

*A FRAGMENT OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF  
ECCLESIASTICUS.*

THERE is no need to dilate in this Review on the importance of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus. As every student of the Bible knows, the older Sirach wrote his Wisdom in the Hebrew language, but unfortunately the original has long ago disappeared, whilst the best versions of it—as such are usually considered the Greek, the Syriac, and the Vetus Latina, from which all the later renderings are derived—are in a very unsatisfactory state, owing chiefly to imperfect acquaintance on the part of the translators with the Hebrew language. Thus it is only the restoration of the Original which would give us back the real Sirach. The readers of the EXPOSITOR, who still remember the controversy between Prof. Margoliouth and Professors Cheyne, Driver and Nöldeke in this Review,<sup>1</sup> know also how decisive a fact such a restoration would form in the questions which are now exciting every Bible student. For instance, if it could be proved that Sirach, who flourished about 200 B.C., composed his work, as some believe, in the Rabbinic idiom, with which we are acquainted from the Talmudic literature, “then between Ecclesiasticus and the books of the Old Testament there must lie centuries, nay, there must lie, in most cases, the deep waters of the Captivity, the grave of the Old-Hebrew and the old Israel, and the womb of the New-Hebrew and the new Israel.” The assumption of Maccabæan Psalms, and many another hypothesis of Bible-Criticism would fall to the ground.

<sup>1</sup> See EXPOSITOR, 1890, I., 295–320, 381–391; and II, 353–358.

It is more important, perhaps, to point here to the evidence as to the existence of Ecclesiasticus in Hebrew afforded by Rabbinic literature both before Jerome, who declares that he has seen the book in the Hebrew original, as well as for nearly six centuries after the death of this father of the Church. For brevity's sake it will be sufficient to refer here to the articles by Dr. Neubauer and by myself in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, in which all the quotations from Sirach to be found in Rabbinic literature are collected.<sup>1</sup> From these it will be seen that these quotations extend over a period of more than a thousand years, viz., from Simeon b. Shetach, who flourished about 70 B.C., to the Gaon R. Saadyah, who died in 949 A.C. The evidence of the latter is the more interesting, as we learn from him something about the actual state of the book, which was still in circulation in his time. I am referring to the Gaon's introduction to the *Sepher Haggalui*, in which we have the following statements.<sup>2</sup> Speaking there of the Sages who, coming after the discontinuance of prophecy, composed books of instruction and wisdom for the use of posterity, he says: "As we find that Simeon, the son of Joshua, the son of Eleazar, the son of Sirach, had composed a book of Instruction which is similar to the book of Proverbs in its sections and verses, and which he provided with vowels and accents. And as Eleazar, the son of Irai, who composed a book of Wisdom which is like the book of Ecclesiastes both in its order and its

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Neubauer's article, "Hebrew Sentences in Eccles.," appeared in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, IV. pp. 162-164, whilst mine was published in the same Review (III., pp. 682-706), under the title "The Quotations from Eccles. in Rabbinic Literature." I may add here that I have both before and since then collected many materials on echoes of Sirach in the Rabbinic literature and the Jewish liturgy which, though not given in the name of Sirach (as the Quotations are), throw much light on many an obscure passage in Eccles.

<sup>2</sup> The quotations in the text are given from Dr. Harkavy's *זכרון לראשונים*, V., in which the fragments of the *ספר דניאל* appeared.

verses, and is provided with vowels and accents.”<sup>1</sup> A few pages further on, where he defends himself against the attacks of the Caraites, he says: “And when these wicked people saw that I had composed a book in Hebrew, divided into verses and provided with vowels and accents, they denounced me with mean slander, and said that this is pretension to prophecy” (that is, they accused him of the ambition to imitate the Scriptures). . . . “But this is only their folly, . . . for these things (the dividing of a Hebrew book into verses and providing it with vowels and accents) any man can do, as, indeed, Ben Sira did, Ben Iri, the sons of the Hasmonæans, and the *Bene Africa*, but none of them pretended to prophecy”;<sup>2</sup> whilst about the end of this Introduction we read, “As indeed the sages made use of the book of Ben Sira, and took from him beautiful words of instruction and meditation,”<sup>3</sup> after which he proceeds to give seven sayings from Sirach, which are all to be found in our Ecclesiasticus, and three from the Book of Wisdom (Eleazar) ben Irai.<sup>4</sup>

Having thus the established fact that the book of Ecclesiasticus was still circulated in *Hebrew* among the Jews in the 10th century,<sup>5</sup> I will now proceed to the description and reproduction of the Fragment of Sirach, which is the main object of this paper. But before doing so, it

<sup>1</sup> Harkavy, *Ibid.*, p. 150. In the Appendix, p. 200, Harkavy shows that we ought to read Joshua, the son of *Simon*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Harkavy, *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Harkavy, *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> This Eleazar is otherwise unknown. It is an interesting fact that one of the quotations Saadyah gives from his Wisdom is to be found in Eccles. iii. 20, 21, and is also quoted in the Talmud, in the name of Sirach. Cp. my Quotations (as above), No. 4.

<sup>5</sup> As I hope to show at some future time, there is a strong probability that also the Gaon R. Hai (who died 1038) made use of Sirach in his מוסר השכל, though he does not mention him. The quotations in his משנה תורה and ברייתא דכלה (cf. Prof. Margoliouth, *Expositor*, 1890, I., p. 306, No. 14, and my Quotations, as above, Nos. 21 and 23), belong probably also to the 11th century.

is my pleasant duty to record here my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, who, being themselves Semitic scholars, and more than generous to fellow-students, have always placed at my disposal their invaluable treasures of Hebrew MSS., allowing me not only to study them, but also to make use of them for publication.

For this Fragment we are indebted to their last journey in Palestine and Egypt, in which countries they have acquired various Hebrew MSS., mostly in fragments. Our Fragment was found in the Palestine bundle, among other leaves of Hebrew MSS., extending over various branches of Jewish literature, as Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Liturgy, Grammar, etc. The Fragment forms one leaf, and measures  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches. The writing is in two columns, hanging from the lines, which is a proof of an early date. The verses read *across* the lines, each column giving half a verse.<sup>1</sup> The number of the lines on each side is seventeen. Although the leaf is torn at the foot, I am able to judge, by comparing the lowest extant line of the recto with the top line of the verso, that one line only is missing.

As to the writing, it represents the so-called Syriac square character of an early type; certainly not later than the beginning of the 12th century. The MS. has also various marginal glosses, all of which, except one, present the same character, though, as it seems to me, by a somewhat later hand. These glosses give varying readings, probably from some other MS., which proves that the Hebrew of Sirach was then still existing in more than one copy. The MS. has, however, suffered terribly by age. The edges are so badly mutilated that they are almost entirely gone, only some few letters remaining. Some lines also in the middle

<sup>1</sup> The end of the verse is marked by two dots, but they are faded in some places.

of the page are entirely eaten away; either the surface of the paper being gone, or the ink faded or run together, so that the letters cannot be made out with any certainty even with the aid of chemicals. In the text that follows, such places are indicated by dots. Letters supplied to words only partly legible are enclosed in square brackets, whilst such words of the reading as are doubtful, are marked by a query. The marginal readings are also given here on the margin in smaller type.

The Fragment corresponds with chh. XXXIX. 15 ins.-XL. 6 (R.V., pica, demy 8vo, p. 318, 2nd line from the top, to p. 320, 13th line from the top), and runs as on pages 6 and 7.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. [מינים]. The *plena* writing (as indicating the chirek) just before a letter provided with a *dagesh* is very common with a certain school of copyists. Cf. Rapoport, *Bikkure Haitim*, x. p. 104. The beginning of the verse had probably בקול בתרועה cf. Job viii. 21, תרועה ושפתח, which probably suggested the Greek (xxxix. 15) ἐν φθαῖς χελεύων. On the whole our text in this verse shows more agreement with the Greek than with the Syriac.

2. [כלם]. The marginal reading, which is indicated by the ring-mark over the word, is faded, but we may safely supply it after v. 23 by הכל, and so we may, after the same parallel, supply מעשה at the beginning of the verse. [יספוק]. Parallel in v. 23, יספוק. Cf. 1 Kings xx. 10. For the *hiphil*, see Isaiah ii. 7. The spelling with ם (instead of ש) occurs in Job xx. 22, and is almost the rule in Rabbinic literature. In this latter the *hiphil* (and also the *piel*) is used either in the sense of supplying needs (cf. *Mechilta* to Exod. xvii. 7, לנו כל צרכינו [or מספק] [אם מספיק] or in that of proving sufficient. We may accordingly translate this clause either that the מעשה or אל will supply every need, or the מעשה will prove sufficient for every need or emergency. The latter, which admits of the *kal*, and is nearer to the sense in which the word is also used in the Bible, is more probable.

3. Supply אין לאיש. The clause would then read (accepting also the letters supplied in the text marked by the square brackets), *It is not for man to estimate their value.* [מוצא פיו] Cf. Deut. viii. 5. There is still a very faint sign of a letter before the ם of מוצא, which may be

## RECTO.

	וכן תאמר בתרועה:	רינה (?) ונבל ועלי מיני[ם]	1
לכל צורך ב' יספיקו	וְכֹל צוֹרֵךְ בַּעֲתוֹ יִסְפִּיק:	אֵל כָּלֶם טוֹבִים	2
	מוצא פיו אוצרו:	[לה] עריך ער[כם]	3
	ואין מעצור לתשועתו:	ועושי (?) [ר]צונו יצליח	4
מסומה (?)	ואי[ן] [נ]סתר מנגד עיניו	מעשה כל בשר נגדו	5
	ש מספר לתשועתו	מעולם ועד עולם יביט	6
	ואין נפלא וחזק ממנו:	אין קמון ומעט עמו	7
בעתו יגבר	כי הכל לצרכו . . .	אין ל . . . ה לכה זה	8
	כי הכל בעתו יגבר:	רוח (?) שמה (?)	9
	וכנהר תבל ריוותה:	ברכות כיאר הציפה	10
	ויהפך למלח משקה	זעמו גוים יוריש	11
	כן לזרים . . . לקללה (?)	ת תמים יישרו	12
	כן לרעים טוב ולרעים[ם]	ב הלק מראש	13
	ואש וברזל ומלח:	אדם מים	14
	דם ענב יצהר ובגד	הלב ודבש	15
לזרא	כן לרעים לרעה נהפכו	לתמים יימיבו	16
	הר[ים] יעתיק . . .	. . . . .	17

## VERSO.

	גם אלה למשפט . . .	18	אש וברד רע ודבר
	וחרב נקמות להחרים . . .	19	חית שן עקרב ופתן
ביום פ	והמה באוצרו לעת יפקדו	20	כל אלה לצורכם נבראו
פיהו	ובחקם לא ימרו פיו:	21	בצותו אותם ישישו
	והתבוננתי ובכתב הנחתי	22	על כן מראש הת[אמ]צתי
צדך	לכל צורך בעתו יספוק:	23	מעשה אל כלם טובים
ינבר	כי הכל בעתו טוב	24	אל לאמר זה רע מה זה
הקדוש	וזמרו . . .	25	על . . . בכל לב הרנינו
	ועול כבוד על <sup>(פ)</sup> בן <sup>(פ)</sup> אדם	26	עסק גדול חלק אל
	עד יום שובו אל אם כל חי:	27	מיום צאתו מרחם אמו
לובש	עד לשוב עפר ואפר	28	מיושב בכסא לנבה
לח עור <sup>(פ)</sup>	ועד עוטה שמלת . . .	29	מעומיה צניף וציץ
תח ומר	אימת מות תחר[ות] . . .	30	אך קנאה דאגה ופחד
	שינת לילה . . .	31	ועת נוחו על משכבו
	ומבין ב . . .	32	מעט לחיק כרנע ישקוט
	כשדוד . . . רודף	33	מעט מעמחוון נפשו
אם כי	מנוח . . . . .	34	עורך . . .
כי			

TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup> OF

[Please note that these lines are

1. [. . . with song] and harp, and upon stringed instruments,
2. [The works of the] Lord are all good ;
3. [It is not for man to] estimate [their value] ;
4. [And to those who do His pleasure] He giveth prosperity,
5. The work of all flesh is before Him,
6. From everlasting to everlasting He beholdeth,
7. There is nothing small and light in His eyes ;
8. [None may say what is this], wherefore is that ;
9. [His word raiseth a wind of desolation] ;
10. *But also* hath overflowed the earth *with* blessings like a river,
11. [In] His wrath He driveth out the nations,
12. As [His ways] are plain to the perfect,
13. [The good to the good] He assigned from the beginning,
14. [The chief things] *for* man *are* water,
15. And [flour of wheat], milk and honey,
16. [All these things] are good [to the perfect] ;
17. . . . .
18. Fire and bad hail and pestilence ;
19. Beast of teeth, scorpion and viper,
20. All these were created for their use,
21. In His commanding them they rejoice,
22. Therefore from the beginning I stood fast,
23. The works of the Lord are all good,
24. None may say, This is bad ; what is it ?
25. Therefore with all the heart praise,
26. A great occupation the Lord assigned,
27. From the day he goeth out of the womb of his mother,
28. From him who sitteth on the throne on high,
29. From him who weareth mitre and diadem,
30. *Nought* but envy, trouble and anxiety,
31. And in the time of his resting upon his bed,
32. A little [folding of the hands], he is quiet for a moment,
33. There is little counsel [in the] vision of his soul,
34. [Whilst thou art]<sup>5</sup> . . . . .

<sup>1</sup> The translation follows the emendations and supplements suggested in the notes to the Hebrew text. Passages and words included in square brackets are doubtful. Each line must be read, as in the Hebrew, with the corresponding line on the next page, which together form the verse.

## THE FRAGMENT.

*to be read across both pages.]*

And thus thou shalt say in rejoicing,	1.
They shall suffice for every need in its season.	2.
[By the] <i>word</i> that proceedeth out of His mouth they were treasured up.	3.
And there is none that shall hinder His salvation.	4.
And there is nothing hid from before His eyes.	5.
[And who will] set limits to His <sup>1</sup> [understanding].	6.
There is nothing <sup>2</sup> strong and hard before Him.	7.
For all <i>things</i> were created [for their use].	8.
For everything shall prevail in its season.	9.
And <sup>3</sup> saturated the earth like a stream.	10.
And turneth into saltness the watered <i>lands</i> .	11.
So they are to the strangers [a curse].	12.
<i>So also</i> to the wicked [whether good or bad].	13.
And fire, and iron, and salt.	14.
And the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing.	15.
So to the wicked they were turned into evil.	16.
. . . . . rooteth up mountains.	17.
Also these for the judgment [were created].	18.
And a sword of vengeance to destroy [the wicked].	19.
And they are in His treasure for the time <i>when</i> they are required. <sup>4</sup>	20.
And in their law they rebel not <i>against the word</i> of His mouth.	21.
And I meditated, and left in writing :	22.
For every need in its season they shall suffice.	23.
For every <i>thing</i> is good in its season.	24.
And sing unto [His holy name].	25.
And a yoke [heavy for the son] of Adam,	26.
Until the day when he returneth to the mother of all living things ;	27.
To him who [sitteth] in dust and ashes ;	28.
To him who is covered with a cloth of [skin] ;	29.
Fear of death [strife and contention].	30.
The sleep of the night [departeth from his eyes].	31.
And from the midst of [terrors he awaketh].	32.
Like the spoiled one [he fleeth before] the pursuer.	33.
. . . . . rest.	34.

<sup>1</sup> Text, salvation.

<sup>2</sup> *Lit.* harder and stronger than He.

<sup>3</sup> Or, intoxicated.

<sup>4</sup> Or sought.

<sup>5</sup> Or when he is soothed.

the rest of another **ב**, but the ink is so run together that it is fairly possible that there was once present the letter **ב**. The clause expresses the same idea as *v.* 20 below. (Cf. the Syriac, *v.* 39.) Note that neither illustration by waters (Greek, *v.* 17, suggested by אוצור; cf. Ps. xxxii. 3?) nor that by the sun (Syriac, *v.* 21) is to be found in our text. The letters עריך are distinct, so that is no room for thinking of ישרים ערימה, or יעריב ערבים, which would account for the versions.

4. ועושי. The word is very indistinct, and looks, at the first glance, like תחש; but I am fairly certain of the reading given in the text. On the whole our text agrees more with the Greek (*v.* 18). The Syriac seems to give here *v.* 21 of our text, [ואין מעצור, etc. Cf. I Sam. xv. 6.

5. I am not certain that I read the marginal מסומה correctly. Perhaps it is מנוסה. It is an entirely different writing, and by a much later hand than the rest of the MS.

6. [מעולם...יביט. This verse is wanting in the Syriac, whilst the Greek (*v.* 20) has only the first clause. The second in the Greek corresponds with the second of the next verse in our text. [לתשובתו] gives no sense in this connexion. I suspect that it is a corruption from לתבונתו. (Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 5, לתבונתו אין מספר. Before מספר only the ש is legible. Perhaps we should supply אין לפרש, or perhaps ומי ישא. Cf. I Chron. xxvii. 23.

7. [ואין, etc. This verse corresponds with Syriac (*v.* 23), whilst the Greek has only retained the second clause (*v.* 20), [נפלא חזק]. This seems to be a favoured phrase with Sirach. See the quotation from Ecclus. in Genesis Rabbah, c. vii. Cf. *Jewish Quarterly Review*, iii. p. 690, No. 4, and notes to it, pp. 698 and 699.

8. Perhaps we should supply after *v.* 24 below אין לאמר מה זה. The word to be supplied in the second clause after לצרכו is probably נברא (cf. below *v.* 20). Note the Syriac מתנבירין.

9. רוח שמה. These words are doubtful, the letters being very faint. The second clause is legible enough, but the sense is obscure. From the context in *v.* 10 we must conclude that there was present here some noun in the feminine (say אמרתו), which in the one case brings destruction and ruin, and in the other bliss and prosperity.

10. [ברכות, etc. The subject is to be sought in the preceding verse (namely, אמרתו?). הציפו in *hiphil* (cf. Deut. xi. 4). רוח in *piel* has also the meaning saturating and *intoxicating* (see Hebrew Dictionaries).

11. [ועמו. The now missing letter is probably ב. The word יוריש was misunderstood by the Greek and misread by the Syriac translator (reading יישפוט). Cf. Dr. Edersheim to *v.* 23. [משקה]; cf. Gen. xiii. 10, כלה משקה.

12. Probably we have to supply here ררכיו את, so that it would read, "His (God's) ways are plain to the perfect." כן, etc. Perhaps we

should supply כן ל' הם ל'ק. In the word לקללה only the letters ללה are certain. Cf. the Syriac, *v.* 31. By זרים are meant the heathen.

13. Probably we must supply הטוב לטוב. The variant reading which is indicated by the ring-mark on ולרעים is faded. Perhaps it was ורע. Cf. the Syriac, *v.* 29, אן טב ואן ביש, ורע.

14. Perhaps we should supply ראשי צרכי (cf. Bensee C. xl. 16).

15. Supply סלת חטים (Fritzsche to *v.* 27) or חלב חטים (Prof. Margoliouth, *Expositor*, 1890, I., p. 383). In these last two verses our text agrees more with the Greek.

16. Probably we have to supply כל אלה. For the marginal reading לזרא cf. Num. xi. 20.

17. Of this whole verse only seven letters remain. To judge from these words, יעתיק הרים (cf. Job ix. 5), this verse must have agreed with the Syriac (see Commentaries to *v.* 28).

18. וברר רע. The Greek reads רעב (רע), whilst the Syriac (with which also the second clause agrees) paraphrases it with מות. The last word probably reads נבראו.

19. [חית שן]. One would expect שן חיה (cf. Deut. xxxii. 24), but both the Syriac and the Greek have the same order, which makes it probable that this was the order used by Sirach (cf. *Speaker* to *v.* 30). [להחיים]. The space after this word may be filled with זרים or אויביו.

20. [כל אלה], etc. Of this verse only a part of the second clause is to be found in the Syriac (*v.* 39) in an entirely different connexion, whilst the Greek retained in the words *and they shall be ready, etc., when need is* (*v.* 31) a faint reminiscence of the first clause. See also above notes to *v.* 3.

21. [בצותו], etc. Cf. Jewish Prayer-Book. ששים ושמונים לעשות רצון. חק נתן ולא יעבר, [ובחקם]. Cf. Ps. cxlviii. 6, קונם.

22. [על כן], etc. This verse agrees with the Greek, the Syriac having misunderstood the whole passage (cf. the *Speaker*, *v.* 32). [הנחתי], which confirms Fritzsche's suggestion; though in good Hebrew we would expect something like ובחבתי זאת זכרון בכפר.

23. [מעשה אל...יספוק]. The Greek (*v.* 33) seems to have read here יספיק. See above note to *v.* 2.

24. [אל לאמר], etc. The Greek read with the margin in the first clause מזה, whilst in the Syriac, which read with the margin, in the second clause ינבר (instead of טוב), whilst there is also some confusion with the second clause of *v.* 20, קפיסין באוצרא. See also Prov. xv. 23 and Eccles. iii. 11.

25. [על כן], etc. Supply כן. Of the second clause only three letters remain. The marginal note would suggest that we had in the text לש השמו הנדול, for which the margin read הקרוש.

26. Note that there is no sign of a new chapter or section (פרשה) in the MS. [עכך]. This is a Neo-Hebrew word, but its use by Sirach

is also guaranteed from a quotation from Ecclus. in the B. Talmud, *Chagiga J. 13a.* (cf. *Jewish Quarterly Review*, as above note 7, end). The word signifies chiefly occupation or business. חלק seems to be a favoured expression with our author. Cf. above, v. 13. On the whole this verse agrees more with the Syriac than with the Greek.

27. [מיוום...שובו], etc. This expression makes the reading ἐπιστροφῆς (see Fritzsche) very probable. Whether we have not to perceive in ארעא רחיא of the Syriac (xl. 1) some sort of euphemism for "grave-yard" (as with the Jews in the middle ages, who called it בית החיים, cf. Zunz, *Zur Literatur und Geschichte*, p. 442) is difficult to say.

28. [מיושב], etc. Note that v. 2 (in Ch. xl.), *their imagination*, etc. (Greek), or *their glory*, etc. (Syriac), which hardly gives good sense in either version, is not to be found in our text. Perhaps the whole verse is only a double of v. 30 put in the wrong place, the Greek reading אח (for אך), and the Syriac רגה (for קנאה); though it is impossible to account satisfactorily for every word in it. [בכסא לגבה]. Cf. Prov. ix., כסא, מרמי קרח [לשוב]. Perhaps we should read ליושב, though in this case we should expect על ע. Cf. Isaiah xlvi. 1; Jonah iii. 6; and Job ii. 8 (בתוך). The marginal reading לובש may be explained by such parallels as Isaiah lxi. 3 and Esther iv. 1 offer.

29. [מעטוח], etc. For צניף וציץ (mitre and diadem) see Dictionaries, but they never occur in connexion with עטה. [שמלת]. Perhaps we should supply שער (cf. Zech. xiii. 5), which may also be taken for שער (cf. 2 Kings vii. 10). The marginal reading ענר [שמלת ענר] is very indistinct. It would be interesting to know the authority of the A.V. for the marg. read. "to the porter."

30. אך. This word was misread both by the Greek and Syriac versions (v. 3) for אף. [תחרות]. This is certainly a Neo-Hebrew word (see Talmudical Dictionaries) occurring in connexion with שנאה and קנאה, meaning strife, quarrel, etc. There is still a space in the M.S. for a short word, which might perhaps be supplied by וריב. The margin had also ומדן.

31. ועת...לילה. Perhaps the words to be supplied at the end of the second clause are תדר מעיניו (cf. Gen. xxxi. 40). This would account for the Syriac, whilst the Greek perhaps misread it for רעיוניו.

32. [מעט לחיק], etc. This verse is missing in the Syriac. The word לחיק gives no sense, unless it is a corruption of לחבק (cf. Prov. xxvi. 33). The marginal reading רוח is probably to be pointed רוח, meaning to be comfortable, to feel refreshed (cf. Biblical and Talmudic Dictionaries, s.v. רוח or רווח). [וימבין ב'.] Perhaps we should supply בלהות לאור (which the Greek read מצפה). Cf. Fritzsche, xl. 6). We should then translate *from the midst of terrors* (supposed to surround him, see Job xviii. 11) *he is watching* (or hoping, cf. Job iii. 9) *for the light* (of the day).

33. **טעם טעם**. We expect, of course, a final Mim. The word **טעם** again runs together with the following **חזון**, which shows distinctly some carelessness here on the part of the copyist. Perhaps we had here **ט' מ' בחזון נפ'**, meaning, *there is little taste* (or counsel, or sense; see Dictionaries, *s.v.* **טעם**) *in the vision of his heart*. [כשרור]. Supply **יניס לפני**. On the whole this verse agrees more with the Syriac.

34. [עודך]. This word can also be read **שרך**. There is just space for one short word before the **ע** or **ש**. Perhaps it was **עת**. **שרך** is only to be found in the Targumim and in the Talmud, and means to be quiet, to be soothed (see Dictionaries, *s.v.* **שרך**). Whether the Greek read this strange word **ישע** (cf. *Speaker's Commentary* to lx. 7) is difficult to say, as almost the rest of the whole line is now torn off. [טנור]. The letters are very indistinct. The marginal readings **כי ער כי** and **אם כי** belonged to *v.* 18, of which nothing remains in our Fragment.

I have confined myself in the foregoing notes to the most necessary explanations in our Fragment; not entering into the question of metre, nor enlarging upon the nature of the Neo-Hebrew words and non-classical constructions we have noticed, nor even examining sufficiently the relation of our text to the Greek and Syriac versions. Want of space compels me to postpone the discussion of these questions to a future occasion. I am also sorely pressed for time, since many scholars both here and on the continent have expressed the wish to see the Fragment published without any delay; and I am, on my part, not less anxious to hear as soon as possible the opinions of those who have made Sirach the special subject of their studies.

But even these meagre notes will suffice to show that our text is not a translation. It will be easily gathered from them that its correspondence with the versions changes almost in every line, agreeing in some places with the Greek, in others with the Syriac. In other places, again, it agrees with *neither* of these versions, omitting whole clauses which are to be found both in the Greek and in the Syriac, or offering new readings which have been either misunderstood or misread by the translators. Cer-

tain clauses, again, are to be found in our MS. which are wanting in *both* versions, or are only reproduced by a very short paraphrase. There cannot, therefore, be even the shadow of a doubt that our text represents nothing else but the original. Even the marginal glosses testify to this fact. Such differences of *plena* and *defecta* as צורך and צרך, or such fine variants as פיו and פיהו, cannot possibly have been suggested by any translation, and could only have been made from some other copy of the original.

As to the date when the MS. was written, I have already remarked in the introduction that the writing points to an early period, not later than the eleventh century. I should like to add that the fact that the MS. is only paper (not parchment) is in no way unfavourable to such a comparatively early date. Among the fragments acquired by the University Library of Cambridge, from the same part of the world which Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson have traversed on their recent travels, we have no less than eight documents written on the same kind of paper as our Fragment, and *dated* from the eleventh century. But for the fact that a lapse of two or three generations is necessary to account for the disappearance of the vowels and accents which were still used in the copies of Sirach from which Saadya quotes, there would not be the least objection to placing the date of our MS. in the tenth century, the age of this Gaon. It may indeed be suggested that the protest of the Caraites against the imitation of the Bible, even in its external form, had something to do with the gradual disappearance of these signs, which become rarer with every age in books not forming a part of the Scriptures.

Nor must we think that our Fragment represents only a quotation from Sirach in some Rabbinical book now lost to us. Not only are its contents too long for a mere quotation, but the way in which our Fragment is written makes such a suggestion quite inadmissible. Passages

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quoted from the Bible are never divided into verses or arranged in columns even when the citations come from the poetical books. They are simply reproduced as prose, one line following the other, without the least sign to distinguish it from the rest of the page. Our Fragment, therefore, comes directly from a MS. containing the whole of Ecclesiasticus in the language in which Sirach wrote it, subject, of course, to changes, corruptions and mutilations owing to the carelessness of copyists and other mishaps which every work must experience during a period of nearly thirteen centuries.

The significance of the Fragment consists thus not only in what it offers, but also in the hope it holds out to us of fresh finds. If I may add a wish to this hope, it is, that it may be again Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, to whose zeal for everything relating to the Scriptures Semitic scholarship is already under such great obligations, whose further finds will prove the means of restoring to us the whole of Ecclesiasticus.

S. SCHECHTER.