The *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* (ISSN 0259-0131) is published half-yearly

*JNSL* is an accredited South African journal. It publishes peer reviewed research articles on the Ancient Near East. As part of the peer review policy all contributions are refereed before publication by scholars who are recognised as experts in the particular field of study.

**Contributions and books for review should be sent to**
The Editor: *JNSL*
Department of Ancient Studies
Stellenbosch University
Private Bag X1, Matieland, ZA-7602
SOUTH AFRICA
e-mail: ancient7@sun.ac.za

**Subscriptions should be sent to the same address but marked as**
Subscription: *JNSL*

**Copyright**
Department of Ancient Studies, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch,
SOUTH AFRICA

**House rules**
Articles submitted for publication must be according to the house rules on the homepage

*JNSL* homepage (house rules, contents, subscription)
http://academic.sun.ac.za/jnsl/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per Invoice</th>
<th>€ 65.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO ORDER: Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</td>
<td>$ 70.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send an e-mail to Ms L C Swanepoel (<a href="mailto:ancient7@sun.ac.za">ancient7@sun.ac.za</a>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booksellers</td>
<td>- 30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further subscription information:
E-mail Ms L C Swanepoel (ancient7@sun.ac.za)
CONTENTS

Articles

Pancratius C Beentjes, “Remember There is One Who Exalts and Humbles” (Ben Sir 7:11): “Putting Down” (ﺷ(Pointer)שא / ταπεινώω) and “Lifting Up” (רז(Pointer)ם / ἀνυψώω) in the Book of Ben Sira 1-17

Rodrigo F de Sousa, Theological Ameliorative Translations in LXX Isaiah 6 19-39

Philip D Foster, Is Everything “Beautiful” or “Appropriate” in its Time? יָפֶה and Semantic Change 41-55

Péter Jenei, Subjugating and Exploiting the Second-class Population of the Ancient Israelite State: The Case of Forced Labour (מַס) in Light of the Population Economy of Ancient Israel 57-72

Gideon R Kotzé, Holding Up a Hand-mill in Lamentations 5:13: A Fresh Interpretation of the Debated Reading in the Hebrew Texts 73-87

Daniel J Wilson, Wayhî and Theticity in Biblical Hebrew 89-118

Book List 119

Addresses of Authors 121
“REMEMBER THERE IS ONE WHO EXALTS AND HUMBLES” (BEN SIR 7:11): “PUTTING DOWN” (שפל / ταπεινώω) AND “LIFTING UP” (רום / ἀνυψώω) IN THE BOOK OF BEN SIRA

ABSTRACT
Whereas the notions of “putting down” and “lifting up” together are used about fifty times in the Book of Ben Sira, up to date an overview of passages in which these verbs occur is missing. This essay will be a first step to fill up this lacuna, focusing on God, and Lady Wisdom as agents. As to God’s activities, these verbs are specifically found at key moments: about theodicy and relating to important biblical figures. Lady Wisdom’s activities are only found in Ben Sira 1-24 with no link to the verb “to put down”.

1. INTRODUCTION
In an analysis of Sir 33:7-15, Wicke-Reuter (2000:251 n. 132) is surprised that there is no publication dealing with the notions of “putting down” and “lifting up” that are so widespread in the Book of Ben Sira. This essay will be a first step to meet her wishes focusing on passages in which God, and Lady Wisdom are agents of these verbs.

2. GOD AS AGENT
2.1 “To lift up” and “to put down” used together
There are just two passages in the Book of Ben Sira in which “to lift up” and “to put down” appear together, either as a word pair or in parallelism:

2.1.1 Sir 7:11b

The introductory formula זכר כי is an important sign that the subsequent statement falls back on an existing, but above all well-known theme from Israel’s tradition. And indeed, there are two passages in the Hebrew Bible which, with the help of the same verbs, bring up the theme that it is God who puts down and lifts up:

1 Even in case זכר would not be original, since it is missing both in Greek and in Syriac, כי still functions as an introductory particle; see Beentjes (1981:31-38).
THEOLOGICAL AMELIORATIVE TRANSLATIONS IN LXX ISAIAH 6

ABSTRACT

This article argues that LXX Isaiah 6 displays certain “theological ameliorative” renderings that change the sense of the text in relation to its Hebrew counterpart. These ameliorations include avoiding anthropomorphisms, heightening divine uniqueness, greatness and transcendence, among other elements. Seen in the broader context of the translator’s overall approach, these transformations may be conscious or accidental, but even when apparently deliberate, do not seem to presuppose a desire to alter the meaning of the original text, but to communicate it. They are prompted by cues found in the text itself and are shaped by the translator’s own interpretive milieu. The analysis could contribute to the discussion about the place of LXX Isaiah in a “theology of the Septuagint”.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are small but significant differences between the extant Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) texts of Isaiah 6. Some interest has been devoted to LXX Isa 6:9-13, particularly in connection with the use of these verses in the New Testament, most notably by Evans (1989:61-68). However, there is room for systematic exegetical studies of the ensemble of chapter 6 in Greek. This article seeks to fill this gap. The delimitation of the pericope as spanning the entire chapter is justified by the fact that it represents a coherent, self-contained unit, with clearly distinguishable limits within the flow of the book of Isaiah. In spite of important divergences in their understanding of the composition of the passage and its function in the book, modern commentators unanimously highlight that it occupies a distinctive place, as shown most recently by Williamson (2018).

The exegetical comparison between the MT and LXX versions of Isaiah 6 allows us to see their differences in light of the particular characteristics of the translator’s approach, such as the attempt to convey the meaning of the original clearly while producing an idiomatically good text in Greek, with attention to the conventions of Hellenistic literature. We can also detect certain liberty regarding the form and content of the Hebrew text, here manifested primarily in the form of “theological ameliorative translations”, that is, renderings that alter the content of the original text to
Philip D Foster (University of Edinburgh)

IS EVERYTHING “BEAUTIFUL” OR “APPROPRIATE” IN ITS TIME? יָפֶה AND SEMANTIC CHANGE

ABSTRACT

In 1995, Gad Sarfatti published a chapter in Studies in Ancient Hebrew Semantics titled “Mishnaic Vocabulary and Mishnaic Literature as Tools for the Study of Biblical Semantics”. In his chapter, Sarfatti demonstrated that Mishnaic Hebrew can be a helpful tool for the study of biblical semantics. In that spirit, this paper highlights the value of examining linguistic convention and language change between the biblical text and the Mishnah for the purpose of exegesis before applying Mishnaic definitions. This is demonstrated using יָפֶה and its occurrence in Eccl 3:11 and 5:17[18] as a case study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Past studies in the meaning of Biblical Hebrew words have tended towards considering cognate languages and translations in preference to Mishnaic Hebrew. This has led to Mishnaic Hebrew receiving less attention than it deserves. However, the solution cannot be an uncritical use of Mishnaic Hebrew, but rather, one that attends to the realities of linguistic change.

Mishnaic Hebrew is commonly divided into two stages called Tannaitic Hebrew and Amoraic Hebrew. The differences between the Tannaitic and Amoraic literature warrant their treatment as different stages of language (Sarfatti 1995:33 n. 2). Tannaitic Hebrew includes the Hebrew of “the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the halachic midrashim and Seder `Olam Rabba” which were “redacted between 70 CE and 250 CE approximately” (Bar-Asher 1999:116). During this period Mishnaic Hebrew was a spoken language. In contrast the Amoraic literature was formed “from the end of the third century down to about 500 CE in an environment where, in all probability, Aramaic rather than Hebrew was spoken” (Bar-Asher 1999:116). While all Mishnaic Hebrew could be of value in biblical semantics, the Tannaitic texts (being temporally closer) are more likely to

---

1 Some effects of this can be seen in Pérez Fernández’s list of differences between Tannaitic and Amoraic Hebrew, which includes “the enormous Aramaic influence on RH2 [Amoraic Hebrew] in morphology, vocabulary, and grammar, the large number of Graecisms, and a return to biblical vocabulary and constructions” (Pérez Fernández 1997:2).
ABSTRACT

The so-called “forced labour” or “corvée labour” (מַסּ) is a common and widespread institution of the ancient Near East. The Old Testament narratives of the early kingdom extensively refer to the same institution and describe it as a conventional tool of the king to maintain large-scale building projects by imposing forced labour on the subjects, both citizens and strangers alike. However, the biblical accounts related to forced labour witness that the nature and the amount of forced labour extremely hardens when it is imposed on the second-class population of the early Israelite monarchy: 1) second-class citizens (northern Israelites); 2) semi-assimilated residents (גְּרֵים); or 3) non-assimilated strangers (native Canaanites, i.e. נָכְרִים, זָרִים). Although there are detailed studies which treat the topic of forced labour in its ancient Near Eastern and ancient Israelite contexts, yet a study of מַסּ in the Old Testament concerning the above-mentioned population economy is a somewhat neglected angle of the field.

1. INTRODUCTION

What is “forced labour” or “corvée labour”? The basic characteristic of forced labour is that it is not done voluntarily but under compulsion (Wittenberg 2007:84). Soggin outlines a concise definition of forced labour:

We are dealing here with a type of work which was performed by the individual not to earn his living, nor for reasons felt to be of public service. We deal with work to which individuals and communities alike were unrelated and had to be, therefore, forced, because its aims were unimportant or even unknown to them. (Soggin 1982:259, cited by Wittenberg 2007:84)
Gideon R Kotzé (North-West University)

HOLDING UP A HAND-MILL IN LAMENTATIONS 5:13:
A FRESH INTERPRETATION OF THE DEBATED
READING IN THE HEBREW TEXTS

ABSTRACT
The precise meaning of the phrase טחון נשאו in the Hebrew texts of Lam 5:13 remains debated by scholars. The available textual representatives do not preserve alternatives to this reading, and the ancient translations render the passage in different ways. In this contribution, I argue that טחון נשאו is an expression of an image that also appears in another ancient Near Eastern literary writing, Esarhaddon’s letter to the god Aššur. Both texts mention the holding of a hand-mill. In the relevant passages, this tool signifies the humiliating menial labour prisoners of war were often forced to perform. Holding a hand-mill in Esarhaddon’s letter, and the similar action in Lam 5:13, can therefore be taken as prisoner of war images.

1. INTRODUCTION
The ancient Hebrew texts of the five poems in the book of Lamentations preserve many debated readings that demand fresh interpretations from modern readers. Debated readings are words, phrases, and sentences that modern readers find difficult to understand or inappropriate in their literary contexts. Scholars have proposed different solutions to remove the perceived problems from these passages, but without reaching an agreement on how to best explain the disputed readings. One such reading whose meaning scholars continue to debate is the first colon of MT Lam 5:13: בחריכים טחון נשא וע切り בטשלו. The word טחון is a hapax legomenon and the precise sense of the expression נשאו is not clear. The verse is partially preserved in 5QLam², but the surviving words in this manuscript match the MT version and, therefore, do not present an alternative to נשאו. The different renderings of the colon in the ancient translations also do not presuppose substantial variants in their source texts,

1 For the purposes of this study, I use the BHQ edition of MT Lamentations, which is based on Codex Leningradensis (Schäfer 2004:72).
2 (Milik 1962:177).
WAYHÎ AND THETICITY IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

ABSTRACT

Clauses which begin with a form of the verb hyh may belong to one of four types. One of the most common types which is distinguished by its lack of a predicating relationship with other constituents and default 3MS agreement is commonly referred to as a “discourse marker” whose role is to anchor or update reference time. This article provides a different analysis of its syntax and semantics, classifying wayhî as an isolated verb whose role is to signal a thetic utterance. This analysis is supported by the syntax of the construction, the correlation between this construction and thetic constructions in other languages, and the congruence of the discourse contexts in which this construction appears with the discourse functions of thetic utterances cross-linguistically.

1. INTRODUCTION

Clauses which begin with a form of the verb hyh may belong to one of four types. The first type is a simple copular clause in which the verb hyh is used to license a specific tense, aspect, or mood (TAM) as demonstrated in example (1). The verb in these constructions always agrees with its subject in person, number, and gender (PNG).

1. Gen 4:14

\[ \text{wəhāyīṯî nā’ wā - nāḏ bā - ‘āreš} \]

\text{CONJ.COP.IRR.1S stranger.PTCP CONJ -foreigner.PTCP in.ART -land} \\
But I will be a stranger and a foreigner in the land.

In the second type of construction with hyh, the verb carries +telic/-durative aspect and there is also PNG agreement, as in examples (2)-(4).

1 Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Antonio, TX on November 20, 2016 and at the 51st annual meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea at Tallinn University, Estonia on August 30, 2018. Special thanks to Cynthia Miller-Naudé, Jacobus Naudé, Tania Notarius, Lénart de Regt, and Werner Abraham for their comments and suggestions. All mistakes remain entirely my own.