

ABSTRACT

This thesis has three goals:

1. A description of the entire semantic field of clothes (*malbushim*) mentioned in the Bible.
2. A precise semantic examination of the significance of the linguistic forms which are included within this field and a description of the semantic links between them.
3. Research into the uses of clothes amongst the different social strata in various situations as reflected in Biblical culture which described in the Biblical literature.

The types and shapes of clothes constitute part of the realia of Biblical culture, but we shall use linguistic means in order to examine this subject. The corpus of the examination includes all the books of the Bible. It is important to state, that in the ancient Biblical poetry there were found only a few names of clothes: the general term *levush*, which occurs frequently in the Bible, or the hapax legomenon **suth* (Gen. 49:11). Except these, no names of clothes are to be found in the poetry. It is possible that this finding is understandable, in the light of the fact that the subjects of the poems revolve generally around blessings, curses and other abstract matters, and there is no room therein for practical and applied subjects, such as clothes.

The books of the Bible were written and edited during a period spanning over a thousand years (1200 – 200 BCE; see Grintz 1972:10; Nöldeke 1911:623; Moscati 1969:10, p. 3.1.3). There is no doubt, therefore, that many changes occurred in Biblical Hebrew throughout generations. It appears that Kutsher's division of Biblical Hebrew (B.H.) into 3 sub-strata (1984:12) is plausible: 1) Ancient B.H., which reflects primarily in the language of the early poetry; 2) Classical B.H., which includes the language of the prose literature in the Bible and that of the admonition prophecies, as well as the language of the classical-visionary prophetic literature; 3) Late B.H., which includes the language of literature of the Second Temple period and those books that were formulated in this language. This division is important for the purposes of tracing the use of the form (used to specify the clothing) in the above mentioned periods and the semantic changes that occurred therein by the speakers. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that the absence of a form in a certain period can also bear witness to the fact that use of a specific item of clothing was ceased (q.v. "*cesur*" infra). It is also significant for the purpose of examining the relationship with the expressions that are included within semantic sub-fields (see paragraph 4.3.1 "Upper and Lower Garment" infra).

The significance of the forms denoting clothes employed by the Bible is indeed known generally from the existing research literature. However, this research is deficient, by virtue of the fact that the description was made both from an archeological, exegetical and etymological point of view: commentators and researchers of ancient texts from previous generations used archeological data together with a comparison of the secular culture of the peoples of the Near East in our times (see the various encyclopedic entries in the Bibliography), for the goal of

these researchers was to summarize, to the extent possible, everything that was known about clothes.

There are some researchers whose studies are based on a preliminary point of view, such as Pedersen (1940), who claims that an item of clothing is regarded in the Bible as the continuation of the soul of its owner or of the persona who wears it, which “absorbs” its qualities and represents it, such as the mantle of Elijah the Tishbite (I Kings, 19:13) or the garments of Esav (Genesis 27:15); *inter alia*, he mentions the defiling power of the clothes of the unclean person (Leviticus 15:1-11). The examples that he cites are fundamentally erroneous: even according to the Bible, clothing serves a practical function (Genesis 3:7 – to cover the naked) or representative function (Leviticus 16:4: holy garments symbolic of the holiness of the High Priest), and it has no spiritual significance, and the same is also true with reference to other items of clothing that appear in the Bible. Therefore, in our opinion, there is no room for a research method which starts out with a preliminary point of view. It is necessary to examine the data in the field of research and to proceed from this to draw conclusions.

A further approach is archeological in nature. But this, too, is problematic: A) There are many time-related lacuna, for while there are some periods from which numerous findings have been preserved, there are others from which no exhibits have been preserved. It is true that studies can be based on paintings and sculptures; however, the ability to draw inferences from one nation to another and from one culture to another is limited, because every nation has its own characteristic dress, and there also exists a “national dress”; B) The name of the object is hardly ever

registered on any clothing, whether it is situated within the framework of sculptures and paintings, or whether it was discovered as an archeological finding (such as skin vestments). For these and similar reasons, it is necessary to have recourse to an examination of texts to which we have access from the period being investigated and to tools that are connected to history and to an examination of the text, a course which requires the use of linguistic tools.

The following research means have been employed in the current thesis:

1. All the books of the Bible (according to the Dotan Edition of the Bible, Tel-Aviv 1991).
2. Concordances in order to examine frequencies of forms. We have mainly used the **New Concordance** of A. Even-Shoshan, Jerusalem 1977.
3. Encyclopedic entries from the field of clothes (see these in the Bibliographical List).
4. General and specific studies on clothes (see in the Bibliographical List).
5. Exegesis of the Middle Ages on the Bible. We have used the edition of the “*Keter Mikraot Gedolot Bible*” and the regular edition of the “*Mikraot Gedolot Bible*”.

6. Etymological lexicons of Biblical Hebrew, such as that of Köhler-Baumgartner and other similar works (see Bibliographical List; for a critical review of these lexicons – see Rabin 1991: 61-62).

7. Scientific editions of the Aramaic translations of the Bible and the Septuagint (see Bibliographical List). For the Aramaic translation of the Bible we used the Sperber's edition.

8. The “*Ma'agarim*” database of the Academy of the Hebrew Language on post-Biblical language, for tracing the use of forms and the comparison of frequencies, in order to discover the reasons for the decrease in use or the disappearance of a form, or to determine the use thereof after the Biblical period.

In addition to these tools, we have also used the work of H.W. Hönig (1957 – see Bibliography). This profound work describes various aspects of the field of clothing, and yet is still deficient because the discussion therein does not include all of the items of clothing that are mentioned in the Bible, and what is discussed – is not described in full; the description of the items and their significance is primarily based on an examination of the modern exegetes on the Bible, with a discussion of their conclusions, and not on research into the data that is found in the Bible itself. There is, therefore, room, in our opinion, for a profound and complementary research project using linguistic tools, which is based on the findings in the Bible itself.

The current research project shall therefore include the following stages:

- A. An introduction that also includes a section which contains the theoretic elements of the semantic aspect of the research.
- B. Collecting of the linguistic forms that are connected with the semantic field of clothing.
- C. A precise examination of the significance of the above linguistic forms, their roots and patterns, in comparison with the meaning of their parallel forms in other Semitic languages, and its reflection in the Aramaic translations (according to the Sperber edition) and the Septuagint.
- D. A compilation of all the criteria for an analysis of the findings; one of the most important of these criteria is, of course, the contextual significance.
- E. Grouping the clothes into sub-groups, from the semantic point of view (such as “head vestments”) and a discussion of the sememas that are reflected in these.
- F. Summary and conclusions.