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Translations and the Exchange of Manuscripts among Eastern Christian Communities: Textual and Material Evidence from Anti-Chalcedonian Syriac Communities in Late Antiquity

Abstract: The spread of Christianity resulted in the emergence of literary cultures in different languages that were connected through the translation of common works. The translation process naturally involved the exchange of manuscripts with the works in the original language and the production of new manuscripts with the translations. This article focuses on the Syriac evidence, analysing both literary sources and manuscript evidence. The first case study examines the movement of manuscripts and libraries as described in the sixth-century *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene (fl. 568/569). The *Chronicle* highlights the relocation of Greek libraries – especially from Alexandria – to Upper Mesopotamia due to the oppression of anti-Chalcedonian communities. The second case study focuses on the manuscript London, British Library, Add. 12160 (fols 1–108) which contains a Syriac translation of John Chrysostom's *Homilies on First Corinthians*. Marginalia in this manuscript indicate how the translation was used during the Julianist debate, while the manuscript's end matter offers a window into the network involved in the translation process. As a whole, this article contributes to the study of processes of exchange among Eastern Christian communities in the late antique eastern Mediterranean.

1 Introduction

Between the years 405 and 406, Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345–c. 410) carried out the immense task of translating the *Commentary on Romans* by Origen of Alexandria (184/185–253/255) into Latin. He undertook the translation at the request of a certain Eraclius,¹ perhaps beginning the translation in Aquileia and completing it in

¹ Rufinus calls Eraclius 'brother' (*frater*): Rufinus of Aquileia, *Preface* to Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on Romans* (Hammond Bammel (ed.) 1990, vol. 1, 35, l. 3; Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 1,

south-western Italy.² Rufinus had to consult various libraries in search of the whole text of the commentary in Greek, as he writes in a preface:

Super omnes autem difficultates est quod interpolati sunt ipsi libri. Desunt enim fere apud omnium bibliothecas – incertum sane quo casu – aliquanta ex ipso corpore uolumina; et haec adimplere atque in Latino opere integram consequentiam dare non est mei ingenii sed ut tu credis qui haec exigis muneris fortasse diuini. Addis autem ne quid laboribus meis desit ut omne hoc quindecim uoluminum corpus quod Graecus sermo ad quadraginta fere aut eo amplius milia uersuum produxit adbreuiem et ad media si fieri potest spatia coartem.

But beyond all these difficulties is the fact that the books themselves have been tampered with.³ For some volumes of this work are lacking in almost everyone's library – it is not known, however, how this came about. To supply these and restore continuity to the Latin work is not within my power but, as you who ask for these things know, [would be] a gift from God. So that nothing is lacking from my labours, you add that I should abbreviate this whole work of fifteen volumes whose Greek text has reached perhaps forty or more thousand lines and reduce it, if possible, to half the space.⁴

In addition to the different manuscripts of the commentary Rufinus used, studies on the biblical text in the translation suggest that he also had recourse to a biblical manuscript while undertaking the translation.⁵ The Latin translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans* offers a glimpse into the logistics of producing a translation in Late Antiquity, where one had to search for codices of the text in the original language and even consult additional manuscripts as needed.

Translations also formed a major conduit for the exchange of ideas across cultures in the premodern Eastern Christian world.⁶ This is exemplified by the letter that

51); *Epilogue* to Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on Romans* (Hammond Bammel (ed.) 1990, vol. 3, 860, l. 3; Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 2, 311). On Eraclius, see Hammond Bammel 1977, 403; Charles Pietri and Luce Pietri 1999, 657–658 (Eraclius 1); Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 1, 12–13.

2 On the context of the translation, see Hammond Bammel 1977, 399–406; Hammond Bammel 1985, 144.

3 I follow Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 1, 51, in translating *interpolati* as 'tampered with'. On the meaning of this term here, see Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 1, 12–13; Brésard (tr.) 2009–2012, vol. 1, 38–40. I have translated all citations from original sources in this article to achieve a certain degree of uniformity. In many cases, I have drawn on existing modern translations and cited these in the footnotes.

4 Rufinus, *Preface* to Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on Romans* (Hammond Bammel (ed.) 1990, vol. 1, 35–36, ll. 11–19; Brésard (tr.) 2009–2012, vol. 1, 135–137; Scheck (tr.) 2001–2002, vol. 1, 51–52).

5 See Kreinecker 2016, 233–235, who draws on the extended study of the biblical text in this work by Hammond Bammel 1985.

6 For example, see McCollum 2015; Toca and Batovici (eds) 2020; Papaioannou (ed.) 2021, 180–237, 559–681.

the East Syriac polymath Ḥunayn ibn Isḥaq (d. 873 CE) wrote to the caliphal scribe ‘Ali ibn Yaḥya in 848 CE in which he enumerates 129 works by Galen (129–216 CE), describes their contents, and notes whether the Greek originals had been translated into Arabic or Syriac.⁷ Ḥunayn details his own translation activities, including hunting down manuscripts for works such as Galen’s *Posterior Analytics*:⁸

وجولت في طلبه بلاد الجزيرة والشام كلها وفلسطين ومصر الى ان بلغت الاسكندرية فلم اجد منه شيئاً، الا بدمشق نحواً من نصفه، الا انها مقالات غير متوالية ولا تامة.⁹

I travelled around in search of [this work] throughout the regions of al-Jazira, all of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt until I reached Alexandria. I did not find anything of it except about half of it in Damascus, but the volumes were neither sequential nor complete.

This brief example from Ḥunayn’s letter exhibits the networks necessary to procure manuscripts for translations that facilitated the transmission of texts across linguistic communities.

Syriac sources offer important insight into the role of manuscripts in the production and circulation of translations in the late antique eastern Mediterranean.¹⁰ Material evidence from Syriac manuscripts complements the numerous literary sources on translations in Syriac. This article seeks to shed light on the intersection of manuscripts and translation activities in the late antique Mediterranean world by focusing on the Syriac evidence. After taking a broader view of Syriac translation culture, I will narrow in on two episodes from the anti-Chalcedonian, Miaphysite Syriac community for which exceptional literary and material evidence survives. An investigation of these sources shows that theological conflicts could affect the movement and exchange of codices which in turn influenced which works saw translation. The late antique Syriac evidence offers the chance to understand in a highly contextualised way how the movement of books affected the exchange of ideas across linguistic communities.

7 For the text of the letter, see Bergsträßer 1925; Bergsträßer 1932; Lamoureaux (ed. and tr.) 2016. On the letter, see Tannous 2010, 31–52.

8 In the Arabic, the text is referred to as the ‘book of demonstration’ (كتاب البرهان). Lamoureaux (ed. and tr.) 2016, 116, n. to §126, identifies this as the *Posterior Analytics*.

9 Ḥunayn ibn Isḥaq, *Letter on the Translation of Galen’s Books* 126 (Lamoureaux (ed. and tr.) 2016, 117, ll. 15–16 [edition]; 116 [translation]; cf. §115 in Bergsträßer 1925, 46 [edition], ll. 15–17; Bergsträßer 1925, 39 [translation]). Tannous 2010, 36, pointed me to this passage.

10 These sources are scattered throughout various publications, many of which are discussed below. For a helpful collection related to the translation of works of philosophy and science in Syriac, see King 2022, 224–246 (edition); 189–223 (translation).

2 Syriac translations and manuscript culture

Translations played a vital role in the emergence and flourishing of Syriac literature. Some of the earliest known literary texts in Syriac are translations of the Bible from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek dating to the second and third centuries.¹¹ Numerous Greek texts were translated in the fourth and fifth centuries. The earliest dated Syriac manuscript, produced in Edessa and dating to 411 CE, consists entirely of translations: the Pseudo-Clementines, an anti-Manichaean treatise of Titus of Bosra (d. c. 378), three works by Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 339), and a translation of a Greek martyrology.¹² In addition to theological texts, philosophical writings of a popular nature and much of the Aristotelian corpus of the Alexandrian Neoplatonic curriculum had been translated into Syriac by the end of the sixth century.¹³ Syriac communities also produced translations of select Greek medicinal and legal works.¹⁴ The experience of translating Greek works of different genres subsequently made Syriac translators important actors in the Greco-Arabic translation movement that took place under the Abbasids.¹⁵ This section offers a broad orientation to the intersection of manuscripts and translations in Syriac sources by looking at the production, use, and circulation of translations.

The translated texts themselves shed light on the use of manuscripts during the translation process. Both the Syriac Old and New Testaments underwent regular revision throughout Late Antiquity.¹⁶ The Harklean translation produced around 615/616 CE represents a literal mirror translation of the Greek.¹⁷ The translator, Thomas of Harkel (c. 570–after 631), added marginal notes that indicate where the Greek manuscripts he consulted differed from the main Greek *Vorlage* for his translation.¹⁸ A colophon to this work indicates that he not only consulted Greek manuscripts but also an earlier Syriac translation of the New Testament,

11 For brief overviews, see Brock 2006; Loopstra 2019.

12 The manuscript is London, British Library, Add. 12150. For a description, see William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 631–633. On the evidence for the translation of the martyrology, see Nau (ed. and tr.) 1912, 7–9.

13 On the translation of popular philosophical texts, see Rigolio 2016; Rigolio 2019. On the translation of Aristotelian philosophical works, see Hugonnard-Roche 2004; Hugonnard-Roche 2019; Watt 2019, 422–427. For a recent analysis of the selection of philosophical and scientific works translated into Syriac, see King 2022, 170–188.

14 On medicinal works, see Kessel 2019. On the translation of legal works, see Van Rompay 2011a.

15 Brock 1991; Gutas 1998, 13–16; Daiber 2007, 1207–1208.

16 Loopstra 2019, 293–296.

17 For an orientation to the Harklean version, see Juckel 2011a; Juckel 2017.

18 A few examples are described in Juckel 2017, 154–155.

known as the Philoxenian version.¹⁹ Notably, Thomas of Ḥarkel completed this translation in the monastery of the Antonians located in the district of monastic settlements known as the Enaton, 9 Roman miles west of Alexandria.²⁰ This was the very same monastery in which Paul of Tella (*fl.* early seventh century) translated Origen's Hexapla into Syriac.²¹ The Enaton had welcomed anti-Chalcedonian bishops forced into exile in the early sixth century and became the unofficial headquarters of the Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian patriarchate from the sixth to seventh centuries.²² The monastery's prominence must have led to the influx of manuscripts which translators like Thomas of Ḥarkel and Paul of Tella used for their translations.

Syriac translators also consulted Greek and Syriac manuscripts when revising earlier translations of theological and philosophical works. For example, the Syriac translations of the discourses of Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–c. 390) underwent continual revision, where the older versions were updated to reflect the Greek text more faithfully.²³ Further, the intellectual community associated with the monastery of Qenneshre located on the Euphrates River in Upper Mesopotamia carried out revisions or new translations of patristic and philosophical works in the late seventh and early eighth centuries to meet their curricular needs.²⁴ Just as the example of Rufinus's translation of Origen discussed above, such revisions demonstrate that the production of translations could involve gathering and consulting a small collection of manuscripts.

A more detailed look into the use of manuscripts in the production of translations can be found in the letters prefaced to the Syriac translation of Athanasius of Alexandria's (c. 295/299–373) *Commentary on the Psalms*.²⁵ A certain monk named Barlaha wrote a letter to Symeon, abbot of the monastery of Beth Licinius on the Black Mountain near Antioch, asking him to translate the proem to the commen-

19 Zuntz 1951, Table: Gegenüberstellung der Kolophone E und P. This unnumbered table is found between pages 176 and 177 in Zuntz's article. On the relationship of the Philoxenian and Harklean versions, see Brock 1981; Aland and Juckel (eds) 1986, 7–12.

20 On the Enaton in general, see Gascou 1991; Juckel 2011b; Ghattas 2017.

21 On the production of the Syrohexapla, see Vööbus 1971, 33–44; Liljeström 2021, 658–661; Marsh 2024, 5–14. The production of the Syrohexapla is largely based on the colophons. For a list see, Gentry 2021, 558. For the text and translation of the colophons and a detailed analysis of select colophons, see Marsh 2024, 113–132, 267–277, 427–429, 665–676.

22 See Gascou 1991, 956–957; Davis 2004, 100, 108.

23 Haelewyck 2017.

24 The evidence is summarised in Tannous 2018, 189–191.

25 Athanasius did not write a *Commentary on the Psalms* as such. This is likely a reference to his *Letter to Marcellinus* (*Patrologia Graeca* 27, cols 12–45): see Guidi 1886, 552–553.

commanded me to transfer according to [my] ability from the Greek speech to the language of the Syrians, I have received it from where you sent it.³⁴

The preface thus makes it clear that Sergius's anonymous correspondent requested a translation of the treatise *On the World* and sent him a manuscript containing the Greek text. This mirrors the type of exchange described in the correspondence between Barlaam and Symeon.

But Sergius's letter adds to this picture by considering the use of manuscripts after the completion of the translation. Sergius explains his approach to translation as follows:

[illegible]

But I am asking Your Love, that if another copy [ṣḥāḥā ٱى سىء] of this same letter is found in which there is something more or less, let Your Election not put the blame on our weakness, for I have taken care to keep in all fullness that which I found in the copy [ṣḥāḥā ٱى سىء] sent from Your Love, not adding anything to those things that were written by the philosopher here and not subtracting from them, according to my ability.³⁵

Daniel King has suggested that Sergius is defending himself here against criticisms of his translation programme, pointing out that others may tamper with his translations.³⁶ Be that as it may, Sergius assumes that his addressee could access another 'copy' or 'manuscript' (*ṣhāḥā* ܣܚܐ) of the same work, presumably also in Greek, with which to compare his translation. He also assumes the potential that multiple versions of the same work or at least copies with divergent readings could be in circulation. Indeed, two notes found in Syriac manuscripts of the sixth century, which contain a translation of the Bible and the works of John Chrysos-

³⁴ Sergius of Resh'ayna, *Preface* to Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the World* (de Lagarde 1858, 134, ll. 14–17; King 2022, 195). McCollum 2016, 166, n. 4, notes that the Syriac text edited by Paul de Lagarde does not accurately reproduce the Syriac text in the sole surviving manuscript. I have nevertheless reproduced the Syriac text from de Lagarde here, as I do not have direct access to the Syriac manuscript nor is it printed in Adam Carter McCollum's article. It is substantially the same text as that printed in King 2022.

35 Sergius of Resh'ayna, *Preface* to Pseudo-Aristotle, *On the World* (de Lagarde 1858, 134, ll. 22–27; King 2022, 196).

36 King 2022, 196.

Timothy made requests to seek books from the same monastic library on several occasions in his letters.⁴²

Indeed, the confessional identity of the owners of manuscripts seemed to have played little role in his attempt to build up his Greek philosophical library. The works of authors who were not tied to particular confessions formed points of connection between competing traditions, and their circulation across ecclesiastical divides was not as problematic as that of Christian authors who had to take a side in theological debates. Directly after the request to search the library of the monastery of Mar Mattai, Timothy writes,

[illegible]

Job the Chalcedonian told me that he has seen a small amount of scholia on the *Topics*, but apparently [only] some remnants of it. But let Your Chastity carefully investigate about scholia or a commentary on these books.⁴³

Here a third confessional identity comes into view. Timothy evidently had contact with a certain Job who came from the Chalcedonian community.⁴⁴ Their common interest in Aristotle's *Topics* helped bridge the different viewpoints of their communities in this situation.

The letter continues with a request for a manuscript containing the translation of Gregory of Nazianzus's *Orations*. Timothy had evidently already accessed the first volume of the *Orations* translated by the Syriac Orthodox ecclesiastical figure Paul of Edessa (early seventh century) and revised by Athanasius II of Balad (d. 687). But he still needed the second volume to complete his library:

[illegible]

⁴² As noted by Brock 1999, 242. See Timothy I, *Letter* 16.12 (Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2021, vol. 1, 85, l. 5; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2021, vol. 2, 68); 33.5 (Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2016, vol. 1, 11, l. 12–12, l. 2; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2016, vol. 2, 9); 39.50–52 (Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2016, vol. 1, 183, ll. 5–11; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2016, vol. 2, 159).

43 Timothy I, *Letter* 43.7 (Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2012, vol. 1, 67, ll. 23–27; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2012, vol. 2, 50; Brock 1999, 236 [§4]).

⁴⁴ Despite various proposals, the identity of the Job mentioned here remains unclear: Berti 2009, 187–189, n. 566; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2012, vol. 2, 50, n. 229.

Send us the latter volume of Athanasius so that we can copy it, for we have the first one. I think the translation is by Paul, for on the title of the same book the following is inscribed: 'The first volume of the holy and God-clothed Gregory the Theologian, which Abba Mar Paul translated from Greek to Syriac on the island of Cyprus.' The revision⁴⁵ is by Athanasius, according to what it says.⁴⁶

The catholicos Timothy I went to great lengths to form a library of both early Christian and philosophical works translated from Greek. In this way, the letter is reminiscent of the manuscript hunting of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq explored in the introduction. But it also serves as a helpful counter-example to the focus of the following two sections on a single ecclesiastical tradition. When works common to several traditions – such as Gregory of Nazianzus's *Orations* – underwent translation into Syriac, the ecclesial background of the translator does not seem to have been important. Such translations became the common heritage of Syriac Christian communities across ecclesiastical divisions.

This brief survey has highlighted the use and circulation of manuscripts in the production of translations as evidenced by Syriac textual sources from Late Antiquity. First, translators not only made use of the manuscripts they received but also sought out additional witnesses to a text – therefore, the production of a translation could involve the consultation of several manuscripts. Second, the translation of a work might not deter readers from going back to the original text or comparing copies of its translation. Indeed, readers could actively seek out other copies of the same work in order to check the translation. Third, Syriac communities throughout Late Antiquity sought to form libraries which housed translations of Greek works alongside literature composed in Syriac. The translations of works of common interest that did not contain material objectionable to one theological confession could form a bridge between competing ecclesiastical communities.

⁴⁵ The term 'revision' (*turrāṣā* ٲٲٲٲ) also has the sense of 'emended' or 'corrected version'. See Jesse Payne Smith 1903, 609. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for drawing attention to the broader range of meaning of this word.

⁴⁶ Timothy I, *Letter* 43.8 (Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2012, vol. 1, 67, ll. 27–35; Heimgartner (ed. and tr.) 2012, vol. 2, 50–51; Brock 1999, 237 [§5]).

3 Imperial opposition to anti-Chalcedonians and the circulation of Greek manuscripts

The short anecdotes in the previous section exhibited general trends in Syriac manuscript culture related to the production of translations. This and the following section turn to specific case studies that shed light on trends in the manuscript culture of the anti-Chalcedonian or Miaphysite Syriac community. The first episode comes from an extensive Syriac historiographical work known as the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene (fl. c. 568/569). The composition of this work and an epistolary exchange found within it relate crucial information about the movement of manuscripts in anti-Chalcedonian circles.

The *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zacharias forms a compilation of historiographical and other texts shaped loosely into the form of a universal history consisting of twelve books.⁴⁷ The first two books (Books 1–2) consist of eclectic materials arranged roughly in chronological order up to the mid fifth century. The remaining ten books (Books 3–12) narrate the history of the reigns of the Roman emperors from Marcian (r. 450–457) through the early years of Justin II (r. 565–578), drawing primarily on the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zacharias of Mytilene (c. 465–after 536) for the period up to 491 (Books 3–6) and two otherwise unknown sources for the reigns of Anastasius I (r. 491–518), Justin I (r. 518–527), and Justinian I (r. 527–565) (Books 7–12).⁴⁸ Pseudo-Zacharias himself describes his plan to cover history up to the year 568/569.⁴⁹ The use of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zacharias of Mytilene betrays the *Chronicle*'s Miaphysite perspective: Zacharias was an anti-Chalcedonian leader who studied with and became a major supporter of Severus of Antioch (d. 538), writing a favourable life of the bishop shortly after his death.⁵⁰ The prominent role of the *Ecclesiastical History* as a source for the *Chronicle* must have led to the false attribution of the *Chronicle* to Zacharias, hence the name assigned to the anonymous compiler.

⁴⁷ On the genre of the work, see Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 33–37. For an edition and full Latin translation, see Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vols 1–2 [edition]; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vols 3–4 [translation]). The German and two English translations only include partial translations of Books 1–2: Ahrens and Krüger (tr.) 1899; Hamilton and Brooks (tr.) 1899; Greatrex (ed.) 2011.

⁴⁸ On the sources, see Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 2, 39–57; Debié 2015, 532.

⁴⁹ Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.1 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 6, ll. 13–17; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 4; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 79 [§1.1k]).

⁵⁰ Zacharias of Mytilene, *Life of Severus of Antioch* (Kugener (ed. and tr.) 1907, 7–115; Brock and Fitzgerald (tr.) 2013, 33–100). On Zacharias and his works, see Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 3–31.

Pseudo-Zacharias himself seems to have come out of a monastic milieu. He refers to the one who encouraged his work on the *Chronicle* as ‘our holy father’ (ܐܬܬܐ ܐܬܬܐ) in one place and ‘our brother’ (ܐܬܬܐ) in another,⁵¹ stating that he did it ‘for the instruction of the brotherhood, the delight of the lovers of learning, and the edification of the faithful’ (ܕܬܬܐܝܢܐ ܕܬܬܐܝܢܐ ܕܬܬܐܝܢܐ ܕܬܬܐܝܢܐ ܕܬܬܐܝܢܐ).⁵² He may well have been a monk in a monastery in Amida (modern-day Diyarbakır, Türkiye) based on shared materials with the contemporaneous Syriac historiographer John of Ephesus (c. 507–589) and his discussion of the library in Amida, which is explored below.⁵³

The growing imperial opposition to the Miaphysite movement in the early sixth century shaped the composition of this work. Anti-Chalcedonian parties enjoyed relative stability during the reign of Anastasius I, exemplified by the tenure of the anti-Chalcedonian Severus (d. 538) as patriarch of Antioch from 512 to 518. This changed when Justin I rose to the throne and initiated various measures to undermine the anti-Chalcedonian movement,⁵⁴ which included deposing bishops such as Severus who fled to Egypt.⁵⁵ The *Chronicle* lists the bishops expelled from their thrones⁵⁶ and the anti-Chalcedonian monasteries forced to relocate in the wake of persecutions.⁵⁷

The forced exile of clerics and the relocation of monastic communities intersect the compositional history of the *Chronicle*. Pseudo-Zacharias informs us that many bishops forced into exile took refuge in Alexandria, including Nonnus who had a short tenure as bishop of Amida after his appointment in 519.⁵⁸ Nonnus was

51 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.7; 2.0 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 56, l. 17 and 104, l. 7; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 40, 72; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 49, 82 [§§1.7 and 2.0b]).

52 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 2.0 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 104, ll. 4–5; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 72; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 82 [§2.0b]).

53 On Pseudo-Zacharias, see Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 32–33. A recent article suggests that Pseudo-Zacharias was a doctor who became a monk later in life: Prostko-Prostyński 2018. On Amida as a centre for the composition of Syriac historiographies, see Debié 2015, 156–165.

54 The change in policy is depicted as abrupt and as emerging from the populace (see Forness 2020), but it was complex and had many factors: Vasiliev 1950, 132–160; Grillmeier 1987, 318–322; Anastos 1985, 128–134; Greatrex 2007, 99–105; Menze 2008, 22–30.

55 On Severus’s flight, see Brock 2017.

56 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 78, ll. 5–17; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 53; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 298–300 [§§8.5a–b]).

57 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 80, l. 11–81, l. 7; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 55; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 303–305 [§8.5c]).

58 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 78, l. 21–79, l. 9; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 53–54; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 300–301 [§8.5b]). On Nonnus, see Honigsmann 1951, 100.

succeeded by Mara who belonged to the nobility of Amida, being the son of the governor, and had been a ‘steward’ (*rabbaytā* ܪܒܝܬܐ) of the church.⁵⁹ The *Chronicle* highlights Mara’s Greek learning through his studies at the monastery of Thomas in Seleucia Pieria which around 530 ‘moved out of zealous faith and was rebuilt, resettling in Qenneshre on the Euphrates River’ (ܩܢܝܫܪܐ ܕܥܦܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܬܘܡܐ ܕܨܠܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܘܣܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܕܙܝܠܐ ܕܟܝܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ).⁶⁰ As noted above, the monastery of Qenneshre became one of the leading centres for the production of Syriac translations of Greek works, and here we must imagine that the library brought from Seleucia Pieria played no small part in its access to manuscripts for translation.⁶¹ The *Chronicle* emphasises that Mara himself acquired a wide range of books:

הם מליט אתה זהו חינוך. אע"פ, לפיכך מה פקיד ללחשוש. אמת וזהו סודו של חינוך והוא חינוך שכלל. [...] חלק מהחלק הזה הוא חינוך וזהו חינוך ג' ו'.

After he remained in his see for a short period of time, he was banished to Petra and from Petra to Alexandria. He was there for some time and formed there a library of many wonderful books. [...] They were transferred to the treasury of the church of Amida after this man's death.⁶²

Based on this passage and the content of the *Chronicle*, prior scholarship has concluded that Mara's library in Amida granted the chronicler access to many sources used in compiling the *Chronicle*.⁶³ Pseudo-Zacharias's personal knowledge of the library helps link him to Amida. For our purposes, this passage demon-

59 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 79, l. 13; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 54; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 301 [\$8.5b]). On Mara, see Honigsmann 1951, 101. Other accounts of Mara's exile and return to Amida can be found in John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 13 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1923–1925, vol. 1, 188, l. 2–197, l. 2 [*passim*]), *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (Chabot (ed. and tr.) 1927–1949, vol. 2, 30, l. 21–32, l. 16; Hespel (tr.) 1989, 21–23; Harrak (tr.) 1999, 59–60), Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* (Chabot (ed. and tr.) 1889–1910, vol. 4, 268, col. 1, ll. 8–14; Chabot (ed. and tr.) 1889–1910, vol. 2, 174). A letter congratulating him on his accession to the episcopacy also survives: Jacob of Serugh, *Letter* 26 (Olinder (ed.) 1937, 223, l. 1–224, l. 31; Albert (tr.) 2004, 286–288).

⁶⁰ Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 79, ll. 16–18; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 54; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 301 [\$8.5b]). The educational curriculum of the monastery of Thomas can be gleaned from a sixth-century source on John bar Aphthonia who guided the monastery through its move to Qenneshre: *History of John bar Aphthonia* 4–6 (Nau 1902, 115, l. 13–118, l. 31 and 124–130; on this text, see Watt 1999).

⁶¹ On the monastery in Qenneshre, see Tannous 2018, 169–176.

⁶² Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 79, ll. 22–25, 27–28; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 54; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 302 [§8.5b]).

63 Allen 1980, 472; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 38, n. 17, with further bibliography.

strates the flow of Greek books from Alexandria to the anti-Chalcedonian communities in Upper Mesopotamia.⁶⁴

The movement of books occasioned by imperial opposition to the anti-Chalcedonian movement also surfaces in relation to the translation of the story of *Joseph and Aseneth*. The first book of the *Chronicle* begins with a general plan for the work⁶⁵ and then features two epistolary exchanges: one on the chronology of the Bible;⁶⁶ the other regarding the translation of *Joseph and Aseneth*,⁶⁷ which forms a chapter by itself.⁶⁸ The unnamed author of the request for a Syriac translation of *Joseph and Aseneth* may well be Pseudo-Zacharias himself.⁶⁹ This request was sent to Moses of Aggel (sixth century) who is also known to have translated Cyril of Alexandria's *Glaphyra*.⁷⁰ The letter written to Moses highlights again the movement of Greek manuscripts in the early Syriac movement this time in relation to a translation:

[illegible]

For in the library of the bishops, who are worthy of memory, who were called the family of the house of Beroea⁷¹ from the city of Rēš'aynā, [in the possession of] a certain boy, their

64 Greatrex (ed.) 2011, p. 302, n. 92, points to one parallel case. A certain Thomas from Armenia acquired a large library of books while in Alexandria and brought them back on his return. See John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1923–1925, vol. 1, 293, ll. 5–8).

65 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.1 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 2, l. 18–6, l. 27; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 1–4; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 76–79.

66 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.2–3 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 7, l. 1–17, l. 17; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 4–12).

67 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.4–5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 17, l. 18–21, l. 12; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 12–15).

⁶⁸ Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.6 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 21, l. 13–55, l. 29; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 15–39). For a summary of the various proposals for the rationale behind the inclusion of *Joseph and Aseneth* in the *Chronicle*, see Jonathan Wright 2018, vol. 1, 69.

⁶⁹ Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 46. But Debié 2015, 163, 351, suggests that the author may be either Pseudo-Zacharias or the Paphnutius who wrote a letter asking Moses to translate Cyril of Alexandria's *Glaphyra*.

⁷⁰ On Moses, see Baumstark 1922, 160–161; Brock 2011.

71 Ahrens and Krüger (tr.) 1899, 17*; Brooks (tr.) 1918, xvii; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 12, n. 8; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 46 and 75, n. 1; and Debié 2015, 351, show a certain hesitancy in trans-

kinsman, whose name was Mar'abda, who was dear to me in Our Lord and to whom I was bound since my youth in study, I found a small, very old book that was called 'Aseneth',⁷² written in the Greek language. I only read the *historia* of it, but I could not understand the *theoria*. Because this language is difficult and foreign to me, I have for this reason sent it to Your Love so that you can translate it for me into the Syriac language, so that you can help me understand everything in the *historia* and something from its *theoria*.⁷³

The letter writer asks for Moses to translate this work because he cannot understand the *theoria* of the text. The precise meaning of the term *theoria* in this context has proven elusive but must refer to a higher meaning of the text.⁷⁴

More important for our discussion is the allusion to a library associated with a family from Beroea (that is, Aleppo) which at the time had been relocated eastward to Rēš'aynā (modern-day Ra's al-'Ayn, Syria and Ceylanpınar, Türkiye). Ernest Walter Brooks makes the following suggestion regarding the library:

we may perhaps conjecture that on the expulsion of the Monophysites in 519 the bishop of [Beroea] (Antoninus)⁷⁵ took his books or those of his see with him, and that in the writer's time they were in the possession of a young kinsman of his at [Rēš'ayna].⁷⁶

The *Chronicle* specifies that Antoninus was one of the bishops sent into exile early in Justin I's reign.⁷⁷ He corresponded with the Syriac author Jacob of Serugh (d. 520/521)⁷⁸ as well as Severus before his exile under Justin I.⁷⁹ A letter by Severus of Antioch written to a group of bishops confirms that Antoninus spent part of his

lating ܠܪܥܝܐ as 'Beroea'. This seems unwarranted, as this is a widely attested spelling of this city: Robert Payne Smith 1879, vol. 1, col. 605.

72 The Syriac has ܡܪܝܬܐ, where the *nun* has been corrupted into a *yud*.

73 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 1.4 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 1, 18, ll. 10–21; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 3, 12–13).

74 See the recent discussion in Jonathan Wright 2018, vol. 1, 66–69.

75 On Antoninus, see Honigsmann 1951, 25–27, which pointed me to most of the sources on Antoninus.

76 Brooks (tr.) 1918, xvii. I have modified the spelling of the cities to match that elsewhere in the article.

77 Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, *Chronicle* 8.5 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 2, 78, l. 13; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1924, vol. 4, 53; Greatrex (ed.) 2011, 299 [\$8.5b]).

78 Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* 4 (Olinder (ed.) 1937, 21, l. 15–24, l. 17; Albert (tr.) 2004, 40–42).

79 Severus of Antioch, *Letters* 29 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1919–1920, vol. 1, 88, l. 6–90, l. 2); *Select Letters* 1.14–16 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 1.1, 63, l. 4–66, l. 8; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 1.1, 66, l. 9–67, l. 22; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 1.1, 68, l. 1–70, l. 14; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 2.1, 57–59, 60–61, 61–63).

exile in Alexandria.⁸⁰ He helped draw up a list of canons in 535 by several anti-Chalcedonian bishops in exile,⁸¹ and Pope Vigilius (r. 537–555) mentions him in a letter dating to 540.⁸² According to a later Syriac chronicle, Antoninus spent his exile in different places and ended up dying in Constantinople.⁸³

How Antoninus's books ended up in Resh'ayna is difficult to reconstruct. There does not appear to be any evidence that Antoninus returned to Aleppo. He may have transferred his library before he went into exile, or he may have done so after going into exile in Egypt and embarking on further travels. While the narrative remains difficult to reconstruct, the example of Antoninus taken together with that of Mara suggest that the forced exile of anti-Chalcedonian bishops led to the relocation of books and libraries. This development affected the sources available to Syriac communities later in the sixth century when authors like Pseudo-Zacharias were creating new historiographies for the Miaphysite movement.

The *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zacharias adds significantly to the picture of the role of manuscripts in the production and circulation of translations. While complementing broader themes, such as the exchange of manuscripts between patrons and translators, it offers contextual details about the libraries in which the original works circulated and the movement of manuscripts across regions. Alexandria, in particular, also emerges as an important repository of Greek codices brought to Syria and Upper Mesopotamia and used by Syriac translators. The deposition of bishops and imperial opposition to anti-Chalcedonians at the beginning of Justin I's reign had consequences for book culture and thereby the availability of manuscripts. We will encounter this final theme in the next section as we turn from literary to material sources.

⁸⁰ Severus of Antioch, *Select Letters* 1.53 (Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 1.1, 167, l. 8–180, l. 2; Brooks (ed. and tr.) 1902–1904, vol. 2.1, 151–162).

⁸¹ *Ecclesiastical Canons of the Holy Fathers in the Time of the Persecution* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, syriaque 62, fol. 223^r, l. 27; Nau 1909, 113 [translation]). I am not aware of any Syriac edition of this work. In addition to the Parisian manuscript, I have consulted the catalogue entry on London, British Library, Add. 12155, fols 225^r–226^r (William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 950). On the dating of the canons, see Nau 1909, 8; Honigsmann 1951, 36–37. Antoninus also co-authored a letter with one of the signatories of the canons: Constantine of Laodicea and Antoninus of Aleppo, *Letter to Thomas of Germanica* (London, British Library, Add. 14532, fol. 145^{r-v}), as noted in William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 962; Menze 2008, 157. I have not been able to examine this text.

⁸² *Collectio Avellana* 92.9 (Günther (ed.) 1895–1898, vol. 1, 349, ll. 18–19).

⁸³ *Chronicle of 846* (Brooks (ed.) 1904, vol. 1, 226, ll. 7–11; Brooks (ed.) 1904, vol. 2, 172).

4 Internal Miaphysite theological debates and the translation of Greek commentaries

The selection of books that were translated from Greek to Syriac in the sixth century was not merely a matter of chance. Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523), for example, defended his decision to commission a new translation of the Bible by pointing to the imprecision and attendant inadequacy of the common Peshitta translation for the debates of his day.⁸⁴ Further, the close parallels between the selection of philosophical works translated into Armenian and Syriac reflect the fact that the neo-Platonic curriculum of Alexandria circulated in two Eastern Christian traditions outside of Egypt.⁸⁵ This section will focus on the connection between theological controversies internal to the Miaphysite movement and the production and use of translations. Translations proved especially necessary for these internal debates, as authors on different sides of the debate wrote in both Greek and Syriac. Below, I will discuss this phenomenon with reference to a translation of John Chrysostom's *Commentary on First Corinthians* produced in Callinicum (modern-day al-Raqqa, Syria). This commentary appears in a manuscript dating to 584 whose final folios contain no fewer than seven short texts that shed light on the context of its production. An examination and contextualisation of the end matter in this manuscript demonstrate the nexus of theological debates, the translation of Greek literature, and the circulation of manuscripts.

The manuscript under question survives almost entirely intact and contains the third volume of the Syriac translation of Chrysostom's *Commentary on First Corinthians*, consisting of *Homilies* 34 to 44.⁸⁶ This manuscript, Add. 12160 (fols 1–108),⁸⁷ forms the first codicological unit of a complex manuscript. For the purposes of this study, I will focus only on this first codicological unit and not address the manuscript to which this unit was bound at a later time. The first quire of the unit of the manuscript under consideration consists of nine folios (fols 1–9) with the entire first folio and the recto side of the second folio originally left blank. The second through tenth quires

⁸⁴ Philoxenus of Mabbug, *Commentary on the Prologue to the Gospel of John* (de Halleux (ed. and tr.) 1977, vol. 1, 53, ll. 11–17; de Halleux (ed. and tr.) 1977, vol. 2, 52–53).

⁸⁵ As noted in Calzolari 2016, 54–57.

⁸⁶ On the surviving evidence for the Syriac translation of the *Commentary on First Corinthians*, see Childers 1996, vol. 1, 40–42.

⁸⁷ For a description of the manuscript, see William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 472–473; Hatch 1946, 84, plate xxxiii.

take the form of quinions (fols 10–99). But the final quire takes the same format as the first quire, containing nine folios (fols 100–108). The producers of the manuscript must have realised that a whole quinion was not necessary to complete the text, as the commentary only stretches to the verso side of the sixth folio in the final quire (fol. 106^v). This offered a generous amount of space to add further texts, while still leaving several folio sides blank for protection. It is also important to note that six folios, forming three pairs, have been replaced in the manuscript and were written in a slightly different Estrangela hand.⁸⁸

A connection between the Syriac translation of John Chrysostom's *Commentary on First Corinthians* and internal Miaphysite debates can be demonstrated based on several marginalia found in Add. 12160. A debate between Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus (d. c. 527) erupted in the 520s after Severus and Julian had been forced into exile in Egypt in the wake of Justin I's opposition and deposition of anti-Chalcedonian ecclesiastical leaders.⁸⁹ Severus and Julian disagreed on the nature of Christ's body: Severus held that Christ's pre-resurrection body was corruptible (φθαρτός) while Julian held that it was incorruptible (ἄφθαρτος).⁹⁰ The followers of Julian became known as Julianists and endured for centuries in Syriac and other anti-Chalcedonian communities.⁹¹

⁸⁸ William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 472 notes that six folios are written in a different, slightly later hand. These folios in fact form three pairs (fols 54–55; 64–65; and 91, 98) which represent three bifolia: folios 54 and 55 as well as 64 and 65 form the fifth and sixth folios of a quinion, while folios 91 and 98 form the second and ninth folios of a quinion. The placement of the folios in the quires as well as the fact that the text on folios 55^v, 65^v, and 98^v does not fill the final column suggests that these folios were simply added to replace missing or damaged folios.

⁸⁹ On the Julianist debate, see Draguet 1924; Moss 2016.

⁹⁰ On the doctrinal disagreement, see especially Grillmeier 1995, 79–111.

⁹¹ On the legacy of the debate, see Kofsky 2013; Possekkel 2013; Wierzejski 2016.

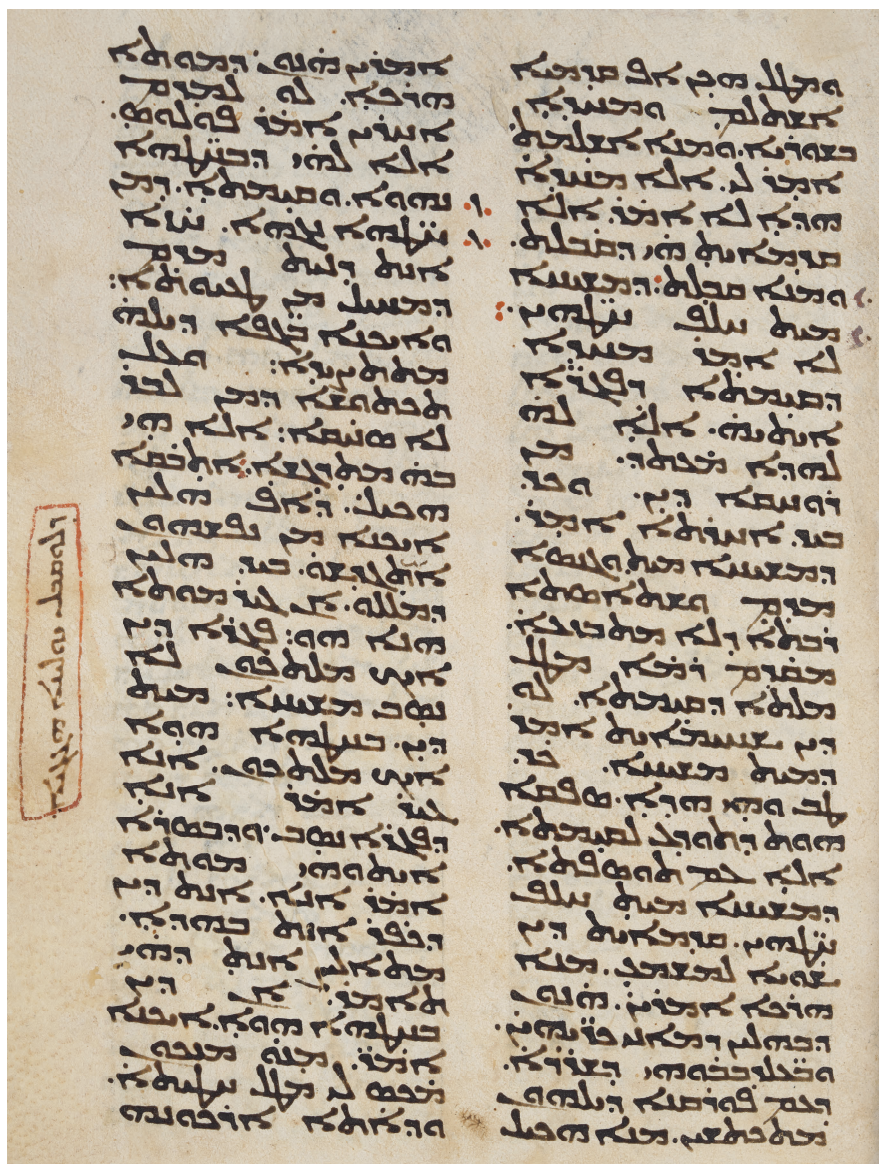


Fig. 1: Add. 12160 (fols 1–108), fol. 44^r. © British Library Board.

Six marginalia in Add. 12160 relate to the Julianist debate (see Fig. 1): five read ‘Against Julian the Phantasiast’ (ܕܢܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܘܠܝܐܢܐ ܕܡܢܝܬܐ; fols 44^r, 55^r, 62^v, 78^v, 86^v); the sixth states ‘On the body that it is mortal’ (ܕܡܢ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ; fol. 45^r). Five

are written in the same Estrangela hand (fols 44^r, 45^r, 62^v, 78^v, 86^v). The sixth appears on one of the folios replaced in the original manuscript (fol. 55^r; see Fig. 2). The scribe of this note has a slightly different Estrangela hand and may well have copied the note from a damaged folio.⁹² The fact that all the notes are written in Estrangela and were probably added before the replacement of folios which themselves are written in an Estrangela hand suggests that the notes were likely added contemporaneously with or shortly after the completion of the manuscript. The notes and the text of the commentary next to which they appear are catalogued in Appendix 1.

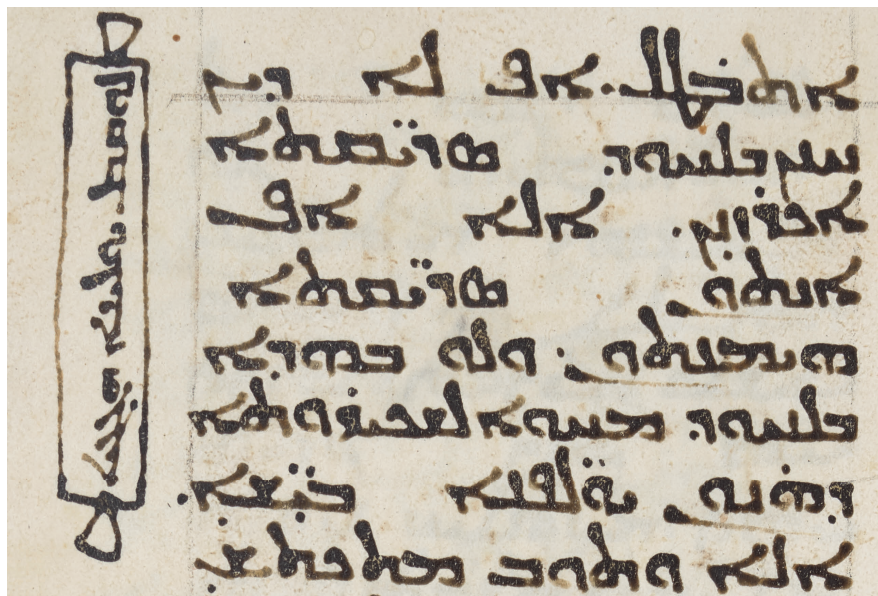


Fig. 2: Add. 12160 (fols 1–108), fol. 55^r. © British Library Board.

The polemical term ‘Phantasiast’ (*haggāgāyā* ܚܓܓܝܝܐ = φαντασιαστής) found in five of the marginalia refers to the belief that Christ’s body was merely an appearance. The term was used in the polemic against the followers of Mani (216–c. 276) and Eutyches (d. c. 456), and Severus applied it to Julian during their debate.⁹³ The

⁹² On the hand, see especially the form of ܕܡܠܟܐ and the form of *hē* whose loop is closed in the note. The decoration here also differs from that on the other folios.

⁹³ Moss 2016, 24.

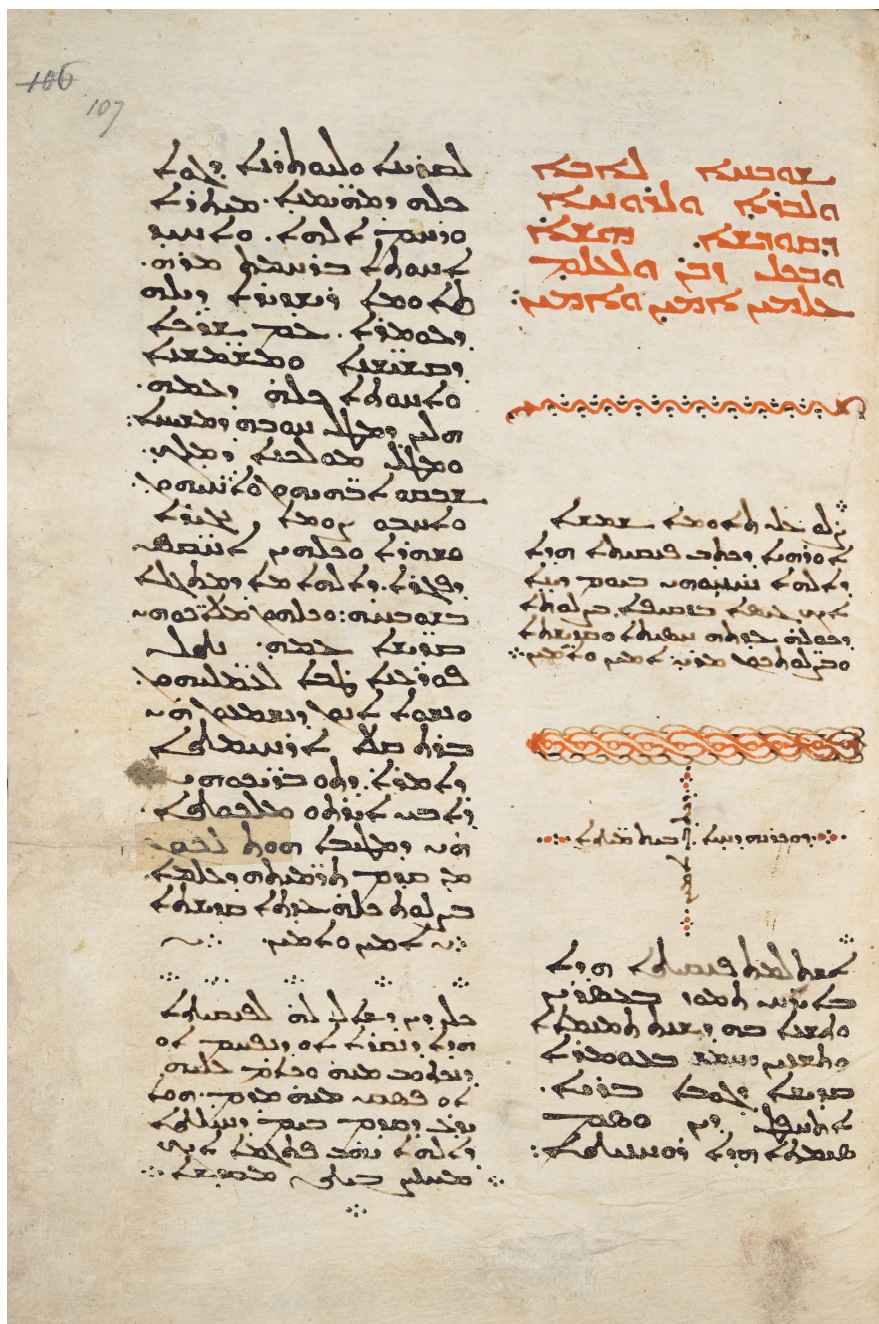


Fig. 3: Add. 12160 (fols 1–108), fol. 107^r. © British Library Board.

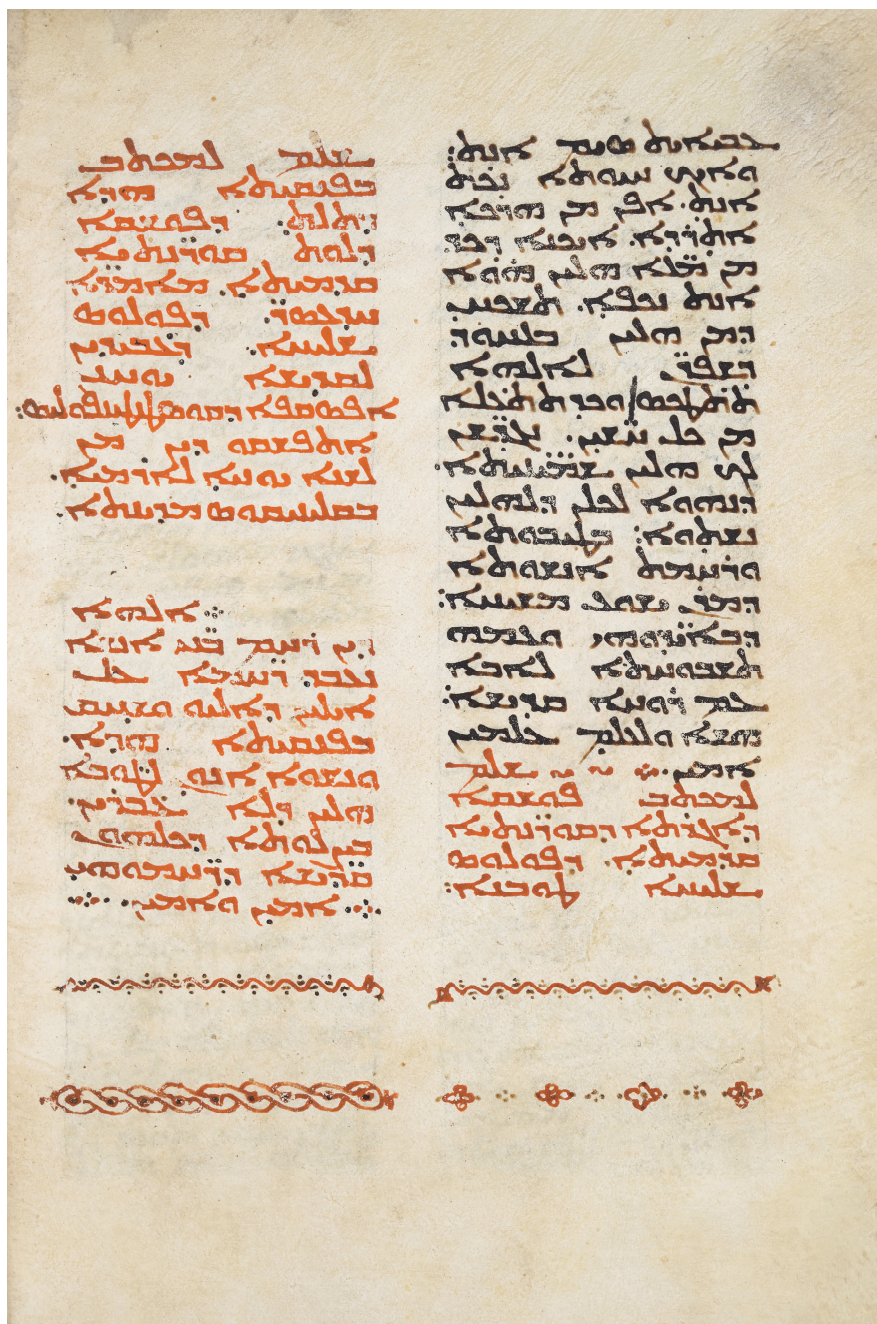


Fig. 4: Add. 12160 (fols 1–108), fol. 106^v. © British Library Board.

wrote in Greek.¹¹⁵ For the Syriac ecclesiastics gathered at Gubba Barraya, having access to patristic writings meant being able to engage in the debates of the day.

The production of the commentary manuscript Add. 12160 occurred during the dispute between Peter, Proba, and John Barbur, but it is only in a subsequent debate that we gain a clear picture of how Peter himself argued. The Tritheist controversy emerged in the 550s and 560s centred around a claim that there were as many natures, substances, and godheads as hypostases in the Trinity. Damian, the patriarch of Alexandria, wrote a rebuttal of Tritheism around the year 585 and sent it to Peter of Callinicum. Both Damian and Peter opposed Tritheist teachings, but Peter found Damian's response wanting. This led to a conflict between Alexandria and Antioch that lasted until 616.¹¹⁶ Peter undertook a trip to Alexandria in an unsuccessful attempt to meet with Damian, and while there he wrote an extensive treatise sometime after Easter of 588.¹¹⁷ It is debated whether Peter's treatise, known today as *Against Damian*, was originally written in Greek and then translated into Syriac by the early seventh century or if it was originally composed in Syriac.¹¹⁸ The treatise largely consists of citations of patristic authorities and interpretations of these works, including several quotations drawn from John Chrysostom's commentaries.¹¹⁹

Peter of Callinicum only began writing to Damian after the production of the commentary manuscript. But his writings offer insight into the manner in which anti-Chalcedonian communities argued in their internal disputes.¹²⁰ Works like Chrysostom's commentaries assumed an important role in proving the faithfulness of one's point of view to the tradition. That Peter himself drew extensively on patristic testimonies to address internal Miaphysite debates offers one potential

tr.) 1981; Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003. Less certain is the attribution of a Syriac anaphora that survives only in much later manuscripts: Ebied and Wickham 2008.

115 Hainthaler 2004, 160.

116 On the Tritheist controversy, see Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1981, 20–33; Van Roey and Allen (eds and tr.) 1994, 122–129; Davis 2004, 108–112; Grillmeier 2013; Zachhuber 2020, 170–183. On Peter and Damian's disagreement, see Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1981, 34–43; Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003, vol. 1, xiv–xxvi.

117 Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003, vol. 1, xx.

118 Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003, vol. 1, xxxv–xxxvi. On the suggestion that it was composed in Greek, see Brock 2005, 704–705; Van Rompay 2022, 482–483, 491–492; Van Rompay 2023.

119 As evidenced in the indices to Peter's works from the controversy: Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1981, 124; Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003, vol. 1, 382; Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham (eds and tr.) 1994–2003, vol. 4, 504–505.

120 On this point related to the Julianist controversy, see Moss 2013; Moss 2016, 106–139.

use of the commentary manuscript produced in the monastery where he likely resided and hosted gatherings of ecclesiastical leaders. This is not to say that the commentary under question was translated specifically for Peter's debate with Proba and John Barbur nor for the Tritheist controversy. Rather, the types of patristic argumentation attested in these internal Miaphysite debates shed light on the reasons why patristic works underwent translation into Syriac and why manuscripts containing such translations continued to be copied. In this way, the manuscript of the *Commentary on First Corinthians* – which itself contains paratextual materials related to the Julianist controversy – forms a material witness to the translation of patristic works for the use of Syriac communities engaged in theological debates.

5 Conclusion

This paper has surveyed how theological debates intersected manuscripts and the production of Syriac translations in the sixth century. External forces – such as Justin I's measures against the anti-Chalcedonian movement – led to the relocation of several libraries. Anti-Chalcedonian bishops brought their libraries with them and acquired new ones while in exile in Alexandria. This opened up possibilities for the production of translations later in the sixth century after the codices had arrived in the centres of the Miaphysite movement in Syria. Internal Miaphysite debates – conducted in both Greek and Syriac – feature a style of argumentation that consists of stringing together patristic witnesses. This made translations of authoritative patristic authorities like John Chrysostom important for Syriac communities and must have led to the production of copies of these works.

The late antique Syriac literary and material evidence examined here offers glimpses into the historical contexts that prompted the exchange and circulation of manuscripts among Eastern Christian communities. Even as literary traditions in a great variety of languages developed in the course of Late Antiquity, translations helped ensure that there was a common basis for discussion and debate. Underlying the numerous translations of Greek works in languages such as Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Latin, Syriac, and other languages was a well-developed book culture that crossed linguistic boundaries. The anti-Chalcedonian movement sought to define itself over the course of the sixth century as hope for a reunion with the imperial church faded. This historical context led to the exchange of manuscripts across and within ecclesiastical communities to produce translations

that demonstrated their connection to the past even as they sought to carve out a path for the future.

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Appendix 1: Anti-Julianist marginalia in Add. 12160 (fols 1–108)

Six marginal notes appear next to the text of John Chrysostom's *Commentary on First Corinthians* in the manuscript Add. 12160 (fols 1–108). These notes identify sections of the text relevant for the debate over the incorruptibility of Christ's pre-resurrection body within the Julianist controversy. This appendix catalogues the marginal notes and the text related to the debate over Christ's body found in the text of the commentary. I have only included quotations from the commentary long enough to highlight key words – such as, 'body' or 'corruption' – that must have drawn attention to these passages. References to the Syriac text come from the present manuscript, while those to the Greek text refer to Field (ed.) 1845–1862, vol. 2.

Appendix 2: Add. 12160 (fols 1–108), fols 106^v–107^r

The final folios of the manuscript Add. 12160 (fols 1–108) feature seven texts which are mostly carefully marked out and distinguished from one another by ornamentation and that offer insight into its production and circulation (fols 106^v–107^r; see Figs 3–4). William Wright included the Syriac text of most of these end materials in his catalogue description of the manuscript, but he abbreviated some, omitted others, and did not translate any of them.¹²¹ Arthur Amiaud published the Syriac text and a French translation of Texts 4 to 7.¹²² Since neither publication presents the texts in full, this Appendix includes the entire Syriac text accompanied by my English translation and brief comments. But first a few words on the palaeography of these notes are needed.

Palaeographic analysis

Hand 1: The subscription to the text, subscription to the volume, and doxology (Texts 1–3 below) all appear in rubrics and were written in the same hand as the commentary itself.

Hand 2: The request to pray for the scribe (Text 4) is written in a cursive hand that differs from that in Texts 1 to 3, as demonstrated by the forms of *'ālap̄*, *dālaṭ*, *hē*, and *taw* in the phrase ‘this volume’ (ܬܝܫܘܒܐ ܕܝܠܕܝܢܐ).

Hand 3: The forms of the *'ālap̄*, *dālaṭ*, *hē*, and *waw* are quite similar in Text 4 (Hand 2) and Texts 5 to 7 (Hand 3). Yet the form of the medial or final *taw* where the final stroke sometimes extends below the baseline distinguishes the hand of Texts 5 to 7 from that of Text 4. This *taw* notably appears in Text 5 for which very little evidence survives. The ligature *taw-'ālap̄* at the end of words found in Texts 6 and 7 also distinguishes this hand. Further, the left loop of *semkaṭ* in Texts 5 to 7 is always on the baseline, unlike that in Text 4.

¹²¹ William Wright 1870–1872, vol. 2, 472 (no. 590).

¹²² Amiaud 1889, v–vi.

Table 2: Palaeographic comparison of the three hands on folios 106^v and 107^r (all images in this table: © British Library Board).

	ⲉⲧⲉⲛⲁⲧⲁ and <i>taw</i>	Initial/medial <i>semkat</i>
Hand 1 (Title; fol. 2 ^v)		
Hand 1 (Text 2; fol. 106 ^{vb})		
Hand 2 (Text 4; fol. 107 ^{ra})		
Hand 3 (Text 5; fol. 107 ^{ra})		
Hand 3 (Text 6; fol. 107 ^{ra})		
Hand 3 (Text 7; fol. 107 ^{rb})		

All three hands seem to be contemporaneous to the production of the manuscript. Hand 1 matches the hand of the commentary text. Hands 2 and 3 are similar, and Text 6 contains the note about the production of the manuscript in the Gubba Barraya manuscript in 584. Hands 2 and 3 match the cursive script that existed alongside the Estrangela script at an early date and is found in several sixth-century manuscripts written in Estrangela but with cursive colophons.¹²³ Some of these even feature a *taw* forming a ligature with the following letter as found in Texts 6 and 7 (see Table 2).¹²⁴

Texts 1 to 3 must have been added by the scribe of the manuscript shortly after completing the commentary text. It is possible that Text 4 – a request for prayer for the scribe – was written by the same scribe of the commentary, who decided to use a cursive script for this note. Texts 5 to 7 seem to have been added by a different scribe shortly after the manuscript reached the library of Gubba Bar-

¹²³ Healey 2000; Briquel-Chatonnet 2001. See also the convenient summary in Briquel-Chatonnet 2019, 254–256.

¹²⁴ Briquel-Chatonnet 2001, 86–87.

ly angels, may give a good repayment for their deeds and make them worthy to hear that beloved verse, which states, ‘Come, you blessed ones of my Father! Inherit the kingdom!’,¹³⁰ which has been prepared for you from before the foundations of the world, through the prayer of the whole holy church. Amen and amen.

Text 7: Warning to unscrupulous borrowers (fol. 107^{rb}):

כל דבר ודאכל לך לפיכך את מנהגים אדם ופועל את ונחמם את מעט חכמה בלתי¹³¹ את פנים מעט מדבר: אתה כ

יחד ומעט בער ושלש את ואלת את נוח פה יצא אבי מעלה כל המושק *

Everyone who requests to read, collate, or copy this volume and withholds it or cuts something out of it should know that he will have to give an answer before the dreadful throne of God like one who plunders a sanctuary.¹³²

130 Matthew 25:34.

131 The reading in the manuscript seems to be *حلب*, but it is possible that the grammatically necessary diacritical mark above the *hē* has been damaged.

132 The warnings and penalties here are typical of Syriac manuscripts from this time. For an analysis, including this manuscript, see Brock 2015, 367–368.