

SHORT NOTES

A NOTE ON *ŠĀLĪŠĪM*

In his article, “The list of David’s officers (*šālīšīm*)”, *VT* 38 (1988), pp. 72-9, N. Na’aman suggests that *šlōšīm* in 2 Sam. xxiii should be emended to read *šālīšīm* and translated “knights”, while D.G. Schley in “The *šālīšīm*: officers or special three-man squads?”, *VT* 40 (1990), pp. 321-6, disagrees with him. Presumably, their arguments apply also to Ex. xiv 7, “and he took six hundred chariots ... and *šālīšīm* over every one of them”, and to 2 Kgs x 25, “and Jehu said *lārāšīm welaššālīšīm*. However, they make no mention of the fact that *šl* in Ugaritic means bronze (or copper). In my article “The Meaning of the Word *šlyš* in the Bible in the Light of Ugaritic *TLT*”, *Beth Mikra* 72 (1978), p. 126, I attempted to show that the Ugaritic word *šl* means not only “metal” but also “armoured” and may be the designation of soldiers wearing metal armour, similar to *qallāšīm* (2 Kgs iii 25; 2 Chr. xxvi 14), *mōrīm* (1 Sam. xxxi 3; 2 Sam. xi 24; 2 Chr. xxxv 23), and *rāšīm* (1 Sam. xxii 16; 1 Kgs xiv 27; 2 Kgs x 25), who were called after their distinctive arms, like the German designation “Ritter” for mounted soldiers.

Ramat-Gan

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NOTES ON GENESIS XV

I. *Janus Parallelism in v. 1*

The poetic device known as Janus parallelism was first identified by C. H. Gordon. He defined it as a “kind of parallelism [that] hinges on the use of a single word with two entirely different meanings, one meaning paralleling what precedes, and the other meaning, what follows”.¹ The example he used was Song ii 12 where the word *zāmīr* means both “pruning season” (parallel to *niššānīm* “blossoms” in the preceding stich) and “music” (parallel to *qōl hat-tōr* “voice of the turtledove” in the following stich).

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After Gordon put forward this initial illustration, other examples of Janus parallelism were identified in the biblical corpus.² In addition, books devoted to biblical poetry began to include Janus parallelism in their descriptions of the literary devices available to the ancient Hebrew poets.³

A hitherto unrecognized example of Janus parallelism occurs in Gen. xv 1. Although older translations of the Bible (e.g., Jewish Publication Society version) understood the entire verse as prose, several more recent works (e.g., *New American Bible*, New Jewish version) correctly render God's words to Abram as poetry. The result is a tristich:

ʾal tīrāʾ ʾabrām
ʾānōkī māgēn lāk
šēkārā harbēh mēʾōd

which may be rendered (as in the NJV):

Fear not, Abram,
 I am a shield to you,
 Your reward shall be very great.

The word on which the Janus usage pivots in this passage is consonantal *mgn*. When vocalized *māgēn* and understood as “shield”, as in the Masorah, the word parallels what precedes it. A *māgēn* “shield,” even when used metaphorically as in the present instance, is an appropriate item to combat fear (root *yrʾ*, as in *tīrāʾ*).⁴ C. Westermann has bolstered this understanding of the word by collecting the collateral Near Eastern evidence.⁵

However, consonantal *mgn* may also derive from the verbal root *mgn* “give, bestow”,⁶ in which case it parallels what follows. A *šākār* “reward” is something which is given (root *ntn* usually), as other biblical passages such as Exod. ii 9; 1 Kgs v 20 clearly indicate.

There has been considerable scholarly debate in recent years as to whether *māgēn* in Gen. xv 1 should be retained and translated “shield”, or whether it should be revocalized to either a verbal (presumably Qal *mōgēn*) or nominal (*māgān*) form of the root *mgn* “give”.⁷ My point is that the choice need not be made.⁸ The poet intended both meanings simultaneously. The orthograph *mgn* was to be understood as both “shield” and “giver/donor”.⁹ This is the beauty of Janus parallelism.

A conscious attempt to incorporate both meanings of *mgn* proba-

bly lies behind the rendering of Gen. xv 1 in the Palestinian Targum tradition (including the Neophyti version). These targumim greatly expand the literal word of the original Hebrew text; this feature thus allows for incorporating multiple meanings into the translation.¹⁰ There are variants in the various texts, but in general the Palestinian Targum tradition translates Hebrew *ʾānōkī māgēn lāk* as follows: “My word is your shield (*tyrs*) in this world, and protects (*mgn*) you in the world to come, even though I have delivered (*msryt*) your enemies into your hands in this world.”¹¹

Finally, several scholars have noted that there are numerous lexical links between Gen. xiv and xv,¹² regardless of attempts to attribute the two chapters to different sources.¹³ Among these nexuses is the pair of words *miggēn* in Gen. xiv 20 and *māgēn* in Gen. xv 1. This connection is solidified, of course, by the recognition of the verb *mgn* “give, bestow” in the latter as well.

II. *The Amorites in v. 20*

The various lists of “the foredoomed pre-Israelite population” of the land of Canaan have consistently attracted the attention of scholars in the discipline of biblical studies.¹⁴ Although the identification of the individual peoples mentioned in these lists has been the primary subject of investigation, a secondary issue that has contributed to the discussion is the order of the peoples within these lists.

The list in Gen. xv 19-21 differs from the other lists in several ways. First, it is the only list in the Bible with ten separate nations listed; in the other instances, typically there are six or seven nations occurring. Secondly, it is the only list in the Bible that omits the Hivites from the pre-Israelite peoples of Canaan. Thirdly, it is the only list that mentions a group called the Kadmonites.¹⁵ All these points have been noted by previous scholars.¹⁶

A difference that has gone unnoticed is the fact that the Amorites appear in Gen. xv 19-21 in position number seven, whereas in the other rosters they are mentioned at the head or close to the head of the list.¹⁷ Thus, for example, in Exod. xxiii 23, xxxiv 11; Josh. xxiv 11; 1 Kgs ix 20, the Amorites appear first among the nations of Canaan. In Exod. xxxiii 2; Deut. xx 17; Josh. ix 1, xi 3, xii 8; 2 Chr. viii 7, the Amorites are mentioned second. In Exod. iii 8,

17, xiii 5; Deut. vii 1; Judg. iii 5; Neh. ix 8, they occur third.¹⁸ Accordingly, the number seven position accorded the Amorites in the Gen. xv 19-21 list is unique.

Similarly, as R. A. F. MacKenzie pointed out, whereas in all these lists the Amorites typically appear before the Perizzites, Gen. xv 19-21 is exceptional with the Perizzites listed before the Amorites.¹⁹

These two unique features about the placement of the Amorites in Gen. xv 19-21 are due to a specific literary device that the author of this material implemented. Elsewhere in the Bible where rosters of ten occur, special prominence is given to the entries listed in the seventh and tenth positions. In Gen. v, Enoch and Noah, whose special characters are obvious, occupy slots number seven and ten, respectively.²⁰ Another example is Ruth iv 18-22, where the list of ten generations begins not with Judah, as might be expected, but with his son Perez. This is purposefully, and artfully, done because of the mention of Perez several verses earlier (Ruth iv 12), and because it thus places Boaz in position number seven and David in position number ten.²¹

The list in Gen. xv 19-21 should be read in the light of the above examples. The Amorites appear seventh in the list of the ten pre-Israelite nations because they play a special role in the narrative. They are specifically mentioned several verses earlier (Gen. xv 16), and they are also referred to twice in the previous chapter. In Gen. xiv 7 the Amorites are among those attacked in the invasion of the four kings from the east, and in Gen. xiv 13 Abram's ally Mamre the Amorite is mentioned.²² Above I noted that there are numerous links between chs xiv and xv, and the word *hā'ēmōrî* "the Amorite" is one such example.²³ All this information will explain the unique placement of the Amorites as nation number seven among the ten peoples to be dispossessed of the land of Canaan.²⁴

In like regard, the Jebusites almost always appear last in the lists of pre-Israelite nations, regardless of whether there are seven, six, or even five entries. This feature is retained in the list in Gen. xv 19-21, only here the Jebusites are specifically number ten, the other position of importance in the seven/ten sequencing. The Jebusites especially are highlighted because they are associated with Jerusalem. This is another point in favor of my view that Genesis stems from the Davidic-Solomonic period.²⁵ In MacKenzie's words, "We are led to ask *when* could such a formula have been

created to express YHWH's great deed of establishing Israel in the land of Canaan. Clearly, not before it was realized. And the final name gives us the clue. The Jebusite was 'driven out' when David captured Jerusalem, 2 Sm 5, 6. The formula must have been fixed soon after that, and at a time when all six groups were well-known and clearly distinguished entities."²⁶

In sum, the positioning of Amorites/Jebusites as seven/ten in Gen. xv 19-21 is not coincidental. Rather, it is due to a well conceived literary plan. The placement of these ethnonyms in this list parallels that of Enoch/Noah in Gen. v and that of Boaz/David in Ruth iv 18-22. In addition, the Amorites are given special prominence because of their appearance elsewhere in the narrative, specifically Gen. xiv 7, 13, xv 16.²⁷

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¹ "New Directions", *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 15 (1978), p. 59.

² G. A. Rendsburg, "Janus Parallelism in Gen. 49:26", *JBL* 99 (1980), pp. 291-3; E. Zurro, "Disemia de *brh* y paralelismo bifronte en Job 9,25", *Biblica* 62 (1981), pp. 546-7; D. T. Tsumura, "Janus Parallelism in Nah 1:8", *JBL* 102 (1983), pp. 109-11; G. A. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (Atlanta, 1990), p. 84 (on Ps cxvi 10).

³ W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* (Sheffield, 1984), p. 159 (Watson also attempted to identify a Janus example in Ugaritic poetry, but his example is, in my opinion, not a good one); A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985), p. 2.

⁴ See V. P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1990), p. 419.

⁵ *Genesis* 2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981), p. 258 = E. tr. *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 1985; London, 1986), p. 218.

⁶ The root is attested in Ugaritic, Hebrew, and Phoenician. For the pertinent texts see M. O'Connor, "Semitic **mgn* and its Supposed Sanskrit Origin", *JAOS* 109 (1989), pp. 25-32.

⁷ The former view is the traditional one and needs little bibliographic support here. For the latter view, see M. Kessler, "The 'Shield' of Abraham", *VT* 14 (1964), pp. 494-7 (and see also p. 495, n. 4, where scholars of an earlier era are cited); M. J. Dahood, "Ugaritic Lexicography", in *Mélanges Eugène Tisserant* 1 (Vatican City, 1964), p. 94; M. J. Dahood, "Review of *Semitica* 12", *Biblica* 45 (1964), p. 129; M. J. Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography IV", *Biblica* 47 (1966), p. 414; M. J. Dahood, "Northwest Semitic Notes on Genesis", *Biblica* 55 (1974), p. 78; O. Loretz, "*mgn*-'Geschenk' in Gen. 15,1", *UF* 6 (1974), p. 492. For general discussion see D. N. Freedman and M. O'Connor, "*māgēn*", *TWAT* 4 (1984), cols 646-59, especially cols 657-9; and M. O'Connor, "Yahweh the Donor", *Aula Orientalis* 6 (1988), pp. 47-60.

⁸ Of course, in a translation, a choice must be made, though there is always the option of placing one meaning in the main body of the text and the other meaning in a marginal note. Note the difference between the *New English Bible* and the

Revised English Bible. The *NEB* rendered the passage: "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am giving you a very great reward", and in the marginal note presented the optional version: "I am your shield, your very great reward". The revised translation of the *REB* reads: "Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield. Your reward will be very great", with no alternative translation based on *mgn* "give, bestow" offered. On the other hand, see p. 268 for the solution proffered by one translation in antiquity.

⁹ O'Connor, "Yahweh the Donor", p. 52, came close to stating the same thing: "Finally, it should be noted that there are cases in which it is impossible to decide clearly between *māgen*, 'shield', and *mgn*, 'donor'."

¹⁰ For another example of targumic expansion to include both meanings of a Hebrew Janus word, see Rendsburg, "Janus Parallelism in Gen. 49:26", p. 292. For the possibility of a somewhat similar phenomenon, see G. A. Rendsburg, "Double Polysemy in Genesis 49:6 and Job 3:6", *CBQ* 44 (1982), pp. 48-51, in particular p. 50, n. 9.

¹¹ The texts can be studied together most conveniently in the synoptic table produced by M. L. Klein, "A Genizah Fragment of Palestinian Targum to Genesis 15:1-4", *HUCA* 49 (1978), pp. 73-87, especially pp. 80-2.

¹² N. M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York, 1966), pp. 121-2; N. M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. 112; G. A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1986), p. 48; O'Connor, "Yahweh the Donor", p. 51.

¹³ For recent discussion, see J. Ha, *Genesis 15: A Theological Compendium of Pentateuchal History* (BZAW 181) (Berlin, 1989), pp. 202-4.

¹⁴ One of the best articles in recent years, with a full bibliography, is T. Ishida, "The Structure and Historical Implications of the Lists of Pre-Israelite Nations", *Biblica* 60 (1979), pp. 461-90.

¹⁵ In fact, it is the only place in the entire Bible where the Kadmonites are mentioned. On these folk, see S. Levin "Kadmeiōnas (Iliad 4.385, 5.804, 23.680) and Kedmōnaious (Gen. 15:19): The Nationality Missing from the Promised Land and the Settlement of Thebes", in *Epetēris tēs Hetaireias Boiōtikōn Meletōn* 1 (Athens, 1988), pp. 161-7.

¹⁶ See, e.g. Sarna, *Genesis*, pp. 117-18.

¹⁷ See the convenient lists in R. North, "The Hivites", *Biblica* 54 (1973), pp. 43-62, in particular p. 43; and in Ishida (n. 14), pp. 461-2. The words quoted above, "the foredoomed pre-Israelite population", are happily borrowed from North (p. 43).

¹⁸ It is true that in Ezra ix 1, Amorites appears last (eighth out of eight), but this list is totally different from the lists under discussion. It includes three nations (Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians) that are outside the land of Canaan (as defined in the Bible which views the Jordan River as the eastern boundary) and thus never appear in the other lists. Furthermore, as Ishida ([n. 14] p. 488) suggested, it is probable that "Amorites" in Ezra ix 1 no longer refers to the population of Canaan, rather to the Arabs.

¹⁹ Cited by North (n. 17), p. 45. Again the list in Ezra ix 1 needs to be excluded from consideration for this statement to be totally accurate.

²⁰ See B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 156-7, 167-8, 309-10; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part One: From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 281-3; J. M. Sasson, "A Genealogical 'Convention' in Biblical Chronography?", *ZAW* 90 (1978), pp. 171-85, especially p. 175; and J. M. Sasson, "Generation, Seventh", in K. S. Crim, (ed.), *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, 1978), pp. 354-6. Actually, these scholars concentrate much more on Enoch in position number seven, probably

because it is obvious that Noah culminates the genealogy as the tenth generation. In so doing, they continue the rabbinic maxim that "all sevenths are favorites" (Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana [ed. S. Buber], 154b-155a; Wayyiqra Rabba xxix 9; etc.).

²¹ B. Porten, "The Scroll of Ruth: A Rhetorical Study," *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies* 7 (1978), pp. 23-49, especially pp. 47-8; Sasson, "Genealogical 'Convention' ", p. 184; J. M. Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* (Baltimore, 1979; 2nd edn, Sheffield, 1989), pp. 181-2. Porten and Sasson seem to have arrived at the same conclusion independently, with their published works on the subject appearing within a year or so of each other.

²² The only other nation from the list in Gen. xv 19-21 that likewise is mentioned in Gen. xiv are the Rephaim. They too are attacked (Gen. xiv 5), and this may explain their inclusion in the list in Gen. xv 19-21. Otherwise they are not included in the lists of the foredoomed peoples. Of course, one cannot press this point too far since the Kenites, Kenizzites, and Kadmonites also occur only in this one list and they do not appear in Gen. xiv.

²³ Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, p. 122; Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 112; Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis*, p. 48.

²⁴ I prefer this argument to that of Ishida (n. 14), pp. 483-5, who argued for a geographical structure to the list in Gen. xv 19-21. On the identification of the Kadmonites, a different geography was posited by Levin (n. 15). Ishida placed these people in southern Judah or the Negev, whereas Levin placed them in Transjordan (not explicitly, but at least implicitly).

²⁵ Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis*, pp. 107-20. Additional material is found in G. A. Rendsburg, "David and his circle in Genesis xxxviii", *VT* 36 (1986), pp. 438-46.

²⁶ Cited by North (n. 17), pp. 45-6. See also Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis*, p. 108. This view is rejected by Ishida (n. 14), p. 474.

²⁷ It hardly needs to be added that this conclusion supports the holistic approach to biblical narrative and brings many of the suppositions of the Documentary Hypothesis into question. As I alluded to earlier, source critics uniformly separate chs. xiv and xv. Even within ch. xv there are some scholars who ascribe the list of nations in vv. 19-21 to a source other than that responsible for the story as a whole. For a survey of opinions, see Ha (n. 13), pp. 30-8, especially the fold-out chart between pp. 30-1.

MORDECAI, THE PERSEPOLIS TABLETS, AND THE SUSA EXCAVATIONS

In a recent article, "In quest of the historical Mordecai", *VT* 41 (1991), pp. 129-36, David J.A. Clines cast considerable doubt on the interpretation of a tablet containing the name *Marduka*, published by A. Ungnad, which had been used by a number of scholars, including myself,¹ to support the historicity of the figure of Mordecai in the book of Esther. While Clines may well be correct in his reappraisal, he has at the same time overlooked more recent

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