that might be read as a “recantation” is 3bc. However, this sentence is also best interpreted as praise:

(a) npl’t (3c) is used in the large majority of Biblical examples to denote God’s saving deeds and should be so interpreted here. The preposition mimme can does indicate that the “wonders” are beyond Job’s understanding, but it does not rob them of their positive, praise-worthy character.

(b) hgdt (3b) is a common verb for declarations of praise. If we construe the perfect as indicating a present action here (or perhaps as a “prophetic perfect”), the basic sentence would be a declaration of praise.

(c) I would construe wlp ’bn and wlp ’dē as something like interjections expressing amazement. Even if one prefers to treat them as object clauses, the sentence can be interpreted as praise if hgdt is taken as a present action.

I would translate 3bc:

Therefore I declare—though I do not understand!
Wonders beyond me—though I do not comprehend!

The incomprehensible divine wonders would include all the things recounted by God, but also his gracious condescension to Job. If all the declarations in Job’s final speech are praises of God, we would not expect him to express his desire to recant and show remorse in verse 6. God has changed Job’s lament into praise, and this last line expresses Job’s intention of abandoning the posture of mourning.

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NOTES

1) I want to express my appreciation to Prof. James Barr for reading a draft of this article, suggesting improvements and encouraging me to submit it for publication.

2) Despite this fact commentators of the quality of Dhorme and Pope follow this translation tradition. Only one commentator of stature, Tur-Sinai, is sensitive to the problem.


TRIBUTE TO TYRE (IS. XXIII 7)

The improved understanding of Is. xxiii 7 proposed here hinges on recognizing the metaphor of paying tribute, in combination with

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assigning two or three words their correct roots. A single, recent translation (NEB) will serve to represent current renderings of the verse:

"Is this your busy city, ancient in story,
on whose voyages you were carried to settle far away?"

This is usually explained as a reference to Phoenician colonization 1) which, of course, is quite plausible. However, at least one scholar has taken exception to prevailing opinion 2), showing it to be open to question, even if the solution he put forward (as will be seen) is not convincing.

The simplest procedure is to present text, translation and notes in that order, the notes helping to offset the unliteral smoothness of the translation.

"ldkem 'alli?Zi
mime-qedem
qadmätäh yobilûhä raglēhā
mērāhōq lāgūr"

"Can this be your joyful city,
To whom, since ancient times,
Her tribute they brought to her at her feet,
Obliged to reverence at a respectful distance?"

Part of a taunt-song by Egypt, contrasting Tyre in her heyday when she was prosperous and powerful with her present reduced status, the verse is addressed to the inhabitants of the city. The term ‘alli?Zi is elliptical for “joyful city”, as is evident from Is. xxii 2; xxxii 13 and Zeph. ii 15. In Akkadian texts “joy” and “town” are similarly connected 3), and there may be the additional nuance of “welcoming” 4) the foreign emissaries. Before considering qadmätäh the expression yobilûha raglēha must first be inspected. The usual translation is “whose feet carry her”, but such a meaning for the hiphil of ybl would be unique. Generally it means “to lead” or “to bear along (offerings)” 5), and in the second meaning is twice attested with the preposition l (Pss. xlviii 30; lxxvi 12). Accordingly, the verbal suffix -bā must be dative: “they bring to her” 6). The words “her feet” (raglēhā), then, do not form the subject of the verb as commonly accepted. A rendering more suitable to the context is “at her feet”. The expression is used in Phoenician, e.g. ṭiḥ p’m ‘dēn