**English Abstracts of the Hebrew Section's Papers**

**Irit Ziffer**

“Their God is a God of the mountains” (1 Kings 20, 23):

Topographic Imagery in Ancient Near Eastern Visual Art

Topographic formations – hills, or mountains whose peaks disappear in hovering clouds or mists, potent erupting volcanoes, springs, rivers and caves – have kindled Man’s mytho-poetic imagination. Mountains were sanctified and became the gods’ habitations. Sumerian literature reveals that mountain ridges were conceived as the pivot separating and at the same time linking heaven and earth, a passageway enabling the ascent to heaven and descent to earth. By extension, mountains were metaphorical of temples, where mortals could encounter the divine through their images. In Mesopotamia, mountains as temples influenced building practices and aesthetics, giving rise to the architecture of the massive stepped temple, the ziggurat. Where there were no mountains, artificial heights were erected. Mountains were perceived as gods or considered their dwelling place, where the divine manifested itself, such as Mount Saphon, the Olympus and Mount Sinai.

Mountain gods or personified mountains are typical of highland regions. These gods are identified by their signature skirt with scales that signify mountains. The paper traces the evolution and representation of mountain gods in the visuals and texts from Mesopotamia through Anatolia and the Levant. Finally I will suggest that the visual form was not unfamiliar in ancient Israel.

**Keywords:** Topographical features – mountains and springs , Mountain-gods,

Spring-goddesses, Strom gods, Iconography, Hebrew Bible, extra-biblical inscription

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**Avraham Faust, Eyal Baruch, James Mclellan and Michal Mermelstein**

The Tel ‘Eton Cemetery:

A 2021 Update and a Note on the Development of the Judahite Burial

The cemetery that surrounds Tel ‘Eton is one of the largest burial grounds in ancient Israel. Additionally, this burial ground has a unique history. The earliest known caves appear to be dated to the Intermediate Bronze Age, but most of the caves are later, and the evidence suggests that the cemetery was used continuously from the Late Bronze Age to (at least) the 8th century BCE. Since this continuous use covers also the Iron Age I, from which hardly any burials are known in the region, and the Iron IIA, from which only a few burials were discovered, the unique continuity revealed in the Tel ‘Eton cemetery is of great importance to the study of this era at large, and especially for an understanding the unique type of burial that developed in Judah and was popular in the 8th-7th centuries BCE, and is known as the “Judahite Burial”.

The cemetery was first studied as part of a large-scale salvage operation that was carried it in 1968, and a few additional caves were excavated over the years. The Tel ‘Eton expedition is conducting, in addition to the excavations on the mound, a survey in the mound’s immediate vicinity, and took upon itself also to publish previous salvage excavations that were not yet published. The first part of the article briefly presents the cemetery, describe the excavations that were carried out in it over the years, and introduce the results of the current expedition. The paper then analyzes the initial results, summarize the development of the cemetery in time and space, and briefly presents the changes in burial practices over the years, and the connection between the Tel ‘Eton cemetery and the popular Judahite burial of the Iron IIB-C.

**Keywords:** Tel ‘Eton, Burial caves, Judahite Burials, Iron Age, Trough Valley

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**Amichay Schwartz and Peretz Reuven**

An Unknown Ayyubid Inscription

from *Maqam* Neby Yusha in Kifl Haris

This article presents an Arabic inscription that was placed on a table in the maqam attributed to Joshua son of Nun in the village Kifl Haris in Samaria. The inscription, which was still on site by the middle of the 20th century, describes in a unique way the phenomenon of "replacement pilgrimage". It refers to the act of pilgrimage to Mecca on behalf of a person who is unable to perform this commandment. The inscription depicts a pilgrimage that took place in the early 13th century CE, for one of the princes of the Ayyubid dynasty, Al-Malik al-Awhad, who governed in the Armenian region. The performer of the Hajj was a certain Jawhar, an apparent resident of the village. The central place of the table in the holy tomb testifies to the significance of the site and its popularity during the 13th century CE. This is also apparent from the account of a Jewish traveler who visited the place.

**Keywords:** The Middle Ages, pilgrimage, martyrs' tombs, Islam, Joshua son of Nun

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