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 הָלָּא (Esther viii 10) has long been considered doubtful, but the conjectural rendering ‘stud­mare’ is confirmed by the Arab. רָמָא, stayed indoors, רָמָא, a mare kept in the stables for rearing foals, and רָמָא, <ce=ui qui garde les juments or qui les fait couvrir. Thus הָלָּא may be rendered ‘thoroughbreds’. Of two other words the roots may perhaps be sought in Arabic: הָרָא, magic charm, and הָרָא, arrogance. The word הָרָא should be connected with Arab. حُرَس, opportune moment, הָרָא הָרָא (Isa. iii 3) will mean ‘wise in the seasons’, ‘skilful in discovering the right moment’. As regards הָרָא, I would suggest that it is cognate with הָרָא, was ulcerated (of a wound), bore rancour, and הָרָא, rancour, malice, hatred. In no Semitic language does the מְבֵר (עֵבֶר) connote ‘overflowing’ of pride or wrath, and there is no reason why, 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) מְבֵר, passed over, and (ii) מְבֵר, rankled.

In two passages in Jacob’s Blessing Assyrian may prove of assistance in interpreting obscure phrases. The words הָיָי יִתְנַה (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 הָיָי, consecrated, in Hebrew and the original signification which has survived in the Ass. נָצָרָה, to curse. Render therefore הָיָי יִתְנַה, ‘that was accursed of his brethren’, for ‘they hated him and could

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1 Doyx Supplément vol. i p. 558 b, Ed. König (Hebr. u. Aram. Wörterb., under יִתְנַה), however, deny this connexion. Possibly the original root is Ass. ramāku, to pour out, sprinkle, while Ar. רָמָא, stayed indoors, is merely a vb. deriv. from רָמָא, mare.

2 Whether the Ass. וֹרָס, to settle, and וֹרָס, wise, cunning, are connected with this root is uncertain; for many scholars would find the cognate root in וֹרָס, engraved, devised, Arab. וֹרָס, (i) tilled, ploughed, (ii) cultivated, studied. Compare probably תֵּרָה (Targ.) enchanter, with תֵּרָה (Hebr. and cp. edēs = יִתְנַה, esēq = יִתְנַה, &c.)
not speak peaceably unto him' (Gen. xxxvii 4). Perhaps also דרכו (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 הֵלֵשׁ in Gen. xlix 10 a long lost root in Ass. šēlu or šîlu, prince, ruler? Then it should probably be pointed הֵלֵשׁ, 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 שֵׂשְׂכַּה, grieve yourselves, for שׂכַּה. This is textually nearer to the original שׂכַּה, and is phonetically a corruption easier to understand than the suggested emendation, שׂכַּה; nor is it easy to account for any error arising in the case of so well-known a root as שִׁבָּה. Further, it agrees with the LXX, which reads otrevákeō. The שֵׂשְׂכַּה 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 ašūṭu means ‘trouble, sorrow, affliction’.3 The occurrence of such an ašuţē eipμéνον, only known in Assyrian and Aramaic, apart from a single occurrence in the Old Testament, is no more striking than that of הָיָרָא, הָיָרָא, 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 הָיָרָא from the text, as inexplicable. But the שֵׂשְׂכַּה appears to be confirmed by the Assyrian adābu, (i) to bind, (ii) to oppress.5 If this is correct, שֵׂשְׂכַּה should probably be pointed as a Pi’ infin., שִׁבָּה, incorrectly written plene, and שֵׂסֵכַּה נֹמֶשׁ 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 שֶׂכַּה, without,

1 Like שִׁבָּה, for example, with the archaic pron. suff.; cp. Ges.-K. § 84 b, and 91 c.
2 Other words in this poem which have to be referred to Assyrian for solution are רֹזִי for רֹזִי (Ass. āru = urru) and יָרְקָי (Ass. aqū and Arab. ؤُرُقُ). 3 The same root, it has been suggested by Dr Gray, underlies שֵׂשְׂכַּה in Job xx 2 (Driver and Gray Job pt. ii p. 134).
4 Examples are לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, לָרָא, and לָרָא.
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 שֵׂשְׂכַּה 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 לא and ב were originally different cases of the same noun, from the נ lui, Ass. balul, to be nothing.2

Another word which has been wrongly suspected by scholars is נון in Ps. lix 6 (which is נון) and Zech. ix 16 (which is נון), for Assyrian proves that ‘to wave to and fro’ is the correct meaning.3 In II Rawlinson 40. 21 nussu 帑 zibbati means ‘wagging of the tail’, and in the Epic of Gilgames, col. iv a. 4 (Schrader’s K. B. v 140), linassisa hummašū is rendered by Jensen ‘let him shake his hair’. In Ps. xl 6 therefore נון should be translated ‘a flag to be waved to and fro’, and in Zech. ix 16 נון מותנופות 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 היה נופות be נופות (Isa. lix 19) ‘the spirit of the Lord passing to and fro upon it’, regarding מותנופות as the Qal ptcP.4 from מותנופות, Arab. מותנופות, and not the pf. Pol. מותנופות.5 Consequently נון, standard, will have meant primarily ‘something waved to and fro’, ‘a banner’, and be a derivative from נון rather than the primitive noun from which נון 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 balu and bali were originally the acc. and gen. respectively of balum, balu; thus in balul zaltum sabit (= it was taken without fighting), the phrase balul zaltum constitutes an adverbial accusative, and in ina bališu (= without him) bališu is in the genitive case after a preposition.

2 In Arabic also נון is probably philologically incorrect for נון by similar false analogy.

3 With Ass. [nasdu] cp. Arab. נון, pervasit, celeriter progressus fuit (in omn re); celeriter abiiit; dispersus fuit, and its derivative נון, rapid motion. The meaning of the נון 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. נון, fled, and Arab. נון (Nasal), oscillated, was in commotion, Hebr. נון, waved to and fro, and Arab. נון, moved to and fro, went quickly, are ultimately to be derived from a common root signifying quick motion (cp. מותנופות and מותנופות, &c.).

6 For the form נון (cp. suff. נון) from נון, cp. נון from נון, און, מון, מון, מון, מון, &c. (Ges.-K. 84c).

7 Thus Delitzsch (Prolegomena pp. 66 ff) has detected a second root מון,
to illustrate my meaning, the words נל and מريف. There are, it would seem, two roots נל in the language, which should be kept distinct, viz. (i) נל, found, and (ii) נל, sufficed, corresponding to the Assyrian verbs, (i) נל = to find, obtain, and (ii) נל = to be wide, broad; to be enough, be plentiful. As in other cases of this nature, (ii) נל 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 נל clearly means ‘that it suffice them, that there be enough for them’; in Judges xxi 14 נל, ‘and even so they sufficed them not’, the meaning given by the Revised Version, is therefore correct. The Niph. נל, 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 מريف, where the usual rendering ‘broke forth’ is unsatisfactory and can only be extended to mean ‘spread abroad’ by a violent exegesis. The passages are נל וירא תולעה על יקבוי עלמים (1 Chron. xiii 2), where the Revised Version avoids the difficulty by rendering ‘let us send abroad everywhere...’, and נל וירא תורר (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 מريف is ‘to command’, ‘issue an edict’, and this is exactly what the cognate root in Assyrian offers. There we find three roots corresponding to מريف: (i) נל, to tell lies, which has no equivalent in Hebrew; (ii) נל, to break through; (iii) נל, to decide, with its common derivative noun נל, command, order, law, edict, especially of a god or king. The Hebrew lexicon should therefore be corrected to read (i) מريف, broke through (= Ass. נל); (ii) מريف, issued an edict, commanded (= Ass. נל); 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. mahasu, to sprinkle, dip, and bearing that meaning, which has only survived in Ps. lxviii 24: נל נטושו ריגול בים, that thou mayest dip thy feet in blood.

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

2 Another probable instance in the Qal is in Lev. xxv 26, where נל נל 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 (ὁς προσέταξεν τὸν λόγον) renders the latter.

G. R. Driver.

[I have no doubt that Mr Driver is right in finding under Heb. נתָּן both Assyr. maṣū 'find, obtain', and maṣū 'be wide, suffice'. The latter verb may be paralleled by Aram. כָּבָאת '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. נצָח, נצָח 'reach, attain' (against Nöldeke, ZDMG. XL 736, and BDB), Heb. נטָה 'stretch out, extend', Assyr. naṭū 'be feasible, attainable', Heb. רדש, Assyr. maddû 'measure' (from idea of extension, as appears from Ar. ˜אא 'extend, stretch', Heb. סטנ extending 'garment'), probably also Heb. רדש 'extend', Aram., Ar. ibid. נט加強ened to מ gutt. as in נתה, נת), and perhaps even Heb. סטנ 'draw out, extend' (נ strengthened to מ as in Assyr. tamābu, Heb. מנת). We thus have a common Semitic biliteral MAṢ, (MAṢ), MAT, MAD, MAT, NAT, 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 Perfissive in Assyrian.

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

In the earlier article 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

¹ See the Journal vol. ix (1907-1908) pp. 584-597.
² Begins tunc abit unus de duodecim (p. 176 c), ends in conscientia et intellectu (p. 454 b).