

Prof. Scott B. Noegel
Chair, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization
University of Washington

“Canaanites.”

First Published in:
A Reader's Guide to Judaism
Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers (2000), 98-100.

FELDMAN explores all aspects of mathematics and astronomy in the Talmud and subsequent rabbinic literature and includes several chapters explaining Maimonides' method of calculating visibility. Chapter 17, on the fixed calendar, explains in detail the calculation of the time of mean conjunction, the four delays that may postpone Rosh Hashanah, and the resultant 14 types of years. That chapter also presents arithmetical rules for converting a Hebrew date into the corresponding Gregorian date, and it includes a discussion of various modern attempts to reform the calendar.

DERSHOWITZ and REINGOLD give precise algorithmic treatments of most of the major calendars of the world. Chapter nine describes easily programmed, simplified rules for the Hebrew calendar, for most of the Jewish and Israeli holidays, and for birthdays and *yahrzeits* (the anniversary of a person's death). It includes a brief history of the fixed calendar, as well as a description of the controversy between tenth-century Babylonian and Palestinian geonim regarding the exact parameters of delays.

SPIER is a standard work for converting dates between the Gregorian and Hebrew calendars, with tables for the 20th and 21st centuries. Sabbath Torah readings and holidays are noted. The book provides detailed rules for determining Hebrew birthdays and for *yahrzeit* according to prevailing Ashkenazi practice.

LEVI is most useful for determining times of day critical for ritual purposes, such as dawn and dusk, with tables for each degree of latitude and for 73 cities with large Jewish populations. Unlike most published tables, which use mean values for dawn regardless of season or location, the times in this work are derived from astronomical calculations of the depression angle of the sun. The English section of the book also includes a short chapter on the calendar and tables that allow conversion between Gregorian and Hebrew dates. It should be noted that there remain disputes about where to place the dateline for the purposes of religious observance and what times to use in polar regions. In practice, the international dateline is used and the times of prayer and observance at nearby synagogues below the Arctic Circle are followed.

ROTH prints a convenient calendar for the years 1920 through 2020, arranged by Gregorian year (and based on M. Greenfield's 150-year calendar, 1963) in the index volume. The corresponding Hebrew date is given for each Gregorian day. Dates of all holidays and fasts (and an indication of postponement, if any), as well as the Sabbath readings for the diaspora, are included. These accessible tables are ideal for determining the date for a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, as follows: look up the Hebrew date corresponding to the actual day of birth of the child; if the child was born after sunset, take the following day instead. The same Hebrew date 13 years later is the day of the bar mitzvah. For girls in Conservative and Orthodox practice, the bat-mitzvah is 12 years later. The event is usually celebrated on the first Saturday on or after that day, when the child is called to the Torah, but it can be postponed for convenience. Occasionally, the event may be celebrated before Saturday (but not before the actual Hebrew birthday)—on Monday or Thursday, or on a festival day, when there is also a synagogue Torah reading. Complications arise when the child was born in the Hebrew month of Adar, since there is an intercalary Adar every two or three years. If the

child was born in Adar of a common year, or in Adar II of a leap year, then the bar mitzvah is in Adar in a common year, but in Adar II in a leap year. If the child was born in Adar I of a leap year, then the bar mitzvah is in Adar I of a leap year and in Adar in a common year. If the child was born on the 30th day of Heshvan, Kislev, or Adar I, then it may happen that in the year of the bar mitzvah the month has only 29 days, in which case the first day of the following month is used instead.

NACHUM DERSHOWITZ

Canaanites

- Aubert, María Eugenia, *Tiro y las colonias fenicias de Occidente*, 1987; translated by Mary Turton as *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993
- Coogan, Michael David, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978
- del Olmo Lete, Gregorio, *Canaanite Religion: According to the Liturgical Texts of Ugarit*, Bethesda, Maryland: CDL, 1999
- Giveon, Raphael, *The Impact of Egypt on Canaan: Iconographical and Related Studies* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 20), Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978
- Gray, John, *The Canaanites* (Ancient Peoples and Places, vol. 38), New York: Praeger, and London: Thames and Hudson, 1964
- Gurney, O.R., *The Hittites*, London and Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin, 1952; 2nd edition, reprinted with revisions, London and New York: Penguin, 1990
- Halpern, Baruch, *The Emergence of Israel in Canaan* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, no. 29), Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983
- Harden, Donald B., *The Phoenicians* (Ancient Peoples and Places, 26), New York: Praeger, and London: Thames and Hudson, 1962; reprinted with revisions, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, and New York: Penguin, 1980
- Smith, Mark S., *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume 1, Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 55), New York: Brill, 1994
- Tubb, Jonathan N., *The Canaanites*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, and London: British Museum Press, 1998

Biblical scholars have had a notoriously difficult time defining which group or groups compose the Canaanites and the geographic extent of their cultural and political influence. The biblical record is somewhat inconsistent in this regard as are extra-biblical sources, and with the exception of texts discovered at Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra in Syria), the Canaanites (including the later Phoenicians) have left no major archive that might enable us to answer these questions. Further, since

Ugarit is located so far north of Israel, some scholars feel that it should not be considered Canaanite at all. Others see the Ugaritic material as sharing enough correlates with what is known of the Canaanites from the Bible to warrant the label "Canaanite." The difficulty in defining precisely what is meant by Canaan and who the Canaanites were has stirred a great deal of debate, and consequently, despite their biblical fame, the Canaanites have few comprehensive scholarly studies devoted to them, unless one includes, as here, works devoted to Ugarit.

AUBET provides an up-to-date analysis of the historical and archaeological data that relate to the Phoenicians. In particular, she uses new archaeological evidence to reevaluate contemporary understanding of the Phoenician colonies and their relationship to local Iron Age communities. The focus of this work is the overseas expansion and Mediterranean trade network that the Phoenicians established from the eighth to the sixth century B.C.E. Aubet opens her work by examining the historical and cultural origins of the Phoenicians and then moves to an analysis of the bases for Phoenician expansion in the Mediterranean. Topics covered in this work include: Phoenician trade, exchange mechanisms and organization, the palace and the temple, routes of Phoenician expansion into the Mediterranean, the chronology and historiography of the Phoenicians in the west, Phoenician colonies, and the silver trade. A series of reflective essays synthesizes the contents of the book. Aubet includes several useful appendixes that discuss Phoenician Iron Age archaeology, the journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia, biblical oracles against Tyre, and the settlements of the central Mediterranean. At the end of the book she provides a bibliography for advanced research.

COOGAN's work offers readers a pocket-size translation of the four most important and complete Canaanite myths from Ugarit: the Tale of Aqhat, the Rephaim text, the Tale of Kret, and the Ba'al Myth. The introductions to each text are brief and footnotes are sparse, allowing for an extremely accessible read. Where Coogan does discuss a text's background, he seeks to juxtapose the Canaanite literature with biblical literature by pointing out linguistic, literary, and mythological parallels. In so doing, Coogan demonstrates for nonspecialist readers the profound impact of Canaanite culture and literature on the Israelites and the Hebrew Bible.

GIVEON's collection of essays is unique in that it takes as its point of departure the evidence for Canaanite contact with Egypt presented by objects of art. Since he transliterates and translates all Egyptian and Semitic words, the book can be used by specialists and interested lay readers. Giveon's essays explore the linguistic evidence for Egyptian contact in Canaan, Egyptian temples in Canaan, methodological issues in dealing with questions of interregional contact, the Samarian ivories, and literary evidence for Egyptian influence in Canaan and vice versa. Giveon also discusses the royal seals of the Egyptian 12th dynasty, Hathor as a goddess of music in the Sinai region, Egyptian mining in the Sinai, and the Phoenician sarcophagus of Ahiaram. Combined, Giveon's essays demonstrate the important role that Egypt played in Canaan, and consequently, the impact of Egypt on ancient Israel.

GRAY outlines a vast array of ancient Near Eastern textual and archaeological sources that contain information about the

society and culture of the Canaanites. Beginning with a discussion of the habitat and history of the Canaanites, Gray proceeds to explore daily life in Canaan as well as Canaanite religion, letters and literature, and art. His comparative approach allows the reader to draw parallels between the literary remains of Ugarit and Egypt and the Hebrew Bible, while preserving the essential and unique contributions of each culture represented by their respective literatures. Gray also provides a select bibliography for each chapter, making his book a useful first introduction to the Canaanites.

GURNEY's pocket-size outline of Hittite history includes sidebars on Achaeans and Trojans in Hittite texts and the Hittites in Canaan and ancient Israel. Gurney synthesizes previous German scholarship on the subject into a concise survey of the Hittite state and society, the Hittite economy, laws and legal institutions, warfare, language, religion, literature, and art. Since the Hittites played such an active role in Canaan and appear with relative frequency in the Hebrew Bible, the student interested in the Canaanites will gain much from this work. Numerous maps, photographs, diagrams, and indexes make the volume extremely useful as an introduction to the subject.

HALPERN brings together a vast array of literary, archaeological, and comparative sources to document the emergence of biblical Israel within Canaan. He is cautious in his treatment of the subject and continually seeks to distinguish the nuances in cult and authority that differentiate the various clans as well as the state from the general populace. Beginning with a discussion of the textual sources, their tendentiousness, and the context of Canaan during the Amarna period, Halpern moves to what he calls the "making of historical Israel." He sheds particular light on the organization of pre-monarchic Israel, the bases of its state and religious authority, the development of a national ethos characterized by religious affiliation, and the development of the Hebrew record that documents these changes. Just as importantly, Halpern offers a historical tour of the sociology of knowledge on the subject. While admitting that "historical Israel is not the Israel of the Hebrew Bible," Halpern nevertheless concludes that within Canaan "the Israel of the pre-monarchic period is not significantly different (except in the ways that one would ordinarily expect) from the picture painted in the biblical sources."

HARDEN offers a cultural survey of Phoenicia. He discusses the origins of the Phoenicians, provides a geographic description of the region under Phoenician influence, and outlines in broad strokes Phoenician history. Harden also provides discussions of Phoenician overseas expansion, the colony at Carthage, Phoenician government, social structure, religion, language, script, warfare, towns, industries, commerce, trade, and exploration. Though largely superseded by Aubet, the work remains a useful supplementary introduction.

SMITH makes accessible a critical edition, translation, and exhaustive commentary on one of the most important cycles of mythological texts from Canaan. While there is much in this work that is of particular benefit to scholars, the general reader will gain much from the comparative insights that Smith provides. He offers also a balanced discussion of the various interpretations of the myth, for example, ritual and seasonal theories, cosmogonic interpretations, historical and political

views, and the limited exaltation of Ba'al. Numerous textual notes make this work an inexhaustible source of information for the interested comparatist. Where appropriate, Smith also adds comments of a literary nature as well as comparisons with biblical, Akkadian, Sumerian, Egyptian, classical, Hittite, and even Indian texts. One of the most important aspects of Smith's work is that it sheds light from the Canaanite perspective on a god whom the biblical authors vilify. Smith also provides a comprehensive citation, text, grammar, vocabulary, author, and general indexes.

TUBB provides the most up-to-date analysis of Canaanite culture. Paying special attention to archaeological data, Tubb surveys the various periods of Canaanite existence. Thus, with a few exceptions, the book's chapters cover specific archaeological periods (e.g., Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age, etc.). Following a chapter on the Persian period, Tubb examines the Canaanite legacy as found in later Phoenician, Roman, and other Mediterranean cultures. By beginning with the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods and concluding with the Neopunic period, Tubb demonstrates the continuity of Canaanite Levantine culture. Despite the presence of periodic small-scale incursions, especially in the third millennium B.C.E., Tubb argues for "a more or less uniform culture throughout the whole of the Levant in the Early Bronze, and perhaps even more so in the Middle Bronze Age." Despite the large-scale incursions of the Sea Peoples (among whom were the Philistines) and the pressing military influence of Egypt during the Late Bronze Age, Canaanite culture remained essentially consistent. Tubb's observations have implications for those historians who place the patriarchs and the social and tribal institutions they represent in the early Middle Bronze Age (a conclusion not shared by all scholars). If Canaanite culture is demonstrably continuous since the Early Bronze Age, "there is nothing to suggest that these institutions had not existed in Canaan from the inception of that period." Even during the early Iron Age, Tubb asserts, "the Canaanite ancestry of Israelite material culture is evident in nearly all of its aspects." In addition to many high-quality color and black-and-white photos of Canaanite material culture and archaeological sites, the book contains excellent maps, an ancient Near Eastern chronological chart, and a list of suggested readings.

DEL OLMO LETE's monograph opens with a useful history of the study of Canaanite religion. Moving from W.R. Smith and M.J. Lagrange to W.F. Albright, J.M. de Tarragon, and P. Xella, del Olmo Lete examines the sociology of knowledge on the subject and provides a concise context for his own work on Canaanite religion. The work focuses completely on information gleaned from the ritual and liturgical texts found at Ugarit. After providing philological and linguistic analyses, del Olmo Lete synthesizes the materials in an effort to uncover their underlying ideology. While certainly aimed at scholarly readers and thus filled with transliterations, the accompanying English translations and the insightful analyses make the book accessible to nonexperts as well. Among other topics included in this comprehensive study are discussions of sacred times and places, sacrificial rites, Canaanite mythology and epic, the pantheon, the funerary cult, festivals, processions, prayers and oracles, and magic. Del Olmo Lete emphasizes the cultic continuity and plurality shared with other second mil-

lenium sites in Syria and the legacy of Canaanite culture on the later Western world: "Rich and varied in its forms, it allows us to see the Canaanite religious universe beneath the Judaeo-Christian reaction against it, which in terms of culture makes clear the paganism underlying our own Western culture." This study offers the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available on the subject. It will not be surpassed for many years.

SCOTT B. NOEGEL

Canada

- Abella, Irving, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada*, Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1990
- Abella, Irving and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982; New York: Random House, 1983; 3rd edition, Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1991
- Brown, Michael, *Jew or Juif?: Jews, French Canadians, and Anglo-Canadians, 1759-1914*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986
- Elazar, Daniel and Harold Waller, *Maintaining Consensus: The Canadian Jewish Polity in the Postwar World*, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1990
- Greenstein, Michael, *Third Solitudes: Tradition and Discontinuity in Jewish-Canadian Literature*, Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989
- Rome, David, *Canadian Jewish Archives*, 48 vols., Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1974-1996
- Rosenberg, Louis, *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of the Jews in Canada in the 1930s*, edited by Morton Weinfeld, Montreal and Buffalo, New York: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993
- Sack, B.G., *History of the Jews in Canada*, translated by Ralph Noveck, Montreal: Harvest House, 1965
- Tulchinsky, Gerald, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community*, Toronto: Lester, 1992
- Tulchinsky, Gerald, *Branching Out: the Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*, Toronto: Stoddart, 1998

The earliest research on the Jews of Canada with lasting value had its origins at the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) in the 1930s and 1940s. It was the formation of the CJC in 1919 that consolidated the image of a united Jewry in the Dominion of Canada, and it was the CJC's revival in the 1930s that created both the archives essential for any scholarly study of Canadian Jewry and a cohort of dedicated researchers, who were also community activists. In that era, Canadian Jews, who were for the most part recent immigrants, were looked upon as marginal by the dominant groups within Canadian society—the English and French—and hence Jews were forced to create their own cultural space in Canada. It is no accident, then, that the first serious students of Canadian Jewry came from within the ranks of its own communal activists.