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pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

NOTES AND STUDIES

SELAH—SOME FACTS AND A SUGGESTION.

ALL theories as to the meaning or the significance of the word SELAH, which is so common in the Psalter, are beset with difficulty owing to the extraordinary distribution of the word itself. It is found in the Masoretic text of the O. T. in seventy-one places in the Psalter and in three places in the Prayer (or Psalm) of Habakkuk (ch. iii). Within the Psalter the occurrence of the word is curiously irregular. It is found in thirty-nine Psalms only out of a hundred and fifty. It is commonly supposed to be a musical direction, but it is conspicuously absent from many Psalms, which seem specially intended to be sung in worship, e. g. xcii (see Heading), xciii, xcv-c, cxx-cxxxiv (the Songs of degrees). Similarly Ps. xxx (a 'Song at the Dedication of the House') contains no SELAH. On the other hand, an apparently non-liturgical Psalm (iii) of eight verses only contains SELAH thrice.

It is true that an appeal to the LXX yields a slightly different distribution. *Διάψαλμα*, the regular rendering of SELAH, occurs in the following places, in which there is no corresponding Hebrew word: ii 2; [ii 6, if we be satisfied with the evidence of the O. L.]; xxxiii 11 (xxxiv 11, Heb.); xlix 15 (l 15 Heb.); lxvii 4 (lxviii 4, Heb.), *medio versu*; lxvii 14 (lxviii 14, Heb.), *ad finem*; xciii 15 (xciv 15, Heb.). To these we may possibly add lvi 3 (lvii 3, Heb.), unless it be simply a misplacement, for SELAH does occur in the MT of lvii 4 (*medio versu*); but not xxxviii 8 (Tischendorf; xxxix 8, Heb.), for the textual evidence is against it. On the other hand, in four cases in which the MT has SELAH *διάψαλμα* is absent from the LXX, i. e. at the end of Pss. iii, xxiv (xxiii), and xlvi (xlv), and again in Ps. lxxxviii 11 (lxxxvii 11, Sept.). These variations however do not affect the general truth of the statement that the unequal distribution of SELAH is a perplexing phenomenon. The result of a study of the LXX is simply to add seven more instances to the seventy-one of the MT. These must certainly be taken into consideration in any investigation of the use or meaning of SELAH, for it is more probable that so obscure a term was sometimes dropped from the MT, than that it was added to the Greek. On similar grounds the occasional absence of *διάψαλμα* from the LXX must not as a rule be allowed to cast serious doubt on the genuineness of SELAH in the corresponding passages of the MT.

In the MT SELAH fits into the general scheme of pointing and accentuation, receiving *Silluk* at the end, or *Ethnah* (or *Oleh-wē-Yored*)

in the middle of a verse (Pss. lv 20; lvii 4; Hab. iii 3, 9). From these facts we may probably conclude that the Punctators supposed that SELAH contributes to the general sense of the verse in which it occurs. The meaning assigned to the word was most probably 'for ever', for this is the rendering given by the authorities which are most closely in touch with Jewish tradition. Thus:

(1) Aquila, wherever he is cited in Greek, has *ἀεί*: St Jerome, where he quotes Aquila, gives *semper*.

(2) The Aramaic Targum (ed. Lagarde) regularly gives 'for ever' (ܠܘܠܝܘܝܝܢ).

(3) St Jerome in the *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos* has always *semper*, or the like.

(4) The Peshitta follows the Targum in a few places, e. g. iii 9; iv 3; xxiv 10, but in most instances leaves SELAH unnoticed. (The true text never gives *διάφασμα* in Syriac transcription, as Lee's text has it.)

Oddly as the words 'for ever' sound at the end of some verses, we must not overlook the fact that to Jewish ears they might be used as an *Amen*, as indeed St Jerome points out (*Commentarioli*, ed. Morin, page 11). The pointing *Sēlah* is perhaps intended to suggest the word *nēṣah*, 'for ever'; it is plainly pointing of an artificial kind.

But Jewish tradition has had little acceptance with modern scholars. The theory which holds the field to-day is that SELAH is a musical term, the precise meaning of which is uncertain. This is in fact as far as the Septuagint takes us. The Greek *διάφασμα* does look like a term of music, and SELAH does occur in many places in which a musical change would seem appropriate to illustrate the change in thought, e. g. in xlvi 4, 8. Still these considerations fall far short of a proof that SELAH is neither more nor less than a musical direction. The evidence resolves itself into a LXX rendering, which is itself of uncertain meaning, and a statement of St Jerome (*Commentarioli*, page 11), which halts between two opinions.

The modern theory of SELAH is at best a probable hypothesis. For some passages in the Psalms however it is not so much. We can judge of the appropriateness of a change in the music only from some change of thought we detect in the passage. Thus in Ps. iii 3 [2] the poet turns from the thought of his enemies to the thought of his God (v. 4 [3]), and SELAH (if it betokens a musical change) comes appropriately between v. 3 and 4 (Heb. numeration). But there is no such transition from v. 5 [4] to v. 6 [5] of the same Psalm.

'I cried unto JEHOVAH with my voice,
'And he answered me from his holy mount.

SELAH.

'I laid me down and slept,
'I awaked, for JEHOVAH sustained me.'

These two verses are parallel, and the thought is continuous.

Again in the two cases which occur in Ps. lxxxviii [lxxxvii] the explanation of SELAH as a musical term seems to fail, while (as I propose to shew) the alternative explanation set forth in this note may be said to apply with exactness.

The first case is that of *vv.* 8, 9. Here the LXX agrees with MT.

'Upon me thy wrath lieth hard,
'And with all thy billows thou hast afflicted me.

SELAH.

'Thou hast put mine acquaintance far from me,
'Thou hast made me an abomination unto them.'

The sense is continuous, there is no break to suggest that a change in the music would be a suitable accompaniment. The passage leaves room for a different explanation of SELAH.

The second case is that of *vv.* 11, 12. Here LXX has no *διάψαλμα* to correspond with the SELAH of MT, but I suggest that the loss of so obscure a word from the Greek text throws very little doubt (if any) on the correctness of the Hebrew reading.

'Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?
'Shall the shades arise and give thee thanks?

SELAH.

'Shall thy lovingkindness be told in the grave?
'Or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?'

Here again (as in *vv.* 8, 9) there is no break in the sense to suggest that a change in the music would be a suitable accompaniment. There is in fact room in both cases for an alternative suggestion as to the significance of SELAH.

This suggestion springs from a series of observations which shew that SELAH is constantly (I had almost written 'always') attached to a verse which by reason of some peculiarity of text has lent itself to characteristic Masoretic or Midrashic comment. *Where SELAH occurs, there usually Masorah or Midrash has been at work.* Without denying that the word may have sometimes, perhaps often, a musical significance, I suggest that it is at other times meant for a totally different purpose.

The modern printed Hebrew Bible contains in the margin a large number of textual notes and a few comments. Some of these refer to

points and accents, and are therefore to be assigned to a period subsequent to the introduction of points and accents into the Old Testament. But other notes apply to the consonantal text, and may be of hoary antiquity. Among these are to be reckoned many of the *Ḳeri* (*Kethib*) and probably also the notes *ḥōdesh*, 'holy', and *ḥōl*, 'profane', which are occasionally attached to divine names or titles, such as 'god' or 'lord', to shew whether the reference is to false gods (or human beings) or to the true God. Probably the note SELAH is the oldest of them all, for it has secured a place in the text itself.

The suggestion I make is that this note (apparently the earliest of all) is of quite general significance, a *Nota bene*, simply calling attention to the context in which it is embedded. One purpose it may well have served is that of calling attention to a change of thought in the Psalm, i. e. of acting as the mark of a fresh paragraph. As such it suggested to the musician some fresh start or some change in the music. But so ancient a term as SELAH may well have served more purposes than one. The reserve of the early Jewish exegete was profound; his wont was not to tell the secret of a difficult passage, but only to set a wise disciple on the track of the explanation.

'The wise men of old have directed that no one shall lecture on these subjects save to a single auditor, and to him only if he be himself a wise man and an understanding scholar. So afterwards the headings of the chapters may be delivered to him and he may be taught a little of the matter; and since he is himself a man of understanding he will get to know all that may be known of the conclusion of the matter and its depth.' (Maimonides, *Yad*, יסודי התורה ch. ii, § 17 on Ezek. i).¹

Thus (it is suggested) SELAH may be taken as the earliest and simplest form of note which was attached to the Hebrew text. It became obsolete and was in many cases dropped when the addition of the vowel points and other helps conveyed the comment to which SELAH was meant to refer.

This suggestion must be tested inductively, though not all of the seventy-eight instances can be discussed. The case will probably be best presented if a number of instances are classified and examined.

The verses of the Psalter then which contain SELAH fall into five classes. They are:—

(1) Those in which some peculiarity of spelling or pointing is found, e. g. vii 6 (יִרְדֵּף); ix 21 (מִזְרָה).

(2) Those in which some peculiarity of grammatical form occurs, e. g. iii 3 (יִשְׁעֶתָה); xx 4 (יִרְשְׁנָה).

(3) Those in which there is a doubt among Jewish exegetes whether

¹ Quoted from H. H. Bernard's *Selections*, pp. 5, 7.

a pronoun (or other part of speech) is 'holy' or 'profane', i. e. whether it refers to the Divine Being or not, e. g. xxiv 6; xlvi 4 (בנאותו); xlvii 5; lii 7 (אהל).

(4) Those which contain names or titles of God which have been the subject of Midrash, e. g. lix 6 (Aben Ezra *in loco*).

(5) Other instances not to be included in the preceding classes which plainly give occasion for Midrashic treatment, e. g. ii 2 (διάψαλμα in LXX); lxviii 8. Several instances might be classed under more than one heading.

1. Under the first heading comes vii 6 with the strangely pointed word וַיִּרְדֵּי . It is beside the mark to correct the form (with Kittel) to the usual pointing of the Kal. The unusual form is attested by the Masorah, Abu'l-Walid (*Book of Roots*, ed. Neubauer), Aben Ezra and Kimḥi. The Punctators plainly indicate that there is a variation in the tradition: some authorities read the Kal, others the Piel. The hesitation as to the pointing sprang (as we see from Kimḥi's comment) from a doubt as to the interpretation. He writes: 'This verb is compounded of the verb in the Kal and the verb in the dageshed voice (i. e. Piel). . . . The meaning of the compound is that the enemy pursues me in his own person (Kal) and causes others to pursue me (Piel).' Kimḥi then applies the words to Saul's pursuit of David in which Israel was bidden to join.

The next verse to be mentioned in which these three elements—a strange pointing, a strange (perhaps, perverse) interpretation, and the word SELAH—are found, occurs at no distance from the first. In ix 21 the Hebrew (consonantal text), the LXX, and the Peshitta read, 'Appoint them (i. e. the nations) a *lawgiver* (an instructor, מורה) that the nations may learn to know that they are men.' But early Jewish study stumbled at the thought of a 'lawgiver' to give *torah* to the nations! Some severer lesson was expected for the heathen than merely that they should become Moses' disciples and learn that they are but men! On the Masoretic-Midrashic side it was suggested that מורה was intended; the Psalmist must surely have prayed that 'terror' should be the lot of the nations. So Aquila writes φόβημα, and Jerome supersedes the *legislatorem* of the Gallican Psalter by the *terrorem* of the *Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos*. Is it only a coincidence that SELAH closed this verse as it closed vii 6? Before answering the question it is well to remember that there is one (one only) intermediate verse which ends with SELAH. Here (ix 17) the pointing (and interpretation) was a subject of discussion by early Jewish scholars. 'He snareth (ניקש) the wicked in the work of his own hands'—so stands R. V. marg. in agreement with the Punctators. A. V. and R. V. text read 'The wicked is snared' (as though ניקש) in agreement with the Jewish

Commentators. Is it of no significance that three successive instances of pointing which have given rise to Jewish discussion are followed each by the note SELAH?

Under this heading falls also Ps. lxxxviii 8. It has already been urged that the explanation of SELAH as a musical direction is not suitable in this passage. But there is abundant justification in the sense of the verse itself for taking SELAH as a *Nota bene*, warning the reader that the pointing of an important word needs consideration. The literal translation of 8^b is certainly *not*

‘And with all thy billows thou hast afflicted me’,

but

‘And thou hast afflicted all thy billows.’

But this is nonsense, it is objected. So it is, but nonsense with a purpose in it, as the SELAH (here equivalent to *sic*) shews. Change the vowel points only and a sense quite serious—too serious indeed for publication—appears, namely,

‘And thou hast afflicted all that wait on thee’.

The Psalm is as gloomy and bitter as the early speeches of Job, and its bitterness finds a climax in *v.* 8. The Psalmist, like the author of Ps. lxxix (*v.* 7 [6]), identifies his cause with the cause of all the righteous, and declares that in his affliction they also have been afflicted. But the words seem to reproach God with utter injustice, and so the earliest commentators warned the reader of dangerous ground with a SELAH, while the Punctators embodied and veiled the tradition in an impossible pointing of the dangerous word. ‘Thy billows’ is a very early mask for ‘those that wait on thee’, for it is found in LXX, but the Greek translators have carried the process a stage further by providing a suitable verb (ἐπήγαγες).

2. SELAH again is attached to verses which contain a word of peculiar grammatical form. The first occurrence of SELAH in the MT of the Psalter is in iii 3 [2], where ישועתה ‘salvation’, is found with the uncommon ending *-āthāh*, which stands for *-āh* plus *āh*. ‘There is no salvation for him in God. SELAH.’ A modern expositor would no doubt pass over the form with a brief grammatical remark, but not so the Hebrew commentator of early times whose thought easily turned to Midrash. R. D. Kimḥi comments thus: ‘*There is no salvation for him (David) in this world, for he shall not be delivered from the hand of Absalom, and there is no salvation for his soul for the world to come. . . . Every doubling of a termination is intended to double the meaning of the word.*’ Now this comment is certainly ancient in form, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that it is also ancient in matter.

I suggest that SELAH is a N.B. calling attention to the tradition that the uncommon form of *ישועתה* was not meaningless. Masorah and Midrash meet here.

Ps. iii 5 [4] is a similar case. A literal translation of the verse (MT) is: '[With] my voice I will cry unto JEHOVAH and *he hath answered* me from his holy mountain. SELAH.' 'Past instead of Future', comments Kimḥi, . . . 'Either it is to be understood literally that his confidence rested on this experience (i. e. that JEHOVAH had answered him in the Past) *or* (and this is correct) the Holy Spirit had come upon his tongue . . . for the thing is as if it were already accomplished, when it hath been spoken by the Holy Spirit.' Again, SELAH calls attention to the meeting of 'Masorah' (in the wider sense) and Midrash.

One more passage—a striking one—may be mentioned: Ps. xx 4 [3], 'JEHOVAH remember all thy meal offerings and accept as fat (LXX *πιανάρω*, יִרְשָׁנָה) thy burnt sacrifice.' Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimḥi all comment on the strange form of the termination of the word, and explain the verb as expressing in one way or another the notion of acceptance. But the Midrash Tehillim (p. 176) contains a comment which is perhaps much older than that of the three great Commentators. It runs: 'Accept thy burnt sacrifice. SELAH. This is ISAAC who was bound upon the altar as a burnt sacrifice.' The comment is surprising, for why should Isaac be introduced here? The form of יִרְשָׁנָה answers the question. Neither the vowels nor the consonants can be satisfactorily explained on the hypothesis that this is a single homogeneous word. The Midrash suggests a various reading; while the Bible-text looks like a group of consonants and vowels intended to preserve a record of two readings. We may read *either* יִרְשָׁן 'may he accept', *or* יִשְׁנָה 'may he change' (or 'he will change'). Isaac is the one burnt sacrifice in the O. T. which was 'changed', since God sent a ram to take his place. The victim was changed and the sacrifice was accepted. Here again where Masorah and Midrash meet, we find SELAH standing at the end of the verse.

3. The third class of SELAH-passages may be compared in part with the list of the passages which are reckoned as *Tikkun Sopherim*.¹ A question arises whether a word (or a suffix) has a 'holy' reference, i. e. a reference to the Supreme, or a 'profane' one. Thus Ezek. viii 17 'Lo! they put the branch (the *barsom* of the Parsees, perhaps) to their face', is said to be *Tikkun Sopherim* for the daring expression 'to my face', i. e. 'in defiance of me', God himself being the speaker. A similar question arises in Ps. xxiv 6, 'They that seek thy face, O Jacob. SELAH.' Is the reference of the possessive pronoun 'profane', as the A. V. takes it? The LXX takes it as 'holy', for it translates para-

¹ J. T. S. i 387-414.

phrastically: *ζητούντων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ. διάψαλμα.* The Peshitta half way between MT and LXX gives 'That seek thy face, O God of Jacob'. Here is a trace of the well-known Midrashic discussion as to 'holy' and 'profane', and SELAH is added to warn the reader against too hastily accepting the 'profane' reference.

Again, what is the reference of the possessive suffix in xlvi 4 [3], 'The mountains shake with the swelling thereof'? The E.V. rendering suggests the swelling of the sea, but a very different rendering is possible, 'The mountains shake at His majesty'. So Rashi explains, '*His majesty*'. That is of the Holy One (Blessed be He) who is mentioned at the beginning of the Psalm'. A concluding SELAH warns against the 'profane' interpretation adopted by the E.V.

Ps. xlvii 5 contains again an instance of the doubt between 'holy' and 'profane'. Taking the reference as 'profane' we translate (following E. V.):—

He chooseth for us *our* inheritance,

Even the excellent { land of Jacob which he loved.
sanctuary

On the other hand, following the reading pre-supposed by the LXX in the first clause (*τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ*), we render:—

He chooseth for us [the land of] His inheritance,
Because He loveth the glory of Jacob.

The doubt whether Canaan should be spoken of as 'our inheritance' or 'His inheritance', a doubt giving full play to Midrash, is noted at the end of the verse with SELAH.

Yet another instance of the same doubt may be seen in lii 7 [5], '[God] shall take thee up, and pluck thee *out of tent*' (*sic!* מִאוֹהֶל, LXX ἀπὸ σκηνώματος). The E.V. takes the 'profane' view of the phrase and renders 'out of thy tent', but the Peshitta and Aben Ezra give 'His tent', and SELAH (as in other instances) gives warning that the word may (or must) be taken as 'holy'.

4. The fourth class consists of those SELAH-passages which contain Names or Titles of God. A good instance is found in lxviii 33: 'Kingdoms of the earth, sing ye to God; sing praises unto the Lord (אֲדֹנָי). SELAH.' The SELAH is perhaps a reminder that this 'Adonai' is an 'accommodation' for the Tetragrammaton, which eight of Kennicott's MSS have. The address is to the Gentiles, and therefore the Sacred Name, thought to be unsuitable here, is suggested only, not expressed.

A second instance is almost certainly to be found in l 6: 'And the heavens have declared his righteousness,'

כי אלהים שפט הוא סלה:

thirty of Kennicott's MSS read שופט, together with the 'Elohim' which occurs in this verse and in the following verses.

The second clause is ambiguous; it might be rendered *either* 'For He hath judged gods' (*elohim* = gods of the nations) *or*, 'For God (ELOHIM), He is judge'. The concluding SELAH warns the reader to choose with care.

To these must be added Hab. iii 3, where SELAH is introduced into the middle of the verse to call attention to the use of שׁוֹרֵק (without the article and without any qualifying word) as a designation of the God of Israel. The title is noticed in the Masorah on this passage. It is difficult to see what the note SELAH considered as a musical direction could mean in the middle of this verse.

Here a SELAH-passage should be mentioned in which perhaps the name of a heathen god is given. Ps. lx 6 runs: 'Thou hast given to them that fear Thee a banner that they may be delivered (escape) from the face of Kosheṭ. SELAH.' What is Kosheṭ? Ancient authority is divided. The Targum takes the sense of *truth* and gives a Midrashic turn to the words 'that they may escape thereby for the sake of the truth of Abraham'. LXX, Aquila, and Peshitta take Kosheṭ as equivalent to *kesheth*, 'bow'. It is however to be observed that the Punctators have pointed the word as they have pointed 'Molech', i. e. so as to suggest the meaning 'the shameful thing', and it is possible that the word is the disfigured name of a heathen god, like Nego (for 'Nebo') or Nisroch (perhaps for 'Marduk'). A god *Ḳaus* (קס) or *Kaush* is known as an Edomite or as a Nabatean deity (see Nöldeke, E. B. s.v. Edom), who may have been a storm-god or war-god. *Ḳaus* is also a common Arabic word for 'bow' (*arcus*).

5. The fifth class consists of those passages which seem for different reasons to challenge Midrashic or Masoretic treatment. Such are the verses in which by use of synonymous words an idea is repeated, or again in which there is a repetition of a word or a syllable. Midrash insists that in such cases the two words are not strictly equivalent, since each word has its own reference, and even a repeated syllable is not otiose. (One extreme case of this last kind has been already noticed in Ps. iii 3, ישועה, where a 'double termination' has been thus treated by Midrash.) Ps. lxxviii supplies two instances: *first* (of a clause), in v. 4 [3] where two synonymous words are used to express one idea, 'Let the righteous be glad, [and] let them exult' (יעלצו), to which some thirty MSS prefix the conjunction ו). Kimḥi's comment on the *two* verbs is simply 'Hezekiah and Israel', i. e. he suggests that each verb has its own subject: Hezekiah 'is glad'; Israel 'exults'. In this case the SELAH, which has been lost from MT, is preserved in LXX, οἱ δίκαιοι ἐὺφρανθήτωσαν, διάψαλα. ἀγαλλιάσθωσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

In the second passage the repetition is of a syllable. (Again SELAH is preserved in LXX only.) V. 14, 'As the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her pinions with yellow (בִּירִקְרִק) gold. *διάψαλμα*.' Both Aben Ezra and Rashi comment on the reduplicated form, and say that the 'best gold' is meant. Here probably the significance of SELAH is Masoretic; it is as though a *sic* were added to a form which otherwise might be carelessly emended.

A good instance of a verse which challenges by its contents Midrashic treatment is ii 2, 'The rulers take counsel together against יְהוָה and against His Anointed'. Here SELAH is absent from MT, but the LXX (= Psalt. Rom. et Gall.) has *διάψαλμα*, and it is most probable that the LXX is right. Midrash must ask, Why is *another* so closely associated with the Holy One? The answer can be supplied from a Midrashic comment on a different passage. It is because 'Every one who riseth up against Israel is as if he rose up against the Holy One, Blessed be He (*Mechilta*, ed. Friedmann on Exod. xv 7)'.¹

Another similar passage is iv 5, 6 [4, 5], 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be silent. SELAH. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness'. Here the Midrash runs: 'What is meant by *Be silent* SELAH? R. Judah said: Provided thou cease from the transgression which thou hast in hand. And if thou behavest thus—what is written next, *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness!* This means, I will reckon it unto thee as if thou hadst built an altar' (*Midrash Tehillim*, ed. S. Buber, p. 46).

Yet two more passages may be cited: (a) Ps. iii 9, 'Salvation belongeth unto יְהוָה; thy blessing be (or shall be) upon thy people. SELAH.' Here the lack of connexion between the clauses has given rise to Midrash. Rashi's comment is as follows: 'It is incumbent upon Him to save His servants and His people, and it is incumbent upon His people to bless Him and to give thanks to Him.' The final SELAH claims the verse for this Midrashic explanation.

(b) Ps. lxxviii 8, 'When thou marchedst (בַּצְעֵרֶךָ) in the wilderness' (יִשְׁמִינֶךָ) has its parallel in Judges v 4, 'When thou marchedst (בַּצְעֵרֶךָ) from the field of Edom', and also in Hab. iii 12, and in 2 Sam. v 24. SELAH reminds the reader that there are these instructive parallel passages. יְהוָה 'marches' with the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire against the enemies of His people; so the parallels teach us. The anthropomorphic expression challenged comment.

Perhaps a sixth class should be added containing SELAH-passages the text of which is highly uncertain. These may be summarily treated here.

(a) Ps. xxxii 7: רָגַי פִּלַּט תְּסוּבְּנֵי סֵלָה; LXX τὸ ἀγαλλίαμά

μου λύτρωσαί με ἀπὸ τῶν κυκλωσάντων με. διάψαλμα. Some corruption is probable here, and רני may be (as it is supposed) a dittography.

(b) Ps. lxii 9 : סלה . . סלה, בטהו בו בכל עת עם . . . LXX ἐλπίσατε ἐπ' αὐτόν, πᾶσα συναγωγή (ἑδ) λαοῦ. . . . διάψαλμα. The Hebrew text reads strangely, and the Greek certainly suggests another reading.

(c) Ps. xciv 15 : כי עד צדיק ישוב משפט ואחריו כל ישרי לב ; Peshitta, 'Because judgement returneth after the righteous man (צדיק), and after him are all the upright of heart'. Two MSS (Kenn.) צדיק. In this last passage SELAH is wanting in the Hebrew, but LXX has διάψαλμα.

In each of these three instances ancient authority suggests a variation in the text. To these passages from the Psalter may be added two from Hab. iii. *Vv.* 9, 13 of Hab. iii are in fact two places as difficult textually as any passage in the whole Hebrew Bible. But early Jewish scholarship did not emend these (or similar places), but it boldly read into them more than the modern commentator can find in them as they stand. The note SELAH is an indication that Midrashic comment is to be looked for to explain these obscure passages, and so to preserve the text untouched.

To sum up the conclusions of this Note :—

(1) SELAH being embedded in the text of the Hebrew O. T. must belong to the earliest stage of comment or exegesis.

(2) As the product of the first tentative work of Jewish exegetes it had (probably) a quite general significance.

(3) It often occurs where there is some change or break in the thought of the Psalmist.

(4) Consequently, though SELAH was not specially intended as a musical direction, it would often serve as one.

(5) In many instances it has no reference to music, but it calls attention to some difficulty of text or interpretation.

(6) It was at one time found more frequently than now in the text of the Psalter, but it lost most of its *raison d'être* when the work of the Masorets attained its present development and the tradition as to the pointing became fixed.

W. EMERY BARNES.