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Hermeneutical Reflections on the Translation of the Bible

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

At the conclusion of today's symposium, we want to deal with some questions of hermeneutics, as they occur in the process of Bible translation. First, we want to shed light on the fundamental question of why we need the translation of the Bible in the first place. For this purpose, we will – especially during the Luther Decade[1] in preparation of the upcoming Reformation anniversary[2] – discuss and evaluate the perspective of Martin Luther, because according to him, the Bible is of fundamental importance for theological work. [3] It is however important to remember that from a hermeneutical perspective, the *oral* word of the gospel for Luther takes precedence over the *written* word in the form of the biblical text. For him the gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of God's love, grace and mercy. In his *Kirchenpostille* of 1522 he explains:

> "Wherefore also Christ himself has not written anything, but only talked, and his teaching is not Scripture but Euangelii which is called good news or proclamation, that should not be advanced by quill but with the mouth."[4]

As U. Luz notes in his current volume on hermeneutics, the human person can only hear the gospel and then be changed. However, in order to be able to hear, man needs the Bible, "which permanently keeps the living oral Gospel"[5]. Accordingly, Luther was very motivated to read the Bible thoroughly, as he remarks in one of his Table Talks from 1532:

> "I have now read the Bible for many years twice a year, and if the Bible would be a big mighty tree and all the words the branches, so I tapped all branches and wanted to know what would be on it and what they would bear. And always I have knocked down a couple of apples or pears."[6]

This intensive Bible study of Luther formed the basis of his understanding of the Gospel, which man receives by faith in Christ who is present in the word.[7]

Furthermore, we will consider philological[8] examples of concepts and grammatical structures that illustrate for us the importance of a biblical-Semitic access to the translation of the Bible. This results in the following outline:

1. Why do we need Bible translation at all?

2. Philological examples of Bible translation

    2.1 Biblical-Semitic terminology: Yahweh and Covenant - "I will be who I will be"

    2.2 Biblical-Semitic grammar: Permission and Prohibition - "You may freely eat - you shall surely die"

3. Result: Bible translation in the biblical-Semitic horizon of understanding

1. Why do we need Bible translation at all?

Luther clearly knew about the foundational importance of Bible translation for access to the revealed word of God in the form of Holy Scripture.[9] Therefore he undertook the translation from the original biblical languages Hebrew and Greek,[10] because they represent in their oldest and best manuscripts[11], the physical basis of the authoritative revelation of God. So K. Haacker aptly remarks:

> "From a Protestant perspective, the Bible in its original languages (and in the probable original text) is the measure against which the translations have to be measured again and again. That is why Martin Luther used the then still quite freshly printed edition of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus and ... continued to work on his own translation all his life."[12]

Above all, three factors emerge that provided Luther's translation of the Bible with a unique effect as, A. Beutel highlights:
(1) the first time use of the original biblical languages as the consistent basis
(2) the accompanying translation-theoretical reflection
(3) the language-shaping competence of Luther[13]

These three aspects are clearly visible on the basis of Luther's translation of Romans 3:28:

Greek	λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.
Vulgate	Arbitramur enim justificari hominem per fidem sine operibus legis.
Luther 1984	So halten wir nun dafür, dass der Mensch gerecht wird ohne des Gesetzes Werke, <u>allein</u> durch den Glauben.
Luther 1912	So halten wir nun dafür, daß der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, <u>allein</u> durch den Glauben.
Luther 1545	So halten wir es nu / Das der Mensch gerecht werde / on des Gesetzes werck / <u>alleine</u> durch den Glauben.

Here Luther adds the adjective "alone", although it is not written in the original Greek text. However, this serves to clarify the intended textual proposition of Paul. As E. Gritsch elaborates, Luther defends the word *"alone"*, because it represents the common vernacular is in German in order to reaffirm the opposition between two things of which the one is confirmed and the other is denied.[14] The unambiguity of the text message is to be underlined in this way, through establishing an exclusivity which the original text *may* have, but not necessarily *needs to* have. So the inevitable influence of theological decisions on the process of Bible translation becomes visible.[15] For this purpose, W. Sauer-Geppert aptly remarks:

> "Now what in many cases, remains more or less a problem of language, is gaining at this exemplary point crucial theological weight - and, of course, plays into the decision of this translation. Basically it is stating that 'purely linguistic' decisions will happen in the rarest cases, that - depending on the context and theological position of the translator - exegetical decisions cannot be excluded, indeed, they should not."[16]

This example shows how portentous a theological decision can be in the process of translation. However, this challenge was not only for Luther, but it is also for our own theological work on the original Biblical texts. Therefore, we will look below at two important examples of the translation of the Bible that illustrate for us the scope of the task.

2. Philological examples of Bible translation

In the following two examples are explained in which the complex problems of the translation process can be illustrated. At the same time the theological implications and consequences are discussed.

2.1 Biblical-Semitic terminology: Yahweh and covenant - "I will be who I will be"

The name of God YHWH includes a basic structure of Revelation and attention to his people in the Old Covenant. This name is indeed of paramount theological significance, because *Yahweh* is the most frequently used Hebrew noun in the OT.[17] The personal name *Yahweh* appears to be an original Hebrew term, because there are no certain occurrences outside of Israel prior to the Mosaic period.[18] Thus it becomes obvious that this name of God - also called the *Tetragrammaton* because of the four consonants YOD-HEH-WAW-HEH – is less a static concept of being, but rather a dynamic concept of action. As M. Rose points out, the Yahweh-name was also unique in the comparative history of religion, because in it the verb היה is underlying, meaning "to be / to become / to prove oneself" (Ex 3:14). This shows that Yahweh reveals himself as God who dynamically intervenes in history and specifically acts to enforce the salvation history with His people. In this structure of intervention in space and time Yahweh proves himself from the outset as unique over against all other gods.[19] In a foundational way, this structure of *Yahweh* is highlighted at the beginning of the Decalogue in Ex 20:2:

> „I am YAHWEH, your God, who has brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Here we see how *Yahweh* defines himself by his redemptive action – the deliverance from Egypt. It involves the continuous, active presence and relationship, and not an existential description of his being. Through his actions, he creates a personal relationship with his people, therefore his people also receives a personal relationship with him (Ex 3:18; 5:1; 6:7; Dt 1:6).[20] The importance of this relationship is also underlined by the fact that the name YHWH occurs in the entire OT very often, namely *6.828 times*.[21] This large number is broadly distributed across all parts of the Old Testament: in the Pentateuch: 26.7%, in the prophets: 51.6%, in the writings: 21.7%.[22] Thus, in the Old Testament, Yahweh is distinguished, singled out and confessed in a very steady way as God who acts, in contrast to the polytheistic gods who cannot act. E. Jenni aptly emphasizes the continuity of God's name from the OT to the NT, because in John 17:6,26 it is Jesus Christ himself, who has revealed the name of God to man.[23] Here we read:

> "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. …
> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Here we see the unity of Father and Son in the work (again, an act of God) of revelation and redemption.[24] Here too - as in the Old Testament - the dynamic working power of God in space and time is at the center.[25] The working power of God in the Old Testament is evident in the dual structure of name and covenant. We see them for the first time in the form of the *theophany*, i.e. the appearance of God on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16-18; cf. 3:1-12):

> "On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.
> Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain2 trembled violently."

At Sinai, God's commitment to his people happens by natural wonders.[26] There, God reveals himself toward Moses as the God of his forefathers. However, he does not repeat the revelation of his name to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in which he had revealed himself as "the Almighty God" (Gn 17:1; 28:3; 35:11). Instead, he introduces as his new name: "I will be who I will be"[27]. After all, however, the promise of the constant presence was given in God's expression: "I will be with you" already to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gn 26:3; 31:3; cf. 39:2).[28] In this self-designation (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה) resonates the peculiar tension, which should henceforth characterize the relationship of God to his people.

God reveals His presence on the one hand, when he gives his name to man, so he can use it to worship him. But on the other hand, the name of God includes the mystery of his elusiveness.[29] God is indeed always present in his gracious care and working, but never controllable or manageable by humans (cf. Gn 32:30; Ex 33:19).[30] This structure in the biblical narrative texts, this "narrative identity" of God is aptly examined by J. Sonnet in the perspective of literary studies.[31] He shows how God reveals himself in the triple movement of *suspense, curiosity* and *surprise* in the Exodus story. Thus, the meaning of God's name, "I will be", is inferred from the broader context of the book of Exodus and integrated into the overall narrative context. First, Sonnet recalls that in the biblical narratives repeatedly the connection between the name and action is established. This is the case, for example, with Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob in the Book of Genesis.[32]

Even toward Moses, God reveals in Ex 3:1-15 first himself in the form of the burning bush. In Ex 3:6 we read: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". This name is repeated in Ex 3:13-15. However, in between Moses asks explicitly for the name of God who empowers and legitimizes him toward the people of Israel. Then God says, "I will be who I will be". With this name God intentionally creates the three dimensions of *suspense, curiosity* and *surprise*, like Sonnet elaborates.

2.1.1 Suspense
The dimension of suspense is already evident in the wider context of the Exodus narrative. Will God or Pharaoh achieve victory in the struggle for freedom of the people of Israel? How will Moses respond to the call by God that culminates in God's promise: "I will be with you" (Ex 3:12)? Two verses later, God extends this promise in the shape of the formula, "I will / can / want to be, what / who I will be / can / want" (Ex 3:14). Through this open-ended formulation this elusive name preserves the freedom of God within the historical action. On the contrary, he thwarts any magical and idolatrous power that could be connected to a tangible or controllable divine name. This is the way how Yahweh expresses and confirms his helping presence in the midst of an unforeseeable future. That is precisely the element of suspense in the saving action of the biblical God. God shapes the unpredictabilities, delays and difficulties of human history with the rhythm of his assistance, as Sonnet aptly remarks.[33]

2.1.2 Curiosity
The dynamics of curiosity arises because the revelation of God's name in Ex 3, connects the past and the future together. God had remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6) and thus proved his faithfulness to this covenant. He will also be faithful to his covenant in the present and future. This perspective into the future

arouses the curiosity of the reader, for here God gives a subtle promise. He will act favorably in the future *for his people's sake*, as he had done repeatedly in the past *for the sake of the Patriarchs*.[34] For already towards Isaac and Jacob God made the promise: "I will be with you" (Gn 26:3; 31:3).

2.1.3 Surprise

The element of surprise occurs because the name of God Yahweh - the *Tetragrammaton* YHWH - has already been used three times in the Exodus story (Ex 3:2,4,7). In fact, the Tetragrammaton was used already in the biblical prehistory, by Seth and his son Enosh, which states:

> "At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord (Yahweh)." (Gn 4:26)

Also, all three patriarchs used the Yahweh-name: Abraham (Gn 15:2; 21:33; 22:14; 24:3,7), Isaac (Gn 26:25) and Jacob (Gn 32:10). This corresponds to the self-designation of God to Abraham (Gn 15:7), and Jacob (Gn 28:13). But in Ex 3:14, the extended meaning of the name Yahweh is now revealed. First, the extended form "I will be who I will be", then the short form "I will be". Accordingly, God gives to Moses the command to say to the Israelites: "I will be (אֶהְיֶה) has sent me to you" (Ex 3: 14b). Subsequently, God once again makes reference to Israel's patriarchs by expressly referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because this is his *eternal* name, which applies to all generations (Ex 3:15). Here closes the circle in the book of Exodus that had begun with the revelation of the Yahweh-name in the Book of Genesis. Here in Ex 3:14 it becomes evident that the future actions of Yahweh for his people will always contain the element of surprise.[35] The surprise arises for man who responds in obedience of faith to God's action, which was unexpected and unavailable to humans.

By these three identified literary dimensions the theological message of the Exodus text in relation to the name of God becomes clear. It is about God's self-determination in his freedom to reveal himself, beyond human interpretation - both in prospect and in retrospect.[36] Nevertheless, the basic structure of the divine name "I will be who I will be" occurs a second time, i.e. at the end of the book of Exodus. When Moses wants to see God's glory, God reveals to him his name once again, but this time differentiated further. In Ex 33:19, we read:

> "And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Here, God's revelation becomes visible in his name by which he manifests his uniqueness and his sovereign self in his dramatic action in the book of Exodus.[37] Thus Sonnet aptly remarks:

> "... in the name that he pronounces in the bush, God reveals himself as a diverse existence and actor through the ages. Human contingencies, delays and obstacles are not lacking in Exodus, but the biblical God asserts himself through all of this."[38]

However, there is a second element of the salvation-historical revelation of God added to this elusiveness and unavailability of God in the form of his name. This second element is God's *covenant* with his people, through which the relationship of Israel to God is concretized physically. On the one hand, God owns all creation (Ex 19:5), so that he has power and dominion over all creatures. On the other hand, God has chosen from every nation *one* people to enter into a special relationship with him (Dt 7:6; 14:2).[39] Due to an unquestionable decision of love God chose Israel to enter with this people into a special community relationship (Dt 7:8). This is concretized in a covenant relationship, by which God will communicate his

lawful will to the covenant partner. However, this lawful will of Yahweh is not unrelatedly abstracted, but embedded in God's covenant faithfulness (hb. חֶסֶד). חֶסֶד (*chesed*) is a relationship in which one seeks to ensure the well-being of the other.[40] This particular quality of covenant faithfulness is therefore inseparably linked to the Yahweh-name or "I will be who I will be".[41]

2.2 Biblical-Semitic grammar: Permission and Prohibition – „You may freely eat – you will surely die"

If we look at the creation account in Genesis 2-3, we see that the satanic serpent in cunning ways instigates man to arbitrarily change the grammar of the word of Yahweh. Through this, man moves toward active disobedience to God. The snake tries to address the spiritual and sensual needs of man. In a first step, the snake twists the fact that God has given the human couple the freedom to enjoy all the trees in the garden - except the tree of knowledge of good and evil – into its opposite (Gn 2:16-17; 3:1-5).

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "
"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.
"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

R. Albertz interprets the opening question of the snake as an exaggeration and her final argument (Gn 3:5) as an allegation.[42] However, it is more specific, to designate Gn 3:1 as a twisting of facts and Gn 3:5 as an exaggeration, because the snake expresses the exact inverse of the commandment. It promises to man a state of being that is due only to the Creator and that cannot by man through his

YAHWEH – „I will be who I will be"
or: The physical „footprint" of God

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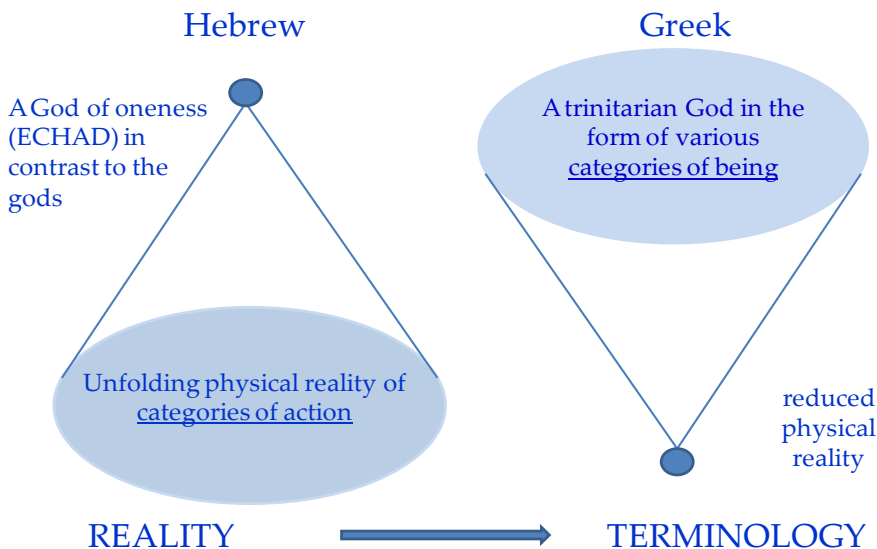
own effort because of his createdness. In response to the serpent´s introductory address, the woman corrects the distortion of facts. While repeating God's prohibition, however, she exacerbates the wording arbitrarily and thus exaggerates God's prohibition (Gn 3:2-3). Because she complements the subordinate clause:

"And do not touch them" (hb. נגע)

That requirement, however, God had not given originally. Here we see the parallelism of designation of freedom and limitation, as it is expressed in the double use of the Infinitive Absolute plus Imperfect (Gn 2:16-17):

Gn 2:16 מִכֹּל עֵץ־הַגָּן **אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל** ("you may freely eat from all trees in the garden")

Gn 2:17 בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ **מוֹת תָּמוּת** („on the day when you eat from it you will surely die")

As the Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius-Kautzsch explains, this use of the Infinitive Absolute before the verb intensifies the certainty of the proposition of the verb, especially in warnings (Gn 2:17 "you will surely die").[43] There is the additional function that the Infinitive Absolute also expresses the emphasis of an antithesis, in terms of a permission (Gn 2:16 "you may freely eat").[44]

It is crucial for the development of the dialogue that the satanic serpent precisely repeats in the negation (Gn 3:4 lo'-mot temu-tun) the definitive text of the warning not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gn 2:17), while the woman attenuates both the freedom and the limitation of their actions (Gn 3:2-3):

Gn 3:2 נֹאכֵל ("we may eat")
Gn 3:3 פֶּן־תְּמֻתוּן ("that you will not die")

Thus the woman has doubted the generosity of God in principle, so that she now believes to recognize his supposed austerity and repression instead of his goodness. Thus, the snake has reached the first purpose of its conversation with the humans. The sneaky aspect is that in response to the uncertainty caused by the twisting of facts by the serpent, man himself has changed the grammar

Semantic Reduction

freely eat everything

eat

surely die

die
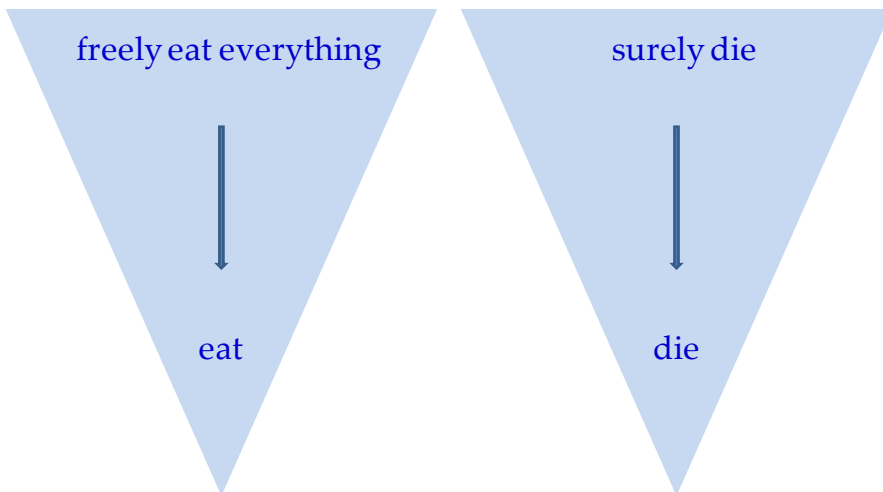
→ The theological seductive power of language!

of the word of God. Here, therefore, there was a *semantic reduction* of the meaning of the terms in their grammatical context. Semantics examines the meaning of linguistic expressions, especially at the word level and sentence level.[45] Here in Genesis 2 and 3 follows from this reduction also a theological deferment of God's Word regarding permission and prohibition for humans.

Here we see the theological seductive power of language to its maximum effect. It is therefore all the more important that we use the power of language consciously and responsibly in the field of theological work, especially in the task of translating the Bible.

3. Result: Bible translation in the biblical-Semitic horizon of understanding

If we ask for the result of our considerations on the translation of the Bible, then it is worthwhile to recall Luther again. This is because he always accepted a "hermeneutic responsibility"[46] for the reader in the translation of the Bible. It was important that the propositional validity of the original text was also effective for the reader of his translation. These dynamics also existed between his "September Testament"[47] of 1522, which he translated from the Greek, and the later writings of Luther. For example, he translated in his lecture "Of worldly authority (1523)" several passages (eg 1 Pt 2:13-14; Lk 22:25; Rom 10:17; 13:4b; 2 Cor 10:4-5), by modifying certain terms, in order to match the propositional intention of the biblical text more clearly with the thematic context. This so-called "argumentational-strategic Bible use"[48] includes three aspects, as Beutel explains:

(1) application of the biblical message to the own problem constellation

(2) adaptation of the Bible to the own theological doctrinal formation

(3) variation in the translation of individual Bible verses due to the argumentational interest[49]

Regarding Luther's handling of the biblical text, Beutel aptly remarks:

"By sometimes varying, supplementing or shortening, he reinforces an accent invested in each scripture, without having prominent accent, or he prevents a possible misunderstanding of the isolated cited sentence - both in the perspective of his own context of reasoning, however, in faithfully respecting the biblical speech intention."[50]

In this sense, we have to agree with H.-M. Barth who highlights Luther´s concern of constant improvement of the translation of the Bible, in order that the message of the Bible can be always understood and accepted in a new way.[51] This leads us to the central and permanent task for the future of Bible translation.

3.1 The multi-dimensional dynamics of the biblical-Semitic language structures and concepts must be transferred into the present, in order that the logical dualism of the Western worldview can be overcome

This means that the complexity of the Hebrew language, with respect to the central theological concepts and concerning important grammatical structures, must also be transported in the translation of the Bible. Only in this way, a contribution to the overcoming of logical dualism in the Western world view can be accomplished at the level of translation of the Bible and biblical studies. The *Platonic division* of reality into the realm of metaphysical ideas and the physical reality and the *Aristotelian limitation* of the horizon of knowledge to the physical reality[52] must be overcome. Western Christianity and its theology suffers from this splitting of reality until today. On this issue, already in 1969, E. Jüngel remarked in an excellent manner:

"You must have made clear the valence and scope of Aristotle's understanding of reality in order to grasp what it means that

also Christian theology remained at least formally largely linked to this understanding of reality. Even where, in the wake of Luther it began to orient itself differently in critical conversation with philosophy because of the genuine theological task of Protestant exegesis, nevertheless there remained secret and unconscious basic tendencies determinative of this understanding of reality."[53]

To overcome this Aristotelian splitting, a reorientation toward the biblical-Semitic understanding of reality is necessary, as it is revealed in the OT. There we see how the invisible realm of models and the visible realm of reality constitute a unity. This unity continues into the New Testament Gospels, where the life path of Jesus Christ leads his followers to participate in the Kingdom of God.[54]

3.2 The physical realization of the creative and redemptive work of God in the context of human action always has the priority of knowledge over the imaginative power of man

To overcome the Aristotelian thought pattern it is important to notice that the realm of "ideas" represents a category that does not exist in the Old Testament. Instead, in the Hebrew, we find the word "model" or "archetype" (hb. תַּבְנִית) to describe a reality in God's sphere, which then comes through revelation to man. Through this, such a "model" becomes much more meaningful than an "idea" of man, which is produced only by human thought.

This means that in the biblical-Semitic path to knowledge the revelation by God takes precedence over the speculation of man.

As an example, we read in Ex 25:9 in the context of the design specification for the tabernacle, including its equipment:
"According to all that I show you, after the <u>pattern</u> of the tabernacle, and the <u>pattern</u> of all its instruments, so you shall make it."

The term *tabnit* תַּבְנִית which is used here describes, according to W. Gesenius, a
„Model, plan, pattern, according to which something is built: the Tabernacle Ex 25,9, its lampstands with lamps 40, an altar 2Ki 16,10, the Jerusalem Temple and its equipment 1Ch 28,11f …".[55]

From a biblical-Semitic point of view, the shaping of reality happens because of the archetypes which God himself commissioned and then realized in cooperation with man. Through this, the notion of a "world of ideas" that would float above reality, is overcome. Rather, the invisible archetype manifests itself in physical reality. Also this dynamic structure must be made clear in the translation of the Bible at all relevant points.

Thus we see the ever-present challenge of the translation of the Bible, to always move anew the horizons of understanding toward each other.

Thank you very much!

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ENDNOTES

1 See Kirchenamt der EKD (ed.). *Rechtfertigung und Freiheit. 500 Jahre Reformation 2017.* Ein Grundlagentext des Rates der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), 4. ed. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2015.

2 For introductory literature on the 500-year-jubilee of the Reformation 2017, cf. Bosse-Huber, Petra; Fornerod, Serge; Gundlach, Thies; Locher, Gottfried Wilhelm (ed.). *500 Jahre Reformation: Bedeutung und Herausforderungen.* Internationaler Kongress der EKD und des SEK auf dem Weg zum Reformationsjubiläum 2017 vom 6. Bis 10. Oktober 2013 in Zürich. Zürich/Leipzig: Theologischer Verlag/Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014.

3 On Luther´s understanding of the Bible, A. Beutel explains: „Die Frage, wie Luther die Bibel einschätzte und gebrauchte, betrifft darum nicht ein einzelnes Lehrstück seiner Theologie, sondern deren Struktur: Sein ganzes theologisches Denken vollzog sich als die vielgestaltige Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift. Dadurch erwies er sich insgesamt – ob als Prediger oder Professor, als Lehrer oder Seelsorger, als Übersetzer, Brief- oder Gesprächspartner – und in einem ganz grundsätzlichen … Sinn als ein biblischer Theologe." – Beutel, Albrecht. „Die Formierung neuzeitlicher Schriftauslegung und ihre Bedeutung für die Kirchengeschichte", in: Nüssel, Friederike (ed.). *Schriftauslegung.* Themen der Theologie, vol. 8. Tübingen: Mohr, 2014, S. 155-156.

4 In German: „Darumb auch Christus selbs (sic!) nichts geschrieben, sondern nur geredt hatt (sic!), und seyn lere nit Schrift, sondern Euangelii, das ist eyn gutt botschafft oder vorkundigung genennet hatt (sic!), das nitt mit der feddern, sondern mit dem mund soll getrieben werden." - Luther, Martin. *Kirchenpostille,* Weimarer Ausgabe 10/1, 17,9-12.

5 Luz, Ulrich. *Theologische Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments.* Neukirchen: Neukirche-

ner, 2014, p. 503.

6 In German: „Ich habe nun seit etlichen Jahren die Bibel jährlich zweimal ausgelesen, und wenn die Bibel ein großer mächtiger Baum wäre und alle Worte die Ästlein, so habe ich alle Ästlein abgeklopft und wollte gerne wissen, was daran wäre und was sie trügen. Und allezeit habe ich noch ein paar Äpfel oder Birnen heruntergeklopft." - Aland, Kurt (ed.). *Luther Deutsch: Die Werke Martin Luthers in neuer Auswahl für die Gegenwart. Vol. 9: Die Tischreden.* 4. ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983, p. 12.

7 Cf. Schwarz, Reinhard. „Luther II. Theologie", *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* 4. ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 2002, pp. 574-575.

8 As a definition of *Philologie* in German: „Wissenschaft, die sich mit der Erforschung von Texten in einer bestimmten Sprache beschäftigt; Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft". - www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/ Philologie

9 On Luther's understanding of the Bible as Holy Scripture as well as the question of the sovereignty of divine acting in theological work, O. Bayer remarks: „Bei aller Arbeit der Auslegung, die wissenschaftlich – handwerklich solide sowie klar und kontrollierbar – zu leisten ist, bleibt das Verstehen des biblischen Wortes im letzten unverfügbar. … Nicht der Ausleger ist es, der dem Text einen Sinn gibt oder den Text verständlich macht; vielmehr soll der Text von sich aus sagen dürfen, was er von sich aus zu sagen hat." – Bayer, Oswald. *Martin Luthers Theologie. Eine Vergegenwärtigung.* 3. ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 2007, pp. 62-63.

10 Cf. Gritsch, Eric W. „Luther as Bible translator", in: McKim, Donald K. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 62-65. „German readers quickly adopted this Bible as an indispensable, indeed fascinating, guide for life. That is why it became the cornerstone for an enduring Lutheran culture in Germany." – Gritsch,

„Luther", pp. 65-66.

11 Cf. Fischer, Alexander Achilles. *Der Text des Alten Testaments. Neubearbeitung der Einführung in die Biblia Hebraica von Ernst Würthwein.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009; Aland, Kurt; Aland, Barbara. *Der Text des Neuen Testaments. Einführung in die wissenschaftlichen Ausgaben sowie in Theorie und Praxis der modernen Textkritik.* 2. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1989.

12 In German: „Aus evangelischer Sicht ist die Bibel in ihren Ursprachen (und im wahrscheinlichen Urtext) der Maßstab, an dem die Übersetzungen immer wieder gemessen werden müssen. Darum hat Martin Luther die damals noch ziemlich druckfrische Edition des griechischen Neuen Testaments durch Erasmus benutzt und … an seiner eigenen Übersetzung zeitlebens weitergearbeitet." - Haacker, Klaus. „Das übersetzte „Wort Gottes" als Kulturgut im Wandel der Zeit. Programme und Probleme der Revision der Lutherbibel", *Kerygma und Dogma* 60 (2014), p. 62.

13 Beutel, Albrecht. „Bibelübersetzungen. II. Christliche Übersetzungen in europäische Volkssprachen seit dem Mittelalter". *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* 4. ed., vol. 1. Tübingen: Mohr, 1998, p. 1499.

14 E. Gritsch, *„Luther"*, p. 67.

15 Regarding Rom 3:28, Luther justifies his insertion of the word "alone" with the fact that this scripture verse is a foundational text for the main article of the Christian faith, the "justification by faith alone." – cf. Gritsch, *„Luther"*, p. 68.

16 In German: „Was nun in vielen Fällen mehr oder weniger ein sprachliches Problem bleibt, gewinnt an dieser exemplarischen Stelle entscheidendes theologisches Gewicht – und natürlich spielt das in diese Übersetzungsentscheidung hinein. Grundsätzlich besagt das, daß es ‚rein sprachliche' Entscheidungen in den seltensten Fällen geben wird, daß – je nach Kontext und theologischer Stellung des Übersetzers – exege-

tische Entscheidungen nicht ausgeschlossen werden können, ja dürfen." - Sauer-Geppert, Waltraut Ingeborg. „Bibelübersetzungen III/1. Übersetzungen ins Deutsche", *Theologische Realenzyklopädie,* vol. 6. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993, p. 239 (Lit.!).

17 Baker, David W. „God, Names of", in: Alexander, T. Desmond; Baker, David W. (ed.). *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch.* Leicester: IVP, 2003, p. 362.

18 Baker, „God", p. 363.

19 Rose, Martin. „Jahwe", in: Müller, Gerhard (ed.). *Theologische Realenzyklopädie,* vol. 16. Berlin: deGruyter, 1987, pp. 438-440.

20 Baker, „God", p. 363.

21 Statistics according to Jenni, Ernst. „Jahwe", in: Jenni, Ernst; Westermann, Claus (ed.). *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament,* vol. 1. München: Kaiser, 1984, p. 704.

22 Detailed statistics in Jenni, „Jahwe", p. 704.

23 Cf. Jenni, „Jahwe", p. 707.

24 Cf. e.g. Jh 1:18; 8:16,38; 10:25-30; 14:10-11; 15:15; 17:10; on this M. Thompson aptly remarks: „… the actions and words of Jesus were truly the actions and words of God. In the incarnate Word we are confronted by God, and the designation of Jesus as „Son" serves to underscore the intimate connection between God and Jesus." – Thompson, M.M. „John, Gospel of", in: Green, Joel, et al. (ed.). *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* Leicester: IVP, 1992, p. 378.

25 Cf. Wilckens, Ulrich. *Theologie des Neuen Testaments. Band 1: Geschichte der urchristlichen Theologie. Teilband 4: Die Evangelien, die Apostelgeschichte, die Johannesbriefe, die Offenbarung und die Entstehung des Kanons.* Neukirchener Theologie, 2. ed. Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2014, p. 215.

26 See Terrien, Samuel. The Elusive Presence. The Heart of Biblical Theology. Religious Perspectives 26. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978, pp. 107-108.

27 On the etymology of the names of God, see literature in Schmidt, Werner H. *Exodus,*

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28 Cf. Terrien, *Presence*, p. 113.

29 Cf. Zimmerli, Walther. *Der Mensch und seine Hoffnung im Alten Testament.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968, p. 43.

30 Cf. Terrien, *Presence*, p. 119.

31 Sonnet, Jean-Pierre. „*Ehyeh asher ehyeh* (Exodus 3:14): God's „Narrative Identity" among Suspense, Curiosity, and Surprise", *Poetics Today* 31 (2010): 331-351.

32 Cf. Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 332.

33 Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", pp. 336-337.

34 Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 338.

35 Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 343.

36 Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 343.

37 Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 347.

38 In German: „… in dem Namen, den er im Busch ausspricht, offenbart Gott sich selbst als eine vielfältige Existenz und Handelnder durch die Zeiten hindurch. Menschlich Unvorhergesehenes, Verzögerungen und Hindernisse fehlen nicht in Exodus, doch der biblische Gott behauptet sich durch all dieses hindurch. - Sonnet, „*Ehyeh*", p. 348.

39 Cf. Jos 24:2-3; Gn 12:1; 17:1-8.

40 On the concept of חֶסֶד, cf. Piennisch, Markus. „Die Relevanz biblisch-semitischer Offenbarungsstrukturen für eine Hermeneutik der Septuaginta", *Stuttgarter Theologische Themen*, vol. 8 (2013), pp. 77-78.

41 On the concept of hb. *berit*, see Chavalas, M.W. „Moses", in: Alexander, T. Desmond; Baker, David W. (ed.). *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch.* Leicester: IVP, 2003, p. 577.

42 Albertz, Rainer. „Die Frage des Ursprungs der Sprache im Alten Testament", in: Gessinger, Joachim; von Rahden, Wolfert (ed.). *Theorien vom Ursprung der Sprache.* Berlin/New York: deGruyter, 1989, II: 10.

43 Kautzsch, E. (ed.). *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.* Second English Edition by A.E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990, p. 342.

44 Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, p. 343. Here we see an emphatic modal

imperfect, as A. Ross explains in his book on Hebrew language: „… written before or after a verb form of the same root, infinitive absolute adds emphasis. … Usually the infinitive absolute emphasizes and reinforces the verb's mood as well as its action. For example, in an affirmative clause, the affirmation becomes more forceful …". – Ross, Allen P. *Introducing Biblical Hebrew.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, pp. 167-168.

45 Cf. Swiggers, Pierre; Wouters, Alfons. „Semantik IV. Altphilologisch", in: Wischmeyer, Oda (ed.). *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik. Begriffe – Methoden – Theorien – Konzepte.* Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013, p. 540.

46 Beutel, „Bibelübersetzungen", p. 1499.

47 On the historical background of the September-Testament: „Luther auf der Wartburg (1521/22)" - www.luther.de/leben/wartburg.html

48 Beutel, Albrecht. „Biblischer Text und theologische Theoriebildung in Luthers Schrift „Von weltlicher Oberkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei" (1523)", *Reflektierte Religion. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Protestantismus.* Tübingen: Mohr, 2007, pp. 35-42.

49 Beutel, „Von weltlicher Oberkeit", p. 35.

50 In German: „Indem er ihn bisweilen variiert, ergänzt oder verkürzt, verstärkt er einen in dem jeweiligen Schriftwort angelegten, aber dort nicht hervortretenden Akzent oder beugt einem möglichen Mißverständnis des isoliert zitierten Satzes vor – beides in der Perspektive des eigenen Argumentationszusammenhangs, jedoch in getreuer Wahrung der biblischen Redeabsicht." - Beutel, „Von weltlicher Oberkeit", p. 42.

51 Barth, Hans-Martin. *Die Theologie Martin Luthers. Eine kritische Würdigung.* Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009, p. 160, elaborates on this: „Luther selbst hat bis in seine späten Jahre hinein an der ständigen Verbesserung seiner Übersetzung gearbeitet. Neue Übersetzungen sind also grundsätzlich in seinem Sinn. Die Bibel ist nicht der Koran, dem von den Muslimen letztlich nur in seiner arabischen Fassung religiöse Gültigkeit zuerkannt wird. Die Botschaft der Bibel drängt von innen heraus darauf, übersetzt, verstanden, gehört, angenommen, genutzt zu werden."

52 Cf. Piennisch, Markus. „Der biblisch-semitische Aspekt der Hermeneutik: Eine Einführung in das Studiengebiet", *Stuttgarter Theologische Themen*, vol. 5 (2010), p. 117.

53 In German: „Man muß sich die Valenz und Tragweite des aristotelischen Wirklichkeitsverständnisses klargemacht haben, um zu erfassen, was es bedeutet, daß auch die christliche Theologie zumindest formal weithin diesem Wirklichkeitsverständnis verhaftet blieb. Selbst da, wo sie sich wie zB. im Gefolge Luthers im kritischen Gespräch mit der Philosophie aufgrund der genuin theologischen Aufgabe evangelischer Schriftauslegung anders zu orientieren begann, blieben doch heimlich und unbewußt Grundtendenzen dieses Wirklichkeitsverständnisses bestimmend." - Jüngel, Eberhard. „Die Welt als Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit. Zum ontologischen Ansatz der Rechtfertigungslehre (1969)", in: *Unterwegs zur Sache. Theologische Erörterungen I.* 3. ed. Tübingen: Mohr, 2000, pp. 212-213.

54 Cf. Piennisch, „Der biblisch-semitische Aspekt", p. 117.

55 Gesenius, Wilhelm. „תַּבְנִית", *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament.* 18. ed. Heidelberg: Springer, 2013, p. 1424.

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