

Terry C. Falla, *A Key to the Peshitta Gospels*, vol. 1, *Alaph-Dalath* (Brill, 1991). xl + 136 + [21] pp; vol. 2, *He-Yodh* (Brill, 2000). xxxvii + 150 + [50] pp.

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- [1] According to the preface this ‘Key to the Peshitta Gospels’ is an “analytical concordance,” but in fact its basic features present it as an attractive combination of a concordance and a lexicon. These features are: 1. a Syriac-English lexicon (with Syriac words of similar meaning to the catchword), 2. a critical guide to the Greek behind the Syriac, and 3. a complete concordance of references. ‘The aim of *A Key to the Peshitta Gospels* is to fulfill this need [i.e., of a complete concordance and a comprehensive critical guide to the Greek behind] by providing the researcher with a range of information, previously unpublished, essential to the study of the Peshitta as a translation of the Greek and as a literary work in its own right’ (introduction of vol. 1, ix). Thus this ‘Key’ provides lexical, semantic, translation-technical and sequential informations by which it surpasses its predecessor¹ and similar analytical approaches,² and actually introduces a new standard for the genus ‘Key’. Due to its basic features the value of Falla’s ‘Key’ is *not* reduced by the *Concordance* of George A. Kiraz³ which was

¹ Henry Fulham Whish, *Clavis Syriaca: a Key to the Ancient Syriac version, called ‘Peshitto’, of the Four Gospels* (London, 1883).

² Otto Klein, *Syrisch-griechisches Wörterbuch zu den vier kanonischen Evangelien nebst einleitenden Untersuchungen* (Giessen, 1916); *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament (Peshitta)*, by W. Jennings (Oxford, 1926), revised by U. Gantillon (1962).

³ George A. Kiraz, *A Computer-Generated Concordance to the Syriac New Testament. According to the British and Foreign Bible Society’s Edition*, vols. I–VI (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1993).

The Concordance to the Peshitta Version of the Aramaic [i.e., Syriac] New Testament published 1985 by The Way International (New Knoxville, Ohio) could not put in danger Falla’s work. The severest deficiency of The Way’s concordance is that it is not based on the *Tetraeuangelium sanctum* published by Ph.E. Pusey and G.H. Gwilliam (1901) but on the *Aramaic [i. e., Syriac] New Testament* (1983, The Way International), which in the Gospels mainly relies on one single manuscript.

published in 1993 (two years after Falla's first volume). For the 'analysis' of the 'Key' refers primarily to *lexical* and *semantic* classification of words, supplemented by complete sequential informations, while Kiraz' *Concordance* primarily offers a *morphological* analysis including context lines for every Syriac word of the whole NT, and detailed statistical data. The user of both works will notice their complementary character, a view Falla himself proposes in a special section (vol. 2 p. xxxvi–vii) devoted to the different scopes of Kiraz' *Concordance* and his own 'Key'. Compared with Kiraz' *Concordance* the broader meaning of the term 'Key' and its semantic accentuation are obvious. The preparation of the 'Key's' future volumes will undoubtedly gain profit from Kiraz' *Concordance* and (as we all hope) be published in a shorter sequence than volume One and Two.

- [2] Their marvellous outside appearance both volumes owe to Beryl Turner ("copy editor, proofreader, typesetter, research assistant"), who created the twenty-five printer fonts for the 'Key' and is responsible for the clearly arranged lay-out. She also created the 'Index of tricky Syriac forms' (vol. 2, appendix p. 5–16), which is a heavenly gift for beginners (the 'Key' inside the 'Key'). The text is printed in two columns, all Syriac words and passages are given in Serto and are vocalized. At the end of vol. 1 we find an "Appendix of supplementary references" (of words which are 'listed and cross-referenced in this volume for full treatment in a subsequent one'), an "English index" (i.e., of the English translations and glosses of the Syriac words and phrases) with reference to page and column, and an "Alphabetical directory of Syriac terms." Volume 2 offers two additional indices, an "Index of tricky Syriac forms" (providing the roots of these forms), and an 'Index of grammatical and general information' (covering both volumes). 'Corrections to Volume One' (two columns) conclude the book.

- [3] The Introduction to "arrangement and methodology" in vol. 1 is clear and instructive, providing samples, summaries and outlines. Falla is well acquainted with the problems of the Peshitta as a translation⁴ and offers fundamental reflections on the evaluation of

⁴ Terry C. Falla, "Poetic features of the Peshitta Gospels," *Le Muséon* 90 (1977): 63–80; "Questions Concerning the Content and Implications of the Lexical Work A Key to the Peshitta Gospels," *Orientalia Christiana*

the Syriac-Greek correspondences. The introduction to vol. 2 introduces some improvements of presenting and arranging the lexical material, the most extensively discussed one is the grammatical classification of “words with the form of the passive participle” (xxi–xxx).

- [4] The ‘Key’ is based on the *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum* published by Ph.E. Pusey and G.H. Gwilliam (1901). For the sake of completeness, Falla adds Lk 22:17–8 and Jn 7:53–8:11 (taken from the Peshitta volume of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1905–1920). Due to their secondary status, references to these passages are put with square brackets in the ‘Key’. The Pusey/Gwilliam volume itself is based on 42 manuscript and is the standard for research in the New Testament Peshitta.

- [5] The articles are listed according to the Syriac roots, personal and geographical names, loanwords from the Greek and pronouns (also the single forms) are incorporated alphabetically. This is what the user expects, and that verbs like ܐܡܪ and ܬܡܪ are quoted in articles headed by ܐܡܪ and ܬܡܪ is a usual practice known from Costaz’ Dictionary (though Costaz puts these “artificial” roots with brackets). For practical reason an “abstract” root is given as a header to every article, thus introducing ‘homonymous’ roots like ܠܐܝܝܬ I (ܠܐܝܝܬ, ‘a leaper’), and ܠܐܝܝܬ II (ܠܐܝܝܬ, ‘a jar’); ܐܝܬ I (ܐܝܬ, ‘buy, purchase’), and ܐܝܬ II (ܐܝܬ, ‘time’). The primarily numerical character of these classifications is evident from ܠܐܝܝܬ I (ܠܐܝܝܬ), and ܠܐܝܝܬ II (ܠܐܝܝܬ) in vol 2 p. 38. This method is helpful for beginners to trace any word under its alphabetically arranged “root” and was recently applied by George A. Kiraz (for technical reason) to produce his computer-generated *Concordance*. The more experienced user will notice that the implicate etymological background of arranging the roots derives mainly from the 2nd edition (1928) of Carl Brockelmann’s *Lexicon Syriacum* (as acknowledged in vol. 1, xxii), but Falla’s use of roman letters to distinguish “identical roots” is not the same as Brockelmann’s to distinguish “homonymous roots.” This can confuse beginners.

Analecta 247 (1994): 85–99; “The Classification of Words in Recent Syriac and Hebrew Lexical Works and the New Approach adopted in Volume Two of A Key to Peshitta Gospels” (paper read at the VIIIth Symposium Syriacum at Sydney, 2000; forthcoming).

- [6] The first section of an article is the Syriac-English “lexicon,” it contains the catchword (e.g., **ܕܡܝܬ**, **ܕܡܝܬܐ**), the notation of speech (*n. m.* = noun masculine), a gloss (or glosses) in roman type corresponding to the Syriac word’s use in the Peshitta Gospels (‘flesh’), italicized qualifications, where required, elucidating the gloss (*flesh and blood* Mt 16:7; *the Word became flesh* Jn 1:14), and Syriac words of similar meaning (**ܕܡܝܬܐ**).—Verbs are introduced according to their conjugations (Peal, Ethpe, Pael, Ethpa etc), which are representing the ‘catchword’ and immediately follow the “root” at the top of an article (e.g., **ܕܡܝܬ**): PAEL, show, make known, declare, *make known a person’s whereabouts* Jn 11:57; *declare something openly* Jn 16:25; *of Moses declaring that the dead rise* Lk 20:37, cf. Peal **ܕܡܝܬܐ**, **ܕܡܝܬܐ**, Pael **ܕܡܝܬܐ**, **ܕܡܝܬܐ**, Aph **ܕܡܝܬܐ**, **ܕܡܝܬܐ**.—In an article with verbs and nouns the verbs are treated first according to their conjugations, nouns and adjectives follow according to the conjugation they derive from (the model for this arrangement probably was the *Thesaurus Syriacus* of Robert Payne Smith).—Numerous articles are divided into analytical categories (e.g., **ܕܡܝܬܐ** ‘father’): I. ‘father, an ancestor’ etc; II. **ܕܡܝܬܐ** ‘parents’; III. *of the Satan* (Jn 8:44); IV. *of God as Father* (with 7 subsections). These categories present terms and expressions in Syriac.

- [7] The user will always have to remember that this Syriac-English “lexicon” of the ‘Key’ is restricted to the Gospels and not all known conjugations and meanings of a special verb or a special noun are represented. But within this limitation, all lexical/semantic informations are given: “The selection of examples is not arbitrary, but seeks to represent, without repetition, the various contexts in which the catchword appears” (vol. 1, xxv). Improvements of this lexical part were introduced by vol. 2: The verbal conjugation is now followed by *basic forms* of the verb, and nouns and adjectives are given as catchword only according to the actual *state* in which they occur in the Gospels (only absolute, only emphatic, absolute and emphatic), thus providing morphological informations.

- [8] The “Syriac words of similar meaning” are an innovative feature in this lexical part of the ‘Key’, it is a first step towards a semantic classification of the Syriac vocabulary of the Peshitta Gospels. Falla is well aware of the venture to enter this area and declares, “that the *Key* seeks to do no more than bring together selections of words, which can function in the same general

semantic field, for the purpose of furthering research in the Peshitta text of the Gospels” (vol. 1, xxv). But he also points to the advantage of this kind of research: “Employed judiciously and in conjunction with the Syriac-Greek correspondences, this feature of the *Key* can provide a valuable aid for the exploration of the Peshitta text and disciplines as specific as a study of the translation techniques of the four Peshitta Gospels and of the text-critical use of the Peshitta in biblical research” (vol. 1, xxvi).

- [9] The second section of an article offers a guide to the Greek underlying the Peshitta Gospels. It is designed “to give the Greek term corresponding to every occurrence in the Peshitta Gospels of the Syriac term in question and to take into account the existence of variant Greek readings, with which the Peshitta is often in accord” (vol. 1, xxvi). The longest paragraph of the introduction is devoted to the scope, method of citation, Greek texts employed, and to the evaluation of the Syriac-Greek correspondences (vol. 1, xxvi–xxxvii). Though Falla sets out well the general problem of term-for-term comparism between the Peshitta Gospels and the Greek text(s), and points at the “unavoidably skeletal nature of the *Key*’s analysis of Syriac-Greek correspondences” which need further evaluation, the actual result of his term-for-term comparism is convincingly useful and an indispensable starting point for any thorough research in the Greek background of the Peshitta Gospels. It is true that the Peshitta’s revisional connection with the Old Syriac, the contextual exegesis of its translator(s), and its predilection toward the poetic are severe restrictions for a term-for-term approach (vol. 1, xxxiv), but these peculiarities are no general disapproval for this approach. For Falla meets the problem of inadequate translations by including “paraphrastic” correspondences as well as non-correspondences in his Syriac-Greek analysis, what makes it complete and reliable.

- [10] One sample for illustration: If the analysis is lengthy or complicated (e.g., ܐܢܫܐ, ܐܢܫܐ ‘a man, person’), it starts with a ‘guide to analysis’ by listing up all occurring Greek terms: ἀνὴρ, γαμίζω, γαμίσκω, δαίμονιζομαι, ὁ πονηρὸς, n. c. (= no correspondences), ἀνθρώπος. The actual analysis is given according to these Greek terms and offers all appropriate references (added by Greek variant readings, if extant). The mysterious reference of ܐܢܫܐ to γαμίζω is due to an paraphrastic translation and explained by the Syriac phrase ܐܢܫܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܡܬܐ Mt 22:30, the one of *gabra* to

of Greek NT editions from Tischendorf (ed. octava 1869–72) to *The NT in Greek, The Gospel According to St. Luke*, ed. by the American and British Committees of the International Greek NT Project (1984/87). In the footnotes he gives evaluations of the Greek editions by citing comments of prominent scholars. It might be interesting to quote Falla's own sound comment on the comparative usefulness of the single editions he was working with: "In summary, if a variant Greek reading is not to be found in the critical apparatuses of *GNT* and Nestle-Aland, it would be prudent to seek it in Legg for Matthew and Mark, *The New Testament in Greek* for Luke, von Soden for the Fourth Gospel, and Tischendorf and Tregelles for all four Gospels, before turning to the other critical editions." This quotation is appropriate to give a feeling for the diligence and reliability of the Greek side of Falla's work.

- [12] The third section of an article offers a complete concordance of references. A welcome feature is that in a simple article all references given in the two preceding sections are listed again. Only the references given in analytical categories of an article are not repeated elsewhere. In longer articles with a larger number of entries, every entry has its own concordance and is a small article of its own consisting of the three basic sections, e.g., ܐܠܝܝܢ I.: The Peal concludes with the concordance of references after the lexical section and the range of Greek terms behind the Syriac. The same is true for the Pael and the Ethpa, for the entries ܡܠܟܐ and ܡܠܟܐ. This distribution of the references brings together what belongs together. By the help of Kiraz' *Concordance*, I made intensive checks of the 'Key's' references. With regard to the fact that vol. 1 is completely worked out by hand (vol. 2 Falla himself could check with Kiraz' *Concordance*), I was thrilled by the accuracy and completeness of the references.

- [13] Criticism of this marvellous work is few and hardly substantial, it refers primarily to the long articles devoted to Syriac particles like ܐܘܪܝܬܐ and its compounds, ܐܘܪܝܬܐ and ܐܘܪܝܬܐ etc., and to the articles dealing with the prepositions. All these articles are marvels of compactness, arrangement and presentation, but extremely diffuse and tiresome to work with (and to work out!). Especially here the information of the 'Key' needs the Syriac (and the Greek) NT to be opened beside to get an appropriate understanding of the lexical, semantic or grammatical peculiarity, the sufficient presentation of

which the 'Key' is not designed to give. A reduction of these complex articles would be tolerable and would contribute to a faster publication of the subsequent volumes. It does not belong to the nature of such a 'Key' to give the optimum in *every* respect, and nobody will dare to blame the author for completing this work by reducing the optimum and complexity of information to a more practicable and more efficient level.

[14]

Finally the attractivity of the 'Key' for the beginners should be noticed. At present no good *and* cheap Syriac lexicon for beginners is available, and Kiraz' *Concordance* will remain a dream for them. The 'Key' is combining both tools and could serve well the needs of beginners. But to fulfill these needs the subsequent volumes should be available within a reasonable amount of time. I hope that Falla will be able to finish this important project, it would be a severe setback for the Syriac studies if its completion would remain a dream!