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ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

THE *ME'UN* (REFUSAL): THE COMPLEX HISTORY OF HALAKHIC ANOMALY

Aharon Shemesh *and* Moshe Halbertal

The halakhic tradition allows an orphan girl, who was married off by her mother or brothers, to refuse the marriage and to annul it unilaterally. This is an exceptional legal phenomenon in the history of halakhah: it has no biblical source, and it contradicts basic halakhic institutions. The present article reveals the origins of this phenomenon and analyses the different ways in which the refusal (*me'un*) procedure was constructed by the Tanaim, who debated the nature of the *me'un*, the degree of its institutional structure, and the degree to which it is compatible with accepted halakhic principles.

THE EARLY SCOPE OF *PARASHAT SHEQALIM*

Shulamit Elizur

At the time when the Four *Parashiyot* were read as independent lections—rather than as additions to the weekly scriptural lection – they were required to contain a number of verses that would suffice for seven readers (i.e., at least 21 verses per *parasha*). The length of the *parashiyot Zakhor, Para* and *ha-Hodesh* has been documented in the Genizah, in *siddurim*, as well as in fragments of *targumim* of the relevant *parashiyot*. This evidence indicates that their extent was greater than that which is found in current usage. However, the original length of *Parashat Sheqalim* has not yet been documented.

This article presents early, unrhymed *piyyutim* for *Parashat Sheqalim* that versify the entire lection of the *parasha*. The information provided by these *piyyutim* is highly significant, since they antedate by many hundreds of years the evidence that may be gleaned from Genizah fragments. On the basis of the *piyyutim* it becomes clear that in its early form, *Parashat Sheqalim* began, as it still does, with Exodus 30:11 and terminated at 31:17.

THE HIDDEN *HEKHALOT*.
TOWARDS RECONSTRUCTING AN UNKNOWN *HEKHALOT* COMPOSITION
FROM THE CAIRO GENIZAH

Gideon Bohak

The *Hekhalot* literature is known to us mainly from manuscripts of European Jewish origin, and to a lesser extent from the few Cairo Genizah fragments of this literature that have been edited thus far. The present article reconstructs a manuscript of the *Hekhalot* literature from the Cairo Genizah, based on three fragments of this manuscript that were published by Peter Schäfer, one fragment that I have published elsewhere, and five unpublished fragments. Reconstruction of the original manuscript is based on joining the pages to each other so as to achieve demonstrable textual continuity, when the ends and beginnings of the pages have been preserved, and on likely textual continuity when the beginning and/or ends of the pages are missing. The resulting reconstruction is perforce tentative, and one hopes that more fragments of this manuscript will be discovered, or that other copies of some of the textual units embedded in it will emerge in other manuscripts. Such discoveries would greatly facilitate the corroboration or modification of the reconstruction offered here. However, even if no such sources emerge, the new fragments edited here for the first time should suffice to enrich our understanding of the *Hekhalot* texts from the Cairo Genizah and to shed new light on some old questions in *Hekhalot* scholarship.

THE IMPACT OF RABBI SAMUEL OF SPAIN
AND REUEL OF BYZANTIUM ON RASHI'S SCHOOL

Avraham Grossman

Rashi's great curiosity led him to show constant interest in the heritage and writings of various Jewish cultures in Europe and in Islamic countries. This article explores his contacts with exegetical traditions of Jewish sages of Spain and Byzantium. The first part of the article deals with a Jewish scholar from Aragon, Rabbi Samuel 'the Pious', who visited Rashi's school in Troyes at the end of the eleventh Century, relaying various biblical and Talmudic traditions to Rashi and his students. The new information influenced Rashi's biblical and Talmudic exegesis and this is reflected in his use of Arabic words.

Furthermore, Rashi was exposed to important information about Jewish society and religious life in Spain and in other Muslim countries by R. Samuel as well as by Jewish traders, who traveled from Christian Europe to Islamic countries from the ninth to the eleventh centuries.

The second part of this paper examines Rashi's contacts with Byzantium. In 1996 Nicholas de Lange published Greek Jewish texts from the Cairo Genizah, most of which were tenth century commentaries on Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets. The author or copyist of these texts was named Reuel. According to Israel M. Ta-Shma, these commentaries influenced the Bible exegesis of Rashi and his students and provided the basis for the *peshat* exegesis of Rashi, R. Josef Kara and R. Samuel b. Meir (Rashbam). There is no evidence however to

support this opinion. Indeed, while the *peshat* method played an important role in Rashi's commentary, he also devoted considerable effort to the *derash* method. In contrast, Reuel dealt only with the *peshat* method. Beyond that difference, there are many other differences between their methods.

Another scholar who influenced Rashi, in Ta-Shma's opinion is R. Tuviyyah b. Eliezer, the author of *Lekah Tov* (Byzantium, end of eleventh century). There is no basis for this opinion, since all the texts in Rashi's Torah commentary, which are parallel to *Lekah Tov*, are missing in the reliable manuscripts of Rashi and presumably were added by copyists. Thus one must conclude that neither Reuel nor R. Tuviyyah influenced Rashi.

UNCERTAINTY AS A POETIC PRINCIPLE:
A READING OF *NƏ'UM AŞER BEN YƏHUDAH*
BY SHLOMO IBN ŞAQBEL

Idit Einat-Nov

In this paper I point to the grotesque aspect of the Hebrew *maqama* and highlight the simultaneous appearance in the text of comic and threatening elements. The grotesque in the *maqama* differs from the serious or ironic grotesquery of the kind familiar from modern literature (Kafka, for instance); rather, I argue, it belongs to what Thomson called 'the playful grotesque', which, to my understanding, shocks the reader and frees him or her from the bonds of reality (from reason, responsibility, seriousness, etc.), while at the same time it is in no way simply comic (an entertaining story). On the basis of my analysis of *Nə'um Aşer Ben Yəhudah*, I argue that the comic in the *maqama* is occasionally mixed with threatening elements, so much so that if it does serve as entertainment, this tends to be a frightening kind. In other words, the laughter it may elicit is not pure and does not provide relief. Rather, it is mixed with incongruous disturbing elements. If this is indeed the case, the text clearly has the potential to evoke an impression of the grotesque. Whether or not this potential is realized depends on the reader's ability or willingness to experience both aspects, the comic and the threatening or repulsive, simultaneously and equally strongly.