

Summaries

Yoel Elitzur

The *Matres Lectionis* in Biblical Hebrew: A New Approach

In medieval Arabic sources, the long vowels *ū* and *ī* were often perceived as *uw* and *iy* respectively; thus, the entire alphabet could be seen as purely consonantal. It seems that such a perception existed in Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic as well, as evidenced in forms such as עִזְרִים, רְדָדִים, and שְׁוֹקִים, whose grammatical pattern is identical to that of the ‘segolates’. The next stage was addition of the glottal consonants *he* (in Hebrew) or *aleph* (in Aramaic) after final vowels. This stage also has a parallel in Arabic, namely, forms like *samā* ‘sky’, *binā* ‘building’.

Emmanuel Mastey

The Etymology and Meaning of אַגְרָטָלִי (Ezra 1:9)

Ezra 1:9–11 lists some valuable temple utensils confiscated by King Nebuchadnezzar that King Cyrus, in turn, ordered returned to Jerusalem. One of the utensils named there is אַגְרָטָלִי *ʾagarṭālē* (in the plural construct form). The word appears twice in v. 9, but otherwise does not occur in Hebrew sources, with the exception of a short discussion in the Jerusalem Talmud (Yoma 3:10) that suggests popular etymologies for this term.

Several theories have been raised in the scholarly literature concerning this word’s source and meaning, pointing to possible Greek, Hittite, or Persian source-words. However, none of these words fully denotes a vessel made of valuable metals. The paper argues in favor of another suggestion, succinctly laid down by Charles C. Torrey, according to which the source is the Greek word κρατήρ, ‘crater’, defined by Liddell and Scott as ‘a large bowl in which the wine was mixed with water, and from which the cups

were filled'. The word *κρατήρ* is extensively employed in Koine Greek. It appears several times in the Septuagint, once in the context of the utensils used in the tabernacle (Exod 24:6). The Epistle of Aristeas mentions it among the utensils donated to the temple by King Ptolemy, and it also appears in Flavius Josephus's inventory of the temple. A series of phonetic shifts, involving both consonants and vowels, altered the Greek word and shaped its biblical form. Several are associated with well-known shifts already attested in Greek papyri and in Greek words appearing in the book of Daniel and in the Mishnah. In conclusion, despite the seeming phonetic gap between *אַגְרִיטַל** and *κρατήρ*, I maintain that the former derives from the latter.

Simcha Gershon Bohrer

Censorship and “Tailed Circle” Glosses in MS Kaufmann of the Mishnah

The margins of MS Kaufmann of the Mishnah (Budapest A50) feature many glosses. Consideration of censors' marks and signatures, and of graphic signs, tailed circles in particular, led to a proposed identification of the “corrector” of MS Kaufmann.

In line with a papal bull issued in 1554 all manuscripts and printed books had to undergo “purification” or “correction”, namely, removal of problematic passages. In the context of local Italian censoring campaigns, the words *גוי* or *נכרי* were replaced eighteen times with *ע"ז* (*oved avodah zarah* – idolater) in MS Kaufmann. “Tailed circles” direct the reader to some of these corrections. Additionally, at the beginning of Tractate Avodah Zarah, a censorship gloss pertains to the entire tractate. The final page bears the signature of the first censor: Franguellus, 1575.

Based on comparison to Hamburg Codex Hebraicus 18 (IMHM: F 881), also censored by Franguellus and “corrected by Yitzhak of Arles”, and the identity between the handwriting of the *ע"ז* corrections to the mishnayot in the Hamburg Codex and the same corrections in MS Kaufmann, it appears that the Kaufmann manuscript was “corrected” in Ferrara by Yitzhak of Arles, and that the censor Franguellus only affixed his signature at the end.

The article also notes the similarity between many of the corrections marked with a “tailed circle” in MS Kaufmann and the text of the printed editions of the Mishnah. This similarity is attributed to the fact that these corrections, most likely the work of a single annotator, were marked some eighty years after the publication of the first printed edition of the Mishnah. Occasionally, the annotator who indicated his glosses with a “tailed circle” attributed to himself glosses of other annotators by marking theirs with a “tailed circle”, even transforming an earlier sign referring to a gloss into a “tailed circle”.

Tamar Zewi

The Orthography of the Hebrew Incipits in Early Genizah Fragments of Saadya Gaon’s Translation of the Pentateuch

The article discusses variations in the orthography of Hebrew incipits in early Genizah fragments of Saadya Gaon’s translation of the Pentateuch (mostly from the eleventh to twelfth centuries). Among its findings is inconsistent variation in the Hebrew incipits’ use of Hebrew *matres lectionis* as compared to the Tiberian masoretic transmission. Moreover, the Genizah fragments provide cases in which the Hebrew words differ from those of the Tiberian masoretic transmission with regard to content; for example, omissions and alternations with other Hebrew words. These changes most probably did not arise from the copying of non-Tiberian masoretic versions of the Bible, but from the copyists’ reliance on memory in preparing copies of the Bible for personal use.

Ali Watad

Who Composed the Arabic Column of *haMelits*, the Trilingual Hebrew–Arabic–Aramaic Dictionary?

The second volume of Zeev Ben-Hayyim’s five-volume series *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Traditions amongst the Samaritans* (1957–1977) contains a trilingual (Samaritan) Hebrew–Arabic–Aramaic

dictionary. According to Ben-Ḥayyim this dictionary, which he called *haMelits*, was composed in two stages. Initially, prior to the eleventh century CE, it was composed as a bilingual (Samaritan) Hebrew–Aramaic dictionary. For the Arabic middle column, Ben-Ḥayyim argues for a later dating, some time between the second half of the eleventh and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, at the latest.

This article examines the connections between the fourteenth-century high priest Pinḥas ben Yosef ha-Rabban, author of the bilingual (Samaritan) Hebrew–Arabic dictionary *Kitāb al-Turjumān*, and the Arabic column in the trilingual (Samaritan) Hebrew–Arabic–Aramaic dictionary *haMelits*. By this means it seeks to determine the date of the latter’s composition.

Alexey (Eliyahu) Yuditsky and Dina Socol

How the Elephant Got his Trunk in Hebrew

Beginning with the early twentieth century, Hebrew dictionaries have the word חרק for ‘trunk’. In its entry for this word, the Ben-Yehuda *Dictionary* cites a work titled צל עולם (World Image) as the source for חרק as denoting an elephant’s trunk. Further investigation revealed צל עולם to be the translation of the French *L’image du monde* written in 1245, and חרק of the Hebrew version to correspond to the word *bouel* ‘bowel’ in the French one. Examination of the manuscript of the Hebrew צל עולם showed that this very word is, in fact, written הרק, which is the singular form of הרקים ‘bowels’. It thus appears that the word חרק denoting ‘trunk’ was the result of a misspelling of הרק ‘bowel’.

Adam Bin-Nun

Ilan Eldar, *The Masoretic Accentuation of the Hebrew Bible*
According to the Medieval Treatise Horayat Haqore,
 Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2018, 344 pp.

The eleventh-century masoretic treatise *Hidāyat al-Qāriʿ*, also known by its Hebrew name *Horayat haQore* (Guide for the Reader), was written in Judeo-Arabic by the Karaite grammarian ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn. It proposed

to guide the reader of the Bible to a proper, accurate reading, and has two parts: Part A – consonants and vowels; Part B – accents (cantillation marks). The author produced two recensions: one long, and one short. Over the millennium since its composition, abridgements, translations, and various adaptations have been made of both recensions. Notwithstanding their great importance, the two Arabic recensions are still in manuscript versions and have yet to be printed in their entirety.

Recently, based on manuscripts of both recensions, Professor Ilan Eldar published a compilation of what *Hidāyat al-Qāri'* prescribes for the biblical accents. Arranged in thematic textual units, the compilation does not follow the order of the original text. First, the Arabic source appears, followed by a Hebrew translation, and each chapter concludes with an excellent, clear summary. The book includes a special chapter by Yosef Ofer titled “The Book *Horayat HaQore* from the Perspective of the Research of Biblical Accents”. In addition, Ofer’s comments on the edition have been incorporated throughout in square brackets.

The present article is a review of the printed book, the manuscripts, the Hebrew translation, the character of the edition, and its usefulness; in addition, it presents a note on the verse “who has measured the spirit of God?” (Isa 40:13). Eldar’s book makes an ongoing contribution to a widening interest in the Masoretic Text and to a more profound investigation of the biblical accents. The conclusion of article addresses the broad question if this book, in its current form, provides an ample response to research needs.

English summaries edited by Dena Ordan