BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

for

NAKY DONIACH O.B.E.

Edited by

GLORIA CIGMAN

and

DAVID HOWLETT

at the
OXFORD CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE HEBREW STUDIES
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Programme

10.45	Coffee
11.10	Opening appreciation by David Patterson President: Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies
	Morning Session: BIBLE STUDIES
11.15	David Howlett — Editor, Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources *The Story of Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.4* Introduced by Ron May Formerly Senior Assistant Librarian, Bodleian Library
11.35	Geza Vermes F.B.A. — Professor of Jewish Studies *Contemporary Study of the Bible since the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls* Introduced by Sebastian Brock F.B.A. Reader in Syriac Studies, University of Oxford
12.15	Alison Salvesen — Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies *Moses' Staff as a Symbol of the Cross* Introduced by Terry Fenton Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies, University of Haifa
12.45 - 2.30	Luncheon
	Afternoon Session : DICTIONARIES
2.30	Ahuvia Kahane — Junior Research Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies *The Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage and the Paradox of Modern Hebrew Lexicography* Introduced by Gloria Cigman Senior Lecturer in English, University of Warwick
3.00	Peter Glare — Greek-English Lexicon, A Supplement *Starting from the Wrong End* Introduced by Glenda Abramson, Cowley Lecturer in Post-Biblical Hebrew, University of Oxford
3.30	Tudor Parfitt — Senior Lecturer in Hebrew, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London *The Lexicographer: A Harmless Drudge?* Introduced by Adrian Roberts Keeper of Oriental Books, Bodleian Library
	Concluding Remarks — Naky Doniach
4.00	Tea

Preface

On Sunday, 12 May 1991, 84 people gathered at Yarnton Manor to celebrate the 84th birthday of Naky Doniach. This large party was made up of family, friends, and many who were both colleagues and friends, spanning three generations and numerous facets of Naky's eventful and fruitful life. The participants are listed at the end of the compilation, which has been published as a further tribute to a man who is loved and respected by them all, as well as by many others who were unable to be present on this celebratory day. The speakers were chosen from among the many who have particularly close links with Naky, professional and personal.

The warmth of this occasion is something that we will all remember. David Patterson's appreciation of Naky is included here, as are all but one of the papers that were presented, namely *Contemporary Study of the Bible since the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls* by Geza Vermes.

Fittingly, Naky himself had the last word, when he said to us, "If any of you are lucky enough to have a day like this in your lives, you will understand why I am too moved for words."

G.C.

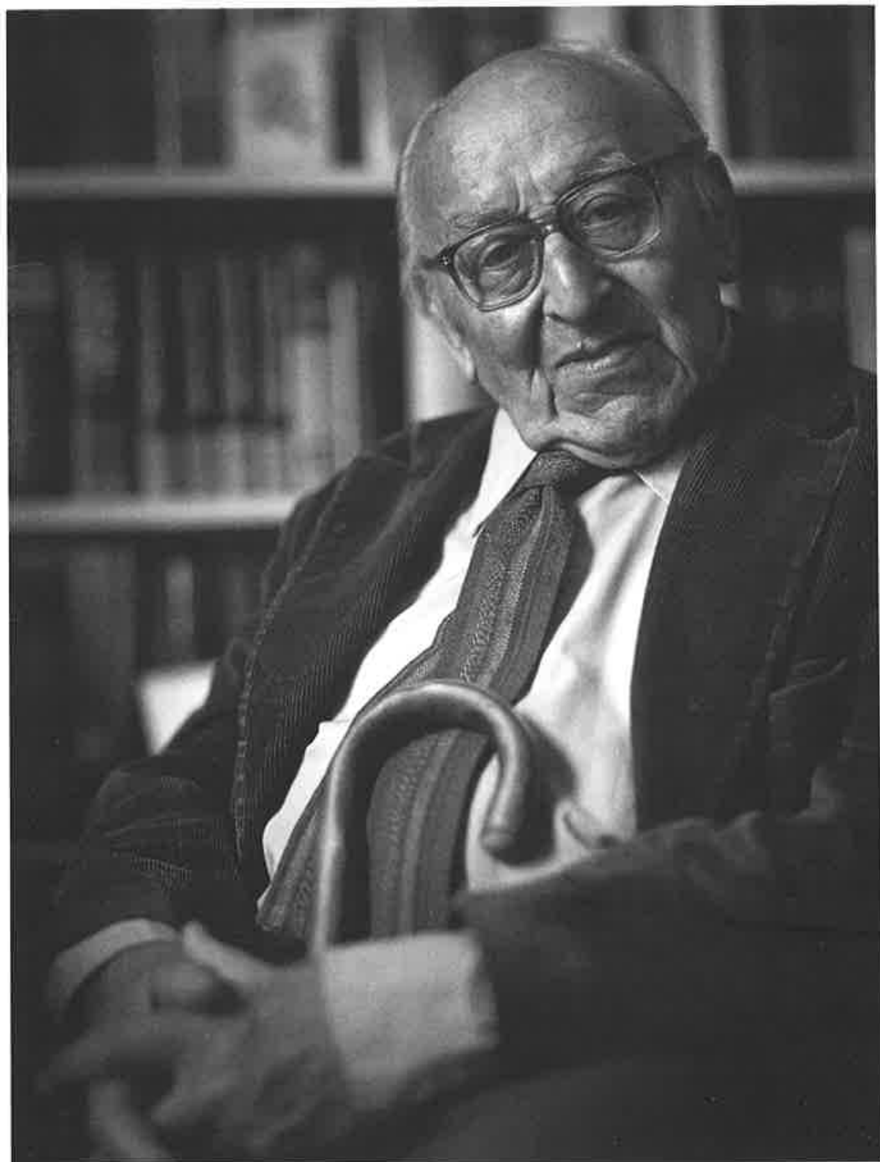
Naky Doniach
An Appreciation by David Patterson

The purpose of this Symposium is to celebrate the 84th birthday of Nakdimon Doniach, O.B.E. It is not my purpose to present a biographical sketch, which may be found in an article by Dr. Glenda Abramson in the Blackwell Companion to Modern Jewish Culture. Rather, it is my concern to dwell on some of Naky's personal qualities. He is, indeed, a man for all seasons. We are celebrating his 84th birthday with Papers devoted to Bible Studies and Lexicographical Studies. We might equally, however, have devoted Papers to his culinary arts, to his horticultural talents, or to a whole range of practical skills. It says in the Talmud, 'By his house shall you know him'. Naky and his late wife, Théa, created a home which is cultivated and artistic, attractive to the senses and the intellect alike, a place renowned for its warmth, its friendship and its generous hospitality. All who know Naky are impressed by the range and quality of his mind, and his extraordinary sense of language. He is a wonderful teacher, with an astounding array of pupils in a wide variety of disciplines. And yet withal he is a modest and retiring man.

Those of us who have been privileged to know him closely and to call him friend are deeply conscious that he has enriched our lives. Over many years I have benefitted from his sage advice and his unfailing help in what were often difficult times. He has been connected with the Oxford Centre since its inception, and in the early days we spent many hours discussing its progress and procedures. Naky served from the beginning as a member of the Centre's Academic Advisory Council, and later he became a Senior Associate Fellow. More particularly he has been the Editor of the Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage, one of the more important of the Centre's projects. After some thirteen years of unrelenting toil, the Dictionary is now almost ready to go to Press, thanks to the help of Dr Ahuvia Kahane, the Assistant Editor, and Ms Debbie Silver. Publication of the Dictionary will be an important cultural event, which will bring great satisfaction to all of Naky's many friends.

It is particularly pleasing to see Naky's children and grandchildren in this distinguished audience on such a happy occasion. For grandchildren, it is especially important to realise the high esteem and wide friendship enjoyed by their grandfather.

On behalf of everyone present, family, colleagues, and friends, may I wish you, Naky, many happy, healthy, and creative years for all of us to share.



Naki Doniach anno aetatis 84.

David Howlett

The Story of Creation, Genesis 1.1 - 2.4

ONE OF the more conspicuous virtues exhibited by the widely admired and much loved man whom we honour today is the ability to listen. He listens to his fellow men in distress and grief with a deep understanding known well to those who in some measure owe their lives and sanity to him. He listens to his fellow men telling stories with an acute perception that comes back to them, like bread cast upon the waters, in his anecdotes related gently and gracefully. He listens to his fellow men from Antiquity, knowing their languages and habits of thought and patterns of narrative from the inside. It is this which I want to celebrate today by considering with you some observations made partly in Naky's company and improved much by the learning he shares like the food he gives his friends.

In the story of Creation, Genesis 1.1-2.4, language and habit of thought and pattern of narrative make a wonderful unity woven from statement and restatement of ideas. One finds Scriptural warrant for such an iterative style in Ecclesiasticus 42.24:[1]

> πάντα δισσά, ἓν κατέναντι τοῦ ἑνός,
> καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲν ἐλλεῖπον,

rendered in the Vulgate at 42.25:

> omnia duplicia unum contra unum
> et non fecit quicquam deesse,

and in English:

> all things are twofold, one opposite the other,
> and He has made nothing incomplete.

There are two primary patterns of iteration. In the smallest unit of Biblical style, the structure of a single verse, the first and basic pattern is parallelism, a statement followed by a restatement in identical order, as Isaiah 1.10:

> a b c d e
>
> Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom.
>
> a' b' c' d' e'
>
> Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah.

An example in English nursery rhyme is

> To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,
> home again, home again, jiggety jig.

To market, to market, to buy a fat hog,
  home again, home again, jiggety jog.

The second but still basic pattern, which also appears in the structure of a single verse, is chiasmus, a statement followed by a restatement in reverse order, as Lamentations 1.1:

a How like a widow she has become

b she that was great among the nations;

b' she that was a princess among the cities

a' has become a vassal.

An example in English nursery rhyme is

As I was going to St Ives
  I met a man with seven wives;
    each wife had seven sacks;
      each sack had seven cats;
        each cat had seven kits.
        Kits,
      cats,
    sacks,
  and wives,
how many were going to St Ives?

John Henry Newman's hymn is in the same form:

Praise to the Holiest
  in the height
  and in the depth
be praise,
in all His words
  most wonderful,
  most sure
in all His ways.

In the first chapter of Genesis the statement and restatement of ideas is fixed arithmetically because Jews believed that Creation itself had been a mathematical act. This is apparent from two famous passages in the Old Testament and another in the Apocrypha. In Job 38.4-7, for example, God asks

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

  Who

    determined

its measurements;

surely you know!

Or who

stretched

the line upon it?

On what were its bases

sunk,

or who

laid

its cornerstone,

when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Again in Isaiah 40.12 the prophet says that it is God

Who has measured

in the hollow of His hand

the waters

and the heavens

with a span

marked off

and enclosed

in a measure

the dust of the earth

and weighed

in scales

the mountains

and the hills

in a balance.

Again in Sapientia 11.20 'Solomon' addressing the Creator, says ἀλλὰ πάντα μέτρῳ καὶ σταθμῷ διέταξας, rendered at 11.21 in the Vulgate, *sed omnia mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti*, 'But Thou hast arranged all things by measure and number and weight'. Like Jews Greeks believed that Creation had been a mathematical act. Plato, in a dialogue which continued to be read in the Latin West during the Middle Ages, makes Timaeus state:[2]

> Wherefore also God in the beginning of Creation made the body of the universe to consist of fire and earth. But two things cannot be rightly put together without a third; there must be some bond of union between them. And the fairest bond is that which makes the most complete fusion of itself and the things which it combines; and proportion is best adapted to effect such a union. For whenever in any three numbers, whether cube or square, there is a mean, which is to the last term what the first term is to it; and again, when the mean is to the first term as the last term is to the mean, then the mean becoming first and last, and the first and last both becoming means, they will all of them of necessity come to be the same, and having become the same with one another will be all one.

Plato is undeniably stating that God created the universe mathematically. More specifically, according to some, he is considering here the Golden Mean or Golden Section, which was much discussed among Ancient philosophers and mathematicians.[3] The beauty of this proportion is that its minor part (m) relates to its major part (M) as the major part relates to the whole (m+M): $m/M = M/(m+M) = (\sqrt{5}-1)/2$. To calculate the major part multiply a number by 0.61803. To calculate the minor part multiply by 0.38197.

For evidence of an arithmetical approach to Scripture from the Hebrew tradition one notes in the Talmud[4] that

> the early [scholars] were called *soferim* because they used to count [*safar*] all the letters of the Torah. Thus, they said, the *waw* in *gaḥon* marks half the letters of the Torah; *darosh darash*, half the words; *we-hithggalah*, half the verses. *The boar out of the wood* [*mi-ya'ar*] *doth ravage it*: the *'ayin* of *ya'ar* marks half of the Psalms. *But he, being full of compassion, forgiveth their iniquity*, half of the verses.
>
> R. Joseph propounded: Does the *waw* of *gaḥon* belong to the first half or the second? Said they [the scholars] to him, Let a Scroll of the Torah be brought and we will count them! Did not Rabbah b. Bar Ḥanah say, They did not stir from there until a Scroll of the Torah was brought and they counted them? They were thoroughly versed in the defective and full readings, but we are not.
>
> R. Joseph propounded: Does *wehithgalah* belong to the first half or the second? Said Abaye to him, For the verses at least, we can bring [a Scroll] and count them! ...

Our Rabbis taught: There are 5888 verses in the Torah; the Psalms exceed this by eight; while Chronicles are less by eight.

Our Rabbis taught: *And thou shalt teach them diligently* [means] that the words of the Torah shall be clear-cut in your mouth, so that if anyone asks you something, you should not shew doubt and then answer him, but [be able to] answer him immediately ... .

One infers certainly from this that the rabbis counted verses, words, and letters of the Hebrew text of the Bible, probably because they believed that the writers had done the same. With this in mind let us turn to the story of Creation, Genesis 1.1 - 2.4.

A 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2a The earth was without form and void,
b and darkness was upon the face of the deep,
c and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.
B 1a And God said,
bi "Let there be light" and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.
ii And God separated the light from the darkness.
i' God called the light day and the darkness He called night.
c And there was evening and there was morning, one day.
2a And God said,
bi "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters
ii and let it separate the waters from the waters."
iii And God made the firmament
ii' and separated the waters which were under the firmament
from the waters which were above the firmament.
i' And it was so. And God called the firmament heaven.
c And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.
3a And God said,
bi "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place
ii and let the dry land appear."
iii And it was so.
ii' God called the dry land earth
i' and the waters that were gathered together He called seas.
ci And God saw that it was good. And God said
ii a "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed,
b and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed,
c each according to its kind, upon the earth."
iii And it was so.
ii'a The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds,
b and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed,
c each according to its kind.
i' And God saw that it was good.
d And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.
B'1a And God said,
b "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens
ci to separate the day from the night,
ii and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,

iiia and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens
b to give light upon the earth."
iv And it was so. And God made the two great lights,
iv' the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night;
He made the stars also.
iii'a And God set them in the firmament of the heavens
b to give light upon the earth,
ii' to rule over the day and over the night,
i' and to separate the light from the darkness.
d And God saw that it was good.
e And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.
2a And God said,
bi a "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures,
b and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens."
ii So God created
iiia the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves
b with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds,
iii'a and every winged bird,
b according to its kind.
ii' And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them saying,
i' a "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas,
b and let birds multiply on the earth."
c And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.
3a And God said,
bi "Let the earth bring forth living creatures,
ii according to their kinds:
iii cattle and creeping things,
iv and beasts of the earth according to their kinds."
v And it was so.
v' And God made
iv' the beasts of the earth according to their kinds,
iii' and the cattle according to their kinds and everything that creeps upon the ground,
ii' according to its kind.
ci And God saw that it was good. Then God said,
ii a "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,
b1 and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air,
2 and over the cattle and over all the earth,
3 and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."
iiia So God created man
b1 in His own image;
2 in the image of God
a' He created him;
b'1 male
2 and female
a" He created them.
ii'a1 And God blessed them and said to them,

2 "Be fruitful and multiply,
3 and fill the earth and subdue it,
b1 and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air,
2 and over every living thing
3 that moves upon the earth."
a'1 And God said,
2 "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit.
3 You shall have them for food.
b'1 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air
2 and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life,
3 I have given every green plant for food."
i' And it was so. And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.
d And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.
A'1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.
2a And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done,
b and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
3 So God blessed
4 the seventh day
3' and hallowed it,
2'b because on it God rested from all His work,
a which He had done in Creation.
1'a These are the generations of the heavens
b and the earth
c when they were created,
d' in the day
c' that the Lord God made
b' the earth
a' and the heavens.

The entire passage makes a great chiasmus, ABB'A'. The announcement of Creation and the description of the void in A are balanced by the perfection of Creation and Sabbath rest in A'. The sentence marked A'1' at once concludes this passage and introduces the next Creation story of Genesis 2, with its new divine title יְהוָה 'Lord', distinct from the title אֱלֹהִים 'God' used throughout Genesis 1. Within these bounds the six days make a parallelism in BB'. Each section is clearly introduced by 'And God said' and concluded by 'and there was evening and there was morning ...'. The creation of light and the distinction of light and day from darkness and night on the first day (B1) are balanced by the creation of lights to shine by day and night on the fourth day (B'1). The establishment of the firmament and the separation of the waters on the second day (B2) are balanced by the generation of creatures that fly beneath the firmament and live in the waters on the fifth day

(B'2). The work of the third day (B3) is twofold: first the gathering of the seas and the emergence of dry land and then the appearance of grasses and trees with their seed. The work of the sixth day (B'3) is similarly twofold: first the production of beasts and creeping things on the dry land and then the creation of man with his dominion over creatures of sea, sky, and land, as well as grasses and trees with their seed.

This account of Creation follows the order of the seven-day week. Its first sentence comprises seven words and its second fourteen words, together twenty-one, of which the Golden Section falls at 13 and 8. There are two occurrences of the Name of God, between which there are thirteen words. From the beginning to the former occurrence inclusive there are three words, and from the latter occurrence inclusive to the end there are five words, together eight, of which the Golden Section falls at 5 and 3.

On the first day (B1) God created light. There are thirty-one words, of which the central, sixteenth, word is 'the light' in bii. The sixth word before that is 'light', and beginning with it the sixth word after is 'light'. The Name of God appears four times. From the first to the second inclusive there are seven words. From the second to the third inclusive there are seven words. From the third to the fourth inclusive there are seven words. From the first to the fourth inclusive there are nineteen words. Before the first there is one word and after the fourth there are eleven words, together twelve. The Golden Section of 31 falls at 19 and 12.

On the second day God created the firmament. There are thirty-eight words, of which the Golden Section falls at 23 and 15. The fifteenth word is 'the firmament' in biii. The eleventh word before that is 'firmament' in bi, and the eleventh word after it is 'firmament' in bii'. The fifth word before this is 'firmament', and the fifth word after it is 'firmament'. There are three occurrences of the Name of God. From the first in B2a to the third in B2bi' inclusive there are twenty-nine words, the Golden Section of which falls at 18 and 11. After the first occurrence the eleventh word is the second occurrence of the Name of God at the crux in B2biii. From the second occurrence to the third inclusive there are eighteen words.

On the third day (B3) God created trees. There are sixty-nine words, of which the Golden Section falls at 43 and 26. The forty-third word brings one to the end of 'on the earth' just before the crux of the passage at ciii 'and it was so'. The tenth word before the crux is 'trees' in cii*b*, and beginning at the crux the tenth word after is 'and trees' in cii'*b*. The seventh word before the former 'trees' is the Name of God, and seven words after the latter 'and trees' bring one again to the Name of God. From the first occurrence of the Name of God in B3a to the second in B3bii' inclusive there are fourteen words. Between the second and the third in B3ci there are seven words. The fourth occurrence at the end of B3ci is the forty-third word from the end of the passage. If we consider the internal divisions of B3 we see that part b contains

nineteen words, of which the central, tenth, word is the beginning of the crux at 3biii. The Golden Section of 19 falls at 12 and 7. The seventh word from the end is the Name of God. Part c contains forty-two words, of which the central, twenty-first from the beginning and twenty-first from the end are 'on the earth', at the Golden Section of the entire paragraph. The eighth word (4 × 2) from the beginning of part c is 'the earth'. Between 'the earth' and 'trees' there are four words (4 × 1). Between 'trees' and 'the earth' there are eight words (4 × 2). The fourth word after 'the earth' (4 × 1) is 'the earth', after which there are sixteen words (4 × 4) to the end of part c. The number of words in the account of the first day, 31, added to the number in the account of the second, 38, equals the number in the account of the third, 69.

On the fourth day (B'1) God created the sun, the moon, and the stars. There are, as in the account of the third day, sixty-nine words. The forty-third word, at the Golden Section at the end of the crux in iv', is 'stars'. The Name of God occurs four times. From the first to the second inclusive there are twenty-six words. Between the first and the third there are forty-three words. Between the third and the fourth there are fourteen words.

On the fifth day (B'2) God created living creatures in the air and the water. There are fifty-seven words, of which the Golden Section falls at 35 and 22. The twenty-second word from the beginning and the thirty-fifth word from the end are 'every creature' in iiia. Between the first and second occurrences of the Name of God there are fourteen words.

On the sixth day, B'3a-b, in a passage of twenty-eight words, half as long as the account of the preceding day, God made living creatures on the land. The Golden Section of 28 falls at 11 and 17. The eleventh word is 'earth' in biv. The seventh word before that is 'the earth', and the seventh word after it brings one again to 'the earth'. The central word stands at the crux of the passage in v 'and it was so'. The Name of God occurs twice, once in B'3a and again in B'3bv'. The second is the fourteenth word after the first. From the beginning to the first inclusive there are two words, and after the second there are twelve words, together fourteen.

Next, in a passage of thirty-six words, ci-iii, God created man in His own image to have dominion over all the earth. The central, eighteenth, word from the beginning is 'the earth'. The Golden Section of 36 falls at 22 and 14. The twenty-second word is 'on the earth'. Then, in a passage of twenty-two words, cii'a-b, God commanded man to fill the earth. The central, eleventh, word is 'the earth'. The eleventh word after that is also 'the earth'. In a passage of fifty-seven words, cii'a'-i', equal in length to the account of the fifth day, God gave food to His creatures. The Golden Section of 57 falls at 35 and 22. The twenty-first and twenty-second words from the end of the passage are 'on the earth'. The seventh word before 'the earth' is 'the earth'. Fourteen words before that bring one to 'the earth'. Fourteen more words before that bring one to the beginning of the passage. The account of

the sixth day ends with a sentence of six words in d. The triumph of the sixth day, from man's point of view, is that God created man in His own image. The account of the entire sixth day comprises 149 words, of which the Golden Section falls at 92 and 57. The fifty-seventh word from the beginning of the passage and the ninety-second word from the end of the passage are 'in the image of God'.

Finally the account of the seventh day comprises forty-six words, of which the central, twenty-third, words from the beginning and the end are יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי 'the seventh day'. The Golden Section of 46 falls at 28 and 18. The eighteenth word from the end is שָׁבַת 'He rested'. There are 194 letters, of which the central, ninety-seventh, is the central vau of the central word יוֹם 'day'. The first occurrence of the Name of God is the seventh word of the paragraph in A'2a. The second occurrence of the Name of God is the fourteenth word after that in A'3. From the second occurrence to the third inclusive, in A'2'a, there are fourteen words. Before the first occurrence there are six words, and after the third there is one word to the end of verse 3, together seven. In verse 4, A'1', there are eleven words, of which the Golden Section falls at 7 and 4. Seven words bring one to the two Names of God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים at the end of the crux in c'.

To recapitulate: the first sentence is half as long as the second (7+14). The number of words in the account of the first day (31) added to that of the second day (38) equals that of the third day (69), which is repeated in the account of the fourth day. The number of words in the account of the fifth day (57) is halved in the first part of the sixth (28), of which the second and third parts (36 and 22) are related by extreme and mean ratio; the fourth part repeats the number of words from the fifth day (57); and the account of the sixth day ends with a sentence of six words. The account of the seventh day (46) alludes to 'the seventh day' at the centre of its seven-part structure and states that 'He rested' at the Golden Section.

The account of Creation in Genesis 1.1 – 2.4 comprises 480 words. The Golden Section of 480 falls at 297 and 183. Parts A and B' comprise 296 words. Parts B and A' comprise 184 words. The same account of Creation comprises 1877 letters. The Golden Section of 1877 falls at 1160 and 717. Parts A and B' comprise 1159 letters. Parts B and A' comprise 718 letters.

We may infer with some confidence that the text has come to us very nearly, if not exactly, as it left the pen of its literate author.

NOTES

1 Biblical quotations are taken in Hebrew from K. Elliger, W. Rudolph *et al.* (edd.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart 1969-76); in Greek from A. Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart 1935); in Latin from B. Fischer *et al.* (edd.), *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (Stuttgart 1969); and in English from the Revised Standard Version (ed. 2) with occasional changes of word order. Parallel indentations and superscript letters, as well as letters and numbers in the margins, are intended to show what words and phrases are paired.

2 Plato *Timaeus*, 31-32, transl. Jowett.

3 T. L. Heath (transl.), *The Thirteen Books of Euclid's Elements*, ed. 2 (Cambridge 1956) I 137. H. L. L. Busard (ed.), *The First Translation of Euclid's 'Elements' Commonly Ascribed to Adelard of Bath*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 64 (Toronto 1983) 20. F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* (London 1937) 45. F. Lasserre, *The Birth of Mathematics in the Age of Plato* (Larchmont, NY 1964). H. E. Huntley, *The Divine Proportion, A Study in Mathematical Beauty* (New York 1970). R. Herz-Fischler, *A Mathematical History of Division in Extreme and Mean Ratio* (Waterloo, Ontario 1987).

4 Rabbi Dr H. Freedman (transl.), *Kiddushin* ch. I 30a-30b, in Rabbi Dr I. Epstein (ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim* (London 1936) Vol. VIII pp. 144-6.

Alison Salvesen

Moses' Staff as a Symbol of the Cross

There are three games that I have played with Naky in the ten years that I've known him as tutor and friend. The first goes back to undergraduate days, when I used to bring him my Biblical Hebrew prose composition each week. A number of words in Biblical Hebrew have variant spellings or synonyms, so Naky would draw out his Even Shoshan concordance from the book shelves in the Clarendon Building and see how many times the spelling or term I had adopted occurred compared to the one he preferred. Naky usually won 5-0, 25-3, 16-9 or whatever, of course. But I appreciated his objective and fair approach to my efforts.

The second game is one we still play from time to time. In this case I do the testing, and check up on Naky's lexicographical skills: 'What's the Hebrew equivalent of *the primrose path*? How do you say *hoist with his own petard* in Hebrew? What's *to warm the cockles of the heart* in Arabic?' Naky sits and thinks, and then comes up with some appropriate idiom from the Bible, Talmud or Qor'an.

The third game doesn't involve linguistics. Like many highly intelligent men, Naky is colour blind. He has problems with the range red-brown-mauve, and with green-blue. Sometimes I put on a jumper just to intrigue him, and he has to guess what colour it is. As he knows I like turquoise and jade, he's often right. But he has no problems at all with yellow, and that's why I'm wearing this particular outfit for a symposium in his honour!

As is well-known, Naky is a polyglot, and one of his many languages is Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic used by Eastern Christians to the present day. The foremost writer in Syriac was the theologian Ephrem, who lived in the fourth century in that region that is unfortunately only too familiar to us today, the Turkish-Syrian-Iraqi border, just south of Turkish Kurdistan. Ephrem too lived in troubled times, on the borders of two great empires, the Roman and the Persian, which were at war throughout most of his adult life; his city Nisibis (Nusaybin) was besieged by the Persians several times, and when it was finally handed over to the Persians by the Romans in a peace treaty, he and the rest of the Christian community went as refugees to the city of Edessa, present day Urfa.

In addition to the beautiful hymns and verse homilies for which he is famous, Ephrem wrote commentaries on Scripture, though for the Old Testament we have only those on Genesis and Exodus. Ephrem's exposition of the book of Exodus is more like a retelling of the biblical story than a modern commentary, though often

he cites a verse or phrase from the Bible and then fills it out for his audience. He mentions Moses' staff in passing a number of times. Introducing the plague of frogs, we find the following, referring also to the occasion when Moses' staff became a snake and swallowed the rods of the Egyptian magicians that had also turned into snakes:

> Since Pharaoh was not convinced by this (the threat of the plague), *Aaron raised his hand with the staff,*[1] (8.2) symbol of the Cross. This staff had marked the beginning of all the plagues when it swallowed up the serpents, like the Cross that was going to slay every idol. Through the staff was accomplished the parting of the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians, which prefigured the destruction of the Canaanites.
>
> *(VII.4).*

If for a moment we ignore the fact that here Aaron is the one holding the staff, we find a connection made between the staff and the accomplishing of the plagues and miracles, implying that it possessed, or was the agent for, great power. This is a motif found frequently in Jewish literature of the same period. However, the staff is also said to resemble the Cross in destroying idolatry.

Further on, in the commentary on chapter 14, Ephrem depicts the Israelites standing at the Red Sea as the Egyptians advance:

> *The Lord said to Moses, 'What do you pray* that I should do for you? (14.15) I am ready to act for your people before you pray to me! *Raise your staff,* which is the sign of the Cross, strike the sea *and divide it.*'
>
> *(XIV.3)*

The most explicit and developed identification of the Cross and Moses' staff occurs in Ephrem's description of the battle against Amalek:

> After these events Amalek came to fight them, and Joshua went out to meet him (17.8). Moses ascended the mountain with the staff of God in his hand. Moses only held the staff on the occasion of mighty deeds and miracles, so that you would know that it was a sign of the Cross, and it was through the power of the Cross that he performed all the miracles. Aaron and Hur went up with Moses .... When Moses raised his arms, *Israel prevailed* and destroyed the presumptuous nations who rushed to make war on the People. When Moses lowered his arms the nations prevailed and began to destroy those who continually grumbled against the Lord and against Moses (17.11).
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> The outstretching of Moses' hands and the staff that stood upright against his breast formed an unmistakable sign of the Cross. Joshua toiled in the valley and Moses on the mountain. When the People saw that he had let his arms fall, fear fell on them and they turned back before their enemies, and when Moses raised his arms, the Israelites were encouraged to advance against their foes.
>
> *(XVII.2)*

There are two other passages in Ephrem's Exodus commentary that are relevant to the discussion. The first is on chapter 12 and the preparations for Passover:

> Now the lamb is a symbol of our Lord, who was conceived on the tenth of Nisan. . . . So on the tenth when the lamb was confined, our Lord was conceived in the womb, and on the fourteenth when it was slain, the One he symbolised was crucified. As for the unleavened

> bread with bitter herb that Scripture mentions, a sign of his renewal[2] is represented in the unleavened bread, and the bitter herb is because those who bear him mourn. '*Roasted*' (12.8,9) is a symbol that he was baked in the fire;[3] '*with your loins girded and shoes on your feet*' symbolises the new disciples who are ready to go out and preach the good news. '*With your staffs in your hands*' (12.11) are the crosses on their shoulders; 'standing on their feet'[4] because no-one partakes of the Living Body sitting down. 'No foreigner *may eat of it*' (12.43) because no one who is not baptised eats of the Body. 'They shall not break *any of its bones*' (12.46), since even though our Lord's hands and feet were pierced, and his side gashed, none of his bones was broken.
>
> *(XII.3)*

We can see that most items in the Jewish Passover have been given a specifically Christian reference, and that the Israelites' ordinary staffs are meant to represent the crosses borne by Christ's disciples.

Finally in chapter 16, we have not a staff, but a tree:

> When the Israelites had crossed the sea, Ephrem says, God wanted to test them by withholding water. *They complained angrily* about the water at Mauret [Mara], *and* God *showed* Moses *a tree*. He threw it *into the water and it became sweet* (15.23-25). The tree was a symbol of the Cross, by which the bitterness of the nations was going to be sweetened.
>
> *(XVI.1)*

Ephrem has Christianised the Exodus narrative, that much is quite clear. But how did he get away with what might seem to us a tenuous and artificial identification?

Syriac Bible interpretation of this period is full of typology,[5] the principle by which something in the Hebrew Bible is seen as having both its purpose and its fulfilment in the events of Christ's life. This way of looking at things goes back to the New Testament itself: for instance Jesus in John's Gospel compares himself and his coming crucifixion to the serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert for the healing of the people (Numbers 21). Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 draws specific parallels between the wanderings in the desert and the experience of the early Church, and says in v. 11 that 'these things happened to them as examples (types), and were written down as a warning for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come'. The Epistle to the Hebrews bases its justification of the new faith on this type of exegesis. Typological interpretation was further developed in the early Church Fathers in the West, and is particularly prominent in the writings of Ephrem's older contemporary, the Syriac theologian Aphrahat. Aphrahat was especially keen on the sign of the Cross made by Moses in the battle against Amalek, though he also saw symbols of the Cross in many other places.

Such an approach to the Old Testament gives the Cross an existence and power stretching back to Mosaic times from the historical gibbet at Golgotha, and thus it represents an attempt to legitimise Christianity. But when did it originate?

For this we have to turn to a pseudonymous work dated to the late first century of the Common Era, the *Epistle of Barnabas*. It gave Christians instructions for living, like the New Testament Epistles, and also provided them with arguments to defend

themselves in controversies with Jews who thought of the new religion at worst as heretical and at best as an upstart. The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* took the line that the events of the Old Testament merely pointed to the coming of Christ. He saw baptism and the Cross foreshadowed in Scripture: the tree mentioned in Psalm One was one example of a sign of the Cross, the bronze serpent of Numbers 21.7 another. And before the battle with Amalek, the author says, 'the Spirit prompted Moses to make himself a representation of the Cross and the one who was to suffer on it' (ch. 11-12). However, there is no identification of the Cross with Moses' staff as such.

From these sketchy outlines the typology of the Cross developed further in the writings of the mid-second century saint and martyr, Justin. He was born in what is now Nablus about 100 C.E., was active in Ephesus in Asia Minor, and was martyred in Rome around 165. In his long work *The Dialogue against Trypho the Jew* he describes an encounter, probably fictitious, with a Jew who is curious to know how Christians can justify their doctrines from Scripture. In a number of passages Justin claims that various events in the Scriptures anticipated and foretold the coming of Christ.[6] Understandably one of Trypho's chief objections to the Christian identification of the historical Jesus with the Jewish Messiah is his ignominious death by crucifixion (cf. 1 Cor. 1.23). So Justin is at pains to show that this terrible and scandalous end was hinted at by Scripture, and by Moses himself. Many times he refers to the foreshadowing of the Cross. So he makes the Cross responsible for the following events involving Moses' staff: Moses' mission to liberate Israel; the parting of the Red Sea; and the gushing of water from the rock in the wilderness. Similarly it is through the Cross that the waters of Mara were sweetened.[7]

But Justin's favourite proof text is the Israelite victory over the Amalekites. He says that Moses himself was the first to reveal the symbol of the so-called accursed Cross, by praying to God with his arms outstretched, supported by Aaron and Hur: when he faltered, Amalek began to win, but when he kept up this position, Israel began to be victorious. The other factor in the eventual victory of the Israelites was that at the beginning of the battle Joshua's name was mentioned, and Joshua and Jesus are the same in Greek and Syriac. Moses did not win the battle by prayer alone, because the best prayers are those made when kneeling or prostrate with loud lamentation, whereas Moses was sitting down. So, Justin reasons, it must have been the combination of the sign of the Cross and the name of Jesus/Joshua that did the trick![8]

These ideas in the *Epistle of Barnabas* and Justin Martyr live on in the works of other Church Fathers such as Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Didymus, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa, and on to Augustine. They usually recur among the proof texts justifying Christianity against heresy and Judaism, so their origins in actual controversies with Jews were still kept in mind. In the East, among the Syriac Church Fathers, the typology of the Cross emerges in Aphrahat[9] and then in Ephrem, as we have seen, in the mid fourth century.

What was the Jewish attitude to Moses' staff at this time?[10] Were the rabbis aware of these Christian arguments, and if so, how did they respond to them? Our biggest problem when dealing with rabbinic literature is the question of dating. The works of the Church Fathers can be dated fairly accurately as they are they were written by individual men whose dates we know, and sometimes we are given the precise year of composition. But rabbinic literature is the commitment to writing of oral traditions sometimes dating back centuries. Where a rabbi's name is mentioned in connection with a particular tradition, he may not be the ultimate origin of the interpretation, or he may have been mistakenly credited with it. Often one rabbi is confused with a namesake or, most frequently of all, a tradition is unattributed. The Targums, Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible, include many very interesting traditions, but they developed over many centuries and, being translations, they do not include dates or attributions.

So when we look at what rabbinic literature has to say about something like Moses' staff, we have to remember that some elements may pre-date Christian arguments about the Cross. However, there are some very interesting references. Many are found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan; this includes many early traditions from Palestine, but it has later Babylonian features and was not given its final form earlier than the seventh century.

a) First, there are a number of references in rabbinic literature to special items created before even the creation of the heavens and the earth, like God's Throne of Glory and the Torah; or at twilight before the first Sabbath, like manna, or the tablets of stone for the Commandments. Moses' staff is sometimes included in the list of Ten Things created at the end of six days.[11]

b) According to Pirqe d-Rabbi Eliezer (XL), the staff was passed down in succession from Adam to Joseph via Enoch, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then it was acquired by Jethro. On Exodus 2.21 and 4.20, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan says that Moses found it driven into the ground in Reuel's garden; it was made of sapphire from the Throne of Glory, and weighed forty seah.[12] He was able to remove it, a feat comparable to that of King Arthur with Excalibur. He 'was willing to stay' with the pagan priest Reuel and marry his granddaughter (sic) Zipporah for the sake of the staff.

c) When Moses raises his hand (and the staff) before the Red Sea divides (14.21), Targum Pseudo-Jonathan describes it as 'the great and glorious staff created at the Beginning and on which was engraved the great and glorious Name [of God], as well as the Ten Signs with which he struck the Egyptians, the Three Patriarchs of the World and Six Matriarchs and Twelve Tribes of Jacob.'

d) As for the battle against Amalek, that favourite theme of Christian writers, some Jewish sources rather play down the use of the staff, and emphasise that Moses' hands are raised in prayer; Moses also relies on fasting and on the merits

of the patriarchs and matriarchs.[13]

e) The incident at Mara, where Moses throws a tree into the bitter waters and makes them sweet to drink, does not involve his staff, of course (though some careless Christian exegetes thought it did). Two Jewish sources have different interpretations of the Biblical passage: in one it is the Word of God that casts a word of Torah from the tree into the water,[14] and in the other the bitter oleander tree thrown into the water has the Divine Name carved on it.[15]

It is of course possible that all these ideas pre-date Christian use of the typology of the Cross. But there are a number of aspects which look suspiciously as though they were developed to counter Christian arguments:

1) First and foremost, Moses' staff has become something that represents God's relationship with Israel; it is carved with the Divine Name, hence its great power, but also with the names of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their wives, and with the names of the twelve tribes.
2) Justin identified the Cross with the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden: the rabbis put the creation of Moses' staff back to the evening of the Sixth Day only, but the sapphire from which it is made is from God's Throne, which was created with Torah before the First Day. In addition, the staff is carved with the names of the patriarchs and twelve tribes: Jewish sources say that God contemplated the creation of the patriarchs and of Israel before Creation, and point out that if God considers doing something, it is as good as done already.
3) Christians were connecting anything made of wood (like Jacob's ladder) or any tree (like the one in the first Psalm) with the wooden Cross: however, in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the staff is not made of wood at all, but as we have seen, of sapphire from God's Throne. This would rather undermine the Christian argument. As for the waters of Mara, they are not sweetened with a tree that could be said to represent the Cross, but with Torah, the focal point of Judaism.
4) At the battle of Amalek, Jewish sources play down the staff and Moses' outstretched arms, and emphasise Moses' reliance on the faith of the patriarchs and matriarchs, and his prayer and fasting. This counters the Christian idea that it was the emblem of Christ's suffering that was responsible for the Israelite victory.[16]

It is evident that both Jews and Christian have moved rather a long way from the literal meaning of the Biblical text, and of course, even further from each other. Are there any other, datable, occurrences of this kind of exegesis, where the interpretation is aimed against one's religious opponents?

In Gen. 22, Abraham is told by God to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him as a burnt offering. At the last moment God prevents him doing so, and Abraham offers

up a ram instead, which he finds caught by its horns in some sort of thicket or bush. The passage was taken by Christians as a foreshadowing of God giving his only Son to die; then later the ram was regarded as a type of Christ dying on behalf of humanity, which Isaac represents. In such interpretations the ram caught in the bush tended to become a Lamb hanging on a tree, with obvious Christian symbolism. Sometimes the thicket represented the crown of thorns. It seems to be in response to such Christian interpretations that the Jewish Bible translator Symmachus rendered the relevant part of verse 13 in Greek as 'a ram caught by its horns in a net'. In this way he produced a legitimate translation without giving the Christians a foothold for their typology. His work cannot be precisely dated, but it is likely to have been carried out at the very end of the second century of the Common Era.

Returning to Ephrem's commentary then, we can see that he was in fact the inheritor and not the originator of this particular typology of the Cross, the identification of the Cross with Moses' staff. Unlike Justin, he does not force the idea, but mentions it in passing. By this time it had become a standard notion in Christian circles, just as the corresponding and contradictory rabbinic accounts were in Judaism. By the end of the fourth century both communities, Christian and Jewish, East and West, appear to have settled on their particular interpretations and there was nothing new to be said on the subject.

NOTES

1 Words in italics indicate Ephrem's quotations from the Syriac Bible.
2 Christ's renewing of everything is a major theme in some of Ephrem's Hymns.
3 Probably a reference to Christ's baptism. The Jordan is sometimes depicted as fiery, or described as a furnace, via an old tradition in the Gospel harmony, the Diatessaron.
4 This phrase does not appear in the Syriac Bible.
5 See J. Daniélou, *Sacramentum Futuri. Etudes sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (1950: English translation *From Shadows to Reality. Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers* (London 1960)), and T.W. Manson, 'The Argument from Prophecy' *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1945) pp.129ff. For Syriac typology in particular, see R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition.* (Cambridge 1975), pp. 290-92.
6 E.g. in ch. 126 Justin says that Christ was called by many names in the Old Testament; Star, Rock, Anointing Oil and Staff. See also E.F. Osborn, 'Justin Martyr' *Beiträge zur historischen Theologie* 47 (Tübingen 1973) pp. 108ff.
7 From ch. 86, on Ex 4.7, Ex 14.16-21 (cf. ch. 138), Ex 15.23-25, Ex 17.5-6. Justin's other symbols of the Cross in Scripture included Jacob's rods thrown into sheep troughs (Gen. 30. 31-42), the staff with which he crossed the river Jordan (Gen. 32.10), the ladder between heaven and earth (Gen. 28. 12-18)!, Aaron's rod that blossomed (Num. 17), the tree at Mamre at which God appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18.1), Psalm 23's rod and staff, Elisha's stick that rescued the lost axehead in 2 Kings 6.1-8, Judah's staff given in pledge to Tamar (Gen. 38.25).
8 Ch. 90, cf. ch. 91, 97, 111, 112, 131.
9 On the victory over Amalek – *Demonstration on Fasting* (III), p.122 line 12f. and *Demonstration on Persecution* (XXI) p.959 line 15 of Parisot's edition (*Patrologia Syriaca* I-II): on the waters of Mara – ibid.p.959 line 11ff.
10 *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (Pseudo-Philo), a Jewish work that probably dates from some time in the first century, has a long passage concerning Moses' staff at his death. God says that it will stand as a covenant between him and Israel, like the rainbow in Genesis (*LAB* 19.11). This tradition seems to disappear in later Judaism, perhaps because Christians who saw the staff as a type of the Cross might have taken advantage of it to prove that the staff prefigured the New Covenant.
11 See W. Sibley Towner, *The Rabbinic 'Enumeration of Scriptural Examples': A Study of a Rabbinic pattern of discourse with special reference to the Mekhilta d'Rabbi Ishmael* (Leiden 1973), pp. 66ff.
12 The weight of 292 litres of flour? Which is very roughly equivalent to 26 stone (365 lbs), or 175 kg, according to an experiment in the kitchen!
13 Mekilta Amalek 1 (II p.142), Pseudo-Jonathan.
14 Targum Neofiti, cf. R. Simon ben Yohai in Mekilta Vayassa' 1, II p.92.
15 Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.
16 Mishnah Rosh HaShanah 3.8 also appears to be contradicting Christian explanations when it stresses that it was the Israelites' steadfast prayer and submission to God that brought victory against Amalek and healing from snakebite (Numbers 21), not Moses' hands or the bronze serpent.

Ahuvia Kahane

The Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage and the Paradox of Modern Hebrew Lexicography

One summer afternoon, towards the end of the work on the letter "B" of the *Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage*, Naky asked: How do you say "Buzz off!" in Hebrew? There followed a game of charades, played by Naky and myself, which involved much to-ing and fro-ing, flapping of the hands and tiptoeing around the room in the manner of the flight of various winged insects. We both enjoyed ourselves tremendously. When the laughter was over we both had a better idea of how the phrase "Buzz off!" is to be used and translated.

In many ways this type of scene was not unusual. Words are a game, and we (the lexicographers at the *OEHDCU*) were (often literally) players. But behind it all was Naky's very serious and, in my opinion, very courageous editorial policy. As Editor of the *Oxford-English Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage* N.S. Doniach was determined to produce a dictionary of linguistic realities, not a dictionary of dreams. Written sources were carefully and exhaustively consulted, but Naky always insisted we find out exactly what every expression meant in real life, who would actually use it, when, in what tone would the words be said, to whom, what gestures were involved and so on. In implementing his convictions, Naky was to break with many traditions and ideologies of Hebrew lexicography. It is mainly about these traditions that I would like to tell you today. I shall try to describe something of the history of modern lexicography and Modern Hebrew lexicography and shall conclude by an attempt to place Naky's work within that context.

The *Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage* is the product of the efforts of many contributors. Indeed all modern dictionaries are the product of scholarly collaboration. But the *OEHDCU* was given its shape and its identity by Naky. All that the rest of us had to do was to follow the leader. This was a game which I, for one, feel very privileged and grateful to have been allowed to play. For Naky, then.

A generation ago Uriel Weinreich, in an article on dictionary definition, complained about "the indifference which lexicography displays toward its own methodology".[1] Many will agree that at the time this complaint was not unjustified.

Ever since the Hellenistic era, lexicographers have been studying one another's work in their pursuit of "meanings". Often they borrowed from one another, sometimes improving on previous efforts, at other times giving substance to

lexicographic "ghosts". But lexicography, and especially the lexicography of living, changing languages, is about more than just the meaning of words. As the great J. J. Scaliger put it (in poetry), lexicography is a *labor omnes poenarum facies habens*.[2] Lexicographers, indeed Scaliger himself, did hold opinions about the many aspects of lexicography, but all too often these opinions could only be inferred indirectly from the final product; there was not a proper debate forum for lexicographers. In many respects lexicography thus deprived itself of the benefits of that system of storing and exchanging information which we commonly call "academics" today.

And yet the words "a generation ago" above must be stressed, and they must be understood in both a temporal and in an evolutionary sense. Weinreich's article appeared in 1962 in a collection of essays titled *Problems in Lexicography*.[3] That volume is today regarded as a something of a turning point in the history of modern lexicography, a point at which systematic questioning and development of lexicographic methodology began. Thus there are today several scholarly periodicals dedicated exclusively to lexicography.[4] Furthermore, lexicography has entered a dialogue with many branches of linguistics and language-related fields: case grammar, government-and-binding theory, discourse analysis, speech-act theory, deconstruction and reception theory, computing and information technology, experimental psychology and language-acquisition studies.[5] In such matters as the nature of definition, loan words, canonical form, collocability, context, data collection and many others, the lexicographer today can seek advice from a rapidly growing body of accumulated knowledge.[6] Some scholars have even made proposals for a comprehensive theory of lexicography.[7]

As more and more information became available, many lexicographers began to realize that the total authority commonly ascribed to dictionaries ("The *OED* defines so-and-so as...", as some articles begin) is at least theoretically if not otherwise false. None of the *literae humaniores* are objective scientific disciplines, nor indeed are the sciences themselves, as argued, for example, by philosophers, Thomas Kuhn and even earlier by Gaston Bachelard and George Canguilhem. The idea that dictionaries were not objective was not a denial of lexicographic method, it was merely a reaction against earlier, uncritical perspectives. Lexicography is today viewed as a "reading", a particular class of interpretation which is bound to a time, to a place, to a group of language users.

A simple example is *The American Everyday Dictionary*, published in New York in 1949 (ed. J. Stein). It includes information about Schenectady, Saratoga, Santa Fe, Santa Anna, Santa Barbara, Sacramento and dozens of other middle sized and small American towns. These entries would not normally be found in an English (or American) dictionary. Their inclusion is probably best explained as the result of post World War II American patriotism. A slightly more self-conscious example may be

found in Dr Johnson's dictionary, where *Grub Street* is defined as "the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries and temporary poems". The reference is, of course, to Johnson himself.

Dictionaries and dictionary entries, whether whimsical or sober, can be "deconstructed", we can subject them to feminist criticism, to political analysis, to discourse analysis, etc.[8] But again, a dictionary is not normally meant to be a personal account of a language, and the compiler of dictionaries is not quite an author. As has been pointed out frequently in recent years, lexicography must strive towards what, in the absence of a better overall term, we call the "descriptive".[9] The dictionary may perhaps best be regarded as an historical commentary on the words of a language, a sort of critical taxonomy. Its orientation remains historical, whether it looks at words and their development over a period of time, or simply seeks to record some aspects of vocabulary at one given temporal juncture. In practical terms, the dictionary is meant to provide the user with hints, that is to say with information about words which would be used not only by the lexicographer himself/herself but by larger groups of language users, by what are known as "speech communities".[10]

This, then, is a brief account of some current opinions in the field of lexicography. It is within this general framework that we may regard the case of Modern Hebrew lexicography and hence also the specific example of the *Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage*.

Modern Hebrew, while never a quite a "dead" language, did, nevertheless, have to be revived as as the primary language of a living speech community.[11] It is difficult to fix a precise date for the beginning of Modern Hebrew, but we might consider 1905, the year *Vaad Halashon* ("The Committee for Language") was founded, or 1908, the year the first volume of Ben Yehuda's Thesaurus was published.[12] At this point in time it would have by definition been impossible to produce a "descriptive" treatment of Modern Hebrew as a *living* language, simply because no such language existed. There existed such layers as Biblical Hebrew, *Leshon Hahamim* and *Haskala* Hebrew, and as we all know, there is considerable overlap between these and Modern Hebrew,[13] but in 1908 the link between old and new was an ideological premise, not an empirical fact. It was a reflection of more general Zionist ideals of revival. These ideals were on the whole utopian, and often incompatible with "descriptive" approaches.[14] Ben Yehuda himself regarded the revival of Hebrew, not so much an independent endeavour as a means of realising Jewish national aspirations.[15]

In the case of Hebrew, we find that the opposite of what has been by definition negated is by definition confirmed. The emerging Hebrew society in Palestine needed a language of its own. Since no such language existed, it had to be invented. This meant creating and "prescribing" the norm. Accordingly, since not only the language, but also the surrounding framework of research and researchers were not

yet in existence, the prescriber of the norm was by definition forced to work in at least relative, if not absolute isolation. As it happened, this isolation and the "personal" responsibility it entailed were quite acceptable to the historical father of Modern Hebrew, Eliezer Ben Yehuda.[16] The impossibility of a "descriptive" approach and the isolation of the first Modern Hebrew lexicographer (perhaps along with nineteenth-century views of the individual as a creative self and a few other ingredients taken from the social milieu of the time) again combine to create a framework that is diametrically opposed to every recent notion of lexicography.

Just as Herzel had dreamed of an *alteneuland*, an "old-new land", so Ben-Yehuda's dream was of an "old-new tongue". Modern Hebrew was a "new" language, but it was to be compiled exclusively from ancient sources. Even inherently modern *denotata* like "electricity", were given ancient names: the Modern Hebrew *hashmal* is a Biblical word which was given its new denotation by Ben-Yehuda himself. He made little distinction between words attested in the ancient sources and words he invented himself using ancient Hebrew roots and forms. Ideology dictated that the lexicographer was free to re-arrange the ancient building blocks. And yet the "old-new" element of Modern Hebrew Lexicography provided the lexicographer with a duty to preserve and perpetuate, much like any other scholar of ancient languages.[17] In this capacity the lexicographer does take part in an established debate about past layers of Hebrew, and is re-integrated with the scholarly tradition. The first Modern Hebrew lexicographer was, or at least wanted to be, both the innovator and a purist, to work both outside the tradition and within it.[18] Here, then, was the paradox of Modern Hebrew lexicography.

Whatever we may think of Ben Yehuda's endeavour, we must concede that its objectives have been realised. Ben Yehuda started a process, and this process is now complete: Hebrew is today a living language. But once a community of native speakers does exist, it begins to generate its own, independent discourse, be it literary, formal, colloquial or slang. Modern Hebrew lexicography was thus founded on a model with a built-in self-destruct mechanism. By accomplishing its aims – the creation of a living tongue – the model's basic premise of dependence on the "pure" ancient language was undermined.

By persuading speech communities to accept Hebrew as their own main everyday language, Ben Yehuda and his followers offered the people a linguistic supplement to political independence. However, it was not long before Hebrew lexicographers realised the threat posed by linguistic independence. They then made desperate and often despotic efforts to regain power. Thus, for example, Ehud Ben Yehuda, the son of Eliezer Ben Yehuda published an English-Hebrew/Hebrew-English dictionary (New York, 1961) which contains a large number of words used by none except the members of the Ben Yehudas' immediate family. These words were, however, ideologically sound: all were constructed from ancient Hebraic elements. *Yeushan*

is Ben Yehuda's word for a "pessimist", *pesimist* in Modern Hebrew; *nibul et* is "pornography", *pornographia* to most native speakers of Modern Hebrew; *reidak* is a "microscope", where the Modern Hebrew is *mikroskop*. Even today this approach is far from extinct. The most recent Supplement to to Even-Shoshan's Hebrew dictionary[19] contains many entries that are inconsistent with actual Modern Hebrew usage. A Walkman (i.e. "a personal cassette player") is given as *shimon*, presumably a word-play on *shama*, the Biblical root "to hear" and the Biblical name *Shimon*, "Simon". There appears to be no evidence for this word other than in the Supplement to Even Shoshan's dictionary. The common Hebrew word for a Walkman is *wokmen*.[20] The case of *shimon* is paralleled by a large number of apparently unattested entries in the Supplement.

Rejection of anything that is not "old-new" was, and in some ways still is, a hallmark of the young lexicographic tradition of Modern Hebrew. Even an eminent linguist like H. Rabin can make the broad claim that it is not possible to date Hebrew words on a morphological basis.[21] This statement is true only if we choose to ignore a very large number of more recent loan words, such as *evoluzia* ("evolution"), *radyo* ("radio"), *televisya* ("television"), *lexicografia* ("lexicography"), whose morphology provides us with excellent indications of the date at which they entered the Hebrew language. Indeed, in making his statement Rabin seems to have been pledging his allegiance to a founding ideology, rather than describing any real state of affairs.

It was this approach that N. S. Doniach, editor of the *Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage*, was to confront. The methodology adopted by Naky was such that it both exposed the paradox of the founding ideology of modern Hebrew lexicography and was incompatible with that ideology. The "creative" side of dictionary-making was put aside and a wide range of non-ancient sources for Modern Hebrew vocabulary was accepted as legitimate. This is the meaning of "current" in the title, *The Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage*.

Viewed from an English perspective, the word "current" is deceptively common. Many dictionaries declare their commitment to language as it is today by including the words "current", "contemporary", etc. in their titles. But in the discourse of Modern Hebrew lexicography "old" and "new" were initially one and the same. As a result, there developed no precise Modern Hebrew equivalent for the word "current". *Ivrit meduberet* means "spoken/colloquial Hebrew"; *Ivrit shotefet*, means "fluent Hebrew", as in "rapid and uninterrupted", or else "day-to-day"; *achshavit* is "avant-garde", or "modern"; *adkani* is "up to date"; *bat zmaneinu* is close, it means "contemporary" or "present day", but has little of the connotation of *actual usage* which is so important in "current". Indeed, it has been Hebrew lexicography's proprietary affliction to invent old-new words, which were very much a product of the "present day", but which nobody actually used. Thus, the title of the *Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary of Current Usage* still awaits a Hebrew translation. But

by now it must be clear that the lexicographers at *OEHDCU*, guided by the principles set down by Naky, do not believe they have the right to invent words. Barring last minute discoveries, a less dramatic, "descriptive", Hebrew title may have to be chosen, perhaps *HaMilon HaAngli-Ivri shel Oxford, Mahadurat 1992*, "The Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary, 1992 Edition". This title will, as it must, become outdated by the year 1993. But then in this electronic day and age, a dictionary based on the acceptance of change has not only the will, but also the means to follow hard on the heels of those languages which it seeks to describe.

Notes

1 U. Weinreich, "Lexicographic Definition in Descriptive Semantics" in F. W. Householder and S. Saporta (eds.), *Problems in Lexicography* (The Hague 1962) 26.

2 Scaliger compiled, but did not complete, a *Lexicon Arabicum*, (Cod. Scal. 212, Leiden). The Latin ([Lexicography is] "a labour which contains all punishments combined") is part of a poem in elegiac couplets, which was inscribed at the top of Scaliger's manuscript and is dedicated to all lexicographers. See Scaliger's (posthumous) *Poemata Omnia* (Leiden 1615) 35.

3 See above, note 1.

4 The best known are *Lexicographica, Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*, and the *International Journal of Lexicography*.

5 For an overview on the relations between lexicography and other disciplines see J. M. Sinclair, "Lexicography as an Academic Subject" in R.R.K. Hartmann (ed.) *LEXeter '83 PROCEEDINGS* (Tübingen 1984) 1-12. See also J. Bahr, "Ist Lexikographie eine Wissenschaft? Bemerkungen zu einer Tagung", Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik 6 (1978) 97-98.

6 For convenient (but not full) bibliographies see L. Zgusta, *Lexicography Today* Lexicographica Series Maior 18 (Tübingen 1988); L. Zgusta, *Manual of Lexicography* (The Hague – Paris 1971) 10-12, 359.

7 See e.g. H. E. Wiegand, "On the Structure and Contents of a General Theory of Lexicography" in Hartmann (see above, note 5) 13-30; G. Stein, "Towards a Theory of Lexicography: principles and/vs. practice in modern English Dictionaries" in Hartmann (see above, note 5) 123-130; E. Agricola, "Mikro-, Medio- und Makrostrukturen als Informationen in Wörterbuch" in J. Schildt, D. Vieherweger (eds.), *Die Lexikographie von heute und das Wörterbuch von morgen: Analysen – Probleme – Vorschläge*, Linguistische Studien, Reihe A, Arbeitsberichte 109 (Berlin 1983) 1-24.

8 See, for example, the work of William Frawley on dictionaries and modern literary theory: "Aspects of Metaphorical Definitions in the Sciences", *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 4 (1982) 118-150; "Intertextuality and the Dictionary: Toward a Deconstructionist Account of Lexicography", *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 7 (1985) 1-20.

9 See H. Allen et al., "Webster's Third New International Dictionary: A Symposium", *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 48 (1962) 431-440; M. Feyery, "Les mots anglais dans les dictionnaires de langue française", *La banque des mots* 3 (1972) 17-34; P. B. Gove, "The Dictionary's Function" in P. B. Gove (ed.), *The Role of the Dictionary* (Indianapolis, Ind. 1967) 5-7; R. Nir, "On Lexicographic Acceptability in Modern Hebrew" in. M. Nahir (ed.), *Hebrew Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Washington 1981) 335-353.

10 See, for example, W. Labov's important attempt to quantify collective notions of what is a "cup": "The Boundaries of Words and their Meanings" in C. J. Bailey and R. Shuy (eds.), *New Ways of Analyzing Variation in English* (Washington 1973) 340-73.

11 For some recent opinions on the subject see E. Silberschlag (ed.), *Eliezer Ben Yehuda: A Symposium in Oxford* (Oxford 1981); A. Kahane, "Ben Yehuda, Whorf and Frankenstein" in T. Parfitt (ed.), *Language Revival* (Papers from the International Conference to Mark the Centenary of the Revival of Hebrew, London, forthcoming).

12 Hebrew was used prior to 1905 or 1908, but only in liturgical and to a lesser extent in literary contexts.

13 See, e.g. H. Rabin, *A Short History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem 1973).

14 A. D. Gordon, one of the great visionaries of the State of Israel, thought the State could not be judged and tested by empirical means, "because such a test will prove that the whole Zionist enterprise is impossible".

15 This is the subject of his "programmatic" article "*Sheela Nichbada*", published in 1879 ("A Weighty

Question", transl. D. Patterson, in E. Silberschlag (ed.), *Eliezer Ben-Yehuda: A Symposium in Oxford* (Oxford 1981) 1-12.

16 Ben Yehuda struggled not only for the revival of Hebrew, but also to be recognized himself as the Reviver. See for example "A Brief Note on a Personal Matter", which he published (in Hebrew) in *Hashkafa* 6.31 (1905) 2.

17 The title of Ben Yehuda's dictionary appears in several languages, but the main titles are in Hebrew and in Latin. The Latin, *Thesaurus Totius Hebraitatis et Veteris et Recentioris*, is highly revealing. *Hebraitas* is a Latin word unattested elsewhere (and probably introduced by Ben Yehuda himself) whose formation is based on such words as *Latinitas*, "Latinity", "pure Latin usage", and the late *Graecitas*, "pure Greek usage". We must therefore translate the Latin title as "A Dictionary of the Complete and Pure Hebrew Language, both Old and New".

Despite the words "Old and New" it is obvious that only an ancient ("dead") language can be "complete"; By speaking of the "Complete and Pure Hebrew", Ben Yehuda may have revealed how paradoxical his notion of revival was. In the *Prolegomena* to the Dictionary (published posthumously, Jerusalem 1941), he discusses two great dictionaries of "dead" languages: the *Thesaurus Latinae Linguae* (p. 13) and the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* of Estienne (p. 29).

18 Ben Yehuda occasionally quotes ancient Greek translations of Old Testament words, often indirectly – through a secondary source. Where no secondary source is quoted the Greek is often given in the particular case/number of the Greek context, rather than in the paradigmatic (nom. sing. or nom. and gen. sing.) form. The Greek is often misprinted and constructions are sometimes given with unexplained omissions. In the Dictionary's Hebrew footnotes the Greek is sometimes retranslated in accordance with the grammatical construction of the Dictionary's Hebrew, rather than the Biblical Greek construction.

19 This supplement is a thin, paperbound pamphlet. It is undated, but was published in Jerusalem in the late 1980's. For the dictionary itself see A. Even-Shoshan, *The New Dictionary* (Jerusalem 1975) vols. I-VII; Supplement (Jerusalem 1983). This dictionary has for many years been regarded as the leading mono-lingual Hebrew dictionary, a position that remains unchallenged. Its only competition, the Academy for the Hebrew Language's *Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*, is a long-standing project which is not likely to reach completion in the near future. See Z. Ben Hayyim, "The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language" in Z. Malachi (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress on Literary and Linguistic Computing* (Tel Aviv 1979) 109-113.

20 A survey by the author in 1989-90 revealed 35 written sources for (Hebrew) *wokmen* (articles in major Hebrew daily papers, advertisements, etc.). 57 Hebrew-speaking shop-owners in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and 212 individuals interviewed in 1989-90 identified *wokmen* correctly. No individual was familiar with the word *shimon*; none managed to make an accurate guess as to its meaning out of context; most people interviewed made a broadly correct guess when given the following defining-context (in Hebrew): "David put on his earphones, put the cassette in his *shimon*, pushed the ['start'] button, and walked away dancing to the sound of the music".

21 Rabin 1973 (above, note 13) 10.

Peter Glare

Starting from the Wrong End

A lexicographer, like anyone else, is liable to be asked on social occasions what he does for a living. On receiving his answer, the questioner usually wishes he had kept quiet, but to cover his retreat, may go on to ask, with some lack of enthusiasm: 'How do you go about writing a dictionary?' The simple answer is, 'You just get on with it.' Otherwise there are as many answers as there are dictionaries, all long and complicated, and I am not going to give another one now: certainly not, as my title might suggest, advocate a new kind, starting with *z* or *omega* or *tav* and working through to *a*, *alpha* or *aleph*, etc. Instead I just want to touch briefly on one particular fault of bilingual dictionaries (to conceal the names of particular offenders under a generality). Not to keep you on tenterhooks too long, may I quote the words of Basil Gildersleeve in vol. 19 of the *American Journal of Philology*: 'Liddell and Scott were even greater sinners than the average lexicographer, and complaints enough were heard in their lifetime. In the 7th edition they not only kept in mistakes of their own but spoiled other people's work.' (In what follows I shall include among the sinners Liddell and Scott's successors, without necessarily distinguishing them.) The illustrations I shall be giving in the next few minutes are admittedly trivial. This is merely for simplicity of presentation – the same things are to be found in the more important and complicated articles.

There are indications in Liddell and Scott that the old conceit that the Bible was originally dictated by God in the words of the Authorized Version, and that all other versions are either unauthentic prefigurations or later corruptions, is no longer held. Except just occasionally. The eighth edition concludes its article on the adjective λοιπός as follows: section 4: 'τὸ λοιπόν and τὰ λοιπά, *the rest* Aesch.*Pr*.476, 697,699, etc.; also λοιπόν without the Article, as Adv. *for the rest, further*, Lat. *ceterum*, and so often (λοιπὸν) ἤδη, *already*, Plat.*Prot*. 321c; (and) λοιπὸν δή Id. *Gorg*.458d: the regul. Adv. λοιπῶς is not used.' Much of this section is, to put it mildly, inaccurate, and is replaced by an equally inaccurate section in the ninth edition (LSJ). This incidentally includes a mention of the phrase καὶ τὰ λοιπά, which is the modern Greek equivalent of our *et cetera*, with one single example; this unfortunately is not an example of the phrase at all, being part only of a longer construction. But this is not to my present point. The new edition continues with an extra section 5: 'λοιπόν, Adv. *then, well then*, Plb. 1.15.11,al., Dsc.2.83, Arr.*Epict*.1.24.1, οὐδεμία λ. ἀμφισβήτησις *BGU* 969.19 (ii A.D.)'; again, not all

true, but then 'b*finally*, λ., ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε *2Ep.Cor*.13.11'. This recalls St Paul's ringing valedictory greeting to the Corinthians in the AV: 'Finally, brethren, farewell!' In fact, St Paul was being rather less dramatic, and, having said what he had to say, went on: 'Now all that remains is for me to say goodbye' – in fact, as the original section 4 put it 'for the rest'. This last addition to the article is therefore quite unwarranted. It is an example of the not uncommon practice in bilingual dictionaries of starting from the wrong end – of deciding what the context *ought* to require, and asserting that the word in the text means just that. In this particular case no great harm, theologically speaking, is done, and even lexicographically it is hard to say that the translation is wrong; only the false impression is given that the word had undergone further sense development.

The verb ἄω (C) in LS8 is divided into two sections. I is defined as (transitive) *satiate* and II intransitively, *take one's fill* of a thing. In the 1968 supplement a new section III is based on some passages from the didactic poet Nicander – ἆσαι φλοιόν *Th*.676, and *Al*.305 and 331. In the first, the quotation given, just the bare object φλοιόν *bark*, does not adequately illustrate the sense of the verb; the full phrase, giving as the object ἔγχλοα φλοιὸν ἐλαιήεντα κρότωνος *the sappy, oily bark of the castor-oil tree*, would make it clear what sort of substance was involved. The other two examples also concern herbal remedies. Anyway, what do you do with medicines? Of course, you administer them, so the definition of this new section III is '*administer* a medicine'. It is not easy to see how the sense *administer* evolves from the ideas of *satiate* and *take one's fill*, nor does it. Schofield's translation of the first of these passages begins 'Administer *plenty* of', etc. and this no doubt is the source of our new sense *administer*. But *plenty* is the essential idea. If *give one a fill* were added to *satiate* in the first section, the Nicander passages would fit there quite happily and there would be no need for a new section. Here the addition is not only unnecessary, but wrong. The reader here has, of course, been given the correct senses, and can, if he is discerning enough, reject the new suggestion and employ the correct sense when making his translation.

My next example is of a ἅπαξ λεγόμενον. If the word is misunderstood here, we have no further example against which to check it. In Xenophon's treatise *On the Art of Horsemanship* there occur the words μεταδετέον δὲ μετὰ τὸ ἄριστον ἀπὸ τῆς φάτνης, ἵν' ἥδιον ἐπὶ τὸ δεῖπνον ἴῃ. The general sense is clear. After its morning feed, the horse must be taken away from the stall where it has fed, so that in the evening it comes to its food with a fresher appetite. And so LS right from the first edition translate μεταδετέον as 'one must untie', and the Loeb translation renders the passage 'the groom . . . must loose him from the stall, etc.'. However the preposition μετά when prefixed to a verb never has a negative force – one of the advantages a lexicographer has is that he can see together all the words with the same prefix and observe what its force is – but is most commonly used to indicate change.

Here the word means 'one must change its tether', i.e. tie it up somewhere else. The reader, as typified by the Loeb translator, has no other evidence and so accepts what the lexicographer says. Passow, on whose dictionary LS originally based their work, glosses the verb μεταδέω with 'umbinden, d.i. anders od. anderswohin binden' and one has the unkind thought that LS read 'umbinden' as though it were 'unbinden'.

Or here is another simple one. We all know what a dragon looks like. It is a scaly creature with wings and a long tail, usually breathing out fire from its nostrils. In the 5th-century-BC poet Bacchylides occur the words ξανθοδερκὴς δράκων. What more natural than that LSJ should render ξανθοδερκής as *with fiery eyes*, of a dragon? ξανθοδερκής is derived from δέρκομαι *see* or *look* and ξανθός. Now ξανθός means (more or less) *yellow* and in all the other compounds recorded by LSJ it retains that sense, and there seems no reason why we should impose our later ideas of the creature on this early specimen. Anyway δράκων in Greek just means *a large snake*.

Sometimes the lexicographer is alert and sees that there is something wrong. The article on ἀναφορά in LS[1] has two main divisions, covering the ideas of 'raising' and 'leading or referring back'. LS[6] introduces a third section, with one supporting reference, and the definition '*floor* of a wine-press'. LSJ considering *floor* to be unsuitable in the context, changes this to '*ceiling* of a wine-press'. But neither of these alternatives has any clear connexion with the original Greek verb ἀναφέρω. The editors in this case were unable to see how the passage concerned could be explained by the definitions already given, consigned it to a position of lonely emininence and guessed a meaning for it. Now the Greek, from *Geoponica* 6.1.3, runs: Δεῖ δὲ τὸν ληνεῶνα ὅλον καταλεῖφθαι πάντοθεν λειοτάτοις κονιάμασι, καὶ οὐχ ἧττον τὰς ἀναφόρας, ἵνα μηδὲν γεῶδες, μήτε τῶν ζωογονουμένων ἐν αὐταῖς, ἐμπίπτον μιάνῃ τὸν οἶνον. The whole of the room where the wine-vat is, and especially the ἀναφοραί, must be covered over with thin layers of plaster, so that no earthy material or living creatures which are engendered in it, fall into the wine and foul it. For impurities to fall into the wine from the floor, unless the vat was sunk below floor-level, would be unlikely; hence LSJ's preference for the ceiling. Even then, ἀναφόρας is plural, which does not seem appropriate. One is here confronted by a technical term, and it is not easy to be sure what it *does* mean. To suggest that we are here concerned with ducts (leading from the press to the vat) would at least do no violence to the basic idea contained in the verb φέρω. The problem becomes less simple when a third language is involved. I am referring of course to the Septuagint and the other Greek versions of the Old Testament. We do, sometimes, know what the Hebrew means; equally the Septuagint translators sometimes did not. And if we know what the Hebrew means, we don't necessarily know if that was the Hebrew which the translators were translating. The Greek word ἀνάβασις normally means *going up, ascent*, and LSJ's article is divided into a

number of sections, all of which are variations on this idea. There is one exception. Section I 5 is defined as *leaves* of tree. This seems an unlikely sense for the word to have. The one reference supporting this is Lxx *Ez.* 47.12 where the Greek runs: καὶ ἔσται ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῶν εἰς βρῶσιν καὶ ἀνάβασις αὐτῶν εἰς ὑγίειαν. The translation in the RV is: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing. The fault here lies with the Septuagint translator who has taken the Hebrew *alvah* 'leafage' and apparently read it as *aliyah*, for which the Greek ἀνάβασις would do as a translation. But of course ἀνάβασις never meant 'leafage', and a mistake on the part of the Septuagint translator does not justify a new sense.

So words cannot be made to mean anything one likes at the whim of the translator, though I would certainly not maintain that etymology is an infallible guide to the sense of a word. Ancient authors, as we were constantly told at school, did write sense, however much we doubted it at the time, and one must look for a sense which is consistent with the context. Words do develop and change their meaning, but not usually without some sort of reason.

The English definitions in the examples I have mentioned are then unsuitable. There may have been more excuse for them in the days when the study of the classics consisted mainly of translations from Greek (or Latin) into English, or the other way round, expressed in the most elegant terms possible. Now it is clear that what we really want to know is what the words actually mean, or rather what they meant to the original users in communication with each other. It is no use finding an attractive English word and saying: 'That will make a good definition.' The likelihood is that there is no exact equivalent and it may very well be more honest to give some periphrasis, which in itself is not particularly elegant, but is derived from a study of the context and of the development of the word and its use in as many other passages as one has time to examine.

Liddell and Scott indeed even felt the need to justify the use of English in their Lexicon. 'It may be asked (they say) whether such a Lexicon should be in *Latin*, as in the old times; whether the other is not an unworthy condescension to the indolence of the age. In answer we would draw a distinction between an English *lexicon* and English notes to Classical authors. We hold that critical notes to these authors will always be best in the Latin Tongue .... The chief business of lexicography is one, to interpret words; of Criticism another, to unravel the idioms and intricacies of language. The Latin tongue may be the best organ for the latter work, yet very unequal to the due execution of the former. And quite unequal it is. For just as impossible is it to render the richness, boldness, freedom and variety of Greek by Latin words, as it is to give any adequate conceptions of Milton or Shakspere by French translations. Yet French is, confessedly, the language of Mathematics. So Latin is the language of Classical criticism. But we hold it feeble and defective for the purposes of lexicography. And when we add to this the fact that in richness at

least and freedom (though certainly not in beauty or exactness) our own language is not unworthy to compare with the Greek, we conclude confidently that the best lexicon an Englishman can use to read Greek with, will be in English. A Frenchman may have reason for using a Greek-Latin lexicon; an Englishman can have none.'

I have been guilty this afternoon of the same crime of which I have been accusing my fellow-lexicographers – of starting from the wrong end. I should have begun by congratulating Naky on his eighty-fourth birthday, and thanking him for all the help and encouragement I have received from him both in a personal way and in the course of my work. I could say a lot, but instead I will just mention a small incident that occurred recently. I happened to be travelling in the train from Oxford to Hanborough in company with the present wine correspondent of the Observer. On the way he pointed out of the window and said, 'I used to live there.' What he was pointing to was this very Yarnton Manor. In the subsequent conversation of course Naky's name turned up. My companion remembered him, and Théa, with great affection, and spoke particularly of an occasion when Théa helped a friend of his at a critical time in his life. I mention this, to emphasize that Naky's friends are not just here in this room, but to be found constantly in all sorts of places.

Tudor Parfitt

The Lexicographer: A Harmless Drudge?

I think the starting point for this brief deliberation must be Dr. Johnson's famous definition of a lexicographer as 'a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge'. (Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol.i, p.296). Johnson was writing in 1755, about a hundred years before the explosion of language and nationality issues which would destroy forever the notion that a lexicographer is necessarily harmless. And indeed many of the great lexicographers spawned by the age of nationalism were far from drudges; on the contrary many of them were inspired, passionate, extremist individuals: often men of absolutely heroic stature.

I first met Naky in about 1969 or 1970. I was starting on my postgraduate work under the supervision of my erstwhile tutor, David Patterson, and my subject at the time, although it was to change, was the image of the Arab in Modern Hebrew Literature. I was constantly coming across transliterated Arabic words in Hebrew texts which I did not know and which I could not find in the Arabic dictionaries in the Oriental Institute Library. But I knew that on the second floor of the Oriental Institute there was a door which had Arabic Dictionary on the name plate. I imagined a room with a vast multi-volumed Arabic dictionary, something like the OED but bigger. One day having failed, as usual, to find a word, I knocked on this door and went in. Naky was sitting reading a book. There was no other book in sight.

"I'm looking for the Arabic dictionary" I said.

"I" replied Naky "am the Arabic Dictionary."

This statement was true for the Arabic Dictionary and has become perhaps even more true for the Oxford Hebrew Dictionary and not only in the sense he meant it. In any event such a statement, suggesting total identification and involvement with a language and its needs, could easily have come from the three lexicographers I would like to very briefly discuss today.

The first of these is Eliezer Ben Yehuda, the reviver of the Hebrew language, who requires no introduction either to this august assembly or indeed to this venerable room whose walls have heard a lot of him over the years. I should also mention that the Ben Yehuda family was known to the Doniach family along with Bialik, Ahad Haam, Lea Goldberg, Shalom Asch, which is to say just about everybody in Jewish letters at the time. Ben Yehuda of course was the first great modern Hebrew lexicographer.

My second lexicographer and grammarian, of whom I have spoken in this very room some years ago, was the reviver of the Slovak language. This too has some relevance to Naky insofar as both he and his parents, and particularly I think his mother, were and are very considerable scholars of Slav languages; and the third is Claudius Labib, the little-known reviver, or rather would-be reviver of the Coptic language. As far as I know, Naky does not know Coptic, although this public reproach might well inspire him to go off and learn it.

One element which these three quite remarkable men have in common is that they clearly are not drudges. Indeed they share a passionate attachment to their respective languages and people and a lot of heroic extremism in the way they subordinated their domestic environment to their lexicographic and language revival endeavours.

When Ben Yehuda was on his way to Palestine in 1881, sailing down the then unpolluted Danube, various events occurred which would be later recorded in his memoir *Halom ve-Shivro*. 'This journey' he wrote 'in the company of a gentle, loving creature, passing through that wonderful scenery acted upon me like a charm. My spirit . . . grew calm, I was able to take my mind off the troubles that awaited me in Palestine and so I began getting my wife accustomed to speaking Hebrew. This' he wrote with typical understatement 'was a little difficult at the beginning ... but loves prevails over every difficulty.'

The difficulty of course was that Devora Ben Yehuda knew no Hebrew at all at the time and the idea of speaking this language within the family and relationship (when there were several other languages that she and he did know which they could have spoken) was unheard of. None the less she persevered and a few days later, at a particularly beautiful spot on the Danube called, because of the precipitous nature of the banks, 'the iron gate', Ben Yehuda, unable to restrain his rapture, exclaimed in Hebrew: 'Mah yafeh hamakom hazeh'. And his wife, obviously no linguistic slouch herself, replied, 'Beemet yafeh zeh hamakom'.

As Ben Yehuda wrote: 'these were the first words uttered by a woman in our times, in a secular conversation, in the Hebrew language as a living, spoken language'. The point I am making is that Ben Yehuda's zeal with respect to the revival of Hebrew was sufficient that he felt quite justified in insisting that his wife spoke Hebrew and nothing but Hebrew for the rest of their lives together. Not long after his arrival Ben Yehuda's wife gave birth to a son: 'This precious holy soul' he wrote 'was the mother of the child who was born on that day (the day of the founding of Rishon le Tziyyon). She was the first Jewish mother in our time to speak Hebrew to her children from the first moment of their birth – this was my wife Devorah.' Clearly the fact that the birth of his son seemed to him to be a symbolic parallel of the birth of the new Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael tells its own story. But there is more to it. Ben Yehuda's financial position at the time was not marvellous. He earned ten dollars a month for teaching in the Alliance school in Jerusalem and two

dollars a month for the editorial work he did for the Jerusalem Hebrew journal *HaHavatzelet*. Not a princely sum and not one with which you could employ exactly an army of servants, as he pointed out. But you could get a young maid for less than half a dollar a month, and this was sorely needed because Devorah, not robust at the best of times, had been weakened by childbirth and the privations of Jerusalem life. According to Ben Yehuda: 'she voluntarily agreed not to have a maidservant in the house, lest the child overhear the sound of a language other than Hebrew'. From the detail provided in the text we can see that Ben Yehuda was proud of the privations that his wife, and to a lesser extent he had endured on behalf of the language he loved.

Ben Yehuda went on to write his dictionary and spearhead the movement which resulted in the revival of Hebrew. He died in 1922. Devora – perhaps to some extent the victim of her husband's zeal – died in 1891 at the age of 36.

There is an absolutely remarkable and hitherto unremarked similarity between the life and work of Ben Yehuda and that of Claudius Labib who was born in Asyut, Egypt, in 1868 and died in a nearby village in 1918. Labib was brought up in the educational system of the Coptic church in Egypt and went on to become the greatest Coptic scholar Egypt had produced, writing an important grammar as well as his famous dictionary of Coptic. Like Ben Yehuda, he was dedicated to the revival and separate development of his nation – the Coptic people. Coptic, like Hebrew, had not been spoken for well over a millennium. His involvement with the task he had set himself was absolute. He was as identified with the revival of Coptic as Ben Yehuda, not many miles away, was with Hebrew.

Unlike Ben Yehuda, Claudius Labib delayed his marriage to his beloved until she had mastered Coptic. It was a condition of his proposal to her that she learn it and it was explicitly stated in the wedding contract that she would be required to speak Coptic at all times within the home as long as they remained married. Like all other Copts, her native language was Arabic. She was now forbidden to speak this language. In the same way that Ben Yehuda's family was raised, in Hebrew, in Jerusalem, so Claudius Labib's somewhat more numerous family was raised, in Coptic, in Cairo. The young Ben Yehudas were the first native speakers of Hebrew for about 1800 years; the young Labibs were the first native speakers of Coptic for about 1200 years.

The young Labibs knew no Arabic: on one famous occasion Claudius's daughter was in the garden of their country home and a lamb fell into an irrigation ditch. Wanting to alert the Muslim gardener she told him all about the lamb in Coptic. He understood nothing and the poor creature drowned. Henceforward all the servants, gardeners and guests were required to learn Coptic. In the same way that Ben Yehuda rejected his real name, Eliezer Perelman, and called himself by a proud Hebrew name, Ben Yehuda – the Son of Judah, at first as a pen name and later as his officially recorded name – so Labib insisted, again in his marriage contract, that his wife take a Coptic name and later called his sons and daughters names which had

not been heard in Egypt for the best part of two thousand years: Nefertiti, Isis, Ahmis, Seti, Pahar, Tutut and so on.

For reasons which I cannot go into here Claudius Labib failed to extend his revival of Coptic beyond a fairly small circle, and this language has been able to retain what Gibbon in his *Autobiography* called 'the decent obscurity of a learned language'.

L'udovit Stur, my third character, is widely regarded as the creator of the Slovak literary language, as the man who united the Slovak people and as 'the most illustrious name in Slovak history'. Like Ben Yehuda and Claudius Labib, Stur made great life decisions on the basis of his love for his language, Slovak. At the time Slovak was repressed by the Hungarians and Stur risked his life on countless occasions in defence of Slovak and made many sacrifices. Perhaps foreseeing difficulties he abandoned his great love, one Marie Pospisilova, declaring "I have consecrated myself to the cause of my precious language and I can serve the cause of the revival better as a bachelor'. But then Stur had the problem of turning a spoken language into a literary language, the other two had the opposite task of turning an ancient literary language into a vernacular spoken language and for that you need women and children!

These three figures, these three great lexicographers, have achieved a sort of legendary status. And I think the same can be said, to a certain extent, of the Doniach involvement with languages. Not long ago I was in the University steam room after a game of squash when I bumped into a former student at the Oxford Oriental Institute. "Is it true" he asked "that Doniach knows *all* of the Chinese dialects?" I do not know the answer to that, but I do know that his friends have real pleasure in recounting not only the many languages he does know but also the prizes and honours that have been bestowed upon him in respect of them.

His early education must have something in common with that promised by Mr Wackford Squeers in his well-known academy, Dotheboys Hall, where 'youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket money, provided with all necessaries and instructed in all languages living and dead'.

This passion for languages runs in the family. Naky's mother was a very considerable Russian scholar as well as being a noted Hebrew writer and activist, while his father, Aaron, was a Semitics scholar and, among other things, the first incumbent of the post I occupy with such little distinction at SOAS. Indeed I think he was probably the first holder of a post in Modern Hebrew anywhere in the world. It was he who started the family connection with Wadham, it was he who without his matriculation got a B.Litt. in Arabic at Oxford, it was he who translated the Balfour Declaration into its Hebrew version, it was he who was imprisoned by the Russian secret police as he was on his way to Herzl's last public address, who started the first Hebrew school for girls in this country, who founded the Oxford Jewish Society and much else in his remarkable life. Naky's father, Aaron, was aware that

he would be the stuff of legend. Shortly after his arrival in Oxford in about 1919, Aaron sent his son Sonny a photograph of himself in subfusc inside a copy of Hans Christian Andersen's *Tales* with the dedication: 'This photo and other legends.' One of Aaron's obituaries spoke of his 'passionate love of Hebrew and Arabic and his burning faith in the future of the Jewish people'. This passionate love has been given perhaps even more remarkable substance in the work of Naky which we are celebrating here.

If the impression is conveyed of an austere, dry and somewhat crazed man then it is a lamentably misleading impression. Naky is a complete man. No-one I think has mentioned his culinary prowess. Here too he is no drudge. On the occasion when I first encountered him in the room of the Arabic dictionary in the Oriental Institute he turned to me and asked "Have you ever eaten a truffle?" adding that he thought that *kemehah* would do as a translation of 'truffle' in Hebrew. I replied that I had never had the good fortune to eat a truffle.

And with that he led me back to Osney and, while I chose a bottle of wine in his cellar, he cooked the best *omelette aux truffes* that I am ever likely to eat.

Participants

1.	Mr D. & Dr G. ABRAMSON	(David and Glenda)
2.	Mrs Vivienne ALFORD	
3.	Dr Mustapha BADAWI	
4.	Dr Meg BENT	
5.	Mrs Elsa BEHRENS	
6.	Prof. & Mrs A. BRON	(Tony and Diana)
7.	Mrs Gloria CIGMAN	
8.	Prof. & Mrs Benjamin COHEN	
9.	Mrs Mary COUPLAND	
10.	Mr & Mrs M. COOPER	(Mel and Grazyna)
11.	Mrs Hélène DAVRAY	
12.	Miss Martha DONIACH	
13.	Professors I. & D. DONIACH	(Sonny and Deborah)
14.	Miss Iona DONIACH	
15.	Mr Edgar DUCHIN	
16.	Mr & Mrs S. DURANT	(Stuart and Ruth)
		(Owen and Galia)
17.	Dr David GENDLE	
18.	Mr & Mrs P. GLARE	(Peter and Ivy)
19.	Mr & Mrs S. GOLT	(Sidney and Deborah)
20.	Dr & Mrs I. GRANT	(Ian and Beryl)
21.	Mr Ian HACKETT & Miss Miriam DURANT	
22.	Mrs Diana HALLIDAY	
23.	Dr & Mrs J. HARLE	(Jimmy and Betty)
24.	Dr Ruth VAN HEYNIGEN	
25.	Dr David HOWLETT	
26.	Dr John HYMAN	
27.	Mr Adam JACOB	
28.	Dr Ahuvia KAHANE	
29.	Mrs Hannah KANTER	
30.	Mr David KESSLER	
31.	Dr & Mrs L. KOCHAN	(Lionel and Miriam)
32.	Mr & Mrs W. LOCKWOOD	(Wilfrid and Faith)

33. Dr & Mrs N. LUCAS	(Noah and Beatrice)
34. Mr & Mrs M. F. LYONS	(Mike and Lorna)
35. Mr & Mrs R. MAY	(Ron and Helen)
36. Dr Mark MAZOWER	
37. Mr & Mrs W. MAZOWER	(William and Miriam)
38. Dr Fuad MEGALLY	
39. Mr & Mrs H. MICHAELS	(Henry and Louise)
40. Mrs Patricia MOSS	
41. Dr Ron NETTLER	
42. Dr Christine NICHOLLS	
43 Dr Tudor PARFITT	
44. Dr & Mrs D. PATTERSON	(David and José)
45. Mr. Peter PILLEY	
46. Miss Maya RAWAL	
47. Mr Shashi RAWAL	
48. Mr & Mrs A. ROBERTS	(Adrian and Sue)
49. Dr & Mrs H. ROSENBERG	(Harry and Mildred)
50. Mr Benedict ROTH	
51. Mrs Ruth SHAFFER	
52. Mr D. & Dr A. SALVESEN	(David and Alison)
53. Dr Najah SHAMAA	
54. Dr Raphael SAPPAN	
55. Dr & Mrs K. SAUNDERS	(Kenneth and Sylvia)
56. Dr & Mrs H. SHUKMAN	(Harry and Barbara)
57. Professor Geza VERMES	
58. Mr John WALL	
59. Mrs Hilde WATSON	
60. Dr Connie WILSACK	
61. Mr & Mrs L. WOLLENBERG	(Lionel and Sarah)