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The subject of this course is the Hebrew text of the book of Exodus, studied in the light of archaeological evidence and pertinent ancient Near Eastern documents as well as traditional and modern commentaries.

Prerequisites: Thorough command of Biblical Hebrew and prior experience studying the Bible in the original. Qualified undergraduates are welcome but require permission from the instructor to register.

ABBREVIATIONS OF REFERENCE WORKS

CAJS  Penn’s Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, 420 Walnut St. which has a first rate library of Judaica and Near Eastern Studies. It’s books are part of the Penn library system and, apart from those in its Reference Room, can be delivered upon request to VPL for pick-up.
DJD  Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, a series of several volumes (BM487.A1 + year of publication; vols. 1 and 14 (at least) are in JANES.; vols. 2, 3, 5-7, and 9-10 in the Van Pelt Religious Studies Seminar)
Einspahr  Bruce Einspahr, Index to Brown, Driver, & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon (JANES: J4833.B683 E35)
EJ  Encyclopaedia Judaica (JANES: and Ref, DS/102.8/E52 and E53)
EncMiq  (Encyclopaedia Biblica) (BS/440/E5)
Even-Shoshan  תַּנְיָה (תַּנְיָה) (JANES: BS1121.E93 1993)
Greenberg  Moshe Greenberg, Introduction to Hebrew (JANES: PJ4567.G855)
IR  Inscriptions Reveal (כְּמוֹ הַכְּרֵצִים) (J45034.8.P3 J4) f
JANES: Judaica and Ancient Near East Seminar room, 401 VPL
JBL  Journal of Biblical Literature (BS410.J7)
JSB  The Jewish Study Bible (JANES and Rosengarten: BS895.J4 2004)
Lisowsky  G. Lisowsky, Konkordanz zum hebräischen Alten Testament (BS 1121.L55)
Preparing for class

Review the assigned passages on the macro and micro level.

Macro: What is the overall structure of the chapter or other literary unit? Can it be outlined? Do the chapter divisions divide the narrative correctly, or can you suggest a better division of the material? Can you explain how the passage moves from one stage or theme to the next? What is its point (or points), and how does each part contribute to the overall picture? Can you suggest a title for the unit as a whole, and for its subsections as well? For help with some of these questions, see Moshe Greenberg, "Questions for Uncovering the Message of a Biblical Text," on the website.

Micro: Come to class prepared to translate and explain the text, and explain why your translation and explanation are better than other possibilities. Check anything that seems curious, interesting, ambiguous, or unusual, making sure that you are able to explain the grammar and support your explanations. For help, consult your commentaries plus Davidson, BDB, GKC, and a concordance (I’ll show you how to use these in class). See also

In principle the way to ascertain the meaning of a word or phrase, in a given passage is to consult check all other attestations in the Bible. The aim is to find decisive examples of the meaning or nuance you think is present in the verse you are studying; that is, passages where the meaning or nuance is not merely possible but inescapable. Use a concordance, such as Mandelkern’s, Lisowsky’s or Even-Shoshan’s. Each of these is valuable for different purposes. Mandelkern’s - the classic work -- breaks down each root into each of its inflected forms, so you can see how it is used in various conjugations, with various prepositions, etc. Even-Shoshan, at the beginning of each entry, classifies the words in terms of the combinations and idiomatic phrases in which they appear. Lisowsky is largely limited to nouns and verbs. It subdivides the verbs by their conjugations and the nouns by their status as subject, object, or other, and then lists the words in the order in which they appear in the Bible irrespective of person, number, prefix, suffix, etc; it is valuable for tracking all the occurrences of a word in a particular book, part of a book, group of books, or period.

In addition to concordances, consult BDB, which is practically a concordance and is very acute in its treatment of semantic nuances and will alert you to nuances you never suspected.
A handy tool for using BDB is Einspahr, which lists all of BDB’s citations of every verse in the Bible.

When consulting BDB and Even-Shoshan, examine the evidence they cite -- don't just take their word regarding the nuances of the Hebrew words and especially about the nuances of the comparative evidence.

A very important step is to analyze each word grammatically so as to identify the exact subject, gender and number of nouns and adjectives, the subject, gender, tense and conjugation of verbs (and which function of the conjugation is intended), and to identify aspects of each word that may seem different from what one might expect in the light of the context. For help in the grammatical analysis, consult Biblical Hebrew grammars, such as: Davidson, Greenberg, GKC, and Jouion-Muraoka. GKC and Jouion-Muraoka have word and verse indexes to help you find an analysis of the phenomenon or passage you are working on. Davidson lists all attested forms of each word alphabetically and parses them (including an identification of the declension of each noun and an explanation of the declensions on pp. 58-77 and 87-90).

Read any other readings assigned for a particular passage.

THE TEXT OF EXODUS

See N.M. Sarna, "Exodus, Book of," in Anchor Bible Dictionary 2:691

Masoretic Text ("MT")

All editions of the Bible have basically the same text, but many are imprecise when it comes to matters of cantillation and, in some cases, vowels. The best editions are those based on the Aleppo Codex (ca. 925 CE), which is almost certainly the codex endorsed by Maimonides,1 and Leningrad Codex B19A (completed in 1009 CE).2

Editions based on the Aleppo Codex:

Unfortunately, most of the Torah is missing from the Aleppo Codex (up to Deut. 28:17), as are certain other parts of the Bible, and each edition fills in the gaps based on other old manuscripts and other types of evidence.


3. The earlier edition is also used for the text of the Torah is also used in תורְהַנְֵבָּאָּהָּ הַיַּיְֽהַּ (see below) and the series עִיפְּֽהַּ מִכַּרְיַא.
The Biblical text in מלחמת הורלט המְר (Jerusalem Crown: The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000), based on Breuer’s edition, edited under the supervision of Yosef Ofer, with further refinements since Breuer’s revised edition. This edition features a three-column page-layout and a Hebrew font designed to resemble the font and layout of the Aleppo Codex.

There’s also an on-line edition of the Tanakh apparently based on one of the Breuer editions. See http://www.mechon-mamre.org/. It requires special fonts; I was able to read only the version that has a parallel English translation (the old JPS translation of 1917), but maybe you’ll have better luck.

**Editions based on Leningrad Codex:**


**Older editions** of the Biblical text, though reprinted widely, are much less reliable. Two of the best known are:

*The Letteris Bible*. Edited by Meir Halevi Letteris. (British and Foreign Bible Society, 1866 and reprinted frequently). This is one of the most commonly available texts, but it contains numerous mistakes, particularly in vowels and cantillation.

*Koren Bible*. Distinguished by its attractive font, but its text is an eclectic edition based on earlier printings and masoretic manuals (particularly that of W. Heidenheim, 1880) rather than the oldest masoretic manuscripts, and on unclear editorial principles.

Numerous variant readings of the consonantal text -- some significant, but most not (they involve spelling and grammar) -- are found in the texts from the Judean Desert. Variant readings are also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and ancient translations. See the Appendix at the end of the syllabus.

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COMMENTARIES

Medieval

Most of the classical medieval Jewish commentaries, such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Radak (Kimhi), Ramban (Nachmanides), and Seforno, are printed in non-critical editions in מַכוֹרָאָת גֶּדֹלוֹת. There are now also two critical (or “scholarly/scientific”) editions of מַכוֹרָאָת גֶּדֹלוֹת on the Torah alone, published by Mossad Harav Kook (JANES: BS1222/1986).

There also are separate, critical editions of the following commentaries:

- Rashbam (11/12 century), edition by Rosin: JANES: BS1225.S33 1881a
- David Kimhi (Radaq, ca. 1160-ca. 1235), edition by Kamelhar: CAJS BS1225.K56 1970.8
- Ramban (Nachmanides), edition by Chavel: CAJS BS1158.H4 N33 1959
- Shadal (Shmuel David Luzzatto)(Italy, 1860-65) straddles the pre-modern and modern outlook in his fine commentary (JANES: BS1225.L9 1965). The 1965 edition has omissions and (often misleading) paraphrases of Shadal’s original (the original is at CAJS: BS1225.L98 1858 and BS1224.I8 L89 1871).

Modern

1. Recommended for regular preparation:


2. Others worth checking frequently or periodically:

A.B. Ehrlich, *Miqra' ki-Pheshuto* (Heb., 1899), vol. 1, and *Randglossen zur Hebraischen Bibel* (German), vol. 1 (1908) (linguistically perceptive, but selective).


*Entsiklopedyah, ’Olam ha-Tanakh*, Vol. 2 (JANES.; BS1158.H4 E59...)

Hakham, Amos, *Sefer Shemot* (in the Da’at Miqra’ series) (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1991)


3. Briefer commentaries


There are also brief annotations in other one-volume Bible commentaries that have been published lately, such as *The New Interpreter's Bible, Harper's Bible Commentary, The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, and *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*.

**INTRODUCTIONS**


There are introductions to the book in all the commentaries, introductions of the Bible, Bible encyclopedias and dictionaries and the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Note in particular:


**MONOGRAPHS**


David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (London, Faber and Faber, 1963)

Yair Zakovitch, "And you shall tell your son...:" *The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991). Note: at the end of p. 83 several lines are missing; see the Blackboard website for them.


HISTORICAL BACKGROUND


John Bright, *A History of Israel*

K.A. Kitchen, "Exodus, the," ABD 2:700-707


E.S. Frerichs and L.H. Lesko, eds., *Exodus. The Egyptian Evidence* (Winona lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997)


PERTINENT EGYPTIAN TEXTS AND ARTISTIC EVIDENCE


"Brickmaking in Egypt," ANEP # 115


F. Yurco, "3,200-Year-Old Picture of Israelites found in Egypt." BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY
REVIEW 16/5 (September-October, 1990):20-38. See also his most recent discussion (with reference to other studies and views) in Frerichs and Lesko, eds., Exodus. The Egyptian Evidence, chap. 2.

In the Upper Egyptian Room of the University Museum:

To the immediate right of the entrance, against the wall, is a stone relief from a temple found at Tell el-Retaba. The relief shows Raamses II (1279-13) standing before the deity who is identified in the accompanying inscription as "Atum, Lord of the (region) Theku." It is therefore likely that this temple belonged to Atum and that the sanctuary and its estate, and perhaps the entire city, were called Pi-Atum, meaning "House of Atum." Pi-Atum is identical to the form Pithom used in Exodus 1, hence many scholars believe that the tell where this relief was found was that city. The region Theku that is also mentioned in this inscription may be identical to Sukkot, the place from which the Israelites left Egypt. Note also the statues of Raamses II in this room.

In the Lower Egyptian Room note the objects from Merneptah's (1213-1204) palace in Memphis (this cannot be the palace mentioned in Exodus, which must have been the one in the city of Raamses [Egyptian Pi-Raamses] in the Nile Delta).

APPENDIX

Exodus texts from the Judean Desert


2QExod\textsuperscript{a,b,c} (DJD 3:49-56 and plates X-XII)

4Q manuscripts in Jewish script: DJD 12, nos. 1, 13-21. On 4QGen-Exod\textsuperscript{d} see Tov, JJS 38:17. On 4QExod\textsuperscript{e} see also Cross, ALQ 137 & pl. 18; pb 184-85 n. 31. On 4QExod\textsuperscript{b} see Alexander Rofe, (4QExod) אמת של משה וinteropים למל י בידי שמות מקומראות in in בז, ה, מ, ור, ב, ב. 4 מך ב (שנה 40, ימ יתיה), pp. 197-202.

4QpaleoGen-Exod\textsuperscript{d} and 4QExod\textsuperscript{m} (Sanderson, Judith E., An Exodus Scroll from Qumran. Harvard Semitic studies 30 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986]; JANES: BS1245.2.S25 1986; P.W. Skehan et al., DJD 9)

4QDeut\textsuperscript{f} (DJD 14, no. 37; includes fragments from Exodus.

7QLXXExod (DJD 3:142-143 and pl. XXX)

MurExod (DJD 2)

There are verse-by-verse indexes of passages cited in these manuscripts in each volume of DJD, and a comprehensive index in E. Ulrich, "An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert (Genesis-Kings)," in Dead Sea Discoveries 1 (1994):116-119.

351-363.

There are also excerpts of Exodus in *tefillin* (DJD 1, 2 and 6; Yadin, *Tefillin from Qumran* [BM657.P5 Y3]) and anthological texts such as 4Q158 (DJD 5 p. 3), 4Q174, 4Q175 (DJD 5), in the "Damascus Covenant," etc.

**Old Greek ("Septuagint," "LXX")**

The best editions are those of A.E. Brooke and N. McLean (the "Cambridge Septuagint") and J. Ziegler, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum* (the "Göttingen Septuagint") (both editions are in MedStud and CAJS).


If you do not (yet) know Greek, you can check the translation of Sir Lancelot C. Brenton, *The Septuagint version of the Old Testament. With an English Translation, and with various readings and critical notes* (JANES:, BS742 B74 1971), but the text is uncritical. A more recent translation (without the Greek, but based on a critical text), is scheduled to appear in the *New English Translation of the Septuagint.* A draft of the translation of Exodus can be seen at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/exod.pdf


**Samaritan Pentateuch (SP)**


A very helpful edition, based on two old manuscripts and laying out SP and MT in parallel columns with differences highlighted, is A. and R. Sadaqa, *_petuhot et setumot: étude sur les alineas du Pentateuque* (Tel Aviv and Holon, 1961-1965; JANES: 220.1T Sa).


For further bibliography on the textual sources mentioned above and related resources, see W. Propp and J. Tigay, "Guide to Biblical Research," at www.sas.upenn.edu/~jtigay/guide.html.

**Parashah divisions**


The Qumran divisions are indicated in DJD 12 and 14.