BOOK REVIEWS

Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon. A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's* Lexicon Syriacum (Winona Lake, Indiana & Piscataway, New Jersey: Eisenbrauns & Gorgias Press, 2009), ISBN 978-1-57506-180-1 & 978-1-60724-620-6, l + 1688 pp + CD, Hardback, $149.50.

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This dictionary is a greatly revised and expanded version of the second edition of Carl Brockelmann's *Lexicon Syriacum* (Brockelmann 1928). It contains the following innovations that make it very much improved and easier to use than Brockelmann's *Lexicon*:

— it is arranged alphabetically rather than according to root

— many citations have been added

— the etymologies have been updated

— the presentation is much clearer, using an attractive Estrangelo font, and with entries divided into paragraphs.

This is the fourth dictionary that Michael Sokoloff has produced, following on from his three Jewish Aramaic dictionaries (Sokoloff 1990, 2002 and 2003). As a former lexicographer, I know first-hand the day-to-day drudgery of the task of compiling a lexicon, and that many of the critical comments by 'metalexicographers' (for the term, see Green 1996, p. 469) display a lack of empathy with the lexicographer's plight. So, as well as affirming Sokoloff's status as the most prolific Aramaic lexicographer of his generation, I should also clarify that all comments in the present review are offered with much appreciation and gratitude for all of Sokoloff's efforts and accomplishments.

Several years ago, I organised *Aramith*, a conference on Aramaic lexicography, at the University of Sheffield (23–25 July, 2002), papers from which were published in subsequent issues of *Aramaic Studies*. At this conference, Sebastian Brock presented a learned assessment of the state of play, as it was then, in the field of Syriac lexicography (subsequently published as Brock 2003). Among Brock's many observations were the following criticisms of the second edition of Brockelmann's *Lexicon*:

> 1 — the use of Latin, making it unpractical for many modern users (Brock 2003, p. 168; similar comments are made regarding Payne-Smith 1879–1901)
> [2] — the failure to consider source texts that date from the late fourteenth century up until the present day (Brock 2003, pp. 168–169; also the case for Payne-Smith 1879–1901)
> 3 — the use of outdated and often unreliable text editions (Brock 2003, pp. 169–170; again also the case for Payne-Smith 1879–1901)
> 4 — the use of page numbers instead of Syriac words in the Latin-Syriac glossary, making locating the entry more cumbersome (Brock 2003, p. 167)

Realising that the ideal solution of a completely new and fully comprehensive lexicon is not practical at this time, Brock suggested the following way forward (Brock 2003, pp. 177–178):

> 5 — build upon the three existing lexicons (Audo 1897, Brockelmann 1928 and Payne-Smith 1879–1901), supplementing largely by means of texts published after 1928, particularly those of the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Scriptores Syri)* and *Patrologia Orientalis*
> 6 — expand on point 5 by including excerpts from other authors (such as Philoxenos, Jacob of Edessa, Dionysius bar Ṣalibi and Barhebraeus), translated authors (such as Gregory of Nazianus, Severus and Aristotle), liturgical texts and a selection of unpublished texts
> [7] — exclude texts composed during the last five centuries (suggesting that problem 2 cannot be satisfactorily resolved at this point in time).

Sokoloff was present at Brock's *Aramith* presentation and he concurs with Brock's assessment in the introduction to the work under review (p. xv; n. 47 is particularly interesting). The question before us, therefore, is whether or not Sokoloff has succeeded in addressing the problems identified by Brock and resolving them according to his suggested practical solution (ignoring, of course, points [2] and [7]).

The answer in respect of points 1 and 4 is immediately clear. This is, thankfully, a Syriac-English dictionary, and the enclosed CD contains both an index of cited passages and a reverse English-

Syriac index. Two of Sokoloff's previous dictionaries included indices of cited passages (Sokoloff 1990 and 2002), but the reverse index is a new and very welcome feature (cf. my comments in Bhayro 2004, p. 385). Similarly, it becomes clear from Sokoloff's introduction (pp. xv–xvi, nn. 49–51), as well as his list of abbreviations (pp. xxiii–xlix) that he has resolved point 3. For example, Brock's highlighting of Beck's editions of the works of Ephrem (Brock 2003, p. 170) has certainly been addressed by Sokoloff (cf. p. xxxii and p. xv, n. 49).

As already explained, this dictionary is based upon the second edition of Brockelmann's *Lexicon*, so it does not completely fulfil point 5. It would be unfair, however, to criticise this dictionary for not being something it does not claim to be. Indeed, if one were to choose one of the three pre-existing lexicons on which to base a new, expanded edition, then Sokoloff has surely chosen well. Brockelmann's *Lexicon* has long been recognised as the best Syriac dictionary available, and it is a relief to have it in English at long last.

In his introduction, Sokoloff gives us fair warning that point 6 was not his top priority: "Since the purpose of the present work was not to produce a new Syriac dictionary, the writer did not comb the literature to find new entries and meanings. However, an exception was made for two important lexical articles: Juckel, Harklean and Schleifer" (p. xxii). This does, however, bring us to an important point. No matter how much effort is put into such a project, individual scholars will still have to annotate their own copy as they edit and read more and more texts. For example, the other day I was reading a poem by Giwargis Warda (13th century). In the midst of a description of the human body's seven powers, we read ܐܚܪܝܢ ܢܬܘܦܐ ܕܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ … ܐܦ ܕܢܚܘܪܐ ܕܬܘܣܦܬܐ "another is the absorption of food... also that which discharges that which is surplus" (Gignoux 1999, p. 128). Sokoloff's entry for ܢܬܘܦܐ gives the glosses "attractive; distilling" (p. 955). For the former definition, we are also given a Greek term, two references (Ephrem and Galen) and the following extra piece of information: "one of eight natural forces of the body". I will, therefore, need to add the following in the margin: "also, absorption (of food), Gignoux 1999:128; one of <u>seven</u> natural forces". Similarly, the entry for ܬܘܣܦܬܐ gives "addition; more numerous" (p. 1632). Again, my marginal note will read: "also, surplus, in rel. to bodily

discharges, Gignoux 1999:128". I am sure that all of us will make similar notes, just as we have done in the past with the previous lexicons.

I mention this because it remains a shame that there is no single designated person or group to whom we can all send new text editions and lexical notes, in order for an online record to be established and maintained. Both Sokoloff (p. xv) and Brock (2003, p. 178) have issued very clear calls for a systematic, coordinated and concerted effort to be made in this regard. The question is, will anyone heed these calls?

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Rana Sabbagh, Fayez Ayash, Janine Balty, Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, and Alain Desreumaux, *Le martyrion Saint-Jean dans la moyenne vallée de l'Euphrate: Fouilles de la Direction Générale des Antiquités à Nabgha au nord-est de Jarablus*. Documents d'archéologie syrienne XIII (Damascus: Ministère de la Culture: Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées, 2008). Pp. 54.

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One of the most problematic aspects in Syriac studies is the lack of an extensive, extant, and identifiable corpus of sites and structures, particularly given the number of such locations mentioned in various Syriac texts. Thus, every discovery carries with it the potential of providing confirmation of the physical context mentioned in the sources, but more importantly furthering our knowledge of the social and cultural world of the early Syriac churches. *Le martyrion Saint-Jean dans la moyenne vallée de l'Euphrate: Fouilles de la Direction Générale des Antiquités à Nabgha au nord-est de Jarablus* provides a brief and preliminary introduction to the salvage excavation of one room of a Syriac martyrion at the site of al-Nabgh al-Kebir in Syria. It is to be hoped that this report foreshadows a longer manuscript when more extensive excavations have been completed.

The focus of this brief book is a single mosaic floor which was unearthed by accident in the region of Jarablus. The mosaic consists of two connected and contemporary pavements, one of which includes a lengthy Syriac inscription. Since this excavation was undertaken as a salvage operation, the excavators were unable to extend the project further than the boundaries of the mosaic (7). Nevertheless, given the significance of this find to Syriac studies, the decision to publish these preliminary results is to be applauded, although the data might have been better published as an article or a preliminary report. The title is somewhat deceptive, since only one room has been unearthed as yet. The reference to a martyrion comes from the Syriac inscription, but in fact the complete context of this mosaic remains unknown. The book consists of four sections: a brief discussion of the context of the site; a very short section on the archaeological material found in conjunction with the mosaic (Rana Sabbagh and Fayez Ayash, 9–10); the analysis of the mosaic (Janine Balty, 11–22); and the analysis of the Syriac inscription (Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, and Alain Desreumaux,

23–28). These sections are followed by sixteen coloured plates detailing the ceramics, the mosaic, and the inscription.

The first of the short sections which make up this work details the finds located above the mosaic. It is clear from Sabbagh and Ayash, the authors of this section, that there was no undisturbed stratigraphy, since the ceramic assemblage involves twenty-two forms which range from the Hellenistic period to the Abbasid period (9). The publication of this material is thus of very limited value, and can only be used to suggest a possible lifespan for the habitation of the site. Only proper stratigraphical excavation of the entire site will provide evidence for the length and nature of occupation of this site.

In the second section, Balty introduces and describes the mosaic. Measuring 9.59 X 5.34 (to 5.37) m (11), this pavement is a remarkable find. The western half of the mosaic consists of a primarily geometrical design made up of octagons and hexagons surrounded by other geometrical forms. Each of the octagons contains a central geometric or figural motif. The eastern half of the mosaic consists of two registers with four small panels separated by vegetation. The mosaic is bounded on three sides by a patterned border while the fourth side (the easternmost side) consists of a two-part Syriac inscription divided by a step or the start of a staircase (11).

Balty's presentation of the mosaic is thorough, and she presents a strong case for dating the two mosaics as a unit. She dates them to the very end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth century based on stylistic analysis with comperanda in Syria and Palestine. According to Balty, the presence of animals and floral motifs in the large geometric mosaic, and the layout in the smaller eastern mosaic, dates it to at least at the end of the fourth century (13–17). She bases her analysis on other mosaics, some securely dated and others dated solely through stylistic relative chronology.

An important question addressed by Balty involves the evidence for iconoclastic or iconophobic activity. Several images were removed and carefully repaired by the Christian community associated with the church or complex. While Balty agrees with scholarship which suggests that this activity can be linked to the

Edict of Yazid II in the early eighth century,[1] she also indicates that the presence of iconoclastic activity in this mosaic widens the geographical scope of the discussion: "Mais jamais jusqu'ici, pareilles manifestations d'iconophobie n'avaient été découvertes hors d'Arabie et de Palestine—où elles ne sont d'ailleurs pas systématiques."(17). In fact, while the presence of this iconophobic or iconoclastic activity in inland Syria may be linked to the same activities elsewhere, it bears considering that not all of this activity is necessarily linked to the same cause. For example, official Byzantine Iconoclasm and the preferences of local clergy have been suggested as other possibilities.[2] Further excavation will hopefully clarify the dates of this particular iconoclastic activity, and add to the overall question of the causes of this activity in the region.

The final section of this book is an analysis of the Syriac inscription. Given the current lack of further contextual evidence for the structure that housed this mosaic, the Syriac inscription provides perhaps the most significant amount of historical data. Although missing its dating formula, the inscription indicates the names of the two abbots who oversaw the installation of the mosaic; two deacons of the church; the two mosaicists; and, perhaps most importantly, indicates that the structure was a martyrion dedicated to St. John. The inscription was done in two hands. Briquel Chatonnet and Desreumaux have provided a reconstruction of the dating formula which roughly corresponds to the stylistic dating evidence provided for the mosaic, placing the inscription in the earliest part of the fifth century. This date is confirmed by their palaeographic analysis, which situates the mosaic within the Edessan tradition but also suggests that the script contains transitional elements which indicate the shift from *estrangelo* to *serto* in the region (26–28). The publication of this inscription is extremely important, given that it is one of the earliest examples of a Syriac inscription in the region.

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[1] Balty relies heavily on the discussion in G.W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 91–111.

[2] See, for example, Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 203–204.

Overall, this short book does a valuable service in providing a brief, preliminary publication of one small part of a salvage excavation of a Syriac complex on the Syrian Euphrates. This structure provides a rare snapshot into the cultural milieu of the Syriac church in Syria in the late fourth or early fifth century. Indeed, more than anything, this chance find indicates the desperate need for increased scientific excavation of Syriac sites—and the subsequent excavations and publications of the martyrion of St. John will be of particular importance to Syriac studies.

Sebastian P. Brock, *The History of the Holy Mar Ma'in with a Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts*. Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation, 1. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008. ISBN 978-1-59333-222-8.

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This volume inaugurates the new series edited by Adam Becker and published by Gorgias Press which will make available in bilingual Syriac/English editions the Persian Martyr Acts composed from the fourth century to the Islamic period, recounting the persecutions of Christians at the hands of Sasanian authorities (224–651). While many of these texts have certain historical events at their core others are clearly descriptions of the heroic deeds of revered martyrs and confessors of a purely legendary or mythological character. This corpus of martyrologies has for the most part already been printed (the lion's share in the second and fourth volumes of P. Bedjan's *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*); however, *The History of the Holy Mar Ma'in* had never before been published in full. The launching of this exciting new series with this inaugural volume from Sebastian Brock therefore not only marks a fundamental contribution to the study of Syriac martyr acts but also another significant milestone in the publication and study of Syriac literature as a whole.

The *History of Ma'in* of Sinjar, a general under Shapur II (309–379) who would suffer as a confessor subsequent to his conversion to Christianity, had previously received significant scholarly attention only twice: in his *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880) G. Hoffmann had dedicated six pages to providing an annotated summary of the text, which was followed almost a century later by M. Fiey's 1971 *Le Muséon* article 'Ma'in, général de Sapor II, confesseur et évêque' (vol. 84: 437–53). In his comprehensive and concise 'Introduction' Brock succeeds in admirably advancing the state of scholarship on this text. Following a synopsis and outline of the text, Brock notes its 'literary pretensions', identifying key biblical allusions (e.g., IV Macc 6.10; Acts 8.36, 9.16) and literary models (e.g., the *Life of Abraham of Qidun*, as well as some 'general parallels' with the *Martyrdom of Qardagh*). The date and setting of composition, the *History*'s topography (including a map of the broader Mesopotamian region

relevant to the text) and chronology, as well as the text's historicity all receive thorough examination, and Brock is careful to note where his conclusions differ from that of previous scholarship (or, such as in his discussion of the text's date of composition, where his conclusions, despite being built upon differing interpretations of the evidence, nevertheless on the whole agree with previous studies).

The *History* is transmitted by only one manuscript, British Library Add. 12,174, dated to the late twelfth century and written in the monastery of Mar Barsaumo (a note at the end of the manuscript, indicating that it had been commissioned to fill a gap in the library's holdings, was written by Patriarch Michael the Great). Brock's edition reproduces the text in the manuscript while adding section numbers, resolving abbreviations and correcting obvious scribal errors; deviations from the manuscript are detailed in the apparatus. The text and translation appear in facing pages. The Syriac is printed in Estrangelā and the translation is eminently readable while remaining a faithful guide to the Syriac for novice readers. The detailed annotation clarifies and comments upon historical, prosopographical, linguistic, textual, and theological matters while making reference to significant scholarly studies as well as parallels in Syriac literature (both published and in manuscript).

A valuable appendix follows the index of names and biblical references. Brock's 'Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts' presents the entirety of the Syriac texts in a chronological arrangement headed by the reigning Sasanian monarch and makes reference to all previous printed editions and significant studies as well as the relevant ancient translations. This is followed by a concordance to Bedjan's AMS II and IV, a listing of the Syriac, Greek, Armenian, Sogdian, Arabic and Coptic manuscripts, the major Greek translations, and a bibliography preceded by a discussion of general guides, reference works and major ancient sources. Brock's 'Guide' is itself then followed by an Index covering all the Syriac Acts of Persian Martyrs in which personal names, biblical personal names, place names, and, all the names of Persian Martyrs appearing at the end of British Library Add. 12,150 (a manuscript copied in Edessa and dated to 411) as well as names preserved in Deir al-Surian Fragment 27 which are additional to F. Nau's edition of BL Add. 12,150 in PO 10.

This inaugural volume to Gorgias Press's new series of 'Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac' marks an auspicious beginning. The value of S. Brock's contribution to this series is far out of proportion to its modest size or price, and will no doubt be of interest to all students of Syriac Christianity as well as martyrdom in late antiquity, who will all find that its pages repay serious study.

M. Immerzeel, *Identity Puzzles. Medieval Christian Art in Syria and Lebanon.* Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 184 (Leuven; Peeters 2009) Pp. 325. Hardback

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A comprehensive study of the Christian Art of Syria and Lebanon is long-overdue and so this new book must be applauded for attempting the first complete overview of a field that has thus far been fragmented and lacking a holistic approach to the subject. For far too long Syrian and Lebanese frescoes and icons have been explored only in the context of the art of Asia Minor (in particular Cappadocia), Cyprus and Egypt and been relegated to a footnote of art historical scholarship as "provincial Byzantine" or "Crusader" art. Immerzeel does the monuments of the region a great service by placing them firmly centre stage and arguing for provincial workshops across the Levant that had their own iconographic and stylistic traditions that were confident enough to draw inspiration from other regions whilst remaining secure in their own Syrian identity.

The other issue with this subject has been that although we have had a series of monographs and articles on individual monuments or cycles (for example Erica Cruikshank Dodd's monograph on Deir Mar Musa al-Habashi, Matt Immerzeel and other members of the Paul Van Moorsel Centre publishing extensively on Deir Al-Surian in Wadi Natrun as well as on many other sites across Syria and Lebanon) this is the first time that anybody has sought to establish a corpus of Syrian Christian art. This is no small task and, as an inventory of all frescoes and medieval icons known at this time, this is an invaluable addition to anyone with even a passing interest in the field. It is extensively and gorgeously illustrated and the photographs alone are a mine of valuable information.

There is a clear and logical geographical arrangement of the material which makes it easy for the reader to compare and contrast the styles and iconographical preferences of different regions and to understand how these different workshops may have functioned individually and in collaboration with each other. On many levels this is a substantial and excellent guide to the Medieval Christian Art of Syria and Lebanon; however there is one crucial area in which this study is not wholly successful and the key

to this flaw lies in the title. In naming the book *Identity Puzzles* Immerzeel is clearly stating that his work will address issues of identity amongst the Christians of the region and, to some extent, disentangle the plethora of denominations that exist in the area. He also debates how far it is possible to link different styles of painting to different denominations and doctrinal beliefs. As he states in his introduction and first chapter this is a complex and, in many cases, impossible question to answer. Denominational borders are fluid and ever-changing and it would also be unrealistic to conclude that artists would be prepared only to work for one Church. This would have been financially unsustainable at the very least and it is untenable to presume that painters would have erected such rigid barriers unless the frescoes and MSS were carried out by monks, when on the contrary most evidence points to professional ateliers.

Therefore Immerzeel sets himself a task which is, with the current state of scholarship, impossible to answer comprehensively. He succeeds admirably in synthesising the material in general and identifying the sites which can be clearly linked to a particular denomination, something that is not particularly arduous in Syria given the relative paucity of material and the fact that the denominational boundaries are relatively well-defined there. The problems occur in Lebanon and on the Syrian coast where various groups have inhabited different regions at different times in history and the extra factor of Western, Crusader influences is added into the equation. Here Immerzeel can, for obvious and well-explained reasons, do little more than advance hypotheses based on language, fashion and style.

On balance this reviewer believes this to be a very good addition to the literature on the subject but has two reservations; the first is that this should have been edited with a little more care as the language is often clumsy (and in places slightly incorrect) for native English readers, but this is an exceptionally minor quibble! The other, more significant, concern is that this felt rather hastily produced and leads the reader to wonder if it would not have been better to have waited a little longer and produced a much more "finished" study. This very much reads as "work in progress" and is excellent as a statement of where the field has reached at this particular moment in time, but one very much hopes that Immerzeel will take the time to write a more extensive volume in the near future.

Edward M. Cook, *A Glossary of Targum Onkelos According to Alexander Sperber's Edition* (Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 6), E.J. Brill, Leiden, 2008; ISBN 978-90-04-14978-6; xxi, 310 pp. (€ 113.00 / US$ 162.00) [Also available, for the same price, as a digital edition in pdf format.]

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The last twenty years have seen the publication of a number of excellent new Aramaic dictionaries, such as Michael Sokoloff's dictionaries of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (1990),[1] Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (2002),[2] and Judean Aramaic (2003);[3] Abraham Tal's dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic (2000),[4] and Jacob Hoftijzer and Karel Jongeling's dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions (1995),[5] which includes Jewish epigraphic materials up to 300 CE. For linguists and other specialist scholars these dictionaries represent a revolution in our knowledge of the history and development of the Aramaic dialects, and of their regional varieties and idiosyncrasies, and provide us with tools that surpass anything previously published. But despite these advances, ordinary students and readers of texts written in Jewish Literary Aramaic, many of which were excluded from Sokoloff's dictionaries for obvious linguistic reasons (since it is considered neither a pure Babylonian nor Palestinian variety), are still required

[1] M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990; 2nd ed. 2002).

[2] M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

[3] M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003).

[4] A. Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* (2 vols.; HdO I.50; Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[5] J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions* (2nd ed., 2 vols.; HdO I.21; Leiden: Brill, 1995).

to fall back upon the dictionaries of Jastrow[6] or Levy[7] which are bulky, dated, and based on old editions of the texts. This new *Glossary of Targum Onkelos* by Edward Cook is thus to be warmly welcomed, as it offers the reader a handy and reliable one-volume glossary of all of the vocabulary of Onkelos—the most widely used Jewish Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch—found in the best currently available edition of the targum, that of Sperber,[8] in an easily usable format.

The glossary was generated from the Targum Module of Accordance,[9] for which Ed Cook was also the editor, which was itself created on the basis of files supplied by the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon.[10] The data was then re-checked against Sperber's edition (and this reviewer has not yet found any errors!). The entries within the glossary are arranged according to alphabetical order, rather than by roots, and provide the lemma, the part of speech, a simple gloss, an indication of whether or not it is a loanword, a list of biblical references if the word occurs ten times or fewer, and then finally cross-references to the same or related lexemes in dictionaries of other Aramaic dialects, such as those mentioned in the first paragraph, but also the standard dictionaries of Syriac,[11] Mandaic,[12] and Christian Palestinian Aramaic.[13] Personal names are not included in the glossary, but geographical names are listed on pp. 308–310. The entries are very generously and spaciously laid out, with rarely more than nine to the page, and they are printed in a large font size. This makes the glossary very

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[6] M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; London: Luzac; New York: G.P. Puttnam, 1903; and many reprints).

[7] J. Levy, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim und einen grossen Theil des rabbinischen Schriftthums* (3rd ed.; 2 vols.; Leipzig: Baumgärtner, 1881).

[8] A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic. Vol. I, The Pentateuch according to Targum Onkelos* (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

[9] http://www.accordancebible.com/about/articles/targ.php

[10] http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/

[11] Primarily, C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon syriacum* (2nd ed.; Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1928).

[12] E.S. Drower and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

[13] F. Schulthess, *Lexicon syropalaestinum* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1903).

uncluttered and easy on the eye, but also of course increases the length of the book.

The lemmas of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, interjections, etc., are provided with the supralinear vocalization found in Sperber. Verbs, however, are given only in their unvocalized root form, and this seems to me to be a minor defect, given the likely users of this volume. It would have been helpful for students if the vocalized forms of the verb forms used, whether ithpaal, aphel, or just peal, had been provided after the bare root.

The gloss for each entry is provided in English. The corresponding Hebrew terms in the Masoretic text, where there are such equivalents, are not provided. This is quite understandable, given the amount of extra work this would have demanded, although it would have been good to see them here. For these Hebrew equivalents readers will still need to use Chaim Kasovsky's *Otsar ha-Targum* (1940),[14] Emil Brederek's *Konkordanz zum Targum Onkelos* (1906),[15] or the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon.[16]

It is useful to have references to the biblical passages where less common Aramaic words are used, but perhaps this process could have been taken a little further. For example, the provision of a simple figure in brackets to indicate the number of occurrences of words used more than ten times, or even an appendix with a listing by frequency of the most common words? It is always tempting for reviewers retrospectively to suggest more work for colleagues who have already laboured for years to produce valuable publications, and such tables are not found in other equivalent glossaries, but this is data that could be easily generated by the software that is being used, and the popularity of vocabulary frequency lists among students of Biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek suggests that this might be a valued feature in any similar glossaries in the future. (There is no mention in the introduction of any planned glossary of, for example, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, but given the usefulness of this volume,

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[14] C.J. Kasovsky, אונקלוס לתרגום קונקורדנציא התרגום: אוצר (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1940).

[15] E. Brederek, *Konkordanz zum Targum Onkelos* (BZAW 9; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1906).

[16] http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/targumstartpage.html

perhaps Ed Cook or one of his graduates might be encouraged to produce one?)

The cross-referencing to related lexemes in other Aramaic dialects is perhaps a little unexpected in a glossary such as this. I know that I, and many colleagues, will find this a very convenient and labour-saving index to common Aramaic terms in the various dictionaries we use, but I wonder whether our students will ever make use of this data? Perhaps I am not doing them justice, and the best of them will go look up the entries in Sokoloff's dictionaries to see how the terms are used in other Jewish texts, but I suspect I may have to wait a while before they make use of Drower and Macuch's Mandaic dictionary (more's the pity!). So this cross-referencing is a useful addition to the tools available to scholars, but perhaps the provision of Hebrew equivalents would have been a better use of the considerable effort that must have been required for this work?

In reviews of books published by Brill (and indeed of many other well-known publishers) it has become something of a cliché to grumble about the price, and I am reluctant to repeat the same old groans, but in this particular case I see no way of avoiding it. Ed Cook's *Glossary of Targum Onkelos* is an absolutely essential purchase for all libraries with an interest in Jewish, Biblical, or Theological studies, and it is clearly going to become a standard tool for many of our students. However, whilst many of our libraries will find a means of paying, the price means that it is completely unaffordable for its main target user group, our students. And the digital copy, in pdf format, costs exactly the same as the paper copy. You do not have to be a prophet to see that unless Brill soon publishes a cheaper paperback student edition, or reprices its digital version, this volume is destined to be illegally reproduced by students in every library that owns a copy,[17] thus depriving the author of well-deserved royalties, and the publishing house of due profits, for a beautifully produced and extremely useful book.

[17] This reviewer clearly neither encourages nor endorses such illegal behaviour.

William H. Taylor, *Antioch and Canterbury: The Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of England, 1874–1928*. Gorgias Press, Piscataway, 2005. ISBN 1-59333-312-9. [2], ix, 135 pp. $76 [Luxury edition of 50 copies, ISBN 1-59333-235-1, $234]

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At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the Syrian Orthodox Church found itself and its people divided between two powerful empires, the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, and the British Empire in India. In the Ottoman system it had the limited advantages of being a recognised millet, and its Patriarch possessed an Imperial Firman recognising him as the official representative of his community and forbidding any others from interfering in his decisions concerning appointments or management of properties and endowments. But unlike the Syrian Catholics, Chaldeans, Maronites, and other uniate churches who were under the declared protection of France, and the Byzantine Orthodox churches who were under the protection of Russia, the Syrian Orthodox had no foreign supporters or sponsors, and so were disadvantaged both in the regular outbreaks of inter-communal fighting over the ownership of churches and other properties, and in obtaining funding for schools and similar projects. In British India, and those notionally independent parts of India under British 'protection', the Patriarch was accorded no special status, and although the colonial authorities in theory abjured any interference in religious affairs, the reality was often far different from this. In particular, since 1816 evangelical missionaries from the Church of England, belonging to the Church Missionary Society (CMS), had been actively working among the Christians of South India and attempting to reform them according to Protestant ideals, with the result that the local Syrian Orthodox community was split, with, from 1843, one part owing allegiance to the new pro-Reform metropolitan Mar Athanasius, and one part to the established pro-Antiochene metropolitan Mar Dionysius. This led to bitter disputes over jurisdiction and property which dragged through the Indian courts for the rest of the century, and unsurprisingly both the Anglican hierarchy in India and the civil

colonial authorities almost always gave support to the pro-Reform metropolitan and his successors.

It was in these circumstances that in 1874 Patriarch Peter III (in current Syrian Orthodox reckoning Peter IV) and Bishop Abdallah Sadadi of Jerusalem (later Patriarch Abdallah), travelled to London in an attempt to establish closer relations with the Church of England. The account of this voyage, and of subsequent similar contacts between Anglicans and Syrian Orthodox up to 1928, is the subject of this excellently researched monograph by William Taylor, which began life as a 1987 MPhil thesis at the University of Lancaster under the expert supervision of Chip Coakley, and which makes full use of key archival sources in the UK, such as the correspondence of the Archbishops of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace, and British Foreign Office files in the Public Records Office, as well as Syrian Orthodox accounts of these encounters published in Arabic. As such it makes a fine companion volume to Coakley's own larger-scale work, *The Church of the East and the Church of England. A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission* (Oxford: OUP, 1992).

But readers should beware that this is not a particularly cheerful or edifying tale! Patriarch Peter arrived in England in August 1874 looking for the equivalent of an Ottoman Firman recognising him as the head of the Syrian Orthodox community in India, as well as hoping for British government agreement to act as protectors of the Syrian Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire, and for the Church of England to finance his educational and printing initiatives. Unfortunately, although wise in the ways of Ottoman imperial politics and local inter-denominational rivalries, he had no experience or knowledge of the complexities of British politics and cultural attitudes, nor of the decentralised, disorganised, and doctrinally diverse nature of the Church of England. Consequently, like an infantryman in no-man's land, he found himself caught in vicious cross-fire, often without being able to determine who was firing at him, or why. For many in the nineteenth-century Church of England, the Patriarch was the head of a heretical and decadent church, to be condemned both for its christological doctrines and for its primitive and unreformed practices, whether the use in scripture and liturgy of an ancient language not understood by the people, or its many 'superstitious' rituals and customs. The evangelical protestant wing of the Church of England in particular,

both in England and in India, openly and fiercely attacked him, and rejected his claims for the jurisdiction of his metropolitan in India. Even the more moderate Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) refused to consider funding schools or printing because this would have been to support a church whose beliefs they opposed. At the same time, although the Patriarch had received official permission for his journey to London, the Armenians in Istanbul had since denounced him to the Ottoman authorities for seeking foreign interference in the empire, the Ottoman ambassador thus refused to give him any support, and the British Foreign Office was becoming increasingly jumpy about the consequences of his visit, and utterly opposed any idea of British support for his church which could yield them no possible advantage, and would only empoison Anglo-Ottoman relations which were of key importance for British regional interests.

After spending six months in England, Patriarch Peter left for Cairo and then India with very few of his ambitions fulfilled. Whilst civil authorities in India had been reprimanded for publicly favouring the pro-Reform metropolitan, the Anglican church authorities still clearly gave him their full support. The government refused to even consider intervening on behalf of the Syrian Orthodox within the Ottoman jurisdiction, and his political manoeuvring in London had clearly alienated potential sympathisers and allies, and had earned him the suspicion of the Ottoman authorities. Only within the realms of education and printing had he achieved some minor successes. He had made friends with a number of English families and clergy who promised him their support, and in March he had been granted an audience with Queen Victoria who clearly took to him, and asked to see him again. With the aid of these friends, and a generous donation from the Queen, the Syrian Patriarchate Educational Fund was established. This channelled some money towards Syrian Orthodox schools, and helped in the purchase of printing presses set up in the monastery of Dayr al-Za faran[1], but after a brief flurry of activity the Fund sank into desuetude, and was almost entirely forgotten by the Anglican authorities. In 1892 it paid for O.H. Parry's trip to Tur Abdin which led to the 1895 publication of his

[1] An account of this press and its publications is soon to be published by David Taylor and Jack Tannous.

Six Months in a Syrian Monastery—described, rather depressingly, by Taylor (p.72) as 'the most singular achievement' of the Fund.

Bishop Abdallah Sadadi (now known as Mar Gregorius) returned to England in late 1887, where he remained until late 1888, and so was present for the Lambeth Conference of 1888 at which Anglican bishops from around the world were gathered. This encounter sparked some interest in the idea of inter-communion between the two churches, though discussions moved at a snail-like pace. He returned for a third visit (now as Patriarch Ignatius Abdallah) in 1908, and on this occasion discussions went far further than before, though there was never any real prospect of intercommunion. The Patriarch was more than aware of the internal divisions of the Church of England and the problems they posed; 'I myself am most anxious for a rapprochement between the two churches, if it can be accomplished without the sacrifice of any vital doctrine. We are entirely at one with the High Church party, but the attitude of Low Churchmen is a great obstacle' (Taylor, p.98). In reality internal divisions within his own church were just as problematic, and it was the opinion of contemporary observers that he was unwilling to commit himself to any agreement for fear that opponents in India would seize upon his statements and use them against him. Discussions about intercommunion continued into the 1920s, but by then the political context of the Syrian Orthodox had changed dramatically, and the incentives for intercommunion were greatly reduced.

The third visitor around whose trips to London this book revolves is Afrem Barsoum, another future patriarch (and an impressive scholar), who came first in 1913 as a simple monk, and then in 1920 as the Metropolitan of Syria and the Syrian Orthodox envoy to the Paris Peace Conference, and finally in 1927. On each occasion he tried to gain financial and political support from the Church of England, but was constantly rebuffed. As he wrote to Randall Davidson, then Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1928; 'The ordinary expressions "I will try", and "I am sorry", and "I regret" intimidate me. I regret very much that our church cannot engage the attention of the Episcopal Church and my three missions in 1913, 1920, and 1927 have been unsuccessful' (Taylor, p.109). It is not surprising that the astute Barsoum realised that there was no advantage to be gained in the future from attempted alliances with European nations and churches, and so in the post-Ottoman world

he instead (especially after his elevation to the patriarchate in 1932) sought to link his church to the rising tide of Arab nationalism. This policy was arguably instrumental in gaining his church one of the longest periods of toleration and peace it had known in centuries, although it is now the subject of keen internal debate.

William Taylor's monograph *Antioch and Canterbury* neatly demonstrates the impact of international politics and internal faction-fighting on the relationship between the Church of England and the Syrian Orthodox Church over a key fifty-year period. It is a fascinating read, and impeccably documented, though not always very uplifting or encouraging! Repeated attempts at contact, on the initiative of both parties, ultimately yielded no substantial or lasting ecumenical results. The Anglicans were unwilling to provide any substantial financial support, and were incapable of delivering political support, and the Syrian Orthodox were unable publicly to compromise their doctrinal position. (The only positive note is that, almost by accident, it did inaugurate a period of Syrian Orthodox printing and publishing in the Middle East that became an important vehicle for education and identity-formation.) In our own age, after break-through doctrinal agreements between the Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox, it is to be hoped that a new generation of Anglican and Syrian Orthodox leaders will once again attempt to foster links between the two churches.

On a technical note, it should be noted that the book shows some signs of having been rushed through the final stages of preparation. In chapter I, footnotes 10 to 21 at the bottom of the page should be renumbered 9 to 20, in order to correspond to the relevant note numbers in the text. The list of abbreviations is not mentioned in the list of contents but is to be found after the bibliography, although not ordered alphabetically. The index is frankly a mess. 'Eastern Churches Committee' should go under E, not D; the only entry under G is 'Heber, Reginald'; Syrian bishops, Mar Athanasius, Mar Dionysius, etc, are lumped together under M; Queen Victoria is under Q, Sultan Mahmud under S, etc. There are many typographical errors; those which particularly caught my attention (or amused me!) are the following: on p. 63, n. 34, for 'See page 75', read 'See page 57'; Parry's description of Patriarch Peter, p. 75, as 'living day by day far removed ... from the softening influence of familiar intercourse with me', should read not the

conceited sounding 'me', but 'men'; on p. 107, line 22, for 'the Parish Conference', read 'the Paris Conference'; on p. 112, n. 87, for 'the Wet Syrian Church' read 'the West Syrian Church'; on p. 119, paragraph 2, line 2, for 'complicated a lot of', read 'complicated the lot of'. The many other slips should not cause too many problems for readers.

The luxury edition, limited to fifty copies and printed on high quality paper and in a red cloth binding, was produced to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the enthronement of the current Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwaz, which fell on the 14th September 2005. It has an extra page in which the Kiraz family dedicate the volume to this worthy successor to patriarchs Peter, Abdallah, and Afram, whose own ecumenical initiatives have been rewarded with incomparably greater success.

Christoph Baumer. *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006, xi + 328 pp; hardcover. $49.50.

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With its large format and dozens of stunning color images, it would be easy to mistake *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* as a mere "coffee table book." That label, however, would seriously underrate the book's merits and importance. For at a time when many people still conceive of Christianity as a religion of Europe and the Americas, Christoph Baumer has written a superb survey of a Christian community that once extended across large areas of Mesopotamia, Iran, the Persian Gulf, southern India, Central Asia, and China. Other recent monographs have surveyed parts of the Church of the East's history for a general audience, but none with the fullness and precision of this monograph, a translation of the original German version published in 2005.[1]

Baumer frames his work as an officially endorsed history of the Church of the East. A letter of appreciation and blessing from his Grace Mar Dinka IV, the Catholicos Patriarch of the Church of the East, opens the book, and the patriarch also appears with the author on the book's dust jacket. Fortunately, the author's sensitivity to the Church's modern image rarely overrides the rigor of his historical analysis. On the controversial issue of the Church's name, for instance, he notes that even the problematic label "Nestorian" is "not without honor" in the Church's own theology and literature (8). "Assyrian," the name favored in the modern Diaspora and used in the book's title, is equally awkward when used to describe a Christian community that stretched so far beyond northern Mesopotamia.

The book's first four chapters explore the genesis and early development of the Church of the East in Mesopotamia, western Iran, and India. Baumer cautiously reviews the tales of the Church's apostolic origins, variously attributed to the journeys of St. Thomas, Mar Addai, Mar Aggai, and Mar Mari. Few of these stories are attested before the sixth century, and one can easily be

[1] *Frühes Christentum zwischen Euphrat und Jangtse: eine Zeitreise entlang der Seidenstrasse zur Kirche des Ostens* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 2005).

skeptical about their historicity. The *Acts of St. Thomas* are much earlier, composed perhaps in Edessa ca. 200 CE, but its memorable vignettes of Thomas's mission in the land of "King Gondophares" reveal little familiarity with actual Indian place names and customs. Here, as often in the book, Baumer wisely sets to one side the murky issue of origins to focus on the indisputable evidence for the Church's growth by the end of late antiquity. The stone crosses with Middle Persian inscriptions erected on the Malabar Coast between the sixth and ninth centuries complement, for example, the testimony of the mid-sixth century Alexandrian merchant Cosmas Indicopleustes, who knew that the region's clergy were appointed "from Persia."

Chapters 5–6 explore the development of the Church of the East in its core territories of the Sasanian Empire (224–642). Baumer's summary of the Church's political history nicely captures the increasingly intimate yet perilous bonds that linked Christians to the Sasanian throne. East-Syrian chroniclers preserve numerous stories about the fierce competition for influence between Christian and non-Christian parties at court. By the reign of Khusro II (r. 590–628), Christians had risen to the highest levels of the court, but their power was fractured by the bitter struggle between East-Syrian (Nestorian) and West-Syrian (Miaphysite or Jacobite) factions. Non-specialists may find Baumer's account of these struggles overly dense with names and details, but his meticulous notes will usefully guide determined readers to the appropriate bibliography. His overview of the Church's spirituality includes valuable introductions to the topics of East-Syrian monasticism, mysticism, and the organization and symbolism of East-Syrian churches. Here, as elsewhere, Baumer enriches his account with numerous illustrations of archaeological finds, such as the desolate ruined churches of northern Iraq and the Tur Abdin region of southern Turkey.

Chapters 7–10 survey the history of the Church of the East under Islamic rule and the Church's extraordinary expansion across Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. Although many readers will have encountered bits and pieces of this story elsewhere, no previous book puts the pieces together so well. The evidence comes in an astonishing variety of forms: a Syriac chronicler's report about the bishop of Merv's humiliation of the Turkish shamans (169), Sogdian Christian inscriptions from the

borders of Tibet (175), Chinese Christian texts from Dunhuang (187), and cross-amulets from Inner Mongolia (196), to name a few examples. Contextualization of individual finds remains challenging, since the relevant literary sources are frustratingly thin. But the overall picture is clear: Nestorian Christians developed a significant and abiding presence in pockets all along the Silk Road, building churches and establishing monasteries in which they copied, translated, and composed an impressive range of Christian literature.

Christianity also gained many adherents among the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the northern steppe. Baumer estimates that one-third or more of the Turco-Mongolian tribes living between Lake Balkash (eastern Kazakhstan) and Manuchuria (northeastern China) were Nestorian Christians by the beginning of the thirteenth century (198). This may be a generous estimate, but there is ample documentation for the importance of Nestorians at the early Mongol courts—a situation that both surprised and appalled the Franciscan visitor William of Rubruck in 1254. Christianity was especially well rooted among the Mongol queens (*khatuns*), such as Sorqaqtani, daughter of the Kerait chieftain Toghril Khan and wife of Genghis Khan's son, Tolui. Many readers may be surprised to learn that the woman who gave birth to both Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan dynasty of China, and Hulagu, founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty of Iran, was a fervent Nestorian Christian. This could also be the area of Nestorian history most likely to yield new evidence as a result of growing archaeological research (and agricultural expansion) in Mongolia, western China, and Central Asia.[2]

The book's final chapters (10–12) examine the sobering history of the Church of the East since the age of European expansion. In India, the "Thomas Christians" of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts initially welcomed the arrival of the Portuguese as potential allies against their Muslim neighbors. Relations soured as the Portuguese clergy began to inveigh against the "heretical" traditions of the region's Christian community, which numbered around 30,000 families (ca. 150–200,000 people) in the early sixteenth

[2] Baumer has helped raise funds to support such archaeological research through the Society for the Exploration of Eurasia (www.exploration-eurasia.com).

century (236). At the notorious Council of Diamper in 1599, the clergy of Goa made bonfires from piles of local Syriac manuscripts. As Baumer laments: "thus the only branch of the Church of the East to escape Tamerlane's frenzy of destruction was annihilated by Europeans" (239). In demographic terms, however, the indigenous Christians of South India have triumphed: the seven and a half million "Thomas Christians" in Kerala today eclipse the population of all other branches of the Church combined (245).

Dialogue with the Catholic Church also reshaped the East-Syrian community of Iraq, which survived Tamerlane's massacres (or to be more precise, some survived) by retreating to the highlands of northern Mesopotamia. The defection of the Nestorian bishop of Cyprus to Rome in 1445 marks the beginning of the prolonged ecclesiastical struggle that eventually led to the formation of the modern Assyrian and Chaldean Churches. Baumer conscientiously reviews the stages of this convoluted process through which "the hierarchical line of the ancient Nestorian Church of the East has become Catholic, while the hierarchical line that was once united with Rome has returned to the East-Syrian creed" (251). His account of this "period of trials and tribulations" includes thought-provoking remarks on the impact of Protestant missionaries from England and America, the introduction of the printing press, and the genocide of 1915–1918—all topics worthy of further study. The "Renaissance" of Assyrian Christian culture in the Diaspora today offers an unsettling contrast to the continuing decline of the indigenous Christian communities of Iran, Iraq, and southeastern Turkey.

In brief, this book is a major achievement, an insightful and meticulously researched survey of more than 2000 years of Christian history. The general public and scholars alike will benefit from its breadth and erudition.