

The three centuries that elapsed between Caesarius of Arles and Alcuin are the darkest of West European history. Evil though it was beyond compare for the particular see and city of Rome, the case of the 'leaden' tenth century was in no way so desperate. Yet it is precisely in those three centuries that took place the evolution definitely fixing the religion of mediaeval and a large part of modern Europe. The stage then passed through was that one so particularly decisive when popular piety that has listened to the word of the preachers makes the ideas they express, even if but rhetorically at times, its own; and that piety in its slow and silent workings generates by and by a common and accepted belief. Thereafter, by steps natural and easy enough, come the reflexion or reasoning of the more educated on what is so believed, its formulation, consequent disputes, heresy, dogma. It is this consideration which gives value, indeed importance, trivial looking as they may seem or sometimes almost grotesque, to the records coming from this darkest period of the history of the Church. It is too late to begin our knowledge of the post-patristic age with the ninth century, with the Carolingian renaissance, or with Bede who is a figure apart. It is not only in the fixation of the biblical text and the palaeographical declension of 'noster'¹, but in all the great range of items that lie between such extremes, that the ninth century presents us already with a completed work. If we wish to know how the result came about we must look to the years 500-800. The liturgist is better off perhaps than most other kinds of enquirers for this period; but I venture to think that if he wishes his study to be fruitful it must not be divorced from the history of popular religion and current beliefs.

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NOT A GLOSS (2 KINGS xv 30 *b*).

THERE is a striking discrepancy between (a) 2 Kings xv 30 and (b) *ibid.* xvii 1.

According to (a) Hoshea slew Pekah, king of Israel, and succeeded him on the throne

בשנת עשרים ליותם בן עזיה

'in the twentieth year of Jotham, son of Uzziah'.

¹ See Traube *Perrona Scottorum* p. 527.

According to (b) Hoshea began to reign

בשנת שנים עשרה לאחז מלך יהודה

'in the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah'.

The first statement of date seems to be impossible; sixteen years only are assigned to the reign of Jotham in 2 Kings (xv 33). There is a proposal to shorten his reign by attributing part of it to his regency for his father (2 Kings xv 5b; cf. E. L. Curtis, CHRONOLOGY, in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* i 402b), but none for lengthening it to twenty years. Accordingly Stade, in the *Polychrome Bible*, pronounces xv 30b to be 'a very late addition'; Benzinger (*in loco*) would strike it out of the text.

But the knife (blind instrument!) should be applied sparingly in criticism. Before 30b is finally condemned as a gloss, the text should be more carefully examined. The text is no doubt corrupt, but a corrupt text sometimes conceals a fact worthy of attention.

In the present case we have, I believe, three helps towards the emendation of the passage: *first*, the parallel half-verse, 2 Kings xvii 1; *secondly*, the LXX version of xv 30b itself; and *thirdly*, an Assyrian inscription.

In the first place in 2 Kings xvii 1 the statement of date stands outside the construction of the verse; it is an addition to the text, as the writer first wrote it. The hypothesis put forward in this note undertakes to explain the origin of this addition; it suggests that xvii 1a is borrowed from xv 30b, and preserves a less corrupt text of that passage.¹

(1) The corruption of עשרה שנים into עשרים is an entirely reasonable hypothesis. The possibility of such a misreading *springt ins Auge*, as the Germans say.

(2) The change of the name *Ahas* into *Jotham* requires more consideration. The point is crucial. Threefold evidence may be brought forward to support the hypothesis of this change.

(a) The LXX (cod. B) exhibits the name of *Ahas* in this verse. No doubt the Greek text is itself corrupt. But I do not think that we can say with Stade, 'Ahas is without doubt an attempt to correct the text'. If so, it was a hopeless attempt. LXX B runs thus:—

ἐν ἑτει εἰκοστῇ Ἰωαθὰμ υἱῷ Ἀχάς

'in the twentieth year of Joatham the son of Ahaz'.

(Ahaz was, on the contrary, the son of Jotham.) The corrupt reading 'twentieth' is retained, and this fact militates against the theory that the LXX took Ἀχάς by way of correction from xvii 1. The more

¹ A memorable date such as that of the tragic death of Pekah the enemy of Judah (2 Kings xv 30b) is likely to belong to an earlier stratum of Kings than a merely formal synchronism like that of xvii 1.

reasonable supposition is that the LXX found the name *Ahas* in some form in xv 30.

(b) Transcriptional probability suggests an explanation of the supposed falling out of the name *Ahas* from Hebrew MSS, and its disappearance from the MT. We have only to suppose (see below) that *Ahas* is a shortened form of *Jehoahas* (2 Kings xiii 1), or *Joahas* (2 Chron. xxxvi 2), and the probability of the loss of the name in the course of transcription becomes apparent. I suggest that the original reading was

לִיְהוֹאָחָז בֶּן־יֹחָזָבָב

'of Joahaz the son of Jotham'.

The transcriber's eye slipped from the first name to the second, and the transcriber wrote 'of Jotham'. A later scribe added 'son of Uzziah', an obvious gloss. In xvii 1 the compiler added a different description, namely, 'king of Judah'.

In the LXX also transcriptional probability favours the reading *Joahas*. The original reading was, I believe,

Ἰωαχὰς υἱὸς Ἰωαθάμ.

Ahaz was not recognized under the unusual form of his name, and a careless transposition was made,

Ἰωαθάμ υἱὸς Ἰωαχὰς.

In the course of further transcription the initial letters *Ἰω* of the second name were lost in the preceding *υἱὸς*, so cod. B reads

Ἰωαθάμ υἱὸς Ἀχὰς.

(c) The supposition that Ahaz is a shortened form of Jeho-ahaz (Jo-ahaz) is confirmed by an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III (*Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, ii 20).

The Assyrian king, after mentioning the kings of Ammon, Moab, and Ashkelon as his tributaries, adds the name of Ya-u-ḥa-zi (mātu) Ya-u-da-ai. This can only be Jeho-ahaz (Joahaz), i. e. Ahaz of Judah; cp. 2 Kings xvi 7, 8.

I conclude that 2 Kings xv 30b is not a late, but an early passage, and that it yields Hebrew evidence that the true name of Hezekiah's father was not *Ahas*, but *Jehoahas* (*Joahas*).

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