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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Hebrew-Aramaic Notes and Queries.

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ALL students of the Old Testament in its original languages are aware that there still remain a considerable number of words in the Sacred Text which have not yet been fully elucidated. Some of these are titles, some proper names, while a few belong to a different category. In some cases the difficulty consists in the fact that these words have been borrowed from foreign tongues, and have possibly undergone certain changes of form, to enable them to become naturalized in Hebrew or Aramaic. Our knowledge of the ancient languages of Western Asia and Egypt has been so much increased of late years that many problems of this kind which once perplexed students of the Bible have now been solved. It cannot, therefore, be presumptuous to endeavour to carry the process still further. The object of these Notes and Queries is to examine some of these difficult words, to state what the writer's own investigations have led him to infer concerning their etymology and meaning, and to invite the criticism of those whose own studies lie in this direction.

1. Among the many interesting words that occur in Daniel, none has proved such a crux to students as *tiphtâyê* (תִּפְתָּיָא), which occurs only in Dan. iii. 2, 3, and is evidently the Aramaic definite plural of a singular which may have been *tiphtê*. Our A.V. rendered the word "the sheriffs," and the LXX and Vulgate renderings are as evidently mere conjectures as is this. The Syriac Peshittâ translators contented themselves with transliterating the unknown term, wrongly substituting *b* for *p*. In modern times many attempts have been made to discover the origin of the word, some writers assigning a Semitic, others an Aryan etymology. Drs. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, in their new Hebrew Lexicon, regard all these attempts as failures, while at the same time they disprove the theory that we are dealing with a "copyist's error" by pointing out that the word (written תִּפְתָּיָא) occurs in an Aramaic inscription in Egypt.

If the word is Persian, as would seem probable *a priori*, its original form would be *ti-pati* in the Akhæmenian, and *ti-paiti* in the Avestic dialect. Now, *paiti* ("lord, master, owner") occurs in the Avestâ, and is *pâti* in Sanskrit and *pet* in Armenian. In the latter tongue, which is a sister language to ancient Persian, a prefix *ti* occurs, and is a shortened form of the Sanskrit *ati*, which occurs in the Akhæmenian inscriptions in the sense of "over" (*cf. atiyâisha*, "he went over"). In Sanskrit we have such compounds as *ati-mânusha*, "superhuman," and in Armenian from *air*, "a man," comes *ti-air*, contracted *ter*, "overman" = "Lord," and from *kin*, "woman" (*cf. γυνή*) is formed *ti-kin*, "over-woman" = "lady," and from *ezerk'h*, "limits," comes *ti-ezerk'h*, "over-limits," = "world," "universe." Therefore *ati-pati*, or *ti-pati* would mean "over-lord," and would denote some kind of governor or other official. Benfey, many years ago, suggested *ati-paiti* as the origin of the word, but his want of knowledge of Armenian prevented him from proving the correctness of his conjecture. The compound *ati-pati* does not actually occur in Sanskrit, but similar compounds do, and we may compare the word *adhi-pati*, formed with another prefix of much the same meaning.

2. This investigation may help us to solve another problem, the meaning and derivation of the title *Tirshâthâ* (תִּרְשָׁתָּהּ), which is given to Nehemiah (Ezra ii. 63; Neh. vii. 65, 70, viii. 9, x. 1), and to him alone. The word has the Hebrew definite article *ha* always prefixed to it. Its meaning seems clear from the fact that Nehemiah is also called *pehâh* (פְּהָחַ) in Neh. v. 14, and this word (Assyrian *pahâtu*) denotes "governor, procurator." In Esther and Ezra the *satrap* takes precedence of the *pehâh*; hence in Darius's time and that of his successors the latter was subordinate to the former. According to Herodotus (iii. 89, 90) the fifth Satrapy under Darius comprised Phœnicia, Palestine and Cyprus. In Ezra's time Tattenai was Satrap of Syria (Ezra v. 3, 6, vi. 6, 13), and he is probably the person mentioned on Contract Tablets under the name Ushtanni or Ushtanu. The *pehâh* or *tirshâthâ* at Jerusalem would be sub-

ordinate to him probably, as being ruler only of a single city and its surrounding district. So far for the meaning of the term, but what is its derivation ?

Among the many etymologies which have been proposed, the latest is that tentatively accepted in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon—*i.e.*, Avestic *tarsh̄ta*, which is there rendered “the feared,” “the revered.” But this derivation is impossible, for the Avestic root *tares, teres* (Sanskrit *tras*) means “to be afraid,” *timeo*, and its past participle *tarsh̄ta* means *timidus*, in modern Persian *tars̄dah*, “frightened,” not a likely title for a governor !

It seems more likely that *Tirsh̄ath̄a* has assumed this form in Hebrew through a transposition of the *r*. Its original form was perhaps *tish̄athr̄a*—*cf.* Tirhakah (*Tirh̄aḡah*, תִּרְהָקָה) from the Egyptian *Taherqa*, in Assyrian *Tarqu*. So we get *Elassar* for *ālu Larsa*, through precisely the same transposition of this one letter. *Ti-sh̄athr̄a* would have as its first element the prefix *ti* (for *ati*) “over,” as already explained. The rest of the word is the Avestic *sh̄athr̄a* (in modern Persian *shahr*), a “district” or “city” (*cf.* the change of meaning in Hebrew *medīnāh*, “district,” now in Arabic *madīnah*, “city”). Hence *ti-sh̄athr̄a* or *tirsh̄ath̄a* denotes “over-city,” “præfectus urbis,” and might even be rendered by our term “mayor.” A similar official, though called by another name, is to be found in every village and city in modern Persia.

The meaning of the word was early lost, for the LXX (*Ἀσερσαθά, Ἀθαρσαθά.* etc.) and Vulgate (*Athersatha*) do not venture to translate it, while the *Peshittā* rendering, “chief of the priests,” is a very bad guess.

3. In the Aramaic of Dan. iii. 24, we find the word *haddābar* (הַדְּבָר), which Brown-Driver-Briggs's Hebrew Lexicon renders “counsellor, minister.” They say it is a “Persian loan-word: original form and meaning dubious.” The termination *-bar* is evidently Persian, being the Akhæmenian *-bara*, Avestic *-vara*, Sanskrit *-bhara*, from the root *bhri*, which is the Greek *φέρω*, Latin *fero*, and English *to bear*. But all attempts to find the

explanation of the first element have hitherto failed. Possibly the word should be *ḥaddâbar* (חַדְבָּר), not *haddâbar*. If so, the first part is the word *ḥhad*, which in Armenian means "a two-edged sword." This comes from the Avestic root *ḥhad*, "to strike," which in Sanskrit is also *ḥhad*, "to strike, hurt, kill." There is another root in Sanskrit with a cerebral *d*—i.e., *ḥhad* or *ḥhand*, meaning "to divide, break." Connected with this latter root we have the Sanskrit *ḥhadga*, "a sword," and *ḥhadga-grâhin*, "sword-grasper," is the title of a particular dignitary. Hence *ḥaddâbar*, or, as some would transliterate, *ḥhaddâbar*, would be *ḥhadâbara* in Akhæmenian Persian, and would mean "sword-bearer." The softer *h* of the Massôretic text (*haddâbar*) may, however, be defended, and may have the same meaning, for, beside the root *ḥhad*, there exists in Avestic a softer form of the root (*had*), which also means "to strike."

4. Another word which is sometimes rendered "counsellor" is *adargâzar* (אֲדַרְגָּזָר), which occurs in the Aramaic of Dan. iii. 2. Brown-Driver-Briggs's Hebrew Lexicon suggests that this is the Persian word *andarzaghar* (more correctly *andarzgar*) used in the early Persian version of Ṭabarî in this sense. It is true that Persian lexicons give the obsolete word *andarz*, meaning "advice," etc., and *gar* is a common Persian ending. But this *-gar* is only a *later* form of the Akhæmenian *-kâra*, Avestic *-kara* (Sanskrit has both forms), from the root *kri*, "to do." Hence the proposed etymology is impossible, because (1) the termination is too late a form to occur in early Persian, and (2) *andarz* would be *hañdarez* in the ancient language, and occurs in that form as a verb in Avestic. We must therefore try something else.

In Avestic we find the word *âdra*, "respectable," which is the adjectival form of a noun representing the Sanskrit *âdara*, "honour, respect, care," from the root *dri*. There is also the Avestic *gûzra*, "secret, mysterious," from the root *guz*, "to hide, shelter," which is the Sanskrit *guh*, "to cover, conceal," whence comes *guhera*, "a guardian." This corresponds with the Avestic *gûzra*, since the *h* in Sanskrit becomes *z* in Avestic.

Hence would come the compound *âdraguzra*, or something similar, which corresponds consonant for consonant with the word we are studying. It would mean "guardian of honour," or "venerable" (*cf.* the Sanskrit and Pâli *âdaraniya*, "venerable," from Sanskrit *âdara*, Pâli *âdaro*, "honour"). In Armenian we have the verb *gzereł*, "to grasp, catch, attract," which is doubtless from the same root from which comes *gúzra* above. This etymology requires no change in the order of letters in the Aramaic word, and but a slight alteration of the Massôretic vowel-points. It may perhaps be worth noticing that the modern Persian root *guzar* cannot be appealed to here, since in Avestic that root was *vîtar*, which assumed its modern form according to laws well known to philologists.

5. The meaning of the word (נְבִיזְבָּחַ) *nebizbâh* (Dan. ii. 6, Aramaic) is from the context known to be "reward," as in both the A.V. and the R.V. So Aben Ezra explains it as = $\delta\omega\rho\nu$, and Rashi renders it *dôrênôth* (= $\delta\omega\rho\alpha$). But the question of its derivation is not so easy, since few will agree with Saadiah in deriving it from the root *bâzaz* (בָּזַז), "to plunder"! I venture with diffidence to suggest that the word should be *nibâzēnâh* (נְבִיזְנָחַ), which differs from the Massôretic form only in one consonant. The first element *ni*, in Avestic as in Sanskrit, means "down, in, into." The second element comes from the Avestic root *baž*, "to divide, to give," or *baj*, "to divide, break, distribute," whence *bâga*, "wealth." The corresponding Sanskrit root is *bhaj*, *bhañj*. In Armenian we have *bâž*, "an impost, tax" (Modern Persian *bâj*); *bâžel*, "to tax"; *bâžîn*, "part, share"; *bâžânel*, "to divide, cleave, share." The rest of our word is the Avestic nominal termination *-ana* (sometimes *-anâ*, feminine). Hence we get *ni-bâz-anâ*, which would mean "a gift," and in Aramaic would be written נְבִיזְנָחַ (*nibâzēnâh*).

NOTE.—For the sake of comparison with other languages, and because the softening in certain Hebrew consonants when *daghêsh* is omitted is undoubtedly of late date, in these Notes and Queries נ is always represented by *b*, ז by *g*, and so on.