

Preface

On 3 January 2012, a group of scholars, students, family, and friends gathered at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev to open a three-day conference in honor of an outstanding scholar and wonderful friend, Professor Zipi Talshir, on the occasion of her 65th birthday. Among them was the late Professor Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz. Professor Hurowitz was the one who opened the conference with warm words of greeting and praise for Zipi.

The present volume is the product of this conference; it contains papers by nine of the participants, who later converted their lectures into articles to be included alongside contributions from other distinguished scholars. Professor Hurowitz's sudden, tragic death, however, resulted in the sad effect that, despite his original wish and intention, no article by him could be included here. It therefore seems fitting to introduce this volume with the warm words that he extended to Zipi and the other guests at the conference.

Distinguished guests—honorable dean, speakers at this event, members of the Talshir family, colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen—welcome!

It is a gratifying privilege to open this conference honoring our friend Zipi Talshir on the occasion of her 65th birthday. Sixty-five or ה'ס equals סה (be silent)! As Scripture says, “Be silent, all the earth,” in Zipi’s honor!

A statement attributed to Rabbi Judah ben Tema, found at the end of tractate Avot, chapter 5, reads: “He would say, ‘Sixty to old age, seventy to ripe old age.’” According to this calculation, Zipi has now reached the midpoint between old age and ripe old age. It’s hard for me to think of Zipi as an elderly, white-haired person, for we are both young and have lived barely half our life spans. I therefore prefer to pursue a different tack, taken from the ancient Akkadian calendar from Ҳузиріна, present-day Sultantepe in Turkey. According to this calendar, a 60-year-old is *meḫlūtu* and a 70-year-old is *ūmū arkūtu*. The second term means “long-lived.” The first term is usually interpreted “maturity” because it derives from the verb *eṭēlu*, which means to “reach maturity,” and in one text placed in opposition to *šeḫrūtu*, “youth.” But, as listed in a lexicon, it translates the Sumerian *nun*, “prince,” and appears between the Akkadian *rubū*, “prince,” and *ašaridu*, “goes before the camp.” The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* translates it “prowess” and “excellence.” There is

no doubt in my mind that these terms are far more applicable to the guest of honor than “old age” and “ripe old age.” In any event, we all agree that 65 in gematria equals להל”ל; therefore, it would be most fitting to name this gathering תהילה לציפורה, as the poem *zamāri meḥluti izammurū* states: “Sing praises of excellence.”

We are all acquainted with Zipi and conversant with her many instructive studies. I cannot, however, open an academic conference honoring such an eminent scholar without first recounting something of her personal history and academic path and also providing glimpses of her activity.

Born in Romania at the end of 1946, Zipi was nearly five years old when she and her mother made aliyah straight to a tent city in Atlit, to an army barracks left behind by the British, and then to a neighborhood of new olim on the outskirts of Petah Tikva. In an immigrant environment, she acquired—in addition to her native Romanian—Yiddish and of course the language of the state, Hebrew. And, because Romanian is descended from Latin, and Yiddish from German, and Hebrew from Hebrew, this paved the way to the study of ancient literature, philology, and the Bible and its ancient translations. She subsequently turned to skilled teachers to hone her talents. The year 1965 saw her enrolling as a student in the departments of Bible and Jewish History at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Alongside her study of Bible and history, Zipi also engaged in what is currently referred to as “marriage studies,” and she received her “Mrs. Degree” after marrying a young kibbutznik, who set his eyes on ציפורה and other birds whose names he pursued. The beloved companions, Zipi and Dodik, married and the couple became a paragon of love, mutual admiration, and respect. Partners in family life, child-raising, and hospitality as well as gardening and research—they have, over the years, also built a joint library and have even published some studies together.

Between children, Zipi found time to learn something from the leading biblical scholars, the wise men of Jerusalem. Her teacher par excellence was the late Prof. Isaac Leo Seeligmann, under whose direction she wrote her master’s thesis, spending much time at his home and his famed library. She began her doctorate with Prof. Seeligmann, completing it after his death under the direction of Prof. Emanuel Tov, the future editor of the Dead Sea Scrolls and recipient of the Israel Prize.

While studying for her bachelor and master’s degrees, Zipi worked as a teaching assistant in the Bible Department and also as a research fellow for important projects in Jerusalem and Pennsylvania, including the Hebrew University Bible Project and the Parallel Aligned Text of the Greek and Hebrew Bible Database, under the supervision of such eminent scholars as Shemaryahu Talmon, Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, Emanuel Tov, and Robert Kraft. This activity helped shape her interest in the history of the scriptural text and its transla-

tions, the Septuagint in particular, and she has even taught joint courses on these topics with Prof. Alexander Rofé.

In 1990, the couple Zipi and Dodik Talshir and their four children—Gayil, Yaoz, Nimrod, and Lotan—began a new chapter in the Negev, at Ben-Gurion University: to paraphrase the psalmist, *גם ציפור מצאה בית ודודה קן לו*, whereas others say, “He who wishes to increase wisdom should go south.” They packed the enormous library housed in their narrow quarters in the Kiryat ha-Yovel neighborhood in Jerusalem and moved it to the basement of their spacious home in Meitar, planting a garden paradise in which Zipi could rest from her labors, moving about at the breezy time of day, reading and researching.

And what are the many studies she has carried out from her days in Jerusalem to those in Beer-Sheva? They cannot be numbered, and I must be content with mentioning but a few. As wise chefs state: “It is unnecessary to eat the entire pot to know that the dish is tasty.” Generally speaking, we can say that Zipi specializes in late biblical literature, the Septuagint, and textual criticism.

Her first book, *המסורת הכפילה על פילוג המלוכה*, was published in Hebrew and later in expanded form in English (*The Alternative Story of the Division of the Kingdom: 3 Kingdoms 12:24a–z*). This study demonstrates Zipi’s academic maturity. Grounded in a reconstruction of the original Hebrew version that underlies the alternative story of the division of the kingdom found in 3 Kingdoms in the Septuagint (a task that requires profound knowledge of Greek and sensitivity to Greek and Biblical Hebrew alike), she defines the alternative story as rewritten history and clarifies its thrust and Second Temple period historical background.

Her doctoral dissertation “First Esdras: Origin and Translation” continued the path set out in her master’s thesis. It served as the basis for two books published in the prestigious SBL series: *Septuagint and Cognate Studies*. The first volume is an expanded version of her doctorate that treats the composition of Esdras and its relationship to the biblical book Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah, the underlying textual infrastructure of the parallel chapters in the MT, and the method and world view of the translator against the backdrop of his day. The second volume, part of which was written in collaboration with her husband, is a text-critical commentary on 1 Esdras.

Biblical commentaries are an invaluable asset to biblical studies—as the much-needed commentary on 1 Esdras shows. In the meantime, Zipi has contributed a commentary on the book of Haggai to the *Olam ha-Tanakh* series.

Apart from these books and scores of learned, instructive articles, Zipi has edited several volumes, among them *Homage to Shmuel* in honor of Shmuel Aḥituv, and *On the Border Line: Textual Meets Literary Criticism—Proceedings of a Conference in Honor of Alexander Rofé*, to which she contributed major papers. Recently, two volumes appeared under her editorship: *The Literature of the Hebrew Bible: Introductions and Studies* [all in Hebrew]. This

book will serve as an introduction to the Bible for scholars, students, and enlightened lovers of the Bible, to which Zipi's contribution is a comprehensive article on textual criticism. And she is still going strong. At present, she is working on a critical edition of Chronicles for *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, one of the leading works in the field of textual criticism. She is also slated to produce a commentary on Chronicles for the *Mikra Leyisra'el* series.

In addition to her intense involvement in research, writing, and academic editing, Zipi devotes time and energy to departmental matters. She chaired the department for four years, and one of her crowning achievements was the founding of the Deichmann Program for Jewish and Christian Literature of the Hellenistic-Roman Era. This program, headed by Zipi, and directed by Professor Cana Werman in collaboration with Professor Roland Deines of Nottingham University, is unique in Israel and attracts many students.

Last but not least, Zipi fulfills the directive of the Great Assembly cited at the beginning of Avot: "Raise up many disciples." She is an exemplary and devoted teacher, much beloved by her students.

Zipi, we love you!

Although Prof. Hurowitz's description of Zipi's scholarship surveys much of her work, it is incumbent upon me to add several remarks.

Zipi's research concentrates on the history of biblical texts and traditions. Her interests lie in the processes of text preservation and transmission, and the methods exercised by later authors in adopting and adapting existing texts and traditions to their own linguistic, literary, and ideological conventions. Thus, her study involves the ancient translations of the Bible, mainly the Septuagint, which, together with the biblical scrolls from Qumran, form the most valuable witness to the history of the biblical text and are most pertinent to the fields of biblical textual and literary criticism.

These interests are well exemplified in her books, already mentioned above: her 1989/1993 book on *The Alternative Story of the Division of the Kingdom*, which dares to present the lost story in its surmised original Hebrew form; the 1999 introductory book on 1 Esdras—an apocryphal book, preserved in Greek, which nevertheless has parallels in the main parts of the canonical books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, with the addition of a wisdom-oriented story that introduces the leader of the revival of Judah onto the stage of history; and her thorough, text-critical commentary on the book of 1 Esdras (2001), which offers a full reconstruction of the Hebrew-Aramaic Vorlage of the book, as well as a meticulous comparison of the canonical books and their counterparts in 1 Esdras (which, in her view, is a book created in order to accommodate the story of the three youths in the history of the Return). This last book completes her study of this intriguing ancient book, offering a comprehensive interpreta-

tion of a work created in the Hellenistic period, on the verge of the Qumran literature.

These works demonstrate Zippi's combined interests by studying the translation techniques of those who produced the Greek versions of these compositions, by attempting to reconstruct their original Hebrew or Hebrew-Aramaic form, and by analyzing the ways in which the later authors reshaped and rewrote the biblical texts.

The threefold method also appeared in Zippi's articles, such as the 1996 article on the three deaths of Josiah, which follows the transmission of the story of the death of this cherished king in the books of Kings, Chronicles, and 1 Esdras; the 1995 "Contribution of Diverging Traditions Preserved in the Septuagint to Literary Criticism of the Bible"; and in the extensive 2002 article on the nature of the edition of the book of Kings reflected in the Septuagint, which demonstrates the work of a redactor who tried to reorganize the course of events, especially with regard to Solomon's reign.

Zippi has also produced studies of a more general scope, especially in reference to synchronic and diachronic approaches to the study of the Hebrew Bible. Among them are "Text Criticism within the Frame of Biblical Philology" (2007); "Textual Criticism at the Service of Literary Criticism and the Question of an Eclectic Edition of the Hebrew Bible" (2012); and recently, "Texts, Text-Forms, Editions, New Compositions and the Final Products of Biblical Literature," which appeared in the Munich 2013 Congress Volume (*Vetus Testamentum Supplements*).

As was noted by Prof. Hurowitz, at present Zippi is working primarily on the book of Chronicles. Here too her interests focus on the ways in which the author of this book, who probably lived in the late Persian period, adopted the existing history of his people, as described mainly in the books of Samuel–Kings, and adapted it to his own literary taste and ideological concepts. Her work on Chronicles has two facets: strict text-critical research accompanied by a commentary centered on the transmission of the text that will be published as part of *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (Stuttgart); and more exegetically-ideologically-oriented research that will be published in the *Mikra Leyisra'el* commentary series (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv).

Appreciation for Zippi's high-level scholarship is evident in the present volume. Scholars from around the globe gladly presented to her the best of their scholarly crops. Some came all the way to our home in the desert to take part in the conference: Prof. Ron Hendel from the University of California–Berkeley; Prof. Anneli Aejmelaus of the University of Helsinki, Finland; Prof. Julio Trebolle Barrera of the University of Madrid, Spain; Prof. Olivier Munnich of the Université Paris–Sorbonne; Prof. Jan Joosten of Oxford University, and Prof. Roland Deines of the University of Nottingham, England. Others sent in their essays for the volume: Prof. Erhard Blum from Tübingen, Germany;

Prof. Johan Lust from the University of Leuven, Belgium; and Prof. Adrian Schenker of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Nor were the local Israeli scholars shy in their desire to contribute words of wisdom on this occasion. Eminent scholars from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Alexander Rofé and Prof. Emanuel Tov, joined colleagues from Tel-Aviv University, Prof. Frank Polak and Dr. Noam Mizrahi, and from the University of Haifa, Prof. Nili Shupak, Dr. Itamar Kislev, as well as Dr. Johnathan Ben-Dov who collaborated with another representative of Europe, Romina Vergari from Italy. From Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Zippi's home university, five scholars honored her with the fruits of their research: Prof. Mayer Gruber, Dr. Dalia Amara, Dr. Tova Forti, Dr. David Gilad, and I. All made the effort to write on the theme of the conference and the volume, concentrating on the processes of the composition and transmission of the Hebrew Bible.

I would like to thank all those who took part in the conference for three wonderful days of razor-sharp scholarship and deep, amicable feelings. I would like to thank all who contributed to this volume for their collaboration and for their willingness to offer up the best of their academic endeavors. In their names, I would like to say that it is an honor to dedicate our work to a dear colleague, an excellent scholar, and a wonderful friend.

—Cana Werman
Ben-Gurion University
May 2015