SOME NOTES ON SECOND ISAIAH

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In the following notes references to the Hebrew text are to Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, 1968 (BHS) for passages from Isaiah, supplemented for some of the Qumran references by M. Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark's Monastery, Vol. 1, New Haven, 1950; the seventh edition of Biblia Hebraica (BHK) has been used for passages from the rest of the Old Testament. The following editions of the versions have been used: LXX, Septuaginta, ed. J. Ziegler, Göttingen, vol. XIV (1939) for passages from Isaiah, and vol. XV (1957) for passages from Jeremiah, and for passages from the rest of the Old Testament Septuaginta, ed. A. Rahlfs, 5th edition, Stuttgart, 1952; Targum, ed. A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic, Leiden, 1959 ff., compared for passages from Isaiah with J. F. Stenning, The Targum of Isaiah, Oxford, 1949; Peshīṭa, ed. A. M. Ceriani (Translatio Syra Pescitto Veteris Testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano Sec. Fere VI photolithographic edita), Milan, 1876-1883, compared for passages from Isaiah with G. Dietrich, Ein Apparatus Criticus zur Pelitio zum Propheten Jesaja, BZAW VIII, 1905; Vulgate, Biblia Sacra inxta Latinam Vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem inssu Pii. XI Cura et Studio Monachorum abbatiae pontificae sancti Hieronymi in urbe ordinis sancti Benedicti edita, 1926 ff., except for the passages from Jeremiah where Biblia Sacra inxta Vulgatam versionem, ed. R. Weber, Stuttgart, 1969, has been used; Old Latin, P. Sabatier, Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae seu Vetus Italic, Paris, 1751. For Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion the 1964 reprint of F. Field, Origenis Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt, Oxford, 1875, was used.

The following abbreviations have been used for the English versions: RV (Revised Version), RSV (Revised Standard Version), and NEB (New English Bible). I have also used the common abbreviations MT (Masoretic Text), BDB (F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament,

1) I am indebted to Professor J. A. Emerton for numerous suggestions, criticisms and references.

(a) Isaiah xli 18 and xlii 9

Besides these two passages, the word תֵּשׁ occurs six times in Jeremiah (iii 2, 21, iv 11, vii 29, xii 12 and xiv 6) and once in the singular in Numbers xxiii 3. The uniform translation in RV and RSV is ‘bare height(s)’, and this agrees with the meaning given in *BDB*, ‘bare place, height’. KB however translates ‘track’ adding in parenthesis ‘bare ways formed without human work by the traffic of caravans’, and refers to the discussion by P. Jouon, who concludes that the meaning ‘trodden path’ or ‘track’ is suitable in all the relevant passages. North translates תֵּשׁ in both the Isaiah passages as ‘sand-belts’, following Driver, who concludes that the meaning ‘sand-dune’ is suitable in all the relevant passages. NEB follows Driver in the Isaiah passages, rendering ‘sand-dunes’ in xli 18 and ‘dunes’ in xlii 9, but in Numbers xxiii 3 it renders יִשֵּׁש by ‘forthwith’. and in the six Jeremiah passages it renders תֵּשׁ by ‘high bare places’.

Driver correctly traces the idea of height in the conventional translation to the influence of LXX’s translation ἐπὶ τῶν ὀφέων in Is. xli 18, and draws attention to Vitringa’s comparison with the רָה of Is. xiii 2. But he points out that there is nothing inherent in the root תֵּשׁ to suggest height, and follows Wutz in interpreting תֵּשׁ as

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1) יִשֵּׁש in Job xxxiii 21 (Kt.) is probably corrupt, and would in any case have to be explained differently. The conjectural reading of יִשֵּׁש for וָהָר in 1 Samuel xix 22 is based on the transliteration ἐπὶ τῶν ὀφέων preserved in LXX and. But even so it seems to have been regarded as a proper name, and other mss. of the LXX read Σοφέως. No version has a reading corresponding to any of its translations of תֵּשׁ in the passages discussed in the text. The reading therefore is far too uncertain for the passage to be included in the present survey.

2) In *Journal Asiatique*, Ser. 10, vol. 7 (1906), pp. 137-142. This discussion has been overlooked by recent commentators.

3) P. 101, though he also adduces KB, which seems rather to agree with Jouon.


5) ‘Bare places’ in Jer. iii 21.

6) This interpretation is older than Vitringa; it is to be found, e.g., in Ibn Ezra’s commentary on Is. xiii 2. It was criticized by Michaelis, *Supplementa ad Lexica Hebraica*, Göttingen, 1792, n. 2529, on the grounds of lack of philological evidence.