The Martyrdom of Arianos and the Four Protectores in an Unpublished Christian Palestinian Aramaic Palimpsest, St Catherine Monastery (Sinai, Arabic NF 66)

[El Martirio de Ariano y los Cuatro Protectores en un palimpsesto arameo cristiano palestinense inédito, Monasterio de Santa Catalina (Sinai, Arabic NF 66)]

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Abstract: Among the New Finds in a storage chamber in St Catherine’s Monastery 1975 a number of Christian Palestinian Aramaic palimpsests came to light. Some of them feature martyr stories that have been rarely attested, and for one the Greek text witnesses are missing. Two fragments contain the martyrdom of Arianos and the Four Protectores.

Keywords: Apollonios; Arianos; Christian Palestinian Aramaic; Hagiography; Martyrdom; Patristic; Philemon; St Catherine.

Resumen: Entre los Nuevos Hallazgos en un almacén del Monasterio de Santa Catalina en 1975 vieron la luz una serie de palimpsestos arameos cristianos palestineses. Algunos de ellos recogen historias de mártires rara vez atestiguadas, y en un caso los testimonios del texto griego están perdidos. Dos fragmentos contienen el martirio de Ariano y los Cuatro Protectores.

Palabras clave: Apolonio; Ariano; arameo cristiano palestino; hagiografía; martirio; patrística; Filemón; Santa Catalina.

* Published with the kind permission of St Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai, Egypt. The reading and preparation of the edition was made possible by the Early Manuscript Electronic Library (EMEL). The photos will be made accessible under www.sinaipalimpsests.org.
The Martyrdom of Philemon, Apollonios, and Arianos and the Four Protectores has been known in Armenian, Coptic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic\(^1\) (BHO 973), Ethiopic, Syriac, and in the main transmission in Greek and Latin. In the Christian Palestinian Aramaic and in Syriac transmission the texts have not been fully preserved.

The Syriac manuscripts were described by Anton Baumstark in his history of Syriac Literature in his usual short style,\(^2\) but they were omitted in BHO 973. Of all Syriac testimonies only the beginning part of the Martyrdom of Philemon survived in an early Syriac manuscript, London, BL, Add 17.204, fols. 2v-7v, written on vellum in a bold Estrangela, and is dated to ca. 5th century according to Wright’s Catalogue.\(^3\) The critical edition with references to the transmission in other languages was published by Sebastian P. Brock in the memorial volume for Father Devos.\(^4\)

The other two surviving Syriac manuscripts seem to be of a later date and are catalogued under Vatican, sir. 160, fols. 146r-152v\(^5\) on vellum in Estrangela, and Vatican, sir. 161, fols. 113r-116v on vellum in Estrangela. Both manuscripts are not dated and come from Deir es-Surian. They contain the complete martyrdom story.\(^6\)

The Greek can be only consulted in the Acta Sanctorum for March, vol. I (Antwerp, 1668), pp. 895-899 under Martyrium S. Thyrsi et

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1. Is listed in BHO 973 as Syriac.
5. A copy and translation of the text was kindly made available to me by Sebastian P. Brock for the study of these two fragments.
sociorum and the Patrologia Graeca 116, cols. 537-560 (BHG 1514), as there does not exist any critical edition yet. A similar situation exists for the Latin transmission, which can be found in the Acta Sanctorum for March I, pp. 751-756 (BHL 6803).7

Apart from the Ethiopic, Greek, Latin, and Syriac a Coptic version (BHO 110) is extant, which diverges quite considerably from all other transmissions, and can be read in the comprehensive article by Francesco Rossi.8

The first two Christian Palestinian Aramaic versions that came to our attention contained only parts of the Martyrdom of Philemon in a continuous text. They do not derive from the same manuscript, but belong to the early language period. One has been preserved in an original manuscript from St Saba (CSRP8 = St. Petersburg Syr. 16, fol. 28, 56-57),9 which was taken by the Georgian scribe Iovane Zosime from St Saba to St Catherine’s Monastery in the 9th century to be reused for a Georgian text.10 The legible parts of the remaining fragment that were not integrated in Land’s edition of 1875, were recently published.11 The second version derives from the Cairo Genizah and was edited by Agnes S. Lewis with her sister Margaret D. Gibson in

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1900. The new additional readings by me were incorporated into a text file within the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon.

It does not come as a surprise that the third and final part of the Martyrdom with Arianos and the Four Protectores has now surfaced on two Christian Palestinian Aramaic folios under the Arabic manuscript Sinai, Arabic NF 66, having the Life of St Stephen the Sabate as the upper text, and is dated to 901. One Arabic folio consists of two merged previous Christian Palestinian Aramaic folios, i.e. one recto and one verso and vice versa.

This early version in Christian Palestinian Aramaic dates approximately to the 6th century AD and is clearly written by a different scribal hand than that of Cambridge, University Library, T-S 12.750 and T-S 12.749r + T-S NS 329.698r, and St. Petersburg, Syr. 16 (CSRP). Not only is the scribal hand different, but also the number of lines vary in all three manuscripts and the kind of parchment used is

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13 See under www.cal1.cn.huc.edu.

14 In Ioannis E. Meimaris, Κατάλογος τῶν νέων ἀραβικῶν χειρογράφων τῆς ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Ἀγίας Αἰκατερίνης τοῦ Ὀρους Σινᾶ (Mount Sinai Foundation: Athens, 1985), p. 35, the manuscript is indicated there as being a palimpsest with "Syro-Palestinian" and Greek underneath, but nothing is visible on the photo juxtaposed on p. 34, whereas on a photo in Alain Desreumaux, “Les manuscrits araméens christo-palestiniens du nouveau fonds du monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Sinai”, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (2010), pp. 1317-1328, esp. 1322, fig. 2, one sees the Christian Palestinian Aramaic undertext of another martyrdom, but with the same scribal hand.

15 See Early Manuscript Electronic Library (EMEL) under www.sinaipalimpsest.org.

16 Two good photos are found in Nehemya Alloni, Geniza Fragments of Rabbinic Literature: Mishna, Talmud and Midrash with Palestinian Vocalization [in Hebrew] (Makor: Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 70-71, and now under the Friedberg Collection project www.jewishmanuscript.org. It looks that also T-S 12.757 belongs with these fragments on account of the script, but it has another martyrdom as content.
of a different making, whereas Arabic NF 66 has 20 lines and the Cambridge fragments have only 15 lines per column with a bold script, and CSRPM has 22 lines and a small uneven script type. The Christian Palestinian Aramaic text in Arabic NF 66 deviates considerably from the Greek and Latin versions as appearing in the Acta Sanctorum and the Patrologia Graeca and differs from the Syriac Vatican versions too.

It hints to a translation of an early Greek forerunner, but in the absence of a critical Greek edition one can hardly judge the position of Christian Palestinian Aramaic in the history of the textual transmission.


The manuscript has twenty lines per column. The punctuation is three dots for a full sentence and for a half or sub clause, but only two dots before direct speech. The scribe of the Christian Palestinian Aramaic undertext of Arabic NF 66 often tended to write very densely in some lines, cramming more letters into a line than usual. This causes problems in the reading and discerning the spaces between words. Noteworthy is the intentional spelling of ‘r:b’t’: in fol. 3(I) r a1 with a supralinear dot on the aleph and in ‘r:b’ty fol. 3(II) v b1 with yod instead. There seems to be a kind of method behind this varied spelling. It is worthwhile to point out that in initial position no dot is written on the aleph to denote /e/, /i/, but always in final position. The taw in ‘t.‘ sign, portent’ carries a dot on top to distinguish it from the pronoun ‘t ‘you’. No noteworthy surplus plene spellings occur, even in the imperfect prefixes, which points to a very early date of the manuscript. Greek proper names and words including loans from Latin are always transliterated into Christian Palestinian Aramaic in the expected fashion, ‘wsy’ οὐσία, ‘ργ’ns Αἱρίανός, [dyw]qlyyns Διοκλητιανός, τωτυκws Θεότυχος, Plgyn παλάτιον (< Latin). The external Aramaic morpheme endings are employed with the Greek words δlπν’ < δελφίς, Prwtyq tur’ < πρωτέκτωρ, Prwtyqtwry’ for προτέκτορας, qyr: sy’ < καιρός (Gen.). The scribe used the variant form -nh in the 1 plural independent personal pronoun and in the possessive suffixes.

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19 This is for example also the case with every second šw’. and šwy in an unpublished homily fragment of Georgian NF 19, fol. 59.

20 Internal representation of ε in Christian Palestinian Aramaic is rare and seems to be restricted to pronounced Greek ε as in myl’n < μέλαν and in ty’rwn < θεσπον, see Christa Müller-Kessler, *Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen*, Teil 1 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1991), p. 40.
The sequence of the two merged folios in Christian Palestinian Aramaic is the following:

Sinai, Arab NF 66, fol. 3(I) r § 3.11 [Greek, AMS]
Sinai, Arab NF 66, fol. 3(I) v § 3.12 [Greek, AMS]
Sinai, Arab NF 66, fol. 3(II) r [V Arabic MS] § 3.12 [Greek, AMS]
Sinai, Arab NF 66, fol. 3(II) v [r Arabic MS] § 3.12 [Greek, AMS]

2. Text and Translation


1. 'r:b'ṭ. the four qšy' l' [l'h']

Prwtyqtwry' Protectores dyšzb y' [l'h'] to save
w'mrw : lyt and they said, 'He 'r'y[nw] the prefect
hw hrš 'l' is not a sorcerer24, but hygmwn' Arianos,

5. brnš dhl a human being fearing d'kpt mnk who was fettered by
mn 'lh': God. For a sign w'trm you and was thrown

21 It looks as if the Christian Palestinian Aramaic division corresponds to the Greek as in the Acta Sanctorum for March. Unfortunately, the part of the fragment is damaged right at the beginning of the new chapter.

22 Οἱ Προτικτορεις εἰπον. Τοῦτο τὸ θαύμα οὐκ ἐστὶ μαγεία, ἀλλὰ σημεῖον ἀναστάσεως. Ὅσπερ γὰρ ὁ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεράπων Ἀρειανός βληθεὶς ὑπὸ σοῦ μετὰ δεσμῶν ἐν τῷ χῶσατι καὶ ἐπιχωθεὶς ἀνηγέχθη τῇ δύναμίς τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τῶν περικεμένων αὐτῷ δεσμῶν ἐλυσθή ὁ θεός καὶ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος πιστεύσας ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας ἐπὶ τὸν ζώντα θεόν, κἂν ἀπόθανεν πάλιν ἀναστήσεται κἂν ὑποκατὼ ὦρεων ἢ πετρῶν συλλεξθῇ σωθῆται τῇ βοήθει τοῦ κυρίου ἢμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τοιχοφεύνει καὶ ημεῖς ἑτοιμοὶ ἔσομεν τοῦ αὐτῶν ὑπομείναι δάνατον, ἢν ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τὸν αὐτῷ ἀπολαύομεν τῶν ἐπηγεγελμένων ἁγαθῶν τοὺς ἀγαπάσει τοῦ Κύριου.

23 There is only room for a he, since the script does not run beyond the column.

24 Syriac understands it differently l' ml dhrš' hw 'not because he is a sorcerer'.
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10. In dkwl brnš that every human-being pḥ' : wšr' the pit, and released

dhw' 'mr strated, since he said to us yth mn him up from

15. hw : d'wp resurrected, also pwgr:ynh our bodies

typ mn 'wšr' the pit, He (God)

God did not bring

him up from

who trusts in

in God, also

if he is dead,

he demon -

did not bring

Therefore

we also

deliver

Our bodies

Therefore

Arianos,

so that we may rise

relieve

under

mountains, if

the prefect

he will be, or

Arianos,

under rocks.

under rocks.

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Our bodies

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Arianos,
w’mr lhwyn: and said to them, ‘gyb dy But Theotychos,
bqyr:sy’ ‘In previous tywtykwos the Protector,
qmwy ky times when Prwtyqtwry’ the one who was
hwytwyn ‘my you were with me hdn dhw’ the respected
10. b’plyyn : kwl in the palace, all myqr bhwn among them,
m’ dhwytwyn what you w’mr : ykl answered and said:
š’:lyn hwy asked I hwy ‘lh’ ‘God is able (to do)
yhb lkwn : gave you, hdn d’nh this so that we
lbayl dhytwyn because you ‘tydvn dncyzl are ready to go
15. mhdyyn ly loved me lwth dyrym to him to lift
km’ bn ln as … Why mn lbk kwl from your heart
kdw […]jwn28 do you now …, mqm’ every evil
š’:lw b’y’d ask through the hand byš’ d’t thing, which you
mwt’ : ‘n’ (for) death. I mhšb think about
20. šm’ lkwn . heard you. ‘lynk29: d’bd t us, since you did

Arab NF 66, fol. 3(II) r30 [verso in the Arabic MS; left hand column is cut off; Latin in Acta Sanctorum for March, vol. I, p. 756, chapter 3.12; Greek in Acta Sanctorum for March, vol. I, p. 899, § 3.12; PG 116, p. 556, § 44 middle]

1. ln tbyrw’ us a great favour, [……]
yhb ln mn giving us of [……]

28 Some individual letters are not clearly discernable in ll. 16-17. A restoration is difficult, since the Christian Palestinian Aramaic text diverges here from the Greek and Syriac.
29 d’t mhšb ‘lyn is missing in Syriac.
30 The second column of the second folio (II) is cut off and merged with folio (I), καὶ ἔχαρισε ἡμῖν τὸν εὐκτάιον καὶ τίμιον θάνατον· ἄλλα ἄξιω καὶ αἰτὸς αἴτημα παρασκευήγας μοι παρά σου. Καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Βασιλεὺς, Ποίον τούτο; Θεότυχος εἶπεν· ἰνα κελεύσῃς πάσαν τὴν οὐσίαν μου καὶ τὰ χρήματα γενέσθαι ...
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1. [...] š’r:b’ty the Four

2. [...] Prwtyqtwr’ Protektores

3. [...] b:r:b’[y]’ into four

4. The sentence b’'n’ dyzdbn:wn is omitted in Syriac.

5. ... πποςέσαξεν ἐνενεφθῆναι καὶ ἑπέρρος τέσσαρας σάκκας ἔχοντας εξ ἡμισείας ἰμμον, βληθέναι δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἅρμανον καὶ τοὺς Πρωτοκτόρας ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἀσφαλισθέντας ἐπιμελῶς μυρήναι ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, ... δειφίνος ὑπεισελθὼν ...
Christa Müller-Kessler

[......] sqyn 'm sacks (filled) with
5. [......] ḥl' dhw' sand, which was
[......] bhwn : kn dy in them. But
[......] wkwt 'wp also likewise
[......] l'ry'ns the prefect
[......] hygmwn’ Arianos
10. [......] yrm’. bsq’ would be thrown
[......] hmšy’ : into the fifth sack,
[......] wyxtm’wn and they would be
[......] hym’ wbn. drowned in the sea.’
[......] bs’t’ And at once they were
15. [......] ‘trmw lym’:.³⁴ thrown into the sea.
[......] wh’ nwn’ And hark, the fish,
[......] dmt’mr which is called
[......] dlpy’ qbl the dolphin, received
[......] hmyštywn : the five,
20. [......] l’b ’rm outside of

³⁴ Ll. 3-15 deviates in Syriac.