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OBSERVATIONS ON THE FRAGMENT OF THE ORIGINAL OF ECCLESIASTICUS EDITED BY MR. SCHECHTER.

HAVING been invited by the Editor of the EXPOSITOR to make some observations on the interesting Fragment of the original of Ecclesiasticus, published by Mr. Schechter in the last number, I gladly take the opportunity of congratulating Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson on their latest discovery, which, though it does not eclipse, is well worthy to rank, both for interest and importance, with the most remarkable of the documents they have brought to light. It is now a matter of common knowledge that, almost simultaneously with the discovery of the leaf which Mr. Schechter has deciphered, several more belonging to the same copy, and containing in all some eight chapters, came into the hands of Dr. Neubauer, who is now actively engaged in preparing an edition of them. The discovery is not altogether unexpected, for it was always a matter of surprise that Ben-Sira's book, which had enjoyed great popularity, and which had been known to have survived the taking of Jerusalem by many centuries, should have been preserved only in indifferent translations. But it is a more than usually fortunate circumstance that the discovery should have been made while all those who took part in the controversy about this author's language (to which Mr. Schechter has alluded) are still alive; for if then we saw through a glass darkly, we may now expect to see face to face.

Until the publication of Dr. Neubauer's texts it is premature to discuss the bearing these discoveries may have on the chief points that were then in dispute. As, however, one of the disputants has hastened to declare that their evidence goes *entirely* against the theses that I formerly maintained, perhaps I may ask those whom this

controversy interests to suspend their judgment. One of
the Syriacisms which I had restored from the versions is
confirmed by the Fragment; חית שן for θηρίων ὀδόντες in
xxxix. 30.[1] Perhaps this is not very important, yet the
fact of Ben-Sira having this term for "wild beasts," when
the author of Daniel has not, cannot fail to strike us. One
other, in verse 16, פקדן, which I had suggested as account-
ing for the Greek "salvation" and the Syriac "command-
ment," is now shown to be erroneous.[2] About two other
restorations, which this Fragment does not confirm, some-
thing will be said in the sequel.

Most interesting is the light which this Fragment throws
on the metrical theory which the writer advanced some
years ago, and which obtained little favour. Those who
are able to read unpointed Hebrew, and who have no
prejudice either way, will allow that the following account
of the evidence given by this Fragment is correct.

1. A great many verses suit the metrical scheme exactly,
and many of these are hemistichs which in their Greek
form gave little hope of their metrical form being re-
stored.

(*a*) xxxix. 31*a* : " In His command they shall rejoice,"
ἐν τῇ ἐντολῇ αὐτοῦ εὐφρανθήσονται: no literal rendering of
this would have produced a tolerable verse. The Hebrew
supplies an additional word of no importance to the sense,
but of great importance to the metre " In His commanding
them," בצותו אתם ישׁישׂו and thus the scheme is main-
tained.

(*b*) xl. 5*a* : " Wrath and envy and trouble and unquiet-

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[1] See the *Speaker's Commentary*, ad loc. Mr. Ball's note in the Variorum
Apocrypha is directed against this. I must, however, take the opportunity of
thanking him for the friendly attention accorded to my portion of the Com-
mentary on Ecclesiasticus in the work cited. References throughout this
article are to the numbering of the verses in Swete's edition of the LXX.

[2] The suggestion was put in a more modest form in the *Speaker's Com-
mentary*, and I was wrong in altering it afterwards.

ness," θυμὸς καὶ ζῆλος καὶ ταραχὴ καὶ σάλος : the Hebrew shows that the word interpreted "wrath" is a corruption of a conjunction signifying " only," and that the following "and" is an interpolation. The Hebrew אַךְ קִנְאָה דְּאָנְה וָפַחַד has perfect rhythm ; but this could not have been restored from the ancient versions without arbitrariness.

(c) xxxix. 25b : " So to the sinners evils," οὕτως τοῖς ἁμαρτωλοῖς κακά : these words seemed insufficient for a hemistich of the ordinary form, and the Syriac and Latin renderings, though giving such a hemistich, seemed unsatisfactory in sense. The Hebrew gives a correct verse, though its sense is somewhat obscure. כֵן לְרָעִים טוֹב וְלִרְעִים.

(d) xxxix. 24a : " His ways to the holy are straight," αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ τοῖς ὁσίοις εὐθεῖαι. The Hebrew (which like the Syriac is here corrupt) nevertheless shows that the word employed for "holy" was one which suited the metre. From the Greek it could not have been restored quite naturally. דְּרָכָיו לתמים יִישָׁרוּ.

2. It must also be admitted that many of the Hebrew lines do not suit the metrical scheme, and on the hypothesis that this Hebrew Fragment is necessarily free from corruptions, this disagreement is fatal to the metrical theory. But will any person adopt such a hypothesis ? Even in the canonical books the best critics are accustomed to treating the Masoretic text and the ancient versions as witnesses out of whose various assertions the truth must be forced. And that the MS. whence this Fragment comes was carelessly written will be apparent to any one who studies it. Endeavouring then to ascertain the true reading of some of the lines on ordinary critical grounds, without prejudice either in favour of or against the metre, we shall find that when their true form is restored, they naturally fall into the metrical scheme.

(a) xxxix. 23b : (Schechter, 11b). ויהפך למלח משקה.

Both the Greek and the Syriac versions invert the order of the last two words, rendering "as (Syr. 'and') he turned waters into brine." But the well-watered land was not turned into *salt*, but into *salt-land*, so that מלח should be corrected מְלֵחָה. The true reading of the hemistich is then ויהפך משקה למְלֵחָה, and this is metrical. Gesenius in the Thesaurus, *s.v.* מלחה, restores the verse in this form, except that he wrongly gives מים for משקה.

(*b*) xl. 1*a*: (Schechter, 26*a*) עסק גדול חלק אל.[1] With this the Syriac agrees, and it is unmetrical. The Greek, however, has ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, "Great vexation has been created for every man," and if the law of parallelism have any force, this rather than " God created great vexation " is the true form of the hemistich which is followed by " and a heavy yoke upon the sons of Adam." In this form the first hemistich is metrically correct :

עסק גָדוֹל חֵלֶק לְכל אִיש.

The fact that the Greek has the nominative in both hemistichs shows that the translator had this reading before him. We notice in passing the Arabizing use of this word חלק, which this Hebrew Fragment repeatedly certifies. This will give some justification for the occasional employment of Arabisms in restoring the text where the Hebrew fragments desert us.

(*c*) xl. 6*a* (Schechter, 32*a*): מעט לחיק כרגע ישקוט.

The Greek has here ὀλίγον ὡς οὐδὲν ἐν ἀναπαύσει. The Hebrew Fragment shows that we have not a mistranslation but a corruption of the Greek text. The proposition ἐν, which is before ἀναπαύσει, has really lost its substantive; and ἀναπαύσει (which should rather be ἀναπαύσεται) is a verb corresponding to the Hebrew ישקוט. I do not see

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[1] The marginal variant עליון for אל will give a metrical hemistich, but a poor one.

why Mr. Schechter should question לחיק, which seems very natural in this context. Only the Greek shows us that the order of the second and third words should be inverted; and indeed it is unnatural to separate כרגע from מעט. The verse so restored is metrical:

מְעַט כְּרֶגַע לְחֵיק יִשְׁקוֹט,

and I can imagine none but metrical reasons which induced the author to add לחיק, and to substitute מעט כרגע for the idiomatic כמעט רגע.

(d) xxxix. 15d (Schechter, 1b) : וכן תאמר בתרועה.

The Greek has καὶ οὕτως ἐρεῖτε ἐν ἐξομολογήσει, and from the two authorities the true form of the verse can be restored. On the one hand it would have been arbitrary to assume that the word used for "proclamation" was the particular form which suits the metre (בתרועה); on the other the Greek is clearly right in giving the plural rather than the singular of the verb; for both the vocative in *v.* 13, and all the imperatives which follow, are in the plural also. The form of the hemistich which results is metrical:

וכן תאמרו בתרועה.

3. Where neither text is metrical, there are cases in which both can be shown to be corrupt.

xxxix. 22, 23 (Schechter, *vv.* 10 and 11) read as follows in the Hebrew:

ברכות (בִּרְכָתוֹ read) כַיְאֹר הֵצִיפָה וְכַנָּהָר תֵּבֵל רִוָּתָה

זֵעֲמוֹ גוֹים יוֹרִישׁ　　　　וַיַהְפֹּךְ לְמֶלַח מַשְׁקֶה.

The first two are metrical; for the pointings כַיְאֹר and כַנָּהָר are certified by texts of the Old Testament. The omission of the first *anacrusis* is not an arbitrary supposition of mine, but a license admitted by Arabic prosody; perhaps in this context I may quote the words of the poet Abu'l-'Alā Al-Ma'arri (*Letters*, p. 112 of the Beyrout edition; p. 68, l. 26 of my forthcoming edition). "How," says the

author to his friend, "did you manage to keep clear of the licence called *Kharm,* which poets both ancient and modern agree to admit? Do you not know that Mutanabbi was most fastidious about his versification, and would alter words after they had been recited, and avoid licenses even when the metre naturally led to their employment? Yet even he employs *Kharm* in two places: لا يَحْزن اللهُ الأَميِر

وآنِي and أَن تَكَ طيبى كانتَ لِياما ." Those who can read Arabic will see that the license referred to is the same omission of the first *anacrusis* of a verse that I postulate for Ben-Sira.[1]

The fourth was restored above on the ground of the consensus of the Greek and Syriac versions, and certified Hebrew usage. There remains the half-verse 23 *a*: "so his wrath nations shall inherit" (Greek), "his wrath nations shall drive out" (Hebrew), "so in his wrath nations he judgeth" (Syriac). From the consensus of the Greek and Syriac we infer that the word "so" is wrongly omitted by the Hebrew. Otherwise the Greek text corresponds with the Hebrew, except that for the singular יוריש it substitutes the plural יורישו. Adopting this reading, we should get a line suiting the metrical scheme tolerably well; but it is nevertheless clear that the singular is a better reading than the plural on critical grounds. If therefore one of these readings be right, the preference must be given to the unmetrical one.

My belief is that neither reading is right. It seems to me that an image, similar to that of the *river* in the pre-

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[1] I had supposed that the license by which the Arabic poets divide the sense or even the words between the two halves of the line was too well known to need illustration. V. 4: μὴ εἴπῃς ἥμαρτον καὶ τί μοι ἐγένετο; ὁ γὰρ κύριός ἐστι μακρόθυμος

<div align="center">אל תאמר חטאתי ומה לי
היה כי אל ארך אפים</div>

shows that Ben-Sira allowed himself the first of these liberties, and we may assume that he allowed himself the second.

ceding verse, is imperatively required both by what precedes
and what follows. Just as the Divine blessing is like a
river that overflows and fertilizes the soil, so the Divine
wrath is like a . . . that turns the fertile land into a
barren waste. A trace of the true reading seems to me
preserved in the Syriac "judges." This, as Mr. Schechter
observes, probably stands for יִשְׁפֹּט; and this can with
ease be emended יִשְׁטֹף—*overflows*—just the word that we
require. That which *overflows*, and, instead of fertilizing,
turns the land into salt-land, would seem to be the *sea*—
and this is preserved in the second half of the word ren-
dered "nations." I should emend the whole verse, there-
fore,—

$$\text{כֵּן זַעְמוֹ כַיָּם שָׁטוֹף יִשְׁטֹף,}$$

where the addition of the infin. absol. seems to me re-
quired by the idiom as well as by the metre.

So far, therefore, as the metre is concerned, the verses
restored to us in this fragment may be divided roughly into
three classes : verses which correspond with the metrical
scheme; verses which, when corrected in accordance with
the ancient versions, correspond with it ; and verses which
disagree with it according to all the authorities, but which
can be shown on critical grounds to be corrupt. I do not
assert that this division is exhaustive; but, for my part,
the study of this fragment has strengthened me in the
belief that my metrical analysis of Ben-Sira's verses is
substantially correct.

Before proceeding to speak of the Aramaisms which this
Fragment does not confirm, I will add one to the mediæval
reminiscences of Ecclesiasticus collected by Mr. Schechter,
and request the reader to consider the passage in detail.
In the *Sahih*, or collection of Traditions of the Prophet
Mohammed, compiled by Muslim (ninth century), we find
the following : " There are three," said the prophet,
" whom God will not address on the Day of Judgment

. . . *an old adulterer, and a lying king, and a poor
man who is proud.*" We can have no doubt of the source
of this saying if we compare Ecclesiasticus xxv. 2—" Three
sorts my soul hateth, and I am greatly offended by their
life : *a poor man that is proud, a rich man that is a liar,
and an old adulterer that doateth.*" We cannot be sure
that the person who put this saying into Mohammed's
mouth got it from the Jewish tradition ; but, as it is one
of those of which the original Hebrew is preserved, and
which, therefore, circulated independently, this may be
regarded as probable. The Hebrew form of the saying
occurs, as has often been pointed out, in Talm. Bab.,
Pesahim 113*b* :

דַל בָּאֶה וְעָשִׁיר מְכַחֵשׁ וזקן מנאף ופרנס מתגאה

עַל הצבור בחנם

—" a poor man who is proud, a rich man who lies, an old
man who commits adultery, and an official who, without
ground, sets himself above the community."

We have then apparently the original of the words of
Ben-Sira, and yet we cannot well credit him with the
sentiment contained in the text. What writer of respect-
able morals would have placed an old *adulterer* on a level
with the other characters mentioned in the passage ? In
a poor man, lying (according to Juvenal) is a peccadillo ;
even if he perjures himself, the gods will wink at the
offence. That wealth naturally produces pride was also
the opinion of the ancient moralists. If, therefore, a poor
man lies, and a rich man is proud, reprehensible as their
conduct is, it excites in the mind of the moralist no special
indignation. But in what state of life is *adultery* a venial
offence ?—for let it be observed that neither the Greek
nor the Hebrew of the passage allows us to substitute a
less obnoxious notion for this deadly sin. It is clear that
there is no such state, and Ben-Sira cannot have written
this ; although, if the Hebrew of chap. xxv. be found in

the same recension as Mr. Schechter's Fragment, it is
probable that it will agree with the Rabbinical quotation.

To find out what Ben-Sira can have meant, let us go to
the other sources for the reconstruction of his text. And
in the first place the Syriac gives us a natural and proper
sentiment in place of that which we condemn, substituting
for "an old adulterer" "*an old man that is a fool and
wanting knowledge.*" And the same is given by some
Greek MSS., one substituting the word "fool" ($\mu\omega\rho\acute{o}\nu$) for
"adulterer" ($\mu o\iota\chi\acute{o}\nu$), one putting the words "adulterer"
and "fool" side by side; and so also the Old Latin *senem
fatuum et insensatum*. *Folly* and *ignorance* in an old man
are as inexcusable as lying in a rich one, or boastfulness
in a poor one. Reprehensible in all cases, in that of an old
man they are also inappropriate.

If this be so, why have half or more of the authorities
"adulterer" for "fool"? The reason I suggest is the
following. The New Hebrew for fool is שׁוֹטֶה *shoteh*, a
word as characteristic of the Rabbinical language as עסק,
which Ben-Sira is known to have employed repeatedly.
The word used by the Biblical language for "to commit
adultery" (of a *woman*), is שׂטה, *satah*, whence the Rab-
binical for adulteress *sotah* (ordinarily spelt with ס). In
the ancient copies of Ben-Sira the word was probably שׁוֹטה,
which might be read "fool" or "adulteress." The Syriac
translator, familiar with the word from his own language,
renders it correctly. The Greek translator, a poor scholar,
renders it adulter*er*; but later correctors of his work insert
the true rendering on the margin. The ancient editor
of the Hebrew text, misreading as the Greek translator
did, "adulteress," *substitutes* the *classical* Hebrew for
"adulterer" (מְנָאֵף). And in this last form the verse gets
circulated, to the discredit, it must be owned, of those who
have cited it with approval.

But there is another point to be noticed before we quit

this verse. The Hebrew ends (the list of three) with the
" old adulterer," but the Greek and Syriac add the words
" wanting in wisdom " ; and the agreement of these two
authorities makes it highly probable that this addition
formed part of the original text. What is the significance
of these extra words ? Why should Ben-Sira have spoiled
the terseness of his epigram by adding them ? It is difficult
to think of any reason for the addition, until we observe
that the true words for " an old adulterer," together with
the text which this addition naturally represents, give us a
line of the same rhythm as the first half-verse preserved in
the Rabbinic quotation.[1] That observation indeed supplies
us with a very adequate reason for their insertion ; for in
all ancient poetry the insertion of words which fill the
metre, but only slightly affect the sense, is exceedingly
common. But if Ben-Sira inserted words in order to con-
form to a metrical standard, he must have been consciously
writing in metre ; and we shall be entitled to search in
other parts of his work for the same rhythm as we have
detected in this verse. The nature of the Rabbinical quot-
ation does not prove that there was no metre in Ecclesi-
asticus, but only that at an early period the law of its metre
was forgotten.[2]

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[1] ‎דַּע נָאֶה וְעָשִׁיר מְכַחֵשׁ וְזָקֵן שׁוֹטֶה חֲסַר בִּינָה‎

[2] No attempt has as yet been made to reply to this argument. But yet
there must be some reason why—*e.g.* in the enumeration xxxix. 26—" wine "
should be described as " the blood of the grape," and " corn " likewise given
two words ; and it is from observations of this sort that facts can be learnt.
So in the line immediately preceding that which we have been discussing,
καὶ προσώχθισα σφόδρα τῇ ζωῇ αὐτῶν, Heb. (probably) ‎וְקַצְתִּי מְאֹר בְּחַיֵּיהֶם‎,
metrical necessity will account for the substitution of " their life " for
" them " ; but scarcely anything else. In the preceding hemistich, " three
sorts my soul hateth," the substitution of " my soul " for " I " has probably
the same reason. That lines of many words like iv. 22a, συντήρησον καιρὸν
καὶ φύλαξαι ἀπὸ πονηροῦ (‎שְׁמֹר עֵת וְהִשָּׁמֵר מֵרָע‎ ; the last word was rather
‎מֵבִישׁ‎), should fall *naturally* into the same rythm as those of few words, like
viii. 10, μὴ ἔκκαιε ἄνθρακας ἁμαρτωλοῦ (see Syriac), cannot to my mind be
accidental.

The consideration to which this little discussion leads is whether the text supplied by these fragments of the tenth or eleventh century must necessarily supersede that which can be restored from the versions; or whether, even where its testimony is unfavourable, ground already won can be defended against it. To take an example of what seems to me a certain restoration—in viii. 10 the Greek has " the coals of the wicked," the Syriac " the perfectly wicked," whence it follows that the original had for " coals " the word *gumrē*, which is found in Rabbinical Hebrew, but is unknown to the classical language. If a Hebrew MS. of this passage were discovered, and it were found to contain some classical expression for " coals," what should we infer ? The right inference would probably be that this MS. contained an interpolated text.

Let us apply this consideration to one of the verses as they appear in the fragment published by Mr. Schechter. In xxxix. 16 the Greek has " all the works of the Lord that they are good exceedingly "; the Syriac, " all the works of the Lord are fair together." Since there is a Chaldee word meaning " exceedingly " which could easily be misinterpreted " together," the present writer restored it as the last word of the verse ; and he also found that with this word the metrical scheme was satisfied. While then the variety of the Greek and the Syriac renderings was accounted for by the hypothesis that the word לַחְדָּא had occurred in the original text, the metrical scheme gave a sufficient reason for the employment of this Chaldaism instead of the ordinary Hebrew מְאֹד, which would suit the Greek, though not the Syriac version. A MS. of the Hebrew has now been discovered, and it contains no adverb at all. When therefore I hear the taunt of the adversary, " You were positive that לחדא occurred in the original of that verse; I told you that it did not; and now see which was right ! " is there any answer that I can with modesty

make? Perhaps there is. The whole affair is a question of probability. On the one hand, the metrical theory may be a delusion, and the Greek and Syriac versions may have conspired to deceive us. On the other hand, the Hebrew recension may be corrupt. The same interpolator whom we detected in the act of substituting מְנָאֵף for שׁוֹטָה may have banished the Chaldaic adverb from the verse. When the metrical law had been forgotten, words of this sort would easily drop out.

The other Aramaism which "ought to appear, but does not," is of less importance; for it was rightly pointed out by Prof. Noeldeke that the word כֻּפֶּן occurs in the Hebrew of Job, and that therefore I was not justified in claiming it for my thesis. The Hebrew (Schechter, 18*a*) by omitting an "and" restores the metre, so that the thesis gains something from it; and since the form כֻּפֶּן accounts for both the Greek and Syriac renderings, I am inclined to think it was the word employed by Ben-Sira, the word רֵעַ which appears in the text being the remains of a variant inserted by some one who preferred the more strictly Hebrew synonym.

<div align="right">D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.</div>

THE DERIVATION OF PURIM.

RENAN, in his *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, following P. de Lagarde, derives Purim from the Persian. The Jews, according to this view, adopted the Farwardîgân Festival, discarding its religious peculiarities, and celebrated it in the twelfth month as a purely secular festival. They called it in Aramaic *Pourdai*, and in Hebrew *Fourdim*: the latter, whether by errors in transcription or some process of phonetic decay, became Purim.

Zimmern, in Stade's *Zeitschrift* for 1891, sought a derivation from the Assyrian *puḥru*. At the same time he derived the festival from the Babylonian New Year Feast.