

# ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION FACTBOOK

## From Gladstone Library (Wirral)

27<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1911

### THE OLD SYRIAC GOSPELS.

(1) Stit,—I have now received a report from Dr. Arthur Hjelt, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Helsingfors, concerning Appendix I. in my edition of the Old Syriac Gospels. The monks did not allow Dr. Hjelt to use a re-agent; he could therefore examine only those passages which are visible without it. **In 133 passages he finds that I am right as against Dr. Burkitt;** and in as others he thinks that my reading is possible. Those in which he finds Dr. Burkitt right as against me are seven in number; and those where his reading is possible, rather than mine, are ii. **Seven** of these, however, **I dispute**, because the extra syllable, consisting generally of only one letter, which I added to these words, was seen by me only with the re-agent.

(2) For the benefit of those who possess my book, I subjoin a list of the verses verified.

Matt. i. 2; ii. 2; 16; iii. 3; V. /9; viii. 16; viii. 24 and 29 are partly in my favour, and partly in Dr. Burkitt's. Matt. XV. 2; xvi. 9; xviii. 15; 19; xix. II; XXI. 38; XXIV. 2; XXV. II; XXVI. 24 as in text; 29; XXVII. 20; 37; 43; Mark iv. I; v. ; vi. 55 2; 12; Xi. 22; Xiii. 25; 27; 28; XiV. 19; 22; 24; xvi. 4; ; Luke i. 70; 79; 80; ii.8; g; 12; 15; iv. 35; 35; 36; 40; V. 4; 19; 262; vi. 33;viii. 192; ix. 52; x. 4; xii. 54; xiii. 32; xiv. xv. 6; xvi. 23; xvii. 15; xix. 4; 22. 33; sod. 15; 3/\* xxii. 45; • **John i.** ; 42; 14 • 21; 21; 21; iv. 21; 35; vi. r. 'five words; vi. 19, a much-doubted word; 37; vii. II; 19; 49; 51; viii. 53; 33; ix. 2; 2; X. 38; Xi. 2; 18; 21; 25 conjectured by Dr. Burkitt, but read by me; xii. 29; 37;

xiii. 32; xviii. so; ; 5; xx.

(3) Also in the Supplement to Appendix I., pp. 294-299: Matt. ii. 9; iii. /4; v. 42; viii. 4; XVii. 20; xxiii. 17; xxiV. 22; 41. Mark i. 29; vi. 49; viii. 2; Luke i. 15; ii. 9; vii. 38; 44; viii. 49; x. 3; xi. 8; 38; xii. 3; 16; 31; 50; **Mark • xiii. ; 32;** xviii. 14; xix. 12; xx. 33; XXI. 12; i8; 49; John vi. 52; **vii. 25 • 45;** ix. II. Of the words which Dr. Hjelt thinks possible, he has underlined **2/ in my favour**: Mark viii. 25; Luke v. i; t8; 222; viii. 19; ; xix. ; 6; 7; xxiii. 49; John vi. 25; ix. 9; x. 29; xiii. 23; xv. 6; 24; xviii. 2. And in the Supplement, pp. 294-299; Matt. xxi. 24; Mark xiv. 4; xvi. 7. Here Dr. Hjelt, not having the re-agent, did not see the segyame points. Luke xxii. 6; xxiii. 35. In the following passages Dr. Hjelt underlines **7 of Dr. Burkitt's readings as correct**: Matt. xxii. 19; Luke xix. 5 a dot; • **John xiii. 22.** In the Supplement, John iii. 21; vii. 32; x. 9; xiii. 38.

(4) And II as possible: Matt. viii. 24 partly; 29 partly; cf. supra. Mark xi. 20; xiv. 9; \*xvi. 418/ ' • **Luke v. 221 ; \*IX. 38; xix. \*28.** In the Supplement, **\*Mark xvi. 5;** Luke xii. 42; \*xvi. /6.

(5) I do not, however, accept all these 18 corrections to my own work. Those which I have marked with an asterisk I at first read as Dr. Burkitt and Dr. Hjelt have done. **But a slight touch with the re-agent revealed to me an additional final letter,** or syllable, which sometimes put the word in the plural, but has now faded away. Seldom has a wish been so quickly fulfilled as that which was expressed by your Reviewer on April 29. Dr. Burkitt has displayed great learning and ingenuity in his emendations of those passages which did not please him. But he has worked under the great disadvantage of **never having perused one half of the manuscript—that half, in fact, which contained the most difficult passages.** And what we chiefly want to have is **the text as it was written in the second century; not as it has been revised in the twentieth.** In forty-one cases he has attempted to correct words that had been rightly read by the original transcriber: 24 by Dr. Rendel Harris, 8 by me, 8 by Dr. Burkitt himself, 2 by Dr. Bensly and 2 by Bensly and Burkitt together. This was imprudent, for there are now four people who witness that the correction was unnecessary, viz., the original transcriber, myself, my sister, Mrs. Gibson (to whom I showed all such divergencies when at Sinai in 1906), and Dr. Hjelt.

Messrs. Williams and Norgate intend to prepare a leaflet suitable for placing in the pocket which they have put in the binding at the end of my book. It will contain a more detailed explanation of Dr. Hjelt's report, and will be sent by post to those who apply for it.

Yours faithfully,

AGNES SMITH LEWIS.

Cambridge, May 22. 1911

**The above was copied from the common domain and seen in the Gladstone Library archive. The original library access and industry of Agnes Lewis at St Catherine's, Sinai-her signal scholarship and her intrepid use of the "Re-agent" gain for her conclusions my utter respect. With Rendel Harris her sister and Dr Bensly she came to pretty incontrovertible conclusions and these conclusions volubly cry in our ears-an ancient copy of the Syriac gospels there indubitably is which in itself drives back written NT MSS evidence of evidence to the third century and of MSS Existence as such to the early second century.**

**Bob Coffey**  
Aramaic Bible Companion