In reference to a Hebrew deity: Some remarks on Lamentations

Upon reading the Hebrew version of Lamentations in comparison to its Greek counterpart, one is immediately struck by the peculiarities, alternatives and variants when reference is made to a Hebrew deity. The Hebrew version alternates between יהוה and אֱלֹהִים, whilst the Greek version sticks to the term κύριος. The Hebrew version does, however, transition into an almost exclusive use of the term κύριος from Lamentations 3:55 onwards. The immediate question that comes to mind is why certain terms were used at certain intervals of the text to refer to a Hebrew deity. This study aims at coming to a deeper understanding of whether the idiosyncrasies in relation to the terms were brought about by the nature and character of lamenting, their underlying theologies or whether it is a matter of a different Vorlage. This study will therefore offer a close reading of the Hebrew text in relation to the terms used to reference a Hebrew deity, whilst the focus will fall on the textual variants when it comes to the Greek version of Lamentations.

Contribution: This study contributes on three essential levels: (1) working towards a theology of the Septuagint in general and here specific the Greek version of Lamentations, (2) by focusing on the terms used to refer to a Hebrew deity in Lamentations, the study does contribute to a different perspective of reading the Lamentations text and (3) this study contributes towards a more nuanced understanding of a Hebrew deity in general and in the Septuagint in particular.

Keywords: Lamentations; YHWH; Elohim; El; Adonaj; Kyrios; Hebrew deity.

Introduction

A deity of the Hebrew people was called by more than one name and referred to using various terms: אֱלֹהִים is one such a term, which occurs in 2248 verses and is used 2601 times, with יהוה used only 235 times spread over 225 verses. These figures are dwarfed by the 6828 occurrences of Elohim spread over 5790 verses. The term יְהֹוָה occurs in 56 verses and is used 57 times, of which 39 occur in Job. The term דָּוִד occurs 48 times, spread over 48 verses, used 22 times in close textual proximity to יהוה, thrice with יְהֹוָה, twice with Elohim and thrice with אלהים. These statistics are not to be taken too seriously, although they are helpful to understand overall about how frequently these terms were used, at least deduced from the Masoretic Text (MT). In addition to these statistics, the Old Greek version will most probably reflect a different overall, and with that simplistic, picture. To be more precise, in general the Old Greek version limits itself to the term κύριος and θεός when reference is made to a Hebrew deity; in many instances, it will opt for either one of these terms and use only the one throughout, as illustrated in Lamentations and Job. The interest of this investigation, however, is not to analyse, compare and discuss statistics; it is rather interested in what terms Lamentees used when reference was made to a Hebrew deity. More specifically, how the Lamentees as accounted for in Lamentations reference a Hebrew deity in both its Hebrew and Greek frame of reference. The aim is therefore to identify, discuss and determine the extent to which the genre of ‘lamenting’ impacts how reference is made to a Hebrew deity and to do so comparing the Hebrew and Greek versions of Lamentations. The terms that dominate Lamentations when reference is made to a Hebrew deity are יהוה and אֱלֹהִים, which makes for a fascinating reading of Lamentations in this respect.


Note: Special Collection: Septuagint and Textual Studies, sub-edited by Johann Cook (Stellenbosch University).
**Yahweh and Adonai in referring a Hebrew deity in the Hebrew version**

In terms of referring a Hebrew deity, what is striking about the Lamentations text is the frequent use of the term יְהוָה in close literary and, one might add, conceptual proximity to the term אלהים; this is unparalleled in the Hebrew Scriptures. Equally noteworthy is the absence of the term יָהָה or any other term within the category of referencing a Hebrew deity, with a single exception where the term אלהים is found in Lamentations 3:41. The Hebrew version of Lamentations alternates between the terms יהוה and אלהים, whilst its Greek counterpart consistently uses the term κύριος (cf. Lm 2:7, 18, 19, 20b; 3:31, 36, 37, 58). What is of interest is whether the theology underpinning the act of ‘lamenting’ in relation to a Hebrew deity has any significant impact on the terms used for such an entity when being in a state of either mourning or lamenting (O’Connor 2008:27). An appropriate place to start is Lamentations 1:12–18, as it attests to the use of three terms in close concession and the alternating use of the term יהוה. According to the MT, the subject responsible for inflicting pain and sorrow is Yahweh (Lm 1:12). It is, however, Adonai who is responsible for handing one over to one’s adversaries (Lm 1:14); in 4QLam this act is ascribed to Yahweh. The subject responsible for submission to one’s adversaries remains unchanged in the MT, with Adonai tossing aside the weak (Lm 1:15a) and treading the virgin daughter Judah (Lm 1:15b). The 4QLamentations text is less ‘consistent’ because it is Adonai (line 6) who tosses, but Yahweh the one who tramples (line 7). The alternating use of the term יהוה and אלהים is further illustrated in Lamentations 1:17.

In Lamentations 1:17א, ציפה, צדי, בשל yet Jacob. As for 4QLam, it is the word of Adonai who ‘prefers’ the term יהוה over אלהים. In Lamentations 2:18 and 2:29, Adonai is the recipient of ‘calling upon’, ‘crying out’, ‘submitting before’; the scribe then reverts back to Yahweh with a plea to consider what he is doing to whom (Lm 2:20a), but an immediate question that derives from such a plea is put to Adonai in Lamentations 2:20b. The question is whether priests and prophets should be killed in his sanctuary followed by the day of anger ascribed to Yahweh in Lamentations 2:22. This raises the question of why the scribe unproblematically substitutes the term אלהים and יהוה with one another, as if he embraces a fluid manner by which he references a Hebrew deity. One possible reason for this is the elastic cognitive space produced by the act of

---

5. For the Hebrew terms used to refer to a Hebrew deity, this study will use both the Hebrew-letter forms and the transcribed forms: Yahweh, Adonai, El, Elohim and Shaddai. The reason for using both Hebrew characters and the transcribed forms are to draw a distinction between the linguistic value of the Hebrew characters (which might include a definite or indefinite article) and the transcribed form, often used to express a proper noun.

6. 3Q3 Lamentations fragment 1 does read the term יהוה in line 2 (cf. Lm 1:11), making it a continuous line in the MT (Lm 1:12) highly likely, although it is not visible on the fragment. The first word of the term יהוה is visible in 4Q111 Lamentations, column 3, fragment 3, which supports the notion of a יהוה reading in 3Q3. According to Kotze (2013:75), the referent of the suffix refers to the narrator and his community, and such an interpretation is reminiscent of the directive addressed to YHWH in verse 7 of 4QLamentations.

7. 4QLam (111), column III, fragment 3.

8. The issue for Kotze (2013:98) is the question of which of the readings constitutes the more original reading.

9. I agree with Millers’ (1992:73) assertion that the usage (of the term יהוה and אלהים) was absolutely uniform and that there is no apparent preference for one over the other. Kotze (2013:92) is therefore correct to assert that ‘it is debatable whether an indiscriminate substitution of the term יהוה and אלהים within the whole of the book is justified in light of the inconclusiveness of usage reflected in the manuscript evidence’. To this point, this study will argue that there is a shift in Lamentations 3:54 onwards, whereby Yahweh becomes the dominant divine agent.

10. To this end, it seems plausible that יהוה יהוה is an interpolation; it erroneously found its way into the text; cf. Kotze, The Qumran Manuscripts, 100–102.

11. The Targumim also reads the YHWH term.

12. The Vulgate and Syriac versions attest to the following renderings, respectively, dominus and κύριος, which reflects a Yahweh equivalent.

13. 4QLamentations 111 (line 10) does not read the entire יהוה term but only the Aleph, which indicates a strong possibility for a 91 ה reading. Kotze (2013:98–115) offered a detailed analysis and discussion on the discrepancies between the MT and 4QLamentations readings.

14. Berlin (2002:110) simply stated that for the poet (scribe) it is all ‘God’s doing’.

15. One possible explanation is that the manuscript read the term יהוה with a superscript י and therefore was the case in 1Q1ahi 3:15a–18; see the discussion on this in Nagel (2012:176–178); see figure 5 Nagel (2012). On closer investigation of the 4Q111—4QLamentations, this possibility should be ruled out; see examples here: https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-482315 and https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-499725.
lamenting. It allows the lamentee to express more ‘openly’, ‘freely’ and ‘honestly’, ignoring the proverbial ‘red tape’ when it comes to critically engaging a Hebrew deity on matters that are existentially threatening. To add to this appropriation, the unhindered fluctuation between the terms ה׳ and אל signals conceptual integration and blending; being less concerned about the different conceptual qualities these terms present, but to cognitively bridge the conceptual variety they offer. There is no evidence to deny such a probability, but equally true is that the data do not explicitly suggest such a postulation. There is, however, no uncertainty that the scribe is lamenting a dismal situation and is referencing a Hebrew deity; whilst doing so his adverse tone and sentiment continue in Lamentations 3:18, where he writes that all hope in Yahweh has been lost, but he makes an abrupt turn in Lamentations 3:22–25, with the scribe praising Yahweh for his steadfast love (Lm 3:22),7 that he is the one who shares in the soul (Lm 3:24), and for Yahweh’s goodness to those who wait (Lm 3:25), for salvation comes from Yahweh (Lm 3:26) and Adonaj will not reject forever (Lm 3:31). The scribe proceeds with rhetorical questions all directed at Adonaj (Lm 3:36, 37). But before the study moves on to the unique use of the term יהוה, it should acknowledge the significance of the term אל, translated by the Old Greek as ὕψιστος, issued in Lamentations 3:35 and 38. These references reveal the mental state and transitional tone of the scribe as he moves to the next phase of lamenting, a phase characterised as self-reflection; the scribe encourages the readers to do just that and turn towards Yahweh (Lm 3:40). The scribe continues effortlessly to address deep-seated lamentations going back and forth between Adonaj and Yahweh. But the reference to יהוה in Lamentations 3:41 in close conceptual proximity to יהוה in Lamentations 3:50 interrupts this conceptual going back-and-forth between יהוה and אל, revealing another facet of his conceptualisation of a Hebrew deity and how he relates it to lamenting, at least insofar as the concept of locality goes. As for the scribe, the referent of both יהוה and אל reside in the שמים. The conceptual overlap and blend between יהוה and Adonaj is masterfully demonstrated with a call to return to Yahweh (Lm 3:40), to lift hearts and hands to El, who is up in heaven, and then to have Yahweh look down and see their tear-filled eyes. The locality they share, שמים, and the actions they perform from this location effectively construct a conceptual bridge between El and Yahweh to the degree that one has no option but to consider an equation El = Yahweh. However, such an equation is not only premature but also creates a cognitive conundrum: if El = Yahweh and Yahweh = Adonaj then El = Adonaj. The latter is somewhat problematic from a Judean perspective, therefore the blending of El and Yahweh is acknowledged, but the evidence is far too limited to conclusively draw any inference other than in the context of Lamentations 3:40–41 they share a locality.

Another insightful reference to a Hebrew deity is found in Lamentations 3:55; the phrase להשך והך ישאר ‘I call your name Yahweh’ suggests that the ‘sacred name’ Yahweh is reserved for a Hebrew deity. This conceptual potentiality of the term יהוה does, notwithstanding the consistency by which the scribe alternates between these terms, distinguish itself from the term אל and strengthens the argument that Adonaj can never conceptually equate to Yahweh. To be sure, the term אל is never used as a name for a Hebrew deity; in fact, from the third-century BCE, it is used more often than not as a ‘substitute’ to avoid the pronunciation of the sacred name, יהוה (see Rösel 2000, 2011). Whilst the conceptual blending between Yahweh and Adonaj cannot be denied, there is most certainly a literary conceptual turning point in Lamentations 3:59–66; here the term יהוה is exclusively used for a Hebrew deity, and it remains the dominant term when reference is made to the divine subject until the end of Lamentations (cf. Lm 5:19, 21). An exception is the reference to Adonaj in Lamentations 3:58; here it is affirmed that Adonaj takes up the cause of the lamenter. The fluctuation between terms יהוה and אל up until Lamentations 3:55 is so consistent that it becomes prescriptive to the reader, to such an extent that it becomes impossible for the reader to draw any meaningful and clear distinction between Yahweh and Adonaj. To be sure, the steady alternation between these terms in close succession conceptually forces the reader to blend the concept Yahweh and Adonaj whilst lamenting. The ‘out-of-sync’ and unexpected use of the term יהוה in Lamentations 3:41 has an impact on the Yahweh and Adonaj conceptual integration. It is something the Lamentation text does not recover from, as it homes in on the term יהוה from Lamentations 3:55 onwards. To further elaborate on the conceptual blending of the term יהוה and אל, two diagrams (Figures 1 and 2) are added to illustrate the mental nodes of both these terms. To this end, a few remarks as a way of illustrating the blend should be in order.

The concept of ‘rejection’ is limited to Adonaj; he is the only one with the ability to reject (Lm 1:15a; 2:7a; cf. 4QLam 1:15a) and to embrace (Lm 3:31). ‘Eyesight’ and the concept of ‘seeing’ is dominated by יהוה (Lm 1:9, 11, 20; 2:20a; 3:50, 59), but interestingly the negation of ‘seeing’ is ascribed to Adonaj (Lm 3:36). If one includes the conceptual domain of ‘watching’ over, then Adonaj is preferred in 4QLam 1:17b, whilst 5QLam A 4:16 prefers Yahweh. The ‘dwelling’ in a sanctuary concept is associated with Adonaj (Lm 2:20b), but

16. O’Connor (2008:28) remarks that ‘Lamentations is a book of voices, of stunning, intermingling and clashed testimonies by survivors of the city’s fall’. By Voices, I mean the literary device of multiple speakers. But voice is also a metaphor. To have a voice signifies the human capacity to act in the world, in this case, by bringing pain to speech.

17. Villanueva (2008:213) makes a noteworthy statement that in Lamentations 3, the individual lament dominates.

18. Origins and other Greek text witnesses prefer reading Κύριου in this instance.

19. 3Q3 fragment 1 (Lm 1:10–12) and fragment 2 (Lm 3:53–62) do not account for any reference to a Hebrew deity as they are too fragmentary.

20. See de Troyer’s (2008:144–153) and Hartenstein’s (2008:73–81) discussions on the ‘names’ of a Hebrew deity and its history by which they offer some perspective of why it might have been problematic to equate Yahweh with Adonaj and El.

21. In this instance, it is acknowledged that Adonaj has elevated the cause of the lament.

22. Stone (2021:493–494) stated that the alternation between complaint and theodicy remains a puzzle in Lamentations 3; the uncertainty of whether to characterise the lamenter.
FIGURE 1: Mental Adonaj and Yhwh framework in the Masoretic text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adonaj</th>
<th>Yhwh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>לֹ֔וּז - to give ‘over’ (Lm 1:14)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - to make to suffer (Lam 1:5, 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוֹס - reject (Lm 1:15a)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - look (Lam 1:9, 11, 20; 2:20a; 3:50, 59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לֹ֔וּי - tread (Lam 1:15b)</td>
<td>לֹ֔וּי - command ‘against’ (Lam 1:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לֹוֵע - roused (Lam 2:1, 22)</td>
<td>לֹ֔וּי - just (Lam 1:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לַ֔וּי - swallowed (Lam 2:2)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - forget (Lam 2:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לֲוָ֔י - is like an enemy (Lam 2:5)</td>
<td>לֹ֔וּי - house of (Lam 2:7b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לַ֔וּי - reject (Lam 2:7a)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - consider (Lam 2:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לַ֓וֹ - towards (Lam 2:18, 19)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - dost see (Lam 2:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - sanctuary of (Lam 2:20b)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - no vision ‘from’ (Lam 2:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - not reject (Lam 3:31; cf. Lam 2:7a)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - make (Lam 2:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - not see (Lam 3:36; cf. Lam 1:9, 11, 20 etc)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - hope (Lam 3:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - not command (Lam 3:37; cf. Lam 1:17)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - loyalty of (Lam 3:22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - conduct legal suit (Lam 3:58)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - portion of (Lam 3:24, 4:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - do (Lam 3:25)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - good (Lam 3:25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - salvation (Lam 3:26)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - return to (Lam 3:40, 64; 5:21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - name of (Lam 3:55, 66)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - name of (Lam 3:55, 66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - listen (Lam 3:61)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - listen (Lam 3:61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - destroy (Lam 4:11)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - destroy (Lam 4:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - take (Lam 4:20)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - take (Lam 4:20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - remember (Lam 5:1; cf. Lam 2:6)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - remember (Lam 5:1; cf. Lam 2:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - sit (Lam 5:19)</td>
<td>לָוָ֔ה - sit (Lam 5:19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2: Mental Adonaj and Yhwh framework at Qumran.

Greek of Lamentation does not see the need to distinguish between lament and praise, lament and hope, lament and salvation with respect to a Hebrew deity. Therefore, it is not necessary to use a ‘distinctly’ different term, such as θεός, when the lamenting moves from one phase to another; the translators kept it monotonous by exclusively using the term κύριος when referencing a Hebrew deity. This raises the question of whether the term κύριος is avoided because of the nature of lamenting or if it is a matter of a different Vorlage.26 The study will return to this question, but first the study wants to address some of the textual variants relating to the term κύριος.27

In Lamentations 1:11, the term κύριος is ‘omitted’ by Codex Alexandrinus (codex A), and the Arabic translation does not attest to any equivalent. The reverse is also true: codex A attests to a plus κύριος reading after ἀπόστρεψε με in Lamentations 1:13.28 At the first occurrence of the term κύριος in Lamentations 1:18, a Codex Sinaiticus (codex S) redactor proposes to read it with a definite article,29 suggesting that the scribe wanted to accentuate the ‘absolute’ form of the term.30 Another interesting case is found in Lamentations 1:17; here, an ‘original’ scribe of ms 86 suggests reading αὐτὸς κύριος in addition to Δίκων. The occurrence of the term κύριος in Lamentations 2:1 is not without its own set of alternatives; ms 231 and 233 transpose the term, whilst Didymus Caecus (p. 1512), Origines, Hieronymus and others attest to κύριος as a plus reading resulting in a κύριος κύριος reading.31 Codex A, however, ‘omits’ the term altogether.32 In fact, both the

Kyrions as reference to a Hebrew deity in the Greek version

The Greek version of Lamentations simplifies matters to a large degree; the term κύριος is read irrespective of whether its Hebrew counterpart reads הוהי and יהוה. To be sure, the old

---

24. The Masoretes did not seem to agree what to ascribe to whom in this case; Codex Leningradensis 19a (MT') prefer the Adonaj reading, whilst Codex Leningradensis 34b (MTL&4) and the MT 1753 held as Cambridge opt for the Yhwh reading (cf. Lm 2:18, 19).


26. Gentry (2009:934) remarked that ‘Greek Lamentations is chiefly characterised by formal equivalence to the source language, that is, Hebrew’.

27. One example is a 10th century manuscript, 239, that offers κυριος as opposed to κυριος in Lamentations 1:14 and Yhwh (Lm 3:40, 64; 5:21), ‘Destrauction’ – the concept of having power to destroy – lies with both Adonaj (Lm 2:2) and Yhwh (Lm 4:11). If this includes an act of ‘treating’ or ‘trampling’, it again applies to both Adonaj (Lm 1:15b) and Yhwh (4QLam 1:15b). The Masoretes, however, do not ascribe the act of treading and trampling to Yhwh, but for them the concept of ‘salvation’ is exclusive to Yhwh. Inferred from these mental or conceptual frameworks, it will be difficult not to accept that both Yhwh and Adonaj are equally capable of operating within the earthly domain and that they are conceptually integrated for the most part.
minus\textsuperscript{33} and the plus\textsuperscript{34} readings of the term κύριος occur often. Furthermore, in Lamentations 2:7b, the genitive form of the term κύριος in both codex B and S omit the term, whilst the Boharian translation ‘adds’ an equivalent for dei.\textsuperscript{35} The Ethiopic translation, however, duplicates the term κύριος (dative form followed by a genitive form). The ‘omission’ of the term κύριος is again attested in Lamentations 2:8 by codex B and S, including the Ethiopic and Armenian translations. Codex A and the Arabic version present the direct opposite by ‘adding’ a term κύριος. Interestingly, ms 46 reads θεού as an alternative for κυρίου in Lamentations 2:9, with the Boharian translation attesting to another plus term dei (cf. Lm 2:7).\textsuperscript{36}

Not all Greek text witnesses were comfortable with reading the term κύριος in Lamentations 3:50–66; the term is ‘omitted’ by ms 534 in Lamentations 3:50, with Latin, Ethiopic and Armenian translations attesting to a minus reading of κύριος in Lamentations 3:66. However, the Syrio-hexapla (Origines recension) and Codex Marchalianus attest to a plus κύριος reading in Lamentations 3:61. In some instances in chapter 5, the term κύριος is omitted (cf. Lm 5:1, 21), whilst others attest to a plus reading (cf. Lm 5:19).\textsuperscript{37}

To return to the question of whether there is any reason to suspect a different Hebrew Vorlage as constructed by the Qumran text fragments and the Masoretic text, the answer is that there is no evidence to support such a proposition. What the textual evidence does suggest is that there is no alternative term to reference a Hebrew deity other than the term κύριος. Notwithstanding the fact that there is absolutely no consistency amongst the scribes with regard to when to read, duplicate, include or exclude the term κύριος.

### Conclusion

A reasonable inference from the Hebrew version of Lamentations is that the nature, character and tone of the first phase in lamenting (Lm 1:1–3:54) created the necessary conceptual space to use alternating terms, יהוה and אלהי, and by doing so, blending the concepts represented by these terms whilst referencing a Hebrew deity. Both the terms and the concepts they represent reveal a fluid, accommodating approach in ‘calling upon’ a Hebrew deity in the midst of turmoil. The scribe did not apply any literary or linguistic legalities with the use of either יהוה or אלהי. It therefore seems that he allowed the process of lamenting to dictate, at least in the phase in which the desperation and vulnerable state is made explicit, which terms should be used when reference is made to a Hebrew deity. To this end, as soon as the lament reached a second phase, that of potential outcome, salvation and liberation, the term יהוה took prominence and was placed alongside the term אלהי. But even before the term יהוה took centre stage, the scribe deployed the term ‘most High’ (cf. Lm 3:35, 38) to transition from lament to self-reflection and salvation and the prominence of the term אלהי in relation to יהוה. One possible reason for the alternating use of the terms יהוה and אלהי is that it is used to accommodate those constructing a ‘theology from below’, an anthropocentric theology. But liberation and salvation can only come from ‘above’, a theocentric theology, aptly exemplified by the term יהוה followed by ‘calling upon אלהי’ in association with יהוה in the dominion of the heavenly abode.

The fact that the term אלהי is used only once, and with this single occurrence blending with Yahweh was made possible, causes one to simultaneously draw a distinction between אלהי and יהוה, and to blend the characteristics of these concepts. It should be reiterated that associating אלהי with יהוה does not necessitate or automate the blending of אלהי and Adonaj. In fact, even though the concepts יהוה and Adonaj are blended, they are not assimilated, which makes an automatic blending with אלהי inappropriate. The blending of these concepts as references to a Hebrew deity solidified the conceptual integration of these terms into the term κύριος. The Lamentations text allows for a combination of a more fluid and blending concept of a Hebrew deity, determined and informed, on the one hand, by the terms יהוה and אלהי during the first phase of lamenting, and on the other hand, opting for a close association between יהוה and אלהי whilst making יהוה prominent as the Hebrew deity who will liberate the lamentee. There is, therefore, conceptually no significant distinction drawn between יהוה and אלהי, but most certainly between Adonaj and אלהי, notwithstanding the alternating use of יהוה and Adonaj in Lamentations 1:1–3:54. This signals a more fragmented, fluid and complex concept of a Hebrew deity in the Hebrew frame of reference.

For the Greek version, the reference to a Hebrew deity during the process of lamenting and salvation is far more simplistic and minimalistic, almost to the point of being stale and giving off a monotone vibration. The fluidity of referencing a Hebrew deity, created by lamenting a desperate situation, got lost. The only instance where reference to a Hebrew deity was amplified is in Lamentations 3:35 and 38 with the use of the term μεσίτις. In the Greek frame of reference, a Hebrew deity was referenced using a single term by the Lamentee, that of the term κύριος; the term used to refer to a Hebrew deity at the peak of lamenting, the same term used to address the deity responsible for deliverance. This signals a static, monotone and simplistic concept of a Hebrew deity, that is, Κυρίος.

### Acknowledgements

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.
Author’s contributions
P.N. is the sole author of this article.

Ethical considerations
This article followed all ethical standards of research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information
This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability
Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer
The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

References


