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To know — to have sexual commerce

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IN §§ 154—156 of the Code of Hammurapi (2123—2081 B. C.) *ilmad*, he learned, and the reflexive stem *iltamad* mean *he knew* in the special sense of *he had carnal knowledge*; § 154 states: *If a man has sexual intercourse with his daughter, he shall be expelled from the town, Assyr. šumma amêlu^m mâ-ratsu iltamad, amêlu šuāti âla^m ušêçûšu*; cf. Winckler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis* (Leipzig, 1904) p. 44, n. 2. The etymological equivalent of Heb. יָדַע, Assyr. *idû* is used in this sense, of a woman who has not known man, in § 130 of the Code: *If a man rapes another man's (espoused) wife who has not known a male and lives in the house of her father (cf. BL 108) that man shall be put to death.* In Deut. 22 24 a virgin betrothed to a man, who is raped by another man, is referred to as *his neighbor's wife*. The phrase *who has not known a male* is expressed in the Code of Hammurapi by *ša zikara^m lâ idû*, just as we have in Jud. 11 39: וְהָיָא לָא יָדְעָה אִישׁ, *she had not known man*, and in Num. 11 39: וְכָל אִשָּׁה יָדְעַת אִישׁ לְמִשְׁכַּב זָכָר, *every woman that has known man by lying with a male.* This passage belongs to the secondary strata of the Priestly Code; *לְמִשְׁכַּב* is a form of the infinitive (GK²⁸ § 45, e)¹ which is common in Aramaic (cf. מִנְיָן, Ezr. 7 20). I have pointed out in *Kings* (SBOT) 179 that דָּבַר לְאָמַר means *he said speaking*, not *he spoke saying*. Consequently it would be more correct to translate: *Every woman that has lain with a male, knowing man.* It is possible, however, that לְמִשְׁכַּב זָכָר is

¹ For the abbreviations see above, p. 41.

merely a gloss derived from **לא ידעו משכב זכר** in the following verse.

In Syriac (and in Samaritan) we find instead of **למד** and **ידע** in this special sense the verb **הכח**, to know, to discern, to be wise or experienced; the original meaning of **הכמה**, wisdom is experience; see Haupt, *Koheleth* (Leipzig, 1905) p. 29, n. 8. Ethiopic *a'māra*, to know (originally to see, Assyr. *amāru*) and Arabic **عرف**, to know are used in the same way. The primary connotation of **عرف** is to smell; it is the Assyr. *erēšu* which means both to smell (be fragrant; cf. SGI 24, below) and to be wise (ZDMG 65, 562). To smell, to perceive through the nose, may mean to perceive in any way; to smell out denotes to find out by minute investigation. A sneaking spy is a smeller. French *sentir* means to smell, to perceive, to feel. Our sense is derived from the same word. *Scent* is merely an incorrect spelling of *sent*. We also say to sniff danger and to nose for to find out. Thieves call an informer a nose. According to Pliny (14, 90) Cato said that women were kissed by their relatives for the purpose of finding out whether they had partaken of any intoxicating beverage; Roman women were originally not permitted to drink wine (*propinquos feminis osculum dare ut scirent an temetum olerent . . . non licebat id feminis Romae bibere*). For the connection between kissing and smelling see JAOS 28, 120. 130, also BL 3 (Cant. 7 s).

Also the original meaning of **ידע**, to know may have been to smell and to be fragrant. I pointed out SFG 22, 1 (cf. Delitzsch, *ProL* 26; contrast Schwally, TLZ 24, 357) that **ידע** was a *verbum cum 'originario*. The causative of this stem in Ethiopic is **עדע**, not **עדע**. Heb. **הידע** (Aram. **עדע**) is a form like **הודיש** from **ידש** — **يبس**. Arab. **أيدع الكحج على نفسه**, he imposed upon himself the pilgrimage to Mecca stands for **أودع**, from **ودع** (contrast NBSS 203; for Mehri *wida*, to know, see ZA 2, 278). The noun **أيدع** is said to denote gum-dragon, saffron, and sapan (or *bukkum*, i. e. **بقم**) wood. Gum-dragon or dragon's blood is a dark red-brown resin, Pliny (33, 116) calls it *cinnabaris* (**κιννάβαρι Ἰνδικόν** — **αἶμα δράκοντος**).

The dragon's blood of Socotra is obtained from *Dracaena cinnabari*. Saffron is in Hebrew כַּרְמִי (BL 95) — Assyr. *kurkanû* (HW 436^a, l. 3; SGI 129; KM 55, below; 142, *ad l.* 10; MVAG 9, 209). Both dragon's blood and saffron were used, not only as dyes, but also as perfumes and for medicinal purposes; so the original meaning of عِدَاة may have been *ἀρωμα*. Syr. *sammâ* drug, medicine, poison, pigment, which is identical with Arab. *samm*, poison, and *šammâmât*, perfumes, is derived from Sumer. *šem*, *āρωμα* (SGI 263; contrast NBSS 95). Cf. ZA 30, 61.

According to Baumann (ZAT 28, 31. 125) שָׂרָה, *to have sexual intercourse* means originally *to acknowledge, to care for*. Schwally (ZDMG 52, 163) thinks, the primary connotation is to learn whether the bride is *virgo intacta*; in the East much importance is still attached to the *tokens of virginity* referred to in Deut. 22 15, although the criterion is not an infallible one (see Driver *ad loc.* in ICC; cf. BL 41. 117. 133; EB 690; DB 4, 595, †. 596^b). But שָׂרָה is used both of men and women; a woman cannot test the virginity of a man. Socin suggested, the original meaning might be to see the face of the bride (cf. BL 101, n. 4). But שָׂרָה is used also of homosexual intercourse (Gen. 19 5). Moreover Greek γινώσκειν (Lat. *cognoscere*) has the same meaning, not only in the LXX and in the NT, but also in profane authors, e. g. in Plutarch's *Alexander*, c. 21 (cf. the passages quoted in Gesenius' *Thesaurus*, p. 571^b). The idea that this use of שָׂרָה as well as of γινώσκειν and *cognoscere* may have been influenced by this special use of Assyr. *lamādu* and *idû* (AkF 46) seems to me untenable. There is no doubt a connection between γινώσκειν, *to know* and γίγνεσθαι, *to be born*. Greek γινωρός means not only *known*, but also *related by blood, kinsman*, just as Heb. שָׂרָה, from שָׂרָה, *to know*, means, not *acquaintance*, but *relation, relative*. In English, *kin* means *race, breed, family*, and *ken* denotes *knowledge*; we have also *to ken* = *to beget, to bring forth*. The Germanic forms have been discussed by Collitz on p. 91 of his monograph *Das schwache Präteritum und seine Vorgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1912) — *Hesperia*, No. 1.

Also in Sumerian, *zu*, *to know*, has the same sexual meaning, e. g. ASKT 119, 18. In Sumerian incantations we often find

to our phrase *to cut one's eye-teeth*, i. e. to know what is what, to be old enough to understand things; the eye-teeth are usually the last of the exposed teeth to appear (*cf.* JBL 21, 6; BL 66; ZDMG 63, 519, l. 25; JAOS 32, 5; CoE 505. 510. 511; also ZAT 35, 36). ע uses ידע מדע , lit. *knowing knowledge*, i. e. *sexually mature* for משתין בקיר which denotes a little boy below the age of puberty (AJSL 22, 255).

In the cuneiform script the ideograms for Sumer. *zu*, to know, and *su*, body, are originally identical. I have pointed out in AJSL 26, 1 that certain words for *body* have also the special meaning *membrum virile*, e. g. Talmud. ג'נ and Greek $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ (contrast HK 1). The oldest form of the character *su* (\triangleleft , originally ∇) seems to represent the hypogastric (or suprapubic) region at the middle of the lowest part of the abdomen; the ideogram means therefore also *to increase*. According to Delitzsch, *Ursprung der Keilschriftzeichen* (1907) p. 140 the character *zu* means *great of eye* ($\triangleleft + \text{III} = \boxed{\text{III}}$) but the ideogram for *eye* is originally not triangular, but round, a segment of a circle with a horizontal line after it, which represents the optic nerve (q- ; *cf.* BA 9, 1, p. 104, No. 406). Hilprecht stated in the second part of his *Old Babylonian Inscriptions chiefly from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1896) p. 41, n. 6: Originally *zu* and *su* had the same ideogram, which represents a vessel (cistern?) into which water flows. *Zu* means, therefore, *to flow into* or *to pour into*, *to add*, then *to increase one's knowledge*, *to learn*, *to known*. Barton (BA 9, 2, p. 4) thinks, the character represents a storage-jar with lines either for ornamentation or to indicate the contents of the jar; the storage-jar suggested the idea of increase, gain, and the ability to secure gain, such as wisdom, knowledge. This is just as impossible as the explanation given in Langdon's Sumerian grammar that the sign *su* represents a frame for stretching skins upon. Both *zu*, knowledge, and *su*, body, represent originally the suprapubic region. We find \triangleleft for both *zu* and *su* (BA 9, 1, p. 2, No. 7). The hairiness of the genitals, which appears at puberty, symbolizes physical and mental maturity, procreation and discernment.

There is a connection between pubescence and knowledge. The *age of consent* (i. e. the intelligent concurrence in the adoption of the contract) for marriage was fixed by the common law at 14 for males, and 12 for females, and 14 is also the *age of discretion*. The entire period before 14 is called the *age of nurture* (CD 108^b). At 14 both sexes are held to have arrived at years of discretion and are fully responsible to the criminal law. In Scotland the law fixes the attainment of puberty at 14 in males, and 12 in females. In Austria the nubile age is 14 for either sex, subject to the consent of the parents (EB¹¹ 1, 373^a). In the villages near Jerusalem a girl generally marries at the age of 12 or 13 (BL 111).

This explains the connection between discretion, knowledge, and carnal knowledge, sexual congress. In the Biblical legend of the Fall of Man the Serpent symbolizes carnal desire, sexual appetite, concupiscence. This is the original sin which has been transmitted to all descendants of Adam; only the innocents are free from it. The Serpent in the story of the Fall of Man is a later addition: in the original form of the legend *Eve* (which means *serpent*; JAOS 32, 14, n. 29; CoE, n. 13) was the sole seductress.