

THE BIBLE AND JEWISH HISTORY

Studies in Bible and the literature of the Second Temple period,
dedicated to the memory of Jacob Liver*

The late Jacob Liver was a scholar whose interests were not narrow or parochial but encompassed a wide range of subjects, His two books and the posthumous collection of articles (discussed in these pages in a previous issue) attest to this fact. The volume under review, which contains essays on a broad spectrum of subjects by friends and colleagues, is a fitting tribute to his memory. It also reflects some of the subjects which preoccupy Israeli scholars dealing with the biblical and early post-biblical field today.

The editor, in his short preface, has outlined the main traits of Israeli biblical scholarship and has contrasted it with the strong theological interest that was prevalent in the previous generation of Jewish scholars. He has also provided an all-too-brief characterisation of Jacob Liver, the scholar. Uffenheimer has done wisely in providing an English summary for all the articles, since many potentially interested scholars will not have direct access to them. The four sections of the book are: 1) Biblical studies; 2) History, geography and archaeology; 3) Hebrew language and grammar; 4) Ancient translations and literature of the Second Commonwealth.

The longest article in the first section is by the editor. It is a detailed examination of Isaiah chapter 6, but its title "Isaiah 6 and Its Rabbinic Exegesis" is a misnomer. It is true that the larger part of the article does deal in detail with the rabbis' approach to Isaiah 6, and studies the three approaches that can be detected, but Uffenheimer adds an approach of his own in which he examines the setting of the prophetic dedication in the light of Isaiah's environment. Literary, textual and theological problems are also examined in the course of discussion, which lead Uffenheimer to the plausible conclusion that Isaiah's vision was the result of actually experiencing the service in the Temple. Three other papers in this section are characterised by close examination of literary problems. Moshe Greenberg's "Narrative and Redactional Art in the Plague Pericope (Exodus 7-11)" (pp. 65-75) is a close analysis of the redactional process that made a unit of the plague stories. Greenberg contends that there were originally two lists

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of seven elements each. These were skilfully joined by the redactor into a single list of ten elements with a resulting narrative that is thematically richer than its components. Menahem Haran, in "The Antiquity of the Passover Sacrifice" (pp. 93-103), demonstrates that the Passover sacrifice at a sanctuary was an integral part of the *Chag ha-Matzot* and was not a late innovation. A careful reading of the passages in Exodus (23:18 and 34:25) shows both their independence of each other and their dependence on even earlier traditions. This analysis also shows that they were a source for the Deuteronomist (Deut. 16: 4-5). A different method of analysis is used by S. E. Loewenstamm in his study "The Deaths of the Patriarchs in Genesis" (pp. 104-123). He examines the narratives about their deaths in terms of the various sanctuaries in which they originated, and traces the development of the narrative and its adaptation by the various writers. This close reading of the text pays particular attention to rhetorical and stylistic elements. I was not always able to follow all the writer's arguments as to the original version of some of the texts, and at times had the feeling that too much logic and precision is being demanded. H. J. Katzenstein, in "Tyre: An Oracle (Isaiah 23:1-14)" (pp. 147-153), rejects the now commonly accepted viewpoint that this oracle is to be dated to the fourth century B. C. E., and argues convincingly and vigorously that its setting is the campaign of Sennacherib against Syria in 701 B. C. E., during which Luli (Elulaios of the Greek sources) fled from Tyre to Cyprus. The lamentation echoes the political situation and the oracle is also a warning to Hezekiah of Judah and his ministers. The other articles in this section are by Y. Aharoni, I. Ben-Shemen, G. Brin, Y. Hoffman, M. Harel, A. Neher and the late Leah Frankel.

The second section, dealing with history, geography and archaeology, touches on problems of a more pragmatic and concrete nature. The earliest material discussed is from a recent volume of Mari texts. P. Artzi and A. Malamad discuss "Shibtu, Queen of Mari" (pp. 169-183). Shibtu emerges from the material which they discuss as an energetic queen, who took an active interest in the welfare of her husband's kingdom. It is noteworthy that we have no information from the scant references in the Bible to various queens of Judah and Israel about one who was so influential in all spheres during the life of her royal husband. The queens we know best from the Bible usually have a negative streak.* Shmuel Ahituv examines the various proposals for "The Location of Pithom" (pp. 157-160). Using recent archaeological discoveries in conjunction with literary evidence, he shows that Tell el-Maskhuteh in the eastern Delta best fits the identification. Two other articles use archaeological and geographic techniques: Ephraim Stern, in "Archaeological Aspects of the History of the Coastal Region of Palestine

* This article is available in English in *Orientalia* 40 (1971), pp. 75-89

during the Fourth Century B. C. E.” (pp. 207 - 221), has used the data to be derived from recent excavations to clarify some historical problems. Stern notes that the wave of destruction that affected the coastal regions occurred ca. 380 B. C. E., and would relate this to the Egyptian struggle for independence from Persian hegemony which then spread, two decades later, to the coastal areas of Palestine. He clinches his arguments with references to Egyptian inscriptions from this period found at Gezer, Akko and Sidon. Zakhariah Kallai has given a great deal of time and thought to the identification of biblical sites, and to the detailed examination and survey of the area between Jerusalem and Shechem, especially the region called Mount Ephraim in the Bible. In “Baal Shalisha and Ephraim” (pp. 191 - 206) the evidence for the identification of Baal Shalisha is reviewed and Kallai reaches the conclusion that Khirbet el Margameh is the most appropriate site. I. Ephal, who has recently examined (in his Hebrew University dissertation) the evidence concerning the Bedouin in Palestine during the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian periods, puts his specialised knowledge to use in studying the lists of the “Sons of Keturah and the Sons of Ishmael” (pp. 161 - 168). His conclusion, convincingly argued, is that the lists do not reflect political-territorial lines but rather the nature of the contact of these groups with Palestine and the neighbouring areas. Those listed as the sons of Keturah are united by their connection with international trade, while those listed with the sons of Ishmael are the Bedouin units called *Aribi* in the Assyrian sources and *‘Arabim* in the Bible. Another desert group mentioned in the Bible is given historical associations for the first time by Haim Tadmor in “The Meunites in the Book of Chronicles in the Light of an Assyrian Document” (pp. 222 - 230). Tadmor has found a reference to this group in a fragment, discovered at Nimrud, of a historical inscription of Tilgath-Pileser III; this is the first reference in an extra-biblical source to the Meunites mentioned in II Chronicles 26:7. On the basis of the fragment, Tadmor is able to locate them somewhere south of El-Arish in northern Sinai. Joseph Naveh’s “Two Ostraca of the Persian Period” (pp. 184 - 190) contains the revised reading of an ostrakon published originally by A. Cowley in 1932 and also the first publication in Hebrew of the *krm zbdyh* (vineyard of Zebediah) ostrakon from Ashdod. Naveh’s experience with Aramaic material is virtually unrivalled, and there can be no doubt that his readings are correct. They add to the cultural history of this little-known period.

The articles in section three deal with Hebrew language and grammar. They are: J. Blau, “On the Repetition of the Predicate in the Bible” (pp. 234 - 240); A. Dothan, “Soba’im - A Methodological Trait of the Tiberian Punctuation” (pp. 241 - 247); Avi Hurvitz, “Diachronic Chiasm in Biblical Hebrew” (pp. 248 - 255); and Israel Yeivin, “The Verbal Form *yqwtlnw*, *yqtwlw* in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Comparison to the Babylonian Vocalisation” (pp. 256 - 276). Each author applies the skills he has developed

in his area of specialisation to a specific problem, and clarifies it with the use of comparative material,

In the last section there is no unifying focus. Two of the articles deal with Bible translations; the first, by David Weissert, deals with "The Verb *hdl* in LXX - Ezekiel" (pp. 279-288) and clarifies the translation technique of the LXX in the book. The second, by M. Z. Kaddari, "Research in Onqelos Today" (pp. 341-373), takes on a larger theme and provides a very useful survey of the subject. Since there is renewed interest in Targumic studies today, there is no doubt that the publication of this study in English would fill a real need, and would serve as a hedge to some of the poorly-informed statements on the subject that abound in the literature. My only disagreement with Kaddari is in his discussion of the linguistic affinities of this Targum. Kaddari believes it to be written essentially in the Western Aramaic, but this reviewer is convinced that it is in the dialect which I prefer to call 'Standard Literary Aramaic', and which often reveals the influence of the area in which a work was compiled and transmitted. The Targum Onqelos was compiled in Palestine and therefore some Western traits are evident, but since it has reached us via Babylonian traditions it will naturally betray Eastern traits too. Bezallel Porten, who has achieved unrivalled familiarity with the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, discusses "The Aramaic Marriage Contract of the Handmaiden Tapmut" (pp. 307-329). In this study he is able to add important material to the understanding of this particular document and to clarify scribal practices, especially where corrections were made in the original text. He shows that these marriage contracts were not a condition for marriage but were drawn up to regulate particular questions of personal and property status.

The Scrolls are represented by an interesting article by Jacob Licht on 4Q 184, "The Wiles of the Wicked Woman" (pp. 289-296). Licht suggests some plausible new readings in the text, and is of the opinion that it is not a sectarian allegory but is directed against real women. As a literary work, it falls short of its biblical models. The only article dealing directly with Tannaitic material is Shmuel Safrai's "Historical Notes on the Mishnah *Pesachim*, Chapter 10" (pp. 297-306). It is Safrai's opinion that the procedure of the Seder night described in this chapter is from post-Temple times, when the reading of the description of the Exodus was introduced. Safrai also agrees that a close analysis of the Mishnah in conjunction with other Tannaitic sources shows that the recitation of the Haggadah preceded the meal in Mishnaic times too, and that it was not a later innovation. David Flusser, in "Did You ever see a Lion Working as a Porter?" (pp. 330-340)*, examines the comparison, made years ago and repeated by modern commentators, of the words of Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar (Mish-

* A summary of this article appears in this issue of "Immanuel"

nah *Qiddushin* 4, 14, etc.) with the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6: 25 - 34) about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Flusser discusses the important parallel to be found in the letters attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, with particular attention to a section of the seventh letter recently published from a Greek papyrus. The last article deals with "Nicolaus of Damascus as a Source of Jewish History in the Herodian and Hasmonean Age" (pp. 374 - 394). It is a thorough-going investigation of the importance of Nicolaus as Josephus's prime source for many parts of his historical works.

The volume closes with a "Bibliography of the Writings of Jacob Liver". The interested reader will find important material in this volume and will be stimulated to rethink some positions that he may have assumed to be proven. It is a fitting memorial for Jacob Liver.

Description by Prof. J. C. Greenfield