ZER RIMONIM

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Studies in Biblical Literature and
Jewish Exegesis Presented to
Professor Rimon Kasher

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Edited by
Michael Avioz
Elie Assis
Yael Shemesh

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Preface

The present volume is a collection of original papers written in honor of Professor Rimon Kasher, emeritus professor of Bible at Bar-Ilan University, where he taught for nearly forty years. His areas of expertise included the Aramaic Targum, the Book of Ezekiel, biblical theology and more.

All the papers included in this volume were written in modern Hebrew, which is in itself a refreshing and novel milestone in the IVBS series. Readers of this volume will have to read it "from right to left", to borrow a title from a volume dedicated to David Clines.

The papers included in this volume are the fruits of ongoing research done in Israel by Israeli scholars. The authors whose papers are presented here teach at Bar-Ilan University and at other Israeli universities: Tel Aviv University; Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Haifa University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. One of the outstanding features of biblical studies at Bar-Ilan University is its strength in the field of classic Jewish exegesis to the Bible, early and modern. Almost half of the papers are devoted to Jewish interpretation of the Bible.

Bar-Ilan scholars were responsible for the milestone project, Mikra'ot Gedolot 'Haketer': a revised and augmented scientific edition of 'Mikra'ot Gedolot,' based on the Aleppo Codex and early medieval MSS. This is a revised edition of the Rabbinic Bible, known also as the Mikra'ot Gedolot. The Hebrew text of the Bible is based on the Aleppo Codex. The inclusion of the medieval commentators to this work contributed to their accessibility to a wider audience who can now read their commentaries in a most convenient version. Today it is common to find many academic publications that refer to this edition.

Many of the papers in this volume feature the commentaries of these figures. Readers will find fascinating contributions dealing with Rashi, Qimhi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides and Seforno as well as Karaitic and Byzantine interpretation.

There are also papers devoted to the study of the biblical texts themselves. The papers cover all areas of the biblical canon: biblical law; biblical narrative; historiography; prophecy and wisdom.

The papers included in this volume were written by renowned scholars from Israel and have been reviewed by both its editors and by anonymous reviewers from Israel and from abroad.

We would like to thank the "Beit Shalom" fund in Japan and the Rabbi Mordechai Nurok Chair in Bible for their support in the production of this volume of essays. Special thanks go to the IVBS

staff: Louis Jonker, Leigh Andersen, Kathie Klein and Bob Buller, for their ongoing help throughout the creation of this volume.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Mrs. Hedva Kaplan, the administrative coordinator and Mrs. Chenya Spungin, both from the Department of Bible at Bar-Ilan University, for their great assistance.

MICHAEL AVIOZ
ELIE ASSIS
YAEL SHEMESH
(Editors)

Rimon Kasher: The Man, the Teacher and the Scholar

Rimon Kasher was born in Jerusalem on the first of Adar, 5705 (February 14th, 1945), to his mother, Tziporah nee Rabinowitz-Teomim and his father Shimon z"l, eldest son of Rabbi Menahem Mendel Kasher, and brother to Asa Kasher. The family moved to Binyamina when Rimon was six months old and two years later to Rishon LeZion where they lived during the War of Independence and the first years following Israel's independence, including the years of austerity. His first memories are of that period. It was there that he began his formal education, entering first grade at the "Haviv" school.

In 1952 the family moved to Ramat-Gan, to a housing project designed for IDF personnel and their families that would become known as Ramat-Hen. Rimon went to the second grade at the H.Y.L School in Yad Eliyahu and from third grade on he attended the Ramat-Hen Elementary School. Rimon was a member of the first graduating class of Blich High School. After graduating in 1963 in the humanities track, Rimon was inducted into the IDF and served two years and four months at IDF Southern Command Headquarters as a sergeant in the Chaplaincy Corps. Rimon was often enlisted as an instructor at the military chaplaincy on matters concerning identification of fallen soldiers. He was involved in this work during the Six Day War, on the southern front, and later during the Yom Kippur War as well.

Following his discharge from the IDF, Rimon began his studies at Bar-Ilan University in the Department of Bible and the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages. He went on to pursue graduate studies, earning an MA and a Ph.D. from the university's Department of Bible. He was privileged to study under iconic teachers and scholars: in the Department of Bible – Professor Goshen-Gottstein z"l, and Professors Menahem Cohen and Uriel Simon. In the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages he enjoyed the tutelage of Professor Pinhas Artzi z"l, studied Aramaic and its dialects under Dr. David Cohen z"l, Hebrew language under Professor M.Z. Kadari z"l and biblical cantillation under Professor Aron Dotan.

The list of scholars considered by Rimon to have been most influential in his academic life includes: Professors Moshe Greenberg and Ezra Fleischer z"l as well as Professors Shmuel Ahituv and James Barr.

Rimon's M.A. thesis, "The Targumic Tosefta to Prophets," was written under the guidance of Professor Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, z"l. This thesis laid the framework for what would eventually become a book that is essentially an annotated scientific edition of

segments from the Targumic Tosefta to the Prophets. Rimon's doctoral dissertation, "The Theological Conception of the Miracle in the Bible", was also written under Professor Goshen-Gottstein's direction.

While working toward his master's degree, Rimon married Hanna, daughter of Penina nee Distenfeld z"l and Shmuel Adler z"l. Professor Hanna Kasher is a professor of philosophy at Bar-Ilan University. The couple has two sons: Carmel (a veterinarian turned physician) and Almog (a lecturer in Bar-Ilan University's Arabic Department).

Between 1999–2001 Rimon served on the editorial board of Aramaic Studies (formerly Journal for the Aramaic Bible), a journal still published by Brill.

In 1993, Rimon was made an associate Professor and in 1996 he was promoted to full Professor. Upon his retirement he was named professor emeritus. Among the positions he held at the university were: director of the Institute for the History of the Jewish Bible, dean of libraries, and member of the Book Committee at the Bar-Ilan University Press. Recently he was asked to assume responsibility for the subject area the Bible and its translations for the new on-line edition of the Encyclopedia Hebraica.

Rimon's principal research interests have been the history of thought and beliefs of ancient and later Jewish civilizations. Biblical literature in all its diversity – its genres and nuances, from all periods, is representative of ancient Jewish civilization. Rimon's research deals with a number of sub-topics. His dissertation represented an exhaustive examination of the concept of the miracle in the Bible. He examined the question of ethics in biblical literature in view of modern biblical criticism and published an article dealing with Imitatio Dei and its articulation in all of biblical literature. He even explored the issue of the Prophet Ezekiel's social reform in light of various biblical approaches to the question of social justice. Additionally, he addressed the question of the affinity between the Book of Ezekiel and Apocalypticism, probing and characterizing the phenomenon in modern scholarship. He is currently writing a monograph on the topic of "Between God and Man: The Bible's View on the Boundaries Between the Human and the Divine." Alongside these thematic, cross-cutting topics, Rimon accords lengthy treatment to the belief system of the 6th century BCE, a century bracketed by the destruction of Judah and the exile at its onset and by the return to Zion at its close. His fruitful research into the period has yielded an extensive, comprehensive commentary on the Book of Ezekiel (two volumes, 965 pages in the Mikra Leyisrael Scientific Commentary on Bible Titles series). He also collaborated with Professor Elie Assis on a commentary on two early Second

Temple period books of prophecy, Haggai and Malachi (forthcoming in the Mikra Leyisrael series).

In addition to the aforesaid works of commentary, Rimon published a series of articles on the Book of Ezekiel and on the affinity between Ezekiel and Haggai and between Ezekiel and Zechariah. In the framework of his studies of Jewish culture, he dealt extensively with the Aramaic biblical translations, with the purpose of exposing the translators' convictions and comparing them with the beliefs and thought embedded within rabbinic literature. His research in this field has yielded a string of publications, including the book *Targumic Tosefta to the Prophets*, comprising a collection of 150 translated segments of prophetical works that deviate from the "official" Targum Jonathan and divulge the (rejected) beliefs of the translators. In addition, he published a sizable collection of articles, some of which unveil, for the first time, previously unknown units of translations, while others disclose singular beliefs held by the translators alone.

A seminal article by Rimon, published in 1988 in the article compendium Mikra, dealt with rabbinic interpretation of scripture and is widely quoted in various scholarly works in this field. This article is undoubtedly a mainstay in the research field of ancient exegesis.

In his lectures in the Department of Bible, Rimon taught graduate seminars on wide-ranging topics. Some of the topics addressed in the seminars included: Monotheism and Polytheism; Creation, Nature and the Miracle in the Bible; the Biblical Concept of Man; the Wisdom Books; Jeremiah and Ezekiel: Affinities and Contrasts; Biblical Ethics; Temple and Cult in the Biblical Period, and more.

Anyone who ever studied with Rimon, the editors of this book among them, fondly recalls his fascinating lectures. He never sufficed with superficial answers to questions that arose in class; rather than improvise, he would earmark such questions for further inquiry. Rimon's character is marked by integrity and truth. These attributes inform his studies and his teaching as well as his actions. Rimon is a student of biblical ethics; his daily life exhibits strict adherence to moral standards. Rimon sets a personal example to his students and friends by implementing, in his own life, the moral values that he so extensively taught. His humility and unpretentiousness afforded his students in class, as well as those he mentored, the room they needed for self-expression and personal development, as an outgrowth of their individual qualities. Rimon, always respectful of his students whom he nurtured and advised, knew that each person marches to their own drum. For this, in particular, he is revered by his friends and students and has earned their affection.

Rimon was and remains active in various extra-academic frameworks such as human rights and animal rights organizations. He strives to practice what he preaches: Rimon was a pioneering member of an academic organization established to protect laboratory animals and he is an ideologically motivated vegetarian.

Notwithstanding his many pursuits, Rimon also finds time for hobbies. He follows current events, listens assiduously to news broadcasts and clips important news items from the newspapers. He is an enthusiastic amateur astronomer; he enjoys star gazing and keeps abreast of related scientific literature. His musical tastes run to the music of famed Italian tenor, Andrea Bocelli.

Rimon has mentored many students who wrote their doctoral dissertations under his guidance and who now teach in the Department of Bible, in Bar-Ilan's Center for Basic Jewish Studies and in other academic frameworks. Among them are the following: Dr. Baruch Alster, Dr. Joshua Berman, Dr. Tova Ganzel, Dr. Tmima Davidovitz, Dr. Stewart Vanning, Dr. Hazoniel Touitou, Dr. Chezi Cohen, Dr. Amichai Nachshon and Dr. Yitzhaq Feder.

In profound appreciation of Rimon – the man, the teacher, the scholar and the friend – we are pleased to present this collection of articles written in his honor.

List of Contributors

Prof. Yairah Amit, Tel Aviv University
Prof. Elie Assis, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Jonathan Ben-Dov, Haifa Univeristy
Dr. Joshua Berman, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Gershon Brin, Tel Aviv University
Dr. Hezi Cohen, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Tmima Davidovitz, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. David Elgavish, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Brachi Elitzur, Yaakov Herzog College
Dr. Yitzhaq Feder, Haifa University
Prof. Joseph Fleishman, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Gershon Galil, Haifa University
Dr. Tova Ganzel, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Isaac Gottlieb, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Edward L. Greenstein, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Jonathan Grossman, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Mayer Gruber, Ben-Gurion University
Dr. Jair Haas, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Jonathan Jacobs, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Bustenay Oded, Haifa University
Prof. Yosef Ofer, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Jordan S. Penkower, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Yosi Peretz, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Frank Polak, Tel Aviv University
Prof. Meira Poliak, Tel Aviv University
Dr. Moshe Rachimi, Orot Israel College
Dr. Ayelet Seidler, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Yael Shemesh, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Shimon Shtober, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Nili Shupak, Haifa University
Prof. Uriel Simon, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Miriam Sklarz, Orot Israel College
Dr. Yechiel Tzeitkin, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Shmuel Vargon, Bar-Ilan University
Dr. Eran Viezel, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Prof. Yair Zakovitch, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

The Officers of the Israelites: From Beaters to Beaten (Exodus 5)

Jonathan Grossman

The narrative describing the escalation of oppression of the nation of Israel (Exod. 5) interrupts the anticipated sequence of the Exodus narrative. Once God reveals His plan to Moses in the episode of the burning bush, the reader expects the narrative to develop accordingly. Since the escalation is not incorporated within the plan presented to Moses at the burning bush, the very occurrence of this narrative is unexpected.

The article outlines the approach of Moshe Greenberg, who understands the escalation narrative as augmenting the Exodus narrative with an added theological perspective that highlights Pharaoh as particularly resistant toward God. However, the author offers another approach, supported by the literary structure of the chapter. According to the suggested structure, the protagonists of the narrative are the Israelite officers. The structure implies that these officers choose to stand alongside the stricken enslaved Hebrews, rather than support the striking representatives of the king. This ethical choice is an essential introduction to the Exodus narrative.

The Early Life of Moses (Exod 2–4) and the Early Life of Israel: Parallel Records in the Book of Exodus

Joshua Berman

Expositors have long noted that the episode of the burning bush (Exod 3–4) prefigures the revelation at Sinai to the entirety of Israel. This study demonstrates that Moses' formative experiences (Exod 2–4) parallel those of Israel as a people in the Book of Exodus. Nearly every episode endured by Moses in chapter 2 correlates with an experience endured by Israel following the Exodus from Egypt. These correspondences are expressed in both thematic and verbal parallels. These parallels culminate in the correspondence between the revelation at the burning bush and the revelation at Sinai, which is shown to be more thoroughgoing than previous scholarship has identified. Possible meanings for these parallels are suggested.

Moses' Status in the Inception of the Exodus Narrative: Testing, Education and Narrative Development

Frank Polak

This paper relates to Exod. 3–4 and to Exod. 6 in a hyper-chronic perspective. The account of the revelation at the burning bush represents an encounter between Yhwh and Moses, commencing with Moses' arrival at the region of the holy mountain and Yhwh's endeavor to draw Moses' attention. The encounter consists of a protracted dialogue, interlaced with short action sequences, that seems comparable to the "Call Pattern" (Judg. 6; Jer. 1), but is far richer in extent and content. Moses is allowed to continue questioning his call, until his doubts and self-doubts are finally overruled. This raises the question of what stands behind this continued interplay of question and response? The analysis proposed in this paper points to three dimensions: testing, responding to doubts and self-doubts, and thereby education in the divine ways. Moses' audacity (Muffs) is tested to determine if he is equal to the momentous task. At the same time, he is educated by the divine responses: particularly by learning the divine name and its implications, and by experiencing the divine presence and power. The second revelation (Exod 6:2–8; 6:12/30–7:5), rather than merely paralleling the previous encounter, forms a response to Moses' continued doubts concerning his call (5:2–6:1; 6:12; Greenberg) which is reaffirmed. The present revelation also incurs a deepening of Moses' insight and heralds a second stage in his education, leading up to the revelation he experiences in response to his prayer for the 'great sin' of his people (Exod 33–34). Thus, even if we acknowledge the different provenance of this chapter, it serves as hypertext within a given literary context which thus renders it a palimpsest (Genette). The analysis of the present text in its entirety, then, must be hyper-chronic (Eslinger) rather than merely syn- or diachronic.

The Sin and Punishment of The Licentious Priest's Daughter in the Hebrew Bible (Lev. 21:9) and in Early Jewish Interpretation

Joseph Fleishman

Prostitution by a priest's daughter degrades her father, indeed jeopardizes him and his household's social and financial future. Prevention ensures the father's social and legal status as a priest in his home and in society. Therefore, one may conclude that an aim of this law was to ensure Israelite society's immunity, in general, and the holiness of the priests, in particular, against the desecration of prostitution. The biblical law regarding the licentious priest's daughter evolved and moderated over time. At an early stage, apparently, the Jewish law applied to any daughter of a priest and her punishment was literally to be consumed by fire. Such a punishment was meted out in contemporary societies. As time passed, milieu changes resulted in the punishment's corresponding attenuation. Yet while the penalty – in both its original and altered forms – relied consistently on textual interpretation, that interpretation had evolved. The new penalty was considered more humane. It was no longer applied to an unattached daughter, but only to a betrothed or married daughter. The punishment was construed not as a physical burning, but rather as burning the person from within, by means of lead, thereby leaving the body intact. After the destruction of the Second Temple, when the priests no longer served in the Temple, a modified view of the desecration was taken and milder repercussions were accordingly imposed.

Biblical Beginnings

Isaac Gottlieb

In the belief that beginnings and endings of literary works receive special attention, this paper deals with the *incipits* of the Pentateuch in the Hebrew Bible. The division of the Torah literature into five books indicates that each book possesses both an individual nature (and name) as well as a designated role in the united whole. Ideally, it would seem that the opening verse or verses should relate to that particular book while also providing some sort of continuation with the preceding work. It is also reasonable to expect opening verses to offer some unique aspect, whether in form, content, or language, that

distinguishes them from general chapter beginnings. The opening verses are investigated with the assistance of medieval Jewish exegesis and modern scholarship.

Jonathan’s Lot

Hezi Cohen

Researchers (Jobling, Garsiel, and others) have noted that the story of the battle at Michmas (both in its original and final form) portrays a sharp contrast between Jonathan and Saul in a number of ways. By comparing Saul and Jonathan the author/editor sought to belittle Saul's role in the military campaign and to diminish his glory as a leader.

The narrative's closing scene, in which Jonathan is singled out as a sinner and held responsible for God’s unresponsiveness to Saul’s divination, does not accord with the otherwise pervasive presentation of Jonathan as the hero in this passage. Similarly, Jonathan's portrayal as a sinner seems absurd in light of the people's egregious transgressions (eating blood) and Saul's own sins – impatiently offering sacrifices before the arrival of the prophet for which he forfeited the monarchy, and callously rejecting the need for heavenly counsel by dismissing the Ark of God.

I contend that the key to understanding this passage lies in a careful reading of the scene of the drawing of lots. In most cases, biblical lottery singles out the guilty party by closing in on him through a series of concentric circles (tribe, clan, family etc.). However, Saul positions himself and Jonathan (who is perceived at this stage as a hero in Saul’s eyes) on one side and the people on the other. Arraying the royal family against the nation expresses Saul’s view (not to mention his desire to prove) that guilt lies with the people and not with the leadership.

God's response in this case, as elsewhere, (Num. 11; Num. 21; Judges 20; 1 Kings 22) is sarcastic: accentuating the sinful nature of the very quest to determine the identity of the sinner. The divine response provoked a chain reaction in which the nation prevented the killing of Jonathan while declaring him the ultimate hero of the war.

The discussion will include a new examination of the parallels between Jonathan and Achan, (Josh. 7) with the goal of substantiating a corresponding parallel between Saul and Achan. This is intended to reinforce a critical reading of Saul in this passage.

Solomon's Temple: Fiction or Reality?

Gershon Galil

The paper reexamines the description of Solomon's Temple in 1 Kings 5:6–9:9 in light of ancient Near Eastern building inscriptions and stories, pointing out that the original text incorporated by Dtr in 1 Kings 5:15 – 9:9 was composed in the second half of Solomon's reign and reflects the circumstances of this period. A few glosses were added to this text in the pre-exilic period, and it was enlarged and augmented by Dtr in the mid-sixth century BCE. In the Persian period a few priestly elements were interpolated. The architectural plan of the Temple closely resembles the plan of temples in Syria in the early first millennium BCE. The similarities between 1 Kings 5:15–9:9 and Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian building inscriptions and stories may identify the genre of the text in the book of Kings as "a building story." However, the similarities are only partial, and may not be used as an argument for dating this biblical text. By contrast, only the Deuteronomistic edition of the text adheres closely to the Neo-Assyrian pattern, and there is no evidence that the pre-Deuteronomistic version of the text included similar elements which were switched by Dtr, as suggested by Hurowitz. It is reasonable to suggest that the Temple was built in the days of Solomon, and the building story was composed by Solomon's scribes: no ancient Near Eastern king caused his scribes to compose a building story or inscription in honor of another king. Though this may have been unheard of, it is even less conceivable that a king would build a temple or a palace and attribute it to one of his predecessors.

Biblical Criticism and the Samaritan Issue — Past and Present

Yairah Amit

This paper traces the different positions in biblical literature regarding the Samaritans and their interpretation. However, its main purpose is to show the extent to which modern positions vis-à-vis the Samaritans in contemporary Israeli society - that is, in the State of Israel – are influenced by biblical positions as they have been interpreted throughout the generations. The discussion is therefore twofold: addressing the biblical sources – their background and the

ways in which they have been interpreted, as well as the modern problem - how it was solved and which sources were actually the most influential.

On "*Sefarim*" that Merodach-Baladan sent to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:12)

Bustenay Oded

This paper maintains that the term "ספרים" which Merodach-baladan, king of Babylonia, sent to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:12) means, in the context of 2 Kings 20 (MT), magico-medical texts and not "letters" as rendered in most Bible translations and as understood by most commentators. The biblical narrator (redactor/editor) deliberately synthesized, reconstructed and reinterpreted two separate historical episodes: Hezekiah's illness and cure, (2 Kings 20:1–11) and the visit of the Babylonian envoy (2 Kings 20:12–19). The primary stratum of the report about the Babylonian visit probably contained a comment that the messengers brought a letter from their king concerning anti-Assyrian activities.

Through the intentional-editorial conjunction of the two episodes with the phrases "at that time"; and "for he had heard that Hezekiah had taken ill" (v. 12), the writer of ch. 20 reinterpreted the preexisting diplomatic royal letter (preexisting מכתב* /ספר*) as magico-medical texts to convey two theocentric ideas: that cure is determined by prayer to God and not magical treatment (*ašipu*=exorcist, witch-doctor) or *asû*, and that a favorable outcome or salvation is attained not by a political-military treaty, but by trust in God. Reliance on foreign /human power will end in disaster (deportation).

Restrained Descriptions of War in the Book of Kings

David Elgavish

The description of wars in the Book of Kings is restrained and moderate. Several wars are described laconically, while others are not described at all. The number of warriors is rarely recorded, and the results of the battles are limited. The writer usually records the damage inflicted on the defeated party using only a single descriptive

method: in the wars of Israel and Aram at Samaria and Afek, the Aramean deaths are recorded; in the wars of Araam against Baasha and against the House of Jehu, the defeat of cities and regions is mentioned; and in the war at Ramoth-gilead, only the death of Ahab is noted. In the war of Shishak, damage to property belonging to the Kingdom of Judah is acknowledged.

The damage to the population is also limited. There are no wars of *herem*, involving complete destruction of all the population. There are no acts of humiliation of the defeated party after the victory. Even testimony about destruction of cities is rare and appears primarily in the war against Moab (in which case the destruction was ordered by Elisha) and in the Babylonian's campaign against Jerusalem.

In the relationship between Egypt, Judah, and Israel, only a single attack by Egypt (that of Shishak) is mentioned, and even this attack is described in a limited and restrained manner, referring only to Judah. By contrast, relations between Aram and Israel were stormy for many years. Aram took advantage of many opportunities to smite Israel, and to overpower her completely, but these military operations are described laconically, as are their results. The results are either completely omitted or described with a single focus, be it deaths or conquest of regions.

The wars of Assyria against Israel and Judah were limited in the Bible to a period of only 30 years, from Tiglath Pileser III until Sennacherib. The Assyrian mode of punishment was usually exile, and there is no mention of destruction of cities or massacres of population. This is true also of Babylon's war against Judah. The exile of Jehoiachin was primarily that of the higher echelons of society in Judah. In the war against Zedekiah, according to the description in Kings, the leadership and its buildings were damaged, as were national buildings and military installations in Jerusalem.

The restrained character of war descriptions in Kings is particularly evident in the wars of Judah against Israel, depicted as moderate and limited in character. They are rare with limited goals and a limited scope. Limited damage is inflicted on each of the kingdoms.

Comparison with other historical biblical books underscores the restrained character of the wars in the Book of Kings. The wars in Joshua and Judges are particularly violent and are described in detail. Large scale violence and large numbers of dead also appear in the wars recorded in Samuel. The description of wars in Kings is limited in comparison to Chronicles, though both books seem to survey the same period. The number of Judah's wars in Chronicles is greater and the wars are more intense: this is seen in the larger numbers of warriors, in the tangible danger, and in the greater number of enemy causalities incurred by the divine salvation.

The restrained character of wars in the Book of Kings also deviates from the standard in the ancient Near East, as demonstrated by the documents at Mari, the Hittite material, the Mesha inscription, and in the Assyrian royal inscriptions in particular.

Lessons from the Prophet's Reproach: The Reshaping of Jehoshaphat's Reign in the Book Chronicles

Brachi Elitzur

The Book of Chronicles rewrites the narrative of the lineage of the Kingdom of Judah and its leaders, from the beginning of its establishment until its destruction. The account of the Kingdom in the Book of Chronicles is occasionally presented from a different perspective than that shown in the Books of Samuel and Kings. However, regarding most of the kings, a common historical basis is discernible, as is the development and design of each of the Books according to the point of reference of the writing and its meaning, both revealed and hidden.

This is not the case in the description of the Kingdom of Jehoshapat. The Chronicler adds many informative details which describe Jehoshapat as an independent king very active in judicial and military matters, who sponsors royal Torah and law Academies, and encourages and strengthens the people to believe that they can overcome their enemies. However, in the Book of Kings Jehoshapat is presented, for the most part, as acting in tandem with Ahab, out of familial obligations, while making no significant contribution to the security and spiritual welfare of his own kingdom. Even though Jehoshapat is presented in a positive light in the Book of Kings, the portrayal of his occasional attempts to curry favor with the kings of Israel contrasts strongly with the Book of Chronicles' portrait of a charismatic and dynamic king.

In this paper we will attempt to locate the reasons behind the transformation of Jehoshapat's character in the Book of Chronicles and examine how the renewed depiction of his personality integrates with the overall trend of the Book of Chronicles.

The first part of the paper is devoted to examining the aims and central principles behind the writing of the Book of Chronicles. The material is based on the words of earlier researchers, with our own additions, in an attempt to clarify the religious-historical background that led to the development of the assertions particular to this book.

The second part will deal with the specific portrayal of Jehoshapat's character in light of the distinctive premises of the book. In this section we will introduce the opinion that the Chronicler upheld an idealized conception of the Kingdom of Jehoshapat as a unique, Torah observant kingdom that adhered strictly to the commandments pertaining to the king. This transformation posits the Kingdom of Judah, under the leadership of Jehoshapat, as the antithesis of its counterpart, the Kingdom of Israel, where Baal worship and sins against the Law and morality were endemic amongst the royal family and its subjects.

Lastly, we will examine the significance behind the sequence of events in Jehoshapat's reign, as they are presented, according to the doctrine of retribution, which constitutes a central theme of the book.

Defilement of God's Name in Ezekiel

Tova Ganzel

The need to preserve the sanctity of the divine name and to prevent its desecration are consistently stressed throughout the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel considers the divine name and its desecration in the context of the scattering of the Israelites among the nations, which desecrates God's "name." This state of affairs will be reversed in the future when God returns the people of Israel to their land: this act will sanctify God's name among the nations. In one instance (chapter 43), by noting that God's name has been defiled, not just desecrated, Ezekiel gives heightened expression to the extent to which the people sin against God. There is a crying need for a divinely imposed, striking alteration in the behavior of the people; this in turn will bring in its wake the desired change in the state of the divine name. Only by this means will God's name retain its sanctity in the future and will God be enabled thereby to dwell among his people forever.

The Injunction Against Ezekiel to Mourn His Wife's Death (Ezek. 24: 15–25)

Yael Shemesh

Ezekiel 25:15–25 describes an extraordinary symbolic act: the Lord announces that the prophet's wife is about to die but forbids him to engage in the conventional mourning rites and customs. The Lord exploits Ezekiel's private life as a prophetic sign to inform the people of their impending doom: just as he does not mourn the death of his wife, they will not follow mourning customs for the destruction of the Temple and death of their sons and daughters.

We also find that the first priests in Israel—Aaron and his sons—were forbidden to practice mourning rituals (Lev. 10:6–7). There, however, the ban is imposed in the service of the social order and to protect the people. In Ezekiel's case, the ban on mourning symbolizes the approaching collapse of the social order in the wake of the catastrophe that will soon strike Israel and undermine the normal modes of expression. This is a punishment for the people, who are not worthy of mourning the disaster they have brought upon themselves and whose dead do not merit lamentation.

The article emphasizes the cardinal importance of mourning rituals in all human societies, and especially in traditional societies like that of the Bible, as shown by sociological and psychological scholarship. In light of the great benefits that mourners derive from mourning customs, we can appreciate the magnitude of the sacrifice demanded of Ezekiel in order to comply with the Lord's injunction not to mourn his beloved wife.

Urban Ideology and the Construction of Space in Amos Chapter 3

Jonathan Ben-Dov

The article strives to understand the city prophecies of Amos according to the so-called 'Spatial Turn' in literary criticism. It aims to clarify the category 'city' by means of the symbols and other poetic devices employed in its designation and in the construction of its ideological signification. A form-critical study of Amos 3:9–15 reveals the intricate structure of this collection of short prophecies, with v. 12 as the linchpin of the entire pericope. The imagery of vv. 9–11 is demonstrated to be part of an urban tradition in biblical

poetry, represented mainly in such verses as Psalm 55, 122, Isaiah 1:21–26 and Jeremiah 9:22. Vv. 12,15 continue this prophecy with a short statement on Samaria, which intensifies the tension between the city and its surroundings by means of isolating several items from the urban scenery and the gruesome image of a lion in prey. Vv. 13–14 consist of a prophecy on Bethel, which was introduced here among the prophecies on Samaria by virtue of the reference to a city and an urban symbol: the altar. The city is poetically defined by the unification of its surroundings (the wall) with some prominent structure in its heart. The importance of justice and peace for the maintenance of the city is underscored along the lines of the poetic tradition. Several long-lasting cruxes in the interpretation of Amos 3:9–15 are elucidated in lieu of the above discussion.

The Rîb with the Inhabitants of Judea During the Reign of Ahaz (Mic. 6:1–8)

Shmuel Vargon

This article will examine the literary type of the prophecy, its bounds, cultural-cultic background, time, and message. The prophet partially adapted for his own purposes, the so-called Dispute Prophecy, or Lawsuit Speech model. However, the motivation behind his literary application of the prophecy diverged from that of the well-known model.

The Prophecy contains a reproach for the breach of the covenant, a dispute and debate aimed at causing the people to repent. A sense of amazement, pain and sorrow at the violation of the covenant arises. The prophet's argument in the dispute focuses mainly on the people's lack of fidelity to the covenant and the bizarre manner in which it worships its Lord—imitating the rite of Baal, on the mountains and hilltops.

To demonstrate the perversity of the Canaanite rite form that had taken hold in the Kingdom of Judah, Micah puts ironic-sounding questions into the mouth of the people (vv. 6–7), where Israel is represented as truly and sincerely desirous of returning to its God and of fulfilling the covenant struck between them. To show its willingness to repent, Israel is prepared to offer any sacrifice that the Lord will find pleasing, from (individual) burnt offerings and calves, continuing with thousands of rams and myriads of streams of oil, and finally to the ultimate sacrifice—one’s first-born son.

The fear and despair that arrived in the aftermath of disasters during the reign of King Ahaz were one of the primary causes driving the severe ritual aberration in Judah, and they led to the revival of ancient Canaanite rites during his reign. At that time Micah proposed an alternative method of forestalling the recurring blows suffered by the people—a way formulated in three main principles: "to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with your God" (6:8), with which this prophetic passage concludes.

Structure and Meaning in Zechariah 8

Elie Assis

This article asserts that the collection of ten short oracles in Zechariah 8 is ordered in a well planned structure, and is meant to be read as a meaningful sequence, though each is an independent entity. The collection is made up of ten oracles, divisible into three parts. The article demonstrates a sophisticated structure of these oracles.

The first part (8:2–8), comprising the first four oracles, describes the first stage of redemption: the removal of the nations from Jerusalem, the return of the people and God to the city, and a prediction of the city's expansion and the high quality of life therein. The second part (8:9–17), comprising the next three oracles, places a greater emphasis on the theological significance of the redemption: the renewal of the covenantal relationship between the people and God, the erection of the temple, the economic abundance that will follow. The last oracle of this section, that is also the seventh in the collection, is its apogee. It ends with the concluding formula נאם ה׳and the next verse introduces another section with the opening formula: ויהי דבר ה׳ אלי לאמר. This seventh oracle promises that all the good will continue on condition that social justice prevails, but insinuates devastation if justice is not carried out.

The collection does not end on this threatening note and, perhaps to avoid this, the ensuing third part comprises a further three oracles that share a positive promise for the future. After describing the transformation of fast days into days of festivity, the prophet predicts a universal acknowledgment of God, by peoples who will express their belief in God, and recognition of Israel. This is the second focal point in this collection. The first oracles lead up to the seventh oracle that is the first focal point – a warning not to repeat the ancestors' misdeeds. The second focal point, at the end of the collection, merges the central points in the collection: the relationship between the people and God, and the nations' recognition of God, the people and Jerusalem.

Psalm 135—A Mosaic and Its Meaning

Yair Zakovitch

Psalm 135's twenty-one verses, without exception, were borrowed from other biblical compositions and joined together to create a coherent literary unit. The article presents the distinct building blocks used by the psalmist and explains the motives behind each selection. Additionally, it looks for alterations by the psalmist to the source-texts, introduced upon their incorporation into the psalm, while elucidating the psalm's message and attempting to understand the writer's steadfastness in coping with the challenge of creating such a mosaic.

Three Philological Notes on the Book of Job

Edward L. Greenstein

In the present study three passages in the poetry of Job are interpreted by means of a philological approach that rests on two assumptions: that a passage may be clarified in light of its immediate context; and that, especially in a text as intertextual as Job, obscure expressions and allusions can be clarified by identifying linguistic and literary parallels, especially within the Biblical corpus. Job 5:19–22 is interpreted by understanding that one must distinguish seven distinct disasters from which God will rescue Job, as stated in the introductory verse; that the poet will sometimes make use of Aramaic; that the immediately following verse recapitulates the last two disasters mentioned; and that the types of dangers that are delineated are to a certain extent paralleled in Psalm 91. In Job 12:4–6 Job seeks to demonstrate to his companions that, as he says, he is no less versed in traditional wisdom than they. The verses are interpreted by understanding that Job rehearses some of the points his companions had made, and by making minor textual adjustments on the basis of the parallelisms and in view of terms and locutions employed elsewhere in Biblical poetry. Job 29:6 is understood to contain a double meaning by discerning an allusion to Deuteronomy 32, a classic poem on which the poet plays and to which the poet alludes a number of times in Job (including chapters 5 and 12). The sense of the allusion dovetails with the major theme of the preceding verses in Job 29.

"Eat this scroll" (Ezekiel 3: 1) – Writing as a Symbol and Image in the Bible

Nili Shupak

The Hebrew Bible indicates that daily communication in ancient Israel was oral rather than written. In conspicuous contrast with the few references to writing as an everyday occurrence, there are relatively many references to writing as a symbol and metaphor.

This discussion proposes to analyze these important passages that have received little attention in previous research. Expounding the texts in question, whose significance is at times ambiguous and controversial, an attempt will be made to answer the following questions:

Why and under what circumstances were these passages written? Who was their author? Did he belong to a particular social stratum? Did he write on his own initiative or as a representative of someone else? In which books, traditions, sources and strata of the Bible is writing symbolically used? Can these instances be dated? Are the biblical findings compatible with archeological evidence that clearly shows the increased number and wider dispersal of written inscriptions in the land of Israel in the 8th to 7th Centuries BCE?

No research on writing in ancient Israel can ignore the possibility of cultural influence from the highly developed neighbors to the north and to the south, especially since writing techniques and written texts existed millennia before Israel became a nation. Hence the present discussion introduces parallels from ancient Near Eastern cultures, notably the Egyptian culture, to shed light on the biblical texts.

The research results are compatible with the epigraphical finding and affirm it. Although in the 8th to 6th Centuries BCE most inhabitants of the land lacked writing skills, they were aware of them and the target audience of the biblical texts would have known of the possibility of setting matters down in writing.

Divine Abandonment in Mesopotamian Literature and the Bible: On the Possibility of Reconstructing an Ancient Theological Discourse

Yitzhaq Feder

Against the common view that literary imagery, commonly referred to as "metaphor," is primarily a poetic device, the present article adopts the position that, in theological discourse, these images are an indispensable means by which the culture can formulate its beliefs. Moreover, as can be seen in the case of ancient Near Eastern cultic beliefs, these metaphors are in certain contexts taken to be literally true. The god's dwelling in spatial proximity to his devotees enabled cultic worship and was deemed essential to guaranteeing the community's well-being. On the other hand, should the temple be destroyed, the god would be considered among the victims.

This article begins by examining the role of descriptions of divine abandonment in various genres of Mesopotamian literature, particularly Sumerian city laments, Balag and Eršema prayers, historiographic accounts of temple destruction and incantations depicting the abandonment of an individual's personal god. This broad survey sheds light on the distinct rhetorical functions served by the descriptions in different literary genres, but also illuminates certain common characteristics, indicating a basic unitary conception underlying them all.

From here, the article turns to descriptions of divine abandonment in the Bible, particularly in sources dating to the period adjacent to the First Temple's destruction. By comparing these sources with the Mesopotamian sources outlined above, it becomes possible to assess to what degree the Israelite attitudes are based on similar premises as their Mesopotamian counterparts. Furthermore, a delineation of which issues are at stake in the biblical discourse on divine abandonment provides a fresh perspective from which to approach the question of Israel's susceptibility to Assyrian and Babylonian religious influence.

In the final section, a preliminary attempt is made to trace the theme of divine abandonment in later Jewish tradition, particularly the relation between the medieval conception of "nature" and its ancient Near Eastern and biblical antecedents.

Traditions of Layout Concerning the Poem of *Ha'azinu* in Medieval Biblical Manuscripts from Ashkenaz

Yosi Peretz

The present-day layout of the Poem of *Ha'azinu* (Deut. 32:1–43) was consolidated in the generations following the Talmudic period and is reflected in the majority of accurate Tiberian manuscripts from the tenth and eleventh century. Scrutiny of various records as well as a partial examination of medieval Spanish manuscripts, reveal common patterns of layout, while most Ashkenazi manuscripts of the same period manifest completely different layouts of the poem, some of them halachically invalid. Our study presents different types of layout in 226 Ashkenazi manuscripts, constituting almost the entire bulk of surviving manuscripts from this particular area, and determines the exact distribution of each type. The examination shows, *inter alia*, that only two manuscripts manifest the poem recorded in 67 lines, among them the Aleppo Codex, written in accordance with Maimonides' instructions. In approximately one third of the manuscripts the poem is transcribed in 70 lines according to the pattern of "tile over tile and brick over brick." In approximately 56% of the manuscripts, constituting the main stratum of the Ashkenazi sphere, the poem is transcribed in various halachically invalid ways, as for example in the pattern of the Song of the Sea – "tile over brick and brick over tile," or, as in seventeen manuscripts, (7.5%), written in regular prose style indistinguishable from other text units. A study of ancient manuscripts reveals that the various Ashkenazi types of layout were not invented by medieval Ashkenazi scribes, rather they reflect ancient traditions already evident in old Tiberian manuscripts from the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The Unconscious in the Commentary of R. Isaac b. Samuel The Spaniard's Commentary on the Book of Samuel

Shimon Shtober

All biblical writers are too cautious to speculate about the stirrings inside people. The soul is a danger zone; emotions in flux are treacherous. While intentions are unreliable and motives are not always explicit, deeds can be counted on.

These assumptions are also valid as far as the attitudes of medieval and even of modern biblical commentators are concerned. Exegetical remarks that elucidate the stirrings inside the souls of the biblical personae are very rare in their commentaries. Yet there are a small number of exceptions in the writings of Karaite and Rabbanite biblical commentators. I refer here in particular to Japheth b. Eli (the 10th century) and R. Isaac b. Samuel The Spaniard (the 11th century), two distinguished commentators of the Bible. Their exegetical writings abound with psychological insights.

Furthermore, I will argue that psychoanalytical terms could be applicable to the process of their delving into the unconsciousness of the biblical protagonists. Both commentators dealt with many episodes, where they found emotions raging in the minds of the biblical heroes such as Saul, David, Joab, Uriah the Hittite etc. The two aforesaid commentators, Japheth and R. Isaac "The Spaniard" strove to interpret the stirrings inside the souls of those heroes, especially the part played by the unconscious that influenced their sayings or their deeds.

Excerpts of R. Isaac The Spaniard's commentary to the Books of Samuel, which consist of these psychological insights, are treated in this presentation. The interplay between unconscious and conscious in the minds of the biblical heroes will be demonstrated in the following seven circles of relationships: Saul and David; Saul and Jonathan; Jonathan and David; David and Joab; Uriah the Hittite and David; David and the Woman of Tekoʻa; Hushai and Absalom.

On the "Literal Sense" in Medieval Jewish Exegesis and Daniel al-Qūmisi's Contribution to the Semantic Study of the Hebrew Bible

Meira Polliack

The first part of the article traces common denominators in the development of a literal consciousness among medieval Jewish exegetes of the Islamic and Christian domains. It then underlines the necessity of integrating the Karaite exegetical corpus into the wider understanding of the emergence of *Sensus Litteralis* in systematic Jewish exegesis. Its second part is devoted to the use of Arabic glosses in exploring the semantic of the biblical text as part of Daniel al-Qūmisi's interest in the literal sense. Al-Qūmisi, who led the movement of Karaite immigration to Jerusalem in the late ninth century, was also among the major founders of Karaite biblical study,

which flourished in the city during the tenth and eleventh centuries. A product of an Islamic environment, his language, thought, and style show signs of Islamic and Arabic influence. His works of biblical interpretation, written in Hebrew, are original in their orientation and focus, incorporating concerns for grammar, philology, and literary and historical context. In many respects they mark the beginning of the Jewish literal exegesis of the Hebrew Bible. The Arabic glosses incorporated in his works are exemplified according to four semantic functions (lexicographical definition; delineation of semantic field; definition and reconstruction of Hebrew homonyms; expansive interpretive definition). The glosses are then further analyzed as part of the transitional stage from Karaite glossographies and mnemonic notations of Arabic Bible translations, to continuous and systematic Bible works which had a strong focus on the literal sense of the Hebrew Bible. For students of the history of Jewish Bible exegesis, there is no one who preceded Daniel al-Qūmisi in developing such a ripe view of the importance of the literal sense to the understanding of the Hebrew Bible, thus rendering him the first medieval Jewish exegete - one worthy of greater appreciation and recognition – to thoroughly engage in this method of biblical interpretation.

On the Structure of the Exegesis of the Byzantine Exegetical Writing

Gershon Brin

The paper deals with a certain structure in the Byzantine exegesis, whereby the commentator uses the form 'למה אמר' while stating the main problem of a biblical text, and concludes with 'ובשבילם אמר' or 'לפיכך אמר' and other parallel formulas after providing the solution of the problem.

The second part of the paper deals with the exegesis of Exod 34:16-26. The aim of this part is to show a variant form of the discussed formula - 'ולפיכך אמרו הנה'. Moreover, I will present herein a lengthy exegetical text demonstrating a broader format of the methods used by the Byzantine exegetes to solve the problems of a difficult biblical text. Special emphasis will be placed on the commentator‘s methods of dealing with the issues of the structure of a biblical judicial text.

Corrections and Additions to Rashi's Commentary on Amos by Rashi and his Students

Jordan S. Penkower

In previous studies, we analyzed corrections and additions by Rashi to his commentaries on the Pentateuch and the Prophets: Joshua, Kings, Ezekiel, and Habbaquq. In this study we discuss three cases of Rashi's corrections to his commentary on Amos, as well as one case with two corrections by his students. In these cases, Rashi's goal is to solve exegetical problems of lexicography, syntax, and context. So, too, his students' goal was to solve similar problems. We will examine the spread of these corrections in the manuscripts, and the degree of precision with which these corrections are attributed to Rashi. To accomplish this, we examined the surviving 45 manuscripts of Rashi's commentary on Amos.

In the first three cases, the ascriptions (ת׳ ור׳ מודה ; נר׳ לר׳ ; אמר ר׳) also appear in corrections in other parts of Rashi's Bible commentary; in those other cases the transmission of the notes may be ascribed to R. Shemaya.

The fourth case, which consists of two additions/corrections not by Rashi, differs from the other three cases discussed, with respect to the language of the ascription (ל׳מ׳ה׳ = לא מפי המורה). Although unusual in the context of additions to Rashi's commentary on the Bible, this last ascription is found elsewhere – in the commentary on the Talmud by the scholars of Mainz (attributed to R. Gershom).

In the above fourth case, the additions with the accurate ascriptions are found in one French manuscript, and somewhat similarly in two Sefardi manuscripts, and one Italian or Byzantine manuscript. In the other three cases, the accurate ascriptions are found in Ashkenazi manuscripts (and one Sefardi manuscript). One may conjecture that these two groups of manuscripts represent two channels of transmission of the commentary, each one representing the work of one of Rashi's students: the first group – as yet unidentified; the second group – that of R. Shemaya.

Of Rashi's three corrections to his commentary on Amos, two (4:3, 6:7) occur only in a minority of the manuscripts (12%; 11%). In the third case (3:12), about half of the manuscripts (49%) contain the correction. With respect to the final case (2:6; two additions not by Rashi), the corrections occur only in a minority of manuscripts (26%).

In the case of 3:12, 3 manuscripts contain 2 additions, 3 manuscripts contain 1 addition, and 15 manuscripts contain 1 addition (which is a variant of one of the above 2 additions). Only

one manuscript wrote explicitly about the second addition: ת׳ ור׳ מודה (an addition [by one of Rashi's students] and Rashi agrees). Whereas, with respect to the first addition, which occurs in two different variations, one may conjecture that this too is an addition by Rashi (it includes various characteristics of his commentary). With respect to the additions, several manuscripts add: ת׳ (addition) to indicate that this is an addition. However, with respect to the above noted 15 manuscripts, they only note: ד״א (another opinion).

We saw that the minority of manuscripts that preserve the various corrections contain, among themselves, variants as to the ascription of the corrections. In general, only a minority among these manuscripts preserve the exact ascriptions.

All of these results, once again, show that the manuscripts of Rashi's commentary on the Prophets represent the history of Rashi's commentary on the Prophets; and in order to understand that history in its entirely, one must examine all the manuscripts.

Rashi's Criticism of Mahberet Menahem

Jair Haas

Throughout his biblical commentaries Rashi used the formula "every X in Scripture means Y" (as well as other similar formulas) to introduce generalizing lexicological rules relating to the meaning of specific roots or phrases in all their different appearances in the Bible. The exact purpose of these rules in an exegetical context is not entirely clear, inasmuch as they are not strictly required in order to explain the meaning of a particular word, which was normally done by bringing additional particular examples from other places in the Bible. In other words, it seems that the aforementioned formula, more than being an integral part of the commentary itself, comes closer to constitute a lexical entry that Rashi formulated in the wake of his commentary on a particular appearance of the phrase or root in question. This kind of lexical entry Rashi knew primarily from the biblical dictionary of Menahem b. Saruk, the Mahberet. Indeed, a systematical comparison of Rashi's "entries" with the Mahberet points to a connection between them. For while Rashi generally relied heavily on the word explanations of Menahem (77 % percent of all cases according to one count), the determinations introduced by the aforementioned formula all differ, in some way, from the Mahberet! Hence it seems most likely that Rashi's "entries" should be seen as a latent criticism or improvement of the conclusions reached by Menahem b. Saruk in the Mahberet.

Flying Letters

Mayer Gruber

Two places in the Babylonian Talmud letters describe letters flying off of Hebrew texts. Pesahim 87b states that the letters flew off of the tablets of the Decalogue broken by Moses. According to Avodah Zarah 18a , the letters flew off of a Scroll of the Torah, which R. Hanina son of Teradyon held to his chest while he was burned alive by the Romans. The phenomenon of letters, which actually flew off of medieval Hebrew manuscripts, that partially survived a tragic fire in the Municipal Library of Turin, can be explained by the established difference in the ignition temperature of animal skin that is blank (359◦C.) as against animal skin on which letters have been inscribed using ink of vegetable origin(450◦C.). Since, letters do not generally fly off of stone tablets when they are broken, it can safely be assumed that the story of the letters flying off the Decalogue tablets developed secondarily from the story of R. Hanina son of Teradyon, which seems to reflect a natural phenomenon.

The Text of Rashbam's Commentary on the Torah according to Breslau MS and other Sources

Jonathan Jacobs

History has not been kind to the commentary on the Torah composed by Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam, c. 1080-1160). The only manuscript still extant in the 20th century (MS Breslau) did not contain the full text of the commentary, and was full of mistakes, addenda and omissions. This sole manuscript was lost in the Holocaust. Hence, any additional testimony which may help to reconstruct Rashbam's original commentary is important.

Rashbam's commentary on the Torah was quoted extensively by 12th and 13th century commentators in northern France and in Germany. In this article I categorize these quotations in accordance with their relationship with MS Breslau: first - those offering a more complete wording than that of the manuscript; second – those which do not appear in the manuscript at all; and third – those which contradict the text of the manuscript. These sources support the hypothesis that Rashbam's commentary as it is known to us is a partial and shortened version of the original work. I propose a

possible explanation for the partial nature of MS Breslau, viewing it as an intermediate stage in Rashbam's work; after its publication Rashbam continued developing his commentary. In light of this possibility the status of MS Breslau as a primary version of Rashbam's commentary on the Torah should be reconsidered.

Why Did Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra Leave Spain and Go to Italy?

Uriel Simon

In the introduction to his commentary on Lamentations (Rome 1142) Ibn Ezra writes: "And I Abraham son of Rabbi Meir [native of] a distant land / have been driven out from the Land of Spain by the wrath of the tormentors." It is generally accepted to identify these "tormentors" with the Almohades, who destroyed many Jewish communities in the Magreb and Andalusia.. This occurred, however, in the years 1145–1148 while Ibn Ezra had left Spain in 1140. Moreover, here is no evidence that Ibn Ezra ever resided in Luccena, and the claim that his lament *Woe! For misfortune from heaven has fallen upon Spain* is based on his eye-witnessing its destruction rests on a misinterpretation of the words of the poem.

Haim Schirmann and Israel Levine suggested that Ibn Ezra left Spain before the calamity due to his presentiment of imminent danger. But this assumption is refuted by a lately found poem, sent to him from Egypt by his son Isaac in July 1141 in which he accuses his father of having deserted his home and having abandoned his young children, and demands that he return to Spain to rebuild his home and resume his fatherly responsibilities.

A close examination of the opening poems of the commentary on Ecclesiastes and of the book of grammar *Moznayim* as well as the rhymed prose introduction to Lamentations (all written in Rome 1140–1142) reveals that they contain no reference to a general calamity, but to the author's severe creative crisis, caused by "the wrath of the tormentors" back in Spain. It is quite clear that Ibn Ezra – writing three-four years before the Almohades began their campaigns in North Africa – could not have expected readers to associate the word "tormentors" with these potential enemies. We must therefore conclude, that the reference is to personal enemies, whose aggression caused him to leave both his home and his homeland.

In Spain, Ibn Ezra depended upon the goodwill of wealthy patrons of poetry and scholarship for his livelihood. The constant search for new patrons was the main reason for his former travels throughout Spain and North Africa. It thus seems very probable that he left for Italy because he suffered not only from the refusal of a former benefactor or the indifference of a new one, but also from the fear instilled in him by his competitors. Although the main reason for his departure was undoubtedly financial, his decision may have been reinforced by ideological differences with the quite conservative Jewish community. But we cannot corroborate this assumption with definite proof.

Ibn Ezra's Secrets in Nachmanides' Commentary: Affinities in Terminology and Exegetical Contexts

Miriam Sklarz

Ibn Ezra and Nachmanides each maintained an esoteric teaching of his own. Ibn Ezra's philosophical-astrological teaching derived from Greco-Arabic culture, while Nachmanides was imbued with the Kabbalistic traditions of his teachers, the Kabbalists of Gerona. Both commentators shared the conviction that Biblical texts and Rabbinic homiletics embody their esoteric systems and hint at them. In their commentaries on the Pentateuch, these exegetes allowed themselves to divulge something of their mysteries and thus, to a certain extent, to reveal that which they believed the Pentateuch sought to conceal. At the same time they both emphasized that these hints are intended only for that select circle of readers who can understand their mysteries.

In this article are presented five cardinal mysteries of Nachmanides' commentary, with emphasis on their relationship to those of Ibn Ezra with regard to terminology, contents and the exegetical contexts (in Scripture and in Midrash) into which these mysteries are woven. In all the instances presented, the mystery of Ibn Ezra forms the exegetical basis of Nachmanides' mystery. Sometimes Nachmanides adds a Kabbalistic tier to Ibn Ezra's astrological mystery and sometimes Nachmanides regards his Kabbalistic mystery to be identical with the mystery of Ibn Ezra.

The broad influence of Ibn Ezra on Nachmanides' commentary in the domain of mystic interpretation lies concealed. Sometimes Ibn Ezra's name is completely absent from the discussion while on occasion the latter's words are found cited in his name only

in Nachmanides' "Sermons of the Ramban" but not in his commentary on the Pentateuch. Even there, where Nachmanides chose to name his source, his words still fail to reveal the full influence of Ibn Ezra's mystery on his own. Thus, this article presents an additional aspect of the "hidden love" for Ibn Ezra which is harbored in Nachmanides' commentaries.

Radak on the Exposition in Biblical Narrative

Ayelet Seidler

The modern literary method analyzing the biblical narrative identifies *expositions* in many biblical stories. The role of an exposition is to provide the reader with necessary information and background regarding the plot and the main figures participating.

In the biblical commentaries of Rabbi David Kimhi (Radak) we discern clearly that Radak is well aware of the fact that in many cases the information provided in the beginning of a story is meant to make the reader understand what follows. Radak does not define the phenomenon *per se* but he repeatedly introduces it with fixed formulations which he uses mainly in this context, such as "this is written here to inform …", "this is written in the beginning because …" etc.

An examination of his commentaries yields that Radak generally assumes that information presented in the beginning of a story is instrumental in providing us with an essential knowledge of its background and thus helps us to better understand the *plot*. Radak also places special emphasis on the role of the exposition in shaping biblical protagonists.

Radak often identifies the role of an exposition in pointing out the *ethical or moral message* of the story. In those cases the exposition deals with the main *theme* of the story rather than the clarification of its plot. In other cases, according to Radak, an exposition is not meant to serve as an explanation but rather as a prolepsis.

My attempt to categorize Radak's use of exposition yielded another category in his commentary. Radak identifies *retrospective* comments and refers to their role in elucidating the plot.

Applying modern literary analysis to medieval exegesis provides us with the ability to better understand the working methods of medieval commentators and to evaluate their possible contribution to modern Bible exegesis.

Later Additions of Radak to His Book of Roots and its Theological Goals

Yechiel Tzeitkin

This article addresses the later addenda that Radak introduced to his book, "The Roots" and also provides an explanation of its theological goals.

Radak utilized the two parts of his book, "Sefer HaMichlol", in all of his works of commentary as evidenced by the cross-references that exist (sometimes verbal ones) between the various works. Radak quoted from "The Roots" in his commentaries, but also augmented it with exegeses and new ideas as they occurred to him while writing his commentaries.

There are some recognizable variations in wording between the different manuscripts of "The Roots." We conclude that many of these divergences attest to the different editing stages of the book and do not not stem from copyist errors. Some of the manuscripts clearly reflect preliminary versions of the book while others are evidence of later versions. Nevertheless, most of the manuscripts that I viewed reflect a variety of intermediate stages, most likely a product of the copyists' simultaneous use of several sources.

Radak's later addenda included: exegeses on sentences, examples of verses containing the roots that were being explained, and exegeses and comments of a philosophical nature. The latter are especially significant to our research. We are familiar with later versions of Radak's works containing added creative exegeses that weren't requisite for understanding the literal explanation of the commentary. Y. Berger has pointed out Radak's commentary on the Book of Chronicles in this context. It is typical of Radak's early works that he didn't expand his commentary in a philosophical direction when this was not indicated for understanding the literal interpretation of the text. This was a conscious, stylistic choice on the part of the commentator. Therefore, wherever Radak found it necessary to pay attention to the philosophical issues raised by the verses, he did so. Only later, when he embarked on his commentaries of the Prophets and Psalms, did Radak widen his literal exegeses by incorporating philosophical thought in different places throughout his commentaries and using it to supplement earlier works, such as his commentaries on "Chronicles" and in "The Roots." This change is perceived as a large scale shift in the orientation of Radak's works, from that of a definitive philological commentary to that of a theoretical commentary.

Further to the aforesaid, the interposition of the renewed commentaries added by Radak in later stages – namely the addition of verses that exemplify the interpreted root – afforded readers the ability to independently reach, with ultimate ease, the pertinent grammatical conclusions, particularly in regard to the vocalization of the verses. This phenomenon accorded well with Radak's overarching objectives for this work.

Finally, we will point out, that in the process of identifying the later ideological exegeses added to "The Roots," it became evident that the quotation from "The Guide to the Perplexed" cited in the treatment of the root n-s-h is itself a later addition. Thus, contrary to the premise of existing research, this quote cannot be regarded as a chronological anchor for dating the entire composition. Moreover, since The Roots formed a part of his initial work, quoted in all of Radak's subsequent commentaries, and constituting their philological basis, it is of no assistance in determining the time period of Radak's literary corpus.

Nachmanides' Interpretations Concerning Rachel's Tomb in the Development of His Commentary on the Torah

Yosef Ofer

Nachmanides's Commentary on the Torah is one of the most important exegetical works on the Pentateuch. The commentary was written in its entirety while Nachmanides lived in Spain, and he took a copy of it along with him when he moved to the Land of Israel, where he spent the final three years of his life (1267–1270). During that brief period he amended his commentary, introducing hundreds of addenda of various lengths. These numerous addenda and changes are gradually coming to light through a research project which has been conducted over the past few years. This article presents some of the fruits of this research, focusing on six fragments related to the location of Rachel's Tomb.

Nachmanides updated his Commentary on the Torah in light of three geographical discoveries which he made in relation to Rachel's Tomb: Rachel died inside the Land and not outside of it (fragments f. and d.); Rachel was not buried at Ramah (fragments b., c., d., e.); and Rachel's Tomb is close to Bethlehem (fragment a.). These facts affect various sections of the commentary, and Nachmanides rewrote these to reflect his new discoveries. These changes, like many other

amendments which he introduced, indicate Nachmanides's sensitivity and his constant willingness to reexamine his interpretations, to amend and to update them in accordance with new data and sources previously unknown to him.

Nachmanides was aware of the difficulties likely to arise from amending the text of his commentary which had already been copied and widely distributed. He therefore tried wherever possible to avoid changing or deleting sections, preferring instead to add new, complementary fragments. In general, this approach proved effective: the addenda were disseminated and in later generations were incorporated in the printed editions of the commentary. However, the new data which Nachmanides discovered concerning Rachel's Tomb made it impossible to avoid introducing certain changes into his commentary and deleting some passages. A comprehensive examination of the manuscripts and the printed editions reveals that not all of these have been preserved in the common editions of his commentary.

Symbolic Acts in the Book of Ezekiel According to Menachem ben Shimon's Commentary

Tmima Davidovitz

This article deals with the unique feature of the Book of Ezekiel – the numerous symbolic acts. According to Menachem ben Shimon, these symbols are, for the most part, employed to represent a sign of punishment for Israel, as an illustration of the impending disaster.

A central issue discussed by Menachem ben Shimon regards the performance of these acts: did they actually take place or only appear so in a prophetic vision? Menachem ben Shimon (in ch. 4–5) preferred the second approach. His conclusions were the dual result of emotional and rational difficulties. Other acts took place in reality as demonstrated by the questions of the audience. Menachem broadened the philological commentary.

The Opinion of Medieval Biblical Exegetes on the Level of Creative Freedom that Moses Had in Writing the Torah

Eran Viezel

The basic axiom of Judaism over the generations has been the divine origin of the Torah and its authorship by Moses in the sanction of the Holy Spirit. What, however, was the nature of God's revelation to Moses which enabled him to write the Torah? Did God dictate the Torah to Moses word by word (a textual revelation)? Or did Moses, perhaps, enjoy a certain degree of creative freedom, i.e. God transmitted to Moses the substance of the Torah but Moses phrased and formed it independently as he saw fit?

It seems that the Sages were unconcerned by the technical aspect of how the Torah was recorded and did not see this issue as a controversial aspect of faith. On the other hand, most of the *peshat* exegetes focus intensively on understanding the level of creative freedom accorded Moses in writing the Torah. The exegetes fall into distinct groups. Rashbam and Ibn Ezra assumed that Moses had vast creative freedom in writing the Torah and that the Torah comprises verses which were written by others. Radak, Nahmanides, Joseph Caspi, Gersonides and Abravanel emphasized that Moses recorded the entire Torah verbatim as dictated by God. The opinion of Saadiah, Rashi and Joseph Bechor Shor reflects a synthesis of both groups' approaches. The author proposes to explain the exegetes' obsessive need to define the level of creative freedom accorded Moses in writing the Torah, as well as the lack of agreement on this matter.

"O Nations, Acclaim His People" (Deut. 32:43) Traces of Jewish-Christian Polemic During the Renaissance

Moshe Rachimi

R. Obadiah Seforno, a leading Jewish sage in Italy (1470–1550), was a humanist and philosopher, rabbi and physician, and was one of the few individuals to whom the term *ish eshkolot* (l'uomo universale) could be applied.

Seforno, who embodied Renaissance culture, openness, and contact with the Christian world, was well aware of the clear and present dangers inherent in exposure to Christian religion and culture. Religious pressure, albeit covert, heightened in his time, and the temptation to convert to Christianity intensified. Seforno was not blind to the historical reality in which he lived and was active. The underlying motivation and aims of his commentary were both educational and religious: to strengthen his readership's Jewish identity, and to provide an answer to the questions raised in the theological polemic against Christianity.

The article examines Seforno's commentary to the Poem of *Ha'azinu* (Deut. 32:1–43), and reveals its anti-Christological interpretations that were meant to contend with the Christian commentary and the veiled pressure to convert.

The Christian commentaries did not extensively interpret the Poem of *Ha'azinu* as confirming their religion and as a polemic against Judaism, and in consequence the medieval Jewish commentators did not lend their interpretations an anti-Christological bent.

Seforno's commentary is unique in that he uses nearly the entire Poem to deliver anti-Christian messages. A historiosophic poem with exilic and redemptive components, *Ha'azinu* speaks of the Jewish people's mission and depicts a future vision. Coupled with moving poetical language and the sublime thought of the wisdom literature, it provides the commentator with an opportunity to glean from it the lofty ideas of the chosenness of the Jewish people and its redemption, and to attack the Christian position. The central topics discussed by the commentator – the chosenness of the people of Israel, exile and the future Redemption – present an anti-Christological interpretation meant to duel with the Christian spirit of the time.