Ainsi dans l'expression ἄρτους ἐνωπίους l'épithète ferait allusion au fait que la communauté doit être présente à la phase solennelle du rite, qui vaut également à ces pains le nom de ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως, "pains de la présentation" (Ex. xl 23).

Si l'interprétation proposée ici est fondée, on pourrait conclure:
Dans la Septante aussi bien que dans le Texte Massorétique et que dans la Mishna, c'est "devant Dieu" que cette offrande est "en permanence". Elle suit donc la règle générale de toutes les offrandes. La particularité que nous révèle ici la Septante c'est que le renouvellement des pains s'accomplit solennellement "en présence de la communauté" et que les traducteurs voyaient là une caractéristique du rite. Peut-être aussi souhaitaient-ils par cet ajout encourager ou réveiller le zèle des Juifs eux-mêmes pour assister au renouvellement des Douze Pains.

Paris

André Pelletier

"COVENANTING WITH THE PRINCES: NEH VI 2"

The so-called "memoirs" of Nehemiah are not without problems. One of these problems is the translation of passages without consideration of their full potential. An example of this can be seen in a study of Neh vi 2.

Most scholars have focused their attention on the difficulty presented by bakkephārim in the MT. Two alternative views have arisen to explain that phrase 1). On the one hand, one may translate this as, "in the villages." It is supported by the reading of the Oriental Hebrew text, bakkephārim (showing an apparent derivation from kāphār). Furthermore, the Greek texts read, en tais kōmais; and the Vulgate renders it in viculis. Yet, in order to be properly understood,

it is commonly agreed that the phrase must be interpreted to mean, "in one of the villages."

On the other hand, one may infer that the phrase veils the more specific designation, "in Chephirah." This calls for an alteration of the MT, and it has no textual support. The grounds for such an inference are other biblical references to a place known as Chephirah (Neh vii 29/Ezra ii 25; Josh ix 17; xviii 26) and the actual existence of a village by that name in the plain of Ono. Proponents of this theory derive the MT reading from kephir.

The first alternative cannot be accepted without question, however, for the fact is that the MT literally reads, "with the lions," and not, "in the villages." Thus, the derivation from kephir, as suggested by those who propose the second alternative, is correct. Neither must we accept the first alternative on the basis of the Oriental Hebrew text, since the Ketiv of that text can also support the MT reading, "with the lions." The second alternative, though pointing to the correct derivation, has no support whatsoever except by inference; hence, it too may be discarded.

Assuming, then, that "with the lions" is the correct translation of bakkēphirim, and that the readings of the Greek texts and the Vulgate are mistranslations, can any sense be obtained from the MT? It should be noted that kephir is used figuratively in the OT to mean "princes" (cf. Nahum ii 12-14; Ezek xix 2-6). This would fit the context of Neh vi 2 very well, for Nehemiah is invited to some kind of meeting with his opponents who are governors, or tribal chiefs, or princes of local districts. Therefore, the sense of bakkēphirim is, "with the princes" 1).

Besides the meaning of that term, we may reassess the phrase which precedes it, wēniyyāḏ̄h愧 yahdāw. Followed by the preposition beth, this combination of words is not found elsewhere in the OT. One other explicit conjunction of y’d and ybdw may be found in Job ii 11; it is less clear in Amos iii 3, Josh xi 5, and Ps xlviii 5. There is a consensus that the Neh phrase should be translated, "let us meet together." It is not impossible, though, that the phrase originally meant, "let us covenant together."

1) Perhaps the mention of lions is also meaningful as a reference to Samaritans. In Kiddushin 75a-b, Samaritans are called "lion proselytes" Apparently that refers to 2 Kgs xvi 25-33, in which the Assyrian colonists in Israel turned to Yahwism supposedly from fear of the lions sent by the Lord. Such a veiled reference would not be out of context, although it is a very tenuous hypothesis.