ZEUS, ARTEMIS, APOLLO: JOHN BAR PENKĀYĒ ON ANCIENT MYTHS AND CULTS*

INTRODUCTION

John bar Penkāyē completes the first part of his work *The History of the Temporal World* (*taššīṭā šal šālmā d-zabnā*), or as he entitled it *The Book of the Main Points* (*kṭābā d-rēš mellē*),¹ with the ninth chapter, in which he provides a summary of cults and beliefs that “had taken hold” of mankind before the coming of Jesus Christ. The peoples that stand at the centre of Bar Penkāyē’s work are the Jews, the Greeks, the Chaldeans, and the Magi (i. e., the Persians). John also provides short notes on some other nations without indicating their names. Presumably, he meant the Romans and the ancient Arabs.

The question that naturally emerges is what sources Bar Penkāyē used while compiling the ninth chapter. Anton Baumstark attempted to give a brief answer to this question in his survey of Bar Penkāyē’s work.² He suggested that John might have used early Christian apologetic works containing mythological material and drew some parallels between John’s writing and the preserved works of Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Ambrose, and Pseudo-Melito. Baumstark assumed that a lost apology of Quadratus could be a source for the ninth chapter as well. However, it is doubtful if Bar

(*) I am grateful to Dr. Alexander Treiger (Dalhousie University) for reading an earlier draft of this publication and suggesting some improvements.

(1) For more detailed information about John bar Penkāyē and his writings with further references see Yu. FURMAN, “The origins of the temporal world: The first *mē’mrā* of the *Kṭābā d-rēš mellē* of John bar Penkāyē” in the present volume.

(2) A. BAUMSTARK, “Eine syrische Weltgeschichte des siebten Jahrh.s.,” *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Alterthumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* (1901), S. 279.

Penkāyē could read these original Greek writings. He does not exhibit knowledge of Greek anywhere in *The Book of the Main Points*. Moreover, at the beginning of the sixth chapter he provides a list of the “sacred books of the Old Testament” and concludes it with the following remark: “I know these [books]. I read all of them in Syriac. Whether there are others or not I do not know.”³ This allows us to suggest that John could not read Greek and hence only used literature available in Syriac as sources for the ninth chapter. Therefore, it is works composed before the seventh century and known to have been available in Syriac that need to be taken into consideration in this paper, as we attempt to identify parallels and sources of Bar Penkāyē’s ninth chapter.

PSEUDO-NONNOS’ MYTHOLOGICAL SCHOLIA

The most striking textual parallels to the ninth chapter can be found in the *Mythological Scholia* of Pseudo-Nonnos. These scholia were composed in the sixth century with a view to explaining mythological allusions made by Gregory of Nazianzus in four of his homilies, namely: the *Oratio in sancta Lumina* (Or. 39), the *Oratio funebris in laudem Basilii Magni* (Or. 43) and the two *Invectives adversus Iulianum* (Or. 4 and 5). Gregory’s *Homilies* along with the *Mythological Scholia* were translated into Syriac probably in the sixth century. The first version survived only in part. The second recension of the Syriac version of the *Homilies* and the *Scholia* was prepared by the Monophysite bishop of Edessa, Paula, in 623/4. Paula’s recension survived for the most part and became the basis for Sebastian Brock’s edition of the *Mythological Scholia*.⁴

The “Greek-related” paragraph of the ninth chapter follows in many of its details the myths found in the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina*. These are the myths of Kronos and Zeus’s birth, the birth of Dionysus and Aphrodite, Hekate-Artemis, Apollo and his oracles. The slightly modified myths of Aphrodite and Dionysus’s birth are repeated in the *Scholia to Invective I* and the *Scholia to Invective II* respectively.

(3) BL Or. 9385, f. 47r:9–11.

(4) S. BROCK, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, Cambridge, 1971.

In what follows, we shall outline the textual relationships between the aforementioned *Scholia* and the ninth chapter of Bar Penkāyē's work.

The *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* begin with a story about Kronos swallowing his children and about the birth of Zeus.

[illegible]

(6) W. LÜDTKE. "Zur Überlieferung der Reden Gregors von Nazianz," OC II, 3 (1913), p. 266.

(8) BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, p. 33.

Zeus, the pagan theologians — or rather dreamers — say, was born of Kronos; and after he was born he was rescued thus: Kronos, they say, while dwelling with Rhea, taking the children that she bore to him, used to swallow them. And this occurring many times thus, Rhea remained without children. Now when she bore Zeus, in fear lest this child too would, being swallowed up, perish, she wrapped a stone in saddling clothes and gave (it) to Kronos to swallow, as if (it were) a child, while Zeus she hid in Crete. And set over the child the Korybantes and Kouretes, so that they should dance and clap hands and beat their weapon(s); and (thus) there would be a noise which could cover up and hide the sound of the child's crying, so that Kronos, learning where he was hidden, should not take him and swallow him up.⁹

The first [one] we will introduce is the god of the Cretans whom they call Kronos. Due to his envy or gluttony or for some other reason, which I do not know, he swallowed his children one by one. People say he had a wife called Demeter (it was one of her names by which she was called, for it was their will to create gods and to name them). Demeter knew that this Kronos had eaten his own children. Therefore, after she had given birth to Zeus, their god, it is said that she entrusted him to some people who were able to hide him. They made noise by jerking, singing and clanging their swords so that the cry of the child could not be heard. So, they brought him and hid on a mountain which was abundant with trees. His mother wrapped a stone in swaddles and laid it instead of [Zeus] so that when Kronos would come, he would swallow the stone instead of the child without hesitation. This was the reason for the erring to mislead and to be misled exactly as their gods [did].¹⁰

(9) BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, pp. 175–176 (Syriac text); 61 (English translation); I cite Brock’s English translation of the *Scholia*.

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Dionysus's birth

Semele was the daughter of Kadmos; Zeus was enamoured of her and slept (*lit.* was) with her, but Hera, having come in jealousy, put on the guise of the nurse who was familiar with Semele, and counseled Semele: 'You should ask Zeus to sleep with you as he sleeps with Hera.' Now Zeus used to sleep with Hera accompanied by thunders and thunderbolts. And Hera was counseling Semele these things so that when Zeus came to her with thunderbolts she would be burnt up, as a mortal, and (so) she (herself) would no longer have a rival — which is what actually happened. For when Zeus came again to Semele, Semele asked him to sleep with her as he slept with Hera. And having slept with her she was burnt up by the thunderbolt. And Semele perished. And then Zeus, having taken Dionysus, who was an (unborn) child, sewed him up in thigh. And afterwards in the seventh month Hermes, having arrived, opened up his thigh, and (Zeus) gave birth to him.¹¹

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Let us tell another impious [story] which is about Dionysus, the god of the Greeks. He was born from Zeus in adultery as well. People say that once Zeus met a woman and fell in love with her. Then he slept with her and she conceived. When the wife of Zeus found it out, she became jealous. Since she wanted her to punish herself, she came [to her place] and told her: "When Zeus comes to you, tell him: 'If you love me, come to me in the same disguise you come to your wife, Hera'." He was used to come to her as a lightning. Therefore, she was led astray like a child and told Zeus to do this. And when he came to her the way she had asked — as a lightning — she was wounded and died. However, the child she bore did not die. As the time for [the child] had not yet come, Zeus took him, tore his own hip, and put him inside till the appointed time came and he was born.¹²

Aphrodite's birth

[illegible]

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The pagans consider Hekate to be a goddess, and some of them say she is Artemis, but others the moon, and others a certain specific goddess, who, by means of certain foul shades, appears to those who summon her. But especially they say that she appears to those who are accursed. Her shades appear (as) men, having dragons' heads which are very long and very large, so that at the sight of her she amazes and terrifies those who see (her).¹⁵

Now, let us tell [a story] about Artemis, the goddess of the Ephesians. People say that she sends visions and fearful demons to magicians. Therefore, she is honoured as the one who is able to reveal the hidden.¹⁶

Apollo and his oracles

[illegible]

(17) Cf. BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, pp. 195–196, 214, 301 (Syriac text); *The Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians*, ed. J. R. HARRIS, Cambridge, 1893, 2.

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<...> In this Delphi there was a temple of Apollo, in which was the Pythia, in which stood the tripod of bronze; from which tripod of bronze an oracle used to proceed. And above the tripod was a bowl in which oracular pebbles¹⁸ were cast <...> Now the tripod was (there) for this reason: because the oracle pronounced concerning three (different) times; for the oracle promises to say both concerning things past, and concerning those present, and concerning those to come.¹⁹

And here is the story about Apollo as found in the ninth chapter:

Also, other people tell us about Apollo that he found a place in this country where a spirit of divination was ascending from. He sat and divined over it. He divined on the past, the present, and the future with a tripod where he laid his pipes. Therefore, Apollo is honoured as a master of the hidden. He is honoured among the Greeks though he is not able to perform any of these.²⁰

According to Bar Penkāyē and the *Scholia*, Apollo used to divine the past, the present, and the future. This feature is found in both texts. However, the texts differ in details: according to the *Scholia*, Apollo divined using the tripod and pebbles (or vessels? see note 21), while according to Bar Penkāyē's ninth chapter, he performed this with the use of pipes.

Finally, several parallels should be pointed out between the 'Egyptian' section of the ninth chapter and the *Scholia*. These are the myth of Osiris and Typhon and a short note on the worship of reptiles and creeping things²¹ in the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina*.

It seems that only the first part of the myth of Osiris and Typhon is represented in the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* which mentions the struggle between the two. Neither the *Scholia to the Oratio in*

(18) It seems that translation was made in accordance with the Greek text where we have χαλκῆ (BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, p. 168), while the Syriac word *pīlā* has the meaning 'law bowl, saucer' and designates some kind of temple vessel (M. SOKOLOFF, *A Syriac Lexicon*, Winona Lake, Ind., Piscataway, NJ, 2012, p. 1186).

(19) BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, pp. 186 (Syriac text), 66–67 (English translation).

(20) BL Or. 9385, f. 85r:19–f. 85v:1.

(21) BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, p. 191 (Syriac text).

[illegible]

When comparing the material of the *Scholia* and that of the ninth chapter, it seems probable that Bar Penkāyē used a revision of the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* which was no longer preserved. Several facts support this assumption. First, most of the myths contained in the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* are represented in the ninth chapter. Second, the sequence of the stories in the *Scholia*²³ is nearly the same as that in Bar Penkāyē's work. Third, textual parallels with the *Scholia* help elucidate some obscure passages in the ninth chapter. However, it should be noted that several peculiar details present in John's narration are absent from the *Scholia*. On the other hand, Bar Penkāyē tends to omit such important details as names of characters or locales present in the *Scholia*. Taking these arguments into consideration, it can be assumed that John was acquainted with another variant of the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* which he used as the basis for the 'Greek' section of his ninth chapter.

(23) The content and order of the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina* are found in BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, p. 17.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE *EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS*

One of the most striking parallels to the ninth chapter of Bar Penkāyē's work is found in the apologetic work of the early Christian author Clement of Alexandria, the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, which was written at the end of the second century CE. Clement rebukes the Greeks and mocks them for their absurd tradition of mystery cults and worship of false gods. He reveals a deep knowledge of Greek mythology, and his descriptions of it somehow found a way into Bar Penkāyē's work. As far as we can judge, there are no known Syriac translations of Clement's writings. If the supposed textual relationships can be proven it would give us reason to assume that there once existed a translation of Clement's work into Syriac which is either no longer preserved or has not yet been discovered.

Below we shall cite several passages from Clement's work that the ninth chapter reproduced very closely to the source.

Zeus and Demeter

Δηοῦς δὲ μυστήρια αἱ Διὸς πρὸς μητέρα Δήμητρα ἀφροδίσιοι συμπλοκαὶ καὶ μῆνις τῆς Δηοῦς, ἥς δὴ χάριν Βριμῶ προσ-αγορευθῆναι λέγεται <...> ταῦτ' αἱ Φρύγες τελίσκουσιν Ἄττιδι καὶ Κυβέλῃ καὶ Κορύβασιν· τεθρυλήκασιν δὲ ὡς ἄρα ἀποσπάσας ὁ Ζεὺς τοῦ κριοῦ τοὺς διδύμους φέρων ἐν μέσοις ἔρριψε τοῖς κόλποις τῆς Δηοῦς, τιμωρίαν ψευδῆ τῆς βιαίας συμπλοκῆς ἐκτινύνων, ὡς ἑαυτὸν δῆθεν ἐκτεμῶν.

The mysteries of Demeter commemorate the amorous embraces of Zeus with his mother Demeter and wrath of Demeter on account which she is said to have received the name Brimo <...> The same rites are performed in honour of Attis and Cybele and the Corybantes by the Phrygians, who have spread it abroad how that Zeus tore off the testicles of a ram, and then brought and flung them into the midst of Demeter's lap, thus paying a sham penalty for his violent embrace by pretending that he had mutilated himself.²⁴

Bar Penkāyē's account of a similar variant of the myth is as follows:

(24) Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation to the Greeks. The Rich Man's Salvation. To the Newly Baptized (fragment)*, ed. G. W. BUTTERWORTH, London, New York, 1919, pp. 34 (Greek text), 35 (English translation); I cite G. W. Butterworth's English translation.

Nevertheless, let us see what people say about Zeus after this and let us investigate what good deeds he committed to pay his mother back. People say that after he had grown and matured (oh, if only he had not been born — since if he had not been born he would not have existed at all!) — he came lasciviously with unsatisfied desire [to his mother], violated her, and slept with her. She bore a girl from him whose name was Persephone. The mother of Zeus became furious for he had dishonored her. Therefore, when he decided to please her, he found a ram and cut off its testicles, brought them and threw them on her lap as if he took vengeance on himself. This was done to show her that she might not fear him in the future.²⁵

The texts have two significant details in common. This proves a connection between them. The first such detail is a story of how Zeus managed to appease Demeter's wrath by his manipulations with a ram's testicles. I was able to find this detail only in the work of Clement, while there is no hint of it in the Syriac texts taken into consideration. The second detail is that Clement unambiguously designates Demeter as the mother of Zeus. Exactly the same role is ascribed to Demeter throughout the ninth chapter. This seems to be important since other available writings claim that Rhea was the mother of Zeus.

One further detail which points to a probable connection between the two texts appears in the continuation of the story. After Persephone grew up, Zeus abused her as well assuming the guise of a serpent.

κυεῖ μὲν ἡ Δημήτηρ, ἀνατρέφεται δὲ ἡ Κόρη, μίγνυται δ' αὐτῷ ὁ γεννήσας οὗτοσι Ζεὺς τῇ Φερεφάττῃ, τῇ ἰδίᾳ θυγατρὶ, μετὰ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Δηώ, ἐκλαθόμενος τοῦ προτέρου μύσους (πατὴρ καὶ φθορεὺς κόρης ὁ Ζεὺς) καὶ μίγνυται δράκων γενόμενος, ὃς ἦν, ἐλεγχθεῖς.

Demeter becomes pregnant; the Maiden grows up; and this Zeus who begat her has further intercourse, this time with Persephone herself, his own daughter, after his union with her mother Demeter. Totally forgetful of his former pollution Zeus becomes

(25) BL Or. 9385, f. 84r:13–21.

the ravisher as well as father of the maiden, meeting her under the form of a serpent, his true nature being revealed.²⁶

The same feature can be found in the ninth chapter of Bar Penkāyē's work:

However, Demeter did not stop fearing the lasciviousness of Zeus. She took care lest he might assault the girl and abuse her. Despite the fact she had hidden her most safely, he turned into a dragon (ܡܝܬܢܐ) and abused her as well.²⁷

Though it is known from ancient literature that Zeus used to assume various guises to get hold of his victims,²⁸ it is nowhere else mentioned that he became a serpent (or dragon) in the story with Persephone. This could also be a witness to the possible connection between the two texts.

Demeter and Persephone

The myth of Demeter and Persephone retold by bar Penkāyē reveals some other features also found in Clement's writing. For example, Clement relates how Persephone was abducted by Pluto and how Demeter started searching her daughter.

ἀλωμένη γὰρ ἡ Δηώ κατὰ ζήτησιν τῆς θυγατρὸς τῆς Κόρης περὶ τὴν Ἐλευσίνα (τῆς Ἀττικῆς δέ ἐστι τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον) ἀποκάμνει καὶ φρέατι ἐπικαθίζει λυπουμένη.

It tells how Demeter, wandering through Eleusis, which is a part of Attica, in search of her daughter the Maiden, becomes exhausted and sits down at a well in deep distress.²⁹

This part of the myth is almost literally retold in the ninth chapter of Bar Penkāyē's work.

Demeter did not stop searching for her daughter who was stolen by Pluto. After wandering and roaming along the roads, she came up and sat wearily by a well of water.³⁰

(26) Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation*, ed. BUTTERWORTH, pp. 34 (Greek text), 35 (English translation).

(27) BL Or. 9385, f. 84r:23–f. 84v:2.

(28) Cf. BROCK, *The Syriac Version*, p. 274 (Syriac text).

(29) Clement of Alexandria, *The Exhortation*, ed. BUTTERWORTH, pp. 40, 41 (English translation).

(30) BL Or. 9385, f. 84r:9–12.

Moreover, Bar Penkāyē mentions a certain swineherd who helped Demeter to find Persephone and whom Demeter granted a gift of seeds of wheat. It is noteworthy that Clement lists inhabitants of Eleusis among whom he names Eubouleus, a swineherd. This detail is also a feature exclusively common to both the ninth chapter and Clement's *Exhortation to the Greeks*.

Taking into consideration the parallels discussed above, we may assume that some parts of Clement's writing were circulating in Syriac literature. However, we are unable to state whether this was an integral translation of his work or Syriac readers were familiar with them indirectly in a paraphrase or epitome of some sort. Bar Penkāyē himself could have incorporated these myths in the plot of his chapter. However, it is more probable that John used some one concrete source for the 'Greek' section of his book. He could have used a revision of the Mythological Scholia unknown to us where parts of Clement's *Exhortation* were interspersed. This, however, must remain a conjecture, since none of possible 'mediators' between Clement and Bar Penkāyē is known to us.

THE APOLOGY OF ARISTIDES

The *Apology* of Aristides is an early Christian apologetic work written originally in Greek in the mid-2nd century CE. It is preserved mainly in Armenian and Syriac versions. The original Greek text of the *Apology* is not extant independently. However, it is embedded in the Greek version of the romance *Barlaam and Josaphat*, where it is transmitted with some modifications.

The Syriac version of the *Apology* was discovered in a manuscript of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in the late 19th century and edited by J. Rendel Harris. The manuscript itself dates to the 7th century and contains a number of separate treatises of ethical character.

It could be suggested that Bar Penkāyē knew the *Apology* (or at least some text related to it) and elaborated on its material while compiling the ninth chapter of *The Book of the Main Points*. Similarity between the *Apology* and the ninth chapter could be observed on three different textual levels: structure, rhetorical devices, and content.

From the point of view of structure, the *Apology* has a very simple, fivefold division. First, the author proves that the four elements of the

Barbarians (earth, water, fire, and wind) cannot possibly be gods. Then he recalls Greek mythology beginning with Kronos and ending with Persephone. Egyptian myths and beliefs follow. The Jews are said to be much nearer the true knowledge of God. However, they are reported to be worshippers of angels. Finally, the author describes the Christians as those who alone worship the true God.

Bar Penkāyē's ninth chapter seems to follow a similar pattern. While describing the condition of mankind deluded with various kinds of false gods, Bar Penkāyē begins with the Jews. Their impiety is argued from numerous citations from the Old Testament. Then John moves on to tell some of the stories of the heathen. First come Greek myths which begin with Kronos and end with a woman soothsayer in the sanctuary of Apollo. Next comes a paragraph on Egyptian beliefs where the myth of Isis, Osiris and Typhon along with some stories illustrating the Egyptian tendency to worship almost all created matter are told. Thereafter beliefs of the Chaldeans and the Magi (i. e., the Persians) are described. Some short notices on other, unspecified nations are also provided. Finally, Bar Penkāyē returns to the Jews and discusses their attitudes to Jesus Christ by citing the New Testament.

Although the ninth chapter does not reproduce the structure of the *Apology* in detail, some common features can be outlined. First, in both sources there is a division of mankind into religious groups, which are then described one after another. The repertoire of these groups is, however, subject to change depending on the purpose and the cultural background of the author. Even the fivefold division of the *Apology* was changed when the work was incorporated in the *Barlaam and Josaphat* romance where only three groups of mankind are represented: the worshippers of false gods (Chaldeans, Greeks, and Egyptians), the Jews, and the Christians.³¹ Possibly Bar Penkāyē imitated this structure in order to create an impression of some kind of apologetic work; yet he redesigned it according to his own purposes and ideas. Second, the inner structure of the separate paragraphs of the ninth chapter resembles that of the *Apology*. Aristides' refutation of the Greek myths begins with Kronos and lists the Greek gods and goddesses by seniority. Bar Penkāyē does exactly the same. His re-telling of Greek mythology also opens with a story about Kronos and discusses the gods in the order of their appearance. However, the

(31) *The Apology of Aristides*, ed. HARRIS, p. 70.

exact list of gods and the myths that are being recounted differ. The structural arrangement of the Egyptian part in Bar Penkāyē's work is also the same as in the *Apology*. First comes the myth of Isis, Osiris, and Typhon, followed by a list of objects worshipped by the Egyptians. The textual relations between this part of the *Apology* and the ninth chapter will be discussed below.

Another similarity with the *Apology* can be found in the argumentation deployed by Bar Penkāyē in his ninth chapter. While accepting the possibility that common people could err, he regrets that even the wise men among the heathen were unable to distinguish between the true God and false gods and were overcome by delusion. John wonders about “how it happen[ed] that even those who were the most intelligent and the most brilliant among the heathen taught them nothing but to thoughtlessly sacrifice fetid offerings to dumb idols with a great zeal and to wrongfully and facilely call the created things using the merciful, fearful, and venerated name of the only one God?”³²

We find this idea also in Aristides' *Apology*:

[illegible]

And it comes to me to wonder also, O king, at their philosophers, how they too have erred and have named gods those likenesses which have been made in honour of the elements; and the wise men have not understood that these very elements are cor-

(32) A similar passage could also be found in Eusebius's *On Theophany*:
 אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּ מַה הֵם וְכִי הֻמָּשְׁתָּחֶה לָּהֶן בְּבִרְיוֹת עֲבוֹדָתָן כִּי
 נִסְתָּרוּ מֵעֵינֵינוּ שֶׂם הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים
 וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים וְשֶׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשִׁים
 "Nor did their wise men, who are boasted of for their excessive
 wisdom, and the invention of geometry, Astrology, and Arithmetic, know or
 understand how to weigh or to discriminate in their minds, between the
 distinguishing measure of the Divine power, and that of irrational mortal
 nature" (Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, *On the Theophania*, ed. S. LEE, London,
 1842, II.12:15–18).

ruptible and dissoluble <...> Great then is the error which their philosophers have brought upon their followers.³³

It should be noted that the passage of Aristides refers first of all to the logical skills of the wise people of the past which he assumed they possessed.³⁴ Bar Penkāyē, on the other hand, mentions repeatedly the natural law that the heathen followed in contrast to the written one.³⁵ One of Bar Penkāyē's main arguments for accusing the heathen of impious life is that the gods they invented performed abominable actions and permitted those who worshipped them to perform the same, being their role model. He writes: "Indeed, those who say that their gods (as they call them) easily took part in adultery and debauchery, in insane dancing and satanic singing, and all the other repugnant and abominable [deeds] obviously performed the same [deeds] themselves, [being] their (i. e., the gods') creators."³⁶ Moreover, at the end of some Greek myths he introduces a didactic conclusion. Thus, after telling the story of how Demeter deceived Kronos and substituted a stone for the newborn Zeus, he concludes: "This was the reason for the erring to mislead and to be misled exactly as their gods [did]."³⁷ The stories about Zeus, Persephone, and Aphrodite end with similar conclusions.

(33) *The Apology of Aristides*, ed. HARRIS, pp. 7–11; 17–18 (Syriac text), 37 (English translation).

(34) Cf. the following passage from the Apology: "For if a little part of the element be dissolved or corrupted, all of it is dissolved and corrupted. If then these elements are dissolved and corrupted, and compelled to be subject to another harder than themselves, and are not in their nature gods, how can they call gods those likenesses which are made in their honour?" (*The Apology of Aristides*, ed. HARRIS, p. 37).

(35) Bar Penkāyē maintains that people had been given a natural law before they received a written one. He points this out several times in the ninth chapter and throughout the *Book of the Main Points*. For example: "Neither the natural law nor the written one helped them (i. e., the heathens and the Jews)" (BL Or. 9385, f.87r:7). "The world did not want to know its Benefactor with the natural wisdom that God had given it" (BL Or. 9385, f. 87r: 21–23). "God multiplied laws, those laws which were written in nature. They were torn in pieces in the sea of evil. He engraved them upon the scrolls and put them forward" (BL Or. 9385, f. 45r:16–18), etc.

(36) BL Or. 9385, f. 82v:22 – f. 83r:1.

(37) BL Or. 9385, f. 84r:12.

Thus, before introducing the first Greek god Kronos, the author of the *Apology* makes a general statement which could refer to the following passage in its entirety (in the same way as in Bar Penkāyē).

For they called suchlike persons gods, who are not gods, and hence men have taken occasion to commit adultery and fornication, and to plunder and do everything that is wicked and hateful and abominable. For if those who are called their gods have done all those things that are written above, how much more shall men do them who believe in those who have done these things!³⁸

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The idea that the pagans are supposed to be excused for their wrong deeds due to the fact that they imitate their gods' behaviour might be a trivial and rather common *topos* in apologetic literature. Bar Penkāyē could borrow it from some other apology, not necessarily that of Aristides. Nevertheless, it is virtually certain that Bar Penkāyē's ninth chapter has links with early Christian apologies.

Finally, some textual similarities between the two works can also be observed in the paragraphs devoted to the Egyptians. Both works begin with a myth about the struggle of Osiris, Isis, and Typhon. However, it would appear that the author of the *Apology* and Bar Penkāyē used different sources. The version that appears in the

(39) Ibid., pp. 39–40 (Syriac text), 42 (English translation).

Nevertheless, the two texts come very close to each other in of the way they describe the animate and the inanimate objects worshipped by the Egyptians. Bar Penkāyē writes as follows: “They worshiped wild and domestic animals, even abominable reptiles. Divination and witchcraft were likewise held in honour according to the testimony of the books. Also, they worshipped trees, roots, and stones. They called **garlic, onion, leek** (لحمون، فليجك، ولخيم) and other similar things too with the fearful name [of God], too.”⁴⁰

١. ڇا ڪو به ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٢. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٣. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٤. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٥. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٦. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٧. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٨. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ٩. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.
 ١٠. ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو، ته ڪم ڪري سگهجي ٿو.

(40) BL Or. 9385, f. 85v:18–22.

and others **garlic, onions, and thorns**, and others the leopard, and the like.⁴¹

Despite the fact that Bar Penkāyē's list is nowhere as detailed, both texts name the garlic and the onion as Egyptian gods. Theoretically, Bar Penkāyē could have elaborated on the passage from Numbers 11:5 where the Israelites are said to have remembered "the leeks, the onions, and the garlic" (ܠܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܬܐ) which they had eaten in Egypt. This passage would help explain why 'the leek' was introduced in Bar Penkāyē's list. However, Bar Penkāyē must have read about this notion elsewhere for he did not incorporate the entire list of Numbers 5:11 in his text.

The commonalities between the *Apology* and the ninth chapter are insufficient to establish the latter's direct dependence on the former. Thus, Bar Penkāyē probably did not use the *Apology* of Aristides directly. However, he could have known some texts related to the *Apology* which are no longer extant.

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, *CONTRA MAGOS*⁴²

Bar Penkāyē introduces his discussion of Persian beliefs with the myth of Zurvan. This myth or at least its fragments are well known in East-Syriac literature. Several records of it are found in the Syriac *Acts of the Persian Martyrs*,⁴³ in the treatise of Mār Āḇā,⁴⁴ and in *The Cause of the Foundation of the Schools* of Barḥadbšabbā of Ḥalwān.⁴⁵ The most detailed versions of the myth are represented in Bar Penkāyē's *Book of*

(41) *The Apology of Aristides*, ed. HARRIS, pp. ܣܝܬܐ:4-7, ܬܝܬܐ:6-15; 45, 46 (English translation).

(42) The Zurvanite myth in Syriac literature and its relationship with Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Contra Magos* have been discussed in detail in Ю. В. ФУРМАН, [Yulia V. FURMAN], "Персы и их религия в «Истории» Йоханнана бар Пенкайе" ["Persians and their religion in the *History* of John bar Penkāyē"], *Символ*, 61: *Syriaca · Arabica · Iranica* (2012), pp. 122-146. Here, only a short summary of the issue will be given.

(43) *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, ed. P. BEDJAN, vols. 1-7, Parisiis, Lipsiæ, 1890-1897, vol. 2, p. 577:3, 7-11.

(44) O. BRAUN, "Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der persischen Gotteslehre," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 57 (1903), SS. 562-565.

(45) *Cause de la fondation des Écoles [de] Mar Barḥadbšabbā 'Arbaya, évêque de Ḥalwan*, ed. A. SCHER (PO, IV.4.18), Paris, 1908, pp. 365:13-366:1, 366:4-6.

the *Main Points*⁴⁶ and Theodore bar Kōnī's *Scholia*.⁴⁷ It seems that the main source of borrowing for all these writings was Theodore of Mopsuestia's work *Contra Magos*. Until 1968 it had only been known from a short account of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Photios.⁴⁸ According to Photios, the treatise *Contra Magos* consisted of three books: the Zurvanite myth was expounded in the first book, while the two other books dealt with the Christian teachings. Two Syriac fragments of the last two books were published by H. Scheinhardt⁴⁹ in 1968 and by G. J. Reinink in 1997.⁵⁰ The fact that the Zurvanite myth first appeared in the East-Syriac literature in the fifth century and that its early Syriac accounts are similar to Theodore of Mopsuestia's account (as preserved Photius) allows us to suggest that the treatise *Contra Magos* was the main source from which the Zurvanite myth spread within the East-Syriac tradition, which always held Theodore in great esteem.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The evidence presented above demonstrates some commonalities between the section on cults and mythologies in the ninth chapter of Bar Penkāyē's *Book of the Main Points*, on the one hand, and the *Scholia to the Oratio in sancta Lumina*, the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, the *Apology* of Aristides, and the lost treatise *Contra Magos* of Theodore of Mopsuestia, on the other. Unfortunately, Bar Penkāyē did not indicate his sources, with the exception of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, we are unable to answer the question of whether he borrowed the material from any or all the writings presented above or was acquainted with them through another author's secondary renderings.

(46) P. DE MENASCE, "Autour d'un texte syriaque inédit sur la religion des Mages," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 9:3 (1938), pp. 587–601.

(47) H. POGNON, *Inscriptions Mandaïtes des coupes de Khouabir. Texte, traduction et commentaire philologique avec quatre appendices et un glossaire. Deuxième partie*, Paris, 1899, pp. 111–112.

(48) Photius, *Bibliothèque*, éd. R. HENRY, t. I («codices» 1–84), Paris, 1959, p. 187.

(49) H. SCHEINHARDT, "Zitate aus drei verlorenen Schriften des Theodor von Mopsuestia," in: *Paul de Lagarde und die syrische Kirchengeschichte*, Göttingen, 1968, SS. 189–198.

(50) G. J. REININK, "A New Fragment of Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Contra Magos*," *Le Muséon*, 110:1 (1997), pp. 63–71.

We are also unsure to what degree the ninth chapter reflects creative revision and compilation of the material. It is possible that answers to these questions will never be found. However, further inquiries may allow us more accurately to outline connections between the ninth chapter and the other relevant works both within the Syriac tradition and outside it.

John bar Penkāyē

THE BOOK OF THE MAIN POINTS.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

The present edition of the ninth chapter is based on six manuscripts: **L** — MS London, The British Library, BL.Or.9385 (19th century),⁵¹ fol. 81v–89v/^{syr}p.171; **M** — MS Mingana, Library of the Selly Oak Colleges, Mingana 179 (20th century),⁵² fol. ^{syr}76v–^{syr}84v; **P** — MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Syr.406 (20th century),⁵³ fol. ^{syr}190v–^{syr}210r; **S** — MS Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, MS. 4133 (19th century),⁵⁴ fol. ^{syr}98r/98v–^{syr}108v/ 110r; **V** — MS Vatican 497, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.Syr.497 (20th century),⁵⁵ fol. ^{syr}151v–^{syr}167v; **Ū** — MS Vatican 592, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.Syr.592 (20th century),⁵⁶ fol. 216r/p.^{ar}435–222v/p.^{ar}448. While setting the type, I indicated the ends of lines in **L**. Since the signs for *rbāṣā karyā* and *rbāṣā ʔarrīkā* are used

(51) See description of the Ms. in an unpublished handwritten catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since 1899.

(52) A. MINGANA, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, 3 vols. (Woodbrooke Catalogues, 1–3), Cambridge, 1933, 1936, 1939, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 395–396.

(53) F. BRIQUEL-CHATONNET, *Manuscrits syriaques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (nos 356–435, entrés depuis 1911), de la bibliothèque Méjanes d’Aix-en-Provence, de la bibliothèque municipale de Lyon et de la Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg. Catalogue*, Paris, 1997, pp. 139–141.

(54) *Ibid.*, pp. 219–220.

(55) A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire des Manuscrits Syriaques des Fonds Vatican (490–631), Barberini oriental et Neofiti*, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1965, pp. 28–29; see also J.-M. VOSTE, “Manuscrits Syro-Chaldéens récemment acquis par la Bibliothèque Vaticane,” *Angelicum*, 6 (1929), pp. 39–40.

(56) VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Inventaire des Manuscrits Syriaques*, pp. 119–121.

inconsistently in these manuscripts they are normalized in the following edition.

TEXT

[f.81v]⁵⁷ / מִן־מִן־ / דִּמְעָה * דָּזַע קִילָה [דְּמַעְלָה תִּלְלָה]⁵⁹ דָּוָתָה * חֲפִצָּה
 זֶע / דְּהִתָּה זֶה דְּתִלָּה דְּמָה דְּזֶה יִזְדָּה: מִתְּנָה מִלְּמִלְּהָ לֶהָ / תִּלָּה דְּבָה
 דְּסִדָּה: יִזְמִיָּה בָּה דִּי זֶה דְּזֶה שֶׁמֶן: דְּתִדָּה [5] תַּעֲשֶׂה זֶה יִפְלָה לֶהָ
 תִּלָּה דְּמַעְלָה: מִיִּחַל זֶה בָּה / דְּתִפְדִּי־שֶׁהָ מִלְּלָה: דָּזַק זֶה דְּתִנָּה
 לֶהָ * תַּעֲשֶׂה זֶה⁶⁰ מִיִּשְׁעָה / יִעֲדִיב מִשְׁבֵּה דְּזֶה תִּלָּה דְּתִנָּה:
 תִּבֵּה / דְּלִבָּה דָּה לֶהָ תִּלְלָה דְּתִנָּה דְּתִנָּה לִתְעִיבָה: / דְּלִבָּה דְּחַבָּה
 מִשְׁמֵה יִעֲמֵה: מִדְּתִיבָה לִתְעִיבָה⁶¹ תַּעֲשֶׂה זֶה דְּתִנָּה [10] דְּתִנָּה יִעֲמֵה מִלְּמֵה:
 זֶה לִבָּה דְּתִנָּה זֶה: בָּה מִלְּמֵה / דְּתִנָּה תִּלָּה⁶² מִיִּשְׁעָה חֲלָה זֶה: מִלְּמֵה
 מִיִּחַל: דְּתִנָּה / תִּדְּמָה: דְּתִנָּה מִלְּמֵה זֶה דְּתִנָּה זֶה: מִלְּמֵה חֲלָה
 [P. 82r/f.82r] תִּדְּמָה מִלְּמֵה לִתְעִיבָה: דְּתִנָּה מִשְׁבֵּה תִּלָּה: מִלְּמֵה תִּלָּה / דְּתִנָּה
 בָּה תִּנָּה דְּתִנָּה: דְּתִנָּה לִתְעִיבָה: מִלְּמֵה זֶה מִלְּמֵה / מִלְּמֵה זֶה דְּתִנָּה
 דְּתִנָּה: דְּתִנָּה לִתְעִיבָה לִתְעִיבָה⁶⁴: מִלְּמֵה מִלְּמֵה בָּה דְּתִנָּה: מִלְּמֵה
 יִשְׁמָה בָּה מִלְּמֵה: [5] מִלְּמֵה מִלְּמֵה דְּתִנָּה דְּתִנָּה: מִלְּמֵה תַּעֲשֶׂה
 מִלְּמֵה / דְּתִנָּה דְּתִנָּה דְּתִנָּה: מִלְּמֵה זֶה מִלְּמֵה⁶⁵ / דְּתִנָּה: דְּתִנָּה
 זֶה יִזְדָּה⁶⁶ מִלְּמֵה: מִלְּמֵה⁶⁷ גְּזָה דְּסִלָּה / מִלְּמֵה: מִלְּמֵה יִלְלָה
 דְּתִנָּה זֶה: מִלְּמֵה לִתְעִיבָה⁶⁸ / דְּתִנָּה: מִלְּמֵה מִלְּמֵה דְּתִנָּה: מִלְּמֵה זֶה:

(57) Add. M, V, P, S מִן־מִן־ V

(58) Add. M דְּתִנָּה

(59) M, V, S מִלְּמֵה מִלְּמֵה מִלְּמֵה V

(60) M, V, V, P, S תַּעֲשֶׂה זֶה

(61) V, V, P, S לִתְעִיבָה

(62) M, P, S דְּתִנָּה

(63) M, S מִלְּמֵה V, P מִלְּמֵה

(64) V, V מִלְּמֵה

(65) V, V מִלְּמֵה

(66) M, P, S גְּזָה

(67) Abs. V, V.

(68) M, P, S מִלְּמֵה V מִלְּמֵה V

דִּבְּ לִימְהֶם [-] [10] חֲתִיבָּ דְּמַחְסֵה דְּלִקְתָּ דְּפִשְׁה יִפְּ. יִזְכֵּי מִיחֵל דְּבִל
 דְּמֶה / מְכַתְּמֶה דְּשִׁמְרָה יִזְכֵּי: תִּבְּ לִימְהֶם דְּתַבְּתֵה דְּלִקְתָּ מִלְּכָה מְבִּי / לִימְהֶם
 דְּיִזְכֵּי יִפְּ מִדְּמִיבְּתֵה לִבְּ מִי יִזְכֵּי. מִי / דְּלִקְתָּ יִזְכֵּי לִבְּ
 לִכְתְּמֶה. דְּתַלְּיִם יִזְכֵּי מִי / דְּתַבְּתֵה מִי מִיזְכֵּי דְּמֶה. מִיזְכֵּי
 יִזְכֵּי מִי. מִי [15] לִיבְּ מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי דְּתִבְּ מִיזְכֵּי. מִיזְכֵּי לִבְּ
 מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: דְּשִׁמְרָה יִזְכֵּי מִי / דְּתַבְּתֵה / תִּבְּ
 מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִי לִיבְּ מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי. / מִיזְכֵּי דְּתִבְּ
 דְּתַבְּ: מִי / דְּתַבְּתֵה דְּלִיבְּ / תִּכְתְּמֶה: דְּמִי לִכְתְּ. מִי
 לִיבְּ דְּלִכְתְּ. דְּתִבְּ [20] מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי דְּמִי: תִּכְתְּ. מִי
 דְּתַכְתְּ מִי / מִי: מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: יִפְּ מִי דְּתַכְתְּ
 מִי / תִּכְתְּ מִיזְכֵּי. מִי / לִיבְּ דְּתַכְתְּ מִי / לִכְתְּ: תִּכְתְּ
 מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי ⁸¹ מִיזְכֵּי: / מִיזְכֵּי דְּתַכְתְּ מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי
 לִכְתְּ דְּתַכְתְּ מִיזְכֵּי [P. 83r/f. 83r] מִי: לִכְתְּ מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי
 מִי. מִי / מִי ⁸² מִיזְכֵּי דְּתִבְּ מִי. מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי
 מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִיזְכֵּי מִי / יִפְּ.
 מִיזְכֵּי ⁸³ דְּלִיבְּ מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִי / מִי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי [5] מִי / מִי.
 מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי. מִיזְכֵּי מִי
 מִי / מִי / מִי. מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִיזְכֵּי מִי / מִי
 מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִיזְכֵּי מִי / מִי / מִי
 מִי: דְּתַלְּיִם מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִי [10] ⁸⁴
 מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי
 מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִיזְכֵּי מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי
 מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי ⁸⁵ מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי: מִי
 מִיזְכֵּי / מִיזְכֵּי מִי. מִי / מִיזְכֵּי מִיזְכֵּי מִי [15] מִי:

(80) M, V, P, S דְּלִימְהֶם־V, דְּלִימְהֶם־M

(81) M, V מִיזְכֵּי, P, S מִיזְכֵּי

(82) V מִי, M מִי

(83) L מִי

(84) Abs. L.

(85) Add. L.

(86) M, V, S מִיזְכֵּי, P מִיזְכֵּי

١٨٥٠. ڄڻ ٺٽو. ڊس ٺٽو ڪٺ 87 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ڊس ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ڊس ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ڊس ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو 88 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو /
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو 89. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو 90 ٺٽو ٺٽو [20] ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو 91 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو:
 ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو: ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو
 [P. ٺٽو/f.83v] ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو /
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو 92 ٺٽو ٺٽو [5] ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو:
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو: ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو.
 ٺٽو ٺٽو [10] ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو /
 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو: ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو / ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو
 ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو. ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو ٺٽو

(87) Abs. V, V̄.

(88) Abs. L.

(89) In M, V, V̄, P, S interchanged.

(90) Add. L.

(91) M, V, P, S ٺٽو ٺٽو V̄ ٺٽو ٺٽو

(92) M, V, P ٺٽو ٺٽو V̄ ٺٽو ٺٽو S ٺٽو ٺٽو

(93) P ٺٽو ٺٽو

וְלִמְיָאֵף. יִזְכֵּר יָעוֹב בְּעִמְיָם / פְּהִימְסִימְסִי: בְּיָמָה מִן מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי אִתְּמַר / בְּלִמְיָאֵף
 בְּדִימְיָם / סַבְבִּי. מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי מִן יִמְלָא יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם. אִתְּמַר בְּדִימְיָם / מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: בְּיָמָה מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. אִתְּמַר בְּדִימְיָם [P. 84r/f. 84r] מִן יִמְלָא יִזְכֵּר
 לִזְכֵּר: לִבְרִיתָהּ יִזְכֵּר יִזְכֵּר לִבְרִיתָהּ. לִבְרִיתָהּ / לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם⁹⁴ אִתְּמַר⁹⁵ בְּדִימְיָם
 בְּדִימְיָם בְּדִימְיָם. בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ / בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ. אִתְּמַר⁹⁶ בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ
 בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ: / מִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. לִבְרִיתָהּ אִתְּמַר מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי:
 מִימְלָא בְּדִימְיָם [5] אִתְּמַר לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם: בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ אִתְּמַר. בְּדִימְיָם /
 בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ: לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם / לִבְרִיתָהּ מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי.
 מִימְלָא לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / לִבְרִיתָהּ אִתְּמַר בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם
 יִמְלָא לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי בְּדִימְיָם⁹⁷
 בְּדִימְיָם בְּדִימְיָם [10] לִבְרִיתָהּ. בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / בְּדִימְיָם בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. יִמְלָא בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ /
 אִתְּמַר⁹⁹ בְּדִימְיָם¹⁰⁰ אִתְּמַר בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / יִזְכֵּר
 יִמְלָא לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ. מִימְלָא בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ¹⁰¹ / בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ
 בְּדִימְיָם. לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם בְּדִימְיָם: [15] לִבְרִיתָהּ לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם בְּדִימְיָם
 בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. יִזְכֵּר / לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי¹⁰². מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / מִימְלָא מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי לִבְרִיתָהּ /
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם. בְּדִימְיָם לִבְרִיתָהּ בְּדִימְיָם: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם. יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם
 מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי¹⁰⁴ / מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי. אִתְּמַר
 בְּדִימְיָם מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם: / יִזְכֵּר בְּדִימְיָם: /

(94) M, V, P, S בְּדִימְיָם V

(95) Add. M, V, V לִבְרִיתָהּ

(96) M, V, P, S בְּדִימְיָם V

(97) M, V, P מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי V

(98) M, V, S בְּדִימְיָם V

(99) M, V, P, S בְּדִימְיָם V, P, S בְּדִימְיָם V

(100) Add. L.

(101) M, V, V, P, S מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי

(102) M, V, P, S מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי V, P, S מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי

(103) M, P, S מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי

(104) P, S מְבִלְתִּימְסִימְסִי

(113) L عَجْجَة
(114) L عَجْجَك
(115) P حَكَمَة
(116) L دَبَسَ
(117) Add. L.
(118) Abs. L.
(119) L مَيَّحَ
(120) L دَفَسَ، دَفَسَ
(121) Abs. V. Ṽ.
(122) M, P حَكَمَتِ
(123) Abs. V. Ṽ.

ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ: ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲٲ: ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ [10]
 ٲٲٲ¹²⁴ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ.
 ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 [15] ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ [20] ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲ¹²⁷. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ¹²⁹ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲ. [P. ٲٲٲ/f.86r] ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ.
 ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. /
 ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. / ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ [5] ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ.
 ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. / ٲٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ
 ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ / ٲٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲ ٲٲٲٲ. ٲٲٲٲ¹³² ٲٲٲٲ

(124) Abs. V, V̄.

(125) Abs. P.

(126) Abs. L.

(127) Abs. L.

(128) S ٲٲٲ

(129) Abs. L.

(130) S ٲٲ

(131) Add. M, V, S ٲٲ V̄

(132) P, S ٲٲ

על־סוף. / בְּכֹךְ / דָּוָי קִדְעָה. תָּדַדְתָּ בְּהַדְיָל מִכְּתִישׁ בְּלֹאֵה; בְּכֹךְ דְּהוּמָי /
 תִּמְרָה דְּפִתְחָה מִלְּךְ יִזְלֵם לְעִישׁ: / בְּכֹךְ מִיָּדָה דְּכֹכְדָה לֵישׁ וְלִשְׁלִישׁ. [10] חֲלִיבָה
 מִיִּסְסָה לְכִי־הָאָה תֵּה דִי־מִלְּהוּמָה תֵּה מִלְּךְ יִזְלֵם תֵּה קִדְעָה / לֹאֵה בְּכֹךְ וְהִלְיָה. יִשׁ מִן
 דִּיכְתֵּשׁ מִכְּבֹּדֵה תֵּה לֵישׁ קִסְדִּתְנָה. / וְהַתְּלִישׁ מִכְּכֹךְ מִכְּכֹךְ יִסְבִּיב תֵּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה.
 מִכְּכֹכְבָּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה / תְּלִישׁ דְּהוּמָי. בְּכֹךְ דִּיכְלֹאֵה הִלְבִּיב תֵּה לֹאֵה. מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ
 יִזְכֵּד / בְּכֹכְבָּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ. לְכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ בְּכֹכְבָּה. [15] מִכְּכֹכְבָּה.
 בְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ לְכֹכְבָּה וְלִכְלִמְכָּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה תֵּה חֲלִישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה / דִּיכְלֹאֵה. מִכְּכֹכְבָּה
 חֲלִישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ תֵּה דִּישׁ לֹאֵה. [134] דִּישׁ. / בְּכֹכְבָּה בְּכֹכְבָּה
 מִכְּכֹכְבָּה יִלְכֵּה. בְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ. / בְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ. [135] מִכְּכֹכְבָּה תֵּה
 דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה יִסְבִּיב. יִלְכֵּה דִישׁ לֹאֵה / תִּלְכֵּה מִן תֵּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ בְּכֹכְבָּה
 וְהִלְכֵּה. תְּלִישׁ [20] דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ בְּכֹכְבָּה וְהִלְכֵּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ. [136] דִּישׁ
 יִשׁ. / מִכְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ בְּכֹכְבָּה מִן תֵּה בְּכֹכְבָּה. [137] דִּישׁ. /
 מִכְּכֹכְבָּה יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְכֹכְבָּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה יִשׁ. בְּכֹכְבָּה דִּישׁ קִדְעָה / לִכְלִישׁ
 וְלִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. יִשׁ מִן דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה / לִכְלִישׁ. [138] דִּישׁ. /
 יִלְכֵּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה: יִלְכֵּה דִּישׁ [P. 86v/f. 86v] יִלְכֵּה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה לִכְלִישׁ. [139] דִּישׁ.
 דִּישׁ בְּכֹכְבָּה. / לְכֹכְבָּה לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה. [140] דִּישׁ. /
 יִלְכֵּה. [137] עֲבָדָה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה לִכְלִישׁ: תִּלְכֵּה לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. [138] דִּישׁ.
 מִכְּכֹכְבָּה: דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה. [139] דִּישׁ. / לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. [140] דִּישׁ.
 יִלְכֵּה לִכְלִישׁ. [139] דִּישׁ. / לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. [140] דִּישׁ. /
 יִלְכֵּה. [137] עֲבָדָה מִכְּכֹכְבָּה לִכְלִישׁ: תִּלְכֵּה לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. [138] דִּישׁ.
 מִכְּכֹכְבָּה: דִּישׁ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה. [139] דִּישׁ. / לִכְלִישׁ דִּישׁ. [140] דִּישׁ.

(133) Abs. P, S.

(134) In M, V, $\tilde{V}$, P, S interchanged.(135) V, $\tilde{V}$ מִכְּכֹכְבָּה

(136) L דִּישׁ

(137) V, $\tilde{V}$ יִלְכֵּה

(138) Abs. L.

(139) L לִכְלִישׁ

(140) L לִכְלִישׁ

141 [عبد القيس] / تَدْعُكَ شَيْءٌ لَحْدَهُ دِيْمِس. فَمَلِكٌ مَقَامٌ مَدِي
 دِيْمِس. / جَدٍ دِيْمِسَ مَتَّهَ دِيْمِس. 142 لِي. دِيْمِسَ دِيْمِس. 143 / تَدْعُكَ دِيْمِس
 فَب / لِي تَدْعُكَ دِيْمِس. دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ دِيْمِس. جَدٍ دِيْمِسَ دِيْمِس. [15]
 مِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ.
 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ.
 دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / لِي مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. 144 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. /
 تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. 145 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. /
 تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. 146 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 147 [P. 87r/f. 87r] مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 دِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 148 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 149 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 150 [عبد القيس] / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.
 مَدِيْمِسَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ. / تَدْعُكَ تَدْعُكَ.

(141) In M, V, $\tilde{V}$, P, S interchanged.

(142) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(143) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(144) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(145) Add. V مَدِيْمِسَ

(146) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(147) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(148) L مَدِيْمِسَ

(149) V, P مَدِيْمِسَ $\tilde{V}$ مَدِيْمِسَ

(150) In V, $\tilde{V}$ interchanged.

(151) Add. L ۛ (ۛۛۛ)

(152) In $\mathbf{M}, \mathbf{V}, \tilde{\mathbf{V}}, \mathbf{P}, \mathbf{S}$ interchanged.

(153) Abs. L.

(154) M هُجِتْ، V هُجِتْ، $\tilde{V}$ هُجِتْ، P هُجِتْ، S هُجِتْ،

(155) V $\bar{V}$ $\bar{V}$ $\bar{V}$

(156) Add. L.

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(162) L ذو حيس
(163) Abs. P.
(164) L ذو حيس
(165) M ذو حيس
(166) M, V مذهب مذهب $\tilde{V}$ مذهب مذهب
(167) M, V, $\tilde{V}$, P, S مذهب مذهب
(168) M, V, $\tilde{V}$, S مذهب
(169) Add. L.
(170) M, P مذهب مذهب $\tilde{V}$ مذهب مذهب V مذهب مذهب

(172) M $\leq$ V, P, S $\leq$ $\tilde{V}$ $\leq$ $\tilde{V}$

TRANSLATION

I suppose, by means of what we have said previously, we have already made a detailed introduction to our New Testament [times and events]. It seems to us (and we have already shown) [that] we will enter the lawful gates towards those things which are in Christ. From now on we may speak openly, for no one will dare to justly slander us anymore. If something like this happens¹⁷⁷ in our country, we would easily send our oppressors to the prophecy gate guards and show them as beating the air. They would turn into builders who work with clay and bricks or masons [who] cut hard stones from the big rock with which all the earth is filled.

What is to follow? Earlier, we described how and in what way God created the created world; which natures [P. 682r] appeared first and which were [made] last, and how many more there will be; [and precisely described] the days of the first week [of creation] one by one. [We indicated] what was necessary about the miracle and the way of Adam's creation and what the reason for his Fall and the expulsion from Paradise was. [We narrated] what was done by his offspring; about Noah and the Deluge which occurred during his time; about his sons with the rest of the peoples and lands over which a part of them was scattered. [We told] about the building of the Tower [of Babel]. [We discussed] where kingly rule began; how and when

(173) M تخلص للكم P لخلص V, S تخلص للكم $\bar{V}$ تخلص

(174) Add. M $\frac{1}{2}$ V, P $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$

(175) $M, V \rightarrow \tilde{V}$

(176) Add. M $\text{P} \rightarrow \text{S}$ $\text{P} \rightarrow \text{S}$ $\text{P} \rightarrow \text{S}$

(177) Lit.: will be heard.

idolatry started and the reason for it. [We told] about Abraham's election and the succession of his descendants. We gradually narrated what was done by the Jews and to the Jews, among the heathen and to the heathen in all times and histories. According to the order of our narrative we will mention only a small part of it in order not to burden our work with undue labour retelling all of [the histories]. For order and arrangement are worth adhering to.¹⁷⁸ Thus, we swiftly went through many things in our work and mentioned only the signs demonstrating divine concern for us, humans, [which He showed] from the very beginning. [We mentioned] what He did to us in His mercy looking at our transformation and how all of us remained contentious and stubborn from the very beginning. He had already been aware of it before He brought us to life. [He had been aware of] the evilness of our nature and of our disobedience as if He had already seen this. His goodness was not reasonable. Nevertheless, He brought us to life because of His goodness and created those who were not worthy. He honoured those who despised Him. He did everything with His concern looking at the transformation of those who had been disobedient from generation to generation. [P. ٧٧/f.82v] These chapters which we have already written with our Lord's help show all these [deeds]. We have already demonstrated the [existence of] evil demons who are set as adversaries against themselves and against all mankind; how greatly concerned the Merciful God is not to allow demons to steal our freedom. [We have demonstrated] that human beings obeyed [demons'] will and were tempted by various kinds of delusions. The [demons] have persuaded some people that there is no God at all. [They have persuaded] others that there is a God who has no concern [for them]. They have propelled others to the insanity of [worshipping] the stars. They have caused some of them to fall into the trap of the idols. They have persuaded others to call silent elements [their] gods.

Nevertheless, I am ready to narrate a story about the great blessing which has happened to us through the appearance of God the Word in the flesh, with the help He granted to me. It seemed necessary for me to demonstrate how the human race had lived before our Lord came and how [the human race] lives now. Thus, the great blessing, transcending one's thought, given to the human race with [the coming] of Christ, our Lord, would appear to be all the greater

(178) Lit.: order and arrangement are good for all [things].

and more amazing. Hence, the mouth of impious Jews and the rest of evil [people] who still prefer to remain in delusion like in night dreams shall be shut. Who does not know that before the Christ's shining forth the Jews together with the heathen had lived under delusions of all kinds [and had led] a disgusting and filthy life following the laws of their ancestors? Indeed, those who say that their gods (as they call them) easily took part in adultery and debauchery, in insane dancing and satanic singing, and all the other repugnant and abominable [deeds] [P. ~~ms~~/f.83r] obviously performed the same [deeds] themselves, [being] their (i. e., the gods') creators. David, the sound of the spiritual lyre, justly calls these [gods'] worshippers their creators, since people made them out to be gods while they were not. Similarly also the prophet Jeremiah who said: "Behold, people made gods."¹⁷⁹ For indeed, they are children of a perverted mind and a foolish fiction. Not only the heathen were living this way, the Jews [were living this way] as well. Only a few [of them] like some kind of backbone¹⁸⁰ were staying out of every human formation in the fear of God. Prophets testify concerning the life that the Jews led. The first prophet Moses [says]: "They sacrificed to demons who are not gods"¹⁸¹ etc. The blessed David remembers the first and the last [things] one by one: "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image."¹⁸² And more: "They sacrificed their own sons and daughters to the devils."¹⁸³ And this also: "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works,"¹⁸⁴ and other things. One of the prophets shows that the Jews were even worse than the heathen: "I swear — says the Lord — that Sodom and her daughters did not commit half of your sins."¹⁸⁵ He mentions Sodom as having been entirely filled with evil in its time. He also [mentions this] to demonstrate that God did not honour the Jews for their righteousness but due to another reason which we will discuss [below] with the help of

(179) Cf. Jer 16:20. The biblical quotations are translated as they appear in the Syriac text of the memra; usually, Bar Penkāyē follows the Peshitta readings.

(180) Lit.: leaven.

(181) Deut 32:17.

(182) Ps 106:19.

(183) Ps 106: 37.

(184) Ps 106: 35.

(185) Cf. Ez 16:48, 51.

our Lord. So Elijah's reproaches inform everyone of the impious lifestyle of the Jews. Likewise, Isaiah [says] that "they sacrifice in gardens"¹⁸⁶ and divine upon the roofs. "They defile their vessels with carcasses"¹⁸⁷. The worst thing is what they say to the other nations: "Stay away from us, do not approach us for we are the holy ones"¹⁸⁸ as if [P. 4/f.83v] only the [pretentious] name of friendship with God is enough for them [to be called the elected ones]. However, God is not indifferent; He cries and moans cursing His life and talking about their impiety. He demonstrates that a number of their gods was equal to the number of their towns along with other [things]. Though called the nation of the elect much more often than the others, they behaved this way.

The history of diverse heathen beliefs with which they were afflicted surpasses speech. How did it happen that even those who were the most intelligent and the most brilliant among them taught them nothing but to thoughtlessly sacrifice fetid offerings to dumb idols with a great zeal and to wrongfully and facilely call the created things using the merciful, fearful, and venerated name of the only one God? This is a fruit of the heathen poets' mind. It all appeared with the vain investigations which were an evil trap and painful fetters of the Devil. He bound the soul and [tempted it] with empty delusions; he depraved the flesh with debauches of every kind. They turned out to be the same as their gods — dead for justice and alive for evil. Nothing can hold us back from telling their shallow stories or from inscribing [them] in this book as a demonstration of their impiety and the emptiness of their wisdom which they supposed to gain during thoughtful investigations. However, they were unable to perceive that the created and mortal nature could not dare to come nearer to that Nature which is unbounded and uncreated. We shall tell some of their tales, which they allege to be true, in order to demonstrate their ignorance.

The first [one] we will introduce is the god of the Cretans whom they call Kronos. Due to his envy or gluttony or for [P. 4/f.84r] some other reason, which I do not know, he swallowed his children one by one. People say that he had a wife called Demeter (it was one of her names by which she was called, for it was their will to create gods for

(186) Is 65:3.

(187) Is 65:4.

(188) Cf. Is 65:5.

themselves and to name them). Demeter knew that this Kronos had eaten his own children. Therefore, after she had given birth to Zeus, their god, it is said that she entrusted him to some people who were able to hide him. They made noise by jerking, singing and clanging their swords so that the cry of the child could not be heard. So, they brought him and hid on a mountain which was abundant with trees. His mother wrapped a stone in swaddles and laid it instead of [Zeus] so that when Kronos would come, he would swallow the stone instead of the child without hesitation. This was the reason for the erring to mislead and to be misled exactly as their gods [did].

Nevertheless, let us see what people say about Zeus after this and let us investigate what good deeds he [committed] to pay his mother back. People say that after he had grown and matured (oh, if only he had not been born — since if he had not been born he wouldn't not have existed at all!) — He came lasciviously with unsatisfied desire [to his mother], violated her and slept with her. She bore a girl from him whose name was Persephone. The mother of Zeus became furious for he had dishonored her. Therefore, when he decided to please her, he found a ram and cut off its testicles, brought them and threw them on her lap as if he took vengeance on himself. [This was done to show her] that she might not fear him in the future. He learned this trick from his father who, as the heathen say, had cut the testicles of Heaven. Therefore, [Zeus] stopped begetting [children]. However, Demeter did not stop fearing the lasciviousness of Zeus. She took care lest he might assault the girl [P.¹⁰⁰/f.84v] and abuse her. Despite the fact she had hidden her most safely, he turned into a dragon and abused her as well. As their gods are violators and violated [at the same time], thus they perform all the same [to one another] without any shame as if it is of necessity.

Nevertheless, let us see what happened to [the girl] who was abused by her own father. People say that Death came and abducted her and she became a wife for him. He is called Pluto. The place where he took her is called Sheol. We will describe the impiety of the Greeks and then, gradually, the rest of the heathen. Indeed, the great blessing which will appear afterwards will seem much greater. Anyway, Demeter did not stop searching for her daughter who was stolen by Pluto. After wandering and roaming along the roads, she came up and sat wearily by a well of water. I will keep silent about the other things people say happened there, since they are not worth mentioning. They say that a swineherd came there and told her about

the daughter. After he had done this, she loved him very much. The Greeks say that she gave him [seeds of] wheat and taught him to spread¹⁸⁹ the skill [of agriculture] among the people¹⁹⁰ for they did not yet have the food of wheat bread. Such are the stories about Demeter and Kronos.

Let us relate another impious [story] which is about Dionysus, the god of the Greeks. He was born from Zeus in adultery as well. People say that once Zeus met a woman and fell in love with her. Then he slept with her and she conceived. When the wife of Zeus found it out, she became jealous. Since she wanted her to punish herself, she came [to her place] and told her: "When Zeus comes to you, tell him: 'If [P.~~500~~/f.85r] you love me, come to me in the same disguise you come to your wife, Hera'." He was used to come to her as a lightning. Therefore, she was led astray like a child and told Zeus to do this. And when he came to her the way she had asked — as a lightning — she was wounded and died. However, the child she bore did not die. As the time for [the child] had not yet come, Zeus took him, tore his own hip, and put him inside till the appointed time came and he was born.

Let us tell [a story] about Aphrodite, the goddess of the heathen. People say that she was born in the following way. They say, that when Earth became angry with her husband Heaven for binding her children, she brought Kronos, her son, gave him a sickle and told him: "When your father is going to descend from heaven to sleep with me, cut his testicles." He cut [the testicles] off as she had ordered him and threw them into the sea. Foam appeared [on the surface of the sea] and Aphrodite was born from it. Due to her debauchery she is quite honoured by the heathen. The blessed Paul teaches what they perform during their feasts: "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret."¹⁹¹

Now, let us tell [a story] about Artemis, the goddess of the Ephesians. People say that she sends visions and fearful demons to magicians. Therefore, she is honoured as the one who is able to reveal the hidden. Also, other people tell [us] about Apollo that he found a place in this country where a spirit of divination was ascending from. He sat and divined over it. He divined on the past, the present, and

(189) Lit.: to show.

(190) Lit.: the world.

(191) Cf. Eph 5:12.

the future with a tripod where he laid his pipes. Therefore, Apollo is honoured as a master of the hidden. He is honoured among the Greeks [P. **١١١**/f.85v] though he is not able to perform any of these.¹⁹²

We will tell another disgusting [story] and pass to those [stories] of the Egyptians. People say that a woman served [as a priest] instead of a man in that divine place. She bared her privy parts during divination, stood over the entrance to that abyss, and divined this way.

Since there are many Greek stories and tales beyond number as their gods and goddesses are numerous, let us consider the rest of the nations now.

We will tell about the Egyptians since we forgot everything that was told. People say that Isis, the mother of the Egyptian gods, had a husband whose name was Osiris. Once, Typhon, his brother, made war against him and killed him. He cut off his members and scattered them everywhere. When Isis came to know this, she gathered troops and killed Typhon, the brother of her husband. She made a careful search of her husband Osiris' members and gathered them. Only his phallus was lost. When she joined the gathered members together — each of them being honoured by priests — she made up a model of the phallus and joined it [to the other members] instead of the phallus that was lost. From that time there was a custom in Egypt to worship and honour the phalli like gods. They worshipped wild and domestic animals, even disgusting reptiles. Divination and witchcraft were held in honour too, according to what the books say. They also worshipped trees, roots, and stones. They called garlic, onion, leek, and other similar things too with the fearful name [of God].

Let us reveal the reason why the Prince of the World bound them. People say that the Egyptians were a wild and disobedient nation. [P. **١١١**/f.86r] Thus, they constantly rebelled against their ruler. Once they had a cunning king. He established a law and a custom for them to worship various animals. This land [would worship] this [animal] and that [land would worship] another. The animal that was worshipped in one place was slaughtered and eaten in another. And the [animal] that was honoured in one city was held to be repugnant in another. Therefore, [the king] incited them against one another and they stopped struggling with their ruler.

Also, people say [the following] about them. When Pharaoh pursued the Israelites, God drowned him in the Red Sea. And when

(192) Lit.: none of these things are typical of him.

those who stayed behind and did not come with him saw what had happened to him and all his troops, [they began] to honour and worship that thing which prevented them from joining the Pharaoh as if [that object] had brought salvation to them. So, the Egyptians were seized with these abominable habits. And there was no item from among the variety of things that they did not worship like a god.

What shall we say about the Chaldeans and those who followed them (I mean the Magi)? The Chaldeans ascribed divine economy to the stars and to the signs of the zodiac. They believed that the spirit of divination inspired them to compile horoscopes and fates and other [things].¹⁹³ Hence, they assumed that there was no other [superior power] except this one. However, "the world by itself is moved with the seven [planets] and the twelve [signs of the zodiac]". This [notion] perniciously cast them out into the abyss of ignorance and into the delusion of sorcery.

The Magi, who descended from them, were different in other ways. They regarded all the signs of the zodiac as being substantial and living. Most of all they honoured fire, the sun, and the rest of the celestial bodies as if these had acquired divinity by nature. Also, they have incantations¹⁹⁴ and barsoms,¹⁹⁵ stories based on their inventions which they tell and which I also consider necessary to recount. They say that before the heavens and the earth were created Zurvan had been offering libations to God for a thousand years wishing to have a son called Hormizd who would create the heavens and the earth. After this many years had passed, he thought and said to himself: "What is the use of this sacrifice? Maybe, I labour in vain." At that very moment, Hormizd and Ahreman were conceived along with the thought. Hormizd came from the libations and Ahreman [came] from the doubts. When [Zurvan] understood that, he made a vow and said: "I will give these sticks (which they call 'barsoms') to the one who will be the firstborn. And I will give him the power to create the heavens and the earth." When Ahreman heard this he at once tore the womb of his mother, came out, and stood before Zurvan, his father. When [Zurvan] saw him he said: "Who are you?" Ahreman lied to

(193) Lit.: was blowing to them [knowledge] about horoscopes, fates and other [things].

(194) Lit.: murmurings.

(195) Barsom — a bundle of twigs held by the officiating Zoroastrian priest at acts of worship.

him: "I am your son, Hormizd." When Zurvan became angry because of this and they began to argue, the turn of Hormizd came and he was born. Hormizd was given the power to create everything that is good and beautiful. And Ahreman made all the rest, which is harmful. Such were the stories that the Magi invented about creation.

Some said that the world came from two sources: the good and the evil. Some worshipped Tammuz. Others offered libations to Venus. However, I will stop describing the impiety which was served by some people at the high places of the Edomites. Other people cherished the memory of their elders by creating statues and carved images of them after their death. Finally, they obtained the useless inventions of idols. Such are [P.^o 100/f.87r] the rest of the heathen. Earlier we showed the [relevant] things as far as the Jews are concerned.

There was no further kind of evil or delusion which Satan had not invented and there was no one over whom Satan had not spread [his evil influence and delusions] in accordance with their disposition to his harmful advice. Thereby, he cut them from any kind of decency so that their [dignity] would not be superior to that of cattle. Thus, death put a yoke over them and they were descending hopelessly to Sheol like cattle. Neither the natural law nor the written one could help them. Neither the Pentateuch nor the Prophets [comforted them]. Nor did the miracles calm their fury — such as those shown in Egypt, on the Red Sea and in the desert, in the promised land, in Assyria, and in Babylonia¹⁹⁶ which God performed from time to time with the help of the prophets both among the Jews and among the heathen. However, despite all those things that God did and more than those as the Scripture teaches us, humans preferred to stay in their delusion. Therefore, [God] committed them to their desires so that they had to worship the hosts of heavens. As it is said: "And they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."¹⁹⁷ And even as they did not like to retain the true God in their knowledge,¹⁹⁸ as the apostle said, nevertheless by His grace He did not leave them without witness¹⁹⁹ and never stopped caring for them. Indeed, the Jews did not ask, "Where is the Lord who had taken us out of Egypt?" The heathen did not think, "Who is he who gives us rain (in

(196) Lit.: among Assyrians and Babylonians.

(197) Cf. Rom 1:25.

(198) Cf. Rom 1:28.

(199) Cf. Act 14:17.

its time), grows fruits in our lands, and fills our hearts with gladness?"²⁰⁰ The world did not want to know its Benefactor with the natural wisdom which God had given it. However, their minds were blinded with love for passions. They had made their passions their gods again. Thus, [P. ~~ms~~/f.87v] the blessed Paul said, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind."²⁰¹ And by "reprobate" he calls all the evil a fraction of which we have described earlier and in which all the humans had lived before [the coming of] Christ.

What is to follow? Oh, wonderful Paul! "They will do those things which are not convenient being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness; [full of] envy, murder, contention, deceit, malice, whisper, and backbiting, hated by God, impudent, boasters, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, half-witted, disobedient to parents, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful..."²⁰² They do all these; however, they are not deprived of natural discretion which is able by nature to blame all of these [things] which put their creators under accusation. This is evident from the fact that they did these [things] to others while judging, blaming and accusing others who did all the same things.²⁰³ Therefore, they will have no defense on the Judgment Day.

Thus, so as not to extend this chapter by relating too many things, we shall extract a small fraction from the big [amount of material] and reveal the object of our thought. We spoke about the beginning of man's formation: the way in which he came into existence [by the will] of God, with great care and honour and how the Deceiver appeared on the same day. Step by step, we described God's care for man or for mankind and their disobedience. It seemed necessary for us to speak about the times and the signs which occurred²⁰⁴ then. We did this following the sequence of when this happened. [P. ~~ms~~/f.88r] We demonstrated the beautiful harmony evident within all this, as all this to a great degree points out the abundance of God's mercy upon us. We also showed the reasons for [God's] electing the nation of Israel. [We showed] that neither did they abide by the written law given to them nor did the heathen [obey] the natural law which was

(200) Cf. Act 14:17.

(201) Rom 1:28.

(202) Cf. Rom 1:28–31.

(203) Cf. Rom 2:1–3.

(204) Lit.: occur.

hidden among them. Also in accordance with our power, we spoke about the demons' plot and their evil envy which they developed against humans. Despite our weakness, we shed light on the words of the prophets, which had alluded beforehand to the [future] shining forth of Christ the Saviour, our Lord. [We explained the words] of the Law and the Prophets, the signs and the symbols of the Christians which He performed. We briefly showed the demons' delusion with which both the Jews and the heathen were enfeebled before the shining forth and the appearance of our Lord. We did this in order to shut the mouth of those who do not understand that the coming of our Lord offered us many reasons for goodness. Indeed, despite the fact that the entire Law along with its judgments was proclaimed by the fearful sight of the fiery pillar, in the cloud, with voices of trumpets and on the smoking mountain, and was announced by God, its Giver, it could not perfect "the humans with that which was desired".²⁰⁵ [The Law] remained with its recipients as long as the fearful voice of its Giver was hammering in their ears. I think that this explains that which was shown to the blessed Elijah on the mountain. The angel said to him: there will be an earthquake. And the Lord was not in the earthquake. And more: I will make a wind which rends the mountains asunder and moves the earth. And the Lord was not in the wind. He revealed Himself neither in the fire nor in one of these [things] but in the voice which speaks softly²⁰⁶ that we may acknowledge the wonderful lowliness with which [P. ~~100~~/f.88v] God, by His grace, condescended towards the human race with the humble acceptance of our origin. He shiningly, peacefully, humbly, and softly caught the world in a salutary net and by His mercy brought it near to those things which are good. As Isaiah said: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench till He brings forth judgment unto victory and nations believe in His name."²⁰⁷ And more: "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before a shearer was dumb, so did He not open His mouth in His humility."²⁰⁸ And more: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He

(205) Absent from Mss. **M**, **V**, **Ź**, **S**.

(206) Cf. 1 Kings 19:11–12.

(207) Cf. Is 42:2–4.

(208) Is 53:7.

sent me to bind up the brokenhearted"²⁰⁹ and so on. We were healed with nothing but His wounds.²¹⁰ He spoke with us neither in the pillar nor in the cloud nor in the fire nor in the voice of the trumpet nor by the crying which they heard. They asked [Him] not to speak with them anymore lest they should die. Not common people were saying this, but those who thought themselves to be consecrated. As Moses said: "I exceedingly fear and quake."²¹¹ What is the use of these severe [signs] if [there appeared] at once the worship of the calf and cymbals and whispering and [the desire] to return back to Egypt? What will you say, Jew? Are these things true or not? I do not think that you will argue.

Now, let us see [how] He speaks with us in our humility with His soft speech. The tax gatherers will rush [to Him] and be made better; the whores will be kissed and purified; the common people and the fools will receive instruction and become wiser; the poor will be satiated; the sick will be healed; the lepers will be made clean; the blind will regain sight; the lame will walk; the sinners will become just; the erring will repent; nations will live in peace. Such is [His] soft speech. [Earlier signs] are the voice of the trumpets [P. ١٨٩/f.89r], the earthquake, and the strong wind. These, on other hand, are from grace. The [earlier] ones are from the Law. What can you say against it lest you blame Beelzebub again? And this is because of your stubbornness which cannot be softened and because of your obstinate heart which does not believe. As it is written about you: "They blinded their eyes, and darkened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor listen with their ears, and understand with their heart, and repent, and I should heal them."²¹² And more: "Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not."²¹³ And more: "Let their table become a snare before them."²¹⁴ Thus, let the praise of God increase on account of His grace and let shame descend upon the unjust. Despite the fact that He unbound the fetters with which the Devil had fastened both the Jews and the heathen, some of them still persist in their stubbornness, do not raise their eyes and see the sun of justice which rose for

(209) Lk 4:18; cf. Is 61:1.

(210) Cf. Is 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24.

(211) Heb 12:21.

(212) Cf. John 12:40; cf. Is 6:10.

(213) Ps 69:23.

(214) Ps 69:22.

them by grace. Instead, they prefer to remain in the darkness of delusion like eyeless moles. For everything about the Christ, our Lord, happened the way the prophets [had prophesied] about Him.

Most of the delusions which took hold of the Jews and the heathen at that time have already been exposed. So, it only remains to discuss the ideas which the Jews had held about Christ, our Lord. Indeed, they had always rebelled against the Holy Spirit according to the word of Stephen.²¹⁵ Therefore, they do not understand it since they do not believe it. "Their God is their belly, and their glory is in their shame."²¹⁶ They had the following idea about the Messiah: A man is going to come who will be granted the name of sonship²¹⁷ on account of his friendship [with God] and his excellence (the same way kings and righteous ones were also called ['sons']). Then God would give victory to the Jews with his help and they would be gathered from every place. So, he would make abundant for them [P. 1.89v] the [blessings] of this [life] so that they might live without labour and put the yoke upon the heathen, who will provide service to their bellies. They were not at all ashamed to frame the whole teaching of Christ up to their bellies' needs. It seems that the Pharisee told our Saviour the same things at once while [...] ²¹⁸ from heaviness of his belly and wishing to eat bread in the kingdom of God.²¹⁹ From their expectations it could be understood that the whole teaching of Christ was restricted to the palate and the belly. In the same bodily way they thought about the Resurrection as well. When they are resurrected [they believed] they would return to the weak and lowly elements again.²²⁰ They would marry and be given in marriage.²²¹ The Sadducees said that nothing like this existed: neither the Resurrection, nor the angels, nor the Spirit. Therefore, our Lord said to them: "You err,

(215) Cf. Acts 7:51.

(216) Phil 3:19.

(217) Cf. Ps 2:6–9.

(218) The text seems to be corrupted and does not give a satisfactory reading.

(219) Cf. Lk 14:15.

(220) Cf. Gal 4:9.

(221) Cf. Mt 22:30.

not knowing the scriptures or the power of God.”²²² “They are the blind leaders of the blind.”²²³

In this way, my beloved, in this book I described a select few of the many [things] concerning the delusions that had gripped the people before the coming of our Lord in order to show how goodness flourished where previously sin had been abundant, for one can behold the beauty of light in comparison with darkness, [just as we get to know] sweetness in comparison with bitterness, wealth with poverty, healing with illness, life with the death, glad tidings with upsetting news. However, impious people do not wish to observe these. We, O my beloved, will keep in mind both the first and the last so as to confess and give praise to That Who has fully brought us salvation forever and ever, Amen.

This is the end of the ninth chapter. The first part of the *Book of the Main Points* by Mār Yōḥannān bar Penkāyē is complete.

SUMMARY

The present paper deals with *The Book of the Main Points* of the East-Syriac monk John (Yōḥannān) bar Penkāyē (7th c.). In the ninth chapter of this treatise, John provides a survey of the erroneous cults and beliefs of the various nations (the Jews, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Persians) practiced before the coming of Jesus Christ. The paper attempts to find parallels and sources of the ninth chapter in works mainly known in Syriac and composed prior to the seventh century. It also offers a critical edition of this hitherto unpublished chapter, based on six manuscripts, and an English translation.

(222) Mt 22:29.

(223) Mt 15:14.