion contexts. The Jerusalem contexts cannot, then, be taken as purely cultic and added to 1:3 in defence of the Shiloh theory.

The list of kingship texts should be expanded. There is overt kingship material within the immediate context of 1:3, 11. As has been argued, the section is not chapter 1, but 1:1–2:11. The family's worship of and Hannah's appeal to Yhwh Tsevaot ultimately result not just in the birth of Samuel, but in the hoped-for anointed, David (1 Sam 2:10).

The oracle from Yhwh Tsevaot in 1 Sam 15:2 is also directed at kingship. Initially, it is only about military justice for the Amalekites. Yhwh Tsevaot commands Saul to "utterly destroy them" (v. 3). However, it is implicitly also about judgment upon Saul. This is the second time that Saul is given a command that will lead to disobedience, and it was probably intended to be a test for him to fail. Yhwh Tsevaot is clearing the way for the appointment of the *nagid* after his own heart. In

³⁷ Alternatively, Elohe evokes Yhwh's creational power to highlight the new beginning made in 2 Samuel 5. Otherwise, the rationale eludes this author. Not commenting on 2 Sam 5:10 in particular, Emerton, "New Light on Israelite Religion," 4, suggests that Yhwh Tsevaot has an ellipse of Elohe, following *GKC* §125h. Cf. C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 2:374. The advantage is that Elohim can be taken as a common noun, and so in construct with Tsevaot, whereas Yhwh is a proper noun, which some believe cannot be in construct. That the longer title is original has not been well-accepted, but this is a matter for another time.

other words, 1 Sam 15:2 cannot be disconnected from the aftermath of the Amalekite debacle later in the chapter, which is the final rejection of Saul as king (15:10–35), which immediately precedes and presages David’s anointing (chap. 16).

This leaves only two out of seven contexts that are not directly about kingship, 1 Sam 4:4; 17:45. First Samuel 17:45 implicitly endorses by public victory David’s impending leadership, in judge-like fashion proving that he is one upon whom has come the Spirit (16:13). Yhwh Tsevaot is invoked in 1 Sam 4:4, or, at least, the narrator wants the name connected to that context, to show that Yhwh Tsevaot is operating to bring about the demise of Eli’s family, the rise of Samuel, and so the anointing of David. In that sense, the text shows what Yhwh Tsevaot is not. He is not the God tied to the box, to be sure, nor the God subservient to Israel’s army, but neither is he the God who exalts the leadership of Eli’s family, or even that of Israel’s elders. Yhwh Tsevaot connected in a forced way to non-Davidic leadership leads to disaster. First Samuel 4 thus implicitly recites the lesson of Judges—a king is needed—and implies that it is Yhwh Tsevaot who will meet the need. Still, while 1 Sam 4:4 can be explained as Davidic, it might be wondered why only one transition’s midpoint or low point is marked (as tabled above).

Looking again at Yhwh Tsevaot as a kingship name, there may be some significance that five out of eleven uses are by the narrator, but there is certainly significance that six out of eleven uses are by David or about David. It is not merely about kingship in a generic sense. By weight of usage, Yhwh Tsevaot is a Davidic term.

4. *Prophetic texts.* The most surprising uses of Yhwh Tsevaot are in the two out of seven contexts that are “prophetic.” The first, 1 Sam 15:2, overlaps with a military context, and the second, 2 Sam 7:8, 27, also has present David’s tent and a focus on kingship. However, they are rightly also termed prophetic. In 1 Sam 15:2, Samuel delivers an oracle of judgment upon Amalek, and in 2 Sam 7:8, Yhwh gives Nathan covenantal revelation to deliver to David. The formula used in both texts is prophetic (and so not the cultic divination of Eli): “Thus says the LORD of hosts” (used profusely by the prophets, especially in Jeremiah and Zechariah). The book of Samuel has interest in prophetic matters, for it elsewhere speaks of the transition in vocabulary from “seer” to “prophet”; it speaks of the mysterious band of prophets; and in these Yhwh Tsevaot texts, it has Samuel using first a prophetic formula that will later become standard. Moses may have been the prophet *par excellence*, but Samuel was the father of the classical prophetic movement. In any case, the point is that Yhwh Tsevaot is in some way a prophetic name.

5. *Inclusio texts.* The final uses of the title in the book, in 2 Samuel 7, should be emphasized. “Yhwh Tsevaot” brackets the revelation given to David and David’s response (v. 8, “You shall say . . . ‘Thus says Yhwh Tsevaot’”; v. 27, “Yhwh Tsevaot . . . has revealed”), even though David’s response itself seems more preoccupied with Adonai Yhwh (used a perfect seven times—another possible indication of careful use of divine names in Samuel—including in David’s first and final address to Yhwh, and noting a textual variant in v. 29). The *inclusio* indicates that all that is revealed comes from him. Yhwh Tsevaot has revealed himself and his purposes for David, Israel, and the world.

Also, as was mentioned earlier, there is a wider bracketing that initially is with regard to worship. The first use of the title in the book has Elkanah worshipping Yhwh Tsevaot (1 Sam 1:3) and the second has Hannah praying (1:11), and the final uses have David exuberantly worshipping (2 Sam 7:26–27; not that the word “worship” is used, but “pray” connects both sections, 1 Sam 1:10, 12, 26, 27; 2:1; 2 Sam 7:27, the final use of the word in the book. Half of all uses of “pray” in the book are in these two sections). This indicates that Yhwh Tsevaot is the immanent and approachable God, but also that he is immanent and approachable to those supportive of the Davidic program. David and Davidides may approach him.

Does the worship *inclusio* also indicate that Yhwh Tsevaot is a cultic term? Beyond 2 Samuel 7, there is more to be accomplished in the book, including succession planning and the choice of Araunah’s threshing floor for an altar. Yhwh Saboath is not deployed in these contexts. Interestingly, although the choice of the threshing floor is vitally important, Yhwh Tsevaot is still not used. The opportunity to bracket 1 Samuel 1 and 2 Samuel 24 by use of Yhwh Tsevaot is not taken up, and it is telling. It signifies that Yhwh Tsevaot is not dominantly a cultic term. Yhwh Tsevaot is not mentioned again after 2 Samuel 7, since he has at that point already accomplished his purposes in accordance with the significance of that name. The name is Davidic, and speaks of the victory and “rest” that he implements through the Davidic family.

6. *Davidic texts.* Yhwh Tsevaot is the Davidic, monarchical, covenantal name. Although he does not develop the significance of the observation, Ross insightfully writes that Yhwh Tsevaot “was a most appropriate title for the God who was to establish the new dynasty. . . . And the emphatic reference to שׁבָּאֵ־וְיָ in David’s prayer shows how Israelite tradition associated this title with the Davidic innovations.”³⁸ Waltke writes, briefly, “The title occurs in connection with the installation of kingship when old Israel becomes fully mature.”³⁹

Why, then, is the name used outside the immediately Davidic context, or better, in ways that overlap with prophetic and cultic emphases (and the military emphasis, although this is easier to connect with the Davidic monarchy)? Ross comments thus: “So we are not surprised to find it is in this name that Nathan pronounces the divine promises to the house of David.”⁴⁰ Still, it is more than just an appropriateness. The overlapping or multi-focused uses accord with part of the program of the book, which is to ensure that leadership in Israel is not torn into dysfunctional demarcation between prophet, priest, and king, but rather is united around the Davidic monarchy. Samuel is the book in which prophet, priest, and king finally become demarcated roles, yet the book also quietly highlights synergies and intersection, which work towards exalting David’s prestige and power. David does not act as priest, yet he is more than the cult’s chief patron—perhaps its chief governor, to borrow a phrase. David does not control the prophet, but prophecy

³⁸ Ross, “Jahweh שׁבָּאֵ־וְיָ,” 82.

³⁹ Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 398.

⁴⁰ Ross, “Jahweh שׁבָּאֵ־וְיָ,” 82.

from here on will be monarchy-focused, decrying royal failings but proclaiming messianic hope. Yhwh Tsevaot is a title that engages in a program of branding, as it were, putting a Davidic stamp upon all facets of leadership in Israel (including in connection with the elders, 1 Sam 4:3–4).

In this light, it can be seen that the book of Samuel is not especially interested in the origin of the title. Whether it arose in a cultic context is irrelevant—and is unlikely, based upon the meaning that is attributed to it. The book's point is that Yhwh is present to transform the political and religious constitution of the nation, centralizing all around the Davidic monarchy.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is more that can be done to understand divine names, and their distribution, in Samuel,⁴¹ including on the intriguing “Director/Splendour/Enduring One of Israel” (1 Sam 15:29). There is more to be said on the terminology and grammar of Yhwh Tsevaot itself, which has not been treated in this article. What has been found is that, negatively, just as 1 Sam 9:9 observes that “seer” has been replaced by “prophet,” but has no interest in reciting the history of that transition, so too does Samuel record the new name, Yhwh Tsevaot, but has little interest in reciting the history of the development. The name is used by the narrator, connecting it with Shiloh and the ark, but this does not imply origin. Only four select characters in Samuel use the name, pointing to a theological interest, not a diachronic one. One minor historical lesson is that the Philistines had not previously heard the Israelite appellation. David needed to define it for them (and not to demarcate it from the Canaanite pantheon).

From inferring meaning from context, though, the conclusion is that the new title, original to the Book of Samuel, makes a statement about the newness of the Davidic age. It is as El Shaddai is to Genesis and Yhwh is to Exodus. That Yhwh Tsevaot is a programmatic title is confirmed by the bulk of the term's uses being in 1 Sam 1:1–2:11 and 2 Samuel 5–7, forming an *inclusio* of David expectation and realization. There are only three uses in between the *inclusio*, which themselves can be explained within the book's Davidic metanarrative.

This is not to say that the title is simplistically Davidic. There are overlapping connections, military, cultic and prophetic. The proposal is that Yhwh Tsevaot is the God who transforms the religious and political landscape of Israel, so that all is unified around the anointed Davidic king.

⁴¹ In the style of Stephen Dempster, “The Lord Is His Name: A Study of the Distribution of the Names and Titles of God in the Book of Amos,” *RevBib* 98 (1991): 170–89.