

THE
OLD SYRIAC GOSPELS

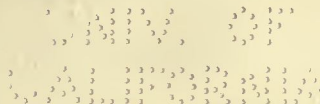
OR
EVANGELION DA-MEPHARRESHÊ;

*BEING THE TEXT OF THE SINAI OR SYRO-ANTIOCHENE PALIMPSEST,
INCLUDING THE LATEST ADDITIONS AND EMENDATIONS, WITH
THE VARIANTS OF THE CURETONIAN TEXT, CORROBORATIONS
FROM MANY OTHER MSS., AND A LIST OF QUOTATIONS
FROM ANCIENT AUTHORS.*

EDITED BY

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WITH FOUR FACSIMILES.

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PREFACE.

AFTER the publication of Dr. Burkitt's valuable book, the *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, in two volumes, it might seem as if a new edition of the Sinai Palimpsest text were not required. Dr. Burkitt's book is essentially an edition of the Curetonian. As such, it is very accurate, leaving little to be desired. But it can never supply the want of an edition of the Sinai text. The total absence in it of any enumeration of the Palimpsest folios shows that it was not compiled with such a purpose. The Sinai text deserves a better fate than to remain for any time in a position of subordination to the Curetonian, which, however interesting, is nevertheless its inferior both in antiquity and in purity. Many a little point in the older text has been lost sight of through its being either omitted or crowded too closely among the quotations from Aphraates, &c., quotations which sometimes resemble the Peshitta rather than the Old Syriac, and sometimes vary considerably from both versions. In a few passages, moreover, Dr. Burkitt has declined to accept words which are distinctly apparent in the manuscript, preferring his own conjecture to my actual reading. I may instance Matt. xxvii. 43, Luke ii. 15.

My sixth visit to the Convent in 1906 gave me the opportunity of verifying these passages, and also of abolishing in many places the word "illegible," which has been used oftener than is necessary. Dr. Burkitt has not seen the manuscript since he transcribed about a third of its Gospel text in 1893. Many of his emendations, extracted from my photographs, are excellent, and his studies in the Syrian Fathers are beyond all praise. But, as I have said elsewhere, no amount of learning, skill, and conscientious care, can quite replace a study of the manuscript itself.