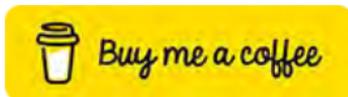


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ON 2 KINGS xix 26, 27

THE chief object of the following Note is to defend the famous conjecture of Wellhausen (לִפְנֵי קָמָה : for : לִפְנֵי קָמָה) in the last clause of 2 Kings xix 26. I ventured to give this passage as an example of a convincing emendation, which was afterwards found to be virtually supported by an ancient authority, in the article 'Text and Versions' (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 5031), notwithstanding that it had been rejected on metrical grounds by Budde (*ZAT* xii 35).

1. *Wellhausen's conjecture.* This is to be found in the 4th ed. of Bleek's *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, p. 257, note. Wellhausen, who was responsible for this edition, there says :

'In 2 Kings xix 26, 27 (= Isai. xxxvii 27, 28) one must divide לִפְנֵי קָמָה וְשָׁבַח Before Me is thy standing up and sitting down, thy going out and coming in I know. To get any sense for the expression *Corn blasted before it be grown up* is a thankless task ; on the other side וְשָׁבַח stands opposite the corresponding pair וְצָתָךְ וְכֹאֵךְ on one leg.'

This characteristically short and lively utterance will bear some expansion. Isaiah declares that the inhabitants of the cities sacked by the King of Assyria were weak, broken, and withered. They had become vegetation and green herb, grass of the roofs and a thing blasted before standing (corn). Roof-grass, as every one knows from Psalm cxxix 6, is a standing comparison for something weak and withered, and the word for 'blasted' is almost the same as that used in Gen. xli for the dried-up ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream. But, as Wellhausen says, it is a thankless task to find a sense for the words 'before standing corn'. In the next verse 'and thy sitting down' stands all by itself, something is missing. The 'and' (translated 'But' in the E.V.) is very harsh : obviously 'thy standing up' is required before it.

Wellhausen's solution is to end verse 26 at שָׁרְפָה (blasted) and to transfer לִפְנֵי קָמָה to verse 27, at the same time changing the final ה into ך. By a perfectly legitimate alteration of the vowel-points this can be read 'Before Me (i.e. Jehovah) is thy rising up'. Sense and balance are at once secured by the emendation of a single letter.

2. *Budde's objection.* Prof. Budde of Marburg, still happily with us though he fought at Gravelotte in 1870, is well known as the discoverer of the *Īinā*-metre in Hebrew, the rhythm used for laments, the characteristic of which is a long line of three beats followed by two. In the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* xii 31-37 (1892) he discusses this Isaianic oracle and points out that it is in *Īinā*-rhythm. Therefore, he says, Wellhausen's emendation is unsatisfactory. The rhythm of the Masoretic text is better, though the text is obviously

The Syro-Hexaplar text is, speaking generally, a very literal translation from the Greek, not an emendation of the Peshitta. Here **ܡܥܒܠ** (*incendium*) undoubtedly represents *ἐμπυρισμός*, which is an independent rendering of the Hebrew, whether it be the M.T. **שׂרפָה** or an otherwise unattested variant or misreading **שׂרפָה**. The fact that *ἐμπυρισμός* is a 'better', i.e. a more scholarly, rendering than *πάτημα* makes it improbable that *ἐμπυρισμός* is a relic of the original LXX. For **שׂרפָה** here and also for **שׂרמָה** in Isai. xxxvii 27 the Peshitta has **ܥܫܡܠܐ**, a rare word of uncertain meaning, said to mean the withered lower leaves of an ear of corn. Evidently, therefore, the *ἐμπυρισμός* of the Syro-Hexaplar note has no connexion with the corresponding word in the Peshitta.

This makes it improbable that **ܡܥܒܠ** in the Note is directly suggested by **ܡܥܒܠ** in the Peshitta (**ܥܫܡܠܐ ܡܥ ܡܥܒܠ**). And even if it were, what would be the underlying Hebrew for **ܡܥܒܠ**? It would be **קמתך**, i.e. an even greater consonantal change of the M.T. **קמה** than Wellhausen's emendation.

The natural deduction is that Paul of Tella had here in mind not the Peshitta but a Greek text, and that the Note is a literal rendering of Greek words without reference either to the Syriac Bible or to the sense of the context. Now **ܡܥܒܠ**, like **ܩܡܬܐ** in the Targums, is sometimes used to translate the Hebrew **קמה** meaning 'standing (corn)', but its ordinary meaning is something that stands, a statue (like Lot's wife) or a stele. I suggest that it is nothing more than a rendering of the LXX *ἑστηκότος*, which in the text which the Note follows had **σου** (**ܥܘܪܝ**) added to it.

Field, in his *Hexapla*^{10c}, translated the Note

Ε'. καὶ ἐμπυρισμὸς ἀπέναντι ἀναστάσεώς σου,

and would have pointed to Zeph. iii 8 (*ἀναστάσεώς μου* = **קומי**) as his justification. But there is really not much reason to go beyond *ἑστηκότος* for **ܡܥܒܠ**, which as I have said is paralleled by the Syro-Hexaplar renderings in 1 Regn. xxviii 20 and Isai. xvii 5. To render **ܡܥܒܠ** by *seges* in this passage is to beg the question.

May I say here that I dare not continue to maintain the view which I put forward some time ago (*PSBA* for 1902, p. 218) that this Note from the 'Fifth Column' is really a survival of the original LXX? It does seem to support **לפני קמך**, the consonants of Wellhausen's emendation, but the *πάτημα* of the ordinary text looks more original, because more incompetent, than the scholarly *ἐμπυρισμός* of the Note. Therefore it is an emendation of the LXX, not an earlier form. But even without this shadowy support the emendation itself may be confidently accepted. At least, there is little reason to sacrifice it at the altar of a metrical theory, which we have but small reason to suppose that Isaiah or his contemporaries would have ratified.

F. C. BURKITT.