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# HEKAMTHO

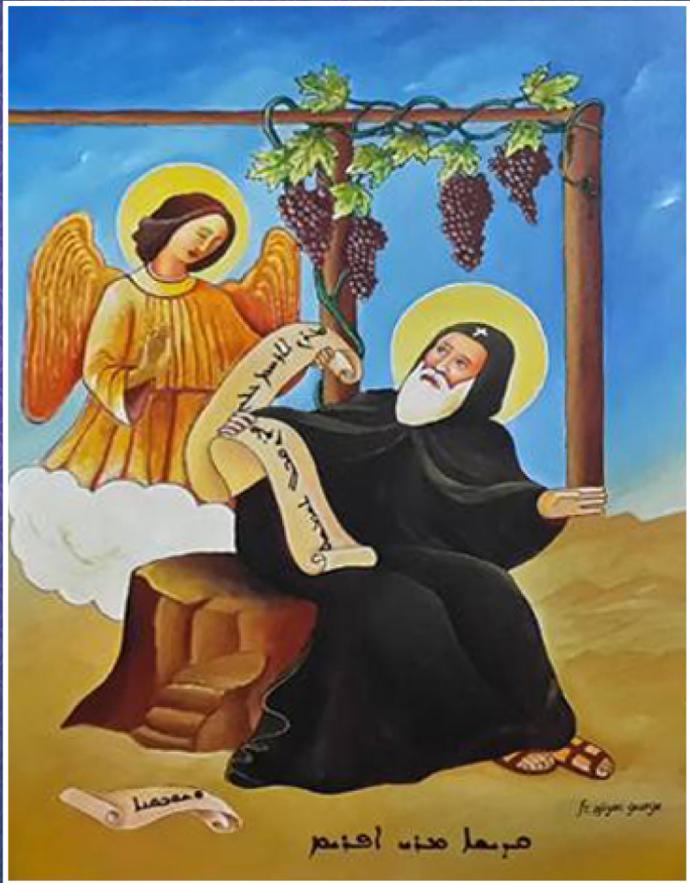
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# HEKAMTHO

SYRIAN ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

## Syriac Language & Traditions



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## Forward

Dearly beloved in Christ,

Just like a beautiful flower that buds and blooms, the MSOT seminary has taken its first step towards its accomplishment of an academic theological journal titled “Hekamtho” means Wisdom. This venture was made even more blessed by the holy presence of H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 who released the first volume of Hekamtho by his holy hands.

Hekamtho will be a momentous landmark in the history of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church itself. It is quite certain that this endeavor will equip the Church and its seminary to contribute proficiently to the discussions in the global scholastic scenario. This publication is intended to focus on a specific meadow of knowledge in each volume. Hence it will nourish the readers with a multifaceted understanding on a specific theme. Moreover it will be a platform to congregate the knowledge and thoughts of various renowned scholars and make it accessible to the interested. The scholars who contribute to the journal are selected with much attention from diverse milieu, to make sure that the readers are able to gain equitable, rational and empirical insight on the topics.

Syriac language has always held a distinctive place in the history of Christianity. The numerous contributions it has made in the growth of the Christian church and worship is accepted by everyone. Hence I deem that it is in all ways apposite to dedicate the opening volume of Hekamtho to the Syriac Language and Traditions itself.

On this joyful occasion, I would like to congratulate the entire editorial team for their sincerity, hard work and dedication for bringing out a journal of international standards. I am sure that this new initiative by the MSOT Seminary will surely be a valuable contribution in the field of Theological education.

Congratulations & Best Wishes

Dr. Theophilose Kuriakose  
Resident Metropolitan

## Editorial

It is with immense pleasure that I am writing this editorial for the very first volume of ‘Hekamtho’, the theological & academic Journal published by our MSOT Seminary. The syriac word ‘Hekamtho’ has been derived from the Hebrew word ‘Hekma’ which means ‘Wisdom’ and this is exactly what this journal aims to achieve.

This journal is published with the intention of not just to impart critical knowledge but also to partake and practice the will of God. By imitating the will of God, wisdom becomes the way of life. Therefore, I hope and pray that this new venture becomes an instrument and inspiration for our good conduct, improves our relationship with God and fellow beings and this journal would help us to materialize our theoretical knowledge in to concrete expressions of day-to-day life based on the skill of love, truth and faith, which is the core of true wisdom.

Hekamtho is planned to be published bi-annually and each issue will be dedicated exclusively to a specific topic. The first issue of this journal is dedicated to Syriac language and traditions. The prime reason for selecting this topic is because Jesus himself had used Aramaic syriac as his choice of language for his salvific ministry on earth. The syriac language is made even more special because this is the language in which god himself revealed the wisdom of His Kingdom to mankind for the very first time. Moreover, syriac is the official liturgical language of our Syrian orthodox church which makes our liturgy unique and our worships more spiritually enhancing.

This journal is intended to share the Syrian Orthodox perspective on various theological, liturgical, social and missiological discussions. It is also meant to develop a sense of critical thinking in the minds of the readers. The authors for this issue are all renowned scholars in the field of Syriac literature and were selectively handpicked in

order to make this journal of impeccable quality.

Sebastian Brock in his article “The Syriac language and its place within Aramaic” illustrates the evolution of Syriac as a language from the origin to its current usage. It provides us with a holistic view of the Aramaic heritage.

In his Syriac article “Dionysius Jacob Bar Ṣalibi’s confession of the Syrian Orthodox faith”, Gabriel Rabo illustrates the spiritual life of Bar Ṣalibi, a prominent theologian of the Syrian Orthodox Church during the time of Syriac Renaissance.

George Kiraz, in his article titled “Globalizing Syriac studies” explains how technology played an important role in connecting various Syriac scholars worldwide to work together for the development of the Syriac language. He also points out the fact that there are only few active members or well wishers for the Syriac language therefore resulting in its slow growth.

Adai Jacob Corepiscopa in his article, “ Syriac Translation of New Testament and the formation of the canon in the Antiochian West Syrian Church” assesses the relation between Syriac language and the formation of NT canon. He analyses how Syriac, as a language, has its impact on the canonizing process of the New Testament books. This article also highlights how the translation of the New Testament Bible into Syriac language resulted in creating an importance for this language within Christianity.

Kuriakose Moolayil Corepiscopa explains the linguistic and liturgical heritages of Syriac language in his article “ Syriac heritage”. He presents certain pointers on how the Syriac heritage is nurtured with special reference to the the writings of the Fathers of the Early Church.

In the last article by Biju Parekkattil titled “Christological and pneumatological dimension of of Holy Eucharist in West Syrian tradition”, showcases the theological understanding of Eucharist from a West Syrian Church perspective.

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate and thank all the scholars who enriched this journal through their valuable contributions. We were indeed fortunate enough to have these renowned scholars in the field of Syriac language sharing their knowledge and thoughts in this very first volume of the journal.

Therefore, I pray to Lord God Almighty to make this new venture a grand success by ensuring that the purpose of this journal is fulfilled which is none other than to impart Wisdom.

Fr. Dr. Ajiyan George  
(Editor)

## **The Syriac Language and Its Place Within Aramaic<sup>1</sup>**

*Prof. Dr. Sebastian Brock*

Both Aramaic and Hebrew have been around in written forms for some three millennia and are the longest-lived of all the Semitic languages, and their earliest inscriptions go back to about the tenth century BC. Needless to say, over the course of three thousand years any language will develop, and this is very much the case with Aramaic, which is today known from a large number of different dialects. A few of these dialects were adopted as literary languages with their own distinctive scripts, and sometimes their own name, as is the case with Syriac and Mandaic, while the Aramaic dialect of the Jewish Targums and Talmuds is simply known as ‘Jewish Aramaic’.

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<sup>1</sup> Further details on the topics covered in this article will be found in various chapters of the first volume of *The Hidden Pearl: The Syrian Orthodox Church and its Ancient Aramaic Heritage* (ed. S.P. Brock and D.G.K. Taylor, Rome, 2001).

For convenience scholars have divided the history of Aramaic over the three millennia into five main periods, Old Aramaic, Achaemenid (or Official) Aramaic, Middle Aramaic, Late Aramaic and Modern Aramaic.

### **Old Aramaic**

Aramaic first emerged as a written language at a time when there were several small Aramean kingdoms in the area of modern Syria. At first these were independent, but they soon fell under the control of the Assyrian Empire (based in the north of modern Iraq). Quite a number of important Aramaic inscriptions from the eighth and seventh centuries BC survive. Towards the end of the Assyrian Empire Aramaic had come to be used widely alongside Akkadian, and a famous relief carving illustrates two scribes in the process of writing: one holds a stylus with which he impresses wedge-shaped signs ~ ('cuneiform') on damp clay, writing in Akkadian, while the other has a pen, and he is writing (in ink) on skin, in Aramaic. Thus it was not surprising that Aramaic replaced Akkadian as the language of international relations in the Achaemenid Empire.

### **Achaemenid Aramaic**

Whereas Old Aramaic is mostly attested in inscriptions on stone, Achaemenid Aramaic (or Official Aramaic, as it is sometimes called) is best known from documents written on papyrus or skin. Several different archives have come to light in different countries. In Egypt, which was under Achaemenid control, there was a Jewish community living in the south of the country, on Elephantine, an island in the river Nile. At the beginning of the twentieth century a large collection of papyrus letters and documents, produced by the community, came to light; of particular interest is a fragment of *The Wisdom of Ahiqar*, a work which is also known in its later Syriac form. Subsequently, from elsewhere in Egypt several official letters, written on skin, from the Achaemenid administration were discovered, and then

yet another collection of private letters from a pagan community. Much more recently another collection of official documents, this time originating from Afghanistan, has come to light, indicating how widespread the use of Aramaic was under the Achaemenid Empire.

### **Middle Aramaic**

The conquests of Alexander the Great brought the Achaemenid Empire to an end, and during the ensuing Hellenistic period, when West Asia came under Seleucid rule and Greek became the language of government, Aramaic will have continued to be widely spoken, but by now different local dialects had developed; some of these were also written, and it is from these written dialects, mostly known only from inscriptions, that our knowledge of Middle Aramaic derives, the one exception being Biblical Aramaic, found in parts of the books of Ezra and Daniel. The roots of Biblical Aramaic in part go back to Achaemenid Aramaic, and they have a successor in the Aramaic texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Around the turn of the Christian era a number of different local Middle Aramaic dialects came to be written down, and these are known from inscriptions, usually on stone. Thus there survive large numbers of inscriptions in Nabataean Aramaic and Palmyrene Aramaic, and smaller numbers in Hatran Aramaic (in modern Iraq). Yet another local dialect, for which there are inscriptions from much the same time, was that of Edessa, otherwise known as Syriac. The dialect of these Edessene inscriptions has a few differences from what we know today as Classical Syriac, and so it is sometimes referred to as 'Old Syriac'. Besides the short inscriptions on stone and in mosaic, there are also three legal documents, written on skin in the early 240s; these incidentally shed important light on the change of constitution in Edessa at this time: having been a semi-independent kingdom ruled by the Abgar dynasty, it became a Roman *colonia* in 213,

but reverted briefly to a kingdom in 239-240. In none of these early Syriac inscriptions and documents is there yet any hint of Christianity, but certainly by the second or third century AD Syriac, the dialect of Edessa, had been adopted as the literary language of Aramaic-speaking Christianity, and in the form in which we encounter it in the earliest surviving Syriac literature, Syriac is classified as belonging to Late Aramaic.

### **Late Aramaic**

Late Aramaic is the period during which several literary dialects of Aramaic developed in different religious communities, each producing a literature that survives. Thus Aramaic as spoken among the Jews developed into two slightly different written dialects, Palestinian Jewish (and Samaritan) Aramaic and Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, while the religious literature of the Mandaean (in southern Iraq) was written in the Aramaic dialect known as Mandaic. Aramaic-speaking Christians in fact developed two different written dialects: by far the most widespread was Syriac, based on the local dialect of Edessa (Urhoy) and sometimes known as Urhoyo (or Beth Nahroyo, Mesopotamian); the other belongs to Palestine and is generally known as Christian Palestinian Aramaic (an older name was Palestinian Syriac. Christian Palestinian Aramaic is attested for a little less than a thousand years, from the early fifth century to about the fourteenth century, after which it fell out of use; fortunately, however, a certain number of manuscripts written in this dialect and script survive. These manuscripts (which are often fragmentary and forming the erased under-texts of parchment folios that had been re-used) contain only texts translated from Greek.

Of the Late Aramaic literatures, Syriac is by far the largest, and it has had a continuous use right up to the present day. Although the grammar remained exactly the same, two different reading traditions developed, Eastern, which preserved in the pronunciation,

the original long vowel *a*, and the Western, which altered long ‘*a*’ into long ‘*o*’ (e.g. Eastern *malka*, but Western *malko*); otherwise there are only minimal differences. With time, the script, too, developed into two distinct sets of letter forms, each with different vowel symbols.

### **Modern Aramaic**

When the Edessene dialect of Aramaic (i.e. Syriac) was adopted as a literary language, its development was, as it were, frozen, while the different spoken forms of the language moved on and developed, eventually to become the various Modern Aramaic dialects. None of the Modern dialects is a direct descendant of any of the literary dialects, but their ancestors must have been earlier spoken forms of Aramaic for which no evidence survives. The Modern Aramaic dialects fall into three distinct geographical groups. Western Aramaic, which was still spoken in the seventeenth century in mountainous regions of Lebanon, today survives only in three villages in Syria, two of which have Muslim populations, and one (Ma‘lula) largely Christian. Central Aramaic is represented by Turoyo, the name given to the closely inter-related village dialects of Tur ‘Abdin in south-east Turkey. Much the largest group of Modern Aramaic dialects belongs further east, to northern Iraq and Iran; these include various Jewish dialects and Modern Mandaic, as well as those used by Christian communities. The Christian dialects of Iraq are known as ‘Surith’. Collectively, all these dialects have come to be designated as North East Neo-Aramaic (NENA).

Modern Aramaic dialects were occasionally written, as well as spoken; this already took place with some Christian (Surit, Soureth) and Jewish dialects in the seventeenth century, but it was primarily in the nineteenth century that, encouraged by American missionaries in the Urmia area (NW Iran), Modern Aramaic began to be used quite widely as a literary language, alongside (or even replacing) Classical Syriac; it is now employed quite extensively,

sometimes (misleadingly) designated as ‘Assyrian’. Only much more recently has Turoyo become a written, as well as a spoken, language; sometimes the Syriac script is used, but (especially in Sweden) the Latin alphabet is also employed.

TABLE 1: ARAMAIC WITHIN THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES<sup>2</sup>

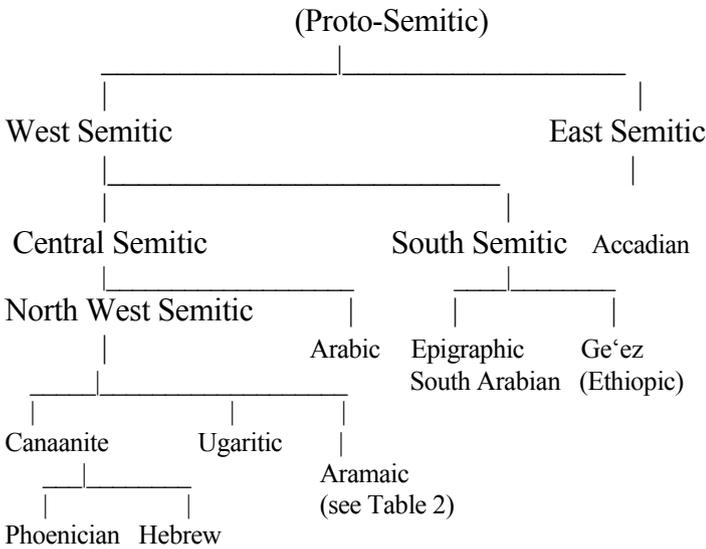


TABLE 2: THE FIVE STAGES OF ARAMAIC

<i>Approximate dates</i>		<i>Type of evidence</i>
10 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> century BC	<b>OLD ARAMAIC</b>	Inscriptions
6 <sup>th</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> century BC	<b>ACHAEMENID ARAMAIC</b>	Inscriptions Documents, letters on papyrus and skin (from Egypt to Afghanistan)

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed diagram, see *The Hidden Pearl*, I, p.14.

**MIDDLE  
ARAMAIC**

3rd cent. BC - 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD		
1 <sup>st</sup> cent. BC - 3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD	Palestinian Aramaic	Inscriptions, Qumran manuscripts
1 <sup>st</sup> cent. BC - 3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD	Nabataean	Inscriptions, a few legal documents
1 <sup>st</sup> cent. BC - 3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD	Palmyrene	Inscriptions
1 <sup>st</sup> - early - 3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD	Hatran	Inscriptions
1 <sup>st</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. AD	Edessene (Old Syriac)	Inscriptions, 3 legal documents

**LATE ARAMAIC**

3 <sup>rd</sup> cent. onwards		
	Syriac	Literature (oldest dated manuscript 411) inscriptions
	Jewish Aramaic	Literature, inscriptions
	Samaritan Aramaic	Literature, inscriptions
	Mandaic	Literature, inscriptions

**MODERN  
ARAMAIC**

attested from 17 <sup>th</sup> cent. onwards	Western (Ma 'lula and two other villages)	Only spoken
	Central: Turoyo	Only spoken until recently
	North-Eastern dialects	Spoken, but also written from 17 <sup>th</sup> , and especially 19 <sup>th</sup> cent.

**APPENDIX: Aramaic Scripts**<sup>3</sup>

The earliest Aramaic inscriptions are written in an alphabetic (consonantal) script consisting of 22 letters; the letter forms at this early stage were very similar to those of Phoenician (from which the early Greek alphabet was derived). Gradually the Aramaic script became quite distinct from the Phoenician, and thanks to its use as an official language of communication in the Achaemenid Empire, it gained a very wide diffusion. One of the consequences of this was the adoption of the Aramaic alphabet by the Jews on the return from the Exile, abandoning their earlier script (Palaeo-Hebrew) which had close affinities with the Phoenician script. This Aramaic script adopted by the Jews is the direct ancestor of the modern 'square Hebrew', the standard printed script of today. Only the Samaritan community preserved and developed the earlier Palaeo-Hebrew script.

During the period of Middle Aramaic various distinctive local Aramaic scripts emerged, known today almost entirely from inscriptions, though now supplemented by the small number of manuscripts in Aramaic among the Dead Sea Scrolls (in which the script employed for the two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, is identical). The main distinctive local scripts that emerged around the beginning of the Christian era were Nabataean (modern Jordan, and north of Saudi Arabia), Palmyrene (in Palmyra and its vicinity), Hatran (in the small kingdom of Hatra, and Syriac (in the region of Edessa). The Edessene inscriptions are in an early form of Estrangelo, while the three legal documents employ a cursive script which must be a distant ancestor of the Serto script which only started to come into use in the West Syriac tradition around the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century (though the familiar Serto script in use today is not found until about the twelfth century, which was roughly the time when the distinctive East Syriac script started to develop and go its own way).

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed account, see *The Hidden Pearl*, I, chapter 3.,

The Aramaic scripts of the first millennium BC employed special symbols for numerals,<sup>4</sup> and this system was carried over into usage in Syriac as well, where it can be found indicating quire numbers in many manuscripts of the sixth and seventh century. These symbols seem especially to have been used in medical and related types of texts even as late as the time of Barhebraeus. Elsewhere, however, the old symbols came eventually to be replaced by letters, with 1 to 10 represented by *alaph* to *yodh*, 20 to 90 by *kaph* to *sadhe*, 100 to 400 by *qoph* to *tau*; for higher figures combinations of letters are used, eg. 687 would be *trpz* (400+200+80+7).

A certain number of Asian scripts employed for writing different languages are derived from the Aramaic script; thus offshoots of the Aramaic script in the period of Achaemenid Aramaic are the Avestan and the Indian Kharoshthi script, and offshoots of Syriac is the Sogdian script, from which in turn the Uighur, Mongolian and Manchu scripts derive.<sup>5</sup>

*For further reference*

## **A. OLD ARAMAIC, ACHAEMENID ARAMAIC, MIDDLE ARAMAIC**

### *(1) Collections of texts*

G.A. Cooke, *A Text-Book of North Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903). [Still a very helpful collection, though many important inscriptions have subsequently been found].

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<sup>4</sup> For the old numerical symbols see the Table in *The Hidden Pearl*, I, p.59, and for more details about the representation of numerals, see G.A. Kiraz, *A Grammar of the Syriac Language*, I. *Orthography* (Piscataway NJ, 2012), pp.159-73.

<sup>5</sup> A diagram illustrating the development and diffusion of the Aramaic alphabet is given in *The Hidden Pearl*, I, p.60.

H. Donner and W. Rollig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, I-III (5th edn Wiesbaden, 2002). [The standard collection, with commentary].

J.C. Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, II. *Aramaic* (Oxford, 1975). [The most important inscriptions, mostly Old Aramaic].

### **Achaemenid Aramaic**

G.R. Driver, *Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century BC* (Oxford, 1954, 1957). [Archive of Arsham].

B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Text Book of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, I-IV

(1986-1999). [Documents and Letters from the Jewish settlement on Elephantine; Vol. III includes the Ahiqar text].

S. Shaked, *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria* (London, 2012).

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J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, I-II (Paris, 1930, 1932). [Vol. has a good selection of inscriptions].

J.A. Fitzmyer and D.J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic* (Rome, 1978).

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D.R. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore, 1996),

K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra un dem übrigen Ostmesopotamien* (Göttingen, 1998).

H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of*

*Edessa and Osrhoene* (Leiden, 1999). [Includes the three legal documents of AD 240, 242 and 243].

J.F. Healey, *Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period* (Oxford, 2009). [An excellent selection of Nabataean, Palestinian Aramaic, Palmyrene and early Syriac inscriptions with introductions and translations].

## (2) *Dictionaries*

Inscriptions: J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, I-II (Leiden, 1995).

Biblical Aramaic: L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner (tr. M.E.J. Richardson), *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, V, *Aramaic* (Leiden, 2000).

## **B. LATE ARAMAIC**

### *Main dictionaries*

#### **Jewish Aramaic**

M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan, 1990).

- , *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan, 2002).

- , *A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* (Ramat Gan, 2003). [Covering texts from c. 165 BC to AD 200].

#### **Mandaic**

E.S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1963).

#### **Syriac**

##### (a) Intermediate

J. Payne Smith (Mrs Margoliouth), *Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, 1903; many reprints).

L. Costaz, *Dictionnaire syriaque-français* (Beirut, 1963, repr. 1986).

G.A. Kiraz and S.P. Brock, *A Concise Syriac-English, English-Syriac Dictionary* (Piscataway, forthcoming).

(b) Advanced

T. Audo, *Dictionnaire de la langue chaldéenne*, I-II (Mosul, 1897; repr. Stockholm, 1979). [Syriac-Syriac].

R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, I-II (Oxford, 1898, 1901).

M. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon* (Piscataway NJ, 2009). [Translation and reorganisation of C. Brockelmann's *Lexicon Syriacum* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1928)].

### **Christian Palestinian Aramaic**

F. Schultess, *Lexion Syropalestinum* (Berlin, 1901).

## **C. MODERN ARAMAIC**

### *Dictionaries*

#### **Central dialects**

H. Ritter, *Die Volkssprache der syrische Christen des Tur 'Abdin*, B. *Wörterbuch* (Beirut/Wiesbaden, 1979).

Kurillos Ya'qub and Asmalr El-Khoury, *The Guide: the First Literary - Colloquial Syriac Dictionary* (Stockholm, 1985).

Y. Ishaq (ed.), *Leksiqon Swedoyo-Suryoyo* (Stockholm, 1988)

#### **North-eastern dialects**

N. Maclean, *A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac* (Oxford, 1901).

Y Sabar, *A Jewish Neo-Aramaic Dictionary* (Wiesbaden, 2002).

Glossaries are to be found in several of the modern studies of particular local dialects, e.g. G. Khan, *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of*

*Qaraqosh* (Leiden, 2002), *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Barwar*, I-III (Leiden, 2008).

An excellent collection of poetic texts, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been published by A. Mengozzi, *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq* (Leuven, 2011).

#### **D. ARAMAIC SCRIPTS**

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J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script* (Jerusalem, 1970).

- , *Early History of the Alphabet* (Leiden/Jerusalem, 1982).

##### *Syriac scripts*

W.H.P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston, 1946; repr. with added Introduction by L. van Rompay, Piscataway NJ, 2002).

(see also, *The Hidden Pearl*, I, chapter 3).

## **Dionysius Jacob Bar Şalibi's Confession of the Syrian Orthodox Faith**

***Gabriel Rabo***

(Göttingen University)

### **Abstract**

Bar Şalibi was a prominent theologian of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Syriac Renaissance, which begins with him. He was born in Melitene (Malatya) towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. He worked as deacon and teacher, first in the city of his birth, where he had studied, then in Urhoy (Edessa/Urfa). In October 1148 the Patriarch Athanasius Yeşu' bar Qatreh (1139–1166) made him bishop of Mar'aş. For the last five years of his life he was archbishop of Amid (Diyarbakır) in South-East Anatolia. He passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1171 and lies buried there, in St Mary's Cathedral.

According to my researches, Bar Şalibi was the author of 79 works and there are 582 Syriac manuscripts containing one or more of these. One, written in Melitene between 1158 and 1167, is his *Confession of the Syrian Orthodox Faith*. Syrian Orthodox

believers had asked him to write a defence of their Faith, because the Chalcedonians maintained that it was a heresy.

This *Confession of Faith* has not yet been edited. I used four manuscripts in making my edition, selecting Mardin 350, *olim* Deir Za'faran 97/1, -of A. D. 1502, as my base manuscript (the *Confession* is on foll. 163r–164r). With this I collated the other three: Istanbul Thoma Başaranlar 9/6 (*olim* Amid), of A. D. *ca.* 1600, pp. 298–301; Jerusalem St. Mark's 222, of A. D. 1792, foll. 72r–74v; and Jerusalem St. Mark's 153, dated after the eighteenth century, pp. 22–30.

In this tract Bar Şalibi expounds the Faith of the Syrian Orthodox Church according to the Creed of the first three Ecumenical Councils. In treating of the Trinity and the Incarnation, Bar Şalibi quotes from Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, above all. He refutes the positions of Arius, the Tritheists, Eunomius, Sabellus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Mani, Marcion, Apollinarius, *Julian of Halicarnassus and the Chalcedonians* and, against all of these, defends the formula 'one incarnate nature' (Greek: *mia physis sesarkomene*) in Christ. *This Confession sets out concisely and clearly the Faith of the Syrian Orthodox Church.*





أَلِهَامِ، وَهَأَمَلْ Vatican Borg Syr 147: وَجَلَدَ كَعَمَهُ إِذَا قَر. 3  
 وَبُنَا وَهَمْ وَصَلَا أَوْ وَحَفَّيْ) مَسْنَا 97/1: لَيْفَا مَعِي - مَهَبْ. حَلَا  
 وَأُوذَكَهْ أَلْ وَجَلَدَ كَعَمَهُ إِذَا قَر حَاتَبْ. وَنُنَا كَلَا مَبُنَا حَبْنَا وَنَبْ.  
 هُجَلْ هَمَنْ. أَحْزَمَر حَقَبْ (مَعْمَسَلَا: ص x م. cm: لَيْفَا: لَهَقْ.  
 هَهُ وَهَيْ: حَيْ. قَرَا: ح). 4. قَوْمَ حَيْ أُوذَكَهْ: حَلَا وَهَمُصَا  
 وَإُوذَكَهْ وَجَلَدَ مَ حَا كَعَمَهُ أَنْبَ قَر حَبْنَا وَنَبْ. حَزَنُصَا وَحَلَمُصَا  
 وَكَلَمُصَا. 5. م - أُكَبْ بِأُوذَكَهْ كَعَمَكَ: مَسْنَا 9/6: قَالَا قَرَس - هَا.

مَجْ حَبْنَا هَهُ وَبُنَا لَوَسْرًا مَعْمَسَا هَأَمَلَكَم. كَصَحْبُؤَنَالْ وَأَسْرَجَلْ مَلَاهُ كَمُنَا وَهَبَعُنَا وَهَهُ أَحَلَا  
 أَوْحَا أَنَّهُ مَبَمَلْ حَسَلْ هَمَجْ لَأَجْ حَبْنَا وَهَقْفَا كَلَبْ. (سَهُ; كَصَحْبُؤَنَالْ وَهَقْفَا  
 وَأَلَهَمَر وَهَهُ وَبُنَا لَوَسْرًا مَعْمَسَا. كَلَبْ. فُكَلَهْ مَعْمَسَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا. مَحَحَلَا وَبُنَا وَنَبْ.  
 أَفَمَر هَهُ وَنُنَا حَوَهْ كَبَا هُنَا أَنْ. قَالَا وَه). مَجْ كَلَا وَهَهُ وَنُنَا مَلَاهُ كَمُنَا وَهَهُ وَهَبْ حَوَا  
 سَمُنَا كَعَمَهُ وَهَهُ أَفَمَر كَعَمَهُ; (كَلَبْ هُنَا أَنْ قَر) هَقْفَا: أَيْ تَالَمَهُ هَأَمَلَمَهُ سَابْ  
 (أَنْب - حَا) (أَبْ هَهُ وَهَهُ; وَأَسْرَجَلْ وَهَهُ فَتَبُنَا) وَكَمْرَ مَحَكْ. لَوَسْرًا وَحَلَا كَلَا وَهَهُ  
 أَلَا. بَوَا مَبُنَا كَعَمَهُ: حَوَهْ مَجْ وَبُنَا وَحَفَّيْ) كَعَمُنَا وَهَمَجْ مَبُنَا كَلَبْ. لَأَسْ كَلَا حَبْنَا وَنُنَا  
 وَهَهُ أَحْزَمَر كَلَا وَهَهُ حَلَا وَهَهُ وَحَبْنَا وَنَبْ. كَعَمُنَا وَهَهُ وَهَمَجْ حَقَبْ. إِسْنُ هُنَا  
 حَقْ هَوَلَا كَلَا حَقْبِ حَا حَقْ مَعْمَسَا هَهُ مَجْ كَلَا مَجْ هَهُ لَوَسْرًا فَتَبُنَا. (كَلَا حَبْنَا  
 وَمَبُنَا سَهُ كَعَمُنَا وَأُكَبْ مَعْمَسَا وَحَزَنُصَا. قَالَا وَهه - وهَا).

A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn 1922, 296, fn. 6. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> مَبُنَا فُكَلَهْ مَعْمَسَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا. مَسْنَا وَحَلَا هَتَبُنَا وَهَهُ أَوْحَا وَبُنَا وَنَبْ. مَسْنَا  
 أَحَفَّيْ. وَهَمُصَا ح. وَهَمُصَا أَنْب. قَالَا مَهه - مَر. حَلَا هُنَا بُنَا مَسْنَا حَبْنَا وَأُوذَكَهْ  
 هَهُ وَحَقَبْ. لَسَهْ مَسْنَا سَبَا 350.

<sup>5</sup> مَبُنَا فُكَلَهْ مَعْمَسَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا. مَسْنَا وَحَلَا هَتَبُنَا وَهَهُ أَوْحَا وَبُنَا وَنَبْ. وَهَهُ  
 هَهُ وَنُنَا وَحَقَبْ. وَهَمُصَا. وَهَمُصَا. قَالَا 1 - ل. حَلَا هُنَا مَعْمَسَا حَاهَمُصَا.  
 هَمَنْ قَوْمَ حَيْ وَبْ سَمُنَا بَوَا لَأَجْ هَمَجْ بَوَا هَمَجْ حَبْنَا كَعَمُنَا كَعَمُنَا وَبُنَا وَهَهُ.  
 وَهَهُ وَحَلَبْنَا حَلَبْنَا سَبَا (مَسْنَا) وَنَبْ. وَهَهُ مَعْمَسَا كَلَمَا (مَهْوَا) وَهَهُ وَهَهُ بَوَا حَقْ وَهَهُ  
 حَبْنَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا مَ حَقَبْ. إِسْنُ هُنَا أَنْبَ قَر (أَيْ نُنَا كَعَمُنَا وَهَهُ حَلَبْنَا وَهَهُ  
 وَهَهُ وَهَهُ وَحَبْنَا هَهُ وَبُنَا وَنَبْ. أَنْبَ قَر. أَلَا حَقَبْ حَبْ وَنُنَا مَعْمَسَا. حَلَا.  
 سَلَا لَوَسْرًا وَهَهُ وَهَهُ وَهَهُ. هَهُ مَجْ هُنَا حَلَا مَعْمَسَا بَوَا حَقْ قَوْمَ حَيْ  
 مَعْمَسَا حَلَا إِسْنَا. وَنُنَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا هَهُ أَنَّهُ كَعَمُنَا وَحَلَا وَهَهُ. وَبْ هَمَجْ بَوَا  
 أَحَلَا أَهَمُصَا. (وَهَكَكَا). مَسْنَا وَحَلَا هَتَبُنَا. 1 - حَا). هَهُ لَكَلَا مَعْمَسَا وَحَلَا  
 وَهَهُ أَنَّهُ حَقَبْنَا وَهَهُ أَنْبَ مَسْنَا وَنَبْ. فُكَلَهْ مَعْمَسَا سَمُنْ وَهَكَكَا. حَلَا





















كِنْعًا وَحَيِّهِ مَدِينًا [د مه و مدينا .و. مه]. هُوقف<sup>1</sup> بِمَا حَقَّقْنَا  
 كِنْعًا<sup>2</sup> وَحَتَمْنَا كِنْعًا: أَلَّا يُوْهَ فَهَكَه<sup>3</sup> هَكَه<sup>4</sup> مَكْتَفَلًا. مَب  
 كِنْعًا<sup>4</sup> أَرْبُحِبْ هَمَّوْبِ حَلَا مَب مَب. هَكَه<sup>5</sup> وَ مَب; أَلَّا هَكَه<sup>6</sup>.

M2.20a

هَكَه<sup>7</sup> مَلَّا أَوْهَد هَهُ أَلَّا<sup>6-26</sup> وَ مَب: أُنْكَ مَهْ وَ حَلَكَه<sup>7</sup>. كَه كَل هَقِي  
 دَاهَهُنَّا<sup>8</sup> مَدَانِي; آ حَسَه<sup>8</sup>. أَلَّا هَكَه<sup>9</sup> نَهَضْت دَاهَهُنَّا. <sup>10</sup> أَدَانَا  
 5 وَ كِنْعًا وَ مَدِينًا جِب نَعْمًا هَقِي: وَلَا خَقِبْ حَتَمْنَا دَاهَهُنَّا<sup>11</sup> كَتَبُوا:  
 هَمَّوْبِ; كِنْعًا<sup>12</sup> مَب مَهْمَا هَب مَب حَتَمْنَا مَدِينًا. هَقِي: أَلَّا هَمَّوْبِ وَ هَمَّوْبِ  
 كَتَبُوا دَاهَهُنَّا. <sup>13</sup> هَب مَدِينًا. مَدِينًا مَب فَ رَلَّا مَدِينًا هَمَّوْبِ.  
 هَمَّوْبِ أَدَه هَمَّوْبِ; لَوْبِ<sup>14</sup> حَتَمْنَا نَهَضْتَا مَدِينًا هَقِي: هَقِي: هَقِي.  
 10 كَل حَتَمْنَا وَ لَّا مَدِينًا. آ أَمَلَا حَب وَ خَلَّا نَهْ وَ حَصَمْنَا<sup>15</sup> هَمَّوْبِ;  
 مَب: كَه لَوْبِ<sup>16</sup> حَتَمْنَا مَدِينًا. أَلَّا سَبَا حَمَّوْبِ; لَوْبِ<sup>17</sup> مَدِينًا. هَكَه  
 لَوْبِ<sup>18</sup> مَدِينًا.

B.301

M1.74a

أَلَّا أَمَلَا يُنْعَتِ أَدَه جِب كَلْمِيَّةً نَمَّا وَ مَب كِب مَدِينًا كَلْمًا: أَمَلَا  
 مَب كَه هَمَّوْبِ مَدِينًا نَهَضْتَا. <sup>19</sup> مَب مَب مَب كِب<sup>20</sup> وَ نَمَّا: وَ كَلْمًا مَب  
 15 كَمَلَه. أَلَّا أَمَلَا وَ مَب مَدِينًا. وَ كَلْمًا مَب آ حَمَّوْبِ: هَمَّوْبِ  
 حَمَّوْبِ: مَب دَاهَهُنَّا هَمَّوْبِ وَ مَب مَدِينًا مَب مَدِينًا. هَمَّوْبِ  
 وَ مَدِينًا<sup>22</sup> كَل مَدِينًا: وَ مَب. هَمَّوْبِ: هَمَّوْبِ وَ مَدِينًا مَب  
 مَدِينًا. مَدِينًا وَ مَدِينًا نَعْمًا مَب مَدِينًا: هَمَّوْبِ مَدِينًا كَل

M2.20b

<sup>1</sup> Z هَقِي | M1<sup>2</sup> دَانِيَا | M2<sup>3</sup> فَهَكَه | M2.M1<sup>4</sup> دَانِيَا | Z<sup>5</sup> لَاهَجَه | Z<sup>6</sup> هَوَالَا.  
 M1 هَمَّوْبِ. M2 هَمَّوْبِ | B<sup>7</sup> مَه: مَه: M1 2x مَه; مَه: مَه: M2 مَه: مَه: M2<sup>8</sup>  
 مَدِينًا | M2.M1<sup>9</sup> وَ | M2<sup>10</sup> دَاهَهُنَّا | M2.M1<sup>11</sup> دَاهَهُنَّا | M2<sup>12</sup> دَاهَهُنَّا  
 | M2.M1<sup>13</sup> لَوْبِ | M2.M1<sup>14</sup> حَمَّوْبِ | M2.M1<sup>15</sup> مَدِينًا | Z<sup>16</sup> مَب | M2.M1<sup>17</sup> لَوْبِ | M2.M1<sup>18</sup>  
 نَهَضْتَا | B<sup>19</sup> - جِب | M2.M1<sup>20</sup> مَدِينًا | M1 2x مَدِينًا وَ مَدِينًا | Z<sup>21</sup> مَدِينًا: مَدِينًا  
 كَه كِنْعًا حَمَّوْبِ مَدِينًا مَدِينًا: مَدِينًا مَب وَ مَدِينًا كَل مَدِينًا

<sup>26</sup> مَدِينًا هَمَّوْبِ (syllable) مَدِينًا «كِنْعًا مَلَّا» مَه: مَدِينًا مَب وَ مَدِينًا كَل  
 هَكَه: مَدِينًا مَدِينًا مَدِينًا.







حَسَمَعْمَالَا ةَاوَحْبِي ةَاوِي نَعَقْنَا وَحَلَّتْ أُمِّيَا. <sup>34</sup> حَسَوَه \ وَهَسَقَوَه  
 أَلْفِيَه هَالْحَبْ حَلْمَحَا حَبْأُنِيَا أَسْ شَقَعْنَا هَانَسَافَه وَأَه هَمُقَتْنَا  
 حَوِيَتْنَا ةَاكَلَعْنَا وَهَسَعْنَاهَا وَكَبَلَا هَالْأَسْمَه حَلْمَحَمَدَا وَهَوِيَتْنَا  
 كَلَاهَا. أَسْ وَحَلَمَافِي: حَامِيَه هُوَا لَأُوهُ كَعُكَا وَهَسَعْنَاهَا وَسَعْنَا  
 هَوِيَتْنَا حَمَمَا. كَاخ مَرِيَا ةَاوَمَعَا كَلَا حَوِيَا وَحَمَقِيَا وَحَسَا كَلَاهَا  
 أُنِيَا: «هَمِيُنِيَا سَم حَلَمَدَا كَلَاهَا حَمَمِيَا: هَالْوَحْس هَالْأَمِيَا حَامِيَا.  
 هَالْفِيَه مَد تَعَمَه مَد فَيِيَه. كَب كَلَاهَوَاهَا لَأ هَوِي أَلْفِيَه لَأ مَد  
 تَعَمَه هَال مَد فَيِيَه ... ةَاكَلَعْنَا لَكَلَاهَا مَر مَد مَحِيَا. هَسَبِيَه  
 حَمَمِيَه أَسْ هَال حَمَقَلِيَا مَد حَلَا; سُبِيَه لَأ مَد فَيِيَتْنَا كَلَاهَا;  
 حَتِيَه. هُوَتْنَا حَوِيَتْنَا هَوِيَتْنَا حَمَمِيَه وَهَوِيَا وَهَوِيَا وَهَوِيَا أَلَاهَا.  
<sup>35</sup> هُوَتْنَا وَهَوِيَا وَهَوِيَا فَيِيَا أَلَاهَا.»

<sup>34</sup> هُوَا نَعَقْنَا أُوْتَا وَهَمَمَكَا لَحِيَا هَقَكَا حَمَمِيَتْنَا ةَاكَلَعْنَا وَهَم مَد أُنِيَه ةَاكَا وَكَلَا  
 حَلَّتْ أُمِّيَا هَوِيَتْنَا وَحَلَّتْ أُوْتَا وَهَسَبَلَا أُنِيَا إِنَا ةَاوَحْبِيَا وَهَم فَيِيَتْنَا حَوِيَا وَكَبَلَا  
 ةَاوِيَتْنَا وَهَوِيَتْنَا وَهَوِيَتْنَا وَهَوِيَتْنَا. كَب شَمَمَه هَمَمِيَتْنَا كَلَا هَمَمِيَه هُوَكَب وَكَب وَكَب  
 وَهَوِيَه مَدَمِيَا (حَمَمِيَه \ إِسْمِيَا حَمَمِيَه) حَمَمِيَتْنَا هَمَمِيَا هَالْمَحَبِيَه ةَاوِيَه نَعَقَقَسْ هَمَمِيَا وَهَمَمِيَه أَسْ  
 وَحَلَّتْ كَلَا حَسَمَعْمَالَا ةَاوَحْبِيَه ةَاوِيَه حَلَا وَحَلَمَحَبِيَه حَلَمِيَا أَسْ وَحَمَمِيَه ةَاكَلَعْنَا أُوْتَا وَهَوِيَا  
 وَهَمَمِيَا حَمَمِيَه. وَهَوِيَا وَهَمَمِيَه حَمَمِيَه حَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه. حَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه  
 حَمَمِيَه كَلَاهَا وَكَب وَهَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه وَكَلَا; كَب وَكَب وَهَمَمِيَه حَمَمِيَه لَأُوهُ كَعُكَا وَهَمَمِيَه  
 حَمَمِيَه حَمَمِيَه مَدَمِيَه مَدَمِيَه.

<sup>35</sup> أَلْفِيَه أَسْ لَحَمَمِيَه وَكَبَلَا هَمَمِيَه لَأُوْتَا مَدَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه. أَلْفِيَه حَمَمِيَه نَعَقَقَسْ تَعَمَه  
 وَهَمَمِيَه: حَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه أَلْفِيَه هَمَمِيَه وَهَمَمِيَه.

## Globalizing Syriac Studies

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Globalization is a term with many definitions.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (online edition), the term was first used in 1930 in the context of holistic education. The term *globalization* is used here with a general sense and refers to the expansion of the field of Syriac studies well beyond the bounds of university campuses or the cells of learned monks in monasteries. Since the emergence of international symposia dedicated exclusively to Syriac studies in the 1970s until the modern era of the Web 2.0, the field of Syriac studies has seen tremendous expansion. But centuries before these modern

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activities, globalization was already well underway in the field of Syriac studies, and as early as the medieval period the study of Syriac had moved into a state of ‘proto-globalization’.

### **Proto-Globalization**

While the term *globalization* is modern, it has been applied to earlier periods to describe ‘archaic’ globalization in which groups from different communities worked together and exchanged ideas. One such case is the Islamic golden age under the Abbasid rulers, when Jewish, Christian and Muslim traders and scholars interacted and created an intellectual environment. Earlier Syriac-Greek interactions arguably fall within the bounds of archaic globalization, however as this paper is concerned with Syriac studies as the domain of globalization, the earliest forms of globalization may be attributed to Eastern scholars who traveled to Europe and introduced Syriac studies there. Mardin lies at the heart of this globalization. In the 16<sup>th</sup>-century, the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Abdullah I bar Stephanos sent to Rome a priest called Mushe, a native of Qaluuq near Sawro, who became known in Europe as Mushe of Mardin. In Rome, Mushe taught the Syriac language and cooperated with Europeans to publish, for the first time, the Syriac New Testament. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Maronite College in Rome would become instrumental in introducing Syriac studies in Europe, with Maronite scholars like Ibrahim al-Haqillani and the Assemanis playing an important role. The 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed much travel in the opposite direction, as scholars and missionaries set out from Europe for the Middle East. They too contributed to the globalization of Syriac during this early period. It has been during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, that the effects of globalization can be seen most vividly, especially with the introduction of technology.

## Symposia

The beginning of modern globalization for Syriac studies can be found in the early 1970s, when scholars in the field decided to hold an international symposium to bring together scholars interested in Syriac.

In 1971, Werner Strothmann organized a Syriac conference in Göttingen with the theme *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet*, supported by the Göttingen Academy of Sciences.<sup>2</sup> It was attended by European scholars, and the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Jacob III who read a paper. Ca. 40 scholars attended, mostly from Germany, but also from other countries including Sebastian Brock (England), Han Drijvers (Netherlands), Paul Harb (Lebanon), Élie Khalifé-Hachem (Lebanon), William F. Macomber (USA; Rome), and Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina (Rome). As most of the papers were delivered in German, the Lebanese Prof. Michel Breydy, who was at the time living in Germany, translated simultaneously for the patriarch.<sup>3</sup> This symposium began the tradition repeated in all subsequent symposia, gathering scholars from the Middle East and from Europe.

Prior to the 1971 symposium (but after plans for the event were in place), invitations were issued for the first Symposium Syriacum. The history of this beginning was recounted by Rene Lavenant in a personal communication to me, and was subsequently published on the Beth Mardutho website in 2001.

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<sup>2</sup> The details on this symposium were provided by H. Kaufhold and I provide them here for historical purposes.

<sup>3</sup> Kaufhold published a photo of a reception hosted by the Mayor of Göttingen in Peter Bruns and Heinz Otto Luthé (eds.), *Vom Euphrat an die Altmühl. Die Forschungsstelle Christlicher Orient an der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt* (Eichstätter Beiträge zum Christlichen Orient 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012). The papers of the conference are subsequently published in Gernot Wießner (ed.), *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen*, vol. I and II (Wiesbaden 1973, 1978).

The new website of Beth Mardutho, designed in 2011, no longer includes this account, and its details had to be resurrected by an overnight search on my computer for the purposes of this paper. The phenomenon of losing electronic published material is problematic for many fields of research, including that of Syriac studies, and it will be revisited later in this paper. According to Lavenant's account:

Fr. Ivan Zuzek, S.J., at that time Rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, and Father Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, S.J. († 1984), professor of Syriac at the Institute, became aware of this problem, when they realised that all the energies of the Institute were concentrated on the Russian and Byzantine studies. Their view was shared also by Prof. Antoine Guillaumont († 2000), professor of the Syriac patristics at l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes of Sorbonne (later at the Collège de France) and Father François Graffin, S.J. professor of Syriac at the Institut catholique in Paris (at that time also the director of *Patrologia Orientalis*. It was then that the decision to organise a symposium of Syriac studies every fourth year was taken.

The first meeting of the Symposium Syriacum took place in 1972, with about 80 participants, and was attended by the Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignatius Anton Hayek. Although most of the participants were experts in the field, the symposium was attended by a few *sharwoye* 'beginners'. One such beginner was Lucas van Rompay, 22 years old at the time:

I vividly remember seeing some of these great scholars with whose names I was familiar from my readings: I. Ortiz de Urbina, J. Mateos, Jules Leroy, Jean Maurice Fiey, Werner Strothmann, François Graffin, E. Hambye, Luise Abramowski, William Macomber, ... and some of the (then!) slightly younger generation: Rifaat Ebied, Sebastian Brock, Robert Taft.<sup>4</sup>

Subsequent meetings took place every four years with the last meeting held in Malta in 2012. These symposia, as well as other subsequent regional symposia series that were held in the 1980s

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<sup>4</sup> Personal communication to G. Kiraz, April 6, 2012.

and 1990s,<sup>5</sup> provided a networking platform that would change the field of Syriac studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

### **The Static Web**

By the time of the 1992 Symposium Syriacum in Cambridge, some Syriac scholars had begun to use email accounts. These facilitated communication and brought scholars closer to each other. (My first email account was imposed on me in 1991 when I joined the M.Phil. program in Computer Speech and Language Processing at the University of Cambridge. I had resisted getting one the previous year in Oxford as I thought it would waste my time.) But scholars with email addresses were still few in number. In the early 1990s I had asked on the 590-member hugoye-list if anyone had an email account that was used for scholarly purposes, and only two people replied.

While email communications facilitated cooperation, in essence all it did was make communication easier. Scholars were still able to communicate prior to email via ‘snail mail’. The real impact email had is that it changed the *culture* of communication. Although students could in theory communicate with eminent scholars by letter, in practice they were unlikely to do so. The advent of email culture removed such barriers, and senior scholars began to find themselves spending hours each week answering queries from around the world.

One ‘early’ project illustrates the use of this virtual email network: the *Comparative Edition to the Syriac Gospels* project. This project produced an edition of the Syriac Gospels aligning the texts of the Sinaiticus MS, the Curetonianus MS, the Peshitta, and the Harklean versions.<sup>6</sup> All these texts needed to be proof read. An announcement was placed on the Internet in 1994

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<sup>5</sup> S. P. Brock and A. M. Butts, ‘Syriac Conferences’, *GEDSH* 389-90.

<sup>6</sup> For the history of the project, see G. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels* (1996), vol. 1, p. xvii-xix.

(on the ANE list which was administered by the University of Chicago) asking for volunteers. Twenty scholars replied, ten of which would go on to proof the text. Out of the ten, I had only met one in person before, and to date I have not met all.

The next major development in the globalization process was the development of the World Wide Web. In its beginnings in the early 1990s, it was simply a system of *read-only* hypertexts (i.e. texts with links). The first web pages in the academic domain of Syriac studies were probably those of the Syriac Computing Institute (SyrCOM, the forerunner of Beth Mardutho). I am unable to determine a date as to when SyrCOM went public and a previous attempt to find such a date on the server of the University of Cambridge gave no results. If memory serves me, this website must have gone public in 1993 or 1994 at the latest. It was an informational website about the activities of the Institute. As time moved on, academic institutions began to have their own websites and faculty members began to have their own web pages.

Specialized websites also began to appear. In the mid-late 1990s, scholars began to publish peer-reviewed electronic journals on the Internet. *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* was one of the earliest of these journals. While today one takes electronic academic journals for granted, at the time the electronic medium for such publications was not taken seriously. Scholars did not consider electronic journals to be of the same academic caliber as printed editions, and it took some time, even until the mid-2000s, for scholarly attitudes to shift.

*Hugoye* is by no means the only online resource. Kristian Heal of Brigham Young University provides an extensive list of resources (*Hugoye* 15.1). The list is now available as a page on the Beth Mardutho website under the “Resources” menu item. The page lists online resources for books, corpora, databases, email lists, e-journals, and manuscript repositories. Today, one

can do research in places as remote as Deir al-Za'faran, a monastery outside Mardin, with an Internet connection. In fact, many of us are now online anytime, anywhere, with various mobile devices.

I began compiling data on the number of hits the term 'Syriac' gets on Google search in 2005 when a search on the term resulted in 300,000 hits. The Web was by then expanding exponentially. The following year, hits jumped to 1.7 million. The following two years did not change significantly: 2007 also resulted in 1.7 million results and 2008 the number dropped slightly to 1.6 million. The results rose to 2.8 million in 2009 only to drop back to 1.8 million in 2010. With the move to Web 2.0 (which will be discussed shortly), the number of results became much more significant: 2011 saw 4.1 million hits and 2012 an astonishing 28 million hits at the beginning of the year. This is due to the fact that the past few years have witnessed a surge in the amount of Syriac material online in terms of book digitization, most notably in Google Books and Archive.org. This may be the reason behind the surge in search results for the term 'Syriac' in 2012.

It is interesting to note the Google automatic suggestions for search terms that begin with "Syriac", and how these have changed in the last six years. Terms are tabulated below (each list gives the terms in order):

2006

syriac orthodox church

syriac orthodox

syriac church

syriac alphabet

syriac christianity

syriac bible

syriac fonts

syriacus

2007

syriac orthodox church  
syriac orthodox  
syriac alphabet  
syriac bible  
syriac language  
syriac church  
syriac dictionary  
syriac christianity  
syriac font

2008

syriac orthodox church  
syriac language  
syriac bible  
syriac orthodox  
syriac church  
syriac alphabet  
syriacomment.com  
syriac christianity  
syriac font

2009

syriac orthodox church  
syriac bible  
syriac alphabet  
syriac language  
syriac catholic church  
syriac christianity  
syriac dictionary  
syriac font  
syriac script

2010

syriac orthodox church  
syriac language  
syriac bible  
syriac alphabet  
syriac christianity  
syriac peshitta  
syriac catholic church  
syriac aramaic  
syriac font  
syriac new testament

2011

syriac orthodox church  
syriac bible  
syriac catholics  
syriac christianity  
syriacstudies.com  
syriac alphabet  
syriac peshitta  
syriac studies  
syriac orthodox youth convention

2012

syriac orthodox church  
syriac bible  
syriac alphabet  
syriac voice  
syriac people  
syriac christianity  
syriac orthodox church india  
syriac dictionary

All of these activities fall under what is now termed Web 1.0, a static mostly read-only content. The move to participatory websites, such as social networking, has begun to take Syriac studies into the realm of Web 2.0.

### **The Dynamic Web 2.0: 2000 –**

The term ‘Web 2.0’ also does not have an agreed upon definition. In general, it refers to the World Wide Web where information on the Internet is aggregated in a participatory manner. Examples of the Web 2.0 include sites relying on crowd sourcing (like Wikipedia) and the various social network systems.

One may add discussion lists to this genre, although discussion lists have preceded not only Web 2.0, but also what is now known as Web 1.0. One of the earliest discussion lists was ANE (not the current ANE) hosted at the University of Chicago. While ANE covered primarily the Ancient Near East, many of the posts were concerned with Syriac studies. The first list dedicated to Syriac was founded by the Peshitta Institute. It was, and remains, an announcement list rather than a discussion group. Today hugoye-list, founded by Beth Mardutho, is the primary discussion group for Syriac studies. The first message was posted on September 30, 1998 and as of April 6, 2011, it had 5196 messages and 590 members. Officially, the list is moderated. Practically, however, it is semi-moderated in that messages are published without the approval of list moderators. When participants break the rules of the list, they are tagged to be moderated after which all their messages have to be approved by one of the list moderators. The success of hugoye-list lies in the fact that it is closer to a question-answer list rather than a fully-fledged discussion list. The QA nature of hugoye-list is in fact invaluable. It combines the knowledge base of almost 600 individuals in one place. While not all queries find answers, the majority do.

Thus far, Syriac studies has not witnessed successful crowd sourcing websites. In fact, it is doubtful whether such sites can be successful when the number of participants is low (as in Syriac studies). If one is to take Wikipedia as a measuring tool, one finds that articles on Wikipedia on topics with a large academic community behind it are more reliable than ones where the academic community is small. (Even in the former case, one must always exercise caution when using Wikipedia articles.) For crowd sourcing to succeed, there must be a critical mass that is large enough to warrant projects to go that route. The field of Syriac studies is therefore not a good candidate for crowd sourcing.

## Conclusion

In summary, the globalization of Syriac studies began with the convention of dedicated international conferences, providing scholars with a broader contact base. Following these, the development of the Internet in the 1990s paved the way for Syriac studies to become a global, yet specialized, subject area.

There is, of course, a downside to the reliance on hosted digital content. As mentioned earlier, Lavenant's account of the history of international Syriac Symposia is no longer available online. For a period of two weeks in May 2012, the entirety of the Beth Mardutho website was down due to technical difficulties and no one had access to *Hugoye*. In fact, the future of hosting journals like *Hugoye* in the coming decades is unknown. HTML and PDF formats may become obsolete, and if there is no one to take care of conversions, all of this content will be lost. (For this reason, *Hugoye* is also published in print.) The hope, however, remains that with advancements in technology, Syriac studies will follow the path of future technologies, whatever that may lead. ✠

## **Syriac Translations of the New Testament and the Formation of the Canon in the Antiochian West Syrian Church**

*Dr. Adai Jacob Corepiscopa*

In the first century AD the language of the common people in the Middle East and Mesopotamia was Aramaic. But gradually in the 1<sup>st</sup> century itself in Palestine Syria and Mesopotamia a new language began to sprout as a branch or as a daughter the Aramaic language and it was called Syriac. The language had variations in accordance with regions, Antioch Edessa etc for example in Palestine. During the time of Jesus the common people in Palestine conversed in Palestinian Syriac, which was a branch of Aramaic language. When we closely examine, we come to the conclusion that the language spoken by Jesus was Palestinian Syriac<sup>1</sup>. The Gospel for the salvation of the human race was thus preached at first by Jesus and his disciples in Syriac Language.

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<sup>1</sup> Wikenhauser.A, Einleitung in das Neue Testament, 88.

Another important and unique position of Syriac language was that it was born and brought up in Christian background. Therefore in the early centuries Syriac became a synonym for everything Christian. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards Edessa began to develop as the main centre of the Syriac language and Christian scholasticism and within a few years Syriac became a full-fledged literary language. It is argued that the first biblical writing in Syriac is Diatessaron of Tatian and it was written in Edessa in AD 150. The theological school of Edessa became a great centre for biblical and theological studies and the medium of instruction was Syriac. Another important centre of Syriac language was Nissibis, where one more Syriac Theological school flourished in the early centuries.

From the concept of New Testament Canon and from the idea of canonisation we mean the acceptance and selection of the NT books as authoritative books of the Christian Church. Canon therefore contains a fairly long history of the selection and approval of the various books of NT. The acceptance of the NT books was not a sudden incident but a gradual process. Only step by step in the course of time the NT books were selected and accepted. The Syrian church has its own history of canonisation and it deserves special attention. A comparison of the canonisation process of the Syrian Church with that of the Greek and Latin churches will show that the Syrian Church adopted a strict and discretionary attitude towards canonisation. The modern scientific research proves that the strict attitude of the Syrian Church in the case of acceptance of certain books of the NT was based on sound reasons. Apostolic origin, apostolic background or connection, conformity with the rule of faith and divine inspiration are the main criteria to get acceptance as a canonical book. We can assume that Syrian Church was very strict in keeping the criteria and cautious in the selection of books.

As an inseparable part of the process of canonisation we have to deal with the different translations of New Testament in to the Syriac language from the 2<sup>nd</sup> till the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore this small presentation is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the various translations of the New Testament into Syriac and the second part deals with the process of canonisation.

## **Part I - The Various Translations of the NT into Syriac**

The list of books found in the translations done during centuries is the most important evidence for the development of the Syriac canon of NT.

### **1. The Old Syriac Translation<sup>2</sup>**

For the Old Syriac translation of the four Gospels we have two important Manuscript evidences. The first one is a manuscript found in the Monastery of St. Mary in the desert at the Western side of Cairo. This manuscript was discovered by William Cureton in 1842 and it is now kept in the British Museum. It was published in 1858 with the name Curetonian Syriac version (Syr<sup>c</sup>). The second manuscript evidence for the Old Syriac translation of the four Gospels is a Palimpsest found in the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai. This manuscript was discovered in 1892 by Agnas Smith Lewis and it is called Sinaitic Syriac version (Syr<sup>s</sup>). Some of the scholars have the opinion that these manuscripts were originally written in the middle or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the second century.

Manuscript evidence for Old Syriac translation of Acts and letters of Paul are traceable from the writings of Syrian Fathers. St. Ephrem had written commentaries on Acts and letters of Paul using the text of the Old Syriac translation. This translation is considered to be still older than the translation of the four

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<sup>2</sup> Compare A. Vööbus, *The Old Syriac Version in a new light ...*, Stockholm, 1949, *Studies in the history of the Gospel Text in Syriac*, Louvain, 1951

Gospels. Old Syriac translation for the Catholic letters and for the book of Revelation is not available.

## 2. Diatessaron of Tatian<sup>3</sup>

A Syrian Monk called Tatian wrote a harmony of the four Gospels and it is called Diatessaron. It was written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the second century. Many of the scholars believe that Diatessaron is the oldest Syriac manuscript of the NT<sup>4</sup>. The influence of Diatessaron was great in the Syrian Church and at least for three centuries Diatessaron was used for public reading instead of the four gospels. In the early centuries in the NT canon of the Syrian church, Diatessaron occupied the position of the four gospels.

## 3. Peshitta (Syr<sup>pesh</sup>)

In the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century a new translation of the books of NT appeared and it became part of the official Bible of the Syrian Church. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards this new version of the Syriac Bible began to be called “Peshitta”. The NT Peshitta contains only 22 books. The four minor Catholic letters and the book of Revelation are omitted. There is no exact information regarding the master brain behind the formation of Peshitta. The critic F. Burkitt has the opinion that Bishop Rabbula of Edessa (411-431) is the creator of Peshitta. Bishop Rabbula had made an exact translation of NT in to Syriac using the Greek text. Burkitt identifies this Syriac translation made by Rabbula with Peshitta.

Regarding the time of Origin of Peshitta Arthur Voobus holds another view. According to him Peshitta originated at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. He defends the argument saying that Peshitta was widely in use even before the split in the Syrian

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<sup>3</sup> Compare T.. Zahn, *Tatian's Diatessaron*, Erlangen 1881, *Untersuchungen zum Diatessaron Tatians*, Heidelberg 1918

<sup>4</sup> S. Brock, *The hidden Pearl*, Vol. III, P. 221ff.

Church in 431. M. Black after a critical examination expresses his own opinion regarding the role of bishop Rabulla to the formation of Peshitta. According to him bishop Rabulla made a complete revision of the Old Syriac Text and this revision was an important step towards the formation of Peshitta.

#### **4. Philoxiniana (Syr<sup>ph</sup>)**

In the West Syrian Church there was always the tendency to revise the older Syriac texts of the NT. Bishop Philoxinos of Mabug initiated a revision of Peshitta in the year 508 with the help of his assistant Polycarpus. He made a new translation of NT into Syriac comparing and using the Greek Manuscripts making it closer to the Greek text. In this translation as a result of the comparison with the Greek canon the four minor Catholic Epistles and the book of Revelation which were omitted in Peshitta were included.

#### **5. Charclensis (Syr<sup>h</sup>)**

Thomas of Charkel/Harkel was Bishop of Mabug but he was expelled by Caesar Mauritius and therefore he was staying in St. Anthony's Monastery near Alexandria. He himself said that he had made a comparison of Philoxiniana with Greek Manuscripts in the year 616. This means that Bishop Thomas of Charkel revised Philoxiniana using the Western type of Manuscripts. This revision is known as Charclensis/ harclensis.

#### **6. The Palestinian-Syriac Translation (Syr<sup>Pal</sup>)**

Greek was the language used in Palestine during early centuries of Christian era. But there were a lot of common people, who were not able to understand Greek but knew a type of Syriac dialect called the Palestinian Syriac. Therefore during the time of worship the readings from the Bible and the Homily were translated into Palestinian Syriac. This popular dialect of the common people was an offshoot of the Aramaic language and was spoken by Jesus Christ. According to Lagrange a

translation of NT was made in the 5<sup>th</sup> century into the above mentioned Palestinian Syriac. For this translation a complete Manuscript evidence is not available, but we have 3 lectionaries and other fragments of gospels to prove the existence of such a translation.

## **Part II - Formation of the Canon of the New Testament in the Syrian Church**

In the Syrian Church also the formation of the canon of the New Testament was a gradual process. Without much conscious effort as a natural phenomenon the canonisation process started already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and continued till the 7<sup>th</sup> century. We will try to analyse the development of the canon on Chronological basis.

### **1. Situation of the Canon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century**

In the case of gospels two types of Syriac translations emerged during this period. The first type is the translation of the four gospels done separately as we see now. This translation was later known as evengelion “da mepharreshe” and it means separated gospels. It is believed that this translation took place in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and if so it is perhaps the oldest translation of the gospels. The date of origin is highly disputed. The Manuscript evidence is the old Syriac translation called Syr<sup>sin</sup>. Acts and the letters of Paul were also translated into old Syriac in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Most probably from the letters of Paul ‘Hebrews’ and ‘Philemon’ were excluded. Therefore in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century the canon of the Syrian Church contained only 17 books including 4 gospels, Acts and 12 letters of Paul.

The second type of translation was made by the Syrian Monk called Tatian<sup>5</sup> who was expelled from the Church in Rome and came back to the Orient in the year 172. As we know he made a

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<sup>5</sup> Wikenhanser, Einleitung 81, Kümmel, Einleitung, 467.

harmony of the four gospels in Syriac known as Diatessaron and it was also known as Evengelion “damehallette” and it means mixed gospels. Some of the Scholars have the opinion that Tatian had used Old Syriac translation of the separated gospels to write his Diatessaron<sup>6</sup>. Soon in the canon of the Syrian Church the four Gospels were replaced by Diatessaron. Till the 5<sup>th</sup> century Diatessaron enjoyed the position of a canonical book in the place of the four gospels.

## **2. Position of the Canon in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Regarding Canon no radical change occurred in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. We can assume that the situation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century continued in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century also. But from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards we get more information from the writings of the Fathers. In the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the Syrian Church in Antioch accepted only three Catholic letters as canonical books (James, 1Pet, 1 Jn) and rejected the other four minor Catholic Epistles and the book of Revelation. Lucian of Antioch (312) who had his education in Edessa and settled down in Antioch was one of the leaders of the Antiochian school of thought. John Chrysostom also accepted only the three Catholic Epistles. Diodorus of Tarsus (394), Severian from Gabala, Polychronius of Apamea etc. belong to the Antiochian school of thought. With the end of the 4th century the Canon of the Syrian Church contained 22 (19) books. But instead of the four gospels Diatessaron was used. Fathers like Aprahat and Ephrem had quoted from Diatessaron and St. Ephrem had written a commentary on Diatessaron.

## **3. Development of the Canon in 5<sup>th</sup> century**

5<sup>th</sup> century became the most decisive and crucial period in the history of the New Testament canon. Majority of the documents that give a clear picture of the New Testament Canon of the

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<sup>6</sup> Einleitung 85.

Syrian Church were written in the fifth century. A Brief survey of those documents will provide us with ample material to grasp the attitude of the Syrian Church toward the New Testament canon.

### **3.1 Doctrine of Addai<sup>7</sup>**

This document emerged around the year 400 and it gives a hint regarding the Syriac canon just before the time of Peshitta. Addai is considered as the founder of the Church in Edessa. At the time of his death he called his disciple and gave the following advise; “The Law, the Gospels, the letters of Paul and Acts of the Apostles are the books that you can read in the church of Christ and outside those you should not read anything because nothing is given outside them in which the truth is written”. Here the gospels mean most probably Diatessaron. But the canonical books are listed here.

### **3.2 Syriac Canon from Sinai**

Some of the scholars hold the view that the Syriac Canon discovered by A. S. Lewis was written around 400 A.D. In this canon the four separate gospels (listed instead of Diatessaron), the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Paul are the books approved by the Holy Church.

### **3.3 Apostolic Constitution**

This book was written in the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This contains the list of books that can be read during worship. In this list also we see only the four gospels, Acts and the letters of Paul. In the beginning of the fifth century in the list of letters of Paul among the 14 letters the letter to the Hebrews and a third

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<sup>7</sup> Kümmel, Einleitung 443.

letter to the Corinthians are included, but the letter to Philemon is omitted.

### **3.4 Apostolic Canon**

Apostolic Canon is also from the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This book seems to be an appendix to the Apostolic Constitution. According to this canon the 7 Catholic letters are approved as canonical books. But the book of Revelation is omitted.

### **3.5 Introduction of Peshitta**

In the beginning of the 5th century Peshitta was introduced as the official Bible of the Syrian Church and that was the most important incident in the history of the canon of the Syrian Church. From the seven Catholic Epistles only the three major epistles - James, I Peter and I John were approved. Therefore the original New Testament canon of the Syrian Church contained only 22 books. The date of origin of Peshitta is a matter of debate and dispute. After the council of Ephesus in 431 as we all know there occurred the great split in the Syrian Church and East Syrians separated themselves and formed their own Church. But Peshitta was the common Bible for both. In the West Syrian Church there was the tendency to revise the canon of the New Testament.

## **4. Canon of the West Syrian Church in the 6<sup>th</sup> century**

In the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century a revision of the canon of the New Testament took place in the West Syrian Church. This revision was initiated by Bishop Philexinos of Mabug. In the new revised list the four minor Catholic Epistles and the book Revelation were included. It is perhaps because of the influence of the Coptic and Greek churches that the West Syrian church included those 5 books in the Syriac canon. Thus the number of NT books was fixed as 27.

## **5. Canon of the West Syrian Church in the 7<sup>th</sup> century**

An important witness to the Canon of the West Syrian Church in the 7<sup>th</sup> century is the new translation made by Bishop Thomas of Charkel. The list of NT books found in Philexiniana was adopted in this version also. In the West Syrian church all the 27 books began to get approval. But the book of Revelation was never fully accepted and not used for public reading.

## **6. An Important Witness to the Canon of the West Syrian Church in the 12<sup>th</sup> century**

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Dionasius Bar Sleetbi was an outstanding Theologian, linguist and liturgist of the West Syrian Church. His commentary on the 27 books of the New Testament is an important testimony to prove that the West Syrian church has approved all the 27 books of NT. But for public reading during worship the minor Catholic letters are very seldom used and the book of revelation is not used.

## **7. Bar Ebraya**

Mar Gregorios Yuhanon Bar Ebraya was consecrated as the Catholicose or Maphrian of Tigris in the year 1264. He was a scholar not only in Theology and Biblical Studies, but in all arena of leaning. In him we can see an ocean of wisdom<sup>8</sup> and he was always engaged in reading, studying and writing books. In the Syrian Orthodox church he is unique in scholastic excellence. When we examine his exegetical writings on NT books we can see that he used the original Peshitta having only 22 books excluding 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of Peter, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> letters of John, Jude and the book of Revelation. Several revisions of the canon by the Syrian church during the course of several centuries didn't affect Bar Ebraya.<sup>29</sup>

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8 Ö. Joseph, das Meer der Weisheit, 82.

9 Ö. Joseph, das Meer der Weisheit, 83.

## Conclusion

In the first five centuries the Syrian Church was perhaps the most flourishing church in the world. Syriac became a developed language of the learned and the Syrian Universities of Edessa and Nissibis were great centres of learning. In the field of Textual criticism more research is needed to trace out the crucial role of the Syriac language in the formation of the New Testament.

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## The Syriac Heritage<sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil*

Syriac is the Edessan dialect<sup>2</sup> of the Palestinian Aramaic Language. Aramaic<sup>3</sup> itself is the Palestine dialect of the Hebrew, the classical language of the Jewish tribe. Hebrew and other language of the Semitic family are the descendent languages from Semitic heritage. There are Syriac scholars who believe that the Hebrew is the first language of the whole humanity. Palestinians, during the times of Jesus Christ were using

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<sup>1</sup> Syriac Heritage is the ancestral privilege of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. The rich literal and liturgical treasure of this church is a wide topic of research. See Aprem I, *The scattered Pearls*, S.P. Broke, *An outline to Syriac Literature*, George A. Kiruz, *Dictionary of Syriac Heritage*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Modern Urfa in southeastern Turkey known in Syriac as Urhoi.

<sup>3</sup> Aramaic is came of the ancient languages of the entire humanity. It has a spoken and written history of more than 3000 years. Aramaic used different scripts in its long history. The Jewish Aramaic script is related to Hebrew square script whereas the Christian Palestinian script is related to Estrangela script.

Aramaic as the mother tongue. So Jesus and his disciples used this language in their daily life and Ministry. The gospels are traditionally believed to be written in Greek language. Nevertheless origin of the Gospels in its original form that was spoken and enacted in the Aramaic medium. The writers of the Gospel texts retained the Aramaic forms in this Greek text to emphasis, interpret, clarify and to keep the originality of the context in which Jesus performed His Ministry<sup>4</sup>.

### **Gospels in Syriac**

When Christianity spread widely into the Greek and other language communities, the text forms of the Gospel and the other bible texts were written in Greek. These texts are now known as the basic text of origin of the New Testament. Even then the importance of the Gospel text in its Aramaic (Syriac) verbal form cannot be ignored. There are mentions about the Syriac Gospel texts of St. Mathew seen among the Syriac Speaking Christians. Later the Edessan Christians became very influential in the field of biblical texts and its interpretations<sup>5</sup>.

### **The School of Nisibis**

The school of Nisibis, where Mor Aphrem and his contemporaries taught under the great teacher Mor Jacob of Nisibis is one of the ancient schools of Christian scholarship and Syriac literature. When Nisibis was added to the Persian Empire the orthodox teachers and others under the leadership of Mor Aphrem moved to Edessa and started the school of Edessa.

### **The Syriac Scripts**

The Syriac in Edessa developed the vocalization of the Syriac alphabets using Greek vowels and the Easterners of the Roman

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<sup>4</sup> The Syriac peshitha is believed to the closest rendering of the Aramaic originality.

<sup>5</sup> Saint Mor Aprem the Syrian is the most known figure of the Edessan school, first known as the school of the Persians.

Empire developed vocalization using the diacritical points. The scripts also developed in two different ways in addition to the *estrangelo*, which is now used exclusively to write titles and other figurative forms only. Thus the Syriac language took the distinctive names, the West Syriac (Edessan) and the East Syriac (Persian). The East Syriacs who adopted the Nestorian theology took the East Syriac as their official version and the Antiochean (Edessan) Syrian Orthodox took the *Serto* as their version of choice<sup>6</sup>. The *estrangelo* script was also used by some scribes.

### **Bible in Syriac Tradition**

Some parts of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic<sup>7</sup>. In Palestine the Old Testament was rendered into Aramaic, the language of the Common people. The Old Testament Aramaic rendering was known as the Targum. ‘Targum’ means the translation. The Hebrew texts were either translated into Aramaic or the Rabbis did the translations extempore.

### **Syrian New Testament**

Gospel of Mathew is believed to be written in Syriac according to the witness of certain Church fathers. But majority of modern scholars believe that all the gospel texts were written in the Greek language. The number of Aramaic words and expressions retained in the gospel texts are numerous in the Mathew, when compared to other texts. The close conformity of the gospel of Mathew to Aramaic background is very explicit. The Syrian speaking communities of Syria and Edessa were using the gospel of Mathew more than any other texts. Before the collection and compilation of the NT as an authorized

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<sup>6</sup> The *Serto* script is now used by the Syrian Orthodox, Maronite, The Malankara Churches of the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions. The Chaldean script is issued by the Church of the East, Chaldean Catholics and Syro – Malabar Christians.

<sup>7</sup> The book of David, Dead Sea documents, Jewish Targums etc are examples, where Aramaic is used in parts.

volume Churches in different regions used any of the available texts. It was only in the 4<sup>th</sup> century that all the NT books were canonized and compilation of the texts done formally by the church.

The Syriac church also had the four distinctive gospels in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The first version of the Syriac Gospels is known as the Old Syriac Gospels. Copies of this text are extant. The most famous gospel text in Syriac during the latter part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is the one compiled by the great scholar named Tatian the Syrian. It is known as the Diatessaron<sup>8</sup>.

### **The Syriac Diatessaron**

Diatessaron is the harmonious blending of the four Gospel texts into one. Thus the four Gospels were rendered into one very prudently, but skillfully avoiding certain texts to suit the bias of the compiler. Tatian was a Syrian by birth and was a lover of knowledge interested in travelling. He gained mastery in Syriac, Greek and Bible. He traveled up to Rome and was a disciple of Justin Martyr. His diatessaron became so popular among the Syrians and none other than St. Aphrem wrote a commentary of the Gospel on the basis of the diatessaron text. Nevertheless, the Church later disapproved the diatessaron and reaffirmed the use of the separate gospels. Rabulla the bishop of Edessa intervened and had to burn all the available copies of diatessaron .

### **Old Syriac Gospels**

The ancient Syriac Gospel text in the separate fourfold form is the famous old Syriac Gospels. This text was used in the Syriac Church before the origin of diatessaron as well as after the abolition of it.

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<sup>8</sup> See S.P. Brockes, *Bible in Syriac Tradition*

## Syriac Bible

A series of scholarly translations, revisions and updations of the Syriac version of the Bible were done by eminent scholars. Mor Polycarpus, the Corepiscopa under Mor Philexinose of Mabbug, Paul of Tella etc. contributed at large for the different updations of the Syriac Bible. The Syriac Peshitta is a parallel development in the history of the Syriac Bible. It is a gradual development which in course of time formed the Peshitta text, the editors of this text is anonymous. and is believed to be the work of many scholars over different centuries.

## Liturgical Heritage

The Syrian church has a great treasury of liturgical text. The holy Eucharist service text are 79 in numbers, beginning from the Anaphora of St. James of Jerusalem believed to be the oldest and is the basic text of all other Anaphore. Yearly prayer book known as the *Penkeesa* include prayers of the seven hours of all major feasts and Sundays. There are Syriac prayers for the days of the week, known as the *Shimo* for the seven days of the week. *Bethgaso* is the treasury of the Syriac music. All the poetic prayers in the Syriac tradition are in different modes, which again can be sung in eight tunes, known as *Octoechos*. All the eight tunes of all the poetic prayers are stored in specified texts handed over to generations by music teachers to their students.

## Syriac Patristics

Syriac fathers contributed a lot to the Christian literature in parallel to the Greek patristic writings. Aphrahat, Aprem, Jacob of Edessa, Jacob of Serug, Michael Rabo, Bar Sleeti, Bar Ebroyo, etc are eminent literal figures whose outstanding works that still survive as monuments in Christian literature. Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum and Mor Phelexinos Dolabani are the literary luminaries that kindled the light of knowledge and awakened the Syriac heritage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 19<sup>th</sup> century orientalist like

Asemani, Edmund Beck, Payne Smith, William Wright attracted western scholarship into this stream of Christian scholastic heritage. Dr. Sebastian Brock of our times contributed with dedication in the field of Syriac research to lead and guide the rediscovery of Syriac heritage. Dr. George Kiraz and his Gorgias press are rendering valuable services in the development of Syriac Patrimony.

### **Conclusion**

Syriac Scholarship in India is now a rejuvenating branch of academics. St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Jacob Thekkeparambil is known as the light house of Syriac learning in India. There M.A. and Ph.D. courses are offered in Syriac. The Institute is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. The contributions of Konat Mathan Corepiscopa and his family, and the contributions of Kurian Corepiscopa Kaniamparambil are worth to be elaborated. More detailed introduction to the field of scholarship in Syriac Heritage is to come.

## **Christological and Pneumatological Dimensions of Holy Eucharist in West Syrian Tradition**

*Fr. Biju M. Parekkattil*

### **Introduction**

The Syrian Orthodox Liturgy, especially the liturgy of St. James, is Trinitarian in character. The role of the Trinity in the economy of salvation is beautifully and profoundly presented throughout the service of the liturgy. The Liturgical Service of the Eucharist is brought to the Father by the Son, a sacrifice in which we take part, the bread and wine become Jesus' body and blood through the Holy Spirit. The participation in the Holy Eucharist unifies man and community with Holy Trinity by grace and facilitates to experience the Kingdom of God here and now. Therefore the Christological and pneumatological

dimensions of the Eucharist is very beautifully allocated in its Trinitarian context in the West Syrian Liturgical tradition.

### **Pneumatological Dimension of the Liturgy**

Holy Spirit has the primary place in the life of the Church, though he operates within and outside the Church. Holy Spirit participates in the Creation, redemption, and sanctification of the human beings and cosmos (1 Cor. 6:11; Ps. 104:30). West Syrian Church Fathers always pointed out the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit as the essential condition for the consecration. But they had almost never identified a single moment of transformation with any particular element of the Anaphora. Epiclesis is the prayer addressed to God the Father the first person of the Trinity, to send the Holy Spirit in order to sanctify the Holy elements offered in the Eucharist, the offering priest and the faithful. In the West Syrian Liturgical tradition, Epiclesis and institution are mutually complementary. Bar Salibi writes: “(The priest) recites the words that our Lord said in the upper-room when he accomplished the mystery. By these (words), he indicates that he is the one who consecrates now as well as these elements which are placed on the altar, by the will of the Father and by the operation of the Spirit, through the priest who signs crosses and recites the words. It is not the one who ministers, but the one who is invoked on the mysteries, who consecrates. Again the bread receives the first sign (rushmo) of consecration through the signing (hatmo) of the crosses. It symbolizes the mystical consecration which was accomplished on that evening in the upper-room. Again the sign (hatmo) of the crosses symbolizes him who consecrates the offered gifts by the will of his Father and by the operation of the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore

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<sup>1</sup> B.Vargis, The Syriac Version of the Liturgy of St. James, P.30.

it highlights the importance of both the institution narrative and the epiclesis. The invocation of Holy Spirit has a profound significance in the consecration of the liturgy in the Orthodox tradition. “We cannot grasp what is meant by the Eucharistic eating of the flesh of Christ without keeping in mind the working of the Holy Spirit”<sup>2</sup>

The Anamnesis in the Eucharist always comprises the gifts of the Holy Spirit too. According J.M.R. Tillard, in oriental tradition, pneumatological dimensions of the Eucharist always includes the gifts of the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Epiclesis reminds us the fact that Pentecost is not merely a historical experience of the Church in the first century, but an ongoing experience in the Church. Therefore Epiclesis is a prayer for the renewal of the Pentecost and to remain as a living experience.<sup>4</sup> The invocation of Holy Spirit both on the Eucharistic elements and on the participants is an acknowledgement of the work of Holy Spirit in the Church through the sacraments. To celebrate Holy Eucharist is not possible without mediation of Holy Spirit, because it is the Holy Ghost that mediates the effects of Christ in us.

There are two types of epiclesis are found in West Syrian tradition namely, consecratory epiclesis and epiclesis of sanctification. The Eucharistic epiclesis has three objectives such as 1) the presence of Holy Spirit in Congregation and in the oblation, 2) the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and 3) to cause the fruits of the communicant. The invocation and coming of the Spirit can be also regarded as an anticipation of the final Parousia of the Lord.

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<sup>2</sup> D.M. Stanley, *The Bread of Life, Worship* 32, P. 488

<sup>3</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, *L' Eucharistie*, P.387.

<sup>4</sup> J.J. Von Allmen, *Lord's Supper*, P. 31

## **Christological Dimension of the Liturgy**

The most important characteristic of the Liturgy is its Christological nature, as a part of the Trinitarian Theology. The liturgy makes us known both the plan of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ and commemorates the redeeming action of God in Christ. All the events of Christ's sacrifice, the incarnation, the last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are not repeated in the Eucharist, but they are made present. Therefore every Eucharistic celebration is the "Eucharista" or thanksgiving of the Church for the salvation achieved through Christ. Soteriological themes are well reflected in the Anaphora of the St. James and it is very close to the New Testament Faith and Preaching that Jesus is Lord and Saviour. At Eucharist, we recognise Christ, both as Priest and Victim. St. Severius of Antioch clearly reveals the Christological dimension of the Eucharist in his letter to Misael the deacon: "It is not the offerer himself who, as by his own power and virtue, changes the bread into Christ's body, and the cup of blessing into Christ's blood, but the God-befitting and efficacious power of the words which Christ who instituted the mystery commanded to be pronounced over the things that are offered. The priest who stands before the altar, since he fulfils a mere ministerial function, pronouncing his words as in the person of Christ, and carrying back the rite that is being performed to the time at which he began the sacrifice for his apostles, says over the bread, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me": while over the cup again he pronounces the words, "this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:19-20). Accordingly it is Christ who still even now offers, and the power of his divine words perfects the things that are provided

so that they may become his body and blood”.<sup>5</sup> In another letter, he teaches that in the person of the priest, Christ himself pronounces the sacramental words: “You should know that the priest who offers, represents the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; for he in fact celebrates the memory of the sacrifice which he himself instituted, and of that which he himself began in the mysterious supper”.<sup>6</sup> Therefore in the Syrian Orthodox anaphora, all prayers are addressed to the Father, except the last one before dismissal. Mose Bar Kepha explains the theological significance of this prayer as follows: “Wherefore...all the prayers of the qurobo are addressed to the Father, except this prayer, the last of all prayers, which is addressed to the Son, wherein priest confesses to the Son, because that through him we have gained access to the Father, and he is the way that leads us, and door that brings us into the Father according to his own unimpeachable and all holy words”<sup>7</sup>. The role of Christ as the offerer is clearly depicted in the anaphora, without discarding Christ’s role as the offering.

Eucharist is the response of redeemed Church to its redeemer. Therefore in our Eucharistic liturgical celebration, we acknowledge, it is in Christ that we are made worthy to receive the benefits from God. It is both the commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ and the thanks giving for whole dispensation and redemption. We make memorial of the whole economy of salvation and give thanks to God for them. It includes all the salvific events like the moment of His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, glorification in heaven and His continued offering of Himself to the Father. In

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<sup>5</sup> Severus, Select Letters, II-1, p 238.

<sup>6</sup> Severus, Letter 105, To Caesarea the Hypatissa, PO. XIV, 256.

<sup>7</sup> B.Vargis, The Syriac Version of the Liturgy of St. James, P.52.

post Sanctus prayer, in west Syrian tradition, the Christological economy of salvation is narrated from incarnation onwards and it makes possible to include all life Christ in the salvation history of the people of God. The redemption in Christ is commemorated in every Eucharistic prayer, as the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt in every Passover celebration<sup>8</sup>.

Christological dimension of the liturgy is the central to the Eucharistic celebration, because its source and model is in the Last Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Conclusion**

Eucharistic celebration is the centre of the Christian life and the sublime expression of our faith. All the prayers and sacramental rituals together are meant to signify what God has done for our salvation. The Church is the body of Christ, committed to his mission of the kingdom of God. The epiclesis in the Eucharistic liturgy expresses pneumatological aspects of the liturgy. So in the Eucharist, we get strengthened in our mission knowing that Holy Spirit guides us in our prayers as well as in our life, and that our mission must continue until the Parousia, which we joyfully anticipate.

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<sup>8</sup> L. Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 125.

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