

## **APPENDIX V.**

### *Introduction to the Aramaic Jewish Bible*

#### *A Translation from the Aramaic to English by*

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The Aramaic Jewish Bible is called the "Peshitta Tanakh" (or AN"K) and it is a holy text to the ancient Israelites and it is the official Bible of Assyrian Judaism. The word "Tanakh" is an acronym of the three words Torah (*Law or Teachings*), Nevi'im (*Prophets*), and Ketuvim (*Writings*). The text of the Tanakh is regarded as being holy, in particular the Name of Ail, especially in its four letter form יהוה, Aramaic: ܝܗܘܗ (Yah), or ܡܪܝܗ (MarYah, Lord YHWH).

The Pshitta Tanakh is the ancient Scriptures translated into Lishana Aramaya (Aramaic language) from the original Hebrew text which pre-dated the Greek Septuagint text (LXX). The Aramaic Tanakh uses many Hebraic terms, many times transliterating the words and phrases rather than translating them. Often times the Aramaic Peshitta and the LXX agree against the Masoretic text. The Masoretic text is not the original Hebrew that was used by the translators of the Aramaic Pshitta. In other words, the text used by those who translated the Aramaic Pshitta is much older than the Masoretic text. The Aramaic Pshitta Tanakh was completed during the first century C.E., while the standardized Masoretic text was completed between the seventh and tenth centuries C.E.

According to the canon of this Aramaic Bible, it contains fifty-two books, which are divided into three sections: The Law (Aurayta/Torah, the Five Books of Moses); The Prophets; and the Writings. The books of the Prophets are traditionally divided into the "Former Prophets" and the "Latter Prophets", or sometimes as

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"The Prophets" and "Minor Prophets". The Aleppo Codex arranges the prophets in the following "historical order": Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Certain books of the Tanakh are "double books" such as Ketava Shemuel, Sipra d'Malke, and Sipra d'Dabaryamin. The Book of Psalms, within the Writings, are divided into five "books" or sections. The sections of Psalms are divided in the following manner: Section (or "Book") 1: Psalms 1-41; Section 2: Psalms 42-72; Section 3: Psalms 73-89; Section 4: Psalms 90-106; Section 5: Psalms 107-150. There is also a 151'st Psalm in Hebrew which is found within the "Psalms Scroll" of the Dead Sea Scrolls and within the Septuagint.

Codex Ambrosiano (5th-7th century copy of the Aramaic Pshitta Tanakh) includes the following books within it alongside the traditionally accepted books, and are noted by Aran Younan as being "canonical" by Assyrian Jews: Wisdom, Epistle of Jeremiah, Epistle of Baruch, Baruch, Bel, The Dragon, Susanna, Judith, Ben Sirach, Apocalypse of Baruch, 4 Ezra, 1 - 4 Maccabees, portions of Josephus' Wars of the Jews.

The translation from the Aramaic to English is a gradual process. Updates can be found at <http://www.pshitta.org/english/>

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### *Canon of the Pshitta Tanakh.*

The following list of the Books of the Aramaic Pshitta are according to notes by Aran Younan in 1901, and correspond to the list and order of ancient Aramaic Codex Ambrosianus.

Genesis - Sipra d'Berita

Exodus - Sipra d'Mapkana

Leviticus- Sipra d'Kakhane

Numbers- Sipra d'Minyane

Deuteronomy - Sipre d'Tinyan Aurayta

Job - Ketava d'Yob

Joshua - Ketava d'Ishu bar Nun

Judges - Sipra Dayane

1 Samuel / 2 Samuel - Ketava Kadmaya d'Shemuel / Ketava

Trayana d'Shemuel

Psalms - Ketava d'Mazmore (d'David)

1 Kings / 2 Kings - Sipra Kadmaya d'Malke / Sipra Trayana  
d'Malke

Proverbs - Ketava d'Matle

Wisdom\*

Ecclesiastes - Ketava d'Kukhlat

Song of Songs - Tishbekhat Tishbekhata

Isaiah - Ketava d'Eshaya Nebya

Jeremiah - Ketava d'Eramya Nebya

Lamentations - Ketava d'Olyata

Epistle of Jeremiah\*

Epistle of Baruch\*

Baruch\*

Ezekiel - Ketava d'Khazquiel

Hosea - Ketava d'Khosha Nebya

Joel - Ketava d'Yoel Nebya

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Amos - Ketava d'Amos Nebya  
Obadiah - Ketava d'Obadya Nebya  
Jonah - Ketava d'Yonan Nebya  
Micah - Ketava d'Mikha Nebya  
Nahum - Ketava d'Nakhom Nebya  
Habakkuk - Ketava d'Khabok Nebya  
Zephaniah - Ketava d'Zefanya Nebya  
Haggai - Ketava d'Khagai Nebya  
Zechariah - Ketava d'Zekarya Nebya  
Malachi - Ketava d'Malakhi Nebya  
Daniel (with "Prayer of Azariah" and "Song of Three") - Ketava  
d'Daniel Nebya  
Bel\*  
The Dragon\*  
Ruth - Ketava d'Rot  
Susanna\*  
Esther - Ketava d'Ister  
Judith\*  
Ben Sirach\*  
1 Chronicles / 2 Chronicles - Sipra Kadmaya d'Dabaryamin / Sipra  
Beth d'Dabaryamin  
Apocalypse of Baruch\*  
4 Ezra\*  
Ezra - Ketava d'Ezra  
Nehemiah - Ketava d'Nekhemya  
1 Maccabees\*, 2 Maccabees\*, 3 Maccabees\*, 4 Maccabees\*  
Josephus, Wars of the Jews\*

\* The Jewish Aramaic Peshitta mentions these books as being canonical and in most cases are given Hebrew names rather than Aramaic. The list corresponds to Codex Ambrosianus. Younan's manuscript contains the Hebrew Masoretic text with extensive lists of vocabulary, variants, and other valuable information for those researching Aramaic Peshitta manuscripts, and in particular Jewish Aramaic dialects.