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*THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.*

I. *Kai* is almost uniformly used as a connecting link. This is natural in the case of a translator who had before him the Aramaic ܘ . The *εὐθύς* which is so commonly connected with it is perhaps more easily explained as a translation of an Aramaic particle than as original in a Greek writer. This particle may have been ܘܢܝܢܐ (Dalm., *Worte Jesu*, p. 23).

εὐθύς occurs about 42 times (*καὶ εὐθύς* c. 25, *ὁ δὲ εὐθύς* vi. 50, *ἀλλ' εὐθύς* vii. 25).

παλίν, which occurs about 25 times, may also be due to an Aramaic original, perhaps ܘܢܝܢܐ .

δέ occurs about 140 times, frequently to point a contrast or to introduce a new subject.

γάρ occurs about 67 times.

ἀλλά occurs about 43 times.

Other particles are rare.

ὥστε 13, *τότε* 6, *εἶτα* iv. 17, viii. 25, *μὲν—καὶ* iv. 4, *μὲν—ἀλλά* ix. 12, 13, *μὲν—δέ* xii. 5, xiv. 21, 38, *οὖν* x. 9, xi. 31, xiii. 35, xv. 12.

The frequent use of *ὅτι* recitativum (about 37 times) is perhaps more easily explained as a translation of ܘܢܝܢܐ than as original.

II. THE VERB.

(a) In Syriac the use of the present participle as an historic present is practically limited to the verb "to say" (Nöld., *Syr. Gram.*, S. 190). The frequent use of this construction in the case of other verbs in the Harklean Syriac is probably due to the scrupulous accuracy of the translator.

But there is reason to think that in the Aramaic dialects this usage was not limited to verbs of saying. In Daniel the construction is common with other verbs (cf. Strack,

Abriss. des Bibl. Aram., S. 21; Kautzsch, *Gram. des Bibl. Aram.*, S. 139).

e.g. iii. 3 מתכנשין and וקאמין iii. 7 ונפליון—שמעין—iii. 26 נפקין, iii. 27 חוין, iv. 4 עלליון, v. 5 וכתבן, v. 6 נקשן, v. 9 משתבשין.

Cf. also *Tobit*, ed. Neubauer, p. 4, l. 7, נחכין.

If the translator of the Aramaic Mark had this construction often before him—and it must be remembered that in an Aramaic MS. of that date the perfect and the participle would frequently be undistinguishable—the many historic presents in the Greek Mark find a natural explanation. λέγει or λέγουσιν occur about 72 times. Other verbs about 77 times. The irregular occurrence of the construction should be noticed. It occurs sometimes at the beginning of a sentence, especially in the case of the frequently used ἔρχεται (ονται), καὶ ἔρχεται (ονται), about 23 times. Other cases are καὶ ἀναβαίνει iii. 13, καὶ γίνεται ii. 15, καὶ συνέρχεται iii. 20, καὶ συνάγονται vi. 30, vii. 1, καὶ προσπορεύονται x. 35, καὶ ἀποστέλλουσιν xii. 13. But often in the middle of a narrative with past tenses before and after it.

καὶ συνάγεται iv. 1, καὶ ἐγείρουσιν iv. 38, καὶ ἔρχονται—καὶ θεωροῦσιν v. 15, ἔρχονται v. 35, ἔρχεται vi. 48, καὶ φέρουσιν—καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν vii. 32, καὶ παραγγέλλει, viii. 6, καὶ λύουσιν xi. 4.

This interchange of present and past tenses seems to find its most natural explanation as being due to translation from an Aramaic original in which the participle, without the verb “to be,” would frequently, as in the Aramaic of Daniel, be found amidst past tenses.

The use of the Greek participle loosely appended to a preceding clause may be due to the same cause: cf. i. 6, καὶ ἔσθων, and i. 13 D καὶ πειραζόμενος.

Perhaps also due to the same cause are the cases in which we find two or more participles, connected by καὶ, or, without conjunction, before a finite verb.

- i. 26. *καὶ σπαράξαν—καὶ φωνήσαν—ἐξήλθεν.*
 i. 41. *καὶ σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐκτείνας—ἤψατο.*
 iii. 5. *καὶ περιβλεψάμενος—συνλυπούμενος—λέγει.*
 v. 30. *καὶ εὐθύς—ἐπιγυνοὺς—ἐπιστραφεὶς—ἔλεγεν.*
 v. 25-27. *καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα—καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα—καὶ δαπανήσασα—καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἔλθοῦσα, ἀκούσασα—ἐλθοῦσα—ἤψατο.*
 v. 33. *φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδυῖα—ἦλθεν.*
 vi. 41. *καὶ λαβῶν—ἀναβλέψας—εὐλόγησεν.*
 vii. 25. *ἀκούσασα—ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν.*
 viii. 6. *καὶ λαβῶν—εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν.*
 viii. 13. *καὶ ἀφείς—ἐμβὰς ἀπήλθεν.*
 viii. 23. *καὶ πτύσας—ἐπιθεὶς—ἐπηρώτα.*
 ix. 26. *καὶ κράξας καὶ πολλὰ σπαράξας ἐξήλθεν.*
 x. 50. *ὁ δὲ ἀποβαλὼν—ἀναπηδήσας ἦλθεν.*
 x. 17. *καὶ—προσδραμῶν εἰς καὶ γονυπετήσας—ἐπηρώτα.*
 xii. 28. *καὶ προσελθὼν—ἀκούσας—εἰδὼς—ἐπηρώτησεν.*
 xiii. 34. *ἀφείς—καὶ δούς—καὶ—ἐνετείλατο.*
 xiv. 3. *ἔχουσα—συντρίψασα—κατέχευεν.*

(b) Another common construction in Aramaic is the use of a participle with the verb "to be" to describe events in the past. This has influenced the Greek translator in two ways. (i.) Sometimes he imitates the Aramaic construction.

- i. 6 *ἦν—ἐνδεδυμένος*, 22 *ἦν—διδάσκων*, 33 *ἦν—ἐπισυνηγμένη*, ii. 6 *ἦσαν—καθήμενοι*, 18 *ἦσαν—νηστεύοντες*, v. 5 *ἦν κράζων*, vi. 52 *ἦν—πεπωρωμένη*, ix. 4 *ἦσαν συναλαοῦντες*, x. 22 *ἦν—ἔχων*, 32 *ἦν προάγων*, xiii. 25 *ἔσονται—πίπτοντες*, xiv. 4 *ἦσαν—ἀγανακτοῦντες*, 54 *ἦν συγκαθήμενος*, 40 *ἦσαν—καταβαρυνόμενοι*, xv. 7 *ἦν—δεδεμένος*, 26 *ἦν—ἐπιγεγραμμένη*, 43 *ἦν προσδεχόμενος*, 46 *ἦν λελατομημένον*, i. 39 D *ἦν κηρύσσων*, ii. 4 D *ἦν κατακείμενος*; cf. also i. 4 D *ἐγένετο—βαπτίζων*, ix. 7 *ἐγένετο—ἐπισκιάζουσα*, ix. 3 *ἐγένετο στίλβοντα*.

(ii.) But more often he renders by an imperfect, about 180 times as compared with about 56 occurrences in Matthew.

(iii.) Prepositions.

The following are Semitic usages:—

- i. 11. ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα = ב, אתרעי ב, Heb. כפץ ב.
 i. 15. πιστεύετε ἐν = ב, דימין ב, Heb. האמין ב.
 ii. 16. ἐσθίει μετά = עם, אכל, Aram. or Heb.
 i. 30. λέγουσιν αὐτῷ περὶ αὐτῆς = על, אמר על.
 v. 29. ἵαται ἀπό = מן, אתאסי מן, Heb. נרפא מן.
 i. 7. ἔρχεται—ὀπίσω = תר, אול, Heb. הלך אחרי.
 v. 34. ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην = זיל לשלם, Dalm., *Gram. des Jud. Pal. Aram.*, S. 194.
 v. 34. ὑγιῆς ἀπό.
 vi. 50. ἐλάλησεν μετά = עם, מלל עם.
 vii. 28. ἐσθίουσιν ἀπό = מן, אכל, Aram. or Heb.
 xii. 2. λάβη ἀπό = מן, נסב מן, Heb. לקח מן.
 vi. 2. διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ = בידיה or על ידיה. But the plural is unaramaic.

Here also should be reckoned the frequent repetition of a preposition, both in a compound verb and independently.

- i. 25. ἐξελεξε ἐξ; cf. i. 26, v. 2, 8, vi. 54, vii. 29, 31, ix. 25.
 i. 42. ἀπήλθεν ἀπό; cf. v. 17.
 i. 45. εἰσελεθεῖν εἰς; cf. ii. 1, v. 13, vii. 17, ix. 25–28, 45, 47, x. 15, etc.
 vii. 26. ἐκβάλη ἐκ.

(iv.) Some miscellaneous Aramaic idioms:—

- καὶ ἀφέντες τὸν ὄχλον παραλάβανουσιν iv. 36; cf. also
 viii. 13, xii. 12, xiv. 50, and Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 17.
 ἀναστὰς ἐξῆλθεν i. 35; cf. also ii. 14, vii. 24, x. 1, xiv.
 60, and Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 17.
 ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν vii. 25; cf. also v. 23, xii. 42, xvi. 1,
 and Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 16.

- καθίσας ἐφώνησε ix. 35; cf. Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 17.
 ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν i. 45, and about twenty-five times; cf.
 Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 21.
 εἶπεν δοθῆναι v. 43 = לֵאמֹר; cf. Dan. iii. 19.
 εἶπα—ἵνα ix. 18; cf. iii. 9.
 ποιήσω ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι i. 17.
 εἰς used indefinitely = כִּי, Dalm., *Gram.*, S. 89, ix. 17, x.
 17, xii. 28, xiii. 1, xiv. 18, 66.
 εἰς = πρῶτος: so xvi. 2 τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων; cf. Dalm.,
Gram., S. 196.
 εἰς κατὰ εἰς xiv. 19; cf. Wellh., *Skizzen*, vi. 190.
 δύο δύο vi. 7; cf. vi. 39 and 40; cf. Wellh., *Skizzen*, vi.
 190.
 εἰς τριάκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἐν ἑκατον iv. 8; cf. iv.
 20. The εἰς and ἐν seem to be due to translation of
 כִּי; cf. Dan. iii. 19 שבעה כִּי, or כִּי ב, or כִּי ע; cf.
 Dalm., *Gram.*, S. 103; Wellh., *Skizzen*, vi. S. 193.
 καλὸν ἐστίν—εἰ ix. 42.
 τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ (var. αὐτῆς) Ἡρωδιάδος vi. 22. The
 usual Aramaic rendering of "the daughter of" is
 ברתה כ. The Greek translator, by rendering the
 suffix, has put before his readers an expression which
 could only mean "his daughter" or "her daughter,"
 either of which is incorrect in point of fact.
 τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων iii. 28 = בני נשא.
 οὐ—αὐτοῦ i. 7; cf. vii. 25, = ה—כ.
 There are in the Gospel a number of renderings of idioms
 which are Semitic, but of which the original might be
 either Aramaic or Hebrew.
 e.g., τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ = birds, iv. 32; οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ
 νυμφῶνος ii. 19; "to reason in the heart," ii. 6;
 "in that day," of the indefinite future, ii. 20. So
 "in those days," xiii. 17, 24; "in that day," iv. 35;
 or "in those days," of an indefinite time within the
 period contemplated.

φωνὴ ἐγένετο = a voice was heard, i. 11; "to taste of death," ix. 1; "the Jordan river," i. 5.

Further, there are several passages which suggest mistranslation of an Aramaic original, although it is not easy to reconstruct the Aramaic phrase. Thus ἔρχεται in iv. 21 can hardly be original. D has ἄπτεται, which may preserve the true meaning.

Again, ἐπιβαλὼν in xiv. 72 is difficult. D has ἤρξατο = ἴψ. This may be right. ἐπιβαλὼν may be an attempt to render ἴψ misread as ἴψ. ἐν ὀνόματι ὅτι Χριστοῦ ἐστὲ, ix. 41, can hardly be original, and seems to be due to a translator who has rendered too literally an Aramaic idiom.

Lastly, fragments of the original Aramaic have been preserved in—

Βοανηργές iii. 17, Βεεζεβούλ iii. 22, Κανααῖος iii. 18, Ἰσκαριώθ iii. 19, Παββουεὶ x. 51, Ταλειθά κούμ. v. 41, ἐφφαθά vii. 34, Ἐλωὶ Ἐλωὶ λαμὰ σαβαχθανεὶ xv. 34, Ὡσαννά xi. 10, Γολγοθᾶ xv. 22, ἀββά xiv. 36.

The translator adds ὁ πατήρ. In x. 46 he is uncertain whether βαρτίμαιος is a proper name, or whether the blind beggar is spoken of as a son of Timai. Δαλμανουθά in viii. 10 has been explained as a corruption of an Aramaic original; cf. Rendel Harris, *Study of Codex Bezae*, p. 178; Schultze, *Gram.*, S. 48; cf. also Nestle, *Phil. Sac.*, S. 17; Dalm., *Gram.*, S. 133. But I do not feel satisfied with any explanation which has yet been given.

In spite of the tradition as to a Semitic original of St. Matthew, modern scholars seem to be generally agreed that our Gospels were written in Greek, and based upon Greek sources; cf. Dalm., *W. J.*, S. 56. Wernle, *Syn. Frage*, SS. 117-121. Dr. Zahn is, of course, a distinguished exception; but his defence of an Aramaic St.

Matthew has, so far as I know, found no supporters. That St. Matthew and St. Luke were written in Greek seems to me to be beyond question, But there is much in St. Mark to suggest an Aramaic original, and I have attempted in the preceding pages to bring together some of the evidence. I do not venture to say that it is sufficient to prove my thesis that our present Gospel is a translation; but I think that there is enough to justify a reconsideration of the question, and that it is worth while making the attempt to induce linguists, such as Professors Wellhausen, Nestle, and Dalman, to pronounce a final judgment upon it.

The Aramaic colouring of St. Mark has, of course, often been commented on, and there are two possible ways of explaining it. The popular explanation is that the author was bilingual, that he wrote his Gospel probably at Rome, and therefore in Greek, but that his material, oral or written, has come to him in an Aramaic form, and thus naturally retains an Aramaic ring (cf. Swete, *St. Mark*, p. xxxvi.). Those who hold this view do not seem to have sufficiently apprehended how much of Aramaic idiom and phraseology there is in the Gospel. It is to be found not only in our Lord's sayings, where it would be natural enough in a Greek writer, but in the framework of the Gospel, which must be due not to the sources of the work, but to the writer himself. It seems to me difficult to suppose that a Greek-speaking Jew would have written Greek of this sort, and this difficulty is increased if one supposes that he was writing it for the Roman Church. St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter if he wrote the first Epistle, all wrote a less Aramaic Greek than this. The question is, of course, one of probability. Is it more probable that the Greek of this Gospel can be explained as the work of a bilingual Jew, or as a translation of an Aramaic original?

I write, of course, on the assumption that the language

of St. Matthew and St. Luke has been largely determined by St. Mark, and that they cannot therefore be adduced as independent examples of Greek writings with a considerable Aramaic colouring.

I do not propose to discuss at any length the importance of the question here raised. It may be sufficient to indicate some of its bearings. If the Gospel were written in Aramaic, it will probably have to be assigned to an earlier date than the period 60-70 A.D., to which modern writers seem disposed to attribute it. Further, it will be improbable that it should have been written at Rome. Again, some difficulties which at present confront students of the Synoptic problem will be removed. Divergencies between St. Mark and the two later Gospels might easily be accounted for by supposing that the Greek copies of St. Mark which lay before the later writers differed slightly from the Gospel in its present form. And agreements between St. Matthew and St. Luke as against St. Mark might be similarly accounted for.

In conclusion, reference should be made to Prof. Blass' *Philology of the Gospels*. The greater part of this paper was already in MS. when that work appeared. And it seems to the present writer that the argument for an Aramaic Mark, there put forward, from the phenomena presented by the textual variations, is more precarious than the argument from the linguistic features of the Gospel. But of course the two lines of proof would support one another.

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