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TRACES OF THE VERNACULAR TONGUE IN THE GOSPELS.

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III.*

In the language of the Mishna the baker is called נַחְתָּם; in Targumic and Syriac with the postpositive article, נַחְתוּמָא, נַחְתוּמָא. Prof. J. Levy in both his Dictionaries derives this word from the Aramaic verb נַחַת *to descend*, Aphel אַחַת, *to bring down*, which in one passage of the Pesikta occurs of the baker who brings down the bread baked from the oven.

But this derivation is very unlikely. This Aphel אַחַת can be said of every one bringing down something; it denotes nothing in any way characteristic of the baker. And indeed it is possible that נַחְתוּם is formed from נַחַת with postfixed *om* like פְּרִים *Zeugon*; but with the same right the final letter can be considered as a radical. The form can be the same as נִפְתוּלִי *struggles*, Gen. XXX., 8, and נַחְשׁוּל *tempest*, a frequent word in the literature of the Talmudic age.

The name of the baker נַחְתוּם was so common in Palestine that in the Palestinian Talmud *Baba bathra* II., 3 a noun נַחְתוּמָר is formed, which signifies a baker's shop. The termination might seem to be Persian, but I am persuaded that it is Roman as *armamentarium*, *columbarium*, and such like. Just as instead of *columbarium* also a shorter form *columbar* was in use, *nachthomar* instead of *nachthomarium* (a mixed word, half Hebrew, half Latin) the work-shop or sale-shop of a baker.

Now I direct the attention of the reader to a remarkable passage of St. John's Gospel, VI., 27: Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son

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of man shall give unto you; *for him hath God the Father sealed* (τοῦτον γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐσφράγισεν ὁ θεός). The use of σφραγίζω III., 33 does not surprise us; it signifies there, *to confirm*, but the train of thought which has led the Lord to employ here the verb σφραγίζω is difficult to understand.

One of my Jewish friends who studies very earnestly our New Testament, Mr. Moses Reichersohn at Wilna, known as the author of two grammatical works, suggested to me in reference to this difficulty an idea which I think ought not to be suppressed. My Hebrew translation has כִּי בּוֹ חֶתֶם חוֹתְמוֹ אָבִיו הָאֱלֹהִים. Hereto Mr. Reichersohn in one of his letters remarks: מזה נראה כי הנחתם בחותם האב הוא הבן אך צריך עיון כי יתכן אשר אולי בנגוף הספר הראשון היה החותם מוסב על הלחם וכן נקרא האופה בלשון התלמוד בשם נחתם ונ"ל מזה נראה כי הנחתם בחותם האב הוא הבן אך צריך עיון כי יתכן אשר אולי בנגוף הספר הראשון היה החותם מוסב על הלחם וכן נקרא האופה בלשון התלמוד בשם נחתם ונ"ל that is, "thence it seems that the sealed by the seal of the Father is the Son, but it ought to be queried whether perhaps in the original text the seal referred to the meat (bread), for in the Talmudic language the baker bears the name נחתם, and it seems to me (ונראה לי = ונ"ל) that he is named thus because he impresses his seal on the bread." Besides he calls to mind that the consecrated wafers in the Lord's supper are wont to be marked with certain signs as INRI (the inscription over the cross).

The supposition that the pronoun *him* (αὐτόν) originally did not relate to the speaker, but to the meat (מאכל), is quite unnecessary. The Lord compares himself to a heavenly meat and as such he is, as he says, sealed by the Father. Really it is conceivable that he, saying so, has in mind the custom of bakers which is expressed by their name, or of which their name is certainly a reminder.

THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF AMOS.

BY TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D.,

New York City.

As long ago as the days of Jerome this prophet was spoken of as *imperitum sermone, sed non scientia*. An echo of this thoughtless utterance is found in a recent clever American volume,* the author of which regards Amos as one "who had not received the slightest education." The assertion in either case is due to a complete misconception of the purport of the prophet's account of himself (vii. 14). Amaziah the priest, offended at the severe utterances of Amos against Israel, bade him return to Judah and there in safety earn his

* The Outermost Rim and Beyond, by Ch. Van Norden.