

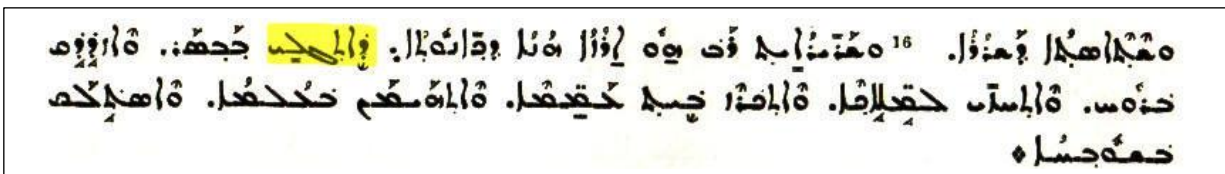
# Aramaic / Syriac Primacy?

Graham Thomason, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

We present some points concerning Aramaic Primacy – the claim that Aramaic is the original language of the New Testament.

1. Syriac is a form of Aramaic, and the most widely known edition of the bible in Syriac is the *Peshitta* (ܦܫܝܬܐ). The word means “Simple”, and is contrasted with the *Qadma* (ܩܕܡܐ), the “Old”<sup>1</sup>. The Simple and the Old *what?* The Simple and the Old *Translation*, we claim.
2. In 1 Tim 3:16, with the Peshitta as primary, we would lose the precious Greek Majority Text reading

μυστήριον· θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί  
*mystery; God was manifested in the flesh,*  
 instead reading [BFBS Peshitta]



*mystery which was manifested in the flesh*  
 – a reading only supported by one Greek manuscript (D).

3. We are not aware of any discoveries of gematria of the Syriac bible, but there may be some. For gematria of the Greek New Testament, see Bullinger's *Number in Scripture*. As examples of Greek gematria, we mention Ἰησοῦς= 888, and we take a phrase from Rev 12:9

ὁ καλούμενος διάβολος καὶ {RP: - } [P1904 TR: ὁ] Σατανᾶς  
*who is called devil and [the] Satan*

which in gematria is 2197 = 13<sup>3</sup>, a number deeply associated with Satan, provided we take the P1904 TR (Patriarchal Greek Church and Received Text) reading, not the RP (Robinson-Pierpont) one. The P1904 TR reading is supported by about 44% of manuscripts, (110 for, 142 against, 12 with a hiatus, judging by Hoskier's data, from *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, Vol. 2):

APOC. XII		321
— ὁ ante σατανας	B 2 4 6 7 8 9 10 13 14 16 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30*	
	31 32 33 34 35 37 38 [non fum] 39 40 41 42 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 55 56	
	58 61 64 69 70 73 74 75 77 78 79 80 82 84 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 96 97 98	
	100 101 102 103 104 106 107 108 109 110 [non 111] 112 113 [non f. 114] 122 123*	
	124 125 126 128 129 132 135 138 139 [non 140] 142 [non 146] 149 150 151 153	
	154 156 157 [non 158] 160/1 164/5 text [Hab. com.] 166 167 170 171 [non 172] 174	
	[non 176-206] 177 180 181 182 187 188 190 192 194^ 200 [non 201] 202 207 210	
	211 212 214 218? (vel ως σατ.) 219 220 221 222 224 227/8/9/30 233 242 244 245	
	246 250 251 Compl.	

4. The original Peshitta did not contain 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation. We regard these as essential to the New Testament, recognizing references to nephilim in some places in some of these books (an unpopular topic to many).

<sup>1</sup> See Scrivener's Plain Introduction, Vol. 2, p.8.

5. The Peshitta contains some Greek words. If Syriac was the original language, why is even the name of book of Acts called ܐܡܫܝܩܐ, as if from the Greek New Testament (Πράξεις), rather than being given a Syriac name?
6. The Greek New Testament contains some Syriac words, but also about 30 Latin words<sup>2</sup>. We do not have a list of Latin words in the Peshitta, and there could be some where the Greek equivalent of the Syriac is not borrowed from Latin. The larger presence of Latin words could be a sign of primacy, as contemporary Latin could become less well-known with the passage of time, but we do not press the point. In the Greek text, apart from coins (ἀσσάριον, δηνάριον, κοδράντες), weights and measures (λίτρα, μίλιον, μόδιος), and names of winds (Εὐροκλύδων which may originate from Latin *Euraquila*, and Χῶρος, perhaps from Latin *Corus*), which are understandably transliterated, we find the following, with the Peshitta<sup>3</sup> set alongside:

Verse	Latin in Greek NT	Latin in Latin script	Peshitta (L)=Latin (S)=Syriac	Latin to English	Syriac to English
Acts 21:38	σικάριος	sicarius	(S) ܟܨܘܪܝܐ	assassin	worker of evil
John 2:15	φραγέλλιον	flagellum	(L) ܦܪܘܓܝܠܝܘܢ	whip	whip
2 Cor 2:14	θριαμβεύω	triumfo	(S) ܩܘܪܒܐܢܐ + ܟܘܪܒܐܢܐ	triumph	spectacle + make
Mark 15:39	κεντυρίων	centurio	(L) ܟܥܢܬܘܪܝܘܢ	centurion	centurion
Matt 27:65	κουστωδία	custodia	(L) ܟܘܨܬܘܕܝܐ	guard	guard
Matt 26:53	λεγεών	legio	(L) ܠܗܝܘܢ	legion	legion
Matt 27:27	πραιτώριον	praetorium	(L) ܦܪܘܩܘܪܝܘܢ	praetorium	praetorium
Mark 6:27	σπεκουλάτωρ	speculator	ܟܦܘܠܐܬܘܪܐ (L)	scout, spy, executioner	spy, scout, executioner
Matt 22:17	κῆνσος	census	(S) ܟܦܘܠܐܬܘܪܐ	(poll) tax	money, silver
Acts 16:12	κολωνεία	colonia	(L) ܟܘܠܘܢܝܐ	colony	colony
Acts 6:9	Λιβερτίνος	libertinus	(L) ܠܒܝܪܬܝܢܘܨ	freedman, libertine	freedman
John 13:4	λέντιον	linteum	(S <sup>4</sup> ) ܠܝܢܝܘܢ	linen cloth	fine linen
Acts 19:12	σιμικίνθιον	semicintium	(S) ܫܝܡܝܟܝܢܝܘܢ	piece of cloth	cloth, patch
Acts 19:12	σουδάριον	sudarium	(L) ܫܘܕܐܪܝܘܢ	sweat band	sweat band
2 Tim 4:13	φελόνης	paenula	(S) ܦܝܠܘܢܝܐ	cloak	book holder
1 Cor 10:25	μάκελλον	macellum	(L) ܡܐܟܝܠܘܢ	food market	food market
Acts 28:15	ταβέρνη	taberna	(S) ܬܒܝܪܢܝܐ	inn, tavern	shop, tavern
Acts 28:15	φόρον	forum	(L) ܦܘܪܘܢ	market	
2 Tim 4:13	μεμβράνα	membrana	ܡܡܒܪܐܢܐ + ܟܘܨܬܘܕܝܐ (S)	parchment	volume + parchement
John 19:19	τίτλος	titulus	(S) ܬܝܬܘܠܘܨ	inscription	tablet

For Wikipedia's discussion, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic\\_New\\_Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_New_Testament).

<sup>2</sup> The words are taken from *A Study of Latin Words in the Greek New Testament* by Esther Laverne Benjamin. We exclude from her list ξέστης, *pot* or *cup*, χάρτης, *paper* (an earlier word than charta?), ἔχω, *hold* (though some derive it from *aestimo* in certain places, including Luke 14:18).

<sup>3</sup> Syriac mostly taken from <http://www.dukhrana.com/peshitta/>

<sup>4</sup> The Syriac word has a Greek origin, σινδών.