

have always taught about these purposes — that God is faithful to the Jewish people, who are yet “beloved because of the fathers”. As God gathers Jews out of the nations and brings them back into their promised land (into a land of tremendous difficulties, and often against their own will), He is involving them in His preparation to vindicate Himself one day in the eyes of all nations.

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The next issue of MISHKAN will feature Colin Chapman’s response to this review.

JESUS, THE GOSPELS AND THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

**The Four Gospels Translated into Hebrew by William Greenfield in 1831, and
Evangiles de Matthieu et de Marc traduits en hebreu en 1668 par Giovanni Battista
Iona retouches en 1805 par Thomas Yeates, and Evangiles de Luc et de Jean traduits
en hebreu en 1668 par Giovanni Battista Iona retouches en 1805 par Thomas Yeates.**

Jean Carmignac (editor)

Introduction par Jean Carmignac (Traduction hebraïques de Evangiles rassemblees par Jean Carmignac). Brepols, Turnhout-Belgique, Bruxelles 1902, XLII ‘pp. 82, XLI+ pp. 370, pp. 420. Price B.F. 1050; 1350; 1350.

These three volumes constitute a step towards a promising publication of New Testament translations into Hebrew.

The series, which is projected finally to consist of ten volumes, will contain the most important Hebrew Gospel translations from Shem Tob Ibn Schapruts “Jewish” translation of Matthew at about 1380 until the complete translation of the New Testament by F. Delitzsh in 1877. About twenty different translations of all or part of the Gospels will become easily accessible; half of these have never before been published. For economic reasons, it has been necessary to produce only a selection, but the publishers hope that this series will create both a need and an opportunity for additional publications containing the Gospel translations which were not included. This desire also includes translations of the other parts of the New Testament.

Today there are about 90 translations of all or part of the New Testament into Hebrew. However, this tradition of translations has stirred surprisingly little interest among scholars. Pincas E. Lapidé has contributed to a study of the subject in *Hebraisch in den Kirchen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1976). Personally, I have investigated translations of Matthew 1:21 and the rendering of the name of Jesus in this tradition (Studier i navnet Jesus, Aarhus 1982, pp.208-221, 228-238, English Summary pp. 369-381), but there is still a need for research.

The tradition of translations of the New Testament into Hebrew has its own worth in that it sheds light on the work done in different times by different translators who wanted to express a message which originally came from the Jews in a Hebrew adequate for Jewish readers. It is therefore wrong for U. Becker to say of E. Hutter, who in 1599 was the first to publish the whole New Testament in Hebrew, that his Bible editions have mere bibliographical value today (RGG III, 1959, 497). In addition, no less interesting are the attempts from the Jewish side to

translate the New Testament or sections of it in the course of their struggle against Christian missions. The publishers intend for this series to contain three such translations of Matthew. Also to be included are quotations from the Gospels as contained in the Jewish counter-polemics of the Middle Ages. Another welcome feature will be two Gospel translations done by Roman Catholics in the beginning of the 17th centuries. We also find a 1668 translation of the Gospels by the baptized Jew, Giovanni Battista Iona. This translation, based on the Vulgate, had to wait a full 30 years before it was published. In more recent times, the whole New Testament was translated by Catholics only in 1970. This is also the first time that the translation of Yeates has been published. (The translations of Iona and Yeates are available in vols. 2 and 3 as a parallel text.)

The main purpose for this publication of Hebrew New Testament translations is to provide a means of New Testament research for those involved in the necessary attempt to identify the Semitic substructure, “le parfum semitique” or “le parfum de la Palestine au debut de l’ere chretienne”. Carmignac thinks that Jesus most probably spoke an Aramaic dialect; however, this does not eliminate the possibility that Jesus spoke Hebrew, a language which was spoken and alive in his times (shown by evidence from Qumran and Murabba’at. (Cf. also his article on “Studies on the Hebrew Background of the Synoptic Gospel, ASTI VII, 1968-69, pp., 64-93, where he argues in favour of the existence of a pre-synoptic text for the Gospels.) Recent developments in research seems to indicate Hebrew rather than Aramaic as the language of Jesus. Even Matthew Black in his third edition of An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts (Oxford 1967, 49), must admit: “We must nevertheless allow, possibly more than has been done before, for the use of Hebrew in addition to (or instead of) Aramaic by Jesus himself, especially on solemn festive occasions.”

No complete Aramaic Gospel-translation exists (“Quel beau sujet pour une these de doctorat: ‘Retroversion d’un Evangile en arameen!’”), and the difference between Hebrew and Aramaic is considered by Carmignac to be secondary in relation to the difference between Semitic and Greek thinking. For this reason, a translation of the New Testament into Hebrew is the second best option when the Semitic substructures of the Gospels are to be analyzed. Jesus and the first disciples spoke and thought within Semitic language categories. Carmignac emphasizes and rightly so, that a back-translation is and remains a back-translation and, as such, cannot directly lead us back to an original Hebrew text. The tradition of translations into Hebrew has, of course, its history of origin and its own presumptions, all of which should be taken into account. Yet a reader of a modern Hebrew translation of the New Testament is kept on course in relation to basic semitic concepts which would be easily forced into the background when it is the Greek text which is being interpreted.

In addition, these publications contain an introduction to the life and works of the respective translators and a short language analysis by Carmignac. In vol. 1, space has been found for Samuel Bagster’s long “Memoir” of Greenfield (pp. XV-XXXVII). This is not to be regretted, but it does make it more difficult to understand why Iona’s interesting introduction (“Prooemium” in Latin-Hebrew) was left out of vol. 2.

As an introduction, Carmignac has composed a list of the Hebrew translation-tradition, which is the most complete listing I have seen. He does, however, mention that this is not, a complete listing, and to those who would like to cooperate in extending it, he says, “et merci d’avance a ceux qui pourraient completer cette liste!” Undoubtedly, Aarhus (Denmark) is not the best place from which to do such investigation! However, some of the most prominent features should be mentioned.

The list is divided into 4 categories: A) Published Works; B) Identified Mss; C) Unidentified Mss; and D) Translations which have been lost. The usefulness of this list, however, would be greatly enhanced by certain corrections. In category A’, Carmignac

mentions only the year and not the place of publication. For some of the translations it would have been helpful to mention where they could be consulted, as some are extremely rare. This is not only true of some of the older translations, but also of some of the more recent such as Y. Elihai & Y. Blum: John (1967) and Matthew (1970). These are found in neither the “National Library” nor the “Ecole Biblique” in Jerusalem, nor (we suppose) in the British Library in London. A copy is available for consultation in the little library of Ratisbonne in Jerusalem. In category ‘B’, year and translator are mentioned but the signature indicators for individual manuscripts are omitted. These are mentioned later in category ‘C’, but here the translators are not mentioned. True, most are unidentified manuscripts; however, it is possible to give an approximate date of writing, a practice which has been adopted by others.

Because this series will become the standard work in this field, some inaccuracies should be mentioned. F.A. Christiani published the Epistle to the Hebrews in 1676, not in 1673. According to F. Delitzsh, the Gospel of Luke by H.C.I. Frommann ended with chapter 22:14. R.L. Lindsey published the Gospel of Mark in 1969 and not in 1970, and a preliminary sketch was available already in 1966. The title page of the New Testament that was published in Rome in 1975 mentions David Kinneret as well as Johanan Bauchet. Ms Sloane 237 in the British Library in London contains Rev. 1:1 to 2:13a, not Rev 1:1 to 2:12. Whether the translator of Ms Cambridge University Library 00.1.32 should be called Rahibi or Rachabi, as Lapide insists (op.cit., p.93), is still a matter of conjecture.

The Letter to the Romans by J.H. Callenberg (1732) is not a “pure” Hebrew translation, but “In Germanicum Judaeorum idioma transferi.. .“ Other such translations are not included in the list. Was it indeed Callenberg who published a Hebrew translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews around the year 1747? Other additions to the list may be mentioned. A Hebrew edition of the Gospels which was based on the Living Bible was published in Israel in 1977 and the whole New Testament in 1979. Moishe Immanuel Ben-Meir produced for “Christian Victor” a Hebrew edition of the Gospel of John with explanations (New York, 1958). In 1975 Anthology of the Gospels was published by Companions of Saint Michael (Gent, Belgium), where Bauchet & Kinneret (1975) is rendered with a few alterations.

Finally, there are some books in the list which cannot be characterized as translations. This is true of H.P. Chajes’s Markus-Studien (Berlin 1899) and of G. Aicher’s Hebraische Wortspiele im Mattäusevangelium (Bamberg 1929). Chajes undoubtedly attempted to understand the Gospel of Mark from a Semitic background; he did back-translate a few verses or parts of verses. It is also true that Aicher composed a long list of Hebrew ‘plays-on-words’ he found in the Gospel of Matthew. However, neither of these are continuous translations. Similarly one may question whether J. Zurishaday’s HaBrit should be included in such a list, or his refutation, which was first published in two volumes in Jerusalem in 1937-38 (Carmignac mentions the enlarged edition of 1947), where he translates single verses from the New Testament. From Israeli research into the life and teaching of Jesus come Hebrew publications such as those by David Flusser which contain many translations of single passages into Hebrew.

Retouched editions are listed. There is room to doubt if Hutter’s separate editions of Matthew (1599) and Mark (1600) were retouched in relation to the text of the polyglot edition of 1599. Neither can this reviewer understand why F. Petri’s translation of Luke (1574) was not mentioned in its revised form, which was published in 1581.

Criticisms of the list drawn up by Carmignac should not be allowed to overshadow the main issue: This series constitutes an excellent tool for those who wish to work with the Hebrew tradition of translation as well as for New Testament research which, through these translations, will be able to breathe in a little of “le parfum semitique”.

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