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Joshua Berman (Bar-Ilan University)

**“THE POLES OF YOUR YOKE” (LEV 26:13):
MUDBRICK BEARING AND THE CAREER OF A
BIBLICAL METAPHOR**

ABSTRACT

The yoke as a metaphor for political suppression is well-attested in the writings of the ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible. Puzzling, however, are instances where the metaphor is expressed as “the poles of the yoke” (Lev 26:13; Ezek 34:27) or, simply, “the poles” as the yoke of a draft animal is comprised of a single pole. This study interprets the appearance of this phrase, in Lev 26:13, in light of representations of mudbrick transport found in the Eighteenth Dynasty funerary chapel of the vizier Rekhmire. The study investigates Ezekiel's invocations of this trope of a yoke of many poles and explores the dynamics that governed how later writers reuse metaphors and adapt them within a new context.

Idan Breier (Bar-Ilan University)

ANIMAL METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN BIBLICAL PROPHECIES AND ROYAL MESOPOTAMIAN INSCRIPTIONS

ABSTRACT

This article examines the use of faunal images to describe enemies in the biblical prophetic literature and Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions. Both sets of texts reflect the close interaction between humans and animals during this period, the prophets adopting metaphors from nature in order to depict the threat of invasion if Israel remains unrepentant and the Mesopotamian scribes employing them in order to present their masters as great warlords in the eyes of the gods and elite. The findings suggest that – as might be expected – those animals that pose a danger to human beings (lions, wild oxen, wolves, leopards, snakes, raptors, etc.) symbolize the imperial armies, those perceived as weaker (sheep, goats) their victims. Likewise, those who flee (e.g., mongooses, foxes, fish, birds, etc.) represent adversaries on the run.

Christian Stadel (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

**Š (< *Ś) IN SAMARITAN HEBREW (AND
PHOENICIAN?)**

ABSTRACT

*In the Samaritan reading tradition, original *ś is realised as /š/. In this article, I review the previous explanations for this phonological peculiarity, viz. a merger *ś, š > š or a spelling pronunciation. I find that there is little to support the merger hypothesis (and that the assumption of the same merger in Phoenician also rests on very shaky ground), and that a spelling pronunciation is a more likely explanation of the Samaritan phenomenon.*

*Hermann-Josef Stipp (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München /
Stellenbosch University)*

DIE VERBALE REPRÄSENTATION GEZÄHLTER VERGANGENER WIEDERHOLUNGEN IM BIBELHEBRÄISCHEN

Für Christo van der Merwe zum 65. Geburtstag am 21. März 2022

ABSTRACT

For speakers of tense-prominent languages, the aspect-prominent character of the Biblical Hebrew verbal system is especially manifest in the description of repeated past processes because these are frequently phrased through forms of the imperfective inversion pair (Inversionspaar). However, this does not apply to counted repetitions which, according to their verbal representation, are assigned to the perfective aspect. Yet counted repetitions form only a particularly explicit special case of boundedness: As comparisons with temporarily bounded repetitions demonstrate, it is the boundedness (or definiteness) as such that constitutes the perfectivity.

Der aspektprominente Charakter des bibelhebräischen Verbalsystems zeigt sich für Sprecher tempusprominenter Sprachen besonders deutlich an wiederholten vergangenen Sachverhalten, für die trotz ihrer präteritalen Zeitstufe häufig die Glieder des imperfektiven Inversionspaars eintreten. Dies gilt jedoch nicht für gezählte Wiederholungen, die nach Ausweis ihrer verbalen Repräsentation dem perfektiven Aspekt zugeordnet werden. Gezählte Wiederholungen bilden indes nur einen besonders expliziten Sonderfall der Begrenzung: Wie der Vergleich mit zeitlich limitierten Wiederholungen zeigt, ist es die Definitheit bzw. Begrenztheit (boundedness) als solche, die die Perfektivität konstituiert.

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Lucas J Whitson (Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

**IS PSALM 68 INHERENTLY COHESIVE?
FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND HEBREW PSALMS**

ABSTRACT

Oft uncritically cited Albright questioned the literary cohesion of the sixty-eighth psalm. The present paper applies a modern definition of literary cohesion by applying Halliday's Functionalist framework to the Hebrew poem. Specifically, elements of conjunction, reference, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion are closely scrutinized. Though several issues related to the psalm's orthography, canonical placement, and theological contribution remain unaddressed by the present paper the investigative approach below discovers that previous assessments of disunity in Psalm 68 have been overstated.

BOOK REVIEW

Van Ess, M (ed.) 2021. *Uruk – Altorientalische Metropole und Kulturzentrum: Beiträge zum 8. Internationalen Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 25. und 26. April 2013, Berlin* (CDOG 8). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 495 pages. ISBN 978-3-447-11368-7. €78.00.

From 25 April – 8 September 2013, the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin housed the exhibition *Uruk: 5000 Jahre Megacity* (*Uruk: 5000 Years of the Megacity*) to mark the 100th anniversary of archaeological excavations at Uruk. Accompanying the exhibition was a book of the same name (Crüsemann *et al.* 2013). An English version of this book was published in 2019, language edited by Timothy Potts (Crüsemann *et al.* 2019). The contributions were of a high quality, but the book itself was for more general consumption, and served as a sort of catalogue to the exhibition.

To mark the opening of the *Uruk: 5000 Jahre Megacity* exhibition, on 25 and 26 April 2013, the Deutschen-Orient Gesellschaft (DOG) held their 8th International Colloquium. The papers read at this colloquium formed the scientific framework for the *Uruk: 5000 Jahre Megacity* exhibition, and therefore all dealt with some aspect related to Uruk. The book under review constitutes the proceedings of this colloquium. Pascal Butterlin, Ricardo Eichmann, Margarete van Ess, Eckart Frahm, Hans J Nissen, Walther Sallaberger, and Helga Vogel all have contributions in both books – *Uruk: 5000 Jahre Megacity* and *Uruk: Altorientalische Metropole und Kulturzentrum* – but the present work is much more stringently scientific.

As Nissen (p. 297) notes, the name of the city of Uruk is also the name of the earliest archaeological phase of city formation in ancient Western Asia – the Uruk Period of the 4th millennium BCE, and the Uruk culture. Uruk the city, as well as the Uruk culture and the Uruk Period are dealt with in various chapters in this book. Textual, archaeological and art historical sources are all addressed.

The so-called “Uruk expansion” (see e.g., Algaze 2005) refers to the spread of Uruk cultural traits across ancient Western Asia during the fourth millennium BCE. The presence of such cultural traits at various sites are discussed by Alizadeh (Susiana), Frangipane (South Eastern Anatolia, focusing on Arslantepe and Zeytinli), Helwig (the Central Iranian Plateau, particularly from Arisman), and McMahon (Tell Brak in Northern Mesopotamia). These contributions reveal that the situation is much more

complex than previously assumed, and they repeatedly call into question the underpinnings of the concept of an “Uruk expansion”.

Cuneiform culture at Uruk, and the city as a centre of learning are also dealt with. Frahm gives an overview of cuneiform culture at the site from the fourth until the first millennium BCE. Lönert and Meinhold both discuss Inana, the city goddess of Uruk. Lönert discusses this goddess’s relationship with Dumuzi and with kings and the interplay between these in texts, while Meinhold discusses the relationship between Inana and Nanaya. Ossendrijver discusses astral science at Uruk from the Neo-Babylonian until the Seleucid Period of the first millennium BCE. Sallaberger’s contribution is wide-ranging, discussing (historical) kings who inhabited Uruk, and the deities who were thought to inhabit the city during the third millennium BCE.

Butterlin and Eichmann discuss aspects of the monumental architecture of Uruk during the fourth and third millennia BCE respectively. Van Ess, in a highly technical article, discusses the topographical development of Uruk during the fourth and third millennia BCE. In a contribution which focuses primarily on textual, rather than archaeological evidence, Kleber discusses the Eanna Temple during the Late Babylonian Period.

The history of Uruk is also discussed by Nissen (from the Uruk until the Akkadian Period), Charpin (Old Babylonian Period), and Tenney (Kassite Period). Sallaberger’s contribution also touches on the Early Dynastic rulers of Uruk, and Ossendrijver’s chapter touches on the history of Uruk during the first millennium BCE.

Two chapters focus on art historical sources. Vidale, Bianchi and Usai discuss their reconstruction and the ancient history of the famous alabaster “Warka Vase”. Vogel discusses the iconographic motif of the *Schilfringbündel* (ring-post with streamer) during the late Uruk/Jemdet Nasr Period.

A great variety of topics relating to Uruk – as both a city and as a cultural phenomenon – are therefore discussed. Due to the wide-ranging nature of the contributions, I will make only some general observations. All the contributions are of a very high standard. However, while reading this volume I was repeatedly struck by our modern ignorance of the site and the period. For example, Butterlin notes that we do not know what the functions were of the buildings in Eanna during the Uruk Period. Indeed, he suggests that the only buildings in Uruk which functioned as temples at the end of the fourth millennium BCE were the *Steingebäude* and the *Riemchengebäude*, and that all the other buildings likely had secular

functions. He further suggests that Inana was worshipped not in the Eanna Precinct, but in what we call the Anu Precinct (p. 71-72). In a similar vein, Vidale, Bianchi and Usai provide a thought-provoking discussion on the possible ancient history of the Warka Vase and what this may suggest about historical and religious changes which occurred with each “destructive event” related to the Vase – an item most readers of this volume will think they know quite well. The lack of knowledge and understanding should not be taken as a criticism, but rather as an indication of how much there is still to do, and how many possibilities there are for future research.

The contributions cover nearly all aspects related to Uruk. Perhaps the most obvious gap is the exclusion of a contribution dedicated to the mythical rulers of Uruk. While there are references to Enmerkar, Lugalbanda and Gilgameš throughout the volume, and while Sallaberger gives brief overviews of Lugalbanda as the spouse of Ninsumun (p. 358-359) and to Gilgameš as a god at Uruk (p. 359), the volume may have benefited from a more thorough analysis of these three rulers and their ties with Uruk.

Because this volume has been published eight years after the colloquium, it does suffer somewhat from the exclusion of more recent research. Most of the contributions do not include sources published after 2013-2014, and when they do, these are usually works published by the author (either in the capacity of author or as editor). This becomes problematic when the exclusion of more recent research impacts an argument. For example, Vogel’s catalogue is missing a handful of examples of the *Schilfringbündel* (for a full treatment of the *Schilfringbündel* or ring-post with streamer, see Van Dijk-Coombes 2023:21-35 *et passim*, 217-234), perhaps the most notable of which is the remains of a copper *Schilfringbündel* which was excavated at the small annex of the *Steinstiftgebäude* (Eichmann 2013:121, 123 Abb. 16.7). Although this dates to Uruk V, rather than the Uruk IV/III period which Vogel examines, it constitutes an actual *Schilfringbündel* from an archaeological context, and it should have been mentioned. The exclusion is most likely due to its publication in 2013.

The volume is well illustrated, especially those contributions which are based on the material culture, whether the sources are archaeological or iconographic. But some figures, particularly those representing plans, are too small to make sense of them. See, especially p. 57, Fig. 1 where five plans are presented together on only one page.

Despite minor quibbles such as these, the contributions are of a very high quality and are by experts in their respective fields. Frahm (p. 159)

mentions the Old Babylonian name Uruk-liblut, “May Uruk live”. The present volume surely allows just that.

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