Notes on the Old Testament

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1. רֶפֶּה, Gen. 31:47.

The Jewish temple at Elephantine is called in Papyrus E, l. 14, and J, l. 16 (Sayce and Cowley's publication), רֶפֶּה. The word has given rise to various explanations. Nöldeke has noted the possible derivation from Assyrian ekurru; Syriac ē qpādē, “roof,” has been suggested; and most recently Sachau argues for the active formation ē gārā, as in Syriac, the “assembler,” hence “assembly,” comparing Arabic ī dām, “mosque.” Preferring to remain in the field of the elder Aramaic I suggest identification with Rabbinic רֶפֶּה, “heap, hill,” which is used in the Targums for a heathen altar; so the Targum to 2 Ki. 21:3 renders רֶפֶּה. The word is then to be associated with רֶפֶּה, Gen. 31:47, in אַבִּיר דַּרְבּוּן, “heap of witness,” there rendered into Hebrew by בְּרֵי. If רֶפֶּה is of katil-formation, as the Massora points it, it is related to אַבִּיר as Syriac kābrā to kēbārā, with the softening of ʿ to ʾ; if it should be pointed רֶפֶּה, it is the same word, ʿ having become ʾ. With the root-meaning of a heap, אַבִּיר corresponds in meaning to Hebrew בֵּית בֵּית, primarily a “height” (e.g. Dt. 32:13). Both words experienced the same development in meaning, coming to be used of the sacred mound or elevation, then of the precinct, and finally of the temple reared there. בֵּית בֵּית appears to be used in the latter sense in 1 Ki. 11:7; more accurately the structure is a בֵּית בֵּית, e.g. 12:7. We may compare the like development of denotation in Arabic masjid and Latin templum. The Aramaic-speaking Jews of Elephantine were thus using the Aramaic equivalent

1 Aramäische Papyrus, 1911, pp. xxiii f.
of the Hebrew המל for their Yahwe-temple. What relation this native Aramaic word מאר to Assyrian .MONTHU, I leave to Assyriologists to determine. There may have occurred in this case one of the numerous artificial assimilations of Semitic and Sumerian words.2

2. שים, 1 Ki. 20 12.
This technical term for attacking a city has its exact parallel in the Syriac; e.g. in the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus, in Gottheil and Jastrow's Semitic Study Series, xiii, p. 17, l. 2, and p. 34, l. 6. The phrase in the latter passage, של לע מדיה, is identical with the Hebrew. There can be no objection in finding the same meaning for ל שים in 1 Sam. 15 2. Compare English "set at, make a set at," and Dr. Cobb cites for me a word of Prince Hal to Falstaff: "We two saw you four set on four."

It occurred to me several years ago that the original reading for this obscure phrase was best represented by the Greek text B, which has ΠΟΧΧΩβαουεθει; ΡΟΧ is for δοχ, a mutilation of Marduk, and Βαουεθει is an abbreviation of the name of the Babylonian goddess Ζερ-π(b)anitum. Stade, I find, has made the same suggestion in the Polychrome Bible, ad loc. There remains for explanation the syllable -OTH-. This doubtless represents an original מ, so that the text primarily read: And the Babylonians made (or better, worshiped) את מודר מוא (וג) בקית.

4. The barbarous syllables in Is. 28 10.
Duhm in his brisk fashion has correctly criticised the current interpretation of these words as "precept upon precept, . . . line upon line, . . ." He would understand them as onomatopoetic sounds taken from some proverbial phraseology. May these syllables be a pedagogic by-word taken from the schoolmaster's instruction in teaching the alphabet? "Ṣade

3 This note was read at the meeting of the Society in December, 1910. Professor Margoliath has briefly made the same suggestion for identity of מ and "י in JQR, N.S. ii, 427.
for Sade, Kof for Kof," so we might say, but in this passage may be preserved elder or variant names of the letters נ and ב (cf. the names of נ and ב). The sing-song phrase may have attached itself to these letters because of their raucous rhyming. This interpretation would be in agreement with the pedagogic character of the chapter, and would heighten the contrast in the reference to “the strange lips and other tongue” with which Yahwe threatens to teach his people.

5. נֶפֶר, Is. 28 15.

In his paper entitled Ro’eh and Hozeh in the Old Testament, in the Journal for 1909, p. 42, Dr. Jastrow argued that both these terms originally connoted divination; he showed that נֶפֶר is the bard of the Babylonian, the practitioner of intentional auspices, and נֵס is the observer of accidental omens. Jastrow discussed in this paper every important instance of נֵס but one, the present case.

In this passage the commentators have endeavored to understand נֵס as though it referred to a “vision” obtained with Hell, i.e. some necromantic rite. But it is evident that נֵס is synonymous with the parallel נְרָב even as the Greek understood them,—διαθήκην . . . συνθήκην (Sym. συνθήκην in both places). But Jastrow’s discussion gives a clue to the understanding of נֵס in our passage. This word and its parallel נְרָב denote a covenant founded upon, consecrated by, auspices. Our verse then presents the two roots bard and נֵס, of which the latter is to the former as, according to Jastrow’s thesis, נֵס is to נְרָב, which, with Jastrow, equals bard. This equation further reflects corroboration upon the derivation suggested by Jensen for the connection of Hebrew נְרָב with Babylonian bard, used of auspices.8 Our biblical verse not only gives us a hitherto misunderstood word from the vocabulary of divination, but also unconsciously offers the etymology for the much discussed נְרָב.

There remains the discussion of the form of the word,

8 See Haupt in the Journal, 1900, 59. It may be noted that this derivation for נְרָב is not to be found in Kraetzschmar’s monograph, Die Bundesvorstellung, 1896, in the articles on “Covenant,” in HDB and EB, nor in the Oxford Dictionary.
which is pointed as the Kal active ppl.; cf. הָאָר, v. 7. The pointing is impossible; the word is to be equated with (the aramaizing?) הָאָר of v. 18, to which it bears the same relation as הָעָלָל to לָעָל. Accordingly point הָאָר, הָאָר (v. 7), and read probably הָאָר, v. 18.

6. מָכַל, Am. 5:9.

The usual interpretation of this verb connects it with the three biblical instances of the root לָל, "be cheerful, smile," with which are to be associated the names לָל and לָל, denoting the deity's complaisant demeanor (cf. מַלָל). The corresponding Arabic root balaja, balija, means "be bright, joyous," the original idea being possibly that of the breaking of the dawn, in which case לָל is a variation of the more common theme לָל. But the usual rendering, "he flashes destruction upon the strong," is too forced an interpretation to commend itself to the present writer. I propose therefore to connect the verb with Arabic walaja, "come in," so that our Hifil is exactly parallel with מַלָל (so to be read for מַלָל) in the parallel limb of the verse. Walaja is itself also to be connected with the theme מָכַל, proceeding from the meaning "divide, break open," to that of "entering." PLG, BLG, WLG, are thus variations of the same theme. A parallel is to be found in the Hebrew verbs מָכַל, מָכַל (occurring only in the derived stems), with which is to be connected Assyrian balatu, "live," for which, so far as I know, no connections have been established by the Assyriologists. The two Hebrew verbs, in the first stem, had the sense of "getting off with one's life."

7. מָכַל, Eccles. 11:5, etc.

Some instances outside of the Hebrew sphere may be adduced to Dr. Cobb's interesting paper on מָכַל as practically "the universe," in the JOURNAL, 1910, 24. In the Assyrian we have Ea bān kala, "Creator of the universe," Hilprecht, Assyriaca, 18; Sala as goddess ša kullati, Delitzsch, Handwörterbuch, 331; the proper name Sin-li'-i-kullati, "Sin is powerful over all," Tallquist, Neobabylon. Namenbuch, 319; and the royal title lugal kalammu, "king of the whole
(world)," Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumer. u. akkad. Königsin-
schriften*, 152. In the Syriac the divine title ʿল נא, "lord
of all," is frequently found, e.g. in the Life of St. Ephrem,
Brockelmann, *Syr. Gramm.*, Chrestomathy, p. 26, and
Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors*, ed. Budge, p. 28, l. 21,
et passim, here always written as one word. I may compare
a similar epithet in one of the emperor Julian's orations,
ὁ βασιλείῳ τῶν διαν Ἡλιος, cited by Cumont, *Oriental Re-
ligions*, 258, n. 80, from Hertlein's ed., *Or. iv*, p. 203, 5.
Shamash, the Babylonian sun god, is also hailed as god of

8. The interrogative particle י or הֲשָׁה.

In the *Journal* for 1904, p. 95, the writer suggested that
י in Am. 7 2, Ruth 3 16, is an interrogative particle, corre-
sponding to Latin *num*, Greek μή. The same use is required
for הֲשָׁה in Jer. 2 5: הֲשָׁה מָאָס אַב וְהָלָל, generally
translated: "What falseness have your fathers found?" but
this demands הֲשָׁה מָא. Translate: "Did your fathers find
falseness in me?" In the same way may be understood the
unique expression in Dt. 5 23: יכ, כָּל בְּשָׁה וְי, universally
translated, "Who is there of all flesh who has heard," etc.
But then we should have הֲשָׁה כָּל, as in Gen. 21 8. The difficulty
is avoided by taking הֲשָׁה as the interrogative: "Has
any flesh heard?" It may be observed that the interrogative
pronoun, used exclamatorily, has become a negative particle,
as already in classical Hebrew, and then an interrogative
particle.

9. The correlative use of י and הֲשָׁה.

The most natural translation of י in Is. 62 5: יכ וְי בֵּית יְהֹוָה
בְּהוֹרֵר חַטֲלָה יָסָל כִּיּוּ, is "as," — "as a young man
marries a virgin," etc. The commentators who translate it
"for" have to supply the necessary "as," while Lagarde,
recognizing the difficulty, proposed חַטֲלָה (see Duham, *ad loc.*).
Further, י is to be translated as "so," in Job 6 21, יכ וְי וַיְהֹוָה
לָךָ (reading י for י); here י is supposed by some
translators to be an error for י, but unnecessarily. These
cases prepare the way for observing the correlative use of \textit{\textit{ו}} and \textit{ appName} in Is. 55:9; cf. the immediately following correlation in v. 10. \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName}. Again, \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName} may possibly be taken as correlatives in Job 31:11, \textit{appName} “as it is a felony, so it is a fire that burns even to hell.” But the usage is more evident in Gen. 18:20, where Yahwe says, \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName} 
\textit{appName} ... \textit{appName}. The translation of RV, “because ... and because,” misses the terse rhetoric. Also the preferable rendering of \textit{appName} as an asseverative particle (\textit{e.g.} Dillmann, Gunkel) evades the logic of the passage, for the Deity is thereby represented as forestalling his inquisition (v. 21) with a verdict. Rather he is depicted as drawing a \textit{prima facie} conclusion from the fame of Sodom and Gomorrah’s iniquity: “as the bruit of them is great, so is (must be) their sin grievous.” That is, there is enough evidence, as with a grand jury, to call for an indictment and lead to a judicial examination.

This correlative use of \textit{appName} is etymologically the same as that of the preposition \textit{appName}, \textit{e.g.} in \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName}. The basis of both the conjunction and the preposition is a demonstrative element (see Duval, \textit{Grammaire syriaque}, 164), which lends itself to correlation, as in the case of “here and there”; an exact equivalent to this correlative use of a demonstrative element is found in the English “the . . . the” in comparisons.

Correlation is also evidently expressed by \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName} in Jer. 3:20: “As a woman is false to her lover, so have you been false to me.” Just below in v. 23 \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName} may possibly be used in the same way: “Just as in vain are the hills, etc., so in Yahwe is Israel’s help.” \textit{appName} in these cases is to be connected with the Syriac \textit{aikan}, “as” (which actually occurs in an Aramaic magical inscription from Nippur as \textit{appName}). For \textit{appName} from \textit{appName}, \textit{e.g.} \textit{appName} from \textit{appName}, “where.” Etymologically the proper correlative particles would be \textit{appName} ... \textit{appName}, as in Jer. 3:20, but confusion has probably arisen in the literary tradition.\textsuperscript{4} Further, \textit{appName} in 1 Ki. 11:2 may be

\textsuperscript{4} Cf. Haupt’s notes on \textit{appName} and \textit{appName}, \textit{JBL}, 1910, 104.
the same word. Stade, *SBOT*, *ad loc.*, would change it to ḫ on the strength of the Greek μή. But the Greek may be right without faulting the Hebrew. ḫ, like the Syriac ḫ and the Latin *ut*, may have come to denote purpose or end.