Shlama Akhay,

In Mar Aphrahat’s 22nd Demonstration ("Of Death and The Latter Times"), we read a direct quote from the Peshitta of 1Corinthians 2:9:

**Mar Aphrahat wrote:**

\[\text{טָפַה שֶׁהָיָה} \]
\[\text{נָנַע} \text{הָרְבּוּ} \]
\[\text{בָּרָא לְאָוֶּה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \]
\[\text{טָפַה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \text{לְאָוֶּה} \]
\[\text{טָפַה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \text{לְאָוֶּה} \]

Translation:
"There is the thing... Which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and which hath not come up into the heart which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

**Peshitta wrote:**

\[\text{טָפַה שֶׁהָיָה} \]
\[\text{נָנַע} \text{הָרְבּוּ} \]
\[\text{בָּרָא לְאָוֶּה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \]
\[\text{טָפַה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \text{לְאָוֶּה} \]
\[\text{טָפַה} \text{רֶכֶזָּה} \text{לְאָוֶּה} \]

Translation:
"[i]Which eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and which hath not come up into the heart of man, That which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

As you can see, this is **100%** verbatim the reading of the Peshitta. Pretty impressive for a "version" that was supposed to be around when he was alive, no? 😊

Shlama Akhay,

In Mar Aphrahat’s 22nd Demonstration ("Of Death and The Latter Times"), we read a quote from the Peshitta of Galatians 3:28:

**Mar Aphrahat wrote:**
And the Apostle said neither "male nor female" and neither "servant nor free" rather "you are all one in Yeshua Meshikha"

There is no "male nor female" There is no "servant nor free" "you are all one, for, in Yeshua Meshikha"

With just a little rearranging of the clauses which is typical of the writing style, or paraphrasing, of Mar Aphrahat - the reading is 100% identical to the Peshitta. 😊
Shlama Akhay,

In Mar Aphrahat's 22nd Demonstration ("Of Death and The Latter Times"), we read a direct quote from the Peshitta of Romans 5:14:

**Mar Aphrahat wrote:**

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Mar Aphrahat wrote:

[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]

אָこんにちは הָועָדָן וְלָתֵּר יִשָּׂרֵי

Transliteration:
Aykh d'eman Shlikha:  
d'amlekh mowtha men w'adam w'adma l'Moshe  
w'ap al alyn d'la khaTaw

Translation:
As the Apostle said, that "Death ruled from Adam unto Moses" and "even over those who sinned not."
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**Peshitta wrote:**

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Peshitta wrote:

[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]

אָינתָן הָועָדְן וְלָתֵּר יִשָּׂרֵי

Transliteration:
amlekh mowtha men w'adam w'adma l'Moshe  
ap al alyn d'la khaTaw

Translation:
"Death ruled from Adam unto Moses, even over those who sinned not."
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As you can see, this is 100% verbatim the reading of the Peshitta. Pretty impressive for a "version" that wasn't supposed to be around when he was alive, no? 😊

Shlama Akhay,

In his Eighth Demonstration (Of the Resurrection of the Dead), Mar Aphrahat quotes the Peshitta reading of Yukhanan 11:43 verbatim against Old Scratch:

**Mar Aphrahat wrote:**
Here is why finding direct quotes from the Peshitta in Mar Aphrahat's Demonstrations is so explosive.

The dates of composition:

*Quote:*

The Demonstrations are twenty-two in number, after the number of the letters of the Aramaic alphabet, each of them beginning with the letter to which it corresponds in order. The first ten form a group by themselves, and are somewhat earlier in date than those which follow: they deal with Christian graces, hopes, and duties, as appears from their titles:--"Concerning Faith, Charity, Fasting, Prayer, Wars, Monks, Penitents, the Resurrection, Humility, Pastors." Of those that compose the later group, three relate to the Jews.
("Concerning Circumcision, the Passover, the Sabbath"); followed by one described as "Hortatory," which seems to be a letter of rebuke addressed by Aphrahat, on behalf of a Synod of Bishops, to the clergy and people of Seleucia and Ctesiphon (Babylon); after which the Jewish series is resumed in five discourses, "Concerning Divers Meals, The Call of the Gentiles, Jesus the Messiah, Virginity, the Dispersion of Israel." The three last are of the same general character as the first ten,--"Concerning Almsgiving, Persecution, Death, and the Latter Times." To this collection is subjoined a twenty-third Demonstration, supplementary to the rest, "Concerning the Grape," under which title is signified the blessing transmitted from the beginning through Christ, in allusion to the words of Isaiah, "As the grape is found in the cluster and one saith, Destroy it not" ( lxv. 8 ). This treatise embodies a chronological disquisition of some importance.

Of the dates at which they were written, these discourses supply conclusive evidence. At the end of section 5 of Demonstr. V. (Concerning Wars), the author reckons the years from the era of Alexander (B.C. 311) to the time of his writing as 648. He wrote therefore in A.D. 337--the year of the death of Constantine the Great. Demonst. XIV. is formally dated in its last section, "in the month Shebat. in the year 655 (that is, A. D. 344). More fully, in closing the alphabetic series (XXII. 25) he informs us that the above dates apply to the two groups--the first ten being written in 337; the twelve that follow, in 344. Finally, the supplementary discourse "Concerning the Grape" was written (as stated, XXIII. 69) in July, 345. Thus the entire work was completed within nine years,--five years before the middle of the fourth century,--before the composition of the earliest work of Ephraim of which the date can be determined with certainty.

The manuscript evidence:

Quote:
The oldest extant MS. of these discourses (Add. 17182 of the British Museum) contains the first ten, and is dated 474. With it is bound up (under the same number) a second, dated 512, containing the remaining thirteen. A third (Add. 14619) of the sixth century likewise, exhibits the whole series. A fourth (Orient, 1017), more recent by eight centuries, will be mentioned farther on. Of the three early MSS., the first designates the author as "the Persian Sage" merely, as does also the third: the second prefixes his name as "Mar Jacob the Persian Sage."

The witnesses:

Quote:
It is not until some years after the mid-die of the tenth century, that the "Persian Sage" first appears under his proper name,--of which, though as it appears generally forgotten in the Syriac world of letters, a tradition had survived.--The Nestorian Bar-Bahlul (circ. 963) in his Syro-Arabic Lexicon, writes thus:--"Aphrahat [mentioned] in the Book of Paradise, is the Persian Sage, as they record."--So too, in the eleventh century), Elias of Nisibis (Barsinaeus, d. 1049), embodies in his Chronography, a table, compiled from Demonstr. XXIII., of the chronography from the Creation to the "Era of Alexander" (B. C. 311), which he describes as "The years of the House of Adam, according to the opinion of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage." --To the like
effect, but with fuller information, the great light of the mediaeval Jacobite Church, Gregory Barhebraeus (d. 1286), in Part I. of his Ecclesiastical Chronicle, in enumerating the orthodox contemporaries of Athanasius, mentions, after Ephraim, "the Persian Sage who wrote the Book of Demonstrations;" and again in Part II., supplies his name under a slightly different form, as one who "was of note in the time of Papas the Catholicus," "the Persian Sage by name Pharhad, of whom there are extant a book of admonition [al., admonitions] in Syriac, and twenty-two Epistles according to the letters of the alphabet." Here we have not only the name and description of the personage in question, but a fairly accurate account of his works, under the titles by which the MSS. describe them, "Epistles and Demonstrations;--and moreover a sufficient indication of his date, in agreement with that which the Demonstrations claim: for one who began to write in 337 must have lived in the closing years of the life of Papas (who died in 334), and in the earlier years of the life of Ephraim. So yet again, a generation later, the learned Nestorian prelate, Ebedjesu, in his Catalogue of Syrian ecclesiastical authors, writes, "Aphrahat, the Persian Sage, composed two volumes with Homilies that are according to the alphabet." Here once more the name and designation are given unhesitatingly, and the division of the discourses into two groups is correctly noted; but the concluding words appear to distinguish these groups from the alphabetic Homilies. Either, therefore, we must take the preposition rendered "with" to mean "containing,"--or we must conclude that Ebedjesu's knowledge of the work was at second-hand and incorrect. Finally, in a very late MS., dated 1364, is found the first or chronological part of Demonstration XXIII., headed as follows:--"The Demonstration concerning the Grape, of the Sage Aphrahat, who is Jacob, Bishop of Mar Mathai." Here (though the prefix "Persian" is absent) we have the author's title of "Sage": and the identification of the "Aphrahat" of the later authorities with the "Jacob" of the earlier is not merely implied but expressly affirmed. Here, moreover, we have what seems to account for the twofold name. As author, he is Aphrahat; as Bishop, he is Jacob--the latter name having been no doubt assumed on his elevation to the Episcopate. Such changes of name, at consecration, which in later ages of the Syrian Church became customary, were no doubt exceptional in the earlier period of which we are treating. But the fact that Aphrahat was a Persian name, bestowed on him no doubt in childhood--when he was still (as will be shown presently) outside the Christian fold--a name which is supposed to signify "Chief" or "Prefect," and which may have seemed unsuited to the humility of the sacred office--supplies a reason for the substitution in its stead of a name associated with sacred history, both of the Old and of the New Testament. Here finally we have the direct statement of what Georgius had justly inferred from the opening of Dem. XIV., that the writer was himself of the clergy, and in this Epistle writes as a cleric to clerics.

That he definitely was from the Persian Church (Church of the East):

Quote:

That the author was of Persian nationality, is a point on which all the witnesses agree, except the fourteenth-century scribe of the MS. Orient. 1017, who however is merely silent about it. The name Aphrahat is, as has been already said, Persian--which fact at once confirms the tradition that he belonged to Persia, and helps to account for what seems to be the reluctance of early writers to call him by a name that was foreign, unfamiliar, unsuited to his subsequent station in the Church, and superseded by one that had sacred associations. As a Persian, he dates his writings by the years of the reign of the
Persian King: the twenty-two were completed (he says) in the thirty-fifth, the twenty-third in the thirty-sixth of the reign of Sapor. --Again: as a Persian of the early fourth century, it is presumable that he was not originally a Christian. And this is apparently confirmed by the internal evidence of his own writings; for he speaks of himself as one of those "who have cast away idols, and call that a lie which our father bequeathed to us;" and again, "who ought to worship Jesus, for that He has turned away our froward minds from all superstitions of vain error, and taught us to worship one God our Father and Maker."--But it is clear that he must have lived in a frontier region where Syriac was spoken freely; or else must have removed into a Syriac-speaking country at an early age; for the language and style of his writings are completely pure, showing no trace of foreign idiom, or even of the want of ease that betrays a foreigner writing in what is not his mother-tongue. It is clear also that, at whatever age or under whatever circumstances he embraced Christianity, he must have taken the Christian Scriptures and Christian theology into his inmost heart and understanding as every page of his writings attests.

That he was bishop of Nineveh:

**Quote:**

If we accept the late, but internally probable, statement of the Scribe of MS. Orient. 1017 (above mentioned), that "the Persian Sage" was "Bishop of the monastery of Mar Mathai," we arrive at a complete explanation of the circumstances under which this Epistle was composed. For the Bishop of Mar Mathai was Metropolitan of Nineveh, and ranked among the Bishops of "the East" only second to the Catholicus; and his province bordered on that which the Catholicus (as Metropolitan of Seleucia) held in his immediate jurisdiction. The Bishop of Mar Mathai therefore would properly preside in a Synod of the Eastern Bishops, met to consider the disorders and discussions existing in Seleucia and its suffragan sees. It thus becomes intelligible how an Epistle of such official character has found a place in a series of discourses of which the rest are written as from man to man merely. The writer addresses the Bishops, Clergy, and people of Seleucia and Ctesiphon in the name of a Synod over which he was President, a Synod probably of Bishops suffragan to Nineveh, and perhaps of those of some adjacent sees.

That he is prior to Ephraem:

**Quote:**

In thus placing Aphrahat first as their projected series of Syriac Divines, the learned editors follow the opinion which, ever since Wright published his edition, has been adopted by Syriac scholars--that Aphrahat is prior in time to Ephraim. This is undoubtedly true (as pointed out above) in the only limited sense, that the Demonstrations are earlier by some years (the first ten by thirteen years, the remainder by five or six) than the earliest of Ephraim's writings which can be dated with certainty (namely, the first Nisibene Hymn, which belongs to 350). It is then assumed that Ephraim was born in the reign of Constantine, therefore not earlier than 306, and that Aphrahat was a man of advanced age when he wrote (of which there is no proof whatever), and must therefore have been born before the end of the third century--perhaps as early as 280. It has been shown above (p. 145) that even if we admit the authority of the Syriac Life of Ephraim, we must regard the supposed statement of his
birth in Constantine's time as a mistranslation or rather perversion of the text. Thus the argument for placing Ephraim's birth so late as 306 disappears, while for placing Aphrahat's birth no argument has been advanced, but merely conjecture; and the result is, that the two may, so far as evidence goes, be regarded as contemporary. It is true that Barhebraeus, in his Ecclesiastical History, reckons Aphrahat as belonging to the time of Papas, who died 335; built is to be noted that in the very same context he mentions that letters were extant purporting to be addressed by Jacob of Nisibis and Ephraim to the same Papas,--and though he admits that some discredited the genuineness of these letters, he gives no hint that Ephraim was too young to have written them. In fact he could not do so, for in the earlier part of this History he had already named Ephraim as present at the Nicene Council in 325, and had placed his name before that of Aphrahat in including both among the contemporaries of the Great Athanasius.

That his canon is that of the **Peshitta**:

**Quote:**

His New Testament Canon is apparently that of the Peshitta;--that is to say, *he shows no signs of acquaintance with the four shorter Catholic Epistles*, and in the one citation which seems to be from the Apocalypse, it has been shown to be probable that he is really referring to the Targum of Onkelos on Deut. xxxiii. 6.

All quotes from "JOHN GWYNN, D.D., D.C.L. -- REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN" as quoted in the book - *NICENE AND POST-NICENE FATHERS, SERIES II VOLUME XIII*

There you have it, folks. The Peshitta present in Nineveh during the 330s - remarkable, seeing that Rabbula's *great-grandmother* had not yet even been conceived! 😅

'nuff said! 😅

(*) our modern-day imbeciles claim that Rabbula of Edessa, the 5th-century arch-enemy of the Church of the East, produced the Peshitta. How the Church of the East, his hated enemies, came to adopt a version supposedly made from his hands - only these idiots know.

P.S. - if the Peshitta was around during the 330s and quoted by a high-ranking official of the Church of the East, how much farther back in time must it have originated? The late 200s....the early 200s....the late 100s....the early 100s.....the Apostles' hands? 😁

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*Paul Younan*

Post: Wed Oct 15, 2003 4:45 pm  
Post subject: Mar Aphrahat and Yukhanan 10:30

**Shlama Akhay,**

In his Sixth Demonstration, Mar Aphrahat quotes the Peshitta of Yukhanan 10:30 verbatim against Old Scratch:

**Mar Aphrahat wrote:**

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[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]
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Shlama Akhi Yuri,

In Mar Aphrahat's *Demonstrations on Faith*, we find the following quote from Luqa 15:8:

"What woman, who has ten coins and loses one of them, and (Waw Proclitic) not does light a lamp and sweep (Khama) the house..."

Now let's see how the Peshitta and Old Scratch read:

**Peshitta wrote:**

"I and my Father are one (khnan)"

**Old Scratch wrote:**

"I and my Father we are one (ankhnan)"
"What woman, who has ten coins and loses one of them, not does light a lamp and sweep (Khama) the house..." (exactly 100% the same as Mar Aphrahat)

Old Scratch Sinaiticus:
"What woman, who has ten coins and loses one of them, not does light a lamp and sweep (Khama) the house..."

Old Scratch Cureton:
"What woman, who has ten coins and loses one of them, not does light a lamp and organizes (kansha) the house..."

As you can see, Akhi, the reading from Mar Aphrahat is 100% the same as the Peshitta. Both Old Scratch readings differ, however, in the following important ways:

1. Old Scratch (s) has the imperfect of the PEAL, whereas Mar Aphrahat uses just like the Peshitta
2. Both Old Scratch (s) and (c) are missing the Waw Proclitic, included in Aphrahat and the Peshitta
3. Old Scratch (c) uses a completely different word, for "sweep~organize", instead of the word employed by both the Peshitta and Mar Aphrahat

So what do you think here, Akhi - should we believe the "scholarly consensus" about a long-missing Diatesseron.....or what? (it sure as heck ain't Old Scratch Mar Aphrahat is using!) 😊
The theory is that Mar Aphrahat used the Peshitta, and sometimes he quoted directly

So, if Mar Aphrat wrote early to middle fourth century, that would mean his proof texts from the Peshitta would clearly predate both Old Scratch mss.

I may add these into an appendix or extra section in RUACH QADIM or a subsequent work. Perhaps it will go in the hardcover version when published, but I would like to see a lot more of these to make a killer presentation of it.

Shlama w'burkate
Andrew Gabriel Roth

I never even thought of that! 😐

Don't you have anything to say about these examples so far? Should I find about 20 more direct quotes from the Peshitta by Mar Aphrahat?

My only goal was to show that the probability of his paraphrasing matching up

I have the patience to put up here. I imagine that this great man must also be known as "Aphraates" by Lamsa, when he talks about an early commentary being made on the Peshitta.

So, if Mar Apharat wrote early to middle fourth century, that would mean his proof texts from the Peshitta would clearly predate both Old Scratch mss.

Don't you have anything to say about these examples so far? Should I find about 20 more direct quotes from the Peshitta by Mar Aphrahat?

My only goal was to show that the probability of his paraphrasing matching up

The process is painstaking because, most of the time, Mar Aphrahat (a.k.a, "Aphraates", "Parhad", etc.) really is re-wording and re-formulating, and just plain recalling from memory.

My only goal was to show that the probability of his paraphrasing matching up directly with the Peshitta (the text he was paraphrasing) would far outnumber the times it seemed he might be quoting something else - it's just random. (and sometimes not quoting anything at all, like the earlier example on this forum about Martha being told "If you have faith....")

See what I mean?

The theory is that Mar Aphrahat used the Peshitta, and sometimes he quoted directly
from it and sometimes he just paraphrased. That's the goal of these posts......to demonstrate some direct quotes from the Peshitta and at the same time show some quotes that match nothing in existence - therefore proving the theory that he used the Peshitta - and only the Peshitta.....and perhaps some "literary genius."

You see, the reason Akhan Yuri hasn't answered yet (God love him!) is that these examples don't fit into their theory. How could Mar Aphrahat be quoting a version which supposedly didn't exist until a hundred years after he was buried? (quotes, mind you, directly from the Peshitta and directly against the Old Scratch readings.)

According to this latest view, the Old Scratch was the basis for the Diatesseron harmony of Tatian.

Who laid that egg? I have no idea. But I know many people tried real hard to hatch it.

I guess those scholars should paraphrase their "consensus!" 😊

The gall of these people - to think they can come around and tell millions of people throughout the world who have a 2,000 year-old history that they don't even know the story of their own texts - that they really were waiting around for 21st-century American philosophers to edumacate them and set them straight.

Sheesh!

Drmlanc


"The gall of these people "

Yeah the anger of these people amazes me too...

""to edumacate them ""

😊 Too much Simpsons for you...

""to think they can come around and tell millions of people throughout the world who have a 2,000 year-old history that they don't even know the story of their own texts"

So do you have quotes from the Church etc that the Peshitta is the original? Just the stuff I'm looking for for the historical compendium. Do you have quotes for each book (22/27) of its Aramaic primacy?
Akhi, this was not an issue before. Nobody talked about what language the books were originally written in because they did not even know that centuries later, people would be claiming that a foreign language was it.

This is the universal tradition among all the churches in Asia all the way to India, and Japan before Tamerlane wiped out 99.999999% of the church.

This is why all the churches, bar none, venerate the Peshitta and no other version (not just the Church of the East, but the Maronites, Jacobites, Chaldeans, Indians, etc.)

No other version is allowed in their worship and their liturgical readings. That all these churches hate each other from 431 AD also says a lot, because they all use the same version. It must have been well established centuries before these splits for all sides to unanimously adopt them as their official version......otherwise, why would they adopt the version of their hated enemies?

When I talk of the "history" behind the primacy of the Peshitta, I am not referring to words but to the actions of these particular communities.

As the old saying goes....actions speak a lot louder than words....
"Let your light shine before (with Lamadh Proclitic) men, that they may see your beautiful works"

Old Scratch Cureton:

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your beautiful works"

There you have it my man, Mar Aphrahat here agrees 100% with the Peshitta, but here are the problems with Old Scratch:

(1) Sinaiticus has a Lamad Proclitic before "qdam" - and Mar Aphrahat does not.
(2) Both Sinaiticus and Cureton have "Shapir" (beautiful) before "works", whereas Mar Aphrahat and the Peshitta agree against them with "Tawa" - "good".
(3) Finally, both Old Scratch (s) and (c) have "Bnay Anasha" (men) as distinct words - whereas Mar Aphrahat and the Peshitta have them combined.

Where is this "scholarly consensus" Akhi?

Shlama Akhi Yuri,

Looky, looky! 😊

Here is a quote from Mar Aphrahat's Demonstrations on Faith:

"For he said to his disciples: whatever I tell you in the darkness, proclaim in the light (Nahira)."

Now, let's looky-looky at how the Peshitta and Old Scratch read here:

Yukhanan 10:27:

Peshitta:

"Whatever I tell you in the darkness, proclaim in the light (Nahira)."
Old Scratch:

[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]

Whatever I tell you in the darkness, proclaim in the light (Nuhra).

See Akhi Yuri, the quote given by Mar Aphrahat not only matches the Peshitta 100% but I’ve also demonstrated that there are two major differences between the quotation given by Mar Aphrahat and the Old Scratch:

(1) The "Emar ena" (I said) are two distinct words in Aphrahat, but a combined word in Old Scratch.
(2) Instead of "Nahira" for "light" as Aphrahat and the Peshitta have it, Old Scratch has "Nuhra".

What Akhi? Does this mean that Mar Aphrahat was quoting from the Peshitta, paraphrasing - or quoting from a long-lost "Old Syriac Diatesseron"?

He certainly wasn't quoting Old Scratch! 😊

Paul Younan
Site Admin

Joined: 05 Sep 2003
Posts: 1251
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Shlama Akhi Yuri,

In Mar Aphrahat's Demonstrations on Faith, he puts these words in Meshikha's mouth:

This is translated "Thus he spoke to his disciples: This is my commandment - that you love one another."

Now to prove to you that Mar Aphrahat was simply paraphrasing, and not directly quoting either the Peshitta or Old Scratch, I have provided their direct wordings for three different verses in Yukhanan which record a similar saying by Meshikha:

Yukhanan 13:34:
Peshitta:

"A new commandment I give to you - that you should love one another."

Old Scratch:
"A new commandment I give to you - that you should be loving to one another."

Yukhanan 15:12
Peshitta:
[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)] shortfall
"This is my commandment = that you should love one another."
Old Scratch:
[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)] shortfall (same reading)

Yukhanan 15:17
Peshitta:
[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)] shortfall
"this I command you: to love one another"
Old Scratch:
[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)] shortfall
"this, therefore, I command you: to be loving to one another."

Akhi Yuri - can you tell me whether or not Mar Aphrahat is citing any specific version here - or is he simply paraphrasing?

Or, is he supposedly quoting from a long-lost (possibly never having existed) "Old Scratch Diatesseron?" 😊

Shlama Akhi Yuri,

In Mar Aphrahat's Demonstrations on Faith, he puts these words in Meshikha's mouth:

[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)] shortfall (see
http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/cgi-bin/analysis.cgi?voffset=63450%2079873 )

This is translated: "If you believe, your brother shall rise".

Mar Aphrahat was commenting on the raising of Lazarus, and he quoted Meshikha as saying these words to Martha.

Now, can you please tell me where Mar Aphrahat is quoting from? 😊
Mar Aphrahat (the "Persian Sage") lived c.280-367. He wrote extensively, but very little of his writings have survived to this day. One of these works is called "Demonstrations", and it is available in the CAL database.

It is commonly claimed that Mar Aphrahat used either the Diatesseron or Old Scratch in his scriptural commentaries, and not the Peshitta since it is commonly held that he lived before the time of the Peshitta.

But the reality is that Mar Aphrahat for the most part does not give direct scriptural quotes of any known version. Most of the time, he appears to be going from memory or paraphrasing from the Peshitta.

Mattai 1:23 is an example of this:

In the original Aramaic of Aphrahat, we read the following quote from Isaiah 7:14 and Mattai 1:23:

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear; and His name shall be called Emmanuel, that is, our God with us."

First of all, this verse exists nowhere in any version or translation of the Diatesseron - so we can rule out the Diatesseron completely.

There are 4 possibilities left:

1. He was quoting the Peshitta of Isaiah 7:14 (he used the Peshitta Tanakh)
2. He was directly quoting Mattai 1:23 using Old Scratch
3. He was directly quoting Mattai 1:23 using the Peshitta
4. He was paraphrasing, or recalling the scriptures from memory

Which of these scenarios are the most likely?

Well, he could not have been quoting the Peshitta Tanakh - since the words "a Son" are not present in his quote. The Peshitta Tanakh has "she will bear a Son". So we can rule out #1 as a possibility.

Now, let's look at scenarios 2 and 3. Here is the reading of Mattai 1:23 from both versions:

We can rule out scenarios 2 and 3 altogether. Firstly, they both contain the "a Son" reading just like the Peshitta Tanakh of Isaiah 7:14. Secondly, they have the word that Mar Aphrahat used instead of (which is interepreted) instead of (which is).
We are left with only one other possible, reasonable scenario. That is that Mar Aphrahat freely paraphrases or in some cases may be recalling scripture from memory.

This leaves Mar Aphrahat's writings very vulnerable to attacks by Greek Primacists who insist that he used the Diatesseron - since the Diatesseron doesn't even exist anymore so that we could compare the readings and refute the Greek primacists. The argument that Mar Aphrahat used the Diatesseron is an argument from silence - an almost impossible charge to prove, or to defend against.

In this case, however, there is no valid translation of the Diatesseron - (the Arabic or the Latin) which contains this reading. Tatian simply did not appear to include this passage in his harmony of the 4 Gospels.

Therefore I submit that Mar Aphrahat in this case was not directly quoting any known (or unknown) version, but it is very evident that he was simply "targumming." 😆

Sorry, Paul, but actually this verse is present in all the Diatessarons that I've consulted so far.

For example, this is what we find in the Arabic Diatessaron,

6166 Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, With us is our God.

But, in any case, the differences between the many different versions of this verse don't seem to be all that significant.

Shlama,
Yuri.
Sorry, Paul, but actually this verse is present in all the Diatessarons that I've consulted so far.

For example, this is what we find in the Arabic Diatessaron,

6166 Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, With us is our God.

OK - I see it in the Arabic Diatesseron - but still that version reads "A Son" - which is absent in Mar Aphrahat.

This actually proves that Mar Aphrahat was not quoting the Diatesseron - otherwise the words "A Son" should be present! 😊

**Yuku wrote:**

But, in any case, the differences between the many different versions of this verse don't seem to be all that significant.

I disagree - for a direct quote the words should be 100% the same. They are not - therefore Mar Aphrahat cannot be quoting the Diatesseron. He was, as I stated - paraphrasing.

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**Paul Younan**

*Site Admin*

Joined: 05 Sep 2003
Posts: 1251
Location: Chicago, IL USA

Posted: Fri Apr 16, 2004 10:06 am  Post subject: Yukhanan 16:13  

Shlama Akhi Antonio,

I was wondering if I may ask you a question, since you studied Aramaic and NT history for one of your PhDs in Germany.

Are there any grammatical errors in this reading from Old Scratch?

**Old Scratch Yukhanan 16:13 wrote:**

[font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]

By the wisdom of God that was in him he translated the New Testament from Greek into Syriac because of its variations, exactly as it was. ' (Rabul episcopi Edesseni, Baleei, aliorumque opera selecta, Oxford 1865, ed. J. J. Overbeck)
Here we have historical evidence that Rabbula made his own translation, or revision, of some version of the Greek New Testament into Syriac. After the completion of Rabbula’s version, he sought to extinguish any other version of the scriptures from his episcopal territory:

**Rabbula wrote:**

>'The presbyters and deacons shall see to it that in all the churches a copy of the *Evangelion de Mepharreshe* shall be available and read'. (*Th. Zahn, Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, i.* (1881), p. 105.)

This title, *Evangelion de Mepharreshe* is a combination of Greek and Aramaic and means "Separate Gospels." This name was intended to distinguish it from the Diatesseron (or Gospel Harmony) of Tatian, which was very popular at the time in the area of Edessa, his diocese. So Rabbula, in one of his numerous tirades, began to suppress the Diatesseron in favor of his own translation.

Some modern idiots, headed by none other than F.C. Burkitt, in the early part of the 20th century theorized that this version which Rabbula made, the *Evangelion de Mepharreshe*, is today known to us as the Peshitta.

We have already written about the researches of Arthur Voobus and Bruce Metzger, who have thoroughly disproved this theory. The primary evidence against Burkitt’s theory is the quotations of the Gospels by Rabbula himself - they do not match the Peshitta. In fact, Arthur Voobus proved that Rabbula did not even use the Peshitta.

The second reason why it is impossible to suppose that Rabbula created the Peshitta is the acceptance of it as the official New Testament of the Church of the East. It is unrealistic to imagine that the Church of the East would have accepted as its official version a text produced by its chief opponent and persecutor.

The question remains, then - what version did Rabbula create? What is this *Evangelion de Mepharreshe*?

If you study the history of the Old *Scratch* manuscripts, you will come to the conclusion that they were the product of Rabbula's translation effort. In fact, the ending to the Gospel of John in the Old *Scratch* manuscripts reads this way:

**Old *Scratch* wrote:**

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“Shlam *Evangelion de Mepharreshe*"

“Here ends the *Evangelion de Mepharreshe*"
(c.f., Syriac Text at the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon)
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Rabbula created Old *Scratch*, not the Peshitta - which was never known by the name of "Evangelion de Mepharreshe."

This is the reason why the Old *Scratch* was not used by the Church of the East, and why it eventually fell out of use in every other Church of the middle east (including Rabbula's own Syriac Orthodox Church, which eventually reverted back to the Peshitta) - only to find it's way to a dusty shelf in a Greek Orthodox monastery of Egypt.
Paul, is this the first time that the OS has been identified with the translation Rabula did?

Shlama Akhi Michael,

I’m not sure. But I’m finding additional evidence all over the place. I’m reading the researches of Arthur Voobus right now, and I’m just stunned at how people could have missed this connection.

Voobus demonstrates how Rabbula inserted readings known from Old Scratching ("Evangelion de Mepharreshe") into a translation he made of one of Cyril of Alexandria's Greek letters, where the underlying Greek of Cyril's letter cannot account for the biblical text Rabbula used.

This shows beyond a doubt that Rabbula was responsible for Old Scratching. He used his own translation - it all makes sense now. This clarifies Rabbula's own rule which states, “Let the presbyters and deacons take care that in all the churches there should be the Evangelion de Mepharreshe and it be read.”

Voobus proves that the four gospels stipulated by Rabbula were the Old Syriac four gospels, not the Peshitta. Even the Greek biography written after he died contains Old Scratching gospel quotations taken from the Evangelion de Mepharreshe.

People have always wondered what his translation may have been, so much so that Burkitt theorized (but Voobus and Metzger later disproved) that it was the Peshitta. But all along, the important clue in the name Evangelion de Mepharreshe was seemingly missed.......I don't know whether anyone else has made this connection, or not.

Shlama Akhi,

Great post.

I'd like to learn more about Rabbula's persecution of the C.O.E., and if there is any evidence that he sought to discredit not only the Diatesseron, but the Peshitta.

Also, could you give a citation for A. Voobus' demonstration that Rabbula did not use the Peshitta? Thank you Akhi!

BTW - I visited St. Thomas Church this last Sunday. Totally English, but on the bulletin there was the familiar [font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]ה[font] !

I must say, coming from a conservative Lutheran background, it was composed of elements familiar and foreign. Very intense...

Rob
Rob Vanhoff wrote:
Shlama Akhi Paul,

Great post.

I’d like to learn more about Rabbula's persecution of the C.O.E., and if there is any evidence that he sought to discredit not only the Diatesseron, but the Peshitta.

Shlama Akhi Rob,


Rob Vanhoff wrote:
Also, could you give a citation for A. Voobus’ demonstration that Rabbula did not use the Peshitta?

Here are a few citations:


Rob Vanhoff wrote:
Thank you Akhi!
BTW - I visited St. Thomas Church this last Sunday. Totally English, but on the bulletin there was the familiar [font=Estrangelo (V1.1)]አን bü [/font] !

I must say, coming from a conservative Lutheran background, it was composed of elements familiar and foreign. Very intense...

Rob

Cool. If you're ever in L.A., take a ride to Dean's parish. It's the other extreme (all Aramaic, no English at all - not even the sermon.) 😊
Paul, do you see any connection between the other problems you have pointed out previously in the Old Syriac and the Rabulla?

Well, it would explain why someone would have scratched off Old 'Scratch.'

Paul, when you mention the Old Syriac here do you mean 'Codex Sinaiticus'?

If the codex sinaiticus is the work of Rabulla then what is the Cureton mss?

As I understand both these mss differ from each other.

Paul, do you see any connection between the other problems you have pointed out previously in the Old Syriac and the Rabulla?

Both texts are definitely related, the Cureton being a revision of the Sinaitic. Both read ~ 90% the exact same, word-for-word. The other 10% represents a revision.
'The presbyters and deacons shall see to it that in all the churches a copy of the Evangelion de Mepharreshe shall be available and read'. (Th. Zahn, Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, i. (1881), p. 105.)

Shlama, Akhi Paul,

Yes, I agree with Voobus that Rabbula did not produce the Peshitta.

But beyond that, I'm not quite sure if I can understand your argument.

So, let's see... SyS uses the expression "Evangelion de Mepharreshe".

Also, Rabbula uses the expression "Evangelion de Mepharreshe".

So this means that Rabbula was the author of SyS? Is this your argument?

Best,

Yuri.

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**Paul Younan**
Site Admin

Joined: 05 Sep 2003
Posts: 1251
Location: Chicago, IL USA

Posted: Fri Apr 23, 2004 10:49 am  
Post subject:  

Well, you have a nasty little habit of grossly oversimplifying my arguments. Here is the fuller picture:

(1) We know from his biographer that Rabbula created his own translation from the Greek ("by the wisdom (!) of God that was in him (!) he translated the New Testament from Greek into Syriac because of its variations, exactly as it was.")

(2) We know that Rabbula suppressed the Diatesseron (only in the areas under his control, of course) and replaced it with what he called the "Evangelion de Mepharreshe" ("....in all the churches a copy of the Evangelion de Mepharreshe shall be kept and read")

(3) We know that Old Scratch Mattai starts with "here starts the Evangelion de Mepharreshe" and that Old Scratch Yukhanan ends with "Is finished the Evangelion de Mepharreshe"

(4) We know that no Peshitta manuscripts (or any other manuscripts) are known by this name

(5) And, finally, we also know that Voobus proved that Rabbula did not quote from the Peshitta.....that he did not even use it.

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**Paul Younan**
Site Admin

Joined: 05 Sep 2003
Posts: 1251
Location: Chicago, IL USA

Posted: Fri Apr 23, 2004 11:10 am  
Post subject:  

Akhi Yuri,

How's the search for "eastern variants" coming along? I didn't send you off on a wild-goose chase, did I?

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**Paul Younan**
Site Admin

Joined: 05 Sep 2003
Posts: 1251
Location: Chicago, IL USA

Posted: Fri Apr 23, 2004 11:21 am  
Post subject:  

Post subject:
Shlama Akhi Yuri,

I'm assuming you can read Aramaic: what does it say on top of this manuscript?

I'm gonna go out on a limb and assume that you know how to read the Serto script (Jacobite) - what does it say on the bottom of this page of the Cureton version of Old Scratch?
Shlama Akhi Yuri,

Here is a scan from an eastern manuscript of the Peshitta which dates to before the Old Scratch manuscript above which has "Evangelion de Mepharreshe" on the heading of the manuscript.

Why does this 5th-century eastern copy of the Peshitta not have "Evangelion de Mepharreshe" on the heading? (like Old Scratch does?)
Akhi Yuri,

Here's another eastern Peshitta copy...this time from the 6th century....but, lookie! It's also missing the "Evangelion de Mepharreshe" heading like Old Scratch has? What's going on here? Can you explain?
Shlama Akhay,

Check out this spurious reading from Old Scratch in Mattai 20:28:

Rabbula the Maniac wrote:
Translation:

**Quote:**

"But you should seek to increase from that which is small, and to become less from that which is greater. When you enter into a house and are summoned to dine, do not sit down in the highest places, lest perchance a more honorable man than you come in afterwards, and he who invited you to come should say to you, go down lower; and you be ashamed. But if you sit down in the worst place, and one worse than you should come in afterwards, then he that invited you will say to you, go up higher; and this will be advantageous for you."

Why this addition of this spurious made-up reading? Well, the Bezae contains it....why else? 😊