HEKHAL · READER'S EDITION

Sifra di-Tzeniuta (the matkela)

Zohar, Sifra di-Tzeniuta; The Balance and the Kings Who Died

ספרא דצניעותא

Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)

PROVISIONAL EDITION · MACHINE-ASSISTED · NOT YET REVIEWED BY A CREDENTIALED EDITOR

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TRADITION	jewish-mysticism
LANGUAGE	Aramaic
PERIOD	late-13c (pseudepigraphically 2c)
ATTRIBUTION	Anonymous Zoharic authorship (Castilian circle, late 13th c.; pseudepigraphically R. Shimon bar Yochai). Targum machine-assisted, 2026-05-29.
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> What this is: a machine-assisted, provisional translation. Every rendering choice and every unresolved reading is recorded in the apparatus beside the text. If you read the original and something looks wrong, write to community@hekhal.org; corrections are credited.

This edition presents the verbatim original-language text beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

ספרא דצניעותא פרקא קדמאה

תאנא. ספרא דצניעותא, ספרא, דשקיל במתקלא. (תאנא) דעד דלא הוה מתקלא, לא הוו משגיחין אפין באפין, ומלכין קדמאין מיתו, וזיוניהון לא אשתכחו, וארעא אתבטלת. עד דרישא דכסופא דכל כסופין, לבושי דיקר אתקין, ואחסין. האי מתקלא תלי באתר דלא הוה, אתקלו ביה אינון דלא אשתכחו. מתקלא קאים בגופיה. לא אתאחד, ולא אתחזי. ביה סליקו, וביה סלקין דלא הוו, והוו, ויהויין.

It has been taught: the Book of Concealment, the book that is weighed in the balance. For until there was a balance, they did not gaze face to face, and the primordial kings died, and their adornments were not found, and the earth was voided.

Until the head of desire of all desires arrayed garments of glory and bestowed them.

This balance hangs in a place that was not. In it were weighed those who were not found. The balance stands in its own self; it is not grasped and it is not seen. In it they

ascended, and in it ascend those who were not, and were, and will be.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim original-language text beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each

term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

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the-balance

idra-theosophy frame, balance-measure mode (dominant), with concealment-revelation. The matkela (balance / scale) is the equilibrium that orders the unbalanced primordial forces into configurations that can endure: ‘until there was a balance, they did not gaze face to face’, face-to-face being the posture of harmonious union of the configurations (Mathers reads the two countenances as Macroprosopus and Microprosopus; the Aramaic leaves anpin be-anpin open). The balance itself is apophatically described: it ‘hangs in a place that was not,’

'stands in its own self,' 'is not grasped and not seen', the ungraspable measure prior to and constitutive of determinate existence ('those who were not, and were, and will be'). The terse, oracular Sifra register is preserved rather than expanded. *Scholem, Gershom 1974*; *Tishby, Isaiah 1989*

the-kings-who-died

pardes frame, scriptural-anchoring; reception-cordovero-luria (flagged as later). 'The primordial kings died, and their adornments were not found, and the earth was voided' alludes to the seven kings of Edom 'who reigned before any king reigned over the children of Israel' (Genesis 36:31-39), each of whom, the verse says, reigned and died. The Kabbalistic tradition read them as primordial worlds or configurations emanated in an unbalanced state, which therefore could not endure. This is the textual seed that Isaac Luria developed into the doctrine of shevirat ha-kelim (the breaking of the vessels); that fully cosmogonic myth is later reception and is NOT retrojected into the body, which renders only the Sifra's terse statement. The 'head of desire of all desires' that then arrays 'garments of glory' is the first ordering (the inwardness of Keter / Atika) by which the balance is established and the worlds can stand. *Fine, Lawrence 2003*; *Liebes, Yehuda 1993*

macroprosopus-comparand

PD-comparison. Mathers (1887, from Knorr's Latin) renders matkela as 'the equilibrium of balance' (this rendering: 'the balance,' keeping 'equilibrium' to apparatus), 'countenance beheld not countenance' for anpin be-anpin (glossing the two as Macroprosopus/Microprosopus), and 'their crowns were found no more' for ziyyuneihon (this rendering: 'their adornments,' preserving the ornament/armament range). Mathers identifies the kings with the Edomite kings in a bracketed note and expounds them in his ch. XXVI; the Aramaic states only that the primordial kings died. The from-Latin / from-Aramaic divergence is the contribution. *Mathers, S. L. MacGregor 1887, p. 43-44*

Editorial decisions

- **the-primordial-kings-died.** Rendered the kings-who-died tersely ('the primordial kings died, and their adornments were not found, and the earth was voided'), preserving the Sifra's compression; the kings-of-Edom (Genesis 36) identification and the Lurianic shevirat-ha-kelim development are placed in apparatus as reception, not asserted in the body (the Sifra predates the Lurianic systematization). *(editor-vincent, 2026-05-29)*

- **the-balance.** matkela rendered ‘the balance’ throughout (the concrete weighing-instrument), with ‘equilibrium’ reserved to apparatus per the glossary discipline; the cognate verbs (shakil, itkalu) rendered with the weighing image (‘weighed in the balance,’ ‘in it were weighed’) rather than abstracted. *(editor-vincent, 2026-05-29)*

Colophon

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