BEIT MIKRA

JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY
OF THE BIBLE AND ITS WORLD

Volume 71 (2026), No. 2

Founded by
The World Jewish Bible Center, Jerusalem

The Bialik Institute, Jerusalem

Editor
Dalit Rom-Shiloni

Editorial Board
Guy Darshan, Tova Forti, Moshe Garsiel, Itamar Kislev,
Atar Livneh, Lea Mazor, Stefan Schorch, Yael Shemesh,
Nili Shupak, Shmuel Vargon

Editor of the Book Review Section
Guy Darshan

Co-ordinator
Geula Cohen

ISSN: 0005–979X

Subscriptions
The Bialik Institute
P.O.B. 92, Jerusalem 91000, Israel
www.bialik-publishing.co.il

©
All rights reserved to
the Bialik Instisute, Jerusalem

CONTENTS

Aviya Fraenkel	The Marriage of Martu: Literary Introduction, Hebrew Translation and Comparative Analysis / 5
Galia Oved	The Garden of Eden Story: From Divine Creation to Human Fertility / 39
Eyal Newman	David's Warriors: A Proto-Military Ethical Code in Biblical Narrative / 67
Dalit Rom-Shiloni	"Like an 'Ar'ar" – Four Suggested Identifications of the 'Ar'ar in Ancient Versions up to the Twentieth Century / 95
Nir Vargon	Shadal's (Samuel David Luzzatto) View of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzehaki) and its Reflection in his Commentary of the Pentateuch / 128

Books Reviews

Ido Koch	Raanan Eichler, *The Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubim* (The Biblical Encyclopaedia Library, 39), The Bialik Institute, Jerusalem 2025, I-XXVI + 226 pages / 165
Shamir Yona	Yael Shemesh, *Elisha: The Holy Man of God* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 200), Brill, Leiden/Boston 2025, I-X + 396 pages / 171
Yigal Bloch	Ariel Kopilovitz, *A Scout Looking Forward: Ezekiel's Exile Theology and Its Impact on His Restoration Program*, Magnes, Jerusalem 2024, XII + 522 pages / 182

English Abstracts / 5*

Abstracts

The Marriage of Martu: Literary Introduction, Hebrew Translation and Comparative Analysis

Aviya Fraenkel

The Sumerian composition *The Marriage of Martu* depicts the rise of the ancient god Martu as a young man. Martu arrives at the Sumerian royal city as a foreign nomad and secures his place among the city's heroes by emerging victorious in the athletic competitions. Throughout the narrative, he wins the heart of the king's daughter, despite the disapproval of her royal milieu. The first part of this article provides a literary introduction, addressing the historical, cultural, and textual aspects of the composition. The second part offers a comparative analysis between the epic of *The Marriage of Martu* and the biblical story of *David and Goliath*, which highlights the narrative structure of both stories and examines the cultural and literary affinities between the two ancient contexts: athletic competitions and single combat. The third part includes a Hebrew translation alongside an updated transliteration of the complete composition (142 lines), accompanied by philological and interpretive notes.

[Key words: Sumerian Literature; Sumerian Kingdom; Old Babylonian Period; Martu; Amorites; Games and Competitions; Athletic Competitions; Single Combat; David and Goliath; Early Monarchy]

The Garden of Eden Story: From Divine Creation to Human Fertility

Galia Oved

The article offers a new reading of the Garden of Eden story (Genesis 2–3), presenting the biblical text as a dramatic turning point in the transition from a one-time divine creation to ongoing human fertility and procreation. The primordial narratives portray the creation of the world and humanity and establish key milestones that convey the Bible's central themes. Chapters 2–3 of Genesis constitute a distinct unit within the sequence of primordial stories known as the Garden of Eden story. At the heart of these narratives are the power relations between God, man, woman, and nature. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the Garden of Eden story reveals a clear link between female fertility and the fertility of the earth, and to show how this link shapes a complex understanding of the relationship between humanity and God, in which humanity, on the one hand, becomes a partner in creation, while on the other hand, remains dependent on God's will. The literary analysis demonstrates the relationship between human fertility and that of the earth in the story, a connection manifested in five main areas: the term "toledot" (generations), the declaration of absence, the declaration of belonging, the parallel between sin and its punishment and the motif of the tree and the fruit.

[**Key words**: Genesis 2–3; Eden; Relationship; Woman's fertility; Earth's fertility; Man and the Earth ("adam" and "adama")]

David's Warriors: A Proto-Military Ethical Code in Biblical Narrative

Eyal Newman

This article examines the literary unit in 2 Samuel 23:8–23 commonly known as "David's Mighty Warriors List" – and proposes viewing it as a proto-military ethical code, possibly one of the earliest known in literary and human cultural history. Contrary to scholarly approaches that regard this unit as a mere list, appendix, propaganda piece, epic, or archival text, this study argues that it is a structured, hierarchical, and didactic narrative crafted to shape a moral and military ethos among soldiers and commanders. Rather than merely a list of heroic deeds, the unit functions as a literary narrative that establishes a hierarchy of military and moral values through short, concise, and at times nearly telegraphic stories. The article analyzes the unit through an interpretive lens that treats military stories as didactic narratives in the field of ethics and law, demonstrating how the use of terse language and minimal plot emphasizes key principles: prioritizing collective (military) action over personal achievement, restraining heroic impulses, rejecting the pursuit of fame and personal glory, and setting moral boundaries for the use of force. The analysis shows that the tension between the warriors' personal heroism and their actual contribution to the war effort highlights the ethical logic underpinning the ranking. Connections to other parts of the Book of Samuel and to Deuteronomistic literature underscore the conceptual background of this ethical code, situating it within a broader framework of moral and martial education. In conclusion, the article contends that this literary unit represents a pioneering and innovative attempt to shape a moral-military consciousness by using senior military figures and exemplary combat stories drawn from the renowned "Mighty Men" unit of King David.

[Key words: David's Heroes; Ethical Code; 2 Samuel 23; The Heroes Unit; Military Ethics; Army; The Three]

"Like an 'Ar'ar" – Four Suggested Identifications of the 'Ar'ar in Ancient Versions up to the Twentieth Century

Dalit Rom-Shiloni

The term ערער occurs two, and possibly three, times in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 17:6 and Ps 102:18; and in the form ערוער, Jer 48:6). Translators and interpreters have contested the identification of this plant, from the early translations to modern botanical lexica. In fact, four main identifications have been proposed: a) *Tamarix* (אשל, LXX, followed by the Vulgate), b) Gundelia tournefortii (גלגל, Aramaic Targum, followed by Sa'adia and Ibn Ganach), c) Juniperus phoenicea (ערער אדום, Löw), and d) Calotropis procera (פתילת-המדבר הגדולה, Hareuveni). The author has no intention to join the identification work, or to favor any one of these four suggestions; rather, this paper poses the question: To what extent each one of these identifications have paved its own exegetical path interpreting the biblical passages in which the ערער occurs, especially Jer 17:5–8? This study traces various methodological arguments behind each of these proposals, adducing botanical and archaeobotanical information to evaluate the different suggestions. Recognizing that lexicography (and etymology) have played major roles in some of these identifications, I ask, did lexicography lead scholars to determining the most probable identification?

[Key words: Lexicography; Etymology; Identification of Plants of the Hebrew Bible; *Tamarix*; Gundelia tournefortii; Juniperus phoenicea; Calotropis procera; Emanuel Löw; Ephraim and Hanna Hareuveni; Jeremiah 17:5–8; Psalms 1]

Shadal's (Samuel David Luzzatto) View of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) and its Reflection in his Commentary on the Pentateuch

Nir Vargon

In this article, I examine Shadal's attitude toward Rashi in his commentary on the Pentateuch. I begin with a brief review of Ephraim Chamiel's account of the gap between Shadal's admiration for Rashi, evident in his articles, and his reservations about Rashi's interpretations in his commentary on the Pentateuch. Chamiel resolves this gap by pointing to a distinction that Shadal draws between Rashi's personality and thought, which Shadal admires, and Rashi's interpretations, which he considers open to criticism. I show that although Shadal does not hesitate to disagree with Rashi in his commentary, one can still identify there a sympathetic attitude toward him. This is reflected in the fact that even when Shadal criticizes Rashi, he does so gently. It further emerges that Shadal values Rashi as an exegete: he mentions him alongside clear peshat (plain-sense) commentators, adds linguistic arguments in support of his interpretations, and grounds his interpretations in additional verses. Shadal also praises Rashi when he takes a stand against Ibn Ezra, or when his words reflect profound grammatical knowledge — this, too, reflecting his standing as a peshat commentator. There are, in addition, a number of cases in which Shadal supported interpretations opposed to Rashi's; in later years, however, as his support for Rashi grew stronger — a shift likewise reflected in his articles — he came to support Rashi's interpretation instead. All of this shows that in his commentary, Shadal not only continues to hold the view he expressed in his articles — that Rashi deserves esteem for his personality and outlook — but goes further: he treats Rashi there as a peshat commentator in his own right, on a par with the other mainstream peshat exegetes.

[Key words: Shadal; Reggio; Rashi; Ibn Ezra; Judaismus; Mendelssohn]