

century good MS. is found in the British Museum (Add. 7851), and it has been carefully described by the skilled hand of Dr. Rieu.

Happily, Rabghūzi is not the only man who can guide us safely in our investigations of the language of nations which played so important a rôle in the history of the world.

A manuscript in the John Rylands Library of Manchester contains the text of the Koran with a literal translation into this Rabghūzi dialect, distant only a few steps from the Uighuric tongue. This MS. numbered cod. 760-773 consists of fourteen volumes of 355 × 300 mm.

Nearly all the volumes are unfortunately truncated at the beginning and at the end, and all of them have many leaves missing in the middle, whilst the margins of many of the remaining leaves which were injured by worms have in consequence disappeared for ever. But what is most to be regretted is the clumsiness of the last binder who arranged the volumes in the present order. Many leaves which properly belong to the beginning are placed at the end; and several leaves which contain verses of a Surah and should have been bound, for instance, in volume 766, are bound through an incomprehensible blunder in volume 770, etc.

As the MS. stands to-day, it would have occupied thirty volumes instead of fourteen if there were no lacunæ in it.

The MS. seems to come from a country in which Arabic was not the language of the people. The last owner of the MS. has preserved his name in his seal found on Folio 19a of volume 765: "‘Abdul-Bâki, son of ‘Ali, the Arab." We suppose that according to the Oriental custom he would not have called himself "the Arab" if he were living in an Arab country.

One of the curious features of this MS. is that the old Turki and the Persian translations do not correspond always with the Arabic text, in spite of the fact that one word is above the other, beginning with the Arabic and ending with the old Turki. If we mistake not, the Persian and the old Turki translations were made several years before the transcription of the Arabic sacred text,

and the task of the scribe was in this case simply to transcribe from another MS. a translation already in existence. Two reasons make this view highly probable :

1. There are Arabic sentences which do not give the same meaning as that of the translation. This fact would be very surprising, did we suppose that the divergence extends only to some very easy words, such as pronouns, and preformative letters of the Aorist. We know that in early times, and before the invention of the diacritical points in the Arabic language, there were in the Mohammedan world different schools, which read, for instance, the word *مقتل* as *Naktulu*, "we kill," or *Yaktulu*, "he kills," or *Taktulu*, "thou killest." When the context did not condemn one of these readings to death, they were generally admitted by the most rigid commentators; and the *Kutubul-Kira* 'at have preserved scores of such words read in a different way. In the MS. with which we are dealing, it happens sometimes that when the Arabic text gives "he kills" the translation exhibits "we kill." Let us take an example which is even more amazing than a usual variant of a diacritical point. In volume 760, last line of fol. 1, the Arabic words of Surah iii. 116 *وان نصيبهم* are rendered in Persian *واكر برسد شمارا* and in old Turki *واكر تكسا سيزكا*. The Arabic text means "and if it befall them," and the Persian and the old Turki signify "and if it befall you." The old Turki and the Persian translations are, therefore, made from a copy of the Koran which exhibited the reading of Flügel's edition, "and if it befall you."

2. In volume 771, folio 68a, the word "God" is omitted in the Arabic text in verse 18 of Surah xlv., but it is rendered, in spite of the Arabic omission, into Persian and old Turki. This omission means also that the copyist was transcribing from two different MSS. He has omitted the word in question in one of his transcriptions, but he has inserted it in the two other transcriptions. Here we find a curious coincidence, to which we wish to draw attention.

In the book entitled "Leaves from the ancient Qurâns" which was printed some few months ago at the University Press of Cambridge, the word *Allah*,

which occurs in the verse of the Koran quoted above, has been read *اللكم* or *اللك* "a blow." I was not quite satisfied with this reading, but the palimpsest which belongs to Dr. Agnes S. Lewis did not permit me to read the word otherwise. The letter *ك* is distinct and does not seem to suffer the existence of another word, or, at all events, I was not able to find a more suitable word. Everything considered, it appears that the scribe of our present MS. found himself face to face with the same difficulty; having been unable to substitute another good vocable for the one that he could not decipher, he omitted it entirely. The hypothesis will become more plausible, if we consider the extreme care the copyist has taken, throughout all the volumes, of the word *Allah* on which he has indeed profusely lavished all his skill; he writes it always in gilt letters, and sometimes he forms its letters in a curiously waving form, resembling a coarse zigzag. In any case such an omission in the text of the Koran while both translations, the Old Turki and the Persian, are exact, is worthy of the attention of critics.

The note of the scribe referred to above informs us that the Arabic text has been transcribed from an old Kūfic MS., but the most elementary criterion is deficient as to the provenance of the old Turki version.

On the probable hypothesis that the translation was undertaken several years before the transcription of the Arabic text, the old Turki dialect becomes of exceptional importance. The Arabic MS. itself goes back to the time of Rabghūzi, or at latest, a few years after him, while the translation is very probably many decades earlier. Our MS. is, therefore, from a linguistic point of view, more valuable than Rabghūzi's apocryphal stories.

A second reason which seems to establish a superiority of our MS. over Rabghūzi's work, is the facility with which it may be used for critical studies or scientific researches. Being simply a literal and interlinear translation of the Koran, while the Old Turki word is placed immediately under the Persian and the Arabic words explained, it affords a most valuable field of investigation

for the student who is by this method enabled to examine more thoroughly the old Chaghataï dialect for purposes of comparison with the Uighur language.

There are many lexicographical and grammatical similarities between the dialect exhibited in Shaw's Grammar\* and that used in our MS. ; but these similarities, so far as our short study of the text permits us to judge, do not seem to exceed in preponderating proportion those which unite all the Tatar dialects, the Chaghataï and the Osmanli, for instance ; and the main interest is precisely to ascertain the number of these similarities and dissimilarities and to know the epoch in which they have been gradually introduced by the general public, whose linguistic knowledge was not so brilliant in ancient times as to fix all the disunited elements of words into a more common and stereotyped form of speech.

We could lay more stress on some grammatical peculiarities of this dialect, but we think that this short notice is sufficient to give an adequate idea of the MS. and to stimulate the ardour of Ural-Altai scholars, who, by a careful study of its contents, will perhaps be in a position to make substantial additions to the information published from time to time regarding the Turco-Tatar languages.

It should also be pointed out that in certain catalogues mention is made of a Koran *cum Versione Turcicâ* ; but since it is not clearly stated what value we must attribute to this misleading term, we infer that it means simply Osmanli Turkish. At the time when such catalogues were prepared, few scholars were familiar with the Old Turki. These MSS., consisting of a single volume, cannot be compared with the thirty volumes of which our MS. was composed. We cherish the hope that in the near future we shall learn more of the exact nature of these manuscripts.

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\* " A Sketch of the Turki Language " (Lahore, 1875).

## A MOSLEM APOCRYPHAL PSALTER

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It was my good fortune recently to purchase a MS. copy of the Zabūr Da'ūd, or Moslem Psalter, at one of the dealers near the Mosque Al Azhar. It is dated 1172 A.H., and the copyist's name is given as Mohammed ibn Ibrahim ibn Mohammed al Halabi. It was evidently written at Cairo, and although in good condition the MS. bears no title, but begins in the middle of the first page, as follows :

“ In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate : It is related to us by Abu Walid ibn Yunas ibn Abdullah ibn Mohammed ibn Thlaib, the preacher in the mosque of Cordova, who said that it was related to him by Mohammed Abdullah b. Mohammed b. Nasir, who said it was related to him by Abu 'Ali Husseiny Sa'ad b. Idris, who said it was related to him by Abu Abdullah b. Yahya b. Abu Zachariya of Egypt, who said it was related to him by Abdul Aziz b. Jafir b. Abd es Samad, who said that Mohammed b. Ahmad told him how Abdul Man'am heard from Akil b. Munabah abd es Samad how Wahab b. Munabah said, ' I read that which God Most High sent down upon David (upon whom be peace) in the Zaboor.' ”

Then follow “ Psalms ” in order to the number of a hundred and fifty. The MS. has 215 pages of text, and measures eight and a half inches by thirteen inches. The script is good and the ink is of two colours, the number of the Psalm and the expression “ O David,” wherever it occurs, being put in red ink, as also in those cases where there are repeated phrases. The Psalms are divided into eight books, each beginning with the Moslem formula, “ In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.” These eight sections of the Psalter are divided as follows : Psalm 1-17 ; 18-36 ; 37-46 ; 47-57 ; 58-77 ; 78-99 ; 117-142 ; 143-150. At the close