CRITICAL NOTES

ךֵּ֣שׁ AND כַּ֣ן:
TWO VERBS MASQUERADING AS NOUNS
IN MOSES' BLESSING (DEUTERONOMY 33:2, 28)

Irregular spelling is not normally an obstacle to understanding the biblical text. Nevertheless, when the deviant spelling of a rare word coincides with the normal spelling of a common word, exegetes can be misled. I submit that there are two irregular spellings in Moses' Blessing: כְּשָׁה for כָּשָׁה (Deut 33:2) and כִּ֣ן for כַּ֣ן (Deut 33:28). These spellings have disguised the identity of the forms in question, leading many exegetes to assume that they are nouns or simply scribal errors. I shall argue that they are, in reality, verbs and not in need of emendation.

I. כְּשָׁה

According to the oral reading tradition recorded by the Masoretes, supported by most ancient witnesses (including the Samaritan version), the kēṭib הָאמֶּר in Deut 33:2 is to be read (qērē) as two words: כָּשָׁה קַנְּ. Because the second word looks like the noun כָּשָׁה ("law"), attested in Hebrew and Aramaic passages of Esther, Ezra, and Daniel, the phrase כָּשָׁה קַנְּ was traditionally understood as connecting the Torah with fire in one way or another.

This article was completed during my tenure as a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1994–95. I am indebted to Professor David Tene for inviting me to be a member of his research group there. I would also like to thank Professor David Berger for his valuable comments and encouragement.

1 Cf. Aleppo margin, תָּאִּלָּת הַבָּדָה מִלֵּי אוֹרָתִי אֲדֻמִּי מֵעָלָה מִלְּעַנְּ וּמֵאֲלִי, "written as one word and read as two words." The writing of כְּשָׁה together with a following monosyllabic word is found also in Jer 6:29: כְּשָּׁפַ֣ת (see הֶלֶבֶּל כְּשָּׁפַ֣ת [ed. S. Frensdorff; Hannover: Hahn, 1864] 96). Short proclitic words are often written together with the following word in inscriptions as well. The Samaritan Pentateuch has כָּשָׁה קַנְּ, written as two words (A. Tal, The Samaritan Pentateuch Edited According to MS 6 (C) of the Shekhem Synagogue [Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1994]). For other ancient witnesses that support the reading as two words, see the next footnote. There is only one ancient witness that may have interpreted our form as a single word: LXX. It has been conjectured that the word ἠγγέλων ("angels") in the Septuagint's rendering of the end of 33:2 (ἐκ δεκατάκα τοῦ ἄγγελον μετ' τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) corresponds to the kēṭib כָּשָׁה and that the latter is to be compared to Arabic ḥasad ("lion") and Epigraphic South Arabian ḫ̱d ("man, warrior" [?]) (J. S. Vater and K. W. Justi apud K. H. Graf, Der Segen Moses [Leipzig: Dyk, 1857] 10; W. Gesenius, Hebräisches und chaldaisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament [Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1823] s.v. כָּשָׁה; A. F. L. Beeston, "Angels in Deuteronomy 33," JTS n.s. 2 [1951] 30–31).

2 The Vulgate renders ignea lex ("fiery law") and the Samaritan Targum has פַּרְצֵי אֱלֹהִים ("fire of
By the nineteenth century, such interpretations had fallen on hard times. It was realized that the word נַלְלָה (Ezra 1:8; 4:7) and נַלְלָה, "Baghdad" (b. Yebam. 67a; b. Ketub. 10b, etc.), is an Iranian loanword. It was also noted that, outside of Deut 33:2, the word is attested only in post-exilic compositions. As a result, scholars began to question the traditional exegesis. K. H. Graf, for example, asked how a "Hebrew poet of the early period" could have used such a word. More recent scholars have asked the same question, for it is now generally acknowledged that Moses' blessing was composed "long before the post-exilic dates which were in vogue around the turn of the century."7

Thanks in part to these considerations, scholars have concluded that the reading נַלְלָה is impossible, and a great number of alternatives have been offered. D. N. Freedman's view is typical: "In a few instances, a different vocalization is proposed, where MT is clearly faulty: e.g. 'אָֽשֶׁדּוֹת [sic, for 'אָֽשֶׁדוֹת—RCS] for נַלְלָה (v. 2), where the vocalization of MT is based upon a highly improbable interpretation of the text."8 Further, "MT cannot be followed in its analysis of the term into two words, נַלְלָה, which is a counsel of despair."9 G. Rendsburg, who calls the form "one of the most difficult cruces in the Bible," agrees: "Modern Bible critics have rightly rejected the Masoretic division into נל and dl."10

Torah") (A. Tal, The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch: A Critical Edition [Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1981] 2.392, 399). Onagous, Neofiti, and the Fragment Targums are similar, except that they break up the phrase. Mekhilta, Sifre and other midrashim also find references to Torah and fire here.

See R. Kent, Old Persian (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1953) 189. It is far from certain that the Iranian dialect from which the word was borrowed is Old Persian, pace such handbooks as HALAT, s.v. נל; and K. Beyer, Die aramäischen Text vom Toten Meer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht) 558. The name נל is from the Median dialect; the Persian counterpart would have yielded נל, as in Syriac (see HALAT, s.v. נל).

Graf, Der Segen Moses, 9.


Freedman, "Poetic Structure," 30
9 Ibid, 39.
10 Rendsburg, "Hebrew šd," 81; so already Margulis, "Gen. XLIX 10," 206
11 Rendsburg, "Hebrew šd," 81.
As we have seen, however, the division into two words is supported by most of the ancient witnesses. I submit that the problem with that division can be solved by taking היה as an irregular spelling of the verb היה—a feminine perfect\(^{12}\) of the root מ-כ-כ occurring only a few chapters earlier (Deut 28:49, היה). It is feminine because it is the predicate verb of the feminine noun היא.

The form היה = היה is a contraction of היה. The latter exhibits the archaic third person feminine singular form of III-verbs attested sporadically in the Bible (Lev 25:21, היה; Lev 26:34, היה, Jer 13:19, היה; Ezek 24:12, היה) and possibly also in the Siloam inscription and Mishnaic Hebrew.\(^{13}\) The contraction is apparently the result of the elision of נ between identical or similar vowels, as in כְּעַה (Isa 16:6), מְמַל (Isa 28:1,4).

Omission of quiescent נ in the orthography is well known from the Bible (e.g., Gen 25:24, מָלַא; 31:39, מָלַא; Deut 28:57, מָלַא; 1 Sam 1:17, מָלַא; 2 Sam 22:40, מָלַא; Ps 22:22, מָלַא)\(^{14}\) and from Northwest Semitic inscriptions; however, the most interesting example for our purposes comes from tannaitic literature. In Mishnaic Hebrew, the feminine of נ (“he came”) is נַא, normally vocalized נַאִ in reliable manuscripts, such as Codex Kaufmann.\(^{15}\) This form may be compared to (the final syllable of) נַאִ in Deut 29:29. In one of the earliest and most important rabbinic manuscripts, the Vatican manuscript of the Sipra (Codex Assemani 66), alongside נַא we find נ in the meaning “she came.”\(^{16}\) This spelling fluctuation is precisely the one we have posited for היה and היה (“she flew”).\(^{17}\)

According to this analysis, the phrase מִכָּה יָהַשׁ נְאָ לְ לֵּמבָּטַ תּנָחַת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ לֵּּבָּ בַּיִת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ לֵּּבָּ בַּיִת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ לֵּּבָּ בַּיִת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ לֵּּבָּ בַּיִת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ לֵּּבָּ בַּיִת מַהֲכַת מַהֲכַת נְאָ לְ L-8 verb forms being treated as III-verbs.\(^{18}\)

\(^{12}\) Cf. the nineteenth-century emendations to היה and היה cited by Graf, Der Segen Moses, 10.


\(^{14}\) The phenomenon is especially common in Job, e.g., 1:21; 35:11; 39:9; 41:17.

\(^{15}\) The form has a very archaic appearance, and, like other Mishnaic forms, may actually be older than its standard Biblical Hebrew counterpart. It is therefore conceivable that anomalous forms such as Deut 33:16 וה Albuquerque (“may it come,” alongside Isa 5:19 וה Albuquerque) and 1 Sam 25:34 וה Albuquerque (“you [fem. sing.] came,” alongside Ezek 16:7 וה Albuquerque) owe their existence to a reanalysis of וה Albuquerque which incorporated the feminine ending into the root. It is well known that a similar reanalysis occurred in וה Albuquerque (“door”) and other nouns. For the roots of Mishnaic Hebrew in the biblical period and its importance for biblical studies, see R. C. Steiner, "A Colloquialism in Jer 5:13 from the Ancestor of Mishnaic Hebrew," JSS 37 (1992) 11–26 and the literature cited there.

\(^{16}\) See I. Yeivin, מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא מָלַא_Mishnaic Biblical Hebrew (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1985) 633–34. S. Naeh, 66 מָלַא מָלַא_Mishnaic Biblical Hebrew (diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989) 251. Naeh rightly views this form as an example of III-verbs being treated as III-verbs.

\(^{17}\) To what extent there is a morphological parallel between וה Albuquerque and פי is depends on the root of the latter. The dictionaries know only פי, but the similarity between the bird-names פי and פי (from the hollow root פי- פי) leads me to wonder whether there was a hollow by-form פי- פי. In that case, the morphology of פי is would be identical to that of פי. Another possible parallel between the two is that they are both presupposed by forms in Moses’ Blessing (see n. 15 above).

\(^{18}\) Cf. JPS: “Lightning flashing at them from His right.”

\(^{19}\) The absence of a verb in this stich bothered Ibn Ezra enough to make him combine it with the previous stich, yielding something like פי- פי.
up the four previous stichs and even to resolve a slight contradiction among them. Two of these stichs speak of the Lord coming (אֶל, אֲלֵיהֶם) to the Israelites from his place while two of them speak of him shining (יָדוֹ, יָד) upon them from his place—presumably while remaining there. The fifth stich reconciles the apparent contradiction: instead of coming to them in person, the Lord sends a fire from his right. Through his fire, the Lord both shines and comes.

II. "ע"מ

Another word in Moses’ blessing that looks like a noun is "ע"מ (Deut 33:28). Most ancient and medieval exegetes took it to be the construct form of "ע" מ ("eye, spring"). An important exception, pointed out by N. Netzer, is Menahem b. Saruq (tenth century). who connected it with the noun הַמַּעֲגוֹת in the preceding verse (33:27) and with the verb יָעַק in Isa 13:22. His gloss to the section in question is: יָעַקְתָהּוּ הַמַּעֲגוֹת, "they have the meaning of ‘dwelling.’" Netzer notes that Menahem’s approach was criticized by Dunash and subsequently forgotten.

The gloss makes it very likely that Menahem took "ע" מ as parallel with the verb מָעַק, perhaps by a simple process of elimination (cf. מָעָק, מַעְקָק and מַעֲגָה). Y. Avishur has shown that "ע" מ and מָעָק are attested as parallel pairs elsewhere in biblical poetry. Thus, there can be little doubt about the correctness of Menahem’s view, and it is, in fact, generally accepted today. Freedman, for example, translates: “So Israel settled securely, alone dwelt Jacob, in a land of grain and must; indeed his skies drip dew.” I. L. Seeligman renders: “Israel thus dwells in safety, Jacob abides in seclusion, in a land of corn and vintage, and blessed with dew from the heavens.”

It is not clear whether Menahem took the word as a verb or a noun. A few modern adherents of Menahem’s view have taken it to be a noun—either a by-form of the con

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20 Cf. Ps 104:4: "He makes the winds his emissaries, burning fire (סָפוֹת) his servants." The verb סָפוֹת is not attested elsewhere with fire as its subject, but it is used of the Lord in Ps 18:11, and its synonym, סָפוֹת, is used in Isa 6:6 of a fiery angel flying from the Lord to a man.


22 Menahem ben Saruq. Mahberet (ed. A. Sáenz-Badillos; Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1986) 285*, s.v. ע"מ section 3. The edition of Z. Filipowski (London: Me'orot Ye'ishenim, 1854), which is now superseded, is missing the gloss; hence Netzer did not know of it. Note that occurrences of ע"מ with the meanings “eye, spring, appearance” are dealt with elsewhere (sections 6–8), as are occurrences of ע"מ with the meaning “sing, answer” (sections 1–2).


24 If so, we may assume that he was willing to overlook the fact that, according to the Masoretic accents, מַעֲגוֹת is a phrase.


27 Seeligman, "Psalms from Pre-Regal Times," 78.
crete noun กำไร or an abstract (verbal) noun on the pattern of צָרָה and דָּרָה. According to these analyses, our verse exhibits parallelism between a verb and a noun, which, according to S. Loewenstamm and Avishur, is rare and late. Nevertheless, Loewenstamm does not exclude this possibility.

Most modern scholars, unaware of the aforementioned possibility, have followed K. Budde in assuming that the parallel of the verb הָעֲשָׂרָה should also be a verb (derived from the root מה-ו-ו) and that הָעֲשָׂרָה should be emended accordingly. Of the three emendations proposed in the 1920s—Budde’s חָשְׂרָה, U. Cassuto’s חָשִׂיר, and A. Van Hoonacker’s חָשִׁיר—it is the second that has won general acceptance. It has not been realized that the interpretation of חָשִׂיר as a verb—perfect or participle—does not require any emendation at all.

Cassuto’s emendation assumes that חָשִׁיר is a dynamic verb with a perfect and participle on the pattern of לְּבָנָה, rather than a stative verb with a perfect and participle on the pattern of סַרְפָּה. It is true that Biblical Hebrew verbs of dwelling normally have dynamic morphology—as does perhaps חָשִׁיר itself in Isa 13:22. Nevertheless, many of them exhibit vestiges of an older stage during which they were stative. Thus, the perfect of חָשִׁיר in five passages (prose, nonpausal) is dynamic חָשִׁיר, but Moses’ Blessing and the Song of Deborah preserve three examples of an archaic stative perfect חָשִׁיר, either because the poetic dialect is more archaic than standard Biblical Hebrew or because all three occurrences are in at least minor pauses. The stative participle חָשִׁיר survives in prose only as a noun meaning “neighbor,” but one poetic passage (Isa 33:24) has it instead of the usual dynamic חָשִׁיר.

Similarly, the participle of חָשִׁיר is dynamic חָשִׁיר, but a fossilized stative participle survives in the noun חָשִׁיר (“stranger, resident alien”); the two forms are frequently collo-

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28 M. Bar-Magen, “” , Beit Mikra 18 (1972–73) 48–50. See already JPS: “Untroubled is Jacob’s abode.”
29 S. Loewenstamm, “” , Beit Mikra 21 (1975–76) 152–53.
31 K. Budde, Der Segen Moses’s, Deuteronomium 33 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922) 16.
33 See HALAT, s.v. חָשִׂיר III, where the form is analyzed as a hollow verb with the archaic fem. plur. perfect -ה ending preserved in Akkadian and Aramaic and attested sporadically in BH. If this is correct, חָשִׂיר (compared with, say, 1 Sam 4:15, חָשַׁל) exhibits a shift to ultimate stress before a word beginning with a laryngeal (צְלָל); see G. Bergsträsser, Hebräische Grammatik (Leipzig: F. C. W. Vogel, 1929) 2,§28e; and G. Rabin, מַסְמַךְ וְמַסְמַךְ שָׁם הָרֶכֶם וְמַסְמַךְ בַּלָשָׁן הָמַקְרֵי בֵּית הַלְּבָנָה בּוּרוּבָא (Jerusalem: Academon, 1973) 18.
34 W. F. Albright, “An Archaic Hebrew Proverb in an Amarna Letter from Central Palestine,” BASOR 89 (1943) 32 n. 26. A fossilized stative participle from a different semantic field may be discerned in the noun חָשִׁיר (“almond tree”) from the root חָשְׂרָה (“be vigilant, be awake at a time when it is customary to sleep [late at night or early in the morning]”), whose productive participle is חָשָׁר. As is well known, the Hebrew name of the almond tree derives from the fact that it is the first tree to bloom (= awaken) in the spring (= morning). The noun חָשִׁיר shows that חָשְׂרָה originally had stative morphology, like its near-synonym חָשָׁר (“be awake”) (participle חָשָׁר) and its near-antonym חָשָׁר (“be asleep”) (participle חָשָׁר). For the spread of dynamic morphology at the expense of the stative and its causes, see P. Jouon, Grammaire de l’hébreu biblique (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifi-
icated in the Bible as יָשֵׁב, and the like. The verb יָשֵׁב also preserves the stative form of the participle in Neh 13:21 (יָשָׁב) alongside the younger and more common form יָשָׁב.

Thus, there is every reason to expect that the verb related to יָשֵׁב was originally stative יָשָׁב, just as יָשָׁב is related to יָשָׁב, יָשָׁב, יָשָׁב, and יָשָׁב to יָשָׁב. Indeed, were it not for the plene spelling of יָשָׁב in our verse, it would never have posed much of a problem.

Plene spelling is rare in the MT for an e not derived from ay, but it is not unattested; see examples cited by F. I. Andersen and A. D. Forbes and J. Barr such as Exod 25:31, הָשָׁב; Josh 9:11, הָשָׁב; Mic 1:8, הָשָׁב; Ps 139:12, הָשָׁב; 2 Kgs 17:16, הָשָׁב; and from Deuteronomy itself (7:5). The closest parallels are 2 Sam 22:29, יָשָׁב, and 2 Chr 2:16, יָשָׁב. Both nouns are probably derived from hollow statives, just like יָשָׁב.

It should be noted that BHS consistently refrains from emending plene spellings of the sort cited above. That wise policy can now be safely extended to יָשָׁב in Deut 33:28. The interpretation of that word as a verb meaning "dwell" or "dwell" requires no alteration of the Masoretic spelling or pointing.

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cal, 1923) §41b (note the article cited there); and J. Blau, תְרֵמָה תְרֵמָה (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1972) 131. This process led ultimately to the near-total disappearance of stative marking for the perfect in Mishnaic Hebrew (see G. Haneman, אֲנֻף הַמַּעֲשָׂה הַמַּעֲשָׂה [Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 1980] 69–73).


36 Barr, Variable Spellings, 142.

37 Indeed, as pointed out by Barr, BHS creates its own plene spelling in Deut 33:12, only a few verses from our example, where it gives the form רְשָׁב, not found in the Leningrad codex!
The sentence יָמֹן (Prov 8:30a) presents one of the great puzzles in the Hebrew Bible. In it personified Wisdom says, or seems to say, that she was an יָמֹן with God during creation. But what is an יָמֹן?

Three main explanations of יָמֹן have been offered: (1) artisan, (2) constant(ly), and (3) ward/nurseling. I will argue for a fourth, which is a variant of the last, by drawing upon the neglected insights of two medieval scholars, Yonah Abu al-Walid Marwan ibn Janah and Moshe Qimhi.

1. יָמֹן refers to some aspect of craftsmanship.
   (a) יָמֹן = "artisan" or the like. Some commentators take יָמֹן as equivalent to יָמָן (or emend thus). יָמָן = "artisan" is a hapax found in Song 7:2. Thus, e.g., RSV "master worker," F. Delitzsch "master of the work," 4 H. Ringgren "Werkmeister." 5 This is apparently a loanword from Akkadian ummânu ("foreman") via Aramaic. 6

   The major ancient versions presuppose a similar understanding: Peshitta: mtqn 2 hwy, "I was establishing"; Vulgate: componens, "arranging," "composing"; and probably LXX: ἀρρόςους, "composing" or "being in harmony with." This understanding is reflected in the Wisdom of Solomon (7:21; 8:6), which speaks of wisdom as the τεχνίτης ("artificer") of the world.

   יָמֹן, "artisan," does not exist elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew. To be sure, some com-

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4 Franz Delitzsch, Proverbs (1873; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 191. Delitzsch implausibly derives the word from "be firm," hence "one who is strong in his art."
5 Helmer Ringgren, Sprüche (ATD 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1962) 39. Ringgren's use of the feminine in German, in spite of the masculine form of יָמֹן, shows one of the difficulties in treating the word as a noun.
6 Avi Hurvitz argues that since the noun pattern qāṭāl indicates the holder of a certain occupation, יָמֹן as pointed probably means "artisan" (לְיָמֹן שֶם יְהוָה אָמָנוֹ בֶּן בֶּן שמִיל, in The Bible in the Light of its Interpreters: Memorial for Sara Kamin [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995] 647–50).
mentators regard יָשְׁרָה in Jer 52:15 as a collective meaning “artisans,” but this is actually an aural variant of יָשָׁר, “multitude” (1 Kgs 25:11). The verse lists groups of exiles in the second wave, and according to 2 Kgs 24:14 all the artisans were deported in 597. In any case, the posited sense of יָשְׁרָה, “collectivity of artisans,” would not apply in Prov 8:30a.

The problem with explaining יָשְׁרָה as “artisan” is that nowhere in Proverbs 8 is Wisdom assigned an active role in creation. On the contrary, in the parallel lines she is said to be playing constantly. The emphasis on Wisdom’s play in vv. 30–31 seems to be a deliberate refutation of the notion that wisdom had an active productive role in the work of creation.

(b) יָשְׁרָה = “tool.” Gen. Rab. §1.2 states simply, דִּכְרֵי יָשְׁרָה. “men means artisan (כָּמְמַדִּים).” However, the midrash goes on to describe wisdom (= Torah) not as an artisan but as the tool (נָשׁ לֶחֶב) of God, who used the Torah (believed to be preexistent) as a blueprint when constructing the universe. This midrash, if it is to be understood precisely, is construing יָשְׁרָה in a derived sense as “means of artistry.” Saadia assumes this interpretation when he explains that wisdom was the means whereby all things were initiated and put into operation.

(c) יָשְׁרָה is emended to דִּכְרֵי, supposedly meaning “binding [all] together,” “uniting.” This was proposed by R. B. Y. Scott, for which he appeals to the LXX, Vg. and Pesh. But this explanation too goes contrary to context and syntax, as well as assuming an unattested meaning for the verb דִּכְרֵי.

2. יָשְׁרָה = “constant(ly),” “faithful(ly),” or the like.

Thus Symmachus and Theodotion: ἐστὶν ἁμενήν, “set firm”: Targum: יָשְׁרָה, “trusted one”: Venetus: πιστὸς, “good faith.” A. Ehrlich renders “vertrauten Freund” or “beständiger Gast.” P. O. Plöger hesitantly parses יָשְׁרָה as an infinitive absolute used adverbially in the sense of “beständig.” However (as Plöger recognizes), the root יָשְׁר (“he firm/constant”) is not productive in the G-stem (this appears only in the frozen form, יָשָׁר, “Amen”). Moreover, the use of the N-stem would be expected in the proposed sense.


5 Even in Prov 3:19, which says that God created the world “by” (or “in”) wisdom, wisdom is an instrument, not an agent.

9 Saadia ben Yosef Favyumi, דִּכְרֵי (trans. into Hebrew and ed. by Yosef Qafiḥ, Jerusalem: HaVa‘ad Lehoṣa‘at Sifrey Rasag, 1976 [?]).


3. בָּשָׁל is derived from בָּשׁ, “to raise”/“care for.”
(a) בָּשׁ = pedagogue. Ber. Rab. §1.1 offers “pedagogue” as one gloss among several. This might be justified morphologically by construing the word as a nomen agentis of the qätól pattern, rare in Biblical Hebrew, but the picture of Wisdom teaching God his task is inapprorpriate. Gal 3:24 seems to reflect this interpretation: ὁ νομὸς πανθε-γωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, “The law was our teacher till Christ came.”

(b) בָּשׁ, a passive participle meaning “ward,” “one who is raised.” Aquila’s παπανουμενη (“nursed”) construes the word thus, and this interpretation is followed by most modern commentators (e.g., C. H. Toy and William McKane). If this is correct, the word must be taken as an epicene noun, because as an adjective the passive participle would be feminine. But no such noun is attested. The plural participle בָּשֵׁל appears in Lam 4:5.

4. בָּשׁ is an infinitive absolute meaning “being raised”/“growing up,” serving as an adverbial complement to the main verb.

Ibn Janah was the first (and almost the only) scholar to identify בָּשׁ as an infinitive (רַבָּשׁ), which is exactly what the vocalization indicates (תפרא, §323.16). He recognized also that the word is an adverbial complement, for which he uses the Arabic termHAL. For the sense he adduces Esth 2:7: “And he was raising (בָּשׁ) Hadassah.” But this example, though mentioned by many commentators, implies that Wisdom was doing the child-rearing (see 3a above), which is impossible, since there was not yet any child figure on the scene.

Moshe Qimhi says that the “expected form” (תוֹרָשָׁה) would be בָּשֵׁל. In other words, he too recognizes that בָּשׁ is an adverbial complement (בָּשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה, p. 198). Moshe Qimhi’s contribution to the solution lies simply in referring to Esth 2:20b: “and Esther obeyed the word of Mordecai אִּישׁ הָאָדָם הַיָּדָע הַבָּשֵׁל just as was the case when (she was) growing up with him.”

The significance of this parallel has been obscured by the lexicons, which consistently parse בָּשֵׁל as a noun meaning “tutelage,” “fosterage,” or the like. This construal creates a hapax legomenon and produces an awkward phrase, “as it was in fosterage with him.”

In fact, בָּשֵׁל is an infinitive. BHS and others reasonably propose supplying a mappiq for a third feminine suffix—a minuscule emendation yielding “when she was growing up.” But even without the mappiq, בָּשֵׁל can be parsed as infinitive with a third feminine singular suffix. (For the usage, see GKC §91f.) A third option would be to parse בָּשֵׁל as the extended or “feminine” form of the G infinitive. In any case, Esth 2:20b shows that the G infinitive of בָּשֵׁל can be intransitive and can refer to the child’s part (“being raised,” “growing up”) as well as the guardian’s. In fact, the example of Esth 2:20b conforms to the rule that the infinitive, especially in the G-stem, is indifferent to

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13 The preferred form in this sense is the G participle; see 1 Kgs 10:1, 5; Esth 2:7; Num 11:12; Isa 49:23.

voice. It also shows that יָשָׁר ("be raised") can govern a word meaning "with," because יָשָׁר ("with"/"next to") is a near synonym of יָשָׁר as a preposition of proximity. (Compare the use of these prepositions in 1 Kgs 20:36.)

The infinitive absolute sometimes functions as an adverbial complement. Examples are Gen 30:32a; Exod 30:36a; Num 6:5b, 23b (דְּסַפֶּה = "saying" rather than "say!"); and Jer 22:19. In the latter verse, note also the passive sense of the G and H infinitives of verbs that are otherwise transitive.

By this understanding, the second line in our verse (8:30bα) is not precisely synonymous with the first (v. 30a) but refines and elaborates the picture. This is the same relation that v. 31b bears to v. 31a. Lady Wisdom is declaring that while God was busy creating the world, she was nearby, growing up like a child in his care (v. 30a) and giving him delight (v. 30bα) by playing before him (v. 30bβ) in the world that would be inhabited (v. 31a). Now that humans are on the scene, she is the guardian and teacher and declares, "And my delight is in mankind" (v. 31b).

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A LOVER, CITIES, AND HEAVENLY BODIES:  
CO-TEXT AND THE TRANSLATION 
OF TWO SIMILES IN CANTICLES 
(6:4c; 6:10d)

Canticles—is there another work so fascinating, so splendid, yet so bewildering? 
Many aspects of Canticles can be confounding. Are there two or three main characters? 
What is the book's role in the canon of the Hebrew Bible? How erotic is the language? 
One also wrestles with trying to understand many perplexing lexical items. In this note, I 
look at a phrase that occurs as part of a simile, which occurs twice but should be under-
stood differently in each instance.

Canticles 6:4a–c, 6:10a–d and Commentary

6:4a יִשָּׁה אַלְדָּרָה רֵעְיָהּ You are beautiful, my dear, like Tirzah
6:4b נַאֲהִ התֵּרָה לֶגָּדְלָה Lovely like Jerusalem
6:4c אִמָּהּ מְרַגְּלָה Who is this who gazes (down) like the dawn
6:10a מַעֲרָה יֵאלֶת בַּעַלְתָּהּ Beautiful like the moon
6:10b נַהֲלָה לֶגָּדְלָה Radiant like the sun
6:10c בֵּיתָהּ מְרַגְּלָה You are beautiful, my dear, like Tirzah
6:10d אִמָּהּ מְרַגְּלָה

The text may be formatted to point out the elements of the similes:

6:4a יִשָּׁה אַלְדָּרָה רֵעְיָהּ You are beautiful, my dear, like Tirzah

TARGET REFERENCE FRAME¹ = יָרֵעֲיָה, רֵעְיָה (= female lover)

¹ Rather than the traditional tenor-vehicle labeling of the two principal elements in simile 
and metaphor, I prefer TARGET REFERENCE FRAME and SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME. These are 
labels I offer by bringing together two theoretical elements: (1) Benjamin Harshav's [Hrushovski] 
literary theory for working with texts (“An Outline of Integrational Semantics: An Understan-
der’s Theory of Meaning in Context,” Poetics Today 3/4 [1982] 59–88) and (2) the hypothesis that simile 
and metaphor involve a mapping phenomenon from a source, traditionally "vehicle," onto a target, 
traditionally "tenor" (G. Lakoff and M. Turner, More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic 
Metaphor [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989] 4 and passim; I discuss this mapping phe-
nomenon in detail in chapter 4 of "Simile, Metaphor, and the Song of Songs" [Ph.D. diss., Univer-
sity of Chicago, 1993]). REFERENCE FRAME allows one to refer to the components within a single 
simile or metaphor syntagm, but it also acknowledges that those components are vital to the overall 
semantic integration of a text.
6:4b Lovely like Jerusalem
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה in 6:4a (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:4c אֹתָם בְּנֵרָה יָעַמָּא kannidgalot
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה in 6:4a (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:10a מִרְאָה מִשְׁקֶפֶה מִמֶּשֶׁר רָד. Who is this who gazes (down) like the dawn
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:10b יִסְדָה מִלְנָה. Beautiful like the moon
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה in 6:10a (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:10c בֹּרֶה מִלְנָה. Radiant like the sun
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה in 6:10a (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:10d אֹתָם בְּנֵרָה יָעַמָּא kannidgalot
TARGET REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה in 6:10a (=female lover)
SOURCE REFERENCE FRAME = יסדה
EXPLANATION = יסדה

6:4a–b. Despite the occurrence of יָעַמָּא kannidgalot in 6:4b, the translators of the LXX, Vg, and Peshitta understood יָעַמָּא kannidgalot not as a geographic name but as a noun from the root יָמַד.
“be pleasing,” D. Broadribb, S. Krauss, and M. H. Pope, among others, have followed these ancient versions. For the Pope proposed “verily pleasing,” understanding the *kaph* to be asseverative.

The occurrence of *ירשא* in 6:4b convinces me that *ירשא*, as an early capital of the North, refers to that city. May have been used for two reasons. (1) As a short-lived, early capital, it may have offered the poet a more benign parallel than Samaria. *ירשא* may have been less charged with negative connotations associated with the North’s capital. (2) The poet may have wished to play on the root meaning “pleasing.”

Precisely how the beauty and loveliness of a city compliment the female lover is difficult to know. Perhaps the male lover has in mind a beautiful and stunning winter and early spring phenomenon in the Judean and Samarian hills, where a brief moment’s sunshine may brilliantly strike sandy colored city edifices framed by a backdrop of dark rain clouds. If so, one can begin to understand what he might have in mind. One may be reminded that cities are typically personified as women (Isa 66:1–12; Ezekiel 16).

6:4c. Here we arrive at a crux. Scholars have tended to suggest two major senses respectively for *ירשא* and *ירשא* may denote (1) terror⁴ and (2) magnificence,⁷ and *ירשא* may denote (1) a bannerman or an arrayed troop⁵ or a bannered astronomical phenomenon⁹ (denominative verb from הִזָּר, “banner”) or (2) something seen (cognate to

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9 S. T. Byington, *ירשא*,” *JBL* 39 (1920) 82.
Akkadian dagālū (“to look, see”), whether sights,10 brilliant stars,11 war trophies,12 or something most conspicuous/ eminent.13

The adjective הַּדָּגָלְוֹת occurs elsewhere only in Hab 1:7, where it applies to the fearsome Neo-Babylonians. The substantive הַדָּגָלֶה throughout the Hebrew Bible designates a terror or an overwhelming negative feeling associated with theophany (Exod 15:16), the teeth of a monster (Job 41:6), enemies (Josh 2:9), and so forth. Goitein, though, has amassed examples of Semitic lexical items that show a transition or semantic shift from “terror” to “splendid” or “terrific” in the sense of “extraordinary.””14 Is this the case here? Given the co-text, I think it reasonable to consider the adjective to be denoting a quality that produces an overwhelming feeling, either awe from terror or awe from something splendid. In the similes of 6:4a and 6:4b the woman’s beauty and loveliness are highlighted; these attributes are awe-inspiring in a non-“terror” sense. But does the co-text in 6:5b, where one reads that the woman’s eyes הַּדָּגָלְוֹת the man, suggest that terror or fright might be in mind? Evidence from the Arabic cognate, which clearly encompasses “fear,” shows that fear might be a sense of the Hebrew root שָׁבַר. Only here and in Ps 138:3 does the hiphil of שָׁבַר occur. In the psalm it refers to an emboldening or an arousal of strength in the supplicant, not fear. The eyes in Cant 6:5 arouse something in the man; it could be fear (based on Arabic) or, more likely given the focus on beauty within the immediate co-text, intense excitement. I do not think that terror or fear is in mind in 6:5b; rather the man is aroused by the eyes to the point that he is overwhelmed, asking her to turn away—“Turn your eyes from me for they overwhelm me!” (6:5a–b).

The sense of הַּדָּגָלְוֹת must enter into the discussion. If this word refers to arrayed troops ready for battle, then overwhelming terror would be linked to הַּדָּגָלְו. Referring to the lover as terrible, like an arrayed army, juxtaposed to her being fair, beautiful, and radiant, I must confess, strikes me as so odd as to be troublesome.

Keeping in mind for the moment the possibility of הַּדָּגָלְו being a denotative verb from הַּדָּגָל (“banner”), one may conjecture that the lexical item could refer to any sort of figuratively or nonfiguratively bannered entities, including these two cities, which could be radiantly “bannered” with sunshine, for example. With this latter understanding of הַּדָּגָלְו, an overwhelming splendid quality would be linked to הַּדָּגָל. This is true also if one understands הַּדָּגָלְו as having the sense “things seen” (feminine for neuter), Akkadian dagālū being a cognate. Only the co-text allows for a more specific sense.

12 Pope, Song of Songs, 560–62. He has in mind Anat’s rampage against humanity in which she makes a necklace of severed heads and a girdle of severed hands. These would be things to be looked at הַּדָּגָלְו, that is, war trophies, that would be horrific or terrible הַּדָּגָלְו.
13 Fox, Song of Songs, 152: “most eminent”; Krauss, “Archaeological Background,” 137: “pre-eminence.” Krauss, though, does not mention the Akkadian cognate; rather, he argues that שָׁבַר has a sense of “excellent one” in addition to “flag” (p. 136).
O. Loretz considers this lone half-line to be an (out-of-place) insertion from 6:10—a possibility. But we should prevent ourselves from being hasty in rearranging the MT, and we should try to make sense of a text as it is. Since Tirzah and Jerusalem are mentioned in 6:4a–b, might one not take דְּרַמִּים to denote “the things seen” (with definite article in Hebrew) and to refer to these sights, the beauty and loveliness of which have just expressed something meaningful about the woman?

6:5–9. These verses continue the male lover’s comments. Most noteworthy for my discussion is to note that in 6:9d–e the lover mentions that daughters/girls, queens/princesses, and concubines praise the female lover. In v. 8 he begins to speak of and draw in other women—queens/princesses, concubines, and young women—in order for him to claim the uniqueness of his lover. That his lover is unique among other women is his perception of her. In 6:9d–e, however, he reveals that these women also have a perception of her—a most favorable one. The male lover, then, is shifting the point of view from his own to that of the women.16

6:10a–c. The referent of נָשִּׁי is the female lover, but the speaker of 6:10a–d is not so clear. The male lover, the women, or the poet is possible, though I believe the male lover is most likely since he has been speaking up to this point. Though the words are from his mouth, he most likely is specifying the praise of the daughters/girls, queens/princesses, and concubines alluded to in 6:9d–e. Here, then, is the expression of the women’s point of view; here is their assessment of the female lover. One may note that the quatrains 6:10a–d, which ends the male lover’s words, does not have a second person pronoun as does the tricolon that initiates his thoughts (6:4a–c)—support for seeing a shift from second-person interaction to a reported third-person perspective.

נָשִּׁי denotes the glow of dawn just before the sunrise. The EXPLANATION of the simile in 6:10a is expressed, yet a full understanding of the simile is not without conjecture. The poet might have the early morning light in mind as it brightens, suggesting the enveloping and rising beauty of the woman. נָשִּׁי with its denotation of “position above,” when mapped onto the TARGET REFERENCE FRAME, suggests the loftiness and high place the woman has in her lover’s mind. Additionally, like each of the similes in 6:10b–c, radiant beauty is important.19

לָבָן (“white one”) is a poetic term for the moon used elsewhere only in Isa 24:23 and 30:26, in each occurrence parallel with נָחָץ (“heat”), a poetic term for the sun. Does the speaker have in mind a large resplendent moon?18

may refer to moral excellence (Ps 18:27; 24:4), the polished quality of an arrow.


16 I must thank the reviewer of this article who suggested this possibility.

17 Pope, Song of Songs, 571–72. So also Fox, Song of Songs, 153; Murphy, Song of Songs, 176.

18 Fox, Song of Songs, 153.

19 G. Gerleman, Ruth, Das Hohelied (BKAT 18; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985) 186; Krienetzki, Hohe Lied, 65; Murphy, Song of Songs, 178.
(1sa 49:2), or to physical choiceness (valiant man [1 Chr 7:40]; sheep [Neh 5:18]). In Psalm 19 the root is used to mediate between a brilliant sun and moral perfection. In Ps 19:5c–7 the psalmist colorfully writes of the sun. Following this, one reads in Ps 19:9c that the “commands of Yahweh are הָעַדֵּנֶס, enlightening the eyes.” The English word radiant most fittingly conveys the sense of הָעַדֵּנֶס in this psalm, as it does here (6:10c) in co-text with the sun.  

6:10d. The second and third cola of v. 10 focus on the astronomical phenomena of moon (v. 10b) and sun (v. 10c). Those who believe that in 6:10d הָעַדֵּנֶס refers to stars (see n. 11 above) are close to the mark; “the things seen” in a co-text of astronomical phenomena and perhaps as a semantic parallel to “moon” makes this sense winsome. 

One should, however, keep in mind that the phrase הָעַדֵּנֶס in 6:4c and 6:10d marks an envelope construction (inclusio). The phrase in 6:4c refers to lexical items mentioned in the two preceding cola: Tirzah (6:4a) and Jerusalem (6:4b). Similarly, the phrase in 6:10d should refer to the lexical items mentioned in the two preceding cola: moon (6:10b) and sun (6:10c). The two cola 6:4c and 6:10d help to demarcate the beginning and end of the male lover’s expression of affection, but the sandwiched text has sufficiently changed in point of view and imagery so that the phrase should not have the same referents in 6:10d as it has in 6:4c. The phrase should follow a pattern of referring to the focal lexical item in each of the two preceding cola. 

Conclusion

Canticles 6:4–10 presents the male lover’s expression of affection. He likens his lover’s beauty to two cities (6:4a–c); he focuses on her facial features (6:5–7); he mentions her uniqueness among other women (6:8–9c); and he contemplates what women say of her (6:9d–10d). Having then considered the co-text in conjunction with etymological issues, I offer now a complete translation of Cant 6:4a–c and 6:10a–d:

| 6:4a | תֶּנֶס יִרְדֵּנֶז | You are beautiful, my dear, like Tirzah |
| 6:4b | וַאֲנַא הָעִיר | Lovely like Jerusalem |
| 6:4c | וַאֲנַא הַנּוֹרֶת | Overwhelming like the[se] sights |
| 6:10a | מְרַזְּאָה הִמְבָּטַחְתָּ | Who is this who gazes (down) like the dawn |
| 6:10b | יִסָּהָמָה | Beautiful like the moon |

6:10c רעה חמה
Radiant like the sun
6:10d אומת נחרלות
Breathtaking like the[se] sights
[i.e., the moon and sun]\(^{22}\)

A lover, cities, and heavenly bodies!

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\(^{22}\) *Today's English Version* offers a similar translation for these two verses. I arrived at my translation before discovering TEV's translation and thus independent of influence. I was happy to see the like-mindedness.
The penultimate verse of the book of Zechariah speaks of מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים, a phrase that is today almost always rendered “the bells of the horses.” The modern lexicographical consensus on this point is a relatively recent development, however, the ancient versions present us with a number of different translations of מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים, but “bells” is not among them. Especially puzzling is the rendering we find in the Targum to the Latter Prophets, which has מראות, for מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים (or some variant thereof). Since we here have an example of an Aramaic hapax legomenon rendering a Hebrew one, it is not surprising that previous scholarship has been at a loss with respect to the targumic word here used, both as to its correct reading and its semantic reference.

Although the reading מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים is found in most printed sources (the Arukh, the rabbinic Bibles, the London and Antwerp Polyglots, and the lexica of J. Levy, M. Jastrow, and G. Dalman), there is considerable variation in the manuscripts. A. Sperber’s edition lists the following variants: מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים (the reading adopted in Sperber’s own text), מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים, מַרְחֶה, מַרְחֶה, מַרְחֶה, מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים, and מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים. 1 P. de Lagarde’s edition printed the reading מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים, 2 while that of Wilna adopted yet a sixth variant, namely, מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים. 3 In the recent English translation of the Targum of the Twelve Prophets by K. J. Cathcart and R. P. Gordon, it is again the reading מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים that serves as their Vorlage. 4

It is in fact only for the reading מַשְׁלַחְתָּ הָעֵשֶׂים that a translation has been attempted, although it is clear from the lexicographical tradition that the translations offered were little more than guesses. A. Kohut’s edition of the Arukh relates the word to Greek κρούω, which is said to be the equivalent of German “Schall, Geklingel.” It also suggests the possibility that the true reading is מַרְחֶה and represents a Persian loanword denoting a musical instrument resembling the tambourine. 5 The seventeenth-century lexicon of J.

My thanks to Professor Robert Gordon of Cambridge University, and Dr. Edward M. Cook of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project (Cincinnati) for commenting on an earlier draft of this article.

5 Aruch Completum (ed. Abraham Kohut; Vienna, 1878–92, reprint, Tel Aviv: Ramah, 1961) s.v. מַרְחֶה.
and J. Buxtorf offers three possibilities: "pack-saddle, or horse-cloth. Others have medallions." The third of these options is the one adopted in the Latin version of the targum included in the London Polyglot (phalerae), and the second is the one favored by Levy's lexicon (Pferdedecken). Some nineteenth-century commentators on Zechariah state that the enigmatic Aramaic word refers to horse trappings in general. Jastrow's dictionary relates the word to the root הברה and renders the noun as "wrap, blanket," while Dalman's dictionary suggests a link with Greek κρυστάλλος, and gives the meaning as Federbusch, "plume" or "crest." Cathcart and Gordon opt for the translation "blanket," accompanied by a prudent question mark and a sensible footnote.

It is clear from the foregoing that everyone is guessing, and that no convincing interpretation of הברה (or any of its textual variants) has yet been put forward. It is the purpose of the present note to suggest a candidate for such an interpretation. My proposal is to accept the most widely adopted reading (to be vocalized הברה, the feminine singular construct of *ןבר, הברה), and to interpret it as a Greek loanword based on κορυφή, which is defined in LSJ as "headstall of a bridle." This proposal is supported by two considerations: its agreement with other ancient versions of הברה in Zech 14:20, and its conformity with the pattern of Greek loanwords in rabbinic usage.

With respect to the first point, it is significant that three of the other ancient versions interpret הברה to refer to a horse's bridle or part thereof: (1) Septuagint: Κορυφή ("bit" or "bit and bridle"); (2) Peshitta: פֶּגָּדֶתָא ("bridle"); (3) Vulgate: fenum ("bit" or "bridle"). Although translations of הברה that diverge widely from this interpretation are offered by both the Minor Greek versions and the anonymous Jewish scholar con-

6 Joannes Buxtorfius P. and Joannes Buxtorfius F., Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum (ed. B. Fischerus; Leipzig: Schaefer, 1869–74) s.v. הברה: "clitellae, vel ephippia. Alia phalerae." A phalera was a medallion or ornamental disc on a horse’s trappings.
10 Jastrow, Dictionary, s.v. הברה.
12 Cathcart and Gordon, Targum of the Minor Prophets, 226.
13 The other readings are readily explained as scribal errors due to the graphic similarity of הברה and וertia, and to the unfamiliarity of both the Aramaic word and the Hebrew term which it renders.
14 The singular vocalization הברה is to be preferred over the plural הברה (pace Buxtorf, Levy, and Dalman), since all other ancient versions construed הברה as a singular noun.
15 LSJ, s.v. Κορυφή, I.1.
sulted by Jerome, it is clear that there was a significant exegetical tradition in antiquity that supported it. The strength of this tradition can be gauged from the fact that the Vulgate did not break with it, despite Jerome’s own preference for another interpretation.

It is altogether plausible that the targumist too should have aligned himself with this exegetical tradition, especially since the Hebrew הָלַעֲמָל of his Vorlage was a puzzling *hapax legomenon*, and the *Targum to the Twelve Prophets* elsewhere shows affinities with the Peshitta.

With respect to the second consideration mentioned above, it is beyond dispute that Greek loanwords were common in the language of the rabbis—notably including terms describing horse trappings—and that the correspondence between נֵבֶר (or rather its absolute form נַבֶּר) and Greek κορυφάς is much closer than that between נֵבֶר and Greek κρόμα (as suggested by Koluch) or Greek κρούμαθος (as suggested by Dalman). We know from S. Krauss’s study of Greek and Latin loanwords in rabbinical Hebrew and Aramaic that the fricative θ of later Greek was often represented by the fricative β of later Hebrew and Aramaic, and that the Greek vowel υ was frequently represented by the vowel letter υ, while o was often not transcribed at all. The correspondence between κορυφα and הָלַעֲמָל therefore occasions no surprise. As for the correspondence between the ending -א and the single letter כ, we need to remember that endings of Greek loanwords were frequently elided, and that the diphthong αη had come to be pronounced as [ε] in later Greek, so that Greek αλλάζου could be transcribed as πυθ, and αὐτοκείμενα as *hymnus* (with metathesis).

If our proposal is admitted, it is also instructive to take a closer look at the precise

19 See Jerome, *In Zachariam Prophetam* (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 76 A, Pars I.6, Turnholt: Brepols, 1970) 807: “Quod cum ab Hebraeo quaererem quid significaret, ait mihi, non debebere nos legere mesuloth, sed mesaloth, quod significat phaleras equorum et ornatum bellicum.” (“But when I inquired of a Jew what it [i.e., הָלַעֲמָל] meant, he said that we ought not to read הָלַעֲמָל, but הָלַעֲל, which means the medallions and military trappings of horses.”)

20 Jerome, *In Zachariam Prophetam*, 897: “Soli Septuaginta χαλινων id est, treuum, transtulerunt, quos et nos in hoc loco secuti sumus, ne nouum aequalium in quaestione vulgata maxime moraferre.” (“Only the Seventy translated it as χαλινων, that is, ‘bridle,’ and we too have followed them in this place, lest we should appear to be introducing something new in a much-publicized question.”) Jerome does not explain what the mysterious quaestio vulgata was that induced him to follow the LXX, but he goes on to make it clear that he himself prefers the interpretations of the Minor Greek versions.


23 Ibid., 1.42 (§55) and 98 (§155).

24 Ibid., 1.20 (§28).

25 Ibid., 1.19 (§27).


27 Ibid., 1.55 (§69).

28 Ibid., 2.434, 454.

29 Ibid., 2.228.
technical meaning of κορυφά in Greek usage. As used by Xenophon in the fifth century BCE, the word is generally understood to refer either to the “headstall” of the bridle (everything but the bit and reins), or to one or more of its upper straps. Julius Pollux, however, a Greek writer who flourished in the late second century CE, defines it as “the strap that extends from the crown of the horse to the bit (ο ὀφέλει τς κορυφής του χαλινον ἔκτεταμένος ἢμας ἐπι τον χαλινον).” This last definition, which is probably relatively close in date to the targum, is particularly suggestive with respect to the exegesis of Zech 14:20. For one thing, the phrase ἐπι τον χαλινον is reminiscent of the LXX, which renders the words πάλα σατάρα of the MT as ἐπι τον χαλινον, which could have been interpreted to mean “that [strap] which [extends] to the bit.” For another, the specific sense of “crown-to-bit bridle strap” suggests a connection with yet another witness to the Jewish exegesis of this verse in late antiquity.

According to the Babylonian Talmud (b. Pesah. 50a), Rabbi Eleazar stated that the מצליג of Zech 14:20 (understood as a plural) were the μεταοπίων τοις μεταλειμνυμένοι, usually translated as “the bells which are hung on a horse between its eyes.” This translation is unlikely, however, both because the interpretation of מצליג as “bells” is a modern one, and because bells, if they were attached to horses at all in classical antiquity, were not hung between their eyes. A better translation of Rabbi Eleazar’s words would be “the bridle straps which are attached to a horse between its eyes.” There is clear pictorial evidence from the first and second centuries CE that at least some Roman bridles had crown-to-bit straps which crossed between the horse’s eyes, and could therefore be said to “be attached” there—a possible meaning of the verb מצליג in Mishnaic Hebrew. These straps are the objects which Rabbi Eleazar’s audience would have most naturally assumed to be situated between a horse’s eyes. In other words, the rabbi and the tannaist may have understood מצליג in the same way—as referring to a specific component of a horse’s bridle, which in Greek had the precise designation κορυφα.

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32 Julius Pollux, Onomasticon (ed. I. Bekker; Berlin: Nicolai, 1846) 33 (§147).
34 Or possibly medieval, if Rashi’s Hebrew and Old French glosses are understood as referring to bells and not more generally to tinkling ornaments.
35 There is almost no evidence that the Greeks and Romans (unlike the Assyrians and Persians) regularly attached bells to their horses.
36 See Vigneron, Le cheval dans l’antiquité, 1.54; and his Planche 16 (b and c).
37 See Jastrow, Dictionary, s.v.
THE INDENTURED LABOR OF THE PRODIGAL SON (LUKE 15:15)

Luke's parable of the Prodigal Son describes a youth in need who "hires himself out [ἐκολλήθη] to one of the citizens of that country" (Luke 15:15 NRSV). Previous commentary assumes that the "hiring out" itself needs no detailed discussion, its meaning being self-evident. Yet in antiquity as today dependent labor took a variety of forms, such as chattel slavery, debt bondage, hired agricultural employment, clientship, and indentured service. Among these possibilities, the Hellenistic institution of paramoné (or "indentured labor") may provide insight into the kind of "joining" that ἐκολλήθη indicates. This suggestion not only offers a more specific translation for ἐκολλήθη but also lends support to the view that the author of Luke articulated his theology in the language of ancient economics.

In the Greek East and other Hellenized areas of the Roman Empire, the noun παραμονή (a new word coined around the third century BCE) had a technical usage best translated as "indentured labor." A paramoné-contract or, more precisely, a paramoné-clause within a legal instrument, bound an agent "to remain with" (παραμονέων: a patron and to work in general service for a specified length of time. The clauses were intentionally vague; during the tenure of the clause, the free person indentured under paramoné had to do whatever services were ordered, making the agent a general laborer. The indeterminate nature of the agent's duties and obligations, from custodial services and animal husbandry to business sales, makes paramoné wholly unlike other Hellenistic labor contracts, which usually neither were demandingly vague nor required the laborer "to remain with" the hirer in the literal sense of that term. The paramoné-

5 Westermann, "Paramone," 25-26, 37; although he pushes this thesis too far in his attempt to narrow the definition of paramoné to clauses containing unspecified tasks only, so de Ste. Croix. Class Struggle, 572 n.73.

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clause in a labor contract from Alexandria, dated 9 BCE, illustrates this general service. According to the clause, a free woman indentured her labor to another woman, a beer seller. The agent agreed to work in the brewery in any capacity required, “carrying out in addition the orders that will be imposed upon her.” A similar paramonē document, coming from the first century CE, specifies that a weaver will remain with a certain Heron for two years “spending his time and doing everything ordered and weaving whatever the above mentioned Heron may wish.” Additional examples can be found in Greek apprentice contracts (διδασκαλικὴ ὁμολογία), which bound by indenture free-born youths for a prescribed period with a view to learning an art or trade.

Such paramonē-clauses contracted not only free labor but also servile. Originating in Athens, Delphi, and other Greek cities at the time of Alexander the Great and continuing into the Roman period, the institution of paramonē was a common legal mechanism used by Greeks to defer the manumission of their chattel slaves. Such clauses obligated an ex-slave to remain with the former master for a specified length of time, often “as a slave,” before the manumission became effective. Paramonē-clauses were therefore more binding than the Roman liberti (freemen’s and freedwomen’s) stipulations of operae (workdays) and obsequium (deference) to the former master, now the patron.

The prodigal’s relation to the citizen is best understood as paramonē, not hired agricultural employment or chattel slavery. Agricultural employment means hired hands on piecework as in the parable of laborers in the vineyard, in which no provision “to remain” with the landowner is stipulated (Matt 20:1–16). In contrast, the prodigal must remain. If the passage were to state that the son sought employment as a professional pig tender, then hired piecework might be its meaning. Rather, the son is driven to seek any employment and finds illusive relief by contracting himself out as a general laborer to the citizen. Subsequently, he receives his initial task of feeding pigs. A change in subject makes clear a separation between two different moments in the parable episode: a first event, καὶ πορευθεὶς ἐκολλήθη ἐνὶ τῶν πολιτῶν τῆς χώρας ἐκείνης, “So he [the son] went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country”; and a second event, καὶ ἐπέμψεν αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς ἀγροὺς βόσκειν χοίρους, “and he [the citizen] sent him to his fields to feed the pigs.” Willing to do whatever was necessary or required, the son indentured himself to the citizen in a nonspecific way: the degradation of the task eventually received demonstrates the youth’s obligation to do anything. Such was the phenomenon known as paramonē.

6 Ägyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen (staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden (BGU) IV 1126.9–10; Westermann, “Paramonē,” 27.
7 Papiri Greci e Latini, Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto (PSI) VIII 902.3–4 (» Michigan Papyri V 355); Westermann, “Paramonē,” 27.
8 Bertrand Adams, Paramonē und verwandte Texte: Studien zum Dienstvertrag im Rechte der Papyri (Neue kölner rechtswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen 35; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1964) 114–45. Indentured by their masters to a third party, slaves also served in apprenticeships.
A *paramonē* contract of service dating from the reign of Trajan (98–117 CE), and so roughly contemporaneous with the composition of the Gospel of Luke, provides a remarkable parallel. The document, from the village of Thedelphia in Egypt, tells how Ares and Thermouthas, a married couple, borrow twenty silver drachmae from Lucius Bellienus Gemellus, an Egyptian landowner, legioary veteran, and Roman citizen. In lieu of interest, Ares agrees to leave his family temporarily and to indenture himself under *paramonē* to the local citizen. He is to "remain [παραμενεῖν] during one year from the aforesaid day tending the pigs that Lucius has [βόσκων ἀ ἔχει ο Λουκίους χοιρίδα]" and to "bring them to the proper roads and pastures and doing everything [ποιῶν πάντα], which is incumbent on the tender" at a wage of twenty drachmae per month (P.Oxford 10.15–19). Ares further agrees that "it will not be possible for him to leave within the time [μὴ οὐσίς ἔξοικα σε οὐτῶ ἐντὸς τοῦ Χρόνου ἀπαλλαγήνα]" (10.22–23). At the year's end, Ares must repay the initial loan of twenty drachmae. If Ares leaves before the tenure of service, he violates his agreement "to remain" and so is obligated to pay a penalty: "But if he leaves before the time [ἐάν δὲ πρὸ τοῦ χρόνου ἀπαλλαγή], he shall repay the money double" (10.27–28). Such is an example of indentured nonslave labor.

There are many parallels between Ares and the prodigal son. Both Ares and the prodigal son find themselves in need, seek financial assistance, join themselves to a prosperous landowning citizen, separate from their family, agree to "be bound" in the technical sense of *paramonē*, and are sent to the landowner's fields to tend pigs. A further parallel lies in the document's penalty clause for premature departure, which anticipates that Ares might not wait a full year before returning home to his family. This attempt to prevent workers from leaving may illuminate the way that the prodigal leaves to return to his father's household (Luke 15:18–19). Apparently, landowners such as Lucius Bellienus Gemellus experienced workers absconding, even while bound under *paramonē*.

An Ephesian Tale by Xenophon of Ephesus provides another parallel, the value of which is its context within a full narrative. The hero Habrocomes, long separated from his home and his wife, sails to Italy but finds himself without any means of support, similar to the prodigal. He wants to look for his wife yet as a last resort must "hire himself out to some quarrymen" [ὑπὸν ἀπεμισθασθε τοις τὸς ἱερανίους ἐργαζόμενοις] in order to live (5.8.1–2). He finds the work arduous, even miserably servile, lamenting his condition (5.8.3–4) as much as the prodigal. Unable to bear his labors any longer, he goes down to the sea "by night" [νυκτὸς] and catches the first available ship in order to continue the search for his wife (5.10.1–2). This nocturnal departure suggests stealth and so the reneging of some kind of labor contract to remain with the quarrymen; Habrocomes is probably bound under *paramonē*. Since the prodigal leaves the pigs without conse-

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11 Samuel, "Role," 301–2, pace Westermann, "Paramone." 44–46, who argues that the loan is antithetic, a legal fiction.

quence, the situation is perhaps more comparable to Habrocomes' abandonment, by night, of his fellow quarrymen.

Because the parable of the prodigal son illustrates an agreement of indentured labor similar to that in a paramonē-clause, knowledge of paramonē is critical for the parable's interpretation. This finding suggests a more specific translation for ἐκολληθή in Luke 15:15: "he was indentured to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his field to feed the pigs." The parable thus portrays the economic position of the son as extremely low in order to heighten the drama of the acceptance by the father. Read in this way, the parable becomes intelligible as one important part of Luke's larger theological theme of hospitality to the poor, outcast, and marginal, expressed in the language of ancient economics.¹³

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