

## Schweizer's "Remains of a Hebrew Text of I Maccabees."<sup>1</sup>

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IN my article "Maccabees" in the third volume of Cheyne and Black's *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, the following words occur in a note, below the middle of col. 2868, concerning a Hebrew version of I Maccabees and the conclusions of Schweizer regarding it: "Schweizer, in a critical discussion of the text, . . . comes to the conclusion that it is based upon the original Hebrew from which all the other versions have sprung. His view is probably too optimistic. The text may certainly prove to be here and there of some value for a criticism of the readings of the versions, but its general importance is only secondary. The style is too simple and the vocabulary too easy to be ancient, and the work as a whole resembles the paraphrastic compositions [*Megillath Antiochus*, etc.] above mentioned."

This note was added by the editors to my manuscript, which was finished and delivered to them in the early summer of 1898. The

<sup>1</sup> This investigation was concluded in the late fall of 1901, and presented to the Society of Biblical Literature at its annual meeting in December of that year. After it had been prepared for the printer, some time later, I learned that Professor Nöldeke had discussed this Hebrew text in the *Literarisches Centralblatt* (1901, col. 521 ff.); and upon reading his article I saw that it so closely resembled my own, in both argument and conclusion, as to render my intended publication superfluous. I accordingly put my paper aside, and abandoned all thought of printing it. Recently, however, I have been led to reconsider my decision, and to resurrect the manuscript. Bousset, in his *Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, 1903, p. 17, note, says of this Hebrew text of I Maccabees that it represents "eine Rückübersetzung aus einem griechischen Text, der nicht ohne Wert ist." He thereupon cites reviews of Schweizer's pamphlet by Schmidt, Vetter, and Levy. I have thought that if so careful a scholar as Bousset can still hold this view, which he has now given a wide currency through his book, the publication of even these brief notes of mine may not be altogether superfluous. They are here printed exactly as they originally stood, before I had seen Nöldeke's article.

proof-sheet containing it, sent to me in the summer of 1901, gave me my first knowledge of Schweizer's publication. I was glad of the note, and it was, of course, my business to test the new work at once. This, however, was unfortunately out of the question. With the proof came the urgent request to return it as soon as possible, and it was manifestly too late to procure the book from Germany and begin an investigation which might be long and could hardly yield any important result. The note was cautiously worded, and I therefore accepted it, and added a reference to Schweizer in the bibliography at the end of the article "First Maccabees."

The following discussion of the new Hebrew text and of the work mentioned may seem to some to be unduly extended. But after seeing Schweizer's publication, and testing the new text, I was unwilling to allow the references in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* to stand without some explanation. And having once undertaken to estimate the value of this material, it seemed unavoidable to give details in such number as to leave no room for doubt; both in justice to myself, and for the sake of scholars who may thereby be saved some time and spared some vexation.

In the year 1896, Professor Chwolson, of St. Petersburg, discovered in a Hebrew manuscript<sup>2</sup> a hitherto unknown version of a part of 1 Maccabees; viz. chaps. 1-4 (in a version somewhat briefer than the standard ones) 7<sup>27</sup>-9<sup>22</sup> 9<sup>29a. 31. 73</sup> and that part of chap. 6 which narrates the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. The text was found to be incomplete at the end, breaking off in the middle of a sentence (the beginning of 6<sup>14</sup>); in other respects, however, it was in excellent condition, presenting a smooth version which cursory examination showed to be practically identical with the standard recension.

This Hebrew text Professor Chwolson published in vol. vii. (Jahrgang xii.-xiii. 1896-97) of the texts and studies of the Jewish Verein "*Mekize Nirdamim*,"<sup>3</sup> in Berlin, but without investigating it carefully, or comparing it with other versions. As I learn from the very brief notice in the *Theologischer Jahresbericht* (Bd. xvii. 1, p. 81), Chwolson conjectured the ninth century as the date of this translation, and Italy as the land in which it was made.

As 1 Maccabees is a work of very great importance, and the Hebrew in which it was originally written has long been lost, the

<sup>2</sup> I have seen it referred to only as "a Paris manuscript." The publication of Schweizer, mentioned below, gives no more definite information as to its whereabouts.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Orientalische Bibliographie*, 1898, p. 115, no. 2232.

question of the nature and origin of such a text as this is one of no ordinary interest, and the necessity of investigation was of course imperative. Since a part of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus has recently come to light, we are prepared to hear of the recovery of the original text of other books of the Old Testament Apocrypha, now preserved only in translations.

It was with the purpose of investigating thoroughly the facts bearing on the important questions of the origin and value of this manuscript that Dr. Abraham Schweizer published his "*Untersuchungen über die Reste eines hebräischen Textes vom ersten Makkabäerbuch*" (Berlin : Poppelauer, 1901). He evidently realized the importance of his task, and says in his preface (p. 7) : "*Es soll in der folgenden Abhandlung dieser neue hebräische Text des I. Makkabäerbuches auf genaueste mit allen anderen vorhandenen Relationen desselben verglichen werden, damit wir dann schliesslich ein Gesamturteil über denselben abzugeben und aus diesem Urteile die Konsequenzen zu ziehen im Stande sind.*" He accordingly compares the Hebrew text (which he reprints), verse by verse and phrase by phrase, first with the Greek version, then with the Syriac. His investigation of the relation of the Hebrew to the Greek (in which he uses the apparatus of Swete's edition, devoting one chapter to the Alexandrine text, and another to the Sinaitic and Venetian codices) occupies about thirty pages ; the comparison with the Syriac, about twenty pages. Last of all, he investigates the Hebrew text itself, and compares its readings with those of Josephus. The whole book contains 116 pages.

His conclusion, which he considers to be supported by an overwhelming array of evidence from every side (see his remarks, pp. 33, 40, 43, 45, 65 f., 84 ff., 92 f.), is that this Hebrew text is indeed a survival of the original, and derived immediately from it ; somewhat abridged, it is true, so that it is in reality a 'clipped' recension, but preserving none the less the wording of the book as it left the hands of its author.

The result of this conclusion would be, indeed, to put the study of the book on a new footing, — as Schweizer (p. 7) assumes that it has, — if the conclusion were borne out, or even given some slight plausibility, by the facts. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

In the first place, the character of this new Hebrew document as a popular abridgment from the Maccabean histories is so obvious as to need no argument. This is, of course, what any one even slightly acquainted with medieval Jewish literature would expect, and the expectation becomes certainty as soon as the first examination of the

document is made. But this is not all; the author of the abridgment expressly characterizes it as such. In 1 Macc. 9<sup>22</sup>, the Greek reads: *καὶ τὰ περισσὰ τῶν λόγων Ἰουδου . . . οὐ κατεγράφη· πολλὰ γὰρ ἦν σφόδρα*; "And the rest of the deeds of Judas . . . were not recorded, for they were very many." In the passage corresponding to this, the Hebrew has (Schweizer's text, p. 12, line 4 *a. f.*): דָּתָר דְּכַרֵּי יְהוּדָה . . . הֲלֵא הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל סֵפֶר הַחֲשֵׁמוֹנִים "And the rest of the deeds of Judas . . . are they not written in the Book of the Hasmoneans?" (the only natural way of writing "Liber Machabaeorum" in Hebrew). This innocent adaptation of the standard text certainly needs no explanation. Schweizer's comment (pp. 30 f.) may be cited as a specimen of his critical procedure: "*In diesem Texte findet man die Formel, die in den Königsbüchern so oft bei den Königen von Israel und Juda angewendet wird. Man sieht daraus(!), dass der hebr. Text auch hier das Ursprüngliche hat. Der griech. Uebersetzer las wahrscheinlich לא "nicht" statt הלא "fürwahr," daher kam ein ganz anderer Sinn heraus; vielleicht hat er auch statt ספר על gelesen מספר,*" etc. . . . "*In Wirklichkeit eröffnet der hebr. Text unserm durch die Dunkelheit des griech. Textes getrübbten Blick eine herrliche Aussicht, indem der Verfasser hier ein von ihm gekanntes und benutztes Dokument für die Geschichte Judas andeutet.*"

Moreover, this Jewish compendium of the Maccabean history, like the others of its kind, uses not only 1 Maccabees, but 2 Maccabees as well. The passage at the close (Hebrew text, p. 13, lines 10-14), narrating the circumstances of the death of Antiochus, is taken from 2 Macc. 9<sup>9</sup>. 12. 17. 20. Schweizer has observed this, and says (p. 89): "*Auffallend ist nur noch der Umstand, dass an einigen wenigen Stellen unseres Textes . . . einige Sätze eingefügt sind, die eine gewisse Aehnlichkeit mit Sätzen vom 2. Makkabäerbuche zeigen.*" He then explains the fact by the supposition that this Hebrew was derived from a recension of 1 Maccabees older than the one from which our translations were made!

Our document is, then, like the *מגלת אנטיוכוס*, the story of Judas Maccabaeus and his deeds in its briefest form, with due prominence given to the fate of his hated opponents, Nicanor and Antiochus. It was plainly intended to make edifying reading for devout Jews, especially on the day of the Hanukka.

It still remains to ask, however, whether this abridgment may not have been made *from the original Hebrew*, as Schweizer asserts so positively that it was. The character of the Hebrew in which it is

written makes this a very improbable supposition at the start. On this important point Schweizer has only the vague remark (p. 93) that the language of this document reminds us of "the post-exilic books Ezra and Nehemiah," and much resembles that of the Mishna! The fact is, the language bears unmistakably the stamp of the Middle Ages; some striking examples will be given below. Ancient texts of no canonical authority might, however, be considerably altered and corrupted in the lapse of centuries and yet preserve for us much of the original form, — the fragments of Bar Sira have given us some illustration of this, — so it will be necessary to examine the evidence which Schweizer has to offer.

It is possible to be brief here. He shows, without difficulty, that the Hebrew text cannot be derived from the Greek, nor yet from the Syriac. The greater part of his demonstration, indeed, is quite superfluous. On the other hand, when he attempts to show that the Hebrew, in the many places where it diverges from the Greek or Syriac versions, preserves the original reading, his disregard of both evidence and probability is surprising. The fact is, every page of the Hebrew text contains numerous passages which make perfectly plain its character as a secondary recension, loose, awkward, and full of blunders. In no instance is there any ground for the contention that it has preserved the original reading, as against the other versions. The most striking evidence of these statements will be given below; a few passages, chosen at random, may be cited here by way of illustration. 1 Macc. 1<sup>9</sup> reads: "And they [the successors of Alexander] all put on diadems after his death, and so did their sons after them, for many years." The Hebrew, p. 3, line 8, has: **יִקְחוּ לָהֶם כָּל מַחְמָדָיו אַחֲרַי מוֹתוֹ וְגַם הָיָה לְבְנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם**, a bit of nonsense which shows that the Jewish translator misunderstood the word "diadems." In 2<sup>6</sup> the expression "by force" (*ἐν ἰσχύϊ, in fortitudine*) is misunderstood, and translated (p. 5, line 7 *a. f.*) by **בְּנִבְרִיתוֹ**, which is ill suited to this context. In 2<sup>20</sup> we read: "He [Mattathias] died in the one hundred and forty-sixth year," *i. e.*, of the Seleucid era. Our Jewish translator mistook this number for the old man's age (!) and renders (p. 6, line 12): **וַיָּמָת בֶּן מֵאָה וָאַרְבָּעִים וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים**. The beginning of 3<sup>38</sup> (Hebrew text, p. 7, line 12) is a striking example of mistranslation, of such a nature that no theory of "a scribal error" or of "text-corruption" can be entertained for a moment.

Of most of such passages as these Schweizer takes no notice, and in more than one case he defends a Hebrew reading in a way

that is unjustifiable. So, for example, when he argues (p. 43 f.) that עדת יהודים is preferable to the συναγωγή Ἀσιδάϊων of 1 Macc. 2<sup>2</sup>. His comment on 1<sup>4</sup> (Hebrew, p. 3, line 16) is characteristic. The standard versions read: "And they [the renegades] built a *gymnasium* in Jerusalem." The Hebrew has in place of "gymnasium," בית הקדשים והיכלות לאילים, which is an embellishment such as no student could mistake. But no, according to Schweizer (p. 52) this is the original, and the other the translation; the Hebrew phrase "gibt die Bedeutung des griech. γυμνάσιον richtig wieder"! This would be very amusing if it were not so evidently unfair.

There is another, and a very serious, flaw in Schweizer's investigation which it is impossible to excuse. As has been observed, he compares the Hebrew with the Greek and Syriac versions at considerable length. The omission of the *Latin version* is more than noticeable. He must certainly have known that Latin was the favorite medium of translation into Hebrew in the Middle Ages, and that a considerable amount of literature of this same character was produced, especially among the Jews in Italy. As was remarked above, Chwolson conjectured that this very document was translated in Italy in the ninth century. Schweizer, while rejecting the theory of a translation, adopts the view that this text came from Italy, where it had been preserved (pp. 13 f.). Why, then, did he fail to compare the Latin version?

In not a few places he claims to have done so. On p. 45 (note 1) he says: "Zur Vergleichung von verschiedenen dunklen Stellen wird öfters auch die lateinische Version herbeigezogen"; and on pp. 65 and 84 he asserts several times over that he has 'proved' that the Hebrew cannot have been derived from the Latin. In one place (p. 65, above) he expresses himself a little more exactly: "Ebenso zeigt es sich an einzelnen markanten Beispielen deutlich, dass auch der lateinische Text mit dem hebr. nicht übereinstimmt." But there are in fact only a scant dozen of cases in which he has cited the Latin versions at all, and these quotations appear to be merely those which happened to be in Grimm's Commentary (whence most of his knowledge of 1 Maccabees is derived). They are introduced by him quite incidentally, and without any attempt to make a critical use of them.

If he had compared any extended passage of the Hebrew with either the Vulgate or the version of the Codex Sangermanensis, he must have seen at once the origin of this text. It is the *Vulgate*, however, which furnishes the true key to the many striking divergencies of this Hebrew from the Greek and Syriac versions; a Vulgate

text, moreover, which is nearly identical with the modern standard, only very seldom containing a reading peculiar to the version of the Sangermanensis.

A few examples will suffice for proof; the number could easily be multiplied. 1 Macc. 1<sup>13</sup> reads: "And he [the king] gave them [the hellenists] authority to do after the manner of the Gentiles." Our Hebrew text (page 3, line 14) has: **ויתן להם ממשלה לשפוט את הגוים**. The source of this amazing sentence is at once plain from the Vulgate, *ut facerent justitiam gentium.*. The Latin translator had rendered too literally, and the Jewish translator was led into a bad blunder. In 2<sup>64</sup>, Mattathias says to his sons: "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men!" The Hebrew (p. 6, line 8) has **התנחמו ותגברו** "comfort yourselves and be men," which is explained by the Latin *confortamini*, used here to translate *ισχυετε*. 2<sup>24</sup>, "When Mattathias saw this, he was filled with righteous wrath," where the Heb. has the inappropriate **וידאן**, due to the Latin *et doluit*. In 2<sup>15</sup>, the Greek and Syriac versions read (as the context requires): "Then the emissaries of the king who were compelling [the Jews] to apostatize came to the town of Modein to offer the sacrifices." The Heb. (p. 4, line 25) has, on the contrary, the following distorted version: **ויבאו שמה מלאכי מלך אנטיוכם לצות לעם אשר ברחו בעיר מודעי לובח**. This is a verbal translation of the Latin: *et venerunt illuc qui missi erant a rege Antiocho ut cogere eos qui confugerant in civitatem Modin immolare*, in which the words *eos . . . Modin* are a palpable mistranslation of *την ἀποστασίαν εἰς Μωδαίιν*. The impossible **צדת יהודים** (Greek, *συναγωγὴ Ἀσιδαίων*), 2<sup>42</sup>, came from the Latin (Sangerm.) *conventus Judaeorum*. It is said in 3<sup>5</sup> of Judas: "Those who troubled his people he destroyed (lit. 'consumed,' Gr. *ἐφλόγησε*, translating **בער**)." Our Hebrew has, for this verb, **הצית להבה**, a blindly faithful rendering of the stupid Latin translation, *succendit flammis*.

It is in the proper names, especially, that the character of this text, as a secondary version of late date, is plainly revealed. Antiochus is the king of "**צסיא**" (*Asia*), 8<sup>6</sup>; *Ἀλκιμος* is written **אליכמום**, with **כ** (Lat. Sangerm. *Alchimus*), 9<sup>1</sup>; Beth-Sûr is written with **ם** (!) in both 4<sup>61</sup> and 6<sup>7</sup>, in the latter case **בית סורא** (*Bethsura*)! In 4<sup>20</sup>, instead of Beth-Sûr, as in the Greek and Syriac versions, our Hebrew has the impossible reading **בית חורון**, taken from the Vulgate *Bethoron*. For *ἐν Ἀλασα*, 9<sup>5</sup>, Heb. has **בלישה**, Vulg. *in Laisa*; for Emmaus, in 3<sup>57</sup>, **אמהו** (!) = Sangerm. *Ammau*. In 6<sup>1</sup>, our standard text reads: "Antiochus . . . heard that there was in Elymais (*ἐν Ἐλύμας*) in Per-

sia a city," etc. The Hebrew (p. 13, line 1) has: (!) **בְּעִיר אֵילִימַדִים (!) אֲשֶׁר בְּמַרְסָם**, a phrase which would be a remarkable achievement indeed for the author of 1 Maccabees, but is quite natural here in view of the Latin, *civitatem Elymaidem in Perside*.

But even these examples are not the worst. In 8<sup>17</sup> (Heb. p. 11, line 6 *a. f.*) Jason (**Ἰάσων, Jason**) is written **יָזוֹן!** The interesting counterpart of this is the form in which Gazara (**Γαζαρά, Gazara, Gezeron**) is written in 4<sup>13</sup> and 7<sup>45</sup>, namely **יָצוֹר**. It is plain that we have in these examples testimony of some importance as to the pronunciation of the author of our Hebrew version. The same is true in **גַּלְצִיָּא** = *Galatia* and **אִישְׁפַּנְיָא** (*sic!*) = *Hispania*, in 8<sup>2</sup>.

These specimens are more than enough. It remains to be added, that the translator abridges at will, and omits altogether the more difficult words, phrases, and passages of his original (whence Schweizer's frequent claim that the "*Schlichtheit*" of the Hebrew proves it to be the work of the author himself); his work will then perhaps have been sufficiently characterized. It is quite worthless for the criticism of 1 Maccabees, as is also Schweizer's own "investigation."

A word may be added in regard to the probable home, date, and authorship of this Jewish translation. The manuscript in which it was found contained other writings, and the whole was in the handwriting of one man, who lived, as Schweizer says, "*an den herrlichen, rebenumkränzten Ufern des Rheins,*" where he seems to have been a rabbi in the schools at Mainz and Worms especially, between the years 1120 and 1180. The peculiarities of transliteration just mentioned would seem to point to this very part of the world rather than to any other. *Galatia* is pronounced "Galatzia"; *Hispania* is "Ishpania"; the sounds of *g*, *j*, and *y* are hopelessly run together, as in certain modern German dialects: *Gazara* is written with initial **ג**, *Jason* with **ז**; and so on.

There is therefore some probability, from internal evidence, that this rabbi of Worms, whose works are contained in the Paris manuscript, was himself the one who translated the story of Judas Maccabaeus from the Latin. This probability is increased by another circumstance. At the end of the manuscript, some acrostic verses yield the sentence: **אֲנִי יַעֲקֹב בֶּר אַבְרָהָם**, "I am Jacob bar Abraham." Schweizer (p. 9) thinks that this is not likely to have been the name of the rabbi himself who was the author of so large a part of the book, "*denn zur Zeit, wo das Manuscript abgefasst wurde (1160-80), gab es keinen Gelehrten, der unter dem Namen Jakob b. Abraham bekannt wäre.*" He therefore thinks that the acrostic verses were probably



borrowed from some older book. But is the name of every rabbi who taught in Worms and Mainz in the twelfth century so certainly known? And as for the verses (doggerel regarding the laws of clean and unclean animals), they are not such as would have been copied from another book; the important thing in them is the acrostic; it was for the sake of this that they were composed, and for this reason that they were put at the end of the whole. The author of these documents took some pride in his work, and therefore signed his name. We have some reason to believe, then, that Jacob bar Abraham was the author of this "Hebrew text of I Maccabees."

