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CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

“NEW TESTAMENT
MISCELLENEA”

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XXVI

NEW TESTAMENT MISCELLENEA

A.

TEXTUAL VARIANTS AND AMBIGUITIES IN MATTHEW 1:23 AND ISAIAH 7:14

Matthew 1:23

Ἴδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν,
καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ,

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Emmanuel.

Shem Tob Hebrew Gospel

הנה העלמה הרה ותלד בן
וקראת שמו עמנואל

Behold the young woman is pregnant and will bear a son;
and you shall call his name Emmanuel.¹

Isaiah 7:14

הנה העלמה הרה וילדת בן
וקראת שמו עמנואל

Behold the young woman is pregnant and is bearing a son;
and she will call his name Emmanuel.

Septuagint

Ἴδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν
καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ

Behold the virgin will conceive and will bear a son;
and you will call his name Emmanuel.

The first difference to be noted in these four texts concerns the naming of the infant. According to the **וְקָרָאתָ** of Isa 7:14 “she will call” (a 3fs *waw-consecutive perfect* indicating a future action), the mother will name the child. The unusual 2fs **תִּקְרָאת** (see GKC 74^s) in lieu of the normal **תִּקְרָא** could (1) be repointed as the participle **תִּקְרָאת**, indicating that the pregnant woman had already named her unborn son, or (2) **תִּקְרָאת** could be emended to read with the Dead Sea Scrolls which have **וְקָרָא**, “and he called/will call.” But the Greek **καλέσεις** in Isa 7:14 means “you (sg.) will call,” and the **καλέσουσιν** in Matt 1:23 means “they will call,” as if the text were **וְקָרְאוּ** rather than the MT **וְקָרָאתָ**. The Shem Tob Hebrew Gospel read the **וְקָרָאתָ** of Isaiah as the 2ms **תִּקְרָאתָ** “and you shall call,” following the Greek singular of Isaiah rather than the Greek plural of Matthew.

The Hebrew adjective **הַרְרָה** “is pregnant” was translated into Greek as a future active verb (**ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει**); and the participle **וַיֵּלְדָת** “and is birthing” became a future middle verb (**τέξειται**)—as though the Hebrew were **וַתֵּלְדֵה וַתֵּהַרְרֵה** “and she will conceive and she will bear.”

In summary, the first part of the “sign” given in the Hebrew of Isa 7:14 contains one adjective (**הַרְרָה**), one participle (**וַיֵּלְדָת**), and one finite verb—a *waw-consecutive perfect* coming after the imperfect **יִתֵּן** “he will give,” which introduced the “sign.” That one verb (**קָרָא** “to call”) in the “sign” itself became (1) a 3fs in the MT of Isaiah, (2) a 3ms in the Qumran text of Isaiah, (3) a 2ms in the Septuagint, (4) a 2ms also in the Hebrew Shem Tob Matthew, and (5) a 3mpl in the

Greek Matthew. The Septuagint translators transformed the Hebrew statements of fact—expressed by adjective and participle [i.e., the maiden is pregnant and is now bearing a child]—into future verbs, making them predictive rather than indicative.²

On the varied and sometimes ambiguous use of עַלְמָה “young woman” and בְּתוּלָה “virgin,” the following texts in Hebrew and Greek illustrate the fact that עַלְמָה was not always translated by παρθένος “virgin.”³ When עַלְמָה was used for a “virgin” it required the use of בְּתוּלָה as a modifier, which in turn required a modifying phrase like “whom no man had not known.”

- Gen 24:43 הַיְצֵאתָ הָעַלְמָה הַיְצֵאתָ “the young woman (*almah*) going forth”; and αἱ θυγατέρες . . . ἐξελεύσονται “the daughters going forth.”
- Proverbs 30:19 בְּעַלְמָה בְּנֶבֶר וְדֶרֶךְ וְדֶרֶךְ “an the way of a man with a young woman (*almah*)”; and καὶ ὁδοῦς ἀνδρὸς ἐν νεότητι “an the way of a man in youth.”
- Exod 2:8 הָעַלְמָה וַתֵּלֶךְ “and the young woman (*almah*) went”; and ἐλθοῦσα δὲ ἡ νεανίς “and the young woman (*neanis*) went.”
- Deu 22:23 נַעֲרָה בְּתוּלָה מְאָרְשָׁה לְאִישׁ “young woman, a virgin (*bethulah*) espoused to a man”; and παῖς παρθένος μεμνηστευμένη ἀνδρὶ “a young virgin (*parthenos*) espoused to a man.”
- Gen 24:16 וְהַנְּעֶרָה טִבַּת מְרֹאָה מְאֹד בְּתוּלָה וְאִישׁ לֹא יִדְעֶהָ “The maiden was very fair to look upon, a virgin

(*bethulah*), whom no man had not known”; and παρθένος ἦν καλὴ τῆ ὄψει σφόδρα παρθένος ἦν ἀνήρ οὐκ ἔγνω “the virgin (*parthenos*) was very fair to look upon, a virgin (*parthenos*), whom no man had not known.

In Hebrew the term “Virgin” (בְּתוּלָה / *bethulah*) was used as a title of honor in the epithets “the Virgin Daughter Judah” (Lam 1:15), “the Virgin Daughter Sidon” (Isa 23:12), “the Virgin Daughter Babel” (Isa 47:1), and “the Virgin Daughter Egypt” (Jer 46:11). These “virgins” were castigated by the prophets for their wanton adultery/idolatry, but the honorific “Virgin” was retained in the epithets. The Canaanite goddess of love and war, Anat, was known by the epithet “the Virgin Anat.” In Aramaic בְּתוּלָתָא “virgin” may refer to a young woman having difficulty in bearing her first child. Note-worthy also is the Islamic tradition in which Mohammed’s daughter Fatima—who was married to Ali Ibn Abu Talib and was the mother of Hasan and Husein—is honored by nine titles, including the title *batûl* “Virgin.”

Given these varied uses of both בְּתוּלָה and נְעָרָה for women with or without sexual experience, the only way to be explicitly clear about the celibacy of a person was to spell it out with a modifying clause such as בְּתוּלָה אֲשֶׁר / נְעָרָה לֹא יָדָעָה אִישׁ לֹא “a maiden/a virgin whom a man had not known.” In Matt 1:20, the modifying clause stated: “for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” Without such modifying statements even the honorific epithet “Virgin” could be misleading about one’s truly being celibate.

B.
THE MEANING OF “ISCARIOT”

The names Judas and Judas Iscariot appear in a variety of forms in the Gospels and the actual meaning of Iscariot has yet to be agreed upon. Here are the different readings:

- Mark 14:43, ἰούδας “Judas”;
- Matthew 26:14, Ἰούδας Ἰσκαριώτης⁴ “Judas Iscariot”;
- Mark 3:19, 14:10, Luke 6:16. Ἰούδαν Ἰσκαριώθ¹ “Judas Iscarioth” or Ἰούδαν ὁ Ἰσκαριώθ “Judas the Iscarioth”;
- Matt 10:4, John 12:4, Ἰούδας ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης, “Judas the Iscariot”; Mss. A X Δ Θ Π Ψ read Ἰούδας Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτης “Judas Simon Iscariot”;⁵
- John 14:22, Ἰούδας οὐχ ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης,⁶ “Judas, not the Iscariot.” Ms. D reads Ἰούδας οὐχ ὁ ἀπὸ καρυῶτου, “Judas, not the one from Karuot”;
- John 13:2, Ἰούδας Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου “Judas Simon of Iscariot.” Ms. D reads Ἰούδα Σίμωνος ἀπὸ καρυῶτου, “Judas Simon from Karuot”;
- John 6:71, 13:26, Ἰούδαν Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου “Judas Simon of Iscariot”;
- Luke 22:3, Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Ἰσκαριώτην “Judas, the one called Iscariot.”
- Σκαριώτης, Σκαριώθ, Scarioth, Scariota, Carioth, and Cariotha are variants found in the numerous manuscript traditions of all of the verses above.

OLDER DERIVATIONS OF “ISCARIOT”

Davies and Allison (1991: 157) and Klassen (1992:1091) have provide helpful summaries of the various interpretations

of ‘Iscariot’—none of which accommodate all of the variants cited above. The place name **שׂרֵיב** in 2 Sam 10:6, 8 (which became *Ιστωβ* in the Septuagint)⁷ provides a clue for those who, by analogy, read *Ἰσκαριώτης* as the noun **שׂרֵיב** and the place name **קְרִיּוֹת**, meaning “the man of Kerioth.”⁸ This accommodates ms. D in John 13:2 and 14:22 which read *Ἰούδα Σίμωνος ἀπὸ καρυώτου*, “Judas Simon from Karuot.” Some preferred to interpret *Ἰσκαριώτης* as **שׂרֵיב**, “man of Jericho.”

Others take their cue from the *Σκαριώτης*, *Σκαριώθ*, *Scarioth*, and *Scariota* variants, and identify ‘Iscariot’ as the Greek *σικάριος* and Latin *sicarius*, both meaning bandit, assassin.” If this were the case, the initial *Ἰ* of *Ἰσκαριώτης* would reflect the prosthetic **שׂ**, which in Hebrew is prefixed to some words to facilitate pronunciation, as opposed to taking the initial *Ἰ* of *Ἰσκαριώτης* as the Hebrew **שׂרֵיב** “man.” This identification of the *Ἰ* of *Ἰσκαριώτης* as a prosthetic **שׂ** also works for those who read the *σκαριώ* of *Ἰσκαριώτης* as being

- the Aramaic **שׂרֵיב** “the false one, a liar, a traitor”;
- the Aramaic **שׂרֵיב** “red paint,” making Judas a “dyer” or a “red head”;
- the Hebrew **שׂרֵיב** as found in Isa 19:4, which became *παραδώσω* “I will hand over” in the Septuagint;
- the Latin *scortea* “coat or apron of leather,” becoming secondarily a “purse” or a “purse-bearer”;
- the Greek *καρυωτὸς* “one who is (from a town of) date palms.”

A NEW DERIVATION OF "ISCARIOT"

Jastrow (1903: 1413, 1417) cited the Hebrew masculine plural noun קְרוֹיֹת "persons called up to read from the Scriptures" and the Hebrew קְרוֹאִים / קְרוֹאוֹת "those called up to read from the Torah," i.e., lectors. This קְרוֹיֹת is a cognate of the Arabic قارئ (*qâ'rīy^{un}*) "a reader/reciter of the *Qur'an*," and similar to the Arabic قراء (*qurrâ^o*) "a devotee, one who devotes himself/herself" to religious exercise . . ." (Lane 1885:2504, from the verb قرأ (*qara^o*) "to call, to read, to recite, to chant [Scripture]").

This interpretation does justice to the Greek definite article ὁ in the named spelled out as Ἰουδαῖος ὁ Ἰσκαριώθ or as Ἰούδας ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης. This definite article in Greek requires the name to be reconstructed as אִישׁ קְרוֹיֹת, with the ὁ Ἰσ of the ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης reflecting an אִישׁ in the construct state ("the man of") followed by the קְרוֹיֹת in the absolute state. This derivation means that Judas would have been a man familiar with the *Tanakh*, a lector who read aloud well and probably had read widely. Religious texts like the Psalms of Solomon may have contributed to a messianic zeal which envisioned the coming of a Son of David who would "purge Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction . . . and the alien and the foreigner will no longer live near them" (Ps Sol 17:22, 29) (Wright 1985: 667). Judas zeal for Jesus may have led him to think that a staged betrayal would be a sufficient catalyst to get the Messiah to demonstrate his power to "destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth" (Ps Sol 17:24) and bring about a gentile free Jerusalem. When his scheme backfired suicide became Judas' option of choice (Matt 27:5).

The name Ἰούδαν Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου, “Judas Simon of Iscariot,” suggests that Judas’ fathers’ name was Simon and that father Simon was a lector. If so, it was a good example of “like father, like son,” for both could have been lectors, one after the other.

C.

Revelation 13:18

A Clue from the Monk Beatus

᾿Ωδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν. ὁ ἔχων νοῦν
ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου,
ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν,
καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding
calculate the number of the beast,
for it is the number of a person.
Its number is six hundred sixty-six.

J. Massyngberde Ford (1975: 216), citing H. A. Sanders, (1918: 95–99), quoted the commentary of the monk Beatus of Liébana (in the Cantabrian Mountains of northern Spain), written around 776 A.D. On Rev 13:18, Beatus commented:

“This is wisdom; he who has understanding let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man,” *that is, of Christ whose name the beast takes for himself*. . . . (my italics).⁹

In the opinion of the writer the most obvious name which the Christ and the beast shared in common with a numerical equivalent of 666 would have been *sôter*, which had anti-theoretical meanings depending on whether the *sôter* was a

Greek word or a Hebrew word. The Greek σωτηρ “savior” (as in Luke 2:11 σωτήρ ὃς ἐστὶν Χριστὸς κύριος “a savior who is Christ, the Lord”) would be transliterated in Hebrew and Aramaic as סוֹתֵר (= *swtr* = *sôtēr*). In Hebrew the ס (s) = 60, the ו (w/ô) = 6, the ת (t) = 400, and the ר (r) = 200, which all together equal 666.

The Hebrew and Aramaic word סוֹתֵר (= *swtr* = *sôtēr*), in contrast to the Greek word transliterated into Hebrew using these same letters, means “destroyer” or “one who tears down” (Jastrow 1903: 1022); and its Arabic cognate is شتر (*šatar*) “to offend, abuse, revile” and شتير (*šatîr*) “knave, rogue” (Lane 1872: 1503; Hava 1915: 351). Therefore, 666 can be a numeric code for “savior”—when based upon the Greek loanword σωτηρ (*sôtēr*)—or 666 can be a numeric code for “destroyer” when based upon the Hebrew/Aramaic סוֹתֵר (= *swtr* = *sôtēr*).

The phrase “it is the number of a man” (ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν) would have been מִסְפַּר אִישׁ הוּא (mispar ^{ʾiš hû}) or מִסְפַּר אָדָם הוּא (mispar ^{ʾādām hû}). Were it the latter phrase with אָדָם (^{ʾādām}/Adam), the phrase could also mean in light of Arabic cognates cited by Lane (1863: 36) “it is the number of a ruler/provost” or “it is the number of a peacemaker, reconciler, exemplar.”

Thus, Beatus’ comment, “[it is the mark/number of] Christ whose name the beast takes for himself” indicates the hidden wordplay requiring certain linguistic skills to recognize that Christ’s Greek title סוֹתֵר/σωτηρ/*swtr* “Savior”—being one way to indicate 666—was transformed to become also the Aramaic/Hebrew name and mark of the beast called סוֹתֵר/σωτηρ/*swtr* “Destroyer.”

NOTES

1. The וקראת could be read as וקראת! “she will call” as in the MT of Isa 7:14; but in light of the 3ms ויקרא in Matt 1:25, it is properly read as the 2ms *waw-consecutive* “you (Joseph) shall call.”
2. For the use in Hebrew of an adjective as a noun, see GKC § 132a, note 2.
3. On the ambiguity of παρθένος (as in the Illiad II: 514, “She, a modest virgin, went upstairs, where the god lay with her in secret,” see Liddell and Scott 1966: 1339.
4. The -της ending of Ἰσκαριώτης is the *nomen actoris* suffix and the -ώθ ending of Ἰσκαριώθ is the spirantized Hebrew ת, the original ending of the noun to which the -ης suffix was added.
5. See Aland (1968: 34) for the variants Scarioth, Scariota, Carioth, Σκαριώτης, and Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτου.
6. See Aland (1968: 389) also for the variants Scarioth, Scariotha, Scariotis, οὐχ Σκαριότα.
7. Josephus (Antiquities. 7:121) refers to it as Ἰστοβος.
8. In Josh 15:25 the city named קריית חצר הַיָּא חַצְרוֹן— which became “Hazorhadattah, Keriothhezron (that is, Hazor)” in the RSV—was among the cities belonging to the tribe of Judah. The Septuagint reads here καὶ αἱ πόλεις Ἀσερων αὕτη Ἀσωρ, the initial קריית read as the plural noun “cities.” In Amos 2:2, הַקְרִיּוֹת became also in the Septuagint πόλεων αὐτῆς “her cities,” whereas the Vulgate read it as a place named Carioth, which came

into English as Kerioth. In Jer 48:21 the place name קְרִיּוֹת became Καριωθ, and the noun הַקְּרִבּוֹת became τὰς πόλεις “the cities,” but in Jer 48:41 the name appears also as הַקְּרִיּוֹת, which became Ακκαριωθ in Greek. Some have conjectured that the definite article attached to this intensive plural would mean “The City,” meaning Jerusalem.

9. Beatus wrote his commentary on the Apocalypse believing that the Savior would come at the turn of the millennium (1,000 A.D.) and bring to an end the world as he knew it.