



## מי היו היבוסים?

### אבנר רמו

In the ancient Hebrew the letter ב (b) was written as  while the letter ר (r) was written as , and it is not surprising that sometimes the late scribes and the translators misspelled them. Here are several examples:

In the Book of Joshua we read:

**ולמשפחות בני-קהת הלויים, הנותרים מבני קהת; ויהי ערי גורלם ממטה אפרים.**  
“And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, even the rest of the children of Kohath, they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim” (Jos 21:20).

Yet the Chronicler re-writes this verse as:

**וממשפחות בני קהת-ויהי ערי גבולם ממטה אפרים.**  
“And some of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their borders out of the tribe of Ephraim” (1 Ch 6:51).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **גבולם** (*gevulam*) a misspelled **גורלם** (*goralam*) - “of their lot.” It is also possible that **גורלם** (*goralam*) is a misspelled **גבולם** (*gevulam*) - “in their border.” If this suggestion is correct then we have here, in addition to metathesis, an exchange between ב (b) and ר (r).

In the Book of Micah we read: **עתה תהיה למרמס כטיט חוצות** - “now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets” (Mic 7:10; see also: Is 41:25; Eze 26:11; Nah 3:14).

Yet in the Book of Zechariah we find: **והיו כגברים בוסים בטיט חוצות, במלחמה**, - “And they shall be as mighty men, treading down in the mire of the streets in the battle” (Zec 10:5).

However, the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that **בוסים** (*bosim*) is a letter-deletion and a ר (r) - ב (b) substitution error of **רומסים** (*romsim*) - “treading down.”

We read in the Book of Jeremiah: **אין עוד תהלת מואב-בחשבון חשבון עליה רעה** - “The praise of Moab is no more; in Heshbon they have devised evil against her” (Jer 48:2; see also: Gen 6:5; 50:20; Jer 26:3; 36:3; Eze 38:10; Hos 7:15; Mic 2:3; Nah 1:11; Zec 7:10; 8:17; Ps 21:12; 35:4; 41:8; 56:6; 140:3; Pro 15:26; 24:8; Est 9:25; Neh 6:2).

In the Book of Samuel we read: **ושאול חשב להפיל את-דוד ביד-פלשתים** - “For Saul devised to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines” (1 Sam 18:25).

Yet we also find in this book: **וידע דוד-כי עליו שאול מחריש הרעה** - “And David knew that Saul was devising the evil against him” (1 Sam 23:9; see also: Pro 6:14; 12:20; 14:22).

However, the comparison between these verses and in particular the reading of: **מחשב להרע-לו** - “**He that devises to do evil**” (Pro 24:8), suggests that in verse 1 Sam 23:9 the word **מחריש** is a letter-substitution and order-type error of **מחשב** - “was devising.”

In the Book of Proverbs we read:

אל-תחרש על-רעך רעה; והוא-יושב לבטח אתך.  
אל-תרוב (תריב) עם-אדם חנם-אם-לא גמלך רעה.

“Do not devise evil against thy neighbor, seeing he dwells securely by you.

Do not strive with a man without cause, if he had not done you harm” (Pro 3:29-30).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that here the word **תחרש** is a letter-substitution and order-type error of **תחשב** - “you devise.”

We read in the Book of Kings:

ויקח יהוידע הכהן ארון אחד, ויקב חר בדלתו; ויתן אתו אצל המזבח בימין (מימין), בבוא-  
איש בית יהוה, ונתנו-שמה הכהנים שמרי הסף את-כל-הכסף המובא בית-יהוה.

“And Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and he bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of YHWH; and the priests that kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought to the house of YHWH” (2 Ki 12:10; see also: 2 Ki 18:21; Is 36:6; Hag 1:6; Job 40:24, 26).

The word **ויקב** is of the root **נקב** (nqb) - “piercing a hole.”

Yet in the Book of Exodus we read:

והיה בעבר כבדי, ושמתיך בנקרת הצור; ושכתי כפי עליך עד-עברי.

“And it shall come to pass, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand until I have passed by” (Ex 33:22; see also: Is 2:21).

It is not clear how the English translator determined that **בנקרת הצור** means: “in a cleft of the rock.” The Greek translator wrote here: “in a hole in the rock” which suggests that he believed that **בנקרת הצור** is a letter-substitution error of **בנקבת הצור**.

Similarly, we find in the Book of Isaiah:

שמעו אלי רדפי צדק, מבקשי יהוה; הביטו אל-צור חצבתם, ואל-מקבת בור נקרתם.

“Hearken to Me, you that follow after righteousness, you that seek YHWH; look to the rock whence you were hewn (from), and to the hole of the pit whence you were dug (from)” (Is 51:1).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **מקבת בור נקרתם** is a letter-substitution error of **נקבת בור נקבתם** a “(to) the hole of a pit which you were pierced (from).”

We read in the Book of Judges:

ותקח יעל אשת-חבר את-יתד האהל ותשם את-המקבת בידה, ותבוא אליו בלאט, ותתקע  
את-היתד ברקתו,

“And Jael Heber's wife took a tent-pin, and took the hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and stuck the pin into his temple” (Jud 4:21; see also: 1 Ki 6:7; Is 44:12; Jer 10:4).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **מקבת** (*maqeveth*) means "a piercer."

A common expression in the Bible has the form of: "x son of y." In the Hebrew part of the Book of Ezra we read: **זרבבל בן-שאלתיאל וישוע בן-יוצדק** - "Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak" (Ezr 3:8). Yet in the Aramaic part of the same book we find: **זרבבל בר-שאלתיאל, וישוע בר-יוצדק** - "Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak" (Ezr 5:2; see also: Ezr 5:1; 6:14; Dan 3:25). It appears that the change from Hebrew to Aramaic was associated (among other things) in the change of the Hebrew word for "son" - **בן** (*ben*) to the Aramaic **בר** (*bar*). However, when we read the following expressions: **התשכח אשה עולה מרחם בן-בטנה** - "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" (Is 49:15; see also: Job 19:17), and: **דברי למואל מלך-משא, אשר-יסרתו אמו. מה-ברי, ומה-בר-בטני; ומה בר-נדרי.**

"The words of king Lemuel; the burden wherewith his mother corrected him. What, my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?" (Pro 31:1-2), we can assume that exchanges between **בן** (*ben*) and **בר** (*bar*) occurred also within the Hebrew language itself.

In the Book of Samuel we read:

**ויסף עוד אבנר לאמר אל-עשהאל, סור לך מאחרי: למה אככה ארצה**  
"And Abner said again to Asahel: Turn you aside from following me; wherefore should I smite you to the ground?" (2 Sam 2:22).

Yet in the Book of Kings we find: **ויאמר יהוא מה-לך ולשלום, סב אל-אחרי** - "And Jehu said: What have you to do with peace? turn you behind me" (2 Ki 9:18, 19).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **סב אל-אחרי** (*soy el-akharai*) is a letter-substitution error of **סור אל-אחרי** (*sur el-akharai*) - "turn behind me."

In the Book of Micah we read: **עתה תהיה למרמס כטיט חוצות** - "now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets" (Mic 7:10; see also: Is 41:25; Eze 26:11; Nah 3:14).

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However, the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that **בוסים** (*bosim*) is a letter-deletion and a **ר** (r) - **ב** (b) substitution error of **רומסים** (*romsim*) - "treading down."

Similarly, the English (but not the Greek) translation of the words: **כפגר מובס** - "as a carcass trodden under foot" (Is 14:19). about the one that was cast out of his grave, suggests that the translator believed that **כפגר מובס** (*kepeger muvas*) is a letter-substitution and order-type error of **כפגר נרמס** (*kepeger nirmas*) - "as a carcass trodden (under foot)."

Similarly we read in the Book of Isaiah: **מי-בקש זאת מידכם, רמס חצרי** - “who had required this at your hand, to trample My courts?” (Is 1:12).

Yet we also find in this book: **צרינו בוססו מקדשך** - “our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary” (Is 63:18).

Here again the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that **בוססו** (*bosesu*) is a misspelled **רמסו** (*ramsu*) - “trampled.”

In the Book of Exodus we read: **וברב גאונך תהרס קמידך** - “And in the greatness of Your excellency you overthrow them that rise up against You” (Ex 15:7).

Yet the Psalmist wrote: **בך צרינו ננגח; בשמדך נבוס קמינו** - “Through You do we push down our adversaries; through Your name do we tread them under that rise up against us” (Ps 44:6; see also: Ps 60:14; 108:14).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests again that **נבוס** (*navos*) is a misspelled **נהרוס** (*naharos*) - “shatter.”

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

**והיה כערער בערבה, ולא יראה כי-יבוא טוב; ושכן חררים במדבר, ארץ מלחה ולא תשב.**  
“For he shall be like a tamarisk in the desert, and shall not see when good comes; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, a salt land and not inhabited” (Jer 17:6).

The understanding of the English (but not the Greek) translator of the Hapax legomenon **חררים** (*kharerim*) as “parched places” indicates that he believed that this word is the result of **ב** (v) - **ר** (r) exchange in **חררים** (*khareyim*) - “parched.”



³wš³mm in hieroglyphs

Jerusalem appears in the “execration text” of the Middle Egyptian Kingdom (c. 19<sup>th</sup> century BC) as: “Rushalim”, and in the Amarna letters (1330 BC) as: “Urushalim.” On the other hand, a place named **יבוס** - “Jebus” or people named: **יבוסים** - “Jebusites” does not appear in any Middle-Eastern ancient source.

The Chronicler wrote:

**וילך דויד וכל-ישראל ירושלם היא יבוס; ושם היבוסים יבסי הארץ.**

**“And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem--the same is Jebus--and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there”** (1 Ch 11:4; see also: Jos 15:8, 63; 18:28; Jud 1:21; 19:10, 11; 2 Sam 5:6, 8; 24:16, 18; 1 Ch 11:5, 6; 21:15, 18, 28; 2 Ch 3:1).

The plethora of referenced indicating that **ירושלם היא יבוס** - **“Jerusalem--the same is Jebus”** even convinced the Greek translator of the Book of Joshua to replace in verse Jos 10:5 the “Amorites” with “Iebousites.” At that time, we read that **אדני-צדק מלך ירושלם** - **“Adonizedeq king of Jerusalem”** (Jos 10:1, 3).

The Prophet Isaiah predicts that in the future Jerusalem will be named **עיר הצדק** - **“The city of tsedeq - “city of Justice”** (Is 1:26). And in the Book of Genesis we find a similar name: **מלכי-צדק מלך שלם** - **“Melchizedek king of Salem”** (Gen 14:18).

Several biblical interpreters suggested the “Salem” is “Jerusalem” If this is indeed the case then we can replace: **ירושלם היא יבוס** - **“Jebus, the same is Jerusalem”** (Jud 19:10) with: **ירושלם היא שלם** (*yevus hi shalem*) - **“Jerus, the same is Salem.”** From here it is a short step to: **ירושלם** (*yerusshalem*) - **“Jerusalem.”** This understanding may tempt us to suggest that **יבוסים** - **“Jebusites”** should be renamed as: **ירושים** (*yerushim*) or “people associated with the city of Jerusalem.