

brothers finally made the actual sale, why doesn't the narrator exercise his usual care in participant identification and integration? Even assuming separate documents here, couldn't the redactor have done a better job?

If, however, the Midianites of v28a are the Ishmaelites of 25 and 28b, all fall nicely into place per the usual conventions of participant identification. The mention of the Midianites in 28a counts as the necessary re-presentation of the Ishmaelites which are mentioned only once in 25. Then, to remove all doubt, the narrator again terms them Ishmaelites in 28b.

The only lingering doubt which might remain is: why, in verse 28, are the Midianites mentioned in an almost misleading way (with indefinite nouns) as '*anasim midyanim soharim* in the verse "And there passed by certain Midianite merchants."? To answer this last question, I turn again to the consideration of another major point of text theory.

Peaks as zones of turbulence

It is a fact of discourse structure that structure at a high point of a discourse has features special to it. In terms of narrative structure, structure at peak is not the same as routine narration. Peaks are stylistically marked by a variety of means; and effort is made to insure that the peak of a story does not go by too fast. Some form of rhetorical underlining (repetition, paraphrase, parallelism of statement) is the order of the day. Often the event-line of the story is in some way packed or extended -- e.g., by reporting a lot of the minute component parts of an overall action. Often the verb/non-verb ratio is higher here than for the story as a whole. The stage may be crowded with participants for the last crucial scene of the last act. Specific devices like shifts in tense (e.g., to the historical present) of person (e.g., to first person plural) may contribute vividness. Sentence length may be decidedly shorter (or longer) than the usual length. Dialogue or even drama (i.e., dialogue without formulas of quotation) may come to the fore as not in previous sections of the story. Or, conversely, a story heavy in dialogue may phase out dialogue entirely in favor of a reported sequence of actions.¹⁶

Above all, in terms of text analysis, a peak is a zone of practical analytical difficulty. I have observed this repeatedly in conducting discourse analysis workshops in various parts of the world (Mesoamerica, South America, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines). People who have begun textual analysis on a text in a language, and who have worked happily on the text for several weeks and who have begun to formulate rules for uses of tenses and for participant reference, will report in to me in a state of considerable frustration and discouragement -- because they have encountered the peak of the discourse and their routine, business-as-usual rules do not work anymore! Special peak-marking rules have to be formulated as modifications or 'gear-shifts' before textual analysis can continue.

Now to apply this to Gen 37, I have two observations to make: (1) As already stated, this chapter is the inciting incident of its story -- and