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## ***Obsequies of My Lady Mary (II): A Fragmentary Syriac Palimpsest Manuscript from Deir al-Suryan (BL, Add 14.665, no. 2)***

### *Research History*

The publication process for the Syriac witnesses of the five-book version or palm tradition of the *Liber requiei Mariae* running in Syriac under the titles ܩܘܘܪܐ (*‘uppāyā*) ‘interment’ or ܩܘܘܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܩܘܘܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ‘Obsequies of My Lady Mary’,<sup>1</sup> and surviving only in the form of single or fragmentary early manuscripts (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century), mostly in palimpsests,<sup>2</sup> has been more than neglected. This singular Syriac transmission of the apocryphal Marian text (S1)<sup>3</sup> has

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<sup>1</sup> W. Wright, *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature of the New Testament* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1865), p. 11. There must have been two different printings as one print does not contain the fragmentary Syriac Obsequies material on pp. 11-15 (e.g. the copy in Cornell University Library), but it has a preface with the same page numbers. The title pages are identical in both printings.

<sup>2</sup> BL, Add 17.137, no. 2 (A), fols. 9, 6 (top), 7 (bottom) [no. 465], and Add 14.665, no. 2 [no. 507] are two early fifth-century palimpsest manuscripts without additional grammatical diacritical points except for the *šyāmē*, the supralinear dot for the feminine pronominal suffix *-ā*, the far-deixis *ܐܘܪܐ*, *ܘܪܐ*, and the interrogative pronoun *ܘܫܐ* ‘what’, while Add 14.484, fols. 1-8 [no. 158] is not a palimpsest and already shows the additional points to distinguish homographic spellings for various grammatical forms, but has the typical open shaped letters like *be*, *waw*, and *mem* for a fifth- to sixth-century Syriac manuscript.

<sup>3</sup> According to recent insights from the previously unavailable or unpublished versions in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and the Syriac text presented here and the witness from BL, Add 17.137, no. 2A (see n. 4, 6 below), they all definitely belong to transmission S1 going by the definition of M. van Esbroeck, *Les textes littéraires sur l’Assomption avant le X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in F. Bovon (ed.), *Les actes apocryphes des apôtres. Christianisme et monde païen* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1981), pp. 265-285, esp. 270. A different point of view is taken by C. Naffah, “Les «histoires» syriaques de la vierge: traditions apocryphes anciennes et récentes”, *Apocrypha* 20 (2009), pp. 137-188.

not received the attention that one would have expected for such an early and unique Syriac text source within the apocryphal studies, despite having been known for a long time.

Meanwhile it has emerged that all remaining Syriac text witnesses follow a rather deviating Greek version. It also supports the fact that a longer Greek transmission of the five-book or palm version must have circulated as can be deduced from Christian Palestinian Aramaic translation depending on the Greek version,<sup>4</sup> from the much longer known and late Ethiopic transmission,<sup>5</sup> and now the Syriac text samples.<sup>6</sup> Hardly any attempts have been made yet to fill this gap by publishing the incompletely preserved Syriac palimpsest folios which came to the attention of the scholarly readership with the publication of the Syriac catalogues of the British Museum 1870-1872,<sup>7</sup> and the preceding monograph on Syriac apocryphal literature by Wright in 1865.<sup>8</sup> The content of the surviving fragments in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic changes the picture of the transmissions of the palm tradition considerably. The longer version was translated, copied, and distributed on the periphery as early as the fifth-century AD in Palestine (CPA) and Upper Mesopotamia (Syriac) and much later in Ethiopic.

All the Syriac text witnesses containing the *Obsequies* originate from among the collection of 250 Syriac manuscripts bought and collected by Abbot Mushe of Nisibis in Northern Mesopotamia and Babylonia in the 10th century, when they were taken by him to be stored in the monastery Deir al-Surian, at that time a Syrian Orthodox monastery in the Skete Desert, Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Among them are found a number of fragmentary parchment manuscripts, two of them being very early palimpsests (5<sup>th</sup> century), which preserve unpublished and noteworthy sections of the Syriac *Obsequies*.<sup>10</sup> They are housed today in the

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<sup>4</sup> C. Müller-Kessler, “Three Early Witnesses of the ‘Dormition of Mary’ in Christian Palestinian Aramaic from the Cairo Genizah (Taylor-Schechter Collection) and the New Finds in St Catherine’s Monastery”, *Apocrypha* 29 (2018), pp. 69-95; *idem*, An Overlooked Christian Palestinian Aramaic Witness of the ‘Dormition of Mary’ in *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* (CCR IV), *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 16 (2019), pp. 81-98.

<sup>5</sup> V. Arras, *De Transitu Mariae apocrypha aethiopice* 1 «CSCO 342/343; Scriptorum Aethiopicorum 66/67» (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> One of them is BL, Add 17.137, no. 2 (A), fols. 9, 6 (top), 7 (bottom); see C. Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I): Unpublished Syriac Palimpsest Fragments from the British Library (BL, Add 17.137, no. 2), *Hugoye* 23 (2020), pp. 31-59.

<sup>7</sup> W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838*, 3 vols. (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1870-1872).

<sup>8</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 13-16.

<sup>9</sup> For additional literature on the background of these manuscripts see S. P. Brock, “Without Mushē of Nisibis, where would we be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature”, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (2004), pp. 15-24, and the recent catalogue by 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» (Louvain: Peeters, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Van Esbroeck, “Les textes littéraires sur l’Assomption”, p. 270 [only Add 14.484 is listed for S1]; S. J. Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary’s Dormition and Assumption*, (Oxford: Oxford University

British Library, but were formerly acquired by the British Museum in the first part of the nineteenth century and later catalogued by Wright in his three-volume edition of 1870-1872.<sup>11</sup> Before the catalogues' publication Wright provided a few samples as demonstration from two incompletely preserved manuscripts and two independent fly leaves in his *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature* of 1865.<sup>12</sup> Since then the matter has remained in a status quo and no real start has been made to edit them fully,<sup>13</sup> or to offer a revised and collated readings,<sup>14</sup> especially for two preserved palimpsest folios under BL, Add 17.137,<sup>15</sup>

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Press, 2002), pp. 32-37, 325-331, 334-343 [translation]; S. J. Shoemaker, "New Syriac Dormition Fragments from Palimpsests in the Schøyen Collection and the British Library", *Le Muséon* 124 (2011), pp. 259-278, esp. 263.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, p. 389 (no. 507, 2, fols. 21-24) "The older text is written in a fine, regular Estrangelā of the V<sup>th</sup> or VI<sup>th</sup> cent., in two columns of 26 or 27 lines, and once formed part of the apocryphal ܡܝܪܝܡ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ ܕܡܝܪܝܡ, Add. 14,484, foll. 1-8".

<sup>12</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 11-15.

<sup>13</sup> Only Shoemaker, "New Syriac Dormition Fragments", p. 263, recently made a start by publishing the left-hand column of the recto side of Add 17.137, fol. 9. Meanwhile the other sections of Add 17.137 could be added in Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 31-59.

<sup>14</sup> Scholars who dealt with issues of the *Obsequies* from various Syriac sources have relied again and again on the rather limited text samples from the BL, Add 14.665 text witness that were published in 1865 by Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 11-15. These passages have been simply repeated or translated for their own studies on the *Liber requiei Mariae*. Among them is A. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle* «Archives de l'Orient Chrétien» (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1955), pp. 260-261. In this study Wenger speaks in n. 1 of the fragments (Add 14.665, fols. 21-24) having many lacunae or being improbable in their translation. Without going back to the originals this is a rather weak argument. Also Arras, *De Transitu Mariae*, pp. VI-VII, went by the primary work of Wright, but the Syriac witnesses were not within the scope of his edition. The same applies to the detailed study on the Marian apocryphon by van Esbroeck, "Les textes littéraires sur l'Assomption", pp. 265-285, who does not even mention the fragmentary passages from Add 14.665, and the manuscripts as Add 17.137 and others, but only lists Add. 14.484 for S1. Again for the collective monograph by Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, pp. 325-328, the surviving material was not collated. The study by S. Spreckelmeier, *Bibelepisches Erzählen vom 'Transitus Mariae' im Mittelalter* «Literatur - Theorie - Geschichte 14» (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), omits the recent publications of the earliest Syriac texts by Shoemaker, New Syriac Dormition Fragments, and S. P. Brock and G. Kessel, "The 'Departure of Mary' in Two Palimpsests at the Monastery of St. Catherine (Sinai Syr. 30 & Sinai Arabic 514)", *Christian Orient: Journal of Studies in the Christian Cultures of Asia and Africa* 8 (2017), pp. 115-152. This claim, however, cannot be sustained, since the surviving Syriac tradition of the "five book" version obviously follows a diverging Greek transmission which is lost today. The early sources preserve important sections of a longer version. Without the missing Greek link one cannot reach a satisfactory conclusion concerning its possible deviation and "Sitz im Leben".

<sup>15</sup> A nearly complete reading of the two surviving Syriac folios comprising §§ 98-104 was added by Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 43-59, preceded by the publication of one column by Shoemaker, "New Syriac Dormition Fragments", p. 263. The remaining four, actually five folios, under the same shelf mark, formerly claimed to belong to the *Obsequies* by Wright, *Catalogue*, p. 389, and his successors, are not part of this text. They contain the *Homily of the Presentation in the Temple* by the fifth- to sixth-century Syriac writer Jacob of Serugh, the earliest palimpsest and text witness for this author from Mesopotamia so far; see C. Müller-Kessler, "Jacob of Serugh's Homily on the Presentation in the Temple in an Early Syriac Palimpsest (BL, Add 17.137, no. 2)", *ARAM* 32 (2020), pp. 9-16.

and the unedited parts of BL, Add 14.665, no. 2.<sup>16</sup> They are in so far relevant to apocryphal studies, as they form the earliest surviving witnesses transmitting important sections for the more than incomplete and deviating Syriac transmission of the five-book version of the *Dormition of Mary* or *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* and provide new and early language data for Classical Syriac.

*Manuscripts of the Syriac Obsequies of Mary*

The Syriac *Obsequies of Mary* are preserved in three fragmentary manuscripts and two single mutilated leaves, all written on parchment. It covers the following text numbers: BL, Add 14.484, fols. 1-8,<sup>17</sup> Add 14.665, fols. 21-24,<sup>18</sup> Add 17.137, fols. 6(top)+7(bottom), 9,<sup>19</sup> Add 17.216?, fol. 17 as well as Add 14.669?, fol. 39.<sup>20</sup> The content of the surviving folios (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD) demonstrates an independent transmission deviating from the Western Aramaic sources and translated into Christian Palestinian Aramaic (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century). The latter Palestinian witness is also just preserved in four fragmentary palimpsest manuscripts without overlapping each other in content,<sup>21</sup> and were only edited recently. As a western Melkite source it has from the contextual point of view more in common with the late Ethiopic transmission<sup>22</sup> despite the translation or better the copies being one thousand years apart. It does not show much similarity with the Coptic tradition. The latter is also only scantily transmitted and diverges from the Greek, and is perhaps influenced by Egyptian thought.<sup>23</sup>

The publication of the new and previously only partially edited Syriac palimpsest fragments is a new starting point for textual criticism and theological appreciation of this

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<sup>16</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 13-16.

<sup>17</sup> Edited by Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 45-55 (ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ). The Syriac *Obsequies* text under this shelf mark is not a palimpsest.

<sup>18</sup> Now classified as 14.665D by S. P. Brock, *An Inventory of Syriac Texts Published from Manuscripts in the British Library* «Georgias Handbook 50» (Piscataway, NJ: Georgias Press, 2020), p. 243.

<sup>19</sup> See Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 31-59.

<sup>20</sup> Fol. 17 said to be bound in the volume under Add 17.216, is definitely not the fragment with the *Obsequies* text as listed by Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 11-13. The same is true for Add 14.484, fol. 6 on p. 13 and Add. 14.669, fol. 39. I ordered all three manuscript volumes several times in the Asian and African Studies reading room of the British Library. They cannot be found under these arbitrarily bound shelf marks. It would take some time to trace the correct shelf mark and folio numbers among the Syriac Addendum collection. Interestingly, they could also not be traced by Brock, *An Inventory of Syriac Texts*.

<sup>21</sup> Müller-Kessler, “Three Early Witnesses”; Müller-Kessler, “An Overlooked Christian Palestinian Aramaic Witness”.

<sup>22</sup> See Arras, *De Transitu Mariae*.

<sup>23</sup> For the latest overview see H. Förster, *Transitus Mariae. Beiträge zur koptischen Überlieferung. Mit einer Edition von P. Vindob. K 7589, Cambridge Add 1876 8 und Paris BN Copte 129<sup>17</sup> f II f. 28 und 29* «Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. Neue Folge 14; Neutestamentliche Apokryphen II» (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 225-229.

variously transmitted Marian apocryphon. A still glaring lacuna, however, remains, in the missing complete Greek forerunner of the five-book tradition. It can be only postulated and assumed by the complete Ethiopic transmission (15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century), and nearer in time by the fragmentary Christian Palestinian Aramaic witnesses (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century), as well as now by this early Syriac source. That no text source has surfaced for the longer and early Greek tradition is still a deplorable gap in the history of this apocryphal text, especially for a manuscript treasure horde like the Monastery of St Catherine on Sinai, where Melkite monks translated this *Dormition* composition directly into Christian Palestinian Aramaic from Greek *Vorlagen*, definitely predating this dependent Western Aramaic language source.<sup>24</sup> In the East circulated obviously another Greek tradition that formed the text basis for the Syriac translations. The best proof for this are the additional paragraphs 68-69 (according to the Ethiopic subdivision) not found in the short Greek version, which are now attested in Add 14.665, fol. 22<sup>25</sup> (see below), and the unparalleled addition in Add 17.137, fol. 9ra.<sup>26</sup> It is hardly conceivable that Syriac translators were so liberal as to revise the text for their purposes. The other western and late Coptic transmission is much freer in its translation of the *Transitus Mariae* text, but in it hardly any sufficient text basis has survived except for four partially incomplete folios.<sup>27</sup>

Given the fact that only the short Greek version exists so far from late attested copies (ca. 11th century),<sup>28</sup> one should ask, if this was intentionally caused by the Orthodox Greek doctrine to accept and transmit just shorter aspects of the death and burial story of Mary. Other Eastern and Western Orthodox Christian churches continued to translate, copy, and transmit a longer apocryphal version, peripheral or not. In Greek Orthodox church circles, however, the copying tradition obviously did not continue for longer than beyond the sixth century judging by the existing textual evidence in the dependent Christian Palestinian Aramaic sources. It is rather striking that even for the early Syriac *Obsequies* version no tradition existed to copy this Marian apocryphon in later periods among Syrian church communities. One of the possible answers could be that these text copies might be lost today.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It should be pointed out again within this context that the Christian Palestinian Aramaic text corpus is always dependent on Greek *Vorlagen*, since its literature is known for having only produced translations directly and literally from Greek, which makes its early text transmission interesting for the today missing and preceding Greek sources.

<sup>25</sup> Both paragraphs are not provided in the readings by Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> See Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 43-45.

<sup>27</sup> Förster, *Transitus Mariae*.

<sup>28</sup> See in the latest edition by Wenger, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge*, p. 11, 209-241.

<sup>29</sup> Such statements are always risky, since unknown texts might be hidden somewhere without being read or discovered yet. One must, however, also take all early texts losses from Mesopotamia into account, of which none would have survived without the diligent collecting enterprise by Mushe of Nisibis.

On the basis of the new text sources in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Syriac, which have only recently come to our attention, a revised text stemma for the five-book version has now to be considered after the one developed by Michel van Esbroeck.<sup>30</sup>

*The Importance of the Syriac source (BL, Add 14.665, no. 2)*

Three folios of Add 14.665, no. 2 preserve vital sections of the middle part for the *Liber requiei Mariae* concerned with Jesus finding the archangel Michael singing with other angels, and Mary and the Apostles in the inner chamber, Mary taking her final breath, then her death, her burial preparation, followed by her interment in the tomb on the Mount of Olives. Most relevant, however, is that it contains a longer paragraph 68 and an additional one 69 on fol. 22 and the content of fol. 23, which covers paragraphs 125-128 of the fifth book adding the apocryphal *History of Peter and Paul* as attested in the early Christian Palestinian Aramaic transmission and in the later Ethiopic one. No text samples of this folio were included by Wright in his collective book on the *Contributions to the Apocryphal Literature*, as he considered the legible letters insufficient to determine the content.<sup>31</sup> The text passages transmitted through these surviving four folios are of importance, since they support the early character and originality of the late five-book transmission in Ethiopic. While Shoemaker was unaware of the existing Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Syriac text witnesses he came to the conclusion that this part might have belonged to a separate apocryphal story outside the five-book circle for the early *Dormition* history that circulated independently in the Middle Ages<sup>32</sup> because of the late separate text source in Christian Arabic from the Monastery of St Catherine (Sinai, Arab. 405),<sup>33</sup> and the Garshuni version from the 16th century (Wat., sir. 199).<sup>34</sup>

The unedited Syriac fol. 23, however, proves that a longer version was extant for Syriac as well as for Christian Palestinian Aramaic, which preserves, for a long time overseen, two folios with the paragraphs 121b-122b and 125b-126a (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cent.) within the *Codex Climaci rescriptus* (CCR IV), originally published by Agnes S. Lewis 1909.<sup>35</sup> This important early witness in this conservative western Aramaic dialect found under the renowned *Codex* was recently reedited with some corrected readings and draws attention to the fact of its

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<sup>30</sup> Van Esbroeck, “Les textes littéraires sur l’Assomption”, p. 270.

<sup>31</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Shoemaker, *Ancient Traditions*, p. 347, n. 167.

<sup>33</sup> A. S. Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum. Transcribed from an Arabic MS. in the Convent of Deyr-es-Suriani, Egypt, and from MSS in the Convent of the St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai* «Horae Semiticae III-IV» (London: J. Clay & Sons, 1904), pp. 150-164 (Arabic); pp. 175-192 (English).

<sup>34</sup> A. van Lantschoot, “Contribution aux Actes de S. Pierre et de S. Paul. II — Recension Karšuni des Actes de S. Pierre et S. Paul”, *Le Muséon* 68 (1955), pp. 219-233.

<sup>35</sup> A. S. Lewis, *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* «Horae Semiticae VIII» (London: Cambridge University Press, 1909), p. XV: “two leaves of a rather worthless story, already known to us from *Horae Semiticae*, vol. IV”.

relevance and early dating.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, Shoemaker's view point has now to be revised on the ground of the new and early Aramaic fifth- and sixth-century text witnesses. While the Syriac text transmission deviates here considerably from the early Christian Palestinian Aramaic for the surviving parts of the five books, the late Ethiopic one comes rather close to the Palestinian witness. That the younger Ethiopic and longer text version can be taken as rather authentic for a missing early Greek *Vorlage* is further supported by the recent publications and insights from the Western Aramaic source, where meanwhile the paragraphs 98-102, 108b-110a surfaced in an early Christian Palestinian Aramaic version. The hardly legible text could be extracted from a double palimpsest manuscript as the lowest text under Sinai, Georgian NF 19, fol. 8-9 (CP2), which was discovered among the New Finds in St Catherine's Monastery in 1975, and dates to the fifth or sixth century.<sup>37</sup> Until then the complete five-book version with the apocryphal story *History of Peter and Paul* within the *Dormition* cycle had been attested only for the late Ethiopic transmission. Both, the text on the two folios from the *Codex Climaci rescriptus* and the two manuscript relics from the Georgian codex (Georgian NF 19) support the fact that the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version forms here an important intermediate position on account of its closeness to the late Ethiopic version published by Victor Arras. Both are based on a Greek forerunner. CP1 (T-S 16.327+T-S AS 78.401, T-S 16.351, T-S NS 258.140) follows the early short Greek transmission in the first 48 paragraphs.<sup>38</sup>

The here for the first time presented Syriac fol. 23 of Add 14.665 with paragraphs 125b-128b is a significant addition to the early textual evidence of the longer transmission next to Ethiopic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic.<sup>39</sup> On the one hand it speaks for an early tradition of the longer version in Greek from the 4th to 5th century as can be deduced from the 5th century surviving witnesses in Syriac, which were all translated in Northern Mesopotamia, and on the other hand it makes the very late Arabic and Garshuni narratives less interesting and reliable, since they are freely retold and date much later.<sup>40</sup> There can be no doubt that all three or four independent Syriac witnesses are drawing their text basis from a longer Greek palm-book version from which no text source has come to light yet.

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<sup>36</sup> Müller-Kessler, *An Overlooked Christian Palestinian Aramaic Witness*, pp. 81-98.

<sup>37</sup> The identification and reading process of the palimpsests concerned were undertaken during the Sinai Palimpsests Project helped by the multispectral digital photography through Early Manuscript Electronic Library (EMEL). See the catalogue entries under [www.sinai.library.ucla.edu](http://www.sinai.library.ucla.edu).

<sup>38</sup> Müller-Kessler, "Three Early Witnesses", pp. 75-85.

<sup>39</sup> Müller-Kessler, *An Overlooked Christian Palestinian Aramaic Witness*.

<sup>40</sup> See Lewis, *Acta Mythologica Apostolorum*, pp. 150-164 (Arabic); pp. 175-192 (English); van Lantschoot, *Contributions aux Actes de S. Pierre et de S. Paul: II*", pp. 219-233.

*Script and Codicological Details*

The parchment itself is flattened and very smooth in giving the impression of a paper-like material making at first glance the distinction between flesh and non-flesh sides difficult. The measurements are 28.57 cm in length and 22.23 cm in width. The ink is honey-coloured. On all four palimpsest folios the lower text is not always fully preserved, i.e. it has often faded in several passages. Mostly the verso (non flesh) sides are affected, but in one instance also the recto (fol. 21r) preserves barely enough remaining legible words to enable an assignment to its content.<sup>41</sup> Obviously external forces like humidity and unsuitable storage conditions damaged and effaced the ink and made the lower script illegible more than that the script was intentionally removed.<sup>42</sup> Only the writing on fol. 23 gives the impression of having been scraped off with some remaining legible lines. Especially at the folds for the later bifolios the letters at the beginning of the lines are either completely illegible or missing on account of the damage to the folio or through later restoration.<sup>43</sup> The upper text was written after a ninety-degree rotation in relation to the lower text on all four folios and thus forming eight bifolios in total. The fact that the four folios are palimpsests makes them a bit less accessible, but enough uncovered letters can be seen to obtain a good impression of the shapes of the script for comparative palaeographic studies, especially on two obverse (fols. 21r, 24r) and one reverse side (fol. 22v).

The lines are 0.5 cm apart and they do not show the usual line justification at the end. The text is divided into two columns with 26 to 27 lines in between them.<sup>44</sup> The last letter(s) in each line in the left-hand column of fol. 24r are missing in the top half, since the folio was here cut to size.

The scribal hands in Add 14.665, no. 2 as well as in Add 17.137, no. 2 (A) are clearly very early *Estrangela* specimens. The letters here are well executed, foremost the pronounced large written letters. The *semkath* shows a rather large loop on the left-hand side and also the *peh* and final *kaph* tend to be rather large in contrast to the other letters, which is quite typical for fifth- and sixth-century manuscripts. The letters *be*, *waw*, and *mem* have open shapes at the bottom, which can be compared to the early and dated palimpsest

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<sup>41</sup> The reading of the four palimpsest fragments has not been an easy task. It was a very slow process under the unfavourable light conditions in the British Library Reading Room, even with the help of an ultraviolet light reading-lamp (LED torch) which had to be provided by myself, since the equipment was either missing or broken in all reading rooms.

<sup>42</sup> For how palimpsests were prepared for rewriting in R. Netz and W. Noel, *The Archimedes Codex: Revealing the Secrets of the World's Greatest Palimpsest* (London: Phoenix), 2007, pp. 82-83.

<sup>43</sup> Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. I, p. 389, speaks of the leaves being stained and mutilated. This is rather exaggerated for the four folios, which remained complete except for damages mostly at the folds in the new bifolios. The illegibility was caused by the restoration in these areas.

<sup>44</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 13-16.

examples in BL, Add 14.512 (d. 459).<sup>45</sup> One can claim that they display definitely good and singular witnesses for fine *Estrangela* hands from the 5<sup>th</sup> century which were written in North Mesopotamia. Add 14.665 displays an even finer and more elegant stroke than Add 17.137, no. 2 (A). Nothing comparable can be found among the British Library manuscripts material from Deir al-Suryan.<sup>46</sup> The plural dots (*šyāmē*) and the supralinear diacritical dot indicating the feminine suffix as well as the demonstrative pronoun of the far-deixis are regularly employed. A large single dot indicates the end of a sentence or half sentence or the beginning of direct speech, and is only placed on top of a final letter when being a final *nun*.

Both scripts do not share any scribal resemblance to the third manuscript with the Syriac *Obsequies* Add 14.484, fols. 1-8, which is of much later date according to the *Estrangela* characters. Wright, however, pronounced it as one of his eldest manuscript among the Syriac collection.<sup>47</sup> The latter is the only non-palimpsest manuscript for the *Obsequies*.<sup>48</sup>

#### Graphical and Lexical Notes

The language in Add 14.665, no. 2 agrees mostly with the rules of Classical Syriac as set out in the reference grammars. There are occasional variations in spellings such as *plene* ܡܠܢܐ for ܡܠܢܐ (§ 73) and ܡܠܢܐ for ܡܠܢܐ also with suffixes (§§ 69, 73, 126) as can be frequently observed in the manuscripts of the fifth and sixth century.<sup>49</sup> A variety in the spelling for the

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<sup>45</sup> A useful website for comparative palaeographic samples of dated Syriac manuscripts can be found under dash.stanford.edu. It presents hardly any palimpsests which mostly do not come with colophons and dates.

<sup>46</sup> It is a pity that none of the folios have ever been displayed in a photographic format for demonstration of their state or preservation.

<sup>47</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 11. The *Estrangela* type found on the palimpsest folios under *Codex Arabicus* and listed as Martin Schøyen Collection 579 (Shoemaker, *New Syriac Dormition Fragments*, p. 278) is clearly not a fifth-century hand, but must have been written much later according to the palaeographical features and orthography, at least in the 6th century. Concerning its dating it goes with the other sixth-century manuscripts for the *mappqana* “Transitus Mariae” witnesses, see Brock and Kessel, *The ‘Departure of Mary’*, p. 116.

<sup>48</sup> It is listed as a palimpsest manuscript by A. B. Schmidt, *Syriac Palimpsests in the British Library*, in V. Somers (ed.), *Palimpsestes et éditions de textes: les textes littéraires* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), pp. 161-186, esp. 171.

<sup>49</sup> For possible full spellings of ܡܠܢܐ and ܡܠܢܐ in early manuscripts compare also Add 14.484, fols. 1-8, which shows occasional ܡܠܢܐ (§§ 19, 84), and the older and longer form ܡܠܢܐ ‘we’ (§§ 20, 85) as well as the rare ܡܠܢܐ ‘other’ (§ 82) in Wright, *Contributions*, pp. ܡܠܢܐ, ܡܠܢܐ, ܡܠܢܐ; see A. Merx, *Grammatica Syriaca* (Halle: Impensis Librariae Orphanotropei, 1867), p. 50; T. Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1898), pp. 5, 44, 92, 99, and A. Ungnad, *Syrische Grammatik* (Munich: Beck, 1932), pp. 6, 48-49, 89. On more diverting spellings see F. C. Burkitt, *Evangelion da-mepharreshe: vol. 2 Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), pp. 39-78; D. G. K. Taylor, *The Syriac Versions of the De*

preposition ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ‘to, with’. Add 17.137 (A) and Add 14.484 can be noted for the preposition ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ with pronominal suffixes, the spelling with *aleph* ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ (§ 103), but without only ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ( §§ 67, 70).<sup>50</sup>

Add 14.665 has been the first Syriac text, in which the Greek word ‘palm-shoot’ ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ( §§ 76, 77)<sup>51</sup> has been attested. It is employed in the Syriac translation as the central technical term for the palm tradition,<sup>52</sup> here a particular part of the palm-pinnate in ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ‘and take the palm-shoot from this pinnate’ (§ 76). It might support the argument by van Esbroeck that this term stands in the centre of this Marian apocryphon<sup>53</sup> for the Tree of Live being a palm-tree, although the Tree of Live is never mentioned as such in this apocryphon. This might obviously be the reason for the Aramaic translator to retain the Greek term in Syriac instead of using an Aramaic option. Only for the term ‘pinnate’ he chose in the Syriac translation a more indefinite Aramaic lexeme ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ<sup>54</sup> instead of ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ<sup>55</sup> which would be in the Latin term *ramus palmae*.<sup>56</sup> This unique loan ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ has not been registered in the dictionaries since Wright’s publication of 1865. In the meantime ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ is attested thrice in fol. 24r ( §§ 76, 77), and appears twice in a slightly different usage ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ ‘olive-branch’ in the second early *Obsequies* manuscript (Add 17.137 (A), fol. 7r bottom; § 102), where the dove receives the olive-branch from Enoch for Noah as a sign of God.<sup>57</sup> Another early Greek loan to be noted is ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ < ἄγκλων ‘his elbows’ (§ 73), which has been known so far only from a few early texts in this spelling without the expected *nun*, e.g. the *Commentary on Leviticus* by Ishodad of Merv.<sup>58</sup> It

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*Spiritu Sancto by Basil of Caesarea* «CSCO 576; Scriptorum Syri 228» (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), pp. 183-195; S. P. Brock, Some Diachronic Features of Classical Syriac, in M. F. J. Baasten and W. T. H. van Peursen (eds.), *Hamlet on the Hill: Greek and Semitic Studies. Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* «Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 118» (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), pp. 95-111, esp. 96-98.

<sup>50</sup> This orthographical difference is not treated in the reference grammars by Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik*, and R. Duval, *Traité de grammaire syriaque* (Paris: Vieweg, 1881).

<sup>51</sup> Syriac adapted the Greek noun θαλλός from the word stem θάλλω ‘to sprout, grow, thrive’ by adding the emphatic ending as replacement for the Greek nominative ending -ος. See how Greek nouns were treated in Syriac S. P. Brock, Greek Words in Syriac, *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996), pp. 251-262, esp. 254.

<sup>52</sup> It is noteworthy that all the early Syriac witnesses and also the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version for the palm tradition show hardly any Greek influence. See Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 40-41; Müller-Kessler, “Three Early Witnesses”, p. 86.

<sup>53</sup> Van Esbroeck, “Les textes littéraires sur l’Assomption”, pp. 268-269.

<sup>54</sup> See for Aramaic terms of the palm in general *Palmae* in I. Löw, *Flora der Juden*, vol. 2 (Wien: A Kohut Memorial Foundation Inc., 1924), pp. 302-362, esp. 333 for ܐܘܘܪܐܘܐ.

<sup>55</sup> R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1870-1901), col. 2551; Löw, *Flora der Juden*, p. 328.

<sup>56</sup> In the Latin version just *palma* Wenger, *L’Assomption de la T.S. Vierge*, pp. 245-246, 249, 254.

<sup>57</sup> See on the attestations of this special Greek foreign word Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 41-42.

<sup>58</sup> See C. van den Eynde, *Commentaire d’Išo’dad de Merv sur l’Ancien Testament: II Exode - Deutéronome* «CSCO 176/179; Scriptorum Syri 80/81» (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1958), p. 70:7 [Syriac]; p. 93 n. 7



a) Sequence of the folios according to the upper text as bound now in BL, Add 14.665, no. 2.<sup>63</sup>

fol. 21r [v] <sup>64</sup>	E1 §§ 70-72 <sup>65</sup>	[G1 §§ 36-38]
fol. 21v [r]	E1 §§ 72-73	[G1 §§ 38end-39]
fol. 22r	E1 §§ 67-69	[G1 §§ 33-35]
fol. 22v	E1 §§ 69-70	[G1 §§ 35-36]
fol. 23r	E1 §§ 125-126 <sup>66</sup>	not attested
fol. 23v	E1 §§ 126-128	not attested
fol. 24r	E1 §§ 76-77	[G1 §§ 43-44]
fol. 24v	E1 §§ 77-78	[G1 § 45]

b) Sequence of the folios according to the underlying *Obsequies* manuscript in BL, Add 14.665, no. 2<sup>67</sup>

fol. 22r	E1 §§ 67-69	[G1 §§ 33-35] <sup>68</sup>	Wright, p. 14 (partially)
fol. 22v	E1 §§ 69-70	[G1 §§ 35-36]	—
fol. 21r (v)	E1 §§ 70-72	[G1 §§ 36-38]	—
fol. 21v (r)	E1 §§ 72-73	[G1 §§ 38end-39]	Wright, pp. 14-15 (partially)
two folios missing <sup>69</sup>			
fol. 24r	E1 §§ 76-77	[G1 §§ 43-44]	Wright, p. 15 (partially)
fol. 24v	E1 §§ 77-78	[G1 § 45]	—

<sup>63</sup> For the re-use of the upper text the lower one was turned by 90 degrees and the original divided into a bifolio. Such procedures are common in the re-employment of parchment, see also Netz and Noel, *The Archimedes Codex*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>64</sup> The sides of the folio in parenthesis are indicated according to the upper text.

<sup>65</sup> The Ethiopic subdivision is here given preference as in the editions for the Christian Palestinian Aramaic transmission and the other Syriac source (Add 17.137, no. 2), although it does not always agree with the Syriac versions. The Greek allocation of chapters is considered to see whether it is applicable. Both divisions form only a working basis and do not imply anything conclusive for the Syriac transmission. See also Müller-Kessler, "Three Early Witnesses", pp. 89-91; Müller-Kessler, "An Overlooked Christian Palestinian Aramaic Witness", pp. 88-98; Müller-Kessler, *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* (I), pp. 39, 49-54.

<sup>66</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 16 could not assign the passages on this folio because of the hardly legible script. The text version is on the one hand partially overlapping with the Christian Palestinian Aramaic one as surviving in *CCR* IV, fol. 12v (r), but the remaining text is considerably deviating from the CPA and Ethiopic witnesses. The latter two are surprisingly close despite their long transmission gap.

<sup>67</sup> The lower Syriac text on fols. 22-24 is found bound upside down (turned by 180 degrees) in the collective volume.

<sup>68</sup> The Syriac version tends to have sometimes a longer text than the surviving shorter Greek one. The division by paragraphs can only be taken as tentative.

<sup>69</sup> It is conceivable that only one folio is missing here.

*Obsequies of My Lady Mary (II)*

fol. 23r	E1 §§ 125-126 <sup>70</sup>	—
fol. 23v	E1 §§ 126-128	—

*Text<sup>71</sup> and Translation of BL, Add 14.665, no. 2*

Since no adequate transliteration and translation has been offered till today for the lower text of the four folios of Add 14.665, no. 2 a first tentative reading of the *Obsequies* text is presented here, since it provides unparalleled text passages as well as new lexical items. Not all readings could be established since the preservation of the script on some reverse sides is very faint or hardly visible.

**1a.** fol. 22r [flesh side] — E1 §§ 67-69 [G1 §§ 33end-35] — Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14 (partially published)

1.	<p>ከቤቱ ለቤቱ .<sup>72</sup> ከቤቱ ወለ    towards our Lord.  <small>(G<sup>35</sup>) Our Lord</small></p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    took her soul and  placed it</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ወለ    within Michael's  hands,</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    and wrapped it in  a precious garment,</p>	<p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ፥    and he found the</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    Apostles with  Mary</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    and greeted them</p> <p>ፊፊፊ ጠቅላይ    and Mary.<sup>73</sup></p>	
5.	<p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    which none could</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    relate about its</p>	<p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    (G<sup>34</sup>) Mary opened</p> <p>ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ ጠቅላይ    her mouth and said,</p>	

<sup>70</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 16 could not assign the appropriate passages to it on account of the hardly legible text.

<sup>71</sup> Passages read by Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 14-15 are indicated by †...‡ and new additions not found in Wright, *Contributions* by \*...\*. The palimpsest is at times impossible to read on account of the light conditions in the reading room at the British Library. Not clearly visible letters are indicated by ..., other sections missing through restoration and darkening of the parchment are indicated by [...].

<sup>72</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14: ጠቅላይ.

<sup>73</sup> This is obviously a paragraph division for the Syriac text according to the special signs, which deviates from the Ethiopic subdivision.

	ܦܫܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ* 74†. ܫܘܒܘܬܐ	splendour. <sup>75</sup> (E68) The	ܐܢܝ ܒܘܠܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ*	I bless you,
	ܘܥܘܠܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	Apostles saw the	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ* 76†	my blessed Lord,
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	soul of	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ*	my Master,
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	of Mary when it was	ܐܢܝ ܒܘܠܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ*	I bless you
10.	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	handed over	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	who did what was
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	into the angel Michael's	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	promised to
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	hands,	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	me so that I did
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	which was perfect,	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	not measure you
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ		ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	(by what)
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	¶and went with	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	you had promised.
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	goodness	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	And for what
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	to eternal glory. <sup>77</sup>	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	did you leave your
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	(The body) was	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	angels
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	clad in that shape	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	upon my soul, but
15.	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	of female and of male,	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	by coming to me <sup>78</sup>
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	¶when there was	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	yourself? The Lord
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	nothing	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	did not reply.
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	of defilement except	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	'Have I done
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	for	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	everything
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	the image and	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	for you of which
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	the splendour	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	I have been found
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	of the whole body	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	worthy? For was I
20.	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	cast aside <sup>80</sup> . (E69) Peter	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	not a humble one
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	rejoiced by saying to	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	so that I was found
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ		ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	worthy of this
	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	to our Lord, 'Who of	ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ	glory?' And after

74 Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14: †. ܫܘܒܘܬܐ ... ܫܘܒܘܬܐ.

75 Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14: †...†.

76 Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14: †ܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ.

77 ¶...¶: This additional half sentence is neither found in G1 nor E1.

78 Three lines are damaged here and difficult to read.

79 ܕܥܘܠܐ cannot mean 'arm' in this context. It is employed here as a preposition. Such usage is not attested so far for Syriac (see above). The reading of the last letter *yud* is questionable.

80 ¶...¶: Greek and Ethiopic deviate here considerably from the Syriac by having a shorter text and speaking of her body being λευκότερος τοῦ ἡλίου ἑπταπλασίως 'seven times whiter than the sun' (G1) and ܘܩܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ 'and her whiteness is seven times in cubits' (E1).



15.	[...] 𐤁𐤓 you [...] [...] 𐤁𐤁 ..[...]  [.....] [.....]  [.....] [.....]  𐤓𐤁𐤆... great ...  [.....] [.....] ... 𐤒𐤁𐤆 [.....]	... 𐤌 𐤌[𐤒]𐤗 his sleep ... 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤁𐤁 like the dead one which you will watch. 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 Often I said concerning them, 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁[𐤒] 𐤓𐤁𐤆 “The demonic (way) I ga[ve] you, ... 𐤁𐤁 𐤓𐤁𐤆 from my evilness are the signs, 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 and it will be like from 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 the body, of which the soul, 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 is found shining as their light. <sup>87</sup> 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 G36/E70) Again Jesus said 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 to Peter, ‘Watch kindly
20.	𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 which is near [...] 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... he said words 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... 𐤁𐤁 𐤓𐤁𐤆 which you brought 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 of the kindness to you. He intimated (?) 25. 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 one of four by  𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 grasping you and be careful	𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 her body, and take care <sup>88</sup> 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 not to drop (it) outside of the town

2a. fol. 21r [non flesh side] — E1 §§ 70-72(beginning) [G1 §§ 36-38] — unpublished

1.	𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ..... ... 𐤁𐤁 𐤓𐤁𐤆 you were ... [.....] [.....] 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 was asked of him, what	𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... for the death 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... lliw I hcihw... 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... that you ... 𐤓𐤁𐤆 [𐤓𐤁]𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... to ... of the mount. ...
5.	𐤓𐤁𐤆 ... 𐤁𐤁 𐤓𐤁𐤆 ..... After 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 those had heard 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 𐤓𐤁𐤆 Peter saying, ... 𐤁𐤁 ‘go in ...	[.....] [.....] ... 𐤁𐤁 ..... [.....] [.....] [.....] [.....]

<sup>87</sup> ¶[...¶] missing from G1.

<sup>88</sup> There is change of persons being addressed. After Jesus speaking only to Peter, he switches to more addressees.

Obsequies of My Lady Mary (II)

	.....	...he said, 'These are being
10.	[.....] [.....] [.....] [.....] ... and they carried [...]	worthy of Mary's body coming to the mo[unt.] (G37/E71) Peter
15.	[.....] [.....] [.....] [.....] [.....] [.....] Our Lord with the angels [.....] [.....]	... Mary's body ... and placed it on the bier. ... and from ... those who were asleep ... awoke. Peter brought them the pinnate and seated the angel [...]
20.	..... going to ... the bier and ... from life they were, but with mourning, which was heard as from a great crowd [.....] which was ...	And Peter said to John, You are a virgin and a plague(?). And... which threw themselves before the bier, when you carried it.' He said,
25.		

2b. fol. 21v [flesh side] — §§ 72-73end [G1 §§ 38-39end] — Wright, *Contributions*, pp. 14-15 (partially published)

1.	they did not know to where they could go. One of them hold onto in	And when the high priests heard much clamour of those who were singing hymns, they were disturbed.
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	. <b>ܘܢܘܩܘܡ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	a way that he could leave and go	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܥܘܒܪܐ</b>	And the priests were saying to one another,
5.	<b>ܘܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	And after he had come toward	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	‘There is a great uproar.’
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	the Apostles and saw the crowned	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	And one of them
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	bier and the Apostles	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	answered and said to them,
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	who were singing hymns, he responded and said	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	‘Mary went out from
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	to them in [great] rage, <sup>89</sup>	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	the world by the Apostles
10.	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	‘Why are you oppressing	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	[sin]ging hymns in front of her.’ <sup>90</sup>
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	the people in this matter	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b> *	And the Lord who said to them,
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	by which you do?’ And he rose	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	[‘Satan] entered their heart,
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	in rage and ran	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	[...] rise
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	toward that bier,	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b> *	[...] them
15.	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	and grasped it, and tried	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	[.....] <sup>91</sup>
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	to throw it on the ground,	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	the body which ca[rried] that
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	and hold on to that place	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	deceiver.’ <sup>(E73)</sup> And at once
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	of that pinnate to throw it down	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	they came out with swords and rods
	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	to that body on	<b>ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ</b>	to kill the Apostles

<sup>89</sup> There is not enough space for a *beth*. It looks more like a *gof*.

<sup>90</sup> Wright, *Contributions*, p. 14: †...†.

<sup>91</sup> This line and the following half lines are broken off from the folio.

<sup>92</sup> An alternative reading, which would be possible is **ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ** ‘the blade of his shoulders’; cf. Syriac **ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ** ‘lower part of the shoulder’ in J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Oxford Press 1903), p. 594. If the reading is **ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܢܐ**, it can be connected with a special meaning for ‘rounded part of the shoulder’ of **ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ** meaning ‘arched’  $\sqrt{\text{ܘܕܥܘܒܪܐ}}$  or ‘vessel, pot’, which is only attested in the Jewish Aramaic dialects as Galilean Aramaic, Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic; see the relevant dictionaries M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Jerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London: Luzac, 1886-1903), p. 612a; M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic from the Byzantine Period* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan, 1991), p. 250b; M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan, 2002), p. 253a.







	[.....] [.....]	[.....] [.....]
	... חסד [.....]	... נשכר we will ...
	[...] רבבות [.....]	... אם . לא . Either he ...
	רבבות רעות the fight with the	ל מהו דמיון ל us whatever Peter
	goodness	commanded
25.	[.....] [.....]	... יד . ופיו him ...
	... יד ... .. he said ...	... אם . or he is from

4a. fol. 23r [flesh side] — E1 §§ 125-126 — unpublished (Pl. II)

1.	ל ידו רב ו and great, since	. כל רב כל I am hanging all.
	אם יו ופיו Peter said to him, 'He	כא ידו כח For I beg of my
	is the one	דא, daughter,
	יודו רב רב knowing god, because	רבבות רבבות [ד] [since] many died
	פתחה פיה she opened her mouth	על רב רב on account of this
		הanging
5.	מחלל כל דא and blasphemed the word	מחלל.. רב . רב name. My father ...
	רב דא of Jesus. But	ופיו ל ידו said Peter
	ל . רב רב she hold back of all.	... רב רב to Paragmos, '...
	... רב To her he confessed	... רב .. ..
	... רב ... .. for ever	. רב ... .. dead.
10.	כל רב רב And you confessed that	... רב ... (126)? .....
	he will make known about	
	רב רב ... .. and was	[.....] [.....]
	רב רב .. ..	[.....] [.....]
	רב רב ... רב .....	[.....] [.....]
	... רב רב did not dug ...	[.....] [.....]
15.	... רב רב on earth. ...	... רב רב Her father
	רב רב רב the king so that they will	.. רב .. ..
	go after when	
	[.....] [.....]	... רב and not ...
	[.....] [.....]	... רב רב the whole gathering,
		which ...
	[.....] [.....]	... רב רב was standing ...
20.	רב [.] רב .....	[.....] [.....]
	[.....] [.....]	... רב from ... .
	[.....] [.....]	רב רב רב Paragmos convinced
	[.....] [.....]	[...] רב Peter
	רב .....	רב .. רב Peter
25.	. רב רב ... רב these ... and to Paul	[.....] [.....]
	רב .....	רב רב deed ...

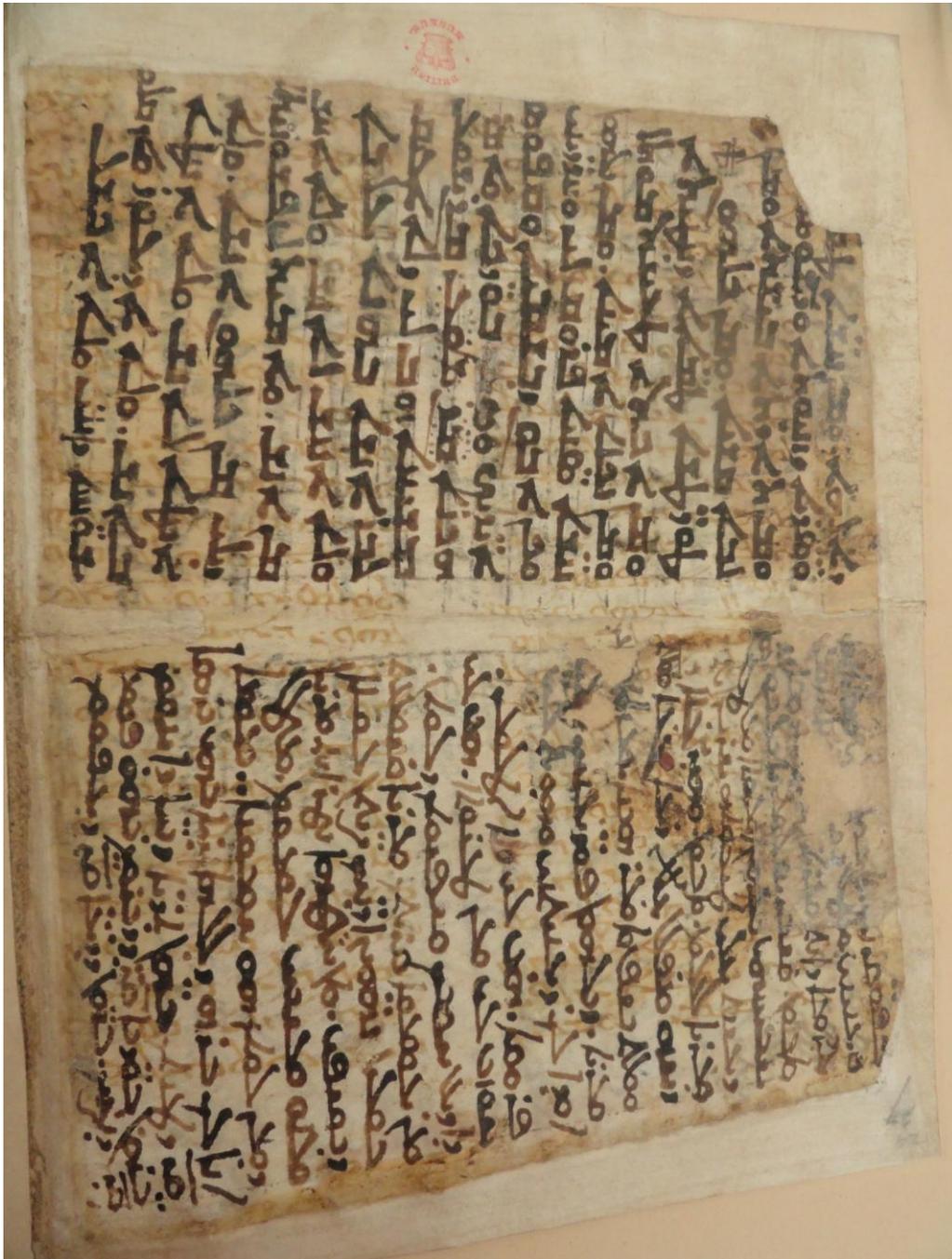


readings of some scanty passages. The text has been neglected ever since. Preserved in it are sections of an early witness for the *Obsequies of My Lady Mary* in Syriac (S1) covering the final part of the second book, the beginning of book three, and central sections of book five with the apocryphal History of Peter and Paul according to the Ethiopic five-book cycle. The textual diversity is at times considerable in comparison to the other early transmissions in Greek and Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and the much later Ethiopic one. It has been the first Syriac source to attest the central term for the palm tradition ܩܘܠܘܕܐ 'palm-shoot'. The new and additional readings intend to fill some lacunae in the only partially preserved transmission of the early Syriac translation of the *Dormition of Mary* from Upper Mesopotamia.

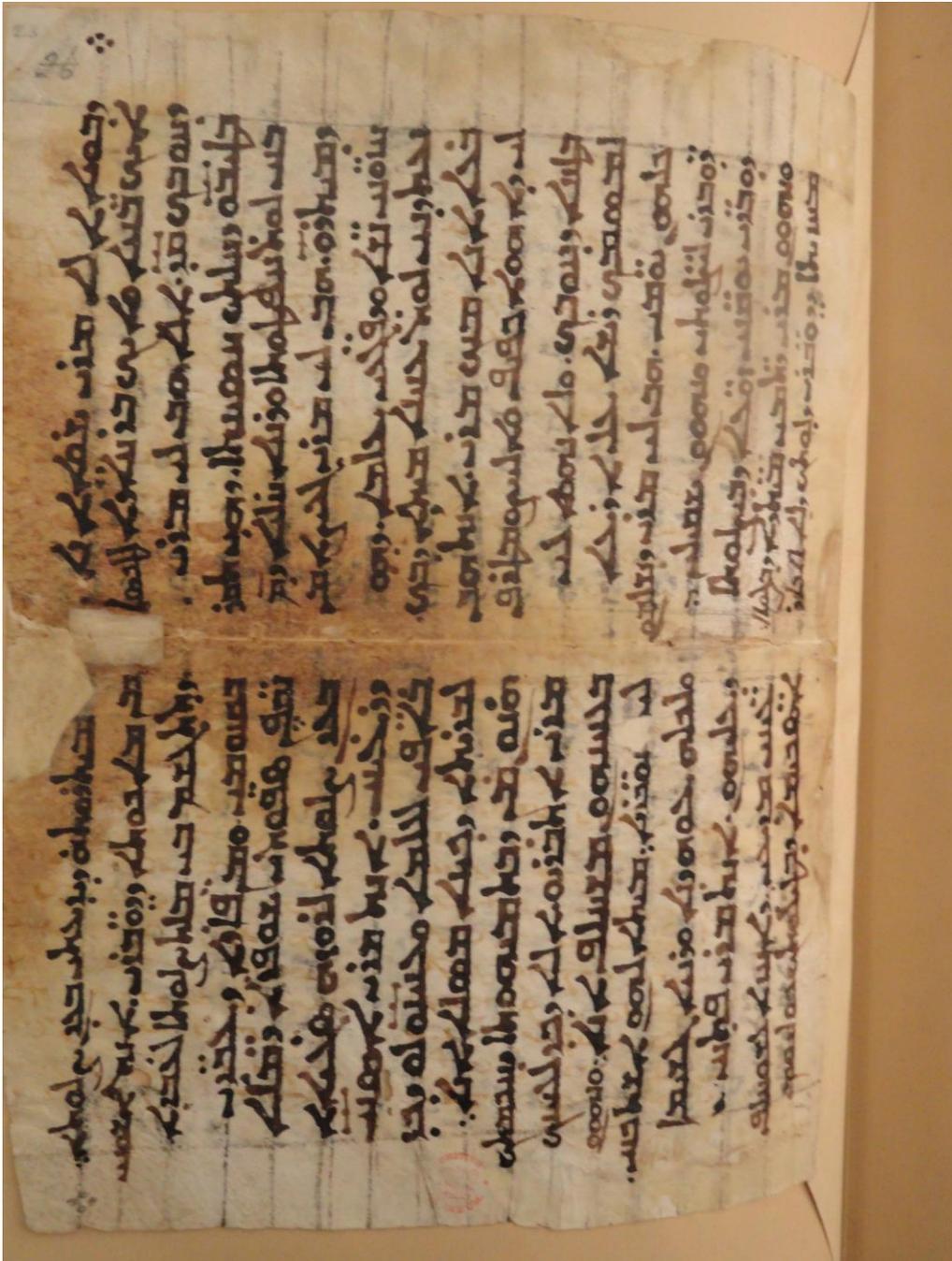
**Keywords:** Christian Palestinian Aramaic; Deir al-Suryan; *Dormition of Mary*; Ethiopic; Mushe of Nisibis; *Obsequies*; Palimpsest; Palm-shoot; Syriac.

Contribuciones a la literatura apócrifa de 1865 ofreció solo lecturas de algunos pasajes escasos. El texto ha sido descuidado desde entonces. En él se conservan secciones de un testimonio temprano de las exequias de My Lady Mary en siríaco (S1) que cubre la parte final del segundo libro, el comienzo del libro tres y las secciones centrales del libro cinco con la Historia apócrifa de Pedro y Pablo. según el ciclo etíope de cinco libros. La diversidad textual es a veces considerable en comparación con las otras transmisiones tempranas en arameo palestino griego y cristiano, y el etíope mucho más tardío. Ha sido la primera fuente siríaca en atestiguar el término central para la tradición de la palma ܩܘܠܘܕܐ 'brote de palma'. Las lecturas nuevas y adicionales tienen la intención de llenar algunas lagunas en la transmisión sólo parcialmente conservada de la traducción siríaca temprana de la *Dormición de María* de la Alta Mesopotamia.

**Keywords:** Arameo cristiano palestinese; Deir al-Suryan; *Dormición de María*; Etiópico; Mushe de Nisibis; *Obsequios*; Palimpsesto; Brote de palma; Siríaco.



Pl. I BL, Add 14.665, fol. 24r



Pl. II BL, Add 14.665, fol. 23r