
The book under review is a revised version of the author's 1980 doctoral dissertation prepared under the direction of Marvin H. Pope at Yale University. In the sense that it brings together much information concerning the Hebrew word 'am(m) "people," it is a useful volume. But the book has several failings, mainly of omission, hence its usefulness is somewhat diminished.

Good's thesis is highly original, "that the noun 'am(m) represents the sound made by caprine beasts and originally signified 'flock'" (p. 2). The best evidences for this theory are 1) the Arabic words 'tma "choice animal from the flock," 'aynān "man deprived of flocks," 'āmiya "animal from the flock without milk," and 'āma "to thirst for milk"; and 2) such tantalizing biblical passages as Psa 95:7 and Zech 9:16, especially in conjunction with Prov 30:24-26 where 'am refers to animal groups and not people.

Apart from these items, however, there is little to commend the theory and few will be convinced of Good's suggestion. In fairness to the author, he readily admits that "absolute proof is unattainable" (p. 1), but this leads one to wonder why the thought was not relegated to a tangential remark or footnote instead of setting the tenor for an entire monograph.

The aforementioned failings of the book, however, lie elsewhere. The following comments are in no particular order of importance and are offered to increase the book's usefulness.

In his discussion of Semitic cognates to Hebrew 'am(m), Good opts to exclude the modern dialects. Accordingly, note the following: Neo-Aramaic 'amma "people," Modern South Arabian 'ām (< ām) "grandfather, ancestor," Gurage (Selti-Wolane) umi "maternal uncle," Argobba amme "paternal uncle." W. Leslau, Etymological Dictionary of Gurage (Ethiopic), Vol. III (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 42, suggests that the Ethiopian terms may be borrowed from Arabic. Beyond Semitic, note that 'ām "uncle" also appears in Berber, where it is definitely a loanword from Arabic.

Attention to the modern dialects can often be instructive and an interesting semantic parallel between the two well-known connotations of "people" and "kinsman" in Semitic 'm may be forthcoming in Modern South Arabian. The Mehri word for "people, folk" is ḥā-bū which conceivably could derive from "the fathers" (see T. M. Johnstone, Harṣūsī Lexicon [London, 1977], p. 1).

In the realm of semantic development, the classic work of C. D. Buck, A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages (Chicago, 1949), might have been consulted. Although most words for "people" derive from roots meaning "fill, fullness, multitude, crowd, birth, world, men, strength, etc.,” it is of interest to note Welsh gwerin "people" among whose cognates is Sanskrit vrnda “crowd, herd, swarm” (ibid., pp. 1313-1316, especially 1314). I do not think that one such word-pair among the dozens of Indo-European languages further bolsters Good’s thesis, but a reference to it would have been of interest.

Any treatment of Hebrew 'am(m) must also discuss Egyptian 3m “das asiatische Nachbarvolk der Ägypter,” a term used from the Old Kingdom onward (see A. Erman and H. Grapow, Wörterbuch der aegyptischen Sprache, Vol. 1 [Leipzig, 1926], p. 167). The word clearly must have been borrowed from Semitic 'm and a Canaanite source in the 3rd millennium would seem most likely.

Two important studies by Israeli scholars should be added to the bibliography: J. Liver, "'am," Ensiqlopediya Miqra’it, Vol. VI, pp. 235-39; and Y. M. Grintz, ‘Munahim qedumim be-torat kohanim, III,” Leshonenu 40 (1974-75), 20-25, with discussion of ‘am "kinsman" and the phrase 'am ḥā’āres

MARTIN BERNAL

1 A History of Boeotia. Calgary: University of Alberta, 1979, p. 43.
2 Cambridge Ancient History II/1; History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1800-1380 B.C. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 582-626 and 801-5. Chadwick also fails to mention Gordon’s work on Linear A in their chapter of the Cambridge Ancient History on “The Linear Scripts,” shows an intolerance for contrary opinions that should have no place in academic life.5

people of the land." Another lacuna is the 1980 New York University doctoral dissertation of Laurence Kutler, "Social Terminology in Phoenician, Biblical Hebrew, and Ugaritic." Good cannot be expected to have used this work in his original dissertation, but the published version of 1983 should have incorporated Kutler's material.

Good's acceptance of the exilic date for "P" presents many problems, particularly in his discussion of the phrases ne'ēsap 'el 'amāmā(y)w "to be gathered to one's people/kinsman" and nikrētā hāannepek hāhi mē'āmmēhā "that soul is to be cut off from its people/kinsman." See especially the aforementioned article by Grintz. Also, see now Avi Hurvitz, A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel (Paris, 1982), pp. 67–71. Of related interest, see Hurvitz's discussion of 'āmīt "fellow" (ibid., pp. 74–78).

Good resists using the expression 'ām sēgullā "treasured people," especially if compared with Akkadian sugulla "herd," to support his thesis on the caprine origin of 'ām(m). But he does believe that the connection between the two terms "remains probable" (p. 171, n. 58), despite the convincing argument of M. Greenberg, JAOS 71 (1951), 172–74, to relate Hebrew sēgullā and Akkadian sikiltu "earnings, possessions." To all that Greenberg has forwarded, note as well the Egyptian evidence, where sḏwt means "precious things, treasures," and sḏwtyw means "treasurers" (see Erman-Grapow, Wörterbuch, Vol. V [1931], 636–38, where however the hieroglyphs are described as "unlesbares";

accordingly see also R. O. Faulkner, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian [Oxford, 1976], p. 258). The fiscal connotation of these words assures the equation made by Greenberg. (The correspondences of Egyptian s = Hebrew s and Egyptian Ỉ = Hebrew l are well known. Since the equation of Egyptian d and Hebrew q is less widely recognized, note the following cognates: mḏšt "papyrus-roll, book" = mēgillā, qḏ "relate, recount" = higgid, as well as ḏnh "wing" = Arabic ǧānāb.)

Good speaks of the linguistic situation of the Nabateans as diglossia (p. 26), but he intends bilingualism. The former refers to two varieties, a literary and a colloquial, of the same language (the best example being Arabic). The latter refers to the use of two distinct languages, which was obviously the case among the Nabateans where both Aramaic and Arabic were used.

To sum up, it is convenient to have many important ideas about Hebrew 'ām(m) gathered between the covers of one book. Scholars seeking information not only on 'ām(m) but on such phrases as 'ām qēšēh 'ōres "a stiff-necked people," 'ām yhw "Yahweh's people," the several mentioned above, and still others, will want to refer to Good's study. But additional material along the lines presented here would have enhanced the volume greatly.

Gary A. Rendsburg

Cornell University