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Abstracts

Family Relations in Mesopotamian Proverb and Instruction Literature

Nili Samet

This paper examines the image of family life as reflected in the didactic wisdom literature from Mesopotamia. This body of texts, documented from the mid third-millennium to the Hellenistic Period, includes proverbs and instructions written in Sumerian and Akkadian. The paper reviews a variety of exemplary proverbs and instructions dealing with family relations, investigating the ways in which they reflect the image and reality of contemporary family life and institution. The examination reveals a fundamental difference between proverbs and instructions. The instructions present a didactic approach, describing an ideal patriarchal family who lives according to traditional values of discipline and hierarchy. Proverbs, on the other hand, allow a glimpse into the reality of Mesopotamian everyday life, depicting their family relations from a popular perspective, often accompanied by amusing undertones. Issues such as obedience to family authorities, power balance in the family, honor and friendship among family members, sexual fidelity, and even the very importance of the family institution as part of the social order, are all treated differently by each sub-genre. Additional differences between proverbs and instructions are revealed on the dialectological and registerial levels: proverbs sometimes use the Emesal sociolect, which is associated with women, while instructions consistently use the main dialect. Additionally, proverbs tend to use a popular register, whereas instructions employ a higher, standard one. In light of these findings we may portray Mesopotamian proverbs

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as popular literature, which gives voice to Sumerian-speaking men and women, belonging to various social classes and groups. The last part of this paper is dedicated to a brief discussion of the implications of the above conclusions on the scholarly discussion of the dating, origin and function of Mesopotamian didactic wisdom.

[**Key words:** Wisdom literature, Proverb literature, Sumerian literature, Mesopotamia, Women in the ancient Near East]

Biblical *zori* Resin of the Atlantic Pistacia from the Land of Israel

Zohar Amar

“Zori” is mentioned in the Bible as a well-known, prestigious product for which the Land of Israel was renowned, and especially the region of Gilead. Its importance is reflected in the fact that it appears first on the list of medicinal and perfume ingredients “from the choice produce of the land” that were shipped to Egypt and traded in the sea islands. Several identifications have been suggested for this term, which raises doubts about their credibility. In this article we would like to propose the resin of the Atlantic pistacia as the most likely candidate to be identified as the biblical zori. The identification is supported by historical sources that point to the production of this resin in the region of ancient Israel and its use in traditional societies today. There is also archaeological evidence that large quantities of resin were exported from Canaan in the Late Bronze Age. Another corroborating piece of evidence is the preservation of the name “zori צָרִי” – in the ancient Arabic name – “צַרִי” darw (ضرو) which refers to the resin of the Pistacia. The research is also based on a field study where the production of the Atlantic pistacia resin was reconstructed using the traditional method in several different areas in Israel. The quantity of resin obtained was greater than from any other tree growing in the Land of Israel and Syria.

[**Key words:** Zori, Resin, Incense, Atlantic pistacia, Gilead, Nabataeans]

**“You Shall Not Boil a Kid in Its Mother’s Milk”
in Saadya Gaon’s Translation of the Pentateuch**

Tamar Zewi

An investigation of important manuscripts and early Genizah fragments of Saadya Gaon’s Translation of the Pentateuch reveals more than one version of its translation of the prohibition “You Shall Not Boil a Kid in Its Mother’s Milk,” which appears three times in the Pentateuch. The article presents the early evidence for these translations and compares them to the Jewish Rabbinic halachic broadening interpretation, on the one hand, and to the Jewish Karaite literal interpretation, on the other hand.

[**Key words:** R. Saadya Gaon, Translation, Tafsir, “You Shall Not Boil a Kid in Its Mother’s Milk”, Jewish Rabbinic Translations, Karaite Translations]

**On the Tripartite Division of the Bible in Jewish Tradition
Part 2: Three Stages of Prophecy and Additional Principles from
R. David Kimhi To Joseph ibn Yahya**

Eran Viezel

The first part of the article (see Beit Miqra 66,2) was devoted to the early stages of clarifying the question of the division of biblical books into Torah, Prophets and Writings in the Jewish tradition. As is made clear, interest in the division of the Bible into sections only began in Middle Ages, with Maimonides’s Guide of the Perplexed. Following Maimonides, the idea took shape that this division reflected three distinct levels of prophetic revelation: those of Moses, the prophets, and the holy spirit (ruah ha-qodesh). Although this view was recognized as part of Maimonides’ legacy, rabbis considered it to reflect the traditional religious position, and anchored it in well-known sayings of the Sages (Hazal). The following part of the article outlines the development of the rabbinic scholars’ interpretation of the division of the Bible, and the manner in which this scholarship expanded during the second half of the Middle Ages. In an

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extended, foundational period spanning some 300 years – beginning with R. David Kimhi at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, and lasting until Abarbanel and Joseph ibn Yahya in the 15th and 16th centuries – dozens of dicta were written on the subject, and a number of detailed and systematic works devoted exclusively to the matter were penned by leading rabbinical scholars. The reasoning employed by these scholars, their assumptions and conclusions, inform us of their influence on each other, and attest to the gradual creation of what might be called, in general, the traditional view of the tripartite division of the Bible into Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim.

[**Key words:** Hebrew Bible, Pentateuch, Prophets and Writings, Jewish exegesis, Prophecy]

The Meeting Between Jephthah and His Daughter as a Base for a Meeting Between the Bible and Music

Efrat Buchris

The article discusses the tragic meeting between Judge Jephthah and his daughter, which is narrated in Judges 11. It was just a single glance that caused a dramatic upheaval and brought them from the joy of a victorious battle in one moment to mourning and eulogy in the next. The article isolates the situation of the meeting between Jephthah and his daughter, and sheds light from different angles on the transformation from “good” to “bad”. Three ways of expression are examined, in which the Bible itself shaped the upheaval, and three points of reference are derived. The points form the basis for an examination of musical works based on Jephthah's story that were composed throughout history. Examination of the ways of expressing an identical situation through different mediums is done by means of a basic philosophical starting point: the proposal that all arts, including the art of Biblical insight, originate from the same root, which is human's emotional reactions to stimuli from both internal and external sources. Thus, the Bible and music meet as reflections of a singular essence.

[**Key words:** Jephthah, Judge of Israel, Jephthah's daughter, Ways of biblical design, Vicissitudes of fate 'Periptea', Oratorio, Musical contrasts, Sign motif, Dissonant, Word painting]

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The Love of Yaakov (Shabtai) to (King) David

Roy Horovitz

Yaakov Shabtai (1934-1981), one of Israel's most important authors, loved the Bible and saw it as a main source of inspiration. Two of his most famous biblical plays, "Crowned Head" and "Eating", were acclaimed by critics and audience alike, and have long become modern classics of Israeli culture. A recent groundbreaking discovery of three more biblical plays ("Business", "Love" and "Kinghood") sheds light on Shabtai's continued interest in biblical drama and demonstrates how Shabtai, a modern, secular and Israeli playwright, never ceased to search for paths to render the Bible accessible to his Israeli audience. The author has recently published those in his book *A World of Innocents: The Dramatic Afterlife of the Bible in Yaakov Shabtai's Plays* (Jerusalem 2021). This paper focuses on Shabtai's attraction to and fascination with the character of King David, the (more or less) 'protagonist' of two of the three 'new' plays: "Business" and "Love". Together with "Crowned Head", these three illustrate different and fascinating appearances of the same character, which enable a close look at questions of government, state, political power and corruption. The article analyzes the way Shabtai portrays King David within each play and shows that his love for his hero was not of a blind nature. Shabtai, I claim, follows the critical attitude of the Bible towards its heroes in general, and David in particular, and his criticism strengthens gradually from one play to the other over the chronological timeline.

[**Key words:** Biblical reception, Bible as literature, King David, Israeli drama, Yaakov Shabtai, Batsheva, Rekab and Baanah, Zimri]

The Reception of the Bible and Its Interpretation in Dikla Laor's Photo Album "Women of the Bible in the Golan Heights"

Lea Mazor

The article traces the interpretation of the Bible embodied in an album, which includes artistic photographs of staged scenes of women's life in the Bible, taken against the background of the Golan Heights. It examines the

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fundamental ideological principles guiding its biblical interpretation and the ways of its realization in details and as a whole, as a demonstration of the reception of the Bible in today's Israel.

[**Key words:** Women in the Bible, Historiographie, Intertextuality, Text and intertext, Feminism, The Bible in art, Photographie, Visual images, Orientalism, Zionism, Golan Heights]