

ECHOES OF INK AND FAITH

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Severios Roger AKHRASS | Ephrem Aboud ISHAC | Erich RENHART

ECHOES OF INK AND FAITH

A Catalogue of Sixty Selected Manuscripts
from the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate, Damascus

Uni-Press Graz 2026

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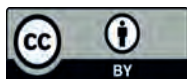
First edition 2026

Cover image: SOP 359, fol. 123v ‘The wine miracle at Cana’

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To the blessed memory of
 Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem Barsaum,
 whose tireless devotion to the preservation
 of Syriac heritage led him to gather scattered manuscripts
 and to lay the foundations of the modern Patriarchal Library.
 This catalogue, which reflects in part the fruit of his vision and
 labor, is offered in grateful remembrance of his enduring service to
 scholarship, the Church, and the safeguarding
 of our written tradition.

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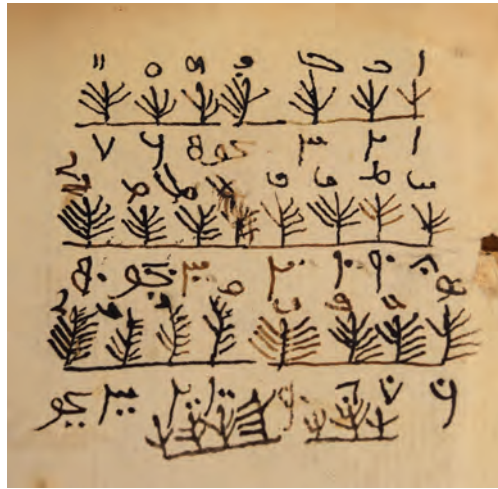
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SOP 092, fol. 10r:

text example; top of the page: double numbering of folios (left and center);

quire number 2 [2] in *estrangelo* with modest decoration



SOP 092, fol. 205r
Syriac and Hindu-Arabic numerals with
pictograms

Illustrations: fol. 167v, geometric drawing: two overlapping circles with text inscribed; fol. 182v, geometric drawing: circle with four segments and text inscribed; fol. 200r [new part], geometric drawing: circle with three segments, text inscribed; fol. 204 [new part], drawing: four emblems with ornamental motifs (exercise); fol. 205 [new part], drawing with the letters (numbers) of the Syriac alphabet, the Arabic equivalent and stylized tree-symbols (pictograms) accordingly

Marginal dots: The scribe of the supplement folios has inserted four dots right of the versos' first line (fol. 1-9, 58-87, 197-203 where the current text ends). The original manuscript had such four dots as well on the same place of the page but they are not always visible. Occasionally, there are varieties in the arrangement of the four dots in lozenge form, once they appear linked by a wavy line (fol. 141v).

SCRIPTS

Syriac: *serto* throughout; no traces of *estrangelo*

Arabic: paste down (right board) with some words in *Arabic* (half a line)

STATE OF PRESERVATION

Present state: The manuscript is in a stable state with slight problems of damage. The binding is stable; fabrics especially on the right board, risk getting detached; fol. 158 is detached (broken).

Earlier restorations: The fact that there are several quires inserted into an older volume makes clear that this cannot be the original binding. If we succeed in identifying the watermarks, we would be able to give an approximate date of the most dramatic restoration work. Additionally, there are the traces of several paper repairs across the whole book, though no texts have been affected by them.



SOP 092, fol. 182v: geometric drawing with inscribed text

SOP 93 = Dam 4/10

Moses Bar Kipho
Book of Homilies or Explanations of the Feasts
 (Volume I)

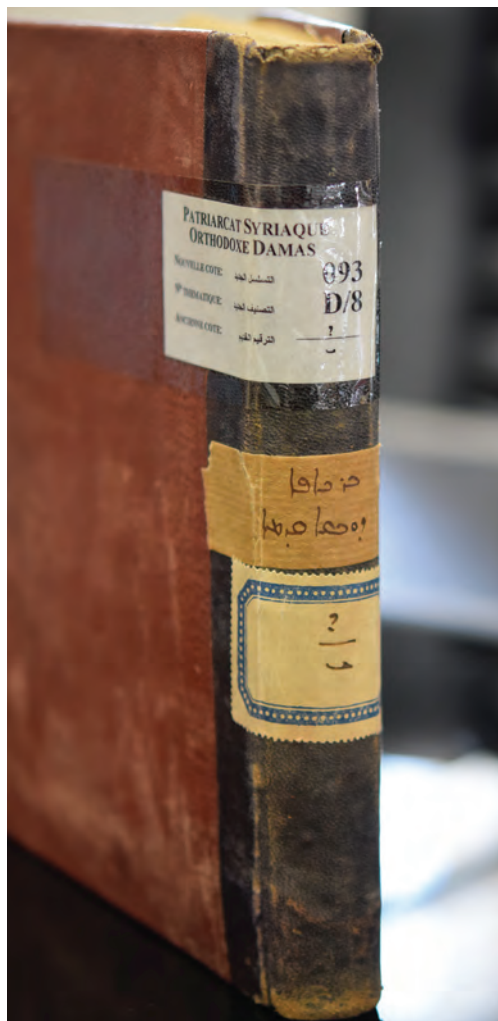
1911-12, 170 fol., paper

Date: 1911 (fol. 1r); 1912 (fol. 67r, 93v)

Scribe: John (fol. 93v), Monk Yuhanon Dolabani (fol. 170v). Yeshu' (fol. 45r) is the scribe of the archetype from which the present manuscript was copied. The archetype which dates approximately to the 13th/14th c*, was brought to Beirut from Midun, Tur 'Abdin, in 1927 by the Very Rev. Issa Khoury-Yacoub, the father of the present owner Fr John Khoury. Dam 4/10 (vol I) and Dam 4/12 (vol II) were copied from this archetype before it left Tur 'Abdin.

* BROCK, Sebastian P., "M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library: A Catalogue (Missoula, 1979)", *Journal of Semitic Studies* 26 (1981): 321

Lit.: COAKLEY, *The Homilies* = COAKLEY, James Farwell, "The Homilies of Moše bar Kepha on the Early Chapters of the Gospels". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1977 [especially for the homilies in fol. 18r-103v]. COAKLEY, James Farwell, "The Explanations of the Feasts of Moše bar Kepha", 403-410 in *IV Symposium Syriacum, 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (Groningen – Oosterhesselen 10-12 September)*. Edited by DRIJVERS, Han J.W. and LAVENANT, René and MOLENBERG, Corrie and REININK, Gerrit J. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 229. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987. RELLER, *Mose bar Kepha und seine Paulinenauslegung* = RELLER, Jobst, *Mose bar Kepha und seine Paulinenauslegung, nebst Edition und Übersetzung des Kommentars zum Römerbrief*. Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 35. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994 [especially, p. 74-75]. *The book of Sermons* = *The book of Sermons by Mor Severus Moses Bar Kipho*. Edited by Nahir AKÇAY, Adyaman, 2015. VÖÖBUS, Arthur. "Die Entdeckung neuer Urkunden für das liturgiegeschichtliche Schrifttum des Moše Bar Kepha." *Oriens Christianus* 60 (1976): 69-75



Title: സമാ സിദ്ധി നിരക്കു ചു പഴയ വി. മി. പാഠപുസ്തകം

[illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 8-19; COAKLEY, *The Homilies*, §1

Lit.: BÉGUIN, H., “Un recueil d’homélies du IX^e siècle en langue syriaque”, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* III, 2 [22] (1920-1921): 363-372

Title: **የቅርንጫፍ ምርት ማሻሻያ ስልጣን ለጥቅም አገልግሎት ለሚሰጡ የጥራት ማረጋገጫ ሰነድ**

[illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 20-37; COAKLEY, *The Homilies*, §2

May God magnify his remembrance in heaven and earth, and may God have mercy on everyone who prays for Ieshu' (who is the scribe of the old exemplar that I copied from), the wretched who scribed according to his strength ignorantly.

Title: גילת חזונו של משה, משהותו ופועלו. חזונו של משה, משהותו ופועלו. חזונו של משה, משהותו ופועלו.

[illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 20-37; COAKLEY, *The Homilies*, §3

[illegible][illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 47-57; COAKLEY, *The Homilies*, §5

[illegible]

ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಜನರನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡಂತೆ

Title: מכתב מנחם ויחזקאל אבינו וחסדו לחסידיו כי חפץ נחמיה

Des.: $\frac{1}{2} \text{ حلقه } \text{حق} \text{ بقل} \text{ حلقه } \text{حق} \text{ حلقه } \text{حق} \text{ حلقه } \text{حق}$

= *The book of Sermons*, 143-160

Title: אבות דאבינו מלכא וכל אינש שפירי מתוה נדעיה וראוי להם שיעשו
אחיבה ליל אבניה כי כפי רצונם יהיה מהם יותר חזקה ומקלה עליה

[illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 173-181

[illegible][illegible]

= *The book of Sermons*, 187-215

Title: משנה ופסוקים על חכמת המלך

Title: אבות בלחם מאכילין וכל מנהג חסידים. כתבם חפצתא. וחסדו רבי נחמן.
לחמנו כי כפרה. תעשה וזהו זכות מחייל. וזו שבת לפיתוי סוד של
לחמנו שלל מנחה כלום מהנשאר מהנשאר

[illegible]

= STROTHMANN, Werner, ed. *Moses Bar Kepha. Myron-Weihe*. Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 7. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973; VARGHESE, Baby, *Moses Bar Kepha. Commentary on Myron*. Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 34. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014

על גאסער פונדזש באקט, וואס האט געלאכט, מוויינט ברויך וואפל בעסטע קינד
 מיט אל יעדעם שטיק וואפן.

[illegible]

It was written to Severius the weak Metropolitan of Syria, who is Aphrem Barsoum from Mosul, who on the 30th of January AD 1933 became the Patriarch of the See of Antioch, and was called Ignatius Aphrem the First.

II. CODICOLOGY

BOOK COVER

Dimensions: 22 x 17 x 3 cm

Description: board covered in dark brown Buckram, spine in black leather; three labels on the spine

BOOKBLOCK

Folios: 170 numbered leaves

Writing support: thin translucent paper

Inks and pigments: black ink for the text; magenta for headers and text highlights, for decorative dots at the end of textual units; pale blue ink used for the index (fol. 3r); blue ink for a header (fol. 170v); black ink (not so intense) used for the book title and the colophon (fol. 170v) [autograph of Patriarch Barsoum]

Book structure:

- (a) *Numbering of folios/pages:* (1) *counting of folios* from 1 to 170, the last 7 folios (blank) unnumbered; on the top left of the rectos in pencil. (2) *counting of pages* with Syriac characters, starting from ܠ (fol. 5v) to ܠ [20] (fol. 16r), starting again (*sic*) with ܠ (fol. 18r) ending with ܠ [303] (fol. 170v)
- (b) *Quire numbers:* *quire I* (fol. 1-9): initially 8 folios; a bifolium added, the first part of which used as pastedown, the other folium counted as “fol. 1”; ܠ (fol. 9v); *quire II* (fol. 10-17): ܠ (fol. 5v). Quire numbering starts anew (*sic*) with ܠ (fol. 18-25), ends with ܠ [20] (fol. 170r); the following 7 leaves are blank and unnumbered.
- (c) *Quire structure:* The book is composed of *quaternions* (8 folios) throughout, addition of folios at the beginning and at the end, a total number of XXII quires.
- (d) *Consecutio foliorum:* PD + fol. 1-170 + 7 fol. (blank, including PD)

FOLIOS/PAGES

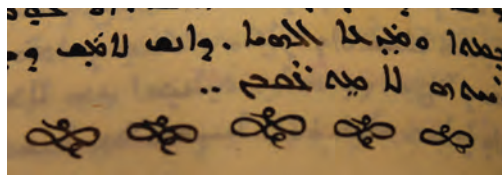
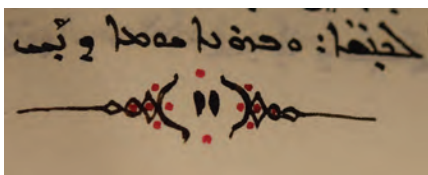
Dimensions: 20.2 x 15.8 cm

Empty pages: blank fol. 1v, 2v, 3v, 4v, 16v; only pagination/foliation fol. 2r, 4r, 5r, 17r

Page layout: one column, captions in red and sometimes centered, no headers; catchwords bottom left of the versos; 17-19 lines per page

Decorative elements: scarce; modest decoration of quire numbers; scant decorative elements fol. 58v, 85r and 125r at the bottom of the page, decorative dots e.g. fol. 59r, 71r and 97r; crossing out of words fol. 84r

Marginal dots: none



SOP 093, fol. 73v and fol. 125r:
restrained decorative elements
(quire number and end of a paragraph at the bottom of the page)

SOP 094 = Dam 4/11

Moses Bar Kipho
Book of the Explanations of the Feasts
 (Volume III)

1912, 122 fol., paper



Scribe: Monk Yuhanon Dolabani (fol. 113v). This manuscript is copied from another one written by a scribe called Aday, in the year (AD 1490) for the Church of SS Sergius and Bacchus in the village of Ḥbob (fol. 113v).

Date: 1912 (fol. 89v, 113v)

Lit.: *The book of Sermons = The book of Sermons by Mor Severus Moses Bar Kipho*. Edited by Nahir AKÇAY, Adyaman, 2015. COAKLEY, *The Homilies* = COAKLEY, James Farwell, "The Homilies of Moše bar Kepha on the Early Chapters of the Gospels". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1977 [especially for the homilies in fol. 3r-25v]. COAKLEY, James Farwell, "The Explanations of the Feasts of Moše bar Kepha", 403-410 in *IV Symposium Syriacum, 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature (Groningen – Oosterhesselen 10-12 September)*. Edited by DRIJVERS, Han J.W. and LAVENANT, René and MOLENBERG, Corrie and REININK, Gerrit J. *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 229. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987. RELLER, Jobst, *Mose bar Kepha und seine Paulinenauslegung, nebst Edition und Übersetzung des Kommentars zum Römerbrief*. Göttinger Orientalforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 35. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994, 74-75. VÖÖBUS, Arthur, "Newly Discovered Manuscript Sources for the Genre of Liturgical Commentaries by Mōšē Bar Kēphā." *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975): 490-94. VÖÖBUS, Arthur, "Die Entdeckung neuer Urkunden für das liturgiegeschichtliche Schrifttum des Moše Bar Kepha." *Oriens Christianus* 60 (1976): 69-75. VÖÖBUS, Arthur. "Entdeckung der Überreste des von Mōšē Bar Kēphā verfaßten Kommentars zur Apostelgeschichte". *Oriens Christianus* 62 (1978): 18-23 (esp. p. 20)

Fol. 1v-2v: INTRODUCTION AND INDEX of the book from which this manuscript was copied.
The homilies transcribed in this manuscript have a page number after their title in the index.

[illegible]

Inks and pigments: black ink used for the text, red for titles, captions, lines separating paragraphs (e.g. fol. 68v-76v), and for section numbers in the margins

Book structure:

(a) *Numbering of folios/pages:* (1) folio numbers from 1 to 92, placed on the top left of the *rectos*, in pencil; (2) page numbers in Syriac numerals, starting with ܐ [2] (fol. 6r) to ܡܠܬ [162] (fol. 85v), continued by another hand to ܡܠܬ [178] (fol. 93v); the following two empty pages were also numbered; (3) numbering of folios with Hindu-Arabic numerals, from “4” (fol. 6r) to “164” (fol. 86r), continued by another hand to “176” (fol. 93), on fol. 93v there is the number “178” (sic); placed close to the conventional folio numbers, in red ink

(b) *Quire numbers:* none

(c) *Quire structure:* The book consists of *quaternions* (8 fol. per quire): the central bifolia of the quires are: fol. 8|9, 16|17, 24|25, 32|33, 40|41, 48|49, 56|57, 64|65, 72|73, 80|81, 89|90 [fol. 86 pasted in at a later stage].

(d) *Consecutio foliorum:* PD | FL + bookblock (fol. 1-92) + 1 endleaf (= fol. 93 [blank]), pasted to the FL) + PD

FOLIOS/PAGES

Dimensions: 24 x 18.5 cm

Empty pages: fol. 1v, 3v-4v, 84v, 86v

Page layout: one column: length of lines 14.5 cm, 20-27 text lines, variable distance to the edges; fol. 85v-86r: two columns (list of the maphrians)

Decorative elements: incipit page (fol. 5r)

Marginal dots: none

SCRIPTS: *serto*; *Latin*: fol. 2r, 2v, 77v; *Arabic*: e.g. fol. 1r, 3r, 84r

STATE OF PRESERVATION: Fol. 4-6 are detached; the manuscript is in a stable condition with slight problems of damage.

SOP 522, fol. 5r: upper half of the decorated incipit page

