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“My God Was My Help”: A Note on the Great Isaiah Scroll (Isa 49:5)*

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This article discusses the origin of the reading ʿzry ‘my help’ in the text of the Great Isaiah scroll (Isa 49:5). The scroll is the oldest Hebrew copy of the Book of Isaiah. The author of the article proposes that variant ʿzy ‘my strength’ (it might be translated also as ‘my shelter’), which has been preserved in the Masoretic Text and in the scroll 1QIsa^b, should be considered as the original reading. The variant ʿzry emerged as a result of harmonization Isa 49:5 with the texts from the Book of Psalms (10:14; 27:9; 30:11; 63:8) and the Book of Isaiah (41:10, 13, 14; 44:2). This process was facilitated by the following circumstances: first, the words ʿzr and ʿz are paronyms, second, at the end of the first millennium B. C. E. they were perceived as synonyms.

Keywords: Book of Isaiah, Servant songs, Great Isaiah scroll, Qumran, Dead Sea Scrolls

The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a) found in the 1st Qumran cave is the oldest surviving Hebrew copy of the prophet’s book.¹ Its text differs considerably from the canonical text of the Masoretic Bible known to us through medieval manuscripts (further referred to as MT = Masoretic text). This article attempts to shed some light on the origin of the Qumran (1QIsa^a) variant ʿzry ‘my help’ in Isa 49:5. This reading is only found in 1QIsa^a scroll and is not present in any other copy of the Book of Isaiah.

In his work dedicated to the study of the language of the Great Isaiah Scroll,² Edward Yechezkel Kutscher showed that most of the variations in readings between 1QIsa^a and MT can be explained by the fact that the scribe who copied 1QIsa^a scroll³ edited the text of the *Vorlage*, thereby

* I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Matthew Morgenstern, Prof. at Tel Aviv University, for checking and improving my English.

¹ It dates to the second half of 2nd century B. C. E. (see Lange 2009:258).

² Kutscher 1974.

³ It was also supposed that such editing occurred at an early stage. An editor might have been the scribe, who wrote the *Vorlage*, from which the Isa 34–66 text was copied into 1QIsa^a (see, e. g., Lange 2009:259f.).

adapting it to the language of readers who lived at the end of 1st millennium B. C. E. The works of other scholars have demonstrated that in some cases the editing was due the scribe's desire to harmonize the Biblical text as well as all to show his own understanding of particular Bible passages in the text of the scroll.⁴ However, in some cases the difference in readings may be explained through the existence of a textual tradition, which is probably more ancient than the one found in MT (see, for instance, reading ^ʔ*wr* 'light' in Isa 53:11).⁵

It should be noted that Isa 49:5 verse is part of the co-called Second Servant Song (Isa 49:1–6). In this text the Servant tells of the personal consequences brought about by a conversation with God. The Servant laments to YHWH about the misfortunes that followed him throughout his mission, which was given to him by God and that concerned the “restoration of the tribes of Israel.” God emboldens His Servant and expands the scope of his mission to a universal one: from now on he must become the “light to the nations.”

The Hebrew text of the Isa 49:5 verse as presented in 1QIsa^a scroll goes as follows.

1QIsa^a: *wʿth ʔmr yhwš ywšrk mbtn lʿbd lw lšwbb yʿqwš ʔlyw wyšrʔl lw yʔsp wʔkbbd bʿyny yhwš wʔlwy hyh ʿzyʔ*⁶

‘And now said YHWH, who created you from the womb as a servant unto Him to bring Jacob back to Him, and Israel to be gathered back to Him. And I was honored in the eyes of YHWH, and my God was my help.’

Unlike in 1QIsa^a, in the MT as well as in the Qumran scroll 1QIsa^b one finds ^ʿ*zy* ‘my strength’ instead of the word ^ʿ*zyʔ* ‘my help.’

MT: *wʿth ʔmr yhwš yšry mbtn lʿbd lw lšwbb yʿqb ʔlyw wyšrʔl lʔ* (Qṛe: *lw*)
*yʔsp wʔkbbd bʿyny yhwš wʔlwy hyh ʿzyʔ*⁷

‘And now said YHWH, who created me out of the womb as a servant unto Him to bring Jacob back to Him, and so that Israel might not perish (Qṛe: to be gathered back to Him). And I was honored in the eyes of YHWH, and my God was my strength.’

⁴ See, e. g., van der Kooij 1981:81–94, 99; Pulikottil 2001:45–117.

⁵ See, e. g., Barthélemy 1986:403–407.

⁶ Ulrich–Flint 2010:82f. In this and other editions quoted here, the Hebrew and Aramaic texts are present in their original script. Transliteration is provided in the article.

⁷ Goshen-Gottstein 1995:223f.

1QIsa^b: *w^ʿth kh ^ʿmr yhwšw ywšry mbtñ l^ʿbd lw lšwbb y^ʿqb ^ʿlyw wyšr[^ʿl lw y^ʿsp w] ^ʿkbd b^ʿny yhwšw w^ʿlly hyh ^ʿzy⁸*

‘And now said YHWH, who created me out of the womb as a servant unto Him to bring Jacob back to Him, and so that Isra[el would be gathered back to Him. And] I was honored in the eyes of YHWH, and my God was my strength.’⁹

The texts of the Greek (LXX), Latin (Vulgate) and Syriac (Peshitta) translations of the Bible are most likely based on the Hebrew *Vorlage*, which included the ^ʿzy variant ‘my strength’ (as in the case of MT, 1QIsa^b) and not ^ʿzy ‘my help’ (1QIsa^a), since they use those equivalents which have the meaning ‘strength, firmness’: Greek ἰσχύς, Latin *fortitudo* and Syriac *ʿwšn*?

LXX: καὶ νῦν οὕτως λέγει κύριος ὁ πλάσας με ἐκ κοιλίας δοῦλον ἑαυτῷ τοῦ συναγαγεῖν τὸν Ἰακωβ καὶ Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς αὐτόν· συναχθήσομαι καὶ δοξασθήσομαι ἐναντίον κυρίου, καὶ ὁ θεὸς μου ἔσται μου ἰσχύς¹⁰

‘And now says the Lord, who molded me from the womb as a servant unto Himself, to gather Jacob and Israel back to Himself. I will be taken and honored before the Lord, and my God will be my strength.’

Vulgate: et nunc dicit Dominus formans me ex utero servum sibi ut reducam Iacob ad eum et Israhel non congregabitur et glorificatus sum in oculis Domini et Deus meus factus est fortitudo mea¹¹

⁸ Ulrich–Flint 2010:136f.

⁹ When comparing the Qumran and Masoretic versions of the text, one may discern two other important variant readings of Isa 49:5. In 1QIsa^a the reader sees *ywšrk* ‘who created you’ (active participle of the verb *y-š-r* with a second person pronominal suffix), while in both MT and 1QIsa^b one finds *yšry/ywšry* ‘who created me’ (active participle of the same verb with a first person pronominal suffix). Thus, in 1QIsa^a scroll God’s direct speech begins already in Isa 49:5, while in MT and 1QIsa^b it starts only in the next verse (49:6). In addition, before the word *y^ʿsp* in 1QIsa^a there is the variant *lw* (preposition *l* ‘towards, to’ with a 3 m. s. suffix), while in the consonant text of the majority of Masoretic manuscripts (Kətib) one finds the variant *l^ʿ* (negative particle). The Qumran (1QIsa^a) variant matches the gloss left by the Masoretes on the margins of the manuscript (Qəre), which shows that in this case the word should be read as *lw* and not *l^ʿ*. Thus, the texts of 1QIsa^a and MT Qəre (‘and Israel to be gathered back to Him’) differs considerably from the text of MT Kətib (‘and so Israel might not perish’) in its semantics.

¹⁰ Ziegler 1983:305.

¹¹ Weber 1994:1147.

‘And now says the Lord, who molded me from the womb as a servant unto Himself, so that I will gather Jacob back unto Him, and Israel was not gathered. And I was honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God became my strength.’

Peshitta: *hšʔ hknʔ ʔmr mryʔ dgblny bmrbsʔ dʔhwʔ lh ʕbdʔ wʔpnʔ* (variant: *dʔpnʔ*) *lyʕqwb lwth wlʔysrʔyl ʔkns ʔšbht qdm mryʔ wʔlhy hwʔ ʕwsny*¹²

‘And now thus says the Lord, who molded me in the womb, that I shall be a servant unto Him, and I will turn (variant: so that I turn) back Jacob back to Him, and I will gather Israel. I was honored before the Lord, and my God was my strength.’

On the other hand, Targum Jonathan uses the phrase *sʕdy* ‘my help’ to translate *ʕzy* (or *ʕzry*). It is as if it contains the same understanding of the passage as the Qumran scroll 1QIsa^a.

Targum Jonathan: *wkʕn ʔmr ywy dʔtqny mmʕyn lnhwy ʕbd plh qdmwhy lʔtbʔ dbyt yʕqb lplnyh wyšrʔl ldhlyh ytrqb wyqymʔ* (variant: *wʔbyqrʔ*) *qdm ywy wmymr ʔlhy hwch bsʕdy*¹³

‘And now said the Lord, who prepared me from the (mother’s) womb to be a servant, who serves before Him, in order to turn back the House of Jacob to serve Him, and so that Israel will draw nearer to the fear before Him. And I was (variant: I will be) honored before the Lord, and the Word of my Lord was my help.’

Scholars who studied the text of Isaiah rarely paid attention to the variant *ʕzry*, found in 1QIsa^a scroll, and tried to explain its origin even less.

Soon after the discovery of the scroll, Johannes Lindblom wrote the following about both variants: “Beide Lesarten geben einen guten Sinn und vertreten zwei gleichwertige Traditionen. Es ist in solchen Fällen nicht notwendig, eine Wahl zu treffen.”¹⁴

Edward Y. Kutscher¹⁵ noted that replacement of *ʕz* on *ʕzr* (or *vice versa*: *ʕzr* on *ʕz*) occurred in the name of the Jewish king Uzziah (*ʕzyh*, *ʕzyhw*), who is also called Azariah (*ʕzryh*, *ʕzryhw*). He assumed, though very carefully, that the reason for this replacement of *ʕzy* on *ʕzry* in 1QIsa^a could have been a harmonization with the text of the Book of Psalms, in which one can find variants that are not too different from those in Qumran, as, for instance, in Ps 70:6 (*ʕzry wmply ʔth* ‘You are my help and my savior!’) and

¹² Brock 1987:89.

¹³ Sperber 1962:99.

¹⁴ Lindblom 1951:239.

¹⁵ Kutscher 1974:272.

Ps 115:8–11 (three times: $^{\prime}zrm\ wmgnum\ hw^{\prime}$ ‘He is their help and their shield’).

Some exegetes noticed that the verb $^{\prime}zr$ ‘to help’ is also used in Isa 49:8.¹⁶ Therefore, it might be possible that the Qumran variant appeared as a result of harmonization of Isa 49:5 with the text that follows.

Antti Laato supposed that the reading found in scroll 1QIsa^a might be a reflection of the original version of the text, since other texts of Second Isaiah also tell how YHWH helps ($^{\prime}\bar{a}zar$) his Servant.¹⁷

We will try to provide a new explanation for the reading $^{\prime}zry$ in Isa 49:5 further.

Most of the early witnesses of the Isaiah text (perhaps with the exception of Targum Jonathan) confirm the antiquity and reliability of the Masoretic version of the Isa 49:5b wherein the reading $^{\prime}zy$ is found. Furthermore, as stated earlier, the majority of readings from 1QIsa^a can be explained as resulting from editorial activity by the Qumran scribe or his predecessor. Therefore, it is more probable that $^{\prime}zry$ variant in 1QIsa^a appeared as a result of such editing.

It should be noted that the word $^{\prime}wz/^{\prime}z$ ‘strength’ is found also in non-Biblical texts from Qumran, where it appears more than 50 times; the noun $^{\prime}zr$ ‘help’ appears 16 times and its synonym $^{\prime}zrh$ ‘help’ appears 6 times in those texts.¹⁸ It is therefore very unlikely that either of these words were out of use by the time 1QIsa^a scroll was copied. All of the following words also appear in the scroll itself: $^{\prime}wz$ – 5 times (Isa 12:2; 26:1; 45:24; 52:1; 62:8), $^{\prime}zr$ – once (49:5), and $^{\prime}zrh$ – 5 times (10:3; 20:6; 30:5; 31:1, 2). Thus, the variant $^{\prime}zry$ in Isa 49:5 could not have appeared due to a substitution of an older obsolete vocabulary with a more frequently used one by a Qumran scribe (a reverse process is also not likely).¹⁹

In our opinion, the appearance of $^{\prime}zry$ variant in 1QIsa^a can be explained by an attempt to harmonize it with the texts of Psalms, although not with the ones proposed by Kutscher.

At one time Hans-Jürgen Hermisson²⁰ noted that the structure of the phrase $^{\prime}lhy\ lyyh\ ^{\prime}zy$ ‘My God was my strength’ used in Isa 49:5 (MT) resembles a certain type of sentences found in the Book of Psalms: a subject de-

¹⁶ See, for instance, Shalom M. Paul’s commentary (Paul 2012:326).

¹⁷ Laato 1992:108.

¹⁸ Abegg et al. 2003:548f., 558.

¹⁹ Cf. Kutscher 1974:272.

²⁰ Hermisson 2003:362.

noting a deity + the perfect form of the verb *h-y-y* ('to be') + a predicate nominative (Ps 10:14; 27:9; 59:17; 61:4; 63:8; 90:1).

After analyzing the use of this type of sentence in the Book of Psalms, the following conclusions can be made.

1. In such sentences the words formed from the root $\text{ʿ}z-r$ 'to help' are often used as predicate nominatives.

Ps 10:14: ... *ʔth hyyt ʿwzr* '... You were (his) helper'

Ps 27:9: ... *ʿzrty hyyt*... '... You were my help...'

Ps 63:8: *ky hyyt ʿzrth ly*... 'For you were a help to me...'²¹

2. The use of the word $\text{ʿ}z$ 'strength' in the sentences of this type has not been documented (with the exception of Isa 49:5).

Therefore, it can be supposed that the Qumran version of Isa 49:5 (1QIsa^a) *ʔlwhy hyh ʿzry* 'My God was my help' appeared as a result of the harmonization of this text with those in the Book of Psalms. The scribe who created the manuscript or his predecessor substituted the word $\text{ʿ}zy$ with the word $\text{ʿ}zry$ 'my help.'

Furthermore, another factor which contributed to presence of the variant $\text{ʿ}zry$ in the text is most likely a harmonization with other texts of Isa 40–49 that include speeches of YHWH to Israel. The verb $\text{ʿ}z-r$ 'to help' also appears there (Isa 41:10, 13, 14; 44:2).

The Isa 44:2 is the most noteworthy passage, because it coincides with the beginning of 49:5 in 1QIsa^a (*ywʿsrk mbtn*²²).

Isa 44:2 (1QIsa^a): *kwh ʿmr yhwsh ʿwʿskh wywʿsrkh mbtn wʿwzrkh*...²³ 'Thus said YHWH, who made you, created you out from the womb, and who helps you...'

It should be noted that in this (Isa 49:5) and in the next (49:6) verse in the text of 1QIsa^a scroll one can find two other examples of the way the Qumran scribe harmonized the text of the Second Servant Song with other Biblical texts, in particular with those found in the Book of Isaiah. In Isa 49:5 he substituted the 1st person singular pronominal suffix in the word *ywʿsry* 'who created me' (MT: *yʿsry*; 1QIsa^b: *ywʿsry*) with a 2nd person one (1QIsa^a: *ywʿsrk*) in order to harmonize Isa 49:5 with Isa 44:2, 21, 24;

²¹ Compare also with Ps 30:11 (*..yhwsh hyh ʿzr ly* '...O YHWH, be my helper!'; *hyh* is the imperative form of the verb *h-y-y* 'to be') and with the Qumran text 4Q160 3–4 ii 2 (*...wʿzrth hyh lw*... '...But He was a help unto him...').

²² In both MT and 1QIsa^b one finds the variants *yʿsry/ywʿsry* 'who created me' (see above).

²³ Ulrich–Flint 2010:74f.

43:1.²⁴ The Qumran (1QIsa^a) variant *šbty yšr^l wnsyry y^qqwb* ‘the tribes of Israel and the preserved ones of Jacob’ in Isa 49:6 is, in most likelihood, a result of harmonization with those texts of the Bible, in which the phrase *šbty yšr^l* ‘tribes of Israel’ (about 40 times: Gen 49:16, 28; Ex 24:4 and others) is used.²⁵ In MT we find a different word order: *šbty y^qqwb wnsyry yšr^l* ‘the tribes of Jacob and the preserved ones of Israel’ (also in 1QIsa^b, LXX and other ancient versions of the text). In addition, the phrase *šbty y^qqwb* in the Bible is only found in Isa 49:6. The scribe harmonized Isa 49:6 but did not notice that in Isa 40–55 Jacob and Israel are usually mentioned in this particular order: first Jacob and then Israel (40:27; 41:14; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12; 49:5; the reverse order can only be found in 41:8).²⁶

Furthermore, there are two factors that contributed to the substitution of ^ʿzy with ^ʿzy in Isa 49:5: a) ^ʿzy ‘my help’ is a paronym of ^ʿzy ‘my strength,’ b) the words ^ʿz and ^ʿzr were seen as synonyms in Hebrew of 1st millennium B. C. E. – beginning of the 1st millennium C. E. The second point should be explained in more detail.

As it has been said above, Kutscher had pointed to the substitution of ^ʿz with ^ʿzr (or *vice versa*: ^ʿzr with ^ʿz?), which occurred in the name of the Jewish king Uzziah/Azariah. A number of other examples of the alternation between ^ʿz and ^ʿzr in proper nouns is given in Gershon Brin’s article: ^ʿāzar^ʿel (1 Chr 25:18)/^ʿuzz^ʿel (1 Chr 25:4), ^ʿāzaryā (1 Chr 6:21)/^ʿuzz^ʿyā (1 Chr 6:9) etc.²⁷

By turning to ancient translations of the Bible, one can see that the Hebrew word ^ʿz (^ʿoz) was translated not only as ‘strength, power’ but also

²⁴ Cf. Paul 2012:326.

²⁵ Pulikottil 2001:68.

²⁶ Another example of a similar harmonization can be found in homilies of a Persian Christian author Aphrahat (4th cent. C. E.), who wrote in Syriac (Wright 1869:326, line 9). In his 16th homily Aphrahat is quoting the Syriac text of Isa 49:5 the following way: *wtpn^ʿ nwrb^ʿ dy^ʿqwb wtqym šbt^ʿ d^ʿysr^ʿyl* ‘and you will return the sprout of Jacob and raise the staff of Israel’ (compare with the text of Isa 49:6 in Peshitta: *wtpm šbt^ʿ dy^ʿqwb wtpn^ʿ nwrhb d^ʿysr^ʿyl* ‘and you will raise the staff of Jacob and will return the sprout of Israel’). There is a rearrangement of words in the text of the homily (unlike in 1QIsa^a, it is not the names Jacob and Israel that are rearranged but the verbs and nouns *nwrb^ʿ* ‘sprout’ and *šbt^ʿ* ‘staff’). Thus, the same result as in 1QIsa^a is achieved: as a result of harmonization, the words *šbty*/*šbt^ʿ* are connected with Israel and not with Jacob.

²⁷ Brin 1960:12ff.

as ‘help, protection.’ The same equivalents were used as when translating the words ʿzr и ʿzrh .

In particular, the following Greek words are most commonly used in LXX in order to translate the Hebrew word ʿoz : ισχύς ‘strength, might’ (see Ex 15:13; Isa 49:5; 51:9; 52:1; are found approximately 50 times), δύναμις ‘strength, power’ (see Job 41:14; Ps 21(20):2, 14; 20(29):8; used over 50 times altogether), κράτος ‘strength, power’ (see Ps 59(58):10; 62(61):12; used 5 times altogether), ὄχυρός ‘strong’ (see Judg 9:51; Isa 26:1; used 5 times altogether). However, in some cases we find other equivalents: βοηθός ‘help, helper’ (Ex 15:2; Ps 28(27):7; 59(58):18; 81(80):2; compare Gen 2:18, 20; Judg 5:23), βοήθεια ‘help’ (Ps 62(61):8; compare Isa 31:1; Ps 121(120):1, 2), ἀντίληψις ‘help’ (Ps 84(83):6; compare Ps 22(21):20).

In the Peshitta the Hebrew word ʿoz is most often translated as $\text{ʿwšn}^?$ ‘firmness’ (see Isa 49:5; 51:9; used over 40 times altogether), ʿšyn ‘firm, strong’ (see Judg 9:51; Isa 45:24; 62:8; used approximately 15 times altogether), $\text{ʿhyl}^?$ ‘strength’ (see Ps 21:2; 28:8; used 10 times altogether). A few times the following equivalents also appear: $\text{ʿdwr}^?$ ‘helper’ (Ps 28:7; 62:8; compare Ps 94:17) and $\text{mšy}^{\text{ʿn}}?$ ‘helper’ (Ps 84:6).

The following Latin words are most commonly used in the Vulgate in order to translate the Hebrew ʿoz : *fortitudo* ‘strength’ (see Ex 15:2; Isa 49:5; used approximately 30 times altogether) and *virtus* ‘courage, bravery, firmness’ (see Ps 21:2, 14; 29:11; used over 20 times altogether). However the following equivalents can also be found: *adiutor* ‘helper’ (Ps 28:7; 59:18; 81:2; compare Gen 2:20) and *auxilium* ‘help’ (Ps 62:8; 84:6; compare Judg 5:23).

In Targum Jonathan the word ʿoz is usually translated with *ṭwṣp* ‘strength’ (see Isa 12:2; 26:1; 45:24; used over 20 times) and *ṭwṣp* ‘strong’ (see Judg 9:51; Jer 51:53; used 5 times altogether). In Isa 49:5 one also finds the equivalent *sʿd* ‘help’ (compare Isa 30:5).

It should also be noted that the Septuagint is the most important source in these matters, since texts of the Peshitta and the Vulgate could have been influenced by LXX. In turn, appearance of the word *sʿd* ‘help’ in Targum Jonathan’s Isa 49:5 can be explained by translator’s use of the *Vorlage* that differed from the Masoretic text.

The aforementioned thesis on the synonymy can probably be explained by the existence of two homonyms (homographs?): ʿz I and ʿz II. Masorettes vocalized ʿzy as ʿuzzī , since they in all likelihood thought that it originates from the root ʿ-z-z ‘to be strong.’ However, some scholars think that originally there were two lexemes: ʿoz I ‘strength’ from the root ʿ-z-z

‘to be strong’ (compare with Arabic ʿazza ‘to be strong, powerful’) and ʿoz II ‘refuge, protection’ from the root ʿw-z (compare with Arabic ʿāda ‘to resort to something, ask for help’).²⁸ The fact that this word is sometimes spelled plene in MT (ʿwznw in Ps 81:2) points to that in particular. Some dictionaries relate ʿzy in Isa 49:5 to ʿoz II and translate it as ‘my protection.’²⁹

Let us also note that the contamination of meaning in the very same Ancient Hebrew roots ʿz-z and ʿw-z most likely occurred in the name $m^{\text{ʿ}}wz$ ‘refuge, fortress,’ which can be found 36 times in the Hebrew Bible.³⁰ The Masoretic vocalization seems to suppose that the word is derived from the root ʿz-z (singular form: $mā^{\text{ʿ}}oz$, but plural: $mā^{\text{ʿ}}uzzīm$, singular form with a pronominal suffixes: $mā^{\text{ʿ}}uzzî, mā^{\text{ʿ}}uzzô$, etc. – with geminated z). Nevertheless, it seems that the consonant text of the Masoretic tradition can, in some cases, point to the fact that the word is derived from the root ʿw-z , since it includes those forms, which were written *plene*: $m^{\text{ʿ}}wzy$ (Isa 27:5; 2 Kings 22:33; Ps 31:5; 43:2), $m^{\text{ʿ}}wzw$ (Ps 52:9) and others. Contexts in which one finds the word $m^{\text{ʿ}}wz$ allows to interpret this word both as a noun derived from the verb ʿz-z ‘to be strong’ and as a noun derived from the verb ʿw-z ‘to find refuge.’ A hypothesis has also been made according to which two lexemes, i. e., $m^{\text{ʿ}}wz$ I ‘refuge,’ which derives from the root

²⁸ As far as we know, the first hypothesis about the existence of ʿoz II was put forth by Theodor Gaster in 1930’s. (Gaster 1937–1938:189).

²⁹ HALOT distinguishes between two lexemes: ʿoz I ‘strength, might’ derived from the root ʿz-z (p. 805) and ʿoz II ‘refuge, protection’ derived from the root ʿw-z (p. 806). It gives the following passages where ʿoz II is found: Ex 15:2; Ps 21:2; 28:7, 8; 29:11; 46:2; 59:10, 18; 62:8; 81:2; 118:14; Isa 12:2; 49:5; Jer 16:19. In addition, the authors of the dictionary entry acknowledge that in all of the mentioned texts, with the exception of Ps 62:8, one can see the use of ʿoz I also. DCH (vol. VI, pp. 325, 864) also points to ʿoz II lexeme ‘refuge, protection’ (in the same contexts as HALOT except Ps 81:2, but adding Ps 30:8). On the other hand, CHALOT (p. 269) rejects the existence of the lexeme ʿoz II, while all of the relevant passages are interpreted with the use of ʿoz I, which is translated as ‘strength, power’ and ‘fortress.’ HAHAT (pp. 941–942) only includes the lexeme ʿoz , to which the following meanings are attributed ‘Kraft, Stärke, Macht’ (‘strength, might’), as well as ‘Schutz, Zuflucht’ (‘protection, refuge’ – in Ps 28:7; 59:10, 18; Isa 49:5; Jer 16:19; Ezek 24:21; 30:6, 18; 33:28). In addition the article mentions that it is possible that a contamination occurred between the noun ʿoz , which derives from the root ʿz-z , and the noun ʿoz , which derives from the root ʿw-z . However the article also points out to a lack of clear examples of this contamination.

³⁰ See HALOT 610.

$\text{'}w\text{-}z$, and $m^{\text{'}}wz$ II ‘strength’ derived from the root $\text{'-}z\text{-}z$, also existed.³¹ In ancient translations of the Bible this word is translated with the use of equivalents, which have the meaning of ‘strength, firmness’³² on one hand and ‘help, protection’ on the other.³³

A few words must be said about the origin of *wmymr ʔlhy hzwh bsʿdy* (‘And the Word of my God was my help’) reading in Targum Jonathan.

The easiest way to explain this is to assume that the targumist was familiar with the type of the Hebrew text, which included the variant 'zy ‘my help’ (= 1QIsa^a) in Isa 49:5. If one is to accept this point of view, one also has to assume that this type of the text was widespread around the Common Era. Therefore, the harmonization discussed in the article, was most likely produced not by the Qumran scribe himself but by his predecessor. Other explanations can also be proposed. For instance, the targumist could have been familiar with the oral interpretative tradition of Isa 49:5, according to which the word 'z meant ‘help’ in this text (we know that the targumist sometimes translated the related $m^{\text{'}}wz$ by using the equivalent $s^{\text{'}}d$ ‘help,’ see fn. 33). Moreover, the translator of the Targum could have harmonized the text of Isa 49:5 with the texts of the Book of Psalms and Isaiah due to the same reasons as the Qumran scribe (or his predecessor). The similarity of the phrase *ʔlhy lhy ʿzy* ‘my God was my strength’ (MT) to sentences of the ‘God (was) with someone (name or pronoun)’ type could have been an influence on the appearance of the Isa 49:5 variant in Targum Jonathan. The Hebrew sentences of this type in Targums are regularly translated with the phrase ‘Word of God (was) someone’s help.’ Here are several examples:

³¹ See DCH V 384–386.

³² For instance, Greek $\text{ισχυ}\acute{\sigma}$ ‘strength’ (Isa 23:4, 11; Ezek 24:25; 30:1 and others), ὄχυρωμα ‘fortress’ (Prov 10:29; Isa 23:14) in LXX, Syriac $\text{'wšn}^{\text{'}}$ ‘strength’ (Isa 17:9; 23:4, 14 and others), $m^{\text{'}}šn$ ‘who makes one firm, strong’ (Isa 17:10; Ps 60:9 and others) in the Peshitta, Aramaic *ṭwṭp* ‘strength’ (Isa 17:9; 23:4, 14 and others) in Targum Jonathan, and Latin *fortitudo* ‘strength’ (Ps 43:2; Isa 17:9 and others), *robur* ‘hardness, firmness’ (Jer 16:19 and others) in the Vulgate.

³³ For instance, Greek ὑπερασπιστής ‘protector’ (Ps 27(26):1; 28(27):8 and others), βοηθός ‘helper, help’ (Ps 52(51):9; Isa 17:10; 25:4) in LXX, Syriac $\text{msy}^{\text{'}}n^{\text{'}}$ ‘helper’ (Isa 25:4; Ps 28:8 and others), $\text{'dwr}^{\text{'}}$ ‘helper’ (Isa 25:4 and others) in the Peshitta, Aramaic $s^{\text{'}}d$ (vocalized either as $s^{\text{'}}ed$ ‘help’: Isa 25:4; Nah 3:11 (variant); Joel 46:16 (variant), or $sā^{\text{'}}ed$ ‘helper’: Nah 3:11 (variant); 2 Kings 22:33; Joel 4:16 (variant)), rḥsn ‘safety, support’ (Jer 16:19) in Targum Jonathan, Latin *protector* ‘protector’ (Ps 27:1; 28:8 etc.), *adiutor* ‘helper’ (Ps 52:9; Isa 17:10) in the Vulgate.

Gen 39:21: (MT) *wyhy yhw h 't ywsp...* ‘And YHWH was with Joseph...’; (Targum Onkelos) *whwh mymr' dywy bs'dyh dywsp...* ‘And the Word of the Lord was of help to Joseph...’

Josh 3:7: (MT) *...k'sr hyyty 'm msh 'hyh 'mk .?..* ‘As I was with Moses, I will also be with you’; (Targum Jonathan) *...kmh dhwh mymry bs'dyh dmsh kym yhy mymry bs'dk .?..* ‘As my Word was of help to you, so will my Word be of help to you.’

It should be noted that this formula is used quite often in Isa 40–55 of Targum Jonathan. In addition, this formula is used to convey both the nominal sentences of said type and the verbal sentences, which uses the verb $\text{'}z-r$ ‘to help’ is used.

Isa 43:2: (MT) *...?tk 'ny... .?..* ‘I am with you...’; (Targum Jonathan) *...mymry hwh bs'dkwn... .?..* ‘My Word was of help to you...’ (also in Isa 41:10; 43:5).

Isa 41:13: (MT) *...?ny 'zryk .?..* ‘I am helping you’; (Targum Jonathan) *...mymry bs'dk .?..* ‘My Word is help for you’ (also Isa 41:14).

It can also be assumed that in order to translate Isa 49:5, the targumist used the same phrase as he used in other cases, since the Hebrew sentence he was translating had, in his opinion, similar semantics with the aforementioned passages from Isa 40–55.

In summary, the following conclusions can be made.

1. The original text of Isa 49:5 included the variant 'zy ‘my strength’ (or another possible translation: ‘my refuge’), which is found in the Masoretic Bible as well as in scroll 1QIsa^b.

2. The Qumran version of Isa 49:5 (1QIsa^a) *'lwhy hyh 'zry* ‘My God was my strength’ appeared as a result of a harmonization of this text with other texts from the Book of Psalms and Isaiah by a Qumran scribe or his predecessor.

3. Harmonization occurred due to two factors: a) 'zy ‘my help’ is a paronym of 'zy ‘my strength’; b) the words 'z and 'zr were seen as synonyms in Hebrew of 1st millennium B. C. E. – beginning of 1st millennium C. E.

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