

FRANCIS BREYER, *Ägyptische Namen und Wörter im Alten Testament* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 93; Münster: Zaphon, 2019). Pp. 205. Hardback. €75.00.

Francis Breyer's *Ägyptische Namen und Wörter im Alten Testament* is a valuable contribution to the discussion on linguistic contact between Egyptian and Hebrew. The work at times presents itself as a dialogue with Görg's work in this area—conscious that Görg's hypotheses have not been widely accepted, yet ultimately open to many of his suggestions (vi, 24, 189–95).

The introductory chapters sketch the grounds for comparison between the Hebrew and Egyptian lexicons, touching on issues of history, philology and historical phonetics. Of particular use is his discussion of the correspondence between Egyptian and Hebrew phonemes and graphemes (21–22). Nevertheless, the description of the phonetics of Hebrew is somewhat deficient, lacking references to even the most important developments, like the Canaanite shift and segholation (20–21).

One of the questions that faces those who work in the field of loanwords is how inclusive one should be of implausible loan hypotheses. Breyer's approach is to include discussion of many loanwords, even when he may not be convinced of their status. This is notable, because it differs from the approach taken by many recent studies of loanwords in Hebrew, which tend to be more restrictive (for example, Paul Mankowski, *Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000] 1–9). This has important consequences for how one reads and uses this book: it is not a list of words that can be treated as uncontroversial loanwords. It is, rather, a discussion of possible cases of lexical contact. Thus, Breyer often suspends judgement to the extent that one must frequently refer forward to the concluding chapters to ascertain Breyer's opinion. Even there, Breyer cautions: "letzlich wird trotz alledem die Bewertung dem Leser überlassen bleiben, wenn dieser der Expertise des Autors nicht folgen möchte" (159). Though some might deem some of the loans hypothesised improbable, Breyer admirably leaves the judgement in the hands of his readers.

On the whole, many of the loan hypotheses that Breyer ultimately accepts will be uncontroversial—for example, the derivation of **מִצְרַיִם** from Egyptian (117; cf. Yoshiyuki Muchiki, *Egyptian Proper Names and Loanwords in North-West Semitic* [SBLDS 153; Atlanta: Scholars, 1999] 245). Nevertheless, other possible loanwords discussed (with various levels of certainty) are less plausible, such as **אֵוֶה**, "Eve," < Egyptian (Eg.) *hm.t*, "majesty (with snake determinative)" (42–45). This example, as Breyer freely admits, is argued in a speculative fashion (43). Another example is **בְּרִית** "covenant loyalty" or "steadfast love" < Eg. *hsw.t*, "praise, favour" (115–16). This is implausible, because the equivalence of the Egyptian feminine ending *-t* with a West Semitic *d* in **hasd* (cf. Syriac **ܚܫܕܐ**, Arabic *ḥašāda*; HALOT, s.v. **חֶסֶד**) is never adequately explained.

Occasionally, Breyer's analysis does not adequately explain the inner-Semitic evidence. Although one might countenance the possibility that Akkadian *paṭāru* and *pašaru*, "to interpret or solve," could derive from Egyptian *ptr*, "to see" or "to see in a dream," the primary meaning of the Akkadian words is "to loosen." The same is true of Aramaic פָּשַׁר. The development of "loosen" to "solve or interpret" is plausible (as the Latin etymology of solve itself demonstrates). However, the semantic development of "see" to "interpret" to "loosen" is markedly less plausible, especially when it must occur in Aramaic as well as Akkadian. The Semitic evidence is currently best explained as deriving from a proto-Semitic *PṬR, with inner-Semitic loans in order to explain the unusual correspondences of t and š. For the Akkadian *paṭāru* (instead of *patāru*) compare Hebrew עָשַׂר, "to become, make rich," Aramaic עָתַר, "to be, make rich," and Akkadian *eṭēru*, "to pay."

Nevertheless, certain other proposals are worthy of further investigation. One such case is the comparison of Hebrew שָׂרָף, "seraph, snake," with Egyptian *srrf*, "Griffon, Serpent" < Eg. *šrf*, "to be warm." However, given that Hebrew also contains שָׂרַף, "to burn," there are other possibilities: we might be dealing with an Afro-Asiatic word and root. Alternatively, one language may have formed the noun as a calque from the other, based on a shared Afro-Asiatic root. A substrate or culture word is a third possibility, given the similarities to lexemes in Indo-European languages (cf. Latin, *serpens*, Greek, *ἔρπις, Sanskrit **sarpá-*). The correspondence in meaning and form between the Indo-European and the Semitic is at least as good as the Egyptian. However, those lexemes are more typically treated as deverbal from **serp-* "to drag" (Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* [2 vols.; Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series; Leiden: Brill, 2010] 1:464) and the similarity may be coincidental.

This book fills an important gap in the literature; it is especially valuable for the discussion of Egyptian loanwords in Hebrew, because it comes from a scholar whose training is primarily as an Egyptologist, rather than as a Hebraist. Although the book is primarily of linguistic interest, it will also be useful to those studying the cultural contact between Israel and Egypt, onomastics, or those Hebrew texts that contain many Egyptian loanwords.

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