*This is an answer to a request to respond to an article called a " **A Refutation of Glenn David Bauscher's "Proofs of Peshitta Primacy"**", by Mitch Powell on his web site: http://fontwords.com/thoughts/refutation_of_peshitta_primacy.pdf*

Hi Fabrice,

I think Mitch sounds really smug and pleased with himself. He also plays very fast and loose in his reasoning.

What he has analyzed in his web site article is a summary of my Peshitta proofs which are taken from my book, <u>Divine Contact</u> and also from my NT translation notes. He obviously has not read either of those, but I will attempt to answer his arguments, even though I cannot seem to copy his article for reference.
I don't think he addresses the ELS argument because he has not read my book; the summary wraps up my conclusions from my books, and the ELS phenomenon requires some careful statistical analysis which was addressed by a professional statistician, Ed Sherman, so I will leave that one for you to read in <u>Divine Contact</u>.

The testimony of Josephus is quite clear on the point of Greek not being a language of Israel in the 1st century. Josephus was not fluent in Greek, by his own admission. He had to apply himself to learn Greek; it was obviously not the native tongue of the Jews there and there were few Jews who learned it well, as Jews were not encouraged to do so.
"**I have taken great pains to obtain the Greek learning and understand the elements of the Greek language**"- Josephus. How does this come to mean that "<u>Greek was a primary or second language in Israel</u>"?
"**Our nation does not encourage those that learn the language of many nations**"- Josephus. How does this come to mean that Greek was a primary or second language in Israel?
"**I have so accustomed myself to speak our own language, that I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness?**"
How does this come to mean that Greek was a primary or second language in Israel? How can such an idea be supported in face of such testimony of such a 1st century Israeli scholar, Priest and historian of Israel? Notice also that Josephus speaks of only one language - "**our own language**"; there was only one common language; no mention of "language**s**". Elsewhere Josephus wrote: "I have proposed to myself, for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans, to **translate those books into the Greek tongue, which I formerly composed in the language of our country**, and **sent to the Upper Barbarians**".
Whiston's note on the "upper Barbarians": Who these Upper Barbarians, remote from the sea, were, Josephus himself will inform us, sect.
2, viz. the **Parthians and Babylonians**, and remotest **Arabians** [of the Jews among them]; besides the Jews beyond Euphrates, and the Adiabeni, or **Assyrians**. Whence we also learn that these Parthians, Babylonians, the remotest Arabians, [or at least the Jews among them,] as also the Jews beyond Euphrates, and the Adiabeni, or Assyrians, **understood Josephus's Hebrew, or rather [Chaldaic](#)**, books of The Jewish War, before they were put into the Greek language.*(Chaldaic is Aramaic)*
The Preface to Antiquities has the following:
2. "Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy

of their study; for it will contain all our antiquities, and the constitution of our government, as interpreted out of the Hebrew Scriptures...I grew weary and went on slowly, it being a large subject, and **a difficult thing to translate our history into a foreign**, and **to us unaccustomed language**..."

There were some Hellenists in Israel, but that very term demolishes the idea that all or most 1st century Jews in Israel spoke Greek. A Hellenist is by definition, "a Greek speaking Jew". If the common Christian view of 1st century language of Israel were correct, then all Jews in Israel were Hellenists! But the NT mentions the Hellenists as a separate group in Israel.

Ac 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians <1675> against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.
Ac 9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians <1675>: but they went about to slay him.
Ac 11:20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians <1675>, preaching the Lord Jesus.

The genealogy problem in Mat. 1 is quite simple, really. Mark, my objector, says that the answer is that David is named twice, both in the 1st and second groups of names; he fails to mention that Josiah at the captivity of Babylon is also mentioned twice, in the second and in the 3rd group of names as an end point and starting point, as David is. By his method of counting, then the 3rd group from Josiah to Christ has 15 generations! Count 'em.
There is no need for double counting any names .From Abraham to David by all accounts is 14 generations; from David *(starting with Solomon, the 1st after David, so as not to double count David)* to Jeconiah at the captivity of Babylon is 14, and from Jeconiah *(starting with Shealtiel, the 1st generation after Jeconiah, so as not to double count Jeconiah)* to The Messiah is 14 generations in the Peshitta, but 13 in the Greek. There is no way around this problem in the Greek text. If one counts a name doubly in the third set, then the same must be done in the 2nd, and that gives 14, 14 and 15 generations, making the 3rd number incorrect, as if Matthew could not even count correctly. That's a fine introduction to the Divinely inspired New Testament!

This is simply fudging, which is a polite word for cheating. The problem is not in the second set of generations; it is in the 3rd set, and no matter how you slice it, the Greek text cannot be correct in its reckoning of Joseph the husband of Mary in the 3rd set of generations. The Aramaic term "gabra" can refer to a father, and this would mean that the Joseph in 1:16 is Mary's father, not her husband, and makes Joseph son of Jacob, the 12th generation from Jeconiah: Shealtiel, Zerubbabel,Abiud,...Jacob, Joseph, Mary, Jesus. This also means that this is Mary's genealogy, not her husband's, which also means that Luke's genealogy in chapter 3 is Joseph's; this makes perfect sense when you study it, as Luke 3:23 makes clear-"Jesus, supposed to be Bar (son of) Joseph, Bar Heli, Bar Matthat,..." Compare the names in this genealogy with Matthew 1:1-17, they cannot be the same genealogy, but Matthew 1 in the Greek text has to be Joseph's, the husband of Mary, and not Mary's genealogy, whereas the Luke 3 genealogy is also plainly Joseph's the husband of Mary! Many have interpreted the Luke 3 genealogy to be Mary's, when she is nowhere mentioned in it, and Matthew 1:1-17 to be Joseph's, Mary's husband, where her name is found.

The Peshitta clears up both discrepancies, the numbers of generations and whose genealogies are recorded in Matthew 1 and in Luke 3. The commentators are generally wrong on these points, as they are relying on a flawed NT in Greek, which is merely a translation of the Aramaic Peshitta, the original NT!

I cannot take up my time to refuting more of this guy's idiocy. The above demonstrates how vapid and ridiculous his arguments are.

Thanks for sending this. I will use this response on my new web site and include it in future editions of my books as an appendix.

Burkta saggyath b'Maran w'Pruqan
Many blessings in our Lord and Savior,

Dave

1 βιβλος γενεσεως ιησου χριστου υιου δαυιδ υιου αβρααμ

2 αβρααμ εγεννησεν τον ισαακ ισαακ δε εγεννησεν τον ιακωβ ιακωβ δε εγεννησεν τον ιουδαν και τους αδελφους αυτου

3 ιουδας δε εγεννησεν τον φαρες και τον ζαρα εκ της θαμαρ φαρες δε εγεννησεν τον εσρωμ εσρωμ δε εγεννησεν τον αραμ

4 αραμ δε εγεννησεν τον αμιναδαβ αμιναδαβ δε εγεννησεν τον ναασσων ναασσων δε εγεννησεν τον σαλμων

5 σαλμων δε εγεννησεν τον βοοζ εκ της ραχαβ βοοζ δε εγεννησεν τον ωβηδ εκ της ρουθ ωβηδ δε εγεννησεν τον ιεσσαι

6 ιεσσαι δε εγεννησεν τον δαυιδ[14] τον βασιλεα δαυιδ δε ο βασιλευς εγεννησεν τον σολομωνα εκ της του ουριου

7 σολομων δε εγεννησεν τον ροβοαμ ροβοαμ δε εγεννησεν τον αβια αβια δε εγεννησεν τον ασα

8 ασα δε εγεννησεν τον ιωσαφατ ιωσαφατ δε εγεννησεν τον ιωραμ ιωραμ δε εγεννησεν τον οζιαν

9 οζιας δε εγεννησεν τον ιωαθαμ ιωαθαμ δε εγεννησεν τον αχαζ αχαζ δε εγεννησεν τον εζεκιαν

10 εζεκιας δε εγεννησεν τον μανασση μανασσης δε εγεννησεν τον αμων αμων δε εγεννησεν τον ιωσιαν

11 ιωσιας δε εγεννησεν τον ιεχονιαν[14] και τους αδελφους αυτου επι της μετοικεσιας βαβυλωνος

12 μετα δε την μετοικεσιαν βαβυλωνος ιεχονιας εγεννησεν τον σαλαθιηλ σαλαθιηλ δε εγεννησεν τον ζοροβαβελ

13 ζοροβαβελ δε εγεννησεν τον αβιουδ αβιουδ δε εγεννησεν τον ελιακειμ ελιακειμ δε εγεννησεν τον αζωρ

14 αζωρ δε εγεννησεν τον σαδωκ σαδωκ δε εγεννησεν τον αχειμ αχειμ δε εγεννησεν τον ελιουδ

15 ελιουδ δε εγεννησεν τον ελεαζαρ ελεαζαρ δε εγεννησεν τον ματθαν ματθαν δε εγεννησεν τον ιακωβ

16 ιακωβ δε εγεννησεν τον ιωσηφ τον ανδρα μαριας εξ ης εγεννηθη ιησους ο λεγομενος χριστος[13]

17 πασαι ουν αι γενεαι απο αβρααμ εως δαυιδ γενεαι δεκατεσσαρες και απο δαυιδ εως της μετοικεσιας βαβυλωνος γενεαι δεκατεσσαρες και απο της μετοικεσιας βαβυλωνος εως του χριστου γενεαι δεκατεσσαρες

Two observations are significant from the above Greek genealogy in Matthew chapter 1:
1. The number of generations in the three sets of names delineated in v. 17 are, 14, 14 & 13 when counting the names in each set. The text of v.17 states that the number of generations in each are 14,14 & 14. This presents a mathematical problem not easily dispatched, which mitigates the credibility of the Greek text as we have it.
2. The Greek text presents this as Joseph's – (Mary's husband) genealogy. This is very different from the genealogy of Luke 3:23-38, which is also presented as Joseph's.

The Peshitta NT presents a compelling solution to both of the above problems.
In verse 16 the Peshitta has: יעקוב אולד ליוסף גברה דמרים דמנה אתילד ישוע דמתקרא משיחא

Yaqov begot Yoseph **gavrah** of Maryam, from whom was born Yeshua, who is called The Messiah.
"Gavrah" has a wide range of applications in its meaning: **Man, hero, mighty man, husband, authority, master, guardian**. It is applied to single men, married men, fathers, young men, & old men. Context would normally determine the specific application. If the Greek is a translation of the Peshitta, which I believe I have demonstrated in my notes in my translation of The Peshitta NT and in the book, <u>Divine Contact</u>, then the Greek translator appears to have mistaken **gavrah** as ανδρα (husband), when "Master" or "Authority" as applied to a father, was probably meant.

Paul Younan, a native Aramaic speaker from Lebanon and deacon of the Church of the East in Chicago, has written the following on this subject:

Use of ܒܪܐ in Classical and Contemporary Aramaic Thought

Paul David Younan.

Abstract: In this article an attempt is made to throw some light on ܒܪܐ in relation to the varied usage of the term in Classical and Contemporary Aramaic, with particular attention paid to the impact on the traditional understanding of the lineage of Christ as recorded in the Gospels.

INTRODUCTION

Almost since they were first penned down, historian and theologian alike have attempted to reconcile the discrepancies between the genealogical record of Jesus as recorded by Matthew and Luke.

Traditional Understanding of Matthew's Genealogical Record:

First Series	Second Series	Third Series
1. Abraham	1. Solomon	1. Salathiel
2. Isaac	2. Roboam	2. Zerubabel
3. Jacob	3. Abia	3. Abiud
4. Judas	4. Asa	4. Eliachim
5. Phares	5. Josaphat	5. Azor
6. Esron	6. Joram	6. Sadoe
7. Aram	7. Ozias	7. Achim
8. Aminadab	8. Joatham	8. Eliud
9. Naasson	9. Achaz	9. Eleazar
10. Salmon	10. Ezechias	10. Mathan
11. Booz	11. Manasses	11. Jacob
12. Obed	12. Amon	12. **Joseph**

		(husband of Mary)
13. Jesse	13. Josias	13. Jesus
14. David	14. Jechonias	

Traditional Understanding of Luke's Genealogical Record:

First Series	*Second Series*	*Third Series*
1. Abraham	1. Nathan	1. Salathiel
2. Isaac	2. Methatha	2. Zerubabel
3. Jacob	3. Menna	3. Reza
4. Judas	4. Melea	4. Joanna
5. Phares	5. Eliakim	5. Juda
6. Esron	6. Jona	6. Joseph
7. Aram	7. Joseph	7. Semei
8. Aminadab	8. Judas	8. Mathathias
9. Naasson	9. Simeon	9. Mathath
10. Salmon	10. Levi	10. Nagge
11. Booz	11. Mathat	11. Hesli
12. Obed	12. Jorim	12. Nahum
13. Jesse	13. Eleazar	13. Amos
14. David	14. Joshua	14. Mathathias
	15. Her	15. Joseph
	16. Helmadan	16. Janne
	17. Cosan	17. Melchi
	18. Addi	18. Levi
	19. Melchi	19. Mathat
	20. Neri	20. Heli
		21. **Joseph (husband of Mary)**
		22. Jesus

Church fathers, whether Augustine and Ambrose in the West, or Eshoa-Dad of Merv and Bar-Hebreaus in the East, alike struggled to explain in a satisfactory way the contradictions and questions raised by a plain reading of these texts. None of them were able to successfully demonstrate their conclusions, answer the myriad of questions raised by their own conclusions, or even agree with one other.

In post-modern secular thought, the attempt has been made to discredit the accounts on the basis that the authors of the Gospels in question were making exaggerated claims in order to establish a non-existent lineage for Christ.

In reality, there are very problematic issues raised by a plain reading of these texts - especially within the confines of the current academically accepted framework, that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were first penned in Greek.

It is only when we refer to the Aramaic story, in an Aramaic psyche, will we be able to finally answer the puzzling questions raised by the plain reading of the text:

◆Why are there only list 13 generations listed from the Captivity of Babylon to Jesus, in Matthew's account? Doesn't Matthew say there should be 14 generations?
◆Why does Luke list 20 generations in the second series, and 22 in the third? If this is the same Joseph, shouldn't there be 14 generations in the second and third series of Luke as well?
◆Why do the lineages of Joseph, the husband of Mary, almost completely differ in the two accounts?
◆How can Jesus be the Son of David, if Mary is not a daughter of David?
◆If both St. Matthew and St. Luke give the genealogy of St. Joseph, the one through the lineage of Solomon, the other through that of Nathan - how can the lines converge in Joseph? How can Joseph claim descent from King David, through **both** Nathan **and** Solomon?

As with most problems that appear complex on the surface, this one has a very simple answer. The answer lies in the Aramaic original of the Gospel of Matthew, according to the Peshitta version.

BACKGROUND OF ܓܒܪܐ

ܓܒܪܐ (pronounced Gaw-ra) is a noun in the Emphatic state derived from the ancient Semitic verb ܓܒܪ (pronounced Ga-bar) - meaning "To be strong, brave, manly, courageous." This term is well attested to in the other major Semitic languages - גבר (pronounced Gaw-bar) in Hebrew and Ja-br in Arabic. The general meaning of the Emphatic noun ܓܒܪܐ is "Man."

A COMPENDIOUS

SYRIAC DICTIONARY

FOUNDED UPON THE

THESAURUS SYRIACUS

OF

R. PAYNE SMITH, D.D.

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As used in Matthew 1:16, the word is ܓܒܪܗ which is the Possessive Pronominal form of ܓܒܪܐ , meaning "Her 'Gab-ra.'"

Contextual Usage of ܓܒܪܐ in the Aramaic New Testament

Although mainly used to mean 'man' in a generic sense, the term can also mean 'husband' depending on the context

Why is it that sometimes the general meaning of 'man' is increased in specificity, depending on context, to mean 'husband?' For no more reason than saying - 'I now pronounce you man and

wife" can also be said "I now pronounce you husband and wife." Since a husband is merely a more 'specific' type of 'man', this equation of terminology is quite acceptable, even in English.

The question then arises - can the term, when used in proper context, also mean 'Father?'

I believe it can be demonstrated from the Gospels that all three shades of meaning are attested to - depending on context.

Verses in the Gospels where ܓܒܪܐ is used to mean the generic '*man*', although by no means an exhaustive list, include:

◆ Matthew 7:24
◆ Matthew 7:26
◆ Matthew 8:9
◆ Matthew 9:9

Please reference the Concordance at www.peshitta.org for a more complete listing for this word.

Some examples of the contextual variant '*husband*' include:

◆ Matthew 19:5
◆ Matthew 19:10
◆ Mark 10:2
◆ 1 Corinthians 7:14
◆ 1 Corinthians 7:16
◆ 2 Corinthians 11:2
◆ Ephesians 5:23.

Finally, the contextual variant '*father*' can be read in:

◆ Matthew 7:9
◆ Matthew 21:28
◆ Matthew 22:2
◆ and, arguably, Matthew 1:16.

Since the subject matter of this thesis attempts to reconcile the two accounts of Jesus' lineage, let's have a closer look at Matthew 1:16, and a related verse - Matthew 1:19, in the Aramaic of the Peshitta.

MATTHEW 1:16 & 1:19

The Aramaic reading in the Peshitta version is:

ܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܓܒܪܗ ܕܝܘܣܦ ܕܡܬܝ

The verse reads: "Jacob fathered Yoseph, the **ܓܒܪܗ** of Maryam." The word used here, in verse 16, is **ܓܒܪܐ** with a 3rd-person feminine pronominal possessive suffix of **ܗ** (i.e., 'her Gaw-ra.')

This word has traditionally been translated '**husband**', however, the main Semitic term for 'Husband', is **ܒܥܠܐ** ("Ba'la", or, **ܒܥܠܗ** for 'Her husband.) Examples of this word can be found in:

- Matthew 1:19 (Here "Joseph" is called בעלה - 'her husband'.Greek has Aνηρ, the same used in v.16)
- Mark 10:12
- Luke 2:36
- John 4:16-18
- Romans 7:2-3
- 1 Corinthians 7:4, 7:10, 7:13, 7:16, 7:39
- Ephesians 5:33
- 1 Timothy 3:2
- Titus 1:6.

Why would Matthew use two different terms, in such a short span of writing (3 verses - 1:16 to 1:19), to refer to Maryam's 'husband', Yoseph?

The fact is, he had to distinguish between two different people named Joseph - Matthew is not referring to Mary's husband in verse 16 at all, but rather her father!

Depending on context, it has been shown that **ܓܒܪܐ** can mean '*man, husband or father*.' The usage in verse 16 would demand that we translate **ܓܒܪܐ** as '*father*', rather than 'husband', **since the context is a genealogy.** Verses 18 & 19, however, would demand that we associate *that* Joseph with her '*husband*', **since the context is that of marriage.**

Matthew, then, **is recording the genealogy of Mary**, whereas Luke **is recording that of Joseph**. Which would be exactly opposite of the currently accepted academic line - that Luke recorded Mary's lineage while Matthew recorded that of Joseph.

That would give us 14 generation in the third series of Matthew. It would also explain why Luke has 20 generations in the 2nd series and 22 generations in the 3rd series - i.e., Joseph's lineage did not break out cleanly in 14-generation groupings, except for the first series. Since Matthew is giving the line of Mary, only her lineage would be required to break out evenly in 14-generation groupings. That would also explain why the names are completely different in both

the 2nd and 3rd series between the accounts in Matthew and in Luke. It also demonstrates that both Mary and Joseph were descendents of King David - each through a separate line!

A valid question is - 'Isn't it a fact that lineages generally exclude females?'

The answer to that, generally, is yes. However, the problem is that Mary is the only *real* human parent that Jesus had. Jesus was the only person in history who had no human father - whose previous generation included only one person. So in order to count 14 generations - Mary must be included, even though it would introduce a female in the lineage. In order to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of David, Mary must be demonstrated to descend from David's house!

Here is a revised view of the Genealogical Record, according to a more proper understanding of Aramaic Matthew:

First Series	Second Series	Third Series
1. Abraham	1. Solomon	1. Salathiel
2. Isaac	2. Roboam	2. Zerubabel
3. Jacob	3. Abia	3. Abiud
4. Judas	4. Asa	4. Eliachim
5. Phares	5. Josaphat	5. Azor
6. Esron	6. Joram	6. Sadoe
7. Aram	7. Ozias	7. Achim
8. Aminadab	8. Joatham	8. Eliud
9. Naasson	9. Achaz	9. Eleazar
10. Salmon	10. Ezechias	10. Mathan
11. Booz	11. Manasses	11. Jacob
12. Obed	12. Amon	12. **Joseph (father of Mary)**
13. Jesse	13. Josias	13. **Mary**
14. David	14. Jechonias	14. **Jesus**

THE GREEK MISTRANSLATION

Since we know from Patristic writing that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the 'Hebrew Dialect' of Aramaic (Judean Aramaic), and that "everyone" translated it into Greek "as best they could" - it then follows that the Greeks mistranslated this term as 'husband', instead of the more proper contextual variant, 'father.'

In Greek, the words for 'husband', **ajnhvr** (Aner), and 'father' **pathvr** (Pater) are completely different. It is impossible for an Aramaic translator of a Greek document to confuse the two - but it is very easy for a Greek translator of an Aramaic original to mistake the *contextual variances* in the single term ܓܒܪܐ

THE OLD SYRIAC

According to the modern academically accepted framework, the Peshitta is a revision of the Old Syriac - which, in turn, is a translation from the Greek.

Since we have already demonstrated that the Church Fathers admitted that Matthew wrote in Aramaic, and the Greek versions are nothing more than translations - one naturally wonders, how does the "Old Syriac", and in particular, the Cureton manuscript read?

Once again, the Old Syriac shows itself to be a fraud and a translation directly from the Greek. For Matthew 1:16, it reads:

ܝܘܣܦ ܓܒܪܗ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ

In English - "Joseph, to whom she was betrothed"

Not surprisingly, it is caught red-handed because it also preserves the original Peshitta reading of ܒܥܠܗ in verse 19!

The Peshitta is the *only* Aramaic version that preserved the original reading. The Greek versions were based on the Peshitta, and the "Old Syriac" is an imposter translated from the Greek - **AFTER** the mistranslation had crept into the Greek translations.

THE MEDIEVAL HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS

Dr. James Trimm, of the Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism, has made use of three medieval manuscripts of Matthew in the Hebrew tongue, known as the Shem Tob (1300's), DuTillet and Munster versions.

Regarding the age of the earliest manuscript witness to these versions of Matthew, and their similarity, Dr. Trimm states:

"*...one surfaced in the 1300's and the other two in the 1500's.*

Shem Tob (1300's) differs the most, while DuTillet and Munster are very similar. However there are many readings where they all agree together against all other versions (such as in Mt. 1:1). Shem Tob has many obvious layers of corruption which explains its substantial variances.

I believe they originate from the original Hebrew of Matthew. All three came out of the Jewish community." (post on the www.peshitta.org discussion forum, dated July 14, 2001.)

But, according to all three medieval versions of the Hebrew Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus, is as follows:

First Series	*Second Series*	*Third Series*
1. Abraham	1. Solomon	1. Salathiel
2. Isaac	2. Roboam	2. Zerubabel
3. Jacob	3. Abia	3. Abiud
4. Judas	4. Asa	4. **Avner**
5. Phares	5. Josaphat	5. Eliachim
6. Esron	6. Joram	6. Azor
7. Aram	7. Ozias	7. Sadoe
8. Aminadab	8. Joatham	8. Achim
9. Naasson	9. Achaz	9. Eliud
10. Salmon	10. Ezechias	10. Eleazar
11. Booz	11. Manasses	11. Mathan
12. Obed	12. Amon	12. Jacob
13. Jesse	13. Josias	13. **Joseph (husband of Mary)**
14. David	14. Jechonias	14. Jesus

These Hebrew versions of Matthew show themselves to be frauds and mere medieval translations from the Greek and Latin manuscripts since, like their sources, they make the claim that the *Joseph* mentioned in the third series is the '*husband*' of Maryam.

Secondly, to make up for the obviously lacking 14th generation in the third series, they make up a new name (Avner) and insert it in between Abiud and Eliachim.

Thirdly, this solution is superficial in that it seemingly only resolves the one issue regarding the 14 generations. But what of all the differences between the names in Matthew and Luke? And the number of generations in the 2nd and 3rd series of Luke? Or, the problem of exactly which son of David Joseph was supposedly descended from?

I believe it can be demonstrated with this, and other, examples that Hebrew Matthew never existed - that it was in Aramaic that Matthew wrote his Gospel, and that by 'the Hebrew dialect' Judean Aramaic was meant.

What can history and tradition and tell us about the original language of Matthew - was it Aramaic or Hebrew?

Specialists of the Aramaic language have analyzed closely this topic, and have come to distinguish various Aramaic dialects in the contemporary Palestine of Jesus as testified to by inscriptions thus discovered.

Based on this data, they are able to distinguish seven dialects that were shared by seven different localities in this small region:

◆Aramaic of Judea.

◆Aramaic of Southern Judea.

◆Aramaic of Samaria.

◆Aramaic of Galilee.

◆Aramaic from beyond Jordan.

◆Aramaic from Damascus.

◆Aramaic spoken in the Orontes River Basin of Syria.

The Aramaic of Judea was called the 'Hebrew dialect.' It was different from, yet mutually comprehensible with, the Aramaic of Galilee (the dialect that Jesus spoke.) This is one reason why Peter's (Keepa's) "speech" (dialect) was recognized during the trial, which happened to be in Judea. Peter spoke Galilean Aramaic, whereas the inhabitants of Judea spoke a slightly different dialect. It was for these inhabitants of Judea that Matthew wrote his Gospel.

Papias says that Matthew wrote the Logia in the Hebrew (*Hebraidi*) language; St. Irenæus and Eusebius maintain that he wrote his gospel for the Hebrews in their national language, and the same assertion is found in several ancient witnesses. But, in the time of Christ, the national language of the Jews was Aramaic, and when, in the New Testament, there is mention of the Hebrew language (*Hebrais dialektos*), it is **Aramaic** that is implied.

Hence, the aforementioned Church Father may have been alluding to Aramaic and not to Hebrew. Besides, as they assert, the Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel to help popular teaching and evangelization. <u>To be understood by his readers who spoke Aramaic</u>, he would have had to reproduce the original catechesis in this language, and it cannot be imagined why, or for whom, he should have taken the trouble to write it in Hebrew, when it would have had to be translated afterwards into Aramaic for use by the common people - who no longer understood the old language.. Moreover, Eusebius (Hist. eccl., III, xxiv, 6) tells us that the Gospel of Matthew was a reproduction of his preaching, **and this we know, was in Aramaic.**

Even if Matthew recorded the preaching of Jesus (which was in Aramaic) in Hebrew (a ridiculous assumption) - then the Hebrew would be, as the Greek, second-hand information.

<p style="text-align:center">NEO-ARAMAIC USAGE OF ܓܒܪܐ</p>

The term ܓܒܪܐ is still used today in modern literature. However, as in all languages, sometimes the way a word is spelled changes over time. For instance, we no longer spell 'shop' the way it was spelled centuries ago - 'Shoppe.' Many times, simple variances in spelling arise.

In Modern Eastern, or neo-Aramaic, the word ܓܒܪܐ can still be spelled the same way, although a variant using the spelling ܓܘܪܐ is attested to. Sometimes the Beth ܒ is spelled with a Waw ܘ in Eastern Aramaic, according to the vocalization rules of Qushaya and Rukakha (c.f., Yukhanan Bar-Zubi's Grammar, 13th Century or www.assyrianlanguage.com under 'Rules for Aspiration')

Using Oraham's Dictionary of the Assyrian Language, we can see direct witness that ܓܒܪܐ means both 'man' and 'husband.'
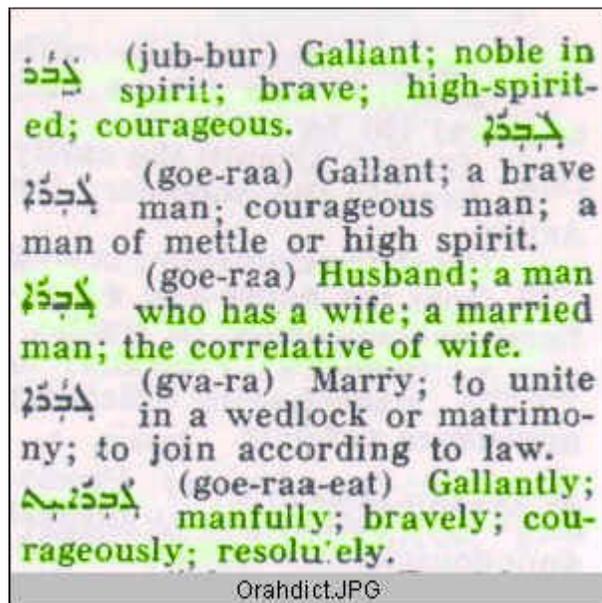
And, that the new variant in spelling is attested to by this dictionary:

Ora3.JPG

According to the Way International's Concordance to the Peshitta, the term can mean 'man' or 'husband.'

Conc_ent.JPG

In a book called 'Dishna d'Saybuthi, shown below, we see a short story using the new variant to mean 'elders of a household:'

Dishna2.JPG

In the above scan, the context of the short story is a description of a holiday the Assyrians of the Hakkari mountains celebrated during "Khad b'Nisan" (1st of Nisan (April), which is the Assyrian New Year.)

The title is - "The Second Festival/Celebration of the First of Nisan." During this "Festival", which coincided with the "first rain" in spring, the story states that "all the ܟܠ ܒܢܝ̈ (residents of the house/the entire houshold), both ܣܒ̈ܐ ܘܥܠܝ̈ܡܐ (elders and young), departed from the home and allowed the rain to fall upon them, and getting soaked - they would begin to sing- 'The drops of Nisan, the drops of Nisan.....may Nisan be blessed!"

This article proves that the term ܐܒܗ̈ܐ can mean 'elders of a household', since it mentions them alongside the ܕܗܪ̈ܐ, "young." This meaning, "elders of a household", is not attested to in the dictionaries referenced above - just as the meaning "father" is not attested to.

Finally, and the most powerful example - in Kinnara d'Rookha (the Harp of the Spirit), a quarterly published by the Archbishopric of the Church of the East in Baghdad, Iraq, Vol. 1 No3, 1999, the following fable is written:
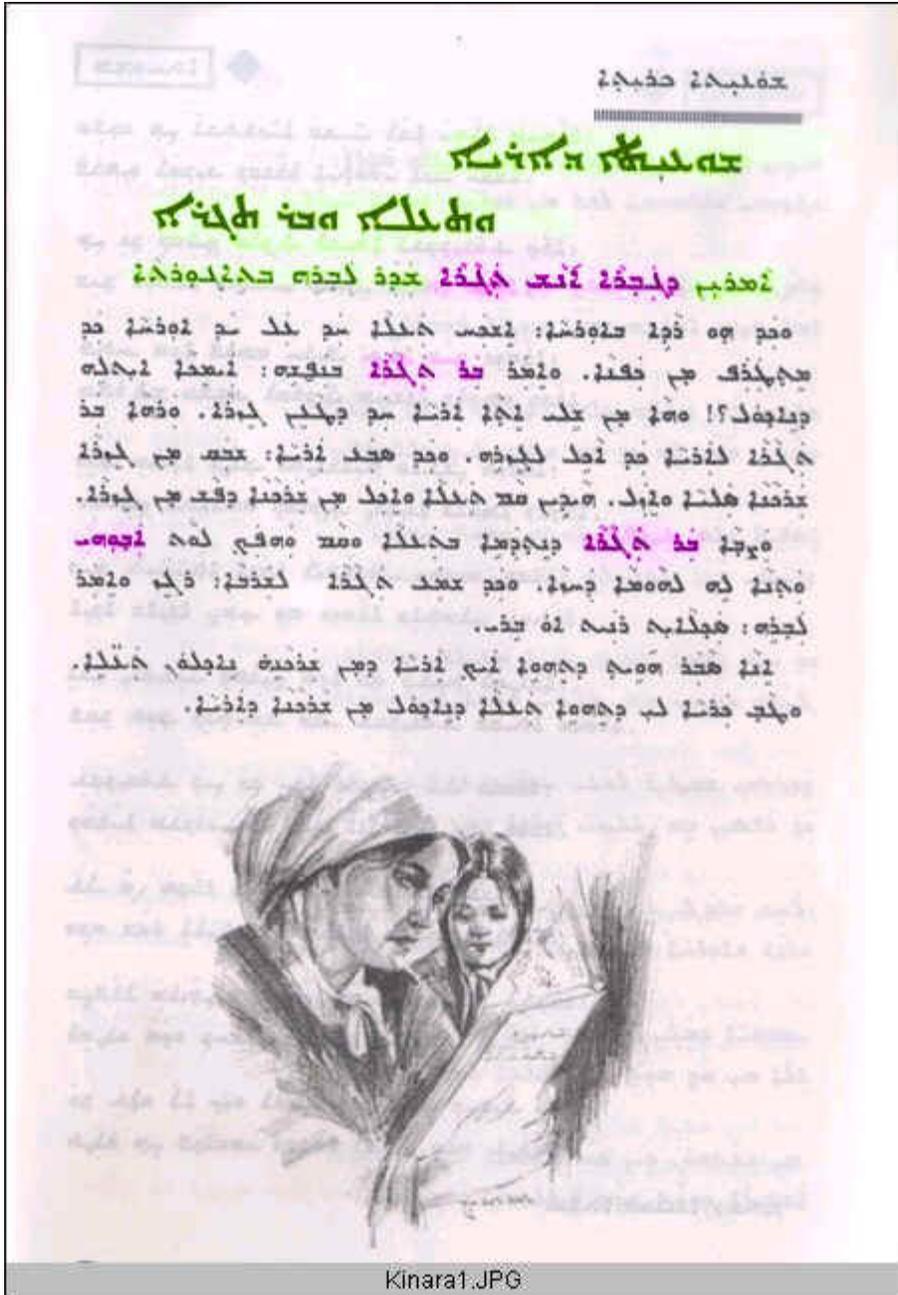
The above scan contains a Fable called "The Fable of the Lion, the Fox and the Son of a Merchant." The heading, the most important part of this example, contains the following introduction, which, when translated, means:

ܡܬܐܡܪ - 'it is said'

ܕܚܕ ܐܒܐ - 'that a father'

ܐܢܫ‎ - 'a man'

ܬܓܪܐ‎ -'who is a merchant'

ܫܕܪ‎ - 'sent'

ܠܒܪܗ‎ - 'his son'

ܠܡܬܓܪܘܬܐ‎ - 'to go trade'

This example is extraordinary in that it demonstrates the contextual usage of ܠܒܪܐ‎ in a sense that can only mean '**father**.' It cannot be translated as '**man**', since, the word following immediately after it is ܐܢܫ‎ - '**a man**' (yet another Aramaic term that means '**man**'). So to translate ܠܒܪܐ‎ as '**man**' here would make it redundant with ܐܢܫ‎.

I have also highlighted, later on in the short story, where the son is called ܒܪ ܬܓܪܐ‎ "Bar-Tagara", or "son of the merchant." Additionally, the article also uses the word ܐܒܘܗܝ‎ - "his father."

So this example makes a very clear case for translating ܠܒܪܐ‎ as "father", if it is drawn from the proper context.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS

When I started researching this topic, I wanted to check the thesis with a number of professors who work in the field of Syriac/Aramaic, at some of the world's most prestigious universities. Since I do not (yet) have permission to quote them by name, I will only summarize their responses to give you an idea of the varying opinions on this topic.

In response to the question, 'Have you ever seen an instance where ܠܒܪܐ‎ can be translated 'father' or 'head of household' in English?'

They wrote:

"Dear Paul: Thanks for the question..... it doesn't seem to be in any of the major Syriac lexicons (I checked Thomas Odo, Qardahi, Manna, Bar-Bahloul, Payne Smith, Brockelmann, Brun, and Costaz! Nor is it in the two dictionaries I have to hand of Turoyo [Ritter] and Sureth [Maclean]).

As in many languages, <u>I am sure there must be places in Syriac literature where gabra / gabro could be understood to mean</u> <u>something more inclusive than just man/ husband, and where it may have the sense you are looking for.</u> (After all, the New Testament passages Ephesians 5.23 and 1 Cor 11.3 get you pretty close to this.)

If you find any examples do let me know!"

"Dear Paul: GBRA is from an old Semitic word found in the Hebrew Bible, where it first meant "warrior; adult male." From there <u>the development into "male head of the household" is not hard to see.</u> It is often hard to tell from context whether "husband" would be the best translation."

"Dear Paul, A lot of ink has been spilt over this passage in Matthew, and on the two genealogies, both in antiquity and in modern times, and there seems to be no clear-cut answer to the various problems!   Among Syriac writers I recall there is a long section on the genealogies in Dionysius bar Salibi's Commentary on the Gospels.   As far as gabra is concerned, I suppose it is possible that the reading in C(ureton) has in mind the early apocryphal traditions about Mary's youth, and where Joseph is understood as being considerably older and is seen more as her guardian: <u>if so, gabra would more or less be "protective male".</u>   But I can't say I've gone into this possibility, and probably others have."

"Hi Paul: I consulted all my Aramaic and Syriac dictionaries, and could not find even one occurrence where GBR' meant father."

"Hi Paul, gbra means 'man'. To give it another meaning, would be <u>an inference from context.</u> 'Man of the house/household' doesn't change the meaning from 'man' in my opinion. <u>I do not know of a context</u> where such a meaning could be attached."

"Hi Paul, I can't remember seeing gabra used where it could mean father, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist somewhere."

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I could not have stated it better than the world-renowned professor of Aramaic who said, in his reply above, that "a lot of ink has been spilt" over this passage in Matthew. One cannot help but to wonder if it was all spilt in vain, if it had to be spilt at all - if only we would at last open our eyes and realize the obvious. Sometimes the hardest explanation to accept is the simplest one - because it's too simple. Occam's Razor would not have needed a name if it was well understood and implemented.

The root of this problem is as old as the Church itself. The repercussions of the struggle between Jew and Gentile for control in the one Body of Christ is being felt today. Hellenism in the West, over time, won. The Semitic Church - aside from the small remnant that survived to the "East" of the border, by all accounts vanished and was driven out during the struggle.

They say that history is written by the victors. There is no better example of this principle in action than the Greek vs. Aramaic New Testament debate. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence that would indicate otherwise, the academic world still clasps tightly around the legacy of this historic struggle.

Such a simple and elegant solution to Matthew 1:16 - and the myriad of problems posed by the traditional understanding of this verse, is tossed away because it rocks the proverbial boat too much. It would make *too* much sense - if only the scholarly atmosphere was conducive to it, of course.

I think about another one of the responses to my question posed above, essentially stating that the definition is lacking support in the dictionaries.

Are our languages, and thoughts, to be governed by *dictionaries*? I thought it was the other way around.

It is inherent in our human nature to overcompensate, to over-explain the simple. The meaning of Occam's Razor - neatly summarized, is that <u>the truth is simple</u>. And that is what ܦܫܝܛܬܐ (the Peshitta) is all about.

Paul D. Younan

1 כתבא דילידותה דישוע משיחא ברה דדויד ברה דאברהם

2 אברהם אולד לאיסחק איסחק אולד ליעקוב יעקוב אולד ליהודא ולאחוהי

3 יהודא אולד לפרץ ולזרח מן תמר פרץ אולד לחצרון חצרון אולד לארם

4 ארם אולד לעמינדב עמינדב אולד לנחשון נחשון אולד לסלמון

5 סלמון אולד לבעז מן רחב בעז אולד לעוביד מן רעות עוביד אולד לאישי

6 אישי אולד לדויד מלכא דויד אולד לשלימון מן אנתתה דאוריא

7 שלימון אולד לרחבעם רחבעם אולד לאביא אביא אולד לאסא

8 אסא אולד ליהושפט יהושפט אולד ליורם יורם אולד לעוזיא

9 עוזיא אולד ליותם יותם אולד לאחז אחז אולד לחזקיא

10 חזקיא אולד למנשא מנשא אולד לאמון אמון אולד ליושיא

11 יושיא אולד ליוכניא ולאחוהי בגלותא דבבל

12 מן בתר גלותא דין דבבל יוכניא אולד לשלתאיל שלתאיל אולד לזורבבל

13 זורבבל אולד לאביוד אביוד אולד לאליקים אליקים אולד לעזור

14 עזור אולד לזדוק זדוק אולד לאכין אכין אולד לאליוד

15 אליוד אולד לאליעזר אליעזר אולד למתן מתן אולד ליעקוב

16 יעקוב אולד ליוסף גברה דמרים דמנה אתילד ישוע דמתקרא משיחא

לגלותא דבבל שרבתא ארבעסרא ומן גלותא דבבל עדמא למשיחא שרבתא ארבעסרא

לדויד שרבתא ארבעסרא ומן דויד עדמא