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### The Difficult Verses of the Song of Deborah Expounded

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The Difficult Verses of the Song of Deborah

Expounded

In the Light of Holy Scriptures

As

A B.D. Thesis

Of

The Rev. W.A. Schack.

*Read and approved by  
W. A. Schack  
7. 11. 1931  
April 18, 1931  
1931*



## The Difficult Verses of the Song of Deborah.

The Song of Deborah celebrates the victory of Israel over the Canaanites "in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo" (V.19). This glorious victory over the Canaanitish kings who were in alliance with Jabin broke the yoke of oppression and secured to the Israelites<sup>-ite</sup> repose of forty years duration (V.31). This triumphal ode gives us a lively description of Israel as a fluctuating and unsettled<sup>nation</sup> nation, and a striking picture of the disorders and dangers which confronted<sup>-ed</sup> Israel during the period of the Judges. It also throws a flood of light upon the culture of early Israel; immortalizes the political and social conditions of Israel at that time; and pictures to the people of all times the Jean d' Arc of Israel. Frank Knight Sanders, the historian, describes Deborah, the judge and prophetess of Israel,<sup>Jud.</sup> who played a prominent part in Israel at that time as follows:-

"In lofty patriotism, good judgment, vigor, and all qualities of leadership, she was worthy of this recognition, a remarkable woman."<sup>1)</sup>

Indeed, not many like Deborah can be found in the Old Testament, much less to-day. For it was due to her influence that Barak, who judged Israel together with her, went out to battle against Sissera, the general of the combined host, whom the Lord Jehovah delivered into the hands of a woman, viz., Jael, as Deborah bessestime had prophesied. This triumphal ode which celebrates this great and glorious<sup>glorious</sup> victory of Israel was sung by Deborah and Barak after they had returned<sup>returned</sup> from their pursuit.

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1) History of the Jews, p.84.



This ode is regarded by many as the oldest monument of Hebrew poetry, save that of Moses. Even higher-critics acknowledge it as one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew literature. George Foot Moore says: "It is the oldest extant monument of Hebrew history before the foundation of the kingdom"<sup>2)</sup>. The ~~author~~<sup>3)</sup> author of this old extant piece of Hebrew literature is Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Israel. This fact is substantiated by the title (V.1) and by the internal testimony (VV.7.1b). "In the opinion of the great majority of scholars, Deborah herself is the author of the Ode"<sup>3)</sup>. "Critics have been almost unanimous in attributing the Ode to a contemporary, and a participant in the glorious struggle which it celebrates. So, to make but a single quotation, Kuenen writes, 'Form and contents alike prove that it is rightly ascribed by all competent judges to a contemporary'. This consensus has recently been challenged by Seinecke and especially by Maurice Vernes, but neither the methods nor the conclusions of these critics have commended themselves to other scholars."<sup>4)</sup> The representation of the song agrees entirely with the historical events. Its historical value cannot be exaggerated. George Foot Moore says, "The song of Deborah is unsurpassed in Hebrew literature in all the great qualities of poetry, and holds a high place among the Triumphal Odes in the literature of the world"<sup>5)</sup>. "No war ode or battle hymn<sup>6)</sup> in the world surpasses it in fiery energy and true poetic power". "The beauty of this ancient poem is unrivalled. Viewed from the literary point of view, the poem is a perfect piece of art. To the historian and student of Israelitish religion this Triumphal Ode

2) cf. The International Critical Commentary, Judges, p.133.

3) cf. Footnote p. 133 of The International Critical Commentary, Judges, by George Foot Moore for the names of these scholars.

4) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore, p. 139.

5) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Foot Moore.

6) Students History of Hebrews, Laura A. Knott, p.90.



is of the greatest value". <sup>7)</sup> ~~77~~ The form of the Ode cannot, however, <sup>- only</sup> be construed to out modern meter as some critics <sup>at</sup> have endeavored to do time and again. In it all the essentials of Hebrew poetry are apparent. It has poetic diction, poetic thought, and parallelism. In addition to these necessary marks it has also alliteration throughout. George Foot Moore says, "the movement of the poem is throughout straightforward and natural. It sets before us, first, the situation before the revolt; second, the rising of the tribes; third, the victory and its sequel, the death of Sissera." <sup>8)</sup>

Thus far, then, we have heard the opinions of critics, historians, and exegetes concerning the Song of Deborah, and have seen that it rightly can be ascribed to Deborah as a contemporary of the historical <sup>- ical</sup> events which it embraces. Therefore, let us now devote a few moments <sup>- ians</sup> to the text itself in order to convince ourselves that there is enough linguistic evidence to substantiate its antiquity aside from the consensus of the critical, historical and exegetical world, before proceeding to the body of the thesis which is to be grounded upon the linguistic evidence found therein.

The linguistic testimony does not in any way verify, on the one hand, that this triumphal ode is of post-exilic origin as Maurice Vernes and Seinecke claim; but, on the other hand, authenticates <sup>it</sup> its remote age. George Foot Moore says: "We detect in it none of the anachronisms by which a later writer so easily betrays his own age; nor does the atmospheric perspective of the narrative indicate that the writer stood at a distance from the events which he relates. It exhibits neither the vagueness which is the first result of the blurring of details in tradition, nor the artificial circumstantiality <sup>- ality</sup> which marks the subsequent attempt to recover them". <sup>9)</sup> But in the poetic dic<sup>t</sup>ion of this Song archaisms, words occurring here for the first time, words used in a modified sense, and idiomatic phrases



are to be found. In short, it has an antiquated cast and antique coloring throughout. And because of this, we shall note later that this linguistic evidence affirms the anitquity of the Song of Deborah<sup>-ah</sup>. For the relative particle *ו* and the ending *ן* are some of the ancient remnants of the Hebrew language and are found in this triumphal ode.

Finally, its remote age is confirmed by the fact, that the different codices of the LXX and other versions of the Old Testament differ as to the translation of a number of these passages found therein. The translators of these different renditions found it a difficult task to render some of its verses into their respective language and yet to keep the antique color of the Hebrew of this Song. For instance, The LXX renditions differ greatly in verses 3, 15, 16, 28-30. These and other differences, however, will be taken care of later in the body of the thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is to give a translation of the entire Song and offer a tenable solution of the linguistic difficulties found therein, established on sound biblical exegesis, and not by corrupting the text, as critics have done and yet do; for that militates against the clear conception of Holy Writ.

Verse 1.

Gives us the introduction and title of the Song.

וַתִּשֶׁר דְּבוֹרָה וּבָרַק בֶּן-אֲבִינוֹם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאִמְרָהּ:

"Then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, on that day saying."

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- 7) Beginnings of Hebrew History, Charles Foster Kent, par.139, p. 520.
  - 8) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore.
  - 9) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore.



The Theodotion and LXX codex Vaticanus translate **רָשָׁה** with **kai sēsan** (fr. **saído**) and the Vulgate likewise has the plural **cecineruntque** (**cano**), but the Alexandrine codex of the LXX agrees with the Targ. Pesch. Ar. translating it in the singular **שָׁסַן** as Orig. and It. Ver. (**contavit**) have done. We, however, reject the former translation, viz., the plural; because **רָשָׁה** is the singular. And the Hebrew language as well as other languages has the verb in the singular when two nouns closely connected are its subject. The feminine form of the verb is here used because it stands before a feminine sing. and a masc. singular; cf. Num. <sup>12, 1.</sup> 13, 1. <sup>10)</sup>

**וְאֶהְרִין וְאַהֲרֹן מִלֵּיל מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ** "Then spake Miriam and Aaron". However, it is particularly feminine here 1) because Deborah is the closest subject; and 2) because she plays the more important role.

From this, then, we see that both sang it. But this does not imply that both wrote it; for its authorship has already been touched upon in the introduction. Both sang it, because it speaks of that important event which had just transpired in which they played prominent parts. "But the crowning event of this period, both in its intrinsic interest and our knowledge of it, is the victory of Deborah and Barak. It is told both in prose and poetry, and the poem is one of the most incontestable remains of antiquity that the Sacred records contain, and the increased pleasure and instruction with which we are enabled to read it furnish a signal proof of the gains added to our Biblical knowledge by the advance of Biblical criticism." <sup>11)</sup>

The rare occurrence of the nota accusativi in poetic style may be explained from the fact that in this as in other respects poetry represents a somewhat more archaic stage of the language than prose. <sup>12)</sup> <sup>13)</sup>

10) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar E. Kautzsch cf. **yy77**. par. 146  
 11) History of the Jewish Church, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, vol. 1, p. 38  
 12) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch cf. 117b.  
 13)



בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא "on that day." This tells us that this song was written immediately after the battle and was the song of triumph which Deborah and Barak sang on their return from the battlefield. "Deborah's song of victory breaks in, and continues in its highest strains the echo of that day. In company with the returning conqueror, or herself leading the chorus, after the manner of Hebrew women, the Prophetess poured forth the hymn which marks the greatness of the crisis. It could be compared to nothing short of the day when Israel passed through the desert." (13)

Concerning these words "on that day" D. Johannes Bachmann writes:

"Uebrigens handelt es sich dabei nicht um eine blosse moeglichst genaue chronologische Bestimmung (Chytr.: statim accepto beneficio gratiae agenda), sondern jener Siegestag soll damit zugleich als Anlass und Gegenstand des Siegesliedes hervorgehoben werden." (14)

VV. 2-5. The praise of God for His coming.

Verse 2.

בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּהִלָּתָם בְּהִלָּתָם בְּהִלָּתָם  
 בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּהִלָּתָם בְּהִלָּתָם בְּהִלָּתָם

"Because of the leading on of the leaders in Israel, while the people volunteered, praise Jehovah."

The LXX codex Alexandrinus and the Theodotion translate פָּרַע and פָּרַע and פָּרַע "en tō arkasthai archegous en Israēl", as if it were the Arabic word Pairon which means 1) to let the hair grow. 2) to be excellent, a leader. In ancient days the growth of hair was a sign of nobility cf. Deut. 32,42. Therefore, the LXX reading in this form renders it more correctly than the LXX Vaticanus. "For the LXX Vat. has ἀποκαλύθη ἀποκαλύμμα ἐν Ἰσραὴλ" and the Symm. "en tō apokalypsesthai kefalās." Whereas, the Targ. translates it in the sense of "raechen" which is similar to the K.J.V. that has "avenge". The Vulgate has translated it

13) History of the Jewish Church, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, vol. 1, p. 391.  
 14) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 303.  
 15) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 303.







We note again, that the nota accusativi is missing here, but <sup>as</sup> we see from the grammar, it ~~is~~ rarely occurs in poetry. Here <sup>in</sup> as in Psalm 3,3 kings are addressed. What ~~is~~ transpired here is enough <sup>to</sup> to convince anyone that Jehovah is the Lord God of Israel. Although Israel had no kings and princes who ruled <sup>over</sup> them at this time, ~~it~~ nevertheless Deborah bursts forth in her song of triumph and <sup>addresses</sup> addresses this class of people. She desired to arouse the attention of the neighboring tribes and nations. "The words are addressed to the rulers of the nations of the world so far as they were within the horizon of the poet's contemporaries; they shall learn the great <sup>17)</sup> might of ~~Jehovah~~ Yahweh and His jealousy for his people Israel". "The rulers of the nations are summoned to hearken to the praises of Yahweh. The poet would make the world a witness of Yahweh's <sup>18)</sup> mighty acts and compel it to own his greatness; cf. Dt. 32,1.3." "Hear, ye kings! give ear, o ye princes!" "The two verbs are often <sup>18)</sup> coupled in poetical parallelism; cf. Gen. 4,23; Ex. 15,26; Num. 23,18 & <sup>19)</sup> the two nouns also occur together Ps. 3,2. Hab. 1,10." Furthermore, <sup>Die</sup> D. Johannes Bachmann says concerning this verse the following: "Die herrliche Grosstat wodurch Jehovah sich von Neuem als Gott und Koenig Seines Volks erwiesen hat, zu deren Verkuenderin sich die Prophetin im Folg. macht, soll auch ueber Israels Grenzen hinaus laut werden (vgl. Ps. 9,13; 96,3.10; 105,1; Jes. 13,4.5. u.m.), <sup>den</sup> den Koenigen der Erde zum Zeugnis, <sup>-lich</sup> zur Warnung (Ps. 3,13) und <sup>30)</sup> womoeglich zur Erweckung gleichen Lobes (Ps. 68,29f. Jes 49,7; 53,15)."

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- 16) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 117 sec. b. <sup>18)</sup>  
 17) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Foot Moore, p. 137 p. 137.  
 18) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Foot Moore, p. 137 p. 137.  
 19) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Foot Moore, p. 137 p. 137.  
 20) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 310.



אֲנִי refers to the author, namely, Deborah. "Damit tritt die Person Deborah scharf hervor. Jedoch soll nicht als das Weib, das des Sieges Werkzeug gewesen (v.G.); oder als die Sängerin ....; sondern als die mit Gottes Geist erfüllte Prophetin, die in der gegenwaertigen herrlichen Fuehrung Jehovah als des Koenigs Seines Volks ebensosehr ein Wiederaufleben der bisherigen (V.4ff) wie ein Unterpand aller kuenftigen (V.31) erblickt, und deren Worte daher mit Recht das Gehoer der Koenige und Fuersten in Anspruch nehmen".<sup>21)</sup>

אֲנִי The pronoun is repeated in order that the prophetess might draw the attention of her hearers. Geo. Foot Moore says: "observe the repetition of the pronoun, which has a weight in Hebrew that we cannot give it in translation. The note of triumph rings in this exaltation of the subject. Most interpreters find in this dominant I the self-consciousness of Deborah, heroine and poet, but for reasons already set forth this is improbable. Wellhausen thinks that the I of this verse, as of Ex. 15 is Israel".<sup>22)</sup> We, however, do not look at this I in the light that Wellhausen does for it is merely a strong and weighty expression in Hebrew for the first person and awakens the hearers to hearken unto the voice of the mouth-piece of God.

אֲשִׁירָה is the cohortative form "let me sing". מִמֶּנִּי from which מִמֶּנִּי (psalm) is derived means "to be sung with musical accompaniment".<sup>23)</sup> Moore says: "make melody, music, canere vel voce vel fidibus" Luther translates it "spielen"; whereas, the K.J.V. has "I will sing praise." The Vulgate has: "ego sum, ego sum, quae Domino canam, psallam Domino Deo Israel". And the LXX has: "ἐγὼ τῷ κυρίῳ ᾄσωμαι (fr ᾄειδο), καὶ ψαλῶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ Ἰσραὴλ". The Vulgate emphasizes the first

21) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 311f. 138.  
 22) The International Critical Commentary, Judg., G.F. Moore, p. 138.  
 23) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore. 138.



person more so, than the other versions in this verse. "I" brings <sup>out</sup> the meaning of the original "I" in the best possible manner. We, too, are obliged to do the same if we wish to hold to the <sup>Heb</sup> Massoretic Text, for the first person is emphatically placed in the forefront <sup>the</sup> by the repetition of the pronoun.

Verse 4.

יְהוָה יָצָא מִסֵּיר בְּצֵאתוֹ מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהַשָּׁמַיִם נָפְלוּ כְּדֹפִים וְהַעֲנָנִים נָפְלוּ מַיִם  
אֶרֶץ עֲדוֹם רָטְטָה וְהַשָּׁמַיִם נָפְלוּ כְּדֹפִים וְהַעֲנָנִים נָפְלוּ מַיִם

"Jehovah in thy going out of Seir, in thy marching out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens fell in drops (dripp<sup>ed</sup>), and the clouds dripped water."

"Seir) is the home of Esau, the land which was given him by Jahweh, as Canaan was given to Jacob ( Jos.34,4 Deut.3,5. cf. <sup>32, 3.</sup> Gen. 32,3-35,14). It is in the mountain range east of the 'Arabah, from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of 'Aqabah, now called <sup>to</sup> in its northern part el-Gibal. in the southern esh-Sherah. The region of Edom) identical with Seir; see Gen.32,3 and cf. also 33,8." It is not specifically the plateau in distinction from the mountain, but it is simply the region of Edom. Ps. 38,7.8 plainly all<sup>ed</sup> to this verse.

יָצָא with dagesh in י distinguishes the infinitive form <sup>from</sup> from the noun (Prov. 4,13). The primary meaning seems to be "walk with great steps, stride, stalk"; and is used of the stately march of a religious pomp. Here <sup>it is used</sup> in the sense of "in thy marching out". The Vulgate renders this word with "tansires"; the K.J.V. has "when thou marchest out", and Luther translates it with "einhergingest" in contrast to the other "auszogest."

34) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Post Moore. <sup>Winer.</sup>



The particle  $\text{וְ}$  which the LXX renders with  $\text{καί}$  and  $\text{καί}$  and the Vulgate with  $\text{que}$  and  $\text{ac}$  is not climacteric but cumulative; each <sup>clause</sup> clause adds a trait to the completeness of the description. Bachmann says: "Das doppelte  $\text{וְ}$ ..... is bloss des Nachdrucks wegen wiederholt." <sup>35)</sup>

$\text{וְ}$  construed with the acc. "to drop, to overflow with". It is here <sup>here</sup> used in the sense of "to drop". Verba copiae and inopiae also called <sup>called</sup> verba abundandi et deficiendi are construed with  $\text{וְ}$  and hence <sup>evidently</sup> with the acc. <sup>this</sup> The nota accusativi, however, is missing because <sup>the</sup> this is poetry. The LXX renders this with  $\text{ἐστάξε (στάζο) = stillo}$ ; yet the Vulgate has  $\text{distillaverunt}$ . The LXX, furthermore, adds  $\text{drosous (dew)}$ . We, however, let the Massoretic text suffice and remain thereby.

<sup>Keil-DeLitzsch</sup> Keil-DeLitzsch interpret this verse as follows: "Um den <sup>die</sup> Herrn die Ehre fuer den durch seinen allmaechtigen Beistand erfochtenen <sup>sieher</sup> Sieg ueber die gewaltige Heeresmacht Sissera's zu geben und die Heiden mit <sup>Furcht</sup> Furcht vor Jahve, die Israeliten mit Liebe und Vertrauen zu ihm zu erfuehlen, geht die Saengerin zurueck auf die <sup>er-</sup> furchtbar herrliche Offenbarung Jahve's in der Vorzeit, da Israel zum Volke Gottes angenommen ward Ex.19. Wie Mose in seinem Segen (Deut. 33,2) die Staemme Israels <sup>auf</sup> auf diese grosse Tatsache hingewiesen als die Quelle des Heils und <sup>Segens</sup> Segens fuer Israel, so macht auch die Prophetin Debora den Preis dieser herrlichen Gottesoffenbarung zum Ausgangspunkte ihres Lobes <sup>grossen</sup> der <sup>grossen</sup> Gnade, welche Jahve als der treue Bundesgott in ihren Tagen seinem Volke <sup>Volke</sup> erwiesen hat." <sup>37)</sup> "Das Ausgehen ( $\text{וַיֵּצֵא}$ ) Jahve's von Seir und sein <sup>Her-</sup> schreiten ( $\text{וַיֵּשֶׁב}$ ) vom Gefilde Edoms ist eben so zu fassen wie sein Aufgehen ( $\text{וַיֵּצֵא}$ ) von Seir Deut. 33,2. Wie die Herabkunft des Herrn <sup>auf</sup> auf den Sinai dort als ein Aufgehen der Sonne vom Osten her <sup>ort</sup> geschildert ist, so wird hier dieses Herabkommen in einer schweren Wolke unter

35) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 317.

36) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 117 seq. 2. <sup>Keil-</sup>

37) Biblischer Kommentar ueber das A.T., 1 Band, Carl Friedrich Keil-Franz Delitzsch, S. 348.



Donner, Blitz, Feuer und Rauchdampf (Ex. 19, 18. 19) in engerem  
 Anschlusse an diese Phaenomena als ein von Seitz im Osten her <sup>aufsteigen</sup> aufsteigen-  
 des Gewitter dargestellt, in welchem der Herr einherschritt seinem  
 vom Westen her zum Sinai gezogenen Volke entgegen." "So hoch <sup>aber</sup> aber  
 Israel am Sinai durch den Herrn seinem Gott. erhoben war, so tief <sup>war</sup> war  
 es durch seine Schuld in der juengsten Vergangenheit in die Knecht-  
 schaft seiner Draenger geraten bis Debora helfend auftrat, V. 8-9".  
 Hengstenberg, however, says: "The song goes back to the time when  
 Jehovah revealed Himself on Mt. Sinai or. Ex. 19". This is merely  
 another proof of His majesty. We, however, reject this latter  
 interpretation for God came this instance to deliver the Israelites.  
 For as a reference to this battle this verse portrays God's <sup>particular</sup> particular  
 coming to aid them at this particular time. God truly came to them at  
 this instance in a storm, which came from the south or southwest <sup>and</sup> and  
 we see that the Lord shook the earth and let the heavens and the <sup>clouds</sup> clouds  
 drip water. This battle was similar to the battle of Cressy, in which  
 "the slingers and the archers were disabled by the rain, the swordsmen  
 were crippled by the biting cold". "A still more striking resemblance  
 is the defeat of the Carthaginians, by Timoleon, at the battle of the  
 Crimesus, in Sicily. It opens with the spirit-stirring and prophet-  
 like speech of Timoleon, 'as though a god were speaking with him'. His  
 encampment, like Barak's is on the hill above the river. The <sup>chariot</sup> chariots  
 of his opponents are broken by the Greek infantry. The violent <sup>storm</sup> storm  
 of wind, rain, hail, thunder and lightning, beating in the faces of  
 the Carthaginians, but only on the backs of the Greeks; the <sup>confusion</sup> confusion  
 in the river becoming every moment fuller and more turbid through  
 the violent rain, so that numbers perished in the torrent; the <sup>total</sup> total







moved or were moved and that is the meaning of the niphal <sup>וַיִּזְרַח</sup>.  
Of course, one could take it as the niphal of <sup>זָרַח</sup> and refer it to the  
gushing streams of water down the mountain sides, but I personally  
believe that the former interpretation is correct when taking the  
picture as it stands.

The LXX and a Latin version also render this as the moving of the <sup>the</sup>  
mountains; Luther, however, translates it "ergossen" and the K.J.V.  
does likewise, translating it "melted", namely, taking it as the  
regular niphal of <sup>זָרַח</sup>.

וַיִּזְרַח according to common explanation is 1) simply a prefixed  
demonstrative particle, e.g. the mount yonder. 2) it may be taken <sup>in</sup>  
apposition. 3) or most naturally as subject. George Foot Moore <sup>calls</sup>  
it "a gloss, because  $\Sigma$  alone renders it quite grammatically <sup>Toutest</sup>  
tò Sina." However, we say that it is no gloss, but is there by  
inspiration of the Lord, for a gloss militates against the clear  
conception of Holy Writ, and furthermore, we find the same mentioned  
in Ps. 88,9. It is also used thus in Is. 33,13 and 1 Kings 14,24.

VV. 6-8 Describe the conditions before the war with Sissera <sup>and</sup>  
Jabin.

Verse 6.

<sup>וַיִּזְרַח</sup> וַיִּזְרַח שְׁמָגָר בֶּן-אַנָּת וַיִּזְרַח יָעֵל בֶּן-יֵאוֹבֵד  
וַיִּזְרַח יָעֵל בֶּן-יֵאוֹבֵד וַיִּזְרַח יָעֵל בֶּן-יֵאוֹבֵד וַיִּזְרַח יָעֵל בֶּן-יֵאוֹבֵד

"In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath; in the days of Jael, the  
highways rested (were not travelled), and the walkers (travellers) or  
rather those that had to walk) of the byways walked twitching (crooked,  
winding) roads."

These conditions as described above are not unnatural, but the result  
of war. For as it was in the days of Shamgar, so it ~~was~~ <sup>result</sup>  
was now. During the time of war, travel on the highways are <sup>stopped</sup> even stop  
today for they are guarded and fortified.

32) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore



"In the days of Jael" is called 'a gloss' by George Foot Moore. <sup>Other</sup> Other Commentators (Teller, Koehler, Hollmann, Ges., Stud., Be., <sup>Calli</sup> Nettli) <sup>33)</sup> say that Jael was another female judge of whom we have no record. Still others /~~שׁוֹפֵט~~/ (F. Boe. and Boettcher) claim that it is a "volks-<sup>volks-</sup>tuemlich" cognomen of Shamgar or Ehud<sup>34)</sup>. Karl Ludwig Stephan says, 'they go back to the etymology of the word שׁוֹפֵט. aram. כִּזְבִּי syr. ja'la, ar. wa'lun (caper montanus, rupicapra cf. auch arabisches: wa'lun nobilis, eminens, ~~שׁוֹפֵט~~ princeps: Freytag Wb.) Steinbock, "Gomse" sehr gut und sagen dasz es den Beinamen eines schnellen, <sup>35)</sup> gewandten Kriegers bedeuten kann." However, we cannot go wrong, if we take it as the Jael referred to in V. 34. For, truly she, too, lived at the time when the highways ceased to be highways and the travellers chose winding, twitching byways for their course.

וּבְיַמֵּי שׁוֹפֵט is a hapaxlegomenon and means "winding, twitching, crooked". It is derived from the verb שׁוֹפֵט which denotes "to turn", "to become crooked". This is one of the proofs from <sup>turn</sup> the linguistic standpoint for the antiquity of the Song of Deborah. For herein are <sup>istic</sup> words to be found that are archaic, or used for the first time, or in a modified sense.

"Shamgar, the son of Anath, defended himself against the <sup>enemies</sup> enemies of the south with the long pole armed at the end with a spike still <sup>still</sup> used by the peasants of Palestine". Shamgar, however, was unable to stem the tide of the enemy, therefore he began to build systematic mountain roads, which led in roundabout ways for the use of his <sup>army</sup> army and ~~of~~ this incident is ~~recalled~~ recalled in these words, for now the <sup>the</sup> highways being closed due to the war were unused and the travellers again sought the byways.

~~שׁוֹפֵט~~ / שׁוֹפֵט  
 33) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore.  
 34) Das ~~שׁוֹפֵט~~ Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann, S. 330.  
 35) Das Deborahlied, Karl Ludwig Stephan, S. 11.  
 36) History of the Jewish Church, Vol. 1, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, p. 3



Verse 7.

קָזְזוּ כְּרִדְוֹן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְקִצְוֵי עַשְׂ שִׁמְתֵי דְבוּרָה שִׁמְתֵי אֵם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

"Unwalled villages in Israel ceased; until that I, Deborah, arose, <sup>that</sup> that I arose (as ) mother in Israel".

In <sup>קָזְזוּ</sup> the dagesch forte is missing, we should have <sup>קָזְזוּ</sup>. Because when a vowel is to be made specially emphatic generally in <sup>the</sup> the principal clause, it is followed by a dagesch forte affectuosum in <sup>the</sup> the following consonant. <sup>37)</sup>

Now as to the interpretation of <sup>קָזְזוּ</sup>. The meaning has been said <sup>said</sup> to be uncertain by commentators. For instance: The Targum and Syriac <sup>Syriac</sup> versions translate it as "the open country". Bachmann and Budde: "Bauern <sup>Bauern</sup> likewise, Luther. The LXX renders it "dunastoi" and so do Ewald and <sup>if</sup> others take the stand that it means "leaders" in V7. and V.11 where it <sup>38)</sup> again occurs they translate it with "leadership". The K.J.V. has <sup>the</sup> "the inhabitants of the villages". However, we must cling to the <sup>original</sup> original and expound it in the light of Scriptures. Now in Ezekiel 38,11 we have <sup>have</sup> it used in the sense of "the open country" in distinction from the walled and fortified cities, and thus it is also used in the Targum <sup>Targum</sup> and Syriac, which is a cognate language. Therefore, we can <sup>by</sup> rightly interpret it, if we translate "unwalled villages". For the <sup>villages</sup> villages were no longer fortified as in days gone by, but were like <sup>the</sup> unto the open country, scarcely inhabited and unprepared for war. They <sup>ceased</sup> ceased to be villages just as the highways ceased to be the main roads <sup>of</sup> of travel; for all those who formerly lived in the villages had fled into <sup>into</sup> the mountains for safety. Even farming stopped during this period, until Deborah arose. That is what our text here wishes to tell us.

37) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 201.

38) Das Deborahlied, Karl Ludwig Stephan.



"In the song of Deborah we have the only prophetic utterance that breaks the silence between Moses and Samuel. Hers is the one voice of inspiration (in the true sense of the word) that breaks out in the Book of Judges. In her song are gathered up all the lessons <sup>which</sup> the rest of the book teaches indirectly. Hers is the life, both <sup>her</sup> in her own history and in the whole period, that expresses the feelings <sup>and</sup> and the thoughts of thousands, who were silent till 'she, Deborah, arose a mother in Israel'. Hers is the prophetic word that gives an utterance <sup>utterance</sup> and a sanction to the thoughts of freedom, of independence, of national <sup>national</sup> unity, such as they had never before in the world, and have rarely <sup>relative</sup> since." <sup>39)</sup> וַיָּקִימָהּ "that I arose". The prefixed ו־ is an old relative particle and testifies that this Song is antique. Now we ask, <sup>do</sup> what do critics say concerning it? Olshausen for example says ו־ is a remnant <sup>remnant</sup> of וַאֲ by the elision of א and the assimilation of ו־ to the consonant of the following word. Gesenius calls it a forma decurtata of וַאֲ. With this view may be classed the theory of Ewald. Inasmuch as he also <sup>also</sup> assigns the priority to וַאֲ although ~~he~~ <sup>gives</sup> his own explanation <sup>of</sup> of the origin of this form. ~~He~~ <sup>He</sup> maintains it is a remnant of וַאֲ. Sperling calls it the connecting link between <sup>the</sup> the Phoenician וַאֲ and the Hebrew וַאֲ. Now in the Assyrian we have אֶרֻ and in the Aramaic אֶרֻ nouns which mean 'place', consequently, Fleischer, Muehlau, Friedrich Delitzsch, W.L. Harper, Kraetzschmar, Zimmern, and recently also Brockelman argue וַאֲ is of substantive <sup>40)</sup> origin and ו־ is a remnant of this noun." Thus they pronounce it late Hebrew. <sup>However</sup>, if וַאֲ would be of nominal character such combinations as וַאֲ-קִיּוֹם occurring elsewhere could scarcely have arisen. Thus we see, that throughout the Old Testament it was

p. 292.

39) History of the Jewish Church, vol. 1, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, p. 292  
40) וַאֲ, Carl Gaenssle.



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purely a relative particle. Likewise was  $\cdot\omega$  a relative particle <sup>and is</sup> and is not a remnant of  $\omega\alpha$ . For in the first place,  $\cdot\omega$  occurs <sup>-anously</sup> simultaneously with  $\omega\alpha$  even in the early writings. And, then, we have proof from other Semitic languages, that it is etymologically independent <sup>of  $\omega\alpha$</sup>  of  $\omega\alpha$ . In fact, it could not be a remnant, if it is found in the early <sup>writing</sup> writings for it is a well known fact to linguistic science that words <sup>are</sup> are often mutilated and disfigured beyond immediate recognition in the course of their history, e.g. L. aetaticum and the E. age. However, such phenomena do not warrant assumption that the same thing has happened with  $\omega\alpha$ , for the reason that  $\omega$  meets us simultaneously with  $\omega\alpha$ , already in the earlier stages of the language, whereas, the example referred to above represents the result of a long process of decay, <sup>the</sup> the shorter form not being found side by side with the full and unimpaired original. We are, of course, well aware that  $\omega$  is employed <sup>most</sup> much more extensively in later literature than in the earlier. But the fact remains that it is also found, though with less frequency, in the earlier writings, e.g., in the song of Deborah, which <sup>is</sup> by many <sup>regard</sup> regarded as the oldest monument of biblical Hebrew. And as we have two words in English or any other language meaning the same thing, why <sup>can't</sup> can't the Hebrew have the same? Therefore, we conclude that  $\cdot\omega$  is not a postexilic or late Hebrew form, but as old as the language itself <sup>is</sup> is, for it not only occurs in the late writings, but is found <sup>side</sup> side by side with  $\omega\alpha$  in the early writings. It is etymologically independent <sup>from</sup> from the other Hebrew particle, and good Hebrew."

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- 41)  $\omega\alpha$  , Carl Gaenssle.
- 42)  $\omega\alpha$  , Carl Gaenssle.



Much has been written in regard to the ending <sup>43)</sup> **ד. Johannes**.  
 Bachmann says there are some who claim it is the second person fem.,  
 others who claim it is the third person, and still others who <sup>it is</sup> say it is  
 the first! <sup>43)</sup> "If Massorettes would have looked upon this form as <sup>the</sup> the  
 second singular feminine they would have placed a Qeri here <sup>denoting it.</sup> denoting it,  
 but this has not been done, so the second feminine singular is <sup>out</sup> of  
 the question. It plainly shows us that it is, furthermore, <sup>not</sup> the <sup>third</sup> third  
 person for that would be of an altogether different nature and the  
 Massorettes would have placed a Kethib in the footnote if that <sup>were</sup> were the  
 case. <sup>44)</sup> "So it can but be the first, and is the first person in its  
 regular form. <sup>45)</sup> The LXX, ~~///~~ and the Vulgate translate it, as  
 though we would have the third person in the original; for the LXX  
 renders it <sup>46)</sup> "ἀνάστε" and the Vulgate has "surgeret." Many of course <sup>would</sup> would  
 like to follow this translation in order to disprove the authorship of  
 this Song. But this verse authenticates Deborah as its author, for the  
 text plainly has the first person singular and not <sup>of</sup> other form.  
 Furthermore, when she calls herself the Mother of Israel, she is in no  
 way boasting of her great deeds, much less of herself, but is <sup>speaking</sup> speaking  
 as it was customary in those days. Just as Moses and others <sup>have</sup> have done  
 and have not boasted.

Verse 8.

וַיִּבְחַרְוּ אֲזָנֵיהֶם לִשְׂרָפִים וַיִּבְחַרְוּ עֵינֵיהֶם לִשְׂרָפִים וַיִּבְחַרְוּ אֲזָנֵיהֶם לִשְׂרָפִים וַיִּבְחַרְוּ עֵינֵיהֶם לִשְׂרָפִים

"It chose new gods, then was warfare of the gates; a shield, was it  
 seen? and a spear(lance), among the 40,000 in Israel?"

We see that Israel lived in idolatry for our text tells us that  
 Israel chose new gods. It does not say as some explain it "God chose  
 new things." For if it were to denote God's choosing we would await  
 the feminine and not the masculine form. And, then, it would refer to  
 God choosing the judges for Israel, because Israel was unable to do

43) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.  
 44) Das Deborahlied, Karl Ludwig Stephan.  
 45) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 44 i.  
 46) Das Deborahlied, Karl Ludwig Stephan.



that; and the use of Elohim for "judge" is very much restricted. The verb used here expresses actions which continued throughout a longer or shorter period. And our text does not warrant any explanation concerning God; for Israel did the choosing. Jerome translates it: <sup>it</sup> Nova bella elegit Dominus et portas hostium ipse subvertit, clypeus et hasta si apparuerint in quadringenta millibus Israel". But the text is plain God did not choose new wars, but Israel chose new gods. Ewald translates it "they chose new judges". He takes Elohim in the sense of "judges", and refers that to Deborah and Barak. For he looks at the LXX and takes the reading of the Alexandrine codex, which reads, <sup>the</sup> ~~sképe~~ <sup>sképe</sup> ~~neanídōn~~ <sup>neanídōn</sup> ~~siromastōn~~ <sup>siromastōn</sup> ~~ánēfthe~~ <sup>ánēfthe</sup> ~~kai~~ <sup>kai</sup> ~~siromástes~~ <sup>siromástes</sup> and then interprets this so-called accidental corruption of the LXX text 1) sképen éan ido kai siromásten, 2) sképe éan ófthē kai siromástes calling it an <sup>orthographical</sup> orthographic <sup>error</sup> error."

47) However, the Hebrew is clear and, therefore, we must on sound Scriptural grounds reject all false interpretations or corruptions of this verse. We, too, must reject the translation offered us by Luther for it reads: "Ein Neues hat Gott erwahlet, er hat die Tore bestritten, for the original as aforesaid does not in ~~any~~ anyway wish to say this. The original speaks of new gods, and not new things or new judges; therefore, we reject all other interpretations and remain with the original which is clear and pictures to us the conditions at that time. "The weakness of Israel, ultimately due to their apostasy from Jehovah (Jud. 5,8), was directly owing to the invariable and necessary consequence of such infidelity, decline of patriotism, and of faith in the mission ~~of~~ and future of the race."

47) An Introduction to the O.T. in Greek, Henry Barclay Swete.  
48) History, Prophecy and the Monuments, J.F. Mc Curdy, par. 138.  
191.



There was no spear nor shield to be seen in Israel, because the people were a pastoral and ~~not~~ agricultural people and not a warlike nation.

VV. 9-11. Concerning these <sup>r</sup>vases the critics have turned their poisonous pen saying that they are obscure and that the text <sup>suffer-</sup>has suffered so badly, that it would take too much energy to restore it. Let us, therefore, delve into the matter and see whether their statements <sup>as</sup> have any grounds.

Verse 9.

לְבַיְתִי יְהוֹנָדָב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַמְתַנַּחֲבִים קָרָא יְהוֹנָדָב

"My heart is to the commanders of Israel, those who volunteer among the people, praise Jehovah".

לְבַיְתִי is also found in the same manner in Judges 16,15. Herewith, Deborah begins her exhortation to the commanders and the people.

קָרָא 'lawgiver', but in this case it means "a commander of an <sup>army,</sup> army; cf. V. 14. The chokekim are the parahot of V.3. They are the <sup>leaders</sup> leaders and commanders of the people in battle. And unto them as well as unto the volunteers, those who had given themselves willingly, the <sup>common</sup> common soldiers, Deborah is now speaking. For she wishes to say: My heart goes out both to the commanders of Israel, viz., Barak and the <sup>chieftains</sup> chieftains and to the people who volunteered willingly for the cause of <sup>Jehovah.</sup> Jehovah.

"It was a general revival of the national spirit, such as rarely <sup>occur-</sup> occurred. The leaders are described as filling their places with an <sup>ardour</sup> ardour worthy of their position. 'The chiefs became the chiefs', indeed as well as in name. 'The lawgivers of Israel willingly offered <sup>themselves</sup> themselves for the people'. 'The Lord came down amongst the mighty! And to this the nation responded with readiness, unlike their usual sluggishness, as under Gideon and Saul. 'The people willingly offered themselves'. 'They that ~~rode~~ rode on white asses, they that sate on rich <sup>carpets</sup> carpets of state, they that humbly walked by the way', all joined in this



solemn enterprise". Thus we see that the text is plain and <sup>difficultly</sup> no difficult is at hand as the critics state. Herein, Deborah admonishes all to bless the Lord, to give praise unto Jehovah. At the same time <sup>also</sup> she also arouses the attention of the neighboring tribes and nations <sup>give</sup> to give praise unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, who has so miraculously delivered them from the combined host of Jabin.

Verse 10.

וְלִבְנֵי יַגְדֵי הַחַיִּים יִשְׁבְּנוּ עַל-מַצְיָנוּ וְהַזְּכִּי עַל-דְּרָגָתֵינוּ שִׁירָה  
 "The riders upon asses that are white (spotted white), those who sit upon carpets, and those who walk upon the way, sing!"

Deborah here continues her exhortation to all classes of people, the rich as well as the poor. For those who ride upon white asses (cf. Jud. 10,4; 13,14), and those who sit upon carpets or as <sup>K.V.K.</sup> the K.J.V. says "in judgment", or as Luther puts it "im Gericht" are the wealthy, and those who go on the way are the poor. They, however, according to our text, are all to join in with one accord and <sup>שִׁירָה</sup> sing.

<sup>שִׁירָה</sup> 1) converse. 2) mention by singing of. Ps. 145,5. In the latter sense it is also used here. The people are to mention the praise of the Lord by singing.

<sup>זָהָב</sup> comes from <sup>זָהָב</sup> "spotted white" or better "white". This is the color of the costliest ass and only the wealthy owned such for riding. The price was out of reach for the poor and the animal was also considered to be the best riding on account of its gentle nature. Luther translates this word with "schoen", but it denotes <sup>the</sup> the color and not the beauty.

Now as to the construct state. "The construct state, which, according to par. 89 a, primarily represents only the immediate government by one substantive of the following word (or combination <sup>-ation</sup> or words), is frequently employed in rapid narratives as a connecting <sup>-ing</sup>



form even apart from the genitive relation; so especially, -1. <sup>before</sup> before prepositions, particularly in elevated (prophetic or poetic) style, especially when the nomen regens is a participle.<sup>50)</sup> Therefore, the nouns ( <sup>ל</sup>וֹשֵׁי and <sup>ל</sup>הֹלְכֵי ) which are found here before the preposition <sup>ל</sup>בֵּי being participles are in the construct state.

<sup>ל</sup>זַי "a vestment, garment, then, also a carpet". We have the plural <sup>ל</sup>זַי here. Many say this is an Aramaic ending and has been taken from the north Palestinian song of Deborah which also has other linguistic peculiarities and is filled with Aramaisms. But that is not so. For we have the original Song of Deborah before us in the Massoretic text, and therein are embodied all the <sup>old</sup> forms of the language, its idioms and phrases, and also new words, which occur here for the first and probably even the last time. It is the <sup>oldest</sup> document save that of Moses in Hebrew poetry.. For we have shortly seen that <sup>ל</sup>וֹשֵׁי occurs here and is used as a Hebrew particle side by side with <sup>ל</sup>שׂוֹנֵי, and now we have this old plural ending of <sup>ל</sup>י which we will again meet in V.15. In later Hebrew this ending is lost and we <sup>again</sup> find it in the Aramaic, which is a cognate language of the Hebrew.

Verse 11.

מִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ וּמִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ  
 מִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ וּמִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ  
 מִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ וּמִלִּישׁוֹת הַיָּרֵיחַ

"From the sound of the archers at the place of drawing waters, there shall they repeat the righteousness<sup>33</sup> of Jehovah, the righteousnesses of His dominion in Israel; then, there went down to the gates the people of Jehovah."

<sup>ל</sup>קוֹץ 1) voice. 2) noise. 3) sound. Here the word is used in the last sense, for it refers to the noise made by the archers. The sound that was produced by the arrows which flew through the air from the bows of the archers.

50) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 130 a.



אִשְׁשֹׁנָה comes from יָנָה a dem. verb, "one who has an arrow, a bowman, an archer". The text is very clear to all those who wish to look at it in the light of Scripture, but unto the higher-critics it is a jumble of events, for they continually hash it up in such a manner, that it cannot but help to be an obscure field. For instance "Buddle corrupts the text here and reads אִשְׁשֹׁנָה for this word here.

K.L. Stephan changes both of the above mentioned words and writes and punctuates them thus אִשְׁשֹׁנָה קוֹרֵב. For he claims that palaeographical one can well imagine how a מ came into existence for יָנָה; how a נ was lengthened into a נָ; and how the נ and מ took a different position<sup>51)</sup>. Such corruptions as these never occurred in the transcribing of Holy Writ by the scribes, for they were very exact in noting all peculiarities down in the manuscript as they had found them. They did not alter one jot or tittle in Holy Writ. Therefore, those who change them to suit their fancy and say that it might have been this or that way, are corrupting God's holy and infallible Word. And such mutilations militate against the clear conception of Holy Writ. For God plainly tells us what He means with the words as they stand in the text, and since God's is infallible we are not to go ahead and correct Him and say: Look here, you have erred. That is what the critics are doing. They corrupt the text themselves and then deny the authenticity of the Book. For they can not see the Bible taught as God's holy and infallible word, but would rather have the people look upon it as they do upon the works of Shakespeare and Milton. We, however, are to remain with the original and expound it in the light of Scripture, letting vain thoughts and imaginations aside. The addition in the K.J.V. "they that are delivered" is not found in the text and need not be there for the text is clear enough, and therefore is rightly put in italics.

51) Das Debora-Lied, Karl Ludwig Stephan, p.19.



מִשְׁאַבֵּי The prefixed מ is the מ locale and denotes the place where, viz., at the place.

הִזְכִּיר the Piel is here used of this word and denotes "to recall, to mention, to declare". The meaning of recalling suits our text best; for they are to recall and repeat the righteousnes<sup>best</sup>s of Jehovah, <sup>which</sup> He bestowed upon them time and again.

צִדְקוֹת "righteousnesses, faithfulnesses, faithful or righteous <sup>acts</sup> acts." Now we again arrive at that much disputed word פְּרִיזוֹן.

" פְּרִיזוֹן Budde renders it with "Bauernschaft" and Luther "seinen Bauern" remaining with his translation of V.7. Likewise does the <sup>K.J.V.</sup> K.J.V. remain with its interpretation of V.7 rendering it with "the inhabitants <sup>of</sup> or his villages". Bachmann also renders it with "country people". But there are others who render it: rulership, rule, leadership, and leaders. Budde, Bachmann and a number of others take it as the sub. <sup>53)</sup> gen.; however, it is best taken as the obj. <sup>most</sup> gen., and rendered most correctly with "rule" <sup>over</sup> or "dominion". For the Lord Jehovah ruled over the entire country of Israel, over the open and unfortified <sup>as</sup> places, as well as over the walled cities and villages. But at this particular <sup>-certain</sup> period the walled villages had become an open country as we have already seen in verse 7. Therefore, we rightly translate it with "dominion". For now the scene of the battle is ended, and the <sup>curtain</sup> curtain which had fallen rises again. We see the people returning from the mountains to their villages, farms and cities to reoccupy their dwellings there. Keil says, "From the voice of the bowmen <sup>praise</sup> the praise of Jehovah is sounded". But the author breaks off here and <sup>continues</sup> continues with the warriors.

Verse 12. עֲרִיבִי עֲרִיבִי זְבוּלָה עֲרִיבִי עֲרִיבִי זְבוּלָה שִׁירֵי בָרַק וְשִׁבְהָ שִׁבְהָ בֶן-אֲבִינוֹם

"Arise, arise, Deborah! Arise, arise, speak(utter) a song! Rise up Barak and lead captive thy captivity, son of Abinoam."

53) Das Deborahlied, Carl Ludwig Stephan. 53) Biblischer Kommentar ueber das A.T., Band 1, Carl Friedrich Keil-Franz Delitzsch.



<sup>twice</sup>

וְרִי is the imperative Qal second singular feminine and occurs <sup>twice</sup> in pairs. However, the tone of accentuation is varied. The first <sup>two</sup> being milra and the last two milel, cf. Is. 51,9. The tone is here intentionally varied. The imperative with affirmative tone is on the <sup>the</sup> stem syllable, but not for any rythmical reason. This the Qeri <sup>also</sup> tells us: (milra) inira, signiricat vocem acutam cui tonus est in ultima (praeter consuetu dium) cf. Gen.40,15; Lev. 15,33; and Jud. 4,18.

וְרִי comes from וְרַי and means "to speak intensively, to utter" and not to sing as Luther translates "sing ein Liedlein". For with <sup>these</sup> words, Deborah shows how she aroused Barak to lead the warriors <sup>into</sup> into battle and to come home victorious, leading the captives into captivity. The events of the battle will now follow as we shall see.

וְשִׁבָּה The caterph-patach takes the place <sup>under</sup> of an ordinary schwa under double consonants or under initial sibilants. cf. Ges. Hebrew Grammar, 73,g. A schwa follows upon a copulative <sup>under</sup> under initial sibilants. <sup>of</sup> cf. Num. 33,18. Is. 37,17. Dan.9,18.

Verse 13.

וְרִי יִרְדָּה שְׁלֵמָה לְאַדְמֵי הַיָּם עַם יִהְיֶה יָרֵךְ לִי בְּאַבְוֹרָיִם׃

"Then go down, o rest(remnant), to the noble ones as a people; Jehovah, go down for me among the strong ones."

וְרִי may be the Qal imperative of וְרַי or it may be the <sup>and</sup> apocopated Piel impf. of וְרַי. Cf. Ges. 73 g. Gesenius says that וְרִי is not <sup>perfect</sup> perfect nor imperative of וְרַי but it is an apocopated imperfect Piel of וְרַי "to have dominion over". Thus also does Luther and the K.J.V. take it <sup>it</sup> For Luther translates it as follows: "Da herrschen die Verlassenen ueber die maechtigen Leute; der Herr hat geherrschet durch mich ueber die Gewaltigen." And the K.J.V. has: "Then he made him that remaineth <sup>have</sup> have dominion over the nobles among the people: the Lord made me have dominion <sup>it</sup> over the mighty". But we take it as the imperative Qal of וְרַי

54) Gesenius Hebrew Grammar, E.Kautzsch, par. 73 g. 55) same par. 69g.



which gives complete sense in this verse; and, therefore, reject the translation of Luther and the K.J.V. ~~of~~ <sup>do</sup> of this verse, because they do not cling to the Massoretic text. In fact, Luther even has "Verlassener" <sup>do</sup> for "rest" or "remnant". But he, as well as the translators of the K.J.V. <sup>17.1.11</sup> do not err in this verse as much as Budde, Stephan and others. For the latter simply corrupt the text to suit their fancy at all times. And this corrupting of the text is contrary to the clear conception of Holy Writ. The Adirim are the noble ones and the Giborim the strong ones. Now Deborah while giving Barak and the the warriors their <sup>orders</sup> plainly says that they should go down to the noble ones and not to the rest of the noble ones. For the prefixed <sup>וְ</sup> tells us this. <sup>וְיָרְדוּ</sup> shows us that there were but a small handful left in Israel's camp in comparison to what they have had in bygone days. And this rest was to go down to the noble ones as a people and nation, so that they, too, would take part in the encounter. Furthermore, Deborah calls upon Jehovah to help Israel in battle, and to go down for them among the strong ones of the enemy; for they were both better prepared for war, and by far outnumbered Israel in warriors. The <sup>וְ</sup> is best rendered "among" and not "against". Budde and George Foot Moore read "Israel" for "said", "rest" . ~~וְיָרְדוּ לְיַד הַגִּבּוֹרִים~~ The LXX ~~of~~ reads this verse as follows: "tote katebe kataleimma tois ischurois; laos kurion katebe autō en tois krataiois ex emou." From this we then see that the LXX renders it "then go down, o rest, to the mighty ones; go down, o people of the Lord, to him among the strong ones for me." However, we must reject such interpretation and corruptions and remain with the reading of the Hebrew in our text. For the people of the Lord, namely Israel is not to go down among the strong ones of the enemy/ for Deborah, but Jehovah is called upon by Deborah to go down for the people of Israel in whose name she is calling the Lord, among the mighty ones of the enemy and among their strong ones, so that they



may be delivered from the oppressing yoke.

Verse 14.

מִן־אֶפְרַיִם שְׂרָפָה מִן־אֶמְלֵק אַחֲרָיְכֶם בְּנֵי־בִנְיָמִן  
מֵעִירֵי נַחֲכִיר יָרְדוּ לָכֶם מְקַלְלִים וְיִשְׁבְּרוּן־מִן־קִשְׁטֵי־כָשָׁבֶט לְפָרִי:

"From Ephraim whose roots are in Amalek after you Benjamin with your people; from Nakhir there came down leaders, and from Zebulun those, who go in long extended lines with the staff of a writer."

יָרְדוּ is the poetic equivalent for יָרָד .

מֵעִירֵי נַחֲכִיר the stem is expanded to a trilateral form only used <sup>thus</sup> in poetical passages with a suffix.

מְקַלְלִים is the Polel participle of קָלַל and means 1) leaders <sup>in</sup> in war and peace. 2) commanders. We take it in the first meaning here.

יִשְׁבְּרוּ "lay hold of", "take hold of"; then, "to go in long extended <sup>and</sup> lines with". It is used in the last meaning here. לְפָרִי from פָּרַד <sup>write</sup> "to write" is a "military scribe" or "tribune". A recruiting officer is meant here. <sup>here.</sup>

The roots, i.e., the fast and secure habitation. Our text says: <sup>Ephraim</sup> "Ephraim had its roots in Amalek". With these words the text wishes to tell us, <sup>us</sup> that Ephraim dwelled in the territory in which Amalek ruled the mountains, for Amalek was still there. Higher-critics, indeed, say that Amalek occupied an/ altogether different part. However, what more <sup>more</sup> can we expect of the enemies of the Bible? Our text tells us that Amalek still was there and that is sufficient for us.

Luther renders the יָרְדוּ as "wider" and likewise does the K.J.V. translate it with "against", but the יָרְדוּ is plainly used in the <sup>usual</sup> sense of "in". Furthermore, Luther translates "in deinem Volk" and the K.J.V. has "among your people"; but it is very plain that the יָרְדוּ here <sup>means</sup> means "with" and so we render it "with your people". For Benjamin, i.e., the tribe of Benjamin, was to come down with its people. And, finally, Luther has "von Zebulon sind Regierer worden durch die Schreibfaher", <sup>the</sup> but the text merely states that the tribunes or military scribes, those <sup>three</sup> who go in long extended lines with the staff of a writer came from Zebulun.



Zebulun. Israel received their recruiting officers from Zebulun. <sup>that</sup> That is what our text tells us and nothing more.

Beginning with this verse we have the names of the tribes given <sup>that</sup> that represented Israel in battle. Why were they not all represented? <sup>the</sup> "The tribes were disunited and helpless, and in the roll of honour <sup>immortal-</sup> immortalized in the Song of Deborah, Judah himself is conspicuous by his absence". "Dan and Asher, the two maritime tribes clung the one to his ships in the harbour of Joppa, the other to the sea-shore by the Bay of Acre. The pastoral Reuben preferred to linger among the sheep-folds, among the whistling pipes of the shepherds. And the Nomadic Gileadites abode in their tents or their cities safe beyond the <sup>Jordan</sup> Jordan valley." <sup>56)</sup> Of these things we hear in the next few verses.

Verse 15.

<sup>57)</sup> וְשָׂרֵי כְּבָשֶׁת עִם-דְּבוֹרָה וְיִשָּׁשכָר כִּי בָרְקִי בְּצִמְחֵי שֶׁמֶח בְּרִגְלָיו  
בְּקִלְעֹת צֹדֵק לְאֵמֶן אֲזַלְתִּים חֲקָתֵי-בָבִי

"And the princes in Issascher were with Deborah, and as Issaschar so Barak in the valley he was sent on his feet, by divisions of Reuben, there were great decrees of the heart."

וְשָׂרֵי may be "my princes", but here it is another form for the <sup>plural</sup> plural. Just as the endings ךְּ, ךִּ, — so ךִּ is but another form for the <sup>the</sup> plural. וְשָׂרֵי is st. abs. here, as also וְיִשָּׁשכָר is st. abs. in Jer/. 33,14 <sup>14</sup> and וְשֹׁשַׁנִּי in Is. 30,4. <sup>58)</sup> The dagesch lene in the ךְּ that follows <sup>also</sup> also proves that וְשָׂרֵי is st. abs. and not st. constr. <sup>59)</sup>

וְשָׂרֵי (like the constr. state in Syriac) which is supposed to <sup>appear</sup> appear in e.g. וְשָׂרֵי princes. The Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar states this concerning it. "Perhaps "my princes" is intended, but it can be <sup>read</sup> read either the construct state וְשָׂרֵי which has good authority or the st. abs. with the reading of the LXX. This we also see from וְיִשָּׁשכָר "Lord" or "my Lord", but due to the dagesch lene in the following consonant <sup>ch</sup> we must read וְשָׂרֵי as the st. abs. <sup>ant</sup>



In **רָצַפְּ** we have a Qett perpetuum.

**רָצַפְּ** also found in Pr. 17,11; Ob. 1; Dan. 10,11 is used in the sense of "geschickt", "was sent". The LXX. Targ. Pesch. use it in the sense of "um Truppen u.s.w. zu sammeln". 7

**רָצַפְּ** "on his feet". Luther translates "mit seinem Fussvolk", and the K.J.V. has "on foot", but in the margin it has the literal translation as is also used in the translation of this verse. Luther renders it as though Barak went down into the valley, i.e., the battlefield, with the infantry which he had prior to Issachar's arrival, and with those who Issachar had offered for battle. Karl Ludwig Stephan and others interpret it "auf jemandes Fuessen", "hinter jemand her". And then translate the entire passage thus: "In das Schlachtfeld wurde Issachar fortgerissen hinter Barak her". He tries to show that Issachar was compelled to follow Barak in battle; and yet the text is plain merely telling us that Barak was sent into the valley on his feet, i.e., he walked with the infantry. The Vulgate circumscribes this nicely: "qui quasi in praecipio ac barathrum discrimini se dedit."

**רָצַפְּ** does not come from **רָצַפְּ** brook, river, but from **רָצַפְּ** and denotes 1) division 2) brook. We take it in the first meaning here, because it gives the best sense. For Reuben was inwardly divided in counsel as the context shows. If one would take it in the second meaning or from the cognate root **רָצַפְּ** we would have the boundary lines of Reuben's territory given; for Reuben had a river Arnon to the south, the great Salt Sea to the west and part of the river Jordan, and there was also a river which came from the northeast corner and surrounded Reuben on the north emptying into the Jordan river. However, on the east there was the great Syrian Desert. The R.V. takes the meaning of

56) History, Prophecy and the Monuments, J.F. Mc Gurdy, par. 183.  
57) History of the Jewish Church, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, vol.1, p.384.  
58) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E.Kautzsch par. 87 g. 59) same par. 31,  
60) Das Deborahlied, Karl Ludwig Stephan. 21,1.







D. Johannes Bachmann says, "the Aquilla renders it with dialogismoi in the sense of statuta (cogitatio); and Symm. has, akribelai (accurate statutum) whereas, the LXX c. Al. akribasmoi kardias (akribasmoi used in the sense of mandatum, lex, praeceptum); and the LXX c. Vat. has exiknoumenoi kardian (exiknoumenoi used in the sense of statuta (pervenio) <sup>64)</sup>". The K.J.V. renders this with "great thoughts (impression of the heart"; and Luther circumscribes it as we have seen. <sup>the</sup> The text, in itself however, is clear enough, so that we do not have to circumscribe it or even change it. For perversions of the sacred <sup>text</sup> text only militate against the clear conception of Holy Writ.

Verse 16.

וְלָמָּה יָשָׁבְתָּ בְּתוֹכָם לְשָׁמֹעַ תְּהִלָּתָם בְּיַד הַמְּשִׁיבִים הַמִּזְרָחִים  
 וְלָמָּה יָשָׁבְתָּ בְּתוֹכָם לְשָׁמֹעַ תְּהִלָּתָם בְּיַד הַמְּשִׁיבִים הַמִּזְרָחִים

"Why did you sit among the folds? to hear the pipings among the flocks? By the divisions of Heuben great were the considerations of the heart."

יָד is here used in the sense of "among", "unter". For it speaks of the herdsmen of the tribe of Reuben.

הַמְּשִׁיבִים Many translators leave this word out entirely, or retain it in the original form. For instance, "the Theodotion and the LXX c. Al. have rendered it with anameson ton Mosfethaim (Mosfaitham). The It. has "in specula eorum" translating it as though <sup>it</sup> <sup>it</sup> stood in the original. The It. Proc. Syr. has anmeso cheileon as though <sup>it</sup> <sup>it</sup> stood there. And the LXX c. Vat. has rendered it with: anameson ton <sup>65)</sup> tes digomias (fr. gomos = burden)." Although the etymology of <sup>this</sup> <sup>which</sup> this word is unclear, it undoubtedly comes from <sup>this</sup> <sup>times</sup> מְשִׁיב = מְשִׁיב or מְשִׁיב which means "to fasten or bring unto one certain place". Thus in olden times were the flocks brought unto one certain place, namely, the fold, or enclosure. An enclosure generally consisted of two rows of sheep <sup>which</sup> which

64) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.  
 65) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.











upon the heights of the field".

קָרָה introduces a clear cut contrast. The Piel is here used of קָרָה "to upbraid, reproach, scorn, disregard, hold of little value". We take it in the meaning of scorn, disregard or hold it of little <sup>value</sup> value in this case. For Zebulun displayed valour upon the battlefield by disregarding their lives even unto death. They exposed their <sup>bodies</sup> bodies recklessly and fought valiantly. Zebulun, therefore, deserves special mention for they were the means to a great extent, by <sup>which</sup> which the Lord delivered Israel out of the hands of the enemy.

D. Johannes Bachmann tells us "that the LXX c. Vat. renders this word with  $\delta\nu\epsilon\iota\delta\iota\sigma\epsilon$ , the c. Al. with  $\delta\nu\epsilon\iota\delta\iota\sigma\alpha\varsigma$  and the It. has : <sup>improperant</sup> improperant while the Targ.  $\text{מְסַרְוּ וַיִּפְשְׁוּהוֹן בְּקִשְׁפֵי אֶרְבָּתָא}$  and the Vulgate translates it with "obtulerunt animas suas morti!" The K.J.V. translates it with "jeopardied". Jeopardied is used in the sense of exposed to reproach, which it truly means, but disregarded would have expressed it just the same and would have been a better and more simpler word to use.

קָרָה "the heights of the field", i.e., the high place of the battlefield. These words show us that Naphtali displayed equal valour. Luther renders this as is customary "in der Hoche des <sup>Gefildes</sup> Gefildes" and likewise does the K.J.V. render it. "The LXX c. Vat. has  $\epsilon\pi\iota\ \upsilon\pi\sigma\epsilon\ \delta\grave{\alpha}\gamma\rho\alpha\upsilon\ \epsilon\iota\theta\eta\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$ ." <sup>77</sup>

To the latter part of the verse we can well supply  $\text{קָרָה וַיִּפְשְׁוּהוֹן בְּמַחֲמַת}$  for this is what the context wants to say. It tells us first of Zebulun's bravery on the battlefield and then describes Naphtali's.

This ends the calling of the tribes to battle. The question now arises with many: Why were not Simeon and Judah called? Were not these <sup>three</sup> tribes especially noted for military prowess? Indeed, they were.



They were the best disciplined in warfare. But the reason why they were <sup>were</sup> not called is threefold. In the first place, they were not called; then, they were not called, because they lived too far south from <sup>the</sup> the battlefield; and the final point is, that they had trouble at this particular time with their Philistine neighbors as the history <sup>relates.</sup> relates.

VV. 19-22 The description of the battle itself.

Verse 19.

וַיָּבֹאוּ מְלָכֵי כְּנָעַן לְמִלְחָמָה עִם יָבִין בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּחַל קִישׁוֹן עַל הַיַּרְדֵּן  
 וַיִּלָּחֶם יָבִין עִם מְלָכֵי כְּנָעַן עַל הַיַּרְדֵּן עַל הַנָּחַל קִישׁוֹן עַל הַיַּרְדֵּן

"There came kings, they waged war; then, there waged war <sup>kings</sup> kings of Canaan, in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; spoil of silver they <sup>did</sup> did not take."

From this we see, that Jabin was not fighting alone; but as the other Jabin one hundred years prior to this event, so this Jabin <sup>also</sup> also had numberless allies. He is the only king mentioned, because of his <sup>his</sup> his great power and prowess. Jabin was the most powerful king at this particular time. He himself was not present at the battle, but his general, Sissara, commanded the forces of the allied Canaanitish <sup>kings</sup> kings. In these early days every ruler of a large city or tribe was termed a king. Now the scene of the battlefield was the Plain of Esdraelon which <sup>which</sup> is the Greek term for the Hebrew Jezreel. The main section of this large, treeless plain through which the muddy river Kishon passes is the <sup>the</sup> Valley of Megiddo, which lies near Mt. Tabor. <sup>70)</sup>

"Megiddo now known as Iejjun, lies about the center of the <sup>lower</sup> lower border of the Plain, in the general direction of the continuation, southeasterly, of the Carmel range of mountains. Taanash, mentioned five times in the Bible in connection with Megiddo, was a stronghold of the Canaanites, situated four or five miles southeast of Megiddo. Not far from it is Hadad Rimmon, where the great mourning for Josiah <sup>71)</sup> was held (Zech. 12, 11)."

70) The Students' Historical Geography of the Holy Land, W.W. Smith, p. 51.  
 71) same as above, p. 53.



יצא from יצא "break off, out off". Then it is particularly used  
 of something that is out off by force. Hence, "spoil, plunder, <sup>prey</sup> prey,  
 unjust gain, lucre", and thus it is also used in Ex. 13,31; 1 Sam. 3,3;  
 Is. 32,15; 56,11; Jer. 33,17; Ez. 33,13; Mic. 4,13; Ps. 119,36; Pr. 33,1.  
 Many interpreters render it with "a piece, <sup>there</sup> of bit, of silver"; but there  
 is no reason to prefer this supposed etymological explanation to the  
 sense which alone is supported by the Hebrew usage. We take it in <sup>the</sup> the  
 sense of "spoil", for that is what the Hebrew word here bears out.  
 D. Johannes Bachmann says, the LXX c. Vat. takes it in the sense of  
 gift for it has δōron ἄργυρίου. The Vulgate takes it in the sense of  
 "prey" and translates: "et tamen nihil tulere praedantes". Whereas,  
 the LXX c. Al. has it in the sense of "unjust gain", viz., <sup>pleonazian</sup> <sup>72)</sup> ἄργυρίου. Luther and the K.J.V. likewise renders it thus.

Verses 30.

מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם נִלְחָמוּ הַכּוֹכָבִים מִדְּרָגָתָם וְהַיָּם נִלְחָמוּ מִן הַיָּבֵשׁ

"From heaven they fought, the stars from their paths warred with Sissera".

A terrific battle raged, accompanied by a terrific storm. We can  
 well take it as divine aid. This is the fulfillment of Deborah's <sup>can</sup> cry  
 unto the Lord for help against the strong ones (V. 13). This shows,  
 that the victory was not won by Israel's prowess alone, but, as in  
 times past, by the divine aid of the Lord Jehovah. Of course, it <sup>is</sup> is  
 not necessary to believe that this was a destruction similar to  
 Sennacherib's army, because of the storm that raged, and that <sup>routed</sup> routed  
 the forces of the Canaanitish kings; but it shows the divine Hand of  
 God aiding the chosen generation. Heaven, of course, was not  
 looked upon by the Jews as the seat of God, as much as Mt. Sinai <sup>was</sup> was;  
 yet Deborah pictures here in her triumphal ode that God, who <sup>the</sup> heard the  
 cry of the afflicted, lives in the heavens and from His abode He

72) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.







also render it. For the LXX c. Vat. has: "cheimaffous archaion."  
 It is, therefore, as we see from these last renditions considered to  
 be "torrens antiquitatis"<sup>77)</sup>. Furthermore, <sup>it is</sup> the celebrated stream of  
 antiquity, the stream at which great deeds were done in ancient <sup>times</sup> times.  
 We accept this last interpretation of תַּרְנֵנִת and reject all others,  
 because 1) the Targ., and the LXX c. Vat., and the Rabbinical <sup>exegeses</sup> exegeses  
 explain it as the torrens antiquitatis, the celebrated stream of  
 ancient days, and do not consider it a nomen proprium or something <sup>else.</sup> else  
 And 2) because to translate it as a nomen proprium here would be <sup>abrupt</sup> abrupt  
 and the sense of the verse would remain obscure. The text, however, is  
 clear if we accept the above interpretation/. Let us, therefore,  
 cling to the original and render it as "the stream of olden times", <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~  
 then, we will find the difficulty very easily solved.

יְהִי מִכֹּחַ from תַּרְנֵנִת to tread. This form here is the second person of  
 the Jussive. It means "then go on". This form gives the words <sup>of</sup> ~~expression~~  
 of intense admonition and vigor. Some try to make it future and <sup>others</sup> others  
 past, but let us remain with the Jussive for it adds <sup>the</sup> expression to the  
 verse and renders the word correctly. Therefore, we translate it: "Go  
 on my soul with strength" and not as the K.J.V. has it: "O my soul,  
 thou hast trodden down strength". The former is certainly much <sup>stronger</sup> stronger  
 and gives the verse more color and expression.

73) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.

74) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.

75) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore. <sup>Moore.</sup>

76) Das Deboralied, Karl Ludwig Stephan.

77) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.



Verse 33. A description of the flight of Sissera's armies.

וַיִּבְרֹךְ הוֹלְכֵיהֶם מִלִּפְנֵי הַחֲמֹשִׁים הַקּוֹלָרִים וְהַקּוֹלָרִים הַקּוֹלָרִים

"Then beat the hoofs of the horses, from driving of the horses of his strong drivers."

וַיִּבְרֹךְ comes from וַיִּבֶן "to beat, pound, strike". The Vulgate overlooks this word and translates "ungulae ceciderunt". The Aquilla does not translate it, but coins it in Greek "ὄμαλιῶν". The LXX. C. Vat. translates it with "ὄτε ἔνεποδίσθησαν" for it seems, that the translators understood that the horses were unable to walk, due to the plungings and gallopings. They seem to have the impression that the horses hoofs were broken and their heels were injured. However, the LXX c. Al. Proc. Syr. has: "ἀνεκόπῃσαν" and the Theodotion "ἀνεκόπῃσαν". The text, nevertheless, is clear for the word used here denotes the beating of the horses hoofs in the mud.

וַיִּבְרֹךְ from וַיִּבֶן "heel, hoof". We take it in the sense of "hoof". The Targ. and Vulg. do not consider it the hoof, but rather the heel of the horses cf. Gen. 49,17. The pterna that is the hind part of the foot which is not covered by the hoof. Taking it in this meaning they say, that וַיִּבְרֹךְ means "to injure", for the horses were driven fast that while they galloped they injured (bruised) the heels of their front feet with the hoofs of their hind feet. We, however, reject this meaning for the text is very clear that וַיִּבְרֹךְ is used in the sense of beating, pounding, striking the earth with their hoofs. This beating of the earth with their hoofs was done in their wild flight; for they began plunging, prancing, and trampling through the mud which was caused by the quickly rising Kishon.

The dagesch in the פ is a dagesch forte dirimens and makes the schwa which is under the פ more audible, cf. Ps. 77,30; 89,53."

78) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.  
79) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch.



וּבָרִים is here used collectively. It denotes all the horses of the <sup>forces</sup> forces.

וּבָרִים derived from <sup>equine</sup> וּבָרִים "rapid course" (וּבָרִים drive). The cognate root which is used in Nah. 3, 3 gives more light on the word used in our <sup>our</sup> text. It tells us that "the driving of the horses" is here meant. "Many wish to change the second radical and for וּבָרִים write <sup>וּבָרִים</sup> וּבָרִים, וּבָרִים which means "to move about in a circle, to circle"; then, "to move with celerity". Thus the Targ. has וּבָרִים and the LXX and Vulgate likewise understand it. For they have: LXX c. Vat. "spoudḗ ēspousan"; the Aquilla has "ēformōnton ē supḗpeia" and the Vulgate translates <sup>it</sup> it with "fugientibus impetu et per praeceps ruentibus fortissimis hostium" <sup>80</sup> Luther also misunderstands this, for he renders it "vor dem Zagen" <sup>and</sup> And the K.J.V. translates "then were the horsehoofs broken by the means <sup>of</sup> of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones". It renders <sup>וּבָרִים</sup> וּבָרִים broken as we have seen from some of the aforementioned. We, however, <sup>reject</sup> reject this interpretation as well as the aforementioned, because they do not render the words of the text correctly. We must at all times cling to the original and expound the words as they stand. In no wise are we to disfigure the text or to make them sound smoother <sup>to</sup> to our human understanding, for the text <sup>itself</sup> itself is clear. All misinterpretations of the original militate against the clear conception of Holy Writ.

The repetition in the Hebrew serves to intensify the expression to the highest degree. Here it shows us the intensity of the battle, <sup>viz.</sup> viz. the drawn out and protracted pursuit.

וּבָרִים "strong or mighty ones". Here the strong, courageous <sup>and</sup> and heroic drivers and riders are meant.



VV. 33-37 The flight and death of Sissera.

Verse 33.

אָרוֹר מֵרוֹז אַמֵּר מִלְאַךְ יְהוָה אַרְוֹר יִשְׁרָאֵל כִּי לֹא בָּאנוּ  
בְּעֶזְרַת יְהוָה לְעֶזְרַת יְהוָה בְּאַבוּרֵינוּ:

"Curse ye Merozi said the angel of Jehovah; curse ye bitterly her inhabitants, because they did not come to <sup>the</sup> help of Jehovah, to the <sup>help</sup> of Jehovah among the mighty ones."

Meroz, the name of an Israelitish village which must have been in the neighborhood of the muddy Kishon and which undoubtedly could have captured Sissera and the routed forces, because of its <sup>position in</sup> connection with the flight, as the context shows, is otherwise <sup>unknown</sup> to us. Its geographical location can not be definitely asserted, <sup>for</sup> the place is only mentioned here. The context tells us that this <sup>city</sup> and its inhabitants are to be bitterly cursed, and because of the denunciation of Meroz, we can well believe, that the city or <sup>village</sup> designated by that name was blotted out, and its inhabitants were eradicated from the earth, because they refused to take part in the struggle with Sissera, much less did they attempt to capture him <sup>and</sup> his armies, after they had been routed, but instead let them <sup>escape</sup>. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley says: "We can imagine what was the crime <sup>and</sup> what the punishment from the analogous case of Succoth and Penuel, which in like manner, gave no help when Gideon pursued the <sup>Midianites</sup>. The curse was so fully carried out, that the name of Meroz never <sup>again</sup> appears in the Sacred History." <sup>81)</sup>

D. Johannes Bachmann gives us the following readings of the different versions of this verse as follows: <sup>ent</sup> The Vulgate has "Meroz," the <sup>Targ.</sup> Targ. <sup>the</sup> the Pesch. Ar. "Merod," the LXX c. Vat. "Mēros, Maruz, the <sup>82)</sup> LXX c. Al. "Mazor" and the It. has "Mazor, Manzor, Manzer." From this we then see that the different versions change the reading of this

81) History of the Jewish Church, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, vol.1, p.338  
82) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann. <sup>282</sup>



word Meroz somewhat; however, it is not disfigured beyond recognition.

This verse gives us the striking contrast between the cowardice of Meroz and the deed of Jael.

הַיְהוָה מַלְאֲכָיו was no ordinary angel or messenger, but the manifestation of Jehovah. This expression is used throughout the Old Testament of the second person of the Trinity, the Son. As proofs we have the <sup>story</sup> of Abraham. When Abraham and his wife Sarah were well stricken <sup>year</sup> in years and the time had ceased ~~to~~ to be with Sarah after the manner of women the Malak Jahveh appeared unto them announcing the birth of Isaac. It was the Malak Jahveh with whom Abram pleaded concerning the destruction of Sodom ~~and~~ and Gomorrah. Furthermore, it was the manifestation of Jehovah, the Malak Jahveh, that appeared unto Manoah and his <sup>wife</sup> wife. From these illustrations we, then, readily see that this Malak Jahveh was at all times the manifestation of Jehovah in the O.T.

אָרַר the infinitive absolute, which is here used to strengthen the intensity of the curse, is rendered by the LXX c. ~~with~~ with the word "ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κατοικῶν αὐτήν." However, the LXX c. Al. has it translated correctly with "katarássei katarásasthai tous ἐνοικοῦς αὐτῆς." The Theodotion here reads "katarássei katarássthe tous ἐνοικοῦντας αὐτῆν" and the Vulgate has simply <sup>83)</sup> "maledicite" whereas, the Targ. expresses it with "maledicite et frangite."

Now comes the reason why the inhabitants and Meroz itself are to be cursed. It is: "because they did not come to the help of Jehovah, to the help of Jehovah among the mighty ones." In other words, because of the cowardice and perfidy of the inhabitants of Meroz, they and the village itself are to be bitterly cursed. For they let Sissera and the hostile forces escape by way of it. They played traitor to Israel and, as our text says, to Jehovah; for they did not come to His aid.

83) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.



The curse, undoubtedly, was carried out to the fullest extent, for we no longer hear of Heroz after this battle.

The haggiborim are the brave men of the enemy's forces.

Verse 34.

וְיִבְרַךְ מִנְּשִׂיִם יַעֲלֵל אֲשֶׁת הַקָּהָר הַקֵּנִי מִנְּשִׂיִם בְּאֶהֱלָהּ בְּבִרְךָ:

"Blessed above women shall be Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite; above women in the tent shall she be blessed."

In contrast with the cowardice or perfidy of the men of Heroz, the fearless devotion of Jael appears doubly glorious.

וְיִבְרַךְ is the imperfect or invocation. God does not bless Jael because of her deed. These words here are words expressing the joy and attitude of Deborah which were national and not religious. The LXX c. Vat. renders them with eulogethēis en gunaikin and refers this by a parallel passage to the greeting of Mary of. Luke 1,43; but these words were no longer spoken by the Malak Jahweh, the angel of the Lord, they are merely Deborah's expression of joy which was national and not religious therefore, this is to be rejected for it militates against the clear conception of Holy Writ. Scripture tells us that God never leads anyone to such tactics as this woman employed. God hates every wicked and evil deed, and, consequently, could not have made an exception here. But Deborah shouts out for joy with a patriotic heart; she says, that Jael is to be praised above all women, and then limits her praise to all nomadic women.

אֲשֶׁת הַקָּהָר above all women of the tent, i.e., above all those that live in tents made of hair cloth; in other words, above all nomadic women.

מִן here means "singled out". She was chosen to capture Sissera. The idea of separation is naturally derived, on the one hand, a number (taken from among) and that of choosing, singling out, on the other hand, from a larger class. Cf. 1 Sam. 3,38. Ex. 19,5.



The LXX c. Al. renders this with "en gunaikon en skenē sūlog." <sup>the</sup> And the Vulgate has "benedicatur in tabernaculo suo".

Now as to the phrase: אִשֶׁת הַיָּבִיבָה הַקֵּינִי. George Foot Moore calls it <sup>it</sup> a gloss. He says: "it entirely destroys the balance of the verse; <sup>84)</sup> and therefore, would like to strike it." But we say "no!" for each and <sup>every</sup> every word, yea, every jot and tittle, as the Savior says, are not to be ~~be~~ taken away nor added thereto. Each and every word has its purpose <sup>in</sup> in Holy Writ and, likewise, has this phrase its particular purport here. It shows us the contrast still clearer. It tells us, that it was not <sup>an</sup> an Israelite; although Sissera passed through Meroz, the Israelitish village, but it was Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, that captured him and put him to death. The Kenites lived in the south, <sup>but</sup> but at this particular time this particular family was living in the <sup>Plain</sup> Plain of Esdraelon, where the battle was fought. More is not known <sup>concerning</sup> concerning it.

Verse 25. מִיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר קָלַב בָּתְּנָה בְּסִכּוֹל אֶזְרִי'ים הִקְרִיבָהּ הַחֲמָה:

"Water he asked for, sour milk she gave, in a princely bowl she <sup>offered</sup> offered the sour milk."

We now behold Sissera after he had abandoned his chariot, <sup>more</sup> the more easily to avoid notice, flee, unattended, and in an opposite <sup>direction</sup> direction from that taken by his army, to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite. He accepted her invitation to enter, and she flung a mantle over him as he lay wearily on the floor. When thirst <sup>prevented</sup> prevented sleep, he asked for water and she brought him sour milk in her <sup>choicest</sup> choicest vessel, thus ratifying with the semblance of officious zeal the sacred bond of Eastern hospitality. The vividness of the situation and the quickness of action is here brought out in this and the following verse, because the copulative ~~was~~ is missing.

84) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore. <sup>Moore.</sup>







misery and fatigue. Then, it was that Jael took one of the great wooden pegs in her left hand, which were used to fasten down <sup>the cords</sup> the cords of the tent, and the hammer, the mallet, which was used to drive <sup>it</sup> it into the ground in her right hand and with one terrible blow dashed <sup>it</sup> it through and through, piercing the temples of Sissera.

**הַזָּרְקָה** is not a grammatical error, as some claim; for the <sup>correct</sup> correct form would be **הַזָּרְקָה** and **הַזָּרְקָה** is added here to distinguish it from the second person masculine singular. We find this same form in Obadaiah 13. It is also to be cp. to the Arabic modus energicus. Luther translates it "griff", but it would be better rendered with "streckte aus". For she first sent forth her hand and, then, took the peg. Likewise, would <sup>she</sup> the K.J.V. have better rendered it with "sent forth" than with "put."

**הַזָּרְקָה** is the left hand in contrast to **הַיְמָנִית** right hand.

**זָרְקָה** from **זָרַח** "nail"; then, "tent-pin". In Jud. 4, 31 we have "jethad ha'ohel" a pin of the tent, but here we merely have <sup>the article</sup> the article before "jethad."

**מַחֲזֵה** hammer, mallet. This word is a hapaxlegomenon, for it is <sup>only</sup> only used in this verse. The Samaritan Pentateuch translates it with "carpenter's hammer"; Luther with "Schmiedehammer"; the LXX c. Vat. has <sup>has</sup> "eis sfuran kopiōnton"; the It. with "malleus"; and the Vulgate and LXX c. A. <sup>c. A.</sup> translate it alike. The LXX c. Al. has <sup>is</sup> "eis apotomās kata-kōpon." It is merely the hammer of workmen, of those who labour.

**זָרְקָה** labouring, a laborer, a workmen. The LXX c. Al. translates <sup>it</sup> it with katakōpoi. However, the LXX c. Vat. and the Aquilla render it <sup>86)</sup> correctly with kopiōntes (work) and the Vulgate has "fabrorum".

**הַזָּרְקָה** from **מַחֲזֵה** "to hammer". It is a hapaxlegomenon as aforementioned. The LXX c. Vat. renders it with <sup>ed</sup> "esfurokōpese"; the Targ., Pesh., and Vulg. have (**הַזָּרְקָה** percussit). The LXX c. Al. translates it <sup>ly</sup> incorrectly for it has <sup>87)</sup> "apōtomen." Luther leaves it out, and the K.J.V. has it

86) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Sachmann.

87) do.



correct in the marginal note.

אֶרְבֵּי from רָחַם "to smite through and through; then, to crush". It <sup>is</sup> also is a hapaxlegomenon, for it only occurs here.

רָחַם "to smite through and through; then, to crush". It is regarded as a synonym to רָחַם, and thus it is also rendered by the LXX c. Vat. with ἐπάταξεν and by the Theodotion with ἐπέτεμε which designates to <sup>sever</sup> the head from the body. The K.J.V. renders it in like manner. This <sup>last</sup> translation is incorrect, however; for she did not sever the head <sup>from</sup> the body, but merely crushed it with the blow of the hammer. Therefore, <sup>we</sup> must reject it upon sound scriptural exegesis.

עָבַר "to pass through, pierce, transfix". We take it in the sense of <sup>of</sup> pierce, i.e., durchbohren. For the tent-pin went through and through <sup>the</sup> the temple. The Vulgate has rendered it correctly with perforans. And the LXX. c. Vat. has διέλοσε κρόταρον αὐτοῦ.

The uses of four different verbs in this verse shows how completely Jael carried out her deed in every minute detail. George Foot Moore claims, that only one instrument was used; <sup>38)</sup> but we accept <sup>both</sup> both for both are mentioned in our text and they are both also accepted <sup>by</sup> by the LXX and Vulgate. From the prose narrative we also see, that the hammer as well as the tent-pin were used. In fact, the result of <sup>this</sup> this deed could only be due to a hammer.

"Jael's attitude, her weapon, her deed, are described both in the historic and poetic account of the event, as if fixed in the <sup>national</sup> national mind. She stands like the personification of the figure of speech, so famous in the names of Judas the Maccabees, and Charles Martel; the Hammer of her country's enemies. Step by step, we see her advance;

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38) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore. <sup>There.</sup>



first, the dead silence with which she approaches the sleeper, as he lay on his side, 'slumbering with the weariness of one who has run <sup>run</sup> far and fast', then the successive blows with which she 'hammers, <sup>the</sup> crushes, beats and pierces through and through' the temples, till the point of the nail reaches the very ground on which the slumberer is <sup>is</sup> stretched; and then comes the one comes the one convulsive bound, the <sup>the</sup> contortion of agony with which the expiring man rolls over from the low divan, and lies weltering in blood between her feet as she <sup>strides</sup> strides over the lifeless corpse." <sup>89)</sup>

Verse 37.  
 בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ קָרַע וְנָפַל שָׁכַב בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ קָרַע וְנָפַל בֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ קָרַע וְנָפַל שָׁכַב  
 זָפַל שָׁמָּה :

"At her feet he bowed down, fell, laid there; at her feet he bowed down, fell, where he collapsed, there he fell down a victim of violence(slain)."

As in the foregoing verse the four verbs describe vividly the manner of the slaying of Sissera, so the verbs in this verse <sup>picture</sup> picture clearly the last acts of the gruesome procedure.

Sissera, undoubtedly, was lying on a raised bed off the ground. It was not raised very much, but the ordinary bed of the Beduin. <sup>from</sup> And from this bed he, then, fell and laid dead, i.e., a victim of violence.

בֵּין is not used strictly in the literal sense here, but has the meaning of "at". For we see he fell, and the בֵּין denotes the place where he now lies after he fell.

קָרַע "bow down, collapse": "sich beugen, sich krummen", naemlich im <sup>im</sup> Todeskampf. This word is used in connection with נָפַל <sup>where</sup> to fall. "Where he collapsed there he fell." The LXX c. Al. has "zugkampsas epesen." The Aquilla and Theodotion have "ekampson," and the LXXp. <sup>translates</sup> vat. translates <sup>90)</sup> it with kataklithois.

The Vulgate renders this act with "defecit".  
 89) History of the Jewish Church, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, vol.1, p.28  
 90) Das Buch der Richter, D.Johannes Bahmann. p.27



<sup>15</sup>  
<sup>91</sup>  
<sup>92</sup>  
<sup>93</sup>
 Here we have a Kamez with a skeph -katon cf. Deut. 33,5 where <sup>in</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>Hebrew</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> is used likewise. As to <sup>in</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>Hebrew</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> which means "lie down", "lie". In this connection it shows Sissara as lying there dead, and it is also used in this sense in Jerem 14,3.18 and in 43,17. The Latin for it is cubare and the Greek koimān. In the original we have <sup>not</sup> <sup>Hebrew</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> meaning "where" and not as the LXX c. Vat. renders it kathós, for that would be <sup>Hebrew</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> in Hebrew <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> comes from <sup>the</sup> <sup>c. Al.</sup> meaning "spoiled, destroyed, then slain" and in the last sense it is used here to denote a victim of violence. The LXX c. Al. however, has "talaiporós" and the Vulgate renders it with "miserabilis". These terms which the LXX c. Al. and Vulgate here employ are not strong enough to express the act that has been accomplished. But the LXX c. Vat. gives a much better translation of the word for it has "exodautheis" and the Targ. renders it with <sup>91</sup> <sup>92</sup> <sup>93</sup> "spoliatus ac. vita". This word <sup>the</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>in</sup> which is used here shows that the victim of violence did not stir from the spot where he collapsed, for he was overpowered and slain. Herein is to be found a constructio assyndetos. And the constructio assyndetos in a series of verbs is used as a rhetorical expedient to produce a hurried and so an impassioned description, cf. Ex. 15,9; Deut. 33,15; 1 Sam, 15,8; and Amos 5,31."

VV. 28-30. The scene in Sissara's palace, where his mother and her women are awaiting his return.

A few statements of Critics concerning these verses are the following <sup>following:</sup>

Critics in general say that VV. 28-30 are the most vivid <sup>antic-</sup> passages of the Old Testament. George Foot Moore says: "Their lighthearted anticipations form a striking contrast to the ill suppressed forebodings of the mother's heart, and the whole scene produces on the reader, who knows the ghastly reality, an incomparable effect."

91) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.

92) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch, par. 154a footnote la.

93) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore.



"Lowth justly says that there is nothing in literature more perfect in its kind than these verses." And Herder says: "It is <sup>only</sup> only modern sentimentality that can discover in this passage the note of a woman's pity for the mother of the fallen king. It is the pitilessness <sup>-accusation</sup> of triumph; we need not say, the exaltation of gratified revenge." 94)

And D. Johannes Bachmann writes of these verses as follows: "Wenn es <sup>so</sup> eins der Geheimnisse poetischer Kunst ist, durch Contraste zu wirken, <sup>wirken</sup> so ist dies hier mit unnachahmlicher Meisterschaft zur Anwendung gebracht." 95)

Verse 23.

כַּעֲלֵה הַחַיִּים וְנִשְׁקָפָהּ וַחֲבַב אֶם עֵינָיו לֹא יִפְתָּח וְיִשְׁמַע יְהוָה וַיִּזְעַק וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה וַיִּזְעַק וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה  
לִכְבוֹ' לְבֹא מִזֵּד אֶלֶּי אֲנִי וְעַמִּי מִלְּבָבוֹתָי:

"Through the window she looked forth and cried out, the mother of Sissera through the lattice; why does his chariotry tarry to come? why do the steps (hoof-beats) of his chariots linger?"

With the vision of the king lying dead at the feet of his <sup>slayer</sup> slayer still before our eyes, Deborah transports us to Sissera's palace, where the queen-mother is anxiously watching for her son's return.

The effect of the transition is heightened, by the postponement of the explicit subject, the reader must himself feel who this <sup>anxious</sup> anxious woman is, cf. Jael verse 25.

כַּעֲלֵה like עֲלָה meaning "through". The meaning is that her view is <sup>obstructed</sup> obstructed, therefore, she is forced "to look forth through the lattice window." Thus כַּעֲלֵה is also used in Gen. 36,8; 2 Sam. 8,13; 2 Kings 9,2 and Prov. 7,6.

עָפָה is here used in the Niphal and has the meaning in the Niphal <sup>here</sup> "to lie over"; "project"; then, "to look forth or abroad". It is here used in the last sense, namely, "to look forth"; for she was <sup>looking</sup> looking north in the distance through the open window for her son's return.

94) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, G.F. Moore.

95) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.



The LXX has 'dià tēs thurídos parakúpsē(parakúpto) is here used in the sense of "project)". The LXX. c. Al. however, has 'diékuptēn which expresses the longing expectation of the mother of Sissera. This is the meaning also here as we see from the following verb, which is linked up with **קָפַץ**. Luther translates: "sahs zum Fenster aus" and the K.J.V. has "looked out a window". It would, however, be much clearer if we would render it "she looked forth through the window".

**קָפַץ** is a hapaxlegomenon and is only used in the Piel here. It denotes the crying of the trumpets. In Arabic it is used in the sense of "to cry" and so from the cognate root we get the meaning of crying here. This cry of the mother of Sissera was a cry in anticipation for she foresaw the doom of her son. The LXX c. Vat. here omits this difficult word and the LXX c. Al. renders it with 'kai katemánthanon. The Targ. has: **קָפַץ** which comes from **קָפַץ** attenders, prospicere; and the Vulgate translates it with 'ululavit, which is not used of a joyful noise of the battle, but of a loud lamentation! Luther also interprets it as a cry of lamentation for he has: "heulte". We, however, as stated before take it as a cry in anticipation.

**קָפַץ** "through the lattice". **קָפַץ** literally is a "latticed window". The LXX c. Vat. translates it thus: 'ektōs tōu toxikōi "forth from the loophole", cf. Symm. in Ezekiel 40,13( thurídes toxikái). However, the LXXc. Al. and the Theodotion have 'dià tēs diktuotēs, "through the lattice" cf. 3 Kings 1,3; and Ezekiel 41,13 which adds thuridos! The It. has "per fenestram retiatam" thinking it was a window of network. And the Vulgate renders it with "de coenaculo" which denotes a dining room in the uppermost story". Furthermore, H.E. Swete says of this, that scriblopousa..... Sisara appears to be a supplementary gloss in c. Al. However, we know and can be certain that the mentioning of Sissera, to designate whose mother it was, was

96) Das Buch der Richter, D.Johannes Bachmann. 97) do.  
 98) Introduction to the G.T. in Greek, Henry Barclay Swete, p.333.



in the original from the very first for the copyists of the Hebrew Old Testament were very exact not to place anything into the text <sup>which</sup> which was not formerly there, nor did they take anything out that was <sup>there</sup> there. They copied it as it was and changed no letter; and since we have it <sup>in</sup> in the original we can well translate it and let all conjectures aside.

**יָזַח** is stronger than **נָחַם**. Luther rightly translates it <sup>Warum?</sup> "Warum", but renders the last part of this verse incorrectly and also the <sup>יָזַח</sup> **יָזַח** which occurs there again, as we shall see later.

**יָזַח** is the Piel of **יָזַח** and means "tarry, delay". It is parallel to the Piel 'schw. **יָזַח** is used of disappointment in Ex. 33,1 and <sup>also</sup> also here; for it speaks of the mother's disappointment concerning her son's <sup>son's</sup> return to us. The LXX c. Al. has 'eschátisen and the c. Vat. has <sup>eschúnt</sup> **eschúnt** (which comes from **eschátizo** and is not used intransitively here but <sup>trans-</sup> transitively, in order to denote "to wait in vain; hence, to tarry"). The Vulgate has moratur and Luther translates it with "verzaucht". However, <sup>schä-</sup> "saudert" would have been much better here.

**אָחַר** is used in the Piel here. It denotes "to come after; hence, to <sup>to</sup> linger". "The Perfect Piel for **אָחַר** according to Gen. 34,19 <sup>would</sup> **אָחַר** would be expected. This is a rare anomaly here." <sup>92)</sup>

**יָזַח** from **אָחַר** 1) an anvil; 2) tread, step; hence, paces, i. e., hoof-beats. Here it denotes the hoof-beats of Bissera's chariots. <sup>the</sup> The LXX c. Vat. has "pódes ármáton" and the Vulgate renders it with "pedes quadrigarum". They really are not mere steps, but paces; for the <sup>hoof</sup> hoof-beats of the horses are meant here. The LXX c. Al. translates it <sup>more</sup> more clearly with "íchnē ármáton" for íchnos represents the hoof-beats of his <sup>his</sup> chariotry. Luther renders this last part incorrectly for he has: "Wie bleiben die Raeder seiner Wagen so dahinten". The K.J.V., likewise, renders **יָזַח** with "wheels". But our text clearly shows us, that the <sup>the</sup> wheels are not meant here. **יָזַח** here denotes the hoof-beats of <sup>warrior</sup> Bissera's chariotry. For the first sign of the return of the warriors <sup>99)</sup>

99) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautsch, par. 84 n.



would be the distant sound of horses feet.

Verse 29.

הַכְּמוֹת שָׂרוּתַי הַתְּעַנְנָה אֶחָדָה מֵאֲמָרֵי הַכִּזְבִּיב אֲמָרַי הָיָה לָּהּ:

"The wisest one of her princesses answered her; yea more, she returned her answer (own words) to her."

In this verse there is evidence that Sissera was of a royal household, for the verse mentions women attendants to the queen-mother. It is very ironical for it alludes to the wisdom of these ladies, whose prognostications were so wide of the truth.

הַכְּמוֹת שָׂרוּתַי Gesenius calls this a partitive genitive here. He says, "this includes especially the cases in which an adjective in the construct state is followed by a general term, as here "the wisest one of her ladies/for better princesses". This construction which is found here expresses the superlative degree in Hebrew. The Vulgate renders it as the comparative degree, for it reads: "una sapientior ceteris". The K.J.V. translates it as a plain adjective in the positive degree, for it has "her wise ladies answered her." And Luther translates this superlative in the plural for he has: "Die weisesten unter seinen (referring them to Sissera) Frauen antworteten". The LXX c. Vat. has "ai sofai archousai" "the wise princesses". But the LXX c. Al. has "sofai archouson" (like Luther) aiming at the literal rendering. However, this is a Hebrew idiom expressing the superlative degree and cannot be rendered literally. This is brought out clearly in the latter part of the verse. For הַכְּמוֹת שָׂרוּתַי אֲמָרַי הָיָה לָּהּ refers to the wisest of the princesses and not to the mother of Sissera. For the wisest of the princesses also anticipated the evil with which Sissera met, and therefore, returned the very words of the queen-mother to her again. The word "princesses" shows that Sissera hailed from a royal family, and that the queen-mother had attendants in her royal household. There is fine irony in

100) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Hantzsch.







Verse 30.

וְהָיָה יְהוָה יִחְזָקוּ שְׂפָתָיו לְרַחֵם לְחַטָּתָם לְלֹא שָׂבָר שְׂפָתָיו  
 וְעַתָּה לָּא מְדַבֵּר שְׂפָתָיו לְקַטְוָה צְבָע לְקַטְוָה לְצֹא הָרִי שְׂפָתָיו

"Is this not the case, that they found, they divided the booty? A woman(wench) or two for every man; booty of dyed cloth for Sissera; booty of dyed and embroidered cloth; a dyed cloth, a couple of pieces of embroidered cloth on the necks as booty."

The question with which this verse begins carries the affirmation into the mind of the hearer, viz., surely that is the case. The <sup>Vulgate</sup> Vulgate however, represents it in the wrong light for it has: "fositan nunc dividit etc." Likewise, do the LXX versions render it incorrect for both the c. Vat. and the c. Al. translate falsely having: "ouch <sup>surely</sup> sūrasoue auton <sup>and</sup> iamerizonta skūla." Both the Vat. and Al., undoubtedly read <sup>and</sup> <sup>not</sup> for <sup>and</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>not</sup>. The K.J.V. also errs for it has "have they not spelt?" and yet the Hebrew is very plain, and when interpreted means: "Is this not the case?" Luther translates it as though it were a deliberative question, for he has: "Sollen sie denn nicht finden und austellen den Raub?" But we see from the original, that it is a plain affirmative question, viz., "Is this not the case? or wont this be the case?" and the answer that is to come forth is "certainly it will be the case".

**לחם** literally means "womb", but here it denotes a female <sup>maiden</sup> or maid captive who is to be a wench, a contemptuous slave of the captor. <sup>sense</sup> George Foot Moore, says: "It is probable that this is the tropical use of <sup>the</sup> the word **לחם** "womb"; cf. the contemptuous cummus for a woman in Latin". We, however, take it in the sense <sup>also</sup> pars pro toto. For this particular part of the woman is to designate the entire personage here, as it also designates the person in Deut. 31,10ff. Both the LXX c. Vat. which reads "oikteirmon oikteiresei" and the LXX c. Al. which reads "filiázon filóis" have rendered it incorrectly. For both laboured to keep up <sup>the</sup> the <sup>more</sup> more.

105) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, George Foot Moore



alliteration of the Hebrew and missed its point through ignorance of the rare use of **לחם**. As the c. Al. and also the It. missed <sup>point</sup> the point by translating it "amicantes amici". Of all the versions only the <sup>Vulgate</sup> Vulgate comes near to the true sense of it, for it has "et pulcherrima seminarum eligitur ei". The K.J.V. renders it with "damsel" and Luther has "Metze" which denotes a common wench.

**רַחֵם נְחֵם** "a woman or two". This is a *qualis pro indefinito*. Plurali as also in ch. 15,16; Is. 17,3; and Amos 1,3f. <sup>178y/</sup> For when two numbers are set side by side in the Hebrew as shown from these <sup>106)</sup> passages the thought is an indefinite, unlimited number. <sup>106)</sup> The *dual* here also expresses indefiniteness. It gives the effect of a certain lordly disregard, a wench or two, what matter, more or less?

**לְכָל אִישׁ אִישׁ** "for every man" or per capita. Literally "for the <sup>of a</sup> head of a brave man". However, here all men are called brave men, and therefore, we can rightly say it means "for every victor", or "for every man". Thus the Vulgate also translates it with "ei". The LXX c. Vat. has "eis kefalēn andros;" whereas, the LXX c. Al. has "anatoū" instead of <sup>107)</sup> andros. The Targ. renders it **לְכָל אִישׁ אִישׁ**.

**שָׂרָפָה** from **שָׂרָפָה** "dyed garments, dyed cloths"; literally, "something dipped in dye". It shows the contrast here between **שָׂרָפָה** "dyed cloth" and **לְקָמָה** "embroidered cloth". Between the common and the costly <sup>cloth</sup> cloth is here given us. **לְקָמָה** is embroidered cloth, i.e., cloth in which patterns were worked with a needle in various colors. The LXX <sup>varieties</sup> render it with "skilla bammaton poiklias (variegated)". However, <sup>מִלְּקָמָה</sup> the dual does not mean "embroidered on both sides" as the K.J.V. and R.V. render it, nor does the LXX c. Vat. "poikiltan" or the c. Al. <sup>interprets</sup> interpret it correctly; for they miss the dual entirely. The dual here means "a couple of pieces of embroidered cloth or embroidery", and is <sup>to be</sup> defined as **מִלְּקָמָה** above. Luther leaves the fourth part of the Hebrew <sup>sentence</sup> sentence

106) Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, E. Kautzsch.  
 107) Das Buch der Richter, D. Johannes Bachmann.



away entirely and in the last he does not translate the dual לְקַמְטֵימָם .

לְקַמְטֵימָם comes from קַמְטֵי "nape of the neck" literally we would translate "for the necks", viz., for those who take spoil in pillaging the camps of the defeated, they are booty for the necks. They will put them about the nape of their necks as booty, for that was custom in those days, as our text clearly tells us. The Vulgate renders this part with supplex ad ornanda colla"; and the LXX c. Vat. has 'tō trachēlō autoū skūla; whereas, the LXX c. Al. has 'perī trachelon autoū skūlon." From the readings of the LXX versions we see, that they apparently read לְקַמְטֵימָם for קַמְטֵימָם. The K.J.V. has "meat for the necks of them that take the spoil", and Luther has "um den Hals". However, the Hebrew has the plain לְ which means "for" and not "about", or anything else.

Verse 31. The conclusion of the Song of Deborah with the grand promise  
כִּי אֶמְצָא בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁמַח בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
וְנִשְׁמַח בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁמַח בְּיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

"Thus shall all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah, but those who love Him are like the rising up of the sun in its power"; and the land had rest forty years.

Deborah, herewith וְיָשָׁרְךָ לְךָ / says, that all the enemies of Israel shall perish, As Sissera, the general of the combined host of Jabin, perished, if they continue to put their full confidence and trust solely in the great Jehovah of old, the triune God of all the ages. Furthermore, she says, those that love Him, namely, the Great Jehovah, who has delivered them from the hands of their enemies, are to be like the rising up of the sun in its power. In other words, Israel, if it continues as a nation to trust in the Lord, will be great and invincible in its power. Those who love Him will conquer all trials, tribulation and dangers, as the sun vanquishes and annihilates the darkness at its rising and dispels the mists of dawn. This is a fitting picture of the rising of Israel, the spiritual Israel, the church of God, hereupon earth. If the church of Christ holds fast to the doctrines of Holy Wr:



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and to the orthodox interpretation of Scripture, then, it will show its love toward the triune God and will reap the blessings that is here foretold. It will be like the rising up of the sun in its power, it will vanquish all enemies of the Cross of Christ and God's infallible and unerring word, and it will grow and increase into a big stable <sup>spiritual</sup> Israel, which will go on into eternity as the kingdom of glory.

Concerning these words George Foot Moore says: "No more fitting or impressive figure could be conceived, cf. Ps. 19, 5<sup>103</sup>".

<sup>Introduction</sup> **יְהוָה** "in its power". Henry Barclay Swete in his work: "Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek" says, the c. Alx. substitutes the usual <sup>usual</sup> **ἀνατολῆς** for the spirited and literal rendering of the c. Vat. (cf. Ps. 1 -19, 7), and appears to have read **יְהוָה**; of. Ps. 19(20), 7. <sup>103</sup>

"And the land had rest forty years". This is but a chronological note of the editor of the book, and has no bearing on the Song, <sup>is</sup> nor is it an argument against the authorship of the triumphal Song. For the editor of the Book of Judges was able to look back on this triumphal victory of Israel and could see how many years the land was at peace. <sup>the</sup>

Regarding this chronological note we find these words in the work: "History, Prophecy and the Monuments", "The faith and enthusiasm of the Jeanne d' Arc of Israel, the "prophetess" Deborah, and the skill and energy of Barak, the general whom she chose to lead a hastily mustered host, were the chief factors of the triumph which broke forever the power of the Canaanites, and gave a respite of rest and prosperity to the harassed Israelites." <sup>110</sup> From the Song of Deborah we, however, have clearly seen that it was the Lord Jehovah of Israel, who freed Israel from the yoke of the oppressors and secured unto them rest for a period of forty years, the life of the prophetess Deborah and Barak, who judged Israel during this time.

103) The International Critical Commentary, Judges, Geo. Foot Moore.  
109) Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Henry Barclay Swete.  
110) History, Prophecy, and the Monuments, J.F. Mc Curdy. <sup>110</sup> <sup>Swett.</sup>



God grant, that this thesis has served its purpose in solving these difficult verses of the Song of Deborah on sound scriptural grounds. May it for all times quiet the minds of Lutheran theologians and enlighten them on this oldest extant monument of Hebrew poetry, and give them an orthodox interpretation of the original Hebrew of this Song of Triumph.

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