

Measurement units in Biblical verses

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Abstract- Considered here are the units of length, mass and volume used in the Bible. The first part deals with the historical positioning of the occurrence of these measurement. The following will present the verses containing the names of these units.

Introduction

The Bible is a book which provokes the contemporary man. It provokes and doesn't allow him to be indifferent towards it. It does not matter that it was written 2 - 3 thousands years ago, that its authors had the different mentality, that it came into being, one would say, in exotic environment, nevertheless it is always real and true.

At present, the interest in this book is growing. According Fr. Kazimierz Greła, one of the contemporary Polish theologians, the exegetes publish improved translations in order to bring closer its true meaning, comment on particular books, write monographs on problems presented in it [1 - p.5].

In the main part of this work, we refer to Millennium Bible [2], which is a Polish translation from the original languages, and "bible computer compilation" can serve as reference source [3, 5]. Some examples of units of length, mass and volume are shortly presented below.

I. The length

The units of length frequently use part of human body as reference: palm, finger, foot, step. The other units are: "sabat way, mile, rod "(sążeń)", stadium, cane.

Examples:

- its thickness was equal to width of the palm – First Book of Kings , 7,26 - *It was four fingers thick*
- window 3 steps above the window - First Book of Kings 7,4 - *There were three rows of windows arranged in sets of three.*

In addition a quotation from the Book of Exodus: *the length of each material should be 42 feet and the width is six feet.*

II. The mass (weight)

The Jewish use: talent (34,272 kg), mine (0,571 kg), sykl (11,424 g) and halvesykl.

- Its weight is *talent in gold* First Chronicle 20,2

- *The spear that weighed three hundred sykles of bronze* (2nd Samuel book 21.26)

The New Testament mentions only talents and roman pounds.

III. Volume

Two types of units exist: one deals with solids (wheat and barley ...) sea, kor, choiniks, bushel or a barrel the other with fluids (oil wine) bat, efa, kor, ksestes, metretes.

Examples:

- *he made a trench around the alter large enough to contain two seas of see:* (1st Book of Kings 18,32).

- *20 000 kors (bats) of wine , 20 000 kors (bats) of fine oil* (1th King Book, chapter 5.11)

Summary

Every metrologist should be overjoyed with such an amount of metrological units in the Bible.

The assumption of this presentation is that it could encourage the individual searching of further metrological terms mentioned in the most beautiful book – the Bible. The English translation of the Bible is available on line (and as well to many other languages) and such terms can be found with the aid of search engines..

The historical and geographical contexts of those terms are also worth knowing. Various historical translations may be helpful.

(This English version of abstract is prepared behave of Fr.R. Olejnik from his Polish abstract by Z Warsza and his friends. In final paper this text can be developed on base of other Olejnik's Polish publications and Bible on line. ZW)

Bibliography

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 - [4] Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu. W przekładzie z języków oryginalnych, Poznań Wydawnictwo Pallottinum , 1980 (in Polish)
 - [5] Internet: bible.org/netbible
- and few selected earlier papers of R. Olejnik in Polish

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