

## A note about the manuscript London Or. 2438\*

[Una nota sobre el manuscrito London Or. 2438]

**Gianmaria GIANAZZA**  
Salesian Pontifical University (Jerusalem)  
ggianazza@hotmail.com



While studying *Kitāb Asfār al-Asrār* of Ṣalībā,<sup>1</sup> an author of the Eastern Church from Mossoul (14<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>2</sup> I collected all the

---

\* Updated edition of an article published in *Journal of Eastern Christian Churches* 64(3-4) (2012), pp. 327-330. Unfortunately, though the note number 8, the attached facsimile of London 2348, f. 10v and Sachau 12, f. 47v was not published. I changed some numbers of the paragraphs of expected edition, according to the rhymed prose (*saǧʿ*) and I added some details about the last question: when these few pages arrived at the British Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his description in H. G. B. TEULE, 'A theological treatise by Išo'yahb bar Malkon preserved in the theological compendium *Asfār Al-Asrār*', *Journal of Eastern Christian studies*, 58 (2006), pp. 235-245. Critical edition (about 2000 pages) to be published soon in 6 volumes, with an Italian translation (one volume).

<sup>2</sup> There is an exact date (1332) at the beginning of index of the work; the author transcribes 3 chapters from *Kitāb farā'id al-fawā'id fī usūl al-dīn wa-l-'aqā'id* of 'Abdīšū' (died in 1318); the author writes the history of the Patriarchs of the Eastern Church till Yahbāllāhā († 1317) and says that he was eye-witness, with others, at the opening of the tomb of the Patriarch Ḥanānyšū' 650 years after his death (he died in 699).

manuscripts I could (10):<sup>3</sup> among them there is a manuscript obtained from the British Museum (London Or. 2438).<sup>4</sup>

This manuscript of only 56 folios (23,5 cm wide, 15,25 cm long; 17 lines in each page, written in fair Nashī) contains some extracts from the work of Ṣalībā: some of its pages are damaged, more or less torn, many others are illegible,<sup>5</sup> due to the humidity factor.<sup>6</sup>

Comparing the description of the size of the page and the lines in it, and especially the handwriting of this manuscript with the

---

<sup>3</sup> Four of them are complete (Vat. Neofiti 54 from the 18th century; Cambridge Addition 2889 written in 1730; Par. Ar. 6732 written in 1885; Par. Ar. 6744 from 19th century); while four are incomplete (Vat. Ar. 110 from 14th century, Berlin Sachau 12 from 14th century; Vat. Borgia Ar. 198 from 19th century; Birmingham Mingana Christian Ar. 19 from 19th century); two are excerpts (London Or. 2438, and Vat. Ar. 687 from 18th century). Others are unobtainable: one in possession of John Osta, Chaldean “chor-bishop” in Cairo (*Fihris* 2628, cfr. P. Sbath, *Al-Fihris (Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes) Supplément* (Le Caire, Impr. Al-Chark, 1940), p. 25); another mentioned by L. Cheikho, *Catalogue raisonné des Manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l'Université Saint Joseph*, in *MUSJ* X (1925), p. 136, who refers to a note in I. Barṣawm, *Tārīḥ dayr al-Za‘farān*, p. 47; one in S. John seminary in Mossoul (FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne. Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire et de la géographie ecclésiastiques et monastiques du Nord de l'Iraq*, Beyrouth 1968, III, p.13 n.5); one quoted by Siouffi, vice-consul of France in Mossoul (cf. Siouffi M., ‘Notice sur un patriarche nestorien’, *Journal Asiatique* (Janvier 1881) 89-96).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1984, no 33, pp. 23-24.

\* The manuscript was donated to the Museum by Col. S. B. Miles (1838-1914), who was Consul-General of Baghdad in 1879.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1r-v, 2r-v, 3r-v, 4r-v, 5r-v, 7r-v, 8r-v, 9r-v, 10r-v, 11r-v, 12r-v, 13r-v, 14r-v, 26r-v, 32r-v, 40r-v, 41r-v, 52r-v, 55v.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 1r-v, 2r-v, 3v, 4v, 5r-v, 7v, 32r, 50r-v, 51v, 52r-v.

handwriting of Sachau 12,<sup>7</sup> I noticed that the handwriting is the same;<sup>8</sup> not only but these few pages of London Or.2438 are some of the pages missing in Sachau 12.

I present in the following table what I discovered about these two manuscripts:

| <i>London Or.</i><br>2438                         | <i>Sachau</i><br>12 (S) | <i>Our edition</i> <sup>9</sup> | <i>Description</i>  |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1v: illegible <sup>10</sup><br>2r-v <sup>11</sup> |                         | II,04:1-21                      | The second preface: answer //1 <sup>v</sup> line1//to Jews and others who oppose our faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified and died                       |
| 2r-4v <sup>12</sup>                               |                         | II,05:52-<br>II,1:30            | II,05:52 is the end of the 5th preface about the meaning of Union / Incarnation and filiation; 3 <sup>r</sup> line 6: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Book, 1 <sup>st</sup> |

<sup>7</sup> 180 f., 24,5 cm wide, 16,5 cm long, 17 lines in each page: cf. his description in W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der Arabischen Handschriften* 9 (Berlin, 1897), pp. 546-547, no 10183; E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der Syrischen Handschriften*, pp. 407-415.

<sup>8</sup> Notice the way of writing *nūn* at the end of the word, putting it inverted over *alif*: *šayṭān* (cf. attached the facsimile of London 2348,10v and Sachau 12, 47v).

<sup>9</sup> II,04:1-21 means the 2nd book, the 4th foreword, §§ 1-21; II,3:10-II,3:10-29 means the 2nd book, 3rd chapter, §§ 10-29;

<sup>10</sup> In the 2nd line of this page I could read the word *al-tawāḍu'*, that appears at the end of the 3rd preface of the 2nd book of *Ṣalībā*: cfr. our edition II,03:55.

<sup>11</sup> After that the text is missing till II,05:52.

<sup>12</sup> After that the text is missing till II,3:10.

|                       |                                      |  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
|                       |                                      | chapter: East is the best direction  |
| 5r-v <sup>13</sup>    | II,3:10-29                           | East is the origin of languages  |
| 6r-v <sup>14</sup>    | IV,1:62-79                           | Some Jewish prophets (Asaph, Ethan, Heman, Jeduthun, Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, Micaiah, Obadiah)  |
| 7r-15v <sup>15</sup>  | II,5:185-<br>II,8:9                  | 7 <sup>r</sup> 3line2-13r: 2 <sup>nd</sup> book, 6 <sup>th</sup> chapter: East was the origin of the faith in God, of the law and the priesthood, and of the promise in Christ. 13 <sup>v</sup> line6: 7 <sup>th</sup> chapter: East was the origin of the promise in Christ and faith in him; 15 <sup>v</sup> line4: 8 <sup>th</sup> chapter: preaching of the apostles |
| 16r-25v <sup>16</sup> | II,8:29-<br>III,1,2,3,4,5,<br>6:1-12 | 18 <sup>v</sup> line2: 9 <sup>th</sup> chapter: Profession of faith of the Eastern Christians, translated into Arabic; 20 <sup>r</sup> line13: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Book, chapter   |

<sup>13</sup> After that the text is missing till the end of the chapter; missing also II,4 & 5.

<sup>14</sup> This page is not in its place.

<sup>15</sup> After that the text contained in our edition II,8:9-29 is missing.

<sup>16</sup> After that two pages are white; the text of Ṣalībā continues with Sachau14r.

|                                      |                       |  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
|                                      |                       | 1: Introduction; 20 <sup>v</sup> line9:<br>chapter 2: the successors of<br>Peter in Rome; 21 <sup>v</sup> line5:<br>chapter 3: the patriarchs of<br>Alexandria; 23 <sup>r</sup> line4:<br>chapter 4: the patriarchs of<br>Antioch; 24 <sup>r</sup> line2: chapter 5:<br>the bishops of Jerusalem;<br>25 <sup>r</sup> line12: chapter 6: the<br>Caesars from the time of<br>the Apostles to the council<br>of Nicaea; |
| 26r-32v <sup>17</sup>                | III,6:39-<br>III,8:24 | 28 <sup>v</sup> line 4: chapter 7: reason<br>for the council of Nicaea;<br>31 <sup>v</sup> line14: chapter 8: history<br>of Constantine and his<br>successors till Constantine,<br>son of Constantine, brother<br>of Heraclius   |
| 33r-40v <sup>18</sup>                | III,8:74-229          |  |
| 41r-49v                              | III,8:253-436         |  |
| 50r-v: 2<br>illisible black<br>pages |                       |  |
| 51r-v <sup>19</sup>                  | III,8:476-496         |  |

<sup>17</sup> After that the text contained in our edition III,8:24-III,8:74 is missing.

<sup>18</sup> After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 229-253 is missing.

<sup>19</sup> After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 496-619 is missing, but it is in Sachau 15r-20v.

52r-54v<sup>20</sup>

III,8:619-691

55r-56v<sup>21</sup>

III,8:842-876

Now the question is: when did these few pages arrive at the British museum and from where?<sup>22</sup>

In any case the note put at the beginning of the description of the manuscript<sup>23</sup> should be changed, in conformity to the note of Ahlwardt (about 750/1349) and Sachau (according to the Arabic handwriting, the manuscript may be written around 14<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 691-842 is missing, but it is in Sachau 22r-29v.

<sup>21</sup> End of the manuscript.

<sup>\*22</sup> This manuscript entered in the listing of Oriental manuscripts in 1881 (from an E/mail of Hedley Sutton, APAC Reference Service, January 8, 2014). Sachau 12 was bought by the State Library in 1884 with other manuscripts of the Sachau collection (from an E/mail of Petra Figeac, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, January 8, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Rieu, *Supplement*, p. 23: written in fair Neskhi, apparently in the 13th century.

<sup>24</sup> Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, p. 547; Sachau, *Verzeichnis* p. 414.

اسم السم النصب كانه مثل الاله وهذا الشئ  
 من صفة السم وقال له لعل ولكن فافهم ان  
 السم هو الذي في زيارته اسم يدوم واللعن طالع  
 من صفة السم النصب كانه مثل الاله وهذا الشئ  
 من صفة السم وقال له لعل ولكن فافهم ان  
 السم هو الذي في زيارته اسم يدوم واللعن طالع

London 2348, 10v

الرسل الاطهار من كان لهم بطون الذين الذين  
 الناس الى الابدان ففي تلك الامم مع رجل واحد يقال له  
 سمون وحصل بطون الناس ويقول عن نفسه ان  
 الله واياه نزل من السماء وعمل له مركبه من شياطين طيرها  
 في الهواء اهله فطروش وبوحاف مديه روميه وغيره  
 كله مشهور وروى في كتاب قصص الرسل المعروف بالاربعين  
 ومن بعده اجتمع ابناءه وانشاءه وم السمويه مشتمل  
 اسمه واخبر عنهم من هذا وعلموا باخبارهم لغيره  
 اربع زوايا العالم هو نوح وقيل طروش والسمون  
 المشهور بالرسول واطحن الناس وافقه اباها وهم هولاء  
 من ذكروا من لويس اللويد بروح القدس في رساله الي  
 طبا نواكس حيث قال وقال سلمتهم للسمون ابناء دوبرك  
 لا يفرون وغنقون ما نذروك وشيعة هولاء هولاء  
 يعتقدون ان الله خالق الالهة ثم الالهة خالق العالم وما  
 فيه شياطين طروش وشيعة هولاء كان اباهم وسميه  
 ملاك خالق العالم كله بغير شبهه الله انشأوا بيت وسميه  
 وهولاء كان يعتقدون ان عدو السموات ثلثا به حقه

Sachau 12, 47v