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Stefan Bojowald (Universität Bonn)

EINE ÄGYPTISCHE PARALLELE FÜR MI 7, 18-19

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Beitrag wird die Stelle Mi 7, 18-19 aus einer neuen Perspektive betrachtet. Die Hauptrolle spielt die Versenkung der Sünden im Meer, durch die sich die Allmacht Gottes ausdrückt. Die Vorstellung wird mit einer ägyptischen Parallele verglichen, in der ein ähnliches Motiv vorkommt. Im dortigen Fall geht es um die Versenkung einer Krankheit im tiefsten Wasser. Die direkte oder indirekte Abhängigkeit der Texte wird abgelehnt. Die Erklärung wird vielmehr in deren Zugehörigkeit zu einem gemeinsamen ostmediterranen Erbe gesucht.

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the passage Mi 7, 18-19 from a new perspective. The sinking of sins into the sea plays the main role, through which the omnipotence of God is expressed. The idea is compared with an Egyptian parallel in which a similar motif occurs. The case there is about the sinking of a disease in the deepest water. The direct or indirect dependency of the texts is rejected. Instead, the explanation is sought in their belonging to a common Eastern Mediterranean heritage.

Ivri J Bunis (University of Haifa)

THE INTERCHANGE OF THE PREPOSITIONS לְ AND לִּי IN POST-BIBLICAL HEBREW*

ABSTRACT

The paper examines indications of a morphosyntactically conditioned complementary distribution of the prepositions /'il/ (< /*'ilay/) and /l-/ (< /*la/ or /*li/), originally underlying the respective words לְ and לִּי in post-Biblical Hebrew texts. Within the Bar-Kosiba letters, Tannaitic Hebrew and the Samaritan reading tradition of the Pentateuch, /*'il/ appears to be employed with pronominal suffixes, whereas /l-/ is found with syntactic complements. The paper proposes that the Samaritan reading tradition elucidates the rarer indications of this complementary distribution in the other texts: לְ is only read in the Samaritan reading tradition as a reflex of /*'il/ with pronominal suffixes, but as a reflex of /l-/ with syntactic complements, suggesting /*'il/ followed by syntactic complements to have been reanalyzed as /l-/ preceded by a prosthetic vowel [ʔV-].*

Ariel Cohen (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF VARIANTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE: THE CASE OF THE MOLTEN SEA

ABSTRACT

The Hebrew Bible abounds with variants: expressions that are different, yet are similar in some respect – their meaning or their written or oral form. It is notoriously difficult to ascertain whether two expressions are variants, and, if so, what type of variant they are. I argue that the solution is to define precisely the vague notion of similarity of sound or meaning, and that linguistics provides such measures. Specifically, phonology can tell us the likelihood that a specific phoneme would be confused with another, and semantics can tell us under which conditions two expressions mean the same. I demonstrate this approach with a test case – the two different descriptions of the decorations of the Molten Sea: פקעים in 1 Kgs 7 and בקרים in 2 Chron 4.

Eric N Maroney (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary)

RECONSIDERING THE SO-CALLED “PLURAL OF RESULT” IN BIBLICAL HEBREW¹

ABSTRACT

Plurals of nouns such as אֲבָנִים, דָּם, עֵץ, and כְּסָף have been explained by appeal to the Plural of Result (also called the “Plural of Composition” or the unwieldy “Plural of Natural Object in an Unnatural Condition”). Under this theory, singular forms of such nouns refer to a substance, while plural forms of the same noun refer to multiple, separate instantiations of the substance. This paper will first chart the history of this grammatical category. It will then be shown that this grammatical category does not explain the data of Biblical Hebrew. Finally, an alternative account to the Plural of Result will be given, using insights from the linguistics of the mass-count noun distinction.

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Peter Zilberg (Bar-Ilan University), Noga Ayali-Darshan (Bar-Ilan University) and Nili Samet (Bar-Ilan University)

TWO ŠĀṬĪR TEXTS FROM THE BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY COLLECTION

ABSTRACT

This study explores various aspects of the socio-historical landscape of the Chaldean region of Bīt-Amukānu in 5th century BCE Southern Babylonia, through the lens of two previously unpublished texts from the town of Šāṭir. The study offers an editio princeps of these texts, with a detailed analysis that provides new insights into the town's human landscape. Particular attention is given to the interactions between the Babylonian and West-Semitic inhabitants of Šāṭir, as well as their involvement with local institutions, especially the town's local temple.

BOOK REVIEWS

O’Kane, M 2024. *1 & 2 Kings: A Visual Commentary* (Hebrew Bible Monographs 103). Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press. x + 410 pages. ISBN 978-1-914490-20-0 (Hardback) / ISBN 978-1-914490-74-3 (ePDF). £75.00.

Throughout the centuries artists produced sculptures and paintings based on Biblical stories and characters. (Bocian, Kraut and Lenz 1989). However, they are more than that and, in a sense, “interpreters” of the biblical text (Cornelius 2004:254). The books of Kings in the Hebrew Bible with its many stories and colourful characters is for this reason very popular. In this book Martin O’Kane (Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David) presents a “visual commentary”. An important online source in this regard is the German <https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel-in-der-kunst> with one volume dedicated to Solomon (https://www.die-bibel.de/bibel-in-der-kunst/bibel-in-der-kunst_2017) with an article by O’Kane (https://cms.ibep-prod.com/app/uploads/sites/18/2023/08/BiKu_2017_06_OKane_Solomom_Islamic_Tradition.pdf). There is also a review of the book (https://cms.ibep-prod.com/app/uploads/sites/18/2025/01/BiKu_2025_20_Pietsch_Rezension_OKane.pdf).

The book is dedicated to Cheryl Exum and John Sawyer, the first well-known for her book *Art as Biblical Commentary: Visual Criticism from Hagar the Wife of Abraham to Mary the Mother of Jesus* (2019) and the second for his *Isaiah Through the Centuries* (2017).

Each pericope is structured (pp. 3-6) around three parts with regard to the Books of Kings:

- (1) Biblical Context
- (2) Jewish, Christian and Islamic literature
- (3) Artwork in Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions.

Because of the three aspects addressed, the book is much more than a mere “visual commentary”. It also includes the reception in music, as with Händel’s oratorio *Solomon* (1784) on 1 Kgs 3 (pp. 62-63).

The term visual commentary is not understood as the Hebrew Bible in its cultural-historical context namely ancient Egypt and Western Asia (viz Ancient Near East) with special reference to visual culture or iconography as done by Othmar Keel (e.g., his commentary on Canticles 1994) and his

disciples. Cf. also the *Zondervan Illustrated Background Commentary Series* (Walton 2009). It is more the Hebrew Bible in later visual arts in Judaism, Christianity and Islam even including modern art (as in Apostolos-Cappadona *et al.* in *EBR* 2010; mentioned on pp. 2-3).

The book has nearly 200 fairly clear images from a variety of visual media (List of figures pp. 8-20), although some are maybe too small and the paintings by some masters are always better viewed as originals or maybe on the Internet.

There is a Glossary of terms and commentators, and list of primary sources (pp. 379-388). The Bibliography of cited sources (pp. 389-400) seems in order, but I missed Burge cited on p. 146. There is also an index of biblical references and of authors cited (pp. 401-410). I would have liked an index of central concepts (e.g., temple) and maybe even characters (e.g., Solomon) as these are so central in the stories in the Book of Kings.

The book is special in that it includes both Jewish, Christian *and* Islamic traditions. It is impossible to repeat what is included and comment on that but allow remarks on some passages. The book starts with the last days of king David (1 Kgs 1, pp. 23-44) and from the visual material includes Bible initials, but also the fairly provocative painting fig. 1.6. Another passage is the visit of the Queen of Sheba (Bilqis in the Arabic and Makedah in the Ethiopian traditions) in 1 Kgs 10:1-13 (pp. 116-136) with its rich visual tradition, from the Iranian Bilqis to the orientalist Poynter (figs. 1.41 and 49). Elisha helped the widow with the two children (2 Kgs 4:1-7), the painting 2.20 focuses not on the prophet, but the woman and kids, even including a dog.

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Peintner, S 2022. *Gott im Bild: Eidôlon – Studien zur Herkunft und Verwendung des Begriffes für das Götterbild in der Septuaginta* (The Septuagint in its Ancient Context 2). Turnhout: Brepols. 290 pages. ISBN 978-2-503-59611-2 (Print) / ISBN 978-2-503-59612-9 (ePDF). €65.00.

This iconographical study represents a comprehensive approach to the word *eidôlon* in the Greek Bible (LXX), including the Deuterocanonical books. It consists of eight large sections, including an introduction, as well as a summarizing ending and an extensive bibliography. It also includes a reflection on methodology. This method is built up of carefully formulated research steps (*Untersuchungsschritten*). The first is the exegetical, the second the interpretive, followed by linguistic and contextual exegesis. Linguistic exegesis entails the grammatical identification and semantic interpretation of words. This, according to the author, is basic to all translations. Peintner thus notes that translated texts require a unique methodological approach. She also argues that contextual exegesis holds the key to understanding the nature of an *eidôlon*. Theological exegesis can, according to her, be seen as a form of contextual exegesis. She notes contemporary endeavours to formulate a theology of the LXX for understanding texts and concepts.

Peintner follows an array of exegetical perspectives that assist the reader to understand words and concepts. It must be said that this methodology does not offer a novel perspective, but ultimately the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Peintner formulated a useful research topic, beginning with a consideration of non-Jewish texts, with a focus on Greek literature. This is followed by an account of Egyptian sources, which include papyrological witnesses.

Eidôlon in non-Jewish texts

In Greek literature various terms are linked with *eidôlon*. In Homer *eidôlon* is used in conjunction with the existential form of the dead. Plato also relates *eidôlon* to the dead. With the Epicureans this lexeme is used in addition to *tupos* to explain the process of vision. It is also used in idols that appear in dreams. Pictorial representations which include statues and figures of art, and divine manifestations are important aspects of *eidôlon*. Herodotus in *Hist* 1,51 refers to a golden statute of a

3 el tall woman. The cultic context in Plutarch also expressed in *Nik* 13,7 in the context of the rites of death and resurrection of the mystery god Adonis, included funeral practices. The selected texts exhibit multiple forms of expression in *eidôlon*.

As for *eidôlon* in Egyptian sources, Lamentation P. Strasb. 2.91 is the first to mention. It dates from the first century BCE, thus to the time of Soter II. Typical of this era are holy animals. In the ostraca we find Demotic and Greek texts. Herodotus is a reliable witness concerning the veneration of these animals. They, *inter alia*, had to be looked after by devout caretakers. When these animals were illtreated or harmed or killed, the death penalty was imposed. Examples are falcons, as representatives of Horus, and ibises, which function in nature as the god Thot.

The central aspect concerning the cultic statue theology in Egypt found in the temples is that they are not *a priori* gods. The god can be present in the statues as they are living in the statues. The statue then becomes the body of god, his soul, his Ba, in which it can live. This distinction between idols (body) and gods (souls-Ba) first takes place in the late Egyptian era.

The expression *eidôlon* appears also in an Ostrakon dating from 50 CE (P. Worp 7). The so-called holy fish from the goddess Neith that is venerated in Saïs is another example. The goddess Athena is identified with Neith who in turn is referred to by the word *eidôlon*. Papyrus Chester Beatty XVI. This Papyrus concerns the magicians Jannes and Jambres. Necromancy, in this context, concerns the questioning of the dead about the future. The background to this writing is the sin of idolatry. The correspondence with the LXX is significant.

Hebrew equivalents

Eidôlon is often used as equivalent for the verb עִצַּב (that practically occurs only in the plural). In the Twelve Minor Prophets, in Hab 2:18 the Hebrew אֱלִיל is the basis. *Eidôlon* appears also in Hos 8:4; 4:17 in 14:9, etc.

The divine designations אֱלֹהִים and אֵל, according to the author, were only descriptions and not names of gods. For the record the word אֱלֹהִים occurs 2750 times in the Hebrew Bible. Of these there are plural forms (gods) and singular forms (a god). There is not yet an acceptable explanation why the term for the God of Israel (אֱלֹהִים) occurs in the plural. The author thinks that could be explained by means of a

comparison (eine Steigerung): “largest, highest” and then “the only God”.

As for cultic vocabulary, *במה*, for example, indicates a cultic high place that mostly is taken over from Israel’s neighbours, although, according to Peintner, the expression holy high place does not express the correct meaning. She opts for small high place for cultic use or a cultic place. Finally, the Greek *bômos* could be understood as a platform or altar in the sense of a Canaanite, Israelite example.

In the next five sections of the book, Peintner discusses *eidôlon* in the Pentateuch, the Psalter, the Prophets, Histories (the books of Kingdoms, Chronicles, and Daniel), and Deuterocanonical books (the books of Wisdom and Tobit, the Letter of Jeremiah, and books of Maccabees).

Conclusion and summary

Peintner focused on 3 broad topics:

- (1) Does the LXX avoid a neutral concept of the idol gods?
The conclusion is that there does not exist a standard concept for the *Götterbilde* (images of gods).
- (2) To be sure, it remains a question whether in the texts studied by Peintner *eidôla* is a pejorative concept.
On the semantic level the negative connotation of the substantive cannot be detected. On the contrary, the pejorative connotation can only be secondarily determined inasmuch as the *eidôla* can only be observed as false and illegitimate.
- (3) Understanding the structure of the *eidôlon* as a mosaic.
This noun does not have a single connotation but can be likened to a mosaic. In the final analysis smaller parts assembled together create a mosaic. This analogy creates a broader perspective as to how the word *eidôlon* should be understood. Peintner refers to a few perspectives to fill in the picture.
 - (3.1) The size of the statue she takes from Gen 31:34, the statue stolen from Rachel’s father. It was small enough to be carried by a woman;
 - (3.2) Herodotus in *Hist* 1,51 refers to a golden statute of 3 el;
 - (3.3) In Ezek 8:10 there is a reference to a two-dimensional *eidôla* that was located on a temple wall;
 - (3.4) Material is found in Num 13:52 as is the case in Deut 29 that was made from silver and gold;

- (3.5) A characteristic is the focus on the strange as well as the strange gods, *inter alia*, in Num 24:23 where a reference to strange gods appears.

Final conclusion. The researcher has in fact resolved her research problem. This study fills a gap in research in theological and religious studies by systematically exploring the various uses and connotations of the term *eidôlon*. She discusses the use of the term *eidôlon* in Greek literature and in Egyptian sources from the Hellenistic era. She demonstrates that the concept becomes the *terminus technicus* for the pictorial representation of deities. The researcher must be congratulated on an excellent study that has contributed to expanding our knowledge of the term “idol”. She is naturally not done with her research, there is still much to be done.

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Salemi, S 2024. *A Linguistic-Theological Exegesis of Ezekiel as Môphêt: “I have made you a sign” (Ezekiel 12:6)* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 76). Leiden / Boston: Brill. xvi + 246 pages. ISBN 978-90-04-69102-5 (Hardback) / ISBN 978-90-04-69122-3 (E-Book [PDF]). €95.00.

In Ezekiel 12:6 Yahweh calls the prophet a *môphêt*, a sign. This noun occurs only four times in Ezekiel. The author aims to determine what *môphêt* implies both in its context and for the theology of the book of Ezekiel.

About the relationship between the book and the prophet scholars hold a range of different opinions. Kraetzchmar (1900), Herrmann (1908) and Holscher (1924) endeavoured to distinguish between sections authored by Ezekiel and secondary additions. Later scholars discern various layers within the text of Ezekiel. The author adopts a systematic approach to the topic, which can be brought home under the rubric of TEXT and TRADITION. The following issues are addressed:

Under Methodological considerations

- (1.1) Historical perspectives including historical-narrative setting.
The author is clearly serious about the historical background of the document, whether it was found in Jerusalem and/or Babylon.
- (1.2) Synchronic study with a focus on grammatical aspects.
Semantic study – semantic analysis of *môphêt*.

- (2) The phenomenon of symbolic actions. Several approaches were used to study these actions. Appropriate examples are literary, socio-historical and rhetorical ones.
- (3.1) Salemi devotes a chapter to *môphêt* and the Hebrew Bible (Chapter 3). The research of several scholars is quoted in this regard, including James Barr, John F A Sawyer, James Aitken, Kurtis Peters and Marilyn E Burton. He also refers to the ground-breaking research of Muraoka. The chapter concludes with a semantic analysis of *môphêt*. Eleven examples are analysed.
- (3.2) It is possible to establish a link between the identity of the prophet and the symbolic actions.
In addition to Ezekiel, books such as Jeremiah, Hosea are also known as “symbolically”-oriented collections.
- (4) Chapter 4 is devoted to Ezekiel as symbol. Chapters 12 and 24 are discussed in this regard in order to determine their possible theological implications.
In the first passage exegesis and possible theological implications are determined. In the second the embodiment of Yahweh is addressed.
- (5) Conclusions
The book of Ezekiel presents a strange form of ministry, a “bodily” prophetism constituted by symbolic actions. The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and the deportation of the nation constitute the crisis of 587 BCE. According to Salemi, this forms the conceptual centre of the whole book of Ezekiel.

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Theis, C 2022. *Mehrköpfige Wesen in der Bibel und im syrisch-palästinischen Raum* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 115). Münster: Zaphon. X + 162 Seiten. ISBN 978-3-96327-198-4 (Buch) / ISBN 978-3-96327-199-1 (E-Book, via ProQuest). €69.00.

The published book is based on a study completed at the Theological Faculty of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. The author (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christoffer_Theis) is well-known for his published PhD in Egyptology (*Massive Magie und Raum. Der magische Schutz ausgewählter Räume im alten Ägypten nebst einem Vergleich zu*

angrenzenden Kulturbereichen (Orientalische Religionen in der Antike 13), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014) and his Habilitation, *Der polymorphe Bes – Untersuchungen zu Entwicklung, Devianz und Tradition eines mehrköpfigen Gottes im alten Ägypten* (2022) published by De Gruyter 2025.

The study looks at multi-headed beings in the Levantine world (Syro-Palestine) from the Chalcolithic (5th millennium BCE) to the post-Christian periods. The *longue durée* approach is interesting, starting with the famous IPIAO Abb. 52 (Theis Abb. 7): 5 caprid heads on a staff.

The study includes 80 figures with 62 B/W, the rest in colour covering more than the Levant, but also later, including a part on beings from the Middle Ages (chapter 5). The image on the cover of the book is the famous Megiddo ivory (IPIAO Abb. 978 = Theis Abb. 35). The indices (pp. 135-138) give an overview of the sources, indicating the number of heads involved (e.g., 7).

The two main chapters deal with multi-headedness in on the one hand the Levant and on the other hand in the Bible.

The Biblical sources receive attention in two parts:

The Hebrew Bible

4.1.1 Ez 1, 4–6 und 9b–10

4.1.2 Daniel 1

4.1.3 Psalm 74

4.1.4 Pešitta.

The New Testament

4.2 In Revelations 12:1 there is the seven headed snake. The study shows that this is a very old motif which occurs on Mesopotamian seals like IPIAO Abb. 232 (<https://bodo.unifr.ch/bodo/id/33608>) where there is a multi-headed snake, a hero controlling snakes, scorpions and even a dog. Cf. in this regard the article by Chr. Uehlinger, “Mastering the Seven-Headed Serpent: A Stamp Seal from Hazor Provides a Missing Link between Cuneiform and Biblical Mythology”. *NEA* 87/1 (2024), 14-19.

Multi-headedness functioned as sign of power, but also as symbol of chaos and evil (p. 100).

A question that might be asked is the use of the term *Mischwesen* (e.g., p. 59) for such multi-headed beings and the relationship to it (cf. <https://www.die-bibel.de/ressourcen/wibilex/altes-testament/mischwesen>).

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