

2. A NOTE ON ISAIAH XIV, 31

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Some of the new light shed on the biblical text must pass from the Dead Sea scrolls through the channels of the classical versions before it illuminates the Hebrew text. As the example treated here is taken from Isaiah and its Vulgate translation in comparison with DSS, it may be appropriate to point out that the value of the Latin translation for the restoration of a Hebrew text different from, though, of course, not necessarily superior to the MT, is being vindicated by the scrolls from the Judaean Desert.

If in the immediate vicinity of our verse we find (Is. viii, 4) the Vulgate reading *patrem suum et matrem suam* as against MT **אבי ואמי** and LXX *πατέρα ἡ μητέρα*; or (Is. xiv, 11) Vulgate *concidit cadaver tuum*, as against MT **המית ונבליך**, and LXX *ἡ πολλή σου εὐφροσύνη*¹, we are not entitled any more to dismiss the Latin variants as mere “guessing”, “misunderstanding” or “free rendering” on the part of Jerome after the discovery of DSIa, which reads here **אביו ואמו** and **המית ונבלתך**, respectively. Likewise, the active voice employed by Jerome in translating **מַרְדֵּךְ** (Is. xiv, 6) should be appreciated now in the light of the use DSW makes of this word.²

Verse 31 in chapter xiv of Isaiah concludes with some difficult words; the prophet, having addressed **פִּלְשֶׁת כָּלךְ**, rhetorically demanding of her that she bewail her fate, utters the prophecy about the coming of the “smoke”, i.e. a devastating enemy, “from the north”, adding the further description: **וְאֵין בְּיָדָהּ בְּמוֹעֲדֶיהָ**.

What do these words mean? Context forbids interpreting the consonants of the last word according to what they stand for in almost all the other instances in the Bible, namely **מוֹעֲדִים** “appointed times, feasts”.³ The Targum, which does interpret it like that, is compelled to translate the preceding word in a very free manner⁴ in order to supply some sense to the clause. The main

1. The Vulgate points the first word **הַמִּית**, LXX had **הָמוֹן**.
2. 3:1-2; 3:9; 7:12 (with a different spelling in 9:6).
3. Consequently, many emendations have been suggested, so **עֲמוּדֵיהָ** (frequently; cf. Ben-Yehuda's Thesaurus or **מַעֲרִיבֵיהָ** (Fischer, *Heilige Schriften des AT*), etc. As to the reading **מוֹדַעֵיהָ** in DSIa, cf. Y. Kutscher, *הלשון והרקע הלשוני של מגילת ישעיהו*, p. 191, who offers a phonetical explanation. He admits, however, that the MT is “indeed difficult”.
4. **וְלֵית דַּמְאָחַר בְּזִמְנוּהָ**.

version of LXX seems of no use in this passage; one link of the Hebrew text is missing in it and the rest enigmatic.⁵ Starting from the general meaning of the root יעד, a few commentators explain our word as denoting an "appointed place", but the majority deem it to signify an "appointed, summoned group of people; a troop".⁶ Thus we read, to mention only two instances of Jewish exegesis, Saadiah's rendering: "and there is no one who separates himself amongst those that have been summoned"⁷, and the paraphrase of S.D. Luzzatto: באנשים הנועדים והנקהלים. The latter explains the form itself as בינוני מבין קפעל, which obviously is not what the punctators meant.⁸ However, his search for a verbal form here is somewhat parallel to our discussion below. Whether, on the other hand, a hypothetical noun מועד* supports the meaning of "group, troop" is, to say the least, doubtful.

The Vulgate is more pronounced in its translation: it has as equivalent for our word *agmen*. This military term we find in the Latin Bible as translation of מהרבה, מחנה, אגף, and also (once in Is.) חיל. The later Greek versions—and apparently through their influence some codd. of LXX—point in the same direction: ἐν τοῖς συντεταγμένοις αὐτοῦ.¹⁰ It should, however, be stressed that Jerome is not blindly dependent on them; in this case the differences (singular against plural, and the omission of the preposition) are sufficient to prove this. Similarly, Rashi comments: בגודרים שיעד לבוא עליכם, a curious but not so rare concurrence. Now, we may be inclined to see in this line of translation just another attempt to explain a difficult word according to its context, but a look into the DS War scroll suggests a different solution. There (15: 3) we have הנועדים ליום קרב. Whether this be a hint at an apocalyptic

5. מועדיו is being omitted in the translation. Its τοῦ εἶναι for בודד will be tentatively explained below. Gesenius (in his commentary on Isaiah) supposes that the Greek word is a graphic corruption of τοῦ μεῖναι, the equivalent of which he finds in Arabic translations.

6. Ibn Ezra: בארמוניו. — Fr. Delitzsch (in his Commentary): "...Scharen (nach d. Form מועד, die am bestimmten Orte... zu bestimmten Termine zusammengetroffene Menge).—Duhm (HAT):... jeder nimmt seinen angewiesenen (יעד) Platz ein...—Cf. GBW, Koenig etc.

7. H. Derenbourg, *Version arabe d'Isaïe*, etc. (1896) *ad loc.*

8. Cf. מועדים (Jer. xxiv, 1) and מועדות (Ez. xxi, 21) — part. pass.!

9. Cf. Barth, *Nominalbildung* p. 242. Brockelmann (*Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semit. Sprachen*, I, 376) states that besides names of places etc. some abstracts are to be found of this form. Later a concrete meaning may develop. But his most akin example, מודע (Ruth ii, 1; Prov. vii, 4) refers to a single person. Analogically, we should expect our word to denote "the person summoned", and only in its plural form it might come to mean "group"! As to the form מועד cf. Ben-Yehuda: "צורה מיוחדת זו קבעו כבר קצת הקדמונים, וכן רד"ק."

10. Ziegler, *Septuaginta: Isaias*: θ', σ' and α' (discounting his graphic error; previously in the same sentence there is a similar mistake in some codd.: τεταγμένοι for τεταγμέναι!). Field, Orig. Hexapl.: codd. 22, 36, 46 (*sub obelo*) αλῖ.

interpretation of Ps. xlviii, 5 (מלכי ארץ נועדו) or not, it is certain and has rightly been pointed out¹¹ that the Hebrew הִנָּדָה, and later its Greek equivalent συναγαγεῖν in the Apocalypse, is apt at a certain stage to narrow its meaning so as to denote especially a "warlike assembly". This may be what Hieronymus thought and had in mind when translating our passage, but is it not more likely that he actually read בְּנוֹעֲדֵי¹², or at least based his translation on those of others who had such a text before them?¹³ Our Massoretic pointing, and perhaps even Rashi's remark, could then be a faint echo of this reading.

If it be so, what about the preceding word? בּוֹדֵד is harsh; commentators who adhere to it add some midrashic explanation.¹⁴ DSIa has מוֹדֵד instead, which seems rather good in itself¹⁵, yet when accepting it we are at a loss how to explain the prepositional ב of the following word; it cannot be instrumental. On the other hand it would be unwise to assume, on the evidence of the Vulgate which has no preposition here, that originally that letter was not there. Yet the Vulgate does help us: its *effugiet* is apparently based on a Hebrew נוֹדֵד.¹⁶ Here we reach an interesting, and perhaps sound, reading with some alliteration in it: וְאִין נוֹדֵד בְּנוֹעֲדֵי. We can hardly hope to establish the exact details of textual change, but the way seems clear: נוֹדֵד בְּנוֹעֲדֵי changes into מוֹדֵד בְּמוֹעֲדֵי (again the alliteration¹⁷ is to be noted; on the other hand, a certain peculiarity in writing the letter נ in one MS may have had its influence¹⁸) and later מ becomes ב.¹⁹

The restored sentence ought to be understood differently from what Jerome translated, but it makes good sense:

"... none is fleeing among his summoned troops..."²⁰

11. Cf. C. Rabin, "המבנה הספרותי של מגילת מלחמת בני אור..", in *מחקרים במגילות הגנוזות* Jerus., 1961, pp. 39–40.
12. There is another passage where a part. act. of niph'al is being rendered by *agmen*: Deut. xxv, 18 הנחשלים אחריו — *extremos agminis*.
13. Greek *συντεταγμένοι* = הנוֹעֲדִים, cf. Hatch-Redpath, *Concordance*, and Rahlfs' Septuagint on 1 K viii, 5.
14. Kimhi and others. Kutscher (*op. cit.*, p. 404) writes: הצרוך אמנם סתום הוא. Ben-Yehuda compares Arabic بَدَد "to disperse, scatter."
15. Meaning "immeasurable". But Kutscher (*ibid*) doubts 'מוֹדֵד'.
16. Cf. Is. xvi, 1 *fugiens* = נוֹדֵד. Could it be that even the variants in the codd. of LXX (τοῦ εἶναι, τοῦ μέναι and του στήναι; Ziegler p. 333) point to an original ἐξιστάσθαι or ἀφιστάσθαι. i.e. נוֹדֵד?
17. Y. Kutscher (*op. cit.*, p. 404) who starts from the MT, hints that alliteration may have caused the reading of the scroll.
18. A change in the older script is not excluded. Delitzsch (*Lese-und Schreibfehler*, p. 103) does not believe in changes at such an early stage, but he cites (p. 117) instances of the change מ from ב.
19. A direct change from נ into ב is, of course, also quite possible. Perles, *Analekten*, p. 37: "In der althebräischen Schrift zeigen ב und נ. namentlich auf hasmonäischen Münzen, grosse Aehnlichkeit."
20. נוֹדֵד denoting "fleeing in war": Is. xxii, 3 and especially xxi, 15.