



Universiteit Utrecht



The publication of an annotated edition and translation of tannaitic meshalim

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Postdoc project “Parables and the partings of the ways”

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1. Overall project: Parables and the Partings of the ways

1. Corpus: Parables in Gospels and other Early Christian texts, and in early rabbinic (tannaitic) literature
2. 3 PhDs (parables about family relations, slaves, and meals)
3. Postdoc project (LT): ‘critical’ edition of ‘all’ the tannaitic parables
4. How do we define tannaitic parables?
 - Tannaitic sources?
 - Tradents = known tannaim?
 - Text presented as tannaitic (e.g. baraita)
5. Critical edition of texts culled from larger corpora?
 - Some of these corpora have good critical editions; some not
 - there are various textual witnesses for all parables: printed editions, larger manuscripts, geniza fragments

2. Practical issues to resolve

1. digital and/ or book presentation
2. delineation of the parable: how much of the literary context (co-text) will be included?(most have exegetical function in midrash).
3. what will we present: transcribed manuscripts? full critical text?
4. translation (which version will be translated)?
5. annotation/commentary?
6. Digital presentation: pop-up windows; vertical or horizontal synoptic; apparatus?
7. which program will we use to generate it?

3. Critical editions of rabbinic texts

3.1. The specific problems of editing rabbinic literature (compared to Bible)

- many texts
- very long and fluid transmission history (3rd-10th cent. and later)
- further oral transmission after writing down (cf. M. Jaffee; Elman and Gershoni)
- creative additions by medieval scribes (cf. Beit-Arie)
- Texts only known because they survived in medieval *yalkut* (florilegia), e.g. Midrash Hagadol; Yalkut Shim'oni.
- many lost manuscripts
- fragmentary texts
- often several recensions
- sometimes impossible to pick one ‘base manuscript’
- stemmatics is usually impossible; no ‘Urtext’
- outdated ‘critical’ editions made in 19th-20th cent. still used as standard texts

3.2. Various kinds of scholarly editions

- full critical editions
 - diplomatic
 - eclectic
- vs. ‘transcriptional editions’ (term: Milikowsky)
 - vertical or horizontal synopsis
 - diplomatic transcriptions
- Cf. Milikowsky-Schäfer discussion (1986-2010)

5. Case study : Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael Beshallach 4: 35 ff

The father, the son, and the friend

5.1 Intro: parables (meshalim) in midrash

midrash = rabbinic interpretation of a biblical verse.

mashal = literary form used in midrash

2-part structure of the parable (mashal)

a. Mashal = Parable proper

Stereotypical formula: “(They told) a parable. To what is this matter similar”; “What is this like”; “A parable about...”

b. Nimshal = application

Stereotypical formula: “So it was...”; “So did the Holy One...”

Before and after the parable: other midrashic interpretations

5.2 The function of this mashal in context cf. handout

Base text: Exodus 5:15: The Lord said to Moses: “Why do you cry at me? All they have to do is to go forward”

Exegetical difficulty: The previous text in Bible does not mention that Moses cries at God.

Difficulty = ‘peg’: explained by means of midrash; including the parable

5.4 Outline of midrash/mashal/nimshal/midrash (see handout)

(A) Interpretation 1. R. Joshua: all they have to do is to go forward

(B) Interpretation 2 R. Eliezer. God says: Don't use so many words; this is no time for long prayers (this refers to v. 13-14), they only have to go forward now, fast; I will divide the sea for them

(C) Interpretations 3-8: excursion on the merit of the division of the sea

(A') Interpretation 9: mashal + nimshal (continuous line of thought of Interpretation 1): All they have to do is to go forward

Mashal:

Man = God

son = Israel

friend = Moses

Nimshal. God says to Moses (v. 15): You do not have to shout at me (which he did not, yet it says so in Ex. 14:15). I am not angry anymore at the people (even though I was for a while because they complained). Therefore let them go forward (and I will open the sea for them).

(B) Interpretation 10: Rabbi says (in H-R: "another interpretation"; in some mss. such as the geniza fragment no introduction but apparent continuation of the mashal): Why do you stand reciting long prayers. Link is laid to Ex. 5:22-23 where Moses *did* complain to (shout at) God:

4.2.1 Synopsis Mekhilta RI Beshalach 4:35 ff. translation

Ms Oxf.	Ms. Munich	Ms. Vatican	T-S C4.8[2 (Geniza fragment)	Const. 1515 (First print)	parallel: Exodus Rabbah 21:8 (Soncino)
R. Abtulum/s the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulus [the elder] said:	R. Abshalom the elder said:	R. Abtulis, the elder, said
They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	They told a parable, to what is the matter similar?	A parable, to what is the matter similar?	It can be compared
To one who was angry at his son and he seized him.	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To a king who was angry at his son and he drove him away	To one who was angry at his son and he drove him away from his house	to a king who had a son who had provoked him to anger with the result that he sentenced him to a severe punishment.
His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him	His administrator (epitropos) came in to ask from him	His friend came in to ask from him that he take him back in his house	The instructor [of the king's son] sought to appease the king,
He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not on behalf of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from him but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything of me not for the sake of my son	He said to him: You do not ask anything from me but on behalf of my son	but met with the rejoinder: 'Is it not on behalf of my son that you are entreating me?'
I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	I already discussed with (?) my son	I already discussed with my son	I am already appeased to my son	I am already satisfied/reconciled (?) with my son	Well, I have already become reconciled with my son.'

Ms Oxf.	Ms. Munich	Ms. Vatican	T-S C4.8[2 (Geniza fragment)	Const. 1515 (First print)	parallel: Exodus Rabah 21:8 (Soncino)
So said the Holy One to Moses:	So said the Holy One Blessed be He to Moses:	So said the Holy One to Moses:	[nimshal missing]	So said the Place to him:	[nimshal missing]
Why do you shout? Not because I am already reconciled with you	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	Why do you shout? Not on behalf of my sons? I am already reconciled with my sons.	-	Why do you shout at me? I am already satisfied with them (?)	-
Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward. Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	Speak to the children (sons) of Israel that they go forward.	-	-
Yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc.,	R[abbi] said: yes[terday] you(?) said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.,	R[abbi] said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Yesterday he said: For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name etc. and you have not delivered your people at all	Rabbi said: yesterday you said: For since I came to Pharaoh etc.	Rabbi said: [God] said to Moses: 'Only the other day, you were complaining, For since I came to Pharaoh, He hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all (Ex. V, 23)
and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me? Speak to the children of Israel.	and today you stand and multiply prayers. Why do you shout at me?	and now you stand pouring out prayers, WHEREFORE CRIEST THOU UNTO ME?

<p>Ms. Oxf. ר' אבטולוס [זקן] או' מושלו משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרפו ונכון איפרוף לבקש הימנו</p> <p>א' לו כלום את מבקש ממי לא מפני בני כבר נתרצית לבני כך אמר ה' הק' למשה מה תצעק לא מפני נתרצית מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר דבר אל בני ישראל דבר אל בני ישראל ויסען אםש הייתה או' מזד באתי אל פרעה לדבר בשمر וגו'</p>	<p>Ms. Munich ר' אבשלום הזקן אמר משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרדו נכון אהובו לבקש הימנו</p> <p>אם' לו כלום את מבקש הימני אלא בני כבר הרצית לבני כך אמר ה' הק' למשה מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר נתרצית לבני דבר אל בני יש' ויסען</p> <p>ר' אמר אמ' המש הייתה או' [ז] מזד באתי אל פרעה וגו'</p>	<p>Ms. Vatican ר' אבשלום הזקן אמר משל למה הדבר דומה לאחד שכעס על בנו וטרדו נכון אהובו לבקש הימנו</p> <p>אם' לו כלום את מבקש הימני אלא בני כבר הרצית לבני כך אמר ה' הק' למשה מה תצעק לא מפני בניי כבר נתרצית לבני דבר אל בני יש' ויסען</p>	<p>T-S C4.8 ר' אבטולוס [זקן] או' משל משל למה הד' ד'ו' למלך שכעס על בן טרדו ונכון אופיטרוף לבקש ממן אם' לו כלום את מבקש ת[מ]ני לא מפני בני כבר הרצית ליبني דבר אל בני יש' ויסען</p>	<p>Exod. R 21:8 רבי אבטוליס הזקן אמר משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שכעס על בנו וטרדו עליו גזירה קשה והיה הpedagog מבקש על ידו אמר לו כלום אתה מבקש ממי אלא על בני כבר הרצית ליبني דבר אל בני יש' ויסען</p>	<p>Constant. 1515 ר' אבשלום הזקן אמר משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שכעס על בנו וטרדו מביתו נכון אהובו לבקש הימנו ולחציתו לכתם אמר לו כלום אתה מבקש ממי אלא מפני בני כבר נתרצית לבני כך אמר לו המקום מה תצעק אליו כבר אני מרוצה עליהם</p>
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<p>ועכשיו את עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען</p>	<p>אומ' מזד באתי אל פרעה וגו' ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען אלי</p>	<p>ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען אלי</p>	<p>אםש היה או' מזד באתי אל פרעה לד' בש' וגוי וכצל לא הצלת את עמר ועכשיו את עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען אליו דבר אל בני ישראל</p>	<p>ר' אמר אל אםש היה אמר ומזד באתי אל פרעה ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען אלי,</p>	<p>רבי אמר אםש היה אמר ומזד באתי אל פרעה וגוי ועכשיו אתה עומד ומרבבה בתפילה מה תען אלי,</p>
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4.2 synoptic comparison of the textual witnesses (Hebrew)

The geniza fragment



5. Thomas Kollatz's "Parables lab"



"To everything there is a season;
a time to cut, and a time to paste..."