

Jack, J. W. "Contributions and Comments: Cushan-Rishathaim," *The Expository Times*, Editor James Hastings, 1924, vol. 35, pp. 426-428.

Cushan-Rishathaim (כּוּשָׁן רִשְׁתַּיִם).

THE identity of Cushan-rishathaim (Jg 3⁵), the first recorded oppressor of the Israelites just after their entry into Canaan, seems to be still undetermined. The oppression rests conceivably on a well-founded traditional basis, but nothing is apparently known of the oppressor beyond his mention in the narrative. He is described as king of Aram-Naharaim, 'Aram of the two rivers' (? Tigris and Euphrates), which corresponds with Mitanni in the Tell el-Amarna Tablets. This was the large country which lay to the east of the Upper Euphrates, and was bounded on the west by Naharin and on the south-west by Amurru.

To take up the position, as Stade does, that the form of the name proves it unhistorical, is not sound criticism. Most scholars, following the suggestion of Ball (EXPOSITORY TIMES, xxi. p. 192), are inclined to regard him as of Kaššite origin, or connected at least with those foreign invaders of Babylon, probably from Elam (Kash) and the Farther East, who founded the third Babylonian Dynasty (c. 1760-1180 B.C.), and they cite a Kaššite name, *Kashsha-rishat*, in support of their view. Klosterman, Marquart, Cheyne, Lagrange, and others consider Aram (אַרַם) to be a corruption for Edom (אֶדוֹם), regarding Naharaim in this case as a gloss, and they take Cushan to represent some Edomite king, possibly 'Husham' of the land of the Temanites (Gn 36³⁴). But the writer would advance a third and rather interesting theory as to the identity of Cushan-rishathaim. Seeing that Aram-Naharaim, over which he is stated to have ruled, must be taken as referring to Mitanni, on the eastern side of the Euphrates, is it not possible that he can be identified with Tushratta, the powerful king of that country, c. 1380 B.C.? If the identity could be proved, it would settle many vexed questions, including the date of the Exodus. It would practically fix the earlier date for that event, making the Israelites identical with the Habiru of the Tell el-Amarna Letters (c. 1380 B.C.), for Tushratta is known to have been contemporary not only with Assur-uballit, king of Assyria, and Burnaburias II., king of Babylon, but with Amenhetep III. of Egypt and his son Akhenaten. Indeed, if the earlier

date of the Exodus be assumed, Cushan-rishathaim must be none other than Tushratta, who would be king of Mitanni at the time when the Israelites were settling in Canaan. The name used to be written Dushratta, but the form with T is now adopted by scholars as the correct one. 'Personally,' says Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, 'I would write Tushratta.'

The two names are not nearly so dissimilar as they look. If we reject the terminations of 'Cushan' and 'Rishathaim,' which are admitted to be mere Hebrew additions (the Greek Versions, for instance, make the former element *Xouσα*), we are left with the name 'Cush-rishatha,' and if this had been written 'Tush-rithatha,' we would at once have said that it represented Tush-ratta, yet this change only means substituting η for ζ at the commencement, and η for ψ in the second element, the vowels being negligible as dating only from the Christian centuries. Now, we know that in the Israelitic alphabet, taken from the Baal Lebanon and Moabite Inscriptions, ζ and η were almost similar and very apt to be confused with each other, and we know too that η in Aramaic (through which the oppressor's name must have come to Israel) was often represented by ψ in Hebrew. Moreover, when we remember the intentional perversion of proper names that was frequently made by the later scribes in order to cast ridicule on their bearers, especially when these were known to have been enemies of Israel, we cannot but see that there is a great likelihood of the two names being identical.

A closer examination of the matter makes it even more certain. It is well known to philological scholars that confusion of letters was common in the older form of writing. Many instances of this are cited by Professor Burney in his *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings* (1903), and in his *Judges*, cxxiii. Cases of such were not always due to obliteration or illegibility of a letter, but some of the most serious corruptions arose from similarity between certain letters in the ancient Israelitic script, the oldest Semitic form of writing with which we are acquainted. Transcribers and editors undoubtedly confused ζ with η in many words. These two letters in the Israelitic script resembled each other so closely (ζ and η) that the one might

easily be taken for the other by a later scribe or editor who had no historical knowledge of Tush-ratta. It must be remembered that, from the earliest period of which we have any knowledge down to the Babylonian Captivity, this ancient script was the one used by Hebrew historians; and hence we have numerous errors by copyists, who confounded letters which are quite dissimilar in the later square Hebrew, but are much alike in this older alphabet. An example of this occurs with the name *Heleb* (2 S 23²⁰), which in a parallel passage (1 Ch 11³⁰) appears as *Heled*, the corruption being due to the original record in the Israelitic script, in which כ and ג differ so little (כ and ג) as to be almost indistinguishable from each other. Another example is כטל, 'for the dew,' in Dt 33¹³, corresponding to the more appropriate טעל, 'above,' in Gn 49²⁵, as the word in both cases is contrasted with 'beneath.' But in the older character ט is ט and ע is ע, so the corruption was easily effected. Similarly, when we remember the slight difference between כ and ח (כ and ח) in the Israelitic alphabet, it is easy to see how the former might be substituted for the latter by some redactor or copyist to whom the ancient kings of Mitanni were unknown. The Israelitic script gradually passed into the Sidonian, which was more cursive, and this again evolved later still into the Aramaean, which opened the closed loops of many letters and curved the tails of them more and more to the left. All these transitions happened before the ordinary square Hebrew script came into existence, and while they made writing easier and more rapid, they must have contributed further to many mistakes and corruptions, especially in ancient unknown names.

It is quite evident that the second element of the name has been intentionally perverted to Rishathaim (רִשְׁתַּיִם) by some scribe, in order to cast contempt on Tushratta. He has connected it with the Hebrew word רָשָׁע (with suffix רָשָׁעוֹ), 'wickedness,' so as to signify that this ancient oppressor of Israel was a ruler of 'double wickedness,' a kind of double-dyed barbarian. We have numerous instances of the same type of perversion in the old Hebrew records, such as Adoni-bezek for Adoniz-edek, Baal-zebub ('lord of flies') for Baal-zebul ('lord of the mansion'), and Bosheth ('shameful-

ness') for Baal in proper names (Ish-bosheth, etc.). That the name has been perverted is evident from the fact that it contains ט. This peculiar guttural breathing is believed to be confined to the Semites, and could not have occurred in the Mitannian king's name, whatever it was. The language of Mitanni is certainly not Semitic, and indeed appears not to be Hittite or Indo-European even, but rather of the Caucasian type. The letter ט, with the sound it represents, is therefore foreign to the name and could only come into it through associating it with רִשְׁעָה.

The fact that the name would naturally come to the Israelites through the Aramaic dialect, which intervened between them and Mitanni, no doubt rendered the perversion an easy one, for it was not unusual for the Hebrew letter ט to take the place of the Aramaic ת, t (Arab. ت, th), just as the Hebrew י, z, took the place of the Aramaic ד, d (Arab. د, dh). Thus, instead of the consonants r-t-t in the second element (as in Tush-ratta), there easily came to be r-sh-t. Early Aramaic and early Hebrew, as far back as the twelfth century B.C., were dialectic forms of the one language of 'Amurru,' with many common characteristics, but as time passed the changes referred to showed themselves, being strikingly analogous to those laid down by Grimm for the Teutonic languages. In the triumph song of Deborah (Jg 5), the word יתנ (v. 11), generally regarded as an Aramaism, would naturally be יתנ in Hebrew, from the verb יתנ, to 'repeat a thing.' Other examples are numerous, such as the Hebrew יתב for Aramaic יתב, Hebrew שקל for Aramaic שקל. This philological relation between Aramaic ת and Hebrew ט goes to show how easy, and indeed natural, it was in Hebrew to pervert the second element of Tush-ratta's name from its Aramaic, or at least its original form, r-t-t, into r-sh-t (as in 'Rishathaim'). Whether this be so or not, the second element, from its present appearance, shows clearly that it has been made to resemble רִשְׁעָה.

Even apart from any such intentional and easy perversion, it is surely inevitable that, during the lapse of the generations before the documents J and E came into existence, as well as in the numerous copyings of these ancient documents during the centuries following, the name of Tushratta should assume a form somewhat different from its original. We have but to think how the name Hammurabi

became changed into Amraphel (Gn 14¹), or to compare the list of David's warriors in 2 S 23 with those in 1 Ch 11 and 27, referring also to the Greek text. Many of these names are quite different in the two lists, and some perhaps are in no case handed down correctly. In the case of ancient names that occur only once, the greatest caution is necessary. One has but to reflect, too, that the Hebrew vowel-points are late and not to be depended on. The Greek transliteration of Hebrew names in the Septuagint and in Josephus shows that no vowel-points existed in the Hebrew Scriptures then in use. These vowel-points were not inserted till after the fifth century A.D. at least, and represented merely the traditional pronunciation of the synagogue. In the case of many ancient and less-known names, this vocalic pronunciation could be nothing else than uncertain guess-work, for it was impossible to ascertain it exactly from untrustworthy tradition. The vowels of 'Rishathaim' are just as likely to have been those of *rat-ta*. The Vulgate has *Rasathaim*.

Looking at the matter from these aspects, it is evident that the name Cushan-rishathaim represents that of Tush-ratta, the powerful king of Mitanni, whose sister, Gilu-hipa, was married to Amenhetep III. of Egypt, and whose daughter, Tadu-hipa, became the wife of the revolutionary Pharaoh, Akhenaten. Tushratta had inherited a kingdom weakened by internal intrigue, his brother Artasumara, who reigned before him, having been assassinated. He found it necessary to take stringent measures both with the Hittites and the Canaanites. The former were encroaching on his kingdom, and he waged war against them, driving them back to their own confines. The latter were interfering with his caravans when passing through Palestine, and he sent Akhenaten dispatches demanding compensation for these attacks. No doubt the Israelites were involved in the trouble, and it was probably at this time (c. 1370 B.C.) that he attacked them, and commenced his eight years' oppression.

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Proverbs xxvi. 8.

'As a bag of gems in a heap of stones,
So is he that giveth honour to a fool.'

I AM far from other books of reference, but Martin, in the 'Century Bible,' speaks of this as 'notori-

ously difficult to translate.' In translating into Mambwe (Bantu), with a native assistant, I was interested to find that he at once connected it with the cairns of stones scattered all over Bantu-country, to which a passer-by is accustomed to add a stone, stick, or a few beads or anything which happens to be handy, thus 'honouring' the guardian spirit. Martin mentions the same idea but dismisses it as 'far fetched,' whether on linguistic grounds, or because of his difficulty in seeing a connexion between this and the second clause, is not clear. I pressed my assistant for his view of the connexion. He explained that few would be so foolish as to leave a bag of gems on a cairn (however much he might wish to do so from ostentatious motives), for he well knows that as soon as his back is turned somebody will 'buy' the gems in exchange for something of no value. It is remarkable that although even valuables thus placed on a *grave* are safe from theft, those left on such a cairn are not. Surely this idea fits exactly the meaning of the Proverb:

'He that would restrain her restraineth the wind,
And his right hand encountereth oil.'
(Pr. 27¹⁶, R.V.)

Is it possible that in this verse there may be some reference to oil upon troubled waters, especially if *ruach* can ever refer to a storm at sea?

'Boast not thyself of to-morrow;
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.'
(Pr. 27¹, R.V.)

It is interesting to find very many native proverbs, almost identical, word for word, with those in this book. For instance:

'*Utaiamvya,*
Pano utamanile cipafile ndaka.'

Literally

'Don't bother yourself,
For you don't know what the sun will give birth to.'

The word *ndaka* is an ancient word only now found in such phrases as 'sunrise,' 'sunset,' 'now (this sun),' and 'sun-drawer (morning star),' and a few proverbs and songs. (Can any Bantu student throw light on its origin and history?)

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