

## Gen. vi. 14, Gopher Wood.

עשה לך תבת עצי־גפר. Kautzsch, „Baue dir einen Kasten aus Pinienholz“. Gesenius „arbores piceas, resinosas, quales sunt pinus, abietes, cupressi, cedri“. I do not think these renderings can be maintained. Certainly גפר has no connection with כפר, though like that word it was presumably derived from a Hebraized Babylonian narrative upon which J<sup>2</sup> (from whom P borrows) was dependent. Halévy compared Bab.-Ass. gipāru, but it is generally held that gipāru means „reed, canebrake“ (cf. Jensen, Kosmologie, 170 f., 325 f., 427). עצי־גפר should mean the timber of some tree commonly used in ship-building at the time when J<sup>2</sup>'s Hebraized Babylonian authority was put into shape — most probably, some variety of cedar. But J<sup>2</sup>'s informant very likely misunderstood the cuneiform phrase. I conjecture that this phrase ran, gušur (or gušūrē) erini, i. e. „beams of cedar“ (see the Assyrian Lexicons). Overlooking (iṣ) erini, the Hebrew translator took gušur to be the name of a tree, and produced the phrase עצי־גפר. Next, under the influence of כפר (v. 14b), גפר was miswritten גפר, פ and ש being confounded, as in יחלש for יחלף, Job xiv. 10, MT. If this be correct, the timber of the ark would be cedar-wood (ארִן, erinu). Nor is it perhaps quite impossible that the substitution of a תִּבְיָה „box“,

for an elippu, „ship“, may have arisen from a confusion between erinu „cedar“ and erinnu „box“ (ארון) in the phrase gušur (gušūrē) erini. This is not the only case in which Assyriology has been helpful in solving hard problems. Belial (בליעל) and Hadad-rimmon (חדד־רמון) may, I believe, be explained satisfactorily by its help.

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