DISHAN (PERSON) [Heb diššān]. A son of Seir, the Horite (Gen 36:21; 1 Chr 1:38), brother of Dishon (Gen 36:21; 1 Chr 1:38), uncle of Dishon (Gen 36:25, 26 [read, with 1 Chr 1:41, Dishon instead of Dishan]), and the father of Uz and Aran (Gen 36:28; 1 Chr 1:42 [read Dishan instead of Dishon, but see below]). See also SEIR; HORI; DISHON; UZ. According to Gen 36:30, both Dishan and one translates Heb ʾāllāṭā as "tribe" or "chief". Furthermore, the names Dishan and Dishon are identical, Dishon and Central Arabian form of the same name. The occurrence of the same name in 3 different positions of the genealogy (Gen 36:20-28; 1 Chr 3:8-10) makes it doubtful that this genealogy is an actual representation of the Horite/Seirite tribal system. The Masoretic tradition may have expressed similar doubts by misspelling the name of Dishon/Dishan twice (Gen 36:26; 1 Chr 1:42). Gen 36:20-28 forms one of the most ancient components of Genesis 36 (Weippert 1971: 443); it seems, however, to have been compiled from conflicting traditions well after the demise of the Seirite/Horite tribal system.

The name Dishan/Dishon signifies an unspecified piece of game (Nöldeke 1904: 84). For more animal names among the tribal/personal names recorded in Genesis 36, see also ACHBOR; AIAH; ARAN.

Bibliography

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DISHON (PERSON) [Heb diššān]. The name of two men in the OT. It may mean "mountain goat" (IDB 1:354).
1. The 5th son of Seir, the Horite, who lived in the land of Edom (Gen 36:21; 1 Chr 1:38). He was the father of Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran (Gen 36:26; 1 Chr 1:41). Some scholars believe that Dishon is a variation of DISHAN, but in the genealogy of the Horite chiefs he is listed as the brother of Lothan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Ezer, and Dishan (Gen 36:20-21). The form diššān occurs only in Gen 36:26.
2. The son of Anah and grandson of Seir, the eponymous clan leader of the Horites who lived in Edom (Gen 36:25; 1 Chr 1:41).

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DISMEMBERMENT. See PUNISHMENTS AND CRIMES.

DIVES. See LAZARUS AND DIVES.

DIVINATION, DIVINER. See MAGIC (OT).
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assembly" (phr m’d) is employed. Elsewhere in the Ugaritic texts the most common designation for the assembly is dr šdbr bn ‘il, “the assembly of El/the assembly of the sons of El” (UT 107.2 [KTU 1.65]; UT 2.17, 25–26; 34 [KTU 1.40; see also line 8]; UT 1.7 [KTU 1.39]; UT 9.16 [KTU 1.41]; RS 18.56, 17–18 [KTU 1.87]; UT 128.111.19 [KTU 1.15]). In the Keret text the phrase ‘dr šd is also used to connote the assembly of the gods (UT 128.111.7, 11 [KTU 1.15]).

2. Biblical. The terminology used in Hebrew to denote the assembly is also diverse. Biblical Hebrew, while not using the term pbr/pbr to designate the assembly, does employ the terms šdva, “assembly” (Ps 82:1) and šd, “generation” (Amos 8:14; see also Ps 14:5; 49:20; 75:15; 84:11; 95:10; 112:2; Isa 53:8; Jer 2:31; 7:29; Prov 30:11–14; compare dr in KAI 26.111.19;27.12), both of which are used in the council of Ugaritic materials. Additionally, Isa 14:13 employs the phrase kbr m’dr, “mount of assembly” (cf. Ug phr m’d), and qhll qdššn, “assembly of the holy ones” (Ps 89:6). The term śdva also occurs in the biblical materials as a designation for the council (Ps 89:8; Jer 33:18; 23:22; Job 15:8). Neither qhll nqr śdva is attested in Ugaritic as a term designating the assembly of the gods.

B. Members of the Assembly

More significant for an understanding of the role and function of the divine assembly in the literature and religion of the ANE is the variety of terms used to designate the members of the assembly.

1. Mesopotamia. The membership of the heavenly council is most clearly discernible in the Mesopotamian literature. There the membership of the council is composed of all the major gods and goddesses of the land. Most important among these gods are two special groups, the fifty ita rabbii, “the great/senior gods,” and the seven gods called ita šdna, “the gods of the fates,” or the mašmura šdna, “the determiners of the fates.” The depiction of the council proceedings in Mesopotamian materials, most especially in the Enuma Elish, reveal that the council met under the presidency of the high god Anu and that after a banquet and discussion of the issues, the fate of the council was determined. The execution of the will of the council was the storm god Enlil.

In the Canaanite and Hebrew literatures depicting the assembly of the gods, the individual natures of the constituent members of the assembly are not nearly as clear as they are in the Mesopotamian accounts. In both the Canaanite and Hebrew assemblies the identities of the gods, apart from the high god, remain somewhat obscure.

2. Ugarit. In the assembly of the gods, as depicted in the Ugaritic materials, the members of the assembly are noted as šd, “gods,” a fact that is conveyed by the designation of the assembly as pbr bn śd, mpbr bn śd, and dr bn śd. There are, however, some more specific indications of the membership in the Canaanite assembly. In the Keret epic (UT 126.1–28 [KTU 1.16]), El sits at the head of the assembly and four times addresses the gods, called either šd, “gods,” or bn, “my sons,” asking who will heal theailing Keret. UT 128.111.2–7 (KTU 1.15) presents El, Baal, Yarih (Moon), Kothar-wa-Hasis, Rahmayyu (‘Atirat?), Re. Though broken, the text seems to give the names of some of the major deities and the leading members of the assembly, and then lists the assembly itself, as though the latter had been hypostatized and could represent a grouping of minor deities. This hypostatization of the council is confirmed by the appearance of the council in the pantheon lists and sacrificial tariffs from Ugarit. The Ugaritic pantheon list (UT 17.7 [KTU 1.47.29]) includes the pbr šd among the deities of Ugarit; the corresponding Akkadian list (Ug V.18.28 [RS 20.24]) reads ‘pu-bur šdamt, “the council of the gods.” In addition to this grouping of deities occurs the notice of pbr šd, the “assembly of Baal,” that might be equivalent to the “helper gods of Baal” (šd fdr šdams šd-ša-tu-[ša]-ad [UT 17.4 (KTU 1.47.26)/Ug V. 18.25 (RS 20.24)]). The connection of the two assemblages in the texts (dr šd uqdr šd; UT 1.7 [KTU 1.39]; UT 3.16 [KTU 1.41]; RS 18.56.17–18 [KTU 1.87]) suggests that these might be interpreted as collective “summary” statements for those deities not designated specifically in the lists. The dedication of sacrifices to this hypostatized council (dr bn uqdr bn śd, UT 2.17, 33–34 [KTU 1.40; see also lines 7–8, 42]) or pbr šd, Ug V.9.9 [RS 24.643; KTU 1.148]) indicates that it was regarded as an object of veneration, a view that is confirmed by the Phoenician references to the council that show that as late as the 6th century B.C.E., the divine assembly was still invoked as an active part of the Canaanite pantheon (KAJ 4.3; 9.5–6; 26.111.18–19; 27.11–12). The Ugaritic materials reveal a concept of the council of the gods that may be summarized as follows: the major and minor deities of the pantheon met in assembly under the leadership of El to make those decisions concerning the cosmos that fell within the purview of the gods. Most specifically, the issues of kingship, temple, and progeny concern the council. Apart from the fact that the members of the assembly are noted as gods or sons of El and are often the recipients of sacrifices, there seems to be little or no development of the individual roles or functions as presented in the Ugaritic texts.

3. Israel. An analogous situation is encountered in the Hebrew materials. Though there are numerous references to the divine beings that constitute the members of the heavenly court, there is little or no development of individual figures or functions in the early Hebrew materials. In Ps 29:1, 89:7, the members of the Hebrew court are called b’ne šd, “sons of gods/gods” (or possibly “sons of El,” reading šd-n; cf. Ug bn šd). Likewise, Deut 32:8 may contain the reading b’ne šd’lím (cf. LXX, 4QDt), a reference that would be analogous to the b’ne šd’lím, “the sons of god,” contained in Gen 6:2; 4; Job 1:6, 21:1. See also SONS OF GOD. In Ps 82:6, the deities of the assembly are called “sons of the Most High/Elyon” (b’ne šd’lím), while the inclusive nature of the membership in the assembly is reflected by the reference to kî l’šd’lím, “all the gods,” in Ps 97:7. A more general designation of the members of Yahweh’s court is qdššn, “holy ones” (Deut 33:2–3; Job 5:1, 15:15[Q]; Ps 16:3; 89:6, 8; Zech 14:5; Prov 9:10; 50:3), or the collective meaning of qdššn (Exod 15:11; Ps 77:14; 93:5; cf. Ug bn qdš). Despite the tendency of interpreters to view the Hebrew materials from a monotheistic viewpoint, it is apparent that the biblical materials themselves envisioned Yahweh surrounded by his heavenly court, the lesser deities who made up the divine entourage.

Given the warrior character of Yahweh presented in the
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early Hebrew materials, it is possible to ascertain one function of these divine beings who accompanied the high god. Though the precise meaning and etymology of the phrase remain debated, it is possible to interpret the beings, two matters are made clear from those texts that are concerned with the incomparability of Yahweh (cf. Deut 3:24; 10:17; 1 Kgs 8:2; Jer 10:6; Ps 86:8, 95:3; 96:4[=1 Chr 16:25]; 97:7; 135:5; 196:2; etc.): such comparisons presume the setting of the council (cf. Ps 89:5–9), and the members of that council are presumed to be clearly inferior to Yahweh. Despite this inferior status, these beings constituted the "host of heaven" (šēḇāq hašādānayim, cf. Isa 40:26; Ps 148:3), the worship of whom was forbidden in Hebrew tradition (Deut 4:19; 17:3; cf. Jer 8:2, etc.). As illustrated by the parallelism of the lēḵōd bōqer and lēḵōd ṭālākim ("the morning stars")/"all the sons of god"; Job 38:7), the heavenly bodies could be envisioned as part of the divine entourage who participated in the wars of Yahweh (cf. Josh 5:13–15; 10:12b–13a; Judg 5:20; Ps 148:2–3). In addition to the function of serving as part of the divine retinue, the beings served to praise and adore Yahweh in his court (Ps 29:1; 148:2–5).

C. The Messenger of the Council

Since the major function of the council of the gods was to make and enforce decrees concerning the operation of the cosmos, an important role played by certain members of the assembly was that of messenger of the council. In the Canaanite materials from Ugarit, the major gods are depicted as dispatching messengers (called mišk, šēdš, ginš; cf. Hebrew mal'āqah, šēdš, vēlām) who deliver their addresses in a highly stylized, formulaic manner (tmnh/ḥat). In the Hebrew Bible, the phrase mal'āqah YWHW, "the messenger of Yahweh" (Exod 3:2; Num 22:31; Judg 13:13, 15, 16, 2 Sam 24:16–17; Zech 3:1; etc.; see also the mal'āqāh of Gen 39:2–3), is used to denote those divine beings who serve as envoys of Yahweh and who deliver his decrees. Often confirming their divine commission is the notice that they are "sent" (šlah) by Yahweh from his council (Gen 24:7, 40; Exod 23:20; Num 20:16; compare Judg 15:8).

This concept of messenger forms a major aspect of the conceptual background of Hebrew prophecy wherein the prophet is viewed as the messenger of Yahweh (cf. Hag 1:13; Mal 3:1). Such texts as Jer 23:18 (cf. v 22) and Amos 3:7 reveal the council background presupposed by the concept of prophecy (see also Job 15:8). As the messengers of the Ugaritic council delivered their messages via set formula, the pronouncements of the Hebrew prophets were also characterized by certain formulaic expressions, the most common of which was "thus says Yahweh" (kōh ʿāmar YHWH), a phrase frequently paralleled by the formula "the word of Yahweh" (debar YHWH). The prophetic reception of the divine message, i.e., the commissioning of the messenger, is conveyed at least in part via the common expression "the word of Yahweh was to PN" (ṣāyah debar YHWH 'ašer PN) and then delivered with the imperatives characteristic of prophetic addresses (cf. 1 Kgs 12:22–24; 15:20–22; 2 Sam 7:4–5; Jer 21:11–12; Ezek 28:1–2; etc.).

D. Hebrew Depictions of the Assembly

The role of the divine assembly as a conceptual part of the background of Hebrew prophecy is clearly displayed in two descriptions of prophetic involvement in the heavenly council. In 1 Kgs 22:19–23 (cf. 2 Chr 18:18–22), Micaiah ben Imiah oversees the heavenly decision regarding the fate of Ahab. Isaiah 6 depicts a situation in which the prophet himself takes on the role of the messenger of the assembly and the message of the prophet is thus commissioned by Yahweh. The mythological depiction here illustrates this important aspect of the conceptual background of prophetic authority.

Not all depictions of the assembly pertain to prophecy. Ps 82:1–8 presents a picture of judgment in the divine realm. Yahweh is presented as speaking in the "sādat el, the assembly of El . . . in the midst of the gods" (bēneq ʿēlōyōn), called also "sons of the Most High/Elyon" (bēneq ʿēlōyōn), and condemns them to death because of their failure to dispense justice properly.

A further association between the concepts of the assembly and the divine decree is found in the epic traditions concerning the "Tent of Meeting" (ʾḥēl mōšēd—cf. Exod 33:7–11; Num 11:16–29; 12:4–10, etc.). In Hebrew traditions the ʾḥēl mōšēd is an earthly representation of the heavenly abode of the deity, served as an oracle tent where Yahweh appeared directly to his people (Exod 25:22; 29:42–45; 30:36; 40:34–38; Num 9:15–29). These traditions are consistent with the ANE concept of the council meeting at the shrine of the high god. In mythological terms, this shrine was located on the mountain dwelling of the deity. In the Canaanite materials, this was the cosmic abode of El, gr lī, "Mount L" (UT 137.14.20 [KTU 1.2]), called also ṭāšπ, (UT nt pl. ix:31.22 [KTU 1.1]), located at the confluence of the rivers of the deep (UT 51.4V.20–24 [KTU 1.4]; UT 129.4–5 [KTU 1.2.11]; UT nt.V.13–16 [KTU 1.5.V.5–7]; UT 49.4–6 [KTU 1.6.32–34], etc.) In the biblical materials, the assembly is depicted as meeting on the "mount of assembly" (har mōšēd, Isa 14:13, cf. Ezek 28:14, 16). With the establishment of Jerusalem as the central cultic site, such traditions were applied to Mt. Zion, the dwelling place of Yahweh (Ps 48; 46; Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–3), the place of the decree of Yahweh and the issuance of the Law (Isa 2:3; Mic 4:3), the site of life-giving waters (Isa 35:20–22; Ezek 47:1–12; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8; I Enoch 26:1–2).

The depictions of the council contained in Job 1:6–12 and 2:1–7 and Zech 3:1–7 reveal the beginnings of the development of a specialized figure, the šāṭān/Satan, "the adversary." In Job 1:6–12 and 2:1–7, the šāṭān is presented as one of the bēneq ʿēlōyōn who assembled before Yahweh on the appointed day (ḥāppōyīm). In the story, he serves to test Job's faithfulness, but remains throughout under the direct control of Yahweh. In Zech 3:1–7, this figure stands to accuse the high priest Joshua but is rebuked by Yahweh; this figure, though developing a specialized function and role in the conceptions of the assembly, remained, at least until the time of Zechariah, a member of the assembly under the control of Yahweh.

E. Development of Specialized Functions

Despite the general tendency for the members of the council to remain in the background, the development of
some specialized functions and figures, such as those of the Satan, are apparent, especially toward the intertestamental period. The collection of divine beings constituting the assembly provided a basis for the development of an elaborate angelology wherein there were specific ranks and hierarchies of divine beings (Dan 8:16; 9:21; 10:13, 21; 12:1; Tob 12:15; 1 Enoch 81:5; 87:2-3; 88:1; 90:21-22; 2 Esdr 5:20; etc.). The figure of the Satan begins to appear as a distinct figure (Jub. 49:2; CD 4:13; 5:18; 8:2; 1QS 1.8, 23-24; etc.), and the concept of "hostile" angels also becomes evident (1 Enoch 60:7; 55:3; 61:1; 69:4; 6, etc.). A partial background for this development may be found in those biblical texts that reflect stories regarding human and/or divine rebelliousness in varying forms (Gen 6:1-4; Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:1-19; Job 4:17-18).

At the same time, heavenly figures are seen as intercessors on behalf of humans (Dan 6:23; 10:13, 21; 1 Enoch 15:2; Tob 12:15; etc.), a role that is assigned to a member of the heavenly court in Job (9:33-35; 16:19-21; 19:25; 33:23-24). In the Ugaritic epics, the role of intercessor is played by the god Baal, who intercedes before the high god El on behalf of the earthly king (UT 128.11-16 [KTU 1.15]; UT 2 Aqht 1.16-27 [KTU 1.17]). Additionally, these figures serve as protectors of the righteous (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; 2 Macc 11:6; 1 Enoch 20:5; Jub. 35:17; 1QH 5:21-22; etc.) and as the heavenly army of the end time (Zech 14:3-5; 1QH 3.35-36; 10.34-35; 1QM 15.14). The NT materials add nothing new to the picture already developed. Such passages as Luke 1:11-20 and 2:8-14 show that the messenger function remained a primary aspect of these divine beings, though throughout they remain subjugated to the power and will of God. See also ANGELS; SATAN.

**Bibliography**


E. THEODORE MULLEN, JR.

**DIVINE MAN.** See ARETALOGY.

**DIVINE NAMES (OT).** See NAMES OF GOD.

**DIVINE WARRIOR.** See WARRIOR, DIVINE.

**DIVINERS’ OAK (PLACE)** [Heb 'élōn mōfônērim]. A sacred tree (a terebinth or perhaps an oak) near Shechem, according to Judg 9:37. Since Gaal, looking out from the gate of Shechem, described the approach of the enemy as from the direction of the Diviners’ Oak, the tree must have been outside Shechem.

Since several other biblical texts refer to a conspicuous tree in association with an altar or a sanctuary at Shechem (Gen 12:6-7, cf. Deut 11:30; Gen 35:4; cf. 33:19-20; Josh 24:25-26; and Judg 9:6), the question arises whether they all refer to the same tree and holy place at Shechem. Though this may indeed be the case, such a simple identification is hindered because the trees bear different names ('élōn, 'ēdēl, 'a'lād, and 'élōn, respectively). It may be, however, that the names are used imprecisely or interchangeably (Gottwald 1979: 776, n. 500). Also, the texts offer scant information regarding the locations of these trees with reference to Shechem, and the trees are described differently.

The description given to the tree in Judg 9:37 connects it with divining or receiving oracles. A similar association may be sought in Judg 4:4-5, which states that the prophetess Deborah used to sit under "the palm tree of Debo rah," and in 2 Sam 5:24-25, where David awaits a sign from the trees. Messages were also sought from trees at Ugarit (CTA 3.C.19-20). The tree in Gen 12:6 is qualified by the term mōřēth (Hiph'il masc. part. from יָרֵה). Based on the evidence of Hab 2:18-19, which uses this same form and also a 3d masc. imperfect verb of the same stem to denote the giving of revelation, it is probable that the sacred tree of Moreh in Gen 12:6 is also one where revelation was received and that it should be identified with the Diviners’ Oak. See also YGC, 165-66; Nielsen 1955: 216-22.

**Bibliography**


**WESLEY I. TOEWS**

**DIVORCE.** The biblical teaching on divorce is much debated for two reasons. First, while the relevant texts are not numerous, they provoke exegetical issues which are complex and difficult. Second, since the church and synagogue look to Scripture for moral guidance and since divorce continues to be a pressing moral problem, the pastoral issues these texts envisage are important and urgent.

A. In the OT

The great halackic debate over divorce among the rabbis of Second Temple Judaism focused on two OT texts: Gen 2:22-24 (with 1:27) and Deut. 24:1-4. According to rabbinic haggadoth, Gen 2:22-24 teaches that God created males and females (Gen 1:27) in order to re-create them into an inviolable union (CD 4:19-53). Marriage thereby establishes a new physical relationship ("one flesh") comparable to other familial relationships, held together by a natural (i.e., hereditary) and therefore indissoluble covenant. In fact, the deuteronomic text (cf. Jer 3:1-5) which forbids remarriage of a divorced wife to her first husband is but the logical extension of the levitical prohibition (Leviticus 18) against marrying close relatives; a divorce

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**E. THEODORE MULLEN, JR.**

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