

HEB. *TALPI'ÔT*, SIEGE-TOWERS

In my *Book of Canticles* (Chicago, 1902) p. 68 (= AJSL 19. 14) I have explained *talpi'ôt*, Cant. 4:4 as a derivative of the stem *lafâ* = Assyr. *lapû* or *labû*, to surround, enclose (cf. GB¹⁰ 880^a.829^a and König's *Wörterbuch*, p. 545^b). We have the same root in the post-Biblical *lippîf*, to envelop, Arab. *lâffa*, *lifâfah*, envelope = Syr. *lîfâfâ dî-'iggârtâ*, also in Arab. *talâffa'a*, *lâhafa*, *âlhafa 'âlâ* (cf. JBL 34, 183) and in *lâbîsa*, to wrap, clothe oneself.

This rare word *talpi'ôt* or *talpî'ôt* (ZAT 34, 134, below) must be restored also in Lam. 3:5 where *rôš u-tîla'a* is a corruption of *râšê talpî'ôt* (תַּלְפִּי'וֹת) tops (cf. Gen. 11:4; KB 3. 2, p. 52, l. 30) of turrets, i. e. wheeled wooden turrets employed in approaches to a fortified place (EB¹¹ 10. 680^a, below). We must render: *He built against me and beset me with tops of turrets*. On Assyrian reliefs the tops of these turrets are manned with bowmen (see the illustrations on p. 102 of the translation of *Ezckiel* in the Polychrome Bible).

We can hardly assume that *rôš* denotes the head of the battering-ram these turrets were armed with. At any rate the Assyrian battering-beams had no ram's head (see *Ezckiel*, SBOT, 47. 47; EB 4509). Nor can *rôš* in Lam. 3:5 denote *headwark* (JBL 36, 80) although it has that meaning in v. 19. For *mîrvûdî* before *la'nâ ya-rôš*, wormwood and poppy, we must read *mîrvôri*, my bitterness. We find the same corruption in 1:7 where *u-mîrvûdîhâ* (for *u-mîrvôrêhâ*) is a scribal expansion based on 3:19 (see above, p. 167, n. 46). ZA 30, 97 I have shown that *ṭippâh* in Lam. 2:22 corresponds to the Assyr. *ṭuppû*, to nurse, to rear, bring up. \mathfrak{T} renders: *lafîfîl*, I swathed, swaddled.

The singular of *talpî'ôt* would be *talpîl* which may be regarded as an infinitive Piel (Cant. 40, n. §). There is no Tif'el in OT (JBL 34, 78). The primary connotation is *hemming in*, besetting. Cant. 4:4. *Kî-mîgdâl Dauid çauuarêk, banûî lî-talpi'ôt*¹

¹ The LXX renders: *ὁ ψκοδομημένος εἰς Θαλιωθ*, and the Ethiopic version reads: *alla tohânçâ qêsta talfîjîôs*; see Ludolf's *Psalterium Davidis* (1701) p. 339; cf. stanza 18 of the poem in Dillmann's *Chrest. Aeth.* p. 140: *Salâm la-kîsâdêkî za-mârfâdu Dauid re'jôtâ, Dîba Talfjîôs tabîbân za-astonâdâfâ mašarratâ*, Hail to thy neck (O Mary) whose aspect is like) the Tower of David whose foundation experts laid on (not against) Talfjyôs.

should be translated: *Thy neck is like the Tower of David, constructed for siege-towers*, i. e. round and therefore proof against battering-turrets, strong enough to resist the impact of turrets armed with battering-rams; *cf.* the cut of the so-called Tower of David in Hilprecht's *Explorations in Bible Lands* during the sixth cent. (Philadelphia, 1903) p. 603. Hall Caine says in *The Manxman* of Kate's neck: *It was round, and full, and soft, and like a tower* (BL 32, n. 15). Cylindrical towers offered the best resistance to the ram. Their circular form avoided angles which could be attacked by a battering-ram. Therefore the outer part of a tower projecting beyond the city wall was sometimes semicircular, while the inner portion was square (EB¹¹ 10. 6S2.684^a; *cf.* also 23. 773^b).

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