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Pancratius C Beentjes (Tilburg University)

**“REMEMBER THERE IS ONE WHO EXALTS AND
HUMBLES” (BEN SIR 7:11):
“PUTTING DOWN” (שפל / ταπεινώω) AND “LIFTING
UP” (רום / ἀνυψόω) 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”.

Rodrigo F de Sousa (Faculté Jean Calvin)

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”.

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Philip D Foster (University of Edinburgh)

**IS EVERYTHING “BEAUTIFUL” OR “APPROPRIATE” IN
ITS TIME? יָפֵה 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 יָפֵה and its occurrence in Eccl 3:11 and 5:17[18] as a case study.*

Péter Jenei (University of Pretoria)

**SUBJUGATING AND EXPLOITING THE SECOND-
CLASS POPULATION OF THE ANCIENT ISRAELITE
STATE: THE CASE OF FORCED LABOUR (מַזְרָם) IN
LIGHT OF THE POPULATION ECONOMY OF
ANCIENT ISRAEL¹**

ABSTRACT

The so-called “forced labour” or “corvée labour” (מַזְרָם) 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 (מְגֵרִים); or 3) non-assimilated strangers (native Canaanites, i.e. מְגֵרִים, 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 מַזְרָם in the Old Testament concerning the above-mentioned population economy is a somewhat neglected angle of the field.

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.

Daniel J Wilson (University of the Free State)

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 athetic utterance. This analysis is supported by the syntax of the construction, the correlation between this construction andthetic constructions in other languages, and the congruence of the discourse contexts in which this construction appears with the discourse functions ofthetic utterances cross-linguistically.¹