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JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

NINETEENTH YEAR—1900—PART I.

Notes on Psalm ii. 11–12 and on אָרֶן, Isaiah xlv. 14.

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THE Masoretic Hebrew text of the last strophe, v.^{10–12} of Ps. 2, is as follows :

1 וַתֵּת מַלְכִים הַשְּׁבִילֹ	5 פֶּן יֵאָנֶף וְתֵאָבְרוּ דָרֶךְ
2 הַיָּסוּרֹ שֹׁפֵטֵי אֶרֶץ	6 כִּי יִבְעַר כַּמַּעֲט אֲפֹ
3 עֲבָדוּ אֵת יְהוָה בִּירֵאָה	7 אֲשֶׁר־כָּל חֹסֵי בֹ
4 וַיִּלְלוּ בְרַעְדָּה נִשְׁקֹוּ בֹר	

The above division into lines is necessitated by the trimeter rhythm, which is fairly constant throughout the poem. In the fourth line of the strophe two unusual expressions occur, viz. *וַיִּלְלוּ בְרַעְדָּה* and *נִשְׁקֹוּ בֹר*. The first of these is translated slavishly by *G αγαλλιασθε αὐτῶ ἐν τρόμῳ* (*V exultate ei cum tremore*) but there is really no parallel for *וַיִּלְלוּ בְרַעְדָּה* which seems impossible, or, at least, very improbable. The stem *ליל*, cognate with Arabic *ġala*, means only 'go around in a circle, be excited to laughter, rejoice,' and is certainly very strange in connection with *רַעְדָּה*. The only other passage besides Ps. 2¹¹ where *ליל* appears in a sense different from its ordinary meaning is Hos. 10⁵, where it occurs in parallelism with *אָבַל* 'mourn.' Here, however, it may well be a clerical error for *חִיל*, as Ewald and Cheyne clearly saw. Grätz and others, following Ps. 48⁷, accordingly substitute *חִילֹ* in Ps. 2¹¹, which would be a possible reading, were it not for the following *נִשְׁקֹוּ בֹר*.

The translation of this by 'kiss the son' is not impossible from a purely textual point of view. The Aramaic form *בֹר*¹ might have been used by our poet instead of the Hebrew *בֶּן*, to avoid a disagreeable assonance with the following *פֶּן*, especially as the Aramaic form *רַעַץ* (root *רַעַע* for Hebrew *רָעַץ*) occurs v.⁹. The existence of

¹ *בֹר* occurs also in the Aramaized Hebrew of Prov. 31².

the purely Heb. בן in v.⁷ does not militate against this suggestion, as there would have been no reason to use a different expression in that passage. Some expositors, in fact, insist on translating 'kiss the son,' owing to the allusion to the sonship of the divinely appointed king in v.⁷, but if the context of Ps. 2¹² be examined carefully, it will be seen that neither the subject of אֱנִי nor the person to whom the possessive suffix in אֱנִי refers can possibly be the Son-Messiah. "Lest he be angry and ye wander on your way, for his wrath is easily kindled. Happy are all who put their trust in him." This can refer only to Jahveh Himself, whom the heathen kings are especially adjured to serve in v.¹¹, and not to the divinely appointed king. The translation 'son' then is clearly inadmissible from a critical point of view.

Jerome translates נִשְׁקוּ בַר *adore pure*,² which is followed by some modern commentators — notably Briggs, *Mess. Proph.*, p. 136, who renders 'and reverence with trembling, render sincere homage.' This is not satisfactory because בַר occurs nowhere else as an adverb, although בַר appears Is. 33⁷ in the sense 'bitterly.' The stem נִשְׁק, moreover, never appears in classical Hebrew without an object: cf. Job 31²⁷ 1 K. 19¹⁸ Hos. 13³. Turning now to G and V, we find the translation δράσαθε παιδείας *apprehendite disciplinam*, which, as Grätz saw, must presuppose a text קָחוּ בְמוֹסָר. In his *Psalmen*, p. 158, he accordingly substitutes this for נִשְׁקוּ בַר. This seems much too radical a change for serious consideration. The widely divergent text of G here would rather imply the existence of a different Hebrew original. Baethgen, *Psalmen*, p. 7, very ingeniously conjectures that the original of G depended on some haggadic interpretation of בַר in the sense of מוֹסָר or תּוֹרָה. He advances this suggestion on the analogy of the Talmud which understood נִשְׁקוּ בַר as 'cleave to the law,' בַר = תּוֹרָה.³ Lagarde reads נִשְׁקוּ מוֹסָרָו 'put on again his bonds,' referring it to the allusion in v.³, but this is equally unsatisfactory, as נִשְׁק is never found in this sense.

It is evident that the text of this whole passage is extremely corrupt, both from the fact that the versions differ so widely from M and that it is practically impossible to get any sense from M as it stands. The verses ¹¹⁻¹² may be altered as indicated in the following revision of the strophe:

1 וְתַחַה מַלְכִים הַשְׂכִּילוּ	And now, ye kings, take heed!
2 הַיְסִירוּ שַׁמְטֵי אֶרֶץ	Be warned, ye rulers of earth!

² Cf. Sym. προσκυνήσατε καθαρῶς. Ἀφ. καταφιλήσατε ἐκλεκτῶς.

³ See Weber, *Altsynagogale Theologie*, p. 148.

עבדו את יהוה ביראה 3	Serve ye Jahveh with fear,
ונשקו לו ברעדה 4	And cleave to him with trembling.
מן יאנה ותאבדו דרך 5	Lest he be angry and ye wander on your way!
כי יכשר כמעט אפו 6	For easily kindled is his wrath.
אשר כל חסי בו 7	Happy are all who put their trust in Him.

The chief points to be noted are : a) The verb נשק, meaning 'cleave to, kiss,' is nearly always⁴ construed in classical Hebrew with the preposition ל. b) It is possible, therefore, that the last syllable of the otherwise unsatisfactory גילו stands for an original לו. Erasing the unnecessary גי, we get לו...ו.⁵ c) The next step is to transpose נשקו, so as to read ונשקו לו. The גי of גילו may possibly have arisen from dittography of קו in נשקו. d) This leaves ברעדה, of which בר may be cancelled as a dittography. This gives the perfect trimeter line לו ברעדה, and makes the last strophe seven lines long, as are the first and third. The second has but six. The word דרך in the fifth line of the strophe may be construed as an accusative of respect dependent on תאבדו as in Dt. 32²⁸: כי נוי אבד עצות הפה.

ארן occurs twice in the Old Testament,⁶ namely, Is. 44¹⁴, in the evident sense 'fir, cedar,' and in 1 Chr. 2²³ as the name of one of the descendants of Judah. This word is plainly not a variant of the usual expression ארז, Ez. 17²¹, but is a derivative from a stem ארן, which, as may be shown from the Assyrian, probably means 'to be high,' or 'strong.' There can be little doubt that ארן is a cognate of the common Assyr. *êrinu*, *êrnu*, 'cedar, fir,' which is used individually and collectively. The plant name *arantu* seems to furnish the key to the exact meaning of the stem, as it is defined in K. 271, 12, by *U. SAG. EL* 'a high-growing plant.' This meaning appears to be further confirmed by the existence of such forms as *irintu* 'power, victory,' *urnatu* 'strength,' *urinnu* 'staff, sceptre (?)',⁷ all of which are cognate in meaning with the idea 'high, strong.' It is probable also that the substantive *urnakku*,⁸ occurring V. R. 29, 41 *c. f.* in

⁴ With the accus. Prov. 24²⁶ 1 S. 20⁴¹.

⁵ So also Wellhausen, *Psalms*, Hebrew Text (SBOT).

⁶ Cf., however, ארנים Para 3, 8 in connection with ארדם; also ארונים, probably an error for אורנים, Rosh ha-shana, 23a.

⁷ Cf. *irintu*, Tig. viii. 62; *urnatu*, II. R. 31, nr. 3, 28; *urinnu* explained by *ibirru* (= *xattu*), K. 4378 c. vi. 74.

⁸ *Urnakku* explained by ŠEŠ. NA. and in connection with *bituni*, 'house,' and *siqurrdtuni*.

connection with *ziqurrátum* 'temple-tower,' is a derivative from the same stem. I suggest, moreover, that *súrinnu*, which appears in several passages with the apparent meaning 'pillar,'⁹ may be a *shaphel* formation from אָרְן. It is not likely that there is any close connection between אָרְן = *érinu* and אָרְן which is cognate with the Arab. 'arz' 'cedar,' Eth. 'arz, Syr. אָרְן, although the consonantal root אָרְן, common to both words, may connote the idea 'high, strong.'

It is probably this tree which is represented on the monuments as bearing three cones at the end of the branch,¹⁰ although this is clearly the fancy of the Assyrian artist.

⁹ Cf. *šurinni bábi bli Istar*, 'pillars of the gate of the house of Istar.' K. 891, Obv. 5. See *Hdub.*, p. 691, and Delitzsch, *Assyr. Gr.*, § 65, nr. 33, for *shaphel* noun-formations.

¹⁰ See Bonavia, *Flora of the Assyrian Monuments*, plate 25 and pp. 90-92.