

**A RICH COMPENDIUM OF BIBLICAL AND
ANCIENT NEAR EAST KNOWLEDGE**

by *SHALOM PAUL* *

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130 + 194 p.

In the preface to this volume dedicated to H.L. Ginsberg, the editor, M. Haran, states that:

“the Israeli Exploration Society takes pleasure in honouring one of the most outstanding scholars of our time in the fields of Bible studies and Semitic languages. He pioneered decisive paths in the interpretation of the Ugaritic texts. His works have gained him an authority of the first order in the study of Hebrew and Aramaic in their various periods and dialects, as well as in North-Western Semitic epigraphic research in general. His commentaries to, and translations of several books of the Bible, with studies on background problems of biblical history, are marked with extraordinary feeling for the meaning of the text and an unique insight which has enabled him to shed light on many a biblical enigma.”

The volume, which is a rich compendium of scholarly studies reflecting Ginsberg's own vast spectrum of scientific interests, is a contribution to him from colleagues and disciples in Israel, the United States, and Europe, and happily coincides with his seventy-fifth birthday. It is divided into two parts: a non-Hebrew section, consisting of 18 articles in English and French with an English summary of the Hebrew section, and 31 studies in Hebrew along with a Hebrew summary of the non-Hebrew section. A bibliography of his writings from 1928/9–1976, drawn up by J. Tigay, lists 205 entries which attest to the acumen and scope of scholarship of this master craftsman, so often referred to as the doyen of many of the disciplines under study. This chronological list of his writings is followed by a contextual one, which is a very convenient tool for all who wish to discover Ginsberg's specific contributions in each of his fields of research.

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In his "Appreciation" to Ginsberg, his life long friend and colleague, A. Halkin, descriptively highlights the originality, acumen, modesty, honesty, penetrating analysis, and sensitivity to language that characterizes the work of Ginsberg – adding to his many credits his role as translator, as is witnessed in the JPS translation of the *Torah and Five Scrolls* and *Nebi'im*.

Leading off the essays in English is one by W.W. Hallo, "Assyrian Historiography Revisited," which presents the views which the Assyrian Empire fostered and propagated about its own past. He offers an important new interpretation of the Assyrian King List, and sums up a thousand years of Assyrian Historiography showing its antiquity and continuity. A.F. Rainey in a grammatical inquiry into "the Barth-Ginsberg Law in the Amarna Tablets" applies the results of his predecessors (i.e., Barth's work on the G-stem of the Hebrew verbal system, which Ginsberg proved to prevail also in Ugaritic) to the Canaanite glosses and personal names in the El-Amarna tablets. A. Caquot, "Remarques sur la Tablette Ougaritique RS 1929 No. 6 (CTA 13)," studies a broken Ugaritic tablet pertaining to a myth about Anat – a text first dealt with by Ginsberg himself. E. Ullendorf, "Ugaritic Marginalia IV," is a study of Ugaritic vocalization based on an examination of all Ugaritic verbs which contain an *alef* in their base stem. M. Tsevat continues the Ugaritic contributions to the volume in his "Comments on the Ugaritic Text UT 52," tracing this hymnic narrative text about the origin and nature of a class of minor gods called the "pleasant gods" to both Hittite and Greek cultures. R.D. Barnett in an article on iconography uncovers "The Earliest Representation of 'Anath' in Egyptian art.

W. Moran's study, "Puppies in Proverb – From Šamši – Adad I to Archilochus?" traces the continuity of an ancient proverb from Mari (*ARM* I, 5:11-13) down through Greek literature. The proverb is interpreted (after an analysis of a very difficult Akkadian verb) as pertaining to a hasty bitch who cuts short the time of gestation and rushes into birth, thereby producing what is untimely and defective. This is based on the congenital inability of puppies in the first days and weeks after birth: "The bitch in her overeagerness gives birth to the blind." M. Smith's survey of "East Mediterranean Law Codes of the Early Iron Age" reviews the law codes of Egypt, Palestine, Babylonia, Persia, Rome and primarily Greece during this period along with their significant elements.

J.A. Soggin's essay on "The History of Ancient Israel – A Study in Some Questions of Method," is the first contribution in the non-Hebrew section to biblical studies. He investigates when the proper conditions prevailed for the writing of historiography in Israel. He attempts to establish the datum point from which modern historians can start operating and questions the value of texts prior to the monarchy for obtaining facts relevant to the historian. His conclusion is that the starting point should be the United Monarchy, during the first years of the tenth century. J.A. Emerton grapples with the riddle of the expression *par hašēnī* in "The 'Second Bull' in Judges 6:25-28," and resorts to an Arabic and Syriac root to interpret it as "the finest bull." D.N. Freedman presents a comparative study of the structure of two independent compositions which share formal and literary features, "Psalm 113

and the Song of Hannah.” He concludes that the Psalm is more archaic, belonging to an earlier phase of Israelite prosody, dating from the pre-monarchical period of the twelfth century. The Song of Hannah, on the other hand, was adapted and elaborated in the interests of the monarchy. His analysis includes an investigation of the metrical pattern and contents of both hymns. H. Cazells renews the investigation into the “*Problemes de la Guerre Syro-Ephraïmite*” and reconstructs the events surrounding this war between 734-732 in the light of the discovery of King Menahem’s stele found in Iran and Tadmor’s and Ne’aman’s studies of Tiglat-Pileser’s annals. E. Lipiński inquires into the historical background of “The Elegy on the Fall of Sidon in Isaiah 23,” and understands that chapter to reflect three different periods: I, vss. 1-4, 6-7, 10, 12-14, when the city was destroyed by Esarhaddon in 677; II, vss. 8-9, 11-12, 15-16, reflect the siege of Nebuchadnezer; and III, vss. 17-18 — are an epilogue, dating from 570-650. The last biblical entry in the non-Hebrew section is by N.M. Sarna, who dates “The Abortive Insurrection in Zedekiah’s Day (Jer. 27-29),” to 597 and not to 594/3 as is usually assumed. He resolves the contradiction in Jer. 28:1, where “the fourth year” refers to the fourth year of the sabbatical cycle which began in Tishri 602. In addition to his analysis of the six power summit meeting whose aim was to plot rebellion against Nebuchadnezer, he also deals with Jeremiah’s epistle to the exiles and dates the emancipation of the slaves before Kislev 588.

F. Rosenthal presents a study and greatly modified translation of the Aramaic inscription discovered in Afghanistan in 1969, “The Second Laghmân Inscription.” R. du M. du Buisson examines an ivory column of the third century C.E. from Palmyra which refers to a divine couple — “Shadrâfâ et D’anat, Couple Divin à Palmyre.” J.A. Fitzmyer, S.J., investigates the Temple Scroll, IIQ Temple 57:17-19, and the Damascus Document, CD 4:126-5:11, to prevent evidence of “Divorce among First-Century Palestinian Jews.” He demonstrates that divorce — contrary to present opinion — was condemned in the thinking of some of the Palestinian Jews of the first century — which, of course, has implications for the prohibition of divorce as found in the New Testament, cf. Mark 10:9-11; Luke 16:18; I Cor. 7:10-11. In the last offering in the non-Hebrew section, J. Tigay writes on “Notes on the Development of the Jewish Week,” its distinctive terminology (*šabbat*, *šabū’a*), and the numerical designations of weekdays. “Indications that the sabbatical week has become an object of widespread consciousness appear only in Second Temple and Tannaitic times.”

The Hebrew section commences with S.E. Lowenstamm’s translation of the Baal and Mot text, “CTA 4:VIII: 1-35,” based on a wealth of exegetical data and several new interpretations, which show the text to be a composite reflecting different formulae. A Demsky studies “Mesopotamian and Canaanite Literary Traditions in the Ahirom Curse Formula,” and suggests that three of the four curses in this Phoenician inscription are translations of curses found in the same order in the epilogue of Hammurapi’s law collection. M. Haran, after reviewing the various interpretations offered for “Seething a Kid in its Mother Milk” contends that this threefold prohibition in Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21 is based on humanitarian

purposes and is not, as is usually assumed, connected with a Canaanite cultic practice. The reading and interpretation of the Ugaritic text cited as the biblical forerunner has been subject to several attacks recently and is no longer held to be a feasible parallel. H. Reviv analyses the historical background of "The Traditions Concerning the Inception of the Legal System in Israel: Significance and Dating," and concludes that Ex. 18:13-27 reflects the period of David; Num. 11:16-25 – the days of Jehoshaphat; and Deut. 1:9-17 – the days of Hezekiah. M. Weinfeld's study, "They Fought from Heaven" – Divine Intervention in War in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East," examines three miraculous events in the stories of the Exodus and the Conquest: the shooting star which put the enemy's horses and chariots out of commission (Jud. 5:20); the pillar of fire and cloud which drove the Egyptians into a panic (Ex. 14:25); and the light emanating from divine fire which dazzled the enemy forces (Ex. 14:25), and brings a wealth of parallels for similar supernatural phenomena from Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Greek descriptions of war.

S. Paul's comparative study into Mesopotamian and biblical "Adoption Formulae" reviews the cuneiform juridical expressions for adoption and their interdialectal equivalents found in the Bible and elsewhere. Special attention is drawn to a specific Akkadian formula "to establish sonship relations" and its unique biblical counterpart in Jer. 3:19. In this verse the prophet employs technical terminology to declare that the formal adoption of Israel by God was for the purpose of validating the gift of the land of Israel to his chosen people. S. Yeivin discusses the fixation of the formula of the number of the twelve tribes of Israel and their waves of immigration into the country – "On the Number of the Israelite Tribes." J. Milgrom offers "A Formulaic Key to the Sources of D," which is a significant study for the understanding of the sources and the development of D by an examination of the recurrent formulae in this document. The preponderant reliance of D upon E (21 times) demonstrates its North Israelite origin. The author suggests that during the eighth century after the fall of Samaria, the D source was brought south to Jerusalem where it influenced Hezekiah's attempted reform to centralize the cult. It subsequently was expanded by the inclusion of elements drawn from P, prior to its official endorsement by Josiah. D's linguistic and ideational dependence on the northern prophet Hosea is also an integral part of this study.

Y. Muffs makes an important theological contribution to the understanding of the phenomenology of prophecy and the personality of the prophet in his "Reflections on Prophetic Prayer in the Bible." Two significant events in the life of Moses – the golden calf incident and the report of the spies – reveal the independent personality of the prophet in his role as an intercessor on behalf of his people by means of prayer in order to defer or cancel divine punishment. The meeting between Israel and Assyria (2 Kings 16:5-9) in the light of historiographic methods known from the chronographic literature of Mesopotamia (9th-6th centuries) is the subject of the study by M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, "Ahaz and Tiglath-Pileser in the Book of Kings – Historiographic Considerations." Along with an inquiry into some technical political vocabulary, the authors suggest a possible Josianic dating for the pericope.

Another work whose subject is neo-Assyrian times is by B. Oded, "Mass Deportations in the Neo-Assyrian Empire — Facts and Figures." This, one of four different studies by the author on various aspects of exile, pertains to the number of exiled and under which kings, the identity of those exiled, the places from where populations were exiled, and to where they were brought.

M. Weiss engages in a methodological inquiry of "These Days and the Days to Come according to Amos 9:13." He compares similar descriptions in Lev. 26:3-5 and Joel 4:18, pointing out the distinctive differences of presentations in each, and emphasizes that the intention of Amos is to highlight not merely the assurance of future bounty but the unceasing labor of man because of the blessing of plenty which nature would yield.

J.C. Greenfield demonstrates interdialectal parallels and topoi in three "Notes on the Asitawada (Karatepe) Inscription." Y. Yadin, "Beer-sheba — The High-Place Destroyed by King Josiah," basing his investigation of the excavations at Beer-sheba on ceramics, fortifications, and a reinterpretation of the findings at that site, and taking an opposite point of view of Y. Aharoni, reasons that the city was destroyed by Josiah as recorded in 2 Kings 23:8, and that building 430 there is none other than the High Place and not a Temple. N. Avigad identifies the owner of "The Seal of Seraiah (Son of) Neriah" as the person by the same name in Jer. 51:59-64, making this the first seal for whom a biblical identity has been found.

M. Greenberg presents a thorough philological, stylistic, structural, metrical, and thematic commentary of "Psalm 140," interpreting its language and imagery in the light of other petitionary psalms. He demonstrates the progress and interrelation of ideas by stanzas and deals with the question whether the individuality of the psalmist emerges from the composition. He concludes that the Psalm itself cannot be dated by its language. A Hurwitz's analysis of "The Term *liškat-šārim* (Ezek. 40:44) and its Position in the Cultic Terminology of the Temple" leads him to the conclusion that, on one hand, the existence of the "chambers of musicians" reflects a late historical situation in which music played a significant role in the cult, and, on the other, the absence of the post-exilic term, *mešōrerim*, indicates that the phrase antedates Second Temple times and belongs to an intermediate period. A. Rofé, as part of a discussion of the genre of wisdom "Do not say" admonitions, assumes the use of this formula in Qoh. 5:5, which he views as part of a pericope in which Qohelet deprecates sacrifice, prayers, and vows and condemns the belief in dreams and angels — a condemnation which is in line with his negation of communication between God and man — "The Angel in Qohelet 5:5 in the Light of a Wisdom Dialogue Formula." L. Finkelstein starting with the blessing in 1 Chron. 29:10 launches an investigation into the question of the correct formula to use in a benediction, a subject of controversy between Rab and Samuel in 3rd century C.E., with implications for current liturgy in "The Prayer of King David According to the Chronicler."

S. Talmon cautions on the 'wholesale' comparative approach to solve biblical difficulties in his article "On the Emendation of Biblical Texts on the Basis of Ugaritic

Parallels.” His two examples are from 1 Sam. 1:21, where he maintains the Masoretic text, interpreting the last two words as meaning “the heights of mountains,” and Jer. 9:20, for which he proposes an alternate reading. J. Blau examines the various theories put forward for the explanation of the *n*-suffixes after the future indicative and offers his suggestion for its appearance in Hebrew and Aramaic as being derived from the energetic of the indicative in the “Pronominal Third Person Singular Suffixes with and without *N* in Biblical Hebrew.” Another grammatical contribution is by M.Z. Kaddari on the “Construct Infinitive as Time Adverbial in Biblical Hebrew.” S. Morag, “On Some Semantic Relationships” offers a componential study of sememes (= semantic markers) inherent in roots which share the semantic field of “movement” and “speech.” These roots are further classified by those in which the sememe of “speed” also denotes positively “ability” and “skill,” “power” and “wealth,” “achievement” and “success,” and by those which denote negatively “burn” and “fear.”

R. Weiss “On the Use of the Negative *l'* in the Bible” discusses passages in which there is a difference between the Masoretic text and the ancient evidence on the text concerning the use of the negative *l'*. B.A. Levine examines the theory whether the language of the Song of Songs is a link between spoken Hebrew of late biblical times and the spoken language which become the basis for Rabbinic Hebrew, against the background of early Hebrew poetry, especially with regard to the inverted imperfect and consecutive tenses – “Chapters in the History of Spoken Hebrew.”

H. Katzenstin’s article on the statement of Herodotus pertaining to “The Camp of the Tyrians at Memphis” suggests a date for the camp, the nature of its inhabitants, and their vocation. B. Porten, in his ongoing investigation of the archives of Elephantine, deals with Cowley documents 30, 31, 27, 32, 33, pertaining to the efforts of the Jews to rebuild their Temple destroyed by the Egyptians, in “The Archive of Jedaniah B. Gemariah of Elephantine: The Structure and Style of the Letters (1).” “Ancient North-Arabian Inscriptions on Three Stone Bowls” are interpreted by J. Naveh as dedicatory texts whose provenance is from an Arab shrine of the 4th century C.E. M.H. Goshen-Gottstein examines certain aspects of “The Language of Targum Onkelos and Literary Diglossia in Aramaic,” and the reasons adduced for its characterization as being of “Western” or “Eastern” provenance. He reviews the history of research since the middle of the nineteenth century in the light of the diglossia model in Semitic linguistics, and suggests a new formulation for the linguistic development from Proto-Onkelos to Targum Onkelos. Z. Ben-Hayyim takes issue with the interpretation of a cryptogram in a Mermar-Marqa manuscript, and rereads the passage which mentions the restoration of a bath-house or pool in “Whence the *Knšt Myh* Samaritan Synagogue?”

This rich collection of articles is indeed a worthy tribute to one of the greatest scholars of our day.