NOTES AND STUDIES

ORIGIN OF THE HEBREW PÁRÁSH.

The origin of the Hebrew párāsh ‘horseman’ or ‘riding horse’ has been hitherto obscure. The corresponding Syriac word has been probably borrowed from Hebrew as the Ethiopic has been from the Arabic faras, and etymologists have been divided between deriving the word from the name of Persia and assigning it to an Arabic root. It is not found in Assyrian, which has only sāsu; this, we may infer from the borrowed Egyptian sēms and sēnsem (with the Babylonian mimination?), comes from an earlier samsu.

A new light has been thrown upon the question by a cuneiform text from Boghaz Keui which has just been published by the Museum of Berlin (Koilschrifturkunden aus Boghazkōi ii p. 3, ll. 16–18). Here the ideographic KUR-RA-as-tar ‘plenty of horses’ is glossed para-as-tar, -tar being a suffix which denotes ‘abundance’. Consequently paras must have been the word for ‘horse’ in Hittite. Seeing that horses were imported into Syria from Asia Minor, where Aryan nomads were employed in breeding and training them, it is more probable that the word passed from the Hittites to the Semites than from the Semites to the Hittites. It is possible that the primary source of the word may have been Indo-European, and I am inclined to connect it with the Latin curro (curso), though it is true that no satisfactory Indo-European etymology has as yet been proposed for the latter word. Moreover, Hrozný quotes a passage from an unpublished Hittite text which reads: GIS khulugannis parnass-a paiszi ‘the wagon and the parnas move’, where it is difficult not to see in parnas a derivative in -na from par ‘horse’. In this case the final -as will be the nominative termination and have nothing to do with the root.1

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THE HEBREW שִׁפְלָה.

The Hebrew šiphlāh clearly means ‘belly’ in several passages in the O.T. (2 Sam. ii 23, iii 27, xx 10). But in one passage the meaning ‘belly’ is not suitable (2 Sam. iv 6). I propose to suggest therefore that in 2 Sam. iv 6 the word has a different meaning, and that it occurs again with the same meaning in another passage which has been misunderstood (Hos. iii 2).

In 2 Sam. iv 6 we read, according to R. V., ‘and they came thither

1 On the other hand there is a word paras-nāwas, also written parsi-nāwas, which seems to signify ‘riding on horseback’; e.g. paras-nāwas amēl qa-su-ga-ba-as uizzī, ‘the wine-bearer comes on horseback’.