

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I would like to make the following comment with regard to Zvi Ron's paper "Four Large Letters in the Bible," (XXXVII:2, April-June 2009).

The letters "ך" and "ך" are radically different and unlikely to be confused. The Ketib-Qere system does not attest to a "נ/כ" confusion. The noun "עטין" is a *hapax legomenon*, occurring only in Job 21:24 as the plural-suffixed 3rd masculine "עטיניו." The Bible usually uses "שדים" for "breasts" (23 times) and "דד" for "nipple." In Lamentations 4:3 "שדים" is used for an animal. In the Talmud "עטיניו" means "packed olives" (see Jastrow, 1063). BDB render "עטין" as "pail, bucket." In Modern Hebrew "עטינים" means "udders."

However, the verb "העטין" does not exist in the Bible, Talmud, or Modern Hebrew. It seems to me that Eisenstein's suggestion has no merit. The "ם/ס" confusion is perhaps attested in the late Ezra 4:13, where we have "םתפאו" but "סתפאו" in some manuscripts (Tanakh Koren [1983] p. 14 end comments). This too is very doubtful. Regarding the confusion "ח/ך" in "משפטן" we note that Rashi's explanation comes several verses later than the *Benot Zelophehad* issue. The confusion cannot be justified by the verse's theme, since "משפטן" would make no sense. I also wonder how one can use Rashi's homiletic explanation, given in the 11th century, to explain something that was done centuries earlier.

Aron Pinker
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AUTHOR'S RESPONSE:

Thank you Dr. Pinker for your interest in my article. We have manuscript evidence of unusual forms of the final "*nun*" which in fact resemble a "ך" (see Kasher's *Torah Shelemah*, vol. 29, pp. 166-167, especially figures 17, 18 and 19a). The Qere/Ketiv system ignores many cases of letter confusion; for example, Deuel/Reuel (Num. 1:14, 2:14) and Dodanim/Rodanim (Gen. 10:4; I Chron. 1:7). For many years, scholars have debated the sources of the many differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text. The approach most widely accepted today is that the Septuagint is based on an early Semitic textual variant, now lost, that differed from the Masoretic text. I believe that Eisenstein's idea that this textual variant had a "ך" instead of a "ך," is not unreasonable. The similarity between "ס" and "ם" is clear and, as you point

out, attested to in some manuscripts. Rashi's homiletic explanation is, as is customary with Rashi, based on a much earlier midrashic source. In this case it is based on the *Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas* 11.

Zvi Ron
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Sir,

I enjoyed the article by J.J. Adler, "Chronicles: The Neglected Books of the Bible" (XXXVII:2, April-June 2009). As the author of the one article on Chronicles in the 37 years of *Jewish Bible Quarterly* publication (Kimhi and Tanchum ben Joseph Hayerushalmi on Chronicles [XXVI:1, January-March 1998]), as mentioned in Note 1 of Rabbi Adler's paper, I would like to point out some excellent volumes on Chronicles that have been published fairly recently: First, the magisterial commentary by Sarah Japhet for the Old Testament Library (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994). Second, two volumes by Isaac Kalimi: *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, his time, place and writing* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica, vol. 46, Royal van Gorcum, 2005) and *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Eisenbrauns, 2005). All of these books deal in some way in great depth with the issues addressed in my paper regarding the differences between the versions of events as recorded in Chronicles vs. the way those events are reported in the rest of the Bible.

Ben Zion Katz
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Sir,

I was intrigued by the novelty of Dr. Berel Lerner's essay "Lot's Failed Trial." Aside from a few mistaken citations, such as Sodom's *water for his flocks* (13:10, not 14:10) and Lot's daughters' seduction of their father (19:32, not 20:31), I want to add a convincing climax to Dr. Lerner's thesis.

When Lot saw that his "righteousness" failed to save his wife's life, he sensed that the Divine intervention was not due to him. It was for this reason that he began to have doubts about himself. In the end his mortification at the hands of his daughters left him alone and unredeemed.

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