

On the Genesis of Nahum 1:3a

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Abstract: It is suggested that Nahum used Num 14:17-18 to generate Nah 1:3a. If the perceived process for deriving Nah 1:3a is deemed plausible, then significant insights can be obtained into Nahum’s sentiments about the acrostic in Nah 1, its date, and the meaning of גדול כח. The suggested process could have greater applicability.

Introduction

Since the end of the 19th century, the interpretation of the hymn of theophany in Nahum 1 was dominated by the possibility that it depicts an alphabetic acrostic.¹ While the Hebrew Bible contains several alphabetic acrostics in the book of Psalms, Proverbs, and Lamentations (Ps 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145, Prov 31:10-31, Lam 1-4) no such forms were thought to exist in the Prophets.² Thus Nahum 1 seems to be unique in the Prophetic corpus, with significant implications for the integrity of the Book of Nahum and the prophet’s originality.

Even if we admit, as many scholars do, that Nahum 1 contains a partial acrostic we must also be aware that the alphabetic “order” went unnoticed by many readers for along time and seemingly for good reason. Indeed, the partial alphabetic acrostic in Nahum’s hymn remained undiscovered, or was not considered of any significance, until the 19th century because it is a partial acrostic containing many irregularities.³

The acrostic is most obvious up to the letter *kaph* (כ). Murphy opined, “Until the letter *kaph*, the poem is an acrostic psalm; the attempts to reconstruct the entire alphabet are ingenious but not convincing.”⁴ Recent scholarship is comfortable with an abbreviated acrostic, which runs to the letter *kaph* (ends at verse 8 or 9).⁵ The recurrence of so many successive letters of the alphabet at regular intervals reduces to the vanishing point the possibility of the occurrence being by chance or accident. The generally held position with respect to the state of the Nahum acrostic was summed up by De Vries saying, “Two things ought no longer be disputed: (1) Nahum 1 does indeed begin with an acrostic hymn ... ; (2) this hymn reproduces only half of the alphabet, ending with the letter *kaph*.”⁶

Still, even this conservative approach technically requires four emendations in the eleven lines concerned. Certainly the technical requirements of the acrostic cannot be the sole determinants for an emendation. The rationalization for an emendation must necessarily include some inkling about the author’s expressive needs. It necessitates understanding the creator’s or adopter’s literary *modus operandi*, what was it that he wanted to convey, what his priorities were, and what motivated him.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the formation of the unusual phrase כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח, which occurs in Nah 1:3a at the very beginning of the acrostic, and to elicit from this analysis plausible insights into Nahum's sentiments with regard to the importance of the acrostic format, irrespective of whether the acrostic is his creation or an adaptation of existing material.

Nahum 1:3

Nahum 1:3 reads

יְהוָה אֵרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְגִדּוּל כַּח וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנְקָה
יְהוָה בְּסוּפָה וּבִשְׁעָרָה דָּרְכוּ וְעָנַן אֲבָק רִגְלָיו

*The Lord is forbearing and of great strength and acquit He does not acquit,
the Lord comes in a whirlwind and in a tempest is His way and a cloud dust at His heels.*

The first part of this verse caused considerable difficulties to exegetes. Some exegetes considered Nah 1:3a a gloss, because it sums up the Covenant theology of southern Israel while they believed that Nahum was not from Judah.⁷ Yet, others found Nah 1:3a contradicting the statement in Nah 1:2 that God is "quick to anger" (בַּעַל חֲמָה), and deleted Nah 1:3a for this reason.

Arnold, for instance, deletes just כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח, considering it a gloss.⁸ Gunkel deletes Nah 1:3a and the following יְהוָה.⁹ J.M.P. Smith says, "This [Nah 1:3a] seems to be a gloss intended to modify the absolute statement of line 1 by presenting another and complementary phase of the divine character. Not only does it depart from the alphabetic order, but it is an abnormally long line, ... After the strong statement of Yahweh's wrath in v. 2a, the glossator felt the need for a reference to the patience and mercy of God, but was careful to add that even so, Yahweh was not one to let the wicked go scot-free."¹⁰ Pereman found both occurrences of יְהוָה in the verse inconvenient for the acrostic structure, since they obscured what he believed to be the א-line (Nah 1:3a) and the ב-line (Nah 1:3b).¹¹

One is certainly struck by the similarity of Nah 1:3a to standard stock descriptions of God's attributes (Ex 34:6-7, Num 14:18, Joel 2:13, Jon 4:2, Ps 86:15, 103:8, 145:8, Neh 9:17) and the obvious deviation from them.¹² For instance, in Ex 34:6-7 we find

יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אֶפְיֹן אֵרֶךְ וּרְבַּח חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת... וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנְקָה

Why did Nahum change the formulaic expression? Why did he opt for the phrase כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח instead of וּרְבַח חֶסֶד? How was Nah 1:3a possibly generated? Obviously, understanding the process, by which the author of the hymn in Nahum 1 might have shaped existing material to create the hemistich, is by its very nature rather speculative. Still, if a plausible scenario could be construed it could shed some light on Nahum's priorities and illuminate the still debated issues connected with the acrostic in Nahum 1. We would attempt to suggest a plausible literary path that generated Nah 1:3a and discuss the insights that it offers with respect to Nahum's position on the acrostic.

Analysis

The critical term for understanding the formation of Nah 1:3a is the phrase כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח ("and great of power or strength"), which does not occur in the list of God's attributes, nor anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible.¹³ The Septuagint has for כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח "and his power is great" (καὶ μεγάλη ἡ ἰσχύς αὐτοῦ), the Targum tries to remove any anthropomorphic vestiges rendering כַּח וְגִדּוּל כַּח "and much strength before him" (וסגי חילא קדמוהי), the Peshitta has "and great in power", and so does the

Vulgate (*et magnus fortitudine*). Thus, while the MT phrase **גדול כה** does not occur anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, it is supported by the *Versions*.

Yet, already Gunkel suggested "In der Glosse ist für das sinnlose **כה** zu lesen **חסד** (Ex 34:6, Num 14:18, Neh 9:17, Ps 103:8, Joel 2:13, Jon 4:2, Ps 145:8)."¹⁴ Similarly, J.M.P. Smith emends **כה גדול** to **גדול חסד** in accord with Ps 145:8 (cf. Num 14:19, Ps 57:10, 108:5) because it is "an idiom nowhere else occurring."¹⁵

However, Haupt observes that **גדול חסד** would not have been corrupted to **כה גדול**. In his opinion, the glossator meant to emphasize the fact that if God does not wreak vengeance at once, it is not lack of power, which prompts Him to defer the punishment, but His patience. He is all-powerful, but long-suffering.¹⁶ Indeed, **כה** and **חסד** are orthographically quite different in both the paleoscript and the square script. One would be hard pressed making a case for an orthographic corruption.

It is quite possible that the phrase **גדול חסד** was also current in Nahum's time. Various combinations of **גדל** and **חסד** are found in the Hebrew Bible (Num 14:19, Ps 57:10, 108:5, Gen 19:19, 1Kgs 3:16). However, these cases (except of Ps 145:8) never occur in the context of the thirteen divine attributes. Only in Ps 145:8 does the construct form **גדול חסד** occur, and that in the context of the thirteen divine attributes. It can be well questioned whether the single occurrence of a phrase is sufficient cause for the emendation or deletion of another single phrase. Indeed, the fact that almost always the formulaic phrase is **ורב חסד**, except of **וגדול חסד** in Ps 145:8, and that it occurs frequently, indicates that it was a firmly established formulaic phrase presenting little chance for drastic scribal error in two words. The MT, as we have seen is also supported by the *Versions*.

Certainly, the phrase **וגדול כה** could have been derived in a variety of ways. It might have been a contraction of a longer phrase such as **גדול יהוה ורב כה** (cf. Ps 147: 5, Job 36: 5). It could have been a variant of the stock phrase **כה גדול** (Ex 32:11, Deut 4:37, 9:29, 2 Kgs 17:36, Jer 32:17). Indeed, Spronk believes that Nahum generated the phrase **כה גדול** from **גדול כה** (Ex 32:11, etc.) by restructuring it according to the structure of **רב חסד**: i.e., **חסד** ==> **כה**, **רב** ==> **גדול**, and **כה רב חסד** ==> **כה גדול**.¹⁷ An Israelite would obviously find the phrase **וגדול כה** not only sounding "right" but also being quite meaningful. While the possibility of Spronk's suggestion cannot be disproved, it still leaves open the question why did Nahum choose **כה גדול** altogether and not some other phrase, say **רב חסד**, **גדול חסד**, **רב כה** (cf. Ps 147:5, Job 36:5). In Spronk's view Nahum replaced the formulaic **רב חסד** with **כה גדול** to make the point that some of God's attributes would assume a vengeful character, and at the same time he omitted any of the standard references to forgiveness underscoring God's anger. Spronk says, "The poet put his own stamp on the original formulae. The original positive message was 'vengefully reapplied'¹⁸ to underline the announcement of YHWH's anger coming upon his enemies. **נוטר** in v. 2b has been interpreted as replacing **חסד**. Now the traditional **אפים ארך**, 'long of anger,' that is, able to hold back his anger for a long time (cf. Isa 48:9, Jer 15:15, Prov 19:11, 25:15), seems to have been mentioned only to be modified. For this reason **רב חסד** was replaced by **גדול כה**, whereas the references to YHWH's willingness to forgive (Ex 34:7, Ps 103:8) are left out."¹⁹ Why then didn't he use **רב כה**?

Genesis of **וגדול כה**

Our analysis leaves the impression that the phrase **גדול כה** is not a scribal error, but was rather deliberately selected by Nahum. It cannot be deleted or emended. How did **גדול כה** come into being? What was the rationale for it? I suggest that Nahum adapted Num 14:17-18 to his particular needs when he formulated 1:3a. The verses in Num 14:17-18 read:

ועתה יגדל נא כח אדני כאשר דברת לאמר:
יהוה ארך אפים ורב חסד נשא עון ופשע ונקמה לא ינקח פקד עון אבות על בנים על שלשים ועל רבעים:

(And now, let my Lord's strength be great as You declared saying: God [is] slow to anger and abounding in kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression, yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children, upon the third and fourth generation).

These two verses are the only reference to the deity's great power, which uses both גדל and כח, and a variant of God's attributes in such close proximity.

In his plea to God, after the return of the spies (Num 14:17), Moses uses the phrase נא כח אדני יגדל. This is followed by a variant of God's attributes (Num 14:18). Nahum seems to be making (or using) the reasonable implication

אדני גדל כח \Rightarrow יגדל כח אדני.²⁰

Had Nahum made this implication and linearly adopted the text in Num 14:17-18, he would have come up with the verse

אדני גדל כח יהוה ארך אפים ונקמה לא ינקח.

Such a verse would have naturally provided the א for the acrostic, and would have been perfectly balanced as a 3-cola line of 3-beat cola.

Why then did Nahum not use such a verse for 1:3a? It seems that at the time Nah 1:3a was formed the term אדני was no more in use as a standalone name of the deity.²¹ The author consequently replaced it with יהוה. However, this resulted in the loss of the א in the acrostic. He therefore moved the entire second colon to the beginning of the verse recouping the א in the acrostic (in the word ארך), albeit as the second word following יהוה. This resulted in the verse

יהוה ארך אפים יהוה גדל כח ונקמה לא ינקח.

This version was apparently unsatisfactory because it did not properly mimic the format of Num 14:18, where יהוה occurs only once, at the beginning of the verse. Consequently, Nahum had to delete the second יהוה. To indicate that יהוה should not be considered part of the acrostic he also used יהוה in the following hemistich, where it is unnecessary and harms the poetic balance.²² Nahum could have certainly formed the verse

ארך אפים יהוה גדל כח ונקמה לא ינקח.

However, doing so he would not have been faithful to the text in Num 14:17-18. In Num 14:17-19 Moses presents the tension between גדל כח and רב חסד. He argues that God would exhibit even greater כח ("strength, excellence, greatness") by exercising His great grace. J.M.P. Smith is correct saying that "the strength spoken of must be moral strength, and the thought probably is that Yahweh's self-control is too great to permit him to act upon the impulse of sudden outbursts of wrath".²³ However, this is not the only type of strength that Nahum alludes to. Placing גדול כח between ארך אפים and לא ינקח Nahum cleverly indicated that God's strength is exhibited not only by His restraint and patience, but also by His exacting the punishment due. In גדול כח both moral and physical strengths are alluded to, reflecting the unique combination of God's justice, compassion, and power.²⁴

Roberts observes, "In most of these passages [where some of the thirteen attributes occur] the emphasis is upon God's mercy, his slowness to anger, and his willingness to forgive. Nahum's emphasis is quite different. While he acknowledges the traditional confession about the nature of Yahweh, he shapes the statement to support his own borrowed portrait of Yahweh as an enraged God of harsh vengeance. In contrast to all the other occurrences of this confessional statement, where Yahweh's slowness to anger is expanded by the statement וגדול חסד or ורב חסד, 'and great in loving kindness,' Nahum has וגדול כח, 'but great in strength,' this shifts the thought from God's merciful willingness to forgive to back to God's majesty, and the shift is completed by the following statement that Nahum shares with Ex 34:7 and Num 14:18: 'And Yahweh will certainly not acquit the guilty.' Contrary to what some might think (Jonah 4:2), God's traditional graciousness and willingness to forgive would not allow his enemies to escape their deserved judgment."²⁵

It is significant that the recipients of God's grace in Num 14:19 are the Israelites, while in the historical context of Nahum those were the Assyrian. Clearly, Nahum has not selected accidentally Num 14:17-18 as the source for his verse. His obvious purpose was to countervail the existing perception, based on the thirteen attributes, that God's essential mercy, slowness to anger, and willingness to forgive lead to long lasting injustice.²⁶ Linking the attributes that are relevant to Judah's situation with the episode of Moses' plea in Num 14:17-19, Nahum makes the point that God's essential mercy, slowness to anger, and willingness to forgive are applied to their oppressor as they were in the past applied to the benefit of their forefathers. This was a comforting message for Judah during the Assyrian oppression. It provided a proper perspective, pointed out a clear historical precedent, and was imbued with hope. Indeed, Nahum exhibited in 1:3a masterful treatment of a biblical source for bringing home his prophetic message.

Insights

Any attempt to decipher the creative process that led to an author's choice of a particular phrase is admittedly speculative. However, it is believed that in this case the internal logic and the textual uniqueness of Num 14:17-18 accord a measure of plausibility. If I am correct in my understanding the process by which Nah 1:3a was derived from the text in Num 14:17-18, then the following observations can be made:

1. The hemistich Nah 1:3a should not be deleted, nor should it be in any way emended.²⁷
The author invested much thought into its formation, shaping it to his liking by balancing between the needs of the acrostic and faithfulness to the original text from which it was culled. The phrase גדול כח is the only phrase with sufficient thirteen attribute "pedigree" to replace the thirteen attribute phrase רב חסד.
2. The needs of the acrostic played a non-trivial role in the shaping of the text.²⁸
This should be considered as an argument against those who deny the partial acrostic in Nahum 1.²⁹
3. The acrostic cannot be exilic or post exilic.³⁰
In the exilic or post exilic period אדני, as a standalone name of the deity, was in wide use.
4. The author did not rigorously adhere to the acrostic structure. He was satisfied when the word for the acrostic was the second in the line.
In Nah 1:6 many move לפני so that that the following זעמו would provide the ז – line for the acrostic. Support for the reading זעמו מי יעמוד לפני is found in Ps 76:8 (compare also 2 Sam 22:7 and Ps 18:7). Roberts rationalized that the corruption of the MT "reflects a tendency in textual transmission for unusual word order in poetic texts to be reverted back to more common patterns over the course of time."³¹ However, the first line of the MT exhibits a nice chiasmus, while the

suggested emendation does not and sounds stilted. Moreover, it is not obvious how לפני wandered to where the emendation places it, and how on arrival it acquired a ו. Our insight into Nahum's creative process indicates that there is no need to emend Nah 1:6 into a Hebrew oddity. Nor should we feel compelled to delete the first ו of ויודע in Nah 1:7, though a minor emendation.

5. The phrase גדול כח should be given a meaning that reflects the spirit and the context of Num 14.

Seemingly Nahum was pulled to Num 14 not just for the technical reason of finding a more vengeful version of the thirteen attributes. He must have intended to create a theological linkage between the attitude of Moses and the situation in his time.

6. The approach utilized for the analysis of Nah 1:3a may have greater validity, though this potential has not yet been explored.

Conclusion

Nahum struggled in the opening chapter of his prophecy with the classical problem of timeliness of heavenly justice, and the danger that delay of judgement would lead to a perception of God's inability and loss of faith. The long oppression of Judah by Assyria made this problem in particular acute.

Using רב חסד in a text that mentions some of the thirteen attributes was out of the question. In the historical context this attribute was an advantage for the Assyrian oppressor. Nahum needed something to counter the growing impression that the gods of Assyria are stronger than the God of Israel and that the God of Israel does not have the strength to free them from the long lasting oppression. He needed as Spronk says a counterbalance to אפים ארך.³² In a text that quotes God's thirteen attributes he could not replace one of its phrases with an arbitrary construct. He had to find a phrase that is useful for his intended message but is also closely linked with the thirteen attributes. It is in my opinion a mark of Nahum's ingenuity that he found the required phrase in Num 14:17-18. Substituting in a very familiar context a different and unique phrase guaranteed of being effectively noticed.

References

1. The acrostic is a literary, usually poetic, creation in which the first characters of its parts form the sequence of letters of the alphabet, some words, or names. In the Talmud (TY Shabbath 16:5, TB Sanhedrin 104a) the acrostic is called "alpha beta" (אלפא ביתא) and this term apparently included chapters of the Hebrew Bible that had 22 lines. For instance, we find in the Midrash "You transgressed seven sins before me, therefore Jeremiah comes and laments over you seven laments, which are the seven alpha betas of Lamentations" (Ptihata d'Eikha Rabbati 27). However, the last chapter has just 22 lines.
2. Melitz, A. "אקרוסטיכון במקרא." *Beit Mikra* 36 (1991) 250-262.
3. Delitzsch, F. *Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen*. Leipzig: BCAT 4/1 (1867) 107. According to Delitzsch the acrostic was first noticed by the pastor G. Frohnmeier of Lienzingen in Würtemberg. Delitzsch mentions it in his commentary on Ps 9:1. He notes, "Sogar der Prophet verschmäh't es nicht, wie aus Nah 1,3-7 ersichtlich, der Buchstabenfolge einen Einfluß auf seinen Gedankenreihen einzuräumen" (106f.).
4. Murphy, R.T.A. "Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk." In *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds. R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer, and R.E. Murphy). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall (1968) 294.
5. Christensen, D.L. "The Acrostic of Nahum Reconsidered." *ZAW* 87 (1975) 17-30. Cf. also Karl Eliger in *Das Alte Testament Deutsch* ("Nahum." In *Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten*, II,

5. Göttingen (1964)) and Friedrich Horst in *Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten, Nahum bis Maleachi*, 3. Tübingen (1964)).
6. De Vries, S.J. "The Acrostic of Nahum in the Jerusalem Liturgy." *VT* 16 (1966) 477f.
7. Beyerlin, W. *Origins and History of the Old Sinaitic Traditions* (trans. S. Rudman). Oxford: Blackwell (1966)138.
8. Arnold, W.R. "The Composition of Nahum 1-2, 3," *ZAW* 21 (1901) 259.
9. Gunkel, H. "Nahum 1." *ZAW* 13 (1893) 226.
10. Smith, J.M.P. "Commentary on the Book of Nahum." In J.M.P. Smith, W.H. Ward, J.A. Bewer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*. Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark (1985) 288.
11. Pereman, J. *Sepher Nahum*. Tel Aviv: Ancient Near-East Studies (1956) 37.
12. The NJPS translation of the thirteen attributes in (Ex 34:6-7) is: The Lord! the Lord! a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of parents upon children and children's children, upon the third and fourth generation. Variant forms of the same characterization of God occur in Num 14:18, Joel 2:13, Jon 4:2, Pss 86:15, 103:8, 145:8, Neh 9:17. The term יג מידות "thirteen attributes" occurs in TB Rosh Hashanah 17b. There are differences among Jewish traditional commentators on the counting of the thirteen attributes in these verses. Luzzato mentions twelve different methods for counting the attributes (Luzzato, S.D. תורה פרוש על חמשה חומשי. Tel Aviv: Dvir (1966) 386-7). Hacham mentions some additional methods (Hacham, A. ספר שמות פרוש דעת. מקרא. Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook (1991) 332-335).
13. The NJPS translates גדול כח, "of great forbearance." However, the sense "forbearance" for כח is not attested in the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, while the Hebrew ארך אפים and גדול כח describe two clearly distinct attributes, "slow to anger" (ארך אפים) and "of great forbearance" (גדול כח) used in the NJPS translation make the two attributes almost synonymous. Standard English translations render גדול כח "and great of power."
14. Gunkel, 226.
15. J.M.P. Smith, 289.
16. Haupt, P. *The Book of Nahum: A New Metrical Translation with an Introduction, Restoration of the Hebrew Text and Explanatory and Critical Notes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press (1907) 21.
17. Spronk, K. *Nahum*. Kampen: Kok Pharos (1997) 37.
18. Fishbane, M. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press (1985) 347 note 79.
19. Spronk, 36-37.
20. Such an implication can be detected at work also with respect to the phrase גדול חסד. Compare Gen 19:10, Num 14:19, Pss 57:10, 108:5, 145:8 with 1 Kgs 3:6, Ps 86:13, 2 Chr 1:8.
21. None of the following prophets use אדני by itself for the deity: Samuel, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai. It would appear that the use of אדני was resumed in the Babylonian exile.
22. Christensen, D.L. "The Acrostic of Nahum Reconsidered." *ZAW* 87 (1975) 21. Christensen notes, "This poem is remarkably well preserved with no evidence elsewhere of secondary expansion. The prosodic-textual analysis of the poem as a whole reveals a careful weighted internal structure, which suggests that the anomalous poetic feature displayed in this bicolon is intentional."
23. J.M.P. Smith, 289.

24. Rashi (1040-1105) understood גדול כח as expressing the Lord's capability to exact vengeance, linking גדול כח with ונקמה לא ינקמה. Ibn Ezra (1089-c. 1164) and Kimchi (1160-1235) who felt that this phrase expresses the Lord's capability to contain His anger, apparently link כח גדול with ארץ אפים. The sages noted, "Anywhere [in the Hebrew Bible] you find His might you also find His mercy" (TB Megilah 31a).
25. Roberts, J.J.M. *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press (1991) 50.
26. Abarbanel (1437-1508) says that mentioning ונקמה לא ינקמה and ארץ אפים is intended to be an apology for the lateness of heavenly punishment for Assyria. Nahum essentially says that Assyria's transgressions have not been forgiven. The punishment has been postponed to enable Assyrian repentance in accord with the Lord's attribute of "slow to anger."
27. Gunkel, 226. Gunkel has just יהוה בעל חמה אל קנאו ונקם, which he derives from 1:2a, 1:2b, and 1:3a. BHS suggests deletion of the first hemistich. For the sake of obtaining a starting א for the acrostic, some delete יהוה (Pereman, 37).
28. This position is supported by the observation that in the preceding verse the words אל, יהוה, and יהוה occur in a reversed order to that in the thirteen attributes, suggesting that the change was made to accommodate an acrostic.
29. Delitzsch, F. *Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen*. Leipzig: BCAT 4/1 (1867) 106-107. Already Delitzsch opined that "the author allowed himself here and there, perhaps accidentally, to follow the alphabetic order." Almost half a century ago Haldar denied altogether the presence of an acrostic hymn (Haldar, A. *Studies in the Book of Nahum*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell (1947) 24). Maier argued that "no satisfactory explanation is given for the incredible circumstance that the Hebrew copyist did not recognize the alphabetism which modern interpreters easily discern; no justification has been offered for the incomplete arrangement" (Maier, W. A. *The Book of Nahum: A Commentary*. St. Louis: Concordia (1959) 60). Most recently, using textcritical and formcritical arguments, Floyd expressed strong opposition to the possibility of an acrostic in Nahum. He argued that too many letters of the Hebrew alphabet are missing and/or have been reconstructed; the א-strophe is three times as long as the comparable strophes; there are no known examples of ancient Near Eastern texts consisting of an acrostic on the half of the alphabet (Floyd, M.H. "The Chimerical Acrostic of Nahum 1,2-10". *JBL* 113 (1994) 421-437). A similar position was taken by Becking, who finds Floyd's arguments convincing (Becking, B. "Passion, Power and Protection. Interpreting the God of Nahum." In *Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender Specific and related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes* (eds. B. Becking and M. Dijkstra). Leiden: E. J. Brill (1995) 4ff.). For a discussion of the acrostic in Nahum 1 see my paper: "Nahum 1: Acrostic and Authorship." *JBQ* 34,2 (2006) 97-103.
30. Jeremias, J. *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der späten Königszeit*. MWANT 35 (1970) 19. For instance, Jeremias felt that Nahum's book is the product of post-exilic reinterpretation by cultic prophets. Seybold attributes to a 7th century prophet some sections of chapters 2 and 3, with the rest being fill-ins by a redactor in the Persian period (Seybold, K. *Profane Prophetie: Studien zum Buch Nahum*. Stuttgart: SBS 135 (1989)). Haupt believed that the Book of Nahum is a liturgical compilation for the celebration of the Maccabean victory over Nicanor on 18th of Adar, 161 BCE (Haupt, 1).
31. Roberts, 41.
32. Spronk, 37. Spronk say, "It can be concluded that in Nah 1:3 כח גדול is meant to counterbalance ארץ אפים."