

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

INTRODUCTION

§ 1. SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE BOOK.

IN the story of Ahikar we are probably, as in the parallel case of Tobit, in the region of folk-lore pure and simple. It is a tale of Ingratitude and its Just Judgement, much in the same ethical manner as Tobit is a tale of a Grateful Ghost, and how he made recompense to his benefactor, who had cared for his dead body. We make the acquaintance of the story, first of all, in the supplementary pages of the *Arabian Nights*; we then trace it through the legends of a variety of peoples, with a growing sense of the antiquity of the common nucleus which underlies the traditions, and finally, as an interesting combination of good luck with good learning, the original story turns up in an Aramaic papyrus of the fifth century B.C. among the ruins of Elephantiné; in a language, that is, which had been conjectured as its original, and of an antiquity even greater than had been assigned to it by any of its investigators. The discovery followed from first suspicions to last achievement is itself almost a romance.

Ahikar, who is the hero of the tale, was Grand-Vizier to Sennacherib, King of Assyria; he was a sage, as well as a politician, high in honour, abundant in wealth, and only poor by the curse of childlessness which left him without a son whom he might make the heir of his wealth and his wisdom. Repeated prayers brought him at last an injunction to take his sister's son, Nadan, and bring him up as his own offspring. The story-teller relates the education of the youth, and how, after being deluged with proverbial philosophy, he turned out ill, intrigued against his adopted father, and betrayed him, by forged documents of a treasonable character, to the Government. Ahikar is condemned to death and Nadan steps into his place; but, on the way to execution, the swordsman is reminded by Ahikar of a previous occasion on which he had saved him from a similar danger. A plan is devised by the two friends for the saving of Ahikar's life, a criminal is substituted for him at the place of execution, and Ahikar is hidden away in his own cellarage to wait for the evolution of events. At last political circumstances bring the necessary turn to the wheel of his fortune. The King of Assyria is unable, without his aid, to meet the intrigues and satisfy the demands of the King of Egypt; he sighs over Ahikar dead, and is informed, to his delight, that the sage is really living. Ahikar is brought out of his hiding-place, a very spectacle, with unkempt locks and overgrown nails, and reinstated in his ancient honour. After an interval spent, in the typical folk-lore manner, in satisfying the requirements of the King of Egypt, Ahikar returns to claim the boon of a due revenge on his adopted son, whom he imprisons, beats, and starves, and to whom he talks parables, till the young man dies,—after the manner recorded of another traitor in the Acts of the Apostles.

The story is divided internally into four parts, which need not, all of them, be of equal antiquity. There is (1) the narrative itself: (2) the imbedded proverbial philosophy or, as we may call it, the Teaching of Ahikar: (3) the journey to Egypt, which may be the expansion of a later folklorist and can easily be detached from the main narration; and (4) the similitudes, with which Ahikar completes the education of his nephew; or as we may call them, the Parables of Ahikar.

§ 2. THE ANTIQUITY OF THE BOOK.

The antiquity of the book is demonstrated by the following considerations:

(a) That Democritus, the Greek proverbial philosopher, is alleged by Clement of Alexandria to have incorporated with his writings matter which he had appropriated from the Pillar of Ahikar: if this be the real Democritus, and the monument actually contained the Sayings of Ahikar, the latter must have been extant in the early part of the fifth century B.C.

(b) That the story of Ahikar has been made the foundation for the account of the adventures of the Greek Aesop at the Court of Lykeros, King of Babylon.

(c) That the Book of Tobit makes definite allusion to the story of Ahikar and Nadan, the deliverance of the former, and the just doom of the latter, in a way that assumes the story to be well known to the author of Tobit and to his readers.

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(d) That Theophrastus is said to have composed a book called *Ahikar*, which suggests some account of the hero of our tale.

(e) That Strabo enumerates amongst persons who had mantic gifts a man named Ahaikar amongst the people of the Bosphorus, where it has been acutely suggested that we should read 'the people of Borsippa'.¹

(f) The names of the leading characters in the story are Assyrian in form, a peculiarity which is often conserved in the very latest versions.

(g) *Ahikar* appears to be included amongst the wise men of the world in a mosaic found at Trèves.

(h) And lastly, the story of *Ahikar* is found in a fragmentary papyrus recently recovered from the ruins of Elephantiné, and without doubt belonging to the fifth century before Christ.

A further confirmation, if confirmation were needed, would lie in the occurrence of definite quotations from the recovered story in other early works. The investigation of such quotations is, however, complicated by the uncertainty as to whether all parts of the *Ahikar*-tradition are substantially of the same age. If we could assume that they were, then, in view of the great age of the Elephantiné-papyrus and the still greater age of the original from which it is derived, we could at once infer that the *Ahikar* story was an influencing factor in a number of Biblical Psalms and in certain of the Sapiential books, such as Proverbs and Sirach, as well as in Daniel and in Tobit, in the Book of Jubilees and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. We shall also have a number of significant parallels in the New Testament, in the Gospels, the Acts, the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the second Epistle of Peter. It will, probably, be best to present all these coincidences as parallels in the first instance, and postpone the decision as to whether they are actual quotations until we have further light on the development of the story itself. Over and above these Biblical parallels, we have a number of quotations made by Shahrastani, probably through the medium of Democritus, a series of adaptations of the proverbs of *Ahikar* by Mohammed, an incorporation of part of the opening sentences in the story of Syntipas, a versification in Old French of one of the Parables of *Ahikar*, and a number of quotations in early Armenian writers. Few books have so wide an attestation as the story of *Ahikar*. For convenience we tabulate the above parallels and quotations as follows:—

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Democritus. | Matthew. |
| Tobit. | Luke. |
| Psalms. | Acts. |
| Proverbs. | 1 Corinthians. |
| Sirach. | 2 Peter. |
| Daniel. | 2 Timothy. |
| Jubilees. | Koran. |
| Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs. | Syntipas, and an |
| | Old French Parable. |

§ 3. QUOTATIONS AND REFERENCES.

a. Democritus.

Now that the antiquity of *Ahikar* is so firmly established, there is very little ground for questioning the references made to him or his teaching by Democritus or other writers depending on Democritus. Here are the principal passages that come under discussion:

Shahrastani, as from Democritus (ed. Cureton, p. 306):

'The tail of a dog gives him meat, his voice gets him blows.'

Cf. Aeth. 2: 'My son, make fair thy discourse and thy behaviour; for the wagging of a dog's tail gives him bread, but his jaw brings him stones.'

Syr. ii. 38: 'My son, sweeten thy tongue and make savoury the opening of thy mouth; for the tail of a dog gives him bread, but his mouth gets him blows.'

It is also found in the Copenhagen Arabic in this form:

'The tail of a dog gives him bread to eat, and his mouth gives him a beating with stones to eat.'

In Cod. Syr. S₃ it recurs in this form:

'For the tail of the dog gives him bread, but his mouth gives him blows and stones.'

In the Armenian sayings it has got into the second group in the form:

'(God passes judgement between me and thee). For the tail of a dog gives him bread, and his mouth a cudgel.'

¹ Th. Reinach in *Revue des Études Juives*, xxxviii, pp. 1-13, and Fränkel in Pauly-Wissowa, s. v. Ahikaros.

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In the Aesop story it comes in this form:

'My child . . . be accessible to those whom thou meetest, knowing that even to the dog his tail supplies bread.'

Here then, in every version except the Slavonic, we have the traces of the special proverb. There can be no doubt that it formed part of the primitive collection.

A second example from the same source runs as follows:

'Do not allow any one to tread on your heel to-day, lest he tread on your neck to-morrow.'

This is almost exactly the Syriac proverb (ii. 39):

'My son, suffer not thy neighbour to tread on thy foot, lest he tread on thy neck.'

The proverb is also found in the Armenian, Arabic, and Slavonic versions.

A third example which follows in Shahrastani is as follows:

'Be not over-sweet, lest thou be swallowed down: nor over-bitter, lest thou be spit out.'

The proverb is found in the Slavonic and Armenian versions (c. ii. 8): it is no doubt to be referred to both Democritus and Aḥikar.

The next instance from Shahrastani is as follows:

'(Solon) saw a man who stumbled, and said to him: It is better to stumble with the foot than with the tongue.'

The proverb is found in the Ethiopic, in the Syriac (ii. 53), and in the Slavonic. In the proverbs of Maximus it is referred to Socrates: for which I propose to read Democrates (= Democritus).

The last, and perhaps the most interesting of the maxims of Democritus, will be found in Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 75:

'For swine delight in mud more than in clean water, and wallow in a drain, according to Democritus.'

The latter half of the sentence is quoted by Plutarch, *De tuenda sanitate* 14, again with reference to Democritus. There seems to be little room for doubt that Democritus is quoting from the same proverb of Aḥikar which we find quoted in 2 Peter ii. 22, and which is current in the Syriac (viii. 18), Armenian, and Karshuni versions: e.g. in the Karshuni (viii. 15):

'My son, thou hast been to me like the pig, who went to the hot bath with people of quality, and when it came out of the hot bath it saw a filthy hole, and it went down and wallowed in it.'

These examples will show conclusively the correctness of the tradition that Democritus copied from Aḥikar, and issued the proverbs of the latter under his own name.

b. The Tobit Parallels.

The parallel passages in the Book of Tobit, and the supposed references to Aḥikar, have occupied the leading place in the criticism of the text, partly because it was by their means that the antiquity of Aḥikar was, in the first instance, established, and partly because around these parallels the question of relative priority was, in the first instance, debated. Now that the antiquity of Aḥikar has been vindicated in an extraordinary manner, we need not hesitate to mark quotations in Tobit, only reserving such cases as may properly be referred to a more recent manipulation of the text of Aḥikar.

The following are the principal parallels, as given in the Vatican Codex, with which, however, the Sinaitic text should be carefully compared:

Tob. i. 21 seq.: 'And Esarhaddon¹ his son reigned in his stead, and he appointed Achiachar the son of Anael my brother over all the fisc of this Kingdom, and over all the administration. And Achiachar asked on my behalf, and I came to Nineveh. And Achiachar was Cupbearer and Great Seal, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Esarhaddon appointed him a second time:² and he was my cousin.'

Tob. ii. 10: 'And I (Tobit) went to the physicians, and they could not help me. And Achiachar maintained him until the time that he went to Elymais' (where an acute conjecture suggests to read 'his hiding-place' for 'Elymais').

Tob. xi. 17, 18: 'And there was great joy to all the brethren in Nineveh, and Achiachar and Nasbas his cousin (?) came (to the wedding festival).'

¹ It is difficult to say if this is the original form; it looks as if Σαχερδωνός were a misplaced genitive, and the original reading 'the son of Esarhaddon', which would mean that Tobit had repeated the blunder of the versions of Aḥikar, by making Sennacherib later than Esarhaddon.

² Exactly, but unintelligibly, 'Sacherdonos, a son ἐκ δευτέρου', which again looks like an original 'Son of Sacherdon'.

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For 'Nasbas' the Sinaitic text has 'Nabad', which can hardly be right, and it makes Achiachar and Nabad to be both of them cousins of Tobit. Perhaps the obscure Nasbas covers the name of Nadan's younger brother.

Tob. xiv. 10: 'My child, consider what Nadab did to Achiachar that brought him up, how from the light he led him to the dark and what recompense he made him: and Achiachar (God) saved, but to the other the just reward was made, and he went down to the dark. Manasses (*read Ahiakar*) did alms, and he was saved from the snare of death which he laid for him, but Nadab fell into the snare and perished.'

I have corrected some obvious transcriptional blunders, and made one bold but necessary emendation. For the almsgiving of Ahiakar, see also Tob. iv. 10, 'Alms doth deliver from death, and will not suffer thee to come into darkness'. See also Ahiakar (viii. 2, viii. 37 Syr.).

Tob. xiv. 15: 'And he heard before his death of the destruction of Nineveh, which Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus took captive;'

where the Sinaitic text expands, and explains that Nineveh was taken captive by Achiakar, the King of Media.

Ahasuerus is a mere blunder for 'Nineveh and *Athur*' in the Ahiakar story: the Sinaitic expansions have made the confusion worse confounded. Tobit's history and his geography are out of the reach of justification.

Tob. iv. 17: 'Pour out thy bread on the graves of the righteous and do not give it to sinners:' with which cf. Ahiakar

(Arab. ii. 13): 'O my son, pour out thy wine on the tombs of the just, and drink not with ignorant, contemptible people.'

(Syr. ii. 10): 'My son, pour out thy wine on the graves of the righteous, rather than drink it with evil men.'

[On this question see I. 189-192.—Gen. Editor.]

c. Parallels in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

See p. 291 of this volume.¹

d. Some Old Testament Parallels.

The parallels with the O.T., especially with the Sapiential books, are constant, and it is not always easy to say certainly on which side antiquity lies. As a general principle the Ahiakar sentences are older than their parallels in Sirach. A few places may be noted:

Ahiakar (c. ii. 45 Syr.): 'My son, I have carried salt and have removed lead; but I have not seen anything heavier than that a man should pay a debt that he did not borrow,' &c.

Cf. Sirach xxii. 14, 15: 'What is heavier than lead, and what is the name thereof, but a fool? Sand and salt and a mass of iron are easier to bear than a man without understanding.'

Some traces of a similar proverb will be found in the papyrus:

Ahiakar (c. ii. 65 Syr.): 'My son, strive not with a man in his day, and stand not against a river in its flood.'

Cf. Sirach iv. 26: 'Do not stand up against a river' (cf. the Syriac version).

Ahiakar (c. ii. 2 Syr.): 'My son, if thou hast heard a word let it die in thy heart.'

Cf. Sirach xix. 10 (Syr.).

Ahiakar (c. ii. 19 Arab.): 'O my son, be not neighbour to the fool, and eat not bread with him.'

Cf. Ps. cxli. 4.

Ahiakar (c. ii. 61 Arab.): 'O my son, let the wise man beat thee with a rod: but let not the fool anoint thee with sweet salve.'

Cf. Ps. xli. 5 (LXX).

Ahiakar (c. viii. 38 Arab.; cf. viii. 41 Syr.): 'For he who digs a pit for his brother, falls into it; and he who sets traps shall be caught in them.'

Cf. Ps. cxli. 10.

For coincidences with Daniel we may take:

Ahiakar c. i. 3 (Arab.) with Dan. ii. 2, ii. 27, v. 7.

Ahiakar c. i. 7 (Arm.) with Dan. v. 16.

Ahiakar c. v. 4 (Arab.) with Dan. ii. 11.

Ahiakar c. v. 11 with Dan. iv. 33.

¹ In Jub. xxxvii. 23 the words 'When the raven becomes white as the *râzâ* (i. e. a large white bird), then know that I have loved thee' may be an echo of Syriac A 62 'And the raven become white as snow'.—[Gen. Editor.]

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e. Coincidences and Parallels with the New Testament.

Aḥiḳar, c. iv. 14, has the account of Nadan's revelry, after he has got rid of his uncle, and of his beating the menservants and the women-servants, &c. We have to compare carefully Matt. xxiv. 48-51, and Luke xii. 43, 46, and it will be seen that the language of Aḥiḳar has coloured one of our Lord's parables.

Perhaps the same thing is true of the parable of the Prodigal Son; for we have in the Syriac (viii. 34):

'Forgive me this my folly; and I will tend thy horses and feed thy pigs which are in thy house.'

and in the Armenian (viii. 24):

'Father, I have sinned against thee. Forgive me, and I will be a slave unto thee henceforth and for ever.'

Cf. Luke xv. 19.

Nor should we neglect to compare the story of the unfruitful fig-tree in the Gospel with:

Aḥiḳar, c. viii. 35 (Syr.): 'My son, thou hast been to me like the palm-tree that stood by a river, and cast all its fruit into the river; and when its lord came to cut it down, it said to him, "Let me alone this year, and I will bring thee forth carobs." And its lord said unto it, "Thou hast not been industrious in what is thine own, and how wilt thou be industrious in what is not thine own?"'

for which we compare Luke xiii. 6-9.

For Aḥiḳar, c. viii (death of Nadan), cf. the death of Judas in Matt. xxvii. 5, in Acts i. 18, 19, and in the traditions of Papias.

For the rest of the N.T. compare

Aḥiḳar, c. ii. 16 (Syr.): 'My son, it is not proper even to eat with a shameless person.'

with 1 Cor. v. 11;

Aḥiḳar, c. ii. 59 (Syr.): 'Visit the poor in his affliction, and speak of him in the presence of the ruler, and do one's diligence to save him from the lion.'

with 2 Tim. iv. 17;

and Aḥiḳar, c. viii. 18 (Syr.), viii. 15 (Arab.), viii. 24 (Arm.) (the pig that went to the bath), with the 'true proverb' in 2 Peter ii. 22, noting that the proverb in Aḥiḳar can be traced back to him through Democritus.

f. Parallels in the Koran.

The Koran knows Aḥiḳar by the name of Loqman, and makes allusion to him and his gnomic sayings.

The 31st Sura of the Koran is, in fact, named after him, and we may compare:

'O my son . . . be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice, for the most ungrateful of all voices surely is the voice of asses.'

The passage becomes intelligible when we put by the side of it Aḥiḳar, c. ii. 45 (Arm.), ii. 8 (Syr.), ii. 11 (Arab.):

'My son, cast down thy eyes and lower thy voice . . . for if a house could be built by a high voice, the ass would build two houses in one day.'

§ 4. MATERIALS FOR THE DETERMINATION OF THE TEXT.

a. The Aramaic Papyrus.

The first and only authority for the original text of Aḥiḳar is the Aramaic papyrus, discovered at Elephantine by Dr. Rubensohn in the excavations of 1906-1908, and published by Sachau in 1911 as part of his *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine*. The MS. is unfortunately imperfect, but it is clear, from comparison with a number of dated documents with which it was found, that it was written somewhere between 420 B.C. and 400 B.C. It is thus the earliest example of either Biblical or Apocryphal literature. The book itself cannot have been composed very much earlier than its copy, and Sachau suggests that it was produced somewhere between 550 and 450 B.C. We should say that the upper limit is more likely, for even if the book were at once popular (as it almost certainly was) it would take time for it to be carried from Mesopotamia to the outlying Jewish colony at the first cataract of the Nile. Suppose we say that it was written about 500 B.C., or a little earlier. It should be somewhat later than the Aramaic inscriptions from Zinjirli, for in these the name of Assyria is still written Asshur, whereas the Aḥiḳar book has Athur. The

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Aramaic, then, is the original language: there is no sign of Hebraism anywhere in the book. We are as near to the first form of an ancient book as we are ever likely to be.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the papyrus is so incomplete. There is nothing preserved of the narrative portion after the condemnation of Ahiḳar, and not very much of what leads up to the condemnation; while the fragments of the proverbs and parables are so difficult to reconstruct, that we are hardly able to read a single unbroken sentence. It appears as if the proverbial philosophy and the parabolic admonitions were mixed up together, and that there was little agreement between what is contained of them in the papyrus and the two collections which are exhibited in our extant versions.

Moreover, as the latter part of the narrative is not extant, which must at least have contained the account of Ahiḳar's recovery, we cannot be certain whether the Egyptian episode is a part of the missing matter or whether it is the addition of a later folklorist. We can, however, make certain things quite clear.

First of all, the papyrus makes the story fall under Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, his son; and it does not make the mistake which occurs in most of the later versions, of calling Sennacherib the son of Esarhaddon, and putting all the story in his reign. It is nearer to history even if it is not exactly history. We understand, too, what used to be a difficulty, why Tobit, which certainly follows Ahiḳar, does not make the mistake of inversion with regard to the kings which we find in Ahiḳar, according to the later versions (though there are suspicions that Tobit has corrected an original mistake).

If, however, the papyrus in certain points discredits the later versions, there are other points in which it accredits even the youngest of them. Thus the Arabic version has the correct Assyrian form, Nabuṣumiṣkun, for the executioner of Ahiḳar; and M. l'Abbé Nau, in his valuable book on Ahiḳar, has pointed out that one of the youngest copies of the Syriac text is free from the historical blunder over Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. Further, amongst the few proverbial sentences that can be reconstructed from the papyrus fragments there is one which is preserved in the Armenian version, and apparently nowhere else. So that even late versions are not to be despised in the reconstruction of the original legend.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the story has been treated very freely by many generations of transcribers. Even if it should be maintained that there was an original historical nucleus (which seems very unlikely in view of the manner in which the story is told) there can be no doubt that it was handled as a folk-tale from the earliest times. For example, in the opening of the story, Ahiḳar explains his unsuccessful wedlock with sixty wives, for whom he built sixty castles or palaces. That is genuine folk-lore. When he adopts his sister's son, Nadan, he hands him over to eight wet-nurses that they may bring him up; and the boy grows up like a cedar under their assiduous fostering. If any one doubts whether this is folk-lore or not, he may consult the following openings of Tibetan tales from the collection of von Schiefner and Ralston:

Story of Sudhana Avadana, p. 52.

The boy Sudhana was handed over to eight nurses, two to carry him, two to suckle him, two to cleanse him, and two to play with him. As those eight nurses fed him and brought him up on milk, &c.: . . . he shot up like a lotus in a tank, &c.

An exactly similar story concerning the rearing of Visvantara on p. 257; again, on p. 273, *The Story of the Fulfilled Prophecy*, the same description is given of the rearing of Sūryanemi; and on p. 279, *The Story of the Two Brothers*, the same description will be found for the early years of Kohemankara.

In the same way, whether the Egyptian episodes of the story are a part of the original document or not, they are neither more nor less than folk-lore. For instance, the demand of the Pharaoh that Ahiḳar should make some ropes out of sand is one of the themes in the Tibetan tale of Mahausadha and Vasakha, which will be found, in the collection from which we have just quoted, on p. 138: 'King Janaka sent a messenger to Pūrṇa, the head-man of the village Pūrṇakatshtshha, with an order to send a rope made of sand one hundred ells long,' &c.

These examples, taken from a single collection of Eastern folk-tales, will be sufficient to show, to any one who is unfamiliar with Eastern story-telling, that the Ahiḳar legend is not meant to be taken for history. It is an ethical folk-tale, with Ingratitude for its theme of reprehension. To try to turn it into history is to do the original composer a literary injustice. We now turn to the description of the leading versions.

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b. The Syriac Version (S).

There are not many copies of this version, and those that do exist are late. The following are the chief texts:

- S₁: a single leaf of the twelfth or thirteenth century in the British Museum (Cod. Add. 7200).
- S₂: a MS. in the Cambridge University Library, formerly in the possession of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, dated A. D. 1697 (Univ. Cant. Add. 2020).
- S₃: a MS. in the Sachau Collection at Berlin (Cod. Sach. 336), written in 1883. This is the MS. to which M. Nau attaches so great importance, that he has made it the basis of his text. The main thing in its favour is that it has escaped the inversion of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon.
- S₄, S₅, S₆ are three transcripts in the American Mission Library at Ooroomiah, none of them of any importance.
- S₇ is a fragment of the fifteenth century at Berlin (Cod. Sach. 162).
- S₈ in the British Museum (sixteenth or seventeenth century) = Cod. Or. 2213, contains the latter part of the story of Ahikar.
- S₉ is a MS. in the Chaldean convent which Nau describes as 'Notre-Dame des Semences, à neuf heures au nord de Mossoul', written in 1883.

Of these S₁, S₂, S₃, S₈ are the only ones that require attention.

There is also a translation into modern Syriac (dialect of the Jebel Tûr) in the Berlin MS., Cod. Sach. 339; it is accompanied by an Arabic text, of which it appears to be a direct translation.

c. The Arabic and Karshuni Versions (A and K).

We have the text of Ahikar in Arabic, printed by Salhani in his *Contes Arabes* (Beyrout), and there are also a number of MSS. either in Arabic script, or in Karshuni (Arabic in Syriac characters): of these the principal are:—

- K₁: a Cambridge MS. (Cod. Add. 2886) dated 1783.
- K₂: a British Museum MS. (Cod. Add. 7209).

The former of these MSS., with the latter as an occasional supplement, is the base of Mrs. Lewis's translation of Ahikar in the Cambridge volume.

- K₃: a Gotha MS. (no. 2652), which was employed by Cornill in editing an Arabic counterpart to his Ethiopic text of the Sayings of Ahikar.
- K₄: a Vatican MS. from Aleppo, referred to by Assemani.
- K₅: the Arabic half of the Berlin MS. (Cod. Sach. 339) described above as containing a modern Syriac version and a Karshuni original.

The Arabic MSS. proper must be fairly numerous. There are examples in Copenhagen and in the Vatican and at Paris.

- A₁: Copenhagen (Cod. Arab. 236), written in 1670.
- A₂: Vatican (Cod. Arab. 11), from the collection of Pope Innocent XIII, written in 1766.
- A₃: Vatican (Cod. Arab. 55).
- A₄: Paris (Cod. Arab. 3637), from which Caussin de Perceval made his translation.

d. The Ethiopic Version (Aeth.).

A complete Ethiopic version has not yet been found; but in the *Book of the Wise Philosophers* fifteen maxims of Ahikar are extant, translated from an Arabic original. They were published by Cornill in 1875.

e. The Armenian Version (Arm.).

This version is of peculiar importance. It is at least as early as 450 A.D., and is extant in numerous copies, most of which are unfortunately late. It was also frequently printed in Constantinople in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mr. Conybeare has noted the following MSS.:—

- Arm.₁ in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.
- Arm.₂ at Venice, no. 482 in the Library of San Lazaro: fifteenth or sixteenth century.
- Arm.₃ at Paris (Cod. Arm. no. 92), in the National Library: dated A. D. 1619.
- Arm.₄ at Paris (Cod. Supp. 58), seventeenth century.
- Arm.₅ at Paris (Cod. Arm. 131), late seventeenth century.
- Arm.₆ at Paris (Cod. Arm. 69), seventeenth century.
- Arm.₇ at Oxford (Bodl. Can. Or. 131), A. D. 1697.
- Arm.₈ at Edjmiatzin (Cod. 2048), about A. D. 1600.
- Arm.₉ at Edjmiatzin (Cod. 1633) in A. D. 1604.

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Arm.₁₀ at Edjmiatzin (Cod. 1995) in A. D. 1605.

Arm.₁₁ at Edjmiatzin (Cod. 1986) in A. D. 1623.

Arm.₁₂ at Edjmiatzin (Cod. 51) in A. D. 1642.

As we have said, this version is early, its text inspires confidence. For example, the saying 'Son, rejoice not thou in the number of thy children, and in their deficiency be not thou distressed' is found only in the Armenian and in the newly-found papyrus.

The translation of the Armenian version is made from Mr. Conybeare's Armenian text which is published in *The Story of Ahikar*, Cambridge, 1898, and is based on the above MSS.

f. The Greek Version (Aes.).

All that we at present know of the Greek version is contained in the Greek lives of Aesop, which are modelled upon the story of Ahikar, and which may conveniently be studied in Eberhard's *Fabulae Romanenses Graece conscriptae*, in which the part that corresponds to Ahikar runs from p. 285 to p. 297.

g. The Slavonic Version (Sl.).

This version is made from the lost Greek, and is translated by Jagić in *Byzant. Zeitschr.*, pp. 107-126. We have not thought it worth while to give a translation of this version.

It is probable that other versions will come to light before long: in particular we consider it very unlikely that there should be no traces of the story in Latin.

SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS, VERSIONS, AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE TEXT OF AHIKAR.

1. The original text will be found in Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine* (Berlin, 1911), and in Ungnad, *Aramäische Papyrus aus Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1911).
2. The Armenian, Syriac, and Arabic versions in *The Story of Ahikar*, edited by Conybeare, Harris, and Lewis (Cambridge, 1898).
3. The Slavonic version translated into German by Jagić, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, i, pp. 107-26 (1892). This translation is repeated in English in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*.
4. The Ethiopic fragment was published by Cornill in the *Book of the Wise Philosophers*, and Cornill's translation is repeated in English in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*.
5. The Arabic version was published by Salhani in *Contes Arabes* (Beyrout) and in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*.
6. The Arabic version was translated in not a few editions of the *Arabian Nights*, beginning with Chavis et Cazotte (Cabinet des Fées), t. xxxix.
7. A neo-Syriac version, accompanied by an Arabic text, was published by Lidzbarski in 1894 (*Die neuaramäischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibl. zu Berlin*), Weimar. A German translation accompanies this work.
8. English translations of the chief texts are found in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*; and the Syriac version was translated by E. J. Dillon in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1898.
9. A French translation of the Syriac versions is given by M. Nau, *Histoire et Sagesse d'Ahiakar* (Paris, 1909).
10. The Greek version, so far as it is involved in the text of Aesop, may be consulted in Eberhard, *Fabulae Romanenses Graece conscriptae*; the principal parts of the parallel story being reproduced in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*.
11. The Armenian version has often been printed. The first attempt at a critical edition is found in the Cambridge edition *ut supra*, accompanied by a translation; the earlier editions have been chronicled for the following dates: 1708, 1731, 1807, 1834, 1850, 1861 (see Nau, p. 15). The book appears to have been very popular in the Armenian community.

COMPARATIVE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SAYINGS OF AHIKAR IN DIFFERENT VERSIONS.

I. Proverbs of Ahikar.

The numbers below refer to the verses in Chapter II.

| Syriac. | Arabic. | Eth. | Arm. | | Syriac. | Arabic. | Eth. | Arm. |
|---------|---------|------|------|---------------------------|---------|---------|------|------|
| A | B | | | | A | B | | |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Cf. Arm. c. ii at end. | 8 | 9 | 11 a | 45 a |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 b | | | | 11 b | 45 b |
| 3 | 3 | 3, 5 | 1 c | | | | 11 c | |
| 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 d | | 9 | 10 | 12 | 5 |
| 5 | 7 | 9 | 2 | Cf. Syr. A 19, 72. | 10 | | 13 | 7 |
| 6 | | | | | 11 | 11 | | 5 |
| 7 | | | 39 | | 12 | 12 | 14 | 6 |
| | | | 3 | | 13 | 13 | 16 | 6 |
| | | | | | 14 | 14 | 17 | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | 10 a |

INTRODUCTION

| Syriac. | Arabic. | Eth. | Arm. | | Syriac. | Arabic. | Eth. | Arm. | |
|-----------|------------|------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------|----------------------------|
| A B | | | | | A B | | | | |
| 15 15 | 18 | | 10 b | Cf. Arm. 27. | 45 | | | 69 b | |
| 16 16 | 19 a | | 10 c? | | 46 | | | 69 c | |
| 17 18 | 58 | | 12, 97 | | 47 | 41 | | 15 | Cf. Syr. A 42, Arm. 66. |
| 18 19 | 8 | | 13 | | 48 | 44 | | 51 | |
| 19 7a, 20 | | | | Cf. Syr. A 5, 72. | 49a | 46 | | 73 c | |
| 20 21 | 19 b, 58 b | | | | 49 b | 7, 47 | 12 | 50 | |
| 21 | 21 | 9 | 12 | | 50a | 48 a | | | |
| | 22 | 8 | | | 50 b | 48 b | | 25 | |
| 22 | 23 | 10 | 14 | | 51 | 49 | | 52 | |
| 23 | 24 | 11 | 14 | | 52 | 53 | | | |
| 24 | 25 | | | | 53 | 45 | 13 | | |
| 25 | | | 17 | | 54 | | | 56 | |
| 26 | 26 | | 18, 78 | | 55 | 8 | 54 b | 3 | 57 |
| 27 | 27 | | 19 | | 56 | | | 91 | |
| 28 | 28, 29 | | 20, 21 | | 57 | 56 | | 77 | |
| 29 | 31 a | | 22 a | | 58 | | | | |
| 30 | | | 22 b | | 59 | | | 60 | |
| 31 | 31 b | | 23 | | 60 | 58 a | | | |
| 32 | | | | | 61 | 22 | 38, 55 | 28 | |
| 33 | | | 41 | | 62 | | 59 | 14 | 83 |
| 34 | 33 | | 42 | | 63 | | | | |
| 35 | | | 85 | | 64 | 20 | | 80 a | |
| 36 | 30 | | 43 | | 65 | 38, 62 | | 28, 81 a | |
| 37 | | | 44 a | Cf. Syr. A 56. | 66 | 6 | | 81 b | |
| 38 | 5 | 35 a | 2 Parab. 26 c | Greek 11. | 67 | 60 | 15 | 38 | |
| 39 | 35 b | | 47 | | 68 | 63 | | 82 | |
| 40 | 36 | | 64? | | 69 | 64 | | | |
| 41 | 37 | | 65 | | 70 | 65 | | | |
| 42 | 39 | | 66 | Cf. Syr. A 47 and Arm. 15. | 71 | 66 | | | |
| | | | | | 72 | | | | Cf. Syr. A 5, 19. |
| 43 | | | 67 | | 73 | 61 a | | | |
| 44 | | | 68 | | 74 | | | 84 | |
| | | | 69 a | | 75 | | | 26, 27 | |

II. Parables of Ahikar.

The numbers below refer to the verses in Chapter VIII.

| Syriac. | Arabic. | Arm. | | Syriac. | Arabic. | Arm. | |
|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|---------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | | 21 | | | |
| 2 a | 2 a | 2 | | 22 | | | |
| | | | | 23 | | | Cf. Syr. 2, 30-2. |
| 2 b | 2 b | 3, 5, 7 | Cf. Syr. 23, 30-2. | 24 | 20 | 12 a | |
| 3 | 3 | 8 | | 25 | | 13 | |
| 4 | 4 | 9 | | 26 | 21 | 20 | |
| 5 | 6 | 10 | | 27 | 22 | 21 | |
| 6 | 5 | 18 | | 28 | | | |
| 7 | 8 | 12 b c | | 29 | 23 | | |
| 8 | 7, 9 | | | 30 | | | |
| 9 | | 17 | | 31 | 26 | | |
| 10 | 10 | 15 | | 32 | 27 | 4 | |
| 11 | 11 | | | 33 | | 22 | |
| 12 | 12 a | 12 d | | 34 | 29 | 24 b | |
| 13 | | | | 35 | 30 | 25 | |
| 14 | 12 b | 11 | | 36 a | 32 | 16 | |
| 15 | 13 | | | 36 b | 33 | 23 | |
| 16 | | | | | | 26 | Cf. Arm. 7. |
| 17 | 14 | 19 | | 37 | | | |
| 18 | 15 | 24 a | | 38 | 34 | | |
| 19 | | 6 | | 39 | 35 | | |
| 20 a | 17 | 14 a | | 40 | | | |
| 20 b | 18 | 14 c | | 41 | 38 | 26 c, 27 | |
| 20 c | 19 | 14 b | | | | | |

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

SYRIAC VERSION A.

from MS. Syr.₂

1 ¹ AGAIN, by the divine power, I write the proverbs, to wit, the story of Ahikar, sage and secretary of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and Nineveh.

In the twentieth year of Sennacherib, son of Sarhadum, king of Assyria and Nineveh, I, Ahikar, was the king's secretary.

² And it had been said to me when I was a boy, that no son will be born to thee¹: and the wealth that I had acquired was too vast to tell. Sixty wives had I wedded: and sixty castles did I build them: and I had no son.

³ Thereupon I, Ahikar, built me a great altar, all of wood; and kindled fire upon it, and laid good meat thereon, and thus I spake:

⁴ 'O Lord, my God; when I shall die and leave no son, what will men say of me? they will say that this, then, is Ahikar the just and good and God-serving: he is dead, and has left no son to bury him, no! nor a daughter: and his possessions, as if he were accursed, no man inherits. ⁵ But I ask of Thee, O God, that I may have a male child; so that when I shall die, he may cast dust on my eyes.'

⁶ and this voice was heard by me, 'O Ahikar, wise scribe, all that thou hast asked of me I have given thee; but as to my having left thee childless, let it suffice thee: perplex not thyself: but behold! Nadan thy sister's son: he shall be a son unto thee: so that with the growth of his stature thou shalt be able to teach him everything.'

¹ Presumably, this was said by the astrologers.

SYRIAC VERSION B.

from MS. Syr.₈

... And it was said to me, '[There will be no **1** son to thee].'² And I had much wealth; I wedded me sixty wives, and built me sixty castles: and from none of these women had I a son.

Then I ³ built me a great altar of incense and vowed a vow, and said,

'O Lord God, give me a male ⁵ child, that when I shall die he may cast dust on my eyes.'

Thereupon there was heard by me ⁶ this voice, saying, 'O Ahikar, vex not thyself overmuch; there is no son for thee; but behold Nadan thy sister's son; make him thy son; so that as he grows up, thou mayst be able to ^{8, 15} teach him everything.' Then when I heard this, I took Nadan my sister's son, and he became my son.

ARABIC VERSION

1.1 IN the name of God the Creator, the Living One, the Source of Reason, we hereby begin with the help of the Most High God¹ and His best guidance, to write the story of Haiqâr the Wise, Vizier of Sennacherib the King, and of Nadan, sister's son to Haiqâr the Sage.

There was a Vizier in the days of King Sennacherib, son of Sarhadum, King of Assyria and Nineveh, a wise man named Haiqâr, and he was
2 Vizier of the king Sennacherib. He had a fine fortune and much goods, and he was skilful, wise, a philosopher, [in] knowledge, [in] opinion and [in] government, and he had married sixty women, and had built a castle for each of them. But with it all he had no child by any of these women,
3 who might be his heir. And he was very sad on account of this, and one day he assembled the astrologers and the learned men and the wizards and explained to them his condition and the matter of his barrenness. And they said to him, 'Go, sacrifice to the gods and beseech them that perchance they may provide thee with a boy.'
4 And he did as they told him and offered sacrifices to the idols, and besought them and implored them with request and entreaty. And they answered him not one word. And he went away sorrowful and dejected, departing with a pain at
5 his heart. And he returned, and implored the Most High God, and believed, beseeching Him with a burning in his heart, saying, 'O Most High God, O Creator of the Heavens and of the earth, O Creator of all created things! I beseech Thee to give me a boy, that I may be consoled by him, that he may be present at my death, that he may close my eyes, and that he may bury me.'

Then
6 there came to him a voice saying, 'Inasmuch as thou hast relied first of all on graven images, and hast offered sacrifices to them, for this reason thou shalt remain childless thy life long. But take Nadan thy sister's son, and make him thy child and teach him thy learning and thy good breeding, and at thy death he shall bury thee.'

¹ Literally 'God, may He be exalted!' *passim*.

ARMENIAN VERSION

THE maxims and wisdom of Khikar, which 1.1 the children of men learn.

In the times and in the reign of Seneqerim King of Nineveh and of Asorestan, I, Khikar Notary of Seneqerim the King, took¹ sixty wives and builded me sixty palaces. And I, Khikar, was sixty years of age,² and I had not a son.

Then I went in to the 3 gods with many offerings; I lit a fire before the gods and cast incense² upon it, and presented my offerings and sacrificed victims, kneeled down and prayed, and thus spake in my prayer.

O my lords and gods, Belshim and Shimil and 4 Shamin, ordain and give to me male seed. For lo, Khikar dieth alive. And what say men? That Khikar though alive and wise and clever is dead, and there is no son of his to bury him, nor daughter to bewail him. I have no heir after my death. Not even if a son should spend ten talents in the last day, would he exhaust my riches. But (I ask merely) that he may cast 5 dust with his hands upon me, in order that I may not remain unremembered.

Then there was a voice from the gods and 6 they said:

Khikar, there is not ordained seed for thee. But thou shalt take Nathan³, thy sister's son, and bring him up as thy son, and he shall pay thee back thy cost of rearing him⁴.

¹ Can. thus: 'acquired me slaves and handmaids and many possessions. I builded,' &c.

² Add 'of sweet odour' 58 and Edjm.

³ So the better Arm. MSS. The inferior read 'Nadan'.

⁴ So Canon. Others have 'pay thee back thy name'. See note on Arm. text.

SVR. A

SVR. B

7 And when I heard these things, I
 was grieved again, and said, 'O Lord God! is
 it that Thou wilt give me as a son Nadan my
 sister's son, so that when I die, he may throw
 dust on my eyes?' And no further answer was
 8 returned to me. And I obeyed the command
 and took to me for a son Nadan, my sister's son:
 and because he was yet young, I furnished him
 with eight wet-nurses: and I brought up my son
 on honey, and made him lie on choice carpets,
 9 and clothed him in fine linen and purple; and
 my son grew and shot up like a cedar, and when
 my son was grown big, I taught him book-lore
 10 and wisdom; and when the king came from the
 place to which he had gone, he called me and
 said to me, 'O Ahikar, the wise scribe and master
 of my thoughts, when thou shalt wax old and
 die, who is there to come after thee and to serve
 me like thyself?'

11 And I answered and said to
 him, 'O my lord the king, live for ever! I have
 a son, wise like myself, and book-learned like
 myself, and educated.'

12 And the king said to me,
 'Bring him and let me see him. If he is able to
 stand before me, I will release thee in peace, and
 thou shalt spend thy old age in honour, until
 13 thou shalt end thy days.' Then I took my son
 Nadan and set him before the king, and when my
 lord the king saw him, he said, 'This day shall
 be a blessed day before God, so that like as
 Ahikar walked¹ before my father Sarhadum, and
 before me also, he shall be rewarded² and I will
 set his son in my gate in his lifetime, and he shall
 depart his life [in peace].'

14 Thereupon I, Ahikar,
 bowed down before the king and said, 'My lord
 the king, live for ever! And like as I walked
 before thy father and before thyself even until
 now, so do thou also extend thy forbearance to
 the youthfulness of this my son, that thy grace
 which was toward me may be found multiplied
 15 towards him.' Then when the king heard this,
 he gave me his right hand, and I, Ahikar, bowed
 down before the king.

Nor did I cease from the instruction of my son,
 until I had filled him with instruction as with
 bread and water. And on this wise was I dis-
 couraging to him:

¹ Lit. 'ran'.

² Reading *ܐܝܕܝܐ*.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 1. 7-15

ARABIC

7 Thereupon he took Nadan his sister's son, who was a little suckling. And he handed him over to eight wet-nurses, that they might suckle him and bring him up. And they brought him up with good food and gentle training and silken clothing, and purple and crimson. And he was seated upon couches of silk. And when Nadan grew big and walked, shooting up like a tall cedar, he taught him good manners and writing and science and philosophy.

10 And after many days King Sennacherib looked at Haiqâr and saw that he had grown very old, and moreover he said to him, 'O my honoured friend, the skillful, the trusty, the wise, the governor, my secretary, my vizier, my Chancellor¹ and director; verily thou art grown very old and weighted with years; and thy departure from this world must be near. Tell me who shall have a place in my service after thee.' And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord, may thy head live for ever! There is Nadan my sister's son, I have made him my child. And I have brought him up and taught him my wisdom and my knowledge.' And the king said to him, 'O Haiqâr! bring him to my presence, that I may see him, and if I find him suitable, put him in thy place; and thou shalt go thy way, to take a rest and to live the remainder of thy life in sweet repose.' Then Haiqâr went and presented Nadan his sister's son. And he did homage and wished him power and honour. And he looked at him and admired him and rejoiced in him and said to Haiqâr: 'Is this thy son, O Haiqâr? I pray that God may preserve him. And as thou hast served me and my father Sarhadum so may this boy of thine serve me and fulfil my undertakings, my needs, and my business, so that I may honour him and make him powerful for thy sake.' And Haiqâr did obeisance to the king and said to him, 'May thy head live, O my lord the king, for ever! I seek from thee that thou mayst be patient with my boy Nadan and forgive his mistakes that he may serve thee as it is fitting.' Then the king swore to him that he would make him the greatest of his favourites, and the most powerful of his friends, and that he should be with him in all honour and respect. And he kissed his hands and bade him farewell. And he took Nadan his sister's son with him and seated him in a parlour and set about teaching him night and day till he had crammed him with wisdom and knowledge more than with bread and water.

¹ Literally 'the sealer of my secrets', *passim*.

ARMENIAN

And when I heard this from the gods, I took 7 Nathan my sister's son; one year old was he, and I clad him in byssus and purple; and a gold collar did I bind around his neck; and like a king's son I decked him out with ornaments. And I gave him to drink milk and honey, and 8 laid him to sleep on my eagles and doves, until he was seven years of age. Then I began to 9 teach him writing and wisdom and the art of knowledge and the answering of dispatches, and the returns of contradictory speeches. And by day and by night I ceased not to instruct him; and I sated him with my teaching, as it were with bread and water.

Then saith the king unto me: Khikar, my 10 Notary and wise one, I know that thou art grown old; and after thy death, who is there to discharge ably and wisely the affairs of our kingdom? And I am very grieved at this thought.

And I said to him: O King, live for 11 ever. There is my son, who is superior to me and is more clever.

And the king says: Bring 12 him unto me, that I may behold him. And when I had brought him and stood him before the king, he beheld him and said: In his days may Khikar be blessed, because in his lifetime he hath led and stood before me his son, and may he himself be at rest.

I bowed my head to my lord, and taking 13 Nathan I led him into my dwelling and thus spake in my teaching¹.

¹ Canon adds: 'give ear to my conversation and precept. Write it on thy seal, and forget it not; that the years of thy life may be plentiful, and that in glory and wealth thou mayst reach old age.' No other Arm. source

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 2. 1-8

The Proverbs of Ahikar

SYR. A

2¹ 'Hear, O my son Nadan, and come to the understanding of me, and be mindful of my words, as the words of God¹:

2 My son Nadan, if thou hast heard a word, let it die in thy heart, and reveal it to no man; lest it become a hot coal in thy mouth and burn thee, and thou lay a blemish on thy soul, and be angered against God.

3 My son, do not tell all that thou hearest, and do not disclose all that thou seest.

4 My son, do not loose a knot that is sealed, and do not seal one that is loosed.

5 My son, lift not up thy eyes and look upon a woman that is bedizened and painted; and do not lust after her in thy heart; for if thou shouldst give her all that is in thy hands, thou findest no advantage in her; and thou wilt be guilty of sin against God.

6 My son, commit not adultery with the wife of thy neighbour; lest others should commit adultery with thy wife.

7 My son, be not in a hurry, like the almond-tree whose blossom is the first to appear, but whose fruit is the last to be eaten; but be equal and sensible, like the mulberry-tree whose blossom is the last to appear, but whose fruit is the first to be eaten.

8 My son, cast down thine eyes, and lower thy voice, and look from beneath thine eyelids: for

¹ Cf. *Teaching of Apostles*, c. iv, 'Him that speaketh to thee the word of God, thou shalt remember night and day, and thou shalt honour him as the Lord'.

SYR. B

And on this wise I was saying to him¹:

'Hear my teaching, my son Nadan; and come 2¹ to my understanding, and be mindful of my words, according to the following sayings:' and thereupon Ahikar² began to teach Nadan his sister's son, and answered and said to him:

'My son, if thou hast heard a word, let it die in² thy heart; and reveal it to no man; lest it should become a hot coal in thy mouth, and burn thee; and thou shalt lay blemish on thy soul, and shalt be hated on earth, and be angered against God³.

My son, do not tell all that thou seest, and do³ not disclose all that thou hearest.

My son, do not loose a knot that is sealed, 4 and do not seal one which is loosed.

My son, sweeten thy tongue, and make savoury 5 the opening of thy mouth; because the tail of the dog gives him bread, and his mouth gets him blows.

My son, the eye of man is a fountain, and is 6 not satisfied with riches until [filled with dust].

(My son), lift (not) up thine eyes (and look 7 upon a woman bedizened) and beautified, lust not after her in thy heart; for if thou shouldst give her all [that thou hast, advantage]⁴ in her thou wilt not find; and thou wilt be guilty of sin before God.

My son, stand not in the house of those that 8 are at strife: because from a word there comes a quarrel, and from a quarrel is stirred up vexation; and from vexedness springs murder⁵.

My son, if a house were built by loudness of 9 voice, the ass would build two houses in a single

¹ The account of the earlier years of Nadan's bringing up is omitted; if indeed it existed in the first form of the story.

² The text is double; a copy which had the primitive 'I, Ahikar, took my son' having been compounded with one that had 'Thereupon Ahikar'. A comparison with the Tobit-parallels shows that the second clause is a modification of the first.

³ We expect 'And God shall be angry with thee'.

⁴ A slight correction has been made in the Syriac text.

⁵ Cf. *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, 'My child, be not angry, for anger leads to murder,' which is a simpler and more archaic form of the same precept.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 2. 1-11

The Proverbs of Ahikar

ARABIC

- Thus he taught him, saying:
- 2¹ 'O my son! hear my speech and follow my advice and remember what I say.
- 2 O my son! if thou hearest a word, let it die in thy heart, and reveal it not to another, lest it become a live coal and burn thy tongue and cause a pain in thy body, and thou gain a reproach, and art shamed before God and man.
- 3 O my son! if thou hast heard a report, spread it not; and if thou hast seen something, tell it not.
- 4 O my son! make thy eloquence easy to the listener, and be not hasty to return an answer.
- 5 O my son! when thou hast heard anything, hide it not.
- 6 O my son! loose not a sealed knot, nor untie it, and seal not a loosened knot.
- 7 O my son! covet not outward beauty, for it wanes and passes away, but an honourable remembrance lasts for aye.
- 8 O my son! let not a silly woman deceive thee with her speech, lest thou die the most miserable of deaths, and she entangle thee in the net till thou art ensnared.
- 9 O my son! desire not a woman bedizened with dress and with ointments, who is despicable and silly in her soul. Woe to thee if thou bestow on her anything that is thine, or commit to her what is in thine hand and she entice thee into sin, and God be wroth with thee.
- 10 O my son! be not like the almond-tree, for it brings forth leaves before all the trees, and edible fruit after them all, but be like the mulberry-tree, which brings forth edible fruit before all the trees, and leaves after them all.
- 11 O my son! bend thy head low down, and soften thy voice, and be courteous, and walk in the straight path, and be not foolish. And raise not thy voice when thou laughest, for if it were by a loud voice that a house was built, the ass

ARMENIAN

Son, if thou hear any word in the royal gate, 2¹ make it to die and bury it in thy heart, and to no one divulge it. The knot that is sealed do thou not loose, and that which is loosed do thou not tie. And that which thou dost see, tell not; and that which thou hearest, reveal it not.

Son, raise not up thine eyes to look on a 2 lovely woman, rouged and antimonied. Desire her not in thy heart. For if thou shouldst give her all thy riches, thou¹ dost get nothing the more out of her; but art condemned by God and by mankind. For she is like unto a sepulchre which is fair on the upper side and below is full of the rottenness and bones of the dead.

Son, be not like the olive-tree, which is first 3 to bloom and last to ripen its fruit. But be like the mulberry, which is last to bloom and first to ripen its fruit.

has such an addition, which however distantly resembles the Slavonic and Syriac.

¹ Bodl. = 'thou art not in any way benefited by her more than to be condemned by the God of just judgments and by mankind'. Canon = 'thou wilt not get anything more than thy own sin and shame from men and judgement from God', omitting the rest.

SYR. A

if a house could be built by a high voice, the ass would build two houses in one day: and if by sheer force the plough was guided, its share would never be loosed from the shoulder of the camel.

- 9 My son, it is better to remove stones with a wise man than to drink wine with a fool.
- 10 My son, pour out thy wine on the graves of the righteous, rather than drink it with evil men.
- 11 My son, with a wise man thou wilt not be depraved, and with a depraved man thou wilt not become wise.
- 12 My son, associate with the wise man, and thou wilt become wise like him; and associate not with a garrulous and talkative man, lest thou be numbered with him.
- 13 My son, while thou hast shoes on thy feet, tread down the thorns and make a path for thy sons and for thy sons' sons.
- 14 My son, the rich man eats a snake, and they say, "He ate it for medicine." And the poor man eats it, and they say, "For his hunger he ate it."
- 15 My son, eat thy portion, and despise not thy neighbours.
- 16 My son, it is not becoming even to eat with a shameless man.¹
- 17 My son, envy not the prosperity of thy enemy; and rejoice not at his adversity.²
- 18 My son, draw not near to a woman that is a whisperer, nor to one whose voice is high.
- 19 My son, go not after the beauty of a woman, and lust not after her in thy heart because the beauty of a woman is her good sense, and her adornment is the word of her mouth.
- 20 My son, if thine enemy meet thee with evil, meet thou him with wisdom.³
- 21 My son, the wicked falleth and riseth not; but the just man is not moved, for God is with him.

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. v. 11 *ἐάν τις . . . ἢ πόρνος . . . τῷ τοιούτῳ μηδὲ συνεισθίειν*.

² Cf. Prov. xxiv. 17 *ἐὰν πέσῃ ὁ ἐχθρὸς σου, μὴ ἐπιχαρῆς αὐτῷ*.

³ He does not mean 'overcome evil with good', which would be a sentiment foreign to the action of the story, but 'get the better of him'.

SYR. B

day: and if by sheer force the plough was directed, the ploughshare would never be worn away under¹ the shoulder of the camel.

Better to remove stones with the wise man 10 than to drink wine with the fool.

My son, in the company of the wise thou wilt 11 not be depraved; and in the company of the depraved thou wilt not become wise.

My son, make companion of the wise person, 12 and thou wilt become wise like him; and make not a companion of the foolish person, lest thou be reckoned like him.

While there are shoes on thy feet, tread down 13 the thorns and make a path for thy sons and thy sons' sons.

My son, the rich man eats a snake, and 14 they say, "For his medicine he ate it": the poor man eats it, and they say, "Because of his hunger he ate it."

My son, eat thy portion, and stretch not out 15 thy hand over that of thy neighbour.

My son, do not eat bread with a man that is 16 shameless.

My son, if thou seest thine enemy fallen, do 17 not mock at him; lest he should rise up and repay thee.

My son, be not envious at the good fortune of 18 thine enemy; and do not rejoice at his misfortune.

My son, do not approach a woman who is 19 hateful and talkative, and one whose voice is high.

For the beauty of a woman is her good sense 20 and the word of her mouth is her adornment.

My son, if thine enemy meet thee with evil, 21 meet thou him with good.

My son, if thou seest a man who is stronger 22 than thyself, rise up before him. . . .

End of Fragment.

J. R. HARRIS.

¹ This difficult expression is replaced in S₂ by the easier term 'would never be loosed from'. In either case the meaning is obscure. Quaere, 'if brute force were sufficient, the camel might go on ploughing by himself'?

ARABIC

would build many houses every day; and if it were by dint of strength that the plough were driven, the plough would never be removed from under the shoulders of the camels.

12 O my son! the removing of stones with a wise man is better than the drinking of wine with a sorry man.

13 O my son! pour out thy wine on the tombs of the just, and drink not with ignorant, contemptible people.

14 O my son! cleave to wise men who fear God and be like them, and go not near the ignorant, lest thou become like him and learn his ways.

15 O my son! when thou hast got thee a comrade or a friend, try him, and afterwards make him a comrade and a friend; and do not praise him without a trial; and do not spoil thy speech with a man who lacks wisdom.

16 O my son! while a shoe stays on thy foot, walk with it on the thorns, and make a road for thy son, and for thy household and thy children, and make thy ship taut before she goes on the sea and its waves and sinks and cannot be saved.

17 [O my son! if the rich man eat a snake, they say "It is by his wisdom", and if a poor man eat it, the people say "From his hunger".]

18 O my son! be content with thy daily bread and thy goods, and covet not what is another's.

19 O my son! be not neighbour to the fool, and eat not bread with him, and rejoice not in the calamities of thy neighbours. If thine enemy wrong thee, show him kindness.

20 O my son! a man who fears God do thou fear him and honour him.

21 O my son! the ignorant man falls and stumbles, and the wise man, even if he stumbles, he is not shaken, and even if he falls he gets up quickly, and if he is sick, he can take care of his life. But as for the ignorant, stupid man, for his disease there is no drug.

22 O my son! if a man approach thee who is inferior to thyself, go forward to meet him, and remain standing, and if he cannot recompense thee, his Lord will recompense thee for him.

ARMENIAN

Son, it is better with a wise man to carry 4 stones, than with a foolish man to drink wine.

Son, with wise men be not a fool, and with 5 fools be not thou wise.

Son, be thou the companion of a wise man, 6 so that thou become wise as he is; but do not become the companion of a senseless man and of a fool, lest like them thou be called a fool.

Son, pour out thy wine, and drink it not with 7 the senseless and with the lawless, lest thou be despised by them¹.

Son, be thou not over-sweet, so that they 8 swallow thee down, nor over-bitter, so that they spit thee out. But do thou be gentle, tranquil in the works of thy paths and in all thy words.

Son, while the boot is on thy foot, tread down 9 the thorns and make a path for thy sons².

Son, a rich man hath eaten a serpent, and 10 they say it is medicine for him. A poor man hath eaten it, and they say that he ate it out of hunger. Eat thy own portion in peace³, and cast not thy eye on that of thy companion; and with one that is without fear go not on a journey; and with the senseless do thou not eat bread.

Son, if thou seest thy enemy fallen, do not 11 make a scoff at him; for if he get up again, he requiteth thee evil⁴.

Son, the lawless man falleth by his evil deeds, 12 but the just man is raised by his good deeds.

Son, go not near a senseless and backbiting 13 woman, that thou be not despised by her⁵; and thou art made a mock of, and she robs thee.

¹ Canon and Edjm. = 'despised like them'.

² So Canon, *ordots*: the other MSS. have *otitz*, 'for thy feet'.

³ Ven. and Canon add 'in peace': Bodl. and 58 omit.

⁴ Ven. adds: 'and there is continual ill-will.'

⁵ The Arm. = 'by them'. If that be read we should turn 'woman' into the plural.

SYR. A

22 My son, withhold not thy son from stripes; for the beating of a boy is like manure to the garden, and like rope to an ass [or any other beast],¹ and like tether on the foot of an ass.

23 My son, subdue thy son while he is yet a boy, before he wax stronger than thee and rebel against thee, and thou be shamed in all his corrupt doing.

24 My son, get thee an ox that [is fat and] lies down, and an ass that has good hoofs, but do not get thee a slave that is runaway nor a maid that is thievish; lest they destroy all that thou hast gotten.

25 My son, the words of a liar are like fat sparrows; and he that is void of understanding eateth them.

26 My son, bring not upon thee the curses of thy father and of thy mother, lest thou rejoice not in the blessings of thy children.

27 My son, walk not in the way

¹ The bracketed words are a gloss.

ARABIC

23 O my son! spare not to beat thy son, for the drubbing of thy son is like manure to the garden, and like tying the mouth of a purse, and like the tethering of beasts, and like the bolting of the door.

24 O my son! restrain thy son from wickedness, and teach him manners before he rebels against thee and brings thee into contempt amongst the people and thou hang thy head in the streets and the assemblies and thou be punished for the evil of his wicked deeds.

25 O my son! get thee a fat ox with a foreskin, and an ass great with its hoofs, and get not an ox with large horns, nor make friends with a tricky man, nor get a quarrelsome slave, nor a thievish handmaid, for everything which thou committest to them they will ruin.

26 O my son! let not thy parents curse thee, and the Lord be pleased with them; for it hath been said, "He who despiseth his father or his mother let him die the death (I mean the death of sin); and he who honoureth his parents shall prolong his days and his life and shall see all that is good."

27 O my son! walk not on

ARMENIAN

Son, spare not the rod to thy son; for the rod is to children as the dung in the garden; and as the tie and seal fastening the packet, and as the tether on the feet of the ass, so is the rod profitable to the child. For if thou strike him with a rod once or twice, he is rendered clever quietly, he does not die¹. But if thou leave him to his own will, he becomes a thief; and they take him to the gallows and to death, and he becomes unto thee a reproach and breaking of heart².

Son, train thy son in hunger³ and thirst, in order that in humility he may lead his life.

Son, receive not any who⁴ shall repeat to thee the (word) of an enemy, for they will repeat thy word.

Son⁵, at first thou art fond of⁶ a false man⁷, but in the end he becomes hateful to thee. For a false word is like a fat quail; but he that is foolish swallows it down.

Son, love the father who⁸ begat thee, and earn not the curses of thy father and mother; to the end that thou mayst rejoice in the prosperity of thy own sons.

Son, without a weapon go⁹

¹ Bodl. = 'once or twice, he is quieted, but does not die'. I render the Venice text which is attested by Canon.

² Canon here adds in agreement with the Syriac and Slavonic these two precepts: 'Son, make thy child obedient, while he is small and pliant, lest he come into open conflict with thee, and thou be undone by his injury, and win the curses of strangers because of his disobedience. Son, acquire for thyself a sturdy ass and a strong-hoofed horse and an ox short in neck. And desire not a runaway slave, or one petulant of tongue, or a quarrelsome thief.'

³ Paris 58 omits this adage.

⁴ So Bodl., 58: Ven. = 'at first (one) loves a false man'.

SYR. A

unarmed; because thou knowest not when thy enemy shall come upon thee.

28 My son, even as a tree is fair in its branches and fruit, and a bosky mountain in its trees, so is a man fair in his wife and weans; and he that hath not brethren, nor wife nor weans, is despised and contemptible before his enemies; and he is like unto a tree by the roadside, from which every passer-by plucketh, and every beast of the weald teareth down its leafage.¹

29 My son, say not, "My lord is a fool, and I am wise"; but take hold of him in his faults and thou shalt obtain mercy.

30 My son, count not thyself to be wise, when others count thee not to be wise.

31 My son, lie not in thy speech before thy lord, lest thou be convicted, and he shall say to thee, "Away from my sight!"

32 My son, let thy words be true, in order that thy lord may say to thee, "Draw near me," and thou shalt live.

33 My son, in the day of thy calamity revile not God; lest when He hear thee, He should be angered against thee.

34 My son, treat not thy slave better than his fellow; for thou knowest not which of them thou wilt have need of at the last.

35 My son, smite with stones the dog that has left his own master and followed after thee.

¹ Cf. Ps. cxxvii, 5.

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the road without weapons, for thou knowest not when the foe may meet thee, so that thou mayst be ready for him.

28 O my son! be not like a bare, leafless tree that doth not grow, but be like a tree covered with its leaves and its boughs; for the man who has neither wife nor children is disgraced in the world and is hated by them, like a leafless and fruitless tree.

29 O my son! be like a fruitful tree on the roadside, whose fruit is eaten by all who pass by, and the beasts of the desert rest under its shade and eat of its leaves.

30 O my son! every sheep that wanders from its path and its companions becomes food for the wolf.

31 O my son! say not, "My lord is a fool and I am wise," and relate not the speech of ignorance and folly, lest thou be despised by him.

32 O my son! be not one of those servants, to whom their lords say, "Get away from us," but be one of those to whom they say, "Approach and come near to us."

33 (O my son! caress not thy slave in the presence of his companion, for thou knowest not which of them shall be of most value to thee in the end.)

34 O my son! be not afraid

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not on a journey by night¹, lest thy enemy meet thee, and thou be destroyed.

Son, as a tree is enjoyable to see for its fruit and branches, and the mountains are wooded with the cedars, in the same way are enjoyable to see man and wife² and son and brother and kinsman and friend, and all families.

Son, one who hath not wife²¹ or son or brother or kinsman or friend is in the long years despised, and is like unto a tree that is in the crossways, and all who pass by it pluck off her leaves and break down her branches.

Son³, say not thus: My lord²² is foolish and I am wise, but bear with him in his folly; and thou wilt keep thyself with a wise man, until some other one shall praise thee.

Son, say ill to no one; and²³ be thou not evil-tongued in the presence of thy lord, that thou be not contemned by him.

Son, turn not aside at the day²⁴ of thy sacrifice, for fear lest the Lord be displeased with thy sacrifice⁴.

Son, quit not the scene of²⁵ mourning and repair unto the wedding; for death lies ahead of all, and the punishment is great.

Son, put not on thy finger a²⁶ gold⁵ ring which is not thine; nor clothe thee in byssus and purple that is not thine. Neither mount a horse that is not thine, since the onlookers who know it will make mock at thee⁶.

¹ Canon adds 'by night' with the Slavonic. The other sources omit with the Syriac.

² Ven. omits 'and wife'. The other sources with Canon add it.

³ Paris 58 omits this adage.

⁴ Paris 58 adds 'which thou offerest'.

⁵ Paris 58 adds 'or silver'.

⁶ Bodl. and Paris 58 add 'when they recognize it'.

SYR. A

- 36 My son, the flock that makes many tracks becomes the portion of the wolves.
- 37 My son, judge upright judgement in thy youth, in order that in thy age thou mayst have honour.
- 38 My son, sweeten thy tongue and make savoury the opening of thy mouth; for the tail of a dog gives him bread, and his mouth gets him blows.
- 39 My son, suffer not thy neighbour to tread on thy foot, lest he tread on thy neck.
- 40 My son, smite the [wise] man with wise word, that it may be in his heart like a fever in summer; [but know] that if thou smite the fool with many blows, he will not understand.
- 41 My son, send a wise man and give him no orders; but if thou wilt send a fool, go rather thyself and send him not.
- 42 My son, test thy son with bread and water, and then thou canst leave in his hands thy possessions and thy wealth.
- 43 My son, withdraw at the first cup, and tarry not for lickerish draughts¹; lest there be to thee wounds in thy head.
- 44 My son, he whose hand is full is called wise and honourable; and he whose hand is scant is called foolish and abject.
- 45 My son, I have carried salt and removed lead; and I have not seen anything heavier than

¹ Lit. 'heats'. But perhaps we should change the reading slightly (cf. the 73rd proverb), and translate 'tarry not for sweet unguents'.

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- of thy Lord who created thee, lest He be silent to thee.
- 35 O my son! make thy speech fair and sweeten thy tongue; and permit not thy companion to tread on thy foot, lest he tread at another time on thy breast.
- 36 O my son! if thou beat a wise man with a word of wisdom, it will lurk in his breast like a subtle sense of shame; but if thou drub the ignorant with a stick he will neither understand nor hear.
- 37 O my son! if thou send a wise man for thy needs, do not give him many orders, for he will do thy business as thou desirest; and if thou send a fool, do not order him, but go thyself and do thy business, for if thou order him, he will not do what thou desirest. If they send thee on business, hasten to fulfil it quickly.
- 38 O my son! make not an enemy of a man stronger than thyself, for he will take thy measure¹, and his revenge on thee.
- 39 O my son! make trial of thy son, and of thy servant, before thou committest thy belongings to them, lest they make away with them; for he who hath a full hand is called wise, even if he be stupid and ignorant, and he who hath an empty hand is called poor, ignorant, even if he be the prince of sages.
- 40 O my son! I have eaten a colocynth, and swallowed aloes², and I have found nothing more bitter than poverty and scarcity.

¹ Literally 'he will weigh thee'.

² Or 'myrrh'.

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- Son, eat not bread that is not²⁷ thine own, even though thou be very hungry.
- Son, if a man be stronger²⁸ than thyself, have no controversy with him, lest he slay thee.
- Son, crush and consume the²⁹ evil out of thy heart, and it is well for thee with God and man, and thou art holpen by the will of God.
- Son, if thy doorposts be loftily³⁰ built to heaven as it were seven ells, whenever thou enterest, bow thy head.
- Son, take not from others³¹ with a big weight and give back to them with a little weight, and say: I have made a profit. For God allows it not, but will be wroth; and thou wilt die of starvation.
- Son, swear not false, that of³² thy days there be no fail¹.
- Son, give ear unto the laws³³ of God, and be not afraid of the evil (one), for the commandment of God is the rampart of man.
- Son, rejoice thou not in the³⁴ number of thy children, and in their deficiency be not distressed.
- Son, children and possessions³⁵ are bestowed by God. The rich man is made poor, the poor man is enriched; the humble is exalted, and the exalted is humbled.
- Son, if lofty be the lintels of³⁶ thy house, and thy friend be sick, say not: What shall I send him? but go on foot and see him with thy eyes; for that is better for him than a thousand talents of gold and silver.
- Son, in reward for evil-speak-³⁷ ing receive not gold and silver, for it is a death-fraught deed

¹ Bodl. and Paris 58 add 'upon the earth'.

SYR. A

that a man should pay back a debt when he did not borrow.¹

46 My son, I have carried iron and removed stones; and they were not heavier on me than a man who settles in the house of his father-in-law.

47 My son, teach hunger and thirst to thy son, that according as his eye sees he may govern his house.

48 My son, better is he that is blind of eye than he that is blind of heart; for the blind of eye straightway learneth the road and walketh in it: but the blind of heart leaveth the right way and goeth into the desert.

49 My son, better is a friend that is at hand than a brother who is far away: and better is a good name than much beauty: because a good name standeth for aye, but beauty wanes and wastes away.

50 My son, death is better than life to a man that hath no rest: and better is the voice of wailing in the ears of a fool than music and joy.²

51 My son, better is a drumstick in thy hand than a wing [?] in the pot of other people; and better is a sheep that is at hand

¹ Cf. Sirach xxii. 14, 15; Prov. xxvii. 3.

² Cf. Eccles. vii. 1, 2. Apparently the sentiments of Ecclesiastes are contradicted.

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41 O my son! teach thy son frugality and hunger, that he may do well in the management of his household.

42 O my son! teach not to the ignorant the language of wise men, for it will be burdensome to him.

43 O my son! display not thy condition to thy friend, lest thou be despised by him.

44 O my son! the blindness of the heart is more grievous than the blindness of the eyes, for the blindness of the eye may be guided little by little, but the blindness of the heart is not guided, and it leaves the straight path, and goes in a crooked way.

45 O my son! the stumbling of a man with his foot is better than the stumbling of a man with his tongue.

46 O my son! a friend who is near is better than a more excellent brother who is far away.

47 O my son! beauty fades but learning lasts, and the world wanes and becomes vain, but a good name neither becomes vain nor wanes.

48 O my son! the man who hath no rest, his death were better than his life; and the sound of weeping is better than the sound of singing; for sorrow and weeping, if the fear of God be in them, are better than the sound of singing and rejoicing.

49 O my child! the thigh of a frog in thy hand is better than a goose in the pot of thy neighbour; and a sheep near thee is better than an ox far away; and a sparrow in thy hand is better than a thousand sparrows flying; and poverty which

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and very evil. And shed not just blood unrighteously, lest thy blood be shed in return for his blood.

Son, keep thy tongue from 38 evil-speaking and thine eye from immodest glances, and thy hand from stealing; and it will be well for thee with God and man. For whether it be gold or little things that one steals, the punishment and the slaying is one and the same.

Son, commit not adultery with 39 thy friend's wife, lest God be angry and others commit adultery with thy wife.

Son, take not a widow to wife, 40 for whenever there is any word between you, she will say: Alas, for my first husband! and thou art distressed.

Son, if retribution overtake 41 thee from God, flee not nor murmur; lest God be angry and with other harsher stroke destroy thee untimely.

Son, love not thy son better 42 than thy servant, for thou knowest not which of them will be useful to thee.

Son, the sheep that stray 43 from the flock become the portion of the wolves.

Son, pass a just judgement 44 in thy mind, and honour the aged; to the end that thou mayst receive honour from the great judge, and that it may be well with thee.

Son, incline thine eyes and 45 soften the utterance of thy mouth, and look under thine eyes; that thou mayst not appear senseless to men, for if a temple were built by halloosings, an ass would build seven palaces¹ every day and . . .

¹ So Ven. which has *aparan*s. The other MSS. with Canon have *darbas*, a word not given in lexicons, but which must have the same sense. The meaning of the word 'tchardakhs' is unknown and I leave it blank [? cottages]. Canon omits it, perhaps rightly. Canon has this precept 45 after no. 2 of our series and adds to it in that context this: 'Son, if the oxen by sheer strength drew along, the yoke would not diminish from the neck of the camel.'

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than a heifer that is far off: and better is poverty that gathers than wealth that scatters; and better one sparrow in thy hand than a thousand on the wing: and better is a woollen coat on thy back than fine linen and silks on the backs of others.

52 My son, restrain a word in thy heart, and it shall be well with thee; because when thou hast exchanged thy word, thou hast lost thy friend.

53 My son, let not a word go forth from thy mouth, until thou hast taken counsel within thy heart: because it is better for a man to stumble in his heart than to stumble with his tongue.

54 My son, if thou hear an evil matter, put it seven fathoms deep underground.

55 My son, tarry not where there is contention: for from strife arises murder.¹

56 My son, every one who does not judge right judgement angers God.

57 My son, remove² not from thy father's friend, lest perchance thy friend come not near to thee.

58 My son, go not down into princes' gardens, and draw not near to princes' daughters.

59 My son, aid thy friend before the ruler, that thou mayst find

¹ Cf. *Teaching of Apostles*, 'Be not angry: for anger leads to murder: nor contentious'.

² A slight textual correction.

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gathers is better than the scattering of much provision; and a living fox is better than a dead lion; and a pound of wool is better than a pound of wealth, I mean of gold and silver; for the gold and the silver are hidden and covered up in the earth, and are not seen; but the wool stays in the markets and it is seen, and it is a beauty to him who wears it.

50 O my son! a small fortune is better than a scattered fortune.

51 O my son! a living dog is better than a dead poor man.

52 O my son! a poor man who does right is better than a rich man who is dead in sins.

53 O my son! keep a word in thy heart, and it shall be much to thee, and beware lest thou reveal the secret of thy friend.

54 O my son! let not a word issue from thy mouth till thou hast taken counsel with thy heart. And stand not betwixt persons quarrelling, because from a bad word there comes a quarrel, and from a quarrel there comes war, and from war there comes fighting, and thou wilt be forced to bear witness; but run from thence and rest thyself.

55 O my son! withstand not a man stronger than thyself, but get thee a patient spirit, and endurance and an upright conduct, for there is nothing more excellent than that.

56 O my son! hate not thy first friend, for the second one may not last.

57 O my son! visit the poor in his affliction, and speak of him in the Sultan's presence, and do thy diligence to save him from the mouth of the lion.

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Son, boast not in the day of 46 thy youth, lest thy youth be thy destruction.

Son, suffer not thy companion 47 to tread on thy feet, lest he should presume and tread on thy neck¹ as well.

Son, speak not in wrath with 48 thine adversary before the judge, lest thou be called senseless² and foolish. But whatever he asks thee, answer him with sweetness; and thou wilt heap up his judgement on his head.

Son, if thou petitionest God 49 for good, first fulfil His will with fasting and prayer, and then are fulfilled thy petitions unto thy good.

Son, a good name is better 50 than a face that excites longing. For beauty is destroyed³, but a good name endureth for ever.

Son, it is better to be blind 51 of eye than blind of mind; for he that is blind of eye is quick to learn the coming and going of the road. But the blind in mind forsakes the straight road, and walks according to his will.

Son, a side-bone in thy own 52 hand is better than a fat lamb in the hand of others. A sparrow in thy hand is better than a thousand fluttering in the air. A kid for a feast⁴ in thy own house is better than a steer in the house of others.

Son, it is better to garner with 53 poverty⁵ than to squander with riches.

Son, curse not thy son, until 54 thou seest his end; and reject him not in scorn, until thou behold his latter end and earnings.

Son, examine the word in thy 55 heart and then utter it. For if thou alter the word, thou art a fawner.

¹ Bodl. add 'and head'.

² Bodl.: 'lest thou appear senseless and unprofitable.'

³ Bodl. 'passes'.

⁴ So Bodl. and Canon: Ven. has 'a fat kid in', &c., where *parart* 'fat' is a corruption of *patarag*, which is the *potior lectio* and better attested.

⁵ Canon: 'Better is poverty with repose than . . .'

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out how thou mayst help him from the lion.

60 My son, rejoice not over thy enemy when he dieth.

61 My son, when thou seest a man who is stronger than thyself, rise up before him.

62 My son, if the waters should stand up without earth, and the sparrow fly without wings, and the raven become white as snow, and the bitter become sweet as honey, then may the fool become wise.

63 My son, if thou art a priest of God, be thou ware of Him and enter His presence in purity, and from His presence remove not.

64 My son, him that God prospers do thou also honour.

65 My son, strive not¹ with a man in his day, and stand not against a river in its flood.²

66 My son, the eye of man is like a fountain of water, and it is not satisfied with riches until filled with dust.

67 My son, if thy will is to be wise, refrain thy tongue from lying, and thy hand from theft, and thou shalt become wise.

68 My son, have no part in the espousal of a woman; for if it shall go ill with her, she will curse thee; and if it shall go well with her, she will not remember thee.

69 My son, he that is elegant in his dress is elegant also in his speech, and he that is con-

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58 O my son! rejoice not in the death of thine enemy, for after a little while thou shalt be his neighbour, and him who mocks thee do thou respect and honour and be beforehand with him in greeting.

59 O my son! if water would stand still in heaven, and a black crow become white, and myrrh grow sweet as honey, then ignorant men and fools might understand and become wise.

60 O my son! if thou desire to be wise, restrain thy tongue from lying, and thy hand from stealing, and thine eyes from beholding evil; then thou wilt be called wise.

61 O my son! let the wise man beat thee with a rod, but let not the fool anoint thee with sweet salve. Be humble in thy youth and thou shalt be honoured in thine old age.

62 O my son! withstand not a man in the days of his power, nor a river in the days of its flood.

63 O my son! be not hasty in the wedding of a wife, for if it turns out well, she will say, 'My lord, make provision for me'; and if it turns out ill, she will rate at him who was the cause of it.

64 (O my son! whosoever is elegant in his dress, he is the same in his speech; and he

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Son, if thou hearest an evil⁵⁶ word about any one, hide it in thy heart seven fathoms deep; so that the evil die and the good be fulfilled.

Son, do thou not scoff frivolously⁵⁷; for the frivolous scoff is a quarrel, and the quarrel is slaying and death.

Son, the false word and the⁵⁸ false conversation is heavy as lead; but after a few days it floats upon the waters, like the leaf of a tree.

Son, reveal thy lesser counsel⁵⁹ to thy friend, and after days irritate him and flout him. And¹ if he does not reveal that counsel, then reveal to him thy greater counsels, and thou keep-est him a trusty friend.

Son, in the presence of kings⁶⁰ and judges, be helpful to thy comrade; for, as it were from the mouth of a lion, dost thou rescue him; and he becometh to thee a good name and a glory.

Son, if thy enemy come to⁶¹ thy foot, grant him pardon and laugh with joy to his face and receive him with honour.

Son, where thou art not in-⁶²vited, go not unto a festival; and where they ask thee not, give no answer.

Son, over a river frozen and⁶³ swollen pass thou not, lest thou die a sudden death.

Son, ask of a wise man words⁶⁴ of advice², and thou shalt be made wise. But if thou ask a foolish man, in spite of many words, he is not wise.

Son, if thou sendest a wise⁶⁵ man to give any command, he himself fulfils the matter. But if thou sendest a fool, give the command in the presence of many men. And do thou either go thyself or not send him.

Son, test thy son in hunger⁶⁶ and thirst; and if he is able to bear it, then give thy riches into his hands.

¹ Lit. 'judge not'.

² Cf. Sirach iv. 26.

¹ Bodl. 'and see, if' and below 'and keep him', &c.

² Bodl. 'words of wisdom'.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 2. 69-75 (78 Arm.)

SYRIAC

temptible in his dress is contemptible also in his speech.

70 My son, if thou shalt find a find before an idol, offer the idol its share of it.¹

71 My son, the hand that was satisfied and is now hungry will not give, nor the hand that was hungry and is now satisfied.

72 My son, let not thine eyes look upon a woman that is beautiful; and be not inquisitive into beauty that does not belong to thee: because many have perished through the beauty of woman, and her love has been as a fire that burneth.

73 My son, let the wise man strike thee with many blows, and let not the fool salve thee with sweet salve.²

74 My son, let not thy foot run after thy friend, lest he be surfeited with thee and hate thee.

75 My son, put not a gold ring on thy finger, when thou hast not [wealth]³, lest fools make mock of thee.

This is the teaching which Ahikar taught to Nadan his sister's son.

¹ This sentence cannot be of Christian or Moslem origin.

² Cf. Ps. cxli. 5, 'Let the righteous smite me,' &c.

³ Or 'when it is not thine'.

ARABIC

who has a mean appearance in his dress, he also is the same in his speech.)

65 O my son! if thou hast committed a theft, make it known to the Sultan, and give him a share of it, that thou mayst be delivered from him, for otherwise thou wilt endure bitterness.

66 O my son! make a friend of the man whose hand is satisfied and filled, and make no friend of the man whose hand is closed and hungry.

67 There are four things in which neither the king nor his army can be secure: oppression by the vizier, and bad government, and perversion of the will, and tyranny over the subject; and four things which cannot be hidden: the prudent, and the foolish, and the rich, and the poor.¹

ARMENIAN

Son, from the house of invitation and from the wedding go first before thy fellow, and return not again¹; that thou mayst get thy boon fragrant² and mayst get no wounds on the head.

Son, a man who has many possessions and chattels, they call him wise and virtuous; but one who has few chattels they call a fool and of no account, and no man honoureth him.

Son, I have eaten endive and I have drunk gall, and it was not more bitter than poverty. I have lifted salt, and I have lifted lead, and it was not heavier than is debt. For though I ate and drank, I could not rest³. I have lifted iron and I have lifted stones upon my shoulders, and it was better for me, than to dwell with the ignorant and the fool.

Son, if thou be poor among thy fellows, reveal it not; lest thou be despised by them, and they hearken not unto thy words.

¹ Perhaps the sense is 'and stay not till the last'.

² Canon: 'that thou mayst be anointed with fragrant oil,' &c. Compare the Syriac. Other texts read: 'that thou mayst get a good name.'

³ Canon adds: 'until I repaid the debt.'

ARMENIAN

71 Son⁴, love thy flesh and thy wife. For she is thyself and the companion of thy life, and even by extreme labour she nurtures thy son.⁵

72 Son, if thy lord send thee to bring a dunged grape, bring it not to him; for he will eat the grape, yet not let thee off punishment for the dung.

73 Son, the word of a wise man in drink is better than the word of a fool that is thirsty or sober.⁶ Better is an upright slave than one free but false. Better is a friend near at hand than a brother far away.

74 Son, reveal not thy secret counsel to thy wife. For she is weak and small of soul, and she reveals it to the powerful, and thou art despised.

75 Son, if thou drinkest wine, keep thy tongue from much speaking, and it is well for thee and thou art called wise.

76 Son, without a schedule and witness, give not up thy property, lest the other deny it and thou regret it.

77 Son, forsake not thy friend, lest thou find not another sharer of thy counsel and friend.⁷

78 Son, love thy father who begat thee, and incur not the curse of thy father and mother, so that thou mayst rejoice in the prosperity of thy sons.

⁴ This precept, no. 41 in the series of Paris 58, is not in Ven.

⁵ Paris 58 here repeats precept 15.

⁷ Nos. 77 and 79 are only given in Paris 58.

⁶ The Armenian text must be faulty here.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 2. 79-101 (Arm.)

ARMENIAN

- 79 Son, it is better if they steal thy goods, than that they detect theft in thee.
- 80 Son, if God prosper a man in his undertakings, do thou honour him. And whenever thou beholdest an aged man, do thou rise and stand up before him and magnify him.
- 81 Son, oppose not thyself to a wealthy man and to a river in flood. For the eyes of a grasping man are not filled¹ except with dust².
- 82 Son, do thou not bring about a betrothal match, for they see the good to be from God and from luck; but the bad is traced to thee, and they call thee an intriguing person³.
- 83 Son, if the rivers pause in their courses or the sun in its career, or if the gall become sweet as honey, or the raven turn white as the dove, even so will the senseless man abandon his want of sense and the fool become sensible.
- 84 Son, go not on foot⁴ too often to the house of thy friend, lest he hate thee.
- 85 Son, a dog that leaves his master and follows after thee, pursue him with stones⁵.
- 86 Son, good deeds and a pure offering are pleasing to God; and do thou fear shame as thou fearest God.
- 87 Son, the taking of an evil counsel into thy heart is the antagonism of the *dev*⁶; and endurance is the foundation of deeds and the rampart of faith.
- 88 Son, that which seems evil unto thee do not to thy companion; and what is not thine own, give not unto others.
- 89 Son, love the truth and hate lawlessness and⁷ falsehood. Give ear unto the commandments of God, and fear not the evil one. For the commandment of God is the rampart of man.
- 90 Son, flee from a man that is evil and speaketh falsely; for avarice is the mother of all evils, and all evils are engendered of impudence.
- 91 Son, love not judgement⁸; for even if thou get the better of thine adversary, yet be in fear of the judgement of God.
- 92 Son, he that is upright in mind is the sun giving light, and he that is treacherous in heart is gloomy with darkness, and he that is generous in heart is full of pity. He that is grasping, even though he has aught, is nevertheless dull of wit.
- 93 Son⁹, into the house of a drunkard enter not; and if thou enter, tarry not; for in thy habits thou remainest empty and idle.
- 94 Son, malign not thy fellow whether near or at a distance; for evil words will quickly reach the master and lead to quarrels¹⁰.
- 95 Son, God hath ordained wine for the sake of gladness, but in the place of a brothel or in any other low and unsuitable place, it is better to drink muck than wine¹¹.
- 96 Son, a drunken man thinks in his mind thus: I am brave, and everything that I say, I say wisely. He does not know that if he meets with a man of courage, he will throw him at the first touch of his hands flat on the ground and drag him.
- 97 (Son, if thou behold thine enemy fallen, do thou sorrow over him, that thou mayst make a friend of him; but if thou mock at him, when he gets up again he will requite thee with evil¹².)
- 98 Son, a drunken man thinks that the earth whirls round; in his going he knows not that his head is deranged; for as the earth is the mother of all plants and fruit-bearing things, so wine is the mother of all evils; it doth cause men to be sick with divers sicknesses, and to slay others without mercy; it deranges the man and changes his nature into that of a brute.
- 99 Son, flee from guaranteeing; but if thou become a guarantor, make up thy mind that thou must give away out of thy purse; and not thy purse only, but the hair off thy chin¹³.
- 100 Son, be thou not false in speech; for if they find thee to be once false, then when thou speakest the truth, they will reckon thee false and will not believe thee¹⁴.
- 101 And I say to Nadan: Son, receive into thy mind my precepts and forget them not.

¹ Paris 69 adds 'with treasure'.

² Paris 58 om. 81. Paris 69 has 'are not filled with treasure, but are filled with dust'.

³ The Armenian is obscure here.

⁴ Canon adds 'on foot'.

⁵ Bodl., Ven. add: 'which is not.' Canon omits.

⁶ Or to the *dev*, a Persian word which in Old Armenian usually means a demon.

⁸ Canon adds 'of injustice'.

⁷ Ven. om. 'lawlessness and'.

⁹ Nos. 93-100 are only given in Codex Paris 58 and Venet.

¹⁰ Codex Paris 58 gives this precept in late and obscure Armenian, and its text is clearly faulty.

¹¹ Ven. adds this: 'A drunken man is like an arrow in the hollow (lit. "palate") of a bow, which strikes no one else, but bruises its own head.'

¹² This precept has already come as no. 11, in almost identical language.

¹³ This precept is in bad late Armenian and I give the sense of the last clause conjecturally.

¹⁴ This precept also is in late Armenian.

ARMENIAN

The questions¹ of the king's sons and the answer of Khikar.

Houday and Baliayn asked questions of Khikar, and Khikar said to Nathan: There are four things that increase the light to man's eyes,—to look upon flowers, to tread with naked foot on the green, to walk upon the water, and to see one's friend.

102 Four things are there which make a man fat and keep him healthy,—to wear linen and to hear such things as seem to him pleasant; in the house an amiable and healthy spirit, and to see one's remote (friend) well off.

103 And four things are there which improve a man's banquet,—at all times to converse well, not to give answer to every word, to be humble, to talk little, modesty in small matters and big ones.

104 And four things are there which bring shame to one's face—domination of love, to talk too much and to boast that one knows what one does not know, (to conceal everything, to weave a snare and fall into it)², and false-speaking.

105 They asked the sage and said: What is the most pleasing thing on earth? He replied: Modesty. He that hath a modest face is pleasing. For all evils are born of impudence and folly.

¹ The passage which follows until the resumption of the narrative is written in vulgar Armenian. Ven. gives the names thus: Shoutay and Bayilan.

² Ven. omits the words in brackets.

SYRIAC

31 But I, Ahiqar, supposed that everything which I had been teaching Nadan he took hold of in his heart, and that he stood in my stead in the king's gate; and I knew not that Nadan listened not to my words, but scattered them, as it were to the wind, and returned and said that 'my father Ahiqar is grown old, and stands at the door of his grave; and his intelligence has withdrawn and his understanding is diminished';

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31 Thus spake Haiqâr, and when he had finished these injunctions and proverbs to Nadan, his sister's son, he imagined that he would keep them all, and he knew not that instead of that he was displaying to him weariness and contempt and mockery.

Thereafter Haiqâr sat still in his house and delivered over to Nadan all his goods, and the slaves, and the hand-maidens, and the horses, and the cattle, and everything else that he had possessed and gained; and the power of bidding and of forbidding remained in the hand of Nadan; and Haiqâr sat at rest in his house, and every now and then Haiqâr went and paid his respects to the king, and returned home. Now when Nadan perceived that the power of bidding and of forbidding was in his own hand, he despised the position of Haiqâr and scoffed at him, and set about blam-

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And^a this was the advice which I taught to Nathan my sister's son. All this I taught to Nathan my sister's son, I, Khikar, chief Notary of Seneqerim the king. And so I supposed in my mind that the teaching and advice which I taught to Nathan would abide and remain and that he would preserve it in his mind. And I knew not that he despised my words, and scattered them like the chaff before the wind, supposing in his mind that Khikar his father was grown very old and had arrived at the door of his tomb. His mind (he said) is distraught and his thoughts are deficient and he knows nothing.

^a What follows is in MS. Canon given in a form which often more nearly resembles the Syriac than do the better Armenian copies, as below:

All this I taught to Nathan my sister's son, thus thinking that what I taught he kept in his heart and would live in the royal gate. And I knew not that he scorned my words, and scattered them like dust before the wind. Forthwith he began to waste my chattels and my possessions. He spared not my slaves and maidservants nor even my darlings and my friends, but bound and ill-treated them; wounded with violent blows and destroyed my steeds continually.

SYRIAC

2 and my son Nadan began [to ill-treat] my servants by beating them and slaughtering them and destroying them; and he showed no mercy on my servants and my handmaidens though they were industrious and well-beloved and excellent; and my horses he slew and my good mules he hamstrung.

3 So when I beheld me that my son Nadan was doing detestable things, I answered and said to him, 'My son Nadan, touch not my property; my son, it is said in the proverb, "What the hand did not acquire, the eye did not spare."'

4 Moreover I showed to Sennacherib my lord all these matters; and my lord spake on this wise: 'As long as Ahikar lives, no man shall have power over his wealth.'

5 Then when my son Nadan saw his brother Nebuzardan standing in my house, he was very irate and he spake on this wise: 'My father Ahikar is grown old and his wits have waned; [and as for his wise words, he despised them]¹; hath he given his possessions to Nebuzardan my brother, and hath he removed me from his house?'

6 When I, Ahikar, heard these things, I said, 'Alas for thee, my wisdom, that my son Nadan has made insipid; and as for my wise sayings, he has contemned them.'

¹ Probably a repetition from three lines lower down.

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ing him whenever he appeared, saying, 'My uncle Haiqâr is in his dotage, and he knows nothing now'; and he began to beat the slaves and the handmaidens, and to sell the horses and the camels and be spendthrift with all that his uncle Haiqâr had owned.

3 And when Haiqâr saw that he had no compassion on his servants nor on his household, he arose and chased him from his house, and sent to inform the king that he had scattered his possessions and his provision.

4 And the king arose and called Nadan and said to him: 'Whilst Haiqâr remains in health, no one shall rule over his goods, nor over his household, nor over his possessions.' And the hand of Nadan was lifted off from his uncle Haiqâr and from all his goods, and in the meantime he went neither in nor out, nor did he greet him.

6 Thereupon Haiqâr repented him of his toil with Nadan his sister's son, and he continued to be very sorrowful. And Nadan had a younger brother named Benuzârdân, so Haiqâr took him to himself in place of Nadan, and brought him up and honoured

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Nathan began to dissipate² my property to its loss, and spared not my servants and handmaids. But he tormented them and killed them, and cut about my horses and mules, and my steeds, and destroyed the very pick of the flock.

And when I saw Nathan my sister's son, that he was transforming my affairs and dissipating my property, I began to speak with him and I said: Keep away from my property, and come not near it, for it is written in the Proverbs that, whereon hands have not laboured, that thing his eye spareth not. And I went and⁴ told Seneqerim my lord. And he called Nathan and said: As long as Khikar is alive, thou shalt not touch his property.

In that season Nathan saw⁵ Boudan¹ his brother, who had been brought up in my house, and said: Khikar my father is grown old and his words have lost their savour.

And when I⁶ heard this, I cast him out from all my belongings.

¹ In Bodleian MS. *Baudan*.

When I saw that Nathan counterfeited (*or* metamorphosed) my affairs, then I spared my chattels lest he should ruin them. And I said to Nathan: Come not near my chattels, for it is said in the wise ones, that hands which have not been hard worked, the eye shall not spare. And I went and told my lord Seneqerim. And the king ordered Nathan and said: As long as thy father Khikar is alive, go not near his possessions, but remain in the royal gate, and let thy father Khikar remain in his gate, and rest in his old age.

I, Khikar, when I saw all this that Nathan did, I said in my heart: Alas! How hath Nathan despised my sweet advice, and all my wisdom hath he set at naught and quite despised.

THE STORY OF AHİKAR 3. 7-9

SYRIAC

7 Now when my son Nadan heard thereof, he was angry and went to the gate of the king, and devised evil in his heart; and sat down and wrote two letters to two kings who were enemies of Sennacherib my lord; one to Akhi, the son of Hamselim, king of Persia and Elām, as follows:

8 'From Ahikar the Secretary and Great Seal of Sennacherib king of Assyria and Nineveh, greeting. When this letter reaches thee, arise and come to Assyria to meet me; and I will bring thee into Assyria, and thou shalt seize the kingdom without war.'

9 And he wrote another letter, as follows: 'To Pharaoh,

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him with the utmost honour. And he delivered over to him all that he possessed, and made him governor of his house.

7 Now when Nadan perceived what had happened he was seized with envy and jealousy, and he began to complain to every one who questioned him, and to mock his uncle Haiqâr, saying: 'My uncle has chased me from his house, and has preferred my brother to me, but if the Most High God give me the power, I shall bring upon him the misfortune¹ of being killed.' And Nadan continued to meditate as to the stumbling-block he might contrive for him. And after a while Nadan turned it over in his mind, and wrote a letter to Achish, son of Shah the Wise, king of Persia, saying thus:

8 'Peace and health and might and honour from Sennacherib king of Assyria and Nineveh, and from his vizier and his secretary Haiqâr unto thee, O great king! Let there be peace between thee and me. And when this letter reaches thee, if thou wilt arise and go quickly to the plain of Nisrîn², and to Assyria and Nineveh, I will deliver up the kingdom to thee without war and without battle-array.'

9 And he wrote also another letter in the name of Haiqâr

¹ Lit. 'cast him into the misfortune'.

² *Nisrîn* may either mean 'the eagles' or 'the wild rose'. I prefer the latter, because the usual plural of *nasr* is *nusûr* or *ansur*.

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But Nathan 7 formed a plan of wickedness in his heart. He wrote in my name a letter¹ to the enemy of Seneqerim, the King of Nineveh and Asorestan; and it was as follows:

I, Khikar, chief Notary of 8 Seneqerim the king, have sent to the King of the Egyptians to this effect: When this writing 9 reaches thee, thou shalt muster thy forces, and come to the plain of the Eagles on the twenty-fifth day of the month Hrotitz, and I will put in your power the land of the Asores, and will give the throne of Seneqerim into thy hand without trouble, for thee to hold it.

And he had made his hand- 10 writing to resemble my hand-

¹ There is evidently a lacuna here to be filled up from the Bodley MS. as follows: 'to Pharaoh, king of Egypt.'

Then Nathan went into the house of the king and planned very great evils for me. For he wrote two letters. One he sent to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, since he was an enemy of my lord Seneqerim, and it was written as follows:

I, Khikar, notary of Seneqerim king of Asorestan and Nineveh, to Pharaoh king of Egypt write. Be it in thy cognizance, when this dispatch reaches thee, at once shalt thou muster thy forces and come to the plain of Eagles on the twenty-fifth day of the month Hrotitz, and I will lead and make thee king over these without trouble.

And again a letter which had this form:

From Seneqerim, king, health (or peace) to Khikar, notary of my tribunal. When there shall come to

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king of Egypt, from Ahikar, Secretary and Great Seal of the king of Assyria and Nineveh, greeting. When this letter shall reach thee, arise and come to meet me at Eagles' dale, which lieth to the south, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Ab. And I will bring thee into Nineveh without war and thou
 10 shalt seize the kingdom.' And he made these writings of his like to my own handwriting; and he sealed them in the king's palace, and went his way.

And he wrote further another letter to me, as if from my lord the king Sennacherib; and on this wise he wrote it:

11 'From Sennacherib the King, to Ahikar, my Secretary and Great Seal, greeting. When this letter reaches thee, gather all thy forces together, to the rock that is called Šiṣ: and come forth from thence and come to meet me at Eagles' dale, which lieth to the south, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Ab.

12 And when thou seest me approaching to thee, array thy forces against me, like a man that is ready for battle: for ambassadors of Pharaoh the king of Egypt are

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to Pharaoh king of Egypt. 'Let there be peace between thee and me, O mighty king! If at the time of this letter reaching thee thou wilt arise and go to Assyria and Nineveh to the plain of Nisrîn, I will deliver up to thee the kingdom without war and without fighting.'
 10 And the writing of Nadan was like to the writing of his uncle Haiqâr.

Then he folded the two letters, and sealed them with the seal of his uncle Haiqâr; they were nevertheless in the king's palace.

11 Then he went and wrote a letter likewise from the king to his uncle Haiqâr: 'Peace and health to my Vizier, my Secretary, my Chancellor, Haiqâr. O Haiqâr, when this letter reaches thee, assemble all the soldiers who are with thee, and let them be perfect in clothing and in numbers, and bring them to me on the fifth day in the plain of
 12 Nisrîn, and when thou shalt see me there coming towards thee, haste and make the army move against me as an enemy who would fight with me, for I have with me

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writing, and had sealed it with my seal. And when the forces of the king asked to go home to their homes, Nathan alone remained before the king, and said: O King, live for ever. I that have eaten bread and salt in thy house, God forbid that I should see evils before thee. Khikar my father, who was in honour and greatness before thee, hath lied to me and to thee, and hath taken the side of thy enemies. And the letter which Nathan had written in my words, and had likened his handwriting to my handwriting therein, he took, and read the dispatch which he himself had sealed, before the king.

And when the king heard it, 11 he was very much distressed, and said: What wrong have I done to Khikar, that he has so behaved to me? And at once Nathan wrote by the command of the king a letter thus conceived:

When thou readest this 12 writing, thou shalt muster thy hosts and shalt come to the plain of the Eagles on the twenty-fifth day of the month Hrotitz. And whenever thou

thee this dispatch, thou shalt prepare my forces which are under thy hand; exactly on the twenty-fifth day of the month Hrotitz thou shalt come to meet me on the plain of Eagles. And when thou comest near draw up face to face against my forces, as if it were being prepared against thine enemies. For the envoys of Pharaoh are come unto me to see our forces and tremble.

And this letter Nathan sent to me as if by the command of the king. And he himself, Nathan, stood before the king and said: King, live for ever. I have eaten bread and salt in thy house. God forbid that I should deceive my king.

For my father Khikar, whom thou didst send unto rest, unto honour, unto glory, hath not done according to the command of your kingship, but hath played false to God and your kingship. And he had given the letter to certain trusty men of the king, and they gave it to the sovereign; and the sovereign gave it to Nathan and said: Read. And Nathan read it before the king; and the king was sorely troubled, and asked those who gave him the letter: Who gave into your hands this letter? And as Nathan had charged them, they answered with one mind, saying: Travellers that were going into Egypt. They had the letter, and we thy servants found them and took them by force. And when we asked them: Whence are ye? they answered, We are native slaves of Khikar.

And the king was troubled and said to the trusty men: What harm then have I done to Khikar, that he hath devised such a snare for me? Wherefore hath he returned evil for good? Nathan replied and said: Be not troubled, O mighty king. But let us go to the plain of the Eagles, as is written in the dispatch, and let us see if it is so; then let thy behests be done.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 3. 12-15

SYRIAC

come to me, that they may see what forces I have.'

13 And my son Nadan sent this letter to me by the hands of two of the king's servants.

And thereupon my son Nadan took the letters that he had written, as if he had actually found them; and he read them before the king; and when my lord the king heard them, he lamented and said, 'O God, wherein have I sinned against Ahikar, that he should do unto me on this fashion?'

14 And my son Nadan answered and said to the king, 'My lord, do not fret nor rage. Arise and let us go to Eagles' dale on the day that is written by him in the letter. And if it be true, then all that thou commandest shall be done.'

15 So my son Nadan took the king my lord, and they came to me at Eagles' dale: and they found me having with me great forces that were gathered there. And when I saw the king, I put my forces in array against him, as it was written in the letter. And when the king saw it, he was much afraid.

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the ambassadors of Pharaoh king of Egypt, that they may see the strength of our army and may fear us, for they are our enemies and they hate us.'

13 Then he sealed the letter and sent it to Haiqâr by one of the king's servants. And he took the other letter which he had written and spread it before the king and read it to him and showed him the seal. And when the king heard what was in the letter he was perplexed with a great perplexity and was wroth with a great and fierce wrath, and said, 'Ah, I have shown my wisdom! what have I done to Haiqâr that he has written these letters to my enemies? Is this my recompense from him for my benefits to him?' And Nadan said to him, 'Be not grieved, O king! nor be wroth, but let us go to the plain of Nisrin and see if the tale be true or not.'

15 Then Nadan arose on the fifth day and took the king and the soldiers and the vizier, and they went to the desert to the plain of Nisrin. And the king looked, and lo! Haiqâr and the army were set in array. And when Haiqâr saw that the king was there, he approached and signalled to the army to move as in war and to fight in array against the king as it had been found in the letter, he not knowing what a pit Nadan had digged for him. And when the king saw the act of Haiqâr he was seized with anxiety and terror and perplexity, and was wroth

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shalt see me, thou shalt draw up in battle array against me. For the messengers of Pharaoh are come to me to see my hosts.

He brought the letter to me, 13 and he himself went to the king. He stood before the king and said:

Grieve not, O ruler; but 14 come, let us go to the plain of the Eagles, and let us see whether this be so. Then what thou commandest is done.

And Seneqerim took his army 15 and came to the plain of the Eagles, and found me with my army; and I drew up my forces over against him as he had commanded. When the king saw this, he was very grieved.

And Nathan took the king and went to the plain of the Eagles. But I, Khikar, when I learned of the setting out of the king, prepared my forces and set them over against him, as had been written in the dispatch by behest of the king.

When the king saw my forces, he was sore troubled. The king said: If thou bringest Khikar before me, mighty presents will I give thee, and all the royal affairs shall be discharged by thee; for thou hast been found a trusty servant before me. And the king went back into his palace.

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16 Then my son Nadan answered and said to him: 'Let it not disturb thee, my lord the king. Return and come into thy chamber¹ in peace: and I will bring Ahikar before thee.'

Then my lord the king returned to his house.

17 And my son Nadan came to me and said to me, 'All that thou hast done, thou hast done finely: and much hath the king praised thee; and he commands thee to dismiss thy forces that they may go every man to his own place and his own district. And do thou come to me thyself alone.'

4 1 Thereupon I came before the king, and when he saw me, he said unto me, 'Art thou come, Ahikar, my Secretary and the foster-child of Assyria and Nineveh, thou whom I caused to come into honour? but thou hast turned back and taken the part of my enemies.'

¹ Taking the word as equivalent of the Greek *κουτώνα*.

ARABIC

16 with a great wrath. And Nadan said to him, 'Hast thou seen, O my lord the king! what this wretch has done? but be not thou wroth and be not grieved nor pained, but go to thy house and sit on thy throne, and I will bring Haiqâr to thee bound and chained with chains, and I will chase away thine enemy from thee without toil.'

And the king returned to his throne, being provoked about Haiqâr, and did nothing concerning him. And Nadan went to Haiqâr and said to him, 'W'allah, O my uncle! The king verily rejoiceth in thee with great joy and thanks thee for having done what he commanded thee. And now he hath sent me to thee that thou mayst dismiss the soldiers to their duties¹ and come thyself to him with thy hands bound behind thee, and thy feet chained, that the ambassadors of Pharaoh may see this, and that the king may be feared by them and by their king.' Then answered Haiqâr and said, 'To hear is to obey.' And he arose straightway and bound his hands behind him, and

4 1 chained his feet. And Nadan took him and went with him to the king. And when Haiqâr entered the king's presence he did obeisance before him on the ground, and wished for power and perpetual life to the king. Then said the king, 'O Haiqâr, my Secretary, the Governor of my affairs, my Chancellor, the ruler of my State, tell me what evil

¹ Lit. 'to the way of their path'.

ARMENIAN

Nathan began to speak and 16 said: Grieve not, O king, but let us go home. And I will bring my father Khikar before thee. The king said to Nathan: If thou bringest Khikar before me, I will give thee very great presents and I will set thee in trust over all my affairs. And all the affairs of my kingdom shall be transacted by thee with ability.

And the king returned to his 17 palace, and Nathan my sister's son came to me and said: Seneqerim the king hath sent me to thee and says, Come to me and let us be joyful together.

And when I went, the king said 4 1 to me:

Khikar, Notary and wise man, thou wast my counsellor and ruler, and giver of commands of the house of the Asores and Ninevites; and thou hast gone over to the side of my enemies.

And Nathan came to me and said: My father Khikar, very honourable and pleasing hath seemed to the king this preparing of thy cavalry in array. Therefore hath he sent me to thee and saith, All thou hast done thou hast done well and wisely. So then give orders to thy forces to go to their place, and do thou come and let us make merry together.

SYRIAC

2 And he gave me those letters that were written in my name and were sealed with the seal of my own ring. And when I read them, my tongue stammered and my limbs became faint: and I sought for a single word from the words of wisdom and I found me none.

3 And my son Nadan answered and said to me, 'Away with thee from the king's sight, thou foolish old man: and give thy hands to bonds and thy feet to iron fetters.'

Then Sennacherib the king turned away his face from me, and he talked with Nabusemakh¹ . . . and said to him, 'Arise, go slay Ahiḱar, and separate his head a hundred ells from his body.'

4 Then I fell on my face on the ground and worshipped the king, and I said, 'My lord the king, live for ever. Seeing, my lord, that it hath pleased thee to kill me, thy will be done. I know, however, that I have not sinned against thee. But
5 command them, my lord the king, that they kill me at the door of my house: and let them give my body to burial.'

6 And the king said to Nabusemakh² . . . , 'Go, kill Ahiḱar at the door of his house, and

¹ 'Yabusemakh Meskin Kanti', which I do not understand; the correction of the first part of the name is obvious. Possibly it should be 'Nabuṣumuṣkin, my colleague'. Compare the form as given in the papyrus, and in the Arabic.

² *Ut supra*.

ARABIC

have I done to thee that thou hast rewarded me by this
2 ugly deed.' Then they showed him the letters in his writing and with his seal. And when Haiḱâr saw this, his limbs trembled and his tongue was tied at once, and he was unable to speak a word from fear; but he hung his head towards the earth and was dumb. And when the king saw this, he felt certain that the thing was from him, and he straightway arose and commanded them to kill Haiḱâr, and to strike his neck with the sword outside of the city.

3 Then Nadan screamed and said, 'O Haiḱâr, O black-face! what avails thee thy meditation or thy power in the doing of this deed to the king?'

4 Thus says the story-teller. And the name of the swordsman was Ibn Samik. And the king said to him, 'O swordsman! arise, go, cleave the neck of Haiḱâr at the door of his house, and cast away his head from his body
5 a hundred cubits.' Then Haiḱâr knelt before the king, and said, 'Let my lord the king live for ever! and if thou desire to slay me, let thy wish be [fulfilled]; and I know that I am not guilty, but the wicked man has to give an account of his wickedness; nevertheless, O my lord the king! I beg of thee and of thy friendship, permit the swordsman to give my body to my slaves, that they may bury me, and let thy slave be thy sacrifice.'

6 The king arose and commanded the swordsman to do with him according to his

ARMENIAN

And that letter, which Nathan² had written in my¹ words and had likened therein his handwriting to my handwriting, the king gave unto me and said: Take and read.

And when I read it, all my limbs were² dissolved, and my tongue was shrivelled up as parchment; and I was stupefied and became like one of those distraught. I sought for a word of wisdom and found no answer to give.

Nathan began to speak,³ and said to me: Get out of the presence of thy king, grey-haired one, perverted and inane³. Give thy hand for the iron and thy foot for the fetter.

And the⁴ king turned away his face from me and said to Abusmaq, his *nayip*: Lead away and slay yon godless Khikar, and remove his head afar, about one hundred ells.

And I fell on my face and⁵ kissed the earth and said: O King, live for ever. Thou hast willed me to slaying, and hast not hearkened unto my words. And I from my heart know that I have not in any way wronged thee, and in my heart there is no guile. I am innocent. Therefore have pity on me and order that in my own house they slay me and give over my body for burial.

And the king ordered Abus-⁶maq, that they should slay me in my own house. And when

¹ Ven. omits 'my'.

² Bodl. = 'all the flesh of my limbs was'.

³ The Arm. word is obscure.

SYRIAC

give his body to burial.' Thereupon I, Ahiḱar, sent to Eshfagni my wife that she should bring forth from the daughters of my tribe maids a thousand and one: 'and let them put on raiment of mourning, and let them wail and lament and weep
7 over me. And let them come to meet me, and let them make a funeral feast¹ over me before I die. And prepare thou bread and a table and a banquet for Nabusemakh² . . . and his Parthians that are with him, and come to meet them, and receive them and bring them into my house. And I too will come into the house as a guest.'

8 And Eshfagni my wife, for that she was exceeding wise, understood all my message, and did whatsoever I had sent to her to do; and she came forth to meet them, and she brought them into my house: and they did eat bread, and with her own hand she served them, until they fell asleep from drunkenness, every man in his place.

9 Thereat I, Ahiḱar, entered and said to Nabusemakh³, 'Look towards God, and remember the love that there was between us, brother: and grieve not over my death: and remember that thee also did Sarhadum the father of Sennacherib deliver to me that I should slay thee, yet I slew thee not, because I was aware that there was in thee no ground of offence; and I kept thee alive until the king desired thee, and when I brought thee before him,

¹ Lit. 'a house of weeping'.

² Yabusemakh.

³ *Ut supra*.

ARABIC

desire. And he straightway commanded his servants to take Haiḳâr and the swordsman and to go with him naked that they might slay him. And when Haiḳâr knew for certain that he was to be slain he sent to his wife
7 and said to her, 'Come out and meet me, and let there be with thee a thousand young virgins, and dress them in gowns of purple and silk that they may weep for me before my death. And prepare a table for the swordsman and for his servants. And mingle plenty of wine, that they may drink.'

8 And she did all that he commanded her. And she was very wise, clever, and prudent. And she united all possible courtesy and learning.

And when the army of the king and the swordsman arrived they found the table set in order, and the wine and the luxurious viands, and they began eating and drinking till they were gorged and drunken.

9 Then Haiḳâr took the swordsman aside apart from the company and said, 'O Abu Samik, dost thou not know that when Sarhadum the king, the father of Sennacherib, wanted to kill thee, I took thee and hid thee in a certain place till the king's anger subsided and he asked for thee? And when I brought thee into his presence he rejoiced in thee: and now remember the kindness I did

ARMENIAN

I went forth from the king, I wrote a letter lamenting to Abestan my wife and said: When this letter reaches thee, do thou send out to meet me a thousand virgins; and let them put on apparel of mourning and let them mourn for me and bewail me, that I may see with my own eyes even the wailers who bewail me in my lifetime. But^a thou shalt make large loaves, to give to my executioners, and dainty viands for them to eat and drink.

And Abestan my wife was⁸ very wise and¹ fulfilled my orders. She went out to meet me, and led them into the house, and set before them a table; and fed them, and gave them to drink old wine and unmixed, till they were fuddled and were drunk and fell asleep.

Then I⁹ and my wife fell at the feet of Abusmaq weeping, and I said to him: Abusmaq, my comrade, look up to heaven and behold God with thy eyes; and remember the bread and salt which we have eaten together, and remember how that they betrayed thee to Seneqerim the king's father; and I took and kept thee until the king asked for thee, and how, when I led thee before him, he gave me

¹ Paris 92 and 58 alone add the words 'was . . . and'.

^a The narrative that follows is given in MS. Canon in a form more closely resembling the Syriac as below: And they shall make and prepare a table, adorned with all good things, for Abusmaq and the Parthians who are with me. Thou shalt go out to meet these and shalt lead them into the house.

And Arphestan my wife did immediately what I had commanded; and we set out to my house. And Abusmaq and the Parthians reclined, and my wife set before them a table, and waited on them. And I entered with them to eat bread; and they were fuddled with wine.

And I said to Abusmaq my comrade, Look up to heaven and discern God with thy eyes and remember the love of our brotherhood. And sin not against my blood, for thou knowest that I am innocent. But

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 4. 9-13

SYRIAC

he gave me great gifts, and many presents did I carry off
10 from him. And do thou too, now, preserve me alive and recompense me this kindness: and in order that the word come not abroad that I was not killed and that the king may not quarrel with thee, behold, I have in my prison-house a slave, Marzifan hight, and he is due to die: clothe this slave in my raiment and rouse up the Parthians against him and they will slay him: and I shall not die, because I have done no wrong.'

11 And when I spake thus, moreover Nabusemakh¹ . . . also was sore grieved over me, and he took my raiments and clad in them the slave that was in the prison-house. And he roused up the Parthians, and they arose in the fumes² of their wine, and they slew him and removed his head a hundred ells from his corse, and they gave over his body for burial.

12 Then went forth the report in Assyria and Nineveh, that Ahiḳar the Secretary is killed.

And Nabusemakh³ . . . rose up, and Eshfagni my wife, and they made for me a hiding-place underground; its breadth was three cubits and its height five cubits, under the threshold of the
13 door of my house. And they put bread and water with me, and went and showed to Sennacherib the king that Ahiḳar, the Secretary, was dead: and when the men heard it, they wept; and the women disfigured⁴ their

¹ *Ut supra.*

² Lit. 'taste'.

³ *Ut supra.*

⁴ Lit. 'scratched'.

ARABIC

10 thee. And I know that the king will repent him about me and will be wroth with a great wrath about my execution. For I am not guilty, and it shall be when thou shalt present me before him in his palace, thou shalt meet with great good fortune, and know that Nadan my sister's son has deceived me and has done this bad deed to me, and the king will repent of having slain me; and now I have a cellar in the garden of my house, and

11 no one knows of it. Hide me in it with the knowledge of my wife. And I have a slave in prison who deserves to be killed. Bring him out and dress him in my clothes, and command the servants when they are drunk to slay him. They will not know who it is they are killing.

12 And cast away his head a hundred cubits from his body, and give his body to my slaves that they may bury it. And thou shalt have laid up a great treasure with me.' And then the swordsman did as Haiḳâr had commanded him, and he went to the king and said to him, 'May thy head live for ever!'

13 Then Haiḳâr's wife let down to him in the hiding-place every week what sufficed for him, and no one knew of it but herself. And the story was reported and repeated and spread abroad

ARMENIAN

mighty gifts. Now therefore 10 keep me and render to me a return of the service I rendered thee, and to thee there will be mighty gifts as thy requital, good for good¹. I have a man in prison, and very like unto me is he. He shed blood in my house and is under sentence of death, and his name is Seniḳar. Take therefore my garments into the prison and dress him up in them and slay him; and so thou fulfillest the king's command.

And when I said this, Abus- 11 maḳ had pity on me, and did my will and what I told him. And the soldiers, fuddled, woke up from sleep² at midnight, and slew Seniḳar my slave, and removed his head from him one hundred ells.

And the news 12 went forth into the city of Asorestan, that Khikar, Notary and wise man, was dead.

Then Abusmaḳ my comrade and Abestan my wife made me a house dug out underground, its³ length seven ells, and its height equal to my head's, hard by the door-posts of my house. And they shut me in and placed 13 beside me bread and water, and then Abusmaḳ went off to the king and told him that 'Khikar the wise is slain'. And all who heard of my death beat their breasts and were full of regret

¹ Bodl. has 'will be a requital from God': Paris 92, 'will be mighty gifts'. I render the Ven. MS.

² So Ven. and Paris 92: the rest = 'fuddled with wine, woke up at'.

³ Canon = 'its height three ells and its length seven ells, equal to (or level with) the door-posts of my house'.

remember also this, that the sire of Seneqerim gave thee into my hands for slaying; and I wronged thee not, for I knew that thou wast innocent. And I kept thee until the king made a request; and then I led thee before the king, and the king gave me mighty gifts. This do thou likewise and slay me not. There is my slave whose name is Sêniphar, and very like is he unto me. And he is in prison, because he is under sentence of death. So then lead me into prison and dress him up in my garments and cast him to the Parthians, for them to slay him. . . .

SYRIAC

faces and said: 'Alas for thee, Ahiḱar the wise Secretary, thou fence of the breaches of our country: for like thee there will never be any one to us.'

¹⁴ Then Sennacherib the king called my son Nadan, and said to him. 'Go make a funeral feast¹ for thy father Ahiḱar, and then return to me.'

¹⁵ And when Nadan my son came, no funeral feast did he make for me, nor any remembrance at all; but gathered him the vain and lewd folk, and set them down at my table, with singing and with great joy; and my beloved servants and handmaidens he stripped and flogged without mercy.

¹⁶ Nor had he any reverence for my wife Eshfagni, but sought to do with her the way of man with woman.

¹⁷ And I, Ahiḱar, was cast into darkness in the pit beneath. And I was hearing the voice of my bakers, cooks, and butlers as they wept and sobbed within my house.

¹ Lit. 'a house of weeping'.

ARABIC

in every place of how Haiḳâr the Sage had been slain and was dead, and all the people of that city mourned for him. And they wept and said: 'Alas for thee, O Haiḳâr! and for thy learning and thy courtesy! How sad about thee and about thy knowledge! Where can another like thee be found? and where can there be a man so intelligent, so learned, so skilled in ruling as to resemble thee that he may fill thy place?'

But the king was repenting about Haiḳâr, and his repentance availed him naught.

¹⁴ Then he called for Nadan and said to him, 'Go and take thy friends with thee and make a mourning and a weeping for thy uncle Haiḳâr, and lament for him as the custom is, doing honour to his memory.'

¹⁵ But when Nadan, the foolish, the ignorant, the hard-hearted, went to the house of his uncle, he neither wept nor sorrowed nor wailed, but assembled heartless and dissolute people and set about eating and drinking. And Nadan began to seize the maidservants and the slaves belonging to Haiḳâr, and bound them and tortured them and drubbed them with a sore drubbing.

¹⁶ And he did not respect the wife of his uncle, she who had brought him up like her own boy, but wanted her to fall into sin with him. But ¹⁷ Haiḳâr had been cast into the hiding-place, and he heard the weeping of his slaves and his neighbours, and he praised the Most High God, the Merciful One,

ARMENIAN

and said: Alas for thee, O Notary! Who is there to decide the matters of thy kingdom with thy ability?

Then the king called Nathan ¹⁴ and said to him: Go, make lamentations for the house and mourning for thy father.

^{Na-15} than^a came, and instead of lamenting he gathered together actors, and made great cheer; and he very cruelly tormented my servants and handmaids.

And even for Abestan my wife ¹⁶ he had no respect, but desired to fornicate with her, that had brought him up. And I from my subterranean chamber heard the weeping and groanings and the complaints of my servants. And ¹⁷ I moreover wept and my soul longed for a little bread and a morsel of meat and a cup. And I was destitute of all my chattels.

^a MS. Canon has the narrative which follows in a form nearer to the Syriac. It is given below: And Nathan went off to the house of Khikar, but with him there was no concern for mourning. And he collected all his dear ones to drink wine and made great good cheer, instead of mourning as the king commanded. Using force to the dear ones of Khikar he tortured them and had no respect for Arphestan wife of Khikar, nay rather desired to fornicate with her.

And I, Khikar, was hearing the voice of my stewards whom Nathan tortured and ill-treated. And I was tortured in the darkness. My soul was longing for bread and a morsel of meat.

SYRIAC

18 And after a few days came Nabusemakh¹ . . . and opened [my prison] over me² and comforted me; and set before me bread and water; and I said to him, 'When thou goest forth from me, remember me before God, and say, O God, just and righteous, and that showest grace upon the earth, hear the voice of Thy servant Ahiqar,³ and remember that he sacrificed to Thee fatted oxen like sucking
19 lambs. And now he is cast into the darksome pit where he seeth no light. And dost Thou not save him that crieth unto Thee? O Lord, hear the voice of my colleague,⁴ [I pray Thee.]'
5 1 Now when Pharaoh, king of Egypt, heard that I, Ahiqar, had been slain, he was greatly rejoiced, and he wrote a letter to Sennacherib on this wise:

2 'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to Sennacherib, king of Assyria and Nineveh, greeting. I am planning to build a castle between heaven and earth, wherefore seek out and send me from thy kingdom a man who is a skilled architect, that he may give me reply concerning all
3 that I shall ask him. And when thou shalt send me such a man, I will collect and send thee the revenue of Egypt for three

¹ *Ut supra.*

² Lit. 'on my eyes'.

³ Cf. Apoc. vi. 10, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true,' &c.

⁴ This trifling but necessary emendation confirms our interpretation (*vide supra*) of the corrupt name.

ARABIC

and gave thanks, and he always prayed and besought the Most High God.
18 And the swordsman came from time to time to Haiqâr whilst he was in the midst of the hiding-place: and Haiqâr came and entreated him. And he comforted him and wished him deliverance.
19 And when the story was reported in other countries that Haiqâr the Sage had been slain, all the kings were grieved and despised king Sennacherib, and they lamented over Haiqâr the solver of riddles.

5 1 And when the king of Egypt had made sure that Haiqâr was slain, he arose straightway and wrote a letter to king Sennacherib, reminding him in it 'of the peace and the health and the might and the honour which we wish specially for thee, my beloved
2 brother, king Sennacherib. I have been desiring to build a castle between the heaven and the earth, and I want thee to send me a wise, clever man from thyself to build it for me, and to answer me all my questions, and that I may have the taxes¹ and the custom duties of Assyria for three years.' Then he sealed

¹ i.e. taxes in kind, agricultural produce. For this rendering of the Arabic word, see Dozy, vol. ii, p. 345.

ARMENIAN

And all the inhabitants of Asorestan and of Nineveh fled from me.

When the king of Egypt 5 1 heard this, of how Khikar the Notary was dead, and of the Ninevites and all the land (that) they were fled, he was very glad. And the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, wrote a letter as follows:

To Seneqerim, king of the 2 Asores. Health be to thy Lordship and Kingship. Be it known to thee that I desire to build a palace hung betwixt heaven and earth. Look and send unto me a true and clever and wise man who can build, and also give answer to any question I ask. If however thou shalt neglect 3 this request, then I will come

And when Pharaoh heard that Khikar was slain, he was very glad, and wrote a dispatch to the king Seneqerim, riddles.

And the king called Nathan and said: Write an answer to this letter.

And Nathan said: Difficult is this matter. Who is able to give answer thereto?

And the king was distressed and said: Alas for Khikar my secretary and wise man!

And when Pharaoh learned that they could not give an answer to his writing, he sent puissant forces and they took tribute from Seneqerim. And as long as Khikar languished in the prison, the burden of Pharaoh was multiplied on Asorestan and Nineveh. Those who were under the hand of Seneqerim also were much impoverished and all the land laid waste, and the chambers of the royal treasury were emptied.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 5. 3-7

SYRIAC

years: and if thou send me not a man who shall give me reply concerning all that I ask him, then do thou collect and send me the tribute of Assyria and Nineveh for three years, by the hands of these ambassadors that come to thee.¹

4 And when this letter was read before the king, he cried out to all the nobles and franklins of his kingdom, and said unto them: 'Which of you will go to Egypt to give reply to the king concerning all that he shall ask him? And he shall build him the castle that he planneth, and bring back the three years' tribute of Egypt and come hither.'

5 And when the nobles heard this, they answered and said unto the king: 'My lord the king, thou knowest that not only in the years of thy reign, but also in the years of thy father Sarahadum, Ahikar the Secretary was in the habit of resolving
6 questions like these. And now, also, behold his son Nadan, he is instructed in his father's booklore and wisdom.' And when my son Nadan heard these things, he cried out before the king and said: 'The gods themselves cannot do things like these; let alone men'¹

7 And when the king heard

¹ Cf. Dan. ii. 11.

ARABIC

the letter and sent it to Sen-
3 nacherib. He took it and read it and gave it to his viziers and to the nobles of his kingdom, and they were perplexed and ashamed, and he was wroth with a great wrath, and was puzzled about

4 how he should act. Then he assembled the old men and the learned men and the wise men and the philosophers, and the diviners and the astrologers, and every one who was in his country, and read them the letter and said to them, 'Who amongst you will go to Pharaoh king of Egypt and answer him his

5 questions?' And they said to him, 'O our lord the king! know thou that there is none in thy kingdom who is acquainted with these questions except Haiqâr, thy vizier and
6 secretary. But as for us, we have no skill in this, unless it be Nadan, his sister's son, for he taught him all his wisdom and learning and knowledge. Call him to thee, perchance he may untie this hard knot.' Then the king called Nadan and said to him, 'Look at this letter and understand what is in it.' And when Nadan read it, he said, 'O my lord! who is able to build a castle between the heaven and the earth?'

7 And when the king heard

ARMENIAN

and take away thy kingdom and will lay waste thy land.

When
4 the king heard this he was very grieved, and sent and mustered his satraps to ask their advice, saying: What shall we do?

The¹ satraps say: O King, who
5 else can answer this question except Nathan, who hath learned of Khikar and knoweth his lore and hath been brought up in his house? He will be able to give an answer to this demand which the king of Egypt hath written. Then the king called Nathan and showed him the counsel; and he gave him the dispatch, and Nathan read it. When he had read aloud
6 the letter, he cried out with a loud voice and said: This² is a matter which even the gods³ cannot settle or give answer to. How shall I be able to give answer?

When the king heard, he rose
7

¹ Canon: 'And they perplexed said: To such a matter Khikar would give an answer, and now Nathan who is in his place.'

² Canon: 'Such a matter the gods cannot answer, much less men. When the king heard, he was sorely troubled; he rose . . .'

³ The Arm. word used is *dign*, i. e. the *deus*.

And the king said: Alas for Khikar, secretary and wise man! One who should give thee to me alive, many chattels would I give him, even to the half of my kingdom.

And Abusmaq revealed it not to the king, that he might be in stress and know the value to him of Khikar.

And Pharaoh sent a dispatch to king Seneqerim which had this tenor: From Pharaoh to Seneqerim, health. I desire to build a palace. . . .

This when Nathan heard, he cried with a loud voice and said: King, live for ever. Such a matter as that the gods could not make answer to. Surely then not men?

When the king heard this he was very distressed. He rose from his throne and sat on sackcloth, beat his

SYRIAC

these words, he was much perturbed, and he descended from his throne and sat on the ground, and spake thus:¹ 'Alas for thee, Ahikar the wise, that I destroyed thee for the words of a boy! Who will give thee to me for such a time as this? I would give him thy weight in gold.'

ARABIC

the speech of Nadan he sorrowed with a great and sore sorrow, and stepped down from his throne and sat in the ashes, and began to weep and wail over Haiqâr, saying, 'O my grief! O Haiqâr, who didst know the secrets and the riddles! woe is me for thee, O Haiqâr! O teacher of my country and ruler of my kingdom, where shall I find thy like? O Haiqâr, O teacher of my country, where shall I turn for thee? woe is me for thee! how did I destroy thee! and I listened to the talk of a stupid, ignorant boy without knowledge, without religion, without manliness. Ah! and again Ah for myself! who can give thee to me just for once, or bring me word that Haiqâr is alive? and I would give him the half of my kingdom. Whence is this to me? Ah, Haiqâr! that I might see thee just for once, that I might take my fill of gazing at thee, and delighting in thee. Ah! O my grief for thee to all time! O Haiqâr, how have I killed thee! and I tarried not in thy case till I had seen the end of the matter.' And the king went on weeping night and day.

ARMENIAN

from his golden throne and sat in the ashes, and with his own hands he smote his face and plucked out his beard and said: Alas for thee, Khikar, Notary and wise, I have through the tittle-tattle of men destroyed thee! For thou didst arrange the affairs of our kingdom. Now if any one gave thee unto me, I would give him whatever he asked of me, no matter how great a treasure of gold and silver.

8 And when Nabusemakh² . . . heard these words, he fell down before the king and said to him: 'He who has contemned the commandment of his lord, is guilty of death; and I, my lord, have contemned the command of thy kingship. Command, therefore, that they crucify me.

8 Now when the swordsman saw the wrath of the king and his sorrow for Haiqâr, his heart was softened towards him, and he approached into his presence and said to him: 'O my lord! command thy servants to cut off my head.' Then

When Abusmaq my comrade heard this, he stood before the king and said: O King, live for ever. He that doeth not the king's commands is sentenced to death, for the commands of God and of the king are one. Thou didst bid slay Khikar, and he is still living.

¹ Cf. Ezek. xxvi. 16 καὶ καταβήσονται ἀπὸ τῶν θρόνων αὐτῶν πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες . . . ἐπὶ γῆν καθεδούνται . . . καὶ στενάξουσιν ἐπὶ σέ καὶ λήφονται ἐπὶ σέ θρήνον καὶ ἐρούσιν σοι. . . .

² *Ut supra.*

¹ B.M. MS. 'is crucified'.

person and said: Alas for Khikar, able notary and wise! On the words of a lying man I slew him. There is none like thee. And there is no successor like thee in the royal gate. If any one gave thee to me, I would weigh him against gold and buy thee. When Abusmaq learned the deep distress of the king, he said: My lord king, he that contemns the behests of his lord and fulfils them not is guilty of death. Now then this word of mine is fulfilled in me. For I fulfilled not the behest of my lord. Thou didst make behest to slay Khikar, and now he is still alive.

SYRIAC

For Ahiḱar, whom thou didst command me to slay, is yet alive.¹

9 And when the king heard these words, he answered and said, 'Speak on, speak on, Nabusemakh¹; speak on, thou good and clever man, unskilled in evil. If it is indeed as thou sayest, and thou show me Ahiḱar alive, then I will give thee presents of silver, a hundred talents in weight, and of purple, fifty talents in value.'²

10 And Nabusemakh³ answered and said, 'Swear to me, my lord the king, that, if there be not found before thee other sins of mine, this sin shall not be remembered against me.' And the king gave him his right hand on this matter.

¹ Cod. 'Yabusemakh'.

² Dan. v. 16.

³ Cod. 'Yabusemakh'.

ARABIC

said the king to him: 'Woe to thee, Abu Samik, what is thy fault?' And the swordsman said unto him, 'O my master! every slave who acts contrary to the word of his master is killed¹, and I have acted contrary to thy command.' Then the king said unto him, 'Woe unto thee, O Abu Samik, in what hast thou acted contrary to my command?' And the swordsman said unto him,

9 'O my lord! thou didst command me to kill Haiqâr, and I knew that thou wouldst repent thee concerning him, and that he had been wronged, and I hid him in a certain place, and I killed one of his slaves, and he is now safe in the cistern, and if thou command me I will bring him to thee.' And the king said unto him, 'Woe to thee, O Abu Samik! thou hast mocked me and I am thy lord.' And the swordsman said unto him, 'Nay, but by the life of thy head, O my lord! Haiqâr is safe and alive.' And when the king heard that saying, he felt sure of the matter, and his head swam², and he fainted from joy, and he commanded [them] to bring

10 [Haiqâr]³. And he said to the swordsman, 'O trusty servant! if thy speech be true, I would fain enrich thee, and exalt thy dignity above that of all thy friends.' And the swordsman went along rejoicing till he came to Haiqâr's house. And he opened the door of the hiding-place, and went down and found Haiqâr sitting, praising God, and thanking Him. And he shouted

¹ B.M. MS. 'is crucified'.

² Lit. 'his reason flew'.

³ Cod. 'him'.

ARMENIAN

The king 9 said: Speak, Abusmaq, my servant and trusty one. If thou canst show me Khikar alive, I will give thee¹ byssus and purple and bestow on thee mighty presents.

And Abusmaq, when 10 he heard this from the king, like a swiftly flying fowl, came unto me, and opened the door of my subterranean chamber, and led me forth.

¹ Bodl. 'will array thee in'.

And the king said: Speak, speak, my servant, well-doing and trusty. For thou hast not sinned. But of many good things hast thou become worthy. If thou showest me Khikar, I will give thee royal purples and one hundred thousand talents of gold.

SYRIAC

11 And forthwith the king mounted his chariot, and came unto me in haste, and opened [my prison] over me, and I ascended and came and fell before the king; the hair of my head had grown down on my shoulders, and my beard reached my breast; and my body was foul with the dust, and my nails were grown long like eagles'.¹

12 And when the king saw me, he wept and was ashamed to talk with me, and in great grief he said to me, 'It was not I that sinned against thee, Ahiḱar; but thy son whom thou broughtest up, he it was that sinned against thee.'

13 Thereupon I answered and said to him, 'Because I have seen thy face, my lord, no evil is in my mind.' And the king said to me, 'Go to thy house, Ahiḱar, and shave off thy hair, and wash thy body, and recover thy strength² forty days; and after that come to me.'

¹ Dan. iv. 33.

² Lit. 'let thy soul come into thee'.

ARABIC

to him, saying, 'O Haiqâr, I bring the greatest of joy, and happiness, and delight!' And Haiqâr said to him, 'What is the news, O Abu Samîk?' And he told him all about Pharaoh from the beginning to the end. Then he took him and 11 went to the king. And when the king looked at him, he saw him in a state of want, and that his hair had grown long like the wild beasts' and his nails like the claws of an eagle, and that his body was dirty with dust, and the colour of his face had changed and faded and was now like ashes.

12 And when the king saw him he sorrowed over him and rose at once and embraced him and kissed him, and wept over him and said: 'Praise be to God! who hath brought thee back to me.' Then he consoled him and comforted him. And he stripped off his robe, and put it on the swordsmen, and was very gracious to him, and gave him great wealth, and made Haiqâr rest.

13 Then said Haiqâr to the king, 'Let my lord the king live for ever! These be the deeds of the children of the world. I have reared me a palm-tree that I might lean on it, and it bent sideways, and threw me down. But, O my lord! since I have appeared before thee, let not

14 care oppress thee.' And the king said to him: 'Blessed be God, who showed thee

ARMENIAN

And the colour of 11 my face was changed and my head¹ was matted and my nails were grown like an eagle's.

When the king beheld me², 12 he bent his head and was ashamed to look in my face; and hardly looked in my face, his face being full of shame; and³ he said to me: O my loved and honourable brother Khikar, go to thy house and repair thy person for forty days, and then come unto me. And I did so. And I came back again to the king, and the king said: I have sinned against thee, father Khikar. Not I is it that has sinned against thee, but Nathan thy sister's son, whom thou didst bring up.

And I fell on my face and 13 kissed the earth before the king and said: Forasmuch as I have seen the face of the king, I am alive; and all evils are turned for me into wellbeing, forasmuch as thy servant Khikar has found grace.

The king said: Hast thou heard this, O honourable good Khikar, to wit, what the Egyp-

¹ Canon; 'the hair of my head.'

² Bodl. adds 'in such plight'.

³ For the text of MS. Canon see below:

And he sent me to the bath for them to wash and anoint me with fragrant oil (omitting the direct speech of the king on this point). And they did so, and brought raiment of great price and clad me in it. And the king brought and set me close to him. And all that he had promised to Abusmaq he fulfilled amply.

SYRIAC

6 1 Therefore I went to my house, and I was in my house about thirty days, and when I was recovered¹, I came to the king, and the king answered and said to me: 'Hast thou seen, Ahiḳar, what a letter Pharaoh, king of Egypt, has written me?'

¹ Lit. 'my soul was in order upon me'.

ARABIC

mercy, and knew that thou wast wronged, and saved thee and delivered thee from being slain. But go to the warm bath, and shave thy head, and cut thy nails, and change thy clothes, and amuse thyself for the space of forty days, that thou mayst do good to thyself and improve thy condition and the colour of thy face may come back
15 to thee.' Then the king stripped off his costly robe, and put it on Haiqâr, and Haiqâr thanked God and did obeisance to the king, and departed to his dwelling glad and happy, praising the Most High God. And the people of his household rejoiced with him, and his friends and every one who heard that he was alive rejoiced also.

6 1 And he did as the king commanded him, and took a rest for forty days. Then he dressed himself in his gayest dress, and went riding to the king, with his slaves behind him and before him, rejoicing and delighted. But when Nadan his sister's son perceived what was happening, fear took hold of him and terror, and he was perplexed, not knowing what to do. And when Haiqâr saw it he entered into the king's presence and greeted him, and he returned the greeting, and made him sit down at his side, saying to him, 'O my darling Haiqâr! look at these letters which the king of Egypt sent to us, after he had heard that thou wast slain. They have provoked us and overcome us, and many of the people of our country have fled to Egypt for fear of the taxes that the king of Egypt has sent to demand from us.' Then

ARMENIAN

tian has sent and that which is said, that the inhabitants of Nineveh and Asorestan are fled? And I said to the king: Therefore let a herald proclaim at the 14 gate of thy palace, that Khikar is alive; and all who shall hear it will return, each man to his place.

And the king commanded a herald to cry, saying: Khikar is alive; and that all the dwellers in Nineveh and Asorestan returned, each man to his place.

Then the king brought the letter of Pharaoh and gave it to me, and said: Read and give an answer to this letter.

SYRIAC

2 And I answered and said, 'My lord the king, let there be no trouble to thee over this affair. I will go to Egypt and build the king a castle: and I will make him answer concerning all that he may ask me: and I will bring back with me the three years' tribute of Egypt.'

3 And when the king heard these things he rejoiced with a great joy: and he gave me gifts: and as for Nabusemakh¹ . . . he set him at the head of all. And after this I wrote a letter to Eshfagni my wife, as follows:

4 'When this letter reaches thee, command my huntsmen that they catch me two young eagles: and command the workers in flax, that they make me hempen ropes; the length of each one of them shall be a thousand ells, and their thickness that of one's little finger.

5 And bid the carpenters to make me cages for the young eagles: and deliver over Ubael and Tabshelim, the two boys, who do not yet know how to talk, and let them teach them to say on this wise: "Give the builders mud, mortar, tiles, bricks, for they are idle."

¹ *Ut supra.*

ARABIC

Haiqâr took the letter and read it and understood all its contents. Then he said to the king, 'Be not wroth, O my lord! I will go to Egypt, and I will return the answers to Pharaoh, and I will display this letter to him, and I will reply to him about the taxes, and I will send back all those who have run away; and I will put thy enemies to shame with the help of the Most High God, and for the happiness of thy kingdom.'

3 And when the king heard this speech from Haiqâr he rejoiced with a great joy, and his heart was expanded and he showed him favour. And Haiqâr said to the king: 'Grant me a delay of forty days that I may consider this question and manage it.' And the king permitted this.

4 And Haiqâr went to his dwelling, and he commanded the huntsmen to capture two young eaglets for him, and they captured them and brought them to him: and he commanded the weavers of ropes to weave two cables of cotton for him, each of them two thousand cubits long, and he had the carpenters brought and ordered them to make two great boxes, and they did this.

5 Then he took two little lads, and spent every day sacrificing lambs and feeding the eagles and the boys, and making the boys ride on the backs of the eagles, and he bound them with a firm knot, and tied the cable to the feet of the eagles, and let them soar upwards little by little every day, to a distance of ten cubits, till they grew accustomed and were educated to it; and they rose all the length of the rope till they reached the sky; the

ARMENIAN

And I said to the king Sene-⁶ 1
kerim: Concerning this matter which the Egyptian has sent, do thou not be anxious. I will²
go and give him answer and will bring to thee the tribute from Egypt.

When the king³
heard this he was glad, and established Abusmaq at the head of the divan. And on the morrow I wrote to Abestan my wife and said as follows:

When thou redest this⁴
writing, do thou have caught two nestlings of an eagle, and two children not yet able to talk, and two nursing women to nurse the little ones. And they shall say: Clay, lime, mortar, brick. The artisans stand idle. And have two ropes spun, the length thereof two hundred ells, and the thickness thereof one ell.

And cause a⁵
carpenter to fit together two cages for the children; and give food to the eagles, every day two lambs. And cause the children to be bound upon the eagles, and to make little flights, until they form the habit. And in this way habituate them until they soar aloft two hundred ells.

And I took and read it, and said to the king: Send yon envoys to go to their place. And I will later set out and fulfil the behests of Pharaoh.

And when they were gone, I, Khikar, Secretary, sent and had brought two eaglets. . . .

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 6. 6-8

SYRIAC

6 And Eshfagni my wife did all that I commissioned her: then I said to the king: 'Command, my lord, and send me that I go to Egypt.' And when the king commanded me to go, I took me a force of soldiers and went.

7 And when we came to the first halting-place, I let out the young eagles and bound the ropes to their feet and made the boys ride on them; and they took them and went up to a height, and the boys cried out as they had been taught, 'Mud, mortar, tiles, bricks supply to the builders who are idle.' Then I pulled them in again.

8 And when we came to Egypt, I went to the king's gate: and his nobles told the king, 'There is come the man whom the king of Assyria has sent.' And the king commanded and gave me a place to reside in; and on the following day I came in before him and worshipped him and inquired after his health¹.

¹ Lit. 'asked after his peace'.

ARABIC

boys being on their backs. Then he drew them to himself.

6 And when Haiqâr saw that his desire was fulfilled he charged the boys that when they were borne aloft to the sky they were to shout, saying, 'Bring us clay and stone, that we may build a castle for king Pharaoh, for we are idle.' And Haiqâr was never done training them and exercising them till they had reached the utmost possible point (of skill). Then leaving them he went to the king and said to him, 'O my lord! the work is finished according to thy desire. Arise with me that I may show thee the wonder.' So the king sprang up and sat with Haiqâr and went to a wide place and sent to bring the eagles and the boys, and Haiqâr tied them and let them off into the air all the length of the ropes, and they began to shout as he had taught them. Then he drew them to himself and put them in their places. And the king and those who were with him wondered with a great wonder: and the king kissed Haiqâr between his eyes and said to him, 'Go in peace, O my beloved! O pride of my kingdom! to Egypt and answer the questions of Pharaoh and overcome him by the strength of the Most High God.'

8 Then he bade him farewell, and took his troops and his army and the young men and the eagles, and went towards the dwellings of Egypt; and when he had arrived, he turned towards the country of the king. And when the people of Egypt knew that Sennacherib had sent a man of his Privy Council to talk with Pharaoh and to answer his questions, they carried the news to king Pharaoh,

ARMENIAN

And Abestan my wife was 6 very wise and did everything at once which I told her. Then the king commanded me to depart to Egypt.

And when I 7 reached the gate of Egypt, I brought the children's cages, even as they were habituated. And I bound them upon the eagles; they flew up and soared aloft, and the children cried out and said: Clay, lime, mortar, brick. The artisans stand idle.

And I, Khikar, took a rod, and 8 I went after all whom I met and struck them blows (and said): Hurry up, give what the artisans ask for. The king of Egypt came up and was very astonished, and was glad and bade us make (the birds) come down. And he said: Come, rest them from their labours. Eat, drink, and be merry, and on the morrow come to me.

SYRIAC

9 And the king answered and said unto me, 'What is thy name?' And I said to him, 'My name is Abikam: one of the contemptible ants of the kingdom.' And the king answered and said to me, 'Am I thus despised of thy lord, that he has sent me a despised ant of his kingdom? Go, Abikam, to thy lodging, and come to me early in the morning.'

10 Then the king commanded his nobles, 'On the morrow clothe yourselves in red,' and the king dressed himself in fine linen, and sat on his throne. And he commanded and I came into his presence: and he said to me, 'To what am I like, Abikam, and to what are my nobles like?' And I answered and said to him, 'My lord the king, thou art like unto Bel, and thy nobles are like unto his priests.' And again he said to me, 'Go to thy lodging, and come to me on the morrow.'

11 And the king commanded his nobles, 'On the morrow clothe yourselves in robes of white linen,' and the king himself put on white and sat on his throne. And he commanded and I came into his presence: and he said to me, 'To what am I like, Abikam, and to what are my nobles like?' And I said to him, 'My lord the king, thou art like to the sun, and thy nobles to his rays.' And again he said to me, 'Get thee to thy lodging, and come to me to-morrow.'

ARABIC

and he sent a party of his Privy Councillors to bring him before him¹. And he came and entered into the presence of Pharaoh, and did obeisance to him as it is fitting to do to kings. And he said to him: 'O my lord the king! Sennacherib the king hails thee with abundance of peace and might, and honour; and he has sent me, who am one of his slaves, that I may answer thee thy questions, and may fulfil all thy desire: for thou hast sent to seek from my lord the king a man who will build thee a castle between the heaven and the earth.'

10 And I by the help of the Most High God and thy noble favour and the power of my lord the king will build [it] for thee as thou desirest. But, O my lord the king! what thou hast said in it about the taxes of Egypt for three years—now the stability of a kingdom is strict justice, and if thou winnest and my hand hath no skill in replying to thee, then my lord the king will send thee the taxes which thou hast mentioned, and if I shall have answered thee in thy questions, it shall remain for thee to send whatever thou hast mentioned to my lord the king.'

11 And when Pharaoh heard that speech, he wondered and was perplexed by the freedom of his tongue and the pleasantness of his speech.

¹ Lit. 'betwixt his hands'.

ARMENIAN

And when it was dawn the king⁹ called me and said: What is thy name? And I said: Abikam is my name. For I am a serf of Seneqerim the king.

And when the king heard, he was grieved exceedingly, and said: Have I seemed so contemptible in the eyes of Seneqerim the king of Asorestan, that he has sent a serf unto me to give me answer? And he said to me: Go unto thy house and to-morrow come to me.

And when on the morrow I¹⁰ went, the king gave command to his forces to dress themselves in scarlet *chlamid*; and the king himself was arrayed in purple raiment, and sat on his throne, and his forces around him. He commanded and called me to him and said: Abikam, unto whom am I like? Or my forces, whom are they like? I said, Thou art like to the *diq*¹ and thy satraps to their priests. He said to me: Go to thy lodgings, and to-morrow come unto me.

When I had gone to my¹¹ house and came the next day to him, he had arrayed his forces in linen, and he himself was arrayed in scarlet, and he said to me: Unto whom am I like, or my forces, to whom are they like? And I said: Thou art like the sun and thy satraps are like its rays.

¹ i.e. 'to God'. The plural *diq* literally = 'demons', but is used like the Hebrew Elohim as a singular. The same use is found in the Arm. version of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, Bk. 1. In the Arm. O.T. it is used as a plural.

SYRIAC

- 12 And again the king commanded his nobles, 'On the morrow clothe yourselves in black,' and the king put on crimson. And he commanded, and I came into his presence: and he said to me, 'To what am I like, Abikam; and to what are my nobles like?' And I said to him, 'My lord the king, thou art like to the moon, and thy nobles to the stars.' And again he said to me, 'Go to thy house: and come to me to-morrow.'
- 13 And the king commanded his nobles, 'On the morrow dress in diverse and varied colours, and let the doors of the palace¹ be covered with red hangings.' And the king himself was robed in fine needlework.² And he commanded and I came into his presence: and he said to me, 'To what am I like, Abikam? and my nobles, to what are they like?' And I said to him, 'My lord the king, thou art like to the month Nisan, and thy nobles to its flowers.' Then
- 14 the king said to me, 'The first time thou didst compare me to Bel, and my nobles to his priests. The second time thou hast compared me to the sun, and my nobles to its rays. The third time thou hast compared me to the moon, and my nobles to the stars. And the fourth time thou hast likened me to Nisan, and my nobles to the flowers thereof. And now tell me, Abikam, to what is *thy* lord like?'
- 15 And I answered and said to him, 'Be it far from me, my lord the king, that I should make mention of my lord Sennacherib, whilst thou art seated.
- 16 My lord Sennacherib is like³

ARABIC

- 12 And king Pharaoh said to him, 'O man! what is thy name?' And he said, 'Thy servant is Abiqâm, and I am a little ant of the ants of king Sennacherib.' And Pharaoh said to him, 'Had thy lord no one of higher dignity than thee, that he has sent me a little ant to reply to me, and to converse with me?'
- 15 And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord the king! I would to God Most High that I may fulfil what is on thy mind, for God is with the weak that He may confound the strong.'
- 14 Then Pharaoh commanded that they should prepare a dwelling for Abiqâm and supply him with provender, meat, and drink, and all that he needed. And when it was finished, three days afterwards Pharaoh clothed himself in purple and red and sat on his throne, and all his viziers and the magnates of his kingdom were standing with their hands crossed, their feet close together, and their heads bowed. And Pharaoh sent to fetch Abiqâm, and when he was presented to him, he did obeisance before him, and kissed the ground in front
- 16 of him¹. And king Pharaoh

ARMENIAN

And again he 12 said to me: Go to thy lodgings, and on the morrow come to me.

And when I went on the 13 morrow, he commanded the satraps to array themselves in dyed raiment, and he arrayed himself in raiment of plumes, and sat on his throne and said to me: To whom am I like? I said: Thou art like to the 14 green grass¹ and thy satraps to the blossoms thereof.

Then the king was glad and said: Tell me the truth. Seneqerim the king, to whom is he like? I said: God forbid that 15 thou shouldst mention Seneqerim the king, since thou art sitting down. But stand up, and I will tell thee. When he had risen up, I said: Seneqerim 16

¹ Lit. 'temple': but as in Daniel, it means palace; cf. Dan. iv. 4, 'I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace' *בְּהִיכְלִי*; Dan. vi. 18, 'Then the king went to his palace' *הִיכְלָה*. Cf. also 1 Reg. xxi. 1; 2 Reg. xx. 18, &c.

² 'Dressed in tapestry.'

³ An erasure has been made of two words, and these are now illegible.

¹ Lit. 'between his hands'.

¹ Venice MS. = 'to the plain'.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 6. 16 (17-26 Arab.)

SYRIAC

[the God of Heaven] and his nobles to the lightnings that are in the clouds: for when he wills, he fashions the rain and the dew [and] the hail; and if he thunders, he restrains the sun from rising, and its rays from being seen; and he will restrain Bel from coming in and from going forth in the street, and his nobles from being seen; and he will hinder the moon from rising and the stars from appearing.

Perhaps the original text was 'the God of Heaven', which was erased to make way for 'the idol Bel', but this correction was a stupid one, seeing that Pharaoh has himself been compared to the great god Bel; hence perhaps a final erasure. The Arabic has 'my lord is the God of Heaven', which is sufficiently audacious to invite correction. Mrs. Lewis by the use of a reagent has brought up the word Bel, and perhaps the whole expression 'our god Bel'.

ARABIC

said to him, 'O Abiqâm, whom am I like? and the nobles of my kingdom, to whom are they like?' And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord the king! thou art like the idol Bel, and the nobles of thy kingdom are like his servants.' He said to him, 'Go, and come back hither to-morrow.' So Haiqâr went as king Pharaoh had commanded him.

ARMENIAN

the king is like unto Bêlshim, and his satraps to the lightnings. When he willet, he weaveth the rain¹; and he shooteth out the dew on high, he sendeth it forth in his empery. He thunders, and imprisons the rays of the sun. And when he willet, he doth bring hail and grindeth to dust tree, green herb and dry; and he makes the dawn break and smiteth the shoots of green grass.

¹ Bodl. = 'the material of rain'.

ARABIC

- 17 And on the morrow Haiqâr went into the presence of Pharaoh, and did obeisance, and stood before
18 the king. And Pharaoh was dressed in a red colour, and the nobles were dressed in white. And Pharaoh said to him, 'O Abiqâm, whom am I like? and the nobles of my kingdom, to whom are they like?' And Abiqâm said to him, 'O my lord! thou art like the sun, and thy servants are like [its] beams.' And Pharaoh said to him, 'Go to thy dwelling, and come hither to-morrow.'
- 19 Then Pharaoh commanded his Court to wear pure white¹, and Pharaoh was dressed like them and sat upon his throne, and he commanded them to fetch Haiqâr. And he entered and sat down before
20 him. And Pharaoh said to him, 'O Abiqâm, whom am I like? and my nobles, to whom are they like?' And Abiqâm said to him, 'O my lord! thou art like the moon, and thy nobles are like the planets and the stars.' And Pharaoh said to him, 'Go, and to-morrow be thou here.'
- 21 Then Pharaoh commanded his servants to wear robes of various colours, and Pharaoh wore a red velvet dress, and sat on his throne, and commanded them to fetch Abiqâm. And he entered and
22 did obeisance before him. And he said, 'O Abiqâm, whom am I like? and my armies, to whom are they like?' And he said, 'O my lord! thou art like the month of April, and thy armies are like
23 its flowers.' And when the king heard it he rejoiced with a great joy, and said, 'O Abiqâm! the first time thou didst compare me to the idol Bel, and my nobles to his servants. And the second time thou didst compare me to the sun, and my nobles to the sunbeams. And the third time thou didst compare me to the moon, and my nobles to the planets and the stars. And the fourth time thou
24 didst compare me to the month of April, and my nobles to its flowers. But now, O Abiqâm! tell me, thy lord, king Sennacherib, whom is he like? and his nobles, to whom are they like?' And Haiqâr shouted with a loud voice and said: 'Be it far from me to make mention of my lord the king and thou seated on thy throne. But get up on thy feet that I may tell thee whom my lord the king is like and to whom his nobles are like.'
- 25 And Pharaoh was perplexed by the freedom of his tongue and his boldness in answering. Then Pharaoh arose from his throne, and stood before Haiqâr, and said to him, 'Tell me now, that
26 I may perceive whom thy lord the king is like, and his nobles, to whom they are like.' And Haiqâr said to him: 'My lord is the God of heaven, and his nobles are the lightnings and the thunder, and when he wills the winds blow and the rain falls. And he commands the thunder, and it lightens and rains, and he holds the sun, and it gives not its light, and the moon and the stars, and they circle not. And he commands the tempest, and it blows and the rain falls and it tramples on April and destroys its flowers and its houses.'

¹ Or a dress completely white.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 6. 17-20 (27-30 Arab., 17-24 Arm.)

SYRIAC

17 And when the king heard these things he was exceeding wroth, and said to me, 'By the life of thy lord, I adjure thee tell me what is thy name?'

18 And I answered and said to him, 'I am Ahiḱar the Secretary and Great Seal of Sennacherib king of Assyria and Nineveh.'

19 And the king said to me, 'Did I not certainly hear that thy lord had killed thee?' And I said to him, 'I am yet alive, my lord the king: and God saved me from something which my hands did not.'

20 And the king said to me, 'Go, Ahiḱar, to thy house, and come to me to-morrow, and tell me a word which I never heard nor any one of my nobles, and which was never heard in the city of my kingdom.'

ARABIC

27 And when Pharaoh heard this speech, he was greatly perplexed and was wroth with a great wrath, and said to him: 'O man! tell me the truth, and let me know who thou really art.'

28 And he told him the truth. 'I am Haiqâr the scribe, greatest of the Privy Councillors of king Sennacherib, and I am his vizier and the Governor of his kingdom, and his Chancellor.'

29 And he said to him, 'Thou hast told the truth in this saying. But we have heard of Haiqâr, that king Sennacherib has slain him, yet thou dost seem to be alive and well.' And Haiqâr said to him, 'Yes, so it was, but praise be to God, who knoweth what is hidden, for my lord the king commanded me to be killed, and he believed the word of profligate men, but the Lord delivered me, and blessed is he who trusteth in Him.'

30 And Pharaoh said to Haiqâr, 'Go, and to-morrow be thou here, and tell me a word that I have never heard from my nobles nor from the people of my kingdom and my country.'

ARMENIAN

The king said: Tell me, what 17 is thy name? I said: Khikar is my name. He said: Wretch, 18 hast thou come to life? And I said: Since I have seen thy face, O king, I am alive. The king 19 said: May this day be blessed, for I have seen Khikar with my own eyes alive, with my own eyes.

And I fell on my face and 20 did homage to him and kissed him. The king said: Expound this saying.

There stands a pillar, and 21 upon that pillar twelve cedars, and upon them thirty wheels, and upon each wheel two couriers¹, the one black and the other white. And I said: O king, this the cowherds of the Asores know. The pillar of which thou spakest is the year and the cedars are the twelve months. The thirty wheels are the days of the months. The two couriers, the one black and the other white, are dawn and nightfall².

The king said, What is this 22 story, that from Egypt as far as Nineveh there are 500 leagues—how did our mares hear the neighing of your stallions and miscarry? I, Khikar, went out from him, and I took a cat and scolded and tortured it. Then they told the king, saying: Khikar flouts the *diq* and tortures the cats. The king called me and said: Khikar, wherefore dost thou flout our *diq* and torture the cats? And I said: 23 Yon cat has done harm enough to me. Aforetime the king gave to me a cock; sweet of voice was it, and at each hour it awoke me, to go to the king's palace. This very night (the cat) went off and bit off the head of the cock and came back here. And the king said to me 24 as follows: It appears that as thou growest old, in the same

¹ The Arm. word has this meaning.

² After the explanation of the pillar MS. Canon passes direct to the rope of sand incident, as does the Syriac.

SYRIAC

7¹ Then I sat down and meditated in my heart and wrote a letter as follows:

'From Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to Sennacherib, king of Assyria and Nineveh, greeting.

2 'Kings have need of kings and brethren of brethren: and at this time my gifts are become scant, because silver is scarce in my treasury: command, therefore, to send me from thy treasury 900 talents of silver, and in a little while I will return them to their place.'

3 This letter, then, I folded and held it in my hands: and the king commanded and I came into his presence, and I said to him, 'Perhaps in this letter there is a word that was never heard by thee.' And when I read it before the king and before his nobles, they cried out, as they were ordered by the king to do, and said, 'This has been heard by all of us, and it is so.'

4 Whereupon I said to them, 'Behold, [in that case] there is a debt of 900 talents from Egypt to Assyria.' And when the king heard this, he marvelled.

5 Then he said to me, 'I am planning to build a castle between earth and heaven. Its height from the earth shall be one thousand fathoms.'

ARABIC

7¹ And Haiqâr went to his dwelling, and wrote a letter, saying in it on this wise:

'From Sennacherib king of Assyria and Nineveh to Pharaoh king of Egypt.

2 'Peace be to thee, O my brother! and what we make known to thee by this is that a brother has need of his brother, and kings of each other, and [my] hope from thee is that thou wouldst lend me nine hundred talents of gold, for I need it for the victualling of some of the soldiers, that I may spend [it] upon them. And after a little while I will send it thee.' Then he folded the letter, and presented it on the morrow to Pharaoh.

3 And when he saw it, he was perplexed and said to him, 'Verily I have never heard anything like this language

4 from any one.' Then Haiqâr said to him, 'Truly this is a debt which thou owest to my lord the king.'

And Pharaoh accepted this, saying, 'O Haiqâr, it is the like of thee who are honest in the service of kings. Blessed be God who hath made thee perfect in wisdom, and hath adorned thee with philo-

5 sophy and knowledge. And now, O Haiqâr, there remains what we desire from thee, that thou shouldst build us a castle between heaven and earth.'

ARMENIAN

measure your words and wisdom are changed round. From Egypt to Nineveh there are 500¹ leagues. How then in a single night could a cat bite off the head of the cock and come back hither? But I said: How could your mares hear the neighing and miscarry?

The king said: Leave this. 25 Come and weave me a rope of sand. When I had gone out from him, the king said to all those with him: Whatever Khikar says, ye shall say, 'We know and have heard this saying.'

And I took and wrote a letter 7¹ thus: From Seneqerim king, all hail to Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Brethren have need of brethren 2 to behold them and kings of kings. In this season expenses and debts enough have there been and silver is wanting in our treasuries. So then give orders and have brought to me by dispatch a hundred talents of silver. And I fastened up 3 the letter and went in to the king and said: In this dispatch I have written of a matter, of which neither your city² nor your satraps have heard. And they all said: We have heard and we know this matter of yours. But I said: If ye have heard, say then before ye have opened the letter. And they could not say, but opened and read it. I said: Ye have heard what is written. The king said³: 4 If a rope of sand thou weavest not for me, thou shalt not carry

¹ MS. Canon has 360.

² 92 adds 'nor your king'.

³ Canon = 'and Pharaoh said: Weave me a rope of sand, in length nine ells. And I said: My lord king, order them to bring forth from your treasury a model that I may see and according to the model make it, that it be not too thick or too thin. And Pharaoh said: In my treasury is none. But unless thou weave it, thou carriest not off the silver, which by thy wisdom thou hast sought and I promised.'

SYRIAC

6 Then I brought out the young eagles and bound the ropes to their feet, and set the boys on their backs; and they were saying, 'Provide mud, mortar; [foreman, mix] tiles and bricks for the builders, because they are idle.' And when the king saw it, he was confounded.

7 Then I, Ahiḱar, took a switch and beat the king's nobles, till they all took to flight. Then the king was indignant with me, and said to me, 'Thou art gone clean mad, Ahiḱar: who is able to carry up anything to these boys?'

8 And I said to him, 'Concerning the affairs of Sennacherib my lord, say ye nothing; for if he had been at hand, he would have built a couple of castles in one day.' And the king said to me, 'Have done with the castle, Ahiḱar, and go to thy lodging; and in the morning come to me.'

ARABIC

Then said Haiqâr, 'To hear is to obey. I will build thee a castle according to thy wish and choice; but, O my lord! prepare us lime and stone and clay and workmen, and I have skilled builders who will build for thee as 6 thou desirest'. And the king prepared all that for him, and they went to a wide place; and Haiqâr and his boys came to it, and he took the eagles and the young men with him; and the king and all his nobles went and the whole city assembled, that they might see what Haiqâr would do.

Then Haiqâr let the eagles out of the boxes, and tied the young men on their backs¹, and tied the ropes to the eagles' feet, and let them go in the air. And they soared upwards, till they remained between heaven and earth. And the boys began to shout, saying, 'Bring bricks, bring clay, that we may build the king's castle, for we are standing idle!'

7 And the crowd were astonished and perplexed, and they wondered. And the king and his nobles wondered. And Haiqâr and his servants began to beat the workmen, and they shouted for the king's troops, saying to them, 'Bring to the skilled workmen what they want and do not hinder them from their work.' And the king said to him, 'Thou art mad; who can bring anything up to 8 that distance?' And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord! how shall we build a castle in the air? and if my lord the king were here, he would have built several castles in a single day.' And Pharaoh said to him, 'Go, O Haiqâr, to thy dwelling, and rest, for we have given up² building

¹ Lit. 'on the eagles' backs'.

² Lit. 'we have passed away from'.

ARMENIAN

away the tribute from Egypt. And I went into a deeply dug chamber, and perforated the wall of the chamber on the side whence the dawn shone; and when the dawn gleamed forth, it flashed into the chamber seven ells; and I took up dust of sand and cast it into the hole bored and blew into it. It appeared like woven twists, and I said: Give orders, O king, that they collect yon ropes and I will weave yet others.

When the king saw this he 5 laughed and said: Blessed art thou before the *dig*. And he gave me very great presents, and allowed the tribute from Egypt and well and gladly dismissed me, and I departed.

SYRIAC

9 And when it was morning, I came into his presence, and he said to me, 'Explain to me, Ahiḳar, the following matter. The horse of thy lord neighs in Assyria, and our mares hear his voice here, and their foals miscarry.'

10 Then I went forth from the king's presence, and commanded my servants to catch me a cat, and I whipped it in the streets of the city; and when the Egyptians saw it, they went and told the king that 'Ahiḳar has acted contemptuously of our people and makes mock of us. For he has caught a cat and whips it in the streets of our city.'

11 And the king sent for me and called me; and I came into his presence.

12 And he said to me, 'In what way art thou insulting us?' and I answered and said to him, 'This cat has seriously damaged me in no slight matter; for a cock had been entrusted to me by my lord, whose voice was extremely beautiful, and by the time that he crowed I understood that my lord wished for me, and I went to the gate of my lord. And in this past night this cat went to Assyria and tore off the head of this cock of mine and returned.' And the king answered and said to me, 'As far as I can see, Ahiḳar, since thou art grown old thou art become stark mad. For it is 360 parasangs from here to Assyria; and how canst thou say that in a single night this cat went and cut off the head of the cock and came back?'

14 Then I said to him, 'And if it is 360 parasangs from Egypt to Assyria, how do thy mares in this place hear the voice of the horse of my lord, and their foals miscarry?'

ARABIC

the castle, and to-morrow come to me'.

9 Then Haiqâr went to his dwelling and on the morrow he appeared before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said, 'O Haiqâr, what news is there of the horse of thy lord? for when he neighs in the country of Assyria and Nineveh, and our mares hear his voice, they cast their young.' And when Haiqâr heard this speech he went and took a cat, and bound her and began to flog her with a violent flogging till the Egyptians heard it, and they went and told the king about it.

11 And Pharaoh sent to fetch Haiqâr, and said to him, 'O Haiqâr, wherefore dost thou flog thus and beat that dumb beast?' And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord the king! verily she has done an ugly deed to me, and has deserved this drubbing and flogging, for my lord king Sennacherib had given me a fine cock, and he had a strong true voice and knew the hours of the day and the night. And the cat got up this very night and cut off its head and went away, and because of this deed I have treated her to this drubbing.' And Pharaoh said to him, 'O Haiqâr, I see from all this that thou art growing old and art in thy dotage, for between Egypt and Nineveh there are sixty-eight parasangs, and how did she go this very night and cut off the head of thy cock and come back?'

14 And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord! if there were such a distance between Egypt and Nineveh, how could thy mares hear when my lord the king's horse neighs and cast their young?'

SYRIAC

- 15 And when the king heard this, he was sore vexed, and he said to me, 'Ahiqâr, expound to me this riddle: A pillar has on its head twelve cedars; in every cedar there are thirty wheels, and in every wheel two cables, one
16 white and one black.' And I answered and said to him, 'My lord the king, the ox-herds in our country understand this riddle that thou tellest. The pillar of which thou hast spoken to me is the year; the twelve cedars are the twelve months of the year; the thirty wheels are the thirty days of the month; the two cables, one white and one black, are the day and the night.'
- 17 Again he said to me, 'Twine me five cables from the sand of the river.' And I said to him, 'My lord the king, bid them bring me from thy treasury one rope of sand, and I will make one to match it.' Then he said to me, 'Unless thou do this, I will not give thee the Egyptian
18 tribute.' Thereupon I sat down and calculated in my heart how I should do it. And I went out from the king's palace¹ and bored five holes in the eastern
19 wall of the palace. And when the sun entered the holes I scattered sand in them, and the sun's path² began to appear as if [the sand] were twined in the holes. Then I said to the king; 'My lord, bid them take up these, and I will weave you others in their stead.' And when the king and his nobles saw it, they were amazed.
- 20 And again the king commanded to bring me an upper millstone that was broken: and he said to me, 'Ahiqâr, sew up for us this broken millstone.' Then I went and brought a nether³ millstone, and cast it down before the king and said

¹ Lit. 'temple', *ut supra*.² Lit. 'furrow'.³ Lit. 'the mortar of a millstone'.

ARABIC

- and how could the voice of the horse reach to Egypt?'
15 And when Pharaoh heard that, he knew that Haiqâr had answered his questions.

And Pharaoh said, 'O Haiqâr, I want thee to make me ropes of the sea-sand.' And Haiqâr said to him, 'O my lord the king! order them to bring me a rope out of the treasury that I may make
16 one like it.' Then Haiqâr went to the back of the house, and bored holes in the rough shore of the sea, and took a handful of sand in his hand, sea-sand, and when the sun rose, and penetrated into the holes, he spread the sand in the sun till it became as if woven like ropes. And Haiqâr said, 'Command thy servants to take these ropes, and whenever thou desirest it, I will weave thee (some) like them.'

- 17 And Pharaoh said, 'O Haiqâr, we have a millstone here and it has been broken and I want thee to sew it up.' Then Haiqâr looked at it, and found another stone.
18 And he said to Pharaoh, 'O my lord! I am a foreigner, and I have no tool for sewing. But I want thee to command thy faithful shoe-

SYRIAC

to him, 'My lord the king, since I am a stranger here, and have not the tools of my craft with me, bid the cobblers cut me strips (?) from this lower millstone which is the fellow of the upper millstone; and forthwith

21 I will sew it together.' And when the king heard it, he laughed and said, 'The day in which Ahiḱar was born shall be blessed before the God of Egypt; and since I have seen thee alive, I will make it a great and appropriate day.'

22 Then he gave me the revenue of Egypt for three years, and straightway I returned and came to my lord the king Sennacherib: and he came forth to meet me and received me.

ARABIC

makers to cut awls from this stone, that I may sew that millstone.'

19 Then Pharaoh and all his nobles laughed. And he said, 'Blessed be the Most High God, who gave thee this wit and knowledge.'

20 And when Pharaoh saw that Haiqâr had overcome him, and returned him his answers, he at once became excited, and commanded them to collect for him three years' taxes, and to bring them to

21 Haiqâr. And he stripped off his robes and put them upon Haiqâr, and his soldiers, and his servants, and gave him the expenses of his journey. And he said to him, 'Go in peace, O strength of his lord and pride of his Doctors! have any of the Sultans thy like? give my greetings to¹ thy lord king Sennacherib, and say to him how we have sent him gifts, for kings are content with little.'

22 Then Haiqâr arose, and kissed king Pharaoh's hands and kissed the ground in front of him, and wished him strength and continuance, and abundance in his treasury, and said to him, 'O my lord! I desire from thee that not one of our countrymen

23 may remain in Egypt.' And Pharaoh arose and sent heralds to proclaim in the streets of Egypt that not one of the people of Assyria or Nineveh should remain in the land of Egypt, but that they should go with Haiqâr. Then Haiqâr went and took leave of king Pharaoh, and journeyed, seeking the land of Assyria and Nineveh; and he had some treasures and a great deal of wealth.

¹ Lit. 'my peace upon'.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 7. 23 (24-26 Arab., 6-7 Arm.)

SYRIAC

23 And he made it a great day and set me at the head of his household: and he said to me, 'Ask what thou wilt, Ahikar'; and I worshipped the king and said, 'Whatever thou wilt to give me, bestow it upon Nabusemakh . . .¹; because he gave me my life; and for myself, my lord, bid them give me my son Nadan, that I may teach him a further lesson. For he has forgotten my former teaching.'

ARABIC

24 And when the news reached king Sennacherib that Haiqâr was coming, he went out to meet him and rejoiced over him exceedingly with great joy and embraced him and kissed him, and said to him, 'Welcome home, O kinsman! my brother Haiqâr, the strength of my kingdom, and pride of my realm. Ask what thou wouldst have from me, even if thou desirest the half of my kingdom and of my possessions.' Then said Haiqâr unto him, 'O my lord the king, live for ever! Show favour, O my lord the king! to Abu Samik in my stead, for my life was in the hands of God and in his.'

25 Then said Sennacherib the king, 'Honour be to thee, O my beloved Haiqâr! I will make the station of Abu Samik the swordsman higher than all my Privy Counsellors and my favourites.' Then the king began to ask him how he had got on with Pharaoh from his first arrival until he had come away from his presence, and how he had answered all his questions, and how he had received the taxes from him, and the changes of raiment and the presents. And Sennacherib the king rejoiced with a great joy, and said to Haiqâr, 'Take what thou wouldst fain have of this tribute, for it is all within the grasp of thy hand.' And Haiqâr said: 'Let the king live for ever! I desire naught but the safety of my lord the king and the continuance of his greatness. O my lord! what can I do with wealth and its like¹? but if thou wilt show me favour, give me Nadan, my sister's son, that I may recompense him for what he has done to me, and grant me his blood and hold me guiltless of it.'

¹ غير here = *dergleichen*.

ARMENIAN

When the king Seneqerim⁶ heard of my coming, he went out to meet me with joy. When we had saluted each other, he took and led me into his palace and made me recline at the head of the couch; and made merry for several days, and bestowed on me very great presents, and said to me: O my father Khikar, ask of me other very great presents and I will give them to thee. And⁷ I bowed to the earth to him and said: O king, live for ever. Whatsoever thou wouldst bestow on me, bestow on Abusmaq my comrade, who gave life to thy servant.

But to me thou shalt give Nathan my sister's son whom I taught¹. For he hath not well learned my former lore.

¹ Canon = 'sister's son, that I may teach him another teaching'.

SYRIAC

24 And the king commanded and gave me my son Nadan; and the king said to me, 'Go thy way, Ahikar, and work thy will on thy son Nadan; for no man shall rescue his body from thy hands.' Thereupon I took Nadan my son, and brought him to my house; and I bound him with iron chains whose weight was twenty talents, and I fastened the chains in rings, and I fastened collars on his neck; and I struck him one thousand blows on the shoulders and a thousand and one on his loins¹; and I put him in the porch of the door of my palace, and gave him bread by weight and water by measure.

26 And I delivered him to my boy Nabuel to guard, and told my boy, 'Write down in a tablet whatever I say to my son Nadan, when I go in or come out.' And I answered and said to my son Nadan as follows:

ARABIC

27 And Sennacherib the king said, 'Take him, I have given him to thee.' And Haiqâr took Nadan, his sister's son, and bound his hands with chains of iron, and took him to his dwelling, and put a heavy fetter on his feet, and tied it with a tight knot, and after binding him thus he cast him into a dark room, beside the retiring-place, and appointed Nebu-hal as sentinel over him and commanded him to give him a loaf of bread and a little water every day; and whenever Haiqâr went in or out he scolded Nadan, his sister's son, saying to him wisely:

ARMENIAN

And the king gave Nathan 8 my sister's son into my hands, and I^a bound him with a single chain of iron, which was of the weight of seven talents, at the door of my portico; and I entrusted him to Bêliar my servant. And I ordered him to scourge him on his back and belly. And I said to him in my coming in and going forth: Whatsoever I speak in proverbs with him, do thou write on paper and keep it with thee; and I gave to him a little bread and a little water. I began to speak and said as follows:

The Parables of Ahikar, VIII. 1-41

8 1 'My son, he who does not hear with his ears, they make him hear with the nape of his neck.'

2 My son Nadan answered and said to me, 'Wherefore art thou so angry against thy son?'

I answered and said to him, 'My son, I set thee on the throne of honour; and thou hast cast me down from my throne. And

¹ Cf. the punishment of the disobedient servant in the Gospel, *ἀπρίσεται πολλὰς*.

1 'O Nadan, my boy! I have done to thee all that is good and kind, and thou hast rewarded me for it with what is ugly and bad and with killing.

'O my son! it is said in the proverbs: He who listeneth not with his ear, they will make him listen with the scruff of his neck.'

2 And Nadan said, 'For what cause art thou wroth with me?'

And Haiqâr said to him, 'Because I brought thee up, and taught thee, and gave thee honour and respect and made thee great, and reared thee with the best of breeding, and seated thee in my place that thou mightest be my heir in the world, and

Son, him that with his ears 8 1 heareth not they make to hear through his back.

Nathan began to speak and 2 said: Wherefore art thou angry with me, my father? I have¹ sinned against thee, my father Khikar. If thou wilt have mercy on me, thy servant, I will even become to thee dust and ashes and a servant all the days of my life.

And I said to him:

Son, on the throne of glory I seated thee, and from my throne thou didst hurl me to ruin.

Son, I in byssus and purples 3 clad thee, and thou with earth wouldst have destroyed my body.

Son, I raised thee on high 4

¹ Canor, with Syriac, omits the words 'I have . . . of my life'.

^a For the text of MS. Canon, see below:

'Then I took Nathan, and led him to my house; and bound (him to) my pillar of iron, of which the weight was seven hundred utres; and I placed a rope round his neck. And I smote a thousand blows (lit. trees) on his chest and a thousand on his back. And he was kept in the door of my portico. And I gave him bread by weight and water by measure; and entrusted him to Beliar my servant, and I said to him: In my goings out and my comings in, whatever I say to Nathan write it in thy book.'

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 8. 2-6 (7-10 Arm.)

SYRIAC

as for me, my righteousness¹
has saved me.

3 Thou hast been to me, my son, like a scorpion, which strikes at a rock. And the rock said to it, "Thou hast struck at an unconcerned heart." And it struck at a needle, and they say to it, "Thou hast struck at a sting worse than thy own."

4 My son, thou hast been to me like a gazelle that was standing over a sumach-tree and eating it. And the sumach-tree said to it, "Why eatest thou me, seeing that they tan thy skin with me?" And the gazelle said, "I eat thee in my life, and when I am dead they will pluck thee up by thy roots."²

5 My son, thou hast been to me like the man that threw a stone at the heaven, and it did not reach the heaven; but he incurred sin against God.

6 My son, thou hast been like the man who saw his companion shivering from cold, and took a pitcher of water and threw it over him.

¹ In the primitive sense of 'alms-giving'?

² Apparently the point of the story is missed, which is that the sumach-tree has its revenge on the gazelle: 'thy skin shall be dyed with my roots presently.'

ARABIC

thou didst treat me with killing and didst repay me with my ruin. But the Lord knew that I was wronged, and He saved me from the snare which thou hadst set for me, for the Lord healeth the broken hearts and hindereth the envious and the haughty.

3 O my boy! thou hast been to me like the scorpion which, when it strikes on brass, pierces it.

4 O my boy! thou art like the gazelle who was eating the roots of the madder, and it said to her, "Eat of me to-day and take thy fill, and to-morrow they will tan thy hide in my roots."

5 O my boy! thou hast been to me like a man who saw his comrade naked in the chilly time of winter; and he took cold water and poured it upon him.

6 O my boy! thou hast been to me like a man who took a stone, and threw it up to heaven to stone his Lord with it. And the stone did not hit, and did not reach high enough, but it became the cause of guilt and sin.

ARMENIAN

like a tower, so that if the enemy should come to me, I might go forth and fortify myself in thee; and thou thyself hast been found to be the enemy in my house.

Son, I gave thee to glory⁵ and honour; and thou didst betray me into the hands of enmity and death.

Son, I nurtured¹ thee like 6 the cub of the fox; and thine eye was on thine hole and my finger smooth was on thy mouth and thy fingers were sharpened upon my eyes.

Son, my righteousness and 7 innocency saved and rescued me; and thy injustice prospered thee not.

Son, thou wast to me as a 8 scorpion which struck the needle. The needle said²: Behold a sting which is worse than thine own. Again he struck the sole of the foot of the camel, and he set his foot hard upon that scorpion and crushed it and said: Captive, knewest thou not that thy breath and soul were under my feet?

Son, thou hast been to me 9 like a goat which was eating madder. Says the madder: Why eatest thou me? Knowest thou not that with my root they dye thy skin³? Said the goat: I in my lifetime eat thee, after my death they pluck up thy root and prepare (*lit.* build) my skin.

Son, thou hast been to me 10 like him that shot his arrow up to the heavens; and he was not able to reach thereunto, but reaped the reward of his lawlessness, and the arrow returned upon his head.

¹ I render *snoutzi* of MS. Canon instead of *ousoutzi* = 'taught' of the other MSS. MS. Canon has the rest of the saying thus: 'like the young of the eagle, and thy fingers were sharpened against my eyes. For thine eye was evil to look upon me.'

² I supply the words 'The needle said' from MS. Canon. The other copies omit it through *homoioteleuton*.

³ So MS. Canon; the other MSS. less well: 'with me they work thy skin.'

SYRIAC

- 7 My son, not when thou hadst killed me, wouldst thou have been able to stand in my place; for be well aware, my son, that even if the tail of the swine should grow to seven ells, he would never take the place of the horse: and even if his hair should become soft and woolly, he would never ride on the back of a free man.¹
- 8 My son, I said that thou shouldst be in my place; and thou shouldst acquire my house and my wealth, and inherit them. But God was not pleased therewith and has not heard thy voice.
- 9 My son, thou hast been to me as the lion that came upon an ass in the morning of the day and said to him, "Welcome, my lord Kyrios." But the ass said to him, "May the same welcome that thou givest me be the portion of him that tied me up last night, and did not make my halter fast, so that I had not seen thy face."
- 10 My son, a snare was set² upon a dunghill, and there came a sparrow and looked at it and said, "What doest thou here?" And the snare said, "I am praying to God." The sparrow said, "And what is that in thy mouth?" The snare said, "Bread for guests." Then the sparrow drew near and took it, and the snare caught him by the neck. And the sparrow said, as he was being shaken, "If this is thy bread for guests, may the God to whom thou prayest never listen to thy voice."
- 11 My son, thou hast been to me as an ox that was bound with a lion; and the lion turned and crushed him.

¹ We should expect 'the free man would never ride on his back'.

² A Syriac play of words between ܠܬܠܐ = *disposuit laqueos* and ܠܬܠܐ which follows.

ARABIC

- 7 O my boy! if thou hadst honoured me and respected me and hadst listened to my words thou wouldst have been my heir, and wouldst have reigned over my dominions.
- 8 O my son! know thou that if the tail of the dog or the pig were ten cubits long it would not approach to the worth of the horse's even if it were like silk.
- 9 O my boy! I thought that thou wouldst have been my heir at my death; and thou through thy envy and thy insolence didst desire to kill me. But the Lord delivered me from thy cunning.
- 10 O my son! thou hast been to me like a trap which was set up on the dunghill, and there came a sparrow and found the trap set up. And the sparrow said to the trap, "What doest thou here?" Said the trap, "I am praying here to God."
- And the lark¹ asked it also, "What is the piece of wood that thou holdest?" Said the trap, "That is a young oak-tree on which I lean at the time of prayer." Said the lark: "And what is that thing in thy mouth?" Said the trap: "That is bread and victuals which I carry for all the hungry and the poor who come near to me." Said the lark: "Now then may I come forward and eat, for I am hungry?" And the trap said to him, 'Come forward.' And the lark approached that it might eat. But the trap sprang up and seized the lark by its neck. And the lark answered and said to the trap, "If that is thy bread for the hungry

¹ For this rendering of نقشي see Payne Smith's *Thes. Syr.* col. 3555, sub ܢܩܫܝܐ.

SYRIAC

ARABIC

ARMENIAN

God accepteth not thine alms and thy kind deeds. And if that is thy fasting and thy prayers, God accepteth from thee neither thy fast nor thy prayer, and God will not perfect what is good concerning thee."

12 My son, thou hast been to me like the weevil that is in the corn, which destroys kings' granaries, and is itself of no account.

13 My son, thou hast been to me like the pot, to which they made golden handles¹, but its bottom was not cleansed from blackness.

14 My son, thou hast been to me like a husbandman that sowed a field with twenty measures of barley; and when he reaped it, it made him twenty measures. And he said to it: "What I scattered, I have gathered, but thou art shamed with thine evil name, in that thou hast made a bushel into a bushel²: and I, [how] am I to live?"

15 My son, thou hast been to me like the . . . bird that could not save himself from death, and by his voice slaughtered his companions.³

16 My son, thou hast been to me like the buck that led his companions into the slaughter-house; and yet he did not save his own life.

17 My son, thou hast been to me like the dog that came to the potters' oven to warm himself, and after he was warm rose up to bark at them.

11 O my boy! thou hast been to me (as) a lion who made friends with an ass, and the ass kept walking before the lion for a time; and one day the lion sprang upon the ass and ate it up.

12^a O my boy! thou hast been to me like a weevil in the wheat, for it does no good to anything, but spoils the wheat and gnaws it.

12^b O my boy! thou hast been like a man who sowed ten measures of wheat, and when it was harvest time, he arose and reaped it, and garnered it, and threshed it, and toiled over it to the very utmost, and it turned out to be ten measures, and its master said to it: "O thou lazy thing! thou hast not grown and thou hast not shrunk."¹

13 O my boy! thou hast been to me like the partridge that had been thrown into the net, and she could not save herself, but she called out to the partridges, that she might cast them with her(self) into the net.

14 O my son! thou hast been to me like the dog that was cold and it went into the potter's house to get warm. And when it had got warm, it began to bark at them, and they chased it out and beat it, that it might not bite them.

Son, thou hast been to me like the sower, who sowed ten bushels, and gathered five bushels, and the rest failed.

¹ Lit. 'ears'.

² Cf. Matt. xxv. 24-7.

³ Reading ܡܕܝܬܐ.

¹ This meaning of ضرر will be found in Lane, p. 1776, col. 3.

SYRIAC

- 18 My son, thou hast been to me like the swine that had been to the baths, and when it saw a muddy ditch, went down and washed in it, and cried to its companions, "Come and wash."
- 19 My son, my finger is upon thy mouth, and thy finger is upon my eyes. Why have I brought thee up, thou jackal, that thy eyes look thus upon apples?
- 20 My son, the dog that eats of his hunting will become the portion of wolves: and the hand that is not industrious shall be cut off from its shoulder: and the eye in which there is no vision the raven shall pluck it out.
- 21 What good hast thou done me, my son, that I remembered thee and that my soul had comfort in thee?¹
- 22 My son, if the gods steal, by whom shall they make them to swear? And a lion that steals a piece of land, how will he sit down and eat it?
- 23 My son, I caused thee to behold the face of the king, and brought thee to great honour: and thou hast chosen to do me evil.
- 24 My son, thou hast been to me like the tree that said to its woodcutters, "If there had not been somewhat from me in your hands, ye had not fallen upon me."

¹ We should have expected, 'that I might remember thee and that my soul might have comfort in thee'.

ARABIC

- 15 O my son! thou hast been to me like the pig who went into the hot bath with people of quality, and when it came out of the hot bath, it saw a filthy hole¹ and it went down and wallowed in it.
- 16 O my son! thou hast been to me like the goat which joined its comrades (on their way) to the sacrifice, and it was unable to save itself.
- 17 O my boy! the dog which is not fed from its hunting becomes food for flies.
- 18 O my son! the hand which does not labour and plough and (which) is greedy and cunning shall be cut away from its shoulder.
- 19 O my son! the eye in which light is not seen, the ravens shall pick at it and pluck it out.
- 20 O my boy! thou hast been to me like a tree whose branches they were cutting, and it said to them, "If (something) of me were not in your hands, verily you would be unable to cut me."

¹ *Gûre* means a hollow place, *siân* is presumably from the Hebrew נֶחֱם to be soft or sticky and the Syriac ܢܚܡ *linus, coenem*. I can find no justification for *siâg*, the reading of the MSS. used by Salhani and Lidzbarski.

ARMENIAN

Son, thou hast been to me like the axe that was chopping a tree. Said the tree: Wert¹ thou not from me, thou couldst not overcome me. Thus² didst thou imagine saying: I will fill his place. But if the pig's tail were about five ells long, it would not fill the place of the horse. And if its fleece³ were as purple, it could not be likened to the body of a king³.

¹ MS. Canon, better: 'Were not what is in thy hand from me, thou wert not able to overcome me.'

² MS. Canon, better: 'My son, thou didst imagine thus, saying: I will fill the place of Khikar, but were the pig's tail nine ells long, &c.'

³ MS. Canon like the Syriac adds here this saying: 'Son, I thus thought, that thou wouldst stay in my house and inherit my goods. But according to thy lawlessness, God hath not prospered thee.'

THE STORY OF AHIKAR 8. 25-28

SYRIAC

25 My son, thou hast been to me like the young swallows which fell out of their nest; and a cat caught them and said to them, "If it had not been for me, great evil would have befallen you." They answered and said to her, "Is that why thou hast put us in thy mouth?"

ARABIC

ARMENIAN

The maggot of the bread ate ^{12d} the body of a king, but was itself of no use to any one nor profitable, but vile.

Son, thou hast been to me ¹³ like the young of the swallow which fell out of its nest, and a weasel found it and said: If it had not been for me ¹, then a great evil would have befallen you. The nestling said to the weasel: Thy good which thou hast done to me shall return upon thine head.

¹ Lit. 'if it had been apart from me'.

ARMENIAN

Son, a dog which itself eats the quarry, will become the prey of wolves. An eye that gives me ¹⁴ no light, the ravens dig it out. Hand which helps me not, from the shoulder let them lop it off.

Son, thou hast been to me like the lure which lay buried in the dung. A sparrow found it and ¹⁵ said: What doest thou? ² And it said: I am engaged in prayer unto God. Said the sparrow: And that which is in thy mouth, what is it? It said: A little loaf for the hungry. The sparrow darted in to take the bread and was caught by the neck and said: If this was a little loaf for the hungry, God even so heareth thy prayer.

Son, they said to the wolf: Keep away from the fold. It answered: If I live away, I am ¹⁶ blinded; for the dust is a remedy for my eyes and benefits them.

Son, thou hast been to me as the wolf that encountered an ass, and said: Peace be unto thee. ¹⁷ The young ass said: Peace to yonder master of mine, who hath loosed the cord of my feet, and let me behold thy face evil and bloodthirsty. ³

Son, thou hast been to me like one who saw his fellow a-shivering. Taking water he threw ¹⁸ it over him.

Son, thou hast been to me like the dog which went into the oven of the potter. When he ¹⁹ was warm, he began to bark at the potter.

² So Paris 69: the rest = 'What art thou?'

³ Canon omits 'evil and bloodthirsty'.

SYRIAC

26 My son, thou hast been to me like the cat, to which they say, "Leave off thy thievish ways, and thou shalt go out from and come in to the king's palace, according to thy heart's wish." And she answered and said, "If I should have eyes of silver and ears of gold, I will not leave off my thieving."

27 My son, thou hast been to me like a serpent that was mounted on a thorn-bush and thrown into a river; and a wolf saw them and said to them: "Bad rides on bad, and worse than either carries them off." The serpent said to him, "If thou hadst been here, thou shouldst have paid the reckoning for the she-goats and their young ones."

28 My son, I have seen a she-

ARABIC

21 O my boy! thou art like the cat to whom they said: "Leave off thieving till we make for thee a chain of gold and feed thee with sugar and almonds." And she said, "I am not forgetful of the craft of my father and my mother."

22 O my son! thou hast been like the serpent riding on a thorn-bush when he was in the midst of a river, and a wolf saw them and said, "Mischief upon mischief, and let him who is more mischievous than they direct both of them." And the serpent said to the wolf, "The lambs and the goats and the sheep which thou hast eaten all thy

ARMENIAN

Son, they said to the cat, ²⁰ Give up thy habitual affair ⁴, and the privilege ⁴ is extended to thee to enter the palace and quit it. The cat said: If my eyes were gold and my paw of silver, I would yet not give up the habitual thing ⁵.

Son, thou hast been to me as ²¹ a snake that wound itself round a bramble and fell into a river. A wolf saw it and said: Lo, the evil is mounted on the evil, and evil is that which drives them along.

⁴ Lit. 'word'.

⁵ Canon here has 'habit', *bars* for *ban* = 'word', and this should probably be read all through.

SYRIAC

goat brought into the slaughter-house, and because its time was not yet come, it returned to its place and saw its children and its children's children.

My son, I have seen colts that have become slayers of their mothers.

29 My son, I fed thee with every pleasant meat: and thou, my son, hast fed me with bread of ashes¹, and I was not satisfied therewith.

30 My son, I salved thee with sweet salves, and thou, my son, hast fouled my body with dust.

31 My son, I trained up thy stature like a cedar, but thou hast humbled me in my life, and hast made me drunken with thy wickedness.

32 My son, I raised thee like a tower and said, "If the enemy should come upon me, I will go up and dwell in thee": and thou, when thou sawest my enemy, didst bow before him.

33 My son, thou hast been to me like the mole that came up out of the earth that he might get possession² of the sun, because he had no eyes; and an eagle saw him and struck him and carried him off.

¹ Lit. 'dust'.

² Lit. 'receive'. But perhaps the original was 'that he might see the sun, though he had no eyes'.

ARABIC

life, wilt thou return them to their fathers and to their parents or no?" Said the wolf, "No." And the serpent said to him, "I think that after myself thou art the worst of us."

23 O my boy! I fed thee with good food and thou didst not feed me with dry bread.¹

24 O my boy! I gave thee sugared water to drink and good syrup, and thou didst not give me water from the well to drink.

25 O my boy! I taught thee, and brought thee up, and thou didst dig a hiding-place for me and didst conceal me.

26 O my boy! I brought thee up with the best upbringing and trained thee like a tall cedar; and thou hast twisted and bent me.

27 O my boy! it was my hope concerning thee that thou wouldst build me a fortified castle, that I might be concealed from my enemies in it, and thou didst become to me like one burying in the depth of the earth; but the Lord took pity on me and delivered me from thy cunning.

28 O my boy! I wished thee well, and thou didst reward me (with) evil and hatefulness, and now I would fain tear out thine eyes, and make thee food for dogs, and cut out thy tongue, and take off thy head with the edge of the sword, and recompense thee for thine abominable deeds.

¹ For this meaning of حانف cf. Lane, Book I, part 2, p. 598, and Badger, p. 272.

ARMENIAN

Son, thou hast been to me as 22 a mole which came out of its hole and one with another went forth because of their eyes not seeing. And an eagle swooped and seized him; and the mole said: If there had been no senses in my case, I should have remained in my place and lived a peaceful life.

Son, they gave teaching to 23 the wolf's cub, and said: Say thou, *ayb, ben, gim*¹; and he said *ayts, bouts, garhn* (i.e. goat, kid, lamb).

Son, they took the swine to 24 the bath, and he plunged into it, then rolled himself in the bog, saying: You wash in your own, and I will in mine.

¹ i.e. the first three letters of the Armenian alphabet.

SYRIAC

34 My son Nadan answered and said to me, 'My father Ahiḱar, such things be far from thee: do to me according to thy mercy: for God also forgives the fault of men: and thou also, forgive me this my folly: and I will tend thy horses and feed thy pigs which are in thy house, and I shall be called evil: but thou, devise not evil against me.'

35 I answered and said to him, 'My son, thou hast been to me like that palm-tree that stood by a river, and cast all its fruit into the river, and when its lord came to cut it down, it said to him, "Let me alone this year, and I will bring thee forth carobs." And its lord said unto it, "Thou hast not been industrious in what is thine own, and how wilt thou be industrious in what is not thine own?"'

36 My son, they say to the wolf, "Why dost thou follow after the sheep?" He said to them, "Their dust is exceeding good for my eyes." Again they brought him into the school-house¹: the master said to him, "Aleph, Beth"; the wolf said, "Kid, Lamb."

37 My son, I taught thee that there is a God: and thou risest up against good servants, and beatest those that have not sinned; and like as God has kept me alive on account of my righteousness² so hath He destroyed thee for thy works.

38 My son, they set the head of the ass over a dish at the table, and he rolled off and fell in the dust. And they say, "He spites

¹ Lit. 'house of the scribe'.

² Query, 'almsgiving'? *ut supra*.

ARABIC

29 And when Nadan heard this speech from his uncle Haiḱâr, he said: 'O my uncle! deal with me according to thy knowledge, and forgive me my sins, for who is there who hath sinned like me, or who is there who forgives like thee? Accept me, O my uncle! Now I will serve in thy house, and groom thy horses and sweep up the dung of thy cattle, and feed thy sheep, for I am the wicked and thou art the righteous: I the guilty and thou the forgiving.'

30 And Haiḱâr said to him, 'O my boy! thou art like the tree which was fruitless beside the water, and its master was fain to cut it down, and it said to him, "Remove me to another place, and if I do not bear fruit, cut me down." And its mastersaid to it, "Thou being beside the water hast not borne fruit, how shalt thou bear fruit when thou art in another place?"'

31 O my boy! the old age of the eagle is better than the youth of the crow.

32 O my boy! they said to the wolf, "Keep away from the sheep lest their dust should harm thee." And the wolf said, "The dregs of the sheep's milk¹ are good for my eyes."

33 O my boy! they made the wolf go to school that he might learn to read, and they said to him, "Say A, B." He said, "Lamb and goat² in my belly."

34 O my boy! they set the ass down at the table and he fell, and began to roll himself in the dust, and one said, "Let him roll himself, for it

¹ This is evidently a pun, *ghabar* meaning dust, and *ghubr* the last milk in the udder.

² The animals mentioned by the wolf had names which doubtless began with A, B. In the Arabic and English this is lost.

ARMENIAN

Nathan began to speak and ²⁴^b said: My father Khikar, men sin unto God, and He forgives them, when they say: I have sinned. Father, I have sinned unto thee. Forgive me, and I will be to thee a slave henceforth for ever.¹

And I spake to Nathan thus: Son, thou hast been to me ²⁵ like a palm-tree which was growing with roots on the bank of the river. When the fruit ripened, it fell into the river. The lord of the tree came to cut it down, and the tree said: Leave me in this place², that in the next year I may bear fruit. The lord of the tree said: Up to this day hast thou been to me useless, in the future thou wilt not become useful.

Son, God hath rescued me ²⁶^a because of my innocence, but hath destroyed thee because of thy lawlessness. God passes judgement between me and thee. For the tail of the dog gives ²⁶^b bread and his mouth a cudgel.³

¹ Canon adds: 'like one of the sinners'.

² Canon = 'Leave me for this year'.

³ Canon adds this precept about the dog after no. 16. It comes as the fourth in the first series of the Syriac.

SYRIAC

himself; he does not receive honour."

39 My son, thou hast verified the proverb, which is current: "Call him whom thou hast begotten, thy son, and him whom thou hast purchased, thy slave."

40 My son, the proverb is true that is current: "Take thy sister's son under thy arm and dash him against a stone."

But God is He that hath kept me alive, and He will judge between us.¹

41 Thereat Nadan swelled up like a bag and died. And to him that doeth good, what is good shall be recompensed: and to him that doeth evil, what is evil shall be rewarded.¹ And he that diggeth a pit for his neighbour, filleth it with his own stature. And to God be glory, and His mercy be upon us. Amen.

The proverbs of Ahiḱar the sage and secretary of Sennacherib king of Assyria and Nineveh are ended.

J. R. HARRIS.

¹ Lit. 'He shall be rewarded evil'.

ARABIC

is his nature, he will not change."

35 O my boy! the saying has been confirmed which runs: "If thou begettest a boy, call him thy son, and if thou rearest a boy, call him thy slave."

36 O my boy! he who doeth good shall meet with good; and he who doeth evil shall meet with evil, for the Lord requiteth a man according to the measure of his work.

37 O my boy! what shall I say more to thee than these sayings? for the Lord knoweth what is hidden, and is acquainted with the mysteries and the secrets. And He will requite thee and will judge betwixt me and thee, and will recompense thee according to thy desert.¹

38 And when Nadan heard that speech from his uncle Haiqâr, he swelled up immediately and became like a blown-out bladder. And his limbs swelled and his legs and his feet and his side, and he was torn and his belly burst asunder and his entrails were scattered, and he perished, and died. And his latter end was destruction, and he went to hell. For he who digs a pit for his brother shall fall into it; and he who sets up traps shall be caught in them. This is what happened and (what) we found about the tale of Haiqâr, and praise be to God for ever. Amen, and peace. This chronicle is finished with the help of God, may He be exalted! Amen, Amen, Amen.

A. S. LEWIS.

ARMENIAN

In the same hour Nathan ²⁶ swelled up and all his body burst asunder, and I said:

Son,^a he that doeth good, ²⁷ winneth good; and he that digs a pit for others, himself falls into the pit. The good endeth in good and the evil in evil.

Here endeth Khikar.¹

F. C. CONYBEARE.

¹ The last three words in Codex Ven. alone.

^a The text of MS. Canon is as follows:

Said Khikar: He that doeth well to the good will meet with good. And he who diggeth a pit for his fellow, with his own person filleth it. He who loves evil is hateful to many, and he who pursues the good inherits it.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

AETHIOPIC FRAGMENTS OF THE SAYINGS OF AHIKAR.

The following is the translation of the fifteen sayings of Ahiḳar, published by Cornill in his *Maṣḥafa Falāsfā Tabībān*, or *Book of the Wise Philosophers*. These sayings are taken from two MSS., one at Frankfort and the other at Tübingen. They apparently come from an Arabic collection of ethical maxims, and not from a complete story of Ahiḳar. We should have inferred that the precepts were in separate circulation in Arabic, from the title of a MS. in the Vatican described by Assemani which is said to contain *Hicari philosophi Mosulani praecepta*.

Instruction of Hāiḳar the Wise.

- 1 He spake as follows:
 'Hear, my son, and keep in remembrance my discourse, so that thou rememberest God the High and the Mighty.
 My son, if thou hearest a discourse, hide it in thy heart and disclose it not to thy neighbour, that it become not to thee as a coal and burn thy tongue, and bring derision upon thee and make thee hateful to God.
- 2 My son, make fair thy discourse and thy behaviour; for the wagging of a dog's tail gives him bread, but his jaw brings him stones.
- 3 My son, do not tarry with him, in whom there is strife: for strife brings controversy: and strife gives for an inheritance revengefulness and murder.
- 4 My son, if a house could be built by talk without action, an ass would build two houses a day.
- 5 My son, it is better to haul stones with a wise and understanding man, than to drink wine with a fool.
- 6 My son, so long as there are shoes on thy feet, tread down the thorns, and level the way for thy children and thy children's children.
- 7 My son, if the rich man eats a snake, they say of him, "He seeks a medicine therein"; if, however, the poor man eats it, they say of him, "It was from hunger."
- 8 My son, if there come to thee a slenderer and poorer man than thyself, rise up to receive him.
- 9 My son, the wicked falls and rises not again; but the good man falls and rises immediately and remains in his condition.
- 10 My son, cease not to beat thy son; for the chastisement of a child is good for it, even as dung makes the land good; and as the land which is not rugged and on which there is grass delights the cattle, so doth a well-brought up son delight his father.
- 11 My son, keep thy son in curb, as long as he is small, that he may not grow up and thou have no more control over him, and be fain to blush over his corrupt behaviour.
- 12 A fair repute is better than a fair appearance; for the fair repute abides for ever, but the fair appearance and form pass away.
- 13 My son, it is better to stumble with the foot than with the tongue; and bring no discourse out of thy mouth, before thou hast entered into counsel with thine own self.
- 14 My son, if the course of water should turn backwards, and if birds should fly without wings, and if the raven should become white as snow, then may a fool become wise.
- 15 My son, if thou wilt be wise, refrain thy tongue from lying and thy hands from stealing.'

J. R. HARRIS.

THE ARAMAIC FRAGMENTS FROM ELEPHANTINÉ.

The following represents roughly the narrative portion of the Ahiḳar-legend, and the most important of the Parables and Proverbs of Ahiḳar preserved in the papyrus:

- 1 Ahiḳar was his name, a wise and erudite scribe, who instructed his son He said: The son will be for me before Ahiḳar the Great Seal of Sennacherib, king of Assyria and there was no son to me and Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had fulfilled (his days) and Sennacherib died his son, named Esarhaddon, and he was king of Assyria in the place of his father (Sennacherib) Assyria. Thereupon
- 15 I (took) my son and I instructed him and virtue in the Palace along with I presented him before Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria. And wisdom what he had asked him. And thereon Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, loved him and said, (Long) life the wise scribe, the counsellor of all Assyria, who has appointed as his son, and no son and I bowed down and worshipped, I, Ahiḳar, before Esarhaddon (the king) of Assyria. Ahiḳar, and when I saw the face of Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, favourably, I rose up (as I was before) Sennacherib thy father, who was king (before thee)

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

- I shall not be able to serve (the king) in the gate of this palace whose name is Nadin, my grown-up son, and he shall succeed me as Secretary (and Great) Seal shall he be; and also my wisdom and the king of Assyria. And he said to me, (like thyself) and in thy stead he shall do thy work. I went to my house and I set him in the gate of the palace and I said, he will seek after what is good (my son Nadin) whom I have brought up, think on the king Sennacherib, thy father he is wise and according to his counsel and advice will much disquiet the king. Listen as a son, who is not my son; as a son
- 4 1. (Answered) Esarhaddon the king and said: whom my father hath made great, who (ate) the bread of my father thou wilt seek, where thou canst find that old man Ahiḳar. He is a wise secretary whether he can corrupt the country against us, after that Assyria; he attached to him two men, in order to see that officer (?) Nabušumiškun, riding upon a swift horse with him after yet three days and the others who were with him, as I was walking in the vineyards. Nabušumiškun, the officer, rent his garment, and lamented the wise Secretary and master of good counsel who by whose counsel and words all Assyria was directed (Nadin, thy son) whom thou hast appointed in the gate of the Palace, hath undone thee.
- 9 Then was I much afeard, even I Ahiḳar; and I answered and said to Nabušumiškun I am he who aforetime saved thee from undeserved death the father of the present king, Esarhaddon, (was angry) with thee I brought thee to my house, thither was I bringing thee
- (I treated thee) as a man treats his brother, and I hid thee from the presence of (king Sennacherib). I said, I have killed him, until at another time and after yet many days I presented thee before king Sennacherib, and caused thy sins to pass away before him: and no evil did he to thee. And with me also king Sennacherib was well pleased, because I had preserved thee alive and not
10 slain thee. And now do thou also to me in the same fashion as I did to thee. Slay me not, but bring me into thy house until other days. King Esarhaddon is merciful as one towards another. He will remember me and will long for my advice. Thou wilt then present me before him, and he will suffer me to live. Thereupon answered Nabušumiškun and said to me, Fear not. Thou shalt live, Ahiḳar, the father of all Assyria, according to whose counsel Sennacherib and all the Assyrian army were wont to make war. Nabušumiškun, the officer, spake to those two men, his companions, who were with him, (Listen) and I will give you a piece of advice, and it is good advice too. The two men answered and said to him, Tell it us then. And Nabušumiškun answered and said to them, Listen to me. Yonder is Ahiḳar, a great man. He is the Great Seal of Esarhaddon. According to his counsel and word is the whole army of Assyria governed. Do not let us kill him. There is a eunuch whom I have, and whom I will give you. He must be killed in the mountain; he shall be a substitute for Ahiḳar other people (may come and) see the body of yonder Ahiḳar, for the body of the young man, the eunuch, whom I have
- until our brother Esarhaddon (shall have regret) over our brother and the heart of Esarhaddon I will give you much treasure and the soul (of the officer) was content with his two companions.
- 11 (And they said,) Do as thou counselest Thereupon they slew the aforementioned eunuch
12 in the stead of Ahiḳar At that time report was made in the king's palace, (and they said) to the king, He hath been slain. Thereupon Nabušumiškun (brought me to his house, and he caused to be supplied to me there (meat and drink) and said, Let these things be furnished to my
13 lord (Ahiḳar). Likewise he brought much treasure Thereupon Nabušumiškun, the officer, went to Esarhaddon the king (of Assyria), and informed him, saying, I went my way, (as directed) and I found Ahiḳar (walking in his vineyards), and I have put him to death. And do thou, O king, inquire of the two men whom thou didst appoint. So spake he until that Esarhaddon (believed his words).

(This is all of the narrative which has been preserved: the extant portions of the proverbial and allegorical parts of the book are very fragmentary in character, and uncertain as to their restoration, to order, and sense. The most important are as follows:—

What is stronger than a braying ass?
The son who is instructed and disciplined, and who has on his feet
Do not withhold thy son from beating, if thou
My son, if I beat thee, thou diest not. And if I leave on thy heart

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

Smite the boy, like even so to all thy servants

The lion will be the stag in the secret of his den (?)

And he pours out his blood and eats his flesh

The ass has left and does not carry it. He takes up from his companions,
. which was not his.

Watch carefully over thy mouth and make thy heart slow (?), for the word spoken is
like a bird, and he who utters it is like a man without the craft of the mouth is mightier
than the craft

Do not conceal (?) the word of a king

They deal with trees by fire, with flesh by a knife, and with man

Let not thy heart rejoice in the multitude of children and over their fewness (be not thou dis-
couraged).

(Cf. Armenian sayings, No. 34.)

A king is as a merciful man, also his voice is higher than that of him who stands before him . . .

The king is fair to look on as the sun, and for them that walk the earth, his adornment is
costly . . .

(My son,) I have lifted sand, and I have carried salt, but there was nothing heavier than

I have lifted straw and handled (?) the plough and there was nothing lighter than the
man who dwells in

The panther met the goat, and it was naked. And the panther answered and said to the goat,
Come and I will cover thee with my skin.

The goat answered and said to the panther, Why my skin? Take it not from me . . .

The wolf came to the lambs (?) and I will be silent. The lambs answered and said to
him, Take what thou wantest from us

Nothing lies in a man's power, to lift up his foot or to set it down

(Do not bend) thy bow and shoot an arrow at the upright, lest God should and cause it
to return upon thyself.

(Thou hast bent) thy bow and shot thy arrow at one who is more righteous than thou. That is
a sin against our God.

A loan is heavy, and borrow thou not from a man and if thou contractest a loan, give
thy soul no peace until

. in thine ears, for the charm of a man is his trustiness, and his hatred is lying with his
lips (?).

The son of my body has spied out my house he has told strangers

He has become a false witness against me:

And who will now declare my righteousness?

With him that is higher than thyself do not

With him that is stronger than thyself, do not

. and be not insolent to thy father

The thorn-bush sent to the pomegranate (and said):

The thorn-bush to the pomegranate. How numerous are thy thorns for him who handles thee!

The pomegranate answered and said to the thorn-bush,

Thou art all thorns for him who handles thee.

THE STORY OF AHIKAR

GREEK VERSION OF THE LEGEND OF AHIKAR.

The following is the portion of the story of Aesop which shows coincidence with Ahiḱar.

Fabulae Romanenses Graece Conscriptae (ed. Eberhard).

c. xxiii Μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο τῆς νήσου ἀπάρας, περιήει τὴν οἰκουμένην, τοῖς ἀπανταχοῦ τῶν φιλοσόφων διαλεγόμενος· ἀφικόμενος δὲ καὶ πρὸς Βαβυλῶνα καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σοφίαν ἐπιδειξάμενος, μέγας παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ Λυκῆρῳ ἐγένετο. κατ' ἐκείνους γὰρ τοὺς χρόνους οἱ βασιλεῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους εἰρήνην ἔχοντες καὶ τέρψεως χάριω προβλήματα τῶν σοφιστικῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους γράφοντες ἔπεμπον. ἅπερ οἱ μὲν ἐπιλυόμενοι φόρους ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς πρὸς τῶν πεμπόντων ἐλάμβανον· εἰ δὲ μή, τοὺς ἴσους παρείχον. ὁ τοίνυν Αἰσώπος τὰ πεμπόμενα τῶν προβλημάτων Λυκῆρῳ συνῶν ἐπέλυε, καὶ εὐδοκίμειν ἐποίει τὸν βασιλέα. καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ Λυκῆρον ἕτερα τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἀντέπεμπεν, ὧν ἀλύτων μενόντων, φόρους ὁ βασιλεὺς ὅτι πλείστους εἰσέπραττεν.

c. xxiv Αἰσώπος δὲ μὴ παιδοποιησάμενος, ἓνα τινὰ τῶν εὐγενῶν, Ἐννον τὴν κλήσιν, εἰσεποιήσατό τε καὶ ὡς γνήσιον παῖδα τῷ βασιλεῖ προσενέγκας συνέστησε. μετὰ δ' οὐ πολὺν χρόνον τοῦ Ἐννου τῇ τοῦ θεμένου παλλακῇ συμφθαρέντος, Αἰσώπος τοῦτο γνούς, ἀπελαυνεῖν ἔμελλε τῆς οἰκίας. ὁ δὲ, τῇ κατ' ἐκείνου ὀργῇ ληφθεὶς, ἐπιστολὴν τε πλασάμενος παρ' Αἰσώπου δῆθεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀντισοφισζομένους Λυκῆρῳ, ὡς αὐτοῖς ἔτοιμός ἐστι προστίθεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ Λυκῆρῳ, τῷ βασιλεῖ ἐνεχείρισε, τῷ τοῦ Αἰσώπου ταύτην σφραγισάμενος δακτυλίῳ. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τῇ τε σφραγίδι πεισθεὶς καὶ ἀπαραιτήτῳ ὀργῇ χρησάμενος, παραχρῆμα τῷ Ἑρμιππῳ κελεύει, μηδὲν ἐξετάσαντα οἷα δὴ προδότην διαχειρίσασθαι Αἰσώπον. ὁ δὲ Ἑρμιππος φίλος τε ἦν τῷ Αἰσώπῳ καὶ τότε διὰ τὸν φίλον ἐπέδειξεν. ἓν τινα γὰρ τῶν τάφων μηδενὸς εἰδότες κρύψας τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐν ἀπορρήτοις ἔτρεφεν. Ἐννος δέ, τοῦ βασιλέως κελεύσαντος, πᾶσαν τὴν διοίκησιν Αἰσώπου παρέλαβε.

c. xxv Μετὰ δὲ τινα χρόνον Νεκτεναβὼ βασιλεὺς Αἰγυπτίων πυθόμενος Αἰσώπον τεθνηκέναι, πέμπει Λυκῆρῳ παραχρῆμα ἐπιστολὴν, οἰκοδόμους αὐτῷ ἀποστέλλαι κελεύουσιν, οἱ πύργον οἰκοδομήσουσι μήτ' οὐρανοῦ μήτε γῆς ἀπτόμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον ἀεὶ πρὸς πάνθ' ὅσα αὐν ἐρωτῇ· καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσαντα, φόρους εἰσπράττειν, εἰ δὲ μή, κατατίθεσθαι. ταῦτα τῷ Λυκῆρῳ ἀναγνωσθέντα εἰς ἀθυμίαν ἐνέβαλε, μηδενὸς τῶν φίλων δυναμένου τὸ πρόβλημα τὸ περὶ τοῦ πύργου συνεῖναι.

After this he set sail from the island, and went c. xxiii about the world, in discourse everywhere with the philosophic; and having reached Babylon, he then also exhibited his wisdom and acquired renown with Lykeros the king. In those days the kings were at peace with one another, and used to amuse themselves by sending one another sophistical questions to answer; and those who could resolve them used to get for their answers tribute from those who proposed them; if, however, they failed, they paid in turn the like amount. So Aesop, who was associated with Lykeros, used to solve the problems which were sent to him, and caused the king to become famous. And he himself sent through Lykeros counter-challenges to the kings, the non-solution of which brought an abundance of revenues to the king.

Now as Aesop himself had no children, he c. xxiv annexed a certain young man of noble birth named Ennus, and brought him to the king, with commendation as his proper son. And when, not long after, Ennus played false with the concubine of his adoptive father, Aesop, becoming aware of it, would have banished him the house. But he, seized with rage against him, and having forged a letter, to wit, from Aesop to the kings who were in contest with Lykeros, to the effect that he was prepared to take their side rather than that of Lykeros, went and put the letter into the king's hands, having first sealed it with Aesop's signet.

So he, being persuaded thereby, and under the influence of implacable anger, forthwith directs Hermippus to make away with Aesop without a trial, on the ground that he was a traitor. Hermippus, however, was a friend of Aesop, and showed himself so at the time. Without any one knowing it, he concealed Aesop in one of the tombs, and secretly maintained him. Meanwhile Ennus, by the king's orders, took over all Aesop's affairs.

Some time after, Nectenabo, the king of the c. xxv Egyptians, having ascertained that Aesop was dead, forthwith sends to Lykeros a letter, commanding him to send builders to construct him a tower that should not touch either heaven or earth, and a man withal who should make him continual answer to all his questions; if thus he would do, he should revenues acquire; but if the contrary, he should pay them over. When these

ὁ μέντοι βασιλεὺς καὶ κίονα τῆς ἐαυτοῦ βασιλείας ἔλεγεν ἀπολωλέκεναι τὸν Αἰσωπον. Ἑρμιππος δὲ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως δι' Αἰσωπον λύπην μαθὼν, προσῆλθε τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ ζῆν ἐκείνον εὐγγέλισατο, προσθεὶς ὡς τοῦδε χάριν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἀνείλεν, εἰδὼς ὡς μεταμελήσει ποτὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ τῆς ἀποφάσεως. τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως διαφερόντως ἐπὶ τούτοις ἡσθέντος, Αἰσωπος ῥυπῶν καὶ αὐχμῶν ὄλος προσηνέχθη, καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, ὡς εἶδεν αὐτόν, δακρύσαντος καὶ λούσασθαι τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἐπιμελείας ἀξιοθῆναι κελεύσαντος, Αἰσωπος μετὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑπὲρ ὧν κατηγορήθη τὰς αἰτίας ἀπεσκευάσατο. ἐφ' οἷς καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τὸν Ἑννον ἀναιρεῖν μέλλοντος, Αἰσωπος αὐτῷ συγγνώμην ᾗτήσατο. ἐπομένως δὲ τούτοις ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου ἐπιστολὴν τῷ Αἰσώπῳ ἐπέδωκεν ἀναγνῶναι. ὁ δὲ αὐτίκα τὴν λύσιν συνείδεν τοῦ προβλήματος, ἐγέλασέ τε καὶ ἀντιγράφειν ἐκέλευσεν, ὡς ἐπειδὴν χειμῶν παρέλθῃ, πεμφθῆναι τοὺς τε τὸν πύργον οἰκοδομήσοντας καὶ τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτώμενα. ὁ βασιλεὺς οὖν τοὺς μὲν Αἰγυπτίους πρέσβεις ἀπέστειλεν, Αἰσώπῳ δὲ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς διοίκησιν ἐνεχείρισεν ἅπασαν, ἔκδοτον αὐτῷ παραδοὺς καὶ τὸν Ἑννον. ὁ δὲ Αἰσωπος παραλαβὼν τὸν Ἑννον, οὐδὲν ἀγῆδες αὐτὸν ἔδρασεν, ἀλλ' ὡς νύφ' ἄλλω προσσχών, ἄλλους τε καὶ τούτους ὑπετίθει τοὺς λόγους.

things were read to Lykeros, they put him in a sad muse, seeing that none of his friends could understand the riddle about the tower. Whereupon the king was saying that he had lost in Aesop the very pillar of the kingdom. Hermippus, however, when he learned the king's grief over Aesop, came to the king, and gave him the good news that he was yet alive, adding that it was for this very reason that he had not done him to death, because he knew that the king would some time repent him of the sentence. And when the king was mightily pleased thereat, Aesop was brought in to him, all filthy and begrimed, and the king, when he saw him, wept, and bid him to the bath and to be attended with all care, and after this Aesop cleared himself of all the accusations that had been made against him. Whereupon the king would in turn have slain Ennus, but Aesop asked that he would pardon him. Thereafter the king put into Aesop's hand the letter of the Egyptian to read. And he, promptly divining the solution of the riddle, laughed and bid them dispatch a reply to the effect that, on the approach of winter, he would send him both the builders of the tower, and the person who should answer his questions. So the king sent ambassadors to Egypt, and to Aesop he entrusted all his ancient affairs, handing over to him Ennus, to boot. So Aesop took to him Ennus, nor wrought he him any unpleasantness, but dealing with him again as with a son, he imparted to him the following and kindred instructions.

C. xxvi. 1 'Τέκνον, πρὸ πάντων σέβου τὸ θεῖον; τὸν βασιλέα
2 δὲ τίμα· καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐχθροῖς σου δεινὸν σεαυτὸν
3 παρασκεύαζε, ἵνα μὴ καταφρονῶσί σου· τοῖς δὲ φίλοις
4 πρᾶον καὶ εὐμετάδοτον, ὡς εὐνουστέροις σοι μάλλον
5 γίνεσθαι. ἔτι δὲ τοὺς μὲν ἐχθροὺς νοσεῖν εὐχου καὶ
6 πένεσθαι, ὡς μὴ οἷους τε εἶναι λυπεῖν σε· τοὺς δὲ
7 φίλους κατὰ πάντα εὖ πράττειν βούλου. αἰεὶ τῇ
8 γυναικί σου χρηστῶς ὁμίλει, ὅπως ἐτέρου ἀνδρὸς πειρᾶν
9 μὴ ζητήσῃ λαβεῖν. κοῦφον γὰρ τὸ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐστι
10 φῦλον καὶ κολακευόμενον ἐλάττω φρονεῖ κακά. ὀξείαν
11 μὲν πρὸς λόγον κτῆσαι τὴν ἀκοήν, τῆς δὲ γλώττης
12 ἐγκρατὴς ἔσο. τοῖς εὖ πράττουσιν μὴ φθόνει, ἀλλὰ
13 σύγχαيره· φθονῶν γὰρ σεαυτὸν μάλλον βλάψεις.
14 τῶν οἰκετῶν σου ἐπιμελοῦ ἵνα μὴ μόνον ὡς δεσπότην
15 σε φοβῶνται, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς εὐεργέτην αἰδῶνται. μὴ
16 ἀσχύονον μανθάνειν ἀεὶ τὰ κρείττω. τῇ γυναικί μηδέ-
17 ποτε πιστεύσης ἀπόρητα, ἀεὶ γὰρ ὀπλίζεται πῶς σου
18 κυριεύσει. καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ εἰς τὴν αὔριον ἀποταμιεύου·
19 βέλτιον γὰρ τελευτῶντα ἐχθροῖς καταλείψαι, ἢ ζῶντα
20 τῶν φίλων ἐπιδείσθαι. εὐπροσῆγορος ἔσο τοῖς συναν-
21 τῶσιν, εἰδὼς ὡς καὶ τῷ κυναρίῳ ἄρτον ἢ οὐρὰ προσ-
22 πορίζει. ἀγαθὸς γενόμενος μὴ μετανόει. ψίθυρον
23 ἀνδρὰ ἐκβαλε σῆς οἰκίας, τὰ γὰρ ὑπὸ σοῦ λεγόμενα
24 καὶ πραττόμενα ἐτέροις φέρων ἀναθήσει. πρᾶττε μὲν
25 τὰ μὴ λυπήσουτά σε, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς συμβαίνουσι μὴ
26 λυποῦ. μήτε πονηρὰ βουλευσῇ ποτὲ μήτε τρόπους
27 κακῶν μιμήσῃ.

'My child,' said he, 'first of all revere the divine, c. xxvi. 1
and honour the king; to thine enemies make
thyself dread that they despise thee not: but to
thy friends be gentle and generous, that they in
turn may be better affected to thyself.

Further, let it be thy prayer that poverty and
sickness may be the lot of thy enemies, that they
may not have it in their power to annoy thee;
but for thy friends desire good fortune in every-
thing. Ever talk kindly to thy wife, that she
may not seek to make experiment of another
man. For the female sex is a slight thing, and
when flattered makes little of mishap. Keep
thyne ear attentive to discourse, but be retentive
of thy speech. Envy not the prosperous, but be
glad with them: for by envying thou wilt rather
damage thyself. Have such care of thy servants
that they not merely fear thee as lord, but revere
thee, too, as benefactor. Take no scorn to be
always learning better. Never entrust secrets
to the wife, for she ever sets her camp to have
mastery over thee. Every day, and for the
morrow, do thou store up: for it is better to die
and leave one's estate to enemies than to live and
be dependent on friends. Be affable to those
whom thou meetest, knowing that even for the
dog his tail provides him bread. When thou

τούτοις τοῦ Αἰσώπου τὸν ἔννον νουθετήσαντος, ἐκείνους τοῖς τε λόγοις καὶ τῇ οἰκείᾳ συνειδήσει οἷά τιμι βέλει πληγείς τὴν ψυχὴν, μετ' οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας τὸν βίον μετήλλαξεν.

c. xxvii Αἰσώπος δὲ τοὺς ἱξευτὰς πάντας προσκαλεσάμενος, αἰετῶν νεοττοὺς τέτταρας συλληφθῆναι κελεύει. συλληφθέντας οὖν οὕτως ἔθρεψεν, ὥς λέγεται, καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν, ὅπερ οὐ πᾶν τί με πειθόμενον ἔχει, ὥς παῖδας διὰ θυλάκων αὐτοῖς προσηρημένων βαστάζοντας εἰς ὕψος αἶρεσθαι, καὶ οὕτως ὑπηκόους τοῖς παισὶν εἶναι, ὥς ὅποιπερ ἂν ἐκείνοι βούλονται ἵπτασθαι ἂν τε εἰς ὕψος ἂν τε εἰς γῆν χαμαί. τῆς δὲ χειμερινῆς ὥρας παραδραμούσης καὶ ἡρὸς διαγελάσαντος, ἅπαντα τὰ πρὸς τὴν ὁδὸν συσκευασάμενος Αἰσώπος, καὶ τοὺς τε παῖδας λαβὼν καὶ τοὺς αἰετούς, ἀπῆρεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, πολλῇ φαντασίᾳ καὶ δόξῃ πρὸς κατάπληξιν τῶν ἐκεῖ κεκρημένων. Νεκτεναβὼ δ' ἀκούσας παραγεγονέναι τὸν Αἰσώπον, ἐνήδρευμαι, φησὶ τοῖς φίλοις, 'μεμαθηκὼς Αἰσώπον τεθυγκέναι.'

c. xxviii τῇ δ' ἐπιούσῃ κελεύσας ὁ βασιλεὺς πάντας τοὺς ἐν τέλει λευκάς περιβαλέσθαι στολὰς, αὐτὸς δὲ κίρραν ἐνεδύσατο καὶ διάδημα καὶ διάλιθον κίταριν. καὶ κατεσθέις ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ δόφρου, καὶ τὸν Αἰσώπον εἰσαχθῆναι κελεύσας, 'τίμι με εἰκάσεις,' εἰσελθόντι φησὶν, 'Αἰσώπε, καὶ τοὺς σὺν ἐμοί;' καὶ ὅς, 'σὲ μὲν ἡλίω ἐαρινῷ, τοὺς δὲ περὶ σε τούτοις ὥραλοις στάχυσιν.' καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς θαυμάσας αὐτὸν καὶ δάροις ἐδεξιώσατο. τῇ δὲ μετ' ἐκείνην ἡμέρᾳ πάλιν ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς στολὴν λευκοτάτην ἐνσκευασάμενος τοῖς δὲ φίλοις φοινικὰς κελεύσας λαβεῖν, εἰσελθόντα τὸν Αἰσώπον τὴν προτέραν αὖθις πεδῖον ἐπέθετο. καὶ ὁ Αἰσώπος, 'σὲ μὲν,' εἶπεν, 'εἰκάξω ἡλίω, τοὺς δὲ περὶ σε τούτοις ἀκτίσιν.' καὶ ὁ Νεκτεναβὼ, 'οἶμαι μὴδὲν εἶναι Λυκήρον πρὸς γε τὴν ἐμὴν βασιλείαν' καὶ ὁ Αἰσώπος μειδιάσας ἔφη, 'μὴ εὐχερῶς οὕτω περὶ ἐκείνου, ὦ βασιλεῦ, λογίζου. πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὸ ὑμέτερον ἔθνος ἢ ὑμῶν ἐπιδεικνυμένη βασιλεία δίκην ἡλίου σελαγεῖ· εἰ δὲ Λυκήρῳ παραβληθείη, οὐδὲν ἂν δέοι μὴ τὸ φῶς τοῦτο ζόφον ἀποδειχθῆναι.' καὶ ὁ Νεκτεναβὼ τὴν τῶν λόγων εὐστοχίαν ἐκπλαγείς, 'ἦνεγκας ἡμῖν,' ἔφη, 'τοὺς μέλλοντας τὸν πύργον οἰκοδομεῖν' καὶ ὅς· 'ἔτοιμοί εἰσιν, εἰ μόνον ὑποδείξεις τὸν τόπον.'

c. xxix μετὰ τοῦτο ἐξελθὼν ἔξω τῆς πόλεως ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τὸ πεδῖον, ὑπέδειξε διαμετρήσας τὸν χώρον. ἀγαθὸν τοίνυν Αἰσώπος ἐπὶ τὰς ὑποδειχθείσας τοῦ τόπου γωνίας τέτταρας τοὺς τέτταρας τῶν αἰετῶν ἅμα τοῖς παισὶ διὰ τῶν θυλάκων ἀπηρητημένοις, καὶ οἰκοδόμων τοῖς παισὶ

hast been kindly do not regret it. Turn the 13
whisperer out of thy house, for he will carry off
and deposit with others whatever thou sayest or
dost. Do such things as will grieve thee not 14
afterwards, but over things that happen grieve
thou not. Devise thou not evil, nor ever imitate 15
the ways of bad men.'

When thus Aesop had admonished Ennus, the latter was compunct in soul as with an arrow at his words, and by his own conscience, and not many days after he departed this life.

Aesop then called to him all the hunters, and c. xxvii
directed the capture of four eaglets. When these were caught he reared them (so it is said) and trained them (a thing which does not altogether convince me) to carry boys, attached to them by bags, up into the air, and to be so under the boys' direction as to fly wherever they willed, whether to the heaven above or the earth beneath. Winter being now past and smiling spring arrived, Aesop made all things ready for his journey, and taking with him the boys and the eagles, he hied him to Egypt, employing much splendour and great array for the astonishment of the people in that country. Now when Nectenabo heard of the arrival of Aesop, he said to his friends, 'I have been entrapped by the information of Aesop's death.'

On the next day, then, the king bid all his c. xxviii
officials to robe them in white raiment, whereas he clad him in a suit of orange, with a diadem and a jewelled turban. He took his seat on a lofty throne and bid Aesop to be summoned. To whom entering said he, 'To whom dost thou compare me, Aesop, and those who are with me?' Whereat he, 'Thee to the sun in spring, and them that are around thee to its beauteous ears of corn.' The king marvelled at him, and honoured him, too, with gifts. On the next day the king arrayed him in purest white, and bid his friends be clad in purple, and upon Aesop's entrance he asked him again his former question. Whereat Aesop, 'Thee,' said he, 'I compare to the sun, and them that are about thee to his rays.' Whereat Nectenabo, 'I think,' said he, 'that Lykeros has nothing to compare with this kingdom of mine.' Aesop smiled, and said, 'Reckon not so readily, O king, concerning him. To your people your vaunted kingdom hath indeed the splendour of the sun: but if it should be compared with Lykeros, it would take nothing to convert that light into mirk.' Nectenabo, amazed at his witty words, inquired, 'Hast thou brought us those who are to build the tower?' Said he, 'They are ready, if only you show us the place.'

After that the king went out into the plain, c. xxix
and pointed out and measured the spot. Thereupon Aesop, bringing to the four corners of the place indicated the four eaglets with the boys fastened to them by bags, and giving to the

μετὰ χεῖρας δούς ἐργαλεία, ἐκέλευσεν ἀναπτήναι. οἱ δὲ πρὸς ὕψος γενόμενοι, 'δότε ἡμῖν,' ἐφώνουν, 'λίθους, δότε κοῦραν, δότε ξύλα, καὶ τὰλλα τῶν πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν ἐπιτηδείων.' ὁ δὲ Νεκτεναβὼ τοὺς παῖδας θεασάμενος εἰς ὕψος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀετῶν ἀναφερομένους ἔφη· 'πόθεν ἐμοὶ πτηνοὶ ἄνθρωποι;' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος· 'ἀλλὰ Λυκῆρος ἔχει' σὺ δὲ θέλεις ἄνθρωπος ὦν ἰσοθέῳ ἐρίζειν βασιλεῖ;' καὶ ὁ Νεκτεναβὼ· 'Αἰσωπε, ἤττημαι.'

c. xxx ἐρήσομαι δέ σε, σὺ δὲ μοι ἀποκρίναι· καὶ φησὶν· 'εἰσί μοι θήλειαι ὧδε ἵπποι, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴν ἀκούσωσι τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἵππων χρεμετιζόντων, εὐθὺς συλλαμβάνουσιν. εἴ σοι πρὸς τοῦτο πάρεστι σοφία, ἐπίδειξαι.' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος· 'αὐριον ἀποκρινούμαι σοι, βασιλεῦ.' ἐλθὼν δὲ οὐ κατήγετο, αἰλουρον τοῖς παισὶν ἐκέλευσε συλλαβεῖν, καὶ συλληφθέντα δημοσίᾳ περιάγεσθαι μαστιζόμενον. οἱ δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι τὸ ζῶον σεβόμενοι, οὕτω κακῶς πάσχον αὐτὸ θεασάμενοι, συνέδραμον, καὶ τὸν αἰλουρον τῆς χειρὸς τῶν μαστιγοῦντων ἐκσπασαντες, ἀναγγέλλουσιν ὡς τάχος τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ πάθος· ὁ δὲ καλέσας τὸν Αἰσωπον, 'οὐκ ἤδεις,' φησὶν, 'Αἰσωπε, ὡς θεὸς σεβόμενος παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστὶν αἰλουρος; ἵνα τί γοῦν τοῦτο πεποίηκας;' καὶ ὁ· 'Λυκῆρον τὸν βασιλέα ἠδίκησεν, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τῆς παρελθούσης νυκτὸς οὗτος ὁ αἰλουρος· ἀλεκτρύνα γὰρ αὐτοῦ πεφόνευκε μάχμον καὶ γενναῖον, προσέτι μὴν καὶ τὰς ὄρας αὐτῷ τῆς νυκτὸς σημαίνοντα,' καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς· 'οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ ψευδόμενος, Αἰσωπε; πῶς γὰρ ἐν μιᾷ νυκτὶ αἰλουρος ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου ἦλθεν εἰς Βαβυλῶνα;' κακεῖνος μειδιάσας φησὶ· 'καὶ πῶς, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἐν Βαβυλῶνι τῶν ἵππων χρεμετιζόντων αἱ ἐνθάδε θήλειαι ἵπποι συλλαμβάνουσιν;' ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ταῦτα ἀκούσας, τὴν αὐτοῦ φρόνησιν ἐμακάρισε.

c. xxxi μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα μεταπεμφάμενος τῶν ἀφ' Ἡλίου πόλεως ἄνδρας ζητημάτων σοφιστικῶν ἐπιστήμονας, καὶ περὶ τοῦ Αἰσωπον διαλεχθεὶς αὐτοῖς, ἐκάλεσεν ἅμα τῷ Αἰσώπῳ ἐπ' εὐχίαν. ἀνακλιθέντων οὖν αὐτῶν, τῶν Ἡλίου πολιτῶν τίς φησι πρὸς τὸν Αἰσωπον· 'ἀπεστάλην παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μὴν πεδσὶν τινα πυθέσθαι σου, ὡς ἂν αὐτὴν ἐπιλύσῃς.' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος· 'ψεύδῃ θεὸς γὰρ παρ' ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν δεῖται μαθεῖν. σὺ δὲ οὐ μόνον σαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ σου.' ἕτερος πάλιν εἶπεν· 'ἔστι ναὸς μέγας καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ στῦλος, δώδεκα πόλεις¹ ἔχων, ὧν ἑκάστη τριάκοντα δοκοὶς ἐστέγασται, τούτους δὲ περιάσι δύο γυναῖκες.' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος ἔφη· 'τοῦτο τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ οἱ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐπιλύσονται παῖδες' ναὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ κόσμος, στῦλος δὲ ὁ ἐνιαυτός, αἱ δὲ πόλεις, οἱ μήνες, καὶ δοκοὶ αἱ τούτων ἡμέραι, ἡμέρα δὲ καὶ νύξ αἱ δύο γυναῖκες, αἱ παραλλὰξ ἀλλήλαις διαδέχονται.'

hands of the boys the builders' tools, bid them fly away. But they, mounted on high, kept crying out, 'Give us stones, give mud, give timber, whatever else is proper for building.' Nectenabo, regarding the lads high borne in the air of the eagles, said, 'Whence shall I get me winged men?' But Aesop said, 'Yea! but Lykeros hath such: and wilt thou, a man, strive with a king, the mate of gods?' Whereat Nectenabo: 'I am beaten, Aesop,' quoth he.

'I will, however, ask thee somewhat, and c. xxx answer thou me.' Says he, 'I have mares here, which, when they hear the horses in Babylon neighing, straightway conceive offspring. If thou hast aught of wisdom for that matter, show it.' Said Aesop, 'To-morrow, O king, I will answer thee.' When he came to his lodging, he bid his boys to catch a cat, and when caught to drag it about in public and whip it. But the Egyptians who reverence that beast, seeing it suffer thus, ran together, and pulling the cat out of the hands of those that were whipping it, report immediately to the king its sufferings. He, then, called Aesop, and said, 'Knowest thou not, Aesop, that the cat is worshipped amongst us as a god? Wherefore hast thou done thus?' Said he, 'This cat, O king, in the past night, did wrong to King Lykeros, for he killed his cock, a game bird and well bred, which, further, used to tell him the hour of the night.' To whom the king: 'Dost thou not blush, Aesop, thus to lie? How came a cat in one night from Egypt to Babylon?' He, smiling, made reply: 'And how, O king, do thy mares here conceive when the horses neigh in Babylon?' When the king heard this, he commended his understanding.

After this he sent for men from Heliopolis, expert c. xxxii in sophist questions, and having discoursed with them about Aesop, he invited them and him to a banquet. When they were set at meat, one of the citizens of Heliopolis says to Aesop: 'I have been sent by my god with an inquiry for thee to resolve.'

'Liar!' said Aesop. 'God needeth not lore from man. Thou accusest not thyself only, but thy god!'

Another again said: 'There is a great temple, and in it is a pillar, it has twelve gates, whereof each is roofed with thirty beams, and round these go two women.' And Aesop replied: 'Even boys in our country can solve that riddle; For the temple is this world, and the pillar is the year, the gates are the months, and their beams are the days: moreover night and day are the two women who succeed one another alternately.'

On the following day, Nectenabo called to c. xxxii him all his friends and said: 'Through this Aesop we shall incur revenue debts to King Lykeros.' But one of them said, 'Let us bid him

¹ Sic! lege πύλας.

περὶ ὧν οὐτ' εἶδομεν οὐτ' ἠκούσαμεν.' ἀρεστὸν οὖν τοῦτο τῷ Νεκτεναβῷ δόξαν, καλέσας τὸν Αἰσωπὸν ἔφη· 'φράσον ἡμῖν, Αἰσωπε, πρόβλημα περὶ οὗ οὐτ' εἶδομεν οὐτ' ἠκούσαμεν.' καὶ ὅς· 'αὐριον περὶ τούτου ὑμῖν ἀποκρινοῦμαι.' ἀπελθὼν οὖν καὶ συνταξάμενος γραμματεῖον, ἐν ᾧ περιείχετο Νεκτεναβὸς ὁμολογῶν χίλια τάλαντα τῷ Λυκῆρῳ ὀφείλειν, πρῶτας ἐπανελθὼν τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ γραμματεῖον ἐπέδωκεν. οἱ δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως φίλοι, πρὶν ἀνοιχθῆναι τὸ γραμματεῖον, πάντες ἔλεγον· 'καὶ εἶδομεν τοῦτο καὶ ἠκούσαμεν, καὶ ἀληθῶς ἐπιστάμεθα.' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος· 'χάριν ὑμῖν οἶδα τῆς ἀποδόσεως ἔνεκεν.' ὁ δὲ Νεκτεναβὸς τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ὀφειλῆς ἀναγνούς εἶπεν· 'ἐμοῦ Λυκῆρῳ μὴδὲν ὀφείλοντος πάντες ὑμεῖς μαρτυρεῖτε;' κακῆνοι μεταβαλόντες εἶπον· 'οὐτ' εἶδομεν οὐτ' ἠκούσαμεν.' καὶ ὁ Αἰσωπος· 'καὶ εἰ ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, λέλνται τὸ ζητούμενον.' καὶ ὁ Νεκτεναβὸς πρὸς ταῦτα· 'μακάριός ἐστι Λυκῆρος τοιαύτην σοφίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ ἑαυτοῦ κεκτημένος.' τοὺς οὖν συμφωνηθέντας φόρους παραδούς τῷ Αἰσώπῳ, ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἀπέστειλεν. Αἰσωπος δ' εἰς Βαβυλῶνα παραγενόμενος, διεξῆλθέ τε Λυκῆρῳ τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ πραχθέντα ταῦτα καὶ τοὺς φόρους ἀπέδωκε. Λυκῆρος δ' ἐκέλευσεν ἀνδριάντα χρυσοῦν τῷ Αἰσώπῳ ἀνατεθῆναι.

enounce riddles, of things we never heard nor saw.' This seemed agreeable to Nectenabo, so he called Aesop and said: 'Enounce us, Aesop, a riddle of somewhat we nor heard nor saw.' Said he, 'I will answer thee of this to-morrow.' So he went away and composed a letter in which it was contained that Nectenabo admits that he owes a thousand talents to Lykeros, and on the morrow he returned to the king and gave him the document. But the friends of the king, before the paper was opened, cried out together, 'We both know this and have heard it, and we truly understand it.' Said Aesop, 'Thank you for your answer.' But Nectenabo took and read the admission of the debt. Said he: 'You all bear witness that I owe nothing to Lykeros.' And they took him up and said, 'We neither saw nor heard of it.' Whereat Aesop: 'And if the thing is really so, your inquiry is answered.' To which Nectenabo said, 'Happy is Lykeros who has such wisdom in his kingdom.' So he handed over to Aesop the tribute as agreed, and sent him away in peace.

And Aesop, when he reached Babylon, discoursed to Lykeros of all that had taken place, and delivered to him the tribute. And Lykeros bid that a statue of gold should be set up to Aesop.