

# THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

INTERPRETED

## Chapter I

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V. 1

**M\***

הַמְשָׁה אֲשֶׁר הִזָּה חִבְקֻק הַנְּבִיא :

**LXX** Τὸ λῆμμα, ὃ εἶδεν Ἀμβακούμ ὁ Προφήτης.

**V** Onus quod vidit Habacuc propheta.

**T** The revelation which Habakkuk the prophet saw.

This verse, supplying a title to the Book, is the work of an editor. See for similar headings, prefixed to other prophetic writings or parts of them: Is. 1,1. 2,1. 13,1, Jer., Jos., Joel, Am., Obad., Micah, etc. **הַמְשָׁה** The word is used to mean (1) a material load carried by men (Jer. 13,21,22) or placed on the back of an animal (Ex. 23,5), and (2) an utterance, especially a prophetic oracle or revelation from Yahweh (Is. 14,28. Ezek. 12,10). The second meaning comes from the verb **הִשָּׂא** = lift, lift up, and esp. lift up the voice when an announcement has to be made impressively, such as the prophetic one. We may render the word also by «burden» according to LXX and V (cp. also the word *ἄρμα* in Aq.), which metaphorically gives us the same meaning, «as though the import of the prophetic oracle were a grievous load imposed on the individual or people» concerning whom it was uttered<sup>1</sup>.

**הִזָּה** Notice the special meaning of the verb (= see as a seer in an ecstatic state) when accompanied by acc. of the vision seen.

**חִבְקֻק** The etymology of the name of the prophet is not clear. Frd. Delitzsch connects the name with the Assyrian hambakûku, a garden plant (cp. Ἀμβακούμ of the LXX). F. E. Peiser is of the

\* M = Masoretic Text. LXX = Septuagint. V = Vulgata. T = The writer's translation. Note also the abbreviations: K = Kittel's Biblia Hebraica. AT = American Translation. Aq. = Aquila's Version. AV = Authorized Version. RV = Revised Version. V. = verse.

1. Westminster Commentaries. The Book of the Prophet Habakkuk by G. W. Wade. London, 1929, p. 169.

opinion that the name appears to be a pseudonym<sup>2</sup>. The V names him Habacuc. A conservative opinion, based on the postscript to ch. III v. 19 «on my stringed instrument», is that he was a Levite, since only a Levite was authorized to use an instrument to accompany his songs in the Temple.

The only Hebrew root to which the name must be connected, if it is of a Hebrew origin, is חבקק "embrace", "clasp". The uncertainty of the derivation of the prophet's name extends to the time when he lived. If he is the author of I. 5-11, where the Chaldeans are named, he lived at the end of the seventh century. If he is an editor of the book, he must be a person of a much later period.

**חבקי** This name signifies properly a delegate or mouthpiece of another, according to the general Semitic sense of the root חבא (=utter a low voice, speak), relative to the Hebrew נבע (=bubble up, pour forth)<sup>3</sup>. The Greek word for it is προφήτης which is equivalent to the Hebrew<sup>4</sup>. Amongst the writing prophets only Habakkuk, Haggai and Zechariah have this title appended to their names.

VV. 2-4. These three verses give us a short prophetic utterance, a complaint, because Yahweh allows violence and injustice to triumph in the land. They make no mention of a foreign invader. What is described is the native oppression and not that coming from a war<sup>5</sup>.

V. 2

**M** : עד אנה יהוה שועתי ולא תשמע אועק ארץ חמס ולא תושיע

**LXX** Ἔως τίνος Κύριε κερᾶξομαι, καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσακούσεις; βοήσομαι πρὸς σὲ ἀδικούμενος, καὶ οὐ σώσεις;

**V** Usquequo Domine clamabo, et non exaudies? vociferabor ad te vim patiens, et non salvabis?

**T** How long, O Lord, must I cry without being heard by you? Call toward thee "violence"! Without being saved?

Instead of the participle which the LXX and the V use in rendering the word חמס (in the meaning of «cry out concerning

2. The Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. VI, «Habakkuk» by E. G. Hirsch.

3. See the words נבא and נביא in A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O. T. by Brown, Driver and Briggs. Boston, 1907, p. 611.

4. See Cornill, C.H. The prophets of Israel. Chicago, 1904 (Transl.), p. 5 ff.

5. See International Critical Commentary. Habakkuk by W. H. Ward. New York, 1911, p. 5.

violence»), it is right to use an exclamation: «violence»!, following the best translations<sup>6</sup>.

עַד מָתַי אָנָה Less common than the syn. עַד מָתַי.

שׁוֹעֲתִי The action is conceived as complete, though it continues on into the present: «How long have I already called for help (and do still call)»? which is practically equivalent to «How long shall I call for help?»<sup>7</sup>. It is apparent that the period of distress has already been protracted.

אָנָה אֵלֶיךָ וְגו' The words עַד אָנָה are here understood.

הַמָּס Violence is the main complaint, repeated also in v. 9 and II. 8, 17. The v. 2 is made up of two pentameters (3+2).

V. 3

**M** : מָה תִּרְאֵנִי אֲנִי וְעַמְּךָ תִּבְיֹשׁ וְשֵׁד וְחַמְסֵךְ לִנְגְדִי וְיְהִי רִיב וּמְדוֹן יִשְׂאֵל

**LXX** Ἰνα τί μοι ἔδειξας κόπους καὶ πόρους, ἐπιβλέπειν ταλαιπωρίαν καὶ ἀσέβειαν; Ἐξ ἐναντίας μου γέγονεν κρίσις, καὶ ὁ κριτὴς λαμβάνει.

**V** Quare ostendisti mihi iniquitatem et laborem, videre praedam et injustiam contra me? et factum est iudicium, et contradictio potentior.

**T** Why dost thou cause me to see wrongdoing and to look upon trouble? Destruction and violence are before me and strife and contention.

**M** תִּבְיֹשׁ, **LXX** ἐπιβλέπειν ταλαιπωρίαν, reading שֵׁד תִּבְיֹשׁ. The **V** follows the **LXX** in reading an infin. תִּבְיֹשׁ. I keep the infin. of the versions in translating the verse. Marti prefers the Syriac reading אֲבִיִּשׁ for תִּבְיֹשׁ<sup>8</sup>, which seems to be probable in originality (cp. Old Latin Version «Ut viderem»)<sup>9</sup>.

וְגו' According to the **LXX**, I do not translate the conjunction (cp. the words וְשֵׁד הַמָּס in Jer. 6,7. 20,8. Ez. 45,9).

לִנְגְדִי הִיָּה The **LXX** takes together the following words רִיב וּמְדוֹן יִשְׂאֵל reading מְדוֹן for מְדוֹן and rendering the clause as follows Ἐξ ἐναντίας μου γέγονε κρίσις καὶ ὁ κριτὴς λαμβάνει. The word יִשְׂאֵל seems to be superfluous; I have left it out on the ground that it was required since the מְדוֹן became מְדוֹן, and that it stands out of the metre.

6. See The Bible: An American Translation, edited by Smith and Goodspeed. Chicago, 1935. Stonehouse, G.G.V. The Book of Habakkuk. London, 1911, p. 155 etc.

7. See Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 155. Westm. Comm., p. 171.

8. See Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 158.

9. See Westm. Comm., p. 171.

V. 3 must be composed of two pentameters. Sellin supposes that the second part of the verse must be a trimeter couplet after omitting יהי<sup>10</sup>.

V. 4

**M** כֵּן תִּפּוֹג תּוֹרָה וְלֹא יֵצֵא לְנֹצֵחַ מִשְׁפָּט כִּי רָשָׁע מִכְתִּיר אֶת הַצְדִּיק כֵּן יֵצֵא מִשְׁפָּט מֵעֵקֶל:

**LXX** Λιὰ τοῦτο διεσκέδασται νόμος καὶ οὐ διεξάγεται εἰς τέλος κρίμα, ὅτι ἄσεβῆς καταδυναστεύει τὸν δίκαιον, ἔνεκεν τούτου ἐξελεύσεται τὸ κρίμα διεστραμμένον.

**V** Propter hoc lacerata est lex, et non pervenit usque ad finem iudicium: quia impius praevalet adversus justum, propterea egreditur iudicium perversum.

**T** Therefore the law is ineffective and never goes forth judgement; for the wicked circumvents the righteous; therefore judgement goes forth crooked.

**תפוג** The verb is פוג (=grow numb, cool or cold); cp. the same word in Targum (=cease, be helpless); hence a benumbed or helpless תורה is a תורה ineffective. The LXX has διεσκέδασται, reading תפר (Hoph. from פרר = be broken, frustrated, violated; cp. Ps. 119, 126 διεσκέδασαν τὸν νόμον σου), whereas the V gives a free rendering: "lacerata est". I keep the word as it is in the M; it is more expressive than that of the versions.

**תורה** The question here is whether the word תורה applies to the religious instructions of the past or to those brought in power by the reformation of Josiah<sup>11</sup>. The second is more probable, since the author of the message concerned here is a contemporary of Josiah and Jeremiah. The present verse seems to express the prophetic disappointment because of the unsuccessful reformation of Josiah. Habakkuk's attitude towards the reformation is, in my opinion, like that of Jeremiah (cp. Jer. 11, 1 ff.).

**לנצח** The word נצח with the prepos. ל means «for ever». The other meaning of the word «preeminence», «victory» is used without approval. Some scholars, as Gesenius and Ewald, give to the word נצח the impossible meaning of sincerity (according to the equivalent Arabic word) as required antithesis to מעקל of the second part of the verse. But of this part see below.

10. See Westm. Comm., p. 172.

11. Cp. however Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 24.

**משפט** The prophet's disappointment extends to the social life since justice, which ought to be its foundation, is powerless or rather unknown and forgotten.

**כי וְ** The second part of the verse elucidates the first. It stands as a gloss which, being in the margin first, entered into the text later<sup>11a</sup>. Somebody thought that the word **לנצח** might be misunderstood in an absolute sense and he added the present comment.

**רשע** The versions support the Masoretic punctuation **רֶשַׁע**. Stonehouse<sup>12</sup> proposed a different vocalization which renders the word **רֶשַׁע** (=wickedness), on the ground that the article is absent before the word, whereas it occurs before the following **צדיק**. The rule based on the same words, occurring in other O.T. passages, demands that the article come before both the words. This rule, however, leaves out some cases as exceptions<sup>13</sup>, so that it is difficult for me to follow Stonehouse's opinion.

**מכתיר** From **כתר**; pt. Hiph. = "surrounding". The LXX has *καταδυναστεύει* (and the V the equivalent "praeualet") which seems to be rather a free rendering of the present Hebrew word than another reading (**מכמיר** or **מכביש**)<sup>14</sup>.

**צדיק** The interpreters who see the oppression coming from an external enemy (the **רשע** of this verse) identify the **צדיק** with Judah, as knowing and worshipping the true God (see below).

The first part of the verse gives us two trimeters, whereas the second is not rhythmic (except if we leave out the word **יצא**, when we have also two trimeters (see K).

VV. 5-11 are a unity containing the answer which Yahweh gives the Prophet for the complaint already expressed. Yahweh is arousing the Chaldeans who will, in their speedy advance, conquer nations and kingdoms and punish the sin of the people. To resort to the expediency of omitting the passage I, 5-11 as an independant oracle (composed by another writer than Habakkuk) as Wellhausen and Nowack claim, or to that of transposing it from its present place to the beginning of the book (Van Hoonacker) or after 2, 1-4 (Budde, Smith) is a dangerous conjecture<sup>15</sup>. A possible transposition of vv. 5-11 before

11<sup>a</sup>. See Intern. Crit. Comm., p. 8.

12. Op. cit., p. 161.

13. Ibid., p. 162.

14. Ibid., p. 162.

15. See Westm. Comm. p. 152 ff.

I, 2-4 is proposed by Prof. Vellas, who supports it on Balla's and Sellin's theory that the whole book of Habakkuk is a "prophetic liturgy"<sup>15a</sup>.

V. 5

**M** דָּאן בְּגוֹיִם וְהִבִּיטוּ וְהִתְמַהוּ וְהִתְמַהוּ תִּמְהוּ כִּי פִעַל פִּעַל בְּיָמֵיכֶם אֵל תִּאֲמִינוּ כִּי יִסְפֵּד :

**LXX** Ἴδετε οἱ καταφρονηταὶ καὶ ἐπιβλέψατε, καὶ θαυμάσατε θαυμάσια καὶ ἀφανίσθητε· διότι ἔργον ἐγὼ ἐργάζομαι ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν, ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ἂν τις ἐκδιηγῆται.

**V** *Aspicite in gentibus, et videte; admiramini, et obstupescite: quia opus factum est in diebus vestris, quod nemo credet, cum narrabitur.*

**T** Behold, faithless, and see and be utterly amazed; for I am about to do a deed in your days, that you will not believe when told.

**בְּגוֹיִם** It is to be corrected to **בְּגֵדִים** according to the LXX "οἱ καταφρονηταὶ" (cp. v. 13 and 2, 5). The V follows the M. There are, however, translators and interpreters who prefer the Masoretic **בְּגוֹיִם**<sup>16</sup>. I hold the conjectural reading, since it is required by the "prophetic scheme" (sin—judgement—redemption) which is so evident in the prophecy of Habakkuk. In the previous verses the sinful condition was exposed and now God announces His punishment on the wrongdoers (the verb is **בָּגַד** = to deal treacherously, faithlessly).

**וְהִתְמַהוּ וְהִתְמַהוּ** The lit. rendering is "and astonish yourselves, be astonished". The LXX has καὶ θαυμάσατε θαυμάσια καὶ ἀφανίσθητε, reading an absol. inf. for θαυμάσια and **וְהִתְמַהוּ** or **וְהִמְחוּ** for ἀφανίσθητε (Niph. from **מחה** = wipe out, exterminate). The V connects the two verbs with an "et". Wellhausen prefers **וְהִתְמַהוּ וְהִתְמַהוּ** according to Is. 29, 9<sup>17</sup>. It is probable that both the passages (Hab. 1, 5 and Is. 29, 9) had the same forms of the verb **תמה**, but this does not mean that we should prefer the second for the first. Any way, I take the words as an emphatic expression, and translate "be utterly amazed,"<sup>18</sup>. Stonehouse gives an unacceptable conjectural translation of the whole verse<sup>19</sup>.

15<sup>a</sup>. See Vellas, B. Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. Athens, 1949 (in Greek), p. 63. Of the validity of Balla's and Sellin's theory cp. Pfeiffer, R.H. Introduction to the O.T. New York, 1941, p. 600.

16. See Amer. Translation. Expositor's Bible, The Book of the Twelve, vol. II by G. A. Smith, New York, 1903, p. 134. Stonehouse, op. cit. p. 134 etc.

17. See Expos. Bible, p. 134.

18. See Amer. Translation.

19. Op. cit., p. 29 ff. and 134.

כי פִּעַל פִּעַל וְגו' The LXX read a 1<sup>st</sup> pers. sing, whereas the V implies a passive, instead of an active, participle. A similar expression is found in Ps. 44,2 פִּעַל פִּעַלָּת בִּימֵיהֶם. The word פִּעַל stands as a cognate accusative or object; this as well as the participle are expressive of divine achievement (cp. 3,2. Is. 5,12. Ps. 44,2. 45,9).

The question, evidently, is whether the subject of the participle is in the 1<sup>st</sup> or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> pers. sing. Scholars are divided on this point, but all of them see their regularity of the omitted object. My opinion is, again, based on the "prophetic scheme" which the editor of Habakkuk's prophecy preserved, even though he has used only fragments of the original speeches. According to it, the answer is coming from God, deciding to punish the social evil which the Prophet denounced to Him. God, then, should be meant as the subject of פִּעַל and the next participle in v. 6 מְקִים, in a direct speech. The work that they are invited to look upon is the deadly work to be done by the Babylonian armies.

לא תאמינו כי יספר The wrong-doers would not like to believe in their own doom. Their punishment is unexpected and so terrible, as to be incredible (cp. Lam. 4,12 לא האמינו מלכי ארץ וכר ישבי תבל (כי יבא צר ואויב בשערי ירושלם)), although it probably had fallen upon other nations. The temple of Yahweh was powerful and consequently protected the whole land, according to the common thinking of Jeremiah's pre-exilic times (Jer. 7,4).

V. 5 consists of two pentameters.

V. 6

**M** כי הנני מקים את הכשדים הגוי המר והנמהר ההולך למרחבי ארץ לרשת משכנות לא לו:

**LXX** Διότι ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξεγείρω τοὺς Χαλδαίους, τὸ ἔθνος τὸ μικρὸν καὶ τὸ ταχυνόν, τὸ πορευόμενον ἐπὶ τὰ πλάτη τῆς γῆς τοῦ κατακληρονομησαί σκηνώματα οὐκ αὐτοῦ.

**V** Quia ecce ego suscitabo Chaldaeos, gentem amaram et velocem, ambulantem super latitudinem terræ, ut possideat tabernacula non sua.

**T** For, behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess habitations that belong not to it.

כי הנני מקים את הכשדים An emphatic expression with present for future (futurum instans). Cp. the following similar expressions:

Am. 6, 14 **כי הנני מקים עליכם...גוי**. II Sam. 12, 11 **כה אמר יהוה הנני ואני הנני מקים את** Gen. 9, 9 (in a different sense) **מקום עריך רעה בריתי אתכם**. Cp. also Jer. 5, 15 **הנני מביא עליכם גוי**. 'The Chaldeans' advance, as it is here expressed, is about to reach the boundaries of Palestine; cp. the words **ההפך למרחבי ארץ**. The absence of special mention of Judah is not opposed by the words **ἐφ' ὑμᾶς** after **ἐξείργω** in some MSS of the LXX, since they do not seem authentic. It is more than certain to say that what in the present case was a prophecy for Judah, was a fact for other nations. This is only an example among many others testifying to the truth that a prophetic menace or warning is a product of the Prophet's historical consciousness.

The word which has been of deep interest to the scholars is **כשדים** (LXX *Χαλδαῖοι*; cp. Assyrian *Kaldû*). It has here the special meaning of the people ruled by Nebuchadnezzar, whom God uses as executors of his vengeance; He uses the power and passion of men to work out His designs (see Am. 6, 14 above, and Hab. 1, 12 below). The so-called Chaldeans or Babylonians won their independence up to 626 (when Medes and Babylonians attacked Nineveh) and after the fall of Nineveh (612) began conquering Western Asia in a wonderfully rapid career. Habakkuk's prophecy comes at this time, esp. the time between the battle of Carchemish and the first Captivity (605 - 597), since before the first date this nation had not yet amazed the world by its feats, and after the second date the enemy appears in Judaea; nowhere in Habakkuk's book is a condition of captivity implied.

Related to the date I accepted above is my opinion of the structure of the Book, to which I refer in various sections. The solution I followed (i. e. an internal oppression to be punished by the Chaldeans) is one of many others facing the same problem. It is an old one, but is supported by the majority of critics (as Pusey, Delitzsch, Kleinert, Kuenen, Sinkler, Driver, Orelli, Kirpatrick, Wideboer, Volck, Davidson). The oppression, according to some other scholars (Hitzig, Ewald, König, Smend, Giesebrecht, Wellhausen) comes from the invader, i. e. the Chaldeans. Another opinion, combining the two previous, is to accept the Chaldeans as punishers of the oppressors: the Assyrians (Budde, Cornill) or the Egyptians (Smith: "The tyrant is either Assyria up to about 615 or Egypt from 608 to 605"<sup>20</sup>). Quite a different view is taken by Duhm in his epoch-making book in 1906. It rests upon the substitution of **הכתיים** for **הכשדים**; the reference would in

20. See Expos. Bible, p. 116 ff. Cp. Westm. Comm., p. 152 ff.



that case be, not to the Babylonians of the seventh Century, but to the (Macedonian) Greeks of the fourth, under the Alexander the Great<sup>21</sup>. According to J. E. McFadyen "The advantage of this view is the unity with which it invests the book... Ch. 3 could also be authentic"<sup>22</sup>. But although McFadyen has a respect for this view (prophecy against Greece) he assumes the correctness of the traditional reading כשדים (prophecy against Babylon)<sup>23</sup>. In reference to Duhm's theory it must also be noted that the Jerusalem Habakkuk Scroll reads הכשדאים and interprets them as the כתיאים.

G. Stonehouse sees the prophecy as a picture of the national trouble and mischief caused by the Chaldeans; "it is to the early years of the Chaldean invasion that we must assign the short prophecy of Habakkuk"<sup>24</sup>.

G. Wade, although perplexed by the problems, does not follow the majority. He takes vv. 5—11 as a quotation from an earlier prophecy<sup>25</sup>. According to W. Ward "the time is between the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.) and the first Captivity (597 B.C.)"<sup>26</sup>. Eiselen,<sup>27</sup> Sanders and Kent<sup>28</sup> and J.M.P. Smith<sup>29</sup> maintain the same.

R. H. Pfeiffer thinks that "it seems preferable to adhere to the traditional dating of the book at the end of the seventh Century (605 - 600)"<sup>30</sup>.

E. G. Hirsch thinks that Habakkuk is "clearly under the influence of Isaiah; and the view which makes him a younger disciple of the greater prophet, advanced by W. K. Betteridge in *Journal of American Theology* Oct., 1903, seems to meet best the situation reflected in the book"<sup>31</sup>.

21. See Duhm, B. Das Buch Habakkuk. Tübingen, 1906, p. 21. C. C. Torrey in his article "Alexander the Great in the Old Testament Prophecies" (*Festschrift für K. Marti*, Beih. 41, Z.A.W., 1925, p. 283) follows Duhm's theory.

22. The Abington Bible Commentary ("Habakkuk" by J.E. McFadyen), New York, 1929, p. 804b.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 805 b.

24. *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

25. *Westm. Comm.*, p, 150 ff. and 211 ff.

26. *Intern. Crit. Comm.*, p. 4.

27. Eiselen, F. C. *The Minor Prophets*. New York, 1907, p. 471.

28. *The Messages of the Earlier Prophets*. New York, 1899, p. 219.

29. *The Prophets and their Times*. Chicago, 1941, p. 155 ff.

30. *Intr. to the O. T.*, p. 599.

31. *Jewish Encycl.*, p. 117 b.

A. S. Peake (as G. Wade) takes vv. 5-11 as an older oracle and the rest of the two chapters (I and II) as the composition of Habakkuk, dating probably from exile<sup>32</sup>.

Walker and Lund hold to the unity of the book after they applied the chiasmus to it; "But now that a chiasmus is understood to place non-parallel material between parallel portions, no reconstruction of the text is necessary"<sup>33</sup>; The following structure of the Book is according to them:

Part I (1,1—2,5)	Part II (2,6—20)	Part I' (3,1—19)
strophe A (1,1—4)	strophe K (2,6—8)	strophe A (3,1—2)
» B (vv. 5—11)	» L (vv. 9—13)	» B (vv. 3—7)
» C (vv. 12—13)	» K' (vv. 14—17)	» C (vv. 8—10a)
» B' (vv. 14—17)	» L' (vv. 18—20)	» B' (vv. 10b—15)
» A' (vv. 2,1—5)		» A' (vv. 16—19)

Catholic scholars hold to the traditional date; F. E. Gigot's<sup>34</sup> and Philippe's<sup>35</sup> view ascribes the book to 605-600 B.C.

הַגּוֹי הַמָּר וְגַ' This nation, which is treated as a single whole, is bitter, fierce (cp. Jud. 18,25 and II Sam. 17,8, where מְרֵי נֶפֶשׁ means angry, enraged) and hasty, vehement, impetuous (cp. Is. 32,4 וְלִבָּב נִמְהָרִים יִבִּין לְרַעַת).

לֹא מֵרַחְבֵי אָרֶץ. They set no bounds to their conquests, so that their march is far and wide and their operations extend over the world (cp. Gen. 13,17 קוֹם הַתְּהוֹמָךְ בָּאָרֶץ לְאַרְכָּה וּלְרַחְבָּה). The phrase מֵרַחְבֵי אָרֶץ only here.

לְרַשֵׁת מִשְׁכְּנוֹת The prep. לְ with inf. const. expresses purpose. Their purpose is conquest, to seize for a possession the dwelling-places of other peoples.

לֹא לֵא A condensed expression. Cp. Gen. 15,13 and Jer. 5,19; note also the recurrence of this phrase in Hab. 2,6 which favors Habakkuk's authorship of the section 1,5—11<sup>36</sup>.

32. The Problem of Suffering in the O. T. London, 1904, p. 5.

33. Journal of Biblical Literature, vol. LIII, 1934, pp. 355-370: H. H. Walker and N. W. Lund, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Habakkuk". See mainly p. 360.

34. The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. VII (New York, 1910), "Habakkuk" by F. E. Gigot, p. 98 b.

35. Dictionnaire de la Bible publié par F. Vigouroux. Tome 3<sup>ème</sup> (Paris, 1910), "Habakuk" par E. Philippe, p. 373.

36. See Westm. Comm., p. 175.

V. 7

**M** אִים וְנֹרָא הוּא מִמְנוּ מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְשִׂאתוֹ יִצָּא :**LXX** Φοβερός και ἐπιφανής ἐστίν, ἕξ αὐτοῦ τὸ κρίμα αὐτοῦ ἔσται, και τὸ λῆμμα αὐτοῦ ἕξ αὐτοῦ ἔξελεύσεται.**V** Horribilis et terribilis est: ex semetipsa iudicium, et onus ejus egredietur.**T** Terrible and dreadful is he; his judgement and destruction shall go forth from him.**אִים** This word occurs again only in Song 6,4, יו (אִימָה כְּנִדְגָלוֹת) =terrible as an army with banners); but the substantive אִימָה (=terror, dread) is common (cp. the verb אִים pi. "terrify", occurring in late Hebrew (Talmud etc.).**נֹרָא** The LXX has ἐπιφανής (reading נִרְאָה). In my opinion, one who reads נִרְאָה for נֹרָא (V terribilis) should keep also שִׂאת for the conjectural שִׂאת (see below). On the contrary, נֹרָא is relative to שִׂית.**הוּא** The nation is personified as a hero, hence the singular in the M and the versions.**וְשִׂאתוֹ** The LXX renders it και τὸ λῆμμα αὐτοῦ; the V has the equivalent "et onus ejus". This is a literal rendering of the word שִׂאת; the metaphorical rendering is "dignity", "majesty" which most commentaries use<sup>37</sup>. The best meaning, however, comes from the conjectural reading שִׂאת (destruction) corresponding to the נֹרָא; but if one prefers the LXX (=נִרְאָה), the word שִׂאת should also be held. The difficulty which the metre meets is great. One has to find two trimeters in the verse, and to succeed in that, he should omit one word. In such a case, either the וְשִׂאתוֹ is a gloss<sup>38</sup> or the verb יִצָּא is a superfluous supplement. Duhm reads: אִים וְנֹרָא הוּא וְשִׂאת מִמְנוּ יִצָּא<sup>39</sup>. Cp. also K "prps מִשְׁפָּט וְשִׂאתוֹ dl. cf. mtr.)".**אִים וְנֹרָא הוּא וְשִׂאת מִמְנוּ יִצָּא** Those who keep the verb יִצָּא as an authentic word, should perhaps put it in the plural, on account of the compound

37. See New-Century Bible, The Minor Prophets, vol. II by Driver, (New York, 1903), p. 69. Cambridge Bible; Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah by Davidson (Cambridge, 1896), p. 68. Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 169 etc.

38. See Intern. Crit. Comm., p. 9.

39. Op. cit., p. 22.

subject. One opinion is that the «ן» of the plural has been separated and prefixed to the following וקלו, or that it has been fallen out on account of the following ן in וקלו<sup>40</sup>. The meaning is that the Chaldeans have no master, except their own will, according to which judgement and destruction come to overthrow the nations (cp. Is. 10, 8-11, 13-14, and Aeschyl. Prom. 186 παρ' ἑαυτῶ τὸ δίκαιον ἔχων which Hitzig quotes<sup>41</sup>).

V. 8

**M** וקלו מנמרים סוסיו וחדו מואבי ערב ופשו פרשיו ופרשיו מרחוק  
יבאו יעפו כנשר חש לאכור;

**LXX** Καὶ ἔξαλοῦνται ὑπὲρ παρθάλεις οἱ ἵπποι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὀξύτεροι ὑπὲρ τοὺς λύκους τῆς Ἀραβίας· καὶ ἔξιππάσονται οἱ ἵππεις αὐτοῦ καὶ ὀρμήσουσιν μακρόθεν, καὶ πετασθήσονται ὡς ἀετὸς πρόθυμος εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν.

**V** *Leviore* parvis equi ejus, et *velociore* lupis vespertinis; et diffundentur equites ejus; equites namque ejus de longe venient, volabant quasi aquila festinans ad comedendum.

**T** Swifter than leopards are his horses, and keener than evening wolves. His horses prance, and his horsemen come from afar; they swoop down like a vulture hastening to devour.

וּקְלוּ מִנְמָרִים The V renders the וקלו better than the LXX (ἔξάλλομαι=leap out of or forth from). Jeremiah (4,13) compares their horses to eagles: וקלו מנשרים סוסיו. Cp. also Hos. 13,7. Jer.5,6. 13,23.

An identical picture of the same people is given in Deut. 28,49 ישא יהוה עיניך גוי מרחק מקצה הארץ כאשר ידאה הנשר. Cp. Jer. 4,29. Ezek. 23,23-24 for the Chaldeans' cavalry.

וּחְדוּ מִוְאָבֵי עֵרֶב Their horses' qualities of speed (see above) and keenness are compared to the swiftest and fiercest beasts of prey. The wolf attacks at night with fierceness, after concealing itself during the day (cf. Virg. Georg. 3, 264 "genus acre luporum"<sup>42</sup>, and Hor. Epodes 16,51 "Vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile"<sup>43</sup>.) Cp. also Zeph. 3,3 שפטיה זאבי ערב. The LXX has "λύκους τῆς Ἀραβίας", reading ערב for ערב. The AT has "wolves of the desert"; such a meaning is probable and supported by Jer. 5,6 זאב ערבנות ישדרם.

40. Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 170.

41. The Pulpit Commentary, Habakkuk's exposition by W. J. Deane, p. 2 b.

42. Cambridge Bible, p. 69.

43. Westm. Comm., p. 175.

כי תפושׁו וג' The verb פוש occurs besides in Jer. 50,11 כי תפושׁו and Mal. 3,20 [4,2] ויצאתם ופשׁתם כעגלי מרבק and means "spring about", "gambol". The LXX has και ξεπιπάσονται (ξεπιπάζομαι = ride out or away); the V "et diffundentur". The different rendering of the versions and the dittography of פרשׁיו obliged some interpreters to leave out the words ופשׁו פרשׁיו<sup>44</sup> or make a conjecture. Stonehouse agrees with G. Smith that the יבאו, which is omitted by the LXX, was inserted to afford a verb for the second פרשׁיו and reads וחשו for ופשׁו, supporting the LXX και δομήσουσιν<sup>45</sup> Duhm keeps the clause for the measure and reads ופשׁו פרשׁי פרשׁיו מרחוק and יבאו יעפו<sup>46</sup>. It seems to me that the whole verse must give four trimeters, the third of which has been so much corrupted that none of the conjectural readings is undoubted. In view of this difficulty I follow the AT which gives the word פרשׁ its two meanings "horse" and "horseman".

כנשר השׁ ראכור The preceding clause was of general import; the present one refers to the invasion of Judaea. For a similar expression cf. Jb 9,26 כנשר יטושׁ ערי-אכר. See also Deut. 28,49 and Lam. 4,19. נשר may be a more comprehensive word, including both "eagle" and "vulture" or better "griffon-vulture"<sup>47</sup>.

V. 9

**M** כלה לחמם יבוא מגמת פניהם קדימה ויאסף כחור שבי:

**LXX** Συντέλεια εἰς ἀσεβείας ἦξει, ἀνθεστηκότας προσώποις αὐτῶν ἔξεναντίας, καὶ συνάξει ὡς ἄμμον αἰχμαλωσίαν.

**V** Omnes ad praedam venient, facies eorum ventus urens: et congregabit quasi arenam, captivitatem.

**T** All of them come for violence; the direction of their faces is forwards; and they gather up captives like sand.

כלה The M takes it as the adj. כל + sf. 3 ms. This form occurs sometimes for כלו (=the whole of him, the whole of it) which in the

44. New - Cent. Bible, p. 69.

45. Expositor's Bible, p. 135. Stonehouse, op. cit., 173. Cp. Westm. Comm., p. 175.

46. Op. cit., p. 24.

47. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O. T. by Brown etc., p. 677 a. See also Hastings' A Dictionary of the Bible, vol. I, p. 632 a.

present case, referring to the Chaldeans, means "all of them". The LXX has συντέλεια, punctuating קָלָהּ (=completion, complete destruction).

לַחֲמֵם The LXX punctuates חֲמֵם and renders it εἰς ἀσβεῖς; חֲמֵם is pt. of חָמַם (=treat violently, wrong). Cp. Prov. 8,36. By such a rendering the whole verse receives a meaning opposite to that in M. The punishing (active) invader of M is substituted by the punished (passive) wrongdoer of the LXX. Note the antithesis of this violence to that in v. 2; the one repays the other of which the prophet already complained.

מִגַּמַּת פְּנֵיהֶם קְרִימָה This is a very difficult clause. The word מִגַּמַּת is omitted by the V, whereas the LXX has ἀνθεστηκότας agreeing with the preceding ἀσβεῖς and being either a conjectural rendering or some form of קוּם.

If I assume the text to be correct, the rendering would be "the eagerness (or "strain"; an assumed connection with the Hebrew גָּמַם = to swallow down. Cp. Gen. 24,17 for a literal meaning, and Jb 39,24 קָרַעַם בְּרֵעֵשׁ וְרִגְזוּ יִגְמָא אֲרָץ for a metaphorical meaning) of their faces is forwards" or "the assembling..." (an assumed connection with an Arabic verb = to become much, to be abundant; 48 a combined rendering would be «the direction...» 49. קְרִימָה (=eastward) has in the present clause the meaning of «forwards» 50, but this is only a convenient rendering. The LXX has ἐξ ἐναντίας, reading קְדָמַת (constr. of the useless קְדָמָה = front, east); cp. I Sam. 13,5 קְדָמַת בַּיִת אֹנֶן. See also Jos. 19, 12-13. The V renders it literally "ventus urens". A suspicion of a corrupt text is found in all commentaries 51. The AV rendering "as the east wind" is too free; it attempts to get from the original the thought that the Chaldeans will devour everything like the destructive east wind (Hos. 13, 15; cp. also the next clause).

G. Smith thinks that the reading פְּנֵינוּ מִקְרִיִּם (cp. Am. 9,10) for קְרִימָה פְּנֵיהֶם is a probable one 52.

Stonehouse gives the textual emendation גַּם־יִפְנֶה (or יתפנה) יִמָּה וְקְדָמָה "Yay, he turns himself west and east, i. e. everywhere); for the order יִמָּה וְקְדָמָה see Gen. 28,14 53.

48. Westm. Comm., p. 176. Cp. RV.

49. Expositor's Bible, p. 135.

50. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O. T. by Brown etc., p. 870.

51. Intern. Crit. Comm. pp. 9 and 11, etc.

52. Expositor's Bible, p. 135.

53. Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 175.

Duhm, consistent to his own theory, gives the following reading :  
**מְזַמְּרֵם פְּנִיָּהֶם קְדָמָה** <sup>54</sup>.

**וְגַ** ויאסף כחול וג' Their captives are as the sand, i.e. innumerable ;  
 for the comparison see Gen. 22,17. 41,49. Jud. 7,12. II Sam. 17,11.

V. 9 gives three trimeters.

V. 10

**M** והוא במלכים יתקדם ורזנים משחק לו הוא לכל מבצר ישהק  
 ויצבר עפר ויכבדה :

**LXX** Καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν βασιλεῦσιν ἐντροφήσει καὶ τύραννοι παίγνια αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς πᾶν ὄχυρωμα ἐμπαίξεται, καὶ βαλεῖ χῶμα καὶ κρατήσει αὐτοῦ.

**V** Et ipse de regibus triumphabit, et tyranni ridiculi ejus erunt ; ipse super omnem munitionem redebit, et comportabit aggerem, et capiet eam.

**T** Yea, it is he that makes scorn of kings, and rulers are a joke to him ! Yea, it is he that laughs at all fortresses, and heaps up a dirt and captures them.

**וְהוּא** Note the emphatic position of the Hebrew pronoun in both couplets, which must be preserved in the translation.

**יִתְקַדֵּם** The LXX uses the verb ἐντροφάω with the meaning "treat haughtily or contemptuously" <sup>55</sup>. The verb קָם occurs also in II K. 2, 23. Ez. 22,5 . 16, 31. The V gives a loose rendering. The Chaldean nation makes light of the power and persons of kings (cp. Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Jehoiakim in II Chr. 36,6. II K. 24, 1, 3. Jer. 22, 19, and Jehoiachin II K. 24, 12, 15). The verbs of vv. 10-11 should be in the present.

**מִשְׁחָק** (=object of derision) Only here. The collective Hebrew predicate is rendered by the LXX and the V by plural.

**וְגַ** והוא לכל (ו) Duhm adds a ו according to the LXX and the emphatic והוא of the beginning of the verse. Not only persons, but also every obstacle and every attempt to check their advance are derided by the Chaldean conqueror.

**וְיִצְבֵּר וְגַ** The strongest fortress is no impediment to them and is captured in an easy way : by piling earth against the walls, until it rose to their level, so that the assailants, advancing along its top,

54. Op. cit., p. 26.

55. A Greek - English Lexicon by Liddell and Scott (Oxford, 1940), vol. I, p. 578 a.

could fight their way in. Cp. II S. 20,15. II K. 19,32. Jer. 6,6 et al., where we find the technical expression "cast up mound [against the city], [עֲרֵה עִיר] שָׁפַךְ מְלָחָה

The v. 10 is made up of four trimeters.

V. 11

**M** אִז חֲרַף רוּחַ וַיַּעֲבֵר וְאִשְׁמֹו זֶו כָּחוּ לְאַלְהֵוּ ;

**LXX** Τότε μεταβαλεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ διελεύσεται καὶ ἐξιλάσεται· αὐτῆ ἢ ἰσχυρὸς τῷ θεῷ μου.

**V** Tunc mutabitur spiritus, et pertransibit, et corruet: haec est fortitudo ejus dei sui.

**T** Then he sweeps like the wind and passes on, and he makes his strength his god.

V. 11 is not above suspicion and seems to have suffered in transcription. The renderings which I give below come from several scholars and show the uncertainty of the original text.

**אִז חֲרַף רָרַח** If we assume the text to be correct, the translation should be "then the wind shifts"<sup>56</sup> or "then he changes his spirit (mind or purpose),, after the versions (cp. v. 7 **מָמְנוּ מִשְׁפָּטוּ**)<sup>57</sup> Equally probable and with a better meaning is the rendering "then they sweep on (or "they pass on quickly") as the wind", but we have in this case to add a **כ** before **רוּחַ** as Wellhausen does<sup>58</sup> or to consider **רוּחַ** as an accusative of condition without **כ**<sup>59</sup> Both these renderings find place in the significance of the words **חֲרַף** end **רוּחַ**. The reading **יַחְרִיף כָּחַ** "he renews his strength" (Grätz, Nowack), after Is. 40, 31, is free, departing from the received text<sup>60</sup>. Duhm reads **אִז חָרַף כְּרוּחַ וַיַּעֲבֵר** (חול = whirl, dance, writhe)<sup>61</sup>. A general sense may be the following: the Chaldean in his advance is arrested for a moment by a fortress, lying in his way, but after it has been taken, he sweeps on like a hurricane, in his career of conquest.

(It continues)

56. Expositor's Bible, p. 135.

57. Intern. Crit. Comm., p. 9.

58. At Expositor's Bible, p. 135, 4.

59. Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 176 f.

60. Stonehouse, *ibid.*

61. Op. cit., p. 28.