TRACING THE PRE-MASSORETIC TEXT OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK[1]

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Abstract. The Book of Habakkuk is well-known for using a very sophisticated language in terms of semantics, poetics, or rhetorical structure, causing tremendous difficulties to later interpreters, both ancient and modern. For this reason, from a diachronic perspective, textual deviations from the canonical Massoretic tradition could be mere relics of the perplexity of confused translators or scribes. This study argues, however, that there are cases where the independent, divergent textual traditions coalesce into a reading that could be considered a historically more reliable variant than the reading survived within the Massoretic Text. This appears to be the case with בגוים in Hab 1:5 and היין in Hab 2:5, for which three independent traditions presuppose a common pre-Massoretic ancient alternative reading.

Keywords: Book of Habakkuk; textual history; textual criticism; textual witnesses; Habakkuk 1:5; Habakkuk 2:5.

Although opinions differ, I am inclined to believe that the Book of Habakkuk is a literary composition in the fullest sense of the word. That is, unlike the work of many other "classical" prophets, the compositions in this book were probably never uttered in front of an audience, its literary form being the only one in which it ever existed. The Book of Habakkuk, composed at a writing table, has a well-defined structure. It is unlikely that this could be ascribed merely to a final act of redaction. Unlike other anthologies of prophecies (such as Isaiah or Jeremiah), Habakkuk was intentionally built as a logical, rhetorical progression from beginning to end.

The literary character transcends not only structure but also language. Habakkuk exploits the linguistic possibilities of poetry to its limits. The book contains numerous exotic expressions which appear nowhere else, or are used only sporadically in other contexts, and even in those instances, often with semantically diverging nuances. The semantic ambivalence used in various passages confers this prophetic composition a stylistic harmony that again, from a different perspective, testifies to its unity.

Transferring this poetic epicureanism to other languages has always proved to be a formidable challenge to both ancient and modern translators. Therefore, when we approach the textual history of this book by means of classical, diachronic methods, we cannot ignore the serious possibility that interpretations surviving in ancient textual witnesses (be they translations or copies) do not lead us back to a more original, pre-Massoretic version of the prophecy but are mere relics of the perplexity of confused translators or scribes.

Nonetheless, I shall argue below that there are some cases where the difference between the Massoretic Text and other ancient versions are unlikely to be explained with scribal or exegetical incompetence, but we rather get a glimpse into a variant older than the Massoretic tradition. I would like to illustrate this with two case studies on Hab 1:5 and 2:5.[2]

Beside the well-known versions in the Septuagint, the Jonathan Targum, the Peshitta and the Vulgate, we have three further evidences that can be taken into account for the Book of Habakkuk: the Habakkuk Pesher from Qumran (1QpHab), the Greek Twelve Prophets manuscript from Naḥal-Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr), and the Hebrew Twelve Prophets fragment from Wadi Murabbaʾat (MurXII).[3]

In what follows I shall work with the consideration that ancient manuscripts and translations are not to be considered as mere witnesses or counter witnesses to a reading familiar from the Massoretic Text. The pre- and para-Massoretic traditions attested in these variants receive their true significance in their primary context. Only by taking this context seriously they can be used

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[2] For a third example pointing to similar direction, see Csaba BALOGH, "Reconsidering Habakkuk 1,8", in: Viktor KÓKAI NAGY and László Sándor EGERESI (eds), *Propheten der Epochen / Prophets during the Epochs: Festschrift für István Karasszon zum 60. Geburtstag / Studies in Hounour of István Karasszon for his 60th Birthday* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 426), Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2015, 113–125. A corrected version of this paper can be downloaded from this link: https://www.academia.edu/15574047.

[3] As for other traditions, one can mention the Codex Barberini (Barberinus graecus 549), containing a Greek translation of Hab 3. Codex Barberini differs from the Septuagint version in several locations and is probably to be regarded as a revision. See Jennifer M. DINES, "The Minor Prophets", in: James K. AITKEN (ed.), *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015, 445. Another fragment designated as 4Q82ᵍ contains a small part of Hab 2:4. Due to the specific focus of the case studies above, none of these two references shall be taken here into account.

subsequently in the diachronic process of textual reconstruction of a purportedly early version of a biblical text. As well-known, variant readings can be explained with several factors, of which a different (Hebrew) *Vorlage* is only one of the several possibilities. In line with the scope of this study, I would like to summarise shortly the general character of these early Habakkuk-versions.

The Septuagint of Habakkuk follows the general trend of the Old Greek tradition of The Twelve.[4] The translation probably derives from Egypt from the first half of the 2nd century BC.[5] The rendering follows the Hebrew text closely, being a so-called quantitative translation which strives to mirror the number of Hebrew words in the Greek variant, usually avoiding paraphrases. Differences from the Massoretic Text can generally be explained with a different vocalisation in the Hebrew *Vorlage*, or, occasionally, with the interchange of similar consonantal letters. This phenomenon was not necessarily caused by scribal misreading or insufficient linguistic competence. It should more likely be seen as an attempt to make sense of a seemingly unintelligible or very difficult Hebrew text.[6]

The Habakkuk Pesher from Qumran (1QpHab) is usually dated to the second half of the 1st century BC.[7] This scroll, preserved in a rather good condition, contains citations from small sections of Hab 1–2, appending short commentaries (so-called peshers) to those citations taken from the prophecy of Habakkuk, following the apocalyptical hermeneutics of its era.[8] The Habakkuk

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[4] Although opinions occasionally differ, it appears that the translational technique of the Old Greek version of The Twelve is homogeneous and probably the work of a single translator. See DINES, "The Minor Prophets", 439.

[5] *Septuaginta Deutsch,* 1203, 2415 assumes that the translation was made either during the years of persecution under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204), or under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (around 175).

[6] See DINES, "The Minor Prophets", 440–443. Paraphrases or double translations appear mostly in locations where the translator found the Hebrew text very difficult to render. For the Old Greek version of Habakkuk, see further James A. E. MULRONEY, *The Translation Style of Old Greek Habakkuk. Methodological Advancement in Interpretative Studies of the Septuagint* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 86), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.

[7] William H. BROWNLEE, *The Text of Habakkuk in the Ancient Commentary from Qumran* (Journal of Biblical Literature. Monograph Series 11), Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1959; Timothy H. LIM, *Pesharim.* London: Sheffield Academic Press – Continuum, 2002, 21. Some believe that his scroll written by two scribes is the copy of an earlier text. See on this Stephen LLEWELYN, Stephanie NG, Gareth WEARNE and Alexandra WRATHALL, "A Case for two Vorlagen behind the Habakkuk commentary (1QpHab)", in: Shani TZOREF and Ian YOUNG (eds): *Keter Shem Tov. Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Memory of Alan Crown* (Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Contexts 20), Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2013, 123–150.

[8] A typical illustration to this principle can be found in 1QpHab ii 5–10, in a comment on Hab 1:5, which surmises that the prophecy given by Habakkuk was in fact meant to be read as an announcement referring to the end times and not the era of the prophet itself.

Pesher works with a Hebrew text roughly similar to the Massoretic version, but also with occasional differences. Some of these differences are orthographic variants, scribal errors, or – as it was the case with the ancient translations – results of hermeneutical decisions based on semantical or grammatical standpoints. Arguably, however, certain variants from the Pesher can be traced back to a Hebrew tradition earlier than the Massoretic variant.

The Naḥal Ḥever manuscript (8ḤevXIIgr) of The Twelve is, according to the general opinion, an early radical recension of the Septuagint, based on a Hebrew *Vorlage*. This Greek manuscript is dated to 50 BC – 50 AD.[9]

The Habakkuk-fragment from Wadi Murabbaʾat derives from the first half of the 2nd century AD, from the era of the Bar-Kochba revolt. This text presents close connections with the textual tradition known from the Massoretic version.[10]

The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Peshitta is argued to be a variant close to the Massoretic Text. Due to the translation style of the Peshitta (which is not always literal) it is often difficult to decide whether the differences derive from existing traditions or should be considered mere exegetical variants.[11] While some renderings in the Syriac come close to the Septuagint, it is not evident whether these cases can be regarded as influences from the Greek version or they presuppose Hebrew textual variants. This latter assumption is strengthened in cases where Syriac deviances compared to the Massoretic tradition are paralleled by other ancient variants as well (like the Habakkuk Pesher or the Targum).[12]

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[9] Emanuel TOV, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr)* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 8), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

[10] Józef T. MILIK, "88. Rouleau des Douze Prophètes", in: Pierre BENOIT et al., *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 2.1), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, 181–205; Beate EGO et al., *Biblia Qumranica 3B: Minor Prophets,* Leiden: Brill, 2005, 128–139.

[11] A. GELSTON, "Some Readings in the Peshiṭta of the Dodekapropheton", in: P. B. DIRKSEN and M. J. MULDER (eds), *The Peshitta - Its Early Text and History; Papers Read at the Peshitta Symposium Held at Leiden, August 1985.* Leiden: Brill, 1988, 95–96. See further A. GELSTON, *The Peshiṭta of the Twelve Prophets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

[12] See, for instance, Hab 2:16-17. Cf. GELSTON, "Some Readings", 96–97, though Gelston himself does not exclude here the influence of the Septuagint upon the Syriac text.

1. Habakkuk 1:5

Translation	1:5	Massoretic Text
Look at the nations and observe,	a	רְאוּ בַגּוֹיִם֙ וְֽהַבִּ֔יטוּ
be astonished, be astounded!	b	וְהִֽתַּמְּה֖וּ תְּמָ֑הוּ
For a work is being done in your days	c	כִּֽי־פֹ֙עַל֙ פֹּעֵ֣ל בִּֽימֵיכֶ֔ם
that you would not believe if you were told.	d	לֹ֥א תַאֲמִ֖ינוּ כִּ֥י יְסֻפָּֽר׃

This verse introduces a new section within the prophecy, describing in vv. 5-11 the terrible devastation and unjust action of the Chaldaeans in the world. In contrast to the view which considers this a divine response to Habakkuk's earlier protest in vv. 2-4, allegedly complaining because of social disorder in Judah, I interpret this section as an illustration (and not a response) for the unfairness on the international (and not Judaean) scene which the prophet Habakkuk complains about in vv. 2-4. It is exactly Babylon's atrocities set out in detail in vv. 6-11 that urge him to formulate his questions addressing God. The Chaldaeans are not presented here as the obvious means of divine punishment, but rather contested as part of the problem. Habakkuk wonders at God's strange sense of justice when using the unlawful Babylon as a tool to bring order into a world in upheaval. According to this rhetoric, Hab 1:5-11 is part of the written complaint started in vv. 2-4, and not an originally independent textual unit.[13]

The reading בַגּוֹיִם in Hab 1:5 is generally accepted by Bible translations ('look among the nations' or 'look at the nations'). Yet if we take a closer look at the ancient versions, a shadow of doubt is cast over this apparently undisturbed harmony among modern translations:

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[13] For further arguments concerning my view of the rhetorical reconstruction of the book, with a discussion on secondary literature, see Csaba BALOGH, "Survival of the Fittest: Habakkuk and the Changing Trail of the Prophetic Tradition", in: Előd HODOSSY-TAKÁCS et al. (eds), *Wichtige Wendepunkte. Verändernde und sich ändernde Traditionen in Zeiten des Umbruchs // Pivotal Turns. Transforming Traditions in Times of Transition* (Beihefte zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 98), Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014, 27–44.

Source	Translation	Original text
MT		רְאוּ בַגּוֹיִם֙ וְהַבִּ֔יטוּ
	Look at[14] the nations, and see!	
LXX		ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονηταί καὶ ἐπιβλέψατε
	Look, you despisers,[15] and watch!	
1QpHab		*[…]
	[…]*	
8ḤevXIIgr		[…]
	[…]	
MurXII		ראו [ב]גוים ו[הבי]טו
	Look [at the] nations, and s[e]e!	
TargJon		חזו בעממיא ואסתכלו
	Look at the nations, and understand!	
Peshitta		*ḥzw mrḥʾ wḥrw*
	Look at the insolent one and see!	
Vulgate		*aspicite in gentibus et videte*
	Look among the nations, and see!	

[14] The rendering 'among the nations' cannot be correct. In cases where the Hebrew verb ראה has no other object, within the construction ראה + ב the preposition can only refer to the object of the verb (cf. Gen 29:32; 34:1; Ex 2:11; Num 11:15; 1Sam 1:11). When the verb ראה has other objects, the prep. ב can mean 'among' (cf. Num 23:21; Deut 1:35; 21:11; 23:15; Jos 7,21; 1Sam 16:1).

[15] The οἱ καταφρονηταί could also be interpreted as accusative (cf. *Septuaginta Deutsch*). This text reappears in Acts 13:41, with οἱ καταφρονηταί used as vocative, although there are some differences between the two texts.

LXX Hab 1:5	Acts 13:41
ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονηταί καὶ ἐπιβλέψατε	ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονηταί
καὶ θαυμάσατε θαυμάσια	καὶ θαυμάσατε
καὶ ἀφανίσθητε	καὶ ἀφανίσθητε
διότι ἔργον ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι	ὅτι ἔργον ἐργάζομαι ἐγὼ
ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν	ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν
ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε	ἔργον ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε
ἐάν τις ἐκδιηγῆται	ἐάν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν

The בַּגּוֹיִם of the Massoretic Text is supported by MurXII, Targum and Vulgate.[16] A different reading is, however, found in the Septuagint and the Peshitta. The Greek οἱ καταφρονηταί assume בֹּגְדִים in the background.[17] The בגוים < > בגדים change can be traced back to paleographical reasons, namely the interchange of the letters ו / ד.[18] Opinions differ, however, with regard to the earlier reading. Most exegetes are of the opinion that the Septuagint altered the original text, either by chance or intentionally.[19] Before taking the arguments further in this regard, we need to look at the other evidences.

With respect to the Syriac translation, we have good reasons to believe that *mrḥ* (*marrāḥ*) 'the insolent one; haughty, arrogant'[20] also backs the Hebrew בֹּגְדִים part. form.[21] For the Syriac translator this insolent person is Babylon, as made clear

[16] Jerome notes that the translation *aspicite in gentibus* is supported by Aquila, Symmachos and Theodotion. However, he also adds a further remark to this text, which testifies to his acquaintance with different reading traditions at this point: 'Ubi in Hebraico scriptum est RAU BAGGOIM, et nos transtulimus, *aspicite in gentibus*, et LXX posuerunt, *videte contemptores,* excepto Aq. et Sym. et Theod., qui com nostra interpretatione concordant, in alia quadam editione ἀνωνύμῳ reperi, *videbitis calumniatores,* et in alia similiter absquae auctoris titulo, *videbitis declinantes*' (Fridericus FIELDS, *Origenis Hexaplari quae supersunt.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1875, 2.1003).

[17] The Greek expression appears elsewhere only three times in the Old Testament, in two other locations also rendering some form of בגד. In Hab 2:5 καταφρονητὴς renders בּוֹגֵד part., while in Zeph 3:4 ἄνδρες καταφρονηταί translates Hebrew אַנְשֵׁי בֹּגְדוֹת. In Hab 1:13 καταφρονοῦντας corresponds to בּוֹגְדִים.

[18] For the interchange of ו / ד, see N. AVIGAD, "The Palaeography of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Documents", in: Chaim RABIN and Yigael YADIN (eds), *Scripta Hierosolymitana. Vol. 4: Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Jerusalem: Magnus, 1965, 77. These two letters are already very similar in paleographic Hebrew. See Robert D. HAAK, *Habakkuk* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 44), Leiden: Brill, 1992, 45, note 36. For a similar case, the ו / ר interchange, we have examples within the Massoretic Text as well. Cf. Friedrich DELITZSCH, *Die Lese- und Schreibfehler im Alten Testament.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1920, §§109a-b, 110b.

[19] See *Septuaginta Deutsch,* 2459; Wilhelm RUDOLPH, *Micha – Nahum – Habakuk – Zephanja* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament 13.3), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1975, 203; A. S. VAN DER WOUDE, *Habakuk, Zefanja* (De prediking van het Oude Testament), Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1978, 20; J. J. M. ROBERTS, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (The Old Testament Library), Louisville: Westminster – John Knox Press, 1991, 91; HAAK, *Habakkuk*, 36; Lothar PERLITT, *Die Propheten Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanja* (Altes Testament Deutsch 25.1), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, 52. Commentaries usually argue that the translator projected Hab 1:13 or 2:5 into 1:5. However, this opinion does not agree with the style and character of the Old Greek translation as a literal rendering (see above). Neither is the assumed process sufficiently well argued, for which it must remain questionable.

[20] C. BROCKELMAN, *Lexicon syriacum,* Halle 1928, 831; J. PAYNE-SMITH, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902, 300b.

[21] The sg. form of the Syriac variant is the result of contextualisation. In Hab 2:5 *marrāḥ* stands for the sg. part. בּוֹגֵד. An overview of the root *mrḥ* leads to the conclusion that the Syriac translators considered בגד a synonym of זיד, as the table below illustrates:

from the following Hab 1:6. The phrase אֶת־הַכַּשְׂדִּים הַגּוֹי הַמַּר is rendered by *lkldyʾ ʾmʾ mrḥʾ*, 'the Chaldaean, the insolent nation'. The expression *mrḥʾ* is used in relation to Babylon as a translation of זיד / זָדוֹן in Jer 50,29.31.32. Identifying the object of the verb in Hab 1:5 as Babylon / Chaldaea gives this verse a new perspective.

The biblical citation in the Habakkuk Pesher was originally located in the closing section of the first column (i 16-17), which was, unfortunately, not preserved. Reconstructions of the broken section of the scroll usually presuppose that the Pesher also followed the Massoretic reading בגוים. Nonetheless, the explanation of Hab 1:5, which is entirely preserved, renders this suggestion very unlikely:

Translation	1QpHab ii 1-10
The explanation of the word against the unfaithful ones (הַבּוֹגְדִים): They are the people of the man of falsehood, because they did not believe the words of the teacher of righteousness which came from the mouth of God, and against the unfaithful ones (הבוג]דים) of the new covenant, because they did not believe in the covenant of God and they profaned his holy name. So the explanation of the word against the unfaithful ones (על הבו]גדים) relates to the final days. They are the violent ones of the covenant who do not believe, when they hear all that will happen to the final generation, from the mouth of the priest, in whose heart God has given insight, to explain all the words of his servants, the prophets, through whom God has told[22] all that will happen with his people and his congregation.	¹ [ ] פשר הדבר על [הבוגדים עם איש ² הכזב כי לוא] האמינו בדברי[מורה הַצֶּדֶקָה מפיא ³ אל . ועל הבוג]דים בברית[החדשה כ]י[א [לו]א⁴ האמינו בברית אל [ויחללו] את ש[ם]קודשו⁵ וכן פשר הדבר] על הבו]גדים לאחרית א⁶ הימים . המה עריצ]י הבר]ית אשר לוא יאמינוא⁷ בשומעם את כול הבא]ות ע[ל] [הדור האחרון מפי ⁸ הכוהן אשר נתן אל ב[לבו בינ]ה לפשור אֿת כול⁹ דברי עבדיו הנביאים[אשר]בׄידם ספר אל את ¹⁰ כול הבאות על עמו וע]דתו

	mrḥ			*ʾwl*	
	בגד	זָדוֹן / זֵד / זיד		בגד	זָדוֹן / זֵד / זיד
	Hab 1:5.13; 2:5 (?)	Ex 21:14; Deut 1:43; 17:12. 13; 18:20.22; 1 Sam 17:28; Jer 50:29. 31.32; Sir 12:7.		Pss 25:3; 59:6; 159:158; Prov 2:22; 23:28; Isa 24:16;48:8	Pss 19:14; 86:14; 119:51. 78; Mal 3:15.19

The word *mrḥ* also renders other synonyms of בגד, like סוג (cf. Prov. 14:14, Peshitta, as well as the Targum). For the בגד / סוג synonymy, cf. Ps 78:57.

22 The line [אשר]בׄידם ספר אל can also be vocalised / rendered as 'in whose hands was / is the book of God'.

The surviving commentary hardly allows for any doubts with respect to the variant that the author of the Pesher had at his disposal. There are several arguments to uphold the view that the Habakkuk Pesher must have been familiar with the reading בוגדים 'unfaithful ones; treacherous ones' in the Hebrew text it used. First, the commentary refers to this pericope as 'the word against the unfaithful ones' ([הדבר על [הבוגדים), apparently a formulaic reference,[23] as if it were a well-known passage within the book explained. Second, the commentary uses three times the reading בוגדים, which can hardly be explained as an arbitrary change of the text, but likely part of its base text.[24] Third, according to the Pesher, Hab 1:5 refers to the 'the people of the man of lies' (עם איש הכזב). Alluding to lies (כזב) in the explanation of this verse makes sense within the sphere of 'being treacherous, unfaithful' (בגד).

The same is true of the concepts of 'they do not believe' (א[לו]א האמינו) and 'violent ones of the covenant' (עריצ[י הבר]ית), also presupposing בגד in the background. Fourth, within the hermeneutical frame of the scroll, the Pesher differentiates clearly between sections of the prophecy that the author presupposes to deal with the foreign nations (the Kittim) and those addressing, in his view, issues within the Jewish society. In this respect it is surprising that v. 5 is assumed to refer to unfaithful Judaeans, and not foreign nations, while a possible בגוים variant would have explicitly favoured this latter explanation. The Judaic focus not only prefers בוגדים in the original version of Hab 1:5, but it also precludes, in my view, the בגוים variant. The phrase 'a work is being done that you would not believe if it were told' in the text of Habakkuk, is not explained as the result of the surprising act of God, as the context of Habakkuk would suggest, but as a condemnation against those Jews who heed the man of lies and who do not believe the one proclaiming the true teaching and the new covenant.[25] Moreover, יְסֻפַּר 'someone would tell' is interpreted as an explanation of the prophetic books, which is assumed to be the task of the 'Priest' (i.e. the Teacher of Righteousness) acknowledged by the

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[23] Cf. Moshe J. BERNSTEIN, "Pesher Habakkuk", in: *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 648. Another even more usual formulaic reference within the scroll is when the explanation of the cited passage starts with פשרו 'its explanation is:'.

[24] There are other cases within this scroll when the author of the Pesher cites a keyword of the explained passage. Cf. another example below at Hab 2:5.

[25] Strikingly, a very similar interpretation appears in the already referenced Acts 13:41. Apostle Paul preaches in the synagogues of the Antiochians. The audience is Jewish whom he addresses as follows: "and from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses, by him everyone *who believes*, is freed. Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you!", and then he cites Hab 1:5: "'Look, you despisers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you.'" In my view, the phrase ἔργον ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ἐάν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν in Acts confers an idea very close to the interpretation of the Pesher, namely as an allusion to the scepticism of the Jewish audience. Paul also warns the synagogue attendants to avoid the fulfilment of this passage from Habakkuk.

community. Concluding, the recurring use of the term בוגדים within the explanatory section not only positively confirms this as the most likely variant within its base text, but the Jewish focus in the interpretation of Hab 1:5 makes it implicitly highly unlikely that the reading בגוים would have been known to the author of the Pesher.[26]

The fact that three different, independent traditions (Septuagint, 1QpHab and Peshitta) point to the same direction strongly support the view that רְאוּ בֹגְדִים וְהַבִּיטוּ 'look at the treacherous ones and observe' was the original version in this prophecy.[27] The reading בגוים is secondary, but likely not an intentional exegetical change; it was the result of textual corruption. In a certain way, grammatically speaking, this secondary reading also makes sense, and this could have been the reason why it survived. The wider context, nonetheless, strongly endorses בֹגְדִים as a better exegetical alternative. בֹגְדִים refers to the Babylonians several times within Habakkuk and the Biblical tradition. This interpretation fully complies with the manner that the Chaldaeans are described within Hab 1:5-11, and the rhetorical function of this specific passage as evoking astonishment and shock from the hearers.

2. Habakkuk 2:5

Translation	2:5	Massoretic Text
Indeed, wine betrays,	a	וְאַף כִּי־הַיַּיִן בּוֹגֵד
the man is haughty and he will not stand (?).	b	גֶּבֶר יָהִיר וְלֹא יִנְוֶה
For he enlarges his throat like Sheol,	c	אֲשֶׁר הִרְחִיב כִּשְׁאוֹל נַפְשׁוֹ
and he is like death, and is never satisfied.	d	וְהוּא כַמָּוֶת וְלֹא יִשְׂבָּע
He gathers to himself all nations,	e	וַיֶּאֱסֹף אֵלָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם
and collects to himself all people.	f	וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֵלָיו כָּל־הָעַמִּים׃

This verse is placed within the context of the divine answer to Habakkuk's earlier complaint. After having protested because of the lack of righteousness, the

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[26] Those pericopes where the Pesher intends to correct the biblical texts are treated differently within the scroll. Cf., e.g., Hab 1:11 and 2:16, where the author exposes his own version of the text (which differs from the Massoretic variant). In the explanatory section he nonetheless also mentions the tradition that he intends to correct. No such awareness is shown in Hab 1:5. See further note 47 below.

[27] The rendering οἱ καταφρονηταί, if read as vocative and not accusative, could presuppose the form הַבֹּגְדִים, with definite article. However, the absence of the article from the biblical Hebrew version would be technically more difficult to explain. I consider it more likely that בֹגְדִים is here the object of the verb ראה, and not a vocative.

prophet waits for an answer from God, who commands him to write the prophecy (חָזוֹן) and its explanation on tablets (pl.). The event proclaimed is supposed to appear soon. Vv. 2:4ff represent, in my view, the content of the prophecy written on the tablets.

Within this prophecy, the more famous Hab 2:4, as well as 2:5a-b, are full of barely used words, presenting a significant challenge to scholars who tend to disagree in almost every regard. Even such basic questions as the proper delimitation of the logical units remain disputed. For while some would like to connect v. 5 with v. 4,[28] others consider Hab 2:5 the introduction of a new pericope.[29] From a syntactical and rhetorical perspective, I consider וְאַף כִּי a strong syntactical argument against reading v. 5 independently from v. 4. However, the nature of the semantic-rhetorical connection between vv. 4 and 5 is difficult to determine and largely depends on the interpretation of these two verses. When taken on its own, אַף כִּי is used with three different senses in biblical Hebrew, depending which of the two particles dominate semantically:

(a) אַף כִּי is used most often in conditional clauses, introducing a second, emphatic phrase (the particle כִּי often has this emphatic nuance). In such constructions, אַף כִּי bears the meaning '(if…), how much more', or, in negative sentences, 'how much less'.[30]

(b) In another group of conditional sentences, אַף כִּי introduces the conditional sentence. כִּי can itself be used as a conditional marker, and אַף is used in such instances as a synonym of גַּם.[31] In this case, the meaning of אַף כִּי is 'even if,

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[28] RUDOLPH, *Habakuk,* 216–217; Francis I. ANDERSEN, *Habakkuk* (The Anchor Bible 25), New York: Doubleday, 2001, 220–222.

[29] VAN DER WOUDE, *Habakuk,* 38; ROBERTS, *Habakuk,* 116; HAAK, *Habakkuk,* 59–60; G. PRINSLOO, "Habakkuk 2:5a: Denouncing 'wine' or 'wealth'? Contextual readings of the Masoretic text and 1QpHab". *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 72 (2016). http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/3576.

[30] There are several variations in this respect. Consider the following:

(1) הֵן ... וְאַף כִּי (Deut 31:27; Job 15:15-16; 25:5-6; Prov 11:31);

(2) הִנֵּה ... וְאַף כִּי (1Sam 23:3; 2Sam 4:10-11; 16:11; 1Kgs 8:27; 2Chr 6:18; Ezek 15:5);

(3) רְאוּ־נָא ... אַף כִּי (1Sam 14:29-30);

(4) כִּי אִם ... וְאַף כִּי (1Sam 21:6);

(5) כִּי ... וְאַף כִּי (2Chr 32:15);

(6) אַךְ ... אַף כִּי (Job 35:14).

(7) On some occasions, the condition is not explicitly marked by any particle, but it can be deduced from the context (see 2Kgs 5:13; Job 9:13-14; Prov 15:11; 17:7; 19:7.10; 21:27). See further also the construction הֵן ... וְאַף (כִּי) in Job 4:18-19.

[31] From a semantic point of view, אַף כִּי is similar to גַּם כִּי (cf. Ps 23:4; Prov 22:6; Isa 1:15; Lam 3:8; Hos 8:10; 9:16) and כִּי אִם (Isa 10:22; Jer 2:22; 22:24; 37:10; Am 5:22). For אַף and גַּם as synonyms, see Gen 40:16; Lev 26:16.24.40.42; Deut 2:11. For אַף and אִם, see Job 19:4-5; 34:17;

(still) …' (cf. Ezek 14:21-22; Neh 9:18-19?). The structure of the sentences is: [sentence *A*] אַף כִּי + verb + וְ + [sentence *B*].

(c) The expression אַף כִּי is also used in sentences which are not conditional, having an emphatic function (any of the particles אַף and כִּי can have emphatic nuances): 'really' (Gen 3:1), 'indeed, what is even more' (Neh 9:18?; Ezek 23:40[32]).[33]

Which of these options suits Hab 2:5 best? Option (b), denoting condition, is syntactically and semantically strange within the context. Due to the particle הִנֵּה appearing in the previous v. 4, one could feel inclined to presuppose to deal with the often attested construction... אַף כִּי   הִנֵּה (see (a) above: 'if…, how much more…'). Although there are semantic uncertainties regarding these two verses, such a logical connection between vv. 4 and 5 does not seem to be warranted. As a result, we are left with option (c), namely that וְאַף כִּי is used in an emphatic sense, 'indeed, what is even more'.[34]

The ancient translators are seemingly perplexed by the difficult Hebrew syntax and wording. The general evidence does not appear to point to a more reliable textual tradition that differs from the Massoretic Text. Nonetheless, in the ancient renderings of v. 5 there is one notable exception where the difference with respect to the Massoretic text needs our utmost attention. A word corresponding to הַיַּיִן is present in the Targum and the Vulgate but is absent in all other ancient traditions, as the table below illustrates:

40:8-9. The construction כִּי אִם shows that the same combination of particles can have several different semantic nuances. Cf. 'but' Ps 1:4; Isa 33:21; 37:19; 59:2; 'if not' Isa 42:19; Am 3:7; 'than' Eccl 3:12; Mic 6:8.

[32] וְאַף כִּי in the phrase וְאַף כִּי תִשְׁלַחְנָה in Ezek 23:40 is problematic. The verb תִשְׁלַחְנָה can be pl. 3 or pl. 2 fem. Since 24:40b uses sg. 2 fem. forms, which are difficult to connect with the previous passage, the connection between the two is probably secondary. Vs. 40a is arguably continued in 23:42. The original sentence might have looked as follows: וְאַף כִּי תִשְׁלַחְנָה לַאֲנָשִׁים בָּאִים מִמֶּרְחָק * וְאֶל־אֲנָשִׁים * בָּאִים * מִמִּדְבָּר וַיִּתְּנוּ צְמִידִים אֶל־יְדֵיהֶן וַעֲטֶרֶת תִּפְאֶרֶת עַל־רָאשֵׁיהֶן 'what is even more, the have sent even after the men coming from afar, and after the men coming from the desert, and they put bracelets on their (fem) hands, and beautiful crowns on their (fem) heads'. The logical sense of וְאַף כִּי is here probably similar to עֹוד זֹאת 'even these' in Ezek 23:38, and express some kind of gradation in describing the sins of the two women. וְאַף כִּי is to be rendered as 'indeed, what is even more'.

[33] אַף כִּי is here probably synonymous with גַּם כִּי. Cf. Ruth 2:21. The semantic equivalence of גַּם / אַף was already noted above.

[34] Cf. Francis BROWN, S. R. DRIVER, Charles A. BRIGGS, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906, 65.

Source	Translation	Original text
MT		וְאַף כִּי־הַיַּיִן בּוֹגֵד גֶּבֶר יָהִיר וְלֹא יִנְוֶה
	Indeed, wine betrays, the man is haughty and he will not stand (?).	
LXX	ὁ δὲ κατοινωμένος (?) καὶ καταφρονητὴς ἀνὴρ ἀλαζών οὐδὲν μὴ περάνῃ	
	But he who is drunk with wine and a despiser, a boastful man, will complete nothing.	
1QpHab		ואף כיא הון יבגוד גבר יהיר ולוא ינוה
	Yeah, wealth is treacherous, the man is haughty and he will not stand (?).	
8ḤevXIIgr	[…]ος ἀνὴρ ἀλαζών καὶ οὐ γ[…]	
	[…] a boastful man, and not […][35]	
MurXII		
	[…]	
	[…]	
TargJon		ואף הא כטעי בחמר גבר יהיר בשע ולא יתקיים
	Moreover look, like him who stumbles by wine is the haughty man in wickedness.	
Peshitta		*wgbrʾ mrḥ ʾ wyʿnʾ l ʾ sbʿ*
	The insolent and greedy man will be satisfied.	
Vulgate	*et quomodo vinum potantem decipit sic erit vir superbus et non decorabitur*	
	As wine deceives the drinker, so will the haughty man be, and he will not be embellished	

The translation 'wine betrays' raises contextual problems. It glosses over the connection with v. 4, presupposed, as argued, by וְאַף כִּי. There is hardly any nuance in the idea 'wine betrays' that would logically honour this existing syntactical relationship. Even the proper meaning of the phrase הַיַּיִן בּוֹגֵד 'wine betrays(?)[36]', or הַיַּיִן בּוֹגֵד גֶּבֶר יָהִיר 'wine betrays the haughty man' is unclear.[37] At any rate, הַיַּיִן was

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[35] Emanuel Tov reconstructs the line as follows: [καὶ ὁ οἶνος παράνομ]ος ἀνὴρ ἀλαζών καὶ οὐ γ[ε περάνῃ]. This verse obviously differs from the Septuagint.

[36] One would rather expect the yiqtol form here.

[37] Prinsloo ("Habakkuk 2:5a", 6) references Prov 20:1 as an example supposed to explain the idea behind Hab 2:5. The phrase לֵץ הַיַּיִן הֹמֶה שֵׁכָר וְכָל־שֹׁגֶה בּוֹ לֹא יֶחְכָּם he renders as 'A mocker is the wine,

read by the Targum (חמר) and the Vulgate (*vinum*). But with these two ancient witnesses we have exhausted the series of textual evidences supporting the Massoretic Text.

At a first sight, הַיַּיִן is also presupposed by the Old Greek reading κατοινωμένος 'drunk',[38] which is found in critical editions of the Septuagint text. However, κατοινωμένος is a modern emendation deriving from Schleusner from 1822.[39] The original variant of the Septuagint was κατοιόμενος 'conceited'. Schleusner's correction was also adopted later in the critical edition of Ziegler,[40] and with this the emendation has turned into a majority opinion as the more original reading. It was argued that if the inner-textual development of the Septuagint is taken into account, this version ultimately also supported the Massoretic variant.

In his detailed study on the topic, Ziegler bases his argument for the emended form κατοινωμένος solely on הַיַּיִן in the Massoretic Text.[41] He was apparently not disturbed by the fact that, from exegetical point of view, there is a significant difference between Hebrew הַיַּיִן 'wine' and Greek κατοινωμένος 'drunk'.[42] The most serious problem is, of course, the unanimous reading [ὁ] κατοιόμενος in Greek manuscripts, and in the ancient translations of the Septuagint.[43] What then is the exact relationship between the Old Greek and the Massoretic tradition?

a brawler is beer, and everyone led astray by it, is not wise'. One may ask, however, whether the two sentences, do indeed expose similar ideas? The st. cstr. forms in לֵץ הַיַּיִן הֹמֶה שֵׁכָר probably have an adjectival sense, resulting in something like: drinking much wine will lead to mocking and idle talk (cf. Prov 7:1; 9:13). I.e., the one who drinks too much, will become loquacious. If that is correct, is hard to observe any connection with Hab 2:5. Prinsloo also refers to other texts where Babylon, the imperial ruler, is portrayed as holding a cup of wrath in his hands (Jer 25:15-16; 50:7-8; Isa 51:23). He concludes that "the violence committed against others by imperial powers (metaphorically described as a cup filled with fuming wine) will turn against them." (PRINSLOO, "Habakkuk 2:5a", 7). This argumentation seems too farfetched, as both the rendering 'the wine is treacherous' or 'the wine deceives' differs from the cup-metaphor of the cited passages. This latter does, indeed, appear later in the prophecy at Hab 2:15-16.

[38] H. G. LIDDELL and R. SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, 929.

[39] J. F. SCHLEUSNER, *Novus Thesaurus Philologico-Criticus,* ii. London, 1822. See BROWNLEE, *The Text of Habakkuk*, 46.

[40] Joseph ZIEGLER, "Konjektur oder überlieferte Lesart? Zu Hab 2,5 κατοινωμένος] κατοιομενος", *Biblica* 33 (1952), 366-370.

[41] Cf. ZIEGLER, "Konjektur", 368. This is all the more strange as κατοιόμενος is a rare word, appearing according to Liddell-Scott only once beside Hab 2:5. On the other hand, κατοινωμένος is very often used. The principle of *lectio difficilior* used in textual criticism would not favour the emendation. See also VAN DER WOUDE, *Habakuk,* 145.

[42] Cf. M. Th. HOUTSMA, "Habakuk 2,4 en 5", *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 19 (1885), 182. Similarly Segert, *apud* BROWNLEE, *The Text of Habakkuk,* 46.

[43] Cf. Vetus Latina: *ille vero qui praesumit et contumax est.*

Before answering this question, I would like to investigate Hab 2:5 in the Habakkuk Pesher.

In 1QpHab viii 3 we find the reading הון יבגוד 'wealth deceives', which differs from the Massoretic Text both with respect to the verbal form (note the yiqtol) and the reading הון instead of הַיַּיִן. In the explanatory section, vv. 5-6 are explained as follows:

Translation	1QpHab viii 8-13
Its explanation: it concerns the evil priest, who was called by the true name at the beginning of his appointment in office. But as soon as he came to rule in Israel, his heart became proud and he dismissed God and became unfaithful (ו[י]בגוד) towards the commandments because of wealth (הון). And he sized and gathered the wealth (הון) of lawless people, who rebelled against God. And he took away the wealth (הון) of the nations to increase the punishment upon himself.[44] He committed guilt and abominations in all uncleanness of sin.	⁸ פשרו על הכוהן הרשע אשר ⁹ נקרא על שם האמת בתחלת עומדו וכאשר משל ¹⁰ בישראל רם לבו ויעזוב את אל ו[י]בגוד בחוקים בעבור ¹¹ הון . ויגזול ויקבוץ הון אנשי חמס אשר מרדו באל¹² והון עמים לקח לוסיף עליו עון אשמה ודרכי ¹³ ת[וע]בות פעל בכול נדת טמאה

Clearly, the Pesher saw הון 'wealth; multitude; plenty' as a key concept in Hab 2:5, as it is referenced three times within the explanation. הון describes the greed of the priest in question.[45] But from where does this concept of הון 'wealth; multitude; plenty' derive? It is often argued that הון is an arbitrary modification of the reading tradition הַיַּיִן known from the Massoretic text, in order to support the anti-wealth ideology of the Qumran community.[46] However, this opinion does not accord well with the hermeneutics of the scroll. It is not likely that the author of the Pesher intentionally modified the biblical base texts for ideological reasons, or that he would have built a specific concept on a text which was intentionally changed. One can hardly escape the conclusion that the Pesher did have הון in its biblical base text.[47]

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[44] This line is a contextual interpretation of Hab 2:5dg. The author of the Pesher observed a relationship between the nations gathered (קבץ) by Sheol and the wealth gathered by the evil priest, as well as between the people brought together and the wealth brought together (יסף).

[45] Cf. later also 1QpHab ix 5–6.

[46] Cf. the discussion in PRINSLOO, "Habakkuk 2:5a", 4-6.

[47] One may call attention here to two other cases. In Hab 2:16, the Massoretic Text contains a problematic reading וְהֵעָרֵל, which appears in 1QpHab as והרעל 'to stagger, reel' (probably the same reading is followed by the Septuagint, the Peshitta and the Vulgate; cf. also Ps 60:5). While we do not know for certain whether this was an intentional modification of the text or an existing

We have reasons to believe that the rendering κατοιόμενος in the original version of the Septuagint goes back to a Hebrew text which also contained הון rather than הַיַּיִן. Long before the discovery of the Habakkuk Pesher, in an article from 1885, M. Th. Houtsma already suggested that κατοιόμενος derived from Hebrew הַהֹן or הַיִן, which, at least on a consonantal level, overlaps with the now familiar Qumran variant, argued to have the meaning 'proud, arrogant'.[48] It appears that one should talk about textual corruption not in the case of the Greek translation but rather within the Hebrew tradition: היין > הון (הין).[49]

Houtsma noted that emending the Massoretic Text along הון > היין (הין) would not only make sense of the relationship between the Septuagint (and we may now add 1QpHab) and the Massoretic tradition, but this would suit exegetically the context of vv. 4-5 in every respect, especially regarding the highly disputed עֻפְּלָה in v. 4a.[50] Moreover, וְאַף כִּי could then be more easily explained as a binding element between vv. 4 and 5, connecting especially the nuances covered by עֻפְּלָה and הון (הין).

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tradition known to the Pesher, it is clear that the explanatory section of the scroll, 1QpHab xi 12–14, does not follow the הרעל variant suggested by the scroll, but the form וְהֵעָרֵל also known from the Massoretic Text. Another interesting case is Hab 1:3, with the Massoretic

Text having וְעָמָל תַּבִּיט 'and watch at trouble'. The biblical citation appears similarly in 1QpHab i 5 as [ת]בֹ[יט ומל[ע], but in the explanatory section we read: [פשרו על אשר הביט] אל בעשק ומעל 'its explanation refers to those who watch at the oppression and *disobedience*'. Due to the shortness of the text, we cannot tell whether the Pesher treated עמל and מעל as synonyms, or whether we deal here with unintentional interchange of letters. At any rate, the Pesher does not seem to deal irresponsibly with the biblical text. He clearly gives the reading he had before him, even when the explanation differs from the biblical variant. As a side note, Jonathan D. H. Norton believes that the author of the Pesher might have been acquainted with several textual variants. See Jonathan D. H. NORTON, *Contours in the Text. Textual Variation in the Writings of Paul, Josephus and the Yaḥad* (Library of New Testament Studies 430), London: T&T Clark, 2011, 54–55. This presupposition does not seem to be necessary, however.

[48] See HOUTSMA, "Habakuk 2,4 en 5", 182. In biblical Hebrew, *qaṭṭāl* formations can be nouns (דַּיָּן, גַּנָּב) or adjectives (קַנָּא). Cf. Paul JOÜON and Takamitsu MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14), Roma: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993, §88H a. (הַיִן) הַן, much like the previous עֻפְּלָה in v. 4, is a *hapax legomenon*. As I noted, Habakkuk is often uses rare words, or rare nuances of more or less familiar words. Two further examples of this style in Hab 2:5 are יָהִיר (cf. Prov 21:24) and נוה.

[49] BROWNLEE, *The Text of Habakkuk*, 45-46. It is striking that later exegetical literature treated the κατοιόμενος < הון derivation, and the relationship between the Septuagint and the Pesher sceptically. Note for instance J. A. EMERTON, "The Textual and Linguistic Problems of Habakkuk ii.4-5", *Journal of Theological Studies* 28 (1977), 1–2. The two traditions are, however, traced back to a common tradition now by the critical apparatus of the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*.

[50] See HOUTSMA, "Habakuk 2,4 en 5", 182.

The root עפל appears only once more, in Num 12:44 (in hiph.). It is striking that the parallel text of this verse in Deut 1:41 exchanges this verb with the likewise singular synonymous lexeme הין (הין) hiph.

Num 14:44

| They insolently went up to the mountain top. | וַיַּעְפִּ֗לוּ לַעֲל֛וֹת אֶל־רֹ֥אשׁ הָהָ֖ר |

Deut 1:41

| They proudly went up to the mountain. | וַתָּהִ֖ינוּ לַעֲלֹ֥ת הָהָֽרָה: |

Both texts follow a similar syntactic structure. The hiph. verbs denote the mode of action followed by the construction ל + inf. cstr., this latter ultimately expressing the concrete action.[51] Interestingly, there is also a third reference to the same event, in a somewhat different wording in Deut 1:43:

Deut 1:43

| They presumptuously went up to the mountain. | וַתָּזִ֖דוּ וַתַּעֲל֥וּ הָהָֽרָה: |

If these evidences are evaluated side by side, it becomes obvious that the rare terms עפל and הין (הין), and the somewhat more often used זיד are treated as synonymous.[52] The derivate of זיד, the word זֵד 'presumptuous' is on its turn known as a synonym of יָהִיר (cf. Prov 21:24), which also appears in Hab 2:5b. The agglomeration of the terms עֻפְּלָה (Hab 2:4a), הין (הין) (2:5a) and יָהִיר (2:5b) parallels semantically the historical episode narrated in Num 14:44; Deut 1:41 and 43.

One cannot exclude that the Peshitta's translation *y'n'* 'greedy' also points in the direction of Hebrew הון. Interpreters argue that the Peshitta dismissed the problematic phrase *ואף כי־היין* in its rendering.[53] However, this is far from certain. In the phrase *wgbr' mrḥ' wy'n'* 'and the arrogant and voracious man', *mrḥ'* obviously translates Hebrew בּוֹגֵד (cf. Peshitta Hab 1:5.13). But what about *wy'n'*?

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[51] For this ל + inf. cstr. syntactic structure, see JOÜON-MURAOKA, *Grammar,* §124o.

[52] In Deut 1:43 we find the syntactical form hiph. wayyiqtol + qal wayyiqtol, which is semantically analogous to the hip. wayyiqtol + ל + inf. cstr. structure. See on this JOÜON-MURAOKA, *Grammar,* §124o.

[53] Mark SEBÖK, *Die syrische Übersetzung der zwölf kleinen Propheten und ihr Verhältniss zu dem massoretischen Text und zu den älteren Übersetzungen, namentlich den LXX und dem Targum,* Breslau: Preuss und Jünger, 1887, 61.

Scholars believe that this lexeme rendered Hebrew יָהִיר 'presumptuous'.[54] This opinion based on the sequentiality of the terms used is not the only solution, however. The more so as the Syriac translation obviously changes word order by placing *gbrʾ* at the beginning of the sentence. On its single other appearance, Prov 21:24, the Peshitta failed to translate יָהִיר.[55] The Syriac translators were probably unfamiliar with the sense of the otherwise indeed exotic יָהִיר. I believe, therefore, that Syriac *wyʿnʾ* should more likely be related to some form of *היין. One could think of a case of translating Hebrew (הַיַּיִן) with a *phonetic* equivalent.[56] But it is even more convincing to conclude that *yʿnʾ* 'voracious' renders Hebrew הון. It needs to be remarked that while the Peshitta was acquainted with the Old Greek text ('boastful'), he chose a semantically different rendering, which endows this textual tradition with an additional text-historical value as an independent witness.

The fact that הון can be related to voraciousness is aptly illustrated by Prov 30:15-16:

Prov 30:15-16	
The leech has two daughters, "Give, give!"	לַעֲלוּקָה שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת הַב הַב
Three things are insatiable,	שָׁלוֹשׁ הֵנָּה לֹא תִשְׂבַּעְנָה
Four never say, "Enough!":	אַרְבַּע לֹא־אָמְרוּ הוֹן׃
Sheol, a barren womb,	שְׁאוֹל וְעֹצֶר רָחַם
earth that cannot get enough water,	אֶרֶץ לֹא־שָׂבְעָה מַּיִם
and fire which never says, "Enough!"	וְאֵשׁ לֹא־אָמְרָה הוֹן׃

Little imagination is required to understand why *yʿnʾ* 'voracious' was seen as adequate translation within the context of Hab 2:5. The person alluded to in Hab 2:5 through cryptic metaphors is compared to the insatiable Sheol. It also needs to be remarked that in Prov 28:25, one of the rare places where the Syriac *yʿnʾ* is used,[57] *gbrʾ yʿnʾ* renders Hebrew רְחַב־נֶפֶשׁ 'one with a wide throat'. The combination of these Hebrew words also appears in Hab 2:5c: הִרְחִיב כִּשְׁאוֹל נַפְשׁוֹ 'he widened his throat like Sheol'.

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[54] BROCKELMANN, *Lexicon syriacum,* 305; SEBÖK, *Syrische Übersetzung,* 61; EMERTON, "Habakkuk II. 4–5", 1; *Biblia Hebraica Quinta,* 95.

[55] Syriac *ʾšyn* renders Hebrew לֵץ and not יָהִיר (cf. Prov 19:29; 20:1).

[56] Cf. the rendition עפלה > עולה in Hab 2:4. For the technique of using phonetically similar terms in translation, see SEBÖK, *Syrische Übersetzung,* 5. One could further ponder the possibility of an inner-Syriac corruption (ܘܝܥܢܐ *wyʿnʾ* < ܘܝܝܢܐ *wyynʾ*), but that would not lead to a semantically feasible result within the Syriac text.

[57] As for the other texts, see Isa 56:11; Sir 31:20. In Prov 28:25 this is also the translation of the Targum. Cf. J. LEVY, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil des rabbinischen Schrifttums.* Leipzig: Gustav Engel, 1866, 340.

To conclude, it appears that the original Old Greek translation κατοιόμενος 'conceited, boastful', the Qumran variant הון 'wealth', and most likely the Peshitta *yʿnʾ* 'voracious' go back to the same base text containing הון, different from what we now find in the Massoretic version. If three independent traditions presuppose the same *Vorlage*, we have good reasons to argue in favour of this as the historically more reliable earlier variant.

The proper vocalization of הון still remains a question. 1QpHab (and probably Peshitta) favour the reading הוֹן, 'wealth', which connects this verse line especially with vv. 5c and 6. Following this vocalisation would lead to the following rendering:

Indeed, wealth is deceiving (?),
the man shall not be glorified (?).[58]

While this provides two meaningful phrases, their logical interconnection still remains unintelligible. The variant הַוֵּן or הַיָּן 'boastful, conceited', reconstructed based on the translation of the Septuagint, fits the context better, both with respect to the relation between vv. 5a and 5b, and 5a and 4a.[59] Arguing for a hapax legomenon (הַוֵּן or הַיָּן) in the context of Habakkuk hardly presents a problem for a book apparently purposefully designed as a safe haven for hard to find Hebrew lexemes.

Of course, one should not exclude the possibility that the prophet evokes the multiple senses of the consonantal הון, obviously lacking the limiting interpretive character of a vocalised text. Habakkuk was, as I already noted above, one of the great masters of language. The connotation of dis/satisfaction (expressed by הוֹן) could be related to Hab 2:5cf, while the idea of being conceited (הַוֵּן), connects v. 5a to v. 4a. The eventual ambivalent sense of הון would make this text another example of the well-known Janus-parallelism.[60]

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[58] The reading הוֹן 'wealth' is adopted by some modern translations. Cf. NRSV, NAB.

[59] See the discussion above concerning the synonymous treatment of הון and עפל Num 14:44 and Deut 1:41.

[60] See on this literary pheomenon D. Yellin, משנה ההרואה בתנך, *Tarbiz* 1 (1929), 1–17; Cyrus H. Gordon, "New Directions", *BASP* 15 (1978), 59; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry. A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOT Supplement Series 26), Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984, 159; Scott B. Noegel, "Janus Parallelism in Job and Its Literary Significance", *JBL* 115 (1996), 313–320; Idem, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job* (JSOT Supplement Series 223), Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996. For examples within Habakkuk, cf. David Toshio Tsumura, "Polysemy and Parallelism in Hab 1,8-9", *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 120 (2008), 194–203; Idem, "Janus Parallelism in Hab. III 4", *Vetus Testamentum IOSOT* (2013), 113–116.

Be it as it may, the variant הַיַּיִן preserved by the Massoretic Text is most likely a secondary development. היין with reduplicated consonants might not necessarily be considered an error, however. We have early paleographic evidence that in some circles consonantal י or ו could have been written as יי and וו respectively (whether reduplicated or not).[61] Obviously, in such circumstances היין could have been easily misunderstood. The Massoretic vocalisation may have ultimately canonised the semantically less likely option.

The two examples noted above, Hab 1:5 and 2:5, make clear that the evaluation of diverging textual traditions is a very complex task. The analysis has shown that in certain cases the variant reading preserved by the Septuagint brings us closer to the earlier text of Habakkuk. Chances to stumble upon an earlier reading are especially high in places where ancient textual traditions presuppose the same base text independently from each other.

It is also clear that mapping the intricacies of textual history serves the purposes of interpretation, as the clarification of the earliest forms of Hab 1:5 and 2:5 brings us one step closer to unfolding the encrypted message of the book of Habakkuk.

Csaba BALOGH
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[61] Cf. Isa 54:11 ענייה (1QIsaᵃ) and עֲנִיָּה (MT); 1QpHab xi 2 היים; m. Ber. 6,1 הייירקות; 4Q219 i 12 ויצוווהו (sg. 3 masc + suf.); Isa 58:9 תשווע (1QIsaᵇ) תְּשֻׁוַּע (MT). For details, see Eric D. REYMOND, *Qumran Hebrew. An Overview of Ortography, Phonology, and Morphology* (Resources for Biblical Study 76), Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014, 61–63.

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