A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE END OF 11QT III 3

There is a small but significant problem at the end of Col. III, line 3 of the Temple Scroll. Contrasting attempts to understand and restore the last partially-preserved word of this line, which reads [lwybykh msy], have been offered by Y. Yadin and H. A. Mink. I shall suggest a third solution in this note.

Yadin first observed (II, p. 5):

It seems that ms|byb was intended in the continuation of this line, since a similar sentence introduces the command to build the Temple in several biblical passages, e.g., whnyhwty lw mkl `wybyw msbyb...hw` ybnh byt lsmy (I Chron. xxii:9f.); wyhy ky ysb hmlk (dwyd) bbytw wh`hnyh lw msbyb mkl `ybyw...h`th tbnh byt lsbty... (II Sam. vii:1-5; see also I Chron. xvii:10); whnyh lkm mkl `bykm msbyb...whyn hmqwn `mr ybhr h` `bykm lw lskn snw sm `mbh `byw `t kl `mr `hky mswh `km (Deut. xii:10-11; see comm. 1. 4); see as well I Kings v:17-18. Cf. `mr ldwyd w/hnhw`ty lkh mkwl `wybykh (DJD, V, 4 Q 174, i:7...). The yod appearing clearly after the samekh—msy|byb—seems explicable only as a scribal error or a reversion of a vowel following a mobile sheva, a process that occurs in other scrolls (see Kutscher, p. 394).

The latter process seems irrelevant inasmuch as missabib—to use a Masoretic vocalization—contains no šwâ of any kind. The former explanation is unattractive in terms of method; a scribal error should be posited only as a last resort, especially in a broken context. Yadin himself (II, p. 5) appears to have been sufficiently uncomfortable with his proposed restoration not to include it in either his transcription of the Hebrew or his English translation of Col. III.
Mink has offered a second and altogether different solution for this small *crux interpretum* in order to avoid positing an unverifiable error (p. 177):

Ein Verbot der Anwendung von Fremdarbeiten wäre natürlich nach den Aussagen über den Frondienst beim Tempelbau zu formulieren, vergl. etwa 1. Kön. 5,27; 9, 15.21; 2. Chr. 8, 7-8, und vergl. 2. Chr. 2, 1.16-17. Das wort *ms* ist hier zwar immer singul. (wie TR. LXII, 8), der plur. *msym* ist jedoch Ex. 1, 11 belegt. Ich schlage daher vor, nach [utwl’t šny] Ende Z. 2 so zu ergänzen: [wlw²] / [ṭḥ mkwl gykh wmkw]/ ḥwybykh msym.

Although Mink avoids the pitfall of claiming a scribal error, his proposed restoration *māsi[m]* seems unlikely on palaeographic grounds (see below).

I wish to suggest a third way of explaining and restoring the end of 11QT III 3, one that posits a tentative new reading of a *bêt* after *msy*, involves only a slight amendment of Yadin’s initial understanding, and rests upon this line’s context within the Temple Scroll rather than upon any imperfect biblical parallel.

![Figure](Figure)

Top Line: Left-hand Edge of 11QT III 3
Bottom Line: Script of Scribe A, 11QT

*Palaeography.* Near the left edge of 11QT III 3, an admittedly minute remnant of a letter is visible (see Figure, top line, Yadin III, Pl. 18). This trace is so tiny that Yadin said nothing about it in his commentary, which is usually meticulous in recovering the maximum amount of information from an often damaged manuscript. In this instance, however, I believe that Yadin overlooked a tiny horizontal line with an upper-right-to-lower-left slope that begins near the middle of the last fully-preserved letter, *yādh*. Both the central position of this remnant and its slightly diagonal slant are characteristic of *bêt*’s baseline in the late Herodian formal script of