

כִּיֹּאֲבִיָּא on folio 140 v^o is not given in the Lexica. I take it to be a shortened form of כִּיֹּאֲבִיָּא, chartularius, the keeper of the records.

ωαλασακω. This word, too, has not yet found a place in the Syriac dictionaries. It is, as my friend Mr D. A. J. Cardozo pointed out to me, the Greek σκευοφύλαξ, keeper of the (sacred) vessels and so 'sacristan'. See Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 993.

The mention of John, Metropolitan of Edessa, confirms, if confirmation were necessary, the Melchite origin of our MS. For Duval, in his *Histoire d'Édesse*, p. 252, gives as the successor of James (*d.* 708) on the Jacobite Episcopal throne of Edessa a certain Gabriel, who sat till 729. George, the master of the Constantine who, in the year A.D. 720-721 rendered Items 21 and 22 of our MS into Syriac, is mentioned by Le Quien (*Oriens Christianus*, Paris 1740, vol. ii, col. 914) as the nineteenth orthodox Bishop of Apamea, to which city he was translated in A.D. 711.

כִּיֹּאֲבִיָּא (the *seyāmē* are quite distinct) does not, so far as I can discover, occur in the Lexicons, nor is it included in the index of place-names given at the end of Wright's Catalogue. There is a village named Briṣa about 25 miles SSW of Ḥomṣ.

C. Moss.

PHARES, PEREZ, and Matthew xi 12.

IN the Commentary on Matthew in the New One-volume Commentary issued by the S.P.C.K. a good deal has been made of Jewish phraseology connected with Perez, the more vigorous twin son of Tamar and Judah. An examination of this phraseology will therefore not be out of place; but first it will be convenient to say a word or two on the two Old Testament passages mainly concerned.

(1) Gen. xxxviii 29. This describes the birth of Perez, saying that the midwife called him by this name *Pērēs* (פֶּרֶץ, in pause פֶּרֶץ *Pārēs*), meaning 'Breach', because he had made a breach and come out before his twin-brother *Zerah* (זֶרַח, in pause זֶרַח *Zārah*). In the N.T. the name appears as φάρεσ, i. e. with vocalization as if in pause: I do not know the authority for the conventional accentuation Φαρέσ and Ζαρά, but if the Hebrew be followed it should be Φάρεσ and Ζάρα. The *Z* of Zerah is a true *z*, but the last letter of 'Perez' is *z* for *ץ*, as in Zion-Sion and

Zidon-Sidon. This *z* was 'made in Germany' by Reuchlin: the old transliteration of such words was always with *s*, but Reuchlin for the first time introduced the German *z* (i.e. English *ts*) to represent this sharp sibilant, which modern scholars transliterate by *z*.

It should be noted that according to the Biblical genealogies Zerah had very few descendants, so that Perez is regarded as the ancestor of practically all the tribe of Judah.

(2) Micah ii 13 עֲלֶה הַפְּרִץ. The whole verse is: 'The breaker (*lit.* breacher) is gone up before them: they have broken forth and passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat: and their king is passed on before them, and the LORD at the head of them.' This is a prophecy of the restoration of Israel, which some think to be a post-exilic insertion in Micah. The 'breaker' is now explained to mean the 'fence-breaker' (as they say in Australia), i.e. the leading ram of the flock. Here it is used metaphorically for the Leader of Israel, i.e. the Messiah or the LORD Himself. It should, however, be noted that if we interpret the 'breaker' as the Messiah it is only as the leader of a flock of sheep. The appropriateness of the term is derived solely from the imagery, and without the imagery of the flock (*ver.* 12) it would be inappropriate. It would require a good deal of confirmatory evidence to prove that 'the breacher', standing by itself without context, was a standing name for 'the Messiah'.

That the Messiah, the Anointed King who was to come in God's good time, should be a son of David was a belief held by many Jews, at least from the first century onward, as is obvious both from Jewish and Christian sources. But all the sons of David, including therefore the Messiah, were also sons of Nahshon, of Perez, and of Judah. Consequently when the names or exploits of these ancient worthies happen to be the subject of discussion Rabbinical writers remember that the Messiah, David's son, is also son of Nahshon, or of Perez, or of Judah. But when Mr Levertoff in his commentary on Matthew says 'Perez, who often stands for the Messiah' (p. 131 *a*), or declares that *Perezim* (*sic*) is used 'in the Rabbinical literature' for 'followers of the Messiah' (p. 154 *b*), he goes beyond the facts and gives his readers a false impression. In passages where Perez is being considered the Messiah is sometimes called Ben Perez, i.e. son of Perez, but the Messiah is never called Perez—at least, if he be so called it is Mr Levertoff's duty to cite the passage.

There is one passage of Rabbinic literature that will be most conveniently discussed here before coming to Mr Levertoff's use of it. This is the comment on Genesis xxxviii 29 in the Midrash on Genesis generally known as Genesis (or *Beresith*) Rabba. The passage occurs

at the end of § 85: I quote from the critical edition of J. Theodor (Berlin, 1927), p. 1049:—

ויהי במשיב ידו ונו' זה רבה על כל הפרצים ממך
יעמוד עלה הפורץ לפנייהם :

“And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, &c.” That is, the greatest of all “breaches” will arise from thee: “the Breacher has gone up before them”.

This rendering needs some defence in detail. זה introductory stands regularly in Gen. R. for ‘i.e.’ For רבה על see Gen. R. 53 (end), where the third explanation of רבה קשת (Gen. xxi 20) is רבה על כל המורים בקשת ‘the greatest of all that shobt with the bow’. For עמוד in the sense of ‘appear’, ‘stand upon the earth’, see Gen. R. 57 end. For a text at the end without introductory formula, see Gen. R. 62, just before the comment on Gen. xxv 9.

At the end of the passage quoted from Gen. R. 85 most editions, following that of Venice, add ‘Rabbi in the name of (other) Rabbis explained the verse thus ‘All the breachers (הפורצים) arise (עומדין, sic) from thee, as it is said “The Breacher has gone up”.’ But this addition is only found in one MS besides the ed. princeps and does not seem to be genuine. It certainly does not supply evidence that פורצים was a well-known technical term apart from the exegesis of Gen. xlviii 29 and Micah ii 13.

הפרצים, i.e. ‘the breaches’, in the extract quoted is much the best attested reading, and is adopted by Theodor. Some MSS have הפרציים ‘the law-breakers’, another has הפורצים ‘the breachers’. The clause is an explanation of the midwife’s phrase מה פרצת עליך פרוץ ‘what a breach thou hast made!’ Perhaps it would not be unfair to render the sentence in Gen. R.: ‘The greatest Perez of all will arise from thee, see Mic. ii 13.’ But such a sentence does not give us a right to say that Perez (without context) was a Rabbinical name for the Messiah.

We are now in a position to consider Mr Levertoff’s new interpretation of βασιταί in Matt. xi 12 (‘The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force’). And lest I should be supposed to be doing him injustice I quote it in full. He says (p. 154 δ):—

‘On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles the final passage of Deuteronomy was read, thus bringing to an end the cycle of lessons. This may have suggested to our Lord that with the coming of John the Baptist the old dispensation had come to an end, a situation had arisen which called for instant and decisive action, and the Kingdom of Heaven was now being violently stormed by aggressive men as Joshua stormed Jericho after the death of Moses. Probably the original

Hebrew or Aramaic underlying the difficult Greek word translated 'violent' was *parezin*. It should not be interpreted as by Professor Marshall (*Crit. Review*, January, 1896) 'the law-breakers', but in the traditional sense of followers of the son of Perez (the Messiah), who in the Rabbinic literature are actually called *Perezim*. These followers of the Messiah (according to the traditional interpretation of Mic. 2¹⁸ he is called *Porez*) 'break through and make a way for themselves' (cf. Midr. on Gen. 85, end). *Paraz* has the double meaning of breaking and spreading; hence Luke's variant 'the Gospel of the Kingdom is preached', i.e. spread. The *Perezim* are so eager to enter the Kingdom that they jostle one another in their efforts to reach it: '... and the violent take it by force'.

The reader will notice that only one authority is given for this remarkable piece of exposition, issued under the joint authorship of the Rev P. P. Levertoff and Professor Goudge. This is the Midrash on Genesis 85, i.e. the passage quoted and commented on above. Mr Levertoff's transliteration *Perezim* is (I suppose) a misprint for *Pōrezim*. As remarked above, Theodor's best MSS have פּרָצִים (i.e. *Pērāšim*). But in no case, even with the gloss ascribed to Rabbi, are the '*Porezim*' followers of the Messiah! Moreover it is one thing to talk about 'the Breacher' *ha-Porez*, when Judah's son Perez is the subject of annotation, and quite another to suppose that 'Breachers' could be used in a general way without context for followers of the Messiah. *βιασται* is a difficult word, and there are interpreters (of whom Schweitzer is perhaps the best known) who understand it here in a good sense; but until Mr Levertoff no one had depicted these eager persons as jostling one another in their efforts to reach the Kingdom of Heaven—and all this in the name of Rabbinic lore.

I am not forgetting *Lecha Dodi* and Solomon Alkabetz. Alkabetz was one of the enthusiastic Jews who went and settled at Safed to wait in the Holy Land for the Messiah about the year A. D. 1500. He was a poet, and his hymn *Lecha Dodi* (לְכֵה דוּדֵי) is sung just before the Sabbath begins to this day. But the conventions of *piyyūṭ* are different from the ideals of Wordsworth. Not only are the rhymes elaborate, but it is a merit in the school to which Alkabetz belonged to be far-fetched and allusive. Not only is *Lecha Dodi* an acrostic of the author's name, but each line rhymes with itself three times, a fact which tends to cramp the expression. One verse may be paraphrased here to shew the structure:

'My people, rise,' we cry to them,
 'Deck yourselves out with gold and gem.'
 For Jesse's son from Bethlehem
 Draw nigh, redeem our clay

Farther on, the poet addressing a poetical figure which is a sort of synthesis of Queen Sabbath, Jerusalem, and Israel, says :

To right and left shalt thou be free,
To God thy Lord shall thy reverence be . . .

Here Alkabetz was at a loss for a rhyme. He wanted to indicate (not *name*) the Messiah, but the line had to end in *tsi*. Neither David, nor Boaz, nor Nahshon, nor Perez, would do. Then he remembered Numbers xxv 20, where the descendants of 'Perez' are called *ha-Partsi*, so his verse runs on

For the sake of one who is *Ben Partsi*
Let us rejoice this day.

Here, then, the Messiah is called not 'Perez' or 'Ben Perez', but 'Ben Parzi'. I do not think this piece of sixteenth-century Piyuyut is evidence for usage in first-century prose!

In Gen. R. 12 (on Gen. ii 4) the remark of Samuel b. Nachman (3rd cent.) is reported that the word תולדות (generations) is written תולדת every time except in Gen. ii 4 and Ruth iv 18. This was explained by Samuel to refer to the six glorious things given to Adam which he lost, but R. Berachiah (4th cent.) says that Samuel explained that the word is written תולדות in Ruth iv 18 because the six things will be restored when Ben Perez comes. Here undoubtedly we have a fourth-century Rabbi using Ben Perez in the sense of Ben David, i.e. the Messiah. But he was guided to it by having a text to explain in which the name of Perez actually occurs.

The question may be asked at the end, what does Matt. xi 12 mean after all? I doubt if we can get much further than St Ambrose who remarks (*in Luc.* 1382 D): *quae subobscura uidetur esse locutio*.¹ I find it difficult, quite apart from the context, to regard 'the Kingdom of Heaven is being forced' as anything but something regrettable and sinister. At the time the imprisonment of John the Baptist must have seemed very much like a hampering and fettering of spiritual activity by the secular power; ὁ κατέχων or τὸ κατέχων (to use the language of 2 Thessalonians) was at work: it might well be that the saying of Matt. xi 12 originally referred to the continued imprisonment of John. It is surely one of those Gospel phrases about the true meaning of which we must remain in uncertainty.

F. C. BURKITT.

¹ Quoted also by M^cNeile on Matt. xi 12. Ambrose *inter alia* brings forward the victorious persistence of the Syrophenician woman as an example of what he thinks is meant.