

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jbl-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php)

## Note on Amos 2 7a

JULIUS A. BEWER

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE difficulty in Am. 2 7a is now usually solved by omitting על-עפר-ארץ. Wellhausen<sup>1</sup> showed that they are the words that cause all the trouble, and therefore proposed to omit them. He appealed to the LXX for external support, and declared that it had apparently not read these words, because τὰ πατοῦντα ἐπὶ τὸν χούν τῆς γῆς was "an altogether unconstructable addition" and impossible with καὶ ἐκουδύλιζον εἰς κεφαλὰς πτωχῶν.

Professor Torrey<sup>2</sup> accepted this solution, and tried to explain how the double reading in the LXX arose. השאפים was wrongly connected with נעלים of the previous verse, "They sell . . . for a pair of shoes that trample." "It was this trampling of shoes that was further described by the addition of the words על עפר ארץ."

Now while the Greek translators might have made such a strange mistake as to connect השאפים with נעלים, it is not likely that a man who knew Hebrew well enough to annotate his Hebrew text, should have made this queer combination, especially after a proverbial phrase בכבוד נעלים, whose meaning, if he did not know, the preceding words would have explained to him. That a Hebrew reader who translated השאפים by "trample upon" should have inserted, or have added in the margin, על עפר ארץ in order to explain to himself that one treads with sandals "on the dust of the earth" assumes in him, to say the least, a surprising simplicity. Or was he a poetic nature who expressed "old" sandals in this way? Assuming, for the sake of the argument,

<sup>1</sup> *Skizzen u. Vorarbeiten*, vol. v. *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> In this *Journal*, vol. xv. (1896), pp. 151 f.

that this reader was so simple-minded or so poetic, how did he continue the sentence? What did he do with בראש דלים? The Greek translator saw this point, and he continued therefore quite ingenuously *καὶ ἐκονδύλιζον*. Are we to suppose that the Hebrew reader would leave without comment this phrase, which is really much more in need of it, standing so isolated as it does, than "the sandals that trample"?

The very fact that the LXX knew just as little as modern scholars what to do with עפר ארץ על השאפים should put us on our guard. It speaks rather for than against the originality of the phrase.<sup>3</sup> Driver<sup>4</sup> has felt this, and is inclined to regard the reading of the Vulgate as probably original, "Who crush [השאפים] the heads of the poor upon the dust of the earth." But we should expect the accusative after השאפים, see especially Am. 8 4. And when we are not misled by the translation "crush," we expect לעפר rather than על עפר, "Who trample to the dust of the earth," etc., cf. *דָּבַא לְאַרְץ חֵירוֹ*, Ps. 143 3. With these modifications this reading may indeed be the original text, and, if so, it contains an idiomatic phrase similar to "grind the faces of the poor," Isa. 3 15.

But after all this seems not entirely satisfying either, and the following emendation is proposed with all due reserve. Read for

השאפים על-עפר-ארץ בראש דלים  
השאפים אל-כפר ורצו בשער דלים

*Who long for bribes and oppress the poor in the gate.*

אל, cf. Eccl. 1 5. כפר as in Am. 5 12, 1 S. 12 3. Here the judges are pictured as eagerly longing for the price with which the criminals would buy their release, and oppressing the poor in court who cannot give them money, thus making it impossible for them to get redress for their wrongs. רצו, as in Am. 4 1.

<sup>3</sup> That the LXX should have translated השאפים by *ἐκονδύλιζον* is most improbable. Why the Oxford Septuagint Concordance should put † after *τὰ παρῶντα* in Am. 27 is difficult to see, since both שאף (Ps. 55 1. 2 56 3) and שוף (Ps. 138 11) are translated by *καταρῶντιν*.

<sup>4</sup> *The Books of Joel and Amos*, p. 149, in the "Cambridge Bible."

In a note in *AJSL*, xix. January, 1903, pp. 116 f., the present writer suggested that *καὶ ἐκονδύλιζον* of the LXX was probably a translation of *וְרָצוּ*, which the Greek translator had in his Hebrew text. This would presuppose the reading *אָרָץ וְרָצוּ*. But it appears more likely that the LXX had the same consonantal Hebrew text as the Massorites, and that *καὶ ἐκονδύλιζον* was freely supplied by the translator, after he had mistakenly joined the previous clause to vs. 6. While thus the LXX has suggested the way out of the difficulty, it is probably not to be regarded as external authority for the proposed emendation, for the corruption of the text is older than the LXX.