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ENGLISH ABSTRACTS

KADESH: THE HIDDEN TOPONYM

By David Ben-Gad Hacoen

There is a contradiction within D at the beginning of Deuteronomy, namely a verse referring to the Israelites staying at Kadesh for 'many days' (Deut 1:46) and another verse with the instruction given to Moses: 'As for you, turn about and march into the wilderness' (Deut 1:40). The article demonstrates that both concepts are further emphasized in D. This tends to provide evidence that there are two distinct sites in D: (1) Kadesh-barnea where the incident of the spies took place and where the Israelites stayed for just a short period of time, and (2) Kadesh where they stayed for many days.

A Toponym of two words can be shortened into one word when the directional 'ה' is added. If so, the direction to both Kadesh and Kadesh-barnea will be written – 'Kadeshah' (קדשה). If 'Kadeshah' in P (Num 13:26) means 'towards Kadesh-barnea' we find in P the same distinct sites as in D.

All the references to Kadesh and Kadesh-barnea may be separated into two well-defined groups: The verses that mention Kadesh-barnea connect it with the incident of the spies, the journey of the Israelites, the southern border and with the Paran Desert. No mention is made of the incident of the spring, the Edomite border, Aaron's burial or the Zin Desert. Contrarily, Kadesh is connected with the incident of the spring, and Aaron's death and burial. Geographically, Kadesh is situated in the Zin Desert and is mentioned in connection with the Edomite border.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NARRATIVE CONCERNING
THE ANNUNCIATION OF SAMSON'S BIRTH (JUDG 13)

By Elie Assis

The Samson narrative is the only one in Judges that includes the details of the savior's birth (Judg 13). The narrative describes the announcement of the savior's forthcoming birth to his barren mother and her husband Manoah's concern until he realized that the announcement came from God. This essay sets out to clarify the significance of Samson's birth narrative and its role, through an analysis of the characters of Manoah and his wife. On the one hand, the narrative depicts Manoah as an inferior character compared to his wife, while on the other hand it does not focus on Manoah's wife who remains anonymous, but on the husband. Neither does the narrative concentrate on the barren wife's conception, nor on the prediction of salvation. The narrative presents the process of Manoah's recognition of the tidings of the forthcoming birth while leaving his wife's character as secondary, as an example of a person whose attitude to the news is fitting.

In contrast to the other biblical narratives on the conception by barren women, our story does not present Samson's parents as especially worthy of the heralded event. The purpose of the narrative is to show the intervention of God on behalf of Manoah and his wife as an act of kindness, rather than a reward for their good deeds and righteousness. This is how the decree that Samson be a nazirite should be comprehended. This is also how the revelation of God to the woman who did nothing to deserve it should be interpreted. The decree is designed to impose on Samson a minimal requirement so that he would be worthy of divine guidance. Similarly one has to understand God's intervention on a national level.

In the Samson narrative, the stage of bringing forth a savior is not the answer to the cry of the people of Israel to God, as is the case in all the other narratives in Judges. In the Samson narrative, the nation's salvation also is presented as God's kindness, with no merit on the part of Israel. Once the significance of Samson's birth is clarified, one can understand why in this narrative in particular divine salvation is exclusively dependent on divine kindness rather than on human merit, as in the other narratives in the Book of Judges. The Samson narrative story comes after God announces in chapter 10 that He will no longer save Israel, since the people do not deserve salvation. From this point of view, there is no contradiction in the Samson narrative, for God does not save Israel because the people

deserve salvation, but because of divine kindness. The Samson narrative is the beginning of a process as can be seen in Judg 13:5, and it is a transition stage between the period of the Judges and that of the monarchy. In the Book of Samuel, the war against the Philistines will reach its culmination, but then it will be due to merit rather than kindness.

PERFUME IN THE SONG OF SONGS: AN ERROTIC MOTIVE AND SIGN OF SOCIAL CLASS

By Shlomo Bahar

It is generally held that the Song of Songs is not an integral narrative but a collection of poems connected loosely by common motives and expressions.

Unlike the rest of the Bible, the Songs of Songs concentrates on the cultivation of the body and hedonism. The atmosphere is erotic and the book ignores most of the subjects commonly dealt with in the Bible: the fate of human beings and an effort to please a male god. Many of the images come from an urban milieu and an affluent society.

All these particular features lead to a conclusion that most of the poems in the Song of Songs were written by and for people who lived in an urban environment. They belonged to a ruling elite that enjoyed a high standard of living and used luxurious products. Some of these products, such as a variety of perfumes, were imported and quite expensive. The scroll contains a description of the way of life led by the elite community during the time of the monarchy.

The Song of Songs shows a positive attitude toward the behavior which the Prophets so bitterly denounced. It appears that when the Song of Songs was included in the Scriptures it had already been interpreted allegorically. This is the way one may understand its acceptance by those who followed the Masorah and by the Qumran sect.

A REEXAMINATION OF THE DREAMS
OF THE EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS AND OF PHARAOH
IN THE JOSEPH NARRATIVE (GEN 40–41)

By Nili Shupak

Reports on dreams as well as dream-omina are common in ancient Egyptian literature. They reflect a tradition beginning in the second millennium BCE, which left its mark on Greek and Arabic literature.

The issue of the present research is to find out whether the Egyptian influence is also evident in dreams in the Bible, particularly those presented as dreams of the Egyptian officials and of Pharaoh in the Joseph narrative (Gen 40–41).

A comparison of these dreams with the Egyptian dream pattern shows that they have common features regarding the types of dream, their structure, methods of formulation, and ways of interpretation.

There can be no doubt that the narratives of the dreams of the officials and of Pharaoh contain authentic Egyptian elements and features. These are drawn from various areas of life in ancient Egypt: the King's court, landscape and nature, economy, mythology, religion, and magic. Even Egyptian words transliterated into Hebrew are interspersed in these narratives.

Therefore, the biblical text cannot be properly understood without recognition of its Egyptian setting.

POLITICAL FACTORS IN THE DECLINE OF
THE NEO ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

By Idan Breier

The article examines the political reasons that brought about the collapse of the Neo Assyrian Empire. It describes the accomplishment of the empire under Esarhaddon and Aššurbanipal, when it succeeded in extending its rule from the Persian Gulf to Egypt. In this period, Assyria imposed a unipolar balance of power on the international scene, based on clear and absolute military superiority. But it appears that control of Egypt was a particularly difficult task for the Assyrian kings, until the rulers of the 26th dynasty threw off the Assyrian yoke. The Assyrians also had difficulty suppressing revolts in Babylon.

At the same time, new political forces that evolved over the years entered the arena: Elam and Media, on the slopes of the Iranian plateau, as well as the Scythians and the Kimmerians in the north. Faced with the new powers in the region, Assyrian monarchs were unsuccessful in allocating the necessary attention and resources to effective enforcement of their rule. Moreover, the Assyrian kings were confronted with internal upheavals, such as the uprising of Šamash-šum-ukīn in Babylon and the struggles that broke out in the waning days of Aššurbanipal's reign. The internal and external struggles eroded the balance of Assyrian supremacy. The rise of Babylon, Media, and Egypt created a new balance of power in the international arena, which culminated in Babylonian hegemony.

ARSHAM: A BIOGRAPHY OF A SENIOR PERSIAN OFFICIAL

By Yosi Baruchi

This study is an attempt to restore the biography of Arsham, the satrap of Egypt between 454–410 BCE. The historical documentation about Arsham includes some references by Greek historians, Aramaic documents written on papyrus or leather (some including an additional note in Demotic), and Neo-Babylonian business documents written on cuneiform tablets. Some imprints of Arsham's cylinder seal also exist. Further reference to Arsham was found written on an Egyptian monument, not previously used in the study of his life.

With the aid of these historical sources, Arsham's biography is restored and integrated into the broader context of Egypt's history in the second half of the fifth century BCE. Arsham was appointed as satrap of Egypt in 454 BCE, where he ruled for the next 44 years. At the end of his term he settled in Babylon, and was appointed **ברביהא**, one of the most important officials in the Persian Empire. The synthesis of the character of this senior official in the Persian empire contributes important information about the historical realia in Egypt during the fifth century BCE.

ON RASHI'S USE OF THE MASORAH NOTES IN
HIS COMMENTARY TO THE BIBLE

By Lea Himmelfarb

This article seeks to examine the manner in which Rashi incorporates the Masorah in his commentaries. In order to demonstrate how he extracts what he needs from the Masorah and introduces this material into his commentary for interpretive purposes, we chose examples that represent different aspects of Rashi's methodology that fall into four categories: (1) mention of the Masorah as (authoritative) support; (2) interpretation that follows the Masorah; (3) rejection of an interpretation that is contrary to the Masorah; (4) submission to the Masorah.

Each of these examples begins with a study of Rashi's commentary in comparison with the *Targumim* and the interpretations of other commentaries, in order to determine the uniqueness of the commentary by Rashi. This is followed by the citation of the Masorah note on which, or on the likes of which, Rashi relies in his explanations, with an examination of his treatment of the other instances to which the Masorah alludes in the same note.

The few examples of references in Rashi's commentary to the Masorah that we examined provide evidence of the high esteem in which the Masoretes were held by Rashi, both for their activity as the preservers of the textual version, and for the interpretive aspect implicit in their notes.

RASHI'S CORRECTIONS TO HIS COMMENTARY
ON THE PROPHETS

By Jordan R. Penkower

In a previous study, we reviewed three corrections that Rashi made concerning his commentary on Ezekiel. In all these cases, noted by other scholars, there was explicit evidence showing Rashi as the source of these corrections. We further discussed there one more case in Ezekiel (27:17), which however did not provide explicit evidence for Rashi as the corrector.

The present study is devoted to corrections concerning Rashi's commentary on 1 Kings chapters 6–7, and on Habb 2:3. In these cases there is explicit evidence that the corrections were written by Rashi. In the first group, Rashi both added to his commentary on Kings and corrected it; in

the second, he corrected his commentary to Habbaquq. Both of these types of corrections are found in Ezekiel: in 27:17 he added to his commentary, whereas at the end of chapter 21 and at 42:1 he corrected his commentary.

In both these cases, the explicit evidence concerning Rashi as the source of the corrections was often found not *ad locum*, but rather at other places in the manuscripts. Thus, for example, in the case of 1 Kings, only one ms contains the corrections in the Kings commentary. The other mss introduced the corrections at various other places: at the end of Kings; end of Jeremiah; beginning of Ezekiel; end of Ezekiel.

This study shows that when dealing with the history of Rashi's commentary on the Prophets, one should not rely on the majority of manuscripts alone, especially if they are of one type. It could be the case that precisely those manuscripts not examined will provide evidence concerning the history of the commentary. For example, concerning Habb 2:3, if our examination had ended with the 28 manuscripts that reflected the corrected text (without any comment at the end of the commentary), we would not have obtained an accurate picture of the history of the commentary. Even if one discovers a second manuscript type, one cannot necessarily stop there. Thus, in Habb 2:3, Maarsan discovered a second type (with a note at the end of the commentary), but erred in the interpretation of the note there, for he had not seen additional manuscript types (which exhibit the original text before the correction).

An accurate picture of the history of Rashi's commentary requires an examination of the manuscripts which together exhibit the manifold text-types. Thus, for example, in Habb 2:3 we were able to follow the history of Rashi's commentary by examining numerous manuscripts which exhibited various text-types: (1) 5 mss preserve Rashi's original text to this verse; (2) 3 mss preserve the original text (at Habb 2:3) together with the corrected text (at the end of the Minor Prophets), and also note at the end that this correction derives from Rashi; (3) 4 mss preserve the corrected text (at Habb 2:3) together with a note that this is a correction by Rashi (in one of the mss the crucial "r" [rabbi/rabbeinu=my/our teacher] was dropped); (4) the majority of the mss, 28, preserve the corrected text without any note about it being a correction. This is also how the text appears in the printed editions; (5) there are also some 'mixed' types: one ms preserves the corrected text at Habbaquq, and yet, once again, brings the corrected text at the end of the Minor Prophets with the note that this is a correction by Rashi. Another ms abbreviates the text in Habb 2:3, while referring the reader to Rashi's similar comments in Leviticus and Ezekiel. On the other hand, the missing text is filled in on the margin, with a

double-reading: first the original text, and directly following that the corrected text (without a note pointing out that the correction stems from Rashi).

We may conclude, as in our previous study, by stating that the manuscripts of Rashi's commentary on the Prophets, according to their various types, reflect the history of his commentary.

A PHILOSOPHER'S *PESHAṬ* EXEGESIS:
MAIMONIDES' LITERARY APPROACH TO THE BOOK OF
JOB AND ITS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF BIBLICAL
INTERPRETATION

By Mordechai Z. Cohen

Early characterizations of Maimonides' biblical exegesis as 'philosophical *derash*' have given way to recent studies of the systematic hermeneutics he applied to Scripture, especially in the *Guide of the Perplexed*. Yet since most of these studies are philosophically oriented (aiming to reveal the biblical basis of Maimonidean thought, e.g., on creation, the nature of God, prophecy and political theory), there is still a need to evaluate Maimonides from an exegetical perspective, within the Babylonian-Iberian *peshat* tradition he inherited. Although he cites rabbinic and philosophical sources throughout the *Guide* and hardly mentions great medieval exegetes such as Sa'adia, Ibn Janah, Ibn Chiquitilla and Ibn Bal'am, a closer look reveals Maimonides' reliance on their literary-philological methods. Fusing those with his talmudic erudition and Greco-Arabic learning (which included poetics and rhetoric), Maimonides devised a distinctive literary analysis that adds luster to the *peshat* tradition. This is evident in his reading of Job in *Guide* III:22–23, where he revives an opinion rejected in the Babylonian Talmud and marginalized in post-talmudic tradition that Job is a *mashal* (fiction), a position he recasts using Greco-Arabic literary concepts. Although Maimonides adopted this view to support his philosophical reading of the book, his resulting analysis yields an insightful literary approach to Job unique in medieval learning.

The Book of Job invited philosophical interpretation in the Babylonian-Iberian school, as represented by Sa'adia and Ibn Ezra, who drew upon Greek and Arabic philosophy to analyze the dialogues between Job and his friends, and God's speech from the whirlwind. Maimonides developed this approach further, identifying in detail five distinct philosophies in the

Book of Job, which he drew from Aristotelian, Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite thought. Yet many difficulties stand in the way of this reading, since the biblical interlocutors' speeches are filled with redundancies and inconsistencies. Exegetes such as Saʿadia, Naḥmanides, Gersonides and Thomas Aquinas noted these obstacles and devised methods to construe the dialogues as a well-ordered speculative debate, which Aquinas likened to the medieval *disputatio*. Maimonides offered an alternative solution based on the rejected talmudic view that "Job did not exist, nor was he created, but was merely a *mashal*" (BT *Baba Batra* 15a). But whereas the talmudic author of this statement meant merely that the Job narrative is fictional rather than historical, Maimonides identified the *mashal* genre as a sophisticated literary form employed as part of a strategy of philosophical esotericism. Applying the political-literary theories of Alfarabi and Ibn Sina to Scripture, Maimonides argued that the prophets hid their philosophical doctrines in the garb of myth and allegory. He defined the biblical *mashal* accordingly as a text with two levels of meaning: a superficial literal level (*ẓāhir*) for the masses incapable of theoretical speculation, and a deeper allegorical level (*bāṭin*), the true philosophical meaning. Whereas the other medieval exegetes construed Job and his friends as historical personalities and sought to explicate their views, Maimonides regarded them as fictional characters in a literary construct and aimed instead to discover the theories hidden in the text by the author of the narrative. This obviated the need for tenuous attempts to cast the dialogues as a *disputatio* and allowed Maimonides to acknowledge that a straightforward reading of Job legitimately renders the dialogues repetitive and even confused ramblings.

While Maimonides deemed the philosophical *bāṭin* to be the ultimate purpose of the Book of Job, he boldly grants autonomy to the *ẓāhir*, which he interprets according to its own literary logic dictated by the story-line of the righteous suffering servant of God. The result is a *peshat* reading of Job unencumbered by the typical medieval endeavor to harmonize the text with a preconceived philosophical template. In this respect, Maimonides foreshadows a trend in modern Job scholarship that cites the incoherence of the dialogues as evidence to refute the medieval philosophical approach. In this spirit, some modern interpreters argue that the Book of Job advocates a preference for virtues such as patience and tolerance over the ultimately futile doctrinal speculations of Job and his friends. To be sure, Maimonides would have hardly accepted those conclusions, since he was thoroughly committed to the deeper philosophical reading; yet on an exegetical level he acknowledges the validity of a *peshat* reading of the text

of Job akin to the one that forms the basis of the modern non-philosophical reading.

A parallel closer to Maimonides' medieval context can be seen in his older contemporary Rashbam, the northern French biblical exegete and Talmudist whose unwavering search for *peshat* yielded readings of Scripture that contradict not only aggadic midrashic traditions, but even rabbinic halakhic exegesis, which he certainly accepted, since it forms the basis of normative Judaism. To resolve this conflict, Rashbam argued that the biblical text legitimately bears two distinct levels of meaning: the authoritative *derash* derived and transmitted by the Rabbis, which he acknowledges as the essential meaning of Scripture (*iqar*), as opposed to the *peshat*, which he derives independently using his own tools of philological-literary analysis. The analogy with Maimonides is striking: both thinkers posited a bi-level theory of biblical meaning in order to make room for their own *peshat* interpretation of Scripture alongside a very different traditional reading that they accepted implicitly for religious and ideological reasons. While direct influence does not seem likely, this similarity underscores the ingenuity displayed by two medieval Talmudists who sought to devise a conceptual framework for their insightful *peshat* readings of Scripture.

UNIVERSAL SOURCES IN NAḤMANIDES' COMMENTARY ON THE TORAH

By Shalem Yahlom

This article sets out to trace the influence of the Provençal School on Naḥmanides' commentary on the Torah. The writings of Moses Hadarshan were not available to Naḥmanides, but the Provençal School quoted his comments in many places and these influenced the work of Naḥmanides on many occasions.

A systematic examination of Abraham Ben-David's (the Rabad) comments on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* provides evidence that such commentaries influenced the works of Naḥmanides. Also, there are traces of the Rabad's commentaries on *Torat Hacoḥanim* in many places in Naḥmanides' commentary on Leviticus. The many similarities between the commentaries of the Radak and those of Naḥmanides have been noted in research works.

There is no doubt that the literature of the Provençal School has in many aspects influenced Naḥmanides' commentaries.