

# GREEK $\mu\acute{e}v$ IN EARLY SYRIAC

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## ABSTRACT

*The analysis of  $\rightarrow$  in the following colon from the Odes of Solomon (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.) remains a crux interpretum:  $\rightarrow$   $\tau\acute{e}k\alpha$   $\tau\acute{e}k\alpha$   $\tau\acute{e}k\alpha$   $\tau\acute{e}k\alpha$   $\tau\acute{e}k\alpha$  ‘may it (= Your right hand) guard everyone who is held in evil things’ (18.7). This study proposes that  $\rightarrow$  in this colon is best analyzed as  $\rightarrow$  man ‘indeed’, which is a loanword from Greek  $\mu\acute{e}v$ . This is, thus, the earliest known attestation of Greek  $\mu\acute{e}v$  in Syriac, and it shows that the particle is attested already in the earliest layer of Syriac literature (pre-4<sup>th</sup> cent.), even though it does not become common until the height of Syriac-Greek contact in the sixth and seventh centuries.*

Throughout its history, Syriac has acquired more than a dozen particles from Greek.<sup>1</sup> Among these is the particle  $\mu\acute{e}v$  (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1101-1102), which came into Syriac as  $\rightarrow$  man

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<sup>1</sup> For a general overview of the Syriac-Greek contact situation, see Taylor 2002. A bibliography of Greek loanwords in Syriac is available in Voigt 1999-2000. The present author is currently completing a monographic study of contact-induced changes in Syriac due to Greek that is tentatively entitled *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in its Greco-Roman Context*.

(Brockelmann 1928: 393; Payne Smith 1879-1901: 2151; Sokoloff 2009: 778). In Syriac, *ܒܼܼ man* (< Greek *μέν*) can be used independently with the meaning ‘indeed’, as in (1).

(1) *Life of Yuhanon of Tella* by Eliya (mid-6<sup>th</sup> cent.) (ed. Brooks 1907: 29-95)

‘I **indeed**, like my colleagues, am his servant, as we ought to be’  
(73.5-6)

In addition, *ἢ man* (< Greek *μέν*) can be used in conjunction with the particle *ἢ den* (< \**iðayn*)<sup>2</sup> with the meaning ‘on the one hand ... on the other hand ...’:

(2) *Letter 13* by Ya‘qub of Edessa (d. 708) (ed. Wright 1867: \*1-\*24)

לפומכמ הַיְלָדָה הַיְלָדָה הַיְלָדָה הַיְלָדָה הַיְלָדָה

**'On the one hand**, He (= God) expelled the vultures from the field of Abraham. **On the other hand**, He called out gently and pleasantly to Abraham, "Abraham, Abraham, ..." (5\*.10-11)

While *→ man* (< Greek *μέν*) is well attested at the height of Syriac-Greek contact in the sixth and seventh centuries,<sup>3</sup> it remains unclear when this particle first entered Syriac.

On several occasions, Brock (1975: 89 with n. 55a; 1996: 259) has pointed to the Syriac translation of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (ed. Wright and McLean 1898), which must have been translated by at least the first decades of the fifth century,<sup>4</sup> as one

<sup>2</sup> For the development of Syriac *den* from earlier Aramaic \**îdayn* under the influence of Greek δέ, see Butts Forthcoming.

<sup>3</sup> It is, for instance, found in Eliya's *Life of Yuhanon of Tella*, 68.7; 73.6; 82.20, 21 (ed. Brooks 1907), Yuhanon of Ephesus's *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, 139.6 (ed. Brooks 1923-1925), the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, 13.11; 36.13 (ed. Reinink 1993), Ishaq of Nineveh's *Part 2*, 10.35; 17.1; *passim* (ed. Brock 1995), Denha's *Life of Marutha*, 69.12; 81.2 (ed. Nau 1905: 52-96), and throughout the works of Ya'qub of Edessa.

<sup>4</sup> The translation is preserved in one of the earliest dated Syriac manuscripts, St. Petersburg, Public Library, Cod. Syr. 1 (461/462). The translation must, however, predate this manuscript by at least half a

of the earlier Syriac texts attesting *man* (< Greek *μέν*). For the occurrence of the Greek particle in this text, he cites the following sentence:

(3) Syriac Translation of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (ed. Wright and McLean 1898)

କୁଳାଳ କାହାର କିମ୍ବା କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର କାହାର

(333.9-10)

It is best to leave the Syriac untranslated for the moment and turn instead to the Greek *Vorlage*, which reads as follows:

#### (4) Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*

καὶ οὗτος μέν τις τοιοῦτος ἦν. πάλιν δὲ ἂν ἐτέρους εἶδες ...

‘On the one hand, this one, whoever he was, was thus. On the other hand, you may have seen others ...’ (8.7.5)

The demonstrative pronoun *οὗτος* in this sentence refers to a previously mentioned young man, while *τις* serves as an indefinite pronoun to avoid naming this definite referent: his identity is not important to Eusebius's narrative; only his heroic deeds in the face of persecution are.<sup>5</sup> Even though the Greek text clearly has the *μέν - δέ* construction, the *who* in the Syriac translation is probably not to be analyzed as *man* (< *μέν*), but rather as *any man dhu* 'whoever he is', which is translating Greek *τις*.<sup>6</sup> According to this

century since the Syriac version was the basis of an Armenian translation from the first decades of the fifth century (Van Rompay 1994: 73 n. 15; cf. Merx, *apud* Wright and McLean 1898: xiii-xvii).

<sup>5</sup> For this use of *τις* in Greek, see Liddell and Scott 1996: 1796 and especially Humbert 1972: §29.

analysis, then,  $\mu\acute{e}v$  is left unexpressed in the Syriac translation. Thus, the example in (3) does not seem to provide an early attestation of Syriac  $\rightarrow man$  (< Greek  $\mu\acute{e}v$ ).

An early attestation of Syriac  $\rightarrow$  (< Greek  $\mu\acute{e}v$ ) can, however, be found in the following passage from Ephrem (d. 373):

(5) *Prose Refutations*, Discourse 1 by Ephrem (ed. Overbeck 1865)

'hear then the opposite of this: if a man spares the gathered seed so as not to scatter it, **on the one hand**, it is thought that he acted wisely in sparing (it) so as not to scatter (it); **on the other hand**, when we see the scattered investment of the farmer being collected in capital and interest as well as the earth rewarding him, then that discernment which spared (the seed) so as not to scatter (it) (now) appears to be blindness' (33.21-27)

This attestation establishes the presence of *man* (< Greek *μέν*) in Syriac by the time of Ephrem in the fourth century.

An even earlier attestation of *man* (< Greek *μέν*) in Syriac may be found in the *Odes of Solomon*.<sup>8</sup> The form in question occurs

παράδεισος οὗτος 'He (= God) placed this one (= Adam) in paradise, whatever this paradise may have been' (ed. Moreschini and Gallay 1990: 126-129). The Greek clause ὅστις ποτὲ ἦν ὁ παράδεισος οὗτος 'whatever this paradise may have been' expresses in a fuller way what Greek τις does in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*: Gregory is not interested in the precise identity of paradise in the same way that Eusebius is not interested in the precise identity of the young man. Thus, the Syriac translation of ܐܼܾܾ ܕܼܾܾ *mōn d-hu* / ܐܼܾܾ ܼܾܾ *mon d-hu* in Gregory's *Homily* provides a close parallel to ܐܼܾܾ ܼܾܾ *man d-hu* in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*.

<sup>7</sup> The adverb **ܒܼܼܼܼ** *bɔyden* is written here as two words (for this, see Payne Smith 1879-1901: 1002). In his *Letter on Syriac Orthography*, Ya'qub of Edessa seems to imply that when written as two words *bɔy den* is not marked for time (ed. Phillips 1869: 6.12-15).

<sup>8</sup> The verse numbering of the *Odes of Solomon* in this study follows Charlesworth 1973.

toward the middle of Ode 18 in the last colon of the following tricolon, which is cited according to the earliest Syriac witness, *viz.* N = ms. London, Brit. Libr. Add. 14,538 (10th cent. according to Wright [1870-1872: 2.1003-1008]):<sup>9</sup>

(6) *Odes of Solomon*

لبلوغه المأمور في مهنة مهنية. وله فقط هي حل المأمور في مهنة مهنية.

'May your right hand set our salvation to victory / may it receive from every place / and may it guard everyone who is held in evil things' (18.7)

The other Syriac witness, H = ms. Birmingham, John Rylands Syr. 9 (ca. 15<sup>th</sup> cent.), attests essentially the same reading of the last colon: **لَخْدَ وَكَتَبَلَهَ سَبَدَ**. Despite the agreement in the manuscripts, no acceptable analysis of **لَخْدَ** in this colon has yet been proposed.

Charlesworth argues that ܒ in ܠ ܒ is to be analyzed as the preposition *men* “used idiomatically as ‘on the side’” (1973: 80). This leads to his translation: ‘Let it preserve (it) on the side of everyone who is besieged by misfortunes’. This interpretation is problematic for at least two reasons. First, the diacritic point(s) in both manuscripts are decidedly against analyzing ܒ as the preposition *men*. Second, Charlesworth’s analysis is not in accordance with Syriac grammar. J. Payne Smith (1903: 280) does indeed give a meaning ‘on the side’ in her translation of her father’s *Thesaurus*, but this is in the sense of ‘on the side, of the party, in the name’ (‘a parte’ in the Latin original [Payne Smith 1879-1901: 2156]), as in the following example:

## (7) Peshitta Old Testament

ଶିଳ୍ପ ରକ୍ଷଣ କାନ୍ତ କାନ୍ତ

<sup>9</sup> A facsimile edition of the two Syriac witnesses, as well as the Greek version of Ode 11 and the five Coptic quotations (Odes 1.1-5; 5.1-11; 6.8-18; 22.1-12; 25.1-12), is available in Charlesworth 1981. An additional facsimile edition of the other Syriac witness, ms. Birmingham, John Rylands Syr. 9, is available in Harris and Mingana 1916.

'Who is **on the side** of the Lord? Let him come to me' (Ex. 32:26)<sup>10</sup>

More importantly, however, Charlesworth's analysis is ungrammatical since the combination of the preposition *men* and a second prepositional phrase introduced by *l-* is restricted to a handful of phrases in Syriac (cf. Nöldeke 1904: §156):

(8)

	<i>men lbar</i>	'from outside'
	<i>men lgaw</i>	'from inside'
	<i>men ltaht</i>	'below'
	<i>men l'el</i>	'above'

In each of these cases, the element following *men* is to be analyzed synchronically as an adverb (so also Coakley 2002: 52), as is shown by the fact that a following complement must be introduced by an additional preposition.<sup>11</sup> Diachronically, of course, each of these has its origin in the preposition *l-* plus a substantive or preposition. It is, however, only after they were grammaticalized as adverbs that they could fill the syntactic slot after *men*, just as other adverbs, e.g., *men horko* 'from here'. Outside of the limited phrases in (8), *men* is never followed in Syriac by a prepositional phrase headed by *l-*. Thus, Charlesworth's interpretation can be ruled out based on the diacritic point(s) of and on the lack of grammaticality of the phrase \*\**men lkol* < *men* 'from' + *l-* 'to' + *kol* 'all, every'.<sup>12</sup>

In the *editio princeps* of the *Odes of Solomon*, Harris and Mingana (1920: 297) take a different approach to this problem and propose to emend to producing the common idiom 'whoever'.<sup>13</sup> This emendation, however, runs counter to the text-critical principle of *lectio difficilior potior*, as Charlesworth (1973: 80)

<sup>10</sup> Translating Hebrew *mi la-YHWY 'eky* 'Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me!' (NRSV).

<sup>11</sup> In other contexts, and (rarely) , e.g., 'below ground' (cited in Sokoloff 2009: 1639), are compound prepositions that can govern a complement of their own.

<sup>12</sup> Franzmann (1991: 139-143) also analyzes as the preposition *men*, and so her analysis can be ruled out for the same reasons.

<sup>13</sup> This suggestion has subsequently been adopted by, *inter alii*, Azar 1996: 124, 207 and Lattke 1999-2005: 2.68 ("vielleicht"), 2.78 with n. 3; 2009: 252, 259-260 with n. 107.

has pointed out. In addition, it must be stressed that it is an emendation, which goes against the only two Syriac witnesses.<sup>14</sup>

A potential weakness with this analysis is that this would be the earliest attestation of *so man* (< Greek *μέν*) in Syriac, predating Ephrem by around two centuries.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted, however, that Greek particles are attested in the earliest layer of Syriac literature (pre-4<sup>th</sup> cent.). The particle **ܩܻܻ** 'yq' 'in vain' (< *εἰκῇ* [(Liddell and Scott 1996: 484)]), for instance, is attested already in the *Acts of Thomas* (220.10; ed. Wright 1871a), which probably dates to the first half of the third century.<sup>16</sup> Or, to take an even earlier

<sup>14</sup> In the first volume of the *editio princeps*, Harris and Mingana (1916: 40 [Syr.]) erroneously read H as حـ and gave the variant reading of N as حـ. In the accompanying volume (1920: 297), they corrected this error and read both manuscripts as حـ. Though the earlier, erroneous reading was corrected in the second volume, one wonders if it unduly influenced their decision to emend the text.

<sup>15</sup> Most scholars date the *Odes of Solomon* to the second century, though slightly later dates are occasionally suggested (see Lattke 1993b [= 1979-1998: 4.113-131]; 1995: 20-35; 2009: 6-10 with additional references). It should also be noted that it continues to be disputed whether the original language of the *Odes of Solomon* is Greek or Syriac (see Charlesworth 1998: 78-136; Lattke 1995: 16-18; 2009: 10-11 with additional references).

<sup>16</sup> For the date, see Bremmer 2001: 73-77. The word is also found in both manuscripts of the Old Syriac gospels at Mt. 5:22 (ed. Kiraz 1996; cf. Brock 1967: 398) as well as throughout fourth-century Syriac literature: Aphrahat's *Demonstrations*, 1.568.8, 9 (ed. Parisot 1894-1907); *Book of Steps*, 288.20; 508.8 (ed. Kmosko 1926); Ephrem's *Prose Refutations*, 44.4; 53.24 (ed. Overbeck 1865), *Madroše against Julian the Apostate*, 87.28 (ed. Beck 1957b), *Madroše on Nisibis*, 53.1; 122.7; 124.10 (ed. Beck 1963).

example, **נִכְנָה** *tk* ‘perhaps’ (< *τάχα* [Liddell and Scott 1996: 1762]) occurs already in the Peshiṭta of the Pentateuch at Ex. 32:30 and Num. 23:3, which was translated (from Hebrew) by the middle of the second century.<sup>17</sup> While Greek particles are not otherwise found in the *Odes of Solomon*, this text does contain twelve Greek loanwords that occur a total of twenty-four times.<sup>18</sup> Twenty-two of the tokens and eleven of the types are nouns:<sup>19</sup>

(9)    **אֶרְאָה** *’r* ‘air’ (5.5) < *ἀήρ* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 30)  
**אֶרְאָה** *’ksny* ‘foreigner’ (17.6) < *ξένος* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1189)  
**אֶרְאָה** *gns* ‘race’ (41.8) < *γένος* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 344)  
**אֶרְאָה** *lm’n* ‘haven’ (38.3) < *λιμήν* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1050)  
**אֶרְאָה** *mwkl* ‘bars’ (17.10) < *μοχλός* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1149)

<sup>17</sup> For the date, see Weitzman 1999: 248-258. The word is also found in the Sinaiticus manuscript of the Old Syriac gospels at Mk. 11:13 (ed. Kiraz 1996; cf. Brock 1967: 421) as well as in fourth-century Syriac literature: Aphrahat’s *Demonstrations*, 1.632.9; 1.696.14; 1.753.20; 2.133.18 (ed. Parisot 1894-1907) and Ephrem’s *Prose Refutations*, 34.6 (ed. Overbeck 1865), 2.24.46 (ed. Mitchell 1912-1921); *Memra on our Lord*, 31.9 (ed. Beck 1966); *Madraše on Nisibis*, 22.9 (ed. Beck 1961), 90.9, 15 (ed. Beck 1963); *Madraše against Heresies*, 9.4; 44.3; 142.25 (ed. Beck 1957a); *Letter to Publius*, 285.14; 293.18 (ed. Brock 1976); etc.

<sup>18</sup> Previous treatments are available in Franzmann 1991: 3 [incomplete]; Lattke 1993a. Lattke (1993a) includes two words that are probably not Greek loanwords: 1. **אֶרְאָה** *prdys* ‘paradise’ (11.16, 18, 23, 24; 20.7) is not a loanword from Greek *παράδεισος* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1308) but from Iranian \**paridaīda-* (so already Jeffery 1938: 224 n. 5; Brock 1967: 424; cf. Ciancaglini 2008: 237; for the Iranian form, see Hinz 1975: 179 [with the remark of Zadok 1976: 215]; Tavernier 2007: 447); 2. **אֶרְאָה** *phyr* ‘sword’ (28.5) is not a loanword from Greek *σαμψήρα* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1582) but from an Iranian source, such as Manichaean Middle Persian *safšēr* ‘sword’ (Boyce 1977: 81) or Middle Persian *safšēr* / *samsēr* ‘sword’ (MacKenzie 1971: 78-79) (cf. Ciancaglini 2008: 225).

<sup>19</sup> Type refers to a pattern, whereas token refers to actual instances of said pattern.

☞ **نَسْخَة** *pnqyt'* ‘collection, volume’ (23.21) < *πινακίδιον* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1405)

﴿وَجْهٌ﴾ *pr̄swp'* ‘face, person’ (8.13; 11.14; 15.9; 17.4; 22.11; 25.4; 31.5; 42.13) < *πρόσωπον* (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1533)

Ἄνθελος *qwbrnyt* 'helmsman' (16.1) < κυβερνήτης (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1004)

ταύτην το *qyndwv* ‘danger’ (38.5; 39.8) < κίνδυνος (Liddell and Scott 1996: 952)

κιθάρα *qtr* 'cithern' (6.1; 7.17; 14.8; 26.3) < κιθάρα, κιθαρις  
(Liddell and Scott 1996: 950)

τάγμα *tgm* 'legion, troop; order, command' (35.4) < τάγμα (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1752)

In the *Odes of Solomon*, there is also one verbal root that is ultimately of Greek origin, and it occurs two times:

(10) ~~κακός~~  $\sqrt{\text{phys}}$  Ct 'to obey' (8.17; 39.8) <  $\pi\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha\iota$  (Liddell and Scott 1996: 1353-1354)

Given that there are a number of Greek loanwords in the *Odes of Solomon* and that there are Greek particles in the earliest layer of Syriac literature (pre-4th cent.), the early date of the *Odes of Solomon* would not seem to be a sufficient reason for rejecting the analysis of ﴿ in ﴿ ﴿ ﴿ لְמִנְיָה as the particle ﴿ man (< Greek μέν). Rather, this proposal allows for an acceptable grammatical analysis of the word in question without resorting to emendation. Thus, it is proposed that ﴿ in ﴿ ﴿ لְמִנְיָה (Ode 18.8) is the earliest known attestation of ﴿ man (< Greek μέν) in Syriac.

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