

For the understanding of *rab* as “archer” see Delitzsch (n. 3), p. 425. The suggestion may derive from the image in Prov. xxvi 18-19: “Like one behaving madly shooting (k*milahlaḥ ḥayy’ōth) fire-arrows, darts, and death, thus is a man who cheats his fellow and says, Was I not joking?”

The passers-by are morally neutral in the other occurrence in the book of Proverbs (ix 15) where they are accosted by “the woman of foolishness” mentioned in ix 13.

It seems that all biblical references to *rab* as “great one” instead of as “much, many” assume a foreign context; it is frequently just a translation from Akkadian *rabû* “great” in foreign titles; compare *AHw* p. 938a. So the verse might mean “Many people make fools of everyone else, but a drunkard is a fool (even) of passers-by.” Still, this makes a much less punchy message than the one I propose.

Professor J.A. Emerton’s suggestions on a draft of this piece were very helpful, but he cannot be held responsible for my errors, nor does he necessarily share my views.

THE MANTLE HIDDEN BY ACHAN

In Josh. vii 21 we are told that, together with two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels. Achan hid “a goodly mantle of Shinar” šdr šnvr ḥt ṣwbh. Commentators normally assume that the word here, as in the remainder of its occurrences in the OT, refers to a geographical area, and they explain šdr šnvr as a mantle from Shinar.

Although the origin of the name Shinar has in the past been disputed, the area to which it refers in the OT is not in any doubt. Gen. x 10 identifies it with Babylonia, since it is said to include the cities Babel, Erech and Accad. The identification of Shinar with Babylonia is also clearly made in Gen. xi 2 and Dan. i 2.

If the word šnvr in Josh. vii 21 refers to this geographical area, it must be assumed that the phrase šdr šnvr means a “mantle from Shinar”. Thus the Revised Version translates “Babylonish mantle”, giving “mantle of Shinar” in the margin. There is, however, a serious difficulty involved in understanding the phrase in this way. Normally, when the *nomen rectum* in a construct relationship is a proper noun this either indicates possession (GK § 128g), e.g. *hykl yhwh* “the temple of the Lord” (Jer. vii 4), or else is added in nearer definition of the object (GK § 128k), e.g. *nhr prt* “the river Euphrates” (Gen. xv 18), *btzltysl* “the virgin Israel” (Amos v 2). The use of *nomen rectum* to indicate the country of origin of an object
would be exceptional. When a word for an item of clothing stands in the construct state one would normally expect the nomen rectum either to indicate the type of material from which it was made (GK § 1280), e.g. ἀμμυν ὑδ "linen breeches" (Ex. xxviii 42), ἐκροτ ὑρ "a leather girdle" (2 Kings i 8), or to be descriptive of some attribute of it (cf. GK § 128n,p), e.g. κτντ ὑσμ "a tunic reaching to the palms and soles" (Gen. xxxvii 3). It may indeed be possible to understand the phrase ὑδ in some such way. The mantle which Achan hid may have been of a particular style which was associated with Shinar, or else it may have been made of a particular type of material imported from Shinar. Thus the mantle may have carried the name of Shinar in order to indicate its style or material. The lack of such associations with Shinar in other sources may reflect nothing more than the inadequacy of our sources for knowledge of the ancient world. If the phrase ὑδ is explained in some such way, it may be held that the Massoretic Text makes satisfactory sense here and that there is no need to consider the possibility of a textual error.

It remains the case, however, that the phrase ὑδ involves an unusual use of a proper noun as a nomen rectum. The translators of the LXX evidently found this to be a problem. Elsewhere they either transliterated the name Shinar as Σενωαρ (Gen. x 10, xi 2, xiv 1,9), or rendered it by Βαδαλών (Zech. v 11; Dan. i 2); in one place they were apparently dependent upon a Vorlage with a text different from that of the MT (Isa. xi 11). In Josh. vii 21, however, they translated ὁν with θνη something "many-coloured" (cf. Gen. xxxvii 3). How they came by this translation remains uncertain, but one may at least infer from it that they thought that a reference to a geographical location would be out of place here.

The noun ὑδ occurs twice with the meaning of "glory, magnificence" (Ez. xvii 8; Zech. xi 3), and ten times with the meaning of "mantle, cloak" (Gen. xxv 25; Josh. vii 21,24; 1 Kings xix 13,19; 2 Kings ii 8,13,14; Jon. iii 6; Zech. xiii 4). Outside Josh. vii 21 the only use of this word in the construct state is in Gen. xxv 25 and Zech. xiii 4, in both cases with the noun ὑρ "hair" as its nomen rectum. The former concerns the birth of Esau. It is said that he "came forth red, all his body like a hairy mantle (ὑδ ὑρ); so they called his name Esau". The latter passage speaks of the future state of prophecy. It is said that prophecy will reach such a low state that prophets will be ashamed to be recognized as such. They will no