NOTES AND STUDIES

A NEW MS OF THE ODES OF SOLOMON.

For more than two years, ever since Dr Rendel Harris first published the ‘Odes of Solomon’ in October 1909, scholars have been expressing their regret that so interesting a document should have been preserved only in a single late copy. All the while a much older MS of the Odes was lying unnoticed at the British Museum, where it had been housed for some seventy years, and been duly catalogued for forty years!

B. M. Add. 14538 is described in Wright’s Catalogue pp. 1003–1008, and is assigned by him to the 10th century. The greater part of the volume (foll. 1–148) consists of extracts from earlier writers arranged under headings; what follows (foll. 149–155) is in a different and to my eyes a rather earlier hand, as if an earlier MS had been bound up with what precedes. In this latter part there are about 50 lines on the page and the margins are very small, giving the impression that the leaves have been cut down to fit the rest. Wright’s description of the leaves which concern us (foll. 149–152) runs as follows:

4. A collection of Hymns, very imperfect. Fol. 149 a. Those that remain are numbered from to , and from to . The eighteenth begins thus:

Nothing more was needed to tell us that we have here a MS of the Odes of Solomon, followed (as in Dr Harris’s MS) by the Psalms of Solomon, and on examination this proves to be indeed the case.

Dr Wright’s description needs some little correction and supplement. The four surviving leaves of Codex Nitriensis, which I shall call N, contain the ‘Odes’ from xvii 7 to the end, immediately followed by the ‘Psalms’, the extant portions in the numeration of Ryle and James
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being i r–iii 5 and x 4–xviii 5, but the last section (fol. 152) is both defaced and lacerated. There are no headlines, and as neither title nor colophon is preserved, the name of Solomon does not appear. The single Odes and Psalms are written quite continuously, but as in Dr Harris's MS (H) each 'Ode' ends with Halleluia (here written ḫ), while the Psalms have no such ending. Ode xlii ends at the end of the last line of fol. 151 a, 'Psalm' i beginning fol. 151 b without any break or superscription except ḫ, i.e. 'No. 43'.

It should be remembered that the division into 'Psalms' and 'Odes' so far as the Syriac Version is concerned, is modern and artificial. They are numbered in one series in N, the only headings being ḫ, ḫ, &c. (i.e. 'No. 27', 'No. 28'). In H the corresponding headings are ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ (i.e. 'Ode Twenty-seven', 'Ode Twenty-eight'). The collection was also known as 'The Psalms (Ḡaiawān) of Solomon, son of David', but the zmīrta of H exactly corresponds to the ḥ of Lactantius and the Pītis Sophia, as may be seen from Eph. v 19, so that there can be little doubt that the proper name of the whole Sixty Poems in Syriac was ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ.

The collations given below will show how near the text of N is to that of H, in other words how generally satisfactory Dr Harris's text is, so far as the Syriac version of the Odes is concerned. It may further be added that if stiffness and absence of really characteristic native idiom be any test, the Syriac version may be accepted as a very faithful rendering of the original Greek of the Odes. From our point of view that is a merit, as it enables us more clearly to realize what this original Greek may have been like. At the same time it tends to prove that the literary history of the Odes and Psalms of Solomon in Syriac was neither long nor influential. Quite recently Mr W. R. Newbold has attempted to prove that Bardaisan was the author of the Odes, but I do not suppose his theory will commend itself to any one who is familiar with original Syriac literature. The Odes in Syriac are a creditable piece of work, but their language is a very different thing from the graceful and flexible tongue in which the Acts of Judas Thomas and the Dialogue on Fate are written.

1 So C. U. L. Add. 2012, which quotes a few verses from 'Psalms 58' (i.e. Ryle and James xvi), as pointed out by Dr W. E. Barnes in J. T. S. for July 1910.
2 Journal of Biblical Literature xxx 161–204.
3 As a simple instance, contrast the ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ of the Peshīṭa in Matt. xxviii 20 with the ḫ ḫ ḫ ḫ of Ode xlii 6.
The origin of these Odes is satisfactory, which regards the Syriac translation that we possess otherwise than as an exotic.

The discovery of a Nitrian MS of the Odes helps us to bring them back to their proper home, to the land of Egypt. As long as it seemed that the great Monophysite Library of St Mary Deipara contained no copy, it might be guessed that these Odes had had some peculiar ecclesiastical history in their Syriac dress. Now we can see that in all probability they are part of the literary activity of the Syriac Monophysite community in Egypt, the school that produced the translation of the Acts of SS. Peter and Paul and Luke. All three authorities for the Odes in Syriac are of a definitely Jacobite character. The notice detected by Dr Barnes occurs in a late Jacobite MS, Dr Harris's MS is in a Jacobite hand, and the much older Nitrian MS is appended to a catena of extracts arranged and selected in the interests of Monophysite controversy. Moreover the small range of variation between N and H precludes the idea that they were much read.

One or two general remarks on the Odes may be added here. In discussing the style and meaning of these poems hardly sufficient attention seems to me to have been given to the fact that they come before us as Odes of Solomon. They are found bound up with the 'Psalms of Solomon', a pseudopigraphical work composed between 70 and 40 B.C. No doubt these Psalms were called Solomon's, because they are more or less modelled in style upon the Canonical Psalter, the Psalms of David. In fact, we may regard the ascription of these 'Psalms' to Solomon as an indication that the Davidic Psalter was already closed when they were written.

As for the Odes, there is nothing to shew that the name of Solomon was not associated with them from the first, whether they appeared separately, or (as I think more probable) they were first published as an enlarged and Christianized edition of the Solomonic collection. The mention of the χριστός by Solomon in the Psalms may have inspired the Odist to make Solomon speak of theology and grace in a more intimate and less political fashion. But pseudopigraphical composition amongst Jews and Christians had its own rules. Not, of course, that the authors tried to make the hero of old time prophesy or write in accordance with real historical verisimilitude: that would indeed be a literary anachronism. But, for all that, certain historical anachronisms were always avoided. It may almost be expressed in a formula—the Seers of old are supposed to foretell events and to understand doctrines, but they must be silent about names. Thus in Daniel xi we read all about the wars of the Syrian and Egyptian Diadochi, but the names

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of Antiochus and Ptolemy are never mentioned. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs no one doubts that John Hyrcanus is meant in *Levi* xviii, but his name is not uttered. The second of the Psalms of Solomon 'describes the death of Pompey in unmistakeable terms', but the most definite detail 'Solomon' is allowed to set down is 'thrust through upon the mountains of Egypt'. Scholars have disputed whether the Odes of Solomon are Jewish or Christian, but in either case we must not expect more definiteness of statement than is appropriate for a pseudepigraphic work.

To the Early Christians the Psalms of David were a storehouse of specifically Christian doctrine. We ought not to expect that a work which calls itself 'Odes of Solomon' would be much more definitely Christian, on the surface and in the matter of names and catchwords, than the Psalms of David. The Odes of Solomon appear to me to be intended as adumbrations of Christian doctrine in exactly the same way that Psalm xvi (xv) 10 was supposed to indicate the Resurrection, or Psalm xxii (xxi) 17, 19 to indicate the details of the Passion. And this is what makes the interpretation of the Odes to us so exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory, so far as the date and position of the writer is concerned. The Psalms of Solomon 'prophesy' events: we can therefore date these Psalms by the history of events. The Odes of Solomon, on the other hand, 'prophesy' doctrines, and the history of doctrines and dogmas is not so sharply defined a chronological series as the history of events.

This may sound almost too obvious to lead to anything, but as a matter of fact the neglect of these elementary considerations has led several scholars to make definite and (to my mind) untenable statements about the Odes. Thus Dr Harris can still describe the Odist as a 'man who had no Eucharist so far as his language goes', and as a 'mystical writer whose affinities are not with priesthoods or sacraments'. But is it not expecting too much, to expect that 'Solomon' will name the Christian Mysteries? Ode xlii is acknowledged to be Christian, because the writer speaking in the person of the 'Son of God' describes the Harrowing of Hell, and because at the beginning of the Ode is a mention of the 'Tree' and the 'outstretched hands' that are the Lord's Sign. What is not mentioned by name is Jesus and the Cross. But no one would say that the writer was really unaware that the name of the Son of God was Jesus or that He was crucified. Similarly, because the writer in other Odes speaks of cups of milk and never mentions Baptism or Eucharist, we are not at liberty to suggest that these institutions are not all the time in his mind. It is not a question of the *Disciplina arcani*, but of the style appropriate for pseudepigraphical composition.

1 Harris, ed. 2, p. xvi.
Those who have been reading Dr Schweitzer’s new book will understand why it is the theology of the Fourth Gospel and not that of the Pauline Epistles and of the Synoptics that is again and again suggested by the ‘Odes of Solomon’. It is because both the Fourth Gospel and the Odes are representatives of the early Greek-Christian theology, which was dominated by the idea that the bodies of the faithful are delivered from ‘corruption’ by partaking of ‘Spirit’. Like the Fourth Gospel, the religion of the Odes may be described as the Greek Mystery-religion, transfigured by the historical event of the Incarnation, an event which brought the life-giving πνεῦμα to men and thereby gave them salvation and a foretaste of apotheosis.

Collation of $N$ with Harris’s text (ed. 2).

Ode 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>$\text{N}$ begins, fol. 149 a</th>
<th>$\text{N}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (so always)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ode 18: Title $\text{N}$ (in red, and so always)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>$\text{N}$</th>
<th>$\text{N}$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (as txt.)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (as txt.)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>$\text{om. N}$</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>$\text{om. N}$</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (so always)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ode 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>$\text{N}$ (sic)</th>
<th>$\text{N}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (sic)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (sic)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (= H)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ode 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>$\text{N}$ (sic)</th>
<th>$\text{N}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (sic)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (= H)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$\text{N}$ (sic)</td>
<td>$\text{N}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 See Geschichte der Paulinischen Forschung pp. 157-159.
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Ode 21

3 ἦν ἐν N (ὅσα H) 5 ἰδιοματικά] ἱσομετρών N

Ode 22

2 ἦν ἐν N (sic) 3 μεταξὺ N

Ode 23

1 ἢκούσα ἡ N Ἐλισάβετ N 4 ἅμαρτωσα N

Ode 24

1 ἡμείς] pr. ἦν ἐντὸς N 3 ἱδρύα] N (ὅσα N

Ode 25

2 ἡμείς] N (ὅσα N 4 ἱδρύα] N (ὅσα N
ODE 26

1 ฆน (sic) น (H)
2 ฆน

H (see facsimile), ฆน น ฆน
3 ฆน

ODE 27

1 ฆน (sic)
2 ฆน

ODE 28

1 ฆน (H)
2 ฆน

ODE 29

2 ฆน
3 ฆน

ODE 30

No variation.

ODE 31

2 ฆน
3 ฆน

N illegible

7 ฆน (sic)
8 ฆน

N illegible

9 ฆน (H)
Ode 32
1 [στρατεύμα] N fol. 150 b 2 τοῦτο λέγεται N
3 [όμηρος] ὁμ. (οἱμ.) N

Ode 33

Ode 34
5 [ὁμ.] om. N 6 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N

Ode 35
1 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 3 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
2 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 4 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N (sic)
5 ομ. N 6 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N

Ode 36
1 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 2, 3 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
3 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 4 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
5 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 6 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
7 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 8 ἠλπίζω [ὁμ. χόρτο] N

Ode 37
1 [ὁμ. χόρτο] N

Ode 38
2 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N (= H) 3 [ὁμ. χόρτο] N (sic)
4 [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 5 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
6 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 7 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N (sic)
8 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 9 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N (sic)
10 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N 11 λέγεται [ὁμ. χόρτο] N
Ode 39

2 [Nol: 15] N
4 [Nol: 15] N
7 [Nol: 15] N
10 [Nol: 15] N

Ode 40

4 [Nol: 15] N
5 [Nol: 15] N
7 [Nol: 15] N (a stain makes one word illegible)
6 [Nol: 15] N
8 [Nol: 15] N

Ode 41

1 [Nol: 15] N
2 [Nol: 15] N
3 [Nol: 15] N
4 [Nol: 15] N
5 [Nol: 15] N
6 [Nol: 15] N
7 [Nol: 15] N
8 [Nol: 15] N
9 [Nol: 15] N
10 [Nol: 15] N

Ode 42

2 [Nol: 15] N
3 [Nol: 15] N
4 [Nol: 15] N
5 [Nol: 15] N
6 [Nol: 15] N
7 [Nol: 15] N
8 [Nol: 15] N

Psalm 1: Title (Nol: 43) N

ad fin.] + N* (vid.), exp. rubricator
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Psalm 2: Title (print ( = 44) N
1  חֹ֣קֵ֖ם N (sic) 2  חֹ֣קֵ֖ם N
3 בְּֽאָמֹ֣ר N 4 אָמֹ֣ר N 5 אָמֹ֣ר N
7 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 8 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N
11 אֲֽנֹ֣ו תֵּבֹ֣א N 14 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H)
15 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 16 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N
19 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 20 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H)
23 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = txt.)
24 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 28 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N (= êkêkai)
29 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N (letters badly formed) 30 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H)
32 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 35 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H)
37 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H) 38 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N ( = H)
39 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N 40 מַשְׁפִּ֣ת N

Psalm 3: Title  ( = 45) N
1  הֹדֵ֣ד N 2  הֹדֵ֣ד N (rest as H)
4  הֹדֵ֣ד N 5  הֹדֵ֣ד N (rest as H)
30  הֹדֵ֣ד N ( = H)
32  הֹדֵ֣ד N 35  הֹדֵ֣ד N ( = H)
37  הֹדֵ֣ד N ( = H) 38  הֹדֵ֣ד N ( = H)
39  הֹדֵ֣ד N 40  הֹדֵ֣ד N

Psalm 10
4  הָלַ֖ח N first words legible
9  הָלַ֖ח N ( = H)

Psalm 11: Title  ( = 53, sic) N
9] om. N

Psalm 12: Title  ( = 54) N
4  הָלַ֖ח N  הָלַ֖ח N pr. 6 N (sic)
In the above list all differences of reading and spelling are noted, including the plural points, but not differences of punctuation or other differences of pronunciation indicated by dots, except in a few cases where the sense is affected. The punctuation of N is normal; e.g. \( \text{ἐγὰρ} \) for \( \text{ἐγὼν} \), \( \text{ἐπὶ} \) for \( \text{ἐπὶ} \), &c. The point in \( \text{ἐπὶ} \) ('from'), found in H, never occurs in N. \( \text{ἀθάν} \) (‘sign’) always has a point. \( \text{ἀρκεί} \) (‘he brought’) appears to have a point below the line (e.g. xxii 11), while \( \text{ἀρκεί} \) (‘I am’) has a point above the line (e.g. xlii 6).

I have been saved the necessity of attempting to demonstrate the essential unity of the Odes by the admirable paper of Dom Connolly in the January number of this JOURNAL, a paper that ought to be digested by all those whose general impressions of this curious work have been derived from Dr Harris or from Dr Harnack. Especially timely are his remarks upon Ode 19 (pp. 307-309): the chief point upon which I have any doubt is whether so comparatively rare a Syriac word as \( \text{ἀσάφος} \) (sic N) would have been used to translate so ordinary a Greek word as \( \text{ἐκπάρτιαν} \). Even at the cost of mere repetition it is worth while saying once again that \( \text{ἀσάφος} \) means ‘emptily’ or ‘to no purpose’, and not ‘sufficiently’, at any rate in this context. In Ode 19, however, N brings in no various reading of importance: of the modern conjectures, the only fortunate one is Dom Connolly’s suggestion that the copula should be omitted at the beginning of ver. 8, and as a matter of fact it is absent from N.

In what follows I have given the more important changes introduced by N, so far as they affect the translation. I have not included the
addition or omission of small particles, changes of number, &c., which do not appreciably affect the meaning. For the general convenience of the English reader I have taken as my standard the translation given in Dr Harris's 2nd ed., without however either criticizing or endorsing his translations generally, except so far as they are affected by the readings of N or call for some special note.

_Ode 17_

11 my bondmen] the bondmen N

_Ode 18_

3 it stood] they stood N (i.e. 'my members ')
4 remove] cast away N
8 N agrees with H (Dr Harris's MS): (?) read  for (same pronunciation) and render ' 8 And thou wilt preserve from me all that holds fast by evil things'

_Ode 19_

3 N has 'and she that milked Him is the Holy Spirit'
8 and because] om. and N (see above for this Ode)

_Ode 20_

4 your reins] thy reins H, my reins N (sic)
5 'by the blood of thy soul' N H: 'by', as so often in Semitic, is the of price, and means 'at the price of'
devil] deceive N (and H)
9 grace] goodness N

_Ode 21_

4 the thought of the Lord] cf. _Ode 20_: I believe personally that the Odist has the Christian Eucharist in mind
5 His light] om. His N served] passed N

_Ode 22_

2 cast me down] put them for me N
6 a rampart] Diettrich's conjecture is the text of N
ten energy] sic N; helps H

The first six verses of the Ode form one sentence; remembering that relative clauses which are logically in the 2nd pers. are often expressed in Syriac by the 3rd pers., we may translate thus:

'He who brings me down from on high and brings me up from below, and who gathers the things that are betwixt and puts them for me, and who scatters my enemies and my adversaries, He that gave me authority over bonds to loose them, that overthrew through me the Dragon with seven heads and didst set me over his root to destroy his seed—it is Thou, Thou wast there and helped me, and in every place Thy Name was encircling me!'
Ode 23
4 the Most High] the Lord, and ye shall know the grace of the Lord N
13 forests] peoples N
14 and that which was a sign upon it] and that which had come upon it N (sic)
18 And those . . . extinct] and the persecutors were quenched and became extinct N (so also Frankenberg)

Ode 24
1 the Messiah] pr. the head of our Lord N
3 the birds . . . wings] she flew and dropped her wings N
3b-5a should be translated thus:

'And the abysses were opened and (then) were hidden; and they were asking for the Lord like women with child, and He was not given to them for food, because He was not theirs; and the abysses were themselves immersed at the immersion of the Lord.'

Of course it all refers to the Baptism, or rather to the process of the Incarnation of the Messiah, of which His Baptism is itself the complete symbol. *fubba* means 'immersion', not 'seal': cf. also Ode 31, 2 and Exod. xv 5, 10.

Ode 25
4 I shall see him] they have been seen N
10 the truth] thy truth N
11 admirable] N has 'of the Lord', like H

Ode 26
12 translate: 'For he that interprets will be dissolved and that which is interpreted will remain'

Ode 28
7 and . . . drink] and immortal life has embraced and kissed me N
14 nor was . . . theirs] neither did they recognize my birth N
16 make attack] cast lots N (= Hmgs)

Ode 29
2 goodness] grace N
7 him] me N (see J. R. H.'s Note)

Ode 31
2 found] received N

Ode 34
4 read: 'where the beautiful one is encircled on every side'
5 read: 'for everything is above, and below there is nothing, but it is imagined by those who are without knowledge'

Ode 38
2 pits] + empty N
3 arms] steps (or, ladder) N
The best translation I can make of this difficult passage is: ‘it made clear to me all the poisons...and the corrupter of corruption. I saw a corruptible bride being adorned and a bridegroom who corrupts and is corruptible.’ No doubt Antichrist and Heresy is meant, using the words in a wide sense: what is really peculiar is that Heresy or Error is regarded as the bride of the Deceiver. Of course in v. 11, as Dom Connolly points out (p. 306), ‘alike in the beloved and in his bride’ should be translated ‘resemble the beloved and his bride’. I cannot however feel quite certain that ‘beloved’ should have a capital letter. The figure of bridegroom and bride is not elsewhere used in the Odes for Christ and Church, and we cannot be sure that ‘beloved’ really had the definite article in the underlying Greek. The Syriac may mean no more than ‘a beloved one and his bride’. The Deceiver and Error are like a bridegroom and a bride, and those who have dealings with such things are like folk who go to a wedding feast and get drunk.

Ode 40
5 and my tongue his psalms] and my tongue is sweet with his colloquies and [my members] are fat with his psalms N (hole in vellum)
8 inheritance] profit N (= H)

Ode 41
1] Let us praise the Lord, all ye His children, and let us receive the truth of His faith N
3 live] rejoice N 4 us] om. N
17 song] + to the Lord N

Ode 42
4 of no account...me] useless to those that know me, in order that I might be hidden to those that were not holding me N
25 and my name...heads] and I considered their faith, and I put upon their heads my name N

F. C. Burkitt.