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A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies (old series)* can be found here:

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

it necessary to turn to them,[1] and for this reason, if for no other, it is desirable to place them in their true setting and to mark them off from the earlier Lives of which they are partly imitations.

Caradoc of Llancarvan was, as we have said, a contemporary of Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose *Historia Regum Britanniae* was written *c.* 1136.[2] The Durham MS of the Life of St Gildas was written in 1166; and of the Life of St Cungar we have a twelfth-century fragment. These two Lives may have been written at any time between 1120 and 1150. The two later Lives were probably composed towards the end of the twelfth century. They give no evidence of acquaintance with the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the Arthurian material which they contain testifies to Welsh tradition before or soon after his time. Our enquiry therefore may be thought to have a certain literary value apart from its hagiographical interest. I must ask pardon for trespassing in these fields, and daring to write, as Nennius would say, 'quasi garrula avis vel quasi quidam invalidus arbiter': and I gladly repeat the last words of his *Apologia*: 'Cedo illi qui plus noverit in ista peritia satis quam ego.'

J. ARMITAGE ROBINSON.

IS ECCLESIASTES A TRANSLATION?

THE title of this Note is phrased as a query, because the matter is not clear to my mind. But I have had for some time a feeling that the style of Ecclesiastes is, in certain respects, unsatisfactory and disconcerting, and the answer which to me raises the least difficulty and satisfies most of the data is that what we have is not an original but a translation. I cannot offer a demonstration of this, but I venture to hope that my remarks will not be out of place as a suggestion.

The Book called Ecclesiastes, itself a rendering of the extraordinary Hebrew title *Kohéleth*, is a most original work. Especially is this the case if we think of originality as a quality displayed rather in getting to grips with the essentials of a problem than in saying brilliant things about the surface of it. The author, considering the ancient problem of the unequal distribution of what are generally supposed to be the desirable things of life, passes on to consider the nature of real happiness, real success. He comes to the conclusion that a good deal of what passes for success is in itself worthless, and that the only positive good

[1] See especially the admirable work of R. H. Fletcher in his *Arthurian Material in the Chronicles* (1906) pp. 105 ff.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 45.

is having a job and liking it (v 17, 18)—as distinct from the evil of having a job which you don't like, in order at some future time and place to have the means to enjoy what you now think you will like when you get it.

But the clear thinking of Ecclesiastes is expressed in a singularly bald style. The baldness is perceptible in the English Version, but it is far worse in the Hebrew. There is no literary charm in the book due to the use of language[1]: the undoubted impressiveness of many passages is due to the underlying thought.

Is there any real parallel to this in literature? The strange Greek of the Apocalypse of John is very far from baldness. It has a charm of its own: it is only the schoolmaster who is repelled. Mark is written not 'in order', in an unliterary, unconventional style, but it is full of striking words and phrases. The Fourth Gospel might possibly be described as bald in style, but it is quite correct.

This brings me to the linguistic character of Ecclesiastes. Can the style of Ecclesiastes be described as correct or natural? It seems to me neither. It seems to me to have the awkward stiffness of a translation. If it be a translation, it is naturally a translation from the Aramaic. The object of this Note is to ask whether the view that Ecclesiastes is a translation from the Aramaic does not solve many of the linguistic problems offered by the book.

The Aramaic influence in Ecclesiastes is of course evident, but usually it is explained to be due to 'an author who *thought* in Aramaic, and translated the Aramaic idiom, part by part, into unidiomatic Hebrew' (Driver *Lit. O. T.*, ed. 1894, p. 445 note 2). But if Aramaic be the language of the writer, why should he express his thoughts in Hebrew at all, except on the hypothesis that he aimed at canonicity? Or, at least, that he aimed at writing something in the general style of ancient Hebrew literature. This surely is not the case. He does not make any claim to 'inspiration'. Joel seems to be an imitation of the old, pre-exilic prophetic style; many of the Psalms are no doubt quite late, so is Esther, so is Chronicles. But these books, though their lateness is evident to an attentive student, are not altogether incongruous with the older books. Daniel is the nearest parallel to Ecclesiastes, and part of Daniel is extant only in Aramaic, while the rest is itself possibly a translation. But even if the Hebrew parts of Daniel were originally written in Hebrew, there is an obvious reason, for Daniel professes to be prophecy and revelation, while Ecclesiastes makes no claim at all of that sort. Is it not more likely that the thoughts of the unconventional sceptic were put into form in the language of everyday?

[1] Except the use of *mishpāṭ* (= 'how') in viii 5, 6: possibly this is a quoted proverb.

I have begun with these general considerations, because they seem to me fundamental. They seem to me to give the reason for declaring the question open. I now come to one or two definite instances, where it seems to me that the Hebrew text as we have it is rather the work of a not always skilful translator than that of 'an author who *thought* in Aramaic' and wrote in something else.

(*a*) Eccl. vii 14 b (15 b).

'God hath even made the one side by side with the other to the end that man should not find out any thing *that shall be* after him.'

I quote the R.V., but I do not find it convincing, either as a sentiment, or as a strict rendering of the Hebrew, which ends with the words

על דברת שלא ימצא האדם אחריו מאומה

lit. 'for the reason that no man should find after him aught'.

The question arises to whom 'him' refers—to man or to God? The English Version and a good many modern expositors refer it to man, but Symmachus has *τοῦ μὴ εὑρεῖν ἄνθρωπον κατ' αὐτοῦ μέμψιν*. This is no paraphrase, but a literal translation of what the sentence would mean if we treated it as Syriac. To find a thing *after* so-and-so means in Syriac to find him guilty of or responsible for it. A good example is Lk. xxiii 14 (= *οὐθὲν εὗρον ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ αἴτιον*): translated in *SC* ܡܕܡ ܠܐ ܐܫܟܚܬ ܒܗ (literally: 'Nothing have I found after him'): other instances are Dan. vi 4, John xix 4, Acts xxviii 18 (all syr. vg.), and Lk. xxiii 15 *SC*.

According to this view, therefore, we should translate 'God has made one thing against the other in such a way that no man should find any occasion of complaint against Him'.

This seems to me quite in accordance with the thought of Ecclesiastes, but I doubt if it be real Hebrew. I think it is an over-literal translation from an Aramaic original made by a translator who referred 'after him' to man.

(*b*) Eccl. iv 15 f.

'I saw all the living which walk under the sun, that they were with the youth, the second, that stood up in his stead. There was no end to all the people, even of all them over whom he was: yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him.'

This is R.V., which hardly differs from A.V. If the Bible were more read, instead of being talked about, I fancy we should not hear quite so much about 'the noble English of our incomparable Version'. To such a passage as I have transcribed the only appropriate remark appears to me to be the words which immediately follow—'surely this also is Vanity!'

On looking at the passage, however, one sees that it is a general remark about all men, and further that there seems to be some contrast intended between those that come after and their predecessors, a contrast

between some one and the youth who will be his successor. The decisive word is evidently that translated 'the second'. Second to whom? to his elder brother, or *to his father*?

The Hebrew is השני, which of itself rather suggests a second son, as it does in English. But may it not be a mere rendering of the Aramaic *tinyānā* (Syr. *trayānā*)? This word in Aramaic often implies the notion of 'second in command'. In the *Hymn of the Soul* the Brother of the hero, i. e. the exalted Jesus, is called the *trayānā* of the King of Kings, and in the Targums to Jerem. xvii 15 and Zech. xiii 7 the *tinyānayyā* are 'persons of the second rank'.

With this clue we can make sense of the passage. 'The living' are the present generation, now in power and activity. 'The youth' is the second in command, destined in due course to supplant the present generation. There is no limit to human numbers, counting all the successive generations, but the latest generation have no cause for satisfaction ('rejoice *thereat*', not 'rejoice *in him*'), for all 's a bubble!

'I saw all the living under the sun going along with the youthful generation, now occupying the second place, who will one day supplant their elders. There is no end to all the people, those that were before them; yet let the last comers not rejoice thereat, for that also is Vanity.'

This makes sense, but is it Hebrew? I doubt it, except it be regarded as translation Hebrew.

(*c*) The transmitted text of Ecclesiastes seems to have suffered here and there, but I venture to ask whether some of the passages which, as they stand, make no sense, do not look rather like the efforts of a translator who does not quite understand what is before him. Examples are iv 14 b (נולד רש), v 6, xii 11 b.[1] I do not include vi 8 b in this list, for it seems to me that the incoherence is due to corruption. The advantage of the wise man over the fool, seeing that their fates (according to our author) are so much alike, should consist in some saving or excepting clause: read, therefore, מבלעדי for מה לעני, and translate 'What advantage hath the wise man over the fool, except that he knows how to walk (i. e. to behave) before his contemporaries?'

In the difficult passage Eccl. viii 10 also I feel it is impossible to make sense without emendation, and I take this opportunity of suggesting קרבים (or מקרבים) for קברים. If מקרבים be preferred the word will have the technical sense of offering a sacrifice, if קרבים it will have the more general meaning of coming near to God in the Temple: in either case, therefore, it has the connotation of 'going to church'.

[1] In this last verse there is surely some corruption: 'from one shepherd' (מרעה אחד) is nonsense. The context suggests that by means of the lips the mind of one is imparted to others, i. e. the phrase should end with מרע האחד. מרע ('mind', 'intelligence') occurs in Eccl. x 20, and is 'given' in 2 Chr. i 10, 12.

With this trifling change, and reading with Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and practically the 'LXX', וישתכחו for וישתחו, the sense is: 'And further I have seen wicked men at worship, and they who have done so come in and go off on their ways from the Holy Place and boast of it—this also is Vanity!'

If Ecclesiastes be a translation it is not out of place to suggest that the mysterious שואף of i 5 was intended by him for שָׁאַף (or should it not be שָׁאַף? See Judges vi 17). In this case put the first הולך of *ver.* 6 into *ver.* 5 and translate

'And the Sun rises and the Sun sets, and to its place where also it rises does it go. To the South and round to the North, round and round goes the Wind. . . .'

As has been pointed out by Siegfried and others, there is elsewhere in O.T. no trace of the idea that the Sun goes on his course with fatigue or effort, so that an unexplained allusion to the Sun 'panting' is really a difficulty.

(*d*) Finally, all the long lists of Aramaic words and constructions, to be found in Siegfried or any other good Commentary on Ecclesiastes, will on this hypothesis receive their due explanation. No doubt 'Aramaisms' did invade the later Hebrew style, but that was when it was really a dead language. The later we put the 'Maccabaean' Psalms, the Books of Chronicles, Esther, Ruth, &c., the more that we incline to postulate a Hebrew original for Jubilees or the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, the harder is it to believe that Ecclesiastes was composed in the crabbed and unnatural lingo in which we read it in our Hebrew Bibles. It is better as Hebrew than some parts of the Greek Bible are as Greek, but I do not think it any better than that. I find it difficult to believe that so acute and careful a thinker would have employed such a vehicle for his thought, and therefore I welcome the evidence here brought forward, which seems to me to suggest that what we have of the Preacher is a translation from a lost Aramaic original.

F. C. BURKITT.

Additional Note on the physical meaning of 'Vanity'.

The word הֶבֶל *hével*, translated 'vanity' in the English Bible, is a key-word in Ecclesiastes. We are not likely to apprehend fully the thought of the writer in applying the word to human life and effort, until we know the real physical meaning. It is commonly said to mean 'breath' or 'a puff of wind'. When, however, we look for the proof of this statement we find it is an inference from Isaiah lvii 13, where it seems to stand in parallelism to *rūaḥ*. Generally it is used meta-

phorically, as here in Ecclesiastes. The verb הבל does not help us, for it is evidently a denominative from the metaphorical use of the noun. What can be gathered from the context of various passages in which the word occurs in the O. T. I will come to later.

If Ecclesiastes be a translation from the Aramaic, it is reasonable to ask whether its use in Aramaic be not more precise. That seems to be the case. It is used for the 'vapour' or 'exhalation' that comes from the living body and is seen on a cold day. Thus Psalm xc 9 'as a tale that is told' (כמו הגה, *lit.* 'as a sigh', or 'a murmur') is rendered in the Targum 'as the breath of the mouth in winter' (היך הבל פומא בסתוא), where the word for 'breath' is not *rūaḥ* but *hval.* This form of words is quite decisive: הבל, emph. הבלא *havlā*, is therefore the visible breath, no doubt thought of as a mere waste product, and quite different in substance from the invisible breath of life, *rūḥā.* Levy quotes further Jebam. 80b, B. kama 50b, Shabb. 88b, from which we learn that *havlā* is used of the burning breath of angels, of the exhalation from a pit, and of the atmosphere of a rabbinical school full of hardworking pupils.

Further, there is in vulgar Arabic a word *habbal*, which means 'to poultice', or 'to give a vapour bath to'. This is important, as shewing that the Jewish Aramaic use is not a mere inference from the Bible.

Thus 'exhalation' appears to be the accurate physical meaning of the Aramaic *havlā*, and so (no doubt) of its Hebrew equivalent *hével.* 'Vanity' is an exhalation, which comes into visible existence without force or effort, has no vigour, and rapidly vanishes into nothing.

If we go on farther and ask what literary equivalent we can find for *hével* in Ecclesiastes and the other Old Testament passages, we must study the contexts in which the word is used. Most of them are so purely metaphorical that the Targum is justified in rendering it, as it does so often in Psalms, by לְמָא, i. e. 'nothing'. But there are three passages which should govern our choice of a term. In Psalm lxii 9 (10) we read that *hével* is the lightest thing the Psalmist can think of to be weighed in a balance; in Psalm cxl 4 *hével* is as fleeting as a passing shadow; in Isaiah xlix 4 to work for *hével* is like working in mere chaos, in the primaeval disorder.

As I have shewn, 'exhalation' is the most scientific rendering; but some exhalations disperse very slowly. Not only is the word too long, it does not give sufficiently the idea of impermanence. 'Breath' inevitably suggests 'life' and activity: these are not wanted. 'Vapour' is almost as bad as 'exhalation', for the same reasons. Some time ago I used 'bubble' as a poetical equivalent: the object of this note is to confess that it is not a scientific equivalent, but to reiterate my conviction that it is more appropriate as a poetical equivalent than its more scientific competitors. A bubble is very light, very fleeting, yet visible.

Like the breath in winter it also often comes from the human mouth, and a mass of bubbles does depict for us chaos. To say that Life is a Breath is almost tautology, but to say that Life is a Bubble is not very far from the thought of Ecclesiastes.

F. C. B.

ADVERSARIA.

I. The 'Blessed Presbyters' who condemned Noetus.

Noetus the Smyrniot, the original inventor of Patripassianism, was examined and ultimately condemned at a council of 'the blessed presbyters'. The object of this note is to try to give an answer to two questions: the first, Where was the council held? the second and more important, Who were the *μακάριοι πρεσβύτεροι* who composed it?

Our only real authority in the matter is Hippolytus. The account in Epiphanius *Haer.* lvii 1 is, as any one can satisfy himself who compares the two writers,[1] dependent on the account in Hippolytus *contra Noetum* 1 (ap. Lagarde *Hippolyti Romani quae feruntur omnia graece*, 1858, pp. 43, 44). Epiphanius after his manner heightens the effect of the picture by dotting the i's and crossing the t's, as he copies out his source: but there is not the least reason to think that he made use of any other authority. So carelessly and unintelligently does he incorporate into his context the language of his exemplar, that whereas Hippolytus begins by saying that Noetus' place was Smyrna and his date rather recent, *οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου γενόμενος*, Epiphanius transfers him to Ephesus, and writing nearly a century and a half later says that he taught *οὐ πρὸ ἐτῶν πλειόνων, ἀλλ' ὡς πρὸ χρόνου τῶν τούτων ἑκατὸν τριάκοντα*, 'not so long ago, that is to say, some hundred and thirty years back!'

No statement therefore made in this connexion by Epiphanius is of any value, unless (*a*) it is a legitimate deduction from the words of Hippolytus, or (*b*) we find any special reason to suppose that it rests on some other authority and was not deduced (rightly or wrongly) from Hippolytus.

As to place, Epiphanius knows of no other local connexion than Asia and Ephesus. As to the synod, he calls its members *οἱ μακάριοι πρεσβύτεροι τῆς ἐκκλησίας . . . οἱ αὐτοὶ πρεσβύτεροι*: but he also

[1] Besides the phrases quoted in the text, compare Hippolytus 43. 12 *οἰήσει πνεύματος ἀλλοτρίου* with Epiphanius *ἀλλοτρίῳ πνεύματι φερόμενος*: H. 43. 12, 15 *εἰς ἐπηρμένον, ἔπαρμα καρδίας* with E. *ἐπάρμασι μανίας ἐπαρθείς*. Comparison of H. 43. 25 *τί οὖν κακὸν ποιῶ δοξάζων τὸν χριστὸν . . . καὶ ἡμεῖς ἕνα θεὸν οἴδαμεν ἀληθῶς, οἴδαμεν χριστόν* with E. *τί γὰρ κακὸν πεποίηκα; ἕνα θεὸν δοξάζω, ἕνα ἐπίσταμαι* may suggest that something has dropped out of our existing text of Hippolytus.