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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

Brief von Camden M. Cobern an Adolf Erman

Cobern, Camden M.

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General Conference Committee
Preparation of New Hymnal

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PITTSBURG, PA., Denver, Col. 6-26-1901.

Professor Adolph Erman,

Royal Museum,

Berlin, Germany.

Dear Doctor:--

I thank you very much for your kind letter of May 27th. It is very evident that you really did read the "Introduction" with some attention. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for the few errors of detail which you point out. I shall be glad to change them in my second edition.

I think, however, that in one or two cases you did not fully catch the argument which I was developing or you would not have pressed your criticism. You refer particularly to page 21 emphasizing the proposition that Neshor has nothing to do with Nebuchadnezzar. But you will notice that I did not defend the proposition that the Neshor text did refer to Nebuchadnezzar's invasion or have any reference to it. I did mention the views of those who held that opinion but closed the discussion with the remark that even if the Neshor text had no connection whatever with Nebuchadnezzar, yet the statement of Nebuchadnezzar himself, concerning his invasion of Egypt, remained to vindicate Ezekiel from the excessive inaccuracy charged by Dr. Kuenen.

I wish I could understand the meaning of your criticism of my quotation from Brugsch, page 39. I cannot understand Brugsch at all unless the dimensions of the Temple had an original ^{religious} significance, or unless a later priest explained the dimensions ~~to~~ ^{as} having a religious significance, and in either case the quotation would be appropriate in a discussion of the symbolism of number. Can it be possible that the Egyptians, alone, of all ancient nations with which we are acquainted, did not have certain numbers which were of symbolical importance? I cannot think you mean to say that. I understand, of course, that the text quoted by Brugsch was a play on words, but if numbers had not been used symbolically it would hardly have been natural to make such a ^{word} play, ~~as he narrates~~. Please understand I do not want to defend Brugsch, but only to say that taking it for granted as I did that he was right in the reading of the texts given, my use of the text was not improper. *I understand however that you say that the signs used in writing those numbers had no numerical value, so I was wrong in that statement.*

1871

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PITTSBURG, PA.,

A. E. --2.

As to the Turin papyrus, mentioned page 39, I did not ~~mean~~ to say that certain numbers were always sacred to certain Egyptian Deities, but only that in that particular case those deities were represented by the numbers named. I never saw the original papyrus but in the facsimile at London the numbers are given ^{almost} as prominent position on the papyrus, ~~almost~~, as the deities themselves, so that after examining the papyrus I had no doubt in my own mind that the writer of it saw a marked significance in the digits with which he represented each god. Those numbers represented, probably, the importance of the deities relatively to each other, and another scribe, writing in another section and in another era, would no doubt have placed a different list of deities under the same numbers, but I supposed there was no doubt that the Egyptian gods, like the Babylonian, were represented by numbers, although different numbers would be used to represent the same god at different times. This is a very interesting question to me and I have an enormous mass of material on the subject and only wish that I could have an opportunity of talking it over with you with the opportunity of asking questions, making explanations, and so on.

You were correct in your inference as to where I found Nabi in the Egyptian text. I used that word in preference to the ordinary one because of the Hebrew word corresponding to it. It was not essential to the argument but was suggestive of the real correspondence between the functions of this religious teacher in various religions.

Notwithstanding the minor blemishes which you point out I am sure that you must appreciate the importance of the attempt which I have made to bring archaeological data to bear upon Biblical interpretation, as also my attempt to bring before the American public the different critical views on difficult subjects and to fairly state both sides of a question. Even the critics from whom I have differed most widely, such as Cornill, have written to me congratulating me on my fairness. Hommel, Sayce, etc., have also written speaking a good word for the Commentary from an archaeological standpoint. I will send you the whole book and hope that you also can say at least one good word for it. Very sincerely, *Camden M. Cobern*

GUTT

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