THE EARLY VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations

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PART ONE

The Early Eastern Versions
of the New Testament
I

The Syriac Versions

Of all the early versions of the New Testament, those in Syriac have raised more problems and provoked more controversies among modern scholars than any of the others. The reasons lie partly in the multiplicity of translations and revisions of the Syriac Scriptures, and partly in the ambiguity of evidence concerning their mutual relationship. At the same time, that five or six separate versions in Syriac were produced during the first six centuries of the Christian era is noteworthy testimony to the vitality and scholarship of Syrian churchmen. In fact, as Eberhard Nestle has reminded us, "No branch of the Early Church has done more for the translation of the Bible into their vernacular than the Syriac-speaking. In our European libraries we have Syriac Bible MSS from Lebanon, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Armenia, India (Malabar), even from China.'

The several Syriac versions that fall to be considered in the present chapter begin with the earliest translation of the Gospels. Whether this was Tatian's Diatessaron, a harmony of the four Gospels prepared about A.D. 170, or the Old Syriac version of the separate Gospels, is a question that scholars have debated for many years without reaching any generally accepted solution. How much of the rest of the New Testament was included in the Old Syriac version is difficult to ascertain. In any case, toward the close of the fourth or at the beginning of the fifth century a version of twenty-two books of the New Testament was available in a translation which came to be called at a later date the Peshitta² Syriac version. This translation, like Jerome's production of the Latin Vulgate text amid competing Old Latin translations, was intended to supply a standardized version and to bring to an end the confusion and variety of readings in earlier Syriac texts. The Peshitta, however, was unable to satisfy Syrian scholars who desired a more literal rendering than those already

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¹ 'Syriac Versions', Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, iv (1902), 645.
² For definitions of the term 'Peshitta' see p. 48 below.
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available, and at the beginning of the sixth century Philoxenus, bishop of the Jacobite (or Monophysite) branch of the Syrian church, commissioned his rural bishop, Polycarp, to make another version. A century later the Philoxenian version, in turn, seems to have formed the basis for yet another revision made by one who designated himself as ‘Thomas, a poor sinner’, and who is no doubt correctly identified by an unknown Syriac writer as Thomas of Heraclea (Harkel). Finally, in addition to these several versions,¹ all of which are in the ‘classical’ Syriac dialect of Aramaic used at Edessa and generally throughout Syrian communities, there is also the so-called Palestinian Syriac version, which makes use of a form of western Aramaic similar to that used by Galilean Jews in the Old Testament Targums.

I. THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO SYRIA AND THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

It was at Antioch of Syria, the third-largest city of the Roman Empire, that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts xi. 26). Situated on the Orontes River, north of the Lebanon range, the city was a melting-pot where persons of many races met and mingled.² The leading classes were of Hellenic background and, along with some of the indigenous populace, spoke Greek. At the beginning of the second century Ignatius of Antioch,³ while en route to Rome, wrote several letters in Greek.

¹ It is no longer customary to reckon among the Syriac versions the Karkaphensian materials, which are a kind of Syriac Massorah whose authors attempted to preserve what was regarded as the best traditions of the orthography and pronunciation of the more important and difficult words of the Syriac Bible. This Massorah was extant in two forms, corresponding to the two main branches of the Syrian Church. The Jacobite manuscripts greatly predominate in quantity over the Nestorian manuscripts. See J. P. P. Martin, Tradition karkaphienne ou la Massore chez les Syriens (Paris, 1870; Eng. tr. in Hebrewica, ii (1885-6), 13-23); G. H. Gwilliam, ‘The Materials for the Criticism of the New Testament, with Specimens of the Syriac Massorah’, Studia biblica et ecclesiastica, iii (Oxford, 1891), 56-65 and 93-100; William Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature (London, 1894; repr. from Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th edn., vol. xxii, 1887), pp. 20-4; and F. H. A. Scrivener, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, 4th edn., ii (London, 1894), 34-6.

² Among many monographs on Antioch mention may be made of George Haddad’s dissertation Aspects of Social Life in Antioch in the Hellenistic-Roman Period (University of Chicago, 1949), and especially Glanville Downey’s A History of Antioch in Syria, from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest (Princeton, 1961).

³ Ignatius describes himself as bishop of Syria (Ep. ad Rom. ii. 2).
Near the close of the second century the bishopric at Antioch was occupied by a certain Theophilus who, though born near the Euphrates, received a Hellenistic education and produced in Greek a considerable body of writings, including a harmony of the Gospels. Throughout the first two centuries it appears that Antiochian Christians, at least those whose writings have survived, were accustomed to make use of the Old and New Testaments in Greek.

Outside the gates of Antioch, that 'fair city of the Greeks', as Isaac of Antioch described the metropolis, Syriac was the language of the people. The early history of the growth of the Syriac-speaking Church is to a certain extent a matter of conjecture and inference. The historical sources are scanty, and most of the accounts of the earlier periods that we possess leave much to be desired. Despite such limitations, however, we can trace at least the main outlines of the development in Syria of a Christianity possessing a national cast.

The native Syrian Church appears to have had two starting-points, Edessa and Arbela. Edessa, called by the natives Urhai (the modern Urfa in Turkey), was a town in northern Mesopotamia east of the Euphrates, the capital of an independent buffer state (Osrhoène) between the Roman and the Parthian Empires. According to local tradition, reported by Eusebius, Christianity came to Edessa in the apostolic age as the result of the labours of Thaddaeus, one of the seventy disciples, who preached to King Abgar Ukkama ('the Black'). Another form of the same tradition is preserved in the so-called Doctrine of Addai, a Syriac document which dates from the latter half of the fourth century. Here the labours of the apostolic emissary to Edessa, Addai by name, are described in detail, including his work of preaching, baptizing, and building the first church in Edessa.

1 Of these treatises all that have survived are Theophilus' three books To Autolycus. On his harmony, cf. Jerome, Ep. cxxi. 6, 15 (ed. Hilberg, iii. 24–5): 'Theophilus, Antiochæae ecclesiae septimus post Petrum apostolum episcopus, qui quattuor evangelistarum in unum opus dicta copingens ingenii sui nobis monumenta demisit . . .'

2 Carmen, xv.

3 The earlier work of J. P. P. Martin, Les Origines de l'église d'Édesse et des églises syriennes (Paris, 1889) has been superseded by A. F. J. Klijn's Edessa, de stad van de Apostel Thomas (Baarn, 1963; German trans., Edessa, die Stadt des Apostels Thomas (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965)), and J. B. Segal's Edessa 'the Blessed City' (Oxford, 1970).


5 Ed. by G. Phillips (London, 1876).
Apart from such quasi-legendary accounts, the earliest substantial evidence we have suggests that by the second half of the second century Christianity took root in Edessa. To be sure, the doctrinal cast of the earliest form of the new faith was apparently characterized by a mixture of astrological and gnostic speculations, later denounced as heretical. Tatian, for example, after spending some time in Rome as a disciple of Justin Martyr, in the year 172 was excommunicated for doctrinal aberrations (the exact nature of which is unclear) and returned to the East, where he died. During this period Tatian’s Harmony of the Gospels (the Diatessaron) began to be circulated in Syria.

About the same time the Church at Edessa obtained a notable convert in the person of Bar Daisan (Greek Βαρδησάνης). Born at Edessa about A.D. 155, he is said to have been educated in philosophy by a pagan priest at Hierapolis (Mabûg) and to have become a Christian about 180. The first Syrian, so far as we know, who wrote learned treatises in his own tongue and, with his son Harmonius, composed hymns in the same, Bardesanes earned for himself an ambivalent reputation. On the one hand, Eusebius speaks highly of him, praising him as a powerful defender of the faith and a most skilful opponent against heretics. Orthodox Syrians of the following period, on the other hand, have nothing but scorn for him, reckoning him among the gnostic heretics.

Toward the close of the second century the cause of orthodoxy at Edessa was forwarded by the consecration of Bishop Palut, which took place at Antioch about the year 190 at the hands of Serapion. About Palut Burkitt writes, ‘Though those outside might at first call his followers Palutians, as if they were a new sect, he or his immediate successors soon became the undisputed presidents of the Catholic Church in Edessa.’ A variety of kinds of testimony suggests the continued growth of the Church. Mention of the destruction of a ‘Christian temple’ at Edessa in

3 Hist. eccl. IV. xxx. 1–2.
The Introduction of Christianity into Syria

the flood of 201\(^1\) (which happens to be the earliest reference to a church building) may be taken as evidence of a certain degree of ecclesiastical organization. With even greater assurance the same conclusion can be drawn from a comment by Eusebius\(^2\) concerning a synod convened near the close of the second century, probably at Edessa, and made up of 'parishes in Osrhoène and the cities there', for the purpose of discussing the question concerning the date when Easter should be observed. That the royal house was converted to Christianity in the second century and that the new faith was soon after established as the state religion have often been accepted as facts;\(^3\) both remain, however, open to question.\(^4\)

The other main centre of early Syrian Christianity was located at Arbela, situated east of the Tigris in the region of Adiabene. A chronicle of the city is extant, composed about A.D. 550, which contains a series of hagiographical biographies along the lines of the Acts of Martyrs.\(^5\) The compiler dates the introduction of Christianity into Arbela during Trajan's reign (98–117) through the evangelistic work of Addai. Inasmuch as the Jewish population of Arbela was particularly influential—in fact, during the reign of Claudius (41–54) King Izates of Adiabene and other members of the royal house were converted to Judaism—\(^6\) it is probable that the Jewish community provided the starting-point for the Christian missionaries. It is significant that not a few early Syrian bishops have Jewish names.

Several pieces of evidence suggest that the young Syrian Church was not limited to cities, but from the beginning concerned itself with the evangelization of country-folk also. The

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\(^2\) Hist. eccl. V. xxiii. 4.

\(^3\) Most recently by J. B. Segal in Edessa 'the Blessed City'.


\(^6\) Josephus, Ant. XX. ii. 1–5.
presence of Christians in the plain of Syria between Nisibis and the Euphrates is implied by the well-known inscription of Bishop Abercius, dating from the second half of the second century.\(^1\) By A.D. 224/5, when the Sassanid dynasty came to power in Persia, more than twenty bishoprics are known to have existed in the Tigris–Euphrates valley and on the borders of Persia.\(^2\) The congregations seem usually to have been small and occasionally subject to active resistance from leaders of rival religions. We hear, for example, of repeated persecutions during the lives of the early bishops of Arbela.\(^3\) The faith continued, however, to gain strength. One of the persecuted bishops, in a time of enforced exile, is said to have won the entire population of the village in which he took refuge.

In turning now to consider the question when, where, and by whom the earliest translation into Syriac was made of the New Testament and of other early Christian literature, we find that next to nothing is known with certainty, and problems and learned disputes multiply without end. It is generally agreed that at least by the latter part of the second century the practical needs of the Church would have necessitated the production of a Syriac version of the Gospel story, though what form it took is debated (i.e. a harmony or the separate Gospels). Whether other Christian literature may have become available in Syriac at a still earlier date is a question to which quite diverse answers have been given. Haase, for example, supposed that the earliest Syrian Christians used a series of pericopes translated for liturgical purposes.\(^4\) Others have attempted to connect the forty-two Odes of Solomon with early Syrian Christianity, but without being able to persuade a majority of other scholars.\(^5\)

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\(^{1}\) καὶ Συρίης πέδων εἴδον καὶ ἄστεα πάντα Νίςβιν, Εὐφράτην διαβᾶς πάντη δ’ ἔχον συνομήλιον (lines 10–11; for the final word, cf. W. M. Calder, *JRS* xxix (1939), 2–4).

\(^{2}\) Sachau, *Der Chronik*, pp. 61–2.

\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 62.


\(^{5}\) The widest variety of scholarly opinion has been expressed concerning the authorship of the Odes of Solomon and their date (between A.D. 80 and 210). Harnack (followed by Diettrich, Grimme, Charles, Bacon, and Goguel) thought that he could detect two stages in their composition, that of a Jewish *Grundschrift* and the later modifications and additions made by a Christian redactor. Most investigators, however, have been impressed by the unity of style throughout the Odes (especially after Kittel’s research), and regard them as the product of (a) a Jewish Christian (so Harris, Leipoldt, Bartlet, Abbott, Charlesworth), (b) an orthodox Christian who emphasized sacramental mysticism (Bernard, Lake, Plooij, Selwyn), (c) a paganized Christian (Bousset, Reinach, Labourt, Loisy,
Vööbus, on the basis of a passage in Eusebius, has suggested that in the earliest stages the Syrian Churches used the Gospel according to the Hebrews. It must be acknowledged, however, that the text of the passage is uncertain, and requires emendation in order to provide the desired support.

More recently it has been suggested that the earliest Gospel account to circulate in Syriac was the Gospel of Thomas, some thirty or forty years before the Diatessaron. Although it may be, as a number of scholars have argued, that the Gospel of Thomas discloses features that connect it with Syria (e.g. the presence of what are taken to be Aramaisms or Syriacisms; the agreement of

Guidi, Connolly), (d) a full-fledged Gnostic (Gunkel, Gressmann, Clemen, Abramowski, Ehlers), or (e) a Montanist (Conybeare, Fries). Others, seeking to identify the author more precisely, have suggested (f) a disciple of John (P. Smith), (g) or Bardesanes (Sprengling, Newbold). Several scholars regard Edessa as the place of their origin (de Zwaan, R. M. Grant, Klijn). For bibliographical references to most of these scholars, see the present writer's article 'Odes of Solomon', Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. by L. A. Loetscher, ii (Grand Rapids, 1955), 812, supplemented by J. H. Charlesworth, The Odes of Solomon (Oxford, 1973).


2 Hist. eccl. IV. xxii. 8, ἐκ τε τοῦ καθ᾽ Ἑβραίους εὐαγγελίῳ καὶ τοῦ Συριακοῦ καὶ ἰδιώς ἐκ τῆς Ἐβραίους διαλέκτου πιὰ τίθηνα, which H. J. Lawlor and J. E. L. Oulton render as follows: 'Hegesippus sets down certain things from the Gospel of the Hebrews and the Syriac [Gospel] and, in particular, from [writings in] the Hebrew tongue.' They acknowledge, however, that they do not know what is meant by the 'Syriac Gospel', and mention Harnack's suggestion (Chronologie, i. 639 f.) that 'the Gospel of the Hebrews' indicates a Greek translation and 'the Syriac' the original text of the same. In view of the difficulty of the text A. C. McGiffert, followed by other scholars, prefers to emend by deleting καθ’ after εὐαγγελίῳ, so as to give the meaning 'from the Syriac Gospel according to the Hebrews he quotes some passages in the Hebrew tongue'.


words and ideas with passages in Syriac authors; the ascriptions of the document to the apostle Judas Thomas, whose double name is common in Syriac writings), none of these demands a date prior to Tatian.¹

II. THE DIATESSARON OF TATIAN

I. WITNESSES TO TATIAN'S DIATESSARON

Except for a single fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron (διὰ τεσσάρων, 'through [the] four [Gospels]') preserved in Greek,² all other witnesses are of secondary or tertiary character. These witnesses, which range widely as to century and geographical area, can be conveniently divided into two groups, one Eastern and the other Western. The Eastern group (items b to e below) is represented by lemmata incorporated in Ephraem's Commentary on the Diatessaron, several manuscripts of two forms of an Arabic harmony, a Persian harmony translated from a Syriac Vorlage, and traces of Tatianic readings preserved in Gospel quotations included in the works of various Eastern writers. The Western group (items f to k below) comprises the Latin codex Fuldensis, several medieval German harmonies, several medieval Dutch (Flemish) harmonies, two Old Italian harmonies, a Middle English harmony, and the harmonized text presupposed by several medieval writers. All these differ from one another, and from the presumed Latin original from which they are derived.

¹ On the other hand, for what can be said against connecting the Gospel of Thomas with Edessa see, e.g., the vigorous objections set forth by Barbara Ehlers, 'Kann das Thomasevangelium aus Edessa stammen? Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Christentums in Edessa', Nov T xii (1970), 284–317.

² The leaf from a papyrus codex containing the Greek text of portions of Matt. xviii and xix, which its editor, Otto Stegmüller, believed to be a fragment of the Greek Diatessaron (see his article, 'Ein Bruchstück aus dem griechischen Diatessaron (P. 16, 388)', ΖNW xxxvii (1938), 223–9), is probably nothing more than a Greek text which contains several Tatianic readings (so Curt Peters, 'Ein neues Fragment des griechischen Diatessaron?', Bib, xxi (1940), 68–77). The selections from Matthew and John in Greek which Agnes Smith Lewis published as 'Fragments of a Greek Harmony of the Gospels' (in Codex Climaci Rescriptus (1909), pp. xxvii–xxx) were drawn up in accord with a different plan from that of Tatian's Diatessaron and the two have no connection (so Ian A. Moir, Codex Climacii Rescriptus Graecus (Texts and Studies, n.s. ii; Cambridge, 1957)). A. Salac thought that the choice and order of the subjects of certain epigrams in the Palatine Anthology were influenced by the Greek Diatessaron (see his article, 'Quelques épigrammes de l'Anthologie palatine et l'iconographie byzantine' Byslav, xii (1951), 1–29, especially 9–12), but the resemblances are few and inconsequential.
Whether any of them are grandsons or merely great-nephews of Tatian's work, or whether they bear no discernible relationship at all, are questions on which there is no unanimity among scholars.

(a) A parchment fragment of the Diatessaron, measuring about four inches square and containing on one side the greater part of fourteen lines of Greek writing, came to light in 1933 during excavations on the site of the ancient Roman fortress-town of Dura-Europos on the lower Euphrates. Inasmuch as the town fell to the Persians under King Shapur I in A.D. 256–7, the fragment cannot be more than about eighty years removed from the autograph.

The left-hand margin of the parchment has suffered damage, and the first half-dozen or so letters at the beginning of each line are lacking. Most of them, however, can be restored with almost perfect confidence. In the following English translation the restorations are enclosed within square brackets and the modern Scripture references within parentheses. (For a discussion of the debate whether the Greek fragment represents the original text of the Diatessaron, or is a translation of an original Syriac or Latin original, see pp. 30–2 below.)

[... the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. xxvii. 56) and Salome (Mark xv. 40) and the wives [of those who] had followed him from [Galilee] to see the crucified (Luke xxiii. 49b–c). And [the day] was Preparation; the Sabbath was dawning (Luke xxiii. 54). And when it was evening (Matt. xxvii. 57), on the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath (Mark xv. 42), [there came] up a man (Matt. xxvii. 57), being a member of the council (Luke xxiii. 50), from Arimathea (Matt. xxvii. 57), a city of Judea (Luke xxiii. 51b), by name Joseph (Matt. xxvii. 57), good and righteous (Luke xxiii. 50), being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews (John xix. 38). And he (Matt. xxvii. 57) was looking for the kingdom of God (Luke xxiii. 51c). This man [had] not consented to [their] purpose (Luke xxiii. 51a)...

It is evident that Tatian went about composing his Diatessaron with great diligence. Probably he worked from four separate

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1 The fragment was edited by Carl H. Kraeling, A Greek Fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron from Dura (Studies and Documents, iii; London 1935), and re-edited, with a few minor corrections, by C. Bradford Welles, et al., in The Parchments and Papyri (The Excavations at Dura-Europos..., Final Report, vol. 2, part 1 (New Haven, 1959)), pp. 73–4.
manuscripts, one for each of the Gospels, and, as he wove together phrases, now from this Gospel and now that, he would no doubt cross out those phrases in the manuscripts from which he was copying. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how he was able to combine so successfully phrases from four documents into a remarkable cento which reminds one of delicate filigree work.

The most noteworthy reading preserved in the fragment is near the beginning. Although it rests partly on a restoration, and although none of the secondary or tertiary witnesses to Tatian exhibits the reading, it is probable that Tatian referred to 'the wives of those who had followed' Jesus from Galilee. This phrase, which is without parallel in the text of Luke xxiii. 49 in any known Greek witness, finds an echo in the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary (MSS. A and C) and in the Old Latin MS. c.¹

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(b) The commentary on the Diatessaron written by St. Ephraem (d. A.D. 373) is of primary importance for the portions of the Diatessaron that he quotes, but it obviously was not his intention to cite and comment upon every word of the Diatessaron. The commentary is preserved in its entirety in an Armenian translation, which has been edited from two manuscripts, both of which date from A.D. 1195.² They represent two different

¹ In Syriac the difference between 'the wives of those who had followed him' and 'the women who had followed him' is the presence or absence of the letter dalath. Whether the omission was accidental, thus producing the generally accepted reading (so Plooij, ExpT xlvii (1934–5), 471–6, and A. F. J. Klijn, A Survey of the Research into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts (Utrecht, 1949), p. 101), or, whether Tatian, in order to remove all trace of what could become the basis of slanderous attack, introduced the expanded reading (so Lagrange, Critique textuelle; ii, La Critique rationnelle (Paris, 1935), p. 631, and E. C. Colwell, Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament (Leiden and Grand Rapids, 1969), pp. 38–9), is still sub judice.

² The Armenian text of one of the manuscripts was first published in 1836 by the Meçitarists of San Lazzaro in Venice (Srboyn Ephraemi matenagrouthium', ii). Soon afterward a second manuscript was discovered, and a Latin translation, making use of both manuscripts, was prepared by the Meçitarist father J.-B. Aucher. Although Aucher's work was finished in 1841, it was not until 1876 that Prof. G. Moeisinger of Salzburg published the work (Evangelii Concordantis Expositio facta a Sancto Ephraemo Doctore Syro (Venice, 1876)).

The Armenian text has been re-edited by Dom Louis Leloir, Saint Éphrem, Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, version arménienne (CSCO cxxxvii, Scriptorum Armeniac, 1; Louvain, 1953); Leloir provides a Latin translation, op. cit., vol. cxlv, Scriptorum armeniac, 2 (1954).
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recensions, one (MS. A) of the Old Armenian type, particularly as regards the scriptural citations, and the other (MS. B) of the newer Armenian type, with the scriptural citations conformed to the Armenian vulgate (or, as Harris has put it, 'de-Ephraemized').

Since 1963 about three-fifths of Ephraem's commentary has been available in the original Syriac, preserved on sixty-five folios of a manuscript acquired by Sir Chester Beatty and dated by its editor to the late fifth or early sixth century.1 A comparison of the Syriac and Armenian texts discloses that the latter represents, on the whole, a reliable rendering of the original. It apparently was not made from a form of text identical with that preserved in the Beatty manuscript, for occasionally the latter presents supplementary paragraphs involving both lemmata and commentary, and occasionally it lacks material present in the Armenian translation. In view of the considerable lacunae in the Beatty manuscript, the Armenian version as well as patristic quotations are still indispensable for gaining more complete knowledge of the contents of Tatian's Diatessaron.

One folio of Syriac text of Ephraem's commentary has turned up in the collection of the Seminario de Papirologia at San Cugat del Vallés (Barcelona).2 Although the dimensions of the leaf (P. Palau Rib 2) do not coincide with those of the Beatty codex, the editor of the former believes, on the basis of a comparison of the style of the script in the two, that the stray folio was once part of the codex. By comparing the Syriac text with the Armenian version it can be deduced that the folio originally stood as no. 10 in the complete codex.


2 Pedro Ortiz Valdivieso, 'Un nuevo fragmento siríaco del Comentario de san Efren al Diatésaron', Studia papyrologica, v (1966), 7–17, with two plates and a Spanish translation.
Another small fragment of Ephraem's Commentary (MS. Borgia syriaca 82, now in the Vatican Library) was identified and transcribed by Baarda, who also added an instructive discussion of its significance.¹

(c) The Arabic translation of Tatian's Diatessaron is preserved in five more or less complete manuscripts and in three stray folios. These, with the siglum commonly used to designate each, are as follows.

(1) MS. A (Vatican arab. 14), brought from the East to the Vatican Library by Joseph S. Assemani about 1719, is usually dated to the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century, though Kahle assigned it to the thirteenth or fourteenth century. It originally contained 125 folios, but fol. 17 and fol. 118 are missing and fol. 1-7 are not well preserved.

(2) MS. B (Vatican Borg. arab. 259) was given in 1896 by its owner, Halim Dōs Ghālī, a prominent Catholic Copt in Cairo, to the Museum Borgianum de Propaganda Fide in Rome. After an Introduction to the Gospels (fol. 1-85), the Arabic Diatessaron follows on fol. 96–353. The manuscript is usually dated to the fourteenth century, but Kahle,² on the basis of the style of decoration, thought that it could certainly not be older than the sixteenth century.

(3) MS. E (no. 202 of the Library of the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo), consisting of 114 folios, is dated A.D. 1795. The scribe was rather careless, and dozens of instances of sub-standard vocalization occur on almost every page.

(4) MS. O (Oxford, Bodl. arab. c. 163) contains three Christian texts: an Introduction to the Gospels (fol. 5–31), a compendium of Christian truth (fol. 41–139), and the Arabic Diatessaron (fol. 140–288). The manuscript is dated A.D. 1806, and its text agrees more often with E than with A or B.

(5) MS. 1020 of the Library of Paul Sbath (Cairo), written A.D. 1797–8, has not received as much attention as the others.


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(6) What are commonly called the Beirut Fragments of the Arabic Diatessaron are three folios from a manuscript that was finished in July A.D. 1332. They present a form of text which agrees generally with that of codex A.1

The *editio princeps* of the Arabic Diatessaron was published toward the close of the nineteenth century by Agostino Ciasca2 (later Cardinal Ciasca), on the basis of manuscripts A and B. Ciasca’s Latin translation of the Arabic text is not altogether satisfactory, for he frequently adopts the familiar Vulgate wording instead of making a literalistic rendering of the original. Translations into English, accompanied by critical introductions and notes, were published by Hill3 and Hogg,4 and into German, by Preuschen.5

A more recent edition of the Arabic text, prepared by A.-S. Marmardji,6 is based on MS. E, along with variant readings from manuscripts A and B. Unfortunately the edition leaves something to be desired,7 for Marmardji frequently corrects the sub-standard vocalization of MS. E, but it is often impossible to determine from his apparatus whether the printed text is that of the manuscript or is his idea of what the manuscript ought to read. It must also be added that Marmardji’s French translation of the Arabic cannot always be relied upon for strict accuracy.8

The manuscripts of the Arabic Diatessaron present two forms of the text. One form has the genealogies of Jesus near the beginning of the harmony: the genealogy of Matt. i stands in chap. 2 of the Diatessaron, and that of Luke iii in chap. 4 of the Diatessaron. The other form has them at the end, as a kind of appendix. In one form the Evangelists are quoted by the first two

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2 *Tatiani Evangeliorum harmoniae arabice* (Rome, 1888; repr. 1930).
6 *Diatessaron de Tatien. Texte arabe établi, traduit en français, collationné avec les anciennes versions syriaques, suivi d’un évangéliaire diatessarique syriaque ...* (Beirut, 1935).
7 For a sharp criticism, see Baumstark in *OC* xxxiii (1936), 235–48.
8 See D. S. Margoliouth, *JTS* xxxviii (1937), 76–9.
letters of their names; in the other, by single letters. On the basis of these criteria, MS. A and the Beirut Fragments belong to the first form, while B E O, and apparently Sbath’s 1020, belong to the second form.

Many are the problems connected with the origin and relation of the two forms of Arabic Diatessaron. After discussing previous research on the subject, Kahle concluded:

We cannot derive one of these forms from the other and cannot reconstruct an ‘Urtext’ of the Arabic Diatessaron from them. They must be dealt with separately. Ciasca’s attempt to publish a mixed text from both these forms was a mistake. Marmardji’s attempt to create a ‘new’ text on the basis of these two forms by improving the Arabic and adapting it to the text of the Peshitta, which he supposed to be the Syriac original, shows that he had not any real understanding of the actual problems.

From the point of view of the textual critic who wishes to ascertain whether a given reading stood originally in Tatian’s Diatessaron, most scholars have considered the Arabic Diatessaron to be worthless, either because it had been translated from a Syriac Diatessaron which was almost completely assimilated to the Peshitta text, or because the Arabic translation itself had been accommodated to the Peshitta. On the other hand, Baumstark in his review of Marmardji’s edition dissented from this commonly held opinion, finding it contradicted by the presence of not a few disagreements between the Arabic Diatessaron and the Peshitta as well as agreements of the Arabic and syr* against the Peshitta. According to Higgins, the main reason that the Arabic Diatessaron has been thought to be so closely in conformity with the Peshitta as to be of little or no value in ascertaining Tatian’s text is that reliance has usually been placed on Ciasca’s printed text as representing the text of the Arabic Diatessaron. But since MS. A (on which Ciasca relied) in

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2 Ibid., p. 227; 2nd edn., p. 313.
3 OC, 3rd Ser., xi (1936), 241 f.
4 An opinion shared also by Marmardji, who regarded the text of the Arabic Diatessaron as ‘purement et simplement celui de la Pṣṭṭā’ (op. cit., p. xxxix).
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several respects shows itself to be farther removed from Tatian and more closely assimilated to the Peshitta than the other witnesses, the correct methodology is to seek Tatian’s text in B E O.¹ When one or more of these witnesses implies a Syriac text different from the Peshitta, particularly when such readings agree with the Old Syriac and/or with other Diatessaric witnesses, we may with some measure of confidence regard such readings as genuine Tatianic remnants.

(d) A Persian Harmony of the Gospels,² made from a Syriac original, is the latest extensive Tatianic text to be given attention by New Testament scholars. Although the manuscript (Florence, Laurentian Lib. XVII (81)) was described by Assemani³ as long ago as 1742, and again by Italo Pizzi⁴ in 1886, it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that Giuseppe Messina made the text available, with an Italian translation and an extensive introduction.⁵ A colophon gives the information that the manuscript, which contains 128 numbered folios (the first folio is lacking) was copied in the year 1547 by a Jacobite priest, Ibrahim ben Shammas ‘Abdullâh, in the city of Hisn Kaif on the Tigris River, from a parent manuscript dating probably from the thirteenth century. This earlier Persian Diatessaron appears to have been translated (not always quite accurately) from a Syriac

² For a fuller discussion of the Persian Harmony, reference may be made to the present writer’s volume, Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism (Leiden and Grand Rapids, 1963), pp. 103–20, parts of which have been used here.
³ Bibliotheca Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum MSS. orientalium catalogus (Florence, 1742), p. 59.
⁴ Cataloghi dei codici orientali di alcune biblioteche d’Italia, iii (Florence, 1886), p. 301.
⁵ Diatessaron Persiano, i. Introduzione; ii, Testo e traduzione (Biblica et orientalia, N. 14; Rome, 1951). This edition, excellent though it is, does not render obsolete Messina’s earlier volume, Notizia su un Diatessaron Persiano tradotto dal sirico (Rome, 1943). For a fuller discussion of certain stylistic features (e.g. conflate readings) and evidence bearing on the history of the Persian manuscript and its translator, including the complete text and translation of one of the chief colophons, one must refer to the earlier volume. It is a cause for regret also that, although Messina indicates the location and length of sporadic comments interspersed in the Harmony (some of which extend to a column or more in length), yet in the interests of saving space he neither transcribes nor translates any of them. One cannot but wonder whether these comments might reveal or corroborate some characteristic of the Harmonist. To learn even a modicum as to his methods of exegesis would contribute to a fuller understanding of his background and mental processes.
The Syriac Versions

base by a Jacobite layman of Tabriz who calls himself Iwânnîs 'Izz al-Dîn, that is, 'John, Glory of the Religion'. Although Iwânnîs undoubtedly wished the reader to believe that he had himself composed the Harmony de novo, Messina found reasons to believe that in preparing the Persian work he utilized two slightly divergent Harmonies already existing in Syriac.¹

The Persian Harmony is divided into four main divisions, containing respectively 71, 61, 60, and 58 paragraphs. When the sequence of the sections is compared with Tatian's work, represented in codex Fuldensis (see below, pp. 20–1) and the Arabic Diatessaron, only relatively few sections are found to be in the same order, and these can be explained on the basis of independent coincidence.

An early date for the composition of the underlying Syriac Vorlage was argued by Messina on the grounds of (a) the presence of numerous agreements with the Old Syriac and divergences from the Peshitta; and (b) the inclusion of a certain amount of non-canonical matter proving that the Harmony was composed when the New Testament canon was still fluid. But such reasons are quite inconclusive, for there is growing evidence that the Peshitta version did not immediately supplant all Old Syriac readings, and there is ample evidence that even in the Middle Ages authors of a somewhat similar type of literature, namely devotional lives of Christ, did not feel themselves at all inhibited by a universally recognized canon of the New Testament from introducing into their works more than one incident not reported in the New Testament.²

Another type of argument supporting a very early date for the Vorlage of the Persian Diatessaron has been advanced on the basis of iconography. According to a preliminary study by Nordenfalk, the miniatures contained at the end of the Persian codex suggest a second-century archetype.³ The supporting evidence, however, was subjected to detailed scrutiny by other art historians,⁴ and subsequently Nordenfalk modified his views

¹ Diatessaron Persiano, pp. xxi f.
² For further discussion of the points made in the text, see Metzger, Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism, pp. 107 ff.
concerning the high antiquity of the original of the Persian Diatessaron.¹

By way of conclusion one can say that the Persian Harmony, though its structure and several other features bear no discernible connection with Tatian's Diatessaron, is still of great interest to the textual critic of the New Testament in view of the presence of many readings that are of undoubted Tatianic ancestry.² It deserves further investigation, particularly in relation to the Oxford manuscript (Bodl. Poc. 241) which provided the text for the Persian version in Walton's Polyglot Bible, and which presents a good number of affinities with the text of the Persian Diatessaron.³

(e) Other witnesses to the Eastern tradition of Tatian have been found in a wide variety of sources, among which are the following:

(I) Quotations from the Gospels found in the writings of such Syriac and Armenian writers as Aphraates, the Liber Graduum, Ephraem (in writings other than his commentary on the Diatessaron), Rabbula, Agathangelos, Eznik, Marutha Maipherkatensis, as well as in the Armenian Breviary and Ritual, and the Acts of the Persian Martyrs;⁴

¹ Nordenfalk has acknowledged the force of some of Schapiro's arguments, but still thinks it probable that 'in one way or another a copy of an illustrated Diatessaron reached Iona about the time the Book of Durrow was made [i.e. about A.D. 675]' ('The Diatessaron Miniatures Once More', ibid., pp. 532-46, esp. p. 544.)

² For the theory that the mural decorations in the Christian chapel at Dura-Europos were taken from an illustrated copy of Tatian's Diatessaron, see Clark Hopkins, JNES vii (1948), 97.

³ For a list of about 100 such readings, found in the first of the four sections of the Persian Harmony, see Metzger, Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism, pp. 109-17.


The Syriac Versions

(2) The Old Armenian and the Old Georgian versions of the Gospels (see pp. 166–7 and 191–3 below);

(3) A number of Arabic manuscripts of the Gospels and of liturgical texts in karshunic;¹

(4) Citations in Manichaean texts;²

(5) The text of Matt. xix in the Jacobite marriage ritual, preserved in the Old Osmanic language;³

(6) Fragments of a lectionary in Sogdian (see pp. 280–1 below).

It has sometimes been thought that the Harclean Passion-tide Harmony,⁴ extant in more than two dozen manuscripts, preserves traces of Tatian’s Diatessaron, but the most recent research on the subject suggests that the two are entirely independent (see pp. 74–5 below).

Western Witnesses

(1) The principal Latin evidence for the sequence of Tatian’s Diatessaron is codex Fuldensis,⁵ now in the Landesbibliothek at Fulda. This manuscript, a leading witness to the Vulgate (see p. 335 below), was written between 541 and 546 at Capua by the order of Victor, the bishop of that see. Later the manuscript was acquired by St. Boniface, who presented it in 745 to the

¹ For a list, see Curt Peters, *Das Diatessaron Tatians* (Rome, 1939), pp. 48–62.
⁵ The standard edition is still that of Ernst Ranke, *Codex Fuldensis. Novum Testamentum Latine interprete Hieronymo ex manucripto Victoris Capuani* (Marburg and Leipzig, 1868). Cf. also Carl Scherer, *Die Codices Bonifatiani in der Landesbibliothek zu Fulda* (Fuldaer Geschichte-Verein, Vereinsgabe für das Jahr 1905, ii; Fulda, 1905), pp. 6–12.
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recently founded Benedictine Abbey of Fulda in Germany. The manuscript contains the entire New Testament, but in place of the separate Gospels it has a continuous narrative, arranged according to the plan of Tatian's Diatessaron, a copy of which, in Old Latin translation, had fallen into the bishop's hands. About 600 Old Latin readings remain in the text, which is predominantly that of Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

Two other Latin harmonies, which like Fuldensis contain pre-Vulgate readings, are the Munich MSS. 23,977 and 10,025 (34–123). According to Vogels,¹ who called attention to the two manuscripts, the Latin Diatessaron was the earliest form in which the Gospel narrative circulated in the West. Apart from such a supposition, however, the validity of which has been contested by others, it remains true that a Latin harmony lies behind a wide variety of medieval harmonies in western-European vernaculars, including harmonies in Old High German, Middle Dutch (Flemish), Old Italian, Old French, and Middle English. Likewise a few Tatianic readings have been detected in the Arabic translation made by Isaac Velasquez of Cordova (see p. 260 below), and in the Anglo-Saxon version (see p. 454 below).

(g) A large number of medieval German harmonies in various dialects have come to light, the oldest of which is an Old High German (East Frankish) bilingual manuscript dating from the second half of the ninth century,² the Latin text of which depends upon Bishop Victor's work in codex Fuldensis. The principal witnesses to the diatessaric tradition in German fall into three groups. One group, to which belong the Munich MS. Mon Cg 532 (A.D. 1367)³ and the Zürich MS. C. 170 App. 56 (end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century),⁴ is closely

¹ H. J. Vogels, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Diatessaron im Abendland (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, viii, 1; Münster i. W., 1919).
² Edited by Eduard Sievers, Tatian. Lateinisch und altdeutsch, mit ausführlichen Glossar, 2te Aufl. (Bibliothek der ältesten deutschen Literatur-Denkmäler, v; Paderborn, 1874; 2nd edn., 1892).
³ The manuscript was studied by Erich Ronneburger, Untersuchungen über die deutsche Evangelienharmonie der Münchener Handschrift Cg 532 aus d. J. 1367 (Diss., Greifswald, 1903).
⁴ Edited, with a collation of five other fourteenth- or fifteenth-century copies, as well as several fragments, by Christoph Gerhardt, Diatessaron Theodiscum (Corpus sacrae scripturae neerlandicae medii aevi, Series Minor, tom. 1 : Harmoniae Evangeliorum, vol. iv (Leiden, 1970); see also Gerhardt's dissertation, Das Leben Jhesu. Eine mittelhochdeutsche Evangelienharmonie. Untersuchung (Munich, 1969).
related to the Old Dutch tradition. Another group is made up of the so-called Schönbacher fragments from a fourteenth-century manuscript at Graz\textsuperscript{1} derived from a Latin model more strongly influenced by the Vulgate than the harmonies in the first group, and which alone have preserved a textual tradition older than all other German and Dutch witnesses.\textsuperscript{2} Finally, certain fragments from the bindings of books in the library of the Himmelgarten Monastery near Nordhausen represent, according to Baumstark,\textsuperscript{3} a tradition independent of the two preceding groups.

Besides varying degrees of influence from Tatian's Diatessaron on medieval German harmonies, Tatianic readings have turned up also in individual Gospel manuscripts and in a variety of medieval accounts of the Life and Passion of Christ.\textsuperscript{4} Connections have also been found between Tatian's Diatessaron and the Heliand (see pp. 459–60 below).

(h) Middle Dutch (Flemish) harmonies are among the more important Western witnesses to Tatian's Diatessaron.\textsuperscript{5} Among nine such manuscripts,\textsuperscript{6} dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, the following are available in printed form.

\textsuperscript{1} Edited by Anton E. Schönbach, Miscellen aus Grazer Handschriften. 10. Bruchstücke einer altdutschen Evangelienharmonie (Mittheilungen des historischen Vereins für Steiermark, 1; Graz, 1903), pp. 7–103.


\textsuperscript{4} For a list of such witnesses, see C. Peters, Das Diatessaron Tatians, pp. 187–8, to which may be added Der Saelden Hort. Alemannisches Gedicht vom Leben Jesu, Johannes des Täufers und der Magdalena . . . , ed. by Heinrich Adrian (Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters, xxvi; Berlin, 1927); W. Henss, 'Tatians Diatessaron im Saelden Hort. mit Beiträgen zur abendländischen Diatessaron-Tradition überhaupt' (Diss. Marburg, 1953); and R. van den Broek, 'A Latin Diatessaron in the “Vita Beate Virginis Maric et Salvatoris Rhytmica”, NTS xxi (1974–5), 109–32.


\textsuperscript{6} For a list of the nine manuscripts, see Peters, ibid., pp. 140–2, and for a stemma showing the relationship of several Dutch Harmonies, see Th. Frings in Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie, xlvi (1926), cols. 150–5. (The Utrecht Harmony is lost, but, according to Baarda, 'elements of its text are found in the files of Baumstark present in Beurou' (letter dated 6 Jan. 1976).)
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(1) The oldest and most markedly Tatianic of the Dutch harmonies is the Liège Diatessaron,\(^1\) written about 1280 in the West Limburg dialect and close to, if not the same as, the version made by Willem van Afflighem, who from 1277 was prior of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Truiden (or Tryen) on the border between Belgian Brabant and Limburg.\(^2\) Now in the Liège University Library (no. 437), it is a transcript of a copy that shared the same scribal error of *porter* for *potter* that occurs in van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel* of 1271. 'Accordingly,' as Plooij remarks, 'it belongs to the great revival of Harmony-transcription and Harmony-comment of the XI\(^{th}\) and XIII\(^{th}\) centuries.'\(^3\)

(2) The Stuttgart Diatessaron is a Flemish Gospel harmony written in A.D. 1332 by Franse Scavijn, and based on a vulgatized version of the first Dutch Bible translation.\(^4\) The latter was made probably in the abbey of Afflighem.

(3) The Haaren Diatessaron,\(^5\) a small parchment codex preserved in the Library of the Great Seminary at Haaren in the

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\(^2\) For an analysis of the linguistic affinities of the dialect in which the Liège Harmony is written, with a translation into modern Dutch, see Geertruida Catharina van Kersbergen, *Het Luiksche Diatessaron in het Nieuw-Nederlandsch vertaald, met een inleiding over de herkomst van den Middelnederlandschen tekst* (Diss., Nijmegen, 1936).


\(^4\) Edited by Bergsma (op. cit.) on facing pages with the Liège text.

province of North Brabant, was written about A.D. 1400 somewhere in Dutch Limburg in the local dialect. Its text, according to its editor, is almost identical with that of the Stuttgart Diatessaron.

(4) The Cambridge Diatessaron\(^1\) is contained in a manuscript in the Library of Cambridge University (MS. Dd. 12.25), written by two scribes who lived in the first part of the fourteenth century. The dialect of one of the copyists was a mixture of Middle Dutch and the Lower Rhinish dialect; that of the other, Middle Dutch. Written, as it appears, at a monastery between Brabant and the Rhineland, the text is of interest as a specimen of the transition between the original text-type and a subsequent German redaction.\(^2\)

(5) The Gravenhage Harmony (MS. Maastricht 421 in the Royal Library at The Hague) was written in the year 1473. Its readings are cited by Bergsma.\(^3\)

(i) Two Old Italian harmonies of the Gospels survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, one in the Tuscan dialect preserved in twenty-four manuscripts, the other in the Venetian dialect preserved in one manuscript.\(^4\) Although Vaccari\(^5\) thought that the Tuscan text goes back to codex Fuldensis, Peters\(^6\) argued that the most that can be said is that the Tuscan Harmony belongs to the orbit of that branch of the Western transmission of the Diatessaron to which Fuldensis also belongs. The Venetian Harmony, according to both Vaccari\(^7\) and

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\(^1\) Edited by C. C. de Bruin, *Diatessaron Cantabrigiense* (*Corpus sacrae scripturae neerlandicae mediæ ævi*, Series Minor, 1: *Harmoniae Evangeliorum*, iii (Leiden, 1970)).

\(^2\) For a discussion of selected readings from this manuscript, see J. A. Robinson, *The Academy*, xlv (14 Mar. 1894), 249 ff., and Anton Baumstark, 'Der Cambridger Text des mittelniederländischen Leven van Jezus', *OC*, 3rd ser., xiii (1938), 108–22. (Robinson was the first to draw attention to Diatessaric readings in Dutch harmonies.)

\(^3\) Bergsma, op. cit. (see p. 23 n. 1 above).

\(^4\) The two harmonies have been edited by Venanzio Todesco, Alberto Vaccari, and Marco Vattasso, *Il Diatessaron in volgare italiano, testi inediti dei secoli XIII–XIV* (*Studi e testi*, lxxxi; Vatican City, 1938). The editors provide indexes to passages from the Gospels included in the two harmonies.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. iii; cf. also Vaccari, 'Propaganda del Diatessaron in Occidente', *Bib*, xxi (1931), 336–54.


\(^7\) Vaccari in the Preface to *Il Diatessaron in volgare italiano*, p. iii.
Peters,\(^1\) contains more remnants of an older form of text than does the Tuscan Harmony, and Peters found that it occasionally agrees even with Aphraates in singular readings.\(^2\)

\((j)\) A Middle English Harmony\(^3\) is preserved in a manuscript (which once belonged to Samuel Pepys) in the Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge (MS. Pepys 2498, dating from about A.D. 1400). As is shown by the presence of French words and phraseology,\(^4\) the text was translated from a French harmony, which in turn rested upon a Latin model.\(^5\)

\((k)\) The harmonized Gospel text on which Zacharias Chrysopolitanus (Zachary of Besançon, a Premonstratensian) wrote a commentary\(^6\) during the first half of the twelfth century is the earliest Gospel harmony of the Middle Ages that has come down to us.

### 2. DIATESSARIC PROBLEMS AND RESEARCH

The investigation of Tatian’s Diatessaron has led scholars into many byways of research. Although the Mechitarists’ edition of the Armenian text of Ephraem’s commentary on the Diatessaron

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 187.


\(^4\) Examples are cited by Miss Goates, ibid., pp. xv ff.


was published in 1836, it was not until nearly half a century later (1876) that Aucher’s Latin rendering made it available to a wider public. Even then, in some unaccountable way, several years elapsed before scholars became aware of its importance. Since then, however, unrelenting efforts have been expended in order to reconstruct the original Diatessaron.

A Gospel harmony has two independent characteristics; it has a text, and it has also a sequence. The Diatessaric witnesses enumerated above offer evidence bearing generally on either the text or the sequence of the original Diatessaron. Some of them, such as codex Fuldensis and the Arabic Diatessaron, represent more or less closely the framework of Tatian’s Diatessaron, but possess essentially a non-Tatianic form of text. In the case of codex Fuldensis, Victor accommodated almost perfectly the Old

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1 Curiously enough, during those very years it was debated whether Tatian had in fact composed a Diatessaron at all. In an erudite but wrong-headed anonymous work entitled *Supernatural Religion: an Inquiry into the Reality of Divine Revelation* (London, 1874; revised edn. 1879), the author (said to have been Walter Richard Cassels) soberly set forth arguments for disbelieving Eusebius, Theodoret, and other Fathers when they speak of Tatian’s Diatessaron. Even J. B. Lightfoot, in his elaborate reply to Cassels in *The Contemporary Review* (1877), could point to no irrefutable proof of the existence of the Diatessaron—though ironically enough he had in his own library a copy of the Mechitarists’ edition of Ephraem’s Commentary on the Diatessaron! Twelve years later in a note appended to his *Essays on the Work* entitled *Supernatural Religion reprinted from the Contemporary Review* (London, 1889), Lightfoot confesses: ‘I had for some years possessed a copy of this work in four volumes, and the thought had more than once crossed my mind that possibly it might throw light on Ephraem’s mode of dealing with the Gospels, as I knew that it contained notes on St. Paul’s Epistles or some portions of them. I did not, however, then possess sufficient knowledge of Armenian to sift its contents, but I hoped to investigate the matter when I had mastered enough of the language’ (pp. 287 f.).

2 Apparently the first public notice taken of Aucher’s Latin translation was by Ezra Abbot in his book, *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel; External Evidence* (Boston, 1880), p. 55. In the following year Theodor Zahn published his reconstruction of Tatian’s Diatessaron from Ephraem’s Commentary (*Tatians Diatessaron*, being vol. i of his *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Erlangen, 1881)).

3 Among peripheral studies J. Rendel Harris’s investigation of ‘The Gospel Harmony of Clement of Llanthony’ (*JBL* xliii (1924), 349–62) is valuable chiefly in showing how Tatian must have gone about the task of constructing his Harmony.

4 For a convenient chart showing the sequence of sections in the Arabic and Latin harmonies, as well as of the Liège, the Venetian, and the Persian harmonies, see Louis Leloir, ‘Le Diatessaron de Tatien’, *OS* i (1956), 10–21. For the view that only the Dura fragment and Ephraem’s Commentary represent with certainty Tatian’s work, see O. C. Edwards, Jr., ‘Diatessaron or Diatessara?’ *Biblical Research*, xviii (1973), 44–56.
Latin form of text of the original to the current Vulgate. As regards the Arabic Diatessaron, the Syriac base on which it rests is largely the Peshitta, which has in most places supplanted the Old Syriac text of Tatian’s harmony. The chief evidence, therefore, which these two witnesses provide is not textual but structural; the frequent agreements of the sequence of sections may be presumed to reflect accurately the framework of the original Diatessaron.

On the other hand, other witnesses, which have been constructed according to sequences having no connection with the framework of Tatian’s work, may preserve Tatianic readings transmitted to these witnesses via the Old Syriac or Old Latin forms of text. This kind of Tatianic testimony is on a par with the type of text represented in Gospel quotations in, for example, Aphraates, the Syriac Liber Graduum, the Armenian and Georgian versions, and certain Manichaean literature—all of which appear to embody in varying degrees Diatessaric readings. In this connection it should be mentioned that the method of approving as genuinely Tatianic only those readings in the Arabic Diatessaron that differ from the Peshitta has been unwarrantably rigorous, for even when the Arabic Diatessaron agrees with the Peshitta, if the Old Syriac also agrees, such readings are proved to be more ancient than the Peshitta and may therefore be Tatianic. Such a possibility becomes a probability with overwhelming compulsion when Ephraem and other witnesses unrelated to the Peshitta add their support.¹

One of the first problems that confronts the investigator of Tatian’s Diatessaron has to do with its opening sentence. Tatian, on the explicit testimony of Dionysius bar Śalibî,² began his harmony with John i. 1. Although bar Śalibî’s statement is confirmed by evidence from Ephraem’s commentary, it is contradicted by the Arabic text (which begins with Mark, as does the Persian Harmony) and by codex Fuldensis (which begins with Luke i. 1 ff.). The force of the discrepancy, however, is mitigated when the introductory notices in the Arabic manuscripts are considered. A careful study of these suggests that the original text

¹ Cf. the sane and balanced statement of the correct methodology in Tatianic Forschung, which is drawn up with lapidary succinctness, in August Merk, Novum Testamentum graece et latine, ed. nona (Rome, 1964), pp. 17*-18*.

² Joseph S. Assemani, Bibliotheca orientalis, ii (Rome, 1721), 159-60.
of the Arabic Diatessaron did, in fact, begin with John i. i. Similarly, it is almost certain that the first four verses of Luke were not in the text of the harmony which Victor copied, for they are not mentioned in the table of contents, which begins with John. It therefore appears that the present sequence of material in both the Arabic Diatessaron and codex Fuldensis has been modified in the course of its transmission.

During the past decades more than one scholar has given renewed attention to problems concerning the over-all arrangement of Tatian’s Diatessaron. Taking Ephraem’s commentary on the Diatessaron as a basis, Leloir compared the sequence of material in the Arabic, Latin, Dutch, Italian (Venetian), and Persian harmonies. He also collected a considerable number of Tatianisms preserved in the works of Ephraem and supported by either the Armenian or the Georgian version.

In a study of the sequence and character of the Diatessaron, Ortiz de Urbina pointed out that, when one tabulates according to each Gospel the material quoted by Ephraem, the verses cited appear in disorder so far as the sequence of each Gospel is concerned. When, however, one considers the sequence of material within the Diatessaron, it is obvious that Tatian grouped passages from the four Gospels that pertain to the same context, whether of episode, parable, dialogue, or preaching of Jesus. The purpose of the Diatessaron, according to the same scholar, was to supply a convenient text for liturgical usage as well as catechetical instruction of the faithful.

One of the minor puzzles connected with the study of the Diatessaron is the question why Victor of Capua referred to Tatian’s Diatessaron as diapente. Some have thought that the expression was chosen in order to indicate obliquely that, in addition to the canonical Gospels, Tatian utilized a fifth source. Frequently this fifth source has been supposed to have been the

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1 Louis Leloir, ‘Le Diatessaron de Tatien’, OS i (1956), 208–31 and 313–34. See also Leloir’s L’Évangile d’Éphrem d’après les œuvres éditées. Recueil des textes (CSO clxxx, Subsidia, xii; Louvain, 1958), and idem, Témoignage d’Éphrem sur le Diatessaron (op. cit. ccxxvii, Subsidia, xix; Louvain, 1962).


3 In the Preface Bishop Victor states, ‘Tatianus, vir eruditissimus et orator illius temporis clari, unum ex quattuor compaginaverat evangelium, cui titulum diapente compositus’ (ed. E. Ranke).
Gospel according to the Hebrews (so, e.g., Grotius, Mill, and, more recently, Baumstark, Peters, and Quispel); occasionally it has been identified with the Protevangelium of James (Messina). Others have suggested that *diapente* is nothing more than a *lapsus calami* and therefore not to be taken seriously (Zahn).

Another suggestion, first proposed by Isaac Casaubon, that *diapente* should be understood as a musical term, was explored at length in a monograph by Bolgiani. On the basis of information derived from Martianus Capella, Fulgentius, Macrobius, and other ancient authors, Bolgiani shows that δὶὰ τεσσάρων and δὶὰ πέντε are technical terms used in ancient musicology, one referring to three intervals of four notes, the other to four intervals of five notes. He therefore interprets Victor’s comment to mean that Tatian’s ‘harmony’ of the four Evangelists involves not merely four individual notes but four fundamental elements of symphonic harmony, the *diapente*. Thus both terms, *diatessaron* and Victor’s metaphorical use of *diapente*, are appropriate descriptions of Tatian’s Harmony of the Gospels.

Quite apart from the significance of Victor’s use of *diapente* in referring to the Diatessaron, it is natural that, soon after the publication in 1956 of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas, an investigation should be made of the question whether the newly discovered text has any appreciable connection with Tatian’s work. According to Quispel the Gospel of Thomas discloses influence from a Jewish–Christian source similar to the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which he considers to be a fifth source used by Tatian, portions of which are also embedded in the *Heliand*.

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1 Franco Bolgiani, *Vittore di Capua e il 'Diatessaron'* (Memorie dell’Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, ser. 4a, no. 2; Turin, 1962).

2 Gillis Quispel, ‘Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas’, *New Testament Studies*, v (1958–9), 276–90; idem, ‘L’Évangile selon Thomas et le Diatessaron’, *VC* xiii (1959), 87–117. Quispel’s investigations on the Heliand were severely attacked by the Germanist Willi Krogmann (‘Heliand, Tatian und Thomasevangelium’, *ZNW* li (1960), 255–68), who tested passages adduced by Quispel from the *Heliand* and concluded that they are totally insufficient to support Quispel’s thesis. In turn Quispel published a lengthy rebuttal of Krogmann’s strictures, maintaining that though a Germanist may judge differently about the significance of this or that alleged parallel, yet the resemblances, he urged, are so numerous that they cannot be merely accidental (‘Der Heliand und das Thomasevangelium’, *VC* xvi (1962), 121–53). For the most recent stage in the debate, see Quispel, *Tatian and the Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden, 1975), which deals chiefly with the history of the diatessaron in the West.
The relationship of the text of the Gospel of Thomas to Tatianic witnesses was investigated independently by another Dutch scholar, Tjitze Baarda.¹ Setting forth in tabular form data of about 130 variant readings, Baarda showed that it is the Arabic Diatessaron that supplies the greatest number of agreements with Thomas (about sixty agreements) and that the Liège Diatessaron and the Persian Harmony have each about fifty agreements. The Venetian and Tuscan Harmonies agree about thirty times. Ephraem’s commentary on the Diatessaron accounts for about twenty agreements.

The significance of such data has been disputed. Although Quispel has continued to maintain that ‘the author of the Gospel of Thomas and the author of the Diatessaron used the same Jewish–Christian source’,² other scholars³ have been unable to see any influence on the logia in Thomas from an extra-canonical written source (as against oral sources). Furthermore, it is also possible that, when an agreement between Thomas and a Tatianic witness is not merely fortuitous, the agreement may have arisen from the dependence of both on a ‘wild’ text of the individual Gospels.⁴

Another much-debated question concerns the language in which the Diatessaron was first composed—a question that is closely connected with another equally debated problem, the place at which it was first published. Was it drawn up originally in Greek, and later translated into Syriac (so Harnack,⁵ von Soden,⁶ Preuschen,⁷ Jülicher,⁸ Lagrange,⁹ Lake,¹⁰ Kraeling¹¹)?

⁴ In view of the complexity of the kinds of Tatianic evidence, it would be desirable to create and maintain at one central repository a Tatianic file into which evidence could be added as new documents come to light. Baumstark’s file of slips bearing Tatianic evidence, arranged according to Scripture passage, is on deposit in the library of the Vetus Latina Institute at Beuron. Unfortunately most of the slips, written with pencil, are blurred and most difficult to read.
⁵ Adolf Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius; ii, Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur-Geschichte, i (Leipzig, 1897; repr. 1958), p. 289.
⁶ Hermann von Soden, Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt, i, Untersuchungen, iii (Berlin, 1910), 1536–9.
Or did Tatian compile it in his native tongue (so Zahn, Hjelt, Plooij, Baumstark, Peters, Kahle, Vööbus) and, if so, did he work with the separate Old Syriac Gospels before him, or was it an original Syriac composition, made directly from the Greek texts, and designed to present in the easiest and most practical way the substance of the Greek Gospels to a Syriac-speaking Church? Or, as Burkitt thought, was a Latin harmony put together by an unknown compiler at Rome as an epitome of the Gospels, a copy of which, in Greek, having come into Tatian’s hands, he rearranged and improved, subsequently taking it with him to the East, where he translated it into Syriac?

In support of a Greek origin is (a) its Greek title, by which it was known even in Syriac; (b) the silence of Eusebius, who,

7 Erwin Preuschen, Untersuchungen zum Diatessaron Tatians (ShHeid 1918, Abh. 15), pp. 44–56; idem, Tatian’s Diatessaron aus dem Arabischen übersetzt, ed. by August Pott (Heidelberg, 1926), p. 26.
10 K. Lake, ‘I believe that Tatian wrote Greek by preference, made the Diatessaron in that language, that we do not know who translated it into Syriac, and that the Arabic—tested by Ephrem’s quotations—is so corrupt that it has very little value for reconstructing the original text of the Diatessaron’, JBL lx (1941), 331.
11 Kraeling, op. cit., p. 18.

1 Theodor Zahn, Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, i (Erlangen, 1888), 414 f.
2 A. Hjelt, Die altsyrische Evangelienübersetzung und Tatians Diatessaron (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 22 f.
4 Baumstark, who thought earlier that Tatian composed the Diatessaron in Greek (see his Geschichte der syrischen Literatur (Bonn, 1922), pp. 19 f.), came to hold that it was composed in Syriac at Rome for a Syriac-speaking congregation (‘Die Evangelienzitate Novatians und das Diatessaron’, OC, 3rd ser., v (1930), 1–14, esp. 13). According to Roman tradition, even the bishop of Rome, Anicetus (c. 154–65), who was bishop while Tatian was there, was a Syrian from Emesa (Liber pontificalis, ed. by L. Duchesne, i (Paris, 1886), 134).
8 JTS xxvi (1935), 255–8, and the Cambridge Ancient History, xii (1939), 493–95.
9 See R. Payne Smith (Thesaurus Syriacus, i (1879), cols. 869 f.) s.v. The force of this argument, however, is lessened not only by the use of the same word to describe the harmonies prepared by Ammonius and by Elias Salumensis, but also by the presence in Syriac of not a few Greek words taken over by transliteration.
though mentioning the Diatessaron, says nothing of its composition in Syriac; and (c) the circumstance of the very considerable influence that it exerted on the text of the Gospels in the West. In support of its origin in Syriac is (a) the silence of many Church Fathers (e.g. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome) who refer to Tatian or to his *Oration to the Greeks*, but who never mention his Diatessaron; (b) the widespread dissemination of the Diatessaron in Syria;¹ and (c) the presence in the West, as well as in the East, of versions of the Diatessaron that show themselves, directly or indirectly, to rest upon a Syriac *Vorlage*.

Contrary to what might be expected, even the discovery at Dura of a fragment of the Diatessaron in Greek does not settle the matter, for diametrically opposite analyses have been made of its significance. Burkitt,² on the one hand, pointed to differences between its text of Luke xxiii. 51 and the Old Syriac Gospels (the latter read ‘the kingdom of Heaven’ whereas the Dura fragment reads β[αυλείαν] τοῦ θ, in agreement with the accepted Greek text; the Old Syriac authorities paraphrase vs. 51a, whereas the Dura fragment does not). Baumstark,³ on the other hand, identified several presumed Syriacisms in the diction, as well as accounted for the unusual spelling of Arimathea, Ἐρυμαθαία, in terms of a Syriac origin (the ν can have arisen if ιάριμας had been misread by the translator as ιάριμας, Syriac i and n being very similar; likewise the initial e of the word can be easily explained when one supposes a Syriac original).

Another area of Tatianic research to which not a little attention has been given has to do with analysing characteristic features of the Diatessaron in the light of its compiler’s theology.

¹ In the fourth century, for example, Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, because of Tatian’s reputation as a heretic, ordered that some 200 copies of the Diatessaron be destroyed, and that copies of the separate Gospels be put in their place (*Treatise on Heresies*, i. 20). It is significant also that Eusebius’ statement: ὁ Τατιανὸς συνά-φειάν τινα καὶ συναγωγὴν ὁμοὶ οἴ&omicron;ς ὑπὸ τῶν εὐαγγελιῶν ἱστορεῖ, Τὸ δὲ πεσόμενον τούτο προσωνόμασεν, δὲ και παρὰ τοῖς εἰς ἐκ νῦν φέρεται (‘Tatian arranged a kind of joining together and compilation of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title The Diatessaron; and it is still to this day to be found in the hands of some’, *Hist. eccl.* IV. xxix, 6, trans. by Lawlor and Oulton) is modified in the fourth-century Syriac translation of Eusebius’ work by omitting the words ὁμοὶ οἴ&omicron;ς and by reading ‘it is still in widespread use today’ (*The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac*, ed. by W. Wright and N. McLean (Cambridge, 1898), p. 243).

² *JTS* xxxvi (1935), 258 f.

³ *OC*, 3rd ser., x (1935), 244–52.
Was Tatian a heretic from the beginning? What kind of heresy or heresies did he adopt? How far are such tendencies disclosed in his Diatessaron?

Several scholars portray Tatian as primarily a Valentinian Gnostic, although there is much in his *Oration to the Greeks* that runs counter to such an evaluation. Another scholar explains Tatian chiefly in terms of Middle Platonism, but again there is much that does not fit such a philosophical framework. According to yet another, and somewhat more plausible, analysis of Tatian's heretical leanings, he is best explained as an eclectic radical Christian to whom an ascetic-encratite explanation of life appealed from the outset of his career as a Christian. After he left Rome, possibly pausing for a time in Greece or at Alexandria where he may have taught Clement, he returned to Mesopotamia where his tendency to extremes was to lead him outside the Church to become the founder of the Encratites, a sect which rejected marriage as sinful and renounced the use of flesh or wine in any form, even to the extent of substituting water for wine in the Eucharistic service.

Readings that betray Encratite tendencies, preserved in one or more of the several Diatessaric witnesses, include the following selected examples.


4. So *Strom.* i. 1 is usually interpreted.

(a) Instead of following the generally accepted Greek text of Matt. i. 19, Tatian avoided referring to Joseph as Mary's husband by omitting the definite article and possessive pronoun and by taking ἀνήρ in a general and not a marital sense: 'Joseph, because he was a just man' (so Ephraem's citation of the Diatessaron and the Persian and Venetian Harmonies).

(b) It is probable that Tatian reduced the connubial bliss of Anna the prophetess (Luke ii. 36, ζήσασα μετὰ ἄνδρος ἔτη ἐπτὰ ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας αὐτῆς) from seven years to seven days,1 for so Ephraem refers to the passage in one of his Hymns2 and so the Sinaitic Syriac transmits the passage (indeed, here the statement is even more emphatic by the presence of ἡμέρας, 'seven days only she . . .' ; Curetonian hiat). Though the Persian Harmony does not reduce the conjugal life enjoyed by Anna to such a short time, it fails to render ζήσασα, a word which suggests a normal married life, and transforms the married estate into a celibate life: 'She remained seven years a virgin with her husband' (era rimasta sette anni vergine [زهره] con suo marito). With this one may compare the Stuttgart and Theodiscum Harmonies which, instead of reading ἀπὸ τῆς παρθενίας, have 'in her virginity'.3

(c) In several medieval Harmonies (Liège, Stuttgart, Gravenhage, and Theodiscum) the declaration, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife' (Matt. xix. 5), is transferred from the voice of God to that of Adam. This completely changes the meaning of marriage: only a spiritual union between man and wife was intended by God, while the fleshly union is nothing more than an invention of Adam.4

(d) Instead of 'I am the true vine' (John xv. 1), the Persian Diatessaron (IV. 31) has Jesus declare, 'I am the tree of the fruit

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1 Adelbert Merx argued that 'seven days' is the original text; see his Die vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihrem ältesten bekannten Texte; II. ii, Die Evangelien des Markus und Lukas nach der syrischen im Sinaikloster gefundenen Palimpsesthandschrift (Berlin, 1905), pp. 207–8.
2 Edited by T. J. Lamy, Sancti Ephraemi Syri hymni et sermones, iii (Mechelen, 1889), col. 813, vs. 17.
3 For a discussion of the evidence as far as it was known in 1913, see H. J. Vogels, 'Lk, 2, 36 im Diatessaron', BZ xi (1913), 168–71. Cf. also Messina, Notizia su un Diatessaron Persiano tradotto dal Syriaco (Rome, 1943), pp. 57–9.
4 On the passage see D. Plooij, 'Eine enkratitische Glosse im Diatessaron', ZNW xxii (1923), 1–15. and, more briefly, A Primitive Diatessaron (Leyden, 1923), pp 54 f.
of truth' (من درخت میوه راستی) ; cf. Aphraates (Dem. xiv. 24 (39)) 'He is the vineyard of truth.'

(e) The allegation levelled against Jesus, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard' (Matt. xi. 19), is absent from Ephraem's citations from the Diatessaron, as is also the statement in the account of the marriage at Cana, 'when men have drunk freely' (John ii. 10).

(f) At the crucifixion, instead of Jesus' being offered wine mingled with gall (Matt. xxvii. 34), according to Ephraem's quotation from the Diatessaron Jesus was given a mixture of vinegar and gall.

In addition to readings that seem to have arisen as the result of ascetical bias, Tatian has also been thought to disclose certain anti-Judaic tendencies. The examples that have been adduced to prove such tendencies, however, are often either ambiguous or open to the suspicion of being merely accidental variations.

Less disputed are several instances of the incorporation of apocryphal additions into the Diatessaron. For example, it appears that Tatian supplemented the account of the baptism of Jesus with a reference to the appearance of a great light or fire which rested upon the Jordan. This phenomenon, mentioned by Tatian's teacher, Justin Martyr, and included, according to Epiphanius, in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, is

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4 The variation between light and fire may well have arisen, as Ernst Bammel points out (TU xciii (1966), 57), through confusion in Syriac between ḫaḏ 'light' and ḫaḏ 'fire'. (Was the addition meant to suggest that after the heavens opened the brilliance of the divine glory was reflected from the surface of the Jordan?)
5 Dial. c. Try. lxxviii.
6 Panarion, xxx. 13. 7 (K. Holl, pp. 350 f.), καὶ εὐθὺς περελαμψε τὸν τόπον φῶς μέγα.
referred to by Ephraem in his Commentary\(^1\) and is preserved in the Pepsian Harmony, as it is also in two Old Latin manuscripts at Matt. iii. 15, Vercellensis (MS. a: 'lumen ingens') and Sangermanensis (MS. g\(^1\): 'lumen magnum'). Messina has noticed that in the nativity story the Persian Diatessaron presents several readings that occur in the *Protevangelium Jacobi*.\(^2\) On the whole, however, the amount of extra-canonical material that seems to have been present in Tatian's Diatessaron hardly justifies the opinion of some scholars\(^3\) that Tatian made extensive use of a fifth, apocryphal Gospel when he compiled his Harmony.

### III. THE OLD SYRIAC VERSION

#### 1. WITNESSES TO THE OLD SYRIAC VERSION

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Peshitta held the field as the earliest Syriac version of the New Testament.\(^4\) In 1842, however, the British Museum acquired a large number of Syriac manuscripts from the monastery dedicated to St. Mary Deipara in the Nitrian Desert in Egypt. Among these was a heterogeneous codex put together from parts of several different manuscripts. The oldest section, comprising eighty or more leaves (now Add. MS. 1445\(^1\)), was discovered by William Cureton,\(^5\) then assistant keeper in the department of manuscripts, to contain a hitherto unknown Syriac version of the Gospels, in the sequence Matthew, Mark, John, and Luke. As

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\(^1\) Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant ou Diatessaron, ed. by L. Leloir (Sources chrétiennes, no. 121: Paris, 1966), p. 95.


\(^3\) See pp. 28–9 above.

\(^4\) There were, however, occasional expressions of dissent, for as far back as the time of J. J. Griesbach (1745–1812) and J. L. Hug (1765–1846) it was suspected that the Peshitta was not the original form of the Syriac version; cf. C. H. Turner, 'Historical Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament; V. The Languages of the Early Church: (B) Syriac and the First Syriac Gospels', *JTS* xi (1910), 200.

\(^5\) The text was printed and privately circulated in the volume *Quatuor Evangeliorum Syriac, recensionis antiquissima, atque in Occidente adhuc ignota quod superest: e codice vetustissimo Nitrinsi eruit et vulgavit Guilielmus Cureton* (London, 1848). Ten years later the text, with an English translation as well as lengthy Preface containing Cureton's views concerning the origin of the version, was published in the volume *Remains of a Very Antient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, hitherto unknown in Europe* (London, 1858).
soon as the text of the leaves was made available to scholars, it became obvious that the newly found version was a rival claimant to the priority of the Peshitta version. In fact, Cureton went so far as to suppose that in this version he had discovered the original of St. Matthew’s Gospel!1

Unfortunately the manuscript is very lacunose, and with fewer than half of the original 180 leaves surviving. These contain the text of Matt. i. 1–viii. 22; x. 32–xxiii. 25a; Mark xvi. 17b–20; John i. 1–42a; iii. 5b–vii. 37; xiv. 10b–12a, 15b–19a, 21b–24a, 26b–29a; Luke ii. 48b–iii. 16a; vii. 33b–xv. 21; xvii. 24–xxiv. 44a.

Further information was forthcoming when three additional folios of the same version, and probably of the same manuscript, were discovered to be bound as flyleaves of a Syriac manuscript in the Royal Library of Berlin (Orient Quad. 528). The leaves, which preserve Luke xv. 22–xvi. 12; xvii. 1–23; and John vii. 37–viii. 19, were edited first by Dr. Roediger2 and subsequently by William Wright in a privately printed edition of one hundred copies,3 in a format designed to range with Cureton’s edition. Subsequently F. C. Burkitt produced what is now the standard edition of the Curetonian manuscript, along with the three stray leaves, and supplied a literal English translation as well as a volume of linguistic, historical, and text-critical comments.4

A second copy of the Old Syriac version came to light toward the close of the nineteenth century. While visiting the celebrated monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai two Scottish ladies, Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis and her twin sister Mrs. Margaret Dunlop Gibson,5 discovered a palimpsest manuscript (MS. Sin. Syr. 30), the under-writing of which presents the text of the four Gospels. In its original form the codex contained 166 leaves, of

1 ‘This Syriac text of the Gospel of St. Matthew which I now publish has, to a great extent, retained the identical terms and expressions which the Apostle himself employed’ (p. xciii of the 1858 edn.). The same had been advanced for the Peshitta by Widmanstadt in 1555 (see the preface in his edn., p. 52 n. 2 below).
2 Monatsbericht der königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (July 1872), pp. 557–9.
4 Evangelion da-Mepharreshe; the Curetonian Syriac Gospels, re-edited, together with the readings of the Sinalic palimpsest . . ., 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1904).
which 142 survive, preserving the text of Matt. i. 1–vi. 10a; vii. 3–xii. 4a, 6b–25a, 29–xvi. 15a; xvii. 11b–xx. 24; xxi. 20b–xxv. 15a, 17–20a, 25b–26, 32–xxviii. 7; Mark i. 12b–44a; ii. 21–iv. 17; v. 1–26a; vi. 5b–xvi. 8; Luke i. 36b–v. 28a; vi. 12–xxiv. 52; John i. 25b–47a; ii. 16–iv. 37; v. 6b–25a, 46b–xviii. 31a; xix. 40b–xxi. 25.

In view of the difficulty of deciphering the under-writing, which was erased in the eighth century and the vellum reused for the Syriac text of twelve Lives of Female Saints, it is understandable that here and there opinion differs as to the original reading. ¹ Unfortunately even a photographic facsimile of the manuscript ² fails to resolve all of the disputed readings. ³

On the basis of palaeographical considerations the Curetonian manuscript is thought to have been written about the middle of the fifth century (Cureton) or during the second half of the fifth century (Wright) or the early part of the fifth century (Burkitt). The Gospel text of the Sinaitic manuscript is assigned either to the beginning of the fifth or more probably to the close of the fourth century.

Except for the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts no other copy of the Gospels in the Old Syriac version has been identified with certainty. ⁴

¹ The manuscript was edited first by R. L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, and F. C. Burkitt, The Four Gospels in Syriac transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest (Cambridge, 1894). Two years later Mrs. Lewis published Some Pages of the Four Gospels retranscribed (London, 1896). The standard edition is that of Mrs. Lewis, who visited the monastery of St. Catherine six times in order to study the manuscript, The Old Syriac Gospels, or Evangelion da-Mepharreshe; being the text of the Sinai or Syro-Antiochian Palimpsest, including the latest additions and emendations, with the variants of the Curetonian text . . . (London, 1910).

² Prepared by Arthur Hjelt, Syrus Syriacus (Helsingfors, 1930).

³ See W. D. McHardy, 'Disputed Readings in the Sinaitic Syriac Palimpsest', JTS xlv (1944), 170–4, who points out several problems of representing in a critical apparatus the evidence of the Sinaitic palimpsest where it is read differently by different scholars.

⁴ According to Atiya the 'Codex Arabicus' (Sinai Arab. MS. 514), which he describes as a palimpsest of five layers of writing (though it appears that no one folio presents all five layers), contains in its oldest layer portions of the Syriac text of Matthew, John, and Mark, the latter of which presents a considerable number of significant variants from the Peshitta text and is therefore conjectured to represent a pre-Peshitta form of text (see A. S. Atiya, 'Codex Arabicus', Homage to a Bookman; Essays on Manuscripts, Books and Printing Written for Hans P. Kraus . . ., ed. by Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt (Berlin, 1967), pp. 25–85). Until, however, the Syriac text is made available, nothing certain can be said other than to comment that a non-Peshitta text is not necessarily a pre-Peshitta text.
Although no manuscript of an Old Syriac version of the Acts and Pauline Epistles is known, scholars have suspected from the form of quotations from these books in the writings of early Syriac and Armenian authors that an older form of the Syriac text of the Apostolos preceded that of the Peshitta (for a discussion, see pp. 164–8 below).

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD SYRIAC VERSION

Although the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts are far from containing identical texts,¹ they agree often enough to make it convenient to cite their readings over against the text of the later Syriac versions. This general unanimity of the two manuscripts has been interpreted in two ways. Most scholars have taken it to mean that the two manuscripts preserve two revisions of a common original, and therefore may be treated as representatives of a single version in different stages of development. Other scholars, however, impressed by the analogy of the divergences among the Old Latin witnesses—divergences which emerged because of a multiplicity of independent efforts to translate the Greek text into Latin—prefer to regard the two Syriac witnesses as the work of different translators living at different places and times.² In either case, however, it is instructive to consider characteristic readings shared by both the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts. Among noteworthy agreements the following are typical examples.

Both manuscripts agree with Ν and B in omitting ‘first-born’ in Matt. i. 25, and ‘bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you’ and ‘despitefully use you and’ in v. 44. In x. 42 both read ἀπόληται ὁ μισθὸς αὐτοῦ, with D and the Old Latin. Both omit xii. 47 with Ν* B L (‘And someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, asking to speak to you” ’), as well as xvi. 2 and 3 (‘When it is evening, you say, “It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.” And in the morning “It will be

¹ For a collation of the two manuscripts with one another, the readings of the Peshitta being also added where they differ, for purposes of comparison, see Albert Bonus, Collatio Codicis Lewisiani rescripti evangeliorum sacrorum Syriacorum cum Codice Curetoniano (Oxford, 1896).

stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times') and xvii. 21 ('But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting'), both times in company with \( \text{N} \) and \( \text{B} \). In xix. 16 both manuscripts add ἄγαθέ after διδάσκαλε, thus harmonizing the text with that of Mark. In xx. 22 and 23 both omit with \( \text{N} \text{B} \text{D} \text{L} \) 'and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with'.

In Luke both insert xxii. 17 and 18 in vs. 20, agreeing with no Greek manuscript. With \( \text{P} \text{75} \text{N} \text{B} \) both omit 'in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew' in xxiii. 38, whereas in vs. 48 both add 'saying, Woe to us, what has befallen us! woe to us for our sins', agreeing partly with one Old Latin manuscript (g1) and the Gospel of Peter (vii. 25). Both agree with \( \text{D} \) and the Old Latin in omitting xxiv. 40 ('And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet').

In John i. 34 for 'the Son of God' both witnesses read (with \( \text{N} \text{*} \)) 'the chosen of God'. In iii. 6 both insert after 'is spirit' the words 'because God is a living Spirit' (Curetonian omits 'living'). In vs. 8 both insert the words 'of water and' before 'the spirit', along with \( \text{N} \) and the Old Latin. In company with the best authorities both manuscripts omit the pericope de adultera (vii. 53–viii. 11).

Among readings that are peculiar to either the Sinaitic or the Curetonian manuscript (sometimes because the other is defective at that place), the following deserve to be mentioned.

At Matt. i. 16 the Sinaitic Syriac stands alone among Greek and versional witnesses in reading ܐܘܠܗܐ ܠܫܢܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܐܢܓܘܝܕܐ ܬܲܪܒܘܬܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܫܢܐ ܩܫܝܢܐ (Jacob begot Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ'). It is understandable that this reading should have attracted widespread attention, and indeed should be preferred by some as the original text. Most textual critics, however, explain the origin of the reading either as a paraphrase of the reading preserved in the Curetonian Syriac ('Jacob begot Joseph, him to whom was betrothed Mary the

\(^1\) Von Soden translated the Syriac text into Greek and printed Ἰακώβ δὲ εὐγένεσθαι τὸν Ἰωάννης. Ἰωάννης δὲ, ὁ ἑμφυτευθῆ παρθένος Μαρίας, εὐγένεσθαι Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν, which James Moffatt rendered into English in his modern speech version (1913; revd. 1934).
virgin, she who bore Jesus the Christ’) or as a purely mechanical imitation of the preceding pattern in the genealogy.¹ Matt. xviii. 11 (‘For the Son of Man came to save the lost’) is omitted by the Sinaitic Syriac with Ξ B D Θ and Origen, but retained by the Curetonian. In xxiv. 36 the Sinaitic omits the words ‘neither the Son’ against Ξ* B D Θ (Curetonian is defective here and for the rest of the Gospel). In xxvii. 16 and 17 Sinaitic has ‘Jesus Barabbas’ with Θ, several minuscules, and some manuscripts mentioned by Origen.

In Mark, for which Curetonian is defective except for four verses at the close of chap. xvi, the Sinaitic omits ix. 44 and 46 (‘Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched’) with Ξ B C L W, and the latter half of vs. 49 (‘and every sacrifice will be salted with salt’) with Ξ B L (W); likewise xv. 28 (‘And the scripture was fulfilled which says, “He was reckoned with the transgressors” ’) with Ξ A B C D.

In Luke ii. 14 Sinaitic supports the common reading εὐδοκία, not εὐδοκίας found in Ξ* A B* D W and the Latin versions. In iv. 18 Sinaitic omits ‘to heal the broken-hearted’ with Ξ B D L W. In x. 41 Sinaitic (against Curetonian) omits ‘you are anxious and troubled about many things’ with partial support from Old Latin witnesses. Likewise Sinaitic (against Curetonian) omits xxii. 43 and 44 (the angel in the garden and the bloody sweat) with p75 Ξ* A B W, as well as xxiii. 34 (‘Father, forgive them’, etc.) with p75 B D* W Θ. In xxiv. 51 Sinaitic reads ‘he was lifted up from them’, thus agreeing neither with Ξ* D, which do not expressly mention the Ascension (‘he was parted from them’), nor with the other authorities.

As was mentioned above, in the Gospel of John Curetonian is very defective; in iii. 13 Sinaitic retains ‘which is in heaven’ against p66,75 Ξ B L, and in iv. 9 ‘for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans’, against Ξ* D. In vi. 69 Sinaitic reads ‘you are the Christ, the Son of God’ against p75 Ξ B C D L. In xi. 39 Sinaitic inserts in Martha’s speech the words, ‘Why are they

¹ Since every name in the genealogy up to Joseph is written twice in succession, it may be that the scribe of Syr* (or an ancestor of the manuscript), having followed carefully the stereotyped pattern of verses 2–15, in vs. 16 made the initial mistake of repeating the name ‘Joseph’, and then went on to produce the singular reading (see the discussion by the present writer, ‘The Text of Matthew 1. 16’, in Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature; Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren, ed. by David E. Aune (Leiden, 1972), pp. 16–24).
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taking away the stone?' agreeing with no other authority. In xviii the sequence of the narrative is altered in Sinaitic, vs. 24 being inserted between verses 13 and 14, and verses 16–18 being placed after vs. 23, thus representing Caiaphas, not Annas, as the questioner of Jesus, and bringing together the whole narrative of Peter’s denial.

Among the readings that are distinctive to the Curetonian manuscript in comparison with the Sinaitic manuscript, the following may be mentioned. The Curetonian inserts the names Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah in Matt. i. 8 with some support from D and five Ethiopic manuscripts, but the Sinaitic agrees with the mass of authorities in omitting them. In vi. 13 the Curetonian (against Ν Б D) retains the doxology to the Lord’s Prayer, except the words ‘and the power’ (the Sinaitic is defective here). In Matt. xiii. 33 Curetonian is the only witness (along with Clement of Alexandria) that reads ‘the kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a wise woman took and hid in meal, until it was all leavened’. On the other hand, Curetonian omits ‘three measures of meal’. Curetonian agrees with D in inserting a long additional passage after xx. 28, but Sinaitic is defective here.

As was mentioned earlier, Curetonian is defective in the whole of Mark, except one small fragment preserving xvi. 17–20, which is sufficient to show that it contained the last twelve verses of the Gospel, which Sinaitic, like Ν and Β, omits.

In Luke ix. 55 Curetonian has the words ‘and he said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of”’, with D (partially), the minor uncials, minuscules, and Latin versions, while Sinaitic omits them with p465. 75 Ν Б С L W. In xxiv. 42 Curetonian retains ‘and of a honeycomb’, whereas Sinaitic omits the words with p75 Ν Α Б D L W.

In John i. 35 Curetonian by an error reads ‘Jesus’ for ’Ιωάννης of the Greek, and in vs. 36 inserts ‘Lo, the Messiah!’ before ‘Lo, the Lamb of God!’ In iii. 15 Curetonian omits ‘should not perish but’, with p75 Ν Б W. In iv. 47 instead of ‘and heal his son’ Curetonian reads ‘and see his son’ (confusing, from similarity of sound, καὶ ἰᾶσον ‘see’ with καὶ χαλέ ‘heal’), and in vs. 52 the scribe reads ‘ninth hour’ for ὥραν ἐβδομάνη, confusing διὴ with ἅρα. In vi. 49 instead of ‘manna’ Curetonian reads ‘bread’.

From the preceding examples it is obvious that the Old Syriac manuscripts preserve many noteworthy readings, some of
which are not witnessed elsewhere. In general the type of text represented in the two manuscripts belongs to the so-called Western type, though they also preserve many typically Alexandrian readings. Of the two witnesses Sinaitic differs from Curetonian in presenting, on the whole, a shorter text—which is another way of saying that Curetonian incorporates a greater number of Western additions than does Sinaitic.

Linguistically the text of the Old Syriac Gospels, as Burkitt observed, 'is full of peculiarities of grammar and spelling which are hardly to be met elsewhere in Syriac literature, or are found only in the oldest and best preserved works'. According to Torrey, the two manuscripts differ in that Sinaitic prefers words and idioms that are more typical of Palestinian Aramaic than of classical, Edessene Syriac. Such a feature has been held to suggest an Antiochian origin of the form of text preserved in the Sinaitic manuscript. Whether this was the work of one or of several translators was investigated by Hjelt, who, having made a comparison of parallel passages in the Gospels, concluded that the rendering represented in the Sinai palimpsest is not a unity, but that the individual Gospels were translated by three different persons, the oldest translation being the Gospel of Matthew, and the latest the Gospel of Luke.

Although, as was mentioned earlier, no manuscript of the Old Syriac version of the Acts and Pauline Epistles has survived, more than one scholar has attempted to reconstruct fragments of such a version from citations of the Apostolos preserved in the writings

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1 For a discussion of the peculiarities of the text of the Curetonian manuscript, see Friedrich Baethgen, Evangeliafragmente. Der griechische Text des Cureton'schen Syrers wiederhergestellt (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 32–54, and F. C. Burkitt, Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, ii (Cambridge, 1904), passim. The Sinaitic manuscript is the object of a learned and one-sided investigation by Adelbert Merx, Die vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihrem ältesten bekannten Texte. Ubersetzung und Erläuterung der syrischen im Sinaikloster gefundenen Palimpsesthandschrift, vol. i (Berlin, 1897), vol. ii in 3 parts (1902, 1905, 1911).

2 For a list of important omissions in Syr⁴, see A. S. Lewis, The Old Syriac Gospels (London, 1910), pp. xlvi–lxxviii.


4 Charles C. Torrey, Documents of the Primitive Church, pp. 250–69.


6 Arthur Hjelt, Die altysirische Evangelienerübersetzung und Tatians Diatessaron, besonders in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis (Zahn's Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons, vii. 1; Leipzig, 1903), pp. 96–107, and 162 f.
of early Syrian Church Fathers. In the case of the Acts of the Apostles, the Armenian version of Ephraem's commentary\(^1\) on that book discloses that 'the Syriac text used by Ephraem was distinctly, and doubtless thoroughly, Western'.\(^2\) Zahn,\(^3\) having made a detailed study of Aphraates' quotations from the Pauline Epistles, collected not a few passages that differ from the Peshitta. In still more systematic fashion, Molitor\(^4\) combed the writings of Ephraem for citations from the Pauline Epistles; these show occasional agreements with Marcion and Tertullian, and often agree with G in opposition to a group of witnesses originating with D or supported by D.

The most extensive study of the Old Syriac text of Acts and the Pauline Epistles is that of Kerschensteiner. Although Acts was quoted much less frequently than Paul, sufficient evidence has survived to render it certain that Aphraates, Ephraem, and the author of the Liber Graduum used essentially the same 'Old Syriac' text of Acts.\(^5\) In the case of the Pauline Epistles Kerschensteiner\(^6\) collected and analysed nearly 700 citations and allusions from fifteen early Syriac authors. He found evidence to prove the existence of a unified Old Syriac text of fourteen Pauline Epistles\(^7\) throughout the fourth century, and with no trace of an earlier, different text. The theological complexion of the text discloses no heretical traits, though there are not a few free and targumic-like renderings. Textually the version finds its nearest affinities with a mixed text-type comprising many Western and some Alexandrian readings, similar to that current in Asia Minor during the second century.\(^8\)

The Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse were not accepted as canonical by the early Syriac-speaking Church, and hence they do not form part of the Old Syriac version.

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2 Ropes, op. cit., p. cxxviii.
6 *Der altsyrische Paulustext* (CSCO cccxv, Subsidia, xxxvii; Louvain, 1970).
7 Including 3 Corinthians (see pp. 161 and 163 below) and the Epistle to the Hebrews, but without Philemon.
8 *Der altsyrische Paulustext*, p. 209.
3. PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE OLD SYRIAC VERSION

Despite the deal of research that has been expended upon the Old Syriac version, more than one vexing problem still remains unsolved. (a) What are the mutual relations between the Diatessaron and 'The Gospel of the Separated [Ones]', as the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts were designated?1 (b) What is the relation between the Old Syriac and the Peshitta? (c) How should we explain the rarity of extant manuscripts of the Old Syriac as compared with the numbers of Peshitta manuscripts?

The question of the mutual relations between the Diatessaron and the two extant witnesses to the Old Syriac version continues to be debated. Was Tatian's harmony the first form in which the evangelic narratives were known in Syria, and was the Syriac version of the separated Gospels made later, as is argued by Baethgen,2 Wright,3 Zahn,4 Nestle,5 Burkitt,6 Turner,7 Vogels,8 Baumstark,9 Dobschütz,10 Lagrange,11 Vööbus,12 and Black?13 Or, do the Sinaitic and Curetonian manuscripts

1. At the beginning of the Curetonian manuscript stands the heading: 'Gospel of the Mepharreshe, Matthew'; the Sinaitic closes with a colophon: 'Here ends the Gospel of the Mepharreshe, four books.' The Syriac word mepharreshe ('separate ones [books]' is the passive participle of ἀναφημι, and designates the individual Gospels as opposed to a harmony or diatessaron of the four Gospels (Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, from ἀναφημεῖν, 'to mix or mingle').


8. H. J. Vogels, Die altsyrischen Evangelien in ihrem Verhältnis zur Tatians Diatessaron (Biblische Studien, xvi, 5; Freiburg im Br., 1911), p. 144.


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represent a pre-Tatianic form of the Syriac text, as Stenning, Brockelmann, Hjelt, Lewis, Harris, Mingana, and Torrey have maintained?

On the one hand, it is argued that Tatian's harmony could not have been made from the Old Syriac version, in view of important differences in text and wording. For example, the Diatessaron apparently included the account of the great light on the Jordan at the Baptism of Jesus, as well as Matt. xvi. 2–3 and John v. 3–4, all of which are omitted by both Sinaitic and Curetonian, and the last twelve verses of Mark, Luke xxii. 43-4 and xxiii. 34, which are omitted in Sinaitic, but included by Curetonian.

On the other hand, those who think that the Old Syriac does not depend upon the Diatessaron pose the question: How should we conceive of the translator of the separated Gospels spending his time hunting through the Diatessaron to discover the rendering of this or that pericope, this or that verse? Furthermore, as Mingana phrases it, 'if this translator had considered the Diatessaron as an orthodox lucubration worthy of his attention, why did he omit all the apocryphal and mutilated verses that Tatian had accepted as authentic?'

There is, of course, a third possibility, that Tatian and the Old Syriac represent more or less independent attempts to render the Greek. Burkitt championed this view, arguing that the Diatessaron reflects the type of Greek in use at Rome by the middle of the second century, while the Old Syriac is the work of someone who, while having some knowledge of the Diatessaron, was

1 John F. Stenning (‘Diatessaron’, Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, Extra Volume (New York, 1904), pp. 458–61), argues for the priority of the Old Syriac as represented by the Sinaitic manuscript.
3 Arthur Hjelt, op. cit. (p. 43 n. 6), pp. 162 f.
4 Agnes Smith Lewis, ‘Dr Vogels on the Old Syriac Gospels’, Exp, 8th ser., v (1913), 52–62.
5 J. R. Harris, 'An Important Reading in the Diatessaron', Exp T xxv (1913–14), 347–9.
7 C. C. Torrey, Documents of the Primitive Church, p. 277.
8 Exp T xxvi (1914–15), 235.
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working from a Greek text in use at Antioch about the second half of the second century.¹

Consideration of the relation between the Old Syriac and the Peshitta will be deferred until the following section, but the question of the rarity of extant manuscripts of the Old Syriac as compared with those of the later versions deserves a few comments here. The observation was made by Lake that

the various advocates of successive revisions [of the Syriac Scriptures] had apparently an almost unique aptitude for destroying all traces of rival predecessors. Theodoret, writing in the fifth century, mentions that he himself found over two hundred copies of Tatian in use in his province, and replaced them by the four Gospels. This vigorous line of action easily explains the disappearance of the Diatessaron, and the Old Syriac fared little better after the acceptance of the 'Vulgate', or Peshitta.²

There is also the possibility that instead of being, so to speak, an official Old Syriac version, the Old Syriac manuscripts may be merely the work of private individuals who wanted copies of the separated Gospels. When such activity began, according to Black, 'it is impossible to say, but the evidence we do possess points to the existence of such attempts in the middle of the fourth century'.³ Most other scholars, however, would dispute so late a date, and, on the basis of the implications of evidence from earlier Syriac patristic quotations, argue for a much greater degree of antiquity of the Old Syriac version, holding that it goes back to the generation immediately following Tatian. In any case, few will dispute the judgement passed on the Curetonian manuscript by Hort a dozen years before the Sinai palimpsest was brought to light: 'The character of the fundamental text confirms the great antiquity of the version in its original form; while many readings suggest that, like the Latin version, it

¹ So Burkitt in Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, ii (1903), 207 ff. and 223 ff., summarized at the end of his life in The Cambridge Ancient History, xii (1939), 493 f. and 503. Lagrange, however, takes exception to classifying the Old Syriac as an Antiochian type of text (La Critique textuelle, p. 208).
³ Black, 'The Syriac Versional Tradition', p. 130. Lagrange also saw no reason to date the Old Syriac texts earlier than the fourth century (Critique textuelle, pp. 208 and 212).
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degenerated by transcription and perhaps also by irregular revision.¹

IV. THE PESHITTA SYRIAC VERSION

1. NOTEWORTHY MANUSCRIPTS OF THE PESHITTA NEW TESTAMENT

The word 'Peshitta'² is a passive participle of the verb ḫēh ('stretched out') signifying, among other meanings, what is simple or clear. The word appears to have been employed for the first time in designating a version of the Scriptures by the Jacobite Moses bar Kepha (d. 903),³ who applied it to the Syriac version of the Old Testament made from the Hebrew, in opposition to the version made by Paul of Tella from the Septuagint and supplied with complicated references drawn from Origen's Hexapla. In the case of the New Testament the same version would merit such an epithet in contrast to the Harclean version, which was furnished with a textual apparatus. Others interpret the word as meaning widely diffused or current. According to this interpretation the name 'Peshitta' is parallel to the Latin Vulgata.⁴

The Peshitta version antedates the division of Syrian Christianity into two rival communities, and hence it was accepted by the Nestorians as well as by the Jacobites. In its official form it includes twenty-two books of the New Testament, the four minor Catholic Epistles (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude) and the Apocalypse being absent. It thus apparently reflects the canon according to the usage of the Church at Antioch in the fourth and fifth centuries. It does not include Luke xxii. 17–18 and the pericope de adultera (John vii. 53–viii. 11).

² The spelling 'Peshitto' represents the Jacobite pronunciation of the word. On the morphology of the word, see Eberhard Nestle, 'Zum Namen der syrischen Bibelübersetzung Peschiţa', ZDMG xlvii (1893), 157–9, and Ed. König, ibid., pp. 316–19.
Syrian scribes devoted great care to the transcription of the Peshitta version. A remarkable accord exists among the manuscripts of every age, there being on the average scarcely more than one important variant per chapter.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Gregory was able to enumerate more than 300 Peshitta manuscripts of the New Testament. Actually, however, the number is much larger, for Gregory did not include all the manuscripts that are in the libraries in the East. And since Gregory's time other manuscripts have come to light, particularly in little-known collections in the West. Among manuscripts that have been catalogued the following are noteworthy for one reason or another—usually by reason of age.

(1) What is considered to be probably the oldest copy of a portion of the New Testament in the Peshitta version is a fragment of a manuscript (Paris syr. MS. 296, 1°) containing Luke vi. 49–xxi. 37, written by what appears to be the same hand that

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1 See Caspar René Gregory, Textkritik des Neuen Testamentes, ii (Leipzig, 1902), 508-23; iii (1909), 1300-1 (it should be noted that in vol. ii Gregory provides separate lists of manuscripts for the Gospels, the Acts and Catholic Epistles, and the Pauline Epistles).

2 See, e.g., Julius Assfalg's Syrische Handschriften (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, v; Wiesbaden, 1963); James T. Clemons, 'A Checklist of Syriac Manuscripts in the United States and Canada', OCP xxxii (1966), 224-522; id., An Index of Syriac Manuscripts containing the Epistles and the Apocalypse (Studies and Documents, xxxiii; Salt Lake City, 1968); and id., 'Some Additional Information on Syriac Manuscripts in the United States', Symposium Syriacum 1972 (Orientalia christiana analecta, cxcvii; Rome, 1974), 505-8.

3 On styles of Syriac writing, see W. H. P. Hatch, An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts (Boston, 1946), pp. 24-40; on the dating of Syriac manuscripts, see Ludger Bernhard, Die Chronologie der syrischen Handschriften (Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Suppl. xiv; Wiesbaden, 1971).

4 So Anton Baumstark, Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte (Bonn, 1922), p. 73, Anm. 2. For a description of the manuscript, see J. B. Chabot in JA, ser. 9, viii (1896), 241.

The extravagant claims made by Norman M. Yonan for a seventh- or eighth-century copy of the Peshitta New Testament known as the Yonan Codex, viz. that it dates from about A.D. 350, that it is 'Christendom's most precious possession', and that, being written in the language that Jesus used, it is more authentic than any Greek manuscript of the New Testament, are altogether without foundation; see the present writer's article, 'Is the Yonan Codex Unique?' The Christian Century, lxxii (1956), 234-6, and Edward F. Siegman, 'The Yonan Codex of the New Testament', CBQ xvii (1956), 151-7. A photographic facsimile of the manuscript, which begins at Matt. ix. 35 and ends at Heb. xii. 9, is in the possession of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, California.
wrote British Museum MS. Add. 14425, which is dated A.D. 463/4.

(2) British Museum MS. Add. 14459 (fols. 1–66), written in a beautiful, Edessene Estrangela hand described by Wright (no. 90) as ‘apparently of the vth century’, contains the Gospels according to Matthew (beginning with vi. 20) and Mark. It is bound with no. 8 below.

(3) The copy of the four Gospels known as codex Phillipps 1388, acquired in 1865 by the Royal Library in Berlin, was dated by Sachau2 to the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century. Certain features in its lectionary system have been thought to point to a date toward the close of the fifth century. Its text seems to represent a stage between that of the Old Syriac and the fully developed Peshitta text (see p. 60 below).

(4) British Museum MS. Add. 17117, written in a good, regular Estrangela hand which is dated by Wright (no. 91) to the fifth century or the beginning of the sixth century (except fols. 1, 8, 23, 24, 63, and 64, which are perhaps three centuries later), contains the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark (i. 1–ix. 10).

(5) British Museum MS. Add. 14453, written in a large, regular Estrangela hand which is dated by Wright (no. 66) to the fifth or sixth century, contains the four Gospels (ending with John xx. 25).

(6) British Museum MS. 14470, written in an elegant Edessene hand which is dated by Wright (no. 63) to the fifth or sixth century (except fols. 96, 101, and 154–63, which seem to be of the ninth century), contains the four Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, Acts, James, 1 Peter, and 1 John.

(7) Morgan MS. 783, preserving 100 folios of a codex which is estimated to have had originally 216 folios, contains portions of

three Gospels, beginning with Mark v. 23. According to Casey, 'the script is of the second half of the fifth or first half of the sixth century . . . not unlike that of British Museum Add. 14445, dated A.D. 532'.

(8) The earliest-dated manuscript containing two of the Gospels in Syriac is British Museum MS. Add. 14459 (fols. 67–169), written, according to a partially legible colophon, between A.D. 528–9 and 537–8. It contains in a small, elegant Estrangela hand the Gospels according to Luke and John. It is bound with no. 2 above. For a specimen, see W. H. P. Hatch, An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts (Boston, 1946), plate xiii.

(9) The earliest-dated manuscript of the Peshitta Apostolos is British Museum MS. Add. 14479, written at Edessa in a small, elegant Estrangela hand in the year 533–4; it contains the Pauline Epistles. For a specimen, see Hatch's Album, plate xvi.

(10) The earliest-dated manuscript containing the four Gospels in Syriac is Vatican Cod. Sir. 12, written at Edessa in the year 548. For a specimen, see Hatch's Album, plate xx.

(11) The earliest-dated manuscript of the Syriac Gospels decorated with miniatures is the so-called 'Rabbula Gospels', written in the year 586 by a scribe named Rabbula in the Monophysite Monastery of Mar John, in Beth-Zagba. Today it is in the Laurentian Library of Florence (Plut. I, Cod. 56). For a specimen of the script, see Hatch's Album, plate xxxiv. A facsimile reproduction of all of the miniatures is available in The Rabbula Gospels . . . , ed. by Carlo Cecchelli, Giuseppi Furlani, and Mario Salmi (Olten and Lausanne, 1959).

Besides the manuscripts mentioned above which carry sixth-century dates in scribal colophons, on the basis of palaeographical considerations nearly fifty other Peshitta manuscripts have also been assigned to the sixth century.


2 Of this number special attention may be drawn to Morgan MS. 784, a copy of the four Gospels, beginning at Matt. xix. 19, which is said by Casey (ibid., p. 65) to have a subscription at the close of the Gospel of Matthew identical with that in Phillipps MS. 1388. In view of this circumstance it would be of interest to determine to what extent variant readings characteristic of the Phillipps codex (no. 3 above) may be present also in the Morgan manuscript.
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2. NOTEWORTHY PRINTED EDITIONS OF THE PESHITTA NEW TESTAMENT

The first printed edition of the Syriac New Testament was prepared by the humanist Johann Albrecht Widmanstätter, 1506-59, a senator and the Chancellor of Lower Austria. He had studied Syriac under Simeon, a Maronite bishop, and later collaborated with a Syrian Jacobite named Moses Mardinensis (i.e. from Mardin in Mesopotamia), who had been sent as legate to Pope Julius III. Moses brought with him a manuscript of the Syriac New Testament, which served as the basis of the printed volume. As regards the four Gospels Widmanstätter states that they were edited from two manuscripts. Besides the one belonging to Moses of Mardin, the other may have been a codex belonging to Teseo Ambrogio, whom Widmanstätter met at Reggio, but more probably was the Syriac tetraevangelion which he found in the Ptolemean Library at Sienna, and of which he made a transcript for himself. Nothing further is known of these manuscripts, or of the manner in which Widmanstätter utilized them.

The Syriac type for the edition was prepared from steel...

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1 Toward the close of the nineteenth century Eberhard Nestle was able to list more than thirty editions of the Peshitta New Testament, several of them having been reprinted many times (Syriac Grammar, with Bibliography, Chrestomathy and Glossary, Eng. trans. from 2nd German edn., by R. S. Kennedy (Berlin, 1889)). Cf. also the anonymous article, 'The Printed Editions of the Syriac New Testament', CQR xxvi (1888), 257-9; I. H. Hall's Appendix, listing twenty-four editions of the Peshitta, in James Murdoch's English translation of the Peshitta New Testament, 6th edn. (Boston and London, 1893), pp. 496-98; and Alfred Durand, 'Les éditions imprimées du Nouveau Testament syriaque', RSR xi (1921), 385-409.

2 ... Libri Sacrosancti Evangelii de Iesu Christo Domino et Deo nostro. Reliqua hoc Codice comprehensa pagina proxima indicabit. Div. Ferdinandi rom. imperatoris designati iussu & liberalitate, characteribus & lingua Syra, Iesu Christo vernacula, Divino ipsius ore cæscrata, et à Ioh. Evangelista Hebraica dícta, Scriptorio Prelo déligéter Expressa... [Vienna, 1555]. Some copies are provided with about fifty additional pages (the colophon is dated February 1556), giving a primer of Syriac characters and syllables, as well as a reading-book arranged in four columns at each opening. The selections, which are given (right to left) in Syriac, in Hebrew characters, with transliteration of Syriac, and with Latin translation, include the Sanctus, the Lord's Prayer (with 'Forgive us our debts and our sins', i.e. a text made up from Matthew and Luke), the Athanasian Creed, the Magnificat, and a prayer for the dead. For a description of a copy printed in 1562, see F. C. Burkitt in Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, xi (1906), 265-8.


4 The earliest Syriac type (Estrangela characters) was that used in Wilhelm...
punches which a Swabian artist of Ellwagen, Caspar Crapht (Kraft), had engraved in imitation of the beautiful and distinctive handwriting of Moses of Mardin.\(^1\) A thousand copies of the edition were printed at Venice in 1555 by Michael Cymbermann (Zimmermann) under the auspices and at the expense of Ferdinand I, King of Hungary and Bohemia, who three years later became Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. In the Latin preface Widmanstadt expresses the hope that the edition might help promote the union of Christendom.

It is of interest that a reference to Widmanstadt's edition is included in the 1611 English Bible. In the preface, known as 'The Translators to the Reader', mention is made of versions of the Scriptures in various vernaculars; in this context it is stated, 'So the Syrian translation of the New Testament is in most learned mens Libraries, of Widminstadius his setting forth.'\(^2\)

The second edition of the Syriac New Testament (Geneva, 1569) was prepared by Immanuel Tremellius, professor of Hebrew in the University of Heidelberg (1561–77). Although printed in Hebrew characters for lack of Syriac type, according to Darlow and Moule it represents an advance on Widmanstadt's text, in that Tremellius attempted to give the vocalization fully, and especially collated for his text a Syriac MS. then preserved in the Elector Palatine's Library at Heidelberg. . . . The close Latin translation of the Syriac which he added was used as a basis for similar translations by later editors down to the time of Schaaf.\(^3\)

At 1 John v. 7 Tremellius placed in the margin the comma Johanneum, translated by himself into Syriac.

Postel's Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum . . . and Grammatica Arabica, both published in 1538 at Paris. More than half a century earlier Bernhard von Breydenbach's Peregrinatio in terram sanctam . . . (Mainz, 1486) had utilized Syriac and other oriental alphabets in woodcut (see Eberhard Nestle, 'Geschichte des syrischen Drucks', in Marksteine aus der Welilitteratur in Originalschriften, ed. by Johannes Baensch-Drugulin (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 35 ff. from end of volume, and Werner Strothmann, Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien in Europa (Göttinger Orientforschungen; I. Reihe: Syriaca, i; Wiesbaden, 1971).

\(^1\) So Eberhard Nestle ('Zur Geschichte der syrischen Typen', ZDMG lxsv (1903), 16 f.), who thought he had identified the very manuscript used as a model.


\(^3\) T. H. Darlow and H. F. Moule, Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture . . ., ii (London, 1911), 1531.
The Syriac Versions

The first edition of the Syriac New Testament to include the minor Catholic Epistles (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude) and the Apocalypse, though they formed no part of the original Peshitta, was that contained in volume v (issued in two parts, 1630, 1633) of Guy Michel Le Jay's Paris Polyglot Bible. Gabriel Sionita, a Maronite scholar from Syria who at that time was Regius Professor and Interpreter of Syriac and Arabic at Paris, was mainly responsible for editing the Syriac text and its Latin translation. The Syriac vowels are here fully printed for the first time.

Volume v of Brian Walton's London Polyglot Bible (1657) reproduces essentially the text of Sionita's edition, adding as well the pericope de adultera after John vii. 52. Aegidius Gutbier, whose edition (Hamburg, 1663, 1664) incorporates all of the above-mentioned additions, even went so far as to introduce 1 John v. 7 into the text.

The last of this series is the well-known edition of Johann Leudsen and Carl Schaaf (Leiden, 1708; 2nd edn., 1717), which inserts, with inferior manuscript authority, 'raise the dead' at Matt. x. 8 (see Tischendorf, ad loc., with the note of Pusey-Gwilliam). The sub-title of the edition proudly declares that the volume is furnished with a collation of the variant readings of all the previous editions ('Ad omnes editiones diligenter recensitum et variis lectionibus magno labore collectis adornatum').

According to Darlow and Moule, the editors disagreed about the system of printing to be adopted. Accordingly up to Luke xviii. 26 they give the Chaldean system, used by Tremellius and others, which Leusden preferred. After xviii. 26 the printing follows the Syrian system, used in the Paris and London polyglots and approved by C. Schaaf. Leusden died in 1699, when the work had reached Luke xv. 20, and his colleague completed the task alone.¹

The foundation for an edition of the Gospels based on the collation of many Syriac manuscripts was laid by Philip Edward Pusey (1830–80), the deaf and crippled son of Edward Bouverie Pusey, the Tractarian leader. After Pusey's death the work of collating was continued by George Henry Gwilliam, and in 1901 the Clarendon Press published at Oxford under both their names the edition entitled Tetraevangelium Sanctum juxta simplicem Syro-

The Peshitta Syriac Version

rum versionem. . . . The edition rests upon forty-two manuscripts, not all of which were collated fully,¹ and some of which are fragmentary. The resultant text agrees, to a very remarkable extent, with that of the editio princeps of 1555.² The edition provides information from the Nestorian Massora, and the text is divided into paragraphs in accordance with the evidence of the most ancient manuscripts. A Latin translation is on facing pages.

In 1905 the British and Foreign Bible Society published a reprint of Pusey and Gwilliam's edition, modified in several respects. The edition³ is without the apparatus and other notes of the 1901 edition; on the other hand, two passages, lacking in all manuscripts of the Peshitta, are inserted, namely Luke xxii. 17–18 and John vii. 53–viii. 11. The passages, a note explains, were taken from the Syriac New Testament prepared for the Bible Society in 1816 by Dr. Samuel Lee, and 'for the sake of completeness are inserted in this edition, but are placed within special marks [heavy square brackets] to indicate the different authority on which they rest'.

In 1920 the Bible Society issued the Syriac text of the entire New Testament.⁴ For the text of the Acts of the Apostles, the three major Catholic Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 1 John), and the Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews) permission was granted to use the critical revision of the Peshitta prepared by Gwilliam for the Clarendon Press along lines similar to his earlier work on the Gospels. In the collation of manuscripts⁵

¹ e.g. the aberrant codex Phillipps 1388 (no. 3 in the list above) was only partially collated; see the note in Pusey and Gwilliam's edition, pp. 316 f.

² For the criticism that Gwilliam determined his text by a majority vote of his manuscripts and therefore produced 'the latest not the earliest text of the Peshitta Tetracuangelium', see Matthew Black, 'The Text of the Peshitta Tetracuangelium', Studia Paulina in honorem Johannes de Zwaan (Haarlem, 1953), p. 26.


⁵ For the identity of the several manuscripts, see R. Kilgour, ExpT xxxiii (1921–2), 332, and A. Guillaume, ibid., pp. 519 f.
the editor received help from John Pinkerton, who carried on and completed this work after Gwilliam's death in 1913. The remainder of the New Testament is taken from John Gwynn's editions of the four minor Catholic Epistles (1909) and Revelation (1897); for these editions, see pp. 66 and 68 below.

The edition has a remarkable reading at Heb. ii. 16, apparently unknown to any other version or to any Greek manuscript: 'For not over angels has death authority [or dominion], but over the seed of Abraham it has authority [or dominion].' According to Albert Bonus,1 this reading, which is not found in any other printed edition of the Peshitta, is supported by fourteen of twenty Syriac manuscripts which he inspected, including the two oldest.

3. PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE DATE AND TEXTUAL AFFINITIES OF THE PESHITTA NEW TESTAMENT

Until the beginning of the twentieth century it was commonly held that the Peshitta Syriac translation was one of the earliest versions, if not the earliest, of the New Testament to be made.2 The constant tradition among Syrian Christians has been that it was the work of one or more of the original Apostles or Evangelists, some naming Mark and others Thaddeus as the translator. Among European scholars there was general agreement that the Peshitta was in existence by the end of the second century, and certainly by the beginning of the third. Several went so far as to suppose that it was made near the close of the first century or early in the second.3

3 Those who assigned a first-century date include Brian Walton, Carpzov, Leusden, Bishop Lowth, and Kennicott. J. D. Michaelis ascribed the Syriac version of both Testaments to the close of the first or to the earlier part of the second century (Introduction to the New Testament, 4th edn., vol. ii, part i (London, 1823), 29-38).
The Peshitta Syriac Version

In 1901 F. C. Burkitt published a slender monograph which altered scholarly opinion concerning the date of the Peshitta.1 After separating the spurious writings of Ephraem from the genuine ones, Burkitt found that the numerous Gospel quotations made by that prominent Syrian ecclesiastic, who died about A.D. 373, afford no evidence that he was acquainted with the Peshitta text, but rather that he relied upon a different and presumably earlier rendering of the separated Gospels.

The same scholar also advanced the hypothesis that the Peshitta version of the New Testament was made by or for Rabbula, bishop of Edessa, probably in the early years of his episcopate, which extended from A.D. 411 to 435. Rabbula, according to a statement made by his biographer, an unknown cleric of Edessa writing about 450, 'translated by the wisdom of God that was in him the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, because of its variations, exactly as it was'.2 This remark had indeed attracted the attention of scholars before Burkitt. Nestle thought that Rabbula's work involved a revision by way of further assimilation of the Peshitta to some Greek text.3 Wright considered it more probable that Rabbula's revision was 'a first step in the direction of the Philoxenian version'.4 Burkitt, however, connected the biographer's remark with the first publication of the Peshitta, arguing that 'from the time of Rabbula the Syriac Vulgate holds a position of absolute supremacy. Before Rabbula, no trace of the Peshitta; after Rabbula, hardly a trace of any other text.5

The hypothesis of the Rabbulan authorship of the Peshitta New Testament soon came to be adopted by almost all scholars, being persuaded perhaps more by the confidence with which

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1 S. Ephraim's Quotations from the Gospel (Texts and Studies, viii; Cambridge, 1901; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967).
2 J. J. Overbeck, S. Ephraemi Syri Rabulae episcopi Edessani Balaei aliorumque opera selecta (Oxford, 1865), p. 172, lines 18-20; the translation given here is that of Burkitt (op. cit., p. 57).
3 For what is known of Rabbula and his career as bishop of Edessa, see Georg G. Blum, Rabbula von Edessa. Der Christ, der Bischof, der Theolog (CSO ccc, Subsidia, 34; Louvain, 1969). H. S. Pelser has promised the publication of his doctoral dissertation, Rabbula, the Bishop of Edessa (cf. Pelser in De fructu oris sui, Essays in Honour of Adrianus von Selms, ed. by I. H. Eybers et al. (Leiden, 1971), p. 162 n. 1).
4 Eberhard Nestle, Real-Encyklopaedie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, 2te Aufl. xv (1885), 195.
5 William Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature (London, 1894), p. 11.
6 Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, ii (1904), 161.
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Burkitt propounded it than by any proof other than circumstantial evidence. Among the few dissenting voices,¹ Vööbus has repeatedly attacked the validity of Burkitt's reconstruction of the history of the Peshitta, pointing out that it rests solely on speculation and that, before one can confidently regard it as probable, Rabbula's quotations from the New Testament must be examined with a view to determining what version he himself commonly used. In default of the existence of any extensive composition by Rabbula himself, Vööbus analysed the New Testament quotations in Rabbula's Syriac translation of Cyril of Alexandria's Περὶ τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας Πίστεως, written shortly after the beginning of the Nestorian controversy in 430.² In this translation, instead of rendering Cyril's quotations from Scripture, Rabbula inserted the wording of the current Syriac version—a method which more than one author followed in translating from Greek into Syriac. Vööbus discovered that in this treatise, published by Rabbula near the end of his life, only the shortest of the several citations (totalling about thirty-five from the Gospels, and about forty from the Epistles) agree with the Peshitta, and that many of the others, in differing from the Peshitta, agree with either the Old Syriac or the Diatessaron.³

Continuing his research into the history of the use made of the Peshitta in the fifth century, Vööbus⁴ analysed the nature of the Gospel text used by Rabbula's contemporaries and successors, as well as that included in the Syriac translation of the Acts of the Synod of Ephesus. Here too there is little or no evidence of the use of the Peshitta version among fifth-century Syriac sources. Furthermore, contrary to Burkitt's dictum that after Rabbula there is to be found hardly a trace of an Old Syriac text, Vööbus

¹ The most notable exceptions to the otherwise universal chorus of approval of Burkitt's hypothesis were F. Nau in Dictionnaire de la Bible, v (Paris, 1912), col. 1926; id., RHR ciii (1931), 115; J. R. Harris (tentatively), 'The Syriac New Testament', Exp, 8th ser., vi (1913), 456–65; and Alphonse Mingana, 'The Remaining Versions of the Gospels', ExpT xxvi (1915–16), 379; cf. id., 'A New Doctrine of Christian Monachism', Exp, 8th ser., ix (1915), 378.

² The Syriac text is available in Acta Martyrum et sanctorum, ed. P. Bedjan, v (Paris, 1895), 628 ff.; the Greek text is in Migne, PG lxxvi, cols. 1133 ff.


⁴ Researches on the Circulation of the Peshitta in the Middle of the Fifth Century, and Neue Ergebnisse in der Erforschung der Geschichte der Evangelien texte im Syrischen, being Contributions of Baltic University, nos. 64 and 65 respectively (Pinneberg, 1948), and 'Das Alter der Peshitta', ÖC, 4th ser., ii (1954), 1–10.
collected not a few Old Syriac (or, at least, non-Peshitta) readings that continue to turn up in authors long after Rabbula.¹

In Vööbus’s opinion, the Peshitta, though older than Rabbula’s time,² met with considerable opposition, and was not introduced in Edessa as the official Gospel text until the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century.³

Other scholars have joined Vööbus in challenging Burkitt’s thesis, though they do not always see eye to eye with his reconstruction of the history of the Gospel text in Syriac. Matthew Black, for example, having analysed the quotations in Rabbula’s translation of Cyril of Alexandria’s treatise, concluded that Rabbula’s quotations from the Gospels were made from a form of text that was ‘a kind of half-way house between the Old Syriac represented by S and C and the final and definitive form of the Syriac Vulgate which has come down to us’.⁴

In analysing the nature of the Gospel text used in the biography of Rabbula, Baarda has found that the biographer’s text of Matthew and Luke ‘was less revised and contained more archaic elements than both SP and SC have preserved. . . . The text of John used by the author of Rabbula’s life was a more revised one than that of the extant Old Syriac manuscripts, although not yet the very same text that we have in the collated manuscripts of the Peshitta.’⁵

The question who it was that produced the Peshitta version of the New Testament will perhaps never be answered. That it was not Rabbula has been proved by Vööbus’s researches. At the same time one is reluctant to believe that the statement by Rabbula’s biographer is without any historical foundation. Baarda may well be correct in his supposition that Rabbula’s work of revision was not a radical one: ‘The purpose’, he

² ‘The Oldest Extant Traces of the Syriac Peshitta’, Mu, lxiii (1950), 191-204.
suggests, 'was to have a more accurate translation of passages that were important in the Christological discussions within the Edessenian clergy.' Consequently, most of the changes Rabbula introduced involved passages in the Gospel according to John, a feature that, as was mentioned above, is reflected in the Gospel quotations included in the biography of Rabbula.

It appears that, besides Rabbula, other leaders in the Syrian Church also had a share in producing the Peshitta. The presence of a diversity of mannerisms and style in the Peshitta Gospels and Apostolos suggests that the revision of the Old Syriac was not homogeneous, but the work of several hands. Whether, as Rendel Harris thought, one of the translators was Mar Koumi, a well-known Syrian bishop of the fifth century, is problematic. In any case, however, in view of the adoption of the same version of the Scriptures by both the Eastern (Nestorian) and Western (Jacobite) branches of Syrian Christendom, we must conclude that it had attained a considerable degree of status before the division of the Syrian Church in A.D. 431. Despite the remarkable degree of unanimity of reading among most manuscripts of the Peshitta version, there are occasional copies, such as codex Phillipps 1388 (see p. 50 above), that preserve scores of Old Syriac variae lectiones, a feature that, as Black remarks, 'disposes of the textual myth of a fixed Peshitta New Testament text, with little or no internal evidence of variants to shed light on its development and history'.

Finally, some attention must be given to problems involved in determining the textual affinities of the Peshitta version of the


In the Peshitta text of the Pauline Epistles evidence has been found of dependence upon an earlier West Aramaic version similar to that preserved in the Palestinian Syriac version (see L. Dekkat, 'Die Syropalästinische Übersetzung der Paulusbriefe und die Peschitta', NTS iii (1956–7), 223–33).
4 Matthew Black, 'The Text of the Peshitta Tetraeuangelium', Studia Paulina in honorem Johannes de Zwaan (Haarlem, 1953), p. 27.
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New Testament. It has been frequently stated that the type of text represented by the Peshitta is what Hort designated the Syrian text and Ropes the Antiochian—a form of text which also appears in the writings of John Chrysostom and which eventually developed into the Byzantine Textus Receptus. Nevertheless, in a considerable number of readings the Peshitta agrees with one or other of the pre-Syrian Greek texts, against the Antiochian Fathers and the late Greek text. In a detailed examination of Matt. chaps. i–xiv, Gwilliam found that the Peshitta agrees with the Textus Receptus 108 times and with codex Vaticanus (B) sixty-five times, while in 137 instances it differs from both, usually with the support of the Old Syriac and/or the Old Latin, though in thirty-one instances (almost one-fourth of the whole number) it stands alone. From these data he concluded that the unknown author of the Peshitta ‘revised an ancient work by Greek MSS. which have no representatives now extant, and thus has transmitted to us an independent witness to the Greek Text of the New Testament’.

In a similar examination of the Peshitta text of Mark, Mrs. Downs collected all significant readings in that Gospel where the Sinaaitic Syriac (the Curetonian manuscript fails almost completely for Mark) and the Peshitta are identical, but where all other witnesses disagree. Seventy unique agreements were found. She also drew up a list of agreements between the Sinai palimpsest and the Peshitta in Mark having some support in Greek manuscripts or in other versions or both. An analysis of the 135 readings of this list shows that in no case is the Neutral, Caesarean, or Western the prime factor in the composition of the text which Rabbula and his assistants used in making the Peshitto. . . . The fact that the MSS and versions which share these readings with the Syriac are habitually allied to the

1 So, e.g., Hermann von Soden, Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments; I. Untersuchungen, i (Berlin, 1902), 1459 f.
4 Ibid., p. 237.
5 Hope Broome Downs, ‘The Peshitto as a Revision: its Background in Syriac and Greek Texts in Mark’, JBL lxiii (1944), 141–59. The article is a condensation of Mrs. Downs’s unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (with the same title) at Bryn Mawr College (1943).
Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, not to the Peshitto, carries its own decisive evidence. Obviously Rabbula used a copy of the Evangelion da-Mepharreshe as the basis of his translation.¹

As for the textual affinities of the Greek manuscript or manuscripts used in revising an Old Syriac base, Mrs. Downs's research partly confirms and partly contradicts the generally accepted opinion of the textual complexion of the Peshitta. On the one hand, she found that of the 135 readings mentioned above the Peshitta agrees with the Ecclesiastical text in nearly half of the readings (48.9 per cent). On the other hand, of the several strands that account for the non-Ecclesiastical elements in the Peshitta, the Western type of text (D W^MK_1-v Old Latin) provides an unexpectedly large proportion of agreement (29.1 per cent). Thus it appears that, contrary to the customary view which regards the Peshitta as an almost typical witness to the later form of text, a large number of its readings in Mark agree with the Old Syriac, and of the remainder only about one-half agree with the Koine or Ecclesiastical text.²

In the case of the Acts of the Apostles, Hatch found that the Peshitta 'contains many "Western" readings, but its text is mainly that of the Old Uncial family'.³ According to the evaluation made by Ropes, the rendering is often very free, somewhat after the manner of the Western text; the translator has a habit of expressing one Greek word by two Syriac ones. With regard to its relation to the later type of text, Ropes declares: 'The readings which depart from the Old Uncial text and follow the Antiochian are usually also found in "Western" witnesses, and there seems no trace of the peculiar and distinctive selection of readings which is the chief recognizable characteristic of the Antiochian text.'⁴

For the rest of the New Testament in the Peshitta version very little research has been undertaken. In a hitherto unpublished dissertation James T. Clemons makes a study of the Syriac text of

¹ Hope Broome Downs, op. cit., p. 151.
² Ibid., p. 155.
³ William H. P. Hatch (with James Hardy Ropes), 'The Vulgate, Peshitto, Sahidic, and Bohairic Versions of Acts and the Greek Manuscripts', HTR xx1 (1928), 81.
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the Epistle to the Galatians, based on the collation of eighteen manuscripts and five printed editions and illustrated by patristic citations preserved in about fifty Syriac treatises. As regards textual affinities, Clemons concludes that 'the Peshitta [of Galatians] contains several readings that cannot be traced entirely to a Greek original represented by the Textus Receptus'.

In view of the abundance of manuscripts of the Peshitta, some of them of great antiquity, it is to be regretted that during the twentieth century so little scholarly effort has been directed to solving the many problems that clamour for attention. Among the most pressing desiderata is the publication of a concordance to the Peshitta New Testament.

V. THE PHILOXENIAN AND/OR HARCLEAN VERSION(S)

1. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

One of the most confused and confusing tangles connected with the Syriac versions involves the identification of the Philoxenian and/or Harclean version(s). The scanty evidence preserved in several colophons of Syriac manuscripts has usually been interpreted in one of two ways. On the one hand, it has been held that the Syriac version produced in A.D. 508 for Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbûg (Hierapolis), by Polycarp his chorepiscopus

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2 In 1926 the Revd. Albert Bonus of Alphington, Exeter, finished making a handwritten copy (on about 600 sheets of foolscap) of a concordance of the Peshitta New Testament (an occasional section has been crossed out). Today Bonus's concordance is in the possession of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Melbourne. Dr. T. C. Falla is at work preparing a comprehensive index to the Peshitta Gospels, with indication of the corresponding Greek word for each Syriac word.

3 The sceptical views of Gressmann and Lebon, that there is no certain trace of the Philoxenian version and that the Harclean has not yet been discovered, have found no approval among other scholars (Hugo Gressmann, 'Studien zum syrischen Tetraevangelium; I, Besitzen wir die Philoxeniana oder Harclessia?' ZNW v (1904), 248-52; Jules Lebon, 'La version philoxénienne de la Bible', RHE xii (1911), 413-36). Adequate rebuttals of these views are given in the criticism of Lebon (by Lagrange?) in RB ix (1912), 141-3, and the article by L.-J. Delaporte 'L'évangéliaire héracléen et la tradition karkaphienne', ibid. 391-402.
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was reissued in 616 by Thomas of Harkel (Heraclea), bishop of Mabbûg, who merely added marginal notes derived from two or three Greek manuscripts (so White, Tregelles, Martin, Clark, New, Lagrange, Kümmel, and McHardy). On the other hand, it has been held that the Philoxenian version was thoroughly revised by Thomas, who also added in the margin certain readings which he considered to be important but not worthy of inclusion in the text (so Bernstein, Gwynn, Wright, Burkitt, Kenyon, Ropes, Lake, Hatch, Zuntz, Vööbus and, tentatively, Black).  

2 S. P. Tregelles, op. cit. (p. 56 n. 2 above), pp. 269-78.  
3 J. P. P. Martin, op. cit. (p. 48 n. 3 above), pp. 155-63.  
6 Lagrange, Critique textuelle, p. 229.  
9 G. H. Bernstein, De Charklensi Novi Testamenti translatione Syriaco commentatio (Breslau, 1937), p. 5.  
11 William Wright, A Short History of Syriac Literature, p. 16.  
12 F. C. Burkitt, Encyclopaedia Biblica, iv, col. 5005.  
19 Matthew Black, ‘The Syriac Verisonal Tradition’, op. cit. (p. 43 n. 5 above), pp. 139-41. According to Black, Thomas’s revision of the Philoxenian ‘hardly appears to have been a major operation . . . At times Thomas does no more than “touch up” the Philoxenian version’ (p. 141).
According to the former view, there is but one version which was republished with variant readings added in the margin; according to the latter view, there are two separate versions entirely, the later one being provided with marginalia. Furthermore, if the second reconstruction is the correct one, the Philoxenian version has disappeared except for certain manuscripts which contain the minor Catholic Epistles and the Book of Revelation. According to the former view, the Syriac version of these books was made by an unknown translator.

2. THE PHILOXENIAN VERSION

One of the most influential leaders of the Monophysite branch of the Church at the beginning of the sixth century was Philoxenus (Mar Aksenaya') of Mabbûg in eastern Syria, who, with his contemporary, Severus of Antioch, founded Jacobite Monophysitism. Despite acrimonious charges levelled against him by his theological opponents, his writings disclose him as an acute dialectician, a prolific author, a subtle theologian, and an uncompromising champion of the unity of the nature of Christ against what he regarded as the heresy of the two natures.¹

The work of translating the New Testament was performed in 507–8, when the prestige of Philoxenus was at its height. Inasmuch as Philoxenus did not know Greek, he commissioned Polycarp, chorepiscopus in the diocese of Mabbûg, to revise the Peshitta version in accordance with Greek manuscripts.² Polycarp sometimes replaced Syriac words with synonyms, sometimes used different prepositions, and generally gave preference to the independent possessive pronoun over against the suffixes.³ It appears that Polycarp sought to make a more theologically accurate rendering of the Greek than the current Peshitta rendering. In addition to the books included in the earlier

¹ See the comprehensive monograph by André de Halleux, Philoxène de Mabbog, sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie (Louvain, 1963).
² This is the generally accepted view; Alphonse Mingana, however, thought that Philoxenus himself had prepared the version long before his episcopal ordination, in the monastery of Tel’eda, having possibly handed his work to Polycarp for the purpose of simple revision in 505–8 ('New Documents on Philoxenus of Hierapolis, and on the Philoxenian Version of the Bible', Exp, 8th ser., xix (1920), 159).
³ For examples illustrating these and other modifications introduced by Polycarp, see Vööbus, loc. cit. (see p. 64 n. 18), pp. 180–3, and Early Versions of the New Testament, pp. 117 f.; cf. also de Halleux, op. cit., pp. 122 f.
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translation, the Philoxenian included (seemingly for the first time in Syriac) 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the Book of Revelation. Since the Philoxenian version was made and sponsored by Jacobite ecclesiastics, it was used only by the Mono-physite branch of Syriac-speaking Christendom.

Philoxenian manuscripts and editions

Apart from several manuscripts of the Gospels that have been thought by one or another scholar to preserve the Philoxenian version,1 the only assuredly Philoxenian manuscripts are those that contain the four minor Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse. The former were first published at Leiden in 1630 by Edward Pococke, from a late manuscript in the Bodleian (MS. Or. 119, written about A.D. 1610). In this edition the text is given in both Syriac and Hebrew characters, and at the foot of the page are a Greek text and a Latin rendering of the Syriac. After the edition of Pococke had appeared, it was not long before these Epistles were incorporated into printed editions of the Peshitta, a version with which they have really nothing to do.2

In 1909, on the basis of a collation of twenty manuscripts, the oldest of which is dated A.D. 823 (British Museum Add. 14623), John Gwynn produced a fully reliable edition of the four Epistles, with prolegomena, supplemental notes, and the reconstruction of the Greek text attested by the version.3 Gwynn divided the manuscripts into two groups, an older (ninth-twelfth century), and a later (fifteenth-seventeenth century; from this the usual printed editions have been taken), besides several of intermediate character.4

1 e.g. the three manuscripts in Florence, Rome, and Beirut, proposed successively by Adler, Bernstein, and Hall; for bibliography see Anton Baumstark, Geschichte der syrischen Literatur (Bonn, 1922), pp. 144 f., and, for Hall, F. C. Burkitt, JTS xxxiii (1931–2), 255–62.
2 This insertion was first made in the Paris Polyglot Bible (vol. v, part 1; 1630).
4 There is also an Arabic version of the Philoxenian text of the Catholic Epistles, contained in a ninth-century copy on Mount Sinai (see pp. 262–3 below), which agrees in many instances with the readings of the later copies as embodied in the ordinary printed text.
The textual affinities of the reconstructed Greek text of the Epistles seem to be more with the Alexandrian than with the Koine or Ecclesiastical text. Of 115 sets of variant readings, the Philoxenian agrees with Ξ sixty-five times; with A, sixty; with B, fifty-three; with C, forty-four; with K, fifty-one; with L, fifty-five; with P, fifty-one. Furthermore, the agreements of the Philoxenian with the Harclean, Gwynn reports, are more numerous than with any of the Greek texts, being seventy-six in all, about two-thirds of the 115 sets of readings.

In the case of the pericope de adultera, which is lacking in the Peshitta version, Gwynn assembled evidence for the text of the passage from twelve manuscripts. The oldest copy is a note in a hand of probably the ninth century, appended to folio 17 of British Museum Add. 14470, a Peshitta manuscript of the fifth or sixth century (no. 6 in the list above). Several copies, including the earliest, ascribe the translation of the pericope from Greek into Syriac to 'the Abbot Paul, who found it in Alexandria'. Gwynn identified the translator as presumably Paul of Tella of the early seventh century, to whom we owe the Syro-Hexaplar of the Old Testament. Brock, on the other hand, thinks it more probable that a contemporary Syrian scholar of the same name is meant, the Abbot Paul who was Monophysite bishop of Edessa until the Persian invasion, when he fled to Cyprus where he made in 623-4 a Syriac translation of the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus.

The Book of Revelation in Syriac exists in two forms, one of which, up to the twentieth century, has usually been printed in editions of the Syriac New Testament, beginning with the Paris Polyglot (volume v, part 2; 1633), edited by Gabriel Sionita. It was first published by Ludovicus de Dieu at Leiden in 1627 from a manuscript bequeathed by Scaliger to the library of the University of Leiden (cod. Scalig. 18 Syr.). At least ten other copies

1 The pericope appeared for the first time in a printed book in L. de Dieu's Animadversiones... in quatuor Evangelia (Leiden, 1631), pp. 443-4. The text of the passage was taken from a manuscript (dated A.D. 1625) lent to him by James Ussher and now preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin (see J. Gwynn, 'On a Syriac Manuscript belonging to the Collection of Archbishop Ussher', Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, xxvii (1877-86), 269-316). The text contains an egregious scribal blunder—the omission of the negative in vs. 11, so as to read 'Go and sin more'! The J accordingly appears in brackets in the text printed by de Dieu.

of the same type of text have since become known, one of which
identifies the text as a copy of the autograph of Thomas of
Harkel.¹

The other form of the book is preserved in a manuscript dating
from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century²—a manuscript
which is noteworthy as being the only one thus far known that
contains the whole New Testament in Syriac.³ Purchased by
the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres from an unknown dealer in
London about 1860, it is today in the John Rylands Library at
Manchester. The text of the Book of Revelation in the manuscript
was edited in 1897 by Gwynn,⁴ who argued persuasively that
the newly discovered version is nothing other than the unrevised
Philoxenian version, and that the other form of the Apocalypse in
Syriac is what is commonly called the Harclean version. The two
forms differ in that the Philoxenian version is written in free and
idiomatic Syriac, while the other Graecizes after the Harklensian
fashion.

As for textual affinities of the text of Revelation in the Craw­
ford manuscript, Gwynn concluded that it is a mixed text, the
larger component of which is related to the uncials ۺ A C P (or
a majority of them), while the smaller component agrees with B
(Westcott and Hort's ۹) and the minuscules. Its special affinities
are with ۺ and, among the Latin versions, with the Primasian,
the earliest known form of the book in Old Latin.⁵

3. THE HARCLEAN VERSION

From the scattered pieces of information about Thomas of

¹ It is MS. 724 of the Library of the Dominican Convent of San Marco, Florence;
see John Gwynn, 'On the Discovery of a Missing Syriac Manuscript of the Apo­
calypse', *Hermathena*, x (1899), 227–45. Clemons lists sixteen Syriac manuscripts
of the Apocalypse, one of which is incomplete and another fragmentary; the type
of text has not been analysed in all of them (James Clemons, *An Index of Syriac
Manuscripts Containing the Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Salt Lake City, 1968)).
² For a discussion of the date of the manuscript, see John Gwynn, 'On a Syriac
MS. of the New Testament in the Library of the Earl of Crawford, and an Inedited
Version of the Apocalypse included in it', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, xxx
(Dublin, 1893), 361–76.
³ The order of the contents of the manuscript is Gospels, Harclean Passiontide
(Dublin, 1897). (This was the first book involving Syriac characters printed by
the Dublin University Press.) For an appreciative review article, see T. K. Abbott
in *Hermathena*, x (1899), 27–35.
Harkel it appears that he was born probably at Heracleia in Cyrrhestice, a short distance north-west of Mabbûg. After pursuing Greek studies at Qenneshê (i.e. the ancient Chalcis and the modern Qinneshrê), he became a monk in the Monastery of Tar'il near Beroea. In the course of time he became bishop of Mabbûg. He was, however, expelled from his see by Domitian of Melitene, nephew of the Emperor Maurice, before a.D. 602, and went with other Syrian émigrés to the monastery of the Antonians, located at Enaton, the nine-mile relay station near Alexandria. Here, at the insistence of Athanasius I—the titular patriarch of Antioch—Paul of Tella, with assistance from others, translated the Old Testament from the Greek hexaplaric and tetraplaric text of a copy made by Eusebius and Pamphilus. According to a colophon a certain Thomas (doubtless Thomas of Harkel) was his chief assistant in translating the books of Kings. Other colophons state ¹ that it was here at Enaton that Thomas produced his edition or revision of the Philoxenian New Testament (including all the twenty-seven books), which was completed in 616.

The chief characteristic of the Harclean version is its slavish adaptation to the Greek, to the extent that even clarity is sacrificed. For example, at Mark xiv. 58 δια τριῶν ἡμερῶν is translated in the Peshitta intelligibly, and in good Syriac, ˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˒˓
a suitable counterpart to Paul of Tella's Syro-Hexaplar—a painfully exact imitation of Greek idiom, even in the order of words, often in violation of Syriac idiom. As a result the modern scholar is hardly ever in doubt as to the Greek text intended by the translator.¹

It is otherwise as to the meaning of the obeli and asterisks with which Thomas identified readings in his complicated critical apparatus. The earliest assumption (held, e.g., by Wettstein), that the passages marked with obeli and asterisks had some relation to the Peshitta, was mistaken. Furthermore, though one might well suppose that the signs were used by Thomas in exactly the same way as by Origen in the Hexapla,² the data are not always susceptible of such an interpretation. Amid a variety of theories concerning their interpretation,³ there is one point upon which everyone is agreed, namely that these signs were frequently confused in the course of transmission. As it happens, no obeli occur in the Catholic Epistles, and in the Gospels their distribution varies. Furthermore, not all Harclean manuscripts contain this critical apparatus, but its absence appears to be the result of later adaptation to liturgical use, not a more original form. The theory proposed by Black and others, that 'Thomas's Syriac marginalia are his rejected Philoxenus text',⁴ prompts the query why they should have been kept at all if they were rejected as not primary. Moreover, Thomas occasionally provides a variant reading in Greek. How he wished the reader to take such a reading in relation to the Syriac text has not been resolved. Obviously a great deal of work remains to be done on problems raised by the Harclean marginalia.⁵

¹ See also the comments by Brock in section vii, pp. 83–98 below.
⁵ A start has been made by John D. Thomas in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation at the University of St. Andrews, entitled 'The Harclean Margin: A Study of the Asterisks, Obeloi, and Marginalia of the Harclean Syriac Version with Special Reference to the Gospel of Luke' (1973). It is Dr. Thomas's opinion that the obelized readings are originally from the hand of Polycarp, while the readings marked with asterisks are from Thomas's hand (p. 122).
Harclean manuscripts and editions

Among Harclean manuscripts, apart from lectionaries, passion-tide harmonies (see p. 74 n. 5 below), and certain copies of the Apocalypse (see p. 68 n. 1 above), about sixty have been catalogued by Gregory, Baumstark, and Mingana. Of this number the following are noteworthy for one or another reason:

1. Moscow, Archaeological Society MS. 1, of the seventh century, contains on thirty-four folios portions of the four Gospels.\(^1\)

2. Selly Oak, Mingana MS. 124, of about A.D. 730, contains on 261 folios the four Gospels (with some lacunae, including John xviii. 3 to end). Some of the Greek marginal notes differ from those in White's edition.


4. Rome, Vatican Syriac MS. 267, of the eighth century, contains on 163 folios the four Gospels.

5. Selly Oak, Mingana MS. 42, dated A.D. 835, contains on 182 folios the four Gospels, Epistle of James, 2 Timothy, and a quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews.


7. Rome, Vatican Syriac MS. 268, thought by Mai to have been written by Thomas of Harkel himself,\(^2\) but attributed to A.D. 858-9 by Hatch, contains on 172 folios the four Gospels. Plate in Hatch's *Album*, no. lxix.

8. The so-called Beirut codex, on loan to the Library of Union Theological Seminary, New York, attributed to the ninth century by Hall,\(^3\) but to a date a little before 1200 by Burkitt,\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Described and collated by R. Wagner, *ZNW* vi (1905), 286-90.

\(^2\) Angelo Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, v (part 2) (Rome, 1831), pp. 4-5. Since the manuscript contains the Harclean Passiontide Harmony, the date when it was written will be known when the *floruit* of Rabban Mar Daniel, who drew up the Harmony, is known (see p. 75 n. 1 below). In any case, it cannot be Thomas's autograph!


contains on 203 folios the Gospels (with lacunae) in the Harclean version, and the rest of the Syriac canon in the Peshitta version.

(9) British Museum Add. 14469, A.D. 935-6, written by a priest named John in the Convent of St. Mary Deipara in Nitria for the abbot Moses of Nisibis, contains on 205 folios the four Gospels. Plate in Hatch's *Album*, no. lxxiii.

(10) Oxford, New College MS. 333, of the eleventh century, contains on 273 folios the entire New Testament according to the Syriac canon (lacking Heb. xi. 27–xiii. 25); used by White as the basis of his edition.

(11) Cambridge, Univ. Add. 1700, A.D. 1169–70, written by a scribe named Sâhdâ in the Convent of Mâr Şalibâ in Edessa, contains on 216 folios the four Gospels, Acts, seven Catholic Epistles, and the Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews); and 1 and 2 Clement (which follow immediately after Jude). Plate in Hatch's *Album*, no. cxxix.


The *editio princeps* of the [Philoxenian–]Harclean version of the New Testament was issued at the close of the eighteenth century by Joseph White, then Fellow of Wadham College and Professor of Arabic, afterwards Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. He based his edition chiefly on one manuscript, Oxford, New College 333 (no. 10 in the list above). Where this manuscript is defective in the Gospels he employed two codices (Oxford, New College 334 and Bodleian Or. 361) which had been transcribed by Glocester (or Gloster) Ridley, Fellow of New College, Oxford. Unfortu-

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1 On its colophon, see Hatch's article (p. 64 n. 16 above); on its text, see Paul E. Kahle, 'The Chester Beatty Manuscript of the Harclean Gospels', *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, vi (Studi e testi, cxxvi; Vatican City, 1946), 208–13.


3 For comments on the rather unsatisfactory manner in which White displayed the textual evidence, along with lists of errata in his volumes, see William Duff McHardy, 'The Text of Matthew and Mark in White's *Versio Syriaca Philoxeniana* and in the New College MS. 333', *JTS* xlix (1948), 175–8.
nately he had no manuscript to fill out the text of Hebrews, which breaks off at xi. 27.

A half-century later Bernstein published the text of the Gospel according to John from a Harclean manuscript in the Vatican.¹

Finally, among the very few editions of Harclean materials² is Bensly’s publication of the text of Heb. xi. 28 to the end of the Epistle, thus filling out the defective manuscript used for White’s edition.³

In view of the general availability of a goodly number of Harclean manuscripts,⁴ it is no credit to New Testament scholarship that there is still lacking an adequate edition of that version.

The textual affinities of the Harclean version have been described as belonging, on the whole, to the Antiochian⁵ or Byzantine type of text.⁶ But the apparatus which Thomas attached to the version has made it, at least for the Book of Acts, one of the most important witnesses to the Western text that have come down to us,⁷ surpassed in this respect only by codex


² The so-called Beirut Codex, supposed by some to contain the [Philoxenian–]­Harclean version (so E. J. Goodspeed, who edited part of the Gospel of Matthew, JBL xxv (1906), 58–81), is, in the judgement of F. C. Burkitt, a subsequent modifi­cation of the Harclean version (see p. 66 n. 1 above).


⁴ From time to time previously uncatalogued manuscripts of the Harclean ver­sion come to light; e.g. in 1972 it was announced that two Harclean manuscripts had been photographed for the Institute for New Testament Textual Research at Münster (so the Bericht der Stiftung zur Förderung der neutestamentliche Textforschung für die Jahre 1970 und 1971 (Münster/W., 1972), pp. 8 f.). A facsimile edition of a newly found Harclean manuscript of Revelation is being prepared by Vööbus.

It may be mentioned here that, according to a communication from C. F. Burney to the Academy (9 Feb. 1895, p. 131), the Library of St. John’s College, Oxford, possesses the collations made by Henry Dean of several Harclean manu­scripts of the Gospels, entered in an interleaved copy of White’s edition (the copy which the Librarian showed to the present writer had the collations entered on the margins of the pages).


Bezae. In the case of the Gospels an analysis made by Mrs. New of the type of text represented in the marginal readings led her to conclude that for these books Thomas utilized a Greek manuscript with a predominantly Caesarean text and an Old Syriac copy akin to the Sinaitic Syriac. On the basis chiefly of a detailed examination of the colophons in Harclean manuscripts, Zuntz traced the Caesarean element in Acts and the Pauline Epistles back to a 'Euthalian' recension of these books, written in cola and commata, as constituted at Caesarea by Pamphilus and other grammarians.

4. **HARCLEAN PASSION TIDE HARMONIES**

Not a few Harclean manuscripts contain the Syriac text of a harmony of the Passion narratives of the four Gospels. A detailed study made by Morris A. Weigelt of evidence from eight manuscripts reveals that the same basic harmony circulated in two somewhat different forms. One of them, which Weigelt designates Sequence A, is characterized by relatively long citations of Gospel text and infrequent shifts from Gospel to Gospel. The other form, Sequence B, involves about twice as

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1 So Silva New, *HTR* xxi (1928), 394.
3 For a critical assessment of Zuntz's research on the Harclean version, with evidence of not a few inaccuracies, see the review written by G. D. Kilpatrick and W. D. McHardy, *JTS* xlviii (1947), 92–9.
4 The harmony is extant in more than two dozen manuscripts. For earlier descriptions of it, see J. P. P. Martin, *Introduction à la critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament*, Partie pratique, iii (Paris, 1885), pp. 121–44; id., 'Le Διαθήκη των Τατιαν', *RQH* xxxiii (1883), 336–78; and the literature cited in the following footnote.
5 In his unpublished dissertation, entitled 'Diatessaric Harmonies of the Passion Narrative in the Harclean Syriac Version' (Library of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1969), Weigelt provides collations of the harmony in six manuscripts, namely Vatican Syriac 268 (A.D. 859), British Museum Add. 18714 (A.D. 1214), Bibliothèque nationale Cod. Syr. 51 (A.D. 1138), Bibliothèque nationale Cod. Syr. 52 (A.D. 1165), Cambridge University Add. 1700 (A.D. 1169), and Bibliothèque nationale Cod. Syr. 31 (A.D. 1203). In addition he makes use of the evidence of two other witnesses, one published by H. H. Spoer ('Spuren eines syrischen Diatessaros', *ZDMG* lxi (1907), 850–9; George A. Barton and H. H. Spoer, 'Traces of the Diatessaron of Tatian in Harclean Syriac Harmonies', *JBL* xxiv (1905), 179–95) and the other by A.-S. Marmardji (*Diatessaron de Tatien* (Beirut, 1935), Appendix: 'Évangéliaire diatessarique syriaque', pp. 1–75).
6 Contained in the first three manuscripts listed in the previous footnote.
7 Contained in the last three manuscripts listed in n. 5 above, and in Spoer and Marmardji.
many separate citations, half as long as those in Sequence A. Furthermore, Sequence B begins at a later point in the Passion narrative than does Sequence A, and ends slightly earlier. At the same time, the two sequences share the same chronological scheme, show a preference for Matthean material, and contain certain duplicate accounts. Sequence B is thought by Weigelt to be probably an elaboration from Sequence A.

Information concerning the identity of the compiler of the Passion harmony is contained in a note at the close of the harmony in Mingana Syr. MS. 105 (fol. 215a). This reads: 'Here end the lessons for Good Friday, which are harmonized from the four Evangelists... They were harmonized with great care by Rabban Mar Daniel, the man of many lights, from Beth Bāṭin, a village which is near Harran, and by the diligent Isaac, his disciple.'

Textually the Harclean harmony agrees, as one would have expected, with the Harclean version; structurally it differs from Tatianic witnesses—both Eastern and Western. Unlike them the compiler of the Harclean Passion harmony seldom rearranges the order of Gospel material and prefers, instead, to present several duplicate accounts, while omitting John, chaps. xiv–xvii. By way of summary Weigelt concludes that the Harclean Passiontide harmony is 'an independent harmony not influenced by Tatian's Diatessaron either in structure or text. Although less creatively and skilfully constructed than Tatian's Diatessaron, it represents an important stage in the process of constructing harmonies and provides an interesting glimpse into the history of the transmission of the Harclean Syriac version.'

VI. THE PALESTINIAN SYRIAC VERSION

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE VERSION

What used to be called the Jerusalem Syriac version and has now come to be known as the Palestinian Syriac version might

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1 See Alphonse Mingana, BJRL xv (1931), p. 178. Baumstark refers to several liturgical treatises by a Jacobite ecclesiastic called Rabban Daniel (Die Geschichte der syrischen Literatur (Bonn, 1922), p. 283); J. de Zwaan, 'Harclean Gleanings from Mingana's Catalogue', NovT ii (1957-8), 176 f., who discusses the date of Mar Daniel's floruit.

2 Contrary to Duncan Willey's opinion expressed in his discussion of the text of a page from a Harclean Passiontide Harmony ('A Fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron', ExpT xxv (1913-14), 31-5).

with still more propriety be designated the Christian–Palestinian–Aramaic version. The language of the version is the Aramaic dialect used in Palestine during the early Christian centuries. The only claim to be called Syriac rests upon the script in which it is written, which resembles somewhat the Estrangela Syriac script, except that the characters are more square in their outline, and the dolath is usually without its diacritical point; there are two forms of the letter pe, representing the sounds ‘ph’ and ‘p’. In both accidence and vocabulary the dialect is closer to Jewish Palestinian Aramaic than to the classical Syriac current at Edessa.

In addition to sepulchral inscriptions, the documents that preserve the written language are almost exclusively religious in content. Besides material from the Old and New Testaments (though no single book has been preserved in its entirety), there are twenty leaves of a homily of Chrysostom, fragments of the life of St. Anthony, an early creed, two stanzas of a hymn in honour of Peter and Paul, a Liturgy of the Nile, a Euchologium, and a fragment of an apostolic legend.

The language came to be used by Melchite Christians, as they were called, not only in Palestine, but in adjoining lands as well. By the sixth and seventh centuries a considerable number of Palestinian Christians had settled in Egypt, where they made use of a liturgy in their native Palestinian Aramaic for the blessing of the Nile.

Although a few manuscripts are thought to date from the sixth century, almost all of them derive from the ninth and following centuries after the dialect had been replaced by Arabic as the speech of everyday life, though it continued to be used for some centuries longer as the liturgical language. Furthermore,

\[1\] In addition to discussions of the language in the standard grammatical treatises (e.g. Theodor Nöldeke, 'Über den christlich-palästinischen Dialekt', ZDMG xxii (1868), 443–527; Friedrich Schultess, Grammatik des christlichpalästini­ schen Aramäisch (Tübingen, 1924)), see A. Dupont-Sommer, La Doctrine gnostique de la lettre ‘waw’ d’après une lamelle arameenne inédite (Paris, 1946), pp. 78 ff.

\[2\] For this and other liturgical books in Palestinian Aramaic, see G. Margoliouth, 'The Liturgy of the Nile', JRAS (Oct. 1896), pp. 677–731; Matthew Black, Rituale Melchiorum: A Palestinian Euchologion (Bonner orientalische Studien, ed. by P. E. Kahle and W. Kirfel, Heft 22; Stuttgart, 1938); Hieronymus Engelberding, 'Der Nil in der liturgischen Frömigkeit des christlichen Ostens', OC xxxvii (1953), 56–88, esp. 79–83; and Black, A Christian Palestinian Syriac Horologion (Texts and Studies, n.s. i; Cambridge, 1954).
The Palestinian Syriac Version

as Schulthess pointed out, the manuscripts belonging to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries show that even the clergy did not have a sufficient knowledge of the language.

When the Palestinian Syriac version of the Bible was made is a moot question. Nöldeke placed its origin sometime between A.D. 300 and 600, preferring an earlier rather than a later date within that period. Burkitt assigned it to the sixth century. Lagrange argued that sacred texts existed in oral tradition among Palestinian Christians during the fourth century, and that in the fifth century these took on written form. Sometime after the beginning of the fifth century seems to be required in the light of comments made by St. Egeria (Aetheria). During her pilgrimage to Palestine at the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century she found:

In ea provincia pars populi et graecce et siriste novit, pars etiam alia per se graecce, aliqua etiam pars tantum siriste, itaque, quoniam episcopus, licet siriste noverit, tamen semper graece loquitur et nunquam siriste; itaque ergo stat semper presbyter, qui, episcopo graecce dicente, siriste interpretatur, ut omnes audiant, quae exponuntur. Lectiones etiam, quaecumque in ecclesia leguntur, quia necesse est graecce legi, semper stat, qui siriste interpretatur propter populum, ut semper discant.

In other words, it appears that a Greek-speaking bishop was accompanied by a presbyter, who translated the Scripture lessons as well as his sermon into Syriac (i.e. Aramaic) so that all could understand. This suggests, as Vööbus points out, that the Palestinian Syriac version did not exist at that time, but that the Church provided an official (presbyter) to translate the Greek Scriptures orally.

1 Schulthess, op. cit., p. 1; cf. also id., Lexicon syropalaestinum (Berlin, 1903), pp. iv f.
3 F. C. Burkitt, 'Christian Palestinian Literature', JTS ii (1901), 174-85, and Encyclopaedia Biblica, iv (1903), cols. 5005 f.
4 'L'origine de la version syro-palestiniennede s'évangiles', RB xxxiv (1925), 481-504, esp. 497.
5 The dates are those assigned by Berthold Altaner and Alfred Stuiber, Patrologie (Freiburg im Br., 1966), p. 245.
6 S. Silvia, Peregrinatio, xlvii. 3 (CSEL xxxix. 99, lines 13-21). For a discussion of the problem presented by the use of Greek as the hieratic language of the liturgy in the East, cf. August Bludau, Die Pilgerreise der Aetheria (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, xv; Paderborn, 1927), pp. 182 ff. Jerome (Epist. cviii. 30) mentions that at the funeral of Paula psalms were sung in Greek, Latin, and Syriac.
2. NOTEWORTHY MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN SYRIAC VERSION

The existence of an ancient parchment codex containing a Gospel lectionary in a dialect of Aramaic had been known to the scholarly world since about the middle of the eighteenth century when a full description of it was published by two Maronite scholars, the cousins Assemani. During the next generation a Danish scholar, J. G. C. Adler, having examined the manuscript in the Vatican Library, published an extract from it of the Gospel of Matthew.

It was not, however, until a century after the Assemanis had drawn attention to the manuscript that a full and, indeed, sumptuous edition of it, with a Latin translation, was published by Count Francesco Miniscalchi Erizzo. On the eve of the discovery of two other manuscripts of the same lectionary, a posthumous edition was published of Paul de Lagarde's fresh collation of the Vatican manuscript, the text of which he had rearranged in scriptural sequence.

In 1892 Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis came upon another manuscript of the Palestinian Syriac lectionary in the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, and the following year at the same place J. Rendel Harris found a third. In 1899 these were published, with the twice previously edited Vatican manuscript, by Mrs. Lewis and her twin sister, Mrs. Margaret Dunlop Gibson.

The dates of the three manuscripts are known from colophons preserved in the documents. The Vatican codex was written in A.D. 1030, the other two in A.D. 1104 and 1118. Specimens of the three manuscripts, which are usually designated, respectively, codices A, B, and C, are included in Hatch's Album. A colophon

1 S. E. Assemani and J. S. Assemani, Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus, Pars i, Tom. ii (Rome, 1758), pp. 70-103.
2 Novi Testamenti versiones Syriacae simplex, Philoxeniana et Hierosolymitana (Copenhagen, 1789), pp. 135-201.
3 Evangeliiarium Hierosolymitanum ex codice Vaticano Palestino depromptit, editit, Latine vertit, prolegomenis ac glossario adornavit . . ., 2 vols. (Verona, 1861, 1864). The Latin rendering cannot always be trusted to represent accurately the original Palestinian Syriac, for the translator sometimes inadvertently adopted turns of expression familiar to him from the Latin Vulgate.
4 Bibliothecae Syriacae (Göttingen, 1892), pp. 258-402.
6 An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts (Boston, 1946), pp. 248-51.