

NOTES

“PEACE UPON EARTH AMONG MEN OF HIS GOOD WILL” (LK 2:14)

It was Dr. Claus-Hunno Hunzinger who first pointed out the pertinence of a Qumrân expression to the understanding of the Lucan Christmas greeting: *kai epi gēs eirēnē en anhrōpois eudokias* (2:14).¹ He found the phrase *b^enē r^eṣōnō*, “sons of His good pleasure,” in one of the Qumrân Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH 4:32–33). Though it had previously been pointed out, perhaps best by J. Jeremias,² that *eudokias* must refer to God and not to man, there was no direct parallel for the expression “men of God’s good pleasure.” Now at last there was found in the Qumrân texts a contemporary expression that provided the missing Hebrew equivalent.

Fr. Ernst Vogt, S.J., wrote a résumé of Hunzinger’s article³ and stressed especially that *eudokia* and *rāṣōn* express God’s will in electing and predestining man rather than His pleasure in man’s goodness. The phrase “sons of His good pleasure” indicates in Qumrân literature those who are the object of divine predilection. Moreover, since “men” and “sons” are frequently interchanged in kindred Qumrân expressions, *b^enē r^eṣōnō* can easily be the Hebrew equivalent of *anhrōpois eudokias*.

The Qumrân expression contains a pronominal suffix which makes it clear that the good will refers to God. But the Greek of Luke’s verse merely has *eudokias* without a possessive—a fact which has led to the frequently used but erroneous interpretation “men of good will” (i.e., who have good will). Both Hunzinger and Vogt have pointed out that *eudokia* without *autou* could pass as the Greek equivalent of *r^eṣōnō*. In Sir 15:15 and 39:18, *r^eṣōnō* is translated merely by *eudokia*.

However, we wish to call attention here to the reading which is found in the Coptic (Sahidic) version. There we read: *awō tirēnē hiḡ^m pkah h^en *nrōme *mpefwōš*, “And peace upon the earth among men of His will.”⁴

¹ “Neues Licht auf Lc 2:14 *anhrōpoi eudokias*,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 44 (1952–53) 85–90.

² “*Anhrōpoi eudokias* (Lc 2:14),” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 28 (1929) 13–20.

³ “‘Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis’ Lc 2:14,” *Biblica* 34 (1953) 427–29. An English translation of this article, with some revisions, appears in K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York, 1957) pp. 114–17. The author here points out that the phrase occurs again in 1QH 11:9.

⁴ *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, Otherwise Called Sahidic and Theban* (Oxford, 1911) pp. 30–32.

The *apparatus criticus* in modern New Testaments and the commentators often cite the Sahidic version in support of the genitive *eudokias*, the reading of the better manuscripts, against the nominative *eudokia*.⁵ But they fail to indicate that the Sahidic also includes the personal pronominal prefix, *pef-*. This prefix corresponds, then, to the Hebrew pronominal suffix found on *r^ešônô* in the Qumrân expression. Such a detail of the Coptic translation should not be lost sight of, as it gives us valuable testimony that *eudokias* was understood in the past as "of *His* good will." It thus confirms the interpretation based on the Qumrân expression: "Peace upon earth among men of His good will."

The expression *b^enê r^ešônô*, being Hebrew, fits in well with the hypothesis, often used today, that the source of Luke's first two chapters was originally a Hebrew composition.⁶ Recently, however, the Aramaic equivalent of the Lucan phrase has turned up in a Qumrân text being prepared for publication by M. l'Abbé J. Starcky. The latter, with whom I have had occasion to go over the text for the Cave 4 concordance, has graciously permitted me to cite the relevant passage here. The fragmentary manuscript in which the phrase occurs has been tentatively labeled *h^ezât Amram^e*, and assigned the siglum 4Q h^eA^e; it tells of the vision enjoyed by Amram, the father of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The pertinent text is found in fragment 9, line 18. Unfortunately, only the beginning of the lines has been preserved in this fragment; what is left seems to be the end of the work. Though Aaron is not named, it seems that he is the subject.

18 šby^cy bⁿwš r^cw[h wy]qrh wyPm[r

19 ytb^hr lkhⁿ lmyⁿ (vacat)

"he will be seventh among men of [his] good will [and ho]nor and it (he?) will be said . . .

he will be chosen as a priest forever."

The phrase which interests us is *bⁿwš r^cw[h]*, "among men of [his] good will." The text is unfortunately damaged and the pronominal suffix lost; but it can be supplied on the basis of the one found on the parallel, coordinated noun, [wy]qrh. The suffix refers most likely to God, as it does in the Hebrew counterpart, *b^enê r^ešônô*. The most interesting detail in the phrase is the noun *ᵎnwš*, "men,"⁷ for it is the exact equivalent of the Lucan

⁵ See, e.g., A. Merk, *Novum Testamentum graece et latine* (7th ed.; Rome, 1951) p. 195.

⁶ See P. Winter, "Some Observations on the Language in the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954-55) 111-21; see also the literature cited there.

⁷ Actually *ᵎnwš* is a singular noun, but its collective force is quite frequently found, as here.

expression, *anīhrōpoīs eudokias*. Since *רעל* is the normal Aramaic cognate for the Hebrew *rāšōn*, we now have both an Aramaic and a Hebrew equivalent for Luke's expression.⁸ The occurrence of the same phrase in both languages indicates its common and frequent usage and confirms the interpretation that Dr. Hunzinger first suggested.

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⁸ This is not the first instance in which a *NT* expression, previously identified in Qumrān Hebrew, has turned up in Aramaic dress as well. In the *Genesis apocryphon*, published by N. Avigad and Y. Yadin (Jerusalem, 1956), a few words can be read on the left-hand side of column 1, lines 1-4 (see the photo of column 2). The editors say that these words "are as yet unclear" (p. 16). But in line 2 one can clearly read *רז רשׁו די*. The words *רז רשׁו* are the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew *רזי פשׁע* (1Q27 1:2; 1QH 5:36; 1QH fr 50:5) and of the Greek *mystērion tēs anomias*, "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Th 2:7).