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### JASTROW'S TALMUDIC DICTIONARY.\*

BY DR. K. KOHLER,

New York City.

Max Mueller's familiar saying: "He who knows only one language knows none," holds good of no dialect as much as of the Aramæan. For no language, not even the English and Turkish, contains as large a store of foreign words, and many of these disguised and disfigured almost beyond recognition, as does the language spoken by the Jews in Palestine and Babylonia under the Roman and Parthian rule and used in Jewish literature down to the thirteenth century. The meaning of many of these foreign words having been frequently forgotten, we need not wonder at finding a large number of them in an utterly corrupt form which renders it quite difficult to the finest linguist to decipher them. Add to this the total lack of critical editions of either the Talmuds or the Midrashic literature.—In regard to the Targumim, Prof. De Lagarde and A. Berliner made at least a fair beginning.—Thus few realize some of the difficulties the writer of an Aramaic dictionary has to cope with. Aside, however, from these external disadvantages, the one great task of the lexicographer, which consists in the tracing of each word to its root and explaining its various uses in the different formations and ramifications, is much aggravated here where we have to deal with a language which is neither the natural growth of a national speech nor presented in the manner in which it was spoken by the people, but is the dialect of a school ever busy to coin its own terms and create its own laws of etymology. Quite frequently we find biblical expressions pressed into new meanings and molded into

\* A DICTIONARY OF THE TARGUMIM, THE TALMUD BIBLE, AND THE MIDRASH LITERATURE. Compiled by Morris Jastrow, Sr., Ph. D. Part I. and II. London: *Trubner & Co.* New York: *Pulnam & Sons.* 1886 and 1887.

## SEMITIC STUDIES IN AMERICA.

ADDRESSES MADE AT A RECEPTION TENDERED BY DR. WILLIAM PEPPER,  
PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO THE MEMBERS  
OF THE AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY, OCTOBER 31, 1888.

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### THE PRESENT STATUS OF SEMITIC STUDIES IN THIS COUNTRY.<sup>1</sup>

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The addresses here published were delivered at a reception tendered by Dr. William Pepper, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, to the members of the American Oriental Association during the recent fall session of the society. It being the first time that the Oriental Association was to convene in Philadelphia, the local committee of arrangements deemed the occasion which marked the formal recognition of the efforts made of recent years by the University of Pennsylvania to further Oriental and more particularly Semitic studies and research, a fit one for the discussion of such a topic as "The place of Semitic Languages in the University and the Theological Seminary." In response to the invitation extended to them, Dr. W. Hayes Ward, the vice-president of the association, Profs. Harper, of Yale University, and Brown, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, consented to speak on the subject. After these gentlemen had been heard, Dr. Pepper called upon a number of the many distinguished scholars present for further remarks, and in each case the response was as hearty as it was appropriate. The propriety, and we may add the importance, of giving the addresses made on this significant occasion a more permanent form by publication in such a medium as "HEBRAICA" will be universally recognized, and we have no doubt welcomed by all those having the advancement of higher studies in this country at heart. Apart from their intrinsic value, the most significant feature of these addresses is the tone of hopefulness which pervades them. The outlook for the future of Semitic studies is indeed promising. And it may not be considered inappropriate if, by way of an introduction to this publication, I attempt a rapid survey of the present status of the study in this country.

Semitic research is of recent growth in the United States. Ten years ago but little attention was paid to Semitic philology and Semitic literatures, with the single exception of Hebrew.<sup>2</sup> While the other great branch of Oriental philology, Sanskrit, had already secured for itself, in consequence of its close bearings on classical philology, that conspicuous place in the university curriculum which it merits, the provisions, even at our best institutions of learning, for Semitics were painfully inadequate. There were a few private scholars devoting themselves to the study, here and there was a chair for Semitic languages, generally filled by men whose specialty lay in an entirely different direction, perhaps one or two colleges which could boast of a small Semitic library; but that was all. Since this time a

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<sup>1</sup> By Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph. D., University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> For an interesting and valuable sketch of Hebrew studies in this country, see Prof. G. F. Moore's article in *Stade's Zeitschrift fuer alttest. Wis.*, 1888, I., pp. 1-42.

### SEMITIC STUDY IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.<sup>1</sup>

It is a matter of congratulation for students of theology that their professional studies connect themselves at so many points with the wide interests of general scholarship. All the clergymen present will bear me out in saying that professional life tends to movement in a somewhat narrow groove. This is not peculiar to the ministerial profession; it is the common danger of all specialists,—but we, every now and then, become particularly aware of it in our own case. Occasions like the present are therefore of great interest to us, because they set us at the point where our wheel of theological study gears into the intricate system of mental activities that constitutes what we, in the broadest sense, term scholarship. There is no clerical way of learning a language. There is no theological philology.

And, certainly, whoever may suppose himself at liberty to slight Semitic studies, the student of divinity is not free to do so. By far the greater part of the records which he esteems sacred, which are the chief postulate of his life-work and the most important source of the truths he is to expound, have come down to him in a Semitic dress. The obligation of scholarship rests upon him in an especial sense, to see to it that his acquaintance with this Oriental garb of the revelation he has to deal with makes the nearest possible approach to mastery. If he willfully neglects to make this effort, he is not simply foolish, he is recreant.

But mastery in this special field is not possible without a wider reach. The man who knows well Hebrew and the biblical Aramaic, knows, and must know, a great deal more. The Hebrew Grammar of the future, the Hebrew Lexicon of the future, will be produced by men whose range of familiar study embraces the cognate languages. They will probably be theologians, as those whose attainments in these lines we now respect, and whose works we now use, have been; to do their work as it should be done they must have some claim also to the title of Semitic philologist.

But there are other aspects of Semitic study which make it of special concern to the theological scholar. A very large proportion of those problems and tasks which lie in the pathway of Semitic philology are of such a nature that their solution and discharge are of the utmost importance to theological learning. Think a moment. Besides the questions of grammar and lexicography to which allusion has just been made, we have the Textual Criticism of the Old Testament, with its demand for the thorough study of the versions,—Syriac, Ethiopic, even Arabic,—not to forget the Targums; we have the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, with the same demand under somewhat different conditions; we have the question as to the origin of the Semitic family,—largely dependent on the phenomena of language; we have the involved and fascinating inquiries into the relation between the religious conceptions of the Hebrews and those of their brethren in the family, especially the Phenicians and the Babylonio-Assyrians,—inquiries which can be answered only by the aid of the literary monuments; we have the interweaving of the Hebrew history with that of the great empires of Western Asia; we have the rise of Jewish learning, pre-Christian and later; we have the early history of the Christian church, and the Syriac literature bearing upon

<sup>1</sup> By Francis Brown, Ph. D., D. D., Professor in Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

country. My own alma mater,—to mention but one modest institution,—Dartmouth College, had, three generations ago, a “Professor of Learned Languages” named John Smith, who near the beginning of this century (in 1803) felt the need of a Hebrew Grammar which he wrote and found himself able to issue. It was dedicated “To the Learned and Pious of All Descriptions, particularly the Clergy; in the United States of America.” There was a demand for such books among students. Such instances as this remind us, of course, that once a much larger proportion of our college-bred men entered the ministry than now, and that the theological seminary of the present was once not thought of. But they suggest to us, also, the possibilities of the present time, and the hope that on a larger scale, with richer equipment, and purposes both deeper and broader, our institutions of learning will, in the days that are just upon us, establish and generously foster the study of the philology, archæology, history and literature of the great Semitic race.

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#### BRIEF ADDRESSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE SAME TOPICS.<sup>1</sup>

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There is much that is encouraging in the present condition of Semitic studies in this country. Semitic science has had the same obstacles to overcome as other sciences—the lack of conveniently arranged and large collections of materials, and the absence of long established traditions of study; these are necessary shortcomings of our youth. But we are making steady and reasonably rapid progress in these respects. We are adding to our materials in printed books, manuscripts and inscriptions, and to our teaching and working force. In addition to the widespread interest in the biblical side of Semitic work, there is a constantly increasing scientific interest. The enormous extent of the field, and the importance of all its sections, textual, grammatical, historical, archæological and theological, are recognized. We have had in the past and now have a fine array of excellent scholars, and the progress of study is constantly raising our standard of scholarship. We have come to see that the best results for our science will be gained by the example of thoroughly trained men. We have the advantage of a large general public and we are devoting ourselves to the production of specialists, from whom must come the real knowledge and enthusiasm of the community. The orderly shaping of science, the discovery of truth, the proper estimation and interpretation of facts, all those things that enter into the formation of genuine interest must be the work of men who devote their lives to special studies, and acquire the knowledge and intelligence which are necessary for correct judgments. Every department of Semitic study stands in need of specialists; there are Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac and Assyrian texts to be edited and explained, large sections of history to be cleared up, studies in art to be carried on, grammatical forms and constructions to be analyzed. There is need of cordial co-operation between Semitic and Indo-European students—not that the two families of languages are to be brought violently together, but that each group of scholars may learn from the methods of the other. The mass of work to be done is great, and we have in America the possibility of a mass of workers who may do great things.

C. H. TOY.

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<sup>1</sup> By Professors Toy, Haupt, Green, and Lyon.

Professor Haupt said that when he first came to this country some years since he had been deeply impressed with the great interest taken in Semitic studies, and to his genuine satisfaction this bent for Oriental philology and archæology had been increasing, thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of several of our most prominent scholars. We could hardly complain any longer that these studies did not meet with an adequate recognition. New chairs of Semitic philology had been established at quite a number of colleges and universities, and collections of Oriental antiquities had been started in various centres of learning. What we needed was a little more co-operation and centralization. Our representatives of Semitic studies should try above all to get a series of Semitic dictionaries adapted for the use of beginners and written in the English language. Nothing was more sorely needed at present than a good Hebrew-English lexicon, and it was most gratifying to know that this want would soon be met by two of our biblical philologists eminently qualified for such a work. In philology as well as archæology we should try gradually to emancipate ourselves from Europe. There was no longer need for supporting European enterprise in biblical archæology with American money. We could have a national society of biblical archæology just as strong as the London association of that name; and if all efforts in this direction could be properly united we might hope to have some day in this country a collection of biblical antiquities similar to those of the great national museums in European capitals. The interest had here in these investigations was certainly as widespread as in the old country, and a considerable number of students in Oriental philology and archæology frequenting European universities and museums consisted of Americans.

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I have listened with great interest to the able papers which we have heard to-night and to the remarks of the various speakers who have followed. I can readily understand the enthusiasm awakened by the pursuit of Semitic studies; and particularly by that branch of Semitic study which is of such recent origin and yet has sprung into such sudden and extraordinary prominence. I mean the language and literature of Assyria and Babylonia. The most brilliant literary feat on record is the deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions and thus opening up to investigation rich treasures which had been buried for long ages, whose contents were altogether unknown and their very existence unsuspected. Written in strange characters which might be alphabetic, syllabic or idiographic, no one knew in what language, their purport and even the age to which they belonged a matter of doubtful conjecture, they have yielded to the patient skill and learning directed upon them, and have brought to light the history, the religion, the life and manners, the whole realm of thought of great empires whose existence was known, but in regard to almost everything that concerned them there was absolute ignorance. Through these researches, in which American scholars are taking an active and creditable part, we are now brought into familiar contact with the details of a long forgotten civilization and coming to know more of the ancient world than the ancients did themselves.

From the narrow and quiet corner in which my own limited range of study is pursued, I look out with admiration upon these broad and open fields which are cultivated with such zeal and success and bid the laborers God-speed! I recog-

nize with ever increasing gratification the numerous and important points of contact between the Old Testament and the various lines of inquiry, historical, philological, philosophical and religious in which such noble work is doing at the present time. Much welcome light has already come from this quarter in the way of illustration and of the confirmation or the correction of pre-existing opinions, tending to resolve obscure and difficult questions, and enabling us with greater accuracy and certainty to adjust the relations of the life and thought and recorded beliefs of the Hebrew people to those of surrounding nations in a remote antiquity. Much more light may doubtless be expected from explorations and investigations now in progress. We are all seekers after truth; and truth which is ascertained in one sphere is valid in every other, and must harmonize with and prove helpful to true science and sound learning in every department affected by it.

I wish to add a single word in order to emphasize a suggestion made in the admirable paper of Dr. Brown. The introduction of Hebrew and the cognate tongues as elective and graduate studies into colleges and universities is of great consequence to theological seminaries. If students continue to enter the divinity school with no previous knowledge of any Semitic tongue, and their entire first year must be given up to acquiring the rudiments of Hebrew and some tolerable facility in translating it, what is it possible to do for higher learning in this department in the limited time at our command? What could be done in New Testament studies if students entered as ignorant of Greek as they now are of Hebrew? But if our classes could begin with such a knowledge of Hebrew as the graduates of our colleges already possess of Greek,—if they could enter the seminary as far advanced as they now are at the end of the first year, there would be a foundation upon which to build; there would be some hope of their making high attainments in the interpretation and criticism of the Old Testament, and in associated branches of Semitic learning.

W. H. GREEN.

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Professor Lyon, of Harvard, spoke substantially as follows: "Gentlemen of the American Oriental Society, it seems to me particularly appropriate that our first meeting in this city should come just at this time. The University of Pennsylvania, one of the most recent of our schools to manifest special interest in Semitic studies, is now rapidly becoming an example to all others in this line of work. I refer particularly to the interest which they are displaying in the matter of Babylonian research. We have heard already this evening of the valuable Babylonian and Assyrian objects which Professor Peters, now on his way to Chaldaea, has purchased for the university. The university is to be congratulated on having among its instructors a man who is willing to devote his time to the great subject of enlarging our knowledge by work done amid the ancient ruins. No friend of learning can do otherwise than rejoice at his success in securing the means for paying the expenses of the expedition, and we all hope for larger results than have yet been dreamed of. The very important period of the time of the Jewish exile in Babylon is as yet represented by few historical literary remains. While the records of the private and social life at Babylon during this time are sufficiently numerous for us to form a good idea of the influences to which the exiles were subject, we have as yet no native account of the deportation and return to Judea. The annals of Nebuchadnezzar must contain the one and