THE ANIMAL SERIES IN THE PRIMEVAL HISTORY

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In the enumeration of the creatures over which man is to rule in Gen. i 28, the MT is sometimes emended by the addition of ‘nhabbe-hēmā 1). This emendation is based on the LXX and Syriac as well as on the occurrence of “cattle” in v. 26 MT. The assumption is that the phrase has fallen out through scribal error. This plausible suggestion is not to be accepted uncritically. The MT is supported by the Samaritan Pentateuch (von Gall) and by the Targum (Sperber). v. 26 is itself assumed to be corrupt and “beast” is added to it so as to read “over all the beasts of the earth” 2). However, a close look at the LXX shows that: 1) the LXX does not add hāyyāt in v. 26; 2) as the LXX in v. 28 adds “all the cattle and all the earth”, it is questionable procedure to accept only part of the LXX reading; 3) the LXX “translates” hāyyā of v. 28 by ἔρπετον instead of the normal θηρίον 3), making the animal series of v. 26 and v. 28 almost identical to one another. The procedure of the LXX in these two verses is clear. v. 26 LXX = v. 26 MT. v. 28 LXX adds two prepositional phrases from v. 26 and “translates” hāyyā by “creeping thing” so as to harmonize the verses with one another 4). The LXX instead of supporting the proposed emendation is based on the current MT.

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1) E.g., Procksch; Biblia Hebraica (Kittel). Standard Genesis commentaries are cited by author’s name. Many reject the emendation but I know of no thorough study of the matter. bēhēmā is normally translated in this paper as “cattle”, hāyyā as “beast”, and remē and sēres are both translated as “reptiles”. On the meaning of śśr and rmt, cf. W. H. Schmidt, Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift (Neukirchen, 1964), hereafter referred to as Schmidt, pp. 123, 125 f; and K. Elliger, Leviticus (Tübingen, 1966), pp. 151, 154.

2) So most commentators, e.g., Driver, Speiser, Delitzsch, Skinner, Dillmann, Procksch, Schmidt (p. 127, f.n. 2).

3) ἔρπετον translates hāyyā only here in the LXX according to Hatch and Redpath, Concordance to the Septuagint. ἔρπετον and its verbal equivalent normally translates forms of rmt and śśr.

4) v. 26 LXX: “fish of the sea and birds of heaven and cattle and all the earth and all the creeping things (ἐρπετῶν) which creep upon the earth.” v. 28 LXX:
As for the parallel text, even accepting the emendation, the resulting verse differs significantly from v. 28. If we consider vv. 24 f. where the listing of the land animals occurs twice, the variety in the sequence as well as in the designation of the individual members might suggest a complete lack of consistency. Yet this is hardly expected in the P creation account. Fortunately, a way has been pointed out towards an understanding of vv. 24 f. in terms of the development of the tradition 1). It has been argued that v. 25 represents the original sequence. At a later stage, the summary heading nepeš hayyā was added in v. 24. This caused the rearrangement of the sequence in v. 24 so as not to have the hayyā of nepeš hayyā followed almost immediately by hayeto 'eres. The unique and artificial phrase הָדָם הָרָעָם of v. 28 is created by a combination of the first and last parts of the "original" three member series: beasts (of the earth, cattle, creeping things) of the ground 2).

The reason for the condensation of a traditional three part series is basically stylistic. v. 28 combines the fertility command, in parallel formulation to v. 22, with the task of dominion of v. 26b. The joining of the two motifs is accomplished by the word wēkibshūhā, whose grammatical suffix has its antecedent in the blessing phrase but whose verbal content points to the command to rule 3). The condensation of the three elements of the series of v. 25 into a single phrase results in the number in the series remaining constant 4) and maintains a relative balance between the two elements of the command. Omitting the "joining" verb, the first half of the command has three verbs and one object while the second half has three objects

"fish of the sea and birds of the heaven and all (the cattle and all the earth and all) the creeping things which creep upon the earth." The phrase in parenthesis, except for the final "all", is taken directly from v. 26 LXX. The remainder agrees with the MT of v. 28, excepting the unusual rendering of hayyā.

1) Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace the source of this suggestion. SCHMIDT, p. 125, says v. 25 is older than v. 24 because the deed account is older than the word account.

2) The participle of rmī is used instead of the noun and a preposition is added after the participle. v. 25 also differs from v. 26 and v. 28 in having ʿaddāmā rather than ʿeres. ʿeres in conjunction with some form of rmī occurs mainly in P (Gen. vii 14, 21; viii 17, 19), but also in Lev. xi 44 (only here with ʿēš and rmī together, cf. Gen. vii 21). Otherwise ʿaddāmā is more common with rmī than is ʿeres (cf. SCHMIDT, pp. 125 f).

3) Highlighting this dual position, BH3 joins the word to the command to rule while the Masoretes joined it to the fertility command, as indicated by the accentuation.

4) I.e., a series of three.