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SOME HEBREW ROOTS AND THEIR MEANINGS.

MANY difficulties in the Hebrew text have been elucidated by the comparative study of the Semitic languages, and the following notes are an endeavour to throw light on several difficult words in the Old Testament with the help of Arabic and Assyrian.

The meaning of רמך in the phrase בני הרמכים (Esther viii 10) has long been considered doubtful, but the conjectural rendering 'stud-mare' is confirmed by the Arab. رَمَكَة, stayed indoors, رَمَكَة, a mare kept in the stables for rearing foals, and رَمَّاك, *celui qui garde les juments* or *qui les fait couvrir*.[1] Thus בני הרמכים may be rendered 'thoroughbreds'. Of two other words the roots may perhaps be sought in Arabic: חרש, magic charm, and עברה, arrogance. The word חרש should be connected with Arab. حَرْس, opportune moment, الحَرِسَان, night and day, and حَرَس, kept watch, and thus חכים חרשים (Isa. iii 3) will mean 'wise in the seasons', 'skilful in discovering the right moment'.[2] As regards עברה, I would suggest that it is cognate with غَبِر, was ulcerated (of a wound), bore rancour, and غِبْر, rancour, malice, hatred. In no Semitic language does the √עבר(ع) connote 'overflowing' of pride or wrath, and there is no reason why עברה, though the implication of the corresponding word in Arabic is bad, should not in Hebrew mean not only malice or enmity, but also righteous resentment, indignation. There will therefore be two roots in Hebrew, (i) עבר(ع), passed over, and (ii) עבר(غ), rankled.

In two passages in Jacob's Blessing Assyrian may prove of assistance in interpreting obscure phrases. The words נזיר אחיו (Gen. xlix 26) are rendered 'that was separated from his brethren' by the Revised Version. It is possible that there is a play on the classical meaning of נזר, consecrated, in Hebrew and the original signification which has survived in the Ass. *nazâru*, to curse. Render therefore נזיר אחיו, 'that was accursed of his brethren', for 'they hated him and could

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[1] Dozy *Supplément* vol. i p. 558 b, Ed. König (*Hebr. u. Aram. Wörterb.*, under רמך), however, deny this connexion. Possibly the original root is Ass. *ramâku*, to pour out, sprinkle, while Ar. رمك, stayed indoors, is merely a *vb. deriv.* from رمكة, mare.

[2] Whether the Ass. *erêšu*, to settle, and *eršu*, wise, cunning, are connected with this root is uncertain; for many scholars would find the cognate root in חרש, engraved, devised, Arab. حرث, (i) tilled, ploughed, (ii) cultivated, studied. Compare probably חָרָשָׁא (Targ.) enchanter, with חכים חרשים. (For Ass. *e* = Hebr. ח cp. *edešu* = חדש, *ešêqu* = חשק, &c.)

not speak peaceably unto him' (Gen. xxxvii 4). Perhaps also מכרה (Gen. xlix 5) can be traced back to the Ass. *makaru* or *makkaru*, staff (for driving donkeys, &c.), and should be rendered 'staff', the implication being that the brethren have abused the herdsman's staff and employed it in deeds of violence. Again, may there not possibly underlie שִׁילֹה in Gen. xlix 10 a long lost root in Ass. *šêlu* or *šilu*, prince, ruler? Then it should probably be pointed שֵׁילֹה,[1] and the passage will run : 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until the ruler thereof come, whom all people shall obey', viz. until the local rule of Judah's princes passes away before that of one who shall hold universal sway.[2]

In Isa. xlvi 8 I should be inclined to suggest הִתְחַשְּׁשׁוּ, grieve yourselves, for התאששו. This is textually nearer to the original התאששו, and is phonetically a corruption easier to understand than the suggested emendation, התבששו ; nor is it easy to account for any error arising in the case of so well-known a root as בוש. Further, it agrees with the LXX, which reads στενάξατε. The √חשש has long been regarded as confined to Aramaic, but it is now known to occur frequently in Assyrian, where *ašāšu* means 'to be sad, troubled', and *ašuštu* means 'trouble, sorrow, affliction'.[3] The occurrence of such an ἅπαξ εἰρημένον, only known in Assyrian and Aramaic, apart from a single possible occurrence in the Old Testament, is no more striking than that of אגרת, אִרְשַׁת, and so on, while the second Isaiah is especially prone to the use of such words.[4] In at least one instance Assyrian, instead of being adduced in support of textual emendation, may possibly prevent it. In 1 Sam. ii 33 various proposals have been made to remove לאדיב from the text, as inexplicable. But the √אדב appears to be confirmed by the Assyrian *adâbu*, (i) to bind, (ii) to oppress.[5] If this is correct, לאדיב should probably be pointed as a Piʻ infin., לְאַדֵּיב, incorrectly written *plene*, and לאדיב את נפשך translated ' to vex thy soul '.

Assyrian may sometimes correct the false exegesis of the Rabbinic scholars. As an example of this may be cited the word בלא, without,

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[1] Like דִּין, for example, with the archaic pron. suff.; cp. Ges.-K. § 84ᵇ b, and 91 e.

[2] Other words in this poem which have to be referred to Assyrian for solution are הור for הר (Ass. *ûru = urru*) and יקהה (Ass. *aqû* and Arab. وَقَى).

[3] The same root, it has been suggested by Dr Gray, underlies חושׁי in Job xx 2 (Driver and Gray *Job* pt. ii p. 134).

[4] Examples are צוח צרח, שׁבל, שׁרב, מכמר, and מחא.

[5] See Delitzsch *HWB*. pp. 20 b and 21 c. It should, however, be added that Professor Langdon regards the meaning 'oppress' as not well established for √*adâbu* in Assyrian.

which they regarded as a compound of לא, not, and ב, with. But the
Assyrian *balum, balu*, without, side by side with *bali*, without,[1] clearly
proves that in Hebrew also בלא and בלי were originally different cases
of the same noun, from the בלה√, Ass. *balû*, to be nothing.[2]

Another word which has been wrongly suspected by scholars is
התנסם in Ps. lx 6 (נתתה ליראיך נס להתנסם) and Zech. ix 16 (אבני נזר)
מתנוססות על אדמתו), for Assyrian proves that 'to wave to and fro' is
the correct meaning.[3] In II Rawlinson 40. 21 *nussusu ša zibbati* means
'wagging of the tail', and in the Epic of Gilgameš, col. iv a l. 4 (Schrader's
K. B. v 140), *linassisa kummatšu* is rendered by Jensen 'let him shake
his hair'. In Ps. xl 6 therefore נס להתנסם should be translated
'a flag to be waved to and fro', and in Zech. ix 16 אבני נזר מתנוססות
are 'jewels in a crown waving to and fro' with the movement of the
head, and picturesquely depicted as 'waving to and fro over the land'.
Similarly I would translate רוח יהוה נוססה בו (Isa. lix 19) 'the spirit of
the Lord passing to and fro upon it', regarding נוסְסָה as the Qal ptcp.[4]
from [נָסַם], Arab. نسّ, and not the pf. Po'l. from נום.[5] Consequently
נֵם, standard, will have meant primarily 'something waved to and fro',
'a banner', and be a derivative from נסס√ rather than the primitive
noun from which נָסַם was formed as a denominative verb.[6]

Lastly, I am inclined to think that in several cases in Hebrew, where
two roots bear the same form, the rarer has been lost by being merged
in that whose occurrence is more common.[7] Two examples will suffice

[1] In Assyrian *bala* and *bali* were originally the acc. and gen. respectively of
balum, balu; thus in *bala ṣaltum ṣabit* (= it was taken without fighting), the phrase
bala ṣaltum constitutes an adverbial accusative, and in *ina bališu* (= without him)
bali is in the genitive case after a preposition.

[2] In Arabic also بلا is probably philologically incorrect for بَلَ by similar false
analogy.

[3] With Ass. [*nasâsu*] cp. Arab. نَسَّ, *pervasit, celeriter progressus fuit* (*in omni*
re); *celeriter abiit*; *dispersus fuit*, and its derivative تَنَسَّاس, rapid motion. The
meaning of the נסס√ is, therefore, 'to move quickly', probably with the special
connotation of 'moving quickly to and fro'.

[4] The ptcp. also agrees better with the sense of the passage than the perf., all
the tenses referring to future time.

[5] There can be no doubt that Hebr. נום, fled, and Arab. ناس(و), oscillated, was
in commotion, Hebr. נסס, waved to and fro, and Arab. نسّ, moved to and fro,
went quickly, are ultimately to be derived from a common root signifying quick
motion (cp. מול and מלל, &c.).

[6] For the form נֵם (c. suff. נִפּי) from נסס√, cp. אֵם from אמם√, מדְרָה from
מדד√, שֵן from שנן√, &c. (Ges.-K. 84ᵃ c).

[7] Thus Delitzsch (*Prolegomena* pp. 66 ff) has detected a second root מחץ,

to illustrate my meaning, the words מצא and פרץ.[1]   There are, it would
seem, two roots מצא in the language, which should be kept distinct,
viz. (i) מצא, found, and (ii) מצא, sufficed, corresponding to the Assyrian
verbs, (i) *maṣû* = to find, obtain, and (ii) *maṣû* = to be wide, broad;
to be enough, be plentiful.   As in other cases of this nature, (ii) מצא
was lost through the rarity of its occurrence; for it is perhaps only
to be recognized in five or six passages of the Old Testament.   In
Num. xi 22 ומצא להם clearly means 'that it suffice them, that there
be enough for them'; in Judges xxi 14 ולא מצאו להם כן, 'and even
so they sufficed them not', the meaning given by the Revised Version,
is therefore correct.[2]   The Niph. נמצא, which occurs in Joshua xvii 16
and Zech. x 10, in the same way signifies 'was accounted sufficient'.

As a last instance in which Assyrian is of assistance, it suffices
to recall two occurrences of פרץ, where the usual rendering 'broke
forth' is unsatisfactory and can only be extended to mean 'spread
abroad' by a violent exegesis.   The passages are נפרצה נשלחה על
אחינו . . . ויקבצו אלינו (1 Chron. xiii 2), where the Revised Version
avoids the difficulty by rendering 'let us send abroad everywhere . . .',
and כפרץ הדבר (2 Chron. xxxi 5), for which the same translation gives
'as soon as the commandment came abroad'.   But in both cases the
sense required by the context for פרץ is 'to command', 'issue an
edict', and this is exactly what the cognate root in Assyrian offers.
There we find three roots corresponding to פרץ: (i) *parâṣu*, to tell lies,
which has no equivalent in Hebrew; (ii) *parâṣu*, to break through;
(iii) *parâṣu*, to decide, with its common derivative noun *parṣu*, com-
mand, order, law, edict, especially of a god or king.[3]   The Hebrew
lexicon should therefore be corrected to read (i) פרץ, broke through
(= Ass. (ii) *parâṣu*); (ii) פרץ, issued an edict, commanded (= Ass.
(iii) *parâṣu*); and at the same time these two passages in Chronicles
should be translated: 'Let us issue an edict, let us send unto our

corresponding to Ass. *maḫâṣu*, to sprinkle, dip, and bearing that meaning, which
has only survived in Ps. lxviii 24: למען תמחץ רגלך בדם, that thou mayest dip
thy feet in blood.

[1] Another example is perhaps התחנן, implored, with its derivative תחנון,
supplication, which cannot be brought under the √חנן, was gracious.   There are
clearly in Semitic *four* roots of the form חנן: (i) [חנן], Hithp., implored = Ass.
anânu, to implore; (ii) חנן, was gracious = Ass. *anânu*, to be gracious; (iii) *anânu*,
to be hostile, which has no cognate root in Hebrew, and (iv) חנן, was loathsome =
Arab. خَنّ, was loathsome.

[2] Another probable instance in the Qal is in Lev. xxv 26, where ומצא כדי
גאלתו should be rendered 'and there be enough for its redemption'.

[3] See Burney *Judges* p. 116 n.

brethren . . . that they may gather themselves together unto us', and : 'when this thing was decreed', as indeed the LXX (ὡς προσέταξεν τὸν λόγον) renders the latter.

G. R. DRIVER.

[I have no doubt that Mr Driver is right in finding under Heb. מצא both Assyr. *maṣû* 'find, obtain', and *maṣû* 'be wide, suffice'. The latter verb may be paralleled by Aram. ܡܨܐ 'able, possible', properly *capax*. The two sets of meanings appear, however, to go back to a common idea, and thus to have a common root, with which is connected Aram. מְטָא, ܡܛܐ 'reach, attain' (against Nöldeke, *ZDMG.* xl 736, and *BDB*), Heb. נָטָה 'stretch out, extend', Assyr. *naṭû* 'be feasible, attainable', Heb. מָדַד, Assyr. *madâdu* 'measure' (from idea of *extension*, as appears from Ar. ܡܕ 'extend, stretch', Heb. מַד extending 'garment'), probably also Heb. מָתַח 'extend', Aram., Ar. *ibid.* (ל"ה strengthened to ל gutt. as in פָּתַח, פָּתָה), and perhaps even Heb. מָשַׁךְ 'draw out, extend' (ח strengthened to כ as in Assyr. *tamâḫu*, Heb. תָּמַךְ). We thus have a common Semitic biliteral MAṢ, (MAŠ), MAṬ, MAD, MAT, NAṬ, the meaning of which appears to have been 'stretch, extend; reach'. The difference between the meanings 'find, obtain', and the meanings 'be wide, suffice', is merely the difference between 'stretch, extend' (trans.) and 'be stretched, extend' (intrans.); and the connexion between the trans. and intrans. meanings will be clear to those who are familiar with the uses of the Permansive in Assyrian.

C. F. BURNEY.]

FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CRITICISM OF ZMARAGDUS'S *EXPOSITIO LIBRI COMITIS.*

In the earlier article[1] I attempted to shed some light on the authorities used by Zmaragdus by presenting the results of a collation of the marginal symbols in the Bodleian, British Museum, Paris (B. N. 2341), Berlin, Einsiedeln, St Gall 424 and St Gall 435 MSS. Since then I have been able (*a*) to add to the list of MSS, especially by Dom Wilmart's kindness, the following :—

Paris B. N. 12045 (formerly of St Maur des Fossés) (saec. ix), defective at beginning and end,[2]

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[1] See the JOURNAL vol. ix (1907–1908) pp. 584–597.

[2] Begins *tunc abiit unus de duodecim* (p. 176 c), ends *in conscientia et intellectu* (p. 454 B).