

that the Hebrew script is supplanted by the Aramaic on official Jewish government seals about 400 B. C. makes one wonder whether the Jewish tradition that Ezra introduced the "Assyrian," i. e., the Aramaic, script does not have a nucleus of truth after all. Our attitude toward tradition, while no less critical than it used to be, is becoming less sceptical.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

NOTE ON HEBREW HOFŠĪ

In this *Journal*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 169—70, Albright has pointed out that the ideogram *ZAG* in the Amarna letters (ed. Knudtzon) 147, 12. 54. 64; 149, 81 is to be read *emûqu* "force, power" and not *idu* "hand." In the first passage quoted (147, 12) the ideogram is supplied with a gloss, *habši*. This word is connected with the Hebrew *hofši* by Albright. He thinks that the writer, Abi-milki, wished to say *hofši*, but, unable to find a good equivalent of this word in Accadian, availed himself of a circumlocution. The expression *ina dan(n)i emûqi* "in the might of power" would then be intended to mean "free (of oppression)," i. e., *hofši*, which in order to avoid misinterpretation, was added as a gloss. This correspondence between *habši* and *hofši* has been denied by V. Christian, who, on the other hand acknowledges the reading of *ZAG* suggested by Albright; v. OLZ 28 (1925), 419 sq.

It cannot be denied that the most obvious conception of the gloss *habši* is that it has the same meaning as *emûqu*, i. e., power. From a linguistic point of view it may be noticed that *habš(i)* (*hapš*) is not the exact equivalent of *hofši*. We would not expect an *a*, but an *u*, i. e., *hupš*.

But this word is also well known in the Amarna letters. The *amêlūt habši*, "the people of the *habšu*," are mentioned 11 times (81, 33 is however uncertain) in the letters of Rib-addi. He says that they have surrendered their children and the wood of their houses in order to get corn for food (85, 12, cf. 114, 55 sq.), they try to get away and so let him alone (114, 21 sq.; in the same manner he will let them alone, 81, 33 sqq.). The lack of food drives them to the cities where corn is to be found, in order to plunder them

(125, 25 sqq.); need makes them dangerous (130, 41 sqq.) They even appear as his enemies. "Against whom am I to guard? against my foes or against my *hubšu*?" (112, 10 sqq.). They abandon him and are going over to the sons of Abdi-aširta and to Sidon and Beruta, and so the Gaz-people come forward (118, 21 sqq.). He is very afraid of them (117, 90), they may even kill him (77, 36 sq.).

This is all we know about the *hubšu*. As our knowledge of the social conditions of ancient Canaan is very limited we must be grateful for these hints. They show that the *hubšu* represent the principal part of the subjects of Rib-addi; they are possessors of houses and live, at any rate partially, outside the main city.

H. Winckler translated in his edition (*Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* V, 1896) the word *hubšu* by "Untertanen" (once: "Einwohner"); in the glossary he has "Bauer," and so also Knudtzon in his translation. Dhorme looks at the *hubšu* as "intermédiaire entre le nomade et l'habitant de la ville . . . , comme encore de nos jours, le fellah de la campagne" (*Rev. Bibl. nouv. sér.* 6, 1909, p. 73). Dhorme emphasizes their propensity to rebellion; cf. also the commentary of Weber in Knudtzon's edition, p. 1165. We must, however, remember that the discontent of the *hubšu* of Rib-addi is well accounted for. So we have no sufficient ground to designate them as an unsteady element of the population. The importance assigned to them in the letters of Rib-addi makes it probable that they are the peasants, or more precisely the landed proprietors, i. e., the freemen who own the fields and the farms, and whose families therefore constitute the fundamental stock of the population. If this is right, they remind us of the *gibbôrê hayil* in Israel.¹ Thus *habš(u)*, "power," would materially

¹ As the social classes are different in the various countries, the use of the word *hubšu* in Assyria cannot as a matter of course be identified with that prevailing in Canaan. The word is to be found in the Assyrian law-code § 45 (KAVI, VI 55), in Salmanassar II, Balawat-Inscription V 3, and in some inscriptions of Sargon ("Prunkinschrift" l. 33; Thureau-Dangin, *Huitième campagne de Sargon*, p. 7, l. 26; p. 40, l. 258 *šab hubši*; Winckler, *Altorientalische Forschungen* I, p. 404, l. 31 ff.). Delitzsch takes it (*Beitr. z. Ass.* V. 1, 141 on Salm. Bal.) as "Rebell;" Amiaud & Scheil (*Les inscriptions de Salmanassar II*, 1890, p. 48 f., 102) "ramassis de gens de toute sorte," cf. *خيش* (?) or *خيش*, or "hommes de proie," cf. *خيس*. But the law-code shows, although the passage is corrupt, that the *hubšu* must be a social class. Winckler renders it *l. c.* with "Bauer;" Meissner (*Babylonien und Assyrien* I, p. 374 f.) identifies it with the *muškenu* of the Cod.

correspond to Heb. *hayil*, and *hubš(u)*, "owners of power," to Heb. *gibbôrê hayil*.

The word *hubš(u)* is the designation of a species without reference to the number (the nouns commonly called collectives). The single representative of the species must be designated by *-î*, and so we get the Hebrew word *hubšî* > *hofšî*.

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, *hofšî* means a freeman. It is generally used in opposition to slave, cf. Ex. 21 2, 5, 26^z 27; Deut. 15 12, 13, 18 etc., as also of a released slave, v. Gesenius-Buhl, s. v. This may mean a slight degradation of the word, if *hubšu* meant not simply the free, but as suggested above, the landed proprietors. On the other hand we find it with another nuance 1 Sam. 17 25: "The king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his family *hofšî* in Israel." Here the word designates an aristocrat, raised by the king above the people and certainly also above the common *gibbôrê hayil*. We are not able to point out the history and real meaning of such nuances, but it is obvious that the Hebrew word is to be closely connected with the old *hubšu*.

The two words *hapš(u)* and *hubš(u)* would in Hebrew be *hefeš* and *hofeš*. The first one is not to be found; the latter appears Ez. 27 20 in the connection *הַפֶּשֶׁת הַיְהוּדָה*; if the translation of LXX, *ἐκλεκτῶν*, meaning "precious," is right and no mere guessing, it would be on the old line. The relation of *hapš* "power" to *hubš* "owner of power" cannot be said to represent the common relation of *katb* to *kuṭb*. The opposite is more common, e. g. *na'ar*—*no'ar*; *ešem*—*ošem*, cf. Mayer Lambert in *Rev. d. Études Juives* 33, 1896, p. 23; but in this respect it is not possible to state any common rule.

Ham; J. Lewy (*Zeitschr. f. Ass.* 36 [N. F. 2] 1925, p. 148, note 3) translates it "Gefolgsmann, Lehensträger, Söldner" because of the correspondence between § 45 of the Assyrian Code and Cod. Ham. §§ 28 f., 38 f.—The passages quoted do not admit a distinct definition of the *hubšu* of Assyria, but it appears with certainty that they are soldiers, and the complaint of Sargon, that *corvée* had been laid on the city of Ashur and that its inhabitants had been treated as *hubšu* (Winckler *l. c.*) shows that they are not freemen in this period of the history of Assyria. If the connection with *habšu* suggested above is correct, the term has suffered deterioration among the Assyrians.

JOHANNES PEDERSEN
Copenhagen