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Front cover:

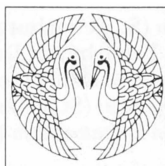
The portrait of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 324—337), the founder of the Byzantine Empire. Miniature from a Christian-Arabic manuscript entitled *al-Durr al-manzūm fī tārikh mulūk al-Rūm* (C 358) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 11b, 11.8 × 9.5 cm.

Back cover:

Plate 1. Portrait of two Roman Emperors — Stauracius (r. 811) and Michael I (r. 811—813). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 101b, 11.9 × 7.5 cm.

Plate 2. Portrait of the Roman Emperor Leo VI the Wise (r. 886—912). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 120a, 11.2 × 10.0 cm.

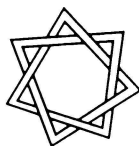
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port the theory of J. Starcky on the Syriac origin of Arabic writing, although she does not deny that there is greater similarity between Arabic and Nabatean letters. Valentina Colombo (Milan), on the contrary, supports the more widely accepted Nabatean theory on the origin of Arabic writing, relying on an analysis of the letter *alif* in inscriptions and the earliest Qur'anic manuscripts. She also accepts the influence of the general form (*ductus*) of Syriac writing on Arabic and strives to reconcile the two views.

Paul Géhin (Paris) reports on the results of a detailed study of a bilingual Greek-Arabic manuscript in the BNF (Supplement grec 911). He establishes that it contains the text of the Gospels, copied in Italy or Sicily by a certain Euthymius in A.D. 1043. He notes that this manuscript, unique in its provenance, presents an outstanding example of Arabic Maghrib-Andalusian script. The author remarks that in the nineteenth century it belonged to the Holy Sepulchre library in Jerusalem. He also claims that two folios which had been torn out of it were brought to St. Petersburg by Porphyry Uspensky. At present, these folios are preserved as part of his collection found in the National Library of Russia (No. 290).

Dickran Kouymjian (Fresno, USA) presents a program for drawing up a new album of Armenian paleography with the use of computer technology.

Ramazan Şeşen (Istanbul) assesses the information contained in the colophons of Islamic manuscripts, beginning with the earliest Arab manuscripts and ending with Turkish examples from the eighteenth century. Drawing on materials from the enormously rich collections in Istanbul, he tries to show that the contents of colophons in the course of time became more detailed and diversified.

In an extremely brief paper, Gérard Troupeau (Paris) analyses data on the colophons of Christian-Arab manuscripts. In concise, general terms he lays out the chronology of manuscripts and confessional affiliation of the copyists — Coptic Jacobite, Greek Malkite or Syriac. Important terms are noted throughout the paper.

The third section is entitled "Transmission des textes". It consists of four papers.

A large paper by Eleazar Birnbaum (Toronto) contains a "methodological investigation of autographs" by Kātib

Çelebî, or Hājji Khalīfa (1609—1657). He stresses that in drawing up his two famous reference works, which to this day serve Islamicists, the Turkish bibliographer employed non-traditional methods. Kātib Çelebî observed strict alphabetical order in the arrangement of materials and used an original system of cards. Relying on the vast materials found in Istanbul and exhibiting exceptional industry, he collected a huge information extracted from an enormous number of historical, literary and biographical works.

C.-P. Haase (Kiel), in his paper describes his re-discovery of Piri Reis' seafaring maps surviving in an early manuscript in the library of Kiel University. The author compares it with published versions well known to scholars.

P. Orsatti (Rome) examines the ratio of manuscript to text in Persian lyric poetry and finds a mystical, talismanic significance in how the *makhlaṣ* ("refuge") — the dedication to the *mamdūh* — was recorded.

A. Sidarus (Evora, Portugal) presents in her paper the complex history and format of an extremely unusual Greek-Coptic-Arab philological manuscript from the BNF.

The fourth section, "Les bibliothèques et leur histoire", contains four papers.

Iraj Afshar analyses mentions of *'arḡs* (a writ addressed to a ruler or high official) in Persian manuscripts of the Indo-Iranian tradition. These mentions testify to a given manuscript's belonging to the royal or public (*vaqf*) libraries and aid in understanding their history. At the close of his work, the author provides two tables of data on the eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts under discussion.

G. Colas (Paris) tells of manuscripts which were brought from India by French Jesuits between 1729 and 1735. These include approximately 160 volumes, primarily manuscripts in the Telugu, Sanskrit and Tamil languages.

Finally, B. Martel-Thoumian (Montpellier) surveys manuscripts acquired by the Damascus library Zahīriya between 1943 and 1972, devoting special attention to historical works and the prices paid for them.

The section concludes with a bio-bibliographical reference work by S. T. Rasmussen on the history of Arabistic and Semitological studies in Denmark.

A. Khalidov

Francoise Briquel-Chatonnet. *Manuscripts syriaques. Catalogue.* Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997, 264 pp.

A new catalogue of Syriac manuscripts prepared by F. Briquel-Chatonnet, a noted French Semitologist and specialist on Syriac literature, offers readers descriptions of manuscripts held in the four most significant French collections — the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Bibliothèque Méjanes d'Aix-en-Provence, the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, and the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg. The Bibliothèque nationale de Paris possesses the richest collection among them. The main body of this collection began to take shape already in the seventeenth century, while recent acquisitions date to the 1990s.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a large part of the Syriac collection — 288 items — had been described in H. Zotenberg's catalogue "Manuscripts orientaux. Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la Bibliothèque nationale", Paris, 1874. To this day, all scholars of Syriac literature make grateful use of this catalogue. Those manuscripts which entered the collection between 1874 and 1911 (46 items) were described by J.-B. Chabot and F. Nau. The latter also equipped the Syriac catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale with corrections and addenda. These reference sources remained inconvenient to use, however, as they were published in periodicals (*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* and *Journal Asiatique*). They have not yet been re-published in a single edition, which would be most welcome.

After 1911, the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris' collection of Syriac manuscripts grew by 80 items. These included 13 manuscripts which belonged to Addai Scher, the Chaldean archbishop of Seert (Siirt, in present-day Turkish Kurdistan), as well as manuscripts from the collections of the famed French scholars F. Nau and F. Graffin. A description of these new acquisitions occupies a large part of the new catalogue, which also provides descriptions of 27 manuscripts from Strasbourg and five from Aix-en-Provence and Lyons. Although Lyons holds only two Syriac manuscripts, their value is extraordinary, as one is a manuscript which contains the *Hexaemeron* of Jacob of Edessa, dated to the ninth century, while the second is a twelfth-century "Breviary".

The author of the catalogue under review has arranged the material of each entry in accordance with a strict two-part system. The first part deals with the manuscript's contents: the author's name and the title of the text in the form accepted by contemporary scholars are followed by the original title in Syriac script (*Estrangēla*) and the beginning of the work is given, also in Syriac. If the manuscript contains several works, headings are provided for each work in the collection. In the case it is a fragment, the author cites the beginning of the surviving (or readable) portion. The author set for herself the task of, where possible, indicating losses in the text or, alternately, noting the appearance in the manuscript of extra folios. If the manuscript has already been published or has entered scholarly circulation in another form, information is given about such publications and the scholarly history of the text.

The second part of the description contains codicological information, divided into three headings. The first provides the date of the manuscript, colophon data, information about the copyist and place of the manuscript's creation, and its owners (private and collective). The second analyses the writing, noting its particular features, diacritical signs and punctuation, numeration of the folios and quires; it also describes and dates corrections and marginal notes, added by copyists or readers, and analyses the artistic lay-out of the manuscript. The third gives information about paper or parchment, ink, the number and dimensions of folios, the number of columns with text per folio, number of lines per column, proportions of folios and margins, number of quires and folios per quire, and binding.

We note with pleasure that F. Briquel-Chatonnet consistently employs water-mark dating methods when describing manuscripts written on paper. The analysis of water marks as a means of dating Syriac and other Oriental manuscripts was first proposed by N. V. Pigulevskaya. In a 1927, at a meeting of the Society of ancient literature in Leningrad, she delivered a paper concerning the importance and necessity of such kind of investigations, since the stability of Syriac scripts and its conventional and unchanging calligraphic forms leave few other possibilities for dating documents. Complementing N. V. Pigulevskaya's observations on the extensive distribution of Italian and French paper among the Syrians, F. Briquel-Chatonnet has discovered in French collections several nineteenth-century Syriac manuscripts written on paper of Russian origin (pp. 207, 208).

Several manuscripts presented in the catalogue are of interest; some of these have already drawn serious scholarly attention. Such are six copies (366, 408—409, 412, 430, 435, S 4140) of a work by the well-known eighth-century Syriac writer Theodore bar Kōnī — "The Book of the

Scholia", a philological and theological commentary on the Bible. Although four of these copies contain only the final second scholion, it is an especially important text, as it is dedicated to a description of 92 sects and heresies which were wide-spread in the Near East in the early Middle Ages. The former owner of several of these copies was the noted French diplomat and scholar H. Pognon, who made a significant contribution both to identifying this outstanding Syriac writer and to dating his life and work.

Among the widely known works of Syriac literature presented in the catalogue are the ascetic homilies of Isaac of Nineveh (in the Russian tradition, he is known as Isaac the Syrian) — 359, 378, IX; a historical work by John bar Penkayē, still not published in full — 405, 406, S 4133; grammatical treatises by John bar Zū'bī and Elias of Nisibis — 426; and various anonymous medical and astrological texts — 423, 424, 425. Of indubitable importance are texts which were translated into Syriac — excerpts from homilies by early Christian authors such as Gregory of Nazianzus, Evagrius Pontius (of whose work little has survived in the original Greek), Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

F. Briquel-Chatonnet's catalogue grants due attention to fragments. Under number 389 are grouped numerous passages from manuscripts, the contents of which vary widely — biblical, liturgical, hagiographic, philosophical. No. 389 B is important for the study of Christian hymns; it presents 10 poetic fragments dated by handwriting to the period from the eighth to twelfth centuries and written in the twelve-syllable meter favoured by the famed Syriac poet Jacob of Sērūgh. The author of the catalogue has succeeded in identifying a substantial number of fragments. This could not have been an easy task, and bears witness to her erudition and broad acquaintance with texts from many genres of Syriac literature. Identifying the remaining fragments is a task for future scholars — this new catalogue will, of course, stimulate the interest of Syriologists in these fragments.

We note with pleasure the codicological similarity of Syriac manuscripts from French collections with those held in St. Petersburg. This relates foremost to a ninth-century Strasbourg manuscript (S 4116) which contains spiritual works by Sahdona (Martyrius), a Syriac writer from the first half of the twelfth century — the so-called "Book of Perfections", which contains five epistles as well as wise sayings. The Strasbourg manuscript is defective: it lacks folios at the beginning and end. The two final folios of this very manuscript, which originated in the Sinai, are held today in the National Library of Russia (Syr. new series No. 13). They were discovered and published in 1927 by N. V. Pigulevskaya, who always spoke of her discovery with great enthusiasm. It was, in fact, a very important find, as the identification of these two folios permitted the identification of the author and the contents of the text, and made it possible to read the name of the copyist and discover the time and place of the manuscript's creation. Thanks to the work of this Russian scholar, other folios from this manuscript were subsequently found in the Ambrosia library in Milan and in the collection of A. Mingana in Birmingham. It is only because of these discoveries that we now have a relatively clear sense of this unique work by a Nestorian writer, a work based on his profound understanding of the Christian patristic tradition. It provides a detailed exposition of issues of Christian morality. Modern scholars have

shown that this work exerted serious influence on other Eastern Christian literatures, reaching in translation Arabic and Georgian readers.

Manuscript No. 395, a liturgical book of the Jacobite order, also draws our attention. Certain sections of the manuscript date from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, as the manuscript was restored and touched up several times. The author of the catalogue was able to date accurately the stages of restoration. The manuscript belongs to the same group as the Gospel from the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (оч. ф. No. 6), which dates to 1578. Geographic indications in the colophons of both manuscripts coincide and lead us to the Northern part of Mesopotamia — Melitēne (Malatya in present-day Turkey), where the Jacobite diocese of Gargar or Gerger was located. The diocese included the convent of the Virgin Mary and Mār Zakkāi or Zacchaeus, where our Gospel was copied. It stood on one of the heights above a fortress (or camp — Syr. *ḵstr'*) Vank (not *dwk*, as one finds on page 115 of the catalogue). The famed convent Abū Ghālib (Syr. *bwglyb*, not *bwglyb*, as on page 115) and the convent Bar-ṣauma were also located there. Both manuscripts mention the same figures in the church — Mār Ignatius, Antioch patriarch of the Jacobites, and Mār Basil, maphrian of the East. Though the manuscript in the possession of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies is not as lavishly adorned as the Paris one, which contains miniatures, the St. Petersburg manuscript is noteworthy for its index to gospel readings for the entire year (fols. 3b—6). The index is written out in a decorative grid, painted gold and blue. The manuscripts juxtaposed here doubtless represent one and the same school of book illuminating.

We consider it appropriate to note that the manuscripts in the Paris and Petersburg collections are united by the genuine kinship of their copyists. The St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection holds a manuscript (coll. Ditr. No. 8) — an order of holiday services — which was copied in Alqosh. The colophon tells us that Alqosh enjoyed the patronage of the prophet Naum. The manuscript was copied in 1659 by the priest Isrā'īl, son of the priest Hormīzd, grandson of the priest Isrā'īl of Alqosh. Manuscript No. 426 in the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris is a collection of grammatical works, copied in Alqosh in 1880 by Isrā'īl Shakhīmā, son of the priest Hormīzd, etc. Thus, the manuscript was copied by the great-grandson of the copyist of the Petersburg manuscript. The names Isrā'īl and Hormīzd were apparently passed from generation to generation in this clan of clerics and copyists.

Thanks to the convenient indices in F. Briquel-Chatonnet's catalogue, it is quite simple to perform comparative analysis of the names of copyists and place names found in colophons. The book contains nine indices: authors, headings (given separately in European scholarly form and Syriac original), beginnings of texts, proper names found in colophons and marginalia, place names, and dated and illuminated manuscripts.

In conclusion, we can state with confidence that this new catalogue represents a worthy continuation to the traditions of Syriac manuscript scholarship long maintained by our French colleagues. It will be a fine aide for more than one generation of scholars and will serve to spur interest in research on Syriac literature and culture.

E. Mescherskaya