The word ṭmāqôm in Gen. i 9 has often been regarded as an error for miqwēh and the immediate context would appear to furnish two good reasons for such a view. First, it is stated in v. 10 that God called miqwēh hammayim, the gathering of the waters, ‘‘seas’’ but if ṭmāqôm is the correct reading in v. 9 this ‘‘gathering’’ is introduced abruptly and ‘‘named’’ without there being a prior statement that it is to be created. In the other cases of naming in Gen. i there is first a statement that an entity is to be created and only afterwards is the naming recorded (vv. 3 and 5, 6 and 8). Indeed, in v. 10 itself the narrative also records the naming of the dry land (yabhāṣāh) which has been mentioned in v. 9. This makes it all the more probable that the ‘‘gathering’’ was first mentioned originally in v. 9. Secondly, the verb yiqqāwû would favour the presence of the noun miqwēh, which is used exclusively for a ‘‘gathering’’ of water and would be most appropriate in this context. The text would then exhibit a further case (the first, in fact) of the ‘‘cognate verb and noun’’ type of clause so typical of Gen. i: tadōw ... ṭešē, mazriya zera, mesqōt ... ṭeḥuṭ, yishreṣṣē šeres, ṭōp yeṭqōpēp, etc. Of course, the second consideration derives its strength from the actual occurrence of the word miqwēh in v. 10.

However, the simple substitution of miqwēh for ṭmāqôm does not rescue the text from its submergence in one single body of water and this salvage operation must, I maintain, be performed. Neither waters gathered in ‘‘one place’’ nor a single ‘‘gathering of waters’’ may, despite time-honoured exegesis, be called yammîm, ‘‘seas’’, as in v. 10. The ancient Israelite (no matter what date we assign to the passage under discussion) recognized the existence of several

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1 Ex. vii 19; Lev. xi 36; Isa, xxii 11, miqwēh.
discrete bodies of water in his world and called them "seas", each one, but not all of them together, being a "sea". Thus the Mediterranean, hayyam/lyam haggadol, the Aelanitic Gulf, yam-süp, Lake Galilee, yam kinneret, the Dead Sea, yam hammalah, are "seas". There is no reason for surmising that in the context of Gen. i Galilee and the Dead Sea were not regarded as "real" seas (the very name yam haggadol shows that the Mediterranean was not regarded as sui generis) or that the Mediterranean and the Aelanitic Gulf were thought to be connected and to constitute a continuous body of water. Now it is true that a notion of a great encircling "cosmic" sea existed in the ancient Near East. It was invoked by H. Gunkel, followed, for example, by J. Skinner, O. Procksch and W. H. Schmidt, to explain the "gathering of the waters" and seems to have influenced many modern commentaries as well as ancient exegesis. It is true that Procksch, quoted by Schmidt, also wrote that P knew "several seas" but he nevertheless adopted the concept of a "Becken des die Erde umgebenden vielgliedrigen Ozeans" (is not this a contradiction in terms?) and Schmidt insists "Dennoch befindet sich das Wasser an 'einem Ort'", rejecting the emendation miqweh. However, so far as the encirclement of the entire land mass is concerned, as distinct from the subterranean ocean (tehom ribeset tahat), this idea does not seem to figure in the OT geographical consciousness, unless it can be teased out of such texts as Job xxvi 10, Ps. cxxxix 9 and Prov. viii 27 (quoted by Skinner). It may, nevertheless, be conceded that such a notion may have been familiar to the Hebrews and even to the writer (or successive writers) of Gen. i 9, but it does not emerge naturally from the passage in question itself and has clearly been pressed into service to explain the expressions maqom 'ehad and miqweh hammayim. Yet surely, "one place" is no ideal location for the circumfluent cosmic ocean?

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3 Genesis (Göttingen, 1901), p. 98.
4 Genesis (Edinburgh, 1910), pp. 22-3.
5 Die Genesis (Leipzig, 1913) p. 248.