

A note about the manuscript London Or. 2438*

[Una nota sobre el manuscrito London Or. 2438]

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While studying *Kitāb Asfār al-Asrār* of Ṣalībā,¹ an author of the Eastern Church from Mossoul (14th century),² I collected all the

* Updated edition of an article published in *Journal of Eastern Christian Churches* 64(3-4) (2012), pp. 327-330. Unfortunately, though the note number 8, the attached facsimile of London 2348, f. 10v and Sachau 12, f. 47v was not published. I changed some numbers of the paragraphs of expected edition, according to the rhymed prose (*saǧʿ*) and I added some details about the last question: when these few pages arrived at the British Museum.

¹ Cf. his description in H. G. B. TEULE, 'A theological treatise by Išo'yahb bar Malkon preserved in the theological compendium *Asfār Al-Asrār*', *Journal of Eastern Christian studies*, 58 (2006), pp. 235-245. Critical edition (about 2000 pages) to be published soon in 6 volumes, with an Italian translation (one volume).

² There is an exact date (1332) at the beginning of index of the work; the author transcribes 3 chapters from *Kitāb farā'id al-fawā'id fī usūl al-dīn wa-l-'aqā'id* of 'Abdīšū' (died in 1318); the author writes the history of the Patriarchs of the Eastern Church till Yahbāllāhā († 1317) and says that he was eye-witness, with others, at the opening of the tomb of the Patriarch Ḥanānyšū' 650 years after his death (he died in 699).

manuscripts I could (10):³ among them there is a manuscript obtained from the British Museum (London Or. 2438).⁴

This manuscript of only 56 folios (23,5 cm wide, 15,25 cm long; 17 lines in each page, written in fair Nashī) contains some extracts from the work of Ṣalībā: some of its pages are damaged, more or less torn, many others are illegible,⁵ due to the humidity factor.⁶

Comparing the description of the size of the page and the lines in it, and especially the handwriting of this manuscript with the

³ Four of them are complete (Vat. Neofiti 54 from the 18th century; Cambridge Addition 2889 written in 1730; Par. Ar. 6732 written in 1885; Par. Ar. 6744 from 19th century); while four are incomplete (Vat. Ar. 110 from 14th century, Berlin Sachau 12 from 14th century; Vat. Borgia Ar. 198 from 19th century; Birmingham Mingana Christian Ar. 19 from 19th century); two are excerpts (London Or. 2438, and Vat. Ar. 687 from 18th century). Others are unobtainable: one in possession of John Osta, Chaldean “chor-bishop” in Cairo (*Fihris* 2628, cfr. P. Sbath, *Al-Fihris (Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes) Supplément* (Le Caire, Impr. Al-Chark, 1940), p. 25); another mentioned by L. Cheikho, *Catalogue raisonné des Manuscrits historiques de la Bibliothèque Orientale de l'Université Saint Joseph*, in *MUSJ* X (1925), p. 136, who refers to a note in I. Barṣawm, *Tārīḥ dayr al-Za‘farān*, p. 47; one in S. John seminary in Mossoul (FIEY, *Assyrie chrétienne. Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire et de la géographie ecclésiastiques et monastiques du Nord de l'Iraq*, Beyrouth 1968, III, p.13 n.5); one quoted by Siouffi, vice-consul of France in Mossoul (cf. Siouffi M., ‘Notice sur un patriarche nestorien’, *Journal Asiatique* (Janvier 1881) 89-96).

⁴ Cf. Charles Rieu, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1984, no 33, pp. 23-24.

* The manuscript was donated to the Museum by Col. S. B. Miles (1838-1914), who was Consul-General of Baghdad in 1879.

⁵ Cf. 1r-v, 2r-v, 3r-v, 4r-v, 5r-v, 7r-v, 8r-v, 9r-v, 10r-v, 11r-v, 12r-v, 13r-v, 14r-v, 26r-v, 32r-v, 40r-v, 41r-v, 52r-v, 55v.

⁶ Cf. 1r-v, 2r-v, 3v, 4v, 5r-v, 7v, 32r, 50r-v, 51v, 52r-v.

handwriting of Sachau 12,⁷ I noticed that the handwriting is the same;⁸ not only but these few pages of London Or.2438 are some of the pages missing in Sachau 12.

I present in the following table what I discovered about these two manuscripts:

<i>London Or.</i> 2438	<i>Sachau</i> 12 (S)	<i>Our edition</i> ⁹	<i>Description</i>
1v: illegible ¹⁰ 2r-v ¹¹		II,04:1-21	The second preface: answer //1 ^v line1//to Jews and others who oppose our faith in Jesus Christ who was crucified and died
2r-4v ¹²		II,05:52- II,1:30	II,05:52 is the end of the 5th preface about the meaning of Union / Incarnation and filiation; 3 ^r line 6: 2 nd Book, 1 st

⁷ 180 f., 24,5 cm wide, 16,5 cm long, 17 lines in each page: cf. his description in W. Ahlwardt, *Verzeichniss der Arabischen Handschriften* 9 (Berlin, 1897), pp. 546-547, no 10183; E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der Syrischen Handschriften*, pp. 407-415.

⁸ Notice the way of writing *nūn* at the end of the word, putting it inverted over *alif*: *šayṭān* (cf. attached the facsimile of London 2348,10v and Sachau 12, 47v).

⁹ II,04:1-21 means the 2nd book, the 4th foreword, §§ 1-21; II,3:10-II,3:10-29 means the 2nd book, 3rd chapter, §§ 10-29;

¹⁰ In the 2nd line of this page I could read the word *al-tawāḍu'*, that appears at the end of the 3rd preface of the 2nd book of *Ṣalībā*: cfr. our edition II,03:55.

¹¹ After that the text is missing till II,05:52.

¹² After that the text is missing till II,3:10.

		chapter: East is the best direction
5r-v ¹³	II,3:10-29	East is the origin of languages
6r-v ¹⁴	IV,1:62-79	Some Jewish prophets (Asaph, Ethan, Heman, Jeduthun, Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, Micaiah, Obadiah)
7r-15v ¹⁵	II,5:185- II,8:9	7 ^r 3line2-13r: 2 nd book, 6 th chapter: East was the origin of the faith in God, of the law and the priesthood, and of the promise in Christ. 13 ^v line6: 7 th chapter: East was the origin of the promise in Christ and faith in him; 15 ^v line4: 8 th chapter: preaching of the apostles
16r-25v ¹⁶	II,8:29- III,1,2,3,4,5, 6:1-12	18 ^v line2: 9 th chapter: Profession of faith of the Eastern Christians, translated into Arabic; 20 ^r line13: 3 rd Book, chapter

¹³ After that the text is missing till the end of the chapter; missing also II,4 & 5.

¹⁴ This page is not in its place.

¹⁵ After that the text contained in our edition II,8:9-29 is missing.

¹⁶ After that two pages are white; the text of Ṣalībā continues with Sachau14r.

		1: Introduction; 20 ^v line9: chapter 2: the successors of Peter in Rome; 21 ^v line5: chapter 3: the patriarchs of Alexandria; 23 ^r line4: chapter 4: the patriarchs of Antioch; 24 ^r line2: chapter 5: the bishops of Jerusalem; 25 ^r line12: chapter 6: the Caesars from the time of the Apostles to the council of Nicaea;
26r-32v ¹⁷	III,6:39- III,8:24	28 ^v line 4: chapter 7: reason for the council of Nicaea; 31 ^v line14: chapter 8: history of Constantine and his successors till Constantine, son of Constantine, brother of Heraclius
33r-40v ¹⁸	III,8:74-229	
41r-49v	III,8:253-436	
50r-v: 2 illisible black pages		
51r-v ¹⁹	III,8:476-496	

¹⁷ After that the text contained in our edition III,8:24-III,8:74 is missing.

¹⁸ After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 229-253 is missing.

¹⁹ After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 496-619 is missing, but it is in Sachau 15r-20v.

52r-54v²⁰

III,8:619-691

55r-56v²¹

III,8:842-876

Now the question is: when did these few pages arrive at the British museum and from where?²²

In any case the note put at the beginning of the description of the manuscript²³ should be changed, in conformity to the note of Ahlwardt (about 750/1349) and Sachau (according to the Arabic handwriting, the manuscript may be written around 14th century).²⁴

²⁰ After that the text contained in our edition III,8: 691-842 is missing, but it is in Sachau 22r-29v.

²¹ End of the manuscript.

^{*22} This manuscript entered in the listing of Oriental manuscripts in 1881 (from an E/mail of Hedley Sutton, APAC Reference Service, January 8, 2014). Sachau 12 was bought by the State Library in 1884 with other manuscripts of the Sachau collection (from an E/mail of Petra Figeac, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, January 8, 2014).

²³ Cf. Rieu, *Supplement*, p. 23: written in fair Neskhi, apparently in the 13th century.

²⁴ Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, p. 547; Sachau, *Verzeichnis* p. 414.

