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THE CHRONICLE
OF
JOSHUA THE STYLITE,
COMPOSED IN SYRIAC
A.D. 507,
WITH A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH
AND NOTES

BY
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EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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PREFACE.

I. THE Chronicle of Joshua (ܝܫܘܥ, Yêshûa' or Jesus) the Stylite has been long known to historians in the abridged Latin translation of Joseph Simon Assemâni (السمعاني), which occupies pp. 262—283 of the first volume of his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*; and it is generally acknowledged to be one of the most valuable authorities for the period with which it deals*. The first complete edition of the Syriac text did not, however, appear till 1876, when it was edited for the German Oriental Society, with a French translation and many useful notes†, by the well known orientalist the Abbé P. Martin, to whose industry scholars are indebted for various important Syriac publications.

That this *editio princeps* should be faulty in many respects was unavoidable, partly from the fact that the editor had only a single not very clearly written manuscript for the basis of his text, and partly because circumstances prevented him from re-collating his copy with the original before putting it to press. It was reviewed by Professor Noeldeke of Strassburg in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Bd xxx, pp. 351—8, where he proposed many excellent emendations. Having read the book through several times with pupils, I sent

* See, for example, the numerous references to it in Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, ed. Saint-Martin, t. vii, especially in book xxxviii.

† See *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes herausgegeben von der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. VI. Band. No. I. *Chronique de Josué le Stylite écrite vers l'an 515, texte et traduction par M. l'abbé Paulin Martin*.

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to Professor Noeldeke a further list of corrections, shortly before the publication of his Syriac Grammar in 1880, and we exchanged several letters on the subject. Since then another friend, Professor Ignazio Guidi of Rome, has most kindly supplied me with a fresh collation of the entire work; and I am thus enabled to lay a tolerably correct text before the reader, without having much recourse to conjectural emendation. If I have not described certain readings of my text as corrections made by this or that scholar, it is because I have ascertained, thanks to Guidi's unwearied kindness, that they are the actual readings of the original manuscript. Thus I could not credit M. Martin himself with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 18, l. 15), and with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 88, l. 2); nor Professor Noeldeke with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 48, l. 6), and with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 85, l. 1); nor Mr Bensly, of Gonville and Caius College, with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 3, l. 13); nor my former pupil Mr Keith-Falconer with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 49, l. 5); nor myself with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 29, l. 13), and with ܠܚܝܬܐ (p. 34, l. 8). I have never altered the actual readings of the manuscript, so far as I am aware, without giving due warning thereof in the notes. I have, however, taken the liberty, with the view of facilitating the task of the reader, of adding a considerable number of diacritical points, especially in the verbal forms. From the interpunction of the manuscript, on the other hand, I have but rarely deviated, and then only when it seemed to me to be absolutely necessary.

In my translation I have striven to be as literal as the difference between the two idioms will allow. My method is first to translate as closely as I can, and then to try if I can improve the form of expression in any way without the sacrifice of truthfulness to the original. I also endeavour to preserve a somewhat antiquated and Biblical style, as being peculiarly adapted to the rendering into English of Oriental works, whether poetical or historical. The Old Testament and the Kor'an,

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which are, of course, in many ways strikingly similar in their diction, can both be easily made ridiculous by turning them into our modern vernacular, particularly if we vulgarize with malice prepense.

In my version I have sometimes expressed the sense of a conjectural emendation rather than of the manuscript reading. The comparison of the Syriac text and the critical notes will readily show the attentive reader when this is the case. Words which I have found it necessary to add for the sake of the English form of expression, or of greater clearness, I have commonly put within parentheses (); but where an actual lacuna in the text is supplied by conjecture, I have employed brackets [].

Of the notes I think it necessary to say no more than that they are intended chiefly for non-orientalists and for those who are beginning their oriental studies. It seemed to me to be quite superfluous to repeat the historical information contained in the copious annotations of Assemâni and of the Abbé Martin. In matters relating to the topography of Edessa and its district I have had recourse to my friend Professor G. Hoffmann of Kiel, who is probably the best acquainted of living orientalists with the geography of Mesopotamia and the adjacent countries. A comprehensive work on the subject from his hand would be a boon to all scholars. The plan of Edessa is taken from Carsten Niebuhr's *Voyage en Arabie, et en d'autres Pays circonvoisins, traduit de l'Allemand*, 1780, t. ii, p. 330, with additions and alterations suggested by Professor Hoffmann. As for the rough map of the seat of war, it is only reproduced from an ordinary atlas.

I have endeavoured, for the convenience of readers, to conform my edition in externals, as far as possible, to that of the Abbé Martin; and I would therefore have gladly adopted his numeration of the chapters, but found it to be impossible. In the first place, I had to strike out his seventh chapter, which

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is merely the final note of a scribe of much later date. This reduces the number of chapters by one from VIII (now VII) to XCI (now XC). But, in the second place, I had to unite his chapters XCI and XCII, the lacuna on p. 75 of his edition being imaginary. Consequently the number of chapters from here to the end is reduced by two, and Martin's ch. XCIII is in my edition XCI.

II. We owe the preservation of the short Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite to the care of a later historian, Dionysius of Tell-Mahrê*, patriarch of the Jacobites (ob. A. Gr. 1156, A.D. 845)†, who incorporated it with his own larger work, which deserves to be made accessible to students of history without further delay‡. The solitary manuscript of this work which has come down to our times is preserved in the Vatican Library§. It is in great part palimpsest, the underlying text being Coptic. According to Assemâni, *Bibl. Orient.*, t. ii, pp. 98, 99, it was written in the Nitrian desert when Moses of Nisibis was abbot of the convent of S. Mary Deipara, that is to say, between A.D. 907 and 944 (see my *Catalogue of Syriac MSS. in the British Museum, General Index*, p. 1310); but in his *Catal. Codd. Manuscriptorum Biblioth. Apostol. Vaticanae*, t. iii, p. 328, no. CLXII, he asserts that it was one of those volumes which Moses of Nisibis brought back with him to the Nitrian Convent in 932, after his visit to Baghdâd and his journey through Mesopotamia ||.

* ܬܠ ܡܚܪܝ, in Arabic ܬܠ ܡܚܪܝ, a small town on the river Balikh, between ar-Rakḳah and Ḥiṣn Maslamah, according to Yāḳūt in the *Muḡam al-Buldân*.

† See Assemâni, *Bibl. Orient.*, t. ii, p. 98 sqq., and pp. 344—8.

‡ The Swedish orientalist Professor Tullberg of Upsala began an edition of it in 1850, which will, I hope, be completed by Professor Ign. Guidi.

§ Dionysius has placed the Chronicle of Joshua immediately after the Henôtikon of Zênôn, without any prefatory remarks.

|| If so, the note to that effect has disappeared from the manuscript. It must be remarked, however, that the volume is much damaged, and that some of the worst pages have been covered at a recent period with “carta vegetale”. The result is that the writing is no longer legible or barely so.

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[illegible]

† The preface from p. 1 to p. 6, l. 10, **ספר**, is in the same hand as the bulk of the manuscript. From that point to p. 8, l. 11, is in the handwriting of Elisha of Zūknin. The next leaf of the manuscript begins with the words, p. 8, l. 10, **במלכותנו אשר מלך במעבד אלהים אלהינו מלך אלהינו**. There is also a modern copy of the preface and introduction, on European paper, as far as p. 11, l. 14, **ספר**.

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mercy of the great God and our Redeemer Jesus Christ be upon the priest Mâr Yêshûa' (Joshua) the stylite, from the convent of Zûknîn, who wrote this Chronicle of the evil times that are past, and of the calamities and troubles which the (Persian) tyrant wrought among men."

W. WRIGHT.

QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.
 23 April, 1882.

CORRIGENDA.

In the Syriac text: Page 2, l. 3, read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ.—Page 19, l. 9, perhaps we might read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ instead of ܐܘܬܐܪܐ; "he used every day to thrust himself into his presence, and importunately ask him to give him" *etc.*—Page 25, l. 18, read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ.—Page 36, l. 12, read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ.—Page 46, l. 13, read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ.—Page 57, l. 22, add ܐܘܬܐܪܐ after ܐܘܬܐܪܐ?—Page 61, l. 11, read ܐܘܬܐܪܐ.

In the English translation: Page 65, last line, Read: "at Âmid. With the view.....of peace, he also sent" *etc.*