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REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

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PRESENTED TO

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AT ITS TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL MEETING,

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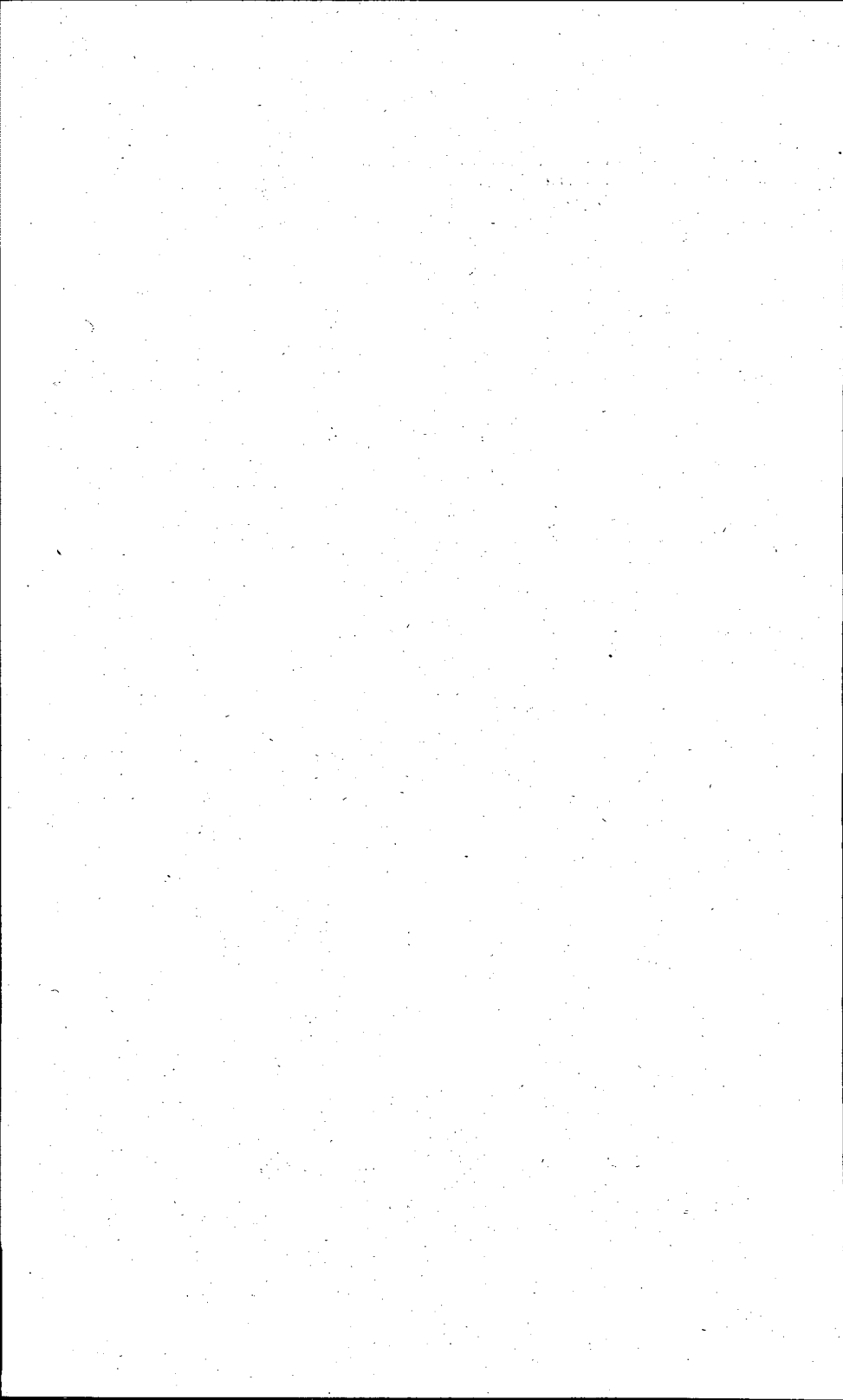
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XIX. REMARKS BY DR ASHTON, FORMERLY MASTER OF JESUS COLLEGE, (I.) ON THE AGE OF A SYRIAC MS. OF THE PENTATEUCH, AND (II.) GLOUCESTER RIDLEY'S ACCOUNT OF A SYRIAC MS. OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. COMMUNICATED BY G. E. CORRIE, D.D. MASTER OF JESUS COLLEGE.

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Mr Gloucester Ridley of New College, Oxford, whose name is well known as connected with the Philoxenian MS. of the New Testament, received in the year 1730, from a friend who was then travelling in the East, four Biblical MSS. Respecting one of those MSS., which contained the Pentateuch in Syriac and Arabic, that friend wrote as follows:

In Codice 1<sup>mo</sup> hæc leguntur “Scriptus anno Younanes MDIV<sup>o</sup>” Epochæ mihi incognita.

And in this sentence Mr Ridley observes in his Dissertation, *De Syriacarum Novi Fœderis Versionum Indole*, &c. Lond. 1761, p. 5: “De æra Younanes, mihi haud minus quam amico incognita, dum qua sit hærebam, facillime me expedivit vir summæ eruditionis, nuper Collegii Jesu apud Cantabrigienses Præses ornatissimus<sup>1</sup> :” adding in a note the name of Dr Ashton as that of the learned person alluded to.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Ashton died in 1752.

The following papers contain Dr Ashton's solution *in extenso* of the difficulty above referred to, and Mr Ridley's acknowledgement of his obligations to the Master; together with an account of an ancient MS. of the Philoxenian Version of the New Testament<sup>1</sup>:

## I.

“An Answer to some Querys of an Oxford gentleman concerning the date of a Persick MS. of the four Gospels sent from Ispahan, said to be written *Yonane* 1504, and *Hegira* 589.

The person who sent the MS. could not learn the meaning of *Yonane*, but is of opinion that it is no Epocha.

*Qu.*

1. What doth the word *Yonane* mean?
2. Can it be supposed to be any Epocha?
3. Will the 1504<sup>th</sup> year of any such suppos'd Epocha concurr with Heg. 589?

*Answer.*

*Yonane* 1504 doth plainly denote the year of an Epocha so call'd, answering to Heg. 589 (which was, as you rightly compute, A.C. 1193), and it seems to me to mean the Greek Year according to the æra of the Seleucidæ (which æra began in the year before Christ 312, and hath been ever since us'd over all the East, as Prideaux in his Connection observes) for *Yonane*, or (as Herbelot in his Bibliothèque Orientale hath it) *Iouanan* is the name by which the Eastern nations call'd the people of the

<sup>1</sup> See Ridley, *De Syriacarum Nov. Fæd. Versionum Indole*, &c. pp. 47 et sq. Lond. 1761: Hug, *Introduction to the Writings of the New Test.* translated by Wait, Vol. i. pp. 372 et sq.

Greek Empire under the successors of Alexander. *Iouanan* from the old name Iones, who, according to ancient tradition, were descended from *Ion*, or *Javan*, the son of Japhet. So Josephus (Antiq. i. 6), ἀπὸ Ἰωῦάνου Ἰωνία καὶ πάντες Ἕλληνας γεγόνασι. Accordingly the sons of Javan in Zach. 9. 13, are by the 70 call'd τὰ τέκνα τῶν Ἑλλήνων, and so our translation, *thy sons, O Greece*; and thus in Daniel, Melech Javan is render'd βασιλεὺς Ἑλλήνων, *the King of Grecia*. So Benjamin the Jew in the 12th century just before this MS. was penn'd, *Tharsis adhuc filiorum Javanis, quos Græcos dicunt, regno accensetur*. Itinerar. p. 53. The Greek Empire then, as Herbelot shews, being called by the Easterns the Empire *Iouanan*, and the several Kings, successors of Alexander, the Kings of *Iouanan*, the Greek æra likewise was call'd the æra of *Iouanan* or *Yonane* i.e. τῶν Ἑλλήνων, 1 Macc. 1. 10. And I think this will be put out of doubt, if the 1504<sup>th</sup> year of the Seleucidæ doth appear to concur with Heg. 589 in A.C. 1193. That year I confess (reckoning from the 312<sup>th</sup> before Christ, when the æra Seleucidarum began) seems to fall a year short, on A.C. 1192, and so not to be coincident with Heg. 589. But this doubt arises only from the different beginnings of the three years in question, and will easily be clear'd by an exact state of them. The Julian (which is the Christian) year, commenceth as we all know, on the first of January, and the Seleucidan begins on the first of October; but the Mahometan is every year varying by an anticipation of eleven days, so as in about 33 years to be retrovers'd thro' the whole Julian year; all therefore to be done in this case, is to shew, that the two last did in good part concur in the same Julian or Christian year. Now the 1504<sup>th</sup> year of the Seleucidæ (or Yonane) began on October the 1<sup>st</sup> A.C. 1192, and the 589<sup>th</sup> of the Hegira began on January the 6<sup>th</sup> following A.C. 1193, so that they were concurrent very near nine months, from Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> to Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> in A.C. 1193. The MS. therefore being dated Yonane 1504 and Heg. 589 must be written within the compass of those nine months."

*Camb.* 1735.

“This MS. is a very valuable gift on the account of its antiquity; for tho’ we have here in our publick Library three or four Persick Gospels, yet the oldest of them bears date about 200 years after this. The oldest of the three MSS. us’d by Whelock in his edition of the Persick gospels was that of Dr Pocock, which was afterwards publish’d by Bp. Walton, and that bore date only 1341, as is said in the preface to Whelock, and more expressly declar’d by Walton in his Prolegom. c. 16. The next thing to be enquir’d, is whether yours be a version from the Greek, or (as Pocock’s was) from the Syriack only<sup>1</sup>.”

## II.

“I am very much obliged to the Master for his most satisfactory solution of the difficulty with respect to the *Æra* of one of my MSS. I know not what return I can make him for the trouble I have given him more agreeable than an acknowledgement of the mistake I was then under, and a more certain account of my MSS. than I was then able to give.

That, the date of which was in question, is a large Quarto written in two columns the one Syriack, and the other Arabick (as I believe, and not Persick), and is a version of the Pentateuch into those languages according to the Septuagint, as I am informed. But I have not looked over that with any diligence, having employed what leasure time I had upon a more valuable book than that, which is

A Syriack Version of the New Testament in the old Babylo-  
nian character, translated from the Greek Anno Xti 506 in the

<sup>1</sup> This document, with the exception of an interlineation in the handwriting of Dr Ashton, is in the handwriting of Lynford Caryl, then Fellow, afterwards (1758) Master of Jesus College.



days of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabug or Hierapolis; by whom is not there mentioned, but I apprehend it was, by Thomas Cherchel or Thomas of Heraclea. It was afterwards collated at Alexandria, and compared with 3 authentic Greek copies; whose various readings are set down in the margin of my MS. which was written at Alexandria in the year of Alexander 927, 4<sup>th</sup> Indiction, which I think corresponds with the time from January to Sept. in the year of Xt 616, which is the age of the book, extremely fairly written, and on the old Alexandrian papyrus. It differs greatly from the common Syriack Version published by Widmansladius, and since reprinted by several, who love to call it the *simplicem et antiquam*, to both which characters my version has a better claim: for plainness, it follows the Greek Idiom more exactly, faithfully preserves its minutest particles, and takes not the liberty to paraphrase and interpret the text w<sup>ch</sup> the Common Version does: as to antiquity, it calls the places mentioned in the New Testament by their Greek names, whereas the other does sometimes call them by those names which they did not recover till the Saracens conquest w<sup>ch</sup> happened some years after my copy was wrote. Not that my version is the true *simplex et antiqua*, which I believe is quite lost, but it agrees much better with it than the common one does as I conjecture from comparing the passages quoted in Ephraim Syrus, w<sup>ch</sup> generally agree with mine, and rarely with the other. It contains the four Gospels, Acts, seven Catholick Epistles, and fourteen of St Paul's.

There are some few copies of the Gospels, and others of the Catholick Epistles in this Version scattered about Europe, in the Vatican, Florentine, and King of France his Library, but I know of none besides that has all; or any, except this, that has St Paul's Epistles.

I have another Syriack version of the New Testament on Vellum, the Gospels the same with the above mentioned, which, it is said at the end of them, was according to the accurate version of Thomas Charchel, and from the editiōn of Barzelebi who

lived about 1150, and then about I presume the book was written. The other parts are in the common version, and it wants four of the Catholick Epistles; it is likewise in the old Babylonian character.

The last is an octavo in Syriack whose age and subject I am a stranger to, they are Treatises in a more running hand, but written upon the Papyrus, whence I conclude it to be very antient, but have not been able to discover anything certain."