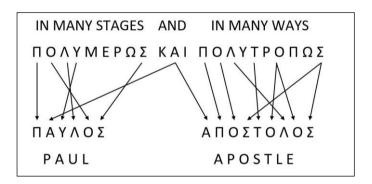
Aramaic / Syriac Primacy?

Graham G. Thomason, 20th February 2019 Revised 28 February 2021, 11 January 2023, 20 January 2023 This article is on www.FarAboveAll.com

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* (حمد). The word means "Simple", and is contrasted with the *Qadma* (مدح), the "Old". The Simple and the Old *what*? The Simple and the Old *Translation*, we claim.
- 2. The salutation to Hebrews 1:1 indicates that the epistle was written by Paul the apostle. Paul's typical salutation is $\Pi AY \Lambda O\Sigma$, $A\Pi O\Sigma TO \Lambda O\Sigma$ (*Paul, an apostle*). The epistle to the Hebrews starts with $\Pi O\Lambda YMEP\Omega\Sigma$ KAI $\Pi O\Lambda YTPO\Pi\Omega\Sigma$ (*In many stages and in many ways*). This may not look like a salutation, but $\Pi O\Lambda YMEP\Omega\Sigma$ KAI contains the letters of $\Pi AY \Lambda O\Sigma$ and KAI $\Pi O\Lambda YMEP\Omega\Sigma$ contains the letters of $A\Pi O\Sigma TO \Lambda O\Sigma$, though the letters $AO\Sigma$ require sharing.



This decoding does not work in the Syriac Peshitta. One does not obtain کُه کُه ه عَلَینُه (Paulaus shelicha - Paul an apostle) from حُدُّدُ مُرَّمَ مُحِدُّدُ (bekul menawan wabkul demwan - in many parts and in many forms). We regard this as evidence that the New Testament was originally written in Greek, not Aramaic.

3. 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]

وهُبُاهِبُا إِنْهَا أَلَاهُ اللهُ وَ وَهُ أَوْدُ وَهُ أَوْدُ الْهُنَا وَالْهُلِّا اِللهُ اللهُ الْمُنَا وَالْهُ اللهُ ا

mystery which was manifested in the flesh

- a reading only supported by one Greek manuscript (D).

¹ See Scrivener's *Plain Introduction*, Vol. 2, p.8.

4. 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 $\ln \sigma o \tilde{v} = 888$, and we take a phrase from Rev 12:9

ό καλούμενος διάβολος καὶ { RP: - } [P1904 TR: ὁ] Σατανᾶς

who is called devil and [the] Satan

which in gematria is 2197 = 13³, 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):

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-δ 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] 160/1 164/5txtt [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 ℓ (vel ως σατ.) 219 220 221 222 224 227/8/9/30 233 242 244 245
246 250 251 Compl.

- 5. 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).
- 6. The Peshitta contains some Greek words. If Syriac was the original language, why is even the name of book of Acts called عنصه, as if from the Greek New Testament (Πράξεις), rather than being given a Syriac name?
- 7. The Greek New Testament contains some Syriac words, but also about 30 Latin words². 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 Peshitta³ 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	حد: صعاب (S)	assassin	worker of evil
John 2:15	φραγέλλιον	flagellum	ei 🔑 (L)	whip	whip
2 Cor 2:14	θριαμβεύω	triumfo	(S) + ペル	triumph	spectacle + make
Mark 15:39	κεντυρίων	centurio	(L) Kostfra	centurion	centurion
Matt 27:65	κουστωδία	custodia	(L) Kinden	guard	guard

² 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).

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

Matt 26:53	λεγεών	legio	(L) とると	legion	legion
Matt 27:27	πραιτώριον	praetorium	هنهانع (L)	praetorium	praetorium
Mark 6:27	σπεκουλάτωρ	speculator	~م <i>عممل</i> لة	scout, spy,	spy, scout,
			(L)	executioner	executioner
Matt 22:17	κῆνσος	census	حمد (S)	(poll) tax	money, silver
Acts 16:12	κολωνεία	colonia	(L) حسامه	colony	colony
Acts 6:9	Λιβερτῖνος	libertinus	(L) 4-1	freedman, libertine	freedman
John 13:4	λέντιον	linteum	(S^4) حده تع	linen cloth	fine linen
Acts 19:12	σιμικίνθιον	semicintium	نوح (S)	piece of	cloth, patch
				cloth	
Acts 19:12	σουδάριον	sudarium	(L) <110.00	sweat band	sweat band
2 Tim 4:13	φελόνης	paenula	د ملاحه (S)	cloak	book holder
1 Cor	μάκελλον	macellum	حملہ (L)	food market	food market
10:25			•		
Acts 28:15	ταβέρνη	taberna	سته لوک (S)	inn, tavern	shop, tavern
Acts 28:15	φόρον	forum	esiso (L)	market	market
2 Tim 4:13	μεμβράνα	membrana	حلامه + محنے	parchment	volume +
			(S)		parchment
John 19:19	τίτλος	titulus	Lou (S)	inscription	tablet

For Wikipedia's discussion, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_New_Testament.

 $^{^4}$ The Syriac word has a Greek origin, σινδών.