

# Summaries

**Adina Moshavi**

## **Topicalization in Biblical Hebrew**

Based on an examination of all the topicalized clauses in Genesis, and selected examples from Exodus–Kings, this article presents a comprehensive description of topicalization in biblical Hebrew, including syntactic and pragmatic aspects. Topicalization is a common device, occurring 171 times in Genesis alone.

In the biblical context the preposed element in the topicalized clause can be subject, object, or adverbial. Topicalization marks the preposed item as linked to an item in an adjacent text segment, either preceding or following. Some examples include:

(Gen. 31:47) ויקרא לו לבן? גר שהדותא ויעקב קרא לו גלעד

(Gen. 34:21) את בנתם נקח לנו לנשים ואת בנתינו נתן להם

The linked items may stand in any position in the clause, and may even be omitted through ellipsis, and their contextual relationship may be of a logical or ad hoc nature.

Topicalization functions as a discourse-connective device, signaling that the marked clause bears an unspecified coherence relation to the text segment containing the linked item. By examining the segments in the light of the linked items, the addressee infers the intended relation between the clauses. Among the several types of topicalization relationships, the most common biblical one between segments linked by topicalization is that of opposition and similarity, both of which are epistemic relations. Opposition always obtains between a pair of linked segments, whereas similarity may involve a topicalization chain. Other functions of topicalization include speech-act relations such as addition, elaboration, summary, or paraphrase, the last three types of which are

characteristic of topicalization involving identical linked items, and linked time adjuncts. The latter involves the content relation of temporal succession, and may exhibit a chain of long discourse segments, each describing a series of sequential events.

**Hayim ben-Yosef Tawil**

**“If the sun has risen on him”: Legal Terminology  
in Light of Cuneiform Texts from Ugarit**

Medieval and modern exegetes are deeply divided as to the precise interpretation of the phrase “if the sun has risen on him” (Exod. 22:2). Exegetes such as Saadya, Ibn-Ezra, Rashbam, and Hīzqoni, as well as modern scholars, including Eherlich, Luzzato, and Cassuto, among others, understood the biblical phrase in its literal-plain meaning, namely, that the break-in occurred in broad daylight. On the other hand, in the *Mekhilta* Rabbi Ishmael understood this phrase as ‘absolute certainty’. Namely, he eliminates the distinction between the nighttime and daytime slaying of the burglar, and restricts the acceptable killing to circumstances in which the murderous intent of the intruder is absolutely beyond doubt. This interpretation was accepted by the Babylonian Talmud, Rashi, and Rambam. Judicial texts from Ugarit, in which one’s legal clearance is compared to the ‘purity of the sun’, shed light on Rabbi Ishmael’s understanding that the phrase “if the sun has risen on him” reflects the idea of clarity, purity, and absolute certainty of the burglar’s intent.

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Mordechai E. Kislev and Orit Simchoni

### A Proposed Explanation for the Replacement of חותל by חותם in the Mishnah

The term חותל found in *m. 'Uqzin* 2:2, which relates to the stones of dried ripe dates, has a unique meaning connected to the biblical וְהַחֲתִיל לֹא חֲתִילָתָּ (Ezek. 16:4). Actually, only very dry, hard date varieties, such as the south Egyptian Ibrimi and Bartamuda, have a חותל that envelops the edible part from the inside and fits the mishnaic text. Carbonized dates from these varieties, dated to the late Second Temple period, have been recovered at Masada. However, due to the absence of such dry date varieties in Iraq and the northern Mediterranean regions, medieval scholars had difficulty explaining the mishnaic distinction between the stones of fresh and dried dates.

Therefore, we suggest that the original and rare word חותל was replaced by the vocally similar חותם (a stalk; the perianth which seals juicy fruit), thereby giving the Mishnah a different meaning. The earliest known substitution comes from the geonic period.

Yochanan Breuer

### Lexical Innovations in Babylonian Amoraic Hebrew

Very few descriptions have been dedicated to amoraic Hebrew, and existing ones focus on grammar, to the almost total neglect of lexicon. This article introduces and describes many lexical innovations from the amoraic Hebrew found in the Babylonian Talmud. For example, עשוי is used in tannaitic Hebrew in its basic meaning, 'is made', whereas in amoraic Hebrew it is an auxiliary verb denoting 'used to' or 'may'; in tannaitic Hebrew במקום means 'in the place', whereas in amoraic Hebrew it means 'instead'. In some items, the change affects not meaning but formation; whether in pattern, e.g., in tannaitic Hebrew the root נכ"ר 'noticeable' is used only in *nif'al*, נִכְר, whereas in amoraic Hebrew we have

also הִפָּר in *hof'al*; or in syntactic sequence, e.g., ‘while alive’ is expressed in tannaitic Hebrew by בַּחַיִּי, and in amoraic Hebrew by מַחַיִּים. Many new phrases were also created in amoraic Hebrew, including דְּבָרֵי הַכּוֹל ‘all agree’, among others.

**Ronit Shoshany**

### **The Chronological Development of the *Segol* Accent**

In the Tiberian “twenty-one book” accentuation system, in which most verses are divided in two – the *atnaḥ* domain and the *silluq* domain – the *segol* is anomalous. In this system, each of these two domains is divided by a *zaqéf* (or a sequence of *zəqéfim*) and a *ṭippēḥa*. This symmetry is violated by the *segol*, which occurs only in the *'atnaḥ*, and never in the *silluq*, domain, even when the latter has the proper conditions for its occurrence. The *segol* is also exceptional in that no precise rules govern its use – rather than a *zaqéf* – in dividing the *'atnaḥ* domain, and in that in 120 cases it is not followed by a *zaqéf*. Moreover, its substitution by a *šalšelet* (rather than a *zaqéf*) in only seven cases warrants explanation. A synchronic analysis of the Tiberian system does not provide an adequate explanation for these phenomena.

The discovery of the rules and the chronological development of the Babylonian accentuation system, which predates the Tiberian one, contributes to the solution of the above-mentioned anomalies. In this article I show that the accent *šin* (the Babylonian parallel to the *segol*), which in its early stages appeared in both halves of the verse, gradually disappeared from the *silluq* domain, and remained only randomly in the *'atnaḥ* domain. A similar process caused the existence of *'atnaḥ* domains in which *segol* is not followed by *zaqéf*. My comparison to the Babylonian system showed that the occurrences of *šalšelet* do not hint at a midrashic interpretation (as Wickes proposed), but are rather the result of a process of change in the accentuation system itself.

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Moshe Bar-Asher

### **Contacts between Hebrew and the Local Languages of Converso Descendants in Southwestern France**

The article investigates Hebrew traditions preserved by the communities of the converso descendants in southwestern France over a three-hundred-and-fifty-year period, from the mid-seventeenth century to the present. The present study is based on Hebrew texts and on the Hebrew element as used in the seventeenth-to-eighteenth-century Spanish (Portuguese) vernacular and writing, and in the eighteenth-century to present-day French spoken and written in these communities. The communities of southwest France provide researchers with a living laboratory for the investigation of a previously unknown Hebrew tradition. We are in a position to describe this tradition fully, especially its phonology. Also discernible are the results of the contacts between this tradition and these communities' oral and written languages.

The article examines two phenomena in detail: (1) the pronunciation of the consonants *zayin*, *samek*/*śin*, *zadi*, and *šin*; and (2) the realization of word-final *mēm*. Three additional topics are also briefly described: (1) the gemination of the consonant *reš*; (2) the pronunciation of *reš*; and (3) the apocopation of unstressed final syllables in the French period of the communities.

Uzzi Ornan

### **Representations of Word Structure in Latin Transcription versus Traditional Vocalization**

The paper investigates the vocalization signs of the traditional Tiberian *niqqud*, and shows that this system does not provide a proper picture of the linguistic structure of the word. Many ambiguities mislead the users, e.g., a dot in the letter 'y' in words such as פּוֹרְיָהּ is mistakenly understood as a double 'y'. It further deals with the transcription of Hebrew words

into Latin characters, and claims that the transcription suggested by the Israel Institute of Standards (ISO FDIS 259-3) is preferable to those founded on the Tiberian vocalization. This IIS transcription is based on the notion of particular “reading rules” for each pronunciation, but unified “writing rules” for all Hebrew pronunciations. From the Latin transcription an accurate reconstruction of the original Hebrew word can automatically be achieved, whether unvocalized or vocalized, and it mainly provides an accurate phonemic description of the structure of the Hebrew word throughout the ages, for all written traditions and all current vernaculars.

### **Abraham Tal**

Menaḥem Zevi Kaddari, *A Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (Alef–Taw): Oṣar Lešon ha-Miqra’ me-Alef ‘ad Taw*, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006, lxiv + 1188 pp.

The recent completion and publication of the long-awaited *Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* represents a satisfying moment for all Hebrew speakers. Unlike the dictionaries of biblical Hebrew published over the last century, the present one is written entirely in Hebrew, by an Israeli scholar. Menaḥem Z. Kaddari brought to fruition a project initiated in 1957 by two prominent scholars, Joshua Blau and the late Samuel E. Loewenstamm, who produced two volumes, covering the letters *’alef* to *waw*. Kaddari subsequently joined the team and, in 1968, a third volume covering *ḥēt* to *ṭēt* appeared. From that date, until the project’s present completion, it was Kaddari alone who carried out this colossal task. The result is a well-conceived, beautiful one-volume dictionary, which will be appreciated by the large public of students, teachers, and learned individuals in need of a scholarly dictionary to elucidate the riddles of an ancient language transmitted to modern generations.

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**Steven E. Fassberg**

Moshe Bar-Asher and Devorah Dimant, *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, University of Haifa: Publication Project of the Qumran Scrolls; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, vols. 1–4 (2003–6)

*Meghillot* marks the first appearance of a Hebrew periodical (an annual) devoted entirely to the study of the documents from the Judean Desert. Previously, Hebrew articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls and related texts and subjects appeared in diverse journals, festschrifts, and memorial volumes. Each of the four volumes of *Meghillot* published to date includes approximately two hundred pages of articles arranged under the general rubrics of (1) ideology and interpretation, (2) texts, editions, and language, and (3) notes. The volumes include English abstracts of the Hebrew articles. The editors are to be congratulated for the variety of subjects investigated, the mixture of older and younger contributors to the volumes, and the high academic level of the articles.

**Aron Dotan**

David Téné, *Sefer ha-Hassaga [...] of Rabbi Jonah Ibn Janāḥ in the Hebrew Translation of Obadiah ha-Sefaradi*, Sources and Studies 8, N.S., Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language and The Bialik Institute 2006, lxi + 238 pp.

Ibn Janāḥ's first grammatical work, the *Mustalḥiq* (not *Mastalḥaq* as on the English title-page), constitutes his critique, corrections, and emendations of Ḥayyūj's works, alongside new items. In this work Ibn Janāḥ laid the foundations of his grammar on the basis of Ḥayyūj's grammatical theory. Previously known only in the Judeo-Arabic original published by Joseph and Hartwig Derenbourg in 1889, this hitherto unknown Hebrew translation appears here for the first time, in an eclectic, critical edition according to two manuscripts. Prepared by the late Professor David Téné, this edition was edited and brought to press posthumously by his devoted student, Professor Aharon Maman.

Téné provided the textual foundation for the critical edition along with annotations and a critical apparatus. For the reader, the lack of a comprehensive commentary to the sometimes perplexing text is quite disturbing. Téné unfortunately did not get around to a discussion of the method of translation, comparison to other translations of medieval grammatical works, and a treatment of the translator's extraordinary Hebrew and terminology. Nothing is said about the identity of the translator, Obadiah, his time and place, or how he is connected to the translation. What Téné does provide are notes shedding new light on the grammatical insights of both Ḥayyūj and Ibn Janāḥ. Although not of much help in clarifying difficult passages, these comments, with their brilliant analysis and innovative insights, constitute a substantial contribution to scholars. Téné's absence is heavily felt in the layout of the text, the minutiae of its vocalization, and the inconvenient setup of the cross-references and footnotes.

Professor Maman has corrected some of these shortcomings in his preface, in which he describes the two manuscripts and dates the translation to the latter half of the twelfth century. He comments on Téné's method of determining the readings of the text and the apparatus. Above all, his general, sixty-page introduction based on various previous publications and lectures by Téné provides a clear idea of the nature of Ibn Janāḥ's treatise, his attitude toward Ḥayyūj, and his disputes with his adversaries. Overall, in spite of its shortcomings, this is still an important publication, indispensable to scholars and students of medieval Hebrew grammar.

### **Chanoch Gamliel**

Aharon Maman, *Otzrot Lashon: The Hebrew Philology Manuscripts and Genizah Fragments in the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2006, lii + 650 pp.

This book is a catalogue of the Hebrew philology manuscripts and Genizah fragments housed in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America library. Compiled by Professor Aharon Maman, a distinguished expert in



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the realm of medieval Hebrew philology, this book benefits greatly from, and reflects, his expertise. In addition to correcting the identification of many manuscripts, he briefly describes each item and surveys its contents and scope. Other valuable aspects of the book include its introduction, which also supplies an overview of the main features of Hebrew philology, and its indexes, a valuable tool for all students of Jewish studies. This new catalogue makes a contribution to, and enhances, further research of Hebrew philology.

### **Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald**

Moshe Bar-Asher, *Les traditions de l'hébreu des communautés juives du sud-ouest de la France*, Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, and The Ben-Yehuda Center for the Study of the Hebrew Language, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2006, Vol. 1: xvi + 352 pp., Vol. 2: xvi + 387 pp.

To date, very little linguistic research has been devoted to the language of the Jewish ex-converso (also known as ex-Marrano) communities of southern France. In this two-volume work, Moshe Bar-Asher provides a detailed description of their Hebrew tradition. Processes of social-demographic change, and especially the fact that their members no longer speak Spanish or Portuguese, made the collection of witnesses to this Hebrew tradition imperative.

The data collected includes oral and written sources: handwritten transcriptions of prayer books, handwritten Hebrew documents from the past three hundred and fifty years, letters, and taped recordings of informants who retained elements of the old Hebrew language tradition in their French and Spanish vernacular. The first volume describes these sources and provides examples of various extant texts and oral traditions as well as a detailed linguistic analysis of the findings. The first volume is actually a slightly revised collection of previously published articles, now conveniently gathered into one book. Accordingly, many of the phenomena described are treated in more than one chapter.

The second volume is a copy of transliterated prayer books completed a century ago, with the addition of a Hebrew translation and linguistic commentary. This volume can also serve the members of the community

as a prayer book that represents their old language tradition. Primarily important for having preserved a language tradition prior to its extinction, it is also of interest as a work of linguistic analysis.

### **Menaḥem Zevi Kaddari**

Yeḥiel Bin-Nun, *Erez Hammoriyya: Pirqa Miqra Velašon*, ed. Joel Bin-Nun, Alon Šěvut: Těvunot, 2006, xxv + 608 pp.

This rich collection of commentaries to, and literary analysis of, manifold biblical passages is unique for its organic integration of solutions to exegetical difficulties with discussions of literary issues. Moreover, the book addresses links between linguistic phenomena and their phonological-linguistic sources, grounding its treatment in aspects of the various Semitic languages. These qualities make this book especially enlightening reading, for the erudite audience in particular.

### **Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald**

Maya Arad, *Roots and Patterns: Hebrew Morpho-Syntax*, Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 63, Dordrecht: Springer, 2005, viii + 286 pp.

If, up to now, the relationship between roots and patterns in Hebrew has been studied from various morphological, syntactic and semantic perspectives, Maya Arad's book takes a new and interesting approach, a syntactical analysis of this relationship. Based on 1812 Hebrew verbal roots, she undertakes a structural analysis of these roots with regard to various patterns. The analyses are well exemplified in sentences, in lists of verbs, and in tables and graphs.

The book's main hypothesis is that the verb represents a combination of root and morpho-syntactic features. Based on this hypothesis, two claims are made: (1) a theoretical view of word formation that sees the root as a lexical entity; and (2) identification of word formation as a

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syntactic process. Regularity and irregularity in the verbal system are attributed to contextual meaning. The theory is based on two distinctions, syntactic and morphological. From a syntactic point of view, Arad differentiates between root- and verb-derived verbs (e.g., *katav* ‘wrote’ is a root-derived verb, whereas *nixtav* ‘was written’ is a verb-derived verb). From a morphological standpoint, a distinction is made between patterns directly inserted into the root, namely *pa'al*, *pi'el* and *hif'il*, and those inserted into the root only if they exist in another pattern, namely *nif'al*, *hitpa'el*, and the passives *pu'al* and *huf'al*. Syntactic, semantic, and morphological regularity (MCM = multiple contextualized meaning) is widespread among the latter, whereas irregularity is more common among the former. This detailed analysis of each of the patterns in relation to other verbs from the same root or pattern does not, however, solve all the disparities found throughout the complex Hebrew verbal system, and alternative analyses are largely ignored.

*English summaries edited by Dena Ordan*