

The “Seven Eyes” of Zech 3:9 and the Meaning of the Dual Form*

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Abstract

The so-called “dual” form, when it occurs with parts of the body naturally occurring in pairs such as hands and eyes, is not dual in meaning as commonly supposed, but rather plural. This explains why the phrase שְׁבַע עֵינַיִם in Zech 3:9 means “seven eyes” and not, as occasionally suggested, “seven pairs of eyes.” This “dual-form plural” is only rarely used where terms for body parts are extended to other objects, making it unlikely that עֵינַיִם means either “facets” or “springs.”

Keywords

Zechariah, dual, pseudo-dual, plural, pair, eyes

Introduction

In Biblical Hebrew, as is well known, the so-called “dual” ending ׁ (construct ׁ) occurs regularly with words for certain parts of the body naturally occurring in pairs, for example יָדַיִם (hands) and עֵינַיִם (eyes). It is commonly supposed that such forms are also dual in meaning. Statements to the effect that יָדַיִם, for example, means “two hands” or “a pair of hands” are standard in textbooks,¹ and are also found in several reference grammars.² The use of the

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¹ See, for example, Weingreen, p. 38; Lambdin, p. 100; Kelley, p. 40; Seow, p. 19; Ross, p. 71; Pratico and Van Pelt, p. 29; Futato, p. 20; Bergman, p. 33; Hackett, pp. 59-60.

² GKC, §88e; Waltke and O'Connor, §7.3.b; Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze, p. 186. Muraoka, similarly, takes רַגְלַיִם to mean “both legs,” with the dual sometimes “doubling for” the plural (Joüon and Muraoka, §91ea).

dual when more than two items are in view, as in the sentence כָּל־יָדַיִם תִּרְפִּינָה (Ezek 7:17), is usually explained as an extension of the normal dual meaning to express the plural.³ Indeed, it is sometimes supposed that in such cases the basic idea of duality is maintained. Thus GKC glosses יָדַיִם as “both hands,”⁴ but adds that in the case of items found in pairs the dual “*may* be used for a plural, either indefinite or defined by a numeral, *where it is thought of in a double arrangement*.”⁵

The common assumption that the dual form also has a dual meaning, even when it occurs with parts of the body, has led to suggestions that the phrase שִׁבְעָה עֵינַיִם in Zech 3:9 should be translated not as “seven eyes” but rather as “seven *pairs of eyes*.” Meyers and Meyers take this to be the literal meaning of the phrase,⁶ but they nevertheless translate it as “seven eyes,”⁷ and for the most part interpret it on that basis.⁸ VanderKam, on the other hand, understands “seven pairs of eyes” to be the actual sense, so that fourteen eyes are in view. These he takes to represent the combined total of fourteen gemstones on the high priest’s breastpiece and the shoulder pieces of his ephod.⁹ This proposal has been cited approvingly by several scholars,¹⁰ and although others still translate שִׁבְעָה עֵינַיִם as “seven eyes,”¹¹ none has so far explained why it cannot refer to seven pairs.¹²

In fact, as this article seeks to demonstrate, the so-called “dual” form, when it occurs with parts of the body, consistently functions as a simple plural, so that עֵינַיִם does not mean “two eyes” or “a pair of eyes,” but simply “eyes.” Such

³ Bauer and Leander, §63s; Joüon and Muraoka, §91ea; Weingreen, p. 38; Hostetter, pp. 41-42.

⁴ GKC, §88e.

⁵ GKC, §88f (italics mine).

⁶ Meyers and Meyers, p. 208.

⁷ Meyers and Meyers, p. 179.

⁸ Meyers and Meyers, pp. 209, 225, 254. They do, however, suggest in passing that the phrase might actually mean “seven pairs of eyes,” and hence “seven heads” (p. 225).

⁹ VanderKam, pp. 568-69.

¹⁰ VanderKam’s proposal is accepted by Tidiman (p. 120) and Klein (p. 150), and considered a possibility by Redditt (p. 65), Boda (p. 258 n. 32), and Petterson (pp. 96-97).

¹¹ See Hanhart, p. 227; McComiskey, p. 1078; Sweeney, p. 603; Schaper, p. 181; Tiemeyer, p. 10; Willi-Plein, p. 89. Earlier statements of this conventional view may be found, for example, in GKC, §88f; Joüon and Muraoka, §91e; Waltke and O’Connor, §7.3b; Bauer and Leander, §63s; Brockelmann, §18a; Rignell, p. 129; Petitjean, p. 172 n. 3; Rudolph, p. 99.

¹² McComiskey (p. 1078) and Schaper (p. 181) cite, respectively, Waltke and O’Connor, §7.3.b and GKC, §88f. However, both these grammars take the view that the dual form, when it occurs with parts of the body, can be either dual or plural, and they do not explain why שִׁבְעָה עֵינַיִם cannot then mean “seven pairs of eyes.”

forms, unlike the dual forms of certain other nouns, are “dual” only from an etymological perspective.¹³ They are thus sometimes termed “pseudo-duals,”¹⁴ although a more helpful description might be “dual-form plurals,”¹⁵ indicating the actual function of the ם^{x} -ending in these cases.

The analysis of these forms as plurals explains why, when they are accompanied by a numeral, the numeral expresses the total number of items and not a number of pairs,¹⁶ and hence why only seven eyes are mentioned in Zech 3:9.

The Dual Form in Biblical Hebrew

In Biblical Hebrew the use of the dual form is very limited.¹⁷ Only a nominal dual is clearly attested,¹⁸ and this is found only with certain nouns. For the most part these fall into one of three categories, which will be discussed below. There are, however, a few exceptions, and it seems likely that these reflect an earlier stage of the language in which the dual was used more generally in speaking of two items, as in Ugaritic, South Arabian, Classical Arabic, and early Akkadian.¹⁹ For example, the Song of Deborah, often considered to be “the earliest text in the Hebrew Bible,”²⁰ contains the dual forms רַחֲמָתַיִם and רִקְמָתַיִם (Judg 5:30).²¹ But in the later material which forms the vast majority of the biblical corpus, the idea of “two of” something is not generally expressed

¹³ Rosén (p. 208) and Glinert (1989, pp. 450, 456) consider them plural forms in Modern Hebrew.

¹⁴ E.g. Steiner, p. 152. The term “pseudo-dual” is used in relation to Arabic dialects by Blanc (esp. pp. 45-47), who notes the parallel with Hebrew (p. 54). Blau prefers the designation “ex-dual,” reserving the term “pseudo-dual” for words such as צְהָרִים which do not derive from genuine duals (2010, pp. 270-71).

¹⁵ I am grateful to Dr. Philip Johnston for suggesting this latter term.

¹⁶ This fact, but not the explanation, is stated in Williams and Beckman, §4.

¹⁷ See generally Fontinoy, pp. 49-61; Joüon and Muraoka, §91.

¹⁸ Opinions are divided as to whether dual verbs and personal pronouns are also found in Biblical Hebrew, or whether these alleged dual forms are to be explained on the basis of a lack of grammatical concord, especially the use of masculine plural forms in place of feminine ones. The former position is taken by, for example, Rendsburg (1982 and 2001) and Tropper (1992), while the latter is argued by Blau (1988) and Bar-Asher.

¹⁹ Fontinoy, p. 200; Lipiński 1997, p. 236.

²⁰ Soggin, p. 80.

²¹ Cross and Freedman describe the use of the dual in this verse as “archaic” (p. 19). Other exceptional cases such as דְּרָכַיִם (Prov 28:6, 18) and עֵצֵלָתַיִם (Eccl 10:18) are variously explained. It is possible that some are “false duals” (see below), for example כַּפְּלָיִם (Isa 40:2; Job 11:6), on which see Joüon and Muraoka, §100o.

using the dual. Rather, the noun occurs in the plural, preceded by the numeral “two” (masculine שְׁנַיִם, feminine שְׁנָיִם) in either the absolute or, more commonly, the construct state.²² It is therefore misleading to say, for example, that סוּסִים means “two horses”;²³ the phrase “two horses” does not in fact occur in Biblical Hebrew, but if it did it would most likely be expressed as שְׁנַיִ סוּסִים or שְׁנַיִם סוּסִים.²⁴

Not all words ending in יָם are etymologically related to the dual; some, such as מַיִם (water), שָׁמַיִם (heaven), and שִׁבְעָתַיִם (sevenfold), are so-called “false duals,” in which the יָם ending has arisen by a different route.²⁵ The three main categories of noun in which the יָם ending does reflect a historic dual, leaving aside the archaic instances already mentioned and the numeral שְׁנַיִם (two), are as follows:²⁶

(1) Certain units of measurement or time, for example אַמְתַּיִם (two cubits), כִּכְרֵיִם (two talents), שְׁנָתַיִם (two years), and יוֹמֵיִם (two days), as well as the numbers מֵאתַיִם (two hundred) and אֶלְפַיִם (two thousand). All these lexemes also possess a distinct plural form, so there is a clear contrast between the dual and the plural, such that the mere use of the dual is sufficient to indicate a double quantity. As a result, the dual form in these cases is never found with the numeral “two,” or indeed with any numeral.

(2) Certain nouns referring to items constructed of two parts, such as מאֲזַנִּים (scales) and רִיחֵיִם (handmill). Most such nouns occur only in the dual and are hence termed *dualia tantum*,²⁷ while others such as דְּלָתַיִם (double doors) and חֲמֻתַיִם (double walls) have singular and plural counterparts. The dual ending with this category of noun does not seem to indicate the number of items, for it is used even when more than one pair is in view, as with מִצְלֵתַיִם (cymbals) in at least Ezra 3:10 and 1 Chr 15:19.

(3) The third category, with which the present article is especially concerned, consists of certain nouns referring to parts of the body typically occurring in pairs, such as יָדַיִם (hands) and עֵינַיִם (eyes). These nouns either do not occur in the plural or, if they do, the distinction between the dual and the

²² E.g. Gen 4:19; 10:25; Lev 24:6; Num 7:17.

²³ Pace Ross, p. 71; Pratico and Van Pelt, p. 28.

²⁴ Compare, for example, שְׁנַיִ כִּבְשִׁים (Lev 23:20) and שְׁנַיִם פָּרִים (1 Kgs 18:23).

²⁵ See GKC, §88c-d; Fontinoy, pp. 54-56 Joüon and Muraoka, §91f-h, §100o. These “false duals” should be distinguished from historically dual forms which no longer have a dual meaning, for which Blau prefers the term “ex-dual” (2010, pp. 270-71).

²⁶ See Joüon and Muraoka, §91ea.

²⁷ Fontinoy, p. 20.

plural is not a distinction in number but rather a distinction in the sense with which the noun is used.²⁸ In such cases the plural is used only where a term originally referring to body parts is extended to refer to something quite different.²⁹ Where the body parts themselves or representations of them are referred to the dual is used,³⁰ even where the reference is metaphorical or idiomatic.³¹ Thus when עֵין means “eye” its plural is עֵינַיִם, but when it means “spring” the plural is עֵינֹת. Similarly, animal horns are קַרְנִים,³² as are the iron horns made by Zedekiah son of Kenaanah (1 Kgs 22:11), while the “horns” or projections on the corners of an altar are קַרְנוֹת.³³

Accordingly, the plural sense “eyes” cannot be expressed using the plural form עֵינֹת (let alone the non-existent form עֵינַיִם),³⁴ any more than in the case of nouns such as אָזֶן (ear) which have no distinct plural form at all. It follows that the use of the dual form with nouns in category (3) does not indicate that there are two of the item in question, only that there are two or more. In other words, the dual functions as a plural.³⁵

In order to express “two of” or “a pair of” such an item, the dual form must be used in combination with the numeral “two,” as in the phrase שְׁתֵּי כַרְעִים (two legs) in Amos 3:12. Although GKC states that the numeral is used here “to express certain emphasis,”³⁶ the fact is that כַּרְעִים on its own would not suffice to indicate the number of legs. In the case of שְׁתֵּי אַזְנוֹי (1 Sam 3:11;

²⁸) In the case of שֹׁפָה (lip), however, the plural form occurs seven times (Isa 59:3; Ps 45:3; 59:8[7]; Song 4:3, 11; 5:13; Eccl 10:12) with no obvious difference in meaning from the more usual dual form.

²⁹) Occasionally the dual is used even in such cases (e.g., אֶרְבַּע רַגְלָיו in Exod 25:26; שְׁלֹשֶׁת-רַגְלָיִם in 1 Sam 2:13), perhaps because of a particularly close resemblance to the body part concerned, or because the extended meaning arose after the dual form became established as the usual form of the plural for the body part in question.

³⁰) Sometimes, however, an extended meaning using the plural is itself a bodily one, for example, קַרְנוֹת שֵׁן (ivory tusks, Ezek 27:15). The plural form כַּפּוֹת רַגְלָיִם occurs in the expressions כַּפּוֹת רַגְלָיִם (soles of the feet, e.g. Josh 4:18; 1 Kgs 5:17) and כַּפּוֹת יָדַיִם (palms of the hands, 1 Sam 5:4; 2 Kgs 9:35; Dan 10:10), but where כַּף simply means “hand” the dual form is used for the plural.

³¹) For example, אֶרֶב אֶפְיָם (Exod 34:6) and רִתְבַּת יָדַיִם (Judg 18:10). Such examples show that it is not precise to say that the plural is preferred where the sense is “figurative” (Joüon and Muraoka, §91d) or “metaphorical” (Waltke and O’Connor, §7.3b).

³²) In Dan 8 the forms קַרְנִים (vv. 3, 6, 20) and קַרְנֵי (v. 7) occur, presumably following the analogy of the plural (see Joüon and Muraoka, §91b).

³³) On קַרְנוֹת שֵׁן (Ezek 27:15) see note 30.

³⁴) Pace Van Hoonacker (p. 612), who thinks that this form should be read in Zech 3:9.

³⁵) This may also be true of the nouns in category (2), if the idea of duality in such cases is lexical rather than grammatical (as with English “scissors”).

³⁶) GKC, §88f.

2 Kgs 21:12) and שְׁתֵּי רַגְלָיו (2 Sam 9:13), the numeral does indeed add a certain emphasis. But this is because the context makes it clear that two ears or legs are in view (since they belong to one person), and not because of the dual form of the noun.³⁷

The dual form on its own, then, without the numeral “two” does not express the idea of a pair or “both.” The word יָדַיִם, for example, simply means “hands.” It is true that when the hands in question belong to a single individual, the *referent* of the word will be a pair. But the idea of a “pair” arises from the context and is not inherent in the word יָדַיִם itself, any more than it is inherent in the plural word זְרוּעוֹת (arms).³⁸ The situation is the same as in English, where a phrase like “my hands” suggests a pair of hands, not because the word “hands” itself has a dual meaning, but because the whole phrase, combined with extra-linguistic knowledge of human anatomy, points in this direction. Here, as always, it is important to avoid the danger, highlighted by Barr, of “taking a case of a word along with its context and suggesting that the significance which is given through associations of the context is in fact the indicator value of that word.”³⁹

The Dual Form Accompanied by a Numeral

If the dual form is plural in meaning where it occurs with terms for body parts, as argued above, it is to be expected that where such a form occurs with a numeral, the numeral will express the total number of the thing in question, and not that number of pairs. This is indeed the case.⁴⁰ Several instances involving the numeral “two” have already been noted; clearly שְׁתֵּי רַגְלָיו (2 Sam 9:13), for example, means “his two legs” or “both his legs” and not “both his pairs of legs”! The following additional examples may be mentioned:

In Exod 25:26; 37:13 the four rings for the poles used to carry the tabernacle table are said to be attached *עַל אַרְבַּע הַפְּאֹת אֲשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּע רַגְלָיו*. Clearly

³⁷) The same holds for שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו (Deut 9:15, 17), שְׁתֵּי עֵינָיו (Judg 16:28), שְׁנֵי שְׁדָיִם (Song 4:5; 7:4), and שְׁתֵּי קַרְנָיו (Dan 8:7). These forms are presumably dual forms since the masculine plural of the nouns in question is unattested, but the numeral would be redundant either way. On קַרְנָיו see note 32.

³⁸) This argument is a slight adaptation of one made by Glinert (1976, pp. 1-2) in relation to Modern Hebrew. Glinert sees the duality of, for example, רַגְלָיִם as pragmatic rather than semantic (p. 2).

³⁹) Barr, p. 69.

⁴⁰) See Williams and Beckman, §4.

רַגְלָיו אַרְבַּע here means “its four legs,” corresponding to the four rings and the four corners, and not “four pairs of legs.”

In Ezek 1:6; 10:21, the four living creatures (חַיִּוֹת) seen by Ezekiel are said to have אַרְבַּע כְּנָפִים. This must mean “four wings,” for verse 11 states that two of them touched those of the next creature, and two of them covered their owner’s body, the implication being that the full number of wings have thus been described. Likewise, in Isa 6:2, שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים clearly means “six wings” and not “six pairs of wings,”⁴¹ since they are further described in terms of three pairs: בְּשֵׁתַיִם | יְכַסֶּה פָּנָיו וּבְשֵׁתַיִם יְכַסֶּה רַגְלָיו וּבְשֵׁתַיִם יְעֹפֶף (with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he was flying).

It seems, moreover, that אַרְבַּע רַגְלִים in Lev 11:23 should be translated as “four legs,” and not “four pairs of legs.”⁴² A difficulty arises from the fact that the passage concerns flying “swarming things” (טָרֵף הָעוֹף), which are generally taken to be insects,⁴³ and therefore have neither four legs, nor eight, but six.⁴⁴ However, since the same creatures are described in verse 20 as “going on four” (הֹלֵךְ עַל-אַרְבַּע), i.e. “on all fours,” it is reasonable to assume that this expression is simply, as Wenham puts it, “the opposite of walking uprightly: the number of legs is irrelevant.”⁴⁵ The apparently synonymous expression אֲשֶׁר-לֹא אַרְבַּע רַגְלִים should then be interpreted in the same way. This approach is to be preferred to that of Fink, who takes אַרְבַּע רַגְלִים to mean “four pairs of legs,” and argues that this figure includes the two antennae.⁴⁶

These passages confirm the conclusion reached above that the “dual” form of nouns referring to parts of the body in fact functions as a plural.

The Origin of the Dual-Form Plural

The use of ׀ as a plural ending in the case of body parts most likely reflects the demise of the dual as a grammatical category.⁴⁷ As noted above, it is probable that at one stage the dual form could be used with any noun when referring to two items, while the plural was used for three or more. Over the course

⁴¹ Pace Fink, who claims that שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים may be understood as “six *pairs* of wings” (p. 123).

⁴² Pace Fink, p. 122.

⁴³ Cf. Wenham, p. 175; Milgrom, p. 664.

⁴⁴ As Péter-Contesse points out (p. 185), the Israelites can scarcely have been ignorant of this fact.

⁴⁵ Wenham, 175. Cf. Milgrom, p. 664; Péter-Contesse, p. 185.

⁴⁶ Fink, pp. 122-23.

⁴⁷ See Blau’s comments on the same phenomenon in Christian Arabic (1966-67, §108).

of time this distinction between dual and plural was eroded, and in the case of most nouns the plural, being the more common of the two forms, was generalised to cover all non-singular instances. In the special case of body parts naturally occurring in pairs, however, the dual form was the more common of the two, and so in these cases it was the dual which became generalised and supplanted the plural. The result was that the ־ים ending with these nouns came to have precisely the same function as the plural ending with other nouns. A similar development has been observed in Akkadian⁴⁸ and in Arabic dialects.⁴⁹

This process explains why the normal plural form rather than the dual-form plural tends to be used when the name of a body part is extended to a different object, as with עֵינֹת (springs) or יָדוֹת (portions, pegs, handles, etc.). These objects, unlike the body parts after which they are named, are not typically found in pairs, and so they would have been familiar in the plural form, while the dual was associated with the original meaning.

It is widely (although not universally)⁵⁰ believed that the ־ים ending of the masculine plural construct arose through analogy with the dual construct.⁵¹ If this is correct, then it may provide further evidence for these dual forms being interpreted as plurals.⁵² Indeed, the fact that the ־ים ending of the masculine plural construct appears even in the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:2-31) may suggest that forms such as יָדִים and יָדִים were already interpreted as plural by the earliest stage of Biblical Hebrew, even though archaic dual forms such as רַחֲמַיִם and רַקְמַיִם (Judg 5:30) could still be used.

The dual forms in category (1), however, retained their dual meaning. These may be seen as fossilised forms which have been preserved because of their regular usage in everyday life.⁵³ With the apparent loss of the dual as a grammatical category, it is arguable that these forms became new lexemes, with the ־ים ending ceasing to function inflectionally. This would explain why these duals are never found with the ־ים construct ending,⁵⁴ as might otherwise be

⁴⁸) See Lipiński 1997, p. 238.

⁴⁹) See Blau 1966-67, §§106-11; Blau 1981, p. 89; Blanc.

⁵⁰) See, for example, Joüon and Muraoka, §92f.

⁵¹) Nöldeke, p. 51; Bauer and Leander, §64f; Ginsberg, p. 549; Fontinoy, p. 26; Steiner, p. 153. The latter sees the borrowing as specifically “from the pseudo-dual” (p. 153).

⁵²) I am grateful to Prof. Geoffrey Khan for this observation.

⁵³) Even these are occasionally neglected in some later writings. E.g., שְׁתֵּים שָׁנִים in 2 Sam 2:10; 2 Kgs 21:19; 2 Chr 33:21; שְׁתֵּים אַמּוֹת in Ezek 40:9; 41:3, 22; 43:14.

⁵⁴) Glinert notes their absence in the construct state in Modern Hebrew (1976, p. 3). The form יָרְחוֹ in the Gezer Calendar (ca. 10th century BC), however, is widely interpreted as either a dual

expected in a phrase such as כְּכָרִים בְּסָרֵף (1 Kgs 16:24; 2 Kgs 5:23).⁵⁵ Indeed, interpreting כְּכָרִים as a construct state of the lexicalised term כְּכָרִים (two talents) would explain the otherwise unusual vocalisation.⁵⁶

The “Seven Eyes” of Zechariah 3:9

It follows from the discussion above that שְׁבַע עֵינָיִם can only mean “seven eyes,” and not “seven pairs of eyes.”⁵⁷ It is also worth noting that the use of the dual-form plural rules out the suggestion that עֵינָיִם refers to springs of water, which are elsewhere always עֵינֹת.⁵⁸ It also counts against the popular view that these עֵינָיִם are “facets.”⁵⁹ For even if עֵין could mean “facet” (and it is otherwise unheard of with that sense),⁶⁰ the dual-form plural is only rarely used where terms for body parts are extended to other objects.⁶¹ The identification of the

construct or a dual with a proleptic pronominal suffix, although opinions differ as to its precise explanation (see Tropper 1993; Renz, pp. 32-34; Sivan).

⁵⁵ With the exception of טָהוֹר וְהָב כְּכָר in Exod 25:39; 37:24, כְּכָר is always in the construct state before the commodity it relates to (Exod 38:27; 2 Sam 12:30; 1 Kgs 9:14; 10:10, 14; 20:39; 2 Kgs 5:5, 22; 15:19; 18:14; 23:33; Zech 5:7; Esth 3:9; 1 Chr 19:6; 20:2; 29:4; 2 Chr 8:18; 9:9, 13; 25:6; 27:5; 36:3).

⁵⁶ The view that this is “a *lectio mixta*” (Joüon and Muraoka, §91b) or “Kompromißform” (Bauer and Leander, §26p) between כְּכָרִי and כְּכָרִים is problematic because, as already noted, the י- construct ending is not found with this type of dual.

⁵⁷ Since עֵין is feminine, one would ordinarily expect the numeral to take the form שְׁבַע, but the longer form occurs with a feminine noun also in Gen. 7:13; 1 Sam 10:3; Job 1:4; Jer 36:23. Joüon and Muraoka suggest that such exceptions may be “scribal errors” (§100d n. 4), and see the unexpected gender in Zech 3:9 as signalling a “figurative meaning,” namely “engraved eyes” (§134a n. 2). But the only other examples of this phenomenon they provide are Zech 4:10 and 1 Sam 14:4-5.

⁵⁸ Exod 15:27; Num 33:9; Deut 8:7; 2 Chr 32:3; Prov 8:28. Pace Lipiński, who argues that עֵינָיִם in Zech 3:9 is an Aramaism (1970, p. 26). Lipiński claims that in Aramaic עֵין is usually masculine when it has the sense “spring,” citing the form עֵינִין in *Targum Onqelos* at Deut 8:7 and in the *Targum of Chronicles* at 2 Chr 32:3. But in the places cited the editions of Sperber (p. 305) and Le Déaut and Robert (p. 153) show the feminine plural form עֵינֵין.

⁵⁹ Pace Wellhausen, p. 181; Mitchell, p. 157.

⁶⁰ In the expression עֵין (כֹּל־)הָאָרֶץ in Exod 10:5, 15; Num 22:5, 11, עֵין probably “meint... nicht »Oberfläche« im konkreten Sinne, sondern ungefähr »das, was man in Blickfeld hat«” (Rignell, p. 132 n. 1). This is the view taken by BDB (p. 744), *HALOT* (vol. 2, p. 818), and Gesenius, Meyer, and Donner (vol. 4, p. 956). None of these dictionaries include Zech 3:9 here, or indeed recognise the meaning “facet.” Nor is it convincing to argue that עֵין in Zech 3:9 means “gleam” and that “seven gleams” must come from seven facets (pace Mitchell, p. 157).

⁶¹ See, however, note 29. Waltke and O'Connor interpret שְׁבַע עֵינָיִם as “carving facets” and take this as proof that “the metaphorical sense of a natural-pair term can be pluralized with a dual,” which begs the question.

supposed “seven facets” with the seven letters of the inscription קדש ליהו is even more unlikely.⁶²

As for the identity of the “seven eyes,” a connection with the “eyes of the Lord” mentioned in Zech 4:10 still seems the most likely explanation. The phrase “these seven” (שִׁבְעָה-אֵלֶּה) in that verse probably refers back to the seven lamps mentioned in Zech 4:2. But the fact that verse 10 identifies these with “the eyes of the Lord” (עֵינֵי יְהוָה) clearly characterises the latter as sevenfold also. It seems unlikely to be coincidental that the only two references to “seven eyes” in the Old Testament occur in these two consecutive chapters.

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⁶² Pace Elliger, pp. 123-24; Petersen, p. 212. The occurrence of the divine name in the short form יהו in theophoric names and in texts from Elephantine (see Porten, pp. 105-6) and Kuntillet 'Ajrud (see Davies, pp. 80-81) is in any case scarcely evidence that this was also the form used on the high priest's צִיץ. A number of other inscriptions once thought to contain the word יהו, including those on jar handles found on the eastern hill of Jerusalem, are now considered to have read יהד (Sukenik; Williamson, p. 65). I am grateful to Prof. Jan Joosten for drawing my attention to this fact.

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