

The regular meaning of the word קצף in the Hebrew Bible is "wrath, anger."¹ From the Middle Ages² until the present day,³ scholars have been divided on the meaning of קצף in Hosea 10:7: נדמה שומרון מלכה כקצף על פני מים "Samaria and its king shall perish⁴ like קצף on the surface of the water." The two renderings of קצף in this verse which have found the greatest number of adherents have been

¹ קצף occurs more than 25 times and always means "wrath, anger" in all passages other than Hos. 10:7. It serves as a synonym to חמה in Deut. 29:27; Isa. 34:2; Jer. 21:5; 32:37; Ps. 38:2, and as a synonym to אף in Deut. 29:27; Jer. 21:5; 32:39.

² Rashi understood קצף as "foam," Ibn Ezra took it as "splinter of wood," and Kimchi sided with the latter interpretation but cited the former as another possibility. Those who understood קצף as "splinter of wood" cited Joel 1:7 as supporting their interpretation.

³ BDB, p. 893; Koehler-Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 848; and W. H. Harper, Amos and Hosea, ICC (London, 1905), p. 347, all translate "splinter of wood" or the like. A. Ehrlich, Miqra Ki-Pheshuto (Rep: N.Y., 1969), vol. 3, p. 382 (Hebrew); S. Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae (Rep: Jerusalem, 1965), p. 1037b (Hebrew); and A. S. Yehuda, JQR 13 (1903), p. 706, all render "foam."

⁴ נדמה is a third person masculine perfect niphal of דמה "to annihilate"; cf. Isa. 15:1; Hos. 10:15 and Zeph. 1:11. That this is the only sense permitted here is shown by the parallelism in verses seven and eight (i.e., // נשמדו). The waw is supplied by BH³ and may or may not be required. An alternative explanation would be to put the etnachta under the word, but this division seems a bit unnatural.

