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Krzysztof J Baranowski (University of Toronto)

A NEW ATTESTATION OF THE CANAANITE H STEM IN THE AMARNA LETTERS: NA-RI-I[Q] (EA 88:36)

ABSTRACT

The problematic verbal form in the Amarna letter 88:36 should be read na-ri-i[q], derived from the common Semitic root R.Y.Q (“to be empty”), and parsed as first pers. pl. yaqtul of the Canaanite H causative stem. This form constitutes an important piece of historical evidence in favour of the vowel pattern /a-i/ in the prefix conjugation of the H stem in Early Canaanite.

Galia Hataav (University of Florida)

MARKING DISCOURSE TOPIC IN BIBLICAL HEBREW: PART ONE

ABSTRACT

Linguists have argued that for a text to be coherent it has to have a common topic, usually referred to as discourse topic (DT). It has been observed that languages make use of linguistic devices to mark the DT of a text, or a shift from a current one thereof. In this (two part) paper, I show that biblical Hebrew makes use of its verbal aspect system to introduce a new DT or mark a shift from an old one. In particular, one of the qatal and yiqtol forms' functions is shown to be marking DTs in the narrative and the modal material, respectively. To introduce a DT of a list biblical Hebrew uses a nominal clause.

Nadav Na'aman (Tel Aviv University)

A נִיר FOR DAVID IN JERUSALEM

ABSTRACT

The article discusses the significance of the term נִיר that is mentioned three times in the Book of Kings. It first examines the suggested interpretations offered by scholars, and concludes that none of them satisfactorily explain the meaning of the term. It then suggests that נִיר means a “cultivated field” that is prepared for sowing. Just as the field is cultivated and prepared for sowing, so Jerusalem, the seat of David's dynasty, is prepared for the reign of the upcoming lineage of royal offspring (“seeds”). The author deliberately integrated the three references of נִיר in places that convey his message of the everlasting reign of David's dynasty, as expressed in Nathan's oracle to David in 2 Sam 7:11b-12.

Aron Pinker (Silver Spring, Maryland, USA)

METAPHORIC SYNONYMY OF “TONGUE-SWORD” IN JOB 5:15 AND 21

ABSTRACT:

In addition to the generally noted difficulties in Job 5:15 and 21, the two verses also contain textual incongruities, or rare term-associations. This study suggests that the author exploited metaphoric synonymy of the words “sword” and “tongue” to create the textual incongruities for a purpose. This approach also provides useful insights into the more generally recognized textual difficulties and leads to a reasonable understanding of vv. 5:15 and 21. Modern exegesis may have been unduly swayed by later sensitivity to slander and the consequent interpretation of these verses.

Christo H J van der Merwe (University of Stellenbosch)

THE INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE RECONSIDERED: REVIEW ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

*Traditional grammars intuitively sensed the different meanings the infinitive **absolute** construction could express. They realised that context must be carefully considered to determine which element of meaning is being profiled. Kim (2009) and Callaham (2010) introduced insights from modern linguistics that paved the way towards a somewhat more sophisticated approach to describing the infinitive absolute construction. In the current study, the contribution of these two authors is reviewed critically; their insights are then refined. It is pointed out that once one fully appreciates the specifying nature of the infinitive absolute, it helps one to acknowledge some of the explanatory value of the insights stemming from cognitive semantics for better understanding the infinitive absolute construction. According to the principle of iconicity, it is possible to postulate a concrete meaning for the repetition of the verbal root. In terms of the notion of radial shifts, plausible shifts of meaning from concrete to abstract are thereafter postulated. Insight into the polysemous senses of the construction requires that the information structure of each instantiation of the infinitive absolute construct be carefully considered in order to establish which aspect of the construction’s semantic potential is profiled.*

Wido van Peursen (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

PARTICIPANT REFERENCE IN GENESIS 37

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the various ways in which participants are introduced and referred to in Genesis 37. It investigates how a linguistic approach to participant reference can help addressing exegetical questions and how it interacts with other historical-critical, as well as synchronic, literary approaches. Its starting point is the model for the description of participant reference developed by Runge and tests its applicability to the Genesis chapter under discussion. To account for the various usages attested in the Hebrew Bible, it is obligatory to distinguish between various types of encoding (including under- and overencoding) and diverse types of participants (including “central” and “main” participant).

Herrie F van Rooy (North-West University)

THE HEADINGS OF PSALMS 73-82 IN THE COMMENTARY OF DIONYSIUS BAR SALIBI

ABSTRACT

In 2004 Ryan published a critical edition of Psalms 73-82 in the commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi. He indicates where Bar Salibi depended on other commentaries, such as the shorter and longer commentaries of Athanasius in Syriac and the commentaries of Daniel of Salah and Isho'dad of Merw. Ryan did not pay special attention to the headings in the factual commentary of Bar Salibi. A comparison of these headings with the East Syriac headings makes it clear that they reflect the East Syriac tradition as it appears in commentaries such as Denha-Gregory and Sachau 215. Bar Salibi's headings were not derived from East Syriac psalm manuscripts or the commentary of Isho'dad of Merw, on which his factual commentary frequently depends.

BOOK REVIEWS

Stromberg, J 2011. *Isaiah After Exile. The Author of Third Isaiah as Reader and Redactor of the Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 13: 978-0-19-959391-0.

The study of the composition and redaction of the book of Isaiah is nothing new. As Jacob Stromberg's book *Isaiah After Exile: The Author of Third Isaiah as Reader and Redactor of the Book* itself demonstrates, his work is situated in a long line of Isaiah and redaction scholars. Stromberg's book stands out as a welcome compliment of Hugh Williamson's (Stromberg's *Doktorvater*) groundbreaking work *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (1994). As a corrective to the consensus' tripartite Isaiah theory, Williamson demonstrated that while Isaiah is indeed a composite work, the portion of Isaiah labeled "Second-Isaiah" never had an independent existence from First-Isaiah, but rather was written as a continuation of what is now the first part of the book. In contrast to Williamson's work on the beginning portions of Isaiah, Stromberg's book focuses on the final compositional additions and redaction of Isaiah. Williamson's influence is evident in Stromberg's careful and logical analysis of the text of Isaiah and Stromberg's work perhaps even supersedes the other's in its structural clarity.

Stromberg's main thesis is that through understanding the author of Third-Isaiah's hermeneutic (i.e. how he read antecedent texts), one can also identify where he was active as a redactor. This thesis is demonstrated and defended through attentive argumentation presented in three sections, each of which contains two chapters. The first section evaluates the composition of Third-Isaiah and singles out the latest compositional layer of Isaiah. The second section identifies the author's hermeneutic by evaluating how he received earlier texts in his own composition. The third section subsequently identifies the places where the hand of Third-Isaiah is evident as a redactor in First-Isaiah and Second-Isaiah.

In the first section, Stromberg evaluates previous theories on the formation and composition of Isaiah 56-66. In Chapter 1, Stromberg pieces together a picture of an earlier Third-Isaiah nucleus surrounded by a later frame through a careful assessment of the merit and shortfalls of various arguments. Having confirmed the scholarly consensus of the earliest portions (Chapters 60-62) and the latest portions (56:1-8 and 65-66) of the book of Third-Isaiah, Stromberg continues in Chapter 2 to evaluate whether the latest compositional pieces are themselves a composite or whether they are comprised of a unified whole. Stromberg concludes that both framing sections are composed by the same hand and identifies the composer of 56:1-8 and 65-66 as the author of Third-Isaiah. His definition of author thus includes not only new composition, but also the compiling and redaction of older materials which lead to the

final form of Third-Isaiah (p. 68).

The second section determines the hermeneutic of Third-Isaiah through an analysis of Isa 56:1-8 in Chapter 3 and 65-66 in Chapter 4. Stromberg accomplishes this by identifying allusions to and influence from older parts of Isaiah, reasoning that “while allusion and influence do not constitute reading proper, they are traces of it – fragments left on the surface of the text illuminating the reading habits of an individual long since lost” (p. 69). Based on his analysis, Stromberg concludes that: (1) it is undeniable that Third-Isaiah read earlier Isaiah materials, (2) Third-Isaiah continued and developed these earlier texts in his own work, and (3) Third-Isaiah affirmed older promises, but read them through his own “hermeneutic” of reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked (p. 114).

Section Three takes the information gleaned from his analysis in the previous two sections to establish areas in which Third-Isaiah might have had a hand in redacting First-Isaiah (Chapter 5) and Second-Isaiah (Chapter 6). He highlights that passages from First- or Second-Isaiah that were alluded to in Third-Isaiah often indicate signs of redaction themselves. These redactions, in turn, develop the text of First- and Second-Isaiah with the same hermeneutic as that found in Third-Isaiah, suggesting that the composition and redaction are from the same hand.

Stromberg's careful work is commendable on multiple levels. In his book, each step carefully and logically builds on the previous argument. This book therefore cannot be used as a reference tool, but must be read in its entirety (although he does provide useful bibliographic and biblical reference indexes at the back). Because of the complexity of his material, Stromberg helpfully summarizes each step as he proceeds to his next argument, enabling the reader to remain focused on the ultimate goal of the project. Also, rather than reinventing the wheel, Stromberg often refers the reader to other works to supplement his own argument, thus simplifying the reading process.

He is cautious to keep his categories clear and precise. For example: he differentiates between allusion and influence in Third-Isaiah; he carefully determines direction of dependence when evaluating redactional theories; and he makes distinction between lexical parallels created by the same author and lexical parallels created by the reuse of antecedent material. This clarity and precision enables Stromberg to tie up any possible loose ends without losing sight of his overall thesis.

Beyond those simply interested in the formation of Isaiah, *Isaiah After Exile* is an excellent example of methodology for those working in Hebrew Bible studies in general. For example, his evaluation of redaction highlights the importance of understanding compositional categories such as allusion and influence when suggesting redactional theories. He also demonstrates the importance of considering the larger context of a borrowed locution when evaluating allusions.

Jacob Stromberg's *Isaiah After Exile* is an excellent contribution to Isaiah

scholarship in particular and Hebrew Bible studies in general.

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