

Summaries

Noam Mizrahi

The “Cycle of Tongues” in the Eighth Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice

The “Cycle of Tongues” is a poetic unit incorporated in Song 8 of the liturgical composition known in the scholarship as the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, several copies of which were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Its fragmentary text is reconstructable by combining the evidence from both 4Q403 1 ii 27–32 and 4Q405 11, but even then, the composite text remains one of the most enigmatic and baffling passages in the Songs. This paper proposes that the interpretive difficulties result from a misunderstanding of the text’s syntax, which has led to its misconceived division into poetic lines. Once its syntax is properly construed and the poetic lines delineated anew, the text becomes intelligible. The linguistic analysis is complemented by a literary investigation of the content and compositional function of the unit within its structural and thematic contexts. According to the proposed reading, the “Cycle of Tongues” describes specific musical aspects of the performance of the angelic liturgy as conducted at the heavenly sanctuary.

Uri Mor

Sifre Zuta on Numbers in Genizah Fragments: Pronominal and Verb Morphology

This study is a chapter in a linguistic analysis of the two Genizah fragments of the halakhic midrash Sifre Zuta on Numbers: MSS St. Petersburg (Firkovich) and Oxford. It discusses the morphology of pronouns (demonstrative pronouns, independent personal pronouns, and pronominal suffixes) and verbs as found in these manuscripts.

The pronominal data reveal that the two fragments are comparable with the best manuscripts of rabbinic literature, for example, in the distribution of the second-person masculine singular pronouns **את** – mainly before participle predicates – vs. **אתה** – mainly for marking contrast. One feature was found to match the Hebrew in use in southern Palestine (the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira): **בם** (alongside **בהם**) ‘among them’.

The verbal data similarly correspond to reliable rabbinic literature manuscripts, for example, in the formation of the verbal and nominal infinitive forms. The small number of distinctive features that were detected, like the nif'al form **ניצול** in the phrase **ניצול בצמיד ופתיל** ‘protected by a fastened cover’, are not strictly morphological, but rather pertain to the lexical and stylistic aspects of the text.

Alexey (Eliyahu) Yuditsky

טחורים That Are Not Mice

Some fifty years ago Yeḥiel Kara suggested that the word **טחורים**, which appears in nineteenth-century Hebrew newspapers, meant ‘mice’ and was borrowed from Yiddish or Polish. The present paper is devoted to evaluating this statement. It shows, in fact, that the word **טכוריש**, meaning ‘polecat’, appeared in the seventeenth century as a Polish gloss of **ברדלס** in the writings of Rabbi Yoel Sirkis. Later Hebraized, this word occurs as **טחור** and **טחורים** in various nineteenth-century Hebrew sources. Yet, some scholars have suggested that, in light of 1 Sam 6:5, **טחור** means ‘mouse’.

Moshe Florentin

Moshe Bar-Asher, *Studies in Hebrew: Ancient to Modern*, Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2023, 286 pp.

Studies in Hebrew: Ancient to Modern is a multifaceted collection of twenty-two of the hundreds of articles and essays published by Moshe Bar-Asher. Of these articles, sixteen have been published previously but were not included in any of the author’s earlier volumes of collected articles. The remaining six are published here for the first time.

The articles in the volume treat almost all periods of Hebrew, from the Bible to the present. Several address the place of Aramaic in Hebrew; others describe the contribution of specific individuals to the study of Hebrew. Although distinctly eclectic, all are characterized by their careful philological methodology. The well-organized articles always present a clear-cut conclusion: as to the nature of a source, the meaning of a word, or the validity of a method. Because of their clear, straightforward presentation, the author's arguments are rewarding not just for scholars, but also for the educated public with an interest in language.

English summaries edited by Dena Ordan