

The Comma Johanneum - The Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses in Hebrew.

The
Travancore-Cochin
India Manuscript.
Evidence & Images
by
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Brief Remarks : Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses I John 5:6-9 in Cochin, India

Finding the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses (I John 5:7-8) in a Hebrew manuscript would be incredible in and of itself. But finding this Hebrew manuscript (Oo.1.32) in a synagogue of Black Malabar Jews is nothing short of a miracle. I say miracle because the facts that we have concerning the source of this manuscript cannot be explained away by any of the usual hand waving ad hoc arguments. I have gathered the critics' arguments concerning the possible sources to determine if there is any truth to these claims. However, there is not a single assertion of the critics that stands up to closer examination.

The location of the Hebrew manuscript found in the synagogue of the Black Malabar Jews in India is where this story begins. The Black Malabar Jews migrated to India when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Over time they married locals, but kept to their particular Jewish religious practices. Another group of Jews migrated from Spain in 1500 or so as a result of the reconquest (Spain cast out all Jews). This group of Jews is known as the White Jews. The religious practices of these two groups are very different resulting in the two groups staying completely separate even forbidding intermarriage.

- [Gebhardt-Klein] The document [MS heb. Oo.1.32,] was discovered in 1806 by the Scottish missionary Reverend Claudius Buchanan while under commission by the Church of England to investigate the state of affairs of the Syrian Mar Thoma (Saint Thomas) Christians in India's southwestern Kingdom of Travancore (modern Kerala) and the immediate environs of the Malabar Coast. During his stay Buchanan visited synagogues of the Malabari Black Jews in the port town of Cochin where he acquired the codex, containing a Hebrew translation of the Christian New Testament but lacking the apocalypse, of which the gospels are believed to have been produced by a certain 17th-18th century Ezekiel Rahabi II. (Gebhardt-Klein, *The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Rahabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew*, 2023, p. iii)
- [Gebhardt-Klein] After returning to Britain, Buchanan entrusted the manuscript to the Cambridge University Library in 1809, where over a century later in 1916 it was bound in half morocco. Three distinct handwriting styles in the manuscript testify to a more complex history of composition than attributable to any single author. The first part (which is believed to be Rahabi's handwriting) covers Matthew through Jude (ff. 1a–131b) and is written in a Sephardic (Spanish) cursive script, with the exception of Hebrews (ff. 90a– b) being written in a smaller cursive [Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort (1712–1761)], and then followed by a third script covering Philippians to the end (ff. 132a–160b), which Myron M. Weinstein has argued belongs to the German immigrant David ben Isaac Cohen in Ashkenazic imitation of Sephardic style. (Gebhardt-Klein, *The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Rahabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew*, 2023, p. iv)

The translation of the New Testament begins with a chief Jewish merchant of the Dutch East India Company in Cochin, Ezekiel Rahabi (1694–1771) originally from Aleppo (modern Syria). The reasons for Ezekiel's creation of a Hebrew New Testament are various. Below are a few interesting points we should consider in our approach to this manuscript.

- [Mascha van Dort] The Hebrew New Testament (1741-1761) facilitated cultural exchange, aiding the Jews in understanding Dutch perspectives by reading the New Testament in their own language. Ezekiel Rahabi used it for his preparation of diplomacy on behalf of the Dutch to the King of Travancore after the Dutch defeat (1741).¹³⁷ (van Dort, Mascha. (2024). Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort's Scholarly Visit to Cochin. *Studia Rosenthaliana*. 50, p. 134)

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• [Delitzsch] The author began his work full of fanatical hatred for Christianity. He writes the Gospel in the Talmudic style as the compound word **און גליין**, with the implied meaning of a disastrous revelation, and with the exception of Mark (perhaps because of 12:29), he rails against all the Evangelists and, like Jesus himself, gives them the epithet **הטמא** (the impure one). At the end of the fourth Gospel, he writes: "Here is the end of the impure gospel according to the preaching of accursed Jochanan the Evangelist, who spoke Greek in Ephesus. In the heavens is my witness that I did not translate all this in order to believe it (God forbid!), but to be able to inform the Epicureans (unbelievers). May they be wiped from the world (Amen, so be it!), and may the true Messiah of our righteousness come, Amen." In this anger he also begins the Acts of the Apostles: "This is the second part of the gospel, which the accursed, impure Christian-blasphemer Luke devised from his bad, weak, and deranged mind; may his name and memory (**ישו**) and the name of Jesus [**ישר**] be meant both times as an abbreviation of **זכורו** [be blotted out of the world!]" (Delitzsch, *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer aus griechischen*, 1870, p. 104. see the appendix for the full article in English)

The Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses (1 John 5:7,8) are found on f152r [Image 305]. Thus we can conclude that David ben Isaac Cohen. There is little information about this person, but what is available I have included in this paper.

There are 2 additional documents I have uploaded related to this paper.

- A Hebrew Letter of 1768. Uploaded by Mascha Nietnodigon Mar 20, 2021.
- Franz Delitzsch, "The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in the Cochin translation" in *Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer aus griechischen* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1870) p. 103-107.

We will discuss the source of the Hebrew manuscript below. First I will present some historical context for the different groups involved in the story of this mysterious manuscript.

Prayers

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Greek Manuscripts 60 AD to 800/850 AD : Containing I John 5:7-8

- GA 01 : Sinaiticus : 4th century : *St Catherine's Monastery* (**Alexandrian text**)
- GA 03 : Vaticanus : 4th/5th century : Found in Vatican (**Alexandrian text**)
- GA 02 : Alexandrinus : 5th century : Unknown [Cyril Lucaris (d. 1638 AD)] (**Alexandrian text**)

Greek Manuscripts : Listed by Age

1st Century

- [None]

2nd Century

- [None]

3rd Century

- [None]

4th Century

- GA 01 London, the British Library, Add. 43725 (IV) : Sinaiticus
- GA 03 Vatican Library, Vat. gr. 1209 (IV) : Vaticanus

5th Century

- GA 02 London, British Library, Royal 1 D. VIII (V) : Alexandrinus
- GA 048 Vatican Library, Vat. gr. 2061, fol. 198, 199, 221, 222, 229, 230, 293-303, 305-308 (V)
double palimpsest : f308v : **1 John 5:5-21 : 3 columns : Damaged : Unreadable** <ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste/?ObjID=20048>

6th Century

- GA 296 Egypt, Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, N.E Σπ. ΜΓ 48, 53, 55 (VI) : f001 :
Damaged : Unreadable <ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=20296>

7th Century

- [None]

8th Century

- [None]

List of 500 by Century

8th to 9th Century = 1 (GA 044)

9th Century = 8

10th Century = 29

11th Century = 82

12th to 18th century = 430

>>Total Manuscripts: 550

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78% of the 550 mss are 12th century and older

Further Examination of the List of 500 NT Greek I John 5

- *The Johanneum Comma An Inquiry - Part 1 - GA 048, GA 0269, and GA 025* (2025)
- *The Comma Johanneum An Inquiry - Part 2 - 9th Century Greek Manuscripts - Commentaries* (2025)
- **Academia Page:** <https://independent.academia.edu/MidusItis>

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Early Manuscripts are all from one Geographic Area : Egypt

The Textual Critic Scholars Aland & Aland declared that the early manuscripts (papyri) have a number of problems. First they only represent one geographical area of Christendom which spread to all of the Roman Empire. The second is that these Greek texts are not textual examples for the New Testament Scriptures. These papyri manuscripts are considered "free text" and thus cannot be used to determine which "text type" is the earliest (there are a number of text types : the Textual Critics are convinced - despite these issues - that the Alexandrian text is the closest to the original). These issues are still present with us today.

• **[Aland & Aland : 8. Text of the Early Period]** To understand the textual history of the New Testament it is necessary to begin with the early manuscripts. By this we mean manuscripts no later than the third/fourth century, for in the fourth century a new era begins... (shown in Table 3 on p. 57). This makes a total of forty-three papyri and five uncials (or more strictly four uncials, because 0212 is a Diatessaron text and should not be counted; cf. p. 104). **...We should not forget that apart from 0212 (found at Dura Europus), all the early witnesses listed above on p. 57 are from Egypt, where the hot, dry sands preserved the papyri through the centuries (similar climatic conditions are found in the Judean desert where papyri have also been discovered). From other major centers of the early Christian church nothing has survived. This raises the question whether and to what extent we can generalize from the Egyptian situation.** Egypt was distinguished from other provinces of the Church, so far as we can judge, by the early dominance of Gnosticism; this was not broken until about A.D. 200, when Bishop Demetrius succeeded in reorganizing the diocese and establishing communications with the other churches. Not until then do we have documentary evidence of the church in Egypt, although undoubtedly not only the gnostic but also the broader Church was represented there throughout the whole period. At almost the same time the Catechetical School of Alexandria was instituted as the first "Christian university." Quite possibly Bishop Demetrius... but this hypothesis, however intrinsically possible, does not square with the evidence of the manuscripts up to the third/fourth century. **Thus P45, P46, P66, and a whole group of other manuscripts offer a "free" text, i.e., a text dealing with the original text in a relatively free manner with no suggestion of a program of standardization (or where these manuscripts also imported from elsewhere?). Some have gone so far as to interpret these "free" texts as typical of the early period. But this cannot be correct, as a fresh collation of all the manuscripts of the early period[10] by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research has shown. The "free" text represents only one of the varieties of the period...** The text of the early period prior to the third/fourth century was, then, in effect, a text not yet channeled into types, because until the beginning of the fourth century the church still lacked the institutional organization required to produce one. Its earliest representatives are Polycarp and Justin, about 130-150 (in earlier writings New Testament quotations are too sporadic or too elusive, especially for the Gospels). (Kurt Aland & Barbara Aland. The Text of the New Testament (1989) pp. 56-57, 59-64 [text interrupted by images])

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Primer : Allusions in the Church Fathers' Works

It is my opinion based on faith and a mountain of evidence that John's first letter contained the Heavenly and Earthly Witnesses (1 John 5:7,8). I have presented many facts that demonstrate this to be true. When Scripture provides truths about God in inspired words, the Christian community uses these concepts and words in their discussions and controversies. The Heavenly Witnesses can be divided into three parts: i) Three witnesses being the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; ii) "Father, Word, Spirit" (Greek: πατήρ, λόγος, πνεῦμα) as a phrase to indicate the persons of the Godhead; iii) and "the three are one" (Greek: οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι).

The first part is alluded to by **Clement of Alexandria** (in Greek) found in this citation:

- Prophetic Extracts. 13.1: **"By two and three witnesses every word is established." By Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, by whose witness** and help the prescribed commandments ought to be kept. (Clement of Alexandria. Prophetic Extracts. 13.1; ANF, vol 8)

ο **Greek:** Πᾶν ῥῆμα ἴσταται ἐπὶ δύο καὶ τριῶν μαρτύρων, ἐπὶ πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ἐφ' ὧν μαρτύρων καὶ βοηθῶν αἱ ἐντολαὶ λεγόμεναι φυλάσσεσθαι ὀφείλουσιν.
(Clement of Alexandria. Eclogae ex Scripturis prophetis. 13.1; Migne Graeca PG 9.703-704)

The second part is alluded to by **John Chrysostom** (in Greek) found in this citation:

- [De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania] But, **O Father, and Word, and Spirit**, the triune being and might and will and power, deem us, who confess you as the unconfused and indivisible substance, also worthy to be the ones standing at your right hand when you come from heaven to judge the world in righteousness, for rightly yours is the glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for always, and for eternity." (Chrysostom, About the knowledge of God and the Holy Theophanies; Translation kjvtoday.com, <www.kjvtoday.com/home/the-father-the-word-and-the-holy-ghost-in-1-john-57>)

ο **Greek:** Ἄλλ', ὃ **Πάτερ, καὶ Λόγε, καὶ Πνεῦμα**, ἡ τρισυπόστατος οὐσία, καὶ δύναμις, καὶ θέλησις, καὶ ἐνέργεια, ἡμᾶς τοὺς ὁμολογοῦντάς σου τὰς ἀσυγχύτους καὶ ἀδιαιρέτους ὑποστάσεις, ἀξίωσον καὶ τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν σου στάσεως, ἥνικα ἔρχῃ ἐξ οὐρανῶν κρῖναι τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ· ὅτι πρέπει σοι δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. (Chrysostom, De Cognitione Dei et in Sancta Theophania; Migne Graeca, PG 64.6A).

The third part alluded to by **Origen** (in Greek) is found in this citation:

- Scholia on Psalm 122:2 "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress." The Spirit and the body are servants to their masters (the Father and the Son); the soul is the maiden to her mistress (the Holy Spirit); and the Lord our God is the three [persons], **for the three are one**. So, the eyes of servants look at the hands of their masters while they issue orders through gestures. It could also be that the hands of the masters, who are the Father and the Son, are the angels belonging to them both, while the hands of the mistress, who is the Holy Spirit, are the powers that are proper to the Holy Spirit. . (Origenis Selecta in Psalmos CXXII)

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○ **Greek:** Ἰδοὺ ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ δούλων εἰς χεῖρας τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν, ὡς ὀφθαλμοὶ παιδίσκης εἰς χεῖρας τῆς κυρίας αὐτῆς, οὕτως οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν πρὸς Κύριον Θεὸν ἡμῶν, ἕως οὗ οἰκτιρῆσαι ἡμᾶς, κ. τ. ἐ. Δοῦλοι κυρίων Πατὴρ καὶ Υἱοῦ πνεῦμα καὶ σῶμα· παιδίσκη δὲ κυρίας τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἡ ψυχὴ. Τὰ δὲ τρία Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστίν· **οἱ γὰρ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν**. Ὁφθαλμοὶ γοῦν δούλων εἰς χεῖρας κυρίων ὁρῶντες, ὅτε διὰ χειρῶν νεύοντες κελεύουσιν. Ἡ χεῖρες κυρίων μὲν Πατὴρ καὶ Υἱοῦ οἱ ἐκατέρου ἄγγελοι· κυρίας δὲ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος αἱ οἰκεῖται αὐτοῦ δυνάμεις. (Origenis Selecta in Psalmos CXXII, Migne Graeca, PG 12.1633).

Sometimes we can find a combination of these unique parts:

- **Father, Word, Spirit, Trinity, one nature,**

- Greek: **Πάτερ, Λόγε καὶ πνεῦμα· Τριάς, φύσις μία**
- Theodore the Studite (759-826 AD) : Epigrams
- <www.dbbe.ugent.be/occurrences/18874>
- <www.dbbe.ugent.be/types/3088>
- 244 COD. 100 : A.D. 1111 : Plate 440 (K. Lake, 1936, VI, p. 14)

There are many more in my paper ***“The Witness of God is Greater”***

Prayers

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Acts of John (circa 150-200)

• [Attridge] To explore the phenomenon, I shall focus on the Acts of John, a work of Christian fiction written sometime in the second century, perhaps as early as the second quarter of that century. Eric Junod and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis* (CChrSA 1-2; 2 vols.; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1983), 2:694-700, date the work to the second half of the second century, arguing that it was used by Acts of Peter, Acts of Thomas and Acts of Paul. Lalleman, *Acts of John*, 208-212, 268-270, dates the work to the second quarter of the century, arguing that it influenced the final form of the Apocryphon of John and Apocalypse of Peter, that its Christology, with its intense focus on Christ and its portrait of him as polymorphic and polyonymous, is attested for the first half of the second century, but not later, and that the kind of Gnosticism it attests is pre-Valentinian. Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 259, dates the work to around 150. ...Most scholars agree that what can be reconstructed is a composite work with strong affinities to some of the less "orthodox" varieties of second century Christianity. Exactly how the work was composed and what the precise affinities are has been a matter of continuing discussion. (Attridge, "The Acts Of John And The Fourth Gospel". in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition*, 2011, p. 256-257.)

• [Elliott] In the East the earliest unambiguous patristic attestation to the Acts of John is in Eusebius (HE 3. 25. 6 (Schwartz GCS 9.2, pp. 252f.)) who condemns the Acts of John (and of Andrew) as heretical. Epiphanius (adv. Haer. 2. 47. 1 (Holl, GCS 31, p. 216)) notes that the Acts of John (and of Andrew and of Thomas) were used by encratite groups. The Manichaean Psalm Book used it as part of a Manichaean corpus of Acts¹ about AD 340 (according to C. R. C. Allberry). Western attestation includes Augustine (Ep. 237 (253) to Ceretius, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 57 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1911), pp. 526–32) who cites in Latin some ten lines of the Hymn of Christ, which Ceretius claims to have found circulating as an independent text among the Priscillianists. The Acts were also mentioned by Innocent I (Ep. 6. 7, PL 20, col. 502) and by Turribius of Astorga (Ep. ad Idacium et Ceponium 5, PL 54, cols. 693–5). The Acts in Latin were also obviously known to the editor of the *Virtutes Iohannis* in the collection of Pseudo- Abdias. The Acts were therefore known by the fourth century as a sectarian work and used by, among others, Priscillianists. (Elliott, J. K. (ed.), "The Acts of John" in *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, 2003, p. 303.)

HIT:

- Again with me say thou:
Glory be to thee, **Father**;
Glory to thee, **Word**;
Glory to thee, **Holy Ghost**.
- <gnosis.org/library/actjohn.htm>.

• Greek:

96. πάλιν ἐμοὶ λέγε·

δόξα σοι **πάτερ**·

δόξα σοι **λόγε**·

δόξα σοι **πνεῦμα ἅγιον**.

- *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha Post Constantinum* Tischendorf Deno Edidervnt Ricardvs Adelbertvs Lipsivs Et Maximilianvs Bonnet, 1891, p. 199.

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Buchanan, Claudius (1766-1815) : Pioneer Anglican in India

• Born in Cambuslang, Scotland, Buchanan was converted in London under John Newton and became an Anglican. He went to Cambridge and upon graduation was appointed a chaplain to the East India Company. He arrived at Calcutta in 1797 as junior chaplain to David Brown and set about learning Indian languages. Under Lord Wellesley, Buchanan played a key role in the founding of Fort William College, serving as vice-provost from 1800 to 1806. In addition to providing training for East India Company civil servants, Buchanan and Brown wanted the college to sponsor translations of the Bible into many languages. They soon enlisted William Carey, from nearby Serampore, as a collaborator. Buchanan's great concern was to see India opened to missionary work. As part of his strategy, he drafted a plan for setting up a full-scale ecclesiastical establishment in India. At the same time he recognized the importance of mobilizing public opinion in support of changing the East India Company charter to allow missionaries to enter India. He instituted in British universities prize essays on Christian missions (1803-1805), which resulted in some notable publications. He believed credible publicity required careful attention to facts, and despite poor health, he undertook an arduous journey (1806-1808) to investigate conditions in South India and Sri Lanka. His findings were published as *Christian Researches in Asia* (1811), a work often reprinted. In 1808 he returned to Great Britain to recuperate and to help in the campaign to open India to Christian missions by speaking and writing. He received honorary D.D. degrees from Glasgow, Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Dublin, and Cambridge universities in recognition of his distinguished service in promoting Bible translation and as a publicist. He died at age 49 in Yorkshire. (Wilbert R. Shenk, "Buchanan, Claudius," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 98-99. <www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography/a-c/buchanan-claudius-1766-1815/>)

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Discovery of the Manuscripts by Buchanan 1806

- [Gebhardt-Klein] The document [MS heb. Oo.1.32,] was discovered in 1806 by the Scottish missionary Reverend Claudius Buchanan while under commission by the Church of England to investigate the state of affairs of the Syrian Mar Thoma (Saint Thomas) Christians in India's southwestern Kingdom of Travancore (modern Kerala) and the immediate environs of the Malabar Coast. During his stay Buchanan visited synagogues of the Malabari Black Jews in the port town of Cochin where he acquired the codex, containing a Hebrew translation of the Christian New Testament but lacking the apocalypse, of which the gospels are believed to have been produced by a certain 17th-18th century Ezekiel Raḥabi II. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew, 2023, p. iii)
- [Buchanan] Almost in every house I find Hebrew books, printed or manuscript; particularly among the White Jews. Most of the printed Hebrew of Europe has found its way to Cochin, through the medium of the Portuguese and Dutch commerce of former times. When I questioned the Jews concerning the old copies of the Scriptures, which had been read in the Synagogues from age to age ; some told me that it was usual to bury them when decayed by time and use. Others said that this was not always the case. I despaired at first of being able to procure any of the old biblical writings; but after I had been in the country about six weeks, and they found that I did not expect to obtain them merely as presents, some copies were recovered. The White Jews had only the Bible written on parchment, and of modern appearance, in their Synagogue; but I was: informed that the Black Jews possessed formerly copies written on Goat Skins ; and that in the Synagogue of the Black Jews there was an old Record Chest, into which the decayed copies of their Scriptures had been thrown. I accordingly went to the Synagogue with a few of the chief men, and examined the contents, which some of them said they had never looked at before, and did not seem greatly to value. The manuscripts were of various kinds, on parchment, goat-skins, and cotton paper.
- [Buchanan] I negotiated for them hastily, and wrapped them up in two cloths, and gave them to the Jews to carry home to my house. I had observed some murmuring amongst the by-standers in the Synagogue, while I was examining the chest : and before we appeared in the streets, the alarm had gone forth, that the Christians were robbing the Synagogue of the Law. There were evident symptoms of tumult, and the women and children collected and were following us. I requested some of the more respectable Jews to accompany me out of the town ; but I had scarcely arrived at my own house at Cochin, when the persons who had permitted me to take the manuscripts, came in evident agitation, and told me I must restore them immediately to calm the popular rage. Others had gone to complain to the Chief Magistrate, Thomas Flower, Esq. And now I had lost my spoil, but for the friendly counsel and judicious conduct of Mr. Flower. He directed that all the manuscripts should be delivered up to him, and that there should be no further proceedings on the subject without his authority. To this the Jews agreed.
- [Buchanan] There was some plea of justice on my side, as it was understood that I had given a valuable consideration. In the meantime he allowed a few days to pass, that the minds of the people might become tranquil, and he then summoned some of the more liberal men, and gave them a hearing on the subject. In the meantime I thought it prudent to retire from Cochin, for a day or two, and went to Cranganor, about sixteen miles off, to Colonel Macaulay, the British Resident at Travancore, who was then at the house of Mr. Drummond, the Collector of Malabar. On my return to Cochin, Mr. Flower informed me that all the manuscripts were to be returned to my house; that I was to select what was old, and of little use to the Jews, and to give back to them what was new. The affair ended, however, in the Jews permitting me generously to retain some part of the new.
- [Buchanan] Ever since I came among these people, and heard their sentiments on the prophecies, and their confident hopes of returning to Jerusalem, I have thought much on the means of obtaining a version of the

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New Testament in the Hebrew language, and circulating it among them and their brethren in the East. I had heard that there were one or two translations of the Testament in their own possession, but they were studiously kept out of my sight for a considerable time. At last, however, they were produced by individuals in a private manner. One of them is written in the small Rabbinical or Jerusalem character; the other in a large square letter. The history of the former is very interesting. The translator, a learned Rabbi, conceived the design of making an accurate version of the New Testament, for the express purpose of confuting it. His style is copious and elegant, like that of a master in the language, and the translation is in general faithful.

- [Buchanan] It does not indeed appear that he wished to pervert the meaning of a single sentence; but depending on his own abilities and renown as a scholar, he hoped to be able to controvert its doctrines, and to triumph over it by fair contest in the presence of the world. There is yet a mystery about the circumstances of this man's death, which time will perhaps unfold : the Jews are not inclined to say much to me about him. His version is complete, and written with greater freedom and ease towards the end than at the beginning. How astonishing it is that an enemy should have done this!, that he should have persevered resolutely and calmly to the end of his work!, not indeed always calmly; for there is sometimes a note of execration on the Sacred Person who is the subject of it, as if to unburthen his mind, and ease the conflict of his labouring soul. At the close of the Gospels, as if afraid of the converting power of his own translation, 'he calls heaven to witness that he had undertaken the work with the professed design of opposing the Epicureans;' by which term he contemptuously means the Christians.

- Buchanan, Christian researches in Asia, 1812, p. 234-238)

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Scribes involved in the Hebrew Manuscript creation

Ezekiel Rahabi (1694–1771)

• Ezekiel Rahabi (1694–1771) was the chief Jewish merchant of the Dutch East India Company in Cochin, India for almost 50 years.[1] Rabbi Rahabi Ezekiel,[2] (or Ezekiel Rahabi) was from Aleppo, in modern Syria.[3] A rabbinical writer known only through his polemical Hebrew translation of the New Testament - The Book of the Gospel Belonging to the Followers of Jesus (c.1750). The translation contains all the books of the New Testament and was translated between 1741 and 1756[4] by a certain Ezekiel Rahabi (not R'dkibi, pace Franz Delitzsch p.108) in "an uneven and faulty Hebrew with a strong anti-Christian bias." [5] Oo 1:32 reads: "Heaven is my witness that I have not translated this, God forbid, to believe it, but to understand it and know how to answer the heretics . . . that our true Messiah will come. Amen." The 1756 edition appears to be the work of two different translators - a less educated Sephardi writer (Matthew-John), Ezekiel Rahabi himself, and a more educated German rabbi (Acts-Revelation) Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort.[4] (Rahabi Ezekiel. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rahabi_Ezekiel>)

Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort (1712–1761)

• Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort (1712–1761)[1] was a Dutch Hebrew professor, responsible for translating an Indian version of the Hebrew New Testament and a Hebrew Quran. Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort was born Jewish in 1712 in The Hague, Netherlands.[1][2] He converted to Catholicism in December 1745 in Aachen.[1] He studied briefly philosophy at the University of Leipzig with professor Johann Friedrich May in 1753.[1] In 1754[1] he was enlisted by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to work as a professor of Hebrew Language at the Seminary of Colombo, Ceylon.[1][3] In 1756 he traveled to Cochin,[1] India, where he was commissioned by Ezekiel Rahabi to finish the translation of the Hebrew New Testament (1741-1756),[4] which Claudius Buchanan took with him to England and currently resides in the Cambridge University Library. Ezekiel Rahabi also commissioned van Dort as the translator of the Hebrew Quran (1757-1761),[4][5] which resides in the Library of Congress in Washington.[6] He also arranged the printing of the prayer books of the Jews of Cochin, India, in Amsterdam in 1757, through the office of Tobias Boas, whom he knew from his childhood.[1][7] Van Dort is further known for his 1757 translations of the excerpts of the chronicles of the Jews of Cochin.[3][8] Van Dort died in 1761, at the age of 48.[1] (Leopold_Immanuel_Jacob_van_Dort. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopold_Immanuel_Jacob_van_Dort>)

German immigrant David ben Isaac Cohen

• David Cohen was young when he met Leopold, who likely acted as a teacher to him. During his youth, David travelled from Berlin to Cochin,⁸⁴ and his education probably suffered as a result. For the Hebrew instruction, they used a Hebrew translation of She'erit Yisrael⁸⁵ from Yiddish by Leopold as a schoolbook, which contained Jewish European history. Ezekiel Rahabi likely proposed the collaboration between David and Leopold, which aligned with his goal to forge an alliance with the Dutch. Both Leopold and David spoke German besides Yiddish, and Germans were a large group among the VOC [aka Dutch East India Company] personnel living in the fort.⁸⁶ It is probable that Leopold and David worked in the Dutch fort, as in 1761 David became the first male without a connection to the VOC to live in the fort as a Jewish 'free burgher.'⁸⁷ Although the Dutch and the Jews of Cochin had been working together, they had done that from separate locations until then: the Dutch fort and next to the palace of the rajah in Mattanchery. David's education by Leopold, along with his introduction to and subsequent move into the fort established a foothold for the Paradeši Jews within the fort. It shifted the balance of the Paradeši Jews' intermediate status away from being subjects of the rajah toward becoming subjects of the VOC.⁸⁸ Notably, David's move took place in 1761, the same year that

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Leopold visited Cochin on his second trip.⁸⁹ (van Dort, Mascha. (2024). Leopold Immanuel Jacob van Dort's Scholarly Visit to Cochin. *Studia Rosenthaliana*. 50, p. 128-129)

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Jews of Cochin India

- Cochin Jews (also known as Malabar Jews or Kochinim from Hebrew: יְהוּדֵי קוֹכִין, romanized: Yehudey Kochin) are one of the oldest groups of Jews in India, with roots that are claimed to date back to the time of King Solomon.[3][4] The Cochin Jews settled in the Kingdom of Cochin in South India,[5] now part of the present-day state of Kerala.[6][7] As early as the 12th century, mention is made of the Jews in southern India by Benjamin of Tudela.
- P. M. Jussay wrote that it was believed that the earliest Jews in India were sailors from King Solomon's time.[15] It has been claimed that following the destruction of the First Temple in the Siege of Jerusalem (587 BCE), some Jewish exiles came to India.[16] Only after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE are records found that attest to numerous Jewish settlers arriving at Cranganore, an ancient port near Cochin.[17] Cranganore, now transliterated as Kodungallur, but also known under other names, is a city of legendary importance to this community. Fernandes writes, it is "a substitute Jerusalem in India".[18] Katz and Goldberg note the "symbolic intertwining" of the two cities.[19]
- Ophira Gamliel notes however that the first physical evidence of the presence of Jews in South India dates only to the granting of the Kollam copper plates.[20] The copper plates are a trade deed dated to the year 849 C.E bestowed upon the Nestorian merchant magnate Maruvan Sapir Iso and the Saint Thomas Christian community by Ayyan Atikal, the ruler of the Kingdom of Venad. The copper plates include signatures in Kufic, Pahlavi, and Hebrew and serve as evidence of West Asian mercantilism in Kerala.[20]
- In 1768, a certain Tobias Boas of Amsterdam had posed eleven questions to Rabbi Yehezkel Rachbi of Cochin. The first of these questions addressed to the said Rabbi concerned the origins of the Jews of Cochin and the duration of their settlement in India. In Rabbi Yehezkel's response (Merzbacher's Library in Munich, MS. 4238), he wrote: "after the destruction of the Second Temple (may it soon be rebuilt and reestablished in our days!), in the year 3828 of anno mundi, i. e., 68 CE, about ten thousand men and women had come to the land of Malabar and were pleased to settle in four places; those places being Cranganore, Dschalor, [21] Madai[22] [and] Plota.[23] Most were in Cranganore, which is also called Mago dera Patinas; it is also called Sengale." [24][25]
- Saint Thomas, an Aramaic-speaking Jew[26] from the Galilee region of Israel and one of the disciples of Jesus, is believed to have come to Southern India[27] in the 1st century, in search of the Jewish community there.[28][29][30] It is possible that the Jews who became Christians at that time were absorbed by what became the Nasrani Community in Kerala.[28][30][31]
- Cochin_Jews. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin_Jews>
- [Katz & Goldberg] The influx of Sephardim into the ancient Jewish community of Cochin, in south India, resulted in a pattern of social organization unique in the Jewish world: the infamous white Jew/black Jew/brown Jew system. The Jews of Cochin organized themselves in patterns derived from their Hindu social context, a system known in the West as the caste system. The "white" or Paradesi ("foreign") Jews were Sephardi immigrants together with a few Jews from Iraq, Europe and Yemen, who joined with an indigenous elite. The "black" Jews, better known as Malabari Jews, were an ancient community which may have originated at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. Each of these groups were slave-holders, and manumitted slaves (meshuchrarim in Hebrew) from the Paradesi community were called "brown" Jews, while manumitted slaves from the Malabari community were known by the Malayalam (local language) term, orumakers. Paradesi Jews would not count any of the other groups for their minyan, would not allow them synagogal honors, would not marry them, and would not eat meat slaughtered by their ritual slaughterers. (Katz, N., & Goldberg, E. S. (1993). The Sephardi Diaspora In Cochin, India. Jewish Political Studies Review, 5(3/4), 97–98.)

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- [Katz & Goldberg] A unique system of Jewish community organization reflecting the Indian caste system evolved in Cochin, a port city in southwestern India, wherein the "white" or "Paradesi" (foreign) Jews, Sephardim who came to Cochin via Turkey, Syria and Iraq, discriminated against two other groups of Jews: the indigenous "black" Jews who had lived on the Malabar coast perhaps since the destruction of the Second Temple; and the "brown" Jews, manumitted slaves, (meshuchrarim in Hebrew). The Paradesis were mostly Sephardim, some of whom arrived in Cochin as early as 1511, but they also included a few leading families from Cranganore as well as immigrants from Europe (Poland and Germany) and a few Yemenites. (Katz, N., & Goldberg, E. S. (1993). The Sephardi Diaspora In Cochin, India. Jewish Political Studies Review, 5(3/4), 98.)

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Christians of Cochin India

- [Baca] When the disciples were instructed to take the gospel to the world, two disciples, Thomas and possibly later, Andrew, took Yeshua's words literal and made their way to Cochin, India. However, the earliest information available about the Hebrew gospel is linked to the church established by the apostle Thomas in India. According to Eusebius, the *Gospel according to Matthew* had been taken to India by the apostle Bartholomew [Thomas]... written 'in Hebrew script' and preserved in India until the visit of Pantaenus... Jerome repeats this testimony of Eusebius, adding that Pantaenus brought the Hebrew Matthew with him on his return from India to Alexandria. Thomas traveled throughout India and was responsible for the establishment of churches in the state of Travancore, where the city of Cochin is located. In 1803, Claudius Buchanan discovered the Hebrew New Testament manuscripts in the synagogue of black Jews and purchased them for his collection. (Baca, Janice F. "The Scroll of Mysteries", 2024, p. 4)

- Saint Thomas, an Aramaic-speaking Jew[26] from the Galilee region of Israel and one of the disciples of Jesus, is believed to have come to Southern India[27] in the 1st century, in search of the Jewish community there.[28][29][30] It is possible that the Jews who became Christians at that time were absorbed by what became the Nasrani Community in Kerala.[28][30][31]

- Cochin_Jews. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin_Jews>

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Origin of the Manuscript Oo.1.32 : *ad hoc* Theories Refuted

The presence of the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses in a Hebrew manuscript created around 1750 discovered in a synagogue of Black Malabar Jews of India, has led critics to propose some predictable *ad hoc* theories . We will present these theories and why they all fail to provide an adequate explanation of how this manuscript came to be.

1. Delitzsch assumes that the source is Luther's German bible 1534 (translated into Hebrew).
 - [Gebhardt-Klein] The 19th-century Hebraist Franz Delitzsch argued that three translators were responsible for the text of the manuscript: presumably Raḥabi translated Matthew through Jude from the Peshitta—Delitzsch suggested Walton's polyglot (1657) as a likely source⁸—transcribing only Hebrews from Friedrich Albert Christian's 1676 Hebrew translation which was acquired from a Lutheran mission in neighboring Tranquebar, and the remaining books translated by an unknown German Jew using Luther's 1534 text. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew, 2023, p. v)

Response: Luther's German bible 1534 omits the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses. (see Appendix: Luther, Martin, 1534. Biblia : I John 5:6-9)

2. Dr. Mascha van Dort suggests that the source is
 - [Mascha van Dort] In Halle (Saale), the Canstein Bible was most commonly used in 1752. This is a Luther translation that follows the text as it had been passed down since Luther's "letzte Hand" (his final official revision, from 1545), and it was printed by the Canstein Bible Institute at Waisenhaus in Halle. (Mascha van Dort, correspondence October 2025)

Response: The 1752 Halle bible does contain the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses. However, there is no indication that the German text was used to back translate into Hebrew. We have asked our translator for any obvious indication that this German bible could be the source. Again, there is no obvious evidence that the Hebrew in Oo.1.32 is back translated from this 1752 German bible. (see: Appendix: Luther, Martin, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, 1752 : I John 5:6-9)

3. Another possibility is that the Hebrew of Oo.1.32 might have been copied from Hutter's polyglott. I have had Hutter's Hebrew transcribed and translated in an appendix. (see: Appendix: The Nuremberg Hutter Polyglot New Testament, 1599 : I John 5:6-9).

Response: I have asked my translator to compare the Hebrew of Hutter's polyglott to the Hebrew in the Cambridge manuscript Oo.1.32. (see: Appendix: Hutter's Hebrew compared to Cambridge Oo.1.32 Hebrew text.) They are not the same at all.

4. Just to be complete, I have seen some critics claim that Ezekiel used Walton's polyglott (Syriac) backtranslating from the Syriac to Hebrew.

Response: Although this might be only true for Ezekiel's part of the Hebrew New Testament (David Cohen was the scribe for I John), I thought it interesting to see that Walton's polyglott omits the Heavenly Witnesses completely as well as the "in earth" of the Earthly Witnesses. (see: Appendix: The London Walton Polyglot New Testament, 1667 : I John 5:6-9.)

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Transcription of an Ancient Exemplar : Pinchas E. Lapidé (et al)

Pinchas Lapidé (Hebrew: פנחס לפיד; 28 November 1922 – 23 October 1997) was a Jewish theologian, historian, and diplomat.[1] From 1951 to 1969, he served as an Israeli diplomat, including a tenure as Israel's Consul to Milan. He played a key role in securing diplomatic recognition for the young State of Israel. Lapidé was the author of more than 35 books, focusing on Jewish-Christian relations, theology, and history. He was married to Ruth Lapidé, with whom he shared intellectual and scholarly pursuits. Lapidé was born in Vienna to a Jewish family as Erwin Pinchas Spitzer. During the Second World War, he managed to escape from Europe and reached Palestine. After the war, he studied Romance philology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Ultimately, Lapidé acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah of the Gentiles, a position he articulates more explicitly in his book *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective*. Furthermore, he suggests that Jesus' return in the parousia will reveal him as Israel's Messiah. Lapidé's interfaith approach shapes his portrayal of Jesus and, similarly, informs his relatively nuanced and non-confrontational perspective on Paul.[10] (Pinchas Lapidé. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinchas_Lapidé>)

- [Lapidé] Rev. Claudius Buchanan, who after many years of pastoral work in India returned in 1810 with a considerable collection of Hebrew manuscripts he had discovered on the Malabar coast in 1806 in one of the synagogues of the Black Jews of Cochin. The collection which he later gave to the Cambridge University Library, included among other items ...the **Hebrew New Testament whose translator (or transcriber?)** appears as "Honored to the degree of the great Rahabi Ezekiel, may he rest in peace." Even Buchanan, whose knowledge of Hebrew was evidently excellent, speaks of him as "a learned rabbi" who disputed with the Syrian Mar Thoma Christians of his Area. ...Buchanan proposed to the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews that a new translation of the New Testament be undertaken on the basis of the Travancore text. (Lapidé, *Hebrew in the Church* 1984, p. 78)

Lapidé's assessment of Oo.1.32 Hebrew New Testament as possibly "transcribed" presents us with a general observation that the manuscript has clues as to the use of an older exemplar. The clues are elucidated by Gebhardt-Klein's study of Matthew's Gospel and the Epistle of Jude.

- [Gebhardt-Klein] Such linguistic disunity cannot preclude a more complex redaction or older history to the text than attributed to its presumable 18th-century author and commissioner. Indeed, the historian of Jewish-Christian relations, Pinchas Lapidé, suggested the possibility that Raḥabi may have been a "transcriber?"¹⁵ instead of a translator of the text—which would seem plausible based on the non-Peshittic readings and dissimilar character of portions of the manuscript. (Gebhardt-Klein, *The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew*. 2022, p. vi-vii)
- [Gebhardt-Klein] The language of the text of Matthew (ff. 1a–21b) is written in the dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew with frequent lapses into Aramaic, most of which could be described as the western dialect of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA).¹⁰ There is also evident Syriac influence in the text,¹¹ though it is not so clear whether that can be explained exclusively from the Peshitta due to many non-standard readings and agreements with a diversity of text types.¹² (Gebhardt-Klein, *The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew*, 2023, p. v-vi)
- [Gebhardt-Klein] Thirdly, there is a problem with assuming that the earliest portion of the manuscript is a translation of the Peshitta text (from Walton's polyglot): the instances of Aramaic influence in the text

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are not unambiguously derived from the Peshitta, but the majority of them show affinity to other text types, while some have no textual precedent elsewhere. ...offering an Aramaic rendition different than any so far known. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew. 2022, p. ix)

- [Gebhardt-Klein] Fourthly, the Travancore text (T) has much affinity in its readings to earlier rabbinical-Hebrew Matthews, most notably the Shem-Tob text (S). Some of the readings are surprising and unique when compared to the others... Interestingly, the same question of source text(s) haunts the other rabbinical-Hebrew Matthews as well, and notably, the late professor of religion George Howard argued that the 14th-century Shem-Tob text goes back to earlier versions referenced in antiquity by various patristic authors. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew, 2023, p. x-xi)

- [Gebhardt-Klein] In conclusion, there is reason to think that the Travancore-Cochin manuscript attributed to Ezekiel Raḥabi, while not laying any great claim to antiquity (18th century), nevertheless may contain in part a text of Matthew representing a continuation and development of earlier versions. ...Delitzsch's claim that it was a translation from the Peshitta of Walton's polyglot appears to be too hasty. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew. 2022, p. xiv)

- [Gebhardt-Klein] **Despite the attributed authorship and late ascription of the manuscript, there is reason to think the text of Matthew may have some connection to earlier medieval rabbinical-Hebrew translations.** (Gebhardt-Klein, The Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of Ezekiel Raḥabi's Rabbinical-Hebrew Matthew, 2023, p. iii)

- [Gebhardt-Klein] Wherever the Travancore-Cochin translation of Jude came from, it did not come from the Syriac of the Peshitta. Combined with my previous work on the text of Matthew,⁷ there is ample evidence for the dubiousness of Delitzsch's generalization that Matthew through Jude was a translation from the Peshitta of Walton's polyglot. More philological research needs to be done before further pronouncements are made. **For too long, scholars have relied on second-hand claims regarding the text, repeated for two centuries without substantiation.** Only a serious and concerted scholarly effort toward reassessment of the books of the Travancore-Cochin manuscript can suffice going forward. Short of this, the unrigorous standards of the past will self-perpetuate and a potentially important witness to the Semitic-language transmission of the New Testament will be lost. Hopefully others will follow up on this most interesting subject and provide the proper critical study which it so much deserves. (Gebhardt-Klein, The Epistle of Jude from the Travancore-Cochin, India Manuscript of the Rabbinical-Hebrew New Testament: Compared to the Peshitta of Walton's Polyglot, 2023, p. iv)

In conclusion, we look forward to an in-depth assessment of the first Epistle of John found in this Hebrew manuscript from India. The evidence of an ancient exemplar for Matthew & the Epistle of Jude, demonstrate that this manuscript cannot simply be labeled a late translation, but may have an origin like that of Shem-Tob. We hope to see more research done on this manuscript in the near future and concur with Gebhardt-Klein's judgement "For too long, scholars have relied on second-hand claims regarding the text, repeated for two centuries without substantiation".

Oo.1.32

Paper; 19×16; 160ff.; about 25–34 lines; stained, with ink corrosion; Oriental Sefardi(?) hands; 17–18c.

NEW TESTAMENT, translated anonymously in Cochin.

With occasional vowel points.

The translation, which is neither accurate nor elegant, covers all the books except Revelation, which is made good in Oo.1.16.2 (entry SCR 918). Heading: **זהו לשון הספר של ואנגיליהן של הנצרים על ישו לדעת משיאש**. With marginal annotation, running heads and catchwords.

The script of some of the chapter headings is fairly ornate.

Described in SSN III, ff.28–41.

The handwriting on ff.132r–160v appears to be the same as that in Oo.1.16.2. It has been identified by Weinstein (see below) as that of David b. Isaac Cohen and characterised as an Ashkenazi copy of a Sefardi style.

See S. Schechter, *JQR* 6 (1893), pp.136–45; and S. Bagster, *The Bible of Every Land* (London, 1848), p.26; and M. Weinstein, *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 10 (1971–72), pp.19–52.

Bound in half morocco by Cambridge University Library, 1916.

A label pasted into a front fly-leaf reads 'This manuscript was found in one of the Synagogues of the Black Jews of Cochin in India, by the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, in the year 1806'.

Presented in 1809 by the Rev. Claudius Buchanan.

SCR 916 HL 891 SS –

See plate 29

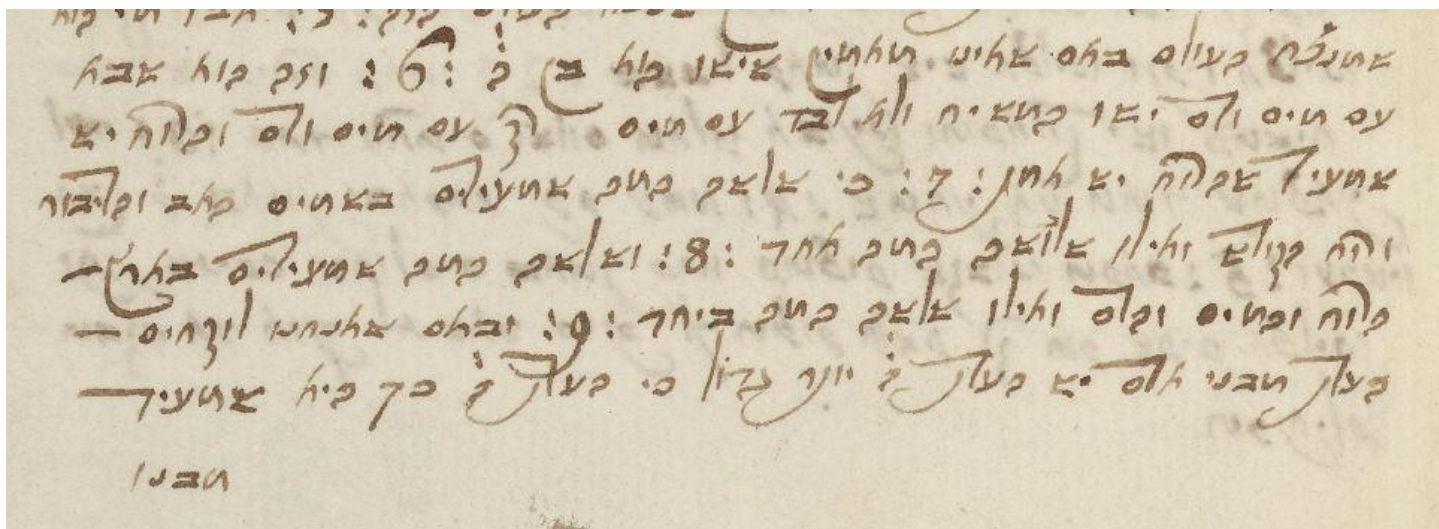
Stefan C. Reif et al., *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 503-504

פרק ה

מי שמאמין שישו הוא המשיח זה הוא נולד מה(אלהים) ומי שאהוב
 אות זם הוא אהוב לזה שנולד ממנו 2: ובוזה אנו מכירים שאנחנו אוהבים
 ובנים ה(אלהים) באם שאנחנו אוהבים ה(אלהים) ועושים מצוותיו 3: כי זה הוא האהבה
 לה(אלהים) שאנחנו עושים מצוותיו ומצוותיו אינו קשים 4: כי כל מה שנולד מה(אלהים)
 מנכח העולם הזה ואמונותיו היא הניצחון שנ(י)צח העולם הזה 5: אבל מי הוא
 שמנצח העולם באם שאינו מאמין שישו הוא בן ח(אלהים) 6: וזה הוא שבא
 עם מים ודם ישו המשיח ולא לבד עם מים רק עם מים ודם והרוח יש
 שמעיד שהרוח יש אמן 7: כי שלשה המה שמעידים בשמים האב והדיבור
 ורוח הקודש ואילו שלושה המה אחד 8: ושלשה המה שמעידים בארץ –
 הרוח והמים והדם ואילו שלשם המה ביחד 9: ובא(י)ם שאנחנו לוקחים –
 העדן מבני אדם יש העדן ה(אלהים) יותר גדול כי העדן ה(אלהים) כך היא שמעיד מבנו

-
- Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England Ms. Oo.1.32 : f152r [Image 305]
- <www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts>
- 6 And this is he who came with water and blood, Jesus the Messiah [or: Jesus Christ, Jesus the Anointed], and not only with water, but with water and blood; and it is the spirit who testifies that/because [as unclear as quoniam/quod/quia in Latin or ὅτι in Greek] the spirit is true.
- 7 For there are three that beare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.
- 8 And there are three that beare witness in earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in one.
- 9 And if we receive the testimony of the sons of Adam, the testimony of God is greater because the testimony of God is such that He testifies of His Son.
- Translated by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence November 2025.

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Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England Ms. Oo.1.32 : f152r [Image 305]

www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts

Comments:

- Margin: "Tehillim (Psalms) 33:6" (Translation by Janice F. Baca, Project Truth Ministries, correspondence, February 2025) "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Psalm 33:6.

Questions:

1. What indications would be present in the Hebrew ... if it was back translated from the German?
2. How certain could anyone be that the Hebrew was back translated from a German bible?

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 04:27:12 PM EST, Sarah VDP <miss.peace89@hotmail.fr> wrote:

Thanks! Here's what my friend said after comparing verses 7 and 8 in the Hebrew, German, Greek and Latin versions:

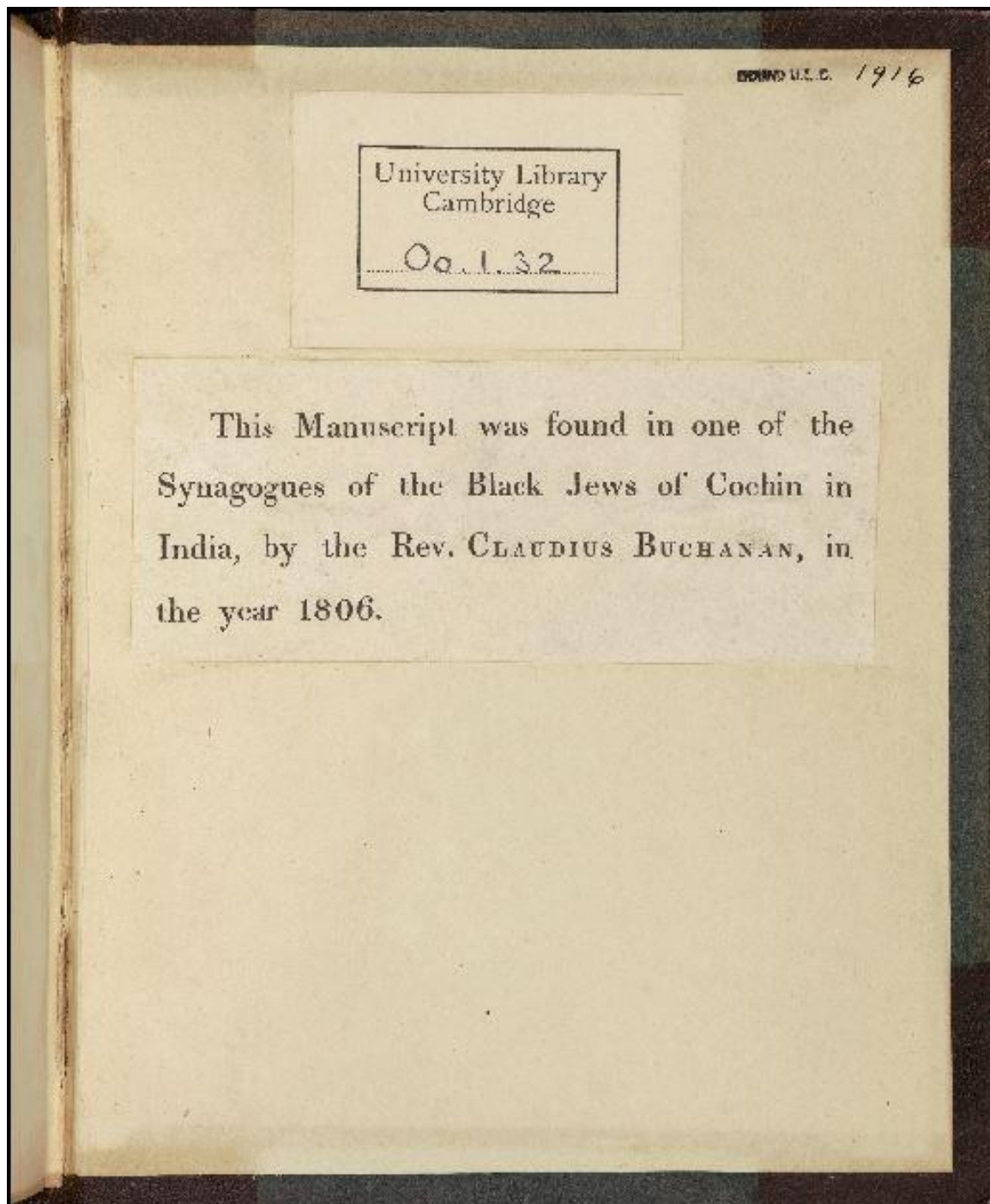
5:7 starts with כִּי That is closer to nam than to quia I think, and the same is true for the first word in German, denn. The Greek and Latin versions I found of this comma have hoti or quia there. שמעידים is a participle ("bearing witness"). That's closer to the Greek, which has a participle there (μαρτυροῦντες) while the German has a relative clause. Then again, while it's technically possible to operate with participles in German, you usually resolve Greek or Latin participles in subordinate clauses -- I'm not sure if Hebrew shares a similar love for participles as Ancient Greek, but it seems to be a viable option there. The Hebrew text has a polysyndeton (A and B and C), while the German text is monosyndetic (A, B and C). However, so are the Greek and Latin versions I saw. Technically, a polysyndeton wouldn't be required in Hebrew, but it would just be a very small decision for a translator to make. As for the rest of 5:7, it's hard to find anything concrete. Most of the Greek I saw is very simple, and the German version just goes along with it almost word-by-word, as does the Hebrew (there are peculiarities in the Hebrew that have to do with Hebrew being Hebrew, but nothing special).

Oh and the German has definite articles for "the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit", as does the Hebrew text. The same is true for 5:8. But I would find it very weird not to have articles in there in Hebrew.

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Other than that, there's not much to say about 5:8 ... the German version is more or less a word-for-word translation from Greek, but so is the Hebrew (with the small exceptions I mentioned). In 5:8, the German version translates the Greek participle with a relative clause again, while the Hebrew has a participle there. That's it.

Conclusion: You could arrive at the Hebrew text on the basis of the German text. However, you could also produce that Hebrew text on the basis of the Greek text. You would have to find some German peculiarities or mistranslations in there to see if the Hebrew mimics them, but based on 5:7 and 5:8 alone, you can't do that. There are no strong indications. Maybe the person who claimed that the Hebrew was translated from the German had found good reason to think so by studying the book in detail, but that can't be ascertained based on these two verses alone.



Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England

Ms. Oo.1.32 : flyleaf

www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts

Ms. Oo.1.32 : f152r [Image 305] : I John 5:6-9

www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts

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Appendix: The Nuremberg Hutter Polyglot New Testament, 1599 : I John 5:6-9

• Elias Hutter (Gorlitz or Ulm 1553-Nuremberg or Frankfurt, c.1605) was a German Hebraist.[1][2]

He studied in Strassburg, studied Asian languages at the Lutheran University in Jena, and was professor of Hebrew at Leipzig University. His Opus Quadripartitum, or Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and German, was published by David Wolter at Hamburg in 1596.

• New Testament Polyglot (at times referred to as the Nuremberg Polyglot) in two volumes (Gospels plus Acts, Epistles plus Revelation), 1599, Nuremberg, "Novum Testamentum Dñi: Nñi: Iesu Christi, Syriacè, Ebraicè, Græcè, Latinè, Germanicè, Bohemicè, Italicè, Hispanicè, Gallicè, Anglicè, Danicè, Polonicè." These volumes contain the NT in twelve languages [Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Czech, Italian, Spanish, French, English, Danish, Polish] presented in two columns of 6 languages across. The English translation Hutter cites appears to be the Geneva translation; the Hebrew is Hutter's original translation and the German appears to be Luther's translation.[3][4]

• Elias Hutter. Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elias_Hutter>



Nuremberg Hutter Polyglot New Testament, 1599
 <archive.org/details/nuremberg-hutter-polyglot-new-testament>
 I John 5:3-5 : Page 902



Nuremberg Hutter Polyglot New Testament, 1599
archive.org/details/nuremberg-hutter-polyglot-new-testament
 I John 5:6-8. Page 902

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Nuremberg Hutter Polyglot New Testament, 1599
archive.org/details/nuremberg-hutter-polyglot-new-testament
 I John 5:9. Page 903

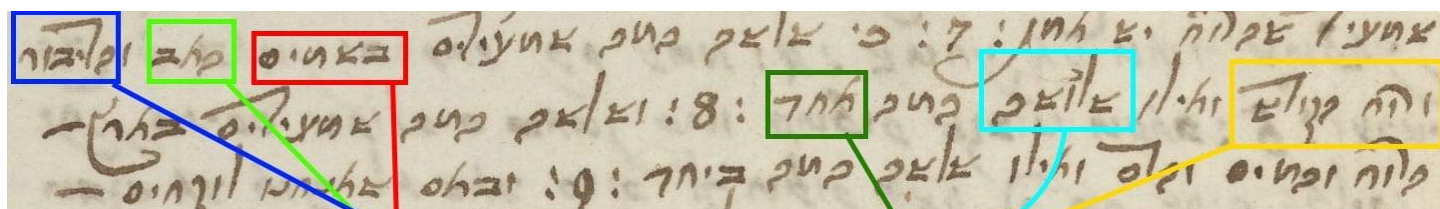
Hebrew Text (with Niqqud)	Working Translation (Literal)	Smooth English Translation
וְהוּא הָבָא בָּמַיִם (וְרוּחַ) וְדָם יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֵינָנוּ בָּמַיִם לְבַדּוֹ כִּי בָּמַיִם וּבְדָם וְרוּחַ מְעִידָה (כִּי־הַמָּשִׁיחַ) אֱמֶת הוּא	6 This is he who came with water (and the spirit) and blood Yeshua the Meshiah; he is not [meaning he did not come] with water alone, but with water and blood, and the spirit testifies (that the Meshiah) he is truth.	6 This is he who came by water (and the spirit) and blood, Jesus the Messiah; he did not come by water alone, but by water and blood; and the spirit testifies (that the Messiah) is truth.
כִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה הֵם הַמְעִידִים 7 בְּשָׁמַיִם הָאֵל הַדָּבָר וְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּשְׁלֹשָׁה אֵלֶּה אֶחָד הֵם	7 Because three they are, testifying in Heaven: The Father, the Word and the Spirit Holy and three these one they.	7 Because there are three who testify in Heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.
וּשְׁלֹשׁ הוּא הַמְעִידָה בָּאָרֶץ 8 רוּחַ וְהַמַּיִם וְהַדָּם וּשְׁלֹשׁ הָאֵלֶּה לְאַחַד הֵבָה	8 And three are, bearing witness on Earth: the spirit and the water and the blood; and three these to a unity are.	8 And there are three who bear witness on Earth: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three are into [= form] one unity.
אִם אֶת־עֲדוּת בְּנֵי אָדָם 9 נִקְחָ עֲדוּת אֱלֹהִים גְּדוּלָּהּ הִיא מִמֶּנָּה כִּי־זֹאת הִיא עֲדוּת אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הֶעִידָהּ עַל־בְּנוֹ	9 If the testimony of the sons of Adam we receive, the testimony of God: great she* is compared to her; for this she is the testimony of God which in her He has testified regarding His Son.	9 If we receive the testimony of the sons of Adam, the testimony of God is greater than it; for it is the testimony of God in which He has testified of His Son.
	* testimony is feminine in Hebrew	

Translation & Transcription facilitated by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, December 2025

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Appendix: Hutter's Hebrew compared to Cambridge Oo.1.32 Hebrew text.

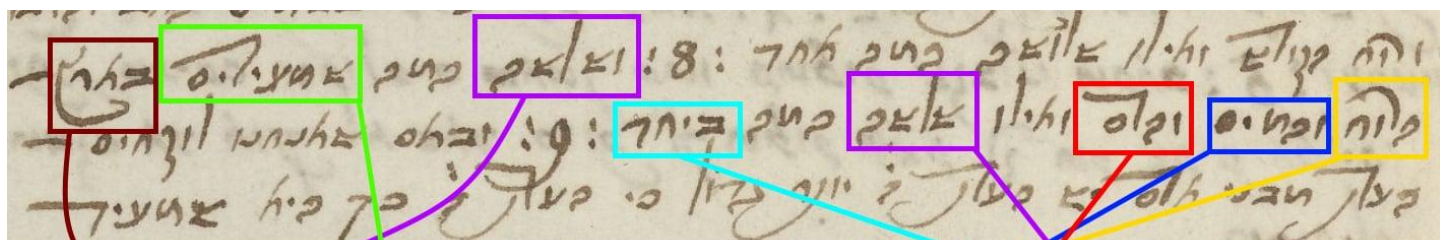
Hutter does have the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses in his Hebrew text of I John 5. So, I asked the translators if the Cambridge Hebrew New Testament Oo.1.32 was simply a copy. The translator created some diagrams detailing the differences (below). I also asked some specific questions concerning the differences (below).



7For there are three that beare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.]

כי שלשה המה שמעידים בשמים האב והדיבור ורוח הקודש אילו שלושה המה אחד

Cambridge Oo.1.32 Hebrew I John 5:7 compared to Hutter's Hebrew with English translation and diagrams via Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence August 2025.



8[And there are three that beare witness in earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in one.]

ושלשה המה שמעידים בארץ - הרוח והמים והדם ואילו שלשם המה ביחד

Cambridge Oo.1.32 Hebrew I John 5:8 compared to Hutter's Hebrew with English translation and diagrams via Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence August 2025.

Response: As you can see the Hebrew in Oo.1.32 is not a simple copy or even close to the Hebrew in Hutter's text. However, I also asked specific questions (below).

My Questions for the Translator

No.

Just some small differences between the two versions. See the image below, for instance. The first line is from Hutter, the second is from the MS. The keywords (green/red) are the same, but the formulations are different.

ושלוש הווח המעידוח בארץ: הרוח והמים והדם ושלוש האלה לאחת הנה
ושלשה המה שמעידים בארץ: הרוח והמים והדם ואילו שלשם המה ביחד

אמעל עקרה יא חתן: ד: כי אלע קטב אפעלס באמיוס סג סג
וה קדש ואלו אלע קטב אחד: 8: ואלע קטב אפעלס באר-
כות זכרים נקד ואלו אלע קטב ביתר: 9: ובס אשת אוזנים -

spirit the holy

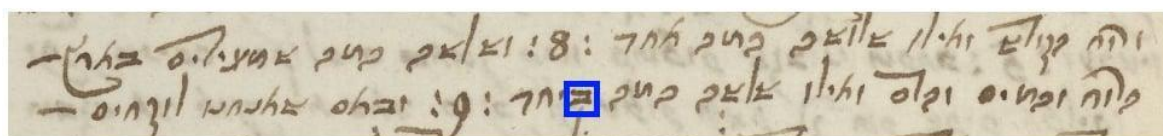
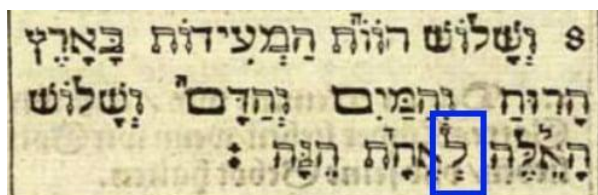
Page 31

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The Sephardic script has a preposition in the last clause of verse 8 and no preposition in the last clause of verse 7. The same is true of Hutter's version, though the preposition it has in the last clause of verse 8 is a different one than the preposition used there in the Sephardic script.

The preposition in Hutter is attached to the penultimate word, and that word means "one". In the Sephardic manuscript, the preposition is attached to the last word, and that word is very similar to the word for "one" and probably related, but it more or less means "together", "communion", "unity" or "oneness".

The prepositions are highlighted here:



Appendix: The London Walton Polyglot New Testament, 1667 : I John 5:6-9

- Brian Walton (1600 – 29 November 1661) was an English Anglican priest, divine and scholar. He is mostly remembered for his polyglot Bible. The proposals for the Polyglot appeared in 1652. The book itself came out in six great folios. The first volume appeared in September 1654; the second in July 1655; the third in July 1656; and the last three in 1657. Nine languages are used: Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Ethiopic, Greek and Latin. Among his collaborators were James Ussher, John Lightfoot and Edward Pococke, Edmund Castell, Abraham Wheelocke and Patrick Young, Thomas Hyde and Thomas Greaves. (Brian Walton. Wikipedia. <[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Walton_\(bishop\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Walton_(bishop))>)

* قَالُوا *
* وَجَدْنَا نَبِيًّا *
* وَدَعَيْنَا مَنَاسِكَ الْكَلْبِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *
* وَنَحْنُ كَالْأَكْلَابِ *

C A P. V.

Festo Luminum, hoc est, Epiphaniz. 6.

Quisquis credit Jesum esse Christum, ex Deo natus est. Et quisquis diligit genitorem, diligit & eum qui natus est ex eo. Et in hoc cognoscimus quod diligimus filios Dei, quum Deum diligimus, & exequimur praecepta ejus. Hæc enim charitas Dei, ut servemus præcepta ejus; & præcepta ejus gravia non sunt. Quoniam quisquis natus est ex Deo, vincit ipsum mundum; hæc est victoria quæ vicit mundum, fides nostra. Quis est enim qui vincit ipsum mundum, nisi is qui credit Jesum esse filium Dei? Hic est qui venit per aquam & sanguinem Jesus Christus, non per aquam solum, sed per aquam & sanguinem. Et Spiritus testificatur, quoniam ipse Spiritus est veritas.

Diest 7. versus.

Et tres sunt testes, Spiritus, & aqua, & sanguis: & hi tres in uno sunt. Si testimonium hominum accipimus, quantum magis testimonium Dei, quod majus est? & hoc est testimonium Dei, quo testificatus est de Filio suo.

<archive.org/details/WaltPoly1PrologVariantReadings/WaltPoly10_John-Rev>

page 922 : image 211

Note: Walton's polyglot Syriac New Testament omits I John 5:7. Further you can see from the Latin that verse 8 omits "in earth". Therefore, Rabbi Ezekiel (et al) could not have used the Peshitta (Syriac) in Walton's polyglot as the basis for the Heavenly & Earthly Witnesses (I John 5:7,8) found in the Hebrew Cochin manuscript.

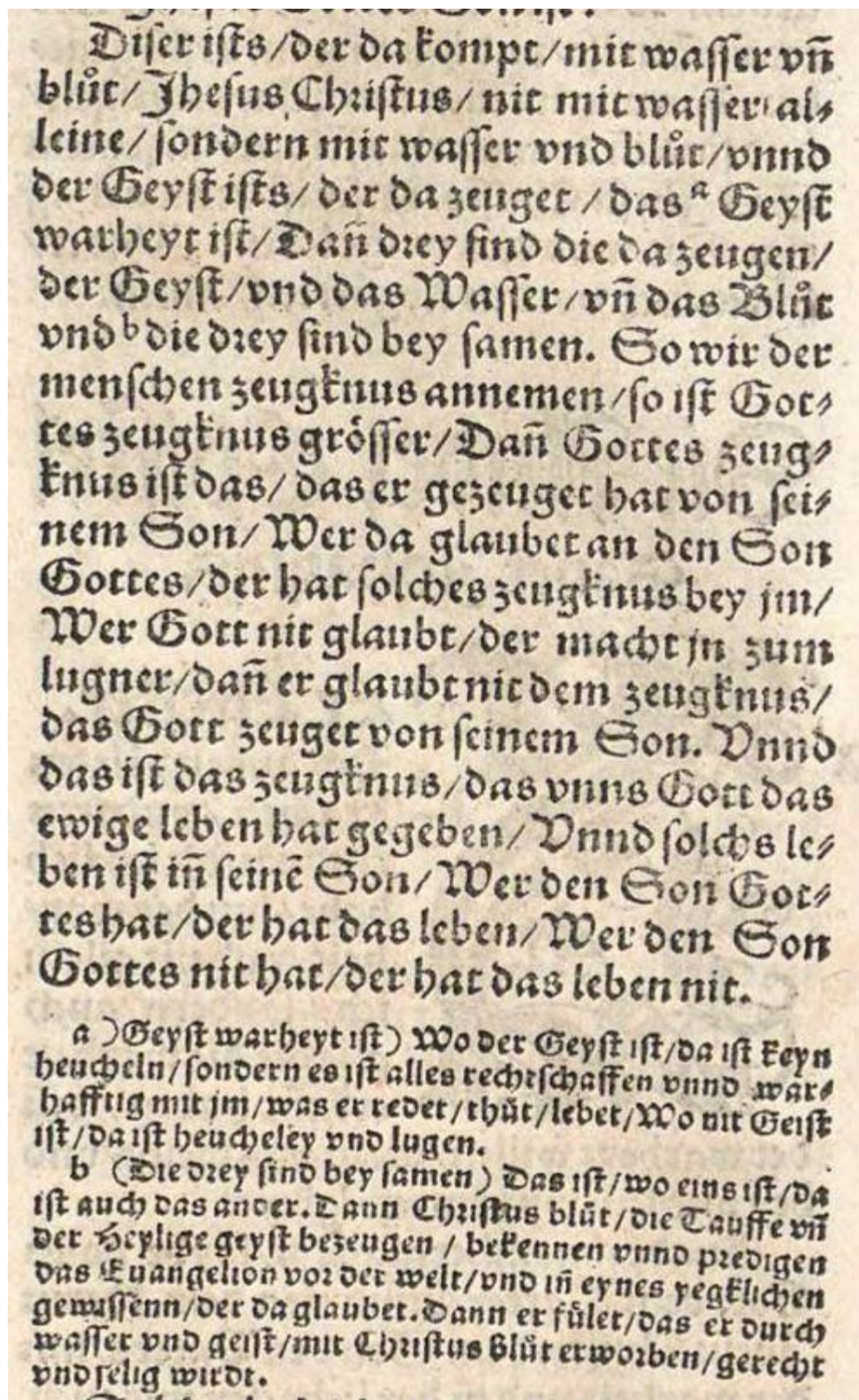
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Appendix: Luther, Martin, 1534. Biblia : I John 5:6-9

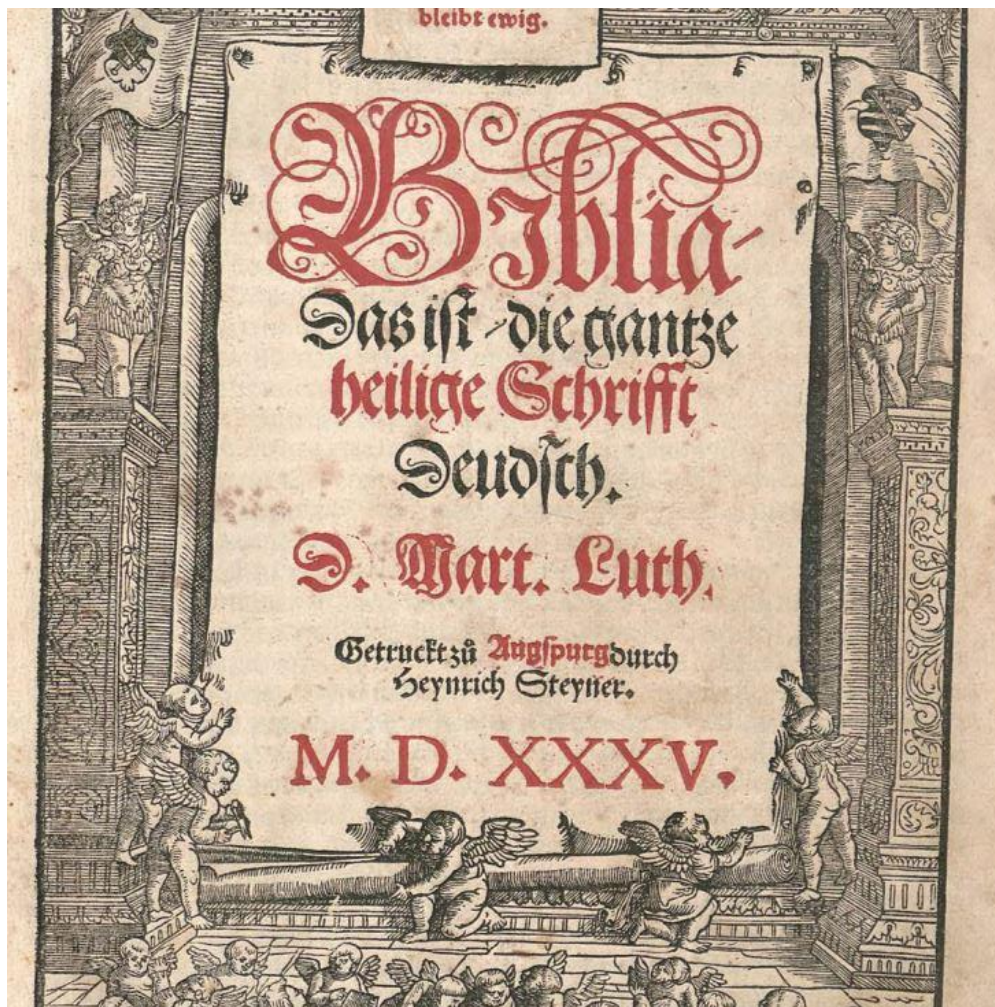
• The translation of the entire Bible into German was published in a six-part edition in 1534, a collaborative effort of Luther and many others such as Johannes Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Caspar Creuziger, Philip Melancthon, Matthäus Aurogallus, and Georg Rörer. Luther worked on refining the translation up to his death in 1546;[25] he had worked on the edition that was printed that year. The Old Testament was translated using a Jewish Masoretic Text of Soncino, the Vulgate of Jerome, the Septuagint, and, later, Latin versions by Santes Pagnino and by Sebastian Münster.[21]:§ 63 The 1534 edition issued by the Hans Lufft press in Wittenberg included 117 original woodcuts.[26] This reflected the recent trend (since 1522) of including artwork to reinforce the textual message.[27] According to Biblical historian W. Gordon Campbell, Lufft's printing of the Bible was introduced for sale at the Michaelmas fair in Wittenberg.[28] The work, was printed on 1,824 pages in two volumes with the addition of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha to Luther's 1522 New Testament, and included woodcut illustrations. ...The complete 1534 edition of the Luther Bible contains a total of 75 books, including 39 books of the Old Testament, 9 books of the Apocrypha, and 27 books of the New Testament:[38] (Luther Bible. Wikipedia. <[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luther_Bible)>

I John 5:6-9

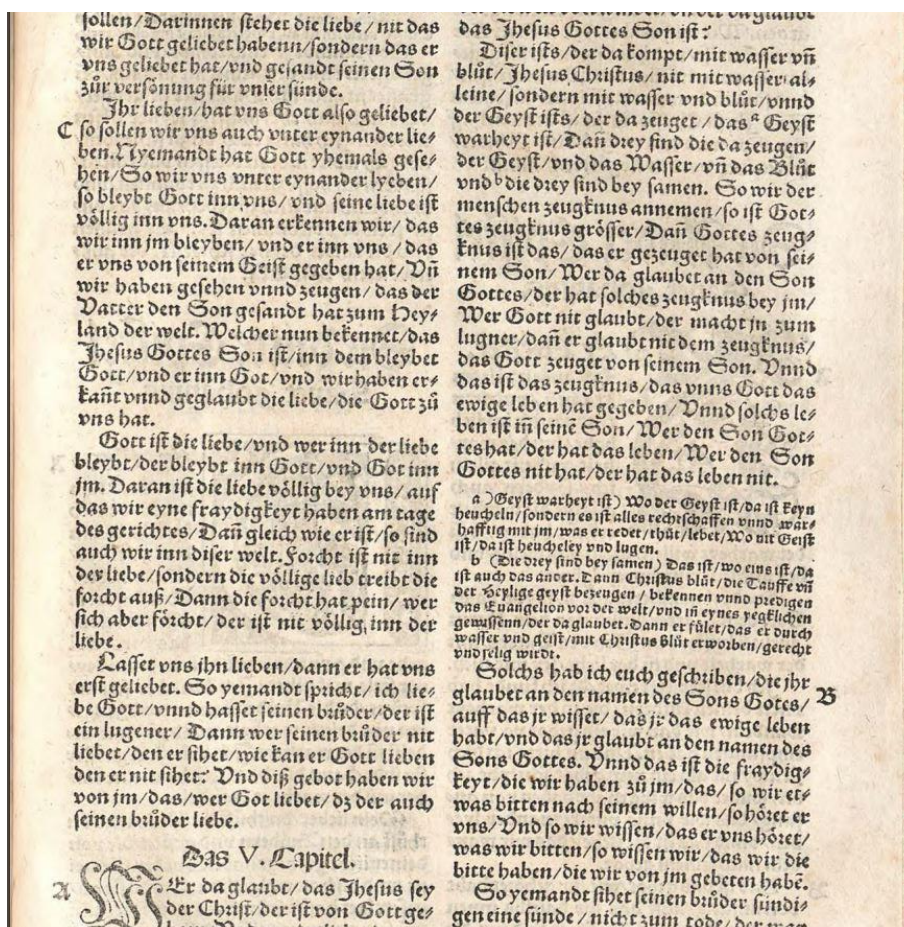
- Diser ists / der da kompt / mit wasser und blüt / Jhesus Christus / nit mit wasser alleine / sondern mit wasser und blüt / unnd der Geyst ists / der da zeuget / das a Geyst warheyt ist / Dann drey sind die da zeugen / der Geyst / und das Wasser / und das Blüt und b die drey sind bey samen. So wir der menschen zeugknus annemen / so ist Gottes zeugknus grösser / Dann Gottes zeugknus ist das / das er gezeuget hat von seinem Son. (page 127 : Image 1290 : <archive.org/details/lutherbibel1535>)
- Transcribed by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, November 2025.
 - This is he that cometh by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth, that the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are together. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the testimony of God, which he hath testified of his Son.
 - Translated by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, November 2025.



Luther, Martin, and Stephan Füssel. 1534. Biblia : I John 5:6-9
 page 127 : Image 1290 : <archive.org/details/lutherbibel1535>



Luther, Martin, and Stephan Füssel. 1534. Biblia
Title page : <archive.org/details/lutherbibel1535>



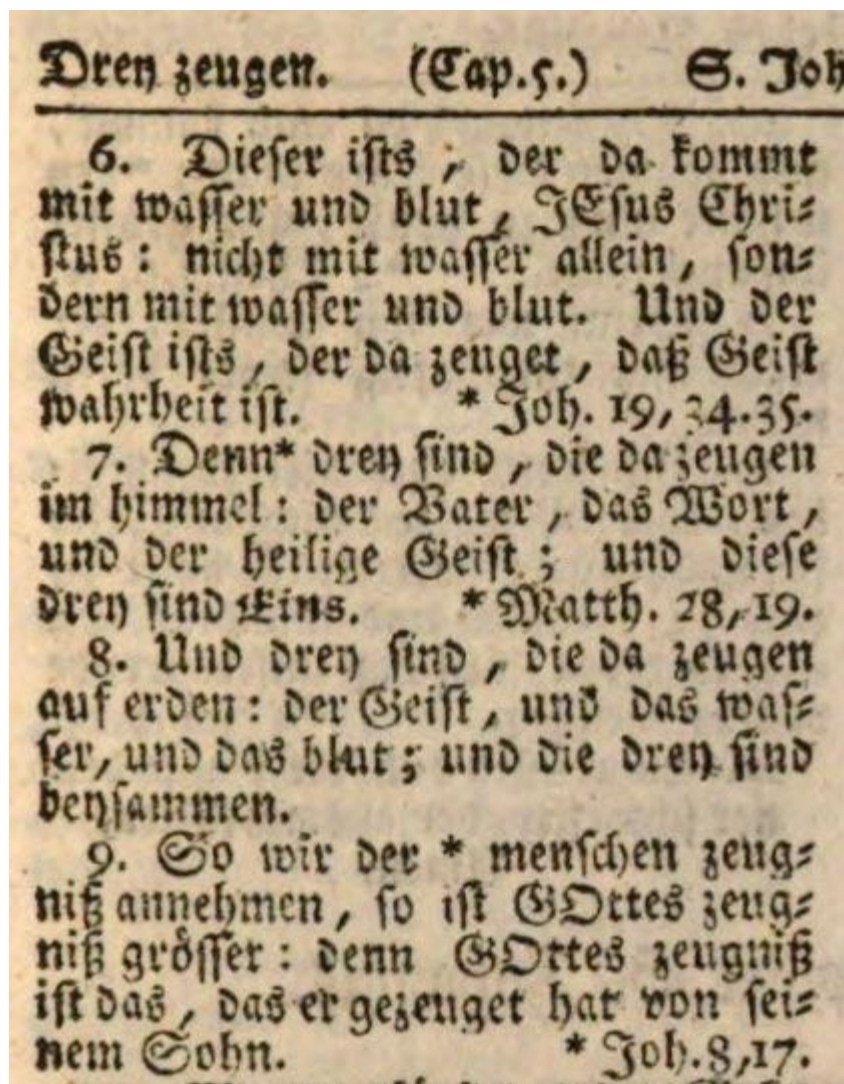
Luther, Martin, and Stephan Füssel. 1534. Biblia : Full Page
 page 127 : Image 1290 : <archive.org/details/lutherbibel1535>

Appendix: Luther, Martin, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, 1752 : I John 5:6-9

Luther, Martin, August Hermann Francke, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, and Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle. 1752. Die Bibel, Oder Die Ganze Heilige Schrift Des Alten Und Neuen Testaments. Die MDCCLII. Auflage. Halle: Cansteinische Bibel-Anstalt. <mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10271540-5>

I John 5:6-9

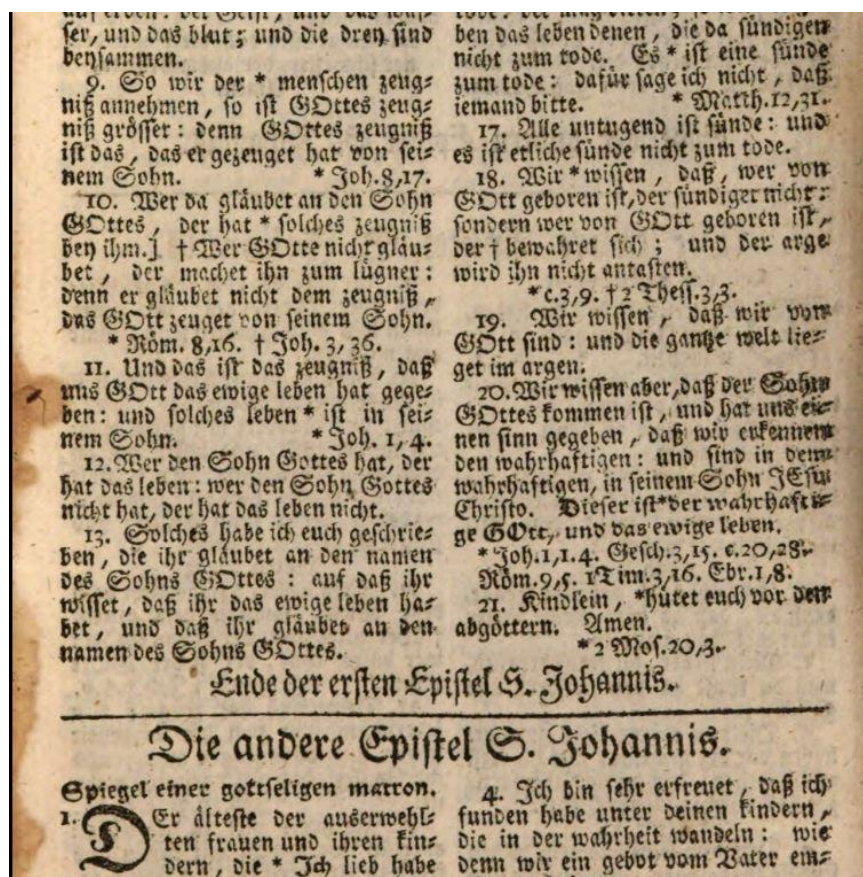
- 6. Dieser ists, der da kommt mit wasser und blut, Jesus Christus : nicht mit wasser allein, sondern mit wasser und blut. Und der Geist ists, der da zeuget, daß Geist wahrheit ist. *Joh. 19, 34.35.
- 7. Denn* drey sind, die da zeugen im himmel : der Vater, das Wort, und der heilige Geist ; und diese drey sind Eins. *Matth. 28,19.
- 8. Und drey sind, die da zeugen auf erden : der Geist, und das wasser, und das blut ; und die drey sind beysammen.
- 9. So wir der * menschen zeugniß annehmen, so ist Gottes zeugniß grösser : denn Gottes zeugniß ist das, das er gezeuget hat von seinem Sohn. *Joh. 8,17.
- page 271 : Image 1635 <mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10271540-5>
- Transcribed by Sarah Van der Pas, correspondence, November 2025
 - 6. This is he that cometh by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth, that the Spirit is the truth. *John 19:34-35.
 - 7. For* there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. *Matt. 28:19.
 - 8. And there are three that testify on earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three are together.
 - 9. If we * receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the testimony of God, which he hath testified of his Son. *Joh. 8,17.
- Translated by Sarah Van der Pas, Correspondence, November 2025.



Luther, Martin, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, 1752 : I John 5:6-9
page 271 : Image 1635 : <mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10271540-5>
BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek



Luther, Martin, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, 1752 : I John 5:6-9
Title Page : <mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10271540-5>
BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek



Luther, Martin, Cansteinsche Bibelanstalt, 1752 : I John 5:6-9

page 271 : Image 1635 : <mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10271540-5>

BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

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Appendix: Franz Delitzsch : The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in the Cochin translation.

Having been better informed about this translation, brought back from the East Indies by Claude Buchanan through excerpts from the manuscripts, thanks to the kindness of a learned colleague, Dr. Schiller-Szinessy in Cambridge, I am now able to provide more precise and, fortunately, decisive information about what I gleaned from secondary sources on page 22 above.

As with all Buchanan manuscripts in Cambridge, the manuscripts concerning us here also bear the following prefaced note: This MS. was found in one of the synagogues of the Black Jews of Cochin in India by the Rev. Claudius Buchanan in the year 1806. Therefore, if the place of discovery is called Travancore, then the small state of that name under British rule in the far southwest of the Indian peninsula is meant, which is bordered to the north by the Principality of Cochin (Sanser. kaćcha marshy shore) and probably also includes it in a broader sense. The Jewish community of Cochin (קוגין) consists of both white and black Jews. It follows the Spanish rite and has its own distinctive synagogue poetry.²

The Travancore translation exists in two manuscripts: I. Codex Oo1. 32, 160 small folio sheets, in Sephardic (Spanish) cursive script, containing all the New Testament writings from the Gospel of Matthew to the Epistle to Jude; the scribe is identified as another from the Epistle to the Philippians onward. II. Codex Oo1.16, small folio, in square script, also on paper, consisting of two parts: 1. Acts to Ephesians, 99 leaves, a copy from Codex I in the original hand. For the remaining letters, the scribe refers to הספר אחר שכתבתי (The other book I wrote before this one). 2. Apocalypse on 6 leaves, by the second hand. That the two hands are working simultaneously and closely together is shown in Codex I by the beginning of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians; the first four lines here are exceptionally by the first hand.

The author began his work full of fanatical hatred for Christianity. He writes the Gospel in the Talmudic style as the compound word און גליון, with the implied meaning of a disastrous revelation, and with the exception of Mark (perhaps because of 12:29), he rails against all the Evangelists and, like Jesus himself, gives them the epithet הטמא (the impure one). At the end of the fourth Gospel, he writes: "Here is the end of the impure gospel according to the preaching of accursed Jochanan the Evangelist, who spoke Greek in Ephesus. In the heavens is my witness that I did not translate all this in order to believe it (God forbid!), but to be able to inform the Epicureans (unbelievers). May they be wiped from the world (Amen, so be it!), and may the true Messiah of our righteousness come, Amen." In this anger he also begins the Acts of the Apostles: "This is the second part of the gospel, which the accursed, impure Christian-blasphemer Luke devised from his bad, weak, and deranged mind; may his name and memory (ישו) and the name of Jesus [1] ישר is meant both times as an abbreviation of ימח שמו וזכרו.] be blotted out of the world!"

But from the Epistle to the Romans onward, these curses disappear. The author is not yet inwardly moved, for he still refers to Jesus as הטמא (a derogatory term for Jesus), he still inserts the occasional innuendo, and upon reaching the Epistle to the Philippians, he remarks irritably: "There are four chapters, but I have not seen anything new (שום חידוש) in them and have therefore left them unwritten." He leaves the Epistle to the Colossians with the same remark: "I have also left these four chapters unwritten." This first half of the manuscript breaks off with the isolated heading of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Meanwhile, an inner change must have taken place within the writer, who is undoubtedly the translator himself. The letters left untranslated (Philippians to 1 Thessalonians) now follow. From here he enlisted the help of another, namely, as sure signs reveal, the help of a German Jew, although the handwriting is not German but Sephardic. After the letters left untranslated have been added, the following follows [2] As in the clause after שמש אמונים ביד פיבא the words כמו פרעה (faithful in the Pharaonic manner).]. to the Thessalonians, the letters to Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the letters of Peter and John. Already in the Peterian letters, a more active internal engagement is evident—the scriptures are reproduced here according to their Old Testament wording, and the quotations are inscribed in the margins. However, with the Letter to the Hebrews, which,

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contrary to the usual arrangement, follows that of John according to Luther's method [3] As is well known, it was Luther who placed Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation at the end because he did not consider these four books to be completely equal to the others.], a fundamental shift occurred; the heading reads:

שוב אגרת אל העבריים היא אגרת אשר שלח המבחר איש אלהי הקרוש שאול בן איש ימיני מתלמידי רבן גמליאל הנקרא פעולוס
עבד ישוע, אל אחד המאמינים ע"י תימוטיאוס אוהבו מארץ איטליא

("Furthermore, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the letter which the chosen, learned, holy man Saul the Benjamite, a disciple of Rabban Gamaliel, called Paul, servant of Jesus, sent to one of the believers through his beloved Timothy from Italy.") Then, as in the Luther Bible, follow the Epistles of James (יעקב) and at the end, the Epistle of Jude (יאקבוס), with which this Codex I concludes. In Codex II, everything in No. 1 is from the original source, but the Apocalypse is from this later source. By listing the missing writings, No. 1 does not follow the Luther Bible, but places the Epistle to the Hebrews at the end of the Pauline Epistles and then follows them with the Catholic Epistles, omitting the Epistle of Jude. The margins of the translation of the Book of Revelation are full of exclamations: Good! (טוב) Difficult! (קשה) Hard to reconcile with...! A convincing chapter! and the like.

An article entitled "The Halle Missionaries and the Jews" in Volume 2 of the journal "Seed of Hope," edited by Pastor Becker and myself, by the former East Indian missionary W. Germann, now pastor in Spechtbrunn near Meiningen, leaves us in no doubt about the translator and his collaborator. The most respected among the white Jews in Ober-Cochin around the middle of the 19th century was Ezekiel, whose father had come there from Aleppo. [1] He is also mentioned in Jost, General History of the Israelite People 2, 408, and had a European reputation in the previous century. From the Prague edition of Abraham Farissol's Ezekiel and related writings with additions by Naftali Wessely (1793, 8th edition) we learn the family name of this Ezekiel. He was called Jechezkel Rakibi (see there 156, 232).] He corresponded in Portuguese with the missionaries in Tranqab. Their old accounts mention him frequently. At the end of August, he raised objections to a letter from the missionaries dated February 1742, in which they cited some ancient synagogue testimonies from the tract *Light in the Evening* (*Licht am Abend*) proving that the Messiah would suffer for the sins of humanity. He nevertheless requested a copy of the tract and offered to continue the discussion. He was a lover of books, owned the Bible in seven languages—a polyglot Bible (perhaps Walton's)—and could also speak Tamil and Warugian (Telugu), but could not read or write them. He was said to have the Tamil Bible printed in Tranqab at his home. [2] The edition by Ziegenbalg, which appeared in 1714-15, of which no copy can now be found anywhere in East India. D. Blomstrand managed to obtain a copy of the 1758 edition by Fabricius, it too has disappeared, but has been reprinted in Madras (communication from Director Hardeland).] In September, he received a Hebrew translation of *Light in the Evening* and the Letter to the Hebrews. He inquired whether he might not be allowed to write in Hebrew, because his Portuguese scribe could not quite grasp his opinion or even felt scrupled about writing it down. Despite his objections, he testified in May 1743 that "the Epistle to the Hebrews in Hebrew would be particularly dear to him," which is why the first half of the Hebrew Gospel of Luke was sent to him in September. We find him mentioned only once more. In October 1754, Jacob Suriano from Cochin, a Jew originally from Spain, came to Trankebar, and a letter to "Rabbi Ezekiel, who lives in Cochin" was given to him.

This Rabbi Ezekiel in Ober-Cochin, he and no other, is the author of the translation from the Gospel of Matthew up to the inscriptions of the Epistle to the Philippians (אצל פיליפסיה), the Epistle to the Colossians (לית (קולוסיה), and the first Epistle to the Thessalonians (לית תיסלוניקא). The text to which he adheres so closely, and from which, for example, that אצל (לית) originates, can also be definitively identified: it is the Syriac text (Peshitt) of his polyglot.

From the Epistle to the Philippians onward, however, it is another who continues the work of Rabbi Ezekiel. While retaining the inscriptions he had already drafted, he soon drops the Syriac לית (אצל). He is

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working for Rabbi Ezekiel, for the first four lines of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians are written by Ezekiel himself, and one immediately recognizes him from the opening words:

פולוס וסילונוס וטימוטיאוס לעדת תיסלוניקא בשם אבא

("Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians, in the name of the Father...") following the Peshitto. However, he works independently insofar as he translates the text according to Luther not from Syriac, but from German. The German Jew betrays himself through the spellings פוילוס (Paulus), רוים (Raum = Rom), אטהרני (Athene), etc., and the translator from the Luther Bible through the sequence of the books, through the misunderstood casus obliqui פטר (for: Petrus), יִהְיֶה (for: Johannes), and הזקן גרא (der Aelste Gajo for: Gaius), but also through slavish literalness, as e.g. in 1 Tim. 11 ("Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ") and in the clause ראש העיר (for capital), and through strange misunderstandings such as: For example, in the clause of the Epistle to Titus, ע"י ניקופלי ("written from Nicopolis," which is made into a person by ע"י = על ידי), and in the inscription of the Book of Revelation, this is the Revelation of John אלה הסודות (לעדת להערת) theologians. incorrect for יהנניס להעדת טילאגין to the community נגלה ע"י יהנניס

Who is this translator? We can identify him with reasonable certainty, even though we cannot name him. A contemporary of Rabbi Ezekiel in Upper Cochin, as the Halle accounts state, was "one of Frankfurt, who understands most European languages and dresses like a European." These two unparalleled individuals in Ober-Cochin must have been mutually attracted to one another, and the surviving manuscripts show that, inspired by the sensational appearance of the young Malabar pagan mission, they met with a shared interest in learning more about Christianity through its documents. The Frankfurter continued the translation of Rabbi Ezekiel, but for Ezekiel, since in Book 1 of Codex II, Rabbi Ezekiel designates the transcription of the letters to the Thessalonians and beyond as his own. We may therefore assume that the affinity for Christianity evident in these manuscripts reflects the inner convictions of Rabbi Ezekiel, who, as Buchanan recounted, became a Christian and died a Christian. His German collaborator's attitude toward Christianity may have been friendly from the outset and may have contributed significantly to lessening Ezekiel's initial hatred. However, these are only assumptions.

We can offer a third reliable piece of information about this historically significant treasure in Cambridge. Codex I contains the Hebrew Epistle to the Hebrews, which Ezekiel received from Tranquebar. When he reported to the missionaries that "this Epistle to the Hebrews in the Hebrew language was particularly dear to him," this is confirmed by the fact that he included it in his translation work. It is the translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews by the proselyte Friedrich Albert Christian* [Not Christiani, for in the account of the baptism, to the question: What will you be called in the future? he answers: Friedrich Albrecht, Cognomine Christian.], which we mentioned above on page 20. This translation is contained in Codex I in literal transcription. The apostle's detailed sermon is taken from the title page, and while Ezekiel writes the apostle with his Syrian name Paulos or Pavlos, (In Tamil he is called Pawul) and his colleague renders the German Paulus as פוילוס, here we read the פוילוס favored by Christian, which stems from his belief that the name Paulus was derived from a פויל sounding similar to פאול, the precursor of the פאול in the London translation.

The translation of the Epistle to the Romans dates from the time when its author was still hostile to Christianity. We provide the text according to MS. Oo1.16 and, in square brackets, the variants in MS. Oo1.32. The omission of הטמא in this later work indicates that the author's relationship with Christianity had meanwhile improved.

• Franz Delitzsch, Paulus des Apostels Brief an die Römer aus griechischen Urtext auf Grund des Sinai-Codex in das Hebräische übersetzt und aus Talmud und Midrasch erläutert (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1870) page 103-107.

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