THE SONG OF

DEBORAH:

POETRY

IN DIALECT

A Philological Study of

JUDGES 5

with

Translation and Commentary

By

Thomas F. McDaniel, Ph.D.
To Erica, Ian, Owen, and Lauren

May they always be free

to cherish and challenge

tradition
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PREFACE

With a single stroke of the pen, an ancient editor or scribe added the conjunction ו (the vowel ū) before the name of Barak in Judges 5:1, and in so doing diminished the stature of Deborah as a judge and as a person wielding real power in early Israel. By adding the ו (ū) to the text, the scribe forced Deborah to join Barak in singing a duet: הַנָּשָׁר דָּרוֹחַ וָּבוּרָה “then sang Deborah and Barak.” Without the ו, the phrase הַנָּשָׁר דָּרוֹחַ וָּבוּרָה would have to be read as a verb-subject-object sequence: “then Deborah made Barak sing” (or do something else), the only question being the precise meaning of the verb. Without the ו, Deborah was clearly in charge; and were the verb “to sing,” Deborah would have been the conductor who made Barak sing. But the addition of the conjunction ו placed Barak on a par with Deborah; they acted in concert.

This slim editorial note created disharmony between the Song of Deborah in Judges 5 and the prose account in Judges 4, where Deborah had the authority to summon Barak and deliver to him the command of Yahweh to go to war. The addition set the tone for the entire poem, making Deborah primarily a songstress whose major role was to encourage the troops in battle.

Folk etymology reduced Deborah’s stature even more. Her name was popularly derived from דָּרוֹחַ וָּבוּרָה “bee,” which may have sweet overtones, but lacks the status of דָּרוֹחַ וָּבוּרָה “leader, governor, guide.” In a similar way, popular etymology associated Yael’s name with עִיל “goat,” missing the more basic meaning “the pre-eminent one” and its derivative “noble, strong.”

A clear understanding of the role of Deborah and Yael in early Israel remains hidden in the obscure lines of the Song of Deborah. Until there is some consensus on the literal meaning of the poem itself, there can be little agreement on the value of the poem for understanding the history, sacred literature, and social institutions of pre-monarchical Israel.

Exegetical tradition—provided by the scribes who added vowel letters and divided the consonant clusters into words—and the early Greek translations for Jews of the Diaspora, which provide a myriad of textual variants, have not made the task of the modern interpreter an easy one.
I offer here a translation of the Song of Deborah which adheres closely to the consonants of the Masoretic text, though I have re-divided many of the consonant clusters in order to restore certain poetic lines. Exegetical traditions, early and modern, have been carefully examined; but with a number of the more obscure lines there has been no compelling reason to stay with traditional translations or exegesis. At times it became necessary to step away from the guesswork reflected in the ancient variants and the speculative emendations of more recent commentators. Looking at the poem as if it were found in a newly discovered scroll provided constructive alternatives for a number of the more obscure passages. The obscurities in Judges 5 are diminished once the poem is read as dialectal Hebrew and the interpreter makes use of a larger lexicon than that traditionally used for classical canonical Judean Hebrew. This approach provided new insights, not only on the names of Deborah and Yael, but also on the meaning of many lines in the poem.

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Wynnewood, Pennsylvania
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Dr. Robert R. Wright of the Department of Religion of Temple University, Philadelphia, invited me to teach a seminar in 1991 on Philological Studies of the Hebrew Scriptures, providing me the opportunity to use the draft of this study, which is a major revision of an earlier work, Deborah Never Sang (Jerusalem: Makor, 1983), now out of print. It was a good seminar, and I am appreciative of the invitation and of the contributions of the seminar participants.

My friend and colleague, Dr. James T. McDonough, Jr., for years Professor of Classics at Saint Joseph’s University, Philadelphia, has assisted in many ways, helping with the LXX and Greek variants, providing invaluable editorial assistance, and reading the entire typescript numerous times with the keen eye of a scholar and typesetter. He introduced me to his friend Gilad J. Gevaryahu (son of the noted Israeli biblical scholar Haim M. I. Gevaryahu), who, in turn, has kindly provided me with help on much of the material cited from rabbinic sources, as well as editing the targum into Israeli Hebrew of my English translation of the Song of Deborah. Professor David Rabiya of Gratz College, Philadelphia, had kindly made the first draft of the targum a number of years earlier.

I am grateful to Chaplain (Brigadier General) Parker Thompson (U.S. Army, retired) and the Round Hill Baptist Church of Round Hill, Virginia, for providing funds for me to visit relevant sites in Israel, as well as Karnak and the Temple of Medinet Habu in Egypt. The plates are, in part, due to their generosity.
### ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>A-text</td>
<td>Codex Alexandrinus</td>
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<tr>
<td>AASOR</td>
<td>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research, New Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AbrN</td>
<td><em>Abr-Nahrain</em>, Melbourne</td>
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<td>AoF</td>
<td><em>Archiv für Orientforschung</em>, Berlin</td>
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<td>AHW</td>
<td>W. von Soden, <em>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</em>, Wiesbaden</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td><em>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</em>, Chicago</td>
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<td>AJT</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ALUOS</td>
<td>Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta Biblica, Rome</td>
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<td>AOS</td>
<td>American Oriental Society, New Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATD</td>
<td><em>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</em>, Göttingen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Authorized Version of the Bible, 1611 (same as KJV, 1611)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-text</td>
<td>Codex Vaticanus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B†</td>
<td>Codex Vaticanus and one undesignated minuscule supporting the reading cited</td>
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<td>BA</td>
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<td>BAR</td>
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<td>BBB</td>
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<td>Biblica et orientalia, Rome</td>
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<td>BO</td>
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<td>Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Gießen and Berlin</td>
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<td>CAD</td>
<td>I. Gelb, L. Oppenheim, et al., eds., <em>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</em></td>
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<td>CBQ</td>
<td><em>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</em>, Washington, D. C.</td>
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<td>CD</td>
<td>Cairo (Geniza text of the) Damascus (Document)</td>
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<td>CHI</td>
<td><em>Inscriptiones himyariticas et sabaeas Continens. Pars Quarta</em> of CIS, Paris</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td><em>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</em>, Paris</td>
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<td>CTA</td>
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### Abbreviations

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<td>PEQ</td>
<td>Palestine Exploration Quarterly, London</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>J. Migne, Patrologia graeca, Paris</td>
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<td>PRU</td>
<td>Palais Royal d’Ugarit, Paris</td>
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<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Stuttgart</td>
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<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue biblique, Paris and Rome</td>
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<td>RivB</td>
<td>Rivista biblica italiana, Brescia</td>
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<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version of the Bible, London and New York, 1952</td>
</tr>
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<td>RR</td>
<td>Review of Religion, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>English Revised Version of the Bible, London, 1885</td>
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<td>SBT</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology, Nashville, and London</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
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<td>TEV</td>
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<td>ThLitZ</td>
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<td>ZDPV</td>
<td>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins, Leipzig, Stuttgart, and Wiesbaden</td>
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</table>

- **1QapGen**  Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran Cave 1
- **1Qisa**    Isaiah Scroll A from Qumran Cave 1
- **1QS**      Manual of Discipline from Qumran Cave 1
- **1QpaleoLev** Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll from Cave 11

#### Notes
- **Aruch Completum sive lexicon vocabula et res, quae in libris targumicis, talmudicis et midraschicis continentur, explicans auctore Nathane filio Jechielis, A. Kohut, ed., Vienna, 1878**
- () Explanatory additions in English translation
- [ ] Editorial deletion from the Hebrew text
- < > Editorial addition to the Hebrew text
- * Denotes the original writing of the scribe when used with a manuscript symbol; when used with a Semitic word, it indicates the original (proto-Semitic) form.
INTRODUCTION

Although the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), like the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15), is recognized as one of “the oldest substantial compositions preserved in the Hebrew Bible” and offers “valid historical data for a reconstruction of the initial phases of Israelite history” (Freedman 1975: 19), paradoxically no scholarly consensus exists at present as to the poem’s structure and meaning. Many of the best studies of Judges 5 are characterized by extensive emendation of the text, restoring a presumably corrupt text to read as the particular scholar would imagine a hymn of victory should read in classical Judean Hebrew. The translation of Cheyne (1904: 453–455), who was preoccupied with Jerahmeel, is given in the Appendix as an example of how a critic could take extreme liberties with the MT. Critical “restorations,” common in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, are summarized in the studies of Moore (1900a, 1900b) and Burney (1918). They were modified and improved upon by some of the twentieth century’s best scholars, including Albright (1922, 1936, 1968a, 1968b), Richter (1963, 1964), and Boling (1975).

Of the poem’s 1,485 letters in the MT (5:1–31a), Burney (1918: 160–165) deemed it necessary to delete 158 letters as secondary additions or scribal errors and emended an additional 33 letters (for a 12.9 percent rate of error). Albright’s first study (1922) resulted in his deleting 204 letters and emending 12 others (for a 14.5 percent rate of error). Richter (1963: 69–81; 1964: 400–402) isolated 202 letters as additions to the original poem and altered the reading of 10 other letters (for a 14.3 percent rate of error).

In addition to these changes, Burney added 17 consonants and 10 vowel letters, Albright added 12 consonants and 10 vowel letters, and Richter added 6 consonants. The total number of changes to the MT by additions, emendations, and deletions according to Burney, Albright, and Richter are 218 (14.7 percent), 238 (16.0 percent), and 218 letters (14.7 percent), respectively. These figures reflect a very high level of presumed errors, glosses, and editorial accretions and omissions for this poem. These revisions do not exhaust the corrections needed to make the poem fairly intelligible. Words and verses were also transposed. Richter transposed two verses and eleven words, Burney transposed one verse and four words, and Albright transposed four words.
Building on the contributions of Albright’s earlier studies, Cross (1950) made significant methodological progress in the study of early Hebrew poetry. Although the Song of Deborah received only limited attention in his work on metrical structure, Cross’s use of orthographic and linguistic analysis based upon epigraphic evidence introduced critical controls absent in earlier studies of Judges 5. Though dealing only with a reconstructed unvocalized text of the less problematic sections of the poem (5:2–3 and 17–30), Cross made numerous emendations, frequently for metrical reasons. He added 24 letters, deleted 34 and emended 3. In addition, he considered five tribal names and the מְמֻּתָּא תֵּבֹס repeated in 5:2 and 5:9 to be extra-metrical.

Other scholars had already produced alternative solutions to resolve the enigmas of the poem. I. W. Slotki (1932) advanced a theory of “repetition, antiphony and blanks.” For him the difficulties of the meter and meaning were removed by the recognition of repetitive antiphonal responses which had been written only once. The repetitions were originally indicated in the text by blank spaces serving as the equivalent of our ditto marks. Sometime during the process of transmission, the blank spaces were removed and thus the clues for the responses were lost, resulting in confusion about the poem’s meter and meaning.

Slotki reasoned that once the antiphonal responses are re-inserted into our apocopated version of the poem, the meter and sense can be satisfactorily restored. He did not deal with the entire poem, nor with its most difficult sections. However, in the eight verses which he developed (5:6, 21, 22–24, 27–30), 232 letters (making up 44 words of antiphonal responses) were presumed to have been lost. This method, like that of extensive emendation, won only limited acceptance because, as Barr (1968: 301) noted with reference to textual emendation, “the impression given was that the interpreter in many cases was rewriting the text rather than explaining what was written.”

Gerleman (1951: 168–180) denied that difficulties existed in the text of Judges 5 and rejected the use of textual emendation. He asserted that the MT was not as corrupt as critics “eager to make brilliant conjectures” claimed. For him “. . . most of the textual emendations which have been made seem to fit ill the characteristic style of the Deborah Song” (168, 180). He defended the Masoretic tradition with his own brilliant conjecture that the poem belongs to a genre of early poetic impressionism which manifested neither the characteristics of logical reflection
and intelligibility, nor even syntactically disciplined logical form. "The impressionism of the Deborah Song is of a primitive unconscious type, a naive spontaneous art" (180). The song has a certain unity for Gerleman which "lies more in the emotional coloring than in the outline." This impressionism reflects, in his opinion, the natural unconscious style of the original poet who, with an "atomizing technique" (177), "reproduces merely his [sic] own momentary impressions (173). Therefore, argued Gerleman, the perspective of the poet was not fixed but movable, and consequently the poem lacks logical progression and reflection.

Unfortunately, Gerleman did not deal with the most enigmatic passages of the poem. His study treated only 5:2–6a, 7a, 11, 17b, 19a, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30. The weakness in his thesis is that, since most scholars find much in the poem to be incomprehensible, the impressionistic creativity may reflect no more than the talent of the exasperated translator, rather than the style of the original poet. The absence of other early "impressionistic" poetry in the Hebrew literary corpus cautions one against calling illogical in the original wording what scholars currently find incomprehensible in their current texts. It can only be said that impressionistic translations have been created from the enigmas in the Song of Deborah. Until these cruces are resolved, it will be impossible to determine whether the impressionism comes from the poet or from the poet’s translators.

Gerleman’s denial of any real literary unity in the poem has been reinforced by Blenkinsopp (1961: 65), who stated

The unity of the poem is theological rather than literary, and we can be certain in any case that whoever gave the Book of Judges its final form as we have it was less concerned with producing an integrated work of art than with preserving what was of value in the traditions of the past for the purpose of edification, and that just as the victory song of Moses and Miriam underwent transformation into what can be called a liturgical canticle, so it is not unlikely, a priori, that something of the same took place here.

Blenkinsopp (1961: 67–76) isolated verses 5:2–5 and 31a as psalmic elements which were added to an original war ballad to

1 Compare Ackroyd 1952: 160–162, who argued that elements of the poem, like the curse on Meroz, may be "quotations" from older traditions utilized by the poet who composed the poem about a hundred years after the event.
produce a liturgical piece celebrating “the great liberating act of God both in society and in the individual soul.” Removal of these psalmic elements “leaves us with a clear-cut ballad [sic] in five moments or ‘fits’ interlaced with short lyric, choral elements.” But, according to Blenkinsopp, even if the poem does not demonstrate a literary unity or appear to be an integrated work of art, it “is not a hotch-potch or a witch’s brew of ill-assorted literary herbs” (76). Blenkinsopp’s adoption of Slotki’s reconstruction of 5:27 and his identifying 5:15b–16 as a “perfect little taunt-song” that had had an independent existence outside the Song of Deborah reflect his eclectic approach. His most significant contribution may well be his insistence that much of the poem is a war ballad. His identifying several passages as psalmic elements, in conformity with exegetical tradition, precluded his identifying the entire work as such.

Lindars (1995: 212–213) supported the “emotional unity” of Gerleman and the “thematic unity” of Blenkinsopp, asserting

The poem is not merely descriptive, but conveys the emotions of the participants . . . . Thus the hearers of the poem are left sharing the experience of those who were actually involved, and can feel that this is their own victory. All this can be felt by the modern reader without the aid of critical analysis. Moreover, the progress of the poem is logical in relation to its subject matter, and there is no prima facie reason for drastic rearrangements.

A theological and cultic unity for Judges 5 was proposed by Weiser (1959: 67–97). His suggestion differs from the “emotional unity” proffered by Gerleman and the “thematic unity” of Blenkinsopp in that Weiser predicated a uniform composition for the poem derived from diverse literary elements, including (a) verses 2–18, which form Deborah’s recitation of the war and the victory and the tribes’ participation (or non-participation) in the cultic festival of covenant renewal, and (b) verses 19–30, which, in a cultic celebration of Yahweh’s recent victory, deal with the conflict between Barak and Sisera.

Weiser’s views have gained limited acceptance, most recently in the study of J. Gray (1988: 421–455). But Mayes (1969: 356), in a convincing critique of Weiser’s conclusions, noted, “This cultic view provides a rather ‘blanket explanation’ of the Song
INTRODUCTION

which is partly acceptable only for the final stage of its history.”

Mayes doubted that the original poem was a unified composition. He preferred to follow H.-P. Müller (1966), who analyzed Judges 5 as a composite of an original poetic narrative of the battle (5:12–31) coupled to a later psalmic introduction (5:2–11). Through a process of double Yahwistic editing, the poem’s elements have been transformed into the present hymn of praise.

Lindars (1995: 218, 222–223) isolated 5:1 as an editorial introduction and identified 5:2–5 as “an assortment of introductory material, appropriate to liturgical celebration of the event, but without internal unity.” Of the remaining verses, Lindars noted that 5:6–8 “may have been the original opening stanza” and verses 9–11 “may well be a liturgical addition, inviting celebration of the victory at cultic occasions” (234, 241). Verse 31, not surprisingly, was also identified by Lindars as a liturgical addition.

Objections have been raised by Globe (1974b) both to the cultic interpretation of Weiser and to the views of Müller and Mayes which deny the literary unity of Judges 5. Although Globe admitted that this poem “could be a synthesis of ancient poems composed at different times” (like Genesis 49), he argued for its literary unity. On the basis of the poem’s content, form, and context, Globe found no reason why the poem cannot be viewed as an integrated literary unit. He asserted (1974b: 508, 511–512)

In the final analysis, the stylistic coherence of Judges 5 gives the impression of a single poetic intelligence mustering all the craft at its disposal, always varying the technique, but often returning to devices used earlier . . . the poem has a carefully composed structure employing a significant number of recurring literary forms . . . . There is every reason to believe that the poem was composed, much as it has survived, shortly after the battle it commemorates.

But Globe was only able to predicate, not demonstrate, the unity of the entire poem. In two separate studies (1974a, 1975), he attempted to demonstrate the unity of 5:4–5 and 5:13–18. What

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2 Note also Mayes 1974: 85–92.

3 Compare Soggin (1981a: 625–639 and 1981c: 94) who identified two strata in the poem: (1) a heroic poem from the early monarchy (5:2–5, 9–11, 13, 23 ["as an unclear insertion"], and 31a); and (2) a later pre-Josianic theological revision (5:6–8, 14–22, 24–30).
he succeeded in demonstrating was the fact that individual strophes of the poem, as they appear in the MT, have characteristics typical of early Hebrew poetry, whatever the enigmatic Hebrew may mean. Recognition of structural balance within several strophes and the calling of attention to aural coherence, normative parallelism, and details like assonance and puns cannot demonstrate unity of the contents per se. Such unity may only reflect a common style found in disparate poetic fragments collected by an editor or redactor. Nevertheless, I concur with Globe’s assertion (1975: 178) that “poetry of this order is rarely the product of textual corruption. Nor does the passage look like later editorial activity.”

Hauser (1980: 25) concurred with Globe’s arguments for the unity of the poem and rejected Blenkinsopp’s proposals to divide the poem into a secular ballad and a later liturgical reworking of the ballad. His study focused on only half of the verses of the poem (the less problematic verses: 3–5, 11, 19–22, 24–30) and led him to conclude that “parataxis is best suited as a key to understanding the poet’s style.” He defined parataxis as the “placing side by side of words, images, clauses, or scenes without connectives that directly and immediately coordinate the parts with one another,” noting that parataxis presents an incomplete picture, elements of which “at first glance do not appear to correlate well with one another.” Since parataxis “tends toward disjointedness,” Hauser concluded, “Judges 5 employs a variety of rhythmic techniques without presenting a consistent metrical structure.” Hauser’s “paratactic key,” was endorsed by Gottwald (1985: 252–254) and certainly provides a means for making some sense out of the Song of Deborah as it now stands in the MT, the versions, and the varied modern translations. However, it has the same limitations as Gerleman’s “poetic impressionism.” Paratactic translations have emerged from the enigmata in the song, but until these enigmata are resolved it remains uncertain whether the parataxis comes from the poet or from the poet’s translators or from both.

Contrary to the views of Gerleman, Mayes, Müller, and others, and in support of the arguments of Globe, my study demonstrates that the Song of Deborah is a brilliantly logical and stylistically uniform epic fragment, employing a much richer repertoire of lexical, syntactic, and grammatical elements than has been realized. While some parataxis may have been employed by the poet, syntax was the poet’s paramount achievement. What Globe was
able to achieve for only several strophes can, in my opinion, be established for the whole poem.

Current philological studies, even with their failures and excesses, provide many clues for resolving the enigmas of early Hebrew poetry. Such studies are forcing Hebraists to recognize that ancient poets had a larger vocabulary and more syntactical options than were formerly recognized. One can concur with Hauser (1980: 28), “Rather than trying to emend the obscure sections [of Ju 5], it seems best to assume that they point more to our lack of knowledge of ancient Hebrew vocabulary than to problems of textual corruption.” As the long-standing cruces of Judges 5 are resolved, the unity of the poem becomes transparent.

Just as the various strophes of the poem cannot be treated in isolation from one another, Judges 5 cannot be treated in isolation from the prose story in Judges 4, which is surely the oldest “commentary” or midrash on the Song of Deborah. The priority of Judges 5 has been reasserted by Halpern (1988: 95) who noted, “Virtually every element of the prose account stems directly, or by a dialectical process, indirectly, from SDeb. . . . Every facet of the prose account can be derived from a reading of SDeb.” However, Judges 4 has its own problems, including what Yadin (1975: 250) has rightly called “one of the most irksome questions of biblical research,” namely, the difference in the accounts of the destruction of Hazor and the death of Jabin in Judges 4 and Joshua 11.

Archaeological studies have supported the integrity of the account of Joshua 11, leading Yadin (1975: 255) to conclude, “The narrative in the Book of Joshua is, therefore, the true historical nucleus, while the mention of Jabin in Judges 4 must have been a later editorial interpolation.” The present study supports

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4 For bibliographic material, see Blommende (1969); Dahood and Penar (1970); Robertson (1972); and Bal (1988a).

5 Amit’s study (1987: 89–111) provides a good introduction to and bibliography of issues surrounding Judges 4. Note Kaufmann’s conclusion (1962: 114), “But this opinion [that the poetry was the basis of the prose] is also not correct. We cannot see why the author of the prose reduced the number of the fighting tribes from 6 to 2. We cannot also understand how he knew all the details which are not mentioned in the song. There is no doubt that the prose and the poetry are two independent forms [italics mine] of the tradition about the war with Sisera.” (I thank Gilad Gevaryahu for this quotation from Kaufmann.)
Yadin’s argument for the historical value of Joshua 11, but it also offers an alternative solution to the problems related to Judges 4.

In Chapter One, the integrity of the consonantal Masoretic text is defended, followed in Chapter Two by an analysis of the literary units which make up Judges 4 and 5. In Chapter Three, it is argued that Shamgar was an Israelite overseer, and that Judges 3:31, which also mentions him, was originally a part of the poem of Judges 5. In Chapter Four, Deborah is identified as the (Hittite) “Mother in Israel” (alluded to in Ezekiel 16) whose name also survives in a name list of Ramesses III, providing a chronological reference point for the Israelite battle against Sisera.

Chapter Five contains my reconstruction and translation of the Song of Deborah (with metrical and syllabic patterns outlined), and this is followed by a philological commentary in Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven, as part of the closing summary, the question of authorship of the poem is addressed, and a case is made for Yael or another Kenite being the author, even though tradition has credited Deborah and some scholars have argued for a composite poem of anonymous fragments.

An analysis of the meter (both accentual and syllabic) of this poem in comparison with Ugaritic poetry or with other biblical poetry will require a separate study. Only brief descriptive statements, following the “traditional school” of Ley (1875), Budde (1882), and Sievers (1901–1907), have been included in Chapter Six. The accentuation and vocalization of the MT, with its recognized limitations, has been utilized (with vocal šēwā‘ counting as a full vowel).

Quotations from the Septuagint have been accented according to the critical editions of Brook and McLean (1917) and Rahlfs (1935). No effort has been made to add accents and breathing marks to the variants cited from these works.

The Appendix includes eleven English translations of the Song of Deborah (nine of which are frequently referred to but are not as available as the RSV, NEB, NAB, and the like). A targum in Modern Hebrew of my English translation found in Chapter Five provides an abstract in Israeli Hebrew of my conclusions, as well as a text by which to compare the changes in Hebrew over the three millennia.
CHAPTER ONE

THE INTEGRITY

OF THE HEBREW TEXT

One of the seemingly most firmly established conclusions concerning the Song of Deborah is that the Hebrew text of the poem is “hopelessly corrupt.” Most contemporary critics would concur with Moore’s statement (1900b: 129):

Probably few scholars would now agree with Ewald (Dichter, i. p. 178 n.) and E. Meier (National-Literatur der Hebräer, p. 89) that the text of the poem has been transmitted to us substantially intact—not to mention the more extravagant notions of its impeccability entertained, e.g. by [J.] Barchmann ([Das Buch der Richter, 1868] p. 517 ff.), August Müller (Das Lied der Deborah, 1887, i. ff.) has proved, on the contrary, that the corruption is extensive and deep-seated. Whether it also is beyond all remedy, is a question about which opinions will differ.

Albright (1936: 26) noted, “So old is the Song that part of the text is hopelessly corrupt, both in the Greek and Hebrew versions, and the meaning of individual words was evidently lost long before the Christian era.” Lindars (1995: 222) asserted, “The LXX presents a maze of strange readings, which are often difficult to relate to the Hebrew text . . . .” but concluded that the tendency of some to accept every word of the MT was unwise, even though the MT was preferable to the LXX. But the consensus about the poem’s textual corruption really needs to be reconsidered, and Albright’s earlier opinion can now be revived: “its textual state is excellent” (1921: 54) and “the text of the Song in its Masoretic form is excellent, as attested by the LXX, but the pointing is often impossible, and the pronominal suffixes and other endings have suffered more than once from dittography” (1922: 73).

A coherent reading of the Song of Deborah, with logical progression and stylistic uniformity, is possible, and the integrity of the consonantal MT can be demonstrated as ninety-nine percent reliable (or about ninety-eight percent correct if the confusion of the vowel letters ṭ and ṭ is included and scriptio plena introduced for archaic scriptio defectiva). The major textual problem lies not in the consonants per se, but in the spacing of the consonants, i.e., the word division provided by tradition.
I. Clues from the “Book of the Wars of Yahweh”

The fragment of the מְלַחְמָתָה מִי הָיוֹ�, the “Book of the Wars of Yahweh,” which has survived in Num 21:14–15, provides not only a parallel reference to Yahweh’s activities associated with Seir (alluded to in Deborah’s exhortation in Ju 5:4–9), but also clues for restoring the text of the Song of Deborah. It contains examples of a mixed and inconsistent orthography with reference to vowel letters and words rarely found in the classical dialect.⁶

The difficulty of the text is evident in the nearly meaningless RSV: “Wherefore it was said in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, ‘Waheb in Suphah, and the valleys of the Arnon, and the slope of the valleys that extends to the seat of Ar, and leans to the borders of Moab.’” The KJV read the הָיוֹדֵב כִּסָּף as “Waheb in Suphah” as “what he did in the Red sea” (following the Vulgate fecit in mari rubro) as though the Hebrew were #ם instead of the MT יָודֵב כִּסָּף.

The LXX is no less problematic. It reads in part, διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται ἐν βιβλίῳ πόλεμος τοῦ κυρίου τὴν Ζωοβ ἐφλόγισεν “On account of this it is said in the book, the war of the Lord, he/she burned Zoob.” It seems that the LXX Vorlage may have had הָיוֹדֵב קְרִית, in which case the feminine קְרִית could have been read as the subject of the feminine verb הָיוֹדֵב = הָיוֹדֵב (although G. A. Smith [1912: 62] suggested that the LXX translated קְרִית, not הָיוֹדֵב).

More important than the translations offered is the manuscript and versional evidence for uncertainty in regards to word division. Despite Noth’s (1968: 160) claim that this text “defies all explanation,” Christensen (1975: 50–51) made significant progress in understanding the text. With only slight modification of Christensen’s scansion, I vocalize and scan Num 21:14–15 as follows:⁷

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⁶ See Cross and Freedman 1952: 57; also note G. B. Gray 1903: 287. Compare Tur Sinai’s (1960: 146–148) reading “wherefore it is said in the book: There were wars of the Lord . . .,” thereby eliminating the מְלַחְמָתָה מִי הָיוֹדֵב.

⁷ Christensen followed Dahood in identifying MT יָודֵב קְרִית “benefactor” as a participle of יָודֵב = יָודֵב. Compare Weippert 1979: 17, who deleted seven vowel letters, three conjunctive ʼs, two ʼs, emended three letters (including reading יָודֵב for יָודֵב), and translated, “Yhwh came in a tempest, He came to the Arnon river, crossed the river, crossed it. Deviated (from the way) to dwell in Ar, Established himself in the land of Moab.” Milgrom (1990: 177) noted that
Christensen’s view “commends itself” but he retained Waheb and Supah as place names, following the eleventh century philologist Ibn Janah.

8 Christensen is correct in identifying the MT תָּוָּא with תָּוָּא “to come,” but he is incorrect in deleting the ה of תָּוָּא. The words have been misdivided. The ה goes with the preceding תָּוָּא as the vowel letter ḫ (see Cross and Freedman 1952: 57). The תָּוָּא is the infinitive absolute having the force of a finite verb (see GKC 75 and 113, McDaniel 1968b: 208–210).

9 Christensen emended MT דָּוָּא to read רָּא “he marched through.” But the emendation is unnecessary. The noun שָׁרָא “torrent” may also occur in Isa 13:6, מָשָׁא מָשָׁא, “(the day of Yahweh) shall come like a raging torrent.” Another good possibility is the Amorite and South Arabic cognate asad/asad “warrior” and the denominative verb, “to fight” (see Huffmon, 1965: 169; P. D. Miller, 1973: 79). For דָּוָּא, see note 268.

10 Christensen is correct in reading MT רָּא as the verb “to march forth.” But his tentative proposal to delete the word is unnecessary since the verb רָּא need not be emended to רָּא, nor does the text have a redundant use of רָּא “to march forth.” The MT רָּא is better read as an adverbial accusative, either the participle “quaking” or the noun “(earth) quake,” from the biliteral base מָשָׁא, with probable by-forms מָשָׁא, מָשָׁא, מָשָׁא, מָשָׁא, like stems מָשָׁא and מָשָׁא (GKC 77, Dahood, 1968: 368). Here the hiphִיִּה “to destroy” reflects the elision of the ה after the preposition (GKC 53a), like the hiphִיִּה in Amos 8:4.

11 Christensen follows a traditional reading of this line. The proposal here calls for reading צָּשָׁא as the energetic qal 1cp imperfect of צָּשָׁא, a cognate of Arabic سُوُح “to enter easily” (Lane 1872: 1468b, 1469a, especially noticing the quotation سُوُح في الأرض ما وجدت مساغا “Enter the land while thou findest a place of entrance”). For the vocalization of the energetic, see Gordon 1965: 11; Dahood 1965: 21; 1970: 377–378; McDaniel 1968b: 205–206; and Blommerde 1969: 15. The צ is an emphatic צ, and this occurrence should be added to the list cited by Dahood 1965: 22; 1970: 406–407; McDaniel 1968b: 206–208; and
The meter here is $3 + 3 + 2 / 2 + 2 + 3$, with a syllable count of 7:8:6:7:8.

The verb מָשַׁאֲלִים “he came” was written simply מָשַׁא, without the vowel letter, but the infinitive absolute מָשַׁאלָה was written מָשַׁאלָה, with the ב serving as the sign for ס. (Interestingly, a variant מָשַׁאלָה, with the elision of the initial מ, is attested in Deut 33:21 for מָשַׁאלָה and מָשַׁאל appears for מָשַׁאל in Isa 21:14.) The ט of מָשַׁאל is an emphatic ט (see Blommerde 1969: 29), the same as the preceding מָשַׁא “yea, he came.” The MT מָשַׁא can be parsed as the זaph’tel (Dahood, 1965: 24–25; 1968: 31; 1970: 58, 389) of מָשַׁאל “to rush forth with force,” which has been identified by Gordis (1940: 35–43) in 2 Sam 1:21; Jer 18:14; Ps 91:6; and Job 5:21. The reconstructed מָשַׁאל has a ב for the ו vowel. Such mixed spellings and misdivision of words led to erroneous vocalization.

The antiquity of this poetic material, reflected in its lexical and syntactical obscurities, favors its historical integrity. The archaic lexical items, rare grammatical forms, misdivided words, and the inconsistent use of final vowel letters alert one to look for similar features in the archaic Song of Deborah. The rare initial waw stem, בֶּשֶׁל, also alerts the critic that this poetic fragment contains elements of a dialect distinctly different from the Jerusalem dialect. Sensitivity to dialectal differences will also serve well any reader or interpreter of the Song of Deborah.

Blommerde 1969: 31. מָשַׁא is possibly attested in Ezek 23:23, where MT מַשַׁא מַшַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַшַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא מַשַׁא
II. Identifying the textual difficulties in the Song of Deborah

A survey of the previous commentaries and studies on Judges 5 would lead one (wrongly, as I shall argue below) to conclude that, aside from the matter of glosses, the textual problems in the poem stem primarily from scribal misreadings of the consonants, rather than scribal misdivision of words. Few critics have challenged the correctness of the 288 spaces currently used for word division and the 52 line divisions in BHS. Efforts to correct the text by emendation of the consonants, coupled with the treatment of the MT vowel letters ’ and י as late additions to the text, compounded the problems of understanding the poem. For example, it was customary for Albright, Cross, and Freedman to delete all vowel letters from the MT in their attempt to restore a purely consonantal text as would have been written before the ninth century B.C.E.\(^\text{13}\)

However, some of the vowel letters removed were originally consonants that had been incorrectly vocalized. Their removal precluded a correct restoration of the text. Since it cannot be assumed that vowel letters were introduced uniformly at one particular period in the transmission of the text, recognition of the partial and inconsistent use of vowel letters is essential. Each ’ and י must be judged on its own merits. The reconstruction of the text offered in this study calls for only thirty changes in the consonantal MT, twenty-five of which involve ’ and י. Included in the twenty-five changes of ’ and י are nine cases where the ’ and י were pointed in the MT as vowel letters although they were originally consonants.\(^\text{14}\)

Judges 5 can be brought into conformity with typical plena spelling and can be restored to its more “original” consonantal form by the following corrections:

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\(^\text{14}\) On the inconsistent use of vowel letters, note the inscriptions from the mid-ninth to mid-eighth centuries from Kuntillet Ajrud and Kirbet el-Qom. See Emerton 1982: 2–20 (especially 2–3), as well as Zevit 1984: 39–47.
(1) the addition of two consonants (a  and a  and fifteen vowel letters (seven internal and eight final letters),
(2) the deletion of one consonant, four vowel letters, and one  conjunction,
(3) changing  to  twice and changing  to  twice,
(4) the emendation of five consonants to graphically similar letters,
(5) the redivision of thirty words (eleven of which involve the transfer of only one letter to the preceding or following word), affecting the formation and vocalization of thirty-seven new words.

Aside from the commonly recurring errors involving  and  (see Delitzsch 1920: 103–105), the problem of  and  spellings, and the transposition of verses 3:31, 5:6–7 and seven other words, only eight changes by addition, deletion, and emendation to the consonantal text need be made to read the poem as an integrated battle ballad. The transpositions call for the addition of only one  and one .

III. Corrections needed in the consonantal text and with the vowel letters

A. Additions to the text

The two consonants to be restored in the poem are a  prefix on  in 5:8 and a  suffix in 5:23, where  “her riders” needs to be read as  “their riders.” Although most words in the MT of Judges 5 are written  , defective spellings survive in thirteen words which, for the most part, were improperly divided. They are as follows:

(1) Three cases of internal  :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Corrected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v 6</td>
<td>יַעֲלִים</td>
<td>יעֲלִים</td>
<td>“he used to attack,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 11</td>
<td>כֹּדֶם</td>
<td>ָּכֹדֶם</td>
<td>“victories,”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v 14</td>
<td>אשֵׁרָה</td>
<td>ָּאֲשֶׁרָה</td>
<td>“hastening (ones).”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) Six plural verbs lacking the final \( \ddot{a} \) vowel:

- v 8 لَعَبَتُمُا لَعَبَت۫ا for لَعَبَتُا لَعَبَت۫ا “they (will) battle,"
- v 9 لَبَتُا لَبَت۫ا for لَبَتُا لَبَت۫ا “respond to the call!”
- v 13 لَي۫ا لَي۫ا for لَي۫ا لَي۫ا “they were accompanied,”
- v 14 أَهَرُهُا أَهَرُهُا for أَهَرُهُا أَهَرُهُا “after you” divided to read أَهَرُهُا أَهَرُهُا “at the rear they strike,”
- v 21 لَعَنَّا لَعَن۫ا for لَعَنَّا لَعَن۫ا “they sought refuge,”
- v 23 لَم۫ا لَم۫ا for لَم۫ا لَم۫ا “they prevailed.”

(3) One singular verb lacking the final e vowel:

- v 14 بَعْضِم۫ا بَعْضِم۫ا for بَعْضِم۫ا بَعْضِم۫ا “with your kin” divided to read بَعْضِم۫ا بَعْضِم۫ا “from concealment he attacks.”

(4) Four cases of misdivision and scriptio defectiva:

- v 11 مَكِلَّا مَكِلَّا for مَكِلَّا مَكِلَّا “to the sound of musicians” مَكِلَّا مَكِلَّا divided and emended to read مَكِلَّا مَكِلَّا “(on) mountain-roads, hurrying”
- v 22 سُم۫ا دِعَرَت۫ا سُم۫ا دِعَرَت۫ا “horse gallopings” divided to read سُم۫ا دِعَرَت۫ا سُم۫ا دِعَرَت۫ا “their horses, (and their) chariots,”
- v 23 مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا for مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا “Meroz said an angel” مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا divided to read مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا “doomed, he sent cloudbursts.”

B. Deletions from the text

(1) Vowel letters:

Even fewer deletions are required. The \( \ddot{a} \) of مَكِلَّا in 5:11 is deleted in restoring مَكِلَّا مَكِلَّا “mountain roads.” The \( \ddot{a} \) of the third \( \ddot{a} \) in 5:12 is deleted, changing the MT qal imperative into the pi'el infinitive construct نِعَرُ لَعَرَ or نِعَرُ لَعَرَ “to overwhelm, to rout.” In 5:16, the \( \ddot{a} \) in مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا مَر۫ا “hissings” is deleted in restoring the lengthened construct infinitive of شَرَكٌ شَرَكٌ، a metathetic variant of شَرَكٌ شَرَكٌ “to look for.” In 5:23, the \( \ddot{a} \) of the plural imperative لَزَتٌ لَزَتٌ “curse ye” has been deleted to read لَزَتٌ لَزَتٌ
“they panicked.” The prefixed to Barak’s name in 5:1 has been deleted as a pseudo-correction once was identified with “to sing,” instead of “to march forth.” (The has been inserted for clarity in the revision, but the elision of occurs frequently enough and early enough that one cannot be certain it would have been in the original spelling.)

(2) Consonants:

The only consonant deleted from the text is the of רְבָּאֵל in 5:16, reading the verb and preposition (“to triumph over”) rather than the name רְבָּאֵל “Reuben.”

C. Confusion of ו and י

In 5:12c, the restored “he marched forth” is read as the preterit of שָׁמָר. In 5:17, the is corrected to שָׂמָר “he attacked,” an energetic shaph’el of שָׁמָר. In 5:22, MT וֹכַּת “the heels of” is read as וֹכַּת, a dual noun with a 3ms suffix “its slopes,” i.e., the banks of the wadi. In 5:23, MT בָּא לָעֵר “he attacked,” an energetic shaph’el of עֵר. In 5:28, MT בָּא לָעֵר “he attacked,” an energetic shaph’el of עֵר.

D. Other emendations

Five other emendations involve the confusion of ב and ב in paleo-Hebrew, the confusion of a ב for a ב or ב, and a ב for a ב.

v 10 מְדִירְנִי “rich carpets” (NRSV) is emended to מְדִירְנִי “mule(s),”

v 12 מְלָעֲבָא “your captives” becomes מְלָעֲבָא “captives,”

v 27 בָּא לָעֵר “where he kneeled” is redivided to בָּא לָעֵר “motionless, was made powerless” or to בָּא לָעֵר “motionless, in a stupor,”

v 28 מְלָעֲבָא “out of lattice” is redivided to מְלָעֲבָא “out of (?) a lattice” and emended to מְלָעֲבָא “she inquired (at the) lattice,”
Five by-forms are recognized which do not require emendation. In 5:10, הָאָדָר appears as a metathetic variant of cognate South Arabic "mountain pass." With the removal of the vowel letter ה and with the change of ש to ת, MT in 5:16 is read as the infinitive of חָקְרָה/חָקֵר "to look at, to gaze." In 5:22, לָדָה is read as a by-form of לָדָה "to be at a distance, to retreat." The second לָדָה of 5:22, with the metathesis of the ש and ה, is read לָדָה "his chariot." In 5:8, שֵׁלֶד is read as the metathetic variant of Arabic "to be courageous."

E. Changes in word division

More than half of the proposed changes in word division have been cited above in sections A–D. For the sake of completeness, they are also included in this section, but without comment. The proposed redivisions are discussed individually in Chapter Six.

v 5 "Israel" becomes יִשְׂרָאֵל “Israel” becomes יִשְׂרָאֵל “God will provide strength”;

v 11 "the sound of musicians" becomes מַכְּלֵים מַחְצֶה מַכְּלֵים מַחְצֶה "(on) mountain passes, hurrying";

v 11 "to the gates, the people" becomes לָשְׁנֵי מִשְׁמַע לָשְׁנֵי מִשְׁמַע "the very storms from";

v 12 "words of a song" becomes דְבָר שֵׁר "words of a song" becomes דְבָר שֵׁר "the pursuer" and "prepared";

v 14 "after you" becomes חָנָה "at the rear they would strike";

v 14 "with your kinsmen" becomes נַחֲמָה "from concealment he attacks";

v 15 "great ones" becomes נָלַי "Gad had joined them";

v 16 "Reuben" becomes רָעֲבַי "to triumph over";
v 18  "upon the heights of the field
they came” becomes
"against Merom he moved,
they were forced to come”;

v 21  "onrushing” becomes
"surging seaward”;

v 21  “march on, my soul, with might” becomes
"it overtook (them), it overflowed,
they sought refuge”;

v 22  “horse galloping agalloping” becomes
"their horses (and their) chariots,
his chariot”;

v 23  “curse Meroz, says the angel” becomes
"they panicked, doomed (to
die), he had sent cloudbursts”;

v 25  “in a lordly bowl” becomes
"in a truly magnificent goblet”;

v 27  “where he fell” becomes
"made motionless, powerless” or
"in a stupor”;

v 28  “through the lattice” becomes
"she inquired (at) the lattice”;

v 30  “are they not finding” becomes
"the victors have forded
(the water).”

IV. The modification of the Masoretic vocalization

In challenging the cavalier treatment of the Masoretic vocaliza-
tion in many studies, Barr (1968: 194) noted:

The picture implied in philological treatments is one of (a) a long period
during which the consonantal text was carefully cherished and transmitted,
and (b) a late and arbitrary process by which vocalization was more or less
imposed on this text by men who were handicapped by the limitations of their
knowledge of Hebrew.
Although Barr doubts that this is a credible picture for the MT as a whole,\(^{15}\) it is certainly the case with Judges 5. The widely varying translations of the LXX A and B texts, coupled with variants in other Greek recensions and in the Latin tradition, indicate that the poem was not well-understood at an early period. As Albright (1936: 26) noted, “the meaning of individual words was evidently lost long before the Christian era.” The vocalization and meaning were obviously restored at many points by conjecture. Nevertheless, the Masoretic vocalization is about eighty percent reliable. Corrections to the MT proposed above in sections A to E modify the vocalization of 48 of the poem’s 360 words. Elsewhere in the poem, 24 changes in the MT, requiring no consonantal emendation, are suggested or adopted.

\(^{15}\) Rabbinic traditions in Megillah 18b and Rosh Hashanah 26a–b, to which Barr (1968: 56) called attention, speak of the uncertainty of the meaning of five biblical or mishnaic words about which it was said “our teachers did not know the meaning,” until they heard the words being used by a handmaid in the household of (the) Rabbi or by an Arab at the market. Note Pollack’s proposal, accepted by H. Gevaryahu (1987: ix), to interpret הָלוֹא in the Psalms in light of current Arabic usage in northern Israel where חָלָא means “to be clear . . . to be without a doubt.”
with a shift of ל to ז, “caravan leader,”
3ms with יָדָו יָדָה as the subject, “Yahweh’s militia descended,”
“and the officers of,”

v 13 "shaph’el of נ, “to defeat,”

v 13 gal passive 3ms of נר, “conceal,”

v 15 infinitive absolute “to surround,”

v 16 infinitive construct of נ, “to wait,”

v 17 emphatic ל “verily” with an enclitic א and the vowel letter ה affixed,

v 17 from נב “he scattered, he assailed,”

v 28 taqtil nominal form of בב, “a vacant place,”

v 29 participle “soothsayer” with the archaic feminine * (-ay) ending and 3fs suffix,

v 30 masculine singular participle “despoiler.”

V. The value of the LXX and later versions for establishing the text

It has long been recognized that the corruption found in the Masoretic text “... is in the main older than the Greek translators, who in the worst places read substantially as we do and therefore give us little help toward a restoration of the text” (Moore 1900b: 129). The widely differing translations in Codex Alexandrinus and in Codex Vaticanus demonstrate how difficult the Hebrew text of Judges 5 was for the early translators. Even Lindars (1995: 222) noted, “The LXX presents a maze of strange readings, which are often difficult to relate to the Hebrew text.” Yet numerous revisions of the MT have been proposed on the basis of variant readings in the LXX or other versions. Kittel (BH3) proposed or accepted six such emendations. Other commentators adopted these or offered alternative translations to bring the MT into conformity with the Greek textual variants.16 But a survey of all the textual variants cited in Brooke and McLean’s (1917: 801–809) critical edition of the LXX provides

little evidence that the LXX and its derivative versions offer reliable clues for altering the consonantal MT.\footnote{See also Brooke and McLean 1897: 9–12. For detailed bibliographies covering studies of the Greek text of Judges, see Schreiner 1961: 173–200, 333–358; Brock, Fritsch, and Jellicoe 1973: 104. Cross (1973: 213) noted, “As recent text-critical study of the Qumran manuscripts has shown once again, the overwhelming majority of textual differences in Hebrew and Greek manuscripts are the result of inadvertent or unconscious errors—as should be expected.”}

The rich repertoire of archaic syntactic, lexical, and grammatical forms which were part of the Hebrew poetic tradition was available only down to the time of the Babylonian exile.\footnote{See McDaniel 1968b: 216–217.} The LXX translators in the Hellenistic period had but limited knowledge of archaic and/or dialectical Hebrew. One must concur with Barr (1968: 268), “. . . the ancient translators did their task remarkably well, considering the circumstances. Their grasp of Hebrew, however, was very often a grasp of that which is average and customary in Hebrew.” Generally, archaic and archaistic elements, dialectal variations, or loanwords in the Song of Deborah were not obvious to the LXX translators. Therefore, the most that can be expected of the LXX and its variants is a hint to the presence or meaning of an enigmatic word or phrase, as demonstrated below.

A. The LXX and lexicography

Knowledge of lexical elements lost \textit{after} the early translations were made can be recognized in several of the textual variants. Three examples illustrate this type of help available from a study of the LXX and other versions. Section C, below, provides an example of the way the doublets and triplets in the Greek manuscripts reflect the translators’ diverse understanding of a difficult poetic Hebrew word.

1. Ju 5:4 אֲשֶׁר and δρόσους

The LXX B-text reads καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἔσται δρόσος, “and the heaven dripped dews” in 5:4b for MT לָשׁוֹן הָאָרֶץ. In the LXX, δρόσους usually translates לֹּחַ “dew” or שָׂרָא “snow,” and
although Arabic جم means “light rain,” Hebrew מלח occurs in parallelism with ריבה "copious showers,” as in Deut 32:2 and Mic 5:6. Although Lindars (1995: 232) concluded that ὀψάους here in 5:4 is just a gloss “to complete the sense,” it probably translates the particle מ, and this can be accepted as the preferred meaning in light of the Arabic usage of جم, as well as جم البعاق "to rain copiously” and “a copious, unexpected torrential rain.”

The MT מ is an adverbial substantive, like the Arabic جم “abundantly,” used with the ellipsis of the direct object. The LXX B-text captured the meaning by treating מ as the direct object rather than as an adverb. The καὶ . . . καὶ in 5:4 represents a later correction to the more common reduplicated מ . . . מ.

2. Ju 5:12 והרא and μυρίδας μετὰ λαοῦ

The doublet in the MT of 5:12,

עוה, והרא, דבריה
עוה, והרא, דבריה.

is read in most Greek manuscripts as a triplet (e.g., the A-text, Lucianic MSS gnwdptv, and the Origenic MSS abcx, supported by the Armenian, Ethiopic, Old Latin and Syro-Hexapla):

ἐξεγείρου ἐξεγείρου Δεβῦρα
ἐξεγείρου (οὐ ἐξεγείρου) μυρίδας μετὰ λαοῦ
ἐξεγείρου ἐξεγείρου (οὐ λάλει) μετὰ ὅδης.  

Burney (1918: 121) corrected the LXX by deleting the third line of the text, assuming that it was an insertion of the Hebrew

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19 Compare Albright’s interpretation (1922: 75), “...‘drip’ is an anticlimax, and here so absurd that a scribe felt impelled to add the remark תון נון נון נון, ‘the clouds (also) dripped water,’ that is, the heavens did not leak, but the clouds distilled a gentle rain.” Note also Cooke 1892: 30; Moore 1900a: 32, 1900b: 141; Burney 1918: 112; and J. Gray 1967: 278.

20 Lane 1872: 228a, 449a, noting especially 449c. בֵּית גַּם מ “a well of much (water).”

21 See Brooke and McLean 1917: 804; Burney 1918: 120; Schreiner 1961: 196.
and B-text tradition. The Greek doublet which survived led Burney to conclude that the Vorlage behind this recension was

Awake, awake, Deborah;
Arouse myriads among the people!

However, a better explanation which does not demand a different Vorlage can be offered. The A-text εξεγείρον μυριάδας μετὰ λαοῦ, which contains a doublet (μυριάδας and μετὰ λαοῦ) is a translation of the second μυριάδας. The εξεγείρον (έξεγείρον) translates the first μυριάδας of this second pair, and the doublet (μυριάδας and μετὰ λαοῦ) translates the other μυριάδας, i.e., the fourth μυριάδας of the bicolon. It is cognate with the Arabic "a numerous company of men, a numerous army," which was used with reference to those involved in quick or sudden moves in a hostile or predatory incursion (Lane 1887: 2307–2308). The translators of the A-text were evidently aware of this (now) rare root which can be labeled rw IV, "a large company of people."

The third line of the A-text, εξεγείρον εξεγείρον λάληι μετ’ φόνη is a separate doublet of the MT ירוא, which matches the B-text εξεγείρον εξεγείρον λάλησον φόνη. A different Vorlage behind the A-text, as suggested by Burney and followed in BH^3 and by Lindars (1995: 290), need not be assumed.

3. Ju 5:12 שיר and ἐνσιχύων and its variants

In 5:12a, the A-text and the Lucianic recension have a doublet for MT שיר ברק. It consists of (a) ἐνσιχύων, which has been identified as the Greek equivalent of ירוא or ירוא (if one reads en σιχυ) and (b) ἔξανίστασα Βαρακ for the B-text ἔννιστασα Βαρακ. The κατισχυν έξεγειρον "overpower, arouse" in MS k is a variant of the A-text ἐνσιχύων ἔξανίστασα "strengthening, arise." Moore (1900a: 34–35) reconstructed the text as Βαρακ τὸ λείπον

See BH^3. MSS δγνπτννv have (and the Old Latin and Ethiopic must have read) en ιςχυ (Brooke and McLean 1917: 804 and Schreiner 1961: 196).
A-text of Hos 12:4–5. The occurrence of ἐναίσχυνθον there for שָׁרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל indicates that some translators understood שָׁרָה, יִשְׂרָאֵל, and שָׁרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל to mean ἐναίσχυνθον or καταίσχυνθον. Similarly, in the A-text of Ju 5:12, ἐναίσχυνθον ἐκανόντων Βαρακ and its Lucianic variants are the translation of the MT שָׁרָה בְּרָכָה. The doublet that survives in the A-text for שָׁרָה is then (a) μετ’ φόδης “with a song” and (b) ἐναίσχυνθον “strengthening.”

B. The LXX obscures the genre

The LXX translators inadvertently obscured the meaning of the Song of Deborah and steered exegetical tradition in a wrong direction when they translated the initial words of Ju 5:1, רָוָה דְבֵּרָה בָּרְכָה, by καὶ ἡσαύ Δεκβωράς καὶ Βαρακ (possibly using Ex 15:1 as the parallel since was translated τότε ἡσαύ Μωσῆς καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Ισραήλ). This translation has reinforced the long-standing tradition that all of Judges 5 is the Song of Deborah. But this designation is actually a misnomer when applied to the entire poem. The MT שָׁרָה of Ju 5:1 and the רָוָה of Ex 15:1 must be attributed to different roots. The latter is certainly from שָׁרָה “to sing,” but the former is from שָׁרָה (like the שָׁרָה in Deut 33:21) or שָׁרָה/שָׁרָה “to march forth.”

To be sure, Deborah delivered a hortatory address (possibly at a cultic assembly) or dispatched a summons to the tribal leaders. However, her words (found only in the exhortation in 5:3–5 and 8–9) did not constitute a “song of victory.” Rather they were a call-to-arms for an Israelite militia so that they might achieve a victory. Consequently, Deborah, as composer or singer, need not be associated with the entire poem (see below, page 247).

The psalmic elements found in translations and created by exegetical tradition were, in my opinion, not psalmic elements in the original poem. Words that appear to be hymnic (shall and שָׁרָה) can now be demonstrated to be homographs of military and combative terms. The poem can be best identified as a short

23 Deborah’s role was analogous to that of a סֵפֶל “speaker, orator” among the ancient Bedouins. The סֵפֶל filled a nonhereditary position of civil leadership (see Buccellati 1967: 90) as well as a religious role (see Lane 1872: 1308).
epic fragment dealing with a “Yahweh war” and would have been a likely candidate for inclusion in the book of the wars of Yahweh, or a similar work. The essential integrity of the Hebrew text can be maintained only when the entire poem is read as a battle ballad, in epic style, which elaborated (1) the causes leading to military confrontation, (2) the mobilization (including Deborah’s exhortation), (3) the strategy of the Israelites, (4) descriptive scenes of the route and rout of Sisera, and (5) the victory of Yahweh’s militia—including the help of Yael, a fellow Yahwist, in Sisera’s assassination.

C. Doublets and triplets

The varied transliterations and translations in the LXX and the versions are very helpful in recovering the Hebrew vocabulary of the translators, but provide little justification for emending the MT. A good example of this limited usefulness can be demonstrated by the variants for ḡmlḥ in Ju 5:22, including the numerous doublets and triplets scattered in 5:21–23, as cited by Brooke and McLean (1917: 806).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5:21</th>
<th>5:22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ὀμαλεῖον (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>transliteration in dgkntwv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ὀμιλεῖον (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>transliteration in l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αὐτοῦς (לַמְ)</td>
<td>“them” in dgkntwv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:22</td>
<td>5:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ὀμαλεῖον (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>transliteration in Mnamyb2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εὐνοοῦσαν (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>“they were foot-cuffed” in B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀπεκοπῆαν (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>“they were cut off” in Abcglnx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εὐθυνοῦσα</td>
<td>(םלֶיו)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐκστασέως (םלֶיו)</td>
<td>“a movement outwards” in Mnamyb,dgkntwv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀβλεπῃ</td>
<td>(םלֶיו)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αὐτοῦ</td>
<td>(לַמְ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αὐτοῦς</td>
<td>(לַמְ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αὐτῶν</td>
<td>(לַמְ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A number of scribal errors are obvious:

- defective spelling of הֶלְמִי as הַלְמִי
- inversion of letters: הַלְמִי and הַלְמִי for הָלָמַי
- inversion plus confusion of י and ה (הָלָמַי for הָלָמַי)
- loss of a letter: הָלָמַי or הָלָמַי for הָלָמַי
- plena spelling or inversion: הָלָמַי for הָלָמַי
- confusion of י and ה: הָלָמַי or הָלָמַי for הָלָמַי
- reduplication and inversion: הָלָמַי (see below).

Furthermore, although the ενεφυοκτησήσαν “they were hamstrung” found in 5:22 in MSS MNadkmoptyb₂ could possibly be a translation of הָלָמַי, it more likely reflects an original הָלָמַי “they were hamstrung” for MT הָלָמַי “the heels of.” Since these manuscripts have πέρναν for the הָלָמַי, ενεφυοκτησήσαν would have to be a doublet. If so, MT הָלָמַי would not be reflected in the translation of MSS MNadkmoptyb₂.

In the Old Latin, dementiae eius in 5:22 reflects a Vorlage with מַדְיָה “his insanity”; and the Armenian, translated into Latin planabunt “they will level,” is a translation of the transliteration, as though בָּםלָי were from בָּםלָי “to make level.” The inverted הָלָמַי and מַדְיָה for MT הָלָמַי מַדְיָה produced only transliterations in the Greek, no association having been made with the מַדְיָה “tumult” of Jer 11:16 (which was there translated περιτομής “circumcision,” similar to the ἀποτομᾶς for הָלָמַי in Ju 5:26a, discussed below) and Ezek 1:24 (which is lacking in the LXX). The eight translations of מַדְיָה (excluding אָפְלָסָטָה and אַפּוּא, etc. for מַדְיָה or מַדְיָה) provide for a better Hebrew lexicon, but require no changes to the MT, except for the matter of scrip-tio plena.
VI. Summary

The integrity of the consonantal MT can thus be accepted as ninety-nine percent correct, and the Masoretic vocalization as eighty percent reliable. Two major problems precluded a more accurate vocalization by the Masoretes, namely, (1) the misdivision of twenty words early in the process of transmission (which was comparable to the misdivision of words elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible examined by Delitzsch [1920: 2–10]), and (2) the pre-LXX transmission of the text without a uniformly consistent use of medial vowel letters (seven cases are attested) and final vowel letters with "י" verbs (defective spellings occur in seven or eight verbs).

The changes identified in this chapter, coupled with the transposition of 3:31 and 5:6–7 to the initial lines of the poem and the transposition of seven other words, exhaust all necessary changes to the text. The text of the poem appears to be free of other editorial activity. This slightly modified text now reads easily as a clearly written poem with syllable balance, normal metric patterns, and an extremely astute use of grammatical and lexical detail to build epic poetry of rare quality.

Transpositions coupled with excessive deletions such as those cited above in the “Introduction” or proposed by Caquot (1986: 55 [that 5:14–17 is “une insertion secondaire dans cette partie du Cantique”]) or Na’aman (1990: 424–426 [who omitted 5:14–17 and transposed 5:18 to follow 5:13]) are attractive only when one is restricted to traditional word division and a limited vocabulary, or when one is insensitive to the inconsistent orthography in the MT and the possibility of dialectal elements and/or loanwords.

The LXX and the versions reflect the same basic text as that found in the MT. Where a significant variant occurs, it is more likely to reflect the early translator’s control of a larger lexical repertoire than that of later lexicographers. Words which were subsequently lost in ordinary Hebrew usage can now be recovered through appeal to cognates and/or the larger lexicon of post-biblical and rabbinic Hebrew (as well as by recognizing foreign words on the lips of non-Israelites).

The firmly established consensus of the commentators, recently reiterated by Lindars (1995: passim), that the text of the poem is hopelessly corrupt must now be abandoned. The only editorial activity in Ju 5:1–31a was limited to the intentional transposition
of two verses (5:6–7) by a Deuteronomic editor and the unintentional mislocation of several words and phrases. (The conspicuous editorial activity reflected in Judges 4 is a different matter and will be addressed briefly in the next chapter.)

The many “paratactic” or “impressionistic” translations of the Song of Deborah which have appeared—from the early one in proto-Lucianic MS k to the most recent one offered by Lindars (included in the Appendix)—have failed to appreciate the fact that the entire poem was a battle ballad. Orthographic inconsistency and scribal inaccuracies, no doubt, contributed to the confusion over the poem’s genre and lexical components. Because the inaccuracies were more in the spacing of the letters between the words than in the letters themselves, the critic can now reconstruct the Vorlage without the excesses of random or wanton emendation.
CHAPTER TWO

THE LITERARY COMPONENTS OF THE DEBORAH–BARAK–YAELE TRADITION

Equating the prose literary unit and the poetic unit in Judges 4 and 5 with precisely the current chapter divisions, 4 and 5, respectively, has been standard procedure in all studies that I have taken the opportunity to review. Malamat’s statement (1971:137) is typical of exegetical tradition on this point:

... in analyzing the Deborah episode we have two versions before us: the narrative account (Jud. 4) and the Song of Victory (Jud. 5). Such double accounts, prose and poetry, of military victories are found elsewhere in the Bible (cf. Ex. 14 and 15) and in the Ancient Near East.

But this identification of the literary units as Ju 4:1–23 (prose) and Ju 5:1–31 (poetry) is not entirely accurate. The chapter units do not coincide with the original literary units. The chapter division should have come after 4:22 to mark the original literary division in the text. The prose introduction to the poem, Ju 4:23–24 (“And at that time God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan... until they destroyed the king of Canaan”), has consistently and mistakenly been identified as the conclusion of the prose account of the defeat of Sisera in 4:1–22.

The poem as it now stands in Judges 5 (MT) is part of the slightly larger literary unit composed of Ju 4:23–5:31. This unit consists of (1) a prose formulaic introduction, (2) the poem proper, and (3) a prose formulaic conclusion. The isolated tradition about Shamgar in Ju 3:31 is the missing link in the poem which, when restored to its proper position, provides the poetic introduction of the original poem.

I. Clues from the formulaic use of קָנַּן and שְּמַגָּר

The account in Ju 4:1–22 has the characteristic Deuteronomistic introduction (“and the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh”) but no formulaic conclusion. The literary unit of Ju 4:22–5:31 has a pre-Deuteronomistic introduction, with
the formulaic רכמנת "and God subdued," and the formulaic conclusion, "and the land was at peace." The formulaic verbs in 4:23 and 5:31, provide a prose *incipit* and a prose *inclusio* for the poem.

Despite the claims of Eissfeldt (1925: 26–27; 1966: 259), Richter (1964: 14), and Soggin (1972: 142) that the formulaic use of רכמנת is Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic, the conclusion of S. R. Driver (1913a: 166–167) appears to be more in concord with the biblical material. Opting for the pre-Deuteronomic origin of this formula, Driver noted:

> It is very possible, therefore, that there was a *pre-Deuteronomic collection* [Driver’s italics] of histories of Judges, which the Deuteronomic compiler set in a new framework, embodying his theory of the history of this period. Perhaps one or two of the recurring phrases noted above, such as “subdue” (3:30; 4:23; 8:28; 11:33), which seem to form a more integral part of the narratives proper than the rest, may mark the portions due to the pre-Deuteronomic compiler.\(^{24}\)

The verb רכמנת occurs thirty-three times in the Bible, but it is not a word common to the Deuteronomic material. Over half of the occurrences are in 1–2 Chronicles. It occurs but once in Deuteronomy and only once in each of the books of 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings. Its use four times in Judges hardly qualifies it to be designated Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic.\(^{25}\) The most that can be said is that רכמנת in Ju 3:30 (but not inJu 4:23; 8:28; 11:33) stands in proximity to well-attested Deuteronomic formulae; but this fact is in itself not sufficient reason to equate the word with Deuteronomic material.

A similar pattern of usage prevails for רכמנת which occurs forty-one times in the biblical text, including fifteen times in pre-exilic prophetic literature. But it occurs only once in 2 Kings...

\(^{24}\) Compare Weinfeld (1972: 24, 351) who identified רכמנת, in the sense of humility before God, as a Deuteronomic term. It is significant that Weinfeld (1972: 398, 404) does not cite רכמנת as a Deuteronomic term either here or in the verses in Judges where the formulaic רכמנת . . . רכמנת appears.

\(^{25}\) The רכמנת of Ju 4:23 must be added to the concordance of Radday, Leb, and Natziz (1977:131–132).
and does not occur in Deuteronomy, 1–2 Samuel, or 1 Kings. It appears but twice in Joshua (11:23, 14:15) in the phrase "and the land was free from war." which has been identified as a Deuteronomic phrase (Soggin 1972: 142). But this usage does not parallel the passages in Judges which consistently contain a numerical modifier, e.g., "the land was pacified for forty years" (Ju 3:11). Such sparse use of מót and כְּפַל in Deuteronomy, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings cautions one against departing from Driver’s identification of these words as pre-Deuteronomic.

Although the formulaic use of מót and/or כְּפַל occurs only five times in Judges, the evidence is sufficient to enable one to recognize several different ways in which the formula was used. In Ju 3:30, both verbs are used in the same sentence to mark the conclusion of a narrative: “So Moab was subdued (מִסְחָה) in that day under the hand of Israel, and the land was at peace (כְּפַל) for eighty years.” Likewise, the full formula occurs in Ju 8:28, where the context clearly indicates that the verbs mark the conclusion of the Gideon narrative: “So Midian was subdued (רֵדָה) before the people of Israel . . . and the land was at peace (כְּפַל) for forty years in the days of Gideon.”

In Ju 11:33, מót was used (contrary to Masoretic accentuation) in an introductory or transitional statement: “So the Ammonites were subdued (רֵדָה) before the Israelites and Jephthah went to his home at Mizpah.” Here כְּפַל does not appear with מót since the story concludes (12:26) on a violent note telling of the death of forty-two thousand Ephraimites. In Ju 4:23–5:31, כְּפַל marks the transition to a new narrative, similar to the usage.

The Song of Deborah is part of a larger narrative consisting of a cycle of “pacification” stories telling of these major events:

1. the subduing by Othniel of King Cushan-rishathaim, followed by forty years of peace (3:7–11);
2. Ehud’s assassination of Eglon, king of Moab, followed by eighty years of peace (3:12–30);
3. the defeat of Sisera by Deborah, Yael, and Barak, followed by forty years of peace (4:23–5:31);
These pacification stories, characterized by their formulaic framework using בַּנֶּה and/or נָטַל, are presented on a graduated scale according to the length of the narrative, from short to long. (The periods of peace could have been concomitant or overlapping and were not necessarily sequential, though the total of two hundred years is of interest.)

Richter (1963: passim; 1964: passim) called attention to the way in which these independent units were framed into a continuous narrative in a pre-Deuteronomic “book of saviour-figures, a Retterbuch.”26 But my analysis differs from Richter’s in several ways: (1) I view the use of the verbs בַּנֶּה and נָטַל as integral to the pre-Deuteronomic framework; (2) the poem in 5:1–31a was an integral part of the pre-Deuteronomic Retterbuch; and (3) Ju 4:1–22 was inserted by the Deuteronomic editor.

Recognition of Ju 4:23–24 as the prose prologue to the poem, rather than as the conclusion of the parallel prose account in 4:1–22, permits one to establish the following sequence in the pre-Deuteronomic tradition:

(a) the destruction and death of Jabin, “king of Canaan”;
(b) the oppression of Israel after the demise of Shamgar;
(c) the rise of Deborah and her summons of Barak;
(d) the defeat of Sisera and the Canaanite coalition; and
(e) the assassination of Sisera at the hands of Yael.

II. The isolated Shamgar tradition in Ju 3:31

Eissfeldt’s statement (1966: 266), “we must reckon . . . with a ‘neutralizing’ of materials which contradict the bias of a particular redactor,” provides the clue for recovering the original poetic introduction of the Judges 5 poem. Most critics are in agreement that Ju 5:1 was not the original initial verse of the poem. For

26 Note also the statement of van Selms (1964: 296): “The characteristic word in these separate stories, which were taken over by the author of the whole book from oral tradition without a literary stage, is not ‘judge’, but the verb נָטַל and its derivations . . . we should call our book rather the ‘Book of Deliverers’ than the ‘Book of Judges’.”
example, J. Gray (1967: 276) typically noted that MT רכָב לַעֲבֹדָה is a secondary addition in a verse that simply ascribes the hymnic elements to Deborah.

I concur that 5:1 was not the initial verse of the poem, but, contrary to Eissfeldt, I consider it an integral part of the poem. As noted above, MT לַעֲבֹדָה is better identified with לַעֲבֹדָה or לַעֲבֹדָה “to march forth.” If it is the former, לַעֲבֹדָה (with defective spelling) was written for לַעֲבֹדָה (as לַעֲבֹדָה appears for לַעֲבֹדָה in Jer 2: 36). With the deletion of the 3 conjunction, the verse reads “Then Deborah made Barak march forth on that day” (with the MT רֶסֶף, רֶסֶף, to introduce the exhortation).

However, when 5:1a is read, “then Deborah made Barak march forth,” Ju 5:1 cannot be the immediate sequel to 4:24, which speaks of a major victory for the Israelites. Between the victory over Jabin and the marching orders to Barak there must have been other events necessitating the sequential “then” clause. Those events appear to have been the rise and demise of the heroic Shamgar. If the two disparate elements composing the Shamgar tradition (3:31 and 5:6–7) are united, they provide the introduction to the poem and the transitional event which triggered Deborah’s ordering Barak into battle.

Scholarly opinion on Ju 3:31 is generally mixed. Few have invested this verse with historical integrity. Burney (1918: 76) argued that it was a late insertion made after the redactors introduced the “minor” judges into the book, possibly making Shamgar a substitute authority figure for the corrupt Abimelek. Later commentators such as Richter (1964: 92–97), J. Gray (1967: 215–216, 266) and Boling (1975: 89–90) generally concurred. They consider this verse to be a Deuteronomistic or post-Deuteronomistic interpolation, possibly extrapolated from the story of David’s hero, Shammah ben-Agee (2 Sam 23:11), or the “oppressor” Shamgar ben-Anat, cited in Ju 5:6–7. But the opinion of Schroeder (1911: 479) is more likely: “vielmehr werden wir es hier mit einer guten historischen Notiz zu tun haben.”

Schroeder based his claim for the historical integrity of this verse on the emendation of to דָּקָר הַמָּלֹם הַפֶּקֶד, “tötete er mit Wurfgeschosß,” which won no acceptance. A better claim for the integrity of the passage can be made by demonstrating that the verse is a poetic tricolon with syllable balance, meter,
synonymous parallelism, and archaic grammatical and lexical features. When restored to its poetic form, Ju 3:31 can be recognized as part of a three-verse Shamgar tradition which included Ju 5:6–7 as well.

With the emendation of MT רְצָב and יֵלֵּד, Ju 3:31 can be read and scanned as follows:

\[ \text{תַּחַת נַחֲלָתָּהּ שָׁמָּגָר בֶּן אוֹתִי:} \]
\[ יָדָאָהוּ יִטַּעַמֶּה יִשָּׂא. \]
\[ יָבֵּב לַעֲשָּׂה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. \]

Then later appeared on the scene Shamgar ben-Anat!

He smote (with) a plowshare two bands of marauders,
he plundered hundreds of men with a goad.
He was appointed overseer and he gained victories
by himself for Israel!

(Meter 3 + 2 / 3 + 2 + 2 + 2; Syllables 7:5::7::6:6)

Unrecognized or rare items in the poetic lines of 3:31 include

(a) the hophr al of בּכַר “to oversee”;
(b) רָשׁ “plowshare” (the first רָשׁ), which has been misunderstood as the first of two direct object signs;
(c) רָשׁ (the second רָשׁ) used more as an emphatic particle than simply as the direct object sign;
(d) feminine dual נִיתְלָה, with the ב/ב variant, a cognate of Aramaic/Syriac נולית and נולית “thieves, marauders, a reconnoitering troop.”

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27 For a discussion on the use of בּכַר in Lev 27:33 and Ezek 34:11–22, as well as the use of בּכַר in 1QS 6:12, 20 and CD cols. 9, 13–15, see pages 61–64.

28 Jastrow (1903: 175, 1185); R. Payne Smith (1897–1901: 541, 3163), noting especially the citation: “Credo אַלְמָעַ — nomen esse gentis cujusdam barbarae, quae famam sibi malam at milites mercenarii acquisivisset.” Note also J. Payne Smith (1903: 47, 449). Undoubtedly the stem is related to the Ge’ez and Amharic falasa/falasa “to emigrate, wander, to be in exile” known from the name of the Falashas, the “Beta Israel” of Ethiopia, now in Israel.
(e) "to plunder," cognate of Ugaritic ꙱ and a by-form of ꙱ and ꙱. 29

Synonymous parallelism is conspicuous with (1) the qṭl "he smote" and the qṭl "he plundered," 30 (2) the dual "two bands of marauders" in parallelism with ꙱ ꙱ ꙱ "hundreds of men," and (3) "oxgoad" in parallelism with ꙱ ꙱ "plowshare." Aural coherence appears with the noun ꙱ and the particle ꙱ and the use of ꙱ and ꙱.

The obvious sequel to this restored tricolon follows in Ju 5: 6–7, which is followed in turn by Ju 5:1 ff.

(But) from the days of Shamgar ben-Anat, from the days he used to attack, 31 caravans ceased. Caravaneers had to roam roundabout routes. Warriors disappeared, from Israel they vanished—until the rising (to power) of Deborah, the rising (to power) of a Mother in Israel. Then Deborah made Barak march forth . . . .

The questions why and when the Shamgar tradition was divided and transposed cannot be answered with certainty, but I

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31 For the proposal to read the hiph‘il of ꙱ "to attack (secretly)," instead of the name Yael, see the discussion below (pages 114–115) on 5:6.
suspect that the material was “neutralized” by the Deuteronomic editor. If Ju 3:31 was the original initial tricolon of the poem, it would not have satisfied the theological bias of a Deuteronomic editor for Shamgar delivered Israel נֹבֶל רְשֵׁית “by himself,” a phrase that a scrupulous Deuteronomic editor could have taken to imply “without Yahweh,” instead of its obvious meaning of without the help of other judges or military alliances.32 By a modest modification in shifting the initial verse of the poem (dealing with Shamgar’s exploits) to its present position in 3:31, as the initial statement of the entire Deborah–Barak–Yael tradition, the neutralization was partially achieved.

The note on Shamgar in 5:6–7 includes two temporal phrases, “from the days of Shamgar” and “until the rising of Deborah.” The יָרֵא of the MT is the relative pronoun יָרֵא and the feminine participle, with the archaistic hireq compaginis.33 Since the form is a homograph of the 1cs qal perfect, and since יָרֵא could mean “I, Deborah, arose,” the lines were treated as a quotation of Deborah and inserted by an editor into Deborah’s exhortation, now found in Ju 5: 3–5 and 8–9, the only part of the poem in which Deborah speaks. With the bifurcation of the Shamgar tradition, the neutralizing of the poetic introduction was fully accomplished. The failure of scholars to recognize that the verses in which Shamgar is mentioned are related to one another and are an integral part of the original poem demonstrates the effectiveness with which the Deuteronomic editors did their work.

32 Note the statement of Eissfeldt (1966: 259): “The narratives about the minor Judges . . . all begin with a statement about Israel’s sinful actions which have as their consequence the anger of God expressed in terms of permitting hostile attack, and about the cry for help which then moved God to send the judge (iii, 7–9, 11b; iv, 1–6; vi, 1–14; x, 6–16; xiii, 1–5).” Compare Seeligmann (1961: 201–221) and Weinfeld (1967: 93–113). Regarding the pre-Deuteronomic identification of the sin of Israel as the non-expulsion of the Canaanites, Weinfeld (105) stated, “This historiographic view was incompatible with the conception of the Deuteronomic editor . . . he ignored this historical introduction expressing this view and wrote his own introduction consistent with his ideological principles.”

33 In his commentary, Soggin (1981c: 86) reversed his earlier position (1975: 201, note 34) that יָרֵא is a shaph’el. On the hireq compaginis, see page 119 below; GKC 90; McDaniel 1968b: 29; and Layton 1990: 107–154.
III. Judges 4:1–22

The Deuteronomic editor is to be credited with more than the neutralizing of the poetic introduction. He was responsible for giving a theological introduction to the entire Deborah–Yael–Barak tradition. Once Shamgar had been moved from his initial position in the poem to the initial position in the combined prose-poetry Deborah tradition, his deliverance of Israel was read as a postlude to the Ehud story. But he was so isolated in 3:31 from the Song of Deborah that, subsequently, he was viewed by some readers as an oppressor of Israel when he was mentioned again (“in the days of Shamgar”) in Ju 5:7.34

The Deuteronomic editor was also responsible for making the prose account of Sisera’s defeat (4:1–22) into a midrash on what must have become by his time a difficult poem to understand since the misdivision of some words in the poem, no doubt, pre-dated him. On the other hand, one must assume that the poem was fairly, if not totally, comprehensible for the pre-Deuteronomic editors who incorporated it into their Retterbuch.

Ju 4:1–22 must be viewed as a Deuteronomic insertion into the pre-Deuteronomic tradition which consisted of two quantitatively unequal elements: (a) an early prose narrative telling of the defeat of Sisera which paralleled at points the poetic account; and (b) the Deuteronomic formulae35 which can be recognized in the following phrases from 4:1–3:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{וַיִּפְסֹר בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנַפְשָׁהּ לְדוּתָּהּ בֵּית יְהוָה} \\
\text{וַיִּפְסֹר בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית יְהוָה} \\
\text{וַיֶּעֶמַּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלֵי יְהוָה} \\
\text{And the Israelites continued to do evil} \\
\text{in the eyes of Yahweh} \\
\text{And Yahweh sold them into the hand of . . .} \\
\text{And the Israelites called out to Yahweh.}
\end{align*}
\]


35 Richter 1964: 6. But, as argued above (pages 29–32), Richter is incorrect in identifying the formulaic verbs והשמיעו והכיסא as Deuteronomic.
By deleting the Deuteronomic material one can recover the pre-Deuteronomic text in the following collection of words:

וֹאָהָדָה מִכֶּנֶּר מַלְיֵר קֻנֵנֶר מַלְיֵר בָּהָרֹר
וֹרֶה נַבּאָה סִימֶרֶה וֹרֶה בָּהָרֹר שֹׁה
כָּפֶשׁ מַאֲחָא רַבָּא בָּרָא
הוֹא לֹהְגָה אָבֵא בְּיַרְשָׁא בְּהַחֲכִיָּא שָׁלָה:

And Ehud died Jabin king of Canaan who ruled in Hazor and an officer of his army Sisera and he dwelt in the enclave of the foreigners indeed he had nine hundred chariots of iron he oppressed the Israelites mightily for twenty years.

This conglomeration of words can be transformed into a very meaningful narrative introduction (compatible with Ju 4:23–24, as defined above, and with Joshua 11) by emending אֶלֶף (אֶלֶף) to the graphically similar אָלֶף “then after,” and reading נָבּאָה יָבּא as the infinitive נָבּאָה יָבּא “to wage war.” The preposition לְ בָּרָא is actually the 3ms of לְ בָּרָא “to go forth, to march out.” With these changes, the pre-Deuteronomic text of 4:1–3 can be translated:

36 BDB 1003; Lane 1872: 1483b, 1484b; and G. R. Driver 1956: 69, 148.

37 Aharoni (1967: 201–203) suggested that אֹרֵשׁ יָבּא was not a place name but designated “the forested regions of Galilee” (= “Galilee of the Gentiles”). The translation of אֹרֵשׁ יָבּא as “the defensive enclave” of the foreigners is based upon the Arabic cognate حَرَسِي “to guard” and حَرَسِي “what is guarded, preserved” (Lane 1872: 546). Dozy (1927: 269–270) cited حَرَسِي “un soldat destiné à garder une place,” and حَرَسِي “une enceinte fermée de murs et assez grande pour loger une petite garnison, où les zélés musulmans se réunissaient pour faire la guerre aux non-musulmans.” and referred to the place name حَرَسِي (Machres), which would be analogous to Hebrew הָרֹשׁ (which lacks, however, the preformative לְ) used as an “evident appellative” in a construct chain (GKC 125). This הָרֹשׁ could be related to Hebrew רֹשׁ IV “to divine” (see page 255).

Drews (1989: 20–21) dealt with the problem of Sisera’s having iron chariots since “in the twelfth-century B.C.E. both offensive and defensive weapons were normally made of bronze”—with only 3 of 150 pieces of weaponry found from the twelfth-century being of iron rather than bronze. Therefore, he concluded that the chariots were probably iron-tired chariots rather than being iron-plated or the currus falcatus “scythed chariots” of the Vulgate.
After Jabin, the king of Canaan who reigned from Hazor, died, Sisera who dwelt in the defensive enclave of the foreigners then went forth to wage war. Indeed, he had nine hundred chariots of iron. He harshly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.

Here the sequence of major characters and events, except for the omission of any reference to Shamgar, is the same as that found in Ju 4:23–5:23, where the deceased Jabin was followed by Sisera, whose oppression led to the rise of Deborah and the mobilization of the Israelite militia. The precise place chosen by the Deuteronomic editors for inserting their formulaic material and prose “commentary” is significant. The editors transformed the pre-Deuteronomic prose *incipit* of the poem into a prose *inclusio* for the “commentary” in 4:1–22. Thereby a theologically acceptable and literarily uniform parallel account introduced the archaic poem of the “Yahweh war.”

The question arises, “Why were the formulaic insertions made at their present positions and not elsewhere in the tradition?” The phrase מִּשְׁלָלֵי יָהּ “an officer of Jabin’s army” (GKC 128++) could just as easily have been placed before the name of Sisera as before the name of Jabin. Had it been so placed, the prose *incipit* to the poem could have remained an *incipit*, and the historical ambiguities between Judges 4 and Joshua 11 could have been avoided—assuming that MT דַּרוֹם was a later *plena* spelling of דַּרוֹם, which was a misreading or modification of the original דַּרוֹם.

An answer may be found in Ju 4:7, where Sisera is identified as מִּשְׁלָלֵי יָהָּוָא “an officer of Jabin’s army” (GKC 128++). In spite of the claim of Cooke (1892: 16), Moore (1900b: 116), Burney (1918: 81), and C. A. Simpson (1957: 14–15) that the references to Jabin (4:7, 17) were from an independent tradition which had been erroneously interwoven with the Sisera tradition, the reference in 4:7 can be retained as a slur on Sisera’s position and power, since he was not a king residing in a fortified city but simply a survivor of a defeated army who was forced to operate out of a defensive enclave of foreigners and/or fortunetellers. As such, Sisera was vulnerable, not invincible—his nine hundred chariots of iron not withstanding. But the Deuteronomic editors missed the slur. They viewed Sisera the way many interpreters
do, transforming him into the highest-ranking officer of the reigning King Jabin, rather than an officer of the deceased king.

This misunderstanding resulted in the reappearance of Jabin in the narrative after his death, only to be defeated a second time at the hands of Deborah, Barak, and Yael (Ju 4:1–24). Assuming that 4:7 and 4:17 were in the text of the Deuteronomic editor, he may have felt the need to correct the tradition in Ju 4:1 (which read, as reconstructed, ד"כ"צ יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ) if Jabin was presumably still alive according to 4:7 and 4:17.

IV. Summary

In summary, the proposal here is that the Deuteronomic editors, by changing an original יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ to יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ (or יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ) and יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ to יבִּי מֵאָנָּנוּ, were able to alter the received tradition sufficiently to accommodate the insertion of their theological formulae and to harmonize their astutely constructed theological prose introduction (4:1–3) with the existing introduction to the poem (4:23–24). But this harmonization transformed the introductory words of 4:23–24 into a conclusion for the prose narrative of 4:1–22. Historical accuracy was sacrificed by this editorial creation of a theologically harmonious unit out of 4:1–22 and 4:23–24. The different traditions about who killed Jabin were probably an insignificant issue for the Deuteronomic editors, if the issue was recognized at all. Indeed, until the excavations at the city of Hazor (1955 to 1958) proved otherwise, the Deuteronomic editor and his successors, like the modern pre-excavation commentators, could have conjectured along the same lines as Moore (1900a: 112):

The relation of the Jabin of our text to the one in Jos. 11, and the question how Hazor, which was totally destroyed by Joshua, is here again the center of the Canaanite power in the north, are much discussed . . . . The common solution is, that Hazor had been rebuilt . . . and that the Jabin here named was a successor, and probably a descendant, of the Jabin of Jos. 11.

But the archaeological evidence clearly establishes, with little reservation, that the Late Bronze Age city of Hazor (Upper City stratum XIII, Lower City stratum 1A) was destroyed in the second half of the thirteenth century. This destruction was followed by temporary and limited Israelite settlements (strata XII and XI). The city was not rebuilt until the mid-tenth century (stratum X), and then by Solomon, not by the Canaanites.
Bimson (1978: 194–200) theorized that there were two destructions of Hazor, assigning the destruction by Joshua to the MBA (fifteenth century) and the one by Barak to the LBA (thirteenth century). But it is no longer necessary to rework the biblical chronology so radically, separating these events by 200 years. The crux can be surmounted by reconstructing the pre-Deuteronomic elements within the Deborah–Barak–Yael tradition.

Editorial transposition of the formula יֵבְשָׁרָה יַד בְּיָדָיו from 4:2a to 4:3a would go a long way toward clarifying the connection between Joshua 11 and Judges 4–5. Such an edited and emended text of Ju 4:1–3 (changing לֶטֶבֶנֶה to לֶטֶבֶנֶה and יָדַּם to יָדַּם, as well as יָדַּם to יָדַּם) would read:

The Israelites continued to do evil in the eyes of Yahweh after the death of Jabin, the king of Canaan who reigned from Hazor. Then Sisera, who dwelt in the defensive enclave of the foreigners, proceeded to wage war; and Yahweh sold them [the Israelites] into his hand. The Israelites cried out unto Yahweh, for he [Sisera] had nine hundred chariots of iron, and he harshly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.

Younger’s (1991: 127) “intertextual analysis” of the poetic texts and prose narratives dealing with the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser I, Shalmaneser III, Thutmose III, and Rameses II has demonstrated that

Ancient scribes could write different accounts about the same referents. But differences in purpose could determine differences in detail . . . , and in the selectivity of the events narrated . . . . If the scribes’ purpose was to praise the king and/or the gods, poetry naturally offered a medium to heighten the emotions of praise through rhetorical embellishments. Hence, divine activity and praise of the deities is encountered more often in the poetic versions. Poetic versions, in fact, also provide a very suitable ground for legitimation . . . . But in most instances the poetic (or more rhetorical) text also added significant historical details so that the complementary nature of the accounts is manifest.

For Younger, Judges 4 provides a “logical account,” while the song in Judges 5 renders “an emotional and figurative account with special themes and purposes.” But as will be demonstrated, the song is as logical as it is emotional, and, at particular points, the prose of Judges 4:1–22 is really a midrash on Judges 5.
V. An Outline of the pre-Deuteronomic poem of a Yahweh war


I. Prose incipit: the historical introduction to the victory of Israel over Jabin, “the king of Canaan” (4:23–24, which is balanced by the prose inclusio in 5:31b)

II. Poetic prologue (3:31; 5:6–7; 5:1, which is balanced by the poetic epilogue in 5:31a)
   A. Shamgar’s exploits and deliverance of Israel (3:31)
   B. Economic oppression and Israel’s (military) inactivity in the post-Shamgar period (5:6–7a)
   C. Deborah’s appearance on the scene (5:7b, 5:1a and 1b)

III. Preparation for military activity (5:1c–5; 8–17a)
   A. Appeal by Deborah for an Israelite militia (5:1c–2)
   B. Deborah’s exhortation (5:2c–5, 8–9)
      1. Incipit: בְּרֵאשִׁית וַקְרָב (5:2c)
      2. Warning to hostile rulers (5:3)
      3. Address to Yahweh (5:4–5)
      4. Affirmation of God’s equipping the Israelites (5:8)
      5. Appeal to the leaders and to the militia (5:9ab)
      6. Inclusio: בְּרֵאשִׁית וַקְרָב (5:9e)
C. Mustering of the troops (5:10–13)
D. Strategy and deployment of forces (5:14–17a)

IV. Military engagement (5:17b–23)
   A. Israel’s provocative attacks (5:17b–18)
   B. Canaanite counterattack through the wadi (5:19)
   C. Yahweh’s counterattack: rain and flash flooding (5:20)
   D. Defeat of the Canaanites (5:21–23a)
   E. Victory for the Israelites (5:23)

V. Aftermath of the battle (5:24–31a)
   A. Assassination of the defeated Sisera (5:24–27)
      1. Blessing upon Yael (5:24)
      2. Sisera’s last meal (5:25)
      3. Sisera’s final “affair” (5:27a)
      4. Yael’s deathblows (5:26, 27b)
   B. Anxiety and false hope in Sisera’s residence (5:28–30)
      1. A mother’s premonition (5:28)
      2. Vain hope offered by divination (5:29–30)

VI. Poetic epilogue: a terminating affirmation (5:31a)

VII. Prose inclusio: a formulaic epilogue marking the end of another “pacification” narrative (5:31b).
CHAPTER THREE

SHAMGAR BEN-ANAT:
AN ISRAELITE OVERSEER

Shamgar has been identified as an ‘Apiru, an Assyrian, a Canaanite, a Hanean, a Hittite, a Hurrian, a Phoenician, and a Syrian.\(^{38}\) In all the studies I surveyed, only Kaufmann (1962: 112–113) and Luria (1984: 283–324, 1985: 105) have identified him as an Israelite. Consequently, it remains problematic for many commentators why a non-Israelite, even though he delivered Israel from oppression, was included among the minor judges of Israel. Though Boling (1975: 90) noted, “His story, brief as it is, is an example of traditionary erosion . . . ,” the Shamgar tradition actually suffered from deliberate early editorial activity. The resolution of the problems associated with Shamgar is to be found in recognizing first that he was indeed an Israelite, not an alien. The brief notices about him in 3:31 and 5:6–7,\(^ {39} \) when united and transposed to the beginning of the Song of Deborah, provide the necessary introduction for this poem of a Yahweh war.

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Assyrian: Sayce (1902: 474) who related the name to Samgamebo which occurs in Jer 39:3; Talqvist (1914: 192), cited by Kraft (1962b: 307); and Burney (1918: 76).

Canaanite or Phoenician: Albright (1921: 56; 1953: 111, but in 1968b: 43, note 98, he concurred with Noth that the name is Hurrian); Alt (1944: 72–75); van Selms (1964: 303–304); and Cundall (1968: 79).


Hittite: Moore (1898: 159–160; 1900b: 105).

Hurrian: Noth (1928: 122–123); Maisler (1934: 192–194); Feiler (1939: 221–222); Myers (1956: 711); Kraft (1962b: 306); Bright (1972: 172); Boling (1975: 89); Rendsburg (1982: 359); KB\(^3\) (1969–1990) 1435.


\(^{39}\) van Selms (1964: 300–301) stated, “. . . the transposition by some Greek manuscripts of iii 31 to xvi 31 is not warranted,” and Boling (1975: 89) noted, “Certain LXX recensions have the Shamgar notice following the Samson conclusion in 16:31 . . . .” However, the narrative about σμηγαρ (or εμηγαρ) υπὸς εναυ in some LXX recensions of Ju 16:31 is not a transposition but a duplication of Ju 3:31, as Lindars (1995: 156) correctly noted. See the citations of MSS δγλνϕτ in Brooke and McLean 1917: 797 (for Ju 3:31) and 862 (for Ju 16:31).
I. Shamgar’s identity

The reasons for uncertainty about Shamgar’s identity are

(a) the unusual nature of his name,

(b) the reading of יָאָל in Ju 5:6 as the name Yael, making Shamgar a contemporary of the heroine who assassinated Sisera,

(c) an apparent contradiction between Ju 3:31 and Ju 5:6 as to whether Shamgar was a friend or foe of Israel.

Although it is explicitly stated in 3:31 that he delivered (יָשֵׁב) Israel, Ju 5:6 suggests that in his time Israel experienced severe oppression. Some have argued that Shamgar was even responsible for the oppression of the Israelites. Albright (1921: 60) had suggested,

After Shamgar’s successful stand, presumably in connection with a Canaanite coalition, stiffened by the aid of Egyptian mercenaries, against the Philistines, he maintained his ascendancy over Galilee, like a medieval robber-knight, by keeping a small army of retainers, supported by the robbery of caravans and by exactions levied from the villages.

Albright’s proposal has been given new life by Lindars (1995: 158 and 236) who generously speculated,

It is thus conceivable that Shamgar was a foreign mercenary leader, who subjected northern or north-central Israel to much harassment in the confused period before the battle of the Kishon. That he also achieved a legendary success against the Philistines is not impossible, but it is hard to believe that he also delivered Israel [Lindars’s italics] . . . This [lack of adequate control to prevent constant risk from brigands] suggests that the mysterious Shamgar is not an oppressive ruler, but a legendary bandit, who took advantage of the weakness of the Canaanite city-states to harass the Israelite settlers.

However, the apparent contradiction in the tradition, making him both a foe and a friend of Israel, is resolved by recognizing the functional interchange of בָּנָי “from” and בָּא “from” in two similar phrases: בָּנָי יָשֵׁב מֵעַמָּנוּ “from (after) the days of

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40 Moore 1898: 159–160; 1900a: 60; and Alt 1944: 75 note 2.

41 Note Alt’s (1966: 181 note 21) acceptance of Albright’s views.
Shamgar ben-Anath” and יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “from (after) the days of Yael” in 5:6. The oppression occurred “from (after) the days of Shamgar” (i.e., after his demise), not in his lifetime. Many have noted that the name Yael in Ju 5:6 is problematic since the oppression of Israel ceased in her days. Moreover, if יָמְיָם יָמְיָם suggests that Shamgar was responsible for the difficulties in Israel as enumerated in 5:6–7a, the parallel יָמְיָם יָמְיָם would also necessitate Yael’s equal responsibility. But this is impossible since the oppression of Sisera was terminated during her time. Reading יָמְיָם יָמְיָם as “from the days of Yael” would equally contradict the context. Kittel suggested (in BH) that the four words יָמְיָם יָמְיָם were an addition, and others have proposed deleting יָמְיָם יָמְיָם or emending it to read יָמְיָם יָמְיָם, “in the days of Jabin.” J. Gray (1988: 427), following Weiser (1959: 76), proposed the paraphrase, “from the days of Shamgar to that of Jael.”

A more likely solution comes simply by revocalizing the MT which has two prepositional phrases composed of nouns in construct with proper names. The second phrase is better understood as a construct followed by a yqtl preterit, either a hiph’al or a hoph’al (יָמְיָם יָמְיָם), of the stem יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “to attack, to deal out violence.” Pope (1965: 192) recognized this word in Job 30:13, יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “they attack.” It is a cognate of Ugaritic גל יז “violence” and Arabic غول “to do away with, to injure,” and, in form [4], “to slay covertly.44

42 The interchange of these prepositions is attested about a hundred times in Biblical Hebrew (see McDaniel 1968b: 199–200; Blommerde 1969: 19; Dahood 1970: 391; Soggin 1981c: 138). Compare the study of Zevit 1975: 103–112. It must be recognized that יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “from” and יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “in” are homographs, but were not necessarily homophones. Given the South Arabic use of bn and mn and the compound preposition bn-mn (Jamme 1962: 212–213, text 735, line 12), one can posit an original יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “from,” with the assimilation of the †. See Rendsburg 1989: 110 for יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “in” occurring twice in Jonah 4:10.

43 Albright 1968b: 43, note 99. For older proposals to emend יָמְיָם יָמְיָם to יָמְיָם יָמְיָם or יָמְיָם יָמְיָם, see Cooke, 1892: 32, and Burney 1918: 114. G. A. Smith (1912: 86) treated it as a gloss but was uncertain about יָמְיָם יָמְיָם.

44 See G. R. Driver 1956: 142; Lane 1872: 2311a, גוֹל גוֹל “destruction, death” or “anything that takes a man unexpectedly and destroys him”; 2311b, גוֹל גוֹל “the slaying covertly, or on an occasion of inadvertence”; 2310a יָמְיָם יָמְיָם “a
Thus, שַהָמָר בֶּן אָנָאָט means “from the days he attacked/used to attack” or “from the day he was assassinated.” The inference is clear that with the death of Shamgar conditions deteriorated for the Israelites. Josephus noted that Shamgar died (κατέστρεψε τὸν βίον) sometime during the first year of his governorship, which may hint at an assassination (Antiquities 5: 4: 3; Naber 1888: 1: 304).

II. Shamgar ben-Anat’s name

Fensham’s statement (1961: 197), “His name and also the name of his ‘father’ testifies [sic] against his ascendancy from Israelite stock,” is characteristic of many who deny Shamgar an Israelite identity because נַּתִּיאת appears non-Semitic and could be a Canaanite name. Most recently Lindars (1995: 157) bluntly stated, “Shamgar is not an Israelite name.” But his name may well be composed of three less commonly used Hebrew vocables, namely, שֶׁתֶּן “to attack” (obscured by the MT pointing of פ for פ), דַּוָּל “to attack,” and נַלְלָה “to help, to save.”

A. שַהָמָר

The name שַהָמָר has been identified with the Hittite Sangar(a), a name of a ninth-century king of Carchemish, suggesting that ṣngr is the correct reading of the name (which appears as ᾃγαρος in Josephus and Sangar in some codices of the Vulgate).45  A. van Selms (1964: 300–301) identified שַהָמָר as a Canaanite name derived from a shaph’el of הָלָל “to submit,” attested in the name הָלָל מַהֲרָל on a Hebrew seal. Danelius (1963: 191–193) interpreted Shamgar as a hybrid name composed of the Egyptian noun sm “alien, der Landfremde” and the Hebrew לָל “alien.” Many have identified שַהָמָר with the Hurrian name Śi-mi-qa-ri

[cause of] destruction destroyed him . . . or [destroyed him so that it was not known whither he had gone]; 2318c, יָגֹנִי “he was deceived, and taken to a place and [there] slain”; 2319, המאת “he beguiled him and slew him.” Note also Dozy 1927: 2: 231–232 who citedWithError| “nuire, causer du dommage” andWithError| “méchanceté, malice” andWithError| “le moyen ou l’occasion de perdre quelqu’un, de le ruiner.”

found in the Nuzi texts, composed of the name of the Sun-god Simiegi (＝ Ḫmg) and the (a)ri terminative frequently joined to Hurrian names.46

However, this last and most popular Hurrian identification also has its difficulties. Although the West Hurrian name aršmg occurred at Ugarit, it may not be the equivalent of the East Hurrian name ši-mi qa-ri since the (a)ri termination and the ar prefix may not be the same element. Speiser (1930: 139–40; 1941: 204) noted that the nominal formative (a)ri in Hurrian names “indicated primarily that the person in question hails from a given place,” and that “the r- termination is particularly well-represented in the eastern group of the languages and dialects under discussion, where it is also found in place names.” Thus, it must be noted that, whereas Maisler (1934: 192–194) in his initial identification of Shamgar as a Hurrian name cited occurrences of the divine name Šimiegi in the West (Boghazkoi, Ras Shamra, and El Amarna), he cited no examples of the divine name plus the r- termination in the West. His examples of ši-mi qa-ri are all from the Nuzi (East Hurrian) texts.

Ras Shamra examples of Hurrian names indicate a tendency in Syria-Palestine for the West Hurrian dialect. The clearest evidence is in the names compounded with the noun iwri “lord, king” as the initial element. This is consistently spelled iwri, indicating the West Hurrian dialect. In the East Hurrian (Nuzi) dialect, the noun appeared with the metathesis of w and r as ɪrwi.

Therefore, to argue that Shamgar is the East Hurrian name

46 Feiler (1939: 221) identified it as a composite of the divine name Simiq plus the verb ar “to give.” On the Hurrian presence in Canaan, see note 100.

47 The following statement of Speiser (1941: 68) is helpful:

. . . the parade example of the metathesis is ɪwri “lord,” which common-Hurrian form is opposed only by Nuzi erwi. Here the choice of this or that phonologic alternant has become characteristic of a dialectal division which separates Eastern Hurrian from other groups which are predominantly western.

For a listing of the occurrences of the name Šimiq(a)ri, see Chiera and Speiser 1927: 50, and Pfeiffer and Speiser 1936: 161. For the name aršmg, see Grondahl 1967: 366 and Soggin 1981c: 58 and references cited there. A full listing of the names with the iwri component and its variants is given by Grondahl 1967: 224–225. Note also Gordon 1965: pages 353–354, no. 116, and possibly page 365, no. 343. An East Hurrian name possibly appears in the
Šimigari, elsewhere unattested in the West, appears to be an argument for the possible, not the probable.

The Masoretic pointing of the name as שַֽמָּגָר rather than שַֽמְגָּר has obscured the Semitic derivation of the name. The reading of the MT may have been influenced by Gershom, the name given to sons of Moses (Ex 2:22), Levi (1 Chron 6:1), and Phinehas (Ezra 8:2), which appears to reverse the נָֽעַר and נַֽעַר elements of Shamgar. But the original name was probably שַֽמְגָּר, with no etymological relationship to the name Gershom. The suggestion of Danelius, noted above, that Shamgar is a composite of the Egyptian šm: “der Landfremde” and its Hebrew equivalent נָֽעַר “alien,” is much more likely the correct derivation of the name Gershom where there is a more obvious Egyptian connection.

If Shamgar were originally Šamgar, the name is composed of participles of שָֽעַר and וָֽעַר (synonyms for “attack”) meaning “the charging assailant,” a fitting name for a military hero. The military nuance of the root שָֽעַר has been recognized in 1 Sam 15:2, בָּֽעַר וָֽעַר לָֽאָֽבִּים “they attacked them on their way” (NEB), 1 Kgs 20:12, שִׁלְחֵם רְשֵׁם עִמָּם וַעֲרֵי יְרוּם “Attack! And they attacked the city,”48 and in Ezek 23:24, שִׁלְחֵם יְלָדֵ干细胞 בָּֽאִים “From all sides they

48 J. Gray 1970: 419, 423. Note also Eitan 1923: 49–50, where Eitan translated שָֽעַר “to attack (in war)” in 1 Kgs 20:12, Ezek 23:24, and Job 23:6. The MT שָֽעַר “and he attacked them” in 2 Sam 12:31 can be added to the list. The participle בָּֽאָֽבִּים “attacker” may also be attested in the name of Shemeber in Gen 14:2, where the MT שֶׁמֶּבֶר possibly stands for an original סָֽעַר, שֶׁמֶּבֶר, “mighty assailant,” an attractively ironic name for a petty king. The Samaritan reading of this name as שֶׁמֶּבֶר and the reading of 1QapGen 21:25 as שֶׁמֶּבֶר would have essentially the same meaning (reading בָּֽאָֽבִּים as the causative pî’el) “the attacker destroys.” The suggestion of del Medico, cited favorably by Fitzmyer (1966: 145), that שָֽעַר means “Mon nom est perdu,” would be more suited as a pejorative epithet than as a king’s name. The claim of Speiser (1966: 101) that the names of Shemeber’s allies, יִשָּׁרָיִל and יִשָּׁרְיָה, were pejoratives needs to be
will arm against you” (JB) or “they shall array against you everywhere” (NAB).

The qal participle of נְזָּד נַעַר stem II “to attack” is attested in Isa 54:15, “should any attack you (נָעַר נְזָּד תִּזְכִּיר), it will not be my doing; the aggressor (נָעַר), whoever he be, shall perish for his attempt” (NEB).\(^{49}\) Powis Smith (1927: 934, 938) noted this verb in Ps 56:7 “they make attacks (נָעַר נְזָּד), they lie in wait” and Ps 59:4 “mighty men are making attack on me (נָעַר נְזָּד תַּעַל תֵּשָּׁה).” It has also been recognized in Lam 2:22, reading “my attackers” for MT נֵלָד “my terrors” (McDaniel 1968b: 42–44; Hillers 1972: 41).

B. נֵלָד

Albright (1920: 55) and Noth (1928: 123) associated the name נֵלָד with Beth-Anath in Naphtali (Josh 19:38), and Danelius (1963: 22) associated it with Del-Anath (LXX Josh 17:7). Others, like van Selms (1964: 302–303), Boling (1975: 89), and Lindars (1995: 157–158), identify it as a heroic epithet meaning “son of (the war goddess) Anath.” These interpretations falter because they treat Shamgar ben-Anath without regard to the poem’s other male military figure, Barak ben-Abinoam, who is similarly given a compound name. Since ben-Abinoam is clearly a patronym, it permits one to read נֵלָד also as a patronym. Layton (1990: 218) noted, “Ben ‘Anat may be the patronym of Shamgar if we assume that the vocable ben has been omitted,” on the assumption that נֵלָד was the name of the goddess and would require the original to have been נֵלָד נַעַר נְזָּד. But, as will be demonstrated, נֵלָד is the name and נַעַר the patronym. The two

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reconsidered. Given the frequent interchange of נַעַר and נְזָּד, this is more likely the equivalent of נְזָּד, cognate to Ugaritic pr “chief,” Egyptian pr “hero,” and Hebrew pr “heroine” (Ja 5:2, discussed below). In light of the נַעַר in Prov 31:2, “Barshúa” could be the masculine counterpart of נֵלָד “Batshúa.”

patronymic worlds בֵּן נָתָן and בֵּן נָתָן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן are examples of unifying elements structured into the poem, insensitivity to which has led many to assert that the poem lacks structural uniformity. But the unifying elements are present.


The evidence that the root is בָּֽהָנָן and not בָּֽהָנָן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן is found in the Ugaritic names בָּֽהָנָן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן, (written also בָּֽהָנָן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן) and אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן, as well as in the feminine bn ’nt, bn ’nt, and bn ’nt. The Ugaritic bn ’nt or bn ’nt refers to Anat or to her male counterpart An(a)/A-na, since, as Milik noted (1956: 5, note 25), “the onomatap category ‘bn + divine name or epithet (often in caritative form with -ay,-an, or -ajm)’ seems to have been rather popular among the army of Ugarit.” On the god

50 See Lane 1872: 2203bc, 2204b; and Jamme 1962: 433b (b’nt), 445a (’nt). Evidence that the root is בָּֽהָנָן and not בָּֽהָנָן אֲבֻרְבָּלוֹן is found in the Ugaritic names bn ’nt (written also bn ’nt) and ’nt, as well as in the feminine bn ’nt, bn ’nt, and bn ’nt. The Ugaritic bn ’nt or bn ’nt refers to Anat or to her male counterpart An(a)/A-na, since, as Milik noted (1956: 5, note 25), “the onomatap category ‘bn + divine name or epithet (often in caritative form with -ay,-an, or -ajm)’ seems to have been rather popular among the army of Ugarit.” On the god
common noun הָלַל “lord” in Isa 54: 5 (“for your ‘husband’ [בֵּית לָלַל] is your maker, לְאַתָּה לְדוֹרֵךְ is his name”) and the epithet יָהֲעָל “Yahweh is lord” in 1 Chron 12:5 offer parallels to this use of הַלָל. The vocables בֵּית לָלַל or לְאַתָּה —properly used as common nouns in names—would later be misunderstood as divine names.

The name לְאַתָּה corresponds to the South Arabic ‘nt, cited above. The noun occurs elsewhere in the name לְאַתָּה הָלַל (1 Chr 8:24). This usage is distinguished by its reduplicated feminine ending (like נַעֲרַתָה, נַעֲרַתָה, and the theophoric ה suffix. Despite Albright’s claim (1924: 85) that the ה ending is a scribal error resulting in the corruption of the place name Anathoth, the MT, just as it stands, makes excellent sense meaning “Yahweh is my helper,” much like the more common לְאַתָּה הָלַל and נַעֲרַתָה. The ה ending occurs elsewhere as a type of abstract noun used in titles and designations of office for males and should not be confused with the מ feminine ending.51

Recognition of לְאַתָּה as a common noun does not preclude agreement with either Craigie (1978: 374–381) or Taylor (1982: 99–108) that the Song of Deborah reflects the poet’s recasting of motifs from the Anat myths.52 Likewise, the poet’s transferring

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51 GKC 122‘ and S. R. Driver 1913: 466. See W. Wright 1896 (reprint 1962): 139 (sec. 233c) for Arabic examples in which intensiveness is indicated by the suffixed feminine -atun. See below the discussion on לְאַתָּה הָלַל in Ju 5:23b, pages 205–206.

52 Craigie noted that the following features of the Anat tradition have been transferred to Yahweh or to Deborah: (1) Anat’s male assistant, Yatpan, appears as Barak; (2) Anat’s role as the “maiden” and her leading of warriors is shifted to Deborah; (3) the “Mistress of the Dominions” and the “Mistress of the Stars” motifs are ascribed to Yahweh. Taylor presents a strong case for the poet’s using the image of Athtart in detailing the person and actions of Yael and the image of Anat for portraying the character of Deborah. He noted, “Athtart was summoned to act as a head crusher in response to a ‘challenge of dominion’
Anat’s power and activities to Deborah and Yahweh does not require the dismissal of the historical Shamgar tradition.

C. Other biblical uses of סֵפֶן

Several other occurrences of סֵפֶן support the interpretation given here for the patronym son of Hadas Deborah, including הָדוֹסֵפֶן הָדוֹסֵפֶן in Ps 18:36 (or the parallel text of 2 Sam 22:36), and מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ in Deut 33:27, and מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ in Deut 33:28. (In Ps 60:7, כּוֹנֶנָּה “save us” is obviously a synonym of כָּכָה “save” and כָּכָה “rescued.”)

1. Ps 18:36

Buhl and Kittel (BH) emended the problematic מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ and מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ of Ps 18:36 and 2 Sam 22:36 to מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ, “thy help.” But emendation is unnecessary. The מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ of MT מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ is equivalent to South Arabic ‘nt and Arabic معون “help, assistance,” as noted above (page 51). When restored by a metathesis of the n and l, so as to read מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ, the variant spelling of MT מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ in Ps 18:36 (though lacking the prefixed n) approximates معון מֶלֶךְ. The מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ is rightly rendered in the RSV “thy help made me great.”

2. Deut 33:27

The suggestions of Cross and Freedman (1948: 196, 209) on this passage are attractive. They read,

חָסַל אֶלֶה הָדוֹסֵפֶן Under him are the arms of the Eternal.

But translating מֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ (“his refuge”) remains problematic in the context of the following second-person elements:

[by Yassib to his father Keret] . . . the point of similarity between Athtart and Jael is to be seen in that Jael crushes the skull of one whose military actions no doubt constituted a challenge to Yahweh’s dominion.” Garbini (1978a: 5–31) saw the poem as a contest between Yahweh and a Philistine weather god and Soggin’s (1981c: 99–101) critique of this was on target.

53 Cross (1950: 310) rendered the MT by “your favor,” noting that the word was difficult. Dahood (1966b: 116) translated “your victory,” relating the MT to Phoenician כּוֹנָה “to conquer.” But, given the context of the subsequent militant action spoken of by the psalmist, a reference at this point in the psalm to “victory” seems premature.
(1) the vocative “O Jeshurun” in 33: 26,
(2) the 2ms suffixes of מַעַן יְהוָה “for your help” and מַעַן יְהוָה “from before you” in 33:26 and 27b, respectively,
(3) the combined vocative and 2ms suffix אַסִּירֵי יְהוָה “happy are you, O Israel” in 33:29.

It is difficult to admit in the same context a 3ms suffix referring to Jeshurun. Thus, the MT מַעַן יְהוָה “savior” in Deut 33:27 must be synonymous with מַעַן יְהוָה “as your helper” in 33:26, where the מ of מַעַן יְהוָה does double duty. Synonymous parallels (though not synonymous parallelism) can be recognized:

There is none like El, O Jeshurun, who rides the heavens as
(who rides) the clouds in his majesty!
(Your) savior (מַעַן יְהוָה) is the God of Old;
underneath are the arms of the Eternal!

(Meter 3 + 3 + 2 / 3 + 3; Syllables 6:9:9::8:9)

3. Deut 33:28

The third occurrence of בְּשָׂר is in Deut 33:28, where the MT מַעַן יְהוָה was translated by Meek (1927: 333–334), “The fountain of Jacob undisturbed.” Freedman (1948: 196) and Cross (1973: 157), following Budde and Cassuto, read, “Securely apart dwells Jacob.” But the MT מַעַן יְהוָה can also be read מַעַן יְהוָה, a pil’el corresponding to Arabic مَعْون [3] and [4] “to assist, to help.” By so reading, the tricolon 33:27b–28 can then be translated as it stands in the MT without further difficulty. The initial מ of מַעַן יְהוָה

54 The translation of מ as “as” reflects the beth essentiae. See GKC 1191.

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and the ́ of יָדָיו can be retained as emphatic uses of ́, whereas the third ́ of יְשַׁיְים must be retained as the volutative ́ with the jussive (GKC 109). The preposition יָס of 28b is needed and cannot be considered a scribal error as T. H. Gaster (1947: 62) hesitatingly proposed, nor emended to read פִּל with the Samaritan text, as Freedman (1948: 210) and Cross (1973: 158) suggested. Deut 33:27b–28 can then be translated:

He drove out the enemy before you!
Yea, he commanded destruction (תֶּלֶב) so that Israel might dwell securely.
By himself (תָּבָא) he delivered (תַּעְנַה) Jacob into a land of grain and wine.
Yea, his heavens drip dew!

(Meter 3 + 2 + 3 / 3 + 3 + 3; Syllables 10:5:8::7:8:7)

A sequential infinitive such as בָּל could have been used after יֹעֵל (= יִעֵל), but an ellipsis is attested in 33:26c, where the participle יָשֶׂם is understood rather than stated, “(who rides) the clouds in his majesty.”

Given this evidence for יָעַן as a verb and יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה as nouns synonymous with יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, יָעַה, it is no longer necessary to insist that יָעַה יָעַה must be related to the Canaanite goddess. The יָעַה element in and of itself is no clear sign that a person so named must have been a non-Israelite.

D. Excursus on the extrabiblical uses of יָעַה

Since the vocable יָעַה יָעַה is attested in Hebrew as a noun and verb synonymous with יָעַה יָעַה, the use of יָעַה יָעַה at Elephantine demands at least passing notice. No one has questioned the Jewish identity of

56 I follow here the suggestion of Gordis (1948: 72) who pointed out that יָעַה is the Hiphil infinitive (not the imperative), here used substantively. . . . He compared similar verbs in 1 Sam 15:23; Isa 14:23; Job 6:25, 26; 25:2, and in the Mishnah. Note the translation of Cross (1973: 157), “He drove out the enemy before you; <Before you> he smashed <the foe>.”
the garrison at Yeb because of the נָפָל element in the name Anati. Shamgar ben-Anat can be extended the same courtesy, for the נָפָל in his name, as at Elephantine, was probably the noun “helper, savior,” not the divine name Anat. What Kraeling (1953: 84) called the “liberal attitude of some of the Elephantine Jews” need not be questioned. The syncretism noted in Amos 8:14 may well have flourished at Yeb. The Elephantine נָפָל was probably related to the נָפָל of Samaria and Hamath (2 Kgs 17: 30), and perhaps even to the earlier designation of Aštarat at Ugarit as the šm b'l “the name (hypostasis) of Baal.” But this does not mean that every occurrence of נָפָל must be related to the goddess rather than to the common noun behind her name.

It now seems certain that the divine names נָפָל and נָפָל were actually substantives abstracted from longer appellations. Albright (1968b: 117) reconstructed the original appellation of these two names as follows:

Similarly the name ‘Anat is probably an abbreviation of an original ‘Anat-pa'āl, meaning something like ‘Turning of Baal’s Face’, that is ‘Wrath of Baal’. The word pa'āl, ‘face, presence’, connotes both favour and disfavour in the Hebrew Bible, where it must sometimes be rendered ‘wrath’, depending on the context.

He argued (1957: 339–340; 1968a: 195) that ‘anat is related to Akkadian ettu “sign, omen,” Aramaic נָפָל “sign, time, destiny,” and Hebrew נָפָל “time,” so that, “the name of ‘Anat then probably meant originally ‘sign, indication of purpose, active will,’ and was originally applied to the personified or hypostatized will of Baal.” Albright (1968b: 113) also identified Anat and Tannit as

57 Following here the proposal of Neuberg (1950: 215), in reading, “those who swear by the Ashimah of Samaria[לְבָנָה] and say, ‘By the lives of thy gods, O Dan, by the lives of thy pantheon, O Beersheba!’ they shall fall and never rise again!” Note Ackroyd 1968: 4 note 1, and compare A. Vincent 1937: 566.


59 Compare the proposal of Deem (1978: 25–30) that Anath means “lover,” arguing that since נָפָל means “to inflict pain or sorrow, to rape,” in the pi'el, the qal meaning could be “to have sexual intercourse by consent,” i.e., “to love.” Given the intensive and iterative nature of the pi'el, if the qal means “to


the same goddess, but postulated different etymologies for the two names:

. . . the Carthaginian appellation of the goddess Anath, Tannit-panê-Ba‘al means ‘Radiance of the Presence of Baal’, or the like. Tannit was often identified with Juno Caelestis, Juno as queen of heaven, or as Virgo Caelestis, ‘the Heavenly Virgin’ (cf. the standing appellation at Ugarit, batlulu ‘Anat, ‘the Virgin Anath’).60

Although more than one goddess could have been related to Baal, the probability that two different goddesses were called by the same title, “the face of Baal,” seems unlikely. Consequently, it remains doubtful whether “the turning of Baal’s face” and the “wrath of Baal” adequately explain the phrase בֶּן הַנַּל.61

Cross (1973: 33) noted that problems persist with identifying Tannit and Anat as the same goddess. He offered an alternative derivation of the name Tannit, suggesting that Tannit (“the One of the Serpent” or “the Dragon Lady”) was the feminine counterpart of tannin “serpent.” But this derivation also is not without difficulty. Since the male tannin was the adversary of Baal and Anat and the victim of Anat’s violence, it appears unlikely that a female *tannintu or tannittu would also have been “the face of Baal” and have shared a common title with the goddess Anat.62

Moreover, the serpent is not found among the fertility symbols which accompany Tannit (which are the pomegranate, the palm tree, the dove, and the fish). Were Tannit the “Dragon Lady,” one would expect some representation of the serpent or the scorpion,

love” one would expect the pi‘el to mean “to love passionately.” Little merit can be given to this reversal of meaning, although “to love” could be well within the semantic range of יל “to help.”

60 Albright argued (1968: 37, 118) for the equation of Tannit with Hebrew תַּנְמִית (Num 12:8), going back to *tannit (= tabnît) “form, structure, image,” with the development tabnît > tannit > tennît. This progression is explained in part by the El-Hofra inscriptions which include the variant titles ΦΑΝΕ ΦΑΝΗ and ΦΕΝΝΕ ΦΑΝΗ [BA]Λ.

61 On the interchange of ו and י, see Isa 1:12 and Ps 42:3 where, contrary to the suggestions in BH and BHS, the MT can be retained as the niph‘al and read with י rather than י. Compare the use of ו in Gen 19:13.

such as appears in the Palmyrene representations of Shadrapa (Satarapes), the spirit of healing.\textsuperscript{63}

A more probable derivation is found in recognizing that the names Anat and Tannit were originally common nouns from the vocable ננה (ננה) “to save.” The noun ננה was discussed already.\textsuperscript{64}

Here it will suffice to note that the bilingual inscription from Lapethos provides further evidence that Anat, identified with the goddess of victory Nikê and the savior goddess Pallas Athénaïe, was an anaptyctic figure. The inscription reads in part: לוֹתָתָה מִלָּה... 'אֱלֹהֹתָה נוֹטַ אֱלֹהֹתָה נוֹטַ “to Anat the strength of the living... to Athena, the Savior Nikê” (i.e., to the Savior “Victory”).\textsuperscript{65}

The Phoenician name ננה was probably originally spelled ננה, from the stem ננה, with forms similar to the באל, באל, באל pattern (GKC 85\textsuperscript{a}, 85\textsuperscript{b}). The נ was elided or assimilated and *'anit became ta(n)nt, which, with the anaptyctic vowel, became tannit (just as *באל > באל > באל and *שורי = שורי).\textsuperscript{66}

Thus, ננה and ננה name the same goddess who stood before Baal as the לנה ננה “a savior, consort.” This role of Anat is clearly attested in the Ugaritic texts.\textsuperscript{67} She was the savior who visited the Underworld that she might restore Baal to life. She

\textsuperscript{63} Note Starcky 1949: 43–85, fig. 8 and pl. IV; and Astour 1967: 236.

\textsuperscript{64} See pages 50–53. Note Benz 1972: 382, 429–431 for a summary of the data on Anat and a survey of other views on the etymology of the name Tannit.

\textsuperscript{65} Donner and Röllig 1962–1964, vol. 1, 9–10 (text 42) and vol. 2, 59.

\textsuperscript{66} Note Harris 1936: 32–34; Berthier and Charlier 1955: 238; and especially Friedrich and Röllig 1970: 13, 93–94, sections 31 and 194. The נ of ננה (ננה) may represent the vowel letter a rather than the original נ consonant as in El Hofra text 4, where the anticipated ננה (פאה) was written ננה. Note also ננה for ננה in text 13:2.

\textsuperscript{67} Note 'nt IV: 83–84, hlk . 'aqth . b'i . y'n . dreq / ybn . 'ahh, “Baal eyed the coming of his sister, the approach of the daughter of his father”; UT 76: III: 11, wp . n'mt [. ] 'aqht, “and so, (most) pleasant sisters” (G. R. Driver, 1956: 119); UT 76: II: 16, 20, n'mt . bn . 'aqht . b'i . . . hrw . 'aqht, “(most) gracious among the sisters of Baal... Mayest thou live, sister!” These texts are also cited by Porten (1969: 170–171). Anat, having been introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos, appears in Egyptian mythology as the spouse of Seth who was equated with Baal. Porten noted that Anat became a favorite with Ramesses II.
repeatedly and successfully confronted Mot with the simple command, *tn 'ly, “Give me my brother!”* (UT 49: II: 12).

The motif expressed in the appellations appears in Gen 2: 18, where Eve stands before Adam as "a savior as his consort," who will save him from *'lv*r(a) "his being alone" by providing him with progeny.

Just as *tn 'lw* and *tn 'lt* can mean “the Helper before Baal,” the Elephantine names *tn 'lw*, *tn 'kad*, and *tn 'lt*, also reflect the noun *tn 'l* applied to Yahweh and Bethel. They are like biblical names compounded with *nr*. Consequently, *tn 'lk* is no more problematic than *tn 'hr*. If the evidence can be sustained that the god Bethel was worshiped at Elephantine, "the savior (is) Bethel."

The Hebrew *tn 'lt* would mean “my helper/savior,” like the *nr* in 1 Chron 27:26.

The abstract noun *tn 'lk* could have been used as a male title or designation. Cazelles (1956: 134) noted the use of a similar noun in 2 Sam 23:1, where *tn 'ld* occurs in synonymous parallelism with *tn 'ka* and *tn 'aad*. The expressions are titles of David meaning, respectively, “the friend of the Warrior of Israel” and “the anointed of the God of Jacob.” He concluded that the ending of *tn 'lk* may be related to Egyptian and Akkadian nominal forms which end in -t or -ty, with the same titulary function.

The MT *tn 'lt* “the Savior Yahweh” in Ju 5:23, is another example.

The Benjaminite name "Yahweh is my Savior,” (in 1 Chron 8:24) with the reduplicated *tn* ending, is another example of *tn* used in a Yahwistic name. It seems highly improbable, therefore, that names at Yehe with the element designate a consort of Yahweh, or reflect the survival of some type of Anat worship.

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68 Porten (1969: 173–179) has argued against the probability of the worship of Bethel or Eshem at Elephantine and has provided a bibliography.


70 Compare Dussaud (1942–1943: 286) who stated, “On peut en déduire que, dans les papyrus judéoaraméens d’Eléphantine, Anat est une déesse-soeur,
It is easy to see how the titulary epithet נָעָם יְהוָה or נָעָם יִהוָה could have contributed to pre-Philonic hypostatic speculation. When the collocation of the appellative and the divine name יְהוָה נָעָם “the Savior Yahweh” was understood as “the helper of Yahweh,” the identification of נָעָם נְאֵל “Lady Wisdom” as the helper (Prov 8:22–32) would have been very natural. Thus, while the Elephantine šelah sheds light on early hypostatic speculation, it provides little evidence for the survival of Anat worship by the Jews of Yeb. At Elephantine, נָעָם was simply a common noun.

III. Shamgar’s status as “overseer”

Although Shamgar is given credit for delivering Israel in Ju 3:31 (ואַלָּא בֶּן הַשַּׁמַּגָּר), the title נָעָם נְאֵל is not used for him. As Boling (1975: 89) commented, “there is a complete absence of any familiar rubrics, whether of the salvific or administrative forms.” A. van Selms (1964: 294) concluded,

Shamgar, therefore, is rather out of place in the list of ‘minor judges’ who . . . would have been real judges, in our sense of the word, at the central sanctuary . . . . There is yet more that creates an aura of isolation around this judge. All the regular elements in the description of the work of Israel’s ‘judges’ are lacking . . . . He could be completely omitted from the book without disturbing its chronology.

Huesman (1975: 297), on the other hand, dissociated the heroic Shamgar of 3:31 from the “oppressor” Shamgar of 5:6 by replacing the name of Jabin in Ju 4:2 with the name of Shamgar, doubling his evidence that Shamgar was an oppressor of Israel. However, such a view, which diminishes the status of the heroic Shamgar, must be rejected for the reasons that follow.

A. A motif from a Sumerian Königshymne

In Römer’s publication (1965: 50–51) of Königshymnen from the Isin period, several lines of one hymn introduce a motif strikingly similar to one in Ju 3:31:

Die Männer des Zerstörens . . . die Menschen, die Feindseliges reden, [habe ich] fürwahr am Boden x x [----] . . . x, mit Wonne mit der Axt (!?) ihren

This approximates the LXX (B-text) of Ju 3:31 καὶ ἐπάταξεν τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους εἰς ἐξακοσίους ἄνδρας ἐν τῷ ἁρπασμῷ “and he smote the aliens, up to six hundred men, with the plowshare,” as well as the translation of the MT offered in this study: “he smote with a plowshare two bands of marauders, with a goad he plundered hundreds of men.” The destruction of vaguely identified hostile aliens with agricultural instruments was an act which merited praise for a Sumerian king. Shamgar’s similar heroism resulted in his elevation to a significant, though brief, political position in early Israel.

In Ju 3:31, בָּמָלֵם דַּמָּלָה “with the goad of the ox” need not be read as two bound nouns. The MT בָּמָלֵם is the magtil form of בָּלֵם (a common form for nouns of instrument) meaning “a goad, a striking instrument.” The idea of the “goad” is contained within the word בָּלֵם itself, without the need for a nomen rectum. Therefore, the MT דַּםָלָה can be dissociated from בָּלֵם “goad” and from the noun דַּמָּ “ox, cattle.” It can be read instead as the verb דָּמַע “to examine, to search, to judge,” introducing a new clause—without doing an injustice to Shamgar’s feat of striking down his enemies with a goad (בָּלֵם) and a plowshare (דַּמָּ).

B. The Qumran בָּמָלֵם דַּמָּה and the “Community Overseer” of Ugarit

The use of a nominal form of דָּמַע “overseer” as a synonym for overseer, commissioner” is attested in 1QS 6:11–14 where the “overseer of the many” is also identified as יָבָשָׁה דָּמַע (11–12) and as the יָבָשָׁה דָּמַע בֵּית הָעִבְרִים (14).73

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71 Lines 217, 218, and 226. Compare also Albright 1968b: 71, note 74, who translated, “I have verily broken the SA.GAZ . . . with the pick-axe; on his neck (?) I have verily imposed the yoke (?)”.


73 Burrows 1951: pl. 6, lines 11–12, 14; Brownlee 1951: 24–25.
T. H. Gaster (1956: 50, 98, note 57) translated both titles as “the superintendent of the general membership,” and equated the former noun to the ἐπίσκοπος “bishop” and the latter to the ἐπιμελητής “stewards, overseers” of the Essene community mentioned in Eusebius and noted by Josephus. These were appointed positions, with the latter one, χειροτονητὸς ἐπιμελητής, being an official elected by the gesture of the outstretched hand.

The ἱσταμένος of 1QS 6:12, 20 and its appearance fifteen times in CD cols. 9, 13–15 may be the hophal participle ἱσταμένος “one who was elected overseer” rather than a pi'el participle, ἱσταμένος, as read by some commentators. The “Rule for the Overseer of the Camp” (ὁμοδιάθηκας ἱσταμένος) in CD 13:7–19 and 14:8–18 identifies the ἱσταμένος as a colleague of the Qumran judges:75

He is to bring back all of them that stray, as does a shepherd his flock. He is to loose all the bonds that constrain them, so that there is no one in his community who is oppressed or crushed (CD 13: 9–10) . . . . Anything that anyone has to say in a matter of dispute or litigation (ὁμοδιάθηκας ἱσταμένος), he is to say to the overseer . . . . Wages for at least two days per month are to be handed over to the overseer (ἤπευξεν ἰδίον ἱσταμένος). The judges are then to take thereof (ὁμοδιάθηκας ἱσταμένος) and give it away for the benefit of the orphans (CD 14:11–14). (Gaster 1956: 81, 83)

If Shamgar “had been appointed” (ὁμοδιάθηκας ἱσταμένος) and had functioned as a ἱσταμένος, his responsibilities would have been quasi-judicial, assuming that there was some correspondence between the two communities even though they were separated by a millennium.

The Ugaritic evidence concerning the root ḫṣ’t/hṣ’s is limited but significant. In PRU II 56: 7 (UT 1056: 7) the phrase paq yhd occurs, which Gordon (1965: 470) translated “overseer of the (religious) community,” noting that “both words anticipate Qumran usage: ἱσταμένος ἱσταμένος.” The Ugaritic title does not correspond exactly to the Qumran title, ἱσταμένος ἱσταμένος, and the functions of the office were probably different in two such disparate

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74 See Naber 1895: 5: 162 (Josephus, War, 2: 8.3); and “Eusebii Pamphili Praeparatio Evangelica,” PG 21: cols. 640 and 643.

75 For the text of the Zadokite Fragment, see Rost 1933: 25–26; for a translation of the text, see T. H. Gaster 1956: 76–84.
communities. But the use of בָּשָׁר in Ugaritic for a community leader means that the Qumran usage of בָּשָׁר, like its Nabatean counterpart, was not an innovation of that community.

Although בָּשָׁר is unattested as a noun in Biblical Hebrew (unless a בָּשָׁר was corrupted to the more common בָּשָׁר), the Qumran בָּשָׁר employs a traditional term attested in Ugaritic texts without the ב preformative. Were it not for the pqr yhd appearing in Ugaritic the proposed revocalization of MT בָּשָׁר to בָּשָׁר could be dismissed as an unlikely anachronism. However, these extra-biblical references suggest that in the phrase בָּשָׁר וְיְשָׁנָה the first word was the stem בָּשָׁר, used for a quasi-judicial appointment.

C. The use of בָּשָׁר in Ezek 34:11–22 and Lev 27:33

Although the nouns בָּשָׁר, בָּשָׁר, and בָּשָׁר do not occur in Biblical Hebrew, the verb בָּשָׁר “to oversee” does appear. The use of בָּשָׁר as a synonym for בָּשָׁר “to look after” (similar to the use at Qumran of the synonyms בָּשָׁר and בָּשָׁר) was noted in Gesenius-Buhl (1921: 112) for Ezek 34:11–12, where the collocation of בָּשָׁר, בָּשָׁר, and בָּשָׁר approximates the collocation of בָּשָׁר and בָּשָׁר in Ju 3:31. The prohibition given in Lev 27:33, which forbids any substitution for or exchange of “every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman’s staff,” used the verb לַא יִכְרֵא בָּשָׁר מִשָּׁשׁ לָרָע, “there must be no judging between good and bad (animals).”

In light of such texts in which the semantic range of בָּשָׁר overlaps the meaning of בָּשָׁר and בָּשָׁר, it is not surprising that בָּשָׁר, rather than בָּשָׁר or בָּשָׁר, was used for Shamgar’s activities. Had nouns been used rather than verbs, he would have appeared as a בָּשָׁר “overseer” and a בָּשָׁר “a deliverer.” Therefore, although the familiar rubric מְשַׁמֵּש is missing, the consonantal MT

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76 For the Nabatean בָּשָׁר, see Negev 1982: 25 and bibliography cited there.

77 This use of בָּשָׁר followed by the prepositions ב and ל parallels the use of מְשַׁמֵּש followed by ב and ל in Ezek 34:17 and 22 (מְשַׁמֵּש בִּן and מְשַׁמֵּש ל). Note also Ezek 34:20.
permits one to recognize him as overseer and deliverer. He would have qualified, no doubt, as a savior-figure for the pre-Deuteronomistic Retterbuch!

IV. Shamgar’s victims

If the proposal proffered in this study, that Ju 3:31 was at one time an integral part of the Song of Deborah, proves correct, then the two earliest poems in Israelite literature contain a common enigma. The Song of the Sea and the Song of Deborah make reference to Philistines although they were not on the scene until after the eighth regnal year of Ramesses III, circa 1190 (Faulkner 1975: 242; Barnett 1975: 371). The solution to this Philistine problem is not to be found by pushing the events into the later Philistine era. The proposal made by Mayes (1969: 353–360; 1974: 91–99) that the Philistines in Judges 4–5 provide the basis for dating the victory over Sisera at the time of the Israelite defeat of the Philistines at Aphek, towards the end of the eleventh century, is untenable. His conclusion (1974: 94), that “even if the arguments which have been adduced in support of this date of the battle against Sisera are not very reliable, it is still probable that the conclusion is correct,” is less than convincing.

Nor is the use of מַלְשָׁנָה in Ex 15:14 to be explained simply as an anachronism, as argued by Cross (1955: 237–250). Albright (1968: 41–42) was correct in maintaining, “it is no longer necessary to insist on an anachronism in this passage, which suits a thirteenth-century background so well.” But, Albright’s proposed emendation of the alleged anachronism is not convincing either. He changed MT יָלֵֽה יָבְּי to read יָלָֽה יָבְּל “all the Children of Shut,” the name of a semi-nomadic group known from the nineteenth century B.C.E.

Excluding the LXX, which did not transliterate מַלְשָׁנָה as a name but translated it by ἀλλόφυλοι “alien tribes” (presumably aware of a Hebrew cognate to Ethiopic palasa “to migrate, to emigrate”), exegetical tradition can be faulted, in words taken

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78 Note also Watts 1957: 378, note 2.

79 Note Albright’s earlier proposal to emend MT יָלֵֽה יָבְּי to יָלֵֽה יָבְּל, cited by Cross and Freedman 1955: 249.
from Barr (1968: 268), “for a strong tendency towards leveling the vocabulary and the interpretation of that which is rare as if it was [sic] that which was more normal.” What appears to be “the Philistines” in Ju 3:31 is the dual of the feminine collective noun המלשׂים “marauders, troops” (being morphologically like מעריות נדנודים “twin cities”). In Ex 15:14, the same noun appears in the plural, with defective spelling, as would be expected in early texts.

80 The stems are attested in the following:

(1) Aramaic בַּלְפָּלֶת “to search, to investigate, to ransack, to break up clods of earth,” and בַּלְפָּל “ground-diggers”;

(2) Aramaic פְּלָל “to dig (after), to perforate, to penetrate”;

(3) Syriac פֶּלָל “to break through, to perforate” which in the ‘ethpeal means “to be pillaged, to be plundered’;

(4) Syriac בַּלְל “to dig into, to search, to investigate.”

The nominal forms which are cognates of Hebrew מלחים are Aramaic בַּלְל “marauders, troop(s)” and the Syriac פֶּלֶת “thieves” and פְּלָל “thieves, marauders.”

81 This stem is attested in Job 37:16, בַלפָּל “the breaking open of a cloud” (repointing ב to ב), and may be original to Job 36:29 (NRSV “spreading of the clouds”) if the reading of MS Ken 245 (noted in BH) is retained as the lectio difficilior, since it reads מֶלְאָשׂים for MT מֶלֶשׂים. The LXX translator appears to have had

**The LXX translator appears to have had**}

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80 The stems of 1 Sam 12:9 are more likely the Philistines of Ju 13–16, not the “marauders” of Ju 3:31.

81 For the Aramaic, see Jastrow 1903: 7a, 175b, 1185a; for the Syriac, see R. Payne Smith 1897–1901: 541, 3164 and J. Payne Smith 1903: 47, 449. Note Ethiopic palasa “migravit, emigravit, ivit de loco ad locum,” (Castell 1669: 3014c) and Akkadian palāšu, pališu “Einbrecher” (AHW 815).

82 If the textual variant cited for Job 36:29 were read and interpreted as בַּלְפָּל “to perforate,” the poetic line would be in logical sequence with the preceding references to rainfall, and the line would not have to be transposed to follow verse 31, as proposed in the NEB and by Pope (1965: 231, 237). The line could better be read, “... can anyone understand the perforations of the clouds (בַּלפָּל), the thundering from His pavilion?” Obviously one variant reading cannot be given much weight, but, likewise, it cannot be ignored. It is possible
“to break open, to break up” in his lexical repertoire since מְשָׁרָה in Job 37:16 was translated ἐρίστασθαι & διάκρισιν νεφών, “and he knows (the) separation of (the) clouds.”

The poet’s use of dual feminine nouns in the initial verse of the poem (i.e., the בְּשָׁרָה in Ju 3:31 when transposed), in 5:16 (םְשָׁרָה), and in 5:30 (םָשָׁרָה) and הַרְשָׁרוּת and הַרְשָׁרָה) reflects a balanced use of these forms which corresponds to the balanced use of the dual suffixed forms in 5:11 (מְשָׁרָה “his two warriors”) and 5:22 (מְשָׁרָה “its two slopes”). The prevalence of the dual forms in this tradition is also evidenced in the בְּשָׁרָה in Ju 4:11 (although the NRSV, following the plural of the Qere, has Elon-bezaananim), which Soggin (1981c: 61, 66) translated “oak of the caravaneers,” followed by Schloen (1993: 32-33) who cited cognate מֶלֶק/עָלָא “to load [a beast with] cargo.” Without commenting on the significance of the dual form of the Ketib, Soggin also cited the Arabic cognate مَاطِعُ “to pack up (for carriage on a beast of burden).”

The problem of the Philistines in Ex 15:14 has a comparable solution. The meaning of מְשָׁרָה in Ex 15:14 is transparent when מְשָׁרָה is read as the Hebrew equivalent of Aramaic רִשּׁוֹ “settlement, inhabited land.” The phrase means “the settlements of the marauders.” Communities of such nomadic peoples are mentioned in Ju 8:10 (מְשָׁרָה בֵּין = B-text אַלַּוּפָלוּנ and A-text וַלְּאַלְוַלְוָן אַנְטָהֲלוֹ), in Ju 8:11 (מְשָׁרָה בֵּינוֹנִים מָכֵרו) “the tent

that מְשָׁרָה and מְשָׁרָה מְשָׁרָה were by-forms in which the liquid מְשָׁרָה and מְשָׁרָה were interchangeable like the occurrence of MT הָעֵצָה “in its towers” in Isa 13:22 for the anticipated הבָּעֵנָה, or the Aramaic interjections מַלְכָּה and מַלְכָּה. Note also מַשָּׁרָה “goad, plowshare” (Jastrow 1903: 1243).

83 The LXX did not associate the word with מְשָׁרָה = γιογάς. MT מְשָׁרָה was evidently recognized as a synonym for מְשָׁרָה “to break open, to break up” and מְשָׁרָה “to break through, to break open.”

84 Note Lindars’ (1995: 192) objection, “However, in this case ‘elon should have the article and the preposition should really be preceded by the relative (supplied in Pesh), as in the next phrase, so that it seems more likely that b is a root letter . . . the name being derived from בֵּן = ‘cut off, bring to an end’ (cf. LXX διαπατούμενον) or ‘plunder’ (cf. LXX πλεονεκτόνων). Indeed the name could well be ‘tree of the plunderers’ . . . .”

85 Jastrow 1903: 599b.
settlements of the eastern tribes), and in Num 31:10, (הל מרות “all of their hosts in their encampments”).

Without emending Ex 15:14 to provide an ethnonym, the very people whom Albright thought the poet had in mind are indicated by the collective noun הלומד, i.e., the הלומד. The verse can be translated, “the peoples heard, they shuddered, anguish seized the settlements of the marauding tribes (واس כלאים).” Anxiety among the Amalekites and the Midianites about the incursion of Israelites into territories which they considered their rightful domain is sufficiently attested in Num 24:15–24 and Ju 8 that an indirect reference to them in Ex 15:14 would not be out of place.

In Ju 3:31 the הלומד “two marauding troops” defeated by Shamgar could possibly have been nomadic tribes of the Trans-Jordan, making Shamgar’s feat similar to Gideon’s defeat of “all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the people of the east,” mentioned in Ju 6:33. But as Aharoni (1967: 240) noted,

Incursions by desert nomads in search of plunder such as those carried out by the Midianites, the Amalekites and the people of the East . . . into the Jezreel Valley were possible only after the Canaanite cities in the region had been weakened by their defeat before Barak.

Consequently, it seems improbable that Shamgar had to deal with marauders from the Trans-Jordan.

Aharoni’s (1975: 259–260) proposal to credit Shamgar with the destruction of Beth Shan Level VII (at the close of the thirteenth century and the end of the nineteenth dynasty) and to identify the “Philistines” killed by him as Aegean mercenaries serving in the Egyptian garrison is very problematic. Since the Philistines are mentioned for the first time in the inscriptions of Ramesses III among the Sea Peoples, but are not listed among the Sea Peoples named by Merneptah, reference to them in

86 See the discussion on pages 158–161 which deals with the MT הל מרות “the troops of Deborah roused themselves” in 5:12.

87 Nomadic tribes in the vicinity of Edom and Moab are referred to by names which are composites of עב and a combative term, including (1) the עב ויר in Ju 8:11, who could be called “the attackers” in light of South Arabic qdm “attack” (Jamme 1962: 447a) rather than “the sons of the east” or “eastern tribes,” cited above; (2) the עב וה “the warriors” in Num 24:17, a name with a cognate to South Arabic štr “to war, to skirmish.” (Jamme 1962: 449b); and (3) the עב וה “sons of battle-clamor, warriors” (BDB 981a). See above, note 50.
connection with Beth Shan Level VII is at best an appeal for an anachronism in the text. Aharoni (1975: 259) found it necessary to stipulate cautiously, “Even if they were not true Philistines but some other segment of the Sea Peoples, it would not be surprising that they should be called Philistines since that became the standard biblical terminology for all Aegean races that appeared in the land.”

But the use of נָוֶר הָרָדוֹת in Zeph 2:5 and the appearance of the מְלֶשָׁהָם, מְלֶשָׁהָם in 2 Sam 15:18 indicate that other names were used for the Aegean people. If the מְלֶשָׁהָם in Ju 3:31 really means Philistines, it remains a difficult anachronism. It would be unusual if the destruction of an Egyptian center in Canaan were referred to solely by an anachronistic ethnicon, accurate or other-wise, for some of the mercenaries found in that Egyptian garrison.

The problem is further complicated by the lack of agreement on the dating of Beth Shan Level VII (opinions vary by almost two centuries from the time of Amenhotep III [1417–1379] to the time of Merneptah [1236–1223]) and on dating the use of Aegean mercenaries at Beth Shan (opinions differ as to whether such troops were used before, during, or after the reign of Ramesses III [1198–1166]).

While the anthropoid coffins found at Beth Shan provide convincing evidence for an Aegean presence there (possibly as mercenaries), it must be noted, as Aharoni (1975: 258) himself stated, “Of much significance is the fact that in the Beth Shan burials none of the typical Philistine pottery, so much in evidence in the anthropoid burials at Tell el-Far‘ah, was found.” This absence of any Philistine pottery led Dothan (1957: 157) to conclude that, at the time of the Aegean presence at Beth Shan, Philistine pottery had not yet emerged.

88 Albright (1975: 2, 511) and Aharoni (1975: 258) identified the Beth Shan material as evidence of a pre-Ramesses III employment of mercenaries at Beth Shan. But Barnett (1975: 377) noted: “Ramses III claims to have utterly defeated them [the Sea Raiders] and suggestions that he and his successors settled groups of Peleset (Philistine) mercenary garrisons in Beth-shan in Palestine are demonstrated by the finds there of ‘Sea People’ burials.” This latter view is also affirmed by Dothan (1957: 157), G. E. Wright (1964: 63–67), Fitzgerald (1967: 192–193), Malamat (1971: 35), and Mazar (1971: 168). For a discussion on the dating of Beth Shan Level VII, see Kempinski 1975: 213–214.
Another difficulty with Aharoni’s proposal is that Shamgar’s victory does not suggest an attack against a city nor the destruction of a city. Even allowing for poetic hyperbole, it would be difficult to take this single-handed action of Shamgar, armed with only an oxgoad, as evidence of his violently destroying a garrison town from which Egypt exercised hegemony over Galilee. Such an interpretation removes Shamgar’s feat from the category of a historical notice into the genre of legend and makes a historical inquiry unwarranted.

But when the text of Ju 3:31 is vocalized rather than and identified as marauding elements of the Sea-Peoples or their precursors, the text fits the historical context. At least from the time of the razzia of the Lydian Mopsos which brought Ashkelon to destruction, the eastern Mediterranean seacoast experienced the brunt of repeated incursions from western Anatolia and the Aegean, culminating about 1200 B.C.E. with the invasion of the Sea Peoples which caused the destruction of the Hittite empire and threatened Egypt and her Asian provinces.

Coastal towns and inland cities in Syria-Palestine were destroyed by the Sea-Peoples. As Malamat (1971: 29) noted,

Such localities as Jaffa, Ashdod, Tel Mor, and even Gezer show evidence of having been destroyed twice—first apparently in the time of Mer-ne-Ptah, in hit-and-run raids from the sea; and the second, a more massive action in the time of Ramses III, involving settlement on the conquered sites.

Fortunately, the topographical list of Ramesses II (1304–1237 B.C.E.) on the hypostyle of the Great Temple of Amon at Karnak preserves in its twenty-five name-rings the names of several marauding groups in the Egyptian province of Asia, probably in Canaan-Galilee, during the last half of the thirteenth century.

89 Barnett 1975: 364–366, especially 365, note 1, where he noted that the Madduwahtash episode and the date of Mopsus have been put back by some scholars to the early fourteenth century. See Mendenhall 1973: 146–148, 168 and Desborough 1975: 680. On the Sea Peoples, in general, see Sandars (1985); and for Mopsus, in particular, see Roscher 1894–1897: 3208–3210 and PW 16a: 241–243.

90 Simons 1937: 75–79, 157–159, nos. 7, 8, 13, and 21, respectively. On the Asiatic campaigns of Ramesses II, see Kitchen 1964: 47–55. The names nrm and r in the name-rings qnwnrm and q:sr have not been identified, and no
These names are among those compounded with the preformative nouns ḍš, ṣwš or ṣyš, including ḍšṭššyš (which was corrected to read ḍšṭššyš on the basis of the list of Ramesses III), ṣwšnrn, and ṣyšrybn.

A satisfactory explanation of the ḍš, ṣwš and ṣyš elements has been lacking thus far. Yeivin (1971: 24, 192) rejected both Hebrew [ם] and Arabic قوس “bow, bowmen” as the cognate or loanword. He surmised that was intended and that the transcription of ḍš for ḏš was used “to differentiate between the familiar (to the Egyptians) ḏš = Nubia, who were Africans, and the Asiatic groups of Cushites.”

This suggestion is possible, but it appears more likely that ḍš (ṣwṣyṣ) is the cognate of Arabic جيشٍ “a raider, an (irregular) military force, marauding troops,” the Syriac and Aramaic جاءもらい “band,” and South Arabic ḍyš. It is the equivalent of the Egyptian ṣd t “a troop” (Faulkner 1962: 97; Shupak 1989: 518) and a synonym for Hebrew יהב “troop, band.” The use of ḍ in

This suggestion is being offered here. However, the name rybn can be recognized as the name Reuben, i.e., [ם] for [ם], characterized by the elision of the צ (see GKC 688), well-attested in other extrabiblical texts like the תחנה and תחנה in the Aramaic papyri (see Cowley 1923: 1–2, 70).

The syllabic ra-ya-bu-na for the anticipated ra-yu-bi-na may reflect the corruption in the Egyptian syllabic orthography frequently attested from the time of Ramesses III, and possibly from the time of Ramesses II (see Albright 1934: 14 [sec. 24] and 20 [sec. 33a]). This identification of rybn with Reuben would preclude Reuben’s participation in an exodus from Egypt during the reign of Ramesses II and would add weight to the arguments of Burney (1921: 52) and others that Reuben, like other tribes, had not participated in the sojourn in Egypt in the first place (see Rowley 1952: 112, 139). The suppression in Canaan of the band of Reuben by Ramesses II explains in part the subordinate position of Reuben among the tribes even though he was recognized as the firstborn of Jacob. The occurrence of the names Sisera and Reuben in the same topographical list of Ramesses II suggests that the hostility between these two disparate bands spanned the reigns of both Ramesses II and Ramesses III.


92 See, respectively, Lane 1872: 494a; and Hava 1915: 670; R. Payne Smith 1897–1901: 685; J. Payne Smith 1903: 69; Jastrow 1903: 237–238; and Jamme 1962: 82. Note that the Syriac has a pejorative meaning.
Egyptian for the Semitic $g$ is reflected in the name for Gezer ($qa-di-ra = \text{גַּדִּיר}$). Consequently, the ring-name $q\ddot{a}\dddot{š}i\dddot{š}ir$, which Yeivin transiterated “Kushsisera,” can be translated “(territory) of the marauding troops of Sisera.” The name Sisera here can be identified with the Sisera of Judges 4–5. However, it need not be the same person, but a family or clan name or a title.

It is impossible to reconstruct history from such limited evidence, but one can conjecture that the suppression of someone named Sisera by Ramesses II eventuated in an aligning of the Sisera clan with the Canaanite forces of Jabin at Hazor, and that from these suppressed marauders came the Sisera who survived the destruction of Hazor and, in turn, oppressed the Israelites.

If Sisera was a Luwian name, as proposed by Albright (1920: 61; 1970: 15), Garbini (1978a: 15–31), Soggin (1981c: 63), and others—rather than Hurrian or Illyrian, as proposed by Burney (1918: 15), Alt (1944: 78), Noth (1958: 37), and J. Gray (1967: 208)—the events leading to Sisera’s oppression of the Israelites become even clearer. Having survived the defeat of Jabin at the hands of the Israelites, Sisera witnessed the success of Shamgar and the Israelites against his kinfolk, the precursors of the Philistines. After Shamgar’s death, he altered that situation for two decades and gave the advantage to his adopted relatives, the native kings of Canaan who ruled under the shadow of Egyptian hegemony.

Beem (1991: 158–162) noted that Shamgar did not easily fit the category of a minor judge (in contrast to the major judges, the “deliverers”) since his brief story lacked the “minor judge framework,” which included these seven elements: (1) the transitional phrase ‘after him’; (2) the name of the judge; (3) the tribal, clan, or regional designation; (4) the years of service; (5) the notice of death; (6) the place of burial; and (7) often a personal detail. He concluded (159, 162) that this “superhuman hero” does not fit the major/minor judge classification: “he stands there . . . with his oxgoad, bigger than any of our categories.”

In my opinion, the Shamgar story lacks five of these seven elements. The narrative provides only his name and some personal details. Shamgar, stands apart from the major/minor categories because his story, now bifurcated in Ju 3:31 and 5:6,
was originally an integral part the older poetic tradition—not the later prose tradition dealing with major/minor judges.

Beem’s study provides, however, the clue as to why the original ַָּּהַּ הַּ in Ju 3:31 was changed into the MT ַָּּהַּ הַּ. Once Shamgar’s poetic lines were bifurcated, the phrase was transformed into the initial element (i.e., the transitional phrase ‘after him’) of the ‘minor judge’ framework.
I. The Meaning of hrwbd

In Megillah 14b Deborah’s name is hrwbd, “hornet, bee” and it is called a hateful name. According to Feldman (1986: 122), Josephus actually denigrated Deborah by equating her name with μέλισσα “bee.” But Brown (1992: 73–74) suggested that Josephus’s translation of hrwbd as μέλισσα explains his reference to Deborah’s interceding for the people as a priestly function. Brown surmised that the analogy to the bee implies that Deborah was asexual, which may help to explain why Josephus omitted the phrase ἡ γυνὴ ὕπατη “wife of Lappidoth.” Many critics since Josephus have associated hrwbd with μέλισσα, among them Bachmann (1869: 252) and G. A. Smith (1912: 82), who noted

... it [hrwbd] may be a Hebrew parallel to the Greek Melissa, which was not only an epithet applied to poets, but [also] the title of the Delphian prophetess and of other ‘humming priestesses’ of such prophetic deities as Demeter, her daughter [Persephone] and Cybele.

While these parallels with μέλισσα are of some interest, defining the name Deborah as “hornet” or “bee” appears to be only an early “popular” etymology, reminiscent of the figurative zoomorphic titles given to the rabbinic dialecticians, the נשים חיות (Hahn 1897: vii–ix). Moreover, the “bee” etymology fails to provide a common derivation for the names Deborah, Daberath, and Tabor, an association about which Burney conjectured (1918: 81), “Possibly there may have been a connexion between the name of this city [Daberath] and the name of the prophetess.”

Even though R. Payne Smith (1897–1901: 815a) had associated the name Deborah with Syriac ṣ̄ibān “leader,” Klein (1987: 114), when citing post-Biblical Hebrew ṣ̄iḥā “leader” and ṣ̄iḥāy “leadership,” made no mention of Deborah, citing instead ṣ̄ibān “to speak, to hum” and as the etymology of Deborah “Deborah” and “bee.” But Brown (1992: 70) rightly noted that “the designation of Deborah as ‘leader’ possibly derives from a wordplay
on the Aramaic root of the name Deborah, dbr, which denotes (among other meanings) to ‘lead (the flock).’” However, more than an Aramaic cognate is involved in recognizing Deborah as “leader.” The stem דבר is Hittite and Hebrew, as well.

Mendenhall (1973: 163) was the first to propose a common etymology based upon the Hittite-Luwian tapara “governor, ruler” for the names דבר (Josh 15:15) in the southern Shephelah (also known as דביר) and דבר (2 Sam 9:4) in the Trans-Jordan (spelled דביר in 2 Sam 17:27 and Amos 6:13; and דביר in Josh 13:26). He stated,

> On the Transjordanian plateau is located the curious Lodebar, “nothing” by popular etymology, but the name is the precise equivalent to later L/Ruwanda preserved in Greek, going back to original R/Luwandatapara, “Ruwanda is Lord.” . . . D/ Tapara ‘lord, governor,’ gives us by popular etymology Debir, just as Egyptian transcriptions yield the name Qiryat-Sofer city of the śāpiru = “governor” . . . . One name is a translation of the other. “City of the book” (ספרי) is thus again a late popular etymology.\(^{94}\)

The appearance of the Hittite-Luwian t/dapara “ruler, governor” is more widely attested than Mendenhall, Klein, or Brown have noted. The vocable דבר appears as a noun meaning “leader” and as the verb “to rule, to govern, to manage the affairs (of a province, not just a flock)” in Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, and elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew, as well.\(^{95}\)

דבר “to govern” is attested in Ps 18:48, which can be translated, “He causes (me) to govern (דבד) the nations subordinate to me,” and similarly, Ps 47:4, “He causes (me) to govern (דבד) nations subordinate to us and nations inferior to us.” Ps 58:2a reads, “O gods, do you really govern (דבד) justly?” Also, in 2 Chron 22:10, one can translate, “Athaliah . . . rose and took control (דבד) over all of the royal seed of the house of Judah.”\(^{96}\)

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\(^{94}\) Mendenhall, 1973: 163. He calls attention to Milgrom’s (1970) study supporting his identification of “ethnic” Levites as being originally Luwian.


\(^{96}\) The versions read “Athaliah . . . rose and exterminated all of the royal seed” under the influence of דבורה in 2 Kgs 11:1.
The place name תורם ("governor") in Josh 21:12, 28 and 1 Chron 6:57 is the same name which appears in Josh 19:20 as תורנו (A-text תבָּר נָה "great lady" but B-text דַּבְּר נָה). The name תורם is a translation of תורמ, as תורמ תורמ “city of the governor” in Josh 15:15 is the translation of תורמ תורמ (as noted on page 74). The A-text תבָּר נָה (= תבָּר נָה for MT תורם) could reflect an honorific plural, like the תורם in Ju 5:2. Indeed, the singular appearance of תורמ תורמ leads one to suspect that it was originally תורמ or even תורמ, the honorific appellative which appears in Lam 1:1, "the Mistress of the people . . . the Mistress among the nations" (McDaniel 1968b: 30–31; Cross 1983: 136).

Deriving the name Deborah from the same root as תורמ and תורמש permits תורמש to be read as the title "Lady-governor, Ladyship," much like תורמ תורמ "Princess" and תורמ תורמ "Queen." The place names from the תורם root could also be תורמ תורמ and even תורמ תורמ—places renowned for leadership.

Therefore, Mendenhall’s conclusion that Debir is related to tapara can be extended to the names תורמ תורמ, תורמ, and תורמ. Luwian names with the independent prefixed or affixed tapara element, cited by Houwink Ten Cate (1961: 158–159), include the variations תרמ-ה, תרמ-ה, תרמ-ה, תרמ-ו, and תרמ-ו. The variations between תרמ and תרמ and תרמ and תרמ parallel the variations occurring in תורמ and תורמ; and the Hellenized spellings ending in תרמ parallel the Semitisized forms תורמ and תורמ. It would not be surprising to find the name of Deborah in other texts appearing as תורמ תורמ, תורמ תורמ, תורמ תורמ, or תורמ תורמ.98

97 The unusual transliterations of תורמ in 5:1 and 7, with the doubling of the third consonant, דָּבְּרָה (MSS נ.g’ gkmsz), דָּבְּרָה (MSS dlhmpq), may find their explanation in this spelling. Gemination of the third radical is rare, even in Arabic and Akkadian. However, transliterations with a doubling of the second consonant—e.g., דָּבְּרָה and דָּבְּרָה—are not problematic since gemination of the second radical is much more common (see Moscati, 1964: 78–79).

98 On the interchange of the voiceless נ and the voiced נ, see 1 Chron 17:17 (תורמ נライト) and the parallel account in 2 Sam 7:19 (תורמ תורמ נライト), where תורמ or תורמ appear instead of the anticipated תורמ. See also note 101.
In view of the many Hittite motifs appearing in the Megiddo ivories, one can anticipate other evidence of a Hittite presence in Galilee until the collapse of the Hittite empire about 1200 B.C.E. 99 Indeed, Rendsburg (1982, 1989) has argued that the peculiar ולديد occurring 120 times in the Torah is a genuine Hebrew form, but he noted that “epicene HW’ is the result of the Hurrian and Hittite substratum [which used a 3rd common singular pronoun] in the very area where Hebrew first appears as a distinct dialect of the Canaanite language.” 100

Deborah’s origins may have been Hittite, allowing her nonetheless still to be counted as an Israelite. She uniquely had the title לאהנה נביו “the Mother in Israel” and Ezekiel (16:3, 45) noted perhaps with more historical accuracy than has been appreciated, “your mother was a Hittite (יְהוּדהַת), your father an Amorite.” The credibility of Ezekiel’s castigation of Jerusalem would have required some established tradition about a Hittite “mother,” comparable to the traditions about “sisters” Sodom and Samaria to which he also appealed (16:46).

The title לאהנה נביו in Ju 5:7, in parallelism with לנהו לנהו, reflects the poet’s use of synonyms: “Mother” and “Ladyship.” The title נביו (like the title לנהו) and the title לנהו “(Lady) Governor” speak of political and/or religious leadership. P. de Boer (1974: 31) cited the epithet “the Lady of the Battle” (given to Inanna in the epilogue of the Hammurabi Code) as an appropriate title for Deborah and correctly noted the absence of any literal “motherly” role for her. The “mother-of-god” title in Hittite texts (ANET, 100

99 Loud 1935: 10. The statement of Gordon (1958: 31, note 9) is noteworthy: “The Hittite contribution to Israel will doubtless appear more and more significant during the years ahead. The full meaning of Ezek 16:3 (‘thy father is an Amorite, and thy mother is a Hittite’) is yet to come.” See also Rabin 1963: 113–139 and Kempinski 1979: 21–45.

100 The Hurrian substratum may account for the spirantization of the Hebrew לנהו and the postpositive article in Aramaic. See Rendsburg (1982: 363) and references cited there. Rendsburg’s conclusion that the epicene ולديد proves that “The Pentateuch as a whole by necessity can be dated earlier than the composition of Joshua, Judges, etc.” is premature. The use of the epicene ולديد could be a deliberate archaizing device designed to give the Pentateuch an ambiance of antiquity, required for its having Mosaic authority. Until the question over its being archaic or archaistic is resolved, there is little to be gained by abandoning the achievements of literary criticism.
209, 211) for women of religious authority could explain Deborah’s title of דבורה, as well as the designation נב この in Ju 4:4. Consequently, the Hittite connection of “the Mother in Israel,” suggested by Ezekiel, provides a link between Deborah’s name and her synonymous title of authority.

The topographical list of Ramesses III (1198 B.C.E.) on the first pylon of the Great Temple of Medinet Habu records the names of one hundred nineteen northern towns and territories (plus six African places) which he had suppressed. The text of the 85th name-ring, which is directly under the arch of Ramesses’ right foot (see Plates I and II), appears in Simons’ transcription and discussion of the ring-name as [q]-ץ-ט-ר-ט (؟). But as is unmistakable from the photograph, the name can also be read <q>טבשת by restoring the q and reading the deeply incised sign as a variant of the [q] sign (ta). As is clear from the 84th and 86th name-rings, the sign cannot be read as the sign (n). The first part of the name is the qט ( qwט or qyט) element meaning “troops, marauding band,” discussed above (pages 70–71). The second element, טבשת, is probably the variant טבר (= טבר). When taken together, qwט plus טבשת could be read as “(the territory of) the troops of Deborah.”

Simons noted, perhaps with more correctness than he realized, that this טבר was related to the 21st ring-name in the list of

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101 See Simons 1937: 78–79, 165–168. For the name ד-ט-ר דוכ-ט = Deper = Tabor (occurring in the list of Galilean cities along with Beth-anath and Merom) captured by Ramesses III in the eighth year of his reign, see Breasted 1906: 3: 159. The טבשת of the Ramesses II list suggests that in this case, at least, Ramesses III did not borrow from the list of Ramesses II at Karnak. On the interchange of ס and ט and ת and ת, see page 75 above and note 98.

102 See Albright 1934: 63; and Gardiner 1966: 531. On the matter of errors in the inscriptions, see Nelson (1929: 23–31) who noted:

Another point not always appreciated in dealing with these Medinet Habu reliefs is the extensive ancient use of plaster to cover up defects in the masonry and to eliminate lines and whole figures . . . the method used for making the corrections was to cut deep rectangular holes along all very deeply cut lines to be eliminated . . . the deep holes served to hold this new plaster covering . . . .

If the disputed sign of [q]-ץ-ט-ר-ט proves to be the base for such a plaster correction (equal to an erasure), the name-ring could still contain a reference to the masculine Tabor (ט-ר-ט = ד-ט-ר'), though not to Deborah / Teborah.
Ramesses II, qayṣ rybn “the band of Reuben” (discussed above, page 70, note 90). Although long debated, it is now recognized that the name Asher (išr) is attested in topographical lists from the reigns of Seti I and Ramesses II. For the purpose of this study it is important to note that the tribal names Asher and Reuben attested in lists of Ramesses II do not occur in the lists of Ramesses III. Apparently, the victory of Deborah (= tbr?) or the forces at Mount Tabor (= tbr[?] = dphr), over Sisera’s coalition prompted Ramesses III to move northward and re-establish his claims in the Asian province. The appearance of the name of either Deborah or Tabor in the topographical list of Ramesses III provides the chronological reference for dating events under discussion, and may prove to be as significant as the mention of Israel in the Merneptah stela.

II. The Meaning of אשת לֶפֶרְדוֹת

Before looking at other proposed dates for Deborah, a brief discussion about Deborah’s titles in 4:4, Ḥaybn h’a and אשת לֶפֶרְדוֹת, is in order. Boling (1975: 95) translated אשת לֶפֶרְדוֹת as


104 The identification of Barak with Lappidoth goes back to David Kimhi and Levi ben Gershom. Gilad Gevaryahu provided me the following text and translation of the midrashic work of the thirteenth-century, Yalkut Shimoni which, following the Tanhuma, reads in Judges 4, § 1:

... according to Eliyahu: they said the husband of Deborah was a simple man (הית לאורה חסיד). She [Deborah] said to him, “Come, I will make wicks for you, and you go with them to the temple in Shiloh. Then your share for the hereafter will be with the learned/righteous ones (בני עבשים). Then you will have a place in the hereafter.” And she was actually making the wicks, and he was taking them to the temple. He [her husband] had three names: Barak, Michael, and Lappidoth: Barak because his face was shiny like lightning; Michael (מיכאל) because he softens himself (מיכאל), or because he was named after an angel (מיכאל); Lappidoth because his wife was making wicks—thick ones so the light would be augmented. And God, who can see through hearts and kidneys, said to her, “Deborah, your intention was to augment my light, so I will augment your light in Judah and Jerusalem against the twelve tribes of Israel [italics mine]. . . .
“Flasher,” and considered it a nickname of Barak, “Lightning,” whom he recognized, following Hilliger, Wellhausen, Budde, and Cooke (cited by Burney [1903: 85]), as Deborah’s husband. Bal (1988a: 57–58), responded quite negatively to this widely accepted identification, stating:

The assimilation of Lappidoth to Barak, who thereby becomes co-judge, constitutes a typical case of the biased use of the [anthropological] code, assisted by the philological code, which ultimately permits all three hypotheses [that Deborah was spouse, prophetess, and judge].

Bal claimed that Moore (1892) [sic] had suspected that לָפְדוֹת was not a name. Following him, she preferred reading לָפְדוֹת as a modifier of נָבָה, observing: “Woman of flames, of light? The epithet would be highly appropriate.” But Moore (1900b: 114) noted, “the only natural interpretation is that which takes נָבָה as the name of Deborah’s husband,” and he caricatured Cassel’s rendering “ein Weib von Feuregeist” as “pure midrash.” Bal’s reading, nevertheless, has merit, and is reminiscent of earlier proposals cited by Bachmann (1869: 254) for rendering תְּאֹּת לָפְדוֹת as “helle Frau” and “Flammenweib.”

Ju 4:4a is a noun clause in which the compound predicate includes (a) the appositional נָבָה נְבָאָה and (2) the bound nouns לָפְדוֹת לָפְדוֹת. Because there is no conjunction in the predicate, לָפְדוֹת could be the appositional modifier of either נָבָה or נְבָאָה. Traditional interpretations made לָפְדוֹת the modifier of נָבָה, and לָפְדוֹת —following common usage as cited in Mandelkern (1967: 57)—became the name of a husband. But when נְבָאָה is read as the modifier of לָפְדוֹת a title emerges: “the prophetess, the woman of torches.” Moreover, if the feminine plural indicates an abstract noun of intensity (GKC 124a,e), לָפְדוֹת could mean “the woman of flames/fire.”

This does not simply imply a “a burning enthusiasm for Yahweh” (James 1951: 59), a hot head, a fiery temperament, or even, as Bal suggested (1988b: 209), “an inflamed and an inflaming woman.” Here, לָפְדוֹת, lacking the modifier נָבָה “fire,” may have to do more with light than heat. The evidence for this is in the metaphorical use of the Arabic قِيس, a synonym of נָבָה. The noun قِيس signified a live coal or firebrand, a “piece of fire which
one puts on the end of a stick” (Lane 1885: 2481a) to be used like a ルピエス, i.e., as a torch or “pot in which light is carried.” The participle ニタオフ means not only “taking fire, a taker of fire,” but also “acquiring or learning knowledge, an inquirer or seeker of knowledge.” The plural ボオス connotes “those who teach what is good.” Hebrew ルピエス may also have been used metaphorically like the Arabic ًمسه . Therefore, ルピエス may well have meant “the lady of learning,” i.e., a woman in what would now be called a “learned profession,” such as ハナアナ “law,” ハナアナ “prophecy,” or ハナアナ “politics.” The epithet speaks of erudition exercised for the good of the community. When understood in this way, ルピエス parallels the epithets “woman of grace” (who in Prov 11:16 “attains honor”) and the “worthy woman” in Prov 12:4, 31:10 and Ru 3:11, which have bound nouns in the singular.

Through ルピエス Deborah can be linked with the ハナアナ “the wise woman” of Tekoa and of Abel (2 Sam 14:2 and 20:16) and the female sages of Israel (who have been studied by Camp [1981: 26; 1990: 188, 203]). As earlier noted by J. Gray (1967: 268), these female sages included Huldah, who was the sagacious woman consulted by the king and the high priest (2 Kgs 22:14), and Deborah.

Consequently, it appears that Judges 4 and 5, in very different ways, recognized Deborah’s power and erudition. “Mother in

105 Note the study of Couturier (1989) which deals with Deborah’s three functions as chantre, prophétesse, and chef. Brown (1992: 43, 48–49) highlighted Pseudo-Philo’s declaration that “a woman [Deborah] will rule over them and enlighten them forty years” (in Biblical Antiquities 30:2–5). She discussed Pseudo-Philo’s having Deborah sent forth on the seventh day, suggesting a representation of Deborah as a Wisdom figure, as well as his making her the female prophetic counterpart of Moses.

106 This interpretation of ボオス sheds light on the meaning of Prov 25: 21–22, where the synonym ヤシール “burning coal” appears: “If your enemy be hungry, give him food . . . for thus you will heap hot embers upon his head (لايل ويبوب يلاله يلاله).” This is quoted in Rom 12:20 as an act whereby evil is overcome by good. Far from being an act of torture, “heaping coals ヨシール “above the head,” was a matter of light and illumination, much like “kindling one’s interest, to kindle the mind, or have a burning/brilliant or bright idea” in English usage. However, note Segert’s (1987: 159–164) survey of other opinions.
Israel” and “the woman of light(s)” were very appropriate titles for Deborah and complemented her name *Taparrat/*Dabarát, “Governor, Leader” with its Hittite affinity. In light of her *יָדָבָרָת “authority, office” she would no doubt have been a *יָדָבָר, though not a *יָדָבָר or a *יָדָבָר.

III. Alternative dates for Deborah

Even if Deborah’s name spelled *tbtr (or *tbr for Tabor) were unattested in the topographical lists of Ramesses III, a strong case could be made for placing her defeat of Sisera during the reign of Ramesses III. The evidence and argumentation can be presented most succinctly in a critique of opposing views which date Deborah and Sisera significantly after the reign of Ramesses III. The proposal of Mayes (1969: 353–356; 1974: 91–99), that this victory by Israelite tribes over a Canaanite-Philistine coalition led by Sisera should be seen in close connection with Israel’s defeat by the Philistines at Aphek sometime in the course of the second half of the eleventh century B.C.E., has already been rejected as untenable (see above, page 64) since Mayes acknowledged that “arguments which have been adduced in support of this date of the battle against Sisera are not very reliable.”

A more attractive chronology has been offered by Yeivin (1956: 103; 1971: 84–85, 104–106, 124) who accepted the historicity of the tradition that Sisera had served in Jabin’s army (Ju 4:2, 7). He dated the defeat of Jabin (which was the catalyst for Merneptah’s Asiatic campaign) to 1221, the victory of Shamgar to 1188 (shortly after the appearance of the Philistines), and the defeat of Sisera to 1175. Yeivin’s dating demands an interval of forty-six years between the date of Sisera’s escape from Hazor and his death at the hands of Yael. This would mean that Sisera was either a boy-soldier under King Jabin or an aged charioteer when chased by Barak. Yeivin’s first date is quite acceptable, but an earlier date for Shamgar’s activity and Sisera’s defeat is required if Sisera is viewed as the same officer who served in Jabin’s army. Yeivin’s discussion on the chronology of this era is helpful in critiquing the views of Maisler, Aharoni, Albright, Lapp, and Globe. The proposals of these scholars demand a more detailed critique, and Yeivin’s contribution will be noted in the course of this extended discussion.
A. Views of Maisler and Aharoni

The tradition in Josh 11:1–16, which associated Joshua with the destruction of Hazor, was transformed by Josephus into Joshua’s battle against unnamed elements of a massive Canaanite coalition assembled at Beroth in Upper Galilee. The defeat of Jabin, according to Josephus, came after Yael’s assassination of Sisera: “Barak also fought with Jabin at Hazor, and when he met him he slew him, and when the general had fallen Barak overthrew the city to the foundations, and was commander of the Israelites for forty years” (Antiquities 5: 1: 17 and 5: 5: 4; Naber 1888: 1: 279, 305).

This harmonistic reconstruction of events in Josh 11:1–16 and Ju 4:23–24 has been given new life in the proposals of Maisler (1952–53: 83–84) and Aharoni (1967: 203–208). They suggested that the order of events in the biblical tradition should be reversed, so that Deborah’s battle against Sisera’s Canaanite coalition was followed by the battle of Merom which ended in Barak’s destruction of Jabin and Hazor. It was conjectured that, subsequent to Sisera’s defeat, Jabin made a renewed effort to occupy the hill country, an action which precipitated his conflict with the Israelites.

Maisler and Aharoni dissociated Joshua from the fall of Hazor, reckoning his name to be a secondary intrusion into the tradition. Moreover, Aharoni was forced to extricate Shamgar from his position in the tradition, where he is viewed as having pre-dated Deborah. He dated the “war of Deborah” to the end of Hazor XIV (Lower City 1b), which contributed to the decline evidenced in Hazor XIII. The “battle of Merom” resulting in Barak’s defeating Jabin and the destruction of Hazor was dated to the end of Hazor XIII (Lower City 1a). Shamgar was made responsible for the destruction of Beth Shan VII, just before the reign of Ramesses III (1198–1166 B.C.E.). This reconstruction of events, especially as articulated by Aharoni, is vulnerable to the following criticism of J. Miller (1977: 91):

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107 Note Yadin’s (1979: 57–68) critique of the theories of Aharoni, Alt, Callaway, Fritz, Mazar, Noth, and Weippert, as well as the critique of Mayes’ interpretation by Globe (1975b: 181).
In order to establish the credibility of Ju 4:1–2, 23–24, Aharoni had to rework radically the chronology of Joshua 11 and Ju 3:31. The archaeological data had to be restructured so that Hazor XIV survived to the time of Deborah, while Hazor XIII encompassed only the time between Mernephtah’s death and the rise of Ramesses III. Moreover, if the translation of Ju 5:18 offered in this study proves to be correct (“Naphtali moved violently against Merom”), a second diversionary movement toward Merom was part of the campaign against Sisera, and hence was not subsequent to Sisera’s defeat.

A more likely solution to the chronological difficulties, which takes less liberty with the texts and the archeological data, is available. The mention of Jabin in the introduction of the prose narrative (4:2) and in the prose prologue to the poem (as I have so identified 4:23–24) need not be assigned a late date during the Philistine era or dismissed as an interpolation, as suggested by Yadin (1967: 259; 1975: 255). Although they have been recast by a Deuteronomic editor, they still provide the best chronological reference for dating the conflict with Sisera to the reign of Ramesses III.

The destruction of Late Bronze III Hazor (Upper City XIII and Lower City 1a) has been identified by Yadin (1959: 87) with Joshua’s destruction of Hazor in the last decades of the thirteenth century B.C.E. Yeivin (1971: 84–85), as noted already (page 81), proposed the approximate date of 1221, suggesting, “Though there is no proof of the fact, it is likely that it was the rumour of this disturbance [i.e., the collapse of Hazor] that decided Mernephtah to undertake his campaign in Hither Asia in the 3rd year of his reign.”

The identification of Sisera in Ju 4:2 and 4:7 as an officer from Jabin’s army has been dismissed too readily by Eissfeldt (1925: 25, 32) as a redactor’s gloss or the result of a conflation of the J and L, or J and E, traditions. As noted, the suppression of the qēṣṭšēr “the troops of Sisera” by Ramesses II provided sufficient reason for Sisera’s aligning with Jabin of Hazor. Judges 4 need not be interpreted to mean that Jabin was alive at the time of the defeat of Sisera. If the emendation of Ju 4:1–2 offered above is correct, the text speaks of Jabin’s death and the subsequent rise of Sisera as an independent figure. Consequently,
Yeivin’s (1956: 103; 1971: 84) reconstruction of events appears highly probable:

With the collapse of Hazor, it is likely that Sisera, Jabin’s C.-in-C. (or at least, the commander of his chariots), tried to salvage Canaanite supremacy by escaping with, at least part of, his chariots, and establishing his headquarters somewhere in western Galilee . . . .

Since the fall of Hazor can be dated to the last decades of the thirteenth century, it is possible to date the defeat of Sisera to the first decade or decades of the twelfth century, allowing time for his consolidation of power and his twenty-year oppression of the Israelites (Ju 4:3). Consequently, the events spoken of in Judges 4–5 generally coincided with the destructions of (a) Tell Abu Hawam V C, (b) Megiddo VII B, (c) the initial phase of Taanach Iron I, and (d) Beth Shan VII, all of which have been dated around 1180 B.C.E.108 This coincidence of destructions in the region under review would suggest that the defeat of Sisera occurred during the period of Egyptian weakness in Syria-Palestine around 1190 B.C.E., when Ramesses III was pre-occupied at home warding off the Sea Peoples.

The defeat of Sisera’s coalition may have been the catalyst for the renewed activity of Ramesses III in Syria-Palestine after 1190, reflected in the name-ring <q>s̱tbrt, as well as in the war scenes of Ramesses III engraved in the precinct of the temple of Mut at Karnak and in the inscriptions and his battle scenes throughout Syria, Khatti, and Amurru recorded at his mortuary temple in Medinet Habu.109 The strengthened Egyptian presence in Galilee under Ramesses III (attested by his rebuilding the port facilities at Tell Abu Hawam) may have precluded the Israelite rout of Sisera’s coalition from being turned into a war of occupation, for there is no archaeological evidence of an immediate Israelite occupation of the major sites.


B. Views of Albright and Lapp

The dating of the Song of Deborah by Albright (1936: 29; 1937: 25; 1968: 11) to 1125, as well as his later back-dating to 1150 (following a revised date for the destruction of Megiddo VII A), requires at least a seventy-five year gap between Jabin and Sisera, thereby dismissing the Judges 4 tradition that Sisera had been an officer in Jabin’s army. Accepting the integrity of Ju 3:31 and its reference to the Philistines, Albright placed the battle against Sisera after the Philistine invasion (c. 1188), but before their northern expansion. Albright was convinced that the phrase בָּהֵמֶן דַּעֲלֵי מַגִּידוֹ at Taanach along the waters of Megiddo” in Ju 5:19 meant that the fight with Sisera was waged at Taanach and that Megiddo must have been in ruins at the time of the battle. He noted (1949: 117)

This total omission of any reference to Megiddo itself, while Taanach becomes the capital of the district, makes it practically certain that Megiddo was then in ruins . . . after the destruction of Megiddo VII about the third quarter of the twelfth century, the site lay in ruins until it was occupied by the people of Stratum VI.

Albright’s conclusions about the dating of the Song of Deborah have been generally accepted by Van Beek (1962: 339), Schofield (1967: 321), Craigie (1969a: 255), Bright (1972: 172), and Freedman (1979: 13).110

Lapp (1964: 8, 23; 1967: 3, 21, 26) also interpreted בָּהֵמֶן דַּעֲלֵי מַגִּידוֹ in Ju 5:19 as the place of battle against Sisera. He assigned the battle to the final destruction of Iron I Taanach, around 1125 (since Taanach was probably abandoned after this destruction until the tenth century), concurring with Aharoni (1957: 145) that “a town that fell into Israelite hands did not as a rule revive—even when the Israelites did not settle at once in the area.”

Yeivin (1971: 62) rightly rejected Lapp’s proposed equation of events in Judges 5 with the last destruction of Iron I Taanach, though he did not state his reasons. I concur with Yeivin’s disagreement with Lapp and Albright, and their followers, for these

110 Albright’s date of 1125 has been challenged by Engberg (1940: 4–9), Alt (1944: 75–79), Noth (1958: 151), Yeivin (1971: 60–62), and Davies (1986: 45–48).
reasons. The usual translation of הָנָבָן by “at Taanach” has been misleading. The of הָנָבָן in this instance means “from,” rather than “at” or “by,” requiring the translation “from Taanach.” Consequently, Ju 5:19 does not indicate the place of battle, or even its point of origin, but the direction of Sisera’s route from Taanach and from Megiddo into Jezreel. The Israelite rout of Sisera, therefore, need not coincide with Megiddo’s impotence or Taanach’s dominance.

Since נְאָשֹׁר need not mean “Philistine” (as argued in the previous chapter), there is no need to insist on a date in the Philistine era. While the text does not speak of Sisera’s defeat at Taanach, it does not preclude an Israelite sacking of the cities participating in Sisera’s coalition, including Taanach Iron I, Phase 1, Megiddo VII B, and possibly Beth Shan VII, which were all destroyed in the first decade(s) of the twelfth century.

C. Globe’s use of Ju 5:17

Globe (1975b: 169–184) rejected the conclusion of Mayes which associated the defeat of Sisera with the battle against the Philistines at Aphek. However, he did not address the more widely accepted views of Albright and Lapp for a date around 1150/1125 B.C.E. Without explicitly concurring with Aharoni and Maisler that the battle against Sisera preceded the battle against Jabin, Globe acknowledged Aharoni’s argument as a “cogent reconstruction,” stating, “Beside this impressive reconstruction, most other recent theories are unconvincing” (181).

Globe supplemented Aharoni’s conclusions by an independent argument that in two major battles around 1200 (±25 years) the Israelites were victorious first over Jabin and then over Sisera. He found the clue for resolving the chronological difficulties in Ju 5:17 (“and Dan, why did he abide with the ships [אֵלֶּה לִימֵה נַעְרָא] Asher sat still at the coast of the sea [אֵלֶּה לִימֵה נַעְרָא]”), which he interpreted to mean, “Asher and Dan were unwilling to jeopardize their lucrative employment in Phoenician ships by fighting against their overlords’ allies” (1975b: 183).

111 Note Brekelmans 1969: 13–14 and above note 42.
Globe needed to determine when the Danites “remained by ships” (i.e., “were in maritime service”) and absented themselves from the war. He ruled out the years between 1190–1150 since the Philistines were then actively consolidating their power along the coast, and hence normal maritime service in the area, requiring the use of non-Philistine employees, was unlikely.

The period after 1150 was ruled out since excavations at Tel Dan (Tell el-Qadi) suggested a mid-twelfth century date for the northern migration of Dan and the destruction of Dan-Laish. The Danites were not likely to have commuted from their northern home to the coastal ports or to the Sea of Galilee for employment in fishing or maritime services. The numerous references to shipping activity in the Amarna letters led Globe to conclude that Dan’s maritime service makes “perfect sense” in the cosmopolitan fourteenth and thirteenth century. In light of the destruction of Hazor circa 1200 [sic], he narrowed the time span to 1200 (±25 years).

Although Globe’s date for Dan’s sea-duty—and consequently the time of the battle against Sisera—between 1225 and 1175 coincides well with the dates proposed in my study (1220 for the defeat of Jabin and 1190 for the fall of Sisera), Globe’s arguments cannot be used to corroborate these suggestions or to reinforce Aharoni’s thesis. Contrary to exegetical tradition, which Globe followed, the נִכוֹל יִדְכוֹנָי in Jn 5:17 does not permit, let alone require, reading this as proof of Dan’s doing “sea-duty.” It will be argued in the commentary in Chapter Six that the words of 5:17 are far better translated, “Then Dan boldly attacked the ships, Asher assailed along the water’s edge and against its harbors.” Consequently, as Globe rejected Yadin’s suggestion that the Danites were the Danuna or the Denyen of the Sea Peoples (whom some identify with the Δανοί), one must also reject the opinion that the Danites were at one time sailors in Phoenician or Philistine maritime services and the idea that the date of their sea-duty provides a clue for establishing the date of the battles with Jabin and Sisera.

IV. Conclusions

Rejecting the conclusions of Albright, Lapp, and Globe does not indicate agreement with Noth’s (1958: 151) statement, “We have no evidence at all on which to assign a date to the victory
over Sisera, even very roughly . . . . As this victory does not appear to have had any direct and tangible effects on Canaanite cities, it is impossible to date it archaeologically.” Nor can one concur with Ahlström’s argument (1993: 379–380):

The possibility cannot be dismissed, however, that the poem in Judges 5 has mixed two events and that the mention of Zebulon and Naphtali may be secondary in the poem . . . . but because Shamgar, who fought the Philistines, is mentioned as a man of the past, the date of the battle may be sometime around 1100 BCE.

To the contrary, a strong case has been made for the date of 1220 for the fall of Hazor and 1190 for the defeat of Sisera’s coalition. The arguments included recognition of

(1) the Hittite-Luwian tapara loanword as the title behind Deborah’s name and the appearance of her name spelled נֵבְרָה (or the name of Tabor [נֵבְרַה]) in a list of peoples whom Ramesses III suppressed (see below, 3);

(2) archaeological evidence that Hazor was destroyed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, and it subsequently remained abandoned;

(3) the violent destruction at relevant sites from Tell Abu Hawam to Beth Shan during the first decade(s) of the twelfth century, which suggests—with all due caution—that the Israelites were contributory to these destructions through military action designed more to neutralize an oppressor than to occupy territory. These actions resulted in the return of Ramesses III to Galilee to suppress the <q> ASSIGN wštbrt “the troops of Deborah,” or the <q> ASSIGN wštbrt[?] “the troops of Tabor.”
CHAPTER FIVE

THE RECONSTRUCTED HEBREW TEXT AND TRANSLATION

In this chapter, the Song of Deborah is reconstructed according to the changes proposed in Chapter One and the outline presented at the end of Chapter Two. Changes made to the MT are marked by the customary sigla:

( ) explanatory additions in English translation

[ ] editorial deletion from the Hebrew text

< > editorial addition to the Hebrew text.

Italicized words in the English indicate translations which are new with this study of the Song of Deborah. Meter and syllable count are listed at the left of the Hebrew text. Metrical balance in the poem is discussed in Chapter VII. Changes in the consonantal MT and vocalization, listed above in Chapter I, are discussed in the commentary in Chapter Six.

There has been no attempt to make the Hebrew text fit a historiographic agendum (as did Cheyne [see Appendix], who forced the text to support his “Jerahmeelite theory”). Were this poem a legendary ballad completely outside the sphere of history (דִּבְרֵי הָיוֹם), and were the words of Pesahim 6b also true for the Deborah–Barak–Yael tradition in Judges 5, that בֵּן דִּבְרֵי הָיוֹם אֵין תָּחַלָּה “there is no chronological order [of events] in the Torah,” the Hebrew text ofJu 4:23–5:31 and the translation of the “Song of Deborah” would still read as follows.
I. Prose prologue: 4:23–24

4:23 God subdued in that day Jabin, King of Canaan, before the Israelites. 4:24 Yea, the hand of the Israelites bore harder and harder on Jabin, King of Canaan, until they finally destroyed Jabin, King of Canaan.

II. Poetic prologue: 3:31; 5:6–7, 5:1–2b

3:31 Then later Shamgar ben-Anat appeared on the scene!

He smote with a mattock two marauding bands;

he plundered hundreds of men with a(n) (ox)goad.

He was appointed overseer, and gained victories

by himself for Israel!

5:6 From the days of Shamgar ben-Anat,

from the days he used to attack (covertly), caravans ceased

and caravaneers had to travel roundabout routes.

Warriors deserted, in Israel they failed to assist,

until the arising of Deborah, the arising of a Mother in Israel!

5:1 Then Deborah made Barak ben-Abinoam

march forth on that day

when the heroine called for heroism in Israel,

when the militia was summoned,

(by her) saying:
I. Prose prologue 4:23–24

זְכָּנֵנִי לְגָּלְגֵל הוֹדֵה הֲוָא אַתָּה בֵּין מַלְךָ נְעָנָּנִי
לָפֶּנָּנִי יְהָיָא.
זְכָּנֵנִי אַתָּה לְגָּלְגֵל הוֹדֵה הֲוָא בֵּין מַלְךָ נְעָנָּנִי
עַד אֶעֶשׂ הֶדְרֵיכָה אַתָּה בֵּין מַלְךָ נְעָנָּנִי.

II. Poetic Prologue 3:31; 5:6–7, 5:1–2b

3+2 12
זָאָה לַדָּי שֵׁמֶךָ בְּנָעָת
3+3 15
זָאָה לַדָּי שֵׁמֶךָ עַמִּי רָשָׁא דַּלְתָּא
2+2+2 12
הִבְכֶּרֶת יְשָׁעֵנִי הֵא אַתָּה שִׁירָא לָא.
2+3
בֵּנֵי שְׁמֵאָה בְּנָעָת
16
בֵּנֵי שְׁמֵאָה בְּנָעָת
3+2 17
וּרְפָּה תְּרוּפָה יְלָז אַרְוַת עַקְלְקַלוֹת
2+2 13
וּרְפָּה תְּרוּפָה בֵּישָׁא לָא
3+3 15
עַד שַׁכְמַעְתָּא דְּבֹוָה שַׁכְמַעְתָּא אַכְּפֹּלֻא לָא
2+2+2
וּרְפָּה בֵּישָׁא לָא
17
בְּרָכָה בְּנָעָת בְּנָעָת
3+3 18
מְפָרְשָׁא מְפָרְשָׁא בֵּישָׁא לָא מְפָרְשָׁא לָא.
לָאָמְרָא.
III. Deborah’s exhortation: 5:2c–4, 5:8–9

5:2c “PRAISE YAHWEH!

Hear, O kings! Listen, O princes! I am for Yahweh!

I, yes I, I will attack, I will fight for Yahweh, the God of Israel.

5:4 O Yahweh, when you went out from Seir,

when you marched from the plain of Edom,

the earth trembled noisily, the heavens dropped open,

the clouds dropped torrentially.

The waters of the mountains flowed from the presence of Yahweh,

the One of Sinai,

from the presence of Yahweh, my God.

God will provide strength.

5:8 God will muster the recruits. When the brave ones battle,

shield, moreover, and spear

will appear among the forty thousand in Israel.

Respond to the call, O leaders of Israel!

O you who are summoned for the militia!

5:9c PRAISE YAHWEH!”
III. Deborah’s exhortation: 5:2c–4, 5:8–9

ברכּוּ, יְהוָה:  
שָׁמַעְנוּ מִלְּכֵּיכֶם אֵאֹנִים, רֹעֵי שְׁמוֹ הָיִינוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל֙
אנָבֵי אָשִׂירֵה אָמְרוּ לִיְהוָה אֵלֵּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וַיִּקְאַףּ נַעֲרֵי בַּכּוּרֵיכֶם בְּעָנָיָי מֶשֶּׁךָ אָדוֹם.
אַרְגֵּן עַשֵּׁה נָא שָׁמַע נָא נָא עֲבֹד נָהָמ.
מֵרֵם הָדוֹרָה נַוִּל.
מַפֵּה יְהוָה וְזָכָּן.
הָדוֹרָה נַוִּל.
וַיִּשְׁרֵאֵל בְּעָרָה אֶלֹהָם הָדְשֵׁים.
וְאָלַחַמְתָּ נֹשְׁרוּ  
מַנְנוּ אֶל הָרוֹמָה  
בַּהֲרָבָּעַתָּ אָלָחְיָסָרָה.
לְבָּכָּה לְחוֹרֵקָה יְשֵׁרֵאֲל יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּהֲרוֹדָה בָּעָמָה.
בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה.
IV. Muster ing the troops: 5:10–13

5:10 Riders on young donkeys, those sitting on mules, and those walking along the way

5:11 hastened on mountain-roads, hurrying between the mountain-passes, where the victories of Yahweh would be given— the victories of his two warriors in Israel, when the very storms would descend from Yahweh.

5:12 The troops of Deborah roused themselves to rout the troops of the pursuer. Barak made preparations to attack, ben-Abinoam to take prisoners.

5:13 When the caravan-leader went forth against the nobles, (when) the militia of Yahweh descended, they were accompanied by (heavenly) warriors.
IV. Mustering the troops: 5:10–13

2+3+3
רבעי אתרות צהוות
ишא על צדרכו
והלב על רוח
שיהו מק[ן]">
הערוב בן מנשבים
שם ונער הקרת יהודה
20
3+2+3
עורק=ח פרטנו בשארשל
א ורד לַנְּשָׁרִים מעט יהודה.
21
3+3
עור(ו) עוניר דַּרְקָה
עור(ו) עוניר דַּרְק.
14
3+3
ישר קָו בָּרֵך
ישר קָו בָּרֵך
14
4+4
וֹשָׁב שְׁבֵי בִּנְבוֹנִים.
א וַרְדֵּשֵׁר לַאֲדִירים
על יהודה ירר
לְּכֹהֵן נבוריים.
21
V. Strategy of the forces: 5:14–16

5:14 Some from Ephraim, hastening through Amalek, would strike at the rear; Benjamin from concealment would attack.

5:15 From Machir commanders would go down. Yea, from Zebulon, (those) brandishing the marshal’s mace, and officers from Issachar along with Deborah. That he might inflict defeat, Barak was concealed in the plain. Dispatched with his footmen along the tributaries was Reuben. Gad had joined them.

5:16 Those of true courage circled about to wait between the ravines, to listen, to look for stragglers along the tributaries, to triumph over the cowardly chieftains.
V. Strategy of the forces: 5:14–16

3+3+3

בָּעֵמֵלָה אֲוֹר יָכְרִי ֒כָּה

בָּנָהָן בָּעֶמֶם יִכָּה

בָּנָה יָכְרִי יָרְדָה מַחֲכָכִים

חֲמוֹךְלָהּ מְשִׁיכָה בּשְּמָהּ סַמָּה

וְשָׁרֵי בְּשֵׁשְׁכָרָה יִפְרְדוּ

2+2

שָׁלָה בְּנֵילָיָה בָּפַלּוּת רָאוֹן

נָה לְיָם

2+3

חֲכָכִים לְבָל לָאָה יִשְׁבַּת בִּינָן מְשַׁפְּרָה

לְשָׁמְעָה מַרָּכָוָה נְרַרְמָו לֶפַלּוּת

2+2+3

רָאוֹן בְּ[כ] ן נְרוֹלִים הָכָהָו לָב.
VI. Israelite attack: 5:17–18

5:17  Gilead in Trans-Jordan went on alert.
then Dan boldly attacked ships;
Asher assailed along the water’s edge
and struck against its harbors.

5:18  Zebulon swam (underwater), risking his life;
Naphtali attacked Merom.

VII. Canaanite counterattack: 5:19

5:19  The kings were forced to come. They fought.
(But) when the kings of Canaan fought,
from Taanach along the waters of Megiddo,
silver spoils they did not take.
VI. Israelite attack: 5:17–18

3+2+2  נלעב בצבר הירדן שכם.
19  והר ולמה גור אגיאת.
2+2+3  אмор ישב לוחות ים.
17  וגו מצרפיי יכפי.
2+3+3  נспешנו על חרק המשלח.
19  נפלים על מורם ישד.

VII. Canaanite counterattack: 5:19

3+3  הבאר מלכיש נחלומו.
18  ואל חזור מלכי עננים.
3+3  בחרך על מור מאחר.
16  עזה חקלא לבחקו.
VIII. The defeat of the Canaanites: 5:20–23

5:20 From the heavens fought the stars,
from their stations they fought against Sisera.

5:21 The Wadi Kishon swept them [the chariots] away,
the Wadi surged seaward.
The Wadi Kishon overtook (them), it overflowed, they sought refuge.

5:22 Then retreated up the slopes their horses (and their) chariots —
his chariot, his stallions.

5:23 Doomed to die, they panicked — Yahweh had sent a cloudburst!
Their riders were in total panic!

Truly victorious were the ones going forth for the Warrior Yahweh,
for the Warrior Yahweh, with the (heavenly) heroes!
VIII. The defeat of the Canaanites: 5:20–23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>פן שם נלחמי הכנענים?</td>
<td>For what reason did the Canaanites war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>נחל קריש נחל קריש ית</td>
<td>The river Khirbet the river Khirbet went down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>נחל קריש תרחך נפש ית</td>
<td>The river Khirbet Terachan went down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>שנים עקצב סוסים דחרות</td>
<td>Two years of horses and mules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>דחרות אברים</td>
<td>Horses of Apries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ערב ארזה עשידי</td>
<td>Evening of Arza was my day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ysi לארז לארז ויהי</td>
<td>Arza and Arza shall be forever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>לערת לארץ עתיר</td>
<td>Lurat and Arza are rich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

101
IX. Assassination of Sisera: 5:24–25, 5:27a, 5:26, 5:27b

5:24 Most blessed among women is Yael, wife of Heber the Kenite,
among women in tents she is most blessed.
5:25 Water he requested, milk she gave,
in a truly magnificent goblet she brought cream.
5:27a Between her legs he drank, he fell to sleep.
5:26 She stretched her hand to the tent-pin,
her right hand to the workmen’s hammer.
She hammered Sisera, battered his head,
shattered and pierced his neck.
5:27b Between her legs half-conscious he fell;
motionless, powerless, there he fell slain.
IX. Assassination of Sisera: 5:24–25, 5:27a, 5:26, 5:27b

3+3+3
מעיים הארץ וינשא תמר הכהני

2+2
משה חלוב נגה

2+2
ובנין לא獍ים חכרים שונים

2+3
בן רגילה כריע נפל סכלל

3+3
יריחו תשפיחוה

17
רימנו לחלומת עמלים

2+2+3
והדלמה כיסרה מחודו ראשי

22
ומתחו החלמה רכתי

2+2
בן רגילה כריע נפל

3+2
בואים יכירו שמס◚רוד

44 112
X. Anxiety in Sisera’s court: 5:28–30

5:28 Through the window she peered—but (only) *emptiness*!

The mother of Sisera *inquired* (at) the lattice:

“Why tarries his chariot’s arrival?

Why so late the sound of his chariots?”

5:29 *The clairvoyants among her damsels divined.*

Indeed, *her soothsayer reported* to her:

5:30 “*The victors have forded (the water)*;

they are dividing the spoil—

a wench or two for the head of the hero—

spoil of dyed cloth for Sisera, spoil of the best cloth,

an embroidered cloth or two for the spoiler’s neckerchiefs.”

XI. Poetic conclusion: 5:31a

5:31a Thus may all the enemies of Yahweh perish.

(May) His lovers (be) like the rising of the sun

because of His power.

XII. Prose epilogue: 5:31b

5:31b And the land was at peace for forty years.
X. Anxiety in Sisera’s court: 5:28–30

2+2 11  
בעד המלך נשקפה ורבב.

3+2+2 13  
אס ססרא בנהה אסנכת.

17  
морע בשמ הרבח לאמ.

2+2 19  
מורע אאהר מעמי מרכביםו.

3+2+2 11  
הכובד שירודיד וענני.

2+2 11  
אף היה树木 אפרזה לוה.

2+2 11  
הלאנה נוהי ההלק שלל.

2+2 16  
רוח רחמס דלאש נבר.

2+2 12  
שלים גנינו לססרא שלם גנינו.

2+2 12  
רקמה רקמות למשה שלל.

XI. Poetic conclusion 5:31a

2+2 11  
כנ יאמינו כלاورוב יוה.

2+2 13  
ואוהבי כלאה והמעה נברעה.

XII. Prose epilogue 5:31b

134  
והשכ 넘יר אברעם שמה.
CHAPTER SIX
COMMENTARY AND NOTES

I. Prose prologue: Ju 4:23–24

In light of the conclusions reached in Chapter Two that Ju 4:23–24 is the prose prologue to the epic poetry of Judges 5, rather than the conclusion of the prose narrative of Ju 4:1–22, it is possible to read Josh 11:1–16 as an expanded commentary on Ju 4:23–24. However, since only these two verses are related to the Joshua passage, the proposals by Hertzberg (1953: 77) and Eissfeldt (1975: 544) to equate the events of Judges 4–5 with the battle depicted in Joshua 11 can now be rejected.112

The proposed emendation of דוחא to דוא and יב to יב (pages 38–40), coupled with the transposition of נמי המל יד from Ju 4:2a to 4:3a, restores these verses to their more original form and brings Ju 4:2 into conformity with the tradition in 1 Sam 12:9 that “he [Yahweh] sold them into the hand of Sisera [who had been] an officer in the army of Hazor (бавות פסחא פסחא אמם) [together].”

These minimal changes to the text permit the accounts in (a) Josh 11:1–16 and Ju 4:23–24 and (b) Ju 4:23–5:31 and Ju 4:1–22 to be read as chronologically sequential texts and thus support the claim that Joshua’s destruction of Hazor and the death of Jabin preceded the rise and fall of Sisera.

4:23. God subdued

(See above, pages 29–32.)

This phrase is the first element of a pre-Deuteronomic formula which usually included the phrase "and the land was at peace" as a second element. Here the first element appears in a prose incipit to the poem; the second element occurs in 5:31, in a brief prose inclusio.

112 Note also Maass 1961: 111.
4:23. At that time

(See above, pages 81–88.)

The defeat of Jabin of Hazor has been dated to 1221 B.C.E., on the assumption that the fall of Hazor XIII (which has been dated on archaeological evidence around 1220 B.C.E.) prompted Merneptah’s campaign to restore control in Egypt’s Asian province. Merneptah’s campaign is generally dated 1221. The eventual defeat of Sisera must have occurred shortly after 1190, and evidently prompted a campaign by Ramesses III after his defeat of the Sea Peoples to reassert Egypt’s hegemony in Palestine.

4:23. Jabin, King of Canaan

It is now widely recognized that the identification of Jabin as “king of Canaan” rather than “the king of Hazor” (as in Josh 11:1) is an anachronism reflecting a tradition found in Josh 11:10 that, “Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms.” Malamat (1960: 17–19), in a survey of extra-biblical texts (primarily from Mari) which corroborate Hazor’s supremacy in the Middle Bronze Age, has demonstrated the correctness of this anachronistic title for the king of Hazor. Included in his evidence is the fact “that the ruler of Hazor, unlike most other rulers, is called ‘king’ (šarrum in Akkadian) both in the Mari archives . . . and in the el-Amarna letters.” One Mari letter even mentions a king of Hazor named Ibi-Addad, the first element being the Akkadian equivalent of the West Semitic Iabni (= אֵבֶנִי). Malamat cited this as evidence of strong Babylonian influence at Hazor, at least in court circles. Such influence continued into the Late Bronze Age, as evidenced by the recovery of a fragment of the Gilgamesh Epic from the debris of Megiddo VIII and the Megiddo ivories from Stratum VII, which reflect Assyrian influence as well as Egyptian, Hittite and local motifs. The Babylonian influence was not restricted to the Canaanite community since Akkadian loanwords (e.g., sārid = רָעִיד “caravan

113 See Boling 1975: 99.

leader” [5:10b] and kudan = יָדָּוָּמ “mule” [5:13a]) were used by the poet of Judges 5, suggesting that the early Israelites were also susceptible to this influence.

II. Poetic prologue: Ju 3:31; 5:6–7, 5:1–26

Albright (1967: 208) suggested that some of the prose in Judges was originally composed in poetic form. He recognized Ju 1:14–15 as an adaptation from an older poem and believed it could be turned into “excellent mixed verse” with a 3 + 3 / 3 + 3 / 2 + 2 + 2 metrical pattern. Ju 3:31, with little alteration of the MT, reads even more easily as fine poetry.

3:31. Then later appeared on the scene

The MT יָדָוָּמ has long been recognized as being “awkward and unparalleled.” A. van Selms (1964: 294–295) concluded that, since this phrase has no exact parallel in Judges, Shamgar was out of place in a list of minor judges and could be completely omitted from the book without disturbing its chronology. The NEB translators went back to Ju 3:26 for the antecedent of the 3ms suffix and translated, “After Ehud there was Shamgar of Beth Anath.” As demonstrated above (pages 32–36, 71–72), Shamgar provides a clue for establishing the unity of the poem and the chronology of the era. The isolated 3ms suffix of MT יְדָוָּמ does not impose insurmountable problems.115

The emendation יָדָוָּמ restores the well-attested infinitive absolute יִדּוּ or יָדָוָּמ (Gen 18:18; 1 Kgs 12:31; Jer 15:18; Ezek 1:3). It removes the awkwardness of the phrase which resulted from Deuteronomic editorial activity, or more simply from a scribal error. The translation “appeared on the scene,” has been adopted from BDB (225b). Sperling (1988: 326) has also noted the use of יִדּוּ “to reign” in Jer. 34:5 and Ps 45:17 (NJV). This meaning, he noted, parallels the use of יִדּוּ “to be, to exist” in the Phoenician phrase וָלַי kn lpny “who reigned before me.”

115 Note also Moore 1898b: Pt. 1, 159; Burney 1918: 77.
3:31. Shamgar ben-Anat

(See above, pages 44–53.)

The use of “Shamgar” throughout this study, rather than “Samgar,” is an accommodation to old traditions. Evidence presented above (pages 49–50) suggests that the name, composed of the vocables יִשָּׁר and רֹקֶב, meant “the charging assailant.” Yeivin (1971: 105) thought that Shamgar was but a metathetic variant of Gershom, but van Selms (1964: 296) had more convincingly noted that the name is without an obvious parallel in Israelite nomenclature. However, van Selms’ conclusion, that Shamgar’s name contributes to an “unIsraelite impression” and “strangeness” of this verse, is itself not very convincing.

The identification of an Israelite cannot be determined by the commonness of a name. David’s name, like Remaliah’s (2 Kgs 15:25), is without parallel in Israelite nomenclature, Whether or not the name David was related to the Amorite dawidum, no one would dare argue that David was a non-Israelite since his name was unique.116 Shamgar’s name is no more unique than the name David, aside from the infrequency of its appearance in biblical texts (twice, versus over eight hundred times for David) and its being a compound like רַוְדַי (Zediour) in Num 1:5. Moreover, Mendenhall (1973: 162) in a different context noted that, “at this early period there exists no linguistic line of demarcation between Israelite and non-Israelite names, other than theophoric.”

I have already presented above (pages 50–60) my arguments that the name Shamgar ben-Anat does not contain a theophoric element, that יְנַעַת does not mean “Beth Anath,” and that the name need not be associated with the goddess Anath. Moreover, van Selms’ speculation (1964: 303) that, “the historical figure of Shamgar was drawn into the mythological sphere which was the intention of those who gave him this ‘metronymikon,’” is hardly persuasive in light of the other options presented.

Additional support for the claim that Anat is an Israelite name derived from יָלַשׁ “to help” has been provided indirectly by Ben Yehuda (1908: 3155), Zorell (1956: 455), Kopf (1958: 187–188), and Dahood (1968: 172, 322, 333). MT יָלַשׁ or מִלָּשׁ in Ps 71:3;

90:1; and 91:9 has been recognized by all four (Kopf citing Ben Yehuda, and Dahood citing Zorell) as being derived from מַעֲנוֹן, a cognate of Arabic عَون و “to help, give succor,” and has been equated with the nouns מַעֲנוֹן and מַעֲנוֹן “help, aid.” Like Hebrew חֲלָלִים has the same common derivation; and like פִּלְפְלִים in Psalms 71, 90, and 91, it is synonymous with שִׂים או ו and their feminine derivatives with the prefixed ב. The use of Zech 9:9, coupled with “savior,” is probably from this root also.

Benz (1972: 170) included לָוָּרְבָּה in his study of Punic and Phoenician names. This name parallels the Hebrew names לָוָּרְבָּה and לָוָּרְבָּה in 5:23b) and in 5:23b. The use of the feminine לָוָּרְבָּה with the theophoric בֹּעֶל element is an exact parallel to the Elephantine לָוָּרְבָּה, which is composed of the “feminine” noun לָוָּרְבָּה (the suffix being a masculine titulary form, rather than the feminine ending) and the theophoric בֹּעֶל element.

Since the vocable לָוָּרְבָּה is sufficiently attested in Biblical Hebrew, as demonstrated above (pages 53–60), conjecture that the לָוָּרְבָּה component in biblical names must be related to the goddess Anath is no longer compelling. Among Israelites in the twelfth-century B.C.E. and in the Jewish colony at Yeb in the fifth-century, לָוָּרְבָּה could simply mean “help, helper, savior.”

3:31. He smote with a mattock

(See above pages 34–35, 60–61.)

The MT waw-conversive וָו (for יְסָרָה or יַסָּרָה) is a case of the haplography of an ש or another example of a defective spelling of a 3ms imperfect of aוֹ ת verb, attested also in Num 21:14 (discussed above, pages 10–12) and in Ju 5:14. The emendation here replaces the waw-conversive with an emphatic וָּו, followed by an imperfect used to express continuous or repetitive action. The imperfect here suggests that Shamgar’s action was more an extended one man war of attrition fought against marauders than a single heroic feat like Samson’s killing of a

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117 See Blommerde 1969: 29 for the emphatic ו, and GKC 107 for the imperfect modus rei repetitae. The stem וָּו for יֹסָרָה occurs in Isa 17:7 and elsewhere; see note 30. See GKC 75 for a list of וָּו = יָסָר verbs.
thousand men in an isolated ambush with the jawbone of an ass (Ju 15:14–15), or Abishai’s spearing three hundred men (2 Sam 23: 18), or Jonathan’s stand at Micmash (1 Sam 14:1–15), passages in which the frequent use of the waw consecutive imperfect is conspicuous.

Contrary to the pointing in the MT, the first רַק in the verse is not the nota accusativi, but the noun רַק “plow, mattock,” used in the very familiar phrase of Isa 2:4 and Mic 4:3, לַהֲךָ הָרֵםַתֹּן לָא לָא “they shall beat their swords into plowshares.” It is a cognate of Akkadian štimu “seeder-plow” (CAD 7: 312).

The LXX B-text kept alive the tradition of Shamgar’s use of a plow (ἄρορφότοκα) but clearly assigned this meaning to מָלָם (see below), not to the רַק in this verse. The use of רַק and מָלָם in synonymous parallelism in 3:31 balances Yael’s use of two weapons in 5:26, the ἄρτος “tent-pin” and the ἠλμάς “hammer.” Such balanced use of parallelism reflects one aspect of the poet’s unifying style and, as noted (pages 60–61), finds its parallel in the ax and pick mentioned in a Sumerian Königshymne.

3:31. Two marauding bands

(See above, pages 64–72.)

It was suggested by van Selms (1964: 304–306) that shortly after 1200 B.C.E. Shamgar fought against destroyers and pillagers from among the Sea Peoples “long before the settlement of the Philistines in the south-western plain of Palestine . . . .” But in the same statement van Selms (306) identified Shamgar’s victims as Philistines: “. . . a separate task force of Philistines was repulsed by Shamgar and his companions. The Philistines could not embark on any serious war against the dwellers of the hill country . . . .” This apparent contradiction or implicit appeal to an anachronism can be eliminated if, instead of transliterating פָלֵדֵה as “Philistines,” the word is translated, following the Greek ἀλλοφύλοι, as “(foreign) pillagers or plunderers.”

It has already been established (pages 64–69) that פָלֵדֵה, traditionally taken to be the “Philistines,” is better read as a dual of the feminine collective noun פָלֵדָה “plunderers, marauding troops,” with Aramaic-Syriac cognates פָלֵדָה and פָלֵדָה. This is the first of five dual forms used in the poem, including the obvious פְּלָדָה in 5:30, and the less obvious suffixed forms
in 5:11 (‘אשֵי נַעֲרֵיהָ,  ‘his two warriors”) and 5:22 (MT יֶהֱלָה, “[the wadi’s] twin banks”). This generous use of the dual, spread throughout the poem, reflects another feature of the poet’s unifying and archaic, if not archaistic, style.

3:31. He plundered hundreds of men

If the MT שָׁם מַאֲה אֵשׁ is retained, the poetic structure and basic meaning of the verse remains unaffected. “Six hundred men” would be the synonymous parallel to “two marauding bands” (a–b–c/c′–b′). But reservations have been expressed about the figure six hundred. Boling (1975: 89) translated “brigade,” commenting that the figure is not to be taken literally since it is an optimum figure for a military unit. Similarly, van Selms (1964: 306) noted, “600 is an indication of a military group intended to operate independently, a battalion sent out for an individual task . . . . We need not interpret our text so literally as to presume that exactly six hundred corpses were left on the battle field.”

But שָׁם is probably not the number six in the first place. It is part of a yqtl-qtl sequence of synonymous verbs, נָלָת and נָלָת, with complete parallelism (a–b–c/a′–c′–b′). MT יִתְכָּו in Isa 10:13, translated “I plundered” and equated with the verbs נָלָת and נָלָת “to plunder, to despoil,” provides the clue. In IQIsa, the MT יִתְכָּו has survived as יִיתְכָּו, a po‘el of נָלָת, written שָׁם. The כָּו here is a qal of the נָלָת stem usually spelled נָלָת. Otherwise, the stem may be נָלָת and a cognate of Ugaritic ışı “to attack, to despoil” or be related to the Egyptian verb sıs: “to force back, to repel” (Faulkner 1962: 211). When שָׁם “six” is read as שָׁם “he plundered,” Shamgar’s heroism becomes all the more noteworthy—hundreds of marauders were themselves plundered by a single despoiler.

3:31. With a(n) (ox)goad

As proposed above, מְלָלִם without the nomen rectum can mean “oxgoad.” It is so used in Sirach 38:25, “how will he that

handles the (ox)goad (מלמה) acquire wisdom, or he that takes pleasure in brandishing a lance (דָּשָּׁן)?” The synonymous parallelism of מלמה and תניֵהוּ removes some of the ambiguity about the nature and use of מלמה as a quasi-weapon (variously translated αροτροπός, αρωτροπός, αρωτρι, αροτρῳ, διδακτηρὶ, εχτῆ, εχετῆ). The use of מלמה without the nomen rectum separates מלמה from מלמה—in without changing the meaning of the phrase . . . . “he plundered . . . with a goad.”

Boling’s preference (1975: 89) for the conflated reading מלחמה, “single-handedly, using an oxgoad,” based upon the A-text doublet (אורתרופוס εκτος = מלחמה מלחמה), with its alliteration, is very attractive and scans well (3 + 2 / 2 + 2 / 2 + 2 and a syllable count 7:5::8:4:6::6:6 or 12:18:12). Moreover, מלחמה would anticipate the idea expressed by כך “by himself.” But the A-text doublet for מלחמה (μοσχων “calves” and βους “bulls/cows”) makes it more likely that αροτροπός and εκτος are also just another doublet that does not require a different Vorlage.

3:31. He was appointed overseer רבק (See above, pages 60–64.)

On the basis of the name ben-Anat, Craigie (1972b: 239–240) relegate Shamgar to the status of a mercenary (in an unspecified army) who was closely associated with the warrior goddess Anat. But the tradition of Josephus (Antiquities 5: 4: 3; Naber 1888: 1: 304), Σαναγάρος ὁ Ἀνάθου παῖς αὐρεθίς ἄργεν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔτει κατέστρεψε τῶν βους, “Sanagaros, the son of Anath, having been chosen to rule, in the first year of his rule ended his life,” remains more credible. If Josephus’s biblical text here was essentially the same as the MT, he apparently understood the רבק of Ju 3:31 as a passive verb, in the sense attested at Qumran where the noun רבק occurs as a synonym for דיפס, “overseer, judicial official.” If Josephus’s comment on the premature death of Shamgar is correct, it is then self-evident why the tradition about him is so brief.

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119 Levi 1951: 46. van Selms’ translation (1964: 307) has been adopted.
3:31. Gained victories by himself

The plural “victories” is intended to reflect the imperfect modus rei repetitae for דֹּלֶת (דֹּלֶת), as with דָּלֶת or דֹּלֶת above (note 117). MT וַיַּגִּישֵׁנִּי דֹּלֶת נָא אֱלֹהִים שָרָאֵל appears more prosaic than prosodic, but a cursory survey of Mandelkern’s concordance (1967: 267–268) exhibits numerous examples of דֹּלֶת as a particle used in poetic texts as a ballast variant or for emphasis (e.g., Isa 31:2 and Nah 3:10–11). Although there has been a tendency to excise the nota accusativi (Freedman 1977: 6), דֹּלֶת is attested in fine poetic texts, and thus the blanket removal of the particle from poetry seems arbitrary. The דֹּלֶת here in 3:31 functions as much as an emphatic particle as it does as a nota accusativi, balancing the emphatic תָּאְמָר and providing aural coherence with יָתֵל קְפָּרָא.

5:6. From the days

he used to attack (covertly)

The death of Shamgar was followed by Sisera’s oppression of the Israelites (Ju 4:3), the consequences of which are listed in 5:6. The use of ב “from” (see note 42) in this verse has gone unrecognized, contributing to the obscurity of the text. Burney (1918: 162) sensed the meaning but felt it necessary to emend the text to יִכְּלָע דָּי [sic] (= יִכְּלָע). The name of Yael here in the MT is the major problem. It has been deleted as a gloss or emended in various ways, including יָלֶת, יָלָת, יָלָת, יָלָת, יָלָת, יָלָת. But none of these suggestions has won wide acceptance. Actually, consonantal יָלָת is only a coincidental homograph of the name Yael. It is a verb (scriptio defectiva) in a construct chain (see GKC 130a), a hiph‘il of יָלָת.


121 For other occurrences of aural coherence in Judges 5, see Globe 1975: 172–175.

122 See pages 46–47; Moore 1900a: 30; and Piatti 1946: 89. Schulte (1990: 181) followed Soggin, Sellin, and Grether in reading יָלָת for יָלָת.
“to attack, to kill covertly.” This verb was noted by Pope (1965: 192) in Job 30:13, and by Driver (1967: 61) in Mic 2:9. The root is attested also in the following passages:

(a) 2 Sam 3:34, “as one falls before the assassins, you have fallen”;

(b) Isa 61:8, “I hate robbery (committed) with violence” (note the similar idea in Luke 3:14, “Rob no one by violence or by false accusation . . .”);

(c) Job 6:18, “caravans are overthrown along their way, they are attacked from the desert-waste and they perish”;

(d) Ps 58:3, “Nay, in your heart you devised acts of violence.”

MT יָלָל in 5:6 could also be read as a vari-temporal hop’al, which would permit the translation of בִּי הָלָל (יָלָל) as “from the time he was assassinated,” which is suggested in part by Josephus’s account of Shamgar’s premature death.

Several proposals have been made to delete or emend בִּי הָלָל. Stuart (1976: 123, 133) revived Sievers’ proposal to delete the patronym for metrical reasons, and Blenkinsopp (1961: 70) with reservation endorsed Slotki’s (1931: 343) emendation, יָלָל for בִּי הָלָל. Stuart’s deletion of הָלָל and יָלָל seems to create meter rather than to restore it; and Blenkinsopp’s (1961: 70) introduction of Anath as a third party (בִּי הָלָל for בִּי יָלָל) only compounds the problem.

5:6b. Caravans ceased דֹּחֲלָה אֱרָהוֹת.

MT יָרֹה אֱרָהוֹת “highways” has the support of the versions; but the tradition, even if exaggerated, of Sisera’s having nine hundred chariots would hardly corroborate the idea that the roads of Galilee were deserted. If Sisera’s oppression was real, the roads had been well-traveled. According to Ju 5:30, Sisera’s mother and the ladies of her court assumed Sisera was raiding
a caravan for the spoils of cloth and silver, which were common items of caravan trade, attested in Old Assyrian trade documents (Veenhof 1972: 89, 152–154, 181). The words from Sisera’s court suggest a well-established practice of deploying chariots to despoil caravans, which led to circuitous caravan movements.123

The repointing of the MT, proposed by many commentators, including Burney and Smith, has been adopted by the RSV and the NEB. The NAB translation, “slavery caravans ceased,” appears to be a gloss to enhance Yael’s reputation. Since Yael really does not appear in the poem at this point, the text need not be paraphrased to make her appear virtuous in stopping slave trade. Freedman’s translation (1975: 13), “In the days of Jael, they enriched themselves, From caravans . . . ,” is problematic in that

(a) it assumes the poem lacks a sequential structure, since a reference here to the enjoyment of the spoils of victory precedes any reference to the battle itself;

(b) it assumes that Shamgar was a contemporary of Yael in spite of the tradition of Ju 3:31;

(c) the preposition “from” is lacking in the MT.

Freedman’s reading here of וְָּלָד II “to be fat, to be plump”124 instead of וְָּלָד I “to cease” would be acceptable if the subject of the verb were Sisera’s troops which kept the Israelite caravaneers

123 Note Schloen’s (1993: 34–35) discussion of Old Assyrian donkey caravan practices:

They tried to dodge the taxes, tolls, and duties that ate into their profits. Using “secondary, unusual and probably difficult tracks” they smuggled their goods past the toll stations or towns which caravans had to pass on the way to their eventual destination. So commonly was this done that there were payments and contracts for services by professional smugglers. Local rulers, of course, tried to prevent smuggling and confiscated illegal shipments. Under similar conditions, no doubt, the caravans of the Song of Deborah kept to “roundabout routes” (Judg 5:6) in order to avoid excessive tolls.

124 See Thomas 1956: 14–15; Calderone 1961: 451–460 and 1962: 412–419. Since the Israelites could not literally eat everything they plundered, Gottwald (1979: 507) conjectured that וְָּלָד stem II “to be plump” would in this context have “a metaphorical sense of ‘feasting upon’ the plunder as a nutritional source for building up the emaciated socioeconomic body of Israel.”
on the run. In light of the re-establishment of an Egyptian presence in Galilee by Ramesses III after 1190 B.C.E., it seems unlikely that Israelite tribes after the defeat of Sisera could have sustained a prolonged period of supremacy which would have permitted the kind of piracy which Freedman’s translation suggests. Thus, הלחם I “to cease” remains preferable—even though it has been abandoned in the NRSV—since it is compatible with the demonstrable cause-and-effect sequence structured into the poem.

5:6c. Caravaneers had to travel

The first ה of הלחם is retained as an emphatic ה. The paralleling of הלחם “caravans,” and הלחם נברהות suggests that the latter term is equivalent to Akkadian עליק Harrani “caravaneer, traveler, or expeditionary force” (CAD 1: 1: 342; Albright 1968: 60). The foot-traveler הלחם (עליק הלחם) is mentioned in 5:10, where a preposition appears in the construct chain, unlike עליק Harrani. The verb הלחם cannot be deleted as Stuart (1976: 124, 133) proposed, but should be read as an imperfect having the modal force of necessity.125 The synonymous parallelism of הלחם “caravans” and הלחם נברהות “caravaneers” is balanced with aural coherence by הלחם in 5:6a and הלחמ in 5:6b, like the use in 3:31 of both הלחמ “plowshare” and the (emphatic) direct object indicator הלחמ. Lindars (1995: 237) failed to recognize aural coherence as a poetic devise and preferred to delete הלחמ as “poor near-repetition.”

5:7a. Warriors deserted . . . failed to assist הלחם

The LXX A-text transliteration φραζων for MT פִּרְצֹן reflects the uncertainty about this word. Frequently it has been translated “peasants” on the basis of פִּרְצֹן “a village or hamlet” and הלחם “a

125 GKC 107n treats the modal idea of necessity with the negative, and GKC 107n briefly cites several examples of “obligation or necessity according to the judgment of another person.” One can compare the qatil of necessity in Ugaritic, e.g., 1 Aqht 215 (CTA 19. I 215), qhm wtaqyn yh, “Take, and you must drink the wine.” Note UT, sections 9.5 and 13.58.
village dweller” (e.g., Lindars [1995: 29] “villagers”) or “peasantry” (Fewell and Gunn [1990: 402]). Rashi surmised the poetic line to mean “open cities without walls ceased to be inhabited” (noted by Rosenberg 1983: 37) and Rashi’s understanding was followed by Budde (1897: 42), Gottwald (1979: 505 “rural-populace”), Stager (1988: 225), and Schloen (1993: 20), “villagers in Israel held back [from volunteering for battle].”


However, early translations of מְרֹק in Hab 3:14 (LXX δυναστῆς, Targum’s מְרֹק, and the Vulgate’s bellatorum) provide the clue for מְרֹק “warrior” or “caravan guard.” The B-text δυναστῆς and Lucianic κρατουσίων of Ju 5:7 may be references to “warlords” and “battle champions.” Also, contra Stager (1988: 224), three words from Papyrus Anastasi I (פ-ר-ץ “warrior,” פ-ר-כ “hero,” and פ-ר-ש “to hasten”) clarify several cruxes in Judges 5, including this one. Albright (1968: 43) recognized the connection between פ-ר-ץ and מְרֹק. Jer 51:30–32 provides a parallel collocation of מְרֹק, and the verb מִדְגָל, and the noun מִדְגָל יָדִים, and the verb מִדְגָל I. It reads, “the heroes of Babylon fled from fight (מִדְגָל נַבָּר, בַּכָּל לָאוֹדָם) . . . the soldiers panicked (מִדְגָל נַבָּר הָאָדָם).” This identification is also supported by the Arabic بَرَزَ فِي الْحَرْب “he went forth into battle.”

In Ju 5:6b, Jer 51:32b, and Deut 15:11 (niph’al), מִדְגָל III is the cognate of מְרֹק “he abstained from or neglected aiding him, [6] he fled from fight” (Lane 1865: 713). (The ש = מ, instead of מ, appears also with כָּרִים “to be dark” and כָּרִים “to be dirty.”)

Freedman’s translation (1975: 13–14), “the yeomanry enriched themselves,” and Boling’s reading (1975: 102), “the warriors grew plump,” would be more convincing if the lines were

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126 See Lane 1863: 186. Craigie (1972a: 349–350) summarized the Arabic evidence and concurred with “warrior.” This interpretation is rejected by Kaltner (1996: 77) and Stager (1988: 225) who, preferring “village tribesmen,” says, “Craigie has gone fishing for etymologies in the vast reservoir of Arabic and hooked a root (baraza, ‘going forth to battle’).” J. Gray (1988: 428, note 19) would settle for a collective singular מְרֹק or plural מְרֹק “champion(s).”
transposed to the poem’s end. But in their present position before the battle scene, the prepositions “from . . . until” belong to the statement of cause for the conflict between Sisera’s coalition and the Israelites. Lewis (1985: 105–108), followed by Schloen (1993: 20), convincingly argued against the existence in Hebrew of the stem יַדָּל II (= خَدْلَ “to become plump in the shank and forearms”). But Hoppe in the NRSV (1991) followed Boling and Freedman and translated “the peasantry prospered in Israel, they grew fat on plunder,” with the “plunder” reflecting the MT יָדָל.

5:7b. Until the rise of Deborah

(See above, pages 73–77.)

Boling (1975: 102–109) translated יָדָל as “again” and put it with the preceding poetic line. By contrast, Freedman (1975: 13–14) translated “booty,”[127] based upon the Ugaritic mgd which appears in parallelism with lhm. But the traditional understanding of יָדָל “until” remains preferable. As stated above (page 36), יָדָל is not the 1cs qal or 2fs shaph’el of יַדָּל, but the feminine participle with the prefixed relative ו and the affixed hireq compaginis. This יָדָל can be added to Robertson’s (1972: 69–76) list of twenty-six occurrences of the morpheme ” (= -î) attached to participles. Reading the participle here has the support of the B-text אֲוָק הַנַּג, אֲוָק אַנָּאָשָׁה. Since the hireq compaginis goes without notice in the LXX, one need not assume that the LXX had the Vorlage יִנָּה or יִנָּה. In this context, יָדָל means “to rise to power,” attested in Ex 1:8, Deut 34:10, and Prov 28:12, 28. Poetic balance is achieved by the repetition of יָדָל (like the earlier repetitions of יָדָל and the wordplays on יָדָל and יָדָל), the synonymous parallelism of לֵדֶר (“Ladyship” and מֵדֶר “Mother”), and the balanced use of the יָדָל and יָדָל.

5:1a. Then Deborah made

Schulte (1990: 179), in line with current studies, noted that 5:1 “ist sicher redaktionell und dient dem Einbau in den Kontext. Möglicherweise war ursprünglich nur Debora genannt . . . .”

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Traditionally, Deborah’s role has been defined on the basis of Ju 5:1, 3, and 12 which, seemingly, have the verb שָׁוְא “to sing.” She has been viewed as the singer whose chanting “would be a source of inspiration to the warriors on the battlefield” (Craigie 1969a: 260), which presupposes a very small and quiet battlefield or a very powerful voice. However, שָׁוְא is not the verb of choice for understanding this verse, which is integral to the poem.

When Judges 5 is read in toto as a battle ballad, verse 1 becomes the poetic parallel to the prose account of Deborah’s sending Barak into battle (Ju 4:6–7). Minimal changes in the MT of 5:1 are required to restore the original meter, syllable balance, and alliteration (compared to deleting part or all of the verse as a redactor’s gloss). These include the repointing of דֶּבָּרִים as a causative form, the deletion of the conjunction י before Barak’s name, and the transposition of יָפָּה from 5:1a to 5:2a.

These changes result in a brief “commission” motif which has been identified as one of five sequential motifs common to the “call schema.” This verse with its “commission” motif links the “allusion to distress” motif—which precedes in 5:5–6 (which for other reasons discussed above [pages 35–36] must follow 3:31 and precede 5:1)—to the motifs of “assurance” and “signs” which follow in Deborah’s exhortation (5:8 and 5:13, as translated above). Only the “objection” motif is lacking in the poem. Otherwise it would match the typical “call schema.”

Just as the LXX ἱσαν could be parsed as a contraction of ἱσαν, 3rd sing. imperfect of εἰμι “to go,” as well as the first aorist of ἴσαν “to sing” (Liddell and Scott 1940: 489, 778), so too the MT דֶּבָּרִים can be parsed as a feminine imperfect of several stems in addition to דֶּבָּרִים “to sing.” The need not be a waw-conversive, nor viewed as the feminine counterpart to דֶּבָּרִים שָׁוְא in Ex 15:1. It is only a coincidence that דֶּבָּרִים and דֶּבָּרִים are yqtl preterits and come from vocables that produce homographs. The MT דֶּבָּרִים in 5:1 is a hiph'il of one of the following stems:

128 See the excellent study of Ackerman, 1975: 5–13.

129 On the yqtl preterit see UT, sec. 9. 4; Cross 1950: 54–56; Dahood, 1970: 417–419; Catcarg 1973: 136; Kuhnigk 1974: 97; and Penar 1975: 86. A proposal to read the MT רַעַשׁ of 5:12 as רַעַשׁ (= רַגְשָׂ) has been made by J. Gray (1988: 433, note 33); see page 161.
προελευσει can hardly be a variant for the בּדָּל ל of 5:2 (see pages 122–126). Rather, it is a remote variant translation of the בּדָּל ל of 5:1, and a synonym of בּדָּל ל = בּדָּל ל "she was going." Thus, προελευσει reflects an early reading in which בּדָּל ל was derived from בּדָּל ל or בּדָּל ל, suggesting—along with the τὸν Βαρακ of the A-text discussed next—a Vorlage having only בּרָב rather than the בּרָב now in the MT with the prefixed conjunction ו.

Moreover, the A-text doublets in 5:12 (ἐνισχύων [= שֵׁר] ξη- ανίστασαν [= חֵל] Βαρακ and καὶ ἐνισχύσον [= שֵׁר] δεβρὰ τὸν Βαρακ) appear at first glance to be a variation of the MT of 5:12, δεβρείς שֵׁר כֻּם בּרָב and כֻּם בּרָב שֵׁר (see page 23 and note 164)—as though דּוּהֵר, שֵׁר בּרָב and כֻּם בּרָב שֵׁר equals דּוּהֵר, שֵׁר בּרָב כֻּם בּרָב שֵׁר—hence it is much more likely that MT דּוּהֵר, שֵׁר בּרָב of 5:12 attracted to itself a variant belonging properly to 5:1, namely the καὶ ἐνισχύσον, δεβρὰ τὸν Βαρακ from a Vorlage which had דּוּהֵר, שֵׁר בּרָב instead of the MT דּוּהֵר שֵׁר בּרָב.

Thus, the Lucianic and A-text remote or misplaced variants (προελευσει [= שֵׁר] and καὶ ἐνισχύσον, δεβרὰ τὸν Βαρακ [= שֵׁר]) provide very important evidence that early translators of 5:1 credited Deborah with marching forth rather than having Deborah and Barak singing duets, as still suggested by Fewell and Gunn (1990: 400), or having Deborah singing a solo, as James (1951: 61) earlier envisaged: “We may picture Deborah moving in and out through the companies, kindling afresh their combat-fury in the name of Yahweh.” To the contrary, she roused Barak and the Israelites by the power of her spoken word and the authority of her office. Her poetic summons survives in her exhortation in 5:2c–4 and 5:8–9.

This interpretation of 5:1 requires that all but one letter (the ו of the MT בּרָב) be retained as part of the original introduction to Deborah’s exhortation.

5:2a. When the heroine called for heroism

Despite numerous studies, בּרָב remains a crux in Ju 5:2 as well as in Deut 32:42, “I will make arrows drunk with blood . . .
from the ‘long-haired’ (ןilestone) heads of the enemy.”131 The desiderated vocable is one that makes sense in both passages. Hebrew lexica generally list three meanings for פֶּרֶע, namely,

(1) “leader,” a cognate of Arabic فرع “he overtopped, he excelled,” which is clearly reflected in the LXX A-text of Ju 5:2 and in Theodotian (ἐν τῷ ἄξωσθαι ἄρχηγοὺς). Lindars (1995: 225) cited the Old Latin dum imperant principes which, as Lindars noted, is preserved in the commentary of Verecundus in addition to Codex Lugdunensis. This meaning has been adopted by RSV, NEB, and NAB (“the leaders took the lead”);

(2) “long hair,” a cognate of Arabic فرع “long or full hair,” which is the basis for the “locks are long” in the NRSV 5:2 and the RSV “long-haired heads” in Deut 32:42, even though the LXX (followed by the NEB and NAB) has κεφαλῆς ἄρχοντων “head of rulers” in 32:42;

(3) “to let alone, to let go,” a cognate of Arabic فرع “it became vacant, it became empty or void.” (Lane 1887: 2378, 2379c, 2381a; BDB 828).


II and III (“when locks hung loose”); and the JB, in Lucianic fashion, introduced all three meanings (“the warriors in Israel unbound their hair”).


Rabin (1966: 131–133) argued against reading “long hair” or “leader” in both Ju 5:2 and Deut 32:42. In response to Burney’s (1918: 107) appeal to the long hair of the wild Enkidu in the Gilgamesh Epic (I. ii. 36) and Seale’s (1962: 346) appeal to the disheveled hair of the Bedouin fighters, Rabin noted, “The only Arabic reference known to me shows that before a decisive battle the warriors shave their heads.” He concluded, “The rendering ‘when lock s hung loose’” does not fit Dt. XXXII, 42, ֻּלְּכָה דִּבְּרָתָּם נִפְגְּשׁוּ, if only because ‘the long-haired heads of the foe’ in Hebrew would be מְאָרָתָה רַעָסָה אֲבוֹת.”

Craigie (1968: 397–399) argued that דִּבְּרָתָּם could be used in synonymous parallelism with ובּ ו י דְ ל ב. He argued that since דִּבְּרָתָּם meant “to volunteer, to offer oneself willingly,” דִּבְּרָתָּם could be the cognate of the Arabic فُعُل when used idiomatically (as in a threat) meaning, “he applied himself exclusively (to someone).” He translated וַכְּבָרָתָּם פָּרָתָּם, “when men wholly dedicated themselves,” which fits the context of Ju 5:2, but not Deut 32:42. Rabin (1966: 133) had challenged the translation of נְדֵב in Ju 5:2 as “volunteer-ed”; and he suggested instead the Arabic cognate נְדֵב “he called or incited someone to do his duty in war, he responded to duty without being summoned.” Rabin took דִּבְּרָתָּם as the cognate of Arabic فُقُرُش “to notch or to share” and أَفْرِشُ “to receive pay,” and of Syriac פַּרְשָׁה “to pay or to repay” (mediated through Aramaic, since פַּרְשׁה became פַּרְשִׁי in Hebrew but פַּרְשִׁי in Aramaic). He argued that דִּבְּרָתָּם could mean “give someone his due,” and translated 5:2, “when duty was done in Israel, when the God-blessed people answered the call.” But this argument is less convincing than the one on ובּ ו י דְ ל ב since it is based on semantic
extensions of questionable cognates. In addition, it offers no solution to the crux in Deut 32:42.

A more likely solution was offered by P. D. Miller (1973: 221) in a footnote which called attention to the Egyptian pr-“hero” and pr-“ib “courageous, heroic.”133 This word is no doubt related to Arabic قرخ and its by-form برخ “he excelled in knowledge, or courage, or other qualities,” as found in the expressions قرخ صحبة برخ صحبة “he became superior to his companion”(Lane 1863, 1893: 189b, 2379b). It is precisely this meaning which is attested in Papyrus Anastasi I (28: 2. 3), “I know how to hold the reins more skillfully than thou, there is no pr- (hero/champion) who is my equal.”134

Without citing the Egyptian pr-“hero,” Bordreuil (1967: 29–36) argued that אַלְמָה provided the clue to the enigmatic pun in the “Report of Wenamun,” which is further evidence of the use of this word in Canaan around the time of Deborah. According to Bordreuil, Penamun (the Egyptian cup-bearer serving Zeker Baal) must have told Wenamun, “the shadow of the pr- (“hero, chief, champion”), your lord, has fallen on you.” This was misunderstood by Wenamun as meaning, “the shadow of the pr- (Pharaoh), your lord, has fallen on you.”135 This accounts for Zeker Baal’s irritation with Wenamun and for the use by Wenamun of the formulaic “life, peace, health” after an apparent reference to the Pharaoh.

Bordreuil also noted the字母 א on the seal inscription from the Beirut area published by Reifenberg (1939: 197) which may be the title א “hero.” Such occurrences of א in Syria, along with the Ugaritic pr- and pr- “chief, prince, princess,” lend support for the translation here of Hebrew א “heroine,”136 a

133 See Erman and Grapow 1897: 527–528; and Gardiner 1966: 565.

134 See Gardiner 1911: 29–30; and Albright 1931: 217.

135 Compare the interpretation offered by Goedicke (1975: 100–102).

136 For another occurrence in Gen 14:2, see note 48.
title of prestige and power. This meaning brings into sharp focus the nature of Deborah’s leadership. It was not so much a matter of her doing her duty as it was her going beyond the call of duty, as the tD stem, indicates, “he engaged unbidden in war” (Lane 1863: 189).

This derivation and translation fits not only Ju 5:2, but also Deut 32:42, “I will make my arrows drunk with blood . . . from the head of the hero (.heap) of the enemy.” The - suffix functions as a title for males (see page 205), like ספרא and מָרְשָׁה (GKC 122’). The plural מַרְשָׁה in Deut 32: 42 (but מָרְשָׁה in the Samaritan text) and Ju 5:2 can be retained as honorific plurals, like the מָרְשָׁה in Prov 1:20. The feminine מַרְשָׁה “heroine” would be a synonym for מִרְשָׁה. The LXX A-text ἀφριγγοῦς (used elsewhere to translate מֵאָרִים, מָרְשָׁה, and מָרָשָׁה) reflects the MT, but it missed the military nuance of מָרְשָׁה and its original honorific plural.

The ב of מִכְרָע is the circumstantial ב, which is followed by the (pi’el) infinitive absolute having the force of a finite verb or with the ellipsis of the finite verb; and “the eager pursuit of an action [expressed by a pi’el] may also consist in urging others to do the same” (GKC 52”). The twenty manuscripts cited by Ken- nicott (1780: 488) having the qal infinitive מִכְרָע (= MT מִכְרָע) reflect late scriptio plena.

5:2b. When the militia was summoned

The cognates of Hebrew נָבוֹן II are Arabic نَبُوُّ “he summoned or he (someone to war),” “he obeyed the summons or call (to war),” “a summons,” and مندوب “a place to which one is summoned” (Lane 1893: 2778c–2779). As Rabin (1966: 129, note 37) stated, this vocable is distinct from the denominative נָבָה “to volunteer” (from נָבָה “a freewill offering”), which was “possibly borrowed from Accadian nidbu, nin- dabu ‘voluntary food offering,’ a word etymologically isolated in Acc. and hence perhaps of non-Semitic origin.”

137 GKC 1137–88; McDaniel 1968b: 208–210; and note 151, below.
Reading בְּמִלּוֹת as a “militia” follows Boling (1975: 71, 101) who noted, “In conquest traditions הַ-אָם alternates with ‘אָם הַמִּלְחָמָה, the people-at-war.” Yadin (1962: 44) had noted this use of בְּמִלּוֹת in the Qumran War Scroll: “Here the term ‘אָם (as also in the description of the battle, viii, 9 . . . ) marks, as in the O. T., the military character of the congregation organized for war.”

5:2c. (by her) saying,

The word לֵאמָר could be deleted as a gloss, but it is attested sufficiently in poetry (Ps 71:11; 105:11; 119:82; Job 24:15; Amos 8:5; Isa 14:24; Jer 10:14) that unless it really messes up the meter or the syllable balance it should be retained. When transposed to its present position, it contributes to the $2 + 2 + 2 / 3 + 3$ meter and functions as a quotation marker introducing Deborah’s exhortation. Once לֵאמָר was read as “she sang,” בְּמִלּוֹת was taken to be the initial word of Deborah’s song (or of Deborah and Barak’s duet). As a result, לֵאמָר was shifted to precede בְּמִלּוֹת.

Since the imperative phrase בְּמִלּוֹת was the original opening phrase of Deborah’s exhortation, the direct quotation indicator has been transposed in this study to precede this initial imperative. The doublets in the LXX which treat לֵאמָר as a finite form (ἐπιφον in MSS a,b,bhtvwy, εἰπον in MSS MNcdgn, and εἰπαν in MSS ax) suggest that the לֵאמָר of לֵאמָר was a late addition, and for that reason it could be deleted.

III. Deborah’s exhortation: Ju 5:2c–5, 8–9

5:2d. Praise Yahweh!

Rabin (1955: 133) and Stuart (1976: 123, 128) emended MT בְּרֶכֶס יְהוָה to בְּרֶכֶס יְהוָה, making it a modifier of בְּמִלּוֹת, translating respectively, “the God-blessed people” and “the consecrated of Yahweh.” But the meter and the syllable balance of 5:1–2b and 5:2c–4 favor the MT, which does not treat the phrase as a modifier of בְּמִלּוֹת. Contrary to O’Connor (1980: 219), who read a 3ms, the MT בְּרֶכֶס יְהוָה serves as the incipit to Deborah’s exhortation, which ends in 5:9 with the same words serving as the inclusio.
The exclamatory “Praise Yahweh!” was Deborah’s affirmation of her allegiance to Yahweh as much as it was an appeal for covenant loyalty from the Israelite tribes. The בְּרֵכָת הָיוֹם of the incipit and of the inclusio were original extra-metrical elements used to demarcate the exhortation. But the misplaced quotation marker, קַו, and the editorial insertion of part of the Shammgar tradition into the middle of the exhortation (see pages 33–36) obscured the original function of בְּרֵכָת הָיוֹם in 5:3 and 5:9.

A “blessing of Yahweh” survives in Josh 22:22 (although without the use of the word בְּרֵכָת). It was made at the beginning of a confrontation between the nine Cis-Jordanian tribes and the three Trans-Jordanian tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, when it was learned that the eastern Israelites had built an altar to Yahweh in Canaan, along the Jordan. The Reubenite coalition affirmed when confronted by the chiefs of Israel:

אל אָלָדֹת יְהוָה אל אָלָדֹת יְהוָה
הָדוֹא רָדָא, אָבֹא דוֹא

“Yahweh is God of gods! Yahweh is God of gods!
He acknowledges, yea, he gives recognition (to) Israel!”

The crisis ended with another blessing of Yahweh by the tribes. The exact wording of the blessing is not given (Josh 22:33) but the results of such a blessing is clearly stated:

יְהוָה אָלָדֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וֹלָא אָמְרִי לְעָלָה לְעָלָה לְגֹבָא

“and the Israelites blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them [Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh].”

It seems clear that the exclamation בְּרֵכָת הָיוֹם need not have been restricted to cultic events or limited strictly to hymnic literature. Consequently, the בְּרֵכָת הָיוֹם of Ju 5:3 and 5:9 need not require a cultic interpretation of this war ballad. The exclamatory

138 The ' is emphatic (see Blommerde 1969: 29; Dahood 1970: 401). Both verbs are participles, with בְּרֵכָת being here the technical term of covenant recognition. This verse can be added to the list of relevant texts noted by Huffmon (1966: 31–37) and Huffmon and Parker (1966: 36–38).
phrase evidently functioned in early Israel in the same way that “God is great!” (Lane 1885: 2587) still functions in the Islamic world.

5:3b. I am for Yahweh!

Lindars (1995: 228) faulted the rébia accentuation of אֶלָה לָהוֹ, as well as Burney and Moore for following it and translating “I, to Yahweh will I sing.” He also rejected Weiser’s and McDaniel’s interjection “I am for Yahweh.” He preferred “I will to Yahweh, I will sing,” wrongly identifying אֶלָה לָהוֹ אַבְרְהָהִים אָבִּי as a “repetitive parallelism.” This call is Deborah’s affirmation of allegiance to Yahweh. Similar expressions appear in Ju 7:18, לְהוֹ וּלְגִּידוֹנִי “for Yahweh and for Gideon!” and Josh 5:13, תַּהֲלְלֹת אֶלָה אָבִּי “are you on our side?” There was perhaps a need for Deborah to declare her allegiance to Yahweh since this “Mother in Israel” seemingly had a Hittite connection (as discussed above, pages 73–78). Her words have the ring of a battle cry,139 and embedded in her summons for a militia was a declaration of war against the Canaanite coalition, stated with synonymous parallels (but not synonymous parallelism) which follow her exclamation.

5:3c. I will attack, I will fight

Muraoka (1985: 49) recognized אֶלָה אֶשֹּׁר אָבִּי here as an emphatic pronoun. Exegetical tradition has identified the verbs as ראוּד שֵׁכר “to sing” and רָמוּד “to make melody,” which are often attested in synonymous parallelism (as in Pss 27:6; 101:1; 104:33 and 105:2) and occur together in Ugaritic, dyšr wydqmr, “who sings and chants.”140 But hymnic terms in Deborah’s exhortation are out of place, since it was a summons to battle rather than a post-battle hymn of victory. In this context, אֶשֹּׁר אָבִּי can be identified as a qal cohortative of שָׁר III “to attack, to assault,” a cognate of Ugaritic šr, South Arabic šwr and Arabic سور (سَار) (see 121–122).

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139 On the use of ל in a battle-cry, see Jones 1975: 650.

140 UT (Supplement), 551; Blau and Greenfield 1970: 12.
Synonymous parallelism also supports taking the הָרַמְצֵה to mean “to attack, to assault.” In this summons to war, הָרַמְצֵה is surely related to the Arabic ذُرُمْزَة “he incited, or urged (to fight),” as in (a) “I instigated war,” (b) the verbal noun ذُرْمَاز “an urging to fight,” and (c) “the day of war.” If the הָרַמְצֵה is read as an intensive pi‘el, it also matches the Arabic ذُرُمْزَة in forms [1] and [6], “the eager pursuit of the action, and causing others to do the same,” as reflected in Ju 4:6, 4:9 and 5:1, as translated in this study. The thematic i vowel of נְשֵׂא, instead of the anticipated u vowel, may be the reverse of the Qere and Ketib נֶשֶׂא in 1 Sam 18:6. As noted (page 121), נֶשֶׂא III

141 Lane 1872: 977c–978a. Compare Ugantic dmr, (UT, 388 no. 727), and Akkadian summuru (CAD 16: 92), used with reference to the pursuit of the enemy. The equation הָרַמְצֵה = dmr, translated “strong, brave,” has been widely discussed. Cognates are attested in Amorite, Old South Arabic, and Phoenician. It has been identified in numerous biblical texts (see KB3 263), including:

1. Gen 43:11, “the strength of the land” (KB3 260b);
2. Ex 15:2, Isa 12:2, and Ps 118:4, פִּלְפַל הָרַמְצֵה, “my might and my defense are Yahweh” (Cross 1950: 101–103; Cross and Freedman 1955: 243);
3. 2 Sam 23:1, פִּלְפַל הָרַמְצֵה, “the favorite of the defense of Israel” (Cross and Freedman 1955: 243);
4. Isa 25:5, פִּלְפַל הָרַמְצֵה, “the strength of the ruthless was brought low” (Tur Sinai, Commentary to Job [in Hebrew], cited by Sarna 1964: 351);
5. Ezek 8:17, פִּלְפַל הָרַמְצֵה, “they sent out strong men” (Sarna 1964: 351);
6. Nah 2:3, פִּלְפַל הָרַמְצֵה, “their soldiers they slaughtered” (Cathcart 1973: 88–89);
7. Ps 59:18, פִּלְפַל, “I am safeguarded” (Dahood 1968: 74);
8. Ps 119:4, פִּלְפַל, “they have been my defense” (Sarna 1964: 351; Dahood 1970: 180);

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occurs in Hos 13:7. It appears also in Ps 92:11, “My eyes have seen the downfall of my attackers (שָׁרָא = MT 92:12), and my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants (ךָךְ).” (Following the LXX’s τοῖς ἐχθροῖς μου, the NRSV has “my enemies” in parallelism with כָּךְ “my assailants.”

Deborah’s exhortation: 5:4–5

Globe (1974: 168–178) surveyed critical opinions on these two verses. It will suffice here to note only a few illustrative opinions. Several scholars have proposed numerous deletions in 5:4–5. For example, Lipinski (1967: 199), who had no difficulty with 5:4a, translated 5:4b–5, “la terre tremble, les cieux vacillent (ךָךְ) et (ךָךְ) les montagnes s’aplatisissent, devant le Sinaitique, devant Yahwe, le Dieu d’Israel.” This reading called for the deletion of six of the eighteen words of 5:4b–5 (the first כָּךְ, then כָּךְ, כָּךְ, כָּךְ, כָּךְ, and then כָּךְ).

Likewise, Cross (1973: 100–101) deleted seven of the eighteen words, viewing the phrase כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ שָׁמְיָה שָׁמְיָה כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּ�לָךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּ�לָךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּ�לָךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּכָהָךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּכָהָךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּךְ כָּcape.
down.” In view of the repetitive parallelism and the use of aural coherence throughout the poem, there is no reason to single out the repeated בָּיָת and נָבַש as unnecessary glosses. The use of בָּיָת “noisily” and בָּיָת “copiously, torrentially” is another example of aural coherence, like בָּיָת and נָבַש in 3:31, and בָּיָת and נָבַש in 5:4 and בָּיָת and נָבַש in 5:6. Repeated words include בָּיָת and נָבַש in (5:3), בָּיָת and נָבַש in (5:5), בָּיָת and נָבַש in (5:6), and בָּיָת and נָבַש in (5:7). Both בָּיָת and נָבַש fall into this pattern.

Satisfactory meter and syllable balance come with reading מִיַּרְבּ כְּרַימִי (i.e., the enclitic בָּיָת attached to a noun in the construct) as the subject of מַיְל, meaning “the waters of the mountains flowed.” Simple prosaic repetition disappears once בָּיָת is recognized as a homograph of two different adverbs (above, pages 21–22; Klein 1987: 102). The schema of 5:4-b scans as a–b–c/a′–b′/c′–a′′–b′′ (with נָבַש for the b’ and b’’).

5:4a. O Yahweh, when you came from Seir

The theophanic references used by Deborah in her exhortation are attested also in Pss 18:7–15; 28 passim; 68:6–9; 77:16; 97:4–6; 144:5; Deut 33:2–3; and Hab 3. They served the purpose of encouraging confidence in those being summoned for battle. The reference to the theophany of Seir-Edom was more than an affirmation of Yahweh’s cosmic power, and had nothing to do with Yahweh’s sacred mountain. The theophany referred to Yahweh’s presence earlier when the Israelites moved from Seir-Edom into a hostile Moab (Num 21:14–15 [see page 10] and 24:17–19 [NEB], in contrast with Deut 2:8–27, which claims a peaceful passage). The theophany references alerted the recruits to the Israelite strategy for combating Sisera. Victory would

144 Note Hab 3:12–13, where לַזְּבֵר and לְזַעֲר are followed twice by the sequential infinitive לָזְבַר ולָזַעֲר: “thou didst bestride the earth . . . thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people . . . for the salvation of thy anointed.” Compare Scafe (1962: 334) who noted, “We may therefore rightly conclude that what we have here [i.e., the motif of storm and quake] is a traditional opening which Hebrew poets used irrespective of the proper subject of a particular poem.” To
be achieved by Yahweh’s sending heavy rains and surging wadis. The militia was needed for a mop-up operation after the storm.145

5:4b. The earth trembled noisily

Boling (1975: 101) translated בְּרֵשָׁה both times in 5:4b “with thunder,” following Daho od’s (1970: 269–270) suggestion that Hebrew בְּרֵשָׁה may be the same as Ugaritic gm “aloud.” The duplicate of this verse in Ps 68:9 has יָסַר instead of בְּרֵשָׁה. But, contra Lindars (1995: 232), this is not decisive in favor of בְּרֵשָׁה “also.” Palache (1959: 8) related יָסַר to the stem יָסָה “to flood” so the יָסַר of Ps 68:9 may be a synonym of the second בְּרֵשָׁה “copious (water),” discussed next. The meter and the syllable balance permit reading the first בְּרֵשָׁה as a modifier of the preceding יָסַר, in chiasm with the second יָסַר. The noise could refer more to the rumble of an earthquake than to the reverberations of thunder.

5:4c. The clouds dropped torrentially

G. R. Driver (1936: 101) convincingly demonstrated that, “the LXX exhibits a number of translations which are explicable only

the contrary, the appeal to theophany in Deborah’s exhortation appears to be deliberately well-chosen. Hauser (1987: 270–273) offers a helpful study on the water motif in Ex 15 and Ju 5. However, it is difficult to concur with his one statement that, “The poet is teasing the reader, suggesting that, despite vv. 4–5, water may not be under Yahweh’s control, may not be available to help with the Israelite victory.” The exhortation strongly hints that water would be Yahweh’s weapon of choice, just as it was in the flood story of Genesis 6–9.

145 Bibliography on the theophany is provided by Lipinski 1967: 199, note 95. Compare J. Gray’s (1988: 426) attempt to contextualize here:

Thus we consider it likely that the theophany of Yahweh in Judg 5:4cde and 5a represents the sublimation of the traditional theme of the enroainment of Baal at the autumn festival in Canaan in the advent of the Israelite God of Sinai at a Palestinian sanctuary . . . to the liturgy of which we refer the Song of Deborah. If, however, the actual Sitz im Leben of Judg 5:2ff was . . . the first celebration of this festival after the exploit of Zebulun and Naphtali at the Qishon, . . . [there] may well have been more than an oblique reference to the rainstorm . . .
from cognate Semitic, especially the Arabic, languages and that the words thus recovered may be added to the slender store of Hebrew words found in the Old Testament.” The second ב of Ju 5:4 can be added to Driver’s list of such LXX translations. The LXX B-text δρόσους “dews, waters” (as in ποταμίῳ δρασφ “in river water” or δράσος ἐναλίῳ “in sea water”) generally renders למל “dew” and שִׁלֹל “snow,” but here it must translate ב, which is the cognate of Arabic حَمَم “abundant or copious (rains)” (Lane 1863, 1865: 228a, 449 and Klein 1987: 102). Given the interchange of ב and ב in the Panammu inscription (Palache 1959: 20), Hebrew ב “pool of water” may be a by-form of ב (=. حَمَم).

5:4d–5a. The waters from the mountains flowed

MT ב need not be repointed as the niph’al of הָלְל “to shake, to tremble,” as proposed by Schreiner (1957: 40) and Cross (1973: 100–101), and as noted in BH1 and BHS. The subject of הָלְל is not ב, but ב, “mountain waters,” a construct noun followed by an enclitic ב. A similar use of the enclitic ב (or preposition) occurs in Ps 77:18, where MT ב מִתָּן הָלְל should be read with Robertson (1972: 93, 102) as ב מִתָּן הָלְל, “the water of the clouds pours forth.” The reference here in Ju 5:4–5 to flash floods through the wadis links the exhortation with the events depicted in 5:21–23, another example of the poem’s unity. G. A. Smith (1912: 56, 86) sensed this meaning and translated ב הָלְל as “the mountains streamed.”

5:5b. The One of Sinai

Critical opinion has long been divided over the integrity of ב. In BHS, as in BH1, both words have been marked as a gloss.

146 On the construct noun followed by the enclitic ב, see Albright 1944: 219, note 83; Gordis 1965: 104; Blommerde 1969: 32; and Christensen 1975: 51, note 81(c). See also Layton 1990: 155–197, for an in-depth study of mim-mation and the enclitic ב in proper names.
Richter (1963: 69–70, note 35) concurred with twelve commentators who dismissed the epithet as a gloss, citing only Grimme, Albright, and Blenkinsopp as those who related פֶּת to the Arabic ذو. But treating פֶּת as a gloss creates a bigger problem, for glosses were added to clarify obscure words, not introduce them.\(^{147}\)


Although not as widespread in Northwest Semitic as in South Semitic, פֶּת is attested in divine epithets, and פֶּת בְּנ can be retained as an archaic epithet of Yahweh, similar to the “Yahweh of Teman” designation in the Kuntilet 'Ajrud inscription and analogous to Gabriel’s title, דנפ, “the one of strength.”

5:5a. My God

MT אלֹהִים יָהָוֶה originally was not a construct chain. Rather, יָהָוֶה must have been יָהָוֶה אֲלֹהִים, i.e., the verb יָהָוֶה followed by its subject, introducing the next element in the exhortation (see below on 5:5d). Consequently, יָהָוֶה should be read as the suffixed noun. Deborah’s acknowledgment of Yahweh, the One of

\(^{147}\) Note Lindars’ (1995: 209) rendering “(this means Sinai)” and his wild conjecture (233–234):

Thus the name [חֶסֶן פֶּת], if accepted, must be regarded as a chance survival of an obsolete title, perhaps that of a god worshiped by proto-Israelite groups (mentioned with the Shasu in Egyptian texts) before the arrival of the Moses group in Palestine. . . . If the proposal is not accepted the phrase must surely be a gloss . . . on the verse as a whole: ‘this means [the theophany of] Sinai.’ It is likely that the gloss was first incorporated into Psalm 68 . . . and came from there into the present context by analogy (גֶּ表現וּשָׁו) . . . .
Sinai, as “my God” emphasized her earlier bold affirmation, יָהֲנָהָי “I am for Yahweh!”

The transposition of part of the Shamgar tradition (now labeled 5:5–6) into the middle of Deborah’s exhortation (see pages 32–36) separated the clause אֵלָי אֱלֹהִים “God will provide strength” from its parallel clause יָהֲנָהָי אֱלֹהִים “God will muster.” Once this happened, the consonant cluster אֵלָי ישעיאל was understandably, but incorrectly, misread “the God of Israel”—thereby obscuring (1) the parallelism of אֵלָי and אֱלֹהִים, (2) the balanced use of yqtl forms, and (3) the a–b/ a’–b’–c schema.

The Vorlage behind the קִרְיוּ אֱלֹהִי in the B-text and the variants קִב לָא (MS s), קִב לְאָאוּת (MSS gmnw), and קִב לְאָאוּת אֱלֹהִי (MS 209), was יָהֲנָהָי אֱלֹהִים, with the אֱלֹהִי of MS 209 being a doublet of the אֵלָי (translated and transliterated). What is striking is the transliteration of אֵלָי as well as its translation. The אֱלֹהִי in the B-text cannot be a gloss on הָאָבִי since there is no apparent reason why a translator would have introduced a gloss of a transliterated אֵלָי instead of the translation אֱלֹהִי— for a word so obvious as שֶׁלֶל אֱלֹהִים—in lieu of a transliteration of הָאָבִי. Evidently, the translator chose this option to reflect an apppellative use of אֵלָי which was unrelated to the אֱלֹהִי (אֱלֹהִים) coming in the next phrase on the line, i.e., the יָהֲנָהָי.148

The several spellings, אֱלֹהִי, אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהִים, reflect a singular אֱלֹהִים with the 1cs suffix, like the אֱלֹהִים “my God” in Mark 15:34, or like the 3ms suffixed יָהֲנָהָי אֱלֹהִים “his God” in Hab 1:11. These variants add solid support to the argument advanced below to read יָהֲנָהָי אֱלֹהִים for the MT יָהֲנָהָי אֱלֹהִים.

Deborah’s exhortation: end of 5:5 and 5:8–9

Burney (1918: 117), following Cooke (1892: 36), considered Ju 5:8 to be the greatest crux in the Song of Deborah, and many critics like Goodwin (1944: 261) and C. A. Simpson (1957:18)

148 Compare Lindars’ (1995: 288) speculation, “As it is unthinkable that אֱלֹהִי is a case of transliteration instead of translation, it must be a rare instance where a word from the second column of the Hexapla has come into the text at the wrong place.” But the introduction of any word from the second column of the Hexapla would be out of place in any translation of the text.
have concurred, asserting that 5:8 was irrecoverable even through appeal to emendations. Moore (1900b: 172) left the verse untranslated in his commentary, and Lindars (1995: 239) noted, “Moore is probably right in maintaining that the true solution will never be found.” More optimistic scholars have offered generous emendations to restore this verse. Richter (1963: 71–74 and 400) listed twelve of these proposals, including his own.\textsuperscript{149}

However, the emendations he cited have not been well accepted, although Burney’s translation (“Armourers had they none; Armed men failed from the city”) was adopted by Meek (1927: 385) and endorsed by Goodwin (1944: 261). More recent translations are equally divergent but no more helpful than the older emendations. Most noteworthy are the following:

1. Rabin (1955: 127) “May God love young men: when there was fighting at the gates”;
2. Margulis (1965: 69) “When Elohim sharpened ‘arrows’ / Then was there war at the gates (of the enemy)”;
3. Hillers (1965: 124) “They chose new gods; indeed they desired demons”;

\textsuperscript{149} He cited, with references, the following emendations of the MT

\begin{align*}
(a) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(b) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(c) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(d) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(e) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(f) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(g) & \text{אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(h) & \text{בֹּרֶה אָלַדְיָה וָרְשָׁא אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(i) & \text{בֹּרֶה אָלַדְיָה וָרְשָׁא אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(j) & \text{בֹּרֶה לְחָם וָדוֹנִים אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(k) & \text{בֹּרֶה לְחָם וָדוֹנִים אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\
(l) & \text{בֹּרֶה לְחָם וָדוֹנִים אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים} \\

The last one (l) is his own proposal, but it is no more convincing than the others since it amounts to rewriting the verse. It required the deletion of MT אָלַי לְחָם וָדוֹנִים and the transposition of 5:11c to 5:8a to fill the lacuna.
4. The Jerusalem Bible (1966: Ju 5:8) “Those that should stand for God were dumb”;
7. Seale (1978: 48) “God chose to do new things. There was fighting at the fronts”;
8. O’Connor (1980: 222) “He chose new gods. He served them food”;
10. Stager (1988: 226) “They did battle with the gates” (i.e., “as a metonymy for the fortified cities . . .”).

What is required is not just one more attempt to stumble upon the correct emendation to recover the irrecoverable. Rather, the basic assumption that the verse is corrupt needs to be challenged. Except for the absence of a 3mpl verbal suffix, common in the older orthography, nothing in the MT of 5:8 is really corrupt or unintelligible. The problems are not textual but contextual. The verse is part of Deborah’s exhortation, her summons to mobilize for battle. Any translation of this verse must make sense in this summons-to-battle and must make sense as a direct quotation of Deborah addressed to (a) Israel’s adversaries (“Listen, O kings”) or (b) to the summoned militia (“O leaders of Israel, O you who are summoned”). For this reason all of the translations and emendations I have found to date are unacceptable.

As established above (pages 34–36), Ju 5:6–7 was not a part of Deborah’s exhortation, but was a part of the Shamgar tradition and must be transposed to its initial position in the poem. Consequently, Ju 5:8–9 is not logically or sequentially related to 5:6–7, but to 5:5. In this context, verses 8–9 become intelligible (with really minor emendation) by appeal to a larger lexicon than that traditionally used by scholars, but readily available to the author of the Song of Deborah.

The repetition of אֲלֹהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל “the God of Israel” in 5:3 and 5:5 was probably not in the original poem. Contrary to the MT
vocalization, 5:5 reflects the poet’s use of aural coherence, not repetition. The text must be redivided to read רָצוֹן אַלַּמְדָּהוּ, restoring the end of one colon and the start of the next, as follows:

. . . before Yahweh my God. 
God will provide strength; 
God will muster (the) recruits.

A similar misdivision of words occurs in the MT of Ps 73:1, which should be divided to read as

אמֵי מָטִיב לַחֶרֶת אַל
אמֵי לֶבְּרָה לָבָּב

Truly El is good to the upright,
Elohim (is good) to the pure of heart

instead of “Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!” (NAS, following the MT).

5:5d. God will provide strength

The use of אַלַּמְדָּהוּ along with יהוה and אלהים in this part of Deborah’s exhortation finds a parallel in the collocation of the nouns יהוה אלהים יהוה in the blessing of Yahweh in Josh 22:22, noted above (pages 128–129). The verb רָצוֹן can be interpreted in two ways. First, it can refer to the equipping of the militia. If so, it would be a yqtl of רָצוֹן stem I or of its by-forms שָׁרֵד and שָׁרוּד “to strengthen,” which is attested in Jer 15:11, “I will greatly strengthen you” (NEB). The same meaning appears in the LXX for the MT of

(a) Hos 12:4–5, שרָד אלהים וּרְסוֹן אלהים, אוֹנִיסְחָעָא הַרַּגְּשֵׁה יָבִיבְתַּנְן יָבִיבְתַּנְן מֵתוּרָד (note Luke 22:43, ἀγγέλος ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐνίσχυσιν αὐτῶν found in MSS aDKLXQPY);

(b) Gen 32:29, יָבִיבְתַּנְן וּרְסוֹן אלהים, וּרְסוֹת אִנִיסְחַעָא מֵתוּרָד;

(c) Hos 14:9, יָבִיבְתַּנְן, וּרְסוֹת בְּאִנִיסְחַעָא מֵתוּרָד;
(d) Ju 5:12, in the doublets of the A-text where MT שֵׁרֶשׁ was translated ἐνισχύων and εξανίστασον and ἐνισχυόμαι (see above, pages 23–24, 122);

(e) Ju 5:14, in the A text’s remote doublet ἐνισχύοντος ἠγήσεως for the MT שֵׁרֶשׁ of 5:14–15, which Tov (1978: 229–231) rightly recognized;

(f) Ju 5:30, in the remote doublet υσχυς αὐτῆς in Lucianic MSS διηκνυτῶν for MT שֵׁרֶשׁ of 5:29.

The “giving of strength” by providing weapons appears in 1 Macc 1:34, “they strengthened themselves (ἐνισχύομαι) and stored up arms and provisions,” and in 6:6, “they grew strong (ἐνισχύομαι) by means of weapons (δύναμις) and a [military] force (δυνάμει) and abundant spoils (σκληροί πολλοί) they had taken from the armies they had defeated.”

Secondly, שֵׁרֶשׁ may provide the transition from the earlier theophany at Seir to the moment at hand when history would be repeated with God’s sending torrents. In this case, the verb is the hiphil of שָׁרֶשׁ II (or the by-form שָׁרֶשׁ II), a cognate of Arabic כַּרְיָה “to soak (the earth with rain), to moisten” and of Aramaic שָׁרֶשׁ which is attested as the noun שָׁרֶשׁ “rain” in the Deir al-Alla texts, where it may be a Hebrew loanword (Lane 1863: 336a; Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1976: 352).

The affirmation “God will send torrential rains” would have been more than just a hint of Deborah’s strategy. It would have encouraged an enthusiastic Israelite response to her summons for battle. Although שָׁרֶשׁ I has been adopted in the translation, שָׁרֶשׁ II is just as likely. One cannot overlook the probability that the poet intended a double entendre, “God will provide strength” (שָׁרֶשׁ) and “God will send rain” (שָׁרֶשׁ).

5:8a. God will muster the recruits

In Akkadian, בֶּרֶע having a strong military nuance which is reflected in bēhiru “(Soldaten-)Werber,” bēru “elite troop,” and bēru “to select (young men/fighters) (CAD 2: 211–212; AHW 1: 118). Craigie (1972a: 350–351) noted the military nuance of בֶּרֶע in Hebrew, without appealing to this Akkadian evidence, citing
its use Ex 15:4, 17:9, and Lam 1:15. The use of בָּהָר as a verb and a noun with definite military overtones in 2 Sam 10:9 is also of interest: יָדָהְרָם מַלְאָל בֶּהָר [ם] נַכָּרָל, “he [Joab] mustered from all the elite troops of Israel.”

Rabin (1955: 127) translated והָרֹשֶׁה as “young men” and cited the Arabic cognate أحمد “recruit, civil militia” (Dozy 1927: I, 258), a synonym of Arabic غمر “inexperienced fighter, recruit.” The noun occurs in Hos 5:7, “Yea, an inexperienced fighter (יָדָה) will devour them (and) their territory.” In light of the contextually appropriate military nuance of both והָרֹשֶׁה and והָרֹשֶׁה, there is little need to emend the text to והָרֹשֶׁה “to be deaf” as did Zapletal (1923), cited and followed by Hertzberg (1959: 171) and noted favorably by J. Gray (1988: 428).

The use of והָרֹשֶׁה is another indication of the poem’s logical consistency. The poet had noted that “warriors had disappeared from Israel,” so Deborah could not have mustered the והָרֹשֶׁה “elite troops,” or the והָרֹשֶׁה “skilled soldiers.” The summons had to be for the והָרֹשֶׁה, the untrained recruits. The use of והָרֹשֶׁה suggests that the summons was made, in the words of Num 1:20, 22, to “every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war.” As Ramesses III was rescued by והָרֹשֶׁה “recruits” along the Orontes (Breasted 1906, 3: 133, 155), the והָרֹשֶׁה “recruits” would deliver Israel along the Wadi Kishon. Schloen (1993:30) noted, “The farmers and herdsmen [of the Israelite hills], many of whom also worked as caravan guards and donkey drivers, ambushed the ambusher and routed his troops.”

The use of והָרֹשֶׁה “new (gods)” in Deut 32:17 has been considered by Weiser (1959: 75), Hillers (1965: 124), Freedman (1975: 18) and, apparently, J. Gray (1988: 429) to be the appropriate parallel to the והָרֹשֶׁה והָרֹשֶׁה, i.e., the Israelites chose “new (gods).” The suggestion could be sustained if this verse were not part of Deborah’s exhortation. However, any reference to allegedly improper religious conduct is out of context in this summons-to-battle. Indeed, J. Gray (1988: 430) even conceded, “it must be admitted that a confession of apostasy in the

150 Compare the NRSV, “Now the new moon shall devour them with their field,” the NEB, “Now an invader shall devour their fields,” and Wolfe (1974: 95), “Now <the locusts> shall devour their fields.”
Covenant sacrament would be expected before rather than in the middle of vv 6–8.” But apostasy is a false issue because the Israelites are identified in 5:31 as the “lovers of Yahweh.”

5:8b. When the brave ones battle

These three words have been variously translated, including (1) “Barley-bread failed (?),” (2) “Armed men failed the city,” (3) “indeed they took for themselves champions,” (4) “then there was war in the cities,” (5) “then they fought at the gates,” (6) “he served them food,” and (7) “then the armed men of the cities came forth.” I concur with Rabin (1955: 125) that, “in this epic fragment, in contrast to the ‘Classical’ Hebrew usage, ‘az means ‘when,’ and not ‘at that time’. It corresponds thus to Arabic idh . . .” The MT can be read as an infinitive absolute or emended to the 3mpl ַלָּאָם. The absence of the final ָ is widely attested, as in the MT and 1QIsa variants (וָלָאָם), and (וָלָאָם) in Isa 1:26, 2:18, and 6:10, respectively. In view of five other cases in Ju 5 where the ָ of the 3mpl is lacking, MT ַלָּאָם is read “they fought.”

MT ַלָּאָם is the metathetic variant of the Arabic شَجَاعَة “courageous, fearless,” شَجَاع “bravery” (Lane 1872: 1535c) and South Arabic ضُرُف “brave men.” This corresponds to the metathetic variations in stems that have a ר and an י (for example, צַלָּאָם “a gate,” which is תִּגְרָה in Arabic and ִרָה in Ugaritic but תִּגְרָה in Syriac and Aramaic). The αρχοντις in the B-text doublet in 5:8 suggests that the translator knew the Hebrew cognate of the Arabic سِرَاعُ الْأَنْس “the first or foremost of men” (Lane 1872: 1350a) used in reference to horsemen and soldiers.

Seale (1978: 53–54) suggested תִּגְרָה “frontier” as the cognate of צַלָּאָם. But “frontier” is only a secondary meaning of צַלָּאָם. Its

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151 See Appendix, sub loco Smith, Burney, Stuart, Coogan, Fishelis, O’Connor, and Lindars, respectively.

152 The stem צַלָּאָם “brave” occurs in a negative sense in Ps 68:22, “Surely God will smite . . . the crown of the courageous one (צַלָּאָם) who walks in his guilt,” i.e., those with “courage” for violence (Mic 3:1–3 and Amos 2:13–16).
primary meaning fits even better, namely, “any gap, opening, interstice, or open intervening space, in a mountain, or in the bottom of a valley, or in a road along which people pass” (Lane 1863: 338c–339a). With this meaning, the מַרְחֵי “ravines” would anticipate the מַסָּאָכֹתִים “mountain passes” in 5:11. This cognate would permit the translation, “God will muster the recruits, when they fight (at) the ravines/wadis.” It is difficult to decide whether a double entendre or a triple wordplay was the intent: (1) the brave ones (תָּלָアクセスות) battle, (2) (at) the ravines (תָּלָ أمس) they battle, and (3) (when) the storms (תָּלָアクセスות) battle.

5:8c. Shield, moreover, 
and spear will appear

Regardless of what may have been Israel’s theology of holy war, any announcement that weapons would be lacking would not have induced a favorable response to the summons-to-battle. Although P. D. Miller (1973: 92) noted that in the theology of holy war “weapons and human might were regarded as being of minimal value,” any summons-to-arms presupposes that arms (= weapons) were as significant as those who had arms to use them. The summons was for combatants, not for spectators. If arms were unnecessary, so was a militia.

The traditional translation of 5:8c, “neither shield nor spear was to be seen,” does not easily fit a summons-to-battle, as I consider 5:8–9 to be. Craigie (1972a: 351) emended and translated 5:8 to read: “then was there for five cities a fortress [Arabic ma-jannat ‘a concealed/proTECTED place’ for MT magen ‘shield’] to be seen? Or a spear among forty thousand in Israel?” But this also is an unlikely statement to be made in a call-to-arms.

A couple of problems are involved here when בְּנָא is read, according to BDB (50b), simply as the interrogative particle in a rhetorical question anticipating an emphatic negative answer. The syntax is atypical because the postpositive בְּנָא is not used elsewhere meaning “was there?” Moreover, a compound subject is not ordinarily separated by a verb and the particle בְּנָא.

The clue to the meaning of this line comes from the postpositive בְּנָא as used in the Kephir Bebhayu marriage deed and several lines from the Elephantine papyri:
“and the house, moreover, is yours”
“and thou, moreover, shall have power”
“they restored, moreover, to their owners”
“the house is to thee, moreover, and to thy children.”

The רָחָץ particle survives in Isa 29:16, רָחָץ וַחֲכוֹת הָאֲדֹעָמִים (which appears in 1QIsa as רָחָץ מֵעֲבוֹדָה) “moreover, you turn things upside down.” The postpositive הָדוֹל (in Gen 34:21 and Num 18:21) is parallel to the postpositive רָחָץ here. (The רָחָץ in Gen 23:13 appears to be the equivalent of the הָדוֹל in Jer 5:5.)

In light of these uses of רָחָץ “moreover,” it becomes clear that Deborah’s call for a mop-up operation after the rain included a promise that weapons would be available. They would have been, without a doubt, the light weapons for ambush in the field (like Shamgar’s agricultural tools), not the specialized weapons for a frontal attack against chariots or for besieging a city.

5:8d. Forty “thousand” in Israel

The forty thousand figure, which matches the number of Egyptian and Hittite combatants at the famed Battle of Kadesh (Breasted 1906, 3:130), can be retained only if it represents the total population capable of producing and equipping a militia of

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155 For an examination of the inner-Greek corruptions in this verse, see Lindars 1995: 289.
Freedman (1975) stated, “The term 'elep is to be understood in its etymologic sense as a village or population center, which was responsible for providing a unit of troops. . . . If the average number of men in an 'elep was 10, that would make a fighting force of 400 at full strength, a substantial army for the hill country of Palestine.” See also Noth (1968: 21–23, 204) who noted that requests in the el-Amarna letters (108: 66 ff. and 133: 16 ff.) were for emergency contingents of ten and twenty men. See note 208.
In light of these options, there is no need to follow Fewell and Gunn (1990: 401) who still speak of 40,000 troops.

5:9a. Respond to the call

MT "my heart" has been problematic, as evidenced by the many varied translations: “Hail to thee!” (Rabin 1955: 126), followed by Richter (1963: 75); “Take heart” (Driver 1962–63: 9), followed by Craigie (1972a: 350–351) and Globe (1974: 503); “I notice” (Gray 1988: 431); “Be proud at heart” (NEB 1970); and “my heart beats fast” (JB 1966). The most convincing interpretation has been Rabin's proposal which associates לבל with the Arabic greeting ليك “at thy service, hail to thee,” like the German use of Latin Servus! But the association of לבל with לייק, which definitely carries the idea of obedience as well as service, would suggest the improbable, namely, that Deborah was now making herself obedient to the militia. But in this context, where she is already at their service, she is soliciting their response and obedience to her.

With the addition of the final vowel letter ו, MT קוורב can be read as the 2mpl imperative of קוורב “to respond” like the imperative לבל in Isa 21:12 (GKC 756). Its cognate, cited by Lane (1885: 2642) and Dozy (1927: II, 515) is Arabic لو "répondre à l’appel de quelqu’un, to respond."

5:9a. O leaders,⁵⁷ . . . Praise Yahweh!

MT "the ones summoned for the militia" may be the appositional modifier of קוורב יישראל, "leaders of Israel," or the vocative לו may do double-duty, indicating that the poet

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addressed the Israelite rank-and-file ($\text{מִשְׁמַרְתָּם}$) as well as the leaders ($\text{לְוָיָיו}$). Either way, the summoned commanders or the commanders and their summoned militia are indirectly urged through the \textit{inclusio} to praise Yahweh. The \textit{inclusio} served as a reminder that this was a “Yahweh war” to which the tribes were being summoned. Deborah appears elsewhere only in 5:12 and 5:15 where, contrary to the MT vocalization, she is addressed in the third person. J. Gray’s (1988: 431) interpretation should be noticed for contrast with the one I present:

The Song of the Well is significant for our understanding of the \textit{hammit-naddebim} in Judg 5:9, which we understand as those who truly proved themselves leaders of the community, like \textit{nêdibê ‘ammô} in Ps 113:8. . . . Thus in Judg 5:9 we would find no reference to leadership or volunteering for war, but to the notables of the various groups of the sacral community who convened the assembly for the renewal of their solidarity on the cultic occasion after the battle of the Qishon. Hence we translate v 9: “I notice the leaders in Israel [\(\text{\textdollar}\)] Who proved themselves nobles among the people.”

IV. Mustering the troops: Ju 5:10–13

The difficulties inherent in these verses are well-illustrated by Moore (1900: 172). Stuart (1976: 124, 129) offered no translation of 5:10–11. The difficulty stems from the failure thus far to isolate correctly the limits of Deborah’s exhortation. Ju 5:10 is not part of Deborah’s summons but a description of the responses to her call-to-arms, thus marking a major transition in the poem.

J. Gray (1988: 433–435) interpreted Ju 5:14–17 “as the gathering of the various members of the community through their representatives” to celebrate the victory at the Kishon. In support of his thesis, Gray had to emend the MT in 5:14–18 as follows in order to come up with the “headmen” who did or did not show up to represent the tribes at the sacral assembly:

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In agreement with Weiser, Gray asserted that “there is no reference to the participation in the campaign of any but Zebulun and Naphtali in v 18, which would accord with the prose account of the campaign of Barak and Deborah in Judges 4.” He concluded that of the ten tribes of the sacral community, only two fought Sisera and four of the other eight tribes “were not able, or chose not, to attend” even the sacral event celebrating the battle.

Lindars (1995: 241), similarly opting for a cultic interpretation, thought that this section of the poem included only verses 9–11, commenting,

The stanza functions as an expression of pride in the splendid response to Deborah’s prophecy, which [response] in my view has just been indicated in v. 8 [“the armed men of the cities came forth”] . . . These verses may well be a liturgical addition, inviting celebration of the victory at cultic occasions . . . [or] a theme for constant praise, like the constant recitation of the Shema (Deut 6:6–8).

What I identify as “the strategy of the forces,” Gray interpreted as “an assembly of the sacral community” and Lindars labeled “a story to tell” at cultic occasions. The interpretation presented below is quite different and requires far fewer emendations. Ju 5:10–13, in my opinion, tells of Israel’s mobilization for battle, while Ju 5:14–18 deals with the strategy and actions of the Israelites which precipitated Sisera’s counterattack. Far from being a celebrative response to Deborah’s prophecy (the exact content of which Lindars never specified), these verses deal with the tribal response to Deborah’s summons for a militia.

5:10a. Riders on young she-asses

This is the first element of the compound subject of נַפְתָּלִי נֵבֶל “they hastened.” Most translators have treated נֵבֶל as a color, with Albright (1961: 39) admitting, “the exact meaning of נֵבֶל eludes us, but it refers to a light color.” The NAB, JB, and NRSV
read “white asses,” following Rashi (לְבָשָׁנָה) and Medieval and Modern Hebrew (Klein 1987: 545) which uses (דָּשָׁן) for “white,” in contrast to the Arabic sahar which denotes the yellowish-red color of the desert (the Sahara), as well as being “used of a camel or she-ass in which there is white or red” (Burney 1918: 124).

The Akkadian emaram sa-ah-ra-am “a small or young donkey” (CAD 16:183–185) may be the masculine counterpart of (סָאָהִּים), Akkadian (sîhru) is generally considered the cognate of (יִתְנַךְ “young.” Given the interchange of (יִתְנַךְ) and (יִתְנַךְ “neck and (יִתְנַךְ “to strangle”), (יִתְנַךְ) here may be a by-form of (יִתְנַךְ “young.” The poet appears intent on depicting the speed with which the militia was mobilized. A yearling or older ass of any color would have speed and, although the tawny ass is a prized animal today (Soggin 1981c: 87), a reference to color seems less likely in a context of mobilization than a reference to the endurance of younger animals.

5:10b. Those sitting on mules

Although Burney’s emendation (1918: 122–125) of MT (יִשַׁבָּה עַל מֶרְחֵם), “let them recall it to mind” won no recognition, his study of this Hebrew phrase and of the Greek translations (lαμφνυ “covered chariots,” κριτηρίου “making judgments” or a “court of judgment,” and συνεδρίων “council, Sanhedrin”) remains an excellent survey of the issues.

Albright’s emendation (1968b: 44), (יִשַּׁבָּה עַל מֶרְחָם), “ye who sit on caparisoned <male donkeys>,” is possible but equally problematic. He cited Hillers’ oral proposal that (יַדְלִים) is a dissimilated by-form of Ugaritic (מַדָּל) “to saddle.” But this hypothesis needs to be reconsidered in view of the proposal of Greenfield (1964: 534) that, “Ugaritic (מַדָּל is . . . a metathesis of (לַמַד) in the technical usage known from Mishnaic Hebrew and Syriac . . . and is another instance of consonantal change for differentiation of meaning.” A development which would accommodate metathesis and dissimilation (מַדָּל > מַדָּל), while possible, is unlikely. As for more recent conjectures, J. Gray’s emendation (1988: 431) of the MT to (יִשַׁבָּה עַל לִבּוּס), “lay to heart,” which is very similar to Burney’s wording, is not likely to gain general acceptance either.
The A-text λαμπηρόν, used also in the LXX at 1 Sam 26:5–7 for סלול נל “cart” (= MT נבלת “encampment”), may indicate a Vorlage having [מָלָר instead of] [יִמָל. The word [יִמָל is known from the Ugaritic and the Egyptian myrn “chariot-warrior.” If so, the [יִמָל here could mean “chariot-warrior” or “chariot,” just as[כ can mean “chariot” (דָּרָכ) or “charioteer” (כֶּרֶם). However, there is no evidence of Israelites with access to chariots prior to their victory over Sisera. Thus, even if λαμπηρόν translated [יִמָל, it is not likely that [יִמָל was original.

Seale (1978: 54) proposed Arabic ملكن “to settle in a place, to be sedentary,” noting, “Both passages [vv. 6–7, 10] refer to three groups of people: mountain travelers, pedestrians, and the settled part of the population.” But Seale’s paraphrase, “those who are settled,” disregards the לְ of the MT, which would have to mean literally “those settled above the town” or “the hill people” or “those settled about the province.” Were the text [בֶּשָׁב הָרְדָּה instead of [בֶּשָּׁב הָרְדָּה, the meaning could be “townspeople.”

O’Connor (1980: 222) proposed the emendation of [יִמָל to [יִמָל, and translated 5:10bc, “You who rule over the Madon realm. You who travel the Madon realm.” He found here a reference to the Madon mentioned in Josh 11:1 and 12:19. But the MT of the Joshua texts is problematic, for the LXX B-text of 11:1 has βασιλέα Μαρρῶν (against the A-text βασιλέα Μαδῶν), and both the A-text and B-text omit [יִמָל in 12:19, although they have βασιλέα Σαμων [A-text Σαμρῶν] βασιλέα Μαρρῶν in 12:20 for the MT [יִמָל.159

Moreover, a diversionary attack by Naphtali in the direction of Merom is mentioned in Ju 5:18 (see below); but it seems unlikely that the rulers of Madon (or Merom) would be addressed here in 5:10, which deals with the mustering of the Israelite militia. The Canaanite kings (5:3) were addressed in Deborah’s exhortation, as well as the Israelites (5:9). But 5:10 is not part of the exhortation, and any direct-address outside the exhortation


159 See Soggin 1972: 133–134, 143–144, and references cited there.
and the dialogue in Sisera’s court (5:28–30) is not apparent. This verse depicts the Israelite mobilization in response to Deborah’s call. A summons to a Canaanite ruler in such a context is very unlikely, even though the emendation of מַדְיָן to מִדְיָן is not.

Similar to O’Connor’s reading a place name is Schloen’s reading (1993: 26) the MT מַדְיָן as “yošēbē midyān ‘you who sit over [rule] Midian,‘” noting that “the reading midyān is supported by the lack of plausible alternatives.” But a summons to Midianite rulers fits this context of the Israelite mobilization no better than a summons to Canaanite rulers. The better solution comes by recognizing that Akkadian wāšib kudani “mule rider” (CAD: 8:491) finds its counterpart in the מַדְיָן, once the מַדְיָן is emended to a ב (ב). A pre-LXX confusion of ב and ב, which were differentiated in some scripts only by the small vertical stroke on the upper left side of the ב, would account for the textual problems.160 According to Fensham (1963: 185–186), Akkadian sirrimu “wild ass” and wadû or adû “donkey” became loanwords in Aramaic (וָדָא and וָדָא). Akkadian kudan “mule” could just as readily have been a loanword in Hebrew. The poet may well have avoided using the common word מַדְיָן “mule” since this stem in Hebrew, like its Syriac cognate מַדְיָן, means “to flee away” (Klein 987: 523), a most inappropriate connotation in an account describing Israel’s mobilization for battle.

This emendation has the support of the A-text λαμπηρών, the Sahidic (translated as carrucas), and the Latin in lecticis “in a carriage,” which (contra Burney 1918: 123) was more than a translator’s guess. These variants reflect a Vorlage with מַדְיָן, a cognate of Arabic كدرون “a camel saddle, a litter for a woman (Hava 1915: 647) and كدورن “carriage” (Dozy 1927, 2: 450). The root (used also for coupling oxen to a plow or for mixing breeds of horses or animals) reflects the meaning found in the A-text and the versions, supporting the emendation of MT מַדְיָן to מַדְיָן. This cognate and the A-text, supported Michaelis’s translation “die auf den Wagen fahren” (cited by Kalkar, 1833: 25), while the “breed mixing” supports my reading “mules.”

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160 See Birnbaum 1971: I, 143, plates 85–87, 162; and Naveh 1976: 47 and fig. 9, no. 4–5. See also Delitzsch 1920: 114, §115.
By reading יד כְּרוֹת for בִּדְרָא כְּרוֹת, the synonymous parallelism “mule riders” and “donkey riders” becomes transparent. Ordinarily in Hebrew הבִּיר does not mean “to ride, to mount,” although it was so used in Syriac (e.g., ṣa ṣe ṣe ṣa ṣe ṣe ṣe). Its use here may reflect Akkadian influence, and the singular יד כְּרוֹת could reflect the Akkadian plural kudani/e. But it is much more likely that יד כְּרוֹת is a collective noun like the Syriac ṣe ṣe ṣe ṣe ṣe ṣe ṣe “asses” and the Hebrew הבִּיר “horsemen” (Isa 21:7; 22:6). The “donkey riders” may have been the (donkey) caravaneers alluded to in 5:6, while the “mule riders” could have been the leaders summoned by Deborah.

5:10c. Those walking along the road

The “footmen” (הלֹלֶץ עַל דָּרוֹם) may be the same as the “caravaneers” (הלֹלֶץ נַהוֹרָה) mentioned in 5:6. A clear distinction was made between pedestrians and riders. One Akkadian text, for example, noted that “the mighty go [i.e., are carried] on chairs, the assistants on . . . , the rank and file on mules, [but] I [go] on foot” (CAD: 16: 182b). The Hebrew הלֹלֶץ עַל דָּרוֹם probably represent the rank-and-file responding to Deborah’s summons in contrast to the wealthier mule riders. The footmen are mentioned again in 5:15b, “dispatched with his footmen along the tributaries was Reuben” (with a hint of Reuben’s lower social status, noted in Gen 49:4 and Deut 33:6). The conjunction קא of הלֹלֶץ is lacking in the LXX MSS MNdptvyc, suggesting that it is secondary. Perhaps the קא should be placed as a vowel letter after the קא since הזָלֶץ would improve the syllable balance of this section of the poem, changing it slightly from 22:20:21:14:14:21 to 21:20:21:14:14:21 (see above, page 95).

5:10e–11a. Hastening on mountain roads

Burney’s (1918: 125–129) historical review of the interpretation of this line could lead one to despair that all viable options...
for a satisfactory interpretation have been exhausted. Richter (1963: 76) noted, “V 11 ‘von der Stimme der Wasserverteiler zwischen den Trankrinnen’ hat viel Kopfzerbrechen gemacht.”

Lindars (1995: 289–290) highlighted the improbability of ever relating the Vulgate (ubi collisi sunt currus, et hostium suffocatus est exercitus ibi, “where the chariots were dashed together and the army of the enemies was choked there”) to the MT. But the collisi = קולס for MT קולס; the currus = מקרס for MT מקרס; suffocatus = מַסְתָּפֵכֵא for MT מַסְתָּפֵכֵא; with hostium reflecting the מַמְחָצִים in MT מַמְחָצִים; and exercitus = מַמְחָצִים for MT מַמְחָצִים, with the doublet ibi = +'ב. Similar confusion of ג and ג, of י and י, and of ח and ח have been cited by Delitzsch (1920: 110, 116, 119).

Thus, the text is not hopelessly corrupt. Instead of reading יי “to muse, to sing out” (Müller 1969: 361), the vocable יי III “to hasten, to run”—the cognate of the Arabic שַחַף and the related שַחַף “light, agile, swift (used of an ass)” or the by-form שַחַף “to go quickly” (Lane 1872: 1511, 1514)—can be recognized. Related also are the Egyptian ššh, šš, and šš-h, all meaning “to hasten or to run” (Erman and Grapow 1897: 3: 472–474; Faulkner 1962: 243). Hebrew וה and Akkadian הָסְע “to hurry, make haste” may be metathetic variants of שַחַף and ššh; but they may be simply similar onomatopoeic verbs. Sellin and Richter’s (1963: 76) emendation to יי is therefore unnecessary. Seale’s translation (1978: 49, 55), “Talk about it [‘the mighty deeds of Yahweh’] louder than the splashing at the well-head where the buckets are lowered and raised,” based on the Arabic root קחס “to stir, to dash water,” is a very lengthy and misleading paraphrastic gloss.

The Himyaritic text CIH 418: 1 (CIS 4: 1: 100) provides the real clue. It reads in part קָלַה הַרֹאשָׁיָהוֹנָהוֹn תַaמָּחָצִים can be restored and read as the adverbial accusative, cognate with Arabic منقل “a mountain road” (from נַסְע “to transport, to convey,” which suggests a “caravan route”) and South Arabic מַנְנָל (= מַנְנָל).
5:11a. Hurrying between the mountain passes

Hoppe (1991: 307) noted that the Hebrew here is uncertain. The appeal to the lexicon of musical terms for understanding the MT תַּהַלְמוּס, as reflected in most translations (RSV “musicians,” NEB “players,” NAB “harps,” Boling [1975: 110], following Albright [1922: 81], “cymbals,” J. Gray [1977: 219], following Weiser, “at the voice of the women singing antiphonally”) has been misdirected. Deborah summoned a militia, not a military band. Because the verse deals with mobilization, not celebration, a non-musical derivation of תַּהַלְמוּס is more probable.

Attaching the ב of תַּהַלְמוּס to the previous word restores the qal participle תַּהֲלֹם, which is in synonymous parallelism with תָּתֹל they hastened. The stem תַּהֲלֹם is attested in Arabic, which is especially rich in onomatopoeic terms for fast movement. In addition to תַּהֲלֹם, noted above, are חֲלָלַה and חַלָּלַה noted above, are תַּהֲלֹם and חַלָּלַה and חֲלָלַה, as well as תַּהֲלֹם, חַלָּלַה, חֲלָלַה, חֲלָלַה, חֲלָלַה, all meaning “to hurry or run quickly” (Lane 1865: 512, 533, 580). In a context of a mobilization, תַּהֲלֹם probably had the same meaning as חֲלָלַה and its synonyms. The collocation of תַּהֲלֹם “to hurry” and חֲלָלַה “to hasten, to move quickly,” has parallels in Arabic usage as well.

Hebrew תַּהֲלֹם is a metathetic variant of South Arabic msb “iter aequae, canalis” (Conti Rossini 1931: 193), or related to Hebrew and Aramaic חֲמָס “to drink,” or a variant of South Arabic and Arabic.msba “mountain road, mountain pass” (Lane 1872: 1287b; Jamme 1962: 33). Either meaning fits the context of a mobilized militia hurrying between the mountain passes (כְּבָר מַעֲלָה), or from one watering station (כְּבָר נַהֲרָה) to another. This is another example of the poet’s using double entendre.

5:11b. where victories of Yahweh would be given

Although Dahood (1966b: 81) proposed to equate תַּהֲלֹם here and elsewhere with the El Amarna šumma “behold, see how,” in this verse תַּהֲלֹם is the equivalent of the prosaic אֶל-לָא תַּהֲלֹם. The verb תַּהֲלֹם has generally been read as an Aramaism, probably from תַּהֲלֹם.
COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

For "victories," note Boling 1975: 110 and the NEB. Compare the comments of McKenzie (1968: 27–28) on "in Cyrus. Seale (1962: 345), on the basis of Arabic "the quality of a blade or lance when it is straight, unbent, and perfect in every way . . . ." suggested that "the rightness of vs. 11 is the practice of open-handed hospitality." But hospitality is not a theme of this song, save for Yael’s giving Sisera his last drink. Seale’s proposal (1978: 55) to read "generosity" (from the root "to scatter, distribute") for MT "would be attractive, in light of Dn 11:24 ("who slighted"), were this poetic line a part of the post-battle scene rather than of the pre-battle mobilization.

The Arabic "one who is courageous [in a charge or assault]" or a "brave fighter" (Lane 1872: 1669a; Hava 1915: 393) is helpful for understanding in a military context or in a war ballad. In battle was the term for courage and arms, whereas in peace it was used for compassion and alms. The frequent synonymous parallelism of and, as in Isa 45:8, 51:5, and 62:1, is also noteworthy.

The meaning of "warrior" (not "peasantry") has been discussed above (pages 117–119). Here attention need only be given to the form of סרани. It could be scriptio defectiva for סרִנָה, a plural noun referring to Deborah, Barak, and Yael, or to the הסינת and the combatants in general. But in this context, where Deborah and Barak were singled out as the leaders (or Deborah and Yael as the heroines in terms of the poem as a whole), the noun could well be a dual to be vocalized סרנין. The same form occurs with the ( = "two months") of the Gezer Calendar (Cross and Freedman 1952: 46–47).

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162 For "victories," note Boling 1975: 110 and the NEB. Compare the comments of McKenzie (1968: 27–28) on in Isa 41:2, used in reference to Cyrus. Seale (1962: 345), on the basis of Arabic "the quality of a blade or lance when it is straight, unbent, and perfect in every way . . . ." suggested that "the rightness of vs. 11 is the practice of open-handed hospitality." But hospitality is not a theme of this song, save for Yael’s giving Sisera his last drink. Seale’s proposal (1978: 55) to read "generosity" (from the root "to scatter, distribute") for MT "would be attractive, in light of Dn 11:24 ("who slighted"), were this poetic line a part of the post-battle scene rather than of the pre-battle mobilization.
5:11d. The very storms from Yahweh

This line has traditionally been translated, “Then down to the gates went the people of Yahweh,” which led Lindars (1995: 248) to conclude, “In my view it [5:11] not only intrudes badly into the sequence of the thought, but also relates to the problems of v. 13, which suggests that it is a misplaced gloss.” But the verse need not be rejected as a gloss—or rejected as a “marginal variation” of 5:13a, as proposed earlier by Burney (1918: 130), nor transposed to 5:12c, as proposed by G. A. Smith (1912: 87).

As argued below, the Israelite militia did not move to or from the gates of any city. The attacks made by Naphtali toward Merom and by Asher against Abu Hawam (5:17b–18), were not against city gates. The military campaign was an ambush along the wadi and was coordinated with attacks along the seacoast. Thus, the MT vocalization and traditional translation is unlikely.

The noun τάφρος is not “gate” but πτέρνα “rain storm” (not to be confused with the etymologically related feminine noun ἡμέρα “wind storm”). Snaith (1975: 116–117) argued that τάφρος in Deut 32:2 (“may my speech condense like the dew; like πτέρνα upon the grass, like ἱσόμην on new growth”) is not ‘small rain’ (AV, RV, JWM) nor ‘gentle rain’ (RSV), nor ‘fine rain’ (NEB), nor even ‘showers’ (JB, JPS). It means ‘the storm rain’, ‘the heavy soaking rain’, and the root is πτέρνα II = שער (and) this explanation is as old as Rashi.

In support of Rashi and Snaith’s identification, Isa 28:2, “like a downpour of hail, a destructive rain storm (かない クレア), like a torrent of water in overwhelming floods” can be cited as another example. Behind MT ντόκις τάφρος in Ju 5:11 is this same שער, requiring the shift of ע to ש. It alludes to the storms implicit in 5:20.

In view of the poet’s use elsewhere of an intervening preposition or an enclitic מ in a construct chain (מִמְּרָס מַדְרוֹן in 5:4–5 and לֶשֶׁר עֲלָיוֹ הַרְרָא and לֶשֶׁר עֲלָיוֹ הַרְרָא in 5:10), the MT שִׁמְרָה is similarly the plural construct שִׁמְרָנִים, followed by the compound preposition בָּנָה (BDB 768). The prefixed מ is an emphatic מ, which appears again in 5:25, בּוֹךְ לַאֲרָרְיוֹת (in a truly magnificent goblet)” (discussed below, page 211).
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5:12a The troops of Deborah
roused themselves
(See above, pages 22–23.)

More than the many variant readings in the LXX A-text tradition, the inundation of imperative forms in 5:12–13 makes these verses suspect as they are vocalized and traditionally translated. The MT has seven imperatives, perhaps nine if the repeated יֹעֵד was intended as an imperative. If one follows the suggestion of Burney (1918: 120–122) or P. D. Miller (1973: 93–94, citing an oral communication of Cross) to restore the LXX doublets to the Hebrew text, then eleven of the twenty-two words of the tricolon would be imperatives. Although the poet had a tendency to be repetitive (םָלֶד, “they ceased” occurs three times in 5:6–7), only five imperatives were used in Deborah’s entire exhortation, including the incipit and the inclusio. Reading here from seven to eleven imperatives is most likely a misreading of the text.

Furthermore, there is no indication of who issued all these commands to Deborah and Barak. P. D. Miller (1973: 94, 99), followed by Ackerman (1975: 10), suggested that the “angel of Yahweh” (mentioned thirteen verses later in MT 5:23 and in a LXX variant of 4:8) issued them. But these texts have their own problems (see Burney 1918: 89), and the “angel of Yahweh” may not be original in either 4:8 or 5:23.

The options available for handling these imperatives are (a) we could transpose verses 12–13 to precede 5:1 or 5:3, transforming 12–13 into an explanation of Deborah’s motivation, or (b) we might read the MT independently of exegetical tradition and utilize a larger lexicon than has been traditionally been used. The latter option proved to be productive.

The original poetic line of 5:12a (with scriptio defectiva) probably looked like this,

At first glance, as Hackett (1985: 27) noted, this approximates the triple use of שָׁאָר in Isa 51:9, “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in days of old.” But here in Ju 5:12a, the poet utilized aural coherence and alliteration rather than straight repetition.

The first word, שָׁאָר, is from שָׁאָר, “to arouse,” and should be read as an infinitive absolute having the force of a
finite verb (or with an ellipsis of the finite verb), as in 5:2 (יָדְעָה) and possibly in 5:8 (יָדָע). Moran (1965: 67–68) argued that in Gen 49:11 and יָדָע in Ex 15:6 are infinitives ending in ו, like those in the Jerusalem and Byblos Amarna letters.163 The short verb יָדָע here can be added to his short list of this archaic form.

The second and fifth words, יָרֵד (= יָרֵד “the troops of”) (see pages 22–23) is based on the doublet מַרְדֹּאָס and מְדָא לָאָו, which reflect a Hebrew יָרֵד, a cognate of the Arabic قُرُد “a numerous army or body of men” (Lane 1887: 2307). It refers to the combatants from the ten tribes (or possibly twelve, see below on 5:13a). This word appears in Num 31:10, מִכַּל הָעָוָה הָעָוָה וּמִכַּל הָעָוָה “all their hosts in their encampments.”

Hence, the מַרְדֹּאָס and מְדָא לָאָו doublet does not require a different Vorlage like the יָרֵד suggested by Meyer (in BHS) or יָרֵד suggested by Tov (1978: 231). Like Burney’s reconstructed text (see page 23), Lindars’ (1995: 290) “consensus text of A AI AII OL Ver” is inaccurate and his conclusion that “It seems likely that מַרְדֹּאָס and מְדָא לָאָו are substitutes for יַרְדָא לָאָו in the damaged Hebrew [Vorlage] . . . ,” is way off target. The feminine יִרָבָּה “governor, leader” stands in parallelism with the masculine ירָבָּה “pursuer” (discussed next).

5:12b. to rout the troops of the pursuer יָרֵד וְרָבָּה

Deborah’s summons-to-battle mobilized a sizeable militia, and the poet chose what is now a rare word, producing a heightened effect through assonance and alliteration, to express that fact. By deleting the יָרֵד of the third ירָבָּה the fourth word in the line) can be read as the pi’el infinitive יָרֵד “to overwhelm, to raid,” a cognate of Arabic قُرُد “he routed, he made a sudden attack” and of قُرُد “a hostile incursion” (Lane 1887: 2306–2308, forms [2] and [6]) and South Arabic قُرُد “to rout, to destroy” (Conti Rossini 1931: 215a; Jamme 1962: 72a, 147a). This verb was noted by S. R. Driver (1913b: 217) in 1 Sam 28:16, יָרֵד וְרָבָּה “he became your enemy,” but he opted to emend

This doublet seemingly reflects the ḵrṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ of 5:1. But as noted in the discussion on 5:1, ḵṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ (Barak = the q̱rb̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ of 5:1), reflects a early dissociation of hr̃ṽ̃d̃̃r̃w̃̃ from hr̃ṽ̃d̃̃ and hr̃ṽ̃ “word” and hr̃ṽ̃ “to sing.”

For reasons already stated (see above on 5:1), hr̃ṽ̃ “to sing” is suspect in this part of the poem which describes the mobilization of the militia. The imperative is also suspect since five of the six words here are pointed as imperatives. Therefore, MT hr̃ṽ̃ has been redivided to hr̃ṽ̃, with hr̃ṽ̃, the sixth word of 5:12, meaning “the pursuer” (i.e., the counterattacking Sisera). The reconstructed hr̃ṽ̃ becomes the ỹ̃q̃̃tl preterit of rw̃̃/hr̃ṽ̃ “to go forth, to march forth.”

The root “to pursue” is a cognate of Syriac matt “to drive, to subdue” and of Akkadian duppur̃̃/dubb̃̃r̃u (Klein 1987: 113). Dahood (1970: 225) also noted the use of this stem in Lam 5:9 (hr̃ṽ̃ = “the sword of the pursuer” [for the NRSV “the sword in the wilderness”]) and in Pss 2:5; 18:48; 38:13; 47:4; 109:2; and 119:161. This reading of 5:12b restores the wordplay of hr̃ṽ̃d̃̃r̃w̃̃ and hr̃ṽ̃d̃̃r̃w̃̃, “the sword of the pursuer” (Globe [1975b: 172] saw here only a pun on D̃bor̃̃ and dabb̃̃r̃i “songstress”). This use of hr̃ṽ̃ with its several different meanings is another example

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164 This doublet seemingly reflects the ḵrṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ and ḵrṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃ (as if ḵrṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ = ḵrṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃). But as noted in the discussion on 5:1, ḵṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ (Barak = a remote doublet for the q̱rb̃̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ of 5:1. Compare Tov (1978: 231–232) who was uncertain whether ḵṽ̃hbw̃̃d̃̃r̃tw̃̃ (Barak = a gloss or a doublet which “may reflect a variant ḵṽ̃hbw̃̃r̃tw̃̃, as many commentators believe, or an exegetical rendering of ḵṽ̃hbw̃̃r̃tw̃̃ . . . .” In my opinion, it is unmistakably a remote doublet.
of alliteration in the poem, like the threefold שֵׁרֶשׁ in 2 Sam 19:18, “the ferry ferried to ferry over.”

5:12c. Barak made preparations to attack שֵׁרֶשׁ בָּרָק

(See above, pages 23–24.)

The A-text doublet (discussed above under 5:1 and 5:12b) dissociated שָׁרַע from the verb “to sing.” Whereas the A-text doublets read it as שָׁרַע or שָׁרַע “to strengthen, to prevail,” it is more likely the stem שָׁרְעִי “to move out, to attack,” which, in light of the Arabic السیر “military expeditions” (Lane 1872: 1484b), can have a military nuance. In the context of mobilization, שָׁרַע can mean “to attack,” an ellipsis for קָוֵם לַמָּלָאָה “to arise for battle” (as in Obadiah 1 “Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle”). On the collocation of שָׁרַע “to attack” and קָוֵם “to attack,” Ps 92:12 should be noted, “My eyes have seen the downfall of my attackers (שָׁרַעְו), my ears have heard [the downfall of] my evil assailants (בַּקָּוֵם לָאָל מְלָאָה).”

However, the restored שָׁרַע, with the initial י being a part of the stem rather than a 3ms prefix, is a hiphil perfect, the cognate of Arabic يسِر “to prepare” as in the expression تَسَسَّر لَلْفَتْنَال “they prepared themselves to fight” (Lane 1893: 2976c). As a participant in the Israelite mobilization against Sisera, Barak made preparation to attack and to capture prisoners.

J. Gray (1988: 433, note 33) proposed adding an א and switching י to ש so that the MT شر׃ שיר becomes “captives” (i.e., אַשָּׁר for אַשָּׁר שָׁרַע or אַשָּׁר אָשְׁר שָׁרַע): “[Deborah,] rouse thyself, lead thy train (דבֵּבֶר) of captives (אֵזָר) [sic].” This is quite similar to my reading שֶׁרֶשׁ in 5:1 as the equivalent of עָשָׁר. But there are problems with “lead thy train” (5:12a) since there is no “thy” and no “train,” perhaps only a feminine imperative, “lead (a retreat!)” The Arabic cognate دَرْبَر means “to follow behind the back, to turn the back”; and in form [4] it means “to retreat, to retire,” with the noun دَرْبَر meaning “a defeat” (Lane 1867: 844, 846).

165 See Cross 1973: 95, note 19, and references cited there.
5:12c. Ben Abinoam (prepared)

to take prisoners

By reading הָכִּים as the second sequential infinitive (GKC 75n) following פָּרַץ “he prepared,” a synonymous parallel to בָּאָה is restored. Instead of the a–b′/a′–c–b′ schema of the traditional interpretation, 5:12 can now be scanned a–b–c′/b′–d–c′. Since the verbs in 5:12 are not imperatives, the suffix of MT מִשְׁבִּים “thy prisoners” is troublesome. The emendation of בָּא (ב) to בָּא (ב) is required here as in 5:10 where רֵעֵץ “mule” must be read for MT מָלֵך (ד), (see pages 149–151). Unlike Ju 4:16 and the Deuteronomic accounts of war in Joshua, the Song of Deborah makes no reference to the total destruction (דָּרֶם) of the enemy.

5:13a. the caravan leader went out

The difficulty over יָרָד שֶרֶד לָאָרָהָרִים (which Rashi understood to mean “then ruled a remnant among the mighty of the nations”) led Kittel in BH3 and Meyer in BHS to emend the MT to יָרָד שֶרֶד לָאָרָהָרִים “Israel descended with the nobles.” They provided the problematic notation “(sic Gbc)” even though the B-text has כַּתָּבַה כַּתָּלָמָה תַּאֶזֶּה יִשָּׂרָאֵל הָאָרָהָרִים “went down a remnant for the mighty ones.” By way of contrast, Stuart (1976: 125, 134), following Cross, deleted יָרָד and read שֶרֶד as a shaph’tel, translating “then bring them down, mighty ones.” On the basis of Arabic سَنْعُرَ “to weave a coat of mail,” Seale (1962: 346; 1978: 56–57) saw a reference here to a mail-clad Sisera (like Saul in 1 Sam 17:38) and the שֶרֶד הָאָרָהָרִים “skin-clad ones” (like Esau in Gen 25:25 “like a hairy mantle”).

The proposal of Chaney (1976: 14), cited by O’Connor (1980: 224), to view שֶרֶד as the border-town in Zebulun mentioned in Josh 19:10 and 12, which was centrally located for Israel’s mobilization, is attractive. However, though the personal name Sered is known from Ugaritic bn. srd (UT 452: 1794) and is found in Gen 46:14 and Num 26:20, there are reservations about a place name Sarid since the LXX (Lagardiana), the Syriac, and the Old Latin translators read שֶרֶד (= Shadud) in Josh 19, which has been identified with Tell Shadud. Contra Na’aman (1990:
425), I concur with Boling (1982: 442) that שֵׁרְדוּ, not שֵׁרַדוּ, was in the original text of Josh 19.

Stager’s (1988: 226) observation that דָּרָ֑ו “has an adversative force in this poem” was on target, but his translation, “Then the fugitives went down against the [enemy] nobles,” is off course. His interpretation requires the singular שֵׁרַדְוּ to be read as a collective or plural, and then “the villagers” (who formed the “militia of Yahweh” and were addressed in 5:31a as the “lovers” of Yahweh) become the “fugitives”—even though the defeated Sisera is the only fugitive otherwise mentioned.

J. C. de Moor (1993: 486–490), using a methodology similar to the one employed in this study, discovered the names of Judah and Levi hidden in this verse. He divided שֵׁרַדְוּ into two words and, with the addition of four vowel letters and one consonant, read the verse as

גַּל יִרְעֶ֖ר יִתְּ֥ה לַמַּקִּרֶ֖ים

“then the princes of Yôdah descended to the dignitaries,
with YHWH descended Levi with heroes.”

The ג of שֵׁרַדְוּ becomes the name שֵׁרַדְו, which in this one instance would have the plene spelling שֵׁרַדְו, compared to the other 800 occurrences of שֵׁרַדְו. Given this ratio of שֵׁרַדְו/שֵׁרַדְו to שֵׁרַדְו/שֵׁרַדְו, de Moor’s comment is not surprising, “the unusual spelling of the name of Judah confused the copyist,” who compressed the confusing שֵׁרַדְו/שֵׁרַדְו into the more enigmatic שֵׁרַדְו/שֵׁרַדְו.

However, since normative plene spelling for the entire poem requires the addition of only fifteen vowel letters, the addition of five letters in this one verse is a bit suspicious. Two of the restored vowel letters could be eliminated by reading the singular “the prince (of) Yôdãh descended,” in parallelism with the restored singular רֹדֵ֑ו לִי לֹא מָרְדֻֽקְו “Levi descended.” But this would suggest an elevated status for Judah or its prince, and make Judah’s disappearance from the tradition all the more surprising.

Even though de Moor conjectured, “A spelling like Yôdãh might be expected to have existed in ancient Israel,” yôdãh would have been spelled simply as י in the original pre-Davidic orthography. The ambiguous י could also be the contracted hoph'al jussive יָד “may he be praised,” a variant of the uncontracted
Note Albright's (1927: 175) statement, "Yeḥûd was evidently the form employed commonly by pre-exilic Jews in everyday language, and was still used by Aramaic-speaking Jews after the exile, as we know from the Aramaic portions of Daniel and Ezra..." On the meaning of the name of Judah, see Millard 1974: 216–218.

See Ziegler 1957: 176. The stem יָדָד/יָדֶּד "to assist, to support" occurs in Hos 12:1, "but Judah still puts (his) trust (ָּדָד) in God," and Ju 7:24, "Give help (ָּדָד) in confronting the Midianites." For the cognates see GKC 77; Lane 1872: 1063c; Dozy 1927: 2: 521a; and Jamme 1962: 70a.
Another Akkadian technical term has been noted by Pope (1965: 177), namely, “The word ‘Tarshish’ is derived from an Akkadian word meaning ‘refinery’ or ‘smelter’ and was applied by the Phoenicians to their mining colonies in Spain and North Africa and on the island of Sardinia.”

See Albright 1968b: 62–63 for a discussion on the Egyptian ֵּמַי “caravan leader” and the quasi-military role of the ֵּמַי.
5:13b. They were accompanied by (heavenly) warriors

Following the B-text and the notes in BH' and BHS, MT יַרְוָבָג is commonly changed to יַלְדוּ. By contrast, Stuart (1976: 134) deleted the י and the following preposition ב and read the ל as another vocative (“O Warriors”). However, one need not delete anything; rather, an addition is required. As noted (on page 162), de Moor (1993: 486), supported by the MT and the B-text, read the יל or יל as the name יַלְדוּ, thereby bringing the number of tribal participants against Sisera up to twelve; namely, Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Gilead, Issachar, Levi, Machir, Naphtali, Reuben, Yōdāh, and Zebulun. (As indicated, de Moor’s proposal cannot be dismissed lightly; but presently I remain doubtful.)

However, using the same basic methodology, I propose the following alternative reading. MT יל (B-text יַל) is not a name but a verb lacking the 3mpl suffix, like לֶדֶה in 5:9 and לֶדֶה in 5:8. When read as יַל, the verb can be parsed as a qal passive of לָדָה, a cognate of Ugaritic לָו (lwy) “to escort” (Driver 1956: 159), Syriac καλα “to accompany, to follow” (J. Payne Smith 1903: 236), and Akkadian lawu “to escort” (AHW 1: 540–541). The יַרְוָבָג are most likely the same as the יַרְוָבָג in 1QH iii: 35–36. The יַרְוָבָג “the star (warriors)” which appear in 5:20 (“From the heavens fought the stars, from their stations they fought against Sisera”) have been mobilized along with the Israelite militia.

V. Strategy of the forces (Part I): Ju 5:14–15a

5:14a. Hastening through Amalek

MT יָרֹמְל and נָרֹמְל have been very problematic. A variety of emendations have been suggested over the years, including:

170 The heavenly warriors appear in Enoch and the Talmud, as well as in the Qumran scrolls. See P. D. Miller 1973: 245, note 219, for references.
“they tore (?) to the valley”  
(G. A. Smith 1912: 87);
“they spread out in the vale”  
(Burney 1918: 133);
“storm, storm into the valley”  
(Albright, 1922: 77);
“princes went forth into the valley”  
(Richter 1963: 401);
“bring them down into the valley”  
(Stuart 1976: 135);
“princes were in the valley”  
(JB and NAB);
“the captains arrived at the valley”  
(Soggin 1981c: 82).

Without emending the consonantal MT, O'Connor (1980: 224) revocalized the phrase to read, “they root them out of Amaleq.” This would be an attractive solution but for the fact that, as evidenced in 5:17–21, the fighting took place in Jezreel, along the sea coast, and in the vicinity of Merom—not in the region of Amaleq. G. R. Driver (1962–1963: 10) appealed to the Arabic “he was ill-natured” and “he was bold or daring in battle” (Lane 1872: 1532), and translated “men of Ephraim were showing a bold face in the plain” (cf. NEB). Driver sensed the poet’s intent as evidenced in the triplet he offered for ירחל: “(hurrying) to thy rear (to join thee).” But the idea of hurrying comes from the text, not the context. It is found in the correct interpretation of ברך.

Without emending the text, Craigie (1970: 83–86; 1972: 352) appealed to the Egyptian root srs “to have command (of a corps)” and the Hebrew שׁלמה “officer” and translated, “officers (go down) into the valley.” This has been adopted by Lindars (1995: 210, 253). But the reading here of רָאִים for the widely attested שׁלמה (i.e., the Hittite šallīš = ša rabāti) and pulling the verb from 5:13 are difficult options, though not impossible.

Craigie’s appeal to an Egyptian loanword was certainly a move in the right direction. However, the loanword was not srs
but šrš “schnell sein, herbeilein (zur Hilfe)”171 (Erman and Grapow 1897: 4: 529). The poet probably intended a wordplay on the name נֵבֶלֶג, associating it with נָבָג “to be quick” or רָפָא (= Arabic أَرْفَأُ “to be quick, to be active.” The recruits from נֵבֶלֶג (“the fast ones”) would be the נָבָג “speedy ones.”172 Moffat’s translation (1922: 276), “wheeling from Ephraim into the glen,” which was similar to that of G. A. Smith (1912: 87), was on target for the participle נָבָג (“רָפָא”). Few contemporary scholars, aside from Schloen (1993: 27), have argued for the integrity of MT בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ. Globe (1975b: 171) who supposedly offered a “literal” translation read בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ “valley” for בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ: “From Ephraim [officers (?) came into the valley],” and Amalek was recognized only in a footnote. But Cazelles (1974: 235–238) had correctly argued for the integrity of the MT Amalek, noting along with lectio difficilior that Ju 12:15 associates Ephraim with the Amalekite hill country. As Payne (1983: 163–172) argued for a Midianite presence in Ephraim, Edelman (1986: 71–84) offered a good case for an Amalekite presence in the hills of western Samaria down to the time of Saul.

The poet’s use of Amalek may help date the composition of the poem. Amalekites exercised control over the hill country (as opposed to there being an Amalekite “enclave” there) only after the death of Ramesses III (1166 B.C.E.) until their defeat at the hands of Gideon (detailed in Judges 6–7), perhaps around 1125. If the Song of Deborah was composed during the period of 1160–1125, it would be quite natural for the area known later as the “hill country of Ephraim” to be referred to as “the land of the Amalekites,” similar to the use of “Canaan” in Josh 22:10–11.173


172 Compare Bowman’s argument (1972–1973: 89) that “Ju 5:14 according to the MT . . . may reflect a late smear tactic against Ephraim.” To the contrary, the verse contains a complimentary wordplay, praising Ephraim.

173 1125 B.C.E. is the probable date for Gideon’s campaign, based on a date at the end of the twelfth century for the destruction of the temple of El Berith at Shechem, which was the work of Gideon’s son, Abimelek (Ju 9:42–49).
The emendation of קָלָם to קָמָה removes the one bit of internal evidence which could help date the composition of the poem.\textsuperscript{174}

5:14b. (They) would strike at the rear

Craigie’s identification (1969a: 257) of the MT קָו רָא יָרָא as a war cry cannot be supported by Hos 5:8, considered by Lindars (1995: 253) and others to be a stylized battle cry. Hos 5:8 has its own textual problems, and the קָו רָא there is better read as קָו רָא (an ‘aph’el of the stem קָו כָּז “to rouse, to set in motion”) or קָו רָא “terrify!” (a hiph’il imperative of קָו כָּז).\textsuperscript{175} Wolff (1974: 104) followed the LXX and translated Hos 5:8 “Sound the alarm in Beth-Aven, <terrify> Benjamin,” assuming a Vorlage with קָו כָּז, not קָו רָא.

Consequently, Hos 5:8 and Ju 5:14b have only apparent similarities. Rabin’s (1961: 387, 400) translation of Ju 5:14b, “May we be thy ransom, O Benjamin” (made on the basis of the Mishnaic קָו רָא “obligation to provide a substitute, make good a loss”), would be attractive in another context. But it is not suitable for a battle ballad in general or Ju 5:14–15a in particular.

MT קָו רָא is composed of the adverbial קָו and the defectively spelled יָרָא 3mpl of הָכַב “to smite, to attack.” Thus, קָו רָא “at the rear they will strike” removes the problematic direct address in the MT and uncovers a key element of the Israelite strategy.\textsuperscript{176} From the vantage point of the Canaanites, whose

\textsuperscript{174} In contrast to the conclusions in this study, compare Kallai’s unacceptable conclusion (1978: 258–261), “. . . the background of the Song of Deborah with the general territorial picture it conveys is incompatible with its being an early epic, and supports the contention that it is a later composition.”

\textsuperscript{175} On the ‘aph’el in Hebrew, see Dahood 1965: 24; and 1968: 31.

\textsuperscript{176} Compare Kuhnigk 1974: 73, where he vocalizes בּ רָא, having an emphatic בּ in parallel with the suffixed בּ of יָרָא. He takes קָו כָּז to mean “Nachkommenschaft, Sprößling.”
chariots faced the plain, an attack from the southern mountains would be from the rear. The fear of such an attack is found in Papyrus Anastasi I 24:5 (ANET 478a; Gardiner 1911: 27), “Then thou thinkest that the foe is behind thee. Trembling seizes thee.”

5:14c. Benjamin from concealment would attack

None of the varied translations give hint that this phrase deals with strategy. Direct address required by MT goes unchallenged by most, including the NAB, “Behind you was Benjamin, among your troops”; the NEB, “crying, ‘With you, Benjamin! Your clansmen are here’”; O’Connor (1980: 224), “Benjamin delays you among the people”; and NRSV, “following you, Benjamin, with your kin.” However, similar to קָבֵר, discussed above, MT is a compound of three elements: the preposition ב, the noun לָעָם, and the yiqtol 3ms of נָלֵם.

The vocable is לָעָם II, “to darken, to dim” (BDB 770; Klein 1987: 475), a cognate of Aramaic נַלְעָם “to conceal, to suppress” and Arabic غَيْم “he concealed.” It was probably used instead of בָּאֶר or מַכֶּר, matching the alliteration which occurs also with the names Machir (רֵכֶם and מַכֶּר) and Issachar (רֵכֶר and מַכֶּר). LINDARS (1995: 210, 291), appealing to לָעָם II, “peoples” in Neh 9: 22, 24 translated the colon “After you, Benjamin, in your companies” and lamented, “It seems impossible to relate Pesh behubak” (perhaps meaning ‘in your willingness’ to take part) to the Hebrew.” But מַכֶּר, minus its preposition and suffix, is the cognate of Hebrew מַכָּר “to hide, to withdraw” (BDB 285), which is a synonym of לָעָם II, “to darken, to conceal.” The Peshitta’s מַכָּר (= מַכָּר) supports my translation.


178 Ordinarily this word is spelled with a ב rather than a בת. See Payne Smith 1903: 133 and 153 for “to cover, to hide” and “covering, hiding.” Note that the מְשַׁךְתָּה “thick darkness” with a ב rather than ה.
5:14d. From Zebulon (those) brandishing the marshal’s mace

The suggestion of Kittel in BH³ to delete הבצמץ כסר, and even the proposals of Burney and Richter to delete just כסר for metrical reasons, are unnecessary. But Meyer’s (in BHS) and de Moor’s (1993: 492) proposal to read כסר “copper/bronze” (cognate of Akkadian siparru, first suggested by Friedländer), and Tsevat’s (1952–53: 107) reading כסר as a cognate of Akkadian šaparu “to rule” and šapirum “governor” remain good options.¹⁷⁹

Since the function of the scribe could be a military one (2 Kgs 25:19; Jer 52:25; 2 Chron 26:11; and 1 Macc 5:42) and in light of the Egyptian borrowing of the term סָפָר (which was apparently the equivalent of their own army official, the sš dn “scribe of distribution” [Gardiner 1947: 33]) there is good reason to retain כסר “scribe, muster-master” (with Lindars, 1995: 291).

As the following excerpts from Papyrus Anastasi I (Gardiner 1911: passim; ANET 475–479) indicate, the position of the scribe was one of authority, like that of the יketerangan and the נריהו:

A scribe of the king, one who enrolls the soldiers (1: 12: 1)
... I am the scribe, the commander of soldiers (1: 13: 6)
... vigilant scribe, who art at the head of the army (1: 15: 1)
... thou honoured scribe, Maher cunning of hand, at the head of the troops, in front of the army. (1: 27: 1)

In this context, הבצמץ is not a synonym of דא “spear,” as in 1QM and 2 Sam 18:14, but the scepter of authority, as in Gen 49:10 and Isa 14:5. A wordplay on Zebulon appears to have been intended here as with Ephraim: הבצמץ and הבצמץ are synonyms like Arabic [he held] and [he carried].


¹⁸⁰ For a survey of the problems with הבצמץ in the LXX, see Walters 1973: 206–208.
5:15a. And officers from Issachar

The NEB translation, “Issachar joined with Deborah in the up-rising,” follows G. R. Driver’s proposal (1962–63: 11) to transfer the ב of רקכע יִרְכּיָּו to the preceding יִרְכּיָּו. With the elision of the ◊, Driver read יָרְבִּי (נָכָּה), a cognate of Syriac يرثب “to rebel.” But ב and נא do not suggest military action, but garrulous, contentious, or mendacious speech. It is more a synonym of מָרֵד “to reject” than of מָרֵד “to revolt.”

Therefore, the MT remains preferable, requiring only a change in the vocalization of יָרְבִּי. The ◊ may be emphatic, though not necessarily, since the bicolon begins with an emphatic ◊ affixed to דָּהָב. It is retained here for better syllable balance. The use of the intervening preposition or particle in the construct chain is characteristic of this poet’s style, noted already in 5:4–5 (יוֹרְבִּי נַּקְרָע יָרְבּי וּרְבִּי “waters of the mountains”) and in 5:10–11 (יוֹרְבִּי נַּקְרָע יָרְבּי וּרְבִּי “those walking the road”). The use of ב “from” here and in 5:6 and 5:19 is a minor unifying element (see note 42).

The principal tui of the Old Latin reflects a Vorlage with יָרְבּי יִרְכּיָּו, where the ב of יִרְכּיָּו was read as ב and affixed to יָרְבּי. The et ex Issachar rendering of the Ethiopic reflects a confusion of ב and ב, or an understanding that ב could mean “from.” The A-text and the Lucianic text seemingly have nothing in 5:15 to reflect the MT יִרְכּיָּו, but the extra ἐνοχὸντος ηγησαὼς doublet in these texts in 5:14 is the remote doublet for יִרְכּיָּו.

Strategy of the Forces (Part II): 5:15b–16

These verses have been considered corrupt by many critics, including Moore (1900b: 172), who left part of the text untranslated, and Albright (1922: 77). Soggin (1981c: 89) provides a very good summary of current opinion. Generally, 5:15–22 is labeled a taunt song or a denunciation of those tribes which did

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181 R. Payne Smith 1897–1901: 2: 2725; J. Payne Smith 1903: 389. Note, for example, Ezek 2:6, בְּנֵי מִרְיָמְתֶּךָ “be not afraid for they are a rebellious house.”
not participate in the battle. Several scholars, including Crown (1967: 240–242), Craigie (1969a: 261), and Globe (1974b: 504), suggested that these lines contained old idiomatic expressions for sarcastic censure, especially against Reuben. Globe believed the poet used a double entendre to make the sarcasm all the more biting. The expression כָּנְפָּס לָבָם was used to demean Reuben as a "commander of the mind," a kind of "armchair warrior" who had only a "division (.semha) of his mind" instead of a command over a real military division (semha) in the field.

But far from being a taunt against those who did not participate in the battle against Sisera, these lines are a continuation of the strategy statement of 5:14. Hay (1964: 403) noted that the strategy was not new or unique:

The similarity between the principal factors in this story and the Reed Sea episode is striking: Israel is delivered when the vastly superior enemy chariot force is swept away by water... Thus it appears likely that Israel again employed the same tactics which she had used successfully against the Egyptians.

5:15b. That he might inflict defeat

Albright (1922: 77), followed by Meyer (BHS), deleted this colon in his reconstruction in light of the LXX A-text which has no hint of it. Burney (1918: 137), followed by other critics (e.g., J. Gray, see above, page 148), replaced כָּנְפָּס with כָּנְפָּס. But given the poet’s liking for paronomasia and for aural coherence, it is more likely that the second כָּנְפָּס in verse 15 is a shaph’el (yiqtol) of the root כָּנְפָּס, like Ugaritic ttkkrn (UT 502: 2679), a cognate of South Arabic škr “to defeat” (Jamme 1962: 71a, 448). This word occurs in the enigmatic proverb כָּנְפָּס כָּn

182 The reference in Gen 49:4 to Reuben’s being “unruly like water” is not a denunciation for his being “fainthearted,” since Aramaic כָּנְפָּס and Arabic כָּנְפָּס “uncontrollable, reckless, boastful,” speaks of the reckless courage of the zealot.
in lieu of MT רָכַב “to hire”: “Strife (רָכַב) wounds everyone, defeating (רָכַב) the fool and defeating (רָכַב) the learned.”

5:15c. Barak was concealed in the plain

Lindars (1995: 256–257) followed Burney in reading כֹּן as an adjective and added the preposition ל to Barak’s name, translating “true to Barak.” But Schnurrer, cited by G. R. Driver (1962–1963: 11), and Soggin (1981c: 89) more correctly related the כֹּן to Arabic كن “to conceal, a place of concealment or retreat” (Lane 1893: 3003; Hava 1915: 666). I concur with this identification, even though Soggin’s translation, “Issachar was a support for Barak,” does not reflect this meaning. The MT כֹּן (= כֹּן כֹּן לֵבֶר כֹּן) is simply a qal passive meaning “was concealed.” This verb also occurs in Ju 12:6, בַּלָּו אֵלֶּה כֹּן לְבֶר כֹּן, “he could not conceal speaking thus,” and in Josh 8:4, כי יָדְוַ אֵלֶּה כֹּן לְבֶר כֹּן כֹּן “all of you shall remain hidden (רָכַב) לְבֶר כֹּן כֹּן כֹּן)” (contra the RSV “hold yourselves in all readiness”).

5:15d. Gad had joined them

It has long been assumed that Gad was not mentioned in Judges 5, and this assumption led Mayes (1974: 31) to conclude that “at the time of the event commemorated in the Song of Deborah there existed no tribe of Gad.” But Gad was there all

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183 MT רָכַב הָרָכַב “the learned,” as the antithesis of הָרָכַב הָרָכַב, must be a cognate of הָרָכַב הָרָכַב “the learned one well-acquainted with affairs, a manager, supervisor.” The Arabic he knew it “he knew it,” with the distinction that הִשְׂרָאִיתוֹ הָרָכַב indicates perceiving a thing by reflection (Lane 1872: 2013–2015). Given the interchange of ב and ל (see Blommerde 1969: 5–6) and the metathesis which occurs in vocables having an ל and a ב, MT רָכַב need not be emended to יִשְׂרָאִיתוֹ or יִשְׂרָאִיתוֹ. See page 142 for a discussion on the analogous in Ju 5:8.

184 Job 12:5, 15:23, 18:12, and Ps 38:18 need to be reexamined in light of יִשְׂרָאִיתוֹ “to conceal.”
along. The יַלְדוּת יָבוּנָו “great ones” but a two-word phrase with a subject and a verb. The subject is יָד and the verb is the qal 3ms of יָלְדוּת “to join, to accompany” (BDB 530–531; Kopf 1976: 153), with the 3mpl datival suffix, meaning “Gad had joined them.”

This interpretation removes the alleged sarcastic censure of Reuben and closely associates Reuben with Gad, an association which is reflected in their intermingled settlement (Josh 13 and Num 32), which predated the time when they were fighting against Sisera as comrades-in-arms. (Isserles [1510–1572], similarly dividing the name, suggested that Reuben in this verse was to be read as רָאוּ זְרָא בִּיבְי [see note 189]).

5:15d–16a. Those of genuine courage

circled about

The translation “genuine courage” combines insights from Akkadian and Arabic. In Akkadian, libbu without a modifier may indicate courage, e.g., ša lib-bi iṣu u emitu la iṣu anâku “I am one who has courage but no strength” (CAD: 9:170b). The Hebrew הָלָם has the same meaning, although it generally has a modifier, as in Amos 2:16 (הָלָם אָמָה הָלָם) and Ps 76:5 (וֹלֶם), both meaning “courageous.” Hebrew חֲקִיקֵי לְבָם is a cognate of Arabic حق “authentic, genuine, true,” as in the expression “perfect in courage” (Lane 1865: 605d, 609c). Consequently, the MT לַחְקִיקֵי לְבָם means the “true-hearted,” those of “genuine courage,” and the masculine bound nouns לְבָם are the subject of the verb חָלַם “to encircle, to surround, to circle about.”

The doublets in 5:16 of Symmachus and the A-text, ἵνα τί μοι καθίσσαι [Symmachus καθίσσαι] “why to me to sit down?” (as opposed to the B-text εἰς τί ἐκάθισσαν “to what [purpose] did they seat?”), reflect לָם instead of כָּלָם שָׁבָה. The ἵνα τί and εἰς τί reflect the MT לָם; the μοι doublet preserves the variant דא (the poetic לָם + 1cs suffix = לָם). The B-text has ἐκάθισσαν “they seated” (= לָם שָׁבָה) which appears to be a contextual translation which avoided the second person since there is no direct address in the immediate context, and since a sequential infinitive after an interrogative לָם makes poor sense.
COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

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Note Jer 31:2, "לאלעה הלוחהו שֵׁלֵמָה, "Israel journeyed to find rest," which has the infinitive absolute followed by the sequential infinitive construct.

185 It functions as a finite verb (or with the elision of the finite verb) and is a cognate of Akkadian lamû “to hem in (an enemy), to circumambulate” (CAD: 9:69–77). In light of the doublets in the Greek text, it is quite possible that the word was originally הָלוֹל, scriptio defectiva for a 3mpl verb. In either case, the original הָלוֹל was incorrectly vocalized הָלוֹל (eiv tī and הָלוֹל (= μοε)) instead of הָלוֹל or הָלוֹל. Lindars (1995: 291) correctly noted, “All the LXX renderings presuppose that the meaning [of מְקַל] is to be deduced from מִכַּל, but all presuppose a different word, which suggests that the text did not differ from the MT.” It is a case where translators and tradition, like contemporary lexicographers, failed to recognize that מְקַל meant “true-hearted” or “courageous.”

P. de Boer (1951: 181), followed by Cazelles (1952: 378), recognized the shaphel of הָלוֹל in Isa 38:12 and 13, “by day as well as by night thou makest me hemmed in (יְשֻׁלָּמָה),” compared to the NRSV “from day to night you bring me to an end.” The infinitive absolute is here followed by three sequential infinitives (discussed next): נָהַב “to wait for,” תָּשְׁבֵּח “to look for,” and בָּא “to triumph over.”

5:16a. to wait between the ravines

Although the MT interrogative הָלוֹל initially points the exegete in the wrong direction, the crux in 5:16 is really מְפָאָשִׁים; variously translated “fireplaces, ash heaps” (BDB 1946a), “Pack-esel, Sattelkörbe” (KB 3616a), or “sheepfolds” (Kimhi, KJV, RSV, NRSV). The translations have Reuben acting very strangely: “Why did you squat between hearths harkening to pastoral pipings?” (Boling 1975: 103); “But why did you remain sitting under the pack-saddles, listening to the shepherds’ pipes?” (Soggin 1981c: 82); “Why do you sit among hearths listening to herds hissing?” (O’Connor 1980: 225); “Why did you stay among the sheepfolds to listen to the whistlings for the flocks?” (Lindars
The converging enclosing walls, which may be up to ten miles in length and from the air look like a large (toy) kite, were used for the entrapment of animals. The double wall is reckoned to account for the dual form of אֵיתַּפִּים. The B-text δίγγόμιας “a double-load, a twin-pack” reflects a dual אֵיתַּפִּים for the MT אֵיתַּפִּים, but provides no better sense: “Why did they sit among the twin-packs to hear the hissing of angels?” The LXX Vorlage apparently had בִּלְבַר “watchers, angels” for the MT בִּלְבַר “flocks (?),” although ἐγκέλων could easily be a misreading of ἐγκέλω “herds” (see below, page 181).

Craigie (1977b: 33–49) and Soggin (1981c: 90) have summarized the issues, which center basically around the two following interpretations:


(b) Eissfeldt (1949: 9–10 and 1954: 54–56), followed by Yadin (1955: 8), Tournay (1959: 361), J. Gray (1967: 287; 1988: 444), and Craigie (1977b: 48), associated the MT בִּלְבַר with the “kite” structures scattered in the area east-northeast of Amman and graphically depicted in a Safaitic drawing scratched in stone.†\[186\] But the meaning of Ugaritic mt’dm is in dispute, some thinking that it means “stages” or “layers” or a unit of distance—one of which fits the context of 5:16. P. de Moor (1993: 491) asserted, “It is certain msptym corresponds to Ugaritic mt’dm and primarily means ‘donkey-pack.’” This would make בִּלְבַר similar to the “two burdens” in Gen 49:14, as translated in the KJV and NKJ. Craigie linked בִּלְבַר to the Egyptian sbty “surrounding walls, ramparts,” but acknowledged that there were also linguistic problems with this identification, though no greater than with Ugaritic mt’dm.

An easier solution than the geographically remote “kites” or “converging fold-walls/sheepfolds” (J. Gray 1977: 223) and the linguistically remote mt’dm and sbty has long been available.

186 The converging enclosing walls, which may be up to ten miles in length and from the air look like a large (toy) kite, were used for the entrapment of animals. The double wall is reckoned to account for the dual form of אֵיתַּפִּים.
The Targum’s שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף “between the boundaries,” the Old Latin labiorum, and the LXX A-text triplet in 5:15 provide the clues for reading “ravines.”

The A-text has the transliterated μοσφαϊθαμ or the like, similar to the Syriac "between the boundaries." Moreover, the A-text of 5:15 has a remote doublet (or triplet) for the MT שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף. In addition to ἐξεπέστειλεν πεζοὺς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα “he sent off his foot soldiers out to the hollow” and ἐξετείνειν ἐν τοῖς ποδίς αὐτοῦ “he stretched out on his feet,” it also has ἵνα τί συ κατακεῖται ἐν μέσῳ χελέων “to what end do you dwell in (the) midst of banks/shores (of the wadi),” obviously a translation of 5:16a in which שְׁבֵל הָרֶשֶׁף was derived from שָׁבַל “lip, boundary, brink.”

The Syriac text has ḫdvbl (“flowing stream”), which suggests the same understanding.

Hebrew שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף may be related to two Arabic cognates, either "brink, lip" or סֵפֶה “the side of a valley or the shore of the sea or river" (Lane 1872: 1574, 1485c). The latter definition fits when used with a wadi, river, or seaside. When no distinction was made between the ש and ו, the two stems easily became confused in Hebrew.

Meek’s translation (1927: 385), “Why did you lounge among the ravines,” was on target for שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף, though he missed the point on שָׁבַל and שִׁבֵּל as they pertained to the strategy of the Israelites. The unusual infinitive, שִׁבְּלָה, “to tarry, to stay” instead of שִׁבַּל, is also attested with the stem שִׁבַּל in Gen 8:7, “. . . [the dove] went to and fro until the waters were dried up (בָּשַׁל).”

5:16b. to listen, to look for stragglers שָׁמַע שִׁרְמָה שְׁמֶר מְשִׁרְמָה

MT שִׁרְמָה, regularly identified with שִׁרְמָה “to whistle, to hiss,” is emended and read, without the ש, as the infinitive construct

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187 The MT שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף can be read as the dual of a feminine noun (like שֶׁבֵל הָרֶשֶׁף “office, function”) meaning “two sides of a valley” or simply “a (mountain) ravine.” As noted on page 111, the poet made frequent use of the feminine dual, including שְׁבֵל הָרֶשֶׁף in 5:30 and שֵׁבֶת הָרֶשֶׁף in 3:31 (as interpreted above, pages 64–69).
Compare the \textit{aγγέλων} of Dn 4:10 and 20 \cite{LXX 4:13 and 23} and the \textit{aγγέλων} of Job 40:11, where \textit{νεφέλ} or \textit{νεφέα} was read for MT \textit{טָחַל} \textit{לָפ”} “overflowing.” As noted on page 176, \textit{aγγέλων} could be an error for \textit{ανέλων}. The intensity of action rooted in \textit{טָחַל} \textit{לָפ”} is greater than that of \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”}. It is more like the intensity associated with \textit{טָחַל} \textit{לָפ”} “to be watchful, to be alert” (noting that \textit{טָחַל} \textit{לָפ”} and \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”} could be easily confused).

For MT \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”}, the LXX B-text has \textit{αγγέλων} “watchers, messengers,”\footnote{188} having read \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”} for the MT \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”}. However, the A-text \textit{οἰκεθεῖν} “to go through” must have read \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”} for the \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”}. But neither reading warrants a change in the MT.

Contrary to exegetical tradition, \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַרְכ”} is not the plural of the well-attested \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַר”} “sheep, flock” or “shepherd” \cite{Soggin 1981c: 82; NEB, and NRSV}. The word is a cognate of Arabic \textit{غذر} “to lag, to remain behind, to survive,” e.g., “such a one remained (\textit{غذر}) after the death of his brothers” \cite{Lane 1887: 2231}. The stem is used in Modern Hebrew meaning “to be missing in battle” \cite{Klein 1987: 465}. Thus, the \textit{טָחַל} \textit{יַר”} are those stragglers who would survive the flooding and the destruction of their chariots. As noted above (page 144), the summons-to-arms was for a mop-up operation. In words borrowed from Ju 20:45 (NEB), the militia would “pick off the straggler on the road.”

5:16b. triumph over cowardly chieftains

Meyer, in BHS, like other commentators, viewed 5:16b as a duplicate of 5:15b. Stuart \cite{1976: 135} deleted it, and the NEB relegated it to a note. But Soggin \cite{1981c: 90} argued for its integrity and translated, “among the groups of Reuben, men were brave only at heart,” which somehow is not supposed to conflict with 5:15d, “from the groups of Reuben there were numerous brave hearts.” The \textit{רֵכ”} here is the cognate of Arabic \textit{حفر} “paltry,
contemptible, worthless.” The כור עלי “cowardly” is a clever wordplay on the כור עלי “courageous” in 5:15c. Unfortunately, an erroneous addition of a ה after the preposition ב transformed the two words ראה נזור לאר “they triumphed over the chieftains” into the awkward phrase ראה נזור לאר “Reuben chieftains.” 189 The verb הארץ used with ב, meaning “to triumph over,” appears in the Mesha Inscription and in many other biblical texts.

VI. Israelite Attack: Ju 5:17–23

As traditionally translated, the Song of Deborah in this section reprimands Gilead, Dan, and Asher for staying out of the conflict with Sisera. Gilead was censured for remaining in Trans-Jordan, Dan was chided for “dwelling at ease” or being preoccupied with maritime interests during wartime, and Asher was reprimanded for “vacationing” at the shore while his kinfolk took to the battlefield. By contrast, two tribes, Naphtali and Zebulon, are singled out for special commendation for courage unto death.

However, with only one change of a ה to ה, the recognition of a shaphel form or two, and the redivision of two words, an entirely different picture emerges in which all the tribes mentioned are hailed for heroic action. These lines actually tell of a three-front attack by the Israelites against Sisera’s Canaanite coalition. The strategy presented in 5:14–18 was to challenge Sisera with

(a) a primary attack by Dan, Asher, and Zebulon against the harbor facilities at Abu Hawam at the mouth of the Wadi Kishon, which may have served, along with Acco, as an Egyptian navy base. 190

189 Note Rabbi Moses Isserle’s (1510–1572) redivision and transposition of the text as . . . ראה נזור לאר נזור לאר (Responsa § 17, beginning with ראה נזור לאר נזור לאר. I am indebted to Gilad Gevaryahu for this reference to ReMa. On ראה נזור לאר “to triumph over,” see BDB 908a, KAI 2: 173.

(b) an diversionary attack by Naphtali towards Merom, although there was no intention to engage or seize the city;
(c) a delayed assault by Ephraim from the south, via the Wadi el Arah and “along the waters of Megiddo,” once Sisera’s forces moved westward toward Abu Hawam.

According to this threefold Israelite strategy, Sisera would be forced to respond. He would, no doubt, hasten westward along the Wadi Kishon, which would have been dry during the late summer months. Even if winter rains or storms were imminent, Sisera would have had to gamble on using the wadi for a quick counterattack to Abu Hawam. This reconstruction fits extremely well with the second half of Malamat’s observation (1979: 47) that, “The adoption of an indirect military approach finds expression in two principal tactics employed by the Israelites: covert infiltration—neutralizing the city defenses; and enticement—drawing the defenders out into the open.” The destruction of the Canaanites, as interpreted here, involved (in words borrowed from Malamat) “tactics based on deception—feints, decoys, ambushes, and diversionary maneuvers—any guile to attain surprise in overcoming the enemy.”

5:17a. Gilead in Trans-Jordan was on alert

Since Gad is mentioned in 5:15b (reading יָד לִבְּנָי “Gad joined them” for MT יָד לִבְּנָי, as proposed above), Gilead here refers to Machir. This identification is supported by Num 32:39–40, “Machir invaded Gilead . . . Moses then assigned Gilead to

191 Malamat 1979: 45. Surprisingly, he did not include the Deborah–Barak–Yael traditions of Judges 4–5 in his examples of Israelite strategy and tactics.

192 The γαβδ and γαδ in MSS wgn’ and the Armenian, like the γαθ of MS π+, are either variants of Γαβδ or displaced variants for Gad in 5:15b. Gad was associated with Moab, as noted in the Mesha Inscription, “Now the men of Gad had always lived in the land of Ataroth” (KAI 2: 169, l. 10), and in Num 32: 34–36, “And the sons of Gad built Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, Atroth-shophan.” Note the study of Mauchline (1956: 19–33).
Machir.” Evidently only a contingent of leaders from Machir participated in the fighting west of the Jordan (5:15, “officers went down from Machir”). But the escape routes in the east were closed to the Canaanites since Gilead/Machir stood on alert. When the Philistines, more than a century later, mustered their forces against Saul at Micmash, the Israelites themselves are reported to have made use of the escape routes into Gilead and Gad: “when the men of Israel saw that they were hard pressed, that the troops [of the Philistines] had drawn near . . . they forded the Jordan to the territory of Gad and Gilead” (1 Sam 13:7).

The MT סֵכַּנְנָה is either (a) the Hebrew cognate of the much discussed Ugaritic cognate škn “to prepare, to make ready, to take a stand,”¹⁹³ or (b) the shaph’el of הַמָּל (“to establish” with the meaning of the hiphil attested in Ezek 7:14, הָעֹלַת הָעַל אֶת הַמָּלֶים, “all was ready, but no one goes out to war” (NEB), and Nah 2:4, הָעֹלַת הָעַל אֶת הָעַל, “the chariotry on the day of its preparation.” The defective spelling of מַלְּקָה created a homograph of מָלֶק “to dwell” and מַלָּק “to take a stand.”

5:17b. Then Dan boldly attacked ships

(See above, pages 86–87.)

The Song of Deborah makes explicit reference to the heroic actions of Dan, Asher, and Zebulon in an assault on the Canaanite coastal facilities, a significant feature not previously recognized because, in the words of Barr (1968: 268), there was “a strong tendency towards leveling the vocabulary and the interpretation of that which is rare as if it was that which was more normal.” First, the pointing of מַלְּק as the interrogative “why” contributed to the misunderstanding of this verse. The proposal of Cross (1973: 235, note 74) to read MT מַלְּקָה as an emphatic מָלֶק extended by הָעֹלַת (well known from Ugaritic)¹⁹⁴ is essential for


¹⁹⁴ Stuart (1976: 135) links the emphatic מַלְּקָה to a composite of דֹּעֶה and הָעֹלַת. This proposal has the support of the double emphatics in Gen 26:9 (לְבָנָה הָעֹלַת) and Jer 5:5 (לְבָנָה הָעֹלַת, LXX = לָבָנָה), although in these cases the מַלְּקָה.
correctly understanding this verse. Emphatic לָמָּה occurs also in 2 Chron 25:16, “Stop! You will surely (לָמָּה) be struck down!”; in Ps 2:1, “Indeed (לָמָּה), the nations rage!” and Ps 22:2 “My God, my God, you have surely (לָמָּה) forsaken me!”

The second key for understanding 5:17a is in recognizing לְנָר as a yqtl preterit of לְנָר II “angriefen, to attack,” rather than לְנָר I “to sojourn, to reside as an alien,” or, as Albright (1968a: 212) proposed, a denominative of Egyptian kur(a) “ship.” Hebrew לְנָר II is a cognate of Akkadian gurrû (D-stem) “to attack, to open hostilities” (CAD 5: 61) and Ugaritic gr (G-stem) “to attack.” The word occurs elsewhere in biblical poetry. Powis Smith (1927: 935, 938) translated לְנָר in Ps 56:7 as “they attacked” and לְנָר in Ps 59:4 as “mighty men attacked me.” The NEB of Isa 54:15 reflects the same usage. Hillers (1972: 41) followed my translation (1968: 43) of Lam 2:22, מַלְאָר מָסָס “my attackers from all over.”

J. Gray (1967: 287–288; 1988: 439), Craigie (1977b: 38–41), and Soggin (1981c: 82, 90) did not read MT לְנָר as “ships,” but in light of Ugaritic an and Arabic ُلْوُن “to be at ease,” translated “Dan abode at ease,” or the like. However, לְנָר is not an adverbial accusative but the direct object of לְנָר. The action depicted here appears in Akkadian texts: “the enemy will take away the

was not elided. Compare Halpern (1983: 384), “Still more appealing is the alternative of taking the lexeme as negative + enclitic . . . so one might render with Cross ‘you do sit still,’ or alternately, ‘you do not sit still’ . . . .” See also Cross 1988: 48, note 7.

195 Note Stager’s translation (1988: 229–232, following Albright [1922: 284]), “And Dan, why did he serve as a client on ships?” On the basis of Punic/Phoenician גֹּל “client” and Ju 18:1, Stager argued that “Dan could be described as a client-tribe (clan) . . .” and speculated that “at least enough of the Danites had been hired or pressed into duty by the shipowners or shipping companies on the coast in the Jaffa region to inspire this saying about them.”

196 See above pages 49–50 and 86–87. Kellerman (1975: 439–449 provides a convenient summary discussion on גֹּל “to sojourn” and lists Ju 5:17 among the eighty-one occurrences in the entire MT. He does not discuss the many occurrences of גֹּל “to attack” except to note helpfully, “If in antiquity, ‘to be foreign’ and ‘to be hostile’ can be simply two different observations about the same person, one must admit the possibility that Akk. gerû, ‘to be hostile’ . . . can be regarded as the etymon of Heb. gwr.”
boats from the mooring places,” and “my soldiers reached the mooring place (and) the harbor to attack them” (CAD 8: 232b).

Attempts to make sense of the MT by reading מַלֹּא as a post-positive particle coupled with the common verb נָלַל “to sojourn” or “to be a client” (as though it were the normal verb used with מֵאַל “mariner” or מָלָא “sailor” or מַלָּא “seaman”) are examples of translators overlooking the poet’s use of now rare forms.

The tribe of Dan has been much maligned because of such errors. Rashi, for example, alleged cowardice: “and Dan why does he gather into ships? Dan gathered his wealth into ships to be prepared to escape” (cited by Rosenberg 1983: 42), suggesting that “Asher and Dan were unwilling to jeopardize their lucrative employment in Phoenician ships by fighting against their overlords’ allies.” Even Lemche’s (1991: 96) mild “lingered by the sea-shore” and “did tarry by the ships” maligns Dan and Asher by insisting that בַּוְּֽוֶֽוָֽוֶּ = “to sojourn” and לָֽוֵֽוָֽו = “to dwell.”

5:17c. Asher assailed
along the water’s edge

Although מַלֹּא (B-text וְקָמָא and A-text וְקָמָא) has uniformly been read as the verb “to dwell,” the proposal here is to repoint it either as (a) מַלֲכָא, the yqtl preterit of an original מַלָּא, cognate of Arabic مَلَّأ “to leap, to assault, to assail” (Lane 1893: 2920), or (b) מַלֲכָא or מַלֲכְא, the yqtl preterit of מַלֲכַּא “to splinter, to shatter.” Either vocable fits the context of an attack along the seacoast, splintering boats and shattering piers.197

The latter word occurs in Hos 8:6, כִּי יָבֵב לְהַעֲרֹד עֵינֵי צְמָרָי, “Surely the calf of Samaria shall be broken into pieces” (NAS). Wolff (1974: 142) correctly observed, “The hapax legomenon is related to the Middle Hebrew word מַלֲכַּא (‘to hew’) and to Arabic سيَب ‘to cut,’ or سيَب ‘chips, splinters,’ and probably means ‘wooden chips’ or ‘splinters.’” Dahood (1959b: 1003), following T. H. Gaster (1950: 10), posited a Ugaritic root לֵבב

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197 Blommerde (1969: 133) found an infixed מ in Job 38:11, reading the MT מֶלֶא as מֶלֶא, used for the smashing of the waves at the shore.
“to smash, to splinter” and argued for reading נָבַּע in Gen 49:24; Lam 1:7; and in Ps 89:45.198

5:17d. And struck against its harbors נָבַּע מָכָרֵי נָבַּע

The MT נָבַּע is not just a “creek” (NEB) or an “inlet” (Stuart 1976: 131), much less “gates” (Soggin 1981c: 83). But as the Arabic فُلْسَيْن indicates, it is “the place where ships unload, where they are stationed near the bank of a river” (Lane 1887: 2374c). The verb נָבַּע “to assault” (נָבְעַ בָּעָבָה, discussed above) is in synonymous parallelism with נָבַּע (נָבְעַ בָּעָבָה) in 5:17b balances the נָבַּע of נָבַּע “to strike, to attack,” which occurs in the hiph’îl in 5:14a. The נָבַּע here in 17b balances the נָבַּע of נָבַּע in 5:17a (as noted). The interchange of נָבַּע and hiph’îl forms may be reflected in the conflated נָבַּע found in Pss 135:8 and 135:10.199 The widely discussed energetic נָבַּע attested also in the Deir ‘Alla texts, accounts for the נָבַּע of נָבְעַ בָּעָבָה. The נָבַּע of MT נָבַּע has been emended to נָבְּעָ since cognates indicate that נָבְּעָ was a נָבְּעָ rather than a נָבְּעָ verb, and the ד vowel was indicated by a ד.

The name of the anchorage which was attacked by Asher is not given unless, as L. H. Vincent (1935: 436) noted, there is a link between נָבְּעָ or נָבְּעָ “Haifa” and נָבְּעָה נָבְּעָה. However, the destruction of Abu Hawam about the time of Israel’s initiative against Sisera makes the Abu Hawam harbor facility the most likely site. Although the twelfth-century destruction of Abu Hawam Stratum V-C is commonly attributed to the Philistine incursions, it is important to note that there is no evidence to support this conclusion. Maisler (1951: 23) noted, “attention must especially be called to the fact that there is not even one ‘Philistine’ sherd found in Stratum IV, nor in Tell Abu Hawam in

198 See McDaniel 1968b: 53, note 1, for bibliography and summary.


Fritz (1973: 123) argued that Hazor actually fell to the Sea Peoples rather than to the Israelites. But Yadin (1979: 66) has rightly rejected this notion as a “desperate theory” and “unwarranted by any source.”

5:18. Zebulon swam (underwater) risking his life

The poet not only praised Zebulon for risking his life, but also described the heroic feat which warranted this special renown. The MT here is only a homograph of הָלָה הָלָה “people, militia” and הָלָה “with.” It is actually the 3ms of הָלָה “to swim,” a cognate of the Arabic ὕμω “to swim immersed in an irrational and dangerous action”—in contrast to swimming on the surface, which is סִיְנ (Lane 1872, 1874: 1289a, 2202a). In the Qur'an (21: 34) ὕμω means “to glide [through the sky].”

This understanding recovers the tradition that Zebulon risked his life in a “frogman” attack against enemy boats moored offshore. Similar underwater attacks are depicted on the alabaster reliefs in the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.) and are known from the story of Scylla and Hydna who attacked the Persian fleet by diving into the sea to cut anchor ropes.

Hints of this heroic feat of Zebulon probably survive in the Blessing of Moses (Deut 33:19), where there is the collocation of

(a) בַּלְוַי מָלָא הָלָה “skillful swimmer,” (for MT מִדְבָּר הָלָה “peoples mountain”);

(b) לֹטֵן “to bury, to submerge, to lay a snare”;

201 Fritz (1973: 123) argued that Hazor actually fell to the Sea Peoples rather than to the Israelites. But Yadin (1979: 66) has rightly rejected this notion as a “desperate theory” and “unwarranted by any source.”

202 לֹטֵן occurs in the pa’el in Aramaic, meaning “to move on, to travel far” (Levy 1924: 4: 639). The Akkadian hamu or amu “raft” (CAD 1: 85; 6: 73) and Arabic “raft” and مسْتَمْعَ عَامَة “a ship upon the sea” (Lane 1872: 2202–2203) are from the same stem.

203 See Plates IV and V. Strommenger and Hirmer (1962: Pl. 204b), and (PW 17: col. 44). I am indebted to my colleague, Dr. Grant Ward, for these references.
Compare the NRSV,

They call peoples to the mountain;
there they offer the right sacrifices;
for they suck the affluence of the seas
and the hidden treasures of the sand.

Note Cross (1975: 233–234), who left these lines untranslated. The vocable חמר occurs in Isa 11:15, חמר על הר יבשה יבשה, “he will wave his hand over the river (Euphrates) with his gliding wind.” The hapax legomenon חמר has generally been translated “vehement” or “scorching,” following Saadia’s שמכ and the LXX πνεύματι βασιλευ (as if היווהו ויתר were a by-form of היווהו or היווהו “hot”). The derivation proposed here, “to swim, to travel far, to glide” provides a synonym for the initial verb, חמר “to wave, to move to and fro.”

The vocable חמר is stem IV (= Arabic حرفي), חמר יבשה יבשה יבשה יבשה “to turn a thing from its proper way or manner,” as in the Qurʾan.

(c) חמר “the overflowing (water) of the seas,” or חמר חמר “floods of water” (like the חמר חמר חמר “flood of waters” in Job 22:11 and 38:34); and

(d) חמר חמר חמר = חמר “vessel, ship.”

A free translation of Deut 33:19, without emendation, reads,

“Skillful swimmers” they are called.
Indeed, they made the ultimate sacrifice.
They gulped the overflowing seawater,
and they submerged ships in the sand. 204

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204 Compare the NRSV,

They call peoples to the mountain;
there they offer the right sacrifices;
for they suck the affluence of the seas
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Note Cross (1975: 233–234), who left these lines untranslated. The vocable חמר could be either (a) a reference to Zebulon’s casualties—a kind of self-sacrifice (Jastrow 1903: 378b) which would go well with the poem’s acknowledgment that “they risked their life to death,” or (b) a reference to enemy casualties (e.g., Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10; Zeph 1:7–8). If Deut 33:18–19 alludes to Zebulon’s actions in Ju 5:18a, the Blessing of Moses must postdate the Song of Deborah, and Freedman’s suggestion (1979: 85–96) that Deut 33 predated Ju 5 will need to be reversed.

205 Compare Hummel (1957: 94–95). He suggested that חמר should be read “to boil,” an infinitive absolute of חמר with the enclitic medio. Note my proposal (page 149 above) to read חמר as a by-form of חמר “young.”
COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

8:16, “maneuvering for battle”)—not stem II (the cognate of “to be sharp, to taunt”). Far from “vacationing” at the seashore, Zebulon faced death in a risky marine maneuver.

5:18b. Naphtali attacked Merom

Critics have long recognized that, “upon the heights of the field,” makes little sense since the fighting, according to what follows in the poem, was in the plain and along the wadi. It is only in the prose story of Judges 4 that the battle was fought at Mount Tabor, perhaps based on of 5:18. Boling (1975: 113), followed by Soggin (1981c: 90), asserted that “refers to the fact that the Esdraelon plain is characterized by undulations and hillocks which provide positions of relative advantage for the opposing forces,” thus dissociating from Mount Tabor. Cross (1950: 28, 34) translated, “he mounted the heights of the (battle)-field.” This was followed by O’Connor (1980: 225) who read the preposition as , “Naphtali surmounts the highest hills.”

A contextually more suitable meaning, supported in part by the Vulgate’s in regione Merome, comes by redividing to “he attacked (in war), he charged, he assaulted” (Lane 1872: 1517) and Egyptian š(š)d(š) “to pillage, to attack (in secret)” (Gardiner 1911: 22). The of MT when joined to the next word becomes the Hiph’il prefix of in the next colon = “they [the Canaanites] were forced to fight” or “they [the Israelites] made the Canaanites fight” (see 5:19a).

Merom, whether it is Meirun, four miles west of Safad or Marun er-Ras, about nine miles further north, was situated in Naphtali. Naphtali may have been well established in that area before the destruction of Hazor. Because the earlier campaign


by Joshua against Jabin was preceded by the defeat of a Canaanite coalition at the “waters of Merom” (Josh 11:7), another attack in that direction could have had adverse psychological effects on the Canaanites, as well as bolstering the morale of the Israelites. The attack was not an assault or siege of the city but a diversionary predatory incursion in or around the area designed to induce a Canaanite counterattack at a time and place of Israelite choosing.

A hint of deception may survive, not only in the Egyptian š(⟨sd⟩)d(⟨d⟩) “to attack (in secret),” but in the A-text and versions which transliterated נשלים with a final ד (Nephtalim or Nphaltalim). This could reflect the Vorlage "Naphtalites upon" or "Naphtali from upon," or even "Naphtali deceptively"—assuming Napl was the cognate of the Arabic معل “to damage a thing” or “to be an agile, acute, or clever man” (Lane 1893: 3022; Hava 1915: 727). If the verb מעל were original, a wordplay on the name נשלים may have been intended also. Both stems, מעל and שלים, convey the idea of being “deceptive, crafty, and cunning.” This type of wordplay has already been noted with Ephraim, Issachar, and Zebulon. However, since נשלים is transliterated נשלים and Nphaltalim in other unrelated texts, the addition of a prefixed מ to מעל or a suffixed ד to שלים cannot be made with any degree of certainty.

VII. Canaanite counterattack: Ju 5:19

5:19a. The kings were forced to come

The hophal שדאר באש ליהיו לשלים, noted above in 5:18b. The ל of ליהיו is suspect once the redivision is made making the subject ofモデルים rather than the subject of ליהיו. Were the ליהיו emended to לשלים, a sequential infinitive, as suggested by the παραταξοσθα of MSS MN, one could read "they made the kings come to fight," instead of the simple sequential ליהיו... לשלים “they came... they fought.”

Whether the verb be active, passive, or reflexive, the point is that the Israelites forced Sisera’s coalition to fight. Sisera may
have wished to avoid conflict when the weather would work to his disadvantage and when Ephraim was making threats from the south. But an attack toward Merom and upon Abu Hawam (an Egyptian port and naval facility, like Acco, at the mouth of the Wadi Kishon) could not be ignored. A quick response by Sisera’s coalition, in strength, was imperative—leaving the rear areas unprotected and vulnerable.

5:19b. From Taanach along the waters of Megiddo
(See above, pages 85–86.)


Sisera gathered the Canaanite chariotsy “at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo” (Judg 5:19), and after crossing the upper reaches of the Kishon River, proceeded toward Mount Tabor. The Canaanites were fully confident in the surprise element and striking power of their chariotsy . . . . The chariots however could not negotiate Mount Tabor and the forested hills of Galilee, and the initiative remained with Barak. The Israelites attacked on a rainy day: the defeat of the Canaanite chariotsy turned into a rout; the Kishon, swollen by a downpour, preventing escape.

While this reconstruction harmonizes the accounts in Ju 4:14–15 and 5:19, it presupposes a certain naïveté on the part of Sisera, an experienced charioteer, for attempting a chariot attack into the forested hills of Galilee and up Mount Tabor.

Actually, Ju 4:14 and 5:19 are not fully reconcilable. The prose account makes no reference to rain and the flash-flooding of the wadi, and the poetic account knows nothing of Mount Tabor. Moreover, the of need not mean “at,” as though the Israelite militia made an attack at Taanach but not at Megiddo. The use of “from” (see above, note 42) indicates simply the east-west route of Sisera’s counterattack to rout the Israelites.

208 Compare Herzog and Gichon (1978: 49–53) who present a three-phased campaign: (a) 10,000–20,000 men from Naphtali and Zebulon concentrated on Mount Tabor; (b) Sisera’s advance to contain them on the mountain; and (c) Deborah and Barak’s rear-attack on Sisera’s forces. See note 156 above.
The super aquas Machedon and ad aquas habitauerunt found in some versions are corruptions of MT מַכְּדֵּן. The former reflects the Vorlage מַכְּדֵּן; the latter reflects a Vorlage with מַכְּדֵּן. For the ג becoming ch or c instead of the anticipated g and γ (Macedon = Machedon), one need only note that in 2 Sam 21:19 מַכְּדֵּן הַתּוֹלְבֵּשׁ, "Goliath the Gittite" appears as Γόλιαθ τοῦ Γαλιατίου and in B as Γόλιαθ τοῦ Χατανίου. The same variation of Γαλιατίου for Χατανίου appears in 1 Chron 13:13. The n of Machedon reflects a misreading of γ for the original ן. On the aquas habitauerunt (= מַכְּדֵּן instead of MT מַכְּדֵּן), one may note the inhabitasti in 5:17 for יִוְרָד.²⁰⁹

5:19b. Silver spoils they did not take

בְּשֵׁם חַסְּקַה לֹא לָכַּה

Akkadian texts indicate that silver functioned as a means of exchange for most caravaneers. Veenhof (1972: 351) noted, “The expression luqatum ana kaspim ta’urum, ‘to turn merchandise again (back) to silver,’ shows that kaspum (כָּסָם) was for the Assyrians the starting point and the ultimate goal of the trade.” Assuming, for lack of evidence to the contrary, an analogous situation in the caravan trade during the days of Shamgar and Deborah, silver would have been common cargo and currency for the Israelite caravaneers. Sisera must have used his chariots often enough to raid caravans so that the direct trade routes became increasingly abandoned as he gained his reputation for being a despoiler of silver.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Two variants, Kennicott (1780: 1: 489) MS 257 מַכְּדֵּן and Lucianic MS מַכְּדֵּן (Brooke and McLean 1917: 806a), suggest that Beth-shan (בֶּית-שָׁנָן or בֶּית-שָׁנָן קֶדֶם) once stood in the tradition. Such limited evidence permits no conclusions, but given the interchange of ג and כ, the variant מַכְּדֵּן may be a variant of מַכְּדֵּן (or מַכְּדֵּן). An association of Sisera with the pre-Philistine military personnel at Beth-shan (Josh 17:16) would be most attractive. Foreign influence at Bethshan could have given it the reputation of being a place of גַּלֶּשׁ, “the (defensive) enclave of foreigners.” See note 37 above.

²¹⁰ The recurring reference to aspects of caravan trade in the poem indicates that those Israelites who defeated Sisera were oppressed caravaneers, rather than participants in a peasant’s rebellion or an influx of nomads. See especially
The Armenian 1cs (= ego) and the singular ελαστιν in MSS ḫqā: reflect, no doubt, a Vorlage having a dittography of the š (נְמַלְעָה for MT נְמַלְעַה) and the absence of the final 3mpl suffix י (see the discussion below on ו:1 in 5:21).

VIII. Defeat of the Canaanites: Ju 5:20–23a

5:20. The stars from their stations

The proposal of Winckler to change the š of מְסָלוֹן to a י and read “from their stations” (= Akkadian manzaltu “mansion, station”) has been adopted by many, including Cross (1950: 34), P. D. Miller (1973), and Stuart (1976: 130). However, the NEB, the NAB, Boling (1975: 103), Soggin (1981: 83), and the NRSV retained “from their courses.” But the interchange of š and י (e.g., śל and zל “to rejoice,” Syriac שֶׁל = כִּסֶא “despise,” Arabic £א = כָּלָי sạ “injury”) mitigates against emending the text, even if one wants to read “stations.”

Craigie (1977b: 33–38) challenged the views of Blenkinsopp, Boling, J. Gray, and Globe that in light of evidence from the Ugaritic texts the stars were considered the source of rain. He argued that (a) the stars, as the heavenly host of Yahweh, were intended to develop the cosmic scope of the battle, (b) Deborah’s “star helpers” reflect the reworking of the myth of Anat and her starry helpers, and (c) the poet had reworked the mythological imagery about Ƿפץ (= מְסָלוֹן “Sun”) and her army of stars. But...
appear in Exod. 14:19ff., in connection with the defeat of the Egyptians in the sea: 1) the pillar of fire and cloud which causes panic in the Egyptian camp (vs. 24), 2) the hurling of the Egyptians into the midst of the sea, and 3) the dismantlement of the chariotry (vs. 25). The ‘sea’ in the Exodus stories, and the ‘torrent’ in the story of the defeat of Sisera . . . derive from the mythological war of God against ‘sea’ and ‘river,’ and their development is particular to Israel’s epic.

213 Note the very fanciful interpretation of Josephus (Antiquities 5: 5: 4; Thackray 1934: 5: 92–93; Naber 1888: 1: 305):

. . . there came up a great tempest with torrents of rain and hail; and the wind blew and drove the rain in the faces of the Canaanites, obscuring their vision (ταῖς ἀράταις ἀντιόσκορταί), so that their arrows and their slings were of no service to them, and their infantry by reason of the cold could make no use of their swords. But the Israelites were less hampered by the storm, which was at their back . . . .

The basis of Josephus’s ταῖς ἀράταις ἀντιόσκορταί may well be found in the tradition behind the αἰλεψα (cité in MS k of 5:22 (see above, page 25) which he took literally rather than metaphorically. Note ἀμαρναία in 1 Sam 12:3.

214 Rahlfs (1935: 426) has Σισάρα in his text, but iοραηλ in his notes.
which in turn must have been read as a corruption of אֶל עָנָי. The confusion of א and ב is evident in the transliteration of בֵּית הָאָרוֹן as קָדָרַה, discussed next. (On the super aquas Machedon and ad aquas habitauerunt, see the discussion above on “the waters of Megiddo” in 5:19b).

5:21b. The wadi surged seaward

The MT בֵּית הָאָרוֹן was translated in the LXX B-text as ἀρχαῖον “ancient,” but the A-text has transliterations: καθήμενα, καθήμενα, and καθήμενα, indicating the uncertainty of meaning. The confusion of א and ב, noted above with בֵּית הָאָרוֹן, is evidenced again in the καθήμενα and καθήμενα. However, the καυσωνων “scorching wind” of MS k is a translation of בֵּית הָאָרוֹן “sirocco,” as it occurs in Gen 41:6, 23, 27. The σωτηρισμένων of MSS gln is not from σωτήρ “to smelt, to boil together,” but σων “completely” plus ψών “to vanish, to crumble away, to disappear” (Liddell and Scott’ 1940: 1691, 2019). Lindars (1995: 270) translated σωτηρισμένων “(the river) of those swept away” and rightly noted, “This was clearly unsatisfactory [as a translation of בֵּית הָאָדו].” I would identify σωτηρισμένων as a misplaced doublet of בֵּית הָאָדו “sweep them away” in 5:21a where MSS gln also read εξεβάλεν.

Many commentators have followed Meyer (BH’) and emended the text to בֵּית הָאָדו “it overwhelmed them, it attacked them.” But a number of other translations have been offered: “the river barring the way” (Meek 1927: 386); “the sacred wadi” (JB); “the onrushing Kishon River” (TEV); “the river of forward-moving attackers” (Seale 1962: 347); “the onrushing torrent (NRSV); “ancient wadi” (NAB and O’Connor [1980: 226], following the B-text χεμάρρους ἀρχαῖον); “[the wadi] headed off” (J. Gray 1988: 427); and “it forestalled them, the torrent Kishon” (Lindars 1995: 211).

However, בֵּית הָאָדו is composed of two words: the adverbial accusative אֵל “seaward” and the infinitive absolute אָדו, used in lieu of, or with the ellipsis of, the finite verb. The ה locale could be added to א, but it is not necessary since the ā vowel was not always indicated in the spelling. Here אָדו means “to advance, to surge forward” attested in the Sabean אָדו (Jamme 1962: 447) and in Ps 18:6, מִכְסָפֶשׁ מַתָּן אָדו, מִכְסָפֶשׁ מַתָּן אָדו “the snares of death surged over me.” This understanding of 5:21c is found in the Talmud
(Pesahim 118b): “Straightway, the brook Kishon swept them out (ודשלך לים) and cast them into the sea (לובש נחל קישון לים נחל קרווש). . . the fish in the sea opened [their mouths]. . .” (H. Freedman 1938: 610). In contrast to the Talmud, the Targum understood כִּרְשׁוּת to mean “antiquity.”

5:21c. The Wadi Kishon overtook (them) נחל קים חזהך

The MT וֹדֶרֶךְ נְשָׁה עַע נָא, “march on, my soul, with might!” (NRSV), where the jussive is read as an imperative, is as impossible a phrase for a battle narrative as was Symmachus’ αὐχαίμον φαραγξ, “a wadi (φαραγξ) of goats” (= מַרְאֵל תַּנָּה) or “a throat (φαραγξ) of goats” (= מַרְאֵל תַּנָּה). Reflecting the difficulty here, the NAB omitted the phrase, having simply, “a wadi . . . , the Kishon” [ellipsis in the NAB].

Cross (1950: 35) proposed וֹדֶרֶךְ נְשָׁה עַע נָא “his mighty chargers pounded (the ground).” However, deleting nine of the eighteen letters (the יִנְכָּה of וֹדֶרֶךְ and the second “conflated” מַרְאֵל מִרְאֵל) has not been a convincing solution. Craigie (1969a: 257) and O’Connor (1980: 226) retained נְשָׁה שׁ “soul” and translated respectively, “Dominate powerfully, O my soul,” and “O my soul, tread down the mighty.” Boling (1975: 113) and Soggin (1981c: 83) retained the 2ms, but read נְשָׁה נַח “throat,” and translated respectively, “you shall trample the throat of the mighty” and “may you press down the necks of the powerful!”

Lindars (1995: 270–271) concluded, “In my view the colon jars so badly with the form and character of the stanza that it cannot be regarded as original, however it is explained.” But to the contrary, a contextually acceptable reading is easily available through a redivision of the MT. The second מַרְאֵל נַח is the subject of וֹדֶרֶךְ נְשָׁה “she (?) overtook,” the יִנְכָּה of which goes with the next word. The restored 3fs יְגֵּל וֹדוּרָא could be emended to וֹדוּרָא, the 3ms הִפְחִיל perfect of וֹדוּרָא (see below).

However, a hasty emendation seems unwise. Speiser (1955: 118–121) recognized the presence of the durative-iterative tan-form in Hebrew which resulted in a “secondary hithpa‘el” form. The prosthetic יִנְכָּה of the tan-form may not appear in all instances. MT וֹדוּרָא could be such a tan-form: *תנָדוּרָא > taddara. Moreover, Sarna (1963: 317–318), van Dijk (1969: 440–447),
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and Schoors (1988: 193–200) argued for the existence of a 3ms taqult in Hebrew.\footnote{A 3ms taqult variant, מְדוּבֵּהּ, could also account for the problematic 2nd sg. παροικεῖς, παροικης, and κατοικεῖς variants for ἠλέη in 5:17. מְדוּבֵּהּ could be the tD stem (Moscati 1964: 127); but a reflexive does not fit the context as well.} This מְדוּבֵּהּ can be added to their list of more than twelve possible taqult verbs which need further study in light of Speiser’s suggestions.

Here מְדוּבֵּהּ means “to overtake,” a synonym of מְדַבֵּהּ (see below) and a cognate of Aramaic מָדַבֶּה “to overtake” (Jastrow 1903: 323), of South Arabic drk “to reach” (Jamme 1962: 432), and of Arabic درك [4] “it overtook, reached, caught up to (him),” used with injurious harmful action (Lane 1867: 873). The iterative-durative tan- form would have been a fitting way to show that the water relentlessly overwhelmed the chariots.

Hebrew מְדוּבֵּהּ “to reach, to overtake” is also found in Ju 20:43, where Moore’s translation (1900b: 443) remains preferable: “they pursued him (ומְדוּבֵּהּ בָּהָה) and overtook him (ומְדוּבֵּהּ בָּהָה) opposite Gibeah”—contrary to Boling’s (1975: 287) “completely subjugated them,” or Soggin’s (1981c: 295, following G. R. Driver [1964]) “reassembling,” or NRSV and NAS “trod them down.”

5:21d. It overflowed, they sought refuge

In the MT וָּנְשֶׁהָ נֶפֶשׁ (“my soul strength”) survives the vocable מְדַבֵּה (“to inundate, to overflow,” which is a synonym of מְדַבֵּה and a cognate of Arabic نفس [5] “it became extended, it expanded,” as in phrase تَنْفَس دِخلة “the water of the Tigris increased” (Lane 1893: 2827a) and South Arabic nps “(rain water) covered (the pasture)” (Jamme 1962: 213). A trace of this meaning may be found in the remote variant in 5:25 of MS 209 which reads מְדַבֵּה וְנִפְּלַט (“pouring out over” instead of מְדַבֵּה וַנִּפְּלַט “being superior” (= מְדַבֵּה וַנִּפְּלַט)).

The final ו of MT מְדַבֵּה goes with the following ו, as the ו of מְדַבֵּה יַעַל וָּנֶפֶשׁ was prefixed to מְדַבֵּה. The resulting yqtl preterit קִנַּת can be added to the list of קִנ verbs which retain the ו in the imperfect (GKC 66\textsuperscript{1}). The MT יָנָּה (contra the LXX δυνατή, δυνατοι,}
and ἐν οὐραὶ is not from ἰσχυρόν “strong,” but from ἰσχύω “to seek refuge,” as in Isa 30:2. "to seek protection under Pharaoh’s shelter." As with other 3mpl verbs in the poem, the final γ of ἰσχύω must be added (see above, page 15).

The poet could have used a more common word than ἰσχύει meaning “to overflow,” such as ἵππες in Isa 23:10, or νάρες in Duet 11:4, or θέληα in Sinaiticus as, . . . ἵππες . . . αὐτοῦ (a senseless cluster of words meaning, “upon high ground a helmsman the hoofs of his standing outside”). The fact that we have what is now a rare cognate or loanword from Arabic and South Arabic provides the critic with a clear clue that the poet made use of dialectal options which do not currently appear in standard lexica of the classical Jerusalem dialect.

5:22a. Up the slopes scattered far and wide

The clue to MT ἀπόλαμα ἵππα is in the proto-Lucianic MS k, ἐπὶ υψανύοντα τας πτέρνας εὐσταθείως αὐτοῦ (a senseless cluster of words meaning, “upon high ground a helmsman the hoofs of his standing outside”) and the variants in the Lucianic MSS dglnptvw, including στέρνα, but not ἐπὶ υβρεῖα. Although cited among the variants in 22b (ἀμαθρωθ for ἀμαθρῶθ), these words are in fact a remote doublet and triplet for ἀπόλαμα ἵππα in 5:22a. They should be read with the notations for MS k preceding the τπως [= τπως] when using the Brooke and McLean text.217
The misplaced readings of MS k, the Old Latin, and the versions include the σπους μου, pes meus, and pes mei in 5:21—all of which translate the יָשָׂם of 5:22 as ποδας (as in Gen 49:19). The doublet is τας περινας “the hooves” (= בָּשָׂם I “heel”) and επι υψη “upon high ground” (= בָּשָׂם II “steep ground, hill”) as in Isa 40:41. The triplet is (1) εὐθυνωντα “one steering something straight” (= בָּשָׂם), (2) εκστασεως “standing outside” (= בָּשָׂם), and (3) αὐτου (= the I of בָּשָׂם, or a בָּשָׂם, from a Vorlage having בָּשָׂם [for the MT בָּשָׂם], with בָּשָׂם being a variant of בָּשָׂם, like the בָּשָׂם in Ps 124:3–5).218

Whether to read בָּשָׂם or בָּשָׂם is a tossup. Given the numerous transliterations reflecting הָלַח and הָלַח, the vocable here could be הָלַח II, not הָלַח I “to hammer.” Either way—with the metathesis of the ה and ב or not—the verb is cognate with Arabic حَمَّل “it (water) poured forth, overflowed” (Lane 1893: 3045). It was also used of a camel left without rein [4]; and, as Castell noted (1669: 856), form [7] means “asportavit” and “abstulit.” Dozy (1927: 764) cited حَمَّل “chameau qui erre çà et là sans gardien, et par conséquent farouche; (puis) tout ce qui difficile à manier” and the verb حَمَّل “errer çà et là.” When one shifts from camels to horses, הָלַח becomes an appropriate term for the rout of chariots.

The verbs הָלַח and حَمَّل are by-forms of הָלַח “to move far off,” which accounts for the Targum’s הָלַח “were drawn off.” Similar by-forms are attested; e.g., הָלַח and הָלַח “to lament” and הָלַח and הָלַח “to be at peace.” The Arabic cognate حَمَّل “pour faire avancer les chevaux, pour les arrêter, pour les faire aller dans une autre direction” (Dozy 1927: 760) provides the clue for determining the origin of εὐθυνωντα “helmsman” = הָלַח, which was a by-form of הָלַח.

218 Lambert (1952: 188) suggested deleting MT הָלַח as a gloss to הָלַח since it is not represented in MS k. But MS k has הָלַח. Lambert’s relating εὐθυνωντα possibly to הָלַח (?), υψη and υψη possibly to הָלַח, and εκστασεως αὐτου (for MT הָלַח) is less than persuasive. Except for εὐθυνωντα “comely, goodly, majestic,” which reflects a reading of הָלַח for MT הָלַח, the LXX variants cited by Lambert on verse 22 can all be related to either הָלַח I (MT הָלַח was misread by MSS MNadknoptvyb; as לֶשָּׂם = εὐθυνωντα = εὐθυνωντα “they were hamstrung”) or הָלַח II, in addition to הָלַח I and הָלַח II or their variants, לְשָׂם and לְשָׂם.
On these verses compare McCarter (1980: 189, 233, 237), “Has the man come here?” (emending the MT to וַיִּהְיֶה הַיָּהלֶל אֶת אֲשֵׁר “is there yet a man to come hither?” (ASV). It may also appear in 1 Sam 14:16, וַיַּהֲלֹ֣ךְ אֶת אֲשֵׂר, which can be translated (shifting the ו of MT to מִהלֶל), “the multitude melted away, they went off and retreated far away.”

All three verbs (אֲשֵׂר, מַיְלִל, and מַיְלִל) are appropriate when describing the rout of chariots, with driverless horses running to and fro (see OIP 6: 22, cited by Speiser [1955: 119]).

The MT וַיֵּלֶךְ אֲשֵׁר requires two simple corrections. The initial מ of וַיֵּלֶךְ must be affixed to the MT וַיִּהְיֶה and the ו of וַיֵּלֶךְ must be changed to a ו. The resulting וַיֵּלֶכֶת אֲשֵׁר ( = scriptio plena) is discussed below. The restored וַיֵּלֶכֶת is the dual of מִילָה “hill, high ground,” with the 3ms suffix having נַּל as its antecedent. The doublet וַיֵּלֶכֶת, as noted above (page 197), reflects this meaning of מִילָה, and the וַיֵּלֶכֶת in 5:11 may offer another example of a noun in the dual with a 3ms suffix. The subject of מִילָה follows the adverbial וַיֵּלֶכֶת and is discussed next.

5:22b. their horses (and) chariots

The וַיֵּלֶכֶת “their horses,” restored with plena spelling (see the above paragraph), balances the 3mpl object suffix of פָּרָג in 5:21. Both suffixes have מֵֽלֶכֶת מַלָּכֶת ... מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת ... מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת מַלָּכֶת as their

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219 On these verses compare McCarter (1980: 189, 233, 237), “Has the man come here?” (emending the MT to וַיִּהְיֶה הַיָּהלֶל אֶת אֲשֵׁר and “the camp was surging back and forth.” He also noted S. R. Driver (1913b: 84), “Is there still (i.e., besides ourselves) any one come hither?”

220 O’Connor (1980: 226–227), following G. R. Driver (1962–1963: 11), proposed the same redivision, but with a different analysis. He read רָגוּר as an infinitive with the force of a finite verb and translated, “The horses’ heels thundered. His [Sisera’s] stallions thundered.” But, there is no evidence that the infinitive construct, like the infinitive absolute, was used as a finite form, or that וּלָכֶת “heal” (= πρόκειται) is a synonym for πρόκειται or פָּרָג “hoof” (= πέπλη).
antecedents. The suffix of מָסְרָיוֹן functions as a double-duty suffix, permitting the translation, “their chariots” (unless the Vorlage had simply מָסְרָיִם “horses and chariots”).

The LXX A-text of 5:22b, which the LXX A-text simply transliterated (ἀγμαδαρωθ, and the like), presented great difficulty. Albright (1934: 52, 64; 1936: 30) equated דָרָה with the Egyptian dhr “to race chariots” and he translated, “ran/raced chariot races his/their stallions.” This has been followed by Cross (1950: 30), Boling (1975: 113), and Stuart (1976: 130), who make it sound more like a sporting event than the panic of a military rout. Soggin (1981c: 83) offered, “the charges of the charging steeds,” but this rendering missed the point that the charioteers were fleeing in defeat rather than charging into battle.

The translation I propose uses Albright’s equation of דָרָה and Egyptian τ/δήρ; but “chariot, chariot-warrior,” rather than “race, chariot-racer,” is the more likely meaning in a battle ballad. However, if, as J. A. Wilson (1955: 239) suggested, teher is a Hittite loanword, דָרָה need not have entered Hebrew through Egyptian channels. It may have come directly from the Hittite (see pages 74–76). The feminine דָרָה “chariot” corresponds to the feminine synonym, תבַּרמ “cart” (which occurs as a Semitic loanword in Egyptian).

5:22c. his chariot (and) his stallions מָסְרָיוֹן

The repeated מָסְרָיוֹן could be (a) an original plural, (b) an incorrect plena spelling for a singular מָסְרָיוֹ, or (c) with a metathesis of רָי to רָי, a suffixed singular noun. In view of the singular suffix on רָי “his stallions,” option (c), “his (Sisera’s) chariot” is the preferred reading. The δυναστῶν αὐτῶν in MSS Adglnptvw, the Ethiopic (= et ualidi) and Syro-hexaplaric (= ualidorum eius) “his strong ones” render MT מָסְרָים, like the B-text ידועוֹ αֵ為什麼. However, the δυναστῶν αὐτῶν “his lords” (in MSS bcx) and the remote doublet δυναστῶν αὐτῶν (in MS k) in 5:23 reflect a Vorlage with מָסְרָים for MT מָסְרָים. Were מָסְרָים original, the reference would be to the מָסְרָיוֹנ and מָסְרָיוֹn mentioned in 5:3 and 5:19. (Syonymous parallelism of מָסְרָיוֹn and מָסְרָיוֹn occurs also in Jer 8:16.)
5:23a. Doomed to die, they panicked

Those who view מַרְיָם as a place name (Mazorhot or Manzor or Meroz), elsewhere unattested, generally follow the argument of Burney (1918: 152) that the city is unknown because “It is highly probable that the curse took practical effect, and the city with its inhabitants was destroyed by the Israelites, and never subsequently rebuilt.” Lindars (1995: 272), in agreement with Burney, negated Meroz all the more stating, “... the purpose [of this verse] is not likely to be related to any particular interest in Meroz.” He correctly noted that down to the present “no certainty attaches to any of the proposed identifications, emendations, or symbolic renderings [of this place name].”

But not everyone has been convinced that מַרְיָם is the name of a town. The doublet in the Old Latin, videant dolores “let them see pains/griefs” (= מַרְיָם מַרְיָם for MT מַרְיָם מַרְיָם), the remote doublet iniuriam in 5:22, and the ἐδοιον ὠδονας “may they see pains” (= מַרְיָם מַרְיָם) in pre-Lucianic MS k and Lucianic MSS glntv, reflect traditions which did not view מַרְיָם as a place name.221

One tradition (Mı‘ed Katan 16) recalls that, “Some say Meroz was (the name of) a great personage; others say that it was (the name of) a star.” Chaney (1976b: 18–19), cited by O’Connor (1980: 227), argued against מַרְיָם as a place name. He emended the text to read מַרְיָם and translated it as “estrange.” The interpretation offered here follows a similar course, but with different results.

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221 MS k is quite contaminated with variants for מַרְיָם מַרְיָם and with remote doublets after katapikov αὐτὰ (for the MT יֵבְרָו), including:

- εἰδοιοιον for מַרְיָם in 5:23a
- ὠδονας for מַרְיָם in 5:23a
- εἰδοιοιον for מַרְיָם in 5:23b
- αρας for מַרְיָם in 5:22
- απολεσατε for מַרְיָם in 5:22
- καταρασει for מַרְיָם in 5:22
- καταρασθε for מַרְיָם in 5:23a
- υπερφανους for מַרְיָם in 5:22
- υβριστας for מַרְיָם in 5:22
- αρατε for מַרְיָם in 5:23
- απολεσατε for מַרְיָם in 5:22
The LXX μηρωζ and its variants (μηρωζ, μηρω, μηρωζων, μηρωζωρ, μαξων, μαξουρωθ, and ναρωθ) are not proper names, but transliterations of an unknown word, like αμαᾶρωθ for הַדַּוִּי in Ju 5:21. The fact that this unrecognized word was preceded seemingly by an imperative נָה “see” (MSS glntv have a doublet εὐοιν and MS k has εὐοίαν) or נָה “curse” (the LXX having various forms of καταράσθε, αρας, and απολέσατε) certainly contributed to its being understood as a name in direct address, rather than as a transliteration of an unknown word.

Ju 5:23a is particularly corrupt with reference to word division. The consonant cluster must have been בָּרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז which should have been read as בָּרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז, with scriptio plena, instead of the MT בָּרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז. This proposed redivision produces three words attested elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew (though not very widely), namely, בָּרָז מָרָז “to be afflicted-unto-death,” מָרָז מָרָז “to panic,” and מָרָז מָרָז “a downpour of water” (Klein 1987: 612, 57, and 616, respectively).

T. H. Gaster (1969: 419) noted that מָרָז is related to the stems מָרָז and מָרָז, which occur in Isa 24:16 מָרָז מָרָז, “woe is me!” and Zeph 2:11 מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז, “he afflicted-unto-death/doomed-to-death all the gods of the earth.” The cognate behind the reconstructed מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז in 5:23a is the Arabic nominal form کذب, the plural of which signifies “persons of whom the best have died or persons of whom death befalls the best” (Lane 1867: 1075a). The restored מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז could be the passive participle מָרָז מָרָז מָרָז. As the gods in Zeph 2:11 and the heroes in Deut 32:42 (see pages 122–126) were doomed to death, so too Sisera’s superior forces were doomed to die suddenly.

The word picture is that of panic-stricken charioteers vainly seeking to escape flash-flooding in a wadi which, only seconds before, had been serving as their safe highway. Consequently, מָרָז (MT מָרָז) must certainly be מָרָז II “to panic, to become panic-stricken,” a cognate of Akkadian araru [B] which occurs

222 Note especially Ps 82:6–7, “gods you are . . . but you will die like a mortal” where מָרָז was used instead of מָרָז or מָרָז. In modern Hebrew מָרָז, a cognate of מָרָז, means “to be lean, to be thin or scarce” (Klein 1987: 612).
in the relevant line, “as to war, the troops will become frightened (i-ru-ur-ma) and throw away their weapons” (CAD 1: 236).

The four infinitives in the LXX (καταφρασθαί of MSS Bb’fqrsz [and MSS jcf for the second רָּה of the MT], καταφρασαῖ of MSS MNcjoa,b, [and MSS AMnb,o,a] for the second רָּה of the MT], and καταφρασσθαι of MS w [for both occurrences of רָּה]) point to a Vorlage of רָּה or רָּה. These provide more examples of the defective spelling in the Vorlage of 3mpl verbs, although the 3rd plural optative ἡπειρειν (of MSS glnpvw) supports reading רָּה for the MT רָּה. The απολέσατε in the Lucianic MSS glnpvw and in MS k can mean “to cause panic.” Hatch and Redpath [1954: 1: 136] list thirty-nine Hebrew words for απόλλων, including רָּה, which appears to have been read for the MT רָּה (see pages 25–26).

5:23b. Yahweh sent a cloudburst

Although not yet recognized in the exegetical studies of this verse, a reference to “heavy rain” is included in the battle scene. Schreiner (1957: 98) noted that the doublets ὑβρίστας “violent ones” and ὑπερφανοὺς “arrogant ones” in the Lucianic MSS glnpvw were translations of a Vorlage having רָּה. If the early translators had read רָּה (= βρέχειν “to wet, to rain”) instead of רָּה (ὑβρίστας), they would have been correct. The Hebrew text must have had רָּה, but it was not the scriptio defectiva of רָּה “high, haughty,” but rather the plural of רָּה “cloudburst,” hidden by the misdivision of words. The ר from מָלֵא and the מ of MT רָּה, when joined, restore the plural noun רָּה (= רָּה scriptio plena), a cognate of Arabic ṭawār “a cloud of which the rain drops are large and vehement in their fall” (Lane 1867: 1195c) and Syriac ṭawā “to water, to satiate,” as in the expression “the Nile supplies its fields with abundant water” (Payne Smith, 1957: 532).

The noun רָּה occurs in the Deir ʿAlla text I: 8, [y/t]ḥtp ry skry šmyn, “let not the abundant rain (?) [b]reak the bolts of heaven” (Hoftijzer and van der Kooij 1976: 173, 179, 194). In addition, it appears in Job 37:11, בָּרָה יִנְדָּה וְנַע בְּדַרְרֵי יִנְדָּה נַע “with abundant water he
ladens the cloud,” and in Hab 3:10, “the deep gives forth noise and abundant waters.”

This in the text may have been the basis for Josephus’s account of the battle (Antiquities 5:5:4) which has wind, hail, and rain working to the advantage of the Israelites (see note 213).

By removing the ש of מַלְאָךְ יְהוֹה in 5:23, the “angel of Yahweh” disappears. But the angel cannot simply be expunged, as Stuart (1976:136) and others have proposed. As noted above, the מַלְאָךְ יְהוֹה originated from a misdivision of מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה.

Gaster’s proposal (1969:419) to treat מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה as an “augur or counselor” is supported only by the B-text of Ju 4:8 which reads, “for I do not know the day when the Lord would prosper the angel with me (. . . εἴσοδόν τόν ἄγγελον κύριός μετ’ ἐμοί)”. Suggestions to read the feminine מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה to accommodate Deborah’s being the messenger of Yahweh are equally unnecessary.

5:23c. Their riders (completely)

The plural suffix “their” is attested in the Sahidic and in MS N (אֲנָוָה). But this variant in itself is insufficient reason for the emendation. The 3fs suffix of MT יְהוָה was due to harmonization after מַרְיָא was read as a place name and after the original יְהוָה was thought to be a reference to the “inhabitants” of Meroz, requiring the shift from the 3fpl suffix יְהוָה to the 3fs יְהוָה. Originally, the יְהוָה were the “riders/drivers” of the רָדָה “chariots,” which requires the 3fpl יְהוָה, as restored. The adverb “completely” is added to reflect the Hebrew infinitive absolute. (See page 155 for the use of יְהוָה “to ride” as a synonym of רָדָה.)

There is no compelling reason to follow the Greek which has (except for MSS fsz) the extra word πάς, suggesting a Vorlage 223

223 Compare Pope (1965:243), who unnecessarily emended יְהוָה לְרָדָה.

224 Reading כִּלֵּל רָדָה for MT כִּלֵּל רָדָה and scanning 3 + 2 + 2. Compare Albright (1950:11,16) who proposed כִּלֵּל רָדָה “The Deep gave forth its voice” and כִּלֵּל רָדָה “the exalted one, Sun, raised his arms.”
having לשלים cał, “their riders all.” The παις stems from the ל and ב of the following כלא ב, which in the early orthography could have been כלא ב or כלא ב. The קלאי (MT קלאי) in this line is the same as in the previous one, a cognate of Akkadian araru [B] “to panic.”

5:23d. Indeed, they were victorious הה להב

MT כ ב here is the emphatic particle, studies of which have been reviewed by Schoors (1981: 243–253). Behind the negative particle כ לא in the MT survives the verb נלא II “to be victorious,” a cognate of Ugaritic and Phoenician Iy “to prevail” (UT 426: 134; Harris 1936: 114) and Akkadian leu “to overpower someone” (CAD 9: 156)—not to be confused with the homograph דלוק or דלוק “to be weary, to be faint.” Dahood (1966: 46, 144; 1970: 288) cited twelve texts225 where this stem occurs, and this verse can be added to that list. As with *ל (MT *ל) in 5:13, the final * of the *ל stem was not written, although it was written with ל (MT ל) in 5:8. The verb נלא II is also found in 5:30a (see pages 226–227).

5:23e. Those going forth בב ינורית יוהה for the Warrior Yahweh

Since MT ינורית יוהה (restored to ינורית יוהה) does not refer to the “inhabitants of Meroz,” but to “the riders of the chariots,” it cannot be the subject of *לא 배 “they came.” The phrase בב ינורית יוהה contains the subject of נלא (for MT נלא), requiring the change of *לא 배 to *לא, a construct plural participle, referring to Barak and the militia. As noted in the discussion of יחק in 5:10, the poet had a liking for intervening prepositions with bound nouns.

As well demonstrated by P. D. Miller (1970: 159–175), Baisas (1973: 41–51), and Sasson (1982: 201–208), דלוק is a homograph of two vocables: דלוק I “to save” (a cognate of Ugaritic ʿdr) and

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225 The list consists of 1 Sam 2:3; Hab 1:12; Mal 2:15; Pss 7:13, 27:13, 68:10, 75:7 (twice), 85:7, 100:2; and Job 13:15 and 36:5. See also note 254.
Some Masoretic manuscripts, the Samaritan text, and the Vulgate attest Ḥy’trmz for the Ḥy trmz in Ex 15:2 (see BHS). Since Yahweh, the divine warrior (= אֱלֹהֵי מַלְאָכָּם “the man of war,” Ex 15:3), was also the savior, the poet probably intended a double entendre. Amit’s conclusion (1987: 102) about Judges 4 is equally valid for the poem of Judges 5: “the purpose of the story is to stress that God, and God alone, is the savior of Israel, a savior who makes use of characters as instruments in a game he has established the rules of.”

The masculine דָּוִד “savior/warrior” used for Yahweh employs the rare titulary ד suffix which appears in the Phoenician/Punic name דוער תֶּה and in the title דוער “hero” in Deut 32:42, discussed above (page 126). Other examples of this suffix include: דוער תֶּה in Ecc 1:1; דוער תֶּה in Ezra 2:55; דוער תֶּה in Ezr 2:57; the title דוער תֶּה דוער יָרָא, “(David,) the beloved (of Yahweh), the Savior of Israel,” in 2 Sam 23:1; and דוער תֶּה (דוער תֶּה) in Ex 15:1–2 (with the NRS and the NRSV: “I will sing [דוער תֶּה] to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my might תֶּה דוערו; contra the KJV, ASV, RSV, and others which read, “... the Lord is my strength and my song [italics mine].226 Cazelles (1956: 136) noted,

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226 Some Masoretic manuscripts, the Samaritan text, and the Vulgate attest דוער for the דוער תֶּה in Ex 15:2 (see BHS).

227 On the form in Akkadian, the MT דוער in 5:23 could conceal an original doubled ו of דוער, as could the סְּדֶּר in 2 Sam 23:1. On the omission of doubled consonants, see Blommerde 1969: 4; Dahood and Penar 1970: 371. Note the smaller נ and פ in the אֶלֶף of Gen 27:46 and Lev 1:1, נא and the כּוֹר, respectively.
IX. Assassination of Sisera in Ju 5:24–27

5:24. Yael, the wife of Heber the Kenite

The noun יָלָה means “wild goat” (Capra sinaitica), in contrast to יְלֵל “gazelle” (Capra ibex nubiana). Popular etymology has attached the definition “wild goat” to Yael/Jael, making her the Bedouin “goat lady.” But, as with דָּבָר = “bee,” this appears also to be an early “popular” etymology. According to Harvey (1962: 787), Yael treacherously “used true nomadic guile, bringing out milk—a sign of hospitality—to the fugitive Sisera . . . ,” which simply stereotypes nomads without being very insightful.

But there is more to the name יָלָה than first meets the eye.228 Taylor (see above, page 52) argued a strong case for the poet’s using the image of Athtart in detailing the person and actions of Yael, as Craigie compared the role of Deborah with that of Anat. Both women were given mythic qualities greatly exceeding those suggested by the simple names “Bee” and “Goat.”

The basic meanings of יָלָה stem I (יָלָה) “to benefit, to avail” and יָלָה stem II (also יָלָה) “to be pre-eminent, to excel, to ascend,” with their connotations of power and prominence, provide a more appropriate meaning of Yael’s name than does “goat.”

The stem יָלָה I appears in Isa 48:17 in collocation with יָלָה “to redeem, to act as kinsman, to be the avenger”: “thus says Yahweh your avenger (יָלָה), the Holy One of Israel; I am Yahweh your God who teaches you to prevail (יָלָה) (RSV “profit”).” There is probably an etiological element in Ju 5:24–31 explaining why יָלָה had the name יָלָה “Availer.” This pre-eminent

228 MS A has יָלָה for Yael, though this abbreviation was commonly used for יָלָה. Variations in the spelling of Heber (לֶבֶר and לֶבֶר) are secondary corruptions. MS k and the Lucianic texts provide some very interesting, though not significant, doublets, namely,

- MSS klptvw: εἰς δεῖτερον μετατέθη for μετατέθη
- MSS klptvgn: εἰς επαυγώ for παυγώ
- MS k: εὐλογημένη for ἀβραὰ
- MS k: εἰς γυναικῶν for γυναικῶν
- MS k: εἰς σκηναῖς for κήρ

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woman became in a very real sense the נָּחַלֶּה “the Avenger” (see Num 35: 16–21) for her distant kin and fellow Yahwists.

The Arabic cognate of נָּחַלֶּה stem II means “noble person.” Lane (1863: 298b, 3056c) cited lines which speak of the great reversal: “... the low or ignoble persons [shall prevail], and the noble persons [shall perish]” and “... that the weak of mankind shall have ascendancy over the strong.” If the semantic range of נָּחַלֶּה approximated that of עֵּֽל “noble person,” the name Yael matches the meaning of Deborah’s name, “lady governor,” as well as Deborah’s title in 5:2a, כִּפְרֵיהָ "heroine." All three words convey the notion of pre-eminence, power, and prestige.

Moreover, Hava (1915: 881) and Klein (1988: 261) noted that עֵֽל in form [10] means “to seek refuge, to look for shelter, to climb a mountain.” Since Arabic שהיר = עֵֽל and [שֵׁר = עֵֽל / שֶׁר = עֵֽל] are synonyms meaning “to climb, to ascend [a mountain],” there is a hint—assuming a similar semantic range—that the defeated Sisera may have thought of Yael not so much in terms of the “goat lady,” but rather in terms of עֵֽל “taking to the hills to seek refuge/shelter” and [שֵׁר “to benefit, to avail” (BDB 418).

The MT יָּנְיָּה רְבַּיָּה חָכַמִּי is frequently deleted as a gloss taken from Ju 4:17. But the poet demonstrated in using ben-Anat, ben-Abinoam, and “Mother in Israel” a liking for a name coupled with a noun of familial relationship. The “wife of Heber the Kenite” apparently fits this pattern, which is another unifying element in the poem.229 The gentilic יָּנְיָּה reflects ethnic identity,

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229 Bal (1988b: 211) stated,

Yael-4 [= in Judges 4] is, like Deborah-4 [= in Judges 4], endowed with a suspect husband. The indication in verse 4:11, commonly translated as “Heber the Kenite,” is, as many have argued ([J.] Gray 1986, 258), dubious as a proper noun and is more likely to refer to a clan.

But it was Soggin (1981c: 66) who argued for the clan name. Gray differed with Soggin, stating, “But his rendering of ‘eket heber haqgeni (4:17) as ‘a woman of the Kenite group’ (Judges, 1981, ad loc.) does violence to the Hebrew . . . . The name Heber may be genuine; but certainly secondary is the detail that Heber had separated from the Kenites . . . .” Contra Bal (page 212), this quotation does not sound like Gray’s reservation on Yael’s marital status. Bal earlier (1988a: 127) followed Boling’s (1975: 114) reading, “woman of Heber the Kenite.” (Note GKC 127d for normal gentilic patterns.)
but it also has vocational overtones (קֵינָה "to smith, to work in iron or silver"), as evidenced in “the smiths’ hammers,” mentioned in 5:26 (following the Targum’s קֵינָה נֶפֶשׁ). Malamat (1962: 143–150), followed by Soggin (1981c: 74, 91) and Bos (1988: 55), concluded that יֵנֶקֶט הַכּוּנִּים was a personification of a clan subdivision, “the Kenite group.” This may well be the case, especially if the personification reflects the clear occupational overtones of קֵינָה.

However, יֵנֶקֶט may mean more than just “the wife of Heber the Kenite.” The Arabic, Ethiopic, and Syriac cognates of קֵינָה also mean “a song, a singer, to sing” (BDB 883; Dozy 1927: 2: 434, form [4]). R. Payne Smith (1897:1136) noted that קֵינָה is a synonym of חַדּוֹר, חָסְדַּי, and לִרְדִּי, which in form [3] (לִרְדִּי) means “he put together and arranged well the component parts of speech” (Lane 1867: 1028a). Therefore, as קֵינָה לֶארוֹד can mean “woman of torches” (= “woman of learning, teacher”), יֵנֶקֶט can mean “woman of song,” equivalent to קִנָּה “song-stress” or “poetess.” (The “wailing women” [תַּןְנָה] in Jer 9:16 were a subgroup of the “women of song” who specialized in laments and who sang at funerals.)

Were it not for the references to Heber in Ju 4:11 and 17, one might readily change יֵנֶקֶט לֶארוֹד to לֶאָר לְאָשֶׁת הַכּוּנִּים “Yael, the woman of the guild of singers” or לְאָר לְאָשֶׁת כַּפֶּר כַּפֵּר “Yael, the woman with the knowledge of poetry,” recognizing here the title כַּפֶּר, a cognate of כַּפֶּר and a synonym of עִלָּם “knowledge, learning” (Lane 1865: 695; BDB: 288). Yael could have qualified for the title לְאָר לְאָשֶׁת “scholar” (Jastrow 1903: 421–22; Brown 1992: 87). Whether the gentilic יֵנֶקֶט was original, or whether the יֵנֶקֶט should be affixed to הַכּוּנִּים (for an הַכּוּנִּים must remain open questions. The references to Heber in 4:11 and 17 could have come from an early misunderstanding of “the woman skilled in poetry” in 5:24.

Such an interpretation would make Yael a “sage” in her own right, like the כַּפֶּר "the wise (singing) women" in Jer 9:16. She could well have been the poet who, as a “Qenite/Kenite,” crafted

or sang (יוֹנָה) the poem long known as the “Song of Deborah.”

This possibility is all the more reason why the אֱלֹהֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר should not be deleted. It may prove to be a hidden signature or an embedded colophon.

On the one hand, Mazar (1965: 302) suggested that Sisera fled to Yael “to seed the peace” between Jabin and Heber. Yael’s residence, Elon-bezaanannim, was perhaps a recognized sanctuary. If so, Mazar conjectured, the assassination of Sisera at a sanctified refuge, in violation of the rules of hospitality, “may be explained only as the fulfillment of a divine command by a charismatic woman.” On the other hand, Fensham (1964: 53) recognized here a close friendship between Israel and the Kenites, as though they were treaty-bound. He argued,

The act of Jael is in accord with Near Eastern legal principles. As a result of a treaty between her people, the Kenites, and the Israelites, she felt obliged to kill the enemy of the other party of the treaty . . . . Typical of vassal treaties is the following: “To the enemy of my lord I am hostile (and) with the friend of my lord (I am) friendly.” This kind of clause forms probably the background of the act of Jael.

But against this interpretation is the statement in Ju 4:17 that peace existed between Jabin and Heber the Kenite, and thus one would expect Heber and Yael in treaty obligation to have come to the aid of Jabin’s successor, assuming that יִרְעָה equals Kenite and יִהְבַּן equals Heber. It can just as readily be assumed that Sisera had utilized the smithing services of Heber-the-Smith (יוֹנָה וַיִּפְקָד) in the maintenance of his weapons, iron chariots, or chariot wheels (see Drews 1989: 20–21). J. Gray (1967: 212) similarly observed, “Actually, the relation between Jabin of Hazor and a Kenite family is quite feasible, especially if, as is probable, the Kenites were itinerant smiths who had special immunities (Gen 4.15).” Sisera, following the demise of Jabin, could well have carried on a working relationship with the Smiths.

In defeat, Sisera could have felt confident that the Smiths (or smiths) at their repair shop would protect him since he had been a “good customer” over the years. Thus, “Ms” or “Mrs. Smith” was caught in a conflict of interests: protecting a distressed client or affirming ethnic and religious loyalties. Whereas in peace (Ju 4:17) she had to accommodate a fearsome Sisera at the expense of her kinfolk, in his defeat she was free to assist her kin (as נָאֲלָה and וֹורֵד) at his expense.
Yael seems to have set up the assassination so that it would appear as though Sisera himself had violated the laws of hospitality by sexually assaulting her. Assassination preceded by sexual allurement including the quenching of thirst appears in the Hittite myth of Illuyankas:

Inaras put on her finery and lured the Dragon Illuyankas up from his lair: “See! I am holding a celebration. Come thou to eat and to drink.” The Dragon Illuyankas came up with [his children] and they ate and drank. They drank every amphora dry and quenched their thirst . . . . The Storm-god came and killed the Dragon Illuyankas and the gods were with him (ANET, 125–126).

This myth could have provided the poet, if not Yael herself, with the inspiration and the modus operandi.231

5:25b. A truly magnificent goblet

Sisera’s last meal was served in style, but the exact nature of the vessel used by Jael has been in doubt. MT יָדָרִים “a dish of lords” was paraphrased by Soggin (1981c: 83), “in a cup from a noble banquet.” O’Connor (1980: 228) added a לו (which he thought was lost by haplography) and changed the plural ב יָדָרִים into an enclitic ב in order to read “in a bowl she brings the mighty one.” This is an attractive solution since Sisera was certainly one of the יָדָרִים “chieftains, nobles” mentioned in 5:13a.

However, there may be no need to add לו. The Lucianic MSS gln read אֶסֹאֲטֹס and MS k has אֶסֹאֲטָו, suggesting a Vorlage with ה “goblet” (a homograph of ה “end,” like the twp in 2 Kgs 12:14) instead of a יָדָרִים “bowl.” The יָדָרִים, when suffixed to the MT יָדָרִים, could be the preposition (with

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231 Zakovitch (1981: 364–374) pointed out that food, wine, sex, and fatigue are recurring themes in other biblical assassination accounts. Yael’s seduction of Sisera stands midway between the seduction of Inaras and the seduction of Judith who, arrayed in finery on a bed of soft fleece, drinks with Holofernes until he becomes weary, after which she severed his head (Judith 12:10–13:10). Note Bal’s references to Judith and her discussion of the reverse rape (1988a: 63, 105–107, 131; 1988b: 65, 215).
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O’Connor) or, as interpreted here, an emphatic קָרַב used with the plural of excellence (GKC 124e).

The poet may have intended this wordplay: with a “truly magnificent goblet” (לְכַלְכַל לְאַרְיָה), Yael brought about “the end to a nobleman” (לְאָרְיָה לְכַלְכַל), reading a majestic plural in reference to Sisera, similar to the use of אֲרָז “his lords” for Potiphar (Gen 38, passim). Burney (1918: 93) and Zakovitch (1981: 369), along with others, noted that the beverage served must have had an intoxicating effect on Sisera. If so, the beverage was like מַרְאָה which Lane (1867: 1095c) cited as “very sour milk that causes a man who has drunk it to arise in the morning languid, or loose in the joints.” Power (1928: 47) argued, unconvincingly, that the beverage made Sisera thirsty and required him to seek water elsewhere, exposing him to the Israelites.

5:27a. Between her legs (The line is transposed here to follow 5:25.)

In the language of the Talmud (Sotah 38a, dealing with Ex 20:24), מְאֹרָה מְאֹרָה, “this verse must be transposed.” Although Ju 5:27a was not the verse in question,232 this quotation reflects an old tradition which recognized the need sometimes for transpositions in the biblical text. The reasons for the transposition of 5:27a to this line are given below in the initial paragraph on 5:27b.

Noting the omission of the first five words of 5:27 in numerous manuscripts, Kittel (BH), Meyer (BHS), Richter (1963: 402), and others, have proposed to delete the first four or five words. (Omissions are also conspicuous in Greek MSS Ahn and in the Old Latin.) More moderately, Cross (1950: 38) and Stuart (1976: 136) deleted only מְאֹרָה as a vertical dittography or a conflation of מְאֹרָה. But in preference to the elimination of one or more words, the colon can be transposed to the end of 5:25, where it fits the context of a weary Sisera having his last meal and final affair.

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232 See Goldschmidt 1933: 5: 300. The verse under discussion was Ex 20:24, which was transposed to read בְּגָלָל מֵאֹרָה אֵלֶּה אֲלֵיָּה אִישֵּׁי אֵלֶּה אָפִּירָה אָפִּירָה אֵלֶּה אָפִּירָה אָפִּירָה. The verse under discussion was Ex 20:24, which was transposed to read בְּגָלָל מֵאֹרָה אֵלֶּה אֲלֵיָּה אִישֵּׁי אֵלֶּה אָפִּירָה אָפִּירָה אָפִּירָה אָפִּירָה.
According to 5:30a, as traditionally read, Sisera and his men were thought to be sexually assaulting the women. But only Sisera, in defeat, finds his way between the legs of a woman. The discreet translation of יִהְיֵשׁ בָּאָה by “at her feet” hides the sexual nuance. (In Deut 28:57, מַמֶּרֶה יִהְיֵשׁ was used with reference to expelling the placenta.) Niditch (1989: 48) noted, “The phrase ‘between her legs’ can be erotic enough even without specific reference to private parts as in Ezek 16:25, one of the classic passages in which the unfaithful Israel is described as a harlot: ‘and you parted your legs wide’ [MT יֵלְלוּ גרְבּוֹת בָּאָה].”

Ginzberg (1928: 6: 199) cited Yeabamoth 103a in which Yael is said to have offered the milk of her breast to Sisera and to have had intercourse with him seven times. The Chronicles of Jerahmeel depict Yael as having embraced Sisera; and Pseudo-Philo tells how Yael decked herself in ornaments when she extended her invitation “to come, eat, and sleep” on a bed scattered with roses. An early tradition alleging that Yael had sex with Sisera survives also in MS h which reads קֵלִלְקָה “he was glued fast together” for the MT שֵכָב “to sleep.” Hebrew שֵכָב can clearly mean “to have sex with someone,” as in the Qere of Isa 13:16, מַמֶּרֶה קֵלִלְקָה “and their wives will be ravished” and Zech 14:2, קֵלִלְקָה הָאָמָנִי “and the women were ravished.” (Kolla, appears also in Deut 29:19 for רֵדֶב.)

These traditions overstate the evidence in the text and reflect the sexual fantasies of the interpreters. It seems clear that Yael provided herself with a good alibi, if for no other reason than that which Matthews (1991: 17) proposed: “Sisera’s death can be seen as the result of Yael’s need to protect her honor . . . against a stranger who had repeatedly violated the code of hospitality.”

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233 See M. Gaster 1899: 174; M. R. James 1917: 172; and Brown 1992: 52–56. Brown (53) noted that Pseudo-Philo quoted Sisera as saying, “If I am saved, I will go to my mother, and Jael will be my wife.”

234 Note Lindars (1995: 281) unusual interpretation of 5:28, The transition to Sisera’s mother is at first doubtful because of the delay in specifying the change of subject, which just for a moment might still be Jael (Alter). With the sexual theme of the preceding stanza still in mind, the audience might now think of Jael as a prostitute looking out for another customer.
Note also Bal (1988a: 103) where she speculated:

Trying to find arguments in his [Zakovitch’s] favor, we can suppose that, according to the lyric code, the three verbs, “collapsed,” “fell,” “lay down,” form chronological series, representing the successive phases of orgasm: the first signifies the orgasm itself, while the moment immediately afterwards is expressed by “to fall”; the third verb, “to lie down,” would then express the post-orgasmic rest here equivalent to death . . . It seems to me more fruitful to leave the ambiguity [of הנל] intact, to adopt it, to let coexisting meanings raise problems that it is the interpreter’s duty to cultivate—since this is his/ her garden.”

Globe (1975a: 362–367) argued that here הנל “to kneel” indicates Sisera’s ridiculous and unwitting obeisance to the simple nomadic Yael; and Boling (1975: 115) similarly found in הנל a reference to Sisera’s obeying Yael. But Bal (1988b: 229) saw a deeper meaning in הנל:235

When Sisera, as a result of Yael’s solemnly executed act of penetration, slowly falls, as a dying gibbor and as a stillborn baby, the verb that expresses the first stage of his undoing is karâ’, to kneel, which can imply spasmodic movement. The spasm of sex and the kneeling down in submission are expressed in one and the same word. It is only in the original language that the ambiguity of this passage can be fully appreciated.

However, despite all the alleged ambiguity of הנל “to kneel” when used in various contexts, it is more likely that הנל here in 5:27a (= 5:25c when transposed) means neither “to kneel” nor “to bow” but “to drink” and “to be weary.” The ambiguity comes from the fact that הנל is a homograph for three unrelated words, rather than a single word with a broad semantic range. The three words are: I “to kneel,” II “to drink” (which is rarely attested), and III “to be weary” (also rarely attested). Hebrew הנל appears as follows:

(1) The frequently used הנל I means “to kneel” (BDB 502), and may be used for sexual activity, as in Job 31:10, let my wife grind for another, and let other men kneel over her.”

235 Note also Bal (1988a: 103) where she speculated:
236 For a discussion of יָדוּעָה מָכָּא, see Burney (1918: xiv–xvi). His conclusion, “If these arguments are sound, any resemblance between Hebrew קָרָא and Arabic کَارَا is probably merely fortuitous,” is in my opinion very problematic; and the rest of his statement is extreme: “and the comparison with Arabic الكارا' should be expunged from Heb. Lexicons, or at any rate marked as highly precarious.” In Arabic، كَارَاء يَدْعَوَا the preposition يَدْعَوَا “in,” indicating obviously that one does not kneel in the vessel, but one drinks with/from a vessel. The text in Ju 7:5–6, which is the text Burney addressed, is without doubt יָדוּעָה מָכָּא, not יָדוּעָה מָכָּא. There are no drinking vessels mentioned in Ju 7:8, though the MT יָדוּעָה is commonly emended to יָדוּעָה “jug” to harmonize with the יָדוּעָה יָדוּעָה “empty jugs” of 7:16. But יָדוֻעַ, as a cognate of Arabic يَدُصَّ “stone, pebble, rugged stony ground” (Lane 1872: 1753), makes good sense and need not be emended away. The three hundred selected fighters of Ju 7:8 simply “took a stone (possibly reading יָדוֻעַ “stones” for MT יָדוֻעַ) from their hands,” i.e., they took the “ammunition” from those whom Gideon had dismissed.

237 In commenting on Speiser’s translation (1951: 65) of dalāpiš ku-ū-ru, in contrast to the translation in CAD 3: 48b and 8: 240 (“Mummu the counselor was with sleeplessness”), Held (1961: 17) argued:

Our investigation leads to the conclusion that karum, kurum denotes a state between sleep and forced wakefulness, i.e., “to become weary, to doze off, to be in half-somnolent, to be deprived of will power and energy.” This seems more appropriate than “to be in a daze, to faint.”

This semantic range of יָדוּעָה מָכָּא is evidenced in the Greek translations. MSS ב, MNדמקפתי have ἀφέω “to awake from sleep” and the B-text has κοιμάω “to lull, put to sleep.” The latter meaning fits the Yael narrative, especially as told in Pseudo-Philo (31: 7), where Yael pushed Sisera “from off the bed upon the earth, but he perceived it not for he was exceeding faint.”
He slept under a "fly-net" according to Burney (1918: 92) and L. R. Klein (1988: 42); or under a "curtain" according to Bal (1988a: 122), following KB 31246 "Decke," following the A-text δέππης, "a leather covering, screens of hide" (sometimes hung before fortifications to deaden enemy missiles).

The problematic ydpf preterit hky can be eliminated by emending and redividing as follows: δέππης δέππης > δέππης δέππης, "(she anointed him) with oil, he became faint . . . " (with scriptio defectiva for כּרה).
Bal (1988a: 121) noted, "Philologists have observed that the form of the imperative is masculine (ca7m od). One could just as well interpret the form as the infinitive absolute (ca7m od), [sic] which has strong imperative force (Boling (1975: 98)." Boling, citing Freedman (private communication), noted the use in the Decalogue of ̱ and ̱ when they appear in an erotic context. (More explicit language could have been used “to bend, to stoop” as in Jer 2:20, "you sprawled and played the whore" [NRS].)

However one translates this phrase, Amit’s observation (1987: 98) is right on target, “The blanket and milk, previously taken as tokens of surpassing hospitality, now appear as a stratagem aimed at ensuring that Sisera will sleep deeply.” In Ju 4:20, Sisera attempted to make it appear as though no one was hiding by ordering Yael (using masculine imperatives, no less, as though he were drowsy, drunk, or just a dumb foreigner—or all three—speaking poor Hebrew): ̱ “Stand up! Open up the tent!” If Yael had to “get up” from Sisera, there is more than a hint in Ju 4:20 that she was “down” with him.

5:26a. She stretched her hand to the peg . . . to the workmen’s hammer . . .

There is now general agreement that the ̱ is the energetic nun. (It also accounts for the ̱ of the MT ̱ in 5:17b, discussed above.) The variants in the A-text for MT ̱ “mallet of the workmen” reflect a different Vorlage. The

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240 Bal (1988a: 121) noted, “Philologists have observed that the form of the imperative is masculine (’amōd), One could just as well interpret the form as the infinitive absolute (’amōd), [sic] which has strong imperative force (Boling (1975: 98).” Boling, citing Freedman (private communication), noted the use in the Decalogue of ̱ and ̱ when they appear in an erotic context. However, Bal’s comment that, “The form of the infinitive absolute, neuters, satisfies the ‘logical’ demands of the more prosaic readers . . . .” is questionable. The infinitive absolute is morphologically masculine, as the first example in GKC 113b indicates: ̱ “eating too much honey is not good” (Prov 25:27). The masculine predicate adjective is used agrees in gender with the subject ̱, an infinitive absolute. In Ju 4:20, whether ̱ and ̱ are imperatives or infinitives, masculine morphs were imposed upon the reader.
Elsewhere in the LXX, te,loj never translates aivw,n, though aivw,n translates jxn "end." Ordinarily aivw,n and te,loj are not synonyms. However, in Ps 9:19 te,loj and aivw,n are used interchangeably to translate or "forever." For MT d[l dbat !ywn[ hwqt "nor the hope of the poor perish forever," the B-text reads ouvk avpolei/tai eivj aivw,n, whereas the A-text has ouvk avpolei/tai eivj te,loj. Other examples of te,loj "forever," can be found in Arndt and Gingrich (1979: 811–812). Consequently, it seems certain that te,loj and aivw,n, as readily as d[l, could be translated by either te,loj or aivw,n.
diviners, but the diviners did not recognize them as the deadly Yael and Deborah. The court fortunetellers discerned that something very precious was around Sisera’s neck. But they did not perceive that the costly covering was his own blood. When נְפִיר is read as something other than a synonym for חֲדָלְנוּ, this unifying element goes unnoticed.²⁴²

G. R. Driver (1962–1963: 12–13), on the basis of Akkadian ħalāpu “to slip in/out/away” and the Ethiopic ḫalafa “(water) ebbed away,” translated כלע הַל פּ ר here “his brains ran out,” which paralleled his translation of the קְנָס הַנְּעָת in 4:21²⁴³ as “(and his brains) oozed out on the ground.” But Boling (1975: 98) noted that, in light of Cant 4:3 and 6:7, נפַר refers to a part of the head that is visible from the outside and can be covered with a veil. Rozelaar (1988: 97–101) drew upon the suggestion of Hazan (1936) that נפַר means “mouth,” and offered this interpretation: “he [Sisera] was sleeping with his mouth open . . . she [Yael] holds the peg above Sisera’s open mouth and strikes it with the heavy hammer, driving it through his mouth cavity (and throat) into the ground.” This interpretation has some support from the γναθον “jaw” in MSS Aabcx.

In the Enûma eliš when Tiamat opened her mouth to consume Marduk, he turned it to his advantage: “He drove in the evil wind that she close not her lips . . . her mouth was wide open, he released the arrow, it tore her belly” (ANET 67). With such a well-known mythological assassination scene current at the time, in which the open mouth was the “bull’s-eye,” it would not be surprising for either Yael or the poet to have borrowed the tactic

²⁴² Remote doublets for נפַר are found in the LXX of 5:27, cited as variants for ספִּים (A-text συγκάψας and B-text κατεκυλισθή), They are ἐσκίρτησεν or ἐσκιρτήσας or ἑσκίρτησας (from σκίρταω “to spring, to leap,” [cf. σκίρω “to skip, dance, frisk”]), which are found in MSS dglptvw and the Ethiopic translated calcitrauit “they kicked [with the heels].” These reflect a Vorlage having נפַר “they leaped” instead of נפִיר. Note Ps 114 (LXX 113): 4, 6, בַּל יֹאמַר לְאָמָר רָק הַנָּפֶּר = תָּא דְּרָה ἑσκίρτησαν ὦσει κροὶ “the mountains skipped like rams.” See page 223, for the confusion of נ and נ.

which focused on the neck/mouth rather than the skull/temple. In a sense, Yael “went for the jugular,” following a well-known mythic model.

5:27b. Motionless, powerless

The first phrase of 5:27, בַּכֵּסָל . . . בְּכוֹל, is transposed in this study to the end of 5:25, but not solely because these words are missing in eighteen Hebrew manuscripts and several Greek texts (see BH). While there is much repetition in the poem, the repetition in 5:27 is as excessive as the seven to eleven imperatives found in the MT of 5:12. This excessive repetition creates suspicion about the interpretation and position of this poetic line.

Given the semantic range and homonymy of the words involved, the phrase בַּכֵּסָל is transposed in this study to the end of 5:25, but not solely because these words are missing in eighteen Hebrew manuscripts and several Greek texts (see BH). While there is much repetition in the poem, the repetition in 5:27 is as excessive as the seven to eleven imperatives found in the MT of 5:12. This excessive repetition creates suspicion about the interpretation and position of this poetic line.

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The second occurrence of בַּכֵּסָל in 27b requires the translation, “between her legs, half-conscious, he fell,” which follows the meaning of בַּכֵּסָל III, discussed above (pages 214–216). This understanding of MT בַּכֵּסָל is as old as the paraphrase of 5:27 found in the prose text of Ju 4:21b, רוחא נרדס יניק ימות, “he was lying fast asleep from weariness and he died” (NRSV). The second occurrence of בַּכֵּסָל in 27b requires the translation, “between her legs, half-conscious, he fell,” which follows the meaning of בַּכֵּסָל III, discussed above (pages 214–216). This understanding of MT בַּכֵּסָל is as old as the paraphrase of 5:27 found in the prose text of Ju 4:21b, רוחא נרדס יניק ימות, “he was lying fast asleep from weariness and he died” (NRSV). The second occurrence of בַּכֵּסָל in 27b requires the translation, “between her legs, half-conscious, he fell,” which follows the meaning of בַּכֵּסָל III, discussed above (pages 214–216). This understanding of MT בַּכֵּסָל is as old as the paraphrase of 5:27 found in the prose text of Ju 4:21b, רוחא נרדס יניק ימות, “he was lying fast asleep from weariness and he died” (NRSV). The second occurrence of בַּכֵּסָל in 27b requires the translation, “between her legs, half-conscious, he fell,” which follows the meaning of בַּכֵּסָל III, discussed above (pages 214–216). This understanding of MT בַּכֵּסָל is as old as the paraphrase of 5:27 found in the prose text of Ju 4:21b, רוחא נרדס יניק ימות, “he was lying fast asleep from weariness and he died” (NRSV). The second occurrence of בַּכֵּסָל in 27b requires the translation, “between her legs, half-conscious, he fell,” which follows the meaning of בַּכֵּסָל III, discussed above (pages 214–216). This understanding of MT בַּכֵּסָל is as old as the paraphrase of 5:27 found in the prose text of Ju 4:21b, רוחא נרדס יניק ימות, “he was lying fast asleep from weariness and he died” (NRSV).

244 Bos (1988: 52) noted the awkward word order which has Sisera sleeping after being hit. She concluded, “Sisera is stunned, collapses, and dies . . . in a slow-motion effect similar to the operative in Ju 5:4.”
The MT יְשָׁבֵל הָאָחָה יִשָּׁבֵל is puzzling. Albright (1922: 80) noted: “Where he stooped there he fell,” is anything but poetical, and the [prosaic] יְשָׁבֵל is found nowhere else in the poem.” He “improved” the poetry by deleting four words and translating “He fell, outstretched.” Cross (1950: 38), Stuart (1976: 127), and Soggin (1981c: 83) essentially concurred with Albright by deleting two or more words. Boling (1975: 104) and O’Connor (1980: 229) retained the MT and treated the relative יְשָׁבֵל as a demonstrative and translated, “at that place where he slumped” and “in that place he crouches.” Similarly, Lindars (1995: 280 translated, “where he collapsed, there he fell, slain.”

However, in preference to deleting any words or replacing the relative pronoun with a demonstrative pronoun, the line can be restored by redividing words and emending a ר to a ר or a ב. The MT יְשָׁבֵל can be read בֹּכְרֵי הָאָחָה יִשָּׁבֵל כְּרֵית הָאָחָה יִשָּׁבֵל. The restored noun, בֹּכְרֵי, is the cognate of Arabic بَعْض “a state of trial or affliction, distress, deprived of the power of motion” (Lane 1865: 146–147). The stem יָשָׁבֵל (= בֹּכְרֵי) appears in Ps 6:11, “All my enemies shall be immobilized (בֹּכְרֵי) and exceedingly troubled; they will be shattered (לְשׁוֹנָה) and in a moment they will be made powerless (בֹּכְרֵי).”

If the word after the restored יְשָׁבֵל was originally the hophal בֹּכְרֵי in Ps 78:31 would be very relevant: “he made powerless (בֹּכְרֵי) the elite warriors of Israel” (RSV, “laid low the picked men”). Had it been the preposition ב and the noun בֹּכְרֵי, the meaning would then be “in a stupor.” This יְשָׁבֵל “immobilized, motionless” provides an alliterative balance for the יָשָׁבֵל “slow-motion, tardy” in 5:28b.

Niditch’s (1989: 50) observations are noteworthy, though more than one verse, in my opinion, is involved. She wrote:

245 On the elision of the R, see pages 120–121; note also the variants יִשָּׁבֵל and יָשָׁבֵל in the parallel texts of Ps 18:40 and 2 Sam 22:40. In 1QpaleoLev (Freedman and Matthews 1985: 45–46, 80) יִשָּׁבֵל appears for יָשָׁבֵל in Lev 25:36, יָשָׁבֵל for יִשָּׁבֵל in Lev 26:18, and יָשָׁבֵל for יִשָּׁבֵל in Lev 26:21. See also Delitzsch 1920: 21–22, §14a–c.

246 Reading here יָשָׁבֵל “to shatter,” which was discussed on pages 183–184 in reference to Ju 5:17c.
Double meanings of violent death and sexuality emerge in every line. He is at her feet in a pose of defeat and humiliation; he kneels between her legs in sexual pose. He falls and lies, a dead warrior assassinated by a warrior better than he is; he is a suppliant and a would-be lover. This one verse holds an entire story. The final twist and nuance of the tale awaits the last line, which nevertheless retains the doubleness of meaning. He is despoiled/destroyed.

Bal (1988b: 215) noted, “The man Sisera is turned into a non-man [4:20 יָאָב אָב ] by means of the penetration of a hard object into his soft flesh. The murder takes the specific form and meaning of rape . . . . This reverse rape, indeed also destroys the man as man . . . .” As Rozelaar and Hazan observed, Sisera, the sole rapist, is dead thanks to oral penetration.

X. Anxiety in Sisera’s court: Ju5:28–30

5:28a. She peered,

but (only) emptiness

This section of the poem is not likely to be an eyewitness account, but it reflects the poet’s realistic imagination. The reference to Sisera’s mother demonstrates the unity and integrity of the poem. Lindars commented (1983: 168), “the ‘mother in Israel’ makes an ironical inclusion with the mother of Sisera at the end of the poem” and “. . . the stanza is not merely a tail-piece, but a satisfying conclusion, which rounds off the poem as a whole” (1995: 280).

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Deborah is the good mother . . . Jael, on the other hand, is the death-dealing mother. Her behavior is maternal: she offers Sisera security . . . and assurance . . . . The picture of Jael covering Sisera and giving him milk to drink suggests a mother putting her son to bed. She even watches over him while he sleeps to protect him from harm . . . . But the nurturing, protective mother can suddenly, unexpectedly, turn deadly. The bad mother is cold and blood-thirsty. She may attack her son in his sleep, when he is utterly defenseless . . . . The different descriptions of Jael’s assassination of the unexpecting Sisera in Judges 4 and 5 are different expressions of anxiety about the mother’s threatening side.
However, MT בָּבְרָא לְיָה לֶא has been somewhat of a crux. MSS Abcx have כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה ("she observed," but the B-text has nothing for it, leading Schreiner (1957: 67) to comment ruefully, “der Übersetzer hat wohl das Hapaxleg. בָּבְרָא לְיָה לֶא ‘und sie klagte’ nicht gekannt und darum unberücksichtigt gelassen.” But as was evident in 5:22–23 with בַּעֵדְמֹהוּב וִיכְלֵל, and 3 (see pages 25–26, 200–201), unknown words were transliterated, not omitted. Guillaume (1960–1961: 17) properly cautioned against equating בָּבְרָא לְיָה לֶא with post-biblical בָּבְרָא "to lament (over a corpse)," since at this point in the ballad Sisera’s mother had good reason to worry but no reason to lament.248

Hebrew בָּבְרָא has been identified with Aramaic בְּבִירָא “to blow the trumpet, to shout aloud,” and the Arabic نُبَل “he cried loudly” (Guillaume 1960: 17). But the Old Latin reurententes in Sisarra, the Ethiopic, the Sahidic, and the doublets in the A-text (MSS Aabeglnntvw with the participles ussyostratefontas or metusstratefontas or ussyostratefontas) reflect a Vorlage which had לְיָה לֶא "returning with Sisera." The translators understood לְיָה לֶא to be the Aramaic לְיָה לֶא (רָא) “to return.” But לְיָה לֶא is commonly emended to לְיָה לֶא “she looked,” following MSS Abcx כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה and the Targum’s נְבָא מְרָא (from וְנָבָא "to look with anxiety, to wait impatiently"), as noted in BHS.

But לְיָה לֶא can be revocalized to לְבָּבְרָא (from an original לְבָּבְרָא), a taqtil form widely used with "ע"ע stems. Then לְבָּבְרָא can be read as a cognate of the Arabic ظب "a deserted, empty land in which there is nothing or no one" (Lane 1893: 2974b). This derivation would account for the unusual absence of a corresponding word in the B-text. Probably early in the transmission of the B-text, the translation of לְבָּבְרָא as כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה “and empty space” resulted in a subsequent scribe’s omitting the phrase כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה but leaving an empty space which was removed by a still later scribe. Such a phenomenon is reflected in 1 Sam 13:1 which deals with Saul’s age at his ascension to the throne and the length

248 Soggin (1981c: 92) commented, “Incongruously the Hebrew text anticipates . . . ‘She lamented.’” He therefore emended the text to בָּבְרָא כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה "she peered,” citing the A-text διέκυτεν and B-text παρέκυψεν. But these are translations of the MT נֶפֶשׁ כָּל "to look down and out, to overhang.” It is the A-text כַּאֲשֶׁר מָאָסֵה כַּם מָאָסֵה “she observed closely,” which suggests בָּבְרָא (see BHS).
of his reign. McCarter (1980: 222) conjectured, “This notice is missing in LXX” . . . It seems likely, then, that originally the numbers were lacking in both clauses: ‘Saul was ___ years old when he began to reign, and he reigned ___ years over Israel.’ The blank spaces were subsequently omitted and the MT now reads, “Saul was a year old when he began to reign and he reigned two years over Israel.” A similar scribal corruption surely lies behind the missing word in MS B for MT .

5:28b. The mother of Sisera inquired at the lattice . . .

The interrogative could be introduced by a verb like or “to ask.” The consonant cluster yields such a verb when the is emended to and the letters are divided to read , recovering a 3fs of “she inquired.” The first “at” serves as a double-duty preposition, “through the window . . . through the lattice”

The scene of “the woman at the window” appears also in 2 Sam 6:16; 2 Kgs 9:30; and Eccl 12:3, as noted by O’Connor (1986: 284). Bal (1988a: 64) views the lattice motif as addressing “the women imprisoned in their passivity.” But there is even more. As much as the poet contrasted the Mother in Israel with Sisera’s mother, the woman at the window was contrasted with the woman of the tent. The noble lady was not Sisera’s unnamed mother with her princesses, but the well-named woman Yael, the “Noble/Availer” (see page 207). A Rechabite ambiance elevates the itinerant lifestyle of smiths and caravaneers above the sedentary and residential lifestyle with its false security symbolized by the lady at the lattice. The open tent provided very little protection compared to secured windows; but what it lacked in security it made up for in opportunity. The ladies of a well-defended court fell victim to a woman of an undefended tent and a woman who sat openly under a date-palm (Ju 4:5).

5:29a. The clairvoyants among her damsels divined

Brekelmans (1969: 170–173) and Weisman (1976: 116–119) surveyed the problems of and proposals for 5:29. Brekelmans concluded: “There is everything to be said for returning to the translation of V. Zapletal [1923] and H. Gressmann: ‘The wisest of her ladies speaks up, and replies to her.’” Unconvinced by this proposal, Weisman followed Globe (1974b: 498) who thought the poet depicted Sisera’s women preparing songs to welcome home the victors in a “mockery of Sisera’s mother and wives who greedily compose their praise for a corpse.” Weisman generously paraphrased, “(Eulogies of) Wisdom her (female) singers chant (to her). She (in turn) recites her response.”

But Weisman’s translation, like others which it is intended to replace, wrongly follows exegetical tradition in deriving MT הָנִּינַ֣ת “to answer.” The stem is, however, נָמִ֣י “to divine,” which is clearly suggested by the הָנִּינַ֣ת in the Ben Hayyim text. Contra Lindars (1995: 295) and others, the second הָנִּינַ֣ת is not the energicum with the 3fs suffix, but the third radical of the stem. The form here in the MT of BHS is the 3fpl of the נָמִ֣י verb, like לָבָ֣ב “they surround” from לָבְּבָ֣ה.

The poet is holding up for ridicule the practice of divination in Sisera’s court with this collocation of הָנִּינַ֣ת “they divined,” הָנָּמִ֣י “soothsayer” and הָנָּמִ֣י “clairvoyants.” The Chronicles of Jerahmeel (M. Gaster 1899: 174) reflect a similar understanding of events in Sisera’s court:

Now, when Sisera went out to fight against Israel his mother, Tamar [רָמָי “soothsayer” (?)], with her maidens and princesses, by means of their enchantments prophesied, saying that Sisera would bring as spoil one or more of the women of Israel with their coloured garments, for she saw in her charms that he would lie upon the bed of Jael, the wife of Heber, and be covered with a coloured garment of needlework.

The Taanach Cuneiform Text I, coming from the fifteenth century B.C.E., includes a solicitation by an Egyptian official named

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250 On נָמִי stem see BDB 778; Jastrow 1903: 1054a; and GKC 674; there is no need to emend the MT to הָנִּינַ֣ת as did Cheyne (1904: 463).
Amenophis for the talents of the renowned wizard (umān = ummān) of Asherah of Taanach. Here in 5:29 the “sagacious women” could be the female counterparts of the ummān mentioned along with sorcerers in Gen 41:8, Ex 7:11, and Isa 44:25, or the “wizards” of Job 34:2.251

In Ps 83:10–11, Sisera is associated with Endor, renowned because of the “witch of Endor” (אשת בֵּנְלֶה אֶפֶן צִנָּר, 1 Sam 28:7). This association made by the psalmist linked Sisera and his court with the world of the occult. The name of Sisera’s residence, “the defensive enclave of the Gentiles,” could also be derived from שלוש שָׁם אָמַל אֲמִי, stem IV “magic arts, divination, sorcery,” and mean “the occult-center of the Gentiles” (see note 37 and compare Na’aman 1990: 427).

McCarter (1990: 290), though not treating the הֵמֹה here as “clairvoyants,” placed these princesses in the category of sages:

Wisdom often manifests itself in the older materials as native cunning, shrewdness, and discernment—the ability, in other words, to recognize the patterns of human experience and manipulate them advantageously. The sage who has this ability is valued as a counselor, and any person of rank would have such counselors ready at hand. Thus the mother of Sisera . . . has counselors . . . upon whom she can call in a time of need (Ju 5:29–30).

Thus it becomes obvious that the poet contrasted not only the “Mother in Israel” with Sisera’s mother (Hackett 1985: 28), the caravan leader with the caravan raider, and the “woman at the window” with the “woman of the tent,” but the tradition also contrasted the perceptive “woman of light” (אשת לְפָדוֹר, שָׁם אָמַל אֲמִי) with the misperceiving “courtly clairvoyants” (הֵמֹה שָׁם אֲמִי).

5:29b. Her (sooth)sayer reported to her

The הֵמֹה is the 3fs suffix and the ה is the feminine ending found in the names רַפְּיָא (תְּרֵפֵי) and הנִּיטְר (in Lam 4:10, where it appears with the reduplicated ending as רַפְּיָא תְּרֵפֵי). This ה occurs frequently in Ugaritic proper names and once

251 See Albright 1944b: 18–19 for the Taanach Cuneiform Text I.
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252 Failure to recognize this rare feminine form forced yrma to be read as the masculine plural construct “the words of,” similar to the idiom and form in Prov 22:21. This in turn required reading ḥay as a reflexive “to herself” rather than as the usual “to her.”

The vocable is either ṣmr I “to say” or ṣmr II “to see, to perceive,” a cognate of Ugaritic ṣmr (Gt stem) “to see” and Akkadian ṣmaru “to see, to locate (a person), to find after searching, to observe (omens)” and amīru “a reader” (CAD 1: 2–5, 14, 65). Something like the Akkadian tūra am-mar ašappara, “I shall make another observation and report to you,” could well have been said to Sisera’s mother. As in Job 13:22 (ḥaṣreḇ) and 20:2 (ḥoḥeḇ), ṣmr does not require a direct object. Indeed, given the Egyptian flavor of Sisera’s court (see below on 5:30a), the ḥaṣreḇ here may well be the Egyptian verb ṭūḥ “to answer,” a loanword or a shared root (Gordon 1965: 501; Gardiner 1966: 562). If so, it could reflect the poet’s intentional use of dialect or a loanword.

There are three subject elements in MT ḥaṣreḇ ṣmr ayh, namely, the pronoun ṣmr, the prefix ḥ of the verb, and the noun ḥaṣreḇ, translated “her (sooth)sayer” in the attempt to combine ṣmr I and ṣmr II. The antecedent of the ḥ and ḥ suffixes (which cannot be reflexive) is Sisera’s mother. The MT ḥaṣreḇ “her (sooth)sayer” (not “her words”) is the subject ṣmr. The quotation in 5:30 comes from a woman other than Sisera’s mother.

5:30a. The victors have forded (the water)

Brongers (1981: 177–189) discussed the use of MT ṣmr and translated “Surely, they must be finding spoil, taking shares . . . .” However, the poet may have been ridiculing the clairvoyant who could only faintly and, at best, erroneously approximate Sisera’s

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252 See Layton 1990: 241–249. Note van Selms’ study (1971: 426–429) where he conjectures, “It is quite possible . . . the yōd in the feminine ending -ay is nothing else than the anaphoric pronoun feminine.”

253 “to make you know the certainty of the words of truth that you may correctly answer” (NAS).
real circumstance. When words of false assurance and vain hope to Sisera’s mother become evident, namely, the assertion that Sisera and his charioters were victorious and had successfully navigated the flooded wadi. The participle הָלַךְ “the victors” is from the root הָלַךְ “to prevail, to overcome someone” (discussed on 5:23d, page 204). 254

The verb הָלַךְ (“to ford (the water)” is the Egyptian δυογ, “kreuzen (den Fluß beim Überfahren); durchziehen (nicht im Schiff); ein Gewässer zu Fuß durchschreiten; auch vom Passieren einer Furt” (Erman and Grapow 1897: 5: 511–514). The noun יְדִיב “ship” (= Coptic μοῦ) appears in Num 24: 24, Isa 33:21, and Ezek 30:9. 255 In Hebrew ואֹבָדָה (וַאֲבָד) and (ו) יִבְּרָא were usually used for “fording (a stream)” and a “ford” (as in 2 Sam 19:18, וַאֲבָדָה יָבֹא אֵלָיו “then they kept crossing the ford to bring over [the king’s household],” and Jer 51:32, וַאֲבָדָה יְבָרַה “the fords have been seized”). But putting an Egyptian word on the lips of the women in Sisera’s court was probably the poet’s clever way of demonstrating the foreign element there, which in 4:2 is indicated in the name of the residence, יִרְבָּא הָרָם “the defensive enclave (or ‘occult center’) of the Gentiles.” These overtones of a dialect are similar to the speech of the sailors in Jonah who spoke Hebrew with Aramaicisms (1:7 מֵאָרָם “on whose account” and in 1:11 מָרָם “it may quiet down”), highlighting their non-Israelite identity.

5:30b. A wench or two for the head of (the) hero

It is of interest to note first that the LXX and other versions do not have Sisera’s mother being told that her son and his men are late because he was (or they were) supposedly raping their victims. The B-text εἰς κεφαλήν ἀνδρός “merciful he will show mercy to the head of a man,” and the

254 Note also Kuhnigk 1974: 112, 136; Penar 1975: 25, 86. See note 225 for a list of the relevant passages.

255 Note Albright 1944a: 231; and Lambdin 1953: 144–145, especially the references to יָדִיב “ships” and יבּוֹר “to plunder.”
A-text φιλάξων φίλος εἰς κεφαλὴν δύνατον "being friendly to friends, to the head of a mighty one," reflect essentially the same Vorlage as the MT, but treat רחם רחם as the widely attested verb "to show mercy" and its cognate accusative. They depict Sisera compassionately disbursing spoils to his men.

However, in contrast to the sexual and erotic nuances in the language of the assassination scenes of 4:18–22 and 5:25–27, the expression רחם רחם לאים נבר is quite vulgar, as Munster (1696: col. 1985) noted long ago:

Est quidem raham & raham propriè uterus mulieris, & item vulva; hic verò capitur pro paella, idqueBY ביוI. modo contemptibili, sicut & Germani hoc utuntur modo câm de descortis contemptim loquantur, מר flattura.

Contrary to Bal’s (1988a: 134) statement, “She [the mother of Sisera] uses the crude word “womb” for /woman/. . . . The crude term “womb” suggests . . . ,” the Hebrew רחם is itself neither vulgar or crude. Its Arabic cognate is either רוח “to be compassionate” or רחם “to be soft.” The vocable is used for names of men and women, and רחם opens the Qur’an in a manner reminiscent of Ex 34:6, “Yahweh is a merciful (רוח) and gracious God.” It is the usage in 5:30 which is vulgar, as vulgar as the use of nice words like רגש and ראיה. On the lips of Sisera’s court lady, רחם takes on a nuance comparable to the Latin caput, about which Adams (1982: 72) noted, “The frequency of caput used of the glans suggests that it was in common use . . . . This usage reflects the tendency for the organ to be personified.” To be sure, רחם does not ordinarily mean the glans, but this is not an ordinary Hebrew who is speaking, but a foreign woman—as though she were ignorant of the appropriate דברות, תבון or ד (Isa 57:8; UT 409) used for the genitalia.

In the Moabite text (KAI 1: 169), דברים, “(slave) woman” occurs once in a prisoner list along with נבר, נבר, נבר, נבר, קצף, and מחר. This pejorative use in Moab matches this single negative use of אמא in Biblical Hebrew. Thus, רחם has a foreign flavor, as well as a vulgar ring. Good Hebrew may not have been a strength in Sisera’s court. It can well be assumed that the foreign words and vulgar usage on the lips of Sisera’s women are the
poet’s device for debasing the enemy and another example of the clever use of dialect.

Treating נבר as though it were a synonym for כָּל and translating “every, all, each” results in euphemistic mistranslations. Lindars (1995: 285) stated, “The meaning ‘per capita’ for לֶבֶר is not in doubt.” He is correct only for the first half of his statement because there is no basis for making the equation נבר = per capita. A reader may miss the point of the literal translation “for the head of” but that is insufficient reason to hide the point. MT כָּל “man” is probably scriptio defectiva for נבר “hero.” Since both nouns are singular they should be translated as Bal did (1988a: 64), “two wombs/girls for the head of the hero,” rather than with G. A. Smith (1912: 90) and others, “A wench, two wenches a head for the men.” Bal’s interpretation of 5:30a focuses attention on the anticipated rapacious action of the troops, at large, and the sexual violence of Sisera, in particular.

5:30b. Spoils of the best cloth

Many proposals have been made to delete MT כָּל כָּלִים or כָּלִים קָלֵים. However, it seems more likely that כָּלִים כָּלִים simply needs to be transposed to precede the second כָּלִים, a slight change which restores the superlative כָּלִים כָּלִים, “the very finest cloth.” The plural-singular “cloths” and “finest cloth” in 5:30b are then balanced chiastically in 5:30c by the singular-dual כָּלַם and כָּלָם, which in turn balance the initial singular-dual כָּלִים of 5:30a. In Hebrew כָּלִים is the equivalent of Akkadian subâtum, a piece of cloth from which one or more garments could be made. The proposed transposition restores three very

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257 Compare Blenkinsopp’s similar suggestion (1961: 75), following in part Budde’s reconstruction (cited by Burney 1918: 156), that כָּלִים כָּלִים is a singular followed by a dual.

258 See Veenhof 1972: 89, 464, and his index for subâtum.
effective alliterative parallels: (1) רְמַעְתִּי נֵכְעָתִי, (2) רְמַעְתִּי רְמַעְתִּי (or רְמַעְתִּי רְמַעְתִּי), and (3) נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ.

5:30c. An embroidered cloth or two רְמַעְתִּי רְמַעְתִּי

Oppenheim’s comment (1967: 246) on rōqem as a trade commodity (see Ezek 27:24) is of interest:

... the work done by the Western craftsmen called rōqem... appealed to the staid Mesopotamians accustomed to monochrome wool and linen apparel. This new and quite characteristic western textile technique... seems to have been applied whenever linen thread and purple wool of various hues are given simultaneously to weavers to be made into pieces of apparel typically to be placed on the image of the deity at certain cultic occasions.

Crowfoot (1951: 9–12) called attention to linen textile woven by the rōqem technique discovered at ‘Ain Feshkha. Sisera did not wear the crown of a king, but his court ladies seemingly envisaged him with a mantle fit for a god.

5:30d. For the neckerchiefs of the spoiler נָנָאֶד לְעַרְאָל

(See above, pages 217–219, on 5:26b.)

As the English word “crown” means a part of the head or an object worn on that part of the head, and as נָנָאֶד means “neck” or “necklace,” so לְעַרְאָל means “neck” or “necklace” (Cant 4:9) or a garment worn around the neck or hung from the neck (or even the shoulders). The suggestion of Guillaume (1963–1964: 5) that here means “captured women” (since it is collocated with “wench” and “shawls”) is too restrictive a translation. Just because the לְעַרְאָל may have included women is no reason to restrict לְעַרְאָל itself only to women—especially since 5:19 mentions “silver spoils.” Were women the only spoils of interest to Sisera

259 Robert Shedinger (oral communication) has called my attention to an unrecognized dual noun in the poetic fragment of Gen 25:23, (MT שְׁנֵי נְכֵעָתִי (וכָּסֵעָתִי) “two nations are in your womb” (like אֱלִישָׁבַא, כָּסֵעָתִי “two legs” in Amos 3:12, the הַגְּדִים in Lev 16:21, and the כָּסֵעָתִי in 1 Sam 3:11).
and the Canaanite kings, they would have needed neither chariots nor caravan chases.

The deletion of the third לשלו in verse 30 for metrical reasons (Cross 1950: 40 and Stuart 1976: 136) or the emendation of the fourth לשלו to לשלו “king’s wife,” noted in BH’, are unnecessary. The reading of the NEB and Freedman’s suggestion (cited by Boling [1975: 115]) to read the fourth לשלו as the participle לשלו has been adopted (contra the NRSV “my neck as spoil”). This vocalization actually revives the proposal of W. Green made in 1753 (cited by Burney 1918: 157).

The poet ridiculed the clairvoyant who could but faintly and erroneously approximate Sisera’s real circumstances. This passage can be added to the two prophetic texts (Isa 10:13 and 30: 1–15, 31:1–3), cited by Van Leeuwen (1990: 303), in which the “false wisdom of foreign courts in planning military exploits without taking Yahweh into account” is held up for derision.

XI. Poetic epilogue 5:31a

5:31a. Thus perished בָּאָבְרִים

By reading אֲבֹרִים as a jussive (“may they perish”), many commentators (such as Weiser 1959: 94–95 and Lindars 1995: 286) interpreted 5:31a as a liturgical addition to the poem—a prayer addressed to Yahweh as indicated by the 2ms suffix on אֲבֹרִים. But in view of the many yqtl preterits which appear in 5:17 (בר, נזר, and זוקן), 5:18 (שחורה), 5:21 (שננה), and 5:26 (שעון), there is little reason to insist on reading אֲבֹרִים as a jussive. As a yqtl preterit, as translated here, or as an imperfect “thus perish” (implying “they will always perish this way”), the MT אֲבֹרִים introduces the poem’s climactic summary.

5:31a. All the enemies of Yahweh אֲבֹרִים יְהוָה

The 2ms suffix of אֲבֹרִים in the MT is unexpected since it is followed by a 3ms suffix on אֲבֹרִים, and direct address occurs elsewhere only in Deborah’s exhortation (5:4–5, 8–9). Moran

Dahood (1968: 147; 1970: 151 and 204), following van Dijk (1968: 69–70), cited thirteen examples of an enclitic/emphatic יב suffix, including the יבניא here.260 In my earlier study (1983: 257), I followed Boling (1975: 115) in adopting this interpretation. However, it now seems more likely that an early misreading here, as in 5:12c, of או for א is responsible for mistaking the enclitic א for the 2ms suffix. The error is comparable to the misreading of א (א) for ב (ב) in Ju 5:10 and is comparable to the textual differences in Ezek 16:7 where the versions read גוהנוי “your breasts” for MT dual גוהנה “breasts.” The enclitic א appears also in 5:4–5, גוהנה אים “waters of the mountain” (discussed on page 134).

5:31a. The sun because of His power... 5:31b. In light of Ps 84:12, “truly Sun and Suzerain is Yahweh,” here could be read as a surrogate for Yahweh. In Ugaritic (UT 491: 2426) špš was so used for Pharaoh and the Hittite suzerain. But it is more likely that the is here the sun which is under Yahweh’s control. The 3ms suffix on refers to Yahweh, not to the sun. Buber (1950: 10) used a masculine suffix and a feminine participle when quoting this verse: יבشاهו יבנור ויבוש “as the going forth of the sun in his valor” [italics mine].

Hillers (1978: 175–182), in a study of the בוריה, נב in Isa 42:6, noted that Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic, and Akkadian metaphors and similes referring to גות and the gods Šapaš and Šamaš addressed themselves to the ideas of freedom and emancipation. The MT יבנור in 5:31a is probably one more example of

260 Vogt’s suggestion (cited by van Dijk 1968: 71) of a link between the emphatic י suffix and the enclitic י of יבניא enhances Dahood’s proposal.
this usage. As the sun moves freely through the heavens by the power of Yahweh, so the covenant people (i.e., “those who love him”)\textsuperscript{261} were free from Sisera’s obstructive coalition. Yahweh’s power expressed in the storm permitted Israel to be as free as the orbiting sun—all the more brilliant following the storm.

XII. Prose epilogue Ju 5:31b

5:31b. And the land was at peace

In Ju 4:23 the formulaic נזלו “to subdue” was identified as the prose incipit. Here the corresponding formulaic לאר ה “to be at peace” provides the prose inclusio. As discussed above (pages 29–32), the Deborah–Barak–Yael tradition in Judges 4 and 5, as it now stands, is composed of two literary units: Ju 4:1–22 and Ju 4:23–5:31. A prose prologue and a prose conclusion encompass the poem which has its own poetic prologue and poetic conclusion—as well as the internal incipit and inclusio demarcating Deborah’s exhortation: הוהי ידבר “Praise Yahweh!”

The words of Ramesses III upon his accession to the throne, have a similar collocation of peace and sun (= Re): “Then my father, Amon-Re, Re-Atum, and Ptah . . . crowned me as the Lord of the Two Lands on the throne of him who begat me . . . the land rested and rejoiced in possession of peace . . . .” (Breasted 1906: 4: 200).

\textsuperscript{261} Matthews (1991: 20) commented, “In the lyric poem, however, her [Yael’s] actions are removed from the realm of law and custom and laid out simply as the proper steps taken by a ‘friend’ of the Lord.” But, while the יחצ时间为 as a masculine plural noun can include Yael, it cannot be restricted to her. MT 5:31a is the epilogue to the entire poem, not simply to the assassination scene. Moran (1963: 84–85) and Boling (1975: 116) noted the covenantal overtones of the לאר here, as evidenced by the use of יחצ or its equivalent in ancient Near Eastern treaties.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. Summary

Like an ancient tell waiting for the archaeologist to uncover its secrets, the war ballad buried beneath the enigmas of Judges 5 has long waited for someone to recover its story-line and confirm the integrity of its text. In this study, I have participated in a literary “excavation” to facilitate the recovery process, sometimes reading the poem independently of exegetical tradition as though it had just been excavated. Coogan’s hypothesis (1978: 144), which appeared about a decade after I started working on the poem, has proven to be helpful:

The unprovable hypothesis on which this study rests is that at some point in the history of the transmission of the Song of Deborah someone made sense of it as a poem. Copyists, redactors and translators may have altered what struck them as obscure or theologically dangerous, but even after three millennia, Judges 5:2–30 exhibits a carefully constructed unity.

My hypothesis differed from his only by including the assumption that someone would again make sense out of the poem. Hopefully, the translation and interpretations offered in this study, supplemented by the work of others who have argued for the literary integrity of the Song of Deborah, have demonstrated the viability of Coogan’s hypothesis and my assumption.

The prevailing critical views, stated by Dentan in a note in the RSV (1965: 298) that, “The Hebrew text is, unfortunately, so corrupt in some places as to be almost unintelligible,” and by Hoppe in a note in the NRSV (1991: 306), “The Song of Deborah may be the oldest part of the Hebrew Bible; it is also one of the most obscure,” can no longer be sustained.

Actually, the consonantal MT is, in one sense of the word, almost without textual corruption. It is fully intelligible once the reader (a) is sensitive to the use of dialect and loanwords and, consequently, (b) employs a larger lexicon than the classical Hebrew one traditionally used, (c) is alert to the misdivision of words, (d) recognizes an inconsistent use of vowel letters by the scribes, and (e) is prepared to transpose several words and verses.
My reconstruction and translation requires only five emendations (י to ד twice, and once each for ד to ש, ת to ב, and מ to מ or דג), the interchange of וא four times, the addition of a ה and a final ה, and the deletion of one final ה and a ה conjunction. Normative spelling required the addition of but fifteen vowel letters and the deletion of only four. These changes in the 1,485 letters of 5:1–31 demonstrate the need for only minimal emendation. Although the lack of a space between some words, like the absence of anticipated vowel letters, could be labeled “textual corruption,” such omissions do not impugn the integrity of the consonantal MT, even though they created problems for readers over the years. The redivision of twenty words was required. Deciding where the words had been misdivided in this battle ballad proved to be the major task.

Appeal to the versions, traditional exegesis, and current lexica of Biblical Hebrew provided only limited help in understanding the more enigmatic lines. Contrary to the opinion of Globe (1974b: 496) that “the vocabulary of Judges 5 is simpler” than that of the Song of Miriam or of the Lamentation of David, the poet had a rich vocabulary, larger than many previous translators have recognized. Indeed, Burney’s observation (1918: 171) remains pertinent:

In considering the language of the Song [of Deborah], one broad general principle has first to be laid down; viz., that, since Hebrew literature, as known to us from the O. T., is extremely exiguous, the Hebrew vocabulary which we possess doubtless represents only a somewhat limited part of the vocabulary which must have been in regular, if not in common, use in the written and spoken language.

I have not emended the MT to accommodate the lexica. Once it was realized that the poet had used a variety of dialectal options, the lexicon for the song was enlarged in an effort to match that of the poet (see below the “Supplemental Lexicon for The Song of Deborah”).

The proposals of other scholars have been weighed carefully. Translations or exegetical solutions inappropriate for a war ballad turned out to be surprisingly unnecessary. Some of them appeared meaningful in an isolated colon, but for understanding the poem as a complete and coherent literary unit they were less than helpful or persuasive.
I. SUPPLEMENTARY LEXICON FOR
THE SONG OF DEBORAH

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<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>(5:8)</td>
<td>“moreover”</td>
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<td>(5:29)</td>
<td>“soothsayer”</td>
<td>בְּרֶסֶל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:23)</td>
<td>“to panic”</td>
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<td>“to march”</td>
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<td>(3:31)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3:31)</td>
<td>“to oversee”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:4)</td>
<td>“abundantly”</td>
<td>בָּמֵם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:4)</td>
<td>“noisily”</td>
<td>בָּמֵמ</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:12)</td>
<td>“to pursue”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“a chariot”</td>
<td>בָּרֵה</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:21)</td>
<td>“to overtake”</td>
<td>בָּדֵר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:6)</td>
<td>“caravaneers”</td>
<td>בָּדֵר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:22)</td>
<td>“to retreat, to overflow”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“to fight”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5:24)</td>
<td>“guild”</td>
<td>בָּדַר</td>
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<td>(5:6)</td>
<td>“to flee from battle, to refuse to assist”</td>
<td>בָּדַר</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:8)</td>
<td>“a recruit”</td>
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<td>(5:29)</td>
<td>“a clairvoyant”</td>
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<td>“to hurry”</td>
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<td>“to make ready”</td>
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<td>(5:10)</td>
<td>“a mule”</td>
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<td>(5:15)</td>
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<td>“to drink”</td>
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<td>“to overpower”</td>
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<td>“to respond”</td>
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<td>“to accompany”</td>
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<td>“to encircle”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:17)</td>
<td>“behold, indeed”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:11)</td>
<td>“a mountain pass”</td>
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<td>(5:16)</td>
<td>“a ravine”</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5:2, 9)</td>
<td>“to summon”</td>
<td>בָּדֵי</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“to overflow”</td>
<td>נפש</td>
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<td>5:16</td>
<td>“a straggler” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>טורח</td>
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<td>5:21</td>
<td>“to seek refuge” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>נינא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:6</td>
<td>“to slay covertly”</td>
<td>נינא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:18</td>
<td>“to swim (underwater)”</td>
<td>טב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:12</td>
<td>“an army, numerous people”</td>
<td>שור</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:12</td>
<td>“to rout”</td>
<td>שור</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:23</td>
<td>“a warrior”</td>
<td>שוריה</td>
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<td>5:29</td>
<td>“to divine” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>נינה</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:22</td>
<td>“embankment” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>עלב</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:31</td>
<td>“marauders” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>פְּלֶשָׁה</td>
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<td>5:7,11</td>
<td>“a warrior” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>פֶּרֶזְוָן</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“to call for heroism”</td>
<td>פִּרְטָה</td>
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<td>“heroine”</td>
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<td>5:30</td>
<td>“to ford a stream”</td>
<td>צָא</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>“small, young”</td>
<td>זָהא</td>
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<td>5:21</td>
<td>“to surge forward”</td>
<td>קָרָם</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:24</td>
<td>“song”</td>
<td>קֵנָה</td>
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<td>5:23</td>
<td>“doomed (to die)”</td>
<td>דָּרוּא</td>
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<td>5:23</td>
<td>“cloudburst” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
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<td>“a storm”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:16</td>
<td>“to look intently”</td>
<td>תִּשְׁמַר</td>
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<td>5:17</td>
<td>“to shatter” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>שְׁמַח</td>
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<td>5:18</td>
<td>“to attack” (Klein, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
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<td>“to proceed”</td>
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<tr>
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<td>“to hasten”</td>
<td>שֶׁמַר</td>
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<td>5:3</td>
<td>“to attack” (BDB, <em>sub voce II</em>)</td>
<td>שִׁמֵּר/שִׁמְרָה</td>
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<td>5:15</td>
<td>“to defeat”</td>
<td>שִׁמֵּר</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:5</td>
<td>“to strengthen” (BDB, <em>sub voce</em>)</td>
<td>שָׁמַר/שַׁמֵּר</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:5</td>
<td>“to soak (with rain)”</td>
<td>שָׁמַר/שַׁמֵּר</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:14</td>
<td>“to hasten”</td>
<td>שֶׁמַר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:31</td>
<td>“to despoil”</td>
<td>שָׁפֵט/שָׁפָט</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:28</td>
<td>“emptiness”</td>
<td>שָׁפֵט/שָׁפָט</td>
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</table>
Out of the 384 total words in the ballad as reconstructed above, 69 words were found which previously went unrecognized as part of this poet’s lexical repertoire, and some of these have different definitions than traditionally understood, though Klein (1987, sub voce) cited 17 of the 69.

Although the defeat of Sisera occurred along the Wadi Kishon, words associated with מַכָּאָבָה מַכָּאָבָה “ravine,” נַפְּלִים “bank,” and מַסֵּה “to ford a stream.” Tradition knew that a flooded wadi was involved, but the language of flooding was lost: דַּעַר “to overtake,” מַרְחַק “to overflow,” וַעֲבוֹר “to surge forward.” Storm rains were involved but translators failed to recognize נֵב “abundant (water),” נֵב “cloudbursts,” נֵב “storm,” and מֻמּוּנָה “to soak (with rain).” The ballad was about fighting charioteers, but most critics missed מַחָר “chariots,” and the language of war, including: מַאֶזֶר “to panic,” מַאֶזֶר “to attack,” מַאֶזֶר “to pursue,” מַאֶזֶר “to retreat,” מַאֶזֶר “to flee from battle, to refuse to assist,” מַאֶזֶר “to conceal,” מַאֶזֶר “to overpower,” מַאֶזֶר “to encircle,” מַאֶזֶר “a straggler,” מַאֶזֶר “to seek refuge,” מַאֶזֶר “an army, troops,” מַאֶזֶר “to rout,” מַאֶזֶר “warrior,” מַאֶזֶר “to defeat” and מַאֶזֶר “to plunder.” Especially noteworthy are מַאֶזֶר II “to fight” and מַאֶזֶר II “to attack,” which were consistently misread as מַאֶזֶר I “to make music” and מַאֶזֶר I “to sing.”

Since מַאֶזֶר and מַאֶזֶר in Judges 5 are not musical terms but words of combat, it appears that Deborah never sang, either as soloist or in a duet with Barak. Instead, in what is now a poetic exhortation, she summoned Barak to fight against Sisera. Her exhortation begins and ends with the imperative בָּרָק “and” and contains some language of the cult. But this does not require a cultic interpretation of Sisera’s assassination or of the battle.

The absence of glosses on the poem’s archaic and rare words suggests that the Song of Deborah was not subjected to repeated pre-Masoretic editorial activity like the prose account in Judges 4. Nevertheless, evidence of Deuteronomistic editorial activity is reflected in the bifurcation of the three-verse Shamgar tradition. Recognition of this editorial reworking permits the reconstruction of the poem into eight balanced sections (see page 240, “The Structure of the Song of Deborah”). The natural divisions of the poem correspond to the transitions and chronological sequence typical of an ancient war ballad.
The structure of the poem is characterized by

1. a chiastic pattern with reference to the number of cola in paired sections I–II and VII–VIII;
2. a balanced number of syllables in sections I and VIII;
3. a near balance of accent units and/or words in the paired sections I–II, III–IV, V–VI, and VII–VIII.

This analysis of the structure differs from those proposed by Boling (1975: 101–105), Stuart (1976: 121–127), and Coogan (1978: 157–158). Stuart, for example, omitted verses 5:1 and 31, deleted 102 consonants plus all MT vowel letters, and added 19 consonants. (The analyses offered by these three scholars are summarized in the chart on page 241, “Alternative Structures.”)

Coogan’s analysis is impressive with its chiastic balance in the number of cola and syllables in the five sections of the poem (as he divided it). Webb (1987: 139–144), with slight modification, adopted Coogan’s analysis. But by following exegetical tradition, neither Coogan nor Webb saw that Deborah’s exhortation was delineated by the incipit and inclusio הָרְשָׁע הָיָה. Thus, 5:9 should be part of stanza I, which changes the neat chiastic pattern of the cola from 22–13–16–13–22 to an irregular 25–10–16–13–22.

One would expect a battle ballad to be as coherent in content as it is cohesive in structure. But Coogan’s cohesive structure is not balanced by a logically coherent narrative. His translation of the poem (see the Appendix) is marked by abrupt transitions from stanza to stanza, and a number of traditional but awkward translations survive even within his stanzas.

Similarly, the translations of Boling and Stuart (also in the Appendix) can be faulted on two accounts unrelated to the issue of textual emendation. First, from 5:2–5:18, the poem’s narrative is illogical and incoherent in contrast to 5:19–5:30, where the story flows logically and easily. Second, the poem’s structure, in spite of efforts to bring it into conformity with acceptable metrical patterns, is imbalanced and incohesive in terms of syllable count and/or word count.
## The Structure of the Song of Deborah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Cola</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Accents</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>III</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
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<td>Strategy &amp; deployment</td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>VI</td>
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<td>Divine response &amp; victory</td>
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<td>VII</td>
<td>5:24-27</td>
<td>Yael's invitation to Sisera</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
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<td>Despair among the Canaanites</td>
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### ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES*

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<th>COOGAN 1978</th>
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<tr>
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<th>EXCLUDE 5:1</th>
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<tr>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>VII</td>
<td>24-27</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Stuart (1976) divide the poem into four parts with the word count for the parts being 131, 59, 54, and 40, respectively.*
V. CONCLUSIONS

In surveying the many complex issues in traditio-historical and form-critical studies on holy war, Jones (1975: 651–653) outlined the formal features of the holy-war schematization imposed more or less by the pre-Deuteronomic or the Deuteronomic editors on earlier holy-war traditions. The eight features included

(1) a statement about oppression and distress in Israel;
(2) the rise of a savior figure to deliver Israel;
(3) the immediate summons of the Israelites to war;
(4) the subsequent enthusiastic response of the people;
(5) the muster and deployment of the troops for battle;
(6) a brief account of the battle;
(7) the enemy’s panic, attributed to Yahweh;
(8) a victory statement, accrediting Yahweh’s intervention as the primary reason for victory.

Since this schematization is now evident in Judges 5, the origin of this framework needs to be reviewed. Since the Deuteronomic editors reworked only the Shamgar component of the original ballad, the Song of Deborah may have been the immediate, if not the ultimate, source of the schematization of the holy-war story. Since this schematization is evidenced long before the Deuteronomic redactors appeared on the scene, their alleged role in imposing this framework on other war narratives is now open to question. The eightfold framework could have been introduced prior to the Deuteronomic redactors, since it was available from the time of the original composition of the Song of Deborah.

The historical accuracy of most events depicted in the poem has been called into question in several studies. For example, Ackroyd (1952: 160–162) appealed to Carrington’s study on King Alfred the Great to demonstrate how fact and fiction are easily mixed in popular traditions. Ackroyd suggested that the Song of Deborah was a popular piece of poetry and included details transferred from other traditions. Similarly, Coogan (1978: 143–144) and Soggin (1981c: 99) appealed to Bowra’s study (1930) of heroic poetry, illustrated by The Song of Roland, to demonstrate that heroic poetry is a poor substitute for history. Halpern (1988: 96), addressing the issue of historical accuracy of the prose stories of Ehud and Deborah (Ju 3–4), stated,
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

However substantial the difference between the sources in Judges 3 and Judges 4, there is one important point of similarity. In neither case is the chief source historiography. Neither is archival. Yet in each case the written version is a historical one. . . . The accuracy of the historian’s representations can with profit be questioned. So can his interpretation of his source. The gists of the reports, however, their logic, their structural coherence, are molded by a concern to reconstruct the past, by antiquarian interest.

While it is true that the author of the Song of Deborah, like the “historian” of Judges 4, was not an eyewitness to the events in Sisera’s court or Yael’s tent—unless the poet was Yael herself—the author seemed knowledgeable about an Israelite defeat of a Canaanite coalition. The poet’s use of formulaic material makes for only tenuous conclusions on historical details, but the poem provides more historical information than has been recognized to date because only “impressionistic” translations were available.

The Israelite attack against Sisera’s coalition apparently commenced with the destruction of Abu Hawam during the first decade of the twelfth century B.C.E. Although this destruction has been commonly attributed to the Philistines, it was more likely a work of Israelites whose strategy was to force the Canaanites to counterattack along the Wadi Kishon. The defeat of Sisera seems to have prompted Ramesses III to return to Galilee where he subdued the q(?)ṣḥbrt, which can be interpreted as “the troops of Teborah/Deborah.”

The poet’s frequent appeal to various aspects of caravaneering is of historical socio-political significance. Conjecture on Israel’s settlement in Canaan needs to address the caravane elements in the poem. Debate limited to conquest versus nomadic infiltration or a peasants’ rebellion can be faulted for overlooking a very reliable tradition about early Israel’s caravaneering activities.²⁶²

²⁶² Note Gottwald’s (1979: 506) assertion that “The generations of biblical interpreters who have believed they saw Israelite caravans in Judges 5:6 were unaccountably oblivious of the categoric premonarchic Israelite rejection of economics and ideology of state-monopolized trade or commercial speculation by professional merchants.” He insisted that the caravaneers mentioned were Canaanite caravaneers who were raided by the Israelites. See Nicholson’s (1986: 16–18, 32) and Schloen’s (1993:23) brief critiques of Gottwald’s use of the Song of Deborah. Note Stager’s study (1988) on the ecology and the social history of early Israel in light of the Song of Deborah. He did not even mention caravaneering, though on the basis of one word, יַעֲדֵה, there is extended discussion on Dan’s alleged maritime activity, and on the basis of יָרָד there is a
Only Schloen (1993) has given serious attention to this evidence and has developed a rather convincing "caravan hypothesis" with reference to early Israel.

Another historically significant element, relevant to the issue of the Israelite amphictyony and the debate over dating "holy-war theory," is the way in which Deborah's call for a militia was expressed in cultic language. Her summons included

(a) the formulaic use of הָרְכִּים יְהֹוָה as the introduction and conclusion to the summons (which may reflect an already established cultic tradition which prompted the poet to use this formula as an incipit and inclusio), like the הָרְכִּים יְהֹוָה in Psalms 146–150;
(b) an affirmation of allegiance to Yahweh, not to the tribes of Israel;
(c) the declaration that she would fight for Yahweh, rather than an affirmation that she would fight for Israel;
(d) a recital of Yahweh's earlier action on behalf of Israel in Trans-Jordan, expressed in the language of theophany;
(e) a promise of Yahweh's intervention and support for the militia;
(f) the use of "the militia of Yahweh" rather than "the militia of Israel."

The debate over which came first, "holy-war theory" or "the practice of Yahweh war," may never be satisfactorily resolved since the Song of Deborah, the oldest full account of such a Yahweh war, has them already inseparably bound. Contrary to Crenshaw's statement (1986: 122), "The poem is therefore an important witness to the absence of any strong sense of a tribal league that required concerted action by all members of the coalition," the fact that the call to arms was restricted to cultic

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discussion about nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists. J. Gray (1988: 427, 445, and 453) gave three one-sentence statements on Zebulon's and Issachar's being porters and hirelings in the (ḥabiru) transport business (and Machir got one sentence on page 443), but he bases this point on Deut 33:19, rather than on the multiple caravan motifs in Judges 4–5 (which he used primarily to provide the tribal names of the sacral community). See above, note 210.

motifs adds support to the hypothesis that an amphictyonic type of relationship was operative at the time among the eleven participants: Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Gilead (on alert), Issachar, Machir, Napthali, Reuben, and Zebulon, with Judah, Levi, and Simeon being conspicuous by their absence—unless de Moor is correct in his reading of 5:13a, where he recovered Yôdâh (= Judah) and Levi (see pages 162–163).

Since ten tribes were mentioned as combatants (plus Gilead’s being “on alert”), Ishida’s (1973: 523–524) proposal to make Israel just a six-tribe league is unlikely. The Midrashic account in Ju 4:10, that only Zebulon and Naphtali were combatants, cannot be regarded as a historically more accurate account than that of Judges 5. In Judges 4, which gives evidence of editorial reworking, the multi-tribe campaign against Sisera was seemingly reduced by Judean editors to a two-tribe campaign to minimize Judah’s non-participation.264 (Even if Judah [Yôdâh] and Levi were in the original poem, as de Moor proposed, they were not recognized by the early Judean editors.) The brevity of the battle account in Ju 4:10, 13–15, in contrast to the multifront campaign depicted in Ju 5:14–23, reflects a similar reduction in the scope of a battle which did not enhance Judah’s reputation.265

Although appearing to be a prose parallel account to the Song of Deborah, Ju 4:1–22 is only a midrash on the poem. Since it is haggadic266 and it reflects, according to钠’an (1990: 426–434), the limitations of an author or redactor who was not acquainted with the geography of northern Israel, the poem in

264 Note Kaufmann’s opinion (1960: 257), “Judah is not mentioned in the song, presumably, because by then it had become subject to the Philistines.” This requires a late date for the battle, conflicting with Joshua 11. Compare钠’an 1990: 426–434. A textual base for selecting Zebulon and Napthali could have come from a misplaced and misread modifying clause after 권에야 נשל תיב התיב in 4:6b, giving the location of Tabor as הובט תיב תיב (scriptio defectiva). Instead of reading this as מטש תיב תיב, the scribes read the words as מטש תיב תיב and transposed them to 4:6c (and then later added them to 4:10 as מטש תיב תיב).

265 See note 104, where the Midrash about Lappidoth makes Deborah the light of Judah and Jerusalem at the expense of the twelve [sic] tribes of Israel.

266 See Sandmel (1961: 105–122) for a discussion on the way haggadic material was added to older traditions in the development of biblical texts.
Judges 5 remains the primary source for details about Israel’s defeat of Sisera’s Canaanite coalition.

Critical opinion that the poem is a composite of independent epic and psalmic units is now no longer compelling. Ackroyd (1952: 160–162) argued that eyewitness accounts of the battle were modified by “poetic glorification of the victors” and these accounts were later modified when the events could no longer be reconstructed. The end result is a poem “which gives no detailed account of the battle but impressions of the circumstances and events which . . . had come to appear significant.”267

To the contrary, the poet could have been a participant in the battle against Sisera (circa 1190 B.C.E.) since the poem may have been composed sometime between the demise of Egyptian hegemony in Palestine after the death of Ramesses III and Gideon’s defeat of the Amalekites, who had so gained control of the hill country of Ephraim that the poet referred to that area by the name Amalek. (If so, the poet was probably not an Ephraimite.)

The translation and interpretation offered in this study calls for the rehabilitation of Shamgar ben-Anat as a true Israelite hero, unencumbered by doubts about his patronym or his alleged loyalties to the goddess Anat. In like manner, Dan and Asher, who have been charged in exegetical tradition with cowardice for not participating in the fight against Sisera, have been rehabilitated. The poet of Judges 5, in fact, praised these two tribes for daring assaults which forced Sisera’s coalition to fight at a time and place of Israelite choosing.

In contrast to Shamgar, Dan, and Asher, “husband” Lappidoth has not fared well in the interpretation presented above. He simply ceased to be, having been transformed into an honorific epithet for Deborah, “the woman of light.” Barak fared better, but he was demoted, so to speak. He is now recognized as having been just a caravan leader—not a military figure—who only reluctantly agreed to become a commanding officer, and apparently only for this single campaign.

Although Deborah and Yael have not suffered in tradition the same marginalization as did Asher, Dan, and Shamgar, their prestige and power as celebrated in the Song of Deborah have not

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267 Lindars (1995: 215) followed this same line of reasoning and argued that the poem was composed sometime in the early monarchy.
been fully appreciated. Although they received recognition as the “Mother in Israel” and the “most blessed of tent-women, the “Lady Governor” and the “Pre-eminent One” have frequently been denied equal recognition with Barak (see Feldman 1986: 122–126). In Heb 11:32, Barak is praised along with Gideon, Samson, and Jephthah, but Deborah and Yael go unmentioned. Unlike the Talmud, which lists Deborah among the judges, the Machsor Vitry (a prayer-book compiled in the eleventh century C.E. by Simhah ben Samuel) lists Barak as a judge along with Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Gideon, and Abimelek (see Hurwitz, 1923: 463), thus displacing Deborah and discounting Ju 4:4, הָרָא שָׁפַלְתָּה אֲתָרְאֵל בִּנְתָּה הָדִיא “she judged Israel at that time.”

Although some commentators have assumed the poet was a male (Buber [1950: 8] wrote of the מַשָּׁרֶד שְׁרֵיָּה מֵרָה, using the masculine noun for the poet and a feminine noun for the poem), either Deborah or Yael could have been the poetess who penned Judges 5. G. A. Smith’s (1912: 30) statement is still relevant when considering either woman to be the poet.

First, in Arabia before the times of Islam, women as well as men were poets . . . Women were frequently spectators of the tribal battles, and since they were more free than the fighters to see the whole action and more able to award praise and blame, it does not surprise us to find from women some of the most vivid ballads of war. This also appears in the early poetry of Israel.

Deborah’s being the author has the support of tradition. Aside from the commentators who have argued for composite sources or a late date, tradition has generally taken for granted that Deborah composed the song that tells her story. This tradition is based on two widely held assumptions: first, that הָרָא שְׁרֵיָּה and used in the poem mean “to sing” (and in my opinion this assumption is now out of tune with the text); and second, that Deborah composed what she sang, as Yee (1993: 111) typically noted, “Judges 5 is Deborah’s own victory song over the Canaanites.” It certainly remains possible that she composed the poem, even if she did not sing it above the battle din. One who was esteemed as the “Mother in Israel,” a prophetess, and a judge could well have had the language skills to compose fine poetry.

But a case can be made for a Kenite origin and possibly Yael’s being the poet. 1 Chron 2:55 traces the מַשָּׁרֶד שְׁרֵיָּה מֵרָה “families of scribes” through the Rechabites to the Kenites of Hammath in Naphtali (Josh 19:32–38). These literate Kenites
worked with words rather than with weapons, with metaphors instead of metals. Surely, some were poets. As a Kenite, Yael could have been as gifted with pen and parchment as she was with peg and hammer.

In establishing the meaning of many of the problematic lines in Ju 3:31 and 4:23–5:31, appeal has been made to Arabic cognates—much as did the rabbis who learned the meaning of rare words from Arabs and servant women (see note 15). The large number of words with an “Arabic” tenor favor a Kenite connection. Yael would have spoken a dialect of the desert. If it was “Hebrew,” it would have been a dialect clearly different from the Hebrew spoken in Ephraim or in Judah. The author’s “Kenite dialect,” unrecognized up to this time, could well account for the problems in understanding the Song of Deborah over the last three millennia. Hebrew which did not conform to the Judean and Samaritan dialects was assumed to be corrupt and/or illogical, requiring all kinds of scribal reconstructions (as evidenced in the myriad of variants in the LXX and the versions) and by the endless scholarly emendations of the MT (as surveyed in this and other studies). The reluctance of some Hebraists “to fish” in the Arabic lexicon (see note 126) has kept many from catching the text’s meaning.

268 Note Crenshaw’s (1986: 121) recognition that Ps 68, Hab 3, and Ju 5 all reflect a “dialect” of Hebrew. Young (1992: 372) noted that the language of Ju 5 was a northern Hebrew dialect, reflecting in part the view of G. A. Smith (1912: 83–84) who earlier argued the poem was in a northern dialect, “flavored with Aramaic” and with “a number of words used in the same sense as in Arabic.” On the Arabic influence, note G. R. Driver’s statement quoted above, pages 133–134. Other problematic dialectal texts which have been clarified by Arabic cognates are the “Words of Agur” in Prov 30:1–9 and the “Words of Lemuel” in Prov 31:1–9. A similar “Kenite” flavor can be detected in the fragment of the Book of the Wars of Yahweh in Num 21:14–15 with its יְהַוֶּה (Waheb), the Arabic/Aramaicتحية “to come” and חַיָּה (חַיָּה) “to water, to moisten, to make (water) to rush forth,” andسوغ/Israeli “to enter easily.”

Kenite influence, rather than Hittite, is more evident in the Song of Deborah.\textsuperscript{269} Aside from Deborah’s name and possibly her title as “Mother,” Hittite influence was quite limited. McMahon’s (1991: 32) following statement is helpful in identifying it.

There is however a certain tendency in many cult texts to associate the [Hittite] Tutelary Deity with the Sun-god(dess) and the Storm-god as a special group of three, either as the first three in a longer list of deities or as a discrete group.

This grouping of the Hittite “big three” may be reflected in the appearance of three heavenly forces in Judges 5: Yahweh as the tutelary deity, the sun (= the Sun-god/Sun-goddess), and the stars (as the heavenly warriors = the storm gods).

However, Kenite influence is more apparent and the poem may contain more fact than fiction, for Yael, although not an eyewitness of the battle along the Wadi Kishon (verses 17–23), certainly knew well what transpired in her tent (which received equal attention in verses 24–30). Her clan’s smiting services could have provided sufficient contact with Sisera’s residence that she was knowledgeable about the inner workings of his court. Moreover, Kenite Yahwism could easily account for Yael’s assassinating Sisera—she sided with fellow Yahwists!\textsuperscript{270}

\textsuperscript{269} Crenshaw’s (1986: 121) assertion that the Song of Deborah “rebuked the Kenites” is puzzling. The assertion of 4:21: יש שלמה ויי מכס מלח חור הוא, is a neutral statement of the obvious: smiths of iron or silver (כינון) who made/repaired weapons and chariots, and/or (re)fashioned silver spoils, must have gotten along well with the military aristocracy who employed them. The Kenites, as (silver) smiths, ought not to be totally dissociated from the silver mentioned in 5:19 and the mention of the goblet in 5:25.

\textsuperscript{270} Bos (1988: 55) concluded, “Yael therefore makes her decision [to slay Sisera] in opposition to her clan.” To the contrary, she did what any Kenite may well have done in a “Yahweh war.” This point was also missed by Matthews (1991: 16, 19) who (reviving A. M. Stuart’s [1887: 308–312] notion that “the true reason [for Sisera’s death] is probably to be sought in Sisera’s entering the tent at all”) argued,

Sisera places himself at risk . . . by violating the hospitality code . . . Sisera was unknowingly a dead man from the moment he entered the area of Jael’s tent and accepted her improper offer of hospitality. He had systematically violated every covenant of the code governing the actions of host and guests.
Although the Israelites may have been only distant relatives, they had become deeply united by religion, so much so that some Kenites became Israelite scribes (as noted above, page 247) and even builders of Jerusalem’s gates in the post-exilic period.\footnote{Although Gottwald (1985: 254) noted that Judges 4 and 5 “are shaped by interests very different from historical reportage . . . [and] the story cannot be trusted to throw direct light on the actual circumstances of the battle as a whole,” there is no reason to insist that the poem had to be written by someone other than an eyewitness or participant along the Kishon or in Yael’s quarters. Although the poem may be non-historiographic, historical details in the poem are as abundant as are its literary motifs. But the one assured tradition—that Judges 5 was the “Song of Deborah”—could be mistaken since this “Yahweh war” ballad could just as well be the “Song of Yael” or a poem composed by some other Kenite. Either way, the poem provides us with an almost perfect text in pre-monarchic Hebrew which retains elements of a Kenite dialectic, as well as foreign words put on the lips of non-Israelites.

Now that the Song of Deborah can be clearly understood—without major emendations—as a literarily cohesive poem, the heroines and heroes come into much sharper focus. While the heroines and heroes come into much sharper focus. While the

excerpts provide us with an almost perfect text in pre-monarchic Hebrew which retains elements of a Kenite dialectic, as well as foreign words put on the lips of non-Israelites.

To the contrary, it was because Sisera and his coalition for decades had systematically violated the הַעֲנִיָּהִים הַעֲנִיָּהִים הַעֲנִיָּהִים “the people of Yahweh” that he had to be stopped. Sisera, whom the poet calls a rapist, was hardly doomed to death for violating the canons of hospitality by entering once a woman’s tent in desperation to save his life. For the הַעֲנִיָּהִים הַעֲנִיָּהִים הַעֲנִיָּהִים, as the militia of Yahweh (which obviously included Yael, as well as Deborah), the protocols of a Yahweh war had superseded the protocols of peacetime hospitality. Sisera was no longer just a potential enemy to be treated with discretion nor a post-battle straggler to be treated with compassion. He was a dangerous fugitive attempting to hide beneath a woman’s skirt. “Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered” (Zec 13:7, Matt 26:31, Mk 14:27) was obviously the operating protocol in war.

\footnote{Note especially I Chron 2:55, “The families also of the scribes that dwelt at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Suaathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab”; and Neh 3:14, “Malchijah the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Bethhaccherem, repaired the Dung Gate; he rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.” [italics mine]}

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poem is complimentary to Shamgar and Barak, as well as to the ten tribe militia, it really acclaims the actions and achievements of Deborah and Yael, pre-eminent women of power in Israel.272

Brenner (1990: 129–138) proposed a triangle or a rhombus as the geometric pattern for understanding Judges 5, but another pattern is required to accommodate all the anti-Sisera forces. The figure that comes to mind—drawn from the Kishon battle-scene itself—is the chariot wheel. Only a pattern as complex as the spoked wheel can accommodate all the Israelite combatants. Yahweh was surely the hub of the militia (as well as at the heart of the poem)273 with Shamgar, Barak, and the ten tribes being the spokes. Around them were the inner and outer rims—Deborah and Yael. They were the “big wheels,” so to speak, who concertedely wielded the deathblow to Israel’s oppressors by outmaneu-vering Sisera—first on the battlefield and then in a tent.

Because the Song of Deborah can now be understood without major emendations, a host of Kenite, Judean and Jewish scribes can be rehabilitated. Far from carelessly transmitting or freely redacting the Song of Deborah (as Cheyne charged [1904], who retained fewer than 800 of the poems’s 1,485 letters), the scribes were almost flawless in conveying a poem which—except for some early Kenite scribes—was not in their native dialect. The accuracy of their transmission of the consonantal text makes it possible to add the Song of Deborah to the list of early Palestinian dialects available for study. The sixty-seven rare lexemes attested in “Deborah’s dialect” can now be added to the well attested lexemes in the standard lexicons of Biblical Hebrew.

272 Note Yee’s (1993: 117) argument with reference to the male author of Judges 4 that:

In creating the character of Jael for his story in Judges 4, our author uses the covert activity of women in war as a strategic entitlement to reinforce negative stereotypes of women in general. Instead of a warrior’s defending her people and her household, Jael becomes at the hands of the male author a temptress, deceiver, and ultimately a castrator.

There is no hint of such stereotyping in Judges 5—since the author was a probably a woman. The reader needs to keep in mind that for the author/editors of Judges 4 and for the poet of Judges 5, the protocols of war rewarded deceptions. Feinting a fainting enemy was fair play and proper protocol.

273 Note Rasmussen’s (1988) conclusion that in the unredacted edition of Judges 4–5, Deborah, not Yahweh, is the real warrior leading men into battle and that her role was shaped after that of Anat in the Canaanite myths.
PLATE I

The 85th name ring on the first pylon of
the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III
at Medinet Habu
PLATE II

The 85th name ring on the first pylon of
the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III
at Medinet Habu
(directly under the arch of the foot)
PLATE III
PLATE IV
From the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.)

PLATE V
From the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.E.)
(See above, p. 185)
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Torczyner, H. See Tur-Sinai, H.


von Rad, G. See Rad, G. von.


Weir, C. J. Mullo. See Mullo Weir, C. J.


Witton-Davies, C. See Buber, 1950.


Cambridge, Massachusetts: American Schools of Oriental Research
Then Deborah sang, with Barak ben-Abinoam, on that day:

With sacrifices of firstlings in Israel,
With freewill-offerings of the people, bless JHVH!

Hear, O ye kings! give ear, O ye sovereigns!
I to JHVH will raise my song,
Will sing to JHVH, Israel's God.

When from the land of Edom Thou marchest,
The earth trembled, the heavens <sway>ed,
The clouds dripped water, the mountains streamed,
At the presence of JHVH, of JHVH, Israel's God.

In the days of Shamgar ben-Anath,
In the days of Jael, caravans ceased,
And solitary travelers took roundabout ways.

Hamlets ceased in Israel, * * ceased,
Till thou didst arise, O Deborah,
Till thou didst arise, a matron in Israel.

No shield was seen, nor spear,
Among forty thousand in Israel;

My heart is with the rulers of Israel;
Ye who offer freely among the people, bless JHVH!

Ye who ride tawny asses,
Sit upon . . and walk in the way, sing!

There they rehearse the victories of JHVH,
The victories of . . . in Israel.
Then marched down to the gates the people of JHVH.

Awake, awake, O Deborah!
Awake, awake, lift up the song!
Arise, Barak! lead captive thy captives, son of Abinoam!

Then Israel marched down like nobles;
The people of JHVH marched down for Him as heroes.

From Machir came truncheon-bearers,
From Zebulun those wielding the muster-master's staff.

And the princes of Issachar with Deborah,
And Naphtali . . Barak,
Into the plain was hurled at his back.
Great were the dissensions in the divisions of Reuben,

16 Why didst thou remain amid ash-heaps,
Listening to pipings at sheep-folds?

17 Gilead sat still, beyond Jordan;
And why does Dan go abroad in ships?
On the shore of the sea tarries Asher,
Sitting still by his places for landing.

18 But Zebulun and Nephtali were tribes
That recked not of life on the battle-field's heights.

19 Kings came and fought;
Then fought the Kings of Canaan,
At Taanach, by the streams of Megiddo.
Gain of silver they took not!

20 From heaven itself fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.

21 The stream of Kishon swept them away,
The . . . stream, the stream of Kishon.

22 Then were battered the hoofs of his horses,
By the galloping of his chargers.

23 Curse Meroz, says the Messenger of JHVH,
Curse its inhabitants bitterly!
Because they came not to the aid of JHVH,
To the aid of JHVH like heroes.

24 Blessed above all women is Jael,
Above all women in tents is she blessed!

25 Water he asked, milk she gave;
Curds in a mighty bowl did she bring him.

26 Her hand she puts forth to the pin,
Her right hand to the . . . .
And smites, crushes his head,
Shatters, pierces his temple.

27 At her feet he sank down, he fell, he lay;
Where he sank he lay, of life bereft.

28 Through the window peered and . .
The mother of Sisera through the lattice:
"Why are his chariots so long in coming?
Why tarries the tramping of his horses?"

29 The wisest of her princesses reply,
Yea, she answers her words herself:

30 "They must be finding, dividing the spoil,
A wench or two for each man,
Booty of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
A piece of embroidery or two for the neck of . . .”

31 So perish Thine enemies all, O JHVH!
But be Thy friends as the sun when he rises in power.
Translation of T. K. Cheyne²⁷⁴

Oxford University  
1904  
Critica Biblica

1.

2. For the crushing of Zarephath in Ishmael,  
   For the disaster to the Arabians in Jerahmeel,  
3b. I, to Yahwè will I sing, I will chant to Israel’s God.  
4. Yahwè! when thou wentest forth from Asshur,  
   When thou marchedst from the highland of Aram,  
   The earth quaked, yea, the heavens  
   Yea, the clouds dripped water;  
5. The mountains streamed before Yahwè,  
   Before Yah, the God of Israel.  
6. In the days of the Geshurites and the Anakites,  
   In the days of Ishmael and Cusham,  
   Those who fared on the ways trembled,  
   They went by crooked paths.  
7. Potentates trembled in Israel  
   At the sword of Jerahmeel and the Ashhurites.  
   King and princes shuddered  
   At the host of Jerahmeel and the Arabians.  
11. Loudly praise ye the righteous acts of Yahwè,  
   His righteous, gracious acts in Israel.  
12. March on, march on Daberath;  
    March on, march on into Asshur.  
    Arise, Barak, and take captives,  
    Subdue the sons of Arabia.  
13. Then they came down to the Asshurites,  
    Yahwè’s force came down into Arabia;  
14. Out of Ephraim [came down] princes,  
    After him Benjamin from Maacath;  
    Out of Machir came down marshals,  
    And out of Zebulun wielders of the mace;  
15. And Ischar was in Daberath’s force,  
    And the warriors of Caslah among his great ones.

²⁷⁴ Cheyne retained fewer than 800 of the 1,485 letters of Judges 5. Even those he kept he often reworked, e.g., MT שְׁמַמַּה became שְׁמַמַּה.
(But) in Pelesheth of Reuben
The great ones searched out the heart.

16. Why didst thou tarry among the Zephathites,
To hear the hissing of the Arabians?

17. Gad dwelt in Arabia,
And Dan sojourned with Ethan.
Asher tarried by Rehob,
And dwelt by those in Zarephath.

18. Zebulun was a people that defied Ishmael,
And Naphtali, in the highland of Jerahmeel.

19. The kings came—they fought,
At Beth-anak by Migdol’s waters,
The host of Cushan and Jerahmeel,

20. Ishmael and the folk of Asshur;
22. The Asshurites were panic-stricken, they perished.
In the stream of Cushan were their corpses.

23. Curse ye Misor of Jerahmeel,
Say a curse upon its inhabitants,
Because they came not to the help of Yah,
to the help of Yah in Arabia.

24. Blessed above women be Jael,
Blessed above women in the tent.
25. Milk of the goats she gave,
Sour milk she presented in a bowl
26. Her hand—she stretched it forth to a club,
her right hand to a staff of Jerahmeel.
She struck Asshur on his head,
She shattered and pierced his temples.

27. At her feet he sank down,
As the wicked, Asshur fell!

28. In the city of Holon she now enchantments, [sic]
Asshur’s mother in the city of Cushan;
‘Why fails his chariot?’
(Why) linger the steps of his chariot-horses’?

29. The wise men of her sanctuary divine;
‘Surely he shall bring back Jerahmeel.

30. Shall not Jerahmeel be strong,
(Yea) prevail over the host of Israel?

31. Perish all the foes of Jerahmeel!
Be his friends as the going forth of the sun!’
Translation of G. A. Smith
(1910 Schweich Lectures)
*The Early Poetry of Israel in Its
Physical and Social Origins*

1. Then sang Deborah and Barak ben-Abinoam on that day saying:

2. That leaders took lead in Israel,
That the people were willing,
Bless ye the Lord!

3. Hearken, O Kings,
Rulers give ear,
I to the Lord,
I am to sing,
I hymn the Lord,
God of Israel.

4. Lord at thy start from Seir,
On thy march from the mount of Edom,
Earth did quake,
Heaven was swaying (?)
The clouds poured water,

5. The mountains streamed,
Before the Lord,
God of Israel.

6. In the days of Shamgar [ben-Anath]
Caravans ceased;
Who would be wayfaring
Fared by the byways.

7. Ceased had order (?),
Till I rose, Deborah,
rose mother in Israel.

8. Sacrifice ceased (?)
Barley-bread failed (?)
Was shield seen or lance,
In the forty thousands of Israel?

9. My heart to the leaders in Israel,
To the willing of the people!
Bless ye the Lord!

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Smith’s diacritical marks have been omitted.
10. Riding roan asses,  
    Sitting on carpets (?),
    Walking the highway—sing (?) them!

11. Hark the huzzahing (?)
    Where the herds water.  
    There they are telling the faith of the Lord,  
    Faith of His rule in Israel.

12. Rouse thee, rouse thee, Deborah,  
    Rouse thee, [rouse thee,] deliver the song!  
    Arise, Barak,  
    Capture thy captors, ben-Abinoam!

11c. [Then down to the gates came the Lord’s folk.]

13. Then came down the rest of the great ones,  
    Down to the Lord came His folk with the brave ones,

14. Out of Ephraim they tore (?) to the valley,  
    After thee, Benjamin, with thy clans!  
    Out of Makhir came down commanders  
    And from Zebulun the drawers of batons,

15. Naphtali’s (?) lords with Deborah,  
    As Issakhar so was Barak,—  
    Into the valley shot at his heels!

    In the septs of Reuben great the heart-searchings!

16. Why satest thou still, the wattles between!
    to list to them whistling the flocks?  
    In the septs of Reuben great the heart-searchings!

17. Gilead stayed at home over Jordan  
    And Dan—why a truant on ships?  
    Asher sat down on the shore of the sea,  
    And stayed by his creeks,

18. Zebulun—the tribe spurned life to death,  
    With Naphtali on the heights of the range,

19. Kings came, they fought,  
    Fought the kings of Kena’an,  
    At Ta‘nak on the streams of Megiddo.  
    Not a silver-bit took they!

20. From heaven fought the stars,  
    From their courses they fought with Sisera.

21. Then thudded the hoofs of the horses,  
    Plunge upon plunge of his stallions.

22. Torrent Kishon swept them away,  
    Onrushing (?) torrent, torrent Kishon.  
    Forward, my soul, in strength!
23. Curse ye Meroz, saith the Lord [His angel]
   Cursing, curse ye herburghers!
   For never came they to the help of the Lord,
   To the help of the Lord with the brave ones.

24. Blessed above women Ya`el,
   Above women in tents be she blessed!

25. Water he craved, milk she gave,
    In a dish for lords she brought him curd.

26. Her hand to the peg she put,
    Her right hand to the workman’s hammer,
    And Sisera she hammered, she shattered his head,
    She smashed, she hacked through his temples,

27. Between her feet he bent, he fell,
    Where he bent there he fell—undone!

28. Out of the window she leans, she whines,
    Sisera his mother thorough [sic] the lattice:
    ‘Why are his chariots shy to come?
    Wherefore tarry the beats of his car?’

29. Warily answer to her ladies,
    Yea, she returns her words to herself:

30. ‘Are they not finding, dividing the spoil?
    A wench, two wenches a head for the men,
    Booty of dyes for Sisera,
    Booty of dyes with brocade,
    Dyes, double brocade, for my neck the spoil!’

31. [So perish, O Lord, all Thy foes,
    But thy lovers! like the rise of the sun in his power].
Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abino'am on that day, saying,

(When long locks of hair were worn loose in Israel; when the people volunteered.)

Bless ye Yahweh!

Attend, ye kings; give ear, ye rulers: I — to Yahweh I will sing,
Will make melody to Yahweh, the God of Israel.

Yahweh, in thy progress from Se'ir,
In thy march from the field of Edom,
Earth quaked, yea, heaven rocked,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.

The mountains shook before Yahweh,
Before Yahweh, the God of Israel.

From the days of Shamgar ben-Anath,
From the days of old, caravans ceased.
And they that went along the ways used to walk by crooked paths.

Villages ceased in Israel;
. . . . . . . ceased;
Till thou didst arise, Deborah,
Didst arise as a mother in Israel.

Armourers had they none;
Armed men failed the city:
Was there seen a shield or a lance
Among forty thousand in Israel?

Awake, awake Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing paean!
Rise up, Barak, and lead captive
Thy captors, O son of Abino'am!
Come, ye commanders of Israel!

Ye that volunteered among the people, bless ye Yahweh!

Let the riders on tawny she-asses review it,
And let the wayfarers recall it to mind!

Hark to the maidens laughing at the wells!
There they recount the righteous acts of Yahweh,
The righteous acts of his arm in Israel.

Then down to the gates gat the nobles;
Yahweh’s folk gat them down mid the heroes.
From Ephraim they spread out on the vale;  
‘After thee, Benjamin!’ mid thy clansmen
14. From Machir came down the commanders,  
And from Zebulun men wielding the truncheon.
15. And thy princes, Issachar, were with Deborah;  
And Naphtali was near to Barak;  
To the vale he was loosed at his heel.

Utterly reft into factions was Re‘uben  
Great were his searchings of heart.
16. Why sat’st thou still amid the folds,  
To hear the pastoral pipings?
17. Gile‘ad beyond the Jordan dwelt,  
And Dan abideth by the ships.  
Asher sat still by the shore of the seas,  
Dwelling beside his creeks.
18. Zebulun is the folk that scorned its life to death,  
and Naphtali on the heights of the field.

19. On came the kings, they fought;  
Then fought the kings of Canaan;  
In Ta‘anach, by the rills of Megiddo;  
The gain of money they took not.
20. From heaven fought the stars;  
From their highways they fought with Sisera.
21. The torrent Kishon swept them off;  
It faced them, the torrent Kishon.  
Bless thou, my soul, the might of Yahweh!

22. Then loud beat the hoofs of the horses;  
Off galloped, off galloped his chargers.

23. Curse ye, curse ye Meroz!  
Curse ye, curse ye her towns-folk!  
For they came not to the help of Yahweh,  
To the help of Yahweh mid the heroes.
24. Most blessed of women be Ja’el,  
    Of tent-dwelling women most blessed!

25. Water he asked; milk she gave;  
    In a lordly dish she proffered curds.

26. Her hand to the peg she put forth,  
    And her right to the maul of the workmen;  
    And she smote Sisera—destroyed his head,  
    Shattered and pierced through his temples.

27. 'Twixt her feet he bowed, he fell down, he lay prone;  
    'Twixt her feet he bowed, he fell down.  
    Where he bowed, there he fell down undone.

28. Out through the window she leaned and exclaimed,  
    The mother of Sisera out through the lattice:  
    'Wherefore delayeth his car to come?  
    Wherefore tarrieth the clatter of his chariots?'

29. Her wisest princesses make answer,  
    Yea, she returneth her reply:

30. 'Are they not finding—dividing the spoil?  
    A damsel—two damsels for every man:  
    A spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,  
    A spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered;  
    Two dyed embroideries for the neck of the queen.’

31. So perish all thy foes, Yahweh:  
    But be thy friends like the sun going forth in his might.

32. And the land had rest forty years.
When locks were long in Israel
When the folk responded—praise Yah!

Hear, O Kings, Give ear, O princes,
For I to Yahweh, Even I will sing,
I will sing to Yahweh, Unto Israel’s God.

Yahweh, when thou rosest from Seir,
When thou marchedst from Edom’s land,
The earth was quaking, The heavens shaking,
The mountains rocking Before Yahweh’s face,
Before the face of Yahweh, Israel’s God.

In the days of Shamgar ben Anath,
In his days the caravans ceased,
The wayfaring men Followed crooked paths
The yeomanry ceased, In Israel it ceased,
Till thou roseth, O Deborah, As mother-city in Israel.

O riders on tawny asses,
O wayfaring men, attend!
To the sound of the cymbals, Between the drums,
There they will recite The triumphs of Yahweh,
The triumphs of his yeoman In Israel they will tell.

Awake, awake, O Deborah!
Awake, Awake, sing a song:
“Arise, take thy captives, Abinoam’s son,
For then the survivor Will rule the haughty,
The people of Yahweh Will rule the mighty.”

O Ephraim, storm, storm into the valley—
After thee come Benjamin’s clans!
From Machir’s folk Come down the captains,
From Zebulon those who wield The staff of the marshal,
While Deborah’s folk Sends footmen into the valley.

Why does (Gad) dwell on dung-heaps
Harking to pastoral pipings?
In the vales of Reuben The chiefs are faint-hearted,
While Gilead dwells Beyond the Jordan.
And why does Dan Become attached to ships?
VIII Asher dwells on the shore of the sea
And settles on its harbours—
But Zebulon is a people
And Naphtali, too—
Which dared to die—
On the heights of the plain.

IX There came the kings and fought,
They fought, the kings of Canaan.
They fought at Taanach,
No silver they won
For the stars from heaven
At Megiddo’s waters;
From their campaign,
Fought against Sisera.

X Kishon’s torrent swept them away,
An impetuous torrent becoming:
In the Kishon were trampled
For the hoofs of their horses
Rearing, plunging,
His living warriors,
Struck them down,
They struck down his strong men.

XI Curse ye Merom, saith — — —
For they would not come
to the help of Yahweh,
Eternally curse ye its people,
To the help of Yahweh,
Sending their warriors.

XII Blessed above women is Jael,
Above women in tents is she blest.
Water he asked
In a lordly bowl
She gave him milk,
She brought him cream.

XIII One hand she put to the tent-pin
Her right to the workman’s mallet;
She struck down Sisera
At her feet he bowed,
At her feet he bowed,
She crushed his head,
He fell, he lay,
He fell outstretched.

XIV Out from the window she looked
And wailed Sisera’s mother:
“Why does his chariot
Tarried in coming?
Why linger the hoofs
Of his chariot-steads?”

XV The wisest of her women replies—
She, too, echoes her words:
Are they not finding
A maiden or two
Dyed work for Sisera
And dividing the spoil?—
As spoil for each warrior,
Dyed and embroidered.

Thus may all perish
While Thy friends be as the rise
Of Thy foes, Yahweh,
Of the sun in his strength.
L. Pirot and A. Clamer

La Sainte Bible: Text Latin et traduction Française

1949

1 Cecineruntque Debbora et Barac filius Abinoem, in illo die, dicentes:

2 Qui sponte obtulistis de Israel
  animas vestras ad periculum,
  benedicite Domino.

3 Audite, reges; auribus percipite, principes:
  Ego sum, ego sum quae Dominio canam,
  psallam Dominito Deo Israel.

4 Domine, cum exires de Seir,
  et transires per regiones Edom,
  terra mota est,
  caelique ac nubes distillaverunt aquis.

5 Montes fluxerunt a facie Domini,
  et Sinai a facie Domini Dei Israel.

6 In diebus Samgar, filii Anath,
  in diebus Jahel, quieverunt semitae;
  et qui ingrediebantur per eas,
  ambulaverunt per calles devois.

7 Cessaverunt fortes in Israel, et quieverunt,
  donec surgeret Debbora,
  surgeret mater in Israel.

8 Nova bella elegit Dominus,
  et portas hostium ipse subvertit;
  clypeus et hasta si apparuerint
  in quadraginta millibus Israel.

9 Cor meum diligit principes Israel.
  Qui propria voluntate obtulistis vos discrimini,
  benedicite Domino.

10 Qui ascenditis super nitentes asinos,
  et sedetis in judicio,
  et ambulatis in via, loquimini.

11 Ubi collisi sunt currus,
  et hostium suffocatus est exercitus,
  ibi narrentur justitiae Domini
  et clementia in fortes Israel.

Tunc descendit populus Domini ad portas,
  et obtinuit principatum.

12 Surge, surge, Debbora;
  surge, surge, et loquere canticum;
  surge, Barac, et apprehende captivos tuos,
  fili Abinoem.

13 Salvatae sunt reliquia populi;
  Dominus in fortibus dimicavit.
14
Ex Ephraim delevit eos in Amalec,
et post eum ex Benjamin in populos tuos, o Amalec;
de Machir principes descendenterunt,
et de Zabulon qui exercitum ducerent ad bellandum.

15
Duces Issachar fuere cum Debbora,
et Barac vestigia sunt secuti,
qui quasi in praecipus ac barathrum
se discrimini dedit.
Diviso contra se Ruben,
magnanimorum reperta est contentio.

16
Quare habitas inter duos terminos,
ut audias sibilos gregum?
Diviso contra se Ruben,
magnanimorum reperta est contentio.

17
Galaad trans Jordanem quiescat,
et Dan vacabit navibus;
Aser habitabit in littore maris,
et in portibus morabatur.

18
Zabulon vero et Nephthali
obtulerunt animas suas morti
in regione Merome.

19
Venerunt reges et pugnaverunt,
pugnaverunt reges Chanaan in Thanach
juxta aquas Mageddo,
et tamen nihil tulere praedantes.

20
De caelo dimicatum est contra eos:
stellae manentes in ordine et cursu suo,
adversus Sisaram pugnaverunt.

21
Torrens Cison traxit cadavera eorum,
torrens Cadumim, torrens Cison.
Conculca, anima mea, robustos!

22
Ungulae equorum ceciderunt, fugientibus impetus,
et per praecipus ruentibus fortissimis hostium.

23
Maleficite terrae Meroz, dixit angelus Domini;
maleficite habitatoribus ejus,
quia non venerunt ad auxilium Domini,
in adjutorium fortissimorum ejus.

24
Benedicta inter mulieres Jahel, uxor Haber, Cinaei,
et benedicatur in tabernaculo suo.

25
Aquam petenti lac dedit,
et in phiala principum obtulit butyrum.

26
Sinistrum manum misit ad clavum,
et dexteram ad fabrorum malleos,
percussitque Sisaram,
quaerens in capite vulneri locum,
et tempus valide perforans.

27 Inter pedes ejus ruit, defect, et mortuus est;
volvebatur ante pedes ejus.
et jacebat examinis et miserabilis.

28 Per fenestram respicens, ululabat mater ejus,
et de coenaculo loquebatur: Cur moratur regredi currus ejus?
Quare tardaverunt pedes quadrigarum illius?

29 Una sapientior ceteris uxoribus ejus,
haec soeni verba respondit: Forsitan nunc dividit spolia,
et pulcherrima feminarum eligitur ei;
veste diversorum colorum Sisarae traduntur in praedam,
et supellex varia ad ornanda colla congeritur.

30 Sic pereant omnes inimici tui, Domine; qui autem diligunt te,
sicut sol in ortu suo splendet, ita rutilent.

31 Quievitque terra per quadraginta annos.
H. W. Hertzberg

Die Bücher Joshua, Richter, Ruth

1953

1 Da sang Debora — auch Barak, Abinoams Sohn — zu jener Zeit also:
2 Daß Führer führten in Israel,
   das Volk sich willig erwies: Preiset Jahwe!
3 Hört es, ihr Könige,
   horcht auf, ihr Fürsten:
   Ich will (dem) Jahwe,
   ich will (ihm) singen,
   will spielen Jahwe,
   Israel Gott!
4 Jahwe, da du auszogst von Seir,
   einherschrittst von Edoms Gefild,
   da bebte die Erde, die Himmel troffen,
   ja die Wolken troffen von Wasser,
5 die Berge zerrannen vor Jahwe — das ist der Sinai —,
   vor Jahwe, Israels Gott.
6 In Samgaras Tagen, des Anath-Sohns,
   in Jaels Tagen lagen still die „Karawanen“;
   die auf Wegen zu gehen hatten,
   müßten krumme Pfade gehen.
7 Still wars bei den Bauren in Israel,
   „alles Leben“ lag still —
   bis daß du aufstandest, Debora,
   aufstandest als Mutter in Israel.
8 „Stumm waren die Krieger‘ Gottes,
   „zu Ende‘ Der Kampf vor Den „Toren“,‘
   kein Schild zu sehen noch Lanze
   bei vierzigtausend in Israel.
9 Den Gebietenden Israel (schlägt) mein Herz,
   (und) die sich willing erwiesen im Volk: preiset Jahwe!
10 Die ihr reitet auf weißen Eselinnen,
   die ihr sitzet auf Teppichen
   und geht auf der Straße: bedenkt es wohl!
11 Dort, wo die Hirten (?) rufen
   zwischen den Schöpfrinnen,
   dort besinge man Jahwes Heilstaten,
   die Heilstaten an seinen Bauern (?) in Israel,”
12 Mach dich auf, mach dich auf, Debora!
   Mach dich auf, mach dich auf (und) sage (dein) Lied!
Erhebe dich, Barak,
und fang, 'die dich fingen',
du Sohn Abinoams!

13 Da 'zog' herab, was entronnen war, zu (den) Edlen,
Jahwes Bolk 'zog' herab zu 'ihm' unter den Helden.

14 Von Ephraim 'zogen sie zu Tal',
Benjamin dir nach unter deinen Scharen,
von Makir zogen Gebieter herab,
und von Sebulon, die den Amtmannsstab tragen.
15 Und 'die' Fürsten in Issakar (zieben) mit Debora,
wie Issakar, so , Naphthai mit' Barak,
zu Tal gelassen, hinter ihm drein.

An Rubens Bächen
sind groß die 'Beratungen'.

16 Was sitst du da zwischen den Hirten
zu hören bei den Herden das Flöten?
'An' Rubens Bächen
sind groß die Beratungen!
17 Gilead bleibt jenseits des Jordan wohnen,
und warum geht Dan auf Schiffe hinaus?
Asser blieb sitzen am Ufer der Meere
und wohnt an seinen Buchten.
18 Sebulon ist ein Volk voller Todesverachtung,
und Naphthai: auf hohem Gefild!
19 Es kamen Könige, kämpften,
Damals kämpften Kanaans Könige,
zu Thaanak an Den Wassern Megiddos —
Beute an Silber holten sie nicht.

20 Vom Himmel her kämpften die Sterne,
von ihren Bahnen sie kämpften mit Sisera.
21 Der Bach Kischon riß sie hinweg,
der uralte Bach, der BachKischon —
triff auf, meine Seele, mit Macht!
22 Da stampften die hufe ,der Rosse'
Galopp, Galopp seiner Renner!
23 Fluchet Meros, sprach Jahwes Engel,
mit Flüchen fluchet seinen Bewohnern!
Denn nicht sind sie Jahwe zur Hife gekommen,
Jahwe zu Hife unter den Helden.
24 Gesegnet fei Jael unter den Weibern
— das Weib Chebers, des Keniters -
vor den Weibern im Zelt sei sie gesegnet!
Um Wafser bat er, Milch aber gab sie,
in der Schale der Edlen brachte sie Rahm.

Ihre hand, sie 'streckt sie' aus nach dem Pflock,
 ihre Rechte nach dem Arbeitshammer,
 zerhämmerte — Sisera —, zerschlug sein Haupt,
 zerschmettert', Durchbohrt' ihm die Schläfe.

Ihr zu Füßen sank er, fiel (und) lag da,
ihr zu Füßen sank er (und) fiel;
da, wo er hinsank,
da lag er, erschlagen.

Durch das Fenster beugt' sich, er spähte'
Siseras Mutter durchs Gitterwerk:
"Warum zögert sein Wagen zu kommen,
warum verzieht seiner Kampfwagen Rollen?"

Die 'Klügste' ihrer Fürstinnen gibt ihr Antwort,
und sie wiederholt sich selbst deren Worte:
"Gewiss, sie finden, sie teilen Beute,
ein, zwei Weiber für jeden Mann,
Beute an Tüchern für Sisera,
Beute an Tüchern, buntgewirkt,
ein, zwei bunte Tücher
als Beute für 'meinen hals'."

Mögen so umkommen all Deine Feinde, Jahwe!
Aber, die ihn lieben, mögen sein,
wie die Sonne aufgeht in ihrer Krast!
Da hatte das Land 40 Jahre Ruhe.
Deborah and Baraq ben Abinoam sang on that day!

When they cast off restraint in Israel
When the troops presented themselves—bless Yahweh!

Hear, O kings
Listen, O princes
I to Yahweh
I, I will sing
I will chant to Yahweh
God of Israel!

O Yahweh, when you came out from Seir
When you marched here from Edom’s land
Earth quaked
With thunder the skies rained
With thunder the clouds rained water!

Mountains shook
Before Yahweh, The One of Sinai
Before Yahweh, God of Israel!

In the days of Shamgar the Anathite
In the days of Jael, they ceased
The caravans and the wayfaring men
Who travelled the winding roads.

The warriors grew plump
In Israel they grew plump again
Because you arose, O Deborah
Because you arose, a mother in Israel!

One chose new gods
Then they fought in the gates.
Neither shield or spear was to be seen
Among the forty contingents in Israel.

My heart is with the commanders of Israel
Those presenting themselves with the troops—Bless Yahweh!

O riders on tawny she-donkeys
O you who sit on the judgment seat
O wayfarers on the road

Attend to the sound of cymbals
Between watering troughs
There let them retell Yahweh’s victories
Victories by his own prowess in Israel!
Then Yahweh’s troops went down to the gates

12 Awake, Awake, Deborah
Awake, Awake. Sing a song!
Arise, Baraq
Take prisoners
O ben Abinoam!
12 Then the survivors went down to the nobles
Yahweh’s troops went down against the knights for me!

(Part III)

14 Those of Ephraim have taken root in Amaleq
Behind you, Benjamin, with your troops.
From Machir commanders came down
From Zebulun, bearers of the ruler’s scepter.
15 Issachar’s captains were with Deborah
Issachar was Baraq’s support
Dispatched to the plain, under his command.
In Reuben’s divisions are command-minded chieftains.
16 Why then do you squat between hearths
Harking to pastoral pipings?
To Reuben’s divisions belong fainthearted chieftains!

(Part IV)

17 Gilead bivouacked beyond Jordan
Why did Dan take service on ships?
Asher squatted at the seashore
He bivouacked by his harbors!
18 Zebulun is a troop
That scorned death
Napthali too
On the heights of the plain!
19 The kings came and fought
Then fought the kings of Canaan
At Taanach by Megiddo’s stream
Silver booty they did not take.
From the heavens fought the stars
From their courses they fought against Sisera!

(Part V)

21 The Wadi Qishon swept them away
The Wadi overwhelmed them—the Wadi Qishon
(You shall trample the throat of the mighty).
22 Then the horses’ hoofs pounded
His stallions racing, racing!
(Part VI)

23 “Oh, curse Meroz!” says the divine adviser
   “Utterly curse its inhabitants!”
   For they did not come to Yahweh’s aid
   To Yahweh’s aid, with knights.

(Part VII)

24 Most blessed among women is Jael
   The wife of Heber the Kenite
   Among women in tents she’s most blessed!
25 Water he asked
   Milk she gave
   In a lordly bowl
   She brought cream.
26 With her left hand she reached for a tent peg
   With her right hand for the workman’s mallet
   She pounded Sisera
   She broke his head
   She struck and pierced his neck!
27 At her feet he slumped. He fell. He sprawled.
   At her feet he slumped. He fell.
   At the place where he slumped, there he fell. Slain!

(Part VIII)

28 From the window she looked down and wailed
   Sisera’s mother, that is, from the lattice:
   Why tarries
   His chariot’s arrival?
   Why so late
   The sound of his chariotry?
29 The wisest of her captains’ ladies answers her
   Indeed, she returns her own words to her:
30 Are they not looting
   Dividing the spoil?
   One or two girls for each man
   Spoil of dyed cloth for Sisera
   Spoil of dyed cloth, embroidered
   Two pieces of dyed embroidery
   For the neck of the spoiler.

(Part IX)

31 Thus may they perish
   All enemies of Yahweh!
   Let his lovers be
   Like the sunburst in full strength!
   And the land was calm, for forty years.
1. . . .

2. When locks were long in Israel,
   When volunteered the people, the consecrated of Yahweh.

3. Hear, O Kings,
   Give ear, O princes,
   I to Yahweh,
   Even I will sing.
   I will sing to Yahweh
   The God of Israel.

4. Yahweh, when you went forth from Seir,
   When you marched from Edom’s field,
   The earth trembled,
   Even the heavens dripped;
   The clouds dripped,

5. The mountains quaked
   Before Yahweh
   Before the One of Sinai,
   Before Yahweh
   The God of Israel.

6. In the days of Shamgar,
   In the days of Jael,
   The travellers ceased,
   Those who walk the roads,
   The twisting paths.

7. The peasantry ceased in Israel,
   It ceased until you arose, Deborah,
   Until you arose, a mother in Israel.

8. They chose new chiefs
   Indeed they took for themselves champions.
   Was not spear and shield to be seen
   Among forty thousand in Israel?

9. My heart is with the commanders of Israel
   Who volunteered, the consecrated of Yahweh,
10. Riding upon tawny asses.
10 b, c. .................
11. .................
12. Awake, awake, Deborah
   Awake, utter a song!
   Arise, Barak, and capture your captors, son of Abinoam!
13. Then bring them down, O mighty ones,
    Let the host of Yahweh come down, O warriors!

Part II

14. From Ephraim bring them down into the valley;
    After you, Benjamin, among your kinsmen.
    From Machir descended the commandery,
    From Zebulun those who wield the marshall’s staff.
15. The princes of Issachar were with Deborah,
    And Issachar, faithful to Barak,
    In the valley rushed at his heels.
    In the clans of Reuben
    Great are the commanders.
16. Indeed you dwell among the sheepfolds
    To hear the piping of the flocks.
    .................
17. Gilead tents across the Jordan;
    Dan indeed sojourns on ships.
    Asher dwells at the seashore
    And by its inlets he encamps.
18. Zebulun is a people who scorned its life to die;
    Naphtali mounted the heights of the field.

Part III

19. The kings came, they fought,
    They fought, the kings of Canaan,
    At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.
    Spoil of silver they did not take,
    .................
20. From the heavens the stars fought,
    From their stations, with Sisera.
21. Wadi Kishon swept them away,
    Wadi Kishon overwhelmed them.
    His mighty chargers pounded
Part IV

22. Yes, hammered the hoofs of the horses,
    Raced chariot-races his stallions.
23. Bitterly curse Meroz
    Bitterly curse her inhabitant [sic]

For they came not to Yahweh’s aid,
To Yahweh’s aid with warriors.

Part IV

24. Blessed above women be Jael,
    Above women of the tent let her be blessed.
25. Water he asked,
    Milk she gave;
    In a majestic bowl
    She brought ghee.
26. Her hand to a tent-pin she put,
    Her right hand to a workmen’s wedge.
    She smote Sisera,
    She smashed his head;
    She struck Sisera,
    She pierced his temple.
27. At her feet he sank, he lay down flat,
    At her feet he sank, he fell down.
    There he sank, he fell down slain.

Part V

28. Through a window peered Sisera’s mother,
    Sisera’s mother cried out through a lattice.
    Why tarries
    His chariotry in coming?
    Why delay
    The hoofs of his chariot-(horses)?
29. The wisest of her ladies answers her,
    Yes, she returns words to her.
30. Have they not found,
    Divided the booty?
    A maid, or two for each warrior.
    Booty of dyed cloth for Sisera,
    Booty of dyed clothes, embroidered,
    A dyed cloth, embroidered, for the neck.
In the very beginning
in Israel
when the people volunteered—
bless Yahweh!
Listen, kings,
give ear, princes,
I to Yahweh,
I will sing,
I will chant to Yahweh
God of Israel.
Yahweh, when you set out from Seir,
when you marched from the steppe of Edom,
the earth quaked,
and the heavens shook,
and the clouds shook water;
the mountains shuddered
before Yahweh, the one of Sinai
before Yahweh, the God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, son of Anat,
in the days of Jael— they ceased:
the caravans and those who go on paths
went on winding tracks.
Warriors ceased,
in Israel they ceased—
until you arose, Deborah,
'til you arose, a mother in Israel.
New gods were chosen,
then they fought at the gates:
neither shield was to be seen nor spear
among forty thousand in Israel.
II

My heart is with the officers of Israel,  
the volunteers among the people—  
bless Yahweh!  
You riders on tawny asses—  
you who sit over Midian  
and you who go on the road—  
sing out!  
At the sound of the cymbals,  
between the water holes,  
there they recited the victories of Yahweh,  
the victories of his warriors in Israel.  
Then the people of Yahweh  
went down to the gates.  
“Awake, awake, Deborah,  
awake, awake, sing a song!”  
“Arise, Barak,  
and capture your captives,  
son of Abinoam!”  
Then the fugitive ruled the mighty ones,  
the people of Yahweh ruled the warriors.

III

From Ephraim, who took root in Amalek,  
“after you, Benjamin, with your people,”  
from Machir, the officers went down,  
and from Zebulon,  
leading with a marshall’s baton.  
And the princes in Issachar were with Deborah,  
Issachar too was loyal to Barak:  
in the valley they were sent at his feet.  
In the divisions of Reuben,  
great were the searchings of heart.  
“Why do you sit among the camp fires,  
listening to the pipings for the flocks?”  
In the divisions of Reuben,  
great were the scrutinies of heart.  
Gilead stayed camped across the Jordan,  
and Dan: why did he serve on ships?  
Asher lived on the seacoast,  
and on its inlets he stayed camped.  
Zebulon was a people which scorned  
its life to the death,  
and Naphtali, on the heights of the steppe.
IV

The kings came, they fought;
then fought the kings of Canaan
at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,
(but) booty of silver they did not take.
From the heavens the stars fought,
from the their highways they fought with Sisera.

Wadi Qishon swept them away,
that ancient wadi, Wadi Qishon;
you shall trample the throat of the mighty.
Then the hooves of his horses hammered:
the galloping, the galloping of his stallions!
“Curse Meroz”
said the messenger of Yahweh,
“curse, curse her inhabitants!
For they did not come to the help of Yahweh,
to the help of Yahweh with warriors.”

V

Blessed among women be Jael,
wife of Heber the Kenite,
among women in the tent may she be blessed.
He asked for water,
she gave him milk;
in a magnificent bowl
she brought yogurt.
She stretched her hand to the tent peg,
her right hand to the workmen’s hammer,
and she hammered Sisera,
she smashed his head,
and she struck and pierced his temple.
Between her feet he collapsed, he fell, he lay;
between her feet he collapsed, he fell;
in the place he collapsed, there he fell in ruins.
Through the window
she peered and cried out,
the mother of Sisera
through the shutter:
“Why is his chariot late in coming?
Why do the hooves of his chariots delay?”
The wisest of her ladies answered her,
she responded to her words:
“Surely they have found and are sharing the
plunder:
one girl, two girls for each warrior,
plunder of dyed cloth for Sisera,
plunder of dyed cloth embroidered,
two dyed embroidered cloths for the neck
of the plunderer.”
Translation of A. and S. Fishelis

Judges: A New English Translation

1. Now Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying.

2. “When breaches are made in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly, bless the Lord.

3. Hear, O kings, give ear, O princes; I, to the Lord I shall sing, I shall sing to the Lord, the God of Israel.

4. Lord, when You went forth out of Seir, when You marched out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens also dripped; also the clouds dripped water.

5. The mountains melted at the presence of the Lord, this (was at) Sinai, because of the presence of the Lord, the God of Israel.

6. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, caravans ceased, and travellers walked on crooked paths.

7. The open cities ceased, in Israel they ceased, until I Deborah arose; I arose as a mother in Israel.

8. When they chose new gods, then there was war in the cities; was there seen a shield or a spear (when the) forty thousand (went against) Israel?

9. My heart is toward the lawgivers of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people (saying,) ‘Bless the Lord.’

10. The riders of white donkeys, those that sit in judgment, and those that walk on the path, tell of it.

11. Instead of the noise of adversaries, between the places of drawing water, there they will tell the righteous acts of the Lord, the righteous acts of restoring open cities in Israel. Then the people of the Lord went down to the cities.


13. Then ruled a remnant among the mighty of the nations; the Lord dominated the strong for me.

14. Out of Ephraim, whose root was against Amalek; after you (will be) Benjamin with your abaters; out of Machir came down officers, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the scribe.

15. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah, as was Issachar with Barak; into the valley they rushed forth with their feet. (But) among the divisions of Reuben, (there were) great resolves of heart.
16. Why do you sit between the borders, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? At the divisions of Reuben, (there are) great searchings of heart.
17. Gilead abides beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why does he gather into ships? Asher dwelt at the shore of the seas, and by his breaches he abides.
18. Zebulun is a people that jeopardized their lives to die, as did Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.
19. The kings came and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.
20. From heaven they fought; the stars from their courses fought against Sisera.
21. The brook Kishon swept them away, that ancient brook, the brook Kishon; tread down, O my soul, (their) strength.
22. Then were pounded the heels of the horses by reason of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones.
23. ‘Curse you Meroz,’ said the messenger of the Lord, ‘curse you bitterly (you) inhabitants thereof,’ because they came not to the aid of the Lord, to the aid of the Lord against the mighty.
24. Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be; above women in the tent shall she be blessed.
25. Water he requested, (but) milk she gave him; in a lordly bowl she brought him cream.
26. She put forth her hand to the pin, and her right hand to strike the weary; she struck Sisera, pierced his head, and wounded and penetrated his temple.
27. At her feet he sank, fell, lay; at her feet he sank (and) fell; where he sank, there he fell down dead.
28. Through the window the mother of Sisera looked forth, and peered through the window; why is his chariot late in coming? Why tarry the strides of his chariots?
29. The wisest of her princesses answer her, she too returns answers to herself.
30. Are they not finding (and) dividing the spoils? A damsel, two damsels to every man; a spoil of dyed garments to Sisera, a spoil of dyed garments of embroidery; dyed garments of embroidery for the neck of the spoiler.
31. So may perish all Your enemies, O Lord; but they that love Him (should be) as the sun when he goes forth in his might.”

And the land rested forty years.
Translation of M. O’Connor
1980
Hebrew Verse Structure

2a When locks were long, in Israel,
2b When people vowed themselves, they blessed Yahweh.
3a Listen, kings.
3b Give ear, potentates.
3c I will sing of Yahweh,
3d I will sing.
3e I will chant of Yahweh, Israel’s god.
4a Yahweh, when you emerged from Seir,
4b When you marched from the field of Edom,
4c Earth shook.
4d The clouds of heaven dripped.
4e The clouds of heaven dripped down water.
5a Hills shuddered
5b Before Yahweh of Sinai,
5c Before Yahweh, Israel’s god.
6a In the days of Shamgar, Anat’s child,
6b In the days of Yael, caravan routes prospered.
6c Path followers followed circuitous caravan routes.
7a Warriors prospered in Israel,
7b They prospered on booty,
7c When you arose, Deborah,
7d When you arose as a mother, in Israel.
8a He chose new gods.
8b He served them food.
8c Neither shield nor sword was seen
8d In the forty companies of Israel.
9a My heart belongs to Israel’s leaders.
9b Those who volunteer themselves for the people bless Yahweh.
10a You who ride on tawny she-asses.
10b You who rule over the Madon realm.
10c You who travel through the Madon realm.
11a Let the voices of recruiters resound amid waterholes.
11b There let them repeat the victories of Yahweh’s warriors,
11c The victories of Yahweh’s warriors on behalf of Israel.
11d The army of Yahweh went down to the gates.
12a Get up, get up, Deborah.
12b Get up, get up.
12c Sing the song.
12d Arise, Baraq, Abinoam’s child.
12e Capture your captives, Baraq, Abinoam’s child.
13a The army of Yahweh went down to Sarid, against the mighty.
13b It went down against the strong for me.
14a From Ephraim they root them out of Amaleq.
14b Benjamin delays you among the people.
14c Out of Machir, commanders go down.
14d Those who march with scribal rod are from Zebulon.
15a The princes are in Issachar with Deborah.
15b Issachar is Baraq’s support.
15c It is sent through the valley at his feet.
15d In Reuben’s divisions, great are the stouthearted.
16a Why do you sit among hearths
16b Listening to herds hissing?
16c Great are the heartsearchings about Reuben’s divisions.
17a Gilead dwells on the Jordan’s far shore.
17b Dan: why does he dwell on shipboard?
17c Asher lives on the seashore.
17d He encamps by his harbors.
18a Zebulon is a people of scorn.
18b His appetite for death.
18c Naphtali surmounts the highest hills.
19a The kings came. They fought.
19b The kings of Canaan fought.
19c In Taanach, near Megiddo Waters.
19d They did not take silver booty.
20a The stars fought from their heavenly paths.
20b They fought with Sisera from their heavenly paths.
21a Wadi Qishon swept them away.
21b Wadi Qishon is an ancient wadi.
21c O my soul, tread down the mighty.
22a The horses’ heels hammered.
22b The horses’ heels thundered.
22c His stallions thundered.
23a Curse Meroz,
23b The messenger of Yahweh says,
23c Curse vehemently her inhabitants.
23d They did not come to Yahweh’s help,
23e To Yahweh’s help, against the warriors.
24a Most blessed among women is Yael,
24b The wife of the Qenite Heber.
24c She is most blessed among women in the tent.
25a He asks for water.
25b She gives milk in a bowl.
25c She brings the mighty one butter.
26a She extends her left hand to the tent-peg.
26b She extends her right hand to the workers’ mallet.
26c She pounds Sisera’s skull.
26d She smashes Sisera’s skull.
26e She smashes and pierces his temple.
27a Between her legs he crouches.
27b He falls. He lies prone.
27c Between her legs he crouches. He falls.
27d In that place he crouches.
27e There the oppressed one falls.
28a Through the window lattice she looks out.
28b Sisera’s mother wails through the window lattice.
28c Why does his chariot tarry in coming?
28d Why does his chariotry’s clatter delay?
29a She gives her words back to her:
30a Haven’t they found, aren’t they dividing the spoil?
30b One woman, or two, goes for each man.
30c Booty of dyed stuff goes to Sisera.
30d The booty of dyed stuff is embroidered.
30e The booty of embroidered stuff belongs on plunderers’ necks.
31a Thus perish all your enemies, Yahweh.
31b Those who love him are like sunrise in his strength.
1. And Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam gave praise in that time, saying:

2. "When the house of Israel rebelled against the Law, the nations came upon them and banished them from their cities. And when they turned to do the Law, they were victorious over their enemies; they drove them out from upon the territory of the land of Israel rebelled against the Law, the nations came upon them and banished them from their cities. And when they turned to do the Law, they were victorious over their enemies; they drove them out from upon the territory of the land of Israel. Therefore on account of the punishment of the breaking of Sisera and his army, and on account of the sign and the redemption that was worked for Israel, that the sages returned to sit in the synagogues at the head of the exiles and to teach the people the words of the Law—therefore bless and give thanks before the Lord.

3. Hear, kings; pay attention, princes. Deborah speaks in prophecy before the Lord: "I am praising, giving thanks, and blessing before the Lord the God of Israel. 4. Your Law that you gave to them, to Israel, when they transgress it, the nations have power over them; and when they turn to it, they are victorious over their enemies. O Lord, on the day when you revealed yourself so as to teach from Seir, when you showed forth your glory upon the territories of Edom, the earth shook, also the heavens bent down, also the clouds spread rain. 5. The mountains shook from before the Lord. This Sinai was shaken up; its smoke went up like the smoke of the furnace because the Lord the God of Israel was revealed upon it.

6. "When they sinned in the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, they ceased traveling on roads and those who were walking on pathways turned to go in hidden roads. 7. The ruin of the unwalled cities where they were dwelling in the land of Israel was captured, and their inhabitants were carried off until I was commissioned—1 Deborah—1 was commissioned to prophesy in the midst of the house of Israel. 8. When the house of Israel chose to serve new idols, which were made nearby, with which their fathers had not occupied themselves, the nations came against them and drove them from their cities. And whenever they returned to the Law, they could not overpower them, so that when the enemy came against them (and with him were men holding shields and spears) with forty-thousand army-chiefs, they were not able to wage battle in Israel.'

9. "Deborah speaks in prophecy: I was sent to give praise to the teachers of Israel who, when that affliction happened, did not cease from studying in the Law; and who, whenever it was proper for them, were sitting in the synagogues at the head of the exiles and were teaching the people the words of the Law and blessing and giving thanks before God. 10. Those who were ceasing their labors, riding upon asses that were saddled with kinds of embroideries, and were going in all the territory of the land of Israel, and were being chosen to sit for judgment, they will be going on their ways and talking about the wonders that were done for them. 11. From the place where they were assaulting them and
taking what was in their hands—the place of seats of the toll-collectors and the
residence of bandits, in back of the water trough—there they will give thanks on
account of the righteousness of the Lord, on account of the righteousness of him
who was dwelling in the unwalled cities in the land of Israel. Then they went
down from the strong fortresses to dwell in the unwalled cities—the people of the
Lord. 12. Give praise, give praise, Deborah, give praise, and give thanks; speak
praise. Arise, Barak, and capture your captives, son of Abinoam. 13. Then one
from the armies of Israel went down and shattered the strength of the warriors of
the nations. Behold this was not from might, but rather the Lord shattered
before his people the strength of the warriors of their enemies.

14. From those of the house of Ephraim, there arose Joshua the son of
Nun; he first waged battle against those of the house of Amalek. After him there
arose King Saul from those of the house of Benjamin; he killed those of the
house of Amalek and waged battle against the rest of the nations. From those of
the house of Machir, those who were marked went down in battle; and from the
tribe of Zebulun they were writing with the pen of a scribe.

15. And the captains of Issachar were listening to the words of Deborah, and the
rest of the tribe of Issachar were serving before Barak, being sent forth in the
cities of the plain to every place where there was need in his sending them forth.
In the clans of Reuben there were many crafty of heart. 16. Why did you sit
apart from the armies of war, to sit between the borders, to hear good news, to
know bad news? My army is victorious with her. Was it right for you to do
(so), you of the house of Reuben? Did you not know that before me the
thoughts of the heart are revealed? 17. Those of the house of Gilead camped out
across the Jordan. And those of the house of Dan passed over, crossed the
Jordan, put their goods in ships. Those of the house of Asher camped out on the
shore of the seas; the cities of the nations that they destroyed—they turned, built
them, and dwelt in them. 18. Those of the house of Zebulun opposite to the
nations that blasphemed—they handed over their life to killing. They and those
of the house of Naphtali—all the inhabitants of the land gave them praise.

19. The kings came; they waged battled. Then they fought the kings of
Megiddo; wealth of silver they did not take. 20. From the heavens the battle
was waged with them; from the place where the stars go forth, from the courses
of their movements, there the battle was waged with Sisera. 21. The Wadi
Kishon shattered them, the wadi in which signs and mighty acts were done for
Israel from of old—that Wadi Kishon—there my soul crushed their warriors dead
by force.

22. Then the hoofs of their horses slipped, the galloping that gallops
before the chariots of his warriors. 23. "Curse Meroz," said the prophet of the
Lord. "Curse, and shatter its inhabitants, for they did not come to the aid of the
people of the Lord, to the aid of the people of the Lord, when it waged battle
with warriors."

24. May Jael the wife of Heber the Shalmaite be blessed with the blessing
of good women, may she be blessed like one of the women who serve in the
houses of study. He asked her for water; she gave him milk to drink; to find out
if his pleasure was in the bowls of warriors, she brought before him cream-
cheese. 26. She reached out her hand for the tent-peg, and her right hand for the
hammer to shatter wicked men and oppressors. She struck it down into Sisera, she shattered his head; she crushed his brain; she made it pass through in his temple. 27. Between her feet he collapsed, he fell, he lay down. Between her feet he collapsed, he fell. In the place where he collapsed, there Sisera fell, plundered.

28. From the window the mother of Sisera looked out and was gazing from between the laths. She was saying: "Why are the chariots of my son slow to come? Why are the runners who are bringing to me the letter of victories detained?" 29. The wisest of her chambermaids were answering her. Even she according to her wisdom was answering and saying to her: 30. "Are they not dividing from what they are finding, giving as spoil a man and his household to each and every one? Much spoil before Sisera, spoil of dyed embroidered cloth upon his neck, rich possessions, and delightful things before his warriors who despoiled."

31. Like Sisera, so may all the haters of your people perish, Lord; and may his mercies be ready to give light with the light of his splendor 343 times over, like the rising of the sun in its might. And the land of Israel was at rest forty years.
Because the people of Israel regained liberty,  
(Soggin)

Because of the total commitment in Israel.  
(Craigie)

The earth quaked,
Yea, the sky was laden with water,
Yea, the clouds dripped water,

The mountains were convulsed
Before Yahweh, Lord of Sinai,
Before Yahweh, God of Israel.

From the days of Shamgar the son of Anath to that of Jael,

(Weiser)

They chose new gods,
Gods which they had not known of old.  
(Weiser)

I noticed the leaders in Israel
Who proved themselves nobles among the people.

[The gentle] who ride on tawny she-asses lay to heart;
[The simple] who walk on the road meditate.

By the voices of those singing antiphonally at the watering-places
Where they repeat in response
Yahweh’s acts of vindication,
The vindication of His champions in Israel,
Then let the people of Yahweh came down from the settlements.

Rouse thyself, rouse thyself, Deborah,
Rouse thyself, rouse thyself, lead thy train of captives;
Arise, Baraq and lead captive
Those that would have taken thee captive, thou son of Abinoam.

Then down came Israel represented by the nobles,
The people of Yahweh came down to Him in the person of the men of substance.

From Ephraim (came down) the princes among the people,
After them Benjamin represented by their headmen;
From Machir came down the directors,
And from Zebulun those who hold the staff (of authority).
And the princesses of Issachar with Deborah,
And Naphtali with their (famous) son Baraq;
Swarmed after them into the valley.

Why did you sit between the converging fold-walls
To listen for the whistling of the herdsmen?
Among the clans of Reuben
There were great heart-searchings.

Gilead remained settled beyond Jordan,
And Dan remained inactive;
Asher stayed by the seashore
And remained settled by his bights.

Zebulun was a folk which held their life cheaply, risking death,
And Naphtali on the high places of the open country.

The stars in their courses fought with Sisera,
The torrent of the Qishon headed him off.
5 Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abimoam on that day, as follows:

The liturgical opening

2 That the leaders took the lead in Israel
   that the people offered themselves for service.
   bless Yahweh!  
3 Listen, you kings;
   give ear, you princes;
I will to Yahweh,
   I will sing;
I will chant to Yahweh
   the God of Israel.
4 Yahweh, when you came forth from Seir,
   when you marched from the steppe of Edom,
the earth shook,
   yes, the heavens poured forth
   (yes, the clouds poured forth water).
5 Mountains quaked
   in the presence of Yahweh,
   (this means Sinai)
in the presence of Yahweh
   the God of Israel.

The Rise of Deborah

6 In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
   in the days of Jael,
caravans ceased.
Travellers on the roads
   went circuitous ways.
7 Villagers were inactive,
   were inactive in Israel –
until you, Deborah, arose,
   you arose, a mother in Israel.
8 God chooses new men;
   then the armed men of the cities came forth;
though a shield was not found or a spear
   among forty thousand in Israel.
A story to tell

8 My thoughts turn to the commanders of Israel,
to the people who offered themselves for service:
bless Yahweh!
9 You who ride on tawny asses,
sitting on saddle-cloths,
and you who pass along the way, give praise!
10 Amid the sound of the revellers
at the watering places,
there let them celebrate
the victories of Yahweh,
the victories of his villagers in Israel.

(Then down to the gates went the people of Yahweh.)

Deborah's oracle

12 Rouse yourself, rouse yourself, Deborah!
rouse yourself, rouse yourself,
speak in song.
Rise up Barak,
take hold of your captives,
you son of Abinoam.

The tribes who respond

13 Then down went the remnant like the mighty,
the people of Yahweh got themselves down like heroes:
14 from Ephraim
went officers into the vale
‘After you, Benjamin, in your companies!’;
from Machir
commanders went down,
and from Zebulun those who hold the musterer’s staff;
15 the leaders in Issachar were with Deborah;
so Issachar, true to Barak,
set out in the vale at his feet.

The tribes who fail

In the divisions of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.
16 Why did you stay
among the sheepfolds
to listen to the whistling for the flocks?
(In the divisions of Reuben
there were great searchings of heart.)
Gilead remained
across the Jordan
and Dan – why
did he linger at the ships?
Asher stayed
at the shore of the seas,
and remained besides its harbours.

Zebulin and Naphtali

Zebulun is an army which scorned
its life to death,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the open country.

The battle

The kings came; they fought;
then fought the kings of Canaan
at Tanaach by the waters of Megiddo.
No profit of silver did they take!
From the heavens fought the stars,
from their pathways they fought against Sisera.
The torrent Kishon swept them away,
it forestalled them, the torrent Kishon.
(My soul, trample in strength!)

Then hammered the hooves of the horses
from the galloping, galloping of his stallions.

Curse Meroz

Curse Meroz,
says (the angel of) Yahweh
curse most bitterly its inhabitants.
For they did not come
to the help of Yahweh,
the help of Yahweh alongside the heroes.

Jael’s deed

Let Jael be blessed above women
(the wife of Heber the Kenite),
above women of the tent let her be blessed.
He asked for water.
She gave him milk.
In a lordly dish
she offered him curds.
Her hand she reached out for the tent-peg,
her right hand for the labourer’s hammer.
She hammered Sisera,
    she crushed his head,
    she shattered and pierced through his temple.

27 Between her feet
    he collapsed, he fell, he lay,
    between her feet
    he collapsed, he fell,
    where he collapsed,
    there he fell slain.

*Sisera's mother*

28 Through the window,
    looked out and peered
the mother of Sisera,
    through the lattice:
    ‘Why so slow has been
    his chariot to come?’
why so delayed have been
    the hoofbeats of his chariots?’

29 The wisest of her ladies replies to her,
    indeed she answers her words for herself:
Surely they have gained
    and divided the spoil,
one or two wenches
    for each of the men,
spoil of gay fabrics,
    for Sisera gay fabric,
one or two brocade scarves
    for his neck as spoil.

*Conclusion*

31 So may all your enemies perish, Yahweh!
    May your friends be as when the sun comes out in its strength.

The land was at peace for forty years.
A targum into Israeli Hebrew of McDaniel’s translation “The Song of Deborah”
(See above, pages 90–105.)
2000

5:1–2b, 5:6–7, 3:31 הקצבה שדיה

3:31 ואוד יראת צאצאיו
ויאוד דכר צאצאיו דכר יראת צאצאיו
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ויתכן שם במִּזֹּר הָהוֹרָה (לַעֲלוֹתָה):
5:8

אלוהים ציווה לאתרון,
בכורים אפרים, מחולות,
לטועות בראתם איש צבאות.
ונהל הקדש מיון משאות.
אות המדינשים לעצאם.
(הכ אфиз) מקרחים לצאצאים, צאצאים.
_sector_5

5:9d

５:10 – 13  שנותיה המרתון

5:10

והב אמצעו ענישה,
והשכבה על פהו.
ואהל השявление ברק.
הנה להבות התה.
והים להביחו החיה.
נסקודים נורא.
נסקודים בשתי המילים (אלהים) בושאר.
כאמץ משווה משווה (ברורא) אלוהים.
_sector_5

5:12

כאמץ נбриיה ימי ענישה.
לת苜ירה על תבואת המקדש.
הבר מצוות отправת.
בון המוסף (הכף) מעל אמשי.
_sector_5

5:13

כאמץ המקדש משיגה את הנ.ContainsKey.
(כסף) הר תושבת אלוהים (מבריה).
(כ) מálido רוחי (סאף אלוהים).
_sector_5

5:14 – 16  אמשיתנו המולתנה

5:14

כאמץ (להקיק) מאמץ, מתיחות דך עמל, חمؤسس נבואות.
בבר מצוות משונה פלן.
טרון בר מצוות היד.
_sector_5

5:15

רתה שולח נבוכים נבוכים בקנין.
(ליאות) רוחו מתחלק להביכים.
כאמץ נביא והמתנה (יהודה) כשאמה הנביא.
(כ) מOLEAN הם פלוני לארוך התורה.
-sector_5

ך מישהת אלוהים.
5:16 

على أرضي المحققين يوم في الحق.

لقد كان في المحققين من أهل.

5:17–18

نأخذ معرفة ملكة للحق.

لا يأمرون بل الحق، لا يحكم إلا الحق.

5:18

فهذا يلبس، يا جليل.

مائل إلى الحق.

5:19

إذا أصلوا، أصلوا.

إذا أرسلوا، أرسلوا.

5:20–23

نعلم أنهم شعب.

نعلم أنهم شعب.

نعلم أنهم شعب.

نعلم أنهم شعب.

5:20

العبيدون وجالوس موظفون,

 niezbędne dla ludzi.

5:21

هذا كوش، كوش.

هذا كوش.

هذا كوش.

هذا كوش.

5:21

ج hectares 6 dysfunction.

ج hectares 6 dysfunction.

ج hectares 6 dysfunction.

ج hectares 6 dysfunction.

5:23

يا شهدت، يا غريب.

يا شهدت، يا غريب.

يا شهدت، يا غريب.

يا شهدت، يا غريب.
5:24–25, 5:27a, 5:27b

5:24

תֶּפֶרֶךְ בְּתוֹם וְאֵעַל אֲבָנָיו הָאָרֶץ.

5:25

מֶשָּׁה לֹא שָׁמַע לַיְוָה.

5:27a

ביִנְיָמֶה שָׁמִית נָעָרִים.

5:26

אֲרוֹן לֹא שָׁמַע לַיְוָה.

5:27b

זֶה עָנָאָל הָעָנָאָל שָׁלוּם.

5:28–30

עַד הַיָּהלָן הָעָנָאָל אֶרֶץ שָׁם לֹא קְרָאת.

5:28

יָמִיךְ עָנָאָל הָעָנָאָל אֶרֶץ שָׁם לֹא קְרָאת.

5:29

רְאוּוֹת רְאוּוֹת הָעָנָאָל שָׁם לֹא קְרָאת.

5:30

רְאוּוֹת רְאוּוֹת הָעָנָאָל שָׁם לֹא קְרָאת.

5:31a

שָׁמִית שָׁמִית

5:31b

זֹהֶר יָמִיך חָלֵג.

5:31b

זֹהֶר יָמִיך חָלֵג.
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