DESCRIPTION OF THREE SYRIAC OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

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During a recent journey to the Near East made by the Editor-in-Chief of the forthcoming edition of the Syriac Old Testament (Peshitta version) in order to investigate the material still to be found in the homeland of the Syriac churches some Syriac Old Testament manuscripts could be acquired. These manuscripts, a description of which is presented herewith, are deposited in the Peshitta Institute, Rapenburg 61, Leiden, the Netherlands.

Pride of place must be given to MS No. 1 a damaged but nearly complete East Syriac copy of the Prophetical books dated A.D. 1306/7. With the exception of some Maronite and Malkite copies of the Psalms1) this is the only dated fourteenth century copy of (a part of) the Syriac Old Testament which, as far as we know, has been preserved. At the same time it is one of the very few surviving dated MSS from that century of hardship2) for the Nestorian Church3).

MS No. 2, also containing the Prophetical books (dated A.D. 1816 or 1817), though dating only from the time of revival of Syriac learning in Northern Irāq at the beginning of the last century, seems to be unique in combining the Prophets with the books of Judith and Esther thus adding to the not too great number of East Syriac copies of these books4).


3) In W. H. P. Hatch's, An Album of dated Syriac Manuscripts (Boston 1946) only 2 (: Pl. CLXXV-CLXXVI) dated 14th century MSS of East Syriac origin are mentioned.

Ms No. 3, a *Lectionary* (dated A.D. 1866), though scarcely hundred years old is even so a welcome addition to the small number of Nestorian Old Testament Lectionaries available in European libraries 1).

**MS No. 1**

Paper, 159 X 243 mm.; 221 leaves of which f. 129-132 and 149-150 are more modern. The quires, signed with letters, were originally 23 in number of 10 leaves (except, as it seems, the last of which only 1 leaf survives); a single leaf (the first of quire 𓊭) is wanting before f. 1; two leaves (the last of quire 𓊬 + the first of quire 𓊫) are wanting after f. 128; two leaves (the last of quire 𓊫 + the first of quire 𓊫) are wanting after f. 140 and one leaf (the last of quire 𓊫) is wanting after f. 148. The place of the second and fourth of these lacunae is taken by modern supplies. 26 long lines in a page. A number of leaves is soiled and torn and the upper part of all leaves is stained with water. Nearly half the text of f. 2-7 and 10-19 is hardly legible. Small portions of the text of f. 154-155, 171, 174 and 176-182 are lost; in addition small parts of the text of f. 136-190 are more or less damaged. Besides a number of marginal annotations (to all probability by the original hand), in a very small script, mainly on matters of pronunciation, there are a number of marginal annotations, in a large unsightly hand (probably the hand which supplied f. 129-132 and 149-150), of a different nature. These glosses give explanations and lexicographical notes on difficult words and passages. The manuscript is written in a good, regular, Nestorian cursive and is dated A. Gr. 1618=A.D. 1306/7 but f. 129-132 and 149-150 seem to be of the 17th or 18th century. This volume contains

*The Prophetical books of the Old Testament according to the Peshitta version.*

Divided into *capitula* which are numbered separately for each book and continuously (in 131 sections: f. 217*) throughout.

1) C. Moussess in his little-known (cp. now J. M. SAUGET: *Bibliographie des liturgies Orientales* (1900-1960) [Rome 1962], p. 128, no. 1554) but useful work: *Les livres liturgiques de l'Église Chaldéenne*, Beyrouth 1955, mentions 7 of such MSS in European libraries (: Berlin, German State Library, Ms. or. fol. 1616; Cambridge, University Library, Add. 1976; London, British Museum, Add. 7168; 14,492; 14,705; Rome, Vatican Library, vat. sir. 24; Woodbrooke, Selly Oak Colleges Library, Ming. syr. 506). Also with the addition of Paris, National Library, Syr. 280 (an 18th cent. lectionary from Malabar) the number remains surprisingly small.

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