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V.--ASSYRIOLOGICAL NOTES.

The following discussions are directed towards the elucidation of some of the obscure or doubtful expressions of the Assyrian texts, as well as towards the establishment of their etymological relations. Those passages or word-forms which, though obscure or misinterpreted at the time of the publication of the respective texts, have been since, within the writer's knowledge, satisfactorily explained, will, of course, not be touched.

The following is the transcription of those sounds about whose representation Assyriologists are not at one: ה ל, ט, כ, נ, ס (after Schrader), צ, ק, ל, ש, ש (after Schrader). The syllable-sign which the English and French schools represent by *e*, Schrader by *i*, Haupt by *ê*, and Pognon by *é*, I shall indicate by *ê*, as Friedrich Delitzsch also represents it in his latest work.

נשר, to bind, join together. Representatives of this root are not numerous in Assyrian, but there seems to be sufficient evidence of its existence. We have first a common word for bonds, fetters: *kašritu*. Norris (I 127) reads this *biritu* (the ideogram of the first syllable representing both *kaš* and *bi*), and compares the Hebr. בְּרִיתָהּ covenant. The same form is adopted by Smith (*e. g.* Hist. of Asurbanipal 26, 1; 44, 1; 66, 2). But since ברה > בְּרִיתָהּ does not mean to bind, the reading *biritu* is without etymological support. Oppert and Menant accordingly read *kašritu*, Inscription de Khorsabad l. 112: *bi-ri-tav*, but in the commentary p. 284: *kašritav*. So also Schrader, Keilinschriften u. d. Alte Testament 172, 15 (cf. vocabulary); 184, 34; 243, 8; 260, 3. These authorities compare קשר to bind, supposing that *kašritu* is written for *kašritu*. A corresponding verb-form is apparently used in the sense of fastening together or repairing, as in another passage cited in KAT 37, 21. 22: *li-bi-it-ti ku-um-mi-ša u a-gur-ri ta-aḥ-lu-ub-ti-ša ab-ta-a-ti ê-ik-ši-ir*. This Schrader renders: "besserte ich die Backsteine seines Gebäudes und die Ziegel seiner Bedachung zu festverbundenem Mauerwerk aus," and connects (40, 37) *ê-ik-ši-ir* with Hebr. בְּיָשָׁר "to be straight, right." That this special association with בְּיָשָׁר is wrong is clear from the fact that the

latter does not mean to be straight or right either in its noun or verb forms. This meaning has been attributed to it from the notion that it was cognate with אָשַׁר and וָשַׁר. But this is impossible, if only for the reason that ך is not used as a predeterminative (see my "Aryo-Semitic Speech," 1881, p. 98 ff.; 111 f.) Its proper meaning is to be fitting or advantageous, a notion derived from that of joining together, just as Skr. *yujyate*, it is fitting, < *yuj* to join. It is akin to קָשַׁר, and hometymous with Targ. קָשֹׁר, Syr. *k'šūrō*, a beam (cf. Mühlau and Volck on נָשַׁר in Gesenius' Hebr. Handwörterbuch, 8. ed.); cf. Arab. *k-th-r* to be many. How the notion of joining together leads to that of repairing may be seen from the use of Hebr. קָשַׁר in Neh. 3, 38.

The question arises whether these forms are to be assigned to קָשַׁר or to נָשַׁר. Decisive proof cannot be gained from the words just cited, since *ik* and *ik̄* represent the same sign, and *kas* might be written for *kas*, inasmuch as the latter syllable has no special sign. Other words, however, may perhaps help to settle the question. In Asurb. 24, 3, 4; 42, 3, 4 we read *mi-lik la ku-šir im-li-ku ra-man-šu-un*, which Smith translates: "evil counsel they counselled among themselves," relying upon the supposed sense of Hebr. קָשֹׁר and the Aramaic usage of כָּשִׁי. I venture to offer the following rendering: royal authority without restraint (limit) they invested themselves with; cf. the correct rendering of 25, 3, 4; 43, 1, 2: and let there not be within our border any rival lord. Besides this *kušir*, the word *kišurru* boundary (cf. English *confine* as noun and verb) points to the same conclusion. Of the meaning of this word there seems to be little doubt. In Khors. l. 82, *e. g.* we read *u-rap-pi-ša ki-šur-ri mat su-a-tu*: I extended the boundaries of that country; cf. l. 136, and Norris II 624 f.

It would seem therefore that the Assyrian root is נָשַׁר and not קָשַׁר. Moreover, there is no antecedent reason for assuming the existence of the latter, since קָשַׁר in the sense of joining or binding is only Hebrew, while נָשַׁר is, in the same sense, Proto-Semitic.

כָּרָה—The origin of the frequently occurring form *biritu* is obscure. The word itself is used in various senses, but it is not difficult to perceive that they are all derived from the general notion of a border, which is its prevailing usage when employed strictly as a noun, *e. g.* in an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I (V 68, see Schrader, Keilinschriften u. Geschichtsforschung, p. 266) *bir-ti mat É-la-mu-ni . . . lu aš-bat*: I took (my course along) the border

of the country Êlamuni;¹ cf. III 41, and Norris I 126 f. where some of the passages cited are misconceived. With a preposition preceding we have the phrase *ina birit*: within the borders or limits of. So in the great inscription of Ašurnāširpal (I 60; cf. Schrader, KGF, p. 145, and Menant, Manuel de la langue assyrienne, 1880, p. 341, 1); cities of the land of Kirhi *ša ina bi-rit*, which are within the limits (of the mountains Usu, etc.). Hence *ina birit* came to mean simply within, in the midst of, and also towards, *i. e.* to the midst of (cf. the usage of *kirib*) as in the passage cited by Schrader, KGF 215, 70; cf. 217 note, where an instance is adduced from Ašurn. II, 66 of *i-na bir-ti* being used as a variant of *ana bi-rit*. It is also even used to mean through (KGF, 215, 79. 80). Its prepositional use (without a preceding preposition) naturally comes next. So it means beside, *i. e.* along the border of (*e. g.* Asurb. 220, 4); near (*e. g.* Asurb. 130, 6); within, in the midst of or among (*e. g.* Asurb. 267, 7;² 294, 2).

The proper sense of the word is therefore border. As to the root, Schrader (KGF 217 note) conjectures that it is עבר "so that *birtu* = עבר(ע) = transitus, Grenze, Gebiet (fines)." But it is questionable if Proto-Semitic ע as first radical ever dropped its vowel in Assyrian in noun-formation, and we naturally look for a פ root. A masculine form of the noun, if it exists, would throw light on this question, and I would suggest that such a form is perhaps to be found in Asurb. 25, 1. 4; 42. 9; 43. 2. The whole passage is: *su-lum-mu-u ina bi-ri-in-ni lūš-ša-ke-in ma ni-in-id (v. dag)-gara a-ḥa-mis mat a-ḥê-ên-na-a ni-zu-uz ma ai ib-ba-ši ina bi-ri-in-ni ša-nu-um-ma bê-lum*. This I render: may an alliance within our border be established and we will help (?) one another; the country on this side³ [of our border] we will strengthen, and let there not be within our border any rival lord. Smith translates *ina bi-ri-in-ni* in the first instance: "by this treaty," and in the second: "in this treaty." If the fitness of the proposed translation is admitted,

¹ Schrader seems scarcely right in translating (p. 267) *ašbat*: "nahm ich ein." That word is often used of taking one's way over, without the word for way being expressed, as Schrader himself elsewhere observes.

² In this interesting and linguistically instructive passage Lenormant (*Études sur quelques parties des syllabaires cunéiformes*, p. 130) reads our word *kašru*. But this is due to a mistake of Smith in transcription, the signs for *ru* and *rit* being nearly alike. In the parallel passage cited above, the correct reading is given by Smith.

³ Cf. Schrader, *Assyrisch-Babylonische Keilinschriften* p. 370, on the form ארר.

it is plain that we have a form yielding the oblique case *biri*, and accented on the second syllable, as the repeated *n* before the suffix shows. This points to a ברה root. Such a one seems to be indicated in the following passage, Sarg. 21: in the midst of the sea the Ionians *i-ba-ru-u*¹ he drove out. In II R 48, rev. 35 *ba-a-ru* is given as a synonym of *haluba* to glide away. ברה is thus one of the many forms used to indicate motion, springing from the root בר of which Hebr. and Arab. ברה are among the nearest representatives. The border is thus named as the place of going forth or out, and it finds an illustration in the Hebrew פֶּתַח; Assy. *patu* > *padu*, (*e. g.* Hist. of Esarhaddon ed. Budge, 70, 33; 118, 16) a border; *patu* an entrance (Del., Assy. Lesestücke, 2. ed. p. 19, nr. 174). In the same way *nirib* < עִרְבַּי, properly an entrance, is used in a sense similar to that of our word, as in Asurb. 258, 10; Asurn. I, 59. Thus both the place of going in and the place of going out gave rise to a word for border, with its associated ideas.

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¹ See Friedrich Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 248, where the whole passage is explained in connection with the relations between the Assyrians and Ionians; cf. KGF 238 and the footnote. For other examples of this root see KAT 64, 20; 219, 22.