Text-Critical Notes on Ezekiel.

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1. v. 11. יָהֵשׁ וְיָכֵל בִּלְיַדְךָ וְהָוָה תֵעֵית תַּנְיָה וְתַנְיָה אֵין לָץ אֱלֹהִים.

In this passage, which is a threat of punishment for previously detailed sins, יָכֵל yields no satisfactory sense.

Withdraw (my eye), after Job xxxvi. 7 (Ges., Reuss, Orelli, RV marg.), is against the connection, the point being precisely that Yahwe's eye is not withdrawn. Diminish, take from (the people), after Deut. iv. 2 (Hâvernick, RV), is too feeble for the tone of the passage. The reading יָכֵל cut off, found in some Heb. MSS., is inappropriate. The Verss. are equally unsatisfactory. G (followed by S) קָדָו דִּפְדוֹמָא וַע, from עֲכָרָב or עֵכָרָב, with object added, a form of threat never elsewhere employed by Ezekiel; עֲכָרָב is never used in O.T. of the dealing of Yahwe with Israel; J confringam = יָכֵל, or perh. = יָכֵל, as T יָכֵל. Of the emendations heretofore proposed no one seems to me satisfactory. Ewald (followed by Graetz), after xxiv. 14, יָכֵל וְלִי, I will not go back; but, besides the insertion of the negative (which is here a difficult procedure), the motive of יָכֵל in xxiv. 14 (the assertion of Yahwe's determination not to recede from what he has said) is wanting in our passage, in which there is no reference to a preceding threat. Hitzig, Nif. of יָכֵל, I will give myself free rein, after Prov. xxix. 18, a doubtful expression, used in Proverbs in bad sense; Cornill, יָכֵל, I will bestir myself, enter the field, which is too military, is never elsewhere used of Yahwe, and does not suit the context; Davidson's יָבֲשׁ (cf. v. 8 and xxii. 8) is in itself appropriate and in accordance with Ezekiel's usage; but one expects here (as compared with v. 8) a definite term of action; Siegfried (in Kautzsch) יָכֵל, I will strike (in), is not here appropriate.

We expect here a formula, such as is given in viii. 18, whence we may read יָכֵל יָכֵל יָכֵל. If יָכֵל had fallen out, יָכֵל might easily be corrupted into יָכֵל; the disappearance of יָכֵל must be regarded as a possible scribal accident.
2. m. 2. The opening distich of this qina is rhythmically and otherwise unsatisfactory, and the Versions substantially follow the Hebrew and offer no help. Budde (ZAT. ii. 1 ff.) inserts a second מֵאָרָה, and Cornill (Ezech.) transfers the מ of the text to the same place. These changes relieve the rhythmical difficulty in part, but do not touch the equally serious lexicographical and rhythmical difficulty of the מֵאָרָה. The rendering what is (or was) thy mother? a lioness is insufferably unrhymical, and how is (or was) thy mother a lioness is unintelligible; Jerome does not better it with his why did thy mother, a lioness, couch among lions? Nothing can be made of the מֵאָרָה, and the form of vs. 10 (וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּגֵרָתָיו) suggests that vs. 2 contains a comparison. This may be got by reading מֵאָרָה אִמּוֹ לְבָשׂוֹ, thy mother is like a lioness; the מ may have fallen out through preceding מ in מַעֲרָה יִנָּה. If the present time expressed by the participle be thought inappropriate, the perf. מַעֲרָה יִנָּה might be read, though there is no difficulty in taking the comparisons here and in vs. 10 as present. With this change, if the division of the verse be made at מַעֲרָה יִנָּה, the rhythm becomes reasonable, but is improved by the transposition of מ (as Cornill proposes) so that it shall stand after מַעֲרָה יִנָּה. The verse would read in the first case:

Thy mother is like a lioness — among lions;
She couched amid lions — she reared her whelps;

and in the second case:

Thy mother is like a lioness — among lions;
Amid lions she couched — she reared her whelps.

The attachment of reared to couched is desirable.

3. m. 7. (וַיֵּלֶךְ אָלְמָנוֹתֵי) G kal ἐκπήρο [רַע] וְהָרָסredi aliquo abro [יוו?]. Peshitto, he walked in his might (free rendering after G); Targum, he destroyed his palaces (or castles); Jerome, didicit viduas facere. Of the old Versions none seems to have had our Hebrew text except that of Jerome, and he did not understand it. To Ewald's he brake their palaces, Hitzig's objection that מ is used of breaking vessels but not palaces (for which מ is the term) seems to be well taken, and a similar objection must be made to מ (or מ) in Graetz's יְבִיאוּ אֲלַמְנוֹתֵי אֲלַמְנוֹתֵי (וכו). Hitzig's own emendation יְבִיאוּ אֲלַמְנוֹתֵי he carried off his prey to his lair, is remote, and too feeble for the context, in which destruction is spoken of; and a similar objection holds to that of
Cornill, who changes Hitzig’s verb to רבי he lay down in his lair (see ψ civ. 22, cxxxix. 3). Davidson (and so Marti, cited by Siegfried in Kautzsch’s Heilige Schrift) suggests בּי he multiplied his widows, but this again is unsatisfactory since the connection rather suggests a reference to some physical destruction. It is perhaps impossible to restore the text with certainty. But, following the parallel clause, we may seek for terms corresponding to the וֹלָה and the וֹלַה, and suggest וֹלַה and he ravaged their dwellings (cf. Jer. xxxi. 28, where this verb occurs as synonynm of various expressions of destruction).

4. xxiii. 5, 12. קָרָן, written מַצֲּרֵי in vs. 23. The connection calls for an Assyrian title of rank, but Ewald is not justified in adopting an Aramaic מַצֲּרֵי in the sense of warriors. Cornill corrects the text-word of vs. 5, 12 to מַצֲּרֵי, after vs. 23, referring to Num. i. 16, xvi. 2. In these passages מַצֲּרֵי (i. 16 Qeri פַּרְשֵׁי) occurs as parallel to פַּרְשֵׁי, and in xvi. 2 מַצְּרִים is parallel to פַּרְשִׁים; in Num. xxvi. 9 Kethib is מַצְּרֵי, Qeri פַּרְשֵׁי. The expressions in these verses are to be rendered “chosen men of the congregation,” that is, chief men. But מַצֲּרֵי (or מַצֲּרֵי) never occurs alone as a title, and it is very doubtful whether it can here be so taken. It seems better, therefore, to look for a term which is definitely an official designation, and from מַצֲּרֵי, by omitting the first letter, we get the familiar מַצְּרֵי, which occurs in Jer. xxxix. 13 as the title of Babylonian officers of high rank. Ezekiel employs the term in this sense nowhere else; but this is true also of the other titles found in this chapter, מַצְּרֵי, מַצְּרֵי, מַצְּרֵי, and מַצֲּרֵי, vs. 23, would then be scribal corruption of מַצְּרֵי.

5. xxiv. 17. לְהוֹדַע which in the connection gives no sense. In Jer. xvi. 7 there is reference to bread and drink of consolation, but the expression of our verse is not used, and cannot mean bread of consolation. Hitzig’s מַצֲּרֵי is without support from Hebrew usage, and Wellhausen’s מַצֲּרֵי does not mean what the context calls for; it could only signify bread of the ill or bad. The proper expression seems to be given in Hos. ix. 4, מַצְּרֵי bread of mourning, from which our text-word would come by insertion of מַצְּרֵי.

6. xxv. 6. מַצָּרִי. The Heb. is followed by Jerome and Targum,
except that they omit the suff. in נב and the prefix in נב; נב is
given by Aquila, and substantially by Theod. (וננ פאש תוכ מטרה סוף
= מ"ה) Sept. (followed by Syr.) reads וַיְמָּכְרָ֣אִים בַּקָּשָׁ֣ס. That this is the rendering of בַּקָּשָׁ֣ס (and not, as
Cornill holds, of 'ב לשם) appears from the Sept. rendering
(תַּמִּּכָּרָאִים בַּקָּשָׁ֣ס) of the similar Heb. phrase in vs. 15, and
from the Old Latin here, et insultati in anima tua. If 'ב רנו be
not deleted, it should be changed to בִּשְׁמֵ֣ה יִבְלֶךְ (cf. xxxvi. 5); but it is better to omit it, as it destroys the symmetry of the
sentence, and is lacking in Sept. Graetz inserts בִּשְׁמֵ֣ה as in
xxxvi. 5. If my emendation is accepted, נא should be inserted before
נב, with Sept., and in accordance with the requirements of the
connection. In xxxvi. 5 נמְטִים נב is rendered in Sept. by וַיְמָּכְרָ֣אִים מַגְזִּיִּים וַיְמָּכְרָ֣אִים בַּקָּשָׁ֣ס. This, however, is not
proof that נא cannot be the original of וַיְמָּכְרָ֣אִים in xxv. 6, for in
xxv. 3 (as Cornill observes) a similar expression of scorn, נא, is,
rendered by וַיְמָּכְרָ֣אִים.

7. xxx. 5. The peoples attached to Egypt in the Mas. text are:
כָּל בָּנַי אֲרִゃ הָבּ֔רֶר תַּמִּּכָּרִים (דֵּל, scribal error for דֵּל), וַיָּמָּכְרָ֣אִים (elsewhere Sept. נ has לִבְנֵה
for מ"ה), לִבְנֵי לֶבֶן, לִבְנֵי בִּשְׁמֵ֣ה יִבְלֶךְ וַיָּמָּכְרָ֣אִים. The change of
בָּנַי אֲרִゃ הָבּ֔רֶר; the doubtful מ"ה (see Stade, De pop.
Javan, p. 6 f.; W. M. Müller, Asien u. Europa, p. 115 n. 3) may be
changed to מ"ה, as in the Syriac; נא should probably be pointed
בָּנַי אֲרִゃ הָבּ֔רֶר; the change of the unknown מ"ה to מ"ה, with Sept., is a natural
suggestion, but לִבְנֵי מ"ה may represent preceding מ"ה, and מ"ה suits the connection (it is preceded by מ"ה;
the מ"ה is best read מ"ה (so Cornill and Siegfried), after Jer. xxv. 20
(דֵּל, פָּאָה), Ezek. xxv. 16 (and cf. סָפָא מ"ה above), and מ"ה
must be omitted as gloss. The Egyptian allies will then be: Cush,
Put, Libya, Arabs, Philistines, a list which gives a regular movement
from south to north.

8. xxxvi. 5. For הִלְּמֵֽשׁ מַֽעְרַשׁ הַלֵּ֔בָּנְה G has רַוִּ֣י הִלְּמֵֽשׁ, Targum תַּמָּכְרָ֣אִים, representing Heb. הִלְּמֵֽשׁ, but this (to say
nothing of the difficulty of an Infin. form מ"ה) hardly suits the
connection: the nations have exultingly taken the Israelitish territory
not to drive it out. Cornill takes רַוִּ֣י הִלְּמֵֽשׁ as representing not
הִלְּמֵֽשׁ מַֽעְרַשׁ (which he thinks is corruption of מ"ה מַֽעְרַשׁ) but some word like
לַמֵּֽשׁ (whence might come M לַמֵּֽשׁ), and suggests הִלְּמֵֽשׁ מַֽעְרַשׁ. Yet
we desiderate Infin. with suffix at the end of the sentence, and may perhaps read לָמַךְ רֵאשָׁהוּ to possess it and to plunder it. לָמַךְ may be corruption of רֵאשָׁהוּ under the influence of preceding לָמַךְ. Peshiṭto has that they may lead them captive and spoil them, apparently taking מָרַשְׁה יָצִיעָל from מָרַשְׁה יָצִיעָל, but understanding two Infin., as the sentence suggests. Graetz, throwing out מָרַשְׁה יָצִיעָל as corruption from preceding מָרַשְׁה יָצִיעָל, reads לָמַךְ הָלַעֲבֹר, to deride and to spoil (after vs. 4), a simple and graphically not difficult emendation, if מָרַשְׁה יָצִיעָל be omitted, though the Infin. should have the suffix.