iii. Description and Comparison of the Manuscripts

The text of the Nestorian treatise we are publishing here is based upon two manuscripts. One of these is deposited in the Vatican Library, where it is known as Codex Vaticanus Syriacus 150; the other manuscript lies in the Mingana-Collection at the Selly Oak Colleges’ Library in Birmingham. Its class-mark is: Mingana Syriacus 566.

Before we pass to a description and comparison of these codices, we record for the sake of completeness that a third manuscript is known to have existed at one time at the Archiepiscopal Library of Scért. A short description from the hand of Mgr. Addai Scher has been incorporated by Dom. R. H. Connolly in his edition of the “Interpretatio Officiorum” of Abraham bar Lipheh. This MS. was designated by him as codex i. It was a: “Codex chartaceus, saeculo ut videtur decimo sexto exaratus”. It contained among various other items on different subjects: “Quaestiones de Eucharistia”. They were anonymous and the same as the tract that is published here, as Dr. Mingana kindly informed me. Together with the whole collection of which it formed a part this codex was burnt in the Worldwar in 1916.

Description. We now turn to those manuscripts which did not suffer the fate of so many oriental books, that were destroyed in the calamities which befell Eastern Christendom at so many occasions, or perished through the carelessness of their owners. For the reader’s convenience we may give the contents of the two manuscripts, so far as it is of interest for the present investigation. We follow their description as given in the respective Catalogues of their collections.

The beginning of the Vatican MS. was analysed by the Assemani’s as follows: “Codex in 8., bombycinus, foliis 215 constans, strongulis Syriacis exaratus, inter Orientales Codices ab Andrea Scandar in Vaticanam Bibliothecam inlatos, olim Tertius.

i. Georgii Arbelae et Mosuli Episcopi, Quaestiones de ministerio


ii. Ejusdem Georgii Quaestionis de Baptismo fol. 39b.

iii. Jaballahae Magni Patriarchae Chaldæorum qui olim Nuhadrae Episcopus fuerat, Quaestiones de Baptismo, de Sacris Ordinationibus fol. 56.

iv. Ejusdem Jaballahae ... Quaestiones de Sponsalisibus, de Nuptiis, et de Sacra Liturgia fol. 66.

v. Jesuabi Arzunitae ... Quaestio, an Eucharistia extra Ecclesiam sit deferenda fol. 93.

vi. Georgii Metropolitanæ Arbelæ et Mosuli, Quaesita de Communione in Paschata, fol. 94.

It appears from the Colophon (fol. 215) that this MS. was written Anno Graecorum 2020 (A.D. 1706). In the “Bibliotheca Orientalis” iii 1 and 2 various parts of this codex were extracted by Assemani: from i: 1, p. 240, 242, 243, 244, 245, 247, 251, and a reproduction of several regulations (without quoting them) in 2, p. cccxv, § 7; from ii: many sentences in his description of the Nestorian Rite of Baptism, in 2, p. cclxi-clxx; from v: 1, p. 244.

Through the kind offices of Dr. R. R. Post, formerly of the “Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te Rome”, now Professor at Nijmegen University, it was made possible for me to study those parts of this codex in facsimile which are concerned with my subject and still unpublished, viz. fol. 1-49 and 65-94. The same scholar was so kind as to write me, that the state of this manuscript is very bad, and that it has been passed over to save it from perishing. Except for a number of places which are absolutely ruined and where nothing is left but a hole, the codex is still very legible. Some places where the reading was doubtful were collated for me upon the MS. itself by Prof. Georg Graf, to whom I wish to express my sincerest thanks for his kindness.

On closer examination one finds, that the codex has eighteen

(1) In: B.O. iii 1, p. 111—Assemani gives a better summary: „Fragmentum de modo Eucharistiae infirmis administranda; de confectione hostieae Eucharisticae; de Baptismo in Ecclesia, ubi Baptisterium desideratur, conferendo; deque Liturgia a solo Sacerdote minima celebrianda”. (2) Letter, Rome, 3-6-1934.
lines to the page, and that Assemani's statement, regarding the first four treatises at least, needs a small but extremely important addition. It is a fact (which is impossible to infer from his report) that the authors' names, both of George of Arbela and of Yaballaha were added in the margin by a later Maronitic hand, as Prof. Baumstark already observed with regard to the first item. These names, therefore, are suspect from the point of view of textual criticism. As to the following two treatises, here the proper name forms part of the text itself.

The account of Assemani does not shed any light on the origin of this codex. So we are at a loss about its ancestry.

The codex Mingana Syriac 566 has been analysed by Dr. Mingana in the Catalogue of his collection. In this case too it is not necessary for our purpose to quote his description in full. The contents of this manuscript (size 236 × 177 mm with 199 leaves and 18 lines to the page) are rather miscellaneous. The items our study is concerned with, are the following:

A. Ff. 1b-34a: Questions and Answers dealing with the Eucharistic elements and with liturgical subjects . . . The questions are asked by a young scholar and answered by a venerable teacher.

B. Ff. 34a-46a. Theological Questions and Answers dealing with baptism.

C. Ff. 46a-66b. Theological and liturgical questions and answers dealing with baptism and liturgy and attributed to the Patriarch Isho'yabih the Great who had been Bishop of Nuhadrâyê.

D. Ff. 66b-67b. Similar questions and answers by Georg, Metropolitan of Arbel and Mosul. (At the end of all the above questions and answers is the following subscription [fol. 67b]: ماعاكم جاليكم ملتاكم من لولبهم وكملاكم من لولبهم [The description of] the observances of the service of the alter and the rest is brought to a close through the help and mercy of our Lord.)

"Dated (fol. 198b) 17th June 1931, and written for me (through the deacon Matthew, son of Paul) by the deacon Joseph, son of Thomas, son of the deacon Sîpa, of the family of Baith Abûna, of the small town of Alkosh, in the time of Pope Pius xi and of the


66
Chaldaean ... Patriarch Emanuel ii. Copied from a MS. of the monastery of our Lady, which is dated 1994 of the Greeks (A.D. 1683) and which was written in the monastery of Rabban Hormizd by the priest ‘Abdisho’ ... Bold East Syrian hand. Fully voweled. Headings in red. Profusely rubricated. Fairly broad margins” (col. 1076).

For a clear apprehension of this Colophon it is necessary to know that Dr. Mingana had a manuscript very carefully copied by the mentioned deacon Joseph in cases he could not acquire the manuscript itself, so that he got “a faithful copy”. The codex which is meant is no. 93 in the list of Mgr. A. Scher. A copy of a certain part of it was used by Dom. Connolly as codex ii of his edition mentioned before. Nothing else of this manuscript has been published, as far as I know. Although we have in codex Mingana Syr. 566 a very young manuscript, its text is certainly older than that of the Vatican one.

Henceforth these manuscripts will be designed by the symbols V. and M.

The first thing to do is to make a comparison between these two codices. From the full analyses as given in the Catalogues it does not seem likely as though they have much in common. There is only one striking conformity viz. V. ix = M. S. The other names are totally different and the divisions show that V. is not a direct copy of the “Vorlage” of M.. We are obliged to recognize the existence of two manuscripts which have not been copied from the same original. Although it is possible that there exists a conformity in the other treatises in spite of the differences in names and divisions (which may be due to copyists), this fact has no further importance for the investigation with which we are concerned in this book. Henceforth we shall deal only with the parts mentioned before which treat of Questions about the Eucharist. We find these in V.: i-iv = M.: A.-D. On collating these texts in both codices it becomes apparent that they are for the greater part the same, a result not

(1) Cf. A. Mingana, Catalogue etc., Introductory Note, p. vi. (2) A. Scher, Notice sur les manuscrits Syriques conservés dans la bibliothèque du Couvent de Notre-Dame-des-Stèmes, in: Journal Asiatique 10, 8, p. 55-82. (3) Vide p. 44, n. 1. (4) We cannot speak here with certainty in view of the fragmentary character of tradition which has generally not much respect for the names of authors. (5) Cf. A. Baumstark, L.G., S. 220 Ak. 2. (6) Thus the Exposition of Abraham b. Lipheh is wanting in V. (but was contained in the Scér MS. which, however, has no further relation with the others).
to be expected from the descriptions of the catalogues. First we
start upon a careful comparison of these parts as far as the contents
are concerned (A), afterwards we shall ask whether the part we
propose to publish might offer some special text-critical points (B).

A. For the sake of clearness a list of the names in the headings
had to be made:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V.</th>
<th>M.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. anonymous; in margin: George of Arbelã</td>
<td>anonymous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; Yabhallaha the Great,</td>
<td>Išho'yabha the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bishop of Nuhadra</td>
<td>Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; ditto</td>
<td>of Nuhadrâyé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Išho'yahb i of Arzun</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. George of Arbelã</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arbelã

The last and the first two items (not taking into account what is
written in the margin of V, though it needs to be asked whether
this addition is right or not) agree in both MSS. They deviate from
each other in the rest where only the names of Išho'yabha and “the
Great, Nuhadra” are points of contact. Presently, viz. in the next
parts of our investigation we shall answer this question regarding
the authors. For the present moment we are only concerned with
the differences between the two manuscripts.

We may say a word on the note contained in M. after item D.
What is the meaning of this reference? The easiest explanation
of “Observances of the Service of the Altar” is that these words
were culled from M. fol. 1b, and that “the rest” includes Baptism,
marrige etc. as a matter of minor importance. The result would
be that in (one of) the ancestor(s) of M. these subjects were reckoned
as a unit by a copyist, not formally but materially.¹

We may register in i the following external differences:

A. The reversion of the order of the questions 10-13, as follows:
M. 10-11-12-13 and V. 12-13-11-10.
B. Q. and A. 24 is omitted in V.
C. V. has in Q. 41: “Question” instead of “Solution”, and goes on
with this change until Q. 44 after which he returns to the right track.

¹ The possibility that the Canons of John b. Abgare once stood in this place
(as in M. viii), but were left out, seems to be less probable, as their name was:
“Canons and Observances of the Altar”.

68
D. In Q. 46 V. has not the “Solution” but puts this in the place of Q. 47.
E. V. omits the Solution of Q. 47 and Q. and S. 48; consequently we get a very queer change for V. goes on to write “Solution” instead of “Question” etc.
F. Something similar has happened elsewhere: fol. 29b18-30a1 (Q. 112). Here the contents of the Q. and “Solution” have been omitted and the word “Question” is immediately followed by the “Answer” and consequently the text is unintelligible.
G. The concluding rubric of the treatise at page 34a is omitted.

We pass ii and iii as irrelevant for the present investigation. Questions about the Eucharist return in V. foll. 66–93 = M. 51–66. V. shows in these pages a considerable plus over M., viz. twelve questions. These additions do not give the impression of being interpolations. On the contrary they fit in very well in the preceding context at least so far as one may venture to affirm about this Quaestiones-Literature 1, its structure being always loose. Yet the possibility cannot be ruled out that a reader at some later time should have provided his copy with some new questions in places which seemed to him wanting a further explanation. But still, the former suggestion seems more probable. I am inclined to the view that M. omitted these pieces which seemed superfluous. I may refer to the fact that M. or his “Vorlage” obviously changed the text of V. fol. 93b in such a way that not only the inscription of V. was left out, perhaps because the name of Isho’yabhib was found already at the beginning of iii, but that also a part of its first Q. was affected. Consequently the text in M. was thrown into confusion and its sense destroyed, while V. has kept the right order. 1 In view of the present material it cannot be settled what reason compelled the copyist. Dogmatical corrections 1 (the writer of M. is, as appears from the colophon, a Uniate = Chaldean = a Nestorian, subject to the See of Rome) are out of the question. The choice remains between carelessness of the copyists or the possibility that the first author himself should have given at one time a revised edition.

In surveying these two parts we observe the remarkable fact that

1 About the Questions vide ch. v. (2) This regards only the collation of V. and M.; but this is not sufficient as the Arabic tradition is different, cf. p. 121–122.
3 They are very often found but almost exclusively in dogmatical statements and names, cf. e.g.: A. J. Wensinck, Mystic Treatises of Isaac of Nineveh, Amsterdam, 1923, p. xvii, and: A. Mingana, Early Christian Mystics, W.S. vii, Cambridge, 1934, p. 74–75.
while i shows only very unimportant changes, those of ii are of a different nature and contain a certain amount of new information. This may be due to the two treatises having once circulated independently. Their union may have taken place at a later date. In this connection it should be remembered that each of them has its own conclusion and that codex-Šeërt contained only the first group. But all these suggestions are merely hypothetical.

B. I have given the text of the best written manuscript M. in facsimile. This text has served as a basis for my translation. This procedure was justified by the following reasons: 1. It is a copy of the elder codex; 2. According to the result reached in A. it seems that M. has the better text, for this part at least; 3. A detailed study of the variants as found in V. and M. cannot be decisive in favour of one, only two codices being at our disposal, but M. seems in most cases to have the text that should be preferred.

This last point needs some further explanation. Appendix i shows a table of the places where V. deviates from the standard-text. Whatever was of some importance for the translation has been referred to the foot-notes.

This list does not register the fact that V. often has “Answer” where M. uses the word “Solution” or the reverse, this change being of rather small importance. Yet we may mention these places here:

V.: Answer  28× at the questions: 27, 28, 29, 38, 49, 53, 63, 65, 66, 67, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103.
M.: Solution
V.: Solution:  4× at the questions: 16, 17, 105 and 117.
M.: Answer

In overlooking this series one cannot say that either manuscript has a preference for a certain terminology. Both seem to use these terms at random and I have been unable to detect a reason for these variations. It appears that both words were considered to be interchangeable. In the next paragraph some works of Greek origin will be dealt with; the same change, viz. between ἀποκρήσις and λύσις will be found there.

Still another kind of differences has not been specially noted. V. (and this fact is not a favourable presumption for the text of this

(1) Words of the MS. in red have been underlined.
manuscript) seems to have been written, especially in the second part, by an untrained copyist. Consequently there are many places in which he began a word on one line, but having written two letters he saw that the space did not suffice. He then wrote the word on the next line and marked the preceding letters by a circle of dots. He records this for the sake of completeness, though it is of no further importance.

That the text of V. is not very good, is proved by a number of mistakes in which Syriac words were written, that have no meaning in the sentence, cf. e.g. Q. 69, 84, 105 ܐܢ in stead of ܐܢ, “end” in stead of “beginning”. The number of mistakes in M., see: 2b1, 9b14 is considerably smaller.

In one instance I ventured to go against the unanimous witness of V. and M., viz. in Q. 83-84; the context shows clearly that “Answer” and “Question” have been left out. It may be that something of the same character happened in Q. 37 where we should add: “Question” before “I saw”, and “Answer” before “This”; but in this case one cannot say that the sequence of thought is confused. The text of the manuscripts gives a sufficient sense. These facts raise the question of the origin of our MSS. Both copies might possibly descend from one and the same codex. The evidence, however, is too small for certainty on this point. The common source lies further back than the direct fathers of the present manuscripts; perhaps it was due to the author.

We have arranged our list of variants under some heads giving now a few illustrations for each of them:

1. A number of places show a reversion of the order of the words, such as is common in many manuscripts: M. 4b6, 6a3, 8a8-9 etc. (not marked in the foot-notes).

2. At some places an accusative is expressed in M. by ܙ which has been neglected in V.: 17a8, 21b4, this use of the preposition being facultative. In several places the reading of either manuscript

(1) Have we a similar case in ܐܡܐܡ instead of ܐܡܐܡ M. 25b13 and 29b18; this form as it stands can only be derived from ܐܡ to suffer, pt. Ethpe’él; but this has nothing to do with “to use” which is required by the sentence. Unless a verb ܐܡ is not registered in the Dictionaries, as is the case with ܓܡ M. 26b3-V. variant reading in 15b6; ܓܡ M. 19a3 where V. has the ordinary ܓܡ.

varies only orthographically: 8a2, M. אֲנַפָּה בֵּן, V. אֱלֹהֵי[כ]; 8a10, M. אֲנַפָּה בֵּן, V. אֱלֹהִים בֵּן; 8b15, M. בְּן וַתִּפְרְדָה, V. בְּנֵי וַתִּפְרְדָה; 16b12, M. אָלַחֵי בֵּן, V. אֶלֹהִים בֵּן. In other cases one manuscript has the object-suffix immediately with the verb while the other writes it separately (or with the substantive itself): 11b1 (not marked in the footnotes).

3. Likewise we did not mention in the footnotes the differences in the use of conjunctions such as כָּל, כִּי, או, או; it being well known how easily such words are inserted or left out in copying. Both manuscripts vary here without a change of some characteristic of private or peculiar style. The same holds good for the change of prepositions having the same meaning.

4. Various places show differences in the use of synonyms. For examples see: M. 33b17 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב; M. 16b4 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב; M. 11b4 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב; M. 10a7, b1 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב; M. 8a14 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב; M. 22a12 אֲנַפָּה מַעֲרָב = V. אֱלֹהִים מַעֲרָב. We choose some very conspicuous instances, some of which may have exegetical consequences. It is important that these cannot be derived from the same original MS.

5. Next comes a number of places where either M. or V. have a surplus. All these cases are marked in the footnotes. Some of them are but extensions of the quotations from prayers. This is a characteristic of V. This MS. often quotes extensively where M. has only the first two words (cf. M. 5a13, 31a3) and in some cases it offers a text which is not found in “Takhṣaṣṣ.” This fact is only remarkable because it shows the variety existing even in the 10th cent. The same is found in the Office of Baptism.6 The reverse, however, is also found; V. omits in several places: “and in the name of the Son etc.”

The value of these variants for the text is but slight. In contrast with the greater part of the cases of the former category,6 it requires notice that V. has a number of additions in the beginning but that the number of omissions compared to M. was growing as it went on. These omissions do not generally effect a change in the meaning of the sentences because the lost words merely repeated things already said. It is, therefore, often difficult to decide about the original text. Yet we are justified in saying that the rule: “lectio brevior potior” does not hold good here. There are a number


72
of places in V. which show clearly that this codex has left out typical Syriac epithets (e.g. 2b15). One might quote evidence from other Syriac manuscript copies showing omissions of one half of a parallelism of words for the sake of brevity. This tendency is evident in V. in various places, e.g. M. 1ga8-91; 1j9g-10; I think almost everyone of V.'s omissions (as far as they are not mere mistakes) should be explained in this way. It is not so easy to decide, whether the same is true for M.; the possibility, however, (see Q. 10O) should not be ruled out. At any rate, I could not find any other reason for the origin of these variant readings.

6. Finally V. has in some places (viz. Q. 10 end, Q. 16, Q. 17, Q. 52) extensive stretches of "varia lectio" or rather additions. Their origin has not become clear to me.

In surveying this matter and carefully weighing its critical implications the choice of M. as the leading manuscript may certainly be justified, as long as a third independent witness cannot be found. The origin of variants like those sub 4 and 6 remains a problem. Did they arise from dictation? One might prefer this guess, as it could also serve as an explanation of those sub 3 and 5.