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NOTES ON ECCLESIASTES

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THERE is no סוף דבר to books and notes on the Preacher. As I write I observe a paper by G. Margoliouth in the current *Expositor* containing some word-studies on that composition of perennial interest. My first five notes bear upon cases of *Aramaismus* in the Preacher.

(1) 3 1 תפק. It has been rather ignored by modern commentators (e. g. McNeile translates "occupation") that פ — B̄Aram. and Syr. צב, e. g. Dan 6 18. *Per contra*, פ occurs in its ordinary Heb. sense as "pleasure" in 12 1, 10, this proving that Koheleth could use a word in more than one meaning. The observation has bearing on the disputed interpretation of עלם 3 11.

(2) הבל ורעות רוח. All possible roots and derivative meanings have been applied to the interpretation of רעות; e. g., McN. has "striving after," Barton "desire of wind." But the equivalent parallel רעות רוח רעיון appears in 1 17; 4 16. Now רעיון is "thought," as in 2 22, in B̄Aram. Dan 2 30, and commonly in Syr. Since the unknown is to be deduced from the known, רעות should also mean "thought." Hence here "a vain thought."

(3) 3 18 is a crux. It reads: "on account of the sons of man that God may prove them" (of course Semitic idiom for, "in order that God may prove the sons of man"), and then לראות להם שיהם בהמה דמה להם. Delitzsch follows א: "and to see that they are beasts, they for themselves (sie an sich selber)." McN., Bar. follow VSS in reading לראות, i. e., "to show (them) that they are beasts," omitting להם, which 6 read with the next verse. But either statement, that God wishes to see, or to show

men, that they are beasts, transcends even Koheleth's pessimism. I suggest that שׁוּם is a conflation of BAram. הָן and Heb. אִם "if," and that שׁ — Aram. ܫܝ, the combination introducing an indirect question, "whether." Cf. Pesh. to Mt. 12 10, "asking whether (ܫܝ) it is lawful," etc. And so read: "to prove them and see whether they are beasts." Of course their end is that of beasts, but not of necessity their life.

(4) 9 15 מִצָּא בַּה אָדָם. Some, e. g. Del., translate: "and he (the king = v. 14) found in it a man;" others treat מִצָּא as impersonal, "there was found." But מִצָּא — exactly here Aram. מִצָּא, the meaning of which, whatever its relation to the Heb. vb., appears to have been attributed to מִצָּא. See some possible examples BDB p. 593, b, and note Job 11 7 אִם עַד תִּבְלִית תִּבְעָא; here comm. would correct to תִּבְעָא, but in any case the sense of מִצָּא here as — מִצָּא was valid to the Jewish readers.

(5) 10 1 יִקָּר מַחֲכָמָה מִכְבוֹד סִכְלוֹת מַעֵם. Recent comm. translate יִקָּר by "more valued;" but this makes no sense in the parallelism. Del. is correct: "schwerer als Weisheit, als Ehre, wiegt ein wenig Narrheit." Or possibly, "a little folly is too heavy for wisdom to carry." יִקָּר is here used in the Aram. sense of יִקָּר "heavy," which appears in Sachau's papyri, plate 46. Probably we should point here יִקָּר. Otherwise the root יִקָּר is used in Heb. only in the sense "be valuable, honored."

The following are some casual notes.

(6) 1 5 אֵל מְקוֹמוֹ שָׂאף זֹרַח הוּא שָׂם. I suggest reading אֵל מְקוֹמוֹ שָׂאף, and so, "unto the place where also he rises—there he is."

(7) 2 8 שְׂדֵה וְשֹׁדוֹת. It is interesting to note that the various traditional interpretations have reasonable philological background. One of these is the Rabbinic interpretation as of "palanquins" or the like (s. Del. for the references). The interpretation is a correct reminiscence of a term parallel to the Akkadian *šadittu* (rt. שָׂדַד), "portable chair."

(8) 3 15 וְהָאֱלֹהִים יִבְקֹשׂ אֶת נַרְדִּי. 'נ' as "persecuted" has no sense. Rather connect with Arab. *ridf, radif*, "rider *en croupe*," "sequence," etc. I. e., it is God's business to ascertain the result.

(9) 5 10 **רָאִיתָ** Kt., **רָאִיתָ** Krê. The Kt. — **רִית** in the Mesha Inscr., l. 12. The Krê should be rectified to **רָאִיתָ**, cf. **רָאִיתָ** in Dan. The VSS, except S, read it as a verb, i. e. **רָאִיתָ**.

(10) 8 10 **וּבְנֵי מִקְדָּשׁ קְדוֹשׁ הָיְתָה**. Ehrlich's point that the "holy place" is not the temple but a synagogue is now corroborated by the 'Ain Dûk Inscr., which twice refers to the synagogue as **בֵּית אֲתוּרָה קְדוֹשָׁה**. The analogy requires correcting **מִ** here to **מִקְדָּשׁ**. I venture this rendering of the first part of the verse: "I saw wicked men buried, and they used to go in and out of the holy place they would go," i. e. the hypocrites had the run of the synagogue. The translation involves a synchysis of the two clauses.

(11) 9 3 **אֲחֵרֵי אֵל מְתִים**. The comm. understand **אֲחֵרֵי** as "after it," i. e. the man's life, etc. But **אֲחֵרֵי** = "end" as in 2 Sam. 2 23, **אֲחֵרֵי הַחֲנִית** "the spear's end." Accordingly translate "his end is to (be with) the dead." So, I see, Ehr. has suggested. Symmachus read similarly (s. Field on the Syr. Hexaplar), but it is not necessary with Driver in Kittel's Bible to correct **אֲחֵרֵי** to **אֲחֵרֵי**.

(12) 9 12 **וּזְקִשִּׁים בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לַעֵת רָעָה**. This is generally translated: "Men are snared at an evil time," in which "evil" bothers the interpreters. But taking **לַעֵת** as case of agent after the passive, the natural construction, we may render: "snared by an evil fate." Above in the same verse we can then translate: "man knows not his fate," and in v. 11 **עַתָּה וּפְנֵעַ** means "a fate of mischance." For in Eccl. **עַתָּה** essentially equals fate. In 3 1 **עַתָּה** = **זְמַן**, and the latter corresponds, according to some even etymologically, to OPers. *zrvân*, which = "time," then used of the absolute category of existence, and so identical with Fate.¹

¹ This category of Time as the absolute existence appears in the apparently little known Syriac tractate *The Epistle of Mara son of Scrapion*, published by Cureton in his *Spicilegium syriacum* (1855). An English translation accompanies the text (pp. 70ff.). Cureton makes no observation on the term, **זְמַן**, which he translates "the Time." Such passages as these may be cited: "Time forbade us to complete those things which were resolved upon in our mind;" "Let us be obedient to that dominion which Time has assigned to us;" and the concluding witticism in answer to the question what Mara was laughing at: "I was laughing at Time, because, without having borrowed any evil from me,

(13) 10 19 כסף יענה את הכל. Generally translated: "Money answers to all things." But the verb occurs in 1 13 as a denominative: "It is an evil business (ענין) that God has given to the sons of man to be concerned with (לענות בו)." And so here: "Money concerns all (or, everything)"; i. e. it is the constant business of the world, unlike the feasting and drinking cited in the first half of the verse.

(14) 11 2 לא תרע מה יהיה רעה. The usual translation is: "thou knowest not what evil shall be." But rather מה = "whether," as in Song 8 4, where it corresponds to אַם in the identical phrase 2 7; 3 5. The development is similar to that of Greek μή. The same construction is found in Jer. 2 5 מה מצאו אבותיכם מה בי עול "did your fathers find in me wrong?". I may refer to my note on מי יקום יעקב Am. 7 2, *JBL* 1904, p. 95, where I argued that מי = מה. Probably there as here מה = μή, i. e. "can J. rise?". The same particle appears in Syriac ܡܐ = *da + ma*.

(15) 11 3 יהיא. The Kt., read as יהיא from the Aramaic vb. היה, "will be," is entirely valid in the sentence. Probably the present pointing is due to the attempt to disguise a pronunciation which was identical with that of the Tetragrammaton, a disguise parallel to the artificial להיא of Baram.

(16) 12 11 "Wise men's words are like goads and like nails implanted בעלי אספות. The current interpretations of these last words are in vain. What is required is: nails driven into the top (= עלי?) of a club. Some such word may be concealed in אספות. A forceful metaphor is used to indicate the stimulating character of the words of the wise!

it repays me." For the nature and early rise of this theologumenon of Time, testified to for the Persian religion by Eudemos a pupil of Aristotle, see Cumont, *Monuments relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, pp. 20, 74; E. Meyer, *Ursprung u. Anfänge d. Christentums*, 2, 88-89; and for the Parsee Zervanite sect, Scheftelowitz, *Die altpersische Religion*, pp. 52, 230.