

Hebrew Linguistics Under the Documentary Hypothesis

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Earlier this year, a fellow scholar and friend, Jeff A. Benner¹ had come across some “inconsistencies” in the linguistics of the Hebrew found in the Book of Exodus. Knowing that I tend to work under the Documentary Hypothesis, he e-mailed me some of his notes. Which is why the credit for this should go to Mr. Benner. One note that I would like to share is the difference in which a noun is treated in two verses of the book. That noun is the Hebrew word **עַם** (people). Found in the beginning of Exodus 5:12:

ויפץ העם

And the people were scattered [...]

With the use of the preceding verb, the noun for *people* is identified as a masculine singular. In Exodus 14:31, the same noun (as a result of the preceding verb) is identified as a masculine plural. *See extract below.*

וייראו עַם

[...] and the people feared him [...]

Under the Documentary Hypothesis, verse 5:12 belongs to the Elohist (E) while 14:31 is credited to the Yahwist (J). Does this example of Hebrew linguistics provide us with more evidence supporting the Documentary Hypothesis? If so, will a deeper analysis provide a clearer date of composition?

1 <http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/>