

**THE BOOK OF TOBIT, A CHALDEE  
TEXT FROM A UNIQUE MS. IN THE  
BODLEIAN LIBRARY, WITH OTHER  
RABBINICAL TEXTS, ENGLISH  
TRANSLATIONS AND THE ITALA**

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The Book of Tobit, a Chaldee text from a unique MS. in the Bodleian library, with other Rabbinical texts, English translations and the Itala by Ad. Neubauer

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Bible  
Septuagint  
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THE  
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A CHALDEE TEXT

FROM

*A UNIQUE MS. IN THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY*

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AND THE ITALA

EDITED BY

AD. NEUBAUER, M.A.

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## PREFACE.

JEROME, in his preface to the translation of Tobit, says that he translated it from a Chaldee text. We give his own words<sup>1</sup>:

‘Chromatio et Heliodoro Episcopis Hieronymus Presbyter in Domino salutem.

‘Mirari non desino exactionis vestrae instantiam: exigitis enim, ut librum Chaldaeo sermone conscriptum ad Latinum stylum traham, librum utique Tobiae, quem Hebraei de catalogo divinarum Scripturarum secantes, his, quae Apocrypha memorant, manciparunt. Feci satis desiderio vestro, non tamen meo studio. Arguunt enim nos Hebraeorum studia, et imputant nobis contra suum canonem Latinis auribus ista transferre. Sed melius esse judicans Pharisaeorum displicere iudicio, et Episcoporum jussionibus deservire, institi ut potui. Et quia vicina est Chaldaeorum lingua sermoni Hebraico, utriusque linguae peritissimum loquacem reperiens, unius diei laborem arripui: et quidquid ille mihi Hebraicis verbis expressit, hoc ego, accito notario, sermonibus Latinis exposui. Orationibus vestris mercedem hujus operis compensabo, quum gratum vobis didicero me, quod jubere estis dignati, complisse.’

Since his time nothing had been heard of a Chaldee text of Tobit; no critic, however, doubted the veracity of the

<sup>1</sup> Opera, ed. Vallarsi, Verona, 1740, t. x.

father's statement. The text which we now publish agrees in one important point with the version of the Vulgate, in representing Tobit in the first chapters in the third person, whilst in all other old versions he speaks in the first person. It is true, however, that our Chaldee text is less in accordance with the Vulgate than with the other texts, as we shall point out later on, and in many places it differs in order and words from Jerome's translation. This, however, can be accounted for. On the one hand, there are many omissions in our MS. of the Chaldee text<sup>1</sup>, and it has most likely been abridged for adaptation to the Midrash. On the other hand, Jerome, who translated his text in one day with the help of a Jewish interpreter, dictating it at the same time in Latin to his secretary, could hardly have made an accurate translation. Moreover, he made use, as is evident, of the old Latin version, called the *Itala*; and it cannot be doubted that he revised his translation before giving it to the public. His method in translating Tobit, although he does not mention it, was probably the same as that which he employed in the translation of Judith from a Chaldee text. We quote a part of his preface to that book<sup>2</sup>: 'Apud Hebraeos Liber Judith inter Apocrypha legitur: cujus auctoritas ad roboranda illa quae in contentionem veniunt, minus idonea judicatur. Chaldeo tamen sermone conscriptus, inter historias computatur. Sed quia hunc librum Synodus Nicaena in numero sanctarum Scripturarum legitur computasse,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 6, 7, 8, 9, and 15. On p. 8, lines 3-5, the text is even out of order.

<sup>2</sup> Opera, t. x. Vallarsi already says, 'Eo fortasse, quo Tobiae versionem modo adornaverat, ut quae Chaldaice scripta erant, alio in Hebraicum reddente, ipse in Latinam refunderet, historiae magis veritatem quam sententiarum et verborum seriem sedulo persequutus.' See also Bickell in the *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 1878, ii, p. 221.



acquievi postulationi vestrae, immo exactioni: et sepositis occupationibus, quibus vehementer arefabar, huic unam lucubratiunculam dedi, magis sensum e sensu quam ex verbo verbum transferens. Multorum codicum varietatem vitiosissimam amputavi: sola ea, quae intelligentia integra in verbis Chaldaeis invenire potui, Latinis expressi<sup>1</sup>.

Accordingly, if we take into consideration the somewhat arbitrary proceedings of the Rabbi who adapted his text to the Midrash, and of Jerome who paid more attention to the sense than to the words, and who evidently made many additions (e. g. ii. 12-19, iii. 16-23, vi. 17 to end), we may venture to say that our Chaldee text in a more complete form was the original from which the translation of the Vulgate was made.

Before entering into details on the old versions of Tobit and their relations to the Chaldee text, we must give some account of our MS. It was bought at Constantinople by Herr Fischel Hirsch, bookseller at Halberstadt, and purchased from him for the Bodleian Library. It contains a collection of smaller and larger Midrashim<sup>2</sup>, copied in the fifteenth century in Greek-rabbinical characters. The book of Tobit is the fifth piece of this collection, and is stated to be an extract from the Midrash Rabbah de Rabbah. We know the Midrash Rabbah or Rabbath on the Pentateuch and the five Scrolls, of which that on Genesis is

<sup>1</sup> We take the opportunity of correcting Dr. Jellinek's statement (Botham-Midrash, i, p. xxiii), that the first Hebrew translation of the book of Judith was made by R. 'Aqiba Levi in 1679. There are two earlier translations of this book: 1. A literal one of the text of the Vulgate, made before 1547 A. D., to be found in the MS. Opp. 712 in the Bodleian Library (see our Catalogue, No. 2240). 2. A less literal one, printed at Venice, about 1650 (see Steinschneider's Catal. Bodl., No. 1340, and [Zedner's] Catalogue of the British Museum, p. 149).

<sup>2</sup> See our Catalogue of the Bodleian Hebrew MSS., No. 2339.

attributed to R. Osh'aya<sup>1</sup>, but no mention whatever is made of a Midrash Rabbah de Rabbah, either in old or in modern works on Jewish literature. Raymund Martini, however, gives in his *Pugio Fidei*<sup>2</sup> a large number of extracts from a Midrash B'reshith (i. e. on Genesis) major, and amongst them a part of the history of Bel and the Dragon, agreeing *verbatim* with the text here published from our MS.<sup>3</sup> In our MS. it is said to be extracted from the Midrash Rabbah de Rabbah. It is certain therefore that the Midrash major on Genesis of Martini and our Midrash Rabbah de Rabbah are identical. Don Isaac Abarbanel<sup>4</sup>, who seems to have possessed a copy of this Midrash major, quotes it under the name of B'reshith Rabba Rabbathâ or the great B'reshith Rabbah<sup>5</sup>. According to our MS., however, we must call it the Midrash Rabbah of Rabbah, i. e. attributed to Rabbah<sup>6</sup>. Martini gives also many extracts from a B'reshith major on Genesis, attributed to R. Moses had-Darshan, which Zunz<sup>7</sup> thinks identical with the already-mentioned B'reshith major. They are, however, in our opinion, two different books, for the following reasons: 1. We give on p. 36 of the text an additional passage to the Midrash Thanhumâ, which is attributed to R. Moses had-Darshan, referring to the history of Tobit, though no names are given. Now this piece has little in

<sup>1</sup> See Zunz, *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Edition of Voisin, p. 742.

<sup>3</sup> See the text, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> *Y'shu'oth M'shibo*, ed. of Carlsruhe, p. 28\* and elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> Our printed Midrash is called by Martini *minor* and by Abarbanel *וויטא*. Alfonso de Zamora quotes the two under the name of B'reshith Rabbah u-K'tannah (see *Archives des Missions Scientifiques*, 2nd series, t. v (Paris, 1858), p. 428).

<sup>6</sup> We do not think *רבה דרבה* can be taken in the sense of the Thalmudical expression *רונה יריונה*. R. Jehudah Gedalyah (see Jellinek *יורה דעה*, p. 47) quotes a Midrash *רבה רבה*.

<sup>7</sup> See below, p. xix.

common with our text of Tobit extracted from the anonymous Midrash major. 2. Don Isaac Abarbanel, as we have stated, possessed a copy of the Midrash major, but when he quotes the extracts from the B'reshith Rabbah of R. Moses had-Darshan, he adds that he cannot verify the quotation. Martini had therefore, no doubt, two Midrashim furnished him by the Jews, either in two distinct MSS. or in one, where the text was the Midrash major and the marginal notes or addition by R. Moses had-Darshan. This last was the case with the MS. of the Midrash Rabbathi, formerly in possession of the celebrated Rapoport<sup>1</sup>, and now in the library of the Jewish congregation at Prague, and which Dr. Jellinek describes as the work of R. Moses had-Darshan<sup>2</sup>.

Our Chaldee text quoted from the Midrash Rabbah of Rabbah, which we have identified with the B'reshith Rabbah major of Martini, would, even if we were to accept Zunz's identification of it with the B'reshith Rabbah of R. Moses had-Darshan, be known at all events at the beginning of the eleventh century amongst the Jews<sup>3</sup>. It must, however, be much older (as might have been argued from our distinction between the two Midrashim, viz. the anonymous major and that of R. Moses had-Darshan), since it is anterior to the Hebrew text published by us, which is believed to be from the fifth to the seventh century<sup>4</sup>. For the Hebrew cannot be a translation from

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. xix.

<sup>2</sup> Beth ham-Midrash, vi, p. xiv sqq., and קונטרס תרי"ג, p. 47. We may add that the Agadic §§ on pp. 15 to 18 and on p. xvi of Beth ham-Midrash are also to be found in our MS. ff. 44 and 49<sup>b</sup> with better readings (e. g. on p. 18, יחזי שבט חנשה שם נב). The Agadic § in Hebrew of i, p. 84 of the same work, is to be found in our MS. in Chaldee on p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> See the extract from Zunz below, p. xix.

<sup>4</sup> See Fritsche's Exegetisches Handbuch zu den Apocryphen, 2nd fasc.,