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THE MEANING OF הַרְבוֹת.

THE word הַרְבוֹת, which occurs several times in the Old Testament is generally taken to mean throughout "ruins, ruined cities, ruined dwellings." This meaning, however, offers serious difficulties in Job iii. 14 and Ps. ix. 7, and gives by no means a satisfactory sense in Ezek. xxxviii. 12 and Mal. i. 4. In Job iii. 14 various suggestions are made and emendations proposed. It is felt by all commentators that a meaning like "palaces" or "(strong) buildings" is required. Olshausen reads אֲרָמְנוֹת, Beer הַיְקָלוֹת, and Duhm, following Ewald, thinks of "pyramids" (Aeg.-Ar. *hirām*, *ahrām*)¹. In Ps. ix. 7 "ruins" gives no good sense either, and again various alterations in the reading of the verse are proposed (see commentaries²). Neither is "to turn thine hand on inhabited 'waste places'" (Ezek. xxxviii. 12), or "we will return and build 'waste places'" (Mal. i. 4) satisfactory. Why speak of cities or inhabited places as "ruins (rebuilt³)"? And when we observe closely passages like Ezek. xxxvi. 4; xxxvi. 10; xxxvi. 33 (in all these passages הַרְבוֹת is parallel to עָרִים; note especially xxxvi. 4), we see that "ruins, ruined cities" does not answer at all. Not only is here "ruins" in itself not satisfactory ("the ruins should be built"? or "the desolate ruins, wastes." Can ruins be not desolate?), but the meaning must be different owing to the parallel of עָרִים. Cf., for instance, Ezek. vi. 6 (בְּמֹתָם || עָרִים); xii. 20 (אֲרָצָה || עָרִים); xix. 7 (אֲלֵמְנוֹתַי || עָרֵיהֶם), and xxxvi. 35 (אֲרָץ || עָרִים), also Lev. xxvi. 31 (מִקְדְּשֵׁיכֶם || עָרֵיכֶם) and 33 (עָרֵיכֶם || אֲרָצְכֶם). These passages already show that הַרְבוֹת as parallel of עָרִים must mean "towns" or "palaces," castles" and the like. And these are not the only places where הַרְבוֹת cannot mean "ruins." Cf. Ezek.

¹ Friedrich Delitzsch (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1902) translates "Ruinen" and remarks: "sarkastisch, da die Paläste der Könige und ihrer Veziere nach altorientalischer Sitte schon unter dem nächsten Nachfolger zu Ruinen zu werden pflegen." But this explanation is scarcely satisfactory.

² They all seem not to consider that הַרְבוֹת לְבָנָה must be parallel to וְעָרִים נִהְרָה.

³ As it is generally explained.

xxxiii. 24, where "ruined places" gives no sense ("those who live in these ruins"?). Neither does Ezek. xxxiii. 27 "in the ruined (or waste) places" fit in. There it should mean, by contrast to *על פני השרדה*, "in the fortified places," "cities" or something similar¹.

Two more passages are really difficult through the rendering of "ruins," "desolate places," and these are Isa. v. 17 (*והרבות מחים*) and Ps. cix. 10 (*וורשו מחרבותיהם*). There, too, a meaning like "palaces," "castles" would furnish a perfectly satisfactory explanation. This would also be the case with *בחרבותיהם* in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6, if the reading is correct, which is made very probable through the meaning of "towns" or "castles." It is very much worthy of consideration whether this meaning is also to be found in Isa. lii. 9 (why should the "ruins" of Jerusalem sing? They will disappear!), Isa. lviii. 12 (*מוסרי דור ודור*), and Isa. xlv. 26. The meaning of "ruins" seems to be certain in Isa. xlix. 19 and lxi. 4; Jer. xxv. 9 and xlix. 13, and Dan. ix. 2. I am not so sure about Isa. li. 3²; Ezek. xiii. 4³; xxvi. 20; xxix. 10⁴ and Ezra ix. 9. In Ps. cii. 7 the meaning of "ruins" seems to be assured already through the parallel (*קאת מרבר*)⁵.

We thus see that in many, we may say in most, of the cases *חֲרָבוֹת* must mean something like "cities," "palaces," "fortified buildings" or the like. I therefore think that we have to distinguish between two different words *חֲרָבוֹת* with different roots. As a matter of fact there is one *חרבות* in Isa. xlvi. 21, which seems to mean "dry places" (from *חרב* "to be dry")⁶. And we have also the root *חרב* "to attack, smite down" (= *חָרַב* "to plunder," III. "wage war with"). Why should it be impossible to assume that there is another root of *חרב* meaning "city," "fortified place," "castle," "palace" or something similar? This suggestion, for which there is, as shown, strong internal evidence, can, I think, also be supported etymologically. *حَرِيْبَة* in Ar. means (also) "wealth,

¹ Cf. also, for instance, Micah iv. 10.

² *מדברה* || *ערבחה* and *ציון* || *זרבתיה*.

³ Cf. Cant. ii. 15.

⁴ It may mean "to ruined palaces."

⁵ It is worthy of note, however, that out of the five passages in which *חֲרָבוֹת* (in st. abs. and without any preap.) occurs (Job iii. 14; Ps. ix. 7 and cii. 7; Ezek. xxxviii. 12, and Mal. i. 4) it can mean "ruins" only in one passage (Ps. cii. 7).

⁶ In Gesenius's *Wb.*¹⁴ (p. 230) it is regarded as pl. of *חֲרָבָה* and translated "Wüsten" (deserts). But it may mean "deserts" and still be derived from *חרב* "to be dry"; places without water are deserts.

or property, by means of which one lives, or subsists" (v. Lane, s. v.), and **مِخْرَابٌ** has (among many other meanings) the meaning of "a [pavilion, or building of the kind called] **قَصْرٌ**" (v. Lane, s. v.), a meaning almost such as we require for **חֲרִבוֹת**. I therefore believe that we have in the Old Testament a word **חֲרִבוֹת** with the meaning of "castles, palaces, fortified places, towns," to be distinguished from **חֲרָבוֹת** "ruins" and **חֲרִבוֹת** "dry places," and that this **חֲרַב** would correspond to the Arabic **حَرْبٌ** in **مِخْرَابٌ** and, most probably, also in **حَرْبِيَّةٌ**¹.

¹ After I had read the first proof of this article, my attention was drawn (by Prof. Büchler) to a note by Praetorius in *Z. D. M. G.*, vol. LXI, p. 951. I looked up the books and articles Praetorius refers to on p. 951, and in his article on "Äthiopische Etymologien" (pp. 621-2, *ibid.*), and I am glad to see that still more support can be found for my theory about **חֲרִבוֹת** put forward above. See especially H. Derenbourg, "Supplément aux monuments sabéens et himyarites du Louvre" (in *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale*, vol. VI, Paris, 1905, p. 40), where he translates **אוסן** (line 3 of No. 21) "dans la forteresse (Ausān)." Cf. also *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, part IV, pp. 178-9 (No. 106, l. 3), where **מחרבן** must mean "castle," "fortified place" (there translated "propugnaculum"), and perhaps also pp. 300-2 (No. 289, l. 3), and see *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, vol. X, p. 301. Cf. also *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, vol. X, p. 241, l. 12, where **מחרבן** must have something to do with some kind of a building. As stated above I think that these roots of **חֲרַב** and **חֲרַב** have to be distinguished from the other roots of **חֲרַב** and **חֲרַב**. With regard to the meaning of **מِخْرَابٌ** see especially Rhodokanakis, *Vienna Oriental Journal*, vol. XIX, pp. 296-8, especially p. 297 (also explained as *Burg, Kastell*). I shall not go here into the question whether **مِخْرَابٌ** is a loan-word in Arabic (see Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen*, p. 274, and the references in *Z. D. M. G.*, LXI, p. 621), or not (see Praetorius, *ibid.*, p. 622). I am inclined to think that it is not a loan-word, especially as we have the same root in Hebrew (as shown above), and other Semitic dialects (see the quoted references).

SAMUEL DAICHES.