THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF
JACOB OF EDESSA’S VERSION

The present chapter is intended as a supplement to the notes and comments to be found in Georr’s printed edition of the text, and is an important prerequisite to the analysis of the text critical value of the Syriac Categories (Chapter 5).

Although the other two Syriac versions of the Categories are both known only from unique mss, Jacob’s translation is well attested in both Western and Eastern traditions. It was also used as the basis for commentaries.

The following witnesses are known (in approximate chronological order):

V  Vat. Syr. 158. West Syrian Serto. 9th/10th cent.
J 1 Paris Syr. 354 (olim Seert 91). West Syrian Serto. Dated 1224
C  Vat. Syr. 586 (7 folios only). West Syrian Serto. 13th cent.
   Mosul 35. East Syrian. 16th cent.2
E  Escorial Or.652. 17th cent.
N  Notre Dames des Semences 51 (Baghdad Chaldean Monastery 169). East Syrian. Dated 1822.3

1 Described by Assemani (Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae Codicum Orientalium Catalogus. Florence, 1742: 323) as representing the version of Hunayn. The error was spotted long ago, Renan, De Philosophia peripatetica, 59. The catalogue number is erroneously given in Baumstark, followed by Georr, as 196.
2 The text in question is described in Scher’s Catalogue (Notice sur les manuscrits...de Mosul. Paris, 1907: 15) as ‘πραγματεία de la Logique composée par Aristote’. Its position in the ms after the Eisagoge was perhaps what led Baumstark to assume that this meant the Categories (GSL, 251, n.4), though I am not aware that this has ever been verified. Georr, 27, simply copies Baumstark.
3 The Notre Dames des Semences catalogue numbers refer to J.-M. Vosté, Catalogue de la bibliothèque syro-chaldéene du couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences près d’Alqos (Iraq) (1929), according to whom all three of these mss from Notre Dames des Semences were copied in the period after the restoration of the Rabban Hormizd monastery in 1808, presumably from much older mss that were still found in that monastery at that time. Our mss were all moved thence first to the monastery of St George, Mosul (see W. Macomber, ‘New finds.’ In W. Voigt, ed., XVII. Deutscher
Jacob’s translation is ordinarily to be found in manuscripts containing
general collections of material on Logic and related subjects. These
mss originate among both Western and Eastern traditions, and thus
testify to the wide dissemination and utility of this particular text. A
number of them also contain Sergius of Reš’aïna’s On the Aims of all
the Works of Aristotle (thus J\(^1\)NM), another important logical text of
West Syrian provenance which was received into the East Syrian tra-
dition.

The manuscript evidence establishes the fact that Jacob’s was the
one Syriac version of the Categories to continue in extensive usage
through later ages and its textual tradition is thus somewhat more
complex than is the case for either of the other two versions with
which we have been concerned. As we have seen before,\(^5\) there is
some evidence also that Jacob’s version was known to the Baghdad
school of Aristotelians who were responsible for the ninth century
Arabic ‘edition’ of the Organon found in Paris Ar. 2346, if indeed
‘Jacob the Hermit’ is to be identified with ‘Jacob of Edessa’.

Jacob’s version was partially edited (up to 3b32) from B and J\(^2\) by
Schüler,\(^6\) and then completely from J\(^1\) and J\(^2\) in Georr’s edition of
1948. Georr already knew J\(^2\) to be a copy of the much older Vatican
ms (V). J\(^2\), however, contains numerous special errors which are not to

\(^4\) Given as 17\(^{th}\) century in Scher’s catalogue (used by Baumstark), but corrected in
that of Vosté (see previous note).

\(^5\) See Chapter 2.

\(^6\) Schüler, Die Übersetzung der Categorien des Aristoteles von Jacob von Edessa.

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Orientalistentag. ZDMG Supp I. Wiesbaden, 1969, II: 473-82), and afterwards to the
Baghdad Chaldean Monastery where they gained new numbers in B. Haddad and J.
Isaac, Syriac and Arabic manuscripts in the Library of the Chaldaean Monastery,
Baghdad. Baghdad, 1988. The old ms numbers from Scher’s Catalogue (Journal
Asiatique 10,7 [1906]: 479-512) were those used by Baumstark, GSL, 251n4, and
Georr, 27.