Old Testament Notes.

PROF. J. DYNELEY PRINCE.

NEW YORK.


1. An Assyrian Cognate of the Word בִּנְיָמִין.

The word בִּנְיָמִין, which is evidently the plural of בִּנְיָהוּ, the ptc. sg. of the stem בּוֹן, occurs six times in the Old Testament with the meaning 'princes, governors.' The only cognate of this word which exists in the Old Testament is the אֲבִיָּלֶּאִים דְּלֵגְמוֹנִים בִּנְיָמִין, 'dignitary, prince' (Prov. 14:28), not to be confused with the בּוֹן of Is. 10:18, ψ 106:18, which is from a stem בּוֹן, 'to waste away.' Besides this, the proper name בּוֹן, which occurs in 1 Ki. 11:35 as the name of a Damascene prince, is, in all probability, a derivative from the stem בּוֹן, and originally had the same meaning as the בּוֹן of Prov. 14:28.

There can be little doubt that the stem בּוֹן, as is suggested in the lexicons, is cognate with the Arabic rasuna, 'to be heavy,' from which we have, for example, the adjectival derivative rasin, 'grave, sedate,' a form like בּוֹן, with ב for ב in the second syllable.

There exists in Assyrian a synonym of qarradu, 'strong, mighty,' which seems to have the form ruzzunu (Sm. 2052, c. II. 30), and to be the piel inf. of a stem ruzznu. Unfortunately, the first syllable of the word appears on the original clay as ur-, i.e. urzunu, which, however, as Delitzsch conjectures (AHW., 596) is probably to be read ruz, i.e. ruzzunu. The reasons for this hypothesis undoubtedly are: first, the existence of a clearly written form ru-uc-çu-nu, apparently with כ, which appears as a synonym of GAL (ik) on the syllabary S c. I., 41; and secondly, the fact that we find (VR., 41, 20) one of the synonyms of kabtu, 'heavy, dignified,' given as (ru?)-uc-çu-nu, with the first syllable effaced, also apparently with כ.
It seems permissible to suppose that these citations are really occurrences of one and the same form, the stem consonants of which are probably הָיָה with ה, as we find it actually written in the first passage quoted above. The character וה may be used either for וה or וה, and the character וּ, although generally employed exclusively for וה, occasionally has the value וה or וה (see Brünnow, 10,977; BPS. 82), so that the writing of the word with וה וה may simply have been intended to represent וה וה. This seems all the more likely if we remember: first, the meaning attributed to וּ רָעֵצְעֵנָה, i.e. qarradu, 'mighty' (also רָעֵצְעֵנָה = kabtu); and secondly, the undisputed existence of a stem of this form (יָה) in both Hebrew and Arabic with a similar meaning. If an Assyrian cognate of this latter stem exists, it must appear, according to the laws of the interchange of sibilants with a pure ה. It is possible, however, to read the Assyrian word either with וה or וה, but, in view of the reasons just given, the stem is very likely הָיָה, and not הוה, and it is probably a cognate of והוה, והוה with וה.

2. The Word והוה in Obadiah 7.

The etymology and meaning of the word והוה in Obadiah 7 is not satisfactorily explained in the lexicons. The translators of the A.V. confused it with the והוה in Hos. 5:12 and Jer. 30:15, translating it 'wound,' a meaning made impossible, however, by the context of the passage in Obadiah. The והוה in Hosea, which is used synonymously with והוה, is plainly a derivative from והוה, 'press, squeeze,' and is used to denote a festering wound. Regarding the והוה of Obadiah, however, the twelfth edition of Gesenius (by Buhl, 1895) gives its meaning, in agreement with the Targumic translation והוה, as 'Fallstrick, Schlinge,' as if it came from some stem meaning 'to bind' (יָה). This meaning 'bind' or 'twine' does not really appear in Hebrew in the stems והוה, והוה, both of which are used in the sense of pressing or squeezing out, as, for example, a fleece (Ju. 6:15), an egg (Job 39:14), or a wound (Is. 1:8: והוה, referring to והוה והוה).

The translation in the LXX of the והוה in Obadiah by ἠδέσποτα, and in the Vulgate by insidiae, 'ambush, lying in wait,' seems more in accordance with the sense of the passage. It is probable that in the Hebrew text used by the translators of the LXX the reading