

## **Ancient Versions of the Bible**

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*This is not the final version of this paper, and therefore may contain typos and areas where clarification is necessary. Please feel free to send feedback and notification of typos. manuscritosarameos at gmail dot com*

### ***Introduction***

The ancient Torah, Prophets and Writings (Tanakh) was originally composed, for the most part, in Hebrew between the time of Moses and the last generation of the prophets. During the time of Nehemiah, the majority of Israelites, as the Bible tells us, could no longer comprehend the reading of the original Hebrew, thus translations were necessary. The original Hebrew Tanakh was translated into the Aramaic language of the time and later a new edition of the Bible was translated into more developed Hebrew language of that time. The Aramaic versions were translated by a group of Masoretes known as “Medinkha'e” (Masoretes of the East) and was finalized in the first century CE. The new Hebrew Bible, translated and edited by the Ma'arba'e (Masoretes of the West) too much longer to complete - up to the eleventh century CE!

Both of these Aramaic and Hebrew editions are witnesses to the now lost original Hebrew text. Both groups of translators and editors were very careful to preserve the original, at least in a translation (the ancient version used by Aramaic speaking peoples

of the East) or as a modern update (the updated text used today by Jewish scribes in writing Torah scrolls). And while they were careful, or meticulous, it is evident that errors, corruptions and even removal of certain words and phrases were removed from the western version and some major differences appear between the Eastern and Western sources.

Professor Emanuel Tov, in his book *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*<sup>1</sup>, says: “Even though the scribes of MT meticulously preserved a uniform text, breaches in this unity are nevertheless visible. Between the early sources of MT there existed differences in consonants between texts from the West (Palestine) and the texts from the East (Babylon). Some 250 such differences are mentioned in the Masoretic notes as Medinkha'e and Ma'arba'e.”

<sup>1</sup> Published by Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 2001

### ***How old are our Bibles?***

As mentioned above, the ancient Hebrew text, which no longer exists (at least in whole), dates back to the time of Moses. Various "versions" of this same text (or group of manuscripts) were found at Kirbat Qumran (the Qumran Caves) and are generally referred to as the “Dead Sea Scrolls.” The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of Biblical and non-biblical texts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

The date of these manuscripts differ and scholars argue as to the exact dates of each scroll or fragment. There is some general agreement to many of the manuscripts dating back to the 300's BCE and the first century CE. In many cases the Aramaic and Hebrew texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls agree with the Aramaic version of the original Hebrew text and against that of the updated

Masoretic Hebrew text.

I postulate that the original Aramaic versions probably date back as far as Nehemiah's time with the necessary updates as the language of the people continued to develop. Its actual origin however is considered to be a “mystery” by most scholars who take even the slightest interest in the ancient Aramaic language. On the other hand, the Masoretic Hebrew texts are quite late in existence. The editing process for the Hebrew MT was completed in the eleventh century.

The most complete known Hebrew Bible in existence (the Leningrad Codex) wasn't composed until more than one thousand years *after* Messiah<sup>1</sup> walked the earth. Yet, the earliest known complete Aramaic version of the Scriptures date back to the fifth or sixth century, which was copied from a much earlier text which is proof is given in the Dead Sea Scrolls. My great grandfather, Aran Ya'aqub Younan, who adapted the Aramaic Peshitta “New Testament” from Eastern Aramaic to Judeo-Aramaic (Neo-Aramaic)<sup>2</sup>, played with the idea that the Aramaic Tanakh and the earliest manuscripts of the western MT began to be composed around the same time. On the other hand, my father believed that the Aramaic could have been the main source text for MT. For either case, I am not yet ready, or comfortable to make an opinion on the matter.

<sup>1</sup> Yeshua ישוע

<sup>2</sup> He began working on his codex in 1897 and the work on the original concluded by 1912 or a year before. He was unable to complete the work before his death. Younan adapted the Church of the East Peshitta text to Jewish Neo-Aramaic which is typically written phonetically and replaces certain characters with others and written with the standard Hebrew alphabet - at least according to the spelling and grammatical rules in which he was using.

***Why choose the Aramaic version over that of the Hebrew?***

I have always said that “oldest is not always better.” However, if there is evidence of more than one textual witness, and these witnesses are older than any "updated" version (i.e., the Hebrew MT) and they do not agree with a latter version, then we must in good conscious choose the majority text. There have been several examples demonstrating how the ancient Aramaic Tanakh (AN"K) and the Dead Sea Scrolls often times disagree with that of the later Hebrew MT.

In my opinion, in many cases even some of the targumic texts (Onqelos, Jonathan, Yerushalmi) are better than that of the Hebrew MT. The reason I say this is because of so many disagreements between the ancient witnesses and the more “modern” Hebrew MT. It is well known that the Hebrew MT contains errors and corruptions as noted above, even though the Masoretes were meticulous in writing the text.

Tov says, “Yet, in spite of their precision, even the manuscripts which were written and vocalized by the Masoretes contain corruptions, changes, and erasures. More importantly, the Masoretes, and before them the soferim, acted in a relatively late stage of the development of the biblical text, and before they had put their meticulous principles into practice, the text already contained corruptions and had been tampered with during that earlier period when scribes did not as yet treat the text with such reverence...corrupted in the course of the scribal transmission...Such corruptions are recognized in the Qumran scrolls (e.g., 1QIsaa in Isa 13:19; 26:3-4; 30:30; 40:7-8) on the basis of their comparison with MT and other texts, and, by the same token, in MT itself, when compared with other texts....1 Sam 1:24; 4:31-22; 2 Sam 23:31; 2 Kgs 11:13; Jer 23:33; 29:26; 41:9... In many details MT does not reflect the 'Original Text' of the

biblical books...differences between the Masoretic Text and earlier or different stages of the biblical text will continue to be recognized.”

***But weren't the Jewish scribes faithful in preserving the original text?***

As has already been noted the scribes (soferim) were from two sets of “Masorete” families - east and west. Many, but not all, of the errors and corruptions found within the western text (MT) have been cataloged by various scholars.

Christian David Ginsburg noted how the scribes responsible for preserving and transmitting MT went so far as to even remove the holy Name of God (YHWH יהוה) throughout the Tanakh in at least 134 passages<sup>1</sup>, replacing the proper Name with the title “Adonai” (Lord). If these particular scribes were so bold as to make such a blasphemous act, what other atrocities must they have committed in the name of “faithful preservation”?

Many a religious individual, especially under the influence of Protestantism, have a fanciful and near idolatrous view of the Hebrew MT in that they imagine the redactors (Masoretes) were divinely inspired to carefully and perfectly preserve the “Word of God.” Many quote the passage in the Gospel of Matthew to base their preposterous ideology: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Matthew 24:35, King James Version).

However, as has already been demonstrated above, this was never the case with the western text that has been transmitted by the Masoretes. Many of the same corruptions found in the MT have been carried over in most of the Christian Bible translations of the Hebrew “Old Testament”.

Concerning the reverence by eastern Masoretes for the holy text of the Tanakh, in relation to the Targums, Pinkhos Churgin says in his *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, “The Aramaic rendering of the Prophets belongs to the earliest translations of the Bible which have come down to us. Its importance for the textual investigation and early Biblical interpretation cannot be overestimated. While the targumist makes little display of critical study in rendering intricate passages, and while he does not pretend to present a minutely literal translation of the Hebrew text, his reverence for the letter and transmitted reading of the text must by far have exceeded that of the Greek and Syriac translators. At the same time his translation is doubtlessly based on a sounder and exacter understanding of both the etymology and usages of the Hebrew language.”<sup>2</sup>

Bible commentator Adam Clarke says of the Masoretes, “The Masoretes were the most extensive Jewish commentators which that nation could ever boast. The system of punctuation, probably invented by them, is a continual gloss on the Law and the Prophets; their vowel points, and prosaic and metrical accents, &c., give every word to which they are affixed a peculiar kind of meaning, which in their simple state, multitudes of them can by no means bear. The vowel points alone add whole conjugations to the language. This system is one of the most artificial, particular, and extensive comments ever written on the Word of God; for there is not one word in the Bible that is not the subject of a particular gloss through its influence. This school is supposed to have commenced about 450 years before our Lord, and to have extended down to AD 1030. Some think it did not commence before the 5th century A.D.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX I, "Emendations of the Soferim"

<sup>2</sup> Yale University Press, 1907

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Bible, “Containing the Old and New Testaments. The text carefully printed from the most correct copies of the present authorized translation, including the marginal readings and parallel texts: with a commentary and critical notes; designed as a help to a better understanding of the sacred writings.” Published by T. Tegg and Son, 1837

***Is there anything "better" than the MT available?***

We have the ancient textual witnesses to the original Hebrew found within the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Aramaic (Medinkhaye) Version and in fragments. As mentioned above, these ancient versions often agree with each other and not with the eleventh century MT.

When pointing out some differences between the use of a particular word in the Dead Sea Scrolls (particularly in the Great Isaiah Scroll) and the Aramaic and MT, demonstrating that the DSS and Aramaic were not in agreement with MT<sup>1</sup>, Paul Younan said, “This is clearly a case where the pre-Masorete original Hebrew reading, \$-x-d [שחר], is attested to by both the POT [Peshitta Old Testament] and LXX [Septuagint]. What makes it irrefutable is the discovery of the DSS Isaiah manuscript, clearly showing that the Masoretes had a scribal error here in reading Resh for Daleth (a most common error while reading Ktav Ashuri). Before the discovery of the DSS, all we would have is the POT and LXX agreeing with each other while disagreeing with the Masoretic version. This example convincingly demonstrates that the LXX and POT can be, at times, much more valuable in ascertaining the original reading than the Masoretic version.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX II, “Shakhad in DSS, Pshitta Tanakh and Masoretic Text”

<sup>2</sup> Peshitta.org

***Modern day Jews accept the MT - why shouldn't we?***

Simply because a particular version has become the mainstream text of Judaism (from Medieval times to the present) does not indicate that such a text is the most authentic or reliable.

Professor Tov says, "[T]he preference of MT by a central stream in Judaism does not necessarily imply that it contains the best text of the Bible. Both the Hebrew parent text of [the Septuagint] and certain of the Qumran texts... reflect excellent texts, often better than that of MT."

There are major differences between the ancient Yemenite and Babylonian texts as compared to those used by Judaism in the West. The Book of Esther is only one example. The differences between the older Yemenite version and that of European Judaism (Ashkenazim and Sephardim) are worlds apart from each other.<sup>1</sup>

The editors of the Hebrew text made the conscientious decision to corrupt various passages of the Tanakh and this was passed down to Christians as can be seen in their modern day translations. The Hebrew manuscripts began to be revised by the Talmudists and Masoretes as early as the third century CE. These same editors were also responsible for providing Jerome with manuscripts which had already been edited for use in his own translation of the Vulgate as has been documented by others.

Another important factor to remember is how certain translations of the Hebrew MT were transmitted to Christian and Jewish communities throughout Europe in other languages. Geddes MacGregor, in his book, *The Bible in the Making*, says: "Translations of the Hebrew Bible into various languages, began to appear about that time. In 1422 Rabbi Moses Arragel translated the Scriptures from the Hebrew into Spanish, for the Christian Church and with the assistance of Franciscan scholars, and it is

upon that version that the Ferrara Bible, printed in 1553, was based. This famous Spanish Bible was intended to serve the needs of both Jews and Christians. Certain deviations were made in the copies intended for Christian readers. For example, where the copies intended for Jews read 'young woman,' the copies set aside for Christian use put 'virgin.'”

Personal religious sentiment for a particular text while blatantly ignoring the historical facts of the more ancient versions can put one in a serious situation doctrinally - especially when they choose to continue using a corrupted text that did not even exist in the first century as it exists today.

As far as the Aramaic versions are concerned, they are faithful editions of the original Hebrew text from just after the time of the Exodus from Egypt to Sinai. Because of the very nature of the Aramaic versions, they faithfully retain the original intent, or meaning of what was written in the time of Moses and the prophets.

The earliest Aramaic transcribers had a great reverence for the text, which was not the case, as has already been commented above, with the later editors up to the eleventh century.

Someone who is not familiar with textual criticism or even with the history of ancient versions and the manners in which sacred texts were transmitted may erroneously conclude that the Hebrew text currently in use in the synagogues and translated in Protestant Bibles is the *original*. This is far from the truth! The Hebrew MT no longer resembles the same text that was used in the first century during the time of the Apostles.

Although an ancient Hebrew text was used in the synagogues during the first century, since the language of Messiah and the

Apostles was Aramaic, they would have used the Aramaic versions available at the time alongside that of the Hebrew.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX III, “Yemenite Esther” to compare portions of the western Rabbinical version and that used by Yemenite synagogues (Jews from ancient Yemen).

<sup>2</sup> This is also the era of the origin of the Aramaic “New Testament” known as the Peshitta, which I don't yet cover in detail within the draft of this paper. However, for a list of some differences between the Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek, see APPENDIX IV, “Catalog of Differences Peshitta, MT and Greek”

### ***Original Aramaic Text***

“The Jewish Aramaic Bible versions are known to us, first and foremost, as major literary crystallizations.” (*Sheki'im mi-targume ha-Mikra ha-Aramiyim*, by Moshe Henry Goshen-Gottstein, Rimon Kasher, 1983, Bar-Ilan University). “Before the Christian era Aramaic had in good part replaced Hebrew in Palestine as the vernacular of the Jews. It continued as their vernacular for centuries later... Translations of books of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic for liturgical purposes must have begun before the Christian era... In recent decades there has been increasing interest among scholars and a larger public in these Targums. A noticeable lacuna, however, has been the absence of a modern English translation of this body of writing.” (*The Aramaic Bible*, by Philip S. Alexander, 2003)

“The Jewish Aramaic Bible translations came into existence when, and where, Hebrew was no longer fully understood. As such the earliest Aramaic interpretative literature, found in Qumran, is to be understood... In the diaspora under Hellenistic influence, the Greek translation of the Septuagint replaced the original Hebrew text. This situation did not please the Rabbis, who... keenly appreciated that much was lost in translation... an Aramaic

translation under rabbinic supervision of Torah and Prophets appeared as well. These translations are relatively unique in their structure, and specifically in their oral-performative setting, which binds them to the original text...” (Extracted from *Playing Second Fiddle: How the Rabbis Tamed the Jewish Aramaic Bible Translations* by Willem Smelik, University College London, and Alex Samely, The University of Manchester).

“Jewish Aramaic Bible translations have an uncommon structure in performance and contents... They are deliberately modelled as a counterpoint to the original text... They are painstakingly literal in a one-to-one fashion wherever possible, up to the point of copying Hebrew syntax, while freely adding interpretative supplements, or substituting some lemmata (within the one-to-one mode), for exegetical and theological reasons. While these remarks apply to all of the Jewish Aramaic translations, they are quite distinct from one another in several ways. While some translations bear the imprint of rabbinic authority, others reflect the concerns, interests and opinions of educated laymen.” (*The Antiphony of the Hebrew Bible and Its Jewish Aramaic Translations: The Need to Read a Translation in Concert with the Original*, Dr. Willem Smelik, University College London).

While the Aramaic translation of the Peshitta Tanakh reflects the original Hebrew that was used by the Masoretes in producing a revised, standard version of the Hebrew text, there are books within the Tanakh that were written originally in Aramaic, and not in Hebrew. For example, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, once a single “book”, were originally written in Aramaic and translated to Hebrew. (See *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon*, by Cyrus Herzl; *Biblical Books Translated from the Aramaic*, by Frank Zimmermann; *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues*, by Steven L. McKenzie, Matt Patrick Graham; *The Collegeville Bible*

*Commentary: Based on the New American Bible*, by Robert J. Karris). It is likely that other books such as Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, the Chronicles and Malachi were also originally written in Aramaic and later translated into Hebrew. These texts, including Ezra and Nehemiah, were written between 530 and 430 BCE.

The earlier Masoretic text was produced out of necessity due to the ancient Hebrew script no longer being used as well as due to the fact that a standardized edition with full use of vowel points and grammatical tradition was needed for Jews at the time - this is what we refer to as “Masorah”, as mentioned earlier in this paper. The currently used Hebrew Bible among Jews and Christians, was edited much later by Jacob ben Hayim Ibn Adonyahu around 1524 CE and based on manuscripts that he had available to him at the time, and as will be shown below, those manuscripts had problems of their own.

The Jewish translators of the Aramaic edition of the Tanakh had access to the original (sometimes called “Vorlage”) text of the Hebrew. This is one reason there are discrepancies between the Aramaic and the later revised, standardized Hebrew edition.

Gillian Greenberg gives some interesting information on his comparisons of the Masoretic and the Syriac/Aramaic Peshitta Tanakh in his book *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Jeremiah*:

“In the earlier literature, Talmon assembles evidence in the rabbinic writings, Hebrew fragments from after 70 CE such as those from Wadi Murabba`at and Massada, and some subsidiary details from the ancient version, and concludes that proto-Masoretic Texts were indeed established during the first century CE...Against the background of the evidence for the date of the

standardization of the proto-Masoretic Text, it is historically possible that a MS which was close to even if not identical with the latter would have been in existence at the time of writing of the Peshitta, and could have formed the Vorlage....that the translators would have sought out a 'model' text, one given high status by those involved in Palestine, as the basis of the work of such importance, and that the model they would have wanted to work from would therefore have been in the line of transmission of the MT....

Jutscher describes some of the biblical scrolls found at Qumran as 'vernacular' copies, deliberately simplified and otherwise adapted for Hebrew-speaking readers, and circulating in the Holy Land up to the second century CE. The nature of these MSS, and the question of their suitability for the Vorlage of the Peshitta, is also discussed by Weitzman. These non-proto-Masoretic Text MSS, which made up such a large proportion of the total, may have been of great importance during the earlier life of the Qumran community: but their number may give a misleading idea of their importance during the later stages, the time at which the Peshitta was written, when as Tov suggests a central stream in Judaism may have been responsible for the copying and circulation of these texts...This evidence of the text of the Peshitta before the fifth century is found largely in the writings of Aphrahat and also in those of Ephrem...

'The Judaism of the Peshitta Pentateuch ... is predominantly rabbinic but embodies some non-rabbinic elements. The religion of the Peshitta Psalter is emphatically different from rabbinic Judaism ... The hypothesis may be ventured that the Pentateuch was translated while that community was yet Jewish, and the Psalter when its evangelization was well under way if not complete.' [Quoting Weitzman]...

Weitzman points out that the presence of some Jewish exegesis in the Peshitta is compatible with an origin in a Christian community if that community had Jewish roots or Jewish contacts, and concludes, overall, that the Peshitta was the work of non-rabbinic Jews, conscious, at least during the time of translation of all but the last books, of isolation from Jews elsewhere in the world... For such a community, the production of a biblical text which was readily accessible in a community where the knowledge of Hebrew was decreasing may have been more important than literalness.” (Extracted from *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Jeremiah* by Gillian Greenberg, copyright 2002, BRILL).

### ***A Word about the Aleppo Codex***

Some who hold to the purity of the Aleppo Codex (another Hebrew Masoretic text) claim that there are thousands of errors in the commonly accepted Hebrew Bible. “In Venice, circa 1524, a Tunisian scholar named Ya'acov Ben-Hhaim used the printing press to produce an edition of all 24 books of the canonized Bible, the first of its kind. With its inclusion of famous Bible commentators such as Rashi and Ibn Ezra, the Mikraot Gedolot Edition, as it became to be known, was accepted as the definitive and authoritative Torah text. After another printing in Warsaw, it became the standard for Orthodox communities. There is just one problem: the Mikraot Gedolot is highly inaccurate. Of that edition, the Five Books of Moses, the Prophets and the Writings together contain several thousands of errors. Not just of musical cantillations and vowels, but letters as well. Ya'acov Ben-Hhaim [Jacob ben Chaim] carried out his manuscript comparisons on texts that were within his geographical reach, but they were not accurate themselves. (It is interesting to note that the printing of the Mikraot Gedolot was executed under the aegis of a Christian printer, Daniel Bomberg, and Ben-Hhaim, who converted to

Christianity. It is not clear, however, whether Ben-Hhaim's conversion was before or after 1524.)” (*Jerusalem Post*, "The True Torah?", by Robby Berman)

The Aleppo Codex is attributed to the work of Aaron ben Moses ben Asher (sometimes called “Bar Asher”) who “lived in Tiberias during the first half of the 10th century. His family had been involved in creating and maintaining the Masorah for either five or six generations. Ben-Asher rapidly gained fame as the most authoritative of the Tiberias masoretes, and, even after his death, his name continued to hold respect.” (Jewish Virtual Library, from *Gates to Jewish Heritage*)

“The scholar who added the vowels and accents was Rabbi Aaron Bar Asher, one of the most illustrious experts in the specialized science of the Biblical text that goes by the name "Masorah." The Masoretes developed elaborate systems for maintaining the accuracy of the written, consonantal text of the Bible, as well as for recording the vowels and accents, which had previously been handed down through oral memorization. Though several such systems were devised during the early medieval era, in the end the one from Tiberias achieved dominance; and Aaron Bar Asher was perhaps the most distinguished exponent of the Tiberian school of Masorah.” (Shepherdstown, West Virginia December 1999, January 2000. Prime Minister Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister Farouk a-Shara of Syria enter into ill-fated peace negotiations under American auspices)

Maimonides wrote, “The codex which we used in these works is the codex known in Egypt, which includes 24 books, which was in Jerusalem ... and was used for editing the books (of the Bible), and everyone relies on it, because it was edited by Ben-Asher, who studied it carefully for many years and edited it many times ... and I relied on it in the Torah Scroll which I wrote according to it.”

“Which is the accurate version? Because the book is sacred, its text must be agreed upon and accepted unconditionally, without any discrepancies among the various versions. Yet this is not the case. It is true that there are no discrepancies that change the basic meaning of the text... However, there are differences between ancient Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible and, therefore, the same can be said about the printed editions based on these manuscripts. To enlightened readers, the recent attempts by some scholars to 'find' hidden messages by combining letters in the Bible seem pathetic, at best.” (*Hebrew Bibles, from 1488 to a new edition of the Keter Aram Tzova*, by Nachuym Ben Zvi)

Not enough research has been done in regards to the Aramaic Tanakh in order to show any major differences between it and the Aleppo Codex. With this Codex being available at least in part, anyone with a good knowledge of the Syriac/Aramaic translation of the Tanakh should be able, with ease, to compare the two in order to provide an early analysis.

The Aramaic Peshitta Tanakh, for the most part, is translated directly from the original, pre-Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, thus providing us with a much more pure text - especially compared to the “Ben Chaim” European edition of the Tanakh which is most certainly corrupted. This is the same text that almost all English translations of the “Old Testament” are eventually based upon. Clearly more research in this field needs to be covered, and only time will tell. (For more information, see the articles posted at <http://www.chayas.com/allepo.htm>)

***Peshitta Translated by Jews***

“Even to the West of the Euphrates river, in the Holy Land, the main vernacular was Aramaic. The weekly synagogue lections, called sidra or parashah, with the haphtarah, were accompanied by an oral Aramaic translation, according to fixed traditions. A number of Targumim in Aramaic were thus eventually committed to writing, some of which are of unofficial character, and of considerable antiquity. The Gemara of the Jerusalem Talmud was written in Aramaic, and received its definitive form in the 5th century. The Babylonian Talmud with its commentaries on only 36 of the Mishnah's 63 tractates, is four times as long as the Jerusalem Talmud. These Gemaroth with much other material were gathered together toward the end of the 5th century, and are in Aramaic. Since 1947, approximately 500 documents were discovered in eleven caves of Wadi Qumran near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. In addition to the scrolls and fragments in Hebrew, there are portions and fragments of scrolls in Aramaic. Hebrew and Aramaic, which are sister languages, have always remained the most distinctive features marking Jewish and Eastern Christian religious and cultural life, even to our present time.” -- Paul Younan (Peshitta.org).

“The Peshitta translation of Genesis, and indeed of the Pentateuch as a whole, is particularly rich in links with contemporary Jewish exegetical tradition, and this makes it likely that these books were translated by Jews rather than by Christians.... the Peshitta translation of Proverbs is also likely to have been the work of Jews in northern Mesopotamia; it subsequently came to be taken over by Syriac-speaking Christians and by later Jews (who lightly modified the dialect).” -- *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, by Sebastian Brock.

***Summary***

The Peshitta Tanakh (A"NK) is a reflection of the original Hebrew autograph. That original, or autograph no longer exists except in the form of the Aramaic version. The currently used Hebrew Masoretic Text is NOT the original autograph. I believe carefully examining the Targums also give the diligent student a shadow of that original autograph.

As a rule I do not and will not use the Masoretic Text as a guide to the original since it has come down to us with its many corruptions. This does not mean that I have no respect for the western body of Masoretic texts. I take Theodore of Mopsuestia's comment very seriously, "it would be nonsense to disregard the voice of the Hebrew," but when I see clearly identifiable errors, I must disregard the later for the earlier, especially if there are textual witnesses to give evidence of a more pure text.

So which sources do I think are more reliable? Without a doubt - the Peshitta Tanakh and its related manuscripts such as the various Targums.



**APPENDIX I.**  
*Emendations of the Soferim*  
*Concerning the Divine Name.*

Genesis 18:3,27,30,31,32; 19:18; 20:4.

Exodus 4:10,13; 5:22; 15:17; 34:9(2x).

Numbers 14:17.

Joshua 7:8.

Judges 6:15; 13:8.

Kings 3:10,15; 22:6.

2 Kings 7:6; 19:23.

Isaiah 3:17,18; 4:4; 6:1,8,11; 7:14,20; 8:7; 9:7(8),16(17); 10:12;  
11:11; 21:6,8,16; 28:2; 29:13; 30:20; 37:24; 38:14,16; 49:14.

Ezekiel 18:25,29; 21:14(9); 33:17,20.

Amos 5:16; 7:7,8; 9:1.

Micah 1:2.

Zechariah 9:4.

Malachi 1:12,14.

Psalms 2:4; 16:2; 22:31(30); 30:9(8); 35:17,22,23; 37:13;  
38:10(9),16(15),23(22); 39:8(7); 40:18(17); 44:24(23); 51:17(15);

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54:6(4); 55:10(9); 57:10(9); 59:12(11); 62:13(12); 66:18;  
68:12(11),18(17),20(19),23(22),27(26),33(32); 73:20;  
77:3(2),8(7); 78:65; 79:12; 86:3,4,5,8,9,12,15; 89:50(49),51(50);  
90:1,17; 110:5; 130:2,3,6;

Job 28:28.

Lamentations 1:14,15(2x); 2:1,2,5,7,18,19,20; 3:31,36,37,58.

Daniel 1:2; 9:3,4,7,9,15,16,17,19(3x).

Ezra 10:3.

Nehemiah 1:11; 4:8(14).

(Verses in parenthesis are those of the Septuagint based text as opposed to those in the Hebrew)

## **APPENDIX II**

### *Shakhad in DSS, Pshitta Tanakh and Masoretic Text.*

Summary: Concerning the use of the word “shachar” and “shachad” in DSS Isaiah (Dead Sea Scrolls), Pshitta Tanakh and the Hebrew MT

Until recently I had not paid much attention to the use of the word “shachad” and “shachar” in these various ancient versions of the Bible. I wasn't aware that DSS Isaiah used “shachad” which I find fascinating since it seems to agree with the Peshitta Tanakh as opposed to the much later MT. This peaked my interest after a member of the Peshitta.org forum posted a question about its use in the Great Isaiah Scroll. I reproduce my response below.

The word שַׁחַד (שַׁחַדָּה) has been translated as “bribe”, “gift” and “reward” by different translators.

Isaiah 8:20 from Pshitta Tanakh uses the word “bribe” שַׁחַד (sh'khad) while the Masoretic text uses: שַׁחַר (shachar) which is often translated as “morning”, “light” or “dawn”.

*Translation of Isaiah 8:20 from the Aramaic:*

“To the testimony and the law! If you do not speak according to this word, because there is none who bribe them.”

Jastrow's Dictionary of the Targumim says of the word “shachad”: to win the favor of, bribe and quotes Sanhedrin 43b (*see below*).

Strong's Hebrew Bible Dictionary gives this information for the word “shachad”: a primitive root; to donate, i.e. bribe:--hire, give a reward... from 'shachad' (7809); a donation (venal or

redemptive):--bribe(-ry), gift, present, reward. (Number 7809).

There's an interesting comment by Adam Clarke where he says of Isaiah 8:20, "If there be any sense in these words, it is not the sense of the original; which cannot justly be so translated...The reading of the Septuagint and Syriac **ܫܚܚܕ** shachad, gift, affords no assistance towards the clearing up of any thing in this difficult place."

Clarke adds: "Kimchi says this was the form of an oath: '-By the law and by the testimony such and such things are so.' Now if they had sworn this falsely, it is because there is no light, no illumination...no scruple of conscience in them." (Adam Clarke's *Holy Bible With a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 1836; page 570).

The use of the word "bribe" is also found in Peshitta Ezekiel 16:33

"All the prostitutes pay them, but you gave to pay all of your lovers and they gave bribes for your prostitution, to come to you from all of your surroundings."

As noted above by Rabbi Jastrow Babylonian Talmud mentions similar uses of this word in the Talmud: "He (Joshua) bribed him (Achan) with words"; from which we also find the phrase: "whom I can persuade with words and bribe with money."

*Job 15:34 from Various Translations*

We find a similar use of the word "shachad" in Job 15:34.

*Peshitta:* For the company of the pagans/godless will be devastation and desolation, and the fire will consume the house of

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the wicked/bribery. (from my own translation of the Aramaic)

*Bishops Bible (1568)*: For the congregation of hypocrites shalbe desolate, and the fire shall consume the houses of such as are greedie to receaue giftes.

*Jewish Publication Society*: For the company of the godless shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tents of bribery.

*New American Standard Bible*: For the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.

*New Jerusalem Bible*: Yes, sterile is the spawn of the sinner, and fire consumes the tents of the venal.

*Geneva Bible (1587)*: For the congregation of the hypocrite shalbe desolate, and fire shall deuoure the houses of bribes.

*Amplified Bible*: For the company of the godless shall be barren, and fire shall consume the tents of bribery (wrong and injustice).

*Complete Jewish Bible*: For the community of the ungodly is sterile; fire consumes the tents of bribery.

**APPENDIX III.**  
*Yemenite Esther.*

For a list of differences see [www.chayas.com/dod.htm](http://www.chayas.com/dod.htm)

In the final edition of this paper I plan to provide a transcription of the Yemenite Esther followed by the commonly used Hebrew Masoretic. The Yemenite will be transcribed from a scroll from my private collection (Bibliotheca Aramaica).

**APPENDIX IV.**

*Catalog of Differences Between Peshitta, MT and Greek.*

This is a preliminary list of verses that have variances between the Aramaic, Hebrew MT and the Greek. I have not verified each of these. Some of the references are from my own research, some from that of my great grandfather and others from various sources. In the final publication of this paper, each of the verses will be translated and compared with each other in detail. Passages from the Peshitta New Testament will also be included.

Genesis 1:2

Genesis 1:26

Genesis 2:2

Genesis 3:6

Genesis 6:3

Genesis 12:3

Genesis 17:16

Genesis 27:40

Genesis 32:28

Genesis 32:30

Genesis 47:31

Genesis 49:14

Exodus 6:20

Exodus 20:7

Exodus 20:11

Exodus 38:8

Leviticus 18:21

Numbers 25:4

Deuteronomy 5:11

Deuteronomy 23:1

Judges 14:15

1 Samuel 1:24

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1 Samuel 2:13  
1 Samuel 2:35  
1 Samuel 6:19  
1 Samuel 13:5  
1 Samuel 24:3  
2 Samuel 15:7  
2 Samuel 14:4  
2 Samuel 18:4  
1 Chronicles 2:15  
1 Chronicles 5:2  
1 Chronicles 12:1  
1 Chronicles 23:13  
1 Chronicles 29:19  
2 Chronicles 3:4  
2 Chronicles 16:9  
2 Chronicles 21:2  
2 Chronicles 22:2  
2 Chronicles 36:9  
1 Kings 5:11  
Nehemiah 10:32  
Nehemiah 12:24, 36  
Job 5:24  
Job 6:6  
Job 6:9, 10  
Job 6:14  
Job 13:20, 21  
Job 19:25  
Job 24:19, 20  
Job 31:10  
Job 36:21  
Job 38:7  
Psalm 7:11  
Psalm 48:14  
Psalm 68:11

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Psalm 74:5  
Psalm 89:47  
Psalm 119:48  
Psalm 139:13  
Psalm 139:15  
Psalm 145:1  
Proverbs 6:3  
Proverbs 6:11  
Proverbs 11:25  
Proverbs 18:22  
Ecclesiastes 10:19  
Canticles 5:7  
Isaiah 5:17  
Isaiah 6:10  
Isaiah 9:6  
Isaiah 10:27  
Isaiah 14:12  
Isaiah 19:10  
Isaiah 28:10  
Isaiah 28:13  
Isaiah 28:20  
Isaiah 30:33  
Isaiah 33:1  
Isaiah 33:24  
Isaiah 43:28  
Isaiah 47:6  
Isaiah 49:4  
Isaiah 51:20  
Isaiah 59:19  
Isaiah 61:2  
Isaiah 64:5  
Jeremiah 4:10  
Jeremiah 5:10  
Jeremiah 7:4, 5

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Jeremiah 8:4

Jeremiah 23:23

Jeremiah 27:1

Jeremiah 46:18

Ezekiel 32:5

Daniel 8:24

Hosea 12:3

Amos 6:10

**APPENDIX V.**

*Introduction to the Aramaic Jewish Bible*

*A Translation from the Aramaic to English by*

*Ya'aqub Younan-Levine and Associates of Bibliotheca Aramaica*

The Aramaic Jewish Bible is called the "Peshitta Tanakh" (or AN'K) and it is a holy text to the ancient Israelites and it is the official Bible of Assyrian Judaism. The word "Tanakh" is an acronym of the three words Torah (*Law or Teachings*), Nevi'im (*Prophets*), and Ketuvim (*Writings*). The text of the Tanakh is regarded as being holy, in particular the Name of God, especially in its four letter form יהוה, Aramaic: ܝܗܘܗ (Yah), or ܡܪܝܗ (MarYah, Lord YHWH).

The Pshitta Tanakh is the ancient Scriptures translated into Lishana Aramaya (Aramaic language) from the original Hebrew text which pre-dated the Greek Septuagint text (LXX). The Aramaic Tanakh uses many Hebraic terms, many times transliterating the words and phrases rather than translating them. Often times the Aramaic Peshitta and the LXX agree against the Masoretic text. The Masoretic text is not the original Hebrew that was used by the translators of the Aramaic Pshitta. In other words, the text used by those who translated the Aramaic Pshitta is much older than the Masoretic text. The Aramaic Pshitta Tanakh was completed during the first century C.E., while the standardized Masoretic text was completed between the seventh and tenth centuries C.E.

According to the canon of this Aramaic Bible, it contains fifty-two books, which are divided into three sections: The Law (Aurayta/Torah, the Five Books of Moses); The Prophets; and the Writings. The books of the Prophets are traditionally divided into the "Former Prophets" and the "Latter Prophets", or sometimes as

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"The Prophets" and "Minor Prophets". The Aleppo Codex arranges the prophets in the following "historical order": Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Certain books of the Tanakh are "double books" such as Ketava Shemuel, Sipra d'Malke, and Sipra d'Dabaryamin. The Book of Psalms, within the Writings, are divided into five "books" or sections. The sections of Psalms are divided in the following manner: Section (or "Book") 1: Psalms 1-41; Section 2: Psalms 42-72; Section 3: Psalms 73-89; Section 4: Psalms 90-106; Section 5: Psalms 107-150. There is also a 151'st Psalm in Hebrew which is found within the "Psalms Scroll" of the Dead Sea Scrolls and within the Septuagint.

Codex Ambrosiano (5th-7th century copy of the Aramaic Pshitta Tanakh) includes the following books within it alongside the traditionally accepted books, and are noted by Aran Younan as being "canonical" by Assyrian Jews: Wisdom, Epistle of Jeremiah, Epistle of Baruch, Baruch, Bel, The Dragon, Susanna, Judith, Ben Sirach, Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Ezra, 1 - 4 Maccabees, portions of Josephus' Wars of the Jews.

The translation from the Aramaic to English is a gradual process. Updates can be found at <http://www.pshitta.org/english/>

**APPENDIX VI.**

*Exodus 20:7,11 – Comparisons with Aramaic Tanakh*

*Peshitta - Exodus 20:7, 11:* You shall not swear falsely in the name of MarYah your Alaha, for MarYah will not consider him innocent who swears falsely in his Name... for MarYah made the heavens and the earth, the seas and all that is with them in six days, and rested on the seventh day; for that reason, Alaha blessed the seventh day and made it holy {or, sanctified it}.

*LXX:* ου λημψη το ονομα κυριου του θεου σου επι ματαιω ου γαρ μη καθαριση κυριος τον λαμβανοντα το ονομα αυτου επι ματαιω ... εν γαρ εξ ημεραις εποιησεν κυριος τον ουρανον και την γην και την θαλασσαν και παντα τα εν αυτοις και κατεπαυσεν τη ημερα τη εβδομη δια τουτο ευλογησεν κυριος την ημεραν την εβδομη και ηγιασεν αυτην (Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord thy God will not acquit him that takes his name in vain... For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and the sea and all things in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it. - Brenton)

*Masoretic:* You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain; for Yahweh will not allow to go unpunished he who takes his name in vain... For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all which is in them. And he rested on the seventh day; thus, Yahweh blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

*King James Version:* Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh

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day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Targum Jonathan:* My people of the house of Israel, Let no one of you swear by the name of the Word of the Lord your God in vain; for in the day of the great judgment the Lord will not hold guiltless any one who sweareth by His name in vain... For in six days the Lord created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and whatever is therein, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the Lord hath blessed the day of Shabbatha and sanctified it.  
(Etheridge)

**APPENDIX VII.**

*Canon of the Pshitta Tanakh.*

The following list of the Books of the Aramaic Pshitta are according to notes by Aran Younan in 1901, and correspond to the list and order of ancient Aramaic Codex Ambrosianus.

Genesis - Sipra d'Berita

Exodus - Sipra d'Mapkana

Leviticus- Sipra d'Kakhane

Numbers- Sipra d'Minyane

Deuteronomy - Sipre d'Tinyan Aurayta

Job - Ketava d'Yob

Joshua - Ketava d'Ishu bar Nun

Judges - Sipra Dayane

1 Samuel / 2 Samuel - Ketava Kadmaya d'Shemuel / Ketava

Trayana d'Shemuel

Psalms - Ketava d'Mazmore (d'David)

1 Kings / 2 Kings - Sipra Kadmaya d'Malke / Sipra Trayana  
d'Malke

Proverbs - Ketava d'Matle

Wisdom\*

Ecclesiastes - Ketava d'Kukhlat

Song of Songs - Tishbekhat Tishbekhata

Isaiah - Ketava d'Eshaya Nebya

Jeremiah - Ketava d'Eramya Nebya

Lamentations - Ketava d'Olyata

Epistle of Jeremiah\*

Epistle of Baruch\*

Baruch\*

Ezekiel - Ketava d'Khazquiel

Hosea - Ketava d'Khosha Nebya

Joel - Ketava d'Yoel Nebya

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Amos - Ketava d'Amos Nebya  
Obadiah - Ketava d'Obadya Nebya  
Jonah - Ketava d'Yonan Nebya  
Micah - Ketava d'Mikha Nebya  
Nahum - Ketava d'Nakhom Nebya  
Habakkuk - Ketava d'Khabok Nebya  
Zephaniah - Ketava d'Zefanya Nebya  
Haggai - Ketava d'Khagai Nebya  
Zechariah - Ketava d'Zekarya Nebya  
Malachi - Ketava d'Malakhi Nebya  
Daniel (with "Prayer of Azariah" and "Song of Three") - Ketava  
d'Daniel Nebya  
Bel\*  
The Dragon\*  
Ruth - Ketava d'Rot  
Susanna\*  
Esther - Ketava d'Ister  
Judith\*  
Ben Sirach\*  
1 Chronicles / 2 Chronicles - Sipra Kadmaya d'Dabaryamin / Sipra  
Beth d'Dabaryamin  
Apocalypse of Baruch\*  
4 Ezra\*  
Ezra - Ketava d'Ezra  
Nehemiah - Ketava d'Nekhemya  
1 Maccabees\*, 2 Maccabees\*, 3 Maccabees\*, 4 Maccabees\*  
Josephus, Wars of the Jews\*

\* The Jewish Aramaic Peshitta mentions these books as being canonical and in most cases are given Hebrew names rather than Aramaic. The list corresponds to Codex Ambrosianus. Younan's manuscript contains the Hebrew Masoretic text with extensive lists of vocabulary, variants, and other valuable information for those researching Aramaic Peshitta manuscripts, and in particular Jewish Aramaic dialects.

**APPENDIX VIII.**  
*Genesis 1:2 in Comparison.*

Peshitta: And the Earth was chaos and shallow, and darkneses was on the surface of the deep abyss. And the Spirit of God incubated/brooded/hovered on the surface of waters.

Most translations of this verse, which are from the Masoretic, use the words "moved" or "swept", NRSV: "swept over the face of the waters". The Masoretic text uses the phrase "me'rachepeth", from "rachaph" (See #7363 in Strong's Hebrew Concordance, a primitive root meaning "to brood").

Targum Onkelos (transliterated) rendered this verse in the following manner:

v'are'a havath tzad'ya v'reiqanya nachshokha al-apei t'homa  
v'Rukha min qadam YY (MarYah) m'nash'va al-apei ma'ya. (My transliteration may not follow standards)

Onkelos: "a wind from before the Lord blew upon the face of the waters"

Jerusalem Targum: "the Spirit of mercies from before the Lord breathed upon the face of the waters"

Lamsa translated Genesis 1:2 in the following manner: And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water.

It appears to me that the text of Peshitta indicates Rukha d'Koodsha was "incubating" life as in "preparing it" and "growing

it” into what it was to become. While the word “moved” probably isn't entirely incorrect, I feel that it doesn't convey the fuller sense of the plain words of Peshitta.

The word “incubating” is defined as “hovering, enveloping, heating to optimal temperature for growth, to provide heat, so as to promote embryonic development; to maintain (a chemical or biochemical system) under specific conditions in order to promote a particular reaction; to form or consider slowly and protectively, as if hatching; to maintain eggs, organisms, or living tissue at optimal environmental conditions for growth and development.”

I found an interesting comment by John Wright Follette (whom I believe was a Protestant minister who died in 1966), where he said: “When He brings forth creation, the Word says the 'Holy Spirit moved upon the deep'. The Holy Spirit 'BROODED' (in Hebrew) over the deep. It is the same word that carries the thought of incubation, and brings life. This brooding is like to a hen setting on her eggs. The Holy Spirit 'BROODED' over the deep, and God's creative Word brought forth the glorious creation that we have through the power of the Spirit.” (I'm not endorsing Follette's teachings, but only quoting what I thought was an interesting note on this verse).

**APPENDIX IX.**

*A Comparison of Proverbs 11:25 cursed/watered*

*Peshitta:* The blessed soul will prosper, and the cursed one will be damned more. (or "cursed more", "more cursed")

*American Standard Version:* The liberal soul shall be made fat; And he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

*J.P. Green:* The blessed soul will be made fat; he who waters will also drink fully.

*New International Version:* A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

*King James Version:* The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

*New Revised Standard Version:* A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water.

*Douay-Rheims Bible:* The soul that blesseth, shall be made fat: and he that inebriateth, shall be inebriated also himself.

*Young's Literal Translation:* A liberal soul is made fat, And whoso is watering, he also is watered.

*Geneva Bible 1587:* The liberall person shall haue plentie: and he that watereth, shall also haue raine.

*Jewish Publication Society 1917:* The beneficent soul shall be made rich, and he that satisfieth abundantly shall be satisfied also himself.

**APPENDIX X.**

*Comparing Deuteronomy 23:1 adulterer/eunuch*

*Peshitta Tanakh:* No adulterer shall enter the congregation of MarYah.

*Masoretic text (23:2 in Hebrew):* A man with crushed testicles or a severed organ shall not enter the congregation of YHWH. (from the Stone Chumash, 1998 Mesorah Publications, Artscroll)

*Aleppo Codex:* (this particular verse in Aleppo reads the same as the other Hebrew Masoretic texts),

לא יבא פצוע דכא וכרות שפכה בקהל יהוה

*Biblia Peshitta:* Ningún adúltero entrará a la congegación de Yahweh. (from the Spanish Peshitta, 2006)

*Other Versions*

*New American Standard Bible:* "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

*King James Version:* He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

*American Standard Version:* He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

*Bible in Basic English:* No man whose private parts have been wounded or cut off may come into the meeting of the Lord's people.

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*Douay-Rheims Bible:* An eunuch, whose testicles are broken or cut away, or yard cut off, shall not enter into the church of the Lord.

*Darby Bible Translation:* He that is a eunuch, whether he have been crushed or cut, shall not come into the congregation of Jehovah.

*English Revised Version:* He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD.

*Jewish Publication Society Tanakh:* He that is crushed or maimed in his privy parts shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD.

*Webster's Bible Translation:* He that is wounded or mutilated in his secrets, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

*World English Bible:* He who is wounded in the stones, or has his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Yahweh.

*Young's Literal Translation:* One wounded, bruised, or cut in the member doth not enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

**APPENDIX XI.**

*Isaiah 6:10, past/present tense.*

*Peshitta:* “For the heart of this city/people has been (has become) hardened, they have deafened their ears and have closed their eyes, so that they do not see with their eyes, neither hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, nor (have any) regret nor are they pardoned.”

The ancient text of Peshitta appears to show that this is something that has *already* taken place to the people/city, whereas the Hebrew of the Masoretic text indicates this is almost like a petition to God in order to make this happen to the people/city.

*Biblia Peshitta (Spanish):* Porque el corazón de este pueblo le ha sido endurecido. Él ha ensordecido sus oídos y ha cerrado sus ojos, para que no vea con sus ojos, ni oiga con sus oídos, ni entienda con su corazón, ni se arrepienta ni le sea perdonado.

*Hebrew Masoretic text:*

השמך לב העם הזה ואזניו הכבד ועיניו השע פך יראה בעיניו  
ובאזניו ישמע ולבבו יבין ושב--ורפא לו

*American Standard Version:* Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.

*Lamsa:* For the heart of this people is darkened and their ears are heavy and their eyes closed, so that they may not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted and be forgiven.

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*King James Version:* Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

*Revised Standard Version:* Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.

*New Revised Standard Version:* Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.

*New American Standard Bible:* Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.

*Douay-Rheims:* Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.

*Complete Jewish Bible:* Make the heart of this people [sluggish with] fat, stop up their ears, and shut their eyes. Otherwise, seeing with their eyes, and hearing with their ears, then understanding with their hearts, they might repent and be healed!

*Young's Literal Translation:* Declare fat the heart of this people, And its ears declare heavy, And its eyes declare dazzled, Lest it see with its eyes, And with its ears hear, and its heart consider, And it hath turned back, and hath health.

**APPENDIX XII.**

*Habakkuk 2:11, Theodore of Mopsuestia.*

Theodore of Mopsuestia is quoted by J.P. Migne as writing, "Some have said that the Syrian version reads 'peg'; but it would be nonsense to disregard the voice of the Hebrew -- in which the prophets spoke and which the Seventy with their own translation have made clear to us, for they were notables and perfectly knew that language -- and pay attention to the Syrian who has altered the voice of the Hebrews into that of the Syrians. Besides he often wants to raise his own mistakes to a linguistic law, without knowing what he is talking about."

Theodore's reference to "the Seventy" is the Septuagint. It appears by this comment that Theodore is rejecting the Peshitta text over that of the Septuagint (for this particular passage at least) which says "beetle" while the Peshitta says "peg" or "nail".

*From Aramaic:* For the stone shall implore from the wall, and the nail from the wood shall respond. (or a different tense: For the stone has implored/called out from the wall, and the nail from the wood has responded.)

*Lamsa:* For the stone shall cry out from the wall, and the nail in the wood shall answer it.

*Jewish Publication Soc. (1917):* For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

*Jewish Publication Soc. (modern edition):* For a stone shall cry out from the wall, and a rafter shall answer it from the woodwork.

*Brenton's Septuagint:* For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and

the beetle out of the timber shall speak.

Regarding this passage, Paul Younan said, “I don't know how a beetle makes any contextual sense here. It looks like the Peshitta translates closer to the original Hebrew than the LXX does. Were the Seventy immune from translation error? The translators of the Peshitta were Jews, too. Looks like the latter got this one right.”

**APPENDIX XIII.**

*Differences between the Aramaic of Numbers 25:4  
with other versions or translations.*

English translation of the ancient Aramaic Peshitta: “MRYH said to Moses: Take all the heads [or “chiefs”] of the town and drive [or “disperse”, “move”, “lead”] them before MRYH, toward the light of the sun and my wrath will turn away from the children of Israel.”

*Jewish Publication Society, 1917:* based on the common Hebrew Masoretic text, “And the LORD said unto Moses: Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up unto the LORD in face of the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.”

*New Revised Standard Version:* “impale them”

*Luther (1545):* “hang them”

*Septuagint (Brenton, 1851):* “And the Lord said to Moses, Take all the princes of the people, and make them examples of judgment for the Lord in the face of the sun, and the anger of the Lord shall be turned away from Israel.”

*Lamsa:* “And the LORD said to Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people and expose them before the LORD in the daylight that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from the children of Israel.”

Other languages use “put to death”, “utterly destroy”, “smite”, “slay.”

**APPENDIX XIV.**

*Isaiah 45:17, Peshitta, Mass, LXX, etc.*

*Peshitta:* The salvation of Israel is in MarYah, the Saviour of the world; you will not be insulted nor confused forever.

*Aleppo Codex:*

ישראל נושע ביהוה תשועת עולמים לא תבשו ולא תכלמו עד  
עולמי עד

*Septuagint:*

ισραηλ σωζεται υπο κυριου σωτηριαν αιωνιον ουκ  
αισχυνθησονται ουδε μη εντραπωσιν εως του αιωνος

*New American Standard Bible (1995):* Israel has been saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity.

*GOD'S WORD Translation (1995):* Israel has been saved by the LORD forever. You will never again be ashamed or disgraced.

*King James Version:* But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

*American Standard Version:* But Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be put to shame nor confounded world without end.

*Bible in Basic English:* But the Lord will make Israel free with an eternal salvation: you will not be put to shame or made low for ever and ever.

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*Douay-Rheims Bible:* Israel is saved in the Lord with as eternal salvation: you shall not be confounded, and you shall not be ashamed for ever and ever.

*Darby Bible Translation:* Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, unto the ages of ages.

*English Revised Version:* But Israel shall be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

*Jewish Publication Society Tanakh (1917):* O Israel, that art saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

*Webster's Bible Translation:* But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

*World English Bible:* Israel will be saved by Yahweh with an everlasting salvation. You will not be disappointed nor confounded to ages everlasting.

*Young's Literal Translation:* Israel hath been saved in Jehovah, A salvation age-during! Ye are not ashamed nor confounded Unto the ages of eternity!

**APPENDIX XV.**  
*Comparing Genesis 2:2.*

Genesis 2:2, where it says “seventh day” in the following translations, is in contradiction to Exodus 20:11.

*New American Standard Bible:* By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

*King James Version:* And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

*American Standard Version:* And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

*Bible in Basic English:* And on the seventh day God came to the end of all his work; and on the seventh day he took his rest from all the work which he had done.

*Douay-Rheims Bible:* And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.

*Darby Bible Translation:* And God had finished on the seventh day his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

*English Revised Version:* And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

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*Jewish Publication Society Tanakh:* And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

*Webster's Bible Translation:* And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

*World English Bible:* On the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

*Young's Literal Translation:* and God completeth by the seventh day His work which He hath made, and ceaseth by the seventh day from all His work which He hath made.

*Exodus 20:11*

*New American Standard Bible:* For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

*King James Version:* For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Bible in Basic English:* For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and everything in them, and he took his rest on the seventh day: for this reason the Lord has given his blessing to the seventh day and made it holy.

*Douay-Rheims Bible:* For in six days the Lord made heaven and

*Ancient Versions of the Bible*

earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

*Darby Bible Translation:* For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*English Revised Version:* for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Jewish Publication Society Tanakh:* for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Webster's Bible Translation:* For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

*World English Bible:* for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy.

*Young's Literal Translation:* for six days hath Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and resteth in the seventh day; therefore hath Jehovah blessed the Sabbath-day, and doth sanctify it.

**APPENDIX XVI.**  
*Targum literature.*

The Targum literature includes:

(a) The two Targums to the Pentateuch and to the Prophets respectively, which received the official sanction of the Babylonian academic authorities. Both originated in Palestine, and received their final form in the Babylonian colleges of the third and fourth centuries. That to the Pentateuch, owing to the misunderstanding of a statement concerning the Bible translation made by Akylas (Aquila), was denominated the Targum of Onkelos ('Akylas). That to the Prophets is ascribed by ancient tradition to a disciple of Hillel, Jonathan b. Uzziel:

(b) The Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, the full text of which has come down to us only in a late recension, where it has been combined with the Targum Onkelos. Instead of being called by its proper name, Targum Yerushalmi, this full text had erroneously been called by the name of Jonathan. A less interpolated form of the Targum Yerushalmi to the Pentateuch revealed numerous fragments that must have been collected at an early period. There are also Palestinian fragments of the Targum to the Prophets.[On a peculiar Targum to the Haft̄arot, see R. Gotthell, "Journal of Amer. Orient Soc. Proceedings," xiv. 43; Abrahams, "Jew. Quart. Rev." xi. 295; "Monatsschrift," xxxix. 394.—G.]

(c) The Targums to the Hagiographa vary greatly in character. A special group is formed by those of the Psalms and Job. According to well-founded tradition there was as early as the first half of the first century of the common era a Targum to Job. The Targum to Proverbs belongs, as already mentioned, to the Syrian version of

the Bible. The Five Rolls had their own Targums; the Book of Esther several of them. The Targum to Chronicles was discovered latest of all.

(3) Aramaic Apocrypha: There was at least a partial Aramaic translation of the book of Sirach as early as the time of the Amoraim. A portion of the Aramaic sentences of Sirach, intermingled with other matter, is extant in the "Alphabet of Ben Sira." The Aramaic "Book of the Hasmonean House," also entitled "Antiochus' Roll," contains a narrative of the Maccabeans' struggles, and was known in the early gaonic period. A "Chaldaic" Book of Tobit was utilized by Jerome, but the Aramaic Book of Tobit found by Neubauer, and published in 1878, is a later revision of the older text. An Aramaic Apocryphal addition to Esther is the "Dream of Mordecai," of Palestinian origin.

(4) Megillat Ta'anit, the Fast Roll, is a list of the historically "memorable days," drawn up in almanac form. It was compiled before the destruction of the Second Temple, edited in the Hadrianic period, and later on augmented by various Hebrew annotations mostly of the tannaitic age.

(5) The Palestinian Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi), completed in the beginning of the fifth century.

(6) The Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Babli), completed at the end of the fifth century. The Aramaic contents of both Talmuds are the most important and also the most abundant remains of the Aramaic idiom used by the Jews of Palestine and Babylonia respectively. The numerous stories, legends, anecdotes, conversations, and proverbs reveal faithfully the actual language of the popular usage. Neither Talmud is, however, entirely an Aramaic work. As the utterances of the Amoraim and their halakic discussions retain a great deal of the New Hebrew idiom of the

tannaitic literature, both idioms were employed in the academies. Moreover, a large proportion of the material contained in the Talmud is composed of the utterances of tannaitic tradition that were couched only in Hebrew.

(7) The Midrash Literature: Of this branch the following are especially rich in Aramaic elements: Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, Lamentations Rabbati, the Midrash Ḥazita upon the Song of Songs, and the old Pesikṭa. The Rabbot Midrashim on Ruth, Esther, and Ecclesiastes, and the Midrash on the Psalms, contain also much Aramaic. The younger Midrashim, especially those belonging to the Yelamdenu (or TanḤuma) group, are, in part, the Hebrew revisions of originally Aramaic portions. The Aramaic parts of the older Midrashim are linguistically allied most closely to the idiom of the Palestinian Talmud.

(8) The Masorah. The terminology of the Masorah, which, in its beginnings, belongs to the amoraic period, and the language of the oldest Masoretic annotations and statements, are Aramaic.

(9) The Gaonic Literature: The legal decisions of the Geonim were for the greater part written in Aramaic, in harmony with the language of the Babylonian Talmud; but they possessed this advantage, at least in the first few centuries, that this was likewise the living language of the people. The same is true concerning those two works of the older gaonic period, the "She'eltot" and the "Halakot Gedolot," which contain some material not found in the vocabulary of the Talmud.

(10) Liturgical Literature: In addition to the Kaddish already mentioned, several liturgical pieces originating in Babylon received general acceptance throughout the diaspora. Such were the two prayers beginning "Yeḳum Purḳan" in the Sabbath-morning service, the introductory sentences of the Passover

Haggadah, and certain older portions of the liturgy for penitential days. It is curious to note that the Yemen Siddur contains a larger quantity of Aramaic than the Siddurim of other countries. A unique Targum of the 'Amidah (Tefillah) is to be found in a Yemen MS. (Gaster, No. 61) of the seventeenth or eighteenth century; it has been printed in the "Monatsschrift," xxxix. 79 et seq.—G. The Aramaic poems introducing certain Targumic selections from the Pentateuch have been mentioned above.

(11) Cabalistic Literature: The revival of Aramaic as the literary language of the Cabala by the Zohar has already been mentioned.

(12) Rabbinical Literature: The Aramaic coloring of a large proportion of the works commenting upon the Babylonian Talmud, as well as of other productions of halakic lore continuing the literature of the gaonic age, was derived from the Babylonian Talmud, from which the terminology and phraseology were adopted at the same time as the contents. (Quoted from the *Jewish Encyclopedia*)

**APPENDIX XVII.**

*Jewish Encyclopedia on Targum Onkelos.*

In addition to the complete Palestinian Targum (pseudo-Jonathan) there exist fragments of the Palestinian Targum termed "Targum Yerushalmi"; but of these fragments, comprised under the generic term "Fragment-Targum," only those were until recently known which were first published in Bomberg's "Biblia Rabbinica" in 1518 on the basis of Codex Vaticanus No. 440. A few years ago, however, Ginsburger edited under the title "Das Fragmententargum" (Berlin, 1899) a number of other fragments from manuscript sources, especially from Codex Parisiensis No. 110, as well as the quotations from the Targum Yerushalmi found in ancient authors. This work rendered a large amount of additional material available for the criticism of the Palestinian Targum, even though a considerable advance had already been made by Bassfreund in his "Fragmenten-Targum zum Pentateuch" (see "Monatsschrift," 1896, xl.).

The general views concerning the Palestinian Targum and its relation to Onkelos have been modified but slightly by these new publications. Although the relation of the Targum Yerushalmi to Onkelos has already been discussed, it may be added here that the complete Palestinian Targum, as it is found in the pseudo-Jonathan, is not earlier than the seventh century; for it mentions Ayeshah ('A'ishah) (or, according to another reading, Khadija [Ḥadijah]) and Fatima, the wife and daughter of Mohammed, as wives of Ishmael, who was regarded as Mohammed's ancestor.

It originated, moreover, at a period when the Targum Onkelos was exercising its influence on the Occident; for the redactor of the Palestinian Targum in this form combined many passages of the two translations as they now exist in the Targum Yerushalmi and

the Targum. Onkelos (see "Z. D. M. G." xxviii. 69 et seq.), besides revealing his dependence on the Onkelos in other respects as well. The fragments of the Targum Yerushalmi are not all contemporaneous; and many passages contain several versions of the same verses, while certain sections are designated as additions ("tosefta"). The text of the majority of the fragments is older than the pseudo-Jonathan; and these remnants, which frequently consist of a single word only or of a portion of a verse, have been fused according to a principle which can no longer be recognized; but they may have consisted in part of glosses written by some copyist on the margin of the Onkelos, although without system and thus without completeness.

Many of these fragments, especially the haggadic paraphrases, agree with the pseudo-Jonathan, which may, on the other hand, be older than some of them. In like manner, haggadic additions were made in later centuries to the text of the Targum, so that an African manuscript of the year 1487 alludes to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. Early in the twelfth century Judah ben Barzillai wrote as follows with regard to these additions: "The Palestinian Targum contains haggadic sayings added by those who led in prayer and who also read the Targum, insisting that these sayings be recited in the synagogue as interpretations of the text of the Bible." Despite the numerous additions to the Palestinian Targum, and notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the fragments are of later date than Onkelos, both pseudo-Jonathan and the fragments contain much that has survived from a very early period; indeed, the nucleus of the Palestinian Targum is older than the Babylonian, which was redacted from it.

CODEX AMBROSIANUS

Handwritten text in Aramaic script, likely a copy of the Peshitta Tanakh. The text is dense and fills most of the page, written in a cursive style characteristic of ancient manuscripts. The script is dark and appears to be on parchment or a similar material. The lines of text are somewhat irregular, following the natural shape of the page. The characters are small and closely packed together, with some larger characters that may serve as section markers or initial letters. The overall appearance is that of a well-preserved but clearly ancient document.

From a 5<sup>th</sup> Century Copy of the Aramaic Pshitta Tanakh

## **GLOSSARY**

A simple glossary will be added to the final edition of this paper.

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*This is not the final version of this paper, and therefore may contain typos and areas where clarification is necessary. Please feel free to send feedback and notification of typos. manuscritosarameos at gmail dot com*

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