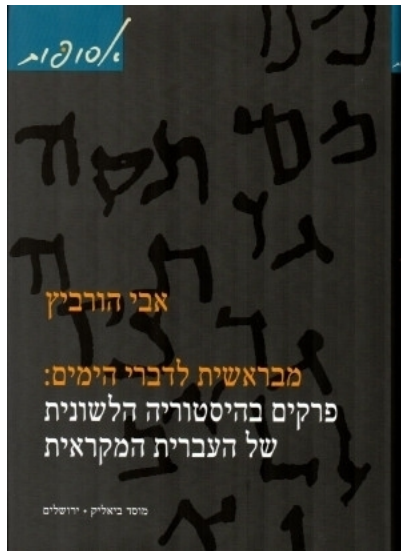




Avi Hurvitz

From Genesis to Chronicles: Chapters in the Linguistic History of Biblical Hebrew [Hebrew]

Asuppot 15

Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2017. Pp. 250. Hardcover.
₪59.00. ISBN 9789655362107.

Gary A. Rendsburg
Rutgers University

Avi Hurvitz has had a long and illustrious career in the field of Biblical Hebrew studies, with a special focus on the diachronic study of ancient Hebrew. As with many scholars, articles penned over the span of decades often are difficult to locate and identify, especially since many appeared in an array of collected studies volumes and not only in standard journals. The present volume, accordingly, is most welcome, as it brings together nineteen essays written by Hurvitz during the years 1964–2008. All of these articles were published originally in Hebrew, and they are presented in this volume as the same. (Below I refer to the articles via their English titles, but to repeat: they all appear in Hebrew in this book.)

The earliest article in the collection is the first one ever published by Hurvitz (in Hebrew or in English), “When Was the Hebrew Expression *על ישראל שלום* Coined” (1964), while the most recent article is “*ממנה, פקיד, אשר על הבית*: On the Use of Three Technical Terms from the Realm of Government and Administration in Biblical Hebrew” (2008), both in the estimable journal *Lešonenu* (vols. 27–28 and 70, respectively).

The nineteen essays are organized into eight different sections, which means that each section contains only two or three articles. The sections and the individual articles are as follows:

Part 1, “The Diachronic Approach to the Study of Biblical Hebrew”: “The Hebrew Language in the Persian Period”; “An Examination of Late Biblical Hebrew in Light of Professor E. Y.

Kutscher's Legacy"; and "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Question of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew"

Part 2, "The Antiquity of the Priestly Terminology": "On the Use of the Priestly Term *Edah* (עֲדָה) in Biblical Literature"; and "Inquiries into the Language of the Priestly Source (P): On the Use of שָׁכַר and שָׂאָר in Leviticus and Numbers"

Part 3, "Neologisms in the Book of Ezekiel": "The Emergence of the Expression מִפֶּה וּמִפֶּה in the Vocabulary of Ezekiel"; and "The Term לְשֹׁכֹת שָׁרִים (Ezek. 40:44) and Its Role in the Development of the Cultic Terminology of the Temple"

Part 4, "Terms Relating to Government and Administration": "מִמְנָה, פֶּקִיד, אֲשֶׁר עַל הַבַּיִת: On the Use of Three Technical Terms from the Realm of Government and Administration in Biblical Hebrew"; and "The History of the Biblical Administrative Expression בַּיִת (ה) אֹצֵר"

Part 5, "Linguistic Considerations in the Study of Wisdom Literature": "The Language of the Frame Narrative in Job (1-2; 42:7-17) and Its Role in the Historical Development of Biblical Hebrew"; and "צָדִיק = 'Wise' in Psalm 37 and the Wisdom Background of the Psalm"

Part 6, "Expressions and Idioms": "Diachronic Chiasm in Biblical Hebrew"; "On the Borderline between Linguistic Studies and Biblical Research: The Development of the Expression סִפְר מִשָּׁה"; "When was the Hebrew Expression שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל Coined?"; and "On the Expression שְׁלֵף נֶעַל in Ruth 4:7"

Part 7, "The Dead Sea Scrolls": "The Language and Date of Psalm 151 from Qumran"; and "The Garments of Aaron and His Sons according to 1Q War VII, 9-10"

Part 8, "Matters of Historical Grammar": "עֲקָרוֹן = *Αναρῶν* = *Amqar(r)una*: A Lesson in Historical Grammar"; and "Clarifying the Relationship between the Priestly Code and the Book of Ezekiel: On Some Terms from the Realm of Holiness and Purity in Ezekiel's Use of the מִקְטָל Form"

Many of the articles, as their titles indicate, deal with single words or phrases attested in ancient Hebrew sources, but there also are several truly programmatic essays, including two in the first section: "The Hebrew Language in the Persian Period" (first published 1983), and "Hebrew and Aramaic in the Biblical Period: The Question of 'Aramaisms' in Biblical Hebrew" (1996). In this day and age in which the standard approach to the diachronic study of Biblical Hebrew has been challenged by Ian Young, Robert Rezetko, and the like, these two articles remain particularly relevant and significant.

Some of these articles also appeared in an English version, so that non-Hebrew readers may be familiar with them thereby. A prime example is “The Language of the Frame Narrative in Job (1-2; 42:7-17) and Its Role in the Historical Development of Biblical Hebrew” (1974-1975) = “The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered,” *HTR* 67 (1974): 17-34. The majority, however, to the best of my knowledge are available only in Hebrew, either in the original publication or now here.

Hurvitz’s overall method is well known and well discussed. I repeat the basics here and then illustrate the method with a single example. The unifying thread throughout Hurvitz’s studies, spanning decades, is to identify features of Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). Such features—both lexical and grammatical, though especially the former—may be identified by the convergence of three complementary criteria (40): (1) distribution: an element is attested either exclusively or predominantly in books dated to the late period (Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles, etc.); (2) external sources: the term or its cognate is attested in late sources (Ben Sira, Dead Sea Scrolls, Mishnah, Imperial Aramaic, etc.); and (3) linguistic opposition: the feature stands in contrast to a known equivalent from earlier biblical literature.

Since a good portion of my own work has been in conversation with Hurvitz’s oeuvre for decades, naturally I was well aware of many of the examples included in the present volume of collected studies. My attention was drawn, accordingly, to an item that previously had escaped my attention: the term *מְמָנָה*, literally “appointed one” > “official” (99-101). The word appears only once in the Bible, in 1 Chr 9:29, in the plural form *מְמָנִים* “those appointed” > “appointed ones” > “officials” (thereby meeting the distribution criterion). Earlier strata of Biblical Hebrew exhibit parallel terms such as *אֲשֶׁר עַל הַבַּיִת*, literally “the one over the house,” and *פֶּקִיד* “official,” with the former presumably the highest-ranking official in the palace and the latter a more general term (thereby meeting the linguistic opposition criterion). Whence, then, the source of *מְמָנִים* “officials”? First, as Hurvitz demonstrates, the verb *מָנָה* “appoint” is the Aramaic semantic equivalent of the Hebrew verbs *נָתַן*, *פָּקַד*, and *שָׁם* (see, e.g., Ezra 7:25). Thus, for example, all four Targumim of the Torah (Onqelos, Neofiti, Pseudo-Jonathan, and Samaritan) render Gen 41:34 *וַיִּפְקֹד* “and let [Pharaoh] appoint” with the verb *וַיִּמְנֶה/וַיִּמְנֵה*. Moreover, the selfsame specific Aramaic equivalent *מִמְנָה* “official” is employed by Targum Jonathan to render *פֶּקִיד* “official” in 2 Kgs 25:19 (thereby meeting the external sources criterion). In light of such evidence, there can be no doubt that the presence of the Hebrew form *מְמָנִים* “officials” in 1 Chr 9:29 reflects a later stage of the language.

The series *Asuppot* is a project of Mosad Bialik, with the goal of assembling an array of articles written by an eminent scholar between the covers of a single book. Earlier volumes collect the essays of such scholars as Moshe Bar-Asher, Joshua Blau, Devorah Dimant, Shamma Friedman, Sara Japhet, Shimon Sharvit, and David Talshir, along with others in the field of Jewish studies

beyond the purview of this journal. It is gratifying to see Hurvitz's oeuvre now joining such celebrated company.

The articles are not simply photomechanically reproduced, but rather the entire work has been typeset anew in a pleasing format, using a very readable font and with appropriate employment of boldface for highlighting. Most helpful are the three detailed indices of words and expressions, sources, and subjects (231-50), allowing the user to determine quickly if Hurvitz has written on a particular word, passage, or subject and where in the volume his treatment may be found. While the entire book is in Hebrew, a detailed English table of contents is provided as well (v-vi).

Five years ago Hurvitz published *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) (reviewed in *RBL* by Jerome A. Lund), a reference work that stands as the culmination of the author's lifelong major research project. That volume and the present volume together will ensure that the very important work accomplished by Avi Hurvitz during the past five decades will continue to inform the field for years to come.