

## THE PROBLEM OF ISAIAH 6:13

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A difficult *crux interpretum* in the book of Isaiah has been the last verse in Isaiah's inaugural vision (Is 6:13). The fact that the famous St. Mark's Isaiah scroll from Qumran (1QIs<sup>a</sup>) reads *ḥmh* instead of the MT *ḥm* aside from another textual variant has led W. H. Brownlee, F. Hvidberg, S. Iwry, W. F. Albright and G. R. Driver<sup>1</sup> to extraordinary reinterpretations which make this text refer to a typical "high place." These reconstructions with their emendations are reflected in the NEB's rendering of Is 6:13 which follows the LXX in omitting the last clause, "a holy seed is its stump." The NEB reads thus:

Even if a tenth part of its people remain there,  
they too will be exterminated  
[like an oak or a terebinth,  
a sacred oak thrown out from its place in a hill-shrine].

It should be noted that the omission of the last clause ignores its presence not only in the Targumim and Peshitta but particularly in 1QIs<sup>a</sup> which supports the MT providing superior textual evidence in favor of retaining "a holy seed is its stump." It is our purpose to discuss briefly major scholarly reconstruction of Is 6:13 before we proceed to discuss the Hebrew text phrase by phrase.

### 1. *Emendational Reconstructions*

As early as 1951 W. H. Brownlee attempted to reconstruct the Hebrew text of Is 6:13 with the aid of the reading *mšlkt* and *ḥmh* of 1QIs<sup>a</sup> in place of the *hepax legomenon* *ḥšlkt* and *ḥm* of

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Brownlee, "The Text of Isaiah vi, 13 in the Light of DSIa," *VT*, 2 (1951), 296-298; Flemming Hvidberg, "The Maṣṣēba and the Holy Seed," *Interpretationes (Mowinkel Festschrift)* (Oslo, 1955), pp. 97-99; Samuel Iwry, "Maṣṣēbāh and Bāmāh in 1Q Isaiah<sup>A</sup> 6:13," *JBL*, 76 (1957), 225-232; W. F. Albright, "The High Place in Ancient Palestine," *VTS*, 4 (1957), 242-258; G. R. Driver, "Isaiah 1-39: Textual and Linguistic Problems," *JSS*, 13 (1968), 38.

the MT. The reading *ḥmḥ* is associated with *mšbt*, “a sacred column of a high place,” and the phrase “and as the terebinth” is transposed to a position after *mšlkt* for the sake of poetic parallelism and metrical reconstruction. The translation he offers is as follows:

“And if there be yet a tenth in it,  
It in turn shall be for burning,  
As an oak when it is thrown down,  
and as the terebinth by the sacred column of  
a high place.”<sup>2</sup>

Among the problems of Brownlee’s reconstruction are the following: (1) The lack of textual or versional support for his transposition of *mšlkt* and the separation of the phrase “and as a terebinth or as an oak.”<sup>3</sup> (2) The omission of the last phrase of 6:13 in IQIs<sup>a</sup>. (3) The rendering of *ḥmḥ* as “the sacred column of a high place.” As a matter of fact Brownlee has pointed out in a more recent publication that the intended meaning of *ḥmḥ* is not related to the idea of a high place.<sup>4</sup>

In 1955 F. Hvidberg’s article appeared with another translation for Is 6:13 also based on IQIs<sup>a</sup>:

“Like the terebinth and the oak, that lie flung  
down (musloekoet, see 1 Kgs. 13vv. 24, 25, 28)  
upon the masseba in the bama. The holy seed is  
its (the bama’s) masseba!”<sup>5</sup>

He interprets “the holy seed” by resorting to Is 17:10-11 and considers this term as an expression of Ba’al’s virility. The *maššebot* in the holy places and their holy seed are interpreted as the spirits of an alien god which shall be destroyed altogether.

S. Iwry also worked on the basis of IQIs<sup>a</sup> independently of both

<sup>2</sup> Brownlee, 297f.

<sup>3</sup> See Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant, The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (AUM, V; 2d ed.; Berrien Springs, Mich., 1974), p. 236, n. 85, for a critique. E. A. Leslie, *Isaiah* (New York, 1963), p. 26, accepted Brownlee’s transposition but also retained the last clause.

<sup>4</sup> W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York, 1964), p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> Hvidberg, p. 99.

Brownlee and Hvidberg. He resorts to four emendations in his reconstruction ( $[w]šr[h]$   $[h]mšlkt$   $[m]mšbt$   $bmh$ ) and treats the last clause ( $zr' qdš mšbth$ ) as a later added gloss:

"Like a terebinth, or an oak, or an  
Asherah,  
When flung down from the sacred column  
of a high place."<sup>6</sup>

With two emendations W. F. Albright recast this verse into a poetic form. He reads also  $šr[h]$  for  $šr$ , pluralizes  $mšbt$  and adds  $b$  so that he arrives at the following translation:

"Like the terebinth goddess and the oak of Asherah,  
Cast out with the stelae of the high place."<sup>7</sup>

Albright's own freedom with regard to his emendational reconstruction, with the omission of the entire last clause which is textually well supported, is quite surprising in view of his own verdict that "we may rest assured that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, though not infallible, has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other Near-Eastern literature."<sup>8</sup>

This representative survey has indicated that a number of recent scholars have dealt with the Hebrew text of Is 6:13 with an unusual degree of freedom. Emendations, transpositions, and omissions have been their rule. No *communis opinio* has been achieved. It seems, therefore, mandatory to discuss the individual phrases of Is 6:13 in some detail.

## 2. The Hebrew Text

The consonantal text of the first phrase of vs. 13 is  $w'wd bh šryh$ . The ordinal  $šryh$ , "tenth," an attributive adjective,<sup>9</sup> is translated in the LXX with *to epidekaton*.

N. H. Tur-Sinai suggests the translation "a (group of) ten (men)" for  $šryh$ .<sup>10</sup> But  $šryh$  is an ordinal and the context does not cor-

<sup>6</sup> Iwry, p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> Albright, *VTS*, 4, 255.

<sup>8</sup> W. F. Albright, "The Old Testament and the Archaeology of Palestine," *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley (London, 1951), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax, An Outline* (Toronto, 1967), p. 23, par. 98.

<sup>10</sup> N. H. Tur-Sinai, "A Contribution to the Understanding of Isaiah I-XII," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 8 (1961), 168.

respond with that of Amos 5:3 or Gn 18:32 which is cited as proof for the suggested meaning.

Recently R. Fey commented on the "tenth" of our passage. According to his view vs. 13 refers to the destruction of the tenth part of the "field's produce" (*Feldertrag*) based on Is 5:10.<sup>11</sup> The idea that the "tenth" represents the "field's produce" cannot be upheld. Contextually *'šryh* refers to the people of the land (*h'rs*, vs. 12). In vs. 11 the destruction of the cities and the land is described; vs. 12 refers to the removal of the people of which there will be a remnant. But vs. 13a indicates that even this small remnant (*'šryh*) shall again be consumed.<sup>12</sup>

In the second Hebrew phrase *wšbh whyth lb'r* (vs. 13b) the Piel inf. cstr. of the verb *b'r* has been variously interpreted. The LXX translates *eis pronomēn*, "for foraging," and Symmachus employs the synonym *kataboskēsīn*, "for a feeding."<sup>13</sup> This seems to point to the picture of animals grazing on the land. A number of scholars, however, take *b'r* in this text to mean "burning,"<sup>14</sup> which is also the suggested meaning for this text by L. Köhler.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, it is to be observed with K. Budde,<sup>16</sup> J. P. Seierstad,<sup>17</sup> H. Wildberger<sup>18</sup> and others<sup>19</sup> that in

<sup>11</sup>Richard Fey, *Amos und Jesaja* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1963), pp. 106-109.

<sup>12</sup>On the remnant motif in Is 6:11-13, see Hasel, pp. 233-248.

<sup>13</sup>E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (New York, 1957), 2, 643.

<sup>14</sup>E.g. R. B. Y. Scott, "Isaiah, 1-39," *Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, 1956), 5, 213; W. Eichrodt, *Der Heilige in Israel* (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 14; G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Jesaja* (2d ed.; Zürich, 1960), I, 93.

<sup>15</sup>L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, 1958), p. 140; so also W. L. Holladay, Jr., ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971), p. 44.

<sup>16</sup>K. Budde, "Über die Schranken, die Jesajas Botschaft zu setzen sind," *ZAW*, 41 (1923), 167.

<sup>17</sup>J. P. Seierstad, *Die Offenbarungserlebnisse der Propheten Amos, Jesaja und Jeremia* (Oslo, 1946), pp. 107f.

<sup>18</sup>H. Wildberger, *Jesaja* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), p. 233.

<sup>19</sup>H. W. Hertzberg, *Der Erste Jesaja* (Leipzig, 1936), p. 17; O. Kaiser, *Der Prophet Jesaja, Kap. 1-12* (Göttingen, 1963), p. 57; M. Buber, *The Prophetic*

both Is 3:14 and 5:5 *b'r* in the Piel is used for the "grazing" of animals in the vineyard (of Yahweh). Since in these two passages the object of *b'r*, "grazing," is Israel as represented by the vineyard, the same meaning of "consume, devour"<sup>20</sup> seems appropriate also for 6:13.

The reference to trees in the phrase *k'lh wk'lwn* (vs. 13c) is of great importance for the understanding of *mšbt* in the next part (vs. 13d). If *'lh* and *'lwn* are literal trees, then *mšbt*, being part of the relative clause with *'šr*, stands in thought-relation to *'lh* and *'lwn* and cannot have the connotation of "stone-pillar" or "sacred column." The meaning of a "stump" or "root-stock" which is left standing after the felling of the literal trees would be the natural corollary.

Both Iwry and Albright felt the inconsistency in translating "sacred column" for *mšbt*. Iwry defends his translation by stating,

In Canaanite cultic tradition *Elt* and *Atrt* are synonymous names for the same goddess. As trees they represent female deities, and frequently in the Bible they are found in conjunction with *maššēbôt* and *bāmôt*. . . .<sup>21</sup>

Albright is quick to point out,

Here we have first *'elah*, literally 'the goddess,' Canaanite *'Elat*, whose name is also coupled with that of Asherah in the Ugaritic epics. Her tree, *par excellence*, was the terebinth, to which her name came eventually to be applied in Hebrew. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Only if *'lh* and *'lwn* are interpreted as representing female deities is the translation "sacred column" for *mšbt* justified.

As ingenious as this interpretation may seem, the comparison of *'lh* and *'lwn* with *'Elat*, *Anath*, or *Astarte* is unfounded.<sup>23</sup> Neither

*Faith* (New York, 1960), p. 133; Hasel, p. 235; H. Ringgren, "b'r," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum AT*, 1 (1973), 731.

<sup>20</sup> So F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT* (Oxford, 1907), p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Iwry, p. 230.

<sup>22</sup> Albright, *VTS*, 4, 255.

<sup>23</sup> It is significant that in one of Albright's latest publications in which he

the LXX nor the Targum nor the Peshitta, much less the MT, provides any hint or even remotely suggests that such an interpretation is warranted.

Ivan Engnell's view is that *'lh* and *'lwn* refer to the ideological world of sacral kingship symbolizing the tree of life concept.<sup>24</sup> He sees the *msbt* as embracing both the "Tammuz" figure and the king. A. Mackay suggests that *'lh* and *'lwn* refers to the male and female palm-tree pillar of the temple.<sup>25</sup> A crucial problem pertains to the interpretation of Israelite concepts on the basis of cultic concepts of extrabiblical religions. It is imperative to investigate the way Isaiah uses *'lh*. A passage which throws light on the meaning of the reference to *'lh* and *'lwn* in 6:13 is Is 1:29f. The term *'lh* is employed in Is 1:29f. in a twofold sense. In vs. 29 Isaiah refers to the *'lh* as a cult object in connection with the gardens of delight, the centers of idol worship. Albright has pointed out correctly that the oak was a cult object consecrated to the goddess Asherah.<sup>26</sup> This cult object with its cult<sup>27</sup> had become an object of the prophet's attacks.<sup>28</sup> In vs. 30 Isaiah refers to *'lh* again, but this time in a literal sense using the term as an object lesson for his people. Hence, it is clear that *'lh* stands as a symbol for the cult and the people of Judah. The withering of the oak referred to in vs. 30 symbolizes the consummation of false religion and its ungodly followers.

This writer, therefore, suggests that *'lh* and *'lwn* in Is 6:13 are used with subtle reference to their cultic use but primarily as representing the people of Judah who follow the abominable practices of the Canaanites. The felling of the *'lh* and *'lwn* thus

speaks of the deification of the "terebinth" and "oak" and citing biblical passages which refer to these trees no word is said about Is 6:13; see his *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), pp. 180-191.

<sup>24</sup> I. Engnell, *The Call of Isaiah* (Uppsala, 1949), p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> A. Mackay, "The Sign of the Palm Tree," *CQR*, 126 (1938), 187-212.

<sup>26</sup> Albright, *VTS*, 4, 255.

<sup>27</sup> F. Zimmermann, "El and Adonai," *VT*, 12 (1962), 190-195.

<sup>28</sup> Wildberger, pp. 71f.

appears to be a picture of the destruction of pagan religion and the death of those who worship under the sacred trees.

Now we turn to the phrase *'šr bšlkt mšbt bm*. Both Iwry and Albright propose *'šrh* for *'šr*. This emendation is made for two reasons: (1) to make the text agree with the idea that vs. 13 is a descriptive statement of a "typical cultic *bamah*,"<sup>29</sup> and, (2) for the sake of poetry. What has been pointed out above, namely that no other manuscript in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic allows such an interpretation, must be repeated. The introduction of a "high place" does not fit the content of the message of Is 6. Emendation for the sake of poetry is highly subjective and is not in harmony with current views. Present-day scholars caution against emending a text to reconstruct its poetic form.<sup>30</sup> Iwry argues that *'šr* has no place in a poetical verse and that the final *h* was dropped because of haplography.<sup>31</sup> However, Brownlee rightly defends the presence of *'šr* rejecting Iwry's double emendation.<sup>32</sup> It also has to be pointed out against Iwry that *'šr* occurs indeed before a participle elsewhere in the OT (Gn 7:8; Dt 1:4; 3:2; 4:6).

Albright makes only two important emendations (*'šr[h]* and

<sup>29</sup> Albright, *VTS*, 4, 255.

<sup>30</sup> O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (New York, 1965), p. 59: "It is open to question whether in the grouping together of short verses or in the parallelism of the members in the long verses it is also possible to go further and to recognize metrical regularity as well. . . . The utmost caution is necessary, especially in view of the fact that no traditions concerning Hebrew prosody have come down to us." See also S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Cleveland, 1963), pp. 361f.; G. Fohrer, "Über den Kurzvers," *ZAW*, 66 (1954), 209; Arthur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development* (New York, 1966), pp. 24f.

<sup>31</sup> Iwry, p. 228, explains that the final *h* of *'šr(h)* was dropped as it was read together with the article *h* of the Hophal participle *hmšlkt*, reading *m* instead of *b*. The *h* of the participle too was later lost.

<sup>32</sup> Brownlee, *Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls*, p. 238 n. 4 states that ". . . it is a mistake to make an invariable rule out of the tendency of poetry to omit particles. They may sometimes be included for the very purpose of filling out the rhythmic value of a stich. For the use of *'šR* in Isaianic poetry, cf. the following examples from the first eleven chapters: 1:29 (twice); 1:30; 2:20, 22; 5:5; 7:25; 11:16 (the last two passages being later additions). The double emendation which Iwry has to perform upon the word at 6:13 makes his results even less convincing."

[*b*]mšbwṭ) in order to read poetry throughout. Yet, his translation still identifies the trees with fertility goddesses. These emendations and interpretations are based on purely subjective viewpoints. The following considerations will indicate why we are unable to accept them.

The expression *bšlkt* which is made up of the prefix *b* and the Piel-type noun from *šlk* is a *hapax legomenon*. The form of *bšlkt* may be considered either as a Piel inf. cstr. with a feminine ending<sup>33</sup> or as a feminine singular noun. IQIs<sup>a</sup> has a different reading. Instead of *bšlkt* St. Mark's Scroll has *mšlkt*, a Hophal part. fem. sing. To determine the original reading is difficult. The identical Hophal participial form appears four times in the Old Testament.<sup>34</sup> The undisputed *lectio difficilior* is however MT's *bšlkt* and its presence in the original text is likely to be understood as a Piel inf.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note that in a number of places where the Hebrew has *b* with the Qal or Piel inf. the LXX invariably renders these constructions with *hotan* and the subjunctive mood.<sup>36</sup> This also holds true for our text. It is there-

<sup>33</sup> So Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1965), I, 265. Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 203, comments: ". . . *shalleceth* here does not refer to the act itself of felling or casting away, but rather to the condition of a tree that has been hewn or thrown down; though not to the condition of the trunk as it lies prostrate upon the ground, but to that of the root, which is left in the earth."

<sup>34</sup>1 Ki 13:24, 25, 28; Is 36:30.

<sup>35</sup> Against this view, see John Sawyer, "The Qumran Reading of Isaiah 6:13," *ASThI*, 3 (1964), 113, who does not give an alternate suggestion except the assumption that the syntax could have been different in the original.

	MT	LXX
Is 1:15	<i>bprškm</i>	<i>hotan ekteinēte</i>
Is 2:19	<i>bqwmw</i>	<i>hotan anastēi</i>
Is 27:9	<i>bswmw</i>	<i>hotan aphelōmai</i>
Is 30:25	<i>bnpl</i>	<i>hotan pesōsin</i>
Is 6:13	<i>bšlkt</i>	<i>hotan ekpesēi</i>

This comparison indicates the consistency with which the LXX translators of Isaiah have rendered *b* with the infinitive with *hotan* and the corresponding subjunctive. The translation of the temporal *hotan* (when, whenever) for *b* is possible as *b* and the infinitive do have temporal meaning. See Oskar Grether, *Hebräische Grammatik für den akademischen Unterricht* (Glückstadt, 1955), p. 90.

fore possible that the LXX translators had *bšlkt* in their *Vorlage* instead of *mšlkt* and understood it as a Piel inf. cstr. However, a comparison can be made between IQIs<sup>a</sup> and Symmachus' version. Both have feminine participles (*mšlkt*, *apobaloussa*) and may reflect Targumic influence.<sup>37</sup>

The noun *mšbt* appears again only in 2 Sa 18:18 where it means "standing-stone."<sup>38</sup> The LXX in Is 6:13 has *thēkē*, "monument," for *mšbt*. I. L. Seeligmann calls this a "coagulated equation" and explains it as being due to the scribe's mechanical translation without consideration of the context or the current Greek idiom.<sup>39</sup> Symmachus (*histatai*) has nothing to offer that would clarify the connotation of *mšbt* in this context.

The relative clause *'šr bšlkt mšbt bm* has all the indications of reference back to the species of trees mentioned before so that it is contextually inconsistent to translate *mšbt* with "pillar," "monument" or "standing-stone" of which no mention is made in vs. 13 or anywhere in Is 6. The broader connotation of *mšbt* meaning "stem" or "stump" is therefore indicated by the context on the basis of the earlier references to trees. This contextual meaning seems to find support on the basis of an Akkadian cognate. V. Sawyer<sup>40</sup> has pointed to a series of Akkadian terms such as

<sup>37</sup> The Targum reads "like a terebinth and like an oak, which appear to be dried up when their leaves fall." See John F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford, 1949), p. 23. Although Symmachus by translating *bšlkt* (*mšlkt*?) with *apobaloussa* comes much closer to the connotation of *šlk* than the LXX with *ekpesēi*, his translation seems to show Targumic influence. The whole clause reads, *hētis apobaloussa (ta phylla) histatai monē*, "which having cast down the leaves stands alone." Symmachus had most likely the Targum's paraphrase of vs. 13 in mind and must have consequently understood *mšbt* as meaning "leaves" or "branches" as derived from the Aramaic *nšb*, "to plant."

<sup>38</sup> Holladay, p. 210.

<sup>39</sup> I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Leiden, 1948), pp. 48f., "The rather obscure phrase *hotan ekpesēi apo tēs thēkēs autēs* which stands for *'šr bšlkt mšbt bm*, is rooted in the coagulated equation of *mšbt* with *thēkē*, gravestone, monument—with which the translator, was, of course, perfectly familiar."

<sup>40</sup>Sawyer, *ASThI*, 3 (1964), 113.

*nansabu, mamšabu, našabu, nensabu*<sup>41</sup> which refer to a “support,” “post,” or “stand” of wood or other material which he believes provides “some evidence for the traditional translation ‘stump.’”<sup>42</sup> The meaning of “stump” has many recent supporters<sup>43</sup> as has the extended meaning “root-stock.”<sup>44</sup>

Another suggestion for the meaning of *mšbt* is put forth by N. H. Tur-Sinai who on the basis of the Syriac reading *nešbeteh* in vs. 13 suggests the meaning “new planting.”<sup>45</sup> In Imperial Aramaic and in Syriac the nouns and verb derived from the root *nšb* means “plantation, growth” and “to plant” respectively.<sup>46</sup> Tur-Sinai’s suggestion has been incorporated into a recent Hebrew lexicon as one of two possible meanings for *mšbt*.<sup>47</sup> It seems that the Syriac version put an extended meaning upon its rendering of *mšbt* which implies that from the “trunk” or “stump” (“root-stock”) of the trees which are fallen a new growth comes forth. This provides an indirect suggestion that the basic meaning of *mšbt* in vs. 13 is indeed “trunk” or “stump” with its roots (thus “root-stock”). On the basis of contextual reasons and Semitic cognates the meaning “trunk, stump, root-stock” appears to have most support for *mšbt*.

The concluding clause of vs. 13 has a significant variant in

<sup>41</sup> W. von Soden, *Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik* (AnOr 33; Roma, 1952), p. 31 par. 31b, indicates that the initial *w* is derived from the letter *m* when a root contains a labial.

<sup>42</sup> Sawyer, p. 113.

<sup>43</sup> S. H. Blank, “Traces of Prophetic Agony in Isaiah,” *HUCA*, 27 (1956), 86 n. 12; H. S. Gehman, “The Ruler of the Universe, The Theology of First Isaiah,” *Int*, 11 (1957), 270; E. G. Kraeling, *Commentary on the Prophets* (Camden, N.J., 1966), 2, 64; and others.

<sup>44</sup> K. Budde, *Jesajas Erleben* (Gotha, 1928), pp. 22, 28; O. Procksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh, 1950), pp. 192f.; Seierstad, *Offenbarungserlebnisse der Propheten*, p. 109; and others.

<sup>45</sup> Tur-Sinai, *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, 8 (1961), 169.

<sup>46</sup> C. F. Jean and J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des inscriptions sémitiques de l’ouest* (Leiden, 1965), p. 184.

<sup>47</sup> Holladay, p. 210, suggests for Is 6:13 either “bare trunk” or “new growth.” In later Aramaic the meaning for *mšbh* is “planting,” see J. Levy, *Chaldisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim* (Leipzig, 1867), p. 60.

IQIs<sup>a</sup>. Compare the following renderings of Qumran scroll and MT:

IQIs<sup>a</sup>: *mšbṭ ḥmh zr' hqwdš mšbṭh*

MT: *mšbṭh ḥm zr' qdš mšbṭh*

Two things ought to be noted: (1) Instead of *ḥm* IQIs<sup>a</sup> has *ḥmh*<sup>48</sup> and (2) there is a significant gap (6 mm) between *mšbṭ* and *ḥm* which does not correspond with the MT. According to IQIs<sup>a</sup> the last clause of our text begins with *ḥmh*. The gap sets *ḥmh zr' hqwdš mšbṭh* off from the foregoing part of vs. 13 and points to the explanatory-like character of the last clause. According to Curt Kuhl these gaps serve as indications that new thoughts are introduced.<sup>49</sup> If *ḥmh* is to be read with *zr' hqwdš mšbṭh* then it cannot have the meaning of "high place" but can only mean "in/among them." The reading of "high place" which began with Hvidberg and Iwry is due to the unfounded rejection of *zr' qwdš mšbṭh*, while they retain *ḥmh* of the same clause to arrive at their arrangement and interpretation of the text. The last three words of vs. 13 which are present in both MT and IQIs<sup>a</sup> are rejected without reason,<sup>50</sup> but the IQIs<sup>a</sup> reading of *ḥmh* in place of *ḥm* of MT is accepted!

A few additional observations are in order with regard to the last clause of Is 6: 13. Sawyer pointed *ḥmh* as *bammeh*, a question, suggesting that the clause is to be translated, "Wherein is the Holy Seed? Its stump!"<sup>51</sup> The fact is, however, that the adjective

<sup>48</sup> It should be pointed out that *ḥmh* in IQIs<sup>a</sup> does in no way require the meaning of a cultic "high-place" (so Brownlee, Hvidberg, Iwry, Albright, Driver). Iwry, *JBL*, 76 (1957), 229, is forced to admit that "we cannot be absolutely certain that the word *ḥmh* is not simply a longer form of MT *ḥm*." Brownlee, *Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls*, p. 239, has moved away from his earlier view that *ḥmh* refers to a high-place (*VT*, 2 [1951], 297f.). M. Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1958), p. 148, points out that "the word taken to mean 'high place' may still at least equally well mean 'in them,' as the Masoretic text takes it."

<sup>49</sup> C. Kuhl, "Schreibereigentümlichkeiten," *VT*, 3 (1952), 311.

<sup>50</sup> For a critique of this omission, see Hasel, p. 237, n. 86.

<sup>51</sup> Sawyer, p. 112. He is now followed by K.-D. Schunck, "*ḥmh*," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum AT*, 1 (1973), 677, who also rejects the meaning of "high-place" for *ḥmh* in Is 6:13.

in IQIs<sup>a</sup> has the article (*hqwdš*) and that the noun it qualifies (*zr'*) stands without the article. Was the *h* before *zr'* omitted because of haplography (*h<sub>1</sub>mh (h)zr'*)? Should the final *h* in *h<sub>1</sub>mh* be read with *zr'* (*bm hzr' hqwdš*)?<sup>52</sup> If the latter were the case, then the final *h* in *h<sub>1</sub>mh* would be a scribal error of a wrong word division. There is no certainty whether we have here a scribal error of a wrong word division or haplography. If it is haplography, then the final *h* in *h<sub>1</sub>mh* still does not make it refer to a "high-place"<sup>53</sup> because a peculiarity of IQIs<sup>a</sup> is an additional *h* after a pronominal suffix of the third person masculine and feminine plural.<sup>54</sup> It is a characteristic of the "vulgar" text of IQIs<sup>a</sup> and may not be a scribal error at all.

The last three words of the MT have been omitted in the LXX. However, other Greek versions do have these words: Symmachus has *sperma hagian hē stasis autēs*; Theodotion translates *sperma hagian to stēlōma*; and Aquila reads *sperma hēgiasmenon stēlōsis autēs*.<sup>55</sup> Seeligmann thinks that these renderings represent the authentic Hebrew form.<sup>56</sup>

What may be the cause of the omission of these last three words in the LXX? Already in 1923 Budde demonstrated that the omission of *zr' qdš mšbḥt* in the LXX is due to homoioteleuton.<sup>57</sup> The exegetes who desire to eliminate the last three words of the Hebrew text cannot claim the LXX for support.<sup>58</sup> The fact that the last three words of Is 6:13 are present in both MT and IQIs<sup>a</sup>, the Targum, Symmachus, Theodotion, Aquila, and Syriac (Codex

<sup>52</sup> The Targum of Isaiah has the article with *zr'*; see Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah*, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> *Supra*, n. 48.

<sup>54</sup> Is 34:7; 41:17, 27. Note the great number of additional examples cited by Iwry, *JBL*, 76 (1957), 228.

<sup>55</sup> See J. Ziegler, ed., *Isaias. Septuaginta*, 14 (Göttingen, 1939), 144.

<sup>56</sup> Seeligmann, pp. 63f.

<sup>57</sup> Budde, *ZAW*, 41 (1923), 166ff. Cf. Iwry, p. 226, and especially Engnell, pp. 13-15, who has argued convincingly that on the basis of text-critical analysis "there is no doubt that the MT represents the authentic and right reading."

<sup>58</sup> So correctly Wildberger, p. 234.

Ambrosianus), but are omitted from the LXX only because of a scribal error, makes it certain that they are original.<sup>59</sup> The unfounded rejection of the last three words of vs. 13 together with the unwarranted separation of *h<sup>h</sup>m<sup>h</sup>* from the final clause in IQIs<sup>a</sup> make the "emendational restorations" of the last verse of Isaiah's inaugural vision unconvincing.

In addition to the textual evidence for the genuineness of the last clause, there are forceful arguments for its inclusion to be brought forth on the basis of the call genre which always has a word of reassurance (Is 6:11b-13).<sup>60</sup> Stylistic considerations argue for the inclusion of the last clause<sup>61</sup> as do traditio-historical considerations<sup>62</sup> and the theological emphasis of the chapter.<sup>63</sup> In short, we do not find any compelling evidence in favor of departing from the MT. On the whole IQIs<sup>a</sup> supports the MT in an unusual fashion, although its two textual variants have given rise to a series of ingenious emendational reconstructions which have found their way also into the NEB but which are not even faithful to the reading of IQIs<sup>a</sup>. The variety of reconstructions of Is 6:13 fall short of textual, stylistic, traditio-historical, theological, etc., support. On the basis of the foregoing discussion the following translation of Is 6:13 is suggested:

And though there is in it a tenth,  
 in turn it shall be devoured;  
 like the terebinth and the oak,  
 of which at felling there remains a stump,  
 a holy seed comes from its stump.

<sup>59</sup> Among the long list of supporters of the genuineness of the last clause of Is 6:13 are F. Delitzsch, C. von Orelli, H. Dittmann, J. Skinner, K. Budde, F. Feldmann, E. König, W. Hertzberg, J. Fischer, O. Schilling, I. Engnell, J. Hempel, H. H. Rowley, J. Bright, H. S. Gehman, L. Köhler, J. Ziegler, M. Buber, E. Kissane, B. Vawter, J. Lindblom, E. Seierstad, W. Harrelson, J. Scharbert, O. Eissfeldt, L. G. Rignell, and many others.

<sup>60</sup> See especially N. C. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW*, 77 (1965), 310-313.

<sup>61</sup> J. Ward, *Amos and Isaiah* (Nashville, 1969), p. 160.

<sup>62</sup> R. Knierim, "The Vocation of Isaiah," *VT*, 18 (1968), 55-57.

<sup>63</sup> Hasel, pp. 242-248.