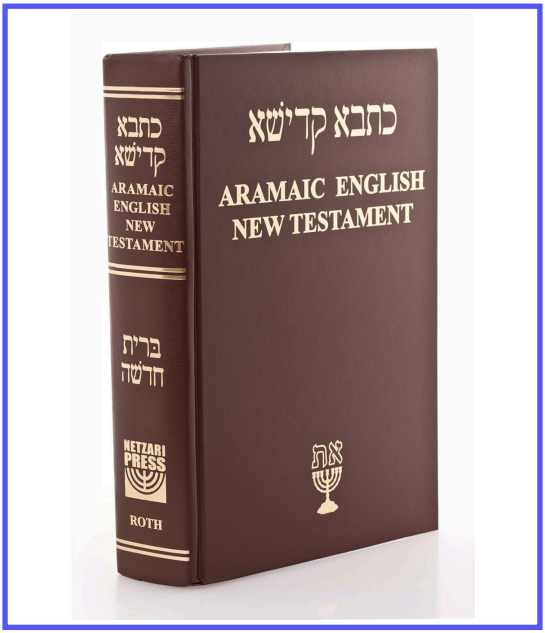


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admirable job for his day and must be credited for the immense benefit he brought to Peshitta studies. Unfortunately, James Murdock retained many archaic terms and in some cases, obscure ideas that have startled many. For example, the words for "pagans", "Arameans", "Gentiles" and "Greeks" were used interchangeably; clearly an error which brought about misleading conclusions. At other times some very awkward old English terms were employed that have little meaning today. Whatever the cause, these impediments simply had to be removed for the sake of the modern audience seeking its way back to ancient truths.

To retain as much consistency as possible, Paul Younan's translation has been compared from Matthew 1 to Acts 15 and James Murdock's translation for the remainder, each word has been cross-checked with Aramaic. In some cases, both sources are woven together into this translation, under a unifying editorial vision and approach.[2] That approach includes the following:

- ❖ In places where James Murdock used the later Western Peshitto readings, the Eastern originals have been restored. In places where a more accurate or detailed translation was required, than chosen by my mentors, the preferred readings were substituted for this edition.

- ❖ A concerted effort has been made to accurately reflect the ways that the True and Kadosh (Set-Apart) Names are used in Aramaic. The Peshitta dialect does not use "Yahweh" and "Elohim" but favors the simplified/singular – and identical – names of Yah and Eloah. It is important to note that all these choices are also reflected in the Hebrew Tanakh where Yah, El and Eloah appear often in the most ancient parts of the text alongside and interchangeable with the more familiar plural/expanded forms (e.g. Exodus 15:1-2). But, in the Peshitta Tanakh and NT, "Yah" is prefixed with the word "Mar" forming "MarYah", and put in this diglot as "Master YHWH".[3]

- ❖ Due to dialectical issues, "Eloah" gets a slightly different spelling and pronunciation in Aramaic, via "Alaha". This word is merely the Aramaic cognate of "Eloah", the Hebrew singular form for Elohim.[4] Essentially, everywhere the English says "Elohim", the reader should be aware that Aramaic reads "Eloah"; I have put the term into the plural "Elohim" for the convenience of the reader.

- ❖ In the main text "clarity notes" are always within parenthesis ( ). These annotations most often take the form of explaining which "Master" or "MASTER" is speaking or being referred to. The Greek word *kurios*, is an ambiguous word that can refer either to YHWH or Y'shua; in addition, it is a term of pagan origin and therefore a defiled title (Isaiah 42:8-9). Aramaic, however, by using MarYah to apply to YHWH and Mari/Maran to apply to Y'shua, clears up a vast amount of ambiguity. Many readings were previously obscured through using "Master", even in the Murdock and Lamsa Aramaic translations. This one aspect alone unravels many difficult to understand passages in the New Testament. Other times these parenthesis ( ) are used to indicate words implied in Aramaic but not shown overtly; these have been keep at a minimum. Most of the time

2 Up to the date of this publication countless requests were received to translate one or two lines of Scripture at a time; these were saved for such a time as they would be used within a complete publication. In addition, the three books authored by Andrew Gabriel Roth all required sections of the Peshitta to be translated into English; therefore, it was a matter of pulling various works together to make up the whole.

3 That MarYah is ***not*** a conjugation from the root "Mar" has been demonstrated amply in my book "Path to Life" www.pathtolife.com. It is the Aramaic cognate and actual word for YHWH, and replaces YHWH 7,000 times in the Aramaic Tanakh. See *MarYah* in Appendix.

4 Eloah has little to do with the Islamic word "Allah", which simply follows Arabic conventions of dropping final "ahs" from Aramaic words. That is why, for example, the word ***nohra*** (light, flame) in Aramaic turns into ***nohr*** in Arabic. Since the Arabic language evolved centuries later, it cannot be used as anything probative in the origins of this usage. Rather, the best solution is to link Alaha exclusively to its Hebrew cognate Eloah, which can be established as being at least 2,000 years old and can be traced to Babylonian Jews who would later compile the Talmud. How this word shifted slightly in appearance and sound is therefore more understandable from the Hebrew-Aramaic chain of transmission than from Aramaic to Arabic.

verse. Where Younan or Murdock have put in necessary parenthetical phrases, they have been retained.

- ❖ Additionally old style King James English common names have been excised in favor of literal and accurate translation/transliteration from Aramaic.
- ❖ Footnotes not unique to this work are noted with the initials of the source, i.e., PY for Paul Younan or JM for James Murdock, or by recognizing the full name of the author.

Footnotes are provided to explain nuances of Jewish and Netzarim culture, Aramaic grammar, wordplays, and so forth. Footnotes generally focus on textual considerations and linguistics that effect our spirituality, as opposed to expansive prophetic or theological insights. If there were an attempt to apply the full extent of every single passage's possible meanings, in a language as multi-layered as Aramaic, no version of the Peshitta would soon be forthcoming. Comparisons between modern "New Testaments" and the original Ancient Aramaic texts clearly indicate that there are many "new ideas" out there which were never part of First Century Netzari values, although nearly all translations claim to uphold primary authority.

Finally, the search for Estrangela transcriptions for the Western 5 ended when electronic files were located for the 1905 Edition of the Syriac New Testament by the British and Foreign Bible Society. I am most grateful that the necessary permissions to use both Aramaic fonts and text as shown on the www.aifoundations.org website were extended.

I also made use of the Syriac Electronic Data Retrieval Archive (SEDRA), developed by George A. Kiraz, and distributed by the Syriac Computing Center. For additional information on the structure of the Database, see G. Kiraz, "Automatic Concordance Generation of Syriac Texts" in VI Symposium Syriacum1992, ed. R. Lavenant, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 247, Rome, 1994.

The Human Element

As any writer knows, a word, a comma or a period can dramatically change the intended meaning of a verse. As any reader knows, it is human propensity to "project" personal values and ideals onto the text; no two individuals will agree on everything when it comes to a translation: This translation has therefore been scrutinized by a host of scholars and critics, from both Jewish and Christian backgrounds. None of the individuals who worked on this project have been on the payroll of any religious institutions; each has had a lifetime of scholarship in primary source materials and fully independent study and faith.

We encourage every reader to make a thorough investigation of any questions that may arise and to avail themselves of the online resources noted throughout this publication. We have provided an Aramaic Primer in the Appendix for those who want to learn Aramaic; in this way the reader can easily search the usage of words within this publication and also through online resources.

The Faith Element

"My beloved, while I take all pains to write to you of our common life, it is needful for me to write to you, encouraging you to maintain a conflict for the faith which was once delivered to the Set Apart believers" (Yehudah 3).

Contrary to the opinions of many, it is very possible to return to the "*faith which was once delivered to the Set Apart believers.*" This is the calling of every soul who puts their complete trust in Y'shua Mashiyach for salvation. The Spirit of Mashiyach is calling out a people from the world to *"arise, shine and let the Glory of Elohim be seen upon you!"*

However, anyone who has ever attended regular Bible studies will likely be familiar with phrases like: "Brother, what do *you* think this verse of Scripture means?" "How do *you* understand this?" What do *you* think is the context?" And of course, nearly every Christian church on Earth

according to copyright laws that demand "substantive changes" to the text! In other words, translators (theologians) *must* change the text to make it different enough from other translations in order to obtain copyright protection.

Most Christians realize that, while they read and study from Greek and English translations laden with Aramaic and Hebrew terms, very few give a second thought that what they are reading is a *version* of a translation originating from an earlier Aramaic or Hebrew text. And precious few are aware of the fact that while Paul went West, the Good News was also spreading rapidly throughout the East.

You will notice that the English in this translation doesn't always flow perfectly. This is simply because in many cases a literal word-for-word translation was employed, without the modern English continuity. The Aramaic in this publication is coming from "as close to original" autographs as there is current public access to at the time of printing. Ancient idioms and poetry are left intact and, because of the nature of the text being used to build theological models, every word matters.

The objective is a truthful, honest rendering that can be trusted and will aid the Household of Faith to return to the *"faith which was once delivered"* – but also notice in the quote from Yehudah that he urged followers of Y'shua to *"maintain a conflict for the faith."* This, of course, means to separate our lives unto Mashiyach Y'shua and reject all forms of Babylon's (worldly and confused) religions that have interpreted Mashiyach according to religious traditions. The conflict, as you will see, is much greater than the religious status quo would want you to know.

In many places Aramaic reads very differently from Greek translations. This is because you are experiencing a culture rather different from the West. You will gain insights into the thought processes of the original *Shlichim* (Sent Ones) in their native tongue, and witness a clear distinction in lifestyle that has not been commonly understood within modern Greek-based Christian culture.

The original Faith is all about the Government of Mashiyach and the lifestyle of those who accepted his Kingship and Government. Although religion adapts into cultures and local governments, the original Netzarim Faith neither adapted into the culture of Rome nor went under the authority of the Pharisees. The Government of Mashiyach can never be brought under the authority of man's governments or religions which are outside the Kingdom of Elohim, and it was on this very premise that those of the original Faith *"shook the earth."* The followers of Mashiyach had exposed the fraudulent nature of all false religion and government:

> *"Beware, therefore, or else you refuse (to hear) him who speaks with you. For if they did not escape who refused (to hear) him who spoke with them on the earth, how much more will we not if we refuse (to hear) him who speaks with us from heaven? Whose voice (then) shook the earth; but now he has promised and said yet again once more, I will shake not the earth only but also heaven"* (Hebrews 12:25-26).

Truth has never been for the faint-hearted, yet it is the foundation of all righteousness. Living the truth provides assurance of redemption. The *Way, the Truth and the Life* is found in YHWH according to His Mashiyach (Messiah), which is why the "New Testament" writings are extremely vital to be lived and understood as originally intended by Mashiyach himself. Our prayer is that all who read and study these Scriptures will be strengthened in Mashiyach Y'shua and go on to strengthen many others. For some it will seem as this knowledge has been sealed for such a time as this, but for others it will be a continuum of what they already know deep within their spirits, that there is much more to the Kingdom of Elohim. It is in this sentiment that this publication is provided to you in the Name of YHWH and in service to his Majesty Mashiyach Y'shua and his people.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have made contributions to this publication: To ***Paul Younan*** for sharing his acumen into the Aramaic language and ancient texts. To ***Stephen Silver*** for doing a masterful job of documenting each and every variance between the Khabouris Manuscript and the 1905 Peshitta, and for the insights he shared. To ***Carmen Welker*** who was ordained by YHWH to bring her journalism skills, editing, proofreading, and dedication to this project which added value to this work beyond measure; and for her husband ***Bill Welker*** who provided his unyielding support of this project. We also want to thank ***Martti Haapalo*** for contributing his skills for the layout and printing logistics.

We are grateful to each of the numerous proofreaders and critics who made contributions, and we also thank those within the online community who love the Word of YHWH and who explore everything and hold fast to the good; you have been a tremendous inspiration and encouragement to bring this project forward in a timely manner. As this publication progressed from an idea to reality, it became very apparent that Master YHWH knew exactly whom to bring along and when, and for that, we are extremely grateful.

Immediately after the first edition was released in October 2008, we began receiving some terrific responses that overwhelmed our hearts. Baruch Ben Daniel and I have carefully and genuinely weighed all feedback, and prayerfully and with much humility considered the thoughtful suggestions, constructive criticism and wise insights that the Body of Messiah has contributed towards this vital work. While we couldn't incorporate every suggestion from those who contributed, we would like to acknowledge ***Dr. Otto Rabbe***, ***Jeremy Springfield***, ***Thomas Asef, Jaye Roth, Susana Malm***, ***Roger Staley***, ***David Coblentz***, ***Kinneret Cohen***, ***Edward MacIsaac, Peter Goertzen, Aaron Schiff, Ken Yeomans*** and ***Dr. Richard Biss*** who have, collectively, invested thousands of hours to help prepare the AENT for publication.

While hundreds of dear souls provided comments, suggestions and criticism we must also thank ***Al, Tommie and Amy Cooper,*** and everyone at ***God's Learning Channel*** (GLC). ***Don and Cindy Wyant***, and everyone at ***Hebrew Nation Radio***. ***Mark Biltz, Paul Sherbow, Thomas and Valerie Asef, Eddie Lane***, ***Karen Pedersen, Pam Staley***, ***Paul Nison***, ***Daniela Persin, Marty and Keren Herz***, ***Ferdinando Sulit Jr.***, ***Bill and Carmen Welker***, ***Teddy Chadwick, Andre Rivenell***, ***Holger Grimme*** (who is translating the AENT into German), ***Dale Schurter***, ***Daryl Watson***, ***Robert Kelly***, ***Tibie Wechsler***, ***Ruut Salo***, ***Jamie Louis***, ***Dorene Glenn***, ***Karen Goodwin***, ***Ann Harris***, ***Aaron McGill***, ***David Chaikin***, ***Dr. Jackson Snyder, Dr. Russ and Jean Hills***, ***Bruce and Victoria Olson,*** and ***Charles Morton*** who are among the ***many*** beautiful souls whose feet are bringing the Aramaic English New Testament to others. Together we are changing the world for Mashiyach!

Special thanks also go to ***Steve and Angela May*** for volunteering their professional services at www.aent.org and www.aramaic.ca and all those on www.peshitta.org who provided deep and meaningful insights for the Aramaic English New Testament. The passion each of you have for Aramaic and the truth of our Redeemer lives forever!

We would like to extend our very deep gratitude for everyone who put their heart and soul into the AENT to make it such a wonderful success. We are overwhelmed with joy at the beautiful testimonies coming from the four corners of the earth, of those drawing closer to our Heavenly Father and His Mashiyach, for such a time as this.

Blessed be the Name of our Master YHWH and His Messiah Y'shua!

Peace & Blessings
Andrew Gabriel Roth
Baruch Ben Daniel

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Ruach haKodesh, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

It should come as no surprise that the New Testament has much to say about its origins by those who were directly responsible for producing it. The *talmidim* (disciples) most certainly did travel throughout the world testifying of Y'shua and what he had taught them about the Kingdom of Elohim. Elsewhere in the New Testament we see other clues about where the *Shlichim* (Sent Ones or Apostles) went:

> *"Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Keefa (Peter) and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles--only Ya'akov (James), the Master (Y'shua's) brother"* (Galatians 1:18-19).

This reference from Rav Shaul continues from events in Acts 2, where all the talmidim had gathered in Jerusalem for Shavuot (Feast of Pentecost) and the giving of the Ruach haKodesh. Also, per events in Matthew 16 we know that Keefa was Y'shua's chosen successor, and yet it was Mashiyach's own earthly brother Ya'akov who was put in charge of the Jerusalem assembly.

The first hint of Ya'akov's ascendancy appears in Acts 12:17. Keefa, after being released from prison, immediately says: *"Tell Ya'akov and the brothers about this."* In other words, Ya'akov is clearly honored beyond the "brotherhood" which includes the rest of the *talmidim*! Furthermore, because Ya'akov's name appears before the rest of the brothers – or even elders as in Acts 21:18 – this is very strong indication that Keefa has decided to leave him in charge of Jerusalem while he, again according to Rav Shaul, opts for some needed field work:

> *"On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Keefa had been to the Jews. For Elohim, who was at work in the ministry of Keefa as a Shlicha to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as a Shlicha to the Gentiles. Ya'akov, Keefa and Yochanan, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do"*
> (Galatians 2:7-10).

So Peter, also known as *Keefa*, was given the task of seeking out converts from among Jews who had settled outside of Israel, but still in areas where Aramaic was the primary language. Scripture in fact tells us one prominent assembly that Keefa founded:

> *"With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of Elohim. Stand fast in it. She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Mashiyach"*
> (1 Peter 5:12-14).

This verse and the Church of the East, who preserved the Peshitta text for nearly 2,000 years, agree. Their documents are unanimous in proclaiming that Keefa had his First Epistle delivered to their door in Abdiabne, from Keefa's assembly in Babylon. Furthermore, Babylon was an obvious choice for Keefa, since it boasted the largest Jewish population in the world outside of Israel. It would be hard to see how the account of Rav Shaul in Galatians 1 and 2 could otherwise be better fulfilled!

Of the three *talmidim* mentioned in Galatians 2:7-10, only one remained in Jerusalem. Ya'akov was in active charge of the Jerusalem assembly for a lengthy period of time (Acts 15:13-21,

to such areas as Syrian Antioch, where he established many assemblies in existence today and who still speak his native Aramaic language.

Yochanan bar Zawdee[6] is the last of the three *talmidim* mentioned, for which we must go to the book of Revelation. What is interesting is that while the Church of the East rejected this work, it nevertheless appears to codify a tradition at least implied in its pages. The reason is, the oldest, most reliable Eastern and Western[7] traditions we have state that Yochanan, after providing for Y'shua's mother by direct command from the stake, made his way to Ephesus where he stayed for many years.[8] After that, assuming the majority view that he is also "Yochanan the Elder" who wrote the Epistles and Revelation, it is easy to see how Roman persecution would have caused him to relocate to the Island of Patmos where he lived out his remaining years. However, the place where Revelation appears to give voice to this tradition is in the listing and addressing of the seven assemblies in Asia. Y'shua decided to address Ephesus first, perhaps because he knew it is the assembly nearest and dearest to his loyal servant's heart.

The Tradition Begins

From this point, reliable tradition confirms the biblical record and tells us that three *Shlichim* each went in one of the four directions. Joining Keefa eastward were Nathaniel Bar Tulmay[9] and Thomas, who eventually reached India in the year 52. When we then take into account the vast territory that Rav Shaul covered, it becomes easy to see how the testimony of Y'shua spread so quickly in the initial decades of the resurrection. Of course, this is also the exact same time period when the first manuscripts of what are called the New Testament began to be written and gathered together. In due course the Aramaic original collection adopted the name "Peshitta" derived from the Hebrew/Aramaic word *pshat*, meaning "simple, straight and true."

And so, while there is no known firm date when the Eastern Canon closed, we can bind it. Put simply, the Church of the East only accepted copies of these books from *Shlichim* or their immediate associates.[10] So, when all the first generation witnesses were dead, that was in effect the close of the Eastern Canon as far as this ancient assembly was concerned, and this would bring us to the close of the First Century or at most the very early part of the second.

Other clues about how early the New Testament circulated are in the texts themselves. It seems that Rav Shaul had a particular preference for quoting verbatim from Matthew (judging by verses like 1 Corinthians 11:24), which obviously dates it prior to his death in 67 CE.[11] Traditions such as Nathaniel Bar Tulmay witnessing a Hebrew version of Matthew would put the book of Matthew almost two decades further back than this. There are also references to Jerusalem before its destruction by Romans in present tense, such as Yochanan 5:2 and others, which indicates that the book of Yochanan, was prior to 70 CE.

5 Yehudah clearly appeals to Ya'akov as an authority and by doing so legitimizes himself to speak as a Shlicha in his own right. Similarly, in Ya'akov 3:1 he counts himself as both teacher and judge, and in 5:14 gives instructions that are binding on the elders of other Nazarene-Messianic assemblies.

6 As opposed to the more familiar Greek-style *zebdaios* (Zebedee). In Y'shua's particular Aramaic dialect, the letter *beyt*, while primarily a B sound, can also occasionally take on the sounds of a V or a W. So, the original pronunciation of this name is *zaw-dee*. The Greek redactor wrongly assumed all *beyt* occurrences were a B sound and so misread it as *zeb* and added a Greek ending to make it *zeb-daios*, from which we get Zebedee.

7 For example, see *Dialogue with (Rabbi) Tarfon*, chapter 81, by Justin Martyr. This famous debate took place in Ephesus in about the year 130, and Yochanan was referenced as a famous resident of that city.

8 See John 19:27. Tradition also tells us that Y'shua's mother lived into the late 40's of the Common Era, but whether Yochanan brought her to Ephesus with him or made sure she was provided for back in Jerusalem is unclear.

9 Yochanan's Gospel calls this disciple by his first name whereas the other three remember his surname, the son of Tulmay, which later got morphed into the Greek as *Bartholomew*. According also to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, p. 8, Nathaniel died being crucified by a mob in India after translating the Gospel of Matthew into Sanskrit.

10 This group included members of the second-tier of talmidim known as the Seventy, who often went in their masters' stead to deliver their letters. Others who did this are mentioned directly in Scripture such as Timothy, Titus and Onesimus.

11 As also detailed in Ruach Qadim, Talmudic research has revealed a parody of Matthew's Gospel written by Rav Shaul's teacher, Gamaliel who died in CE 73. If the parody was written before CE 73, the original had to be in circulation some years beforehand.

that *ten times* more people converted to the faith *east* of Jerusalem in the early decades after the resurrection. In Edessa, of what is now modern Turkey, an early "safe house" for the believers was established after one of their kings received a healing from *Shlicha* Thomas. In due time, the type of Aramaic script used in Edessa, what we now call Estrangela, would become the exact style preserved in the Peshitta, although it is also extremely likely that Hebrew-script styles of these same Aramaic NT books circulated in Israel decades earlier.

It is this early history that caused one of the Patriarchs of the Church of the East to comment in modern times:

> "With reference to....the originality of the Peshitta text, as the Patriarch and Head of the Holy Apostolic Church of the East, we wish to state, that the Church of the East received the scriptures from the hands of the blessed Apostles themselves in the Aramaic original, the language spoken by our Master Y'shua Mashiyach Himself, and that the Peshitta is the text of the Church of the East which has come down from the Biblical times **without any change or revision.**" (Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun, April 5, 1957)

And so this is the core of the matter. These ancient traditions have come down from the First Century, lovingly maintained by this body of believers in an unbroken chain of authority that started with Keefa himself. The end result: 360 manuscripts from the Fourth to the Ninth Centuries that are, for all intents and purposes, virtually identical to one another.[12] They are far more consistent than the "families" which comprised the Greek New Testament.

On the Western side of the divide there is also plenty of early tradition regarding the Nazarenes and their Hebrew-script style Aramaic New Testament books:

> Papias (ca. 130 CE):
> "Matthew composed his work in the Hebrew dialect, and each translated as best they could."[13]
>
> Irenaeus (170 CE):
> "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect."[14]
>
> Clement of Alexandria (ca. 185 CE):
> "In the work called Hypotyposes, to sum up the matter briefly, he [Clement of Alexandria] has given us abridged accounts of all the canonical Scriptures…The Epistle to the Hebrews he asserts was written by Paul, to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew tongue, but that it was carefully translated by Luke, and published among the Greeks."[15]
>
> Origen (ca. 200 CE):
> "The first [Gospel] is written according to Matthew, the same that was once a tax collector, but afterwards an emissary of Y'shua the Messiah, who having published it for his believers, wrote it in Hebrew."[16]
>
> Eusebius (ca. 315 CE):
> "Matthew also, having first proclaimed the Gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to the other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings.[17]
>
> Pantaneus…penetrated as far as India, where it is reported that he found the Gospel

12 This is not to say that more ancient manuscripts do not exist. Many manuscripts were left behind in the Middle East when Muslim invaders banished Aramaic Christians from their own lands. In some cases manuscripts found their way into private hands, only to be made public when the circumstances of their owners changed.

13 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.

14 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1

15 Clement of Alexandria, *Hypotyposes*; referred to by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.14.2

16 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.25

17 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.24

the knowledge of Messiah, to whom Bartholomew [Nathaniel Bar Tulmay], one of the emissaries, as it is said, had proclaimed, and left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters.[18] For as Paul had addressed the Hebrews in the language of his country; some say that the evangelist Luke, others that Clement, translated the Epistle."[19]

Epiphanus (370 CE):
They (the Nazarenes) have the Gospel according to Matthew quite complete in Hebrew, for this Gospel is certainly still preserved among them as it was first written, in Hebrew letters."[20]

Jerome (382 CE):
"Matthew, who is also Levi, and from a tax collector came to be an emissary first of all evangelists composed a Gospel of Messiah in Judea in the Hebrew language and letters, for the benefit of those of the circumcision who had believed, who translated it into Greek is not sufficiently ascertained. Furthermore, the Hebrew itself is preserved to this day in the library at Caesarea, which the martyr Pamphilus so diligently collected. I also was allowed by the Nazarenes who use this volume in the Syrian city of Borea to copy it. In which it is to be remarked that, wherever the evangelist…makes use of the testimonies of the Old Scripture, he does not follow the authority of the seventy translators [a.k.a. the Septuagint] but that of the Hebrew.[21]

Modern Scholarship and New Resources

Returning to the manuscript side of the equation, another interesting development occurred as the centuries passed. Stephen Silver explains:

> "The transcribing of the Khabouris Codex began in September 2004, as a comparison with the 1905 Peshitta. In a careful reading of the entire manuscript during the time of transcription, I noted several grammatical differences, and some few synonyms, but there are only a handful of errors in the entire manuscript. All but one have been corrected by another, later scribal hand. I have pointed out one scribal error which the scribes didn't correct…. Parts of the manuscript have been rubbed off, smudged or otherwise illegible." (quoted from Dukhrana.com)

So, over time, manuscripts were corrected by later scribes. Also, during this process, older pages became worn and had to be replaced, and when the manuscripts became aged, depending on whether they had dated the oldest pages or the youngest ones, it resulted in a dilemma which could easily have thrown off the original date by centuries!

While the age of the Khabouris Codex remains the subject of much debate, there can be no doubt that it ably represents a text group that has much older members. So, while some manuscripts may vary with minor spelling, synonym and syntax variants, this is inevitable over such a long span of time. However, the overall reliability of this text group is thoroughly amazing as it is superior to either the Hebrew Tanakh or the Greek New Testament.

The other collection is known as the "1905 Peshitta" or the Critical Edition that was completed in 1905 by the British and Foreign Bible Society, later merged into the United Bible Society. This text was carefully put together by examining a majority of the most important manuscripts in the Peshitta family and producing a unified text faithful to all of them. The 1905 is in fact so accurate, that it is even used liturgically by many Aramaic assemblies to represent their official manuscripts.[22]

18 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.10
19 Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3:38.2-3
20 Epiphanus, *Panarion*, 29.9.4
21 Jerome, *On Famous Men*, 3; 5
22 In fact, the United Bible Society edition of the Aramaic New Testament based on the 1905, has the seal of the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church on it.

accepted in the East. Between these two, we have an extremely useful and reliable transmission for the 27 book NT canon in the Aramaic language.

In any case, Stephen Silver has done a masterful job of documenting every variance between the Khabouris Manuscript to the 1905-20 Critical Edition Peshitta, so that any Aramaicist can instantly tell at a glance what comes from where. This work was also consulted when comparing Khabouris and official Church of the East and Syrian Orthodox Church published versions that take after the 1905/Mosul editions.

Problems with the 1905 Critical Edition

While acknowledging the essential role of the 1905-20 Critical Edition Peshitta, the reader must also be aware of some of its pitfalls and why it has not been followed letter for letter in this diglot. Put simply, while the 1905 did a great job, generally speaking, in assembling the readings from the best Eastern manuscripts, it also allowed Western Christian bias to creep in by selecting later readings as well. These later readings, all of which are fully documented here, clearly represent subsequent Christian development in areas such as Trinity and anti-nomianism that are divorced from the Semitic originals still preserved by the Church of the East.

For example, in Acts 20:28 the Eastern reading talks about the assembly of Mashiyach being purchased with his blood. This idea, given the context of the crucifixion of Y'shua, of course makes perfect sense in being applied to him. However, over the next two centuries a heresy took root in the West known as Monophysitism; a fancy word that basically denies Y'shua's humanity and affirms him only as a divine being. As a result, the Western Aramaic texts changed this reading to "assembly of Elohim," as if to say that Master YHWH Himself died and bled on the stake without the Universe coming to an end! This is not to deny the 100 percent divine nature of Mashiyach (as this is addressed in both footnotes and Appendixes), but the point remains that this was an "innovation" in the text that would not have been possible in an earlier age.

Therefore, the original Eastern readings are restored here in the Aramaic texts, allowing the reader for the first time to see the closest thing to the original sources of the New Testament that we were able to recover. In doing so, given the high accuracy of the 1905 Peshitta, only "major variants" need be addressed or divergences between Eastern and 1905 that also resulted in unsavory doctrines. Nevertheless, the reader also has the opportunity to see these variants and make their own judgments.

Subsequently, as this restoration effort progressed, we performed a detailed letter-for-letter comparison on both manuscripts from within the Eastern Peshitta family and the Western Aramaic traditions. We found in many cases that identical meanings were expressed slightly differently, or saw slight variations of a given prepositional phrase that would have no impact on the meaning of a sentence, appear in one source but not the other. Going line by line and thought by thought, the concepts were always identical, but patterns of speech and spelling variations would make up 95 percent of the "divergences" catalogued.

However, as the detailed critical comparison lists for each of the 22 eastern books shows, and in most cases where these incidental variations on identical concepts appear, the 1905 reading is retained. In rare cases, the Khabouris was retained and footnoted for the reader.

Summary

Returning to the statement of Mar Eshai Shimun, the Patriarch of the Church of the East, it is in fact very evident that this ancient assembly's traditions most certainly bridge the gap from the Fourth Century back into the hands of the *Shlichim* who originally penned Y'shua's teachings. However, it must be noted that this extrapolation does not rest on tradition alone. Three publications by Andrew Gabriel Roth and plenty of demonstrations throughout this diglot clearly indicate how