

THE S.E. LOWENSTAMM JUBILEE VOLUME

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מחקרים במקרא ובמזרח הקדמון: מוגשים לשמואל א. ליונשטב במלאת לו שבעים שנה. ערכו יצחק אבישור ויהושע בלאו ירושלים הוצאת א רובינשטין תשל"ח. 2 כרכי.

(*Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East; Presented to Samuel E. Lowenstamm*, eds. Y. Avishur and J. Blau, Jerusalem, Rubinstein, 1978, 2 vols. Vol. I – Hebrew, Vol. II – English (French, German) and English abstracts of articles in the Hebrew edition).

It is appropriate to begin this article with some words of appreciation. This volume which is dedicated to Samuel E. Lowenstamm on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, is one of the most important collections even published in Israel in the field of Bible and the ancient Near East. Its importance lies both in the great range and variety of the studies in it, as well as the high scholarly level of the majority of the articles. Thus, it also reflects the state of contemporary biblical research and its cognate fields. Naturally, special emphasis has been placed, on subjects and viewpoints characteristic of Israeli research.

It is an accepted practice to include in jubilee volumes primarily such studies which are close to the scholarly interests of the personality concerned. In this case, the editors of the collection were blessed with an easy task: there is practically no area of biblical research that Professor Lowenstamm has left untouched. Indeed the great diversity of the collection embraces nearly all of Lowenstamm's scholarly endeavour. We have here articles in the field of Ugaritic literature and its relation to the Bible: (Y. Avishur, "The Incense and the Sweet Scent"; D. Marcus, "Ugaritic BN YDM: 'Chest' or 'Back'"; J.C. de Moor, "The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel"; M. Tsevat, "A Window for Baal's House – the Maturing of a god"), monographs on the Hebrew language: (Z. Ben Hayim, "Thoughts on the Hebrew Vowel System"; J. Blau, "On Invariable Passive Forms in Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic"; M.Z. Kaddari, "Vadai (Bevadai) in Mishnaic Hebrew..; H. Rabin, "Lexicographical Remarks"; I. Yeivin, "The Dageshed Alephs in the Bible"), articles on

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biblical exegesis and philology: (J.C. Greenfield, "The Meaning of PHZ"; E.Z. Melamed, "R. Isaiah's Commentary on Prophets and Hagiographa"; S.M. Paul, "Hosea 8:8-10"); investigations of various textual and literary problems: (F. Polak, "Genesis 15, Theme and Structure"; B. Uffenheimer, "Ezekiel 12:1-16"), epigraphy and archeology: (J. Naveh, "The Titles ŠHD/ 'D and MNHM in Jewish Epigraphical Texts"; E. Stein, "Phoenician Cult Masks in Israel"; H. Tadmor, "A Lexicographical Text from Hazor"; A.F. Rainey, "The Scatterbrained Scribe"). And yet, this list does not exhaust all the fields covered in this collection; to the above we must add Hebrew literature, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Whoever doubts that all these areas reflect the range of Lowenstamm's scholarly work, need only read the bibliography of his publications which lists no less than 765 articles (see Vol. I, pp. 441-454). As it is practically impossible for one person to discuss such a wealth and variety of subjects, it will suffice to deliver to the reader something of my personal impressions of a few of those studies which attracted my attention.

In a long and detailed article, T.L. Fenton attempts to describe the "Differing Approaches to the Theomachy Myth in Old Testament Writers," (Vol. I, pp. 337-381). The main point of this article is the relation of the theomachy myth to the traditions concerning the parting of the Red Sea. This problem is part and parcel of the broader issue pertaining to the historicization of myth in Israelite thought and ritual. The diverging scholarly interpretations of biblical theomachy are the outcome of two contradictory approaches. According to the historical school, theomachy reflects a primitive stage of Israelite religion whereas according to the phenomenological current, mythological elements are found at every cultural stage.

Fenton's interpretation of the theomachic myth is based on the developmental assumptions of the historical school. Accordingly, he divides the biblical material into three periods: the first one extends from the beginnings of Israel to the sixth century B.C.E.; the second one comprises the Babylonian Exile; the third one – the beginnings of the Second Commonwealth. In the first period Israel still believed in a widely accepted version of the ancient Near Eastern creation myth, but identified the belligerent and victorious divinity with the God of Israel. Only at a later stage was this myth linked with the Exodus story and the parting of the Red Sea. But it was not before Second Isaiah that the myth was given new meaning. This prophet transformed the cosmogenic myth to an historical one, the universal to a national, a polytheistic to a monotheistic. This cannot be expounded in terms of gradual development, but as the outcome of a deliberate rationalization first worked out within the Deuteronomistic School.

The priestly sources, Genesis 1, already entails polemical allusions against theomachy. This source speaks *for the first time* of the "parting of the sea" as opposed to the mythological motif of the "killing of the sea-monsters." Despite the painstaking analysis of the biblical material, not all the links in the chain constructed by Fenton are of equal strength. His argument that all the theomachy descriptions in Second Isaiah hint at the Exodus – a statement of crucial importance to his theory, results in a somewhat tedious interpretation of several scriptures such as 47:27 and

50:2. It is not at all clear that they are referring to the Exodus. Similarly it is difficult to explain Is. 43:16-17 in terms of theomachy; likewise the assumed reinterpretation of theomachy in terms of the Exodus story seems very doubtful to me. Again, I cannot accept Fenton's view that Second Isaiah was the first to link theomachy with the Exodus story, and the priestly writer mentioned for the first time the motif for parting the Red Sea. The common view seems to be more plausible according to which the sea motif is considerably older than the priestly document. On the contrary, it seems that the associative links between theomachy and the Exodus motif, account for its ancient theological importance long before Second Isaiah. Fenton's *a priori* assumption forced upon him far fetched anti-mythological explanations to passages later than Job or the Psalms. On the other hand, the allusions to theomachy in early passages mentioning seas or sea monsters seem likewise to be highly speculative. At the root of Fenton's article lies the evolutionary view concerning human conscience. The classical representative of this attitude in the field of biblical research is Wellhausen who assumes for that reason that the priestly document is late.

S. Japhet relates more directly to the chronological problem of the sources of the Torah. In her article, "The Laws of Manumission of Slaves and the Question of the Relationship between the Collections of Laws in the Pentateuch (Vol. I, pp. 231-249). By a minute examination of the laws of manumission of slaves in the Holiness Code and Deuteronomy, she attempts to prove that the Deuteronomistic law reflects the latest historical stage. Her main argument relates to the literary dependence of the Deuteronomistic law on that of the Holiness Code. In addition, Japhet claims that the introductory phrase in the book of Deuteronomy "and if thy brother, a Hebrew, be sold" marks a change from the original text of E (Exodus 21:2) which was made under the direct influence of the priestly code (Lev. 25). However, as Japhet herself admits, Deuteronomy frequently uses the words "thy brother" as a general name for the Israelites in many other contexts. Thus, we cannot accept the claim that in this specific case the use of these words ("thy brother") results from the influence of the priestly code. Comparison of the two sections (in Deuteronomy and Leviticus) reveals however interesting differences; these do not seem to be conclusive as to the dependence of Deuteronomy on Leviticus. Certainly, this does not prove Japhet's general thesis according to Kaufmann's basic position — that P precedes D. Therefore, this question is still open to further investigation.

I.L. Seeligmann's article "Lending, Pledge and Interest in Biblical Law and Biblical Thought," (Vol. I, pp. 183-205), contains a systematic presentation of pertinent material collected from the Torah, Prophets and Wisdom literature which when assembled forms a complete mosaic. The author has succeeded in pointing out divergent approaches and conceptions of the lending laws. Notwithstanding, it seems to me that the following of Seeligmann's arguments are still in need of further corroboration:

1. That the system of interest is later than the pledge system, and replaced it.
2. That the negative moral assessment of the lender is comparatively late while the view that he is righteous is an ancient one. It seems to me that the critical analysis

of the facts presented indicates that these diverging biblical views concerning lender and lending existed simultaneously as is the case until this day.

The three articles reviewed above reflect, in my opinion, one of the major methodological problems in biblical research: the difficulty of proving any particular order in the development of concepts, laws or customs mentioned in the Bible. An attempt at avoiding this pitfall finds expression in the article by J. Licht, "The Sinai Theophany" (Vol. I, pp. 251-267). Here Licht, following Lowenstamm, tries to isolate the assumed sources which gradually reshaped the story of the law giving at Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus. Instead of attempting to determine earlier and later sources, Licht emphasizes that the inherent theological differences and the tension between them favoured the development of variegated traditions on this subject.

In his article, "The Incense and the Sweet Scent," (Vol. I, pp. 1-15) Y. Avishur attempts to shed light on the obscurities in the list of "The Commandments of the Ideal Son" in *Aqhat* by means of a detailed stylistic and linguistic explanation of the whole list. In his view, "these verses originally did not belong to the *Aqhat* epic"; moreover, "it is a literary unit of didactic wisdom literature whose 'Sitz im Leben' apparently was the school or family, where commandments and obligatory obeisance towards the parents was taught." In the second half of his article, Avishur compares the section with Ezekiel 8, summing up that the foreign rituals described there are Canaanite and not Babylonian, Egyptian or Iranian.

An example of an unbalanced conclusion drawn from comparison of the Bible with Ugaritic literature is the article by C.H. Gordon, "Build up Climax in Repetitions with Variants" (Vol. II, pp. 29-34). The author demonstrates by some examples taken from Ugaritic and the Bible, the poetic principle of varying repetitions. His primary argument concerns the first two chapters of Genesis which contain two different Creation stories. In his view, the first story concluded with the destruction of the world, and only afterwards the second world was created. Gordon reached this astonishing conclusion by a new interpretation of Genesis 2:1 "*way-kullu haššamayim*" which is translated by him as "the skies were destroyed" in contrast to the universally accepted explanation: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished." Gordon claims that the creator of the first world, which was finally destroyed was the father (Elohim) whereas the second world was created by His son (YHWH-Elohim). This fanciful assumption is faraway from sound philological reasoning as has been demonstrated by the other articles in this volume dealing with the relationship of the Bible to ancient Near Eastern literatures (compare the articles by D. Marcus, "Ugaritic BN YDM: 'Chest' or 'Back'", and J.C. de Moor, "The Art of Versification in Ugarit and Israel").

These few examples may suffice to convey to the reader something of the deep impression left by the richness of this jubilee volume.

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