

The Hebrew Proto-Masoretic Text of Habakkuk 3:1-4 and Its Interpretive Presentations in Other Biblical Texts

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1. Introduction

Interpreting the text of Habakkuk chapter 3 is very challenging for many scholars already point out that almost every word raises a problem.¹⁾ The purpose of this study is not to translate and interpret the textual meanings of various texts in detail. Rather, it focuses on comparing different texts' nuance and variation based on redaction criticism and textual criticism in order to see how the texts were written, changed, and transmitted from one generation to the next. In fact, it is true that translation of each word is important to convey a correct comparison. Thus, a possible meaning from the text using various translational options will be considered.

From the range of the possible meanings, I will try to compare the texts of Habakkuk 3:1-4 and study of the differences among them. Unfortunately, the Greek Twelve Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr; dated to around the late first cent. C.E.) does not preserve 3:1-8.²⁾ The famed Peshar Habakkuk Scroll from Qumran Cave 1 (1QpHab; the first cent. B.C.E) also does not include chapter 3 intentionally.³⁾ Therefore, the biblical text versions that I discuss in this paper are five texts in the order of the suggested dates of the manuscripts: the Hebrew proto-Masoretic Murabba'at Scroll of the Twelve

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- 1) Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed., The Anchor Bible 25 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 268.
- 2) Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXIIgr)*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert VIII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).
- 3) William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar of Habakkuk* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979).

Prophets (Mur88; the second cent. C.E.)⁴); the Greek Septuagint (LXX) represented by Codex Vaticanus (Codex B; the fourth cent. C.E.),⁵ which is the oldest complete manuscript of the Greek Bible; the Syriac Peshitta (Peshitta; the seventh cent. C.E.)⁶ edited by Anthony Gelston⁷); the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT; around 1,009 C.E.) based on Codex Leningrad B19A,⁸ which is the oldest complete Masoretic manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in the world; and the Aramic Targum Jonathan on the Prophets (TJ; the sixteenth cent. C.E.)⁹ edited by Alexander Sperber.¹⁰

Comparing these five texts, we would find some variations which suggest the intention of the scribes who translated them with their own theological and religious viewpoints. It is interesting that in his book, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Emanuel Tov argues that the common idea that the Masoretic text reflects the original text should be reconsidered and states, “we would still have to decide which form of the Masoretic text reflects this ‘original text’, since the Masoretic text itself is represented by many witnesses that differ in small details”.¹¹ Therefore, it is suggested that there were some variations by scribes’ mistakes, corrections, and changes in the texts. The main goal of this paper is thus to see what each manuscript was designed to accomplish.

2. Translations with comparisons

4) P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. De Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba‘at*, DJD II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961).

5) Codex Vaticanus (Codex B; Vatican Library Greek 1209).

6) The original composition of the version may date to the first-second cent. C.E.. For the study of dating the original compositions and manuscripts along with the identity of the communities in relation to each text, see Marvin Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 3-41.

7) Anthony Gelston, *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version, Part III, fascicle 4: Dodekapropheton—Daniel-Bel-Draco* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980).

8) David N. Freedman, et al., *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William Eerdmans, 1997).

9) The posited date of the original composition of the TJ is about the first-second cent. C.E.. See, Marvin Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 31.

10) Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic: The Latter Prophets According to Targum Jonathan* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962).

11) Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 12.

Habakkuk chapter 3 is regarded as the second section of Habakkuk, as the superscriptions appear in Habakkuk 1:1 and 3:1. The first section (chs. 1-2) is a prophetic oracle which presents a conversation between Habakkuk and God based on righteousness.¹²⁾ The second section (ch. 3) is a series of images of theophany, which highlights how God will destroy the oppressor in terms of Habakkuk's complaints in his prayer. The list of references for my own translations are listed as follows: *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon* (2006), *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1988), *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (1999), *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (1996), *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (2013), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (1999), and *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (1997).¹³⁾ In order to examine the textual variations, I translate only Habakkuk 3:1-4, along with the notes and comparisons.

2.1. Exegetical Analysis of Habakkuk 3:1

2.1.1. Texts

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| Mur88 | תפלה לחבקוק הנביא על שגיונות A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigionoth |
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12) Some scholars argue that the first section can be divided into two: first, dialogues between the prophet and God in 1:1-2:4(5); second, a series of "woe" oracles in 2:(5)6-20.

13) Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006); William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon the Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub Co, 1972); H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, eds., *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded Upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945); Joseph Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Coded With the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody: Hendrickson Pub, 1996); "Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon", accessed May 1, 2015, <http://call.cn.huc.edu/index.html>; J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999); M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Brooklyn: P. Shalom, 1967).

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| LXX | προσευχή Αμβακουμ τοῦ προφήτου μετὰ ᾠδῆς A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk with a song |
| Peshitta | ܩܠܘܬܐ ܕܗܒܩܘܩ ܢܒܝܐ A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet |
| MT | תַּפִּלָּה לְחַבְקוּק הַנְּבִיא עַל שְׁגִינוֹת: A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, according to Shigionoth |
| TJ | צְלוֹתָא דְצַלִי חַבְקוּק נְבִיא כַד אֲתַגְלִי לִיה עַל אַרְכָּא דִיהַב לְרַשְׁעֵינָא דָאם יְתוּבּוֹן לְאַוְרִיתָא בְלִבְבִי שְׁלִים יִשְׁתַּבֵּיק לְהוֹן וִיהוֹן כָּל חוּבִיהוֹן דְחָבּוּ קְדָמוּהִי הָא כְּשִׁלּוֹתָא The prayer which Habakkuk the prophet <i>prayed when it was revealed to him upon the time which he gives to the wicked, that if they return to the law in a whole heart, they will be forgiven and all their iniquity which they committed before him will be like an error.</i> |

2.1.2. Notes and comparisons

For the note section in this paper, my critical word study will mainly follow MT first to indicate various deviation comparing with other texts and, if necessary, there will be an analysis of scholarly discussion on any specific word. Then, in the same way, other text versions will be reviewed. My translations in English will be used for the main analysis in order to easily compare the texts.

a. תַּפִּלָּה (noun common feminine singular absolute) generally means a liturgical prayer and is usually found in Psalms. Mur88 uses the same word. Both TJ and Peshitta use צְלוֹתָא (Ṣelota), which is the equivalent term for a prayer in Aramaic. In the LXX, προσευχή, is also a proper term for the prayer. b. חַבְקוּק (proper n.) is the name of the author continued from the chapters 1-2. c. נְבִיא (n. c. masculine. s. a.) means the prophet. All five texts employ the same word without any distinct difference (cf. LXX-προφήτου). d. שְׁגִינוֹן (n. c. m. plural. a.) with the proposition עַל

suggests that this is a kind of a melody. Another famous translation is “on the stringed instruments”. The LXX translates it as “με-τὰ ᾠδῆς, with a song”, understanding the Shigionoth is a melody. Since this variation appears only in LXX, MT is preferred. Marvin Sweeney notes that “the Hebrew term *šigayōn* refers to lamentation as indicated by its appearance in Psalms Vii, a song of lament, and the cognate Akkadian term *šeGu*, song of lament”.¹⁴⁾ However, Peshitta omits the additional phrase. Therefore, the suggested translation in English of the term would be “upon the song of lament”. e. In TJ, רָשִׁיעַ (adjective. p.) is translated as “the wicked” following M. Jastrow. Another scholar, J. Payne Smith, lists “the lawless, impious, and criminal” as other options. This word is TJ’s distinctive expression along with other details. Following the hebrew word, רָשִׁיעַ, ‘the wicked’ is preferred. f. In TJ, כִּשְׁלֹתָא can be translated as “forgetfulness, inadvertent act, and neglect”.

As a superscription in the structure above, verse one plays an important role in situating this chapter as Habakkuk’s prayer. Between TJ and other texts, most differences were created during the scribal transmission with their content exegesis to help and support the presentation of the original text. Unlike simple superscription in most textual versions, TJ adds a long theological interpretation in this verse by including וְצִלִּי (which) between “a prayer” and “Habakkuk, the prophet” to make a descriptive sentence. The additional text gives the information: 1) when the prophet prays, 2) who the prophet addresses, 3) what the prophet suggests, and 4) what the result is. These detailed descriptions highlight the power of repentance and simultaneously request the enemy who committed wrongdoings for a quick response upon the presence of mighty God.

Overall, TJ demonstrates intensive exegetical effort in antiquity to interpret Habakkuk chapter three, which begins a new style of the text distinct from chapters 1 and 2. This also shows that the translator is made an effort to make the text more easily understandable by the readers. Based on MT, TJ adds an interpretation for a more smooth transition from the previous chapters. The usage of the terms, “the

14) Marvin A. Sweeney, “Structure, Genre, and Intent in the Book of Habakkuk”, *Vetus Testamentum* 41:1 (1991), 78.

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| TJ | <p>יִי שְׁמַעִית שְׁמַע גְּבוּרָתְךָ דְחִלִּית יוֹי רַבְרָבִין עֹבְדֶךָ דְאַתָּה יְהִיב אַרְכָּא לְרִשְׁעֵיךָ דְאַם יְתוּבֹון לְאוּרִיךָ וְלֹא תָבוּ וְאִינֹון מִרְגִּזִין קְדָמְךָ בְּגוֹ שְׁנֵיךָ דִּיהֶבֶת לְהוֹן חֲנִיךָ בְּכִין אֶת עֲתִיד לְהוֹדְעָא גְבוּרָתְךָ בְּגוֹ שְׁנֵיךָ דְאַמְרָתָא לְחֻדְתָּא עֲלָמָא לְאַתְפְּרָעָא מִן רִשְׁעֵיךָ דְעֲבֵרוּ עַל מִימְרֶךָ וְצִדִיקֵיךָ עֲבָדִי רְעוּתְךָ בְּגוֹ רֹוּגְךָ רַחֲמִין תִּדְכֹּר:</p> <p>O Lord, I have heard the report of <i>your mighty</i> and I was afraid. O Lord, great is your work which you gave an extension to the wicked that if they return to the law. But they did not return and <i>they provoke before you. Then, you will show your might.</i> Within the years, <i>you have promised to renew the world in order to</i> <i>punish the wicked upon your word.</i> Your will makes righteous. In wrath, you will remember mercy.</p> |
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2.2.2. Notes and comparisons

a. יִרְאַתִּי - The LXX and MT read “fear”. For a nice parallel with “heard” in 2a α, some scholars try to change from “I fear” to “I see”. However, Smith notes that it is not necessary.¹⁵⁾ In LXX, ἐφοβήθη and κατενόησα replace the hebrew word. Additional κατενόησα means “observe, notice, loot at, consider, and contemplate”. b. רַחֵם (show love, have compassion on) is an infinitive absolute. Thus, MT reads, “Remember to be compassionate”. LXX reads it as a noun, “you will remember mercy”. TJ and Peshitta also present it as a noun, “mercy”. “You will have a compassion” is another option. c. In LXX, “two living creatures (δύο ζώων)” appears only in LXX and the Old Latin. This addition is a very distinct expression and makes a lot of trouble for scholars to understand the meaning or author’s intention. In his book, *Habakkuk*, Francis Andersen connects this occurrence with the two attendant deities Drber and Resheph in verse 5.¹⁶⁾ e. In LXX, note the parallel in two verbs ἐπιγνώσθήσῃ and ἀναδειχθήσῃ which are indicative future passive 2nd singular, “you will

15) Ralph Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, Word Biblical Commentary 32 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 114.

16) Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 280.

be known” and “you will be shown”. This occurrence appears to be poetic, following a rhythm. The first verb γνωσθήση is also translated as “you will be known”. The translational options are “learn, understand, and perceive”.

As the second element in the structure, verse two is demarcated as an “Instruction: petition to manifest divine power”. Andersen points out that the verse 2 is “a stanza of five colons with intricate parallelism that connects all five colons in many different combinations”.¹⁷⁾ As he indicates, the MT is very poetic and each Hebrew word conveys distinctive meanings along with others. The Mur88 is quite identical to the MT in spite of some damaged texts.

The LXX eliminates any obscure presentation in the MT and adds more active descriptions of the Habakkuk’s prayer. The LXX reads “and I feared and observed your work and I was amazed”, adding “observed” before the psalmist is amazed. This careful step-by-step description of how the psalmist understands the divine power presents confidence for the reader. LXX also restructures the syntax and rewrites some of the problematic terminology to present a coherent explanation of the proto-MT. LXX reads, “In the midst of *two living creatures*, you will be known. *In the time to come near, you will know completely*. In the time to be present, you will be shown clearly”. These three colons of LXX correspond to two colons of MT, neither of which is simply reproduced. LXX obviously adds interpretive statements into the base text, based on their understanding of social and religious contexts.

TJ envisions a powerful divine council and presents mighty God who will change whole world based on the promise that he showed to the psalmist. The Peshitta presents “your name” instead of “your report” in other versions. Clearly, the writer was afraid of God’s name and the text directly designates the divine power by using God’s presentation rather than using the report.

2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Habakkuk 3:3

17) Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 274.

2.3.1. Texts

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| Mur88 | <p>אלוה מתימן יבוא וקדוש מהר פארן סלה כסה שמים הודו ותהלתו מלאה הארץ:</p> <p>God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah! His majesty has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise.</p> |
| LXX | <p>ὁ θεὸς ἐκ Θαυμαν ἦξει καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἐξ ὄρους κατασκίου δασέος διάψαλμα ἐκάλυψεν οὐρανοῦς ἢ ἀρετὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἰνέσεως αὐτοῦ πλήρης ἡ γῆ</p> <p>God comes from Teman and the holy one from mountain, shaded by thick bushes. [diapalma (Selah)] His excellence covers the heaven and the earth is full of his praise.</p> |
| Peshitta | <p>אלוהא מן הדרומא וקדושא מהר פארן סלה כסה שמים הודו ותהלתו מלאה הארץ:</p> <p>God is from the South to reach and the holy one from the mount Paran. The heaven is covered with splendor and also the earth is filled with his praise.</p> |
| MT | <p>אלוה מתימן יבוא וקדוש מהר פארן סלה כסה שמים הודו ותהלתו מלאה הארץ:</p> <p>God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah! His majesty has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise.</p> |
| TJ | <p>בְּמִיתָן אֲוִרִיתָא לְעַמִּיָּה אֶלְקָא מְדֻרְוֹמָא אֲתַגְלִי וְקַדִּישָׁא מְטוֹרָא דְפֶאֶרְן בְּגִבּוֹרַת עֶלְמִין אֲתַחְפִּיאֻ שְׁמַיָּא זִיו יְקָרִיָּה וְאֲמַרִי תוֹשְׁבַחְתִּיָּה מְלִיא אַרְעָא:</p> <p>When he gave the law to his people, God revealed himself from the south and the holy one from the mount Paran with might of eternity. The heavens were covered with the splendor of his glory. The earth says full of praise</p> |

2.3.2. Notes and comparisons

a. אֱלֹהִים - The ancient name of God presents here in the MT. Mur88 follows again. LXX uses ὁ θεὸς which is a general divine name in Greek. In his commentary, John Smith suggests that it would be nicer to put this whole theophany in the present tense form so that the prophet sees as on the way.¹⁸⁾ b. תְּהִלָּה - another translation of this term is “splendor” rather than “praise” on the basis of *halal*. c. אֶתְגַּלִּי - TJ reads “revealed himself”, using the hithpael form of the verb גִּלִּי. Andersen argues that rather than the reading of the MT, “God comes from Teman”, TJ attempts to “move from mythology to theology” by using “revealed himself”, instead of “came”.¹⁹⁾ Teman could be considered as not only “south” with a directional meaning but also “Teman” with the designation of the place name. d. פְּאַרָן is a place name. Scholars try to associate with El-Paran in Genesis 14:6 or the wilderness of Paran. However, the approaches are less certain. LXX has Teman but lost Paran. e. δασύς “thick bushes” alternatively means “thick with hair, hairy, shaggy or thick with leaves”. f. הַלֵּב plays an important role in positioning of musical annotation in vv. 3, 9, and 13. TJ and Peshitta omit the term. Interestingly, other occasions are all in the Psalms. The meaning is uncertain. g. ἀπετή - also properly means “manifestation of divine power” and not close to “splendor or majesty” as in TJ and Peshitta. h. The word הַבְּיֹן is a *hapax legomenon*. As pointed out by Smith, it may be a scribal error.²⁰⁾

From verse three, there is a change from second to third person speech. It also gives a detailed narrative description. The text shows the third person reporting language in the theophany report in vv. 3-15. It is interesting that the LXX omits the place name, “Paran”, and adds the description of the mountain, “shaded by thick bushes” to make it clear that the mountain is, like Teman (as south), an imaginative place (a thick

18) John Smith, William Ward, and Julius Beyer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1911), 17.

19) Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 292.

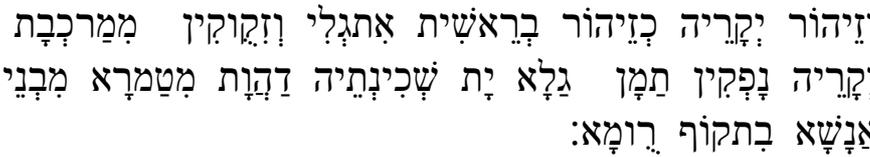
20) Ralph Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 114.

mountain) rather than a designated place (Paran).

TJ continually presents a long exegetical description affirming God’s sovereignty. It reads, “When he gave the law to his people, God revealed himself from the south and the holy one from the mount Paran with might of eternity. The heavens were covered with the splendor of his glory. The earth says full of praise”. Clearly, TJ continually confirms the divine power in these locations and highlights the importance of the torah, God’s revelation, and everlasting power. This editorial extension clearly shows the scribe’s context by supporting the need of repentance and portraying the rise of strife and arrogance.

2.4. Exegetical Analysis of Habakkuk 3:4

2.4.1. Texts

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| Mur88 | <p style="text-align: center;">ונגה כאור תהיה קר[נ]ים מיד[ו לו ושם חביון] עזה:</p> <p>And the brightness has been like the light of day; horns will be from his hand for him. And there is a full of his power.</p> |
| LXX | <p>καὶ φέγγος αὐτοῦ ὡς φῶς ἔσται κέρατα ἐν χερσὶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθετο ἀγάπησιν κραταιὰν ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ</p> <p>And his brightness shall be as light, [there were] horns in his hand. And he placed his powerful love of his strength.</p> |
| Peshitta | <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>And the splendor is like light. His hand placed firmness in the open space around city.</p> |
| MT | <p style="text-align: center;">ונגה כאור תהיה קרנים מידו לו ושם חביון עזה:</p> <p>And the brightness has been like the light of day; horns will be from his hand for him. And there is a full of his power.</p> |
| TJ | <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> |

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| | And the light of majesty is like the light. In the beginning, it was revealed, and the spark from the chariot of the majesty arose there and declared the presence of deity which was concealed himself from the man in the high strength. |
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2.4.2. Notes and comparisons

a. נִגְהַ - LXX reads “his brightness” and TJ adds “of his glory”. The term *nogah* means the brightness of sun, moon, and stars. Andersen argues that this could not be translated as “his brightness was like the light” because the light presents “the face of God”. b. כְּאוֹר possibly “like the light of the day”. Alternatively, as pointed above, “light from sun”, “daybreak”. c. In TJ, קָרַח has various meaning including “honor, majesty, dedication, gift, interest, and margin”. The Hebrew הִוָּדַח in verse 3 can be translated as “weight, power, splendor, height, and majesty”. Frequent additional use of the “majesty”, which other versions do not include, indicates the scribe’s understanding of God. d. קַרְנַיִם - basic meaning of the term “קַרְנָה” is a horn used for “of animals” or “of the altar”. There is a conflict over what the *horns* stand for in this context. *BDB* notes that “rays” is a possible option only in Habakkuk 3:4, so commentators often use “rays” instead of “horns” based on the match with the brightness. Comparing two terms, scholars suggest that it can be derived from the ancient Sun god and transferred to Yahweh.²¹⁾ Understanding horns as rays (the sparks) in TJ is an attempt to eliminate any confusion and presents an image of God’s powerful chariots. Smith’s translation of this term, “twin rays”, reflects the discussion above. In the text, the dual form of the word seems to hint that it is for the horns of animals. e. גִּלָּה also means, “declare, uncover, open, show, and pronounce”. f. שְׁכֵנֵי־תִיהָ also means “dwelling, tent, and divine majesty”. g. הִבְיֹן - The term הִבְיֹן is a *hapax legomenon*. Some versions including NRS, JPS, and RSV translate it as “the hiding of his power”, “veiled his power”, and “his power is hidden”. However, the meaning is very uncertain. Smith insists on the need of emendation.²²⁾ Therefore, the concept of covering as “full”

21) Jimmy Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 134-135. Cf. Francis I. Andersen, *Habakkuk*, 298.

22) Ralph Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 108.

is used in this translation. The term does not correspond with other versions. h. כּוֹנֵן, יְסוּד (in the city) in Peshitta does not correspond to the other texts.

The expression of love and power in LXX (“ἔθετο ἀγάπησιν κραταιὰν ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ”, he placed his powerful love of his strength) is quite interesting. The interchange of ἔθετο (put, place, or lay) and οὐκ (there) is likely, resulting in words carrying different meanings. LXX reads *Sām* instead of *šām*. Peshitta also reads “placed firmness”. Therefore, there is clear interchange between them. The translation using “put” makes God more active and progressive. Additionally, TJ understands “there” as a heavenly place in its detailed explanation.

3. Concluding Remarks

Through the analysis and comparison, we can see that the Proto-Masoretic text seems to be the basis for the other texts. The Murabba‘at Hebrew manuscript is almost identical to the Masoretic text. Besides, even though I do not deal with the text from Nahal Hever in this study, based on the analysis, chapter 1 through 2 of the Nahal Hever text also seems to follow the proto-MT. The LXX, the TJ, and the Peshitta clearly show that they are more interpretive presentations of the proto-MT as I indicated in the comparison sections of each. They added various interpretive words into the original text and edited the base text based on their own religious, social, and political situations. James Mulroneu recently argues that previous studies, focused on an interlinear analysis of the book of Habakkuk, were not able to see the translator’s intentional theological details influenced by a reading tradition and claims that the Old Greek is an interpretation of its Proto-MT.²³⁾ In addition, the Peshitta in vv. 2-4 shows quite interesting textual variations. It employs different words and rewrites the nuance that the original text might

23) James Mulroneu, *The Translation Style of Old Greek Habakkuk: Methodological Advancement in Interpretative Studies of the Septuagint* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016). Unfortunately, at the time of my submission, the book is not handy but a further study on this book in conjunction with this article is worthwhile.

present. For example, אָנֹכִי (“your servant” in v. 2), שְׁמִי (“your name” in v. 2), בְּעִיר (“in the city” in v. 4). These words do not correspond to any other texts. Peshitta looks very close to the MT and seems to be influenced by TJ and LXX, employing similar concept to LXX.

From my Habakkuk study that focused on chapter 1 and 2 in terms of text critical approach, I have concluded that TJ frequently shows the editorial intention to emphasize the righteousness of God’s manifestation. However, chapter 3:1-4 does not convey any suggestion of divine wrongdoing that TJ characteristically tries to eliminate in chapters 1 and 2. Thus, TJ’s defensive changes on selecting the words are not frequent. However, the author of TJ extensively adds exegetical interpretation similar to the Peshher Habakkuk so as to advocate the righteousness of God. Main question in Habakkuk in general is to ask why God brings an oppressor against God’s people in their complaint. TJ’s additional interpretation intends to argue that God will respond their prayer and destroy the oppressors. Thus, TJ is likely to be very pious. The change of the style of TJ in chapter three is readily recognizable in the quite sizable verses when compared with the other texts.

Frequently text critical scholarship presupposes that the old Greek of the Septuagint is actually the base text for the entire biblical tradition. However, there are some issues that do not support that hypothesis. Some Hebrew texts do not always make sense. When we read the LXX version of Habakkuk, we have texts that actually do make sense. The scribes who translated it did not simply translate the text literally. They tried to correct any problem in the text by using their own interpretation. They tried to understand the text’s meaning and presented the text differently at times in order to give a hermeneutical interpretation of the text for the people that they were writing for. This is because the scribes were interpreters and at the same time they were professionals who dedicated their life for that study.

Biblical texts are not only read by individuals, but also presented to various communities in whatever language those communities read. Scribes who understand their text to be holy input their viewpoints in order to fully reflect God’s word in their various situations. So we have to go

back to reread the texts because they are not mindlessly copied from another language. The scribes are theological interpreters who are trying to make sense out of the text to convey to their communities. The questions we have to ask, therefore, are: How does the scripture function in religious communities? What does this text say for us today? Why do we read this text today and what does it have to teach us today? With those questions in mind, we know that each text with its own variations functions in the communities more effectively in terms of their context. When we read such texts, we have a greater appreciation for the efforts of ancient scribes who interpreted and engaged the biblical text, reflecting the words of the prophet in their lifetime.

<Keywords>

Interpretive presentations of Habakkuk, Ancient biblical scribes, The proto-Masoretic text, Syntactic comparison of the biblical texts, The base text for the entire biblical tradition.

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<Abstract>

The Hebrew Proto-Masoretic Text of Habakkuk 3:1-4 and Its Interpretive Presentations in Other Biblical Texts

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The purpose of this study is to compare different texts' nuance and variation based on redaction criticism and textual criticism in order to see how the texts were written, changed, and transmitted from one generation to the next. Frequently text critical scholarship presupposes that the old Greek of the Septuagint is actually the base text for the entire biblical tradition. However, there are some issues that do not support that hypothesis.

I will compare five texts of Habakkuk 3:1-4 in the order of the suggested dates of the manuscripts: the Hebrew proto-Masoretic Murabba'at Scroll of the Twelve Prophets (Mur88; the second cent. C.E.); the Greek Septuagint (LXX) represented by Codex Vaticanus (Codex B; the fourth cent. C.E.), which is the oldest complete manuscript of the Greek Bible; the Syriac Peshitta (Peshitta; the seventh cent. C.E.) edited by Anthony Gelston; the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT; around 1,009 C.E.) based on Codex Leningrad B19A, which is the oldest complete Masoretic manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in the world; and the Aramaic Targum Jonathan on the Prophets (TJ; the sixteenth cent. C.E.) edited by Alexander Sperber.

Through the analysis, the intention of the scribes who translated biblical texts is recognizable when we compare the texts because there are clear editorial works which reflect the scribes' own theological and religious viewpoints. The proto-Masoretic text is the base text for other biblical texts because the LXX, the TJ, and the Peshitta clearly show that they are more interpretive presentations of the proto-Masoretic text. The scribes did not simply translate the text literally. They tried to correct any problem in the text using their own interpretation.