**Houghton Codex (k)**

Aramaic Manuscript Project

Date: 12th century

Origin: A church building in the Assyrian mountains

Version: (k) = K'tav Asshurit script

More Info: Read all sections below

Quick Guide:

(**-**) The dash represents a single character in the biblical text of the manuscript that is indiscernible.

(**---**) A set of three dashes represents three or more consecutive characters within a single word that are indiscernible.

(**-------**) A set of seven dashes represents a single word of any length in which no characters are discernible at all.

(**------- ------- -------**) Three sets of seven dashes represent two or more consecutive words in the manuscript that are completely indiscernible.

Note: Estrangela versions use an asterisk (**\***) for all of the above scenarios. K'tav Asshurit versions tend to work better in BibleWorks for performing most search functions and textual analyses.

Brackets [] are used in the K'tav Asshurit transcriptions to denote alterations, emendations, or other issues in the manuscript. Bracketed text corresponds to a footnote placed under "Textual Notes," at the very bottom of this Version Info section in BibleWorks.

These notes begin with the chapter and verse to which they apply, and are listed in biblical order. (To avoid duplication, they are only in the Version Info section for K'tav Asshurit modules). Also, Estrangela modules use parenthesis () instead of brackets for altered text in the transcription.

Manuscript Information

The Houghton Codex, also referred to as "MS Syriac 4," is a 12th century witness of the Eastern Peshitta text, which contains all 22 books of the Eastern canon of the *Ketuvim Netzarim* ("NT") (excluding 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation) in Estrangela script. It was reportedly found in an ancient church building in the Assyrian mountains, and was presented as a gift to the late missionary to the Nestorians, Dr. Asahel Grant.

The manuscript is in excellent condition overall, but there appear to be some rough portions scattered throughout. Occasional notes and ornamental designs can be found throughout the manuscript. There is also some additional writing pertaining to the summary of the contents, as well as a brief history of the first emissaries of Yeshua.

About the Aramaic Manuscript Project

The Aramaic Manuscript Project is an effort to transcribe biblical manuscripts into electronic form to further the critical study of Aramaic witnesses to the Scriptures. The project places heavy emphasis on the Peshitta Aramaic manuscripts of the *Ketuvim Netzarim* (i.e. "New Testament"), but may also incorporate other textual witnesses at some point.

Peshitta, or Peshito is an Aramaic word thought to mean "simple" or "plain," and it is the designation that was later given to a family of nearly 350 Syriac (Aramaic) manuscripts dating from roughly the 5th century to the 17th century--now mostly preserved by Christian assemblies in the East, such as the Assyrian Assembly ("Church") of the East, and also relocated to libraries and museums in places like the United Kingdom.

While the earliest extant manuscript of the Peshitta family dates to about the 5th century, both historical sources and internal evidence provide reason to believe that the Peshitta (at least its oldest strata) could have been formed as early as 80 to 170 CE. As such, the Peshitta may be the oldest "version" of the *Ketuvim Netzarim*, possibly being formed by the early Jewish followers of Yeshua himself.

The motivation of the Aramaic Manuscript Project is to make several of these manuscripts available in electronic transcriptions, which, with the help of Bible software, can be used to perform textual analyses of the Aramaic Scriptures. Scholarly work of this nature already exists to some extent, but is limited in both number and accessibility.

With G-d's help, the Aramaic Manuscript Project will be another tool to advance the study and analysis of the Aramaic textual witnesses of Scripture; and the goal is to make this tool as accessible as possible.

The Process of Transcribing Manuscripts

The Aramaic Manuscript Project primarily relies on manuscript images, or copies, rather than the original manuscripts themselves. This is because access is limited to the original manuscripts, and also because images are easier to work with when producing electronic transcriptions.

In regards to vowelization, or the existence of vowels (or lack thereof) in the manuscripts, most ancient Aramaic manuscripts were originally written without vowels. As with the Hebrew text of the Tanakh, vowels were added to the consonantal text sometime later.

Due to the primary aim of this project, vowels have been excluded from the electronic transcriptions, because they hinder some search and analysis functions in certain software. As with the Hebrew Masoretic Text, vowels are not considered as authoritative as the base consonantal text anyway.

However, there are vowelized texts of the Peshitta, or the critical edition known as the 1905 UFBS / UBS text, and these are terrific study resources. Again, the primary aim of the Aramaic Manuscript Project is to develop transcriptions that will allow for maximum search, comparison, and other electronic analyses in certain software programs.

The primary benefit of the project exists not in any single manuscript transcription, but rather in the collection of several manuscript transcriptions which can be analyzed together. The section below titled "Use in BibleWorks" will explain some of these benefits as they pertain to using the Aramaic Manuscript Project in the BibleWorks program.

Now, in creating accurate, reliable transcriptions there were several factors that had to be taken into account. Some of these include the condition of the manuscripts themselves, as well as the images of the manuscripts, and also the consistency and clarity of each scribe's work.

Effort has therefore been put forth to ensure that all who transcribe the manuscripts will adhere to a relatively consistent standard of judgment in regards to illegible characters, scribal errors, and everything between.

The consistent threshold was shaped around this consideration: what would the original recipient of the manuscript be able to read and understand without any previous knowledge of the manuscripts contents? In other words, what would a person who only knew the language, but not the nature of the content, be able to discern from the manuscript?

Use in Accordance

The following are suggestions for getting the most out of the Aramaic Manuscript Project in Accordance (at least as of 11-30-18):

#1) Take advantage of the cross-search functionality in the Research tab to cross search words and discover variants with other Hebrew-letter versions in Accordance, such as the "Peshitta-NT (tagged)," "Hebrew Sinaiticus Gospels," and "Hebrew Curetonianus Gospels."

#2) Use the cross-search functionality in the Research Tab to perform lexical analyses with Tanakh ("Old Testament") texts, or extra-biblical literature, such as targums, Talmud, Pseudipigrapha, etc.

#3) Use the "Compare" function to highlight differences between the manuscript transcriptions in this project, and other texts available in Accordance. And Accordance offers several other tools which will make the Aramaic Manuscript Project of value.

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Please report any errors to baytsapra@yandex.com, as we want this work to be as accurate as possible. When reporting errors, however, please send an image of the manuscript that shows where the transcription doesn't accurately reflect the manuscript.

Also, before reporting errors, please be sure to read the sections above to understand the conventions and thresholds employed in this project. Many would-be errors may actually be defensible expressions of the transcribers. Thank you very much.

טיבותא ושׁלמא מן אלהא אבון ומן מרן ישׁוע משׁיחא מחינן

Favor and peace from Alaha the Father, and from our master Yeshua the Messiah, our life-giver.