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Edited by Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson

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### Forty-One Facsimiles of Dated Christian Arabic Manuscripts

The twin sisters Agnes Lewis (1843–1926) and Margaret Gibson (1843–1920) were pioneering biblical scholars who became experts in a number of ancient languages. Travelling widely in the Middle East, they made several significant discoveries, including one of the earliest manuscripts of the Four Gospels in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language probably spoken by Jesus himself. Their chief discoveries were made in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. This fascicule, originally published in 1907 as part of the *Studia Sinaitica* series, is a collection of Arabic Christian documents from various sources, including St. Catherine's Monastery and the British Museum. Translated and edited by Lewis and Gibson, the texts, of great value to scholars of Arabic Christianity, include portions of theological treatises, sections of the Gospels and tales from the lives of the saints; of particular interest are the pages of biblical commentary and lectionaries.

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EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
AGNES SMITH LEWIS  
AND MARGARET DUNLOP GIBSON



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Frontispiece.



Sinai Syriac and Arabic Palimpsest of Peshitta Gospels.  
f. 86 a.  
Script. inf. John xix. 34 b—40.  
Script. sup. Homily of Mar Jacob.



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STUDIA SINAITICA No. XII

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FORTY-ONE FACSIMILES  
OF DATED CHRISTIAN ARABIC  
MANUSCRIPTS

WITH TEXT AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

BY

AGNES SMITH LEWIS,

HON. D.D. (HEIDELBERG); LL.D. (ST ANDREWS); PH.D. (HALLE)

AND

MARGARET DUNLOP GIBSON,

HON. D.D. (HEIDELBERG); LL.D. (ST ANDREWS)

WITH INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS ON  
ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY

BY

THE REV. DAVID S. MARGOLIOUTH, Litt.D.

LAUDIAN PROFESSOR OF ARABIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

CAMBRIDGE :  
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1907

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TO THE  
VICE-CHANCELLOR  
AND SENATUS ACADEMICUS  
OF THE ANCIENT UNIVERSITY  
OF ST ANDREWS  
THESE SPECIMENS OF DATED  
CHRISTIAN ARABIC MSS  
ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY  
AGNES SMITH LEWIS  
AND  
MARGARET DUNLOP GIBSON  
AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE  
FOR THE HONOUR CONFERRED ON THEM  
ON APRIL 2ND, 1901

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## PREFACE.

THE present volume is a natural sequel to Mrs Gibson's Catalogue of the Arabic MSS. in the Convent of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, which forms the third number of this series. The idea of compiling it was first suggested to us by the late Dr Robertson Smith, who remarked, "Arabic dated Manuscripts are just what we want." But it was only in 1897, on the occasion of our fourth visit to the Convent, that we set about photographing specimen pages in earnest, choosing, so far as possible, pages which tell their own tale about chronology. The dates have been re-verified by Mrs Gibson at Sinai both in 1902 and in 1906. They are sometimes misleading, as a date which at first appeared trustworthy has been found on closer examination to belong, not to the MS. in which it appears, but to that from which the said MS. was copied; or again it may merely be the record of a special examination of the MS. by some important person several centuries after it came into being. Therefore if in any case there should be a discrepancy between a date given in this volume and one already published in No. III. *Studia Sinaitica*, the former is always to be preferred.

We have tried to give at least one specimen of each century, between the eighth and the eighteenth inclusive. For our illustration of the eighth century papyrus we are indebted to the kindness of Dr B. Moritz, Director of the Khedivial Library, Cairo, who allowed us to photograph it. Strictly speaking, this is not a Christian document, but neither is it a specially Mohammedan one. By Mr A. G. Ellis of the British Museum, we were guided to Nos. II. III. XXVIII. XXX. XXXII. all of which were photographed by Mr Donald Macbeth, while M. Léon Dorez of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, did us a like service with regard to No. XXVI. We owe special thanks to Dr Bernard Grenfell, of Queen's College, Oxford, for deciphering the few crabbed lines of Greek commercial cursive on the papyrus. They are not now difficult to read, with the help of his copy; but before that copy was made, they had baffled us as much as driftwood from the Atlantic Ocean baffled the

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PREFACE.

Spaniards before the discovery of America. We have also to thank Professor Edward Granville Browne, of Cambridge, for a few hints about the Arabic words on that papyrus. Professor D. S. Margoliouth, of Oxford, has helped us in the understanding of some obscure phraseology, especially in Nos. V. IX. XIV. XVI. XXXI. XXXV. XXXVII. and XXXVIII. and has also kindly executed a task which exceeded our competence, and which was yet necessary for the utility of the book; we mean the Introductory Essay on its calligraphy.

In conclusion, as we are told by Deacon Simeon, the copyist of No. XXXVI. that imperfection exists in the soul of Nature, and the defects of the sons of Nature are not unknown; we would echo his prayer that every one who reads in this book, and finds any defect or fault and puts it right, God may put him right in this world and in the other one.

AGNES SMITH LEWIS.

MARGARET DUNLOP GIBSON.

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## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

THE study of Christian Arabic, which had scarcely commenced when Dozy published his Supplement to the Arabic Dictionaries in 1881, has now become fairly popular. Besides a variety of Christian Arabic texts published in England, France, and elsewhere, we have now a sketch of the history of Christian Arabic literature and an account of its dialect, both from the pen of Dr G. Graf. The present publication richly illustrates its palaeography.

The chief predecessor of Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson in this field is the very eminent Arabist H. L. Fleischer, in the third volume of whose *Kleinere Schriften* are republished three papers (from the *Z. D. M. G.* for 1847, 1861 and 1864) accompanied by plates, illustrating Christian Arabic scripts. Facsimiles of several are also to be found in the beautiful volume edited for the Palaeographical Society by the skilful hand of the late Dr W. Wright. Some specimens of the Christian Arabic MSS. of the Sinai Library were published in facsimile in the Cairene Journal *Mukṭaṭaf* for 1894 (XVIII. 367): they were taken from a large number put into the hands of the editors, the nature of whose magazine prevented their using the whole. Some photographs of MSS. from the same collection are given by Mrs Gibson in Nos. II. and III. of *Studia Sinaitica*, and in Nos. VII. and VIII. of the same series; also by Mrs Lewis in *Horae Semiticae*, No. III. In the Russian publication called *Zapiski Vostochnavo Otdyelenia* XVI. (1905) there are three plates from the Sinaitic MS. 460.

The subject has not ordinarily been treated independently, owing to the difficulty of separating Christian from other Arabic writing. Perhaps the name "Christian type" may be assigned to the handwriting illustrated in the frontispiece, in *Studia Sinaitica*, III. p. 89, and XI. Plates 1—8, and in the Russian publication quoted: perhaps too facsimiles II. and III. show a tendency to introduce Syriac forms into Arabic letters, or at least give the latter a suggestion of the Syriac script. And in general, if the Christian documents of the fifth century A.H. and later be compared with contemporary Moslem documents, a certain stiffness, a certain approximation to the "square character" is often found in the former which is not found in the latter. The Moslem scribe seems to work with greater ease and greater certainty. The Moslem leaves something to the reader, the Christian allows no ambiguity for him to settle.

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Nevertheless the main tendencies in the development of Moslem calligraphy were reproduced in the Christian scripts, for reasons which can easily be made out. Zealous Moslems of an early period forbade non-Moslems to acquire the Arabic language: in the charter given to the Christians by Omar it is expressly stipulated that the former shall not read or write Arabic or use the Arabic language (von Kremer, *Kulturgeschichte*, I. 102, 3). This rule was presently found so vexatious to both conquerors and conquered that it had to be relaxed. And when the Arabic language came to be used in the bureaux, Christians and members of other tolerated sects were known to be specially qualified for clerical work. The *Kātib Naṣṣrānī*, "Christian Secretary," is a person who meets us constantly in Moslem history: and though many a ruler issued edicts forbidding the employment of non-Moslems in any government posts, the force of circumstances caused these edicts to be speedily annulled. A record of their enforcement and repealing meets us most frequently in the history of the Mamluke dynasty, but examples occur far earlier: Omar II. (100 A.H.) issued an edict of this sort (Von Kremer, *ibid.* II. 167), and in 501 A.H. (Ibn al-Athīr, Cairo 1303, X. 160) a vizier resumes office on condition that he employs no non-Moslems. The Christian or other non-Moslem secretary was frequently compelled to personate a Moslem in his official compositions, and even to exhibit familiar acquaintance with the Coran. Thus the famous Secretary of State Ibrāhīm Ibn Hilāl, who was a Sabian, "associated with Moslems on the friendliest terms, fasted with them during Ramaḍān, and knew the Coran so well by heart that it floated on the tip of his tongue and the nib of his pen" (*Letters of Ibrāhīm*, Lebanon, 1898, p. 5). There were indeed pious grammarians who would sooner starve than teach an Unbeliever the Coran, or even the grammar of Sibawaihi, in which verses of the Sacred Book were to be found: but the ordinary teacher could not afford to be particular. And it would seem that the chief teachers of writing as well as the great grammarians were ordinarily, if not always, Moslems.

The writing of the Christians was from this cause assimilated to that of the Moslems: and to write well was a step on the road to promotion. "There was (says Ṭabarī, III. 1181) a certain Fadl Ibn Marwān, attached to a provincial governor, as writer: and he wrote a good hand. Presently he was associated with a clerk of Mu'tasim (afterwards Caliph), and wrote under his supervision: on this man's death Faḍl got his place, and himself had a clerk under him. His fortunes rose with the fortunes of Mu'tasim, he went with him to Egypt, and got control of the whole wealth of the country. Before Ma'mūn's death he came to Baghdad, and acted for Mu'tasim, giving such orders as he thought fit in Mu'tasim's name: when



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Mu'tasim came to the capital as Caliph, Faḍl was the real Caliph, having under him all the bureaux." Similar stories of promotion starting with the possession of a good handwriting are common: and the fortunate persons were often Christians and sometimes Jews.

On the other hand Arabic never became the religious language of any Christian sect, or of the Arabic-speaking Christians as a whole: whence the ordinary cause for the development of a special script was wanting. Syriac, Coptic, or Armenian, remained the religious language of the Christian communities, even (in the first two cases) after the majority of the people had ceased to understand them. Syrians, Jews, and Samaritans, when writing Arabic for purposes connected with the religious communities to which they belonged, often preferred to employ their national alphabets. When they used the Moslem script, it was ordinarily to their interest to conceal rather than to flaunt the fact that they did not belong to the Moslem community.

A considerable number of books written by Christians were of course intended for the public market. Such were medical and philosophical treatises and in general works dealing with science. In these the religion of the author appears in the nature of the formulae with which his book opens and closes: otherwise there may be little or nothing whereby it can be detected. But even translations of the Old and New Testaments were often intended for all classes of readers. And the better sort of Mohammedan theologians and historians, such as Ibn Ḳutaibah and Fakhr ad-din ar-Rāzī, exhibit a fair acquaintance with their contents. On the whole then in the case of works written in both the language and the script of the Moslems, it is best to suppose that the authors usually intended contributing to the national literature of an Arabic-speaking country, rather than to that of their own religious community only. We are therefore prepared to find the modifications of the script noticeable in works emanating from the leading community imitated by those of subordinate communities. The facsimiles therefore should be studied side by side with other works illustrating the development of Arabic handwriting, such as those appended to the Oxford and Berlin Catalogues of Arabic MSS., the *Aegyptische Urkunden aus dem königlichen Museum zu Berlin*, and Moritz's magnificent *Arabic Palaeography*. For the origin of the Arabic script we cannot do better than refer to Berger's *Histoire de l'Écriture dans l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1891). A list of works by Arabic writers on the theory and practice of calligraphy is given by Ahlwardt at the beginning of vol. I. of his monumental *Arabic Catalogue*. Examples of different styles of hands are given by A. P. Pihan, *Notice sur les divers genres d'écriture ancienne et moderne des Arabes*, etc. (Paris, 1856). The treatise called *Khatt u Khattātān* of

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Habib Efendî (Constantinople, 1306 A.H.) contains little besides biographical notices of leading calligraphers.

Facsimiles I. II. III. stand apart from the rest, as representing decidedly early forms of writing. A well-known tradition ascribes the invention of diacritic points to the instigation of the famous or notorious proconsul al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf. “Abu Aḥmad al-‘Askarī in his work on textual corruption states that people continued reading out of the Coran of ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān for over forty years to the days of ‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Marwān: by that time the amount of textual corruption had become very serious and spread over the whole of ‘Irāk, so that Ḥajjāj had recourse to his scribes and asked them to invent diacritic signs for the letters that looked alike: and it is said that Naṣr Ibn ‘Āṣim undertook this task. He invented the dots, single and in pairs with differences of position. For a long time people continued to write all their texts with dots. Even so however corruption of the text was found to occur, and they invented the system which is called *ʿjām*, which they employed in addition to the dots” (Ibn Khallikān, i. 155). The date of Ḥajjāj<sup>1</sup> (on whom M. Périer has recently published an exhaustive study) is the first century of Islam—he died in 95: the first of the Lewis-Gibson facsimiles is of a deed written eight years before that event, 87 A.H. The dots being still novelties, we are not surprised to find no trace of them in the deed. Karabaček, on the basis of an exhaustive study of papyri, finds evidence for the employment of the diacritic dot under B in documents dated 81—96 and for that of the double dot under Y in documents dated 82—89 (*Denkschr. der Wiener Akademie, ph.-hist. Kl.* XXXIV. 225).

Facsimiles II. and III. are similar to the handwritings described by Fleischer in the papers referred to above. Of the first we might use his description, “ein steifes, sich noch eng an das Kūfī anschliessendes Neskhī.” The wide space left after the non-attached letters is similar to that in Fleischer’s Tab. V. On the other hand, except for the sign of the feminine the points seem regularly employed, and indeed in the Eastern style, and the vowel U is occasionally inserted. The writing however of the two dots over the sign of the feminine is a proceeding which some grammarians at least do not recognize: thus in the *Maḳāmah* of Ḥarīrī (No. VI.) which contains an epistle with alternate words of dotted and undotted letters, the sign of the feminine is treated as undotted.

An archaism common to these two hands is the protraction of the stroke

<sup>1</sup> An example of the difficulty occasioned by the want of dots in Ḥajjāj’s time is given in Mubarrad’s *Kāmil*, i. 291, ult. (Cairo, 1308.) Jāhiz, *Ḥayawān*, i. 55, implies that in the time of Hishām Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (ob. 125 A.H.) a dotted letter could not be confused with an undotted one.

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of the Alif below the line of the letter to which it is attached. The Jīm and two following letters resemble in their angle a Syriac G: the Dāl is of the form of a Nestorian D; the Šād is almost rectangular: the Kāf (medial) resembles an Estrangelo Q: the final Kāf is similar to Dāl and to Ṭā; the medial Mīm is above, not below the line; and the medial form of the Hā resembles the initial. Finally in facsimile III. there are specimens of the Kufic final Nūn, and final Yā, and also of a Syriac ‘Ain. Probably in facsimile III. the writer’s hand is decidedly influenced by the habit of writing Syriac.

The writing of the frontispiece is curious, and exhibits many archaisms, especially in the forms of the Dāl and Ṭā: the hook at the top of this letter and at the top of the Lām is also found in the MS. of which there is a facsimile in the *Muḥtataf* XVIII. 367 (fig. 3) as well as in facsimile III.

Archaic handwritings are usually preserved (1) in sacred books, (2) on coins, (3) in inscriptions. In these sorts of writing the old style was long maintained by the Moslems. Since the Arabic versions of the Bible had only a moderate degree of sanctity attaching to them, it was natural that the Christians should extend to their religious books, as well as to others, the modifications that became popular in the writing of the national language. Yet deliberate attempts at reproducing the script of an old copy are not wanting. Ibn Khaldūn notices that men often intentionally imitated the bad writing of a saint, hoping to be spiritually benefited thereby.

On the history of Arabic writing there is a passage of some length in the Bibliography of Hājji Khalīfah (III. 149), the bulk of which is taken from the *Fihrist* (pp. 7—9). Since neither of these authorities give illustrations, their statements are very hard either to understand or to criticize. The author of the *Fihrist* (377 A.H., 987 A.D.) mentions Ibn Muḥlah (ob. 328 A.H.) as the finest penman (with one other) of all who had lived up to his time: but he does not make the assertion which we find in later writers (e.g. Ibn Khallikān, II. 81) that Ibn Muḥlah was the person who altered the Arabic script from the Kufic to “the present style.” This change is sometimes however assigned to a later penman, Ibn al-Bawwāb (ob. 413 or 423, Ibn Khallikān, I. 436), whose calligraphy was so famous in his own time that even a *blind* poet (Abu’l-‘Alā of Ma’arrāh, *Siḥḥ al-zand*, II. 44) could draw an image from it. Of course the supposition that either of these writers invented *naskhī* is contradicted by the fact that the *naskhī* type goes back to the very commencement of Arabic writing. Still it is likely that the influence of these calligraphers was very great, and it is noticeable that the change from the type of fac-

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simile III. to that of facsimile IV. is much the most decided in the collection; the first of which is before, the latter after Ibn Muḳlah's time. The manipulation of the script is altogether more facile, somewhat like that of a grown-up person as compared with the rigidity and stiffness of a child's handwriting. In facsimile IV. we see the first examples (in this collection) of the practice of distinguishing the *undotted* letters by writing minute forms of them underneath (in the case of Ḥa, Sīn, Šād, 'Ain) or a sign above (chiefly in the case of R and Sīn). Perhaps the distinction of the undotted letters in this way is what is meant in the passage quoted from al-'Askarī by *i'jām*, since its purpose was to provide extra security against corruption, after the dots had been found insufficient.

The methods employed are collected by Wright in his *Arabic Grammar*, I. 4, to whose observations one is added by Salhani in the Preface to *al-Akhtal*, p. 7. The volume of Ḳaḷkashandī which he quotes has not yet been issued by the authorities of the Khedivial library. Most varieties will be found illustrated in the facsimiles, but it is not yet possible to assign their employment to special ages or schools. The *muhmilah* sign (as these are called) over the Sīn of the word Masīḥ (Christ) in facsimiles XXI. XXV. and XXXIII. seems intentionally to take the form of a cross. The sign on the Sīn of Yasū' (Jesus) is in the form of an acute angle, with the apex downwards. On other words in the same page (facsimile XXI.) it takes the form of a line slightly inclined from the horizontal, originally meant for a repetition of the letter itself. In facsimile XXII. this is used for the Sīn of Yasū'. In facsimile XII. it is a curved line, still more suggestive of the original letter. In facsimile XXXIII. it takes a form very similar to that of the hamzah, except in the case of Masīḥ, where the cross is retained. The hamzah form is again found in facsimile XXXVII. The letter which most frequently takes a *muhmilah* sign in these facsimiles is the Rā: the Dāl is scarcely ever, if at all, thus distinguished. There are however quite late MSS. in which the scribe regularly puts a dot under it<sup>1</sup>.

The epoch marked by the work of Ibn Muḳlah is equally apparent in the facsimiles published by Wright: compare his Plate XX. of 272 A.H. with Plate XCVI. of 348.

The alterations which handwriting underwent in Eastern Islam after this time were slight. According to Ibn Khaldūn (translated by de Slane, II. 399) another epoch was marked by the copies of Yāḳūt of Mausul (ob. 618 A.H.) and the Saint 'Alī al-'Ajamī: Ibn Khallikān (ob. 671) knows

<sup>1</sup> An example is the Bodleian MS. of Yāfi'ī's History.

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of Yāḳūt as a calligrapher, but does not, like Ibn Khaldūn, state that his writing formed the model followed throughout Eastern Islam. Ḥājjī Khalīfah adds some more names: the geographer Yāḳūt (ob. 628) and Yāḳūt al-Mustaʿsimi (ob. 698), “whose fame filled the earth.” Probably then the type of writing in use in the seventh century (A.H.) was set by Yāḳūt of Mausul, the type in use in the eighth by Yāḳūt al-Mustaʿsimi. Ḥājjī Khalīfah adds that the styles of writing in which these persons excelled were six: Thulth, Naskh, Taʿlīq, Raiḥān, Muḥaḳḳaḳ, Riḳāʿ. Several of these are mentioned in the *Arabian Nights* (ed. Macnaghten, I. 94, cited by Dozy). Ḥabīb Efendī observes that the *Raiḥānī* style suits Corans and Prayers, the *Naskhī* Commentaries and Traditions, the *Thulth* Histories, the *Tauḳīʿ* Firmans and Rescripts, the *Riḳāʿ* Letters, the *Muḥaḳḳaḳ* Verses. He adds that in *Thulth* four parts are straight, and two round; in *Muḥaḳḳaḳ*  $1\frac{1}{2}$  parts straight, and the rest round; in *Tauḳīʿ* they are equally divided. Plate XI. of our facsimiles belongs to the Riḳāʿ style: in letters (says Ḥājjī Khalīfah) it is undesirable to insert dots, except where there is some danger of ambiguity: to insert them all is rather to imply that your correspondent is unskilled in reading hands. The writer of this MS. (though it is not an epistle) is decidedly sparing with them. He also has a tendency to omit the “teeth” of the Sīn, and to attach the non-connecting letters to those that follow (e.g. in maḳṣūd, line 9). All these are found in facsimile V. (of the fourth century), and even in very early specimens of Arabic writing (see Abel, no. 6 of the year 259 A.H., 873 A.D. as read by Karabaček, *W. Z. K. M.* XI. 12). The others are all naskhī, though X. and XXVI. show a faint tendency towards taʿlīq.

It now becomes the problem of the palaeographer to discover clues by which to date undated MSS.: and this problem is no easy one, although numbers of facsimiles of the same century put together (as they are here and in the Moritz collection) leave a distinct impression of uniformity on the mind; it is however hazardous to attempt to fix the date at which any particular form of letter first came into use, or that at which it went out of fashion. Indeed such innovations as can be traced seem ordinarily to be the introduction into the Naskhī hand of forms already in use in the Riḳāʿ hand.

The perpendicular form of the connected Dāl and the final Nūn resembling Rā which occur in facsimile IV. seem characteristic of that period (later fourth century A.H.). At this period too the (final or isolated) Bā and Tā are often unfinished towards the left; facsimile VI. (which is much later, 551 A.H.) illustrates this practice better than IV. Experts in handwriting will very probably be able to observe much more.

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The persistence of the employment of the initial for the final Kāf is very noticeable. The final form (similar to final Lām, only that the latter is below the line) meets us first in facsimile XIX. (671 A.H.), line 2: in facsimile XXIII. a similar form, with a top stroke, is found in line 1, whereas the employment of the initial for the final form occurs in the same page. In XXI. the initial form is used (684 A.H.), and examples of it occur as late as 994 (facsimile XXXIV.). The form with a minute kāf inserted (looking like a hamzah) is found in facsimile XXVI. (714 A.H.). With this handwriting generally compare Ahlwardt XX. of 804 A.H. The employment of both the minute kāf and the top stroke (which most calligraphers regard as an inelegance) is found in facsimile XXXVI. (1036 A.H.).

The forms of the Alif retain some archaisms in quite late MSS.: so the protraction of the connected form below the line is illustrated in XV. (A.H. 619), but perhaps not later. The form (isolated) in which the bottom curves towards the left appears in quite recent MSS. (e.g. facsimile XXXI., A.H. 994). A form in which the top is hooked towards the left occurs chiefly in the inelegant writing of facsimile XIV. (A.H. 600).

Among the principles of calligraphy analysed by Ḥājji Khalīfah after Abu'l-Khair one is that attention should be paid to what is called "justifying," i.e. seeing that the lines begin and end at the same point. Some of the facsimiles (e.g. VII. XVIII.) show clear signs of the line or lines employed for the guidance of the scribe in this matter. The treble dots at the commencement of many of the lines in facsimile XIII. probably serve the purpose of the inverted comma, a sign similar to which is often found in Western MSS.: if this be the purpose of the dots, the places for them have not always been felicitously selected. The use of the Hā to fill up a line that would otherwise be imperfect, which occurs in facsimile XV., is common in Arabic MSS.

The Mohammedan custom of prolonging the B of *Bism* in the Invocation at the commencement of books or chapters was, as Fleischer observed, imitated by Christians: facsimiles XIV. and XXIX. offer good examples. The prolonged B is said to be compensation for the loss of the Alif in this formula.

The orthography and vocalization belong to the subjects of which Dr Graf has treated rather than to palaeography. Both are frequently faulty.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.



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THE manuscript which has supplied us with a frontispiece is not dated. It was discovered by Mrs Gibson in 1902 and is therefore not included in the Syriac and Arabic catalogues which we made in 1893. Our reason for placing it in this volume springs from a wish to make its existence better known. It is numbered 514, and is noted in Mrs Gibson's Catalogue of the Arabic MSS. in the Convent of St Catherine on Mount Sinai (*Studia Sinaitica* III.) as an ἀφηρημένον. The story of how she found it is in the *Expository Times* for 1902, pp. 509, 510.

The manuscript is a palimpsest. It has a stout binding much broken at the back. The leaves are of good, fine vellum, measuring about 23 centimètres by 15.

The upper script is Arabic, in a hand which has been assigned to the end of the IXth or beginning of the Xth century, and is considered to be an exclusively Christian one. A specimen of the same writing is to be seen in Plate XX. of the Palaeographical Society's facsimiles, Oriental Series. It is from the Vatican Codex Arab. 71 which is dated A.D. 885; and another specimen is in the upper script of a palimpsest belonging to me, and of which I have published several facsimiles in No. XI. of this series.

The text of the upper script in Sin. Arab. 514 contains four sermons by Jacob of Serug. The first one, with which the book in its present defective condition begins, is on the subject that no man may alter the least value of anything which our Lord has said in the holy Gospel.

The remainder of the text is for the most part a martyrology. The names of the martyrs are not very easy to identify; but Mrs Gibson observed those of Philemon, Euthalius, Cyricus and Julitta, Eustratius and Arsenius.

Mrs Gibson says: "I could decipher little of the under script without using the reagent (hydrosulphuret of ammonia), but, whenever I painted a page with it, the Syriac lines came up clearly, and were very easy to read. I consider this handwriting to be not later than the VIth century, but I am not an expert, and it seems to me probable that, being a palimpsest, it may be the oldest Peshitta in existence. Its appearance tells at once that it is not quite so ancient as the Old Syriac palimpsest discovered by Mrs Lewis in 1892. I had ample opportunity to place the two together, and there can be no question about their relative antiquity.

“The first page I tried was f. 162<sup>b</sup> which began at John vii. 10, col. 1, ending at ἄλλοι in v. 12. Col. b began at v. 16 and ended at v. 18. This shows that the leaves of the original Syriac manuscript have been folded in two to meet the wants of the Arabic martyrologists in the IXth or Xth century.”

On f. 173<sup>b</sup> Mrs Gibson found part of the *Transitus Mariae* in Syriac, but she does not believe there is much of it.

In the binding is a fragment of a Syriac hymn in honour of the Virgin.

Our second facsimile is from a photograph taken by Mr Macbeth. The slightly Cufic form of some of the letters speaks for its antiquity. It is the earliest dated Arabic MS. in the British Museum. Its author, Theodore Abu Qurrah, Bishop of Harran and Nisibis, lived about the end of the IXth century, and was a pupil of St John of Damascus. It contains a treatise on Image worship which has been published by Dr J. Arendzen, and also, in its first part, a Defence of Christian Doctrines, of which a portion has been edited by P. L. Malouf, S.J., in the *Machrig* (Vol. VI., No. 22, p. 1011). Dr Malouf adduces reasons for believing that the treatise which occupies the first part of the volume is due to the same Theodore Abu Qurrah. He also states his conviction that Or. 4950 is the oldest dated Christian MS. extant.

This MS. has furnished the subject for a paper read by Professor Burkitt before the Cambridge Philological Society in 1896 on St Charitan. He maintained that the rare Syriac words **ܣܝܩܐ** and **ܣܝܩܐܬܐ** and the Arabic word **سيق** are equivalent to the Greek word *Λαύρα*, which originally meant “alley” or “lane.” Mrs Gibson, before she had heard of this paper, identified the word **سيق** with the Greek *σηκός* which means “a fold.” We both think that the Arabs are much more ready to assimilate (and often to mangle)<sup>1</sup> a foreign word than to translate it. My friend Dr Porphyrius Logothetes, the present learned Archbishop of Mount Sinai, tells me that this term was in ancient times applied to what is now called the *Bḡma*, that is the space screened off from the body of the church just behind the holy table. That the *Bḡma* should have been used as a *scriptorium* will surprise no one who has become acquainted with the habits of Oriental priests. But the origin of **سيق** may possibly be more humble and modern. Archbishop Porphyrius has suggested that it probably comes from a habit which the Greeks have of calling a church, and also a monastery, *ὁ οἶκος*. They say, for example, that they are going *εἰς οἶκον*, “to a church, or to a monastery,” and the Arabs may easily have shortened it into **سيق** by dropping the first and last syllables, just as they have turned *εἰς τὴν πόλιν* into Stamboul or Istambûl. English scholars will please remember that the Greeks pronounce *οἶκον* “eekon.” As the word is again used in No. XXXV. with the sense of “cloister” it was evidently also applied to the whole monastery, which might well be called a fold.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gawâlikî, *Almu' Arrab* (Sachau), p. 5: **اعلم انهم (العرب) كثيرا ما يجترون على تغيير الاسماء الاعجمية اذا استعملوها**.



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We have not been able to find the text of No. XIV. in any printed book. There was more than one Evagrius or Evaristus connected with Constantinople, from the Bishop who reigned in A.D. 370 to the celebrated historian who accompanied Bishop Gregorius of Antioch to that city in the VIth century. The emperor to whom this apology is addressed appears to be Constantinus VII. Porphyrogenitus. It belongs therefore to the close of the VIIIth century.

The Greek text of No. XVI. will be found in the works of Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio XXXII., cap. ix. This is numbered XXI. in the Sinai MS.

The Syriac text of No. XX. is in the Roman edition of Mar Ephraim, vol. I., p. 172. It is the beginning of the Sermo in Patres Defunctos.

In the last line of No. XXII. we at first found **وهو له وللامرة . برسر قلايته** untranslatable and were inclined to adopt the suggestions of the Sheyk Muhammed 'Asal to read **وللامرة** and **تلايته**, translating "it belonged to him and to the community in the order of its reading." But Professor Margoliouth thinks that **امرة** is the plural of the Syriac word **ܐܡܪܐ** or **ܐܡܪܐܬܐ**, cantor (see *Theo.*, p. 245).

We have failed to find the text of No. XXVI. in any of Mar Ephraim's works.

The extract from the Lives of Saints which appears in No. XXVIII. is practically the same as what I have already published in the Mythological Acts of the Apostles, page 83 (*Horae Semiticae* III.).

A text which nearly corresponds to that of No. XXXII. will be found in the Arabic version of Joseph ben Gorion, printed at Beirut in 1872.

The Greek text corresponding to No. XXXVIII. will be found in *Migne's Patrologia*, vol. LXIII., pp. 16, 17.

The Greek and Latin text of XXXIX. will be found in Migne, vol. LXXXVIII., pp. 627, 628, and that of XL. in the same volume, pp. 1207, 1208.

All the MSS. which have furnished us with specimen pages are paper, with the exceptions of Nos. II., III. and the frontispiece, which are vellum, and No. I., which is papyrus.

But this does not raise the suspicion as to their antiquity which would occur to us in the case of codices written in Europe. Paper was used in the East for several centuries before it was known to the Westerns. It had not made its way to the neighbourhood of Antioch in the year when John of Beth Mari, the Stylite, turned a manuscript of the Old Syriac Separate Gospels into one of the oldest of extant palimpsests by writing his biographies of Holy Women above them, but we find the story of its origin clearly told in Dr Karabağek's Introduction to his "Guide to the Museum of the Archduke Rainer Papyri." Two Chinese papermakers were taken prisoners by the Arabs in a battle where the latter defeated the combined forces of the Chinese and the Turks at Kangli, on the banks of a river named Tharâg in Transoxonia, in July A.D. 751, accounts of the battle being extant in the chronicles of both victors and vanquished. These papermakers continued to practise their craft in Samarkand, and about A.D. 790 a Government paper-factory was established

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at Baghdad during the reign of Harûn al Raschid. The Chinese made thin paper of the bark of the mulberry tree; and the Arabs produced a more serviceable article out of linen rags. Flourishing factories for its manufacture existed in Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and North Africa long before it found its way into Europe by way of Damascus, under the name of *charta Damascena* or *charta bombycina* from the town of Hierapolis, which was then called Mambidsah of Bombyca. It is therefore not surprising that our third facsimile, although it is taken from a paper manuscript, bears the date of A.D. 988 although there are no extant Greek paper manuscripts before the middle of the XIIIth century<sup>1</sup>.

There are 47 dated Arabic manuscripts in the library of St Catherine on Mount Sinai. Fifteen of these are not included in this volume. In two cases we have given a second example from the same manuscript, because the date page did not offer a good specimen of the hand-writing.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, sub "Paper."

AGNES SMITH LEWIS.

DESCRIPTION OF MANUSCRIPTS.

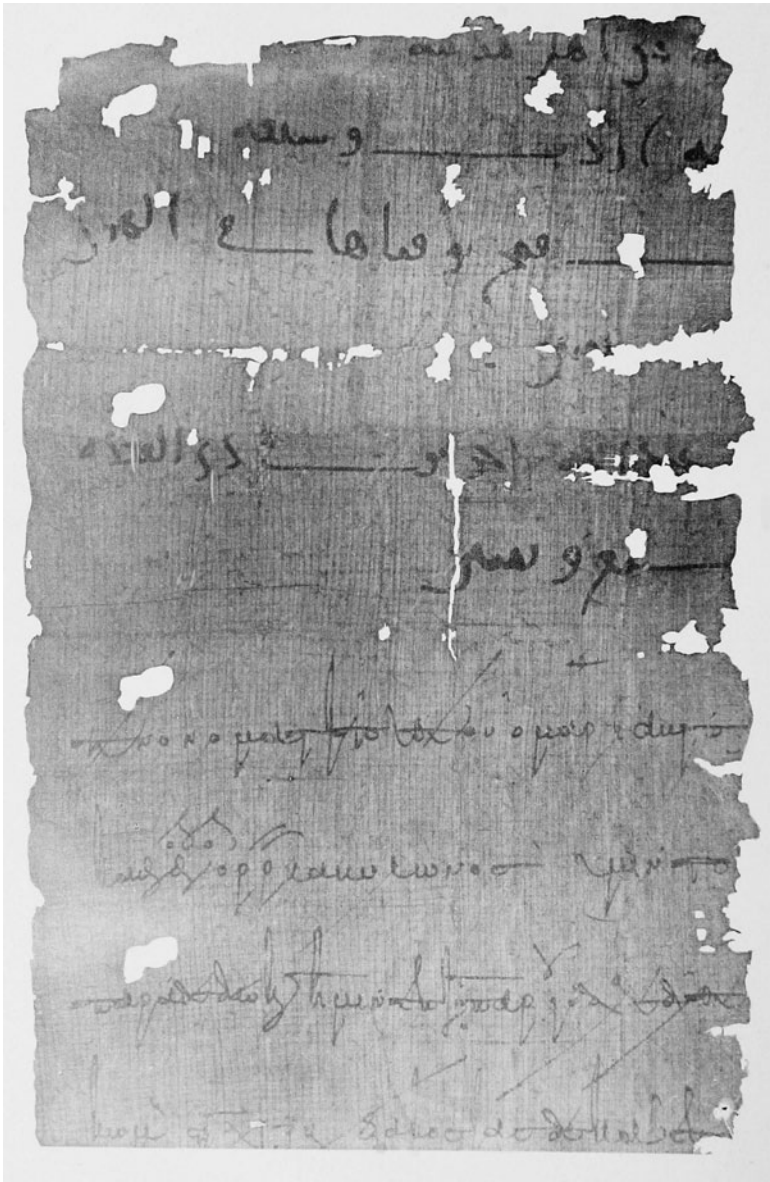
- II. British Museum, Or. 4950, vellum, 237 leaves, most of them  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches by  $6\frac{1}{4}$ . The lower outward corner of each leaf is invariably rounded off.
- III. British Museum, Or. 5008, vellum, 53 leaves,  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches by 6.
- IV. Sinai 139, paper, about 167 leaves, 21 × 14 centimetres.
- V. Sinai 580, paper, about 206 leaves, 20 × 16, from 8 to 12 lines on page.
- VI. Sinai, paper, about 195 leaves, 18 × 13.
- VII. Sinai 69, vellum, about 147 leaves, 18 × 13.
- VIII. Sinai 417, vellum, about 303 leaves, 21 × 17.
- IX. Sinai 410, paper, about 165 leaves, 17 × 12.
- X. Sinai 97, paper, about 383 leaves, 5 being blank, 14 × 10.
- XI. Sinai 445, paper, about 435 leaves, 16 × 11.
- XII. Sinai 82, paper, about 241 leaves, 22 × 13.
- XIII. Sinai 117, paper, about 139 leaves, 23 × 16.
- XIV. Sinai 420, paper, about 193 leaves, 29 × 22.
- XV. Sinai 13, paper, about 383 leaves, 25 × 16.
- XVI. Sinai 276, paper, about 355 leaves, 24 × 16.
- XVII. Sinai 122, paper, about 221 leaves, 25 × 17.
- XVIII. Sinai 408, paper, about 161 leaves, 36 × 25.
- XIX. Sinai 95, paper, about 329 leaves, 18 × 14.
- XX. Sinai 439, paper, about 359 leaves, 22 × 14.
- XXI. Sinai 104, paper, about 269 leaves, 3 being blank, 21 × 14.
- XXII. Sinai 89, paper, about 194 leaves, 28 × 21.
- XXIII. } Sinai 99, paper, about 209 leaves, 30 × 22.
- XXIV. }
- XXV. Sinai 91, paper, about 249 leaves, 22 × 14.
- XXVI. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fonds Arabe 159, paper, 170 leaves,  $25\frac{1}{2}$  centimetres by 17, 15 lines on each page. Dated in the year 1130 of the Martyrs.

- XXVII. Sinai Cod. Arab. 397, paper, about 267 leaves, 31 × 21.
- XXVIII. British Museum, Or. 1327, No. 8 in Supplementary Catalogue, paper, dated 1050 Anno Martyrum. Paper, 242 leaves, 9½ inches by 6¾. Evidently written in Egypt. The sections are marked in the margin by the hand of the scribe with Coptic numerals.
- XXIX. Sinai 628, paper, 23 × 17.
- XXX. British Museum, Or. 1330, No. 14 in Supplementary Catalogue, paper, dated Wednesday the 1st of Mesuri, Anno Martyrum 1102. Paper, 267 leaves, 10 inches by 6½. The author is Ephrem Syrus, but his name is not given.
- XXXI. Sinai 398, paper, about 304 leaves, 36 × 20.
- XXXII. British Museum, Or. 1336, No. 31 in Supplementary Catalogue, paper, 169 leaves, 9 inches by 6¼. The date A.H. 899 is given from the earliest of several notes recording that the MS. had been read by someone. It is therefore probably older than A.D. 1493, though apparently of the fifteenth century.
- XXXIII. Sinai 121, paper, about 360 leaves, 28 × 20.
- XXXIV. Sinai 135, paper, about 208 leaves, 28 × 21.
- XXXV. Sinai 264, paper, about 208 leaves, 24 × 16.
- XXXVI. Sinai 423, paper, about 615 leaves, 36 × 21.
- XXXVII. Sinai 625, paper, about 108 leaves, 20 × 15.
- XXXVIII. Sinai 626, paper, about 230 leaves, 31 × 22.
- XXXIX. } Sinai 339, paper, about 179 leaves, 21 × 15.
- XL. }
- XLI. Sinai 587, paper, about 23 leaves, 14 × 18.

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1.



Papyrus.  
Khedivial Museum, Cairo.  
Eighth Century.