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## ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

### CASTING NETS AND BURNING TEMPLES: THE BABYLONIAN AND PERSIAN BACKGROUND TO JEREMIAH 43:8–13

by Ronnie Goldstein

This article offers a new literary-historical analysis of Jer 43:8–13. The first section of the article addresses two lexical problems in this prophecy: (1) The *hapax legomenon* שפריירו (v. 10) is explained, following a suggestion by Tur-Sinai, as an Akkadian loan-word (from *šuparruru*, to spread), meaning ‘net’. According to this interpretation, it is suggested to translate verse 10b as: ‘and he will spread (נטה) his net (שפריירו) over them (i.e. over the Egyptians)’. (2) The difficult sentence in v. 12b, ‘ועטה את ארץ מצרים’, should be understood as ‘and he will cover (i.e. overwhelm) the land of Egypt’, in light of the fact that in various Semitic languages, verbs with the meaning ‘to cover’ have the additional meaning ‘to overwhelm’ (as in Akkadian *katāmu*). Verbs in this sense appear regularly as part of the simile ‘cover like a garment’, as in Akkadian *katāmu + kīma subāri*. It is suggested here to understand the similar simile in Jer. 43:12b, ‘כאשר יעטה הרעה את בגדו’, as meaning that Nebuchadnezzar will cover Egypt, i.e. will conquer it, as a garment (or employing the slightly different simile here, as the shepherd covers himself with his garment). In light of various Mesopotamian parallels, it is suggested that the original kernel of Jer 43:10–12 consisted of two sentences with the parallel similes of spreading the net and of covering with the garment: ‘\*And he will spread his net over them, and will cover the Land of Egypt as a shepherd covers himself with his garment, departing unscathed\*’. The dependence of the original core of the prophecy on Akkadian language and motifs strengthens argument for a Neo-Babylonian origin of the prophecy, and reinforces the opinion that Jer 43:8–12 preserves a prophecy from the times of Jeremiah.

This original core was disturbed by the insertion of vv. 11–12a and 13, which include both Deuteronomistic clichés and a new topic absent from the earlier layer, the demolition, burning and plunder of the Egyptian temples. The contents of this stratum are nearly identical to the historical traditions about the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses and his attitude to the Egyptian Temples (especially those describing his attitude to the Obelisks in Heliopolis). The main purpose of these additions was to clarify and specify the imagery of the original core of vv. 10–12, and to reapply the Jeremian oracle to the events of Cambyses’ times. According to this suggestion, it is clear that the writing of the Deuteronomistic strata of the Book of Jeremiah continued until at least the 5th century BCE.

### A QUMRAN COMPOSITION ON THE LAWS OF THE SABBATH AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO EARLY HALACHIC HISTORY

by Vered Noam and Elisha Qimron

Among the fragmentary manuscripts of Cave 4 are remnants of two copies of a work on Sabbath law. The connection and overlap between these fragments were discovered in the last

decade. The authors of this article propose new readings and conjectural completions of the text represented by these copies, and offer a new discussion of its contents against the background of early tannaitic halacha. Some of the laws contained in this work are not fully attested in other Qumran texts, and their importance for halachic history is considerable.

(1) The text prohibits picking up or playing musical instruments on the Sabbath. This prohibition is directed both at private individuals and at the priests engaged in the sacrificial service. It does not only reveal a previously unknown aspect of sectarian halacha, but also facilitates reconstruction of the history of one of the prohibitions categorized as *shevut* in tannaitic halacha. The law with respect to the priests implies, in view of a passage from the *War Scroll*, that the members of the Yahad distinguished between the blowing of the trumpets mandated by the Torah, which they permitted on the Sabbath, and the musical accompaniment of the sacrificial service, which they prohibited. It seems that the sect rejected the Pharisaic position on this question, and it is possible that echoes of this dispute may be detected in several rabbinic midrashim. Furthermore, the language of the text allows us to identify the biblical passage which the sect adduced as a source for the obligation to play music in the Temple.

(2) The text apparently prohibits reading from a scroll on the Sabbath. This enables us to suggest a new interpretation of Mishna *Shabbat* 16:1, which mentions Scriptural texts which 'are not read' on the Sabbath, as well as a new understanding of the nature and origin of this ancient prohibition.

(3) The text prohibits 'pouring' live coals. It is possible that the word 'before' found adjacent to this fragmentary prohibition indicates that it referred to a prohibition of lighting or transferring a fire before the Sabbath in order to provide heat or light on the Sabbath. If this interpretation is correct, this passage would reveal the ancient beginnings of a dispute which raged in the medieval period.

## RABBAN SIMEON SON OF GAMALIEL IN BEITAR

by Noah Hacham

The homiletical interpretation of Rabban Simeon, son of Gamaliel II, on the verse: 'My eyes have brought me grief over all the maidens of my city' (עֵינַי עוֹלְלָה לְנַפְשֵׁי מְכַל בְּנוֹת עִירִי) (Lam 3:51), which connects it to the death of many children, is found in three main sources in rabbinic literature (PT *Ta'anit* 69a; BT *Gittin* 58a, and *Sotah* 49b). These sources differ in several important details, including that of location: while two sources mention Beitar (בֵּיתָר) as the place where the children were killed, the third (BT *Sotah* 49b) mentions only 'my father's house' (בֵּית אָבִי). The historical import of these sources is disputed: while one approach bases upon them its claim that the Sages' attitude toward the Bar-Kokhba rebellion was positive, an opposite opinion sees no basis for such attitude in any source. This paper re-examines the three parallel sources using philological, literary and historical approaches, in that order. It is shown that the version of the homily in the Palestinian Talmud is more original than those in the Babylonian Talmud. The literary analysis reveals that the PT portrays the children as good pupils, while BT *Gittin* exhibits them as warriors who abandoned their Torah studies. Thus, the Babylonian version of the story bespeaks a negative attitude toward the Bar-Kokhba revolt as well as toward rebellions against foreign rule in general,

in contrast to the PT that does not oppose the revolt. The historical conclusion in relation to the Bar-Kokhba revolt is that Simeon ben Gamliel was in Beitar during the revolt and was one of its supporters.

‘ANY WORD WHICH IS UNCLEAR SHOULD BE SUPPORTED FROM MANY PLACES’: ON THE LEXEMES פִּיקְרִין AND פִּיקְיִילִיה

by Aaron Amit

For centuries, lexicographers have identified the word פִּיקְרִין or פּוֹקְרִין in tannaitic and amoraic literature with the Greek ποκάριον, ‘small fleece’, a diminutive form of the word πόκος. However, the word ποκάριον is rare in Greek sources, and its presumed usage presents numerous problems in the rabbinic contexts in which פִּיקְרִין/פּוֹקְרִין is used. This article proposes an alternative etymology for the word, based upon a different Greek word, φακιάλιον, attested more commonly in papyri as φακιάριον. The word φακιάλιον is not unknown in rabbinic literature; it has been cited by Joannis Buxtorf, in his seventeenth-century Lexicon, as the etymological basis of the word פִּיקְיִילִיה, mentioned in PT *Betsah* 5:2, 63a. It is my contention that the same word, in its alternate spelling φακιάριον and variants, lies behind the lexeme פִּיקְרִין/פּוֹקְרִין as well. The Greek word itself is a loanword from Latin *faciale*. פִּיקְרִין, or φακιάριον, is a garment similar to the סוּדָרִי(ן), common in rabbinic literature, which is itself derived from Latin *soudarium* via the Greek σουδάριον. According to the Greek sources examined, the φακιάριον was a linen scarf worn around the neck or draped over the arm. It is mentioned in Diocletian’s price edict of 301 among linen garments, and was produced, among other places, in Beth Shean.

In Genesis Rabbah 77,2, Jacob is said to have threatened the angel by placing a פִּיקְרִין on the angel’s neck. Scholars who interpreted this as ποκάριον, ‘fleece’, were forced to explain that ‘neck’ here means ‘throat’, and Jacob stuffed the fleece into the angel’s throat. However, the context clearly indicates a scarf.

The identification פִּיקְרִין with φακιάριον is further confirmed by Tosefta *Kilaim* 5:23, where it is mentioned in the form פּוֹקְרִית together with צִיפָה (or according to the Erfurt manuscript in Tosefta *Shabbat* צִיפֵי צִמָר), ‘raw woolen tufts’, as a forbidden mixture of wool and linen. Lieberman derives פּוֹקְרִית from ποκάριον; however, if this were the case there would be no forbidden mixture, since both are wool. The preferred etymology here too is clearly ποκάριον, ‘linen scarf’.

Likewise, in Tosefta *Shabbat* 5:2, describing the treatment of fractures or wounds, פִּיקְרִין was taken by Lieberman to mean ‘fleece of wool’. However, our understanding of linen scarf makes more sense. The Tosefta describes how the פִּיקְרִין is dipped in oil and wrapped around the fracture with a string, and if we assume that the reference is to a linen cloth, this is precisely the recommended treatment for fractures found in the works of the Roman physician Celsus.

Finally, in PT *Berakhot* 2:2, 4c (=PT *Eruvin* 10:1, 26a) Rabbi Abahu is said to have continued wearing his *tefillin* at night, violating the regnant custom to remove the *tefillin* at sunset. The editor of the Yerushalmi explains that Rabbi Abahu wore his *tefillin* ‘in the manner of פִּיקְרִין’. According to my proposal, this means that he wore the *tefillin* like a ‘scarf’, and not in order to fulfill the commandment of *tefillin*.

The last part of the article examines the usage of *φρακίριον* in papyri and other classical sources, showing how its description matches that of the פִּיקְרִין mentioned in Talmudic sources.

‘AS IT WAS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF ADAM’: APOCALYPTIC AND  
MYTHICAL PERCEPTION OF HISTORICAL TIME IN EARLY MEDIEVAL  
JEWISH THOUGHT

by Joseph E. David

Our picture of the intellectual world of the tenth century Babylonian academies is far from being complete. However, due to the large quantity of Halachic writings and their ambivalence approach toward non-legal aspects of the Talmud we tend to describe the Geonic world as anti-mythic. The article focuses on counter examples of such estimation and offers a refreshing view on the Geonic mythical consciousness and attitude toward Aggadic narratives. Our investigation starts by tracing back the apocalyptic theme mentioned in R. Sherira Gaon’s famous epistle and the meaning and uses of this theme in the construction of historical picture of the Halacha. Our survey also exposes the theological connections of Geonic world with early gnostic and apocalyptical traditions on the one hand and Islamic theological principles on the other. Our claim that R. Sherira Gaon and his son R. Haya did elevate Adam’s figure to be the Father also draws their theological effort to reconstruct an entirely new concept of patriarchy.

THE MESSIAH AS AN INFANT AND AS A CHILD IN *MEGILLAT SETARIM*  
BY R. NAHMAN OF BRATZLAV AND THE MESSIANIC FERMENT OF 1806:  
NEW DISCOVERIES

by Zvi Mark

The scholarly literature knew of the existence of a secret work by R. Nahman of Bratzlav called *Megillat Setarim* that is concerned with the ‘order of the advent of the righteous Redeemer’, but the *Megillah* itself and its content were a mystery. The current article presents, for the first time, passages from the manuscript of *Megillat Setarim* in which the imagery of an infant or a child is used to depict the Messiah. In this article I suggest underpinnings from the biblical, midrashic, and Kabbalistic literatures for the image of Messiah as infant, while at the same time showing the linkage between this imagery and an actual person: R. Nahman’s son Solomon Ephraim, who died in 1806, the year in which *Megillat Setarim* was first revealed to his Hasidim. The article also cites new sources for an additional explanation of R. Nahman’s self-perception as playing a role in the Messianic drama, and of the meaning of the Messianic ferment that seized R. Nahman of Bratzlav before and during 1806 and its waning upon the death of the infant.