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NEW SEMIOTICS

Between Tradition and Innovation



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SEMIOTICS OF COLOUR

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Abstract

This study contains a brief overview and comments on some basic texts on the semiotics and semantics of colour. It presents my view on the basic semiotic status of colour as a communication system and on the grammar features of colour language.

1. Achievements and lacuna

Umberto Eco (1985) defines colour as a *cultural unit*, which means that as a sign it combines both the individual and the social. The problem is that he stops there. Miroslav Dachev (1997) used the cultural unit of Eco in introducing his reflections on colour in Bulgarian symbolist poetry of the late 19th and early 20th century in a monograph. Dachev introduces the concept of *coloureme* (before Kress & van Leeuwen 2002: 352, and Leone's 2007: 164 *cromemi* but with a partially different content). Dachev's *coloureme* serves to summarize the meanings of colour for ideas and feelings, as well as the means by which they are derived – from different versions of the semiotic triangle through the role of context to determine the meaning of the Basic Colour Terms, by the cultural traditions and innovations of the national and international character, to the linguistic features during this period.

Kress & van Leeuwen (2002) deal with the visual colour by analyzing the colour speech and visual rhetoric, but not colour language. They achieve results within the adopted methodology of systemic linguistics. According to the authors the colour is metafunctional in terms of Halliday (1978; 1993) with *ideational*, *interpersonal*, *textual* functions. In some cases colour fulfils these three metafunctions simultaneously, but (346) colour does not always fulfil all three of these functions. (350)

Kress & van Leeuwen recognize that there are two ways to produce meaning of colours. The first is psychological – by associations that come from the culture and the past, but also from present current advertising and brands. An important element is the context in which an association operates. The second way is to accept the visual qualities of colour – *hue, saturation, purity, modulation, differentiation* – as semantic distinguishing features. They are placed within the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. Visual quality ‘is not systematized, as in phonology (in terms of Halle & Jakobson), as structural oppositions but as values on a range of scales. One such scale is the scale that runs from light to dark, another the scale that runs from saturated to desaturated. We see these features not as merely distinctive, as merely serving to distinguish different colours from each other, but also as meaning potentials. Any specific instance of a colour can be analyzed as a combination of specific values on each of these scales – and hence also as a complex and composite meaning potential, as we now demonstrate.’ (355)

This is a very accurate observation, but we are faced with colour idiolects, dialects, with national and regional languages of colour. Thus, we enter by the physical properties of colour, once – in the territory of natural language, and secondly – into the social and individual culture and tastes. This means that we can hardly find any specific colour grammar to the whole socium.

The position of van Leeuwen is that ‘looking at the colour as semiotic resource means, first of all, focusing on its materialities and technologies.’ (2011:1). This means, in my terms, to focus on the ‘speech apparatus’ of mankind with respect to producing colour-signs. But van Leeuwen declares that ‘looking at colour as a semiotic resource not only means looking at colour technologies, it also means looking at the way colour *meanings* are developed.’ (2011: 2).

Van Leeuwen is concerned about the possibility that colours may indicate ideas and feelings, which I consider essential in the semiotics of colour.

An important semiotic case study is the motivation of the colour sign. Van Leeuwen stated this case, although not in comparison with natural language where the linguistic sign is arbitrary, except for a small number of onomatopoeic words. Along with this are given many important features of the motivation and the ability to completely subjective interpretations of colour idiolect, colour dialect positions (2011: 2). In the examples of van Leeuwen, and from my corpus, there are facts that I treat as important features in the colour language (Almalech 2001; 2011):

- One and the same colour can have opposite meanings. I call this intra-colour antonymy.
- Many colours can mean the same feeling or idea. This is the inter-colour synonymy.
- Both effects are due to the small number of tokens in the colour language – visual and verbal.

In van Leeuwen’s book (2011), albeit briefly, are included the paradigm for basic colour terms, the colour theory for designers, the colour wheel and the colour models (RGB, CMY, RYB), the contrasts in Bauhaus art school. There still prevails an occupation with visual colour. It is kind of strange that in his book and in an article with Kress as co-author van Leeuwen never used the theory of prototypes (Rosch 1972a; b; 1975; 1977; 1978).

An important conclusion:

There has never been a single language of colour. Colour codes with a restricted semantic reach have always proliferated, and sometimes contradicted each other. But there are also broader, longer lasting, and more widely distributed trends, such as the reign of ‘puritan black’ or the ascendance of blue (van Leeuwen 2011: 97)

The works of Ugo Volli and Massimo Leone are of special interest. Volli (2004) deals with

the colours in fashion, which shows that semiotic change is the basic rule. Leone (2007) tries to review different semiotic instruments for the analysis of colour. He proposes the idea that the qualities of the visual colour – hue, saturation, purity – are an array of distinguishing features. This opinion is similar to that of Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2002) but with certain differences, as far as he does not use systemic linguistics. For understanding the language of colours it is necessary to analyze the semantic function of these three elements and the combinations of all of them in the common sense of what it means simply by “tint”, “shade” or even by the synecdoche “colour” (164). Leone leaves ‘retorica strutturale’ of Groupeµ and Greimas’ school to be discussed elsewhere.

It seems inevitable that the physical properties of the visual colour hue, saturation, purity etc. should be understood as distinguishing features in terms of phonology – in the structural version of Leone's semiotics, and in the systemic linguistics methodology of Kress & van Leeuwen. Due to lack of space and time I will comment on this case elsewhere.

Semioticians are dealing with the translation of colours. Kourdis (in print) speaks of inter-semiotic translation between language and colour in advertisements. Leone (2009) presents a semiotic interpretation of the art of Marc Chagall on *Moses while receiving from God the Tablets of the Law*. He indicates how the visual colour matches the biblical text.

Caivano (1996; 2010) is an architect and active participant in the international semiotic events. He is engaged in the rhetoric of colours. Caivano is intent on making ‘semioticians interested in visual semiotics better acquainted with the very elaborate aspects of colour theory, from which they could take models to develop other aspects of visual semiotics, and to make colour theorists more familiar with general semiotics’ (1998).

Over the past fifty years, the main objects of the research were Basic Colour Terms. For me, this impoverished the semiotics of colour. However, the development of these studies is important. Here are its most important points:

- The book of Berlin & Kay (1969) triggered the discussions. Basic colour terms are given technical definitions.
- The evolutionary sequence of basic colour terms is presented as an universal phenomenon: I Dark and light; II Red; III Green or yellow; IV yellow and green; V Blue; VI Brown; VII Purple, pink, orange, or gray.
- It is proposed that the categories of colour are presented by the basic colour terms.
- The Prototype theory proposes the idea that there are prototypes, a focus or “the most typical examples” of colours. (Rosch 1972a; 1972b; 1975; 1977; 1978)
- Colour concepts are *embodied* in that focal colours are partly determined by human biology. Colour categorization makes use of human biology, but colour categories are more than merely a consequence of the nature of the world plus human biology. Colour categories result from the world plus human biology plus a cognitive mechanism that has some of the characteristics of fuzzy set theory plus a culture-specific choice. (Lakoff 1987: 29)
- A macro-category of colour is presented by basic colour terms. (Witkowski & Brown 1977; 1978). Macro-colour is a “composite category” – a category may be represented by different basic colour terms, and vice versa – a basic colour term may represent two different macro-categories (Witkowski & Brown 1977: 50).
- These categories are related to the primary colours in human biology, as in the Opponent colour theory (Karl Hering 1834-1918).
- The macro-categories are macro-light, macro-dark, macro-red, macro-green-blue (GRUE), macro-green-yellow. (Witkowski & Brown 1977; Kay & Maffi 1999).
- Each macro-colour has different prototypes that are both intra-social and cross-social.
- Wierzbicka (1990) presents a scheme, which combines the evolutionary sequence, the

prototype theory, the macro-categories and the fuzzy sets. Her understanding is that prototypes are natural objects, rather than Rosch's salient colour areas. Wierzbicka points to specific objects: red – blood and fire; white – light; black – darkness, night; blue – sea and sky; green – all plants; yellow – the sun at noon.

- Wierzbicka (2008) does not accept the universality of the evolutionary sequence of the basic colour terms. She points to the fact that many languages have no words equivalent to the English word “colour” [hue], and therefore there can be no such thing as “colour” [hue] universals. Wierzbicka does not accept colour categories, which as biological phenomena are presented by basic colour terms. (1990: 102-103).
- Saunders (1992, 1993, 1995) & van Brakel, (1997, 1988, eds. 2002) are the most serious and persistent critics of the idea of universals in the evolutionary sequence of Berlin & Kay's paradigm.
- Using Munsell chips leads to anglocentrism, expressed in the fact that the English system of colour terms is superimposed on languages that have two or three English-type colour terms. Munsell's array and the chips based on it, as used in the interviews, discredit the quality of the linguistic data because colour impressions consist of more than hue, saturation and brightness. These chips display only hue, saturation and brightness whereas scholars need a greater number of features of colour, e.g. softness, size, glossiness, because they may influence the production of colour terms. (Biggam 2012: 87)
- Wierzbicka solves the problem of anglocentrism by using the semantic primitives (atoms, molecules) and the prototypes (2008).
- The Vantage theory of MacLaury (2002) has an anti-anglocentric element. It is ‘a theory of cognitive categorization in terms of point of view or ‘vantage.’ [...] MacLaury found the prototype theory and fuzzy-set logic inadequate. [...] A vantage is a point of view constructed by analogy to physical experience as though it were one or more ‘space–motion coordinates’ on a spatial terrain.’ (Allan 2006: 252–253).
- Borg surveys the colour categorization and colour terminology among the *Negev Bedouin* (1999) and the colour usage in the modern Arabic colloquials (2007). He uses the macro-colour categories to demonstrate the richness of colour expressions that stand outside the set of basic colour terms.
- Saunders (2009) puts to use the *habit* – one of the three key concepts of Charles Peirce. ‘Colour’ for Peirce is *not* deterministic, but fluid and variant, in the flux of perpetual change. [...] he proposes *the structuring of ‘habit,’* since the character of the sensory core is determined by the generative functioning of habit. [...] Peirce's arguments thereby assert colour, colour naming and categorisation to be *socially generated historical prostheses* – the production of an *exosomatic organ*. Thus colour has no ‘immediacy’ or predetermined givenness, as colour science asserts, but evolves as part of a historic, dynamic, complex ‘sign- system.’ (2009: 370).
- Biggam (2004, 2012) is an excellent expert on the discussion of the semantics of basic colour terms. She is interested in diachrony.
- Sutrop (2001) operates in the pattern of Lotman's modelling framework – ‘one can analyze the BCTs (i.e., basic colour terms) using the formula “language = code + history” and abandon the technical definition of a BCT. We can paraphrase Lotman's formula in the following way: “colour language = BCTs and non-BCTs + history of language and culture”. (46–47).
- Sutrop is right that ‘focusing research only on the BCTs minimizes the linguistic, semantic and semiotic richness of a colour language.’ (47). It is because ‘BCTs form the absolute minority (maximally 0.5 to 5 percent) of the colour terms in a language.’ (47).

Sutrop insists on language axes to organize and model the linguistic colour space – ‘static vs. dynamic, syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic, synchronic vs. diachronic, semasiologic vs. onomasiologic, and logical vs. mythological.’ (46–47).

2. Proposals and realizations

Not a little has been done so far in the field of semiotics of colour, but I have not met anyone explicitly indicating the basic semiotic parameters of colour. In my opinion, this is necessary, because it would bring a little more clarity to the complex and controversial problem of the symbolism of colour.

2.1. Visual and verbal colour

The big problem is that colour is both a visual and a verbal sign. All researches, in one degree or another, have mixed colour words with visual perception and sensation.

2.2. Signifier and signified

It is worth distinguishing these two areas from a basic standpoint. In terms of Saussure they should look like this:

Verbal colour – basic colour terms

| | |
|-----------|--|
| signifier | sound wave (articulate sounds) |
| signified | 1. idea 2. concept/notion 3. the real object |

Number of signifiers – 11-12 basic colour terms + about 50 non basic colour terms – words for prototypes (light, darkness, fire, blood, sea, sky, plants, the noonday sun), and rivals of prototypes (cherry, strawberry, lemon, cocoa, ruby, sapphire, yolk, egg, rose + NP – Paris blue, etc.)

Visual colour in the passage rites of wedding and funeral

| | |
|-----------|--|
| signifier | Light/colours – electromagnetic wave + elementary particle photon |
| signified | 1. Apotropeic (preserving and reproduction) for Red; spirit and physical purity, immaculate for White; life, fertility, eternity, health for Green (Almalech 1996) 2. The actual objects, coloured according to the ritual norm |

Number of signifiers – thousand shades of basic colours, among which are preferred the most typical (focal) and few versions of mixing colours (RGB, CMY, RYB).

2.3. The number of characters-tokens in natural and in colour languages

Together with the lack of speech apparatus for colours in humans, there is another difficulty for the study of colours as a sign system. The total number of natural language has up to 200,000 characters-tokens (words), while the language of colours has a much smaller number of tokens – in verbal colour 80-100, in the visual – significant for communication up to 30 shades of primary colours. This implies a greater ambiguity of colour signs.

2.4. Communication with verbal and visual colour

This area outlines another problem – how to communicate with verbal and visual colour. Humans have each a biological antenna (acoustic apparatus) to broadcast verbal tokens, and a

biological antenna (auditory perception) for receiving audio signals. For the visual signs each human has a biological antenna only for receiving visual signs (perception and sensation) but no biological antenna to broadcast (speech apparatus) any visual colour characters. A human's "speech apparatus" is a technology for colouring, painting objects.

2.5. Visual colour

Mixing the visual and the verbal is inevitable in the hypotheses, theories and studies of colour.

2.5.1. The symbolism of colour in anthropology

The studies of colour in the culture of the South African tribe Ndembe (Turner 1966), the Muslims of the Jordan Valley (Granquist 1965) of the Bedouins of the desert Negev (Borg 1999) present relevant information about the symbolism of visual and verbal language of colour. The data they provide should be used in the semiotic approach.

2.5.2. Reduplication as a semiotic machine for natural/motivated signs.

As noted by Robert Yelle (2012), reduplication is not only a proven mechanism for the production of onomatopoeia in natural language. It is also an important element in religious ritual space. Yelle raises the issue of motivation of the signs in the religious understanding in different folklore and religious systems and practices. The natural sign has special importance in the Indian mantras, being regarded as a healer and connector of the human world with the Hereafter or the ideal world in a direct way. Thus, in the unscientific, religious understanding of sound and colours in the world traditions the sounds of natural language and the colours are motivated/natural signs. This is an anti-structuralist understanding, but it is a fact in all the world folklore and religious practices. If anthropological researches make it clear that the colours have meanings for non-colours (i.e. symbolism of colours), this should be part of the semiotics of visual colours. In the light of sacred ritual function of the text of the Bible, the Hebrew language and its translations have the status of a recurring ritual.

2.5.3. Colours at rites of passage – universality and relativity

The presence of a red veil, red and white clothes, bouquet (green) and gold in all traditional weddings through the ages – regardless of religion, the type of social order and technological level – is a universal four-syntagmatic encoding of the traditional wedding. (Almalech 1996).

2.5.3.1. Synchrony and diachrony at the wedding

The change of the age-old, universal code in the late 19th and early 20th century is revolutionary. It can be explained only with the arrival of many people from rural areas to cities. The city lifestyle prevents the direct relationship with nature thus opening the way to a new mentality – independence from nature. This leads to a gradual forgetting of the meanings of ancient colours and replacing them with another combination – white (dress, veil, shoes), green (bouquet) and gold (wedding rings). Apotropaic red disappears, and red is the colour of protection power for the bride – "from which all life fled." Now, it is the city environment that protects and provides a reproduction of the family (Almalech 1996).

2.6. Grammar of visual colours

2.6.1. In rites of passage

Visual and verbal colours must be clearly distinguished in a grammar of the language of colours. Typical rites of passage are the folklore wedding and burial. Rituals are an example of

the visual language of colours. In these rituals the main personages (bride, groom, deceased, mourners) undergo a transition from one state to another. They need help and protection, because the transition is dangerous. This presupposes a strategy and structure of the whole ritual, including colours. Strategy and structure are bound by the ultimate goal, which affects not only the participants but serves society by guaranteeing the preservation of the family and the continuation of the Clan. This drastically differentiates the ritual use of colours from its daily use, the fashion, and the architectural use of colours.

In this context, the approach is to find the basic grammar categories we know in the grammar of natural language. For example, the language of visual colours has no parts of speech. The category of Time can be traced only with a view to motivating meanings of colours in traditional rituals in terms of the magical effect of the colours at the time of the ritual, and afterwards, in the future. We can think of the narrative, declarative and narrative-declarative meaning of the ritual colours. For example, the white of the modern bride is narrative, if she is a virgin (physical and spiritual purity). If a modern bride is not a virgin, but wears the white dress of the modern bride, apparently meaning virginity, purity is declarative, i.e. false. Physical and spiritual purity has been a universal signified of white for centuries across many cultures. With the same lexical meaning, *purity*, white is used at funerals – in Ancient Greece, in modern Japan, etc.

It follows that there is a lexical meaning that fits in with the contextual, depending on the structure and strategy of the ritual. For example, white is a sign of mourning in ancient Greece with well-motivated reasons (Goodenough 1964: 165–167; Abrachams 1964: 101; Ferguson 1989: 128), but its meaning is declarative of ‘spiritual, mental and physical purity’, which mourners and the deceased ‘present in the most appropriate way before the gods’ (Goodenough 1964: 166).

Clothes of priests are subordinate to the doctrine as well as the ideas of the calendar holidays in a particular religion.

2.6.2. In the visual arts, design and daily use

Obviously, in this field it is impossible to seek universal and permanent meanings of the colours. What is possible is to stay within the scope of Colour science – theories of contrasts, the colour wheel, models for additive and subtractive mixing of colours – RGB, CMY, RYB.

2.7. Verbal colour

There is no doubt, that research on the semantics of the basic colour terms] is essential for the semiotics of colour. Regarding the imposition trend, not only basic but non-basic colour terms should be considered. Both types of terms are examined systematically in all of my books on colour in the Bible (Almalech, 2010, 2013, 2014). And what is more, non-basic colour terms have been analyzed in a number of publications (Almalech, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013, 2014 etc.).

2.8. My hypothesis and conclusions

There is a very small number of universal meanings of the colours associated with the prototypes of colours. The method of proof is by an associative experiment. The methodology is presented in Almalech 2001. The verbal meanings were compared to the meanings from rites of passage, i.e. by a comparison between verbal and visual colour meanings.

Here are its most important points:

a) A Compilation of Norm for verbal associations of Bulgarians to basic colour terms. The norm is derived from two experiments – Norm for verbal associations (Gerganov 1984) and an experiment in 1995-1996 (Almalech 2001).

The comparison shows that there are sustainable associations of the basic colour terms. Sustainable associations are found in both experiments. These are the words of prototypes, basic properties of the prototypes (for fire hot, warm and blood; expanse, space, limitlessness for sky, sea etc.), as well as semantisation of the basic properties (love, hate for red; freedom for blue, life, eternity for green etc.). Thus, per word-stimulus red sustainably occur fire, flame, blood, heat, hot, and all extreme feelings – love, hate, etc.; per green – grass, tree, shrub, lettuce, lawn, leaf, freshness, life, eternity, vitality, poison, malice, etc. (Almalech, 2001, 2011) These are of the highest statistical frequency. This sustainable set of associations is the Core norm. There is a Periphery norm, in which the associations are different. They reflect the personal and social meanings of the colours that represent the capacity of the colours be varied in its symbolism.

The results of the associative experiments are relevant of language consciousness and subconscious. Svitlana Martinek postulated a stronger significance of this method: ‘The associative network is not arbitrary but to some degree is predetermined by hierarchical conceptual structures in the consciousness of speakers. The responses evoked by a certain stimulus can be seen as the reflection of corresponding conceptual structures.’ (Martinek 2004: 497)

b) The Norm shows some universal features of verbal colour language:

| Visual colours (traditional marriage and burial and secret Religious-Mystic Knowledge) | Colour | Verbal colours |
|---|--------|--|
| fertility – Balkan folklore | GREEN | nature, fertility, vegetation |
| freshness of nature – Balkan folklore, Islam | GREEN | fresh, freshness |
| fertility – Balkan folklore, Islam | GREEN | nature, growth |
| freshness, growth – marriage meaning that is signed over the bride and groom – Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, freshness of nature | GREEN | fresh, nature, freshness, vegetation, growth |
| vegetation on the Earth – Jewish Kabbalah | GREEN | planet, vegetation |

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BIBLICAL DONKEY

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Abstract

The donkey is charged with a rich, important biblical symbolism. Usually the kings choose a strong and combatant animal for ceremonies – a thoroughbred horse, an imposing elephant or even a camel. David has a “royal she-mule”, Solomon is anointed as king on a “wild donkey”. And what does Solomon’s wild donkey signify? Christ enters Jerusalem on “the foal of a she-ass,” as the king of the Jews. How do we account for the fact that in Hebrew the ass’s foal is not a diminutive of the word ‘donkey’, as well as the fact that the she-ass signifies ‘slow pace’ and has nothing in common with the jackass? The paper replies to these curious questions and to the riddle as to why the king of the Jews rides “the foal of a she-ass” and the king is of the tribe of Judah, of whom Jacob/Israel prophesies that he will untie his donkey, just as the apostles set free the ass’s foal for which Jesus Christ sent them. To decode these biblical symbols I use a linguo-semiotic approach.

1. Messiah’s donkey in Easter story

Why in first century A.D. Jewish population of Jerusalem decode as the king of the Jews and the Messiah a stranger who enters the town “riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey”; and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (KJV).

John and Matthew use a quote from the Old Testament:

as it is written: “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” John 12:14-15 (NRS)

to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, “Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Matthew 21:2-7 (NRS)

People in Christian culture are so accustomed to Easter story that they did not realize how strange and unusual is that act. To understand its cultural significance, we must remember the following facts:

- The New Testament was written by Jews for Jews, first.
- The New Testament is a type of Judaism based on the culture and customs brought from the Old Testament.
- Therefore, we should know well the Old Testament.

Subquestions can help us:

- What are the Hebrew terms for foal, colt, mule, she-ass, he-ass, donkey?
- Why the king of the Jews rides “the foal of a she-ass”?
- What is the symbolism of the royal Jewish animal in case that usually the kings choose a strong and combatant animal for ceremonies – a thoroughbred horse, an imposing elephant or even a camel.

It is impossible to give complete and satisfactory answers to these questions in short text but let me try to start to answer.

2. The Hebrew terms for English Biblical terms *foal, colt, she-ass, he-ass, donkey*

John and Matthew quoted Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble **and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.** (NRS)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and **riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.** (KJV)

2.1. The Old Testament prophecy about the ass’s foal of the Messiah and donkey-terminology

In Zechariah 9:9 the terms are:

male donkey/male ass רוֹמָה [hamòr]
 colt רִיעַ [àir]
 pl. female donkey/female ass תּוֹנֵת [atonèt]
 donkey’s foal, **lit.** son of female donkey בֶּן תּוֹנֵת [ben atonèt]

The Messiah’s foal is situated in the context of the particularly well-developed terminology in the Old Testament:

male donkey רוֹמָה [hamòr]
 female donkey וְתָא [atòn]

colt/foal רִיעַ [air]
 male mule/he- wild ass/wild donkey דָּרָפַ [pèred]
 (female form) mule/she-wild ass/wild donkey הַדָּרָפָה [pirdà]
 king's she- mule דָּרָפָה תְּדָרָפָה [pirdàt mèleh]
 wild ass/wild donkey הָרָפָה [père]
 wild ass/wild donkey אָרָפָה [père]
 wild ass/wild donkey דֹרָע [aròd]

What we see in English terms *ass*, *donkey* and *mule* is that female and male individuals are not in relationship of suppletion. We need to add to the same word the pronouns *she* or *he* as formants in a compound. But in Hebrew *she-donkey* and *he-donkey* are suppletive, i.e. they have different roots. In addition, a *young donkey* is one-word-term derived from a third root and more terms are used by the prophet. Suppletivism (‘adding’, ‘exchange’) is a way of expressing grammatical meanings of a word in which a relevant grammatical word form use another root. In clear words – semantically connected words has different roots. Suppletive forms need special attention – they are seen as “irregular” or even “highly irregular”.

Examples for suppletive facts: *good-better-best*; Bulgarian terms for *мъж* (man) and *жена* (woman) are suppletive.

We needed this definition for better orientation in Hebrew terms. In addition, there are some unknown to Europeans features of the Hebrew language and alphabet: In Hebrew the root consists of consonants and no vocals. In Hebrew Alphabet, there are no letters for vocals. The vocals are written with diacritics – dots and dashes.

3. The male donkey רֹמֶה [hamòr]

3.1. Additional information from the extended semantics of the roots (logic, associations, and contexts)

Definition: The root is morpheme that carries the mutual semantic features among all word-derivates from that root. For example, there is something common between *book*, *booklet*, *book-shop*, *booking* etc., including literal and figurative meanings.

The information for the roots is from BibleWorks4.

Male-donkey *Het-Mem-Reish* רמח
 I. ferment, boil, foam; II. be red רמח [hamàr]
 III. smear with asphalt (Exo 2:3, only)
 wine רמח [hèmer]
 bitumen רמח [hemàr]
 cement, mortar, clay רמח [hòmer]
 (he)-as רומח [hamòr]
 roebuck רומח [iahmùr]

(Bibliography used in BibleWorks4: Cohon, Samuel, “Ass,” in ISBE, I, pp. 287-88. McCullough, W. S., “Ass,” in IDB, II, pp. 260-61. McKenzie, J. L., “Ass” in Dictionary of the Bible, I, Bruce, 1965, pp. 62-63. G.H.L.)
 (BibleWorks4)

From *Het-Mem-Reish* the verb *to be red* [hamàr] is formed, which only appears in Job, 16:16 in the form [hamarmerà], meaning *to be reddish*. Classical (Библия, 1940) and current (Библия, 2001; 2002) protestant Bulgarian versions prefer to render [hamarmerà] as “to bloat”.

Only the orthodox Bulgarian version is true to the original *to become red* (почервения). The Septuagint prefers to render the prototype of macro-red, using the word συγκέκασται, meaning *burning in fire, suddenly set afire*. According to BibleWorks4 this word is translated into Latin as *comburare*, but st. Jerome (347-420) does not use it in the Vulgata, preferring instead the word *intumuit* ('to bloat'). The Slavonic translations in Russian, Polish and Czech keep to *reddening* – RST *побазрвело*, BTP *czerwone*, BKR *oduřavěla*.

It becomes clear that the denotation of the *male donkey* comprises associations with macro-red and this type of macro-red is not loaded with positive semantizations and only with great difficulty could be taken as macro-light version of red. From the root of *male donkey* [hamòr] is also formed the word *roebuck* [iahmùr], where the internal motive clearly follows the line of reddishness.

3.2. The divine commandments and the male donkey רוּמָה [hamòr]

The word [hamòr] is used frequently and every time the divine commandments are verbalized in the Exodus and Deuteronomy. There are more than 10 uses – Exodus 13:13; 20:17; 21:33; 22:4; 22:9; 22:10; 23:4 23:5 23:12 34:20; Deuteronomy 5:14; 5:21; 22:3; 22:4; 22:10; 28:31.

3.3. The other meanings of the root *Het-Mem-Reish*

The meanings *wine, bitumen, asphalt, cement, mortar, clay* of the root of the word for the male donkey, *Het-Mem-Reish*, are derived from the semantic features 'red' and 'material', available in the original semitic root semantics. There are also other roots for these same words in Hebrew, but in Genesis, 11:3; Exodus, 2:3; Job, 4:19; Psalms 40 are used for derivations precisely from this root. Similarly, the non-standard word for *wine*, formed from the same root – *wine* [hèmer]. Hence, in Deuteronomy, 32:14 and Ezra, 6:9 a word from this root stands for the *wine* [hèmer]. According to BibleWorks4, two different roots should be considered here (one with the paradigm, *become red, donkey* and the other with *wine, mud, clay, tar, mortar* and *stole*), despite their complete concurrence.

3.3.1. bitumen/asphalt [hemàr] and mortar [hòmer]

Genesis, 11:3 narrates the building of the tower of Babylon.

They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn *them* thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used **tar** for **mortar**. (NAU)

Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had **asphalt** for **mortar**. (NKJ)

In this Genesis 11:3 *tar/asphalt* translates [hemàr], whereas *mortar* translates [hòmer]. Exodus, 2:3 tells about the basket in which Moses is left to swim on the river – *daubed it with slime* (KJV); *covered it over with tar and pitch* (NAU); *daubed it with bitumen* (RSV); *plastered it with bitumen* (NRS); *daubed it with asphalt* (NKJ). In Exodus, 2:3 from the root of *male donkey* is the verb *daubed it with*; [tahmerà]. Job, 4:19 uses the word [hòmer] in the expression *houses of clay* (Bul. *къщи от кал*) [batèi hòmer].

3.3.2. wine [hèmer]

Deuteronomy 32:14 Curds of cows, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs, And rams, the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the finest of the wheat-- And of the blood of grapes you drank **wine**. (NAU)

Ezra 6:9 „Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, **wine** and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, *it is to be given to them daily without fail*, (NAU)

3.4. Red and white donkeys.

The meanings *wine*, *bitumen*, *asphalt*, *mortar* and *clay* indicate the exclusivity of the white donkey, because the usual meanings of the root for the male donkey [hamòr] are realized in the paradigm of the meanings ‘red’ and ‘material’. If the meaning ‘wine’ can be regarded as a denotation of a sacral element, then the meanings of ‘bitumen’, ‘asphalt’, ‘mortar’, ‘clay’ can be considered as an indication of a realization of the root inverse to the sacral – toward ‘dark’, ‘earthly’, ‘low’, ‘material’, ‘transient’ and even ‘hellish’. Precisely these meanings are used when Moses is hidden in the resin basket, so as not to drown in the river of life, full of ‘Nile’s crocodiles’. In a figurative sense, Moses remains hidden under this symbolic cover of resin, symbolizing ‘earthly’, ‘low’ and ‘transient’ until that moment in his life when he leaves the Pharaoh’s family.

3.5. The lexical semantization of the *male donkey* is ‘a symbol of the material’

An important distinctive feature of the word for *male donkey* רוֹמָה [hamòr] is that *male donkey* easily becomes a symbol of the material, because in contemporary Hebrew the word ‘material’ is formed from the root of ‘substance’ חֶמֶר [hòmer], as well as the word ‘foam’ and the outdated *smear with asphalt* חֶמָר [hamàr]. Traditional and contemporary rabbinic thought confirm the idea that “the Judahic Messiah riding a horse, controls the material and physical” (Zohar, Bamidbar, 3:207a). Rabbi Ari Kahn (Kahn), a professor at the Univeristy of Bar-Ilan (Israel) recalls Zohar’s commentary in his popular lectures.

Moreover, in contemporary Israelite society, the idea of the relation ‘material – the Messiah’s donkey’ has various manifestations. For instance, Sefi Rachlevsky, in his book „Messiah’s Donkey” (Rachlevsky 1998) sustains the claim that the national religious movement attempts to replace the democratic Hebrew state by a religious theocracy, using the term “straddling” the institutions of the democratic state. The author shows that the religious Zionist Rav Kuk discusses laic pioneers and politicians who established and built a democratic Hebrew state, as the Messiah’s donkey. “Materialists” (there is a word-play with donkey רוֹמָה [hamòr] and the related words *matter*, *material*, *substance* חֶמֶר [hòmer]) have done the dirty work, so to speak, so that now the nationalist religious movement is designated by God to take over the state institutions in order to transform them into the nationalist religious ideal – the “essence of the Messiah”. Rachlevsky’s book crystallized secular Israel’s fear of ultra-Orthodox power ... from a religious community bent on destroying Israel’s democracy.

The material is precisely related to the word for male donkey, insofar as *male donkey* and רוֹמָה [hamòr] and *matter*, *material* חֶמֶר [hòmer] are derivatives of one and the same root. This kind of commentary, however, expresses the general idea based on only one of the three “don-

key” terms used in Zechariah 9:9. This type of commentary omits details such as the element of elevation originating in Zechariah’s use of the word *donkey’s foal* רִינֵעַ [aìr]. The semantics of ‘elevation’ and ‘soaring’ is carried by the entire semantics of the root of the word *donkey’s foal*. The other omission is Zechariah’s elaboration that the donkey is “the foal of donkeys” (וּנְ תִּתְּ-וֹן [ben atonòt]). Briefly, this kind of religious nationalist claim (to put it mildly) “conveniently” omits the context of Prophet Zechariah’s words in this verse.

3.6. Denotative and connotative aspects

From word-derivation point of view the he-donkey רוֹמָח [hamòr] expresses the macro-red and macro-black in terms of Witkovski and Brown 1977; 1978; 1982, Wierzbicka 1996, Borg 2007.

From contextual, storyline point of view he-donkey is a marker for decisive moments of the life of tribes of Issachar and Judah (Genesis 49:11), of Abraham (Genesis 22:4); Joseph (Genesis 42:27; 44:13); Moses (Exodus 4:20; Numbers 16:15); The conquest of Jericho (Joshua 15:18); The tribe of Judah takes possession of the Holy Land (Joshua 15:12-20; Judges 1:10-16); One of the first punishments for disobeying the Torah in the Holy Land (Judges 6:15); Gideon and Samson (Judges 15:15-16); The beginning of the end of the epoch of the Judges (Judges 19-21); The beginning of the monarchy (1 Samuel 12:1-3); Death of the nameless prophet (3 Kings 13:13; 23-24; 27); king David (1 Samuel 16:20; 25:18-25; 40-44; 2 Samuel 16, 1-4; 17:23); king Solomon (1 Kings 2:8-10; 36-44); The actions of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 4:22); The narrator is prophet Jeremiah, Chronicles and Kings (Jeremiah 22:19; 2 Chronicles 36:6; 2 Kings 24:6); The narrator is prophet Nehemiah (Nehemiah 7:65-68), Isaiah.

4. The Female Donkey וִיתָא [atòn]

Historically, the female donkey was preferred to the male because of its milk and because it was better for riding. In BibleWorks4 it is shown precisely why the donkey is related to the tradition of pacification and the Messiah, as told already by Jacob. This is said in Genesis, 49:11, where chapter 49 is dedicated to Jacob’s legacy to his twelve sons. Verses 10, 11 and 12 are dedicated to the tribe of Judah, from which David is a descendant. The descendents of Judah are the only tribe which returned from Mesopotamia and the New Testament indicates Jesus Christ as a descendent of King David. In Jacob’s legacy in Genesis, 49:11, for the first time, key terms *ass’s colt, foal* are used which are also inherited by the New Testament:

Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: Genesis 49:11 (KJV)

foals of a donkey, lit. sons of female donkey יִנְבּ וּנְ תִּתְּ [bnèi atonò];

binding his foal וְרִינֵעַ יָרָס אֵ [osrì irò]

binding his ass’s colt וְרִינֵעַ יִנְבּ יָרָס אֵ [osrì bnèi irò]

4.1. The prototype of the Messiah’s white donkey

The *white she-donkeys* in Judges 5:10 are a highly significant symbol because it relates to the prophecy that the Messiah will enter Jerusalem on a donkey.

Judges 5:10 „You who ride on **white donkeys**, You who sit on *rich* carpets, And you who

travel on the road – sing! Judges, 5:10 (NAU)

Judges 5:10 Speak, ye that ride on **white asses**, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way. (KJV)

The important notion in regard to the New Testament is “binding the ass’s colts”, where it is tacitly understood that there are “tied asses”.

4.1. Lexical and root information.

The root of the word אָתוֹן [atòn] is not mentioned in BibleWorks4. According to Gesenius, however, in Arabic there is a non-developed root *Alef-Tav-Nun* אתן, meaning, ‘to walk with small steps’ which, with a preposition, can also mean ‘stand stable’, ‘stand firm’, ‘sustain’. This verb is close to the arab verb ‘refuse’ and, according to Gesenius, from this common, non-developed root derives the Hebrew word *ass* אָתוֹן [atòn] (Gesenius, 1996, p. 95). In full agreement with Gesenius, the *Easton Bible Dictionary* (EBD) asserts that the *ass* is called אָתוֹן [atòn], because of its slow gait.

According to the *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, the word has a different origin:

‘Athon, Assyrian ‘atanu’ and Aramaic ‘atana’, is derived from ‘atha’ “to come,” “go,” etc. (Furst suggests that it may be derived from ‘athan, Aramaic ‘adhan, “to be slender,” “docile”, etc.) (Ass – ISBE)

Leaving the passage indicated in BibleWorks4 and to conclude, we should note that the donkey expresses the idea of ‘peace’ and ‘ordinariness’, as well as ‘God’s omnipotence who, if he wants to, makes something great of the most ordinary thing’. This is the sense commented in BibleWorks4, in the case of Numbers 22:21-28, where the donkey speaks to Balaam and becomes the carrier of divine providence. Let us recall that the idea of ‘ordinariness’ includes the most popular qualities of that animal – ‘stupidity’, ‘stubbornness’, ‘strong sexuality’.

Gesenius adds the meanings ‘walk with small steps’, as well as ‘refuse’, which have the potential to develop as ‘stand stable’, ‘stand firm’ and ‘sustain’. According to the *ISBE*-interpretation, the function of movement ‘going’, ‘coming’ is confirmed for denoting the female donkey.

We should note the interest in the term “white asses”. Dr. Thomas McDaniel, 2003 dedicates an entire monograph to this topic, including his interpretation. The book shows an impressive erudition in Semitic philology, knowledge of English translations and the Septuagint. The asses are not the focus of attention, but interestingly, McDaniel gives a completely different translation of Judges 5:10, omitting the female gender of the donkey and the “sitting ones” do not sit on rugs but on mules: *Riders on young donkeys, those sitting on mules, and those walking along the way*. The eccentricity of this translation may explain why the book was published by the author himself. In addition, the author has a series of original ideas.

The word *donkeys* אָתוֹנוֹת [atonòt] is in the feminine plural.

The term *white* is not expressed by the standard Hebrew term for white color (לָבָן [lavàn]), but by a word from the root *Tzadi-Het-Reish* רָחַץ. In the English and Bulgarian translations, however, *white donkeys* אָתוֹנוֹת תְּחוֹרֹת [atonòt tzechoròt] and *white wool* רְחֵצֵי טְהוֹרִים [tzèmer tzàhar] are not translated as *reddish-gray*, *tawny*, but consistently result as *white (female) donkeys* (Bul.

бѣли магаруци).

4.1.1. White she-donkeys, the root *Tzadi-Het-Reish* רהצ and the closely related root *Tzadi-He-Reish* רהצ

The Hebrew word for *white* is תֹּהַר [tzehoròt] and the word's root is *Tzadi-Het-Reish* רהצ. The root *Tzadi-Het-Reish* רהצ according BibleWoks4 has following meanings:

reddish-gray, tawny (Ezek 27:18) רָהַצ [tzàhar]
tawny (Jud 5:10) רָהַצ [tzòhar]

The word *white* designated by words formed from that root appears only twice in the entire Old Testament. The first time is in Judges 5:10 and the second – in the word-combination *white wool* in Ezekiel, 27:18. Such a rare usage is significant in itself. In order to orient ourselves in regard to this meaning, we have to examine the full semantics of the root.

According to Gesenius 1996, the origin of רָהַצ [tzàhar] derives from an unextended root in the language, meaning *bedazzle, knock, shine, blinded by bright light*.

The paradigm of such a denotation of white in the Old Testament comprises only two cases – *white she-donkeys* תֹּהַר תֵּצֵר [atonòt tzehoròt] and *white wool* רֶמֶץ רָהַצ [tzèmer tzàhar]. A possible reading of the word *white* is רָהַצ [tzòhar], but here I shall keep to רָהַצ [tzàhar].

Thus, the root relates to active transformations of the idea of light. The singular form of *white*, תֹּהַר [tzehoròt], is רָהַצ [tzahòr] and the main signification of that word is *reddish-gray, tawny*.

Consequently these translations depend on the tradition and on the amalgamation of this root with *Tzadi-He-Reish* רהצ which is close to it. The paradigm of *Tzadi-He-Reish* רהצ provides the *donkeys' color*:

I. noon, midday; II. roof (once, Gen 6:16) רָהַצ [tzòhar]
fresh oil רָהַצ [itzhàr]
press oil רָהַצ [tzàhar]
(TWOT in BibleWords4)

It is important to check whether Bibles in other languages “insist” on the translation of תֹּהַר [tzehoròt] as *white*, Bul. бѣлу, since [tzahòr] denotes *reddish-gray, tawny* and is not the standard Hebrew word for *white*, which is לָבַן [lavàn]).

The Septuagint shows a leveling of two roots that are close, but different:

Tzadi-He-Reish רהצ and *Tzadi-Het-Reish* רהצ, translating the word תֹּהַר [tzehoròt] with the meaning of the paradigm of the word רָהַצ [tzòhar]. Instead of the standard use of the term for white color (λευκός [leukòs]) or the standard word for *light*, Bul. светлина, Gr. φῶς [fos], the Septuagint indicates the word μεσημβρία [mesembrìas], meaning *noon*. Thus the Septuagint differs from the Slavonic and English translations which use the standard term for *white color* — бѣли, бѣлых, białych, *white*.

The word רָהַצ [tzòhar] is used once as a term for the *window* of Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:16). That which allows the seventy translators to treat the two roots as synonyms, are the semes ‘light’, ‘noon-light, as something positive’ and ‘ritual purity’. This is how the window of Noah's arc and the white donkeys from Judges 5:10 turn out to be in a common paradigm, suggesting ‘light’ and ‘purity’.

The Vulgata uses the word *nitēns*, meaning shiny and not one of the standard words for *white* or *light*.

All translations maintain the whiteness, lightness and shininess of the *donkeys*. In this regard it is particularly significant that the legend of the Septuagint attributes a rabbinic authorship to the Greek translation, and the St. Jerome (347-420) spent much time in the Holy Land, studying Hebrew and advising local Judaic rabbis. The first occurs three centuries before the New era and the second – four centuries after the New era. In this way the tradition consistently confirms this translation.

Of the same order is the riddle why the kings David and Solomon choose foals which are “children of the she-donkey” as the royal animal and not the horse. Judges 5:10 shows that the use of donkeys or foals as animals for riding and expressing abundance, power, influence etc., is a tradition in the Near Eastern Israelite monotheistic culture.

White she-donkeys from Judges 5:10 are related to the Messiah and his foal of a donkey, lit. *sons of female donkey*, from Genesis, 49:11.

5. The colt ריע [air]

BibleWorks4 distinguishes between two different roots *Ayin-Yud-Reish* ry[, which are spelled the same – ‘yr I и ‘yr II. From the first root derives ריע [ur] rouse oneself, awake, incite, as well as ריע [ir] excitement. From the second root derives ריע [air] he-donkey.

Gesenius provides more information, the most valuable of which is the motive of forming the noun *wild donkey* ריע [air] – “The notion of being hot is applied in various ways: 1. to an *ardent rapid course*, or running; a wild ass, so called from its rapid unrestrained running”. Interestingly, Gesenius does not indicate the meaning of the root *rouse oneself, awake, incite*.

From this review of the root in BibleWorks4 and Gesenius, we can draw the following complex conclusion:

The cognitive, sub-consciously flowing relation of the word colt ריע [air] has five aspects, resulting from the colt’s qualities as well as of the extended semantics of the word’s root. The first aspect is that the colt lacks the association with strong sexuality, typical of mature donkeys, i.e. here the ‘lack of strong sexuality’ is at hand. The second aspect is a complete onomatopoeia with *town* ריע [air]. The third aspect relates the colt to ‘flaming’, ‘ardent’, since they form the meanings ‘speed’ + ‘peace’. The fifth aspect is the relation with the verbs rouse oneself, awake, incite ריע [ur]. This last aspect transmits linguistic consciousness and sub-consciousness of a journey to exaltation.

6. The wild donkey הקרפ [pirdà] is the royal animal

In the Hebrew world-view the wild donkey is differentiated from the domestic one with quite different words. There are two denotations for wild ass/wild donkey.

One is קרפ [pèred]/קרפ [pirdà] and the other is קרפ [père]/קרפ [père]. The term for the royal parade animal is king’s she-mule (Bul. царското муле) קרפ תרפ [pirdàt mèleh].

In this context there are several uses – in Jeremiah, 2:24, Job, 11:12, 39:5. Isaiah, 32:14 – where the second word for wild donkey is used for mule, with the textual semantization ‘wild’, ‘natural’, uncivilized’, ‘non-monotheistic’ and ‘absence of people’.

BibleWorks4 indicates the meaning “wild donkey” for the word קרפ [père]/קרפ [père]. The internal form of the term royal donkey/mule קרפ [pèred] is from *run, run fast* קרפ [perà]. On the other hand, the same root, according to Gesenius, comprises the verb *carry weight, support, carry, bear* קרפ [parà]. This word should not be confused with its homophone – קרפ [parà], meaning *young cow*. The verb קרפ [parà] means *carry, give birth quickly, run*. Clearly, the two

verbs אָרַפּ [parà] and הָרַפּ [parà] are close enough – in sound and meaning.

Besides signifying ‘wild’, ‘natural’, ‘uncivilized’, ‘non-monotheistic’, the wild donkey is also a sign for ‘nobleness’ and ‘royalness’. This appears in the different descriptions in 3 Kings of Solomon’s anointment as king, where the word הִקְרַפּ [pirdà] is used.

Zechariah does not use the lexeme אָרַפּ [père], used in Solomon’s anointment as king in 1 Kings:33; 38; 44 (3 Kings, 1:33; 38; 44), yet on the other hand, in the New Testament the apostles indicate that Christ entered Jerusalem as a Jewish king, riding a *mule* (Bul. осле). The founders of the Hebrew monarchy – David and Solomon – prefer the mule as their ceremonial animal. The term is *king’s mule* תִּדְרַפּ רִלְמָה [pirdàt mèleh]. Solomon’s anointment as king occurs on a *king’s mule* (Bul. царското муле). The word formation *king’s mule* תִּדְרַפּ רִלְמָה [pirdàt mèleh] is a smihut-form which unequivocally indicates that the royal mule is female. The term is used in three verses telling about Solomon’s anointment as king, done while David is still alive – 1 Kings 33; 38; 44.

The king said to them, „Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on **my own mule**, and bring him down to Gihon. 1 Kings 1:33 (NAU)

According to the Bulgarian explanatory dictionary, муле (mule) as a general term is a cross between a donkey and a horse. The dictionary distinguishes between the concrete terms – a mule is born of a she-ass and a horse, whereas a hinny is born from a donkey and a mare (BED 1963, p. 423). In the context of the Messiah and his genealogical tree related to King David, the question of the “royal mule”/ “David’s mule” is not without significance, as well as the term “colt, born of an ass”. This term is used both in the Old and the New Testament when it needs to be specified.

All of David’s sons ride she-mules [pirdà]. Solomon’s anointment as king with such a female mule changes the spectrum of semantizations of this word: from the usual animal ridden by the king’s sons in times of peace, this kind of donkey is transformed into a royal animal.

7. The Aramaic *wild donkey* דוֹרַע [aròd]

The word occurs in Job 39:5.

According to Gesenius, the word colt רִיעַ [air] has an Aramaic origin, from the root *Ayin-Yud-Reish* and is an element of the paradigm of macro-red – macro-light רִיעַ [ur] *to be hot, ardent, rouse oneself, awake, incite* רִיעַ [ur]; *to make hot, to heat* רִיעָה [heir]; רִיעַ [ir] *excitement*.

Job’s poetic style is distinctive due to his brilliant command of Hebrew, as well as the large number of loan-words. Thus we can find the Aramaic word next to the Hebrew word in one and the same verse. This is precisely the case with the Aramaic word for *wild donkey* דוֹרַע [aròd], which is next to the Hebrew word אָרַפּ [père] in Job 39:5.

Usual explanation for the many non-Hebrew words in the Book of Job, including the couple דוֹרַע [aròd] – אָרַפּ [père] is that the use of non-Hebrew words serves poetic manipulation (Greenstein 2003; Ginsberg 2007).

The Bulgarian translations of this word and the poetical parallelism of the Aramaic and Hebrew words for *wild donkey* are illustrations of the correctness of Greenstein’s claim.

8. Conclusions

— There are five different Hebrew roots for terms for English Biblical *foal*, *coat*, *female donkey*, *he-ass*.

— Logical and associative relations in Hebrew, established by the polysemy of different roots of names for the donkey are untranslatable into Indo-European languages.

— From color point of view the *he-donkey* חמור [hamòr] is in the area of macro-red and macro-black, while the *foal* of the Messiah is macro-white.

— The *white she-donkeys* in Judges 5:10 are a highly significant symbol because it relates to the prophecy that the Messiah will enter Jerusalem on a donkey. In this sense, the word denoting the color of the donkey is significant.

— White donkeys are related to the meanings ‘light’, ‘noon-light as something positive’, ‘ritual purity’, following the derivation of their semantics from the root, as well as from the biblical context. That is why they are the prototype of the Messiah’s donkey.

— Zechariah’s prophecy is incarnate in the gospels of the New Testament, is cited with precision by the apostles and Jesus enters Jerusalem as a Hebrew king, on a white colt, the ass’s foal.

— Kings ride mules with difficulty, but apparently this is not the case of the most important Judaic kings who are not worried to express ‘peace’ by means of this symbol.

— Kings David and Solomon choose colts “the ass’s foals” as royal animal and not the horse. From Judges, 5:10 is clear that the use of donkey or colt as an animal for riding expresses wealth, power, influence etc., but not ‘solidarity with poverty’, ‘simplicity’.

— The analysis of the extended semantics of the proto-image of Christ’s white colt – the white asses from the call to Court by Debora; the lexemes of Zechariah’s prophecy; the symbols of Jacob’s legacy for the tribe of Judah in Genesis 49; the tradition established by David and Solomon that kings should ride mules – show different levels of the relation between the New and Old Testaments.

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