

A NOTE ON MICAH 5: 1 (HEBREW 4: 14)

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Obscurities in the Hebrew text of Micah have given rise to numerous conjectural emendations, many of which fall short of the mark when submitted to closer scrutiny. One example among many may be gleaned from Micah 5: 1 (Hebrew 4: 14).

The phrase **בת-גדוד התגדדי** has been called into question by many textual critics. Wellhausen, for example, proposed the reading **התגדד התגדדי**, or vice-versa, which he interpreted as, "cut yourself severely."¹ Robinson suggested, **התגדדי בגדר**, "you are enclosed with a wall," leaning as he often does, on the Septuagint.² This is the reading adopted by the RSV.

But are such emendations really necessary? All versions presuppose the same consonantal text, if allowance is made for the common confusion between **ד** and **ר** reflected in the Greek, *εμφοραχθησεται θυγατηρ εμφοραχμου*. Peshitta's **אפמך כפסך בתגדד** might be rendered, "you shall go out in bands, O daughter of bands." Jerome's *nunc vastaberis filia latronis* apparently took the verb **התגדד** as a denominative from **גדוד**.

Targum's **תסתיעין קרתא דצירין** understood the phrase as "band yourself together, O city of sieges," again reading **גדר** for **גדוד**. **תסתיעין** of the Aramaic is the Ithpael of **סיע**, which Jastrow renders by "to join in troops." Since the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and the Targum understood **התגדד** as a denominative verb from **גדוד**, we propose to do the same. In Jer 5: 7 this verb makes good sense as "trooped," even though some critics

¹ J. Wellhausen, *Die Kleinen Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin, 1898), p. 145.

² Theodore H. Robinson, *Die Zwölf Propheten—Hosea bis Micha* (Tübingen, 1954), p. 142.

would emend it there to יתגוררו, "they stay as clients," again leaning on the LXX.

The main objection to the text as it stands is the *hapax legomenon* בַּת-גִּדּוּד. One should remember, though, that בְּנֵי הַגִּדּוּד is found in 2 Chr 25: 13, which RSV translates, "the men of the army." Whereas גִּדּוּד is mostly rendered as "raiding band," in many texts it is synonymous with צְבָא. It refers to the armies of God in Job 25: 2; and Job compares himself to a king "among his troops," כַּמֶּלֶךְ בַּגִּדּוּד (Job 29: 25).

In fact it seems that the word gained in dignity through the centuries, and in Chronicles it becomes unquestionably the equivalent of צְבָא (Cf. 1 Chr 12: 18, 21; 2 Chr 25: 9-10). Rolf Knierim has massed convincing arguments in his article, "Exodus 18 und die Neuordnung der Mosaischen Gerichtsbarkeit,"³ to the effect that the juridical organization of the Israelites was superimposed on a military foundation, so that the שָׁר and the שֹׁפֵט had in many cases identical functions. This situation is clearest in the time of the Judges who, beside carrying juridical responsibilities, acted in emergencies as charismatic military leaders. Knierim favors the opinion of Junge who interpreted the אֶלְפֵי יְהוּדָה of Mi 5: 1 as detachments of the army in which the population was divided. If the argument above is valid, then the phrase בַּת-גִּדּוּד would easily be understood by a population accustomed to military organization.⁴

There is then no need of connecting v 14 with vv 9-10 b, as Lindblom does, forcing its 3: 3 meter into a *qinah* in a way that is not at all satisfactory. Without Wellhausen's emendation, v 14 most naturally follows v 13 both in content and in form. There Zion is summoned to arise and tread her enemies which have besieged her. Here she is summoned to organize herself

³ ZAW, LXXIII (1961), 169 f. Cf. also M. Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen, 1958), p. 103 f.

⁴ On the other hand, Margaret B. Crook ("The Promise of Micah 5," JBL, LXX [1951], 318) interprets בַּת-גִּדּוּד as "possibly a city in distress," thus betraying the precarious understanding of the text.

into troops and repel the attack of the arrogant adversaries. The insulting arrogance is particularly stressed in v 14 b.

The next difficulty met in the verse is the verb שם. The LXX renders it by *εταξεν*, the Peshitta by *ܘܡܪܘ*, the Vulgate by *posuerunt*, and the Targum by *והוהו*. Most critics favor reading *שָׁמַר* with the Peshitta, Vulgate and Targum,⁵ but Haupt prefers to retain the singular form with the LXX.⁶ Roorda suggested the part. pass. *שָׁמוּ*, for which he would have the support of Symmachus *συνοχη ετεθε* "siege is laid."⁷ But both the 3:3 meter and the following *יָבִי* rather favor *שָׁמַר*, which as an indefinite 3rd pl. may well be translated passively.

שפס] LXX, *τας φυλας*; Peshitta, *ܘܠܘܥܘܬܐ*; Vulgate, *iudicis*; Targum, *דיני*. Here the versions go different ways. LXX reads what would correspond to *שָׁבֵטִי* "tribes;" B-68 has *τας πυλας* "the gates," an inner Greek corruption. Peshitta's *ܘܠܘܥܘܬܐ* "shepherd" is plainly a free rendering of *שָׁפֵט*. The Vulgate agrees with the Massoretic text, as does also the Achmimic version *τον κριτην*. Targum's reading points to a plural *שָׁפֵטִי*, the *yodh* of which might have fallen out by haplography. Instead of haplography, some scholars, e.g. Haldar, are inclined to explain it, on the basis of the Lachish Ostraca, as the regular omission of one of two identical consonants in adjacent position.⁸

We would therefore translate this verse as follows, "Now you band yourself together, O daughter of troop(s); siege is laid against us; with the rod they strike upon the cheek the rulers of Israel."

⁵ So Smith, Nowack, Sellin, Procksch.

⁶ P. Haupt, "Critical Notes on Micah," *AJSL*, XXVI (1909), 217.

⁷ Cited by V. Ryssel, *Untersuchungen über die Textgestalt und die Echtheit des Buches Micha* (Leipzig, 1887), p. 80.

⁸ A. Haldar, *Studies in the Book of Nahum* ("Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift," 1946: 7; Uppsala), pp. 9-10.