

A Further Manuscript of Barhebraeus' *Kitāb al-*l*isā*  
“Creme of Wisdom” :  
Princeton, Theological Seminary, MS Nestorian 25  
by  
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Amongst the numerous works of Gregory John Barhebraeus — who was born 750 years ago and being “one of the most learned and versatile men that Syria ever produced”<sup>1</sup> should have had a festival in commemoration of his birthday! — only the large encyclopaedia entitled “Creme of Wisdom” did not yet find the attention that it deserves. As only some small parts have been edited<sup>2</sup> or studied<sup>3</sup> so far there seemed justification for the description of a further manuscript of parts of this work, so that a future editor of it may be informed about this manuscript which was unknown so far.

In the course of collecting the information about the remains of the Syriac medical texts for my planned Corpus Medicorum Syriacorum<sup>4</sup>, I found in James T. Clemons' very useful "Checklist of Syriac Manuscripts in the United States and Canada" an entry "Science Book (incomplete). Nestorian"<sup>5</sup>. As the material on medicine and science is unfortunately very scarce, I asked the librarian of Speer Library of Princeton Theological Seminary to send me a microfilm of that manuscript so that I could see which kind of science is preserved in it.

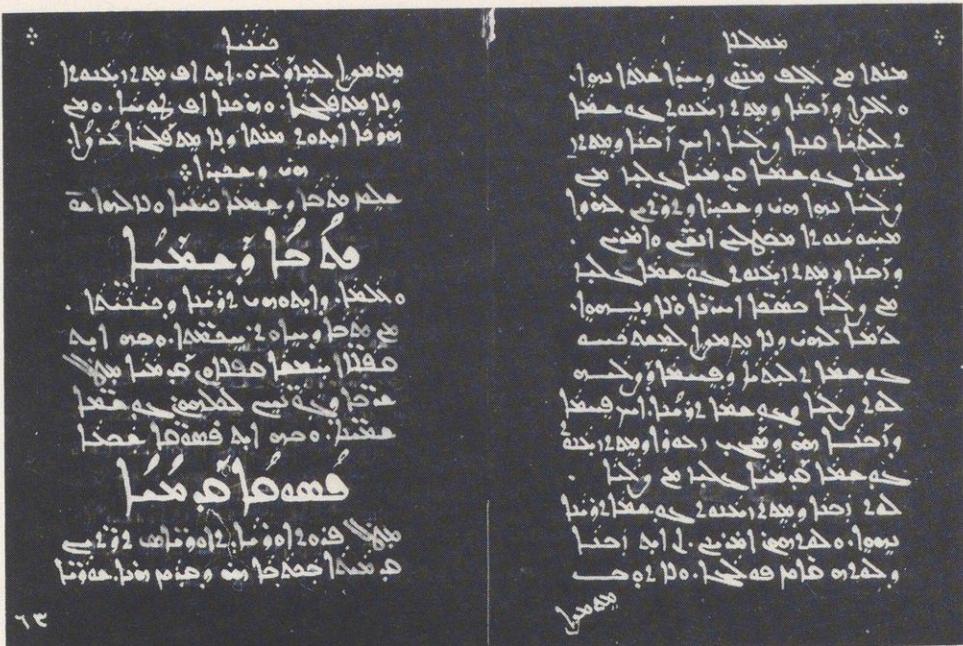
<sup>1</sup> According to William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894, repr. Amsterdam, 1966), p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> These are the tract on the Poetics of Aristotle *رساله في الأدب*, i.e. the *رسالات* *رسالات أرسطو*, edited by D. Margoliouth, *Analecta Orientalia ad Poeticam Aristoteleam* (London, 1887), pp. 114 to 139, and the tract on Physiognomy *رسالة في علم الظواهر*, i.e. the third chapter of the Economics *رسالة في الاقتصاد*, which is *رسالة في علم الظواهر*, edited by Giuseppe Furlani, "Die Physiognomik des Barhebräus in syrischer Sprache, I", *Zeitschrift für Semistik* 7 (1929), pp. 1-16.

<sup>3</sup> G. Furlani, "La psicologia di Barhebreo secondo il libro La Crema della Sapienza", Rivista degli Studi Orientali 13 (1931/32), pp. 24-52, i.e. **וְהַלְכָה**, which is the Arabic **وَالْمُرْكَبَةُ**.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. on it my paper "Ein Corpus Medicorum Syriacorum", *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 7 (1972), pp. 114-122. — A second paper describing further material is in print in the same journal.

<sup>5</sup> *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 32 (1966), pp. 224-251, 478-522, p. 500 No. 334.



Princeton, Theological Seminary, MS Nestorian 25, ff. ٦٢ b and ٦٣ a (with the title of the book).



The same, ff. ١٠٠ b and ١٠١ a.



I am very grateful to Mr .Charles Willard, the Librarian of Speer Library, for sending the wanted microfilm and for some information on the manuscript. He also kindly agreed that I publish the following description of the manuscript together with some pages in facsimile.

The manuscript consists of 47 leaves of white paper of 22 to 22 cm. The written part measures 17 to 11 cm. There is a single column of 13 to 16 lines per page, the ink is black but headings and sometimes numerals are in red. The manuscript is written in a regular Sertā and vowelled with East and West Syrian vowel-signs. The edges of some leaves are damaged (cf. below), therefore some words or parts of words are missing. The leaves are numbered with Arabic numeral signs from ٦١a to ٦٨b, ١٠٠a to ١٠٠b, ١٣٦a to ١٥٧b, and ١٦٧a to ١٧٨b. There is also a pagination from 120 (= ٦١a) to 364 (= ١٧٨b) in stencil. Also in stencil is written on the top of p. 342 (= f. ١٧٧b) "25" and "Science book". Neither the date nor the name of the scribe are preserved on the manuscript but according to the script it can be dated to the 16th century<sup>6</sup>.

The date of entry in Speer Library was January, 1932. It is not known from where the manuscript was acquired. It is, however, certain that these leaves did not belong to one of the few manuscripts recorded in A. Baumstark's "Geschichte der syrischen Literatur" (Bonn, 1922, reprinted Berlin, 1968)<sup>7</sup>, p. 316, n. 4, as those of the manuscripts which were housed in Oriental collections when Baumstark wrote his "Geschichte" do either contain only other parts of Barhebraeus book or do not fit in with the description given in the checklists<sup>8</sup>.

The content of this manuscript is, as already stated, not a "Science book", but part of the "Creme of Wisdom" of Gregory John Barhebraeus. The error of identification is somewhat astonishing because the title is preserved twice in the manuscript (on f. ٦٣a = p. 124 and on f. ١٥٤a = p. 315).

In the following a more detailed description of the content is given as also the other manuscripts — and above all the old one in the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana of Florence<sup>9</sup> — are described only in an insufficient manner.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Plate CLVIII (opposite p. 209), in W. H. P. Hatch, An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts, Boston, 1946.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. my review in Orientalistische Literaturzeitung 71 (1976), cols. 371-373.

<sup>8</sup> Such as "Dijarbakir 34" (17th century) with two columns of 27 lines to the page; cf. Addai Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l'archevêché chaldéen de Diarbékir", Journal asiatique, 1907, p. 345.

<sup>9</sup> MS Syr. 83 (olim 187), cf. St. E. Assemanus, Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mss. orientalium catalogus, Florentiae, 1742, p. 329.

f. 61a (= p. 120) begins abruptly with the words **كَلِيلٌ مَكْلِيلٌ**  
**كَلِيلٌ مَكْلِيلٌ** (= MS Syr. 83 (olim 187)  
of Florence, f. 20b, right column, line 10).

The words belong to the لِسْلِسَةِ الْمُؤْمِنِ of the كِتَابِ الْأَخْلَاقِ  
of the كِتَابِ الْأَخْلَاقِ which starts in the MS Syr. 83 on f. 20a, left  
column, line 1.

f. 71b (= p. 121), line 12 **ମୁହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ**, ଓ **ମୁହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ**  
**କାହିଁ ମୁହିଁ**. **ମୁହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ**. **ମୁହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ**.  
... **ମୁହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ କାହିଁ** (= MS Syr. 83, f. 20b, left column,  
line 13).

f. 70b (= p. 129), line 15 **كَلَّا كَسْوَةِ كَوَافِدِ**  
**كَلَّا مُلْكَهُ كَمَسَنِ**. **كَلَّا لَمْ يَرِدْ** **كَمَسَنِ**  
**كَلَّا مُلْكَهُ كَمَسَنِ**. **كَلَّا لَمْ يَرِدْ** **كَمَسَنِ**  
**كَلَّا مُلْكَهُ كَمَسَنِ**. **كَلَّا لَمْ يَرِدْ** **كَمَسَنِ**

f. 77b (= p. 131), line 2 **תְּמִימָה**, וְ**לֹא** **תְּמִימָה** **תְּמִימָה**  
... **תְּמִימָה** **תְּמִימָה**. **לֹא** **תְּמִימָה** **תְּמִימָה** (= MS Syr. 83, f. 22b,  
right column, line 3).

f. ၄၁၃ (= p. 133), line 3 ရန်တေသနများ၊ ဒါ ၂၁၁ ရန်တေသန ရှုခိုင်

<sup>10</sup> The title is given on both places as የእኔታዎች ስርጓዱ as in the two young manuscripts (Or. 4079 and Or. 9380) in the British Museum.

<sup>11</sup> The word is divided in the MS between line 9 and 10 (ଶବ୍ଦାଳ) and (ରହାଳ).

... ﻦـ ﺔـ ﻢـ . ﻪـ ﻞـ ﻭـ ﺖـ ﻰـ ﻮـ , ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 22b, left column, line 19).

f. ٧٨b (= p. 135). At the bottom of the page the text comes to an abrupt end, with the words ﻦـ ﺔـ ﻢـ . ﻪـ ﻞـ ﻭـ ﺖـ ﻰـ ﻮـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 23b, right column, line 1).

Lacuna from f. ٧٩a to ٩٩b = 31 leaves. There is a fault in the numbering of the pages because the first leave of the next gathering is f. ١٠٠a = p. 209 (sic). It should be p. 198. The right edges of the whole gathering of 6 leaves are partly damaged.

f. ١٠٠a (= p. 209), line 1 ﻪـ ﻦـ . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 34b, right column, line 8).

The text belongs still to the ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ.

f. ١٠٢b (= p. 214), line 1 . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ .. ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ . ﻪـ ﻞـ ﻭـ ﻮـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 35b, right column, line 5).

f. ١٠٠a (= p. 219), line 10 ﻮـ , ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ... ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ . ﻪـ [ ﻪـ ] ﻭـ ﻰـ ﻮـ ﻪـ . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 36b, right column, line 12).

f. ١٠٠b (= p. 220), last line [ ﻪـ ﻦـ ﻮـ ] ﻪـ ﻰـ ﻮـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻮـ ﻪـ ﻰـ ﻮـ ﻪـ ﻭـ = MS Syr. 83, f. 36b, left column, line 13).

Lacuna from f. ١٠٧a to f. ١٣٠b = 29 folios. There is again a fault in the pagination as the number of the first page of the next gathering should be p. 279, it is however numbered p. 281.

f. ١٣٦a (= p. 281), line 1 ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 57b, right column, line 24).

The text is part of ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ of ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ of ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ.

In line 3 we find the following note: ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ . It is, however, not clear which part of chapter 3 is missing because in the MS Syr. 83 no further text does follow.

Line 6 ﻪـ ﻦـ ﻮـ . ﻦـ ﻢـ ﻮـ ﻢـ ﻪـ ﻭـ .

f. 138b (= p. 286), line 1. **מִתְּבָאֵת לְעַמְּךָ וְיַעֲשֶׂת**  
... **מִתְּבָאֵת לְעַמְּךָ** (= MS Syr. 83, f. 58b, right column, line 4).  
f. 141a (= p. 291), line 14 **וְיַעֲשֶׂת לְעַמְּךָ מִתְּבָאֵת**  
... **מִתְּבָאֵת לְעַמְּךָ וְיַעֲשֶׂת** (= MS Syr. 83, f. 59a, left  
column, line 16).

f. 148b (= p. 304), line 6 تَنْهَىٰ حَمْلَةٍ لِّلْكَوَافِرِ  
... مُهَاجِرٍ مُّهَاجِرٍ. كَوَافِرِ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 61a, left  
column, line 11).

f. 101a (= p. 309), line 1. ... **תְּמִימָה** **מֵאַת** **לְבָנָה** **לְבָנָה**  
... **מֵאַת** **לְבָנָה** **מֵאַת** **לְבָנָה** (= MS Syr. 83, f. 61b, left column,  
line 25).

f. 102b (= p. 312), line 13.<sup>12</sup> *መስቀል እና ስም የመስቀል*  
... *የአሁን ዘላቂ መረጃዎች* (= MS Syr. 83, f. 62b, right column,  
line 11).

f. 104a (= p. 315), line 10 ... عَلِمَ حَكَمَ وَحَمَلَ لِعْنَةً ...  
 ... وَسَطَ وَسَطَ لِعْنَةً لِعْنَةً ... حَكَمَ وَحَمَلَ لِعْنَةً ...  
 ... حَكَمَ وَحَمَلَ لِعْنَةً ... حَكَمَ وَحَمَلَ لِعْنَةً ...

f. 105b (= p. 316), line 1 תְּשַׁבֵּחַ נָא תְּהִלָּתָךְ. תְּשַׁבֵּחַ  
תְּהִלָּתָךְ . תְּהִלָּתָךְ תְּהִלָּתָךְ . תְּהִלָּתָךְ  
... תְּהִלָּתָךְ . תְּלִילָךְ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 63a, right column, line 4).

<sup>12</sup> Sic, read ~~wain~~ *whin*.

f. 10vb (= p. 322), last line كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 64a, right column, line 18).

Lacuna from f. 10va to f. 166b = 9 folios. There is again a fault in the pagination. Instead of p. 341 it should be p. 339.

f. 167a (= p. 341), line 1 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 66b, left column, line 23).

f. 169b (= p. 346), line 12 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 67b, left column, line 10).

f. 171a (= p. 349), line 10 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 68a, left column, line 1).

f. 172b (= p. 354), line 5 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 68b, left column, line 19).

f. 170a (= p. 357), line 15 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 69a, left column, line 22).

f. 178b (= p. 364), line 1 كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 70a, left column, line 14).

Last line كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ ... كَوْنَتْ كَوْنَتْ (= MS Syr. 83, f. 70b, right column, line 12).

End of the incomplete manuscript. The last gathering consists of 12 folios.

The described manuscript is unfortunately very incomplete. Nevertheless should it be used when the long overdue edition of the whole "Creme of Wisdom" will once be prepared. It preserves some readings which are lost through homoioteleuta in the old MS Syr. 83.