

# New Developments in the Textual Study of the Old Syriac Gospels

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In this paper I want to outline two major developments in the textual study of the Old Syriac Gospels:

- 1) The re-edition of the famous palimpsest manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels, Sinai Syriac 30, often known as Codex Sinaiticus Syriacus, with the aid of multi-spectral imaging.
- 2) The discovery and edition of a new fragmentary manuscript (F) of the Old Syriac Gospels, currently divided into two parts, Sinai Syriac New Finds 37 and 39, which is only the third known surviving manuscript of this version.

## *The Sinai Palimpsests Project*

My work on both of these texts was made possible through the Sinai Palimpsests Project (which ran from 2011 – 2017).<sup>1</sup> This was a collaborative project between St. Catherine's Monastery of the Sinai, Egypt, which is the custodian of the manuscripts, and whose dynamic librarian is Fr Justin of Sinai;<sup>2</sup> the Early Manuscripts Electronic Library (EMEL) of California,<sup>3</sup> directed by Prof. Michael Phelps, and with Prof. Claudia Rapp as the Project Scholarly Director; and the UCLA Library. The project was generously financed by grants from the Arcadia Trust.

Over the course of the five-year project, EMEL produced multi-spectral images of 74 of the palimpsests of St. Catherine's Monastery (approximately 6,800 pages), using a specially designed imaging rig commissioned by EMEL. Up to 33 images were produced for each side of every folio, using illumination in 12 wavelengths from UV (365nm) to IR (940nm), and producing images based on spectral reflectance and fluorescence. Images were also produced through transmission – that is, backlighting each folio so that light passes through thinner places in the parchment, and so reveals the original writing where the iron gall in the ink has eaten into the parchment, especially on the flesh side of the parchment. A smaller group of images was produced with raking light (at 15 degrees), which provides details of the surface structure and scribal rulings, but is not helpful for reading text. Software was then used to process and in some cases combine these images, in order to improve the legibility of the undertexts.<sup>4</sup>

A specialist team of scholars was asked to catalogue the materials produced by this project, and the images have now been made available to all scholars through the project website, although there are publication restrictions. I was not part of the original imaging or cataloguing team, but in 2015 I was asked to edit the Old Syriac materials and so was provided with all the necessary images.<sup>5</sup>

The resulting images are far clearer than any to which previous generations of scholars have

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://sinaipalimpsests.org> .

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.fatherjustinsblog.info> .

<sup>3</sup> See <http://emel-library.org> .

<sup>4</sup> My knowledge of the technologies used is entirely dependent upon the following published account: <http://sinaipalimpsests.org/technologies> . On this page images will be found of Sinai Syriac 30 in the imaging rig.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank Fr Justin of Sinai for his permission, on behalf of the Monastery of St. Catherine, to edit these Old Syriac texts; Michael Phelps for his generosity in making his project's images available to me before their publication, and for his subsequent help with technical issues; Sebastian Brock for encouraging me in this editing work, and discussing many details of the edition with me; and Maja Kominko of the Arcadia Trust for being so supportive and helpful at every stage.

had access, and yet the difficulties of editing these texts is still not negligible. The clearest images allow the undertext to be read with great ease, once the eyes adjust, but, in the case of the images of Sinaiticus, these are often precisely the folios which the earlier editors were able to read by natural light, and so in most cases only very few corrections need to be made on these sections of text. At the other extreme, images of some pages produced no legible text at all, or contain sections that remain illegible, often due to damage sustained in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (about which more later). Most images required far more work, and some took several days of study before all readable text was transcribed from a single page. Often the text can only be read by switching between multiple images, as various areas of a page responded well to different wavelengths of light or imaging techniques. When the transmissive or backlit imaging was successful, these images were particularly helpful, as they allowed characters and dots hidden under the ink of the upper text to be read, whereas the reflective and fluorescent images leave the overtext (and other stains and marks) superimposed on the undertext. Finally, and perhaps obviously, I soon discovered that it was always a good idea to check readings against the images taken in standard light – otherwise fly spots or other accretions or damage could easily be mistaken for an original scribal mark. On rare occasions, ironically, it was actually easier to read text from the colour images taken in standard light than from the other multi-spectral images.

Originally, I only intended to edit the new fragmentary manuscript (labelled F) of the Old Syriac Gospels, but as I checked its readings against the images of Sinaiticus I discovered again and again that the readings of our editions were not reliable, and so I undertook the re-edition of that text also. My editing work on F is now complete, and the manuscript of the edition will be submitted for publication in 2020. Sinaiticus (Sinai Syr. 30) has also been re-read throughout, though certain problematic sections that defied initial deciphering still need to be re-examined.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Outline history of the Syriac Gospel versions*

In a moment I will turn to the textual developments produced by this imaging and editing work, but first it seems sensible to provide a quick sketch of the history of development of the Syriac Gospel versions.

The Syriac New Testament version with which most people are familiar is the Peshitta.<sup>7</sup> This 22 book New Testament version<sup>8</sup> was produced by the early fifth-century, when it was in circulation on both sides of the Roman/Iranian frontier, and it was this version that was to become the standard Syriac version until the present day. It was given its name ‘Peshitta’, or ‘simple’ version, in the ninth-century by a Syrian Orthodox exegete, Moshe bar Kipho, who

<sup>6</sup> An edition of this text should be submitted for publication within a couple of years.

<sup>7</sup> The standard edition of the Peshitta Gospels, with Latin translation, is by Pusey, P.E., & Gwilliam, G.H., *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum juxta simplicem Syrorum versionem* (Oxford, 1901). The strengths and weaknesses of this edition are detailed in an important introduction by A. Juckel which was prefaced to the Gorgias Press (Piscataway, 2003) reprint of this volume, i\* - xiii\*. The Epistles are edited by Aland, B., & Juckel, A., *Das neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung* (4 vols.; Berlin, 1986-2002). Reliable English translations of the Peshitta books were produced for the first time in a series of volumes produced for the series ‘The Antioch Bible. The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation’ (ed. G.A. Kiraz & A. Juckel; Piscataway, 2012-2016), which are about to be reprinted in a single volume. There are up to 20 Syriac NT manuscripts which might be dated to the fifth century, 73 which might be of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and some 330 in total before the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. See Taylor, D.G.K., ‘Répertoire des manuscrits syriaques du Nouveau Testament’, in J.-C. Haelewyck (ed.), *Le Nouveau testament en syriaque* (Études syriaques 14; Paris, 2017), 291-313. For a helpful listing by A. Juckel of major variant readings in all the Peshitta New Testament books, see Féghali, P., & Juckel, A., (eds), *Le Nouveau Testament Syriaque. La Peshitta: Interlinéaire syriaque-arabe* (Sources syriaques 3; Antélias, 2010), 879-914.

<sup>8</sup> The Peshitta did not include the minor catholic epistles (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude) or Revelation.

wanted to distinguish it (and the completely unrelated Old Testament text) from the complex seventh-century Syriac translations of the Greek Bible produced by Syrian Orthodox refugees in Egypt (the Syro-Hexapla, and the Harklean New Testament). The Gospels were probably revised from the Old Syriac Gospels, with the help of contemporary Greek Gospel texts.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately the standard edition of the Peshitta Gospels published in 1901 by George Gwilliam, based on Phillip Pusey's collations, presents a majority text that often relegates the oldest readings to the apparatus, and does not include several important manuscripts, such as Codex Phillips 1388 in Berlin, which contain an earlier form of the Peshitta, with numerous Old Syriac readings.<sup>10</sup> It thus needs to be used with great caution.

So what can we say about pre-Peshitta gospels in Mesopotamia? There has been much speculation about the earliest form of the Gospel used by the churches in Mesopotamia, often based on minimal evidence, but it seems likely that they made use of Greek manuscripts of the Gospels, since that appears to have been the earliest local language of Christian epigraphy in centres such as Edessa and Nisibis, as also, arguably, of liturgy.<sup>11</sup> The Gospel harmony fragment (0212) from Dura Europos on the Euphrates, dated between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and 254, whatever its precise filiation, is unarguably written in Greek.<sup>12</sup> In the early fifth century Theodoret of Cyrhus (bp. 423–457, expelled after 449) famously claims<sup>13</sup> to have removed more than 200 copies of the Diatessaron Gospel harmony in his region of north-west Syria, close to Antioch, and to have replaced them with the separate Gospels. Although no indication is given of the language of these harmonies, they are most likely to have been written in Greek. Whether or not Greek Gospel harmonies were also in use in Mesopotamia, it appears that the earliest Syriac version of the Gospels in widespread local use was indeed a Gospel harmony, normally presumed by modern scholars to be that of Tatian, although the entire field of Diatessaron studies is currently in a state of turmoil, and so this attribution may change. No manuscript of the Syriac harmony survives, and so we are mostly dependent<sup>14</sup> for our knowledge of its structure and text on the mid-fourth-century *Commentary on the Gospel Harmony* by Ephrem of Nisibis (d.373).<sup>15</sup> Eighty per cent of this survives in Syriac, and all of

<sup>9</sup> Useful introductions include Metzger, B.M., *The Early Versions of the New Testament. Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford, 1977); and Williams, P.J., 'The Syriac Versions of the New Testament', in B.D. Ehrman & M.W. Holmes (eds), *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; NTTSD 42; Leiden, 2013), 143-166. See also the up-to-date survey articles in J.-C. Haelewyck, (ed.), *Le Nouveau testament en syriaque* (Études syriaques 14; Paris, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Codex Phillips 1388 was first collated by Allgeier, A., 'Cod. Phillips 1388 in Berlin und seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Pešitta', *Oriens Christianus* 29/III.7 (1932), 1-15. More reliable is Juckel, A., 'A Re-examination of Codex Phillips 1388', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 6:1 (2003).

<sup>11</sup> For an overview, see Taylor, D.G.K., 'The Coming of Christianity to Mesopotamia', in D. King, (ed.), *The Syriac World* (London, 2018), ch. 4, 68-87.

<sup>12</sup> See Kraeling, C. H., *A Greek Fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron from Dura*. (Studies and Documents 3; London, 1935); Baumstark, A., 'Das griechische 'Diatessaron'-Fragment von Dura-Europos', *Oriens Christianus* 32 (1935), 244-252; Parker, D.C., Taylor, D.G.K., & Goodacre, M., 'The Dura-Europos Gospel Harmony', in D.G.K. Taylor, (ed.), *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts* (Texts and Studies III.1; Birmingham, 1999), 192-228; Joosten, J., 'The Dura Parchment and the Diatessaron', *Vigiliae Christianae* 57:2 (2003), 159-175; Mills, I.N., 'The Wrong Harmony: Against the Diatessaronic Character of the Dura Parchment', in Crawford, M.R. & Zola, N.J., (eds), *The Gospel of Tatian: Exploring the Nature and Text of the Diatessaron* (London, 2019), 145-170.

<sup>13</sup> *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* I.20 (PG 83, 369–72); English translation in Pásztori-Kupán, I., *Theodoret of Cyrus* (The Early Church Fathers; London, 2006), 202.

<sup>14</sup> The relationship of the Arabic and Persian Gospel Harmonies to the early Syriac harmony remains disputed, and they are more important for what they tell us of the structure of the harmonies from which they were translated, than for the wording of that text.

<sup>15</sup> The surviving Syriac was edited by Leloir, L., (ed.), *S. Éphrem. Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque* (CBM 8; Dublin, 1963); Leloir, L., (ed.), *S. Éphrem. Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque: Folios Additionnels* (CBM 8a; Leuven/Paris, 1990); Valdivieso, P.O., 'Un nuevo fragmento siríaco del

it in Armenian translation, although both the Syriac and Armenian have textual pluses and minuses.<sup>16</sup> In this commentary Ephrem also occasionally cites the ‘Greek Gospel’, which has usually been taken to be a reference to the separate Gospels known to him through Syriac, although Matthew Crawford has recently argued that it literally refers to a Greek gospel text, and possibly that of Tatian.<sup>17</sup>

There is clearly a close textual relationship between the Syriac Gospel Harmony known to Ephrem and the separate Old Syriac Gospels, and it is usually (but not universally) presumed that the Old Syriac Gospel text derives from the harmony.<sup>18</sup> Until recently only two manuscripts of this Old Syriac version were known, the Curetonian manuscript (BL Add. 14451; Berlin Syr. 8; Deir al-Surian Syr. frag. 9), and the Sinai palimpsest (Sinai Syriac 30) known as Sinaiticus Syriacus.

The Curetonian manuscript was named for William Cureton the librarian at the British Museum who in the 1840s recognised it as a distinctive Gospel text while accessioning the vast numbers of Syriac manuscripts acquired by the British Museum from the Deir al-Surian, the Monastery of the Syrians, in the Wadi Natrun in Egypt.<sup>19</sup> Cureton printed the text in 1848 for private circulation,<sup>20</sup> and published it in 1858 with a translation, and some curious theories about it being the original text of the Gospels.<sup>21</sup> The standard (and reliable) critical edition is that of F.C. Burkitt (Cambridge, 1904).<sup>22</sup> It is a fifth-century manuscript, but it had already become damaged and lost many folios by the medieval period. When it was rebound in AD 1222<sup>23</sup>, and reconstituted as a complete Gospel manuscript, only 80 folios of Old Syriac text were still joined together, and so most of the textual gaps were roughly patched by the addition of 61 folios taken from damaged Peshitta Gospel manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> The remaining gaps were filled by

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Comentario de S. Efrén al Diatésaron (PPalau Rib. 2)’, SPap 5 (1966), 7-17 [reprinted in CBM 8a (1990), 145-157]. The Armenian text was also edited by Leloir, L., (ed.), *S.Éphrem. Commentaire de l’Évangile concordant, version arménienne* (CSCO 137; Louvain, 1953). Translations drawing upon both the Syriac text and the early Armenian translation were published by Leloir, L., *Éphrem de Nisibe: Commentaire de l’Évangile Concordant ou Diatessaron* (SC 121; Paris, 1966); and McCarthy, C., *Saint Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes* (JSSSup 2; Oxford, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> See Lange, C., *The Portrayal of Christ in the Syriac Commentary on the Diatessaron* (CSCO 616; Subs. 118; Leuven, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Crawford, M., ‘The Fourfold Gospel in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian’, *Hugoye* 18.1 (2015) 9-51.

<sup>18</sup> For an extremely useful survey of scholarship on the Old Syriac version see Haelewyck, J.-C., ‘Les vieilles versions syriaques des Évangiles’, in J.-C. Haelewyck (ed.), *Le Nouveau testament en syriaque* (Études syriaques 14; Paris, 2017), 67-113; an English translation was published as: ‘The Old Syriac Versions of the Gospels: A Status Quaestionis (from 1842 to the Present Day)’, *Bulletin de l’Académie Belge pour l’Étude des Langues Anciennes et Orientales* 8 (2019), 141-179.

<sup>19</sup> For an account of the acquisition of these manuscripts, see W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, vol. 3 (London, 1872), i-xxv.

<sup>20</sup> Cureton, W., *Quatuor Evangeliorum Syriace, recensionis antiquissimae, atque in Occidente adhuc ignotae quod superest: e codice vetustissimo Nitriensi eruit et vulgavit Guilielmus Cureton* (London: The Editor, 1848).

<sup>21</sup> Cureton, W., *Remains of a Very Ancient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac, hitherto Unknown in Europe* (London, 1858).

<sup>22</sup> Burkitt, F.C., *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe: The Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels, with the readings of the Sinai Palimpsest and the early Syriac Patristic evidence edited, collected and arranged* (2 vols.; Vol. I Text; Vol. II Introduction and Notes; Cambridge, 1904).

<sup>23</sup> A note recording this is found at the end of the manuscript, fol. 88a. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum, Acquired since the Year 1838*, vol. 1 (London, 1870), 74; and (with translation) Cureton, *Remains*, i.

<sup>24</sup> See Cureton, *Remains*, pp. ii-iii. These folios contained Mt 23.28-28.42 (8 fol.), Mt 28.42-Mk 6.49 (10 fol.), Mk 6.49-Lk 2.37 (19 fol.), Lk 2.10-3.13 (1 fol., with the superfluous Lk 2.10-37 crossed through), Lk 3.13-17.28 (23 fol.).

5 further folios which were copied from the Peshitta for this new composite manuscript, in the same hand as the record of rebinding.<sup>25</sup> Cureton found 2.5 additional Old Syriac folios from this manuscript in bindings and other places, and after his initial publication 4 additional folios were eventually traced (3 in Berlin and 1 in Deir al-Surian).<sup>26</sup> Even so, only 86.5 folios survive out of an original 180.<sup>27</sup> Notably, the Curetonian manuscript preserves the Gospels in the order Mt, Mk, Jn, Lk, which appears to be unique among extant Gospel manuscripts, although it is attested in other sources,<sup>28</sup> and David Parker has suggested that this was the order of the gospels in the exemplar of Codex Bezae (D 05),<sup>29</sup> which itself has the gospels in the ‘Western’ order Matthew, John, Mark, Luke.<sup>30</sup>

The second manuscript, codex Sinaiticus Syriacus, Sinai Syriac 30, is a late fourth-century palimpsest, and in older literature it was occasionally referred to as codex Lewisianus. This latter name was given in honour of the redoubtable Agnes Smith Lewis, who made the arduous journey to Sinai in 1892 with her sister, Margaret Dunlop Gibson, and photographed numerous Syriac manuscripts, including this one.<sup>31</sup> Back in Cambridge the undertext was identified as being a Gospel text related to that of the Curetonian manuscript, and this led to further expeditions to transcribe the barely legible undertext. I will talk more about this process in a moment. It contains 142 out of an original 166 folios, although a number of folios are effectively illegible. The Gospels are copied in the conventional order: Matthew, Mark, Luke,

<sup>25</sup> Fol. 12-15, containing Mt 8.23-10.31, and fol. 88 containing Lk 24.44-end Lk (itself a palimpsest folio, with the undertext containing the beginning of Peshitta Luke).

<sup>26</sup> The Berlin folios were used to bind Berlin Syr. 8 (formerly Ms. Orient. Quart. 528). See E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin 23; Berlin, 1899), 16-18. For online images, see: <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001435500000000>. They were edited by Roediger, E., ‘Über drei in der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin vorhandene Blätter zur Ergänzung der zu London im J. 1858 von William Cureton herausgegebenen Bruchstücke einer alten von der Peschitta verschiedenen syrischen Übersetzung der Evangelien’, *Monatsbericht der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (July 1872), 557-559, 1\*-6\*; reprinted by W. Wright, *Fragments of the Curetonian Gospels* (London, no date [1872]), 8 pp. For the folio that remained in Deir al-Surian see D. McConaughy, ‘A recently discovered folio of the Old Syriac (Sy<sup>c</sup>) text of Luke 16,13 – 17,1’, *Biblica* 68 (1987), pp. 85-88, [2 pl.]. For a formal description and recent photographs, see S.P. Brock and L. van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)*, (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 227; Leuven, 2014), 379, 625-626.

<sup>27</sup> It preserves the following verses: Matthew: 1.1 – 8.22; 10.32 – 23.25a; Mark: 16.17b – 20; John: 1.1 – 42a; 3.5b – 8.19a; 14.10b – 12a, 15b – 19a, 21b – 24a, 26b – 29a. Luke: 2.48b – 3.16a; 7.33b – 24.44a.

<sup>28</sup> Such as the Latin ‘Cheltenham List’ (‘Canon Mommsenianus’) of biblical books, originating in North Africa, ca. 360 see Erwin Preuschen, *Analecta: Kürzere texte zur Geschichte der Alten Kirche und des Kanons* (Leipzig, 1893), 138-140; and the Latin Gospel Commentary of Pseudo-Theophilus of Antioch (Gaul, ca. 500), see B.M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford, 1997), 231, 296, 311.

<sup>29</sup> D.C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text* (Cambridge, 1992), 110, 113. See also J. Chapman, ‘The Order of the Gospels in the Parent of Codex Bezae’, *ZNW* 6 (1905), 339-346.

<sup>30</sup> This order is also found in the Greek tradition in Codex Monacensis (X 033), the Washington Codex (W 032), possibly  $\mathfrak{P}^{45}$ , 055 and (possibly) 594, and the Old Latin manuscripts a b e f ff<sup>2</sup> q, and the Gothic version (see Parker, *Codex Bezae*, 116-117).

<sup>31</sup> For contemporary accounts of these expeditions see: Gibson, M.D., *How the Codex was Found, a Narrative of two Visits to Sinai from Mrs. Lewis's Journals, 1892-1893* (Cambridge, 1893); Lewis, A.S., *In the Shadow of Sinai. A Story of Travel and Research from 1895 to 1897* (Cambridge, 1898); Bensly, A.D., *Our Journey to Sinai: A Visit to the Convent of St. Catarina* (London, 1896). For more on the remarkable sisters Lewis and Gibson, see Whigham Price, A., *The Ladies of Castlebrae: A Story of Nineteenth-Century Travel and Research* (Gloucester, 1985); and Soskice, J.M., *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels* (London, 2009), which contains several important corrections to the account of Whigham Price. Also valuable is the recent biography of Rendel Harris which draws on many archival sources relating to Harris and Lewis: Falcetta, A., *The Daily Discoveries of a Bible Scholar and Manuscript Hunter: A Biography of James Rendel Harris (1852-1941)* (London, 2018), ch. 10.



- 1892: ('First visit'). The manuscript was photographed in Sinai in February by Lewis and Gibson, and in July the undertext was identified by R.L. Bensly and F.C. Burkitt as coming from a copy of the Old Syriac Gospels.<sup>38</sup>
- 1893: ('Second visit'.) First transcription of the Gospel text, at Sinai,<sup>39</sup> by Bensly, Burkitt, J.R. Harris (but not Lewis).<sup>40</sup> Lewis, however, was already applying a chemical reagent, 'hydrosulphide of ammonia', (NH<sub>4</sub>)HS, as "recommended to me by Mr. Scott, of the British Museum".<sup>41</sup> Lewis took new photographs of the manuscript.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See Lewis' introduction to R.L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, F.C. Burkitt, (eds.), *The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest* (Cambridge, 1894), v. Many of the folios were stuck together in 1892, and needed separating; six were separated using steam from a kettle (Introduction, vi; *How the Codex was Found*, 52-53; Lewis, 'Last gleanings from the Sinai Palimpsest', *Expositor* V.6 (1897), 112). Dirt covering the folios was removed by the monks after 1892, 'probably with a sponge' ('Last gleanings', 112). The sisters' published accounts of the identification by Bensly and Burkitt are less than flattering: see Lewis, *In the Shadow*, x-xii; Gibson, *How the Codex was Found*, 75-77. These were published after the 1893 expedition, when Burkitt and Bensly (and their wives) fell out with Lewis and Harris, who were clearly regarded as meddling amateurs, with the former most valuable for her experience as a traveller and her knowledge of modern Greek and the monks at Sinai. (Although without Lewis there would have been no initial transcription.) See the excellent, if rather one-sided, accounts of their various quarrels by Falcetta, *The Daily Discoveries*, ch. 10; and Soskice, *The Sisters of Sinai*. For a more hostile version that almost entirely excludes Lewis, see Bensly, A.D., *Our Journey to Sinai*, 12, 114-119, 157-158, 166; and Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, II.17: 'Mrs Lewis ... was also of the party'.

<sup>39</sup> Lewis distributed her 1892 photographs to the male scholars before their departure for Sinai (see Lewis, *In the Shadow*, xii-xiii), and so Burkitt was able to transcribe 30 pages even before their departure (Introduction, v). The scholars were not able to work on continuous sections of Gospel texts, since the re-used palimpsest pages had not been rebound in their original order, but instead they had to jump from one folio-long extract to the next, which greatly slowed down the work. During the 40 days in Sinai (8 February – 20 March 1893) a total of 223 pages (out of 284) were transcribed; 100 out of the first 104 pages by Harris; 69 by Burkitt, including the earlier 30, out of his assigned pages, 105-200; 27 by Bensly, plus another 27 together with Burkitt, out of the remaining 80; on their return Burkitt transcribed a further 18.5 pages from the new photographs: see Gibson, *How the Codex was Found*, 131; Lewis, *In the Shadow*, xiii, 95. Transcription from the photographs, rather than the manuscript, is indicated in the edition of 1894 by the transcriber's initials at the bottom of the page being placed in square brackets; see Lewis' introduction to R.L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, F.C. Burkitt, (eds.), *The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest* (Cambridge, 1894), vi. Bensly died two days after returning from Sinai, and so his pages were revised by Burkitt (see Lewis, A.S., *Some Pages of the Four Gospels Re-transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest with a Translation of the Whole Text* (London, 1896), ix).

<sup>40</sup> Lewis had only started to learn Syriac in 1891, in order to read the Apology of Aristides recently published by Harris from a Sinai manuscript: Harris, J.R., (ed.), *The Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians from a Syriac MS. Preserved on Mount Sinai* (Texts and Studies 1.1; Cambridge, 1891). She was taught by the Rev. R.H. Kennett (1864-1932), the University Lecturer in Aramaic, and later (1903-1932) the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge: see Lewis, *In the Shadow of Sinai*, iii. It was Harris' discovery, and talk of other Syriac manuscripts piled in chests, that inspired her to travel to Sinai: see Lewis, *In the Shadow*, iii.

<sup>41</sup> Edward John Long Scott (1840-1918), the Keeper of Manuscripts and Egerton Librarian at the British Museum. See Lewis' introduction to R.L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, F.C. Burkitt, (eds.), *The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest* (Cambridge, 1894), xx; Gibson, *How the Codex was Found*, 134-137. Lewis states that the reagent allowed them to add 'about a sixth more to the words which they were able to copy out' (Introduction, xx). This procedure was carried out with the permission of the monastery authorities, and the approval of all the scholars present (although Bensly initially objected). For Lewis' firm belief that the reagent did no long-term harm, see Lewis, 'Last gleanings', 113; Lewis, A.S. 'Our Sixth Visit to Mount Sinai', *The Expository Times* 17.9 (June 1906), [392-396], 396. I have not been able to find any published technical studies on the application of this chemical to manuscripts, but I note that Samuel Tregelles discussed the use of vapour of hydro-sulphate of ammonia more than thirty years earlier; see Tregelles, S.P., *Codex Zacynthius. Greek Palimpsest Fragments of the Gospel of Saint Luke, obtained in the Island of Zante* (London, 1861), xxii.

<sup>42</sup> See Burkitt, in the introduction to R.L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, F.C. Burkitt, (eds.), *The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest* (Cambridge, 1894), xxxix.

- 1894: Publication of the first edition, by Bensly, Harris, Burkitt (with an introduction by Lewis).<sup>43</sup> Approximately a fifth of the surviving Gospel palimpsest text remained illegible and so untranscribed.<sup>44</sup>
- 1895: ('Third visit'.) Lewis revisited Sinai, and transcribed further passages, again with the aid of ammonium hydrosulphide.<sup>45</sup>
- 1896: Lewis published her 1895 transcriptions of 98 pages that had defied earlier transcription, in a format that could be bound together with the 1894 edition.<sup>46</sup>
- 1897: ('Fourth visit'.) Lewis revisited Sinai, re-photographed the manuscript,<sup>47</sup> and published a small list of corrected readings.<sup>48</sup>
- 1902: ('Fifth visit'.) Lewis revisited Sinai, re-photographed the manuscript,<sup>49</sup> and rechecked some variants.<sup>50</sup>
- 1904: Publication of Burkitt's edition of the Old Syriac Gospels, based on the Curetonian manuscript,<sup>51</sup> which included about 300 passages where he disagreed with the readings in the editions of 1894 and 1896, based on his study of Lewis' photographs.<sup>52</sup> (50 of these corrections were in passages read originally by himself at Sinai.) This led to a flurry of critical articles by Lewis, and a further deterioration of their relationship<sup>53</sup> – although in her 1910 edition she tacitly adopted many of Burkitt's readings.

<sup>43</sup> R.L. Bensly, J. Rendel Harris, F.C. Burkitt, eds., *The Four Gospels in Syriac Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest*. With an introduction by A.S. Lewis. (Cambridge, 1894). Both Lewis (Introduction, xxiv), and Burkitt (Introduction, xxxix) had their Syriac checked and corrected by the Rev. R.H. Kennett, the University Lecturer in Aramaic, and Lewis' Syriac tutor. But it was Harris' work that needed the most repeated correction by Kennett: see Falcetta, *The Daily Discoveries*, 127 (based on letters from Lewis to Harris).

<sup>44</sup> See Lewis, *Some Pages of the Four Gospels Re-transcribed*, ix.

<sup>45</sup> See Lewis, *Some Pages of the Four Gospels Re-transcribed*, ix; Lewis, *In the Shadow*, 85. Pencil folio-numbering was also added by Lewis, with permission, in 1895: Lewis, *In the Shadow*, 85; for the slow pace of transcription, see page 93; for recent minor damage to the folios, see page 94.

<sup>46</sup> Lewis, A.S., *Some Pages of the Four Gospels Re-transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest with a Translation of the Whole Text* (London, 1896). The Syriac was read and corrected by the Rev. R.H. Kennett, and the Rev. Eberhard Nestle (Lewis, *Some Pages of the Four Gospels Re-transcribed*, xxiii).

<sup>47</sup> Bound copies of these photographs were deposited in Cambridge University Library; Westminster College, Cambridge; University Library, Halle; John Rylands' Library, Manchester; University of Birmingham (Rendel Harris' copy). Lantern slides were also prepared, apparently in late 1903; see A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.6 (March 1905), [249-253], 250. Copies of these were deposited in the university libraries of Heidelberg, St. Andrews, and Oxford: see Lewis, A.S., 'The text of the Sinai palimpsest', *Expositor* VIII.2 (1911), [1-15], 6.

<sup>48</sup> Lewis, 'Last gleanings from the Sinai Palimpsest', *Expositor* V.6 (1897), 111-119.

<sup>49</sup> See A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.6 (March 1905), [249-253], 250. These were later added to the photographs already deposited in Cambridge University Library.

<sup>50</sup> See Lewis 1910, iv.

<sup>51</sup> Burkitt had taken over Bensly's long-planned, but unwritten, new edition of the Curetonian Gospels upon the latter's death in 1893: see Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, I.vii-viii. This planned edition predated the discovery of the Sinai palimpsest, but Burkitt included a full critical apparatus comparing the two texts, and printed the text of the Sinai palimpsest when folios had been lost in the Curetonian manuscript. As he wrote (*Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, I.viii): 'In many ways it would have been more interesting to have printed S in full, with the variants of C in the notes', but the broken text of S initially available to him made it unsuitable as the running text of an edition, and so he was advised against it. He must also have been quite aware that Lewis would have been enraged were he to have published the Sinai palimpsest as his main text.

<sup>52</sup> See Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, Appendix III, 541-556; F.C. Burkitt, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.7 (April 1905), 304.

<sup>53</sup> Lewis challenged many of the proposed readings, and stated that she had been able to read the palimpsest in some 70 places where Burkitt had stated that it was illegible. See A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.6 (March 1905), 249-253; F.C. Burkitt, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.7 (April 1905), 304-306; A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 16.9 (June 1905), 427-428; A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelium da Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 17.8 (May 1906), 382-383 ('I stated in your issue for March 1905 that the passages where I should dispute Professor Burkitt's reading would amount

- 1906: ('Sixth visit'.) Lewis revisited Sinai in February, and rechecked some variants.<sup>54</sup>
- 1910: Publication of Lewis' edition of the Old Syriac Gospels. Appendix I contains approximately 500 passages where she disagrees with the readings of Burkitt, in two lists, the second added while the book was at press.<sup>55</sup>
- 1911: Arthur Hjelt examined the manuscript in Sinai, checking some of the readings contested between Lewis and Burkitt. He sent a report to Lewis, which she summarised and published in several articles:<sup>56</sup> 'In 133 passages he finds that I am right as against Dr. Burkitt; and in 21 others he thinks that my reading is possible. Those in which he finds Dr. Burkitt right as against me are seven in number; and those where his reading is possible, rather than mine, are 11. Seven of these, however, I dispute'. To the best of my knowledge, these changes were never noticed or used by New Testament textual-critics.
- 1928: A Finnish expedition travelled to Sinai, in late September, led by Hjelt, to photograph the manuscript. It was planned to take ultra-violet images, but unfortunately the special apparatus failed to work, and so ordinary photographs were taken.
- 1930: Hjelt published a clear photographic reproduction of the Sinai manuscript,<sup>57</sup> although this is rarely helpful for reading the undertext (except where small edge fragments are now lost).
- 2011: The Sinai Palimpsests Project began multi-spectral imaging of the palimpsest manuscripts.

This chronology has a certain interest in showing the stages by which an important ancient text slowly re-emerged, but it also hints at the ways in which the previous relative inaccessibility of the manuscript, and personal rivalries, affected the reliability of the critical edition we use. Let me give a few examples.

In 1893, Burkitt transcribed folio 107r (90v)<sup>58</sup> containing Lk 19.22-31. Like the rest of his colleagues on the expedition, he was overwhelmed by the amount of work he had been assigned, and the poor working conditions. They had to take turns working on the bound

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to eighty. My recent study of the manuscript has brought up the number to over three hundred.');

A.S. Lewis, 'The Sinai Palimpsest', *The Expository Times* 17.10 (July 1906), 479.

<sup>54</sup> Some words were also checked at this time by C.R. Gregory who traced various words at the request of Lewis. See A.S. Lewis, 'The Evangelium da Mepharreshe', *The Expository Times* 17.8 (May 1906), 382-383; Lewis 1910, iv.

<sup>55</sup> A.S. Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion Da-Mepharreshê; being the text of the Sinai or Syro-Antiochene Palimpsest, including the latest Additions and Emendations, with the Variants of the Curetonian Text, Corroborations from many other MSS., and a list of Quotations from Ancient Authors* (London, 1910). Appendix I, 271-300. Lewis wrote (p. 271) that the list contained 'more than 300 passages' where her reading differed, but then on pp. 294-299 she added a further list, compiled whilst her book was at press.

<sup>56</sup> She sent a detailed letter listing the readings to several journals: Lewis, 'The Text of the Sinai Palimpsest', *The Expositor* VIII.2 (1911), 1-15; 'The Sinaitic Syriac Gospels', *The Expository Times* 22 (July 1911), 477-480; see also 'Old Syriac Gospels', *The Athenaeum* 4364 (June 17, 1911), 688. For a clear discussion of Hjelt's report, and its significance, see: McHardy, W.D., 'Disputed Readings in the Sinaitic Syriac Palimpsest', *JTS* 45 (1944), 170-174. According to the archivist at Westminster College, Cambridge, the original copy of the report is no longer preserved there. A transcription of the report inserted by Lewis in a copy of her 1910 edition given to A. Mingana is to be found in the University of Birmingham. In 1913 Cambridge University Press issued 4 quarto leaves entitled: 'Additions and Emendations collected from the manuscript in 1897, 1902, and 1906' (see Hardy, p. 172). I have not seen a copy of these pages,

<sup>57</sup> Hjelt, A., *Syrus Sinaiticus* (Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1930).

<sup>58</sup> The first reference is to the folio number of the original Gospel manuscript, and the second to the later folio number within the reconstituted and over-written manuscript.

manuscript – until the old binding fell apart, and they could distribute the folios<sup>59</sup> – and they lacked any reading aids to try and decipher the undertext except sunlight. And so he and the other scholars usually only transcribed the text that they could read with some confidence. Therefore, when he came to Lk 19.29-30, his transcription, as published in 1894, contained a gap where he could not read the undertext, but he could see that this gap extended to a line and a half (see Fig. 1). (Each page of the manuscript is divided into two columns, usually of between 26-30 lines, and 2-4 words per line.)

The passage is the Lukan account of Christ and his disciples arriving at the Mount of Olives, and Jesus sending two of his disciples to go and find an ass for his entry into Jerusalem. The legible text in Sinaiticus in the 1894 edition reads: ‘He sent two of his disciples [... ..] to them, ‘Go to that village opposite...’ (compare: ἀπέστειλεν δύο τῶν μαθητῶν <sup>30</sup> λέγων ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν κατέναντι κώμην). When the 1910 edition was published, a single word ‘and he said’ (ܐܘܟܠܐ) was inserted after ‘his disciples’, and the following blank line was silently suppressed, no doubt because no known ancient witness had any expansion at this point.

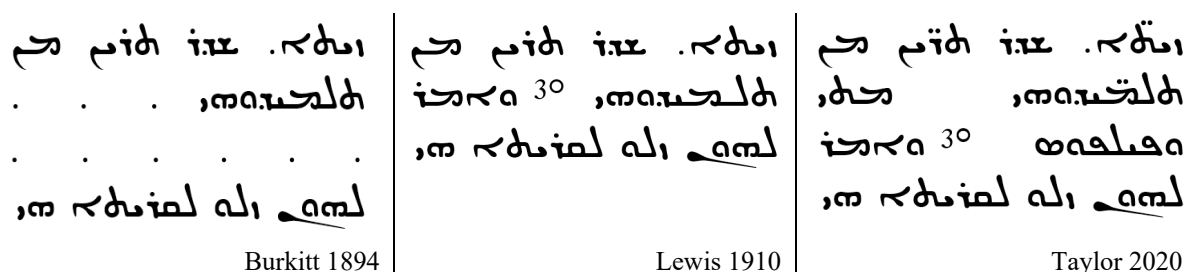


Fig. 1: Lk 19.29-30 in S

Using the new multispectral images, it is now possible to see that there were indeed words written before ‘and he said’ in the original gap, and that they provide the names of the two disciples who were sent: Matthew and Philip (ܡܡܘܨܬܐ, ܐܘܟܠܐ). This is not a variant that is listed in NA28 (and the names are not given in the synoptic parallels, Mt 21.1-2 and Mk 11.1-2), but the apparatus of the IGNTP edition of Luke records that a single 10<sup>th</sup>-century Greek manuscript, 1077 from Mount Athos, has the same reading, ματθαιον και φιλιππον.<sup>60</sup> At a stroke this reading has become six centuries older, but the nature of the link between the two witnesses remains unresolved.<sup>61</sup>

In other places, where the undertext is very difficult to read, the original transcribers mostly left blanks, and these were then steadily filled in by Lewis during her repeated trips to Sinai. Sometimes this was a successful process, sometimes less so. Let us take Jn 12.44. In the 1894 edition Bensly and Burkitt could read nothing in the first eleven lines of the second column of fol. 145v (106v), which includes Jn 12.44 (although the verse begins on the last line of the previous column), and so they simply printed dots to indicated the illegible lines. In the 1896

<sup>59</sup> See Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai*, 181.

<sup>60</sup> The American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP), *The New Testament in Greek: The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Oxford); *Part One: Chapters 1-12* (1984); *Part Two: Chapters 13-24* (1987).

<sup>61</sup> I have as yet found no trace of this reading in Syriac biblical or exegetical texts, nor in Greek exegetical texts. Ambrose’s commentary on Lk 19.29-30 states that the identity of the two disciples is not known, but a plausible candidate for one of them would be Philip: see Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* IX.7 (PL 15, col. 1795). Ambrose was heavily influenced by the exegesis of Origen, but I have not found this tradition in the latter’s surviving commentaries.









through the new images, but the great majority of the new readings are changes to individual words, or small groups of words. In the surviving text of John in Sinaiticus I recorded over 500 sets of major changes. Sometimes these were important textual variants, sometimes a noun or verb was changed with few consequences for our understanding of the base Greek text being used, sometimes just the orthography needed to be corrected. In a number of verses the consequence was that a non-standard verb form or an example of irregular syntax was removed and replaced with more expected forms. It has also been possible to add thousands of new punctuation points and plural markers, and to confirm large numbers of uncertain readings enclosed by Lewis within brackets. Most annoying was the occasional necessity to correct a reading recorded by Lewis, and to replace it with a form that must have been a scribal error, and then have to write in the apparatus that the incorrect reading of Lewis should be read as the correct reading of the Syriac exemplar from which the scribe of S was copying!<sup>87</sup> So the new edition that emerges from this work will not solve all the textual problems related to Sinai Syriac 30, Sinaiticus Syriacus, but it should provide a far more reliable basis for future study.

### *The new Fragmentary manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels*

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Sinai Palimpsests Project has also made available a further precious gift, a new fragmentary manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels. As is well known, the library at St Catherine's Monastery was relocated on several occasions over the centuries. In 1734 the majority of the books were moved out of the tower of St George into what was then the new library, but those no longer needed were sealed up in a room in the crypt of the tower and forgotten. A fire in the chapel of St. George and in the Old Sacristy in November 1971 led to restoration works in May 1975, and the rediscovery of the room and the remains of these manuscripts, which added an additional 1100 manuscripts (or 30%) to the monastery's manuscript holdings.<sup>88</sup> Famously, these included twelve new folios, plus fragments, of the Greek Codex Sinaiticus. But the new finds also included 110 Syriac manuscripts, and 79 fragments.<sup>89</sup> These Syriac new finds were catalogued by Mère Philothée du Sinaï, whose long-completed catalogue was eventually published in 2008.<sup>90</sup> To Mère Philothée goes the credit of being the first person to realise that two of these new Syriac manuscripts, now referred to as Sinai Syriac New Finds (NF) 37 and 39,<sup>91</sup> were palimpsests, and that their undertexts contain passages from the Old Syriac Gospels. From Syriac NF 37 she transcribed 4 lines of Matthew (Mt 15.12), and 6 lines of Luke (Lk 23.13b-14), and provided images of all 6 folios; and from Syriac NF 39 she transcribed 8 columns of text (Jn 9.8-32, 13.2b-30a), with a translation into French, and she also included a photograph of fol. 1r. This partial *editio princeps* drew the attention of Syriac scholars to this important find, and in 2016, using the multi-spectral images of the Sinai Palimpsests Project of which he was a key member, Sebastian Brock published an article in which he provided a scientific introduction to the manuscripts, and published the text of two further passages which include text not preserved elsewhere among the Old Syriac

<sup>87</sup> For example: Mt 2.9 Lewis 1910 ܘܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܗܘܢ (leg), S err ܘܠܗܘܢܘܢ; Mt 10.29 Lewis 1910 ܘܠܗܘܢ (leg), S err ܘܠܗܘܢܘܢ; Mt 11.12 Lewis 1910 ܘܠܗܘܢܘܢ (leg), S err ܘܠܗܘܢܘܢ.

<sup>88</sup> See Holy Monastery and Archdiocese of Sinai, *The New Finds of Sinai* (Athens, 1999).

<sup>89</sup> For an overview see Brock, S.P., 'The Syriac 'New Finds' at St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, and their significance', *The Harp* 27 (2011), 39-52. In addition to the catalogue of Mère Philothée du Sinaï below, see also: Brock, S.P., *Catalogue of Syriac Fragments (New Finds) in the Library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai* (Athens, 1995); Géhin, P., *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinaï et leurs Membra disjecta* (CSCO 665, Subsidia 136; Leuven, 2017).

<sup>90</sup> Philothée du Sinaï, *Nouveaux manuscrits syriaques du Sinaï* (Athens, 2008).

<sup>91</sup> Identified in the catalogue as manuscripts M37N and M39N; see Philothée du Sinaï, *Nouveaux manuscrits syriaques du Sinaï*, 405-421; 424-435.

witnesses (Mk 1.44-2.14 and Jn 1.39b-2.12a).<sup>92</sup> Building on these earlier publications, and with the aid of the new images, it has now been possible to produce a full critical edition of these fragments.<sup>93</sup>

Sinai Syriac NF 37 consists of 6 vellum folios, and the overtext (perhaps to be dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>94</sup> contains, in two columns, Evagrius Ponticus (d. 399), *Chapters on Prayer* (CPG 2452; chs. 24-119), in a new Syriac version, soon to be edited by Paul Géhin.<sup>95</sup> The undertext is written in two columns, in a clear estrangela script. Sinai Syriac NF 39 consists of 17.5 vellum folios, and its overtext (to be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>96</sup> contains the Syriac version of Diadochus of Photiki (d. ca. 486), *Hundred Chapters on Spiritual Perfection* (CPG 6106; chs. 8-99, with gaps).<sup>97</sup> Its undertext is also written in two columns, in a clear estrangela script. The overtexts of NF 37 and NF 39 are written in non-identical Syriac scripts (with NF 37 having, for example, some classic estrangela letter forms, whereas NF 39 has forms more typical of a later Melkite serto script). From surviving quire marks in the overtext of NF 39 it is certain that its folios come from the first three quires of a manuscript.<sup>98</sup> So, given the difference in script, and the approximate dates based on palaeography, and the fact that the later text of NF 39 is preserved from the beginning of a manuscript, NF 37 and NF 39 are almost certainly the remains of two separate manuscripts. Comparison of the undertexts reveals that they are written in the same distinctive hand (despite the contrary claims of the catalogue).<sup>99</sup> The undertexts of NF 37 and NF 39 contain passages also extant in Sinai Syriac 30 (Sinaiticus Syriacus), and so they are not folios taken from that manuscript. Several of the folios now divided between NF 37 and NF 39 were originally consecutive folios, with text that joins exactly.<sup>100</sup> It is certain then that the vellum folios reused in NF 37 and NF 39 originally came from the same manuscript, a third witness to the Old Syriac Gospels, which now contains 23.5 folios (some 7,478 words<sup>101</sup>), and which I have thus labelled as the Sinai Fragmentary manuscript (F). Folios were not numbered in ancient Syriac manuscripts, but analysis of the surviving quire marks in the undertext of F, and the logical positioning of other surviving bifolios within lost quires, suggests that the original Gospel text of F filled 15 quires and 150 folios. The surviving folios thus represent approximately 16% of the original folios and text.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Brock, S.P., ‘Two hitherto unattested passages of the Old Syriac Gospels in palimpsests from St Catherine’s Monastery, Sinai’, *Δελτίο Βιβλικῶν Μελετῶν* 31A (2016), 7-18.

<sup>93</sup> Taylor, D.G.K., *A New Fragmentary Manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels: Sinai Syriac New Finds 37 and 39* (forthcoming).

<sup>94</sup> So Brock, ‘Two hitherto unattested passages’, 8. Géhin suggests 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, see Géhin, *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinai*, 189-190.

<sup>95</sup> See Géhin, *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinai*, 189.

<sup>96</sup> Brock, ‘Two hitherto unattested passages’, 8; Géhin, *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinai*, 190.

<sup>97</sup> See Géhin, *Les manuscrits syriaques de parchemin du Sinai*, 190; Baumstark, A., *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 339.

<sup>98</sup> A quire is the booklet formed by placing a number of rectangular sheets or bifolia (in Syriac manuscripts usually 5 bifolia) on top of each other, and then folding them in half, so producing 10 folios or 20 pages. After the scribe has written his text within a quire, the quires are then sewn together to form a codex. To ensure that they are sewn together in the correct order, they are numbered with quire marks, usually in the lower margin.

<sup>99</sup> Philothée du Sinai, *Nouveaux manuscrits syriaques du Sinai*, 405-421; 424-435.

<sup>100</sup> For example NF 37 fol. 1v (ends Mt 15.32) and NF 39 fol. 9r (starts Mt 15.32); NF 39 fol. 6v (ends Lk 10.9) and NF 37 fol. 4r (starts Lk 10.9).

<sup>101</sup> This figure includes words of which only a few letters survive, but excludes words reconstructed in lacunae.

<sup>102</sup> In comparison, 142 folios of S survive from an original 17 quires and 164 folios (of which the Gospel text was written in 159), which represents 87% of the original manuscript (89% of the Gospel text). 86.5 folios of C survive from an original 18 quires and 180 folios (of which the Gospel text was written in 177), which represents 48% of the manuscript (49% of the Gospel text).

There is no surviving colophon, and so F (the undertext of NF 37 and NF 39) has to be dated on the basis of its script, a far from certain affair. Mère Philothée dated the undertext of NF 37 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, and that of NF 39 to the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>103</sup> Sebastian Brock considered both dates too optimistic, and instead suggested a sixth-century date.<sup>104</sup> The closest dated parallel to some of the distinctive features of the script that I could find was BL Add. 14425 of AD 464,<sup>105</sup> and so I would propose a date in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. The text itself preserves a number of archaic words such as the adverb *'aylkā* (ܐܝܠܟܐ), ‘where?’, only otherwise found in S; the far deictic demonstrative pronoun *hālok* (ܗܠܟܐ), ‘those’, found once in S, 9 times in C, and 9 times in a manuscript of the Syriac version of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* dated AD 462;<sup>106</sup> the noun *nessā* (ܢܥܣܐ), ‘sign, miracle’, found in S and C, and in Aphrahat, and in BL Add. 12150 of AD 411; and the adverb *'od* (ܐܘܕ), ‘therefore, indeed’, which is found in S and BL Add. 12150, but occurrences of which in C and in manuscripts of Aphrahat have all been erased.<sup>107</sup> These features mostly relate to the antiquity of F’s exemplar, but the fact that these forms have not been corrected also supports the date I have suggested.

Gospel verses preserved in F:<sup>108</sup>

Matthew: 15.4b – 16.20; 19.28 – 21.21; 27.35 – 64.  
 Mark: 1.32 – 2.14; 6.3 – 52; 10.47 – 11.22.  
 Luke: 1.50b – 55, 59 – 65, 68 – 74a, 78 – 80; 6.23 – 48; 7.21 – 43; 9.47 – 10.31;  
 12.27 – 14.25; 18.31 – 19.47; 23.8 – 36.  
 John: 1.39 – 2.12; 9.8 – 32; 13.2 – 30.

Gospel verses preserved in F but not in S or C:

Mark: 1.44b – 2.14; 6.3 – 5a.  
 John: 1.47 – 2.1.

The fragmentary nature of the text can be seen from this listing of its contents, but given that we only have two other Old Syriac Gospel manuscripts, its survival is of great importance. Most of the new text is also witnessed in either S or C, but three short passages are attested here in the Old Syriac version for the first time: Mk 1.44b – 2.14 (the account of the paralysed man lowered from the roof, and the call of Levi); Mk 6.3 – 5a (a prophet without honour in his own country); and Jn 1.47 – 2.1 (the wedding at Cana).<sup>109</sup> It will be noted that the Gospels are listed in the standard canonical order. Although none of the surviving folios preserves the start or end of a gospel, there are four legible quire markers on the folios,<sup>110</sup> and these confirm that the Gospels were copied in the standard order, as in Sinaiticus, and not in the order found in the Curetonian manuscript. There are no headers at the top of the pages naming the Gospel

<sup>103</sup> Philothée du Sinaï, *Nouveaux manuscrits syriaques du Sinaï*, 405; 425.

<sup>104</sup> See Brock, ‘Two hitherto unattested passages’, 8.

<sup>105</sup> See Hatch, W.H.P., *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston, 1946), pl. IV.

<sup>106</sup> St Petersburg, Nat. Lib., Syr. n.s. 1 (AD 462), edited by Wright, W. and McLean, N., *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius in Syriac edited from the Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1898), where it is relegated to the apparatus until the end of book V.

<sup>107</sup> Detailed discussions of distinctive lexical and orthographic forms in F are presented in my forthcoming edition.

<sup>108</sup> Damage to some of the vellum folios means that a few verses within the ranges indicated are in fact heavily damaged or lost: Mt 15.14-17, 20-24; Mk 11.12; Lk 7.28, 34-35; 23.16-19, 24-26.

<sup>109</sup> For the first and third of these, see Brock, ‘Two hitherto unattested passages’.

<sup>110</sup> These are: 4 (ܐ) on NF 39 fol. 11r, the start of a quire beginning Mt 27.35; 5 (ܐ) on NF 39 fol. 14v, the end of a quire ending Mk 6.25a; 5 (ܐ) on NF 39 fol. 7v, the start of a quire beginning Mk 6.25b; 8 (ܐ) on NF 39 fol. 5v, the end of a quire ending Lk 6.48. The sharp-eyed will notice that F has a rare system of quire marking known as ‘mirror signing’, which appears to be restricted to Melkite (Byzantine Orthodox) Syriac scribes.



(ἰαωκθ / κιυθ). The plural readings in F seem to have been influenced by Mt 18.18 where Jesus was addressing his disciples in general: ‘Whatever you bind (δήσητε; S C P ἰαωκθ) on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose (λύσητε; S C P κιυθ) on earth shall be loosed in heaven’. To the best of my knowledge this harmonisation is not found in any other witnesses, and it is surely not an accidental change in this particular context.

As a final example, I would like to look at a verse that has been much discussed by New Testament text-critics in recent years, Mk 1.41.<sup>119</sup> The episode at issue is one in which a leper comes and falls at Jesus’ feet and says, ‘If you will, you are able to cleanse me!’. Jesus touches him, and says ‘I will, be cleansed’, and immediately the leprosy leaves him. Before touching him, Jesus is said in Mk 1.41 to have been emotionally moved: all but one of the Greek witnesses say that he was ‘feeling compassion’ (σπλαγχνισθείς), and this is followed in the Syriac tradition by S (C is not extant) and the Peshitta (both read: ܣܘܠܟ ܩܘܝܬܝܟ, ‘he had compassion on him’), and by the great majority of the Latin witnesses, and by all other versions. A single Greek witness, Codex Bezae (D), reads ‘feeling anger’ (ὀργισθείς), and so also a small number of Old Latin witnesses (a ff<sup>2</sup> r<sup>1</sup> and d - the Latin column of D) which read *iratus*. Such stark alternative readings, with important implications for Mark’s portrayal of Christ’s character, have inevitably led to extensive debate about which of the two is most likely to have been the original reading in Mk 1.4. The questions raised are predictable: it is easy to understand why an original reading ὀργισθείς might have been changed by an early scribe to σπλαγχνισθείς, but is it likely that σπλαγχνισθείς could have been changed to ὀργισθείς, except by a copying error? Is such a copying error plausible? The synoptic parallels, Mt 8.3 and Lk 5.13, make no mention of Jesus feeling any emotion; is this evidence that they suppressed the unpalatable reference to Jesus being angry that they found in Mark? The reading ‘feeling compassion’ is supported by a diverse range of evidence, whereas the reading ‘feeling anger’ is attested only in Latin witnesses and in one bilingual Greek-Latin manuscript, so perhaps the reading is of Latin origin?

A constant fly in the ointment for those arguing for σπλαγχνισθείς, and even more so for those attempting to argue that the reading ὀργισθείς is of Latin origin, is the exegesis of this episode in Ephrem’s *Commentary on the Gospel Harmony* (CGH XII.21-24).<sup>120</sup> In an extended section he attempts to make sense of a Gospel text that clearly, in the form that he knew it, had both descriptions of Jesus’ emotions: according to this text he was feeling both compassion and

<sup>119</sup> See, for example: Proctor, M.A., ‘The “Western” Text of Mark 1:41: A Case for the Angry Jesus’ (Ph.D. diss.; Baylor University, 1999); Ehrman, B.D., ‘A Leper in the Hands of an Angry Jesus’, in A.M. Donaldson and T.B. Sailors, (eds), *New Testament Greek and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Gerald F. Hawthorne* (Grand Rapids, 2003), 77-98 [repr. in Ehrman, B.D., *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS 33; Leiden, 2006), 120-141]; Baarda, T., ‘Mk 1.41: ὀργισθείς. A Reading Attested for Mar Ephraem, the Diatessaron, or Tatian’, *ZNW* 103 (2012), 291-295; Williams, P.J., ‘An Examination of Ehrman’s Case for ὀργισθείς in Mark 1:41’, *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012), 1-12; Haelewyck, J.-C., ‘The Healing of a Leper (Mark 1,40-45). A Textual Commentary’, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 89.1 (2013), 15-36; Lorenz, P.E., ‘Counting witnesses for the angry Jesus in Mark 1:41. Interdependence and insularity in the Latin tradition’, *Tyndale Bulletin* 67.2 (2016), 183-216; Johnson, N.C., ‘Anger Issues: Mark 1.41 in Ephrem the Syrian, the Old Latin Gospels and Codex Bezae’, *New Testament Studies* 63.2 (2017), 183-202.

<sup>120</sup> Leloir, L., *Saint Éphrem. Commentaire de l’Évangile Concordant: texte syriaque (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709)* (Chester Beatty Monographs 8; Dublin, 1963), 94-101 [Syriac text, Latin translation]; Leloir, L., *Saint Éphrem. Commentaire de l’Évangile concordant: version arménienne* (CSCO 137; Louvain, 1953 [Armenian text]), 172-175; (CSCO 145; Louvain, 1954 [Latin translation]), 125-127; Leloir, L., *Éphrem de Nisibe. Commentaire de l’Évangile concordant ou Diatessaron traduit du syriaque et de l’arménien* (Sources chrétiennes 121; Paris, 1966), 226-229; McCarthy, C., *Saint Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes* (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2; Oxford, 1993), 201-204;





exegetical texts without fully understanding the exegetical techniques and practices of the exegete concerned.

The discussion of further new readings will have to await the appearance of the edition.<sup>131</sup> This contains a transcription of the text of F in its original folios, columns, and lines, in estrangela script, to enable other scholars to check the readings presented. Another section presents the text in continuous verses, and is printed in unvocalised sereto script, which I suspect is more familiar to many Syriac readers who primarily work on the New Testament. On the facing page is an English translation. There are several apparatuses at the foot of the page. One records all the variant readings between F, S, and C (and there is also an English translation of this apparatus), and of course the readings of S are from the re-read text. Another apparatus collates the early Syriac tradition (that is, the three Old Syriac manuscripts and the Peshitta) against the Greek text of NA28. This latter is a Syriac-centred apparatus, in that it seeks to record all and any disagreements of the Syriac witnesses with the Greek of NA28, and to record the Greek and Latin witnesses (if any) that reflect similar readings. It is not an attempt to correct the Greek text, it is an attempt to understand the Syriac texts as translations of the Greek, and such an apparatus has long been needed. For readers of the Syriac New Testament (whether scholars or members of the modern churches of Syriac liturgical tradition), most critical Greek editions are very frustrating, since they only cite the Syriac in the apparatus in support of existing Greek variants, and thus ignore many interesting readings in the Syriac that deviate from the Greek, and fail to explain them. Again, Greek readings that are unlikely to reflect the earliest Greek text are often excluded from the apparatus of editions such as NA28, even though they may be the source of readings in the versions. This is understandable and perfectly reasonable, but not helpful for readers of the versions. At the practical level, I am aware that many students of the Greek New Testament have limited Syriac, and many Syriac readers have limited Greek, and so in the apparatus in my edition all key readings in both languages are glossed into English. No doubt errors will have crept in, but as Lewis wrote at the beginning of her appendix containing corrections to Burkitt's edition,<sup>132</sup> 'Chi non falla non fa'.

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<sup>131</sup> Taylor, D.G.K., *A New Fragmentary Manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels: Sinai Syriac New Finds 37 and 39* (forthcoming).

<sup>132</sup> Lewis 1910, 271.