

ON EZEKIEL ii 4

יהוה אדני read by the Jews *Adonai 'ēlōhim*, 'Lord God' RV, but equivalent in English to 'Lord JEHOVAH' is a term characteristic of the MT of Ezekiel, indeed according to Cornill (*Ezechiel*, Leipzig, 1886, pp. 172-175) it occurs there over two hundred times. Instances are found throughout the book and chiefly in four formulas :

- (a) אדני יהוה (ii 4 ; iii 11, 27 ; *al.*).
 (b) נאם אדני יהוה (xviii 3 ; xx 40 ; xxvi 21 ; *al.*).
 (c) אני אדני יהוה (xiii 9 ; xxiii 49 ; xxiv 24 ; *al.*).
 (d) אהה אדני יהוה (iv 14 ; ix 8 ; xxi 5 ; *al.*).

In each case the general sense would remain unaffected if אדני were left out : the addition of the word therefore implies some emphasis.

An emphatic term to express the Divine name is appropriate in the mouth of Ezekiel the prophet of the God of Israel in a heathen land. For his countrymen the simple name JEHOVAH was sufficient : He was the God of their race. But in Babylon his character as Lord must be asserted against the claim of universal lordship made for Marduk, 'the king of the gods'.

In Babylon Marduk was called *Bēl*, 'Lord' as the conqueror of Tiamat and Creator of the Universe. So Ezekiel calls JEHOVAH by the title *Adonai* 'Lord', a name known in slightly different forms (*Adon*, *Adonis*) throughout Western Asia.

The LXX (*vide infra*) has among several renderings of the double name one that has captured the prophet's thought that the God of Israel is 'Lord', *Kύριος ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραήλ*, 'the Lord God of Israel', where *Kύριος* answers to אדני and *ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραήλ* is a paraphrase covering יהוה (xliii 18 : cf. iv 14). A shorter form of the same rendering with the same meaning is *Kύριος ὁ θεός* (xliii 19 ; xlv 6 ; 9 ; 12 ; *al.*) where *ὁ θεός* = 'the true God' or 'the God of Israel'. This form of the rendering is characteristic of Ezek. xl-xlviii.

This last rendering does not prove (as Cornill supposes) that the Greek translators had before them in xl-xlviii the reading יהוה אלהים as in Gen. ii 4 ff. Cornill accepts this supposed rendering as original, and asserts, 'Ezekiel has plainly made his vision of the New Jerusalem parallel with the story of Paradise' (*Ezechiel*, page 174). But *θεός* with the article is found not infrequently in LXX for the Tetragrammaton, e.g. in Exod. iv 30 and 31, also in Isa. viii 17 and 18. Indeed, if the name JEHOVAH is to be avoided in a Greek translation, what better cover for it could be found than *ὁ θεός*, 'THE God'?

Another suggestion made by Cornill is accepted by St John Thackeray (greater authority on the LXX) in *J.T.S.* iv 405. It is that in a very large number of the cases in which MT has יהוה אדני the Hebrew text

which the Greek translators had before them contained only the single word יהוה. Cornill makes the further suggestion that this is the true reading, and in this he is followed by Rothstein who would omit ארני from the text with LXX B in ii 4; iii 11; 27, but would retain it in iv 14. Kraetzschmar omits ארני in ii 4, but he says wisely that the freedom used by the scribes in transcribing the names of God is so great that in most passages it is impossible to say for certain which particular form Ezekiel himself wrote.

The suggestion to read יהוה only in a large number of passages seems at first sight to receive strong confirmation from LXX B. A single Κύριος (*vel* Κυρίου) for ארני יהוה is read in codex B in ii 4; iii 11; 27; viii 1; xxiii 49; xxvi 3; 14; *et passim*. The number of instances is at first sight imposing, but the full statement of the evidence of LXX corrects first impressions. In the first place the rendering κύριος Κύριος (so Swete) occurs some fifty times or upwards for ארני יהוה in LXX B: so xx 39; 40; xxvi 15; 19; 21; *al.* This is significant, for it suggests that the single κύριος may be (*not* the original rendering of the Hebrew, but) an inner corruption of the text of LXX. What is more probable than that a scribe with many instances of κύριος κύριος before him should in many cases drop one κύριος either through inadvertence or by deliberate emendation? The opposite error of writing a double κύριος where a single one lay before the scribe would surely occur much more rarely, if at all.

A strange feature of the text of the LXX is that the transliterated form ἀδωναι for ארני is found in codex B in Ezek. xxxvi 33, 37, where the MT has ארני יהוה. In codex A the transliteration is not uncommon (viii. 1; xiii 9; xxvi 3, 7, 14, 15 *al.*), but codex A has notoriously suffered from Hexaplaric revision, and we must no doubt assume that in xxxvi 33, 37 codex B has similarly suffered.

Finally it must be said that the emphatic description of the God of Israel as ארני יהוה, 'the Lord JEHOVAH' is just what we ought to expect from the prophet Ezekiel. His chief task was to impress upon his fellow-exiles that JEHOVAH (and not Marduk or Molech) was Lord. His countrymen were stiff-necked heathen and followers of idols in Chaldaea: vi 4 f.; viii 3 ff.; xiv 3 ff.; xvi *passim*; xviii 6, 11; xx 28; *al.* At best they were syncretists; they worshipped JEHOVAH, but they continued to sacrifice to other gods. By the river Chebar they still made enquiry from time to time of the prophet of the God of Israel, but there was no true acknowledgement of JEHOVAH as THE LORD. We need not be surprised if Ezekiel does actually repeat two hundred times the Confession involved in the term, 'The Lord JEHOVAH'.