ON EGYPTIAN IDEAS AND NAMES IN CANAAN AND THE BIBLE

BY

H. TORCZYNER.

I

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME PAPYRUS.

The name *papyrus* for the plant and the writing material, which, from Egypt, conquered the world of the ancient Orient until the word remained in such developments as paper, papier, Papier etc. even after the writing material was changed by the new invention, is not found in Egyptian proper. And though it occurs in the Coptic language, it must be regarded as a loan-word from the Greek Πάπυρος and not as the equivalent of a traditional Egyptian word. Thus also the Egyptian etymology profferred by J. H. Bondi, *Zeitschrift f. Ägypt. Sprache* XXXIII, 62-68, as if it were *pa-pe-yeor*, must be considered as mere conjecture, without foundation in actual fact[1]. Nor is such an etymology as the (thing) of the Nile at all likely; a natural name for papyrus could only be : *reed* of the Nile, or *reed* alone. Now, however, *yeor* as the name of the Nile, or of a great river in general, is not confined to Egyptian alone. By this name, yeor (יאור), this and perhaps other rivers are called also in Hebrew,

[1] Even worse than this explanation are other attempted etymologies. Cf. lastly H. G. Christiansen, *Zur Etymologie des Wortes Papier, Or. Littztg.*, 1938, p. 204-205.