

A Further Manuscript of Barhebraeus'

"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"¹ 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 edited² or studied³ 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*⁴, I found in James T. Clemons' very useful "Checklist of Syriac Manuscripts in the United States and Canada" an entry "Science Book (incomplete). Nestorian"⁵. 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.

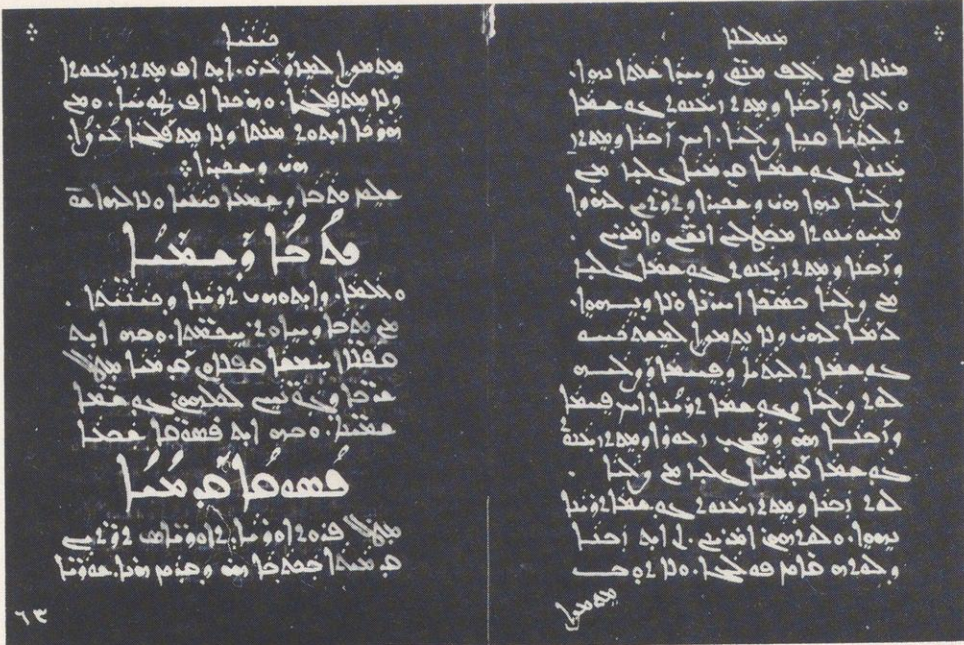
¹ According to William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894, repr. Amsterdam, 1966), p. 265.

² These are the tract on the Poetics of Aristotle ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, i.e. the ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, edited by D. Margoliouth, *Analecta Orientalia ad Poeticam Aristotelem* (London, 1887), pp. 118 to 139, and the tract on Physiognomy ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, i.e. the third chapter of the Economics ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, which is ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, edited by Giuseppe Furlani, "Die Physiognomik des Barhebraeus in syrischer Sprache, I", *Zeitschrift für Semistik* 7 (1929), pp. 1-16.

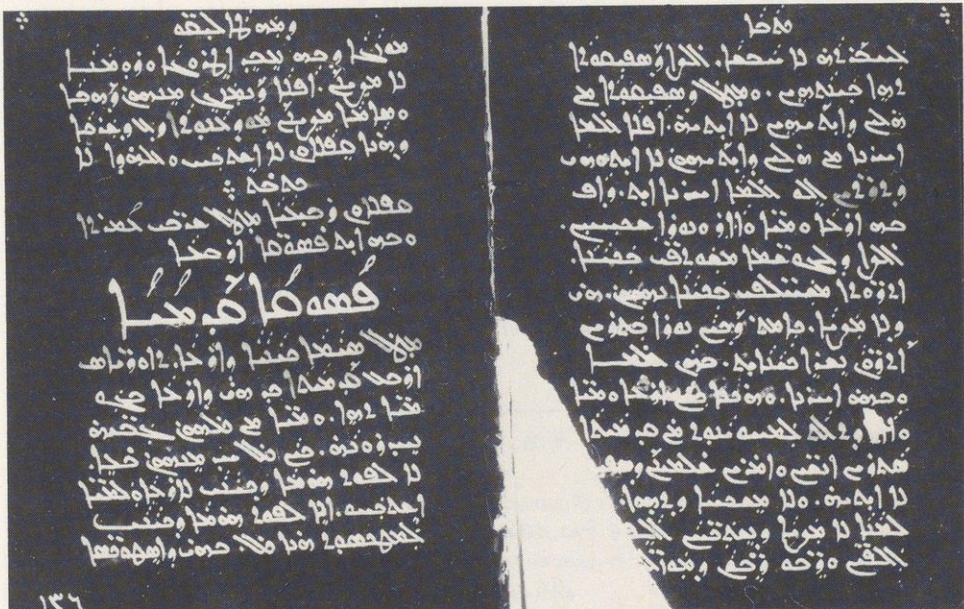
³ G. Furlani, "La psicologia di Barhebreo secondo il libro La Crema della Sapienza", *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 13 (1931/32), pp. 24-52, i.e. ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ, which is the ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ.

⁴ 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.

⁵ *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 ١٣٦ 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. ١٦٧b) "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 century⁶.

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)⁷, 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 checklists⁸.

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. ١٠٤a = p. 315).

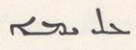
In the following a more detailed description of the content is given as also the other manuscripts — and above all the old one in the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana of Florence⁹ — are described only in an insufficient manner.

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

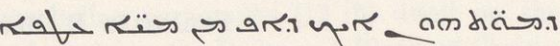
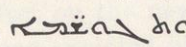
⁷ Cf. my review in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 71 (1976), cols. 371-373.

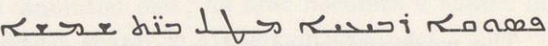
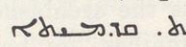
⁸ Such as "Dijarbakir 34" (17th century) with two columns of 27 lines to the page; cf. Addai Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l'archevêché chaldéen de Diarbékir", *Journal asiatique*, 1907, p. 345.

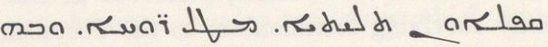
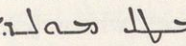
⁹ MS Syr. 83 (olim 187), cf. St. E. Assemanus, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum mss. orientalium catalogus*, Florentiae, 1742, p. 329.

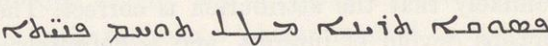
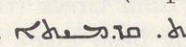
f. 10vb (= p. 322), last line  (= MS Syr. 83, f. 64a, right column, line 18).

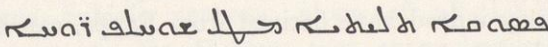
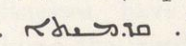
Lacuna from f. 108a to f. 176b = 9 folios. There is again a fault in the pagination. Instead of p. 341 it should be p. 339.

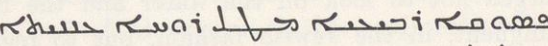
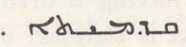
f. 176a (= p. 341), line 1  ...  (= MS Syr. 83, f. 66b, left column, line 23).

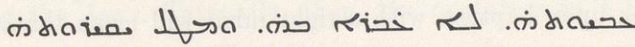
f. 179b (= p. 346), line 12  ...  (= MS Syr. 83, f. 67b, left column, line 10).

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

f. 173b (= p. 354), line 5  ...  (= MS Syr. 83, f. 68b, left column, line 19).

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

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

Last line  (= 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.