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The Genizah of Old Cairo.

By the Rev. Charles Taylor, D.D., Master of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Two years ago Dr. S. Schechter, Reader in Rabbinic in the University of Cambridge, recognized among some old manuscripts that had been brought from the East a leaf from a copy of the long-lost original Hebrew of the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus. With reference to the acquisition of it, Mrs. Lewis has lately written to the *Guardian*: 'The single leaf which Mrs. Gibson and I brought to Cambridge in May 1896, and which was discovered amongst a bundle of other fragments by Dr. Schechter, was bought by us in Southern Palestine, and not in Sinai.'

The publication of the Lewis-Gibson folio in the *Expositor* led to the discovery of others from the same copy of Ecclesiasticus in the Bodleian Library. These were promptly edited for the Clarendon Press by Messrs. Cowley and Neubauer, together with the one first discovered.

In the middle of December in the same year, 1896, Dr. Schechter, well furnished with credentials and introductions, started on an expedition to Egypt, purposing, with the consent of the local Jewish authorities, to examine the contents of the Old Cairo *Genizah* thoroughly, and hoping above all things to find in it more leaves of the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus. The term *Genizah*, from a word meaning *hide*, denotes a storehouse or burial-place of disused Jewish books. His unexpectedly complete success is described by Dr. Schechter in a striking article, entitled 'A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts,' published in the *Times*, on Tuesday the 3rd August 1897. The contents of the *Genizah* were placed freely and unreservedly at his disposal by the Grand Rabbi Raphael Aaron Bensimon, and every fragment that seemed likely to prove of interest and importance was brought to Cambridge.

A mass of separate pieces of writing from all departments of Jewish literature cannot be examined and catalogued expeditiously, like a collection of books. A volume in print or writing may be identified from a small fraction of its contents; but the thousands of fragments in the *Genizah* collection have to be examined laboriously one by one. Consecutive leaves of a codex are found at long intervals, or even the half of a leaf at one time, and the remainder of it weeks or months afterwards. A long time must therefore elapse before the collection can be reduced to order and made practically accessible to scholars.

Many of the fragments, on whatever subject, are of independent interest to the palæographer, one of them, for example, containing the oldest dated piece of Hebrew writing at present known to exist. A general feature of them is the absence of decorative additions, the likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath. On one biblical fragment have been found some letters of gold. The use of gold ink in writing Holy Scripture was forbidden by the Rabbis, but the prohibition was meant to apply only to the case of copies for public reading in the Synagogue.

The reader of Rabbinic must be practised in the solution of acrostics; for he will encounter many phrases in Talmud, Midrash, and all manner of Jewish writings expressed by initials. Some of these groups of letters are familiar and simple enough, while others convey no meaning until perhaps a text of Scripture is noticed which supplies the key. The names of oft-quoted Rabbis are commonly written in this way. Thus RMBM (Rambam) is the Jewish shorthand for Rabbi Moses, son of Maimon, or Maimonides. A complete autograph letter of this famous and voluminous author is one of the treasures of the *Genizah* collection. It was photographed and heliogravured last summer by M. Dujardin, who was then in Cambridge preparing a facsimile edition of the New Testament manuscript *Codex Bezæ* for the University Press.

Curious and important are the Cairo fragments which testify to a wholesale use of acrostic shorthand, in which a verse is represented by its first word, followed by a series of initial letters. It is as if the Fourth Gospel were written after this manner: *In-the-beginning w. t. w. a. t. w. w. w. G. a. t. w. w. G.* 'The particular system represented in the *Genizah*,' writes Dr. Schechter, 'seems to have been known to the old Rabbis under the name of Trellis-writing. Dr. Felix Perles, from his acquaintance with the few specimens acquired by the Bodleian Library, at once recognized their

significance for the true criticism of the Bible, and made them the subject of some apt remarks in a recent essay (*Analecten zur Textcritik*, etc., Munich, 1895).' Finding a few abbreviations in ordinary Bible manuscripts, Kennicott and others used them to account for some of the misreadings of the Septuagint. 'The *Genizah* has for the first time furnished us with samples proving that the abbreviation system was not limited to certain isolated words, but extended to the whole contents of the Bible.'

Of exceptional interest to many will be some palimpsest fragments, with remains of versions of the Old Testament in Greek uncials still legible beneath Jerusalem Talmud or Jewish liturgy of later centuries. The Hebrew-Greek palimpsests first discovered have been already published, an edition of another is in preparation, and there are some which have not yet been fully examined. In what follows, the reference is to the fragment of Aquila's rendering of Ps 90^{6-13} 91^{4-10} (Sept.) given with facsimiles as an appendix to the Preface of *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* (2nd ed. 1897).

In the transcript of the Greek the Tetragrammaton is printed several times in the square Hebrew characters now in use, but at its last occurrence there is the note, 'The Name is written in archaic Hebrew characters.' Turning to the heliogravure of the *verso*, we find it there so written and quite legible, none of its letters, YHVH being written over except the last, which is the same as the second. It may be represented in a rough way in English by ΓΕΓΕ, reversed as in a looking-glass, the first of these letters being a capital *e* with its middle stroke left out. The occurrence of the Tetragrammaton in Old Hebrew writing is in accordance with statements of Origen and St. Jerome, which had been learnedly made out to be erroneous, or artificially explained away.

The characteristics of Aquila as a translator are well known. A discriminating account of his famous and valued ultra-literal version of the Old Testament may be found in the Oxford edition of Origen's *Hexapla* by Dr. F. Field, a work which enables us to identify the fragment, while it is itself both supplemented and corrected by it.

The first line of the *recto* (completed with the help of Dr. Field's *Hexapla*) and the corresponding English are respectively—

απο δηγμου δεμ[ονιζοντος μεσημβριας].
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

The letters at the beginning have their tops torn off. From three to four months after the discovery of the fragment, which is the lower half of a folio, the upper half with the missing tops was found. The scribe has written δεμ for δαιμ. He writes σοι repeatedly for συ, *thou*.

One of Aquila's first principles was to translate 'etymologically,' that is, not merely to give the sense of a Hebrew word in a practical way, but to show its etymological affinities by his Greek. The word *demonize* here serves his turn. If the Hebrew had been lost, we might have argued back from his 'devilling at midday,' to SHED, *demon*, or *devil*, and thence to the Hebrew VASHUD, rendered 'that wasteth.' In like manner he lets us know by his word for 'destruction' that the Hebrew was the word used in Hos 13^{14}, where his rendering done into English is, 'I will be thy bitings, Hades.' Such a version may be of the greatest use for critical purposes. William de Moerbeka's Latin translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle from an older copy of the book than any now extant is in the first rank of authorities for the Greek text.

But the best known peculiarity of Aquila as a translator is his use of συν sometimes with an accusative following. He shows thereby that in the Hebrew stood ETH, which has the meaning *with*, but is also sometimes an untranslatable and not indispensable prefix to the objective case. It occurs in Gn 1^{1}, where his translation accordingly is, in effect, '*In capitulo* God created *with* the heaven and *with* the earth.' Rabbinically, this was made to mean that God created at once the heavens with all therein, and the earth with all therein. The fragment gives a good example of this rabbinicism in the line (Ps 91^{7}) ending συν ταυτην, which is for the Hebrew ZOTH, *this* (fem.), with ETH prefixed. Dr. Field gives the passage in an appendix, but with ταῦτα for ETH ZOTH. Aquila's version has the merit of being transparent. It shows the Hebrew through the Greek.

Of Ecclesiasticus as much has been found by Dr. Schechter as had been discovered previously, and a specimen leaf was published in the January number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. The Cairo text itself is not immaculate; but the Hebrew and the ancient versions correct one another, as in chap. 50^{8}, where the Revisers say in the margin, 'The text here seems to be corrupt.' The Revised Version of course now needs revision. But for some time to come

scholars will disagree about the treatment of passages of which the Hebrew is of questionable accuracy, or defective, or hard to decipher.

After writing thus far I saw another palimpsest, and read on it in Greek uncials (beneath Midrash) the first piece of New Testament found in the *Genizah* collection. In the first line is (or was) ο φηλιξ followed by ανε, the beginning of the verb 'deferred' (Ac 24[22]). Thus the fragment agrees here with the *textus receptus*, as again, for example, in v.[23], 'And that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister OR COME unto him.' The next page has not much legible Greek of its own, but some words, as το νυν εχον πορευου, can be read through from the other side.

Israel's Historical Recollections.

By Professor Eduard König, Ph.D., D.D., Rostock.

The most recent commentary on *Genesis*, which has just been published,[1] closes with the following words:—'To the beginnings of Israel historical recollections do not reach back, any more than with other nations.' The latter instance appealed to embodies a general proposition. But the commentary before us says not a word about the *special* relation of Israel to historical reminiscences. It never raises the question whether a nation which had memories of extraordinary value to preserve might not lay special weight upon the transmitting of its traditions. Nor is any attempt made to trace the indications which prove that this nation possessed a strong genius for the preserving of its reminiscences. In the following remarks I will seek to supply these omissions.

First of all, let it be noted that Israel had the custom of creating actual and externally perceptible supports for historical reminiscences. Such *fulcra memoriae* were the 'cairn of witness' (Gn 31[47]), the pot of manna (Ex 16[33]), the tables of the Law (Ex 34[35] 40[20]), Aaron's rod that budded (Nu 17[10]), the stones from the Jordan (Jos 4[6ff.]), the erecting of an altar on Mt. Ebal, and inscribing of the law upon the altar (Jos 8[30ff.]); note specially, also, the altar by Jordan (Jos 22[26ff.]), the great stone under the oak by the sanctuary of Jahweh (Jos 24[26f.]), the stone Eben-ezer (1 S 7[12]), the sword of Goliath hung up as a national memorial in the sanctuary at Nob (1 S 21[9]), the statue which Absalom caused to be erected in the king's vale, that it might preserve the recollection of his name (2 S 18[18]), and the monument of stones which the people raised for him (v.[17]). It is an extremely interesting circumstance, also, that in Israel one was fond of noting the date when a city was built (Nu 13[22], Hebron built seven years before Zoan), or a national custom introduced (1 S 30[25]). Noteworthy, also, is the tenacity of memory which recalled the ancient attack of the Amalekites (1 S 15[2ff.]), or the ban pronounced long before on the city of Jericho (1 K 16[34]).

Further, I may refer to the fact that in Ex 13[8-10] a command is given to keep the origin of the Passover celebration alive in the consciousness of future generations. In the same passage the continual inculcating of the Divine laws is also enjoined. So also in Ex 13[11-16] and Dt 6[4-9] 11[13-21]. The reading of the Deuteronomic law to the people is commanded in Dt 31[10-13]. Moreover, the priests have the function assigned to them of transmitting the Divine statutes from generation to generation (Lv 10[11], Dt 33[6-11], Jer 18[18], Ezk 22[26] 44[23f.], Hos 4[6], Mic 3[11], Zeph 3[4], Hag 2[11-13], Mal 2[4-8]). In particular, the Song of Moses is to be learned by the people (Dt 31[21]), as well as the Elegy which David composed upon the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 S 1[18]).

Another group of positive tokens of the historicity of the Old Testament consists of those statements which assign a *non*-Israelitish origin to some important phenomenon in Israel's history. Is not the institution of subordinate tribunals expressly traced back (Ex 18[19ff.]) to the counsel of the Midianite priest Jethro? At the building of Solomon's temple, is not the execution of the

[1] *Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alt. Test.* Herausgegeben von Karl Marti. Fünfte Lieferung: die Genesis erklärt von H. Holzinger. Freiburg: Mohr, 1898.