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See also →Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti; →Dobschütz, Ernst von

Diblaim

Diblaim appears in the MT as *Diblāyim*, in the LXX as Δεβηλαιμ, in Syriac as *dblym*, and in Latin as *Debelaim*. The term does not appear in Targum Jonathan, which instead presents a homiletical interpretation of the name in relation to Aram., *dĕbĕlâ*, "fig cake" (see Smolar/Aberbach: 216, n. 557).

Diblaim is the father of Gomer, "the woman of harlotry" whom the prophet Hosea was commanded to marry by YHWH in Hos 1 : 2. Apart from the reference to Gomer *bat Diblāyim* in Hos 1 : 3, no other reference to him appears in the Bible.

Interpreters have struggled to interpret the name. Because the term *diblayim* is a dual form of the noun, *dĕbēlâ*, "fig cake," some interpret the term as the price for sexual relations with Gomer (Wolff: 17; see Nestle; Baumgartner; cf. Noth: 240). Such a view has little basis in Hebrew usage of the term, *bat*, "daughter (of)." Instead, it appears to be the product of imaginative reflection on the figurative character of Hosea's marriage and the names of his children. Others view the name as a corrupted reference to the place name from which Gomer comes (see Diblataim in Jer 48 : 22; Num 33 : 46, 47) or possibly a Canaanite name such as Debal-Yam, but neither place name is fully corresponds to Diblaim. The most likely understanding is that Diblaim is simply the name of Gomer's father. The masculine name, Ephraim, is likewise a dual formation of a root that means "agility" or "enclose" (Sweeney: 16–17).

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Marvin A. Sweeney

Dibon

Dibon, modern Dhiban, is located in Jordan 70 km south of 'Amman, and two km north of the Wadi al-Mujib, the Bible's Arnon River Valley. The toponym Dibon is mentioned a total of twelve times in the Bible. The Israelites passed near the site during their encampment in Jordan prior to crossing into Canaan (Num 21 : 30; 32 : 3; 32 : 34). Dibon is also mentioned twice in Isaiah (15 : 2; 15 : 9) and twice in Jeremiah (48 : 18; 48 : 22), and in Neh 11 : 25, the site is noted as a post-Exilic settlement. Twice-mentioned Dibon-Gad in Num 33 : 45–46, a variation on the name, suggests possession by the Israelite tribe of Gad in the early Iron Age, although the Joshua (13 : 9; 13 : 17) passage suggests the site was given to the tribe of Reuben.

Dhiban is noted for the discovery in 1868 of a 9th-century lapidary inscription authored by Mesha, a Moabite king mentioned in 2 Kgs 3 : 4. The inscription describes how Mesha ended the Omride Dynasty's rule over west-central Jordan, took control of territory to Dhiban's north, and conducted building campaigns throughout the expanded kingdom. Mesha mentions building a high place for Kemosh, the Moabite deity, in Qarhoh, a sacred precinct believed to be in Dhiban. Mesha also reports that he built a palace and water management system and rebuilt gates and towers. The bottom of the inscription is not preserved entirely, obscuring the second half of Mesha's narrative.

Archaeological excavations have so far revealed limited evidence for a late Bronze and early Iron Age settlement that would correspond with the Numbers and Joshua passages. The discovery of early Iron Age ceramic vessel sherds on the surface suggests this interpretation could change with more investigation. Several structures dating to the 9th and 8th century have been identified including a fortification system, a gate, and a monumental building on the acropolis whose earliest phase was recently dated to the 9th century. Ongoing excavations are currently determining the function of this building and whether or not it can be associated with Mesha and his successors. A nearby necropolis contained several individuals interred in eight chamber tombs. Settlement evidence during the 7th and 6th centuries, when the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires dominated the Levant, is rare, although upcoming work may changes this assessment. Above Dhiban's Iron Age architecture are later settlements dating to the Classical and Islamic Periods.

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Benjamin W. Porter

Dibri

Dibri (MT *Dibrî*; LXX Δαβρι) is a Danite (Lev 24 : 11) whose daughter Shelomith was married to an Egyptian. In a narrated legal case, their son was stoned for blaspheming the divine name, probably indicating that those with partial foreign ancestry were still subject to punishment for blasphemy.

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Daniel Stulac

See also → Blaspheming Son (Lev 24 : 10–16)

Dickens, Charles

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812–1870), English novelist and short-story writer, enjoyed great success in his lifetime, initially through the medium of the serialized novel, and his standing in the literary canon has grown ever since. The novels are admired for their caricatures of human types, entertainingly convoluted plots, moral vision, and evocation of the Victorian world. Rewritten biblical stories and tropes are present throughout them, though the writer's relationship with Christian supernaturalism was ambivalent, as witnessed in his naturalistic account for children of Jesus' ministry, *The Life of Our Lord* (1849), and by the fact that his name is inextricably linked with the idea of Christmas as an interlude of escapism which is expressed in *A Christmas Carol* (1843). As a young man, Dickens toured the London churches on Sundays, and the moribund world he found there possibly colored his sense of the Christian sacred texts being as abandoned by the modern world as the "benefaction of loaves of bread" he noticed left behind in the porch of one church dating to the period of Queen Anne (*The Uncommercial Traveller*: 87). At the same time, the major novels in their social critique reconstruct the biblical prophetic stance on a monumental scale for Victorian England and finally insist on the transformative power of love. The novel *Oliver Twist* (1838) is permeated by allusions to the parable of the Good Samaritan. In *Dombey and Son* (1848), biblical themes struggle against the powerful tide of the new mercantilism and some biblical hypotexts, like that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, are reworked in complex ways. The novel *Bleak House* (1852) is related intertextually to the book of Job, and its character Esther Summerson is a gesture towards the independence and stamina of her biblical namesake. Her illegitimacy resonates with the orphan status of the biblical Esther; she was brought up by her godmother, she recounts, "like some of the princesses in fairy stories" (*Bleak House*: 15); the secret of her identity as the daughter of Lady Dedwood (when revealed) gives her a sort of hidden regal standing; and Jarndyce's gift of her in marriage to Woodcourt (which Esther reports in her narrative [p. 859], as what he called a "willing gift") echoes Mordecai's presentation of Esther to Ahasuerus.

Great Expectations (1861) draws on the biblical motifs of Noah's ark, Lazarus, Cain and Abel, and Eden. The convict ship is "a wicked Noah's Ark lying out on the black water," an inversion of the salvific associations of the biblical ark, and Miss Haversham in her shroud seems to be an inverted Lazarus. Cunningham observes that Pip is like Cain in relation to Herbert, while Orlick is Cain in relation to Mrs. Joe, whose death he causes, and Pip, whom he does not succeed in killing. Pip's journey to London is a mixture of exile from Eden and quest for paradise. *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) offers a sophisticated set of variations on the theme of inverted Edens and prospective Edens, in which Old Martin Chuzzlewit ultimately performs the role of God and Seth Pecksniff that of Satan. In *David Copperfield* (1850), another novel filled with Edenic imagery, the figure of Uriah exerts a compulsive hold on David like a reprise of the repressed victim of the biblical David. Uriah has a "cadaverous face," his father was a sexton and his mother is his "dead image" (218, 234, 254). References to Ecclesiastes form an important subtext of *Little Dorrit* (1857), whose eponymous heroine has been read as the Paraclete in female form. In *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), there is the rather heavy-handed imagery of John Harmon and Eugene Wrayburn undergoing baptismal death and rebirth in the River Thames. Less noticed is the use of the stories of Cain and Abel and of Lazarus to provide intertexts for what may be a gloomy prognosis on the direction which civilization for the moment is taking, while nevertheless, at the level of the personal, the Lazarus intertext spells hope already in the present. When Lightwood visits Wrayburn as he lies on what seems to be his deathbed, it is the lawyer's pronouncement of the word "wife" at Lizzie's instigation (as a naturalized substitute for "Lazarus, come forth!") which opens the door for "Providence" to intervene (741). The sense of time coming to an end, derived ultimately from the general Victorian rediscovery of the book of Revelation, is an important moral thread in many of Dickens' narratives, not least *Hard Times* (1854) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Critics are divided over the extent to which Dickens