A THIRD ROOT דּוֹד IN BIBLICAL HEBREW? 1)

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It has long been recognised that to give a satisfactory account of the words דוד (Ps. xxxii 9), דוד (Ps. ciii 5) and דוד (Ez. xvi 7) is difficult. A number of translations and interpretations has been proposed for each verse, but none of them can be said to have gained any substantial measure of support. The purpose of this paper is to review the various interpretations of each verse, and to offer some considerations which may indicate that one interpretation, hitherto proposed by Saadya for Ps. ciii 5 and by ibn Janaḥ for Ez. xvi 7, is in fact appropriate to all three verses and, further, that the etymology of דוד on which it is based is likely to be correct. It will be convenient first to consider Ps. ciii 5 of which the Hebrew text is as follows:

In the first verse of Ps. ciii the author instructs his own soul to praise Yahweh as the agent of a number of beneficent actions. Yahweh, therefore, is the subject of the participle with which verse 5 opens, and

1) I am grateful to J. A. EMERTON for helpful suggestions and to G. R. SMITH for his advice on some aspects of Arabic lexicography.


the feminine suffix refers to the author's soul (שָׁמָּה). The verse is rendered by the Revised Version:

"Who satisfieth thy mouth (or thy years) with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle."

The word נְדָע is rendered as follows in the ancient versions: the LXX, τὴν ἐπίθυμην σοῦ; the Peshitta, ἀου; the Targum, רוֹמֶרָה יְבִית; Jerome, ornamentum tuum; Aquila 1), τὸν κόσμον σοῦ; Symmachus 2), τὴν ἐπιμονήν σοῦ. Of these translations those of Jerome and Aquila can be said evidently to imply that their authors regarded נדָע as the noun נד "ornament (or collectively), ornaments" derived from the well attested lamedh-he root II "he ornamented, decked himself" 3). The translation of Symmachus, on the other hand, may indicate that he connected the word with the root נד "he passed on, advanced" 4), from which is derived the noun נד "perpetuity" and the preposition נ "up to, until, while" 4). The Targum's "the days of thine old age" may imply a similar view of the word, though E. F. C. ROSENmüller 5) thinks that נד is treated by the Targum as if it had the same meaning as נד multituden/numerus for which he compares Arabic نَسْعَلْم. The difficulty with ROSENmüller's view is that no word נד having this meaning is elsewhere attested in Hebrew, and there is no other evidence to suggest that נד in Ps. ciii 5 can be, or ever was, derived from the נד root נד. To the translations of the LXX and of the Peshitta we shall return below.

Rabbinic commentators in their interpretations of נד do not restrict themselves to the occurrence of the word in Ps. ciii; in their opinion the same word occurs also in Ps. xxxii 9, and the one instance of it illuminates the other. Before, then, the views of these commentators are discussed, it is necessary to give an account of Ps. xxxii 9. The Hebrew text of this verse is as follows (the words with which this paper is particularly concerned are overlined):

1) These readings are derived from the Syro-Hexapla which reads (for Aquila) see Field, op. cit., p. 258.
2) For II and its derivatives, see B.-D.-B., pp. 725 f. and K.-B., pp. 682 f.
3) For I, see B.-D.-B., p. 723 and K.-B., p. 682. Gesenius connects נד with this root; see p. 465 below.
4) Alternatively, he may have connected the word with the root נד and the noun נד 'continuance'; for this root, see B.-D.-B., p. 728.
5) Scholia in Vetus Testamentum iv 3 (Leipzig, 1804), pp. 2375 f.