CHAPTER FIVE

STROPHE IV: 18:5

5.1. Text and translation

5.1.1. Textual criticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Verse</th>
<th>Verse Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 5aα</td>
<td>For, at harvest time, when the bud has been completed and [the] sour grape[s] ripen, and blossom has happened,</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. 5aβ</td>
<td>then he will cut off the quivering tendrils with pruning knives,</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. 5bα</td>
<td>and he will turn aside and he will strike away the twigs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>v. 5bβ</td>
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5.1.2. Translation

The translation of "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה" in v. 5aα is here translated “for, at harvest time [. . .]”. By rendering the phrase this way, this means

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1 MT has "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", masculine singular absolute, while 1Q Isā' has "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", which is a qatil-form of the same root. I see no reason for rejecting MT’s "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה".

2 Where MT has "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", qal active participle masculine singular absolute, 1Q Isā' has "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", “being ripened”, which is qal passive participle. I see no reason why MT’s "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה" should be rejected.

3 MT has the noun "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", “twigs” in v. 5bβ, feminine plural absolute, while some Rabbinic witnesses read "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה" instead of MT’s "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה". For details, cf. the textual critical apparatus in The Hebrew University Bible (1995). "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה" means “the plants” (of the root "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה", this form found only in Ps 144:12 where it is used figuratively of vigorous sons), whereas MT’s “רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה” means “the twigs” (of the root "רַבָּכְרִי מִשְׁפַּרְתָּה"). However, as long as MT is linguistically sound and valid, there is no reason why MT should be rejected. For a discussion of the translation of this word, see 5.1.2.
that 'ynpl is not temporarily understood in this text in the meaning “before the harvest”. A similar understanding of 'ynpl is also seen in H. Wildberger’s commentary. According to Wildberger, 'ynpl should not be taken in the sense of “prae”, in a temporal meaning. Rather, he argues, it has the meaning “in the sight of, in the presence of” in Isa 18:5.⁴

The translation of 'ynpl
When the preposition וב is followed by an infinitive construct, this indicates a temporal use of the preposition.⁵ Therefore, the preposition וב is here rendered “when”.

The translation of 'bšr
The translation of 'bšr is not difficult as the conventional rendering of this word is “sour grape”. What is interesting, though, is that the noun וב, “grape”, in singular, is regarded having a plural meaning, “grapes”.⁶ In order to distinguish between the noun’s strict grammatical form on the one hand, and its function on the other hand, it is written “grape[s]” in the translation above. The translation of וב is in Isa 18:5 “ripen”. The phrase וב נמל means sour grapes that are ripen.⁷

The translation of 'hr ṣhm
In Job 15:33 and Gen 40:10, ṣhm means “blooming, in full blossom”. This is also the case in Isa 18:5.⁸ Here, ṣhm can thus be translated “blossom has happened”. For a different rendering, see F. Wutz who makes an unnecessary emendation and reads ṣhm ṣhm, “throws off the blooms”.⁹

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⁵ Cf. C.H.J. van der Merwe & al., A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar (1999/2002) 284: “ו+ infinitive construct is used to indicate that an event referred to in the main clause following the temporal clause with the בו+ infinitive construct, immediately follows it in time.” (His italics).