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ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

NEW LIGHT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE TERM *BĒN BAYĪT* IN BIBLICAL AND RABBINICAL SOURCES

Nili Samet

This paper seeks to identify and re-interpret the hitherto misinterpreted term *bēn bayīt* in ancient Hebrew. The term occurs twice in the Bible (Gen 15:3; Qoh 2:7), and several dozens times in Rabbinical sources. In both corpuses, the unique administrative meaning of *bēn bayīt* has been overlooked by scholars, who erroneously identified it with other terms: in Biblical Hebrew, *bēn bayīt* has been identified with *yēlīd bayīt*, and subsequently understood as a type of slave. In Rabbinical Hebrew, administrative *bēn bayīt* has been assimilated into the frequent meaning 'one of the household'. These misinterpretations gave rise to several exegetic problems that are discussed throughout the paper.

The paper presents various Ancient Near Eastern sources which indicate that *bēn bayīt* is a specific administrative term, which designates a head manager serving a king or a wealthy master. The term was introduced into Ancient Near Eastern languages by Achaemenid bureaucracy, becoming known in Akkadian, Aramaic and Hebrew. In light of this data, the question of the dating and textual history of the two relevant biblical sources is discussed.

While in Qohelet the late term *bēn bayīt* joins dozens of other late linguistic traits, in Genesis 15 it remains isolated within its Classical Biblical Hebrew context. It is therefore suggested that the occurrence of *bēn bayīt* in Genesis 15 does not indicate the late date of the chapter to which it belongs, but rather the late date of an interpretive gloss (15:3) inserted into an earlier text for the purpose of clarifying the enigmatic verse which precedes it (15:2).

THE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES AS A HISTORICAL REALITY

Bezalel Bar-Kochva

Some scholars have recently claimed that the religious persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes have no historical grounds. This thesis joins a challenging call to refresh the research of Ancient Jewish history by utilizing modern disciplines and innovative methods

This denial of the historicity of one of the most celebrated and decisive events in the History of the Jewish people was presented mainly in the voluminous book by Sylvie Honigman in *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochus IV*, Oakland (University of California Press) 2014. The book tries to prove that the religious persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes were invented by court historians of the Hasmonean dynasty in order to glorify the Hasmoneans as the saviors of the Jewish religion and its Temple and thus justify their usurpation of the secular and religious

authority. According to Honigman, Antiochus' violent treatment of the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants in 168 B.C. was only typical of the regular policy of Hellenistic and Seleucid rulers. However, shortly afterwards Antiochus Epiphanes demonstrated respect toward the Jewish God and granted precious gifts to his Temple. The real cause of the unrest in Judea was the heavy tax imposed on the Temple already by the time of Seleucus IV, Epiphanes' predecessor, and not religious persecutions.

Honigman argues that: (a) II Maccabees (and not only I Maccabees) was written by a court historian, living in Jerusalem at the time of John Hyrcanus, who was committed to promote Hasmonean dynastic propaganda; (b) the activities of the gymnasium established in Jerusalem by Jason were not unacceptable to the Jews, and none of the accusations imputed to Jason by II Maccabees can be regarded as an offense against Jewish law and traditional practices; (c) I & II Maccabees adopted a topos current in Mesopotamian literature for justifying the rise to power of 'righteous' rulers and deposition of 'villain' kings, and used it for legitimizing the Hasmonean dynasty; (d) the basic structure of both books accords with the Mesopotamian 'topos'; (e) it is generally accepted that a Seleucid military settlement was founded in the Jerusalem Akra after the Seleucid invasion in 168 B.C.; hence Honigman concludes that the report of the Books of the Maccabees that pagan sacrifices were forced on the Jews in Jerusalem and the rural areas, reflect only the existence of pagan altars serving the foreign military settlers in Jerusalem and in their agricultural allotments in the countryside; (f) the real motivation of the Jewish revolt was the great increase of taxes, especially the tax imposed on the Temple. In Honigman's view, this can be proved by the Olympiodoros inscription discovered in Marisa, dated to the last years of Seleucus IV; (g) there was no parallel to the religious persecutions imputed to Antiochus IV in Greek and Hellenistic history, and such a policy would have been inconsistent with Greek religious conceptions and practices and those of other polytheistic religions.

The present article refutes these arguments one by one. It expands on (a) the hostility of II Maccabees to Simeon, the founder of the Hasmonean dynasty, and the lack of any acquaintance of the author and the abbreviator with Jerusalem and the Land of Israel; (b) the role of the gymnasium as a place of public nudity and especially of the *palaestra* as a center of intensive homosexual activity in the Holy City, not far from the Jewish Temple (indicated quite clearly in II Maccabees); (c) the meaning for the Jews of the period of these practices and of the provocative parades of the Ephebes in the streets of Jerusalem; (d) the Mesopotamian topos, which is entirely different from the content and structure of I & II Maccabees (notably Honigman's misleading assertion, referring to I Macc. 13:48, that Simeon built his palace in the Akra of Jerusalem, presented by her as the decisive evidence for a similarity between the Babylonian topos and the structure of I Maccabees is baseless: according to that verse Simeon built his palace in Gazara, the fortress situated at the edge of the coastal plain. There has never been a palace in the Akra); (e) the lack of a real proof for the foundation of a military settlement in the Jerusalem Akra, while there is ample evidence in the sources that no military settlements were established in Judea, such a step being useless and impractical in the given circumstances; (f) the taxation system of the Seleucids in Judea in the days of Antiochus IV was moderate in comparison with other regions of the Seleucid empire and considerably lower than the Ptolemaic one. The discussion expands especially on the token tax imposed on the Jerusalem Temple and on its timing, as well as on the implications of the Olympiodoros inscription. The token tax on the Temple could

not have been the cause that generated the long Jewish Revolt, nor the taxation system by and large; (g) the internal, international and personal background of Antiochus IV led him to persecute the Jewish religion: he deviated dramatically from the religious policies and practices of his predecessors; the orthodox Jews of Jerusalem launched a revolt before the invasion of the city by Epiphanes in 168 B.C.; the king apparently suffered from cycles of depression and mania, which correspond to the development of his drastic reactions against the rebelling Jews. The article also points out that the assertion that the religious persecutions were unparalleled in Antiquity, is far from being accurate.

The article presents the sources on the religious persecutions which cannot be suspected of a pro-Hasmonean bias: (a) the book of Daniel (esp. 7:25), written at the beginning of the Revolt, many years before the Hasmonean dynasty was established, by a man who awaited divine intervention and did not expect much of the resistance movement; (b) authentic Seleucid official documents, written under the rule of Antiochus IV and his son, Antiochus V, that explicitly refer to the religious persecutions (II Macc. 11:24-26, 31); (c) the accounts on the religious persecution in Judaea preserved by early Hellenistic authors who were personally well acquainted with Seleucid history, and drew directly on contemporary Seleucid court historians. Honigman ignores the evidence of these sources altogether (while accepting the authenticity of the Seleucid documents in chapter 11 of II Maccabees).

Honigman's additional thesis, that the battles of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers are imaginary, is also refuted. The article closes with some comments on the irrelevance to the issue under discussion of the disciplines and methods inadequately applied by Honigman.

BETWEEN BLESSINGS AND PRAYER: ON THE HISTORY OF THE *AMIDAH* PRAYER

David Henshke

The daily *Amidah* prayer, i.e., the eighteen benedictions also known as the *shmoneh esreh*, is composed of three units. Its first unit consists of three blessings of praise; its middle unit contains petitions terminating with 'He hears prayer'; and we would expect the concluding unit to manifest termination and leave-taking. However, only the middle blessing of this section fulfills this function: the first of these three benedictions, the blessing of the (temple) service (*avodah*) and the concluding one, the blessing of peace, are clearly petitions. Hence, the very structure of the *Amidah* prayer is fundamentally problematical.

The solution proposed here is based on the earliest extant versions of the *Amidah* prayer--the seven Sabbath and festival benedictions--formulated in the Temple period as documented in the Tosefta. As described in the Mishnah, the last unit of that *Amidah* ends with the priestly blessings and not the blessing of peace. Accordingly, the concluding blessing of the primary *Amidah* was the priestly blessings. Thus, prayer had a dialogic structure: praise, petition, thanksgiving, and then blessing by God. This structure suggests that the *Amidah* was originally a public prayer and was not intended for individual recitation, for the priestly blessing is recited only in a public framework. However, because the rabbis in Yavneh required the recitation of the statutory prayers twice or three times a day by individuals as well as the public, it became necessary to incorporate the blessing of peace - containing

phrases from the priestly blessing - as a *substitute* for the priestly blessing: In the Evening Service (*Arvit*), and in the Afternoon Service (*Minchah*), there is no priestly blessing. However, because the blessing of peace always became the conclusion of the recitation of the *Amidah* by an individual, as well as for public prayer whenever the priestly blessings were omitted, it eventually came to be viewed as an inseparable part of the *Amidah*.

Thus, the daily *Amidah* originally consisted of eighteen benedictions (although there appear to be nineteen) – for the blessing for peace was not part of the original *Amidah*. However, when the blessing of peace came to be considered an integral part of the *Amidah*, the blessings for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Davidic dynasty were combined into one benediction in the land of Israel in order to retain the original number of eighteen, whereas in Babylonia the blessing against heretics was explained as a later addition.

An analysis of the various versions of the blessing of the service leads to the conclusion that the original version was neither a request for the restoration of the temple service and the return of the divine presence to Zion, nor a petition for the acceptance of the worshipper's prayer. The prayer originally petitioned for the acceptance and perpetuation of the temple service, and concluded: 'for we will serve You alone in awe', which had significance in the context of a standing temple with an ongoing cult. The explanation for the location of this blessing can be derived from sundry sources from the temple period which testify to the existence of prayers uttered during the offering of sacrifices, both in and outside the temple. Apparently, the *Amidah* developed against this backdrop when, for the first time, a fixed framework for public prayer was inaugurated outside the temple. Motivated by the temple service, the set times for prayers were in accordance with the times of the daily sacrifices. Likewise, the *avodah* blessing had to be included. Consequently, the location of the *avodah* blessing is outside the petitionary framework in the *Amidah*: it is not part of the prayer itself, but a reaction and accompaniment to the motivating cause of prayer – the temple service.

ON THE INCLUSION OF THE 'MIKAN AMERU' HOMILIES IN THE HALAKHIC MIDRASHIM

Mordechai Sabato

This article analyzes three passages in the Mekhilta de-R. Ishmael that contain halakhic statements introduced by the term '*from here they said*'.

This demonstrates that in these passages these halakhic statements disrupt the flow of the homily, suggesting that they were inserted at a later date. These statements were included in their present contexts by the Mekhilta's redactor because of the general connection they have with the section preceding them, and they include halakhic rulings based on additional sources.

The classical commentaries, which attempted to interpret these passages as currently formulated, encountered serious difficulties in trying to explain them. In the author's view, the correct way to interpret these passages is to interpret them without these statements, and only thereafter to attempt to account for the insertion of these statements in their present context.

SURVIVING FRAGMENTS OF THE QILLIRIAN HERITAGE
IN PROVENCE/CATALONIA AND IN SPAIN:
IN THE WAKE OF NEW MATERIALS FROM THE GENIZAH

Michael Rand

This article reviews the evidence for the presence of Qillirian *piyyut* in the Sephardic and Provençal/Catalonian liturgical rites. In the case of the former, this consists of several Genizah fragments copied in Sephardic hands that contain *piyyutim* by Qallir. On the basis of an analysis of the texts of the *piyyutim*, the genres that they represent, as well as their liturgical context as documented in the fragments, the author argues that the latter represent an organic liturgical rite of a Sephardic type. For the Provençal/Catalonian rite, the author reviews the evidence provided by a number of known European *mahzorim*, and adduces that of several fragments of a Provençal/Catalonian *mahzor* newly identified in the Genizah. An analysis of this evidence leads him to suggest that the liturgical rite with which Yehuda ha-Levi was familiar included the Qillirian *qedushtot* for the Four Special Sabbaths.

BETWEEN SHEMUEL HA-NAGID AND THE POETS OF ZARAGOZA

Jonathan Vardi

This article discusses certain issues regarding the history of the Hebrew poetry in eleventh century Muslim Spain, focusing on the poets who worked in Zaragoza and their affiliation to the great poet who dwelt in Granada at the time, Shemuel Ha-Nagid. The article includes the first publication of a previously unknown polemic poem written by Ha-Nagid. The author suggests that this poem responds to the derogatory lines, directed at Ha-Nagid, written by the poet Moshe Ibn al-Takana of Zaragoza.

The article discusses Ibn al-Takana as a poet and his affiliation to the compositions of his contemporary, Shelomo Ibn Gabirol, also of Zaragoza. Although the similarity between some of Ibn Gabirol's secular poems and the only poem by Ibn al-Takana that has reached us has been acknowledged, discussion of this similarity has not been sufficient. The article describes the common components in those poets' work, argues that both of them influenced each other, and suggests that Ibn al-Takana is the unknown addressee of one of Ibn Gabirol Panegyric poem. Furthermore, the article suggests that the addressee of Ibn al-Takana's poems, the famous Hebrew grammarian of Zaragoza Yonah ibn Jannah, is also the addressee of another panegyric by Ibn Gabirol to an unidentified dignitary, since Ibn Gaborol explicitly imitated Ibn al-Takana's words in praise of the grammarian.

Finally, the paper discusses the social context of the issues at stake. It examines the possibility that a small literary school with distinct characteristics developed in Zaragoza, reexamines Yonah Ibn Janah's affiliation to the poets of his city, and wonders about the rivalry between the Jewish intellectual elite of Zaragoza and the vizier of Granada Shemuel Ha-Nagid.