

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE X.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ON THE LAW OF FRINGES IN NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY.

DEUTERONOMY XXII. 12 reads, "Thou shalt make thee fringes," etc., A. V. and R. V.; the latter, in the margin "twisted threads"; cf. Num. xv. 38-41.

I shall hope to show reasons for preferring here the marginal R. V. rendering, in the more definite sense of a cord or cords, i. e., corresponding not with the fringes (or as some think tassels) of Num. xv. 38, but with the cord (A. V. ribband) of blue which is the second element there. Not to mention the elaborate reason of edification, with hortatory adjunct, which in Numbers is appended, but omitted in Deuteronomy, where the hortatory element is ordinarily so powerful, the wording of the two passages differs widely, having, except the single word *kanaph* (wing, corner, extremity), no element in common, and even this in divergent forms, Deuteronomy having the plural in תִּי, Numbers that in דִּי, under the regiminal form י. I have found no parallel of laws as between Deuteronomy and the earlier Pentateuch which, evidently dealing with the same subject, seems at first sight to contain—at any rate in the compass of a single verse—so much that is discordant. Even the word for clothing differs, being in Numbers *beqed* in the plural form, in Deuteronomy the collective *kesuth*, used at Ex. xxi. 10 for all wearables; cf. xxii. 26 and Gen. xx. 16, in which it has the etymological sense of "covering."

The analysis may best begin on the side of Numbers as the fullest. Its word for "fringes" (תִּיצִי) is used by Ezekiel for the prominent lock of hair by which he is lifted (Ezek. viii. 3). This rather suggests a tassel than a fringe. Assuming the garment a four-square piece of cloth, preciseness would require an answer to the question, Is *kanaph* the side or the angle? A fringe along each side, or a tassel at each angle, would seem, according as this question is answered, an equally suitable sense. Of course one would not exclude the other. The word תִּיצִי (ribband A. V.) is certainly in Num. xix. 15 used for such a cord as would fasten the lid on a jar. Let us take it as "cord." That for bluish-purple, "blue" A. V., the well-known sacred color of the sanctuary, occurs over twenty times in Ex. xxv. *ad fin.* and six times in Numbers. It need not detain

us. I turn next to Deuteronomy, *l. c.* The word there for "fringes," A. V., occurs in 1 Kings vii. 17 for some decoration of the capital of a column (פְּרִילִים). The four volutes in an Ionic capital are sometimes taken to represent curling masses of hair, and, led by this, we might perhaps approach the פְּרִילִים of Numbers through the sense borne by it in Ezekiel, *l. c.* But Gesenius gives a verb *gadaf* in Syriac and Arabic=twist or weave; and if the analogy to a lock of hair holds at all, it would be rather through its admitting of being twisted into a rope. In short, the suggestion of the etymology which the versions, as I shall further show, favor, is that פְּרִילִים of Deuteronomy rather represents the פְּתִיל, "cord," of Numbers than its פְּרִילִים. What the exact position of the cord was to the fringe or tassel, is an obscure question. But, assuming a fringe made in the most natural manner, by leaving the ends of the thrums of warp, or wool, or both, an edging of cord would be easily run along above them and would help to keep the fringe from further fraying. One may notice in passing that the phrase of Numbers, "for your generations," denotes a permanent feature, not liable to change with the arbitrary phases of fashion.

I proceed to the LXX and Vulgate, in which the *κράσπεδα* and the *στρεπτά* of the LXX, *fimbrias* and *funiculos* of Vulg., are the leading words, and cannot easily be made equivalent to each other.

The LXX translators probably had the costume as worn by Alexandrian Jews, at the period, before their eyes as they wrote, which gives a special value to their testimony. It is as follows:—

NUM. xv. 38.

κράσπεδα ἐπὶ τὰ πτερόγια τῶν ἱματίων
... καὶ ἐπίθησθε ἐπὶ τὰ κράσπεδα τῶν
πτερυγίων κλῶσμα ὑακινθίνον.

The Vulg. phrases are:—

Fimbrias per angulos palliorum
... *in eis vittas hyacinthinas.*

DEUT. XXII. 12.

στρεπτά . . . ἐπὶ τῶν τεσσάρων κράσπεδῶν τῶν περιβολῶν σου, ἃ εἶναι περιβάλλῃ.

Funiculos in fimbriis . . . per quatuor angulos pallii tui quo operieris.

Now we find in Zech. viii. 23 *κράσπεδον* in LXX, used for "the skirt" (of a Jew), where again the Hebrew is *kanaph*, of which the plural is read in Numbers and Deuteronomy here and in Numbers the singular also. And of course in the New Testament we are familiar with it in the same sense. (Matt. ix. 20, *et al.*) This suggests that *κράσπεδον* of the LXX in Deuteronomy also means, not the bare skirt, but one with the fringe or tassel on it¹ which Numbers prescribes. Then by understanding the *στρεπτά*, "twists," of Deuteronomy (or precisely *στρεπτόν*, "twist") as—the *κλῶσμα* of Numbers, which is confirmed by the Alex. LXX read-

¹ As we speak of "the colors," i. e., flags with colors upon them.

ing this same word κλώσμα (Judg. xvi. 9) where the Vat. has στρέμμα, "twisted thing" (A. V. "thread")—we adjust the two passages in harmony. In Numbers the elements are given analytically: (1) the ἱμάτιον, "garment"; (2) its περὺγιον, "extremity"; (3) on this the κρᾶσπεδον, "fringe"; (4) on this the κλώσμα, "cord" ("ribband" A. V.). But in Deuteronomy the language is popular, and takes the κρᾶσπεδον as=(2) and (3) of Numbers; and στρεπτά, as all scholars are aware (as if sympathizing with the purpose and spirit of Deuteronomy), is far more a word in popular use than the rare κλώσμα. In short, we harmonize Numbers and Deuteronomy (as does the LXX) by regarding a phrase of Numbers that directing the "fringe," as read into Deuteronomy. In other words, Numbers is intelligible by itself, but Deuteronomy only by the aid of Numbers. No scholar can expect a stronger presumption in favor of Numbers being the earlier and Deuteronomy the later precept. Render therefore *gedilim*, "cords." This dependence being once understood, the key-word *kenaphoth*, or rather *kan'photh* (reg.) in Deuteronomy has the effect of virtually referring us to Numbers for the details—"blue" in particular—and for the symbolical reasons why.

For the plural of *kanaph* Deuteronomy, as shown above, has the feminine form, Numbers the masculine. That feminine form is part of a favorite phrase (Job, Isa.) for "the four regions ["corners" A. V.] of the earth." As there the feminine marks that abstract sense, so here it probably marks the logical "second intention" with which the word is used, viz., for the skirts with the fringes included.

The question between tassel at the corner and fringe along the side, seems settled by Zech. viii. 23. One can hardly imagine ten men holding on to four tassels at the corners; whereas the edges would give them hold-fast enough. The classical use of κρᾶσπεδον also favors the edge as meant, e. g., in a fragment of Euripides, *σχεδὸν παρ' αὐτοῖς κρᾶσπέδοις Εὐρωπίας*,¹ where "the confines [edges] of Europe" is the sense. Classical students may also recall the parallel of the "tasselled ægis" of Pallas in Homer,² to which some mystical meaning seems to have attached. The vases show it as a sort of tippet fringed along the edge.

Of course Moses addresses in Deuteronomy a popular audience. They would know well enough what he meant because current familiar usage would interpret his words. They would need no reference, express or tacit, to an earlier record. But for us Numbers is the interpreter of Deuteronomy in this, as in earlier instance of Priestly Dues. Therefore the theory that Deuteronomy was independent of, and anterior to, the "middle Pentateuch" does not account for the facts, which in these, and it might be shown in other, instances, suggest the dependence of Deuteronomy on Numbers and on Leviticus.

HENRY HAYMAN.

Aldingham, Ulverston, England.

¹ Frag. 382, ed. Nauck. ² Iliad, V. 738, *et al.*

II.

JUDAISM IN RECENT LITERATURE.

THERE are three notable books on Judaism, each of which deserves a word of comment and of commendation. The author of the first work is favorably known through his writings, and his position of Professor at the Hebrew Union College; the second volume is by many Hebrew authors, of varying celebrity; and the third is by an unknown author. The first treats of the literature of past ages; the second, while dealing with history, treats also largely of present themes and opportunities; and the third is a plea in favor of the Jews, and intended to be read by the Jews and by others, and largely concerns the future.

Professor Mielziner's work¹ is divided into three parts, of which Part First contains the Introduction proper. We give its table of contents: I. The Mishna. Its Origin, Compilation, Division, and Language. Names and general contents of its sixty-three tracts; II. Works kindred to the Mishna:—Tosephta, Mechilta, Siphra, Siphri; fragmentary Baraitoth; III. The Authorities of the Mishna. Biographical sketches and characteristics of the principal Tanaim; IV. The Expounders of the Mishna. Biographical sketches and characteristics of the principal Amoraim; V. The Gemara. Classification of its contents into Halacha and Agada; VI. Complications of the Palestinean and of the Babylonian Talmud; VII. Apocryphal Appendices to the Talmud; VIII. Commentaries on the Talmud; IX. Epitomes and Codifications of the Talmud; X. Manuscripts and Printed Editions; XI. Auxiliaries to the Study of the Talmud; XII. Translations into Latin and Modern Languages; XIII. Bibliography of Modern Works and Monographs on Talmudical Subjects; XIV. Opinions on the Value of the Talmud.

Part Second is devoted to Talmudical Hermeneutics, and Part Third to Talmudical Terminology and Methodology. All, of whatever faith, who have occasion to devote careful study to the Talmud, will be aided by this work.

The second book worthy of mention² contains the papers read at the Jewish Denominational Congress, the Jewish Women's Congress, and the Jewish Presentation at the Parliament of Religions Proper. Among its more noteworthy papers are: The Theology of Judaism, by Rev. Dr. Isaac M. Wise, of Cincinnati; The Synagogue and the Church and their Mutual Relations, with Reference to their Ethical Teachings, by Rev. Dr. K. Kohler, New York; The Ideals of Judaism, by Rev. Dr. E. G. Hirsch, Chicago; Judaism and the Modern State, by Rev. Dr. David

¹ Introduction to the Talmud. By M. Mielziner, Ph. D., Professor of Talmud at the Hebrew Union College. Cincinnati and Chicago: The Bloch Printing Co. 1894. (Pp. 291. 6¼x4.) \$2.50.

² Judaism at the World's Parliament of Religions. Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1894. (Pp. 418. 7x4.) \$2.50.

Philipson, Cincinnati; Judaism and the Social Question, by Rev. Dr. H. Berkowitz, Philadelphia; The Ethics of the Talmud, by Rev. Dr. M. Mielziner, Cincinnati; The Post-Mendelssohnian Development of Jewish Doctrine, by Rev. Dr. G. Gottheil, New York; Judaism a Religion and not a Race, by Rev. Dr. A. Moses, Louisville; Position of Woman among the Jews, by Rev. Dr. M. Landsberg, Rochester, N. Y.; Genius of the Talmud, by Rev. Dr. A. Kohut, New York; The Doctrine of Immortality according to Judaism, by Rabbi Joseph Stolz, Chicago; Popular Errors about the Jews, by Rev. Dr. Jos. Silverman, New York; The Function of Prayer according to Jewish Doctrine, by Rabbi I. S. Moses, Chicago; What Judaism has done for Woman, by Miss Henrietta Szold, Baltimore; Mission Work among Unenlightened Jews, by Mrs. Minnie Louis, New York.

Any student of modern Judaism will find this volume of special value.

The anonymous essay on "The Jewish Question"¹ readily excites and holds the interest of the reader. We should be glad to know who it is that adds, to a broad knowledge of the history of Mediæval Judaism, the power of wielding a facile and at times a trenchant pen. He can hardly be said to account for the prejudice against the Jews,—he rather utters a manly challenge, to those who entertain it, to give a reason for it. The history in the volume is confined to the period from Philo to modern times, with especial attention devoted to the Middle Ages. If the book contains an attempt at a solution of the Jewish question, it is a proposition to establish a Neo-Mosaic Church, from which the racial element is to be excluded, where the worship shall be pure monotheism, and the laws those of morality. It is not to be a Jewish, but a universal church, and would eventuate in ultimate racial extinction,—indeed, the author claims that the alleged racial distinctness, as exhibited in modern Occidental Jews, is largely mythical. This Neo-Mosaic Church would be nearly, in some aspects, like a large portion of the Unitarian faith,—indeed, the author thinks that it might become the one church with which many modern Unitarians could unite. The ritual of such a church might be based upon that of the Jewish Church to any desired degree, and the language would be that of the land in which the local organization found itself. Here, to our thinking, is a significant admission concerning a *sine qua non* of the new Church: "The elements of ethical and religious teaching which have become the property of civilized nations through the Middle Ages and modern times, including those of the New Testament—for instance, the sayings of Christ, in so far as they do not clash with pure monotheism—will have to be assimilated" (p. 47). We should like to see the experiment tried on precisely these lines. Let each member be permitted to eliminate from the say-

¹ The Jewish Question and the Mission of the Jews. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1894. (Pp. 335. 5x2¾.) \$1.50.

ings of Christ whatever teachings are not consistent with pure monotheism,—if there be any such,—and let the residue be assimilated with all that may be elected from Judaism and other sources, and if the experiment be an honest effort, and not a mere fad, the result might be awaited with sympathetic interest by all Christians. But we venture one suggestion: with a pure monotheism, the Jews have maintained for ages faith in a coming Messiah. Might it not be well in the Neo-Mosaic Church to give recognition to the truth, if such there may be assumed to be, that underlies this perennial hope? Jesus, in certain important particulars, resembled (to say it no more strongly) the anticipated Messiah. If, now, his teachings must of necessity be assimilated by the new church, and given their relative importance in its teaching, might it not be well to indicate in the articles of faith in the new church, co-ordinate with its belief in monotheism, that the essence of what has been expected from the Messiah is recognized as having been discovered in Jesus? We do not assume the right to dictate in what form this faith should find expression, but we submit that, in deference to one of the cardinal articles of Jewish faith for more than twenty-five centuries at least, as well as in aid of clear thinking and progress in church fellowship, there should be some recognition of an undoubted truth. We hope that the book will be widely read by Christians and by Jews. It is a thoughtful contribution to the literature of the subject, and our Jewish brethren may not find its suggestions impracticable.

Boston, Mass.

W. E. BARTON.