



**Keywords:** Dionysius bar Ṣalībī; Obadiah; Jonah; Nahum; Syriac; Haggai; English translation.

**Resumen:** En este trabajo presentamos la edición crítica de seis comentarios de Dioniso bar Ṣalībī (d. 1171) escritos en siriaco con su traducción en inglés. Estos comentarios son los comentarios literarios y espirituales de Dioniso bar Ṣalībī sobre Abdías, Jonás y Nahúm. Este particular grupo de comentarios ha sido seleccionado por su extensión y por tener una temática similar siendo libros proféticos que hacen referencia especialmente a la nación de los Gentiles. El propio Bar Ṣalībī los agrupó en su explicación literaria de los profetas Haggai donde ordena a los doce profetas en categorías. Abdías, Jonás y Nahúm conforman una categoría, la de las “profecías sobre las Naciones”.

**Palabras clave:** Dioniso bar Ṣalībī; Abdías; Jonás; Nahúm; Siriaco; Haggai; Traducción al inglés.



### *The life and career of Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*

Jacob bar Ṣalībī (ܝܫܘܥ ܒܪ ܫܠܝܒܝ) was born in Melitene (Malatia,<sup>2</sup> Malatya,<sup>3</sup> Malatiah<sup>4</sup>) in the early 12th century.<sup>5</sup> He was an adherent of the Syriac Orthodox Church.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*. Edited and translated by Watson Boyes (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1930), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Herman Teule, “It is Not Right to Call Ourselves Orthodox and the Others Heretics: Ecumenical Attitudes in the Jacobite Church in the Time of the Crusades” in K.Ciggaar & Herman Teule (ed.), *East and West in the Crusader States*, vol. 2, col. «Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta» 92 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1894), p. 246.

In 1153 Jacob, a deacon<sup>7</sup> at the time, found himself censured by Patriarch Athanasius VIII for having written against John, bishop of Mardin, in a treatise entitled *On the Providence of God* which took issue with a theodicy John had presented which attempted to distance God from involvement in Edessa's fall in 1144 to 'Imad al-din Zangi.<sup>8</sup> Bar Ṣalībī appealed to a synod to lift the censure, this is probably what prompted Patriarch Athanasius VIII to read Bar Ṣalībī's treatise for himself. The treatise impressed Athanasius<sup>9</sup> who then removed the censure and made him bishop of Mar'as<sup>10</sup> (Germaneia,<sup>11</sup> Germanicia<sup>12</sup>) in 1154 which occasioned Jacob bar Ṣalībī to adopt his better known name: Dionysius<sup>13</sup> (ܕܝܘܢܝܨܝܘܨ). A year later at a synod held in the monastery of Bar Sauma<sup>14</sup> his bishopric was expanded to include Mabbug (Mabbogh,<sup>15</sup> Hierapolis, Membij,<sup>16</sup> Manbij<sup>17</sup>). He held this

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Desmond Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2001), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Other names scholars have used to refer to this ecclesiastic structure and the communities that adhere to it include; Syrian Orthodox Church, Jacobite Church, West Syrians, and Monophysites; cf. e.g. Dionysius Bar Salibi, *A Critical Appraisal of the Commentaries of Dionysius bar Ṣalībī on Galatians and James*. Edited and translated by A. T. Stevens (MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1975), p. 11; Christopher Hatch Macevitt, *Creating Christian Identities: Crusaders and Local Communities in the Levant, 1097-1187*, (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2002), pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: A Critical Edition*, vol. 1. Edited and translated by Stephen Paul Swinn (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Modern day Kahramanmaras.

<sup>11</sup> H. Teule, "It is Not Right to Call Ourselves Orthodox and the Others Heretics", p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Rifaat Ebied, "Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī's Works in the Mingana Collection of Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts, with Special Emphasis on His Polemic Treatise 'Against the Muslims'", *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 8 (2011), p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Treatise of Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī "Against the Jews," a Translation and Commentary*. Edited and Translated by Richard Hubbard (PhD diss., Duke University, 1964), p. 3.

expanded post until 1167 when his bishopric was transferred to the oversight of Amida<sup>18</sup> (Amadia, Imadiyah,<sup>19</sup> Diyarbakir,<sup>20</sup> Diarbakir)<sup>21</sup> where he died on the 2nd of November, 1171.<sup>22</sup> He was a prolific author in the Syriac language who wrote poetry,<sup>23</sup> letters,<sup>24</sup> commentaries on works of various Church Fathers,<sup>25</sup> polemics,<sup>26</sup> philosophy,<sup>27</sup> liturgical texts, canon law, science,<sup>28</sup> history,<sup>29</sup> homilies, and biblical commentaries.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol 1, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> H. Teule, “It is Not Right to Call Ourselves Orthodox and the Others Heretics”, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary*. Edited and translated by Marcus Nathan Adler (London: Philipp Fedheim, Inc., New York, 1907), p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol 1, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> H. Teule, “It is Not Right to Call Ourselves Orthodox and the Others Heretics”, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p.14.

<sup>23</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p.11.

<sup>24</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> R. Ebied, “Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī's Works in the Mingana Collection of Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts”, pp. 53-57.

<sup>27</sup> Edward C.V. Petch, *A Critical Edition and Translation of Dionysius Bar-Salibi's Commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations* (PhD diss., University of Sydney, 2004), p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> R. Ebied, “Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī's Works in the Mingana Collection of Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts”, pp. 60-62.

<sup>29</sup> David Thomas & Alex Mallett *et al.* (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 665.

<sup>30</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *A Critical Edition and Translation of Dionysius Bar-Salibi's Commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 4.

*The Commentaries on the Old Testament*

Bar Ṣalībī indicates that the biblical commentaries were written by request in an introduction to his commentaries where he addresses a certain “brother” who he says “didst desire that I should compile this”.<sup>31</sup> This “brother”, he says, desired “that I should pay more particular attention at first to the literal exposition and immediately afterwards to write about the spiritual” and to do so clearly and concisely.<sup>32</sup> This request, along with the encouragement of others,<sup>33</sup> spurring Bar Ṣalībī on to complete his project, partially explains the causes behind writing the commentaries and the rationale for the style and form of their contents. As well as wishing to satisfy the demand for such work Bar Ṣalībī explains a very practical purpose which his commentaries were supposed to meet viz. accommodating the busyness of life. Bar Ṣalībī writes in his introduction that in his day it was impossible for someone to endure carrying out all their worldly tasks and to also properly study and profit from the “comments of the ancients”.<sup>34</sup> He goes on to state “even if it is possible for one to investigate and acquire a single commentator or expositor, the diffusiveness of the word and its subtlety destroys the meaning, and also the knowledge that is sought”.<sup>35</sup> We thus see that Bar Ṣalībī saw prolixity in commentaries as a significant barrier for the reader to gaining spiritual benefit from the Scriptures if concurrently weighed down by the demands of secular learning and business. He accordingly planned to remedy this by providing commentaries that present the “comments of the ancients” in a convenient, streamlined, accessible form.

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<sup>31</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>33</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 54.

<sup>34</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 55.

The original layout of Bar Ṣalībī’s commentaries on the Old Testament usually presents two columns per page,<sup>36</sup> sometimes more.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the more common two-column layout typically the literal (مفسر) commentary was written in the column closer to the center of the book when opened, while the spiritual (تفسیر) or mixed (مفسر) commentary was placed closer to the outer edges of the spread.

The bifurcation of the page layout is a manifestation of Bar Ṣalībī’s own understanding and exegesis of Scripture in which he endeavoured to elucidate Scripture according to two different rubrics viz. literal and spiritual. However, despite the clear distinction between spiritual and literal interpretation in the design of the page the boundary between what is literal and spiritual interpretation is not always strictly upheld.

Spiritual or Mixed	Literal	Literal	Spiritual or Mixed
تفسیر او مفسر	مفسر	مفسر	تفسیر او مفسر

*Sources for the Commentaries on Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum*

Bar Ṣalībī made clear that his Old Testament commentaries were derivative on other authors: “from the books of the teachers and the wisemen who are outside (the Church) [...] I gathered concisely a host of expositions”.<sup>39</sup> This interest in drawing on other authors, however, does not equate to an interest in naming sources. Despite the paucity of named citations a comparison of Bar Ṣalībī’s work with past authors can, in some cases, clarify the identities of his sources. Where his comments appear to participate in a shared tradition with another Christian commentator I have indicated this in the footnotes of the

<sup>36</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>37</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. M, f.96b; cf. S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, pp. 40-42.

<sup>39</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 54.



*Cyril of Alexandria*

Cyril of Alexandria's (d. 444)<sup>44</sup> Commentary on Isaiah is named by Bar Ṣalībī in his comment on the identity of Tarshish<sup>45</sup> in the spiritual commentary on Jonah. The fact that Bar Ṣalībī claims to have drawn on this commentary on Isaiah rather than Cyril's commentary on Jonah may be an indication that Bar Ṣalībī did not have access to Cyril's commentary on Jonah. If Bar Ṣalībī did not have access to that commentary it is also unlikely that he had access to Cyril's commentaries on Obadiah and Nahum since commentaries on the Twelve Prophets usually accompany each other.<sup>46</sup> However, since Cyril's interpretations entered the commentary tradition of the Syriac Orthodox Church it is certainly possible that Cyril has indirectly influenced the commentaries on Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum.<sup>47</sup>

*Ephrem the Syrian*

The commentaries of the famous Ephrem the Syrian (c.a. 306 - c.a. 373)<sup>48</sup> on Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum have a number of comments that, conceptually and verbally, are very similar to a number of Bar Ṣalībī's comments which simultaneously are not shared by a number of other patristic commentators.<sup>49</sup> The influence of Ephrem may have been taken from the work of Isho'dad of Merv for whom Ephrem is a prominent source.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 86.

<sup>45</sup> I have not been able to locate where Cyril, in the commentary on Isaiah, provides commentary on the identity of Tarshish comparable to what Bar Ṣalībī ascribes to him.

<sup>46</sup> An example of this are the manuscripts used to compile the critical editions herein.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. CyrA, 135-77, 281-328.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph P. Amar, "Christianity at the Crossroads: The Legacy of Ephrem the Syrian", *Religion & Literature* 43.2 (2011), p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. EpS, 229-60; EpO, 269-71.

<sup>50</sup> Isho'dad of Merv, *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv*, vol. 1. Translated from the Syriac by Margaret Dunlop Gibson, col. «Horae Semiticae» 5 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. xvii.



*Theodore of Mopsuestia*

Theodore of Mopsuestia's (c.a. 350 - c.a. 428)<sup>51</sup> comments on Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum are paralleled by Bar Ṣalībī's comments on a number of occasions.<sup>52</sup> These parallels are often shared with Theodoret of Cyrus and Cyril of Alexandria. However, Theodore contains material similar to Bar Ṣalībī's comments that cannot be accounted for if Cyril or Theodoret are drawn on to the exclusion of Theodore. Bar Ṣalībī was probably indirectly influenced by Theodore through Isho'dad of Merv who often drew on Theodore in his own commentaries.<sup>53</sup>

*Origen of Alexandria*

It is difficult to evaluate the impact or lack thereof of Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-251/5)<sup>54</sup> on the particular commentaries in focus here. However, there is a possibility that Origen has been drawn on in the spiritual commentary on Jonah. In comments on Jonah 4:7 Bar Ṣalībī quotes both Psalm 22:6 ("I am a worm and not a man") and makes use of an appellation from Malachi 4:2 ("the Sun of Righteousness").<sup>55</sup> The application of Psalm 22:6 and Malachi 4:2 to this section of the book of Jonah is also present in Jerome's commentary on Jonah.<sup>56</sup> Jerome's non-literal interpretations are often rooted in his reading of Origen,<sup>57</sup> this could be the case here. Additionally, the fact that Bar Ṣalībī's spiritual interpretation

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<sup>51</sup> ThrM, 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> ThrM, 174-205, 245-265.

<sup>53</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> Origen of Alexandria, *Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue with Heraclides*. Edited and translated by Robert J. Daly, col. «Ancient Christian Writers» 54 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> These quotations are not made use of by Cyril of Alexandria, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, or Ephrem the Syrian.

<sup>56</sup> Jerome of Stridon, *Jerome's Commentary on Jonah: Translation with Introduction and Critical Notes*. Edited and translated by Timothy Michael Hegedus (PhD diss., Wilfred Laurier University, 1991), pp. 64-65.

<sup>57</sup> Jerome of Stridon, *Jerome's Commentary on Jonah*, lxi.

corresponds so closely with Jerome at this point is itself evidence that Jerome drew on Origen since Origen's influence is evident in medieval ecclesiastical Syriac literature whereas the Latin Jerome is nearly wholly absent<sup>58</sup> and so less able to have his own original interpretations enter the common milieu of sources in the commentary tradition of the Syriac Orthodox Church. Thus, the discussed parallels between Bar Ṣalībī and Jerome at this point may very well come from a common source viz. Origen.

#### *Jewish Sources*

Some comments of Bar Ṣalībī herein are clearly influenced by interpretations that had circulated among Jews but the influence is almost certainly indirect and filtered through the ecclesiastic sources at his disposal which repeated Jewish traditions of interpretation which had already been incorporated among Christian circles long before Bar Ṣalībī.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Manuscripts*

Due to limitations only six manuscripts containing Syriac in Serto script were used to compile the critical editions. These are described below.

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<sup>58</sup> Jerome is not totally absent though *e.g.* cf. Adam C. Mccollum, "Jerome's Life of Paul the Hermit in Syriac (and a colophon on Dayr-al suryan)", *hmmlorientalia* (blog), <https://hmmlorientalia.wordpress.com/2014/10/01/jeromes-life-of-paul-the-hermit-in-syriac-and-a-colophon-on-dayr-al-suryan/#comments> [June 2017].

<sup>59</sup> *E.g.* Various comments on Jonah given by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Cyril of Alexandria have strong similarities to early Jewish traditions which are repeated in later Jewish commentators such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, David Kimhi, and Abrabanel. Cf. Rabbi Steven Bob, *Go to Nineveh: Medieval Jewish Commentaries on the Book of Jonah* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

*Cambridge Add. MS Syriac 1972 (C)*

This manuscript was written in 1219 C.E. (Anno Graecorum 1530).<sup>60</sup> It does not contain a commentary on each Old Testament book that Bar Ṣalībī commented on.<sup>61</sup> The literal commentaries are frequently excluded and in the case of commentaries on the Twelve Prophets only the spiritual commentaries are included.<sup>62</sup> Because this manuscript excludes the literal commentaries on Obadiah, Jonah, and Nahum it only contributes to the critical editions of the spiritual commentaries thereon.

*MS Syriac 130, Houghton Library, Harvard University (H)*

This manuscript was written in 1888 C.E.<sup>63</sup> by the deacon Mattai bar Paulos who was a steward for the Church of the Mother of God in Mosul.<sup>64</sup> He did this simultaneously alongside writing three other manuscripts in the space of four years which all include Bar Ṣalībī's commentary on the Old Testament.<sup>65</sup> Mattai bar Paulos informs the reader that he based his own manuscript on a manuscript from Deir El-Za'faran, "that is, Mor Hananyo, that was from the year of the Greeks 1832 [A.D. 1520/1] and the name of its scribe was Mbarak the priest".<sup>66</sup> The manuscript Mattai is referring to is probably Mosul Orthodox 6.<sup>67</sup> The layout given to the Twelve Prophets is unlike the

<sup>60</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>61</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p. 46.

<sup>62</sup> William Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, vol. 1 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1901), p. 55.

<sup>63</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 132.

<sup>64</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> These include M, CSCO Syr. 08, and Monastery of Sarfeh MS 271; cf. Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Kings-commentary of Dionysius bar Salibi: a Critical Edition*, vol. 1, p. 133; S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 137.

<sup>66</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 133.

<sup>67</sup> As convincingly argued for in S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, pp.133-4.

layout of the other commentaries which usually consisted of two columns headed as “literal” and “spiritual”.<sup>68</sup> For the Twelve Prophets both columns are occupied by the literal commentaries and only after all twelve literal commentaries are given are the twelve spiritual commentaries presented.

*Mingana MS Syriac 152 (M)*

M, like H, was written by the scribe Mattai bar Paulos. He completed Bar Ṣalībī’s commentary on Genesis in August-September<sup>69</sup> 1889 C.E. and completed the entire manuscript in April 1891<sup>70</sup> while in Mosul.<sup>71</sup> The *Vorlage* for this manuscript was the same as that used for H viz. Mosul Orthodox 6. The Twelve Prophets are laid out in the same fashion as had been done in H.

*Paris MS Syriac 66 (P)*

This manuscript was written in the Monastery of the Mother of God located at Natafa near Mardin in 1354 C.E.<sup>72</sup> In regard to the Twelve Prophets, first all the literal commentaries are presented followed by all the spiritual commentaries.

*Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 66 (R)*

I have not been able to identify where this manuscript, at one time stored in Deir El-Za’faran,<sup>73</sup> was written. Ignatius Barsoum in discussing manuscripts of Bar Ṣalībī’s Commentary on the Old Testament “transcribed between 1189-1594”<sup>74</sup> says this was the

<sup>68</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 132.

<sup>69</sup> Dionysius Bar Salibi, *The Commentary of Dionysius Bar Salibi on the Book of Genesis*, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 134.

<sup>71</sup> A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, vol. 1, p. 354.

<sup>72</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 130.

<sup>73</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 124.

<sup>74</sup> Ignatius Aphram Barsoum, *History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*. Translated from the Arabic by Matti Moosa (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004), p. 143.

earliest. There seems to be no colophon on the manuscript providing the date of transcription, possibly this is the result of damage.<sup>75</sup> Like H, M, and P first all the literal commentaries on the Twelve Prophets are given and then the spiritual commentaries thereon. The value of this manuscript for compiling the critical editions herein was hampered by the severe damage suffered by both commentaries on Obadiah and Jonah. Some damage to the commentaries on Nahum were renovated though the Literal Commentary on Nahum remains extremely damaged.

*Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 68 (Z)*

Between the late twelfth and fourteenth centuries, in the monastery of Shira, a monk named Saliba wrote two volumes which in combination contain the entirety of Bar Ṣalībī's Commentary on the Old Testament. This manuscript is the second volume (the first volume is Mardin Orthodox 67).<sup>76</sup> This is the only manuscript utilised which presents the literal and spiritual commentaries on the Twelve Prophets in two accompanying columns.

*Manuscript Relationships*

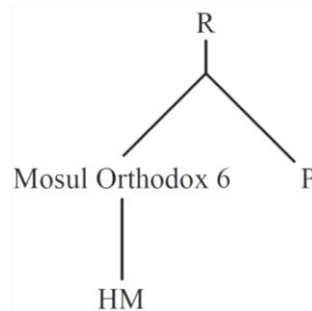
H and M, being both written by the same scribe using the same *Vorlage*, agree very closely. P disagrees at more points with H and M than do H and M with each other. Simultaneously P agrees more frequently with R than does H and M with R. Despite the differences between H, M, P, and R these are united as the products of a stream of transmission distinct from that of C and Z. The similarities of H, M, P, and R fit well with what has been posited by Ryan and is depicted in the following stemma based on his own:<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 125.

<sup>76</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 128.

<sup>77</sup> S. Ryan, *Studies in Bar Salibi's Commentary on the Psalms*, p. 145.

*Relationship of HMPR*

C and Z, on the other hand, agree frequently with each other and out of HMPR are most similar to R. When either C or Z disagree with H, M, P, and/or R this is usually done together and not in disagreement between C and Z. From this it can be surmised that C and Z have a common source which is not shared by R.

In constructing a critical edition one must consider how much weight to assign to a given manuscript and particular readings therein. Since H, M, and P all draw on R the readings of R are *a priori* given more credence than readings from H, M, and/or P. C, R, and Z do not derive from each other. I have not been able to determine whether H, M, P, and R or C and Z represent a manuscript tradition closer to the original(s). Nevertheless, I have selected Z as my base text for the eclectic critical editions herein.

Z is not followed when:

- Z has an awkward reading or is ungrammatical.
- C and R agree against Z.
- Z is damaged, in which case C is followed, if C cannot be used (e.g. for literal commentaries) then R is followed, if R is damaged then P is followed.

*Guide for the Reader*

The Z manuscript folio (f.) and column (col.) on which given words occur are written on the margins. The verso and recto of a folio are represented by v and r. The right column of a folio is represented by col.1 and the left column by col.2. The transition from one folio to the next is indicated with |.

For example: the words ‘folio 230 recto, right column’ are represented by: f.230r col.1.

The reader should note that the lemmata do not reproduce any one rendition of the books commented on herein. The lemmata reproduce material from the Peshitta and Septuagint. Bar Ṣalībī’s own memory of Scripture, his method of paraphrase, Scriptural quotations from patristic authors, the Syro-hexapla are also possible sources.

Lemmata are underlined and followed by a bracketed verse reference corresponding to that in most English Bibles. The underlining of lemmata and the supplying of verse references do not originate with the manuscripts used and have been added by me:

- Example from the critical editions: (1:13 ولا يسبحوا).
- Example from the translations: And do not rejoice (Ob 1:13).

In the English translations where a lemma includes quotations from two different sections of text the omission between the two sections is indicated by an ellipsis.

For example, when the middle of Jon 3:4 is omitted in a lemma of Jon 3:4 this is indicated thus: Jonah began the trip ... Nineveh [shall] be destroyed (Jon 3:4).















































*Translations**Literal Commentary on Obadiah*

f.230r Again, the Literal Interpretation of Obadiah the Prophet.  
col.1

Obadiah preceded those who were before him.<sup>405</sup> He was in the time of Elijah. Just as the letters of Paul are not ordered<sup>406</sup> one after another likewise neither were the Twelve and each of the rest of the prophets arranged by the ancients according to his<sup>407</sup> time. Now as all the prophets prophesied about the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians and also of the house of Judah by the Babylonians; the Edomites, the sons of Esau, would [also] exceedingly afflict the nation and would aid their enemies. And on account of this, so as to console the people, God stirred Obadiah to prophesy about the evils which would trample the Edomites through the Babylonians. And following that the people repented and the temple was repaired. Then they<sup>408</sup> were repaid by the people<sup>409</sup> as was right. And this is the subject of the book of Obadiah. You then, diligent one, pray for the ascetic<sup>410</sup> Dionysius who was solicitous about these [things].

He calls the revelation a vision (Ob 1:1) which he received from God to show hidden things.<sup>411</sup>

We heard a report (Ob 1:1) i.e. a report of the fall of the Edomites after the repentance.<sup>412</sup> I heard it from God just like the prophets, my companions.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> Viz. Obadiah chronologically precedes prophets whose books precede his own in the order in which they are presented in Bar Ṣalībī's commentary on the Old Testament.

<sup>406</sup> Viz. chronologically.

<sup>407</sup> Viz. the time of each prophet.

<sup>408</sup> Viz. the Edomites.

<sup>409</sup> Viz. of Israel

<sup>410</sup> *مصلح* usually denotes 'foreigner' which, by extension, can also refer to an 'ascetic'. Cf. Robert Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. Edited by Jessie Payne Smith (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>411</sup> Cf. ThrM, 176; TdtC, 129.

<sup>412</sup> Viz. of the Israelites.

A messenger to the nations (Ob 1:1) i.e. this is the report: behold God sent messengers viz. the angels, his servants, to gather the nations and come against the Edomites.

Rise! Let us rise! (Ob 1:1) i.e. rise! Go up to battle against Edom!

f.231v | Behold I made<sup>414</sup> you feeble<sup>415</sup> (Ob 1:2) i.e. following that he turns his  
col.2 discourse towards the Edomites: You are certainly found to be contemptible and small<sup>416</sup> i.e. if thieves came upon you or these plunderers who by night (Ob 1:5) in secret rush out so as to despoil<sup>417</sup> [then] when they would despoil something small from you immediately they would move [away from you] out of fear of you, not driving you into captivity. And if, likewise, grape-gatherers came to your land (Ob 1:5) they would not consume your gleanings. He seeks to say that these of yours now are not like these who are of thieves or of grape-gatherers but are desolation and total destruction.

How Esau was stripped! (Ob 1:6) i.e. how all of his shelters were stripped and taken by the enemies!

Up to the border (Ob 1:7) i.e. the captives expelled you from the borders of your land and they sent you afar by means of captivity.

Because of killing and because of<sup>418</sup> (Ob 1:10) i.e. he shows the reason on account of which they are perishing: because of the killing and robbery which you did to your brother Jacob, you will be covered with the shame of captivity and you will perish forevermore.

And do not rejoice (Ob 1:13) i.e. you<sup>419</sup> are not permitted to see them<sup>420</sup> in sorrows again [nor] shall you seize them when they are captured by foreigners nor will you widen your mouth when you utter words which display your joy in their sorrows.

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<sup>413</sup> Cf. Ep0, 526.

<sup>414</sup> Lit. "I gave".

<sup>415</sup> Lit. "small".

<sup>416</sup> See preceding note.

<sup>417</sup> Viz. of the Israelites.

<sup>418</sup> The larger context of the verse includes: "because of the killing and robbery of his brother Jacob".

<sup>419</sup> Viz. Edom.

<sup>420</sup> Viz. the Israelites.

And do not stand against the tunnel (Ob 1:14) i.e. you [shall] not stand against the Israelites again as was your habit on the day of their sorrows or cast out the refugee who is being delivered and fleeing in difficult distress which is likened to a tunnel. i.e. threads.

Others [say he says:] ‘a narrow path’ like the Armenian [word]: ‘narrow pass’<sup>421</sup> so as to speak about the difficult distress by means of the tunnel. For he seeks to say: all these evils which I spoke of above are coming upon you so that this may be manifested to the people [of Israel] at the time of their captivity.

For just as you served up drink ... continually (Ob 1:16) i.e. for just as you served up the punishment for those at the mount of my holiness and you drank their goods you too will drink punishment remaining continually [with] you.

In another way [of interpretation]: as you Edomites drank punishment in the past through David.<sup>422</sup> So now on account of the hatred that you had against those who live at the mount of my holiness likewise all the nations who shared with you in this opinion shall drink.<sup>423</sup>

After these [things] he again spoke about the destruction that [would] come upon them through the people after repentance when he began from: the house of Jacob will dispossess those who dispossessed them (Ob 1:17) up to the end of the prophecy.

And even if the captivity of Jerusalem were in Sepharad, which is within Rome, I would return it.<sup>424</sup>

The End of the Literal Interpretation of Obadiah.

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<sup>421</sup> Cf. footnote 110.

<sup>422</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 11:15-6; EpO, 270.

<sup>423</sup> Viz. shall drink punishment.

<sup>424</sup> Viz. Israel.

*Spiritual Commentary on Obadiah*

f.230r The Spiritual Interpretation of the Prophet Obadiah.  
col.2 Obadiah is the disciple of Elijah and he was the chief of the fifty on whom Elijah had pity and was not burned.<sup>425</sup> And his wife was she who came to Elisha because her sons were being led away due to debt<sup>426</sup> and he produced a sign of the Messiah for her; and the debt came upon Obadiah because he had provided for the prophets whom he hid from Ahab at a time of famine.<sup>427</sup> And he prophesied in the days of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Joel.<sup>428</sup>  
We heard a report (Ob 1:1) i.e. for the LORD reveals to the prophets what he does.<sup>429</sup>  
The messenger was sent to the nations (Ob 1:1) i.e. Immanuel who came to “proclaim | peace to the nations”.<sup>430</sup>  
f.231v col.1 Behold I made<sup>431</sup> you feeble<sup>432</sup> (Ob 1:2) i.e. in this he debased the pride of the Edomites.  
Again feeble<sup>433</sup> (Ob 1:2): the Accuser<sup>434</sup> who was cast out from his rank.<sup>435</sup>  
And if you were raised up in the air and among the stars from there I shall bring you down (Ob 1:4) and I will hand you over into the hands of [your] enemies.  
How Esau was stripped (Ob 1:6) i.e. for they carried him and all that was his into captivity.  
And they sent you up to the border of your enemies and your diviners who were eating your bread were not able to save you and [could] not divine the truth. (Ob 1:7) ... And they destroyed your wisemen with a

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<sup>425</sup> Cf. 2 Kings 1:13-5.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. 2 Kings 4:1.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. 1 Kings 18:1-14; EpO, 526.

<sup>428</sup> Cf. EpO, 269.

<sup>429</sup> Cf. EpO, 269.

<sup>430</sup> Zechariah 9:10; cf. EpO, 269.

<sup>431</sup> Lit. “I gave”.

<sup>432</sup> Lit. “small”.

<sup>433</sup> See preceding note.

<sup>434</sup> Cf. EpO, 269.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. Viz. the devil.

sudden blow (Ob 1:8) ... and in the way that you<sup>436</sup> drank (Ob 1:16) and so on i.e. just as you exalted and derided the sons of Israel when you were drinking and because of the festival you made due to the distress of [your] brother likewise all the nations will drink [you] and rejoice over you.

There will be a preserved remnant (Ob 1:17) i.e. of the house of Hezekiah.

Let us rise and start up a battle against her (Ob 1:1) i.e. he exhorts that they bring him<sup>437</sup> out so as to battle against Edom [which is] figuratively likened to death and sin.

Obadiah, the servant of service prophesied about the punishment of the Edomites and about the Church.

The End of the Spiritual Interpretation of Obadiah the Holy Prophet.

*Literal Commentary on Jonah*

f.231r The Literal Interpretation of the Prophet Jonah.

col.1 These [things] which happened to Jonah are a type and a seal of those of our Lord. And while all the prophets prophesied to the people – only this one was commanded to travel to the nations. He chose to flee so that this bond<sup>438</sup> would not be loosed through his agency and the people<sup>439</sup> be rejected. For he knew that God did not seek to destroy the Ninevites but to turn them to himself.

Rise! Go to Nineveh! (Jon 1:2) i.e. and proclaim the overturning of their city. At that time this was the great city of the Assyrians and [it was] abundant in population and it was being enticed after iniquity and lasciviousness and disgraceful ways.

For it went up (Jon 1:2) i.e. all their evil increased until it roused me to vengeance in like manner as that “outcry which Sodom caused before me”<sup>440</sup>.

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<sup>436</sup> Viz. Edom.

<sup>437</sup> Viz. Edom.

<sup>438</sup> Viz. the bond between God and Israel.

<sup>439</sup> Viz. Israel.

<sup>440</sup> Genesis 18:20; cf. CyrA, 153; Jr, 5.



To flee to Tarshish (Jon 1:3) i.e. if he had perceived that the Ninevites would entirely perish he would not have fled. But he knew that they would repent and good would be upon them and immediately he would seem to be a liar on account of which he fled. And even though he knew that God is in every place he fled. [For] he supposed in himself that the effect of his<sup>441</sup> revelation is not in every place but [only] in the land of promise.

Tarshish (Jon 1:3) i.e. Tarsus of Cilicia. And it is that from which he boarded<sup>442</sup> the ship, descended to the bottom, and slept.

They casted the lots (Jon 1:7) because they saw the other ships proceeding in serenity whereas theirs [was in] tumult.<sup>443</sup> Also, God stirred them toward [using] lots so that Jonah would be discovered.

The sea was stilled (Jon 1:15) i.e. after they threw him.

They sacrificed sacrifices (Jon 1:16) i.e. they did not sacrifice in the sea but they promised to no longer worship idols but would sacrifice to the Lord God of sea and land.<sup>444</sup>

I called out to the LORD (Jon 2:2) i.e. therefore the belly of the whale was spiritual<sup>445</sup> | since [he was able] to stand in it and pray.

col.2 From the belly of Sheol (Jon 2:2) i.e. this is a prophecy which he knew by the Spirit<sup>446</sup> viz. that he would come out of the fish as [if to say]: I had been in the belly of the fish, so too in the depth of Sheol I called you and you answered me.

I descended to the bases of mountains (Jon 2:6) i.e. I was concealed between the mountains which were within the sea. And I was hidden, like one who is swallowed, between the mountains. And the mountains came and rose above his head.

And the land closed in (Jon 2:6) i.e. I thought that I would be closed in forever by these as I descended forever to the lowest depths of the earth, which was uninhabited, and I would be covered over and just as

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<sup>441</sup> Viz. God's.

<sup>442</sup> Lit. "went up".

<sup>443</sup> Cf. ThrM, 196; TdtC, 139; EpS 231.

<sup>444</sup> Cf. ThrM, 198; TdtC, 141; Jr, 26.

<sup>445</sup> Or "allegorical".

<sup>446</sup> Cf. CyrA, 163; EpS, 235.

that which is within doors and locks that do not open ever again I thought that I would be hemmed in forever.

And the LORD commanded the fish and it ejected Jonah (Jon 2:10) i.e. in the place that it swallowed him it [also] vomited him up as instructed.

And Jonah rose and went (Jon 3:3) i.e. as he had been commanded about Nineveh since he was sufficiently instructed by what happened to him.

The city was great unto God (Jon 3:3) i.e. due to divine providence it came to greatness and [to have] a large [number] of inhabitants.

A trip of three days (Jon 3:3) i.e. it is not that the city is thus stretched out but [it is “a trip of three days”] because if someone would seek to go about through all of it and preach in all its markets it would be possible to go around all of it in three days and to know how many [inhabitants] there are.<sup>447</sup>

Jonah began the trip ... Nineveh [shall] be destroyed (Jon 3:4) i.e. if they would not repent.

On the first day that he preached this it<sup>448</sup> was received and they immediately began repentance and when Jonah saw that it was not destroyed on the day which he had appointed it upset him that he would be thought a liar.

f.232r He asked for death for his soul (Jon 4:3) i.e. that is | that he sat outside  
col.1 in expectation so that perhaps he would see in it<sup>449</sup> some sign of  
destruction.<sup>450</sup>

The sun shone intensely (Jon 4:8) i.e. God commanded [the sun] to shine strongly so that when its heat was not dissipated over the head of Jonah it would descend and severely heat him.

They do not understand [the difference] between their right (Jon 4:11) i.e. children who as yet cannot distinguish good from evil and are pure from iniquity and sin.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> Cf. ThrM, 201.

<sup>448</sup> Viz. Jonah's message.

<sup>449</sup> Viz. Nineveh.

<sup>450</sup> Cf. CyrA, 174.

<sup>451</sup> Cf. CyrA, 177; Jr, 68; ThrM, 205.

And a multitude of animal[s] (Jon 4:11) i.e. likewise these also were worthy to be preserved with the children because, like them, they are pure from iniquity.

End of the Literal Interpretation of Jonah the Prophet, his prayer be for him who wrote [this]. Amen.

*Spiritual Commentary on Jonah*

f.231r Again, the Spiritual Interpretation and Elucidation of the Prophet  
col.2 Jonah.

Jonah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah.<sup>452</sup> And Jacob the Edessene said that he was not the child who Elijah resurrected<sup>453</sup> as he noticed the distance of time from Ahab till Hezekiah.

Refuge of Tarshish (Jon 1:3) i.e. one [interpretation]: Tarsus of Cilicia. And another [interpretation]: in Africa.<sup>454</sup> And another [interpretation]: in India. And Cyril relates these three [interpretations] in the Commentary on Isaiah.

Storm (Jon 1:4) i.e. the swallowing of the fish, the expulsion that was from the whale, the repentance of the Ninevites, the deliverance, the growth of the gourd and its destruction.

He fled to Tarshish because it was not agreeable to him to preach to the nations. And Jerusalem was the only holy place. And he knew that they would repent<sup>455</sup> and [it was] on account of this [that] God threatened them. And it was hateful to him to be a false prophet. And he fled so that perhaps he would be protected from being sent. And it did not please him that God, by his<sup>456</sup> agency, would pass on grace from his people to the nations since he had greatly loved his own people and perceived in [his] spirit what would eventuate in the end.

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<sup>452</sup> Cf. EpS, 231.

<sup>453</sup> Cf. 2 Kings 4:20-35.

<sup>454</sup> Or "a distant place".

<sup>455</sup> Lit. "turn".

<sup>456</sup> To clarify: Jonah is the subject of this and the following pronouns in this paragraph.

And the sea was disturbed (Jon 1:4) i.e. only upon that ship which had Jonah in it but over the others it was peaceable and because of this they were motivated to [make use of] lots.<sup>457</sup>

They woke him but he did not want to answer<sup>458</sup> i.e. because he knew that he was the cause.

Nineveh is a type of the nations.<sup>459</sup>

Jonah did not desire [to go to Nineveh] i.e. for the prophets were not sent to the nations and it was not the custom.<sup>460</sup>

And now: the rationale for what [is written]:

The ship is a type of the synagogue.

The sea [is a type] of the world.

The sailors [are a type] of the prophets.

Jonah [is a type] of our Lord.<sup>461</sup>

The lots etc. are on account of there being no salvation in the death of others - except on account of our Lord.

The interrogation by the sailors is like the interrogation<sup>462</sup> by the chief priests.<sup>463</sup>

f.232v col.1 Pick me up and throw me into the sea (Jon 1:12) | i.e. for our Lord died by his will.<sup>464</sup>

The prayer of the sailors that it not be counted a sin against them<sup>465</sup> is a figure of the prophets for when they would prophesy about Jesus they would pray that they not be counted as blasphemers because of prophesying death upon God.<sup>466</sup>

The sea was made calm (Jon 1:15) i.e. the dominance of idolatry ceased from the world after the Lordly death.<sup>467</sup>

The fish is a figure of the grave and death.

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<sup>457</sup> Cf. ThrM, 196.

<sup>458</sup> Based on Jon 1:6.

<sup>459</sup> Cf. EpS, 230, 233.

<sup>460</sup> Cf. EpS, 231.

<sup>461</sup> Cf. EpS, 235; TdtC, 141.

<sup>462</sup> Viz. of our Lord.

<sup>463</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:59-65; Mark 14:55-64; Luke 22:66-71.

<sup>464</sup> Cf. EpS, 233.

<sup>465</sup> Cf. Jon 1:14

<sup>466</sup> Cf. EpS, 231.

<sup>467</sup> Cf. EpS, 233.

The three days are like the three days that our Lord was in the grave.  
 The prayer of Jonah is a figure of the preaching in Sheol.  
 The vomiting forth from the fish is a figure of the resurrection.  
 The journey afterwards is a figure of the journey of the apostles to the nations.

A trip of three days (3:3): not the length and breadth of the city but that in three days it heard the preaching.

In Greek here "three days hence" is written. In Syriac "forty hence" and both of them are true. After three days it turned from evil to good and began repentance. For forty [days Nineveh] wore sackcloth and ash and at the completion of the days the LORD accepted it because on the fortieth day that they supposed that they would perish through him the LORD pitied them.<sup>468</sup>

And Jonah left and sat by the gate and grieved because he was not pleased to be accused of lying. And he was also not pleased with the acceptance of the nations.

And he rebuked him with the gourd plant.

Again, Nineveh is a type of the Church.<sup>469</sup>

The booth that is outside is the Synagogue.<sup>470</sup>

The gourd is a figure of the people who were rejoicing in the prophets.<sup>471</sup>

The worm is a likeness to "I am a worm and not a man".<sup>472</sup> For he cut it<sup>473</sup> down and dried it up. And "the sun of righteousness,"<sup>474</sup> when he came up from the grave, dried up the wrongful nation.

For they cannot distinguish between right and left (Jon 4:11) i.e. when they were sinning they did not know that they were committing sin  
 f.232r because they did not have the Law which makes known the good | and  
 col.2 the evil to the sinner and the righteous, that is to say: the left and the

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<sup>468</sup> Cf. EpS, 237.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. EpS, 245; Jr, 68.

<sup>470</sup> Cf. EpS, 245.

<sup>471</sup> Cf. EpS; Jr, 63-4.

<sup>472</sup> Psalm 22:6; cf. Jr, 65.

<sup>473</sup> Viz. the gourd.

<sup>474</sup> Malachi 4:2; cf. Jr, 64.

right. And because of this they were changed suddenly. And on account of that it was not comely for God to disregard them. And that which made Jonah seem false [viz.] that Nineveh was not overturned due to the folly it had rather the word of the Spirit was confirmed in that it<sup>475</sup> was turned<sup>476</sup> from evils to goods.<sup>477</sup>  
End of the Spiritual Interpretation of Jonah the Elect Prophet.

*Literal Commentary on Nahum*

f.236v Again, by the power of the LORD we write the Literal Interpretation of  
col.2 the Prophet Nahum.

Nahum prophesied about the punishment which would come to Assyria from their enemy [viz.] the Babylonians due to their iniquity<sup>478</sup> which was against the Israelites and their effrontery against God and the temple.

The declaration about Nineveh (Nah 1:1) i.e. he calls the prophecy that is against it a declaration on account of the declaration that will happen against Nineveh having been previously manifested.

That is in the book (Nah 1:1) i.e. for Nahum saw with the vision of the Spirit and was commanded to write the prophecy in a book and bring it to the nation.

The zealous God (Nah 1:2) i.e. he calls him “zealous” for he was zealous on account of these [acts] which the Assyrians did to his people on account of which he was stirred with rage and took vengeance on them [for] all that they did.

The LORD in the hurricane (Nah 1:3) i.e. he calls the troop of the Babylonians a hurricane and whirlwind<sup>479</sup> for by it, as by a hurricane, he would snatch up the Assyrians, and as by a whirlwind he would mete out justice to all and throw and scatter them. The whirlwind is

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<sup>475</sup> Viz. Nineveh.

<sup>476</sup> Lit. “overturned”. The root ٤٥٥ which has often been used in this commentary in connection with destruction is here said to connote ‘turning’ in repentance from evil to good.

<sup>477</sup> Cf. EpS, 237.

<sup>478</sup> Viz. of the Assyrians.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. EpS, 237.

what is in the midst of the hurricane like a wind traveling and circling in the likeness of a pillar ascending upward.

The way of the LORD (Nah 1:3) i.e. [is what] he calls his action.

For he rebukes the sea (Nah 1:4) i.e. about Assyria; he dries it up.

And the rivers (Nah 1:4) i.e. his armies, which are the Assyrians who destroy.

He withered Bashan (Nah 1:4) i.e. he gave a demonstration of these [things] which he did previously among the people through the Assyrians.

And the fruit of Lebanon (Nah 1:4) i.e. the whole habitation of Israel was afraid of the Assyrian. And this [is what] he seeks to say: all these [acts] which you Assyrians then did in the land of promise were not accomplished by your power but [by] God [who] through your hands had chastised his people.

f.236r | Before his rage (Nah 1:6) i.e. you were ignorant, Oh Israel, that it is not possible to stand against divine rage. And like that which is in fire, col.1 by his anger,<sup>480</sup> he melts the kings and leaders and rulers who resemble mountains.

He will inundate<sup>481</sup> his place (Nah 1:8) i.e. God inundates the place of Assyria. And he pursued all of them through the Babylonians and casts them into difficulties as into darkness.

Again, after he would pursue the enemies he [would] inundate<sup>482</sup> his place (Nah 1:8) i.e. Jerusalem.

What [are you] planning (Nah 1:9) i.e. oh Ninevites against the LORD? For it has been predetermined by him to finish you in one blow.

Two times(Nah 1:9) i.e. unto your destruction therefore the first strike finishes off your kingdom.

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<sup>480</sup> Or “his heat”.

<sup>481</sup> ܘܥܫܘܢܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ is suitably translated as “he will inundate” according to the context of the Peshitta of Nah 1:8: ܘܥܫܘܢܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ “and with a flood he makes destruction and inundates his place” cf. Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon: A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbraus; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009), p. 1065.

<sup>482</sup> See previous note.

And they consumed and were filled (Nah 1:10) i.e. because they consumed the goods of nations the divine anger breaks them like stubble and hay.

He will come forth from you ... and ponder [on]iniquity (Nah 1:11) i.e. the blasphemies which the messengers of Assyria made in the time of Hezekiah.<sup>483</sup>

Concerning the heads of waters (Nah 1:12) i.e. God cut down those who were rulers of all the nations as he calls the nations “waters” and he calls the Assyrians “the head of the waters” for by waters is meant the nations; all of whom they had exiled.

They dragged [off] and brought [away] (Nah 1:12) i.e. the Assyrians were dragged [off] by the Babylonians and passed from their land into exile.

And so I answered you (Nah 1:12) i.e. in the time of Jonah. He will not answer you again.

And I will destroy the graven images ... burying you quickly (Nah 1:14) i.e. their idols perish and they are hidden with them like that which is in graves. Or he says to it that the houses of their gods will be ruined by the Babylonians.

Behold his feet are on the mountains (Nah 1:15) i.e. when the Assyrians shall fall many will run to the mountains of Zion who seek their own peace and the destruction of their enemies.<sup>484</sup>

Judah perform [your festivals] (Nah 1:15) i.e. fulfil and accomplish all that you previously promised God to do because the Assyrian shall not again return to perform iniquity within you.

The leader came up ... his power is mighty (Nah 2:1) i.e. he is the God who is your caretaker and he is your leader at all times guarding and watching [so as] to destroy all who come against you. He went up against the Assyrians for your sake and he breathed out rage against them through the Babylonians and this [rage] was so powerful that

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<sup>483</sup> Cf. EpS, 249; TdtC, 180; Jerome of Stridon, *Commentary on Nahum*, Edited by Sr. Albert Marie Surmanski and Thomas P. Scheck, p. 10 in Jerome of Stridon, *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets*, vol. 1. Translated from the Latin by Thomas P. Scheck (Illinois: Interscience Press, 2016).

<sup>484</sup> Cf. ThrM, 255; TdtC, 181.



wherever he strived with them he would pluck them all up, throw [them] down and knock [them] to the ground.

For I restore (Nah 2:2) i.e. he restored the honour to Jacob that he had destroyed in the captivity. Since 'Jacob' is a natural name [and] 'Israel' is [a name] of favour<sup>485</sup> he said: I restore to him the honour suitable to his appellation.<sup>486</sup>

For they oppressed them (Nah 2:2) i.e. I did certainly let go at that time and all of them were oppressed by the Assyrians in the likeness of a vineyard [being trodden] by wild animals. Now I hand over their oppressors to be oppressed by the Babylonians.

Shields (Nah 2:3) i.e. here their prideful ways in battle are made known.

f.237v | Of their mighty ones (Nah 2:3) i.e. the Assyrians were reddened from  
col.2 | of old with the blood of killings that they would instigate in all the nations.

And the mighty men (Nah 2:3) i.e. lo! The killing and the slaughter of men was like a pleasure for them. Yet they would not persevere, not even with fire, to show the pride of their skill.

Some explain "their torches" to be "their spears" as like he who grasps a torch or a lantern likewise they would also grasp the spears for pleasure. And they would run like lightning with their weapons [and] with their torches.

They will seize their authorities (Nah 2:5) i.e. the Babylonians will seize their leaders. And when they flee, their ways will be confused by fear and they will be trampled by each other.

Gates of Judah (Nah 2:6) i.e. all these certainly happened to the Assyrians while they were preparing to open the gates of Jerusalem and to uproot the temple. The Greek says "gates of rivers" i.e. the Assyrians.

And I have raised up horsemen (Nah 2:7) i.e. he said: even if I have raised up its horsemen and gone up to guard the city<sup>487</sup> yet I have gone up to it<sup>488</sup> [and] exiled it from its land in captivity. For [by] "I

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<sup>485</sup> Or "grace".

<sup>486</sup> Cf. TdtC, 182-183.

<sup>487</sup> Cf. EpS, 253.

<sup>488</sup> Viz. to protect it.

went up” he is saying ‘it will go up and be captured’ even if it performs myriads of schemes.

And its maids (Nah 2:7) i.e. the cities that enslave it are taken captive with it.<sup>489</sup>

Nineveh is like a lake (Nah 2:8) by this he shows its abundance. For the goods would spring up and be filled as with water and it was like a deep lake [filled] with a multitude of soldiers.

[They are] fleeing (Nah 2:8) i.e. and now all its soldiers flee.

Stop! (Nah 2:8) i.e. he mocks them and he said: stand before the Babylonians oh Assyrians.

And there is none who turn (Nah 2:8) i.e. concerning his friend, and looks and checks on his colleague, for all of them succumbed and fled.

Where is (Nah 2:11) i.e. he mentions their first leader and spoke interrogatively: where is Nineveh which had been an abode for the kings of Assyria? For it is not and it has perished.

The lion went (Nah 2:11) i.e. for everywhere that their kings went they would plunder and capture without fear. And there was none to stop and restrain them. So now where are those who did not go as was customary?

The lion smashed ... and his lair smashed (Nah 2:12) i.e. thus you assuredly had preyed on everyone without fear and you would gather wealth in the likeness of game and smashed what was sufficient for the sonshenceforth.

“His grandchildren” (Nah 2:12) [is what] he calls the ‘second sons’<sup>490</sup> who would [come to] be. And he said: he did not gather and lay up treasure only for himself and his sons who he had but also for the grandchildren who till then had [still] not been born.

And filling his lair (Nah 2:12) i.e. his kingdom and wealth which he had snatched up.

And I shall cast out (Nah 2:13) i.e. I [shall] destroy you and you shall not prey upon the nations again.

Woe to the city of blood (Nah 3:1) i.e. he desires to slay its evil and give calamity to it.

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<sup>489</sup> Cf. CyrA, 311; ThrM, 257; TdtC, 183.

<sup>490</sup> Cf. EpS, 255.

He said “falsehood” (Nah 3:1) about that which the chief cupbearer  
 f.237r did who promised the people | that he would bring them to a land  
 col.1 better than their own.<sup>491</sup>

And it is not felt about (Nah 3:1) i.e. and it did not again feel about and  
 smash as was its habit. And it is that which feels about according to  
 the habit of those who with zeal feel over something and take it.

The sound of the whip and the sound (Nah 3:2) i.e. of the  
 Babylonians.<sup>492</sup>

And the horse which snorts (Nah 3:2) i.e. with swift force he drove the  
 Babylonians to come up against them while [their] swords and spears  
 shine and flash.

Bounding (Nah 3:2) i.e. leaping [and] jumping.

I will pull down your skirts (Nah 3:5) i.e. I, the Lord, through the  
 Babylonian, will bring blows against you which befit your actions  
 since the pulling down of the skirts of a tunic over the face indicates  
 shame.

Are you better? (Nah 3:8) i.e. he seeks to comfort her. For nothing new  
 had been done for her.

Than Javan of Amon (Nah 3:8) i.e. are you better than Javan, the city  
 of the Egyptians which belonged to Amon the idol, [which is] on one  
 side of the sea with the other side [by] the Nile. And Jeremiah calls it  
 “Amon of waters”.<sup>493</sup> And it is Alexandria and afterwards Alexander  
 enlarged and expanded it.

Cush (Nah 3:9) i.e. it was strengthened by the Egyptians and Cushites.

Also into captivity (Nah 3:10) i.e. you Assyrians captured it and now:  
 receive, also, that which you did unto others!

Water in the siege (Nah 3:14) i.e. prepare for yourself enough water to  
 give you drink in the day of battle and fill the trenches which  
 surround your fortifications so your fort may be strengthened.

And the promise strengthened me (Nah 3:14) i.e. send that which you  
 promised and guaranteed to the nations who will come and help you  
 against the Babylonians.

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<sup>491</sup> Cf. ThrM, 259.

<sup>492</sup> Cf. EpS, 257.

<sup>493</sup> Jeremiah 46:25 (Peshitta).

It will devour you there (Nah 3:15) i.e. there, assuredly, within your cities you shall be trod upon in the likeness of mud, bricks and the mud of the street-market.<sup>494</sup>

Like the creeping locust (Nah 3:15) i.e. the nations will destroy you like creeping locusts.

Due to which you increased like the creeping locust (Nah 3:15) i.e. through my care.

The creeping locust shed [its skin] and flew (Nah 3:16) i.e. those nations [with] which you traded and with whom you had set up a covenant so as to help you - each one [of them] flew [off] to his place like a creeping locust which sheds [its skin], grows wings, and flies [off].

Your fighters are like the locust (Nah 3:17) i.e. in the likeness of the locust which clings to the walls due to the frost and when the sun rises and the cold ceases the wings spread and it flies [off], likewise during your execution each of those fighters of yours who were entrusted with the secrets of your error fly from your aid like the horsemen with whom you were battling [alongside of].

Your associates slumbered (Nah 3:18) i.e. the kings and rulers of your land slumbered and slept as he who is in sleep on account of execution.<sup>495</sup> And their remnant went [and] settled in distant places through captivity.

Your wound is painful (Nah 3:19) i.e. grievous and incurable.

Greek: “Your wound swelled” i.e. it swelled and hardened and there is no cure for it.

f.238v End of the Literal Interpretation of Nahum. |

*Spiritual Commentary on Nahum*

f.236v The Spiritual Interpretation of the Prophet Nahum.

col.1 Nahum prophesied after Jonah and gave a proof concerning Nineveh that one of its lower parts would be immersed in the waters and the upper part burned in fire.

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<sup>494</sup> Cf. TdtC, 187.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. ThrM, 265; TdtC, 188.

He prophesied about the power of God i.e. about the apostles, the advance of the Babylonians, destruction of the Ninevites and their total captivity [as well as] about the wealth that was theirs before captivity.

The affliction of Nineveh (Nah 1:1): by the Seventy<sup>496</sup> it is expressed i.e. “the burden of Nineveh” i.e. the prophecy which is carried and is a book and is carried by the hands.

The LORD is in the hurricane (Nah 1:3) i.e. when he was a man and he disturbed the archons and authorities viz. he ruined their rule.

f.236r And a whirlwind (Nah 1:3) i.e. he calls the Babylonians | a hurricane  
col.2 and whirlwind for by them he destroys Nineveh.<sup>497</sup>

The clouds then are his own dust (Nah 1:3) i.e. the prophets and prophecies who were before the incarnation, just as dust flies before one who walks. Likewise: and before the LORD the prophets propagated and made clear his advent.<sup>498</sup>

He rebukes the sea (Nah 1:4) i.e. authorities and teachers and kingdoms.<sup>499</sup>

And he destroys the rivers (Nah 1:4) i.e. their authorities.<sup>500</sup>

He withered Bashan (Nah 1:4) the incorporeal and perceptible Assyrian.<sup>501</sup>

Dry twigs (Nah 1:10) i.e. robbery and burning desires.

Evil against the LORD (Nah 1:11) i.e. the chief cupbearer and the Assyrian in his letters.<sup>502</sup>

Against the heads of waters which they leaked and overcame (Nah 1:12) i.e. when they went up in the days of Hezekiah.<sup>503</sup>

For you answered me (Nah 1:12) i.e. in the days of Jonah.

His yoke (Nah 1:13) i.e. of the Assyrian.

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<sup>496</sup> Viz. the Septuagint.

<sup>497</sup> Cf. EpS, 247.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. CyrA, 288.

<sup>499</sup> Cf. EpS, 247.

<sup>500</sup> Cf. EpS, 247; viz. the incarnation.

<sup>501</sup> Lit. “the intellectual and sensible Assyrian”.

<sup>502</sup> Cf. CyrA, 296; TdtC, 180; EpS, 249.

<sup>503</sup> Cf. CyrA, 296; TdtC, 180; EpS, 249.

And I will break your bonds (Nah 1:13) i.e. the servitude of the nations you owned.

Behold the feet of the messenger on the mountains (Nah 1:15) i.e. Zerubbabel. Figuratively:<sup>504</sup> the apostles.

He destroyed (Nah 1:15) i.e. the Babylonian.

Leader (Nah 2:1) i.e. that angel who had led them.<sup>505</sup>

The shield of the mighty men (Nah 2:3) i.e. of the house of Sennacherib.<sup>506</sup>

f.237v  
col.1 The gates of | Judah will be opened (Nah 2:6) i.e. for you will enter the captivity that was proclaimed in the days of Hezekiah.

Nineveh is like a lake (Nah 2:8) i.e. because it had inflicted severe pain [on those] who were surrounded by it and were serving it. And the camp which had surrounded Jerusalem he calls a lake.<sup>507</sup>

Will drain (Nah 2:8) i.e. the troop of the Assyrian by the side of the gate of Jerusalem.

Woe to the city of blood (Nah 3:1) i.e. Nineveh.

Mass of corpses (Nah 3:3) i.e. because of the Babylonians by means of the Assyrians.

Javan of Amon (Nah 3:8) i.e. Alexandria.

Waters of the Nile (Nah 3:8) ... your friends (Nah 3:18)" i.e. the kings of Assyria.<sup>508</sup>

For it is the sea which causes it (Nah 3:8) i.e. its war-strength and also the sea and the Nile are like walls encircling it.<sup>509</sup>

He went up to breathe on your face (Nah 2:1) i.e. just as when a man blasphemes they would rend the garments likewise they would breathe in the face of those who are sick as one who is healed with incantations of magic.<sup>510</sup>

Its maids (Nah 2:7) [is what] he calls the cities which were serving it.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Lit. "intellectually."

<sup>505</sup> Cf. EpS, 251.

<sup>506</sup> Cf. EpS, 251.

<sup>507</sup> Cf. EpS, 253.

<sup>508</sup> Cf. EpS, 259.

<sup>509</sup> Cf. EpS, 257.

<sup>510</sup> Cf. CyrA, 306-7.

<sup>511</sup> Cf. CyrA, 311; ThrM, 257; TdtC, 183.

Mourning like doves (Nah 2:7) i.e. over their distress not openly but secretly.<sup>512</sup>

The heart breaks and loosening [of the knees occurs] (Nah 2:10) according to the Seventy:<sup>513</sup> “shaking and movement [and] shaking” i.e. all sorts of torment happened that had made him shake | and move and shake in defeat and fear.

And the loosening of knees (Nah 2:10) i.e. weakness.

They cast lots for its nobles (Nah 3:10) i.e. over the boys and girls.<sup>514</sup>

Like that which ripens (Nah 3:12) i.e. just as a farmer longs for the first fruit of the figs likewise your captives long to encircle you.<sup>515</sup>

They are like women (Nah 3:13) i.e. the house of Nimrod.<sup>516</sup>

Go into the mud (Nah 3:14) i.e. go in amongst the people just as into the mud and trample their corpses like clay.<sup>517</sup>

The sound of the whip and movement of wheels (Nah 3:2) i.e. the army of the Babylonians for by the movement of the wheels of their chariots they rage and agitate against Nineveh and cause destruction.<sup>518</sup>

f.238v End of the Spiritual Interpretation of Nahum the prophet and elect [one] of the Holy Spirit. May he who reads pray about all who partake. |

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<sup>512</sup> Cf. CyrA, 311.

<sup>513</sup> Viz. the Septuagint.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. EpS, 257.

<sup>515</sup> Cf. EpS, 259.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. EpS, 259.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. EpS, 259.

<sup>518</sup> Cf. EpS, 259.

*Abbreviations and Sigla*

Manuscripts

C	Cambridge Add. MS Syriac 1972
H	MS Syriac 130, Houghton Library, Harvard University
M	Mingana MS Syriac 152
P	Paris MS Syriac 66
R	Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 66
Z	Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 68

Locations within Manuscripts

col.1	Right column
col.2	Left column
f.	Folio
r	Recto of folio
v	Verso of folio
	Indication of the transition from one folio to another in Z

*Scriptural References*

In the Critical Editions

ܐ	ܐܘܪܝܫܐܝܡ
ܒ	ܒܪܝܫܐܝܡ
ܓ	ܓܪܝܫܐܝܡ

In the Translations

Jon	Jonah
Nah	Nahum
Ob	Obadiah

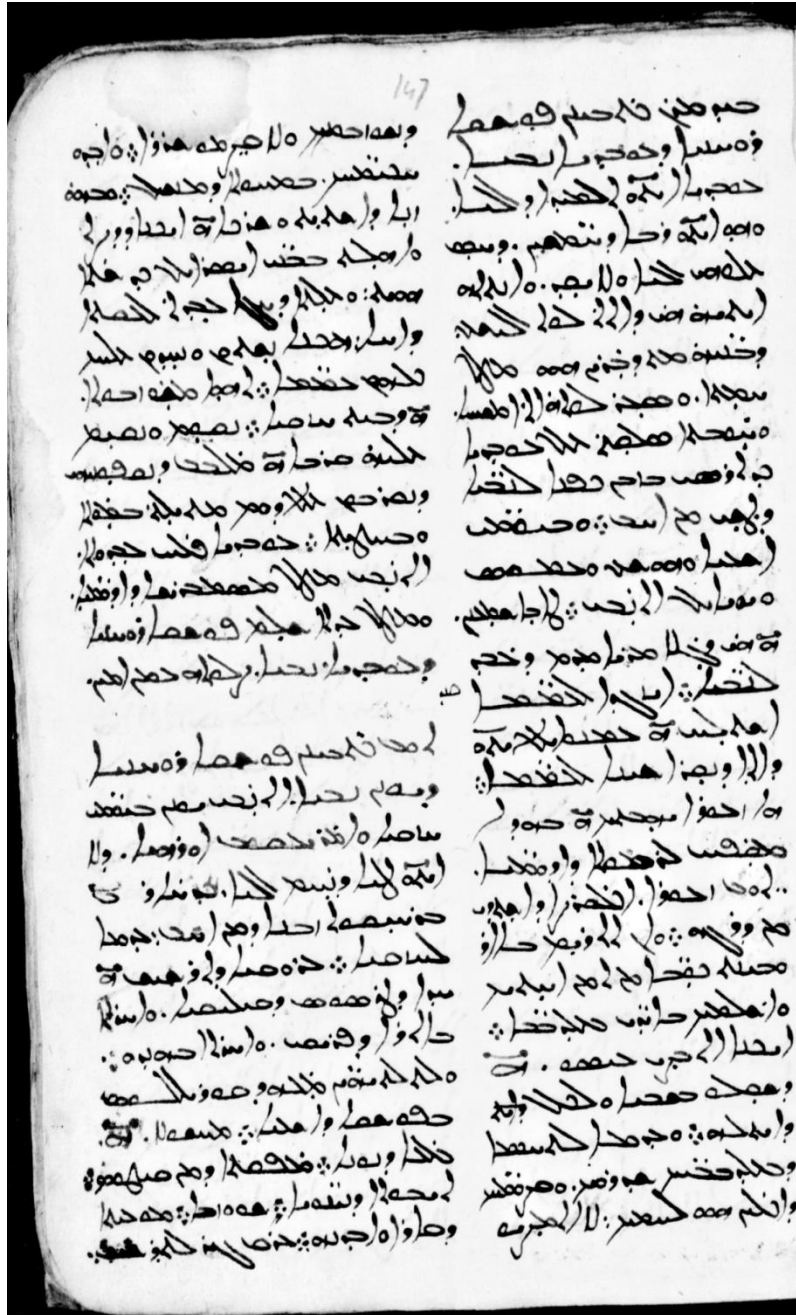


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- MS Manuscript
- TdtC THEODORET of Cyrus, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on Daniel*. Translated from the Greek by Robert Charles Hill, col. «Writings from the Greco-Roman World» 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).
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Samples of Manuscript folios

Cambridge Add. MS Syriac 1972 (C)  
f.147r (microfilm)



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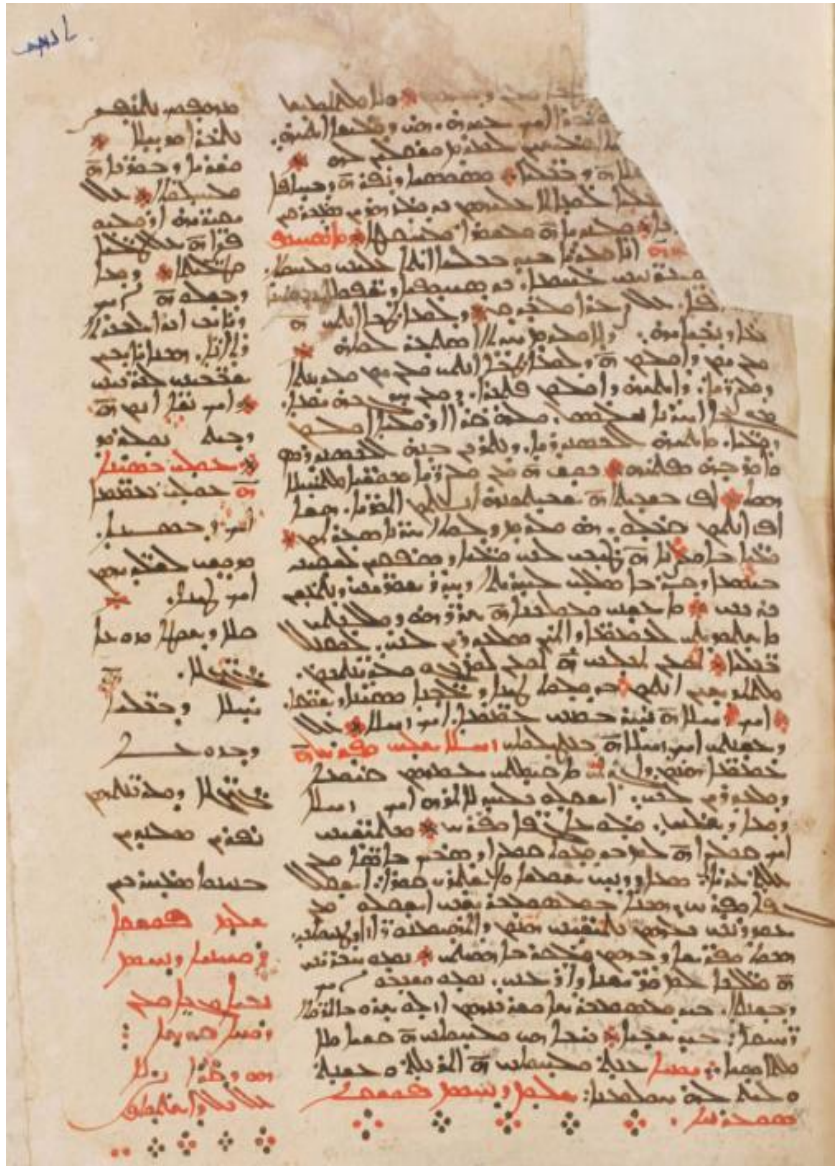


Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 66 (R)  
f.361



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Mardin Orthodox MS Syriac 68 (Z)  
f.237r



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