

HEBRAICA

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL IN THE INTERESTS OF HEBREW STUDY

MANAGING EDITOR :

WILLIAM R. HARPER, PH. D.,
PROFESSOR OF SEMITIC LANGUAGES IN YALE COLLEGE; PRINCIPAL OF SCHOOLS
OF THE INSTITUTE OF HEBREW.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS :

PAUL HAUPT, PH. D.,
PROFESSOR OF THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES IN JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE.

HERMANN L. STRACK, PH.D., D.D.,
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

The editors are not responsible for the views expressed by contributors.

VOLUME II.

OCTOBER, 1885—JULY, 1886.

\$2.00 A YEAR (Four Numbers). 65 CENTS A SINGLE NUMBER.
(In Foreign Countries, except Canada, \$2.25 a year.)

All subscriptions are continued until notice to discontinue is received.

CHICAGO :

The American Publication Society of Hebrew,

P. O. Address, MORGAN PARK, ILL.

B. Westermann & Co., New York; H. B. Garner, 710 Arch St., Phila.; J. B. Hill, San Francisco;
Theodore Stauffer, Leipzig; Elliott Stock, 62 Paternoster Row, London.

12810
119
21012

✦ ΕΒΡΑΙΩΤΑ ✦

VOLUME II.

OCTOBER, 1885.

NUMBER I.

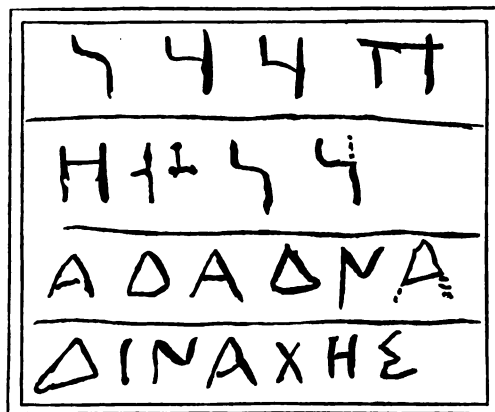
A SOUTH-BABYLONIAN ARAMAIC-GREEK BILINGUAL.

BY PROFESSOR DR. EBERHARD SCHRADER,

Berlin, Germany.

On page 256 of his work—*Les vrais Arabes et leur pays (Bagdad et les villes ignorées de l'Euphrate)*, Paris: 1884—Monsieur Denis de Rivoyre gives, in connection with a non-Semitic (line 5: m u - n a - r ū indicates without doubt its character) cuneiform inscription engraved in the old Babylonian characters, but very indistinct, also an inscription in Aramaic and Greek characters, to which I beg leave to invite attention.

This inscription, consisting of four lines, was found by him in one of the temple-walls of Tello, the site of Old-Babylonian ruins well known through the excavations of Monsieur de Sarzec. It is engraved on a brick (burnt-brick), which was found built into the wall and is not the only one of this kind.



The Greek inscription is clear at first glance, and is to be read ΑΑΔΑΝΑΔΙΝ-ΑΧΗΣ, i. e., 'Αδαδανανάχης, and finally, by the addition of the ending ης, the Grecian

THE MASSORA AMONG THE SYRIANS.*

Freely translated and adapted from the French of the Abbé J. P. P. MARTIN

BY PROFESSOR BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D. D.,

Western Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Allegheny City, Pa.

I. When the immortal J. S. Assémani was writing, in the last century, his *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, (three parts in four volumes, folio, Rome, 1719-1728), on reaching the chapter which he devoted to Bar-Hebraeus, and coming to describe the great commentary which that author composed on the Holy Scriptures under the title of "*Treasury of Mysteries*,"—the learned Maronite let the following lines fall from his pen: "Versiones denique et auctores quibus in hoc libro utitur, hi sunt. In primis Hebraicus textus, et graeca versio Septuaginta interpretum, passim. . . . Praeterea duae aliae Syriacae, praeter simplicem cui poene inhoeret, versiones identidem cituntur, nimirum Heraclensis et كركافنسك Karkaphensis, hoc est montana, qua videlicet incolae montium utuntur."¹

These words of Assemani gave the hint to the scholars of Europe, who set themselves to searching for the new version that Assemani had pointed out on the authority of Bar-Hebraeus. Though they turned out in force, and ransacked all the mountains of Europe and Asia, and searched every crack and cranny, this "mountain version" remained undiscoverable. It was to reappear at the moment when it was least expected.

The scholars were not willing, nevertheless, to refuse themselves the pleasure of putting forth conjectures. J. David Michaelis took it for the version which the Nestorians used. G. Christian Adler, who undertook his journey to Rome largely in the hope of discovering it, did not meet with it. And yet, he had it under his eyes, perhaps even in his hands, in two libraries,—the Vatican and the Barberini.

* [The Abbé Martin printed an essay on this subject in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1869, 6th Series, vol. XIV. Afterwards he issued his book: *La Massore chez les Syriens*, etc., Paris, 1870. The essay which we here translate, presents the matter more succinctly; it is chapter III., Art. II., § VI., pp. 276-296 of the Abbé's recent work: *Introduction à la Critique Textuelle du Nouveau Testament*, Paris, 1882. Although the doctrines set forth in it are now somewhat generally accepted by Syriac scholars, they are little known outside of a comparatively narrow circle. And, as the book from which this section is taken is necessarily a rare one, it is thought that a service will be rendered to American students of Semitic subjects by presenting it to them in an English dress. The translation itself is very free in form and the adaptation includes some considerable omissions. The translator hopes, however, that he has in no case either misrepresented the learned author, or failed to convey his meaning with clearness. He is not, of course, responsible for the correctness of the facts or the validity of the logic; but only for the just transference of the Abbé's meaning.]

¹ J. S. Assémani, *op. cit.* vol. II., p. 283.

At the end of his efforts and researches, he thought he could affirm provisionally that the Karkaphensian version was only a manuscript of the Peshito: "Imo haec Carcafensis," he says, "nobis non versio diversa sed codex quidam insignis Vulgata Syriaca versionis fuisse videtur. Quod vel ex iis varietatibus patet quae a Gregorio laudantur."¹

II. The failure of G. Ch. Adler did not discourage scholars. They still continued to seek the Karkaphensian version, and some are perhaps at this hour still seeking it. They have not found it, for the very simple reason that it does not exist. We can give assurance of this. The Karkaphensian version positively has been discovered. Cardinal Wiseman had the good fortune to put his hand on two MSS. that belong to what has been called the Karkaphensian version. J. S. Assemani had had one of them in his hands; he had even described it in two places in his writings: (1) in the second volume of his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, pp. 499, 500; (2) in his *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Codicum MSS. Catalogus*, vol. III., p. 287; and although the title ought to have attracted his attention, he did not notice that he had in his hands that "Karkaphensian Tradition" of the existence of which Bar-Hebraeus had apprised him.

Nicholas Wiseman, in his *Horae Syriacae*, pp. 149 sq., described the two Roman MSS.; but he did not perhaps throw into sufficient relief the singular and characteristic features of the work which they contained. All the manuscripts of this class bear a title like the following: "Volume of the words and readings of the Old and New Testaments [according to the Karkaphensian tradition]." The words in brackets are wanting in some of the manuscripts.²

III. Now what is this work, thus brought to our knowledge under the name of "Karkaphensian tradition," or some similar name?

It is easy to answer. It is a Massoretic work. The word which we have translated "tradition" is the Syriac equivalent of the Hebrew word *Massora*. The Syrians had a Massora analogous to that of the Jews, contemporary with that of the Jews, and, moreover, like that of the Jews, divided into two currents, the cradle of one of which was the East, in Babylonia, while the other was born and grew up in the West, in Palestine and Syria. We have, in a word, documents which represent two literary traditions or currents. And as the Aramaic is closely like the Hebrew, it goes without saying that the Syriac Massora is, on the whole, much like the Massora of the Jews. It is astonishing that so patent a fact should have so long escaped those who had the Karkaphensian manuscripts in their hands. A simple statement of the contents of these volumes ought, by itself, to have shown them that they had before them, not a new version of the Bible, but (1) a lexicographical and grammatical work; (2) an exegetical work. In drawing up these volumes, which contain sometimes more than 300 leaves, the

¹ *Versiones Syriacae*, p. 88.

² See below. Cf. P. Martin: *La Massore chez les Syriens*. Paris, 1870.

intention was, not to give a new text, but to furnish the means of conserving and using the old texts. The impulse that led the Latin critics of the thirteenth century to draw up *correctoria*, led the Syrian critics of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries to make this compilation, which ought to take its place in history hereafter under the name of *ܩܘܝܘܘܬܘܢ ܩܘܝܘܘܬܘܢ*,—words hard to translate, but the sense of which is easy to recognize in the phrase, “Collection of Biblical words, punctuated and provided with their accents.”

IV. The form of this text may be understood from a view of any page of one of the MSS. which embody it. Take, for instance, manuscript 62 of the Paris National Library, and open at the page that contains the last portion of Mark’s Gospel. From Mark xiv., 72, with which the page begins, to the end of the Gospel, no single verse is given entire. Of the 68 verses contained within these limits, there are given fragments of only 20; and these fragments most frequently consist of only a few words.

No doubt there are places where the verses are less mutilated than in this passage. This is true, for example, of the beginning of these Syrian *correctoria*. One or even two consecutive verses may be found cited entire in Genesis or Exodus; we are not absolutely sure that they are, for we have never verified the fact. In proportion as we advance, however, into the Old and into the New Testaments, the extracts become shorter and more disconnected. The reason for this fact is easy to discover: the object which the Syrian Massorites set before themselves being to guide in the syllabication and rhythmical reading of the text, they did not repeat the words every time they occurred, but, after giving them a few times, assumed that they would be well known to their readers. This is why, in the analyses they make of this same passage of Mark, according to the Philoxeno-Heraclensian version, they do not give more than some fifteen words.

“Brother,” says the copyist of one of these collections of which we are speaking, to his readers, “do not trouble yourself too quickly, if in glancing through the ‘ch’mohe and q’roioto’ (punctuated and accented words), collected here with the greatest care, you do not find in certain parts of the later books the ‘ch’mohe and q’roioto’ that you are seeking. They have been already written before, in the first or last portion of each book. The more difficult ones have been given once, or twice, or even oftener. Take, therefore, the book, read it through, commencing each book at its beginning; continue your reading without fear, and you will discover that I tell the truth. If there are two similar expressions, and you find one of them and not the other, know that they are pronounced alike. I have done as I have said.”¹

To read such a note as this is enough to inform us what kind of a work we have in hand. The Massoretic text is not continuous and it is not the same in all

¹ Additional Manuscript 7183, f. 122.

MSS. From this we may learn the nature of the text contained in the Massoretic MSS. It follows that if a passage is not cited in them, we are by no means justified in concluding that this passage was not authentic in the eyes of the Syrian Massorites, because it is their habit sometimes to pass over several successive verses without drawing a single word from them.

V. It is important to observe, moreover, that all the MSS. do not contain the same passages, or the same words in the same passages. We have verified the fact in a number of passages, and have elsewhere given Matthew I., 18—II., 4a, as it is extracted in four MSS.¹ A single glance at the differences there manifest to all will make the conclusions, which such a comparison demands, very plain. Each MS., or nearly every one, is the work of an author or of a school: of one of those scholars who, from the seventh to the eighth centuries devoted their efforts and lives to the clearing up of all the difficulties of the Scriptures, or of one of those societies of "maq'r'yâne," the mission of which was to conserve the good traditions of reading and pronunciation. This is in harmony with the language which we have quoted from the copyist of the Additional MS. 7183.

VI. We ought not, therefore, to seek for a version in these books, but something very different. This is so true, that not only is the Peshito analyzed in them, but also the Philoxeno-Heraclensian version. Yet, it is worth noticing, that the "ch'mohe and q'roiotho" of the latter figure only in the Massoretic collections of the Jacobite Syrians, while the Nestorian collections (MS. Add. 12138) contain only the analysis of the Peshito.

VII. Among the numerous remarks that might be made with reference to these volumes, we content ourselves with the four following:—(1) The New Testament is divided thus:—*a.* Acts and Catholic Epistles; *b.* Epistles of Paul; *c.* Gospels, in the usual order. This division is adopted in the analysis of both the Peshito and Philoxeno-Heraclensian. (2) The version of Thomas of Harkel contained, therefore, the Acts and Epistles. (3) In the Peshito only three catholic Epistles are analyzed. The fact is less clear in the Philoxeno-Heraclensian, because the Catholic Epistles are analyzed together, and a long search is necessary to find to which Epistle the words cited belong. (4) There are no "ch'mohe" of the Apocalypse given in either case. It would seem, then, that neither the Nestorians nor the Jacobites accepted the Apocalypse in the ninth and tenth centuries as authentic or canonical.

VIII. In the Massoretic collections of the Jacobite Syrians, in the same fashion as the Bible, only somewhat more briefly, the works of the Greek Fathers translated into Syriac have been analyzed,—especially those the translation of which was due to James of Edessa, to-wit:—(1) the works attributed to St. Dionysius the Areopagite—three treatises and the letters; (2) the works of St. Basil—twenty-nine homilies; (3) of St. Gregory the Theologian, bishop of Nazi-

¹ *La Massore chez les Syriens. Pièces Justificatives. Tableau III.*

anza—forty-seven homilies in two parts; (4) the letters of St. Basil and St. Gregory the Theologian; (5) the *λόγοι ἐπιθρόνιοι* of Severus of Antioch—125 homilies divided into three parts, as in the version of them made by James of Edessa about 700–701, A. D.¹

IX. To these analyses, made from the point of view of the pronunciation and punctuation, the following documents are adjoined: (1) the letter of James of Edessa to George of Sarug and to the “scribes who read this book;” (2) a treatise by James of Edessa on punctuation and accentuation; (3) a treatise, apparently by a deacon named Thomas; (4) the names of the Greek points according to St. Epiphanius; (5) divers other little grammatical treatises; (6) enumeration of the *στίχοι* and *ῥήματα* contained in the Holy Scriptures. For the Old Testament, the *στίχοι* are enumerated for the whole and also book by book; but for the New Testament they are enumerated simply for the whole. Moreover, it does not appear that the Nestorian Massora contains this enumeration. (7) Lastly, at the end of all these documents, come very short lives of the prophets, apostles, and disciples, largely taken from St. Epiphanius, and perhaps also from Eusebius.² Sometimes, also, the last leaves of these *collectanea* contain treatises on *vocibus æquivocis*, or tables of words written alike in their consonants, but pronounced differently.

This, then, is the contents of these voluminous collections, subject to variations of the codices. MS. 62 (formerly 142) of the National Library of Paris has furnished the description above.

X. It is astonishing, we repeat, that such an assemblage of documents has not long ago caused the true nature of the work contained in the Karkaphensian or other *كَلِمَاتُ تَحْتَمَلُ* to be recognized. The grouping together of so disparate a collection of pieces ought to have opened the eyes of the blind. Yet neither Andrew Scandar nor Assemani understood the character of these collections. They mentioned, in the *Bibliotheca Orientalis* and the *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Catalogus*, the work of which we are speaking, under the title of “Onomasticon Jacobi Edesseni”! Cardinal Wiseman caught but half a glimpse of the truth. Rosen and Forschall³ advanced no further than Wiseman: they still translated the title *أَمْوُ مَكْمَلَاتُ مَكْمَلَاتُ مَكْمَلَاتُ*, *secundum VERSIONEM Karkaphensem*! But no one has passed on this erroneous road beyond the old catalogue of the Paris National Library, which classified a collection of this kind among the “HISTORIAE SCRIPTORES!” This is not the first time that librarians have taken a missal for a treatise on astronomy. Very likely it will not be the last.

¹ This date is reached by means of MSS. in the Vatican Library. (J. S. Assemani, *Biblioth. Orient.*, vol. I., pp. 404, 570).

² *Patrol. Graec.* XXII. col. 1261–1271 c.

³ *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientatum.* London, 1838. Folio. Pars I. *Codices Syriacos et Carshunticos amplectens*, pp. 34–71.

XI. Of the collections of which we are speaking, only two of those which represent the Massora of the Western Syrians contain in the title the words *مَسُورَاتُ مَسُورِي*, to wit, the Additional Manuscript 7183 of the British Museum, and the MS. 152 of the Vatican library; but all are drawn up on the same plan and are so much alike that a single glance will determine them all to belong to one family.

XII. It is scarcely to be doubted that the school of philologists and grammarians, called "Karkaphensian Tradition," drew its name from the convent of "Karkaph-tho," in the neighborhood of Amid, not far from the great Syrian monastery of Karthamin, in the region of Upper Mesopotamia, which, on account of its numerous convents, received, in the history of the Middle Ages, the name of Tûr-'Abdîn, or "Mountain of the Servants [of God],"—a name which it still bears to-day.¹ This school represented the grammatical and philological traditions of the Western Syrians.²

XIII. Who founded the Syrian Massora? A positive answer is difficult. No doubt the origines of the studies the results of which are collected in the volumes of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mount up to the fourth or fifth centuries. Few proper names, however, are found in these MSS., that are certainly of the fifth century. Perhaps the "Deacon Thomas" who wrote the treatise on punctuation and accentuation inserted in these collections, may be identified with that Thomas of Edessa, who was connected with the Nestorian Patriarch, Mar Abdas I., called "the Great" (538–552). The Massora seems to have been born in Babylonia, and to have been early developed there. Thence it passed to the West, where it made much progress, but in a somewhat altered direction. It is evident that James of Edessa gave a strong impulse to this kind of study. The place of honor given to his letter to George of Sarûg, to his treatise on punctuation and accentuation, and to his translations from Greek writers proves this past doubt. It is perhaps for this reason that the *مَسُورَاتُ مَسُورِي* of his Highness Monseigneur Yûssef-ben-David, Syrian Archbishop of Damascus, bears, at the end of the title, this addition: "Works of Mar James of Edessa;"—not, beyond question, because the collection, such as we have it, was composed by James of Edessa, but in the sense that this great writer was the most illustrious popularizer of labors of this kind, the real founder of a Hellenistic and Græcizing school.³ It is enough, moreover, to read the letter of James of Edessa and to observe the rôle it plays in the Massoretic collections in order to perceive at once the conclusion to which all the facts point: "Let no one omit a letter from," says James of Edessa to the copyists, "and let no one add a letter to these Greek

¹ On all these questions see Martin: *La Massore chez les Syriens*, Paris, 1870. Pp. 123–130.

² Bar Hebraeus clearly identifies the Karkaphensian tradition with the Western Syrians.

³ See the *Journal Asiatique* for 1872. Vol. II., pp. 247–256, and cf. Martin: *Syriens Orientaux et Occidentaux*. Paris, 1873.

and Hebrew words :”—giving a considerable list. There is no doubt, then, but that James of Edessa was the great promoter of the Hellenizing movement which was wrought out in the bosom of the Monophysite portion of the Syrian race in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries of our era. Bar-Hebraeus even attributes to him some *ܕܒܪܐܝܢܐ ܕܩܪܩܦܗܝܢܐ* like those of the Karkaphensian school; but it is probable that he means by this the Karkaphensian collections, of which we may perhaps regard James of Edessa as the principal author.

It is from the translations of St. Basil, of St. Gregory Nazianzen, especially of Severus of Antioch, made by James of Edessa, that the Syrians obtained that terminology and barbarous orthography which disfigure the MSS. of the ninth to the twelfth centuries. It was James of Edessa, also, who enriched the Syrian tongue with some very curious words. It need not be added that the disciples, as always happens, outdid the master. It was a blessing that the Syrian words, properly so called, were in great part saved from these innovations, or the Aramaic language might have suffered a true disaster.

And let no one think that it was only a single Massorite who gave himself to this eccentricity. All yielded to the fashion; no one was able to withstand the Græcizing invasion. Only the Nestorian Massora remained almost entirely sheltered from this flood; but we do not fear to judge unjustly, when we say that it owed this less to good sense than to the circumstances of the times, and especially to the places where it lived.

XIV. The description which we have given of these collections of the Syrian Massora, suffices of itself to teach us the use that may be made of them, and the advantages we may hope to reap from their study. (1) We are not to expect to find a new version in them,—whether a “mountain version,” or any other kind. They contain nothing of this sort; and he will be sorely deceived who approaches their study with such a preconception. (2) We are not even to expect to find exegesis in them; for above all things, these works are, like the Jewish Massora, grammatical or philological. (3) What we may expect to find in them is the tradition of the proper pronunciation, and of a correct punctuation and accentuation. They are the Syrian counterpart of what the Jews called the “Manual for the reader,” or a “Master of the reader.” Indeed, the title that is given to these collections in the most ancient¹ MS. that has come down to us, containing the Nestorian Massora, is just this. On folio 309b. at the head of a treatise on punctuation and accentuation, we read the following title: “We are still writing, by God’s grace, the signs of the punctuation, of the ‘Books of the Maq’r’yânâ.’” The Maq’r’yânâ is, properly speaking, that which teaches to read. In the Indo-Germanic languages this is a comparatively easy thing to do. But in the Semitic languages, where only the consonants are written, it is not an easy task to teach,

¹ The date is 800 A. D.

or to learn, how to read a text, and to read it correctly. This accounts for the important rôle of the Maq'r'yânâ. We have in it, therefore, an important work that ought to be seriously studied; but which ought to be studied entirely from the point of view of Syriac phonology and lexicography.

XV. Is no profit to be obtained from it, then, for the study of Holy Scripture? Such a conclusion would be thoroughly mistaken. Just as the Hebrew Massora has rendered and will render great service to those who study the Old Testament; so the Syrian Massora can very greatly aid those who wish to study the Peshito and Philoxeno-Heraclensian versions of the Bible.

a. When we are trying to determine the canon of the Old and of the New Testaments, for example, one of the best sources of information that we can consult, is certainly the Massoretic collection; we have in these Massoretic volumes, not indeed a witness that is definitive, supreme and complete, but at least the witness of one of the most intelligent parts of two fractions of the Syrian race,—the Jacobite and Nestorian fractions; the witness of learned men who had often examined the sacred text minutely and scrupulously; who determined its reading, fixed its punctuation, marked its divisions, and collected all its lexicographical and grammatical peculiarities; and who did all this, not arbitrarily, but under the inspiration of their language, their church and their race. Such a witness as this, every body will understand, has great value.

b. Likewise, if our business is the determination of a reading in a given place, these Massoretic writings can render important service, if they contain the passage. Their testimony helps to control that of the Peshito or of the Philoxenian, the text of which they analyze and punctuate. Moreover, when we combine the separate MSS. of this family, we may find that we can reconstruct from them the whole text, since the fragments which are not in one ܘܢܘܩܘܢܐ, may be in another.

XVI. These Massoretic manuscripts contain many marginal notes, but all have reference to points of grammar or lexicography.¹ No one of these notes, for example, makes any allusion to the additions to the text, found in the Curetorean version.

XVII. There are known about a dozen MSS. of the Syrian Massora. Of these, there are two at Rome,—one in the Vatican, No. 152 (of about the year 950), and one in the Barberini library, VI. 62, formerly 101 (1093). The National library at Paris has one,—No. 62, formerly 142, (tenth to eleventh century). Monseigneur Yûsef-ben-David, Syrian Archbishop of Damascus, owned one, dated about 1015,² and probably has it yet. All the others are at London, to wit:—as representatives of the Jacobite Massora, the Additional MSS. 7183 (twelfth century); 12178 (tenth to eleventh century); 14482 (eleventh to twelfth century);

¹ Cf. Martin: *La Massore, &c.* Pieces Justificatives.

² This MS. is now in the Library of the Cathedral Church of the Syrians at Mosul.

14667, f. 1-22 (tenth century); 17162, f. 1-14 (tenth to eleventh century); 14684, f. 1-117 (twelfth to thirteenth century). A single MS. represents the Nestorian Massora, to wit, the Additional MS. 12138, which belongs to the year 899. Total: one MS. of the ninth century, one of the tenth, two of the eleventh, four of the tenth to the eleventh, three of the twelfth; in all eleven Massoretic collections, of which two are at Rome, one at Paris, seven at London and one at Damascus or Mosul.¹

This then is what we had to say about the pretended Karkaphensian version, which is not a version, not even a recension in the proper sense of the word. If it is to be classed with any works made in the West, it must be put with the family of *Correctoria*, rather than with any other category of MSS. whatever.

XVIII. Before closing, we may pause long enough to say a word as to certain other Syrian versions that have from time to time been brought into discussion. After having examined carefully the passages of the authors on the authority of whom the existence of these has been affirmed, we are constrained to believe that in some of the cases the sense of the word has been misunderstood. There are in all languages, in Aramaic as well as the rest, some general expressions, the precise sense of which is determined only by the context and analogy. It is the duty of critics to allow weight to the circumstances which determine the sense of such a word in each passage. We have already seen them allowing themselves to be led into error by the word *ܘܡܫܘܪܐ*, the proper and rigorous signification of which is "Tradition," "Massora," but which is very often taken as "Version." The word generally used in Aramaic to designate a version is *ܘܨܘܪܐ*, although, to speak rigorously, this term rather signifies the "edition" of a book. There is also another term which has been the cause of much confusion; this is the word *ܘܦܩܘܠܐ*, "to comment," "explain," "interpret." The sense of "to translate" has often been given to this word; and thus commentaries have often been transformed into versions. Many writers of merit bear in literary history the name of *ܘܦܩܘܠܐ*, "commentators," "interpreters." Such, for example, are Paul of Callinicum (about 578), James of Edessa (+709-710), etc.; but no one seems to have received this name for having made versions of Sacred Scripture. James of Edessa deserved his title much more for the Greek writers whom he translated, than for his recension of Holy Scripture.

There is, nevertheless, a collection of texts that raise the suspicion that the Nestorians had a version made from the LXX., and that a century (or nearly that) before the Monophysites possessed theirs.

Of all the men who have ever lived, few seem to have had a more singular destiny than the Catholicus of the Nestorians, Mar Abbas, called the Great (538-552). Born in paganism, and brought up in the mysteries of Magism, he raised

¹ Cf. P. Martin: *La Massore chez les Syriens*; Wiseman: *Horae Syriacae*; W. Wright: *Catalogus*, vol. I., pp. 101-115.

himself by his strength of will, the force of his character, and the superiority of his talents, to the highest dignities of his sect and the most envied honors of his nation. What a curious history is this, of this Magian, becoming Christian, learning Aramean in the school of Nisibis, emigrating to Edessa in order to study Greek and literature, pushing on as far as Constantinople, some say even to Rome, sojourning at Alexandria for the completing of his exegetical labors, at last returning to his native land, there attaining the Catholicate, enjoying the intimacy of the great Khosroes, and at last,—that nothing might be lacking to his strange fate,—dying in disgrace and irons! Singular figure, which some writer of talent should rescue for us from the obscurity which invests it.

Now, a body of documents scarcely permits us to doubt that the Catholicus Mar Abbas translated the Old and New Testaments out of the Greek, in the first quarter of the sixth century, almost at the very time when Philoxenus of Mabug, in the West, was translating the Holy Gospels by the direction of his Chorepiscopus Polycarp (508). Mar Aud-Icho, metropolitan of Nisibis in the fourteenth century (about 1340) is explicit: "Mar Abbas, the Great," he says, "translated (قَمَص) and explained (كَلَّمَ) the whole Old Testament from the Greek into Syriac. He commented also on Genesis, the Psalms, the Proverbs,"¹ etc. Ebed-Jesu (or Audicho, as the Nestorians call him) speaks only of a translation of the Old Testament, but other writers fill the lacuna. Bar-Hebraeus, to whom the epithet of "the Great" might be justly given (1226–1286), does not distinguish between the Old and New Testaments: "Mar Abbas," he tells us, "went to Nisibis to learn Syriac letters. Desirous also of learning Greek, he went to Edessa and put himself to school to a teacher named Thomas who knew enough Greek. Then he went with his teacher to Alexandria, and, with his help, translated the Holy Scriptures out of the Greek into Syriac."² Lastly, two other Nestorian writers, Maris and Amru-ben-Mathay (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) are more explicit. They say clearly that Mar Abbas "composed a fine collection of Canons, which bears his name, and that he translated (or explained) the books of the Old and of the New Testaments."³

No fragments have come down to us which confirm these statements. We have never met with any other version than the Peshito in the liturgical books of this sect; and no other author known to us has mentioned the fact that we have here brought out. We must remember, however, that the Nestorian literature has almost entirely perished, in the invasions which through fifteen centuries have never ceased to sweep over Babylonia. It is not surprising, then, that this version, if it was made, has perished with so many other books, of the real existence of which there is not the least doubt.

¹ J. S. Assemani, vol. III., pt. I., p. 75. Cf. II., p. 130, col. 1, p. 411 and III., part I., pp. 407–408.

² J. B. Abbeloos and Lamy, *Greg. Bar-Hebraet Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, vol. II., p. 89–91.

³ J. S. Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.* II. 412.

It has been concluded, likewise, from a passage in the Commentaries of Dionysius Bar-Tsalibi (+1171), citing the *Historia Miscellanea* of Zacharias, bishop of Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos,¹ that Maras, bishop of Amid, translated the Gospels from Greek into Syriac. The conclusion does not seem to us, however, included in the premises.

[So far the Abbé at this place. Elsewhere he admits of course the biblical translations of James of Edessa; and also, on the strength of a passage to be found in Overbeck's *S. Syri Ephraemi aliorumque opera selecta*, p. 172, that Rabbulas, bishop of Edessa up to about 436, translated the New Testament. The passage reads: "And he translated (قَمَب) by the wisdom of God that was in him, the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, on account of its variations, accurately according to what it was."]

¹ See *Anecdota* of Land, vol. III., p. 252.