

## A very good Aramaic Translation?

I initially thought that this is an excellent translation, however, as I began reading more and more, especially focusing on certain crucial texts which are usually in the firing line, i.e. relating to dogmatic issues, I again realized one salient matter and that is believing that the Jewish branch of the early Church had indeed proceeded 100% in the footsteps of the apostles of Jesus/Yeshua, is far from the truth

For those who believe that the apostles had propagated a Trinity and especially when the text is conveyed in such a way that it is indeed in agreement with Shimon ben Yochai's "Essence" explication, Alexander's Aramaic translation would surely be a treasure but for those who are on their guard for subtle contamination of the Scriptures, it would definitely just be the opposite (see his Heb. 1 text).

Therefore, and I think this should be the golden rule in our approach to the Scriptures (and especially pertaining to the New Testament), it is then absolutely necessary to always make use of more than one translation, be it from the Greek or from the Aramaic "original".

It sounds good to claim that Jesus and His apostles were Aramaic and that the Aramaic text would then be the very best to consult, i.e. rather than those translations pertaining to the Greek original, but then we must also be prepared to ask ourselves why Greek, if it were indeed part and parcel of the early Church's historical background, is so fanatically pushed on the periphery and especially when the Aramaic translations are conveying a message that is clearly part and parcel of a post-apostolic tradition (as is indeed the case with the Trinitarian doctrine).

Should this type of assimilation in the text be detected, a red light of warning must immediately flicker for this type of exegesis, i.e. found embedded in the text (as is the case in this translation's Heb. 1 text), is then clearly pointing to a tradition that was pushed to the extreme - it must then either have found its way through scribal notes that eventually had become part and parcel of the main text, or it was deliberately added by a scribe - and naturally to promote, as I have stated, not a first-century tradition but a post-schism tradition. All in all, much can happen in translation.

It is the first time I myself have found the Trinitarian doctrine so blatantly added to a translation and if this wording (applied by Alexander in Heb. 1) indeed forms part of the original Aramaic text, then we must ascribe it to circumstantial "evidence".

Paul clearly had a struggle with those who wanted to push their Jewishness and who also wanted to keep the Gospel of Jesus/Yeshua only for the Jews, or at least keeping the Gospel Jewish at all cost - with reference to those who have claimed to be "Hebrews" and this was of course the reason why he had to defend his own Hebraic background, i.e. in his letters, for they were clearly trying to deny him his right to this "title" and identity. However, not only keeping the Gospel "Jewish" for the Trinity is not mentioned per se in the Old Testament (it may indeed be interpreted dogmatically as such but it is never applied to the text the post-apostolic way).

Believing that Paul followed in the Old Testament tradition, keeping to the Festivals and Jewish observance is, however, not at stake here for all believers in Yeshua/Jesus will also know that Paul adhered to the apostolic message propagating a risen Jesus/Yeshua and therefore not following in the dead works of the Law as he clearly had done before his Damascus encounter with the risen Messiah, that is then meaning the type of rabbinical additions added to the keeping of the Law and which were indeed burdensome (Jesus/Yeshua in reference to the Pharisees).

What the knowledgeable Paul had then come against were sectarian apostasies and dogmatic stances not agreeing with the Old Testament faith in God, and that God who sent His Son into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1.15) was never depicted in the Old Testament as a Trinity - this is indeed sometimes propagated by Trinitarians but the fact of the matter is that the Trinity was linked to the Godhead at a later point in time, i.e. in post-apostolic times and this type of theological stance to the Scriptures must then seemingly have been part and parcel of those Jewish (pagan Jewish) sects who had at some stage joined the apostles yet who later again

severed ties with them - we can gather from the NT apostolic letters that the apostolic faith was under attack.

Those who were guilty, and therefore criticized by the apostles, must then indeed have been those very teachers who defied the apostles' teachings and especially the Apostle Paul's and once their doctrinal ideas had taken root anew among those who were part and parcel of the apostolic fold, then their Trinitarian stance must also have become part and parcel of not only their reintroduced dogma but most likely also part of their text.

The Aramaic tradition which is on the whole regarded as "pure" must then also be objectified just as the Greek text is on the whole for naivety can indeed add to erroneous interpretation of the text. It is once again then not only to make a study of the original languages, but to also take the circumstances surrounding the textual tradition into account if we at least want to come to a "proper" understanding of the written text.

Fact is, the Trinity was thrashed out only in the fourth century, i.e. at Nicaea (325), its follow-up Council (381) also again on the nature of Christ in 451 (Nestorius at Chalcedon). However, we have good reason to believe that the Trinity was already well in place in and around 180 A.D. - lauded especially in Egypt - proving that this specific stance was from a certain pagan Jewish sect and we may then indeed ask ourselves: Who joined the first-century Church, causing the apostles of Jesus/Yeshua to address their wrong teachings in their NT letters?

Now, the Near Eastern Church was up to a stage very closely knit with the Western Church. It is said that the leadership of the Church almost went to Syria who was always in close liaison with Near Eastern spiritual activities. However, drastic changes occurred after 451 and the Jewish (Nazarene) tradition (linked to the "Hebrews", Acts 6.1 seemingly) is indeed evident. This "Nazarene" tradition must then also be objectified as it was not only diverse in its make-up - in its development - but sometimes also blatantly apostate.

So claiming that the Trinity was already written in the original Aramaic, i.e. pertaining to the first-century, is indeed jumping the gun! And this is the reason why we don't find this type of occurrence in the Greek text (We may recall the history of Desiderius Erasmus and the new Textus Receptus translation in this regard).

In retrospect, we are today sitting with a Near Eastern Church tradition which differs widely from the simplistic first-century apostolic Church and which has to a very large extent, like the Western Church, followed in the Catholic tradition - the idea is propagated that they are the direct followers and adherents of the first-century apostolic faith, however, such a stance indeed calls for comparisons should we want to probe this very issue.

Fact is, we will soon discover rituals and practices which are not in agreement with the first-century apostolic Church, like for instance the water baptism and which is also administered in post-apostolic fashion, i.e. in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit and which is of course proof of the Trinitarian doctrine having been upheld by them and seemingly to the extent where even the textual tradition was affected. Therefore not following the first-century Acts of the Apostles tradition, i.e. baptizing in the Name of the Messiah (2.38) - with a clear omission of the Trinitarian declaration per se. (Baptism the apostolic way can indeed serve as an indicator pointing to a change of direction that had taken place, i.e. after the death of the apostles and then of course affecting the Godhead declaration too).

This is then a salient indicator of tampering with the original text and which clearly dates from the schism that had occurred shortly before or shortly after the two chief apostles (Paul and Peter) had left the scene. The schism is often camouflaged and therefore given a later dating (see 2 Thes. 2).

It should be clear to most of us that the apostles John, Peter and Paul (even James in a way) did mention a falling away from the apostolic truth in their NT letters and this type of schismatic spirit one can also gather from the Apocalypse (the seven letters). On going through Hebrews 1 - another critical chapter which is normally used concerning Jesus/Yeshua's identity in relation to His Father - I immediately noticed a Trinitarian doctrinal stance that one would never find in those translations that have made use of especially the Greek original. On the whole more than one original textual tradition (i.e. Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, etcetera) is usually applied in Bible translations once again proving the necessity of not only sticking to one so-called "proven" text.

In the translation under discussion, Heb. 1.3 is translated as follows: "... and it was with that Essence of His Trinity... that He cleansed our sins..." and which phraseology then seemingly forms part and parcel of the Aramaic original text used by Victor Alexander (or then reflecting a particular textual tradition) but which does not agree with the Greek original, i.e. in comparison with the Aramaic-English translation, "that Essence of His Trinity".

Now, such wording indeed agrees with the Nicene Trinitarian doctrine and "Essence" so inherent to the Trinitarian doctrine, is indeed something directly relayed to Shimon ben Yochai, and who clearly was an adherent of the Kabbalah and the Essene tradition, something that seems to again point to Paul's "enemies" who had subtly exchanged the apostolic truth for a lie (Rom. 1.25) boasting then in the "better" Aramaic tradition - that is over and opposite the Greek tradition - yet clearly coming forward with this type of deviation from the first-century apostolic tradition and which then seems to be much better conveyed in Greek than in Aramaic - that is with this type of translation of the original in mind.

Fact is, we do not find this type of Trinitarian depiction in the original Greek - often being made inferior to the Aramaic although those who make use of the Greek original text also are staunch Trinitarians - but in the Aramaic tradition under discussion it is applied in this "post-apostolic" way.

I therefore would like to recommend comparisons between more than one Aramaic translator's work, e.g. of Lamda, Etheridge, Bauscher, etcetera, although I have often detected that it is indeed in the Aramaic texts that the Son acquires the status of "God" meaning of course the one Most High God, and not with reference then to his acquired divinity status (see Math. 28.18).

Fact is Jesus/Yeshua is on the whole presented as the Son of God, i.e. in translations that had made use of the Greek original text - and especially in newer translations. Sometimes the Trinity is pointed out as being implied in the text but it is never blatantly added to the text - unless it is added to footnotes or commentaries.

Now, sometimes one has to scrutinize the follow-up verses in order to see the relation thereof to the main text (the one that is in other words under scrutiny and which may then be linked to an implied Trinitarian stance) however, only then to detect a discrepancy (the usual methodology of any one interested in probing the Scriptures). Reading one's dogmatic stances in the text, i.e. when probing translations from the original texts, can then indeed happen and this is something one must always be on the alert when probing the Scriptures. When in doubt, I usually cross-reference as much as I can regardless of the quality of the translation applied.

Although a trinity is usually mentioned in commentaries (i.e. based on the Greek original text), it is not spelled out or added to the text as I have come across it in Alexander's Hebrews 1 translation.

Those interested in the doctrinal history of the Church must then indeed look out for this type of anachronistic application of the Scriptures - disregarding its chronology - i.e. to add a Trinitarian viewpoint to the text and which could then only lead us to one conclusion, namely that those sects, including especially the "Hebrews" (Acts 6), therefore not only the Hellenistic Jews (on the whole associated with the Western Church tradition) must then indeed have severed ties with the Apostles of Jesus, i.e. when their assemblies returned to their former doctrines and dogmatic stances. [See 2 Pet. 2. If we want to be objective about this whole issue, it would perhaps be good to know that Balaam was clearly not following in the true Judaic path of truth - although God had used him very remarkably in prophecy (once!) concerning Messiah's coming and when he was called to curse the Israelites - there is also an idea that the Mark of Balaam relates to infant baptism, something that does appear in the Didache - a non-apostolic, early "Christian" document that correlates well with those apostates who had left the first-century apostolic fold in order to re-establish their own doctrinal stances].

Let's retain objectivity when consulting any translation, not only sticking then to the so-called "untarnished" Aramaic tradition, much as we may appreciate the work and effort put in by this type of special textual scholar and who then had made an in-depth study of the original language.

But apart from what I have said previously, I think Victor Alexander's translation is on the whole good - that is in comparison with what is available to us. So those interested can indeed make use of this translation yet keeping in mind the broader picture too. I have on the whole enjoyed what I have read thusfar, that is apart from texts having a bearing on Godhead issues:

<http://www.v-a.com/bible/aramaic.html>

In this translation (especially reading the much debated Jn 1.1, it is clear that Jesus/Yeshua had a pre-existence from the beginning of creation, i.e. with His Father. This is a salient truth we must never reject even though knowledgeable persons may come with very impressive declarations of the text, trying to distort the Gospel that was preached by Jesus/Yeshua and his apostles (his emissaries) and rendered to us. Fact is, we learn from the text that was passed on to us and we preserve Scriptural Truth this way.

There are of course also other translations (from the Aramaic into English) we can go by. However, it would be good to retain objectivity, for instance where Paul silences women and instructing them to abstain from speaking in the assemblies, lest we go off on a track teaching what is not right in the eyes of God.

Surely, the apostle Paul is dealing with married women and Greek customs, affecting culture and conduct, were of course also intimately linked with the early Church and its expansion. The Greek women were very emancipated and it was also customary for them to chime in giving their input while the speaker is busy conveying his message. This clearly led to confusion in the assemblies and Paul, a Jew (!), naturally would have stemmed the tide in his letters (see his letters to Timothy in this regard). Besides, Paul clearly states to the Philippians that "in Christ" there is neither male nor female, placing every believer (or then teacher) in Christ on the same footing (getting then done with prejudice against called and anointed women, something that had been rife in Mediterranean and especially Near Eastern civilizations).

It should then be clear that Paul never silenced an anointed woman, denying her an opportunity to also speak/teach from the Word (=to teach) and therefore we must always cross-reference, e.g. to Rom. 16. Phoebe is named by Paul as "minister" of the assembly she was serving in the translation under discussion. (I myself feel strongly that Clemens I, who regarded himself as apostle of the Corinthian assembly, had a hand in the type of chauvinism we are detecting in the Pauline letters). Clemens I was a Nazarene (a Hebrew or Ebionite).

There were of course Jewish teachers who had joined the apostles and who were clearly prejudiced against female teachers. The "judaizers" were also something we must never disregard and especially pertaining to the so-called "Nazarene" camp - there were clearly more than one type and especially in its developmental phases.

So let us always read with an open mind, always being prepared to cross-reference. Those who want to study the Bible properly, are normally also those who go further than just reading one translation for they are always making textual comparisons. This is good for then one is able to get a better grip on all the translations and especially when it comes to crucial dogmatic issues.

However, those who just want to read the Bible in its original Aramaic, absorbing its goodness, can indeed on the whole enjoy Victor Alexander's Aramaic-English translation. He has gone to great trouble to explain the Aramaic idiomatic expressions, substantiating it with footnote remarks on its real original meaning. And one can also order a copy for one's bookshelf.

I'd like to quickly add something here. I have noticed that the Holy Spirit is referred to in this translation as "her", a typically Aramaic expression - see Alexander's Gospel of John. (In Hebrew ruach is wind or spirit and it is also a feminine noun). However, the Spirit of God is not regarded as being either feminine or masculine that is in Hebrew, and of course for a traditional Jew. I think this is how we must approach the Aramaic original text, i.e. regarding this particular issue. However, it seems that this type of explicit linking the Spirit to the feminine gender, has indeed contributed to the Spirit being associated with "Mother" (especially pertaining to post-apostolic times).

The Ebionites - there was also an ultra-Jewish branch, therefore not only then linked to the Hellenistic Jews - seem to have been the main propagators of the Mother worship, clearly going back to Jeremiah's times (44). The Mother worship was also rife in Gilead, in Transjordan - the area where the Essenes who practised this type of worship were also well represented (the Pella area). The Mother worship forms part and parcel of the Near Eastern Church's doctrine, something that was definitely not propagated by the apostles of Jesus/Yeshua.

Literally applying the feminine gender to the Holy Spirit and grammatically referring thereto in the third person as "her" is in my opinion not correct as it may lead to confusion. So keep this in mind. Like all languages, Aramaic also then has its own peculiarities in translation.

Ester Blomerus

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