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Kevin Massey-Gillespie (Drayton)

A NEW APPROACH TO BASIC HEBREW COLOUR
TERMS

ABSTRACT

Biblical Hebrew colour terms are generally understood as imprecise. A proper application of linguistic theory on colour terms combined with an examination of Semitic structures of those terms, however, leads to a noticeable fine-tuning of our understanding of these terms and results in changes, some subtle, some striking, in the ways some of the terms are understood. Of note, the biblical Hebrew terms for green and yellow can be much more clearly understood as a result of this study. Most modern translations are mistaken about some of these terms if the conclusions of this study prove to be true.

Gary A Rendsburg (Cornell University)

תַּלְפִּיוֹת (SONG 4:4)

ABSTRACT

The hapax legomenon תַּלְפִּיוֹת in Song 4:4 is nowadays typically translated as "courses," based on a reputed root לפי/לפא "arrange in courses" in Aramaic and/or Arabic. Closer inspection reveals that this root does not bear this meaning in these languages, and that in any case such a meaning does not fit the context. A new etymology is proposed. The noun is a plural taqtîl formation from the root לפי, which in Modern South Arabian means "be able to climb easily. " Thus תַּלְפִּיוֹת means "height," and the whole phrase is to be translated "your neck is like the tower of David, built to the heights." This rare Hebrew noun was used in Song 4:4 to create an alliteration with the surrounding words אֶלֶף "thousand" and תָּלוּי "hung."

Philip J Nel (University of the Orange Free State)

THE TALION PRINCIPLE IN OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES

ABSTRACT

The paper focusses on the occurrence of the talion principle outside the corpus of legal material in the Old Testament. The aim is to demonstrate that the talion principle is presupposed in certain narratives, and that it is encoded as a strategy in the sequence of actions and thereby lends significance to the plot. It often has the character of a minus device or a gap in the story.

Johan Lust (University of Leuven)[1]

THE DIVERSE TEXT FORMS OF JEREMIAH AND HISTORY WRITING WITH JER 33 AS A TEST CASE

ABSTRACT

The article presents a survey of the textual witnesses of Jeremiah, and of the general theories about these textual data. The data are illustrated and the theories are tested with the help of a test case: Jer 33:14-26, the longest "plus" in the Masoretic Text (MT). The major themes dealt with are twofold: the relation between the longer and the shorter texts, and the date of composition of the longer text. The following conclusions remain tentative. 1. The Hebrew verses in Jer 33:14-26, absent from the Old Greek, do not preserve the original words of Jeremiah. The vocabulary, style, and contents plead against a Jeremian authorship. 2. The verses were added by an editor who was responsible for the proto-Masoretic text. Their sources of inspiration, and their transformation in the MT in function of the addition, sufficiently prove this. 3. The addition may have originated in a period close to that of Ben Sirach's grandfather and the date of composition ofZech 12. This hypothesis confirms the view of P-M Bogaert according to whom the edition of the longer text must have been accomplished in the beginning of the 3rd century BC.

Johann Cook (University of Stellenbosch)

A COMPARISON OF PROVERBS AND JEREMIAH IN THE SEPTUAGINT

ABSTRACT

It remains problematic to decide whether a given textual difference in the Septuagint is the result of the parent text used by a translator, or whether the translator himself brought it about. The Greek versions of Jeremiah and Proverbs contain similar textual differences, smaller ones such as the variation in subject!object, as well as larger differences, including minuses and pluses. In both texts the order of certain chapters has been changed. It would therefore seem on the face of it as if these texts developed along similar lines. However, the fact that they exhibit different translation techniques has to be accounted for by the researcher.

A van der Kooij (University of Leiden)

JEREMIAH 27:5-15: HOW DO MT AND LXX RELATE TO EACH OTHER?I

ABSTRACT

As to the relationship between MT and LXX Jeremiah scholars are of the opinion that the so-called short text underlying LXX, and attested by 4QJer^{b,d} represents an earlier edition of the book of Jeremiah than the longer version of MT, attested by 2QJer and 4QJer^{a,c,e}. Most recently Yohanan Goldman has made a very detailed contribution to the discussion in his study, entitled Prophétie et royauté au retour l'exil (1992). One of the chapters he deals with is Chapter 27 (LXX: 34), verse 5-15 (1992:123-167). His thesis is that LXX reflects an earlier Hebrew text of that passage, whereas most pluses in MT are to be seen as part of a later redaction. In this article the differences between MT and LXX Jer 27 (34):5-15 are dealt with, reviewing at the same time the thesis of Goldman. It is argued that LXX of that passage represents a text which is the result of shortening an underlying Hebrew text for reasons of context (e.g. assimilation) and content. The conclusion is that, contrary to his view, MT Jer 27:5-15 attests an earlier text than LXX does.

Wolfgang Zwickel (Kiel)

DAVID: HISTORISCHE GESTALT UND IDEALISIERTES VORBILD. ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZU ENTSTEHUNG UND THEOLOGIE VON 2 SAM 6*

Hans Walter Wolff (11.12.1911 - 22.10.1993) zum Gedächtnis

ABSTRACT

*2 Sam 6 consists of several layers of tradition. The earliest part was a legend on the death of Ussiah (vv. 3*4.6.7*) which emphasizes the holiness of God and the ark. This legend was transformed into a David-story through the addition of v. 2*, in which form David is criticized for attempting to bring the ark (originally from the northern kingdom) to Jerusalem with the help of Judean nobles. Vv. 9-12 place primary attention on Davids' repentance. During the post-exilic period the text was first enlarged by vv. 15.17-19*. David, portrayed as the ideal priest, brings the ark to Jerusalem in a triumphal procession. In the "Michal-episode" vv. 14.16.20-22, David properly submits to Yahweh, while Michal stresses honor; for this criticism of David, she is punished with barrenness. The final redaction (vv. 3a*. 13) lays stronger accent on the triumphal procession as a ritual.*

Frans du T Laubscher (University of the Orange Free State)

EPIPHANY AND SUN MYTHOLOGY IN ZECHARIAH 14

ABSTRACT

In apocalyptic eschatology the focus on Yahweh as Divine Warrior who commands his heavenly army is prominent. Zch 14:1-5, which depicts the conquering of Jerusalem by the nations and the epiphany of Yahweh, is an example of apocalyptic eschatology where the post-exilic author utilises archaic literary traditions. The author's representation of the ritual pattern of the conflict myth includes, inter alia, the motive of conflict and victory of the Divine Warrior and the epiphany which is embodied in verses 3-5. Yahweh's victory will result in the cosmic order being restored and the inauguration of his universal kingdom. It is argued in this article that Yahweh's march to Jerusalem, according to Zch 14:3-5, and the new order established in this new age need be interpreted within the context of the east/west orientation in the ancient Near East and the relevance of the sun mythology as it is attested in the literature of Israel's neighbours and in the Old Testament.

J A Naudé (University of the Orange Free State)

THE ASYMMETRY OF SUBJECT PRONOUNS AND SUBJECT NOUNS IN QUMRAN HEBREW AND COGNATES'

ABSTRACT

The focus is on the one hand on the asymmetry in the distribution of subject pronouns and nouns and on the other hand on the difference regarding this asymmetry among Qumran Hebrew and its cognates, namely Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew. Verbs in these languages differentiate into verb forms which allow null subjects. With null subject verb forms of Qumran Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew, subject pronouns are restricted to appear only in a preverbal position of clauses, whereas subject nouns are likely to appear in preverbal and postverbal positions. With verb forms which do not allow null subjects, subject pronouns appear preverbal as well as postverbal. However, it seems that Biblical Hebrew does not fit these distributional properties. With verb forms that allow null subjects no obvious distinction in the distribution of subject pronouns and subject nouns is observed. In line with a principle and parameter approach, the suggestion is that the asymmetry and difference can be correlated. In fact it is showed that the asymmetry can be deduced from a null subject parameter and the differences in the asymmetry from the movement options of the verb.

S Mittmann (University of Tubingen)

DER RUFENDE IM FEUER (AMOS 7:4)

ABSTRACT

In the introductory verse of the second vision of Amos (Am 7:4-6), the words קֹרֵא *לָרִב בָּאֵשׁ ("Someone called for (legal) dispute by fire") in the Masoretic text do not make adequate sense. The recent attempt (U Ruterswôrden) to justify the reading* רִב *by appealing to the penal sentences of Assyrian treaties is also unsatisfying because neither the category of the treaty nor the individual penalty of fire in case of failure to honour a contract fits with the threatened catastrophe of the vision - the consumption of the "great flood" by fire. The vocalisation of the problematic* לָרִב *should be changed to the final infinitive ("Someone called for 'becoming great' in the fire"). The statement can easily be explained by the way of the OT concept of the theophany, in which Jahwe, appearing in the medium of fire, comes to judge or to effectively proclaim his word of judgement. Also in the vision of Amos does the one who calls, i.e. Yahweh, remain hidden in the fire, just as he does in the flames of the burning bush (Ex 3:2-4); and his call is addressed to the fire, which is commanded to grow to a size adequate to the "great flood".*

BOOK REVIEW

R D Haak, *Habakkuk*. (*VTSup*). Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1992, pp. 177 (ISSN 0083-5889; ISBN 9004095063).

This study is a revision of the author's Ph.D. thesis completed in 1986 at the University of Chicago Divinity School under the supervision of the late Gösta Ahlström.

The interpretation of this prophetic book has always been one of the most problematic of the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. Divergencies exist, for example, with regard to its historical setting and the identity of "the wicked" (רָשָׁע) and "the righteous" (צַדִּיק) who figure so prominently right through the book. But it is not merely historical issues which cause problems; there are also other unsolved form-critical and text-critical matters on which there is no scholarly accord. It is against this background that the contribution of Haak should especially be welcomed because he sets out to address exactly these questions.

He starts off with a text-critical and form-critical examination. With regard to the text-critical tradition behind the text, Haak claims that "the general conclusion must be that the *consonantal* tradition reflected in the MT lies behind the other traditions and that the readings of the MT are usually equal or superior to the other Hebrew readings" (p. 5 My emphasis). He also devotes a few pages to the literary genre of the text. The interrelationship between the different literary units (the pronouncements in Chapters 1-2 and the theophany in Chapter 3) is one of the vexed issues in the scholarly debate on this book. Traditionally the text has been divided into three broad categories: the complaints found in 1:2-2:4(5), the woe oracles in 2:6-19 and a psalm in 3:2-19. Haak does not agree with these delineations and argues that the entire book is in the form of a complaint. In order to fit all the different literary elements to this pattern, he comes up with a few ingenious solutions which can, however, not be accepted.

The second part (which comprises more or less half of the book) is devoted to "Translation and Notes". This is a very valuable section of the study since it could serve as a compendium of the results of critical scholarship on the book up to now.

In a final chapter, building on his form-critical analysis, he sets himself the task of placing the prophecy within a particular historical setting in Judah towards the end of the seventh century BCE He reasons that the choice of the form of the complaint with its various expansions within the book may provide a starting point for answers to historical questions. Fundamental to his whole exercise is the determination of the identity of the antagonist(s) (רָשָׁע: 1:4,13)

and the protagonist(s) (צַדִּיק:1:4,13;2:4) for which a large number of candidates have been proposed so far. Haak finds an important hint in 1:4 for establishing the identity of the צַדִּיק. This figure was responsible for the maintenance of the law (מִשְׁפָּט) in society, which points to the fact that he could only be a royal figure. If this is the case, says Haak, then "the wicked" (רָשָׁע) is also a royal figure who supplanted "the righteous ruler" (צַדִּיק). After having conducted an extensive examination into the socio-political circumstances in Judah towards the end of the seventh century, he concludes "that the best solution is to understand the antagonists (רָשָׁע) as Jehoiakim *and* those who placed him in power and encouraged him in an anti-Babylonian stance" (p. 138). The protagonists (צַדִּיק) are identified with King Jehoahaz, with Habakkuk as one of his group of supporters. Evidence of such a pro-Babylonian stance Haak detects in 1:6-9. The conflict between these two groups is evident right through the book, which suggests 605-603 BCE as the most likely setting for this prophecy.

But to carry out such a form-critical analysis and arrive at this historical scenario for the book, Haak has to deviate from the traditional understanding of certain passages in a number of cases. Central to his argument are 1:6bβ and 1:9aα which he renders as "in order to dispossess the one whose dwellings are not his own" and "The whole (host) comes for the violent one", respectively, to illustrate Habakkuk's pro-Babylonian stance. Such a translation of 1:6bβ can be criticised on several grounds. Firstly, it is clear that the relative אֲשֶׁר was omitted from the phrase, as Haak suggests, but he gives no indication exactly where in the sentence it was left out. If it was between לָרֶשֶׁת and מִשְׁכָּנוֹת, which would amount to a very awkward syntactical construction, one would have expected a third person pronominal suffix attached to מִשְׁכָּנוֹת. If it is, however, between מִשְׁכָּנוֹת and לֹא־לוֹ, which is suggested by the examples which he listed (Gen 15:13 and Jer 5:19), then the only possible rendering is the traditional: "in order to seize dwellings not belonging to him". לוֹ refers accordingly not to the רָשָׁע ("wicked ruler") in 1:4, but to the Chaldeans (1:6aα).

Secondly, another point of criticism relating to Haak's translation of this phrase is also on a semantic-syntactic level: in a context where there are abundant references to the Chaldeans by way of the definitive article, the adjective and participles in the singular (הַגּוֹי , הַמַּר , וְהַנִּמְהָר, הַהוֹלֵךְ) it would be very strange if the pronominal suffix in לוֹ should point back to an object mentioned several phrases earlier (1:4).

A further problematic translation is proposed for 1:9aα, which is likewise of fundamental importance in Haak's reconstruction of the literary genre of the complaint and his claim regarding the historical setting of the prophecy: "The whole (host) comes for the violent one" (כֻּלֹּה לְחָמָס יָבוֹא). The customary understanding of this prophetic utterance is that the Chaldeans are the subjects of the action of חָמָס ("violence"). Since Haak proceeds from the consonantal text, he repoints the MT חָמָס as participle חֹמֵס, ("the violent one") which would make sense grammatically but, if accepted, will be the only

attestation in the Hebrew Bible of this root in a nominal sense. In congruence with his translation suggested in 1:6, Haak then asserts that "the violent one" is yet another reference to "the wicked" figure (Jehoiakim) first mentioned in 1:4 and again in 1:6. But, if evidence of "the wicked ruler" could not be found in 1:6, then the same can be said of this text. The third person reference is still to the Chaldeans first mentioned in 1:6 and the traditional translation as "His whole host comes for violence" must therefore be upheld.

These points of critique on his translations of 1:6bβ and 1:9aα also have implications for his form-critical analysis of this pericope. The Chaldeans were not the saviours, as he propounds, but the aggressors. Consequently Chapter 1:5-6 and 1:7-11 could form-critically not be typified as oracles of "salvation" and "certainty", respectively. Both are integral parts of the oracle of judgment.

Linking up with his earlier interpretations of 1:6 and 1:9, Haak continues to connect the second complaint (which according to his form-critical analysis runs from 1:13 to 2:1) with "the wicked ruler" described in the first complaint (1:2-4). If, however, his discovery of "the wicked ruler" in 1:6,9 is untenable, then the same argument applies to the passage 1:14-17, which is not an allusion to the actions of "the supporters of the illegitimate king" (p. 138). The only possible candidates fit for this portrayal are still the Babylonians. If this is true, then Haak's interpretation of the woe oracles in 2:5-20 which, in line with his previous viewpoints, "highlight(s) the arrogance and wickedness of Jehoiakim and his supporters..." (p. 139), also needs revision.

In sum, it is clear that consensus on important issues in this prophetic book has not yet been reached. Haak, nevertheless, deserves our heartiest thanks for his contribution and especially for the fact that he did not hesitate to challenge longstanding solutions of traditional exegesis to some intricate matters in Habakkuk. That's the only way the progress of critical scholarship is guaranteed.

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