

NOTES AND STUDIES

NEW LIGHT ON THE BOOK OF JASHAR

(A STUDY OF 3 REGN. VIII 53^b LXX).

My interest in this passage was aroused by Prof. Burkitt at a time when his important paper on it in this *JOURNAL*¹ was written but not published. I was aware of his opinion that the accepted reconstruction of the Hebrew was untenable, but not of his own restoration of it. An independent investigation led me to some of the conclusions at which, as his paper subsequently shewed me, he had arrived. In one emendation, however, which I communicated to him, I differed from him; his emendation of the last line of the fragment also appeared open to question. I have since reverted on more than one occasion to this fascinating passage, and have recently discovered, as I believe, the solution of the problem offered by the line in question. The solution, while it curtails by one line the all too scanty relics of the lost book of Jashar, fully compensates, I venture to think, for this loss by the new and interesting light which it sheds on its history. Prof. Burkitt's explanation of the concluding words was put forward with hesitation, and left room, as he will doubtless agree, for further research. The opening lines are baffling and I cannot claim to have said the last word upon them.

The passage, it will be remembered, occurs in the account of Solomon's dedication of the Temple, and is in its position and its greater fullness peculiar to the Septuagint. The LXX alone tells us that Solomon at the end of his long prayer of dedication recited a stanza of poetry and adds that the stanza is written in a (or the) book of song. The passage occurs, however, in a mutilated and altered form in the canonical text at a rather earlier point in the narrative. It is there placed (1 Kings viii 12 f) before the blessing of the congregation and the dedicatory prayer, being brought into immediate connexion with an incident which it clearly serves to illustrate, namely, the descent of the cloud upon the house of the Lord which was filled with His glory. The first line of the stanza together with some of the introductory words and the reference to the Song-book have disappeared. It is beyond question that the LXX, as compared with the Massoretic Text, presents us with a version of an older, if not the oldest, form of the passage, and that it places it in its original context. Its transposition and abbreviation in the MT is the outcome of editorial 'improvement' and religious scruples. Yet the whole passage as it appears in its longer form in the LXX is in all

¹ Vol. x (1909) 439 ff.

probability a gloss, though a very ancient one. In the attempt to restore the original Hebrew the fundamental question arises: had the poem originally any reference to the dedication of the Temple? If not, how and when did the ascription to Solomon arise?

Now, it will be shewn in the sequel that at a date not later than about the third century B.C. the stanza in its longer LXX form, or the poem of which it formed part, was set to music for liturgical use. At that date, therefore, it had received official sanction as a religious poem and was probably ascribed to Solomon. I have therefore in the first part of my paper attempted to restore the Hebrew, with assistance from Prof. Burkitt's article, on the assumption of Solomonic authorship. Since, however, there are not a few indications of the possibility of a non-Solomonic origin, I have in the final portion been bold enough to hazard a theory with regard to a yet older and secular form of the poem. The middle portion brings some 'new light' to bear on the Song-book as a whole.

I.

The passage runs as follows in Dr Swete's text, with the exception that Κύριος is here shifted from the first to the second line of the quatrain and the punctuation altered accordingly. The portions which have no equivalent in the MT are enclosed in square brackets.

Τότε ἐλάλησεν Σαλωμών [ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἴκου ὡς
 συνετέλεσεν τοῦ οἰκοδομησάι αὐτόν
 Ἕλιον ἐγνώρισεν ἐν οὐρανῷ]
 Κύριος εἶπεν τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐκ γνόφου.
 Οἰκοδόμησον οἶκόν μου, οἶκον ἐκπρεπή σαυτῷ,
 τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ καινότητος.
 [οὐκ ἰδοὺ αὕτη γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ψδῆς;]

The variant readings are practically negligible, Prof. Burkitt having conclusively shewn that ἔστησεν of the Lucianic text is a mere emendation of the harder ἐγνώρισεν, not a direct translation from the Hebrew. Εὐπρεπή is read by A and most MSS for ἐκπρεπή: κενότητος of A is a mere itacism. The only substantial variant deserving consideration is ἐν γνόφῳ of A and the majority of MSS, as against ἐκ νόφου (ἐκν.) B and 245 (a cursive described by Field as Lucianic), ἐκ γνόφου 119, 121, ἐκ νότου Ethiopic (as cited by Burkitt).

The earlier passage in the MT runs in the R.V. :—

‘Then spake Solomon, The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house of habitation, a place for thee to dwell in for ever.’

The *crux* in the *first* line of the stanza is ἐγνώρισεν. I had seen, as

Prof. Burkitt saw, that this word could only represent, as it consistently represents throughout the LXX, a Hebrew הוֹרִיעַ, the hiphil or causative of יָרַע 'know', and that Wellhausen's הִבִּין (which seemed to account for the other Greek variant ξησθησεν = הִכִּין) must be abandoned. But הוֹרִיעַ 'made known' is unmeaning in the context and must be due to a misreading of the original by the Greek translator. Prof. Burkitt, by altering the middle radical and assuming that י was not written, emended the word to הוֹפִיעַ (הוֹפֵעַ) 'Shine': 'Sun, shine forth in the heaven!' It had occurred to me that without the alteration of a letter, by a mere re-division of the words, which in the original would be written without break, a sequence of ideas was presented consistent with each other and with the following line. I assume with Prof. Burkitt that י was not written. By merely breaking up הוֹרִיעַ into two parts and appending to the second part the first letter of the next word we obtain instead of

- (a) שמש הוריע בשמים
(b) שמש הור יעב שמים

i. e. 'Sun-glory-beclouds¹-heavens.'

The syntax, it is true, presents difficulties, the words being capable of at least two interpretations, either 'The sun of glory beclouds the heavens' or 'O sun, (the) Glory beclouds the heavens'. The latter is more suitable to a description of a Theophany, and I assume that it is intended. Both the new words have special associations with Jahwe's revelation of Himself and are quite in keeping with the context.

הוֹר is a poetical word denoting 'splendour', especially divine splendour, the 'light and glory which God wears as King'. God's glory (הוֹר) covers the heavens (Hab. iii 3), is 'above the heavens' (Ψ viii 2 [1]), 'above earth and heaven' (Ψ cxlviii 13): He clothes Himself with it, putting on light as a garment (Ψ civ 1).

יעב is a dark cloud or cloud-mass, also associated with Jahwe: He rides upon them as in a chariot (Isa. xix 1, Ψ civ 3) or envelopes Himself in them (Ψ xviii 12 [11] f = 2 Sam. xxii 12). The corresponding Hiphil verb 'becloud' occurs once in the O.T., in Lam. ii 1: 'How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud (יעיב, LXX ἐγνόφωσεν) in his anger!'

The conjunction of the opposite ideas of glory and darkness, and the thought of darkness occasioned by God's glory is thoroughly Hebraic: witness, e. g., in this very context the interchange of 'the cloud filled the house' and 'the glory (כבוד) of the Lord filled the house' (1 Kings viii 10 f), and compare Milton's 'Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear, Yet dazzle Heaven.'²

¹ יעב being the defective way of writing יעיב. Cf. note 2 on p. 525.

² *Paradise Lost* iii 380 f with the context.

In the *second* line of the stanza the only debatable point of real importance is the variant $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omicron\nu$, as against $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omega$ of the majority of MSS which are supported by the MT (ב) in the parallel passage. I am not prepared to dismiss $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omicron\nu$ so lightly as does Prof. Burkitt, who considers that it 'must ultimately be a mere mistake'. A reading attested by B, the Ethiopic version and a cursive described as Lucianic, i. e. with early authority in Egypt, Ethiopia, and possibly Syria, must be one of great antiquity. If $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ is original, $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ no doubt originated, not in a 'mistaken' misreading of N as K, but in the normal assimilation of consonants. The papyri shew that final ν , especially in monosyllabic words, was from 300 to 150 B. C. commonly assimilated to γ before gutturals ($\acute{\epsilon}\gamma$ $\gamma\alpha\sigma\tau\rho\acute{\iota}$, &c.): after 150 B. C. such assimilation is rare.¹ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omega$ would therefore in the early Ptolemaic period become $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omega$, and in Egypt γ (which Egyptians seem to have had a difficulty in pronouncing²) *might* be further altered to κ , producing $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ (γ) $\nu\acute{o}\phi\omega$ (cf. $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\gamma\alpha\sigma\tau\rho\acute{\iota}$ Job xv 35 A). But $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omicron\nu$ is far more likely to have been altered to the easier $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\nu\acute{o}\phi\omega$. Moreover a closer investigation seems to shew that the harder reading is in reality not merely 'transcriptionally' but also 'intrinsically' the more probable. That God dwelt in the thick darkness was a commonplace of Hebrew thought (Ex. xx 21, &c.). But here we have reference to a *promise*,³ which leads us to expect a gracious departure from the recognized ways of the Deity as hitherto revealed. Jahwe has promised to come out from His isolation in the darkness of the thunder-cloud, and to dwell in an earthly abode! For the phrase 'to dwell outside the darkness' we may compare Gen. xxvii 39 (Isaac's blessing of Esau)

משמני הארץ יהיה מושבך ומטל השמים מעל

which R.V.^{ms} with many commentators renders 'Away from the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling and away from the dew of heaven from above.'⁴ The Genesis passage (מושבך) brings us to the only other point to be mentioned in this line of the Jashar stanza, viz. that $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ here, as in line 4, probably represents $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\kappa\eta$; $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\kappa\eta$; $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\kappa\eta$; 'to tabernacle' of the MT seems to be an editorial 'improvement'.

In the *third* line again it is not, I venture to think, so obvious that $\omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta\tau\omicron\nu\sigma\omicron\nu$ $\omicron\iota\kappa\omicron\nu$ $\mu\omicron\nu$ (= בנה ביתי) is 'a mistake for the MT בניתי'. בניתי is certainly more likely to have been *corrupted* into ביתי than *vice versa*; but the former may quite well be an ingenious emendation of the Massorettes who found the other reading obscure. The Greek

¹ Mayser *Gramm. der griech. Pap. aus der Ptolemäerzeit* 230 ff; cf. the writer's *Grammar of the O. T. in Greek* 130 f. ² *Gramm. of O. T.* 100 note.

³ λ commonly of a promise (1 Kings viii 19 &c.), sometimes of a threat.

⁴ Cf. also Prov. xx 3 שבת מריב 'to sit away from strife' and other uses of $\mu\eta$ = 'away from' or 'without' cited in BDB *Heb. Lex.* 578^b.

translator possibly saw a reference in the first half of the line to the palace which Solomon built for himself, but the words, if correctly rendered by him, are doubtless to be explained by Ψ cxxvii 1 (a Psalm which, be it noted, the title incorrectly ascribes to Solomon) 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'. Solomon asks Jahwe to assist in the building or the establishment of the house of splendour which he has designed for Him. We may equate ἐκπρεπή with MT בָּל, a rare word which, as Prof. Burkitt has shewn, must from its associations connote something like 'a heavenly palace' on earth.

The *fourth* line of the quatrain, which in the Greek runs 'To dwell upon newness', in the Hebrew 'A place for thee to dwell in for ever', appeared to Prof. Burkitt the *crux* of the whole passage and the reconstruction of the Hebrew underlying the Greek to be beset by insuperable difficulties. His alternative renderings of the restored Hebrew were

'For thy dwelling at the New Moon Feasts',
or, 'For Sabbaths and for New Moon Feasts'.

These renderings represent an original which fairly¹ accounts for the Greek text, but they entirely fail to explain the MT reading 'for ever'.

I venture to think that I have found the clue to the puzzling divergence between the LXX and the MT at this point. What appears to be the last line of the quatrain proves, if I am not mistaken, to be no part of the poem at all, but to belong to the comment which follows, referring the reader to the source from which the poem is taken. The hint was given me by a suggested explanation² of a rathersimilar puzzle in connexion with another extract from the Book of Jasher. Readers of the magnificent Dirge of David over Saul and Jonathan must often have pondered over the meaning of the intrusive and irrelevant words which are interposed between the introductory clause and the Dirge itself. 'And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.) The beauty of Israel is slain,' &c.³ We recognize that the bracketed clause is a gloss, and the R.V. rendering '*the song of* the bow' goes some way to explaining it. But how much more intelligible the gloss becomes if we recognize that not merely is 'the bow' a title, but that the immediately preceding words also form part of the title. The Hebrew of the words

¹ Ἐπὶ καινότητος should represent על חדשים—not על חדשים which Prof. Burkitt's rendering requires.

² Art. JASHER in *Encycl. Bibl.* I take the idea from the article, without adopting Dr Cheyne's emendations, which, as the sequel will shew, are unnecessary. The suggestion, I since find, had already been made by Lord A. Hervey in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

³ 2 Sam. i 17 ff A. V.

'Also he bade . . . the bow' runs קשת ללמד בני יהודה קשת; 'bow' is absent from the LXX and appears to be a secondary gloss. The passage should run as follows:—

'And he said:—

For instruction. (To) the sons of Judah. [Bow-song].¹
See the writing in the book of Jashar.

'Thy glory (?), O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!' &c.

ללמד, LXX τοῦ διδάξαι: the identical phrase occurs as part of the title to Ψ lx (LXX lix), where the LXX renders εἰς διδασχῆν, R.V. 'to teach'. The Psalm and the title are both regarded as ancient by Dr Briggs: both Psalm and Dirge were apparently 'to be committed to memory for recitation' (Kirkpatrick, comparing Deut. xxxi 22). 'Sons of Judah' recalls 'of (or "to") the sons of Korah' (i.e. belonging to the minor collection of Psalms made by that guild) which occurs in the titles of eleven of the canonical Psalms. קשת 'bow' may either be the 'bow-song'² (analogous to 'the bush' = the passage about the bush, &c.) or possibly a technical musical term of which the meaning is lost.

In the light obtained from this explanation of the exordium to the Dirge we turn to the words which close the Dedicatory Song of Solomon: τοῦ κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ καινότητος. οὐκ ἰδοὺ αὐτῆ γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ᾠδῆς;

τοῦ κατοικεῖν is undoubtedly intended to represent לשבת. But לשבת, if it is a verb at all, means 'to dwell (in)': a suffix is required to express the meaning 'for thee to dwell in'. In the MT the suffix is duly appended and, to make the meaning still plainer, the word 'place' is prefixed: מכן לשבתך. This, however, is a clear case of editorial emendation. לשבת, therefore, in the original did not mean 'for thee to dwell in', but it did mean 'For the Sabbath' (not 'For Sabbaths' as Prof. Burkitt suggests). This recalls the title to Ψ xcii (LXX xci) מזמור ליום השבת, Ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ σαββάτου. Further instances of the allocation of particular Psalms to the Sabbath or other day of the week occur in the LXX titles, though absent from the MT: xxiii (LXX) τῆς μᾶς σαββάτων, (?) xxxvii περὶ σαββάτου, xlvi δευτέρα σαββάτου, xcii εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ προσαββάτου, xciii τετράδι σαββάτων. These parallels arouse a suspicion that to Solomon's Song of Dedication there has been appended a similar liturgical note, indicating that the Song was intended for use on the Sabbath in the services of synagogue or temple.

¹ Dr Cheyne (*op. cit.*) reads 'Of David. For the sons of Jeduthun. For the Ezrahite'. The guild of Jeduthunites has since, alas, been affiliated to the much-enduring Jerahmeel! (*Critica Biblica* iii 250).

² Or belonging to 'the Bow'-collection, which may have included Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii 1-10), &c.: *Speaker's Comm.* on 2 Sam. i.

This impression is strongly reinforced by the subsequent words which have proved a puzzle alike to the ancient translators and editors and to modern commentators. The puzzle to the modern critic is to find a Hebrew original which will account both for the LXX *ἐπὶ καινότητος* and for the MT עולמים 'for ever'. Wellhausen and his followers found the connecting link in the word עֲלָמִים 'youth', and came, as I believe, very near the truth. Prof. Burkitt gave a Hebrew version of the LXX, but abandoned the attempt to account for the MT. Now, there occurs in the titles of two or three of the Psalms a phrase which exactly meets the requirements of the case. It is the musical direction על-עֲלָמוֹת, A.V. 'upon Alamoth', R.V. 'set to Alamoth'. The noun is the plural of עֲלָמָה 'young woman'; in 1 Chron. xv 20 the softer notes of 'psalteries set to Alamoth' are contrasted with 'cymbals of brass to sound aloud', and the phrase is interpreted to mean 'in maidenlike style', in other words 'soprano' or 'falsetto'. Boys' voices, rather than women's, are probably intended; in the title to Ψ ix the words לְבָנִים = *pueris* are appended. The translators and editors of Scripture were apparently not musical experts, and the word עלמות is easily confused with the cognate עֲלָמִים 'youthful vigour' and with עוֹלָמִים 'for ever'. But we are not left merely to probabilities. We find that the phrase has actually been interpreted by two of the later translators, Aquila and Symmachus, in one or other of these ways. The following are the renderings of LXX, Aquila, and Symmachus in the four passages where the phrase (slightly corrupted in two of them) is used:—

	MT	LXX	Aquila	Symmachus
Ψ ix tit.	על מות לבן	ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων τοῦ υἱοῦ	νεανιότητος τοῦ υἱοῦ	περὶ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ υἱοῦ ¹
Ψ xlvi (xlv) tit.	על עלמות	ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων	ἐπὶ νεανιοτήτων ²	ὑπὲρ τῶν αἰανίων
Ψ xlvi (xlvii) 15 ³	על מות	εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας NART (om. B)	? ἀθανασία ? ἐπὶ θάνατον ἀνανεώσει (οἱ ἀνακαινίσει) ⁴	εἰς τὸ διηνεκές
1 Chron. xv 20	על עלמות	ἐπὶ ἀλαμῶθ		(?) ⁵ ἐπὶ τῶν αἰανίων

¹ Theodotion (whose rendering is unattested elsewhere) has, with *Quinta*, ὑπὲρ ἀμῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ, *Sexta* νεανιότητος τοῦ υἱοῦ.

² Ἄλλος ἐπὶ νεοτήτων.

³ The title of Ψ xlix has probably become attached to the end of Ψ xlvi.

⁴ As attested in the Talmud and the Syro-hexaplar (see Field).

⁵ Ἄλλος is undoubtedly Symmachus.

Ἐπὶ νεανιότητ(ος) of Aquila is not absolutely identical with ἐπὶ καινότητος of the Jashar fragment, but is sufficiently close to justify the inference that the two are renderings of the same Hebrew: the older translator by a slight and natural paraphrase (καινότης for νεότης or νεανιότης) produced a tolerably intelligible rendering, which a literal version would not have produced. The explanation here given accounts moreover for the ἐπί which puzzled Prof. Burkitt; ἐϋ is the normal preposition to express musical 'accompaniment'; it is abnormal in expressions of time, such as 'on the New Moon Feast'. For the confusion by which the title has been incorporated into the body of the poem, we may compare the prayer of Habakkuk (iii 19), where the title, similarly placed at the end of the poem,¹ 'For the Chief Musician, on my stringed instruments,' appears in the LXX as a continuation of the prayer: (ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλὰ ἐπιβιβᾷ με) τοῦ νικῆσαι ἐν τῇ ψῆθῇ αὐτοῦ. The conjecture, I venture to think, being supported by the renderings of the later Greek translators, and confirmed by the explanation of the gloss preceding the Dirge (and, as will appear later, by a similar gloss in the third Jashar citation), comes as near to certainty as a conjectural emendation can well come.

It has commonly been assumed that 'the book of Song' (שִׁיר) is identical with 'the book of Jashar' (שִׁירֵי יָשָׁר), and on the whole the assumption seems reasonable, though we may hesitate to decide which title is the older; the fact that the Solomon Song was set to music is slightly in favour of the former.²

The whole canto as restored will now run:—

'Sun, (the) Glory clouds the heavens,
'Jahwe hath promised to dwell without the thick darkness:
(and then, the singer addressing Jahwe)
'Build Thou my house, a celestial Palace for Thyself.'

For the Sabbath. On Alamothe.³

The stanza portrays the glorious descent of Jahwe in the thunder-cloud from His abode in the darkness of the sky, to set His seal to the building, and to enter into possession of the new celestial abode on earth which Solomon has prepared to receive Him.

¹ We have to allow for the possibility that both in Habakkuk (where there is a second title at the beginning) and in the Jashar fragment the title is properly that of the *next* song which followed in the collection. As regards Jashar, however, the parallels in the other citations from that book render this explanation improbable.

² 'Jashar' should probably be explained, not as = the adj. יָשָׁר 'upright', but as = יָשָׁר (י) 'he sang', the title being taken from the first word in the book; cf. the introductory יָשָׁר אֲנִי to the two ancient (? Jashar) songs in Ex. xv 1, Num. xxi 17, and the similar Hebrew titles for the books of the Pentateuch.

³ i. e. 'For soprano voices.'

II. THE TITLES IN THE BOOK OF JASHAR.

We have found that two out of the three citations from the lost Song-book have titles attached to them. It is natural to enquire whether this may not also be the case with the third. Let us look at Jos. x 12 f. We observe first that the incantation to the sun is followed in the MT (though not in the LXX) by the formula of reference familiarized by its use with the other extracts, 'Is not this written in the book of Jashar?' Turning to the prelude we are again struck by the occurrence of words in the MT which are absent from the LXX, interposed, just as the title is interposed in David's Dirge, between the introductory 'And he said' (וַיֹּאמֶר) and the actual incantation. The words are לְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל—literally 'to the eyes of (i.e. in full view of) Israel'. They call up a picture of the whole army 'standing at ease', with eyes riveted on their leader or the heavens as he adjures the sun to stand still. But was this the original meaning? We are irresistibly reminded of the allusion to 'the sons of Judah' which precedes the Dirge, though we hesitate to make the easy emendation to לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. All cause for hesitation, however, is dispelled by the discovery that Aquila actually had these very words in his text! It is to the Syro-hexaplar that we owe the important piece of evidence that Aquila's version was πρὸς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ (Field), or perhaps rather τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ. The parallel with the Dirge leaves little room for doubt that here again we have a title: '(Belonging) to (the collection of) the sons of Israel.' We see how

'And he said:—

To the sons of Israel.

'Sun, stand still . . .'

would inevitably become 'And he said to the sons of I., Sun, stand still', and how the latter, being nonsense, would demand some such emendation as appears in the MT.

Let us put together the long obscured and now recovered titles of these old songs and see what results are obtainable from them. The formula of reference to the title of the whole collection is an invariable concomitant of the minor titles, though placed in varying positions, and must be considered along with them. We have:—

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------|
| (a) Joshua's Incantation | | |
| To the sons of Israel | | } MT |
| Is not this written in the book of Jashar? | | } (not LXX) |
| (b) David's Dirge | | |
| For instruction. (To) the sons of Judah. | | MT, LXX |
| Bow (song) | | MT |
| Behold it is written in the Book of Jashar | | MT |
| | | |

(c) Solomon's Song of Dedication

.....
 For the Sabbath. On Alamoth (= Sopranos) } LXX (not MT ;
 Is not this written in the book of the Ode (or } probably
 Jashar)? } excised?

The results which emerge are as follows:—

(i) The Book of Jashar, like the Psalter, comprised minor collections. It was divided, so to speak, into chapters. We know the names of two of these minor collections, that of 'the children of Judah' and that of 'the children of Israel'. The names are complementary to each other, and this suggests that they are possibly the names of the two main collections. The names resemble the title 'To the children of Korah' which we meet with in the Psalter, yet with a difference. The post-exilic Korah collection 'made in the early Greek period' (Briggs) derives its title from a guild of temple-singers. The titles of the two collections in Jashar are taken not from any narrow clique, but from the two comprehensive territorial or tribal divisions of Palestine in the period of the Divided Monarchy. We are irresistibly reminded of the two oldest narrative-writers in our Bible, known as J and E and commonly associated with the Southern and the Northern kingdom respectively. There is a presumption, at any rate, that these titles are early, and that they may even go back to the time of the Monarchy.

(ii) Solomon's Song has no corresponding 'territorial' title, but it has attached to it the very interesting liturgical note informing us that it was once set to music. Musical rubrics of this kind are not likely to have the high antiquity suggested for the territorial titles. It has been observed¹ that in the Psalter musical instructions as to voice, instrument, or tune are attached only to those Psalms which belong to the collection of 'the chief Musician' or 'Precentor', and the reasonable inference has been drawn that he was the first to introduce them. Now the 'Precentor's' date has been ascertained to have been 'the middle Greek period', about 250 B. C.: he was a contemporary of the Chronicler, whose interest in the temple-singers, of whom he was probably one, is well known. We may infer that the addition of the title 'On Alamoth' to Solomon's Dedicatory Song was probably not made before this period. The date of the title does not of course give us the date of the poem: yet the fact that this poem has the later musical rubric, while it lacks the older tribal title, is perhaps a slight indication that it is not one of the oldest poems in the anthology.

(iii) How did the titles find their way into the O. T. and what purpose do they serve there? The textual evidence at their first appearance

¹ Briggs *Psalms* (*Int. Crit. Comm.*) lxxv.

(i. e. their absence from the LXX of Joshua) suggests that the added words are a gloss; the same impression is made by the title to the Dirge, which interrupts the narrative: there too we see, in the MT, the earlier gloss taking on an accretion. In 3 Kingdoms there is a difference, in that, while in the previous extracts the gloss is restricted to the titles, here the whole excerpt, including the introductory and closing words, appears from the context to be a gloss, though an ancient one.¹ The titles, with in one case the canto itself, are therefore marginal notes which have crept into the text. What more natural explanation of their presence in the margin than that they are references, as it were, to book, chapter, and verse ('*Vide Jashar . . .*')? The glosses as such have long since disappeared, and we have no criterion of handwriting to tell us anything of their writer or writers: yet it does not seem improbable that we owe these precise and scholarly references, framed on the same pattern, to one and the same person, some ancient student of the later historical books, the rolls of which may have occupied one box² in his library. We may even venture to go further and assign an approximate date to the glossator. The glosses were absent when Joshua was translated into Greek (towards the end of the third century B. C.), they had found their way into the text when the first partial Greek version of the Books of Kingdoms appeared (probably in the latter half of the second century B. C.). We may conjecture then that it was at some time between 200 and 150 B. C. that this early student recorded in the margins of his Bible the fact that these poems, one of which he copied out himself, were to be found in another roll to which he had access, and, to facilitate future reference, added the exact titles under which the passages might be found in the Song-book. One such student we know of who would meet the conditions, one of whom his grandson tells us that 'my grandfather Jesus, having much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers (τῶν ἄλλων πατρῴων βιβλίων), and having gained great familiarity therein, was drawn on also himself to write somewhat . . .', one who includes in his category of famous men 'such as sought out musical tunes and set forth verses in writing', himself perhaps one of the 'rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations'.³

However this may be, these titles have added to our knowledge of

¹ This is suggested by the immediately succeeding v. 54 Καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς συνετέλεσεν Σαλ. προσευχόμενος πρὸς Κύριον ὅλην τὴν προσευχὴν καὶ τὴν δέησιν ταύτην, which refers back to the long prayer ending at 53^a (see 52 τὴν δέησιν) without any allusion to the Song.

² Swete *Introduction to O. T.* 225.

³ Sirach *prol.*, xliv 5 f. It has been suggested that the praises of famous men in Sir. xliv-1 are imitations or paraphrases of odes in the book of Jashar (*Speaker's Comm.* ii 55).

the book of Jashar and seem to give us glimpses of three stages in its history. First comes the gathering together of the songs of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms respectively, afterwards combined into a single national anthology,¹ possibly at the time when the two early prose narratives of the national history (J and E) were also being welded together (*circa* 650 B. C.,² or perhaps a century later).³ The collection grows, and in the time of the Chronicler (300–250 B. C.) one at least of the songs has been set to music and designed for liturgical use, if not actually used, in the services of temple or synagogue. A century later the Song-book, with headings to its constituent poems like those in our Psalter, was still accessible to a student whose extracts from it have enabled us to read something of its earlier history. In his day copies must have been scarce, since early in the Christian era the book of Jashar was unknown, and Rabbis could identify it with the Pentateuch or some part of it.

III.

Reverting to Solomon's Song, if we cannot hope to reconstruct all the details with certainty, the stanza must have appeared in some such form as on p. 525 when it received its *imprimatur* as suitable for liturgical use. Several considerations, however, combine to arouse suspicions that this may not have been quite the oldest form and that the ascription to Solomon was an afterthought and not the intention of the poet. We see the process of editorial revision going on under our eyes in the extant documents⁴ and we have no ground for assuming that they exhibit its earliest stages. The post-exilic Ψ cxxvii 'Except the Lord build the house' has also, as the title shews, been interpreted as a speech of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple: have we any reason to suppose that the ascription of our fragment to Solomon is more accurate? The considerations to which I shall briefly allude have reference to the language of the stanza, the Massoretic edition of it and the characteristics of the book of Jashar, so far as they can be inferred from the two other certain fragments which have survived.

As regards the language, we note first the address to the sun. The poet may have merely intended to appeal to the sun to witness its discomfiture and obscurity by the greater glory of Jahwe descending to earth. But the prominent position assigned to the sun suggests that the whole stanza, the third line as well as the first, may originally have referred to it. This impression is strengthened by a quite possible

¹ ἐπὶ βιβλίῳ τοῦ ἔθνους (a happy corruption or correction of εὐθούς) in the Hexaplaric gloss in Jos. x 13 cod. G.

² Carpenter and Harford *Composition of the Hexateuch* 335: cf. Driver *LOT*² 116 ff.

³ Prof. Kennett in *Camb. Biblical Essays* 99–104.

⁴ It has advanced a little further in 2 Chron. vi 1 f.

interpretation of the first two lines, indeed the one which first commended itself to me:—

‘The sun of glory is obscured¹ in the heavens,
‘Jahwe hath said He will dwell in thick darkness.’

Such an interpretation calls up a picture of a solar eclipse or obscuration. The third line presents difficulties, but two points in it are in favour of the explanation that the sun is the deity addressed. The turning of the speaker to Jahwe in this line involves a rather abrupt transition, and it adds to the consistency of the canto if we identify ‘thee’ of this line with Shemesh of the first. The rare and obscure word לְבַל (LXX *ἐκπρεπή*) is, in one of the three other O. T. passages² where it occurs, used of the lofty abode or station in the sky of sun and moon: ‘Sun (and) moon stood still in their habitation’ (וְזָבַח , LXX $\tau\eta\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\epsilon\iota$: Hab. iii 11). The difficulty lies in the building metaphor. Is it permissible to suppose that a Jewish worshipper in primitive times imploring the eclipsed or obscured sun to shine once more would ask him to build his heavenly house—his Beth-shemesh—or to assert that he had built such a house for him? We know too little of Hebrew folk-lore to answer this. The nearest Hebrew parallel is ψ xix (5) 4, the original of which probably ran ‘Shemesh has set up his tent’.³ Reference may incidentally be made to the ‘stations for the great gods’ in the Babylonian account of the creation and to the Greek astrological use of $\text{o}\dot{\iota}\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ and $\text{o}\dot{\iota}\kappa\omicron\delta\epsilon\sigma\pi\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$.

The Massoretic manipulation of the canto requires explanation. The editors have suppressed (1) the reference to the sun, (2) the mention of the book of Jashar. For what reason? Partly, no doubt, because the orthodoxy of the Song-book as a whole was suspected and because this extract in particular in its first line seemed to come perilously near to sun-worship or to be capable of such a construction being put upon it. The suspicion in this case may have been groundless, but at least it was felt. Biblical editors and translators were on their guard against

¹ Or ‘Sun, (thy) glory is obscured’. We must assume a Qal form of the verb (לְבַל), which does not occur in the O. T. The occurrence in a primitive poem of a form unrepresented elsewhere is not surprising; its rarity would partly account for its misinterpretation. The Oxford Lexicon quotes, *s. v.* $\sqrt{\text{לְבַל}}$, an Arabic equivalent = ‘to be hidden’, and of the sun ‘to set’.

² In Isa. lxiii 15 it is used of God’s abode in the sky, ‘Look down from heaven and behold from the habitation (לְבַל) of thy holiness and of thy glory’. In Ψ xlix 15 (14) the text is uncertain. ‘The prayer of Habakkuk’ offers the nearest parallels to the Jashar fragment: it belonged to ‘the Precentor’s’ collection and probably therefore once stood in the Psalter, from which it was afterwards relegated to the book of Habakkuk. It may originally have stood in the Song-book.

³ Briggs *Psalms* (*Int. Crit. Comm.*) i. 167. The LXX reading (xviii 6*) is curious, appearing to represent the sun as the abode of God.

this insidious peril and were apt to omit or paraphrase suspicious passages where the sun was placed in juxtaposition or comparison with Jahwe. Sometimes a real relic of sun-worship has thus been obliterated (Ψ xix is the clearest instance¹), sometimes excessive scrupulousness has caused the alteration of an innocuous comparison, as when the LXX translators scented danger in Ψ lxxiv (lxxxiii) 12 (11) 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield' and freely paraphrased $\delta\tau\iota \ \epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omicron\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota \ \delta\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu \ \delta\gamma\alpha\pi\hat{\alpha} \ \text{Κύριος} \ \delta \ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$.

Lastly, we may gather from the two other relics of the Jashar book at least one characteristic of its contents. It has often been remarked that the Lament over Saul and Jonathan contains no religious allusion whatever. The allusions are to nature, to the heights, the mountains of Gilboa, the dew, the rain. This suggests that the poems in the old Hebrew Song-book were of a semi-pagan character. If they reflected any religious or superstitious feeling, this is likely to have been of a primitive kind in which nature-worship and Jahwe-worship were not regarded as incompatible. These remarks are borne out by the fragment in Joshua (x 12 f) which in its original form probably ran² :—

'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
'And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon,
'Until Jahwe hath avenged Himself of His enemies.'

Jahwe is here placed beside Shemesh, the sun-god, or rather, it would seem, given a subordinate rôle: He appears to need the sunlight to defeat His enemies. (Similarly in our fragment the sun gives light to Jahwe and its eclipse causes Him to dwell in darkness.) In the poem it is not Jahwe but Joshua who commands the sun to stand still, though the narrator naturally attributes the miracle to Jahwe (*v.* 14). We note, however, a second characteristic of the three fragments, viz. that they are all associated with great events in the national history. But was this always so? Did the book of Jashar contain nothing but songs commemorating the deeds of heroes? The Lament over Saul and Jonathan is unquestionably what it professes to be—the commemoration of a historical or supposed historical incident. The fragment in Joshua is not so obviously and inseparably linked to the

¹ Briggs *op. cit.*

² Possibly corrupted from, more probably selected owing to its resemblance to, ἥλιος . A literal rendering of הַצִּיּוֹר 'the Rock' as a Divine title (Dt. xxxii 4, &c.) was similarly avoided in the LXX: fear of idolatry was in this case the motive.

³ The third line in the MT 'And the sun stood still and the moon stayed' reads like a prosaic addition. In the last line the LXX has $\delta \ \theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, which no doubt represents an original יהוה as in *v.* 12* and often in this book (the late Dr Redpath in *J.T.S.* vii 607). The Massorettes, finding objection in the subordinate position assigned to Jahwe, characteristically altered the Divine Name to 'the nation'.

particular incident with which it is brought into connexion. The valley of Aijalon was one of great strategic importance and the scene of numerous battles,¹ and it is conceivable that the fragment in Joshua was in its origin a war-song or incantation of general application, which subsequently became attached to the first great recorded victory in this celebrated battlefield.

Dr Frazer writes in *The Golden Bough*²: 'Primitive man . . . fancies he can make the sun to shine and can hasten or stay its going down.' In the Joshua fragment we have an instance of the sun-staying incantation. I venture to suggest that the fragment which we have been considering may have grown out of an old popular incantation used in times of solar eclipse, and that, as so frequently happened³, the nature religion was afterwards absorbed into the national religion.

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¹ G. A. Smith *Hist. Geog. of the Holy Land* 209 ff.

² i 115-119, where examples are given of making sunshine and staying the sun. 'During an eclipse of the sun the Kamtchatkans used to bring out fire from their huts and pray the great luminary to shine as before.'

³ G. F. Moore, art. NATURE-WORSHIP, in *Enc. Bibl.*